



Assemblyman

Jeffrey Dinowitz

Reports to the People of the 81st Assembly District

WINTER 2013

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Serving the communities of Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights, Marble Hill, Norwood, Riverdale, Van Cortlandt Village, Wakefield and Woodlawn

Dear Constituent:

Bill de Blasio will take office as our new mayor on January 1st, having received an enormous mandate. While I know there will be times when I will disagree with him, I am looking forward to him leading the city in a new direction. I am also looking for our new mayor to build on some of the successes of the Bloomberg Administration while changing course when appropriate.

I have many disagreements with the current administration's education policy. Our schools still have serious problems that have not seen real improvement. The over-emphasis on standardized tests, the policy of favoring charter schools over traditional public schools, the ridiculous and expensive school grading system, the dismantling of most of our large high schools, the scapegoating of teachers for all of the problems in the schools—I hope all of these things will end. While mayoral control of our schools is not going away anytime soon, the promise that mayoral control would be a game-changer for our schools was simply not true. It's time many of these misguided policies are re-examined.

The multi-billion dollar boondoggles and scandals of the current administration – including the massive cost overruns of Croton Water Filtration Plant in Van Cortlandt Park, the CityTime scandal and the 911 debacle – show that being a businessman does not necessarily mean efficient government. The taxpayers deserve more than to see billions of their hard-earned dollars wasted.

The growing economic disparity in our great city between the wealthy and the poor is a real issue that must be addressed. The growing concentration of wealth is not healthy in a democracy. The fact that homelessness has skyrocketed during the current administration while a small slice of New Yorkers have grown richer and richer is a significant failure and needs to be looked at carefully.

A key plank in Mayor-elect de Blasio's platform was his call for a small increase in the city income tax for top earners to finance universal pre-k programs in New York. One key to the future success of children is early childhood education. I support the Mayor-elect's goal. Increased funding such as this can come from Albany. Whether the funding comes from a change in the tax rates for the top earners or in the form of direct aid from the state, this issue must be addressed, and I will be a strong advocate for this.

The to-do list for the new mayor is quite long. I have only mentioned a few issues. I look forward to working with our new mayor on the many issues facing our community and our city.

Sincerely,

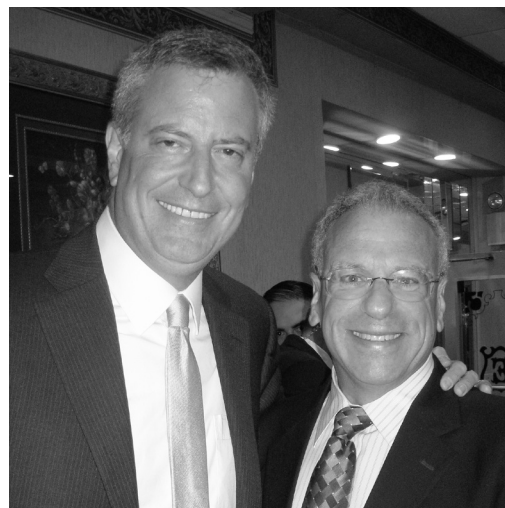
Jeffrey Dinowitz
Member of Assembly

Safety First! **City Approves Neighborhood Slow Zone for Norwood Proposed by Assemblyman Dinowitz**

Make that another Neighborhood Slow Zone that will be installed in the 81st Assembly district! The Department of Transportation recently announced fifteen newly approved Slow Zones, including one that I proposed for Norwood. Assemblyman Mark Gjonaj joined me in submitting this request.

Earlier this year, the city finished installing the Neighborhood Slow Zone that I proposed for the area surrounding Independence Avenue in central Riverdale.

The area designated for the new Slow Zone in Norwood is a highly residential, densely populated area that has seen too much speeding and numerous accidents in the last few years. Studies have shown that previously installed Slow Zones have reduced vehicular speeds and have also reduced the number of accidents in other areas of the city. The Neighborhood Slow Zone will be installed next year and it will include newly installed traffic safety measures including speed humps, and markings that alert motorists of the decreased speed limit. The approved Slow Zone includes all of the side streets within the boundaries of East Gun Hill Road, Bainbridge Avenue, East 204th Street and Webster Avenue. The decreased speed limit and newly installed traffic safety measures will make the Norwood community safer for all community residents, pedestrians and motorists.



