

COMMUNITY BOARD 11 QUEENS

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD 11 REGULAR MEETING

DATE: November 2, 2009

PLACE: M.S .158 (Marie Curie)
46-35 OCEANIA STREET
BAYSIDE, NY 11361

ATTENDANCE:

Jerry Iannece, Chair	Present	George Karahalidis	Absent
Edith Basom	Present	Gordon Keit	Present
Daniel Berrios	Present	Eileen Kenny	Absent
Lana Bind	Present	Incha Kim	Present
Rose Bruno	Present	Franklyn Lloyd	Absent
Edward Braunstein	Present	Susan Macinick	Absent
Robert Caloras	Present	Janet McEneaney	Present
Ocelia Claro	Present	Melvyn Meer	Present
James Colasante	Present	Eileen Miller	Present
Paul DiBenedetto	Present	David Millet	Absent
Edward Doster	Present	Victor Mimoni	Absent
Henry Euler	Present	Steven Newman	Present
Mario Ferazzoli	Present	Dennis Novick	Present
JoAnn Ferrari	Absent	Allan Palzer	Present
Lee Fiorino	Absent	Stephen Pivawer	Absent
Jack Fried	Absent	John Rosse	Absent
Joan Garippa	Absent	Andrew Rothman	Present
Roy Giusetti	Absent	Christina Scherer	Present
Bernard Haber	Present	Gary Sekdorian	Absent
Christine Haider	Present	Frank Skala	Present
Zion Halili	Absent	Mamie Smith	Present
Joseph Hellmann	Present	Joseph Sollano	Present
Laura James	Present	Robert Speranza	Present
Mohan Jethwani	Present	Stephen Tong	Present
		Alex Yagudaev	Present

ALSO PRESENT:

Susan Seinfeld	District Manager, Community Board 11
Linda Vallerugo	Assistant District Manager, Community Board 11
Jordan Goldes	Representing Congressman Gary Ackerman
Mark Scott	Representing Borough President Helen Marshall
Claudia Filomena	Mayor's Office of Community Assistance
Randy LaFargue	Representing Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum
Ali Najmi	Representing Assemblyman Mark Weprin
D.I. Scott Hanover	111 th Precinct
Michael Agnello	Dept. of Parks and Recreation

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

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

The minutes of October 5, 2009 were accepted as written.

CORRESPONDENCE

Friends of Oakland Lake and Ravine will be holding their annual Fall Clean-Up on Saturday, November 7th, from 10 AM to 1 PM.

The Department of City Planning has advised us that the Auburndale/Hollis Hills/Oakland Gardens rezoning is scheduled to be certified in February.

The 111th Precinct Community Council meeting is on Wednesday, November 4th, at 7:30 PM. Susan Seinfeld will be a guest speaker.

The Borough President is holding a US Census Kick-Off press conference at 12:30 PM on Tuesday, November 10th at Borough Hall.

The Queens Historical Society is showing a slide presentation of the 1964 World's Fair on Sunday, November 8th from 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM at Kingsland Homestead.

Frank Skala gave an update on our Annual Holiday party. Original plans were to hold the event on January 3rd. Since Susan Seinfeld cannot attend on that date, he is looking to reschedule the event for Sunday, January 10th, if available.

Jerry Iannece reminded all that tomorrow is Election Day and everyone should be sure to vote.

COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBER DISCUSSION

Frank Skala raised objection to the Lion's Club Annual Dinner Dance flyer being included in our monthly mailing. He believes it would encourage other groups to use our mailing for free. Jerry Iannece responded that he has no problem with any altruistic community based organizations in our district including information in our mailings.

Frank Skala also reported that the Bayside H.S. sign is now shut off by 5 PM. However, the sign is still disturbing to some of the neighbors. There will be a civic meeting to review this issue further. Jerry Iannece reported that CB11 did send a letter to the Principal of Bayside H.S. regarding this sign, but we have not yet received a response. It has also been suggested that the sign may be in violation of the zoning.

Janet McEneaney reported that residents in the community have been complaining about very noisy conditions at the Bayside Library especially after school hours. The librarians have been made aware of this problem, and she is asking for CB11 to address this issue. Jerry Iannece suggested that she reach out to Ed Doster, Library Committee Chair, to schedule a meeting. Janet McEneaney also commented that PS 159 has old playground equipment which has been locked up since it was installed because the Principal does not want the equipment used. Jerry Iannece said CB11 will send a letter to the school. She also noted the timing needs to be changed at the traffic signal at 33 Ave. and the southbound Clearview Expwy. DOT has been asked several times to address this problem. Lastly, she mentioned the construction taking place at 34-45 Francis Lewis Blvd. has had numerous violations and Stop Work Orders issued, and she suggested CB11 monitor this location. Susan Seinfeld reported that an accident did take place at that construction site and the Buildings Dept. is making a full investigation of the project.

