

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 & COMMUNITY BOARD #11 SPECIAL PUBLIC HEARING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 29, 2009
HOLY CROSS HIGH SCHOOL
26-20 FRANCIS LEWIS BOULEVARD
FLUSHING, NEW YORK

PRESENT- COMMUNITY BOARD #7 BOARD MEMBERS

John Barone	Pablo Hernandez	Millicent O'Meally
Arthur Barragan	Adrian Joyce	Kris Ram
Eugene Brennan	Eugene Kelty	Michael Sais
John Byas	Roeme Kim	Marc Schiffman
Tyler Cassell	Donald Kirchhofer	Warren Schreiber
Chin-Hsiang Chiang	Peter Koo	Joseph Sweeney
Michael Chiew	Chanwoo Lee	Carlos Talisaysay
Rocco D'Erasmus	Robert LoPinto	Nicholas Tweed
Joseph Femenia	Nicholas Miglino	Arnold Wagner
Joseph Governale	Kim Ohanian	Linna Yu

ABSENT- COMMUNITY BOARD #7 BOARD MEMBERS

Charles Apelian	Frank Macchio	Lynda Spielman
Arthur Cheliotis	Selma Moses	Joshua Sussman
John Frank	Lilly Moss	Joel Thaler
Fred Fu	Terence Park	Eugene Tsai
Donald Henton	Ranganatha Rao	John Tsavalos
Phil Konigsberg	Jean Ren	Peter Tu
Esther Lee	Hari Shukla	

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 STAFF-

Marilyn Bitterman, District Manager
Linda Talavera, Community Associate

GUESTS-

Frank Padavan, State Senator
Tony Avella, Councilman
Kevin Kim, Congressman Gary Ackerman's Office
Randy LaFargue, Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum's Office
Gene McSweeney, Assemblywoman Ann Carrozza's Office
Mark Scott, Queens Borough President Helen Marshall's Office

Meeting was called to order at 7:15 P.M.

Chairperson Kelty, Community Board #7, stated that at tonight's meeting, City Planning will present the rezoning for North Flushing. Neither Community Board #7 nor Community Board #11 will be voting on this item this evening. Community Board #7 will be voting at our regularly scheduled Public Hearing and Regular Meeting on Monday, February 9, 2009. Community Board #11 will be voting on this issue at their regularly scheduled Public Hearing and Regular Meeting on Monday, February 2, 2009. After City Planning's presentation, we will be accepting questions from Community Board Members first and then the Public will be given an opportunity to ask questions.

P U B L I C H E A R I N G

AGENDA ITEM – NORTH FLUSHING REZONING -

Councilman Tony Avella was given the floor for his comments on this issue.

Councilman Avella thanked Holy Cross High School for providing space for this Public Hearing and he thanked Community Boards #7 & #11 for their work on this issue. This rezoning is 2 years behind schedule. This joint hearing will speed up the process. He explained that the rezoning becomes law when City Council approves it. The process goes from the Community Boards to the Borough President to City Planning and then to the City Council. This is a process that usually takes 7 months to complete. However, we will reduce the time to under 4 months. Every issue that was raised has been addressed by City Planning and this is a very good application, but the plan can still be tweaked. The plan is not final until everything is in place and the public is in agreement. Rezoning is designed to protect the character of the neighborhood. City Planning will be going over all the different zonings tonight.

Brendan Pillar, Project Manager, City Planning Commission, gave a brief summary of this rezoning, copy on file at the Board Office; (copies handed out to all present).

The Department of City Planning proposes zoning changes for all or portions of 257 blocks in northeastern Queens neighborhood of North Flushing, Community Districts #7 and #11; consisting 34 blocks in Community Board #11 and the remainder of 222 blocks in Community Board #7. The rezoning area is generally bounded by Union Street to the west; the Clearview Expressway and Francis Lewis Boulevard to the east; 25th Avenue to the north and Northern Boulevard and Depot Road to the South.

The North Flushing Rezoning was undertaken by the Department of City Planning in response to requests from Council Members Avella and Liu, Community Board #7 and #11 and local civic associations. The rezoning builds upon previous lower-density and contextual rezonings in the adjacent neighborhoods of East Flushing, Whitestone and Bayside adopted by City Council in 2005. Additionally, 34 blocks in Auburndale, generally bounded by the Clearview Expressway, 26th Avenue, Francis Lewis Boulevard and 34th Avenue were rezoned with changes adopted by the City Council in 1995.

Over the last several years, the neighborhoods that make up the North Flushing Rezoning area: North Flushing, Broadway-Flushing, Auburndale and Bayside have been experiencing development pressure largely due to outdated zoning which generally has remained unchanged since 1961 when the Zoning Resolution was adopted. The area's R3-2, R4, R5 and R6 zoning districts allow a variety of housing types and densities that are inconsistent with the prevailing scale and built character of the North Flushing Rezoning area. In areas zoned for single-family detached residences, large new homes have been constructed that are considerably out-of-scale with the surrounding context.

The goal of the proposed zoning changes is to update existing zoning designations using newer lower density and contextual zoning districts to more closely reflect the predominate low scale, one-and two-family residential character of the neighborhood and ensure that future development is more consistent with the existing built form and patterns of development.

The proposal consists of three principal components, each consisting of several associated actions:

Lower Density/Contextual Zoning Changes: Protect neighborhood character and reinforce established building scale by replacing existing zoning on 257 blocks (R1-2, R2, R3X, R3-2, R4, R4-1, R5 and R6) with lower density or contextual zoning districts where appropriate (R2A, R2, R3X, R3-1, R3-2, R4, R4A, R4-1, R4B, R5B and R5D).

