

EDITORIAL

Amazon delivers lessons for NY

State and local officials must do better

Consider the welcome mat still out, and the coffee pot still on. If Amazon wants to find its way back to New York, there are now signs of a way forward for the tech giant, a path smoothed by Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, and decorated by softer rhetoric from opponents and stronger support from those who previously stood in the background.

That includes a change of tone from Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and a statement from the six Long Island State Senate Democrats who said they'd do "whatever we can to help" make the deal happen. State Sen. Leroy Comrie, the Senate's new representative on the Public Authorities Control Board, which has a say in such projects, told the Newsday Editorial Board that he supports Amazon's return, too.

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, however, hasn't been quite as strong or definitive in her rhetoric. She supports "job creation" and has a "willingness to work with Amazon." Unfortunately, that's not enough from the Westchester Democrat, who initially gave sole veto power to someone openly hostile to the project. If Stewart-Cousins added a direct, definitive statement of support for the Long Island City project, would it make a difference? Perhaps. Why not try?

Nonetheless, the new and stronger voices are welcome, even if they came late. And the clear, unified backing of dozens of business and community leaders, led by the Partnership for New York City, in an open letter to Amazon last week, shouldn't be ignored.

It helps that the state offers something that's tough to get elsewhere: a talented and deep pool of workers and a cluster of tech firms that allows knowledge-based industries to flourish.



AP / BEBETO MATTHEWS

A view of Long Island City, near the proposed site for Amazon's HQ2.

Even if Amazon does return to Long Island City, New York needs to take the lessons learned and develop a new attitude and way of doing business. That includes more attention to valid community concerns, stronger leadership from elected officials, and better communication to illustrate how important economic and job growth still is. If needed, the state and city should take the lead so affordable housing and infrastructure improvements get done.

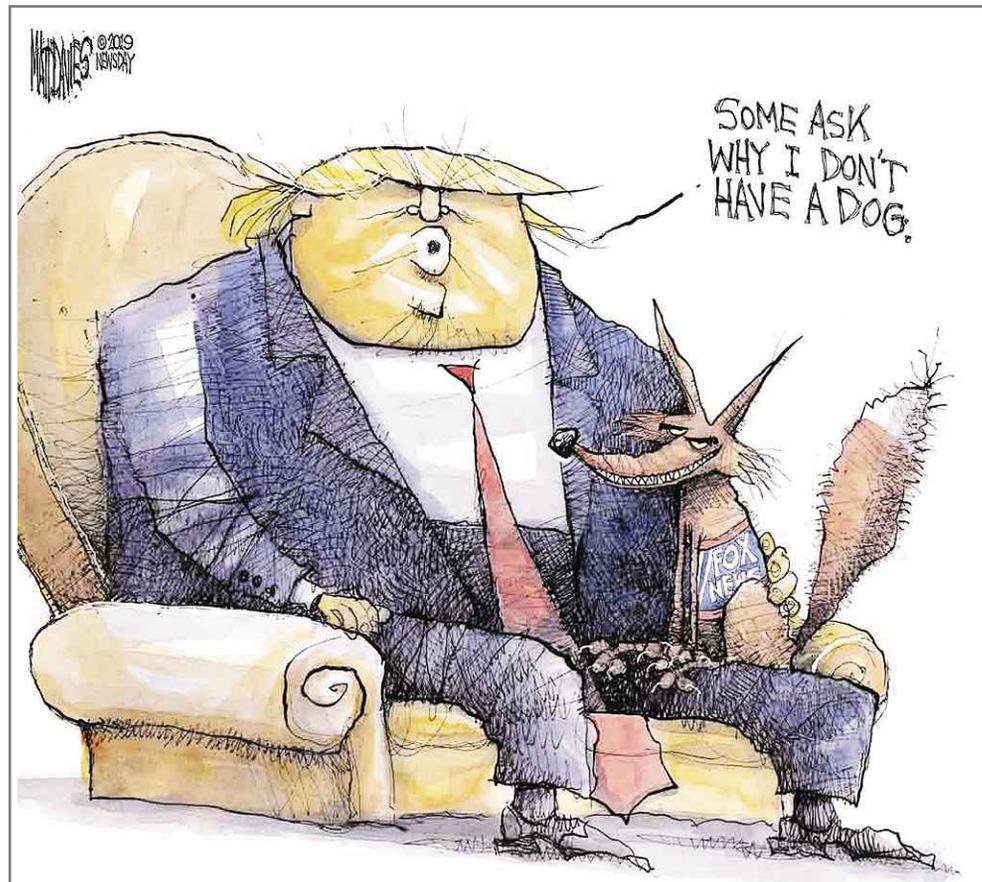
This is also a moment to reevaluate the way New York attracts companies, development and jobs, to assess what works best and to find iron-clad ways to claw back money if companies don't live up to their promises. New York must remain competitive, and until or unless a national movement occurs that changes the economic and business gameplay among states and cities, New York has to keep playing, and winning.

But state, city and local officials must do a better job explaining incentive programs, how they work, and why they're in place. After the deal collapsed, Ocasio-Cortez suggested the state was willing to "give away" \$3 billion that could have been invested in her district, a comment that showed a lack of understanding of how the incentives, mostly a credit against the far larger \$27 billion pot of tax revenue Amazon would've contributed, work. Throughout the Amazon fight, supporters didn't always explain themselves, or the deal itself, well enough. That has to change if we're going to have any hope of being a more welcoming state, and sealing the deal, the next time around.

In the meantime, the door is open — for Amazon, and for others.

— *The editorial board*

MATT DAVIES



NEWSDAY/MATT DAVIES

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LETTERS

Dealing with church sex-abuse scandal

I am stunned by the Expressway column by a loyal Catholic who writes that she was devastated by the church's failure to discipline a priest she knew to be an abuser ["Amid the scandals, I'm still Catholic," March 3].

I have one question: When you saw that the priest went unpunished and continued to have contact with this boy, why didn't you call the police? Why didn't you stand up and act until this child was protected? Unfortunately, having been raised Catholic, I know the answer.

Catholics are, or at least were, raised to obey and defer to church leadership. That is exactly why the cases of sexual abuse were allowed to go on for years and, also, exactly what is wrong with organized religion. When the institution becomes more im-

portant than the mission, corruption is inevitable and it bleeds from the entity into the individual.

I have seen much good done by people working under true spiritual guidance. Belief in God can be comforting when not much else is, and Jesus taught a truly inspirational philosophy. However, the church is often less about Jesus and more about power, politics and control than is admitted.

When a child suffers for years because loyalty to an organization exceeds the moral imperative to act in defense of the defenseless, there is something seriously wrong with the culture of the group. I hope that Pope Francis is able to create a healthier, more open environment for those who choose to stay.

Cynthia Lovecchio,
Glen Cove

Reading the Expressway, I was shocked that writer Pat McDonough never offered her regret in not intervening to notify the police after learning that her report to the diocese regarding a young man having been molested by a priest in her parish did not result in the priest's removal. In fact, she states that he became bolder.

She is an educator and a psychologist. She should have known better.

You can't erase all the damage done by molesting clergy by enumerating all the good things that are done by churches.

Makes me wonder what being a good Catholic means.

Susan Masone,
Huntington

■ Pat McDonough's Expressway is a moving tribute to