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REAL ESTATE IN-DEPTH

Official Publication of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors



Realtors Believe Worst of Pandemic's Impacts are Behind Us

By John Jordan

WHITE PLAINS—The second quarter home sales market in the Hudson Valley, dominated by restrictions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in New York State, struggled mightily with sales activity down significantly.

Second quarter home sales, according to a recently released report by OneKey™ Multiple Listing Service LLC, were down anywhere from 39.8% in the Bronx; 27.9% and 27.4% in Orange and Westchester counties, to 6.2% lower in Putnam County, as compared to the second quarter of last year.

While the sales figures speak to the deep impacts COVID-19 have wrought on the region's economy, brokerage executives credit the ingenuity, savviness and determination of agents to complete transactions during the lockdown in spite of restrictions imposed during Gov. Andrew Cuomo's "New York on Pause" process. Agents were forced to conduct business online and show homes virtually. New

Hudson Valley Home Sales Second Quarter 2020

Bronx County	-39.8%
Putnam County	- 6.2%
Sullivan County	-13.7%
Rockland County	-24.1%
Westchester County	-27.6%
Orange County	-27.9%

York State permitted notary services online and attorneys conducted business in parking lots, in tents and between cars. The sales figures could have been much worse had it not been for the agents' perseverance under trying and sometimes frustrating business conditions.

Although sales figures in the second quarter took a significant hit, real estate brokerage executives believe that since the home sales market entered the COVID-19 crisis on a strong note with plentiful demand, the industry could see a fairly rapid recovery if a second wave of the pandemic is prevented.

On March 7th, New York State Gov. Andrew Cuomo declared a state of emergency and as of March 20th all non-essential businesses were closed. Most of the COVID- restrictions on real estate were lifted when the

Continued on page 2

HGAR Membership Overwhelmingly Approves Merger with Bronx Manhattan North Association

By John Jordan

WHITE PLAINS—The membership of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc. that participated in a more than two-hour virtual Special Meeting earlier this month, overwhelmingly approved a merger agreement with the Bronx Manhattan-North Association of Realtors, Inc.

The more than 400 members who participated in the July 1st session, held via Zoom, also approved a number of bylaws amendments that were necessary to facilitate the merger, along with other changes, including codifying the association's commitment to diversity.

The merger plan also calls for the creation of the Bronx Chapter of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc., with a Chapter representative—Vincent Buccieri of Today Realty Corp. serving on the HGAR Board of Di-

rectors in accordance with the amended bylaws. Buccieri will serve as the Bronx Chapter representative until Dec. 31, 2020. Buccieri currently serves as the president of BMNAR. The merger is now

HGAR in a virtual session via Zoom on Thursday, June 17.

The Board of Directors of HGAR and BMNAR previously approved the merger transaction in separate votes.

"We really feel that this merger is bringing together two very strong organizations to create an even stronger organization."

—HGAR Chief Executive Officer Richard Haggerty

subject to final due diligence by HGAR and must be approved by the National Association of Realtors, as well as the New York State Attorney General's Office.

The membership of BMNAR unanimously approved the merger deal with

The Board of Directors of HGAR also approved the proposed bylaws amendments.

BMNAR CEO Eliezer Rodriguez, who has led the organization since 2013, will join HGAR to assist with the expanded organization's legislative

advocacy agenda in the Bronx and New York City and the development of a stronger Commercial Investment Division. Rodriguez, succeeded Nunzio Del Greco, RCE, who led BMNAR from 1983 through 2012.

BMNAR currently boasts approximately 200 Realtor members and affiliates. The merger deal with HGAR will also include the 31-member offices of the Bronx-Northern Manhattan Association of Realtors' MLS, which will join OneKey MLS. When the deal is finalized, HGAR will have a membership of more than 12,000. The merger will increase HGAR's territory to the entire borough of the Bronx and from 145th St. north in Manhattan, which now gives HGAR full coverage of the borough of Manhattan,

Continued on page 3

NYC Brokers Discuss COVID, Market Activity, 'Black Lives Matter'

By John Jordan

WHITE PLAINS—The Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors and co-sponsor TitleVest recently assembled a panel of powerhouse New York City residential brokerage executives who offered candid assessments of the area's real estate markets now and going forward and what the real estate industry must do in this time of civil unrest.

The online panel discussion held on June 25 entitled "Getting the Deal Done: Real Estate Transaction Best Practices as NYC Re-Opens" featured panelists: Scott Durkin, president and CEO of Douglas Elliman; Bess Freedman, CEO of Brown Harris Stevens; and Gary Malin, COO of The Corcoran Group. The moderator for the program was Brian Tormey, president of TitleVest, and the host was HGAR CEO Richard Haggerty.

Haggerty began the program with the latest home sales data from OneKey



Scott Durkin, president & CEO of Douglas Elliman



Bess Freedman, CEO of Brown Harris Stevens



Gary Malin, COO of The Corcoran Group

MLS on residential transactions in its market area that covers Long Island, Manhattan, the Bronx, Brooklyn, Queens and the Hudson Valley counties of Westchester, Rockland, Orange, Putnam and Sullivan counties.

In the previous 24 hours, 728 new listings were entered into the OneKey MLS system and 156 closings (title transfers) occurred, Haggerty reported. In the previous week, 3,829 new listings were entered and 993 transactions closed (title transfers) took place.

In response, TitleVest's Tormey noted, "That is really encouraging and heartwarming to know that there is that much activity."

The broker panel for the most part agreed that activity is brisk in New York City on the rental apartment market, but are unsure how healthy the sales market will be, noting that New York City just recently entered phase two to allow agents to conduct personal showings.

In terms of the rental market, Malin said, "There is an avalanche of inven-

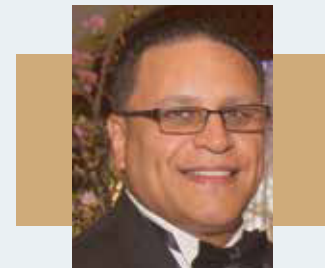
Continued on page 2

tory hitting the market. More inventory than I have ever seen hit the market at one time."

He noted that a manager of his firm's

Continued on page 2

INSIDE SPOTLIGHT ON



Eliezer Rodriguez, Esq. See page 11

- VIEWPOINTS 4**
- LEGAL CORNER 5**
- RESIDENTIAL 6,7**
- HGAR UPDATE 11,12**
- EDUCATION/CALENDAR 13**
- LEGISLATIVE/BARRISTER 14**
- COMMERCIAL 18,19**
- TECHNOLOGY 22**
- PUTNAM 23**
- HUDSON VALLEY REAL ESTATE REPORT SECTION 2**

NYC Brokers Discuss COVID, Market Activity, 'Black Lives Matter'

Continued from page 1

Brooklyn office told him listings in that office had risen from 3,000 in March to 7,500.

"Every (building) owner is dealing with tremendous amounts of inventory and they are going to need to understand that the market is in a moment of change and they are going to need to moderate pricing and they are also going to need to moderate concessions," Malin said.



Brian Tormey, president of TitleVest

He added that landlords in this environment who stand firm on prices "will be holding onto vacancies far longer than they anticipated."

Malin said tenants will be shopping around looking for the best prices and concession packages.

Freedman said that because of the plethora of options for tenants, landlords will have to be reasonable in terms of pricing.

She said the same holds true in the sales market. "There is going to be a sort of a day of reckoning and a correction, but we are here to help them do that."

Freedman described the current climate as an "opportunity environment across the board" for renters and buyers in New York City.

She said that while agents are reporting to her they are showing listings non-stop and starting to put deals together, she noted it is too early to tell how vibrant the sales market in New York City will be a few months from now.

