

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD 11 REGULAR MEETING

DATE: February 4, 2008

PLACE: MS 158
(MARIE CURIE)
46-35 OCEANIA STREET
BAYSIDE

ATTENDANCE:

Steven Newman, Chair	Present	Mohan Jethwani	Present
Edith Basom	Absent	George Karahalios	Present
Daniel Berrios	Absent	Gordon Keit	Absent
Lana Bind	Present	Eileen Kenny	Present
Rose Bruno	Absent	Incha Kim	Present
Robert Caloras	Present	Franklin Lloyd	Absent
Ocelia Claro	Present	Melvyn Meer	Present
James Colasante	Present	Eileen Miller	Present
Joan Corn	Absent	David Millet	Present
Osvaldo Cruz	Absent	Victor Mimoni	Absent
Paul DiBenedetto	Present	Dennis Novick	Present
Edward Doster	Present	Allan Palzer	Present
Henry Euler	Present	Stephen Pivawer	Present
Mario Ferazzoli	Present	James Rodgers	Absent
JoAnn Ferrari	Present	John Rosse	Present
Jack Fried	Present	Christina Scherer	Present
Joan Garippa	Present	Gary Sekdorian	Present
Roy Giusetti	Present	Frank Skala	Present
Bernard Haber	Present	Mamie Smith	Absent
Christine Haider	Absent	Joseph Sollano	Absent
Zion Halili	Present	Robert Speranza	Absent
Joseph Hellmann	Present	Ryan Walsh	Present
Jerry Iannece	Present		
Laura James	Present		

ALSO PRESENT:

Susan Seinfeld	District Manager, Community Board 11
Linda Vallerugo	Assistant District Manager, Community Board 11
Mark Scott	Representing Borough President Helen Marshall
Marva Kalish	Representing Assemblyman Mark Weprin
Bruce Eiber	Representing Councilman David Weprin

Max Pomeran	Representing Congressman Anthony Weiner
Eugene McSweeney	Representing Assemblywoman Ann Margaret Carrozza
Mike Agnello	Department of Parks and Recreation
Janice Melnick	Department of Parks and Recreation
P.O. Bill Conway	111 th Precinct
Sgt. Timothy Everoski	Patrol Borough Queens North
P.O. Robert. Young	Patrol Borough Queens North
Lt. John Errico	FDNY
Firefighter Philip Scarfi	FDNY

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Steven Newman, Chair

ANNOUNCEMENTS

David Kramer has resigned from the Board due to ill health. Although a letter of appreciation was sent to him from the Board and the Borough President, Steve Newman suggested it would be nice if the Board members sent a card. A greeting card is being passed around in the auditorium for all the Board members to sign.

Steve Newman called for a moment of silence in remembrance of CB11 Board member, Sidney Abelson, who recently passed away.

On Saturday, March 8th, from 12 noon to 4 PM, there will be the first annual Going Green in Queens conference at the Hall of Science. This is a community conference for environmental, park volunteer and civic groups.

This Saturday, at 11 AM, in Jamaica Estates, at 117-17 Hanley Road there will be a rally led by Councilman Avella regarding the St. John's dormitory expansion.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Steve Newman explained that we have several speakers registered to speak this evening regarding the St. Mary's Hospital expansion. He stated that we will allow a total of 10 minutes each speaking time for both the opponents and supporters to make their comments.

Objections were raised that there would be limitations on the speaking time and that the individuals signed up for public participation were entitled to 3 minutes each. Ultimately, the opponents spoke for eighteen minutes and a St. Mary's representative for ten minutes.

1. Dr. Blanche Felton spoke in opposition to the St. Mary's expansion stating that the neighborhood already has problems with parking and traffic created by the Hospital. The community had suggested that St. Mary's move the facility to Creedmor where there is adequate space and parking, but the Hospital flatly refused. She believes that the community has been overlooked in many ways, and she does not see a good future for the neighborhood if the expansion goes forward. Dr. Felton pointed out that the present sewer and drainage system is

inadequate. She questioned the zoning, and the negative impact the expansion would have on the value of their homes and the quality of life for the residents.

