



Bronx Press-Review

Bronx gets \$3M from FEMA to rebuild from Sandy's ruin

By HAYDEE CAMACHO

One year following Superstorm Sandy, service organizations and cultural institutions in the Bronx are still struggling to rebuild. Nearly \$3 million in FEMA funds are on their way to provide relief, announced Senator Jeff Klein.

Earlier this year, the New York State Legislature approved federal emergency funds allocated for Sandy relief. Bronx recipient institutions include the New York Botanical Garden, SUNY Maritime, Fordham University, Manhattan College, Wave Hill, the Wildlife Conservation Society and Providence Rest, a nursing home facility off the coast of Eastchester Bay.

"I am happy to report that money so desperately needed to bring the Bronx back has arrived," said Klein. "The very simple message we're sending here today is that although devastation took place, after the damage, we're going to rebuild bigger and better."

Many of the institutions were already trying to recover from the damage caused by the previous year's storm (Irene), which also weakened tree roots. After Sandy, they labored to fund the removal of downed trees, emergency generators, drains and repairs to property, with costs ranging in the hundreds of thousand dollars.

"While we are mindful of all the work that has yet to be done in communities hardest hit by Superstorm Sandy, we are indeed grateful for work to expedite qualified Federal reimbursements for the unprecedented damage done to The New York Botanical Garden last fall," said Aaron Bouska, Assistant Vice President for Government and Community Relations at The New York Botanical Garden. "Reimbursements ensured that the Botanical Garden was quickly re-opened to the public, made safe and accessible to all New Yorkers, and allowed us to welcome tourists from around our State and across the globe."

Another institution that was hard hit was Providence Rest in Throgs Neck. The nursing home is next to the



State Senator Jeff Klein announces \$3 million in FEMA funding to rebuild Bronx institutions after Sandy.

Photo credit: Haydee Camacho

waterfront and incurred severe damage to its seawall. "FEMA was very responsive after Sandy," said Providence Rest administrator Susan Steinberg. "We have been reimbursed for all the damage to our air conditioning units and their replacement, debris removal, tree removal, roof repair, catch basin repair. All has been taken care

of except for the Seawall, which we are working hard to repair once and for all."

"We want to make sure that Providence Rest gets back on track," added Klein. "I want to make sure they continue to provide quality care for our senior citizens."

Former golf range in Pelham Gardens to be redeveloped

By HAYDEE CAMACHO

A former golf driving range in the Pelham Gardens section of the Bronx will be converted to a retail development, announced the Metropolitan Transportation Authority and New York City Economic Development Corpo-

ration. Gun Hill Square, a joint venture between Grid Properties, Inc., and Gotham Organization, Inc., will build the complex which will feature 260,000 square feet of leasable space and up to 100 units of senior housing depending on the availability of

public financing. The purchase price of \$30.5 million for the 550,000-square foot site at the intersection of East Gun Hill Road and the New England Thruway will go toward the MTA's 2010-2014 Capital Program.

The retail development will

create approximately 328 direct construction jobs and 547 permanent jobs. In addition, Gun Hill Square, LLC, has committed to work with NYCEDC to announce available positions and develop and implement hiring plans.

This property is one of four that are currently under contract to be surrendered by the MTA through the agency's effort announced in September 2011 to vacate up to nine city-owned properties for needed capital funding and redevelopment of sites no longer needed by the MTA. The others are the former New York City Transit headquarters in Downtown Brooklyn, a parking lot for New York City Transit emergency vehicles at Houston Street in Manhattan, and a deactivated electrical substation on E. 211th Street in the Bronx.

"Transforming this piece of vacant land into a property that is aesthetically pleasing for our community while creating jobs for local residents and bringing in much needed revenue for the MTA is something I support," said Council Member Andy King of

the 12th District. "Beyond this, I urge the developers to incorporate the housing component for seniors to make this project complete," he said.

The site was acquired by the City and MTA in the mid-1980s to allow for the expansion of MTA's adjacent Gun Hill Bus Depot. The expansion plan was withdrawn and the site has accommodated a variety of uses.

The developer will bear the expenses of installing security measures for the MTA that would separate the retail and housing complex from the adjacent bus depot, including fencing and a multi-camera fiber optic detection system. The proposed development is expected to go through the NYC Uniform Land Use Review Process.

"This project is very good news for the community, in that it takes a piece of property that has long been an eyesore and puts it to a useful purpose," noted Father Richard Gorman, Chair of Community Board 12. "We look forward to the development of this project, especially if it becomes possible to incorporate senior housing in the future."



Rendering of the new Gun Hill retail development in the Bronx. Photo: BLT Architects