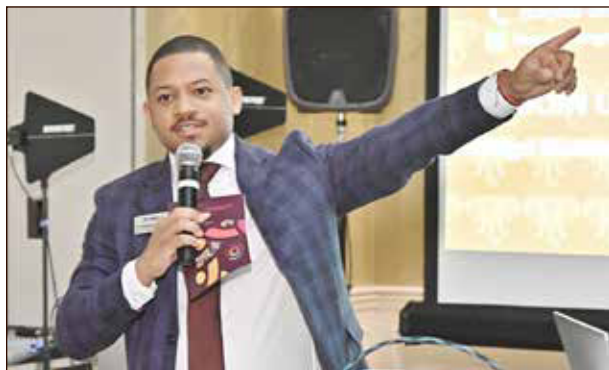


# Realtors Show Strong Commitment to Further DEI at Major Regional Conference

By John Jordan

SLEEPY HOLLOW—Organizers of the second annual Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Summit were in agreement that this year's event, held on June 5 and 6 at the Sleepy Hollow Hotel & Conference Center here, featured a wide-ranged offering of programs and discussions geared at providing insights for real estate brokers, agents, as well as association boards and affiliates to ponder as they look to instill DEI practices and principles into their business and personal lives.

Among some of the key top-



**HGAR DEI Officer Freddimir Garcia helped organize the Second Annual Diversity Equity & Inclusion Summit held on June 5-6 at the Sleepy Hollow Hotel & Conference Center.**

PHOTO BY JOHN VECCHIOLLA

ics explored at The 2023 DEI Summit were the correlation between DEI and fair housing and implicit biases that continue to haunt the real estate industry.

Approximately 200 real estate professionals attended the 2023 DEI Summit. OneKey MLS was the premier sponsor. The hosts for the event were: the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, the National Association of Realtors, the New York State Association of Realtors, New Jersey Realtors, North Central Jersey Association of Realtors, the Greater Rochester Association of Realtors and the

Greater Bergen (NJ) Realtors.

The summit began on June 5 with a Two-Hour NY CE Course entitled "Unmanaged Bias Limits Leadership" taught by HGAR DEI Officer Freddimir Garcia. A Networking Reception followed the conclusion of the class.

On June 6, the day began with welcoming addresses by 2023 NYSAR President elect Jacqueline Rose, and Robert White, 2023 Immediate Past President, New Jersey Realtors.

The morning keynote speaker was Deanna Singh, Chief Change Agent and best-selling author whose presentation was entitled "Actions Speak Louder." Summit attendees then had

**Please turn to page 2**

# Veteran Association Executive Named CEO Of Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors



**Incoming HGAR CEO  
Lynda Fernandez**

By John Jordan

WHITE PLAINS—A new era is dawning at the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors as the search for a new Chief Executive Officer has come to an end.

The Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors announced on June 20 that veteran visionary association executive Lynda Fernandez, CAE, RCE, CIPS has been named HGAR's new Chief Executive Officer. The selection of Fernandez, who is currently the CEO of the Greater Louisville Association of Realtors (GLAR), culminates an extensive and comprehensive nine-month national search by HGAR.

Fernandez is scheduled to take her new position at HGAR on or about Sept. 1, 2023. She has more than 20 years of experience in association manage-

ment, government affairs, communications and international business development. She is a Certified Association Executive (CAE), Realtor Association Certified Executive (RCE), and a Certified International Property Specialist (CIPS).

HGAR officials commended Jana Currier, who has served as Interim HGAR CEO since January 2023 after longtime HGAR CEO Richard Haggerty left the association to become CEO of OneKey MLS. Currier will continue to serve HGAR as Chief Operating Officer going forward once Fernandez joins HGAR.

The Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors and its predecessor associations were until recently served for more than 40 years by two outstanding CEOs. P. Gilbert Mercurio served

as CEO for 31 years until 2012 and Haggerty oversaw the formation of HGAR and its expansion for a decade.

The HGAR Board of Directors appointed a CEO Search Committee that conducted a national search. The process for the highly-sought after post spanned several months and countless hours of intense interviews. 2023 HGAR President and Chairman of the CEO Search Committee Tony D'Anzica said the search was highly competitive, but ultimately the Search Committee unanimously agreed to recommend Fernandez to the Board of Directors for approval as the new CEO.

"After concluding a thoughtful, diligent and extensive nationwide search, the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors is pleased to announce that

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# NYSDOT Previews Major Route 17 Exit Project; Updates on Possible Third Lane Expansion Effort

By John Jordan

TOWN OF WALLKILL—Officials with the New York State Department of Transportation held a public hearing

here on June 1 to update the public on its re-evaluation of planned improvements to Exit 122 on Route 17. They also provided an update on the environmental review of the possible expansion of sections of the roadway with a third lane in each direction from Harriman to Monticello.

The takeaway from their presentation is that there will be considerable road work beginning early next year at Exit 122 of Route 17 and on sections of the highway in late 2025 or early 2026 and for years thereafter, perhaps as far out as 2029 or 2030, as NYSDOT follows through on a \$1-billion commitment for Route 17 improvements first announced by New York Gov. Kathy Hochul in April 2022. The total value of the projects outlined by NYSDOT officials at Exit 122 and on three major projects to be let in 2026 approach that \$1-billion figure.

Mark Tiano, PE, NYSDOT Regional Design engineer and Mark Kruk, NYSDOT Project Manager, said that the second phase involving improvements to the eastern half of Exit 122 interchange is currently valued at between

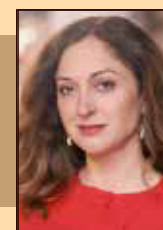


**From left, Mark Tiano, PE, NYSDOT Regional Design engineer, and Mark Kruk, NYSDOT Project Manager, at a public hearing on the Exit 122 second phase project held on June 1 at the Wallkill Town Hall.**

\$75 million to \$85 million. While the final design has not been completed as yet, NYSDOT also intends to have the project complete the widening of Route 17 over the Wallkill River. The first phase of the Exit 122 improvement project was launched in the early 2000s and construction on the western half of the Exit 122 interchange was

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## INSIDE SPOTLIGHT ON



**Christina Prozano - see page 13**

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## Veteran Association Executive Named CEO Of Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors

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Lynda Fernandez has been unanimously approved by the Board of Directors to become the new Chief Executive Officer of HGAR," said HGAR President D'Anzica. "As a current Association CEO, and someone who has served as a former top executive at the nation's largest local Realtor association for more than 15 years, Lynda represents a new generation of leadership. Lynda is a change-agent who is results-driven, dynamic and multilingual."

He continued, "As President of HGAR, I am honored to welcome, and looking forward to working with, Lynda as she helps to steer HGAR into the future, build on its successes, and unleash its full potential in order to solidify its reputation as one of the largest and most outstanding Realtor associations in this country."

D'Anzica noted that throughout her career, Fernandez was involved in a number of significant association merger transactions, including the

historic 2010 merger between The Realtor Association of Greater Miami and the Beaches and the Realtor



**"As a current Association CEO, and someone who has served as a former top executive at the nation's largest local Realtor association for more than 15 years, Lynda represents a new generation of leadership. Lynda is a change-agent who is results-driven, dynamic and multilingual."**

—HGAR President Tony D'Anzica

Association of Miami-Dade County, which created the Miami Association of Realtors (MIAMI). At the time it was the largest merger in the history of the National Association of Realtors and brought together 23,000 Realtors in South Florida, and which is now the largest local Realtor association in the nation.

Fernandez said, "I am very excited to be joining an impressive organization like HGAR and am looking forward

to continuing its great legacy as I work with the exceptional leadership to advance their vision."

Fernandez began her tenure as CEO of the Greater Louisville Association of Realtors on April 26, 2021. She led GLAR through the COVID-19 pandemic and oversaw its expansion that culminated last month with its merger with the Old Kentucky Home Board of Realtors. The new organization is the largest local Realtor Association in Kentucky, representing more than 5,600 members in 13 counties.

She was responsible for 15 staff pro-

fessionals and a contract lobbyist, two separate boards of directors, including a wholly-owned MLS, and was responsible for a \$3-million annual budget. Among her chief accomplishments include launching Kentucky's first Global Council and launching Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives.

Fernandez previously held several posts with the Miami Association of Realtors, where she served as MIAMI's Chief of Communications & Global from Sept. 2018-April 2021. Previously, she was the Senior Vice President of Public Relations and International for MIAMI for almost 14 years.

Prior to her association with the Miami Association of Realtors, Fernandez worked in public relations for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Journalism and Mass Communications from Florida International University in Miami, FL, and a Master of Accounting Degree from Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, FL.

## Realtors Show Strong Commitment to Further DEI at Major Regional Conference

Continued from page 1

the option to attend one of three topical breakout sessions—"The Community in People" panel was moderated by Nan Palumbo, HGAR YPN Chair and featured Soo Yu, AAREA; Christopher Cortez, NAHREP and Donnell Williams, NAREB. Leslie Frazier, Senior Vice President of Community and Industry Relations of the Virginia Realtors, led a discussion on "Dealing with Difficult Conversations, while Brennon Thompson, Analyst, Fair Housing Policy & Programs at the National Association of Realtors, moderated a panel that featured former NYSAR President Jennifer Vucetic, HGAR Past President Anthony Domathoti and Jorge Ledesma, CEO, Greater Bergen Realtors.

The morning program concluded with a panel discussion moderated by

Teresa Tilton, Director of Professional Services, New Jersey Realtors, entitled "Increase Generational Wealth Building for Black & Hispanic Homeowners" that focused primarily on Freddie Mac programs and other affordable housing finance solutions.

The Afternoon Keynote speaker was best-selling author Kelly McDonald who offered tangible recommendations on "How to Make Progress on DE&I in Your Organization."

The afternoon breakout sessions included a "Realtor Safety & Racism" panel moderated by Alexia Smokler, Director of Fair Housing Policy & Programs at NAR, that featured riveting and sometimes frightening personal examples of discrimination shared by Bill Flagg, the 2022 President of the North Central Jersey Association of



**Robert White, 2023 Immediate Past President of the New Jersey Realtors, was one of a host of association executives that participated in the DEI Summit.**

PHOTO BY JOHN VECCHIOLLA

Realtors, and Realtor Eric Brown. Session attendees were riveted by Brown, a black Realtor, who recounted an incident in August 2021 when he and several clients on a home tour were handcuffed by Michigan police who mistook them for burglars. Brown noted that while he and his clients were eventually released and not arrested, several officers had their guns drawn before he proved to police that he was in fact a licensed Realtor legally showing the home to prospective clients.

The second breakout session "Intent vs Impact: Tackling Microaggressions" was led by HGAR's DEI Officer Garcia. The third breakout session covered "Building a DEI Committee" and was led by Anthony Ruperto, HGAR DEI Committee Chair.

The Closing Keynote Speaker was M. Ryan Gorman, Co-Founder/Unmanageable Partner, btcRE, LLC, who closed the two-day seminar with a presentation entitled: "DE&I Leadership Lessons Learned."

Event sponsors were pleased with the increased attendance at the 2023 DE&I Summit and expressed their intent to stage and participate in a summit in 2024.

HGAR President Tony D'Anzica said, "I am really happy with the way the summit turned out. I am especially happy with the collaboration that we have been able to continue with our

Realtor associations in New Jersey and Upstate New York. I do believe this is a conversation we have to have. It reflects what our Realtor values are and together as a group with associations in the entire region, we should be spreading the message to all our members, not just to one select group."

HGAR Past President Domathoti, who led the HGAR efforts at the first DEI Summit held in 2022 in Mahwah, NJ, said of the 2023 summit, "It is a significant event in the calendar of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors and the participating associations. It is about time that all the agencies and associations are recognizing the need for DE&I and this event is a representation of that recognition. I truly believe this event is a step forward in creating a lot more activities by associations that are inclusive of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion."

Richard Haggerty, CEO of OneKey MLS, who along with Flagg, helped organize the first DEI Summit, said he was pleased with the increased attendance and enhanced program offerings at the 2023 summit.

Haggerty, former CEO of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, said, "I think the program has been excellent and I am happy that it has the same energy, if not more, than the inaugural DEI event last year."

He added, "DEI is a process. It is a journey and we have to commit to the journey and it doesn't happen overnight and it will probably never reach a final destination, but we have to make as much progress as we can while we are going along on that journey."

Haggerty added that the first two summits have been a "tremendous success" due to the fact that they have been and will continue to be a collaborative effort involving so many associations.

Haggerty, as well as HGAR's D'Anzica and Domathoti, all said they are committed to staging a DEI Summit next year.

**Editor's Note:** See photos from event on page 21.



Approximately 200 Realtors attended the 2023 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Summit.

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## NYSDOT Previews Major Route 17 Exit Project; Updates on Possible Third Lane Expansion Effort

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completed in 2015.

Kruk added, "We are currently doing a reevaluation of the 2008 Environmental Impact Statement. Once we complete the reevaluation then we are going to move into the final design. We will be done with the final design by the end of the year."

He predicted that the second phase of the Exit 122 project will go out to bid in the spring of 2024 with construction commencing immediately thereafter, most likely in the summer of 2024. Kruk said he expects completion of that project by the end of 2025.

Among some of the key improvements planned will be to relocate the exit ramp to across from the Park and Ride on Crystal Run Road and have the new exit ramp split to allow for direct entrance to I-84. In addition, the bridge over the Wallkill River at the approach to the exit will be widened to allow for increased deceleration in conformance with federal interstate standards as part of an effort to eventually convert Route 17 into Interstate 86. The project will feature a tunnel to improve traffic flow as well as landscaping of the area around the existing Exit 122 ramp.

### Expansion of Route 17

In terms of the much more significant Route 17 expansion project, Kruk related that preliminary work began earlier this year in preparation for the official launch of an Environmental Impact review on what is projected to be \$1 billion worth of improvements in the coming years. A Notice of Intent is expected to be released this fall on the beginning of the environmental review in compliance with federal NEPA regulations since the project will be receiving federal transportation funding. NYSDOT began gathering data for that review earlier this year, which will update a PEL (Planning and Environmen-



A map of the possible project work that will begin in the summer of 2024 at Exit 122 (Crystal Run Road) on Route 17 in Orange County.

tal Linkage) study on the need for the Route 17 expansion (third lane) project released in late 2021.

He explained that while the PEL study included some environmental data, NYSDOT, along with consulting firm WSP USA, will be undertaking new traffic studies, etc. during the Environmental Impact review. Kruk expects a Record of Decision on the Environmental Review and the scope of the potential roadway expansion project in the fall of 2025. WSP USA is also one of the consulting firms working on the Exit 122 phase two project.

"The plan is, once we have a Record of Decision with the EIS, is to move forward with three Design-Build projects hopefully immediately thereafter," Kruk said.

Work on those three projects would likely commence in either late 2025 or early 2026, coinciding with the con-

clusion of work on the second phase of the Exit 122 job. He said that the project worth for each of those three projects could be anywhere from \$250 million to \$300 million each.

Kruk did not specify what those three Design-Build projects might entail or their locations. "We are looking at alternatives," Mr. Kruk said. "It is not definite it is going to be an expansion. We are looking at where the expansion works and where it doesn't work. So, we are looking at all those different alternatives."

Daniel Ortega, community affairs director, Operating Engineers Local 835 Labor-Management Fund and a member of the 17-Forward-86 coalition that has been advocating for years in favor of the Route 17 expansion, said: "We are very grateful for the governor's commitment to the Hudson

Valley where she put \$1 billion in her budget last year to make sure that the Route 17 project will move forward with three lanes for Orange and Sullivan counties." Ortega, who attended the Exit 122 public hearing, added, "We are working with DOT and have been working with them over the years to make sure things are moving forward."

Ortega said that the planned improvements to the Exit 122 (Crystal Run Road) is part of NYSDOT's commitment to improve Route 17 and is a precursor to the large-scale improvements to the roadway in the coming years.

Maureen Halahan, co-founder of the 17-Forward-86 coalition, said, "Projects of this caliber take years to plan and execute and while stakeholders have been waiting for a long time, it is heartening to see that the state is focused on laying out the plan to complete this project in the upcoming years." Ms. Halahan, who is President and CEO of The Orange County Partnership, added, "Our 17-Forward-86 coalition has been the driver since inception and clearly the forward motion is a result of everyone working together with the state. The proof is in the first launch as the bid for the Exit 122 project will be let early next year and the work will begin immediately after. The governor's commitment to this project has been steadfast. Everyone is working in tandem to see these vital projects on Route 17 break ground."

The Orange County Partnership is a founding member of the 17-Forward-86 coalition.

Heather M. Pillsworth, Public Information Officer for NYSDOT's Region 8, said that there will be a website specific to Route 17 that will include all information pertaining to not only the second phase of Exit 122 project, but the overall improvements to the roadway. The website should be going live shortly, she noted.

# Have you seen our Google reviews?

**Nicole S ★★★★★**

O'Donnell & Cullen made the process of grieving my taxes VERY easy. They were quick to answer any questions I had along the way and successfully helped to reduce my taxes! Wish I had reached out to them sooner! Highly recommend!

**Elizabeth V ★★★★★**

Rich and Mike were very proactive and diligent in keeping me posted of the progress along the way at all times. They are very knowledgeable of all the nuances in the process. It was a turn key experience. I would highly recommend O'Donnell & Cullen Property Tax Consultants.

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**Gillian A ★★★★★**

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Tony D'Anzica  
HGAR President



# Leading the Way On Sustainability

**H**GAR has long been in the vanguard, leading the way in taking on tough issues and exploring new developments and trends that impact the livelihoods of our members and affect our industry. Since I believe we must always lead, HGAR has just launched its Committee on Sustainability, joining a very small group of Realtor associations tackling sustainability issues head-on.

As Realtors, our aim is to neither deny climate change or advance initiatives that always take every means available to "save the planet." As a real estate trade association, we must provide our members with a means of discussion, education and strategic thinking on the intersection of sustainability and real estate. This is why NAR founded the Realtor Sustainability Program in 2016. Because of this intersectionality, Realtors must be leaders in the dialogue on real estate sustainability among real estate agents, brokers, consumers and trade associations.

Whether you agree with climate change or not is irrelevant because lawmakers at the local, state, and national levels are already promoting policies and enacting laws regarding sustainability. The role of HGAR's Committee on Sustainability is to be engaged in the discussion so that our members can better understand how the intersection of sustainability and real estate has a direct impact on our industry and your business.

**The role of HGAR's Committee on Sustainability is to be engaged in the discussion so that our members can better understand how the intersection of sustainability and real estate has a direct impact on our industry and your business.**

So, what is NAR's policy? NAR advocates for policies that balance economic development with environmental protection, while focusing on how these issues affect housing, real estate, homeowners and our Realtor members?

NAR advocates for voluntary, market-based solutions to address excessive pollution and degradation of the nation's waterways, while always being mindful of, and vigorously defending private property rights. This includes supporting cost-effective strategies that facilitate a positive, voluntary market response to energy efficiency, resiliency, sustainability and maintaining housing affordability. NAR opposes transaction-triggered mandates or requirements that impose undue economic impact on property owners and managers.

Realtors already recognize the importance of sustainability issues. According to NAR's 2022 Sustainability Report, 63% of Realtors surveyed said energy efficiency promotion in listings was valuable. Fifty-percent of respondents said that in the prior 12 months they had been directly involved with a property that had green features. A total of 51% of respondents found clients were at least interested in sustainability. Nearly a third of all MLSs now also feature "green" fields. These statistics demonstrate how both our industry and consumer preferences are evolving.

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## FROM THE DESK OF THE INTERIM CEO

By Jana Currier  
HGAR Interim CEO, Chief Operating Officer



# Celebrating Homeownership Month

**I**'d like to address all the amazing real estate professionals out there who play a vital role in helping people achieve their dreams. This Homeownership Month, I applaud your dedication, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to assisting individuals and families in finding their perfect home.

As we reflect on the significance of homeownership, it's important to acknowledge that owning a home is not just about having a place to live; it represents stability, security and a sense of belonging. For many individuals and families, it's a symbol of achieving the American Dream.

