
THE BROADWAY DEMOCRATS

♦ District Leaders: Curtis Arluck, Paula Diamond Román ♦ President: Luis Román ♦



In advance of Earth Day 2015, the Broadway Democrats will host discussions at our April meeting of two environmental issues important to all New Yorkers.

Oil on the Hudson

With relatively little public input or even attention, the Port of Albany has become a major hub for the shipment of western oil—including oil from the Canadian Tar Sands—down the Hudson to refineries in New Jersey and Nova Scotia. Sean Dixon, Staff Attorney with Riverkeeper, discusses what these developments mean for the river itself and for downstream communities, including New York City.

New York State—Beyond Coal

Despite some recent positive steps towards modernizing and “greening” New York State’s energy generation and distribution systems, the state still has four operating coal-powered plants, some of which require massive bailouts to keep running—at great cost to their customers, the state’s taxpayers, and the environment. Hear from Sierra Club volunteers about a major new effort to end New York’s reliance on this dirty and environmentally destructive fuel.

Thursday, April 16, 2015

Meeting starts at 8:00 PM

Bank Street College of Education

610 West 112th Street (between Broadway and Riverside Drive)

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President's Corner

Luis Román

With the announcement of the framework for an agreement between the United States and its allies and Iran, one possibly resulting in Iran stopping enrichment of uranium and plutonium and limiting its production of nuclear materials in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions that have been crushing the Iranian people for years, it seems we are on the brink of one of the most bruising political battles in recent memory. Legislation introduced by Tennessee Republican Senator Bob Corker would require Congressional review of the agreement and would delay the relaxing of sanctions during the review period. All of the Republicans in the Senate are behind the bill, but so are a surprising number of Democrats, including New York's senior senator, Chuck Schumer. Some Democrats are expressing support for Israel by their support of the bill; some are supporting the principle of congressional oversight of such an important agreement. At this point, it is not clear whether the bill has sufficient support to overcome the President's promised veto of the legislation. Sixty-seven senators would have to vote to override the veto (there are already more than enough votes in the House to override any veto, due to the overwhelming Republican majority).

Behind the many facets of the political debate over the agreement, a number of fundamental issues are important for us to consider. United States foreign policy has always been the province of the executive branch and the Constitution gives the President great latitude in the conduct of foreign policy. One of the few areas where Congress has any say over foreign policy is in the area of treaties between the United States and foreign countries. Any treaty between the U.S. and a foreign nation must be approved by the Senate. The Obama administration has classified the Iran nuclear agreement not as a treaty but an agreement and thus not subject to the Constitutional requirement, which is the cause for the Corker legislation. The U.S. enters into many agreements with foreign countries that don't reach the level of treaties and aren't reviewed by Congress. Some people question whether an agreement on a topic such as Iran's nuclear proliferation is so important that the Senate should have a say over whether the agreement goes forward. Others believe all of the congressional bluster regarding oversight is just another attempt by Republicans to hamper the efforts of President Obama and deny him what would be a substantial achievement for his legacy.

And consider the issue of our relationship with Israel and the effect that recent political tensions are having on that relationship. The disagreement between President Obama and Israel's Prime Minister Netanyahu has some analysts seeing cracks in the foundation of what is perhaps the United States' closest foreign relationship. Some have speculated that the U.S. could go 'stop blocking U.N. Security Council resolutions calling for establishment of an independent Palestinian state. It is unlikely that the U.S. would go so far, at least in the immediate future, but we could be seeing the beginning of a new chapter in the U.S.-Israel political relationship that could result in far-reaching changes. Given the approach of the 2016 presidential election, each of the candidates should be asked what direction he/she believes the U.S. relationship with Israel needs to go.