"I think it is going to take a little bit of time, I expect, in New York because we are also super-sensitive to what is going on in the country regarding COVID. We are seeing an uptick in all these states that may not been as responsible in certain areas," Freedman said.

She expects the sales market to be "decent" going forward, due to pent-up demand. "I don't think it is going to be crazy, Freedman predicted. "I think we'll be O.K., and I have said before, I am O.K. with O.K. I will take O.K."

Among the hot markets at the moment are: the Hamptons on Long Island, Fairfield County, CT; Palm Beach, FL and Rhinebeck in Dutchess County.

She added that a spike in COVID hospitalizations and deaths in New York that would prompt Gov. Andrew Cuomo to reinstate the "New York on Pause" restrictions "would be a nightmare and would be a worst-case scenario" for the New York City real estate market, Freedman related.

Freedman, who noted that Brown Harris Stevens lost an agent to the coronavirus, said "Wearing a mask is not about politics, it's just about safety. It's

about protecting yourself. It's not right versus left, it is right versus wrong and taking care of each other."

Durkin said in discussions with brokers and agents from other real estate brokerage firms, they say some are very active while others are reporting little business.

"There is no middle ground here," he said. "People are very decisive now in terms of what they need and I think the access being limited as it is, even now in phase two, in many ways the agents know how to work around it now and the buyers are also willing to not obsess over things they cannot control right now," Durkin shared.

He said that real estate professionals in New York have, since COVID restrictions were put in place, "have learned how to deal with this and I think we are able to move faster and smarter right now than we ever have been."

In terms of COVID's impact on Douglas Elliman's national footprint, Durkin related that about an hour before the program began, he ordered his Houston office shut down due to the significant spike in COVID-19 new cases there. He added that South Florida and California, where the firm also has operations, are also seeing new outbreaks of the coronavirus.

"Luckily, people have not been coming into the office, Durkin related. "So, they are staying away."

'Black Lives Matter'

Freedman, Malin and Durkin agreed

that while the real estate industry embraces diversity, more needs to be done, especially in terms of key leadership positions.

Freedman noted that while there is work to do to help foster more diversity in the real estate industry, the "Black Lives Matter" movement has raised awareness of the issue.

"I think when it comes to 'Black Lives Matter' and what is going on in the real estate space, I know that we all believe in equality, but I think we have not done a great job in having a good representation of enough diversity in the leadership arena."

She added, "It is one thing to believe in equality, but to create opportunities is another thing and I know for myself at Brown Harris Stevens, we need to do a lot more..."

Malin agreed with Freedman and said it is important that real estate executives "listen and learn and we really take stock of where we are and more importantly where we need to go. There are going to be some difficult and uncomfortable conversations, but those conversations are important to have. That is how you move things forward."

He added that diversity needs to be a concerted effort to foster real change in the industry.

Durkin related that "Black Lives Matter" "is not a moment, this is a movement and I think it is important for us to embrace that and we are certainly looking within the company at being much more diverse."

Realtors Believe Worst of Pandemic's Impacts are Behind Us

Continued from page 1

Mid-Hudson region entered phase three of the four-phased reopening process on June 23. The Mid-Hudson entered phase four on July 7.

According to the 2020 Second Quarter Residential Real Estate Sales Report Westchester, Putnam, Rockland, Orange, Sullivan Counties, New York released on July 7, single-family residential sales, as compared to Q2-2019 in Putnam County were down 6.6%; Sullivan County posted 10.6% lower single-family home sales, while Westchester County's single-family sector sales plunged 21.3%. Rounding out the painful figures, single-family homes in Rockland County fell 22.1% and Orange County single-family sales dropped 26.5% in the second quarter of this year.

While sales were down, the median sale price of single-family homes throughout the region, with the exception of Putnam County, were higher in the second quarter as compared to 12 months earlier. Sales prices increased 17.7% in Sullivan to \$175,000; 6.7% in Rockland to \$480,000; 12.5% in Orange to \$298,000 and 1.2% in Westchester to \$711,000. Putnam County registered a slight decrease of 1.1% in its median price. The median price in Putnam was \$359,900 at the end of the second quarter of 2020 as compared to \$365,000 one year ago.

The lower-priced condominium and cooperative markets were battered, suffering a 41.5% and 30.4% decline in sales in Westchester County in the second quarter. The median price of a condominium in the second quarter in Westchester County fell 2.3% to \$391,000, while the median for a co-op in the county rose 5.6% to \$190,000. **Editor's Note: For the full OneKey™ MLS report and charts, see second section, pages 1 and 2.**

HGAR President Gail Fattizzi said the market entered the pandemic on a strong note. Sales began to stall in March and hit their low mark in April, but enjoyed a quick turnaround in May once restrictions began to be lifted.

She points to a number of positive

prevailing trends that could foster a recovery in coming months, including: strong buyer demand, a weak New York City market that includes some residents considering a move to the suburbs, as well as the quick rebound of the stock market.

Fattizzi, who is executive director of independent real estate brokerage network Westchester Real Estate Inc.

"I believe the sales rate in the third quarter will be much higher than the sales rate in the second quarter and the average sales rate for the past year,"

—Joseph Rand, Managing Principal of B H & G Rand Realty,

of Somers, said looking forward, "The Westchester and Putnam markets will continue to be strong into the fall. Buyers should get their ducks in a row and be ready to come in with strong offers. They should also consider the fixer-uppers that others don't want to tackle."

She recommends, "Buy now, without all the competition, lock in a super low interest rate for 30 years on a renovation loan so the work is all financed, and create the house of your dreams."

Leah Caro, chairperson of OneKey™ Multiple Listing Service LLC, also praised agents during the lockdown for their ingenuity. During an interview on the radio program "Building Knowledge" presented by the Building and Realty Institute on WVOX, she said that sales along all market types should rise now that most COVID restrictions have been lifted and the industry has returned to a more normal sales environment.

She believes that one sector that should benefit from New York City residents considering a move to the suburbs is the cooperative market.

"Rents in the city are sky-high, Caro, who is President and Principal Broker of Park Sterling Realty of Bronxville, said. "Owning real estate is always cheaper

than renting and a co-op is a great way to get your foot in the door for housing in Westchester."

Caro also noted that very low mortgage interest rates should also fuel home sales in the region going forward. In addition, the expected increase in work-at-home policies, could spark additional activity in locations outside of Westchester's cities.

"I believe the sales rate in the third quarter will be much higher than the sales rate in the second quarter and the average sales rate for the past year,"

—Joseph Rand, Managing Principal of B H & G Rand Realty,

Houlihan Lawrence in its second quarter report authored by Chairman Stephen Meyers and Liz Nunan, president and CEO, noted that agents had to adjust to the new normal during the pandemic.

"All parties involved in a real estate transaction scrambled to meet the demand, all while working virtually, within the guidelines issued by the state. Shortly thereafter came a huge wave of inquiries for short-term furnished rentals to start, soon morphing into single-family home inquiries with an emphasis on home offices and outdoor amenities. As the shutdown wore on, more and more of the workforce embraced working from home as a sustainable model, even if only for part of the time," they stated.

They added that during the lockdown, many homeowners chose not to sell and opted to sit tight, not wanting to expose themselves to any possible health risks."Meyers and Nunan concluded, "Second quarter data for 2020 is partly the result of an atypical event, a paradigm shift in the wants and needs of the buyers. But the market at the end of the quarter remains strong, and interest rates continue to drive the market forward. It remains to be seen if these

trends continue long into the year."

In terms of the region's luxury market, Houlihan Lawrence indicates that inventory levels are low and pending sales are increasing in many markets. The lower end of the luxury market is gaining the most strength and buyers remain value driven, the brokerage firm's second quarter report on the luxury market stated.

