



COMMUNITY BOARD # 4Q

Serving: Corona, Corona Heights, and Elmhurst

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Helen Marshall
Borough President

Louis Walker
Chairperson

Karen Koslowitz
Director of Community Boards

Richard Italiano
District Manager

COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING

DATE: TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2009

TIME: 7:30 P.M.

PLACE: FLANDERS FIELD POST #150
51-11 108 STREET
CORONA, NEW YORK

I. The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

II. The District Manager, Richard Italiano, took the roll call. A quorum was present.

III. Vote On The Minutes (April 7, 2009)

Mr. Tony Moreno made a motion, seconded by Ms. Lucy Schilero, to **accept** the minutes.

By a voice vote, the Board voted 28 in favor, 0 opposed, with 0 abstentions. Motion passed.

IV. REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON

The Chair read a letter from NYS Assembly Member Audrey Pheffer informing the Board of a very important meeting that will affect the quality of life for all Queens's residents. The New York State Cease and Desist List is scheduled to expire this summer. Without it, homeowners are not protected from solicitation by unscrupulous real estate brokers. This is why it is imperative for all Queens's residents to voice the need for the continuation of this program. A hearing is scheduled for Thursday, May 28, 2009, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., at P. S. 63, 90-15 Sutter Avenue, Ozone Park.

The District Manager explained he had received the same letter from the Department of State informing the Board the law for the Cease and Desist List for Queens County is scheduled to expire August 1, 2009. A public hearing will be held on May 28 at P. S. 63 (Old South School). Another hearing will be held on May 29 at the Queens High School of Teaching, 74-20 Commonwealth Blvd. Bellerose, New York. Community residents and public officials are encouraged to attend the public hearings to provide testimony and other evidence of intent and repeated solicitations by real estate brokers and their agents.

Next, the Chair read a letter from LIFT – Legal Information For Families Today. The Board was informed of an important new resource at LIFT called the Family Legal Center. The Center offers free legal information and social work services to parents and grandparents involved in child support, custody and visitation cases in New York City Family Court. LIFT is located at 350 Broadway, Suite 400, New York, NY. Telephone 646-613-9633 ext. 208 for assistance.

Next, the Chair spoke about the lack of attendance at the Board's sub-Committee meetings. It is disastrous that Board members feel that they can attend the one Board meeting monthly instead of one, two or possibly three meetings a month. It is particularly embarrassing to the Committee Chair to invite a guest speaker, and only the District Manager and Committee Chair are present. People will not attend committee meetings if they see no interest in them. In view of these facts, a decision was made by the Chair to combine committees together. Joint committee meetings will be held. More details will be forthcoming in September on which committees will be combined and when meetings will take place.

As an example, the Public Safety Committee will meet with the Transportation Committee on the same day at the same time--one committee behind the other. The combined Committees meeting would have semi-related interests. The Committee Chairs will remain the same and continue to chair their own meetings.

Mrs. Judy D'Andrea pointed out the Board's By-Laws may be affected by this change. The Chair agreed that the by-laws may need to be revised.

V. REPORT OF THE DISTRICT MANAGER

The District Manager reported on a kick-off dialogue project. Working in conjunction with Ms. Susie Tannenbaum at the Borough President's Office, the purpose of this project is to get civic organizations and religious groups in the district together to talk about issues: what needs to be resolved and what are the problems. By working together as a unified community, many issues can be solved. Even though there are a number of civic groups, each one is working independently of one another. In this way, all efforts would be unified.

Currently, the District Manager is working on compiling a list of community organizations in the district which may be interested. In a few weeks, a kick-off meeting is planned at the Board office. Out of the kick off meeting, a community forum is planned at Elmhurst Hospital in the fall. For the future, it would be a benefit to establish a centralized community calendar of all events in the district posted on the Board's website.

The District Manager asked the Board members to contact him with civic organizations to participate in this project. Furthermore, community based organizations are needed around the district either religious, different ethnic groups etc. to talk about common issues that can be solved together.

