



## **DNA Goes to New York State Attorney General with Evidence of Impropriety and Possible Corruption on Dock Street**

**Emails Revealing “Chain of Collusion” Between School Construction Authority, Developer Two Trees and Senior Advisors at Mayor’s Office Now Before Both Department of Investigations and Attorney General Andrew Cuomo**

**New York, NY, June 9, 2009** – As members of the City Council continue to defy public sentiment about the controversial 18-story Brooklyn Bridge side condo known as Dock Street, its opponents are taking unsettling evidence about the perceived inappropriate and unethical communications between real estate developer Two Trees Management, the School Construction Authority (SCA) and two senior advisors at the Mayor’s Office, to New York State’s highest legal authority, State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo.

This announcement comes as the DUMBO Neighborhood Alliance and its supporters receive word that an earlier request for an inquiry to the New York City Department of Investigations (DOI) is now being vetted. Link to DNA’s DOI inquiry letter can be found at [www.dumbo-dna.org](http://www.dumbo-dna.org)

“Land Use Committee Chairwoman Melinda R. Katz and Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn are pressuring the City Council to rush through this project even in the face of hard, irrefutable evidence of impropriety, not only on the part of the developer and the School Construction Authority but, perhaps, the Mayor’s office,” states DNA president Gus Sheha. “Rather than protect the public interest by calling for a halt to Dock Street pending an investigation, they are rushing forward to curry political favors and perhaps further contributions from one of our city’s worst pay-to-play developers.

“As cynical as it may seem, perhaps we as citizens need to look beyond the five boroughs in seeking a fair and judicious examination of the evidence which, without a doubt, shows a violation of the public trust by officials who have been sworn to uphold it,” adds Sheha. “Attorney General Cuomo has repeatedly demonstrated his dedication to casting light into the dark and mysterious corners where fairness and democracy are hijacked and impropriety reigns. We trust he and his office will swiftly examine this matter, before The Brooklyn Bridge, one of our greatest national monuments, is sacrificed at the altar of quick buck condo commerce.

“When the full facts emerge, those who are rushing to fast-track this illegitimately vetted plan, those who are rushing to vote rather than investigate, will have their reputation and political careers painted with the outcome” adds Sheha. “While the City Council members may not have been direct players in impropriety, they are casting votes with the full knowledge that serious and potentially questionable evidence is mounting and in need of investigation. This will not escape the long-memory of the voting public on upcoming election days.”

On Monday, June 1, on the heels of stunning testimony given at a New York City Council Public Hearing regarding the questionable dealings between The School Construction Authority (SCA) and Brooklyn developer Two Trees Management and two revealing stories on campaign contributions and lobbying by the developer to key city planning decision-makers in *The New York Times* and *The New York Post*, The DUMBO Neighborhood Alliance and its supporters asked the Department of Investigations to open an inquiry into possible impropriety, corruption and potential criminality around the controversial 18-story Brooklyn Bridge side-condo known as Dock Street. A copy of the four-page letter from DNA to the Department of Investigations can be found at: [www.dumbo-dna.org](http://www.dumbo-dna.org)

Speculation has mounted regarding the integrity of a proposed 43,000 square-foot middle school which is to be part of the Two Trees' 18-story residential development, due to emails and testimony that was introduced at a New York City Council Public Hearing on May 21, obtained by Andrew Stengel via the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL). Many believe the school is being used as a "red herring" to manipulate the City Council into supporting Dock Street, which has given birth to a firestorm of criticism from local and national historic and preservation groups as well as thousands of Brooklynites.

What is emerging is that the potential impropriety extends its way into the highest level of the New York City Mayor's Office. According to the chain of emails obtained via FOIL, both **Gregorio Mayers, Senior Policy Advisor to Mayor Bloomberg**, and **Nnenna Lynch, Senior Policy to Deputy Mayor Robert Lieber**, had direct email communication with the lobbyist, attorney and Two Trees head Jed Walentas regarding the project. **Emails can be obtained directly from DNA by calling 917-742-6072.**

### **Has \$400,000 in Campaign Contributions and Lobbying By Developer to City Planning Decision-Makers "Bought" Their Votes?**

It has also recently surfaced via two New York dailies that developer Two Trees has spent approximately \$400,000 lobbying the elected official in City Council and other important government agencies. The two City Council members yielding the most power over the development, Land Use Committee Chairwoman Melinda R. Katz and Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn, have received at least \$74,250 in campaign donations from the developer according to *The New York Times* article, perhaps coloring their objectivity on the proposed structure. According to *The New York Times*, "Katz, who is running for city comptroller, has received major financial support from the real estate industry, whose interests she oversees on the Land Use Committee... And Mr. Walentas and his father, David (the principals of Two Trees), were on the finance committee for a Katz fund-raiser in June." The May 28 *New York Times* column followed up on details first revealed in an April 28 item at the *New York Post* blog which set the total Two Trees lobbying effort at \$409,323 since January 2007. Full text: [http://www.nypost.com/seven/04282009/news/regionalnews/brooklyn/lobbying\\_helps\\_dumbo\\_condo\\_project\\_166627.htm](http://www.nypost.com/seven/04282009/news/regionalnews/brooklyn/lobbying_helps_dumbo_condo_project_166627.htm)

"Perhaps, as is being suggested for judges, Councilpersons Katz and Quinn should recuse themselves from the Dock Street process, based on the generous campaign support they have received from its developer," adds Sheha. "One of our greatest city and national landmarks is at stake and it wouldn't be out of the question to ask what role the nearly half a million dollars spent by Two Trees has played in garnering the aggressive advocacy of the two central city planning decision-makers in New York."

More than **25,000 individual citizens** have voiced their objection via petitions, letters, postcards, emails and phone calls to governing bodies including the Department of City Planning, Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council.

To save the Brooklyn Bridge--whether or not you live in New York City--contact New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn: (212) 788-7210 / [cquinn@council.nyc.gov](mailto:cquinn@council.nyc.gov) and Mayor Bloomberg by calling 311 or faxing (212) 312-0700. If you live in New York City, please contact your local member of the Council. Find your representative here: <http://council.nyc.gov/html/members/members.shtml>.

For more information on the efforts being made to save The Brooklyn Bridge, please visit: [www.dumbo-dna.org](http://www.dumbo-dna.org) or [www.savethebrooklynbridge.org](http://www.savethebrooklynbridge.org)

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