Severe Storms, Flooding and Collateral Damage

WHITE PLAINS—With the recent battering from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, government on all levels rose to the task of responding quickly to the devastating floods and related damage inflicted on Westchester County.

In a pre-emptive move, when Westchester County was declared a disaster area by President Obama, residents and businesses were immediately eligible to apply for disaster aid, along with local governments and non-profit agencies.

Coordinating with state and federal efforts, Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino had all relevant county departments put together response plans. The county departments involved included Emergency Services, Public Safety, Communications, Health, Public Works, Transportation, Information Technology, Senior Programs, Environmental Facilities, Social Services and Parks and Recreation.

According to Astorino’s office, some 1,500 people or businesses from Westchester have registered with FEMA, of which 250 visited one of the disaster relief centers.

Also, in the wake of the flooding from these recent storms, there have been several moves to begin a coordinated effort focusing on the functional and local agencies to clear major watercourses like the Saw Mill River Parkway of debris, there by expanding their capacity to handle storm runoff and reduce flooding.

In the Saw Mill River’s case, in particular, items such as tree limbs and oil tanks amassed in the river, raising the water level and disrupting normal flow. This has exacerbated an already chronic flooding problem in communities along the Saw Mill.

U. S. Sen. Charles Schumer, State Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins and others have recently called for clearing this debris as a way to alleviate some flooding, but acknowledged that such action alone will not be the complete solution to the long term regional problems.

In addition, Astorino has formed a Saw Mill River Watershed Advisory Board, a broad-based citizen, professional and technical advisory group to address the flooding issue. Recently, representatives from his office briefed the Westchester County Board of Legislators on the various flood mitigation efforts initiated by his administration.

A Key Need

Albert Annunziata, a spokesman for the Cooperative and Condominium Advisory Council of Westchester and the Mid-Hudson Region (CCAC), representing over 400 condo and co-op owners in Westchester, acknowledged the efforts of Astorino, Cousine, Schum.
Six, Four or Two – Examining Your Choices for Oil!

That same month, after doing the tedious math involved, natural gas came to $1.89 for 138,000 BTUs. Pricing oil is rather simple because the bill indicates the price per gallon. Natural gas is bit more complex since you need to add the supply cost, and the delivery cost which is displayed on the bill per therm (100,000 BTUs) and about 25 percent in additional charges. In addition, for comparison with oil in gallons, multiply by 1.38. The bill in this example was $5.8 per therm for delivery and $7.79 for supply. The total is $13.7 per therm times 1.38, which equals $18.89 compared to a gallon of oil.

Watch Out Westchester!
Since the phase out of Number Six Oil in New York City regulation, our Westchester County friends may question the relevance of these rules. If history is any guide, you will discover that New York City regulations are often repeated in a reasonable time in Westchester. In addition, the price differential is very hard to ignore. Natural Gas Futures—which are available in the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times and online—point to continuing low prices, while oil seems to have lofty numbers. All sorts of conversion deals are available from Con Edison, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), and private contractors. Also, NYSERDA recommends lining the chimney since natural gas has more acidic fumes than oil. Whatever path your building takes, be sure to get accurate specs, estimates and advice from professionals. Care must be taken for the conversion and expect delays and inconveniences. Facts and prices can’t be ignored, so consider the possibilities!

Herb’s Hints
1) Are you one of the 33 percent who overpay electric bills? Find out at roseNYreunds.com!
2) Draw blinds or shades to reduce air conditioning expenses.

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The Building and Realty Institute (BRI), The Business Council of Westchester, the Construction Industry Council (CIC) and the Westchester Putnam Association of Realtors (WPAR) were hosts of the Sep. 15 forum. The groups compose The Westchester Business Alliance, a federation that addresses key issues facing the region’s business community.

More than 130 members of Westchester’s business sector participated in the event at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in White Plains.

“We addressed issues that affect the business community, as well as the entire county,” said Albert Annunziata, executive director of the BRI. “All of the staffs of the sponsoring organizations were pleased with the response to the event.”

A photo montage of the conference is featured on this page.

John Kope, chairman of the Westchester Putnam Association of Realtors (WPAR), questioned candidates on the high taxes and level of spending in Westchester. WPAR was a co-sponsor of the event.

Incumbent Peter Harckham (Democrat/District 2) is pictured while answering a question from the audience.

William Ryan, the Democratic incumbent from District 5, is shown while answering a question from a member of the event’s panel.

Legislator Michael Kaplowitz is pictured while issuing his presentation. Kaplowitz, a Democrat, represents District 4.

Republican Candidates, from left to right, Peter Michaelis, District 2 (Bedford, et. al); Michael Smith, District 3 (Mt. Pleasant, Pleasantville); and Terrence Murphy, District 4 (Yorktown).

Lyndon Williams, vice chairman of the Westchester County Board of Legislators (D-District 13, Mt. Vernon) makes a point, flanked by Democratic Candidates Mary Jane Shimsky (District 12, Greenburgh) and George Kevgas, challenger, District 14 (Yonkers).
Public Relations (PR) – Just What Is It, Anyway?

By Harriet K. Lerner
HARTSDALE—Even 12 years ago, when I started my business, it was not easy explaining to potential clients exactly what I was offering them. Not only did the field have become many times richer and more complex, so, of course, Public Relations (PR) is even more difficult to describe.

Yet it offers the best kind of exposure out there—when performed successfully, it portrays a client as “best of breed” and creates a glittering brand.

