

HUNTER ARMSTRONG JOINS ADVISORY BOARD, *Page 4*

RESTORING NORTH END OF CENTRAL PARK, *Page 8*

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ANDREW A. DAVIS AND JEANNE MCANANEY NAMED 2026 CIVITAS BENEFIT HONOREES

Greg McCarthy
Diana Devendorf Rice
CIVITAS Board Members

Each year, CIVITAS recognizes individuals whose leadership, generosity, and commitment advance its mission to strengthen communities through civic engagement and education. This year's honorees, Davis and McAnaney, have demonstrated exceptional dedication to the organization's values and have made lasting contributions to initiatives that empower citizens and promote social impact.

ANDREW DAVIS is the President of Davis Selected Advisers and co-manages the Davis Real Estate Mutual Fund and numerous real estate-focused institutional accounts.

Andrew currently serves as Vice Chair of the Central Park Conservancy (NY) and sits on the boards of New York Presbyterian Hospital (NY), the Stony Brook Southampton Hospital (NY), the United States Ski and Snowboard Foundation (USA), Friends of Acadia (ME), the Holderness School (NH), the Philharmonia Orchestra of London and the Tastevin Foundation (NY). He also serves on the Special Projects Committee of the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (NY).

Andrew has a long and illustrious history of meaningful philanthropic support impacting numerous communities in need. He was the lead donor of the recently completed Davis Center at the North End of Central Park which has revitalized and reimagined this historic public space to the benefit of all New Yorkers. He is also currently funding specific scientific research into Alzheimer's disease at The Brigham & Women's Hospital/Harvard Medical School (MA) and novel technologies to suppress atmospheric absorption of methane gas at The Bigelow Laboratories (ME).

He received his Bachelor of Arts degree and an Honorary Masters degrees from Colby College and served on Colby's Board of Trustees.

JEANNE MCANANEY is a cherished friend, long-standing supporter, and dedicated CIVITAS Board Member, will also be recognized as a CIVITAS Spring 2026 Benefit Honoree. Jeanne's roots in Carnegie Hill run deep. She was born in the neighborhood before it was officially known as "Carnegie Hill" and, save for a few years in the

» CIVITAS HOSTS CRITICAL DISCUSSION ON NYC'S 485-X TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAM

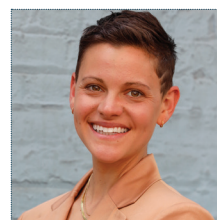
Sharon Pope-Marshall,
Executive Director



Mitchell Korbey



Ahmed Tigani



Madeline DeCervo



Nicholas Alexander

ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2025, CIVITAS hosted a pivotal land use discussion at Marymount Manhattan College that addressed the critical issue of New York City's severe housing shortage, especially affordable housing, and the real-world impact of the 485-x tax incentive program; also known as Affordable Neighborhoods for New Yorkers. Moderated by CIVITAS Advisory Board member Nicholas Alexander, the event brought together leading experts to explore why the program, designed to spur mixed-income housing development, had not fully delivered on its promise.

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CIVITAS

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IN URBAN LIFE

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CIVITAS Citizens Incorporated is a not-for-profit organization focused on the quality of life within the Upper East Side, in East Harlem and neighborhoods along the East River. Since 1981 CIVITAS has worked to improve the urban environment, advocating for appropriate land use/zoning, transportation, landmarks, the environment, and waterfront access.

From The PRESIDENT



Forty-five Years of Shaping a More Livable Upper East Side and East Harlem

DEAR FRIENDS,

CIVITAS was founded in 1981 by August Heckscher and a group of neighborhood activists/leaders and concerned residents, to address quality-of-life issues in Manhattan's Upper East Side and East Harlem. Since its inception, the organization has been a steadfast advocate for comprehensive, thoughtful, and collaborative urban planning, responsible zoning and related land use policy, historic preservation, and safe, equitable waterfront public access.