As far removed as the issue of Iran's nuclear program seems to be from our daily lives, it is still an issue to which we must all attend. The Middle East is again embroiled in conflict, creating an instability which could draw our country back toward military engagement at any time. People in the U.S. have grown justifiably tired of seeing American men and women shipped off thousands of miles to fight in conflicts that don't appear to have a direct relationship to the security or interests of the United States. Even so, events like these have a tendency to move fast and in unexpected ways, and we could be confronting the issue of whether we should be sending our military personnel back into harm's way sooner rather than later. It is important for us as citizens and as Democrats to be as informed as possible about these issues and to express our opinions on the direction our government should take.



City Councilman

Mark Levine

Dear Broadway Democrats,
This spring, our community has a unique opportunity to partake in the renewal of our very own neighborhood. For the first time, you will have the chance to decide how to spend \$1 million on projects in your district. Participatory budgeting lets the whole community participate in decision-making. Community members discuss local needs and develop proposals to meet these needs. Through a public vote, residents then decide which proposals to fund. It's a democratic process in which community members directly decide how to spend part of a public budget. In other words, the

people who pay taxes (all of us) decide how tax dollars get spent.

From street light upgrades to parks' improvement to a new computer lab for a neighborhood school, I invite you to come out, learn about the project proposals, and participate in participatory budgeting. **Vote Week** runs from April 11 to April 19 and I need your participation! Please see a full listing of projects below.

Parks and Recreation

- **Basketball Court Repair at Playground (\$500,000)** Make crucial surface repairs to basketball courts and playground area. This playground is used by neighborhood children and students from P.S. 125, Columbia Secondary School, and Kipp Starr. **Morningside Ave. & W. 123 St.**
- **Public Greenhouse for District 7 (\$50,000)** This project will fund a greenhouse in Frank White Memorial Garden that will incorporate innovative garden projects like composting systems, hydroponics, and sustainable activities. **506 W. 143 St.**
- **Planting Sidewalk 100 Trees (\$300,000)** Planting new street trees and installing tree guards. 50 new trees and guards around Grant Houses and 50 new trees and guards between Riverside Drive and Broadway from 130th Street to 139th Street. **Grant Houses at 130 St.**
- **Repairs to Riverside Park Northern Area (\$250,000)** Repairs to a neglected section of Riverside Park at Riverside Dr. from 138-148 Sts., including fencing and landscape improvements, playground renovations, ball field repairs and erosion repair. **Riverside Dr. & W. 138-148 Sts.**

Libraries and Cultural

- **Hamilton Grange Library Elevator Repairs (\$300,000)** Elevator repairs for the Hamilton Grange Library, a four floor building serving people of all ages from the community. The elevator is in major need of repair and of full ADA access. **503 W. 145 St.**
- **Out of School Time Center (\$900,000)** Build out basement space in the Hamilton Grange Library to create a 600 square foot permanent ADA accessible classroom. Work will include new HVAC, lighting, electrical, IT and security systems. **503 W. 145 St.**
- **Electrical Upgrades at Bloomingdale Library (\$500,000)** An electrical upgrade allowing for more electrical outlets and capacity to accommodate today's technology needs. More patrons can plug in laptops, phones and other devices. **150 W. 100 St.**
- **Electrical Upgrades at Morningside Heights Library (\$500,000)** An electrical upgrade allowing for more electrical outlets and capacity to accommodate today's technology needs. More patrons can plug in laptops, phones and other devices. **2900 Broadway**

Housing

- **Manhattanville Houses Playground Repairs (\$450,000)** Complete renovation of recreational area including basketball hoops and courts, new play surfaces, and safety and aesthetic improvements to serve a heavily used and much needed open space. **129-133 Sts. at Broadway**
- **Grant Houses Playground Repair (\$450,000)** Major playground renovations and repairs to beautify and allow for better use of a play area utilized by the 4,500 residents who rely on the space for play and exercise. **125 St. between Broadway & Amsterdam Ave.**

Youth

- **Youth Technology and Creativity Lab (\$900,000)** This project will create a permanent space for neighborhood youth to engage in design thinking and project-based learning. The purpose of this space is to foster and encourage STEM learning in youth. **503 W. 145 St.**
- **Computer Lab Upgrade at P.S. 163 (\$90,000)** Improve technology instruction by equipping the lab with 36 new Mac desktops to replace existing, outdated computers, and two mobile carts with 48 Mac laptops. **163 W. 97 St.**
- **P.S. 4 School Garden (\$300,000)** Reconstruction and replacement of existing playground structures, the installation of a school garden and planting of new trees within the playground. Project will make the area more safe and fun. **500 W. 160 St.**

