



# FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN SEPTEMBER 2006

The Fort Greene Association is devoted to historic preservation, neighborhood and park enhancement, as well as cultural, economic, and housing advancement. To find out more, become a member, or to volunteer, visit our website [www.HistoricFortGreene.org](http://www.HistoricFortGreene.org)

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Fredrik Anderson  
Joan Bassin  
Naomi Dickerson  
Selma Jackson  
Gustav Peebles  
Peter Vitakis

Location  
Location  
Location  
is proud to  
underwrite  
this issue  
of the FGA  
Newsletter.

NEXT MEETING:  
MONDAY SEP 18  
7:30PM

TOPICS:  
Atlantic Yards  
Actual Rats  
S. Oxford Park  
Transit Issues

LOCATION:  
Community Room of  
the Lafayette Ave  
Presbyterian Church  
85 S. Oxford Street

All are welcome to  
attend, homeowners and  
renters alike.

## And Another Thing...

**THE CIRCUS COMES TO TOWN.** The extensive press coverage didn't really communicate what a disappointing spectacle it was at the so-called public hearing on the Atlantic Yards' environmental impact statement (August 23rd). No matter what your opinion about the arena proposal, pro or con, it's completely understandable if you walked out of that hearing wanting to hose yourself off.

**WHO'S THE BOSS?** As you read this, the primaries will be over. Despite the landscape of NY politics where many elections seem decided in the primaries, it's not over. A meager turnout on any election day sends the wrong message to those elected to represent us. So, vote! Vote in the general election, off-year elections and even when it looks like a landslide. Don't ever let them forget who it is they work for.

**STRENGTH IN NUMBERS.** The FGA and the Society for Clinton Hill have shared a bond over the many years. With so many concerns of mutual interest, we have been working together to be an even stronger voice for the area. The rezoning effort is one example. The Atlantic Yards information meeting in early August was another. There will be more of these kinds of collaborations in the future.

**PLANTING THE SEED(S).** The FGA raised more money during the May 2006 House Tour than ever before, netting 7 times that of any previous tour. The FGA board has been busy over the summer determining the criteria and processes for allocating these funds. Details will be announced in the coming month.

**WORKING OVERTIME.** FGA Board members and volunteers have been meeting and strategizing during the dog days of August, on the arena issue and more. Others have been working on the re-zoning and historic preservation efforts without taking time off. Volunteers have been working to give the FGA website a makeover (an unveiling is expected in October). And this issue of the newsletter didn't just put itself together at somebody's summer house! Thank you all.

**AUTUMN IN FGNY.** Take a stroll. Ride your bike. Shop the neighborhood. Eat with gusto. And bring a neighbor with you to the FGA meeting on September 18.

Phillip Kellogg  
FGA Chair

## Affordable Housing, in Context

The community-based planning initiative for Fort Greene and Clinton Hill took important steps forward over the summer. In June, the NYC office of City Planning presented a draft of the proposal for R6b zoning to the Land Use Committee of Community Board 2. The plan protects the brownstone feel of the residential streets while allowing for additional height on commercial streets. Speaking on behalf of the coalition of community groups that have been working on this effort, the FGA testified about how important this initiative is to the people of Fort Greene and Clinton Hill. The map presented at that meeting goes a long way to help achieve the community's goals.

The support of CB2 has been key. In fact, after that meeting both the Land Use and Executive committees of Community Board 2 voted unanimously to support this work and in a letter urged the Department of City Planning to proceed.

Getting that meeting to happen in June was critical as that allowed necessary environmental reviews to continue over the summer while many organizations were on a hiatus.

Another important step forward is that the proposal contains an affordable housing component. Incentives for some extra density come with the requirement that it include some affordable housing. Council Member Tish James championed this issue throughout the process and worked with several city agencies to make it happen.

We are not done yet. There are more steps to go. We'll keep you posted.

Draft Proposal Map for Rezoning Fort Greene



Department of City Planning

## Update on Campaign for Pedestrian Safety

Over the summer, your Fort Greene Association was hard at work on transit issues. After last year's success at opening up the South Portland exit of the G-train, the FGA embarked on more challenging problems – pedestrian safety at dangerous intersections.

The situation for pedestrians at Fulton & Lafayette is chaotic. Last July, the FGA submitted a recommendation to the DOT that would have given a clear path for pedestrians by changing the light pattern and introducing a new crosswalk at Fort Greene Place. The DOT responded by installing a left-turn signal on Fulton, but the dangers to pedestrians continued.

Over the summer, the FGA met with hundreds of members of the community, and over 500 letters were sent to the DOT, asking them to revisit the intersection. The DOT has agreed to reply to the FGA with its new recommendations by Sept 7th.