Over the past ten years, CIVITAS has expanded its mission to meet the evolving challenges of a changing city. Key action areas and initiatives include:

» CIVITAS held a well-received town hall on the 485-x Tax Incentive Program titled "Why Aren't We Building More Housing?", thereby engaging community and elected officials on how the tax incentive translates (or fails to translate) into affordable housing production.

» We published commentary on the citywide "City of Yes for Housing Opportunity" zoning proposal (COYHO), emphasizing the need to protect light; air, green space, and to ensure off-site affordable housing options within their community districts.

» CIVITAS reviewed and responded to major institutional expansion plans (including Lenox Hill Hospital and New York Blood Center), all which consisted of robust build programs to develop buildings that are not contextual or architecturally sympathetic with our community's built character.

» CIVITAS, in collaboration with El Barrio/East Harlem organizations prepared the National Register of Historic Places nomination application, helping to bring recognition to the neighborhood's heritage and built-environment history.

» CIVITAS advanced a comprehensive vision plan for the East River Esplanade (from East 60th to East 125th Street) by commissioning design work and community visioning sessions to reimagine, rebuild, preserve, steward, and maintain the esplanade.

» We led the formation of the Coalition for the East Harlem Waterfront (with approximately twenty-five civic organizations) to push for \$284 million in additional city funding (on top of \$75 million already committed) to rebuild and improve the Esplanade from East 94th to East 125th streets.

» CIVITAS, in collaboration with the New York Harbor School, and in partnership with the state's environmental agencies, advanced and enabled completion of a three-year pilot study that tested "living shoreline" edge materials (rather than traditional seawalls) along the Esplanade to enhance habitat quality and storm-resilience.

» CIVITAS has commented publicly on the importance of ecological resilience along the waterfront (living shorelines) and authored commentary urging equity in greenway infrastructure investment city-wide.

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» CIVITAS is vigorously advocating for funding for an East Harlem Esplanade gap: East 107th to East 117th Streets.

» Recognizing emergent micro-mobility impacts, CIVITAS launched the Street Action Now! workshop series addressing pedestrian safety, e-bike / e-scooter usage, and “complete streets” design.

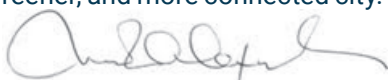
» CIVITAS distributed awareness cards to delivery workers and local businesses (e.g., specifying the law against using sidewalks, pedestrian safety etc.) We advocated successfully for pedestrian crossing safety at East 96th Street and the FDR Drive, improving access to the waterfront for East Harlem residents.

» CIVITAS continually monitors the construction of the Second Avenue Subway as it moves through its various construction phases. We diligently advocate sound construction and project management practice; residential displacement, and improved transparent communication between the MTA, elected officials, community residents, and stakeholders.

» In 2024, the New York Landmarks Conservancy recognized CIVITAS’ Chairwoman Genie Rice as a “Living Landmark” for her sustained work in zoning, neighborhood preservation and urban planning on the Upper East Side and East Harlem.

As CIVITAS approaches its 45th anniversary in 2026, it remains deeply committed to its founding mission: improving the urban environment through research, planning studies, advocacy, and community engagement. From preserving neighborhood identity to promoting equitable, sustainable growth, CIVITAS continues to shape a more livable and resilient Upper East Side and El Barrio/East Harlem.

Join us as we celebrate forty-five years of community-driven change at our 2026 Anniversary Benefit on May 12, 2026—and as we look forward to the next 45 years of building a stronger, greener, and more connected city.


Mark Alexander, President



Greg McCarthy, CIVITAS Board



GREG MCCARTHY

WHAT DO FOUR

St. Ignatius Loyola School graduates do to improve and protect their Upper East Side and East Harlem neighborhoods? Keep reading.

» JEANNE MCANANEY:



“We join the board of CIVITAS. Gorman Reilly '50, Jeanne McAnaney '54, Nichols Alexander '05 and Kevin Simek '05 are fellow alums of St. Ignatius Loyola,

spanning more than 75 years and currently sharing our dedication to community involvement.

As such we are dedicated to enhancing and protecting the quality of life in these communities. Our rigorous education at this outstanding neighborhood school has kept us committed to the values we learned there. Our dedication to CIVITAS reflects the impact of the caring environment for others that the school fosters.”

» KEVIN SIMEK:



“The values instilled at St. Ignatius Loyola Elementary School, rooted in its mission to blend Catholic principles with academic excellence and service, profoundly

shaped my life, work and contribution as a CIVITAS board member. At St. Ignatius, I learned integrity, stewardship, and a passion for community service, inspired by St. Ignatius Loyola and the Jesuit principles of being a “Man for others.” These

principles guide my commitment to CIVITAS’ mission to foster civic engagement and preserve livable neighborhoods in Manhattan’s Upper East Side and East Harlem. Both institutions emphasize community, responsibility, and active participation. St. Ignatius taught me to serve and work with purpose, a value I carry into CIVITAS, where I advocate for vibrant, sustainable communities. This has shaped me into someone who values collaboration, leadership, and contributing to causes that have a meaningful impact. My dedication to education, service, and community preservation reflects the influence of St. Ignatius’ legacy and CIVITAS’ vision in contributing to the common good.”

» NICHOLAS ALEXANDER:



“St. Ignatius, Fordham Prep, and my Catholic education, created a tremendous foundation for me to excel not only as a student and professional, but also as a man for others.

The education and theological studies I was exposed to at an early age provided me with a toolbox to question, analyze, and believe. At CIVITAS, I have been fortunate to apply those tools in questioning and analyzing civic life, and I truly believe that we, as an organization, can and do create impactful results.

My education instilled in me a strong sense of responsibility to influence my community positively. Whether studying tax programs and zoning codes or envisioning an updated esplanade, I find it deeply fulfilling to apply my skills to meaningful work. In many ways, being an active participant in the well-being of one’s community is a natural intersection

» HUNTER ARMSTRONG JOINS CIVITAS ADVISORY BOARD

Joanna Delson, Executive Vice President



holes—and organized alongside Community Board 11 for rezoning in East Harlem. He recalls:

“For the Esplanade, I helped lead an ideas competition and exhibition at the Museum of the City of NY. Superstorm Sandy happened while the exhibition was up and really showed the importance of incorporating coastal resilience to protect the community.”

Today, Hunter is Executive Director of the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative and co-chair of the NYC Greenways Coalition, working to improve the borough’s 29-mile waterfront and advance citywide advocacy.

“It can take many years of tenacity to build these parks and public spaces, and we have to keep doing it for future generations to enjoy and have a safer, greener city.”

Outside of work, Hunter stays busy exploring NYC by bike and subway, enjoying its beaches, and competing in open water swim races. He and his husband Jay, general counsel at several prominent nonprofits, were married in Prospect Park 11 years ago and often return to that spot.

When asked why he chose to join the Advisory Board, Hunter explained, “I had a great experience as executive director of CIVITAS and learned so much working there. In the dozen years since leaving, I’ve continued to learn and reflect on my time. Joining the Advisory Board is a positive way to formalize my role and help CIVITAS prepare for its next generation and next round of challenges.”

Hunter’s presence on our Advisory Board will be invaluable. Having joined the CIVITAS Board shortly after Hunter became Executive Director, I had the privilege of watching his leadership up close. Hunter is a planner who cares deeply about New York City, its people, and the organizations that make it thrive. We are honored to welcome him back to CIVITAS in this new role and look forward to shaping the future together.

CIVITAS IS DELIGHTED TO WELCOME BACK HUNTER ARMSTRONG— this time as a member of our Advisory Board.

