Today's News  Tuesday, November 24, 2009

While Bronx Pols Plot ...

Councilman-elect Fernando Cabrera says he's been active in the Bronx delegation's negotiations with The Related Companies over a living-wage mandate at the proposed Kingsbridge Armory mall. Cabrera, who will replace Maria Baez in January as the local council member, backs demands that the retail jobs pay $10 an hour with benefits. The minimum wage is $7.25. Baez, battling illness, is playing little role in the talks. Cabrera says the delegation will speak as "one Bronx" on the issue.

Related and the Bloomberg administration insist living-wage guarantees would kill the project.

... Mayor Reaps What He Sows

Bronx elected officials' unified opposition to Kingsbridge Armory project subsidies without living-wage guarantees has muted support for the project at the local community board. That's bad for the Bloomberg administration. But when community board members were removed for voting against the new Yankee Stadium, Mayor Bloomberg, who favored the stadium, did not object.

Guv's Bad Gamble

Gov. Paterson has twice agreed to unrealistic state budgets in March, reasoning that there's no reason to fight with the Legislature over revenue projections in the spring when budgets can always be adjusted later. But legislators hate to cut school budgets in mid-year, as Senate Majority Leader John Sampson notes in an open letter to Paterson. And they disdain cuts to health care spending at any time; Sampson reasons that Paterson's proposed $287 million Medicaid cut would be $758 million when the loss of federal matching funds is included.

Balancing the budget without cutting education and health care is difficult because they make up 56% of the state's $55 billion general fund, which has a $3.2 billion deficit.

Sanitation Commissioner Staying On

Contrary to CityHallNews.com's report yesterday that Department of Sanitation Commissioner John Doherty is a "prime candidate to be replaced," Mayor Bloomberg has already announced that Doherty will stay. The mayor said so publicly last Wednesday at a department ceremony. Doherty, in his second stint as commissioner, began at the agency as a street sweeper in 1960.

Boosted by surcharge, tax revenues don't plunge

State tax receipts fell 8.9% in July through September, compared with the same three months in 2008—better than most states and the nation as a whole, which experienced a 10.7% decline, according to a Rockefeller Institute study released yesterday.

Despite claims by tax-hike opponents that high earners are moving out to avoid a new three-year surcharge, New York's personal income tax revenues fell just 7.4%. Only 11 states, and no mid-Atlantic states, had a smaller decline. Quarterly PIT revenues dropped 8.9% in New Jersey and Pennsylvania and 13.9% in Connecticut. Nationally, they fell 11.4%.

At A Glance

BILLABLE HOUR: Sen. Al Franken, D-Minnesota, and Paul Begala will talk politics with Sen. Gillibrand at a fundraising lunch for New York's junior senator Monday from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at law firm Skadden Arps, 4 Times Square. Tickets are $250. Contact Val Delp at val@kirstengillibrand.com or (347) 455-0845.

SCHEDULE: Insider will not publish Thursday and Friday.