Assemblyman Dinowitz is shown here with Mayor-elect Bill de Blasio. They look forward to working with each other on issues facing the Bronx and New York City over the next four years.



Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz joined in the celebration of the 100th anniversary of Engine Company 81 and Ladder Company 46. He presented a proclamation in honor of the occasion. Pictured here are Lt. Harry McMaster, Captain Carlos Vazquez, Assemblyman Dinowitz and Captain Michael Quevedo.

Dinowitz, Klein Introduce Legislation to Quell Increase in Cell Phone Theft

In April of 2012, the Riverdale community was shocked and horrified by the brutal murder of a young man, slain in cold blood for his iPhone as he was walking down the street. This terrible incident was the result of a growing criminal trend in the city, as thefts of cell phones and other “smart” devices like tablet computers are up 10 percent for the year.

To quell this growing scourge of criminality, State Senator Jeff Klein and I have submitted legislation to our respective houses of the state legislature that would discourage the theft of these devices by regulating the secondary market for their resale. If adopted by the legislature and signed by the governor, this new legislation will require anyone selling a smart phone to provide proof of ownership, usually in the form of a sales receipt from the original purchase. Receipts also must include the device’s serial number, which can aid law enforcement in tracking stolen merchandise. Failure to comply with the law would result in stiff penalties for secondary market vendors and possible jail time. We must take swift action to fight this crime by creating every possible disincentive for committing these thefts, and I hope this new legislation can become law during the next legislative session.



Senator Jeffrey Klein and Assemblyman Dinowitz are sponsoring legislation to address the growing scourge of smart phone thefts. They are pictured here announcing this important legislation with 50th Precinct Community Council President Paulette Shomo and PS 24 Parents’ Association Co-President Farrah Rubin.

The Kingsbridge Armory National Ice Center: A Boon for the Bronx!

I grew up in Kingsbridge Heights and have a personal affinity for this wonderful and unique neighborhood. I cannot tell you how happy and excited I am that the proposed Kingsbridge National Ice Center (KNIC) was recently approved for construction in the Kingsbridge Armory by the City Planning Commission.

The KNIC proposal, which will transform the vacant 750,000 square-foot Kingsbridge National Armory into a world-class ice facility, will have a tremendous impact on the neighborhood and its surrounding businesses. The project will create an estimated 890 construction jobs and 267 permanent jobs, with a provision that requires at least 51 percent of the permanent jobs to be reserved for Bronx residents. The center will feature nine indoor regulation size rinks, including a feature rink that will seat approximately 5,000 and will

be used to host international and national hockey tournaments, figure and speed skating competitions, and ice shows. In addition to lots and lots of ice, the center will also have 50,000 square-feet designated for community space, which altogether will bring an estimated 2 million visitors a year to the area.

The revenue generated by this development will benefit not only the ice center, but also the surrounding businesses in the neighborhood, leading to increased tax dollars for our schools and local services.

A facility of this caliber won’t be found anywhere else in the city, and will no doubt create a lot of fun and lasting memories for countless area families, like the ones I have in Kingsbridge Heights. If only this wonderful facility had been built when I lived a few blocks away on University Avenue.

Celebrating 10 years of the New York State Clean Indoor Air Act *Assembly also passes new law banning smoking on playgrounds*

Ten years ago, the New York State Clean Indoor Air Act was signed into law. This monumental legislation outlawed smoking in bars, restaurants and many other public facilities, ensuring patrons and employees would no longer be subjected to the dangers of secondhand smoke.

Since its enactment, New Yorkers have seen the benefits of this vital law. Studies by the New York State Department of Health (DOH) show that over the last 10 years exposure to secondhand smoke by young people attending middle school and high school has dropped by one-third. In addition to these findings, the DOH noted that hospitalizations for heart attacks decreased by 8 percent in just the first year of the law, representing a savings of \$56 million in health care costs for New Yorkers.

