

**Community Board 1, Queens Meeting Minutes**

**December 15, 2015**

**Board Member Attendees – List Attached.**

**Opening – 7:00 pm**

Joseph Risi, Chairperson: Welcomed everyone to the Astoria Manor and stated that it was the Community Board 1 December meeting. He stated that we had several items on the public hearing agenda. The Chairman announced that after we finish with the public hearing items anyone from the public and anyone in attendance there may make comments or ask any questions. He noted the Board would be happy to hear comments or questions. The Chair also said that we had quorum to conduct business and turned the next part of the meeting over to John Katsanos, regarding the first public hearing item, Department of Consumer Affairs.

**Public Hearing Items**

**Item: #1261303-DCA Little Morocco Restaurant Corp. D/B/A Little Morocco 24-39 Steinway Street. An application to renew the license to operate an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 21 Tables and 47 Chairs.**

- John Katsanos, Chair, Consumer Affairs Committee introduces applicant to the Board and questions Yousuf Sultan, representative for Little Morocco. The Board had no questions.
- Joseph Risi: The Chair asked if anyone in the audience wanted to speak for or against the application for the renewal of Little Morocco Restaurant Corporation. Hearing none, he said we can move on to the second item. Item closed.

**Item: #14608645-DCA Win Win Distribution Inc. D/B/A Café to Go 28-58 31<sup>st</sup> Street. An application to renew the license to operate an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 2 Tables and 8 Chairs.**

- John Katsanos, Chair, Consumer Affairs Committee introduces applicant to the Board and questions Chris Liberatos, representative for Café to Go. The Board had no questions. He thanks him, has no further questions and asks the public for any questions or any comments in support or against the applicant. Item closed.

**Item: #15376-2015-ASWC TIG Astoria LLC D/B/A Sweet Afton 30-09 34<sup>th</sup> Street. An application to obtain a new license to operate an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 6 Tables and 12 Chairs.**

- John Katsanos, Chair, Consumer Affairs Committee introduces applicant to the Board and questions representatives for Sweet Afton, Steve Wygoda, Architect and Rob Mohally, Manager. The Board interviews them. Patrons, neighbors and building management speak about the establishment. Asks if there are any comments from the public with respect to this establishment. States the applicant is willing to stick to the hours and accept the stipulations. Item closed.

**Item: #14540-2015-ANWS Newsstand Application-An application to place a newspaper stand at the S/E/C 31<sup>st</sup> Street between Ditmars Boulevard and 23 Avenue in front of the supermarket (Keyfood).**

- John Katsanos, Chair, Consumer Affairs Committee introduces applicant to the Board and questions Mr. Akter (on behalf of his wife Shuli Akter, who is ill) regarding the application and location of the newsstand. The Board interviews Mr. Akter. Item closed. States the Consumer Affairs Committee needs 5 minutes to discuss 2 of the applications.
- Joseph Risi: The Chairman announced there will be a 5-10 minutes recess for the Consumer Affairs Committee to make a recommendation.

**\*Board Back in Session**

- Joseph Risi: The Chairman indicated the Full Board will hear the recommendations from John Katsanos and the Consumer Affairs Committee.
- John Katsanos: Consumer Affairs committee met and had quorum. He said they voted 6-5 to deny the newsstand applicant, also voted 6-5 to deny Sweet Afton's unenclosed sidewalk café and would like to present both of these to take a full vote before the board.
- Joseph Risi: The Chairman announced the First item, #14540-2015 the Newsstand application SE corner of 31<sup>st</sup> Street. Said they will have a roll call. The Chair stated there was a motion and that the motion was to deny the application. Seconded by Ed Babor. The Chairman said there was no further discussion and for Richard Khuzami to do the roll call. Announced we had **20 in favor of the motion to deny the application and 19 in opposition**. The motion was carried.
- John Katsanos: He announced the Consumer Affairs Committee met regarding the applicant doing business as Sweet Afton and we recommended to deny the new unenclosed sidewalk cafe but would add an asterisk to that, it was a close vote 6-5 and there are certain committee members who were considering instead of having a no vote, having a yes vote with a stipulation with the issues raised by the residents, to give an opportunity to the unenclosed café. Said there was a motion recommending to deny the applicant. Ed Babor seconded the motion.
- Joseph Risi: The Chairman stated the motion was seconded. He asked if there were any discussions on the motion.
- John Katsanos: He stated a "yes vote", means denial of the application.
- Richard Khuzami, Executive Board Secretary: He announced there were **23 in favor of the motion and 15 against**.
- John Katsanos: He apologized for going out of order. He stated that the next 2 applicants Little Morocco Corporation and Win Win Distribution Inc. were both recommended unanimously for approval by the Consumer Affairs Committee. He said they would take one applicant at a time. John said he would like to make a motion recommending approval for Little Morocco Restaurant. Ed Babor seconded the motion.
- Joseph Risi: The Chairman stated there was a motion to approve the application for renewal of Little Morocco. He asked if there were any discussions on the motion seconded. No discussion.
- Richard Khuzami: He announced there were **35 in favor and 3 against**.
- John Katsanos: He announced the next item, Win Win Distribution. He said the Consumer Affairs Committee recommended approval. His only suggestion is that they correct their application to 32<sup>nd</sup> Street not 31<sup>st</sup> Street.
- Joseph Risi: The Chairman said the motion was seconded by Rose Anne Alafogiannis. He asked if there were any discussions on this motion. No discussion.

- Richard Khuzami: He announced there were **37 in favor and 1 against**.
- Joseph Risi: The Chairman stated the motion has been carried and that the application was approved. He announced they would take comments or questions from the public.

### **Public Comments**

- Cheryl, Long Island City Partnership (LICP): Introduced herself and spoke about the Long Island City Business and Organization Survey, which she provided forms that can be filled out from now until January 15<sup>th</sup>. She said it is available online and on their website: [www.licpartnership.org/survey](http://www.licpartnership.org/survey)
- Joseph Risi: He questioned her who she is submitting the report to?
- Cheryl: Informed that they are private and keeping for their own data.
- Joseph Risi: The Chairman announced we were closing the public portion of the meeting. The Chair asked if there was a motion for approval of minutes. Seconded by Richard Khuzami. Stated all in favor.

### **Chairperson's Report: Joseph Risi**

I have a brief report. Since our last Board meeting I attended 2 Borough Board meetings at Borough Hall. On November 16<sup>th</sup>, we had the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Text Amendment and the Quality Affordability Text Amendment which was voted on at the Borough President's Office. Community Board 1 and Community Board 3 were the only 2 Boards that voted in favor of it and I have to say something, I was very proud to represent this Board in making a recommendation in favor of the extremely well-articulated stipulations that Elizabeth Erion, Gerry Caliendo, John Carusone and the Committee provided. It was an honor and I thank you. Another meeting was on December 7<sup>th</sup>, there is a brochure in your folder labeled Amnesty, the City of New York has decided to grant all of us, all of you Amnesty, if you are not a registered lobbyist. For example, if you are looking for funding from the City Council or if you are looking to change, implement or suggest any new laws to the Mayor, you may be lobbying, so be aware of this, the information is in your folder. Another item we discussed was "Parks Without Borders", there is a very short timeline for this Parks project. There is also information in your folders regarding the project. Richard Khuzami will update you when he makes his report, he will discuss it in a little more detail. The final and most important thing is to wish everyone a Happy Hanukah, a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

### **District Manager's Report: Florence Koulouris**

Good Evening, I would like to begin by wishing everyone a Happy, Healthy, Holiday Season. Our office has just added a new member to our staff, Jennifer Nino. Since we last met, our office has been very busy. The office has set up committee meetings which the Chairs will report on. I had the pleasure of attending the Greek Homeowners Association Thanksgiving event and prepared salads and also bags of food to give constituents. The Verve Hotel held their first Cabinet meeting and there we discussed matters surrounding the Women's Homeless Shelter. The first week of December the Borough President held the Borough Board and Richard Khuzami and I were invited to attend with our Chairperson, Joseph Risi for the presentation. I also attended the Borough Cabinet meeting in December where we discussed Fire Safety, Homeland Safety and a new website the City is presenting. In your folders you will find business cards regarding the Homeland Safety, "If You See Something, Say Something". In addition, on December 6<sup>th</sup> UCCA held a Holiday Brunch where they honored our own Linda Perno and held the swearing in of officers which was standing room only. We held our monthly District Service Cabinet meeting on December 10 and had multiple agencies in attendance, it was a very informative meeting.

The Department of Consumer Affairs Committee met with 8 agenda items and held a very productive meeting. Today, I attended the walk about P.S. 166 for the school street closing. We are now in the process of preparing for the meetings of 2016 and with that I would like to wish you all a Happy, Happy New Year.

- Joseph Risi: He thanked Florence.

### Committee Reports

- Daniel Aliberti, Access and Disability Concerns: No report
- Rose Marie Poveromo, Airport Access: No report.
- Norma Nieves-Blas, Capital and Expense/Community Development: No report.
- John Katsanos, Consumer Affairs: On December 9<sup>th</sup> we met with several liquor license applicants, the Consumer Affairs Committee and we did have a quorum and we made recommendations. I will go quickly through these applicants. The first one is BK Venture Group doing business as Starlets at 49-09 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The 114<sup>th</sup> emphasized this is the single most problematic dangerous establishment, adult entertainment establishment that has crime stemming from the area. None of these issues will be highlighted to the State Liquor Authority. Consumer Affairs Committee voted overwhelmingly 9 to 1 to recommend denial of the renewal of their liquor license application. Another applicant came before us, Javar Corp. for an alteration of a liquor license doing business as Systems located at 32-10 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue. They have stage shows, cabaret and are a large scale night club. The 114<sup>th</sup> emphasized that there are significant public safety and quality of life concerns. Based on their report, the Consumer Affairs Committee voted unanimously recommending denial of the liquor license application. The next applicant Sunset Lounge came before us for renewal of their liquor license. They are doing business at 37-72 Steinway Street on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor, where they have a bar internally connected to a rooftop area and they have a DJ, music, patron dancing and so forth. The 114<sup>th</sup> reported several items in terms of arrests, reports of crime and summonses but the major issue is there were 295 noise complaints and that they were uncooperative to their neighbors about the noise and uncooperative with 114<sup>th</sup> and when asked by Ms. Frances Luhmann-McDonald, one of our Consumer Affairs members about the noise, they indicated they use a smart phone to measure the noise. Another committee member asked how often they measure the noise they said it is done one time a week and they are open three to four times a week. Based on such noise complaints and the impact on the quality of life of residents, Consumer Affairs Committee recommended unanimously denial of their alterations of their liquor license application. The next applicant, XL35-35 Steinway formerly known as "Lit", constantly coming in for our Consumer Affairs Committee and Community Board under a new corporate name. We were concerned that they were being shut down as a business and then would reopen as a corporation and get a new license and be a bad neighbor and 2 years' worth of the same game. The applicant had no relation based on our discussions with him. He will be opening a Greek music establishment, has former experience and is willing to sign a stipulation. The Consumer Affairs Committee has agreed unanimously to recommend approval of a new liquor license subject to stipulations. General concerns, no outside promoters and no adult entertainment. Next applicant, Aloha NYC, new liquor license applicants were former U.S. Army veterans opening a sophisticated lounge at 37-02 Astoria Boulevard. They will have a Hawaiian theme, DJ, full bar, cold menu and patron dancing. It is a very small establishment willing to agree to no outside promoters, no adult entertainment and sign a stipulation. Consumer Affairs Committee voted unanimously to recommend approval of new liquor license application subject to stipulation.

The next applicant Mist NYC LLC for a renewal liquor license application doing business as Mist located at 37-25 32<sup>nd</sup> Street operating as a lounge cabaret. There are no complaints from the Community, no complaints from the 114<sup>th</sup> before the Consumer Affairs Committee. We voted unanimously, we recommend approval of their renewal of their liquor license application without stipulation. Moving to approve the Committee's entire recommendation including applicable stipulations as a single vote.

- Joseph Risi: The Chair said, before we do that, I would like a motion to have the Community Board notify the State Liquor Authority of our recommendation. He said, we do not approve or disapprove anything, we just make a recommendation to the State Liquor Authority. Seconded by Jean Marie D'Alleva. He stated, possibly in the future, we can have advance notice of these kind of recommendations so that members of the Board can ask questions.
- John Katsanos: Next time we can provide an agenda. Starting next month the Consumer Affairs Committee at the recommendation of our Chairman, Joseph Risi, is in the process of drafting 2 questionnaires that will be distributed, 1 questionnaire will be for liquor and cabaret applicants, the 2<sup>nd</sup> will be for sidewalk café applicants. Those questionnaires are used by other Community Boards and will help us have better disclosure and when we do an agenda you will have a lot of information before you. Thank you.
- Tom Ryan, Industrial/Commercial (EDC): We had a committee meeting prior to our general meeting regarding Small Business Job Vital Act, it was voted unanimously in favor that we show support. We agreed the community board write a letter that Community Board 1 supports the legislation which is now pending.
  - Joseph Risi: The Chair asked, does anyone second that motion? Seconded by John Katsanos. He said we will send a letter out. He said thank you.
- Tom Ryan: One other item, Aravella Simotas has legislation pending in the pipeline regarding small businesses. It is just an FYI. Happy New Year, thank you.
- Linda Perno, Education: No report.
- Joan Asselin, Environmental Protection: No report.
- Judy Trilivas, Health and Social Services/Senior: No report. Happy Holidays.
- Mary O'Hara, Housing: Updated the Board on the recent standing of the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) and Zoning for Quality and Affordability (ZQA).
  - Joseph Risi: The Chairman indicated that the Borough President has recommended denial of both text amendments.
  - Liz Erion: On the MIH note, City Planning is having their public hearing tomorrow, then it goes off to City Council. Queens is not the only borough that voted against it, Manhattan, the Bronx and Staten Island did too. This will not stop the process but it will be modified. We will have a public hearing next month on a ULURP/Demapping application regarding Socrates Sculpture Park to get them on the City map as a park. There is a swapping of property and air rights that will take place. The applicant will make a presentation on January 12<sup>th</sup>. We have a tentative date for a joint committee meeting scheduled for Monday, January 4<sup>th</sup> at our office. Halletts Point project has a new owner, we are trying to have the Durst people come to introduce themselves. They are getting ready to put a shovel in the ground. Hopefully we can set up something jointly. The 3<sup>rd</sup> issue is the Quadriad, this developer wants to do a lot of affordable housing and rezoning of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Steinway Street. They would like to meet again to give us an update and we will try to set that up. He has been working with City Planning for the

last year. We are waiting for materials from them to see if there is a difference from last year.

- Richard Khuzami, Parks and Recreation/Cultural Affairs: Reported on “Parks Without Boarders” (brochure available in the folders) and explains to the Board they can vote online as an individual prior to the deadline of February 28, 2016. He said if the money is available, he would like to get this in our district. On January 6<sup>th</sup>, Parks Department and Costa Constantinides has a visioning for the new dog run so the neighbors can input on the construction. It is funded by the Borough President and the Councilman’s office. It will be held at the Bohemian Hall at 7pm. We also had some honors. Lynn Kennedy, President of Friends of Astoria Heights won the Community Parks Initiative (CPI) Award. She also put on a wonderful Christmas party within the park and had middle school choirs, Girl Scouts and had about 200 attendees. Last week, Central Astoria had a wonderful tree lighting, kid’s rides and marshmallow roasting. We now have a wonderful lit tree, thanks to Marie and George Stamatiades for a great job. Thank you.
- Antonio Meloni, Public Safety: No report
- Ann Bruno, Street Festivals: No report.
- Robert Piazza, Transportation: No report. Wished everyone a great holiday.
- Jose Batista, Youth: Mr. Chairman, I want to tell you about a fairly new program from the Department of Youth and Community Development called Work, Learn and Grow for young people ages between 14-24 that can be placed with small businesses, retailers as well as not for profits. It is a great opportunity for a business owner to give a young person. In October, I had the pleasure of seeing a mentee I had in 1972 at a fundraiser of Health Hospitals. She was a High School student, I was a 21 year old trying to give this young person direction in her life. This person is the head of a department at Mount Sinai, Dr. Angela Diaz is world renowned and has a big organization. You never know the kind of influence when you give an opportunity to a young person. Feliz Navidad, Prospero Ano.
- John Carusone, Zoning and Variance: No report

#### **New/Old Business**

- Joseph Risi: The Chairman asked if the Board had any old or new business. No response. He asked if they had a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by John Katsanos. The Chair announced that the next meeting is January 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Meeting Adjourned – 8:50 p.m.**