



COMMUNITY BOARD 11

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Chair*

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COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: All Board Members
FROM: Allan Palzer, Ad-Hoc Chair
Joint Meeting of the Transportation & Douglaston Zoning Committees
RE: Greenmarket Proposal in Douglaston
DATE: April 19, 2011

On Wednesday, April 13, 2011, the Transportation and Douglaston Zoning Committees met to discuss a proposal from GrowNYC to operate a Greenmarket in the roundabout adjacent to the Douglaston LIRR Station, on the north side of tracks, next to the intersection of 41st Avenue and 235th Street. Present were: Committee Members Allan Palzer, (who chaired the meeting in the absence of the committee chairs), Laura James, 3rd Vice Chair, Ed Doster, George Karahalidis, Steve Newman, Steve Behar, Chris Petallides, Paul DiBenedetto, Susan Cerezo, Joanne Ferrari, Joan Garippa, Lee Fiorino and Susan Seinfeld, District Manager. Michael Hurwitz, Director, and Cathy Chambers of Greenmarket, a program of GrowNYC, gave the presentation. Twenty-two residents from the community attended.

GrowNYC, a non-profit formed over 40 years ago, was started by a Mayoral decree by John Lindsay. It currently operates 53 Greenmarkets throughout the city involving 235 local producers, including the Queens County Farm Museum. Vendors are farmers who grow locally and sell directly to the public. Products include: fruit, vegetables, meats, poultry, seafood, and bakery items. Greenmarket proposes to have farmers sell products from up to 9 tents (displayed on schematics presented to the committee) in the roundabout adjacent to the Douglaston LIRR tracks and waiting room from July to Thanksgiving on Sundays from 8am to 3pm. Set up will start at 6:30 am and clean up and exit by 4 pm. Vendor trucks will be parked in the MTA parking lot (south side of tracks), where the public will also be allowed to park. GrowNYC is presenting its proposal to CB11 because it is applying for a street closure permit which will be reviewed by the Police and Fire Departments. A Greenmarket manager will be on site at all times to assure smooth operations. Shoppers will be urged to walk and bike to the market. At the end of this trial period, an evaluation to determine program continuance will be made.

The original request for a Greenmarket came from the Douglaston Local Development Corporation (LDC) which was formed to revitalize the business area and to preserve the station area's unique architecture and historical character. Jane Stewart, LDC spokesperson, presented letters of support from Councilman Halloran, The Douglaston Little Neck Historical Society and over 200 local resident signatures, including 31 residents in the Douglaston Bay Civic area.

Ms. Stewart said that LDC has negotiated parking fees with the lot operator, an MTA contractor, on the south side adjacent to rail road tracks of \$5.00 (\$7.50 regular price) with authentication for market shoppers and vendors. Commuters will not be hindered by market operations when boarding trains. An employee, from a business on the south side of tracks, stated that there may also be 12 parking spots available in her building. Shoppers can use the station tunnel to access the market from the south side. (**Chair Note:** Signs in the parking lot list charges: \$3 for Strawberry's and "free" for Il Toscano's restaurant diners. Parking lot capacity is 120 vehicles which can expand to 180 with valet service. The LIRR waiting room on the north side has a bicycle rack with 7 slots in back and one rest room which closes at 1:45 pm daily.)

Ann Jawin, Douglaston Bay Civic Association spokesperson, stated that she opposed the Greenmarket for health and safety reasons in her area of 66 residences. She said vehicular traffic generated by the market will block 41st Ave and shoppers will park in front of residences as commuters do on weekdays. She suggested that the Greenmarket locate to the roundabout on the south side. (**Chair Note:** North roundabout is located next to intersection of 41st Ave. and 235th St. (both 42' wide). These streets allow two-way traffic which bypasses the roundabout. The south side roundabout configuration differs - 235th St. feeds directly into it and traffic must go in and around it in order to avoid dead ending and return south as well as driving into the parking lot.

Discussion and general concerns with parking issues were also raised by board members. Steven Behar asked that parking alternatives continue to be looked for and mitigated as much as possible. It was suggested that after Sunday Church services, the three churches in the area who are aware of the proposal, make their parking lots available to shoppers. Steve Newman pointed out that additional parking, prohibited on school days, would be freed up. It was requested that more information about parking mitigation be presented at the Public Hearing.

A question as to why a Greenmarket was even necessary with more than five supermarkets already in the area came up. It was pointed out that the Greenmarket will offer only fresh products grown locally at competitive prices.

A vote of the Committee members was taken and the approval was unanimous. Lee Fiorino voted present, not voting, as she has been involved with the planning of the proposal.