An Important Image

Public Relations is the public face of a corporation, small business, or independent practitioner. Its goal is to depict those entities in the best possible light, so as to increase the bottom lines of the respective entities. It is not about exaggeration or boasting. It is informational and uses the newest tools of the Internet and Social Media (and that will be described in another column!)

Launching a business isn’t enough—the Public Relations practitioner must elucidate to the press its potential and present new angles and ideas. Public Relations is the preservation of a brand, public image or company name. It can stand for the work the company does for its community. Non-profit entities have turned more and more to Public Relations to explain the work they are doing to improve people’s lives and increase their fundraising efforts.

What it was in the beginning, it is still today. That is, the public, or Public Relations Agency, seeks to build excellent relationships with the press, on and off-line, and does so with the basic tool of the well-written, one-page press release.

In that document, the “angle” that makes the client newsworthy is described in as succinct a way as possible. Should the reporter need more information, he can find it on the news page of the client’s website, or the Public Relations practitioners’ website or blog. It is all right to call reporters, but in these days of lean staffs, it’s better to use e-mail as much as possible—and make sure that you completely understand the reporter when your ship comes in, the reporter calls you!

The Issue of Payment

How are people paid? Usually the fee can depend on an agreed-upon time—a sensitive contract before the project begins. However, some Public Relations people get paid on how many placements they get for the client. The longer the Public Relations firm works for the client, the more well-known and highly thought-of the client becomes. Think of the difference between an article written by a reporter and an ad that someone paid for—

which is more believable?

The Advantages of Public Relations

The benefits of a Public Relations Campaign are many. For starters, campaigns are relatively cheap—compare a professional press release to an advertising campaign, no matter how modest. The end result of a Public Relations Campaign turns more and more into “an interview, quote, feature or editorial.

Think of how being seen in the right magazines, or online publications, or a blog, or a website might feel to the client.

Credibility

The public doesn’t like to be sold—ads do this. But good press coverage (such as a success story or a customer case study) is far more believable.

Recycle

The content of a press release can be reused and turned into blogs and articles. It could be picked up by other publications and lead to other features and articles. The news content can be repeated on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter—more on these formats next time!

Editor’s Note: Harriet Lerner owns Go Visible PR, a Hartsdale-based Public Relations and Communications company. She is a consultant for the Westchester Putnam Association of Realtors (WPAR). She has worked extensively with the Building and Realty Institute of Westchester and the Mid-Hudson Region (BR). Her clients range from attorneys and mortgage professionals, as well as many other industries. Her profile is on LinkedIn. She is also an active White Plains Rotarian. Her newly designed website is http://www.GoVisiblePR.com. Send any questions or comments to harriet@govisiblpr.com.

Severe Storms, Flooding and Collateral Damage Draw Quick Response from State, County & Feds

Continued from page 1

and others. He said that such entities have been left reeling from all angles, especially the bottom lines of the respective entities. It is not about exaggeration or boasting. It is informational and uses the newest tools of the Internet and Social Media (and that will be described in another column!)

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The Condo Scenario

Regarding condominium arrears, it must be recognized that collection of these arrears is quite different than with a cooperative. A future article will deal with proper methodology and the judicial process that is required, but one difference between a cooperative and condominium collection process must be recognized, i.e., that with a condominium, the bank has a superior lien and if the bank forecloses, it will extinguish any common charge lien that the condominium has built up — therefore, there is more reason to, for reasons to be explained later, move quickly against the delinquent shareholder, have priority before a bank, and therefore the bank will either pay the balance of the monies owed the cooperative to be preventing a foreclosure or, alternatively, may walk away from the unit if the unit is not worth enough or the mortgage is small enough and the outstanding maintenance and legal fees are significant.

Nevertheless, expeditious action is necessitated both from the point of view of the shareholder (so that the shareholder does not find himself/herself in too much of a hole) and the other shareholders, who basically move quickly against the delinquent shareholder as well as the cooperative, as an entity, in protecting its financial position.

Every board should adopt a consistent policy which not only considers the financial circumstances of a shareholder who comes to it for financial relief or consideration, but also the needs of the cooperative relative to securing payment in as expeditious a manner as is possible. Legal counsel can assist in both drafting and implementing such a policy and work with the board to quickly and efficiently deal with arrears in a manner that is fair to all concerned.

As a first step, when a unit owner/shareholder falls into arrears, even for one month, the managing agent should first call and/or send a friendly “note” to find out if there is a problem or to see if the check was lost.

A written three-day notice is specific and the terms are standard. Concomitant with this or alternatively, the cooperative could notify the lender (if any) and seek payment from the lender. However, this may well cause the shareholder’s mortgage to go into default.

Therefore, many boards are hesitant to do this and would rather follow the so-called “eviction” route, wherein the shareholder may well bring himself/herself back into financial compliance without causing a default under the mortgage.

However, in some cases, if the shareholder does not pay and the eviction proceeding continues, legal notification to the lender is required under the recognition agreement. The bank may or may not pay the arrears (and all incurred late charges and legal fees) depending on the value of the unit, as well as the amount of the mortgage.

In any case, most times a delinquent shareholder will bring himself/herself back into good standing before a formal (non-judicial) foreclosure either by the bank, or the cooperative, takes place.

