

Summer schedule:
Next issue
in four weeks –
Sat., August 27

The Main Street **WIRE**™

25th Year as Roosevelt Island's Independent Community Newspaper



A Public Safety patrol car went up in smoke on the Motorgate deck late last week. Firefighters stopped the flames before they reached the fuel tank. There were no injuries, but the car was a total loss.

Youth Center Expansion in Question As RIOC Asks, Again, for More Data Some Prospect for Long-Term Availability of Eastwood Space

by Dick Lutz

RIOC management and the Youth Program are writing a new chapter in a long-running drama: Will the Youth Center get expansion space – or not?

Following up on discussions in a June 30 meeting of the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), RIOC President Herb Berman has sent Youth Center Director Charlie DeFino a "Data Request" consist-

ing of 23 major items and 30 or more sub-items, saying the RIOC Board is "eager to evaluate" the Youth Center's proposal.

The Youth Center Board, which has been put through this same exercise by previous incarnations of the RIOC Board, has responded with a letter to RIOC Board members offering to answer their questions but declining to provide the data for analysis by the RIOC staff, writing, "...at a meeting on July 5, President Berman advised the Youth Program... that he would, under no circumstances, recommend leasing both floors of the [Blackwell] minischool building to the Youth Program." The letter goes on to say that Berman's letter contains "numerous requests for items that are clearly not material to the lease evaluation process and that will take weeks to complete... Given that Mr. Berman made it quite clear only one week earlier that he was opposed to leasing the school building to the Youth Program, we believe this 'request for information' was made either to delay the decision until the [City] funding is no longer available or to force the Youth Program into a position of non-compliance so that the RIOC staff can claim they did not have the necessary information to make an informed recommendation."

At issue and potentially at risk is State and City funding amounting to a combined total of nearly \$2 million, the bulk of it reserved by City Council Speaker Gifford Miller, who represents Roosevelt Island. Those funds, on hold since 2001, could be threatened with Miller leaving the Council at the end of his current term. (Miller is running for the Democratic nomination for mayor.)

"Rather than working through President Berman, who has already reached his conclusion on this matter, we invite any interested RIOC Board member to contact us... so that we can answer any questions," says the Youth Center letter.

Both the RIOC request for information and the full text of the Youth Center letter are posted on *Website NYC10044* at nyc10044.com as supplements to this issue of *The WIRE*.

At the June 30 RIOC Board meeting, Board members revealed that the owner of Eastwood has said that space currently occupied by the Youth Program will be made available on a long-term basis, suggesting that both floors of the Blackwell minischool, most recently occupied by the Lilies Christian School, may not be needed by the Youth Center. The Berman let-

See **Youth Center**, page 2

RIOC Board to Negotiate on Eastwood, Cites a "Limited Role" but "Final Say"

Board Member Notes "Pressure" on Westview Ground Lease

The Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation has a "very limited role" in negotiations over the Island's current wave of withdrawals from Mitchell-Lama, but "a final say-so," according to statements made by Board members at their June 30 meeting.

Board members attempted to clarify the role they see for themselves during the public portion of the session, expressing a wish that the clarifications be made known to residents.

During the discussions, non-resident Board member John Mannix said Board members have been under pressure, presumably from the Sheldrake Organization, on the Westview privatization. "There are going to be very tough negotiations and I can tell you for what it's worth there have been very sharp words between us and the developer on Westview," Mannix said. "He's attempting through various other means to put pressure on us, and we're going to act in the best interest of the Corporation and the residents. I don't really care what [source the] criticism or pressure comes from." He did not elaborate on the nature of the pressure or the sharp words and, by deadline, had not responded to *The WIRE*'s e-mail request for details.

The WIRE has prepared a full transcript of the segments of the Board session dealing with privatization (as well as retail leases and space for the Youth Program), which came up in the course of formation of a committee to negotiate with the owner of Eastwood about extension of the building's ground lease in removal of that building from the State's Mitchell-Lama affordable housing program. The transcript is available on line at *Website NYC10044* (nyc10044.com) with this issue of *The WIRE*. In what follows, quotations are selected for clarity and edited for readability.

