

**Community Board 1
February 18, 2014**

Mr. Vinicio Donato, Chairperson of Community Board 1, commenced at 7:00 p.m. by introducing public hearing item from the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), Mr. Joseph Risi, Chair of the Consumer Affairs Committee, read the item #7552014-ASWC – Premises 38-40 29 St. (Dutch Kills Centraal). An application to establish an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 7 tables and 28 seats. Mr. Dominic Stiller, owner of the establishment, came up on behalf of the application. Mr. Risi asked if they were already open and if so when. Mr. Stiller stated that they opened in September 2013 about 5 months ago. Mr. Risi asked if they serve food and what they serve at their establishment. Mr. Stiller stated that they serve bar food from burgers to a variety of healthy food options. Mr. Risi asked what the hours of operation were. Mr. Stiller stated that they are open Monday to Thursday from 11am and until 1am on Friday; Saturday and Sunday from 5pm to 1am. Mr. Donato asked if there was anyone on the Board who had a question for the applicant. Ms. Frances McDonald asked if the establishment owned the building. Mr. Stiller replied ‘No’. Mr. Risi added that the Board received letters of support and 1 against. Mr. Stiller stated that he live a block away from the establishment and does not want to change the neighbor for the bad and sees this as a good change. Mr. Donato asked if there was anyone in the audience who wanted to speak for or against the application. Seeing no one. Item closed.

The next item #1382850-DCA – Premises 38-01 35 Ave. (Applebee’s). An application to renew the license to operate an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 6 tables and 17 seats. Mr. John Walsh, General Manager, came up on behalf of the application. He stated that the café has had a sidewalk café for about 6 to 7 years since they have been open and they have had no violations since the last renewal. Mr. Donato asked if there was anyone on the Board who had a question for the applicant. Ms. McDonald stated that she did not see a diagram of the outdoor sidewalk café. Mr. Walsh stated that there will be 6 tables on 35th Avenue going down to Panera Bread. Mr. Donato asked if there was anyone in the audience who wanted to speak for or against the application. There was no one. Item closed.

The next item #1311304-DCA – Premises 41-15 31 Ave. (Diwine). An application to renew the license to operate an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 6 tables and 16 seats. Mr. Efeta Dzidzovic, owner spoke on behalf of the application. He noted that there have been no complaint from the neighborhood. Mr. Risi asked how long they have had an outdoor café license. Mr. Dzidzovic 6 years. Mr. Risi asked if they had any violations. Mr. Dzidzovic replied “No”. Mr. Risi read a letter the Board received from Ben Liebert who is in favor of the application. Mr. Donato asked if there was anyone on the Board who had a question for the applicant. There was no one. Mr. Donato asked if there was anyone in the audience who wanted to speak for or against the application. Seeing no one. Item closed.

The next item an application to obtain a Cabaret License at 36-08 33 St. (Melrose Ballroom). Mr. Basil Messados, President, came up on behalf of the application. Mr. Risi asked if he could give some background on the establishment. Mr. Messados stated that they have a liquor license and have been open for about a month and a half. They have had nine shows in their events space. They have live music shows, birthday parties, weddings, etc. Mr. Risi asked why they were applying for a cabaret license. Mr. Messados stated that would like to allow dancing during an event. Mr. Risi asked what the occupancy maximum for the building is. Mr. Messados stated that the 3 floors can occupy 1,400 people. Mr. Risi asked how they would handle security and parking for the establishment. Mr. Messados stated that they have leased indoor parking spaces for 200 cars and they have contacted a security agency that will provide 1 guard for every 60 people. Mr. Risi asked if they will be on the premises overseeing these events. Mr. Messados replied Yes”. Mr. Risi stated that they have already met with the owner and they have signed a stipulation that stated that there will be no dancing until the cabaret license is approved, there will be no topless or adult entertainment, the manager will be on site at all times and they will moderate order inside and on the sidewalk. Mr. Donato asked if there was anyone on the Board who had a question for the applicant. Ms. Evie Hantzopoulos asked what kind of music will be played. Mr. Messados stated that they have had live Greek shows, electronic music, middle eastern music, and some with DJ. Their hours are from 10pm to 4am. Mr. Piazza asked what the percentage is parties versus live music. Mr. Messados stated that they have had 4 live events a month. So it would be about 50/50. Mr. George Stamatiades asked if they will be using promoters for their establishment and whose liquor license will they be using. Mr. Messados stated that all the events will be using the house liquor license, the promoter is not responsible. Ms. Frances McDonald stated that on their Facebook page they state they have dancing on premise. Mr. Risi stated that the owners have signed a stipulation with the Board. Mr. Khuzami asked that they check the promoter’s history before they use their premises. Mr. Steve Wygoda, Architect, stated that the owner is a business owner in the community. Mr. Donato asked if there was anyone in the audience who wanted to speak for or against the application. Ms. Amy Hau resident, stated that she is concerned about the quality of life and ask that the owners do their due diligence. No further discussion. Item closed.

