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Helen Rosenthal

Council Member, 6th District



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Dear Neighbors,

The new City Council started in earnest this month, with hearings about legislation, city services, and budget hearings. Here are some of the highlights:

Contracts Hearing on Zero Interest Loans for Non Profits

As Chair of the Contracts Committee, I held my first Hearing to hear from non-profits in a tough situation: in contract with the City to provide essential services, but stuck without payment, which is months behind schedule. We heard from organizations that have had to take out commercial loans and pay banks nearly \$100,000 in interest while awaiting their payments from the City -- and money spent on interest means money not spent on services. There is another option for non-profits awaiting City payment, however, and it's a resource that few of them take advantage of: zero interest loans from the Fund for the City of New York. This "revolving loan fund" was started in the Dinkins Administration and doubled recently to provide a steady stream of funding to the City Council's Early Learn Initiative. You can learn more about the hearing [on my website](#).

Cultural Affairs and Libraries Committees Hearing about Queens Public Library System (Mis)management

As a member of the Cultural Affairs Committee, I participated in the Oversight Hearing exploring questionable spending by the Director, [Tom Galante](#). During the Hearing, he was [less than forthcoming](#) about the details of his contract and sources of outside income. [Juan Gonzalez](#) exposed Galante's sweetheart deals, and now the FBI is investigating. Go Juan!

Legislation to penalize taxi drivers who "fail to yield" and kill or seriously injure a pedestrian

I've asked the Council legislative staff to research the City's ability to change our Administrative Code regulating taxi drivers. I believe that a taxi driver who kills or seriously injures a pedestrian (or biker) should have his taxi license immediately suspended, and if a police investigation finds him guilty of "failure to yield," he should lose his taxi license permanently. I will keep you posted as this proposed legislation moves forward.

HelenRosenthal.com up and running!

My new website is chock full of information:

- If your organization is applying for city funding, click on "[Funding](#)"
- Click on "[Community](#)" to get an up-to-date calendar of events in our neighborhood, including arts, education, kids, and housing
- Click on "[Resources for Residents](#)" to get the virtual version of our office resource wall, including alternative side of the street parking calendar, housing opportunities, and information for small businesses, public school parents, and seniors

Cleaning up after the Snow

After all the snowfall this winter, getting back to a normal routine has been a large task. Snow impeded garbage pickup and street cleaning, and it has exacerbated rodent problems. Streets on the UWS are dirty - there is no doubt about that. I have spoken to the Mayor's office about the problem and hope to see improvement soon.

Donating for Good

Blake Ansari's mother reached out to our office about her son's book drive for a Bronx family homeless shelter. We were delighted to help. [Blake's effort paid off](#)-- the pile of books in the office window grew to nearly 200 before Blake came by to pick them up, and he gathered a total of about 600 books! Taking a cue from Blake, our office staff is doing a [healthy food drive](#) to bring to the [West Side Campaign Against Hunger Food Pantry](#). If you like, you can drop off donations until Monday, April 7th at noon.

Hope to see you soon,

Helen

P.S. [The West Side Spirit included a piece I wrote](#) about my first days in office. I hope you enjoy reading it.



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