

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

KEITH POWERS



February 2020

Dear Neighbor:

I wanted to take a moment to highlight upcoming events in the district I think you may be interested in:

Put the “You” in ULURP: On February 26, I will be hosting a workshop that focuses on the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), which is the zoning process in New York City. This process is incredibly important to the shape and the character of the city.

In partnership with the Municipal Arts Society and community sponsors, this workshop will focus on how the community can get involved in the process.

Put the “You” in ULURP will provide a greater understanding of key players, regulations, and processes that influence development, and how the public can engage with them to have a say in their neighborhood. The event will take place at Wagner Middle School and doors will open at 6:00 P.M. You can RSVP [here](#).



Reusable Bag Giveaway: On March 1, New York’s statewide ban on single-use carryout plastic bags will go into effect. Through the Department of Sanitation, my office is providing free reusable bags to constituents and will be hosting a giveaway on Sunday, March 1, outside of Morton Williams at 1066 3rd Avenue, between East 64th and East 63th Streets, from 11:00 A.M.- 1:00 P.M, to ensure to New Yorkers are prepared. Bags will also be available during Mobile District Office Hours this month. This statewide ban is a positive step forward in helping the environment.

Mobile District Office Hours: Every month, you can sit down with representatives from my office to talk about the issues in the district you care about, and work toward solutions. Held at Yorkville Library on the third Thursday of the month and the Stuyvesant Town Community Center on the last Thursday of the month, this is a great opportunity to meet in-person with our constituent services team and get to know my office a bit better.

As always, I encourage you to call or email me at any time, at (212) 818-0580 or kpowers@council.nyc.gov.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Keith".

Keith

NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS

Tree Planting throughout the District

In a dense city like New York, there is a special appreciation for greenery and our trees. I often hear from constituents requesting new or more trees on their blocks and in their neighborhoods. Last year, I allocated \$150,000 through Participatory Budgeting to new tree plantings and new tree guards. My office is working to get trees planted all across the district: From the Grand Central area and West 50s, to the Upper East Side, Midtown East, and the area around Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village. I want to hear from you regarding placement requests: Please email me at kpowers@council.nyc.gov to suggest a proposed location and specific address for a new tree or tree guard. My office will share feedback with the Parks Department.

New Entrances for the L Train

On Monday, February 10, the new Avenue A entrance on the Stuyvesant Town side of 14th Street and Avenue A was opened to the public. This follows the opening of the Brooklyn-bound Avenue A entrance on the south side of 14th Street last November. Like on the south side of the street, the 1st Avenue entrance on the north side of the street will close on Saturday, February 15, for about 3 months of renovation work. While this work is taking place, both entrances to the 1st Avenue station on 1st Avenue will be closed, but both sides of the station will be accessible at Avenue A. It is expected that in the spring, the L train will be fully up and running. Completion of construction on the brand-new elevators at the Avenue A entrances is scheduled for this summer.



Council Member Powers calls for enhanced safety measures along 6th Avenue.

Sidewalk Repairs in Kips Bay

For several months, my office has heard from constituents about the damaged sidewalk on the north side of East 25th Street between 1st Avenue and the FDR Drive. In response to these concerns, we have been working with Hunter College to ensure that necessary repairs are made. Last month, Hunter College agreed to make the repairs and committed to beginning the work as soon as the weather

permits. This sidewalk is an important thoroughfare for Waterside Plaza tenants and others in the area, and its current state creates inconvenient and dangerous conditions for those walking by. I am grateful to Hunter College for its willingness to make these repairs, and I look forward to seeing the sidewalk fixed in the coming months.

A New Vision for St. Vartan Park

In the coming years, the Parks Department will be making a series of improvements to St. Vartan Park in Murray Hill. These changes come from \$4.9 million allocated by Mayor de Blasio and \$1.3 million allocated by my office and the City Council to help redesign the park. This spring, the blacktop area will be converted to synthetic turf, which will provide a much-needed space for youth sports teams to play. With the turf conversion underway, the Parks Department is also beginning to explore ideas for additional park improvements at St. Vartan. The Parks Department is gathering community feedback on potential improvements and will host a public session on Thursday, February 27, at 6:30 P.M. at the Yeshiva University Stern College for Women, 245 Lexington Avenue at 35th Street. I encourage you to attend and share your feedback. If you have further ideas for St. Vartan Park that you would like me to share with the Parks Department, please reach out to Sara Newman in my office at snewman@council.nyc.gov.



