

# ***COMMUNITY BOARD 11 QUEENS***

## **MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD 11 REGULAR MEETING**

DATE: June 15, 2009

PLACE: MS 158  
46-35 OCEANIA STREET  
BAYSIDE

### **ATTENDANCE:**

|                      |         |                   |         |
|----------------------|---------|-------------------|---------|
| Jerry Iannece, Chair | Present | George Karahalos  | Absent  |
| Edith Basom          | Absent  | Gordeon Keit      | Present |
| Daniel Berrios       | Absent  | Eileen Kenny      | Absent  |
| Lana Bind            | Present | Incha Kim         | Present |
| Rose Bruno           | Present | Franklyn Lloyd    | Present |
| Edward Braunstein    | Present | Susan Macinick    | Present |
| Robert Caloras       | Present | Janet McEneaney   | Present |
| Ocelia Claro         | Present | Melvyn Meer       | Present |
| James Colasante      | Absent  | Eileen Miller     | Present |
| Joan Corn            | Absent  | David Millet      | Present |
| Paul DiBenedetto     | Present | Victor Mimoni     | Present |
| Edward Doster        | Present | Steven Newman     | Present |
| Henry Euler          | Present | Dennis Novick     | Absent  |
| Mario Ferazzoli      | Present | Allan Palzer      | Present |
| JoAnn Ferrari        | Present | Stephen Pivawer   | Present |
| Lee Fiorino          | Absent  | John Rosse        | Absent  |
| Jack Fried           | Present | Andrew Rothman    | Present |
| Joan Garippa         | Present | Christina Scherer | Present |
| Roy Giusetti         | Present | Gary Sekdorian    | Present |
| Bernard Haber        | Present | Frank Skala       | Present |
| Christine Haider     | Present | Mamie Smith       | Absent  |
| Zion Halili          | Present | Joseph Sollano    | Present |
| Joseph Hellmann      | Absent  | Robert Speranza   | Absent  |
| Laura James          | Present | Stephen Tong      | Absent  |
| Mohan Jethwani       | Present | Alex Yagudaev     | 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    |
| Dan Getman         | Representing Congressman Gary Ackerman           |
| Claudia Filomena   | Community Assistance Office of the Mayor         |
| Gene McSweeney     | Representing Assemblywoman Ann Margaret Carrozza |
| Bruce Eiber        | Representing Councilman David Weprin             |
| Edgar Bajana       | Department of City Planning                      |
| D.I. Scott Hanover | 111 <sup>th</sup> Precinct                       |

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 PM by Jerry Iannece, Chair

D.I. Scott Hanover addressed the Board and asked individuals to call 911 in an emergency, 311 for non-emergency situations or if you wish to speak to a person, call the 111<sup>th</sup> Community Affairs Officer. He reminded all about the dangers of fireworks and announced this year that the fireworks will be on the Hudson River. Individuals should keep alert during the summer months for graffiti and scratch-fitti.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

1. Pat Veyvoda, of the Women’s Club of Douglaston, spoke about the need to modernize and renovate the Douglaston/Little Neck Library. The Women’s Club has written many letters to the various elected officials on this issue, and she encouraged individuals to also write letters to their elected officials about the library. Jerry Iannece reported that the Douglaston/Little Neck Library is on our CB11 budget priority list and we are actively pursuing a plan.

2. Mary Donahue, member of the Auburndale Improvement Assoc., spoke about the need to create a new one-family zoning designation for one-family attached and semi-attached homes. At present the zone is R3-2, which is incorrect for these types of homes. She asked for the Board’s help and cooperation to establish a new zoning code for the homes on 194 Street bet. 45 Ave. and 46 Ave. as well as many other sections in Auburndale.

3. Kathy Santis gave an update on the church construction at 26-18 210 St. She reported that they have received a public assembly permit and currently there is a stop work order on the job because the fence is not adequate. The neighbors have hired a lawyer and hope to obtain a copy of the plans. Jerry Iannece explained that the church is an as-of-right construction and if there are under 100 occupants in the largest room, parking requirements are exempt.

4. Chris Arapis also spoke about the church construction and pointed out that although this community facility is as-of-right, it is totally out of character with the neighborhood. He noted that the occupancy number on the assembly permit keeps changing, which he believes may be suspicious.