2. Sally Taverini voiced her opposition to the expansion of St. Mary's and the negative impact it would have on the community. She questioned the lack of an environmental impact study and that the cost of the expansion would be financed primarily by taxpayers dollars. Ms. Taverini commented with so many other health care issues and the current budget crisis, this would be a fiscally irresponsible use of taxpayers dollars.

3. Anthony Thiarenza stated that the expansion would not benefit the children but only the administrators of the Hospital. The community would suffer by destroying the neighborhood and the taxpayers would lose by paying for something unnecessary. The only winners would be the highly paid administrators who could generate more revenue for themselves.

4. Edward Tempesta stated that the community does not have objections to the Hospital and the care of the children. However, St. Mary's has expanded beyond care of the children, to outpatient programs and family counseling. This is a small community, and it is being inundated by cars from St. Mary's parking in the surrounding streets. Mr. Tempesta asked that we reject the proposal.

Steve Newman reminded the Board members that the Board has no approval role in this process and no formal vote needs to be taken by the Board. It is an as-of-right private hospital.

5. Karen Pender stated that she spoke before this Board fourteen years ago when relations with St. Mary's became strained. St. Mary's put temporary trailers on the property and the trailers remain to this day. Now they are looking to build a five story expansion, using taxpayers funds, without any input from the community. St. Mary's wants to expand to conduct programs which do not have to be held here. The Hospital has also refused to have a member of the Bayside community on their Board to represent the neighbors. She noted problems with the parking which overflows onto the neighboring streets and stated that the community cannot withstand this expansion.

6. Timothy Vance questioned if the Board was notified about the public hearing two weeks ago and stated that the immediate neighbors surrounding the Hospital were not notified. Mr. Vance pointed out that in the certificate of needs it states that St. Mary's has a strong working relationship with the local civic association and that is inaccurate. It also states that there will be no impact on the surrounding community which is erroneous and misleading. You cannot build a five story building without creating a major impact on a residential community.

7. Maura Vance stated that the Community Board represents the community and the neighborhood needs the Community Board's support now on this issue even if we do not take a formal vote. She spoke about the environmental impact on the community and questioned if the Cross Island Pkwy. can withstand water run off from a five story building in an area which already has drainage problems. The local roads cannot withstand the impact of tractor trailers bringing in deliveries on a daily basis. She urged the Community Board to help preserve Bayside and take a stand against

the expansion.

8. Carol Marian spoke as the President of the Bayside Historical Society and as a neighbor of St. Mary's. She reported that the Board of the Bayside Historical Society voted in support of the neighborhood regarding their concerns with the expansion of St. Mary's. As a resident in the area, she is also very concerned about the negative impact this proposal would have on the community.

Steve Newman wanted to clarify that when he became Chair he realized that St. Mary's was an issue in the community so the Board called St. Mary's and we invited ourselves to the Hospital. Susan Seinfeld, Christine Haider the Bayside Zoning Chair, Eileen Kenny and Eileen Miller, Co-Chairs of the Health Committee and myself made a site visit to the hospital.

9. Dr. Eddie Simpser, Vice President of St. Mary's, gave a brief presentation on the proposed expansion. The new building is designed to provide appropriate care for the children. The expansion is not to provide additional office space for the administration. The children are currently in four bedded rooms and this will allow the children to be in single or two bedded rooms. He stated that they understand there are concerns in the community, and they met regularly with the neighborhood civic association to address these concerns. The Hospital moved people off campus to New Hyde Park to help alleviate parking problems. With regard to drainage problems, they installed dry wells on the property. St. Mary's worked with the community to have Stop signs and traffic lights installed to improve traffic safety. Dr. Simpser stated that he understood the trailers were a problem, and this plan will incorporate the trailers used for school rooms into the new building. They realized the need for more parking and to get cars off the neighboring streets. There will be 60 additional parking spaces with this new plan. He stated that there were concerns about the entrance to the Hospital. 29th Avenue will be straightened, and they will apply for a four-way stop sign to be installed at the entrance. Dr. Simpser stated that there will not be an increase the number of beds, and the five story building will be set in the back of the property away from the vast majority of the neighbors. Any environmental impact issues will be addressed. St. Mary's will continue to work with the community, and he welcomed the neighbors to visit the facility and express their concerns. Dr. Simpser reported that they met with the members of the community in January to discuss the project. He did call CB11 and Dr. Felton when the project was up for review.

