# PARK SLOPE CIVIC COUNCIL COUNCIL CIVIC COUNCIL CIVIC

The Newsletter of the Park Slope Civic Council | Fall/Winter 2022-23

# Sustaining a Legacy of Honoring Excellence in Service to Others

#### Eat! Drink! and Celebrate! Food for Thought Tasting Gala is Back

Food for Thought, which makes its highly anticipated return October 19 after a two-year, Covid-imposed hiatus, is a neighborhood party and a chance to sample food and drink from establishments across Park Slope. But, most importantly, it is a fundraiser making possible much of the Civic Council's good work, especially the college scholarships it gives out each year to graduates of the four high schools in the John Jay Educational Complex.

A modest scholarship program began in the early 1960s but took on its present form in 2006, not long after the old John Jay High School was shuttered and replaced by a three-school complex (the fourth, Millennium Brooklyn, was added in 2011). The then-\$1,000 scholarships were funded from the Civic Council's general budget and individual donations. Then as now, college-bound students with a record of community service were selected in conference with counselors and staff at each of the schools.

Joan Emerson, who chaired the relaunched scholarship committee, wrote in the Civic News in 2011 about how inspired she was by the students she had met and that "It feels great to be forging a relationship between our neighborhood and our local high school, which...still feels like an unknown entity in Park Slope." She announced plans for a fundraiser to increase the size of the awards and to create a more stable source of funds. That vision led to the initial Food for Thought in October, 2012.



"We started Food for Thought because the Civic Council faced a crucial lack of funding," recalled Sarah Murphy Gersowitz, who co-chaired the event with Melinda Morris and who recently rejoined the Civic Council's Board of Trustees. "We wanted to be able to continue and, we hoped, expand, the Council's charitable efforts, in particular, increasing the size of the scholarships and also our annual community grants."

"We also hoped to raise awareness in the neighborhood about the Civic Council and all our activities, and to encourage new members to join and become active," Gersowitz added. Food for Thought Funds Community Service Scholarships



The Park Slope Civic Council awarded Community Service Scholarships to four outstanding high school students at a special presentation on May 25 on the plaza in front of the John Jay Educational Complex. The recipients were graduating seniors of the four high schools within the Complex who exemplified an impressive level of volunteer and community service. Each student received \$2,500 to assist them with their post-secondary education.

Scholarships were awarded to students *(pictured above clockwise from the upper left)* Kamaia John from Park Slope Collegiate, Jack Matos from the Cyber Arts Studio Academy, Xiomara Washington from John Jay School for Law, and Amaris Maria Miranda from Millennium Brooklyn High School.

Ms. John will attend the University of Connecticut, Mr. Matos will attend New York University, Ms. Washington will attend Susquehanna University, and Ms. Miranda will attend Pace University.

The Community Service Scholarships are made possible by private donations and the Civic Council's annual fundraising event, Food for Thought, which returns to the Prospect Park Picnic House the evening of Wednesday, October19 (see accompanying article).

Much gratitude and thanks to all who contributed to the success of Food for Thought in past years. We look forward to seeing you in October!

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-- Joe Rydell, Chair, Scholarship Committee

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# President's Letter Fall 2022

Dear Members and Friends,

I just finished reading a New York Times Magazine article about the extreme polarization, misinformation, intense fury and apocalyptic threats of violence that mark politics today in the state of Arizona. By contrast, the Congressional race in the newly drawn CD 10 that includes Park Slope is, in my view, pretty close to a model of how a vibrant democracy should choose its leaders.

The Republican Party and several minor parties nominated candidates who ended up unopposed in primaries, but the primary in the Democratic Party (still in the future as I write this) is an extraordinary contest that is attracting attention far beyond the district's boundaries. There are a dozen candidates, a wonderfully diverse group that includes experienced officeholders and first-time candidates, as well as a dazzling range of professional backgrounds, personal circumstances, national origins, ethnicities, and sexual orientations. It makes me proud to be a Brooklynite!

