

CAN HE REPLACE ME?

BY ABBY LUBY
DAILY NEWS WRITER

Yonkers mayor wants deputy to succeed

WHILE MAYOR Bloomberg has been raising political storms over term limits and non-partisan elections, the mayor of neighboring Yonkers is creating some political agita of his own over the mayoral line of succession.

Mayor Phil Amicone wants to change the City Charter to allow his deputy mayor to succeed him if he resigns.

But critics call it a political ploy to keep a Republican at the helm of the state's fourth-largest city.

Amicone has called Deputy Mayor Bill Regan the most qualified to assume the post. "He's been the mayor's partner as long as we have run the city. The successor should always be the deputy mayor rather than choose someone from my administration," he said.

Amicone insists he has no plans to step down before his term ends in December 2011.

But Democrats who hold the majority in the City Council are balking at the idea, claiming it's all a plot to keep a Republican stronghold at City Hall.

"This infers that Mayor Amicone is planning to resign before his term is up and that he is grooming Regan as his successor," charged Democratic Councilwoman Joan Gronowski.

The city's Charter Revision Commission, which has to approve the proposal before it can go on the ballot in the November general election, is supporting the change because it would eliminate what could be a long deci-

sion-making process by the Council.

"We wanted a solution that wouldn't go on ad infinitum," said Commission Chairman Julius Walls Jr. "It would fill the post quickly because it's an automatic process."

Mayoral successors in most New York State cities are usually city council presidents, an elected position, rather than deputy mayor, a political appointment.

In a July 28 letter to the commission, Yonkers City Council President Chuck Lesnick, a Democrat, attacked Amicone for wanting too much power.

"This new proposal would, in effect, alter, negate and void the right of the City Council to participate in this most important deci-

sion," Lesnick wrote. "The first on the list is Deputy Mayor, a position not even subject to the confirmation hearings of the commissioners of the departments."

The charter also calls for a special election for mayor 90 days after the acting mayor takes office. City Council Republican Minority Leader John Murtagh, who may toss his hat in the mayoral ring, said the special election rule isn't fair because there might not be time to hold a primary, knocking out possible contenders.

The public can comment on the charter revision at a public hearing at 7 p.m. Monday in the Council chambers at Yonkers City Hall. Comments can also be emailed to Juliusw@dogooddowell.com or to CityHall@YonkersNY.gov, with the subject line: Charter Revision, before 9 p.m. Monday.

AT A GLANCE

WESTCHESTER — Authorities say a motorist deliberately drove into a flock of Canada geese, killing four of them.

The Westchester SPCA said witnesses reported the driver sped up and smashed into six of the birds Wednesday evening in Cortlandt Manor, then kept going, in a green or blue Honda.

Canada geese have become pests in Westchester County and elsewhere and are sometimes legally culled to curb the population. But they are protected by law.

The SPCA said intentionally killing one is punishable by up to a year in jail.

CONCOURSE — Celebrate a tradition of culture and diversity in the Bronx with a free performance of poems and songs on Sunday.

La Casita will mark its 10th anniversary with Lincoln Out of Doors, an afternoon-long schedule of music and oral traditions of Afro-Caribbean, Latino and Native American origins. The program will be held from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Teatro Pregones, 571-575 Walton Ave. For more information, visit www.lincolncenter.org/lcint hebx or call (212) 875-5655.

MT. VERNON — Mark the 230th anniversary of Benedict Arnold's betrayal of the Continental Army tomorrow.

Two Westchester County historians will dramatize Arnold's treason at 1 p.m. at St. Paul's Church National Historic Site, 897 South Columbus Ave.

Admission and parking are free. There's also a 2:30 p.m. tour of the church, Bell Tower and one of the nation's oldest burial yards.

CORRECTION — A story in the Aug. 10 edition incorrectly identified the firm that prepared a report for the city on the rehabilitation of Fordham Plaza.

The firm was WXY Architecture + Urban Design of New York City.

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Mayor Bloomberg speaks and children listen at the opening of the East Harlem Asthma Center of Excellence. Photo by Kristen Artz



Asthma center opens where kids really, really need it

BY FRANK LOMBARDI
DAILY NEWS CITY HALL BUREAU

A \$3.5-MILLION walk-in asthma care center made its official debut yesterday in East Harlem, which has the highest asthma hospitalization rate in the city for children.

The free services available to all at the center will focus on providing information and counseling to help prevent serious asthma attacks and hospitalizations, plus referrals to hospitals and other treatment facilities, if needed.

Located at 161-169 E. 110th St., between Third and Lexington Aves., the 9,000-square-foot facility celebrated its opening with a ribbon-cutting by Mayor Bloomberg and Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer,

whose office was the driving force behind the creation of the center.

Stringer said the new facility — the first of its kind in the city — is the result of two years of efforts to give the East Harlem Asthma Center of Excellence a permanent home. He thanked Bloomberg for putting "his money where his passion and vision is," when it comes to the health of New Yorkers.

Stringer's office contributed \$700,000 toward the project and the rest came from the general city treasury.

"Anyone who struggles with asthma, or has a child who does, knows how just how scary and debilitating asthma attacks can be," the mayor noted. "They can cause young people to miss out on important days of school or other fun activities with friends. And far too often

these attacks drive New Yorkers to the emergency room."

In East Harlem, the hospitalization rate for young asthma sufferers is 11 of every 1,000 children, ages 14 and younger.

Asthma sufferers can visit the center to receive asthma assessments for themselves or their children, asthma education, such as on the importance of taking medications and removing possible dust, mold and other conditions known to trigger asthma attacks and referrals to social services and medical care.

Dr. Betty Perez-Rivera, the director of the center, stressed that the help will be "free of charge," and urged asthma-suffering residents of East Harlem to "make this your second home."

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