Mamie Smith made a complaint that when someone is speaking to the Chair, they should not be interrupted by another person. They should wait their turn to speak. It is impolite and discourteous.

Henry Euler spoke regarding the Auburndale rezoning and stated that there are still outstanding issues and concerns that need to be addressed. A meeting was held on October 22nd at Borough Hall with the Auburndale Civic Assoc. and City Planning regarding the creation of a single family attached zone. This zone did not come to fruition. Another meeting has been scheduled for November 10th with Commissioner Amanda Burden. The other civic associations of Hollis Hills and Oakland Gardens involved in the rezoning have been advised.

Laura James reported a traffic problem at the corner of 247 Street and Northern Blvd. by 7-Eleven. At 247 Street the flow of traffic is northbound from Northern Blvd., and she has witnessed many times motorists traveling southbound on that street in the wrong direction. She suggested that DOT look at the signage.

Andy Rothman reported that both he and Joan Garippa attended the Borough President's Aviation Council meeting. They were informed of new FAA initiatives on flight patterns and educational programs to encourage science and engineering. Further information will be provided to the Education Committee.

Rose Bruno reported that there is a traffic light at the corner of Northern Blvd. and 192 Street and motorists speed starting at 45 Avenue to beat that traffic light. She asked that the Police monitor the location.

Robert Speranza reported that his Church has been unjustly targeted for the mailing of campaign literature. Jerry Iannece replied that the Board will not discuss political issues.

Mohan Jethwani reported that the playground area at Crocheron Park has been vandalized with graffiti.

Christine Haider also commented that her neighborhood at 58 Avenue has been vandalized with graffiti several times over the last few months. She also asked the Police to monitor the area by Peck Park and the Horace Harding Expwy. Service Road regarding trailer trucks parking overnight.

D.I. Hanover addressed the Board and reminded individuals to drive carefully tomorrow on Election Day. The children are out from school and many drivers that usually do not drive will be out on the road.

Frank Skala questioned the Police about a recent robbery on Bell Blvd. D.I. Hanover stated that the Police are investigating. It appears to have been only one incident and there is no pattern involved.

PUBLIC HEARING

Cal. # 240-55 BZ – 207-22 Northern Blvd. - Eric Palatnik, representing Helms Brothers, gave a presentation on the application to extend the term of the variance for fifteen years with the continued use of the auto repair shop as a new car prep facility under the terms of the 1956 Resolution. The current variance expired in November 2008. Mr. Palatnik explained that nothing has changed with this variance and the use will remain the same. Three members of the public registered to speak regarding this application, all in opposition. Irene Harper and Janice Walker gave their speaking time to Mandingo Tshaka who expressed strong opposition to the application stating that a commercial auto repair shop is not compatible adjacent to residential properties. He pointed out that there is an excessive number of auto shops and auto dealers on the southside of Northern Blvd. from Francis Lewis Blvd. to Oceania Street, which impacts on the quality of life for the residents of the neighborhood. Christine Haider, East Flushing/North Bayside Zoning Chair, read the committee report of October 14th for the record. The Committee had made a motion to recommend approval of extension of the variance for a ten year term with the continuance of the past conditions. Discussion followed. It was requested that the previous conditions as outlined in the 1999 variance be specifically listed in our recommendation and that a committee be formed to study a more aesthetically pleasing fencing for the residents. Motion (09-17) was made to recommend approval to extend the term of the variance for a ten year term with the original conditions. Roll call vote was taken resulting in 21 in favor (Basom, Bind, Braunstein, Bruno, Caloras, Claro, Colasante, Doster, Ferazzoli, Haber, Haider, Hellmann, James, Jethwani, Keit, Miller, Newman, Novick, Palzer, Rothman, Sollano), 10 opposed (Berrios, Euler, Iannece, Kim, McEneaney, Meer, Scherer, Skala, Smith, Tong), and 2 abstentions (DiBenedetto, Speranza).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Capital & Expense Budget FY2011 – Steve Newman, Capital & Expense Budget Co-Chair, reported that the committee met last week and prioritized the list of budget submissions for the FY2011 Capital & Expense Budget Register. All Board members received a copy of the priority list and he asked for comments. Henry Euler suggested that the property at 214-27 Northern Blvd. be purchased as a Children’s Annex addition to the existing Bayside Library. It was agreed that this would be added as item #33. Joseph Sollano asked for clarification on item #20 regarding FDNY generators. Frank Skala stated that the number of priority requests was unrealistic and should be reduced to a few top priorities. Christine Haider requested that item #32, install drainage basins/storm sewers in Peck Park/Underhill Park be combined with item #17, drainage and rehabilitation of John Golden Park. It was agreed that this will be combined with item #17. Some discussion followed regarding item #7, build a new high school, being prioritized higher than acquiring property in Udall’s Cove. Mel Meer suggested moving item #7 to item #2. Henry Euler questioned why the item to repair the 216 St. pedestrian bridge was removed. It was noted that DOT will not honor that request because of federal mandates. Dennis Novick warned the Board to be cautious about moving Capital request items and suggested that the committee study the City’s Capital Commitment Plan to see what the various agencies actually have planned or already in the works. Andy Rothman commented that in our request to build a new school, it is important that the school be attended by local CB11 students. Joseph Hellmann mentioned the importance of acquiring the property in Udall’s Cove so that we maintain parkland and avoid development. Mel Meer withdrew his suggestion to move item #7 up in the priority listing. Motion (09-18) was made to approve the Capital & Expense Budget priority submission for FY2011. Roll call vote was taken resulting in 32 in favor (Basom, Berrios, Bind, Braunstein, Bruno, Caloras, Claro, Colasante, DiBenedetto, Doster, Euler, Ferazzoli, Haber, Haider, Hellmann, Iannece, James, Jethwani, Keit, Kim, McEaney, Meer, Miller, Newman, Novick, Palzer, Rothman, Scherer, Smith, Sollano, Speranza, Tong), 1 opposed (Skala) and no abstentions.