Mannix, who is a member of the Board's real-estate committee, said, "We intend to treat everyone the same, using the same market data we have developed on comparables [similar buildings]. Eastwood wants to move quickly. The other negotiations [on Westview and Island House] are far more complex, involving many, many different stakeholders."

Rivercross resident Deborah Beck, also a member

of the real-estate committee, added, "One of the problems we are dealing with is that there's an owner we're dealing with [not any association of tenants]. [We want to] ensure that [in] our negotiations, which just relate to the ground rent, the occupants of the buildings [who are] at income levels that might make it hard for them to meet market rate would be protected to the extent that we have the power to do so."

It was at that point that Mannix made the statement about the Board's limited role: "We actually have a very limited role in these withdrawals. It's very limited, and we can only do what we can do. We have the problem that we don't own the buildings, so conducting negotiations with tenants puts us in a very tight squeeze legally. We're not the owners, so we can't negotiate with tenants. We only have a [ground lease] contract with the owners."

"That being said," Mannix continued, "the Board has been clear that we intend to preserve affordable housing for those that need affordable housing. We have a variety of ideas and ways we can do that."

Westview, Mannix said, "is going along well. There may be some difference of opinion with the developer, but we're sticking to principles we laid out almost a year ago."

Board member David Kraut, an Eastwood resident, then suggested the Board does have power in the situation. "Yes, we have very little we can do about an owner taking a building out of Mitchell-Lama, but we do have final say-so on the terms because they must be approved by this Board. I believe it is possible to leverage that final say-so to insure that the protections you mentioned are, in fact, instilled in the proposal to convert the building."

Kraut then sounded a note of caution to his fellow Board members: "Lacking a strong statement or indication that we are willing to stop or slow down a conversion until the needs of the community are satisfied sends a message to owners that they can do what they want."

Board Chair Marybeth Labate responded: "David, I think we've sent a very strong message that we are negotiating a deal that is aimed towards protecting those who need the protection and we've defined, I believe, in the memorandum of understanding, that it's 150% of AMI [area median income] or below. I can assure you that is known throughout all elements of the negotiations. This Board, right from the very start, set out very clear guidelines."

"I accept your assurances unequivocally," Kraut said, "except that your assurances are only assurances and no guarantee of what the future will hold." Referring to Section 8 subsidies expected to protect low-income Eastwood tenants, he added, "There is no guarantee that Section 8 subsidies will exist one, three, or ten years down the road."

Mannix responded: "I fully agree that this Board has ultimate leverage on these transactions because all we [have to] do is fold our arms and not extend the ground leases and the deals won't go forward. For example, on Westview, if we don't extend the ground lease, then no one can buy. Part of what we're trying

See **RIOC Board**, page 2

Eastwood Owner to Meet With Tenants Wednesday

Eastwood residents will meet Wednesday night (August 3) to hear from building management about plans for privatization and how it will affect them. The session is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

In a meeting held earlier this month, the attorney for the Eastwood Building Committee (EBC) outlined the general terms, not yet final, of an agreement between the EBC and the building's owner, the Belson organization.

Under the proposed plan, all residents will apply for "sticky" Section 8 vouchers; those who qualify will pay about one-third of their income for housing, with government sources subsidizing the remainder. Those who don't qualify will fall under a landlord assistance plan (LAP); their rent will rise on an annual basis at the same rate approved by the City's Rent Guidelines Board (RGB) plus one percent.

A number of finer points remained to be negotiated as of the early-July meeting, but a member of the Eastwood negotiating team, Fay Vass, told *The WIRE* that they should be ironed out in time for Wednesday's session. They include the length of time Section 8 tenants will be protected by the landlord in the event Section 8 is eliminated or substantially reduced and the question of moving from LAP to Section 8 if a tenant's income goes down.

LAP tenants will be allowed to sublet their apartments, but subletting tenants will be required to pay market rate. Vacated apartments will go to market rate.