Next, the District Manager reported on a crane operation at P. S. 102, 55-24 Van Horn Street. A crane operation will be done to install five air conditioning units on school property. The delivery is scheduled for Saturday, May 9 and Sunday, May 10, from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The street will be closed due to the operation of a crane and hoisting equipment. Construction officers and flag men will be on site.

Also, on May 7 – 8, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., 100th Street between Martense Avenue and Lewis Avenue will be closed to vehicular traffic due to a crane operation at 54-09 100th Street. This closing has been approved by the NYC Department of Transportation.

Time Warner Cable will be upgrading the cable system on the east side of Junction Blvd. /opposite 59th Avenue. Excavation began on the street April 17 and should be completed May 15. The work outlined was to remove old pole.

From the NYC Dept. of Consumer Affairs, a public hearing will be held on Wednesday, May 13, at 2 p.m., at 66 John Street, 11th Floor, Manhattan on sidewalk cafes located, or to be located in the Board's district. The two cafes in our district on the agenda is Glodal Entertainment Group, 77-17 Queens Blvd., and Sabor Latino, Corp., 95-35 40 Road.

From the NYC Dept. of Health, H1N1 Flu: What New Yorkers Need to Know. Updates have been received daily on this condition also known as "swine flu". Information was distributed on this influenza virus. Good hygiene is essential.

Next, the District Manager reported on the 2009 Summer Youth Employment Programs. Applications were available if interested.

From the MTA, Bus Company Service Advisory starting Wednesday, April 1, 2009 to 2012 – Reconstruction of Sewer System, 108th Street – 62 Drive to the Horace Harding Expressway as follows:

Q23 Northbound: Bus Stop on 108th Street at 62 Drive will be made on 62 Drive west of 108th Street

Q38 Southbound: Bus Stop on 63 Road near side of 108th Street will be made on 108th Street between 63rd Road and 63rd Avenue

Bus Stop on 62 Drive east of 108th Street will be made on 62 Drive west of 108th Street

QM10-QM11 Westbound – Bus stops were also detoured.

**VI. PRESENTATION: MTA PROPOSED SERVICE CHANGES
JOSEPH RASKIN, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY AFFAIRS,
NYC TRANSIT**

Mr. Raskin asked for the Board's assistance in updating his mailing lists for accuracy and to ensure notices are received by the intended recipient. Contact Mr. Raskin at 1-646-252-2653 or e-mail joseph.raskin@nyct.com with updated information.

Regarding the current budget situation, Mr. Raskin reported both the Governor and the Mayor had issues about funding the MTA's capital budget. Initially, the fare increase proposed was 8%. Now talks stand at a 10% fare increase. More is coming, but as yet it is uncertain since legislation must pass through the Senate and the Assembly.

Mr. Raskin provided reasons why this situation evolved. Up until now, funding was fluid. About 10 years ago, surpluses were seen in the real estate market and the economy was good. At that point, the intermodal transit between bus and subways was instituted.

Due to the down turn in today's economy which had also affected the real estate market, there had not been an influx of funding into the MTA's treasury. Also, NYC transit has never been a profit making venture, which is one of the reasons the IRT and BMT went out of business. Those lines were privately operated until the 1940's. Moreover, a number of past mayors had never instituted a fare increase. Specific sources of income are now being identified to remedy the situation.

Changes affecting this area are more fare based, said Mr. Raskin. The only route change that would directly affect the Board is that the G train, which would not run to Continental Avenue at any time, noting presently it rarely does.

Riding the #7 to Queensboro Plaza and transferring to the W train, a Q train will be in its place between Queensboro Plaza and Canal Street, making the same stops. Riding further south, commuters would have to change to the R train or take 59th Street to the #4 or #5 trains.

Cuts affecting bus service in this area would be the Q48 bus, which would run a slightly less span of operation on Saturday evenings. The MTA bus company is proposing to eliminate the QM 23 and QM 22 buses.

Additionally, part time token booths would be closed; machines would service the public on 71st Avenue on Queens Blvd and 74th Street/Roosevelt Avenue on the Queens Blvd., Line and the #7 Train.

