



NEWS FROM MAJORITY LEADER
PATRICIA D. MCDOW

FIRST DISTRICT COUNCIL MEMBER • YONKERS, NEW YORK • DECEMBER 2006



GROUPS ENTER GROUND FLOOR OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENT

McDow involves community early in process

How would you like to be able to influence the course of the redevelopment of the downtown area? Many residents and businesses alike have expressed concerns about the future direction and look of our beloved Getty Square and waterfront. Majority Leader McDow is working to ensure that various segments of the community are talking to the developers and helping to monitor the progress of the redevelopment.

She has hosted several meetings with merchants, taxi drivers and arts groups to begin the dialogue with the developer chosen to redevelop the downtown and waterfront area — Struever Fidelco Capelli LLC (SFC). This is in addition to the number of public forums that SFC itself has held to gain community input and insight. Although the project is still in the planning stages, SFC and Majority Leader McDow are urging all affected parties to learn about the project and provide feedback.

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McDow is continuing to schedule meetings with the developer and some or all of these groups. She is also having her Community Services Advisory Board review the entire Preliminary Environmental Impact Statement that has been submitted for this project. Moreover, she has also coalesced faith-based, housing, small business, environmental, education, job development, arts committees to develop a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) with the developer. The results from those committees will be united with the work of the community-based organization committee formed by Community Planning Council of Yonkers as one cohesive document/proposal to then be considered by SFC.

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MWBs/SMALL BUSINESSES NETWORK WITH COY DEPARTMENTS

Majority Leader Patricia McDow and the Strategic Business Alliance of Yonkers (SBAY) held a Seminar/Round Table Forum to introduce City of Yonkers Departments and quasi-governmental agencies to the wealth of talented Minority, Women and Small Businesses that can provide goods and services to their offices. This event took place on Wednesday, September 20, 2006 at the Yonkers Riverfront Library.



SBAY President Marlin Wiggins addresses the Networking Forum

In addition to providing a networking opportunity to get City of Yonkers Departments and other agencies to meet and greet businesses, presentations on doing business with the City, and the Mayor's new MWB initiative were made. Marlin Wiggins, President of SBAY said "MWBs and Small Businesses should take advantage of every opportunity available to expand, improve and market themselves. Working with City agencies is a great way to do this."

City of Yonkers Department Heads from Public Works, Parks Department and General Services discussed contracting opportunities. For instance Parks Commissioner Mitch Tutoni indicated that everyone knows that the Parks Department needs mulch and fertilizer for parks, but rarely think about T-Shirts for recreation programs or advertising and performance groups for special events. Municipal Housing Authority, Yonkers Public Schools and Yonkers Public Library also sent representatives who spoke about the special needs that those agencies have.

Approximately 20 contractors and vendors attended the event. McDow asks that any MWBs who want to be on her contractor list call her office at 914-377-6311 or send an email to patricia.mcdow@cityofyonkers.com with contact information (including email and website).

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Said Majority Leader McDow, "As a downtown Yonkers business owner myself, I know that many have questions about matters which seriously affect their livelihood." For example, merchants seem to be concerned about plans for relocation support. Taxi drivers want to ensure that they will maintain prime pick up and drop off locations. Artists want the arts – visual, performance, music – to be an integral part of any redevelopment landscape.

The details of the project highlighted by the developer focused on the Chicken Island property, which would house 7 stories of retail and housing, capped off by a minor league baseball park and 5,000 units of parking, both on-site and off-site. Housing units are being projected at 800, a number of which will be allocated as affordable housing. The development is also projected to create over 2,000 construction jobs. As part of the deal with the City, the developer will replace the 3-bay fire house on New Main Street with a new 5-bay building serving the development and adjacent areas.

McDow said, The developer has been asked to give serious considerations to a variety of concerns. I will continue to work with the various groups to make sure that their concerns are addressed and implemented as much as possible." *Please see Majority Leader McDow's website – www.patriciamcdow.com – for a complete list of ongoing projects in and around the First District, as well as the article on the Glenwood Power Plant on page 4 of this newsletter.*

RENT STABILIZATION FOR THE DISABLED

Housing for the disabled has been jeopardized in some instances due to rent increases, because of fixed incomes. McDow sponsored Disabled Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE) legislation to curb this threat at the beginning of 2006.

DRIE benefits disabled Yonkers residents who live in rent controlled or rent regulated apartments, whose total household income is under \$24,000, and whose rent is at least 1/3 of their income.

'This is a critical new benefit for some of Yonkers' most vulnerable tenants...'

This is NOT a rent rollback or reduction program, but a protective measure against future increases. Yonkers has led the way as the first Westchester municipality to extend this special rent benefit to assist disabled residents.

Jon Shenk of the CLUSTER Housing Resource Center notes, "This is a critical, new benefit for some of Yonkers' most vulnerable tenants... We worked hard with the City Council and the Mayor's Office, with DHCR's staff and with our colleagues at Westchester Disabled on the Move to make DRIE a reality for Yonkers' disabled tenants."

Residents who feel they may be eligible for this benefit should call DHCR at 914-948-4434 to apply.

GAINING A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON THE WATERFRONT



View from the top of Ginsburg development in Kingston

McDow has formed groups that are serving in advisory capacities for the betterment of her district and to monitor development there as well. They are made up of concerned residents who want to be involved and have a say in the progress that their communities are experiencing.

Her Community Services Advisory Board meets monthly to discuss important issues and needs in the First District and how those needs can be addressed.

