



Queens Community Board 13
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Helen Marshall
Borough President

Bryan J. Block
Chairman

Barry Grodenchik
Deputy Borough President

Lawrence McClean
District Manager

BOARD MINUTES

February 28, 2011

St. Clare's RC Church

137-25 Brookville Boulevard

Rosedale New York 11422

Attendance: Angela Augugliaro, Isa Avery, Corey Bearak, Bryan Block, Verdell N. Boncoeur, Tanya Cruz, Bruno DeFrancheschi, James Delaney, Charles Farruggia, Jack Friedman, Anthony Greene, James Gulston, Richard Hellenbrecht, Lloyd Hicks, Bonnie Huie, Kangela Moore, Nagassar Ramgarib, Anup Ramnauth, Peter Richards, Ashok, Satkalmi, Sanu Thomas, Jackie L. Wilson (on assignment for Board) Derrick Warmington, Gerald Wind, George Woolsey, Helene Zaro.

Absent: Victor Carew, Matthew Chacko, Rose Daddario, Bess DeBetham, Samuel Elliott, Seymour Finkelstein, Andrea A. Foy, Michael Gordon, Edward Harap, Kinsley Jabouin, Susan M. Noreika, Jonathan Raines, William Riker, Paul Rubinfeld, Swaranjit Singh.

Elected Officials/ representatives of Elected Officials

District Leader Jacqueline Boyce, Joe Goldbloom representing Councilman Leroy Comrie, Jacqueline Boyce representing Senator Shirley Huntley, Jerry LaMura representing Borough President Helen Marshall, Jeong-ah Choi, Queens Bourough Hall, Zoe Walthous representing Senator Tony Avella, Norman Jones representing Assemblywoman Michele Titus, Liz Errico Dept. of City Planning-Queens, Ali Najmi representing Councilman Mark Weprin, Anthony Lemma representing Assemblyman David Weprin, Leroy Manuel State Committeeman 33 AD.

Staff: District Manager Lawrence T. McClean, Stephanie Rainkie, Community Coordinator, Maxine Brannon, Community Associate.

The meeting was called to order at 7:45 PM by the Chairman Bryan Block.

Mr. Block announced that the CCRB was scheduled to speak this evening but due to illness had to cancel, we will reschedule possibly next month.

Chairman's Report

Mr. Block stated that the Land Use Committee met on February 7th. On February 10th Mr. Block attended the Cambria Heights Civic Assn. meeting . On February 15th there was a Public Hearing on a ULURP item at Alpha Phi Alpha Center in Cambria Heights. The Public Safety Committee met on February 17th chaired by Jonathan Raines. The 105 Precinct Community Council met on February 23rd. Mr. Block attended the Queens Village Republication Dinner at Antun's in honor of former State Senator Frank Padavan.

Motion was made to accept the Chair's report by Tanya Cruz and seconded by George Woolsey.

District Manager's Report

Mr. McClean discussed the contents of the packet that was sent out to the Board members and the elected officials. Included in the packet was the City's preliminary response to our budget priorities that were submitted in November. Many of our requests were answered responded to by the city saying "No funds available", we are reaching to the Councilmen and the Borough President to push some of our Capital priorities, especially with the sewer projects. Some things that are encouraging are that the Board voted to build a library in Springfield Gardens. The Office of Management and Budget supports that request. They also said that there is money for expansion and upgrade on the Bellerose and Rosedale libraries. Councilman Comrie put in \$2,000,000 for the renovation of the Cambria Heights library that is about to state. On the 9th of February, the Youth Committee held a meeting at Antun's with NASA, to discuss some a program for school children on the Space Program. It is important to understand that the Youth Committee is working toward bringing awareness of different programs into our community.

Tonight they are having another meeting on the closing of IS231 on Springfield Boulevard and the Conduit. Jackie Wilson is representing our Board at that meeting, and will express that Board's position in the closing of any school.

We were advised by the Department of Transportation about the construction on the belt Parkway in Brooklyn, this is a six year project. During the rush hour, traffic backs up all the way to Queens, to the Cross Island Parkway because the Belt is down to one lane of traffic.