Photo: Vicki Feinmel

Leaders of the Eastwood Building Committee listened earlier this month as Serge Joseph (second from left) outlined terms of an agreement-in-progress with the building's owner. Left to right: Harry Devine, Joseph, Byron Gaspard, Fay Vass, Amelia Fontes, Ron Vass.

Briefly...

Rivercross is opening its waiting list in a two-step lottery process described in an ad on page 4. The cooperative's list was last opened in 1991 and, for apartments of most sizes, the list still contains applicants from that time.

The City budget passed recently provides funding of nearly \$3 million for **expansion of the Roosevelt Island branch** of the New York Public Library, courtesy of Speaker Gifford Miller, who represents the Island. The \$2,850,000 amount will come in the next two fiscal years. RIOC President Herb Berman tells *The WIRE* he's amenable to expansion into space occupied by the Thrift Shop, which would be relocated.

Governor George Pataki announced Wednesday that he won't seek another term in the office.

Sophie Cohen RIOC Board from page 1

Sophie Cohen passed away on Saturday, July 16. She was a long-time resident of 546 Main Street and a member of the Roosevelt Island Jewish Congregation, where she enjoyed the services and celebrations.

Sophie was born in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1920, the youngest of nine children. Her family gradually emigrated to the United States. Sophie was the last to leave Germany, in 1939. As a young child, she suffered from encephalitis that left her with some physical impairments. These never deterred her and she met all her challenges with determination.

She worked in the hotel business, was active in her union, and had very definite political opinions.

Sophie is survived by a sister and many nieces and nephews.

submitted by Judith Berdy

For between-issues bulletins, send an AddMe message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.

Youth Center from page 1

ter asks that the Youth Program “quantify costs for increased demand for Youth Center services, e.g., provide a cost structure for serving a larger population in increments of an increase of 25 children (current population plus 25 more kids, plus 50 more kids, plus 75 more kids, etc.)” and requests other materials including a certificate of insurance, media clippings, staff biographies, Board member résumés, recent audits, an employee handbook, an employee screening process, and information on the training of parents who volunteer to help with the Center’s programs, such as sports coaches.

Resident RIOC Board member David Kraut, in the June 30 meeting, said, “The fact that we’re going to be negotiating for the Eastwood space is very important but it is not the question... The Youth Center needs to expand, and that has to be based on demographic projections and how much space they’re going to need. I think we need to keep the discussion narrowed to these terms.” Kraut praised the Youth Center under DeFino’s management, but cautioned DeFino that “this Board has to be convinced that you need that space.”

On Tuesday, Kraut added these thoughts in response to a *WIRE* question: “Concerning Herb’s letter to the Youth Center, I would point out that not only does the Youth Center want thousands of square feet of real estate to be given to them at no cost to themselves, but on terms that might well leave RIOC responsible for a lot of the ongoing maintenance and operating costs of the building. And so the Youth Center should not have been surprised that RIOC has expanded its due diligence in order to be assured that the need is real based on the Youth Center’s actual requirements.

“Concerning the Youth Center board’s reply, I understand their frustrations. This process has gone on for quite awhile and so of course they are impatient. But in my view – speaking not only as a RIOC board member desirous that they get the space they need but also as a former member of their board – they should not have expressed their impatience in such challenging and rancorous terms. It never does anyone any good to accuse the other folks of hidden motives and mean dispositions. It only slows down the process until all the feathers can be smoothed again.”

Non-resident Board member John Mannix said, “I sense a lot of frustration... We can’t keep moving the finish line. I would like to have a highest-quality Youth Center in a marquee location. But we need to get the information and make a decision on this and get this off our agenda.”



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RIOC’s Dark Water: Soggy Decision

by Sharon Bermon

Any Roosevelt Islander who goes to see *Dark Water* is really going to see two movies. First, there’s the movie that was made here on Roosevelt Island at great inconvenience – and wetness – to residents – a movie that pretends to portray Roosevelt Island as Roosevelt Island (the name is used repeatedly).

Second, there’s the movie that, coming from Disney/Touchstone as it does, ought to be, um, entertaining?