With much discussion about plans for development in the Council Member's District – particularly along the waterfront – it was decided that a good way to determine the best type of waterfront development in Yonkers is to see first hand what works (and what doesn't) in other communities. As a result, McDow organized a trip to visit other towns with nearby waterfronts that have been developed by those towns.

In addition to a brief stop to Downtown Yonkers, the tour, which took place on February 4, 2006, proceeded to other waterfront sites in Yonkers, Dobbs Ferry, Sleepy Hollow, Irvington, Haverstraw, Peekskill, Newburgh and Kingston. The Council Member felt this was a great opportunity to be able to discuss positive renewal and development for the City of Yonkers.

"This trip was set up to see how development 'fits' with the local landscape", said McDow. Tall buildings that seemed to work in one area wouldn't work in another. The advisory group was able to compare notes to make suggestions for the Yonkers waterfront.



Advisory group members tour other waterfronts with McDow

RESIDENTS EMPOWERED WITH INPUT ON PLANS FOR GLENWOOD PLANT

Remi Companies Introduces Award-Winning Architect

City Council Majority Leader Patricia McDow hosted a town hall meeting with neighborhood residents on Dec. 14 to discuss the future of the Glenwood Power Station, a former Con Edison power plant on the Hudson River waterfront that stopped producing power in the 1960s.

About 40 residents of Glenwood Gardens, 1 Glenwood Ave. and 201 Ravine met with the developer of the power plant, Hoboken-based REMI Companies and its architect, Will Alsop of London (a pioneer in urban redevelopment projects in Europe and Canada), in a process called a “charette”, which allows the community to collaborate with designers, developers and engineers to create a project that reflects their desires and needs.

“If you work together, you can produce something; it might be unusual, but all of our hearts will be in it,” said Alsop.

The residents agreed with Alsop that the landmark building was worthy of preservation for residential and commercial uses. They also offered a number of other suggestions, including a boardwalk and bicycle path, upscale shops, restaurants, an area to catch fish and a supermarket to encourage everyone—not just residents of Yonkers – to visit the area.

‘If you work together, you can produce something; it might be unusual, but all of our hearts will be in it’

Kendra Pizarra, REMI’s vice president, was pleased by the number of residents who filled the community room at 1 Glenwood Ave. and the willingness of Yonkers residents to participate in the charette process.

“I have been taking notes on everything you said tonight,” she told the crowd. “We will listen to all of your suggestions.” She added that REMI would incorporate all of the input that was given into a design that will be presented at the next charette meeting, most likely to be held “in six to eight weeks.”

Majority Leader McDow praised REMI for actively involving the community in the process and encouraged more residents to get involved.

Tuesday’s meeting was very informative and I appreciate REMI’s outreach and Mr. Alsop’s efforts to get input from the community. Residents from Warburton and Woodworth will also be invited to attend the next meeting. It is important to have area residents participate so that they can have a say in what is going on right in their own neighborhoods”, she said.

Anyone with questions or suggestions regarding the future development of the Glenwood Power Station is encouraged to e-mail Kendra Pizarra of REMI Companies at kpizarra@remicompanies.com or by calling Majority Leader McDow’s office at (914) 377-6311.

HERITAGE TEA AND AFRICAN DOLL MAKING

Do you have fond memories of baking cookies or reading books with your parents or grandparents when you were younger? Those are memories that you will treasure and cherish for years to come and share with your children. Unfortunately, many children in Africa have already been denied those simple pleasures from a young age, because of the onslaught of AIDS in their communities and families.

Well, Majority Leader McDow tried to make some of those special memories happen for children from Yonkers municipal housing by co-sponsoring a “Heritage Tea Party and African Doll Making” event to celebrate “Black History” Month on February 11 at Philipse Manor Hall. At the same time, she helped those young people reach out to their African counterparts through a special program called ‘The Uthando Project’ or the ‘Love Project’ by the Zulu women in Africa.

The afternoon began with a presentation of African Drum and Dance by Mr. Henry Jones of Infinite Roots. The families enjoyed tea, yummy finger foods and sumptuous desserts and then joined in on the actual doll-making project.

Local children and their mothers made dolls under the direction of Ms. Agnes Johnson, for South African children whose parents have died from AIDS. Ms. Johnson has been leading these incredible doll making events throughout New York State, in libraries, art galleries, schools and with numerous organizations. Ms. Johnson later delivered the dolls to South Africa.

This event was ‘black history’ in the making and was an unforgettable experience for all.



A flurry of activity making dolls

Helpful Numbers

Affordable Housing	377-6693
Office for the Aging	377-6805
Bee-Line Bus Service	813-7777
Board of Education	376-8000
City Clerk	377-6020
Consumer Protection Agency	377-6807
DPW – Refuse Disposal	377-6270
Municipal Housing Authority	793-8400
City Court	377-6326
Family	966-6400
Tax Department	377-6140
Dept. of Social Services	231-2000
Housing & Buildings Dept.	377-6500
Library: Main Number	337-1500
Mayor’s Help Center	377-4357
Mayor’s Office	377-6300
Parking Violations Bureau	377-6610



Thank you for reading my newsletter. I hope that you found it informative. If you have any suggestions that you would like to share about any of the articles or if there are concerns or needs in the community that should be addressed, please call my office at 914-377-6311 or complete the following form and send it to me at City Hall Room 407, 40 South Broadway, Yonkers, New York 10701. You can also email me at patricia.mcdow@cityofyonkers.com or visit my website at www.patriciamcdow.com.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCERNS: _____

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Wishing you all the best this Holiday Season