

#### EXECUTIVE BOARD

Chair- Ruth Learnard Goldstein  
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 dorris gaines golomb, Allen Hobbs, Roslyn  
 Huebener, Samuel Ramos  
 Alternates- Peter Vitakis, Phillip Kellogg, Paul  
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# H I S T O R I C Fort Greene Association N E W S L E T T E R

SEPTEMBER, 2004

## FGA Says “No to Ratner Development”



FGA members field questions at the DDBB Rally, June 19th

The FGA Brooklyn Atlantic Yards Committee has had a busy summer forging alliances to act against the Forest City Ratner development proposal. Following is an excerpt of the letter sent to our elected officials which outlines the position of the FGA. The full transcript is available on the FGA website.

*Indeed, Mr. Ratner's track record in downtown Brooklyn is a warning bell. Metrotech and the Atlantic Center have had problems keeping tenants, and the vacancies have been filled by government agencies, including the NYS Motor Vehicle Department, and the Empire State Development Agency. Metrotech has not become a 24/7 community, it is abandoned and isolated after office hours, and open space has been turned into Metrotech private space. The Atlantic Center building is reviled by the surrounding neighborhoods, because it has created a massive wall with its back to the Fort Greene community. There are no street level shops integrating the Center with the neighborhood, there is no ambiance in the Center and hot, sterile glassed-in peripheral corridors connect stores. A recent cosmetic and supposedly corrective paint job on the exterior does not correct the inherently bad design of the mall itself. How can we give the power for such an enormous project as the Atlantic Yards to a developer who--on top of one of the best transportation hubs in the country--created Atlantic Center, a commercial failure and an insult to the neighborhood?*

Want to take a stand yourself? Join the FGA BAY Committee. Email the FGA and put “Arena” in the subject line or simply give us a call.

## FGA to Hold Elections

Forget about the Democrats and the Republicans, as part of the November General Meeting there will be an election of Fort Greene Association Executive Board. The following 2 year term positions are up for nomination: chair, vice-chair, corresponding secretary, recording secretary, treasurer and six members-at-large.

If you would like to volunteer or have recommendations of friends and/or neighbors who are willing to volunteer to work for our wonderful neighborhood please contact Fred Lasker, the Election Committee Chair at 718.875.1856 as soon as possible. Do remember that nominations can also be made as late as at the actual General Meeting itself.

## An Open Forum

### *And Other Changes at the FGA*

In an effort to involve as many people as possible in the workings of the Fort Greene Association, the Executive Board of the FGA is making some changes. The things we try that work; we'll keep. The things that need tweaking, we'll tweak. And things that bomb, we'll gently cast aside.

#### **MORE VOICES**

A new item on the agenda at FGA meetings will be an “Open Forum”. During that time, individuals will have an opportunity to speak on any topic. Having a time limit for each speaker, say 3 minutes makes sense (that's how they do it at Community Board meetings). If the demand for speaking time is high, we may do a sign up sheet.

#### **MORE MEETINGS**

Try to name a community in Brooklyn with more going on than Fort Greene! We are surrounded by development proposals. Then there's all that's happening with-in our neighborhood, our schools, our Historic District plus crime, housing and so much more. A couple of extra meetings a year seems like a good – if not necessary – idea. So we are adding one FGA meeting in October and one in March.

#### **MORE INPUT**

Did you know that you could serve on a committee of the FGA by just raising your hand? Have a look at this list of Committees, pick a topic you are interested in and volunteer a few hours to help make things happen for Fort Greene.

**Landmarks Preservation:** Protecting our Historic District and expanding it, Zoning issues, and more.

**Quality of Life and Parks:** Our parks, including Historic Fort Greene Park, and playgrounds plus crime and more.

**Schools and Youth:** Our kids, everyone else's kids, and how do we make Fort Greene the best place to raise them.

**Community Relations:** Helping the FGA reach out to its members, elected officials, organizations, schools, institutions, block associations, and more.

**Communications:** Writers, editors, graphic designers and web designers... think of this as the Pro-Bono account that hits you where you live – right here in Fort Greene.

**Recruitment:** We want to put a major effort in attracting new members to the FGA from throughout our community.

Interested? Send an email to: fort.greene@verizon.net or sign up at the front table at our meeting on September 20<sup>th</sup>.

## Landmarks Commission Fees Now In Effect

This summer the City Council passed the New York City budget and in it was an income-producing measure for the Landmarks Preservation Commission [LPC]. Construction projects within a landmarked district requiring a “Certificate of Appropriateness” or a “Certificate of No Effect”, will now be charged an application fee. The fee will apply whether you are doing a small project on your house or building an entirely new structure. The minimum fee is \$50, increasing with the size of the project.

The Fort Greene Association finds this fee extremely counter-productive to the very goals and objectives of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. The guidance and expertise of the LPC is essential to protecting the very qualities that make our Historic District so great and the last thing the Commission needs to do is give people a reason to avoid working with them. Instead, the Commission should be pursuing those that violate the laws and guidelines of the LPC... those who install inappropriate windows, those that punch out air-conditioner openings in the front of a brownstone... or those who use white cement instead of tinted mortar or bluestone for sidewalks... they are stealing from the rest of us.

The Commission which is terribly understaffed can't possibly inspect and pursue all the violations occurring in Fort Greene, let alone all the other Historic Districts in the City. However, it is possible to imagine that by adding a staff of aggressive inspectors, given the power to collect fines from those that ignore the law, could easily pay for themselves plus generate much more income for the city than the new fee proposal ever will. In the process, the LPC would be fulfilling their mission by stemming the historic erosion that occurs when people skirt the process.

