



# Assemblyman **CHARLES BARRON** *Reports to the People*

Summer 2019



60<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT • EAST NEW YORK • BROWNSVILLE • CANARSIE

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## *Sankofa Park African Burial Ground Dedicated in East New York by Amadi Ajamu*



Left to right: Rev. David Brawley, Peggy Washington, Andre T. Mitchell, Rev. Dr. Herbert Daughtry, Assembly Member Charles Barron, Council Member Inez Barron, Min. Henry Muhammad, Chief Baba Niel Clarke, Rev. Brenda Ross

NYC Council Member Inez Barron and NYS Assemblyman Charles Barron joined together to honor the legacy of our African ancestors who endured centuries of enslavement in the formation of East New York, Brooklyn. Our ancestors were buried on the land previously known as “Schenck Park,” named after a former slave holder. The land was renamed Sankofa Park African Burial Ground in a tremendous Cultural Ceremony and reinternment of our Ancestors bones, which took place on Thursday, July 18, 2019. “Sankofa” is a Swahili word meaning “looking back to go forward.”

Council Member Inez Barron explained, “The preliminary excavation for the renovation of Schenck Park, located here on Barbey Street between Livonia and New Lots Avenues, was put on hold. Historical maps had previously revealed that the park, library and surrounding area was once a site where enslaved Africans were buried. Before starting the park renovations, archaeologists were employed to search for any possible desecrated remains. And indeed, remains including fragments of our Ancestors were found!”

*Continued on next page*





Assemblyman Charles Barron stated, “This is a historic day! East New York has gone from having a slave holder’s name for this park, “Schenck Park,” to a liberated named “Sankofa Park.” Our youth can now feel proud to know that it was their Ancestors that built the roads and homes and cultivated the land of East New York, the community that they live in now. Every time they see the park named Sankofa and the street signs named African Burial Ground, we can tell them about our Ancestors who built the foundation of East New York and were never paid. We now have a strong case for reparations. We must tell our youth how the land of the indigenous people—the Lenapi, Canarsie and Rockaway or so-called Indians—was stolen. And how we were stolen from Africa to build it.”

The multi-million-dollar renovation of the Sankofa Park Development Project by Assembly Member Charles Barron and Council Member Inez Barron will start this year and is expected to be completed by 2020.



(Library of Congress: Manuscript Division)



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# *A Driving Force: Census 2020*

On June 21st, a seven-car motorcade took the streets to raise consciousness of the significance of completing the 2020 Census. Staffers from the offices of City Council Member Inez Barron, Assembly Member Charles Barron and Man Up! Inc. all took to the streets within the NYCHA developments surrounding the Prince Joshua Avitto Community Center and passed out pertinent information. All persons within the household must be counted, no matter his/her immigration status. The census can be completed via mail, at a local kiosk, online and/or in person. This impactful motorcade is the first of many outreaches. Most importantly, check BLACK! We MUST be counted to ensure proper and rightfully deserved funding of hospitals, schools (i.e. head start & day cares), job training centers, senior centers, public transportation, housing and much more. For more information on the census, you can visit: [www.clsj.org/censusjustice](http://www.clsj.org/censusjustice).



## *Decriminalization does NOT mean Legalization!*



On June 20th, both the state Assembly and State Senate passed the decriminalization of marijuana bill. On July 17th, Assembly Member Charles Barron, held a forum about the bill at the Prince Joshua Avitto Community Center. Assemblyman Barron outlined what is stated the bill:

- *Possession of less than one ounce is a violation with a \$50 fine*
- *Possession between one to two ounces is a violation punishable by up to a \$200 fine*
- *More than two ounces is a crime*
- *Smoking in public is a violation*

As of July 29th, Governor Cuomo signed the bill into law. The law will take full effect on August 30th, 2019.

# On The Horizon

With the recognition and work underway at Sankofa Park, the landmarked square of the African Burial Ground, East New York will have a cultural hub that celebrates and narrates the voices of our people that built the foundation of East New York. The East New York cultural hub will also have a brand new \$31 million library. A library overhaul provides an opportunity to reshape and potentially expand this branch for the patrons who rely on it

now and future generations. With generous funding from Councilmember Inez Barron, the Brooklyn Public Library is seeking to highlight the historic significance of the library which is located on a once unacknowledged African Burial Ground containing the remains of enslaved people. Through the branch's overhaul, the library will create a new space that honors buried ancestors and celebrates African-American heritage.

Charles Barron • 669 Vermont Street, Brooklyn, NY 11207



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## Census 2020

Census 2020 is a crisis in the making! In America, race plays a huge role in the protection of minority groups. Racial categories can trigger voting rights protection, anti-discrimination laws, funding for social services and much more.

However, race, ethnicity and nationality are not the same thing. For example, one can have national roots in countries like Nigeria, Jamaica, Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico; be part of a specific ethnic community; and also be considered part of the "Black" race.

For the first time, on the 2020 census, persons of African descent, regardless of nationality or ethnicity, will be able to indicate their ethnicity/nationality and their race! So when you fill out the census and list your nationalities, be sure to also check Black for the race category. For more info: <https://2020census.gov/en/how-to-help.html>.