Other parts of the city, cuts would be more profound. At this point, though, the outcome is still uncertain.

At this point, Mr. Raskin took questions from the Board. Mr. Castro asked regarding staffing on the routes to be eliminated, would workers be reassigned or would they lose their jobs. Mr. Raskin replied staff would not lose their jobs. Savings may come in the form of furloughs and through other measures.

Mr. Nick Pennachio asked are there new negotiations with the TWU? Mr. Raskin responded the contract is coming up.

Mr. Moreno asked about bus service on the Q60. Mr. Raskin said to call the bus company.

The District Manager added when the private lines were taken over by the MTA. Many bus stops were removed from areas where they were once stops before. Questions/complaints from residents are being received about this at the Board office.

Mr. Raskin responded this needs to be addressed by the bus company.

Ms. Ann Pfoser Darby said information on the MTA's finances-- income and expenses and salaries should be made available to the public.

Ms. Clara Salas brought up the disparity of members who make up the MTA Board, pointing out there is only one minority Board member. Mr. Raskin said that it up to the Governor, Mayor, or County Executive to appoint members to serve on the Board.

Continuing with his report, Mr. Raskin reported when the economy fluctuates, it affects tax revenues and also how people ride the system.

The Chair asked how come the extension of the #7 Train to the Convention Center, the Long Island Railroad going into Grand Central and the Second Avenue subway lines have not been discussed.

Mr. Raskin responded in the matter of the Second Avenue and Long Island Railroad lines funding is from the federal budget—not the MTA. The funding for the #7 Train to the Convention Center is a city project, not an MTA project.

The District Manager inquired regarding the #7 Line, one of the Board's capital items is requesting maintenance on the #7 line structure, which runs through Boards 3 and 4. Is there any maintenance program for this?

Mr. Raskin replied yes. Painting the elevated structure had been started going as far as 103rd Street. Signal work and maintenance work on the line is also being done as well. The whole structure will be painted from Willets Point to 103rd Street.

VII. TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE:

Street Activity Permit Request

Reconsideration From the 04/07/2009 Meeting

53rd Avenue Block Party

On 53rd Avenue Between 111th Street & Corona Avenue

Change of Date from 7/4/09 to 7/11/09

Since Committee Chair Joseph DiMartino was not present, the District Manager presented the Committee report.

The organizers of this event have moved the block party to *July 18, 2009*. The District Manager said since it is a new street activity/street closing, police should be present.

Mrs. Judy D'Andrea brought up changes in the community and asked if there was a block association. The District Manager responded no. Just recently, Mrs. D'Andrea said there were shootings and murders on 54th Avenue & 111 Street, which is the next block over to the applicant, and she also pointed out the gang activity in the area.

Mrs. D'Andrea asked about the hours requested for the event. The District Manager responded the time frame is 2:00 p.m. to Midnight. Midnight is too late and unless the police can guarantee it ends at 10:00 p.m., the event should not be supported said Mrs. D'Andrea.

Discussion ensued on the midnight hour and the resulting noise. Mrs. D'Andrea cited an example of all night partying on 49th Avenue.

Mrs. D'Andrea said although block parties are a nice idea, there must be an established block association to work through.

The District Manager reported the application was submitted by an area resident with 45 resident signatures supporting the event.

Mrs. Judy D'Andrea made a motion, seconded by Mr. Alirio Orduna, to **deny** the application based on the following reasons: the Midnight hour was too late, and there was no established block association to be held accountable.

Before the vote was taken, Mrs. Helen Landaverde stated not every block has a block association, and the lack of the association does not mean a block is not a good neighbor. Discussion also ensued on the lateness of the closing time. Mrs. Landaverde continued if the event had good activities for the children; why not give it a chance, citing the 45 signatures supporting the event. Why ruin something that may be good for the community, she questioned.

The Chair pointed out if the event is for children, midnight is very late. The applicants should not have applied with that timetable if the event was for children.

Ms. Beth Moon Ray Ferguson said the age range of the children should be determined. And, she asked if the closing time can be amended?

