

SUNSET PARK NEWS

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Bush Terminal Park Finally Opens

Bush Terminal Park opened at noon on Wednesday, November 5, 2014 with little celebration, fanfare or media coverage. The official ribbon cutting was held on Wednesday, November 12 at 2pm and about 75 community leaders, residents and members of the media attended.

The park sits on the former Bush Terminal integrated port complex, which served as a major shipping hub until 1974. Unauthorized dumping contaminated soil and groundwater making the site hazardous for years to come.

From 1997 to 2002, the state funded a \$700,000 study carried out by the Economic Development Corporation to

determine if the site could be cleaned up. Two years later, the state Department of Environmental Conservation issued a remediation plan. In 2006, the city, state and federal government issued \$36 million in grants to clean up and redevelop the site. Cleanup took six years, and in 2012, the city broke ground on the park.



After nearly 20 years in planning, remediation and construction, the park finally opened revealing panoramic views of the bay stretching from the Manhattan skyline to the Verrazano Bridge with everything in between. The 11 acre park, cut back from 23 acres, features tide pools, restored wetlands, bike paths, two multi-purpose soccer and baseball fields and a restored nature preserve. The entrance is on 43rd Street and the park spans to 51st St. Operating hours are 8-4pm, November 1 to March 1. Hours will be expanded to 8pm during the summer.

Attendees at the official ribbon cutting included Congress Members Velazquez and Nadler, State Assembly Member Felix Ortiz and Council Member Carlos Menchaca.

Library Expansion and Affordable Housing Proposed

The Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) is considering a redevelopment plan for its Sunset Park branch which would create a larger library and add 55 affordable apartments including one for a live-in superintendent.

The one-story building would be redeveloped to include eight stories. Under the proposal, the building would have 18 studios, 11 one-bedroom, 14 two-bedroom and 12 three-bedroom apartments, all below market rate, with studios as low as \$525 per month. The plan is being sponsored by the nonprofit, Fifth Avenue Committee (FAC), which would also develop and own the apartments.

The plan is still in its preliminary stages and would increase the library from 12,000 to 17,000 square feet and modernize its facilities with state-of-the-art technology, an optimized layout for program rooms and meeting space, new heating and cooling systems, and the continued operation of the Workforce 1 Center for jobseekers. BPL has budgeted \$8 million for these upgrades

as the library is one of the busiest in the system in terms of circulation and attendance rates.

As the plan stands, FAC would develop the site for \$24.8 million and build the library core and shell at no cost to BPL. The group plans to primarily use State Low Income Housing Tax Credits to fund the project, guaranteeing the units will remain affordable for a minimum of 50 years.

After construction, which would take at least two years, the city would take back the library under its ownership and FAC would own the rest of the building. During construction, BPL would move the Sunset Park branch to a temporary space located as close as possible to its current location at 51st Street and 4th Avenue.

At a community meeting held at the library on November 3, critics of the plan insisted they would not support it unless the library included a second floor given the extensive needs of the community. (Source: Nikhito Venugopa, DNAinfo.com)

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Kicked to the Curb

Illegal clothing bins were kicked to the curb after City Council legislation toughened regulations. The bill calls for fines of \$250 for first-time violations for bins illicitly placed on public property. The fine will be doubled to \$500 for repeat violations. The bill will also allow the city to immediately remove any bins placed on sidewalks or city property, rather than giving owners a 30-day notice. Bins placed on private property will need to be registered with the city. The City Council hopes to curb illegal placement of bins which soared 350% in fiscal year 2014. (Source: Yoav Gonen, New York Post)

Mouthwatering Move

Li-Lac Chocolates, Manhattan's oldest chocolate house opened Brooklyn's newest chocolate factory on November 17th. Guests of honor included Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams, Council Member Carlos Menchaca, State Senator Velmanette Montgomery, Wendy Goldstein, President & CEO of Lutheran Healthcare, and Andrew Kimball, CEO, Industry City. The factory and a retail store is located at 68 35th Street in Sunset Park Brooklyn. To order online, visit www.li-lacchocolates.com. A public opening was held on November 22 and more than 1000 people turned out.

Manhattan Bound Ferry Docked

Diligently fought by Council Member Vincent Gentile, the service that carried commuters from the Rockaways and Sunset Park to Manhattan for more than a year was docked by Mayor Bill de Blasio on October 31st. "I'm saddened by the mayor's decision" said Gentile stressing that the mayor has heard the concerns of Gentile's constituents and that the mayor has agreed that the concept of a "coordinated commuter ferry system in the city is viable and on his priority list." (Source: Meaghan McGoldrick, Home Reporter)

Save the Date

12/4 - Annual tree lighting at OLPH Basilica. Free Santa pictures and goody bags, 3-5pm. Live entertainment from 4-6pm. Tree lighting at 6pm

12/5 - Smokin' Word Drum comes to Brooklyn for the 2014 International Coquito Masters featuring Machete Movement & Friends. Hosted by UPROSE. 166A 22nd Street. Free. 6pm

12/6 - Holiday Swing Dance at the Sunset Park Rec Center. 30-minute dance lesson at 5pm. Dancing, performances and snacks. 5-8pm

12/6 - Fundraiser to benefit Camp AmeriKids which enhances the lives of youth living with HIV/AIDs and sickle cell disease. \$10 suggested donation. Karaoke, food, drink ticket, raffles and 50/50. Irish Haven, 8pm to 1am

12/7 - Children's Chorus of Bay Ridge. Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 7420 4th Ave, 3:00pm. \$10 donation. For more info see: www.artonthecorner.org/calendar.html

12/9 - 72nd Precinct Community Affairs Meeting, Marien Center, 4520 4th Ave, 7:30pm

12/14 - Bella Voce Singers. Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 7420 4th Ave, 3:00pm. \$10 donation

12/17 - Community Board Meeting, 43rd & 4th, Entrance on 43rd St, 6:30pm

12/20-23 - Sunset Park BID 5th Avenue Trolley. Catch the trolley at all B63 stops starting at 52nd St near McDonalds. 1-5pm

1st and 2nd Mondays of the Month - Neighbors Helping Neighbors, advocates for tenants, tenants rights and affordable housing, accepts walk-in visits at their offices at 462 36th Street. 10am to 4pm

Wednesdays and the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the Month - Green-Wood Cemetery's Historic Trolley Tour, \$15 for non-members, \$10 for members, 1-3pm

Sundays - Live music at the Irish Haven. No cover. 8-11pm



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Rachel Carmean, along with her family, is a long time resident of 58th Street. She is a member of the Sunset Park Landmarks Committee and is fully dedicated to the preservation of Sunset Park's historic architecture and neighborhood. If you have questions about your property, need recommendations for repairs/renovations, or would like to buy, rent or sell locally or out-of-town, I will be happy to help.

Recent Neighborhood Sales*

714 58th St.	2-Fam	\$960k	10/30
438 45th St	3-Fam	\$1.28m	10/23
433 37th St.	2-Fam	\$999k	10/21
754 45th St.	2-Fam	\$990k	10/20
756 43rd St	2-Fam	\$850k	10/14
641 46th St	2-Fam	\$1.07m	10/9

* Source: New York City Public Records
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