Realtors like you are the trusted advisors who guide buyers through the complex journey of finding their perfect home. You navigate the intricacies of the market, negotiate deals and provide invaluable expertise. However, your impact goes far beyond transactions. You build relationships, earn trust, and become pillars of support throughout the homeownership process. Through your expertise, guidance and tireless efforts, you have helped shape communities and fostered a sense of pride that comes with having a place to call your own, the freedom to personalize and create lifelong memories and the financial advantages of building equity over time.

As Realtors, you play a pivotal role in educating potential buyers about the various homeownership options available. You help them navigate the complexities of mortgages, financing and the overall homebuying process,

which can be daunting. By offering guidance, resources, and market insights, you empower individuals to make informed decisions and achieve their homeownership goals.

But let's not forget that homeownership is not accessible to everyone. As we celebrate Homeownership Month, we must also address the challenges and inequities that exist. We have an opportunity to advocate for affordable housing, promote fair housing and fair lending practices and support initiatives that expand homeownership opportunities for the underserved communities.

In the ever-evolving real estate landscape, technology and innovation continue to reshape the industry. Embracing these advancements can empower real estate professionals to provide an even higher level of service. From virtual tours and AI-driven property searches to digital transaction management, these tools can enhance the homebuying experience and streamline processes, ultimately benefiting everyone involved in the process.

So, as we mark Homeownership Month, let's renew our commitment to the values that drive us. Let's continue to be advocates for homeownership, champions of our clients' dreams and stewards of our communities.

Together, we can make a lasting impact and continue to build a stronger, more inclusive future for all. **That's Who We R.**

For resources to support Homeownership Month go to [Nar.Realtor](http://Nar.Realtor) and search homeownership-month.

**As we celebrate Homeownership Month, we must also address the challenges and inequities that exist. We have an opportunity to advocate for affordable housing, promote fair housing and fair lending practices and support initiatives that expand homeownership opportunities for the underserved communities.**

# REAL ESTATE IN-DEPTH

June 2023

Publisher: Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc.  
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Westmore News, Graphics & Design  
John Vecchiolla, Photographer

REAL ESTATE IN-DEPTH, published monthly, is the official publication of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc., One Maple Ave., White Plains, New York 10605. Opinions contained in the articles herein do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Association. The editors of REAL ESTATE IN-DEPTH reserve the right to accept or reject all advertising copy. REAL ESTATE IN-DEPTH (ISSN 0043-339X) or (USPS 677-500) is published 12 times a year for \$12 per year, included in member dues, and \$24 for non-members, by The Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc., One Maple Ave., White Plains, N.Y. 10605. Periodical Postage is paid at White Plains, N.Y. REAL ESTATE IN-DEPTH cannot be responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, nor undertake to return manuscripts or pictures. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to REAL ESTATE IN-DEPTH, One Maple Ave., White Plains, New York 10605.

# HGAR'S Bronx Chapter, Local Officials Hold Flag-Raising Ceremony for Flag Day

**NEW YORK**—Local Bronx elected officials joined the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors Bronx Chapter to raise its new flag in honor of Flag Day—June 14.

The flag was presented to Eli Rodriguez of the Bronx Chapter earlier this year at the Installation of the new HGAR President Tony D'Anzica and the 2023 Board of Directors at Marina Del Rey in the Bronx.

New York State Senator Nathalia Fernandez and representatives



The flag being raised at HGAR's Bronx Chapter office at 1867 Williamsbridge Road.

PHOTO BY JOHN VECCHIOLLA



# Artificial Intelligence: The New Frontier

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is certainly the new “new frontier” filled with all the promise and all the dangers that customarily accompany any new journey into uncharted territory or newly introduced technology. AI has taken front stage in our daily lives, and it is only the beginning. There are a multitude of articles and news stories that come out each day focusing on AI and its effect on business, education, investment, lending, real estate, manufacturing, the job market and every other aspect of our daily lives.

This nascent industry will undoubtedly and forever change the way people work, live, learn, educate and interact with one another. Many believe it is the next best thing to the iPhone or automobile, others believe it could possibly be the most dangerous invention since the development of the atomic bomb. Either way, it is an important technology that must be understood, developed, controlled and above all, utilized in a careful and thoughtful manner. While AI is a technology that has been in development for decades, it has gained more recent notoriety with the advent of ChatGPT introduced by OpenAI [see <https://openai.com>]. This article will delve into the promise and perils of AI.

## A Primer:

### Predictive AI vs. Generative AI

In an article entitled “Predictive AI vs. Generative AI: Unveiling the Distinction,” author Ishan Kapoor states there are two distinct branches of AI that have emerged [see <https://bit.ly/42GmkIA>]. Kapoor explains that “Predictive AI systems are designed to forecast outcomes based on historical data patterns and existing information. These models rely on machine learning algorithms to identify trends, correlations and statistical patterns in data sets. By analyzing vast amounts of historical data, predictive AI can make accurate predictions and estimations about future events.” These traditional AI systems are more akin to the traditional search engine and search engine optimization (SEO) uses (e.g., Google, Amazon, YouTube, etc.).

Kapoor points out the importance of Predictive AI when it comes to marketing, as it “enables businesses to anticipate consumer behavior, optimize advertising campaigns, and identify potential leads. Predictive AI algorithms can be trained to forecast customer preferences, predict market trends and provide valuable insights for decision-making.” This form of AI can be extremely important in the real estate industry when it comes to locating specific properties, identifying trends in particular areas and marketing those properties to potential customers.

On the other hand, Kapoor explains that Generative AI “focus[es] on the creation of new and original content. It employs sophisticated algorithms to generate novel outputs that mimic human-like creativity. By learning from large datasets, generative AI models can generate text, images, music, and even videos that exhibit a high level of authenticity.” He points out that “One of the most notable applications of generative AI is in the field of content creation.” Generative AI can assist with writing, designing, web-development, marketing, producing art and other artistic content, and the list can go on and on. With Generative AI the possibilities are endless and as Kapoor so eloquently states, “It pushes the boundaries of human imagination and offers creative possibilities that were previously unexplored.” However, it must also be carefully devel-



oped and utilized, and safeguards must be put in place.

### The Pitfalls and Dangers of AI

Brian Levine, Esq., HGAR’s General Counsel, in his monthly column in *Real Estate In-Depth* shows how AI could be used to generate portions of an article [see <https://bit.ly/43SIMZR>]. He details the pros and cons real estate practitioners should consider when using AI technology in their business. Levine points out the pitfalls when utilizing AI and stresses the importance of assessing the legal and ethical considerations when deciding to use this new technology in connection with everyday business operations. He also stresses that AI technology, which “learns” from historical data and gar-

provides that “REALTORS® shall be honest and truthful in their real estate communications and shall present a true picture in their advertising, marketing and other representations.”

Hecht provides a perfect example of crossing the line, “using AI to remove a structural crack from a wall violates those two Articles, but removing a hose and bucket accidentally caught in a picture is different.” Hoffman pointed out “three takeaways” offered by Hecht, when utilizing AI:

- Always review AI-generated content for accuracy.
- Don’t use AI to create a work you want to be able to protect.
- Don’t assume any third-party content was created by AI and, therefore, available for your use. Always

***I ran a test query and requested information on certain statutes and areas of the law, and found that many references to the sections of the law that I had inquired about were not accurate or just plain wrong.***

ners information from vast amounts of data and databases that exist on the Internet, could “contain biased information that perpetuates unfair practices (i.e., fair housing).” That is why it is extremely important to exercise discretion when deciding to implement AI technology and include it in your business.

### AI, Copyright Issues And the NAR Code of Ethics

The National Association of Realtors points out the new issues that are popping up in the real estate industry as a result of the increased use of AI. Christina Hoffman, in her article entitled “AI Use in Real Estate Comes with Copyright Concerns” [see <https://bit.ly/3MWfvcV>], points out that there are a number of recent cases that deal with AI-related issues. In one case, *Thaler v. Perlmutter*, a plaintiff filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Copyright Office for denying his registration for an AI-generated image produced by him and his AI System, Creativity Machine, because it was not produced by a human. [See <https://bit.ly/3CmdbEd>]. In another case, *Getty Images (US), Inc. v. Stability AI, Ltd.*, Getty Images sued Stability AI for using more than 12,000 images (and its accompanying metadata) belonging to Getty to “train” its AI system. [See <https://dockets.justia.com/docket/delaware/dedce/1:2023cv00135/81407>].

NAR also points out that Realtors should be aware of the ethical concerns when using AI to promote and market properties. Chloe Hecht, Senior Counsel at NAR, stresses that Realtors should look to Articles 2 and 12 of the Realtor Code of Ethics when using AI to stage or generate images of a property, or use when they use images. Under Article 2, “REALTORS® shall avoid exaggeration, misrepresentation or concealment of pertinent facts relating to the property or the transaction.” Article 12 further

get permission in writing for the way you want to use the work, and save that documentation.

### ChatGPT and AI: Still in its Early Stages

Recently, in a well-publicized *New York Times* article [see <https://nyti.ms/3p4YF0j>], an attorney utilized ChatGPT to prepare a court motion for a personal injury lawsuit, which “was filled with fake judicial opinions and legal citations.” The lawsuit involved a passenger who was injured by a meal cart on a flight. The airline requested the judge to dismiss the lawsuit because the statute of limitations had expired. The plaintiff’s attorneys submitted a 10-page motion citing cases in support of their position that the lawsuit should be allowed to move forward. When the airline’s attorneys asked for copies of the cases cited in the motion, the attorneys for the passenger could not come up with them as they did not exist.

The attorney who used ChatGPT to prepare the motion has been practicing law in New York for more than 30 years and who is now faced with certain disciplinary action. The attorney told the judge that he never used ChatGPT before and had learned about it from his children and articles that he had read. He explained to the judge that he did not understand the limitations of ChatGPT “and could not comprehend that ChatGPT could fabricate cases.” The authors of the *New York Times* article citing Stephen Gillers, an Ethics Professor at New York University Law School, stated that “The worldwide publicity spawned by the episode should serve as a warning.... ‘Paradoxically, this event has an unintended silver lining in the form of deterrence.’” This event stresses the importance of becoming knowledgeable about any new technology before utilizing it and understanding its limitations as well as its boundless potential.

I have also experimented with ChatGPT and realized fairly quickly that the

technology is limited in what it could do. First and foremost, ChatGPT does have a disclaimer that information after September 2021 is limited. I ran a test query and requested information on certain statutes and areas of the law, and found that many references to the sections of the law that I had inquired about were not accurate or just plain wrong. I also used ChatGPT to prepare a simple escrow agreement and post-closing undertaking agreement, and while the resulting document was rather rudimentary, one could see the potential once the technology is perfected. It provided a basic form of a document that could be developed into something useful.

### The Real Estate Professional: The Use Case for AI, Now

While it is clear that one must exercise caution when utilizing AI, there are many instances where AI can be utilized safely and effectively. According to Jimmy Burgess, in an article in *Inman*, ChatGPT is an excellent tool to increase your social media footprint. [See <https://bit.ly/3NqkG32>]. He explains, “ChatGPT has so many opportunities and applications to help agents, one is assisting us with optimizing our reach on social media.” In his article, Burgess provides distinct queries that can be entered into ChatGPT to generate posts with increased SEO for the following platforms: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

He also suggests that one could “compound” the content created for each of the platforms to create content for many other platforms. Burgess points out, “There are only a few generational technologies that come along with the potential to revolutionize the efficiencies in our businesses. ChatGPT is one of these generational technologies. Take advantage of it now and the early adopters will be rewarded.”

Jim Dalrymple II, in his article in *Inman* [see <https://bit.ly/3Jb28kP>], provides a list of invaluable resources that real estate professionals can utilize in the field of AI to increase their productivity, exposure and, ultimately, their bottom-line. He provides links and descriptions to: (1) “chatbots” (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Bard, Microsoft Bing); (2) “image generators” (e.g., DALL-E 2, Midjourney, Stable Diffusion, DreamStudio); (3) “AI Powered Real Estate Platforms” (e.g., OJO, BHR, Restb.ai, Scout, Rezora, RESAAS, ListAssist); and (4) “Other Exotic AI Tools” (e.g., Adobe products, Eleven Labs, DI-D, Runway). These companies provide products and services that cover a wide array of AI technology and tools available to the real estate professional.

Inman has also made available an excellent instructional video presented by Dalrymple and Kent Czechowski entitled “How ChatGPT and AI Technology Will Impact Productivity, Creativity, and Efficiency in Real Estate” [see <https://bit.ly/3CnL0or>]. The Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors Broker-Owner-Manager Committee and Young Professionals Network hosted an exciting event on AI on Tuesday, June 13<sup>th</sup>.

### AI Technology Being Utilized By Lenders and Other Real Estate Professionals

According to an article in *The Motley Fool*, authored by Jeremy Bowman [see <https://bit.ly/3N40sLd>], there are five areas where AI is being utilized extensively. One is in the area of “Predictive Analytics.” He points out that both Zillow and Redfin are using AI to generate proprietary valuation estimates for properties. Another area

**Please turn to page 7**



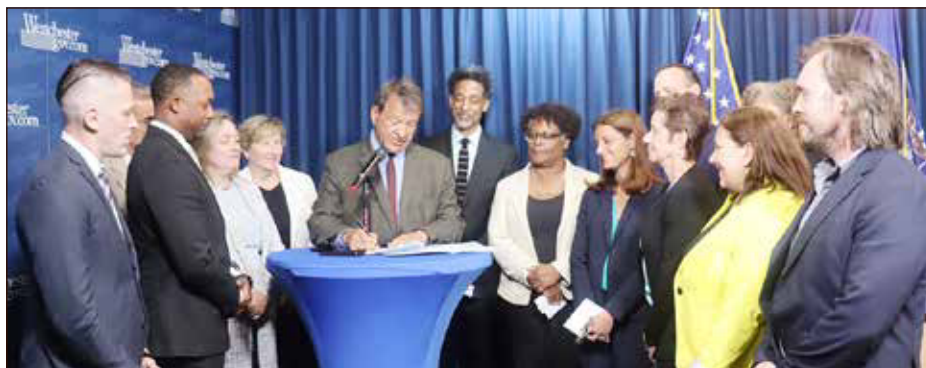
# Westchester County Executive Latimer Signs 'Access to Counsel' Bill into Law

WHITE PLAINS—At a press conference on May 31, Westchester County Executive George Latimer signed legislation into law that will create an agency that will provide legal counsel to income-eligible tenants and occupants facing eviction or other housing-related matters. A housing advocacy organization stated that 93% of landlords are represented by counsel in eviction proceedings in Westchester County, while only 7% of tenants have legal representation.

The new law creates the Office of Housing Counsel located within the Department of Social Services for the establishment of a county-wide program to provide access to legal services for a person whose household income is at or below 300% of the federal poverty guidelines or 60% of the county Average Medium Income who has legal standing in a covered proceeding.

A covered proceeding is defined by the county as any proceeding in any court in the county or any administrative agency administering housing programs which involves: the eviction of a covered individual; challenges to rent increases based upon a landlord's failure to provide proper notice; maintaining or restoring a covered individual's occupancy of a residential rental premises; possession of a residential rental premises for the non-payment of rent or a holdover; restoration or maintenance of essential services and a proceeding which would result in the termination of tenancy, rental subsidy, or other rental assistance.

"Housing is a necessity. Plain and simple," Westchester County Executive Latimer said. "This legislation will help Westchester residents who are facing hardships remain in their homes, easing the burden on our social services



Westchester County Executive George Latimer signs the "Access to Counsel" bill into law flanked by county legislators and housing advocates.

and lowering the number of our neighbors facing a crisis in their living situations. I commend the Board of Legislators for their work on this trailblazing legislation here in Westchester."

The legal services provided to covered individuals will be at no cost to the clients. Additionally, community engagement and education to inform tenants of their ability to access legal counsel will be undertaken to help residents learn about this important program, county officials stated.

According to the 2020 Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) to Congress by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, New York State has the highest rate of homelessness in the country, with 92,000 New Yorkers experiencing homelessness. Even worse, in a 2016 report by Stout Risius Ross, a staggering 1.2 million households are behind on rent and landlords are actively trying to evict more than 236,000 tenants statewide. According to the Right to Counsel NYC Coalition, 220,000 evictions are pending in New York courts, including town, village, and justice courts.

Currently, low-income tenants in

Westchester County do not have guaranteed access to legal counsel in eviction proceedings. Across the state an overwhelming majority of landlords are represented during eviction proceedings, whereas most tenants are not. According to the Westchester County Right to Counsel Coalition, in normal years, when more than 10,000 eviction proceedings are filed in Westchester County Courts, 93% of landlords are represented by counsel, while only 7% of tenants have attorneys. Programs that provide legal counsel at no cost to low-income tenants, have proven to be very successful at preventing evictions and protecting tenants' rights.

The bill reached the County Executive's desk after being unanimously passed by the Westchester County Board of Legislators.

Board of Legislators Chairman Vedat Gashi said, "At the Board of Legislators, we are always looking for ways to improve the lives of the residents of Westchester. This legislation does just that. I thank my colleagues on the Board for their diligent work, the County Executive and his staff for their efforts to bring this to fruition and I look forward to working with the dedicated

county staff on its implementation."

Legislator Catherine Borgia said, "This law sets a gold standard for access to housing counsel. Once the office is in operation, tenants will have access to brief legal representation or full legal representation on a host of housing matters, including eviction proceedings, landlord's failure to provide proper notice of rent increase, maintaining or restoring essential services to the tenant, among others. Even before the pandemic, it was obvious that housing costs were too high, causing economic strain for Westchester families and harming local economies. In 2019, I spent time in several local courts and I saw how unrepresented tenants were outmatched in court. The end of the pandemic-era eviction moratorium has created a huge jump in eviction proceedings, increasing risk of homelessness for families already struggling with high costs."

Legal Services of the Hudson Valley CEO Rachel Chazin Halperin, Esq. added, "This monumental legislation puts Westchester in a small but growing category of progressive jurisdictions across the country that recognizes providing counsel to tenants effectively prevents homelessness. We are grateful to the thoughtful and bold leadership of the County Executive and Board of Legislators for passing and signing this bill and look forward to working collaboratively with them in its implementation. As the only provider of comprehensive civil legal services to low-income residents in Westchester County, the majority of our cases involve housing instability. Now with this legislation, tenants will have the benefit of counsel to assert their legal rights when the basic human right of housing is in jeopardy."

## NY State Launches \$150-Million Momentum Fund for Housing and Infrastructure Projects in Mid-Hudson Region

ALBANY—New York Gov. Kathy Hochul announced on May 17 the opening of the \$150-million Mid-Hudson Momentum Fund grant application process for mixed-use housing and infrastructure projects throughout the Mid-Hudson Region.

The initiative will help communities meet growing infrastructure needs in light of the recent, region-wide population increase brought on by the pandemic, state officials said. The fund, implemented by Empire State Development, represents a major commitment to increase the housing supply to meet growing demand and invest in key infrastructure projects in the region. The governor previously announced the Mid-Hudson Momentum Fund in February.

"With its rich history, natural beauty, and cultural treasures, the Mid-Hudson region has long been a crown jewel for our state that has welcomed new residents and visitors for years," Gov. Hochul said. "As the region continues to see an increase in population and visitors alike, the Mid-Hudson Momentum Fund will help communities address critical needs such as affordable and equitable housing and growing local infrastructure to make sure this region can continue to serve as a destination for families, workers, businesses and tourists."

Empire State Development President, CEO and Commissioner Hope Knight added, "It is imperative that we strategically address the growing demand for housing and infrastructure improvements throughout the Mid-Hudson Region. With informed input



While Gov. Kathy Hochul's "New York Housing Compact" plan failed to muster sufficient support in the State Legislature, she announced on May 17 the opening of applications for the \$150-million Mid-Hudson Momentum Fund for housing and infrastructure projects.