"For now, it appears that the 2020 spring market, which coincided with the start of the shutdown, had a late start. Is this a moment in real estate, or a structural shift with long lasting implications? It is too soon to tell," said Anthony P. Cutugno, senior vice president, Houlihan Lawrence Private Brokerage.

Joseph Rand, managing principal of Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty, also offered high praise for agents and noted that any exodus by New York City residents to the suburbs will be just a short-term trend.

"My basic feeling is that it could have been a lot worse," Rand said. "I really was surprised how robust the market was during the pandemic and we were able to sell homes at all." He noted that at the onset of the coronavirus restrictions in March, the brokerage firm expected sales to be down 50% to 60%, instead of the approximately 25% sales decline in sales the region recorded in the second quarter.

Going forward and with the proviso that a second wave of COVID-19 does not hit the New York market, Rand believes that while closed sales in June and July will be lower than last year, activity will be strong and opens (new contracts) in June and July will be higher.

Rand noted that inventory levels region-wide remain very low and combined with strong demand, market conditions will be tight.

"I believe the sales rate in the third quarter will be much higher than the sales rate in the second quarter and the average sales rate for the past year," Rand said. "I think we are going to have a huge closing rate of deals. Closings will be way up over the next few months."

HGAR Membership Overwhelmingly Approves Merger with Bronx Manhattan North Association

Continued from page 1

according to HGAR Chief Executive Officer Richard Haggerty.

The merger transaction also involves the three-story BMNAR headquarters building at 1867 Williamsbridge Road. Haggerty said HGAR will house its Bronx operations there and may undertake some renovations to the property.

Prior to the respective merger and bylaws votes, members and the HGAR Executive Committee, staff and legal counsel John Dolgetta engaged in far-ranging question and answer sessions with members.

The participants approved the merger deal with 86% of the participants voting in favor of the merger.

The bylaws changes met with 89% of the participants' approval.

HGAR President Fattizzi related that while discussions concerning a possible merger began more than two years ago, talks accelerated about eight or nine months ago, leading to the proposed agreement. She noted that some of the advantages to the transaction included bridging the geography of HGAR's reach between Westchester and Central Manhattan, "joining forces for greater political and legislative advocacy, help with expanding our Commercial Investment Division, welcoming their loyal Affiliate members and bringing in new talent to our organization," she said.

Haggerty added, "I could not be more excited about finally bringing this to fruition." He noted that the deal will combine two organizations whose respective strengths meshed effectively.

He pointed out that the deal will strengthen HGAR's legislative advocacy in terms of rent control and other key



HGAR CEO Richard Haggerty



Gail Fattizzi, HGAR President

legislation in New York City.

"We really feel that this merger is bringing together two very strong organizations to create an even stronger organization," he added.

HGAR Office Reopened on July 6

CEO Haggerty advised that HGAR offices in White Plains and Goshen will reopen on Monday, July 6. Members who wish to meet with staff must do so by appointment only and must wear masks and adhere to social distancing protocols.

The White Plains and Goshen offices will initially be at 50% staffing levels on a rotating basis.

He also noted that for at least several months, classes run by HGAR's Education Department will be presented on a virtual basis only via Zoom. Haggerty also praised HGAR's Member Success Team that dealt with more than 15,000 inquiries during the shutdown.

HGAR-Co-Sponsors BCW Anti-Racism Webinar

The Business Council of Westchester recently launched a series of free webinars designed to take action steps against racism as part of its new "Anti-Racism Initiative."

The first in the series of programs was held on July 9 and was entitled "Unconscious Bias." The webinar was led by Dr. Gena Yvette Davis, Psy.D., MBA, BCC, CCP, an organizational psychologist, executive coach, and corporate trainer.

The series was organized in partnership with Balancing Life's Issues and sponsored by the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors; Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber; New York State Economic Development Council; Westchester-Putnam Workforce Board and the Putnam County Business Council.



Dr. Gena Yvette Davis

PHOTO BY JOHN VECCHIOLLA

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER

By Gail Fattizzi, HGAR President



We Want YOU!!!

Every year in July, HGAR sends out a request for applications for open seats on our Board of Directors, including Director and Officer positions. Officer positions include President-Elect, Treasurer and Secretary. The other two officer positions that comprise the Executive Committee are Immediate Past President (that will be me next year!), and President which will be filled by our current President-Elect, Crystal Hawkins-Syska. Are YOU ready to step up?

Our By-laws stipulate that some experience as a Director is required to fill an officer position. Directors, however, may come forward from the general ranks of all members. Many Directors start their involvement in the association by volunteering to serve on a committee, maybe attending some events, or simply because someone suggested they would be a good contributor and asked them to jump in. In my experience, it's those personal invitations that have been the impetus for many of our greatest contributors to get started volunteering. So here it is, this is my personal invitation to YOU to get involved!

Committee work is the heart, mind and spirit behind an organization like ours that relies so heavily on volunteerism. It's within the committees, work groups and task forces that goals are set, ideas are generated, hashed out, fine-tuned and emerge as recommended action plans to be considered by our Board of Directors. Our committees must work together as effective teams, committed to a common purpose and common goals.

The Board of Directors typically convenes for 10 meetings annually at which the Directors consider opportunities, engage in discussions, review committee recommendations, and ultimately decide any direction the association takes. Clearly, being a Director is an extremely vital role in HGAR, and one that comes with a tremendous amount of responsibility and commitment. At the start of each year, every Director commits to a fiduciary obligation to the association, resolving to put aside their own individual interests and make all decisions solely in the best interest of the association.

The Board of Directors is our governance structure for the association, while our staff is the management and execution side of the organization. Once an action plan or strategy is identified and receives its approval from the Board of Directors, staff along with volunteers set out to implement the plan. We are extremely fortunate to have amazing staff members who support all member services, execute on initiatives, and keep things running on a day-to-day basis.

I know, now you're thinking, "What do I get out of this?" For many, volunteering and finding ways to give back is part of their DNA, it's a mission and a passion. In some cases, it starts with a desire to learn more about how things run in general, or an interest in a specific project or segment of services. For others, it may start with wanting to network and morph into greater participation. Whatever the initial reason, the outcome is infinitely greater than the first intent. I will say, personally, that I have learned SO much from my peers and our incredible staff over the many years of my involvement. The people I've met, the experiences, the exposure to our industry at all levels, and the abundant knowledge are all things I would never have achieved if I had just kept to myself and my own business, and hadn't accepted that first invitation to get involved.

We are looking to diversify our leadership, introduce more perspectives, broaden our horizons, and move our organization forward with commitment, integrity and enthusiasm. When you see that application in your e-mail inbox, I only ask that you consider if you have something to contribute. Or maybe you know someone who does; if so, encourage them. We really do need YOU!



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GATEWAY PERSPECTIVES

By Richard Haggerty, HGAR CEO



Finding the New Normal

As I write this article, back at my desk at the HGAR offices in White Plains, which we reopened July 6th, I can't help but think back on the last four months when we were all working remotely from home. So much has happened in that short period of time, a world-wide pandemic, real estate transactions coming to a virtual standstill, a recession, schools closed and kids sent home, protests about racial inequalities spreading across the country. It seems like a decade's worth of tumultuous events were shoved into a few brief months!

As I have said before, there is no going back to "normal." Once we entered phase two of Governor Cuomo's New York Forward plan, and agents were able to conduct in person showings again, it's as if the flood gates opened and buyers came pouring into the market. While the second quarter sales numbers as reported in this edition of *Real Estate In-Depth* were predictably grim, I think we will start to see a recovery in the third quarter as well as the fourth quarter, reflecting all of the buying activity that is occurring now. However, with the new normal, I expect fewer and smaller open houses and I believe that virtual tours are not just here to stay, they will become more sophisticated.

There are caveats to that rosy prediction. New York State and the northeast states in general currently seem to have a handle on COVID-19, with new cases and deaths steadily decreasing. However, as we know from looking at the national headlines, that is not the reality in many other states across the country where cases are rising at alarming rates. We must continue to be vigilant about the dangers posed by COVID-19 and not let our guard down. We cannot afford to go back to "pause!"

The other caveat, which to my mind is equally pressing, is rebuilding the New York City economy, which is the lynch pin to the New York State economy. Currently headlines are focusing on everyone leaving the city, the fact that Zoom meetings have illustrated how easy it is for employees to work from home, and the challenges posed by employees returning to large commercial buildings while having to practice social distancing. The reality is that our current economy is structurally linked to those individuals who work in the Manhattan commercial buildings, buying their lunches from the local bodegas, frequenting the restaurants and buying from the stores. It's dependent on tourists visiting New York to shop and binge watch shows on Broadway.

A full return to work and tourism is not going to come back soon—not until, as a country, we have COVID-19 contained and a vaccine is in sight. In the meantime, the federal government needs to step up to the plate with a relief package targeting support for state and local governments. From my perspective, we cannot truly begin the economic recovery without such support. The new normal may involve more people working from home, but the new normal still needs a strong and vibrant New York City, a city that has always bounced back from adversity in the past, demonstrating tenacity and resiliency.

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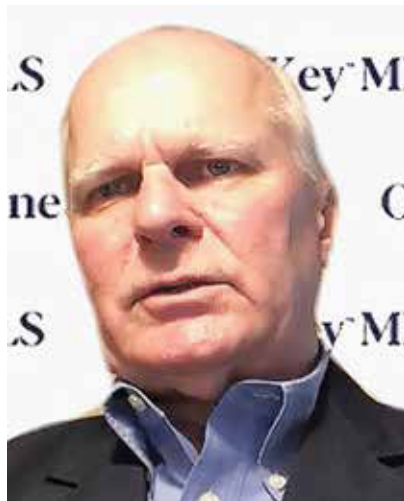
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By John Jordan

NEW YORK—Consumers now have access to a listing search portal that boasts approximately 40,000 listings from some 500 communities throughout the New York metropolitan area.

Officials with OneKey MLS staged a virtual press conference on Monday, June 22 to announce that the consumer-facing MLS platform, which provides real estate professionals and their clients unprecedented access to properties on the MLS—from Montauk to Manhattan, to the Lower Hudson Valley and the Catskill Mountains—had gone live that day.

The timing of the announcement came as New York City entered phase two of the state’s reopening process and one day before the Mid-Hudson entered phase three. The real estate industry reopens once a region enters phase two, which allows open houses to be held as long as safety protocols are adhered to.

OneKey MLS was formed in 2018, following the merger of the Hudson Gateway Multiple Listing Service and the Multiple Listing Service of Long Island. The MLS features properties from Manhattan, Westchester, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan and Dutchess counties, Manhattan, Queens, Brooklyn, the

Bronx, Nassau and Suffolk counties. At press time, there were more than 1,200 Manhattan listings available on OneKeyMLS.com.

“OneKey MLS was created to not only provide Realtors access to innovative tools that will help them do better business, but to also make the property buying or leasing process easier for consumers,” said Jim Speer, CEO of OneKey MLS. “We are thrilled to reach this next milestone in our rollout and look forward to consumers making OneKeyMLS.com the one site they use to find their new home.”

OneKey MLS’s approximately 42,000-plus subscribers serve Manhattan, Westchester, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Orange, Nassau, Suffolk, Queens, Brooklyn and the Bronx.

Along with Speer, other OneKey MLS officials who participated in the on-line press conference were Richard Haggerty, president and chief strategic growth officer, and Leah Caro, chairman of the Board of Managers. Tracy Weir, founder and managing partner of August Partners, the designer of the consumer search website, provided a comprehensive presentation on the many features available for consumers on the site. The robust property search

tools are offered in 21 languages. Consumers are able to save searches and listings, and can share their favorites with friends and family. Every user can sign up to receive alerts on new listings, open houses and saved searches and can review extensive profiles on communities, school districts, etc.

Speer and Haggerty, who is also chief executive officer of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, shared that the origin of the regional MLS for the New York metro region began during a meeting in Albany about three years ago and centered on the market area both LIBOR and HGAR serve.

“We looked at the geography of New York City and the greater suburban area and we recognized this is some of the most powerful geography in the world and shouldn’t we leverage the power of this geography for the benefit of our members so they can better serve their consumer clients?” Haggerty said.

One of the keys to launching OneKey MLS was a commitment to providing the

latest and most accurate data available.

Haggerty, added, “We have worked tirelessly to create a platform that will become the most trusted real estate resource in New York and we look forward to consumers being able to experience it.”

Caro, who is also president of Park Sterling Realty in Bronxville, noted that the OneKey MLS website is updated every five minutes. Another key feature of the consumer-facing website is that only the listing agent and broker of a listing are shown.

She added that OneKey MLS provides “clean data, deep data and timely data.”

The easy-to-use platform features an intuitive, map-based search, beautiful images and in-depth property remarks so consumers can learn all there is to know about each listing. Listings are accompanied by information about nearby properties and recent sales in the area as well as extensive demographic, school and lifestyle data from more than 100 sources.

Federal Judge Throws Out Westchester Landlord Group’s Case Against Cuomo’s COVID Eviction Ban

By John Jordan

WHITE PLAINS—In a 37-page ruling, U.S. District Court Judge C.J. McMahon denied a request by a group of Westchester County residential landlords to impose a temporary restraining order on Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s Executive Order that extended a moratorium on evictions of commercial and residential tenants due to the coronavirus pandemic until Aug. 20, 2020.

The three litigants—Elmsford Apartment Associates, LLC, 36 Apartment Associates, LLC and 66 Apartment Associates, LLC own properties in Elmsford, Port Chester and Yonkers—filed suit on May 25 in U.S. District Court in White Plains seeking a temporary restraining order and summary judgement on the litigation contesting the moratorium extension that allows tenants to temporarily apply their security deposit funds to rents due and owing—provided the tenants replenish those funds at a later date.

The Executive Order also temporarily prohibits landlords from initiating eviction proceedings against tenants who are facing financial hardship due to the pandemic. The original Executive Order went into effect on March 20. The Executive Order, issued on May 7, extended the prohibition of residential and commercial evictions from June 20 for another 60 days until Aug. 20, 2020.

Judge McMahon denied the Westchester landlord group’s multiple arguments, including its claim that the moratorium constituted the state’s physical and regulatory “taking” of the properties and granted the state summary judgement and dismissed the case.

“As long as the order is in place, tenants will continue to accrue arrearages, which the landlord will be able to collect with interest once the Order has expired,” Judge McMahon stated in his June 29th ruling. “Furthermore, landlords will regain their ability to evict tenants once the Order expires. Since EO 202.28 is temporary on



Last month, Gov. Andrew Cuomo extended the Executive Order placing a moratorium on residential and commercial leases until Aug. 20.

Continued on page 8

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HGAR

July 2020

UPDATE

HG Realtor Foundation Cautiously Resumes Volunteer Events

By Mary T. Prenon

WHITE PLAINS—Stymied by COVID-19 from on-site volunteer events since mid-March, the Hudson Gateway Realtor Foundation (HGRF) is carefully resuming volunteering with local charities and non-profit organizations throughout the Hudson Valley.

On July 28, Realtor volunteers will join an outdoor event, sponsored by the Westchester County Parks Foundation, to clean up Twin Lakes Park in Eastchester. Volunteers will be on land and in canoes, assisting in hand-pulling water chestnuts, which are invasive aquatic plants found in the lake and on its shores. Ridding the area of these plants will help to ensure the environmental health of the lake.

While this is an outdoor event, participants will be required to wear masks and maintain social distancing practices while working.

The Westchester Parks Foundation often engages the public to advocate for and invest in the preservation, conservation, use, and enjoyment of the 18,000 acres of parks, trails, and open spaces within the Westchester County Parks system

“We are cautiously optimistic about re-starting our volunteer events on behalf of the HG Realtor Foundation,” said Gail Fattizzi, HGAR President and HGRF Program Committee Chair. “We have contacted many of the non-profits that the Foundation has issued grant money

to, to see if they are open to receiving volunteers at this time, and setting up events if they are.”

On Aug. 14, HGAR Realtor volunteers will be back at the Food Bank of the Hudson Valley in Cornwall-on-Hudson, helping to sort and pack grocery items for needy families. This follows the Realtor Foundation’s mid-May event at the Food Bank, which was its first post-COVID volunteer event.

While the food packing takes place indoors, the volunteer groups are smaller than normal, allowing people ample room to navigate the facility. Masks are also required.

The Food Bank of the Hudson Valley is a branch of the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York and a member of Feeding America, the national food bank network. Last year, the Hudson Valley branch provided more than 15 million pounds of food to 400-member agencies in Orange, Ulster, Dutchess, Rockland, Sullivan and Putnam counties.

The agency also offers other programs such as the Backpack Program. This helps alleviate child hunger by discreetly providing hungry children with backpacks full of nutritious and easy-to-prepare food on Friday afternoons, so they have food to eat throughout the weekend.

“In addition to the upcoming events we already have confirmed, we’ll be

planning something for NYS Realtor Cares Week (August 16th - 22nd), and other events in the fall, conditions allowing,” added Fattizzi. “Events will follow

all recommended health and safety guidelines such as masks and social distancing.”



On July 28, Realtor volunteers will be working to clean up Twin Lakes Park in Eastchester.

SPOTLIGHT ON

A Passion for Real Estate And Baseball Legends

By Mary T. Prenon

Eliezer Rodriguez, Esq. has been a baseball fan for as long as he can remember. One of his favorite players, Roberto Clemente, was actually the first Hispanic selected into the National Baseball Hall of Fame. “I saw him play and I used to imitate him all the time,” remembered the CEO of the former Bronx-Manhattan North Association of Realtors (BMNAR). “To me, it was Babe Ruth who saved baseball, Jackie Robinson who changed it, but Roberto Clemente who was the pulse of major league baseball.”

At that time, little did Rodriguez know that one day he would personally complete Clemente’s mission of providing much needed aid to thousands in Nicaragua, who are still today experiencing the devastation of a major earthquake in 1972.

Together with the former BMNAR, Rodriguez is now part of the Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors (HGAR), in a recent merger approved by both associations’ Boards of Directors. An attorney for many years, he joined BMNAR in 2013, but still maintains a solo practice and provides pro bono services to the New York League of Puerto Rican Women.

It was that giving spirit that led Rodriguez to put his law practice on hold in 2000, to create Project Club Clemente, Inc., which was dedicated to promoting, educating and celebrating the legacy of Roberto Clemente. On Dec. 31, 2005,



Eliezer Rodriguez, Esq.

the project delivered 16,324 pounds of food and medicine to Nicaragua, fulfilling a 33-year old promise that Clemente had made to the earthquake victims. Clemente died in a plane crash on that same date in 1972 while trying to deliver supplies. The plane went down at sea and ironically at the time, Clemente was playing for the Pittsburgh Pirates.

“Clemente had done some training in Nicaragua, and seemed to establish a love affair with that country,” explained Rodriguez. “He was a hero and when he died, the world lost a great humanitarian.” Rodriguez ran several fundraisers

Continued on page 12

2020 HGAR RPAC HONOR ROLL as recorded by NYSAR to July 2020

Thank you to the following Members who are leading the way in the 2020 RPAC campaign

Platinum R \$10,000

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

Crystal R \$2500-\$4,999

JP Endres, BHG Rand Realty, New City
Irene Guanill, Meet the Sellers, Bronx
Crystal Hawkins Syska, Keller Williams NY Realty, White Plains

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

Debra Budetti, ERA Insite Realty Services, White Plains
Leah Caro, Park Sterling Realty, Bronxville
Carol Christiansen, Café Realty, Mount Kisco
Ronald Garafalo, John J Lease Realtors, Middletown
Ann Garti, Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc.
Richard Herska, BHG Rand Realty, Nyack
Pamela Jones, Coldwell Banker Res Brokerage, White Plains
Barry Kramer, Westchester Choice Realty, Scarsdale
Clayton Livingston, Grand Lux Realty, Inc., Armonk
Mark Seiden, Mark Seiden Real Estate Team, Briarcliff Manor

President’s Club \$500-\$999

Carmen Bauman, Green Grass Real Estate Corp. Bronxville
Gary Connolly, Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc.
Lawrence Curasi, Curasi Realty, Inc, Montgomery
Teresa Belmore, Keller Williams NY Realty, White Plains
Maryann Tercasio, Better Homes and Garden Rand Realty, Central Valley

Capitol Club \$250-\$499

Nancy Curasi, Curasi Realty, Inc, Montgomery
Sarah Hughes, William Raveis Legends Realty, Briarcliff Manor
Eydie Lopez, Keller Williams Hudson Valley, Highland Mills
Robert Shandley, BHG Rand Realty, White Plains

99 Dollar Club \$99-\$249

Teresa Belmore, Desmond Bonar, Layla Boyles, Janet Brand, Elisa Bruno Midilli, Randall Calano, Michael Criscuolo, Laurie DiFrancesco, Kevin Dwyer, Patricia Holmes, Clayton Jeffrey, Bonnie Koff, John Kope, Kathleen Mangan, Barbara Shaver, Peggy Shea, Jacqueline Simmons, Cary Sleeper, Judith Speight, Maria Weiss, Patricia Ephraim, Anthony Lando, Rosa Lulgjuraj, Elisa Bruno-Midilli, Valerie Port, Cathleen Stack, Maria Weiss

Recap of Contributions Year to Date**

TOTAL: \$110,229 47% towards goal

Total with pledges: \$129,148

With 2,803 contributors 69% towards participation goal.

Goal: \$233,684 from 4,051 contributors for a total of 36% of membership

BOARDROOM REPORT

Boards of Directors
Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc. (HGAR)
December 4, 2019
HGAR offices, White Plains, New York

BOARDROOM REPORT

Boards of Directors
Hudson Gateway Association of Realtors, Inc. (HGAR)
January 22, 2020
Mohonk Mountain House, New Paltz, New York

HGAR Management, Financial & Membership Reports

Prior to convening a joint HGAR/HGMLS Board of Directors Meeting, the HGAR Directors convened and reviewed the 2020 draft budget as proposed by the HGAR Finance Committee. After review and discussion, the Directors approved the budget as proposed.

Richard Haggerty presented the Treasurer's Report on behalf of HGAR including the bank and investment summary for Dec. 1, 2019, and the Directors approved receipt of the Cash Reports.

HGAR President Ronald Garafalo reminded the Directors of HGAR that in lieu of the usual meeting of the HGAR Board of Directors that is held in January each year, a two-day Directors' Retreat will be held at the Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz, NY on January 21st and 22nd.

CEO Haggerty discussed the appointment of the Fair Housing Task Force chaired by Dorothy Botsoe and Leah Caro. He indicated that there has been extensive press on the issues of fair housing and discrimination in light of the *Newsday* article and that these issues need to be dealt with aggressively. President Elect Gail Fattizzi stressed that the organization needs to be proactive rather than reactive.

