



MARK WEPRIN HAS BEST ATTENDANCE RECORD IN THE CITY COUNCIL

Council Member Mark Weprin has a ninety-nine percent attendance record since he joined the New York City Council, the highest record among all Council Members, excluding the Speaker.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Since the start of the year, the New York City Council has approved measures to:

- ▶ implement comprehensive series of improvements to snow plowing and snow removal procedures to avoid another disastrous snow response
- ▶ upgrade 311 service during emergencies
- ▶ allow the installation of large solar rooftops
- ▶ subject pedicabs to parking rules
- ▶ reduce alternate side of the street parking restrictions
- ▶ increase penalties for violating the housing maintenance code by failing to provide adequate heat and hot water
- ▶ prohibit smoking in pedestrian plazas and public parks
- ▶ outlaw outdoor ATMs that protrude onto the sidewalk

NEWS FROM COUNCIL MEMBER **MARK S. WEPRIN**
23RD DISTRICT, QUEENS

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NEWS FROM COUNCIL MEMBER
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23RD COUNCIL DISTRICT, QUEENS
SUMMER 2011



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NEWS FROM FROM COUNCIL MEMBER **MARK S. WEPRIN** **WEPRIN SCORES TWIN VICTORIES FOR CO-OPS**

FIGHTING FOR PROPERTY TAX FAIRNESS



Bay Terrace President Warren Schreiber, Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, Council Member Mark S. Weprin, and Assemblymember David I. Weprin lead a "tax revolt" at City Hall against outrageous real property tax assessment increases.

When the City Department of Finance (DOF) released the market value assessments for real property taxes for cooperative and condominium properties earlier this year, board members were shocked to see staggering increases, up to one hundred fifty percent in some cases. Council Member Mark Weprin, along with co-op and condo leaders from Eastern Queens, took the lead in drawing attention to the issue. At a huge rally at City Hall, Council Member Weprin and co-op residents called on Mayor Bloomberg and DOF Commissioner David M. Frankel to rescind the increases.

Thanks to the efforts of all who were outspoken advocates on this issue over the past few months, the City Council and the administration of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg agreed to negotiate a joint proposal for legislation to finally ensure tax fairness for co-ops and condos. The recommended changes in how DOF values co-ops and condos will go to the State Legislature. In the interim, DOF will limit increases in market value and effectively limit increases in taxable values. Co-op and condo residents have been shortchanged by the real property tax system for far too long, and the recent agreement finally establishes the path to fixing the problem once and for all.

SUCCESS ON FLIP TAX RULE CHANGE

Earlier this year, Council Member Mark Weprin received very positive news from the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA): its proposed rule on private transfer fees includes an exception for fees paid to homeowner associations, condominiums, and cooperatives, which use the proceeds to benefit the property. The initial proposal would have effectively forced local co-ops and condos to eliminate their transfer fees, known as flip taxes, and Council Member Weprin contacted FHFA seeking the exception. Without the ability to charge a flip tax upon the sale of an apartment, some co-ops would have been forced to assess their shareholders and residents hundreds of dollars more each month.

WEPRIN BLASTS DOE PLAN TO REMOVE FUNDS FROM SCHOOLS

Council Member Mark Weprin contacted the New York City Department of Education (DOE), in opposition to the recent directive to school principals indicating that, according to the Deferred Program Planning Initiative, they can retain only fifty percent of the funds that remain at the end of the school year. In years past, principals were able to roll over one hundred percent of residual monies from one year to the next.

Council Member Weprin noted that allowing principals to roll over remaining funds rewards careful budgeting, leading to a small cushion

in many schools' budgets. When the inevitable budget cuts arrive, the savvy planners' preparedness helps them to better weather the storm. This year in particular, many principals, fully aware of the severe budgetary challenges facing our City and State, saved money that they intended to transfer for use during the next school year. Withdrawing those funds is an affront to the principals' prudent efforts as well as to the students they have tried to protect.

In addition, Council Member Weprin indicated that removing unspent funds perversely incentivizes principals to spend every last dime,

which is exactly the opposite of what DOE should be doing in the current environment.

In response to the criticism, DOE has modified the DPPI guidelines and will allow schools to retain seventy percent, rather than fifty percent, of the unspent money. While seventy percent is an improvement, removing funds that principals worked so hard to save is still counterproductive to the process of giving our students the best learning opportunities possible. The City Council has once again written to DOE to express that schools must be permitted to retain one hundred percent of their funds.

LIBRARY AT WINDSOR PARK RE-OPENS



The community gathered to celebrate the re-opening of Queens Library at Windsor Park following a complete interior and exterior renovation. The facility now includes a teen area and new furnishings for the adult area, in addition to a completely renovated children's room. Upgrades to the library also include new lighting, energy efficient HVAC equipment and carpeting. The technological upgrades include the installation of technology for self check-in and self check-out of library materials. New automated self check-in machines have also been installed to allow the return of materials 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The total investment in Queens Library at Windsor Park was over \$2.8 million, including funding directed by Council Member Mark Weprin and Assemblymember David I. Weprin.

From left to right: Queens Library CEO Thomas W. Galante, Assemblymember David I. Weprin, Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, Council Member Mark S. Weprin, Community Board 11Q District Manager Susan Seinfeld.

MARK WEPRIN VOLUNTEERS AS NYC TOUR GUIDE



Council Member Mark Weprin volunteered with Big Apple Greeter, serving as a New York City tour guide to visitors Andrew and Lisa Oxborough of Cambridgeshire, England. Big Apple Greeter is an organization that has over three hundred volunteer greeters who, each year, bring approximately seven thousand visitors to over one hundred neighborhoods throughout the City. The organization provides the greeters free of charge.

FOR VALENTINE'S DAY, MARK WEPRIN JOINS SENIORS IN CELEBRATION OF 50+ YEARS OF MARRIAGE



Mark Weprin officiated at a ceremony during which couples who had been married for at least fifty years renewed their marriage vows in honor of Valentine's Day. The event took place at Services Now for Adult Persons (SNAP), a senior center serving Eastern Queens.

CELEBRATING LUNAR NEW YEAR



Mark Weprin marched in the Lunar New Year Parade in Flushing, Queens with Congressman Gary L. Ackerman, City Comptroller John C. Liu, Assemblymember Grace Meng, Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, and Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer.

PREVENTING CYBERBULLYING

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg signed into law a bill by Council Member Mark Weprin and Council Member Lewis A. Fidler that facilitates instruction on bias-related harassment, especially cyberbullying. There has been a disturbing number of incidents in recent years in which young people were victims of bullying via internet or electronic devices. In a few cases, the harassment has become so severe that young people have chosen to end their lives.

Rachel Mayo of Little Neck, Queens initially contacted Council Member Weprin about cyberbullying last year when she was a student at Townsend Harris High School. Rachel conducted a study among local high school students and concluded that cyberbullying has become a pervasive and insidious problem. Impressed by the seriousness of Rachel's report and its conclusions, Council Member Weprin moved to pursue the measure that is now law.

Left to right: Council Member Peter F. Vallone, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Council Member Mark S. Weprin, Council Member Lewis A. Fidler, Rachel Mayo.



PROVIDING FREE LEGAL SERVICES

Council Member Mark Weprin, in partnership with CUNY Law School's Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN) and the YMCA of Greater New York's New Americans Initiative, is bringing the strength of 330 members of the State Bar to provide free legal services on issues related to immigration, housing and employment. The services will be

offered at Services Now for Adult Persons (SNAP), a senior center in Queens Village. For an appointment, call SNAP at (718) 454-2100.

Council Member Mark Weprin (far right) sees the legal clinic in action.