FILE PHOTO

from our Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council, this program will help to address and accommodate the surge of interest in this amazing area and help to sustain the region's growth well into the future."

The Mid-Hudson Region has become a top destination for both tourists and new permanent residents, with more than 33,000 new residents moving to the region over the past two years alone. With regional housing stock availability of less than 1% last year, there is a pressing need for new development to support the influx

of residents. The Mid-Hudson Momentum Fund will support mixed-use housing and infrastructure projects that will have lasting impacts in the region and that are consistent with the strategic goals and priorities of the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council's strategic plan. This includes projects that have garnered community support, will result in increased affordable housing, leverage non-state investment, are financially sound, and can begin quickly.

A total of \$150 million will be available for specific projects over a period

of five years and will be split evenly between mixed-use housing projects and infrastructure projects. Awards will range from \$2.5 million to \$10 million per project and a minimum match of 50% will be required from non-state funding sources. Funds can be used for construction, expansion, and the rehabilitation of facilities, equipment and machinery, infrastructure and site development, and design and engineering related to construction. Eligible applicants include not-for-profits, municipalities, public benefit corporations including IDAs and LDCs and for-profit companies.

Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council Co-Chairs Dr. Marsha Gordon, President & CEO of The Business Council of Westchester and Dr. Kristine Young, president of SUNY Orange said, "Since the pandemic, we have welcomed thousands of new residents to our region which has exacerbated the demand for housing and upgrades to the existing local infrastructure. The Mid-Hudson Momentum Fund will help address these needs and we look forward to ensuring approved projects are consistent with the goals and priorities of the region."

Submissions are due to ESD by July 28, 2023 at 4 p.m. to be reviewed by the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council shortly thereafter. Applications that are received after July 28, 2023 will be reviewed by the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council on a quarterly basis. Learn more about the Mid-Hudson Momentum Fund at <https://esd.ny.gov/momentum>



# New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson Named Executive Director of Sustainable Westchester

By John Jordan

MOUNT KISCO—After serving as Mayor of New Rochelle for nearly two decades, Noam Bramson will be leaving city government at the end of this year for the private sector. Recently, Sustainable Westchester announced that Mayor Bramson will take over as Executive Director of the Mount Kisco-based non-profit effective in January 2024.

Bramson has served as mayor for the past 18 years and spearheaded the zoning reform effort in the city that has directly led to the extensive downtown development currently underway. Sustainable Westchester, a climate action advocacy organization and provider of renewable energy, stated that Bramson was selected as executive director after an extensive search process. Interim Executive Director Jim Kuster will remain in place until Mayor Bramson completes his current term in office.

“Mayor Bramson’s vast experience in government and passion for leading impactful climate action initiatives will be of immense value to Sustainable Westchester as the organization continues to grow,” said Kuster, who has served as Sustainable Westchester’s Interim Executive Director since November 2022. “Under his leadership, we will strengthen and expand our innovative programming to help a broad range of municipalities meet the critical environmental and equity objectives contained in New York’s Climate Act.” Kuster replaced Nina Orville as executive director of the organization.

“Mayor Bramson’s demonstrated track record of building consensus, attracting investment, and prioritizing healthy environments perfectly positions him to lead Sustainable Westchester’s continued growth and expand the great results we deliver to our members,” added Sara Goddard, Board Chair of Sustainable Westchester. “We are extremely excited to welcome him aboard.”

Sustainable Westchester pointed to Mayor Bramson’s environmental credentials, noting that under his leadership, New Rochelle is experiencing its fastest growth in a century, serving as a regional and statewide model for environmentally-friendly, transit-oriented development. Bramson was instrumental in adopting New Rochelle’s first-ever

sustainability plan, GreeNR, now undergoing a comprehensive update to emphasize resiliency and climate justice. The organization, in its announcement, also noted that Mayor Bramson has been a champion of open space expansion, including ongoing efforts to create new parkland on the Echo Bay waterfront and along the “LINC,” a reimagined Memorial Highway.

New Rochelle was among the first large communities in New York State to adopt the state’s Stretch Energy Code and is presently the second-highest scoring large community in the state’s Clean Energy Communities program. In addition, as one of the founding Board Members of Sustainable Westchester, Mayor Bramson helped to establish the county’s innovative Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program, with New Rochelle one of the first cities to secure clean, renewable energy through CCA.

“I am thrilled to join Sustainable Westchester as its new Executive Director,” said Mayor Noam Bramson. “Sustainable Westchester is among the most impactful public interest organizations in our region, with a dedicated, highly-capable staff, a record of meaningful accomplishment, and a vital, growing role in helping localities, the county, and all of New York achieve ambitious climate and environmental goals. It will be a privilege to advance such an important mission, while working alongside colleagues, both in and out of government, whom I respect deeply.”

Westchester County Executive George Latimer hailed Bramson’s appointment, stating, “Westchester is one of the state’s foremost leaders in combating climate change and Sustainable Westchester is an integral part of this work. Noam’s leadership driving New Rochelle’s sustainability efforts has been exemplary, and he will be an asset to the organization and all they are doing county-wide. We wish him the best of luck in this new endeavor.”

Recently, the Westchester County Office of Economic Development announced it is partnering with Sustainable Westchester to launch a Clean Energy Accelerator Program.

The program, which includes a Careers Working Group that recently met for the first time, convenes key stakeholders who will work together



**New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson will be the Executive Director of Sustainable Westchester effective January 2024.**

to identify the workforce needs of the clean energy sector and create strong clean energy career pathways for Westchester residents.

“New York State’s visionary climate objectives come with a host of

unprecedented challenges and opportunities,” said Bramson. “Sustainable Westchester is uniquely suited to make the most of this pivotal moment, position our region as a positive model, strengthen partnerships with aligned organizations and advocates, and encourage effective, collaborative policy-making at all levels of government. It will be my goal to ensure that every municipality we serve has the information, tools, encouragement, and support to achieve our shared goal of a healthy, vibrant, equitable, and sustainable county.”

Sustainable Westchester is a hub of innovative climate tech programs and expertise designed to help local municipalities achieve greenhouse gas reduction targets mandated by New York’s landmark Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. The nonprofit organization strives to improve clean energy solutions, save municipalities and consumers’ money, and promote equity and environmental justice within the communities it serves. Its programs include Westchester Power; Community Solar; Building Decarbonization for commercial properties; Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure; EnergySmart Homes; GridRewards; and Zero Waste.

## J. Philip Real Estate Joins Howard Hanna | Rand Realty

NANUET—Howard Hanna | Rand Realty announced on May 17 that J. Philip Faranda and the agents of J. Philip Real Estate located at offices in Briarcliff Manor and Carmel have joined the brokerage firm.

The deal significantly expands the footprint of Howard Hanna | Rand Realty with two new offices in New York State, located in Briarcliff Manor at 522 North State Road and in Carmel at 529 Route 52.

J. Philip Real Estate is widely recognized as a premier independent brokerage serving Westchester and Putnam County, outselling all Westchester and Putnam-based boutiques by unit every year since 2017, Howard Hanna | Rand officials stated. No financial terms of the transaction were disclosed.

Matthew Rand, CEO of Howard Hanna | Rand Realty, said, “We are thrilled to welcome J. Philip Real Estate and team to the Howard Hanna | Rand Realty family, as his expertise in technology and marketing within the real estate industry will undoubtedly enhance our position as the most innovative and creative brokerage in the industry.”

Renee Zurlo, New York General Manager, added, “This is a significant milestone for both Howard Hanna | Rand Realty and J. Philip Real Estate. We will amplify our collective strengths, expand our reach, and offer unparalleled resources to our clients. This will undoubtedly enhance our ability to provide the best real estate experiences throughout New York and Connecticut.”

Philip Faranda, Founder and Principal of J. Philip Real Estate, said of the deal, “I have known the Rands for almost 15 years and always had the greatest respect for Joe, Matt, and of course Marsha in our many collaborations in transactions, association, and MLS matters, and industry events. It was important for me to align myself with a family-owned brand that was committed to professionalism and forward thinking. I see this as a significant opportunity to help our agents be the best in the business and give the clients an experience that will be the



**From left, J. Philip Faranda, Marsha and Matthew Rand.**

standard by which all our competitors will seek to measure themselves. I look forward to growing our market share and turning heads, thanks to now having the backing of the biggest private company in America.”

Howard Hanna | Rand Realty has more than 1,100 residential real estate sales associates serving New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut suburbs of New York City. Howard Hanna | Rand Realty serves Westchester County, Rockland County, Orange County, Sullivan County, Dutchess County, Ulster County, Putnam County, and the Bronx in New York, Bergen County, Passaic County, Hudson County, Morris County, Essex County, and Union County in New Jersey, and Fairfield County in Connecticut. Rand also owns and operates Rand Commercial, a commercial real estate brokerage, and Hudson United Home Services, which provides residential mortgage lending, title services, and personal and commercial insurance. For more information, visit [randrealty.com](http://randrealty.com).

The Hanna Family of Companies proudly provides real estate, title, insurance, and mortgage services to clients across 13 states. The full-service real estate company has more than 500 offices and 15,000 sales associates and staff, including many of the industry’s top-producing real estate, title, mortgage and insurance agents.

## Artificial Intelligence: The New Frontier

Continued from page 5

is in “3D modeling,” where he points out that “Visual representations have become increasingly important in real estate, and it’s one of a number of industries that are taking advantage of...AI-based computer images that allow users to explore a space digitally.” Another area is the use of AI in “Smart Home Devices.” Bowman points out that AI can be used in smart home products to monitor the home and assist with issues that may come up while a person is away. AI is also being utilized in the field of property management.

Another important area in which AI is being utilized with more frequency is in the mortgage industry. AI is being used by underwriters to approve borrowers much more quickly and efficiently. Bowman points out that “In underwriting, AI is used to analyze borrower information such as credit scores, income, and employment history to evaluate the borrower’s risk profile and find the best rate to charge.” AI can also assist with fraud prevention and loan servicing (e.g., assist with payment processing, customer service and support, etc.). He

points out that some lenders, like Rocket Mortgage, are able to issue a loan approval within eight minutes by utilizing AI.

### The AI Frontier is Upon Us, Be Careful on the Journey

AI is exciting and many professionals have set out on the journey with much enthusiasm. The uses for AI, in all its forms and across all industries, are limitless, however, as with all new technologies there are inherent dangers and pitfalls. Everyone must be careful when utilizing AI and be weary of the legal, ethical and societal consequences in implementing existing AI technology. We must all remember that we are the very beginning of the AI journey, and there is still a long way to go.

*Legal Column author John Dolgetta, Esq. is the principal of the law firm of Dolgetta Law, PLLC. For information about Dolgetta Law, PLLC and John Dolgetta, Esq., please visit <http://www.dolgettalaw.com>. The foregoing article is for informational purposes only and does not confer an attorney-client relationship and shall not be considered legal advice.*





A rendering of the \$54-million Braemar at Montebello senior-assisted living development currently under construction.

RENDERING COURTESY OF FILBEN GROUP

## \$54M Senior Project in Rockland County Reaches Critical Development Milestone

MONTEBELLO, NY—On May 30, Owner/Developer FilBen Group, equity partner RSF Partners, general contractor McAlpine Contracting, and designer H2M Architects + Engineers celebrated the “First Floor Rising” event, which marked the completion of foundations and the beginning of the above-ground construction phase for Braemar at Montebello.

The development, when completed, will feature a 200-resident, 133,675-square foot, four-level luxury assisted living residence located on 6.2 acres at 250 Lafayette Ave. in Montebello. The property will provide assisted living and memory care services. Construction on the project began in January of this year.

“Today we celebrate an important construction milestone for the new Braemar Montebello community. We expect senior residents of Rockland County, the Lower Hudson Valley, as well as the greater New York area and northern New Jersey, to be attracted to the active lifestyle and luxurious amenities that this community will offer,” said Richard Filaski, Managing Director of FilBen Group.

The property is close to Harriman State Park in Rockland County and is adjacent to a larger site that includes the Montebello commercial center, which will offer residents access to retail, entertainment, dining, and medical services within close proximity of their home.

Braemar is a brand of Stamford, CT-based FilBen-owned and operated senior living communities. The first property, the Braemar at Medford in Medford, NY, opened its doors in 2008. The Braemar at Wallkill in Middletown, NY, the second property to open under the brand, welcomed its first residents in 2015. The Montebello community will be the third Braemar-branded residence when it opens in 2024. FilBen plans to begin construction of its fourth property, a 152-bed assisted living community in Carmel, NY, in early 2023.

“This \$54-million project will add a beautiful, high quality senior care residence for the Montebello and Rockland County communities,” said McAlpine Vice President John Nolan. “Because of the location of the future building on a sloping site, which will offer breathtaking views to the residents, the project presents several technical and logistical challenges to the construction and design team. For example, construction of foundations and the structural system will proceed in a phased, staggered manner to accelerate the schedule, while addressing access and site engineering complexities,” he added.

“Those of us who know Montebello love and appreciate it as a wonderful place to live. We are committed to maintaining this high standard and look forward to Braemar further enriching the lives of local families and seniors. Braemar at Montebello will



From left, Village of Montebello Attorney Warren E. Berbit; Village of Montebello Deputy Mayor Stacy Caridi; M&T Bank Senior Vice President Kristina Hendrickson; FilBen Group Managing Director Richard Filaski; Town of Ramapo Supervisor Michael B. Specht; FilBen Group Managing Director Joshua Benenson; Village of Montebello Mayor Lance Millman; FilBen Group Managing Director David Filaski; FilBen Group Manager of Development Jessica Cotellese; FilBen Group Director of Community Relations Danielle DiBenedetto; H2M Senior Architect Mark McKee, AIA; McAlpine Contracting Project Manager David Nicklas; Rockland IDA Executive Director Steven Porath and McAlpine Contracting Executive Vice President John Nolan.

PHOTO BY PETER WILK/WILK MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

be another jewel in the crown of FilBen Group’s portfolio and a valuable new member of Montebello’s business community. Welcome and good luck,” said Lance Millman, Mayor of the Village of Montebello.

The total development cost of the project is \$54 million, including \$36 million in construction cost. The owner/developer is a partnership between FilBen Group and RSF Partners, a private equity firm based in Dallas, TX. M&T Bank provided a \$34.8-million construction loan. The development will receive a sales tax exemption of up to \$1,976,809 for state and local sales taxes as well as a mortgage recording exemption in the amount of \$360,055.50 from the Rockland County Industrial Development Agency. Upon completion, the community will employ up to 115 senior care and support personnel.

“Tax incentives are a key element in securing the type of quality development the Braemar Montebello project provides,” said Steven Porath, Executive Director of the Rockland IDA. “The value of the financial incentives provided to this project will be returned to the community many times over through the healthcare and economic benefits Braemar Montebello will deliver to our community,” he added.

The building will feature shared public spaces on the main, second, and third levels. A total of 133 residential units – 66 private, one-person studio units of approximately 400-square feet each and 67 two-bedroom semi-private “Friendship” units of approximately 600-square feet each—will be located on these levels, while additional 12 private and 10 Friendship units will be located on the lower level in a memory care section. The private units are studios with kitchenettes and private baths. The Friendship units have two bedrooms that share a kitchenette and bathroom. All kitchenettes and

bathrooms are barrier-free and include roll-in showers.

The development will also feature a host of amenities. The visitor entrance on the main level will lead from the south parking lot into a two-story, 22-foot high cathedral-ceilinged atrium with a stone and wood reception desk, a tiled fireplace, and comfortable seating. Two passenger elevators, one service elevator, and two additional stairs will provide vertical access and emergency egress to all levels.

Administrative offices will be located adjacent to the reception area, but the majority of the remaining spaces in the central section and east wing of the main level will be occupied by common spaces. The primary public space is the 3,500-square foot main dining room that extends out from the north façade to offer 180-degree views of the surrounding vistas. A private dining room will also be available for celebrations and private dinners. Other amenities include a pub and game room, a café, business lounge, general store, arts and crafts room, family lounge with an adjacent kids’ room, beauty salon, and coffee shop. A fitness center will be located adjacent to a wellness center, which will be equipped with a waiting area, exam room, medication room, offices for the director and staff, and a records storage room. Residents can also take advantage of a 940-square foot parlor that will open onto a 1,000-square foot outdoor terrace. The parlor will share a double-sided fireplace with the adjacent 510-square foot library. A 1,080-square foot cinema and a chapel will complete the public spaces.

The Braemar at Montebello ownership purchased the property on August 3, 2022 in a deal brokered by Rand Commercial. Paul Adler, Esq., SIOR, Chief Strategy Officer of Rand Commercial, represented the seller and the

buyer in the transaction.

FilBen Group is comprised of the Filaski and Benenson families that have worked together for more than 40 years to build, own, and operate senior housing and health care facilities in the New York metropolitan area. To date, the principals of FilBen have built more than 5,000 nursing-home beds, of which they owned 1,300 and operated over 800. The firm currently owns and operates 400 assisted living beds with another 352 beds under development.

In addition to constructing and operating its own facilities, FilBen offers the full spectrum of development and management services, including site selection, development, construction, and project management as well as healthcare program development and operation to other senior care providers. FilBen principals have worked with numerous large not-for-profit agencies, such as Catholic Charities and Senior Citizen Housing Committee, to create more than 1,400 units of independent senior housing. Most recently, the firm has been retained to manage a new assisted living residence owned by the Greek Orthodox Church, which is scheduled to open in Uniondale, NY in 2024.

RSF Partners is a boutique private equity firm based in Dallas, TX that invests in niche subsectors of the real estate market. Established in 1991, McAlpine Contracting is a leading new construction and interior fit-out general contractor and construction manager operating throughout the greater New York Area, including New York City, Long Island, New Jersey, and Lower Hudson Valley as well as in Vermont. Headquartered in Manhattan, the firm has a portfolio of completed seniors housing, multi-family residential, commercial, and institutional projects totaling in excess of \$2 billion in value.



# Artificial Intelligence: The Pros and Cons for Real Estate Practitioners

ChatGPT, Chatsonic, BingChat, YouChat. No, these are not social media sites where you chat about your favorite recipes or movies. These are artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot sites where a person can enter a query and have a response generated by the computer, culling information from the vastness of the Internet. The results are human-like e-mails, essays, stories and pretty much anything else that a human can create, but it's done by a computer.

In the fast-paced and competitive world of real estate, professionals are constantly seeking ways to streamline processes, improve efficiency, and deliver exceptional results. With the advent of AI, real estate professionals now have access to innovative tools that can enhance and optimize their workflow, including creating listings, marketing materials and other documents. However, it is important to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of incorporating AI into these crucial aspects of the real estate industry. This article explores the pros and cons of using AI for real estate professionals and 95% of it, including this introduction, was written primarily by AI as an experiment (see my additional comments at the end).

## Pros Time and Cost Efficiency

AI-powered tools can automate time-consuming tasks associated with creating property listings, marketing materials and other documents. These tools can generate professional and accurate content at a fraction of the time it would take a human professional. This efficiency translates into cost savings for real estate professionals who can allocate their time and resources to other critical areas of their business.

## Tailored Marketing And Personalization

AI can analyze vast amounts of data, such as property features, location, demographics and buyer preferences to generate personalized marketing materials. By leveraging AI, real estate professionals can create marketing campaigns that resonate with buyers, increasing the likelihood of attracting buyers and expediting a sale.

## Efficient Customer Engagement

AI empowers real estate professionals to provide instant, personalized assistance to potential buyers, sellers, landlords and renters. The AI model can handle numerous queries simultaneously, ensuring prompt responses and reducing the need for human intervention. By integrating AI into websites, real estate companies can enhance customer engagement and offer round-the-clock support, ultimately improving customer satisfaction.

## Enhanced Property Search Experience

AI-powered algorithms can analyze large datasets and extract valuable insights to assist clients in finding their ideal properties. AI can understand natural language queries and provide relevant property recommendations based on specific requirements, preferences and budgets. This feature simplifies the property search process, saving time and effort for both real estate professionals and customers.