As you're reading this, the Primary is over and the candidates chosen. All that remains is for everyone to go to the polls on November 8. Be sure to vote!

In other news, we celebrated a significant victory for traffic and pedes-trian safety in July as Governor Hochul signed legislation providing that speed-zone and red-light cameras in New York City can be turned on 24/7. It seems weird that it took so long for this to happen, but that's how things sometimes work in Albany. Civic Council Trustee Madeleine Rumely deserves credit for her effective advocacy on this and

### **New Supermarket Developer Says Promises Will Be Kept**



The developers of the former Key Food site on 5th Avenue and Sterling Place (pictured above) announced a deal with Lidl, a German supermarket chain, to open an almost 25,000 square foot gro-cery to replace the Key Food that served the Park Slope, Gowanus and Boerum Hill neighborhoods for nearly 40 years. Lidl is a discount retailer that relies on private labels to keep prices low.

Community reaction to the announcement was enthusiastic. Jay Marcus, Director of Real Estate for the Fifth Avenue Committee and a spokesperson for the community group that negotiated with the site's devel-opers, was quoted in Park Slope *Patch* saying that the choice of Lidl is a "win-win-win" for developers, the supermarket and neighbors.

SJ Avery, former Civic Council Trustee who was a prime mover in pressuring the developers for a larger supermarket that would better meet the community's needs, said that Lidl and the developers appeared to be living up to the commitments made several years ago to the community in terms of the size of the store, the length of the lease and the discount pricing.

Currently construction on the site is scheduled to begin in October, with a date of completion in 2024.

- - Timothy Gilles, PSCC President

other street safety issues. And by the way, join me in congratulating Maddy on her recent appointment to Community Board 6!

On a related matter, the Civic Council has collected signatures on a petition insisting on stronger enforcement of the Dangerous Vehicle Abatement Act, which was intended to discipline drivers who chronically run red lights and violate speed-zone restrictions. That law hasn't lived up to its promise, and the City needs to devote more resources to enforcement. We'll keep updating you on the progress of that proposal.

For the first time in three years, the Civic Council has a full slate of activities on tap for the fall:

- I'm exceptionally pleased that our Food for Thought Tasting Event, funding college scholarships for graduating John Jay Educational Complex seniors, is scheduled for October 19 at the Prospect Park Picnic House. To buy tickets go to https://www.eventbrite. com/e/food-for-thought-tickets-415694091217. For event details see our ad on page 7.
- The Halloween Parade returns! And back to the actual date of Halloween, Monday, October 31 and our traditional route from 14th Street and 7th Avenue to Washington Park and the Old Stone House on 5th Avenue and 4th St. It's the largest children's parade in the City of New York, and we're thrilled to be leading it once again.
- Finally, stay tuned for an announcement of our Fall Civic Sweep!

We hope your summer was delightful and we look forward to seeing you at our events and around the neighborhood!

Very truly yours, Timothy Gilles



Established 1896 as the South Brooklyn Board of Trade. Incorporated 1938.

Timothy Gilles, President Stephen Copek, First Vice President Linda Wilson, Second Vice President Ezra Goldstein, Treasurer Brian Reagor, Assistant Treasurer Ronald Weiss, Secretary **Ryan DeLorge**, Membership Secretary

*Trustees-At-Large:* Lee Boyes, Jarrett Brilliant, Suzanne de Vegh, Rory Dineen, Sarah Murphy Gersowitz, Christina Gutierrez-Williams, Rickie James, Michael Kaye, Deborah Lauter, Jed Meyer, Scott Middleton, Stephen Painter, Madeleine Rumely, Lauri Schindler, Emmitt Sklar, Donna Stein, Kenneth Stevens, Mitch Szpicek, Tiff Ziter

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The Park Slope Civic Council is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization

#### Thank You To Our Contributors

Judy Antell, SJ Avery, Michael Cairl, John Casson, Melisa Coburn, Rory Dineen, Sarah Murphy Gersowitz, Timothy Gilles, Ezra Goldstein, Christina Gutierrez-Williams, Kimberly Maier, Amanda McAvena, Madeleine Rumely, Joe Rydell, David Schiffer, Tammy Shaw, Donna Stein, Joanna Tallantire, Linda Wilson, Candace Woodward

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# **The Park Slope Civic Council** Working for a Lively, Safe, Green & Beautiful Park Slope!

