



FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN FEBRUARY 2007

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

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

NEXT MEETING:
WED FEB 21
7:30PM
Light refreshments
at 7.00PM

TOPICS:

"Brooklyn Matters":
A new film
highlights how the
Atlantic Yards
project gained
approval and the
challenges it
creates for
Brooklyn.

Committee Reports

LOCATION:
Bishop Loughlin
High School
357 Clermont at
Lafayette

Networking

An entire Fort Greene block on the verge of RAT INFESTATION.

A few blocks away, it's JACK-HAMMERS at 11:00PM.

Down the avenue, it's 17 SKY-SCRAPERS, an arena, public accountability and much more.

The block with rats did a very smart thing: they reached out to their neighbors around the entire block and are working together on a comprehensive solution. Those rattled by jackhammers at bedtime reached out to neighbors an avenue away to work together to find some relief. And flaws in the approval process for the Atlantic Yards proposal, and its potential impact, would never have been noticed had people not reached out to their neighbors, civic groups, elected officials, scientists, planners and the press. So reach out to your neighbors: next door, across the street, down the block and here at the FGA.

Phillip Kellogg
FGA Chair

Fulton Street BID

Dale Charles of PACC

Pratt Area Community Council (PACC) has been working with a steering committee of merchants, property owners, and residents to undertake the extensive planning process required for the creation of a new Business Improvement District (BID) in Fort Greene and Clinton Hill. The boundaries of the Fulton Street BID will be on Fulton Street from Rockwell Place to Classon Ave and side streets facing Fulton Street such as Lafayette Ave, Greene Ave, and Putnam Ave.

A BID is the most sustainable way to provide for the extra services that quality retail corridors need, like sidewalk sweeping, holiday lighting, graffiti removal, beautification, security and marketing. Moreover, a local board of merchants, property owners, residents and elected officials governs a BID, so decisions on services are made locally.

We ask property owner to please be sure to answer telephone, mail or email correspondence from Pratt Area Community Council.

If you have any questions about the Fulton Street BID, please make sure to visit www.fultonstreetbid.bravehost.com, or call 718-522-2613 ext. 30.

Landmarks Approves Carlton/Adelphi Project

On January 17th the Landmarks Preservation Commission approved the project known as the "Carlton Mews". The project in Fort Greene's Historic District consists of a row of townhouses filling-in what are now empty lots along Carlton Avenue, between Dekalb and Willoughby, plus additional construction, restoration and residential conversion of two churches that face Adelphi Street.

Proposed Carlton Mews streetscape on Carlton Avenue between DeKalb & Willoughby



Rendering: Ken Levenson Architect P.C.

In addition to the FGA, support for this project came from Community Board 2, Council Member Letitia James, and the Carlton-Willoughby Block Association. The FGA testified at the Landmarks Commission hearings in support of this project because of how the plans respect both the scale of Fort Greene and the area's historic architecture.

You, Landmarks, and the Fort Greene Historic District

It's almost spring and that means we begin to hear those renovation hammers - great! So here again is our constant mantra - ask before you act.

Avoid problems, delay and unneeded expense -- often with only a phone call or two. Even if you're working with an architect or contractor, YOU are still responsible for compliance. You must be aware of the requirements yourself, especially if you are proceeding on your own.

DETERMINING HISTORIC DISTRICT STATUS

Refer to the map of our Historic District (HD) as designated in 1978 by the City's Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), or check for the brown metal signs showing the HD outline. Installed by the City on posts, they are scattered throughout the neighborhood. An example is in front of 239-241 Cumberland. The signs are easy to miss being high up, so that your sight line is below, but they document in permanent fashion where the historic district is.

We will gladly send a copy of this document upon request, or you may download it at http://www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/html/maps/maps_bklyn.shtml.

PREPARING THE APPLICATION

I highly recommend that you obtain a copy of the Tax Photograph of your property, prepared by the city between 1939 and 1941. It is an essential record often used for reference in your request for alterations and is a valuable part of the archive of your building. Tax photos are in the Municipal Archives on Centre Street, Manhattan. You can view the microfilm there or order prints online at: www.nyc.gov/html/records/home.html

EXTERIOR CHANGES

Exterior changes to buildings in the HD are under the jurisdiction of the LPC, so before you make any change to your building's exterior, do yourself a wise favor -- get in touch with the LPC first. Contact Diane Jackier, Director of Community Affairs, at 212-669-7923 who will direct you to a staff person to answer your questions. About 90% of inquiries are handled by staff. The LPC issues about 9000 permits a year, covering about 200,000 sites -- a daunting task. A phone call can save you time and trouble and perhaps money.

