



The City of New York

Queens Community Board 11

Serving the Communities of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston, Hollis Hills
Little Neck and Oakland Gardens

Christine L. Haider Chairperson / **Susan Seinfeld** District Manager

COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: All Board Members
FROM: Joe Sollano, Chair
RE: Cal. No. 334-78 – BZ
233-20 No. Blvd.
Cal. No. 551-37-BZ
233-02 No. Blvd.
DATE: April 27, 2016

On Tuesday, April 26, 2016, the Douglaston Zoning Committee met to review the above-referenced application. Present were Joe Sollano, Committee Chair, Roy Giusetti, Jyothi Sriram, Larry Gresser, Susan Cerezo, Laura James, 1st Vice Chair, and Christine Haider, Board Chair. Also attending were Susan Seinfeld, District Manager, Michael Nacmias for Eric Palatnik, PC, representing the applicant, Jeong-Ah Choi, representing the Borough President and Elliott Socci, President of the Douglaston Civic Association.

For the past eight years, the premises at 233-20 Northern Blvd. has operated as Auto Gallery, an auto sales room with an attached transmission shop. The new owner purchased the property in 2015. The BSA application seeks to legalize changes made to the interior and signage that were installed by the previous owner. The last variance was granted in 1989 for a ten-year term which expired on October 4, 2008. The previous owner never renewed the variance. The attorney indicated that they are, therefore, seeking a waiver of the Rules and Procedure to reopen the expired variance.

Joe Sollano stated that the Statement of Facts and Findings is incorrect because the approved BSA plans from 1989 and the Certificate of Occupancy are for auto repairs and auto parts sales only. Therefore, a new BSA application must be filed and include a change of use to auto sales. It was pointed out that reopening the old variance would require the BSA to date the variance from 2008 to expire in 2018, two years from now. There is an outstanding \$1,500. ECB violation on the property for operating contrary to the C of O.

Mr. Sollano and Mr. Socci made a site visit and found cars parked everywhere and old tires and junk thrown over the fence into park property. The fence is in need of repair and a boat sits behind the transmission shop. Questions were raised about who was operating the auto sales and transmission shop and if operational changes are being made by the new owner.

The Committee then discussed the application for 233-02 Northern Blvd., operated as Red's Auto Repair. This property does have a current variance and this application seeks to amend the variance to allow auto sales and repair. Both properties require variances for

commercial businesses in a residential R1-2 zone. Mr. Nacmias said that the new owner will change the exterior façade and upgrade the showroom and office.

Concerns were raised because there is a plethora of debris in the rear and side of the property, the windows on the east side are boarded up, an oil tank leaks, an illegal towing operation is operating out of trailers to the west side of the building, and unsightly clothing bins are on the property. Questions were raised as to who will run this business now that there is a new property owner, the relationship between the two locations and the existence of a towing operation.

Members stated that the new owner, who has had possession for a year, should clean up the properties and show his intention to correct the problems. The Committee did not want to go forward until the questions about the operations raised were answered and the Statement of Facts for 233-20 Northern Blvd. corrected. Therefore, the members agreed to table the public hearing until June and possibly meet with the applicant again in May before voting.