

Community Board 1, Queens – Board Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2018

Opening: 6:30 p.m. – Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Joe Nocerino, Community Coordinator from the Office of the Queens Borough President, Melinda Katz, shared a few upcoming events:

- First, “Second Chance”, on Saturday, October 20, 2018, anyone who wishes to clear any Summons/Warrants can go to The Universal Church, 68-03 Roosevelt Avenue in Woodside from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm.
- Also, “Know Your Rights Week” which is a series of workshops at different dates and locations, in which you can have your criminal convictions sealed if the convictions are over 10 years and have not more than one felony conviction.
- Finally, the Annual Veterans Day Observance Ceremony will take place at Helen Marshall Cultural Center at Borough Hall on Thursday, November 8, 2018 at 11:00 am.

Mr. Nocerino gave out awards to, Judy Trilivas for 10 years of service to the Community Board, as well as to Pauline Jannelli for 15 years. The award read, “Grateful Recognition for Outstanding Dedicated Service not only to your Community Board, but also the Borough of Queens.”

Presentation from the NYC Department of Sanitation, James O’Connor, Community Affairs Liaison

Mr. James O’Connor said the leaf collection programs are being held on Saturday, November 24, 2018 and Saturday, December 8, 2018. He said the residents should place leaves on the curbside which will be collected by the Department of Sanitation and added that you must place the leaves in either a brown paper bag or unlined trash cans – this is solely for leaves; no branches. Mr. O’Connor put flyers out as to where you can pick up free bags and the locations of where you could drop off at certain locations, dates and times outlined on the flyer. He said if anyone has questions, instead of calling 311 that they can call customer service at: (646) 885-3769, Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, otherwise leave a message.

Questions and Answers with the Board:

They asked, “How does the NYC Department of Sanitation assess the need for a litter basket in a certain area? He stated that the NYC Department of Sanitation is responsible for 59 districts across New York City. Mr. O’Connor said if there is a request for a litter basket at a certain area, they actually go to the location and assess the need for it. He added that the system used is, they put a request, it gets a unique log # and they make an assessment based on pedestrian traffic, whether or not the request is on a residential/commercial street and the history of the basket; was one there before that was misused. Mr. James O’Connor said if anyone has any questions you can go to the Community Board 1 website and click on “Trash Connect” to see when pickups of trash/recyclables are scheduled.

Public Hearing Item

Fayanne Betan, Representative for Sheldon Lobel P.C. made the presentation for:
285-52 BZ Lukoil North America – A variance application to permit conversion of an existing automotive service use (Use Group 16) to an accessory convenience store (Use Group 6) at 30-14 34th Avenue (Block 607, Lot 29) Long Island City and extend the term of the variance for 10 years.

The proposal is to remove the auto service area and expand on the convenience store. They are not enlarging the building, they plan on expanding the convenience store area which will be open 24/7. The gas pumps will remain as is.

The Land Use & Zoning Committee met with the applicant on Wednesday, September 5, 2018 and found no issues; except the tardiness of the application. Since there will be no service area, the cars that are now continuously parked on the sidewalk of the location will be gone. The Committee approved the proposal, without Stipulations, for a term of 10 years.

Motion to approve the proposal to expand the convenience store area without stipulations: Ed Babor; Andre Stith seconded.

Rollcall – unanimous. 38 in favor; 0 opposed

Public Session

Robert Rogers, representative for Justice for all Coalition, stated they are having a rally Saturday, October 27, 2018 at 4:00 pm and invited everyone to attend. The mission is to fight for low income and affordable housing in Astoria and Western Queens and will be held at the Variety Boys and Girls Club, located at 21-12 30th Road, Long Island City, NY. Amongst the issues that will be raised is no privatization of NITRA development and NITRA land.

Nick Delkoff, representative for Friends of the SBJSA (Small Business and Jobs Survival Act), announced there will be a rally at the steps of City Hall on Monday, October 22, 2018 at 12:00 pm, followed by a Hearing at 1:00 pm. He stated they have been working with a group of activists, which are pushing for rent control for commercial leaseholders, to protect small businesses in the area. He also mentioned that small businesses close their doors due to high rent; not necessarily due to lack of business.