Hunter first joined CIVITAS in 2007 as our inaugural Executive Director, taking the helm of an organization that had previously run solely on the grass-root commitment of its dedicated volunteers. With expertise, creativity, and a broad smile, he launched projects that still shape our work. Even after leaving in 2013 to help lead the marriage equality campaign, Hunter continued to advise CIVITAS, always ready with thoughtful guidance. Now, we’re thrilled to formalize his role on our Advisory Board.

Reflecting on his career path, Hunter shared: “From early childhood, I had been really interested in seeing how public places work (and don’t work)... I decided to pursue a graduate degree in urban planning at the University of Virginia, and then moved to New York right after. I was fascinated to see how different urban design theories I’d studied had been realized across the region.”

At CIVITAS, Hunter helped launch a renewed focus on the East River Esplanade—then riddled with sink-

A Seed is Planted

(Continued from page 3)

of CIVITAS’s mission and the values of a Catholic education.

Most importantly, St. Ignatius and Fordham Prep, emphasized caring for others without expectation of reward; a principle that continues to guide my work at CIVITAS in promoting lively, livable neighborhoods.”

» GORMAN REILLY:



“In September of 1943, at the start of Second Grade, I was about to set foot for the first time into the impressive St. Ignatius School building on East 84th

Street. My focus then was only to make sure I chose the right entrance, clearly marked in stone, “BOYS”; not the nearby one meant for “GIRLS”. I subsequently came to learn much more: school was a serious business; the dedicated nuns in black caps ruled the classroom; they had high expectations of us which included not only our personal development, but also a recognition of our obligation to show concern for others. That concern included not only our immediate family, but our classmates, neighbors, near-by shopkeepers and the community we lived in.

It was a different time. America was at war in far-away places. The daily pledge of allegiance was our way of showing support for those who were risking their lives to protect us at home. As I walked to school along Park Avenue each day, I was greeted often by smiling apartment building doormen. The built environment of 17-story buildings that we appreciate today was already in place, thanks to the rezoning laws of 1916. Years later, after much further education and the start of my career as a lawyer, those values instilled in grade school prompted me to seek out and find time for pro bono representations of those unable to afford a lawyer. In time, I came to learn of CIVITAS and its work close to home in the Upper East Side and East Harlem. I immediately felt I wanted to be a part of it. A seed, planted years ago, took root.”

These four Board Members exemplify the spirit of The CIVITAS Mission Statement. 🌍



JOANNA DELSON

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» REOPENING: THE STUDIO MUSEUM OF HARLEM

Greg McCarthy, CIVITAS Board

THE MUSEUM'S NEW SIR DAVID ADJAYE **DESIGNED** museum reopened on November 15th. It is the first building in its history created expressly for the needs of the institution, and its communities. The design takes its inspiration from the brown stones, churches, and busy sidewalks throughout Harlem.

Undertaken as a public-private initiative in partnership with the city of New York, the new 82,000 square foot building will have enhanced space for exhibitions, educational opportunities and visitor experiences for the entire Harlem community. Space for exhibitions, and the museums "Signature Artist in Residency Program" will more than double in size, and the outdoor and indoor public space will increase by almost 70%.

The Studio Museum in Harlem is the Nexus for artists of African descent-locally, nationally and internationally, and for works that has been inspired and influenced by Black Culture. It is a site for the dynamic exchange of ideas about art and society.

Galleries will be configured in assorted proportions, scales and flooring treatments to accommodate the wide variety of works in the permanent collection and the various sizes and types of temporary exhibition expositions. The entire building will be filled with artwork and the roof terrace will offer striking views of Harlem and New York City.

A major presentation of the work by Tom Lloyd is one of the many exhibitions to view at opening. The museum is located at 144 West 125th Street, NYC. For further information call 212-864-4500.

