

Community Board 1, Meeting Minutes

December 20th, 2016

Board Member Attendees – List Attached

OPENING: 6:30pm

- Chairman Joseph Risi greeted attendees, and asked for people to recite the pledge of allegiance. The pledge was recited.
- Mr. Risi then introduced Brian Barnwell, newly elected Assemblyman for the district, who stood to be acknowledged.
- Chairman Risi noted that the representative giving the presentation on the agenda for the Department of Agriculture (on the Asian Long-Horned Beetle Program and tree inspection; Mr. Bobby Miller), was not yet in attendance. Mr. Risi therefore asked to proceed to a brief announcement by the Community Coordinator from the Borough President's Office Mr. Joe Nocerino, followed by the business section of the agenda, until such time that Mr. Miller arrived. Mr. Miller did not appear for the meeting.
- **Community Coordinator from the Borough President's Office Mr. Joe Nocerino**
 - Mr. Nocerino passed along well wishes and a happy holiday from the Borough President.
 - Mr. Nocerino then invited all attendees to the Borough President's State of the Borough address, and provided information on a program out of Borough Hall woking to help residents who are struggle to pay heating bills keep their heat on.
 - Mr. Risi thanked Mr. Nocerino.
- Mr. Risi congratulated Ms. Danielle Tharrington on completing the Citizen's Police Academy.
- Chairman Risi asked to proceed to the business section of the meeting, starting with approval of the minutes.

BUSINESS:

- **Approval of Minutes:**
 - Mr. Risi called for a motion to approve the minutes.
 - **Motion to Approve made by Edward Babor.**
 - **Motion seconded by Mary O'Hara.**
 - **Motion to approve minutes passed unanimously.**
- **Chairperson's Report – Joseph Risi:**
 - Chairman Risi thanked Board Members for their hard work and dedication on working towards the shared goal of community improvement throughout the year, and stated it has been an honor to represent Community Board 1 Queens.
 - Mr. Risi called for the District Manager's report.
- **District Manager's Report – Florence Koulouris:**
 - District Manager Florence Koulouris wished all attendees a happy holiday season, and then discussed the multitude of meetings and events she attended during the month, as well as office affairs.
 - Ms. Koulouris discussed efforts to prevent the New York School of Urban Ministry (NYSUM) from evicting residents, and thanked public officials for their work on the matter.

- Ms. Koulouris also summarized a recent meeting attended at the invitation of the Parks Commissioner, where the grant for the Astoria Park performance space and the Astoria Park Diving Pool were discussed. Refurbishing the Astoria Park Diving Pool is not financially feasible per the Parks Department.
- The District Manager then discussed the Home Stability Support program, and reviewed a presentation on the matter with the Board Members (specifically highlighting the financial benefit of the program, which is geared towards keeping families at risk for homelessness in their homes). The presentation was emailed to Board Members, as well as included in their folders. The District Manager noted a draft letter in support of the program was included in Board Members' folders, which would be sent to the Governor's Office.
- Chairman Risi asked whether Board Members had the opportunity to review the draft letter, and then called for questions, comments, or a motion in favor of sending the letter.
- **MOTION by Nancy Silverman** in support of sending the draft letter to the Governor's Office.
- **MOTION SECONDED by Edward Babor.**
- **Motion Passed, 1 Opposed, Motion Passed by a Majority Vote.**
 - Clarification: Frances Luhmann-McDonald expressed opposition during the New Business section of the meeting, during dialogue initiated by Nancy Silverman (constituting the entirety of the opposition vote). No opposition was heard during the initial voting period.
- The District Manager finally informed the Board that Uniball 207 pens had been given to Board Members in their folders. These pens' writing is difficult to wash off of checks.
- The District Manager concluded by wishing all attendees a Happy Holidays.
- Chairman Risi called for a report by Norma Nieves-Blas.
- **Report by Norma Nieves-Blas:** Ms. Norma Nieves-Blas reviewed details from a presentation on strategic planning for 2016-2017 given by Mr. Dennis Walcott (President and CEO of the Queens Public Library System) at the Queensborough President's Borough Board Meeting, which she attended on behalf of Chairman Risi. As summarized by Ms. Nieves-Blas, Mr. Walcott discussed several projects, as well public outreach efforts (including a plan to meet with Community Boards' Library Committees).
 - Chairman Risi thanked Ms. Nieves-Blas for her representation and called for Committee reports, and then noted public discussion would follow.
- **Committee Reports:**
 - **Airport:** No Report.
 - **Access and Disability:** No Report.
 - **Economic Development:** No Report.
 - **Capital/Expense & Budget/Planning:** No Report.
 - **Consumer Affairs:** Committee Chair John Katsanos reviewed liquor license applicants for the month (list included in Board Members' folders), as well as briefly noting the Committee received two applications for renewal of sidewalk cafes in the neighborhood. Mr. Katsanos also announced that notices would be forwarded to other Committee Members for review.
 - **Education/Library:** No Report.
 - **Environmental Protection:** Committee Chair Antonella Di Saverio wished attendees a Happy Holidays.
 - **Health/Senior Services:** No Report.
 - **Housing:** Committee Chair RoseMarie Poveromo discussed progress on the reinstatement of the 421a tax break program.

