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REAL ESTATE IN-DEPTH

Official Publication of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors



Realtors Expect Continued Strong Housing Market in 2022

By John Jordan

WHITE PLAINS—After residential sales volume in the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors’ market area reached historically high levels in 2021, brokers expect continued strong sales activity this year, although not at the feverish pace the industry enjoyed in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

To say there are headwinds facing Realtors and consumers in 2022 would be an understatement, with the prospects for high inflation, rising mortgage interest rates, supply chain problems, the Omicron variant and very low for-sale inventories high on the list. At press time, infection rates statewide and in the Hudson Valley and New York City regions continue to fall daily from highs in the mid 20% rates, perhaps a

HGAR Market Area Home Sales Full Year 2021

Bronx County	+61.4%
Rockland County	+19.3%
Westchester County	+19.1%
Orange County	+16.0%
Putnam County	+10.6%
Sullivan County	+ 9.6%

sign that the worst of the Omicron variant is behind the region, although infection rates continue to climb in other parts of the nation.

HGAR and OneKey MLS recently released the 2021 Fourth Quarter and Annual Residential Real Estate Sales Report for Westchester, Putnam, Rockland, Orange, Sullivan, and Bronx Counties, New York. The report noted that residential sales in all markets, with the exception of the Bronx, fell sharply in the fourth quarter as compared to the fourth quarter of 2020. While sales in the Bronx shot up 39.8%, activity in Rockland County fell 10.8%, followed by a 15% drop in sales volume in Westchester County. Orange, Sullivan and Putnam counties saw home sales declines of 15.2%, 18.4%

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Orange County IDA Exec. Director Promises Needed Reforms

By John Jordan

NEW WINDSOR—The Orange County Industrial Development Agency was rattled by a major corruption scandal last year and an entirely new Board of Directors and Executive Director have promised to restore public trust in the organization this year by enacting a number of reform policies.

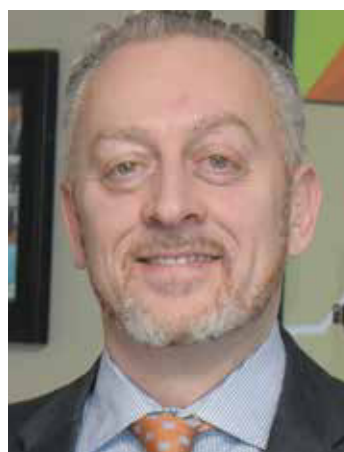
IDA Executive Director Bill Fioravanti in *Real Estate In-Depth’s* “Five Questions With” feature this month (see page 2) chronicles some of the reform measures the IDA has already instituted that fosters greater transparency in its operations.

“There was a time when this agency was more closed-off from its partners

and from members of the public and I think you are going to see an immediate about face in that regard,” Fioravanti said.

Among some of the reforms in the works at the IDA include putting all of its major contracts out to bid. He noted, “You will see us re-procure everything so that the public knows that there are no favors, there are no preferences or preferential treatment. Everything is on the up and up.” Fioravanti also promised greater transparency when it comes to its consideration of incentives for worthwhile development projects.

The IDA saw little activity during its transition in leadership but Fioravanti believes that investor interest has



Orange County IDA Executive Director Bill Fioravanti

picked up of late. “This Board is clear that they are pro-business. They want to incentivize good projects that are deserving and we want to do it the right way. We want them to be good partners that will be accountable and will do what they commit to be doing in terms of job creation and the other guidelines.”

While focused on moving forward, he did note that the IDA Board has authorized its newly hired Legal Counsel to review possible legal claims in connection with the activities of two former administrative officials and a Board Director of the IDA who pled guilty to corruption charges and made restitution of more than \$1 million to the IDA last year.

Gov. Hochul Signs Bill Package to Combat Housing Discrimination in Response to Newsday’s Expose

By John Jordan

ALBANY—New York Gov. Kathy Hochul signed a legislative package on Dec. 21 totaling nine bills geared at combating housing discrimination and addressing issues raised in a *Newsday* expose entitled “Long Island Divided.”

The centerpiece of the legislation is the Anti-Discrimination in Housing Fund that will permit the state to conduct fair housing testing. Other initiatives included in the bills signed into law range from increasing training and raising the maximum fines for misconduct by real estate brokers and salespersons, to emphasizing that all state and local agencies that administer state housing programs have an obligation to “affirmatively further fair housing.” These new bills, spearheaded by Senate Housing Committee Chair Brian Kavanagh and Assembly Housing Committee Chair Steven Cymbrowitz, will ensure the real estate workforce is well versed in fair housing practices and that the new fund is sufficiently resourced to carry out its intended purpose, New York State officials said.



New York Gov. Kathy Hochul

The *Newsday* expose published in November 2019 was the culmination of a three-year investigation that uncovered widespread evidence of unequal treatment by real estate agents on Long Island and both explicit and implicit bias that exists in the real estate industry. The


expose led to State Senate hearings and some disciplinary actions taken against some of the agents identified in the series.

“For too long, the dream of owning a home has been out of reach for too many New Yorkers because of discrimination and bigotry,” said Gov. Hochul. “When intrepid investigative journalists uncovered housing discrimination in New York, we took action to end this unacceptable practice. I’m proud to sign strong new laws expanding access to fair housing and allowing more New Yorkers to achieve the American dream of owning their homes.”

In a prepared statement, the New York State Association of Realtors stated in response to the housing discrimination bills signed into law: “The New York State Association of Realtors, Inc. (NYSAR) was proud to have worked with state lawmakers over the last two years to strengthen fair housing laws in New York State. We commend Governor Hochul and the State Legislature for their actions and their willingness to work with Realtors and other industry partners toward reasonable solutions that enhance fair housing education for all real estate licensees and increase penalties for bad actors who violate the law. There is no place for illegal discrimination, whether it be in housing or elsewhere. The New York State Association of Realtors Inc. is committed to educating our members about these new laws and regulations and will promote strict compliance.”

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Section Two

HGAR 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

HUDSON VALLEY REAL ESTATE REPORT

5 QUESTIONS WITH

Orange County IDA Executive Director Bill Fioravanti

By John Jordan

The embattled Orange County Industrial Development Agency is in the midst of implementing reforms in response to a corruption scandal that rocked the agency and the county's business community last year with guilty pleas by two of its chief administrative officers and a member of its Board of Directors.

Shortly after the three individuals—Orange County IDA Managing Director Vincent Cozzolino, IDA Chief Executive Officer Laurie Villasuso and Board Director Edward Diana—agreed to repay the IDA approximately \$1.27 million in restitution in September 2021 as part of plea agreements that afforded them no jail time for their acts of corruption, the IDA hired Bill Fioravanti as its new executive director. The guilty pleas were the result of a joint investigation by the Orange County District Attorney's office, the State Comptroller's office and the New Windsor Police Department.

Fioravanti, who was serving as interim executive director of the IDA shortly after the scandal broke in March 2001 at the direction of Orange County Executive Steve Neuhaus, was appointed to permanent status by the IDA Board of Directors in October of last year. Since then, Fioravanti has been working with the Orange County IDA Board of Directors, chaired by Mike Torelli, to institute new policies and procedures aimed at bringing more transparency to its operations, as well as restore the public trust in the organization. The Orange County Legislature had voted unanimously to remove the prior Board of Directors in the early days of the scandal.

Fioravanti had served since May 2018 as Orange County's Director of Economic Development up until his permanent appointment as IDA Executive Director this past fall. Previously, the City of Newburgh resident was the Director of Business Attraction for the Orange County Partnership for more than four years. He also has served as the Associate Executive Director of the YMCA of Middletown and the executive director for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Orange and Sullivan Counties.

1 Real Estate In-Depth: You were recently named Executive Director of the Orange County IDA after splitting time as Interim IDA Director and as Economic Development Director for Orange County.

What are your chief short-term goals in respect to returning public trust in the scandal-tainted agency?

Fioravanti: I think really it is all about openness. There was a time when this agency was more closed-off from its partners and from members of the public and I think you are going to see an immediate about face in that regard. Obviously, we operate under General Municipal Laws and we have to have open meetings. We have to be clear about what is on our agendas and you will see all that from us. We are continuing to work with the Board Chair and the entire Board (of Directors) to ensure transparency in all the actions taken by the Board.

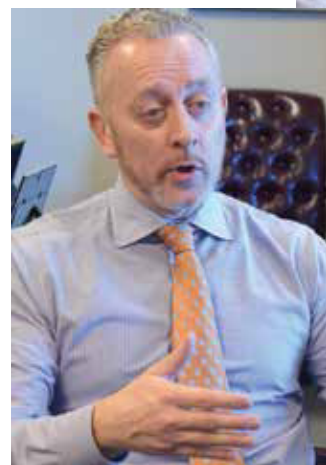
Frankly, I am a bit of a known commodity in the county and the region

and I think people know what I am about, that I am about community development and economic development. It is not economic development at any cost. It is what is best for the county, the municipalities and the residents and our businesses as well. So, I believe that played a part in my appointment that people know what they get with me. Transparency is something we are going to work on every day; working to restore the public's trust.

2 Real Estate In-Depth: What are some of the reforms the new IDA Board of Directors have instituted and

what other measures do you expect to implement in the near future to increase transparency and improve efficiencies at the IDA?

Fioravanti: Well, we are certainly strictly adhering to the guidelines, not just the GML (General Municipal Law), but the Authorities Budget Office that really over-



sees public authorities like ours. There are very strict guidelines for your website, what needs to be posted

and when, transparency of projects, documents, communications and things like that. In addition, in terms of annual reporting, (there are guidelines) on projects that received incentives and what milestones they have to reach in terms of jobs created and such. We need to ensure that there is complete transparency and accountability in those regards. So, we have a new General Counsel that we recently hired—Susan Katzoff of the law firm Bousquet Holstein, PLLC of Syracuse. Frankly, I think this plays into your question, you are going to see us re-procure every service we have here. Whether it is legal counsel, we also do local labor audits of local labor (hiring) requirements we have, everything down to cleaning you will see us re-procure everything so that the public knows that there are no favors, there are no preferences or preferential



treatment. Everything is on the up and up. The same thing goes for our projects. There is annual reporting and all of that is completely transparent.

Other than that, the Board is operating in a way that is very open. We invite our partners in the region and in the state, whether it is the foreign trade zone, the Orange County Partnership, (Orange County) Chamber of Commerce, we do want to have a symbiotic relationship and seamless coordination (with these organizations). I think that is something that Orange County has always done a tremendous job of. No matter what is going on behind the scenes, we have a very well-run economic development machine and we all work very well together to get deals done. I think Orange County is known for getting

deals done and it is not always that easy. Not everything we have done has been slam dunks, but we come together to make sure it is in the right project in the right place and that the right support and resources are there.

Editor's note: Fioravanti then addressed some conflict of issue matters that surfaced as part of the corruption investigation.

There were, actually, very loose conflict of interest policies on forms that were completed and this Board months ago passed new (stricter) conflict of interest policies. (While he noted that conflict of interest regulations would not have prevented the actions of the past staff and Board Director, he did note that you also need "leadership that you can count on and believe in, with integrity and I think that was the main criteria when the County Legislature was looking for a new slate of Board Directors were ethics and a lack of conflicts and people that were here to do the right thing. And I think that when they made their next big step with rebuilding the organization by hiring me, I think that was in mind as well.")

3 Real Estate In-Depth: After guilty pleas, the IDA was reimbursed more than \$1 million by former IDA staff and a member of the Board of Directors. There have been some discussions at previous IDA sessions of possible further actions to be taken in connection with the corruption scandal. Can you provide an update?

Fioravanti: I won't elaborate much on this because it is a legal case and quite frankly because it is not my focus. I am really focused on moving this agency forward in attracting businesses

and growing the economy. Obviously, it is a legitimate concern. Of course, there was the Office of the State Comptroller's report that was done in conjunction with the District Attorney so we have a lot of recommendations and problems that were outlined in that report and the Orange County Legislature recently put out a report so we use that as a basis (for change) as well. Based upon that information and all of the documents and everything we collected for those investigations, the Board did as I mentioned previously, hire a new Legal Counsel, who is advising us on these matters; working with the County Attorney's Office, who has been our Interim Counsel since the transition of leadership. The Board has authorized at its recent Board meeting a review by our new Legal Counsel of possible claims and implementation of any required action.

Editor's Note: When asked if those possible claims involve any legal claim in connection with the corruption scandal, Fioravanti responded, "Yes, like a civil proceeding essentially. I think we all know what was done and what was the extent and we are talking millions of dollars (in addition to the restitution funds received by the IDA). "There were more expenses that were incurred as the result of the illegitimate actions of the prior administration. So, to any extent that is recoverable, I think that is what the (IDA) Board will be considering and again our new Legal Counsel will lead us through that (review)," Fioravanti said.

4 Real Estate In-Depth: Understandably, the IDA saw a decrease in activity as it reorganized its operations. Are you beginning to see new projects coming before the IDA for consideration and are you working cooperatively with other economic development organizations, including the Orange County Partnership, to advance new development ventures in the county?

Fioravanti: The simple answer is "Yes, absolutely." We are seeing a lot of activity. We do have some potential applications in the pipeline from business attractions and expansions we have spoken to. But, the longer play on that is, just as you asked, working with our partners in Orange County and the region—our economic development partners—to create new opportunities. This Board is clear that they are pro-business. They want to incentivize good projects that are deserving and we want to do it the right way. We want them to be good partners that will be accountable and will do what they commit to be doing in terms of job creation and the other guidelines. But, I am excited to say that (investor) interest has started to ramp up for sure. Again, we are going to work with the Orange County Partnership and our other partners, including Empire State Development, to help develop new opportunities. Orange County is always very competitive, we are in the game on a lot of great projects and I expect that to continue to be the same going forward.

Realtors Expect Continued Strong Housing Market in 2022

Continued from page 1

and 25.2% respectively.

The drop off in sales in the fourth quarter was an anomaly for all markets for the year. All posted sizable sales increases for the year as compared to 2020. Bronx County had the largest percentage increase in residential sales at 61.4% year-over-year with 2,553 units sold as compared to 1,582 sales for 2020. Rockland County led the northern counties with an increase of 19.3% (3,631 units compared to 3,044 units in 2020); Westchester, a close second, posted 19.1% increase (11,855 units compared to 9,955 units for 2020); followed by Orange County with a 16% increase (5,406 residential sales compared to 4,662 sales in 2020); Putnam experienced a 10.6% increase over 2020 (1,605 units compared to 1,451) and Sullivan County had a 9.6% increase for 2021 (1,393 compared to 1,271 in 2020).

For perspective, the HGAR/OneKey MLS report noted that while there were significant decreases in the number of residential sales in all counties, except the Bronx, when comparing the 2021 fourth quarter to the 2020 fourth quarter sales, it is important to remember that the fourth quarter 2020 sales were fueled by a surge in buying activity in the second half of 2020 once COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. The report concluded that, "A more realistic comparison would be to the fourth quarters of 2019 and 2018, and the 2021 fourth quarter residential sales numbers were significantly higher than either of those two years."

The migration of New York City residents to the Hudson Valley fueled sales activity as well as increases in the median sale price in all markets. The median price of a single-family residence in Bronx County increased 8.5% to \$575,000. The largest percentage price increase for a single-family home occurred in Sullivan County with a 25.3% increase to \$244,400 from \$195,000 in 2020. Westchester County saw a 6.1% increase in its median price for the year (\$780,000 as compared to \$735,000 in 2020) and actually experienced a slight decrease (-0.8%) in median price for the fourth quarter.

Orange County single-family median price year-over-year rose 16.5% (\$367,000 compared to \$315,000 in 2020), while Rockland County's single-family median sale price increased 12% to \$560,000 (from \$500,00 in 2020). Putnam County saw its single-family median price rise 15.8% to \$440,000 (from \$380,000 in 2020) for the year.

A persistent problem for the suburban New York markets has been low inventory, which has resulted in intense competition for quality listings and multiple bids. According to the HGAR/OneKey MLS report, inventory (for all types of housing) at the end of 2021 fell 53.5% in Rockland; 28.8% in Westchester; 31.4% in Orange; 27.2% and 13.0% in Putnam. Inventory in the Bronx increased 4.8%. Editor's Note: For the full HGAR/OneKey MLS report, go to pages 6, 7 and 8 in the second section of the newspaper.

HGAR President Anthony Domathoti said there was a slowing of sales in the HGAR market region, with the exception of the Bronx, in the fourth quarter. He believes that the migration out of New York City may be at an end.

He said that buyers are now returning to Manhattan and the outer boroughs. "So, it is the return of the buyer to the New York City market that is writing the narrative

for the fourth quarter of 2021," he said.

Domathoti, who is Broker-Owner of EXIT Realty Premium in the Bronx, pointed out the tremendous sales surge in the Bronx in 2021 with a nearly 62% increase in activity, including a nearly 46% spike in single-family home sales.

Domathoti believes that while conditions are still good for sellers, the rate of home price increases in the suburban markets are not sustainable.

"The economy continues to improve, which is good for real estate, but at the same time the price increases in 2022 will be moderate. It will not be like what happened in 2021."

Brokerage firm Houlihan Lawrence in its fourth quarter report stated that the low supply of listings led to a natural decline in the number of sales in the suburban markets in the fourth quarter of last year.

"While the first half of 2021 varied in specific metrics to the second half, two factors remained constant. The inventory was at an all-time low, and buyer demand was exceptionally strong. As the year progressed, the sales outpaced inventory replacement, and this further restriction led to a decline in pending sales and, eventually, closed sales," said Houlihan Lawrence President and CEO Liz Nunan.

She continued. "2022 will likely not see the record-breaking number of sales seen in 2021. But until the supply and demand fall into balance, the market will still be charged with buyers, and sellers will continue to prosper."

Anthony P. Cutugno, Senior Vice President, Director of Private Brokerage for Houlihan Lawrence, speaking on the luxury market said that like the conventional home sales market, the fourth quarter saw lower luxury sales in the region.

"As the supply of luxury homes declined to historic lows, closed sales cooled down—every luxury market registered double-digit declines this quarter. Homebuyers are not retreating, but their desire and ability to purchase a new home are often thwarted by shrinking supply. Looking forward, pending sales are down at year's end; robust gains of 2021 will likely taper off in 2022," he said.

While sales fell in the fourth quarter, Leah Caro, Broker-Owner of Park Sterling Realty in Bronxville, said that two weeks into January 2022—normally a slow time for the housing market—the market continues to be busy with buyers searching for homes in Westchester County.

Caro, who was a guest on the Building and Realty Institute of Westchester's "Building Knowledge" radio program on Jan. 14, said that in terms of the 2022 housing market, "I think interest rates will tick up slightly. I don't think that will be something that will drive people out of the buying marketplace."

She believes that the rise in inflation rates will stabilize later this year and hopes the federal government and others address supply chain issues and other market forces that are preventing people from getting back to work or taking on new jobs.

With millions now receiving the COVID vaccine and boosters, Caro is hopeful that the worst of the pandemic is in the rear-view mirror. "We are definitely in for some adjustments and some changes (in 2022) but I am super optimistic, but I always am," she said.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Anthony A. Domathoti
HGAR President



Let's Join Forces: It's Time To Renew, Re-Energize And Re-Engage

As I open my computer to start writing my first article as 2022 HGAR President for *Real Estate In-Depth*, I go through several thoughts, emotions, and directions! I quickly check my e-mail, look at the Instagram posts and click around the MLS.....I feel a sense of urgency, a sense of optimism and resilience despite all that is going on around us.

Resilience is defined as the ability of people or things to recover quickly after something unpleasant, such as shock, injury, etc. In our case, it has been 24 months of COVID-19 and its impact. If 2020 and 2021 taught us anything, it was that the epidemic is here to stay, and that we must negotiate this new normal to succeed. In 2022, how will that new normal present itself? No one is sure how much longer the pandemic will last. Although things are still uncertain, we are in this together.

I am not exaggerating to say that we will increasingly have to manage within similar scenarios of not only unforeseen but also unthinkable change in the future, as we face severe climate change, virulent new epidemics, legislative headwinds, unstable societal conditions, to name a few. With all present circumstances.... how do we handle, manage and overcome adversity? It's time to Renew, Re-Energize and Re-Engage! That's Who We R®!

As leaders, encourage yourself when other people collapse. You keep on going because you must have something inside of you that is renewed during the time of battle. Renewal requires opening yourself up to new ways of thinking and feeling. The National Association of Realtors adopted the Code of Ethics in 1913. What does this mean to you in your professional endeavor? It means all Realtors have voluntarily agreed to abide by a Code of Ethics, based on professionalism and protection of the public. Would you renew your commitment to walk in the Pathways to professionalism?

The real estate industry continues to change dramatically. As we begin this new year, I urge you to be steadfast and with a renewed commitment to the duties we have to clients, customers, and the public even as it evolves with the times. What gives me the greatest strength is the power and connectivity of our association. More than ever before, we need one another—to help provide guidance, insight, and faith. We have a commitment and a responsibility to be an authoritative voice for our members and our community right now.

My main goals for my presidency are to continue the great work of so many within our association, to constantly strive to elevate our profession within our ranks, Renew relationships association wide, Re-energize Realtors to uphold Fair Housing principles, promote principles of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Re-engage in the Realtor Party and to enhance our service to the community in which we live and work.

Re-en-er-gize—give fresh vitality..... to serving our clients and customers, enthusiasm in upholding the Fair Housing Principles and a fervor to face challenges of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion! We must work to actively avoid tokenizing new members and create a true culture of inclusion to ultimately dismantle systemic racism by dissolving barriers and creating unity.

I quote Mahatma Gandhi who said: "If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him. We need not wait to see what others do."

We each look for exceptional experiences in our daily lives, so treat others better than you'd like to be treated.

To Re-engage, we need to be fully present. To be fully present we must be physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focused and spiritually aligned with a purpose beyond our own immediate self-interest. As our industry faces strong legislative headwinds, it's time to Re-engage in the Realtor Party which is the

only advocacy group in America that fights exclusively for home ownership, real estate investment, strong communities, and the free enterprise system. It's time to Re-invest in RPAC. Now more than ever, it is critical for Realtors across America to come together and speak with one voice about the stability a sound and dynamic real estate market brings to our communities.

My work is not focused on the political right or the left. Let's focus on housing affordability, flood insurance, rent control, housing finance reform, property taxes and to support current and future homeowners. It is up to all of us to invest in and own the process, celebrate the successes, and lean forward to ultimately Own Who We R®.

Remember, HGAR is YOUR Association and we need YOUR knowledge, experience, involvement, input and feedback to ensure success in 2022! I hope that you volunteer or answer, "Yes, how can I help?" when called upon to participate in a focus group or task force.

We have so much to look forward to in 2022, and I am honored to have the opportunity to serve as President of such a valued organization, and to work with so many talented individuals who each bring a new perspective and skill set to the table. It is my passion to serve and support you, and to raise the bar for all real estate professionals. So, let's Renew, Re-Energize and Re-Engage and get 2022 off to a fabulous start... let's Move Forward Together! We R® HGAR Strong!

GATEWAY PERSPECTIVES

By Richard Haggerty
HGAR CEO



Focus on the Positive

As we begin 2022, I have to admit it does seem a bit like "Groundhog Day." After having high hopes for the new year as 2021 was winding down, we were confronted with yet another COVID variant, Omicron, and everyone is saying, here we go again. We also have the drum beat of negative news, which frankly is rarely news and is more often partisan opinion. Given all this noise, it is easy to be overwhelmed by waves of pessimism as we look at the new year.

So, what are we to do as we enter the early weeks of 2022? I suggest we make a commitment to focus on the positive and always keep things in perspective. I know it sounds simpler than it really is—but it shouldn't be.

First, let's look at COVID. We are all COVID fatigued, for very good reason. Some schools are open one week and closed the next, and parents and kids are scrambling their daily schedules yet again. However, the Omicron variant, while more contagious, has been far milder than the previous variants and the new infection rates are plateauing. The vaccines are working. There are fewer people going to the hospital. We are learning to live with COVID, and the effects on our daily lives are nothing like we experienced in the early days of 2019.

Second, let's look at the real estate market in the greater New York City and lower Hudson Valley. 2021 was one of the strongest markets in memory, surpassing 2020, which was fueled by what some call "the great COVID migration." However, that migration in large part happened right here in New York, with some folks speeding up their decisions to leave the city for more space and a back yard, and others taking advantage of good value in the city to buy while it lasted. What has happened since is that Manhattan and the boroughs, as well as the Hudson River Valley, have experienced more than a year of strong activity. Those headlines back in 2019 shouting, "Everyone is leaving New York, never to return," were patently false.

Next, let's take a deep look at that narrative now making the rounds that we have runaway inflation, which will lead to rate hikes which will cripple the market. We have had an extended period of low inflation for three decades. For a good chunk of 2019 the world economy came to halt because of the pandemic. Turning the economy off like that, and then turning it back on, is going to result in some bumps

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In Memoriam

The Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors regrets to inform its membership of the passing of longtime Realtor Josephine "Jo" Falcone, who died at her White Plains home on Jan. 5 at the age of 84.

Falcone, known for her philanthropy and community service, was a licensed Realtor since 1984 and worked for Century 21 Wolff on Mamaroneck Ave. in White Plains and was the manager of the Century 21 firm for more than 20 years. When the then Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty acquired Century 21 Wolf in 2009, she later served as the manager of Rand's Thornwood office.

She was born March 26, 1937 in White Plains to Angelina Barilla and Sylvester (Sal) Dell'Orletta. She is preceded in death by both parents, her brothers Nicky and Dominic, as well as her husband Joseph L. Falcone. Joe and Jo met while working at a department store. After a whirlwind romance, they wed on Sept. 21, 1958, and remained married for more than 60 years.

She is survived by her children AnnaMarie Norris of White Plains, Joseph A. Falcone of Basalt, CO, Michael Falcone of White Plains and Linda Chemaly of Rocklin, CA; son in laws Charles Norris and Robert Chemaly and 10 grandchildren: Nicole, Ben, Brianna, Alexa, Michael, RJ, Michael Gene, Kyle, Christopher and Danielle.

Falcone was one of the first two female Rotarians worldwide, becoming president of the White Plains chapter in 2004. She was inducted into both the Westchester County Senior Citizens and White Plains High School Hall of Fames, served on both the Common Council and as President of the WPHS PTA, elected to two terms on the Board of Education, a member of the Glenn D. Loucks Track & Field Committee, and Tiger Fans Committee. She also served as the director of the WPHS Bengalettes and Tigerettes dance teams and hosted two local TV shows.

A memorial visitation was held on Saturday, Jan. 8th at McMahan, Lyon & Hartnett Funeral Home, Inc., 491 Mamaroneck Ave. White Plains. In lieu of flowers, the family is requesting that you make donations to the following charities near and dear to Jo's heart: Glenn D. Loucks Memorial Track and Field Games Inc., The Friends of White Plains Public Library, The Rotary Club of White Plains and Slater-center.org.

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Broker's Duty to Supervise: Changes in Light of The New Housing Discrimination Legislation

LEGAL CORNER

By John Dolgetta, Esq



On Dec. 21, 2021, Gov. Kathy Hochul signed expansive new legislation contained in nine bills aimed to combat housing discrimination in New York State [see <https://on.ny.gov/3FfcBXJ>]. The legislation was passed as a direct result of *Newsday's* investigative report entitled "Long Island Divided" [see <https://bit.ly/3zKUQPO>] and addresses many of the concerns and issues uncovered in the investigation.

Some critical elements of the legislation deal with the added requirements of brokers, as well as associate brokers, relating to their duty to supervise and the implementation of standardized operating procedures for all brokerage firms. The new legislation also implements additional anti-discrimination, anti-bias, cultural competency training requirements, as well as increasing the amount of maximum fines and licensing and renewal fees for all licensees.

Broker's Duty to Supervise Under RPL § 441 And § 175.21 of the Rules and Regulations: A Review of The Existing Standards

Section §175.21(a) of the Department of State's Rules and Regulations provides that "[t]he supervision of a real estate salesperson by a licensed real estate broker, required by subdivision l(d) of §441 of the Real Property Law, shall consist of regular, frequent and consistent personal guidance, instruction, oversight and superintendence by the real estate broker with respect to the general real estate brokerage business conducted by the broker, and all matters relating thereto."

In light of the recent developments stemming from the *Newsday* report and the new legislation, it is now more important than ever for brokers to think about the procedures they currently have in place to supervise the actions of their licensees. As pointed out in my December 2021 column in *Real Estate In-Depth*, the DOS and NYS Human Rights Commission have filed complaints against many of the brokers and salespersons involved in the investigation which are making their way through the system.

Review of Court of Appeals Decision In Roberts Real Estate, Inc.

In 1992, the New York Court of Appeals issued a landmark decision in *Roberts Real Estate, Inc. v. Department of State* (80 NY2d 116, 589 NYS2d 392 (1992)). New York's highest court held that when a supervising broker is unaware (i.e., does not have "actual knowledge") of the actions of a salesperson and upon finding that the salesperson has acted improperly, even where there may be a failure to supervise, the penalty to the principal broker is limited to a fine pursuant to Real Property Law § 442-c.

In *Roberts*, the New York State Department of State "...sought judicial interpretation of Real Property Law § 442-c that would allow it to suspend or revoke a corporate broker's license based on interpreting 'actual knowledge' to include imputed knowledge of employee-salespersons." The Court of Appeals concluded that the interpretation of the DOS was not supported by the RPL and held that the DOS was not permitted to suspend the license of the broker based upon an "imputed knowledge" standard. The court did indicate, however, that the "...absence of actual knowledge does not insulate real estate brokers from disciplinary measures less severe than license suspension or revocation..." and remanded the case back to the DOS to allow it to consider a lesser sanction (i.e., a fine).

The DOS in *Division of Licensing Services v Bell*, 21 DOS 89 (1989), also similarly held that "...[w]here...the salesperson acts in such a way as to prevent the broker from being aware of his conduct, it cannot be said that the broker failed to meet his supervisory obligations." While the current standard would seem to protect a broker against revocation or suspension if the broker was not aware of the discrimination, several DOS complaints filed as a result of the *Newsday* investigation also name the brokers for "failure to supervise."

'Standardized Operating Procedures' Implemented Under the New Legislation

One part of the newly enacted legislation (S.2131-A/A.618 [see <https://bit.ly/3zQfDAH>]) amends RPL § 442-h of the real property law by adding subdivision 4, which "...directs the Secretary of State...to promulgate rules and regulations requiring real estate brokers to institute standardized operating procedures for the prerequisites prospective homebuyers must meet prior to receiving any services." The legislation will require brokers to submit these procedures to the DOS. The DOS will be required to maintain a copy of the procedures while the broker is licensed "...and for at least five years thereafter." The broker will also be required to submit any changes to the procedures to DOS within 30 days of any such change thereto.

The legislation provides that any salesperson who fails to abide by the procedures will be subject to the penalties under RPL § 441-c. Additionally, the legislation further amends RPL § 441-c by permitting the DOS to revoke or suspend the license of a real estate broker or salesperson should they violate this new subdivision 4 of RPL § 442-h. The legislature explains that this requirement will "...allow for client intake procedures to be monitored and standardized, preventing discriminatory practices."

Associate Brokers Serving as Office Managers Must Now Supervise Other Real Estate Professionals

This new legislation (S.2157-A/A.6355 [see <https://bit.ly/33fiGGy>]) introduces a critical change to the existing law with respect to the oversight standards of associate brokers who act as office managers. Under the new law, associate brokers who serve as office managers must now supervise other licensed salespersons and associate brokers in their office. Additionally, in order to qualify to be appointed as an office manager, the associate broker "...must have been active in the real estate

industry two of the four years before beginning duties as office manager." This new legislation now holds an associate broker, who is an office manager, to the same oversight standards of a principal broker.

Brokers having multiple locations usually appoint associate brokers as office managers to supervise branch offices. The legislature points out that associate brokers, while licensed under the same standards as brokers, "...are not held to the same statutory obligations of oversight placed on brokers at their principal place of business." Under the previous law, an office manager/associate broker was only "...held to the same standards as a real estate agent while [at the same time] maintaining their broker's license."

It is the legislature's view that the "...lack of oversight over agents by office managers can manifest itself with agents who are not properly trained and supervised in their behavior, performance, and compliance with fair housing regulations." According to the legislature, the "...bill ensures that proper oversight is given over real estate agents irrespective of whether they are working out of a broker's principal place of business or branch office under an office manager." This is a major change in the current law. The "duty to supervise" now extends to associate brokers acting as office managers. In most proceedings brought against licensees by the DOS, the DOS commonly names the principal broker in the complaint for a "failure to supervise." The DOS will now certainly name the associate broker-office manager in a complaint.

The Independent Contractor Relationship In Light of the New Legislation

The independent contractor relationship, which requires payment of compensation to salespersons based only on sales production, requires that the employing broker not "direct and control" the salesperson. The DOS requirement to supervise the activities of the salesperson does not give the principal broker the right to "direct and control" the activities of the licensed salesperson or associate broker. The principal broker cannot instruct a salesperson to be in the office at a particular time, work specific hours or to take specific customers to properties designated by the principal broker.

The DOS and RPL, however, require brokers (and now associate brokers-office managers) to monitor the activities of the salesperson and have the "duty to supervise." This duty of supervision consists of "...regular, frequent and consistent personal guidance, instruction, oversight and superintendence..." There has always been a concern for principal brokers when dealing with the "direction and control" versus "supervision" issue. This was lessened after amendments to the Workers Compensation Law and Labor Law which outlined clearly the circumstances under which a salesperson would be considered an independent contractor in New York.

An additional requirement is that there be a written contract with the salesperson in the form prescribed by statute and that the principal broker and salesperson live to the letter of New York law. Doing so also complies with the Internal Revenue Code provisions (IRC Section 3508) which indicate that if a real estate salesperson has a written contract, he or she will be presumed to be an independent contractor.

While all of the above independent contractor standards remain in place, the new legislation does introduce many additional supervision and training requirements for the broker, and for those associate brokers who are appointed as office managers. For years, principal brokers were discouraged from creating office manuals because they might be construed as an indication of "direction and control," but the new legislation now mandates the creation of "standardized operating procedures" to be provided to prospective clients before they are permitted to provide real estate brokerage services. While the rules and regulations have yet to be promulgated, it is important that brokers continue to consider and comply with all of the independent contractor standards previously considered, and to closely monitor the progress of these yet to be promulgated rules and regulations.

Additional Highlights of the New Discrimination Legislation

Two of the bills signed into law (S.945-B/A.6866 [see <https://bit.ly/3Fdmbuc>] and S.2133-A/A.5363 [see <https://bit.ly/3nkzqTU>]) provide for increases in surcharges and fines payable by licensees and also establish an Anti-Discrimination in Housing Fund. The fines contained in paragraph (a) of subdivision 1 of § 441-c have been increased from a maximum of \$1,000 to a maximum of \$2,000. The legislation also provides that 50% of the revenue from these fines are directed to the Anti-Discrimination in Housing Fund. The funds will be used for fair housing testing and the Attorney General is authorized to "...allocate grants to various government and non-governmental entities specializing in anti-housing discrimination."

Brokers and salespersons will now be required to pay surcharges when paying licensing and renewal fees. Brokers will be required to pay \$30 and licensed real estate salespersons will be required to pay \$10. The funds generated from these surcharges will also go to the Anti-Discrimination in Housing Fund for fair housing testing efforts. Therefore, with the increased funding available, expansion of testing efforts will undoubtedly begin to ramp up. Brokers and agents need to make every effort to comply with all anti-discrimination and fair housing laws.

Increased Anti-Discrimination And Fair Housing Training

Three of the bills (S.2132-B/A.5359 [see <https://bit.ly/3HZI22a>]; S.538-B/S.4638-A [see <https://bit.ly/3nkD5RE>]; and S.979-A/A.844-A [see <https://bit.ly/3Fle5j4>]) also expanded continuing education requirements relating to implicit bias training, anti-bias training, education based on historical "legacy of segregation, unequal treatment and...lack of access to housing." Training must include, but is not limited to, the following:

- The legacy of segregation, unequal treatment, and historic lack of access to housing opportunities.
- Unequal access to amenities and resources on the basis of race, disability and other protected characteristics.
- Federal, state, and local fair housing laws.
- Anti-bias training.

Brokers and salespersons are also required to take two hours of training relat-

New York State Awards \$145M for Affordable Housing Projects

ALBANY—Governor Kathy Hochul announced on Dec. 16 more than \$145 million has been awarded to create or preserve 1,178 affordable homes in 21 separate developments across New York. The funding will further pandemic recovery efforts, fight homelessness, help close the digital divide for lower income households, and expand access to safe and sustainable affordable housing opportunities that advance the state's clean energy goals, state officials said.

"This \$145-million investment renews our commitment to creating and preserving the safe, healthy and affordable homes that New Yorkers deserve," Gov. Hochul said. "Our best strategy for recovery from the pandemic is ensuring that everyone has a solid roof over their head and access to the services they need to remain securely housed. With the inclusion of additional resources for clean energy development and requiring free broadband access, we are building back better than before by creating housing that promises a stronger, greener and more equitable New York today and for the future."

The awards are being provided through New York State Homes and Community Renewal's Multifamily Finance RFP, a competitive process used to award federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and subsidy financing for affordable and supportive multifamily housing developments. Together with an additional \$394 million in public and private sources, the 21 new developments will inject \$511 million in total de-

velopment costs into local economies.

All 21 projects are required to meet green building standards as part of HCR's efforts to achieve the goals set by the New York State Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. The CLCPA, the most ambitious climate and energy plan in the nation, requires an 85% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels by 2050 and eventually net zero emissions across all sectors of the economy.

Four of the awarded projects are supported by additional funding from the Clean Energy Initiative, a \$7.5 million pilot program launched earlier this year by HCR and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. The Clean Energy Initiative is designed to allow more New York families to live in healthier, clean energy homes, while providing housing developers with streamlined access to technical assistance and affordable housing finance opportunities. These four projects will be all-electric and/or carbon neutral.

In addition, the developments will provide free or low-cost broadband services as part of the state's efforts to close the digital divide in lower-income communities.

An additional \$34.7 million in coordinated funding from the Homeless Housing Assistance Program, administered by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, has been awarded to seven of the projects to aid in the development of supportive housing.

The award recipients in the New York City-Hudson Valley regions were:

New York City

\$15.8 million for The Rise in Brownsville, Brooklyn. As part of the state's Vital Brooklyn Initiative, Xenolith Partners, LLC and the Women's Prison Association were selected to redevelop a property owned by One Brooklyn Health System. The building will include 72 affordable and supportive apartments on the upper floors and commercial space on the ground floor use by OBHS, Interfaith Medical Center's Alternative Housing Program, and the Community Capacity Development nonprofit organization.

\$10.8 million for Park Place in Brooklyn's Crown Heights neighborhood. The Vital Brooklyn initiative project will be constructed by winning development team H.E.L.P Development Corp on a surface parking lot owned by One Brooklyn Health System. The building will include 43 affordable apartments, including eight homes reserved for homeless families, and ground floor community facility space for the Women and Children Annex and other service providers.

\$1.8 million for Homee in the Crotona/Morrisania neighborhood of the Bronx. The existing 24-bed transitional housing project, operated by Urban Pathways, will be converted and expanded to a 79-apartment development. There are 55 supportive homes for seniors and adults, including individ-

uals reentering the community following incarceration, and 20 apartments for low-income seniors. The remaining nine apartments are for low-income households.

Mid-Hudson

\$9.4 million for Mount Hope Plaza in White Plains. The Mount Hope Community Development Corporation is developing the project on a parcel acquired from the Mount Hope AME Zion Church. The new apartments will include 35 homes for seniors aged 62 and older, and 20 apartments for individuals in need of supportive services. The development will also include a new parking garage for use by residents and the adjacent Mount Hope church.

\$6 million for Dromore Apartments in the Town of Greenburgh. The 45-unit apartment building will be constructed on vacant land by Wilder Balter Partners and the Housing Action Council. With funding from the Clean Energy Initiative, the all-electric design will feature heat pump water heater systems for domestic hot water and an ultra-high-performance building envelope, dramatically reducing the building's energy use.

\$5.2 million for the Hamlet at Carmel in the Putnam County Village of Carmel. The project will include 75 homes across five newly constructed buildings. The apartments will be affordable to a range of incomes in an area defined as a higher opportunity neighborhood with access to high-performing schools. The developer is Kearney Realty.

Houlihan Lawrence's Stronger Together Campaign Raises Over \$125,000 for Breast Cancer Awareness



Houlihan Lawrence teams at American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk held Oct. 17 at Manhattanville College.

RYE BROOK—Continuing a proud tradition that dates back 25 years, Houlihan Lawrence's real estate professionals from across its 30 office teams once again came together this fall in support of Breast Cancer Awareness month, the company's largest philanthropic initiative.

The brokerage firm reported recently that this year, the company's Stronger Together Campaign raised more than \$125,000 with four fund-raising events. The events were:

- American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk held Oct. 17 at Manhattanville College.

- American Cancer Society Real Men Wear Pink held virtually from September through October. The initiative gives men a leadership role in the fight against breast cancer.

- Miles of Hope Community Walk for Breast Cancer held Oct. 3 at James Baird State Park.

- Support Connection Walk With Us, Wherever You Are held Oct. 3. The event raised funds for free breast and ovarian cancer support services. Houlihan Lawrence is proud to partner with Support Connection for more than 25 years.

The top fundraising teams at Houli-

han Lawrence were:

The Rye Brokerage team raised \$20,158, led by Marianna Amato and Bonnie Carnavalla, both recognized as "Tenacious Ten Pacesetters 2021" by ACS. (These are the first 10 participants to reach Pacesetter status by raising \$2,500 or more).

The Scarsdale Brokerage team raised \$15,145, led by Nancy Chochrek and Avisia Limato.

The Greenwich and Riverside, CT Brokerage teams raised \$11,154, led by Jennifer Carretta.

The Chappaqua Brokerage team raised \$7,156, led by Lori Meringolo.

And the Thoroughbred Title team, a Houlihan Lawrence affiliate raised \$6,969, led by Eric Swarhout.

"We are so proud that our Houlihan Lawrence family collectively raised over \$125,000 in support of Breast Cancer Awareness this year. We congratulate everyone's hard work and commitment to make 2021 another record-breaking fundraising year in our company's history. This long-standing tradition is an incredibly important cause for all of us," said Liz Nunan, President and CEO of Houlihan Lawrence.

Over the past 25 years, Houlihan Lawrence's Stronger Together Cam-

paign has raised nearly \$2 million for Breast Cancer Awareness.

"Houlihan Lawrence has been an avid supporter of Making Strides in Westchester for decades, and its employees are fiercely committed to our mission to save more lives from breast

cancer," said Sheila Bogan, Development Manager at the American Cancer Society. "We are so grateful for this continued partnership and beyond thrilled to see the company's impact grow as our presenting sponsor for this year's walk."

Westchester IDA, LDC Provided Incentives That Fueled \$1.2B In New Investment in 2021

WHITE PLAINS—The Westchester County Industrial Development Agency and the Westchester County Local Development Corporation has provided financial incentives and tax-exempt bond financing to major developments representing more than \$1.2 billion in private investment in Westchester County's economy last year.

"As Westchester re-emerges from the economic downturn resulting from the pandemic, the IDA and LDC have

incentives and bond financing in 2021 will create hundreds of new jobs and residential units. We are particularly proud to have provided incentives for Regeneron's major expansion of its Westchester campus," said Westchester County Executive George Latimer.

In 2021, the IDA voted final approval of financial incentives for the \$275 million Gateway II multi-family residential project in Downtown White Plains. The project will feature 500 rental units



A rendering of the Gateway II project in Downtown White Plains.

played a key role as drivers of economic development in the county. The residential projects approved for financial

including 15 affordable units and is expected to create 600 construction jobs

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New Rochelle City Council Adopts Sweeping New Downtown Overlay Zone Amendments



Downtown New Rochelle

NEW ROCHELLE—The New Rochelle City Council unanimously approved on Dec. 20 significant advancements to its historic redevelopment, enabling the continuation of the district’s transformation that began six years ago.

The city’s efforts to adopt a form-based zoning code providing certainty for developers already have helped attract \$2.2 billion in private investment, resulting in the development of 9.2 million square feet of space downtown. To date, New Rochelle has approved 32 development projects, with six projects already completed and 14 under construction.

Positioning the city to emerge from the pandemic poised for continued growth, the updated plan will bolster its economic resiliency, promote stronger social connectivity within the downtown and create an important connection between the development of the waterfront and the transit-oriented development sites downtown, city officials stated.

The adopted amendments include a new waterfront overlay zone, adding a seventh district to the six zones created in 2015; 3,000 more units of housing, including 700 along the waterfront; and additions to the Community Bonus Benefits Program (CBB) to allow builders additional stories in exchange for providing community benefits such as green infrastructure, sustainability and climate resiliency improvements, which now can be outside the specific overlay zones. Increased opportunities for local Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) and more affordable housing for local residents are also incorporated into the new development plan.

“New Rochelle has enjoyed unprecedented economic growth, even through the difficult challenges of the pandemic, and now has an exciting opportunity to build on and expand our prior success,” said New Rochelle Mayor Noam Bramson. “These forward-looking updates to our downtown plan lean heavily into environmental and social governance, thereby ensuring that growth in our community is sustainable, equitable, and inclusive, while also creating a powerful magnet for ESG investment.”

The zoning updates follow an extensive community engagement campaign over the last year by the city and a generic environmental review, which sought to increase connectivity between downtown—where the bulk of the development has been focused—the waterfront and other areas of the city to increase access to recreational and green space. With demand for the city’s residential properties strong, the amendments also will formalize a shift of some mixed-use spaces to residential use to reflect the current hybrid live/work environment and significant ongoing leasing activity, city officials stressed.

In 2015, the City Council approved a game-changing redevelopment that

stimulated billions of dollars in economic investment in New Rochelle. The form-based zoning code adopted ensured that as long as developers adhered to specific criteria within each overlay zone, they could expect project approval within 90 days, faster than almost any other municipality in the region. In the last six years working closely with its master developer RXR Realty, the city has approved 6,865 new residential units, of which 3,600 are completed or under construction.

“These zoning updates reflect the feedback we’ve heard from residents and stakeholders alike, that as we look to the future, we must increase opportunities to connect all the diverse offerings New Rochelle provides, bolster important environmental improvements such as green and sustainable infrastructure, provide more opportunities for local and minority owned businesses, and create

more affordable housing for our residents,” said New Rochelle Department of Development Interim Commissioner Kathleen Gill.

“The unanimous approval of this zoning update is an example of what can be accomplished when a city works with the community and stakeholders alike to reach a common goal. I look forward to the implementation of this new zoning resulting in the continued unprecedented growth and investment in our downtown area,” said New Rochelle City Manager Charles B. Strome III.

The City of New Rochelle has been

working with developers to cultivate additional MWBE opportunities throughout the redevelopment and to promote and increase accessibility to affordable housing opportunities for residents. Those efforts include eliminating the provision that allowed developers to build off-site affordable units to keep such units on-site, increasing the fee for developers who opt out of affordable housing requirements and establishing a sliding-scale credit system to increase accessibility to new housing.

Focus on the Positive

Continued from page 4

in the road and some supply chain issues. I’m not trying to minimize inflationary pressures on the economy, but I do think we need to put them in context, and while interest rates may rise, most pundits predict a gradual rise that still falls within the range of what has been an extended period of low interest rates.

I’m writing this article on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, which provides a perfect opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of someone who faced overwhelming challenges with courage and honesty, and an opportunity for focus on some of the inequities in our society which seem to be falling off the radar. One of my favorite MLK quotes is “Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.”

We cannot let the forces of darkness and hate overwhelm us. We made strides in 2019 and 2020 in bringing a new focus on racial inequality which has plagued this country for way too long. It seems to me that momentum is waning. People of color were disproportionately affected by COVID and continue to be affected by housing affordability issues. We need to keep past President Crystal Hawkins-Syska’s commitment of the “American Promise” in promoting housing opportunity for all a priority.

So, let us all commit for 2022 to focus on the positive and maintain perspective, to drive out the darkness and embrace the light, to continue our focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts, and to promote housing opportunities for all.

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Gov. Hochul Signs Bill Package to Combat Housing Discrimination in Response to Newsday's Expose

Continued from page 1

NYSAR also noted, "Realtors have a long history of opposing illegal housing discrimination and have consistently sought constructive fair housing solutions. We look forward to continuing to work with Governor Hochul and state lawmakers on additional fair housing initiatives to the benefit of all residents of New York State."

The following is a rundown of the new housing discrimination legislation signed into law by the governor.

Creation of the Anti-Discrimination in Housing Fund

Legislation (S.945-B/A.6866) establishes an Anti-Discrimination in Housing Fund, a portion of which will be supported by fines collected for violations of anti-discrimination sections of the real property law. This bill increases the fine ceiling from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and then diverts 50% of the revenue from these fines to the Anti-Discrimination in Housing Fund. This fund will be available to the Office of the Attorney General for fair housing testing which will allocate grants to various government and non-governmental entities specializing in anti-housing discrimination.