## Automating Routine Tasks

Real estate professionals often spend a considerable amount of time on repetitive administrative tasks. AI can automate many of these processes, such as generating property



listings, scheduling appointments and sending personalized notifications. By freeing up time previously dedicated to administrative duties, real estate professionals can focus on higher-

value activities, such as building client relationships and closing deals. listings or marketing materials requires an initial investment in technology, training and infrastructure. Training the model to understand industry-specific terminology and

**AI-generated documents must still comply with applicable laws and regulations. Real estate professionals need to carefully review and verify the output of AI systems to ensure legal compliance and protect their clients' interests.**

value activities, such as building client relationships and closing deals.

## Data-Driven Decision Making

AI algorithms can analyze vast amounts of real estate data, including market trends, property prices and demographic information. By utilizing this wealth of information, real estate professionals can make more informed decisions regarding property valuation, investment opportunities and market predictions. Data-driven insights provided by AI can help professionals stay ahead of the competition and increase their chances of success.

## Fair Housing Compliance

AI can help real estate agents comply with fair housing laws by flagging potential discriminatory language or practices in listings and marketing materials. It can provide agents with real-time feedback and suggestions to ensure they adhere to the principles of fair housing, promoting equal opportunities for all.

## Cons

### Lack of Human Touch And Intuition

AI tools, while efficient, lack the human touch and intuition that real estate professionals possess. The emotional aspect of property descriptions or marketing messages might be challenging for AI algorithms to replicate accurately. Real estate professionals must strike a balance between AI automation and personalized human involvement to maintain authentic and engaging interactions with clients.

## Legal and Ethical Considerations

AI-generated documents must still comply with applicable laws and regulations. Real estate professionals need to carefully review and verify the output of AI systems to ensure legal compliance and protect their clients' interests. Additionally, ethical considerations arise when using AI algorithms to analyze personal data for targeted marketing. Striking a balance between leveraging data and respecting privacy is crucial to maintain trust with clients.

## Initial Investment And Learning Curve

Integrating AI tools for creating

obviously, wrong. Real estate agents should never be drafting any legal document. Also, what the program failed to take note of was that our MLS has a vast amount of information relating to properties in our area, but it's not on the Internet. This means that the information provided by AI could be extremely inaccurate because it does not have the access to it. This information is only available to Realtors, but not AI.

Other issues I came across were, while the program did note there could be biases that are perpetuated unless properly trained, presently, AI would not recognize certain fair housing pitfalls, such as "walk to worship," "great home for seniors," "no dogs" (what about service animals?), or "not child-friendly." As such, it could inadvertently steer certain groups toward or away from properties, in violation of fair housing laws. It could expose Realtors to possible DOS advertising and Article 12 violations (truthfulness in advertising) or Article 2 violations (misrepresentations). Further, with regard to privacy, AI might collect and store data about users, including potentially confidential information. Such information could be exposed if not properly protected. Additionally, copyright law is unclear about whether the words that are spit out onto the page are copyrightable and who would own the copyright (the user, the designer, someone else?). The law has yet to catch up to AI.

## Conclusion

While there are some great benefits to AI, there are some serious issues as well. None of these are going away any time soon and AI is here to stay. If you are going to use AI, be mindful of the following:

- Always review AI-generated content for accuracy and suitability.
- Review content for possible fair housing violations and bias, particularly regarding property or community descriptions.
- Consider using AI to gather ideas and concepts, and then craft your own material from it.
- Do not use AI for work you wish to copyright.
- Ensure you have consent to use any third-party material generated by AI, including pictures, and save that information.

AI is great. Give it a try. But be careful.

*Brian S. Levine, Esq. is General Counsel & Professional Standards Administrator for the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors.*



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# Yonkers IDA Provides Nearly \$8 Million in Incentives For Four Multifamily Projects Valued at \$291 Million

YONKERS— The Yonkers Industrial Development Agency announced recently it had voted to grant final approvals of financial incentives for four multifamily residential developments— Bridgewater North, Miroza Tower, 345 McLean Ave. and 83-95 Vineyard Ave. The four projects represent a total of \$291 million in private investment and will create a total of 612 new residential units and 660 construction jobs.

The Yonkers IDA granted a total of mortgage recording and sales tax exemptions totaling \$7,872,978.

Bridgewater North is the first phase of Ginsburg Development Companies' Ludlow development project to take place at 150 Downing St. The \$96.5-million project will feature 208 rental apartments on seven floors above two levels of parking. Ten percent of the units will be affordable.

The building's amenities will include 24/7 concierge services, a fitness

center, club room and roof deck. It is expected to create 250 construction jobs.

Off-site improvements include the restoration of O'Boyle Park, located just north of the project site; the extension of Bridge Street from Knowles Street to Downing Street, and the creation of a new Bridge Street Park and Promenade that will connect the train station area to O'Boyle Park.

The Yonkers IDA granted a total of \$3,442,500 in incentives, comprised of a sale tax exemption valued at \$2,662,500 and a mortgage recording tax exemption of \$780,000.

Miroza Tower, which is being developed by a subsidiary of Azorim Construction Co. Ltd., will be a 27-story, mixed-use building located at 44 Hudson St. The \$126-million project will feature a 267-unit, mainly residential tower that will include a party room, library, conference room, gym, two



A rendering of the Bridgewater North project, a nearly \$97-million project being developed by Ginsburg Development Companies.

resident lounges, rooftop garden and a children's playroom. The project will also include 1,699 square feet of retail space on the first floor and a 222-space parking garage. Yonkers IDA officials stated that there will be the requisite number of affordable rental units made available. The project is expected to create 175 jobs.

The Yonkers IDA granted the developer a total of \$3,993,750 in sales tax exemptions.

A \$56.8-million project, 345 McLean Ave. involves a 12-story residential building that upon completion will feature 105 studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments for seniors 62 years of age and older whose income is at or below 60% of Westchester County's Area Median Income (AMI). Residents of the building will have access to a community room equipped with computers, a library, recreational space, property

manager's office, Supportive Housing office, laundry room and bike storage. Project developer Verus Development is requesting a 30-year property tax abatement. The project is expected to create 125 construction jobs.

Plans for 83-95 Vineyard Ave. call for transforming a vacant and overgrown site into a \$11.7 million, four-story residential building with 32 rental units and on-site parking for 47 cars on a new parking deck located at the rear of the building. The apartments will include 24 one-bedroom units and eight, two-bedroom units. The ground floor of the building will have a mechanical space, laundry area and bike room. The project is expected to create 110 construction jobs. The Yonkers IDA granted the project a \$301,750 sales tax exemption, a \$134,978 mortgage recording tax exemption, for a total incentive package of \$436,728.



A rendering of the 27-story Miroza Tower to be built on Hudson Street in Yonkers.

# Storm King Art Center Improvement Project Secures \$11 Million in NY State Funding

NEW WINDSOR—Gov. Kathy Hochul announced significant new state funding for the campus-wide improvement project at Storm King Art Center, a 500-acre outdoor museum in New Windsor that includes a \$7.5-million New York State Council of the Arts Large Capital Improvement Grants recipient.

The governor, at the groundbreaking ceremony on June 6, reported that in addition to NYSCA's support, Empire State Development has awarded more than \$3 million in funding to Storm King Art Center in the form of a \$2-million capital grant and a \$1.2-million Market New York grant based on the recommendation of the Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council. NYSERDA has also contributed \$600,000 to the project, bringing New York State's total support for the Storm King Art Center facility to more than \$11 million.

NYSCA's Large Capital Improvement Grants for Arts and Culture support arts and cultural institutions across the state that are undertaking impactful, large-scale capital improvements. Grants range from \$2 million to \$10 million for projects with a total cost of \$4 million or more. This funding will support investments to expand cultural programming, reach new and diverse audiences, and promote accessibility. These grants will also help advance the state's goals around diversity, equity and inclusion and will require all grantees to commit to social equity initiatives and access plans that serve all New Yorkers. NYSCA's Large Capital Improvement Grants program is ad-



Gov. Kathy Hochul was joined by Storm King Art Center representatives and public officials in turning the first dirt at the \$45-million expansion project.

ministered in coordination with Empire State Development, which reviews applications to evaluate the potential for projects to support local placemaking, community development, and downtown revitalization efforts.

The grant to Storm King Art Center will enhance the visitor experience through the construction of two new building elements: the Welcome Sequence and the Conservation, Fabrication, and Maintenance Building. The Welcome Sequence will help to simplify visitors' arrival by doubling parking capacity, removing traffic, and adding new facilities to accommodate guest arrivals and group tours. The Conservation, Fabrication, and Maintenance Building will be Storm King's first-ever purpose-built space, allowing them to work with artists on fabrication, better

care for their collection by conserving important artworks onsite, and provide staff with safe, well-equipped facilities. The new facility will also prioritize sustainability with all-electric buildings and LEED Gold Certification for the Welcome Sequence, reinforcing Storm King's long history of land preservation and environmental education, state officials noted.

President of Storm King Art Center John P. Stern said, "We are thrilled to break ground on Storm King's first-ever capital project. We embarked on this project with a commitment to enhance and sustain the extraordinary experience of art and nature that Storm King offers its visitors, artists, and community. New York State's support, though the NYSCA, ESD, and NYSERDA grants, are essential in reach-

ing today's exciting milestone. I'm grateful for their partnership, which will allow us to share Storm King's extraordinary site and collection with future generations."

Mid-Hudson Regional Economic Development Council Co-Chairs Dr. Marsha Gordon, President & CEO of The Business Council of Westchester and Dr. Kristine Young, president of SUNY Orange stated, "Through the Regional Council's 'live, work, play' strategy, we have focused on enhancing the quality of life for our residents and strengthening the region's identity as a premier tourist destination. This investment in the Storm King Arts Center will attract additional visitor spending and stimulate economic growth throughout the region."

Storm King Art Center announced the expansion project back in August 2022 and stated that the \$45-million project "represents a significant commitment to creatively improve and preserve the Art Center's 500-acre site, securing its unique landscape for decades to come." The Storm King Art Center is working with a global team of consultants, including project partners heneghan peng architects, from Dublin, New York-based WXY architecture + urban design, and landscape architecture firms Gustafson Porter + Bowman, of London, and Reed Hilderbrand of Cambridge, MA and New Haven, CT.

"On behalf of our County Executive, Steven M Neuhaus, we are thrilled to witness the launch of a monumental project for one of Orange County's top attractions, Storm King Art Center," said

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Alex Delgado, Christie's International Real Estate and Layla Boyles, Century 21 Realty Center



Anthony Ruperto, Ally Realty and Jessica Broomhead, Compass

**HG Realtor Foundation**

# Dancing for the Foundation

**Glen Island Harbour Club  
May 18, 2023**

PHOTOS BY JOHN VECCHIOLLA



From left, Ray LaFlamme, US Bank and Wasfiyah Talib, ERA Insite Realty Services



From left, Carol Christiansen, Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation Chair, and Joan Marks, Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation Vice Chair



Gail Fattizzi, Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation President



Irene Amato, A.S.A.P. Mortgage Corp. and Mark Aakjar, Mark's Inspections



Joe Maymi and JP Endres, Howard Hanna Rand Realty



Vili Mirtcheva, Corcoran Legends and Steven Reese, Christie's International Real Estate





From left, Gail Fattizzi, HG Realtor Foundation President and Antoinette Calderon, member of the Bronx Westchester VISIONS /Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired Advisory Board and a licensed Real Estate Salesperson with Park Sterling Realty in Bronxville.

The Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation, the charitable arm of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, was honored recently by VISIONS/Services for the Blind & Visually Impaired at the not-for-profit's Annual Awards event held at the Pelham Bay/Split Rock Golf Course in the Bronx.

Gail Fattizzi, President of the HG Realtor Foundation, accepted the award on behalf of the Foundation. Several Foundation Trustees, Foundation Fundraising Committee and HGAR members and staff were present.

HGAR Affiliate Member Anthony Mormile of Orange Bank & Trust Company was also among the awardees, as well as Maritza Fernandez of the NYC Department of Health & Mental Hygiene and Evan Mittman of Castle Cap Advisors.

"It's such an honor to be recognized by VISIONS, particularly to be among this distinguished group of honorees. We are proud to be able to support the incredible work they do, both by providing financial assistance with grants, as well as bringing volunteers to their Rockland facility (in Spring Valley) to help with various projects," said Fattizzi.

"VISIONS was delighted to honor the Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation, a true partner in VISIONS' mission to open doors and opportunities for people with impaired vision. The members of HGAR have taken VISIONS training on disability etiquette and the Foundation has generously supported VISIONS programs" stated Nancy D. Miller, VISIONS Executive Director/CEO.

VISIONS is a 97-year-old vision rehabilitation and social service organization dedicated to assisting people of all ages who are blind or visually impaired to lead independent and active lives in their communities. It also strives to educate the public to understand the capabilities and needs of people who are blind or visually impaired. VISIONS offers individualized rehabilitation training at home or in the community, social services, employment training and job development, as well as group and community education and activities.

Since 2014, the Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to charities and non-profits throughout Hudson Valley. As concerned members of the communities the membership works in, the Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation participates in qualified community-based charities who serve the housing, hunger, health, happiness, and humane needs of citizens everywhere.

**Building and Land Technology**, a leading privately held, vertically integrated real estate developer, manager, and private equity firm, recently announced the appointment of **Brian Carcaterra** as Executive Vice President.

Prior to joining BLT, Carcaterra spent more than two decades as a broker and senior leader at Newmark Group, Inc. and CBRE Group, Inc. specializing in agency and tenant representation on a local, national and global level. He also co-founded Homewood Real Estate Partners, which has aggregated investments in more than 25 different assets. Carcaterra's extensive client list includes several of the largest hedge funds in the world as well as many local, regional and national real estate and financial services firms.

Carcaterra will be responsible for assisting in the oversight of leasing for BLT's national office portfolio, investments and joint ventures. Carcaterra will be co-leading the leasing initiative with BLT's Leslie Whatley, Executive Vice President.

"Over more than three decades, we have developed, owned, operated, managed and invested in more than 25 million square feet of real estate and have had the opportunity to work with many brokers and business owners. Brian not only brings an extensive



**Brian Carcaterra**



From left, (back row) Jeffrey Lyons, Ian Pinckney, Lucas Irace, Neal Kolze and Cesar Landestoy; (front row) Nancy Curasi, Marie Savage, Carol Cruz, Diana Ryan-Assatly, Pam DiMartino, Annmarie O'Brien, Wendy Reinike and Larry Curasi.

**Curasi Realty, Inc.** recently held its first event to celebrate and formally introduce to by invitation-only guests its newly formed **commercial real estate division**. The event was held at The Country Club at Otterkill in Campbell Hall.

Guests included fellow real estate agents, employees of Walden Savings Bank, Home Inspections for a Cause, Orange and Rockland

Utilities, Dale Giraudin's Basement Systems of NY, Fassnacht Law, McAdam & Fallon P.C., Engineering and Surveying Properties, BML Management, Sobo & Sobo L.L.P., Mundi Financial, J&G Law, M.C.F. Lawn Maintenance & Home Improvement, Kings Hill Contracting, and board members from the New York State Commercial Association of Realtors Hudson Valley Chapter.

client list and substantial commercial real estate industry experience to assist in our national leasing efforts, but he also understands the benefits of BLT's offerings in creating innovative connections between residential and office spaces that underscore our commitment to building communities that endure and fuel growth," said Carl Kuehner, III, Chairman of BLT.

Over the course of his brokerage career, Carcaterra has been recognized by NAIOP, BOMA and other industry groups for spearheading multiple "Deal of the Year" and "Brokerage Team of the Year" award-winning initiatives both locally and nationally. Prior to his real estate career, he was a professional player in Major League Lacrosse where he was an All Star and World Champion. He is a part owner of the Albany Firewolves of the National Lacrosse League and has served on multiple charitable boards.

**Erin Slattery** has rejoined **Curasi Realty** of Montgomery as a licensed real estate salesperson.

Slattery graduated from Fredonia University, receiving a BA in Psychology with a minor in Criminal Justice. She has experience working as a Community Care Manager, which allows her to work with the homeless population and those who struggle with mental health and addiction issues.

She began her real estate career with Curasi Realty in 2019. After a short period with another brokerage, she has returned to Curasi Realty. Born and raised in Newburgh, Slattery has called the Hudson Valley her home for 31 years.

In the most recent expansion of its sales team, ERA Insite Realty announced the addition of four experienced agents to its' offices in Pleasantville and White Plains. Lou Budetti, Broker/Owner and Founder, welcomed **Walter Heitner**, **Joseph Scappaticci**, **Jean-Charles DeOliveira Scappaticci** and **Vincent Cignarella**.

Heitner has been a Realtor in Westchester for more than 20 years, most recently affiliated with Howard Hanna Rand Realty in Yorktown. A current Somers resident, Skidmore graduate, and Brooklyn native, he forged a successful real estate career after selling his family-owned printing business in

New York City. His expertise is vested in his expansive knowledge of Westchester's many towns, amenities and appeal, along with an understanding of the art and architecture of the area's homes.

Joseph and Jean-Charles Scappaticci work together as "Team Scap" at ERA Insite Realty.

Originally licensed in 2004, they were previously affiliated with Century 21 Haviland in Briarcliff. Joseph is a life-long Westchester resident, a graduate of Fox Lane High School in Bedford and Pace University. He has been an elementary school teacher in Westchester for 25 years. Jean-Charles grew up in Brazil, moving to the U.S. after finishing college in Rio de Janeiro. He is fluent in English, Portuguese and Spanish. Apart from real estate, he specializes in graphic design, website development, marketing and advertising. Together they have three adopted daughters and have become passionate about advocating for adoption rights as well as about serving their real estate clients.

Together they have three adopted daughters and have become passionate about advocating for adoption rights as well as about serving their real estate clients.

Cignarella is going on three years as a Realtor. He honed his negotiating skills on Wall Street, prior to embarking on a real estate career. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration in Finance from Iona College and a Master's of Business in Financial Accounting from

Cignarella is going on three years as a Realtor. He honed his negotiating skills on Wall Street, prior to embarking on a real estate career. He earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration in Finance from Iona College and a Master's of Business in Financial Accounting from

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The ribbon cutting of Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Green Team's new office at 40 Matthews St. in Goshen.

**Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Green Team** recently announced the opening of its new office in the heart of Goshen at 40 Matthews St.

Company officials stated that the new Goshen office allows it to better serve those in the surrounding area, from first-time homebuyers to seasoned real estate investors.

The brokerage also reported that **Kristine "Krissey" Many** was promoted to Broker Manager of the Goshen office.

BHGRE Green Teams President Vikki Garby said, "We are so excited about our beautiful and

conveniently located office in Goshen, NY. Our new location benefits from ample parking, close proximity to 17, and an ideal central location within Orange County. The goal was to find a location that would be convenient for agents who serve clients throughout the county. Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Green Team is growing and our new location is an important step towards our expansion. We look forward to making 40 Matthews St. home to many more agents as our company continues to grow. We invite you to stop by and visit us soon."





# HGAR UPDATE



Members of the HG Realtor Foundation, Dancing for the Foundation Planning Committee present flowers to Bonnie Koff, Past Chair of the HG Realtor Foundation Fundraising Committee. From left, Kimra Pierrel Danielle Reese; Koff and Valerie Port.

PHOTO BY JOHN VECCHIOLLA

## Howard Hanna Rand Dancers Win Competition

### HG Realtor Foundation Raises \$20,000 in First Annual 'Dancing for The Foundation' Event

By Mary T. Prenon

NEW ROCHELLE—The Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation, the charitable arm of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, recently raised more than \$20,000 in its first annual local adaptation of "Dancing with the Stars."

Held at Glen Island Harbour Club in New Rochelle, the "Dancing for the

Foundation" event brought in more than 200 people to watch six HGAR Realtor and Affiliate member dancing couples.

JP Endres and Joe Maymi of Howard Hanna Rand Realty in New City and White Plains were named the winners of the competition. Layla Boyles of Century 21 Realty Center in Monroe and Alex Delgado of Christie's International Real Estate in Nyack took second place. Coming in third place were Jessica Broomhead of Compass Greater NY LLC in Chappaqua and Anthony Ruperto of Ally Realty in Beacon.

The event also featured three judges, including Christian Perry of Sotheby's In-

**Please turn to page 22**

## SPOTLIGHT ON

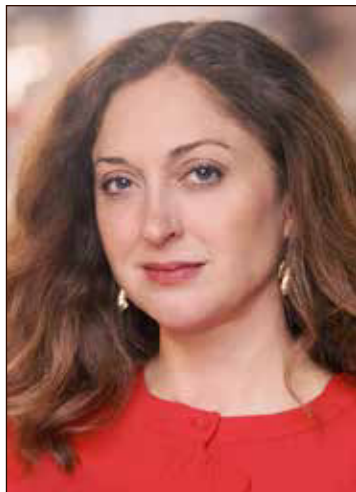
### Christina Prostano A Modern-Day International Gypsy

By Mary T. Prenon

Christina Prostano, an Associate Broker with Compass in Manhattan, has been in the real estate business for almost 20 years, but traveled quite an eclectic career path to get there.

A sort of modern-day international gypsy, Prostano has enjoyed stints as a wedding band singer, an indie rock band performer, a promoter for Planet Hollywood restaurants, and a tourist book producer who has lived in London, Paris and Hong Kong. She has also traveled to almost all 50 U.S. states and visited exotic locations like Dubai, Thailand and Singapore. Prostano even spent a month in Mexico volunteering at an orphanage during her college days.

Today, she's putting all of her international travel background to good use, serving as the Co-Chair of HGAR's Global Business Council and reaping



the benefits of her membership with FIABCI, a worldwide business networking organization for all professionals associated with the real estate industry.

While she has been with Compass just a little over a year, Prostano spent 17 years with Corcoran, where she began her real estate career. She was involved in relocation consulting for many years, working with both domestic and international executives relocating to New York.

While she grew up in the Connecticut suburbs, Prostano has always considered herself a "city girl," and has called Brooklyn her home since 1999. "It's a very special market and clients will always know if you're from Brooklyn," she explained. "You have to know the character of the neighborhoods and which budgets will fit into which communities."

A student at Fordham University  
**Please turn to page 22**

## 2023 HGAR RPAC HONOR ROLL

as recorded by NYSAR May 31, 2023

Thank you to the following Members who lead the way in the 2023 RPAC campaign

### Platinum R \$10,000

Dorothy Botsoe, Dorothy Jensen Realty Inc., White Plains  
Anthony Domathoti, Exit Realty Premium, Bronx  
Richard Haggerty, OneKey MLS, Farmingdale  
Nancy Kennedy, Houlihan Lawrence Inc., Croton-on-Hudson  
Michael Schmelzer, Tryax Realty Management Inc., Bronx

### Golden R \$5,000 – \$9,999

Tony, D'Anzica, DynaMax Realty NYC, Inc., NYC  
Susan Goldy, Susan E. Goldy Inc., Bronx  
Irene Guanill, Century 21 Dawns Gold Realty, Bronx  
Brian Phillips, Douglas Elliman Real Estate, Bronx

### Crystal R \$2,500-\$4,999

T. Teresa Belmore, Keller Williams NY Realty, White Plains  
Layla Boyles, CENTURY 21 Realty Center, Monroe  
Ronald Garafalo, John J Lease Realtors, Middletown

### Sterling R \$1,000-\$2,499

Mark Aakjar, Marks Inspections, Ossining  
Carmen Bauman, Green Grass Real Estate Corp., Bronxville  
Emran Bhuiyan, Exit Realty Premium, Bronx  
Debra Budetti, ERA Insite Realty Services, White Plains  
Leah Caro, Park Sterling Realty, Bronxville  
Carol Christiansen, McGrath Realty Inc., Mount Kisco  
Gary Connolly, Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, White Plains  
Katheryn DeClerck, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Goshen  
J.P. Endres, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, New City  
Michael Gibbons, Azimuth Global Realty Inc., Tarrytown  
Susan Greenfield, Brown Harris Stevens, NYC  
Crystal Hawkins Syska, Keller Williams NY Realty, White Plains  
Joseph Houlihan, Houlihan & O'Malley, Bronxville  
Barry Kramer, BHG Real Estate Choice Realty, Scarsdale  
Brett Lando, Gahagan Lando & Wagner LLP, White Plains  
Cynthia Lippolis, BHHS River Towns Real Estate, Croton-on-Hudson  
Joseph Lippolis, BHHS River Town Real Estate, Croton-on-Hudson  
Clayton Livingston, McGrath Realty Inc., Pawling  
Carole McCann, Hudson Heritage Realty, Washingtonville  
Tana McGuire, eXp Realty, White Plains  
Darin (Nan) Palumbo, Green Grass Real Estate, Bronxville  
Eli Rodriguez, Esq., Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors Inc., Bronx  
Matthew Schmelzer, Tryax Realty Management Inc., Bronx  
Vlora Sejdji, Keller Williams NY Realty, White Plains  
John Sheehan, Skyline I LLC, Bronx  
Christina Stevens, Laujel Realty Corp., Bronx

### President's Club \$500-\$999

James Coleman, Houlihan-Parnes Properties, White Plains  
Jana Currier, Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc., White Plains  
Angela Demaris, PrimeLending, Newburgh  
Kevin Dwyer, Dwyer Agency, Mahopac  
Ismail Kolya, eXp Realty, White Plains  
Roseann Paggiotta, eXp Realty, White Plains  
Maryann Tercasio, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Central Valley  
Renee Zurlo, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Central Valley

### Capitol Club \$250-\$499

Roberta Bangs, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, New City  
Joseph Cosentino, Morris Park Realty Group, Bronx  
Mackenzie Forsberg, Genesis Realty Group LLC, Bronx  
Rey Hollingsworth Falu, Hollingsworth Real Estate Group, White Plains  
Debbie Goldstein, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Central Valley  
Bill Liebertz, Valley National Bank, Middletown  
Joseph A. Marra, Law Offices of Joseph A. Marra, Yonkers  
Harding Mason, Houlihan Lawrence, Inc., Katonah  
Diane Mitchell, Wright Bros Real Estate Inc.; Nyack  
Anthony Mormile, Orange Bank & Trust, Bronx  
Valerie Port, McGrath Realty Inc., Pawling  
Matthew Reid, CrossCountry Mortgage, Pearl River  
Alexander Roithmayr, Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc., White Plains  
Ron Sierra, Pillar to Post Home Inspectors, Rye Brook  
Cathleen Stack, Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc., White Plains  
Veronica Suarez, RE/MAX Distinguished Homes & Property, Tuckahoe  
Kathy Zamechansky, KZA Realty Group, Bronx

### \$99 Club \$99-\$249

Arif Ahmed, Claudia Barnes, Stephanie Baran, Diane Blanton, Laura Blumenthal, Timothy Bohlke, Zaria Braxton, Randall Calano, Susan Camus, Louise Colonna, Michael Criscuolo, Lawrence Curasi, James Damiani, Gina De Cerbo, Dianne DeFalco, Laurie DiFrancesco, Joseph Distelburger, Debra Durkin, BrandiAlexis Dyer, Marie Graham, Alisha Haitoff, Robin Ham, D. Gloria Hernandez, Sarah Hughes, Annmarie Kovacs, Mary Krische, Rosalie Kunert Sauter, Ruth Lara Deane, Marianne LePore, Abraham Lowy, Laurel Lustgarten, Jennifer Maher, Michael Martell, Caterina Massareglio, Rebecca Matta-Candela, John Mc Carey, Karen McCabe, Richard McLymont, Erica Menendez, Don Minichino, Janine Mosher, Kristina Mullings, Eve Neuman, Altagracia Patalano, Shivanie Patino, Julia Piazza, Britzeida Pichardo, Cathleen Ripley, Jennifer Rousset, Brittany Sandarciero, Steven Scarnati, Barbara Shaver, Anthony Sibio, Beth Siciliano, Eric Stein, Kathleen Strong, Karen Taphorn, Carl Van Denmark

**TOTAL: \$223,869 78% towards goal**  
**With 2,955 contributors 66% towards participation goal**  
**Goal: \$288,025 from 4,469 contributors**



**Please Welcome the Following  
New Members to Your Area:**

## Realtor

\*\* Andrea Collins  
Four Seasons Sothebys International  
270 Broadway  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
845-331-3100

Pamela P. Peralta  
2 Teramar Way  
White Plains, NY 10607  
347-873-1946

Nathan M. Pope  
Pope Manhatta Real Estate, LLC  
240 Mercer St.  
New York, NY 10012  
212-260-3531

\*\* Jesselynn Rivera  
Infinity Luxxe Estates, LLC  
352 Covert Ave.  
Floral Park, NY 11001  
347-845-8588

\*\* Pamela S. Roman  
Station Cities  
135 Madison Ave, 4th Floor  
New York, NY 10016  
212-768-7272

## Affiliate

Janet Chavez  
Title Insurance Agency LLC  
1204 Main St., #883  
Branford, CT 06405  
607-216-8066

Grace Greco  
D&D Elevator Maintenance  
38 Hayes Street  
Elmsford, NY 10523  
914-914-3474

Lisa Hauer  
Tri-State Environmental Servs  
3 Browns Lane  
Hawthorne, NY 10532  
914-592-3385

\*\* Nanci Miller  
Tri-State Environmental Servs  
3 Browns Lane  
Hawthorne, NY 10532  
914-592-3385

Chris Rizzi  
Fidelis Home Inspections NY  
36 Wendy Drive  
Poughquag, NY 12570  
845-216-2137

Ron Tesler  
Approved Oil  
6717 4th Ave  
Brooklyn, NY 11220  
718-238-1050

## Realtor

Victoria Anderson  
Imagine Properties NY, Orangeburg

Rochelle Andretta  
HomeSmart Homes & Estates, Montgomery

Jeffrey Bailey  
Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Bronx

\*\* Adolf J. Banu  
Keller Williams Village Square Realty,  
Ridgewood, NJ

Jill Barbara  
Serhant LLC, New York

Christopher Barker  
The Agency Brokerage, New York

Macie M. Barnes  
Prevu Real Estate LLC, New York

Sarah Barschow  
Our House Real Estate Group, Warwick

Vincent M. Bellantoni  
DeLux Realty Group LLC, Hartsdale

Emigdio O. Bernard  
Max Properties Realty, LLC, Bronx

Luis A. Berrezueta  
Serhant LLC, New York

Benyomin Blackman  
Exit Realty Venture, Monroe

Andrew Blee  
Serhant LLC, New York

Christopher Bonanno  
Keller Williams Hudson Valley, New City

Natalie Bradley  
Keller Williams Realty, Chester

Kalin Brown  
Keller Williams Realty Group, Scarsdale

Kareem J. Brown  
Community Realty Alliance Corp., Bronx

\*\* Oliver L. Brown  
Houlihan Lawrence, Inc., Millbrook

Jeffrey A. Canas  
Serhant LLC, New York

Douglas L. Carr  
Scope Realty Bx, Bronx

Paige E. Castiello  
Keller Williams Realty Group, Scarsdale

Llyra Chambers  
Serhant LLC, New York

Jordan Chanin-Albanese  
Serhant LLC, New York

\*\* Evelyn Ciszak  
Coldwell Banker Realty, New City

Robert C. Clarke  
Keller Williams Hudson Valley, Middletown

Dominik Comerico  
Exp Realty, White Plains

# BOARDROOM REPORT

Boards of Directors  
Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc.  
May 17, 2023  
at the HGAR Offices, White Plains, New York

## HGAR Management, Financial And Membership Reports

President Tony D'Anzica presented the President's report. He reported that NAR has approved the additional requirement for all NAR Board of Director members to successfully complete the At Home with Diversity certification, the Fairhaven Simulation and Bias Override: Overcoming Barriers to Fair Housing training starting in 2024. He added that NAR is looking to adjust dues based upon inflation. President D'Anzica then reported that a NAR grant was approved for a local regional organization, the Hudson Valley Property Owners Association, to challenge legislation by the City of Kingston relating to rent regulation. He further reported that he is looking to establish a Sustainability Committee and is seeking a sustainability grant from NAR. President D'Anzica then reported that the OneKey MLS Service Agreement was signed and will remain effective for 21 months, expiring in 2024. Attorney for the Corporation, John Dolgetta, Esq., provided an overview and timing of the agreement. He concluded his report by noting that the former CEO's leased automobile was returned and a refund of the unearned portion of the insurance premium was provided to HGAR by the insurance company.

Interim CEO Jana Currier presented the CEO's Report and turned the floor over to OneKey MLS CEO, Richard Haggerty, to provide an update on new MLS developments. Haggerty reported on new team developments, the addition of RISMedia Premiere and equalizing services for both MLS platforms (Matrix and Stratus). He further addressed the ongoing relationships with Corelogic, ShowingTime, and SentiLock. Haggerty then provided an update on various new MLS products that would be launched soon. HGAR Director of Professional Development Michael Malone indicated that instructors will be working to educate and provide training for these new products. HGAR Chief Strategy Officer Gary Connolly then provided a brief update on the SentiLock lock boxes and issues related to the same. Interim CEO Currier concluded with acknowledging Brian Levine, HGAR General Counsel, for successfully attaining the Realtor Association Certified Executive (RCE) designation.

General Counsel Levine reported on the new HGAR membership applications as of April 2023, and after review, the Directors approved the applicants.

Treasurer Joseph Lippolis presented the Treasurer's Reports as of May 1, 2023, a copy of which was provided to the Directors. Discussion was held regarding revisions to HGAR's Investment Policy. Thereafter, the Directors approved a motion receiving the Treasurer's Reports and filing for audit.

General Counsel Levine presented the latest Ethics Decision to the Board of Directors, presenting Ethics Decision designated as 307-E, which was provided to each of the Directors prior to the Meeting. After review, the Directors approved the decision.

Ron Garafalo, RPAC Co-Chair, provided the recent RPAC report. It was reported that HGAR was at 77% of its 2023 participation goal thus far and also updated the Board on upcoming events. Immediate Past President and RPAC Co-Chair Anthony Domathoti added that HGAR is close to attaining the local President's Cup. He discussed how members can assist HGAR in reaching this goal.

President D'Anzica provided an update on two PAGs. The Bronx PAG is awaiting the completion of the feasibility study. The *Real Estate In-Depth* (REID) PAG plans to meet May 18, 2023, to review the statistically significant response to the recent survey with

Richard Contrata  
Douglas Elliman Real Estate, Katonah

Peter M. Corcoran  
Christies International Real Estate, White Plains

Aireen Craig  
Skyler Realty LLC, Sloatsburg

Michael D'Agostaro  
Serhant LLC, New York

Matthew Daddona  
RE/MAX Town & Country, Fishkill

Tracy Weir. Thereafter, they would review the financials related to the newspaper.

Chief Marketing Officer Cathleen Stack provided a Global Business Counsel update, which included a meeting with the Canadian Real Estate Association, and upcoming webinars. She noted that HGAR is a Principal Member of FIABCI-USA. She mentioned HGAR participated in a program with the Austin Board of Realtors regarding Ireland. Stack added that they have met with representatives from Portugal and recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the international Association, COFECI, Brazil. In addition, she reported that President D'Anzica and Immediate Past-President Domathoti will be traveling at the end of June to participate in a Western European conference. She concluded by noting that the Global Real Estate Summit is scheduled for Oct. 19, 2023, and HGAR will participate with 11 other Associations.

Chief Marketing Officer Stack next reported on the work being performed on the new HGAR website by August Partners/Membio. She noted that the work is progressing, and they are hopeful that the website will go live in July or August.

President D'Anzica reported on the Commercial Investment Division, noting its next event will be May 25, 2023. He stated that CID is instituting a "needs and wants" aspect to all meetings where members can pitch or seek specific properties. He concluded that the CID is working with the MLS regarding commercial listings.

Co-Chair of the Broker-Owner-Manager (BOM) Committee Rey Hollingsworth Falu reported on its next event, scheduled for June 13, 2023, which will address Artificial Intelligence in real estate. This event is being held in coordination with YPN. It will take place at the HGAR offices in White Plains, and will include breakfast. The BOM's next event, scheduled for Nov. 2, 2023, will address NAR's Clear Cooperation Policy.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Officer Freddimir Garcia reported on the DEI Summit, slated for June 5 and June 6, 2023. He noted that nearly 100 people had already registered, and sponsorships were still available. He added that there were three keynote speakers scheduled along with various breakout sessions. He concluded that the event would include a CE class on implicit bias. Regional Directors reported on upcoming County Days for their respective counties. Lee Presser (NY/Manhattan), Roseann Paggiotta (Westchester), Diane Mitchell, HGAR Director, on behalf of Roberta Bangs (Rockland), and Eli Rodriguez, Regional Government Affairs Director (Bronx) provided updates regarding their respective County Day events, noting that all events will have a commercial, legislative, YPN and HGAR component.

YPN Chair Darin "Nan" Palumbo provided a report on YPN's recent activities, noting the creation of "Pizza with the President" events, which will go county to county. She further discussed the joint event with the BOM Committee, as well as a Sept. 12, 2023, event relating to Realtor safety. She indicated that YPN will conduct 16 events by November 2023, and they will be working on a recognition award for Member's Day.

President D'Anzica concluded the meeting by noting that the Leadership Accelerator Program will be having an informational session on Friday, May 19, 2023, and more information will be shared with Officers and Directors in coming weeks.

There being no further business before the Board of Directors, the meeting was adjourned.

Fabiana De Sena  
Serhant LLC, New York  
Ruben DeLaConcha  
McGrath Realty Inc., Mount Kisco

Moustapha Diagne  
Century 21 Future Homes Realty, Bronx

\*\* Michael DiSimone  
Coldwell Banker Realty, New City

Kisha Douglas

Daniel K. Downing  
X-Cap Realty LLC, Sleepy Hollow

Varghese Easow  
Sheila Berg Realty, West Nyack

\*\* Francine D. Ehrlich  
Sotheby's International Realty, New York

Eduarta Ejlli  
Exit Realty Group, Bronx

Daniel Fanelli  
Keller Williams NY Realty, White Plains

Sage Feighan  
RE/MAX Town & Country, Fishkill

\*\* Sarah Finch  
Halter Associates Realty Inc., Kingston

Tony E. Freeman  
RE/MAX Town & Country, Fishkill

\*\* Marion L. Fuscaldo  
Christies International Real Estate, White Plains

Marie S. Gabriel  
Howard Hanna Rand Realty, New City

\*\* Ninive Galan  
Keller Williams NYC, New York

Nichita Galinschi  
William Raveis - New York LLC, Katonah

Jessica A. Gil  
Exp Realty, White Plains

Sara E. Gladstone  
Prevu Real Estate LLC, New York

Josh Goldfeder  
Serhant LLC, New York

Vinicio Gonzalez  
Serhant LLC, New York

Robert Grishaj  
Real Broker NY LLC, New York

Carolyn Gruber  
Robert C. Leffler Inc., Scarsdale

Jake Guadagno  
Serhant LLC, New York

Yunli Guan  
Han Tang Realty Inc., Bronx

Quendry Guerrero  
Keller Williams Realty Group, Scarsdale

Silvio Guerrero  
All Boroughs Management Corp., Bronx

Daniel Harrison  
Curasi Realty, Inc., Montgomery

Cindy Hayes  
Compass Greater NY, LLC, Chappaqua

Melissa D. Hayes  
Century 21 Alliance Realty Group,  
Wappingers Falls

Ian Heyman  
Christies International Real Estate, White Plains

Jacquelyn E. Hoffman  
Prevu Real Estate LLC, New York

Misty W. Huang  
Brenda Sun & Associates, Dobbs Ferry

Edgar Iglesias  
Serhant LLC, New York

Jonathan Interiano  
Serhant LLC, New York

Dalila Johnson  
Keller Williams Realty Group, Scarsdale

Fern Kamins  
Elegran LLC

Ernest Kawecki  
Nest Seekers LLC, New York

Alexis M. Kearney  
Serhant LLC, New York

Eleanor Keiser  
Ginnel Real Estate, Bedford Hills

Assief Khan  
Keller Williams Hudson Valley, Kingston

Shia M. Klein  
Exit Realty Venture, Monroe

Alex Kogan  
Weichert Realtors, Nanuet

Klotilda Kopshtaj  
Exit Realty Group, Bronx

Jiejie Kwon  
Exp Realty, New York

Roy Lebel  
Serhant LLC, New York

Unsoo Lee  
R New York, New York

Joseph Lema  
Firehouse Realty, Lagrangeville

Mengyao Li  
Keller Williams NYC, New York

Nicole M. Lockhart  
Prevu Real Estate LLC, New York

Christine Lopes  
Exp Realty, White Plains

Joel E. Lowy  
Exit Realty Venture, Monroe

Jorge Lozada  
Christies International Real Estate, New City

Amy Lucas  
THD Homes LLC, White Plains

Vanessa Maldonado  
Bushman Hill Real Estate, Scarsdale

Zachary Martin  
Keller Williams Hudson Valley, Middletown

Carmen Massie-Noest  
Arc Real Estate Advisors, LLC, Millstone TWP, NJ

Melissa E. McGrath  
Serhant LLC, New York

Ben O. Meneses  
Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Suffern

Jean M. Michel  
Exp Realty, White Plains



# JULY 2023 Course Schedule via ZOOM

\*Course qualifies for the Virtual Card

- July 6-** Roadmap to Protesting Tax Assessments\* with Carole McCann
- July 10-** Fair Housing for Today\* with Carole McCann (CORE)
- July 11-** Matrix 1: Introduction to Matrix\* with Ismail Kolya
- July 13-** Rentals as a Business\* with Peter Mallon
- July 18-** Matrix 2: The Next Step into Matrix\* with Ismail Kolya
- July 19-** Do's and Don'ts of Real Estate and Agency\* with Elizabeth Boucher (CORE)
- July 20-** Implicit Bias: How the Mind Makes Decisions Without You\* with E'Patrice Hayes (CORE)  
Cultural Competence: A Real Estate Perspective\* with E'Patrice Hayes (CORE)
- July 25-** Matrix 3: Matrix to the Max\* with Ismail Kolya
- July 26-** Legal Update\* with William O'Keeffe

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September 18<sup>th</sup> – November 6<sup>th</sup>

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\* Online classes via CE SHOP, designation courses, and certification courses WILL NOT be included in the purchase of the Education Card.



