



The City of New York

## Queens Community Board 11

Serving the Communities of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston, Hollis Hills  
Little Neck and Oakland Gardens  
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**Jerry Iannece** Chairperson / **Susan Seinfeld** District Manager

### COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Little Neck Zoning Committee Members  
FROM: Joan Garippa and Allan Palzer, Co-Chairs  
Little Neck Zoning Committee  
RE: BSA Cal No. 339-12 BZ  
252-29 Northern Blvd.  
Former Scobee Diner  
DATE: April 18, 2013

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On Wednesday, April 17, 2013 the Little Neck Zoning Committee convened to review the above-referred application. Committee members present were the co-chairs, Joan Garippa and Allan Palzer, Laura James, Gordon Keit and Chris Petallides; also present were Susan Seinfeld, District Manager, Josh Rinesmith, attorney for the applicant, Afshin Hedvat of Lion Bee Equities, (the applicant), six Little Neck residents and three adjacent business owners.

The application to the Board of Standards seeks a variance to permit accessory parking for an as-of-right commercial building in a lot zoned C2-1 and R2A. The commercial overlay zone is 100' deep and the rest, which currently is a parking lot, is zoned R2A. The commercial overlay had been 150' deep before the rezoning of Douglaston and Little Neck in 2006. The proposed parking lot area lies in the R2A zone, representing 35% of the lot, and therefore requires a variance. Seventeen parking spaces are being provided as required pursuant to the Zoning Resolution.

Lion Bee Equities is a contract-vendee for one of two parcels where a vacant building the former Scobee Diner is situated. Only one of the parcels is proposed to be purchased by the applicant. The other parcel is owned by Risa Greenberg Chain, attorney for Greenberg and Hofstein, P.C. The proposed development site frontage is 85' on the north side of Northern Boulevard and 172' on the west side of Little Neck Parkway. The developer plans to demolish the existing structure and build a two story commercial building.

The applicant has identified two prospective occupants, a bank for the first floor and a dentist for the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor which is classified as a community facility. Accessory parking will be accessed using 2 lanes from Little Neck Parkway and vehicles will only be allowed to exit onto Northern Boulevard. There is a drive-through window planned for the bank with one of two lanes exiting onto Northern Blvd. Parking for the site will be

fenced, separating parking provided for tenants and customers of the other stores fronting Northern Boulevard. Customers for those locations will enter and exit the separate driveway cut which is on Little Neck Parkway about 50' north of the proposed entrance.

Discussion ensued and the greatest concern was with traffic in and out of the facility considering that the existing parking lot for the former Staples building is only about 50' further north and vehicles would exit onto Northern Boulevard and possibly try to turn left. Residents noted that the intersection is dangerous and busy. Mr. Rinesmith said that proper signs would be installed for No Left Turn onto Northern Boulevard. A gate will be installed and closed at night. The applicant has already applied to have the bus stop moved further west to allow egress from the building on Northern Boulevard. Joan Garippa requested, from the applicant the letter from NYCDOT and/or NYCT if they approved this move and an approval from owner of the property where the proposed bus stop would be relocated.

It was noted that there was already a curb cut on Northern Boulevard that is used for parking in front of the former diner site and that the Chase Bank across the street has a similar configuration to the one proposed by the applicant. Questions were asked about the feasibility of having more accessory parking spaces added to the site but it was pointed out by the applicant that parking spaces proposed are in conformance with that permitted by code. Committee members suggested that the developer look at not providing a bank drive-through and have all traffic enter and exit onto Little Neck Parkway.

The Committee voted to lay-over the application pending the applicant's investigation and consideration of eliminating plans for a drive-through window and only allow ingress and egress to its parking lot on Little Neck Parkway. Mr. Rinesmith stated that the CB public hearing can be postponed to June 10 since the BSA hearing would not be held until late June.

#### ADDENDUM

The Little Neck Zoning Committee met on Thursday June 6 to review the requested traffic study and an update on the planned bus stop relocation as discussed at the last meeting. Present at the meeting were Committee Chair Allan Palzer, members Gordon Keit, Chris Petallides, Laura James and community member, Ed Doster. Also present were Josh Rinesmith, Afshin Hedvat, the applicant, Matt Carmody, a traffic engineer and two architects. Two residents were present along with two local business owners.

Matt Carmody, representing VHB Engineering, stated that the study concluded that the planned traffic flow, entrances, exits and parking, fell within the acceptable guidelines of the Institute of Transportation Engineers' Trip Generation, 9th edition and City regulations.

One of the two lanes entering the site from Little Parkway will be dedicated to the drive-through ATM window located on the west side of the building. That driveway must have enough room for six cars to stack (wait) to use the ATM window. The second lane into the lot is for customers to park and enter the 3,600 sq.ft. bank's first floor entrance off the parking lot or walk to the front of the building. ATM stations will be located in the lobby.

Medical office clients will also use the entrance to park in the same lot. They will enter the second floor, 1,700 sq.ft. facility, using stairs or elevator in a separate ground floor enclosure connected by an enclosed bridge erected over the exit driveway.

There is a two-lane exit onto Northern Boulevard. One lane is for ATM use. The other is for through traffic. Mr. Rinesmith told members that they would clearly mark the exits as “**stop, right turn only**” for both lanes. The site’s architect stated that parking lot lighting (to be on during evening hours) would be deflected away from adjoining homeowners. Mr. Rinesmith told members that NYCT has issued conditional e-mail approval to relocate the existing bus stop further east, closer to Little Neck Parkway which will be more convenient to passengers and the preferred location for NYCT. This also resolves an issue that had existed with the two curb cuts that were in front of the diner which were less than 50’ from the corner.

Committee members and residents voiced strong safety concerns about two drivers being able to exit onto Northern Boulevard simultaneously. In addition, they expressed concern about site employees parking in the lot leaving customers and clients to fend for themselves for paid parking. It was strongly suggested that the site employers be encouraged to hire the 20 - 30 perspective employees locally. Mr. Rinesmith said that they would convey our employee hiring and parking concerns to the employers. A question was raised about the location of dumpsters. Mr. Rinesmith advised that they would be in the rear of the lot next to parking spot “6” and would be screened.

The consensus of the members was that this area was a parking lot for over 50 years and the continued use was appropriate. A motion was made to recommend approval of the BSA application for accessory parking in an R2A zone. The motion was passed unanimously.