Three neighbors, residing in the area of where Studio Square is located, each came to the podium to once again express their frustration with the establishment. Crowd control, noise complaints, brawls and nuisance behavior, were amongst the items discussed. They also pointed out that Studio Square's liquor license is up for renewal and felt that it should not be approved. Andy Aujla, Chair of Consumer Affairs Committee stated he had not received their renewal application as of yet.

- Chairwoman Maire Torniali once again urged the residents to not only call 311 with their complaints, but to also call the Board office so they could keep track of the complaints. She added that this will be helpful in considering their renewal application.

Rica Takashima and Yuki Nagata of The Ramp Project - StopGap NYC explained to the Board that they now have, a free ramp program to provide to businesses, which is being funded by Citizens Committee for New York City, the ramps are temporary fixtures for wheel chairs, pushing strollers or walkers. It is a temporary ramp that does not require a permit from Department of Transportation or the Buildings

Department. The representatives of The Ramp Project - StopGap NYC did not know the exact weight capacity of the ramp, but would get back to the Board with an answer.

Lindsay Sierra Grant and Resource Manager of (*inaudible*) shared a funding opportunity for the grass roots organizations of the area, up to \$5,000 which is for groups who work on grass spaces, not necessarily for that alone, but also to improve or expand the health and wellness of the area, i.e, healthy food demonstrations, or physical activity such as yoga. The deadline is Thursday, November 1, 2018, to apply.

Chris Sossa, Director of Communications from Senator Jose Peralta's office stated they are continuing to provide free immigration and housing services. He provided his email: sossa@nysenate.gov

Susan Lemay advised she has been a tree street pruner since 1991. She stressed the urgency of not raising the soil at the tree roots. The soil rots the bark when it gets wet, as well as smothers the roots and wants to keep that from happening in our area.

Antonios Benetatos, Vice President of Dutch Kills Civic Association, advised he heard a number of complaints regarding Studio Square, they have had a lack of responsiveness to community and are unwilling to compromise with residents. DEP has already issued 3 summonses to them and is considering a "Cease and Desist". He asked the Board to weigh and consider not renewing their license.

Jack Bernatovicz of Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer's office, said since the last meeting, they hosted a press conference with the Commissioner of DOT to assess the traffic conditions on Northern Boulevard. He also mentioned they helped open RIOULT Dance Center and advised the Chocolate Factory will be opening up their new season soon.

Aisha Mayfield, Community Liaison for Assemblywoman Cathy Nolan, announced there will be a Queensbridge Houses Next Gen Resource Fair on Wednesday, October 24 and Thursday, October 25, 2018, at the Community Center located at 10-25 41st Avenue, Long Island City, NY. The fair will have information in relation to housing and other accessible services that residents could have access to. They are partnering with Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, Senator Michael Gianaris and Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer.

Jasper Wilson of Citizens Committee for New York City announced the organization hosts an annual neighborhood grant of up to \$3,000 for community projects, such as murals and community gardens. The deadline to apply is Monday, January 21, 2019.

Motion to approve the minutes of September 20, 2018; Rose Anne Alafogiannis made the motion; Jean Marie D'Alleva seconded.

Chairwoman, Marie Torniali advised she attended the Borough Board meeting, where the President of New York City Transit Authority announced that they are planning to modernize the Transit System, which will be completed in 10 years rather than 40 years. They will be implementing a State of the Art Signal System, which will be a communication based train control, which is pivotal in modernizing our systems. It will allow trains to run closer together and more reliable. There will be new train cars and will reroute/redesign bus routes to where there is more need for buses, rather than what has been in place. There will also be a new fair payment system. In addition, there will be accessible stations: 50 in the first 5 years and 130 additional in the next 10 years, with the balance done by 2034. Each accessible station will be no more than 2 stops away from each other. Our community will be the tail end of this proposed project (SASS), in the second 5 years. Unfortunately, there will be continuous night and weekend

closures in order to accomplish these goals. They do not have commitments for funding yet – we should know in a few months. She noted it was a very impressive plan and if achieved, will be great!

District Manager, Florence Koulouris greeted the Board. She stated she attended a District Borough Cabinet Meeting and a representative from Night Life Commission Forum will be teaching bad actors in the neighborhood how to be good actors. If an establishment has issues with the Police, this entity will come meet with NLC and give direction to establishments as to how to be good actors. This will apply to Liquor Licenses, Cabarets and Unenclosed Cafés. They will give direction but have no enforcement skills. They are supposed to be an alternative to the Police and the DEP.

Committee Reports

Capital and Expense Planning - Chair, Richard Khuzami, thanked every Board Member for all the hard work they did this past year. He said the report is getting better and better every year. He also said that he thinks this should be a living document, whereas when the committees meet, they can add to the report, so as it would then be current and up to date.

Mr. Khuzami mentioned that he integrated old and new items on the report.

Tom Ryan made a motion to approve the Capital and Expense Report as written; Jean Marie D'Alleva seconded. Unanimous.

Consumer Affairs - Chair, Andy Aujla, stated he has not seen the renewal application for Studio Square, but upon receipt will review with the 114th Precinct.

He then turned towards the Liquor License/Unenclosed Café list for October, 2018. Mr. Aujla mentioned his committee met with representatives of Doha and said they have new owners. The original owners had a negative history, but went over stipulations with Doha and they stated they will be better neighbors. He reviewed and approved all applications listed on the report with the 114th Precinct and asked that the Board approve the applications.

Nancy Silverman indicated there are quite a number stipulations on the list and inquired what determines which applicants get Stipulations. It is imperative to have an idea of what Stipulations are required before making an assessment/approval of these applications. She stated that these establishments should already know what a good actor is and there should not be Stipulations.

Chairwoman, Marie Torniali suggested to send out copies of the Stipulations to all the Board Members.

Chair Aujla mentioned that there was an issue with an applicant, XL35 35, who previously told the committee they were opening a Greek restaurant, which turned into an adult establishment. He said the Stipulations are an extra tool that the Committee uses.

The question was raised, “When does the public get to air their views on these applications?” It was mentioned that when Studio Square goes in front of the Board, the public may be there to voice their concerns.

Motion to approve the Liquor License/Unenclosed Café applications: motion made by Loren Amor; seconded by Ed Babor.

Show of hands: Unanimous

Ed Babor announced that Assembly Member Brian Barnwell had just joined the meeting.

The Assembly Member spoke at length about the Major Capital Improvements (MCI) bill that he is working on with Senator Michael Gianaris. He said there have been a couple press conferences regarding certain landlords that are using the program to increase rent for tenants in rent stabilized buildings for improvements, which improvements should automatically be done. He added that in a sense they are double dipping; charging the tenants extra rent and also getting a tax incentive. Assembly member Barnwell said this bill will abolish the MCI programs. He said it will allow tenants who have gotten rent increases in the past 10 years to revert back to their old rent.

Someone from the Public addressed Assembly Member Barnwell explaining that if landlords do not raise the rent of tenants and a new roof is needed and not getting enough income from his investment property, the banks would be unwilling to fund them for an improvement project.

Thomas Ryan mentioned Paragon in Woodside and also Northern Boulevard being a problem.

Assembly Member Barnwell replied he will be working on legislation in January, 2019. He agrees there are car dealerships, after car dealerships and the cars aren't being sold and that they park them on the street. The Assembly member reiterated that he will be drafting legislation to address that issue.

Discussion followed and it was mentioned that not only should rents be frozen but also real estate taxes. Over the last couple of years New York City has been becoming anti landlords. A member of the public stated that if he does not have ample income, he could not get credit from the bank. Assembly member Barnwell stated this bill is still being worked on and would look at both sides.

Nancy Silverman addressed Assembly Member Barnwell with a statement that her block had the lowest voter turnouts. She said she is really concerned that people don't come out to vote in some areas and wanted his thoughts. He mentioned that some people don't vote because they are afraid they will be summoned for Jury Duty. He added that other factors could be getting home from work, making dinner, going over homework and when done, the polls have closed. It was mentioned to implement weekend voting, early morning voting and mail voting for the elderly.