From the cooperative’s perspective, it will always be protected because it will almost always recoup all of its outstanding maintenance, as well as the attendant fees and late charges and if the lender wants to protect its interest it will have no choice but to pay the cooperative the arrears. The cooperative will, if it has to proceed with a foreclosure against the shareholder, have priority before a bank, and therefore the bank will either pay the balance of the monies owed the cooperative to prevent being wiped out or, alternatively, may

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C-III Capital Partners to Acquire NAI Global Acquisition Brings Expanded Commercial Real Estate Services to NAI Friedland

YONKERS—C-III Capital Partners LLC (C-III) recently announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire NAI Global, a large net- work of independent commercial real estate firms worldwide. The acquisition will mean expanded services for local NAI affiliate NAI Friedland, a full service commercial real estate firm headquartered in Yonkers. C-III is led by Andrew L. Farkas, who founded and was chairman and chief executive officer (CEO) of Insignia Financial Group, Inc. NAI Global will continue to operate as a separate company under its current management following the acquisition, officials said.

Rand Realty’s White Plains Office Collects $1,000 For Local Back-To-School Clothes For Kids Project WHITE PLAINS—Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty recently announced that its White Plains office has collected close to $1,000 for the Back-to-School Clothes for Kids Project.

Kristi Roderick, an senior associate, said that the program provides new school clothing to needy children in Westchester County and the Bronx with the help of donations from local corporations, their employees, clubs, individ uals and schools.

Rand Realty’s White Plains office raised the funds through a variety of efforts, including a “snack box” with all of the profits donated to the clothing drive. With the money raised, the office was able to purchase clothing for seven children from Southern Westchester, with each child receiving at least three outfits, in addition to a coat or sneakers and a toy.

“As part of the corporate culture at Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty, we feel it is extremely important to give back to the communities where we work,” said Jo Falcone, assistant manager of Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty’s White Plains office.

“Back-to-School Clothes for Kids is a wonderful program, and I’m so proud of our agents who donated their time and money to raise funds for this effort.”

Connie Kennedy of TAL International, the President of Back-to-School Clothes for Kids, said. For additional information about the organization, visit www.backtoschoolclothes.org

Better Homes and Gardens Rand Realty, headquartered in New York City, Connecticut and New Jersey because of its relationships with neighboring NAI members. NAI Friedland provides services in the areas of retail, office and industrial commercial real estate, officials said.

Positives

“Our affiliation with the NAI Global Network gives us the necessary national and international contacts when representing Fortune 500 firms and other national or regional corporations in larger-sized re- tial, industrial and office transac- tions,” said Tony Lerner, chief executive officer (CEO) of NAI Friedland.

He added: “Combining the global network of NAI and NAI Friedland has made us a very complementary partnership. There is no doubt in my mind that this new acquisition by C-III will lead to even greater success for our firm and the many other NAI offices around the globe.”

“C-III plans to use its as- set base, along with strategic acquisitions such as NAI, to create a fully diversified com- mercial real estate services company,” said Farkas. “This is the strategy that was suc- cesful for Insignia. C-III is led by the same team that built In- signia, and with C-III’s signifi- cantly larger asset base, I be- lieve C-III can substantially exceed Insignia’s success.”

At its height, Insignia man- aged $12.5 billion in assets. Today, C-III’s portfolio approxi- mates $150 million in as- sets. Insignia was one of the largest commercial real es- tate services companies in the world when it merged with CB Richard Ellis in 2003, spokes- men said.

C-III commenced operations with the purchase of Centerline Capital Group’s institutional real estate debt fund management and commercial mortgage loan servicing businesses in March of 2010. Since that time, C-III has successfully launched mort- gage origination,(retail and investor sales and title insurance busi- nesses from scratch, and ex- panded its principal investment, loan origination fund manage- ment and primary and special loan servicing businesses.

“C-III represents a tremen- dously important opportunity for NAI and our members,” said Gerald C. Finn, chairman and chief executive officer (CEO) of NAI Global. “By teaming up with Andrew Farkas, one of the world’s leading real es- tate businessmen, we expect NAI will be able to significantly grow its service offerings and present new opportunities to our members.”

“We have built the world’s leading commercial real es- tate network, but now we be- lieve it is time to take the en- terprise to a new level and add even greater value to our members and our collective corporate and investment cli- ents. The agreement with C- III will provide a depth of re- sources, talent and tools from which we can draw upon to ac- celerate our growth,” added Jeffrey M. Finn, president and chief executive officer (CEO) of NAI Global. “Rarely do you find partners so perfectly stra- tegically aligned as NAI Global and C-III. This is a natural fit and extremely exciting news for the industry.”

The transaction was expect- ed to close in the third quarter of 2011. Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed, officials said.

Background

C-III Capital Partners LLC is a leading commercial real estate services com- pany engaged in a broad range of ac- tivities, including primary and special loan servicing, loan acquisition, fund management and principal investment. The company’s principal place of business is in Los Angeles, Tex. The firm has additional offi- ces in New York, Greeneville, South Carolina and Nashville.

C-III Asset Management LLC, a wholly-owned subsidi- ary of C-III Capital Partners, is a highly rated servicer (pri- mary and special) of commer- cial real estate loans. Its clients include issuers of commer- cial mortgage-backed securi- ties (CMBS) and collateralized mortgage obligations (CMOs), institu- tional lenders and other in- vestors. C-III Asset Manage- ment is the servicer for approximately $20 billion and the named special servicer for approximately $127 billion of commercial real estate loans. C-III Asset Management is rat- ed CPS 2 by Fitch and Above Average by Standard and Poor’s as a primary servicer. It is one of the highest rated spe- cial servicers in the industry with ratings of CSF 1 by Fitch and Strong and Below Average by Standard and Poor’s as a servicer.

NAI Global is the premier network of independent com- mercial real estate firms and one of the largest commercial real estate service providers worldwide, officials said. NAI Global manages a network of 5,000 professionals and 350 offices in 55 countries through- out the world. NAI profession- als work together with the global management team to help clients strategically optimize real estate assets. NAI offices around the world completed over $45 billion in transactions annually, representing over 200 million square feet of commercial space, spokes- men said.