Streets and Transportation

- **Lighting Upgrades at Hamilton Place (\$196,400)** Installation/replacement of existing lampposts with Bishop Crook lampposts (antique replicas) in Hamilton Place from 138th-144th Sts. The project will provide adequate lighting and improve safety. **Hamilton Pl. from 138-144 Sts.**
- **Street Lighting Upgrade at Amsterdam Ave. (\$632,000)** Installation/replacement of existing lampposts with Bishop Crook lampposts (antique replicas) at Amsterdam Avenue from 125th St-140th St and 146th St-155th St. **Amsterdam Ave. 125-140 Sts. & 146-155 Sts.**
- **Riverside Park Sidewalk Repair (\$400,000)** Sidewalk repairs and improvements along a much needed stretch of parts of Riverside Park between 137th Street and 145th Street. **Riverside Park 137-145 Sts.**

Please join me and your neighbors for the **Participatory Budgeting Kick-off Expo**. Hear about the final projects, vote for your top priorities and decide how to spend \$1 million of your own tax dollars on Saturday, April 11 from 10:30am - 2pm, at Amalgamated Bank (524 West 125th Street).

(Continues on next page)

You can also pledge to vote, and let us know you plan to make your voice count in this process. Eligible voters need to be 14 years old with some form of documentation stating your address, be it a cable bill or an ID, to take part in participatory budgeting. You do not have to be registered to vote. Please see a full listing of voting locations below.

April 13-17	9:30am-5:30pm	District Office of CM Mark Levine 500 W 141 St
April 13-15	5pm-8pm	Frederick Douglass Children's Aid Society 885 Columbus Ave
Sat, April 11	10:30am-1pm	Amalgamated Bank 564 W 125 St
Sun, April 12	11am-2pm	St Mary's Episcopal Church 521 W 126 St
Mon, April 13	7:45am-8:30am	PS 145, The Bloomingdale School 150 W 105 St
Mon, April 13	10am-3pm	Morningside Library 2900 Broadway
Mon, April 13	11am-2pm	Manhattanville Senior Center 530 W 133 St
Tue, April 14	10am-1pm	Riverstone Senior Center 99 Fort Washington Ave
Tue, April 14	11am-5pm	Hamilton Grange Library 503 W 145 St
Wed, April 15	2pm-6:30pm	George Bruce Library 518 W 125 St
Wed, April 15	3pm-7pm	Brotherhood Sister Sol, Inc. 512 W 143 St
Thu, April 16	11am-5pm	Hamilton Grange Library 503 W 145 St
Thu, April 16	4pm-6pm	The Fortune Society 625 W 140 St
Fri, April 17	12pm-5pm	We Act 1854 Amsterdam Ave, 2nd Floor
Fri, April 17	11am-3pm	Jackie Robinson Center at Grant Tenant Association 1301 Amsterdam Ave
Fri, April 17	12pm-2pm	Wilson Major Morris Senior Center 459 W 152 St
Sat, April 18	9am-5pm	Frank White Memorial Garden 506-508 W 143 St
Sun, April 19	11am-2pm	Saint Mary's Episcopal Church 521 W 126 St

Come out and help choose the initiatives that will improve the quality of life for everyone in our community. I hope to see you at the polls!

Sincerely,
Mark Levine

Editor's Note: The majority of the Broadway Democrats' district is in Mark Levine's council district. If you live below 109th Street, West of Broadway, please contact Councilmember Helen Rosenthal's office for information about participatory budgeting in her district at (212) 873-0282 ext. 206.
<http://helenrosenthal.com/participatory-budgeting/>



Steering Committee Richard Siegel

Common Sense Healthcare

Please contact your congressman and senators. Ask them to tell Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to eliminate the "two midnight rule" and "observation status".