It’s a double disappointment. A warmed-over mish-mash of a horror plot, set on a Roosevelt Island and in an Eastwood building that exist only in the trash-it-all imagination of a movie-making crew that the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation suicidally granted a license to kill. I mean, hell, take their money but set the condition that it’s somebody else’s fictional Island, not ours. After *Dark Water*, residents could improve Roosevelt Island’s reputation by taking up counterfeiting or production of meth.

As to its merits as entertainment...

Dark Water attempts to lift itself above the standard horror genre but, despite a stellar cast and impressive special effects, ultimately fails to hold our interest. A re-make of a Japanese shock flick, the film uses water as a metaphor for, well, practically everything. An abandoned child’s tears, the river that separates Roosevelt Island from the rest of Manhattan, the rain that falls constantly during most of the film – and of course, there’s that pesky leak in the ceiling. After two hours of confusion, we’re not sure whether we’ve sat through a psychological thriller, a supernatural gore fest, or a documentary on the failures of urban planning.

Jennifer Connelly has the challenging role of Dahlia, a woman who was abandoned as a child by her abusive mother, and is now being discarded as an adult by her husband. Struggling on two fronts, she has to deal with her internal issues: low self-esteem and crippling migraines, while fending off her not-quite-yet ex-husband, who wants custody of their five-year-old daughter. But her first priority is to find an apartment she can afford, so she takes the Tram to Roosevelt Island to meet John C. Reilly (Mr. Cellophane in *Chicago*), a slick leasing agent eager to unload Apartment 9F. When the Tram crosses the water, we are made to understand that Dahlia and her daughter are not just leaving the East Side of Manhattan, but being exiled from Paradise – Eve and daughter being tossed out of the Garden of Eden.

There’s more water, lots of water, when Dahlia arrives drenched at 540 Main Street. But instead of walking into the actual bright, clean lobby, she enters

a terrifying world where the elevators don’t work and the creepy doorkeeper/super huddles in a cluttered alcove off the lobby, peering at elevator passengers via security cameras. The dark lobby the filmmakers have envisioned resembles the entrance to a prison. When the elevators work erratically, and dark water pours out of the machines in the dismal laundry room, we are offered a number of possible explanations: poor maintenance, wild teenagers – or, *just maybe*, the spirit of a dead child.

Time for a confession: I live here, and I was offended by the liberties that the director (Walter Salles of *The Motorcycle Diaries*) took. If he wanted to make a movie about a struggling single mother living in wretched housing, that’s his prerogative. But turning this Island into a symbol of everything that is wrong with moderate-income housing is going too far. As Dahlia walks down the hall to 9F, Reilly blithely tells her that the style of the buildings is “Brutalist Utopia.” And when he shows her the apartment, the view from the living room window resembles a Soviet prison. The bedroom has no window, only a sheet of plastic that the agent casually says “lets in some light, at least.” Does the Health Department know about this?

The bedroom may be lacking a window, but it has something else – a brown spot on the ceiling that becomes a leak and, eventually, a torrent of water, despite the efforts of plumbers. When Dahlia investigates, she discovers that 10F is awash in water, but there are no occupants.

Well, no *living* occupants, anyway. We’re distracted by the possibility of teenage boys committing acts of childish vandalism. But then there’s the mysterious imaginary friend that Dahlia’s daughter suddenly begins talking to. Or *is* she imaginary? Could she be the spirit of a little girl who seems to be missing from 10F? The fact that we’re not sure suggests that those making the film aren’t sure, either. Where is this going, anyway?

At this point, the film falls apart. Dahlia may be taking too many pills for her migraines. She may be as disturbed as her husband insists. By the time she climbs the ladder of the water tower that the filmmakers have conveniently positioned on the roof, it’s unlikely that you’ll care. Her discovery of what’s in the water tank, the seeming resolution of the mystery, and the fact that the rain stops – for the first time in the film – feels like the end. But wait, there’s the scene in the bathtub, which may be proof of her instability. But then there’s that possible spirit child.