#### **PSCC SCHOLARSHIPS FOR** COMMUNITY SERVICE

- The Food for Thought Gala funds four college scholarships for community service

#### VOLUNTEERISM & GRANTS

- Awarding grants to diverse organizations that enrich the community - Partnering with neighboring organizations on issues of mutual concern

#### ADVOCACY

- Creating NYC's largest historic district - Campaigning for mass transit improvement - Promoting safer and more livable streets - Supporting local merchants and businesses - Advocating for more affordable housing

## SUSTAINABILITY

- Sponsoring Civic Sweeps and neighborhood cleanups - Partnering with Prospect Park Alliance Mulchfest & "Green & Go" cleanup programs - Participating in climate awareness initiatives



#### HONORING SERVICE & ACHIEVEMENT

- Celebrating Ortner Awards for projects preserving the character and grace of the neighborhood - Lovgren Awards honoring individuals and organizations for professional and volunteer service

### COMMUNITY MEETINGS

- Sponsoring Town Hall meetings on the future of 4th Avenue, reducing our carbon footprint, and expanding the historic district - Assembling forums for engagement with local elected leaders

### SPONSORSHIP

- Orchestrating the Park Slope Halloween Parade - Running the PSCC Historic House Tour and Virtual Tour - Providing free Electronics Recycling and Paper Shredding services

# **Our Mission Statement**

The Park Slope Civic Council promotes the health, vitality and character of the Park Slope neighborhood and advocates for the interests of residents, businesses and others with a stake in the community.

#### **Support Your PSCC** and help us to Sustain the Relevance, Viability and History of This Community We Call Home.

Make your check payable to The Park Slope Civic Council and mail with this form to: 123 Seventh Ave., Box 172, Brooklyn, NY 11215, or sign up online at www.parkslopeciviccouncil.org

			Enclosed is my check for:
Primary Contact (and comp	pany name if applicable)	Email	General Household: \$40
Other Adult Members of H	Jousehold (if applicable)	Email	— 🖵 Business/Professional: \$100
	······		Benefactor: \$250
Street Address			□ Student/Elder Community (65+): \$25
City	State Zip	Phone	Other - Contribution of: \$

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## Committed to Community, and . . .

### Council Hosts District 39 Town Hall



In June, the Civic Council was pleased to host the first Park Slope and Gowanus-based Town Hall for our new 39th District City Council Member Shahana Hanif. Co-hosted by Old Stone House, Community Board 6, Park Slope Parents, Park Slope Neighbors, the Park Slope 5th Ave Business Improvement District, Forth on Fourth Avenue, and the Gowanus Canal Conservancy, the Town Hall attracted nearly 100 people and was an opportunity for many to see and hear Council Member Hanif for the first time since her successful campaign to replace Brad Lander, who was term-limited on the Council and is now the City Comptroller.

The audience heard Hanif address a wide range of topics, including her priorities, her committee assignments, and her engagement with the various neighborhoods in District 39.

As a daughter of Bangladeshi immigrants (and the first Muslim woman on the New York City Council), Hanif has a particular focus on immigration issues and was appointed Chair of the Council's Immigration Committee. She's also a member of the Committees on Criminal Justice, Education, Cultural Affairs, Government Operations and Mental Health, as well as being co-chair of the Council's Progressive Caucus.