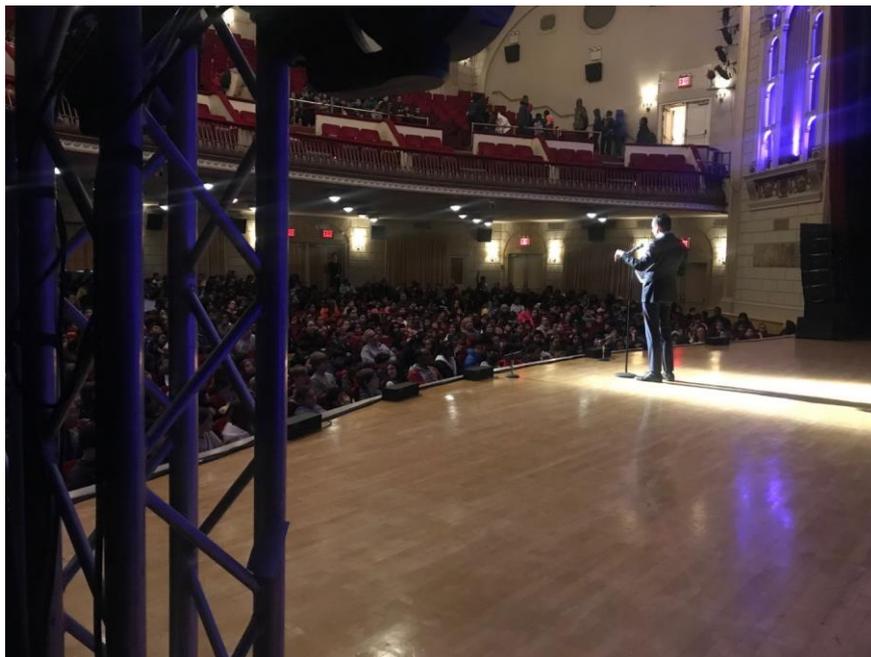
Council Member Powers celebrates the reopening of the public restroom at Greeley Square Park.

EVENT ALERT: Put the "You" in ULURP (Uniform Land Use Review Procedure)

Join me for a workshop covering the basics of land use planning in New York City and how you can get involved. Participants will learn about the key players, regulations, and processes that influence development, and how the public can engage with them to have a say in their neighborhood.

Wednesday, February 26, 2020 | Doors open at 6:00 P.M., event starts at 6:30 P.M.
Robert F. Wagner Middle School, 220 East 76th Street

RSVP: <https://tinyurl.com/YOULURP> | jklaus@council.nyc.gov | 212-818-0580



Council Member Powers welcomes public school students to the Town Hall for a program from the Urban Bush Women during Black History Month.

CITY HALL

Requiring Businesses to Accept Cash Payment

Recently, several businesses in New York City have transitioned their operations to become entirely cashless, accepting only debit or credit cards. This has placed a burden on individuals that are underbanked, unbanked, or do not have access to a credit card (e.g. individuals under the age of 18). Currently, more than 25 percent of New Yorkers are under-or unbanked. That is why it was crucial that the Council stepped in last month and passed a bill to require businesses to accept cash. This is a consumer protection issue, but also fundamentally an equity issue. I was proud to be a lead sponsor of this legislation that will make it easier for all New Yorkers to patronize businesses.



Council Member Powers addresses violence in City jails as he chairs the Committee on Criminal Justice.

Proposed Changes for SCRIE and DRIE Housing from Department of Finance

At the end of January, the City Council's Committee on Finance held an oversight hearing examining the administration of the Rent Freeze Program in New York City, including the Senior Citizens Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE) and the Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE). I raised several concerns with recent proposed rules from the Department of Finance that would make it harder to protect affordable housing and would potentially impact SCRIE/DRIE beneficiaries. This followed testimony I submitted to the Department in December, in which I joined advocacy organizations like Lenox Hill Neighborhood House and Legal Aid Society in standing up for these important programs.