NAI Friedland, founded in 1970, is a full-service commer- cial real estate firm covering the entire metropolitan New York area, with a majority of its busi- ness in Westchester County and the Bronx, but additionally in Putnam and Rockland coun- ties, New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. Headquar- tered in Yonkers, Friedland also maintains a satellite office in Manhattan. Friedland staff members strive to pro- vide guidance and information that enables clients to make the best financial decisions. Brokers in Friedland’s four divisions—Retail, Indus- trial, Office and Residential/Development—understand their markets and are support- ed by a sophisticated com- bination database of available prop- erties and potential tenants, company officials said.

Rand Realty is the leading commercial real estate firm comprising of the top performers in the entire metropolitan New York area, with a majority of its busi- ness in Westchester County and the Bronx, but additionally in Putnam and Rockland coun- ties, New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. Headquar- tered in Yonkers, Friedland also maintains a satellite office in Manhattan. Friedland staff members strive to pro- vide guidance and information that enables clients to make the best financial decisions. Brokers in Friedland’s four divisions—Retail, Indus- trial, Office and Residential/Development—understand their markets and are support- ed by a sophisticated com- bination database of available prop- erties and potential tenants, company officials said.

ADVERTISE IN IMPACT
NARI to Certify Remodeling Project Managers

DES PLAINES, Ill.—The National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) recently announced an industry-first: the Certified Remodeler Project Manager (CRPM) Education and Certification Program. NARI officials said that the program was set to launch as of Sept. 6. Officials added that the initiative addresses a growing trend in the remodeling industry.

"It’s becoming more common for remodeling companies to use project managers to supervise projects, rather than lead carpenters or the general contractor," said David Walker of Double Check Builders, Inc., based in Ronkonkoma, N.Y. Walker is a member of the CRPM Committee and the first program facilitator.

In response to that longtime industry practice, NARI tasked a working group of members with direct experience in project management with developing a new certification aimed at professionalizing the project manager role in the residential remodeling industry. As with all of NARI’s courses, participants in the program will get "real world knowledge" about remodeling project management, since the course was designed by a committee of members with vast experience in successful project management, officials said.

Officials said the committee created a set of knowledge domains and sub-domains that include project cost management, communication, project planning, quality assurance, recordkeeping and risk management.

"To create the domains, we drew upon our own experiences in project management to identify the most important areas of study," Walker said. "We also placed higher concentration on lines that are most responsible for project success, with an emphasis on these areas in the prep course study and test." The CRPM Certification is meant to establish a body of knowledge for project managers that will increase the level of professionalism in how remodeling projects are managed to drive customer satisfaction and profitability for the company, spokesmen added.

Proper Insurance Programs for Natural Disasters Is Topic of October 24 Co-op and Condo Conference

By Jeff Hanley, IMPACT Editor

WHITE PLAINS — "Your Building’s Insurance Programs for Natural Disasters — Are You Prepared?" is the topic of the Oct. 24 membership meeting of the Cooperative and Condominium Advisory Council (CCAC).

Association officials recently announced the scheduling of the event. The conference, scheduled for a 6 p.m. start, will be at the Crown Plaza Hotel in White Plains.

"In the wake of all of the problems associated with Hurricane Irene and all of the harsh weather we have had in recent months, we felt the scheduling of this program is a good idea for our member co-op and condo buildings," said Diana Virril, chair of the CCAC. "Some of our members are still struggling with the effects of Hurricane Irene."

Virril said that representatives of Levitt-Furist Associates and Finger and Finger, A Professional Corporation, will compose part of the program’s panel. Levitt-Furist is the insurance manager for the CCAC and its affiliate, the Building and Realty Institute (BRI). Finger and Finger serves as chief counsel to the CCAC and the BRI. Virril added that additional panel members will soon be announced.

"We are confident that those who participate in the CRPM will walk away with a strong foundation for building a successful process to handle all types of projects from beginning to end," Walker said. "The domains from the program hit on all aspects of what a project manager will experience in their roles—everything from triumphs to challenges."

The NARI member price for the CRPM online prep course and the certification exam is $820. The non-member price for the CRPM online prep course and certification exam is $1,120. For more information on the eligibility requirements, registration and sub-domains, please visit www.nari.org/certify/crpm.

NARI members represent a select group from the approximately 800,000 companies and individuals in the U.S. identifying themselves as professional remodelers, spokesmen said. NARI is a professional association whose members voluntarily subscribe to a strict Code of Ethics. NARI is the only trade association dedicated solely to the remodeling industry. The association, which represents member companies nationwide, comprises 63,000 remodeling contractors. It is known as "The Voice of the Remodeling Industry."

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IMPACT — OCTOBER 2011 PAGE 7
Comprehensive Care Expands Headquarters at Hutchinson Metro Center

NEW YORK—The Hutchinson Metro Center recently announced that Comprehensive Care Management (CCM), a not-for-profit member of the Beth Abraham Family of Health Services, has signed a lease for approximately 18,000 square feet on its headquarters on the 10th floor of Tower One at the center.

With the completion of this major transaction, the 280,000-square-foot Tower One is now over 90 percent leased.

This is the second major lease for CCM at the Hutchinson Metro Center. In early 2010, CCM leased 20,000 square feet on the sixth floor of Tower One and later took another 7,500 square feet of space.

In total CCM, has leased nearly 60,000 square feet, making it the single largest tenant in Tower One.

The 10th floor which provides home health care services to the elderly, disabled and chronically ill in the New York Metro Area, was previously occupied by different locations in the Bronx.

“The benefits of moving to one location and that’s when we decided to look at the Hutchinson Metro Center,” said John Neihy, chief operating officer of CCM. “This is a wonderful location in terms of access to any area in the metropolitan region, whether you drive or take public transportation. The amenities here are great and the free parking and shuttle service are another big benefit.”

CCM employs more than 150 people at the Hutchinson Metro Center, officials said.

“We are very pleased to have Comprehensive Care Management as a major tenant at the Hutchinson Metro Center,” said Robert Demir, vice president of medical practices at the Hutchinson Metro Center.

Currently, there are over 30 medical practices and health care-related firms located at the Hutchinson Metro Center, occupying more than 250,000 square feet of space. Among the other medical practices are University Diagnostic Medical Imaging, ENT & Allergolog- 
iates, Hutchinson Metro Den- tal; Laboratory Corp. of Ameri- ca; Metro Eye Surgeons; New York Associates in Gastroenterology; Occupational Ther- apy Associates of New York; Pelham Gardens Oral Surgery Associates; Pro Health Care Associates and Westchester Square Physical Therapy.

The Benefits

The Hutchinson Metro Center offers many benefits to medical tenants, including custom-built medical suites, first-class amenities, a suburban campus setting, free parking and a shuttle service to nearby subway stations, as well as a conven- 
ient and highly visible location directly off the Hutchinson River Parkway. The complex is also available for ambulances and has diagnostic and phys-
ical therapy services on site. The Hutchinson Metro Center is also less than a mile from four major medical institutions—the Westchester Medical Center, Montefiore Medical Center, Jacobi Medical Center and Valhalla Hospital.

Spokesmen added that the building is zoned for medical and commercial use. The de-
veloper, Ossining T.B. Flats, LLC, contributed $138,000, the cost equivalent to the value of the commercial portion of the building.

280,000 square feet of Class A space on nine floors with four floors of covered parking. Approximately 18,000 square feet of space remains available in Tower One. A second tower of 320,000 square feet is planned for construction ad-
jacent to Tower One. The two towers will be connected by a common lobby. The first phase of 460,000 square feet of floor space at the Hutchinson Metro Center was fully leased in less than two years, officials said.

First-class amenities at the Hutchinson Metro Center in- clude a full-service Metro Cafe, a fitness center, a state-of-the-art teleconferencing center, an on-site child care, a day care, an at- tended gardening area with 24/7 security, landscaped courtyards with gardens and seat-
ing/dining areas, a full-service branch of Hudson Valley Bank, a full-service pharmacy on site, an on-site executive car was-
ning and detailing center, dry clean-
ers, sushi shop, ATM and complimentary shuttle service to nearby subway stations.
Development Strategies in Difficult Times

By Michael D. Zarin, Esq. and Daniel M. Richmond, Esq.

Zarin & Steinmetz, White Plains

WHITE PLAINS—The current real estate recession has resulted in many developers delaying the commencement of approved projects. This article summarizes several possible avenues that are preserving development rights until the housing and economic market improves.

Permits

Renewal requests are exigible under SEQRA, meaning that they are considered by law to have no new environmental or other adverse impacts. They should be granted without excessive administrative delay.

The burden is on the regulatory agency to prove, through credible evidence, that there have been unanticipated material changes in conditions that would adversely impact specific health and safety conditions. Indeed, State law amended last year to allow planning boards to extend the time for considering renewal applications for a specific project impact. If the applicant has not sought to invoke the single integrated project theory, allowing the developer to seek vesting of the entire project. Developers should also be aware of the special exception theory, holding that where a municipality, in bad faith, delays certain project approvals or renewal requests to allow the regulations to be changed, the applicant has a right to have its project reviewed under current law.

Dover, N.Y.

This firm recently crafted legislation in Dover, N.Y., under local municipal home rule authority to granting Vested Rights to developers for projects with long-term build-outs. This legislation assures that there will be no zoning or other regulatory changes affecting the project for up to 10-to-15 years, provided that the developer diligently pursues implementation of the project in accordance with current reasonable commercial standards.

SEQRA

The mere passage of time should not compel a developer to update its environmental analysis. Data does not automatically become stale under SEQRA. Nor was SEQRA meant to be a perpetual process.

Supplemental review should only be contemplated by an agency if it can demonstrate through objective evidence that there exists specific, material, unanticipated adverse environmental impacts arising from: (i) proposed project changes; (ii) newly discovered information; or (iii) changes in project circumstances. Analysis of purportedly “unaddressed” impacts can often be found in existing SEQRA documentation. This firm has also recently worked with municipalities and developers to create legislation, which allows permitting projects to adjust their program to economic conditions during their build-out without triggering supplemental review so long as certain environmental thresholds are not exceeded.

Fees

Finally, developers should seek to recover and or avoid paying permitting fees (e.g., inspection, recreation or performance bonds) where the project is delayed. Permitting fees must be related to either the actual cost or reimbursement of implementing the regulation, or reasonably related to mitigating a specific project impact. If the project delayed,intree funds are lost in permits. Nor can municipalities deposit or use such funds for general municipal purposes, without converting the funds to an improper and illegal taxation.

Editor’s Note: Since 2003, The Building & Realty Institute (BRI) has been lobbying aggressively on reform legislation for both the SEQRA review process and the Vested Rights of all New York State property owners, builders and developers.