Increasing Fines and Adding a Surcharge to Licensing Fees

Legislation (S.2133-A/A.5363) adds a surcharge to licensing and re-licensing fees for real estate brokers and salespersons to be used for statewide fair housing efforts. The surcharge, an additional \$30 for brokers and an additional \$10 for salespersons, will be deposited into the Anti-Discrimination in Housing Fund for fair housing testing efforts.

Senator James Skoufis said, "Follow-

ing Newsday's 2019 exposé on housing discrimination, my colleagues and I opened a year-long investigation into predatory practices in real estate. We held multiple joint hearings, issued 25 subpoenas to compel uncooperative Realtors and their firms to testify, and ultimately produced a wide-ranging investigative report with many legislative recommendations to tighten regulation of this often abusive industry. By signing this package of fair housing bills, Governor Hochul is sending a clear message to housing interests across New York that all homebuyers deserve to be treated with dignity and fairness."

State and Local Agencies Have an Obligation to Fair Housing

Legislation (S.1353-A/A.5428-A) requires all state and local agencies administering housing programs or enforcing housing laws that receive state funding to affirmatively further fair housing. Agencies must take meaningful steps to further fair housing. Pursuant to an agreement with the legislature, the Commissioner must report significant steps taken to in line with this obligation every five years, with interim reporting in year two and year four.

Increases Required Fair Housing Training for Real Estate Professionals

Legislation (S.2132-B/A.5359) increases required trainings for real estate professionals, particularly trainings related to fair housing. Trainings are required to include, but are not limited to courses on:

- The legacy of segregation, unequal treatment, and historic lack of access to housing opportunities;

- Unequal access to amenities and resources on the basis of race, disability and other protected characteristics;

- Federal, state, and local fair housing laws and

- Anti-bias training.

The bill is designed to prevent the unequal treatment of minority homebuyers by increasing overall instructional training as well as instructional training pertaining to fair housing and discrimination in the real estate industry.

Requires Implicit Bias Training for Real Estate Brokers or Salespersons

Legislation (S.538-B/S.4638-A) requires an additional two hours of training relating to implicit bias for real estate brokers and salespersons as part of their license renewal process. During investigations into the issues brought to light by "Long Island Divided," it became apparent that many real estate professionals were unaware of the impact implicit bias could have in their industry, state officials said. The bill ensures that all real estate professionals are made aware of how harmful implicit bias can be and how to ensure they follow fair housing guidelines.

Requires Cultural Competency Training for Real Estate Brokers and Salespersons

Legislation (S.979-A/A.844-A) requires that coursework on cultural competency be included in the curriculum for real estate broker and salesperson license qualification, and requires an additional two hours of training for real estate professionals in comprehensive cultural competency prior to renewing broker or salesperson licenses. This will help decrease discrimination in the real estate industry, and further educate real estate professionals to ensure they follow fair housing practices.

Requiring Standardized Intake Procedures for Real Estate Professionals

Legislation (S.2131-A/A.6186) requires

standardized client intake procedures for real estate brokers and allows for a penalty to be imposed on any real estate broker or salesperson who fails to comply. Pursuant to an agreement with the legislature, real estate professionals must post and maintain their standardized operating procedures at their offices for inspection by the Department of State and the public. The bill allows for client intake procedures to be monitored and standardized, preventing discriminatory practices.

Requires Associate Brokers Serving As Office Managers to Supervise Other Real Estate Professionals

Legislation (S.2157-A/A.6355) requires associate real estate brokers who serve as office managers to supervise other real estate professionals in their office. Office managers must have been active in the real estate industry two of the four years before beginning duties as office manager. Real estate brokers are responsible for maintaining and supervising their place of business, unlike associate brokers who have the same licensing but have chosen to work under the supervision of another broker. The legislation clarifies the required level of supervision and strengthens existing Department of State regulations. In addition, the legislation specifies the length of time an associate broker is required to work prior to becoming an office manager and will therefore ensure offices are appropriately supervised by experienced real estate professionals.

Creating a Telephone Line for Housing Discrimination Complaints

Legislation (S.3437-C/A.2300-C) establishes a dedicated telephone line for housing discrimination complaints. This telephone line will be run by the Division of Human Rights and will provide assistance to those experiencing housing discrimination. This will create a more efficient process for reporting incidents of housing discrimination.

Five Questions

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5 Real Estate In-Depth: The Orange County IDA operated a number of Accelerators in New Windsor, Middletown and Newburgh. Is the IDA looking to exit the Accelerator business or will it continue to operate some of these small business Accelerator locations?

Fioravanti: You are already seeing us downsize some of our Accelerator operations by attrition as our roster of businesses start to fade and our leases expire in various locations. To put it in perspective, the Board of Directors approved in October our 2022 fiscal budget and it represented a \$2.3-million reduction in expenses and that was without shutting down the Accelerator program, just by attrition what has receded and cutting all the management expenses related to them. Galileo (Technology Group, the firm previously in charge of management of the IDA Accelerator) was due \$880,000 in 2021 for just managing the Accelerator program... So, just cutting those expenses, mostly around the management of the program, was a tremendous cost savings.

I think you are going to see us continue the Accelerators sure. I think that with whatever the IDA does, we are looking to make smart, calculated investments in economic development. We are looking at the Accelerator locations on a case-by-case basis. There were obvious decisions which had to be made. For

example, in Highland Falls where there was a supposed Artificial Intelligence Accelerator and we were renting a former bank there for several months and there were zero tenants. **Editor's Note:** The IDA has extricated itself from several of its leases at the Highland Falls property. I will tell you our top concern in any of these locations are the businesses that are in there. Most of them are really hard-working people with dreams that the Accelerator was really supposed to be supporting. So, we are trying to support them, but we don't have the same staff as GTG... On a skeleton crew we are trying to do the best we can. I think you are going to see us not wanting to be landlords. So, as our valid leases expire, we are going to try and work with the landlords and those sub-tenants (and have them do direct leases with the landlord) and support them when we can.

Editor's Note: Fioravanti concluded the interview by saying that the IDA in the future hopes to duplicate its involvement in the redevelopment of a former prison site in Warwick into a thriving commercial center. The IDA was reimbursed a total of \$2.5 million of its \$3-million in financing of the Warwick Valley Office and Technology Corporate Park. The IDA's net investment of \$500,000 has transformed the property into a cutting-edge commercial hub that has produced revenue and hundreds of new jobs for the town and the county.

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914.343.4832
Acodonn@gmail.com

Study Will Include Third Lane Option on Route 17 Gov. Hochul Calls for Environmental Study Of Future Conversion of Route 17 to I-86

By John Jordan

ALBANY—The prospect of major upgrades—including the construction of what business and government leaders say is a much-needed third lane on portions of Route 17 in Orange and Sullivan counties—just got a step closer.

Although not included in her State of the State speech on Jan. 5, accompanying material given to state lawmakers included a directive from New York Gov. Kathy Hochul to the New York State Department of Transportation to undertake an environmental review of the conversion of Route 17 to federal Interstate 86 (I-86).

In her “State of the State Book” presentation, the governor said that as part of her multi-faceted transportation investment initiatives the state would accelerate the conversion of Route 17 into I-86 in Orange and Sullivan counties. Gov. Hochul stated, “Strategic investments in the Mid-Hudson Valley have resulted in the expansion of Woodbury Common and the construction of Legoland and the Resorts World Catskills Casino. Over the past several years, projects have been completed by NYSDOT to upgrade sections of Route 17, including reconstruction of the interchange at Exit 131, where Route 17 meets Interstate 87 and Route 32 (Woodbury Common), and reconstruction of Exits 122 and 125 (Legoland) to meet interstate standards. To facilitate future economic competitiveness and alleviate congestion within the



Gov. Kathy Hochul delivering the State of the State address.

region, the state will begin an environmental review to assess the conversion of the full Route 17 corridor in Orange and Sullivan counties to Interstate 86.”

The New York State Department of Transportation released a statement in connection with the governor’s directive to accelerate the conversion of Route 17 to I-86, which stated: “As Governor Hochul said in the State of the State Address, the state will undertake an environmental review to assess the con-

version of the full Route 17 corridor in Orange and Sullivan counties to Interstate 86. This study will build on the work of the recently completed Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) study and look at alternatives along the 47-mile corridor between Orange and Sullivan counties, including Monticello.”

Michael Fleischer, a consultant with the 17-Forward 86 coalition, said that based on discussions with NYSDOT officials and the department’s aforementioned statement, the environmental review will include the potential addition of a third lane on Route 17 in Orange and Sullivan counties that was included in a recently released Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study by the New York State Department of Transportation. The study released in November 2021 rejected several options to improve congestion on Route 17 and determined a host of others should move forward to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) phase, including the construction of a third lane on Route 17 in Orange and Sullivan counties, upgrades to interchanges on Route 17 in both counties and improvements be undertaken to improve connectivity to transit.

He also noted that the length of time for the environmental review process could be shortened considerably since the PEL study involved a significant amount of work that would have to be performed in the environmental review. Fleischer noted that the environmental review will therefore not be starting from scratch.

The New York State Department of Transportation has stated that the EIS would address the engineering, social, economic and environmental impacts associated with potential corridor alternatives. If the preferred alternative was to construct a third travel lane, the EIS would also include any necessary mitigation actions/strategies.

Maureen Halahan, president and CEO of the Orange County Partnership and co-chair of the 17-Forward-86 Coalition, said, “Yesterday afternoon Governor Kathy Hochul conveyed her vision for New York during her powerful State of the State address. During a time when New York’s recovery is most critical, the governor specifically has a plan for economic development through infrastructure rebuild, shovel ready sites and regional councils that focus on regional growth strategies, including the conversion of Route 17 to Interstate 86.”

Halahan later stated that she believes that the governor’s directive requires the EIS to include a thorough review of the third lane option for Route 17.

The 17-Forward 86 Coalition released a statement on social media in response to the governor’s State of the State Address, stating, “Our 17-Forward-86 Coalition is grateful to Gov. Hochul for making Route 17 a priority for investment and we look forward to working with her administration to make these long-needed upgrades a reality.”

The final report from the New York State Department of Transportation’s Route 17 Planning and Environmental Linkage (PEL) Study group recommended the state move forward with an environmental review of a General Use Third Lane in each direction on Route 17 in Orange and Sullivan counties that could if built as one major project cost anywhere from \$650 million to \$1.27 billion. The PEL Study Group also called for a study of interchange upgrades to be undertaken at exits in Orange and Sullivan counties and that improvements be made in the

region to improve connectivity to existing transit.

The scope of the construction of the General Use Third Lane beginning at Exit 131 in Harriman (Orange County) to Exit 103 (Rapp Road) in Monticello in Sullivan County would determine the cost of the project.

Option 1, which involves using the basic existing footprint of the roadway and shoulders to accommodate a third lane in each direction would cost \$385 million to \$470 million for the Orange County stretch of roadway and another \$265 million to \$325 million in Sullivan County.

Under Option 2, which would involve widening the existing roadway to accommodate the third lane expansions in both directions so that most of Route 17 would conform to federal Interstate standards, the costs would escalate. For the Orange County section, the cost would run between \$615 million to \$750 million, while the Sullivan County component’s cost ranges from \$425 million to \$520 million.

The PEL Study Group did not recommend one option over the other and also while listing interchanges in Orange and Sullivan counties that could be upgraded, it did not issue any specific recommendations, although it did point out those with the greatest need.

In referencing the need for a General Use Third Lane, the study group stated, “Reconstruction under the General Use Third Lane Alternative would provide the opportunity to address deficiencies in the existing roadway to correct non-standard features and storm-related flooding. High crash locations containing curves and overpasses would benefit from widening shoulders, increasing pavement friction, and increased banking (removal of non-conforming super elevation) under this concept. Increasing the capacity of Route 17 would provide a 24% reduction in congestion related crashes overall, per the Crash Modification Factors Clearinghouse.”

The study indicated the cost of the interchange upgrades in Orange County could run from \$135 million to \$175 million and in Sullivan County from \$43 million to \$144 million.

Improvements to Connectivity to Existing Transit projects are projected to cost between \$1 million to \$1.5 million in Sullivan County and \$9 million to \$10 million in Orange County.

The study group also recommended moving forward with a No Build scenario, but that was done chiefly because it is a requirement of the National Environmental Policy Review Act (NEPA) process for any proposed Route 17 project. The group also considered the construction of a High Occupancy Vehicle Lane and the addition of Light Rail and Bus Rapid Transit but did not recommend going forward on any of those options.

While study group officials have stated at previous virtual public workshops that the full project would likely not move forward all at once due to funding constraints and other factors, the report listed the total project cost involving the construction of the General Use Third Lane, interchange improvements and improvements to connectivity to existing transit projects would run from \$529 million to \$935 million in Orange County and \$309 million to \$665.5 million in Sullivan County.

While the Route 17 expansion may qualify for some federal funding, it is likely that the overall project would be done in phases and based on the report it appears work would begin on a stretch of the roadway in Orange County.

“As previously noted, NYSDOT will determine the logical termini and specific project limits of the General Use Third Lane Alternative in the future, following careful consideration of existing and projected traffic congestion, public and agency input, and available funding,” the report stated. “Based on this Route 17 PEL Study, the area of greatest need

Continued on page 18

Houlihan Lawrence Expands Operations to New Haven, CT

RYE BROOK—In what the brokerage firm describes as “a significant expansion move,” Houlihan Lawrence reported on Jan. 10 that it is growing its presence in the State of Connecticut. The Rye Brook-based company announced

Wareck, Co-Owner & Managing Broker. “With longstanding roots in the communities around New Haven and the shoreline, Wareck D’Ostilio will greatly benefit from our affiliation with Houlihan Lawrence. Their powerful brand



Liz Nunan
President, CEO
Houlihan Lawrence



John Wareck
Co-Owner, Managing Broker
Wareck D’Ostilio

that New Haven, CT-based brokerage firm Wareck D’Ostilio is joining Houlihan Lawrence as an independently owned affiliate.

Wareck D’Ostilio’s 75 agents and five offices span New Haven, Milford, Woodbridge, Branford and Old Saybrook, CT. The New Haven-based company will join Houlihan Lawrence’s footprint north of New York City that includes 30 offices and 1,450 agents. The affiliation deal also includes the commercial brokerage operations of Wareck D’Ostilio. Houlihan Lawrence Commercial operates out of the brokerage firm’s headquarters in Rye Brook.

“It is with great excitement that we join Houlihan Lawrence and begin a new chapter in 2022” said John

and marketing platform will elevate our company and our clients to new levels of success.”

“We are thrilled to partner with Wareck D’Ostilio, a well-known and respected real estate brokerage that is woven into the fabric of Greater New Haven. This partnership further strengthens our leadership position in Connecticut and the northern suburbs,” said Liz Nunan, President and CEO of Houlihan Lawrence.

Houlihan Lawrence operations in Fairfield County, CT include offices in Greenwich, Riverside, Darien and New Canaan. The transition to the new brand of Houlihan Lawrence Wareck D’Ostilio should be completed in early February, company officials stated.

The Board of Directors at **Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress** announced earlier this month the appointment of **Adam Bosch** as the organization's next president and chief executive officer. Bosch, a lifelong resident of the Hudson Valley, worked as a journalist, college professor, and policy analyst across the region before joining the senior leadership team of the New York City water supply system. He will become Pattern's sixth president since the organization was founded in 1965.



Adam Bosch

The appointment is a journey back to Pattern for Bosch, who about a decade ago served as vice president of research and external affairs for the organization. Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress is a policy, planning, advocacy and research nonprofit that has promoted regional, balanced, equitable, and sustainable solutions for the Hudson River Valley. Bosch will join Pattern for Progress on Jan. 31.

Bosch started his career as a journalist in the Hudson Valley. He covered public affairs, courts and the environment for the *Wallkill Valley Times*, the *Middletown Times Herald-Record*, and in the Albany bureau of *The New York Times*. His work also appeared in several regional and national magazines. His work in journalism earned six Associated Press awards for investigative reporting, in-depth reporting, and breaking news coverage. Bosch also served as an adjunct professor of journalism for 10 years at SUNY New Paltz.

After leaving journalism, Bosch joined Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress in 2012 as vice president of research and external affairs. Bosch authored reports on the adaptive re-use of closed school buildings across the region, New York's tax cap, and an investigation of Rockland County's budget deficit. His examination of Rockland County's fiscal crisis, and recommendations to solve it, earned Pattern the President's Award from the Rockland County Business Association.