Property Tax Reform Commission Recommendations

In 2018, New York City created a commission to evaluate the property tax system and develop recommendations for reform. These recommendations aim to make the property tax system simpler, clearer, and fairer, while ensuring that there is no reduction in revenue used to fund essential City services. Following several public hearings, the Advisory Commission on Property Tax Reform released its initial report and recommendations. These recommendations are not binding, and most suggested changes would require the involvement of the State legislature in order to be implemented. In the coming months, the commission will be holding another series of public hearings to gather feedback from New Yorkers on their initial recommendations, after which they will release a final report. Dates and locations for the upcoming public hearings will be posted to [this](#) website in the near future. You can read the commission's full report here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/propertytaxreform/report/preliminary-report.page>

New York City's Preliminary Budget Process

The FY2021 budget process is underway. The City Council will soon begin its series of budget oversight hearings, in which the Finance Committee will jointly host each City agency for a hearing on spending with the relevant Committee. Through this process, New Yorkers can see how and where the City spends its money, and areas it would like to invest in for the coming fiscal year. Separately, qualifying organizations are able to apply for discretionary funding through their local Council Member's office, with application deadlines approaching on February 18. Find more details here: <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/>

IN THE NEWS

February 7, [Lower East Side flood protection plan threatened by lawsuit](#), *Curbed*

A transformational plan to fill in and raise East River Park by eight feet is facing a legal battle that threatens to stall flood protections for Manhattan's east side.

February 5, [Surprise for New York Renters: No More Broker Fees](#), *New York Times*

Regulators unexpectedly banned broker fees for renters, which in the city have long amounted to as much as 15 percent of the annual lease.

January 26, [The Best New York City Lawmakers](#), *City & State*

The best New York City Council member of 2019 is (drumroll, please) ... actually two lawmakers: Keith Powers and Helen Rosenthal!

January 23, [Lawmakers Worry Byford Resignation Puts MTA Progress on Hold](#), NY1

City Council Speaker Corey Johnson said he was disappointed to learn Andy Byford, the MTA's Chief Executive Officer of the New York City Transit Authority, is resigning.

SAVE THE DATES

Events with Council Member Powers

[Put the "You" in ULURP \(Uniform Land Use Review Procedure\)](#)

Join me for a workshop covering the basics of land use planning in New York City and how you can get involved. Participants will learn about the key players, regulations, and processes that influence development, and how the public can engage with them to have a say in their neighborhood.

Wednesday, February 26, 2020

Doors open at 6:00 P.M., event starts at 6:30 P.M.

Robert F. Wagner Middle School, 220 East 76th Street

RSVP: <https://tinyurl.com/YOULURP> | jklaus@council.nyc.gov | 212-818-0580

[Reusable Bags Giveaway: March 1 Marks Plastic Bag Ban](#)

Following the passage of State legislation, starting on Sunday, March 1, 2020, New York's plastic bag ban will go into effect. My office has reusable bags to prepare constituents for the transition.

Bag giveaway: Sunday, March 1, 2020

Morton Williams, 1066 3rd Avenue, between East 64th and East 63th Streets

11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

[Mobile District Office Hours](#)

Sit down with representatives from my office to talk about the issues in the district you care about, and work toward solutions. This is a great opportunity to meet in-person with our constituent services team and get to know my office a bit better.

Yorkville Library, 222 East 79th Street

Third Thursday of Every Month

Thursday, February 20, 2020

12:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.

Stuyvesant Town Community Center, 449 East 14th Street
Last Thursday of Every Month
Thursday, February 27, 2020
12:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M.

Drag Queen Story Hour, sponsored by Council Member Keith Powers

Drag Queen Story Hour (DQSH) captures the imagination and play of the gender fluidity of childhood and gives kids glamorous, positive, and unabashedly queer role models. In spaces like this, kids are able to see people who defy rigid gender restrictions and imagine a world where people can present as they wish, where dress up is real.

Epiphany Library
Friday, February 21, 2020, 2:00 P.M.

96th Street Library
Wednesday, April 22, 2020, 4:00 P.M.

53rd Street Library
Saturday, March 14, 11:00 A.M.
Saturday, May 9, 11:00 A.M.
Saturday, June 13, 11:00 A.M.

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From constituent services to legislation and communications, our team is here to help:

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