Citywide Text Change: Establishing a citywide R1-2A designation, which can be mapped in appropriate residentially developed contexts. The proposed R1-2A district will provide modified floor area allowances and revised height, front yard setback and lot

coverage regulations to curb over-scaled single-family homed within 24 blocks of the Broadway-Flushing section of the rezoning area.

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Commercial Overlay Changes: Update commercial overlays by replacing existing C1-2 commercial overlay zones with C1-3 zones and removing or reducing the depths of commercial overlay zones from 150 feet to 100 feet to prevent commercial intrusion onto resident blocks and better reflect the location of existing commercial uses.

Mr. Pillar stated that floor area is what determines the bulk of a house. The R6 classification is only on two blocks presently. A small section (R3X and R4-1) that was previously rezoned on the eastern part is being looked at for this rezoning.

Went into a discussion of the comparison chart; discussed lot coverage; front yard line-up with abutting homes and wall heights.

A power point presentation was given and explained.

- 1) R1-2A-they will be creating a new zoning within the Broadway Flushing area, 24 blocks on 32nd Avenue to Northern Boulevard from the current R1-2 zone.
- 2) R2A on 165 blocks, 1-family detached only, that are presently R2, R3X, R3-2. R4, R4-1 and R5.
- 3) R3X on 4 blocks, 1-2 family detached only, that are presently R2 and R4-2-Bayside area-more closely matched.
- 4) R3-1 on 5 blocks, 1-2 family detached and semi-detached only, that are presently R3-2.
- 5) R3-2 on 3 blocks, all housing types, that are presently R2.
- 6) R4A on 18 blocks, 1-2 family detached only, that are presently R3-2.
- 7) R4-1 on 6 blocks, 1-2 family detached and semi-detached only, that are presently R3-2 and R5-Auburndale portion of the district.
- 8) R4B on 11 blocks, all housing types that are presently R2 and R3-2-parking located in rear alleys or garages.
- 9) R4 on 12 blocks, all housing types, that are presently R2 and R5-N/W & S/E portion.
- 10) R5B on 19 blocks, all housing types, that are presently R2 and R5.
- 11) R5D on 5 blocks, all housing types, that are presently R2, R5 and R6-Auburndale section.
- 12) Commercial overlays will be eliminated on portions of Parsons Boulevard and Francis Lewis Boulevard – new C1-3 overlay to be mapped on Francis Lewis Boulevard @ 29th Avenue.

Floor was open to Board Member questions-

Q-How many of these properties will become non-conforming?

A-15% and only in the R2A district.

Q-What is the major non-conforming issues for this 15%?

A-It varies; lot coverage issues, taller buildings, etc.

Q-How is the sky exposure defined?

A-It is essentially a wall that is on a 45-degree angle from the property line.

Q-On the Beechhurst map, Riverside Drive from 158th Street to 159th Street, are you expanding west?

A-Yes, we are expanding west. Only one block was left out when the Board approved the Whitestone Rezoning – blocks that front on 159th Street.

Q-On the existing zoning map, there is an R5 on the eastside of Union Street? Are you changing this?

A-No, the buildings are already developed.

Q-What is the difference between the R1-2 and the new R1-2A?

A-The lots are typically 60 X 100 which reflects the existing housing, which are very large houses in the Broadway Flushing area.

Q-Auburndale area within Community Board #11 has been cut in half with this rezoning. When can we see the balance?

A-Recommendations will be ready to be reviewed with the community soon.

Q-Can you elaborate on the R3-2 zoning?

A-Some housing did not conform to the zoning so it was just kept as is. There was a variety of housing stock and it was kept in compliance with the existing zoning.

Q-What about the parking in the R3-2 zone?

A-They are required to provide parking with any new developments, which is one parking space per unit.

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Q-What will be the commercial overlays?

A-They were 150 feet. Under the new zoning, they will be 100 feet. This will eliminate the commercial creep.

Q-Why don't you have a 60% rule?

A-City Planning looks at 75% of the block.

Q-What is the height limitation for the R3-2 zone?

A-It is 35 feet.

Q-In an R3-2 zone which has 50 X 100, can they build 2 houses?

A-Yes.

Q-Will the flat roofs on 161st Street south of 33rd Avenue be grandfathered?

A-Yes, it is within the Rickert Findlay Covenant area and not a zoning issue. The civic association has to go to court on this issue.

P U B L I C S P E A K E R S

- 1) Mel Siegel, 35-25 160th Street – Spoke in favor of this rezoning – welcomes the new R1-2A zone.
- 2) Sandi Viviani, 33-16 157th Street – Spoke in favor of this rezoning – In favor of the new R1-2A zone. Thanked the Community Board and the Councilman for their work on this issue.
- 3) Nick Ferrigno, 33-37 163rd Street – Broadway Flushing – Spoke in favor of this rezoning.
- 4) Terri Pouymari, Auburndale Improvement Association – Spoke in favor of this rezoning.
- 5) Susie Shin, 35-44 166th Street – Signed in error. Did not speak.

Senator Frank Padavan was given the floor. He congratulated everyone for all the work that was done on this issue and asked when will this be completed. City Planning responded that hopefully it will be completed by the end of March 2009.

Jerry Iannece, former Chairperson of Community Board #11, stated that this was a collaborated effort and a wonderful job. Community Board #11 will vote on this on February 2, 2009 and Community Board #7 will vote on February 9, 2009. He thanked Gene Kelty, Chair of Community Board #7, Christine Haider, Chair of the Zoning Committee for Community Board #11, Tyler Cassell, Chair of this Rezoning, Councilman Tony Avella and Holy Cross High School for giving us space to hold this Public Hearing.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Louise Ognibene, Recording Secretary