While the Clean Indoor Air Act has been a success, more protections are needed. That’s why I sponsored a new law that further protects children from secondhand smoke by making it illegal to

smoke on playgrounds between sunrise and sunset where children under the age of 12 are present (Ch. 102 of 2013). The law, which takes effect this month, ensures that children will be less vulnerable to the risks of being exposed to secondhand smoke. In addition, my law, sponsored in the State Senate by Senator Gustavo Rivera, which prohibits smoking within 100 feet of a school entrance, will benefit children and adults alike.

The threat to children’s health is real. Secondhand smoke puts children at risk of severe respiratory diseases and often hinders the growth of their lungs. Exposure to secondhand smoke also increases the risk of lower respiratory tract infections, such as bronchitis and pneumonia, and impairs a child’s ability to learn. I’ll continue looking for effective ways to keep children away from secondhand smoke, which contains 40 substances that are known to cause cancer.



Assemblyman Dinowitz attended the Veterans’ Day Ceremony at Memorial Grove in Van Cortlandt Park. He is shown here with Congressman Eliot Engel, Councilman-elect Andrew Cohen, event organizer Herb Barret, along with many veterans and girl scouts.



Assemblyman Dinowitz joined local residents on Reservoir Avenue for a street fair sponsored by the Kingsbridge Heights Neighborhood Improvement Association. He is shown here with organizer Elizabeth Thompson and other participants in this annual event.

Dinowitz Submits Housing Bills Aimed at Protecting Tenants

I have recently submitted four bills to the Assembly aimed at protecting tenants by curtailing fees and surcharges that are often imposed by landlords without legal authority.

Many landlords are increasing the cost of housing by imposing these non-rent fees, such as surcharges for legal services or the use of a tenant-installed air conditioning unit, without adhering to the regulations set forth by the NYS Division of Housing and Community Renewal (DHCR) Operational Bulletin. Citing this need for greater oversight of fee levying by city landlords and an increased need for tenant awareness, I submitted a package of tenant protection bills that will:

- Prohibit landlords from including any legal fees not awarded pursuant to a court order on any correspondence to a tenant;

- Prohibit landlords from imposing surcharges on a tenant for the use of a tenant-installed air conditioning unit if the tenant pays for the electric utility service;
- Require the DHCR to perform a study on non-rental fees imposed by landlords of housing accommodations subject to rent control laws, which will assist the legislature in dealing with landlords who are using these fees improperly for various reasons;
- Require the DHCR to publish an informational pamphlet providing information on the most common non-rental fees that DHCR authorizes landlords to impose on tenants, and provide for the distribution of the pamphlets to landlords and ultimately tenants of rent regulated housing.

Victory! North Central Bronx Hospital Reverses Course, Will Reopen Maternity Ward in 2014

In August, North Central Bronx Hospital closed its perinatal care unit, a decision that sent shockwaves throughout the borough for many expecting mothers. Roughly 10 percent of the entire borough's births took place at North Central, which meant that other hospitals in the area would have to take on a significant influx of pregnant patients. As a direct result of the closure, nearby Jacobi Medical Center saw an increase in wait times and overcrowding in their labor unit.

I was proud to join community members and labor unions in voicing our strong opposition to this terrible and painful cut in service. Closing hospital units in densely populated areas is a bad idea, especially when the unit caters to such a vulnerable population. As it turns out, our voices were heard by the powers that be and our collective outrage forced them to reconsider their bad policy maneuver. **Beginning next summer, North Central Bronx Hospital will reopen its perinatal care unit!**

Stopping the Poorly Conceived Plan for 6469 Broadway

Over the summer, residents of North Riverdale were shocked to hear of a new proposal to house both low income seniors and severely mentally ill at-risk adults in a new housing complex to be constructed at 6469 Broadway. The two groups spearheading the proposal, Comunilife and SelfHelp, envisioned a new 12-story complex that would set aside one-third of its studio apartments for the mentally ill, just blocks away from the Riverdale Manor complex that houses a somewhat similar population.