HGMLS

HGAR outside Legal Counsel John Dolgetta reviewed and discussed the latest version of the Services Agreement. A copy of the latest version of the Services Agreement was emailed to the Directors prior to the meeting and was also included in the Directors' packets. Dolgetta pointed out that the various schedules, which had not yet been finalized as of the last HGAR and HGMLS Board of Directors' meetings in November, were now included. Dolgetta noted that this latest form of Services Agreement had yet to be approved by the Boards of Directors of the Long Island Board of Realtors, Inc. ("LIBOR") and the Multiple Listing Service of Long Island, Inc. ("MLSLI") and these Boards would be meeting in the near future to review and approve same.

After review and discussion, the HGAR Board of Directors approved in principle the draft Services Agreement between HGAR, HGMLS, LIBOR and MLSLI.

Additional Business

CEO Haggerty acknowledged the new Realtor Emeritus member, Sandra Smith. He also introduced and welcomed Jana Currier, Director of Member Engagement, who recently joined the HGAR staff.

Haggerty acknowledged HGAR President Garafalo and HGMLS President Renee Zurlo, for their outstanding contributions to their respective organizations throughout 2019. Haggerty also thanked Leah Caro, as OneKey MLS Chair, for her outstanding work on the OneKey MLS Board of Managers.



A Passion for Real Estate And Baseball Legends

Continued from page 11

and used his own savings to complete the mission. "I did spend a lot of money, but I just couldn't get it out of my mind. It was so important for me to complete what Clemente died trying to do. It was really one of the greatest accomplishments of my life." A documentary on the event is now in development and Rodriguez is also working on a screenplay entitled, "The Light in the Shadow."

As a solo law practitioner, Rodriguez covered real estate, matrimonial and family law, wills and other areas. However, during this time, his focus was primarily on Project Club Clemente. After completing the mission, he got a quick reminder from his younger son that it was time to get back to work. "He was in Pre-K, and the teachers were asking children about what their parents did for a living. My son told them his mother was a lawyer, but said nothing about me," he recalled. "When I told him, I was a lawyer too, he said 'Well, you don't have an office!'"

Rodriguez credits City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law for helping him to meet his wife Fiordaliza, who is now a judge in the Bronx Family Court. After graduating in 1999, the couple reconnected some time later. "We actually didn't start dating until after law school. I used to run a study group, so she called me just to say hello and catch up. To this day, she still won't admit why she called me, but I guess she missed me," he quipped. "I'm also guessing she liked me because she ended up marrying me!"

While attending CUNY, Rodriguez also co-founded the Main Street Student Legal Defense Fund, to help interns in their service to indigent clients and to increase alumni involvement in public interest law. Based on his academic achievement and commitment to Public Interest Law, Rodriguez was selected by The Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund to receive the Father Joseph P. Fitzpatrick Scholarship for furthering the interests of Puerto Ricans, other Latinos and communities of color. At graduation, he was honored with the Theodore F. Kupferman Public Service Award for his service to the law school community.

His ties to the Hispanic community have always been strong. Born in Puerto Rico, Rodriguez and his family moved to north Philadelphia when he was still a baby. "It wasn't the best area—we were often surrounded by crime and drugs—but my upbringing taught me that there was something more to life," he said. "My school teachers also made a big difference in my life."

Rodriguez got involved in theater and won a movie-writing competition that was later used by various schools for instructional purposes. A lover of "The Wizard of Oz," Rodriguez created "The Wizard of Food," aimed at helping children make good nutritional choices. "I even remember my characters—there was the 'Malnutrition Witch,' the 'Thin Man,' and the 'Calorie Lion.' The munchkins became the 'munchies,' and the Yellow Brick Road was renamed 'The

HGAR Management, Financial & Membership Reports

Counsel for the Corporation John Dolgetta, Esq., delivered the Annual Orientation on the legal and fiduciary duties and responsibilities of Officers and Directors. In that regard, Dolgetta reviewed the various policies of HGAR and numerous related forms and documents. He discussed in detail, among other topics, the fiduciary duties and legal obligations of Directors and Officers, HGAR's Antitrust Policy, Whistleblower Policy and recently enacted New York State Sexual Harassment Policy. The Directors and Officers were also provided with a copy of HGAR's Bylaws and an article authored by Dolgetta entitled "Fiduciary Duties of Boards of Directors in the Real Estate Industry." Dolgetta instructed the Directors and Officers to execute and return at the end of the meeting only those forms that require signature.

CEO Richard Haggerty presented the Treasurer's Report as of January 1, 2020. Being the first meeting of the year, Haggerty explained, in greater detail given the presence of newly appointed Directors, the components of the monthly report. He stressed that it was a monthly "snapshot" of the finances of HGAR. After discussion, the Directors approved a motion receiving the January Cash Report.

Haggerty then presented the CEO Update. The Directors and Officers were provided with the 2020 Memberships & Dues Receipts, Budget vs. Actual handout. CEO Haggerty indicated that projected budgeted dues income to March 31, 2020 is \$2,088,379 based on a projected total of 11,011 members. Haggerty pointed out that as of Dec. 4, 2019, 12,207 members were invoiced for a total amount of \$2,585,569, and noted that as of Jan. 15, 2020, 7,860 members had paid dues totaling \$1,435,989.

President Gail Fattizzi then reported that there were two vacancies on the NYSAR Board of Directors that were required to be filled by the Board of Directors. She reported that HGAR Directors T. Teresa Bellmore and Maurice Owen-Michaane expressed a desire to serve as NYSAR Directors, and approved their appointment as NYSAR Directors.

In-House Counsel and Director of Legal Services Brian Levine, Esq. then presented Ethics Decision 262-E, which was provided to each of the Directors prior to the meeting. After review and discussion, the Directors confirmed the recommendation of the Hearing Panel. Levine further reported that a Professional Standards Training Session would be held on Feb. 19, 2020 and that it would include 7.5 Continuing Education credits.

Haggerty then provided to the Directors and Officers an "Overview of Director Responsibilities in Professional Standards Enforcement." The Directors and Officers were provided a handout containing relevant sections (Sections 22 and 23) of the Code of Ethics and Arbitration Manual ("Arbitration Manual"). CEO Haggerty explained that while Board of Directors may act as a "safety valve" in instances where a Hearing Panel did not act in accordance with the requirements of the Arbitration Manual and dismiss certain decisions based on certain procedural defects, the Board of Directors cannot increase sanctions imposed by a hearing panel. He further explained that if an appeal is filed, a panel of five (5) HGAR Directors would be empaneled for the sole purpose of conducting a procedural review.

Continued on page 16

Milky Way," he laughed.

At 17, he joined the U.S. Army and became a sergeant in less than two years. Following his tour of duty, he attended Kansas State University, graduating with a degree in Speech, Pre-law and Social Science. In 1983, Rodriguez was selected among the "Outstanding Young Men of America," but acknowledges that his proudest moment was becoming the first member of his family to earn a college degree.

Rodriguez moved to New York in 1986 and began an internship with the New York City Department of Sanitation in the area of creating recycling initiatives. He was later hired as a consultant and eventually a full-time recycling coordinator. He resigned to attend law school in 1996, and opened his first law firm in 2001.

While he still practices law, Rodriguez' focus these days will be his new role with HGAR. "We had been talking about the merger for a while, and it's in the best interest of both the Bronx and the Hudson Valley," said Rodriguez. "We can offer a lot of great political connections and expertise in the commercial real estate sector, and we will benefit by being able to provide all of our Bronx members with the resources that a larger organization can offer. It's really a great fit for both associations."

Rodriguez will take the lead in expanding the HGAR's Commercial and Investment Division (CID) and will play an active role in legislative advocacy. A Bronx resident, he will also be bringing

additional events to the Bronx, which now consists of more than 1,500 HGAR members."

