

Hudson Yards Brings Big Changes To Chelsea

By Gloria Sukenick, CRDC Housing Chair

It was a week (or so) before Christmas and the weather was frightful ... but many braved the weather to hear Lee Compton of Community Board 4 present the final agreement on the huge Hudson Yard development in our future.

Lee did a thorough walk-through — from park space to the tops of this dense development — so huge, it is a neighborhood unto itself. Some office space, there is a much needed public school, a hotel and some retail. The rest is, of course, housing — 5000 units of it! Need I say, most of it called for ‘luxury’ housing ... with a small percentage ‘affordable’.

The on-site housing was not permanently affordable and there was no guarantee that it would be included. There was some housing to be built at two offsite locations. But overwhelmingly this mega-project was all too typical of the Bloomberg touch ... rezoning in order to create swathes of upscale development with barely any response to the huge numbers of citizens looking for housing that they could afford!

But, a last minute rescue! Down to the wire negotiations produced a many layered (a piece here ... a piece there) patchwork of low, moderate and middle income housing ... and, possibly, some new and some existing 80/20 housing that will be permanently affordable ... a first!

Two off-site locations are in Hell’s Kitchen, and now, an added site for

new affordable housing on West 20th Street, as well as preservation of some existing SRO’s and Section 8 housing. And much of this housing will be family-sized, 2 and 3 bedroom units that invites a stable, mixed income population. I said it was complicated!

Councilmember Quinn’s office, Community Board 4 and West Side Neighborhood Association, (community advocates) swung into action as the final approval of the plan edged closer. They all worked long and hard to achieve these numbers. We think that — although this is a welcome addition — the need for much more affordable housing remains a high priority throughout our neighborhood.

However we, in Chelsea, were scolded by Lee for not having been as present and accounted for at hearings and demos as we could (or should) have been. Not totally unjustified! After all, this is our neighborhood!

Is the New York City’s weather forecast looking a little brighter? Does the defeat of Kingsbridge Armory development in the Bronx herald an independent City Council? The Council voted the Armory plan down because the mayor thought the demand that jobs resulting from that development should pay a living wage, was too much to ask for. Let the sun shine in!

So here’s to a flying start to a new decade! Happy new year! Keep fighting!

GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday January 20, 2010
7:00PM

Hudson Guild, 441 West 26th St.
(btwn. 9th and 10th Avenues)

ON THE AGENDA:

“The Presidential Election, 2009, and what we can expect for the coming year”?

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Kenneth Sherrill, Professor Emeritus of Political Science, Hunter College

Professor Patrick J. Egan,
New York University.

ALSO ON THE AGENDA

Report from the 2010 Nominating Committee for Club Officers and Members-at-Large.

Further nominations will be taken from the floor.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF

*In remembrance of
CRDC members who
left us in 2009*

Mercedes Osgood

Katharine Roberts

Robert J. Healy

Earle Erickson

Belle Feldman

Comments On Economics: Taxes Versus Debt

By Maarten de Kadt, CRDC Member

Reduce taxes. Pay down the more than \$12 trillion national debt. Do both at the same time and do them now. These are rallying cries for Republican conservatives and some Democrats as well.

Implementing these two contradictory policies, however, will result in a worsening of the current economic crisis.

According to conservative pundits, tax reduction is supposed to stimulate business. Fewer taxes mean greater available monies for investment in productive activities. More productive activities lead to greater employment. Greater employment means there are more people able to buy things. Buy more things and the economy improves. Reducing taxes is also supposed to stimulate consumer spending among the already employed by increasing disposable income. More disposable income means more money is available for buying things.

However, more money in entrepreneurial coffers does not necessarily lead to increased investment spending. Investment spending is necessary to create more jobs. Investments come when there is confidence that profits will be gotten on the new activities those investments created. Ours is not an economy with a lot of confidence and investments have been slow in coming. So investment by the government, for example, in infrastructure improvement is very necessary right now.

State and local governments must obtain the funds to buy what they deem to be necessary for public safety and comfort. Either now or later that money must come from taxes or from Federal sources also supported by taxes. If this were a society in which income and wealth were equitably distributed among all, tax policy would be easy; everyone would be taxed equally. But there is a great disparity between rich and poor in our society, so methods must be devised to proportionally tax the rich in greater amounts than the poor. The tax breaks bestowed on the rich over the last 30 years must be reversed.

Everyone except the very poor should pay taxes. However, in order to pay taxes people must be employed. Now, we don't work merely to pay taxes. We work to earn our daily bread. The money we earn is used to buy

the things we do not ourselves make. That is the primary characteristic of an exchange economy — work to live. The things taxes buy are only part of that equation, but a fundamental part. So the conservative argument to reduce taxes amounts to arguing that the government should cut its services.

