

Next issue:
Sat., July 3
Fourth of July issue

The Main Street WIRE™

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Karen Stewart, as she spoke at Tuesday night's Town Meeting, criticizing a plan for revision of the Residents Association constitution put forward by RIRA's current leadership. As the meeting ended, her husband, former RIRA President Patrick Stewart (inset), beamed.



Meeting on RIRA's Constitution Bashes Its Current Leadership

Meeting Fails to Act on Proposed Changes When Katz Declares Failure to Achieve Quorum As Residents Continue to Arrive

A simmering four-year rivalry in Residents Association politics turned into an acrid wound Tuesday night when the organization's president, Matthew Katz, declared a RIRA Town Meeting "null and void" for lack of a quorum. Katz made the ruling at 8:12 p.m., after acceding to a second quorum count called for by residents who had gathered to vote down proposed revisions of the organization's constitution. A

number of residents objected again, pointing out that people were still arriving in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd. Some who support the proposed changes were simultaneously leaving the hall to avoid being counted toward a 100-person quorum; others were reportedly waiting outside to avoid being counted.

"There will not be a third count," Katz announced. In response to a question, he then read language from the current RIRA constitution governing the process by which amendments to the constitution are made, but few heard him. A chant, "Now... now... now," had broken out, overpowering Katz as those opposing the proposed new constitution realized that more than the required 100 residents had arrived. But Katz refused an additional recount.

As voices of protest rose in the Chapel of the Good Shepherd, Island House resident Judy Berdy stepped forward and took the microphone from Katz. "Excuse me. Excuse me! Shush! Shush!" Berdy demanded, shouting, and the crowd, now at 107 according to the count being taken by opponents of the proposed changes, quieted. She then suggested that residents unhappy with Katz's ruling write to "every official, every politician" in protest, before calling for a count of those present who were there to vote against or for the changes.

At some point during this process, Katz left as Berdy continued to manage use of the microphone. He later said, "I had no reason to

stay. My work was done." Opponents of the changes Katz and the current Common Council favor objected to Katz's "null and void" ruling because, under the



Residents Association President Matthew Katz reads from the organization's constitution in answering a question, as his wife, Sherie Helstien (right) speaks with Judy Berdy (back to camera). Moments later, when Berdy took over the microphone, Katz left the meeting after declaring a quorum requirement unmet.

RIOC Plan Puts Island House, Westview, on Privatization Path

Memo Promises Attempts at Subsidies for Some

by Dick Lutz

In a key step toward privatization of Westview and Island House, RIOC has set terms for negotiating an extension of the buildings' ground leases. On Monday, the RIOC Board issued a resolution and memorandum of intent outlining how the land will be valued in determining future ground rent.

The Board's memo also promises an "endeavor" to obtain public-agency subsidies for tenants who meet a key income guideline. It acknowledges that privatization is intended by the likely purchaser, the Sheldrake Corporation.

In Monday's RIOC meeting, Board Chair Mary Beth Labate said, "There will be ample opportunity for debate and discussion. I just ask everyone to view [the memo of intent] with an open mind and, as people get more educated on the process, I think they will understand, in the end, that this could be an extraordinarily favorable thing for those living in Westview and Island House."

There are two major components of the Board's action, which designates Board members John Mannix and Deborah Beck, a Rivercross resident, as RIOC's negotiators. One component is the valuation process. The other focuses on possible subsidies for tenants.

Valuation

Because removing the buildings from the State's Mitchell-Lama program will require a long-term mortgage, RIOC's role in the privatization process focuses on extending the ground lease for the buildings to December, 2068. In Monday's meeting, Beck said, "The part of the deal that RIOC controls is the ground lease... Westview and Island House are privately owned and so it is a [negotiation] with the current owner that would determine who ultimately succeeds in purchasing the two buildings... We have very limited involvement in that process beyond approval of the transaction that is ultimately agreed to."

Separately, John Mannix pointed out that there is a deal under way between the current owners and the Sheldrake Corporation: "We have been asked by the Sheldrake Corporation to negotiate with them. We have had our attorneys review the contract between Sheldrake and the current owners and we are satisfied that there is, in fact, a contract between [them]. Beyond that, obviously, it's confidential. It has not been released to the Board... Our attorneys have read it and have opined that a contract does exist."

The existence of the contract, and RIOC's recognition of it, could impact on the latitude available to tenant groups in each building who have long explored the possibilities of tenant purchase. (Leaders of the ownership efforts in each building have not yet responded to *The WIRE's* request for comment.)

To set the value of the ground under the buildings, an appraisal process is outlined in the memorandum of intent: "The ground rent during the extension term of each of the ground leases is to be based on the greater of the ground rent to be negotiated with the

purchasers and the fair market value of the land." The memo names Jerome Haims Realty, Inc., as the first appraiser. Additional appraisers may be brought into the process, at the option of the parties. The language of the memo indicates that RIOC intends to collect increased ground rent, and adds, "if the projects... are converted to condominium or cooperative ownership... a percentage... of the gross sales price" will also be received by RIOC. The percentage share is specified in the memo as "to be determined" in the negotiations.

Subsidies

The memorandum of intent says, "RIOC will endeavor to obtain... funds from public agencies... to assist existing tenants whose income is below 150% of AMI." AMI stands for "Area Median Income," a federal administrative benchmark set by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and commonly used by government agencies in determining eligibility for government-backed mortgages. While AMI is reset periodically, and varies depending on family size, for New York City the 2004 figures are:

Occupants	AMI	150% Limit
1	\$44,000	\$66,000
2	50,200	75,300
3	56,500	84,750
4	62,800	94,200
5	67,800	101,700
6	72,800	109,200

Thus, if RIOC is able to obtain a pool of funds from public agencies, the income limit for a family of four seeking a subsidy for rent – or a down payment or

See **Privatization**, page 4



I Want to Be a Producer The Child School is staging *Goodbye Rio*, an adaptation of *The Producers*, on Tuesday (June 22) at 6:30, in its new gymnasium building behind Eastwood. There's one performance only; tickets are \$10, available from Rosie at 212-223-5055.

constitution in force since 1991, the lack of a voting quorum at a Town Meeting causes the matter under consideration to go back to the Common Council, where a two-thirds vote can ratify the changes. In a vote on presenting the revised constitution to a Town Meeting, there had been 75% approval. Opponents, who hoped to vote down the change Tuesday night, wanted the decision made then rather than in a future Common Council meeting, where approval would be more likely.

The rivalry over leadership of the Roosevelt Island Residents Association was first joined in a major way in the 2000 election, when Katz ran against incumbent president Patrick Stewart and won the office. In the 2002 election, Katz's First Vice President, Byron Gaspard, opposed Katz with the backing of Stewart and his wife, Karen. Katz, running as a team with Rivercross resident Steve Marcus, retained the presidency, but the political rivalry continued to sizzle beneath the surface, sometimes breaking into the open in meetings of the RIRA Common Council.

Marcus took on the job of heading a committee drafting constitutional revisions. Changes were needed to provide representation for new residents in Southtown, at a minimum, and a number of additional alterations became part of the constitutional revision process.

One change the Marcus committee proposed was elimination of non-elected voting seats on the RIRA Common Council. Those seats are available, by the terms of the 1991 constitution, to resident members of the Board of Directors of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, Island representatives to Community Board 8, and notably, to five delegates appointed by the leadership of the Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations

See **Town Meeting**, page 13

The Editorial Page

Trust, Well-Placed

From the volume of the voices Tuesday night in the Chapel, you’d think somebody was trying to fold up Roosevelt Island, stuff it in a suitcase, and make off to Panama.

Some very hard-working Roosevelt Islanders were made out to be unscrupulous brigands, when all they’ve been trying to do is renovate a Residents Association constitution that has grown feeble with age. They’re the officers you elected, and your trust in them is wisely placed.

Streamlining the constitution is a good idea – downright necessary, in fact, if the Residents Association is going to be agile enough to deal with some serious challenges on an ever-shortening horizon.

So what were the objections?

One misguided soul spoke of a power grab, telling residents who had been rounded up to vote against constitutional reform that they were being used as stepping stones to power. There were suggestions that the RIRA President would suddenly be able to deny Common Council representation to some buildings. There was an implication that somebody had theft in mind by simplifying check-writing for items below \$750.

There were even suggestions – get this – that a resident community-minded enough to campaign for a volunteer, non-paying seat on the Common Council would surely, if she moved from one building to another, suddenly turn on her former neighbors in some building-vs-building war. In fact, allowing dedicated, community-minded residents to serve out their terms after a move is a good idea simply because hard-working volunteers are truly scarce in this over-busy world. And we’re not aware of any impending first-strike strategy being cooked up by the residents of Westview against neighbors in Island House. But from the clatter Tuesday night, you might think that first strike was imminent.

Mistakes were made Tuesday night, no question about it, and that exacerbated the anger that had been whipped up among residents who came to the Town Meeting under various mistaken impressions. One thought the Chapel was going to be closed to the public. Another thought the meeting was to prevent somebody from taking away her apartment. It didn’t matter what the real question was – the answer was to be “no.”

But there are remedies when mistakes are made, and the good-hearted neighbors who serve on your RIRA Common Council are in the process of making them (see extensive coverage throughout this issue).

We’re confident that when the merits are made more clear, and people have been encouraged to reason rather than run off in all directions, the right decision will be made on some very important constitutional changes. The simplest one is moving a lot of procedural plumbing from the constitution itself into a set of bylaws, where changes – like adding Common Council seats for delegates from new buildings, will be easier.

There’s lots of coverage, lots of letters, much to follow in this issue. That’s one place to start, but as you start, know that the villainous behavior attributed to very good people is deeply fictional, and you have nothing to fear from efforts to make RIRA work better for you.

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To the Editor:

Sometimes you run into a great cab driver and the ride home to Roosevelt Island is a treasure, enriched by a wonderful cab driver. I have not been well lately and I have had to use them almost every day to get home from a doctor visit in Manhattan.

I have noted a disturbing trend – drivers who try to get out of trips to Roosevelt Island. They will ask you if they can take you as far as the Tram, or they will stop and put you into another cab. On many occasions I have been told they can’t take me because their shift is ending in an hour. The more this has been happening the more my frustration level. A friend was taken as far as the Tram, then the driver called the NYPD, said she was refusing to pay; my friend, stunned and appalled, was told by the NYPD there was nothing they could do. (Why was she expected to pay when she had not been taken to her destination?) Shame on the NYPD!

As of the hottest day of the year so far, I had my own horrific experience. My daughter and I had been on an un-airconditioned train from Philadelphia to Penn Station. Because of my illness the heat was causing me to have heat exhaustion and I was feeling extremely ill by the time we arrived. I was assisted by a redcap, who got my luggage and me, in a wheelchair, to the cab stand; the captain allowed us to get a cab right away. I thought, *I’m almost home*.

I soon realized that the cab had no airconditioning, so I opened the window and stuck my head out like a puppy. The next thing I knew, the driver was pulling over at the corner of 39th and 8th. He stopped the car, jumped out, opened the hood, and said, “Car can’t go. Air overheat.” I said, “You have got to be kidding me – you didn’t have the air on.” He said, “Lady, get out.”

He then walked away from the car and refused to help us get our luggage out. When I hailed another cab, he ran over, waving his hands, saying, “She’s going to Queens.” The new driver drove off. Our first driver does this once more.

My daughter started to cry. “Mom, you have to call a car service, or we will never get home.” I took her advice. When I turned to her and said, “They’re coming in about 15 minutes,” the driver quickly slammed down the trunk and hood, jumped in the car, and drove off, turning into the Port Authority to get a new, more acceptable ride.

Even on a very hot day I don’t think a cab ride home for a sick person should be a trip through hell.

Have others had outrageous experiences with cab drivers when trying to get to Roosevelt Island? I did report the driver to the Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC). But I also called the mayor’s office, and I would like to include others’ stories with my complaint about the difficulties in getting cabs to come here. Please respond with an e-mail to me at LynneStrong@hotmail.com, and I will include them in my complaint to the mayor’s office.

Lynne Strong-Shinozaki

Letters deadline for July 3 issue: Tuesday, June 29

After deadline, letters are considered on a space-available basis.

Letters

To the Editor:

The hardest part of a transferable job is leaving. This time it is harder than ever. Not only do we leave an extraordinary, vibrant, and multi-ethnic city – truly the capital of the world – we also have to leave Roosevelt Island.