Here's to happy, smooth renovating! For additional information, contact dorris gains golomb, Chair of the FGA Landmarks Committee, at 718 624-5719 or via email dorrgg@verizon.net. Next time, Part Two: Sidewalks, Windows, and Rooftop/Rear Additions.

Crime issue or concern?
Meet the Commanding Officer of the NYPD's 88th Precinct.
7:30pm, Tuesday, February 20.
Call for location:
718-636-6526

. Farmer's Market is open year 'round.
Plenty of meat, cheese, bread, fish and of course: cider donuts!
Saturdays at Fort Greene Park.

Winter can be tough on restaurants.
Enjoy Fort Greene's many terrific places and benefit from having a short walk home.

Contribute an idea or article for the next FGA Newsletter, to be published in April. Send an email to Naomi Dickerson at fga.news@historicfortgreene.org

Our Days in Court

Daniel Goldstein, DDDDB spokesperson

On December 20th Albany's "three men in a room" gave their rubberstamp approval to Atlantic Yards. There it was, as long expected, a vote by the only three elected officials able to vote on the project. But their long expected approval does not seal the deal for Forest City Ratner, not by a long shot.

Organized by Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn, on October 26th homeowners, business owners and tenants filed a federal lawsuit stating that the use of eminent domain for Atlantic Yards violates the Constitution. If these courageous plaintiffs win their lawsuit (and we are confident in the strength of their arguments), key aspects of the project—the arena, the street de-mapping for superblocks—cannot be built and the project would have to be radically altered or scrapped.

Additionally, there will be a forthcoming lawsuit that will prove in state court that the environmental review process was woefully insufficient, improperly and capriciously conducted, and ultimately, illegal. This suit would send the state and the developer back to the drawing board. The suit includes numerous co-plaintiffs. The FGA Board voted unanimously on January 2nd to join the lawsuit as co-plaintiff.

Both of these suits have been made possible by the continued emotional and financial support of the community. We deeply appreciate your support as the lawsuits move forward.

It is also very important for the community to keep Governor Eliot Spitzer and our local elected officials, informed of its concern about and opposition to Atlantic Yards, and encourage the new administration to take a new and transparent look at the project.

Stay informed at:

www.developdontdestroy.org

www.nolandgrab.org

www.atlanticyardsreport.com

Holiday Party

The FGA's Annual Holiday Party was a rousing success. In keeping with the seasonal tradition of generosity, guests brought a bounty of delicious pot-luck offerings. Local restaurants Olea, Ici, Chez Oskar, and Chez Lola made everything merrier by kindly staking free dinners for this year's lucky raffle winners. Heartfelt thanks go out to Jay Anning for hosting, to Roslyn Huebner for chairing the event, and to everyone who came together to make it such a warm and welcoming affair.

FGA GRANTS: Continued Giving and a Sneak Peak

The FGA Grants Committee embraced two new projects over the Holidays, in the spirit of giving within our neighborhood.

CHRISTMAS DINNERS

Working with Pathmark Stores, the FGA purchased \$20 gift certificates for Christmas Dinners, which were given away through a local church. Pathmark Stores' matching contribution of 10% increased the amount we were able to give to \$1060.

Fr. Gilday, of the combined parish of Sacred Heart Church and Church of St. Michael and St. Edward, distributed these Christmas dinner gift certificates to families in Fort Greene. The gift certificates were ready in time for the Saturday and Sunday services, the weekend before Christmas. The effort provided 53 neighborhood families with Christmas Dinners.

It was a pleasure dealing with the people in Pathmark Corporate offices who were helpful and generous with their own contribution to our FGA project. Also, thank-you to Re: Business Services, a new business on South Oxford St. near Fulton. Their 7 pm Fed-Ex pick-up service helped to get a check to Pathmark Corporate Offices in NJ and the gift certificates to us in Fort Greene on a timely basis.