Mr. McClean asked those present to write down the date, May 28th, there was a presentation last month by Detective Cooper of the 105 Precinct about bicycle safety. At the time, Mr. McClean said he had become aware that the Department of Transportation had free bicycle helmets available. The arrangements have been made that on Saturday, May 28th, at the 105 Precinct, 92-08 222 Street, there will be a "Bike Safety Day". At this point in time we know that DOT will be there with helmets for adults as well as children. Long Island Jewish Hospital is initially committed to give children's helmets away. There will be bicycle etchings (ID numbers will be attached to the bicycles by the Precinct). Councilman Comrie's office is providing experts in showing young people and adults how to safely ride a bicycle. We are planning to use the Precinct parking lot for this event, if it should rain that day, the event will be moved inside the Precinct. We will have fliers done in the next few weeks, May 28th Bike Safety Day at the 105

Precinct. The event will be co-sponsored by the 105 Precinct, Community Board 13 Youth and transportation Committees, the Department of Transportation, Councilman Comrie and Long Island Jewish Hospital.

A motion was made to accept Mr. McClean's report by Richard Hellenbrecht and seconded by Kangela Moore. Ms. Moore made a correction to Mr. McClean's report, the presenter at the Antun's meeting from NASA was Joan Brown, Diane Crean was ill and could not make the meeting.

Councilman Mark Weprin spoke to the Board about the tough times we are experiencing with cutback threats to teachers, Senior Citizen Centers being closed. The Councilman said that he hopes that these threats are being made just to alarm people. Councilman Weprin said that a system must be devised on how to decide which teachers are not performing, if test scores are going up, the teacher must be good, who is going to make these decisions? The less teachers we have the larger the size of the class.

The Councilman stated that the Smoking Bill did pass, according to this law, there is no smoking in parks, or in public areas such as beaches. This law will be enforced by the Parks Enforcement Police, not Police Officers. Due to this law, hopefully there will be less and less smoking in the city.

Councilman Weprin's office is located at 73 Avenue and Bell Boulevard. Charles Farruggia thanked the Councilman for his efforts for a turn lane at Jericho Turnpike and Little Neck Parkway. Richard Hellenbrecht mentioned that the areas of Bellerose and Floral Park are under study for rezoning and that they are looking for the Councilman's leadership and guidance in moving this along as quickly as possible. Derrick Warmington asked if government officials considered education a national investment and if so, are teachers an intricate part of that investment?

Councilman Weprin said that he attended public school and his children attend public schools and indeed teachers are the most important part of a child's education and that even today most of us can remember a great teacher we had back in school.

Richard Hellenbrecht, Chair of the Land Use Committee presided over the next item which was ULURP # 100342ZMQ 226-01 Linden Boulevard, this parcel is adjacent to the Cambria Heights Community Garden. This community garden is sponsored by Community Board 13, the Cambria heights Civic Association, Assemblywoman Barbara Clark and Councilman Leroy Comrie. Mr. Hellenbrecht announced that this is a continued public hearing which was started on February 15, 2011 at the Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Center.

The architect for this proposed item is Gerry Caliendo, and the proposal is to build a strip of stores. These building will affect the amount of sunlight on the Community Garden. There are several vacant buildings along Linden Boulevard at this time, and community is wondering what the purpose of these stores would be. There would be increased traffic in the area as well.

Mr. Caliendo was the next speaker. He stated that this application is a zoning change, the proposal is to extend the existing commercial zone along Linden Boulevard between 226 Street and 227 Street. They are proposing to extend this commercial zone to the left of the Community Garden. They are proposing to build a one story commercial retail building.

Mr. Caliendo said that they reached out to the community, the Councilman, and had numerous meetings with the Land Use Committee as well as the Cambria Heights Civic Association and tried to answer all their questions.

Mr. Hellenbrecht asked if there were any questions or comments at this time. Kangela Moore said that she attended the meeting and said that she felt the community was very passionate about this not going through and being as she was there she wanted to Board to know how the community felt.

Derrick Warmington stated that Mr. Caliendo is hoping that the community will support This but if the community does not want this type of investment there, the community will not support this venture. He stated that it is possible that these buildings will remain vacant and become an eye-sore to the community.

Mr. Caliendo said that he feels these buildings will be occupied because they are will be new buildings and will have appeal to a potential tenant over the existing old vacant buildings along Linden Boulevard.

Mr. Warmington stated that there was never a study done to see what kind of business was needed along Linden Boulevard, he assumes that if a pawnbroker comes into the community and the owners are desperate to rent, or possibly a check cashing establishment. These are things the community does not want, who will decide who your tenants will be?

Mr. Hellenbrecht said that there are several possible tenants that have been agreed to not renting the building to, pawnbrokers and check cashing are two of them.

Jack Friedman inquired as to how many jobs will be created by building these stores.

Mr. Caliendo said that this is local retail, obviously whomever worked there might own the business. This is not a Walmart, this is a small store in a local community.

Bonnie Huie asked where the garden is in relation to the building. The answer was that it is adjacent to the east wall of the building and about a third of the garden will be shaded late in the afternoon. The garden itself will not be changed in any way.

Mr. Ramgarib said that he sees this issue from time to time, the developer/architect comes to the Board to request a waiver. If the Civic Association does not want this building there, then he will vote against it.

Mr. Hellenbrecht said that this is currently a commercial use.

Mr. Hellenbrecht stated that the developers have other buildings in the Bronx. Representatives from Assemblywoman Barbara Clark's office said that the Assemblywoman is opposed to this. Councilman Comrie opposed this as well as the representatives of the Brooklyn-Queens Land

Trust. Mr. Block stated that we had letters from the Trust for Public Land and also Assemblywoman Barbara Clark.

Joe Goldbloom representing Councilman Leroy Comrie stated that Cambria Heights fought very hard for this garden. The Councilman sees no future in this project at this time, the Councilman is opposed to it at this stage.

Peter Richards asked what the position of the Land Use Committee was. Mr. Hellenbrecht said that the Land Use Committee goes along with the Community, they are in opposition.

Tania Cruz made a motion to oppose the project. It was seconded by Gerry Wind. The vote was explained, for the project not to go forward vote YES, if you approve of the project Vote NO.

The roll was called, there were 22 yes votes, 1 no vote, 2 abstentions. The motion carried.

The Chairman, Bryan Block introduced Public Advocate Bill DeBlasio. The Public Advocate explained what his office does and some of the issues they are working on. He stated that his office has a good relationship with Community Boards. The top city officials are the Mayor, the Comptroller and the Public Advocate, the Advocate is the watchdog over the whole city. The Public Advocate has a seat on the City Planning Commission, on the Pension Board, he introduces legislation in the Council, and he is next in line succession to the Mayor. He feels that working with Community Boards and community leaders to figure out what they need for the future is very important. He was in the City Council for eight years.

Mr. DeBlasio stated that the City is doing well, but there will be cuts. The Mayor says 6000 teachers will be cut, that is not the only way to handle the situation. The last thing that should be cut are classroom teachers. Child Care Centers should not be cut either, early childhood education is the best way to give a child a chance to succeed in school. The Mayor has a plan to close permanently 17 Child Care Centers exclusively in areas of lower income.

A brief question and answer period followed. Sanu Thomas thanked the Public Advocate for coming to our meeting, and asked about the city's relationship with small businesses.

The Public Advocate stated that the city has a contradictory stance, we say we want small businesses and then we create so many different kinds of fines and penalties and red tape that makes it hard for small businesses to survive. The Dept. of Buildings is a great example, the Dept. of Sanitation, they should lighten up on small business, his office is working on this. If you have a small business or know of someone who has and is having a problem with any city agency, please contact the Public Advocate's office.

The City of New York has tremendous economic power that could be applied to our communities but isn't. We purchase about \$15 billion worth of goods and services each year. The City also has \$110 billion in investments controlled by the people of NYC through the pension fund boards.

Bonnie Huie asked what is the chance of Walmart coming into the city? The Public Advocate said that he is very biased, he feels that Walmart will wipe out small businesses.

In Chicago, Walmart opened in 2006, 18 months later 82 local businesses had closed.

Walmart lowers their prices and keep them there until they drive out small businesses and then bring their prices back up. Walmart has low or no benefit jobs, low salaries, and destroys small business.

Derrick Warmington said that in the light of cutting teachers, closing schools, is this being done for a take over by Charter Schools?

The Public Advocate said that this is a key question going through the city, the Dept. of Education's desire to close the schools. Some schools need to be closed, but Charter Schools are not perfect and not always the solution, they have a reputation of not taking Special Education children, and taking children that are in better academic shape.

Charlton D'souza, a community activist asked about the Metro-card, and also that if a bus driver reports out sick, people are left waiting for a bus for three or four hours at night.

Mr. D'souza has spoken to many of the officials at the MTA about this problem. Mr. De Blasio said that he had not heard about this but he has a meeting with the MTA next week and will inquire about it.

AnnMarie from the Queens Chronicle asked about "The Worst Landlords Watch List".

The Public Advocate said that they have what is called a "Worst Landlords Watch List", most landlords in the city, bog or small, do their jobs. There are a substantial number of bad ones, they leave their tenants without heat or hot water, there are buildings that aren't safe, where locks don't work, where there is mold on the walls which can breed respiratory diseases. There are over 400 buildings where there is profound health and safety violations in large numbers, these buildings have been put on a watch list. These buildings exist in all five boroughs. The Advocates office tries to organize a tenant's association, they go to the city to try to have the landlord brought into housing court for these violations. The Public Advocate said that he sponsored something called the HEAT ACT which will be going before the City Council. This act would increase penalties so that any landlord not providing heat and hot water will have to pay a serious penalty. If you know of a building where this is happening, the Advocates office wants to know about it.

Dwight Johnson from Laurelton asked about the fines that were levied on the landlords and how successful the Advocates office was in collecting them and could this money be used to keep the schools open.

Mr. De Blasio said that they have had more success from public pressure than in collecting the fines. He would like to change the laws in Albany so that landlords would have to pay at least a minimum fine, the way things are now, the landlords ignore the fines for as long as possible and then go to court and bargain to pay a lower amount.

Patrick Jenkins – Community Outreach for Racino

The Racino will be opening in mid-summer, the website is www.rwnework.com

You can look under the career section and see what jobs are available.

There is also a section for vendors, there is a section for construction companies. He will be coming back in the near future to give an update on the Racino. Their office is at 110-00 Rockaway Boulevard, South Ozone Park.

Mr. Block said that he will be asking Mr. Hellenbrecht, the Land Use Chair, to speak about the Regional Alliance with regards to Delta. These are projects that are going on in this community, everyone is talking about jobs. Mr. Hellenbrecht will give us an update next month.

Mr. Hellenbrecht stated that the gas station on 246 Street and the Conduit will be coming back to us, it had been laid over because there were problems with the maintenance, graffiti and keeping the grounds clean, the cars that were being worked on were being parked out in the community. They asked for a variance extension, we explained our concerns about what was going on, they are coming back to a Land Use Meeting on March 7th. If anyone is in the neighborhood of the South Conduit and 246 Street keep an eye on what's going on.

Patricia Oliver speaking on behalf of the Springfield Gardens Taxpayers had information on the "hot sheets motel" The motel is under construction again, they have a court date March 9th. They are asking the community to call the elected officials to let them know that they are requesting their help. This motel is in the area of six schools.

Peter Richards spoke on the Parks Committee Meeting. Mr. Richards said that the Parks Committee met on February 24th. They met on three issues, the Capital Budget priorities was the most important. In Queens there are 375,000 trees, and in Community Board 13 there are 175,000 of them. They have requested a pruning contract, so that these many trees can be inspected and proper care be taken to prune and remove trees as needed. NYC parks Department has turned down this request because of insufficient funds. The Committee took the position that if there is any money in the budget for pruning in Queens, whatever the amount, we should get 46% of it. The committee is also requesting that the elected officials of this Board area possibly come forward with some funding.

Mr. Richards spoke on the Green Streets triangle proposal that was requested to be named after Robert Clabby, a longtime Bellerose community activist. This was originally being handled by the Transportation Committee, and was sent to the Parks Committee, and now is going back to the Transportation Committee because DOT handles this particular parcel of land.

Mr. Richards spoke on the renovation of a playground at 238 Street and 120 Avenue in Cambria Heights. The presentation submitted by the Parks Department detailed the layout, the structure and surrounding trees and landscape around the playground.

The committee agreed that the playground appeared to be feasible and practical. The committee recommended that the presentation should be made to the Community Board on March 28th. The committee recommended that the civic groups, residents and public schools in the immediate neighborhood be notified, and be given the opportunity to assist Parks in implementing this recommendation.

This report was accepted by Lloyd Hicks and seconded by Jerry Wind.

Tanya Cruz, Chair of the Transportation Committee gave the committee report. One of their main concerns is the lack of buses keeping on schedule. Ms. Cruz spoke to Joe Raskin of the MTA, who said that sometimes if a driver is not at work, they take the bus out of service. They have spoken about bringing back the Q79, and possibly extending the Q36 to pick up the ridership of at least 400 people. They invited Mr. Friedrich to their meeting on Tuesday to discuss this further.

Ms. Cruz discussed Intro 370. DOT has been directed by the City Council to publish all crashes and fatalities in a timely manner on their website on a weekly basis, it will be located on the DOT website within the next 60 days, as well as the NYPD website.

They are also requesting that a detailed report be given when a request for a traffic light or STOP sign is denied. DOT has been compelled to do a crash- study every five years where they have to identify all of the high deaths in traffic incidents within the community. The Deputy Borough Commissioner, Maura McCarthy for Queens, has chosen to utilize Community Boards as a means to find out locations. Ms. Cruz will check with the NYPD to see if they will actually be giving the Board those reports.

This report was accepted by Peter Richard and seconded by Nagassar Ramgarib.

Bonnie Huie announced that they will be revamping the Health Committee.

Mr. Block recognized the representatives of the elected officials that were present.

Community Speaking Time:

Paul Martin complained about the fact that the motel was under construction once again.

Mr. Block stated that the Dept. of Buildings rescinded the permit, that is where we stand at this point. Mr. Martin stated that the Community Board has been set up by the City Charter, and reports to the community. So why were they not informed about the motel?

Mr. Block said that this Community Board has opposed this hot sheets motel, and its on record.

Mr. Block explained that the Community Board is advisory only, the elected officials and Buildings dept have the “teeth” to do more.

Mr. Martin also brought up the fact that the NYS Helmet Law applied only to children 1-13 years old, not adults as far as bicycle riding. Everyone on a motorcycle must wear a helmet.

Bill Perkins from the Rosedale Community thanked Fr. McBrien for having us as guests at St.Clare’s. Mr. Perkins said that the pastor of Christ Lutheran Church was involved in a hit & run accident. He was seriously injured, he is now out of the hospital. This leads to a issue we are having in this community involving traffic safety and speeding. There was a high speed accident at 149 Avenue and Memphis Avenue. They are asking for traffic studies and would like the support of the Community Board.

They also have a problem with “dollar vans” as far as regulations and speeding. This contributes to the accident problems in the area.

Noise control in the area. We are coming into the summer months, and there will be more parties. They would like a better response from the 105 Precinct.

They are requesting for four decades an additional precinct. They have a sub-station in Rosedale they have only two shifts and during the summer months they extend it to three shifts for the weekend periods.

Richard Hellenbrecht said that on behalf of the Queens Civic Congress they will be holding an Education Forum at the Bridge Home on March 21, 2011 at 7:30 PM co-sponsored by the Cambria Heights Civic Association.

Mr. Demetrice Mills of the Brooklyn Queens Land Trust thanked the community for opposing the strip of stores proposed for Linden Boulevard. There is only one Community Garden in Cambria Heights.

Mr. Charlton D'souza spoke on the fact that mail has been stolen from mailboxes on 224 Street off of Hempstead Avenue.

Mr. D'souza also spoke once again on the erratic bus service we have been experiencing in Queens.

Barbara Morris spoke on "Going Green in Queens 2011" on March 26, 2011 from 9:30am to 3:30pm. The location of this event is Al Oerter Recreational Center at 131-40 Fowler Avenue in Flushing. There will be free admission, free giveaways, free food, and fun!

Corey Bearak stated that he represents one of the bus driver unions and they are trying to get a hearing in Queens in April.

Bob Friedrich of Glen Oaks Village spoke on the rising property tax assessments for co-ops, especially in Queens. Mr. Friedrich said that unless the city pulls back, maintenance charges in his complex that now run \$600 to \$700 a month would skyrocket by 28%.

Mr. Friedrich asked the Community Board to pass a resolution objecting to the NYC Department of Finance's inflated property valuations that show double and triple digits, single year increases in many co-ops in eastern Queens.

Bryan Block suggested that this issue be turned over to the Land Use Committee.

Corey Bearak stated that the Queens Civic Congress has had a proposal that's in its platform that would fix the problem. The people that are getting the most benefit out of this situation are the ones that live around the perimeter of Central Park.

Mr. Friedrich said that this goes into effect on July 1st.

Mr. McClean stated that there have been meetings about this in Bayside. Before we do a resolution we should find out what the elected officials are doing first.

The minutes of the December 2010 and January 2011 Board meetings were approved by Lloyd Hicks and seconded by Richard Hellenbrecht.

Meeting was adjourned 10 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Rainkie
Community Coordinator