Among other things, Hanif focused on her commitment to constituent service and introduced key members of her staff, including several of particular relevance to the work of the Civic Council: Hannah Henderson-Charnow, Director of Outreach and Participatory Budgeting; Faiza Azam, Constituent Services Director; Mia Perez, Education and Land Use Director; and Michael Whitesides, Communications Director.

Following her opening remarks and staff introductions, Hanif took questions from the audience, which covered a wide range of topics including pedestrian and bicycle safety, traffic congestion, historic preservation and landmarking, sanitation issues including composting, and criminal justice.

In the months since the Town Hall, Hanif has demonstrated a serious commitment to addressing the traffic safety and congestion concerns. See the many references to traffic safety in her newsletters, which can be found at **council.nyc.gov/district-39**.

~~ Timothy Gilles, PSCC President

### Feb 1 Ortner Nomination Deadline Announced for '23 Preservation Awards

Are you aware of a recent renovation, new building or community endeavor that has enhanced the appearance of our historic neighborhood? If you know of any, the Park Slope Civic Council would love to hear from you.

The Preservation Awards honor Evelyn and Everett Ortner, who moved to Park Slope in the 1960s when the neighborhood was in decline. Long term residents were moving out, buildings were being abandoned and houses were difficult to purchase because the neighborhood had been redlined by mortgage lenders and insurance companies. The Ortners and a few of their neighbors launched an effort to encourage people to move here to revitalize Park Slope. Their actions helped to result in Park Slope becoming the attractive and vibrant community that it is today. The couple also played a pivotal role in the creation of our Historic District, now one of the largest landmarked districts in NYC.

Please let us know of any project or action you believe might merit an award. Nominations can be made anonymously. Applications will be sent to candidates who appear to qualify for awards and must be completed and submitted **by February 1, 2023.** The awards, sponsored by Tarzian Hardware, will be presented at a spring meeting of the PSCC. Suggestions of candidates for and questions about the Ortner Preservation Awards can be emailed to: jcasson@parkslopeciviccouncil.org.

Eligibility requirements for the six categories of awards and an application form can be obtained at https://parkslopeciviccouncil.org/2023-ortner/

~~ John Casson, Ortner Committee Chair

### For a Cleaner, Greener Park Slope



Pictured from left at the PSCC 2022 Spring Sweep & Earth Day Celebration: Trustess Stephen Painter and Christina Gutierrez-Williams, and former Chair of the Sustainability Committee, Candace Woodward.

Three active committees lead the Civic Council's sustainability initiatives. The newly formed **Trees Committee** plans to work with the Parks Department and local organizations and officials to increase the number of neighborhood trees and maintain them in better health. The **Livable Streets Committee** focuses on street and sidewalk safety and on addressing excessive congestion. The **Sustainability Committee** runs our twice-annual Civic Sweep and neighborhood beautification effort, recycling events and the Christmas Tree Mulchfest event in partnership with the Prospect Park Alliance. Please join us in extending a warm welcome to new Trustee and Sustainability Committee Co-Chair, Christina Gutierrez-Williams.

To volunteer to participate in any of these efforts, or ask questions, email president@parkslopeciviccouncil.org

## Service in Partnership and Collaboration

### Lovgren Winners Honored at Annual Meeting



Pictured from left: Vice President of Small Business Support - Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce Mark Caserta, PSCC Lovgren Awards Chair Candace Woodward, FOFA Co-Chairs SJ Avery and Grace Freedman, and PSCC President, Timothy Gilles.

At its annual meeting last June the Civic Council presented Mark Caserta, SJ Avery, and Grace Freedman with its 2022 Lovgren Awards for Service to the Community. The awards are named for community activist George Lovgren, who helped prevent the closure of the Union Street Firehouse. They've been presented each year since 1979.

Caserta won the Award for Professional Service for his nine years as the founding director of the Park Slope 5th Avenue Business Improvement District. He was instrumental in the BID's creation and in its development into one of the city's most active and successful BIDs. This past winter, Caserta moved on to the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce, where he was named VP of Small Business Support.

Avery and Freedman were jointly honored with the Volunteer Service Award as co-chairs of Forth on Fourth Avenue, which transformed this year from a Civic Council committee to an independent organization. Both were instrumental in organizing a 2013 Civic Council workshop that led to the establishment of the committee, which saw much success in pursuing its mission "to work with the diverse Fourth Avenue community to promote well-being, safety and vitality along Fourth Avenue."

#### Food for Thought continued from cover

The inaugural Food for Thought raised \$16,000, far exceeding the \$10,000 goal. In a Civic News article following the event, Gersowitz and Morris wrote that "the outpouring of support we received from the community is humbling—and inspiring."

Food for Thought continued its successful run through 2019, featuring a sampling of food and drink from some two dozen community establishments, and with the support of numerous sponsors. In the two years since—years in which our other major fundraiser, the house tour, has also been on hold—the Council has continued to give out scholarships, now pegged at \$2,500, plus community grants, drawing from our reserve funds.

"It's fantastic news that we will be able to resume Food for Thought this year," said Civic Council President Timothy Gilles, "Not only because it is so important to our mission, but because it's a fabulous evening: great people, great food, and a great venue." Gilles praised Co-Chairs Amanda McAvena and Tammy Shaw for again spearheading the Food for Thought fundraiser.

Food for Thought takes place 6:30-9:30 PM, Wednesday, October 19 at the Prospect Park Picnic House. Tickets can be purchased online at: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/food-for-thought-tickets-415694091217 or at the door. See our ad on p. 7 for more information.

### Community Partnerships Help Foster Action

The Civic Council has recently expanded its outreach to organizations and institutions in and around Park Slope to lend our support to important local projects and to recruit allies to our initiatives. Some examples are:

The 78th Precinct Community Council: The PSCC recently forged a relationship with the 78th Precinct Community Council designed to enhance communications between the Precinct and Park Slope residents. Precinct Captain Frantz Souffrant appeared at a PSCC meeting last year, and PSCC Trustee and Second Vice-President Linda Wilson was subsequently named to the Community Council and serves as our liaison. She voices community concerns at Precinct meetings and provides input to the Advisory Committee on Youth Initiatives. Last fall, she partnered with the Precinct by co-sponsoring a holiday toy drive and giveaway party at a local Park Slope church. This August, the PSCC participated in the Precinct's Annual "Night Out Against Crime" at Grand Army Plaza.



Pictured from left: 78th Precinct Capt. Frantz Souffrant, Civic Council 2nd Vice President Linda Wilson, & 78th Precinct Community Affairs Officer Brian Laffey.

**Prospect Park Alliance:** PSCC Trustee Donna Stein serves as the PSCC liaison to the Prospect Park Alliance Community Council, which brings together two dozen community organizations from all neighborhoods surrounding the park. Through the Council, the Alliance shares information and invites input about the park's community programming. Over the past year, the PSCC was involved with Mulchfest, the Christmas Tree recycling program, and participated in "Green and Go," a weekend litter cleanup program. We'll be in the Park once again on October 19th when our Food for Thought dinner returns to the Picnic House.

**Community Board #6**: PSCC Trustee Madeleine Rumely was recently appointed to Community Board #6 by Borough President Antonio Reynoso, and she will be making sure the Civic Council is aware of major issues coming before the Board. She'll be particularly active on the Transportation Committee.

**BrooklynSpeaks (Atlantic Yards Advocacy):** In a long-standing relationship, the Civic Council has been involved for years with BrooklynSpeaks through former PSCC President Michael Cairl. A significant new issue at Atlantic Yards (now called Pacific Park) has arisen due to the developer's effort to dramatically upsize the planned building on "Site 5" in Park Slope, which is now occupied by P.C. Richard and Son, the now-closed Modell's, and a parking lot across Flatbush Avenue from Atlantic Terminal. What was initially a 250-foot-tall building will now be nearly 800 feet high, if the developers get their way. BrooklynSpeaks is insisting on a full review of the project before it is allowed to proceed.

## A Warm Welcome to New Council Leadership



#### Christina Gutierrez - Williams, Trustee

Christina recently moved to Park Slope from the West Coast and promptly joined the Civic Council. She had volunteered for the Sustainability Committee and the Civic Sweep before becoming a PSCC Trustee. She looks forward "to the opportunity to help make the council more diverse and therefore more representative of the

diverse and therefore more representative of the demographics of our beautiful neighborhood." She says that "the intersection of food and sustainability is one of my greatest passions." She has traveled extensively abroad and is fluent in Spanish, with conversational facility in French and Italian. She has worked at several food and culinary research companies and is now Director of Culinary Research and Development for Daily Harvest.



#### Deborah Lauter, Trustee

Deborah and her husband moved to Park Slope in February 2021 and, after living in Manhattan and Fort Greene, she says they have "found the perfect neighborhood fit." She is a lawyer who recently retired as the Executive Director of the NYC Office for the Prevention of Hate Crimes

and has significant non-profit leadership experience at the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta, San Franciscans for Good Government, and elsewhere. Having used her advocacy skills to oppose the creation of a high-rise development that would adversely impact a community garden when she lived in Fort Greene, Deborah is now eager to "serve and advocate for the interests of the Park Slope community."



#### Jarrett Brilliant, Trustee

Jarrett comes to the Civic Council having served for the past several years as President of Preserve Park Slope (PPS). Preserve Park Slope was founded in 2013 in response to the Brooklyn Methodist expansion project and, due to the leadership of Jarrett and others, has been a vocal advocate for safe, accessible streets. PPS was recognized by

the Park Slope Civic Council with a 2015 Ortner Preservation Award. Jarrett has been involved in social media, marketing and communications for grassroots advocacy campaigns and causes. Professionally, he has been a design director with Comedy Central and A&E networks and is a Senior Product Designer conducting user experience research for a market-leading human resources firm.



#### Jed Meyer, Trustee

Jed is an executive in media and market research who has held senior-level positions at Omnicom, Univision, Google and now at Kantar. He has lived in Park Slope for two decades and is an energetic community volunteer. Jed served as a member on the Prospect Park YMCA Board of Managers for more than 10 years and also vol-

unteers with New York Cares, the Prospect Park Alliance, Catholic Charities, the Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen and others. He describes himself as "someone that has a lot of energy and was raised to give back to the community that I live in."



#### Michael Kaye, Trustee

Michael is a lawyer, real estate professional and a Park Slope resident for more than 35 years. As former CEO of a major real estate development company, he has built and rehabbed many hundreds of units of affordable housing, and he has extensive experience working through complex approval processes with city, state and federal

agencies. Michael is very involved in community activities and currently sits on the board of Urban Pathways, an organization that provides housing opportunities for homeless New Yorkers, as well as the Board of Friends of BQX, which is promoting the development of a light rail line between Brooklyn and Queens.



#### Scott Middleton, Trustee

Scott has a background in transportation and community planning in the Boston area. He moved to Park Slope in 2019 and is now Partnership Planner with the Jamaica Bay-Rockaway Parks Conservancy, an official partner of the National Park Service. Scott is leading the development of a stewardship resource plan for the Jamai-

ca Bay Wildlife Refuge and is a liaison for the Park Service with community partners in Brooklyn and Queens. His connections to community and environmental improvement run deep. He is also a board member of Young Professionals in Transportation and, as a trip leader for Bike & Build, he organized a cross-country bike trip that raised over \$100,000 for charitable causes. His passion for sustainability is a key reason why he joined the Civic Council's Sustainability Committee.



#### Suzanne de Vegh, Trustee

Suzanne sees joining the Board of Trustees as a way to "participate in ensuring the neighborhood is a good place to live by promoting safety, social justice, sustainability, and other vital issues." She has a significant and impressive background in the arts, with two decades of experience producing public programming and in development

and fundraising. Suzanne served for 5 years on the New York City Museum Educators Roundtable Board of Trustees and has spent the last 7 years as Program Director at the Pratt Institute School of Continuing and Professional Studies. Other artistic involvements have included the American Folk Art Museum, the Park Avenue Armory, the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian, and the Noguchi Museum.



#### Judy Antell, Communications & Data Manager

Judy is a Brooklyn native who moved to Park Slope with her college boyfriend, married him and never left. Judy and her husband, Rob, joined the Food Coop and raised 3 daughters in the neighborhood. Judy was PTA president at PS 321 while working full time at Big Apple Parent.

She writes about family travel and cars for TravelingMom.com and uses Prospect Park three or four times daily, for walks with her dog, runs, bike rides and bootcamp. She has long enjoyed the Civic Council's house tours, civic sweeps and Food for Thought events and is excited to work with the organization.

**PARK SLOPE 5TH AVE BID** 

**OPEN STREETS** 

**APRIL-OCTOBER 29TH** Community events, movies, salsa and more! On various blocks along 5th Ave and on 4th Street Plaza

MENORAH

LIGHTING

**DECEMBER 18TH 4TH STREET** 

**COMMUNITY GIFTCARD** 

Buy and send a Community Gift Card through our Yiftee portal. One gift card can be used in 80 plus small businesses around Park Slope and the Gowanus. Send someone the gift of a Park Slope experience and support local at the same time.

parkslope5thave #theother5th

parkslopefifthavenuebid.com

JOIN US! Tickets Are On Sale NOW!

**2022 FOOD FOR THOUGHT** 

FIFTH AVENU

PARK SLOPE

TREE LIGHTING

**NOVEMBER 26TH** 

**4TH STREET** 

7

WEDDING FAIR

END OF

👩 theother5th

**APRIL 2023** 

# **WELCOME** Joanna Tallantire! Leading Post-Covid Recovery on 5th



Park Slope 5th Avenue BID Executive Director, Joanna Tallantire (pictured at right) with Deputy Director, Melisa Coburn at the new 4th Street Plaza.

Joanna Tallantire, named executive director of the Park Slope Fifth Avenue Business Improvement District (BID) in February, says that she loves her job, just as she loved the eight years she spent as second-in-command to the BID's founding director, Mark Caserta. "That's not to say that it's easy and that there aren't constant challenges," she adds.

Chief among those challenges has been the lingering effects of Covid-19 on shopping and dining habits. "It's still a recovery period," says Tallantire. "Just when business started picking up Omicron came along and hit holiday sales hard. Many people still aren't comfortable going into shops or restaurants."

Another challenge is Open Streets, with its 25 part-time employees and \$90,000 budget, only half of which comes from the city.

Nevertheless, there's plenty to crow about, including the popularity and business success of the same Open Streets. There's much excitement about the new 4th Street pedestrian plaza on the culde-sac between MS51 and Washington Park. Most remarkable is the avenue's healthy vacancy rate at less than 5%. "Things looked bleak when Covid first hit," says Tallantire. "We lost around 35 businesses But we give how of the loss of t businesses. But we gained 90. Covid made people reevaluate their lives and consider that maybe it was time to chase their dreams."

Tallantire, who lives in Park Slope very close to 5th Avenue, came to the BID by a circuitous route. She grew up in England, where she earned a masters in environmental studies. She spent six years in Germany, where her two children were born, then came to the U.S. 17 years ago when her husband, who works in financial IT, was offered a job here. For five years she was a stay-at-home mom who also ran a birthday-party planning business called Cheeky Monkey.

Cheeky Monkey, says Tallantire, "taught me lots about how much work goes into running a small business. I have great empathy for anyone who runs a shop or a restaurant or whatever. I want to do everything I can to support them. I like to think that's one of the things that makes me well suited to this job."



**f** ParkSlope FifthAvenue



& MORE TO COME! check our website at: https://parkslopeciviccouncil.org/food-for-thought/



To purchase tickets go to: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/food-for-thoughttickets-415694091217 or buy tickets at the door

~~ Ezra Goldstein, Trustee



Box 172, 123 Seventh Avenue Brooklyn, NY 11215

# JOIN! RENEW! DONATE! VOLUNTEER!

# www.parkslopeciviccouncil.org

### **UPCOMING EVENTS!\***

Spring Through Mid-November - Lowlands Nursery is Gowanus Canal Conservancy's mission-driven nursery specializing in urban-adapted hardy native plants: located at 25 9th Street in Gowanus; regular open hours for shopping are Thursdays & Saturdays, 10 AM - 2 PM unless stated otherwise on social media and at their website at https://plants.gowanuscanalconservancy.org/

Saturdays through October 29th - Park Slope 5th Avenue BID "Open Streets": community events, movies, salsa and more! from 11 AM - 10 PM; see their ad on page 7 for a Fall and Winter lineup of fun BID activities.

Beginning Saturday, October 1 the 4th Avenue Yarn Bomb Returns - A collaboration and exhibition of local fiber artists highlighting and celebrating 4th Ave. neighborhood touchstones: installation on the 4th Ave. fence along Washington Park is slated for October 1-2, and will be in place for the Kings County Fiber Festival on October 8, the Arts Gowanus Open Studios weekend of October 15-16 and during the NYC Marathon on November 6; attendance is FREE and all are welcome.

Thursdays, October 6th and the 1st Thursday of every month (except July & August) - Park Slope Civic Council Board Meeting: 7 - 9 PM at the Old Stone House between 3rd and 4th Streets in Washington Park; all are welcome; visit our website at www.parkslopeciviccouncil.org for meeting updates.

Saturday & Sunday, October 15-16 - Celebrating its 26th year, Arts Gowanus Open Studios Returns: featuring over 300 artists across nearly 100 locations throughout the neighborhood, this free event runs rain or shine from noon - 6 PM; visit www.artsgowanus.org for more information, and to browse their online directory of artists.

Saturday, October 29th - the Park Slope 5th Avenue BID, OSH & Park Slope Parents' Halloween Costume Contest & Mini Parade are back! Join the fun at the Old Stone House & Washington Park on 5th Ave between 3rd and 4th Streets for their Costume Contest and Mini Parade kicking off at 2 PM. See you there!



Tickets are **ON SALE NOW** at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/food-for-thoughttickets-415694091217 or purchase at the door for more information contact Amanda McAvena at 614-364-2123 or Tammy Shaw at 917-921-2394

Monday, October 31 - PSCC Park Slope Halloween Parade Returns! Parade kicks off at 7th Avenue and 14th Street and winds up at the Old Stone House at 5th Avenue between 3rd and 4th Streets: Parade marchers start to queue up at 6 PM; Parade runs from 6:30 to 7:30 PM; participation is FREE and OPEN TO ALL.

Monday, October 31 - BOO!KCM; The Brooklyn Conservatory of Music hosts their annual Halloween event for the whole family! Join BKCM outside of their Park Slope building at 58 7th Avenue from 4 - 6 PM for spine-chilling musical performances, a haunted instrument garden and, of course, candy! This event is free to attend.

Holiday Festivities Throughout The Season: Stay tuned for details and drop-off locations for the PSCC/78th Precinct "Toys for Tots" Toy Drive; check out the 5th Avenue BID lineup of seasonal events on page 7; and watch for dates and times for the annual Mulchfest tree drop-off and chipping event in Prospect Park.