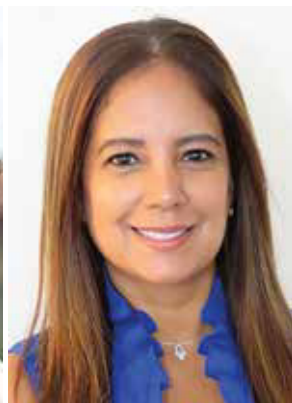
For the past nine years, Bosch has served as director of public affairs for the New York City water supply system. He was born and raised in the Town of Newburgh and graduated from Wallkill High School. He earned his bachelor's degree from SUNY New Paltz, and his master's degree from Columbia University in the City of New York. Bosch lives in Saugerties with his wife, Jennifer, and their eight-year-old son, Tristan.

The Café Residential Team at McGrath Realty Inc. of Mount Kisco has added two agents to its team! Both come from diverse, storied backgrounds and careers giving them the talents and strengths needed to serve their clients with the utmost care and professionalism, brokerage officials stated.

Wasfiyah Talib has a background in social work, customer relations and teaching. **Kimberly De La Concha** is using the same concepts, practices, and principles in her role as a Healthcare Insurance Financial Coordinator in helping her real estate clients.



Wasfiyah Talib



Kimberly De La Concha

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices New England, Westchester, New York and Hudson Valley Properties announced the expansion of **Eric Bjork**'s role within the company to oversee the firm's Rye office. Along with his newly appointed position, Bjork will continue to serve the company's Greenwich, CT and Old Greenwich, CT offices as Senior Vice President and Director of Sales.

"Eric is the ideal candidate to lead our next chapter of growth and development in Rye," said Candace Adams, CEO and President of Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices New England, Westchester, New York, and Hudson Valley Properties. "Eric has been a key part in the success of our Greenwich and Old Greenwich offices and we are excited to see paralleled achievements in our Rye market."

Bjork began his career in the Fairfield County real estate market in 1983. His sales and management experience with elite boutiques and a national firm demonstrate a consistent record of achievement including recognition for individual production and awards for office performance.

Brown Harris Stevens has announced that **Alison Hewitt** has joined the firm as a Director of Sales in Connecticut. In this newly created role, Hewitt will be working closely with the 250 agents and the executive team across the six Connecticut offices in Darien, Greenwich, Stamford, New Canaan, Westport and Rowayton, CT.

"We are thrilled to have a new addition to our powerhouse team in Connecticut. Alison brings such a great passion and commitment to our firm—she will be an amazing asset to the team. With nearly 20 years of experience managing a leading office in Connecticut, Alison brings with her a wealth of knowledge and market expertise," said Christopher Halstead, Executive Sales Director.

Hewitt has close to 20 years of experience in the real estate industry including residential and commercial. A member of the Houlihan Lawrence management team since 2003, she ran the operations of the Darien and Rowayton offices where she oversaw 80 agents.

Brown Harris Stevens is a privately-owned real estate firm with 2,500 agents and more than offices across New York City, the Hamptons, Hudson Valley, Connecticut, South Florida and New Jersey.



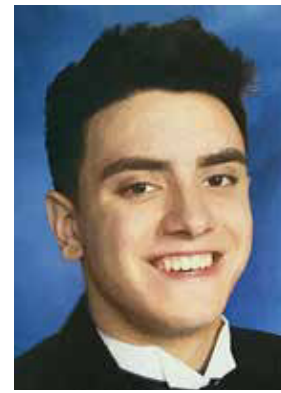
Eric Bjork



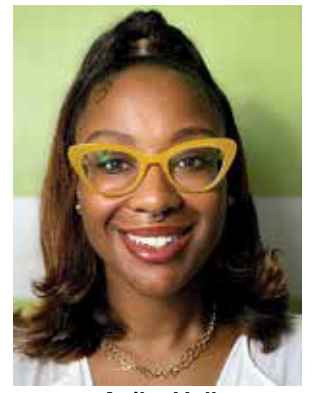
Alison Hewitt



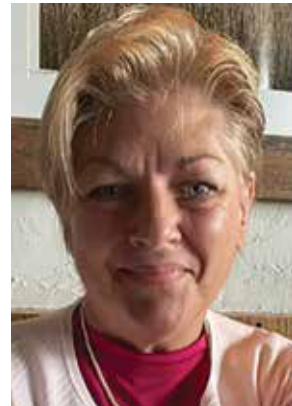
Laura Henion



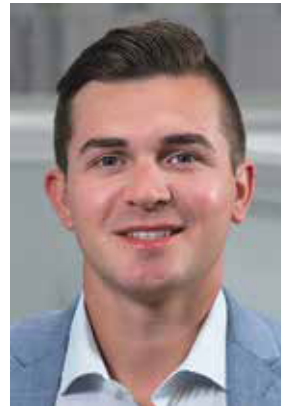
Vincent Bonanno



Anika Hall



Cheryl DeLong



Michael Kirby



Melissa Naclerio

J. Philip Real Estate reported recently it had added eight agents to its expanding real estate sales team.

"J. Philip Real Estate is always looking to recruit the brightest and best talent, and this new group of agents has already shown great promise," said J. Philip Faranda, founder of J. Philip Real Estate. "We welcome all of them to the JPFE family and can't wait to watch them shine."

New agents in the Westchester and Putnam offices include: Briarcliff Office: **Laura Henion**; Pelham Office: **Vincent Bonanno**, **Anika Hall**; Mahopac Office (Putnam County): **Cheryl DeLong**, **Michael Kirby**, **Melissa Naclerio**, **Kole Niznik** and **Andrew Waters**.



Kole Niznik



Andrew Waters

Waterstone on High Ridge has appointed **Jeanie Ricci** as a senior advisor to assist with marketing, community outreach and customer service in anticipation of its opening at the start of 2022.

Waterstone on High Ridge is located at 215 High Ridge Road in Stamford, CT and is a comprehensive senior community offering luxury independent, assisted living and memory care.

Ricci, a Norwalk, CT resident, has seven years of experience in the senior living industry with extensive additional background in sales and marketing. Prior to joining Waterstone of High Ridge, she served as senior advisor at Bridges by EPOCH at Norwalk, a memory care and assisted living community.



Jeanie Ricci

Christie's International Real Estate Westchester | Hudson Valley announced recently that Realtor **Danielle Reese** and her team, known as the **Danielle Reese Team**, have joined the firm's Scarsdale Sales Gallery.

Reese is an accomplished Realtor with more than 13 years of experience. She is consistent top producer and an ambitious agent who will go the extra mile to help buyers in attaining a beautiful home where they can make special memories and sellers in creating maximum value from their property. She also specializes in short-sales and has a long record of successfully helping homeowners in distress.

On her team are **Michael Simoes**, **Ammie Hart** and **Stephen Brown**. Each with varying backgrounds ranging from schoolteacher, brand manager, sales director and public works.



The Danielle Reese Team



HGAR

JANUARY 2022 UPDATE

Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation and Bronx YMCA's 'Operation Realtors Kids' Toy Drive a Huge Success

By Mary T. Prenon

The Hudson Gateway Realtor®Foundation, the charitable arm of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors (HGAR), and the Bronx YMCA's "Operation Realtors Kids" Toy Drive was a tremendous success this year. Now in its 10th year, the toy drive benefitted 80 children in 35 families throughout the Bronx on Christmas Day.

"Operation Realtors Kids" Toy Drive began right after Thanksgiving. While it was off to



Victoria Fontana, Assistant Controller, Leadership Connect

a slow start, by December 22, gifts and donations began to pour in. In total, more than \$1,200 was collected for purchasing additional toys and gift wrapping. "It was a 'Miracle on Williamsbridge Road,'" said Eli Rodriguez, Director of Advocacy, Commercial & Legislative Issues for Bronx & Manhattan Liaison for Bronx Chapter.

Rodriguez, along with his wife, the Hon. Fiordaliza Rodriguez, their sons Miguel Clemente and Christian Marin Rodriguez, Sharlene Brown, Castle Hill YMCA Executive Director, and her husband,



Diana Milone, a Realtor with Diana Alvarado Milone, Inc.

Eugene Oliver, a retired judge, played Santa's elves to help deliver the gifts. Diana Milone, a Realtor with Diana Alvarado Milone, Inc., sponsored five families and

Victoria Fontana, Assistant Controller of Leadership Connect, donated a carload of gifts including coats, sneakers, boots, and many toys.

"Our members and friends give generously during the Holiday Season to help our neighbors in need, and especially this year, with the CO-



Eli Rodriguez (center in Santa hat) delivering gifts to Bronx family.

VID pandemic, so many families require our help," said Rodriguez "Our Realtors are committed to building communities, as well as sustaining them."

Established in 2004 and relaunched in 2013, the HG Realtor Foundation has donated thousands of dollars to charities and non-profits throughout the New York metro area and beyond. As concerned members of the communities we 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.

For more information or to apply for funding from the Hudson Gateway REALTOR® Foundation, please visit www.hgrealtorfoundation.com.

2021 HGAR RPAC HONOR ROLL as recorded by NYSAR December 31, 2021

Thank you to the following Members who are lead the way in the 2021 RPAC campaign

Platinum R \$10,000

- Dorothy Botsoe, Dorothy Jensen Realty Inc., White Plains
- Anthony Domathoti, Exit Realty Premium, Bronx
- Perry Gault, Perry Gault Management, Bronx, NY
- Richard Haggerty, Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc.
- Nancy Kennedy, Houlihan Lawrence Inc., Croton-on-Hudson
- Michael Schmelzer, Tyrax Realty Management, Inc., Bronx

Golden R \$5,000 - \$9,999

- Susan Goldy, Susan E. Goldy Inc., Bronx
- Irene Guanill, Century 21 Dawns Gold Realty, Bronx
- Mark Seiden, The Mark Seiden Real Estate Team, Briarcliff Manor

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

- Tony, D'Anzica, DynaMax Realty NYC, Inc. NYC

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

- Donald Arace, Hudson United Mortgage, Elmsford
- Paul Breunich, William Pitt Sothebys Int Rlty, Stamford
- Debra Budetti, ERA Insite Realty Services, White Plains
- Leah Caro, Park Sterling Realty, Bronxville
- Carol Christiansen, McGrath Realty Inc., Mount Kisco
- Ronald Garafalo, John J Lease Realtors, Middletown
- Anita Gupta, Chatam Management, Bronx NY
- Crystal Hawkins Syska, Keller Williams NY Realty, White Plains
- Joseph Houlihan, Houlihan & O'Malley, Bronxville
- Isaac Kohan, Sodana Extract, Brooklyn
- Barry Kramer, BHG Real Estate Choice Realty, Scarsdale
- Cynthia Lippolis, BHHS River Towns Real Estate, Croton-on-Hudson
- Clayton Livingston, McGrath Realty Inc. Pawling
- David Mizrahi, FM Home Loans, Brooklyn
- Anthony Mormile, Orange Bank & Trust, White Plains
- Eli Rodriguez, Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors Inc., Bronx
- Matthew Schmelzer, Tryax Realty Management Inc, Great Neck

President's Club \$500-\$999

- Mark Aakjar, Marks Inspections, Katonah
- Carmen Bauman, Green Grass Real Estate Corp., Bronxville
- Emran Bhuiyan, Exit Realty Premium, Bronx
- James Coleman, Houlihan Parnes Realtors, White Plains
- John Dolgetta, Dolgetta Law PLLC, White Plains
- Gail Fattizzi, Westchester Real Estate Inc Goldens Bridge
- Ann Garti, Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc.
- Marianne Lepore, Corcoran Legends Realty, Tarrytown
- Brian Lewis, Compass, New York, NY
- Brian Phillips, Douglas Elliman Real Estate, Bronx
- Christina Stevens, Laujel Realty Corp. Bronx
- Maryann Tercasio, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Central Valley
- Laurena Torres, Toresco Realty LLC, New York, NY
- Kathy Zamechansky KZA Realty Group, Bronx
- Renee Zurlo, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Central Valley

Capitol Club \$250-\$499

- Paul Adler, Rand Commercial, Nyack
- Irene Amato, A.S.A.P. Mortgage, Peekskill
- Roberta Bangs, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, New City
- Dionilda Bautista, Exit Realty Premium, Bronx
- Kazuko Boylan, Boylan Real Estate Group, Monroe
- Layla Boyles, Monroe Realty Center, Goshen
- Elisa Bruno-Midilli, McGrath Realty Inc. Yorktown Heights
- Gary Connolly, HGMLS, White Plains
- Joseph Consentino, Morris Park Realty, Bronx
- Katheryn DeClerck, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Goshen
- Kevin Dwyer, The Dwyer Agency, Mahopac
- Mark Engel, Langsam Property Services Corp, Bronx
- Matthew Engel, Langsam Property Services Corp, Bronx
- Sandra Erikson, Sandra Erikson Real Estate, Bronx
- Richard Guarino, Richard Thomas Realty Corp, Farmingdale
- Marcene Hedayati, Corcoran Legends Realty, Tarrytown
- Sarah Hughes, Corcoran Legends Realty, Briarcliff Manor
- Brett Lando, Gahagan Lando & Wagner, LLP, White Plains
- Gary Leogrande, Keller Williams NY Realty, White Plains
- Eydie Lopez, Keller Williams Realty Hudson Valley United, Middletown
- Jennifer Maher, J Philip Real Estate LLC, Mahopac
- Harding Mason, Houlihan Lawrence, Katonah
- David Moore, Hudson United Mortgage, Elmsford
- Jose Morla, Exit Realty Premium Bronx
- JoAnne Murray, Allan M. Block Agency, Inc, Tarrytown
- Danielle Noak, Sandra Erickson Real Estate, Bronx
- Roseann Paggiotta, Houlihan Lawrence Inc., Yonkers
- Walter Sadowski, McGrath Realty Inc., Mount Kisco
- Robert Shandley, Howard Hanna Rand Realty, White Plains
- Cathleen Stack, HGAR, White Plains

SPOTLIGHT ON A Career of a Lifetime

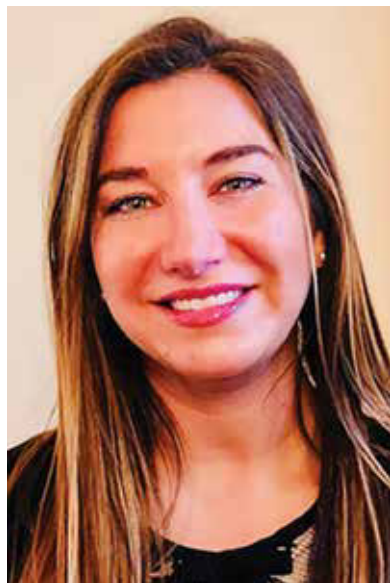
By Mary T. Prenon

As a 17-year-old high school senior, MacKenzie Forsberg, never imagined her part-time job as a file clerk in a real estate office would one day turn into an opportunity to sit at the helm of the firm. Fast-forward 20 years, and today Forsberg is one of three Principals of Genesis Realty Group in the Bronx.

Even when she left for Binghamton University to study psychology, the thought of one day helping to run the company was not on her radar. However, while she was in college, the partners would continue to mail her some work and she would return there every time she was home on a break.

As fate would have it, when she graduated, the company was expanding, purchasing and building properties in the Bronx and Manhattan, and were hiring more staff to help manage those properties. "At first I didn't think there would be a future for me there, but as it turns out, I loved the business and the entrepreneurial spirit of real estate, along with the fast-paced property management aspect," recalled Forsberg.

It didn't take her long to decide to stay in the business. "I actually had a



MacKenzie Forsberg

check written out for graduate school, but at that point, I already knew I wouldn't be going," she said. Forsberg quickly acclimated to her new role, becoming a licensed real estate broker and adding Spanish classes into the mix so she could better serve her clients. "I

Continued on page 12

Continued on page 14

BOARDROOM REPORT

**Boards of Directors
Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc.
Oct. 20, 2021 at the HGAR offices,
One Maple Ave, White Plains**

HGAR Management, Financial & Membership Reports

President Crystal Hawkins-Syska presented the President's Report, reviewing her year as President of HGAR and her emphasis on accessibility to the members. She reminded everyone about Annual Members' Day and reported that she would have a President's Booth at Member's Day to share materials and to promote HGAR.