In an effort to save money, CMS and the insurance companies have come up with a crazy idea. Unless you have a medical need to spend 2 nights in a hospital receiving medical care, YOU ARE NOT ADMITTED TO THE HOSPITAL. This provision is like being "a little pregnant". For the purposes of billing, you are an Emergency Room Patient—even when you are in a bed on a unit. For the insurers:

- They pay the hospital significantly less for providing care than that care costs.
- You are charged several hundred dollars of co-pays for your care.

The two midnight rule requires a physician to certify that you are not sick enough to go home from the Emergency Room, and are so sick that you need to spend two nights in the hospital. When did our doctors get a crystal ball to predict the future?

Ask CMS to replace these "Alice in Wonderland" type regulations with a straightforward, one-day stay rate for hospitalization (\$5000 would be a reasonable cost for hospitals and for payers). It is simple, meets the needs of people when they don't feel well, and saves a fortune in hidden regulation costs.



Steering Committee

Rachelle Bradt

Real Rent Reform 2015 - April Events

According to the most recent New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey, in the last three years the City lost more than 100,000 apartments that rent for \$500-\$900, a 25% drop in that category from just three years ago. In the same period 60,000 apartments were added that rent for \$2,500 or more, a price point that qualifies them to be removed from rent stabilization.

Consider Mayor Bill De Blasio's testimony at a State Budget Hearing, February 25:

** If they are not renewed and strengthened, many thousands of apartments will become unaffordable. And many thousands of people will lose their homes.

** I also want to state clearly my belief that we must end vacancy decontrol. It is a major contributing factor in the loss of rent-protected units in the City.

Wondering what you can do?

Devote a few hours to sustain New York's middle class communities:

Wednesday April 15, 4 pm - 5:30 pm
State Budget and Legislative Forum, with Assemblyman Daniel O'Donnell
Goddard Riverside Community Center
593 Columbus Ave at 88th Street
Westside NYS Assembly Members will report and answer questions. Speak up for an end to vacancy decontrol. Bring a friend or two!

Real Rent Reform (R3)
www.realrentreform.org website
Commit to one event in April and one in May!

Wednesday, April 22, 5:45-7:45 pm
Rent Guideline Board Testimony Workshop
Tenants & Neighbors office at
236 West 27th St, 4th Floor

Interested in testifying at Rent Guidelines Board (RGB) Public Hearings? Go prepared and be persuasive! Join Tenants & Neighbors for a workshop on how to build a powerful testimony and let your voice be heard! RSVP to Darren at Darren@tandn.org or 212-608-4320, ext. 316.

Let's fight for our community and End Vacancy Decontrol in 2015!



The Broadway Democrats' Annual Spring Fling

Honoring

**Jonathan Moore
and**

LILY (Lifeforce in Later Years)

Sunday, May 3, 3:00-6:00 pm

107 West Restaurant

2787 Broadway, between 107th and 108th Streets

\$500 Benefactor (listed on invitation)

\$300 Patron (listed on invitation)

\$175 Sponsor (listed on invitation)

\$150 Guest

\$50 Dues paid member

\$35 Dues paid senior member

You must contact us by April 10th to be listed on the invitation.



Membership

In order to vote in club elections (endorsements, elections of officers, judicial convention, amendments), you must be an eligible, voting member of the Broadway Democrats. You must have attended at least one of the previous nine monthly public meetings and you must pay your dues. Dues partially defray the costs of presenting forums and putting out this newsletter. Dues are \$25; senior dues are \$10.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Special Interests: _____

The Broadway Democrats
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FIRST
CLASS

Assemblymember: Daniel O'Donnell
District Leaders: Curtis Arluck,
Paula Diamond Román
President: Luis Román
Newsletter Editor: Gretchen Borges

Oil on the Hudson and New York State—Beyond Coal

with speakers Sean Dixon and Sierra Club volunteers

Thursday, April 16th 8:00 p.m.

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