The goal of the FGA is to eliminate this fee requirement from next year's New York City budget. To that end, we will be working with the Historic Districts Council to persuade our elected officials of exactly how bad an idea this is. When the time comes, we will be asking for the support of the members of the Fort Greene Association in helping to influence policies affecting our Historic District.

#### **MEMORY**

We are saddened by the death of Bill Sikes, 44 year Clinton Hill resident, who many of us knew.  
 Our sympathy to his wife, Lucy Sikes.

# JOIN THE FGA- BECOME AN ACTIVE MEMBER IN OUR COMMUNITY

I am pleased to enclose my membership dues to the Fort Greene Association, Inc.  
\_\_\_\$15 Member \_\_\_\$25 Friend \_\_\_\$50 Patron \_\_\_\$100 Corporate \_\_\_\$200 Angel

Please Print

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Checks to Fort Greene Association, Inc., Box 170563, Brooklyn, NY 11217-0563

The Fort Greene Association, Inc., operates as a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. A copy of our latest financial report may be obtained by contacting the Office of the Attorney General, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.

## Graffiti

By i.leon golomb

*staring at one,  
and with headlight-like glare,  
as the silver scrawls shine in the night,  
there are those who seem unaware or  
uninterested as they multiply like a plague.  
.....with neighborhood tours  
now advertising Fort Greene as a neighborhood  
under siege.....*



Not so poetic! - Graffiti on the rise in Fort Greene

If you see graffiti please report it to the Graffiti Removal Hotline- 718.802.3875. Be sure to call with an actual address where you have seen a tag.

## 27th Fort Greene House Tour a Success

Every two years, Fort Greene opens its doors to hundreds of people interested in our wonderful neighborhood. On May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2004 the tradition continued with the historic neighborhood's 27<sup>th</sup> house tour.

The event, which included an eclectic array of beautiful homes, was a roaring success, attracting visitors from all five boroughs and beyond. One such visitor, Mr. Brendan Gunn from Boston, Mass, was quite impressed with what he saw. "It is really neat to see the diversity of this wonderful neighborhood celebrated in the incredible selection of unique homes! I cannot wait until 2006!"

This success could not have been possible without the contributions of many people. The homeowners themselves, of course, deserve much of the credit. They were kind enough to share their most personal of spaces with the world. Our local businesses too played a critical role. Yet others, from those selling tickets to those "sitters"

who kindly helped visitors as they navigated through the homes, contributed to this smashing success!

Without their contributions and support, the house tour would simply not have been feasible. Thank you one and all.

## Garden Tour

As summer begins to fade, the Garden Walks Committee is busy looking for new gardens for next year. With all the time and money the avid gardener spends on his "recreation" there is nothing more rewarding than having others come and admire your creation. One of this year's garden owners has said that it was so much fun that they would do it again. If you have a garden or know of one that you think is beautiful or unique, please contact Ingeborg Farrar at 718.596.0151 or send an email to the FGA with "Garden" in the subject line.

### Contact Us

FGA, Box 170563, Brooklyn, NY 11217  
On the Web: [FortGreeneNY.com](http://FortGreeneNY.com)  
Email: [fort.greene@verizon.net](mailto:fort.greene@verizon.net)

## HISTORIC Fort Greene Association

Box 170563, Brooklyn, NY 11217-0563

### On the 20<sup>th</sup> September Agenda:

Gates at the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church.

651 ARTS will be presenting their proposal for a major project that would occupy one of the most prominent spots in our Historic District.

Come see it for yourself.

## NEXT FGA MEETING September 20th, 2004

7:30PM- Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 85 South Oxford Street, Fort Greene

## GOINGS ON

### MEETINGS

**Community Board 2** - meets 2nd Wednesday of the month, 6 pm. Call CB2 office, 718.596.5410, for location. Attend.

**88th Precinct** - 3rd Tuesday of each month, 7:30. Call 718.636.6511, ext 526x for location.

**Clinton Hill Society** - 3rd Wednesday of the month, 7:30. St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Washington Avenue between Dekalb & Willoughby.

**Brooklyn Artists Breakfast** - 3rd Wednesday of the month, 9 am, Tommy's Blue Corner, 166 Dekalb & Cumberland. 718.624.5719.

**House Tours** - Prospect Heights, Sun Oct 3, 12-5, phone 718.707.1277. Bedford-Stuyvesant, Sat Oct 16, 11-4, phone 718.953.7328.

**Fort Greene Walks** - Tours continue thru Oct 30. Call 718.907.6185.

### NEWSCENES

**BAM LDC** - has now moved to new offices at 80 ARTS, 80 Hanson Place. Building provides affordable office space and shared amenities to 14 nonprofit arts and arts services organizations. phone 718.907.4400.

**Frosted Moon Emporium** - 154 Vanderbilt near Myrtle. Charming new shop owned by Fort Greene resident Ada Williams. Body...Home...Tots. phone 718.858.3161.

**Urban Design Landscaping by Brooke** - owned and operated by Fort Greene resident Brooke Klausung specializing in all phases of garden landscaping - 163 Carlton Avenue. phone 718.625.0244

### NEWBABIES

**Gideon Cebra Elijah Graves** - Born March 14, 2004. Parents Nadine George Graves, Cebra Graves, Lafayette Ave. residents. Congratulations!

**Naomi Fekade Sergew** - Born July 21, 2004. Parents Kara Sulmasy and Fekade Sergew, South Oxford Street residents. Congratulations!

### ERRATA

**Landscape designer Nigel Rollings** was inadvertently omitted from the Brownstone Brooklyn Garden District's 2004 garden walk map. Nigel designed the rear garden at Stonehome Wine Bar, 87 Lafayette Avenue.