It’s all too confusing, and by the end of the movie, you’ll be happy to leave the theater. Even if it’s raining and you’ve forgotten your umbrella.

Letters

To the Editor:

During the summer of 2004 there were three separate occurrences when I purchased a liquid dairy product from M&M Deli and found it to be sour. Why three times? In each case it was Sunday, the Fish Store was closed, and I was too lazy to walk from Rivercross to Gristede’s. On each occasion, the expiration date was still in the future. When I returned the items they were replaced graciously, but...

I’ve been told that the dairy delivery to the Deli often sits on the sidewalk for hours before the store opens. That would certainly explain sour milk and cream during hot weather.

We have not suffered from extreme heat this year but, on June 6 I opened 1% milk purchased at the Deli on July 3, with a “sell-by” date of June 7. It is sour. I have been told that the “sell-by” date has nothing to do with the breakdown date of the product. The product should be good, under refrigeration, in homes, for five to six days after the “sell by.”

Since I brought it to their attention last year each time it happened, I sense that the management of the Deli has no concern about the freshness of their inventory, and I encourage my neighbors to refrain from buying dairy products there. Just imagine their consternation when gallons of sour milk and cream remain on their shelves!

Perhaps that will persuade them to have a bit more respect for the hands that feed them.

Mary Cavanaugh

To RIOC President Herb Berman:

Did anyone at RIOC read a script of *Dark Water* before production began? Did anyone ask how our Island would be portrayed in the film? I’m sure you’ve been asked these questions a lot lately.

The aerial shots made our Island look like a penitentiary. The interiors looked like a ghetto. There was no need to call us by name. The title of the location was spoken, not seen – even on the Tram. With a little dramatic license why not call the place Jefferson Island or Washington Island or even Berman Island?

The shoot took place on your watch. At a time when we are trying to attract both tourists and residents to Roosevelt Island, I find this movie to be a strange way of advertising our neighborhood to the world.

Joan Pape

Letters deadline for Aug. 27 issue: Tuesday, Aug. 23.
Letters received after deadline are considered on a space-available basis.

To the Editor:

Eight years after the start of an effort to put residents in charge of the operation of the Island there has been a glimmer of hope (*The WIRE*, July 2).

Four resident members of the RIOC Board – David Kraut, Mark Ponton, Michael Shinozaki, Patrick Stewart – were able to think for the best interests of the community and vote against the duplicative use of the vacant credit union storefront.

The other members of the Board seem to be from an imaginary place where the hired hands have more credence than the Island community. It is mind-blowing that these dream-world board members could believe the unguided efforts of a real-estate agent should be of prime importance.

The four wise men have given substance to the idea that Island policies should be made by Island residents. Creating a viable community takes more than just a leasing agent.

May this thoughtful effort by the RIOC Board continue.

David J. Bauer

Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters to the editor, to the community, and to our officials. Publication on a *Name Withheld* basis will be considered, but the writer’s name, address, and phone number must be provided for verification and for our records; *letters submitted anonymously will not be published*.

Preferred method of submission: E-mail to Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com (plaintext e-mail format preferred, or attach a file), or on a PC-standard 3.5" disk left at the desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. Alternatives: Typed copy left at 531 Main Street. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered if brief, but we are not able to take telephone dictation of letters. All letters subject to acceptance and to editing for length and clarity. Recommended maximum length, 300 words; longer letters will be considered if their content merits the required space.

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

Stillness, an exhibit at Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main Street, continuing through Sun., Aug. 14. Gallery hours: Sat.-Sun., 11:00-5:00; Wed., Fri., 6:00-9:00.



– The Coming Week –

Presentation on the FDR Memorial Plan by the Franklin & Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, **Wed., Aug. 3**, 12:30 p.m., Senior Center.

Dinner & Play Reading (*The Nerd* by Larry Shue) featuring Main Street Theatre graduates, presented by Good Looks at Angie's Restaurant, 41-46 54th St., Queens, **Wed., Aug. 3**, 6:30 p.m. (play reading at 8:00). \$20 plus tax & tip. Information: **718-651-2277**.