A number of questions and accusations were called out from the audience. Steve Newman explained that this is the public participation portion of our meeting. It is not a hearing and therefore not a forum to answer questions. Dr. Simpser was invited to return to the community at another time to explain the plans in detail and answer questions from the public.

Max Pomeran, of Congressman Anthony Weiner's office, addressed the Board and spoke briefly about some of the Congressman's accomplishments during the last year. Brochures were available at the meeting on Congressman Weiner's 2007 Year in Review.

Steve Newman reminded everyone that tomorrow is primary day and to make certain to vote.

PRESENTATION

Lt. John Errico and Firefighter Philip Scarfi gave a presentation on Fire Prevention and the Fire Safety Education Programs. Firefighter Scarfi explained that in a home most fires begin in the kitchen and outlined safety measures to prevent burn injuries and simple methods to put out oil and grease fires. They reminded people of the importance of having a fire extinguisher and carbon monoxide detector in the home, maintaining fire smoke alarms, replacing them after 10 years and changing the batteries twice a year. Although home fires are on the decline, the rate of fires caused by candles has increased. Firefighter Scarfi urged individuals to use flameless candles and to use batteries and flashlights in case of a blackout. He pointed out the dangers of fire caused by cigarette smoking and gave suggestions on discarding cigarette ashes and stressed the importance of keeping lighters away from children. Individuals should have smoke alarm detectors located within 15 ft. of the sleeping area and keep the door closed to prevent fires from spreading. We were instructed not to overload circuits, to use surge protectors and only plug small appliances into surge protectors to help prevent electrical fires. A brief question and answer period followed. Lt. Errico explained that officers from the Fire Safety Education Program are available to attend group meetings and organizations to give presentations on fire safety seven days a week, day or night. There are numerous programs available such as a hazard house simulator module so you can learn what to do in case of a fire emergency, school presentations, instructions for children and lifesaving techniques. Informational material on fire safety was available at the meeting.

Steve Newman stated that it is technically possible to have cigarettes that self extinguish in under 30 seconds, which would drastically cut down and eliminate fires caused by cigarettes. Tobacco companies do not produce them because less cigarettes would be sold. Steve Newman suggested that our congressional representatives look into this further. Congressman Ackerman's representative said he would talk to the Congressman the next day.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

The minutes of January 7, 2008 were accepted as written.

NEW BUSINESS

Henry Euler gave an update on some of the auto dealership problems on Northern Boulevard. He received a letter from Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair of BSA, stating they would investigate the sites he complained about. An inspector was sent out, and Millenium Motors on 202 Street was found to be out of compliance and referred to the Dept. of Buildings for further investigation. Star Toyota was not in violation at the time of inspection, but the Dept. of Buildings will conduct a site inspection based on his complaint. At Star Nissan, they will be doing further research and review of the plans to determine what conditions were originally placed on this property. Henry Euler also spoke about the rezoning of Auburndale. Senator Padavan and Assemblywoman Carrozza sent copies of letters from Amanda Burden stating that City Planning is considering Auburndale for rezoning but there is no time frame at this point. Mr. Euler also commented on the booklet which was distributed to the Board members, "Rethinking Environmental Review", stating that the booklet is very pro-development and looks to curtail environmental review on new construction. He stated that although we can get some ideas from the booklet, we should keep in

mind that the people who put this book together are backed by big industry.