It has been the best choice possible. In fact, after seeing this apartment in Manhattan Park, the first one we saw, we knew there could not be anything better and we took it. Five years later, not only we are sorry to leave the apartment, the view, the skies, the river, the Manhattan skyline, we are sorry to leave the people of our Island, our village within the city.

This village of ours made us feel part of it. It was a great confort to be part of the Roosevelt Island community during the tragic events of the last few years. Not only 9/11, but also the anthrax scare and the Black-out.

On a more personal level, we felt around us the genuine interest in the health conditions of my husband, Dr. S. L. Malhotra, starting with the staff of our 20 River Road building and the people in Gristede’s, when last winter he underwent surgery and had a long hospitalization and rehabilitation.

We have also to give tribute to a very special person of the Island – somebody who saved my husband’s life by taking over his health care and by giving the correct advice at every step. In his compassionate and charming manner he was always available; he frequently visited his patient in the Lenox Hill Hospital and now at home. Dr. Resnick, we will miss you!

Thank you, Roosevelt Islanders, thank you so much!

Gabriella Toresini Malhotra

To the Editor:

This is another letter from another frustrated resident.

How long do we have to put up with Motorgate management and their I-don’t-give-a-damn-what-you-think way of doing business?

Does anyone know what, exactly, Motorgate/Edison Parking is supposed to offer in exchange for the monthly rate? If so, please share it.

Not only do we pay money to have our cars *not* watched and *not* properly guarded against vandalism; now we also have to use stairs reeking of urine and worse, to go up and down the garage floors.

What do we get for our misery? Another computer-typed note on the elevator door: “Sorry for the inconvenience...”

Just a thought: whose inconvenience would it be if we were to withhold the monthly payment, on grounds of unsanitary conditions, unreliable service or, even more accurate, no service at all?

I look forward to reading a response from those in charge.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Alec Menglide

To RIOC President Herb Berman:

I would like to bring to your attention the problem the Roosevelt Island sports teams are having with the playing fields that are contracted for practice.

I am an assistant coach for my son’s team and, on several occasions, we have arrived at the field with a valid permit only to find an off-island team with an equally valid permit for the same date and time.

I can only conclude that either RIOC does not keep a well-organized schedule, or through greed, double books the fields. In either case, the youth of the Island end up being the ones that suffer.

The wording on your permit reads: *This permit is subject to cancellation or termination at anytime without prior notice by an officer of RIOC, or an employee thereof so designated to act who in his/her discretion determined that a violation of this permit has occurred* (up to here it is reasonable) *or for other good reason as may be determined by RIOC* (this portion seems to be very arbitrary and arrogant).

I am requesting that, once a permit is given, RIOC respect the dates and times.

Gene Beola

To the Editor:

I am in 540. This is about Disney. I am beyond civilized discourse. Our lobby is back to worse than its former state of deterioration and, more critically, our intercom (removed and replaced by Disney for filming, twice that I know of) is bolluxed up completely (five weeks) and apparently beyond repair. I am physically disabled and unable to summon my aide, from downstairs, when I need her assistance.

I wonder if those who feel so warm and fuzzy about “Dim H₂O” would feel the same if it had been filmed in their building, had their environment and activities been disrupted, and their building damaged for how long?

Sharon Stern

Additional letters, about Tuesday’s Town Meeting and RIRA constitutional change, appear on pages 11-13 of this issue.

Letters Policy

The WIRE welcomes letters to the editor, to the community, and to/from 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 are not considered for publication*.

Preferred form of submission: E-mail to **Letters@MainStreetWIRE.com** (plaintext e-mail format preferred, or attach a file created using any common wordprocessing software, but no MSWord files containing macros), 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 or faxed to 212-755-2540. Clearly handwritten letters will be considered if brief, but we are not able to take telephone dictation of letters. **Letters subject to acceptance and to possible editing for length and clarity.** Recommended maximum length, 300 words; longer letters will be considered if their content merits the required space.

So, did you hear about the Town Meeting that never was? The RIRA Common Council had passed a revised constitution and adopted bylaws at its May 5 meeting with a two-thirds majority vote required (actually 75% of the voting members endorsed the motions) and brought their hard work to a Town Meeting of RIRA members on June 15. As you may know, a quorum of 100 residents is required for a vote.

The RIRA Column

There was a brouhaha during the 36 hours prior to the meeting as a flyer opposing the amended constitution made its way around the Island. Unsigned, it included a list of “Signatories” containing the names of at least four, possibly more, Islanders who never gave permission to use their names and others who never got to read the screed beforehand, offering the use of their names based on misinformation and misdirection.

Anyway, the meeting was called for 8:00 p.m. I waited until 8:10 to call for the required quorum (Robert’s Rules allowing me to “...wait a few minutes before taking the chair.”) The count was 90 and the quorum call failed. I was asked to take another count, an action I’m not sure is even legal – you’re supposed to stick with the count you’re stuck with, so to speak. However, I asked the proctors to recount the house and the count was 93.

Now when people are on “Roosevelt Island time” at Common Council meetings, I can delay the roll call until I’m certain we can conduct business with a quorum. However, at a Town Meeting, we’re supposed to start when the agenda stipulates and the quorum count is final. Once the count is taken I’m not at liberty to sit there until hell freezes over or a quorum decides to drift in. With a count of 93, the meeting was null and void. I had intended to conduct a lengthy discussion period before any vote but without a quorum that became impossible. It was also my intention, regardless of the outcome of the meeting, to ask for questions on any subject from the floor post-adjourning addressed to the attending Council Members, but the decibel level was so high that I just left.

Would I rather have resolved the issue once and for all last Tuesday evening? You betcha! I spent the last month posting agendas (as they were ripped down from Main Street kiosks) and the Common Council

authorized \$500 toward the cost of the four-page spread in the May 15 *WIRE* that provided due notice of the meeting and copies of the new constitution and bylaws. I find it remarkable that, during the 30 days leading up to the Town Meeting, neither Steve Marcus nor I were asked a single question regarding these complicated rule changes. It’s not surprising that there was rampant confusion as to what people were to be voting on at the Town Meeting. But without a quorum *at the time the roll was called* the issue was decided and we were done.



Matthew Katz, President
Roosevelt Island Residents Assn.
e-mail: MatthewKatz@rcn.com

ours just sets rules of procedure for a membership organization currently at 9,500 members, and a deliberative body, the Common Council. The changes we made simply were designed to make the work of the two dozen (or so) volunteers who are elected to a two-year term easier to accomplish. In the almost 30 years since RIRA was formed, the world has changed, Roosevelt Island has changed, and RIRA has changed; the constitution has not. In fact, no one has taken on the draconian task of getting any amendment passed since 1991. The basic tenets and guarantees of the old constitution remain virtually intact in the revised version and the bylaws simply allow the Common Council to add and remove committees, to require more seats as we strive to include Southtowners in our civic life and to set the rules of our biannual elections so as to keep them current. And the Common Council, I would remind you, is the people who show up to do the work, run the committees, represent their

Since the constitution and bylaws were published in the May 15 *WIRE*, I’ve heard some interesting comments on our work, often from people unfamiliar with either the old or the improved constitution. One person at Roosevelt Island Day even called the old one “sacred.” It’s not; it’s just a tool. The U.S. Constitution may be called sacred given the freedoms it guarantees, but

See **Katz**, page 11

At press time, the **Public Safety Blotter** for June 1-15 had not yet been received. It is expected soon, and will be posted on *Website NYC10044* at nyc10044.com/wire/2419/blot2419.html.

I am pleased to announce that the Board of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation approved the purchase of four new hybrid-electric buses. With partial grants from the New York State Research and Development Authority and the New York State Power Authority, we will be able to replace the aging and less energy-efficient buses with new alternatively fueled buses.

The RIOC Column

There are many benefits to the new buses. The current ones, which are approximately ten years old, have started to break down on occasion. It is also difficult for those buses to look truly clean, due to the fact that some areas of them are just worn. And finally, the current buses are not fuel-efficient. As many of you know, one of Governor Pataki’s top priorities is to preserve the environment. It is anticipated that the new buses will alleviate all of those problems.

There is further good news. The New York State and New York City Offices of Emergency Management will make good on their promise to hold a meeting with RIOC and a community representative in early July. Matthew Katz, the president of RIRA, volunteered to be the representative, and from what I have been told, he will be contacted within the next several weeks to confirm this meeting.

These two agencies have also demonstrated their commitment to Roosevelt Island by sending representatives and the New York City mobile command post to the Island on Roosevelt Island Day. Many Island residents enjoyed the tour of the incredible bus with all of its radios, cameras, video screens, and other high-tech monitoring equipment. As soon as we contacted the two offices and told them about Roosevelt Island Day, they welcomed the opportunity to come back to the Island.

I want to take this opportunity to again publicly acknowledge Doryne Isley and Charlie De Fino for all of their hard work on Roosevelt Island Day. The mobile command post was just one of the many ex-

citing features. I am told that everyone seemed to have a fantastic time. Between the rides, snow cones, and artist demonstrations, there was something for everyone. I am also told that the evening concert was the best one yet!

Planning is already underway for the next big Island event, the Fourth of July fireworks. Tickets are on sale via the web, and will be available at the Tram by next week. I look forward to seeing you there.



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

As many of you have already heard, I have had to recuse myself from anything to do with Island House and Westview. I would like to pass on one bit of information, though, that may be helpful to residents who live in those buildings. I know that there are many rumors flowing about what may happen. As publicly stated by Board Chair Mary Beth Labate at the June 14 Board meeting, information about what is happening is being made available. I invite everyone to visit the RIOC website for that information. On the left-hand side, under the section on news, there is a resolution and a memorandum of intent that have been drafted, but not yet approved, by the Board. It clearly spells out its intentions on this issue. If someone does not have access to the web, please come into the RIOC offices and we will make this available to you.

Finally, I invite everyone to take a moment to look at the newly refurbished rose window at Good Shepherd. It looks fabulous, and I welcome everyone to enjoy the return of this part of Roosevelt Island’s rich history.

Enjoy the warm weather!

COMING UP

– This Weekend –

A View of Island History, display of art and artifacts from the collection of the Roosevelt Island Historical Society, Rivercross Main Street windows, through July.

– The Coming Week –

New York Junior Tennis League Spring After-School Program, Monday through Friday, 3:00-6:00 p.m., through end of school season, for kids 8 to 18, with Peewee program for kids 5-7 on Wednesdays only. No pre-registration or equipment required (wear sneakers and a smile).

Goodbye Rio, the Child School/Legacy High School adaptation of *The Producers*, **Tue., June 22**, 6:30 p.m., Middle School Gym, 566 Main Street. \$10 admission; no children under 18 admitted.

CB8 Speaks television program, **Tue., June 22**, 7:00 p.m., Manhattan Neighborhood Network (Channel 34, TimeWarner cable only), with Assemblymembers Pete Grannis and Jonathan Bing discussing current housing legislation.

– Future Events –

Opening Reception, Roosevelt Island Artists, members’ exhibition, **Sat., June 26**, 6:00-9:00 p.m., Gallery RIVAA, 527 Main Street. Gallery hours Wed. and Fri., 6:00-9:00; Sat.-Sun., 11:00-5:00.

Toastmasters Annual Dinner, **Monday, June 28**.

Memorial Event for Inge Fiori, **Tues., June 29** (tentative schedule; location to be announced).

The Main Street WIRE – next issue **Sat., July 3** (**Fourth of July Business Cards** issue. (To receive e-mail bulletins in the meantime, send an “Add Me” message to Bulletins@MainStreetWIRE.com.) **Deadlines:** Advertising in the paper, Fri., June 25; decision on fliers for *The Bag*, Mon., June 28; fliers due Thur., July 1. **Future issues:** July 31; Aug. 28; Sept. 11, 25; Oct. 16, 30 (pre-election issue); Nov. 6 (post-election issue), 20 (Thanksgiving issue); Dec. 4, 18 (two December holiday issues), then twice a month starting in January, 2005. (Schedule subject to adjustment.) **Phone/fax** for news, **212-826-9055/755-2540**; urgent matters **917-617-0449**. **Phone/fax** for display and classified advertising placement and information, **212-751-8214/755-2540**. **To list your organization’s Island event in this column**, e-mail information to ComingUp@MainStreetWIRE.com, or leave it, addressed to *The WIRE*, at the 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 copy at the lobby desk at 531 Main Street, addressed to *The WIRE*. Please provide telephone numbers for possible follow-up.