The FGA is also working on the intersection of Flatbush & 4th. The FGA submitted a proposal to change the pedestrian light sequence, but the DOT has declined to make improvements.

A common sight at Fulton & Lafayette



Photo: FGA

Between newsletters, get important area news and information from the Fort Greene Association by e-mail. It's free. To sign up send an e-mail of your own to [fga.news@HistoricFortGreene.org](mailto:fga.news@HistoricFortGreene.org).

The FGA website is about to get a facelift. For information on how your company can be a sponsor of the soon to be new and improved portal to all things Fort Greene, send an e-mail to: [theFGA@HistoricFortGreene.org](mailto:theFGA@HistoricFortGreene.org).

## New Bike Lanes

The DOT is planning to introduce five miles of new bike lanes to Brooklyn, most of which will be in Fort Greene. Once these bike lanes are completed, cyclists will be able to ride safely to the popular Manhattan Bridge bike lane without having to traverse the congestion of Flatbush Avenue.

Besides encouraging more cycling, these bike lanes will greatly help alleviate speeding by narrowing the street to cars. Both Carlton & Cumberland, the main arteries of the new bike lanes, are very wide streets, allowing drivers to meander and accelerate. Bike lanes on similar streets in both Prospect Heights and Brooklyn Heights have reduced speeding significantly.

The DOT is also planning to improve Carlton Avenue between Park and Myrtle by making this extremely wide block two-way, creating a planted median, and introducing more parking spaces.

Proposed Bike Lanes (in blue)



[nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/bike/cwbm.shtml](http://nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/bike/cwbm.shtml)

Despite enthusiastic support from the Fort Greene community as represented by the FGA in its testimony before the board, Community Board 2, inexplicably, voted against supporting this proposal. Since that vote, many block associations lining the planned routes have voiced their support for the bike lanes and Councilmember Tish James sent a letter to the DOT stating her unqualified support for this proposal.

The FGA did express concern over one aspect of the proposal: how the bike lane will work at Cuyler Gore Park. The Parks Department is reviewing that part of the plan and looking at various options.

## Arts in the Greene *Betsy Kissam*

Fort Greene has a new museum — The Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA).

MoCADA is located at 80 Hanson Place, corner of South Portland Avenue. Its founder/director Laurie Cumbo hopes residents of Fort Greene “will take part in our exhibitions and public programs as well as our community outreach initiatives, to explore and make the journey that we as an institution are taking to discover the many facets and complexities of the African Diaspora — to participate in making elements of the African Diaspora a permanent part of American culture.”

The Museum opened in May with an innovative exhibition, “The Pulse of New Brooklyn” — featuring “fifteen artists, who live in Brooklyn and come from all over the Diaspora,” says Ms. Cumbo. She calls the show “an interpretation of the people by the people.” Ms. Cumbo is all about change. She hopes to create “a mental revolution as far as how people see themselves, how they see their future and how they see the importance of institutions.”

The gallery at MoCADA at 80 Hanson Place (corner of South Portland)



Photo: [chesterhiggins.com](http://chesterhiggins.com)

The museum’s second major show opens September 18. “Middle Passage: White Ships/Black Cargo,” will exhibit 52 charcoal drawings by artist Tom Feelings from his lifelong work by the same name; it runs through January 19.

MoCADA hours: Wednesdays-Sundays, 11- 6pm; suggested donation: \$4 (seniors/students \$3, children under 12 free). Public programs: \$8 including admission. For information, call 718-230-0492.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Fort Greene Park Halloween Festival

Did you know there are bats in Fort Greene Park? Well on October 28, those bats will be joined by even more spooky creatures in addition to mimes, stilt walkers and face painters when the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Fort Greene Park Halloween Festival kicks off at noon at the Dekalb/Washington Avenue park entrance. From the much-anticipated Costume Parade at 2pm to events such as the free pumpkin patch, hayrides and pony rides, this event is a Fort Greene tradition enjoyed by all.

The event is run by the Fort Greene Park Conservancy, a non-profit organization whose mission is to celebrate and improve Brooklyn’s historic park. John Scheffler, organizer of the Halloween Festival and Conservancy Board Member says, “The Festival is an opportunity for city kids to have a country experience right here in our historic park. When I see children running around the man-made pumpkin patch to select their very special pumpkin to decorate, it makes all the hard work that goes into the Festival all worthwhile.”

For more information on becoming a corporate sponsor of the Halloween Festival or to volunteer, please contact John Scheffler at [jonscheff@yahoo.com](mailto:jonscheff@yahoo.com). For more information about the Fort Greene Park Conservancy, visit their web site at [www.fortgreenepark.org](http://www.fortgreenepark.org).