FGA COAT DRIVE: Yes, NY Cares, but so does Fort Greene.

On Saturday, December 16, 2006 the Fort Greene Association held a coat drive and collected 50 men's coats to benefit a part time Men's Homeless Shelter in the neighborhood. Thanks to Allen Hobbs for helping to spearhead this project, and to Tanya Blackwood for letting the FGA use the Dekalb Avenue real estate offices of Location, Location, Location, as the "location" for this important effort.

TRASH CANS AS ART: A Sneak Peak

The schools have met with Park Rangers and are now back in school painting their impressions onto trash barrels, in another project funded by a grant from the Fort Greene Association. The new barrels will debut this spring in Fort Greene Park.

We are continuing to accept applications for Fort Greene Association Grants Projects. Please continue to spread the word and submit your Grant Proposals. Grant Applications and details can be requested by e-mail to: theFGA@HistoricFortGreene.org.

New Sprinkler Testing Cost a Pretty Penny *Kate Lawrence*

In the past, Housing Preservation Development (HPD) required homeowners to hire a licensed plumber to inspect the residential sprinkler system and fill out the HPD sprinkler inspection forms. This was done annually, the fee ranged from \$135 to \$150 and it was a reasonable process and fee for J2 (3 or 4 family) owners.

But in 1999 the City Council passed the "New Rule" 3 RCNY §37-06, entitled: "Flow Testing of Residential Sprinkler Systems". The only way you know about the new rule is to be given a notice by FDNY. DO NOT IGNORE THE NOTICE! The "New Rule" requires that you hire a plumber who sets an appointment with the FDNY to inspect your sprinkler system within 30 days of their notice or you will receive a \$2,000 violation. Once you are issued a violation the Environmental Control Board (ECB) sets up hearings for you to appeal the violations.

The fees associated with this ridiculous "New Rule" can run into the thousands of dollars. My husband and I calculated that we spent \$4,500: a far cry from an annual \$150 fee from HPD.

On October 18, 2006, a City Council hearing was held to review which city agency would be in charge of inspecting sprinkler systems. The homeowner attendees objected to the high "New Rule" costs, noting that there should be no FDNY inspection fee to witness the test and that seniors and disabled owners on fixed incomes would not be able to afford the plumbers' fees. They pointed out that the Certificate of Fitness test and the application process needed to be simplified and that FDNY had no knowledgeable customer service to help you through the process.

In my opinion the FDNY "New Rule" was designed for high-rise buildings, not small J2 dwellings. The Fire Department cannot respond to residential questions, are rude and misinform owners. It is too complicated a process for a non-trade individual to follow. There is no need to inspect a direct main sprinkler system every month. The FDNY has lost sight of its mission and has opened the door to corruption. Only the plumbers are laughing - all the way to the bank.

Local Artists and their Creations

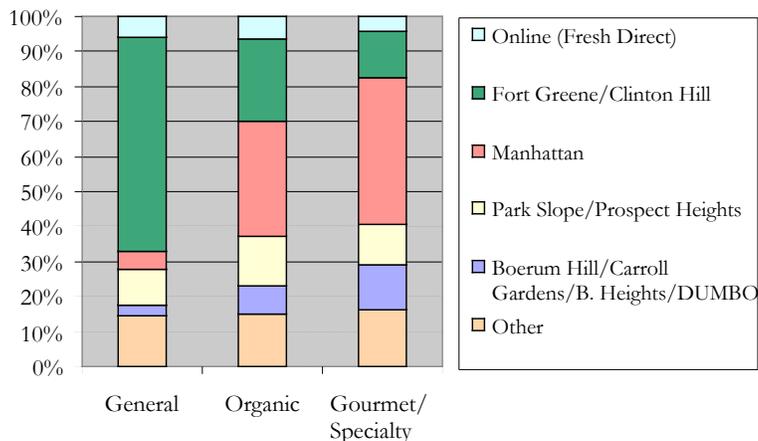


Photo: FGA

Improving the Neighborhood's Retail Mix *Michael Blaise Backer*

An important part of the community economic development work of the Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership (MARP & BID) is our Business Attraction & Retention Program. Funded through avenue banner sponsorships generously purchased by area companies and institutions, the program focuses on helping to retain locally-owned businesses in an increasingly competitive retail environment dominated by national chains, while also recruiting new entrepreneurs and existing small businesses to fill retail vacancies and meet the demand for services not currently available in the community. We've had considerable success since 2000, dramatically reducing the vacancy rate and recruiting over 25 new businesses that have brought increased foot traffic and improved the retail mix on Myrtle, but major challenges remain.

