



Ridgewood Property Owners & Civic Association, Inc.

"After 94 years of community service we're still building a reputation, not resting on one!"

www.rpoca.net

Newsletter Volume 94 Issue 3 March 2026

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Charles Ober

The Board of Directors met for an In person ½ day retreat at the Ridgewood Presbyterian Church on Saturday, February 7th to plan the year and propose initiatives. Results of that meeting will be discussed further and incorporate ideas from our members expressed in the March town hall meeting in our next board meeting on March 12th.

Members: What would you like to see in our newsletter? Do you have an article or restaurant review you would like to contribute? Let us know. Can you contribute photos?
718-381-3366

GRRRC Greater Ridgewood Restoration Graffiti – Cleaning is free, but donations are accepted. Landlord-Tenant counseling is available.
 718-366-8721
<https://www.ridgewoodrestoration.org>

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Thursday, March 5th, 2026

Food & Refreshments: 6:45 pm;

Prompt Start: 7 pm

MEMBERS AND THEIR GUEST ONLY

P.O. Michael V. Gonzalez

NYPD 104th Precinct

Crime Prevention Division

HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CRIME, INCLUDING SCAMS?

MEMBERSHIP TOWN HALL

Moderator: Joseph Segreti, President

Ask Elected Officials and Representatives

Propose Organization Priorities

WRITE LETTERS AGAINST PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

Next Meeting April 2nd, 2026

Presentation TBA

Free Tote Bag to New Members

Ridgewood Presbyterian Church

59-14 70th Avenue

*Sanctuary – Second Floor Through Front Stairs;
 Access to Elevator through right side of church ground floor*

Masks Encouraged; Restrictions Are Lifted

RIDGEWOOD PROPERTY OWNERS & CIVIC ASSOCIATION SENDS FOUR BUSES TO ALBANY ON May 2nd, 1981, LED BY THEN VP PAUL KERZNER TO JOIN A PROTEST ORGANIZED BY SCAR – STATE COALITION AGAINST 100% RE-ASSESSMENT

The State Coalition Against 100% Re-Assessment (SCAR) was a group that fought for five years following the 1975 *Hellerstein* decision to oppose mandatory full-value, 100% reassessment of properties in New York State, eventually helping to enact S.7000-A. Paul Kerzner, VP of RPOCA organized 4 buses of homeowners to go to Albany on May 2, 1981, one of the largest contingents of any other civic group.

S.7000-A is the landmark New York State legislation from 1981 that established the current framework for New York City's property tax system, creating four property classes and implementing various assessment caps and rules that cause significant tax disparities. Also S.7000-A is the name given to the current dominant property tax law in effect in [New York State](#) affecting [New York City](#). Surrounding areas such as [Nassau County](#) have similar laws. The bill was enacted in 1981 in response to the *Hellerstein* decision (*Hellerstein v. Assessor of Islip*, 37 N.Y.2d 1 (1975)). The law is embodied in Article 18 of the New York State Real Property Law. **Class 1 properties are capped at 6% per year increases, 20% over 5 years.** In a rare occurrence, the [New York State Legislature](#) overrode the Governor's veto on December 4, 1981.

Continued on page 3

THE NEW YORK TIMES, MONDAY, MAY 4, 1981

Legislature to Revamp Property-Tax System

By E. J. DIONNE Jr.

Special to The New York Times

ALBANY, May 3 — With 12 days remaining before a self-imposed deadline, the State Legislature is preparing to overhaul New York's property tax system, which was declared illegal by the state's highest court six years ago.

For the state's homeowners, the issue is one of passionate concern, since the way the Legislature resolves the matter will affect the amount of their taxes for years to come. And until the matter is settled, there is no way for owners, and potential owners, of homes to know how much tax they are going to have to pay.

In addition, the state's local governments are worried about the potential loss of billions of dollars if the issue is not settled soon.

The Legislature, which is expected to complete action on a state budget this week, a little more than a month after it was due, has set a May 15 deadline for dealing with the property tax issue. But it is virtually certain to miss that date, too.

Legislative leaders hope the issue can be resolved before the end of the year.

System Declared Illegal

The state's highest court, the Court of Appeals, ruled in 1975 that localities must enforce a widely ignored two-century-old state law requiring all parcels of property to be assessed at full market value.