CEO Richard Haggerty presented the CEO's Report, encouraging attendance at Annual Members' Day. He reminded everyone about the attendance requirements and HGAR's COVID-19 protocols approved at the previous Board of Directors' Meeting. Haggerty also encouraged the Directors to remind those who are unable to attend the Annual Members' Meeting to submit their Proxies.

CEO Haggerty presented the Treasurer's Report as of October 1, 2021, a copy of which was provided to the Directors, on behalf of Treasurer Carmen Bauman who was unable to attend the meeting. After discussion the report was approved for filing.

Immediate Past President Gail Fattizzi, as Nominating Committee Chair, reported that there are two vacancies on the NYSAR Board of Directors. Chair Fattizzi reported that the HGAR Nominating Committee recommended the following individuals to fill said vacancies: Richard Herska and Anthony Ruperto, and after discussion the Nominating Committee's recommendation was approved.

CEO Haggerty then reported on the HGAR Directors who would be serving as Directors on the National Association of Realtors Board of Directors. The number of HGAR Directors to serve as NAR Directors is based on the total number of current outstanding members of HGAR. CEO Haggerty indicated that since HGAR's membership surpassed the 12,000-member mark, HGAR received one additional Director seat (bringing the total number of HGAR Directors serving on the NAR Board of Directors to six). CEO Haggerty pointed out that it has been the policy of HGAR that the members of the Executive Committee customarily serve on the NAR Board of Directors, and as such, the Executive Committee selected and appointed Fattizzi, being a current member of the Executive Committee. Therefore, Immediate Past President Fattizzi, along with all of the other members of the current HGAR Executive Committee, will serve on the NAR Board of Directors for the upcoming 2022 year.

In-House Legal Counsel Brian Levine presented the Ethics Decision designated as 284-E, which was provided to each of the Directors prior to the meeting. After review and discussion, the Directors approved the recommendation of the Hearing Panel.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion ("DEI") Officer Freddimir Garcia reported on the results of the Member-wide demographic survey recently conducted by HGAR ("DEI Survey") and carefully reviewed the draft "Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Membership Survey Report." DEI Officer Garcia pointed out that the Draft DEI Survey Report was in "draft" form and, that until it has been finalized and approved by the HGAR Directors, the results of the DEI Survey and the contents of the Draft DEI Survey Report were to remain strictly confidential. There was a robust and extensive discussion among the Directors regarding the Draft DEI Survey Report. Alternative methods of delivering the DEI Survey to members, as well as ways of encouraging participation, were also discussed. DEI Officer Garcia indicated that the Draft DEI Survey Report would be finalized in the coming weeks and that he would present same to the Directors for approval at a subsequent HGAR Directors' Meeting.

Director of Communications Mary Prenon reported on the upcoming HGAR Annual Meeting and HGAR's Annual Members' Day, reminding everyone about the mask requirements as well as the requirement to provide proof of vaccination or a negative PCR COVID-19 test to attend in-person. She also reminded everyone that County Executive George Latimer would be the guest speaker at the RPAC Luncheon scheduled for 12:30 P.M., that the Keynote speaker, Dennis Giannetti, would be speaking at 2:00 P.M., that the Annual Members' Meeting was scheduled for 3:30 P.M., and that the Cocktail Party would immediately follow the Annual Meeting. Prenon also reported on various other events and presentations scheduled throughout the day.

Director Carol Christiansen and President Elect Anthony Domathoti presented the RPAC Committee report and urged everyone to attend the RPAC Luncheon at Members' Day. They also reported on upcoming events.

CEO Haggerty then made a request of the HGAR Board of Directors to consider a contribution of \$5,000 to RPAC from its reserves and \$5,000 from the funds held by its subsidiary, HGMLS. After discussion, the contributions were approved.

Immediate Past President Fattizzi reported on the Leadership Accelerator Program. She also reported on the progress of the class project, namely, the membership outreach program, instituted by the members of the previous class of the Leadership Accelerator Program.

Secretary Tony D'Anzica reported on the Global Summit that was held on September 29th at the Marriott Marquis in New York City. He was pleased to announce its success and that it was well-attended.

CEO Haggerty and Secretary D'Anzica then presented to the Board for consideration attendance and participation at the annual MIPIM Conference held in Cannes, France. The MIPIM Conference focuses on commercial real estate and new real estate development. The upcoming MIPIM Conference is scheduled for the Spring of 2022. CEO Haggerty reminded the Directors that several individuals attended the MIPIM Conference in 2019 on behalf of HGAR. In 2019, HGAR had participated in the event jointly with the New York State Association of Realtors. CEO Haggerty reported that NYSAR has elected not to participate in the upcoming event and asked the Directors to consider approval of HGAR's participation in this year's event on its own. CEO Haggerty asked HGAR's Commercial Investment Division President John Barrett and Previous Past President Ron Garafalo, both of whom attended the 2019 conference, to address the Directors and share their thoughts about MIPIM.

CEO Haggerty then pointed out that the HGAR Budget had previously included an expenditure of up to \$35,000 for the MIPIM Conference in 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the funds were not used and were still budgeted for the event. In addition to the \$35,000, CEO Haggerty asked the Directors to consider one of the following: (1) an additional expenditure of \$5,000 for HGAR to be a named sponsor of the event (but would not have a booth at the event), or (2) an

additional expenditure of \$12,500 for HGAR to reserve a formal booth at the event. After discussion amongst the Directors, it was decided that HGAR would reserve a booth and participate in the event.

Director Maryann Tercasio presented the report of the HG Realtor Foundation announcing that the HG Foundation had raised approximately \$20,460 to date. Director Tercasio also reported on upcoming HG Foundation events. Past President and Chair of the Nominating Committee Fattizzi reported that there are two Trustee positions and three Officer positions available and that the application deadline for interested candidates is Oct. 28, 2021.

President Hawkins-Syska pointed out to the Directors that written reports of various Committees and Councils (i.e., Education Committee, Professional Standards Committee, DEI Committee, Fair Housing Committee, RPAC Committee, Global Business Council, Legislative Committee, Commercial and Investment Division, and HG Realtor Foundation) had also been provided to the Directors via e-mail prior to the meeting.

Please welcome the following new members in your area:

Designated Realtor

Jerry Baptiste
Buzz Realty
1124 East 58th St., #2B
Brooklyn, NY 11234
718-313-0203

Lesley A. DeCasseres
Hierophant Realty LLC
8 Woodland Avenue, Unit 2
Scarsdale, NY 10583
347-675-5445

Zoraida E. Gonzalez
Novos Realty & Advisory Service
37-06 82nd St. Suite 205
Jackson Heights, NY 11372
347-878-6480

Liani Greaves
LGM Real Estate LLC
890 Lafayette Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11221
917-561-9814

** Omar Harper
Harper & Associates Realty
211 Fishkill Ave., Ste. 305
Beacon, NY 12508
845-857-0826

Althea W. Harris
4074 Edison Avenue
Bronx, NY 10466
718-552-7079

Raymond W. Leblanc, Appraiser
16 Utopian Pl.
Airmont, NY 10901
845-304-9333

Usha Narinedat
Investment Realty Group Inc.
4726 White Plains Road
Bronx, NY 10470
718-708-6939

** Dawn M. Payne
Payne Team LLC
3799 NY-97
Barryville, NY 12719
845-649-1720

** Lisa M. Sanderson
Pocono Regional Realty, LLC
404 Park Avenue
Strousburg, PA 18360
570-296-6400

Continued on next page

Spotlight

Continued from page 11

didn't speak any Spanish at all at first, but now I'd say I'm very proficient—not fluent—but proficient."

As a young woman in this normally male-dominated profession, Forsberg let nothing stop her—even the recession of 2008. "I remember we couldn't get construction financing for new buildings and things were kind of chaotic, but we were able to pivot to third party management," she explained. As a result, they began ramping up their code enforcement services as well, checking for violations and compliance, and practically quadrupled their portfolio.

Rebranded in 2017, Genesis Realty Group LLC (GRG) has owned and managed real estate in metropolitan New York for more than 30 years. Its portfolio consists of approximately 2,500 multi-family and commercial units throughout the New York metropolitan area, with more than \$350 million to \$400 million in real estate holdings. The company provides full-service property and asset management services to ensure that buildings are properly maintained in accordance with New York City Housing Codes, Rental Guidelines, and Health and Safety standards.

Today, Genesis' buildings include large multi-family market-rate and rent-regulated properties in the Bronx, Manhattan and Westchester, as well as investment properties in Newburgh, Kingston and Poughkeepsie. In addition, the company manages some smaller three-family units, as well as office properties.

Most of Forsberg's time is spent spearheading business development and new property management acquisitions, assisting in underwriting and financing for new acquisitions and refinances, and overseeing property and regulatory operations. She also leads the firm's Green Management initiatives such as steam-to-gas hydronic boiler conversions, solar panel installations and lighting retrofits.

A Bronx native, Forsberg now lives in Yonkers and has served on the city's Planning Board for three years. "Yonkers is a development-friendly city and it's really exciting to be involved in

planning its future," she added. "While Yonkers is large, it can also feel like a smaller town with residential, commercial and a little bit of everything."

This year also marks Forsberg's first time serving on the HGAR Board of Directors. "This association is very aligned with how I like to see things run and I'm so happy to be part of its growth," she said. Forsberg also served as a director with the former Bronx Manhattan-North Association of Realtors, prior to its merger with HGAR.

For 2022, Forsberg looks forward to having more events in the Bronx and Manhattan and helping the New York City and New York state real estate communities be more more unified. "We can't operate separately anymore—we're stronger together," she said.

Forsberg is also involved in HGAR's Leadership Accelerator Program and will complete the course this spring. "I love it and I wish we had this type of program when I was younger," she added.

One of her personal goals is mentoring young women who want to get into the property management industry. "No one gets anywhere without mentorship, and when I was younger, I didn't see a future for me in this industry, but I was fortunate to have my two partners mentoring me," she said. Genesis did have an internship program with Fordham University prior to COVID, and Forsberg plans to start it up again when the threat of the virus is over.

In her spare time, she is involved with the Community Housing Improvement Program, as well as the Business Council of Westchester, and many Women-in-Business organizations. But her top priority is spending time with her twin six-year-old girls, Logan and Riley.

As for her psychology background, Forsberg admits she does use it quite often. "About 70% of my tenancy is lower income housing on subsidized programs, and rent regulations can be very confusing," she said. "I think I've been able to forge much stronger relationships with our residents, and that elevates customer service to a new level that you don't find at every property management office."

New Members

Continued from previous page

April M. Whitehead
3 Mount Pleasant Lane
Irvington, NY 10533
914-269-8661

Realtor

Abdelrahman Alhasan
Weichert Realtors, Nanuet

** Donna Allen
Keller Williams Valley Realty, Woodcliff Lake, NJ

Magdalene Anumah
Damico Group Real Estate

Charlene Awani
Keller Williams NY Realty

Felicia C. Barile
Christies International Real Estate, Chappaqua

Brianna Bartlett
Exp Realty, White Plains

Tara Benson
J. Philip Real Estate LLC, Mahopac

Hector E. Calderon
William Raveis Real Estate, Scarsdale

Peter A. Cameron
Houlihan Lawrence Inc., Irvington

David Cardoza
Hudson Property Appraisal Co.

Edwin Castillo
eRealty Advisors, Inc.

** David Castle
Keller Williams NYC

Gulyanne R. Cepeda
Scope Realty Bx

Julissa Collado
Community Realty Alliance Corp

Toni Comrie
Keller Williams Realty Group

Alexander Cortez
Keller Williams Hudson Valley, Middletown

Michael Coschigano
Keller Williams Realty Group

Tom Cramer
Compass Greater NY, LLC, Bronxville

Rebecca M. Daniele
Julia B Fee Sotheby's International Realty, Larchmont

** Emily Daniels
BHHS Nutshell Realty

Juan C. Davila
Exp Realty, White Plains

Kimberly De La Concha
McGrath Realty Inc.

Carolyn DeBlasio
Keller Williams Hudson Valley, New City

Michele DelliCarpini
Corcoran Legends Realty, Tarrytown

Jose Deras
eRealty Advisors, Inc.

Nathalia Diaz
Coldwell Banker Signature Properties, Bronx

Elissa D. Drassinower
William Raveis Real Estate, Armonk

Vianela Espinosa
Howard Hanna Rand Realty, White Plains

Alyssa Ferrazzara
Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Central Valley

Elizabeth K. Friedrich
Houlihan Lawrence Inc., Rye

** Thomas J. Gagliano
Pantiga Group Inc.

Kimberly Garrison
Artisan Realty

Kevin Giaccone
Nestedge Realty

Jessica C. Giliberti
Howard Hanna Rand Realty, Central Valley

Lynne Glaser
Julia B Fee Sotheby's International Realty, Rye

Andreia Goncalves
RE/MAX Class Realty

Mya Good
Exp Realty, White Plains

Jonathan Greenfield
Exp Realty, White Plains

Shari Hall
Douglas Elliman Real Estate, Bronx

Continued on page 8 second section

CALENDAR

JANUARY 2022

January 20

Breakfast with Benefits: "Keep More of Your Money in 2022 – Tax Reduction Strategies for Real Estate Professionals" Via Zoom, 10:00AM – 12:30PM

January 27

HGAR Commercial & Investment Division 2022 CRE Roundtable
HGAR White Plains,
10:00AM – 11:00AM

FEBRUARY 2022

February 3

Breakfast with Benefits: "The Real Estate Influencers" Via Zoom,
9:30AM – 10:30AM

February 16

HGAR Board of Directors
HGAR White Plains,
10:00AM – 12:00PM

February 21

HGAR Offices Closed: President's Day

February 24

HGAR Commercial & Investment Division "Westchester Bio Sciences"
HGAR White Plains,
10:00AM – 11:00AM

MARCH 2022

March 1

HGAR 2022 Installation of Officers
583 Park Ave., NY
6:00pm-10:00pm



February 2022

Zoom Course Calendar

February 1-	45 Hr. Broker Class with Varied Instructors
	30 Hr. Sales Remedial or Gap Course with Varied Instructors
February 9-	CORE Day* with William O'Keeffe & Carole McCann
February 10-	Matrix 1: Introduction to Matrix* with TBD
	Property Tax Grievance* with Carole McCann
February 15-	Handling Multiple Offers in a Hot Sellers Market* with Katheryn DeClerck
February 16-	Navigating REO/Foreclosure Transactions* with Dorothy Botsoe
February 17-	Matrix 2: The Next Step into Matrix* with TBD
February 18-	Bias/Discrimination: How Is It Perceived?* with Dorothy Botsoe
February 22-	Human Rights and Fair Housing (CORE Requirement)* with Katheryn DeClerck
February 23-	Ethical Business Practices (CORE Requirement)* with Peter Mallon
February 24-	Matrix 3: Matrix to the Max* with TBD
	Legal Update (CORE Requirement)* with William O'Keeffe
	Agency Update (CORE Requirement)* with Carole McCann
	RPR 101: The Basics of RRP and RPR Mobile* with Katheryn DeClerck
February 25 -	Anatomy of a Home I: Roof, Ventilation, Insulation, Exterior Walls and Foundation* With Josef Fasolino
February 26-	Matrix: Adding and Editing Listings* with LaVerne Brown-Williams
	Matrix: Searches* with LaVerne Brown-Williams

*Course qualifies for the Virtual Card

As we begin 2022, HGAR remains committed to offering you outstanding courses. Due to pandemic-related circumstances impacting instructors and/or staff, we may need on occasion to make adjustments to classes for which you may be registered. We will contact you via email in the event that a course needs to be modified. As always, don't hesitate to reach out with any questions. We look forward to supporting your continued professional development!

For More Class Information (In-Person and Online) and Registration, go to HGAR.com/Education.

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BARRISTER'S BRIEFING

By Brian S. Levine, Esq



Refresher on 2021 Regulatory Changes Impacting Real Estate

Happy New Year!! I hope this month's article finds everyone well and reenergized for 2022. As we return to work in this new year, I thought I would use this article to provide a refresher of the latest-and-greatest of the changes that are impacting your real estate activities. Enjoy.

State of Emergency Executive Order and Cold Calling

There are numerous State of Emergency Executive Orders that are still active. One such Order is based on the current gun violence in New York State and is effective "until further notice." While this Order is wholly unrelated to real estate activities it, like all other State of Emergency Orders, requires that real estate licensees refrain from making any cold calls. This means that Realtors may not make unsolicited calls to any member of the public regarding the sale of their home unless they already have a developed relationship with them. A Realtor can call a For Sale by Owner (FSBO) only if they have a potential buyer. They cannot contact the FSBO in order to try to solicit the listing. However, all other types of marketing are permitted (mailers, billboards, social media, Internet, etc.).