## Another Summer of Fun, thanks to many

The Fort Greene-market is still bursting with summer vegetables – get a last taste of summer from our many vendors at the market.

Thanks to Councilmember Tish James for sponsoring another series of free films in Fort Greene Park. Fort Greene summers wouldn’t be the same without a picnic dinner under the stars.

The Fort Greene Association greatly thanks the New York Parks Department for another glorious summer in New York. Tennis players rejoiced with the new courts at South Oxford Park, and, as always, the pool at North Elliott and Flushing was a refreshing spot to play, relax, and even exercise. We already look forward to Summer 2007 for our next dip in the pool! Until LIU opens its new pool to residents – something Councilmember James is working on – we encourage residents to take advantage of the city pool in Crown Heights, which can easily be reached by the Dean Street bike lanes. Learn about this pool and others at [www.nycgovparks.org](http://www.nycgovparks.org). Make sure to call ahead of time, as the hours of operation frequently change. The pool is at 1251 Prospect Place at Troy, and the telephone number is 718-771-2787.

## Atlantic Yards Update: The Clock Is Ticking

The unfortunately timed release of the Empire State Development Corporation's Atlantic Yards Project D.E.I.S. (Draft Environmental Impact Statement) in mid summer while most residents of the surrounding neighborhoods, those most directly affected by the project, are away, may have caught us off guard, but not unprepared. The Fort Greene Association, along with most of the other neighborhood, community and civic organizations continue to be strenuous in opposition to the project as currently planned. They are intensely involved in working toward making any development at the site sensitive to the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods.

The 2,000 page DEIS was released at a time most civic associations are on summer recess and many residents are away. Yet it has a mere 66-day period for review response. It may be viewed at [www.empire.state.ny.us/AtlanticYards/DEIS.asp](http://www.empire.state.ny.us/AtlanticYards/DEIS.asp) As required by law, the report was commissioned and paid for by Forest City Ratner Companies, the project's developer. The mid-summer release date and the brief review period are clearly calculated affronts to the effected communities.

The project as proposed with 16 sky-scrappers reaching as many as 60 stories, an 18,000 to 20,000-seat arena, residential, hotel, retail and office complex is bounded by Atlantic Avenue at the North, Flatbush Avenue at the West, Dean Street at the South, and Vanderbilt Avenue to the East will have overwhelming affects for all of us and will alter the face of Brooklyn forever.

Among the impacts are the massive shadows that will be cast on our communities. The shadows will cover parts of Prospect Heights and Boerum Hill, much of Fort Greene from Atlantic Avenue to Gold Street, into as much as one-third of Fort Greene Park, and will reach much of Clinton Hill as far as Grand Avenue. The cold winter months will have the shadows felt at their worst.

The extreme concentration of population foreseen for the project will make this the densest residential area in the entire United States. In addition, traffic, transit and pedestrian congestion will increase significantly, to note a few of the overwhelming impacts on our communities.

Fortunately, our Councilperson Letitia James was able to procure financing through the City Council to fund an impartial professional review of the DEIS, under the auspices of The Council of Brooklyn Neighborhoods (CBN). CBN is composed of community groups, including the FGA, business groups and churches in Community Boards 2, 6, and 8. The CBN was formed to provide a neutral forum to discuss the Atlantic Yards Project proposal and the associated review process.

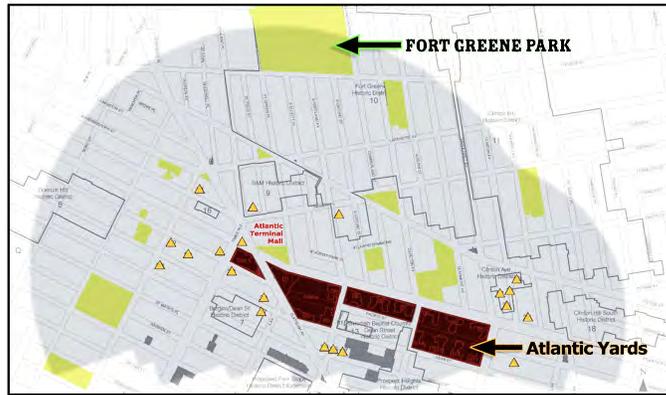
June 15th saw a massive standing-room-only turnout for a meeting hosted by State Senator Velmanette Montgomery, co-hosted by the FGA, Society for Clinton Hill, Park Slope Civic Council, as well as other local groups, where presentation was made by the venerable Municipal Art Society (MAS). The presentation was followed by a panel discussion on the urban design implications of the project on its surroundings. The President of the Municipal Art Society, Kent Barwick, proclaimed that as it stands, this plan "will not work for Brooklyn".

Organized by DevelopDon'tDestroyBrooklyn (DDDB), The FGA was one of many entities that endorsed the celebrity-studded, and hugely successful July 16th rally that was attended by several thousands at Grand Army Plaza.

The Fort Greene Association and the Society for Clinton Hill also co-sponsored a community meeting on August 16th, with a presentation by the Council of Brooklyn Neighborhoods explaining the purpose and function of the DEIS, and CBN's task in engaging the experts who are contracted to critique and identify the project's impacts on the surrounding communities. The presentation was followed by a discussion of how to influence the process. A major purpose of this meeting was to strongly encourage all to testify at the DEIS hearings on August 23 and September 12,

The FGA continues to support the umbrella organization DevelopDontDestroyBrooklyn, in striving for innovative, community-based planning, affordable housing and sustainable jobs, will maintain a solid working relationship with the Municipal Art Society, while also reaching out to other concerned civic groups to help create a viable, liveable alternative for development of the Atlantic Yards. Your help is crucial in this on-going effort. To volunteer, call Ruth Goldstein at 718-596-0899.

*The Real Shadow Sweep Illustration*



*Original graphic from the Draft Environmental Impact Statement courtesy of Forest City Ratner and EDSC. Recoloring and cropping by A. Weissman of WeissmanConsulting.com. For more details, visit [SouthOxford.com](http://SouthOxford.com)*

## Do Good & Drink Well

Save the date! The Fort Greene Park Conservancy will be holding a Winetasting Fundraiser on September 28, 2006. For a tax-deductible donation of \$75 to the Conservancy, you will be able to taste over 100 wines. A VIP donation of \$125 entitles you to attend a special wine tasting class and priority access to the wines. Watch for details after Labor Day about place and times.

Charles Jarden, Chair of the Conservancy, believes "the Conservancy is getting more and more traction as a force behind the revitalization of the park: the \$3.5 million dollar renovation of the Prison Ship Martyrs monument, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, the recent rejuvenation of the Visitor's Center and the upcoming 7th annual Halloween Festival are all examples of park happenings that this community deserves. The proceeds from the fundraiser will help maintain park grounds and expand programming and outreach initiatives for Brooklyn's historic park.

"It is part of our mission to give back to the community," states Conservancy Board Member and Greene Grape owner Amy Bennett. "Because of the central role the Park plays in the lives of residents of Fort Greene and the Conservancy's mission to act as caretaker and guardian of the physical park and the unique cultural traditions connected to it, the Conservancy is an important community organization to support."

The Fundraiser is made possible in part by Greene Grape. For tickets or more information, please send an email to [amy@greengrape.com](mailto:amy@greengrape.com)

## Join the FGA Board!

The FGA Executive Board needs immediate nominations for the far-off November elections, but it's not too soon! If you, or someone you seek out who's interested, would like to serve on the Board as a regular member or alternate, please contact the Nominations/Election Committee Chair, Fred Lasker, at 718-875-1856 giving full information, name, address, telephone numbers, e-mail, etc.

Our present Board has worked successfully together on the memorable 2006 Hour Tour and on important issues such as the Atlantic Yards and dangerous intersections, but there's always room for additional hard-working interested Fort Greeners — and new points of view — perhaps more now than ever before with the current challenges facing our great community.

Streetsblog gives props to the FGA! Check out [www.streetsblog.org/2006/08/14/](http://www.streetsblog.org/2006/08/14/) and see how the FGA is fighting to keep Fort Greene safer.

Underwrite an issue of the FGA Newsletter. Next availability: April 2007. For details, call 718-875-1855.

The FGA is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization. Thank you to all of you who keep your membership up-to-date. To join, visit [HistoricFortGreene.org](http://HistoricFortGreene.org)



**FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION**  
HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN

Next FGA Meeting: Monday September 18<sup>th</sup>, 7:30pm  
85 South Oxford Street, between Lafayette & Fulton

**RATS! AND MORE RATS!**

It's a community-wide problem, and it's time to do something about it. A representative from the NYC Health Department will be here to say what they are doing to get rid of the rodents, and to tell us what we can do to make Fort Greene less inviting to them.



**Plus ATLANTIC YARDS 101**

How about a basic presentation about the project and its implications? Not 2000 pages of documents or reams of rhetoric. This is for those who haven't followed every detail about the proposal, but are starting to wonder how it would affect the community. You still have an opportunity to comment and this presentation can help you.

