

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD 11  
GENERAL BOARD MEETING

DATE: June 16, 2014

PLACE: M.S. 158  
46-35 OCEANIA ST.  
BAYSIDE, NY 11361

ATTENDANCE:

Christine L. Haider, Chair	Present	George Karahalos	Absent
Sila Asa	Present	Gordon Keit	Present
Daniel Baek	Absent	Incha Kim	Absent
Edith Basom	Absent	Anthony Koutsouradis	Absent
Steven Behar	Present	Linda Lee	Absent
Lana Bind	Absent	Robert Liatto	Present
Susan Cerezo	Absent	Janet McEneaney	Present
Ocelia Claro	Present	Melvyn Meer	Present
Paul DiBenedetto	Present	George Mihaltses	Present
Henry Euler	Present	Eileen Miller	Present
Mario Ferazzoli	Absent	Douglas Montgomery	Present
JoAnn Ferrari	Present	Steven Newman	Present
Sonya Fierro-Gladwin	Present	Allan Palzer	Present
Lee Fiorino	Absent	Chris Petallides	Present
Jack Fried	Present	Stephen Pivawer	Present
Alim Gafar	Present	Andrew Rothman	Present
Joan Garippa	Present	Christina Scherer	Present
Roy Giusetti	Present	Gary Sekdorian	Present
Lawrence Gresser	Present	Frank Skala	Present
Bernard Haber	Present	Mamie Smith	Present
Zion Halili	Present	Joseph Sollano	Present
Jerry Iannece	Present	Jyothi Sriram	Present
Laura James	Present	Teddy Teng	Absent
Mohan Jethwani	Present	Alex Yagudaev	Present

ALSO PRESENT:

Susan Seinfeld	District Manager, Community Board 11
Christina Coutinho	Community Board 11 Associate
Dalila Hall	Dept. of Transportation, Queens Borough Commissioner
Deputy Inspector Jason Huerta	111 <sup>th</sup> Precinct Commanding Officer
Det. Neil Blainey	111 <sup>th</sup> Precinct, Community Affairs
Anthony Lemma	Representing Assembly Member David Weprin
Daniel Rossman	Representing Assembly Member Ed Braunstein
Helen Ho	Representing the Office of the Mayor
Jeong-ah Choi	Representing the Office of the Borough President
Kieran Mahoney	Representing State Senator Tony Avella
Megan Keane	Representing Assembly Member Nily Rozic
Mike Yon	Representing Council Member Paul Vallone
Irene Cheung	Representing Council Member Mark Weprin
Ehsan Tonmoy	Representing the Office of NYC Public Advocate
Joanne Choi	Representing Congress Member Grace Meng

The meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm by Chair, Christine Haider.

The Chair led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Deputy Inspector Jason Huerta gave an update regarding year-to-date crime statistics. Inspector Huerta stated that there is a spike in burglaries. He said that there is a current scam where the perpetrator calls a resident and states they represent the IRS and claim they owe money and advise how to pay the debt.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Christine Haider made the following announcements:

There will be a street naming ceremony for Gerry Cilmi, a former teacher at PS 46, with Council Member Paul Vallone on June 20th at 214 Lane and 35 Avenue at 3:30 pm.

Congratulations were given to Douglas Montgomery for a very successful Memorial Day Parade. Congratulations were also given to Jerry Iannece who was honored as Man of the Year at this year's parade.

The Bayside BID is holding "Nights Out" events on Thursdays from now through the end of the summer.

Mrs. Haider announced the passing of long-time Board Member, Rose Bruno. She was 99 years old and a couple of years ago she had received an award for 45 years of service to CB11. Ms. Haider stated that Rose was a very good friend and she will be sorely missed.

Edith Basom had heart surgery and is recuperating.

National Night Out is August 5<sup>th</sup> at the Douglaston Shopping Center from 6:00 to 9:00 pm.

Steel Equities is removing 14 feet of the building wall on 262 Street as promised to the community.

St. John's Home for Boys took over the operation of the group home on 214 Street and 35 Avenue under the State's Close to Home program. Susan Seinfeld had a conference call with the director of the home and representatives of the Administration for Children's Services.

The City is spraying for mosquitoes in the marsh area of Alley Pond Park on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

The Hollis Hills Civic Association is holding a street fair on Sunday, June 22 from 12:00 through 5:00pm at 82 Avenue and 212 Street.