Mr. Donato introduced Guest Speaker –John Napolitano, Director of Community Development -- HANAC. Mr. Napolitano and Mr. Massad, Central Parking System came up on behalf of the parking at HANAC. Mr. Napolitano stated that in February 2011 HANAC was given approval by Department of Buildings (DOB) and proceeded to advertise the facility ability to offer short and long term parking. On March 1, 2014, they offered a new valet service in addition to their current services. They use a ticketing system that is similar to that of parking garages throughout New York City. Prior to opening the garage the rates for parking were discussed. Mr. Massad stated that the garage has been in operation for a few months. There is a gate to the entrance and exit of the parking areas and uses the ticketing system previous mentioned. They have seen an increase in the usage of the parking facility over the recent months. The rates were based on the current area parking as well as the monthly rate. Mr. Massad stated that he currently runs 20 to 30 parking facilities. They tried to keep the short rate low and even provide and early bird special for \$7.00 for 12 hours.

The facility provides 24 hour security. The current 1 hour rate is being reduced to \$2.00, starting on Friday, February 21, 2014. Mr. Donato asked if there was anyone on the Board who had a question. Mr. George Stamatiades asked what the rate was for monthly parking. Mr. Massad stated that he monthly rate is \$225. Ms. Evie Hantzopoulos asked if the rates will increase with the valet service. Mr. Massad replied "No"; there are 21-25 short term parking spots. Mr. Rudolpho Sarchese stated that when the Board approved the project there were 120 parking spaces at the time and there was an agreement to build and provide 50 parking spaces for the same rate as the City metered parking. He then gave various examples of why the parking is needed and at a lower rate. Mr. Massad stated that the rate from 1 minute to 60 minutes will be \$2.00. Mr. Antonio Melonie referred to what Mr. Sarchese previously mentioned and the Board was under the impression that it was going to be a municipal parking lot and feels a bit slighted. Ms McDonald asked if there will be additional parking for short and long term with the valet parking. Mr. Massad stated that the valet parking could go up to 45 spaces. Mr. Prentzas asked if they could explain how they got to this stage and how the parking garage went from Municipal to private. Mr. Napolitano stated that when the City conveyed the property to HANAC the City expected them to run the parking facility. During the ULURP process it was discussed that there was an understanding that the rates were going to be comparable with the city rates. But taking into consideration the insurance, security and other factors they would not be able to provide parking for the same rates and run the parking facility. Mr. Donato stated that the Board will form a committee to meet with HANAC to discuss the parking rates, traffic, and safety within the next 2 weeks in order to modify the rates. They will also reach out to the City to see what they gave HANAC. Mr. Napolitano agreed and is willing to meet with the Board at a future date. There was no further discussion. Mr. Donato thanked them for coming.

VOTING:

Mr. Risi reiterated public hearing item from the DCA #7552014-ASWC – Premises 38-40 29th Street (Dutch Kills Central). An application to establish an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 7 tables and 28 seats. The Committee met and recommended approval of the application, seconded by Mr. Prentzas. Mr. Donato asked if there were any questions. No further discussion. Mr. Donato called for a vote. Motion called and carried unanimously.

The next item #1382850-DCA – Premises 38-01 35 Avenue. (Applebee's). An application to renew the license to operate an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 6 tables and 17 seats. The Committee met and recommended approval of the application, seconded by Mr. Prentzas. Mr. Donato asked if there were any questions. No further discussion. Mr. Donato called for a vote. Motion called and carried unanimously.

The next item #1311304-DCA – Premises 41-15 31 Avenue. (Diwine). An application to renew the license to operate an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 6 tables and 16 seats. The Committee met and recommended approval of the application, seconded by Mr. Babor. Mr. Donato asked if there were any questions. No further discussion. Mr. Donato called for a vote. Motion called and carried unanimously.

The next item an application to obtain a Cabaret License at 36-08 33 Street (Melrose Ballroom). The Committee met and recommended approval of the application, subject to the execution of stipulation that was executed with the Board and is part of the application, seconded by Mr. Prentzas. Mr. Donato asked if there were any questions. No further discussion. Mr. Donato called for a vote. Motion called and carried with 5 Against.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Ms. Mary Witty, resident, stated that the cats in the neighborhood have disappeared. In December, there were 7 cats, which she had taken to the vet care and had spayed and over the last 2 weeks they have disappeared. She noticed while on Craigslist where there were other various neighborhoods similar cases where cats have disappeared. They have tried to reach out to 311 to file a complaint about animal cruelty. They have come before the Board to stop the abuse and crimes. She stated that poisoning cats is a felony. She has tried to reach out to representatives in regards to animal cruelty. Mr. Donato stated that the Board has a Health and Safety Committee and will have Ms. Marie D'Alleva to come up with a resolution and meet with you before the next Board meeting in March. Ms. McDonald stated that they should have Animal Rights added to public utility flyers by reaching out to the local utility companies.