Fourth of July Fireworks Festival, **Sun., July 4**, Southpoint Park. Tickets on sale at RIOC, 591 Main Street, or at Manhattan Tram station.

Book Discussion – The Hours by Michael Cunningham, **Thur., July 15**, 6:30 p.m., Library. Free. Books available at the Library.

Book Discussion – A Fine Balance by Rohinton Mistry, **Thur., Aug. 19**, 6:30 p.m., Library. Free. Books available at the Library.

Senior Center

Monday
10-11, **Latchhook Class**
10-11:30, **English as 2nd Language**
10:30, **Blood Pressure Screen**
12:30, **“Oldies” Movies**
1:00, **Tai Chi**
7:00, **Dance Class** (Beginners)
Tuesday
10:00, **Computers**
10-11, **Dance & Relax**
1:00, **Bingo**
6:00, **Yoga Class**
7:30, **Games** (RISA)
Wednesday
9:15, **Stay Well**
10:00, **Spanish Class**
10:30, **Shoppers’ Bus**

12:30, **Sculpting**
7:00, **Pokeno** (RISA)
Thursday
10:00, **Tai Chi**
10:30, **Creative Arts**
12:30, **Movie**
7:00, **Dance**
Friday
6:00, **Dance & Relax**
1:00, **Bridge**
7:00, **Games** (RISA)
Saturday
7:30, **Bingo** (RISA)

Special Events

Wed., June 23, 11:00, Belmont Racetrack trip
Fri., June 25, 12:30, Birthdays

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

A Gift Subscription For a Former Islander?

About subscriptions: *The Main Street WIRE*, which is delivered free to every residential door on Roosevelt Island, does not normally solicit off-Island subscriptions but, as a courtesy, provides first-class mailing on day of publication. The cost is \$50/year (for about 20-24 issues, published fortnightly September-May, and less often June-August) to cover postage and materials. A check payable to *The WIRE* should be sent, with delivery address, to *The WIRE*, 531 Main Street #413, NYC10044. Note that much of each issue appears, with many archived back issues, on *Website NYC10044* at www.nyc10044.com.

Text of RIOC Resolution and Memo

WHEREAS, R.I. Island House LLC (“R.I. Island House”) and R.I. Westview LLC (“R.I. Westview,” together with R.I. Island House, the “Contract Vendees”) respectively are contract vendees under certain contracts to acquire (i) the ownership interests in North Town Phase II, Inc. and affiliated entities, the tenant under the Island House Lease, and (ii) the interest of North Town Phase III, the tenant under the Westview Lease, in the Westview Lease (the Westview Lease, together with the Island House Lease collectively, the “Ground Leases”);

WHEREAS, the Contract Vendees have requested that RIOC, as lessor under the Ground Leases, enter into discussions and negotiations with them regarding the terms and conditions upon which RIOC would be willing to extend the term of each of the Ground Leases to December 22, 2068 and have indicated an intention to withdraw Island House and Westview (collectively, the “Projects”) from the Mitchell-Lama program and, at the option of the Contract Vendees, either continue to operate the Projects (or either of them) as rentals or convert the Projects (or either of them) to condominium or cooperative ownership;

WHEREAS, RIOC is willing to engage in discussions and negotiations with the Contract Vendees regarding the proposed lease extension transactions and matters incidental thereto (collectively, the “Proposed Transactions”) consistent with the terms and conditions outlined in the draft memorandum of intent (the “Memorandum of Intent”) attached hereto as Exhibit A, which Memorandum of Intent is intended for discussion purposes only (capitalized terms used herein, but not otherwise defined shall have the meanings ascribed to them in the Memorandum of Intent).

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that John Mannix and Deborah Beck, each a member of the Board of Directors, or any successor to either of them designated by the Board (collectively, the “Negotiators”) be authorized, and they hereby are authorized, for and on behalf of RIOC to engage in discussions and negotiations with the Contract Vendees regarding the Proposed Transactions consistent with the terms and conditions set forth in the Memorandum of Intent;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in furtherance of the foregoing resolution, the Negotiators keep the Real Estate Committee of the Board apprised of the progress of the discussions and negotiations regarding the Proposed Transactions and consult with the members of the Real Estate Subcommittee from time to time, as and when the Negotiators deem advisable, about the Proposed Transactions;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Negotiators (i) seek guidance from the Board of Directors, through an advisory vote or otherwise, as to the tentative terms of the Memorandum of Intent, as and when the Negotiators deem advisable, (ii) periodically report to the Board of Directors on the status of such discussions and negotiations regarding the Proposed Transactions, and (iii) present specific proposals with respect to the Proposed Transactions to the Board of Directors for further consideration;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that neither the Negotiators nor the Real Estate Subcommittee shall be authorized to, nor shall any of them, bind RIOC to consummate the Proposed Transactions, or to any terms or conditions with respect to the Proposed Transactions, without the prior approval of the Board of Directors in each instance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Negotiators, and each of them, be authorized to take all such further actions as any of them may deem necessary, proper, convenient or desirable to carry out the intent and accomplish the purposes of the foregoing resolutions.

Memorandum of Intent

Background

R.I. Island House LLC (“R.I. Island House”) has entered into a contract with North Town Phase II Houses, Inc. (“North Town Phase II”), in its capacity as a general partner of North Town Phase II Associates L.P. (the “Partnership”), and the other legal and beneficial owners of the Partnership, to acquire the legal and beneficial ownership interests in the Partnership and North Town Phase II. North Town Phase II is the tenant under that certain ground lease, dated October 30, 1972, between the New York State Urban Development Corporation, the predecessor-in-interest of Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (“RIOC”), as lessor, and North Town Phase II, as tenant, in respect of the property located at 551, 555 and 575 Main Street, Roosevelt Island, New York known as Island House (the “Island House Lease”). R.I. Westview LLC (“R.I. Island House LLC,” together with R.I. Island House, the “Purchasers”) has entered into a contract with North Town Phase III Houses, Inc. (“North Town Phase III”), the tenant under that certain ground lease, dated April 25, 1973, between the New York State Urban Development Corporation, the predecessor-in-interest of RIOC, as lessor, and North Town Phase III, as tenant, in respect of property located at 595 and 625 Main Street, Roosevelt Island, New York known as Westview (the “Westview Lease,” together with the Island House Lease, the “Ground Leases”) to acquire the interest of North Town Phase III in the Westview Lease. Island House and Westview are rental apartment buildings developed under the New York State Mitchell-Lama middle-income housing program. The residential subleases in these apartment buildings are currently subject to the rules and regulations of the Mitchell-Lama program, which is administered by the New York State Division of Housing and Community Renewal. Upon acquisition of the Ground Leases (or the legal and beneficial interests in the Partnership and North Town Phase II, as the case may be), the Purchasers have indicated that they intend to withdraw Island House and Westview (collectively, the “Projects”) from the Mitchell-Lama program and either continue to operate the Projects (or either of them) as rentals or convert the Projects (or either of them) to condominium or cooperative ownership, in each case at the option of the Purchasers. In connection with this privatization of the Projects, the Purchasers have requested that RIOC, as lessor under the Ground Leases, enter into discussions and negotiations with them regarding the terms and conditions upon which RIOC would be willing to extend the term of each of the Ground Leases to December 22, 2068, which is the day immediately preceding the date of the termination of the Master Lease pursuant to which the City of New York leased Roosevelt Island to the New York State Urban Development Corporation d/b/a Empire State Development Corporation (“ESDC”), the predecessor-in-interest to RIOC, as tenant under the Master Lease. RIOC is willing to engage in discussions and negotiations regarding the proposed lease extension transactions subject to the terms and conditions of this memorandum of intent.

Expression of Intent

This memorandum is intended as a non-binding expression of intent to pursue discussions and negotiations regarding the proposed lease extension transactions on certain basic terms outlined below and other material terms to be identified in the course of our discussions and negotiations. The basic terms outlined below are a preliminary formulation, intended as a framework for facilitating discussions and negotiations on these basic terms, as well as other material terms, and not a full or final statement of these or other material terms, all of which remain to be negotiated. This memorandum

is not intended to create binding obligations between RIOC and the Purchasers which can only be effected by the mutual execution and delivery of lease extension and modification agreements and other related documentation mutually satisfactory to the parties and, in the case of RIOC, receipt of approval from its Board of Directors and any other governmental authorities having jurisdiction.

Outline of Basic Terms

Subject to the qualifications set forth in this memorandum, the following is an outline of certain basic terms of the proposed lease extension transactions for discussion and negotiation:

Components of Rent. During the extension term, the rent payable to RIOC under each of the Ground Leases is to be comprised of a variety of components, including, without limitation: (i) ground rent to be determined by the valuation process described in paragraph 2 below; (ii) a payment in lieu of real estate taxes; and (iii) if the Projects (or either of them) are converted to condominium or cooperative ownership, conditional payments (anticipated to be used to fund improvements on Roosevelt Island) equal to a percentage to be determined of the gross sales price of any unit sold after the effective date of the lease extension. The percentage in respect of initial conversion/sponsor sales would be higher than the percentage in respect of re-sales. Payments in lieu of mortgage recording taxes and real property transfer taxes and/or other savings as a result of RIOC’s involvement are also payable to RIOC. The Purchasers shall cooperate with RIOC so that RIOC is able to realize such payments, but the Purchasers shall not be required to pay any additional amount in respect of mortgage recording taxes and/or transfer taxes that they would not be required to pay if RIOC were not involved in the transaction.

Valuation Process. The ground rent during the extension term of each of the Ground Leases is to be based on the greater of the ground rent to be negotiated with the Purchasers and the fair market value of the land covered by each of the Ground Leases, valued as if unimproved and unencumbered by the respective Ground Leases, as determined by the appraisal process described in this paragraph 2. Jerome Haims Realty, Inc. (the “First Appraiser”) shall prepare an appraisal of each of the properties, separately identifying the value of the land as unimproved and unencumbered by the respective Ground Leases. If the Purchasers dispute the value determined by the First Appraiser, then, within fifteen (15) days after RIOC gives the Purchasers notice of the value determined by the First Appraiser, the Purchasers shall select a disinterested MAI appraiser having at least ten (10) years experience in the appraisal of large multi-family residential properties in New York City (a “Qualified Appraiser”) and give RIOC notice of such selection. RIOC, shall, within fifteen (15) days after receiving said notice, select a second Qualified Appraiser and give the Purchasers notice thereof. Each Qualified Appraiser shall then render in writing to the Purchasers and RIOC concurrently its own independent appraisal of the value of the land as unimproved and unencumbered by the respective Ground Leases within thirty (30) days after the date of the selection of the second Qualified Appraiser (the “Appraisal Due Date”). If the valuations of the two Qualified Appraisers do not vary by more than 10%, then a valuation that is halfway between the two valuations shall be the valuation used. If the valuations of the two Qualified Appraisers vary by more than 10%, then, the two Qualified Appraisers, within fifteen (15) days after the Appraisal Due Date, shall select a third Qualified Appraiser. If the two Qualified Appraisers fail to select such third

Qualified Appraiser (who is amenable to serving as such) within said fifteen (15) day period, then either RIOC or the Purchasers may apply to the American Arbitration Association (or any organization successor thereto) to select such third Qualified Appraiser. Upon such selection, the third Qualified Appraiser shall, within fifteen (15) days after such selection, determine, with respect to the valuation that is not within the 10% range, which of the valuations made by the two Qualified Appraisers is more accurate, and the valuation designated by the third Qualified Appraiser as the more accurate of the two valuations shall be the valuation used.

Upon finalization of the valuation process and the negotiation of the ground rent and additional components of rent, and before the Ground Lease extension transactions are consummated, the implementing documents shall be submitted to [blank] or another comparable firm reasonably acceptable to RIOC (the “Evaluator”) to evaluate the economic terms of transaction on behalf of RIOC and issue its opinion (the “Fairness Opinion”) as to whether the economic returns to be received by RIOC are fair market returns. The transactions shall not be consummated unless the Fairness Opinion indicates that the economic returns to RIOC are fair market returns. If the Evaluator shall determine that the economic returns of the transactions to RIOC are not fair market returns, the Fairness Opinion shall specify the reasons for such conclusion, and the transactions shall not be consummated unless the implementing documents are modified to conform to the Fairness Opinion.

Public Subsidies. RIOC will endeavor to obtain (without representation or warranty that the same will be obtained nor as a condition to any obligation the Purchasers under this memorandum) an allocation of funds from public agencies to provide a pool of funds available for rental/maintenance assistance payments and/or condominium/coop downpayment assistance grants to assist existing tenants at the Projects whose income is below 150% of AMI. The specifics as to the availability and amount of, and eligibility for, these subsidies remain to be determined based on the success of RIOC’s solicitation of governmental agency assistance and an analysis of the demographics of the existing tenancy of the Projects. RIOC will periodically update the Purchasers on its progress in its efforts to obtain commitments of subsidy funds and in developing eligibility standards. It is anticipated, in any event, that if the Projects are converted to condominium or cooperative ownership, tenants who purchase their apartments and have received subsidies will be required to repay the subsidies from excess sales proceeds, if any, over their net purchase price upon sale of their apartment. These recouped funds will be used to replenish the subsidy fund.

Retail Space. RIOC shall continue to control the retail space, provided, however, the Purchasers may submit a proposal to RIOC for master leasing or managing and upgrading of the retail space in the Projects and on Main Street at Roosevelt Island. This retail space will be subject to rules and regulations (including, without limitation, RIOC’s right to approve the tenant mix) to be developed by RIOC to address, among other things, the need for commercial uses that provide certain basic tenant services and the maintenance of certain basic design standards. RIOC shall reasonably consider the Purchasers’ proposal, as well as any other third party proposals that RIOC may solicit, for the master leasing or managing and upgrading of the retail space, and endeavor to select the Purchasers or another party to master lease or manage and upgrade the retail space at or prior to the consummation (if consummated) of the proposed lease extension transactions.

Privatization from page 1

maintenance if their building is turned into a condo or cooperative – would be \$94,200 by 2004 standards. The number is likely to rise in future calibrations.

The memo specifies that “if the [buildings] are converted to condominium or cooperative ownership, tenants who purchase their apartments [with] subsidies will be required to repay the subsidies from excess sales proceeds, if any, over their net purchase price” when they sell.

An important parenthetical in the RIOC Board’s memo regarding subsidies is that it will “endeavor to obtain” subsidies “without representation or warranty that the same will be obtained nor as a condition to any obligation [of] the purchasers...”

Assemblymember Pete Grannis, who represents the Island, said on Thursday he had reviewed the resolution and memorandum and, “Absent a clear and definitive statement by RIOC that will guarantee protections for the current residents, I will not be able to support the process as set up by RIOC.”

Asked about the noncommittal nature of the language, Beck responded by e-mail, “It is only the beginning of the discussions. The document made public [Monday] is the first thing that has been put on paper.”

Beck wrote, “One of our priorities is that certain groups of residents now living in Island House and Westview can remain, should the current owner of the buildings be granted an extension of the ground lease by RIOC, enabling that owner to sell the buildings. The new ownership would then have the right to turn the buildings into market-rate rentals and/or owner-occupied units. Should a ground-lease extension be granted and a sale consummated, the groups we hope to assist are fixed-income seniors, disabled, and families with school age children whose incomes fall below the threshold of 150% of median income.”

In Monday’s meeting, Labate said, “I think that the most important issue for the residents is the fact that [it is] the intent of this corporation, of the Board, to the fullest extent possible in these negotiations, to provide some level of protection to those making 150% of AMI or below... There is a commitment on our part to the fullest extent possible to protect those that we feel could be compromised in any way by the negotiations, and that we’ve defined as – and I think it’s a fairly common definition for affordability purposes when it comes to housing – and that is 150% of AMI.”

On that point, in Monday’s meeting, Mannix said, “The protected classes of tenants [intended by the Board’s promise to seek public-agency subsidies] are above and beyond those protected by other law. In fact, we think there will be several classes of protected tenants in addition to [those covered by] the 150% of AMI... It’s been pretty clear in our discussions that there is, with varying degrees of opin-

ions, a clear intent to provide the protections for all of those tenants that need them. I think we’ll have to go forward with the tenant groups as this process goes forward, but I think that intent was stated pretty clearly not just [by Labate] a few moments ago, but over the course of the last couple of months as we’ve tried to get ourselves to today.”

Beck also wrote, “John Mannix and I, negotiating on behalf of and with the support of the RIOC Board regarding the extension of the ground lease, are committed to have a transparent process so that residents of the affected buildings will know what we are doing as the talks progress. It will be up to the owners of the buildings to hold meetings with the residents.”

She added, “Residents should be aware that these preliminary discussions take a lot of time and it is likely that it will not be before the Fall that there is anything more to report.”

Another resident Board member, David Kraut, though not involved in the negotiations, told *The WIRE* by e-mail, “People have to understand that there are two steps to the process. First, the current owners of these properties might sell them to the Sheldrake company or to some other entity. We hear a consortium of current residents are also trying to put together a deal of their own. Whomever the current owners decide to sell to – if they so decide – RIOC can do very little at this point in the process.”

Mannix concurs. In the Monday Board session, he said, “RIOC has a very limited role here. If the buildings are sold while there’s a ground lease in place, [although] we have approval rights, it’s not something that we have any real direct relationship with. It’s with the extension of the leases to allow for conversion to cooperative or condominium ownership that the corporation finds itself needing to be at the negotiating table.”

Kraut wote, “We [could] vote to not allow the sale, but the participants [would] sue us, and we do not have a basis [for such an action], and we would lose, in my personal and non-lawyerly opinion. RIOC has much more to say if and when Sheldrake or another buyer comes to us for the lease extension, which would be necessary prior to a condominium or cop conversion. At that point RIOC – including both management and the Board – will do everything it can to build necessary safeguards into the lease to protect current residents who need protecting. Personally, I am not serving on this board in order to drive the middle class out of their apartments. I am gratified to tell you that every Board member agrees with me on this score.”

In an earlier development on the Westview-Island House matter, RIOC President Herbert E. Berman recused himself from involvement in negotiations. He explained to *The WIRE* that the Sheldrake Organization had contributed to one of his past political campaigns, and he wanted to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest.

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Child School Students Volunteer in Senior Hot Lunch Program

by Mary Camper-Titsingh
“We have a vigorous academic program for our students, but we want our Legacy High School Students to experience Community Service as well,” explains Aurelie Ferrara, staff psychologist at The



Boris Miller received a lunch delivered by Tayo Smart on Tuesday.

Child School, located in the former minischool buildings on the Island. “Our students wrote a letter in early May to Rema Townsend, Director of the Roosevelt Island Senior Center, offering their services to Senior Citizens. We’re now collaborating on an intergenerational program in which our students deliver hot lunches to homebound Seniors every weekday at noon. It is a great opportunity for our students to give back to the community, as well as learning compassion and respect,” she said. The Child School is a private non-profit school for students with a variety of learning disabilities. The nine very responsible students who have volunteered to deliver the hot meals are: Philip Bias, Alicia Cordovano, Kenyetta Hugee,

Daniela Jenkins, Omari Mack, Alisha Simmons, Tayo Smart, Aidan Villa, and Aaron Wein. Every weekday before their own lunchtime, they pick up hot lunches at the Senior Center cafeteria and deliver them to homebound Seniors living in Island apartments. The students get to know their clients on a personal level, and have learned their food preferences. Some Seniors don’t care for fish dishes or broccoli, others prefer skim milk, etc. A few Seniors need help opening the food cartons. The June lunch menu lists a large variety of hot entrees: meatballs, chicken parmesan, beef stew, and stuffed shells. Cold chicken or seafood salads are also available during the summer months. To round out the meals, two vegetables, milk, and fruit are included in the delivery. A dollar is collected for the meal each day, and is turned in to Rema Townsend at the Senior Center. Since undergoing a serious heart operation, Rivercross resident Boris Miller, 87, has been taking part in the hot-lunch program funded by the New York City Department for the Aging. “I really look forward to the meal that the students deliver to my door. It is my main meal of the day. And the lunches are delicious.” Miller



Left to right, some of the students delivering hot meals to Seniors: Tayo Smart, Philip Bias, Kenyetta Hugee, Omari Mack, Alisha Simmons.

smiled as he looked forward to the Salisbury steak meal that Tayo Smart was handing him. “And it is hot enough so that I don’t need to reheat it. I don’t have to do any work,” Miller added. Miller’s daughter, Amy, a social worker who lives in Manhattan, says the hot-lunch program has lifted a great worry from her mind. “My father disliked cooking for himself, and was not eating the right foods. We are so thankful for the lunches. Now I know he is

eating a good wholesome meal every day.” Alisha Simmons, a student who delivers meals, paid a compliment to her 91-year-old client: “She has the heart of an angel and the soul of a swan. Because of her arthritic hands, she does like me to pry off the lid of the food container.” Another student, Kenyetta Hugee, delivers to a home attendant who cares for two seniors in wheelchairs. “They wave to me and smile when the door is opened,”

she said. Child School Staff Coordinators Deirdre Tantillo and Beverly Pierre conduct a training program for the Student Volunteers so that they know what steps to take if there is an emergency. Senior Center Staff Member Liza Konner can explain the program to Senior Citizens who wish to participate in the Hot Lunch Program. For more information call her at 212-980-1888 during Monday-Friday business hours..

Restoration of Chapel of the Good Shepherd Is Marked by Landmarks Conservancy with Citations to Grannis, Berman

On Friday (June 18) at 11:30, after *The WIRE*’s printing deadline, the New York Landmarks Conservancy and elected officials marked completion of the tower and rose window restoration work on the Chapel of the Good Shepherd. The ceremony took place in the church. Merit Citations were presented to Assemblymember Pete Grannis and Herbert E. Berman, President of the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC), in recognition of their support on the project.



“The restoration of the tower and rose window of this historic chapel and vibrant community center is the culmination of a dedicated preservation effort made possible through funding by Assemblymember Pete Grannis and the support of Herb Berman, who both recognized the immense value that Good Shepherd held for the Roosevelt Island community and for the City of New York,” said Peg Breen, President of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. “The Landmarks Conservancy is proud to have managed the res-

toration and we look forward to playing a role in future projects in this very important, ongoing campaign.” The Chapel of the Good Shepherd was constructed in 1888 on the grounds of the New York City almshouse on Blackwell’s Island by British architect Frederick Clarke Withers. In the ’70’s, when the Island was redeveloped as Roosevelt Island, the Chapel was renovated by architect Giorgio Cavaglieri, who had renovated the Jefferson Market Courthouse, another Frederick Clarke Withers building. By 1995, repairs were needed. Architectural conservator William J. Stivale identified several problem areas. The funding process began in 1997, when Grannis allocated several grants toward restoration. From 1997 to 2002, Grannis and the New York State Legislature directed funds totaling \$330,000 to the New York Landmarks Conservancy for the restoration work. RIOC contributed an additional \$24,000 to the project. Construction began in July, 2003, and was completed in May, 2004. The tower and rose window restoration included:

- Dismantling and rebuilding the top six feet of the spire to repair and replace delaminating brownstone.
 - Cleaning and repair of masonry and brownstone trim at the bell tower and spire.
 - Regrouting brownstone masonry at the spire interior.
 - Fabrication and installation of new spire-lighting protection and new lead-coated copper flashing and weather protection at the apex of the spire.
 - Removal of the stained-glass rose window for cleaning, restoration, and re-leading at the Gil Studio in Brooklyn.
- More work remains to be performed in the coming years, including repairs to the roof-truss system, upgrades to the exterior storm-drainage system, and site drainage and replacement of the existing asphalt-shingle roof. The Chapel is one of several important historic buildings on Roosevelt Island in need of substantial restoration. The Conservancy has pledged to continue working with RIOC to address those needs.



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Scenes From the Island's Family Album

In Its Eighth Year, Under Perfect Skies, Roosevelt Island



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Color publication of Roosevelt Island Day coverage was made possible by funding from Roosevelt Island House Management. Some 1,500 photos were taken; most were posted on Shutterfly.com and be available for viewing and ordering. For on-line access to the photos at Shutterfly, they become available, send your e-mail address to editor@MainStreetWIRE.com.