**WHAT'S NEW AT FORT GREENE'S NEWEST PARK**

South Oxford Park, between Fulton and Atlantic, is a beautiful oasis of tennis courts, artful fountains, and a performance space. Come hear about upcoming events and how you can enjoy all it has to offer.

**DANGEROUS INTERSECTIONS**

Come learn about dangerous intersections, and what the FGA is doing to make your neighborhood safer, and how you can help.

[www.HistoricFortGreene.Org](http://www.HistoricFortGreene.Org)

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**New Scenes  
and  
Current  
Events**

**URBAN SPRING**, 185 DeKalb Avenue @ Carlton, owner Gordon Kindlon. Serving only organic and locally grown food, we use wind and solar electricity to power our space, and use only biodegradable packaging to bring you nourishing food that leaves a light footprint. 718-237-0797.

**SEABURN BOOKSTORE**, 85 Fort Greene Place @ Fulton, owner Sam Checkwas. Wide variety, exploring cultural diversity, nature, environment – fascinating stories for adults and children plus greeting cards. Look for the stained glass "85" transom. 718-643-8202.

**LA BAGEL DELIGHT**, 73 Lafayette Avenue @ South Elliott, owner Dino Bovaco. Bagels and all the trimmings – cheeses, salads, cold cuts, muffins and much more. Breakfast a speciality. Stop in and say hello to tall, ever-smiling Robert. 718-246-3744.

**ELAA JUICE BAR**, 711 Fulton Street @ St. Felix. Twenty-two juice therapy selections, fruit smoothies, moss drinks plus. Delightful new shop with welcoming staff. "ELAA" represents the owners' names. Have a look and wish them well as we do. 718-858-3522.

**STAY TUNED** – three new food spots coming soon, clustered in mid-Fort Greene. Watch this channel!

**POLISH BAR OF BROOKLYN**, 470 Myrtle Avenue @ Washington Avenue, owner Tricialee Riley. New beauty bar, offering services for men, women & children – manicures, pedicures, make-up and beauty parties. It is all about making one look "polished". 718-622-5363.

**REPOP 95% RECYCLED**, 68 Washington Avenue @ Flushing, owner Russell. A new boutique with all sorts of wild vintage stuff has sneakily planted itself in the neighborhood. They have a terrific selection of vintage dresses and jewelry and the decor is outrageously fun. Russell says: "If you like my furniture I deliver for free!" [www.repopny.com](http://www.repopny.com). 718-260-8032.

**WHO'S YOUR DOGGY?** Corner of Willoughby and Adelphi. Only two blocks from Fort Greene Park, this new pet food and supply store just opened.

**THE 32<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL ATLANTIC ANTIC** is just around the corner. Join the lively music, delicious foods, and even live belly dancing on Sunday Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>, from 10am to 6pm, on Atlantic Ave between Fourth and Hicks. Go to [www.atlanticcave.org](http://www.atlanticcave.org) for more information.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to John and Laura Davis of Adelphi Street, proud parents of "Julia Antonia Duran Davis" (Thursday July 27). Mom, baby and dad are doing well.

**STEVE MARTIN IN FG:** The Sackett Group presents its second season of theater at the Brooklyn Music School Playhouse 126 St, Felix St.. The season opens with **PICASSO AT THE LAPIN AGILE** by Steve Martin, September 7 to October 1, Thursdays-Saturdays at 8 pm and Sundays at 3 pm. Tickets \$19.00. For more information visit: [www.sackettgroup.org](http://www.sackettgroup.org)

**LIZ PADILLA MEMORIAL 5K** Sunday, October 1 at 10 am. Prospect Park. This Memorial 5k Run is a tribute to Liz Padilla, whose life was tragically cut short on June 9, 2005 in an accident while riding her bicycle to work along 5th Ave in Park Slope. At the time of her death, Liz was the Pro Bono Coordinator and Staff Attorney for an organization providing free legal services to the impoverished citizens of Brooklyn. Funds raised will make sure Liz's legacy continues. For more information, send an e-mail to: [karen@empireeventsgroup.com](mailto:karen@empireeventsgroup.com)

**COMMENTS DUE NOW:** There is still time to voice your opinion with the State about the Atlantic Yards proposal. Written comments must be RECEIVED by the ESDC no later than 5:30 PM, Friday, September 22, 2006. E-mail your comments to: [atlanticyards@empire.state.ny.us](mailto:atlanticyards@empire.state.ny.us)

**OUR SYMPATHIES** to our long-time neighbor, former FGA Chair, Verdell Bivens, whose mother died this summer.

Location  
Location  
Location  
is proud to  
underwrite  
this issue  
of the FGA  
Newsletter.