Ms. Astra Dimitri, resident at Broadway and Crescent, stated that she was here on behalf the missing cats and the not only the cats are being poisoned. There were 43 feral cats in the neighborhood. There is no animal control to handle the animal cruelty. This is a quality of life issue and she has a video on the subject. She asked if it would be possible to show it in the future. She has also taken upon herself to have the cats neutered. She added that while trying to take care of these cats she has been beaten up.

Ms. Frances McDonald stated that many people are concerned with traffic and children getting hit by cars. In the LIC News, there is an article that she wrote in regards to the NYC Police who have control over the traffic and are also the one who give tickets during the same time period that school children are getting out of school. She stated that she has noticed that when school crossing guard is not at intersections and there is a traffic enforcement agent the traffic agent should provide this support to ensure that children are crossing safely. She asked that people should read the article.

Ms. Mary Paul, resident, stated that she supports Ms. Witty and has also noticed that 2 cats from her neighborhood have disappeared and she reiterated the concerns for the missing feral cats.

Ms. Barbara Tuerdoch, resident, stated she has put up signs asking people not to feed the cats.

Mr. Michaels, resident from 33rd Street and 23rd Road, stated that he noticed that on the Upper East Side (UES) in regards to alternate street parking, cars are allowed to park after the sweeper passes. He asked why residents in Astoria

can't do the same as the UES residents. Ms. Donato asked Mr. Melonie to look into it and see if there is any discrepancy with Alternate Side Street Parking.

Ms. Yvonne (no signature) stated that in Astoria the treatment of feral cats has been the worst cruelty since 2011. She stated that NYC Local Law 259 describes the way to control cats on the street.

Mr. Chris Pearall, resident, stated that he is a concern resident and related an incident when he found a kitten dying on the sidewalk. He brought the kitten to a vet and was informed that it was poisoned. He wants to live in a community that does not harm animals.

Ms. Norma Nieves-Blas stated that the NYC Department of Mental Health and Hygiene has a Bureau of Animal and Pest Control. She asked that they reach out to them and have them come out to your meetings.

Mr. George Stamatiades stated that they should also reach out to the Western Queens Gazette and have them do a story on this issue.

Mr. Richard Khuzami stated that since he noticed the disappearance of the feral cats there was an increase in waters bugs and rats.

BUSINESS SESSION:

Mr. Donato motioned to accept the minutes of December's Board meeting. Motion seconded by Ms. McDonald. Motion called and carried unanimously

Mr. Donato wished every a Happy New Year.

Ms. Lucille Hartmann, District Manager, reported that in Board member's folders there was a reminder notice from the Department of Sanitation regarding sanitation pick-up in Alley Streets and common easements. During a snow fall, from November thru March the trucks will not access the easements and the trash must be placed on the sidewalk in front of the residences. In addition, in the folders there is an invitation to a cocktail reception to be held at the Academy Theatre at the Lighthouse Guild in Manhattan on March 24th. Following the reception there will be a private showing of a short movie, The Commute. If you are interested in attending, please RSVP. The United Community Civic Association will be hosting "Community Luv-In" which has been rescheduled to Thursday, February 2nd at Central Lounge at 20-30 Steinway Street starting at 6pm. Admission is \$45.00.

Ms. Jean Marie D'Alleva, Chair of Health & Social Services/Senior Committee, asked if anyone has witnessed cruelty to the cats. Animals are considered property and that information would be important for the police to help.

Ms. Mary O'Hara, Chair of Housing Committee, reported that the Department of Finance will be increasing property taxes for the 2014-2015 years up to 6%. All properties will be subject to the 6% increase. This is bad news for property owners. Mr. Thomas Ryan stated that you can challenge your property assessment each year. Ms. O'Hara stated that all areas will be affected and subject to the 6% increase.

Mr. Richard Khuzami, Chair of Parks & Recreation/Cultural Affairs/OTB Committee, reported that there was a joint meeting with the Transportation Committee, the Parks Department, Astoria Park Alliance and the Department of Transportation (DOT). He had the following resolution in regards to the meeting: 1) signage must be provided in Astoria Park, 2) safety managers in the Park to be provided by DOT, and 3) bicycle regulations be enforced. Mr. Khuzami motioned that the resolution be voted on and a letter be sent to the Department of Parks & Recreation, motion seconded by Mr. Babor. Motion called and carried.

Mr. Antonio Meloni, Chair of the Public Safety Committee, reported that there was an article on the bridge lighting of the Hellgate Bridge. He asked that this project be supported.

Mr. Jose Batista, Chair of Youth Committee, reported that the Summer Youth Employment Program will be opening soon. He will keep the Board updated to the status.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Thomas Ryan motioned for the election of the officers as listed, seconded by Mr. Meloni. Mr. Donato called for a vote. Motion called and carried unanimously.

There was no further business before the Board. Mr. Khuzami motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Bruno. Motion called and carried unanimously.