De Fino's plaque reads, *The community gratefully recognizes your dedicated work with an on behalf of the children and youth of Roosevelt Island. Your presence has made a valuable difference.* The inscription on the base of Isley's sculpture reads, *...above and beyond... Thanks to Doryne Isley from a grateful community.*





Winners These PS217 students won admission to the Specialized High Schools Institute at Stuyvesant High School, a 16-month program that will prepare them for testing to get into the City’s specialized high schools. More than half the students who complete the program are admitted to one of the specialized schools, which include Stuyvesant, Bronx Science, Brooklyn Tech, York (science), CCNY (engineering), and Lehman (American history). It’ll mean summer school and plenty of hard work for (left to right) Carmen Nkounkou, Analeigha Ewing, Kimberly Rosario, Andrew Feely, Thibault Codderrens, and Julian Edelman

Sophie Maisel

Sophie Maisel passed away April 26. *The WIRE* has received this letter from her family. “Although Mom lived a very long and full life, we were all in shock at her death.

“We wanted to tell all her friends on Roosevelt Island how much she had loved living there for 27 years, so much, in fact, that she would never consider moving. Over the past several years, we had tried to get Mom to move closer to her family, who are all out of state, but to no avail. Her love for Roosevelt Island and New York always won.



“Living on Roosevelt Island had always given Mom a sense of freedom and independence, especially in her later years. It was a feeling she could have nowhere else – not to mention all her wonderful friends and neighbors, whom she had come to love.

“Mom had a love for life and the people around her. Her family and friends were very important to her and she would do anything for them. Having spent the last three months on Roosevelt Island while Mom was ill, we became more aware of how many lives she had touched with her kindness and thoughtfulness.

“Mom will be in the hearts and thoughts of her children, Evelyn and Gary, grandchildren

Barry, Todd, Josh, Ben and Jordi, great-grandsons Jeffrey, Matthew, and Zachary, as well as her extended family and dear friends. We will miss her dearly.”

Inge Fiori

Longtime Island resident Inge Fiori died May 26, less than a month short of her 83rd birthday, after a long illness involving brain seizures.

Born in Breslau, Germany, June 24, 1921, she moved to Roosevelt Island August 20, 1975, from Queens, where she had lived since 1965.

She immigrated from Germany in 1955 with her husband, Jean, who died in 1997 after a 43-year marriage. They had met when Inge worked at various positions with Allied Officer and other social clubs in northern Germany. Jean had been in the French Resistance.



She started the special events department at Goldman Sachs, becoming known for her sense of style at top hotels and restaurants in New York and in other parts of the world. She always wore a hat and gloves. She worked at Goldman Sachs under Henry Fowler, who was Secretary of the Treasury under Lyndon Johnson. She also worked for MGM Pictures in New York.

She loved the opera and classical concerts, and entertaining. Her favorite entertainment event was the Fourth of July Fireworks in New York, which she could see from her 19th-floor apartment in Island House. She took many photographs from her apartment windows, recording Manhattan’s east-side building boom from the mid-1970s onward.

She is survived by her son, Charles, who lived on Roosevelt Island from 1975 to 1986,

daughter-in-law Deborah, and two grandchildren, Lauren, 15, and Bryan, 11. One of five children, she is also survived by a sister, Erika, and brother, Hans-Joachim, who both still live in Germany. A brother, Arno, and a sister, Annemarie, died earlier.

Condolences can be sent to Charles Fiori and family, 39 Governors Lane, Princeton, NJ 08540. In lieu of flowers, donations can be sent to the New York Presbyterian Hospital Office of Development, the Metropolitan Opera Guild, Holy Name Province-Franciscan Friars, or the New York Police and Fire Widows’ and Children’s Benefit fund. Details are available from Charles.



Soccer Buds Former Coach/President Claus Cardinal, player Patrick Dumas, Coach Wesley Shepherd, player Craig Ellis.

Strikers in Reunion Barbecue

by Mary Cavanaugh

Octagon Park echoed with “Go Strikers” memories on Sunday, June 13, when more than forty former players and coaches attended a reunion and barbecue for the Roosevelt Island traveling soccer team. They had participated in the Cosmopolitan Junior Soccer League “Under 10 to Up to Under 16” age groups from 1986 to the early ’90’s.

The four former coaches included Wes Shepherd who, with his wife and Striker son Tommy, traveled from their Florida home. Wes led the team to the Cosmo U14 championship in 1989/90. Claus Cardinal came in from Watchung N.J. accompanied by his wife Renata, Striker son Felix, who now lives in Brooklyn, and daughter Lisa, who had been a Junior Striker. Claus, and attendee Arthur Grey, are former presidents of RIYSA. Also, Peter Newman and wife Karen, and Bob Liss with wife Rochelle and Striker son Mike. Mike Liss was most responsible for the organization and communication for the reunion. He earned the thanks of all.

A parent who provided plenty of technical input during league play, Ron Cieciuch, came from New Jersey with his son Tommy and joined Striker sons Adam and Eric.

Among the current Island residents enjoying the day were Matt Lutts, Craig Ellis, Andy Sinclair, Frank and Patrick Dumas, Mewbacka Johannes, and Joshua Stevens.

In addition to eating, drinking, and playing, time was set aside to take a moment to remember the Strikers’ #1 fan, Steckie Stevens.

This was the first get-together in nearly fifteen years, and many joined in a vigorous, hard-fought game. The level of play was a testimony to the skills nurtured on Roosevelt Island. Many of these players started with the Kinderkickers. This was particularly impressive since the proper soccer fields were unavailable and Octagon Park provided a small, uneven field where boundaries and markers had to be improvised.

Strikers even have groupies. Blake Elinson, Briana Herman, Vanessa Morais, and Alexis Neophytides were there for moral support. One newcomer to the Island remarked how the bonds among the players seemed as strong as they would be if they were still a team, cementing the notion that there is a special quality to having grown up on Roosevelt Island.

Participants’ enjoyment was so complete that they have scheduled a repeat event. Tentative date is Sunday, June 12, 2005.



Former players Matthew Lutts, Adam Cieciuch, Eric Cieciuch, and Patrick Dumas



Letters on Constitutional Change and Tuesday’s Town Meeting

To the Editor:

Last night, Matt Katz, President of RIRA, deliberately and publicly prevented a Town Meeting, and thereby wrested authority from the residents, in order to institute a new RIRA Constitution solely by Common Council vote rather than by the vote of the community.

He did so, under strong vocal protest, by refusing to remain in the Chapel even until 8:15, and by refusing to count the attending residents again. He had never called the Town Meeting to order, and people were moving around and coming through the doors as he spoke. His supporters, many of them current Common Council members themselves, lingered outside in the plaza in order not to contribute to the quorum.

By his own count, Mr. Katz said there were “only” 96 people in the room when he ended the Town Meeting at around 8:10, saying that the required 100-person quorum had not been achieved. A simultaneous count being made by two different people while he was speaking produced counts of 107 and 108 respectively.

I sincerely hope, Mr. Editor, that you will publish the picture you took of Mr. Katz scurrying out the door, head down, shoulders hunched, passing uncoun­ted residents streaming inwards through the same door.

By his own rule, put in place in his very first Council meeting as President, Mr. Katz allows his Councilors a full half hour to get to regularly scheduled Council meetings. One would think he would offer the residents at least half that time to arrive to vote on the complete restructuring of their own constitution.

But Mr. Katz continues to operate by his own rules, and they are a disgrace and a shame, both to him and to this community.

Common Council meetings are now suspended for the Council’s summer recess. The residents should watch carefully that Mr. Katz does not now call some unpublished “emergency” Council meeting to ratify this new Constitution, which will prevent the residents from having a voice in the loss of their longstanding rights ever again.

Karen Stewart

To the Editor:

As a longtime resident of Roosevelt Island I am ashamed of, embarrassed for, and disappointed with the organization I have worked for and supported for many years.

For the last nine years I have been in attendance at no less than 90% of all Common Council meetings. I cannot recall any instance of any President not waiting until a quorum was present.

Our current Common Council has not kept faith with our community. How can we keep faith with our Common Council?

Patrick Stewart

Nina Lublin

To the Editor:

As a 21-year resident of the Island, I thought I had seen everything until Tuesday night. I remember when the Residents Association and its Council were a civil, respected, and listened-to organization – but that all changed Tuesday night.

Shame on Matthew Katz and his accomplices for failing to show any respect to his fellow residents and neighbors, for failing to live up to, and succeeding in living down to, everything I thought was wrong with how *he* runs the Council and the Residents Association.

Shame on him and the RIRA officers for not waiting for a suitable amount of time for a quorum to assemble. Shame on them for continuing to fail to properly inform the community about the Town Meeting, believing that all it takes is the use of *The WIRE* — which by the way, is not the RIRA *WIRE*, but is the Island’s newspaper, which seems to have forgotten that it is not the official mouthpiece for the President of RIRA.

What an embarrassment – and it is Mr. Katz who should apologize to the community for treating his fellow Resident Association members and neighbors so disrespectfully and shamefully. If you want change so badly, open the process, have an independently hosted and moderated debate, and stop trying to baffle us with BS and a whole lot of paper, and treat us with the respect you expect from us.

no bellyaching will be accepted. And that’s all I have to say about that.

On to happier and more interesting subjects: The second Verdant Power RITE (Roosevelt Island Tidal Energy) Project federal hearings were held last week in the community room at 4 River Road. Verdant Power, you will recall, intends to install a “six-pack” of underwater turbines this summer in the current of the East Channel north of the Roosevelt Island Bridge to create electricity without burning fossil fuels and without creating pollution. To be licensed to install the final array of 300 turbines, the RITE project must comply with the requirements of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) review. This requires studies of the impact to fish; water quality; navigation; recreation; cultural, archeological, and historical properties; and rare, threatened, and endangered species. The agencies involved in these issues will then issue permits and licenses if all goes well. I will report to you the status of these studies as I receive them.

Roosevelt Island Day. What a pleasure! I awoke Saturday morning chilled and feverish after a sleepless night, but my health and disposition quickly improved in the warm sunshine of that June day. RIRA’s free breakfast quickly ran out of bagels, but Kaie at the Trellis saved the day with a free infusion of pastry. Thanks, Kaie! I spent the morning moving what seemed like tons of topsoil in the PS/IS 217 schoolyard for the planting sponsored by Bonnie Sherk and the Living Library project. Then it was on to the blood drive where Sherie and I shared adjacent gurneys while our veins were tapped. Great way to lose a couple of pounds!

The evening concert was terrific but the highlight for me was the opportunity to thank Housing Management General Manager Doryne Isley and Youth Center Executive Director Charlie De Fino for inventing Roosevelt Island Day eight years ago. They both received plaques with expressions of thanks from the community and Doryne also was given a beautiful original sculpture by outgoing RIVAA president, Arlene Jacoby. RIRA voted the funds at our June 2 meeting and managed to keep it secret until the 12th. I think the surprise was total. I got to express my thanks to Charlie for the work he has done with thousands of Island kids and to Doryne for her unvarying support of the Residents Association as well as her tactful navigating through the minefield of Eastwood, Island House, and Westview residents’ interests along with those of the building owners and DHCR. These folks do tough, often thankless jobs, and the community got to express its thanks with their applause. And Doryne knows how grateful I am for the Westview pool, now running like an 84°F Swiss watch!

To the Editor:

Very few people were satisfied with Tuesday’s meeting to approve RIRA’s amended constitution. Those not involved in the process may not understand why Matt Katz chose to follow the rules and at 8:10 p.m. declare that there was no quorum and therefore no meeting.

I imagine that most people don’t care what went on behind the scenes that caused this meeting to turn out the way it did. I was on the committee that worked very hard to come up with the amended constitution and I’m very anxious for the public to understand why we made the decisions we made. I’ve been on the Common Council for several years and I know the fine work being done by many of the members. I know how much time and effort Matt Katz puts into this organization and I would hate to see that tainted by the actions of a small group of people who were able to orchestrate a regrettable outcome to what could have been a terrific meeting.

Matthew is, above all else, fair. Although he followed the rules the other night, people who wanted to understand the changes and give their opinions were not heard. For that reason, several of us on the Council intend to recommend having another meeting that includes a debate of the issues, a time for comments, then a vote by the residents.

I want to make the point that the constitution does not call for this and, in fact, it allows Matthew to bring the issue right back to the Common Council, where it previously passed with more than 75% of the vote.

