

09/23/2005

## Summertime Stinker

By Thomas Tracy

**Say goodbye to summertime fun. Facing the razor-sharp end of the city's budget axe, the 88th Precinct Community Council said that they may have to end a number of key summertime programs for children as well as seniors – programs they say were only limping along financially in the first place. "I'll be honest with you, the wind is out of my sails," said 88th Precinct Community Council President Delia Hunley-Adossa, who organizes the council's summer youth programs each year. Adossa told members of the 88th Precinct Community Council during their monthly meeting Tuesday that at the end of each summer season, she begins preparing for the next season. She quickly realized, however, that she didn't have any seed money to get the ball rolling.**



Halloween party for the children, Adossa said. They will have a party for seniors, since plans for that celebration are already in place. Photos by Paul Martinka

Usually, the council has a budget of about \$13,700.

Currently, she has a budget of \$5,000, \$2,500 of which is already reserved for monthly council operating costs.

The council usually spends about \$250 a month on their mailings, as well as providing food at meetings and other miscellaneous expenses, council members said.

“Things happen, but budget cuts hurt,” said Adossa. “The resources are simply not there for the 88th Precinct.

“Usually an executive director for a summer camp gets about \$60,000, but I get nothing,” she said. “I’m not asking to be paid; all I’m asking for is for the budget not to be cut.”

Adossa said that the seed money that is usually left after a summer season is over gives her enough to go out and barter for more donations, as well as assistance.

This past summer she was operating on a shoe-string budget. The summer programs could not have been possible without the help of police officers who donated their time as well as the Department of Education, who opened up their schools for some of the programs, which entertained kids and young adults from Monday through Thursday, she said.

Money is so tight that the council will not have a Halloween party for the children, Adossa said. They will have a party for seniors, since plans for that celebration are already in place.

Programs expected to be eliminated next year include an eight week summer youth program, events for the Youth Explorers, an after school program, numerous functions for senior citizens and the Helping and Encouraging Leadership Potential (H.E.L.P.) Program.

The 88th Precinct Community Council is not the only Fort Greene institution that is suffering from a lack of resources. The precinct itself is suffering too, she said.

Although on paper, the precinct is supposed to have 200 police officers assigned to it, the actual count is about 120, Adossa said, adding that she has had several meetings with City Councilmember Letitia James to increase the precinct’s manpower.

She has also had some meetings with James about increasing funds for the council.

Usually, the community council relies on James to provide them with \$8,000 a year.

When James’ predecessor, the late City Councilmember James Davis was in

office, the 88th Precinct Community Council received about \$10,000 annually.

This year, the council received \$5,000 from James. The 77th Precinct Community Council, which also operates in her district, also received less money this year than in previous years.

James, who was in attendance, said that money for the entire 35th Councilmanic district was cut.

James blamed City Council Speaker and failed mayoral candidate Gifford Miller, who she said was angry at her for siding with the mayor over the placing of sanitation garages in the area.

“The budget for the 35th Council district was cut by \$1 million dollars,” she said. “But I believe in a higher power. There will be a new City Council Speaker and all of the funds we lost will be restored by the beginning of next year.”

James said that until the money is restored, the council could rely on money from private foundations and “developers coming into the area.”

Adossa said that the council has already received private contributions from Con Edison, Pfizer and Forest City Ratner, which reportedly donated \$7500.

Although she said that Miller was “angry” at her, James did manage to secure money for a number of groups, according to published reports.

Groups showered with discretionary funds from the 35th Councilmanic District during the 2005/2006 budget included the United Way Workforce Development Program to fight unemployment for people of color, several after-school programs and community-based organizations (CBO) that fight asthma, infant mortality, HIV-AIDS and other health issues. Food pantry CBOs also received allocations along with several public housing complexes in her district that received money for new computers.

“The money for the 88th Precinct council will be restored,” James told audience members. “I know that for a fact.”

Anyone wishing to make a donation so the 88th Precinct Community Council could keep their summer camps afloat can call (718) 636-6569 and leave a message.