- **Land Use & Zoning:** No Report.
- **Legal, Legislative & Parliamentary:** Committee Chair John Katsanos discussed proposed revisions to the bylaws, which would set in place term limits for the Chairperson's and Committee Chair positions (to be presented in January 2017). Mr. Katsanos also wished attendees a Happy Holidays.
 - Chairman Risi asked that the proposed provision be emailed to Board Members so feedback could be given to the Committee Chair. Mr. Katsanos agreed and asked for feedback to be sent via email to him, so said feedback could be incorporated into the provision.
- **Office Staff:** No Report.
- **Parks/Recreation & Cultural Services:** Committee Chair Richard Khuzami announced the groundbreaking of renovations to the Dutch Kills Playground and Comfort Station (discussed and approved at the previous meeting), which occurred on December 8th. Mr. Khuzami also wished attendees a Happy Holidays.
- **Public Relations:** No Report.
- **Public Safety:** No Report.
- **Street Festivals/Special Events:** No Report.
- **Transportation:** Committee Chair Robert Piazza wished attendees a Happy Holidays.
- **Youth Services:** No Report.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Neil Herdan discussed an initiative he is heading to document the history of 31st Avenue. Mr. Herdan also asked for several pieces of information he had difficulty finding, and reviewed several significant anniversaries in the community, including next year's Hell Gate bridge anniversary.
- Jessica Taylor, Astoria resident and representative for SURJ (Stand Up for Racial Justice) asked if she could give her information to Dominic Stiller or other parties interested in helping combat bias incidents in the neighborhood. The constituent did state she did not feel bias incidents were a severe problem in the community, but was concerned nonetheless given the political climate.
- Constituent Dan Sullivan recommended closing Shore Blvd. to make way for a strictly pedestrian walkway be considered for funding from the \$30 Million Anchor Park Program allocation.
- Board Member Vanessa Jones-Hall spoke regarding a recent meeting she attended with the tenants and property manager of Astoria Houses, and notified the Board that she discussed the commitment of the Community Board to the residents at this meeting. Ms. Jones-Hall notified the Board that residents of the Astoria Houses are pleased with the efforts by the Board to improve the housing community. Ms. Jones-Hall then wished everyone a Happy Holidays.
 - Chairman Risi asked if Ms. Jones-Hall could remind Ms. Cogar to send the information the Chairman had asked for in a previous meeting [October 2016] in order to appoint her the public member of the Housing Committee. Ms. Jones-Hall said she would pass along the reminder.
- Constituent Daniel Mann asked that further consideration be given to cyclists in the community, and that the community's bicycle lane network be improved.
- Mr. Kenneth Norman Minor spoke regarding traffic safety concerns specific to 27th Avenue and 4th Street, where motorists are running a stop sign and pedestrians are being struck by vehicles.
 - Mr. Risi asked Mr. Minor to contact the Board Office with information regarding the matter.