That ruling, which became known as the *Hellerstein* decision, declared the current system illegal. Under that system, homes are assessed at a substantially lower percentage of their property value than industrial property or apartment buildings; therefore, homeowners pay proportionately less in taxes.

For homeowners, the threat is of a substantial shifting of the tax burden to them from businesses — a shift that could mean 30 to 40 percent tax rises for homeowners in some areas. Some homeowners, however, could find their taxes cut.

"We all agree we do not want to see a shift in taxes from businesses to homeowners," said Assemblyman George J. Hochbrueckner, a Coram, L.I., Democrat who is the chairman of the Assembly Committee on Real Property Taxation.

But the Republicans and the Demo-

crats in the Legislature have proposed different ways of preventing this.

Republicans have been supporting a measure that would essentially legalize the assessment system now being used by repealing the law requiring full-value assessment and allowing assessors to follow "the same methods of assessment" they used before the *Hellerstein* decision.

"My bill just leaves everybody where they are," said Assemblyman John A. Esposito, who is co-sponsoring the legislation with a fellow Queens Republican, Senator Frank Padavan.

Assembly Democrats argue that the bill put forth by the two Republicans is "simplistic" and may not protect localities — and therefore homeowners — against tax suits brought by businesses. They have united behind a proposal by the Assembly Speaker, Stanley Fink, that calls for assessing property at full market value, but would then allow localities to set up a formal classification system.

An Advantage for Homeowners

Such a system, which would result in different taxation rates for various categories of property, would in effect permit homeowners to pay taxes that were proportionately lower than those for other types of property.

However, within a given class, some property might be overassessed and some underassessed. Since this could result in tax increases for some homeowners who are underassessed — even as it would lower taxes on the overassessed — the Democrats' plan would let localities freeze assessments for occupants whose taxes would otherwise go up.

The Assembly bill also incorporated Governor Carey's preferred solution, which would have all property assessed at full value but give localities the right to institute a "homestead exemption," freeing part of a home's value from taxes.

Mr. Hochbrueckner said he saw a possible compromise built around a simple bill giving communities the option to set up classifications of property and freezing the assessments of current occupants whose taxes would otherwise go up. This would involve jettisoning some secondary provisions from the proposal put forward by Mr. Fink, a Brooklyn Democrat, and supported by Mr. Hochbrueckner.

The Legislature has repeatedly postponed a resolution of the issue by passing bills — whose constitutionality, some legislators agree, is questionable — to prevent the courts from forcing communities to move quickly to full-value assessment. The current moratorium bill expires May 15, the presumed deadline for a broader solution to the problem.

Irwin Landes, who is a top aide to Mr. Fink and has been deeply involved with the property tax issue, said that meeting the May 15 deadline would be "kind of rugged," but added that he was "optimistic" the Legislature would deal with the issue before the end of the year.

Republican Aide Is Skeptical

Richard J. Roth, a spokesman for Warren M. Anderson, a Binghamton Republican who is the Senate majority leader, was less optimistic. "I'm not ruling out a resolution this year," he said, "but I don't see the seeds of one sprouting yet."

In a sense, there are two questions at issue. One involves whether formal classification of different types of property should be permitted. The other concerns unequal assessments within classes.

Recent studies in New York City, for example, have shown vastly different assessments on virtually identical houses. These assessments vary neighborhood by neighborhood, and within neighborhoods.

A major factor in the political equation is the widespread fear of the wrath of homeowners. Last week, about 350 chanting taxpayers rallied on the steps of the State Capitol in support of the Republicans' bill, sponsored by Assemblyman Esposito and Senator Padavan.

The two sponsors and their allies have organized a vocal group of civic and taxpayers' associations behind their plan and against Mr. Fink's alternative. Mr. Hochbrueckner drew boos last week when he tried to defend Mr. Fink's bill before supporters of the alternative plan.

The motivating force behind Mr. Esposito's backers seems to be the fear that any change in the current system could only result in tax increases. This fear is especially widespread in parts of Queens and Brooklyn, where the studies have shown property to be underassessed.



On the steps of the Capitol in Albany last week, homeowners demonstrated against a law basing property taxes on full-value assessments.

Supporters of the Esposito-Padavan proposal worry that Mr. Fink's bill, by calling these assessment inequities to account, could in some way result in higher taxes on homes that are underassessed.

"They don't care about the inequities," Mr. Esposito said of his supporters. He said his worry and theirs was that even though Mr. Fink's

it could ultimately raise them for subsequent owners of the same homes.

Mr. Landes, however, argues that by not writing a specific classification system into state law, the Republicans' bill, already passed by the State Senate, could still permit a court ruling against a classification system.

"It shuts the front door, but leaves the

On December 29, 2021, between the ending of one mayor and the beginning of a new mayor, New York City Advisory Commission on **Property Tax Reform** released its final report with recommendations to create a [new] property tax system. This proposal would create large changes in the current property tax structure of New York City. If adopted, it would create a system where "real" market value, instead of assessed value, would determine the property tax bill. Also, **it would eliminate tax increase limits**. And during the five-year proposed transition period, it would remove the ability to pass the lower assessed value to a buyer upon sale of the property. The new proposal would reset the property on sale to the current market value. Tools have been built to allow the homeowners to calculate the new property tax bill based on the new 2021 Proposal given the new homestead exemption and income levels. (Wikipedia)

In 2022, your president at the time, Charles Ober, as a VP of the Queens Civic Congress (QCC), joined the platform committee and composed an official position of the QCC that states that **any reform of property tax assessment not result in unfair increases of taxes on middle-class homeowners and maintain property tax caps**. As a co-moderator of the QCC mayoral candidate forum, every candidate for mayor was asked their position on property tax reform and the possibility of property tax increases on middle-class homeowners and all stated they did not want property tax reform to make homeownership more expensive.

On Jun 20, 2024, New York Assembly Bill A 10600, the "Five Borough Fair Property Tax Act," was introduced and proposes a significant overhaul of New York City's real property tax system. The bill aims to eliminate the existing class share system and introduce a new Class One-A designation for specific residential properties, coupled with a phased-in tax rate adjustment. To provide relief for homeowners, the bill establishes a homestead exemption for Class One properties, offering income-based tax reductions for households earning up to \$500,000. Furthermore, a "circuit breaker" tax abatement is introduced to cap property taxes exceeding 10% of household income, with a maximum abatement of \$10,000 for those earning up to \$100,000. The bill also impacts co-ops, condos, and rental properties by repealing Section 581 of the Real Property Tax Law, potentially leading to increased tax liabilities for these property types, and eliminating the partial tax abatement program for co-op and condo owners. Finally, the bill grants the NYC Commissioner of Finance the authority to determine fair market value for tax purposes, aiming for more consistent and equitable property assessments. In essence, the "Five Borough Fair Property Tax Act" seeks to create a more equitable system, though it may result in higher taxes for some property owners, particularly those in co-ops and condominiums, while offering relief to lower- and middle-income homeowners. (Wikipedia).

RPOCA opposes City of Yes downzoning and propositions on zoning inserted confusingly for vote during the General Election and is supporting lawsuits to overturn them.

On Tuesday, February 17th, 2026, Mayor Zohran Mamdani proposed a 9.75% property tax increase. The city council speaker Julie Menin, the Chair of the Finance Committee, Linda Lee, and our local councilmember Phil Wong are all opposed to the increase

Our organization has a lot of work to do this year to protect our homeowners.

RPOCA Christmas Concert December 4th, 2025



Left: After the concert everyone went downstairs for food, cake and cookies.

Mamdani co-signs comeback of nonprofit property COPA bill vetoed by Adams

By [Isabella Gallo](#) Posted on [February 18, 2026](#)

A hotly debated housing bill that would give nonprofits first dibs on property purchases — [vetoed](#) by former Mayor Eric Adams hours before he left office — is likely to get a new chance to pass under the Mamdani administration. Its sponsor is already anticipating lawsuits attempting to stop it.

The [Community Opportunity to Purchase Act](#) would keep housing in the hands of the community and curb landlords selling to big property groups, say advocates and bill sponsor Council Member Sandy Nurse. It does so, Nurse said, by giving qualified groups like community land trusts the right of first refusal on distressed residential buildings with four or more units. The nonprofits have 25 days to submit a statement of interest, then 80 days to make an official offer on the property before other buyers can take a shot at it. Since the city began considering COPA five years ago, it's faced sharp criticism from the real estate industry and Republican council members who say it would open the city up to legal challenges. Critics argue the bill violates private property rights, a landlord's right to freedom of contract and the Constitution's takings clause.

Nurse said she'd been told by the city's Law Department her legislation was legally defensible before the council [passed](#) it with a 31-10 vote in December.