I have been made aware of many agents that are ignoring the Orders and they continue to cold call. Such agents are forewarned that in doing so, you are breaking the law. Such an action is criminal and, if forwarded to the Dept. of State Licensing Division, could result in your license being suspended or revoked.

On a positive note, just last week, at the prompting of NYSAR, a bill was introduced in the legislature to try to sever the cold calling provision from the State of Emergency Orders. We will keep you posted as this develops.

New Bills to Curb Housing Discrimination Signed by Governor Hochul

In late December, Governor Hochul signed numerous bills designed to combat housing discrimination. They were signed with the caveat that portions of the bills would be revised with technical amendments. These amendments will be completed sometime this year. Therefore, many of these changes will not take effect immediately and I have noted the effective dates where applicable. However, all Realtors should be aware of these impending changes.

Increased Licensing Instruction

For brokers: the licensing requirement will go from 120 hours of instruction to 152 hours of instruction. Included in that increase is 30 hours of broker and two hours of fair housing instruction.

For salespersons: the licensing requirement will go from 75 hours to 77 hours of instruction. The increase will include two additional hours of fair housing instruction (for a total of six hours).

This regulation is effective as of Dec. 21, 2022.

Office Manager Requirement

Office managers will be required to have at least two years of experience as an associate broker before they will be permitted to serve as an office manager.

This regulation is effective immediately.

Increased Continuing Education Requirement

An additional two hours of implicit bias and two hours of cultural competency training will be required as part of the overall 22.5 hours of required CE education.

This regulation is effective Sept. 21, 2022.

Implementation of Standard Operating Procedures

The DOS will develop regulations requiring brokerages to institute standard operating procedures and submit them to the DOS, where the DOS will maintain these records. Currently, it is unknown as to what these standard operating procedures will be, but it is contemplated that such regulations may include requirements concerning identification, exclusive agreement usage, financing, pre-approvals, etc. In addition to submitting these procedures to the DOS, brokerages will be required to post them on their websites and mobile apps, as well as make them available to the public at their office.

This regulation is effective April 20, 2022; however, due to the fact that it will still need to go through the regulatory approval process, it is anticipated that the effective date will be some time later in the year.

Increase in Licensing Fees

Salesperson: \$10 surcharge

Broker: \$30 surcharge

The surcharged amounts will be directed to support fair housing testing.

This regulation is effective Jan. 20, 2022.

Increase in Fines

Maximum fines that can be imposed by the DOS will increase from \$1,000 to \$2,000. Additionally, the New York State Attorney General's Office will create an "Anti-Discrimination in Housing" fund and 50% of all the fines will be directed to this new fund.

This regulation is effective Jan. 20, 2022.

New Hotline

The bill directs the Division of Human Rights to establish a hotline for registering housing discrimination complaints.

This regulation is effective April 20, 2022.

HERO Act Still in Effect

The HERO Act requires employers to take steps to ensure the health and safety of employees and public. This act creates similar requirements that Phase 2 of the previously expired Executive Order relating to COVID-19 precautions. Such activities as mask, limited contact, wiping down surfaces, spacing, etc. are still required and must be implemented at open houses and all showings.

NY Mask Mandate

Unless an organization has a vaccine mandate in place, all persons over the age of two who can medically tolerate a mask must wear one in an indoor public place. An "indoor public place" is any location that is not a private residence; therefore, masks are required at all open houses and showings.

New York City Vaccine Mandate

Any licensee that conducts business in New York City must now provide proof of vaccination to their broker, even if that brokerage is not in NYC. Brokerages must maintain copies of these records. A "workplace," for purposes of this mandate means any place where there is more than one person; therefore, this requirement would apply to agents at showings and open houses.

Further, those brokerages that have offices in NYC must prohibit anyone from accessing the brokerage who is not vaccinated, with the exception of those who enter for a brief, limited purpose. Medical and religious exemptions will still apply.

NYSAR/REBNY v. DOS Litigation

The case over whether the DOS overreached with their guidance concerning the paying of commissions was decided. As a result, landlords can continue to pass their commission costs (listing agent and tenant agent) on to the tenant.

Conclusion

These changes only scratch the surface of the changes that have taken place over the past year, and there are certainly more to come. Remember, as a Realtor you are required to know your profession and the regulations related to your activities, so continue to stay abreast of new developments through HGAR, OneKey, NYSAR and NAR announcements and articles.

Brian S. Levine, Esq. is In-House Counsel/Director of Legal Services & Professional Standards Administrator for the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors.

RPAC Honor Roll

Continued from page 11

Mary Stetson, Stetson Real Estate, Mamaroneck
Reid Whittemore, Clancy Relocation and Logistics, Patterson

99 Dollar Club \$99-\$249

Barbara Abram, Nanette Albanese-Morey, Michelina Arminio, Latrisha Asante, Barbara Barber, Claudio Barnes, Teresa Belmore, Diane Blanton, Barbara Bodnar, Janet Brand, Lynette Browne, Emilce Cacace, Randall Calano, Maria Campanelli, Cindy Cassuto, Luz Checo, Nancy Chochrek, Olivier Costa, Michael Criscuolo, Theresa Crozier, Ideliza Duarte, Maria Teresa Duguet, Rehanna Ebrahim, J.P. Endres, Jeffrey Farnell, Ralph Gabay, Rey Hollingsworth Falu, Patricia Holmes, Katherine Jennings, Pamela Jones, Maureen King, Mary Kingsley, Ismail Kolya, Elena Kupka, Michele Lasich Pagnotta, Phyllis Lerner, Joseph Lippolis, Joan Marks, Caterina Massareglio, Tana McGuire, Veronica Meola, Ala Millicenco, Jenifer Moore, John Olivero, Sharon Ortiz, Darin Palumbo, Altigracia Patalano, Barbara Peterson, Salvatore Pizzolato, Francine Port, Eugene Reisman, Randi Robinowitz, Viora Sejdi, Salvatore Pizzolato, Francis Port, Valerie Port, Mary Prenon, Danielle Reese, Randi Robinowitz, Elaine Rodriguez, Viora Sejdi, Philip Weiden, Maria Weiss, Jac Zadrima

2021 Recap of Contributions **

TOTAL: \$237,528 93% towards goal

With 3,546 contributors 85% towards participation goal.

Goal: \$255,201 from 4,103 contributors for a total of 36% of membership

Westchester IDA, LDC Provided Incentives That Fueled \$1.2B In New Investment in 2021

Continued from page 6

and 20 full time jobs. Also, in Downtown White Plains the IDA voted preliminary approval of incentives for One Lyon, an \$83-million multi-family residential development featuring 212 rental apartments of which 13 will be affordable. The project is expected to create 52 construction jobs.

The IDA also approved financial incentives for Regeneron's 208,000-square-foot expansion of its R&D campus in the Town of Greenburgh. The \$480-million project, which will connect to its existing facilities on the campus, will create more than 1,600 construction jobs and more than 500 full-time jobs. Regeneron, which is the county's largest private employer, announced in July plans to invest about \$1.8 billion over six years to expand its facilities in Westchester and the Mid-Hudson region.

Westchester's Local Development Corporation, which assists the county's not-for profit organizations in securing tax-exempt financing, voted approval of approximately \$385 million in tax-exempt bond financing for the development of a senior learning community on the SUNY Purchase campus. Phase

1 of the project is comprised of 220 independent living units, 18 assisted-living beds, 16 memory care beds, underground parking, a separate assisted living and memory care building and up to 46 single-family and duplex homes together with supporting infrastructure and property site improvements.

The LDC also voted preliminary approval of \$61million in tax-exempt bond financing for Kendal on Hudson continuing care retirement community in Sleepy Hollow. The funding will be used to finance and refinance the cost of construction of the facility which features 222 apartment residences on four connected buildings on 21 acres overlooking the Hudson River.

"The past year's results build on the momentum of success achieved by Westchester's IDA and LDC. Since 2019, the IDA and LDC have provided financial incentives for developments representing approximately \$3.2 billion in private investment in our county with more than 4,000 new residential units and over 3,100 construction and full-time jobs," said Joan McDonald who chairs both the IDA and LDC.

Four States, Including NY, Seek U.S. Supreme Court To Hear Controversial SALT Deduction Appeal Case

ALBANY—New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and New York Attorney General Letitia James announced on Jan. 3 that New York, Connecticut, Maryland, and New Jersey filed a petition for certiorari to the U.S. Supreme Court to continue their lawsuit against the federal government for its unlawful and unprecedented cap on the deduction for state and local taxes, known as SALT.

The petition asks the Supreme Court to review an October 2021 ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit that upheld the district court's rejection of the states' suit, which argues that the SALT cap was a politically motivated bid by the former federal administration to interfere with the policy choices of predominantly Democratic states.

"The SALT deduction cap is nothing less than double taxation on New Yorkers," New York Gov. Hochul said. "Repealing the SALT cap would not only put more money into the pockets of New York families, it would deliver a much-needed boost to New York's economy. I am proud we are taking this issue to the Supreme Court to continue to fight on behalf of New York taxpayers."

"This unfair cap has already placed a significant financial burden on countless hardworking, middle-class families in New York, and in the years to come, it is expected to cost New York taxpayers more than \$100 billion," said Attorney General James. "We filed this lawsuit to protect millions of New Yorkers from this harmful, misguided, and blatantly political attack. New York will not be bullied into paying more than its fair share, and we will continue to fight back."

The lawsuit—which was originally filed in July 2018 in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York—argued that the new SALT deduction cap was enacted to target New York and similarly situated states, that it interferes with states' rights to make their own fiscal decisions, and that it will disproportionately harm taxpayers in these states. The top states with the highest average deduction for state and local taxes—a majority of which are Democratic—include New York, Connecticut, Maryland and New Jersey.

The 2017 Tax Act reversed over a century of precedent in the federal tax code—drastically curtailing the state and local tax deduction by capping it at \$10,000. An analysis by the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance projected that the cap would increase New Yorkers' federal taxes by up to \$15 billion annually.

As one of the nation's top donor states, this attack is significantly more damaging to New York than many other states. Prior to enactment of the 2017 law, New York State already had the widest disparity among all states when factoring how much money New York sent to Washington, D.C. and the funding it received in return. Other donor states, including Connecticut, Maryland, and New Jersey are being similarly injured.

In its September 2019 ruling, despite ruling against the State of New York and its partner states, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York agreed that the states had been injured based on their argument that the cap on the state and local tax deduction may depress home prices. By effectively raising state property taxes, the SALT cap will also reduce the value of a homeowner's property,

thereby discouraging home sales and decreasing the revenues the states are able to collect by taxing such sales.

Reports in the press also show anecdotal evidence that New Yorkers—particularly the state's highest earners—are already moving their homes and businesses to states like Florida because of the cap on SALT deductions. In New York, the top 1% of taxpayers account for 46% of state income tax collections and losing them threatens the ability of the state to deliver on New York's promise of providing opportunity for every person in the state.

Legal Corner

Continued from page 5

ing to implicit bias as part of their continuing education requirements and license renewal process. According to the legislature, the new law "...ensures that all real estate professionals are made aware of how harmful implicit bias can be and how to ensure they follow fair housing guidelines."

Finally, the legislation also requires that courses in "cultural competency" be included in the licensing curriculum for brokers and salespersons. Brokers and salespersons must take two hours of training in "comprehensive cultural competency." These additional hourly course requirements are included within, and are not in addition to, the current 22.5 hours of continuing education required for renewal.

Understanding the Changes in The Regulatory Landscape

The regulatory landscape in New York's real estate industry has experienced many critical and substantive changes over the past few years. Brokers and agents have had to deal with not only the regulatory changes but also the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. It has not been easy, but through it all real estate agents have remained resolute and strong. Licensees have represented their clients to the best of their abilities through these difficult times and will continue to do so.

At the same time, licensees must keep up with the ever-changing regulatory landscape and while it may not be easy, understanding and complying with the new legislative initiatives is an important part of the business of being a real estate professional. Anti-discrimination laws are a critical component of the real estate industry and must always be at the forefront of any real estate transaction and must be a primary consideration and concern of all agents.

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.



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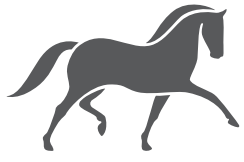
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LANZA**

Associate Real Estate Broker
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**SILVIO
CANGIANNI**

Real Estate Salesperson
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**DARREN
LEE**

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M: 917.658.7791



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Touro College, University System To Create New Campus at 3 Times Square in Midtown Manhattan

NEW YORK—Touro College and University System, one of the nation's leading non-profit institutions of higher and professional education under Jewish auspices, announced plans on Jan. 3 to build a new 243,305 square-foot campus at the 3 Times Square tower owned and operated by the Rudin Family.

In announcing the plan to build its main campus in the heart of Manhattan, Touro reaffirmed its commitment to New York City and the continued importance of in-person learning, officials with the college stated. Touro will transform eight floors of the building into classrooms, science and technology labs, offices and event space and will have a dedicated entrance and lobby on the southwest corner of 43rd Street and Seventh Avenue. The more than 2,000 staff and students who will work and at-

architectural firm FXCollaborative to assist on a sweeping capital improvement program at the tower, including the creation of a new, glass-walled triple-height lobby and a sculptural façade screen designed to diffuse the light of Times Square. The building is easily accessible to Grand Central, the Port Authority and Penn Station, providing an ideal campus for commuting faculty and students.

The school will build a library, academic facilities, laboratories, student lounges and cafes, according to Mr. Jeffrey Rosengarten, Senior Vice President of Operations for the Touro College and University System who led the Touro management team in this exciting new initiative.

In addition to expanding its footprint in Midtown Manhattan, Touro has also extended its commitment to the Harlem



Future Touro Campus at 3 Times Square

tend class there daily will provide a major economic boost to local businesses, revitalizing an area traditionally frequented by tourists and office workers.

Touro plans to officially move into the new space in January 2023.

"Touro College and University System have arrived at its 50th anniversary with confidence and strength under the stellar leadership of Dr. Alan Kadish," said Zvi Ryzman, Board Chairman of Touro College & University System. "The signing of the lease at 3 Times Square for a new state-of-the-art home for several of Touro's world class schools and programs indicates a bright and successful future for the institution."

Seven of Touro's schools will be housed in the location, including the College of Pharmacy (TCOP), New York School of Career & Applied Studies (NYSCAS), Graduate School of Business (GSB), Graduate School of Education (GSE), Graduate School of Jewish Studies (GSJS), Graduate School of Social Work (GSSW) and Graduate School of Technology (GST).

"Throughout the 2020 and 2021 academic years, our schools and programs adapted and thrived during the transition to online and hybrid education, and we will continue to incorporate what we've learned to help our school and approach to education evolve," said Dr. Alan Kadish, President of the Touro College & University System. "After conducting comprehensive surveys and thorough conversations with faculty, staff and students, we know our community places great value on in-person learning. Touro is now celebrating its 50-year anniversary and by improving our campus experience and upgrading our facilities, Touro will be well-positioned for the next 50 years."

3 Times Square—originally constructed as the North American headquarters for Reuters Group PLC in the early 2000s—is a class A office tower that spans 885,000 square feet across 30 stories. In 2020, Rudin engaged

community and has renewed the lease for its TouroCOM Harlem campus at the 230 W. 125th St. for another decade.

Touro College also operates its Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine in Middletown. The Middletown Campus opened its doors on July 21, 2014. It's housed in the former Horton Hospital building, which underwent a \$25-million renovation to become a high-tech medical school—complete with 85 dorm rooms, a state-of-the-art holographic and plastination lab, medical library and clinical training facilities.

Touro is a system of non-profit institutions of higher and professional education. Touro College was chartered in 1970 primarily to enrich the Jewish heritage, and to serve the larger American and global community. Approximately 19,000 students are currently enrolled in its various schools and divisions. Touro has 35 campuses and locations in New York, California, Nevada, Illinois, Berlin, Jerusalem and Moscow. New York Medical College; Touro University California and Touro University Nevada; Touro University Worldwide and its Touro College Los Angeles division; as well as Hebrew Theological College in Skokie, Illinois are separately accredited institutions within the Touro College and University System.

The Rudin Family owns and operates one of the largest privately held real estate portfolios in New York City. Among its real estate holdings, which includes the high-tech Dock 72 office tower at Brooklyn Navy Yard, are 16 commercial office buildings containing approximately 10.5 million square feet of space and 17 apartment buildings comprising over four million square feet of residences.