In his spare time, Rodriguez is very active in his community and was appointed to serve as a member of Bronx Community Board 11 in 2006. Since 2008, he has been coaching his own children and others at the Van Nest Baseball Little League. "Coaching has always been a passion of mine, and I like working with kids – some who don't have a lot. I know what it's like when you don't have much growing up and I never forgot that. I just want to be able to help," he said. Today, his son Miguel Clemente is 18 and Cristian Marin is 15.

His many professional affiliations include: board member for the East Harlem Council for Human Services; chairman of SEEDCO, a national non-profit community development organization dedicated to promoting economic advancement; affordable housing co-chair for Acacia Network, and board member of the New York State Appraisal Board. Last year, Rodriguez was recognized by *City and State* as one of the 100 Most Noteworthy Figures in the Bronx.

He and his family do visit Puerto Rico about every other year, but Rodriguez admits he likes being closer to home. "I believe in being one-on-one with the local community," he said. "Love thy neighborhood has always been part of my pastime. Everything I do for the community, also helps to protect my family. I really care about what happens here."

Strong Majority of Realtors Say Market Is in Recovery Phase as Buyers Return

Continued from page 15

bout of the virus.

Of those who are currently working with buyers, 54% said their buyers' timelines to find and purchase a home has remained the same, while 27% report that their clients now express more urgency about buying a home.

Among NAR membership currently working with sellers, two-thirds said their sellers' timelines to sell has remained the same. Twenty-three percent reported sellers who feel more urgency to sell their property. Less urgency was cited more frequently in urban areas and in suburban areas or small towns and rural markets.

"A number of potential buyers noted stalled plans due to the pandemic and that has led to more urgency and a pent-up demand to buy," said Yun. "After being home for months on end—in a home they already wanted to leave—buyers are reminded how much their current home may lack certain desired features or amenities."

In some cases, respondents reported changes in their buyers' preferences.

Twenty-four percent of Realtors indicated having buyers who shifted the location of where they intend to buy a house due to the coronavirus. Among those who noted having buyers change their intended location, 47% stated that their buyers prefer to purchase housing in the suburbs, 39% cited rural areas and 25% cited smaller town markets.

Thirty-five percent of NAR members surveyed said buyers have modified at least one home feature that is important to them because of the coronavirus outbreak.



NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun
FILE PHOTO

The most common home features cited as increasingly important are home offices, spaces to accommodate family members new to the residence—older adult relatives, newborns or new pets—larger homes with more personal space and bigger yards that would allow for growing foods.

Also, in response to the pandemic, 13% said that homebuyers changed their home type of choice from multi-family to single-family. This shift is highest in urban markets at 16%. Thirty-three percent answered that buyers have adjusted commuting needs since the pandemic began, with 22% less concerned with their commute and 7% wanting to live close to bike trails that connect them to work. Just 5% responded they now have a greater concern about parking and more concern for a location that affords the ability to drive to work.

On the commercial real estate front, some members indicated they are contending with hardships, as only 19% of property managers said they have been receiving all rent payments on time, and only 36% of individual landlords have received timely payments.

Seventy-four percent have reported that leases have been terminated or said tenants have needed to delay rent payments, with the greatest shares (56%) happening in non-essential retail establishments, followed by the office sector at 38%. However, grocery stores are faring well, the least cited of the commercial properties at 4%.

"Consumers have been forced to move away from buying in stores and are now doing much more shopping from home," said Yun. "Unfortunately, this has come at the detriment of commercial property owners, but these circumstances could be an opportunity for growth in the industrial warehouse market, as Americans have become more reliant on home delivery services."

As economies reopen, 44% of NAR members said they expect the demand for industrial properties to increase, and 35% expect the demand for multi-family properties to increase. In comparison, 72% expect the demand for non-essential retail to decline and 66% said they expect office usage to decrease.

The biggest concern for small businesses, according to 83% of commercial members, is a lack of profitability due to a decrease in customers. A majority of Realtors also expressed concern with the following: a resurgence of the outbreak forcing another shutdown (66%), protecting the health of employees, (61%) and challenges with implementing social-distancing measures (59%).

BOARD TALK

Continued from page 12

Strategic Plan Task Force Reports

President Fattizzi then asked the leaders from each of the five (5) Strategic Plan Task Forces to provide an update to the Directors and Officers.

President Elect Crystal Hawkins Syska presented the report on behalf of the Advocacy Task Force. She indicated that the Advocacy Task Force held its first meeting. Its focus was to work with the Leadership Task Force and the Engagement Task Force to increase the awareness of advocacy issues to two distinct groups, members of HGAR and the members of the public, and also to highlight the distinction between "real estate agents" and "Realtors."

COO Ann Garti, on behalf of the Leadership Task Force, presented its report. She discussed in detail the new HGAR Leadership Accelerator Program developed by the Leadership Task Force. The Directors were provided with a handout highlighting the ten (10) required segments of the Accelerator Program curriculum. COO Garti stressed the importance of the program in identifying new people to serve as Directors, Officers, and other leadership positions in the future. The proposed tuition cost per student is approximately \$250 and the initial class would consist of approximately 12-15 students. After discussion the Directors approved the Accelerator Program in concept.

Director Carmen Bauman presented the report on behalf of the Professional Development Task Force. The Professional Development Task Force at its initial meeting focused on several specific objectives, among others, for the upcoming year: (i) a compliance day for Broker/Owner/Managers; and (ii) focus on and promote NAR's Commitment to Excellence (C2X) Program.

Director of Member Engagement Jana Currier presented the report of the Engagement Task Force on behalf of Task Force Leader Marcene Hedayati. Currier highlighted several key items discussed at the Engagement Task Force meeting such as implementation of an "organizational listening" program and procuring member data feedback by sending short surveys to members after each event. A Broker/Owner/Manager Tool Kit, which will also include a Fair Housing Toolkit, is being launched at the Fair Housing event scheduled for March 18th.

Director Debra Budetti presented the report of the Success Task Force. Budetti pointed out that the Success Task Force recommended the implementation of brief surveys of members/callers after any Zen Desk interaction. The Success Task Force also considered several new ideas, such as monthly podcasts, development of a phone app, providing members with the opportunity to meet with staff, increased exposure in *Real Estate In-Depth*, and informational email blasts to HGAR's members.

Fair Housing Task Force

Co-Chairs of the newly formed Fair Housing Task Force, Leah Caro and Dorothy Botsoe, presented the report of the Fair Housing Task Force and indicated that the Task Force had already met twice. Caro and Botsoe stressed the importance of getting information relating to fair housing issues out to all HGAR members. They also discussed the "Letter of Support" prepared by HGAR staff at the direction of the Task Force, a copy of which was provided to all of the Directors and Officers at the meeting. The letter highlighted HGAR's broad support for the recommendations made by the New York State Board of Real Estate concerning new initiatives to combat discrimination and further fair housing training and education. However, the statement expressed concern with one of the recommendations, which requires the video recording and preservation of any and all instruction pertaining to fair housing and/or discrimination. It is our position that the recording of classes would inhibit the flow of ideas and diminish the effectiveness of the classroom experience.