GHP Office Realty Completes Sale of White Plains Facility

WHITE PLAINS—GHP Office Realty, an owner and manager of office properties throughout the New York metropolitan area, recently announced that it has sold a 45,000-square-foot office building at 12 Water Street in downtown White Plains.

The building is directly across the street from the Metro North Train Station. The facility was sold for $3,900,000. The building was vacant at the time of the sale, officials added.

GHP Office Realty purchased the property in 2002. For the last four years, the building has been fully leased to Con Edison. The purchasers are locally based investors, the new owners plan a complete renovation of the property. A re-branding and marketing program of the work is complete, spokespersons said.

In addition to being centrally located, the property has on site parking, operable windows and small floor plates. Jamie Schwartz of GHP Office Realty is quoted the buyers. The sellers were represented by Elizabeth Smith of Goldberg Wepin Finkel Goldstein, LLP, officials added.

By Nathaniel J. Parish, Parish & Weiner, inc., (914) 949-0308, ext. 4 or at Nathaniel@fingerandfinger.com

NEW SIGNAGE INSTALLED AT PROVIDENT BANK PARK

PROVIDENT BANK PARK

Workers recently put the finishing touches on the scoreboard at Provident Bank Park, the new home of the Rockland Boulders professional baseball team in the town of Ramapo. In May, Provident Bank announced it had signed a multi-year agreement that gives the bank exclusive naming rights for the state-of-the-art ballpark. The agreement also designates Provident Bank as the primary marketing partner for the Rockland Boulders. Located off exit 12 of the Palisades Parkway in Pomona, the new Provident Bank Park features more than 4,000 fixed seats, 16 luxury suites and 11 box offices, officials said. The park officially opened on June 16.

By Andrey Wagner

Wagner Web Designs, Inc.

QR Codes: What They Are and How to Use Them

By Lyndee Reader

The software is compatible with a wide variety of modern “Smart Phones,” including iPhone, Blackberry, Sony, Motorola, Nokia and others.

As an example, you could walk into a store, use your “Smart Phone” to scan an item that has a QR Code on it, and immediately see the information. It’s their user-friendliness which makes QR Codes practical for individuals and businesses of all sizes.

Uses

The following are five ways that you can use QR Codes to promote your business:

1. Increase Website Traffic. QR Codes can lead to specific URL’s. You can create codes that are specific to certain pages or products on your site. A Realtor can generate a code that goes directly to a home for sale on their website.

2. Build Your E-Mail Subscriber List. You can build your E-Mail subscriber list by creating a link to your e-mail signup form. Just make sure you give people compelling reasons to subscribe to your newsletter.

3. Business Cards. Rather than overload your business card with a ton of information, you can make the bars as small as minimum, then create a QR Code that leads people to your Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn pages.

4. Contests, Discounts, Sweepstakes and Giveaways. These methods can be very effective when used in conjunction with QR Codes. You can place these codes in your advertisements.

5. Flyers. Suppose you own a restaurant. You could create a QR Code that goes directly to a URL that gives a coupon or a discount on a meal and directions to your restaurant.

You can generate and create your own QR Codes at: qr.li

Editor’s Note: Andrea Wagner has been creating websites for small business for more than 14 years. Contact her for design, redesign, updates for your site, or to discuss creating a QR Code Campaign for your business. Her company’s website is www.wagnerwebdesigns.com
Platinum Energy Group Join to US Energy Group’s Local Network

FRESH MEADOWS, N.Y. — US Energy Group recently announced that Platinum Energy Group (PEG) will join its recently launched Platinum Energy System Integrators (ASEIs). The companies are bringing an enhanced expertise in installation and field service to the Local Network, where Platinum Energy Group will approach to monitoring energy efficiency.

US Energy Group’s ASEIs have undergone advanced training in the installation and commissioning of the company’s flagship Building Energy Management System (BEMS), including the patented Verifier Digital Fuel Gauge, ASEIs are the only entities authorized to install US Energy Group’s BEMS, officials said.

The ASEI is the only group that has been advising owners of all types of buildings for 43 years. The ASEIs have a total of nearly 150 New York area field team of 155 experienced and trained professionals, company spokesmen said.

Officials added that the company has built “a large and extensive portfolio of energy efficient buildings and loyal customers.”

US Energy Group’s BEMS reduces fuel usage by 15-to-30%, depending on the type of building, officials said. Monitoring and analyzing HVAC system information, provides essential data and functionality to identify and respond to in-efficiencies and maintenance issues and prevent catastrophic boiler malfunction. The system also automates the installation of new benchmarking requirements, spokesmen said.

The Verifier Digital Fuel Gauge accurately tracks and certifies deliveries of utilities and usage, preventing shortages. Clippard's Digital Fuel Consumption data in real-time across an entire portfolio of buildings with US Energy Group’s af- fords an accurate, continuous BEMS system. They also receive real-time text message alerts about maintenance issues which are simultaneously sent to ASEIs who can intervene and correct problems before they require costly repairs, officials added.

“With certainly being a synergistic relationship— we are not only helping us and our ASEIs to grow,” said Kaden, US Energy Group’s senior vice president of business development.

Officials said that the growth of US Energy Group’s list of ASEIs is in line with the focus on offering innovative technology that delivers real-time essential information and comprehensive building energy management solutions. As a result, the company is selecting and partnering with highly respected and experienced organizations, like Platinum Energy Group—which have extensive field expertise in all types of buildings and energy systems, and an innovative approach to energy management, spokesmen added.

Founded in 1978 by Chief Executive Officer Jerry Pindus, the company developed the management of a centralized energy and resource management system, which is being used in many corporate buildings and is the only one of its kind.