However, the city's Law Department later reached out to Nurse to raise legal red flags — doing so days before she was set to bring COPA back to the floor in an attempt to override Adams' last-minute veto. Nurse called the move "extremely frustrating" and an example of the "chaotic nature and disorganization" of the Adams administration.

Now, Nurse said, she and her team are working with the Law Department and "seeking to propose some new language to address the concerns." She declined to share what those concerns were, as discussions were still ongoing.

Menin, who abstained from voting on COPA last year, didn't respond to questions from amNewYork Law regarding the nature of the red flags and whether she'd support the bill upon reintroduction. A spokesperson for the council told amNewYork Law Menin "is committed to working with her colleagues and stakeholders on new steps to advance the Council's affordable housing agenda," adding that the council pursued veto overrides of bills that passed with veto-proof majorities in December, which COPA didn't. Some real estate attorneys aren't convinced that just a few changes would prevent the bill from legal challenges.

Sherwin Belkin, a founding partner of real estate firm [Belkin, Burden & Goldman](#), said the entire concept of the bill is problematic. "I think the notion of the state deciding who a property owner can sell its property to raises significant legal and constitutional questions regarding private property and contract rights," he said. Critics of COPA have also raised concerns that the law would slow down property sales, thus potentially driving down prices and the pool of would-be buyers.

That could create an argument that COPA violates the Constitution's takings clause, which prevents government overreach into private property, because the procedural hurdles installed by the government could hurt property owners' return on investment. But even some real estate attorneys say that might be a stretch.

Belkin said the constitutional claim is significantly weaker than the property rights path.

"That argument, I think, is a little more difficult, because you have to demonstrate that there has been an economic injury caused by the bill," Belkin said. "It would be more speculative at this early time to be able to demonstrate that ...but the argument would be that, by so limiting the pool of prospective purchasers, the purchase price will be negatively impacted."

EDITED TO FIT IN SPACE

EDITOR: RPOCA OPPOSES THIS LEGISLATION.

RPOCA GEM TRADE CONTRACTORS

(NEWLY EDITED)

Mention RPOCA when you contract a trade contractor. Some contractors cover multiple categories. Subject to further editing.

Call us with recommendations.

Air Conditioning – Ductless

Weston Brothers 718-793-2000

Metropolitan Ave., Forest Hills

Asbestos Removal

- Hillview Station, Khaild Mehmood
718-669-2210
- Leinster Construction, Patrick Hogan
718-651-9100/917-681-8906(cell)

Automobile Repair

- Bruno's VW-Audi Repair, Inc., 718-386-2428
- Five "Zs" Auto Repair Inc. 718-386-2428
- O & M Automotive Repair 5950 Decatur St.
718-386-2482
- S&F Service 6451 Metropolitan Av 718-497-6791

Brownstone Stoop Repair, Brick Pointing, Cornice

(including filing with NYD Landmarks Commission

- Innovation Brownstone Authority, 718-666-7679
- Anthony Tranchina- 718-459-7121 (see Masonry)

Carpeting

Barry's Carpet, 516-285-0502

Custom Alterations & Sewing

- Eileen Tipple, 917-238-2774
- Antoinette Cleaner; Custom Dressmaker
718-456-1000

Electrician

- Tom Munetz 718-416-2686
- Sureline Electric, Eduardo 917-543-3589
- Valentino 347-737-8320

Gardening; Lawncare; Landscaping

Sal Mangano, 718-779-2548

General Contracting; Permitted Renovations

- Skillman USA Construction, Inc. 718-472-0400 –
917-362-1187 cell)
- Leinster Construction, Patrick Hogan
718-651-9100/917-681-8906(cell)

Handy Home Repairs: Maintenance, Painting, Masonry, Carpentry (lower scale projects)

- Handyman Husband, Frank Angerano
516-474-4491 handymanfrankmv@aol.com
- Hudson Maintenance Corp., Zee 917-336-0887
- Manny Lucas 347-488-2810
- Thomas Kowal, 917-617-2165
- Alex Sprenger, 917-854-0604
- Mike Siragusa 718-386-0104 94 347-538-2041

Lead Inspection; Lead Abatement; Mold

- Hillview Station Inc - Khaild Mehmood
380 E 18th Street, Brooklyn, NY
718-669-2210 (he presented at one of our meetings and offered preferred rate to our members)

