

Community Board 1
June 18, 2013

Mr. Vinicio Donato, Chairperson of Community Board 1, commenced at 7:00 p.m.

Council Member Peter Vallone, Jr. stopped by to thank the Board and address the Board for the last time as the Council Member of CD 22. He spoke of projects he sponsored i.e. the performance area in Astoria Pool Park, the Skate Board Park in Astoria Park and the role the Board plays in the community with the services requested.

Mr. Donato opened the meeting with the first public hearing item from the Board of Standard and Appeals (BSA), Mr. Jerry Caliendo, Co-Chair of the Zoning and Variance Committee, read item #170-30-BZ—An application to permit the expansion of Mt. Sinai Hospital of Queens by the construction of a 6 story addition on property located on the west side of Crescent St. between 30th Ave. & 30th Rd. and a partial renovation of the existing hospital building. Ms. Karen Schwab, CEO of Mt. Sinai came up along with Peter Walsh, Sansa; Scott Scavo, Project Manager; David Williams and Paul Greco, Architects; Benson Perry, Senior Project Manager; Brad Beckstein, Intergovernmental; Sherry Felder Marketing & Communications; and Sue Calden, external Council. Ms. Schwab showed an illustrated of the proposed expansion of Mt. Sinai. When planning they looked at the growing population and the changing health care needs of the communities. In planning they looked at the future needs of what they can do to help the community with the levels of services and new jobs. One of the items they discussed was change of care from inpatient hospitalization to ambulatory care for the coming decades, which will mean their goal with the hospital will also change. The zoning changes they are requesting will maintain the existing character of the surrounding area. With the expansion they hope to attract the best and the brightest staff. The new facility will also allow them to upgrade and renovate their infrastructure of their existing facility along with new elevator banks that will connect the existing building to the new building allowing a smooth flow throughout the facility. She proceeded to show illustrations of the existing building and the future facility with the proposed changes and upgrades as well as the new ambulance area. In terms of the economy, they plan to generate 500 construction jobs and expect when the facility is operational they would need about 160 new permanent hospital employees. Currently, 25% of their employees are from the local area. She then introduced Mr. David Berger who described the current site and existing structures in the proposal and reviewed how the building and new structure will transform over the next three years. The new facility was designed as a 6 story building to optimize the facility and to create a scale and a mass that is a good neighbor to the surrounding apartment buildings. Two major moves that are being made to alleviate some of the concerns and issues that are presently impeding the operational efficiency of the hospital. The first is the entrance of the current Emergency Department (ED); they have created an ambulance drive thru which take the ambulances off 30th Ave., Crescent Street, and 30th Road and places them in the back on hospital property. This will get the ambulance off the highly congested streets and decrease the pedestrian interfacing with patients and ambulances. It would also accommodate incoming patients by ambulance to the new entrance to the ED and next to that there will be a new entrance for ambulatory patients, this will allow out-patient and visitors to make their way back into the 6 story building. He then went on to discuss the four minor variances that are required. They would need a site set-back, which allows for how much mass you can put on the site, how high you can build this would affect the height of the building on Crescent Street and along 30th Road. The next variance deals with plot code, the current R6 District does not allowed them to cover more than 70% of the lot, in the proposal they are covering 100% of the lot. The next two variances deal with where they are and the set-backs that are required to adjacent properties or contiguous security walls. He then illustrated how the current restrictions on the proposal would look like compared to the proposal with the approved variances. It would be a 12 story building that will cast longer shadows, that will take 6-8 months longer to build and will not provide you with the same healthcare program that the 6 story building will provide. He discussed the difference that a 12 story building would provide and how it would not create efficiency for the hospital and what they could provide to the community. The building would not be in context with the surrounding neighborhood. He went on to say that in August they would start demolition of the old annex building on the corner of Crescent and 30th Road. The work hours will be from 7am to 3:30pm daily. The site will be entirely enclosed with fencing on Crescent and 30th Road with a sidewalk bridge on 30th Avenue in front of the existing building. 30th Road and Crescent track will remain open; they will be placing their oxygen tank farm on Crescent and have currently gone to the Fire Department and Department of Buildings (DOB) to get approval for variance for this. All deliveries on the street will be controlled by flagmen to direct traffic behind the fences they will be putting up. During demolition, excavation, and construction they will keep the site wet to control dust. They just finished their hazmat investigation for asbestos, lead paint and tested ground soil since there were petroleum tanks underground. Prior to any demolish they do an intensive test control program and continue that test control program throughout the entire construction project. Contact information will be posted on the fences. Ms. Schwab stated that they received an approval certificate from the Department of Health (DOH) and they expect to be demolishing the annex as well as the two buildings on 30th Avenue this summer. They expect to have ground breaking this Fall. The project will be complete in the early part of 2016. Mr. George Alexiou asked if they were able to acquire all the funds needed for their proposal. Ms. Schwab stated that they have financing for the entire \$125 Million dollar project. They have \$4 Million from the State that they have to spend by December 2013. Mr. Donato asked if there was anyone in the audience who wanted to speak for or against this application. Ms. Mary Finney, resident 25-10 30th Road, stated that they are very happy to have Mt. Sinai in their area and it is a vast improvement over the old Astoria General. She thinks she speaks for a lot of her neighbors that their problem with them is transparency and truthfulness. They were present when they came to CB1 and spoke about the ambulances and private autos and that they were going to be garaged and off the street. That is not the case. Finney asked where they planned to park their five ambulances and people in their cars. They park on our sidewalks and crosswalks, is that what was envisioned for them when they first came to the Board. Ms. Schwab stated that the ambulances are already at Mt. Sinai and the situation was already there before they got involved. Ms. Finney stated that the five ambulances on any given day block their streets and take their parking spots. If they wanted the people on 30th Road and Crescent to believe what is being proposed, you have a lousy track record. It is very hard to drive down those streets with the double parking of cars and ambulances. Ms. Renee Fields, resident 25-10 30th Road, stated that she has a few problems with the presentation that was given. The hospital invited their neighbors to

come and talk to them last night and gave them the same presentation. She stated that there will be 160 new permanent jobs created at the hospital. 25% of your current staff is from the community, but last night their representative stated that they could not look at people's zip codes when they hire them, that is illegal. They have a commitment to hospital unions to hire employees that were laid-off from other hospitals. Forty jobs will be going to doctors leaving, 120 jobs. Tonight we were told that the 6 story building will be equal to the 6 story existing buildings on 30th Road. They were told last night that the building would be taller than other buildings on the block since hospital floors have to be taller than regular floors. They were also told that they do not have any control over EMS and where they park their trucks. Ms. Schwab stated that when they hire people they make an effort to hire people from the neighborhood to the best extent that they can. They consider themselves as a community and do the best that they can to cast a wide net to make sure they promote jobs when they come available in the neighborhood and they certainly encourage people coming to human resources to fill out applications or to do so online. In term of EMS, it is true they do not fall under Mt. Sinai but, work under the NYC Fire Department. Mt. Sinai works very closely with them and when issues are brought to their attention they are brought to the local leadership to resolves the issues as quickly as they can. Mr. David Berger stated that the height of the new building when he spoke, that it would be a 6 story building and has to have floors at 15' and will be 1 story higher than residential buildings with 12' floors. The 6 story is shorter than the 12 story that is allowed in the current zone. They are trying to avoid building a 170' tall building. This is why they are before the Board to obtain variances for the proposal. Mr. Costa Constantinas, Astoria resident, stated he remembers Astoria General Hospital and has seen the changes that have taken place at Mt. Sinai. They have seen five hospitals closed in Queens over the last 6 years. We have a growing community and people from other communities coming to visit our hospitals every single day. The emergency room at Mt. Sinai can hardly keep up with what they currently have. This solution that is on the table is the best proposal. It will add to what they currently have and make a strong and sustainable community hospital. At the end of the day, this is a huge win for this neighborhood we need this hospital. Ms. Carol Scarano, resident, stated that she is the district leader for part of this area and she hears the concerns of everyone and she is hoping that everyone will get together and work closely to make this project a big success. This community is in dire need of a bigger hospital. She stated that from personal experience that a bigger emergency room is needed because it is so overcrowded. She is excited about this new project and it is her hope that everyone will get together to make this project a huge success. Mr. Daniel Peterson, resident 30th Road, stated that he lives behind Mt. Sinai hospital. He thanked Mt. Sinai for speaking to the residents from around the hospital. A few of the points were that they would meet quarterly. He is favor of the application and he does not want to see a 12 story building. The hospital is overcrowded and people are on gurneys in the hallway. I hope that they do keep the quarterly meeting to address and concerns as they come up. Mr. Norm Sateri, resident of 32nd Street, stated that he agrees with most of the people present with having a healthcare facility in Astoria is important. He asked if the hours of construction will be on the weekends as well. Mr. Berger stated that it will be from Monday to Friday. Mr. Sateri asked if they did shadow studies and do you have a slide of this. Mr. Berger replied that they have not done a shadow study. Mr. Sateri asked if they would be recycling the building materials. Mr. Berger replied "Yes". Ms. Pat Farley, resident across the street, stated that she is very nervous about the oxygen tanks. She is very happy that this is going on but, she is having nightmares living across the street from this. The promises that were made and everyone saying that it is going to be fine; she does not believe a word of it. It has been a nightmare living across the street for the last 19 years. She has had to make calls about garbage being picked-up and ambulances keeping her all night. She can only imagine the nightmare it will be over the next 3 years. Mr. Louie Karaiskos, resident 30th Road, stated that he believes that everyone is looking forward to the improvements from Mt. Sinai hospital. It should be in line with the character of the neighborhood. They have seen more disrespect from Mt. Sinai towards their neighbors and many have voiced that today and voiced that throughout the community and the streets. He does not believe that they are a good neighbor and that they respect residents of the area. They are all looking for a better hospital but, based on the hospital's disregard and disrespect for their neighbors and they have not exhibited good neighbor policy. They are a big hospital moving into a small neighborhood. They do not feel that this fits into the neighborhood. Ms. Sheila Morris, stated that she want to express her sympathy for the Board because this neighborhood has some quality of life issues and she does not think that there any section of Astoria that is not being bombarded by something. She wanted to express her solidarity with everyone. Our choices are very few, she used to say if anything happens bring her to NYU Hospital, but that change when super storm Sandy happened and it was cut off. She lives four blocks from this hospital and never thought of being treated at this hospital. She had a friend that was recently treated at this hospital and was amazed by the treatment that was provided by this hospital. She was there every day and experienced that the most difficult thing was getting in and out of the room. They physically had to move beds in order to take blood pressure and move furniture to get physical therapy equipment in the room. How much longer can they go on with that kind of situation? The neighborhood is growing by leaps and bounds. She feels that the ambulance situation will be slightly corrected because they will be able to pull in and dropped off. She hopes that they take the concerns into consideration. She then introduced her niece, Dr. Melissa Lee, physician at Mt. Sinai. Ms. Lee stated that she is the Director of the Ambulatory Services. She has come as a community member, she grew up in Astoria and left for school and came back to work in the community. This is a place where her family can come and trust that they would have good healthcare. She is here as a community member and employee of Mt. Sinai, who has chosen to bring her family back to Astoria to ask that the Board please allow this to work to be done. This is what we need to bring good healthcare to the neighborhood. Mr. Antonio Meloni stated that every time that he has passed by the hospital. The EMS vehicles are running. He asked if there was a 3 minute idling rule. Can they be instructed not to leave the vehicles running? Ms. Schwab stated that she did not have an answer to the question but, she would look into it. Mr. Donato thanked everyone from the community for attending and voicing their opinion on this issue. No further discussion. Item closed.

