



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

Rachel Levy

LIZ KRUEGER April 27, 2018

| ISSUE: **2018 WOMEN OF DISTINCTION**



Women of
DISTINCTION
HONORING WOMEN IN NEW YORK

Rachel Levy

Rachel Levy is the Executive Director of FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, a 35-year-old non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the architectural legacy, livability, and sense of place of the Upper East Side.

Ms. Levy has been at the helm of FRIENDS' holistic approach to advocacy for thoughtful neighborhood growth and to slow the increasing pressures of overdevelopment on the Upper East Side. In 2015, Ms. Levy oversaw the public release of a comprehensive planning and zoning study focused on the neighborhood's vulnerability to out-of-scale development

spurred on by the City's affordable housing initiatives and the development driver that is the Second Avenue Subway.

Currently, Ms. Levy's work is focused on identifying policy changes to stem the tide of super tall towers marching up the avenues of the Upper East Side, while also leading the organization's public challenge of addressing several developments that exploit loopholes in the City's zoning rules. Working closely with elected officials, colleague groups and neighbors, Ms. Levy is leading the charge Citywide and continues to push the administration to take action on this issue.

In addition to zoning reform efforts, Ms. Levy leads research initiatives to raise awareness of the history of the far Upper East Side, east of Third Avenue. The immigrant history of Yorkville has been a particular focus and this spring the organization will publish a book, "Shaped by Immigrants: A History of Yorkville." The project brings together original research on the neighborhood, a diverse collection of historic photographs, and contemporary photographs commissioned for this project. The book will support ongoing advocacy to increase landmark designation of this culturally rich neighborhood.

Ms. Levy holds masters degrees in Historic Preservation and Urban Planning from Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. Her graduate thesis examined the ways that contextual zoning has been used as a preservation planning strategy in New York City, and contributed to the collective understanding of available tools for preservation advocacy. Ms. Levy is also an advisor to the Historic Districts Council, a board member of Preservation Alumni, and a proud resident of Second Avenue