Environmental Protection - Chair, Antonella Di Saverio, stated that on Thursday, November 1, 2018 at 6:30 pm at the Board Office, a representative from NYC Parks Department will be attending the Committee meeting to talk about Roundup and the use of this chemical, Glyphosate in our parks/dog parks. She mentioned a recent court case in California awarded a school's ground keeper \$289 million because he contracted cancer from his exposure to Glyphosate.

Land Use and Zoning – Co-Chair, Elizabeth Erion, indicated there was a training session and only 3 Board Members and Florence attended. She requested if any Board Members have specific questions, she would be happy to explain. She mentioned there will be a lot of high density buildings coming into the area, which will affect the character of the community and she would like the Board Members to know what they are assessing. She advised that the Committee meets every first Wednesday of the month, all the Board Members are welcome to come and discuss any items not understood.

Chairwoman, Marie Torniali mentioned every Board Member now has the Zoning Hand Book. She urged all members to read the book and then send in your questions.

Parks/Recreation/Cultural - Chair, Nancy Silverman stated the Committee is co-sponsoring the Halloween Harvest event at Socrates Park on Saturday, October 27, 2018 and will have a table with information on how to join the Community Board and information regarding the Community Board,

itself. She mentioned that she needs Members to staff the table at 1 hour shifts, between 1:00 pm until 4:00 pm that day.

Transportation - Co-Chair, Robert Piazza mentioned a meeting taking place on Monday, October 22, 2018 with the NYC Department of Transportation regarding proposed changes to Northern Boulevard.

Ed Babor announced that The Taminent Democratic Club is hosting their 87th Annual Dinner Dance and our own District Manager, Florence Koulouris is an honoree.

Community and Economic Development - Co-Chair, Thomas Ryan stressed the Board's support on Small Business Jobs and Survival Act and he also mentioned there are 12 members on his Committee and had only seen about two thirds of the Members, at any given meeting and cannot achieve quorum.

Chair Torniali thanked Tom for his valid comments. She said that quorum is important. Chair Torniali asked board members to review their committee assignments and consider if they can attend committee meetings. She added if you are unable to make the commitment, please let me know and I will be happy to accommodate requests of removal from committees and/or reassignments.

Motion to Adjourn: Amy Hau; Andre Stith seconded.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:30 p.m.

COMMUNITY BOARD 1, Queens

DATE 10/16/18

Community Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	Community Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.
Rose Anne Alafogiannis	✓			Nancy Konipol	✓		E
George Alexiou	✓			Jerry Kril	✓		
Daniel Aliberti	✓			Melanie La Rocca	✓		
Loren Amor	✓			Frances Luhmann-McDonald	✓		E
Avninder Aujla	✓			Hannah Lupien	✓	✓	
Edward Babor	✓			Antonio Meloni	✓		
Jose Batista	✓			Prabir Mitra	✓		
Ann Bruno	✓			Eric Mouchette	✓		E
Giselle Aida Burgess	✓	✓		Stella Nicolaou	✓		
Edwin Cadiz	✓			Norma Nieves-Blas	✓		E
Gerald Caliendo	✓			Mary O'Hara	✓		
Jean Marie D'Alleva	✓			Robert Piazza	✓		
Antonella Di Saverio	✓			RoseMarie Poveromo	✓		E
Katerina Duarte	✓			Yawne Robinson	✓		
Katie Ellman	✓			Thomas Ryan	✓	✓	
Elizabeth Erion	✓			Manuel Salce	✓	✓	
Mackenzi Farquer	✓			Rodolfo Sarchese	✓		
Dean Feratovic	✓			Nancy Silverman	✓	✓	
Evie Hantzopoulos	✓			Dominic Stiller	✓	✓	
Amy Hau	✓			Andre Stith	✓		
Helen Ho	✓			Danielle Tharrington	✓		E
Pauline Jannelli	✓			Marie Torniali	✓		E
Vanessa Jones-Hall	✓	✓		Rod Townsend	✓		
George Kalergios	✓			Judy Trilivas	✓		
Richard Khuzami	✓			Kathleen Warnock	✓		
Number Board Members Present <u>38</u>							
Present <u>38</u>				Absent <u>5</u> Excused <u>7</u>			
April 18							