

## 'Birdhouse Repo' Reminds us that Even the Animals Can't Afford to Live in NYC Anymore

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To live in New York City is so expensive, even the birds can't afford it. This truth is the creative mojo behind a new temporary art project coming to **First Park** this month (<http://www.boweryboogie.com/tag/first-park/>).

The incoming sculpture, aptly entitled "Birdhouse Repo," is the work of city native Aaron Schraeter. Simple yet brilliant, his goal was political commentary on the immediate surroundings, where gentrification is crowding everyone out.

This "foreclosed" birdhouse will post up adjacent to the former "rat alley," now an open air gallery, rechristened First Street Green (<http://www.boweryboogie.com/tag/first-street-green/>). Public unveiling is planned for the end of the month, and will be on display until sometime in June. As for assembly, the 36-inch-high model will be a miniature replica house atop an eleven-foot pole. Same materials, smaller scale. For instance, tar paper and shingles will be used for the roof, while the rest is pressure-treated plywood. The front door to the Birdhouse, so to speak, will be boarded up, yet Schraeter noted that "wouldn't be too upset" at the sight of bird squatters.



#### More from the proposal:

Aaron Schraeter draws inspiration for his work from the constantly changing neighborhoods of New York City, especially the effects of gentrification and who gets to stay. The city has become increasingly expensive, with new luxury condos replacing older commercial spaces and skyrocketing rents due to mass migrations to newly gentrified neighborhoods coupled with the flailing job market and extended recession. With that, this sculpture—a birdhouse under foreclosure—is a simple statement: New York is becoming so expensive that even the animals can't afford to live here. As many human domiciles have, this one will remain “vacant,” save for some possible winged squatters. The openings will be boarded up, and signs will be posted on the sides of the structure reading “house under foreclosure.”

Schraeter presented these plans before the Parks subcommittee of Community Board 3 last week. And while the advisory body wasn't required to make a motion, the panel seemed to enjoy the overall message. He further quipped that “there's no guarantee in my adult life I'll be able to continue living here.”

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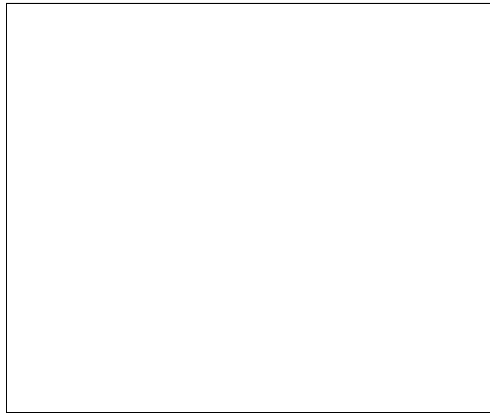
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