Hudson Valley iCampus Retains Tri-State Team from Colliers as Exclusive Agent

PEARL RIVER—Hudson Valley iCampus, the former Pearl River complex of Pfizer, Inc., has retained commercial real estate brokerage firm Colliers as the exclusive leasing agent for the 2.0-million-square-foot, mixed-use, multi-tenanted campus.

The 207-acre property is owned by Industrial Realty Group, LLC, a real estate development and investment firm with more than 100 million square feet of commercial property across the U.S.

“After an exhaustive interview process with many of the premier commercial brokerage firms, Colliers stood out because their team brings a wealth of marketing and deal-making experience, as well as a data-driven intelligence approach,” said Jamie Schwartz, President of Hudson Valley iCampus. “They understand the value of our unique campus and have expertise in all different types of uses, including life sciences, industrial, office, warehouse, flex—all of which are featured here at Hudson Valley iCampus. They see great opportunity for businesses and organizations to locate to this environment, which is conducive to innovation, ingenuity, and industry.”

Schwartz said there is approximately 1.5 million square feet of available space at the campus.

“We’re so pleased to collaborate with Jamie as he reintroduces this magnificent property to the marketplace and the community,” said Robert Lella, Managing Director of Colliers’ Tri-State team, in the Stamford, CT. office. “What he and his team have accomplished thus far at Hudson Valley iCampus is very exciting, and we want to assist him in executing his vision.”



Sheena Gohil, Executive Managing Director, Manhattan office



Charlie Hatfield, Executive Managing Director, Princeton, NJ office.



Robert Lella, Managing Director of Colliers Tri-State team

Other members of the Colliers team include Sheena Gohil, Executive Managing Director, Manhattan office, and Charlie Hatfield, Executive Managing Director, Princeton, N.J., office.

The Hudson Valley iCampus is lo-

cated at 401 North Middletown Road in Pearl River. The property is centrally located in the Hudson Valley and close to dining, shopping and entertainment options, with easy access to train stations, the Mario M. Cuomo Bridge and New York State Thruway, and within 24 miles of Manhattan. Current tenants include Pfizer, Inc.; Auro Vaccines; RK Pharma, Inc.; Sanofi US Services, Inc.; Pearl River Labs and Urban Electric Power, Inc. The site is managed by IRG affiliate IRG Realty Advisors, LLC.

Los Angeles-based Industrial Realty Group, LLC is a nationwide real estate development and investment firm specializing in the acquisition, development and management of commercial and industrial real estate throughout the U.S. IRG, through its affiliated partnerships and limited liability companies, operates a portfolio containing more than 110 million square feet in 31 states.

Colliers is a diversified professional services and investment management company with operations in 65 countries. The firm has reported annualized revenues of \$3.6 billion (\$4.0 billion including affiliates) and \$46 billion of assets under management.

Great Point Studios Opens Lionsgate Studios; Begins \$500M Expansion in City of Yonkers

YONKERS—Great Point Studios officially opened the doors to its long-awaited Lionsgate Studios Yonkers on Jan. 11 at 45 Wells Ave. and announced that it will move forward with a more than \$500-million expansion plan nearby.

The expansion project announced by Great Point Studios Founder and CEO Robert Halmi calls for a 1-million-square-foot facility that will feature more 20,000 square foot stages on one campus than any other facility in the Northeast. The campus will include a total of 11 soundstages. Halmi also announced new long-term tenants for the facility, which include Lionsgate, Mediapro and Syracuse University.

When completed, the project on Wells Avenue in Yonkers will be the largest modern-built film and television production facility in the Northeast, according to Green Point Studios officials.

The campus will feature state-of-the-art film stages, post-production facilities, screening rooms, office space and support space. It will offer a full set of production services on site.

Three of the large stages and 500,000 square feet of office and support space are now open for business, while Great Point has also purchased approximately eight acres of additional land around the originally announced studio site. The expansion of additional stages and office space are already under construction and are scheduled to be completed in phases starting in

September 2022 with total completion slated for December 2023.

Lionsgate will occupy seven of the complex’s 11 stages, along with office and support space.

Mediapro, a leading group in the global audiovisual sector, will take occupancy of its first stage later this year and they have options on two more of the planned expansion stages. Its first stage is expected to be completed this winter.

The S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University has also come on as a partner at Lionsgate Studios. Syracuse University will work with Great Point Studios to create a distinctive learning and fully hands-on working experience for television, radio and film students. Beginning this month, the school will utilize the facility as a giant classroom and will have access to all stages and equipment at Lionsgate Studio Yonkers, Great Point Studios stated in an announcement.

A key investment partner and project developer at Lionsgate Studios Yonkers is National Resources, which will be responsible for all phases of development and construction of the studio complex.

Great Point Studio’s institutional financial partner is an affiliate of Lindsay Goldberg, a private investment firm focused on partnering with entrepreneurs and family-owned businesses to help them grow.



A rendering of the Lionsgate motion picture studio complex in Yonkers.



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Birch Group Spends \$212M on Long Island Complex

NANUET—The Birch Group, a locally-based privately-held commercial real estate investor, owner and operator, reported on Jan. 6 it had acquired a two-building portfolio from DRA Advisors and Onyx Equities in Jericho, NY for \$212 million.

The acquisition follows the company's recent \$255-million portfolio purchase in Short Hills, NJ. With this latest acquisition, The Birch Group has now acquired more than \$1.1 billion of commercial office assets since 2020.

The 665,592-square-foot portfolio comprises two Class A office buildings located at 1 and 2 Jericho Plaza in the Jericho submarket. The area boasts the strongest vacancy rate in the New York Tri-State suburban region and is widely recognized as a rising affluent market with diverse and dense labor pools, offering tenants prime options for top-tier office space.

"This acquisition presents an opportunity to add additional trophy quality institutional assets to our evolving office roster, furthering The Birch Group's strategy to give tenants the optimal experience in environments that meet and exceed expectations as we enter the new year as the largest private office landlord in New Jersey," said Mark Meisner, president and founder of The Birch Group. "As we look ahead to the coming months, we believe companies will place a renewed interest in providing top-notch office experiences and spaces where people want to be. Our focus remains on enacting tailored improvements strategies on a case-by-case basis to create long lasting returns for our tenants and investors alike."

Birch's decision to purchase these properties is a direct result of deep analysis based and its extensive line-of-sight

into the activity and health in subsets of the Tri-state office market, company officials stated.

They note that the Jericho submarket is set to continue on its path of attracting high quality long and short-term tenants to the institutional-quality properties. Nearly 95% leased at 1 and 2 Jericho Plaza, the property's roster of nationally recognized tenants includes AIG, Deloitte, Morgan Stanley, Ernst & Young, Valley Bank, Sterling National Bank and UBS. The properties' trophy quality and sought after location has positioned it to reach full occupancy in the near future, Birch Group officials add.

Located at the intersection of the Jericho Turnpike and Long Island Expressway, the properties at 1 and 2 Jericho Plaza offers connectivity through a nearby LIRR station and is only 25 miles to LaGuardia, JFK, and MacArthur airports.

On-site amenities include completely renovated three-story atrium lobbies, conference hubs and centers, upgraded common corridors, elevators, and restrooms, beautifully landscaped outdoor areas, full-service cafes, fitness centers, 24/7 security, and car-charging stations. The properties are heightened further by an extensive mixed-use amenity base that includes abundant golf courses like Meadow Brook Golf Club within walking distance, and convenient access to retail and hotel accommodations at the nearby Jericho Commons, Whole Foods, Kohl's, Home Depot, and Milleridge Inn. Local upscale and casual dining options include Opus Steakhouse, the Cotillion, and more.

"As the largest office owners in New Jersey and a prolific leader in the Tri-state area, The Birch Group is following the demographic shift to the suburbs



1 and 2 Jericho Plaza, Jericho, NY PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BIRCH GROUP

resulting from the pandemic as leasing activity increases in targeted submarkets," said Christopher DeLorenzo, executive vice president at The Birch Group. "With 2022 return to office plans

coming to fruition, this trend represents an extraordinary opportunity to meet the demand for high-quality office assets in prime markets."

Gov. Hochul Calls for Environmental Study

Continued from page 9

appears to be between Exits 120 (NY Route 211 – Wallkill) and 131 (Woodbury), a distance of approximately 22 miles, and the segment of the corridor that is projected to experience the highest levels of congestion in the year 2055."

Advocates for the Route 17 expansion were heartened to learn that the project could receive funding from the \$1.2-trillion infrastructure bill recently signed into law by President Biden when U.S. Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-CD18) listed the Route 17 project at a press conference in Newburgh on Nov. 8 as one that could qualify for federal funding. He referenced the Infrastructure Act's \$13.5 billion that will go directly to New York State's high-

ways and bridges, and said that revamping Route 17 through Orange County is "a much-needed project that has been stalled for too long."

"Route 17 can receive funding through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act," a spokesman for Rep. Maloney said. "However, the law does not directly earmark funds to specific projects. It will be up to New York State to determine how to dedicate their funds from this legislation to projects like Route 17. However, as he has throughout the legislative process drafting the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Rep. Maloney will continue to fight for funding for critical projects and priorities here in the Hudson Valley."

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What You Need to Know About Upgrading an Unsupported PC to Windows 11, Learn About Windows 11 and Windows Speech Recognition/Voice Typing

TECH TALK

By John Vrooman
john@johnvrooman.com



Unlike Windows 10, Windows 11 has higher than usual hardware compatibility requirements that many PCs are not able to meet (and therefore do not qualify for the upgrade). Fortunately, Microsoft has left some pathways open for users of many non-compatible PCs to still be able to install the upgrade. Unfortunately, the upgrade process is more complicated for these PCs. The following link leads to a YouTube search results page that includes several videos that offer step-by-step instructions that will guide you through the upgrade process. Before starting the upgrade process, I would suggest that you first watch several upgrade-related videos so that you can see what is involved before starting. If you decide to go for it, I wish you luck! Here is the link...www.tinyurl.com/2p9a2dzw

Get Up and Running Faster on Windows 11

These days, it is easier than ever to learn about the latest new computer operating system features and capabilities. How? By seeking out and watching videos. Back in the day, the way many of us learned about new operating systems was by buying giant books and browsing/working through them. These days, by visiting sites like YouTube, and simply typing in keywords, one can quickly find and learn about anything and everything there is to know about a new operating system. To help you to get up and running on Windows 11 faster and easier, the link at the end of this paragraph will lead you to a YouTube search results page. The search results page includes links to numerous Windows 11 overview, tips, tricks, and tutorial types of videos. If you take the time to review some videos, you will quickly learn about new features and capabilities that will surely help you become a stronger Windows 11 computer user. Have fun learning...www.tinyurl.com/yckn7tah

Have You Tried Windows 10/11's 'Speech Recognition,' 'Voice Typing'

Over the past few years, I have been using speech-to-text/speech recognition tools and capabilities (mostly on my phone) quite often. However, for some reason, I do not use this type of technology as much when using my laptop PC. That said, you should know that Windows 10/11 does offer speech recognition and voice typing applications. To activate Windows' "Speech Recognition" app (if it is enabled), you simply use the [Windows logo key] + [Ctrl] + [S] keyboard shortcut. Similarly, to activate Windows' "Voice Typing" app you use the [Windows logo key] + [H] keyboard shortcut. If you want to learn more about these tools, the following link will lead you to some helpful resources... www.tinyurl.com/m9d8ndjc

Microsoft PowerToys Keep Getting Better

I have highlighted Microsoft's free "PowerToys" application in previous articles, but it keeps getting better...so, I am mentioning it again. Microsoft's PowerToys application is a bundle of applications that provides you with additional computing features and capabilities. Not everything included in the bundle of applications will likely interest you, but I am confident that one or more will. The following howto-geek.com link leads to a helpful overview article titled "All Microsoft's PowerToys for Windows 10 and 11, Explained," and covers what each PowerToy application is and does...www.tinyurl.com/5xrk9xt7

Easier iPhone/iPad Text Editing

When editing text on an iPhone, or iPad, a lesser-known and often overlooked way to move the text cursor around your iOS device's screen is to hold down the spacebar of the standard keyboard until the keyboard's keys turn off/become blank. Once the keyboards' keys become blank, you can move the text cursor around your text like a touchpad. The following cnet.com article titled "How to unlock the hidden trackpad on your iPhone and iPad," can help you to better activate and use this feature...www.tinyurl.com/57nrr2km

Move Safari's Address/Search Bar Back to the Top of the Screen on iOS 15

Many iPhone and iPad users got an unwelcome surprise after upgrading to iOS 15. The surprise was that Safari's Address/Search Bar was moved to the bottom of the screen. Fortunately, if this change is an unwelcome one, and you want to move it back to the top, there is a way to achieve that goal. The following youtube.com video titled "How to Move Safari Address/Search Bar to Top iOS 15 [Two Methods]" will show you how. Here is a courtesy link to the video...www.tinyurl.com/ycktm4vr

Workaround for Those Who Do Not Have a Backlit Keyboard

If your computer keyboard does not have backlit keys and you sometimes find yourself wishing that they were, there is an inexpensive solution that you might not have known about nor considered. What is it? Glow in the dark keyboard key stickers. While not ideal, they may provide you with the extra keyboard key visibility that you want/need. If this topic interests you, and you are interested in exploring some options, the following link will lead you to an amazon.com page that lists some relevant products... www.tinyurl.com/2vf483ru

Of course, if your laptop has a free USB port you could also consider getting a small USB-powered light that could provide you with some additional keyboard lighting. If this option sounds better to you, the following link will lead you to another amazon.com page that identifies a few product options that may interest you...www.tinyurl.com/2p935h55

Reminders

This month's column can be viewed at...www.realestateindepth.com/technology (Benefit: If you read this column online, you will be able to click on and visit the mentioned links more easily.)

You can view previous articles by visiting the *Real Estate In-Depth* online archive at www.realestateindepth.com/supplements/archives

If you have any comments, suggestions, tips, or questions, you can e-mail John at john@johnvrooman.com

John Vrooman keeps an eye out for cool new hardware, software, apps, gadgets; SaaS solutions; social media developments, trends, tips, personal/SMB productivity solutions, and more. He gathers information for his column from a diverse range of resources and enjoys sharing his discoveries with others. John has been authoring this column since August 2000 and welcomes your feedback.

PUTNAM POSTING

By Jennifer Maher



Diversity Hits Putnam County Post Pandemic

When I first moved "upstate" to Putnam County 26 years ago from New York City, I experienced culture shock on many levels. Among the many differences, trees, grass, subdivisions, and the shocking relative quiet among them, one change stood out. I was startled by the lack of diversity. In many respects the adjustment to Putnam County living made me long for the multicultural environment that was so familiar to me growing up in the boroughs.

Like you perhaps, I fell head over heels in love with all that Putnam had to offer. What stood out most was the abundance of water—the reservoirs, lakes, the Hudson River, plus endless nature trails and outdoor recreation are something that will keep my roots here, but the cultural, almost monochromatic differences took some adjustment.

Following a robust real estate market in 2020, in 2021 Putnam County saw an increase in sales volume of 25.36% and, with that, an influx of expatriates from New York City. Driving around, shopping, or dining, you can actually see the difference in the variety of cultures of the people that have made their home here in Putnam County.

Diversity means more than just race. Putnam has been experiencing a rise in its senior population for nearly a decade. Consequently, many of the seniors who cashed out their equity from empty nests were replaced by a younger and far more mixed population than we've seen before. The younger first-time home buyers came up in droves during the pandemic, and have given the county a younger face in many respects.

The LGBTQIA+ community, which includes individuals who identify as gay, trans, and non-binary, has also made an appearance here in Putnam County. I attended the first Pride Parade here in Carmel, and it was a well-attended, beautiful event.

Diversity brings so many beautiful things to a community. Places like Peekskill, Hudson, Beacon and Newburgh prove that the local economy and overall vibe of a community is better off when everyone has a chance to live, work and learn with different perspectives coming together. That mix of backgrounds forms a beautiful cultural tapestry. Diversity indeed can improve the individual and collective quality of life for all.

It will be interesting to see the impact this new diversity will have on the Putnam community. I look forward to the many changes we will enjoy from a new variety of dining, shopping, entertainment and recreation that will be sure to follow. I for one always welcome this type of change and the opportunities that come with it.

Jennifer Maher is COO of J. Philip Real Estate and Founding Chairwoman of the Putnam County Business Council.

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