CIVITAS 2025 SPRING BENEFIT THE RECAP



Natasha Brown and Margit Bluestein



Charles, Ella and Amy Devigne,
and Genny and Mark Alexander



Fran Pomerantz and
Sharon Pope Marshall



Bill and Joan Brothers

Roseanne Morrison, CIVITAS Board

» **THE CIVITAS ANNUAL BENEFIT** on May 20th honored persons who are involved in the beautification of the Esplanade on the East River. The event was held at the Dominican Academy-a girls Catholic High School on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. CIVITAS honored Andrew Darrell, Senior Advisor of the Environmental Defense Fund; Peggy Shephard, Co-Founder of WE Act for Environmental Justice; Julie Tighe, President New York League of Conservation Voters; and our stellar Board Member, Gorman Reilly, a past President of CIVITAS. Each spoke eloquently about their careers.

We celebrate the people responsible for the enrichment and enhancement of the East Side of New York City, and the festivities were enjoyed by all. Former honorees were in attendance, as well as a number of NYC inhabitants who support the initiatives of CIVITAS and the general well being of the city we love!

During the event, attendees enjoyed a power point presentation created by our board member, Natasha Brown. We featured intel on the honorees as well as images of former Benefits and participants at the events. The presentation provided guests with a thorough history of CIVITAS as well as the commitment of those involved in the community of the Upper East side.

Next year, we celebrate our 45th Anniversary, and if this Benefit was an indication, we are poised to celebrate CIVITAS' special place in the annals of NYC dedicated to improving neighborhood quality of life-which is our mission statement.



Kamila Yusupova



Elise Frick and Lilly Amelin



Kevin Simek and Nicholas Alexander



Honorees Julie Tighe, Peggy Shepard, Andrew Darrell and Gorman Reilly



Richard Eaddy and Edwin Marshall



Dana Tang and Una Darrell



Cebi and Conrad Foa



Genie Rice



Donald Rice



Ceci Tripp and Claudia Thompson



George Stanley and James T. B. Tripp



David Rapkin and Rita Hirsch

THE DAVIS CENTER: RESTORING THE NORTH END OF CENTRAL PARK

Diana Devendorf Rice, CIVITAS Board Member



FOR DECADES, REVITALIZING THE NORTHERN END OF CENTRAL PARK HAS BEEN

a priority for the Central Park Conservancy (CPC).

With the long-standing challenges of the former Lasker facility and the underutilized Harlem Meer, the moment had finally come for a comprehensive reimagining. Years of community dialogue, environmental study, and the Conservancy's growing expertise converged to make this the right time to launch a transformative project of this scale.

Watching long-standing community hopes take shape in a physical space designed for everyone to enjoy was inspiring to many local residents. Balancing ambitious design goals with the delicate realities of working within a historic and ecologically sensitive landscape is not for the faint of heart.

Dismantling mid-20th century infrastructure in order to restore natural water flow meant literally undoing concrete, piping, and decades of planning missteps. Yet those difficulties were balanced by profound satisfactions: watching natural habitats rebound, seeing families enjoy new pathways, and knowing the space would be more resilient for generations to come.

The project was made possible through the support of generous donors, including lead donor Andrew Davis, whose

commitment helped advance the vision for the Center. His support highlighted the importance of long-term stewardship and public-private partnerships in realizing ambitious projects.

To bring the vision to life, CPC assembled a team of architects, engineers, and contractors with a shared focus on sustainability and design excellence. Their task was to weave new facilities into the Park's historic fabric while allowing nature to take the lead. The CPC worked with neighborhood leaders, Harlem community representatives, and everyday park users to ensure the design reflected local needs.

That input shaped everything from recreation areas to pedestrian connections, making the final product a collaboration as much as a construction.

Walking through the Davis Center today, the achievement feels both sweeping and intimate. The restored edge of Harlem Meer draws visitors to the water. Playgrounds and gathering spaces blend seamlessly into the landscape. Wildlife has returned to the reconnected waterways. And above all, the North End—once overlooked—now feels like it belongs to everyone.

