



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

RETAIL continued on p. 7

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.

ST. JOHN'S continued on p. 6



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

SCHOOL continued on p. 8



Chamber prez is running..... p. 12

Woman mugged on Minetta by pliers perp.....p. 4

S.B.J.S.A. backers spar over 'legal memo' p. 11

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