## CALENDAR

### JUNE 2023

**June 26**

**HGAR's 88th Annual Golf & Tennis Outing**  
The Village Club of Sands Pt., Sands Point, 8:00AM – 7:00PM

**June 27**

**Breakfast with Benefits: Credit – How Important Is It?**  
Via Zoom, 9:30AM – 10:30PM

### JULY 2023

**July 4**

**HGAR Offices Closed – Independence Day**

**July 17**

**Rockland County Day**  
Nyack Seaport, 1:00PM – 5:30PM

**July 19**

**Orange County: MLS & Legal Update**  
HGAR Orange, 9:00AM – 11:00AM

**July 26**

**A Subway Ride to the Ball Game**  
Yankee Stadium, Bronx, 5:00PM-10:00PM

**July 27**

**HGRF Volunteer Event at Friends of Karen**  
North Salem, 10:00AM – 1:00PM



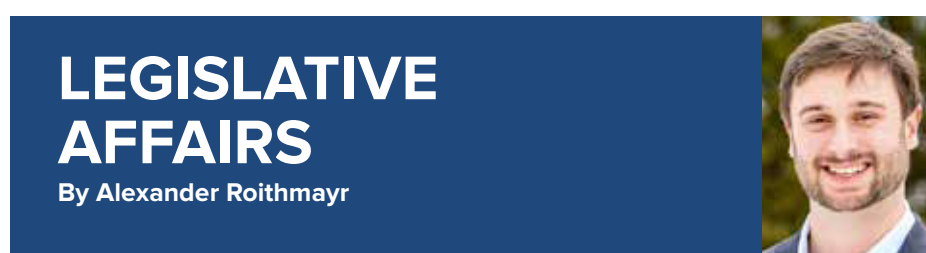
# The End of the Albany Session—Out Like a Lamb

By Alexander Roithmayr

With much debate during the State Budget Fight, the State Legislature seemed ready to jog out the rest of the Legislative Session with infighting, no movement on the housing crisis and a lot still left to be done. What started as a lion of a legislative session, centered around a newly-elected governor and a plan to tackle the housing crisis, was ending as a lamb ready to go out to pasture.

The State Legislative Calendar can be a little hard to understand, so here is a summary:

Originally designed so agricultural workers could spend the second half of the year working the land and the first half of the year actively participating in state government, the New York State Legislative Session was scheduled for about six months, from January to June. In more recent times, despite having six months to legislate, State Representatives are most active in the weeks and hours before the budget is due in March and the end of session in June. Much like a senior before finals or a squirrel before winter,



the halls of power in Albany are busy with much scurrying and cramming in the last week of March and final two state representatives worn out and ready to leave Albany and tend to their districts as they would have tended to

**The governor's housing push and the protracted budget process left little room for Realtor topics to be discussed. It can be hard to focus on lifting the ban on solicitous phone calls when emergency budget extenders need to be passed.**

weeks of session in June.

That being all said, this legislative session flow has been anything but typical. The budget fight has left our

their farms in yesteryear. The year's session resulted in a distinct lack of efficiency in the halls of the Capitol Building.

In 2023, both the New York State Assembly and Senate saw a significant drop in the number of bills passed by the legislature compared to 2022. Of the more than 15,000 bills introduced, a total of 839 bills passed both houses so far. For reference, 2022 saw 1,007 measures pass both chambers. In 2023, the State Senate also saw nearly double the amount of bills passed in their chambers compared to the Assembly. To better catch up, the Assembly will reconvene in the coming weeks to vote on bills that the Senate had already passed. The Assembly Chambers, despite having a Democratic Super Majority, are reportedly at a standstill over several issues.

Some of the bills that were passed take on topics such as the sealing of old criminal records, a commission to study reparations, expanding health care services for undocumented immigrants, and allowing liquor stores to sell on Sundays. Noticeably absent is any movement on the issue of the housing crisis. Gov. Kathy Hochul's Housing Compact, which would have required municipalities to add more housing stock, has been dead for weeks. The legislature, which killed the Housing Compact, has not offered any alternative housing plan or solutions.

There was a concerted effort by members of the legislature to pass "Good Cause Eviction" both during budget negotiations and at the end of session. HGAR, NYSAR and a number of like-minded organizations fought hard to defeat these efforts to pass Good Cause Eviction. As of press time, there seems to be a general understanding that Good Cause Eviction is not a viable solution to the housing crisis.

All in all, the 2023 Legislative Session was a distracted one. The governor's housing push and the protracted budget process left little room for Realtor topics to be discussed. It can be hard to focus on lifting the ban on solicitous phone calls when emergency budget extenders need to be passed. This Lion and Lamb Session can also be described as the stereotype of Albany—a legislative session full of infighting, late budgets and a refusal to tackle the bigger issues.

Just in case you were wondering, State Representatives are up for re-election next year.

*Alexander Roithmayr is Director of Government Affairs for the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors.*

## Storm King Art Center Improvement Project Secures \$11 Million in NY State Funding

Continued from page 10

Orange County Director of Tourism and Film Amanda Dana. "The State of New York has demonstrated its support for the arts industry and in this case, has granted over \$7.5 million towards this capital expansion. The arts industry is a substantial economic driver in Orange County and we are excited to be a part of this investment for the arts and culture sector," Dana said. "We are delighted to welcome guests from around

the world to Orange County and Storm King Art Center is a tremendous driver of these visitors. Enhancing the visitor experience will only add to the affinity people share when they spend quality time in our picturesque county."

Other notable grant awardees included the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival in Putnam County and the National Black Theater Workshop in New York City, which each received \$10 million in state funding.

## New Members Continued from page 14

Karen C. Miller  
Corcoran Legends Realty, Bedford

Genessis Miranda  
Serhant LLC, New York

Christopher J. Mirra  
Keller Williams Realty, Chester

Michael Mulvihill  
Coldwell Banker Realty, Yorktown Heights

Moses Neuman  
United Hudson Realty LLC, Monroe

Vincent Nevling  
Exp Realty, Newburgh

Fiona Ni Bhriain  
Henry Djonbalaj Real Estate, Yonkers

James D. O'Brien  
Keller Williams Hudson Valley, New City

Michael N. O'Byrne  
Compass Greater NY, LLC, Rye

Regina M. O'Day  
Prevu Real Estate LLC, New York

Mohammed Ohib Anwar Elsouk  
BHG Real Estate Shore & Country Prop., Stamford, CT

Hernan Oviedo  
K. Fortuna Realty, Inc., Hopewell Junction

Christopher B. Parker  
Howard Hanna Rand Realty, New Rochelle

Glenda Perez  
HomeSmart Homes & Estates, Montgomery

Samantha Pfeiffer  
Keller Williams Realty, Chester

Dylan Piazza  
Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Central Valley

Mary J. Purgatorio  
Homes By Yara Realty Group LLC, Cuddebackville

Mohammed B. Rahman  
Keller Williams Realty NYC Group, Bronx

Jherry Ramirez  
Damico Group Real Estate, Yonkers

Ludovino Ramirez  
Exp Realty, White Plains

Jesus Reyes  
RE/MAX Town & Country, Fishkill

Jacob Rodriguez  
Keller Williams Hudson Valley, Middletown

Marlon Rodriguez  
Serhant LLC, New York

Vilma Rojas  
Century 21 Dawns Gold Realty, Yonkers

Genevieve Roller  
Exp Realty, White Plains

Daniel Romanello  
Joseph Baratta Company Realty, Tarrytown

Latrice Romeo  
Century 21 Future Homes Realty, Bronx

David Rothbart  
Exit Realty Venture, Monroe

Travis Shea  
Serhant LLC

\*\* Melissa Shiel  
Keller Williams Village Square Realty, Ridgewood, NJ

Frederick Signore  
Houlihan Lawrence, Inc., Yonkers

Nicholas Sioufas  
Ethos Properties LLC, Eastchester

Chanelle Small  
Exp Realty, New York

\*\* Helaine Szabo  
The Marketing Directors, Inc., New York

Jeffrey Thompson  
Scope Realty Bx, Bronx

Yuval Tresser  
R New York, New York

Zineb C. Truta  
Stetson Real Estate, Mamaroneck

\*\* Courtney Tyner  
H E S C Company LLC, New York

Michael J. Vallone  
Serhant LLC, New York

Jiangfan S. Vasil  
Xcel Realty Service LLC, Scarsdale

Eveling L. Vega  
Coldwell Banker Realty, Greenwich, CT

Jonathan W. Wade  
Elegan LLC, New York

Dion Walker-Duncan  
Coldwell Banker Realty, White Plains

Kevin Wegienek  
Compass Greater NY, LLC, Larchmont

Edmond Williams  
Houlihan Lawrence, Inc., Rye

*\*Indicates current member who opened an office as a broker.*

*\*\*Secondary Member*





**Continued from page 12**

Fordham University. His Wall St. experience includes Foreign Exchange (FX) trader, partner in a currency brokerage and stints as an FX strategist for Dow Jones and a columnist for the *Wall Street Journal*. He grew up in the Bronx and now resides with his family in lower Westchester.

"These four unique agents bring such a wide breadth of knowledge, experience, skills and talents to our brokerage," stated Budetti. "They cover an expansive geography with deep understanding of their clients' needs and objectives which in turn gives us the ability to provide even more buyers and sellers with exceptional service. Attracting agents of this caliber is a tribute to our staff, tools, and the reputation we have in the marketplace over the past 38 years."

ERA Insite Realty Services, has been serving the Westchester and Fairfield markets for 38 years out of the same headquarters location at 600 North Broadway in White Plains. The firm also has offices in Bronxville, Pleasantville and Yonkers, as well as Bethel, CT.

**The Business Council of Westchester** has announced the election of three new members to its Board of Directors.

The new Board Members are **Daniel Blum**, incoming CEO of ENT & Allergy; **Sarah Jones-Maturo**, President of RM Friedland LLC; and **Wallace Lynch**, Senior Vice President, Business Banking Sales Team Leader Hudson Valley/metro New York market of KeyBank.

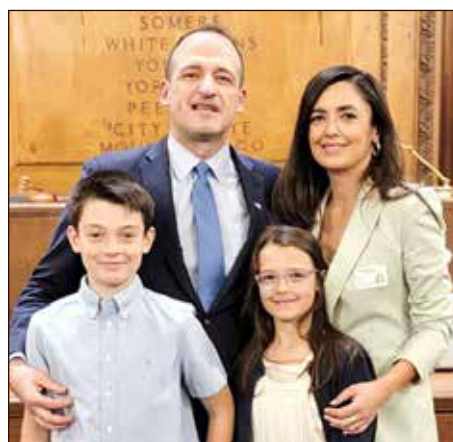
"The three new board members represent real estate, banking and healthcare—three sectors that are essential to Westchester County's economy," said BCW President and CEO Marsha Gordon. "I look forward to working with all three of these exceptional leaders and I'm excited to receive their ideas for advancing our county's prosperity and well-being."

Blum has more than 25 years of healthcare experience across urban and suburban hospitals and healthcare systems. Most recently, Blum worked for LifeBridge Health, serving as President of Sinai Hospital of Baltimore, Maryland's largest community hospital and one of the key teaching hospitals in the state. Prior to LifeBridge, he was President and CEO of Phelps Memorial Hospital Center, a 240-bed regional hospital in Sleepy Hollow.

Jones-Maturo has led RM Friedland—the largest privately held commercial real estate brokerage company in Westchester County—since 2015. She has overseen a complete rebranding of the company, started an investment sales division with a prior sales track record of \$2.4 billion, and spearheaded business development efforts. Before RM Friedland, she spent 11 years at CBRE, where she was an office broker with a particular focus on Northern and Central New Jersey.

Lynch leads an experienced team of highly trained local business bankers serve customized financial solutions to companies, including include commercial lines of credit, SBA financ-

ing, equipment financing, acquisition of commercial real estate and cash management. Lynch has more than 20 years in financial services, and prior to joining KeyBank in 2018 he held various roles with Sterling National Bank, TriState Capital Bank and Signature Bank. He is a board member of Cents Ability, a non-profit that provides high-school financial literacy education.



**From left, BOL Chair Vedat Gashi, his wife Vjosa, and their children, Leka and Hana.**

On May 15, the **Westchester County Board of Legislators** elected **Vedat Gashi** as the new Chairperson of the Westchester County Legislature. Gashi, who represents District 4, was elected to the position by his fellow legislators in a vote of 17-0.

Gashi brings a wealth of experience to the position. Born in Kosovo, at the age of four he and his family fled the oppressive, socialist regime to the United States. Since then, he has been a resident of Westchester County. He earned a B.A. from Connecticut College, where he was invited to serve on the Board of Trustees as a Young Alumni Trustee. Next, he earned his J.D. from Seton Hall University. During his studies, Gashi interned for Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, then at the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, and Congressman Lee Hamilton on the House International Relations Committee.

Gashi takes over as Chair following the resignation of Catherine Borgia, who had served as Chairperson from January 2022 until late April 2023, and the interim leadership of Vice Chair Nancy Barr immediately thereafter. His election makes him the first person of Albanian-American descent and the first person of the Muslim faith to become Chair of the Board of Legislators in its 300 history.

In accepting the position, Gashi expressed his gratitude to his colleagues on the Board for their support. "I am honored to have been chosen to lead this distinguished body," he said. "I look forward to working with my fellow legislators to address the challenges facing our county, and to ensure that Westchester remains a great place to live, work, and raise a family."

**New York City Mayor Eric Adams** announced recently that Deputy Mayor **Maria Torres Springer** will serve in a newly expanded role as deputy mayor for housing, economic development and workforce.

In her expanded role, Deputy Mayor Torres-Springer will drive the city's efforts to preserve and improve the New York City Housing Authority, move New Yorkers experiencing homelessness into stable housing, and advance Mayor Adams' goal of creating 500,000 new homes for New Yorkers over the next decade.

Since January 2022, Deputy Mayor Torres-Springer has helped lead the Adams administration's work to accelerate the creation of much-needed housing in her oversight of the New

York City Department of City Planning and the New York City Economic Development Corporation. She was one of the chief architects of Mayor Adams' "Get Stuff Built" plan to speed up housing construction as a co-chair of the Building and Land Use Approval Streamlining Task Force; the "City of Yes" citywide zoning text amendments to support small businesses, create new housing, and promote sustainability; the transformation of Willets Point with 2,500 affordable homes; and the administration's community planning efforts in the East Bronx, Central Brooklyn, the North Shore of Staten Island, Midtown South, and Jamaica.

"In a year and half with this administration and throughout her career in public service, Deputy Mayor Torres-Springer has shown clearly that she is ready to take bold action to tackle the city's affordable housing crisis," said Mayor Adams. "She has a proven record of creating affordable housing and economic opportunity for New Yorkers, and her leadership of our economic recovery efforts has delivered real results. She is the right person at the right time to create and preserve the safe, high-quality, affordable housing New Yorkers so desperately need, and I congratulate her on this expanded role that will allow her to serve even more New Yorkers."

"Having grown up in Section 8 housing, I know firsthand that safe and affordable housing is about more than mere brick and mortar—it's about creating opportunity and improving lives," said Deputy Mayor Torres-Springer. "Under Mayor Adams' leadership, we came in with a bold agenda to change the paradigm for how we grow equitably as a city. I am incredibly humbled to further serve New Yorkers as we strive to provide stable housing for our neighbors, protect our existing affordable and public housing, and identify new ways to make housing affordable for all New Yorkers at this critical moment in our city's history. I want to thank Jessica Katz for her tireless efforts and Mayor Adams for entrusting me to carry this critical work forward."

After leading **Move, Inc.**, operator of Realtor.com and a portfolio of other real estate brands, for more than three years, gaining market share and breaking several revenue and audience records, **David Doctorow** announced on June 1 his decision to depart as Chief Executive Officer of the business.

News Corp has named **Damian Eales** to succeed him in the position, effective June 12, with Doctorow continuing to assist him in the transition in the coming weeks.

Under Doctorow's leadership, Move achieved record revenues; had record

audiences and consumer satisfaction at Realtor.com; increased market share; strengthened industry relationships and employee engagement; and further diversified revenue streams into the rentals, new homes and seller markets. Between fiscal years 2020 and 2022, Move's revenues grew by 50%, and average monthly unique users reached a high of more than 100 million in 2022. Doctorow helped complete the integration of OpCity into the Realtor.com business and oversaw the acquisitions of Avail and UpNest.

Over the past several years, Realtor.com has continued to innovate and expand its product offerings for consumers, real estate agents and brokers, new construction builders, lenders and property managers. Among many other changes, Doctorow also oversaw the launch of a new home search algorithm, incorporating AI throughout many products; a new mobile app; leveraging the OpCity platform to create new agent/broker products; and the Seller's Marketplace and listing agent businesses, with Realtor.com dramatically expanding content coverage in the new construction and rentals verticals.

Prior to joining Move, Doctorow was with eBay, where he served as Head of Global Growth at eBay Marketplaces, and previously was Chief Marketing and Strategy Officer at Expedia. He has a Master's in Business Administration from Stanford Graduate School of Business and a bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

"I am proud of the many successes we achieved at Realtor.com since February 2020, and greatly value having had the chance to work with the best team in the digital real estate industry. I believe this is the right time for me to embark on a new chapter in my career, and I look forward to working with Damian as he begins his new role," said Doctorow. "Today the real estate market is experiencing new challenges, but I am confident the people of Realtor.com have what it takes to continue growing and empowering the agents, brokers and other customers to grow, while empowering consumers with confidence as they turn to us to make their dreams of a new home come true."

Eales has been serving as Executive Vice President and Global Head of Transformation for News Corp since July 2020. Prior to that, he held senior positions at News Corp Australia over seven years, including Chief Marketing Officer and Chief Operating Officer of the Australian publishing business, where he led commercial, consumer, digital product and publishing divisions. Eales previously served in senior leadership posts in several major Australian businesses. Prior to joining News Corp in Australia in 2013, Eales was Chief Marketing Officer at Westpac Retail & Business Bank, and he spent more than a decade at David Jones, a leading premium retailer in Australia, as a group general manager in financial services, marketing and operations and supply chain logistics and procurement.



**David Doctorow**



**Maria Torres Springer**

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# Area Real Estate Experts Discuss the Future Of NYC's Public Space, Skylines, Neighborhoods

NEW YORK—The Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc., OneKey MLS and TitleVest hosted a virtual panel recently featuring real estate industry leaders who discussed New York's ever-evolving public space streetscapes, skylines and neighborhoods.

Joined by top voices from Compass, the panel explored some of New York's major neighborhood changes—past, present and future—spurred by at times controversial zoning, FAR, development and air rights, and transportation proposals, and how these elements continue to influence the city today.

Leah Caro, President of Park Sterling Realty in Bronxville and Board Manager of OneKey MLS, hosted the event. Brian D. Tormey, NTP, president of TitleVest, a leading New York City-based provider of title insurance and related real estate services, served as program moderator.

"New York is a city of constant change in styles, trends, attitudes, views and perspectives. And as the times keep changing, so do the views," said Caro. "Some of the most consequential projects in recent memory, including the High Line, Hudson Yards,

Chelsea Market, Brooklyn Bridge Park, or Atlantic Terminal, were all somewhat shocking at first glance and met with skepticism, but are now recognized as irreplaceable focal points and tourist destinations in our neighborhoods."

"Getting the Deal Done: Shaping New York's Ever-Evolving Landscape" took place last month and featured speakers Christina Prostano and Vickery Barron, associate real estate brokers at Compass.

"Public space has become a more integral part of development and is almost expected now," said Prostano. "The revitalization of the Domino Sugar Factory, or Little Island, are prime examples of projects built with the public and the community in mind. It helps the neighborhood; people use those parks and it becomes an integral part of life. And in the wake of COVID-19, there is definitely a desire to return to nature and experience fresh air, and community-focused open space is as close as we're going to get here."

"There is going to be change, it's never easy and the unknown is what frightens people," said Barron. "Whether you are a fan or not, Hudson Yards is a perfect example. People heard about



**"Some of the most consequential projects in recent memory, including the High Line, Hudson Yards, Chelsea Market, Brooklyn Bridge Park, or Atlantic Terminal, were all somewhat shocking at first glance and met with skepticism, but are now recognized as irreplaceable focal points and tourist destinations in our neighborhoods."**

—Leah Caro, President of Park Sterling Realty, Bronxville

it, but they couldn't really fathom what it was going to be until they saw and experienced it. And that leap is credited to the project developers, who had the vision to begin with."

"It's absolutely amazing that we live on an island, and even in the boroughs that are very much surrounded by water, and the waterfront was historically a place New Yorkers avoided," said Prostano. "And that's because of a number of reasons, the most prominent of which being that subways and popular transit modes were more focused on the interior spaces, but that's all changing with sweeping transportation projects coming online that account for the modern preferences of residents and commuters."

"I recently sold a townhouse in Harlem nearby the proposed expansion of the Second Avenue Subway," added Barron. "All of the prospective buyers anticipated a wave of positive transformations that would soon occur as a result of more transit-oriented development happening in the neighborhood."

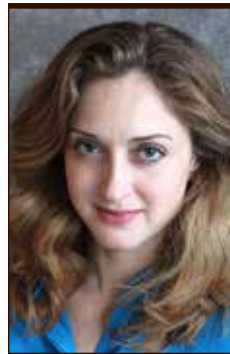
Prostano continued, "Office conversions are probably one of the interesting experiments in terms of land-use currently. A lot of people seem to think

it's feasible, but actually commercial real estate industry leaders are aptly aware of the many challenges, including floor plates that are not designed for residential living. But we have a dramatic shortage of housing inventory, and we have empty offices, at least for now. And there's a lot of people, very smart people, who think we aren't ever going to see those office workers return, so let's see how this plays out."

The webinar was part of the "Be Your Best" series created by HGAR and OneKey MLS, to help Realtors and agents navigate a changing landscape. The event was sponsored by TitleVest.

OneKey MLS is the largest multiple listing service in New York with more than 48,000 Realtor subscribers serving Manhattan, Westchester, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Orange, Nassau, Suffolk, Queens, Brooklyn, and the Bronx.

The Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors is a not-for-profit trade association representing more than 14,000 real estate professionals in Manhattan, the Bronx, Westchester, Putnam, Rockland and Orange counties. It is the second-largest Realtor association in New York, and one of the largest in the U.S.



**"Office conversions are probably one of the interesting experiments in terms of land-use currently. A lot of people seem to think it's feasible, but actually commercial real estate industry leaders are aptly aware of the many challenges, including floor plates that are not designed for residential living."**

—Christina Prostano, Associate Real Estate Broker, Compass.

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# Urstadt Biddle Properties to be Acquired for \$1.4B

GREENWICH, CT—Regency Centers Corp. of Jacksonville, FL and Urstadt Biddle Properties Inc., which is headquartered in Greenwich, CT, announced last month they had entered into a definitive merger agreement by which Regency will acquire Urstadt Biddle in an all-stock transaction, valued at approximately \$1.4 billion, including the assumption of debt and preferred stock.

The combined company is expected to have a pro forma equity market capitalization of approximately \$11 billion and total enterprise value of approximately \$16 billion. Urstadt Biddle Properties Inc. is a self-administered equity REIT which owns or has equity interests in 77 properties containing approximately 5.3 million square feet of space. The company formerly owned the Westchester Pavilion mall in Downtown White Plains, which was the headquarters for the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors until its relocation to its headquarter space at The Source on April 1, 2016. In early 2017, Urstadt Biddle Properties sold the vacant existing 185,000-square-foot Westchester Pavilion mall to Maple and Broadway Holdings, LLC, a subsidiary of Lennar Corp. through its Lennar Multi-Family Communities, LLC subsidiary, for \$56.6 million. The deal was announced on March 1. The Westchester Pavilion was later demolished and is to make way for a large mixed-use development.

Under the terms of the agreement, Urstadt Biddle's Class A Common (UBA)



**Urstadt Biddle Properties was the owner of the Westchester Pavilion, which housed the former headquarters of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors until its relocation to The Source on Maple Avenue and Bloomingdale Road in White Plains in April 2016.**

and Common (UBP) stockholders will receive 0.347 of a newly-issued REG share for each UBA or UB share they own, representing a total consideration of approximately \$20.40 per share based on Regency's closing share price on May 17, 2023. Upon closing, Regency and Urstadt Biddle shareholders will own approximately 93% and 7% of the combined company, respectively. The respective Boards of Directors of both Regency and Urstadt Biddle have each approved the transaction.

"We couldn't be more excited about the combination of our two great companies," said Lisa Palmer, President and Chief Executive Officer of Regency. "The portfolio that Urstadt Biddle has carefully assembled over more than 50 years offers a highly aligned demographic and merchandising profile to Regency. Both companies have a suc-

cessful track record of owning and operating best-in-class grocery-anchored neighborhood and community centers in premier suburban trade areas, and we look forward to the synergies and growth opportunities that this transaction will offer to the combined shareholder base."

"Regency has a long, successful history of being a sector and industry leader in the ownership and operation of high-quality shopping centers around the country, with one of the best-regarded teams in the REIT industry," said Willing L. Biddle, President and CEO of Urstadt Biddle. "I have no doubt that our portfolio will be in great hands under Regency leadership, and as a future Regency shareholder I look forward to the scale and platform benefits that the combination of our two companies will provide."

The combined portfolio will be comprised of 481 total properties encompassing more than 56 million square feet of gross leasable area. The combination is expected to provide several strategic benefits, including:

- The transaction grows the combined company's footprint of high-quality, grocery-anchored shopping centers in premier suburban trade areas while enhancing Regency's overall geographic diversification and maintaining a strong tenant roster.

- The transaction is expected to be immediately accretive to Core Operating Earnings, including approximately \$9 million of annual cost savings benefit, Regency reported.

- The transaction is currently expected to close late in the third quarter or early in the fourth quarter of 2023, subject to the receipt of approval of UBA and UB shareholders and satisfaction of other customary closing conditions. Stockholders of UB holding approximately 68% of UB's voting rights have entered into an agreement to vote in favor of the transaction. There are no anticipated changes to Regency's executive management team or Board of Directors.

RBC Capital Markets and Wells Fargo Securities are acting as financial advisors and Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz is serving as legal advisor to Regency Centers. Eastdil Secured and Deutsche Bank are acting as financial advisors and Hogan Lovells US LLP is serving as legal advisor to Urstadt Biddle.

# CBRE: New York Remains a Top Market For Life Sciences Research Talent

NEW YORK—The New York City metro region received some heartening data from commercial brokerage

firm CBRE, which announced on June 7 that the Greater New York market ranked fourth in the nation for life sci-

ences research talent.

Nationally, the growth of U.S. life sciences researchers remains resilient in the face of economic concerns, with the number of life sciences researchers in the U.S. increasing by 87% over the past 20 years, compared with 14% for all U.S. occupations. Research jobs have not fallen across those 20 years, through three recessions and amid the tight labor market of recent years, according to a recent analysis conducted by CBRE.

"New York's high placement is thanks to a dense concentration of talent in the region's core in the vicinity of Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens with additional concentrations of talent in Central New Jersey, Northern New Jersey, Westchester County, and Long Island," said Bill Hartman, vice chairman of CBRE based in the Midtown New York office.

New York's robust performance is supported by a workforce of 38,700 life sciences research professionals—the largest in the country—and 9,500 annual relevant degree completions at area universities—also the largest in the country.

"New York's strong position as a top market for life sciences research talent is bolstered by some of the region's top universities and colleges, including New York University, Columbia University, Weill Cornell, Rockefeller University, Memorial Sloan Kettering and Stony Brook University," added Joseph DeRosa, CBRE senior vice president.

While New York City and New Jersey have seen significant growth in the life sciences sector, Westchester County is benefitting from a \$1.8-billion expansion program by Regeneron Pharmaceuticals.

New York is situated at the center of a cluster of life sciences powerhouses that spans 450 miles along the northeast corridor and includes other top-ranked markets including Boston (1), Washington, D.C./Baltimore (3), and



**New York's robust performance is supported by a workforce of 38,700 life sciences research professionals—the largest in the country.**

PHOTO CREDIT: CBRE

Philadelphia (6) and includes promising smaller markets such as Worcester (17), Albany (21), and New Haven (24). Altogether, northeastern markets account for four of the top 10 and seven of the top 25 markets. Among the 10 leading markets, the Northeast accounts for 57% of life sciences talent and 56% of annual graduates.

According to CBRE's report, New York boasts some of the highest wages in the life sciences market ranging from \$128,274 for biochemists to \$98,669 for chemists. The yearly cost of living in the area as of 2021 was \$69,246 and the median home value stood at \$517,738, while the average apartment rent for a one bedroom was \$2,857.

Life sciences research professions—from biochemists to epidemiologists and data scientists—increased in headcount by 3.1% in 2022 to a record 545,000 specialists. In comparison, the overall U.S. job growth rate

**Please turn to page 22**



**86 Main St., Yonkers**

## Not-For-Profit Leases Nearly 12,000 SF in Yonkers CBD

YONKERS—Rand Commercial reported on June 7 the lease of the entire second floor at 86 Main St. in Yonkers to Special Citizens Futures Unlimited, Inc. The lease for 11,703 square feet has a 11-year term. The space shall be used as executive and administrative offices serving the firm's current facilities in the Bronx and in Elmsford.

Rand Commercial is the leasing agent for the building. Michael McCall of CBRE represented the tenant. Rand Commercial's Debra Binstok and Paul Adler, Esq. represented the landlord in the transaction.

86 Main St. was built in 2005 and renovated in 2017 by AMS Development, the current owner of the build-

ing. In addition to available space on part of the fourth floor and the entire sixth floor, the landlord operates an office shared space, which is being relocated from the second floor to the fifth floor.

For more than 40 years, Special Citizens Futures Unlimited has provided comprehensive services to hundreds of men, women, and children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other Developmental Disabilities. Located in New York City, the Bronx, and Westchester, it provides an array of services including specialized Residential Programs, Day Services, Community-Habilitation, Respite, Life Skills Programs and Recreation.



# Being an Active ‘Upstander’ Instead of a Silent Bystander

By **Katheryn DeClerck**

Recently at a meeting that I attended, I had the opportunity to take an active role as an “upstander.” Before I tell you what happened at the meeting, I want to briefly explain what an upstander is.

When someone witnesses or ignores a prejudiced attack, they can appear to be condoning or reinforcing the behavior and add to the alienation of the targeted individual. Those are typically referred to as bystanders. An upstander, by contrast, is a bystander who recognizes these kinds of events and takes a stand, by interrupting or challenging the situation.

Many times, people ask what they can do to help in the world of DEI. It’s particularly challenging if you are from a dominant group and not normally the subject of microaggressions or alienation. One way to interfere in a positive way is by interrupting the event.

Let’s suppose you are at a meeting where a participant makes a suggestion on how to tackle the issue at hand, and her idea is ignored or glossed over. Another participant makes a similar suggestion, and he is greeted with support and praise. The first participant (the female) might not want to say that she made a similar

suggestion just a few minutes earlier.

An upstander who notices the situation could point out that the idea had been floated by her, and now that it has gained momentum, thank her for starting the discussion. Additionally,

**When a micro-aggression appears to be unintentional, a bystander might respond to a hurtful comment or joke by saying, “I know you meant well, but that stereotype is hurtful.”**

the upstander could pull her back into the conversation to build on the idea further.

Recognizing contributions and creating opportunities for collaboration and engagement are ways we can disrupt the effect of the slight. It might also make others aware of the slight in the first place. Impact and intent are two different things. Hopefully, the intent was not to ignore the female participant’s suggestion, but the intent doesn’t matter if there is a negative impact.

In the meeting I was attending, I observed a dialogue between two people that concerned me. I am sure that has happened to many of us where we don’t know if we should step in and say something. I wondered what my role in this was. Should I say some-

thing? Does my silence say something? The only person I can control in this world is myself. So yes, I had a role to play, and I needed to try to figure out what I could do at the moment.

“How Bystanders Can Shut Down

Microaggressions” by Zara Abrams ([www.apa.org/monitor/2021/09/feature-bystanders-microaggressions](http://www.apa.org/monitor/2021/09/feature-bystanders-microaggressions)) describes six useful tactics:

**1. Plan Ahead**—responding to a microaggression can be tricky because it’s not

always clear to a bystander whether harm occurred or was intended. It’s crucial to think ahead, practice and rehearse what you’d say when one occurs.

**2. Tailor Your Approach to the Situation**—one strategy to disarm the microaggression is by voicing your disapproval of the statement (for example, if it is a racist comment) by saying, “Not OK” or “I don’t agree with what you just said.” Another approach can be to call attention to subtle or “invisible” microaggressions behind the comment. That could take the form of a statement, such as “Not all Asian Americans are good at math,” or a question, such as “Do you have evidence to back that up?” or “Is this person’s race, religion, or identity really relevant to this conversation?”



When a micro-aggression appears to be unintentional, a bystander might respond to a hurtful comment or joke by saying, “I know you meant well, but that stereotype is hurtful.”

**3. Speak for Yourself**—whatever response you choose should reflect your own perspective and feelings about the microaggression. We shouldn’t presume that other people are offended or hurt by the comment. We should avoid speaking on behalf of others, as that can be seen as a micro-aggression in itself.

**4. Target the Behavior, Not the Person**—regardless of the circumstances, bystanders should avoid calling a perpetrator racist or otherwise attacking their character. Instead, target the comment possibly by asking, “What do you mean by that?” or “Are you aware of how that might be interpreted?”

**5. Consider Circling Back**—an immediate and public response to a microaggression is a good way to model appropriate behavior for other bystanders, but sometimes a direct approach is not always possible or advisable. Some discussions may be more effective behind closed doors.

**6. Seek Outside Support**—in some cases, bystanders may need to solicit outside help, for instance, when micro-aggressions occur repeatedly and other strategies are not effective.

I don’t know if I said the right thing in that meeting but I know that staying silent was not an option. I think I handled it well. Next time, I bet I’ll do better. Important things are not always comfortable and I am ok with that.

So, if you are looking for ways to have an impact and don’t know how to start, begin by paying closer attention. When faced with the opportunity to interrupt a micro-aggression of any sort, do so. It’s learning a skill similar to exercising a muscle. The more you use it, the stronger it becomes. Consider the impact of how people are treated and use your power for change.

*Katheryn DeClerck is a member of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors DEI Steering Committee.*

## HGAR’s DEI Officer Garcia Named To FDR Exhibit Advisory Council

HYDE PARK—Freddimir Garcia, HGAR Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Officer, has been named to serve on the Exhibit Advisory Council on a Special Exhibition at the Franklin D. Roosevelt President Library and Museum in Hyde Park. The “Black Americans, Civil Rights and the Roosevelts, 1932-1962” will be on exhibit at the museum from now through Dec. 31, 2024.

The exhibit centers on the historical voices of many black community leaders, wartime service members, and ordinary citizens who engaged the Roosevelt administration directly and who pushed for progress.

Documents and artifacts from the Roose-



**HGAR DEI Officer  
Freddimir Garcia**

evelt Library’s holdings and from private collections nationwide will be on display. Showcasing some of the most riveting voices from its vast archives of personal letters, political pamphlets, petitions, artworks, photographs, and sound recordings, the Roosevelt Library hopes to inspire further research into key aspects of this important history.

Garcia joins 13 other distinguished committee members on the Advisory Council, including historians, writers, academics and library trustees. The library’s mission is to foster research and education on the life and times of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, and their continuing impact on contemporary life.

## Leading the Way On Sustainability

Continued from page 4

However, Realtors need to remain aware of how some proposed policies may have negative and unintended consequences for our industry, our businesses and consumers. A case in point is the New York State Climate Action Council’s Scoping Plan, which would: 1) prohibit new natural gas service to existing buildings; 2) prohibit propane, natural gas and oil equipment in new homes in 2024; 3) prohibit traditional heating systems in existing homes beginning in 2030, 4) ban natural gas appliances in homes beginning in 2035, 5) ban the sale of gasoline vehicles in New York in 2035, and 6) require single and multi-family property owners to obtain and disclose prior year energy consumption and energy performance ratings in real estate listings.

While the Scoping Plan reflects New York State’s commitment to reduce carbon emissions, serious and significant questions remain unanswered about the costs and feasibility of some of the plan’s recommendations. According to the New York State Association of Realtors, the Scoping Plan fails to adequately ana-

lyze the economic realities faced by New Yorkers and sheds no light on the fiscal impact these recommendations will have on current and future homeowners and commercial property owners.

As our experience at Lobby Day and our interactions with our elected officials demonstrate, lawmakers do not always understand our industry and they need our guidance. Through our Committee on Sustainability, HGAR aims to listen, learn, and influence a discussion that is already going on regarding the intersection of sustainability and real estate and its impact on our industry, consumers and your business.

All year long, HGAR has been exploring sustainability issues. On March 23, HGAR’s Commercial & Investment Division hosted the 2023 Economic Development Roundtable with top experts discussing the local economic development projects and focusing on 1) alternative energy sources to replace fossil fuels, 2) retrofitting existing structures to improve energy efficiency and achieve carbon neutrality, and 3) climate

friendly technologies, clean energy initiatives, and transportation redevelopment.

On April 26, HGAR partnered with the Women’s Council of Realtors to present “Putting the Gr\$\$\$n in Green”, exploring how consumers can save money when purchasing sustainable products such as electric cars, heat pumps, solar panels and energy-efficient appliances.