Steve Newman stated that last Thursday evening, Henry Euler, Susan Seinfeld, Christina Scherer and himself, attended a forum on Global Warming at APEC. He stated that it was a very interesting discussion and a large number of people turned out for the event.

Robert Caloras reported on the Community Education Council meeting held the prior week. The guest speakers were the President of the School Construction Authority and the person in charge of construction in Queens. The Education Council discussed their priority to provide and update electronic equipment in the schools in District 26, which is a priority supported by CB11.

Susan Seinfeld stated that there is information in the Board member envelopes on the Lawn Litter Bill and Senator Padavan and Assemblyman Weprin have signs available.

Mario Ferrazoli questioned the cease and desists lists. He knows someone who is getting excessive amounts of solicitation from real estate brokers and thought their name was still on the cease and desist list.

Frank Skala reported that three weeks ago we held our annual party which was very successful. He will be happy to plan the event again next year unless someone else wants to handle it. Regarding the 3 minute speaking time at the public participation portion of the meeting, if we are going to change the rules, we should take a vote by the members and the new rule go into effect at the next meeting. The people who came here this evening came prepared to speak for 3 minutes.

Steve Newman responded that it is not a rule and when we have large numbers of people speaking on the same issue, we have to somehow limit the speaking time to keep the meeting within a reasonable time.

Melvyn Meer stated that he has been a Board member for nine years and those signed up for public participation always have had 3 minutes for speaking time. In some instances, the Chair has requested if they are going to repeat what someone else has already said, to relinquish or limit their speaking time.

Eileen Miller commented, as Co-Chair of the Health Committee, when she visited St. Mary's they were very open and receptive to the community. She encouraged people to visit the hospital and see the work they do and how they care for the children.

PUBLIC HEARING

FY 2009 Preliminary Budget/Capital and Expense Budget submissions – Steve Newman asked if there were any speakers from the community who would like to speak on this item. There were no speakers or comments.

Steve Newman welcomed Joseph Hellmann back after being out for awhile due to hip surgery.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Joseph Hellmann, Parks Committee Co-Chair, gave a committee report on Holy Cross High School using the ball fields at John Golden Park for practice every afternoon during the football season. The use of the field damages the turf resulting in soil erosion, dusty topsoil when dry and muddy conditions after a rainfall. Other users of the park are confined to other areas where the close proximity of different activities creates safety hazards. Mr. Hellmann explained that groups of more than 20 require a permit to use the ball fields and that permits are not needed for practice sessions. The Parks representatives at the meeting said that Holy Cross has permits to use the fields for 3 days per week and on Saturday for games. Parks will request Holy Cross to limit their use of the ball fields to permitted times only. Holy Cross has offered to rehabilitate the fields after their seasonal use, which will be monitored. It was noted that there is a need for additional ball fields in CB11, but budgetary limitations constrain land acquisition. The committee suggested the following: 1) Parks review their permitting procedures to allow equal access for all potential users of the park facilities, 2) that they enforce permit conditions, and 3) solicit the restoration of the parks by permitted users. The committee also proposed that the formation of citizen park support groups be encouraged. Discussion followed. Melvyn Meer stated that he brought this problem to the attention of the committee with the hope that Parks can keep the fields from being completely destroyed. Janice Melnick, of Parks, thanked us for bringing this matter to their attention. She stated that they will be studying the situation, monitoring the permits more closely and looking for possible other sites to hold the practices.

Steve Newman reported that the Mayor's budget for FY2009 has a proposed budget cut of 5% for Community Boards. This is not the adopted budget, and it still has to go through hearings and the City Council process for review. However, it is conceivable that we will have a 5% budget cut, and we do have ways to handle this cut if it becomes necessary.

The Mayor has announced a couple of senior citizen initiatives which our Board should pay attention to because this Community Board is probably under represented in terms of services for seniors based on the demographics of Board 11. Steve Newman stated we will ask our Senior Citizen Committee to review these initiatives.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM