



## It's not just Amazon causing retail woes, local landlords say

BY SYDNEY PEREIRA

Stretches of vacant storefronts have become a jarring everyday reality in Downtown Manhattan, with Bleecker St. the poster child of this growing retail crisis.

But some landlords and developers with properties in Community Board 2's district

have some explanations for why the retail blight persists despite apparent plummeting commercial rent — and they aren't just blaming it on our having entered the Amazon era.

"It's easy to hang our hats on e-commerce and say that e-commerce is going to destroy

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## Say it saint so... St. John's project blindsides C.B. 2

BY LINCOLN ANDERSON

The massive project at the St. John's Terminal has taken a radically different turn as a new developer is now set to build a 100-percent commercial building on the site's southern portion, south of Houston St.

Hundreds of units of afford-

able housing — as well as market-rate housing — have been foregone with the scrapping of the original scheme.

In addition, it looks doubtful that a 15,000-square-foot recreation center the community had pushed for as part of the project will now be built.

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PHOTO BY TEQUILA MINSKY

Suzanne Vega of "Luka" fame headlined the first annual Village Trip festival's free concert in Washington Square Park on Saturday evening. See Page 25.

## 'A great day!' Ribbon cut on Morton school

BY LINCOLN ANDERSON

Middle-schoolers were laughing, screaming and happily cavorting with each other. Humongous bubbles were blowing around everywhere and bursting on top of people. A girl was stiltwalking through the crowd while balancing a stack

of schoolbooks on her head.

Meanwhile, trying to be heard above the joyful din, politicians, community school activists and city education officials sung the praises of the new 75 Morton middle school and the determined, inspiring, years-long community effort that incredibly brought it all to fruition.

Among them was Richard Carranza, the city's schools chancellor, who was presented with a special plaque reading, "Just Believe."

After all, that's what local schools activists always kept doing, even when the project stalled and hopes of obtaining

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Woman mugged on Minetta by pliers perp..... p. 4  
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David Amram played a jazzy number before Vega hit the stage, and urged the crowd to always retain that spark of Greenwich Village creativity within themselves.



PHOTOS BY TEQUILA MINSKY

Suzanne Vega headlined The Village Trip concert in Washington Square Park this past Saturday evening.

## Whoa, what a Trip first fest was!

BY LINCOLN ANDERSON

The inaugural Village Trip festival brought a mix of classic folk music, literature, storytelling and photography back to town for four days last week, from Thursday to Sunday.

A highlight was the festival's free concert in Washington Square Park Saturday evening, featuring headliner Suzanne Vega. The singer-songwriter played a variety of new and vintage tunes, including her 1980s smash hits, "Tom's Restaurant" and "Luka."

Vega said she hoped the festival — and the concert in the park — would be back for a second install-

ment next year.

The festival also included a talk on the writings of Jack Kerouac and Edna St. Vincent Millay at the Jefferson Market Library, which included the world premiere of David Amram's work "Greenwich Village Portraits." Amram, 87, who was buddies with Kerouac and the Village Beats, was the festival's artist-in-residence.

Sunday night saw another concert at The Bitter End, featuring Happy Traum, Tom Chapin, the Chapin Sisters, David Massengill and others.

The event was the brainchild of Liz Thompson, a British woman with a love affair with the Village and its culture and history. Thompson, who

formerly worked in publishing, frequently visited the Village over the years for work, and always stayed at the Washington Square Hotel, which was like the headquarters for the festival.

"To see the dream become reality was truly thrilling," Thompson reflected of The Village Trip's first edition. "And to have so many people remark that such a festival was long overdue made it all feel worthwhile."

"Thank you to all our wonderful musicians, actors and speakers; to our sponsors and partners; and to all those who supported The Village Trip in this its first year and helped make it happen."

"Here's to The Village Trip 2019."

