



f west68streetblockassociation

COMMUNITY :: New Reasons To Be A Part Of It

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200 Amsterdam at W 69th St -- Judge Gives Victory to Community

A Statement from the Community Advocacy Groups on March 15 is as follows:

Court Rules in Favor of Advocacy Groups in Lawsuit over 200 Amsterdam Avenue

Board of Standards and Appeals Ordered to Revisit Building Permit for the Controversial Tower

The Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS), and the Committee for Environmentally Sound Development (CFESD) applaud the 200 Amsterdam Decision that remanded the building permit for 200 Amsterdam Avenue back to the NYC Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) for review.

In September 2018, the BSA issued a Resolution affirming the Department of Buildings' (DOB) permit for 200 Amsterdam Avenue despite its gerrymandered zoning lot. In response, CFESD, joined by MAS, filed an Article 78 lawsuit, requesting that the Court nullify the BSA decision.

On March 14, 2019, Justice W. Franc Perry ruled in favor of the advocacy groups, vacating and annulling the prior BSA ruling as unreasonable and inconsistent with the plain reading of the Zoning Resolution. The Court also rejected the argument of the developer, Amsterdam Avenue Redevelopment Associates LLC, that simply because DOB had issued the permit in the first place, it was therefore entitled to complete the building. "Vested rights," the Court wrote, "cannot be acquired by relying on an invalid permit."

"The flagrant abuse of zoning demonstrated by the 200 Amsterdam project compelled MAS and our partners at CFESD to intervene and prevent this dangerous precedent from being set," said Elizabeth Goldstein, President of the Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS). "We applaud Justice Perry's decision striking down the Board of Standards and Appeals' erroneous decision. This gerrymandered zoning lot is an affront to the letter and spirit of the Zoning Resolution and should never have been granted a building permit."

"The Board of Standards and Appeals had somehow determined that the zoning lot here—a 39-sided "Frankenstein" lot, stitched together from bits and pieces of various tax lots—was "unsubdivided," allowing the 668-foot-tall tower to go forward at the expense of the Upper West Side community. This decision strikes a blow at developers' creative manipulation of loopholes in the Zoning Resolution and is a win for all New York City neighborhoods," said Olive Freud, President of the Committee for Environmentally Sound Development (CFESD).

MAS and CFESD were represented in the Article 78 proceeding by Richard Emery, Katherine Rosenfeld, and Ashok Chandran of Emery Celli Brinckerhoff & Abady LLP and Charles Weinstock, Esq.

ABOUT THE MUNICIPAL ART SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

For more than 125 years, the Municipal Art Society of New York (MAS) has worked to educate and inspire New Yorkers to engage in the betterment of our city. As a non-profit advocacy organization, MAS mobilizes diverse allies to focus on issues

that affect our city from sidewalk to skyline. Through three core campaign areas, MAS protects New York's legacy spaces, encourages thoughtful planning and urban design, and fosters inclusive neighborhoods across the five boroughs. For more information, visit www.mas.org

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE FOR ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND DEVELOPMENT

Committee for Environmentally Sound Development (CFESD) is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization founded in 1989. CFESD is dedicated to raising awareness and promoting initiatives to preserve the quality of life on the Upper West Side. CFESD advocates for meaningful changes in city code and policy to make sure we consider about the everyday lives of New Yorkers in the grand plans for our city. Over the years, CFESD has been involved in cases throughout New York City, but its primary focus has always been the Upper West Side. In 2013, CFESD sued Lincoln Center to restore Damrosch Park, a 2.4-acre park in Lincoln Center whose trees had been cut down to make way for a private Fashion Week event. CFESD also successfully filed suit against the developers of Riverside South, a development along the Hudson River from 59th to 72nd Street, to require them to link Riverside Boulevard, the new street created by the development, to Riverside Drive at 72nd Street, to avoid congestion.

The West 68th Street Block Association commends the dedicated and tireless leader of CFESD, Olive Freud, without whose leadership this challenge and victory would not have been conceivable. We further give a shout-out our street's campaign participants -- primarily residents of the Dorchester -- who represented all of our interests through their hard work. We also acknowledge their extraordinary financial contribution. Finally, a big shout out to our elected officials, both immediately serving our community and not, led by Gale Brewer, Brad Hoylman, Linda Rosenthal, Richard Gottfried, Helen Rosenthal and their many, many associates.

The court's full decision may be read here

https://gallery.mailchimp.com/717e09d63c718e496c21b72ba/files/e82d5c51-fb41-4bb0-9e1f-9720c34fed39/20190314_2018_The_Committee_for_Envi_v_The_Committee_for_Envi_DECISION__ORDER_O N_127.pdf

As you read the decision, do take note that this block association was an early, continuous and relevant community participant. The West 68th Street Block Association testimony is incorporated into the court's ruling on page 14.

Despite the good news this battle is far from over. Everyone's commitment must remain strong.

Please contribute as further appeals and presentations must be made to preserve and expand this victory. <https://cfesdny.org/> or <https://www.mas.org/>

**A Supermarket at W 68 Street & Broadway
Just Maybe It Can Become a Reality**

A major supermarket operator will consider the space, formerly occupied by Lowe's and in spite of an anticipated extravagant rent, ***only if our community demonstrates its support for a new supermarket.***

As soon as Lowe's announced the store closing, Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal began the effort of determining availability of the site for a new occupant. Furthermore, she began expressing the sentiments of the community to the lease holder that a supermarket was most desired and needed and to partner with that leaseholder to enable the search. In addition, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer has been reinforcing these notions and lending the weight and substance of her office to entice new operators to consider the site.

Who would be the candidates ? Certainly, the community would desire an operator to complement our existing area merchants by bringing a new, broad product line together with a full menu of services. Perhaps it could be an operator seeking to enter our market and/or a flagship location. Or it could be an existing city operator considering a Manhattan expansion.

Either way, only YOU and WE, working together to demonstrate our willingness to patronize a new operation, will prove the market studies and naysayers wrong. Your help is needed to manage a petition drive in your building. Respond to us that you can do this and material will be provided to you ! Start by reading Gale's letter and by signing Linda's on-line petition.

<https://www.westsiderag.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/06.03.2019-UWS-Grocery-Store-68th-and-Bdwy.pdf>

<https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Linda-B-Rosenthal/story/85485>

Car Break Ins – Now Too Numerous & Other NYPD News

At the monthly March 20th Precinct Community Council Meeting, Deputy Inspector Malin shared that while crime in general remains down, we are experiencing a dramatic increase in car break-ins. Please find a map of the break-ins [here](#).

https://gallery.mailchimp.com/717e09d63c718e496c21b72ba/files/a90ca4ed-0509-4851-9cc6-d05d81e4cf0a/20190325_20th_Precinct_Car_Break_Ins_YTD.02.pdf

The thief's modus operandi is to spot items in the car - like a bag, briefcase or purse - and to break a window, generally between midnight and 7am.

Other local NYPD news:

* Beware of scams around tax time. Note: the IRS will never ask you to pay via Google Play or Apple iTunes gift cards!

* Good news! The USPS has changed its procedures and street mailbox theft is decreasing

* Save the date - April 18 at 7:30pm - our next Neighborhood Coordination Officer Build the Block meeting will be held at the Church of Latter Day Saints, 125 Columbus Avenue

* Save the date - April 22 at 7pm - the 20th Precinct Community Council Meeting plans to welcome Police Commissioner O'Neill. (reprinted from the W 64-W67 Block Assoc Bulletin).

W 69th St Brownstone Construction Noise -- Affecting W 68th St

48 and 50 West 69th St are two adjoining brownstones now in the process of being united into one large structure by a wealthy European. This article, just published in the NY Times, outlines the saga confronted by community residents as this tortuous construction project proceeds. Though focusing on W 69th St, many W 68th St Block Association members shared their situations with their fellow member and article author to create an even a broader perspective for the story. Their contributions are acknowledged and greatly appreciated. In addition, we thank those who participate in, and have contributed to, the construction noise task force over this site and who maintain dialogue with the owner's construction representatives.