On May 25 HGAR’s CID presented “Sustainability & The Electrification of New York,” exploring the state’s mandates to electrify both pre-existing and newly proposed commercial real estate properties.

On June 1, HGAR joined the Westchester County Association for its annual sustainability conference, featuring experts in energy policy, business strategy, finance, law and compliance, and a “boot camp” sustainability workshop. HGAR negotiated a 50% discount on the registration fee and multiple HGAR members were in attendance.

HGAR is now partnering with FIABCI and UN Habitat for a July 13 event at Fordham University. This event, “Sus-

tainable Cities and Communities,” is a parallel event to the United Nations High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. More details will follow shortly.

HGAR recently applied for NAR’s \$5,000 Sustainability Grant to help local associations plan and implement a sustainability program and encourage the ongoing awareness of sustainability in real estate.

It has been one of my initiatives as your 2023 President to ensure that HGAR remains in the vanguard when it comes to sustainability. This year our Committee on Sustainability will continue to help our members understand how sustainability issues affect you now, and will affect your business and industry in the future. Following NAR’s lead, HGAR will continue to advocate for policies that balance economic development with environmental protection, while focusing on how these issues affect housing, real estate and homeowners.

If you wish to be a part of that discussion, then join our Committee on Sustainability! Please contact myself or the HGAR staff to inquire!





HGAR Leadership with the DEI Summit Keynote Speakers: From left, Anthony Domathoti, HGAR Past President; Jana Currier, HGAR Interim CEO; Kelly McDonald, Best-Selling Author; M. Ryan Gorman, Co-Founder/Unmanageable Partner at btcRE LLC; Deanna Singh, Chief Change Agent & Best-Selling Author; Tony D'Anzica, HGAR President and Freddy Garcia, HGAR DEI Officer

Kelly McDonald, Best Selling Author

# DEI Summit

## Sleepy Hollow Hotel & Conference Center

### June 6, 2023

PHOTOS BY JOHN VECCHIOLLA



Breakout Session on Realtor Safety & Racism: From left, Alexia Smokler, NAR Director, Fair Housing Policy & Program; William "Bill" Flagg, 2022 NCJAR President and Eric Brown, Associate Vice President & Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator for Student Affairs, SC Technical College System



From left, Feliz Hernandez; Carmen Bauman, HGAR President Elect; Robert Shandley and Tony D'Anzica, HGAR President



From left, Anthony Domathoti, HGAR Past President, 2023 NYSAR President-elect Jacqueline Rose; Jennifer Vucetic, NYSAR Past President and HGAR President Tony D'Anzica



From left, Soo Yu, VP of AREA; Donnel Williams, Second V.P. of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB); Cheryl Williams, Vice Chair, HGAR DEI Committee and Nan Palumbo, HGAR YPN Chair.



Keynote Speaker M. Ryan Gorman, Co-Founder/Unmanageable Partner at btcRE LLC



Keynote Speaker Deanna Singh, Chief Change Agent & Best-Selling Author



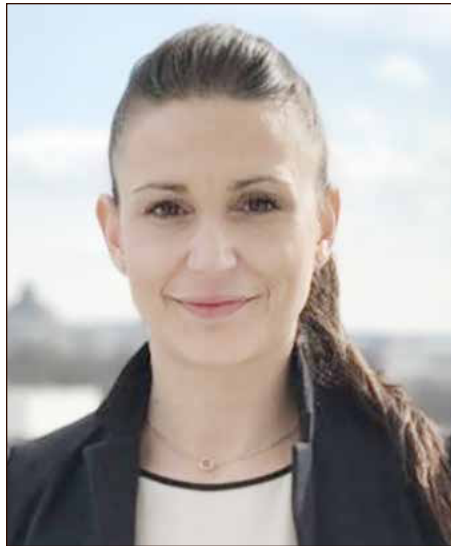
# Report: U.S. Housing Market Needs More Than 300,000 Affordable Homes for Middle-Income Buyers

WASHINGTON—The U.S. housing market is short more than 300,000 affordable homes for middle-income buyers, according to a new analysis released on June 8 by the National Association of Realtors and Realtor.com. The country's persistent housing inventory crunch impacts middle-income buyers more than any other income bracket.

NAR and Realtor.com's housing affordability and supply report examined the number of listings missing by price range in the current market when compared to a balanced market. A balanced market is defined as when half of all available homes fall within the price range affordable for middle-income buyers.

"Middle-income buyers face the largest shortage of homes among all income groups, making it even harder for them to build wealth through homeownership," said Nadia Evangelou, NAR senior economist and director of real estate research. "A two-fold approach is needed to help with both low affordability and limited housing supply. It's not just about increasing supply. We must boost the number of homes at the price range that most people can afford to buy."

At the end of April 2023, approximately 1.1 million homes were available for sale, an increase of five percentage points from one year ago. However, the market is missing almost 320,000 home listings valued up to \$256,000, the affordable price range for middle-income buyers or households earning up to \$75,000. Middle-income buyers can afford to buy less than a quarter



**Nadia Evangelou,**  
NAR Senior Economist and  
Director of Real Estate Research

(23%) of listings in the current market. Five years ago, this income group could afford to buy half of all available homes.

"Ongoing high housing costs and the scarcity of available homes continues to present budget challenges for many prospective buyers, and it's likely keeping some buyers in the rental market or on the sidelines and delaying their purchase until conditions improve," said Realtor.com Chief Economist Danielle Hale. "Those who are able to overcome affordability constraints may be increasingly drawn to newly constructed homes or to the suburbs and beyond, both of which may offer buyers more realistic opportunities for homeownership in the near term."

Among the 100 largest metro areas,

El Paso, TX; Boise, ID and Spokane, WA have the fewest affordable homes available for middle-income buyers. Three Ohio cities—Youngstown, Akron and Toledo—have the most affordable homes available for that income group.

"Even with the current level of listings, the housing affordability and shortage issues wouldn't be so severe if there were enough homes for all price ranges," Evangelou added. "Our country needs to add at least two affordable homes for middle-income buyers for every home listed for upper-income buyers."

The report noted that the housing shortage is less severe in higher priced listings. Homes that cater to higher income levels are seeing fewer listings missing. For instance, buyers earning \$250,000 can currently afford to buy 85% of the listings compared to 93% in a balanced market.

In terms of race, middle-income blacks are suffering the most from the housing shortage. The report stated, "Parsing out by racial/ethnic groups, the lack of listings affordable to middle-income buyers is even larger for minority groups. While more Black and Hispanic Americans earn an income lower than \$75,000 than their white counterparts, there are also significant housing affordability and availability inequalities among racial/ethnic groups. Black Americans are the group that is further away from equilibrium than any other group."

The report noted that while nearly 66% of Black Americans earn \$75,000 and less, these buyers can only afford 22% of homes for sale.



**Realtor.com Chief Economist**  
Danielle Hale

In contrast, 48% of white Americans earn that same income, and they can also afford to buy 22% of the listings. Thus, Black Americans would need 20% more listings with a value of up to \$256,000 than their white counterparts in order to be at equilibrium. Hispanic Americans follow with about 11% more homes available for sale needed than what white Americans need in order to have enough homes listed on the market that they can afford to buy.

The National Association of Realtors is America's largest trade association, representing more than 1.5 million members involved in all aspects of the residential and commercial real estate industries.

Realtor.com is operated by News Corp. subsidiary Move, Inc.

## Christina Prozano Continued from page 13

in the Bronx, Prozano took to radio at WFUV on campus before breaking into theater and singing gigs. She holds an undergraduate degree in English Literature and International Studies and an M.A. in Music from New York University. "I was actually in a band in high school and then got into an indie rock band later, touring colleges and local clubs throughout the country," she recalled. The band, Palomar, put out five albums—the last one in 2012. "We all have kids now and one of the members lives in L.A., but hopefully we'll get together again." Prozano has two girls, aged 13 and 15.

Oddly enough, it was the band experience that piqued her interest in real estate. "I wanted a flexible career so I could go on tour," she said. Plus, her parents were investors, and she witnessed their success and ability to work for themselves.

During her college days, Prozano also had the opportunity to be part of a service project in Mexico and volunteered her time for a month at an orphanage. "We did everything from helping out with the kids to building a new home for the older children there," she remembered. "No one spoke English, so it was great to put what I learned in a book to real life. That actually triggered a love of languages, so I started to learn French and Italian as well."

One of Prozano's other interesting career choices was working with a British publisher producing travel discount books for vacationers in 25 cities around the world. Prozano worked on the New York, London and Paris books, spending five years in London and one year in Paris. "We had to visit various attractions and sign them up to offer a discount to tourists," she explained. "We did everything from selling them the idea, to writing the text and publishing the

book. We wore all the hats."

Also along the career path was a short stint as a marketer for Planet Hollywood restaurants, where she had the opportunity to travel to places like Hong Kong for new openings.

A member of the Real Estate Board of New York for many years, Prozano eventually joined NAR and HGAR after meeting HGAR President Tony D'Anzica earlier at a FI-ABCI event. Even with her extensive background in international travel, she admits she never thought about combining that with real estate.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, she started an interview series on Instagram Live, featuring people who had moved out of New York City. After she took the series to Clubhouse, it started to garner international attention and her interview subjects grew to brokers from around the globe. "I made a lot of great connections, attended international property shows and also earned my CIPS (Certified International Property Specialist) designation. In addition, Prozano is a Crypto Certified Agent.

Currently, she's working on building her Compass team—the CP Global Team—and has added a person who speaks Mandarin Chinese.

As for Prozano's favorite global destination, it's Italy hands down. "I have an Italian passport and we usually go somewhere there every year," she said. "Venice is always amazing."

As Co-Chair of the association's Global Business Council, Prozano is striving to ensure that HGAR will again be honored with NAR's Platinum Global Achievement Award, as it was last year. "Growing any business—domestic or international—is based on entrepreneurship," she said. "To be successful in real estate, all you have to do is take it seriously and treat it as your own business."

## Howard Hanna Rand Dancers Win Competition

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International Realty in Greenwich, CT, who appeared on 13 seasons of "Dancing with the Stars." The others were Elisabeth Viesselmeier of Feeding Westchester in Elmsford, one of the non-profits the Foundation supports, and Bonnie Koff, former Chair of the Foundation Fundraising Committee. Koff, an agent with Corcoran Legends Realty in Tarrytown, was honored for her years of work with the Foundation, which she was also instrumental in founding.

"We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Bonnie Koff, who has been so dedicated to her work with the foundation for so many years," said Carol Christiansen, Chair of the HG Realtor Foundation Fundraising Committee. "With her help, we were able to launch another successful event—the first of its kind for the foundation. In fact, it was so well received that we'll definitely be repeating it next year. The audience participation was just amazing."

The performing dancers also included: Irene Amato of A.S.A.P Mortgage in Peekskill and Mark Aakjar of Mark's Inspections in Ossining; Wasfiyah Talib of ERA Insite Realty Services in White Plains and Raymond LaFlamme of U.S. Bank in Greenwich, CT; and Vili Mirtcheva of Corcoran Legends Realty in Bronxville, and Steven Reese of Christie's International Real Estate in White Plains.

Since 2014, the Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to charities and non-profits throughout Hudson Valley. As concerned members of the communities its members work in, the Hudson Gateway REALTOR Foundation participates in qualified community-based charities who serve the housing, hunger, health, happiness, and humane needs of citizens everywhere.

## CBRE: New York Remains a Top Market For Life Sciences Research Talent

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last year was 2.2%. The continued growth in life sciences research jobs is driven by established markets such as Boston/Cambridge and the San Francisco Bay Area and emerging hubs, including Atlanta, Dallas/Ft Worth and Miami/Fort Lauderdale.

"Demand for life sciences research workers is above pre-pandemic levels," said Matt Gardner, CBRE Advisory Services Life Sciences Leader. "We're also seeing a closely balanced ratio of hiring to job cuts in the biopharma industry compared with the technology sector and the broader economy, which positions the life sciences to remain stable despite an economic downturn."

Several markets saw above-average growth in the total number of life

sciences researchers between 2017 and 2022. These include Atlanta (36%), Denver/Boulder (35%), Dallas/Fort Worth (33%) and Phoenix (33%). The national average in that span was 16%. The New York City/New Jersey market posted a 26% increase during that time span.

CBRE evaluated each of the largest 74 U.S. life sciences labor markets against multiple criteria, including the number and concentration of life sciences researchers, number of new graduates with life sciences degrees and specifically with doctorate degrees in life sciences, concentration of all doctorate degree holders, and concentration of jobs in the broader professional, scientific, and technical services professions.



# New York GOP Lawmakers Fail to Amend SALT Cap in U.S. Debt Ceiling Agreement

By John Jordan

WASHINGTON—If at first you don't succeed, try, try and try again. A group of Republican Congressmen submitted an amendment to the federal debt ceiling agreement before the House Rules Committee to raise the SALT Cap from \$10,000 to \$60,000 for individual tax filers. However, *Real Estate In-Depth* has learned that the amendment failed to pass the House Rules Committee, which approved the debt ceiling agreement by a 7-6 margin on May 30.

The measure marked the third time so far this year area Republican lawmakers have attempted to revise or repeal the \$10,000 SALT Cap imposed by the 2017 Trump Tax Act. To date, none of those efforts have resulted in either the repeal or any revision of the SALT Cap.

The "SALT Fairness and Deficit Reduction Act" amendment would have raised the cap for married couples to \$120,000. The "SALT Fairness and Deficit Reduction Act" amendment was offered by Reps. Mike Lawler (NY-17), Nick LaLota (NY-01), and Anthony D'Esposito (NY-04). The 17<sup>th</sup> Congressional District covers all or parts of all or parts of Rockland, Putnam, Dutchess, and Westchester counties. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional Districts cover sections of Long Island.

"The arbitrary cap on SALT coupled with record inflation has made the affordability crisis even worse for Hudson Valley families, and I have said from the beginning that it needs to be lifted," said Rep. Lawler. "I'm proud to co-sponsor Rep. LaLota's amendment to the Fiscal Responsibility Act (debt ceiling agreement) that lifts the cap to \$60,000 for individual filers and to \$120,000 for married couples filing a joint return. This amendment would eliminate the unfair penalty for the vast majority of Hudson Valley families and is a critical part of solving New York's affordability crisis."

The amendment would have raised the cap beginning after Dec. 31, 2022 and would increase the cap beginning after 2023 by the cost of living for that calendar tax year.

"I came to Congress promising to



At a press conference in Rockland County on Jan. 31, from left, Ramapo Supervisor Michael Specht, Stony Point Supervisor Jim Monaghan, Clarkstown Town Supervisor George Hoehmann, U.S. Rep. Mike Lawler, Rockland County Executive Ed Day and Orangetown Supervisor Teresa Kenny announced the introduction of a bill to raise the SALT Cap. FILE PHOTO

take every opportunity I could to restore the SALT deduction and support Long Island families. My amendment would insert the text of my SALT Fairness and Deficit Reduction Act into the Fiscal Responsibility Act, providing more tax relief for Americans and doing even more to address our federal deficit," said Rep. LaLota. "The bipartisan Fiscal Responsibility Act already provides much-needed support to the American people while addressing spending, adding my legislation would take it another step in the right direction. I am hopeful that the House Rules Committee will allow my amendment to be considered on the House Floor to give Long Islanders tax relief while cutting costs down the road."

"My Long Island neighbors sent me to Congress to provide meaningful tax relief to local families, and one way I have been fighting to deliver that relief is by removing the current SALT cap," said Rep. D'Esposito. "I am proud to join my colleague, Congressman Nick LaLota, in introducing an amendment to the Fiscal Responsibility Act that would effectively restore the SALT cap to pre-2017 levels for the vast majority of Americans. Including the text of the SALT Fairness and Deficit Reduction Act as an amendment to the Fiscal Responsibility Act strengthens this sweeping bipartisan deficit reducing

legislation and provides added financial relief to Americans."

Rep. Lawler, shortly after first taking office in January, began efforts to amend or repeal the SALT Cap. In late January, Rep. Lawler and Rep. Mikie Sherrill (NJ-11), a Democrat, announced they had introduced the "Middle-Class Tax Relief Act," that they said would provide significant relief from the unfair double taxation of the state and local tax (SALT) deduction cap to millions of families and eliminate one of the most significant marriage penalties in the tax code.

The legislation would have raised the cap on SALT deductions from \$10,000/household to \$100,000 for single filers and \$200,000 for married couples.

In April, 2023, Rep. Lawler was one of the "co-leads" of a bill introduced by

Rep. Andrew R. Garbarino (NY-02) entitled "The Securing Access to Lower Taxes by Ensuring (SALT) Deductibility Act" announced at a press conference on Long Island alongside fellow New York members and co-sponsors of the legislation, Representatives Anthony D'Esposito (R-NY-04) and Nick LaLota (R-NY-01).

The bipartisan bill would have allowed taxpayers to fully deduct their state and local taxes on their federal income returns. Other co-leads of the legislation were: Rep. Lawler and Representatives Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ-05), Young Kim (R-CA-40), Anna Eshoo (D-CA-16), Chris Smith (R-NJ-04), Brad Schneider (D-IL-10) and Rob Menendez (D-NJ-08).

In addition to the co-leads, original cosponsors of the bill include Representatives Anthony D'Esposito (R-NY-04), Marc Molinaro (R-NY-19), Pat Ryan (D-NY-18), Tom Kean Jr. (R-NJ-07), Eric Swalwell (D-CA-14), Grace Meng (D-NY-06), Joe Morelle (D-NY-25), Sean Casten (D-IL-06), Dean Phillips (D-MN-03), Paul Tonko (D-NY-20), Zoe Lofgren (D-CA-18), Betty McCollum (D-MN-04), Salud Carbajal (D-CA-24), Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ-12), Jake Auchincloss (D-MA-04), Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL-08), Bill Foster (D-IL-11), Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR-01), Linda Sanchez (D-CA-38), Mikie Sherrill (D-NJ-11), Andy Kim (D-NJ-03), Nick LaLota (R-NY-01), Mike Levin (D-CA-49), Jamie Raskin (D-MD-08), Jared Huffman (D-CA-02), Danny Davis (D-IL-07), Jimmy Gomez (D-CA-34), Judy Chu (D-CA-28), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC- At-Large), Jimmy Panetta (D-CA-19), Julia Brownley (D-CA-26), and Jerry Nadler (D-NY-12).



From left, Eli Rodriguez, HGAR Bronx Chapter; Vince Buccieri, former Bronx Chapter Regional Director; SGT Jimenez; Jana Currier, HGAR Interim CEO and COO; SGT Richard; Tony D'Anzica, HGAR President; SSG Lugo; SFC Gill and Joe Cosentino, Bronx Chapter Regional Director. PHOTO BY JOHN VECCHIOLLA

## HGAR'S Bronx Chapter, Local Officials Hold Flag-Raising Ceremony for Flag Day

Continued from page 4

from New York State Assemblyman John Zaccaro and New York City Council Member Marjorie Velazquez joined in the ceremony held at HGAR's Bronx Chapter office on Williamsbridge Road. HGAR President D'Anzica hosted

the program, which included Bronx Community Board 11 District Manager Jeremy Warneke calling the military detail to order to unfold and raise the flag. Joe Cosentino, Bronx Chapter Regional Director, closed the program with the Pledge of Allegiance.

# Join Us!

## Sign-up for 2024 Committee Service

The New York State Association of REALTORS® has more than 30 committees, forums, working groups, and foundations for members to participate in and offer guidance and support for the organization as a whole. Volunteers are asked to be sure they can attend the association's 2024 business meetings, which are scheduled for February 4–8 in Albany and September 29–October 2 at Turning Stone.

Please visit [www.NYSAR.com/about-nysar](http://www.NYSAR.com/about-nysar) and click on "Meetings & Governance" for more!

Committee sign-up will be from June 30–July 31.







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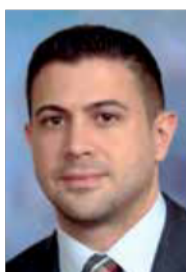
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