



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, April 18, 2007

CONTACT: Brian Connolly
212-935-3960

ELIZABETH YEAMPIERRE, FOUR OTHERS, TO RECEIVE COMMUNITY PLANNER AWARDS

Elizabeth Yeampierre, executive director of the United Puerto Rican Organization of Sunset Park, passionate advocate for the city's environmental justice movement and community-planning activist, will be honored with the second annual Yolanda Garcia Community Planner Award at a reception this evening at the Urban Center.

A certificate for lifetime achievement will be presented to community board veteran **Wilma Maynard** of Bedford Stuyvesant. Certificates of honorable mention will be given to **Damaris Reyes** of the Lower East Side, **Harry Bubbins** of Mott Haven, and **Laura Hoffman** of Greenpoint. The awards will be presented by Yolanda Gonzalez, daughter of the late Yolanda Garcia, and current executive director of *Nos Quedamos*.

The program begins at 6:30 p.m. at 457 Madison Avenue at East 51st Street. It is free and open to the public and news media. Subway: 6 to 51st Street; E, V to Fifth/53rd; B, D, F to Rockefeller Center. Reservations are encouraged. RSVP to rsvp@mas.org or 212-935-2075.

“Across the city, community residents are becoming activists — taking the lead in addressing the planning issues confronting their neighborhoods and proving that they are the experts,” said Eve Baron, director of the MAS Planning Center. “The annual Yolanda Garcia Community Planner award, sponsored by the Planning Center with generous funding from the Citigroup Foundation, was created to shine a light on the enduring work of community planners, applauding their successes and encouraging them to continue their work.”

Yolanda Garcia was a community activist in the South Bronx until her death in 2005. Under her leadership, the residents of the Melrose neighborhood created an alternative to an urban renewal plan and transformed their community. The organization she created, *Nos Quedamos/We Stay*, brings the community's vision to life through

planning, design, construction and programming. Last year, the first award was presented posthumously to her and *Nos Quedamos*.

Harry Bubbins is a member of Bronx Community Board 1 and director of Friends of Brook Park, a nonprofit group focusing on waterfront development and the revitalization of Brook Park in Mott Haven. He advocates for inclusionary zoning in Port Morris, voices his opposition to the Randalls Island water park plan and supports proactive planning for the Bronx Greenway.

Laura Hoffman is a founding member of Barge Park Pals, the current co-chair of the Greenpoint Waterfront Association for Parks and Planning, a member of the Newtown Creek Monitoring Committee and former chair of Brooklyn Community Board 1's Parks and Open Space Subcommittee. She also serves as unofficial town crier for Greenpoint and Williamsburg, collecting and reporting news about the neighborhood via the internet.

Damaris Reyes, a former staffer for City Council Member Margarita Lopez, created Public Housing Residents of the Lower East Side to ensure that local voices were heard by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. In her role as executive director of the Good Old Lower East Side, she works on behalf of local residents, but uses a holistic approach to neighborhood improvement by addressing zoning, job creation, education, affordable housing, small business retention and general community awareness.

Wilma Maynard, a member of Brooklyn Community Board 3, helped develop that district's 197-a plan, becoming an expert in neighborhood planning issues and city public review process. She advocated for land use and zoning training for board members so that it could evaluate and make changes to the city's plan for the Fulton Park Urban Renewal Area. She is a long-standing member of her block association on Herkimer Street.

Elizabeth Yeampierre is executive director of the oldest Latino community-based organization in Brooklyn — the United Puerto Rican Organization of Sunset Park (UPROSE). Since 1996, Elizabeth has helped shift UPROSE's mission to one of advocacy and activism, playing an instrumental role in the city's environmental justice movement. Home to highways, waste treatment plants, power plants and a number of other environmental hazards, the neighborhood's conditions inspired Elizabeth to advocate for the fair treatment of and respect for the people of Red Hook and Sunset Park. She helped defeat an application for 520 mega-watt power plant in her community, helped get the state's brownfield legislation passed, and developed a inclusive community-planning model for the creation of the forthcoming UPROSE greenway. She also helped build the Organization of Waterfront Neighborhoods, whose community-based plan to make the removal of city garbage more sustainable recently became the core of the mayor's Solid Waste Plan.

After an open call for nominations, a jury selected the award recipients. Jury members this year included Karen Philips of the City Planning Commission, Tom Angotti, director of the Hunter College Center for Community Planning and Development, Ron Shiffman, professor at the Pratt Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment,

Micaela Birmingham, director of planning at New Yorkers for Parks, Yolanda Gonzales, executive director of *Nos Quedamos*, and Marc Jahr, market director of Citibank Community Development.

The Municipal Art Society of New York is a private, non-profit membership organization whose mission is to promote a more livable city. Since 1893, the MAS has worked to enrich the culture, neighborhoods and physical design of New York City. It advocates for excellence in urban design and planning, contemporary architecture, historic preservation and public art.

The Planning Center, founded as a project of the MAS in 1989, helps community organizations and neighborhood advocates confront the planning, land use and economic development issues facing their neighborhoods. Through public forums, workshops, publications and one-to-one assistance, the Planning Center tackles neighborhood issues at the grassroots and citywide levels.

#