The District Manager said there is not enough time according to the guidelines by the Street Activities Permit Office. The narrative submitted by the applicant was read to the Board.

More discussion ensued about the role of the police department and its responsibility in covering the event.

Mr. Stephen Castro pointed out our communities are very diverse, civic groups must come together to learn and understand one another. Sponsors of this event should have come to the Community Board to ask questions to ensure the safety of our community. Secondly since people would be coming in from everywhere, the event must be monitored. More responsibility is needed, which requires coming together, planning, and organizing so that people are aware and protected.

Through her extensive experience as a block association president, Mrs. Carmela George stated in groups only one person does the work; the others do not get involved. All must work together.

Mrs. Priscilla Carrow agreed a block association should be in place. By approving this application precedence is set, paving the way for other groups who do not work through block associations who would expect the same endorsement.

More discussion ensued.

At this point, the motion on the floor was repeated. Mrs. D'Andrea said the motion is to **deny** the application based on the hours of its operation, which are too long, and no responsible organization in charge for accountability.

Before the vote was taken, the Chair clarified the meaning of the vote. A yes vote on the motion means to deny, a no vote approves the permit. Before the vote was taken, however, the Chair explained this motion must be voted on before another motion may be given. By a roll call vote, the Board voted 19 yes, 5 no, 4 abstentions. Motion to **deny** passed.

At this point, the District Manager presented an upcoming street activity permit for a church event on either July 16 or July 23 for the Seventh Day Adventist Church, Woodside Avenue between 72 and 73 Streets. This is unique because it is a one block event which spans two Community Boards—Boards 2 & 4. Sign-offs is needed from both Community Boards.

TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION

Update on Parking C/O From The 4/27/09 Meeting

Renewal of Base License #B01738 – NY Saeta Car Service
102-54 43rd Avenue, Corona, NY 11368

The District Manager reported the base license renewal was submitted last month, but held over since more information on the parking was needed. Both the Base and its attorney were contacted and, as a result, a letter was received stating in addition to the parking lot at 104-32 45 Avenue, affiliated cars park inside the building at the same address when not on duty. Also, the number of affiliated cars was reduced to 39.

The District Manager said the Base would need parking for 20 cars; the C of O stated 12 cars. According to the letter, the Base stated the excess cars park inside the repair shop at night when it's not open.

The District Manager commented if the Board chose to approve the application, a stipulation can be added for the TLC to investigate the Base's parking lease.

Discussion ensued.

The Chair called for a motion. Ms. Clara Salas made a motion, seconded by Mr. Alirio Orduna, to **approve** the base renewal application. By a voice vote, the Board voted 26 in favor, 2 opposed, with 0 abstentions. Motion passed.

VIII. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Discussion and Vote on the Public Hearing Item. Conversion of 74th Street To A One-Way S/B Operation.

The Chair called for a motion to move either way on the subject matter.

Before the vote was taken, the District Manager read an excerpt from DOT’s Queens Commissioner’s letter to the residents that should the Board agree to the proposed change, DOT would investigate its feasibility.

Mr. Tony Moreno made a motion, seconded by Ms. Laraine Donohue to **approve** the change to convert 74th Street between Woodside Avenue and Queens Blvd from a two-way operation to a one-way southbound operation.

The Chair called for further discussion. The Board declined further discussion.

By a voice vote, the Board voted 28 in favor, 0 opposed with 0 abstentions. Motion passed.

IX. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Committee Chair Lucy Schilero reported on the following liquor licenses:

NEW APPLICANTS

<u>Establishment Name</u>	<u>Establishment Address</u>	<u>Committee Recommendation</u>
7532 Cellar Corp. Tavern Wine	75-32 Broadway Elmhurst, NY 11373	Denied. Hours of operation unclear. Seems to be open 24 hrs. History of prostitution at location. If new owner, further investigation needed. More info. required on open and closing time.
El Inca House Restaurant & Peruvian Rotisserie Chicken, Inc. Restaurant Wine	40-15 Junction Blvd. Corona, NY 11368	Denied. Under 500’ rule.
Shin Best Choice, Inc. Restaurant Wine	40-12 82 nd Street Jackson Heights, NY 11372	Approved