## **PRESENTATION**

1. Joyce Mulvaney, of MTA Bridges and Tunnels, Ed Wallace, General Manager of Throgs Neck Bridge, and Mike Prigge, Technical Engineer of Throgs Neck Bridge, gave a presentation and update on the Throgs Neck Bridge Project. Ed Wallace reported that the project actually began in 2008. The project will cost \$96.7 million and will include the cleaning and painting of all the steel structure and replacement of 140,000 sq. ft. of the original deck. Mike Prigge reported that they are now in Stage I, which involves taking the median out of the roadway and replacing the deck in that area for use as a temporary fifth lane. Stage II will begin in July, which requires the closure of the CIP onbound ramp. When the onbound ramp is closed, they will run three lanes up the CVE to take care of some of the extra traffic which they expect to divert down the GCP and across the CVE. Mr. Prigge explained that they are very confident that the alternate routes will be sufficient to handle the traffic. The ramp closure will be for 35 consecutive days, beginning after July 4<sup>th</sup> and ending before Labor Day. Incentives are offered to the contractor to complete ramp closure work quicker. Traffic Agents will be provided to handle any additional traffic problems, at key intersections throughout the neighborhood, 7 days a week, 12 hours a day. Stage III consists of the exact same work except that it will take place on the southbound ramp. This work will begin after Labor Day and be completed before Thanksgiving. After the closure of the onbound and offbound ramps, the balance of the work will take place with three lanes of traffic open in each direction on the bridge during peak travel periods. The total project should be completed two years from now. A lengthy question and answer period followed. Due to some technical difficulty, we were unable to see the power point presentation at the meeting. Joyce Mulvaney agreed to e-mail the presentation including a timetable of the work schedule to CB11. Jerry Iannece stated this information will be forwarded to the Board members and posted on our website.

2. Matthew Chong, of NYC Coalition for a Smoke-Free City & Korean Community Services, introduced three high school students, Jessica, Michelle and Shiana, to give a brief presentation on their program. Their mission is to eliminate, reduce and advocate for less retail tobacco marketing where tobacco is sold, such as convenience stores and gas stations. They stressed the importance of eliminating and reducing these marketing strategies because of how they influence people to begin smoking. In addition, tobacco companies have almost no restrictions on advertising over the counter. It was noted that tobacco companies especially target youth, by offering free gifts with tobacco purchases and advertising close to candy displays. They suggested individuals talk to their local stores about tobacco advertising, speak to your children to make them aware of these advertisements and write letters to your local legislators to strengthen the policies against tobacco marketing.

3. Lizzette Mole, of Professional Service Centers for the Handicapped (PSCH) Group Home at 26-15 Bell Blvd., spoke about community partnership and inclusion. PSCH is looking to incorporate their services to help out in the community. As an example, reaching out to a homebound person who may need help with housecleaning, cooking or transportation. PSCH would like the community to know that they are available and willing to help.

## **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

Joseph Hellmann requested that the following statement be added to the Douglaston Hill Street Renaming: “Joseph Hellmann noted that the original street names are an integral part of the Hill’s historicity and should be adopted.” Henry Euler pointed out, under the section on Community Board Member Discussion, it reads “the gas station at 35 Ave. and Francis Lewis Blvd. is storing trucks on the lot.” This should be corrected to read was storing trucks on the lot (the problem was resolved). The minutes of May 4, 2009 were accepted with the above corrections.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Jerry Iannece gave an update on the Lund Fire Products hearing at BSA. He attended the previous hearing and argued the case for the community based on the five findings. As a result, BSA stated that Lund should be seeking relief with regard to residential use. At the eleventh hour, just before this last BSA hearing, Lund wanted to amend their application from Use Group 16 to Use Group 6. BSA stated that this was not appropriate at the last moment, and they have taken the application off the calendar. Lund will have to come back before the Board again with a complete new application. Jerry Iannece stated that this is a major win for the community.

All Board members have been given a copy of the “Conflict of Interest” brochure to refresh everyone’s memory on this topic. A conflict must be revealed if it is a direct monetary gain for a member. If that is the case, the proper procedure is to vote present but not voting. To abstain from voting, would count as a no vote.

Several months ago, the FDNY, due to budgetary constraints, pulled out the security from the front gate at Ft. Totten. This was considered by many as a breach of their contractual obligation. The Borough President, local elected officials and CB11 got involved. We received correspondence, that as of today, light duty fire officers will be manning the gate. Starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, the FDNY is reinstating security.