The next item #308-12-A – Premises 39-27 29th Street. An application to complete construction based on vested rights. Mr. Frank Angelino came on behalf of M & M. He stated that this is an application for vesting on property and will allow them to complete building. The building is eco-friendly and will be used as an office building to relocate 50 employees from their Manhattan site. In 2008, the zone was rezoned from a manufacturing zone with a FAR 5 to a manufacturing /residential zone with FAR2. All the work done on the 5

½ story building has been done under the Department of Building permit. If the application is not approved M & M will have to demolish 3 stories of the building, but if the application is approved the 5 ½ story building will remain the same as it looks and they can complete the interior of the building and obtain a Certificate of Occupancy. They can then use it for expanding their company. He asked that the Board approve the application. He then introduced Mr. Timothy Wong, Technical Director M & M. Mr. Wong stated that he founded the company 12 years ago to become the 1st eco friendly company in NYC. They are State and City, family owned, certified eco-friendly company in New York City. Most of their employees live in Queens. They look forward to being part of Astoria and growing with the community. Mr. Risi asked what they have done in the past 5 years since they started construction to finish the project and what is left to complete on the project. Mr. Angelino stated that when the zoning changed they had to go through extensive work with DOB and get permits reinstated. There were many things that occurred during the last five years and they have a list of all that was done. Exterior is completely done and the interior has to be completed. Mr. Wong stated that there were a lot of hotel being built at the same time. They complete their foundation, stairs, exterior brick, windows, sewer line and elevator. They have the walls for officers and sprinklers to go up. Mr. Stamatiades stated that they had their foundation done and were 100% vested. He is surprised that they did not reach out for support from the Dutch Kills Civic Association. They had never seen an office building go up with balconies which was a big question in the community. Mr. Donato asked if there was anyone in the audience who wanted to speak for or against this application. There was no one. No further discussion. Item closed.

Mr. Joseph Risi, Chair of the Consumer Affairs Committee, read the next item from the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) #1462187 – Premises 36-19 Broadway (Food Craze). An application to establish an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 10 tables and 40 seats. Ms. Brenda Varis, owner, stated she owns a small restaurant that serve Mediterranean food. They opened two months ago and they are working on doing a grand opening as Food Craze. They are currently in the process of making that change. She has been involved in the community on a charity level and has done fundraisers. She is asking that the Board grant them approval for a sidewalk café license to expand. Mr. Risi asked how many seats are inside and had this premise ever been licensed for an outdoor café. Ms. Varis stated that they have 17 seats inside and that they have never had a license for an outdoor café. Mr. Risi asked the hours of operations and hours of the outdoor café. Ms. Varis stated that they are open from 11am to 11pm Monday to Sunday and will change when they add breakfast and it will then be from 7am to 11pm. The outdoor café will be open from 11am to 12pm Monday to Thursday, 11am to 1am Friday and Saturday and Sunday until 12pm. Mr. Risi asked if there are any residents above the premises and if she was aware of the smoking restrictions. Ms. Varis stated that there are no residents above and there is no smoking in any enclosed smoking area. There was no further discussion. Item closed.

The next item #1464047 – Premises 31-06 42nd Street. (Piazza Pizza). An application to establish an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 12 tables and 26 seats. Mr. Robert Callaghan, expediter, stated that Mr. Joseph Ippolito, owner, is also present. The restaurant has been there for 14 years and the hours are 11am to 11pm 7 days a week. He sometimes stays open to 1am on Friday and Saturday if necessary. There are currently 30 seats inside the establishment. They are looking to add 12 tables and 26 seats. Mr. Risi asked if they would be serving alcoholic beverages. Mr. Callaghan stated not at the moment, but they have applied for a liquor license to serve beer and wine. Mr. Risi asked about the 31st Avenue side with 1 table with 3 seats and 1 table with 5 seats. He asked if they are willing to remove 1 seat from the table with 5 seats and 1 seat from the table with 3 seats. Mr. Ippolito replied “Yes”. There was no further discussion. Item closed.

