

Vallone Jr. May Run For BP In 2009

When term limits ends the City Council career of Councilmember Peter Vallone Jr. in 2009, he may run for Queens Borough President.

That news emerged as the councilmember's dad, Peter Vallone Sr., former Council Speaker, announced that he and state Attorney General Andrew Cuomo would co-host an Octoberfest beer and hot dog party on Tuesday, October 2 at the last outdoor beer garden in the Big Apple Bohemian Hall, 29-19 24th Ave., Astoria.

The affair, Vallone Sr., said will serve as a toast to Vallone Jr., chairman of the Public Safety Committee, as he plans to run for higher office, more than likely to fill the upcoming vacancy for borough president of Queens.

Incumbent Helen Marshall will also be term limited out of office after eight years in 2009.

If Vallone Jr. does run for the borough president post, he may be opposing Councilmember Leroy Comrie (D-Jamaica), who is also interested in succeeding Marshall.

As for the October 2 beer and hot dog bash for Vallone Jr., there's a reminder on the announcement that personal (not corporate) contributions to his campaign can range from \$250 to a maximum of \$4,950 (deducting what may already have been contributed), payable to "Vallone for New York", 22-45 31st St., 2nd Floor, Astoria, N.Y. 11105.

Vallone, Comrie and Gennaro are all serving in their first elective office. The city council they entered in 2002 was the first in New York City history with members serving under a term limits law.

Vallone emerged as a tough law-and-order chairman of the Public Safety Committee, supporting measures to make

the New York Police Department ready to deal with anti-terror threats. He also sponsored several pieces of legislation curtailing graffiti activities, among others.

Gennaro, who serves as chair of the Environmental Protection Committee, fought to block the recent sharp increase in city water rates. He has also been in the front line of dealing with several community issues.

COMPTROLLER FIGHT FOCUS ON IN QUEENS, TOO: Two

other Queens councilmembers, David Weprin (D-Hollis) and Melinda Katz (D-Forest Hills) have already declared their interest in running for the city comptroller post, guaranteeing even more election action in Queens in 2009.

Weprin and Katz are fairly well ahead of some other hopefuls in the campaign cash department, having already amassed seven-figure accounts, according to several reports.

With so many present councilmembers facing term-limit ends to their careers in the council in 2009, it's likely several other politicians from Queens will be casting around for other offices to seek, and that could lead to slates being formed.

BLASTS AT IRAN PRESIDENT: The brief visit of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to New York City for the United Nations General Assembly meeting and a speech at Columbia University on Monday caused plenty of excitement, not only for the New York Police Department but also several law-makers.

Among them was Congressman Anthony Weiner (D-Queens/Brooklyn), who is a likely candidate for mayor in 2009.

Weiner and state Senator Jeff Klein of The Bronx called for New York State and

New York City pension funds to divest all their investments in Iran. They released a list of 22 international companies that had investments in Iran's energy sector, thus helping Iran's drive for nuclear weapons.

Vallone, speaking on the occasion of Ahmadinejad's request to visit Ground Zero, commended city Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly for giving the request short shrift.

"Ray Kelly should be commended for his decision," Vallone said. "The police have no obligation to help someone return to the scene of the crime so he can send a picture back home to say, look at what we helped to do."

Weprin and Katz called on Columbia University President Lee Bollinger to rescind his invitation to the Iranian president to speak at the Upper Manhattan institution.

Katz said, "Freedom of speech does not mandate that one of our nation's leading universities should provide a forum for a terrorist sympathizer and Holocaust denier. This invitation is out of the bounds of common sense."

CROWLEY, ACKERMAN HAIL TERROR INSURANCE PASSAGE:

The House of Representatives extended federally backed terrorism risk insurance last week, and Congressman Joseph Crowley (D-Queens/The Bronx) hailed the action as a major step toward helping to ensure the economic security of New York City.

The legislation, which must now pass the United States Senate and get President George W. Bush's approval, would require insurance carriers to make coverage available for a nuclear, biological, chemical or radiological attack for the next 15 years, Crowley said. It also serves as a federal backstop for private insurance by providing compensation for a portion of insured losses resulting from catastrophes certified by the government as acts of terrorism.

Crowley, an original sponsor of the bill,



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noted that by continuing this program, "We will guarantee that the World Trade Center site memorializes those whose lives were lost on 9/11 and becomes, once again, the epicenter of New York's financial services center."

Congressman Gary Ackerman, (D-Bayside), another sponsor of the bill, also hailed its passage. "Failure to extend the act would be an absolute disaster because without terrorism insurance, financial institutions will not lend money and developers at Ground Zero and other major sites will simply not be able to rebuild," Ackerman said.

The Congressional Budget Office's estimate of the bill's 10-year cost at \$10.4 billion threatened passage of the bill, Ackerman said. But House Democrats assured in writing, Ackerman said, that before final passage of the measure, a solution that fixed the "pay-as-you-go" cost of the bill would be part of the legislation.



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