The proposal was ill-conceived and inappropriate for the area. The people of Riverdale are very empathetic and understand fully the need to take care of our most vulnerable populations. But proposing to build a facility of this nature down the block from Riverdale Manor without seeking any input from the community beforehand, was wrong and an unacceptable way to do business.

In response to this issue, Senator Jeff Klein and I worked along with many community leaders, including Laura Spalter, to meet with the developers in hopes that they would reconsider their plan and be good neighbors by listening to the concerns of the community. **As a result of our efforts, Comunilife has decided to pull out of the project, which puts the entire development in serious jeopardy.** Although the potential remains for another bad proposal, the development as initially conceived has been halted, and our collective efforts have sent a strong message that our concerns must be heard!



Senator Jeff Klein, Assemblyman Dinowitz and community residents from northern Riverdale announce a victory in their efforts to prevent the construction of an ill-conceived project at 6469 Broadway.

Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center FINALLY Re-opens

The Parks Department, after years of delay, finally re-opened to the public the Williamsbridge Oval Recreation Center! I had written many letters and attended many rallies criticizing the lack of progress with this project, so I am elated that the residents of Norwood will finally have access to this facility. The Recreation Center is a terrific resource for the Norwood community including after school programs for children, a fitness room for community residents and a computer resource room.

Heat Regulations for Tenants

By law, tenants in a multiple dwelling or multiple residence (i.e. a building with 3 or more apartments) must be provided with heat and hot water as follows:

Heat: From October 1 to May 31- Between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. heat must register 68 degrees Fahrenheit when the outside temperature falls below 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. heat must register 55 degrees Fahrenheit when the outside temperature falls below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Hot Water: 24 hours a day- every day of the year. Hot water must register at or above a

constant temperature of 120 degrees Fahrenheit at the tap.

The NYS Homes & Community Renewal (HCR) is authorized to reduce the rent of any rent-stabilized or rent-controlled apartment when these required heat and hot water services are not maintained. Tenants should file an Application for Rent Reduction for Failure to Provide and Maintain Heat and/or Hot Water Service with the HCR if the landlord does not provide proper heat or hot water. This form is available here: <http://www.nyshcr.org/Forms/Rent/HHW1.pdf>



Each year Assemblyman Dinowitz organizes free flu shots for the community. Working with our other elected officials, Visiting Nurse Service and North Central Bronx Hospital, hundreds of people received these shots and will spend another winter free of the flu.



Once again the generous students of PS 7 donated an extraordinary amount of cans for the annual food drive sponsored by Assemblyman Dinowitz. Members of the PS 7 student government are shown here with Assemblyman Dinowitz, Kelly Links, Tara McMaster and Principal Frank Paterson.



Protecting our natural resources and the incredible beauty of our community is a high priority for our elected officials. That is why Assemblyman Dinowitz, Senator Klein, Congressman Eliot Engel, Councilman-elect Andrew Cohen, Community Board 8 Chair Robert Fanuzzi and others denounced the proposed construction by LG to build an oversized tower that would spoil the view of the magnificent Palisades.



Pictured at the annual Meeting of Riverdale Senior Services Inc. are former President Helen Morik, Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, incoming President Anthony Mahler, current President Judith Kramer, Executive Director Julia Schwart-Leeper, and Councilman Oliver Koppell.



Assemblyman Dinowitz participated in the ribbon cutting for the new assisted living building sponsored by Jewish Home Life Care on University Avenue. The Assemblyman helped secure millions of dollars in funding from the state to enable the construction of this beautiful facility to take place. He is shown here helping to cut the ribbon along with members of their board and Deputy Borough President Aurelia Greene.

Free Notary Service

My office provides free notary service during regular office hours, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Please bring two forms of identification, at least one with your photo and signature, if you would like your signature notarized.

Don't forget -
the deadline to register is

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31

Assemblyman DINOWITZ wants to ensure you receive your Basic STAR exemption

"By registering you're ensuring your tax savings for the future and helping root out waste and abuse of the STAR program."

Everyone who receives the Basic STAR exemption must complete a one-time registration

Go to www.tax.ny.gov or call **518-457-2036**

Registration is easy