As Andrew Davis reflected, "This project is not just about renewing the north end of Central Park. It's about restoring possibility—for children, for families, and for the city." 🌐

LENOX HILL HOSPITAL: WHAT'S NEXT

Stephanie Reckler,
Committee To Protect Our Lenox Hill Neighborhood
Guest Columnist

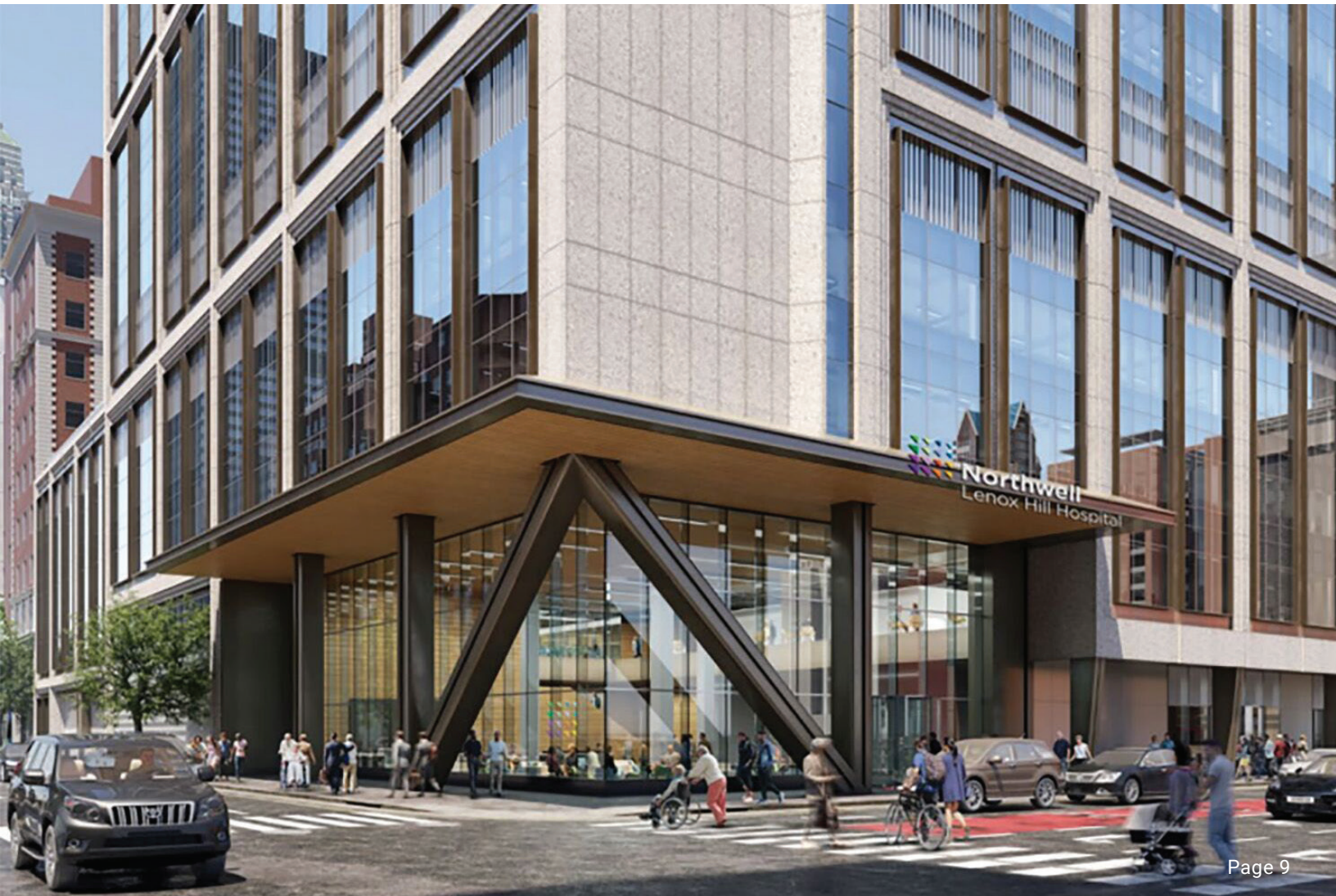
FOR COMMUNITY RESIDENTS ATTENDING THE CITY COUNCIL VOTE ON LENOX HILL HOSPITAL; the disappointment was palatable. The Council approved zoning changes to allow the construction of a massive tower on the Lenox Hill Hospital site. Nonetheless, there were some changes made in the plan that was voted on by the City Council, which likely would not have happened without the persistent and persuasive efforts of The Committee to Protect Our Lenox Hill Neighbor members, community advocates and organizations, including CIVITAS.