Shopping habits of local respondents, 67% of whom live within 2 blocks of Myrtle Avenue



Graphic: Myrtle Avenue Brooklyn Partnership

On the recruitment front, regular shopper surveys we have conducted since 2000 have consistently put certain services at the top: a bread baker, a cheese shop, a butcher, and a great green grocer or organic produce market. While we know that these products are in demand, it has been surprisingly difficult to recruit either existing retailers, many of whom are skeptical that the neighborhood can support a new outlet of their store, or new entrepreneurs who have the skills and know-how of the business. In a modest effort to help prove to local, regional, and national specialty food retailers alike that there exists a very high pent-up demand for their products in our neighborhood, we produced an online shopping survey in October 2006 to grab a snapshot of local residents' grocery shopping habits. The online survey was distributed widely to residents, merchants, and listservs in the FG/CH area, and we received over 850 responses.

For a more comprehensive document of survey findings, please visit www.myrtleavenue.org. For comments, questions, or business recruitment leads, email info@myrtleavenue.org.

FGA meets with DOT to Improve Pedestrian Safety

Last month, the FGA met with the Brooklyn Commissioner of the Department of Transportation as well as the Downtown Brooklyn Coordinator to discuss concerns with the intersection of Fulton & Lafayette. Meeting the DOT at the site was a very important step in making the intersection safer.

This intersection is very complicated and very congested, and the FGA has worked for years to improve pedestrian safety. One of the FGA's biggest concerns is the lack of a crosswalk from Fort Greene Place to the bus stop at the BAM garden on Fulton. With the popularity of Target and other stores at the mall, and the need for many shoppers to reach the bus stop on Fulton, pedestrian flow, as pictured right, is only expected to increase.

After reviewing the intersection, the DOT promised to study the possibility of installing a crosswalk at this intersection and to perhaps change the light pattern at Fulton & Lafayette to improve the safety of the other crosswalks.

The FGA would like to thank Councilmember Letitia James' office for facilitating this meeting, and DOT for taking the time out of their schedule to meet us onsite. We look forward to continued cooperation with DOT in improving safety at this and other intersections.

For more information about the FGA's traffic initiatives, visit www.historicfortgreene.org/traffic.html

The Case of the Missing Crosswalk



Photo: FGA

Tread on Me *Amy Bennett*

On Thursday, January 4 Mayor Bloomberg joined us in Fort Greene Park for a press party to kick off MulchFest – the parks Department's citywide effort to recycle Christmas trees as mulch for parks and gardens. Along with Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe, the Mayor praised the Fort Greene Park Conservancy for its leadership in MulchFest 2007.

Thanks to the FGPC and a grant from the Fort Greene Association, trees were chipped in the Park for the first time – to the delight of the dozens of children who witnessed the sights and sounds of Valley Tree Service transforming pines and firs into useful mulch.

Tree "Liberators" at MulchFest



Photo: Justine Fasciano

On the eve of MulchFest many members of the Fort Greene Association could be seen romping through the streets of the neighborhoods surrounding the park in a bold effort to liberate trees sentenced to the sanitation department for a new life in the citywide mulching program. Those trees are now part of nature at the park entrance at DeKalb and Washington and in gardens throughout Fort Greene.

Sidewalks on the Level

Henry Taplitz

If you are interested in having your sidewalk repaired due to tree root damage, the city is currently conducting a pilot program called "tree and sidewalk repair." The program is free to the homeowner.

However, it is open only to owners of one, two or three family homes. Generally, in our neighborhood, the repair may consist of cutting tree roots and re-grading the bluestone. The Forestry Department, a division of the Department of Parks and Recreation, is managing the program.

You may sign up for the program by dialing 311 and registering. After you are listed, an inspector will eventually come and grade the extent of your damage on a scale of 1 to 100. Don't expect an immediate response. I waited quite a while before the inspection actually took place.