Eastwood Tenants Meeting to hear from building management about privatization plans, **Wed., Aug. 3**, 7:00 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

– Future Events –

The Main Street WIRE – Next issue, **Sat., Aug. 27**. (To receive e-mail bulletins between issues, send an *AddMe* message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Advertising Deadline:** Ads in the paper, Thursday, Aug. 18; decision on fliers for *The Bag*, Tue., Aug. 23; inserts due Thur., Aug. 25. **Future issues:** Fortnightly through December 17: Sept. 10, 24; Oct. 8, 22; Nov. 5, 19; Dec. 3, 17; then fortnightly, resuming Jan. 14, 2006. **News phone, 212-826-9055**; urgent matters **917-617-0449**. **Phone** for display and classified advertising placement and information, **212-751-8214**. **To list your organization's Island-related event in this column**, e-mail information to ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com, or leave it, addressed to *The WIRE*, at the lobby desk at 531 Main Street; provide a telephone number for follow-up questions. There is no charge for such listings.

There is no charge to list Island events here. E-mail information to ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com or leave information at the lobby desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. Please provide a phone number for possible follow-up.

RIOC Board of Directors Meeting, Thur., Sept. 8, 4:30 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd. The Board's afternoon meetings usually conclude with an opportunity for public comment, specific time uncertain.

Open House New York, Sat.-Sun., Oct. 8-9. Includes visitors to Roosevelt Island's Southpoint.

RIOC Board of Directors meeting, Thur., Oct. 20, 9:30 a.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd.

RIOC Board of Directors Meeting, Thur., Nov. 17, 4:30 p.m., Chapel of the Good Shepherd. The Board's afternoon meetings usually conclude with an opportunity for public comment, specific time uncertain.

Senior Center

Monday
10-11:30, **English as 2nd Language**
10:30, **Blood Pressure Screening**
12:30, **"Oldies" Movies**
1:00, **Tai Chi**
7:00, **Dance Class** (Beginners)

Tuesday
10:00, **Weightlifting**
10:30, **Shoppers' Bus**
2:00, **Bingo**
6:00, **Yoga Class**
7:30, **Games (RISA)**

Wednesday
9:15, **Stay Well**
10:00, **Computers**
10:30, **Shoppers' Bus**
12-2, **Painting & Sculpting**
7:00, **Pokeno (RISA)**

Thursday
9:30, **Weightlifting**

10:30, **Creative Arts**
12:30, **Movie**
7:00, **Dance**

Friday
9:30, **Yoga**
10:30, **Computers**
1:00, **Bridge**
7:00, **Games (RISA)**

Saturday
7:30, **Bingo (RISA)**

Special Events

Wed., Aug. 3, presentation on FDR Memorial plan
Fri., Aug. 5, Liza Connert's last day. Come say 'bye'. (Annie Peña returns Aug. 8.)
Wed., Aug. 17, Atlantic City trip
Wed., Aug. 31, Atlantic City trip

Home-delivered meals: **212-744-5022**, ext. 1203

The **Public Safety Blotter** for July 1-18 is now available on *Website NYC10044*, at nyc10044.com, with this issue of *The WIRE*. When the July 19-31 information becomes available, it will be posted with this issue, as well.

Sergeant Evans has been with Public Safety since 1995. She has made many arrests and served as Youth Officer in 1996 and 1997. She left the department in 1997 but returned the next year. Because of her new post, Evans resigned as vice president of the RIOC Public Safety Union.

I hope everyone joins me in thanking these outstanding officers for their dedication and professionalism in serving to protect the residents and property of Roosevelt Island.

As we move into August, the summer is flying by far too fast for my taste. But, unfortunately, so is the possibility that the Youth Center could lose \$1,800,000 of funding secured by our City and State representatives. This funding has been available for *four years*, and the Youth Center has been earnestly trying to get a long-term lease commitment from RIOC since 2001 that is necessary to utilize these grants.