We certainly got the word out. We would like to thank the five non-profits; CIVITAS, Friends of the Upper East Side Historic District, Carnegie Hill Neighbors, Landmarks Conservancy, and City Club of NY, the local churches; All Souls, Saint Jean Baptiste, and Resurrection Church, members of our Executive Committee and our neighbors; Pierre von Bockaele, Ann Namm, Dr. and Mrs. Tannenbaum, Andrew Pearce, and Lenore Passavanti to name just a few, who attended our most recent rallies and city hearings for all the time, expertise and resources they have dedicated to our opposition effort during ULURP and

the years leading up to it. We would not have accomplished anything without them.

Northwell must now finalize its plans, line up financing and obtain approval for the project at the state level before it can go forward. The approval process at the state level provides another opportunity to argue against the need for a facility of this size in this location. We are not making any bets on the possibility that the state hospital review committee, which must issue a Certificate of Need for the facility, or the Department of Health will compel Northwell to downsize the project, but it is conceivable, and we are considering our options.

At this point, we can't predict the timing for the state level actions, which ultimately depends on when and how Northwell proceeds. Our operations will be similar to what we have used in the earlier campaign; we will hold rallies, generate press, have a letter-writing campaign to members of the Department of Health, and engage health equity groups to speak out about their needs for better local hospitals. 🌐





THE EAST HARLEM ESPLANADE

James T. B. Tripp, CIVITAS Board

THE EAST HARLEM WATERFRONT of the East River Esplanade is in deplorable shape. Fortunately, thanks to the efforts of City Council member Diana Ayala who is term-limited, the City Capital Budget contains \$360 million to rebuild and improve 23 and the 33 blocks between 92nd and 125th Street. That work is in a state of advanced design at the NYC Economic Development Corporation, and we hope that actual construction will commence soon.



JAMES TRIPP

However, that funding is not sufficient to do anything for the 10-block section just north of the pier at 107th Street that is slated for total reconstruction and 117th Street. Indeed, as the photograph shows, almost half of this "gap" is entirely closed off with high fencing, blocking any use of the Esplanade, because of its advanced deterioration and unsafe condition. At the same time, the City has built and is building whole new sections of the Esplanade along the Upper and Lower East Side and above 125th Street.

Our rough estimate of rebuilding this gap section, with modest

improvements such as two replacement piers at 111th and 116th Streets, a new pedestrian overpass at 107th and a green edge north of 107th is roughly \$180 to \$200 million. While Diana Ayala is seeking additional City capital dollars, backed by a letter to the Mayor and City Council, we thought it worthwhile to seek supplemental State financial support that could also serve as an incentive for the City to marshal funds to upgrade the gap that is in a high flood hazard zone. To that end, with our partners, the New York League of Conservation Voters, WEACTION for Environmental Justice and Community Board 11, together with two elected officials, Mark Levine, incoming Manhattan Borough President, and State Senator Jose Serrano, CIVITAS sent a letter to Governor Hochel requesting State Environmental Bond Act resiliency funding for this purpose.

