



The City of New York

Queens Community Board 11

Serving the Communities of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston, Hollis Hills
Little Neck and Oakland Gardens

Paul DiBenedetto Chairperson / **Joseph Marziliano** District Manager

To: All Board Members

From: Paul DiBenedetto, Board Chair
On Behalf of
Laura James, Parks Committee Chair

Date: June 23, 2026

Re: John Golden Pond

On June 16, 2026, the CB11 Parks Committees met to discuss a proposal for a redesign and reconstruction of the Douglaston War Memorial and issues with Crocheron Park and John Golden Pond.

Committee Members

Paul DiBenedetto – Board Chair
Henry Euler, 2nd Vice Chair and Environmental Committee Chair
Jessica Burke (also Friends of Crocheron Park)
Joan Garippa
Richard In
Nicholas Kammerer
David Ro
Matthew Mamak
Karen Mazza
George Mihaltses
Jyothi Sriram

CB11 Staff

Joseph Marziliano, District Manager

Elected Officials

Irene Cheung, representing Assembly Member Ed Braunstein

Guests

Jim Buccellato, Little Neck Douglaston American Legion
Todd Tarpley, Douglaston Little Neck Development Corporation & Douglaston Little Neck
Historical Society
Mike Feller, Friends of Crocheron Park

Mr. DiBenedetto called the meeting to order and introduced Mr. Buccellato, who introduced the proposal by the Little Neck Douglaston American Legion to reconstruct and redesign the War Memorial at the Douglaston Train Station Plaza. He presented plans to refurbish the existing 1921 monument by adding a new front panel honoring 34 local service members who died in conflicts from World War I through Iraq, while preserving the original plaque on the rear. The Committee expressed concerns about the impact on a 120-130 year old weeping, beech tree, with the Douglaston Little Neck Historical Society and Development Corporation opposing the proposal due to potential root damage. The Committee agreed that an arborist study was necessary before proceeding and emphasized the need for broader community buy-in from local organizations. The presentation is attached.

Mr. Euler asked if they would consider permeable pavers for the reconstruction to alleviate water runoff and flooding on the street. Mr. Buccellato agreed to consider that feature with his architectural design partners.

Todd Tarpley, representing the Douglaston Little Neck Historical Society and Douglaston Local Development Corporation, expressed opposition to the specific proposal due to concerns about root disturbance potentially killing the 1888 tree, suggesting an alternative location in front of the American Legion Hall as a viable option.

Mr. DiBenedetto suggested contacting the DMA (Douglas Manor Association) and DLDC (Douglaston Little Neck Development Corporation) leadership to inform them of the American Legion's proposal and the need for their involvement/consultation, since the Manor is a NYC landmark district built due to its proximity to the station and the DLDC was directly involved with the planning, design and implementation of the recent train plaza renovation. Mr. DiBenedetto also suggested hiring an arborist to assess the tree at the Douglaston Memorial site. Mr. Buccellato agreed to pay for the arborist study, if any of the concerned parties found the arborist, for the proposal to proceed. The Committee believes that the project needs more community buy-in before deciding, suggesting a meeting with community leaders to gather additional input and potentially reach a compromise. The Committee agreed to postpone voting on the proposal to avoid rejecting it outright while also ensuring proper community consultation.

The second item addressed Crocheron Park's deteriorating Golden Pond. Ms. Burke spoke regarding the ongoing issue which has significantly shallowed from an average of 3 feet to less than 2 feet due to debris and failed infrastructure. There has also been erosion of the area surrounding the pond. Ms. Burke and Mr. Feller agreed to prepare a concise fact sheet for City and State agencies summarizing the current condition of Golden Park Pond, recent studies, and recommendations for rehabilitation, with emphasis on flooding risk to Cross Island Parkway.

The committee passed a motion calling for an on-site meeting with City agencies including Parks Department, Department of Environmental Protection, and Department of Transportation to discuss rehabilitation plans in conjunction with addressing potential flooding concerns along the Cross Island Parkway.

The meeting was adjourned.



**The American Legion
NY State Little Neck-Douglaston Post 103
42-28 235th Street, Little Neck, NY 11363
2026**

TO; WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: Douglaston War Memorial Renewal and Revitalization Proposal

The current Douglaston War Memorial is of obvious historic and cultural value to the Queens Douglaston-Little Neck community of which we are a long-standing member. As veterans of military service, we naturally have a keen interest in the memorial and its maintenance, as well as a deep understanding of what public commemorative markers of this type ought to represent and the message they should convey. It is not our intent to “change the message” but our proposal is simply to renew the old one by honoring the more recent, far more significant sacrifices made by so many within our community in defense of our nation.

It goes without saying that communities honor and commemorate their fallen soldiers, those who heroically gave their lives to secure and defend our nation and the liberties we enjoy. In the case of the current monument and plaque, built and dedicated by the Douglaston Civic Association in 1921, it is a rare occasion when those of us who “simply served” are specifically named and commemorated. However, in this case it was somewhat appropriate as our extensive research revealed few World War I casualties from Douglaston or Little Neck. In fact, US Navy Seaman Apprentice Lester Angell named on the current plaque was the only community fatality of World War I. He served a total of 48 days and died in September 1918 of the Spanish Flu in a Newport, RI, Naval Hospital. So overall, the current monument is not exactly a “memorial” but simply celebrates the World War I service of those in our community who served honorably. Although a worthy and meaningful tribute but only under the circumstances and at that time.