Jerry Iannece was happy to announce that the Auburndale/Oakland Gardens/Hollis Hills rezoning is finally moving forward. There will be a meeting on this topic tomorrow evening at the Reception House. The preliminary plans show Hollis Hills as R2A and Oakland Gardens as R3X. The southern portion of Auburndale is a little more problematic. They have not addressed the M1-1 section (in CB7), but it is something we can work on. There also may be some room to incorporate a new zoning classification for one-family attached homes. This rezoning proposal encompasses both CB7 and CB11. We need to move this forward quickly and, hopefully, by September or October we will be able to vote on this rezoning proposal. Mel Meer noted that there is a loophole in the R2A zone regarding community facilities and suggested this might be the opportunity to correct this issue. Jerry Iannece agreed and said we can try to bring that point out, but he also stated that he would not want to slow down or hold this rezoning proposal up in anyway.

Jerry Iannece announced that at the Borough President’s Community Board Swearing-In Ceremony, Bernard Haber received an award for 40 years of service on CB11. Jerry Iannece also presented a certificate to David Millet for 15 years of service.

Bayside Hills Civic Assoc. will hold a meeting on June 23 at 8 PM at the Bayside Colonial Church on “How The Media Effects Children”.

On the same evening, the Bay Terrace Community Alliance is sponsoring a candidates night with all the candidates for the 19<sup>th</sup> Council District. The meeting will be held at the Bay Terrace Jewish Center. (Addendum: the meeting is to be held at Samuel Field/Bay Terrace Y).

Recently, the Community Boards collectively held a rally at City Hall in protest of the proposed Community Board budget cut. The Mayor is proposing more than a \$30,000 cut for the Boards. Jerry Iannece explained that one of the first things he did when he became Chair was send a letter out to the Mayor which was signed by all the Queens Community Board Chairs protesting this cut.

A concert was held at St. Joseph’s in Astoria for the earthquake victims of Abruzzo, Italy. The concert raised over \$40,000 and Jerry Iannece thanked everyone who attended.

The 111<sup>th</sup> Precinct will hold the National Night Out on August 4<sup>th</sup>, at 6 PM at the Douglaston Plaza Shopping Center just outside Modell’s.

Department of Sanitation has advised us that they are looking for sponsors for their Sponsor A Basket program. Anyone interested should contact Sanitation.

Kaboom is a national non-profit organization that builds playspaces in communities. They are looking to identify community organizations and locations that would benefit from a playspace partnership.

Hollis Hills Civic Assoc. is holding a Clean Up Green Education Day on Sunday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, from 12 noon to 3 PM. Residents can get together at 73 Ave. and 224 St.

### **COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBER DISCUSSION**

Frank Skala reported that 5 out of the 7 City Council candidates have agreed not to post any illegal posters on public property. He commented that he was pleased to be present at the Community Board Swearing-In Ceremony where Bernie Haber received his award but was disappointed to report that only about 6 members of the Board were in attendance. Frank Skala also disapproved of comments made in an e-mail and at the last Board meeting regarding a proposed \$35,000 budget cut to the Board as being the correct thing to do and thought it was inappropriate to make comments regarding staff in public.

Jerry Iannece reminded the members when e-mails circulate by the Board we should show some discretion when voicing our opinion and forwarding e-mails.

Janet McEneaney reported that the Northwest Clearview Civic Assoc. had recommended some locations for daylighting to DOT. However, DOT daylighted various other corners while their

suggestions were ignored. She is requesting an on-site inspection with DOT of the area to resolve some of the traffic issues in the community. She also pointed out that the timing is off on the traffic signal at CVE and 33 Ave. creating traffic back-ups. Jerry Iannece reminded all that items like this should be immediately brought to the attention of the Community Board so that we can start action with the appropriate agency and then follow-up.

Andy Rothman reported that at the previous meeting we had a presentation by the Buildings Department regarding the new Public Challenge Process. At that presentation, we were told that permits would be posted on the website within 3 days and the clock would start for the 45 day challenge period. According to the latest press release, the public 45 day process will begin whether or not a permit is posted. He questions that developers can get the paperwork, start the process and there would be no notification to the community. Jerry Iannece agreed and said that we will follow-up on this with the Buildings Dept.

Henry Euler reported that the Auburndale meeting tomorrow evening on the rezoning plans starts at 7:30 PM. He also stated that we should lobby City Planning regarding a new zoning designation for single-family attached homes.

Paul DiBenedetto announced that the Bayside Historical Society will sponsor a free swing and jazz band concert "Bayside Lights" on June 28<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM on the Great Lawn at Ft. Totten.

