



The City of New York

Queens Community Board 11

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

Jerry Iannece Chairperson / **Susan Seinfeld** District Manager

COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: All Board Members
FROM: Steve Behar, Co-Chair, Economic Development Committee
DATE: October 15, 2013

On Wednesday, October 9, 2013, the Economic Development Committee met. Present from the Committee were Co-Chairs, Jack Fried and Steve Behar, and committee members, Steve Newman, Daniel Baek, Jyothi Sriram, and Alim Gafar. In addition, CB11 Staff Member, Jane Bentivenga, was also in attendance.

The purpose of the meeting was to create a committee strategy and agenda for the 2013-2014 Community Board term. The committee had not met since the Douglaston Fairway project was debated.

The meeting was focused on what the committee could do to assist our community in economic development. The first discussion involved general issues of concern for our commercial areas. Alim Gafar suggested that we seek to develop start-up technology enterprises in the Bayside area. Mr. Gafar suggested that developing a start-up incubator in the area would bring young families with disposable incomes to the area. He suggested that as a way of increasing the foot traffic in our central business districts. A discussion ensued about the viability of such a plan. It was stated that such incubators usually are developed in more "hip" areas such as Williamsburg, Brooklyn and Long Island City. Mr. Gafar stated that the assets of Northeast Queens, such as our green space and our schools, could attract a different type of entrepreneur. Mr. Behar expressed concerns about overdevelopment and stated that any incubator that is created should be created in an existing building. Mr. Behar assigned Mr. Gafar the task of researching the viability of such a plan, meeting with potential landlords and then report his findings to the committee at its next meeting.

The discussion then turned to the specific central business districts within the community. The two main geographic areas that the committee focused on were Bayside Village and Little Neck/Douglaston. Mr. Behar stated that the business owners and the Executive Director of the Bayside Business Improvement District (the "BID") have complained about the parking situation on and around Bell Blvd. The discussion revolved around the parking meters and potentially expanding the Bayside municipal parking lot. The discussion about Bayside then turned to the amount of vacant stores on Bell Blvd. Mr. Behar stated that he believed there was a need to add businesses that would increase foot traffic during the day. He suggested a small supermarket would potentially increase foot traffic to the other stores and pointed out that there was no other supermarket between 48th Avenue and the Bay Terrace Shopping center. It was agreed that there is a need to increase foot traffic but there were mixed views on the need for a supermarket.

The committee then turned to Little Neck/Douglaston. The committee pointed out the amount of storefront vacancies on Northern Blvd. It was agreed that the redevelopment of the Northern Blvd corridor in Little Neck needs to be a focus of the committee. The committee also expressed concern about the commercial district in Douglaston Village near the LIRR train station. It was noted that Giftalicious recently closed in the former Douglaston Market storefront. There are now more vacant stores than open stores near that location. Douglaston Village was also determined to be another area of focus.

Going forward, the committee determined to focus on specific geographic areas and invite the commercial stakeholders of each area to the committee meeting. The next meeting will focus on Bayside Village. The committee will invite the BID and the Bayside Business Association to its next meeting. The committee will also have a future meeting regarding the Little Neck/Douglaston central business districts. It was suggested that the Douglaston Chamber of Commerce be invited to that meeting. The committee will seek out other commercial stakeholders in that area to invite.

The meeting was adjourned.

SUBMITTED BY STEVEN BEHAR