If a new meeting is scheduled, I urge anyone who wants to hear both sides of the issue to attend.

Margie Smith

To the Editor:

RIRA held a Town Meeting last night and I attended with over 100 other residents. The behavior of Matt Katz, the President of RIRA, and several council members, was disgraceful.

The purpose of the Town Meeting was to change the RIRA constitution, something Mr. Katz has been trying to do for almost four years. At 8:00 when he realized that at least 100 residents would attend, he started counting and at 8:07 he declared that their was not a quorum of 100 residents, called no meeting, and left. Roberts Rules states that you should wait 10 to 15 minutes before starting any meeting. Mr. Katz never called the meeting to order, and people were still coming in the doors as Mr. Katz was walking out of them. Again, according to Roberts Rules, you must call a meeting to order before you take a count and declare there is no quorum. Mr. Katz’s behavior reminds me of a small child who owns the bat and ball and when he is not allowed to play the position he wants, he takes his bat and ball and goes home so no one can play. Well, Mr. Katz, the residents played. We took a vote and guess what? The residents voted against the changes to the constitution and remained for over an hour to voice their disgust for your behavior.

If not for Karen Stewart and I, very few residents would have even known about this meeting. You are required by the constitution of RIRA to post notices in every lobby informing the residents of the agenda, time and place of a Town Meeting; this was not done. Except for *The WIRE*, the residents were not given a copy of the present and proposed changes so they could make an informed decision. The only reason Mr. Katz put out a flyer was in response to the one put out by us urging the residents to attend and vote no.

Mr. Katz will say that I am not an elected member of the Common Council. This is by choice. I found it non-productive and constantly went home with a headache after the meetings. I am an active member of this community and have been since 1977. I have not stopped working for the residents, and when my voice and time are needed, I respond. For those of you who do not know me, I am very involved in St. Frances Cabrini Parish, am a board member of the Roosevelt Island Senior Association, and volunteer my time whenever asked.

This is America and the voice of the people count. Mr. Katz, you need to listen.

Joan Christianson

To the Community:

Was Tuesday night really about the RIRA constitution, or was it a desperate attempt to derail it by those few who were going to lose their *unelected* seats on the Common Council, if this revised constitution were approved?

Karen and Patrick Stewart already lost the previous elections by finishing fifth and sixth on a list of six. Their humiliation turned to revenge, and their victim became the community – us.

They managed to mobilize many by means of lies, fear, and manipulation. Some attendees after the meeting admitted that they were told the meeting was about rent, some were told it was about the Island House and Westview takeover. Most were provoked and were upset. They were a list of twisted lies and were told outright to vote “no,” believing that they were fighting for the truth, not knowing they have been played in an act of spite and self interest.

Karen and Patrick Stewart attended all the committee meetings dealing with the constitutional changes. They were involved and vocal, made suggestions and negotiated every step of the revisions. They were part of the whole process, or maybe pretended to be. How can one explain their turning around and stabbing their hard-working colleagues in the back, other than an act of hate toward RIRA, and contempt for the community? Karen’s fliers under the doors are *not* a source of information.

Read the original documents, both the original and the revised, learn first-hand, and understand the improvements made. Learn to appreciate the hard work and the many hours your elected delegates devoted to a long and demanding process. Do not believe the out-of-context lies Karen put under your door. Talk to your present representatives, get it straight from the source, and if you really care, volunteer yourself as a candidate in the coming RIRA elections this November.

Nurit Marcus

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Katz from page 1

constituents and provide the services that RIRA has become known for during the last four years.

The most significant change is that the new rules remove any appointees from voting on the Council, making the Common Council totally representative, *by election*, of the residents. And that is what a Residents Association should do. The appointees from the Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations (RICO), from Community Board 8, and from RIOC (School District 2 never sent a representative in the eight years I’ve been on the Council) never took part in the life of the organization; they didn’t have to. Not one of them has so much as offered an hour to sign up blood donors and that has been a RIRA project for years now. With a Council composed entirely of elected district and Island representatives, RIRA’s voice will be clearer, stronger, and more focused. The old bugaboo about Council Members retaining their seats when they move from one Roosevelt Island building to another is a red herring that I will let others address.

If anything is “sacred” about RIRA, it is our participation through elected representation; the cornerstone of American democracy. And the value of the Common Council is the flesh and blood people who volunteer their time to make things happen. The rules are just paper and when they no longer work, the people who use them scrap the old and invent the new. Remarkable how many people were up in arms about those rules but have never attended a Common Council meeting or volunteered to assist in RIRA programs!

So here’s what’s going to happen: Constitutionally, I should now set a special Common Council meeting to provide the two-thirds majority vote the old constitution requires. But I would rather have the workings of the constitutional revisions understood and acted upon by the RIRA membership. I intend to call a special meeting of the Council, but not to ratify the constitution. Rather, we will discuss convening a new Town Meeting at which the chair of the Constitutional Committee, Steve Marcus, will debate Karen Stewart, architect of Tuesday’s debacle, or anyone willing to take on the task. Questions will be taken from the audience and, perhaps then, everyone will understand just what it is the Common Council has changed and also, what remains the same. At the end of a stipulated period and at a specific time to be announced, a count will be taken, once, and if a quorum exists, a vote conducted to ratify the constitution. That should give everyone ample time and ample warning to get seated and counted, regardless of “Roosevelt Island time.” If no quorum is obtained, the vote will return to the Common Council (as required by both the old and revised constitutions) and

Letters on Constitutional Change and Tuesday’s Town Meeting

To the Community:

In the post-mortem of Tuesday’s town meeting, I feel a mixture of regret and betrayal. The opposition, led by Karen Stewart and Joan Christianson, made great efforts to rally people based on a mixture of half-truths and lies.

Roosevelt Island has real problems. We have residents in Island House and Westview that are genuinely and legitimately afraid that they may not be able to afford to stay in their homes when the new owner gets control, we have a Pataki-appointed RIOC Board that cares only about selling off pieces of the Island for short-term gains, we have a chronic million-dollar deficit that stifles expenditure on even vital services, let alone amenities. Public Safety is almost totally ineffective, Motorgate has a crime wave, and the elevators don’t work. Our merchants can’t make enough to pay their rents, and our Youth Center can’t get two million dollars promised by our elected representatives because RIOC won’t find them the space for a permanent home.

In the midst of these and so many more legitimate concerns, these two people have chosen to devote themselves to “Keep Democracy in RIRA” by misrepresenting the efforts of your elected RIRA representatives to streamline the constitution and move the operational parts to bylaws.

Over the first months of this year, I led a committee of RIRA Council members in many lengthy meetings that succeeded in overhauling the Constitution so that it was understandable and would also permit RIRA the latitude to operate more freely to work for the community. The resulting product was approved by a 75% margin by the whole Common Council, and none of your elected representatives voted against it.

I came to this meeting prepared to sit next to RIRA President Matthew Katz, to calmly discuss the very legitimate concerns of the community, and to explain the rationale for the proposed changes. However, I was really disconcerted by the really militant nature of the audience, particularly since none of the proposed changes in any way affect anybody’s well-being. I can understand why Matthew was anxious to leave the meeting as well, after he took two counts that failed to meet the necessary quorum. You may not agree with his decision, but I hope you can understand it as well.

In written statements that were distributed and comments made by some of the speakers, this initiative was characterized as a power grab by a venal group of RIRA Council members. This is simple paranoia. These folks are your neighbors and (I hope) friends. They volunteer in a community organization with no official power save the power to say they were elected by the residents and reflect the concerns of that community. Many of them work at blood drives, sponsor social events, lobby politicians for our share of the pie, and hound RIOC to work in our best interests. Matthew Katz is the most tireless of these volunteers, and he’s not getting wealth or power from his efforts.

I’d like to now explain why these changes will be helpful, to address the misconceptions and to offer some suggestions that may defuse these issues.

I’ve been either observing or participating in RIRA for over five years, and I can tell you that it gets bogged down in two aspects – the constant need to “interpret” the constitution, which is unclear in so many areas, and the divisive and combative actions of several non-elected members whose voting membership in RIRA is granted by the old constitution.

Here are the highlights of what we recommended to the community:

We moved the following topics to bylaws, so that we don’t have to call a Town Meeting whenever they change:

- Added Southtown to the list of voting Districts, and set the number of seats to three. (By putting district representation in the bylaws the Council can increase this number with a two-thirds vote as new buildings become occupied.)
- Require all voting members of the Common Council to have been either elected by residents, or allow vacancies to be filled by a set of clear rules. (The old rules were confusing and inconsistent.)
- Permit non-voting appointees (such as an Auditor) to be added to the Council.
- Tightened up the rules on Motions by Mail – so we can respond to time-sensitive events without calling an emergency session of the Council. (We added e-mail to the list of acceptable communications methods.)
- Permit representatives who move from one building to another to complete their two year term. (It’s hard enough to recruit and keep hard-working volunteers on the Common Council – see more below.)
- Clarified the rights and responsibilities of building representative alternates (these are the people that don’t win in the building elections).
- Removed the requirement that checks less than \$750 be cosigned by both the President and the Treasurer. (In the interest of speed and convenience, checks haven’t been cosigned for many years, anyway.)
- Realigned the Committees to more evenly balance the workload (Public Safety has its own committee, for example).
- Require that all committees meet at least three times a year.
- Added a provision that campaign rules be established by the Election Committee. (Current rules are unfair and in some cases unenforceable.)
- Mandate that bylaws can only be changed by a two-thirds vote of the Common Council

What *remains unchanged in the Constitution* are definitions of membership, requirements for elections, and rules for Town Meetings. We specifically added a stipulation that seats must be *proportionally allocated*.

Here’s how the flyer that Stewart/Christianson asked Housing Management to distribute has misrepresented the facts:

“Co-signing of all RIRA checks by the President and Treasurer has been removed.”

Not true – Checks over \$750 must be co-signed. This is in line with many community groups. We get monthly statements, and no one in the committee saw a need to hold up the issuing of small checks for several days or more so that they can be co-signed.

“The requirement that all Council Members serve as members of at least one RIRA committee has been eliminated.”

Not true – that requirement is clearly stated.

“The mandate that RIRA president be RIRA’s appointee to the RIOC

To the Editor:

Tuesday evening I was at the Chapel of the Good Shepherd for the Town Meeting vote on the proposed new RIRA constitution.

The meeting started about 8:00 p.m. There was no call to order. When there were only 96 persons at 8:12 (by his officers’ count, others counted more), Matt Katz, president of RIRA, adjourned the meeting. By a minute or two later, by anybody’s count, there were more than the required 100 persons present, and the meeting could have started. At 8:14 p.m. there were well over 100 persons and Mr. Katz had left the auditorium.

It seems that the Islanders have been duped by a Residents Association that does not want the input of the residents it is supposed to represent.

The officers of RIRA walked out and left us to have an informational meeting on what representative democracy is.

A straw poll of the audience was taken. There were only four votes for the revised constitution.

It is obvious that the new constitution was going to be voted down by a very large margin. Instead of facing defeat, the RIRA officers left the meeting. They will now vote in a new constitution at their meeting and feel very satisfied that they got their constitution.

To the Editor:

In an effort to conserve *WIRE* space I will only make three statements to Matt Katz.

1. You were eager to debate when you ran for office and gave the impression that you believed in debate and fellow residents ideas and input.
2. This Island, with its thousands of residents, has always been the home of people who enthusiastically and excitedly sought *open debate* and *open discussion*.
3. Look at yourself in the mirror, apologize to yourself, apologize for disgracing the Chapel by your act of deception inside the Church (your sins will be forgiven) and rejoin and *debate* with the community.

Martin Atkins

They may soon be the only ones that care about their constitution since they refused to consider a true vote by the community.

It was one of the saddest days in our community’s history. We have worked together and have been a real community for over 25 years. RIRA has never been perfect but, tonight, RIRA was not the community, just a group of individuals out to get their way any way they could.

Judith Berdy

Board has been removed.”

True, but of course RIRA doesn’t make appointments to the RIOC Board. The Governor makes seven and the Mayor makes two. Neither RIRA nor the residents have a say in who these people pick. I hope that the Government Relations Committee can convince the Mayor to abide by an Island election for his two picks, but that’s another matter.

“Resident members of Community Board 8 and School Board 2 have lost their seats.”