We are not suggesting to build a new monument as the original is perfectly serviceable and has obvious historic and cultural value to our community - **it simply needs renewal and revitalization**. For instance, among other changes we propose is the removal for restoration of the original bronze plaque to have it fully refurbished to its original appearance. **But more importantly we aim to renovate the existing monument so that it truly pays homage to ALL our fallen of Douglaston and Little Neck for the freedoms we enjoy today.**

We of course have a personal and historic interest in this monument. At least six of our original 1927 charter members names are on the current plaque along with many more who were Legion members. You may be aware there are two women listed among the 75 names, a very

uncommon occurrence and a story unto itself! Both served in the US Navy during World War I. One of them, Ernestine Hutton-Fowler, is among the noted six 1927 Charter members of our Legion Post; she is interred in Zion Cemetery.

Generally, war memorials or public monuments of any sort are strategically located in central civic areas. In this case, placement of the existing monument on the island mall fronting the train station was for exactly the reason that it is a most central civic locale, frequently with a large public presence. Of course, a civic area and public presence are only of value if the site has relative ease of access and a practical physical space for viewing, reflection, and connection to the community's past and current residents, some of whom having suffered great personal losses.

The current configuration, alas, does not meet these criteria. To gain access to the monument, a visitor must step over a chain, a situation that does not invite but rather discourages viewing. Once that barrier is past, one must wend one's way through foliage to stand in dust and dirt a foot or two away from an aged gray, black and difficult to read memorial plaque. Thus, the current arrangement does little to encourage the public to engage with the memorial whose purpose is to educate and celebrate our community's past sacrifices.

Additionally, the current memorial, while of historic significance, fails to properly memorialize the heroism and sacrifice of the many citizens from our community who paid the ultimate price for freedom while serving our country. Over the past year we have done extensive research into the fatal casualties of World War II, Korea, Vietnam Wars, and the more recent conflicts. So far, those of Douglaston-Little Neck number 34. These include the Berbig family of Little Neck who lost both their sons Max and William, in the 1944 Italian Campaign; Marine PFC Hartley Leroy of Hollywood Avenue killed in action on Tarawa, November 1943; Navy Yeoman Leo McGinley of Hanford Street, missing in action during the Philippine Campaign, May 1945; Army Lt Roy Riggs of Little Neck, one of the first American soldiers killed in the Korean conflict, June 1950; Army Lt Kenneth Farrell of Douglaston among the first killed in action in the Tet Offensive, Vietnam January 1968, to mention a few.

We believe we can all agree that it is most important to recognize and honor our many residents who gave the last measure of their lives in service to our nation. Given the above, your kind attention and support will be much appreciated. We sincerely hope you will consider and support this proposal to renovate and renew the existing monument. We are available to respond to any questions or concerns you might have regarding this matter and may be contacted at the POC number or email noted below. Thank you for your consideration.

James Buccellato, CW4, USA (Ret)
Chairman, Memorial Committee
NY State, Queens County American Legion
Little Neck-Douglaston Post 103
(703) 625-0181
wopa83@yahoo.com

For God and Country



DOUGLASTON - LITTLE NECK WAR MEMORIAL
EXISTING SITE VIEW



Conceptual View

DOUGLASTON - LITTLE NECK WAR MEMORIAL
PROPOSED SITE RENDERING

For God and Country

For God and Country



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DOUGLASTON - LITTLE NECK WAR MEMORIAL

Thousands of men and women of Queens County
answered the call of duty to defend freedom
when our nation faced peril.

Those of Douglaston and Little Neck who gave
their lives in service to our nation and
never returned are honored here.

WORLD WAR I

SA Lester T. ANGELL, USN
PVT Frank A. BROWN, USA

KOREAN WAR

1LT Roy T. RIGGS, USA
CPL Walter J. YUSZKIEWICS, USMC

VIETNAM WAR

1LT Kenneth J. FARRELL, USA

IRAQ-AFGHANISTAN WARS

SPC Roger G. LING, USA
SPC Wai P. LWIN, USA

WORLD WAR II

YN2 Harold A. ANDERSON, USN
PVT Adell BAGLEY, USA
PFC Max O. BERBIG, USA
PVT Willaim F. BERBIG, USA
AC Herbert BRENNER, USAAF
GM1 Alfred J. BRIDGES, USN
2LT William A. BURKE, USAAF
S/SGT George W. CLEMENT, USA
SGT Ernest F. FICHTL Jr., USA
1LT Donald G. GRIFFIN, USAAF
S/SGT William H. HADEN, USA
PFC Harry HELD, USA
PFC Frank S. KOVAR, USA
CPL John S. KOVAR, USAAF

WORLD WAR II

1LT Harold J. LEIGHT Jr., USAAF
PFC Hartley S. LE ROY, USMC
CAPT Robert B. MATTSON, USMC
YN2 Leo F. MCGINLEY, USN
CPL Frank R. NOLF, USAAF
S/SGT Edwin R. PHELAN, USA
2LT Everett R. PRINDLE, USAAF
PFC Anthony RAZULIS, USA
2LT Edgar C. SCANLON Jr., USAAF
S/SGT Warren H. SEEBADE, USA
CAPT Joseph A. TERZI, USMC
CPL Robert J. VEASEY, USAAF
PFC Tony J. VLCHEK, USMC

For The Fallen

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.
... R. L. Binyon ...*

DOUGLASTON - LITTLE NECK WAR MEMORIAL
NEW ADDITIONAL PLAQUE