RENEWAL APPLICANTS

<u>Establishment Name</u>	<u>Establishment Address</u>	<u>Committee Recommendation</u>
82 nd Coatzingo Restaurant Corp. Restaurant Wine	40-18 82 nd Street Jackson Heights, NY 11372	Approved
Bodegon Asturias, Inc.	40-12 83 rd Street Elmhurst, NY 11373	Approved

RENEWAL APPLICANTS (cont'd)

<u>Establishment Name</u>	<u>Establishment Address</u>	<u>Committee Recommendation</u>
El Gauchito II Corp. Restaurant Wine	94-60 Corona Avenue Elmhurst, NY 11373	Approved
El Tenampa Restaurant- Mexport International Corp. Restaurant Wine	96-14 Roosevelt Avenue Corona, NY 11368	Denied One arrest for unreasonable noise. and sales for after hours. Applicant stated wants to stay open 24 hrs.
Mi Bakery Restaurant Restaurant Wine	40-43A Junction Blvd. Corona, NY 11368	Denied Under 500' Rule. No files received from SLA.
Michael & Dave Restaurant Restaurant Wine	43-01 Junction Blvd. Corona, NY 11368	Denied. No files received from SLA. Need info. on hours of operation. History of noise complaints.
Remote, Inc. Tavern Wine	83-21 Broadway Elmhurst, NY 11373	Approved
Rincon Sabroso Inc. Restaurant Wine	86-28 Roosevelt Avenue Jackson Heights, NY 11372	Approved
Tacos Mexico, Corp. Restaurant Wine	41-10 102 Street Corona, NY 11368	Denied Numerous history noise complaints.

Mr. Tom McKenzie made a motion, seconded by Mr. Stephen Castro, to **accept** the Committee's report as presented.

By a voice vote, the Board voted 28 in favor, 0 opposed, with 0 abstentions. Motion passed.

Mr. Tom McKenzie brought up a Point of Information. Krystal's on Queens Boulevard had been evicted. This establishment had been the site of a stabbing and murder.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Consumer Affairs

Committee Chair Helen Landaverde reported the next Consumer Affairs Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 12, at 7:00 p.m., at the Community Board 4 Office.

Mrs. Landaverde reported the owner of *Play* was in attendance requesting speaking time to make a statement on the denial of the establishment's requested sidewalk café. It was determined the letter can be read into the record.

The District Manager informed the Board *Play* had sent a letter in response to the Board's denial at last month's meeting of their request for an unenclosed sidewalk café.

Because it was rather lengthy, Mrs. Landaverde summarized the contents of the letter. Basically, the establishment is trying to change their image to be more family oriented, therefore, the need for the sidewalk café to promote its image. Because of the recession, it would also boost business.

The owner also owns a high end Hamburger Restaurant in Park Slope Brooklyn called Flipsters. They are looking to add this to the west side corner of the building and feel the outdoor café will be used primarily as the seating for Flipsters and only secondly by *Play* customers.

A Board member commented *Play* is not a family place. It is a place for 21 year old young adults to get drunk and hang out with friends and smoke.

The Chair called on the Board if any further action was necessary. The general consensus was no.

Before the next Committee report was presented, the District Manager reported on a letter from the Department of Transportation regarding the Art & Leather High School on 94th Street and Corona Avenue, a traffic light was requested by the District Manager for 94th Street & Corona Avenue and Junction Blvd. and 44th Avenue, however, the only way DOT would consider the installation of a traffic light at 94th Street is to convert the street to a one way operation. The Board did not agree to DOT's proposal. Although a traffic light is needed, the Board agreed the street should not go one way.

At this point, the *Environmental Committee* presented its report.

Committee Chair Tom McKenzie reported a Committee meeting was held on April 29. Two committee members were in attendance, and more members are needed. The Board is divided in four parts by the Long Island Railroad and Junction Blvd; NW and NE Corona and SW and SE Elmhurst. Mr. Diego Freire will overlook NE Corona; while Ms. Myrna Littlewort will cover SW Elmhurst and Committee Chair Tom McKenzie will cover SE Elmhurst as Area Coordinators.