Also true – but resident RIOC and RICO members have also lost their seats. That’s what makes this revised constitution more democratic – *only your elected representatives can vote*. If you don’t like the job they are doing, vote ‘em out. RICO, the Roosevelt Island Council of Organizations, is a long-defunct organization that Karen Stewart inherited. The current constitution permits her and another four individuals of her choosing to vote in RIRA matters. Whenever votes come up that Karen feels like blocking, she can show up at RIRA meetings with four of her friends and vote no. To my knowledge, School Board 2 members have never appeared at RIRA meetings in recent history. RIOC members have the real power in the community. Do we really want them voting in RIRA on issues that concern our interaction with RIOC? These folks, and others can, and are encouraged to come to RIRA meetings and share any expertise or opinions they may have on issues under discussion.

Although no vote was taken, perhaps this can be an opportunity to learn from what was said, and to rework the documents to allay the concerns of many of the attendees.

The single provision that several residents told me they don’t like is the one that allows a member who moves from one voting district to another to retain his seat for the remainder of their two-year term. The committee adopted this provision because RIRA has, in the past few years, been forced to remove several very valued members from its Common Council. As in any organization, some members are very hard to replace. We didn’t want to penalize the organization any more, just because a council member moves 100 yards away. However, since many residents don’t share this view, and believe that many important issues are building-specific, I will propose to the Common Council that they rewrite the bylaws to *replace* representatives who change buildings, in the same manner that they are replaced when other vacancies are created. In this way, we can assure that each district is represented with the full number of votes that they deserve. I suggest that, in order to keep the services of the person that moves, they remain on the council as an “at-large” representative, for the remainder of their term.

Others were concerned that we were excluding RIOC, Community Board 8, and School Board 2 delegates. I feel strongly that only individuals *elected* to RIRA should be allowed to vote, because we all need the ability to vote people out when we don’t like the job they are doing for us. However, since these folks have much valuable insight that can be helpful in RIRA deliberations, I propose that they be asked to join in the deliberation, but refrain from participating in the voting. In this way, I think we get the best of both worlds.

I really think that this RIRA term has been one of the most productive – Matt Katz’s efforts over many years helped us secure the MetroCard, communications with RIOC have been improved, we were able to exert enough pressure to restore normal Red Bus service, and civic events have been quite successful. There is a huge amount more to be done – the constitutional reforms we are proposing simply allow us to serve the community more easily. You may disagree with one or two of the changes but, when viewed as whole, I hope you agree that it’s a significant improvement.

Steve Marcus
First Vice President, RIRA

To the Editor:

I got a call after the Town Meeting ended Tuesday night from a Westview neighbor, excoriating “you” (meaning Matthew Katz, my husband and President of RIRA [and all of RIRA?]) about the undemocratic methods used when the meeting was adjourned. I responded that the RIRA Town Meeting agenda was posted on kiosks repeatedly for 30 days, as required. It was replaced several times after the initial posting. Some copies were still up as of the meeting. Even the Stewarts’ flyer and incorrect “informational” postings gave the time. The complete text of the revised Constitution and the by-laws was posted in *The WIRE* with the date and time of the meeting. This was an important-enough meeting that RIRA felt that those interested should and would be on time. Matthew waited ten minutes, convened the meeting and asked for the attendance count. He did two, although Robert’s Rules explicitly says to do the count once and if there’s no quorum, adjourn the meeting. Common Council meetings are scheduled to start at 8:00 p.m.; we start by 8:10 p.m. This is a discipline to which the membership has become accustomed.

I am curious how many of the attendees among those so angry at last night’s events, sought out their democratically elected building representatives’ counsel on the old and revised version of the Constitution and its bylaws, prior to this meeting? How many residents relied instead, on the Stewarts’ and Joan Christianson’s misleading questions and incorrect information? Remember, none of these folks are your *elected* representatives. *And* the Stewarts sat on the Constitutional Committee, helping to mold the finished document presented to the Common Council. Residents, it seems, never thought to ask Matthew directly, or engage his/her own building representatives in any kind of discussion on the issue. I received no prior call from last night’s neighbor, nor any others, and as far as I know, neither did my fellow Westview representatives, nor any of my colleagues in other buildings. Whassup?

Speaking of democracy, please avail yourselves of this opportunity, nay, responsibility, to question your representatives about these large and even the smaller issues. If we don’t know the answer, we’ll surely do our best to get you one. I am truly puzzled why residents listened only to and followed along with someone not elected by building constituencies, without at least going to their own elected reps for confirmation or correction of the information given out. Remember that Ms. Stewart, incidentally, came in seventh in a field of seven in her own building when she last chose to run for RIRA in 2000.

Democracy is a participatory project; you really ought not allow others to do all your thinking and questioning for you. And shame on those who completely misrepresented the revised and updated documents and their changes, and who would then tell you how to vote.

Sherie Helstien
Secretary,
RIRA Common Council

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Letters on Constitutional Change and Tuesday’s Town Meeting

To the Community and Editor:

During Tuesday evening’s Town Hall meeting, a running theme was how wrong it is for someone to keep his or her seat when moving from one building to another. I have a unique perspective on this because I moved twice while on the Council. I would like you to hear another point of view.

After living in Eastwood for 16 years, I moved into Island House and lost my seat on the Council. What I discovered was that people in Island House did not understand many of the issues of Eastwood, and I was able to share with them what I thought the issues were, and why I thought it important for all buildings to support one another.

When I got on the Council, as an Island House representative, it did not mean that I no longer cared about Eastwood or its issues. In fact, I find one of the problems on this Island is that many people only care about their building and not the community as a whole. When I moved into Rivercross last year, that didn’t mean that I no longer cared about the issues of Island House or Eastwood.

My point is, we should all be supporting each other, and in fact at RIRA meetings, in the seven years I have been on the Council, it has never been necessary to vote on a building-specific issue.

Most island residents don’t have the time or inclination to devote to RIRA affairs. Therefore, to lose a willing and experienced member simply because s/he changes her/his address does not make sense. Let’s get real: We are only talking about service to the end of someone’s two-year term.

I can’t help but think that people are using this perceived inequity for their own political agenda and have persuaded others to be against the Constitution because of this one non-issue.

Vicki Feinmel

To the Editor:

At my husband Bernie’s memorial service in Manhattan Park in January, in one-degree weather, the unity of this community was something that should have been bottled and sold. How sad that Tuesday night’s meeting shattered that bottle of love!

I attended last night’s meeting for the purpose of trying to obtain an explanation of 1) why the existing RIRA constitution was being replaced and 2) whether the organization itself was being replaced.

I wanted answers and a forum to help me to decide whether or not this was actually going to happen. I am appalled at the tone and tenor or last night’s meeting. Whether or not it was the intent of the leadership to “pull something,” nevertheless that’s the perception of the community. As I said in my opening sentence, I want to see the unity and love in this community once again.

A constitution serves as the infrastructure for governing an organization. It is simply, emulating our nation’s constitution, an instrument which states the mission, charter and overall guiding principles which govern/guide that organization. If a constitution has flaws which render the governance of an organization unworkable or if those principles are out-of-tune with the times, then the constitution can and should be *amended*, not replaced! Further, the processes and procedures for implementing the charter and mission of the organization should be clearly stated in the organization’s *bylaws*. We may find fault with many of the provisions of the U.S. Constitution, but that’s why we have amendments and a Supreme Court. After all, the original Constitution didn’t provide for me as a woman to vote, but that was remedied by an amendment. So, that the current

RIRA constitution is a troubled or anachronatic instrument, is not a surprise. As Nneka Pope eloquently stated at the Tuesday meeting, the constitution is a “living, breathing organism,” and as such can change and grow, just as our national and state constitutions grow. In effect, RIRA was trying to dissolve itself and form a new organization, which I believe would have required a vote by all of the residents. I don’t think that the Common Council had in mind to do something illegal, but that’s what the effect would have been accomplished by replacing a constitution.

Matt, you have been a dear friend to our family, as have the Stewarts and Christiansons. It breaks my heart to see the divisiveness which has been created by this faux pas...and I hope that when the excitement abates, everyone will accept that it was a faux pas! After all, this was about ideas and processes, not life and death. Unlike Bernie’s demise to cancer, this can be fixed...and I urge everyone to fix it.

Matt, I acknowledge how hard and tirelessly you have worked for this community, hope that you will continue to serve, and call upon you to right this dreadful situation. I know you are not an evil person, and I think you can “fix” it by taking the following steps:

1. Write a letter of apology to the community about last night’s fiasco, both to clarify the misunderstanding of *why* and how RIRA wants/needs the constitution changed and why you left; you will then gain unprecedented respect from everyone in this community. I don’t think we all understand why the changes are needed. In other words, as my kids say, “drop back and punt.” You have worked so hard for this community, and I know you are a truly magnanimous person.

2. Schedule and publicize a meeting of the community to discuss, clarify and debate the changes. Recuse yourself from leading that meeting, so as to provide a mechanism for healing last night’s wounds; that will demonstrate to this community that you are clearly above and beyond reproach.

3. Ask that the “opposition” select a leader to act as a co-chair of the meeting together with a RIRA Common Council member so that it does not deteriorate into a public bashing, but instead creates a climate where this community can focus on the instruments which serve our needs. Have the designated RIRA leader work with the “opposition” leader in advance to provide a mechanism to ensure that the meeting does not deteriorate into a bashing.

4. Provide *The Main Street WIRE* with a synopsis of each RIRA Common Council meeting, such as the Rivercross board provides to its shareholders. That way we would have complete communication without breaking the budget of the *WIRE*. Further, arrange with the Island branch of the New York Public Library and the Roosevelt Island website to publish the complete minutes of each meeting, and let the community know where and when we can see those minutes in a reasonably timely manner after each meeting. This shouldn’t be difficult, as RIRA has a recording secretary...and in any organization, it is the recording secretary’s job to record and produce meeting minutes. I think part of the issue and reason for so much rancor is that we have no clue as to what went on to make RIRA want to do a new constitution. We desperately need a forum to ask those questions, and a little time to digest and discuss the information. Just publishing old and new versions of the

To the Editor:

At the Town Meeting Tuesday night, the president of RIRA sacrificed his public reputation and political future to win a battle over the RIRA Constitution. If the president allows the proposed changes to be enacted against the wishes of the residents, the changes are likely to be undone soon after the November RIRA election. The president may still be able to salvage both his reputation and his desired improvement to the Constitution.

The Constitution would indeed benefit from being split as proposed into a Constitution that expresses principles and bylaws with details. Working toward consensus now on the disputed issues would benefit the community as well as the individuals involved.

Marc Diamond

constitution doesn’t do it for most of us.

5. To underscore your commitment to democracy which I know is very important to you, make very clear the need to observe Roberts’ Rules at that and every other community, town hall and council meeting. They were written for a reason. Had those rules been followed, the passions of last night would not have surfaced and been allowed to derail the fine work of our residents association under your leadership.

I appeal to all my friends and neighbors to get past the events of Tuesday night and move forward to ensure that we continue to achieve harmony in this glorious community. We should not have to see that spirit only at funerals. I don’t want to see the next and only unified community meeting at someone’s memorial...and Bernie would not have wanted that either!

Raye G. Schwartz

Town Meeting from page 1

(RICO). Though RICO had reduced its activity on the Island considerably while led by Susan Whitaker and later Shirley Margolin, when Karen Stewart took over the leadership of RICO, she filled most or all of the five constitutionally-mandated seats, controlling enough voting power to thwart some initiatives favored by the Katz-Marcus administration.

Marcus says that neither Karen Stewart nor Patrick Stewart objected in committee deliberations to the elimination of non-elected delegates, and says he felt that both Stewarts had given up their objection to elimination of non-elected Council seats.

Joan Christianson and Karen Stewart made clear their intentions to oppose approval of the new constitution on Monday, when Roosevelt Island Housing Management distributed their flier headlined, “June 15th will be your last chance to choose.” It read, in part, “The current RIRA administration has moved to strike the current RIRA Constitution and move its key components into a set of Bylaws entirely within the Council’s own control... All matters of substance have either been eliminated or transferred to the new Council-controlled Bylaws.” It added, “The current RIRA administration is confident that this matters so little to you and to all RI residents that you will fail to show up at the Town Meeting scheduled for June 15th to vote against it.” The two-sided flier listed, among its “signatories,” five past presidents of RIRA – Lou Carbonetti, Nellie Negrin Finnegan, Sandra Neis, David Kraut, and Patrick Stewart, along with nearly 40 other Islanders listed as former RIRA vice presidents or holding other leadership positions.