To briefly recap, many years ago the Youth Center was promised space at 504 Main Street – the site of the former Lilies School. This space is ideal because it is removed from the residential buildings, and kids could come and go with minimal disturbance to residents. Also, the adjacent outdoor areas could be improved and these funds could be used both to rehabilitate a building that is in need of major repairs and to provide an attractive state-of-the-art facility where our kids can learn and socialize.

There have been a parade of arguments, alternatives, and strategies to foil this plan. Let's review the bidding:

Legal & Commercial

Initially, the problem was that the space was occupied by Lilies School, which received free rent and electricity from RIOC for years. Eventually, Lilies School was relocated to the building just south of the Octagon. Then a real-estate company hired by RIOC was sent forth to rent it out for big bucks. The only offer I heard about was for a commercial bakery, where truck traffic would have disturbed residents in the middle of the night. Lately, RIOC President Herb Berman has been discussing use of at least one floor for RIOC offices. At a meeting on July 5, he advised the Youth Program's Executive Director and Vice President that he would, under no circumstances, recommend leasing both floors of the school building to the Youth Program.

The "commercial" argument has lost steam in the last few years as it has become clear that RIOC has no problem giving away huge chunks of real estate for peanuts. First, the 19 acres of Southtown will cost the Related Companies less than 10 million dollars in ground rent when all nine hideous buildings are constructed. By comparison, Manhattan Park, which is half the size, will have paid RIOC over 80 million in today's dollars by the time these leases expire. Then RIOC gave a 60-year lease to the Child School for about \$4 per square foot, which amounts to one-eighth of their regular asking price. With burgeoning administrative staff expenses (over \$2 million per year), RIOC can't claim that they are "belt-tightening" when they can pay \$95,000+ per year to the likes of patronage crony John Melia, the mute "Public Information Officer."

"Lack of Information"

Now, when faced with a real deadline to either accept the grants or lose the money, it was time to roll out plan B – the "request for information in order to make an informed decision," like an answer to the following question: "Quantify costs for increased demand for Youth Center services, e.g., provide a cost structure for serving a larger population in increments of an increase of 25 children (current population plus 25 more kids, plus 50 more kids, plus 75 more kids, etc.)." For the RIOC administration, already on record as opposed to offering new space, to inundate the Youth Center with requests for information that are not necessary for the decision-making process is just a sad attempt to goad the Center into non-compliance. I wonder how much paper-

work they made other potential tenants go through before giving them their leases.

There are two things that make this request glaringly absurd. First, RIOC doesn't have for itself the kind of financial forecasts they're requiring from the Youth Center for their own budget process, yet they have a multi-million dollar operation. If this information is important must it be for RIOC, which manages the entire Island? Second, RIOC is treating the Youth Center as if they want the space for free when, in fact, the Youth Center will be spending almost \$2 million in improvements which will give them a rent credit for the next eight years, even assuming the highest possible rent potential from a building that hasn't had a taker for years. No other potential tenant has ever been asked to go through the gyrations they're asking of the Youth Center. For the past four years, the Youth Center has provided every piece of information requested of them, but this last request is just an obvious set-up.

Social & Personal

Some RIOC members obviously don't like Charles DeFino, the Executive Director of the Youth Center. He's blunt and sometimes abrasive. He's also brilliant at crafting programs, getting outside funds and getting the job done. When Charlie makes a promise, he keeps his word. Thanks to him, we've had a summer camp for 15 years, great sports programs, concerts, movies, and eight Roosevelt Island Days. He provides a lot of teens with honest employment, has gotten scholarships for sports camps, and has helped many get into college. Charlie worked hard and brought in the Beacon Program, which adds another great dimension to the services the Youth Program offers to our kids.



Steve Marcus, President Roosevelt Island Residents Assn. e-mail: SteveAtRIRA@verizon.net

Alternative Offers

When this topic was finally discussed at the last RIOC Board Meeting, it focused on speculation as to how long they had to defer the decision so that they could package an arrangement with the ground-lease negotiations with Eastwood landlords. Such a deal would presumably give the Youth Center the same cramped quarters they have been occupying on a temporary basis for the last 12 years. All the plans for additional labs and studios, and for access to the secluded outside areas would go out the window. This would be a really sad finale to years of promises and planning.