- Mr. Minor also informed the Board that there are no emergency evacuation signs on Hallet's Point.
 - Ms. Frances Luhmann-McDonald stated this issue may be federal in nature, and that District Manager Florence Koulouris could clarify further [District Manager Koulouris stated she also believed the issue to indeed be federal].
- Board Member Edward Babor noted that there are frequently buses parked in the vicinity of 27th Avenue and 4th Street (by the Goodwill building), and that this is not an appropriate place for buses to stand. Mr. Babor also stated that buses may block visibility of the stop sign for drivers descending the hill, further contributing to motorists running the stop sign. Mr. Babor suggested contacting the MTA regarding the matter.
- Board Member Richard Khuzami informed the Board that this corner has been a point of contention in the past, and that federal standards for installation of a traffic light were not met when a request was previously made.
- Board Member Vanessa Jones-Hall shared that Ms. Claudia Cogar had requested a study be conducted due to heavy truck and bus traffic, and discussed a speedbump that was a previous fix, which then had to be removed due to the issues it caused. Ms. Jones-Hall also announced that several individuals from the Astoria Houses have been hit, and the intersection is not safe for wheelchair users, individuals with disabilities, or children who need to cross; as such a request for a light has been made. Ms. Jones-Hall highlighted the association between bus congestion in the vicinity of the Goodwill building and the increased construction in the area.
 - District Manager Florence Koulouris asked that information be provided for her, and she would attempt to do a walkthrough at the same time as a second one scheduled.
- Ms. Jennifer Forgash informed the Board that 21st Street north of 34th Avenue needs to be repaved. Ms. Forgash also recommended a stoplight be installed between 34th Avenue and Broadway due to the multiple schools and the senior home, and the fact that pedestrians have been crossing in the middle of the street.
 - District Manager Florence Koulouris stressed the critical nature of 311 reporting, and indicated that without this data, it would be more difficult to request changes. The District Manager asked the constituent to notify friends and neighbors of the importance of 311 reports as well. Ms. Koulouris also asked the constituent to contact the Community Board Office with the exact locations of the schools and senior citizen home.
- Chairman Risi called for a report from Deputy Inspector Fortune, followed by New/Old Business.

PRESENTATION BY DEPUTY INSPECTOR FORTUNE FROM THE 114th PRECINCT:

- Deputy Inspector Fortune discussed crime statistics from 2016, and highlighted the significant drop in crime (especially violent crime). Deputy Inspector Fortune also discussed precision policing initiatives that have removed violent offenders from the neighborhood, the success of the Neighborhood Coordination Officer program, and domestic violence response training that officers in the precinct have been involved with.
- Deputy Inspector Fortune announced the goal of continuing to reduce crime and improve community relations for the year 2017, and wished attendees a happy and healthy new year.
- Deputy Inspector Fortune answered Board Member questions and took comments, resulting in the following clarification:
 - In response to a question about protocols for cellular phone use behind the wheel by police officers (from Board Member Nancy Silverman), Deputy Inspector Fortune

clarified that department issued phones may be used behind the wheel so long as the officer is conducting official business. Use of cellular devices for personal business is strictly prohibited.

- Chairman Risi clarified that “in furtherance of official business there is an exception” to restrictions on cellphone usage while operating a motor vehicle.
- Board Member Vanessa Jones-Hall thanked the 114th Precinct on behalf of the residents of the Astoria Houses for the efforts and progress the precinct has made in improving community relations, and stated the Astoria Houses residents look forward to continued improvements in the future.
 - Deputy Inspector Fortune stressed the importance of community relations.
- Board Member Ann Bruno expressed the high regard high-ranking police officials hold for the 114th Precinct.
- Chairman Risi called for public questions and comments, resulting in the following clarifications:
 - Deputy Inspector Fortune is happy to meet with constituents to discuss concerns from constituents about how officers patrol the precinct.
 - While difficult to pinpoint specific factors driving the reduction in crime, Deputy Inspector Fortune speculated several factors could be contributing. These factors include precision policing, and a program to prevent recidivism by juveniles with robbery convictions. Deputy Inspector Fortune also highlighted several crimes that continue to be problematic, including domestic violence and property crime such as car break-ins to steal expensive items, and mail fishing.
 - Deputy Inspector Fortune discussed efforts to further dialogue and better community relations with the Muslim community (e.g. round table discussions) and how bias crimes are addressed by the NYPD (e.g. it requires a Captain to inspect the scene to make determinations about whether a bias crime has been committed). Deputy Inspector Fortune clarified that the department takes bias crimes very seriously, stressed that constituents should report any bias incidents they witness or are a victim of, and noted the increase in bias crimes since the election.
 - Deputy Inspector Fortune clarified that NCOs are required to address constituent complaints in a timely fashion, and that if an individual feels threatened, to call 911 rather than their NCO. Deputy Inspector Fortune also addressed concerns that dispatch didn't have NCO's contact information, saying he could look into way to provide this information to the front desk. Finally, Deputy Inspector Fortune stated concerns and questions could be addressed directly with him.
 - The best pen to write checks with is Uniball 207, given it is difficult to wash off. Checks should be mailed right before pickup (and not overnight) to avoid theft. Additionally, Deputy Inspector Fortune announced that mail fishing scams have decreased since public announcements regarding the scheme have been made.
 - Chairman Risi thanked Deputy Inspector Fortune and congratulated him on his wife's promotion (which Deputy Inspector Fortune had announced during his statements). Chairman Risi made a last call for a presentation from the Department of Agriculture. The representative (Bobby Miller) was still not in attendance.
 - Chairman Risi acknowledged a final constituent for public discussion.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC DISCUSSION:

- Mr. Ronnie K. Minor expressed support the work Community Board 1 has done to improve conditions for residents of the Astoria Houses (i.e. through programs such as Section 3), and requested continued support.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS:

- Chairman Risi called for New/Old Business.

New Business:

- No requests for new business were heard.

Old Business:

- Ms. Nancy Silverman asked for clarification regarding whether a vote was required to send the letter to Governor Andrew Cuomo's office in support of Home Stability Support [see District Manager's Report].
- Mr. Risi clarified that no vote was needed, but asked if there was any opposition to the letter.
 - Ms. Frances Luhmann-McDonald expressed opposition to the letter. No other opposition was heard.

ADJOURNMENT:

- Chairman Risi asked for a motion to adjourn.
- **Motion to adjourn made by Edward Babor.**
- **Motion to adjourn seconded by Vanessa Jones-Hall.**

Meeting Adjourned at 7:40pm.

COMMUNITY BOARD 1, Queens

DATE 12/20/16

1-Aug							
Community Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	Community Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.
Rose Anne Alafogiannis			E	Jerry Kril	✓		
George Alexiou			E	Melanie La Rocca	✓		
Daniel Aliberti	✓			Frances Luhmann-McDonald	✓	✓	
Joan Asselin	✓			Antonio Meloni		✓	
Edward Babor	✓			Prabir Mitra			E
Jose Batista			E	Kevin Mullarkey			E
Ann Bruno	✓			Stella Nicolaou	✓		
Edwin Cadiz		✓		Norma Nieves-Blas	✓		
Gerald Caliendo	✓			Mary O'Hara	✓		
John Carusone			E	Robert Piazza	✓		
Jean Marie D'Alleva	✓			RoseMarie Poveromo	✓	✓	
Joanna D'Elia			E	Gus Prentzas		✓	
Antonella Di Saverio	✓			Joseph Risi	✓		
Katie Ellman		✓		Yawne Robinson	✓		
Elizabeth Erion	✓			Thomas Ryan	✓		
Mackenzi Farquer	✓			Rodolfo Sarchese	✓		
Dean Feratovic	✓			Nancy Silverman	✓		
Evie Hantzopoulos	✓			Dominic Stiller	✓		
Amy Hau	✓			Danielle Tharrington	✓		
Pauline Jannelli	✓			Marie Torniali	✓		
Vanessa Jones-Hall	✓			Rod Townsend	✓		
John Katsanos	✓			Judy Trilivas			E
Richard Khuzami	✓						
Nancy Konipol		✓					
Number Board Members Present <u>33</u>							
Present <u>33</u>				Absent <u>5</u>		Excused <u>8</u>	