Now accepting nominations for houses to be on the May 2008 FG House Tour. How about yours or someone you know? Call 718-875-1855

FG Park Martyrs Monument 100th Anniversary Celebration Committee is now being formed. To volunteer, call Ruth Goldstein 718-596-0899

New neighbors? Share this newsletter and encourage them to join the FGA - so they can receive their own.



FORT GREENE ASSOCIATION

HISTORIC FORT GREENE BROOKLYN

NOTE
Special
Location

Next FGA Meeting: Wed February 21, 7:30pm *Light Refreshments at 7pm*
Bishop Loughlin High School, 357 Clermont (between Lafayette and Greene)

This special screening is a joint presentation of the Fort Greene Association and the Society for Clinton Hill

SCREENING OF AN ISABEL HILL FILM:

BROOKLYN MATTERS

“A powerful documentary by a well-respected filmmaker, BROOKLYN MATTERS is a must see for all New Yorkers who care about the future of their neighborhoods and the role that public policy and process plays in determining that future.”

— Marilyn Geiber
Former Commissioner, New York City
Department of Environmental Protection

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SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER TISH JAMES

www.HistoricFortGreene.Org

New Scenes and Current Events

BANK OF AMERICA, 449 Myrtle Avenue (Waverly/Washington Avenue), 718 852-1548; M-TH 9am-4pm; Fri 9am-6pm; Sat 9am-4pm. Opened its doors in December 2006. Congratulations and welcome.

SHALENA'S JEWELRY, 384 Myrtle Avenue (Clermont/Vanderbilt), Local residents, George and Blanca Shiwbaran, offer a huge selection of costume jewelry at low prices.

LITTLE HOUSE ON CLINTON, 150 Clinton Avenue (Myrtle/Park), 718 237-7780. Offering hearty breakfast and lunchtime fare -- specializing in wings, burgers & waffles.

MOVE WITH GRACE, 469 Myrtle Avenue (Washington/Hall). New yoga and dance studio - classes for kids and adults.

BURZH-wa, 352 Myrtle Avenue (Carlton/Adelphi). High-end hair salon.

RUTHIE'S SUNRISE, 570 Myrtle Avenue (Emerson/Classon). New breakfast joint by Ruthie's Soul Food.

JOHN TYLER SALON, 456 Myrtle Avenue (Waverly/Washington). Upscale beauty salon.

GNARLY VINES, 350 Myrtle Avenue (Carlton/Adelphi). Clever name for new wine shop.

THIRST WINE MERCHANTS, 187 Dekalb Avenue (Carlton/Dekalb). Another clever name, this shop is run by neighborhood residents Emilia Valencia and Michael Yarmark.

THE SMOKE JOINT, 87 South Elliott Place, 718 797-1011, now serving lunch and making deliveries.

OUR SYMPATHY to FGA Board Member Roslyn Huebener on the recent death of her mother Rose Butwick. We wish Roslyn comfort.

CONDOLENCES to Doris Burton on the passing of her husband "Utah", longtime resident of the Griffin.

For the coming year 2007 we look forward to many more interesting, enjoyable and successful **NEWSCENES**.

MAKE A FORT GREENE CONNECTION

Together with ARTNY, the FGA co-hosted the January 2007 meeting of "Fort Greene Connection", a network of organizations serving the Fort Greene and Clinton Hill communities. Over 20 civic and arts groups meet every two months to exchange ideas, promote collaboration and enrich our neighborhoods.

Thanks go to the FGA's dorris gaines golomb and Ann Macdonald; and Stephanie Bok and Jerry Homan of ARTNY, for their efforts in coordinating and hosting the meeting. Thanks also to CHOICE MARKET (318 Lafayette, at Grand) for catering the meeting so delightfully -- and at a discount, by the way.

To attend the March Fort Greene Connection meeting, call dorris at 718-624-5719.

"YOUR NAME HERE"

The Fort Greene Park Conservancy has been working with the Parks Department to develop a program for sponsorship of new park benches and trees.

For more information on the Conservancy's efforts to improve and celebrate Fort Greene Park and hear about programs in the Park, sign up for our email list at www.fortgreenepark.org.

Eva M. Daniels Realty is proud to underwrite this issue of the FGA Newsletter