Points of change listed in the flier to turn out a quorum included a provision under which Council members would retain their seats after moving from one building (voting district) to another, removal from the constitution of dollar limits on campaigns for RIRA offices, and the removal of voting Council seats for non-elected delegates from CB8 and School Board 2.

Supporters of the constitutional changes responded Tuesday with a flier urging a yes vote, saying that shortening the constitution and moving such items as the number of delegates from new buildings to a set of bylaws were intended to make the Residents Association “lighter on its feet” and able to respond to changes in the community and the political

climate.

Another flier distributed Tuesday was headlined, “Keep Democracy in RIRA,” with the exhortation, “Vote No Tonight.”

Tuesday night’s assembly of a quorum or near-quorum surprised Marcus, who had remained convinced that few would show up to vote on the constitutional proposal. But Karen Stewart and Eastwood resident Joan Christianson, working with others, recruited enough opponents to register a quorum, leading to Tuesday night’s rumble in the Chapel.

Once Katz left, speaker after speaker took over the microphone and, for over an hour, turned him and his administration into a political punching bag. Even some who had been expected to support the change in the constitution deplored his “behavior” in not waiting longer to do the quorum count and in refusing to do a third count. Speeches were interrupted frequently by applause or supportive comments; attitudes ranged from finger-jabbing anger to bewilderment.

Karen Stewart made specific accusations: “I want to make sure that each of you understand what has happened here... What we have now is that *Mr. Katz* will decide how many people your buildings get to represent them. *Mr. Katz* will decide who gets to stay on the Council and, if he chooses, who he may appoint to the Council. When the matter was voted on in the Common Council, I was able to demonstrate that he had shortchanged Southtown by over a third in representation, and had to *force* him to change that... I think what has happened here is simple malfeasance. I think his getting up and walking out when he knew, in fact, that he had a quorum, is something that, under the old constitution, he could be removed for.” Stewart defended a flier she had created, saying only one or two “signatories” had been put on the document without their explicit permission. Others claim the number is nearer a half-dozen.

Margaret Gaspard followed Stewart at the microphone, and said she would resign from the Common Council on Wednesday, in protest.

Debra Mount Cornet said, “They’re using residents of this Island as a steppingstone to get more political power, more personal power.” She proposed residents start a petition to disband RIRA.

Richard Wade saw a conspiracy of Rivercross residents intent on destroying Roosevelt Island’s supply of affordable housing through privatization.

Four supporters of the constitutional change also rose to speak, including Marcus, Rivercross alternate delegates Vicki Feinmel and Ethel Romm, and David Bauer, who heads the Maple Tree Group, an activist group seeking to turn the RIOC Board into a body of elected Island residents empowered to hire professional community management.

Marcus, in particular, spoke at length, defending the work of his constitutional committee. His arguments are summarized in a letter on page 12.

Ethel Romm, a Rivercross resident and alternate delegate who recently moved from Island House, implied much of Karen Stewart’s allegations were smoke and mirrors. “Not one word I’ve heard reflects what’s going on in that [new version of the] constitution.” Speaking of the old version, in force since 1991, she said, “I never saw a more clumsy instrument for us to work with than the constitution that we were working under. It was reflected in the absolute paralysis of what we tried to do. We couldn’t fix a light bulb.”

She continued, “Dr. Wade called us ‘activists.’ I like that word. I wish we could get all of you out when it’s a positive thing, rather than getting you fired up about things you may not be aware of.

After the meeting, residents had various comments. “I think he cut his own throat,” one said of Katz’s handling of the meeting. Another said he had gone to the session expecting an explanation before voting, and was there to learn and make up his mind, but the meeting descended into chaos and the learning process was impeded by political vitriol. “The Stewarts played along in the committee,” said another, reflecting comments Marcus made during the meeting, “and all the time they were lying in wait, in the grass, looking for revenge or something” – a reference to Patrick Stewart’s 2000 loss to Katz in the RIRA presidential election.

A partial transcript of the Tuesday night meeting will be posted with this issue of *The WIRE* on Website NYC10044 (<http://nyc10044.com>).

The contention continues in this issue of *The WIRE*. Katz deals with it in his column (page 3), and letters from supporters of the proposed constitutional revision, and letters from those opposed to it, or to the handling of the meeting, appear on pages 11-13.

by Saul Nadel

SPORTSWIRE

Baseball Standings – Majors (11-13)

Royal:	7-4-1
Green:	7-5
Red:	4-6-1
Navy:	3-6-2

The first game of the final regular-season weekend was played last Saturday (June 12) between Red and Royal. Kevin Breslin pitched four strong shutout innings, propelling Royal to a 10-1 victory. His bat was also a key to the victory, as he went 2-3, with a homer and a double. Adrian Gordon provided solid relief with two innings of work, giving up only one run. Alex Pinks also connected on a home run. Alex Strum was outstanding in the field, robbing two home runs from Alfredo Figueroa. Red player Tolga Enhsailhan was out with an injury, and his missing force kept Red from putting up a big effort against Royal. Peter Camilleri, however, pitched very well for Red.

The second game of the weekend was fought between Navy and Green. This game was played down to the wire. At the top of the last inning, Green led by one run. Navy’s Max McMillan tied up the game with a single, bringing home Anas Dorani, who had led off with a triple. In the bottom of the inning, Green’s Alex Beola walked, Mikko McDonald walked, and Shawn Lee walked. Pitcher Anas Dorani then battled with Daniel Vithlani, throwing nasty pitches, but at the end Vithlani walked, scoring Beola from third base. Green won the game, 10-9. For Green, Alex Guyton went 2-3 and pitched 3 innings. Shawn Lee reached base all 4 times, and Alex Beola pitched good relief, also going 3-3. Mikko McDonald was also hot at bat, going 3-3. For Navy, Max McMillan went 3-4. Ian Kleinfeld went 2-3 and Anas Dorani collected 4 hits in 4 chances. Stay tuned for coverage on the outcome of the playoff games.

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The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (Department) administers the Brownfield Cleanup Program pursuant to ECL 27-1400 et seq. The Brownfield Cleanup Program is designed to encourage the remediation of contaminated properties known as brownfields for reuse and redevelopment. Mr. Bruce Becker has submitted an application to participate in the Brownfield Cleanup Program. The application was determined to be complete by the Department on June 9, 2004. The property described in the application is located at 888 Main Street, Roosevelt Island, NY 10044. The application proposes that the applicant will conduct investigation and/or remedial activities at the site. The application proposes that the site will be used for commercial purposes.

The Department will receive public comments concerning the application for thirty days from June 16, 2004 through July 19, 2004. After review of the application and any public comments received, the Department will determine whether to accept the Applicant’s request to participate in the Brownfield Cleanup Program. If the Department accepts the Applicant’s request to participate, it will execute a Brownfield Cleanup Agreement (BCA) with the Applicant. By executing a BCA, the Applicant would commit to undertake certain remedial activities under the Department’s oversight. A copy of the application as well as a copy of a Draft Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessment are available in the document repository for this site located at the New York Public Library, Roosevelt Island Branch, 524 Main Street, Roosevelt Island, NY 10044, Attn: Petra Kolokotronis.

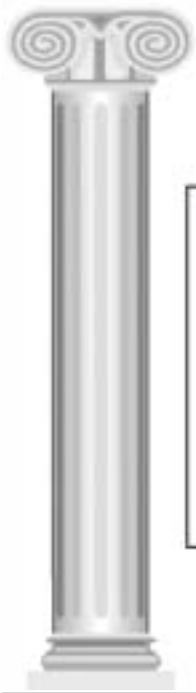
The referenced documents are draft and have not been reviewed by the Department staff prior to their release for public comment. The Department, in conjunction with the New York State Department of Health will review these documents during the public comment period.

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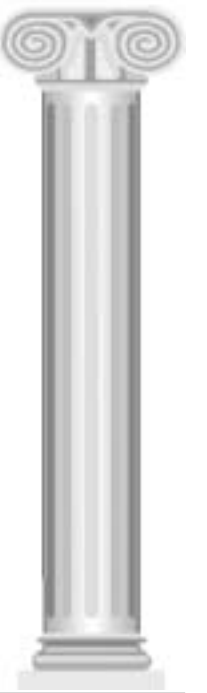


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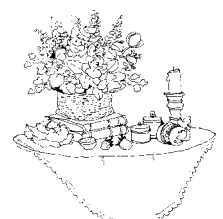
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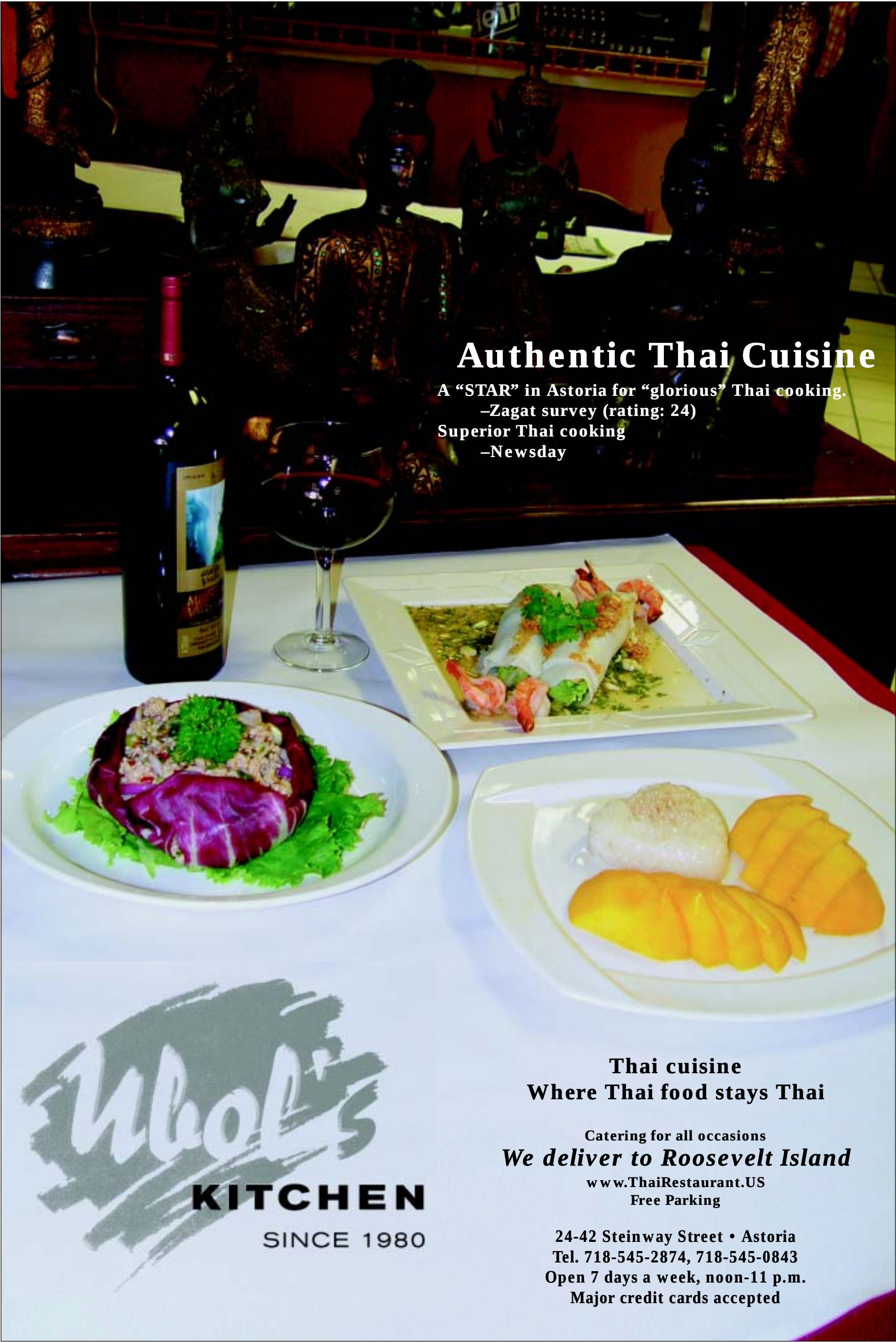


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