CPC Closes on Loan to Finance Highview Estates

POUGHKEEPSIE — The Community Preservation Corporation (CPC) recently announced that it has closed on a $3 million permanent loan to finance Highview Estates, a 138-unit multi-family housing development cooperative built in 1974.

Located at 26 Cooper Road, Highview Estates is situated with easy access to shopping and services along Route 44 and Route 55, as well as to Route 9, the Taconic Parkway and public transportation, spokesmen said.

The multi-family housing development includes 9 two- and three-story buildings, with 72 one-bedroom units, 59 two-bedroom units, 8 three-bedroom units, 72 one-bedroom units, 59 two- and three-story buildings, with 92 one-bedroom units, 59 two-bedroom units, 8 three-bedroom units, 72 one-bedroom units, 59 two-bedroom units, 8 three-bedroom units, and 215 parking spaces for owners and guests.

Originally developed as a rental complex, Highview Estates was converted to a co-op in 1987. There are very few co-ops in Dutchess County. The co-op plans to make some capital improvements, officials said.

The borrower is Highview Estates Owners Corp., a co- op housing corporation that was incorporated in the state of New York in 1987.

Doug Olcott, senior vice president and director of lending for CPC’s Hudson Valley Region Office, will manage the loan - said “CPC is again pleased to invest in a multi-family housing development in Ulster County.”

To date, CPC’s Hudson Valley Office has closed 70 loans for a total of nearly $45 million in financing for more than 1,200 units in Poughkeepsie.” CPC’s loan will be 50 percent insured by SONYMA, spokesmen said.

Officials added that the proceeds will refinance the existing CPC mortgage on the property and provide building reserves needed for future capital improvements and repairs identified by CPC’s engineers.

CPC is a not-for-profit lender that finances resident multi-family development. CPC’s headquarters is in Poughkeepsie. To date, CPC’s Hudson Valley Office has closed 70 loans for a total of nearly $45 million in financing for more than 1,200 units in Poughkeepsie.

Probuild Bank Announces Steps to Fuel Growth

MONTEBELLO — Probuild Bank, a subsidiary of Probuild Bank, recently announced that it was taking measure to get better position the bank for enhanced revenue growth.

The repositioning of the company’s expense base will save approximately $10 million over the next year with about half of the positions of personnel that have been identified, and the remainder in other expenses, officials said.

“Following these expense reductions, Probuild Bank will be well positioned for growth and improvements, said Jack Kopinsky, president and chief executive officer of Probuild Bank.

A portion of the cost savings will be redeployed to new, revenue-generating initiatives designed to improve efficiency and enhance customer experience, spokesmen said.

Headquartered in Montebello, Probuild Bank, with $2.9 billion in assets, is the largest independent full-service community bank in the lower Hudson Valley, officials said. The bank operates 36 branches that serve the Hudson Valley region, including three Pan Pacific Discos. When the seller’s plans for the property changed, it was a win for the City of Bergen County (N.J.). The bank offers a complete line of commercial, retail and investment services, spokesmen added.

Goldschmidt and Associates Reports New Rochelle Transaction

NEW ROCHELLE — Goldschmidt and Associates recently announced that it has brokered the sale of 518-522 Main Street in New Rochelle.

The 17,400 square foot property was sold to a private LLC, officials said. The asking sales price was $1,600,000. The owners are using the property to relocate their juvenile furniture and accessory store from their previous location on North Avenue.

“This was a win-win for everyone,” said Eric Goldschmidt, senior partner of Goldschmidt and Associates. ”It was a win for the purchasers, who were able to maintain their long-standing business downtown New Rochelle. It was also a win for the City of New Rochelle as it confirmed the downtown’s stability as an important area retail hub.”

Ralph DiBart, director of the New Rochelle Business Improvement District, played an important role in the negotiations among the seller, purchaser and city, spokesmen said.

The property was vacant for years following the closing of The Palace Disco. When the seller’s plans for the property changed, Goldschmidt was retained to find a viable user for the property, spokesmen said.

Goldschmidt and Associates was also the broker for the area’s CVS, Citibank, and various Avalon retail transactions, officials added.

Goldschmidt and Associates, celebrating its 20th anniversary, specializes in the leasing and sales of retail, commercial and industrial properties in the New York Metropolitan area.

GHP Office Realty Announces Major Lease in Elmsford

ELMSFORD—GHP Office Realty, a major owner and manager of office and commercial space in Westchester County, recently announced that it represented the landlord in completing a 55,750 square foot lease to Umex Brands in one of the largest leases, to date, in Westchester for 2011.

Umex Brands will be relocating and expanding its corporate headquarters, sales, showroom and manufacturing facility from Yorktown to a new, state-of-the-art facility in 700 Executive Boulevard in Elmsford.

Umex Brands was founded in 1936. It is the world’s leading manufacturer and supplier of specialty cleaning products for commercial and industrial markets, with a product line of approximately 2,000 items, which are used in a variety of industries, including industrial, retail, and automotive. It is also a win for the City of New Rochelle as it confirmed the downtown’s stability as an important area retail hub.”

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Goldschmidt and Associates, celebrating its 20th anniversary, specializes in the leasing and sales of retail, commercial and industrial properties in the New York Metropolitan area.

"Building a better place to live, is our mission," he said. "We are dedicated to providing quality homes for our residents, and we pride ourselves on being a community that values and respects diversity."
VHB Appoints Two Senior Engineers to its White Plains Office

WHITE PLAINS—VHB Engineering, Surveying and Landscape Architecture, P.C. (VHB) recently announced the appointment of two senior engineers, Mike Junghans, PE, PP and John Canning, PE, to serve augment its New York operations, spokesmen said.