The NYC Transit Authority is proposing to make weekend service permanent on the Q31 bus route. There will be another hearing at the MTA on June 23 at 10:30 am.

The Queens Botanical Garden is hosting another electronic waste recycling event on Sunday, July 13 from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm.

The City Council passed a resolution for state legislation to allow 16-17 year olds to serve on Community Boards. It now has to go to Albany and the City Charter will have to be amended.

Mrs. Haider asked Board members to please remain after the meeting for an Executive Session.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Linda Maloney, representing the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence, spoke about different services that are offered. Their office is located at 126-02 82 Avenue, Kew Gardens, no appointment is needed. Additional information can be obtained by contacting 718-575-4545 or 800-621-4673.

Mrs. Haider introduced former NYC Comptroller John Liu who spoke briefly about his current position at Baruch College, 12 years with City Council and four years as City Comptroller. Mr. Liu also congratulated Bernard Haber for 45 years of community service.

Mrs. Haider interrupted public participation to acknowledge Bernard Haber who received a Lifetime Achievement Award and a 45 years of Service Award at the Swearing in Ceremony at the Hall of Science. Mrs. Haider also thanked Mr. Haber for writing an excellent response to the Cityland article regarding garage conversions. Public participation resumed.

Audrey Pheffer, Queens County Clerk, discussed the lack of juror participation. She explained the process and how the Juror Qualification Questionnaire needs to be completed and returned to the Queens Division of Jurors. Flyers were left to handout.

Ehsan Tonmoy, representing Public Advocate Letitia James, gave a community update on various issues that the Public Advocate is working on.

Dan Marckettell discussed the issues regarding a DOB application for 80-02 209 Street to convert a residential house into a house of worship. He asked the CB and elected officials for assistance with this matter.

John Kelly wanted to thank the 111<sup>th</sup> Precinct for their support with traffic control at the corner of Bell Blvd. and 48 Ave.

Beatrice Gallagher asked the DOT to consider speed bumps on 53 Avenue in front of PS 162. The DOT installed traffic lights which causes drivers to speed. She stated that last, year in front of the school, there was a fatality.

John Shehas spoke about burglaries in the area near the Grand Central Parkway and 86 Avenue. He stated that 86 Avenue is used as an escape route. Mr. Shehas asked for the installation of surveillance cameras at 86 Avenue. He said he would make a formal request to the local civic association.

Susan Macinick asked for speeds bumps in the vicinity 33 Avenue between the Clearview Expressway and Francis Lewis Blvd. There are two schools in the vicinity and 33 Avenue is used as an express route. Elizabeth Kraicton also spoke in favor of speed bumps as discussed by Ms. Macinick.

Mandingo Tshaka spoke against Helms Bros. proposal to expand their business to a vacant lot at Oceania Street and 45 Road, across from their showroom.

There were 19 registered speakers regarding the Douglaston Station Plaza proposal. The majority of speakers were in favor of the plaza. It was stated that the proposal is needed to help enhance a dwindling Douglaston Village. There were several who opposed the elimination of the traffic turnaround. The main concerns stated were the redirection of the flow of traffic through the residential neighborhood and, without the turnaround, the long walk disabled and elderly riders will have to reach

the LIRR platform. A representative from QEDC stated that other plazas throughout the City have benefited the community and encouraged the community to work with DOT for this proposal. Three merchants spoke in favor. Several residents stated that this proposal is for a temporary plaza and the DOT will make changes as needed.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

Devin Maroney, representing the Hotel Trade Council, gave a presentation regarding New York City Hotel Development. He stated that the number of hotels in Queens has doubled in the last 10 years. Hotels are a unique land use and could pose extra burdens on residential communities. Mr. Maroney is asking the CB for support to modify the ULURP process to require a special permit to build a hotel. The special permit would allow community boards and the Borough President to review the proposed hotel application and City Planning Commission and City Council to vote for an approval. A short discussion ensued.

Dalila Hall, Dept. of Transportation, Queens Borough Commissioner, gave an overview regarding the criteria and process of installing speed bumps in the community. Ms. Hall stated that speed bumps will not be installed if a roadway is a bus, emergency or snow route. A question and answer period followed. Ms. Hall spoke in regard to the Mayor's Vision Zero initiative and stated that DOT wants permission from Albany to change the City speed limit from 30 to 25 mph in residential areas. Ms. Hall answered several questions about specific locations for installations of speed bumps and problematic traffic areas.

David Breen, representing the DOT Public Space Program, gave a presentation regarding the proposal for the Douglaston Station Plaza. This application was made by the Douglaston Local Development Corp. for a public plaza at the north side of the railroad station. The DOT is proposing two plaza options. One is to close the street including the traffic turnaround and add 7,300 square feet of public space with two crosswalks, tables, chairs, a bike rack and flexible bollards. This will remove four parking spaces and vehicles will exit the area by using other neighboring streets. The second option is to leave the traffic turnaround open and add 3,000 square feet. The amenities will be the same as option one and seven parking spaces would have to be removed. FDNY and other emergency vehicles can still have access to the station with either option. The Douglaston LDC has to enter into a maintenance agreement with the DOT which includes removal of the chairs and tables every night, snow removal and clean-up. The plaza could be used to conduct small events and markets, attracting business to the area. Susan Seinfeld read a statement from Council Member Paul Vallone. Transportation Committee Co-Chairs Bernard Haber and Chris Petallides reviewed the committee report of June 5, 2014. A motion was made to approve the proposal with a partial plaza and maintain the traffic turnaround. Discussion ensued as to how the Douglaston LDC will maintain the plaza. A representative from the Douglaston LDC stated that they were in favor of keeping the turnaround and will help to maintain the plaza. The motion was seconded by Douglas Montgomery. A roll call vote was taken resulting in 30 in favor, 3 opposed and 1 abstention ( In-favor – Asa, Behar, Claro, DiBenedetto, Euler, Ferrari, Fried, Garippa, Gresser, Haber, Haider, Iannece, James, Jethwani, Keit, Liatto, McEaney, Mihaltses, Miller, Montgomery, Newman, Palzer, Petallides, Pivawer, Rothman, Scherer, Sekdorian, Smith, Sollano, Yagudaev – Opposed – Giusetti, Meer, Sriram – Abstain – Gafar) The motion carried.

### **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

Christine Haider asked for additions or corrections to the minutes of the May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. Minutes were accepted with corrections.

## **COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBER DISCUSSION/NEW BUSINESS**

Alim Gafar stated that representatives from SWIM Strong were present at the meeting but had to leave. They left behind flyers with information about their organization.

Janet McEneaney gave an update regarding the fight against airplane noise.

Roy Giusetti asked why Board Member discussion regarding the Douglaston Station Plaza proposal was limited to two questions. Mr. Giusetti discussed that the public has 45 minutes to speak, whereas, the Board Members were limited. Mrs. Haider stated that the proposal was discussed in length. Mel Meer suggested that a motion be made to reconsider the vote due to lack of adequate board member discussion. Mrs. Haider said that once a vote is taken, it can't be changed. Discussion ensued as to how board members should have had more input.

Douglas Montgomery stated that an Eagle Scout is collecting items for the St. Albans VA Hospital as part of an Eagle project. Items can be dropped off at Mr. Montgomery's office. Also, the Community Church of Douglaston is conducting a blood drive on June 20<sup>th</sup>.

Ocelia Claro stated that she attended a meeting held by Senator Avella with Helms Bros. to discuss the possibility of Helms Bros. applying for a variance for a parking lot on vacant lot at Oceania Street and 45 Road which they own. There are two lots that could hold up to 35 cars. The property is zoned R4. Helms Bros. is asking for input before they apply for the variance. Ms. Claro was asked to present this to the board for an opinion. Discussion ensued as to the negative impact car dealers have on the residential community. Jerry Iannece stated that Helms Bros. was a problem in the past and that is why they moved part of their operation to Station Road. Mr. Iannece said they should come before the Board like every other applicant.

Douglas Montgomery questioned why a politician, who is in the middle of a primary, is allowed speaking time. Mrs. Haider stated that John Liu spoke during public participation and it was not political.

Paul DiBenedetto spoke about the events being held by the Bayside Historical Society.

Henry Euler stated that the Board supported a BSA application with conditions for Genesis Auto. Mr. Euler stated that the conditions have not been met and tomorrow the Auburndale Improvement Association will be attending the BSA Hearing and will speak about their concerns.

Jerry Iannece thanked everyone for his end-of-term party.

Mamie Smith announced that she will be resigning from the board. She stated that due to her health, she must step down. She asked for prayers and ended with a beautiful rendition of "God Bless America".

The staff was asked to leave for Executive Session. Executive Session was held.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40pm.