Continued on page 20

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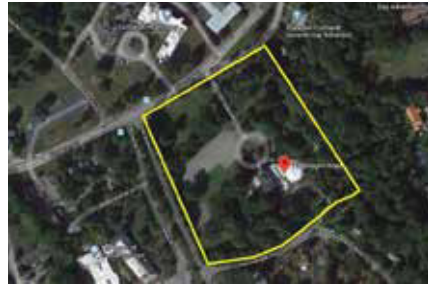


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FOR SALE | 1935 Central Park Avenue | Yonkers Listed by Garry Klein | KL Team | \$1,350,000



100% LEED GREEN CAR WASH LOCATED ON ROUTE 9

FOR SALE | 70 Roa Hook Road | Cortlandt Manor Listed by Garry Klein | KL Team | \$1,800,000



FULLY BUILT OUT RESTAURANT ACROSS FROM METRO NORTH

FOR SALE | 215-215 Halstead Avenue | Mamaroneck Listed by Bryan Lanza | KL Team | \$975,000



OFFICE/MEDICAL BUILDING IN THE HEART OF MOUNT KISCO

FOR SALE | 14 Smith Avenue | Mount Kisco Listed by Karen Heller | \$750,000



VILLAGE CENTER OFFICE/RETAIL BUILDING FOR SALE OR LEASE

1072 Main St. | Fishkill | Listed by Steven Salomone & Don Minichino | \$495,000 | \$3,600 Month + Util.

MIXED-USE OFFICE/RESIDENTIAL BUILDING CONVENIENT TO I-84

FOR SALE | 3975 Route 52 | East Fishkill Listed by John Ravetto | \$475,000

NYACK PROFESSIONAL OFFICE BUILDING COWORKING SPACES

FOR LEASE | 53 Hudson Avenue | Nyack Listed by Rick Tannenbaum | Starting at \$570 | Month

ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL 12,000 SF & RECTORY 2,800 SF

FOR LEASE | 280 Washington Ave & 53 6th St. | New Rochelle | Listed by Darren Lee | Please call for pricing

HIGH GROSSING PERSONAL SERVICE BUSINESS ASKING \$72K KEY MONEY

FOR SUBLEASE | 280 North Central Ave. | Hartsdale Listed by Peter Chen | \$25.00 | PSF | Full Serv. Gross

HIGH CEILING SHOWROOM WITH PARKING ON BUSY ROUTE 9A

FOR LEASE | 267 Saw Mill River Road | Elmsford Listed by Bryan Lanza | KL Team | \$52.00 | PSF | NNN

4,000 SF - 10,500 SF WAREHOUSE WITH LOADING DOCK & RAMP

FOR LEASE | 1401 Front Street | Yorktown Heights Listed by Andy Grossman | \$15.00 PSF | MG

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL CHURCH AND RECTORY

FOR SALE | 140 W 1st St. and 10 S 10th Ave. | Mt Vernon | Listed by Dan Hickey | Please call for pricing

4.85 ACRES ON ROUTE 82 VERSATILE COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

FOR SALE | 2269 Route 82 | LaGrangeville Listed byCarolynn Dittman | \$479,000

LOCATION! LOCATION! LOCATION! CLOSE TO BELLEFIELD & CIA

FOR LEASE | 457 Violet Avenue | Hyde Park Listed by Bill Flood | \$11.00-\$14.50 | PSF | NNN

ST. GABRIEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH CAMPUS 15,000 SF SCHOOL

FOR LEASE | 40 Washington Avenue | New Rochelle Listed by Darren Lee | Please call for pricing

TAKE OVER SUCCESSFUL FULLY BUILT OUT RESTAURANT SPACE

FOR SUBLEASE | 740 N. Bedford Road | Bedford Hills Listed by Peter Chen | \$43.00 | PSF | NNN

GREAT OFFICE SPACE ON BUSY ROUTE 6 ACROSS FROM JV MALL

FOR LEASE | 5651 Hill Boulevard | Jefferson Valley Listed by Kim Galton | \$2,800 Month | MG

COUNTRY OFFICE LOCATED AT THE YELLOW MONKEY VILLAGE

FOR LEASE | 792 Route 35 | Cross River Listed by Rich Aponte | \$32.00 | PSF | MG

State Comptroller Says COVID-19 Impacts to Local Governments And Schools will be 'Severe'

ALBANY—The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected many local governments' revenues and its impact will likely be severe for many municipalities' finances, according to a report released on July 9 by New York State Comptroller Thomas P. DiNapoli.

As sales tax revenues fall by double-digits and state aid is reduced or delayed, DiNapoli called on the federal government to provide aid to local governments before drastic service cuts occur.

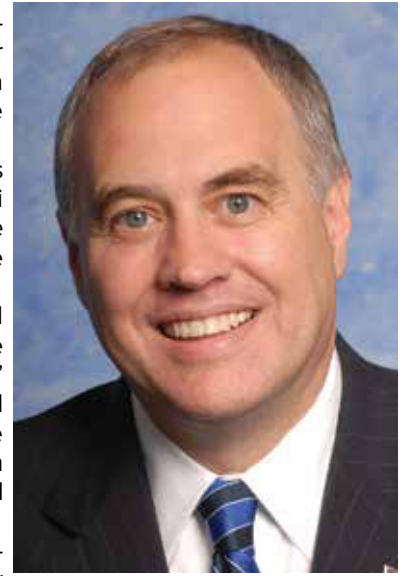
"Local governments are under extreme fiscal pressure. Costs for fighting the pandemic are adding up while revenues are rapidly falling," DiNapoli said. "In this year's state budget, aid to local governments was flat and now the state has withheld some aid. Local governments can only tighten their belts so far. They need federal aid and they need it now."

Federal aid is typically only a minor component of local government revenues in New York—about 5% of total revenues in 2018, excluding New York City. In extraordinary circumstances the federal government has stepped in with financial assistance to help states and local governments weather difficult times. Between 2008 and 2010, in response to the Great Recession, federal aid to local governments in New York increased by nearly 60% and was critical in shoring up local finances.

The report noted that sales taxes are one of the most important sources of revenue for many of New York's local governments and are directly affected by the economic pause and social distancing measures implemented to control COVID-19. Sales tax collections for local governments in May fell 32.3% from last year. From March through May 2020, local governments have received \$824 million, or 19.2% less, in sales taxes than they did during that same period in 2019.

Another risk to local revenues is the flow of state aid. The state budget director withheld 20% of May and June Aid and Incentives for Municipalities (AIM) payments to 12 cities and 20% of June Video Lottery Terminal (VLT) aid payments to 15 counties, cities, towns and villages. These combined reductions totaled \$75.9 million. It is not yet determined if this aid will be paid to municipalities at a later date. While property taxes provide revenue stability for local governments, the tax cap and other constraints will likely limit their use to shore up local revenues. Property taxes could also be impacted by owners not being able to make payments.

DiNapoli said his office is tracking sales taxes on a monthly basis as well as pushing for legislation that gives local governments and school districts more flexibility in repaying debt and using reserve funds for pandemic-related expenses. The legislation has passed both the Assembly and the Senate and is awaiting action by Gov. Andrew Cuomo.



New York State Comptroller
Thomas P. DiNapoli

BOARD TALK

Continued from page 16

YPN

Regional Director for Rockland and Chair of YPN Richard Herska provided a report on relaunching of the YPN. Herska indicated that several items are being considered for the upcoming year, such as providing a "Start-up Toolkit" to all new members, developing new and exciting events throughout the year, developing community service projects (e.g., Habitat for Humanity, etc.), and establishing a partnership with NAR's YPN network. Director Herska further reported that the first YPN event would be held on February 5th at the Doubletree hotel in Tarrytown.

OneKey MLS

OneKey MLS, LLC Board of Manager Chair Caro and CEO Haggerty provided a status report on OneKey MLS, LLC. Haggerty reported that there would be a soft launch of OneKey MLS in mid-February and that a hard launch was tentatively scheduled for the first week of March. He reported that the Services Agreement had been finalized but had to be formally approved by both the Executive Committees and Boards of Directors of LIBOR and MLSLI. Caro further reported that a letter from Jim Speer, CEO OneKey MLS, a copy of which was provided to the Directors and Officers at the meeting, was sent to all Participants of HGMLS and MLSLI informing them about the launch and detailing the fee structure.

Please welcome the new members in your area.

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