Junghans, who previously served as office manager at VHB’s Edison (N.J.) office, will be working on site-civil engineering projects in the Westchester and Mid-Hudson Valley area. Canning, who joined VHB as a project manager, will lead the White Plains office’s transportation division.

A 10-year veteran of VHB, Junghans’ areas of expertise include land development, permitting, site design layout, grading and utility design, as well as storm water management, residential development and Brownfields redevelopment. He has worked on retail, corporate, industrial and government projects throughout the New York metropolitan area.

Junghans obtained his Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from Northeastern University and his Master of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from Rutgers University. Junghans regularly provides engineering services to Stop & Shop, Garden Commercial Properties, Garden Homes, CVS, Digital Realty Trust, and JP Morgan Chase.

Canning’s experience focuses on traffic engineering and transportation planning on projects with a combined construction value exceeding $2 billion, officials said. The projects include City Center, the Ritz Carlton, Bank Street Commons and Avalon in White Plains, as well as New Roc City and Trump Plaza in New Rochelle.

In addition to managing projects, staffing and scheduling, Canning provides cost control and quality assurance services and has served as a liaison with public and private clients. He has extensive experience preparing traffic impact studies, accident/pedestrian analyses and parking utilization studies.

Mike Junghans

Houlihan-Parnes Reports New York Transactions

NEW YORK—Houlihan-Parnes Realtors, LLC recently announced that it has arranged for the successful sale of five apartment buildings in the northwest Bronx.

The facilities include two, six-story elevator buildings. Included in the sale are 2710 Valentine Avenue, which contains 36 apartments and 2695 Briggs Avenue, which contains 48 apartments.

Also included are three, five-story walk-up apartment buildings that have been sold. They include:
- 2737 Webb Avenue, on the corner of West 195th Street, which contains 25 apartments;
- 3202 Kossuth Avenue, which includes 32 apartments;
- 3215 Hull Avenue, which includes 54 apartments.

Both the Kossuth Avenue and Hull Avenue properties are north of the Mosholu Parkway.

Official said that the properties had been owned by a group of investors, including members of Houlihan-Parnes Realtors, LLC. The properties were sold in separate transactions to several investors. All of the sales closed during last July, officials added.

SPEAKERS said that the properties sold for an aggregated price of just under $19,000,000. Jim Coleman of Houlihan-Parnes Realtors, LLC, oversaw the sale of several of the buildings and was assisted by John Manous and Michael Cuniberti. Andrew Albstin and Doran Golubich of Goldberg Weprin Finkel Goldstein, LLP were the attorneys for the sellers in the transactions.

Houlihan-Parnes Realtors, LLC is a real estate investment company headquartered in White Plains. The firm’s companies and affiliates are engaged in the acquisition and ownership of all types of commercial real estate investment property in the continental U.S. Its various companies and affiliates specialize in commercial mortgage finance, investment sales, property management, leasing, mortgage servicing and consulting, company spokesmen said.

John Canning

Leboffe Joins Provident Bank as Business Manager/Assistant VP

MONTEBELLO—Provident Bank recently announced that Thomas Leboffe has joined the bank as Business Manager and Assistant Vice President.

Leboffe will have the responsibility of managing the overall sales and customer services operations of the bank’s Monroe branch.

Leboffe, who has 24 years of experience in the banking and financial services industry, was previously with Key Bank, where he was responsible for hiring, training and coaching the bank’s branch teams in Monticello and Marlboro.

Prior to joining Key Bank in 2008, Leboffe was Branch Manager for NBT Bank in Oneonta and Banking Center Manager for Gen Brustlin, Inc., an 850-person firm that provides integrated planning, transportation, land development and environmental services from 21 offices along the east coast.

Engineering News-Record ranks VHB 80th of the Top 50 U.S. Design Firms and among the Top 50 Transportation Firms in the nation, company officials said.

Thomas Leboffe

Provident Bank has $2 billion in assets - is the largest independent full-service community bank in the lower Hudson Valley, officials said.
Building & Realty Institute
2011 Golf Tournament and Dinner
Tuesday, October 18th, 2011
Anglebrook Golf Club
100 Route 202 Lincolndale, NY
(www.anglebrookgc.com)

$250 (individual golfer)
$800 Foursome (includes hole signage)

SCHEDULE:
10:30 am — Registration  11:00 am — Lunch
12:00 pm — Shotgun Start  5:45 pm — Networking, Dinner and Awards

This event will provide a great opportunity to enjoy a crisp, clear Autumn day and
network with friends and associates or meet new ones!

Registration is FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED and LIMITED TO 48 GOLFERS so sign up NOW!

Sponsorship opportunities:
• Lunch Sponsor: $250
• Beverage/_snack Sponsor: $200
• Tee Sponsor: $100
• Dinner Sponsor: $500
• Raffle prize Sponsors: $100 or merchandise
• Golf Carts: $300

Registration Form: Please complete and return ASAP as slots are limited!

Name_________________________Phone____________________
Email__________________________
Company________________________
Address___________________________
City_________________________State_______Zip___________

YES! I want to participate in the following ways:

• Sign me up as a ___________ Sponsor  $________
• I will play golf/attend dinner @ $250  $________
  MY HANDICAP: _________
• I have a foursome @ $800  $________

Name_________________________Handicap________
Name_________________________Handicap________
Name_________________________Handicap________
Name_________________________Handicap________

• ___ I / we can only attend the networking social
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