The next item #1466796 – Premises 31-19 30th Avenue. (Fresko Fro Yo). An application to establish an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 11 tables and 34 seats. Mr. Gus Prentzas came up on behalf of the application. He stated that his architect is unable to be present due to pneumonia. The application is for 12 tables with 28 seats, 4 tables will be placed on 30th Avenue and 9 will be on 32nd Street. There will be no music and the hours will be from 8am to 12am during the summer and until 10pm during the winter. Both sides of the street are commercial. Mr. Risi asked if the business is currently open. Mr. Prentzas stated no, they will be open in a month and half. Mr. Risi stated that the outdoor café can only be issued during the operation of the business. Mr. Risi asked if they would be serving alcohol and if there were any apartments above the establishment. Mr. Prentzas stated there will be no alcohol and there are 3 tenants above the establishment. Mr. Donato asked if there was anyone in the audience who wanted to speak for or against this application. Ms. Sheila Morris, resident, stated that there are residents across the street. She asked if you need a table to eat Fro Yo. She stated that she did a lot of research on this issue. Fro Yo is not a three course meal and does not require utensils. It is simple food and most people can eat it with a plastic spoon while they walk. She wants to make sure that she does not get any additional second hand smoke. Mr. Joe Moye, resident above the establishment and he believes it would be good for the families. Sometimes you would like to sit and eat. He and his fellow tenants are in favor of the application. No further discussion. Item closed.

Mr. Donato introduced guest speaker Mr. Joseph Mulvey. He came to update the Board about the U. S. Postal Service Replacement of Post Office formerly located at 27-40 21st Street. He advised the Board that they are looking for another site in zip code 11102.

VOTING:

Mr. Jerry Caliendo reiterated public hearing item from the BSA #170-30-BZ—An application to permit the expansion of Mt. Sinai Hospital of Queens by the construction of a 6 story addition on property located on the west side of Crescent St. between 30th Ave. & 30th Rd. and partial renovation of the existing hospital building. Mr. Caliendo stated that the committee met and recommends approval of the application with the following stipulations 1) all fencing including masonry walls at property line with adjacent property owners, are to be 100% opaque with shrubbery to screen the ambulance parking area from adjacent properties, 2) all lighting in ambulance parking, including access and egress areas, to be directed away from neighboring resident’s windows, 3) coordinate with, and be considerate, to adjacent residences and business owners during the construction process including the removal of graffiti as it appears, 4) make every effort to seek, procure and provide

adequate parking facilities for the existing and proposed expansion and should be provided with multi level parking garage which should be built at the existing parking lot, 5) provide traffic control and mitigation at the ambulance access and egress location of the property, especially at the 30th Avenue ambulance entrance, when there is a high pedestrian traffic flow on the sidewalk, seconded by Norma Nieves-Blas. No further discussion. Mr. Donato called for a vote. Motion called and carried with 30 in Favor, 0 Against, 1 Abstention for Cause.

The next item #308-12-A – Premises 39-27 29th Street. An application to complete construction based on vested rights. Mr. Caliendo stated that the committee met and recommends approval of the application, seconded by George Stamatiades. There was no further discussion. Mr. Donato called for a vote. Motion called and carried with 29 in Favor and 1 Against, 0 Abstentions.

Mr. Joseph Risi reiterated public hearing item from the DCA #1462187 – Premises 36-19 Broadway (Food Craze). An application to establish an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 10 tables and 40 seats. Mr. Risi stated that the committee met and recommends approval of the application with the reduction of request to 9 tables and 36 seats, seconded by Ms. Linda Perno. There was no further discussion. Mr. Donato called for a vote. Motion called and carried with 1 Abstention for cause.

The next item #1464047 – Premises 31-06 42nd Street. (Piazza Pizza). An application to establish an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 12 tables and 26 seats. Mr. Risi stated that the committee met and recommends approval of the application with the reduction to 9 tables and 36 seats, seconded by Ms. Mary Demakos. There was no further discussion. Mr. Donato called for a vote. Motion called and carried with 1 Against.

The next item #1466796 – Premises 31-19 30th Avenue. (Fresko Fro Yo). An application to establish an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 11 tables and 34 seats. Mr. Risi stated that the committee met and recommends approval of the application subject to the reduction of request to 8 tables and 28 seats. There was no further discussion. Mr. Donato called for a vote. Motion called and carried with 1 Against and 1 Abstention.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Mr. John Napolitano, HANAC, stated that he came to announce that the municipal parking lot, at the Senior Housing located on Astoria Blvd./29th St., will be opening up to the public in July. By the time our Board convenes their next meeting the parking lot will be available. He introduced Ms. Lee and Mr. Mazad from Central Parking System, they have been contracted to manage the municipal parking lot. Mr. Mazad stated that Central Parking System has recently been purchased by Standard Parking. He has been with Central Parking for the last 20 years and working in different capacities and various locations. The lot will be a self-parking facility. It will have 59 spaces available and open 24/7 fees will be based on the length of stay like other garages. You will receive a ticket with date and time. There will be two levels, roof and cellar. Monthly and daily parking will be available. Mr. Caliendo asked about security. Mr. Mazad stated that they will have cameras on the premises. Mr. Stamatiades asked about the municipal parking. Mr. Mazad stated that Central will be overseeing the roof parking, as well as, part of the cellar parking. There will be 26 monthly parking spaces. The remaining 33 spaces will be available at 1st ½ hour will be \$2.00; ½ hour to 1 hour \$4.00; 1 – 2 hours \$6.00; 2-12 hours \$11.00 and 24 hours \$18.00. Early Bird special 6AM to 10AM is \$5.00 up to 12 hours. The monthly spaces will be on a first come first serve basis and there will be a waiting list. The monthly will be \$200 for a regular car and SUV/van \$250. Mr. Napolitano stated that HANAC is responsible for the lot but it will be managed by Central. The City of NY no longer wishes to run this lot. Mr. Stamatiades asked if there will be bike racks available. Ms. Lee replied “Yes”. Mr. Napolitano stated that the law now obligates them to have a certain number of bikes spaces.

Mr. Harrison Peck, Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance (MWA), stated that they are a non-profit alliance organization to maximize the New York City waterway along the coastline. They are focusing on public transportation and using the waterways. The MWA is working towards a 5 borough ferry system. The City has announced that they will be doing a 6 month study for expanding waterway usage and access. Astoria will be one of the sites that will be considered in using waterway access. If you need additional information you can reach out to the City Council, Mayors office and local representatives. You can participate in a committee and like us on Facebook Astoria Ferry. Mr. Luis Kleinman, MWA, stated that they have a petition that they are working on and will be reaching out to the future candidate potentials questions on where they stand on establishment of a 5 borough waterway service. They will be asking each 5 questions and the responses will be on their website Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance.org. On July 20th, they will have the “City of Water Day”; it will be at various locations throughout the boroughs. For more information you can go to the website for more information.

Simon from Community Development stated that his job is trying to provide outreach to the Brooklyn and Queens region in help obtaining assistance with funding as part of NYSERDA Economic Development Growth Extension (EDGE) Program. For information on the program you can go to nyserdaedge.gov.

BUSINESS SESSION:

Mr. Pallos motioned to accept the minutes of May’s Board meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. Babor. Motion called and carried unanimously

Ms. Lucille Hartmann, District Manager, reported that she and Mr. Richard Khuzami attended, on behalf of the Board, the ribbon cutting for the outdoor space at the Museum of the Moving Image. She recommended that everyone should visit this wonderful asset in our community. The outdoor space will be used for passive enjoyment, movies at time in the evening, and she believes it can also be rented for special occasions. She then mentioned that in Board Member’s folders there is information on the 2013 Senior Stars Production of the Astoria Performing Arts Center. There will be two performances and this year we are represented by an original

comedy act written and performed by our own Fran McDonald. The Central Astoria LLC, will kick off their Waterfront Concert Series this year on June 24th. She wished everyone a wonderful summer.

Ms. Taryn Sacramone, Director of the Astoria Performing Arts Center, also reported that there will be a performance "Ready for Primetime" by the 2013 Senior Stars on June 22nd from 3pm to 6pm and one of our own, Ms. Fran McDonald, will be performing.

Mr. Robert Piazza, Chair of Transportation Committee, reported that the MTA and DOT are planning to take the M60 and convert it to an express bus. He will update the Board in September.

Mr. Jose Batista, Chair of Youth Committee, reported that the Summer Youth Program kicks off in July.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS:

Mr. Jerry Caliendo stated that there will be a meeting notice going out to members of the Zoning committee and all other interest Board members. The meeting will be held on July 18, 2013 at 6:30pm at the Board's office.

There was no further business before the Board, Mr. Pallos motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Babor. Motion called and carried unanimously.