The full article appearing in today's NY Times Metro Section may be found here:

<https://nyti.ms/2uPR5qR> OR

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/05/nyregion/gentrification-one-percent-manhattan.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share>

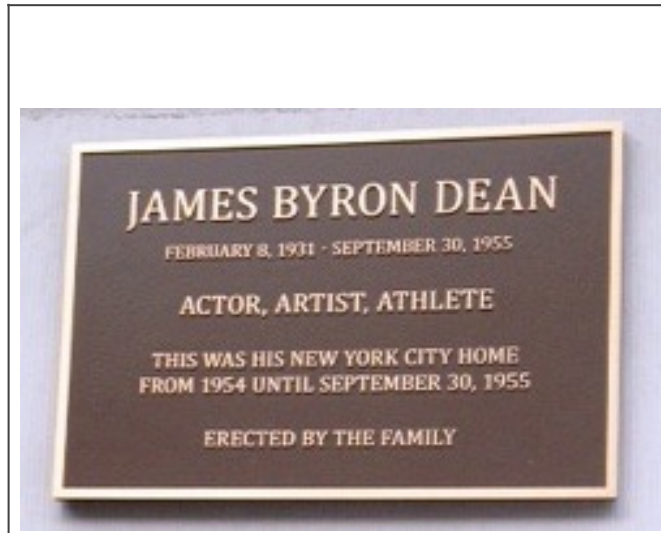
Enduring and Growing Community Block Associations

Our neighboring block associations have much going on:

The West 69th Street Block Association will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year. It will be commemorating the milestone with a great big block party ! We thank them for all they do for our community which includes their fabulous annual Halloween Party and wish them all the best as they take on their next 50 years.

The West 65th St and West 66th Street Block Association was established about 1 year ago. It was started by a group of concerned residents fearful of what the Extell development's impact could be on their streets. Their fears have been well justified. We compliment their leadership for being able to provide regular and informative information on a whole host of community topics. Among the first to acknowledge this were residents of West 64th Street and West 67th Street who now face similar development perils and as such collectively decided to create one bigger association. We congratulate their formation of the W64-W65-W66-W67th Streets Block Associations. We wish their leaders much continued success.

James Dean West 68th Street Residency Commemorated



Next time you walk by 19 West 68th Street take a look at the facade. Just a few months ago the actor's family deemed it appropriate to acknowledge his final home and to give special recognition to his love for New York City.

According to Wikipedia, after Elia Kazan cast Dean in NYC for his role in *Rebel Without A Cause*, Dean left NYC in April 1954 for filming in California. He returned to NY that Oct, calling West 68th St home until his death in an auto accident in 1955.

Another tidbit: Elia Kazan owned the townhouse just across the street.

Spring Flower Planting

Many of the bulbs we planted last fall are beginning to bloom colorfully as the weather warms. Soon it will be time to plant flowers and landscape our tree pits to last through the summer.

Can you help plant ?

Can you help water if the summer is dry ?

Please write back to let us know. Thank you !!

The Rodent Academy is April 11 on Columbus Ave

Did you know certain types of landscaping attract rodents ?

Or, that they have adapted to urban living so well that they are quite comfortable to climb up onto a car engine to tranquilly enjoy munching on some newly found gourmet take out.

The W64th-W67th St Block Association has engaged one of our city's most extraordinary services, the [NYC Department of Health team that manages the Rat Academy](#) to conduct a special class for our community:

Who: NYC Dept of Health in coordination with CB7

What: Rat Academy Workshop

When: Thursday, April 11, 6pm - 8pm

Where: Church of Latter Day Saints, 125 Columbus Ave (between 65th and 66th)

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for this workshop on how to prevent the infestation of rats in our neighborhood and to deal with re-occurrence should it happen.

Please note, the Department of Health will be raffling off rodent-proof garbage cans to participating buildings at this event.

Lowe's Will Probably Not Be Missed But They Were Good Neighbors

"The store never had what I needed, or the appliance installation was very flawed" – the complaints went on and on. None the less, to its credit the store made a conscientious effort to become a part of the Upper West Community. Lowe's become a very early member and supporter of the West 68th Street Block Association for which we remain quite grateful.

Among other things they helped make our block parties and barbeques memorable and fun and made substantial financial contribution.

They extended themselves fruitfully beyond West 68th Street working with elected officials and other community groups to help enrich our community.

We wish everyone associated with the store the best of luck.

About Your W 68th St Block Association

Covering West 68th Street between Central Park West and Amsterdam Ave, everyone is an automatic member with an equal say. Every resident, as well as every commercial and not for profit enterprise, operating both on our street and in abutting buildings may

share their voice. The leadership team, through the steering committee seeks to be representative of all street factions.

Please contact us to learn of the ways you can support your community even more.

Thank you !