



*COUNCIL MEMBER MARGARET S. CHIN
MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT GALE BREWER*

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

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***COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN LEADS RALLY TO
SAVE LOW-COST FOOD MARKET IN LITTLE
ITALY***

*Denounces landlord greed that led to end of negotiations to extend or renew
\$90,000 a month lease*

LITTLE ITALY – Council Member Margaret S. Chin joined members of the Little Italy, SoHo, NoHo and surrounding community to rally against the planned closure of Met Foodmarket at 251 Mulberry St. on Saturday.

The store, which has been open for more than 25 years, officially announced its imminent closure just this week after assuring the community and Council Member Chin’s office that it would remain open. This week, Council Member joined other local elected officials to call on the foodmarket owner and landlord to resume lease negotiations. Despite having a current tenant paying \$90,000 a month, a representative for the landlord, Abington Properties, said it wants to transform the Met Foodmarket into “a more upscale operation.”



“Despite near universal community support and a clear need for more supermarkets like this one, Abington Properties is abandoning their negotiations with the Met Supermarket with hopes that this space might become ‘a more upscale operation,’” said **Council Member Chin**. “As elected representatives, as residents, and as people who work in and depend on this community, we demand that Abington Properties resume lease negotiations with the Met Supermarket. The pattern of greed that chooses upscale stores over low-cost supermarkets, that chooses profits over people, must end today.”

“Properties get their value from the neighborhoods they are a part of, which is why it’s so mind-boggling when landlords sabotage neighborhoods and themselves by forcing out affordable supermarkets and creating food deserts,” said Manhattan Borough President **Gale A. Brewer**. “There’s much we need to do to boost local, affordable supermarket businesses – but landlords

also need to put short-term greed on the shelf, act responsibly, and think about whether renters and homebuyers want to live in neighborhoods without affordable access to fresh food.”

“A grocery store is a hub of a community and part of the character of a neighborhood. It provides affordable, fresh food as well as the social interactions that happen among neighbors while shopping. We're losing affordable grocery stores and local-serving retail at a shocking pace, and that is irrevocably changing our neighborhoods and pushing out the people who made them great places to live. People here don't need and can't afford yet another upscale store -- we need this Met Foodmarket right here,” said Manhattan Community Board 2 Chair **Terri Cude**.

With the closure of Met Foodmarket, shoppers on fixed and low-incomes will have to travel even farther for affordable, fresh produce. The loss of Met Foodmarket is the latest in a string of low-cost food market closures in the past few years – including the Associated Supermarket on W. 14th Street and a Pathmark demolished to make way for an as-of-right real estate development in Two Bridges.

The status of 30 workers at the market remains unclear. The food market owner, Paul Fernandez, told Council Member Chin’s office that they would all be “transferred” to other markets, including one Fernandez owns in Chelsea.

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