2. Laura James, Education Committee Co-Chair, gave the Education Committee report outlining the four initiatives the Committee addressed, School Construction, School Zoning, Community Superintendents and Gifted and Talented Programs. She explained that to address the overcrowded conditions in the high schools in our area, the Committee recommended to add an item for a new high school in the CB11 budget and send a resolution about overcrowding in the neighborhood schools to the Mayor. On School Zoning, as in the case of PS 130 in Auburndale, the Committee decided to work with the Auburndale Civic Assoc. to deliver a letter to all households in the area, and then begin a petition drive within the former boundaries of PS 130. On the issue of Community Superintendents, the Committee believes it is imperative to have the district superintendents spend more time in their own districts. Action by the Committee is yet to be determined. With regard to the Gifted and Talented Programs, district programs need to be more restrictive. These programs are sometimes larger than regular classes and there are a limited number of “super-gifted” city-wide programs. The Committee will gather additional information and then determine subsequent action. It was noted also that the Education Committee would like to have more members join who are teachers or parents of school-age children. Lastly, Laura James outlined the Committee’s resolution on high school overcrowding which points out the

severe overcrowding at Francis Lewis H.S., Benjamin Cardozo H.S. and Bayside H.S., including health and safety concerns for the students. The resolution asks that the Mayor and DOE investigate the cause, take immediate steps to ease the overcrowding, take measures to strengthen the curriculum in other Queens schools to make them more viable, as well as the need for an additional high school. Discussion followed regarding zoned schools, screening for special programs and concerns about the language of the resolution which should state that high schools remain as zoned schools serving our local students. Motion (09-19) was made to table this resolution until next month. The motion passed by a show of hands.

3. Henry Euler, Environmental Committee Co-Chair, gave the Committee report on Gas Drilling for Natural Gas in the Marcellus Shale in NY State. He explained that Marcellus Shale is a region in NY State where they find natural gas deposits. The gas and oil companies want to drill in that area using a process called hydraulic fracturing which involves a technique using large amounts of water combined with toxic chemicals for drilling. Some of the water and chemicals can be withdrawn after this process. However, some of the fluid remains underground and can eventually seep into streams, rivers and reservoirs affecting our water quality. The NYSDEC has prepared a draft document (DSGEIS) for regulating and permitting the drilling for natural gas using this process. There are plans for at least 50,000 wells throughout NY State. Each well could function for up to 50 years, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Some drilling will take place in the watershed area. The NYSDC has set up a 60 day public comment period ending in November. The Committee prepared a draft resolution which states that CB11 is opposed to the use of hydraulic fracturing technology when drilling for natural gas in and near watershed areas until we have more information, the NYSDEC should extend the public comment period regarding the draft guide (DSGEIS) from 60 days to 120 days, and additional public hearings should be held in the NYC area. Dennis Novick, Environmental Committee Co-Chair, explained that he had a different point of view and had voted against the draft resolution. He believes that the resolution should be limited to asking to extend the public comment period so that people can become better informed and should not take a position on the technology. The Board does not have enough information from NYSDEC as to why they believe this type of drilling would not be harmful to the water supply, and we should obtain scientific data on the level of toxins used in this drilling. Discussion followed by the Board. Motion (09-20) was made to recommend approval of the resolution as drafted by the Committee opposing Gas Drilling in the Marcellus Shale. Roll call vote was taken resulting in 30 in favor (Berrios, Bind, Braunstein, Bruno, Caloras, Claro, Colasante, DiBenedetto, Euler, Ferazzoli, Haber, Haider, Hellmann, Iannece, James, Jethwani, Keit, Kim, McEaney, Meer, Miller, Newman, Palzer, Rothman, Scherer, Skala, Smith, Sollano, Speranza, Tong), 3 opposed (Basom, Doster, Novick) and no abstentions.

Jerry Iannece wished all a Happy Thanksgiving.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM.