

Habitat for Humanity - New York City Advocacy Newsletter

April/May 2005, Issue No. 9

- In this Issue:
- **Welcome to the Covenant Action Network**
- **Save the Date!**
- **Inclusionary Zoning Update**
- **Battery Park City Update**
- **“Hammer and Pen” Postcards and Letters to Speaker Miller and Councilmember Katz**
- **Building on Faith Summary**
- **Inside Washington**
- **In the News**

Welcome to new members of the Covenant Action Network! If you are receiving this e-newsletter for the first time, you signed one of our Hammer and Pen postcards supporting the Habitat-NYC Housing Covenant and we have added your name to our advocacy mailing list. YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE SOLICITATIONS. However, if you would like to be taken off this list, please respond to this e-mail and write “unsubscribe” in the subject line. Otherwise, welcome to the Covenant Action Network! You can expect monthly updates on Habitat-NYC and other housing advocacy events.

Save the Date!

Mayoral Candidates Forum on Affordable Housing

Thursday, June 30, 2005

6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

St. Paul's Chapel

at Broadway and Fulton Street

Join us as New York's Faith Leaders discuss affordable housing policies with Mayoral candidates Michael Bloomberg (invited), Fernando Ferrer (confirmed), C. Virginia Fields (invited), Gifford Miller (confirmed), Anthony Weiner (confirmed), Steven Shaw (invited), and Thomas Ognibene (invited).

The forum is sponsored by Interfaith Assembly on Homelessness and Housing in partnership with Habitat for Humanity – New York City, Housing Here and Now, East Side Congregations for Housing Justice, Council of Churches of the City of New York, and many more!

To RSVP, please contact Habitat for Humanity - New York City at (718) 246-5656 ext. 375 or by e-mail abouska@habitatnyc.org.

Inclusionary Zoning Update: 3,300 Affordable Units to be created in Greenpoint-Williamsburg

Building on the historic precedent set in the Hudson Yards rezoning plan earlier this year, city officials announced on May 2 that an agreement had been reached in the Greenpoint-

Williamsburg rezoning plan to guarantee that 33 percent, or approximately 3,300 units, of the new apartments will be affordable to working families. Since the plan was announced last year, local elected officials had been joined by hundreds of local and citywide housing, community and faith groups to urge the city to ensure that a significant number of new units would be affordable. Their voices were heard!

Battery Park City: Keeping the Promise of Affordable Housing

After almost a year of intense organizing that brought together hundreds of housing activists, union members and faith leaders, Mayor Bloomberg joined with Comptroller Thompson on April 19, 2005 to announce the creation of a \$130 million dollar trust fund using surpluses from Battery Park City to build and preserve 4,500 apartments over four years, mostly for low-income families. After almost 40 years, the promise of affordable housing from Battery Park City was finally fulfilled!

2,600 “Hammer and Pen” Postcards supporting Habitat-NYC Covenant campaigns delivered to the Mayor

Many of you have come out and **lifted hammers** to help Habitat-NYC build affordable homes and we have asked you to **lift your pens and raise your voices** so that the thousands of New Yorkers in need of housing will have the opportunity to live in a safe, decent and affordable home. Over the course of the year we have collected over 2600 post cards! On April 21st following the press conference concerning rezoning in Greenpoint-Williamsburg, the “Hammer and Pen” post cards were delivered at City Hall. Furthermore, we continued to put faith into action during our annual Building on Faith Event by signing letters to Speaker Miller and Council member Melinda Katz to support a guarantee of 40% affordable housing in the current Greenpoint-Williamsburg rezoning. The letters had a tremendous impact –See above the Greenpoint-Williamsburg agreement.

Building on Faith Summary

On the weekend of April 16-17 2005, Habitat-NYC’s Jamaica, Queens site hosted a total of 47 participants from 18 different faith and campus organizations at our annual Building on Faith Event. Volunteers had the opportunity to put faith into action and advocate for housing justice. An advocacy training was held on each day where participants received the Habitat-NYC’s Advocate’s Toolkit. The toolkit contains background information, campaigns and links to several housing issues. We send a special thanks to those of you who spoke during the lunch programs and shared your own experience as leaders and advocates.

Inside Washington

Congress Takes Action on CDBG Cuts

The House and Senate have both passed measures seeking to reinstate funding for the Community Development Block Grant. Last month, Sen. Norm Coleman (R-Minn.) introduced an amendment to the Senate Budget Resolution to fully fund the CDBG and retain the program at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The amendment, which passed on March 17 by

68-31 vote, allocates \$2.1 billion to CDBG; however, the measure does not increase the overall budget to cover the additional funding.

In the House, a Budget Resolution Committee Report allocates \$1.1 billion to CDBG beyond the funds requested in President Bush's budget proposal. However, like the Senate amendment, the measure does not include additional funding to cover the shortfall. In addition, Rep. Carolyn Kilpatrick (D-Mich.) introduced a House Continuing Resolution to block the transfer of the CDBG to the Department of Commerce. The resolution states that "the mission of the program would fundamentally be altered from a municipal focus on the revitalization of distressed neighborhoods to a focus on business interests concentrating on economic development projects." The resolution is cosponsored by 53 members of the House. Habitat for Humanity International is urging Congress to fully fund the CDBG at \$4.7 billion and to retain the program at HUD. Further, HFHI has asked Congress to support the president's request for \$30 million for SHOP funding, and has requested \$15 million in funding for Capacity Building for Habitat for Humanity, which received \$4.5 million in funding last year, but was zeroed out in this year's budget proposal. In addition, HFHI is opposing the mandatory five-year spending limit on domestic discretionary spending proposed in the budget. In a recent survey conducted by HFHI's Washington Office, 75 U.S. affiliates revealed that, in the last five years, affiliates had received grants ranging from \$45,000 and \$2.2 million, totaling some \$14.6 million. HFH affiliates use such funds to help cover the costs of purchasing land and developing infrastructure for home construction; impact fees, environmental assessments, title work and engineering; and purchasing warehouses to establish ReStores. It is expected that the White House will send proposed legislation authorizing the transfer of the CDBG program from HUD to the Commerce Department to the Congress in May.

For more information regarding CBHFH and CDBG funding, please contact Carole Kolstad at (202) 628-9171 ext. 4914 or by e-mail ckolstad@hfhi.org.

In the news

The following links are recent news articles related to housing issues.

New York Daily News, "A Nabe Grows in Brooklyn" – May 4, 2005

http://www.nydailynews.com/05-04-2005/news/ideas_opinions/story/306148p-261941c.html

Newsday, "Deal in Brooklyn Housing Plan" – May 3, 2005

http://www.newsday.com/mynews/ny-nyhous034243406may03_0_3052392_story

New York Daily News, "Mike Makes Housing Deal" – May 3, 2005

<http://www.nydailynews.com/05-03-2005/news/story/305884p-261740c.html>

New York Post, "Housing Plan to Redo Brooklyn Waterfront" – May 3, 2005

<http://www.nypost.com/seven/05032005/news/regionalnews/45888.htm>

New York Post, "Landlords Bid for Hike" – May 3, 2005

<http://www.nypost.com/seven/05032005/news/regionalnews/45856.htm>

New York Times, "City is Backing Makeover for Decaying Brooklyn Waterfront" – May 3, 2005

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/03/nyregion/03brooklyn.html>

New York Daily News, "Carpenters Nail Chance to Land a Job" – May 1, 2005
<http://www.nydailynews.com/05-01-2005/boroughs/story/305166p-261174c.html>

David Chen on Battery Park City- April 20, 2005
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/20/nyregion/20battery.html>

Newsday, "Housing Funds Earmarked" – April 20, 2005
<http://www.newsday.com/mynews/ny-nyhous204225646apr20,0,3773288.story>

New York Post, "Mike Gets Left Lift for Housing Plan" – April 20, 2005
<http://www.nypost.com/news/regionalnews/44891.htm>

Gotham Gazette, "Affordable Housing Plan" – April 20, 2005
<http://www.gothamgazette.com/thisweek/04.18.05.shtml>

Crain's on Battery Park City: - April 19, 2005
<http://newyorkbusiness.com/news.cms?newsId=10462>

Gotham Gazette, "City Council Stated Meeting" – April 12, 2005
<http://www.gothamgazette.com/article/searchlight/20050412/203/1384>

City Limits, "Waterfront Woes" – April 11, 2005
<http://www.citylimits.org/content/articles/weeklyView.cfm?articlenumber=1696>

New York Times, "The Slow Fadeout of Rent-Regulated Apartment" – April 10, 2005
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/10/realestate/10cov.html>

New York Post, "City Rents Could Rise" – April 9, 2005
<http://www.nypost.com/realestate/42368.htm>

New York Post, "Green Scene" – April 9, 2005
<http://www.nypost.com/realestate/42362.htm>

New York Times, "Killing off Housing for the Poor" – April 9, 2005
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/09/opinion/09sat3.html>

The New York Times "U.S. Plans New, Deep Cuts in Housing Aid" – April 8, 2005
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/08/nyregion/08housing.html>

New York Daily News "Affordable Housing Push" – April, 5 2005
<http://www.nydailynews.com/04-05-2005/boroughs/story/296513p-253891c.html>

The New York Times “Council Threatens to Block Plan to Rezone Brooklyn” – April 5, 2005
<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/05/nyregion/05brooklyn.html>

City Limits “State Bond-Doggle”: Small Building Seeks Big Subsidy –April 4, 2005
<http://www.citylimits.org/content/articles/weeklyView.cfm?articlenumber=1690>

City Limits “State Bond-Doggle”: Small Building Seeks Big Subsidy” –April 4, 2005
<http://www.citylimits.org/content/articles/weeklyView.cfm?articlenumber=1690>

The Village Voice “Hipsters Defend Brooklyn” – April 3, 2005
<http://www.villagevoice.com/news/0514,ferguson,62681,5.html>