Steve Newman responded to comments made earlier about the proposed budget cuts. He believes all agencies including Community Boards should be included in the cuts since schools and public safety agencies will be part of the cut. Mr. Newman stated that he still believes one of the staff positions could be eliminated.

Susan Macinick thanked Jerry Iannece for attending the CERT graduation. Jerry Iannece praised the CB11 CERT team as the best team in the City.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

ULURP #060551 ZMQ - Application to the Dept. of City Planning by the Briarwood Organization to establish a C2-2 commercial overlay in an existing R4 residential district at the southeast corner of Bell Blvd. and 36 Avenue, which is Redeemer Lutheran Church property. Richard Bass, representing the applicant, gave a presentation on the rezoning proposal stating that they began this application three years ago. The proposal would allow the Briarwood Organization to expand the existing office building for mixed uses and retail space. Three individuals registered to speak on this application. Bishop David Benke, representing the Church, spoke in favor of the proposal stating that the rezoning would provide the Church with more financial security. Helain Soller and Tom Cooke spoke in opposition stressing concerns about creating a negative impact on the community and increasing traffic congestion. Christine Haider, Chair of the East Flushing/North Bayside Zoning Committee, gave the Committee report giving details on the proposal to develop a 16,266 sq. ft., four-story building with 8,183 sq. ft. for commercial office space and 8,183 sq. ft. for a community facility, adjacent to the Briarwood Organization's existing building at 36-35/37 Bell Blvd. The proposed building will contain a two-story street wall base,

30 ft. high and will set back and rise to a height of 53ft. 3 ¼". There will be 55 parking spaces which will be in the rear of the proposed building on the cellar and first floor levels. The existing curb cuts will be used for the proposed building. There will be a parking attendant and parking lifts for a total of 108 cars. Christine Haider reported that the Committee was sympathetic to the financial difficulties of the Church and suggested other options such as renting out the premises, combining with another church or selling off some of their other properties. The Committee suggested to the applicant that 1) the area be rezoned C1-2 instead of C2-2 because this would limit the uses allowed and would conform with the community. 2) Rezone the immediate area planned for the extension of his building only, since there seems to be no immediate plans for the use of the rest of the Church property at this time. A motion was made by the Committee to recommend approval of the application which did not carry by a vote of 7 opposed and 5 abstentions. Lengthy discussion followed by the Board members. The general consensus of the Board was in support of the needs of the Church. However, serious concerns were raised about the uses permitted in a C2-2 zone, possible future overdevelopment and a desire to maintain the character of the community. Also, questions were raised as to why the entire length of the property to the corner of 36<sup>th</sup> Ave. needs to be rezoned with a commercial overlay. Melvyn Meer spoke in opposition to the motion and respectfully suggested that the applicant submit a new application scaled back to a C1-2 overlay, for only 50 ft., for the construction of the building. Motion (09-11) was made to recommend approval of the application to rezone the southeast corner of Bell Blvd. and 36 Avenue to C2-2. Roll call vote was taken resulting in 7 in favor (Doster, Ferazzoli, Ferrari, Haber, Keit, Newman, Yagudaev), 26 opposed (Bind, Braunstein, Bruno, Caloras, Claro, DiBenedetto, Euler, Fried, Garippa, Giusetti, Haider, Halili, James, Kim, Lloyd, Macinick, McEneaney, Meer, Miller, Millet, Palzer, Pivawer, Scherer, Sekdorian, Skala, Sollano), 1 abstention (Rothman), and 2 present (Iannece, Jethwani). The motion did not carry. The two members voting present were asked to reveal their conflict of interest. Mohan Jethwani stated that his wife is a member of the Church, and Jerry Iannece stated that he received a campaign contribution from the Briarwood Organization. Further discussion followed and a second motion (09-12) was made to recommend approval for a C1-2 overlay, for 50 ft. of the property for construction of the commercial building only, and maintain the R4 designation for the balance of the land up to 36 Ave. Roll call vote was taken resulting in 22 in favor (Bind, Braunstein, Caloras, Claro, Doster, Ferazzoli, Ferrari, Garippa, James, Keit, Kim, Lloyd, Macinick, McEneaney, Meer, Miller, Millet, Newman, Palzer, Pivawer, Sollano, Yagudaev), 10 opposed (Bruno, DiBenedetto, Euler, Fried, Giusetti, Haider, Halili, Scherer, Sekdorian, Skala), 1 abstention (Rothman) and 2 present (Iannece, Jethwani).

Jerry Iannece wished all a wonderful summer.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 PM