But at the same time conservatives argue for tax reduction, they also argue for deficit reduction. And since funds are not available to reduce the deficit in this distressed time, reducing the deficit requires cutting services further. Economist Paul Krugman has called this form of deficit reduction “starving the beast.”

I am not arguing against deficit spending or against repaying debt, which are often sensible policies especially when a decision is made to build something that will be used by present and future generations alike. Borrowing money typically spreads the payments out across generations. It also stimulates economic activity. Borrowing money presumes repayment in some regular, sensible, periodic form. However, abrupt debt reductions constrain economic activity, as less money is available to build new things. There is a contradiction here. Money must be spent to fulfill earlier promises of payment. But if repaid now, fewer jobs can be created at this moment.

Remember also, much of the nation's national debt does not stem from earlier decisions to rebuild infrastructure. It comes, rather, from the painful fact that the US has financed two unnecessary wars – a fact our conservative pundits eager to reduce the national debt conveniently ignore.

Now is not the time to repay the war debt. Taxes must be equitably increased to put people to work providing necessary infrastructure and services. Regaining the more than 15 million jobs that have been lost in the last year must be the government's highest priority.

The Same-Sex Marriage Defeat and the 2010 NYS Senate Elections

By David Caraway, CRDC Second VP

For supporters of equality, December 2, 2009, was a heart-wrenching betrayal. On that day, the New York State Senate voted 38–24 against the core human

freedom for any citizen to marry the person he or she loves. All 30 Republicans voted against the legalization measure as did 8 Democrats: Joseph Addabbo (*Queens*), Darrell Aubertine (*Oswego area*), Ruben Diaz (*Bronx*), Shirley Huntley (*Queens*), Carl Kruger (*Brooklyn*), Hiram Monserrate (*Queens*), George Onorato (*Queens*), and William Stachowski (*Buffalo*).

Those 38 not only voted against fairness, they voted against public opinion. In the most recent Marist poll, 51% of registered New York State voters supported gay marriage while 42% opposed it. The bill had already claimed enthusiastic support of the Assembly and the Governor.

On this page in May, I called on the NYS Senate to bring marriage to a vote, and CRDC unanimously passed a resolution echoing that sentiment, but I feel no buyer's remorse. Although the defeat was both astounding and infuriating for LGBT people and progressive allies, vital information was gleaned about the hearts of specific Senators who can now be rewarded or punished accordingly.

In a statement released the day of the defeat, Senator Duane wrote that, "Promises made were not honored." During the 2008 elections at the behest of Senator Duane's office, several of us CRDC members phone banked for Senator Addabbo who ended up voting against the measure. I can only surmise that this was one of those broken promises.

From a practical perspective, I wish we had the luxury and resources to punish Democrats such as Addabbo who voted against equality by vigorously supporting pro-equality opponents. However, 2010 will be no routine election. It is absolutely crucial for all progressive causes that the Democrats control the New York State Senate for redistricting purposes come 2011.

If the Republicans control the Senate in 2011 as they had for a generation until this year, marriage equality will be put on the back burner and a host of progressive causes such as housing, the environment, education and healthcare will also suffer. Further, the Democratic majority must be solid enough to prevent a handful of egomaniacs from holding the state hostage to their shockingly selfish and petulant motives.

I believe our 2010 club priorities should be to defeat every NYS Senate Republican possible, support pro-

equality Democrats, and waste no resources opposing or supporting those 8 Democrats who voted "no" on marriage equality.

There will be many important races in 2010 including Congress and Governor, but I can think of no better bang for our resources than campaigning for and donating to Democrats challenging incumbent Republicans in the New York Senate.

Muriel Beach Honored

We congratulate **CRDC Member Muriel Beach** who received the 2009 Hudson Guild Senior Service Award this past December at the Dr. Elliott Celebration and Dinner.

Muriel was born in New Hampshire and received a graduate degree in Economy from Cornell University. In the '60s she became involved with the Civil Rights Movement and later in the Gay Men's Health Crisis.

A friend introduced her to the Institute for Senior Action (IFSA). After a 10-week training on leadership and advocacy, Muriel was off and running, and she took on new challenges as a senior. She is a founding member of the Senior Outrage Coalition, established to fight the budget cuts in senior programs in the city, and many other causes for the well-being of seniors and our community.



Muriel Beach (second from right) celebrates with friends at the Dr. Elliot Dinner, where she received the 2009 Hudson Guild Senior Service Award

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Chelsea, Madison Sq., Flatiron, Rosehill



***Remember To Vote
In Our Club Election!
Save the Date — February 18***

Club will be voting for all Club positions.
Remember, your 2010 dues must be paid in order to vote. You may do so at the meeting.

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