It was suggested at the next District Cabinet meeting since residents use litter baskets for household garbage, a request be made to the Sanitation Superintendent to get more basket pick ups than the current two per week.

Next, For Sale cars without plates on city streets were addressed. Sanitation Superintendent John Quirk who had attended the District Cabinet meeting gave the Committee Chair a list of the cars marked. When the cars were stickered, none were removed after the owners took them away. Other cars with New Jersey temporary window stickers not filled in were not towed, even though such license stickers are illegal unless filled out. Mr. Quirk said Sanitation does not have tow cars to do the job but suggested at a District Cabinet meeting to find out if Police Fleet Services can provide tow cars to do this.

Noise was discussed as summer approaches. Committee hopes were raised that Police may be more responsive to all night, every night party noise in the community.

EPA has shown much concern and is responding to truck compressor and motor running pollution as well as resulting noise.

McDonald's Restaurant and Strauss Stores both received litter summonses. McDonald's new licensee removed three curbside litter baskets which were in place for the last 35 years. Customers litter ends up in the street and is blown in front of homes. The local church property opposite McDonald's Restaurant had received a \$130 summons for McDonald's litter blown on their sidewalk. The Committee Chair suggested to the Church Pastor to write to the company and demand repayment for the fine.

It should be noted the new operator of McDonald's Restaurant does not comply with the Board of Standards and Appeals previous rulings by having removed speed bump, mirror and warning sign at drive-thru as well as failure to clean street. All these were once obeyed by previous operator.

It was also suggested that Police issue tickets for street car repairs at Strauss Store. Suggestion to be taken up at District Cabinet meeting with Police Commander. Other such areas having similar businesses to be monitored by Committee's Area Coordinators.

The Committee Chair expressed optimism more members would be in attendance at the next Committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday, May 27.

Health

Committee Chair Priscilla Carrow reported the Health Committee met on April 29. No committee members were in attendance. The guest speaker was the Start Up Director for Baby's First Home who presented information on the organization.

Baby's First Home will be the first shelter for homeless teen mothers who have aged out of the foster care system in New York City and its surrounding boroughs. It is slated to be a two year supportive housing unit for five mothers ages 17-21 and their children. Their mission is to provide a nurturing environment and community focus structure to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty, and also to empower young mothers to create independent and fulfilling lives for themselves and their families. Participant young mothers are NYU students who have had babies.

Recently, a six-unit building in Elmhurst has been donated to a 501c(3) not for profit organization at 94-16 46th Avenue.

Additionally, Committee Chair Carrow reported the staff will consist of two full time staff members and three part time employees. Of which there will be an Executive Director, Live In House Manager and a Psychologist. In addition, Baby's First Home will proactively recruit volunteers to supplement services for the families such as babysitting and leading workshops.

There will be no regular visiting hours for the men. If a father insists on visiting his child or girlfriend at the house, he must first schedule a meeting with the staff. Workshops will, however, be provided for fathers and families of the residents. The baby's father is invited to any workshop that involves their role as a parent.

The District Manager clarified the organization is seeking community support and may also appear before the ULURP Committee for a BSA C/O special permit for the property.

The Board will consist of a diverse group of members who are leaders and experts in the field of homeless services, teen pregnancy, business and child welfare and representatives from the Corona and Elmhurst communities.

An informational packet was passed out to the Board members.

The District Manager called on the Board to either support the organization or for representatives to make a presentation at the June CB meeting. The general consensus was for the organization to present information at the next meeting of the Board.

Parks

Committee Chair Tony Caminiti reported on the Corona Golf Playground Ribbon Cutting Ceremony held on April 27, 2009. The Playground is located at 109th Street between 46th Avenue and 47th Avenue at 111th Street, Corona.

The principal speakers were Adrian Benepe, Commissioner of Parks, Hon. Helen Marshall, Queens Borough President, and Richard Italiano, CB 4 District Manager. In attendance were Queens Parks Commissioner Dorothy Lewandowski, students of P. S. 28 and Joanne Amagrande from the Parks Department.

Borough President Helen Marshall had allocated \$2,235,000 for the reconstruction of the playground. The playground features one full basketball court and four half courts as well as two volleyball courts. Two new seating areas include benches, game tables and new water fountains. New fences and a flagpole were also reconstructed and paving was replaced.

At the dedication, Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe had asked the District Manager why the playground was called the Corona Golf Playground. The District Manager researched the matter and reported on the findings. Since the District Manager could not find an old photo of the site, the Board's Historian Tom McKenzie was asked to assist.

Next, the District Manager reported there a move in Queens in bring the Newtown Pippin apple back to its Queens roots. The Newtown Pippin, which bears green apples, was first cultivated in present day Elmhurst in the early 1700's and was a favorite snack of Thomas Jefferson. With the help from the city Parks Department, the trees are being planted in Two Coves Community Garden in Astoria, King Manor Museum in Jamaica, Intermediate School 73 in Maspeth and the Queens Botanical Garden in Flushing. Locations for planting are being sought in Elmhurst, however, the Parks Department rejected the idea for Elmhurst Park because fruit trees require much maintenance. But any resident who wants a tree planted on their property, the Parks Department will supply a tree. Contact the Board office for more information.

Postal

Committee Chair Stephen Castro reported the price of a postal stamp will increase to 44 cents on May 11, 2009 unless the Forever Stamp is used.

The U. S. Postal Service has lost a great deal of business due to the economic downturn. Most businesses, credit card companies, banks, and department stores no longer send out weekly/daily advertisements. Only if a customer uses his/her credit card frequently or if they buy on a regular basis using credit cards, they will receive literature. If not, literature is not sent out which has added to the lost revenue by the Postal Service. Because of the decline of advertising mailers and consumer usage of other services, it has led to the Postmaster General suggesting cutting mail delivery from six to five days, which is up to Washington.

Next month, Mr. Castro will provide information on the USPS's website to purchase stamps or to send/pick up a package.

ULURP & Zoning

Committee Chair Miriam Levenson reported the Committee will meet on May 19 at the Queens Center Mall, Management Office. Notices will be sent providing details.

Youth

Committee Chair Clara Salas reported the Committee will meet May 26 at Elmhurst Hospital. Invited guest speakers are Mr. Joseph Lisa, Principal IS 61 Leonardo DaVinci School to present the school campus idea, and the Youth Initiatives NYC Coalition for a Smoke Free Environment, pending confirmation.

XI. REPORT OF THE LEGISLATORS

Council Member Julissa Ferreras thanked the Board for its help through her transition. Serving as Council Member for 43 days, she is excited for the opportunity to serve. She was elected on February 24 and certified on March 17.

The District Office is located at 32-33A Junction Blvd. The hours of operation are Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.--on Tuesday until 8:00 p.m. to accommodate working families.

Council Member Ferreras spoke about the illegal conversion of two family homes that provide dormitory style shelters, where the Department of Homeless Services is referring clients. One has been identified and two in Community Board 3. Board members were urged to keep an eye out and to report those unsafe dwellings to Council Member Ferreras. Government subsidized programs are paying for those illegal conversions.

An open house and ribbon cutting ceremony will be held at the District Office towards the end of the month. Details will be forthcoming.

Growing up in the neighborhood and working hard, Council Member Ferreras appreciated the opportunity to represent the neighborhood, and thanked the Board and the community for its support to make her dream come true.

Next, Council Member Eric Gioia spoke about access to food stamps. A household that earns \$24,000/year or less with children qualifies for food stamps and should apply.

The mega discount store Costco, where a shopper can get big discounts on fresh produce, does not accept food stamps and they are now opening another store in East Harlem where 33,000 people receive food stamps. It is the highest zip code in Manhattan for food stamp recipients. The Council Member is adamant the store starts accepting food stamps. Healthy food would be obtainable to those who otherwise could not afford it.

Council Member Gioia is sending a clear message to Costco--*If you want to do business in New York, you must do business with all New Yorkers.* It's wrong for the store to accept credit cards, but not food stamp cards.

In so many neighborhoods, supermarkets are closing down, and it is difficult to find fresh produce. The face of poverty in New York is an obese child. Because of such poor diets, Type II diabetes is prevalent in many children.

In a study released from Columbia last week on fast food outlets, the obesity rate jumps 6% if the outlet was located within 500' of a school.

Therefore, Council Member Gioia had proposed legislation to create a safe harbor around schools to ban fast food restaurants within 500' of a school.

People who qualify for food stamps but do not receive them; Costco and other mega discount stores that do not accept food stamps; and the proliferation of fast food restaurants all create a public health threat, which can be corrected.

In light of those facts, Council Member Gioia urged the Board to join him in his efforts to expand access to food stamps and to require Costco to accept them.

Next, Minister Terry Lewis, Special Assistant to Senator Hiram Monserrate, reported on the bed bug epidemic. Today, the Senator introduced and sponsored a bill (S. 4071), to prevent the consumer from being infected by bed bugs. Bed bug complaints have risen 50 times over the past five years, and this epidemic is occurring country-wide. As a health issue and serious problem, the new Bill is to amend the general business law so that manufacturers and sellers of mattresses, both new and used, must abide by new laws in terms of selling,

transporting, and storing mattresses. Once a mattress leaves the store as a new item and is returned within 30 days, it cannot be resold new.

New penalties will be imposed on sellers of mattresses infested with bed bugs. New laws will ensure that manufacturers and the sellers will be monitored by the State Department bi-annually and that requirements are met so that mattresses are not sent out infested with bed bugs.

Penalties include reimbursement to the consumer for the cost of the mattress, the cost of sanitizing and medical expenses incurred as a result of bed bug bites.

Some of the major hotels across the country are experiencing the bed bug epidemic. If you have a problem with bed bugs, contact 311, get the reference number, and 311 will contact the Health Dept. who will contact the State Department to follow up.

Any issues or problems contact the Senator's Office of Constituent Services. Minister Lewis will be happy to assist you.

Mr. Tony Moreno asked Minister Lewis to notify the Senator to continue the Cease and Desist List.

XII. PUBLIC FORUM

Mr. Raul Gordillo, Community Affairs Associate, Government & Community Affairs, Queens Library, reported on the impact of severe budget cuts on the Library.

Two years ago, restoration of the six day service in the 2008 budget was a clear victory for Queens. However, if reductions are implemented, the Library would have to reduce service to a maximum of 5 days a week. Some branches would be open even less.

Saturday and Sunday service would be in serious jeopardy.

40,000 fewer books would be purchased,

These cuts would weaken service in every community library. Some libraries would close three additional days; some more than four days a week. All library services would suffer as well.

In Fiscal Year 2009, the Library has already sustained two budget cuts—July 1, 2008 (\$2,829,000). An additional budget reduction was made in December, 2008 for \$2,134,000. The Library is now facing a budget reduction of \$17,000,000.

Six day service is trying to be saved, but it would be impossible if additional reductions are implemented.

Before concluding his presentation, Mr. Gordillo urged all to log on to the Library's website to sign up for the petition to reduce budget cuts.

At this point, the Chair announced the Executive Committee will meet before the end of the month to discuss a budget problem. Additionally, the next meeting of the Board scheduled for June 2 will be held at St. Paul's Community Center.

Mr. Alirio Orduna announced the Youth Cadets had submitted a video to the Tribeca Film Festival called "Our Youth, Our Story. Two thousand videos were submitted and only eleven were selected. Last Thursday, they had attended the premiere.

Mr. Albert Perna announced a fundraiser will be held to assist the earthquake victims in Italy on Saturday, May 9, at William F. Moore Park on 108 Street. All were invited to come and join the festivities!

There being no further business, Ms. Laraine Donohue made a motion, seconded by Mr. Albert Perna, to adjourn. Motion adjourned at 9:40 p.m.