Masonry, Concrete, Brick Pointing

- Anthony Tranchina- concrete, brickwork, roofing, carpentry 718-459-7121/718-459-5619 with historic district certification

Plumbing, Heating

Jim Simpson & Son – gas piping inspections

6216 60 St, Maspeth, NY 11378, USA

[718-821-6022](tel:718-821-6022) james@jssplumbing.com

L. Spina Plumbing & Heating

Has emergency service on weekends

[718-897-0922](tel:718-897-0922)

Roofing

- Dennis Baljak 718-417-1743 & 347-89-4264

Sewer Clog

- Larry & Roy's Sewer Service 347-239-7234
- Sunrise Sewer Service (\$75) 718-805-9152
- \$49.95 Sewer & Drain Co. 718-845-4995

Solar

- Empower Solar, Matt Brill -203-246-9955
- Trinity Solar 631-319-7232
- Brooklyn Solar 929-607-6051

Tile & Granite

- 2B Tile & Granite Inc. – Nickolay Bachvarov
646-361-2035

Board Of Directors

President Emeritus	Paul Kerzner
President	Joseph Segreti
Exec VP	Charles Ober
VP -Technology	Angela Dykshorn
Treasurer	Maryellen Borello
Recording Secretary	Peggy O'Kane
Financial Secretary	Helen Kuch
Corporate Secretary	Peter Comber
Sergeant-at-Arms	Luis Rodriquez
Board Chair	TBD
Mey Joy Choy	Rosemarie Limbacher
Sadije Kolar	Wojtek Oktawiec, R.A
Vienna Levitan	Jacek Olszewski
Frederick Hoefflerle	Luis Rodriguez

Ways you can help your organization protect and advocate for our neighborhood:

- Get your neighbor to join.
- Attend a meeting
- Apply to join the board of directors by mail or at a meeting.
- Support your organization's initiatives.
- Get free tote bag: attend meeting or join



Ridgewood Property Owners & Civic Association, Inc.

Contacts: Paul Kerzner- 718-381-3366 ridgewoodownersny@gmail.com; www.rpoca.net

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Please give this application to your qualifying neighbor.

Property owners in Greater Ridgewood area are eligible for membership subject to board approval. For information on membership or to report quality of life issues in the neighborhood call Paul Kerzner at 718-381-3366 or email ridgewoodownersny@gmail.com

Applications for membership on the board of directors to fill vacancies is encouraged.

RENEW BY MAIL OR ONLINE AT WWW.RPOCA.NET – CLICK ON BECOME MEMBER TAB

Name of owner/s – mailing address (one membership/ one vote per property):

Address of property: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Check box if interested in board membership; submit resume and highlight how you can contribute to our work.

Annual membership fee: \$25 by check or money order payable to "RPOCA"

Mail to: RPOCA, PO Box 860077, Ridgewood, NY 11386

Membership benefits: Ridgewood Times mailed weekly; Monthly Newsletter; Fighting against legislation that infringes ownership rights; Advocating for neighborhood quality of life; Advocacy for ethical relationships between landlords and tenants and penalties against predatory behavior by landlords; Advocacy for capital and expense funding for neighborhood programs and infrastructure, Public Educational Meetings, Landmarks advocacy. Assistance to owners. Restaurant discounts.

Sgt Michael Gonzalez, NYPD Crime Prevention Division Presentation
Town Hall Meeting: ASK ELECTED OFFICIALS & RPOCA OFFICERS

Mayor Mamdani proposed 9.75% property tax increase. Letter writing campaign at our March 5th, 2026 general membership meeting.

On May 2nd, 1981, RPOCA sent 4 busloads of homeowners to Albany joining homeowners from all over the state to fight 100% reassessment of our homes in proposed legislation leading to a new law that passed in November 1981, the governor's veto overridden in December. That law, now under attack, protects us to this day.

Story pages 2,3. FIGHT PROPOSALS TO RAISE OUR TAXES!

RIDGEWOOD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH GROUND FLOOR AUDITORIUM

THURSDAY, March 5th, 2026 - 7 PM

Food Served Starting at 6:45PM; Prompt start at 7 PM

Ridgewood Property Owners & Civic Association Newsletter

RPOCA
PO Box 860077
Ridgewood NY 11386
Address Service Requested

PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
FLUSHING, NY
PERMIT #1648

Addressee