



Trump’s retreat:
President Trump wants to turn his Florida golf club into a presidential retreat modeled after Camp David. **A8**

STATE SUPREME COURT, ST. GEORGE

Mortgage case draws more claims

GRYMES HILL

Fifth-grader wrote to Gov. Hochul — and got a very special school visit



Gov. Kathy Hochul stands with students during her visit to Notre Dame Academy on Grymes Hill on Oct. 2. Courtesy, Mike Groll

Governor’s surprise visit

Notre Dame Academy in Grymes Hill got an unexpected visit from Albany on Oct. 2, when Gov. Kathy Hochul stopped by for a student leadership ceremony — a visit sparked by a fifth-grader’s handwritten invitation months earlier.

VIP appearance kept under wraps

The visit came together in just 24 hours, with school officials quietly preparing for the VIP appearance while most of the campus remained unaware of who was coming — until the governor walked through the doors. For the story, see Page A11.

After businesswoman Lauren Taliento pleads not guilty to charges of pocketing mortgage payments from a homeowner, 3 former clients allege they, too, lost their homes after turning to her company for help.

Staten Island Advance

As prosecutors on Monday accused Staten Island businesswoman Lauren Taliento of pocketing mortgage payments from a homeowner seeking relief, three women who say they also were scammed by the defendant watched intently from the gallery.

“I went to her for help to do a loan modification. I was a single mom with twin girls — and she helped me lose my house,” said Fabiana Polizzi, 47, following the arraignment hearing Monday.

Polizzi was joined by two other former clients of the defendant.

“A friend of ours recommended her, saying that she could lower our payments — and it came out to where we lost our home,” said Donna Manitta, 54.

“None of us were in default before we started with her, and instead of getting help lowering our payments we lost our homes,” said Dina Pantazis, 49.

Their comments came moments after Taliento, president of JT Homesavers, was arraigned in state Supreme Court in St. George on charges she scammed a different individual — Miguel Mora, a 60-year-old retired New York City subway conductor — who is the only victim referenced in the indictment. Authorities allege Mora lost \$14,000 in his dealings with the defendant.

Prosecutors said Taliento presented herself as an intermediary between the client and a mortgage lender with promises of helping him avoid a possible foreclosure.

“The financial records we obtained show that the (mortgage) payments were not being forwarded to the mortgage lender and she was basically spending the payments herself,” Assistant District Attorney Mark D’Amato said during the hearing.

Taliento was escorted into the courtroom in handcuffs, then released by the court on the condition she promise to return and turn over a passport if she has one. The top count in the case, third-degree grand larceny, is not a bail eligible offense. A 46-count indictment also includes charges of criminal possession of stolen property and theft.

Taliento, who faces the possibility of prison time if convicted, pleaded not guilty to the charges. She is due back in court on Nov. 10.

When asked by a WABC-TV reporter about the accusations, Taliento pointed to banks, investors and predatory lending practices, ABC News reported.

Outside the courtroom, Polizzi, Manitta and Pantazis said they also lost their homes after seeking mortgage assistance from Taliento and her company, JT Homesavers.

The women said they embarked on a mission about a year ago to bring their stories to local and federal law enforcement agencies.

“We were like the three musketeers,” said Polizzi. “We went to every politician, the media, U.S. attorneys,” she said, “stomping through the snow in Brooklyn to the U.S. District Attorney’s office.”

Polizzi said she and Pantazis were friends prior to the ordeal, and through **SEE MORTGAGE CLAIMS, A5**

NEW YORK CITY

Mamdani marks Oct. 7 anniversary amid Gaza debate

Mayor calls the Hamas attacks “profoundly painful” for New Yorkers while accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza.

Josephine Stratman TNS

Mayor Zohran Mamdani marked the anniversary of the Oct. 7 terror attacks in Israel as he attempts to navigates a complicated political dynamic, calling the day “profoundly painful” for many New Yorkers while also criticizing Israel for carrying out a “genocide” in Gaza.

Three years ago, Hamas launched a massacre in Israel, killing around 1,200 and taking 251 hostages. The attacks prompted Israel’s military offensive in Gaza to eradicate Hamas, in which some 70,000 Palestinians have been killed.

In a statement issued Wednesday, Mamdani said the Hamas attacks were “horrific war crimes” that are “profoundly painful” for many New Yorkers while also calling out destruction in Gaza and the actions of both the Israeli and U.S. gov-



Mayor Zohran Mamdani attends the Israelis for Peace “Stop the Genocide, Save Gaza, Save the Hostages” remembrance vigil in Union Square. TNS

ernments. The war has displaced nearly 2 million people and destroyed homes, infrastructure and other public services.

“We grieve alongside our many friends and neighbors who still carry that unthinkable loss,” he said in a statement, concerning the Hamas massacre on Oct. 7.

The mayor then pivoted to the war that

followed: “The suffering did not begin nor end that day. It instead continued through the Israeli government’s devastating, ongoing genocide in Gaza,” the statement said. The mayor added that the federal government must end its “complicity” in the conflict as it continues to send military aid.

Mamdani, who’s built much of his political identity around support of Palestinian rights, has tried to navigate the complicated dynamics around the conflict in his first year in office. On Wednesday evening, he was expected to attend a vigil in honor of the victims of the Oct. 7 attacks, and then meet with Palestinian New Yorkers.

Along the way, he has faced intense criticism from prominent Jewish groups, who have said his rhetoric about Israel fuels growing antisemitism. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has leveled sharp attacks against Mamdani, particularly over the mayor’s assertion that the government’s actions in Gaza constitute a genocide.

Earlier in the week, Ofir Akunis, Israel’s consul general in New York, invited the mayor to join him in watching footage **SEE MAYOR, A4**