Our challenge in the coming months will be to seek both City and State funds so that the entire EHWF will be a legitimate part of the East River Esplanade and will serve the East Harlem community that suffers from a lack of park space. 🌍

Davis and McAnaney to Be Honored at 2026 Civitas Benefit

(Continued from page 1)

1960s and 70s, has called it home her entire life. Her local upbringing shaped her in profound ways: she learned to swim at the 92nd Street Y, mastered roller skating in Central Park, and even learned to sew at the former Singer Sewing Machine shop on 86th Street. She attended elementary school locally, walking to St. Ignatius on 84th Street alongside neighbor friends bound for PS 6. A true New Yorker, Jeanne later expanded her horizons, happily discovering Greenwich Village during her time as a student at NYU, all while maintaining her home base in Carnegie Hill.

After marrying Edward McAnaney, they raised four wonderful children—Kate, Eamon, Margot, and Ashling—instilling in them the same deep connection to the neighborhood. The girls attended her alma mater, St. Ignatius, and Eamon attended St. David's on 89th Street.

Jeanne's dedication to community service is exceptional. She was an active volunteer at her children's schools and at The New York Junior League, where she chaired several committees, including the 1988 Thanksgiving Eve Ball. Her outstanding contributions were recognized when she was named "Outstanding Sustainer" in 2002. In 2003, she and Edward were jointly honored with the Trustees Award by the Dominican Academy.

Her leadership extended beyond New York; in 1997, Jeanne made history as the first woman trustee at The Hill School in Pottstown, PA, helping guide the institution through its transition to co-education. She served on their board for an impressive 17 years before being named an Honorary Trustee.

For over 40 years, Jeanne has been an invaluable pillar of CIVITAS, joining the board in 1981. She chaired our Annual Benefit countless times. Not one to rest on her laurels, she continues to be an esteemed member of several CIVITAS committees. Jeanne's commitment, wisdom, and passion have been instrumental to advancing CIVITAS' mission.

Please join us in celebrating Andrew A. Davis and Jeanne McAnaney's remarkable legacy of community service and their enduring impact on our community on May 12th!

485-x Tax Incentive Program Discussion

(Continued from page 1)



MITCHELL KORBEBY, Partner and Chair of the Land Use & Zoning Group at Herrick Feinstein LLP, offered legal and planning perspectives on the intricacies of zoning regulations and development incentives.

AHMED TIGANI, Acting Commissioner, NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), provided insights into the city's efforts to expand affordable housing and the role of programs like 485-x to achieve these goals. He highlighted HPD's success in employing all tools available to alleviate and resolve the housing crisis.

MADELINE DECERBO, Director of Urban Planning at the Real Estate Board of New York (REBNY), presented the industry's perspective on the challenges and opportunities within the current land use and housing regulatory environment.

The discussion was convened at a time when New York City is grappling with a historically low housing vacancy rate and escalating residential rents, underscoring the urgent need for increased housing production. Experts from development, policy, and advocacy shared their insights and potential solutions. We will share specific comments, desired outcomes and proposed solutions over the next several weeks.

Panelists explored the reasons behind the underutilization of the 485-x program by developers, with a particular focus on the program's structure and potential amendments to enhance its viability. Notably, the discussion touched upon the stringent wage requirements for projects exceeding 99 units, a mandate that, according to some, led developers to pursue smaller, less impactful projects to avoid higher labor costs. Unfortunately, this trade-off has resulted in limited affordable housing production.

The forum addressed structural and administrative hurdles that continued to obstruct new housing construction in the city. These obstacles included restrictive zoning laws, bureaucratic red tape, and lengthy approval processes, all contributing to the slow pace of development.

The CIVITAS discussion served as a critical platform and effective forum for examining the efficacy of the 485-x tax incentive program and fostering the necessary ongoing dialogue on the future of affordable housing development in New York City. 🌐

SAVE THE DATE!



CIVITAS' 2026 ANNUAL BENEFIT
MAY 12, 2026
6:00PM

LOCATION:

Dominican Academy

44 East 68th Street

*Between Park Avenue and Madison Avenue
New York City*

*Visit www.civitasnyc.org to join our
Benefit Host Committee or purchase tickets!*



*To learn more about CIVITAS, or to explore the online
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