Whether or not RIOC likes Charlie DeFino, there will be kids on the Island long after the current Director and Board of the Youth Program step down. The best thing for the Island will be for our kids to have the benefit of a fine new facility built with grants that come from outside our community. I urge the Board to grant this lease before it's too late. And, I urge everyone reading this column to ask their resident Board members – Alberteen Anderson, Deborah Beck, David Kraut, Mark Ponton, Michael Shinozaki, and Patrick Stewart – where they stand on this issue and what they're basing their decision on.

Among those in attendance were RIOC Board members Patrick Stewart and David Kraut, myself, Inspector David Berrere, Commanding Officer of the 114th Precinct, Public Safety Director James Fry, and Doryne Isley, General Manager of Eastwood. Rev. Obed from Dayspring Church and Rev. Miqueli of Cabrini Parish gave the invocation and benediction.

Estrella Suarez was promoted to Captain. Suarez joined Public Safety in 1993 after having served five years in the NYC Auxiliary at the 114th Pct. In 1995 Suarez was promoted to Lieutenant, where she supervised patrol sergeants and as liaison with the City for parking violations, summons controls, and other agencies.

Lieutenant Jonathan Banberger was appointed to Public Safety in 1992. He has made numerous arrests both in uniform and in plain-clothes and has received extra training in defibrillators, bicycle patrol, and served as a field training officer. He holds an associate's degree from New York State Technical College.



Herbert E. Berman, President Roosevelt Island Operating Corp. e-mail: HBerman@rioc.com

The RIRA Column

The RIOC Column

On Tuesday, July 19, the RIOC Public Safety Department had its first-ever promotion ceremony. Gathered at the Manhattan Park Theater were friends, family, police and local officials as Estrella Suarez, Jonathan Banberger, and Michelle Evans received elevations in rank to Captain, Lieutenant, and Sergeant respectively. Following the swearing-in by Public Safety Deputy Director René Bryan, refreshments were served and pictures of the proud officers were taken.



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3BR	\$47,180 - \$56,823	\$1,720 - \$2,038	5 - 6 Persons	\$228,749.23
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To request a lottery application and instructions you must send a STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE, no smaller than 9 by 4 inches, by FIRST-CLASS MAIL to ESC, P.O. Box 9215, Garden City, N.Y. 11530. Certified, registered or overnight mail and walk-in or telephoned requests will **not** be accepted. Your request must be received no later than 9:00 A.M. on August 12, 2005. On August 22, 2005 a lottery application and instructions will be mailed to persons whose requests were received by the aforementioned deadline. Requests received after that deadline will be returned to sender.

Note: This is a two step process. First, you must follow the directions above to obtain a lottery application and instructions. Second, you must submit your completed application with a processing fee of \$150. If your application is not selected in the lottery, the processing fee will be returned. If your application is accepted, a credit check (for which an additional non-refundable fee is required) and personal interview will be required prior to being offered an apartment.

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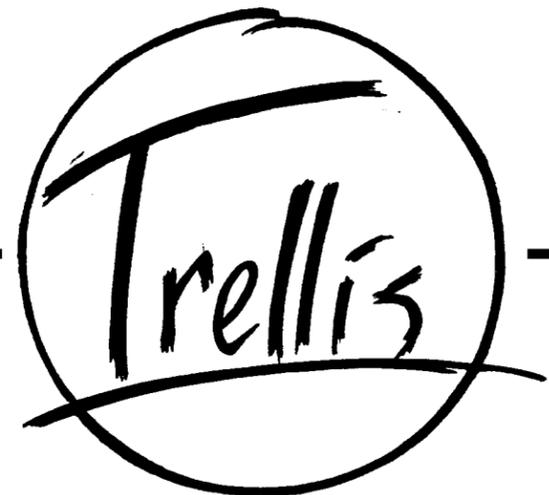
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