



The City of New York

Queens Community Board 11

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

Michael Budabin, **Chairperson** / Joseph Marziliano, **District Manager**

TO: All Board Members
FROM: Douglas Montgomery, Douglaston Zoning Chair and
Eileen Miller, Health and Human Services Committee Chair
DATE: January 29, 2021

On January 28, 2021, the Douglaston Zoning and Health and Human Services Committees held a joint Zoom teleconference meeting to discuss a homeless shelter at 243-02 Northern Blvd.

Present

Michael Budabin, Board Chair
Douglas Montgomery, Committee Chair
Eileen Miller, Committee Chair
Christine Haider, 1st Vice Chair
Victor Dadas, 2nd Vice Chair
Henry Euler, 3rd Vice Chair
Albert Galatan – Member
Rose Marie Guidice – Member
Bernard Haber – Member
Adrianna Aviles – Member
Akshar Patel – Member
Elias Fillas – Member
Wendy Pelle-Beer – Member
Robert Liatto – Member
Christina Scherer – Member
Jyothi Sriram – Member
Michael Golia – Member
Susan Cerezo – Member
Lander Bravo – Member
Sharon Chin – Member
Stephan Popa – Member
Beryl Bain-Bush, Non-Board Committee Member

Civic Associations

Michael Feiner, Bayside Hills Civic Association
Walter Mugdan, Westmoreland Civic Association
Colette Wong, Doug-Bay Civic Association

Elected Officials

David Fischer representing Assembly Member Braunstein
Kevin Kiprovski representing Council Member Vallone

There will several residents in attendance.

CB11 Staff

Joseph Marziliano, District Manager

Jane Bentivenga, Community Coordinator

Christina Coutinho, Community Associate

Mr. Budabin called the meeting to order and announced tonight's meeting is the second meeting regarding a proposed homeless shelter at 243-02 Northern Blvd. This is to gather questions and concerns from the committees to discuss the next step. The public meeting will be held on February 1, 2021. Local civic associations will have the opportunity to speak tonight and the public can register to speak at the February 1st meeting.

Mr. Budabin wanted to clarify misinformation that has been brought to the Board's attention; 1) CB11 did not pick this location, nor did Dept. of Homeless Services (DHS) choose this site over a list of potential sites; 2) There was an inappropriate flyer distributed within the Little Neck area advising to call the Board Office. The office had nothing to do with this flyer. The office welcomes viewpoints but only in a matter showing dignity and respect for all human beings.

Mr. Budabin invited Civic Associations to speak.

Mr. Mudgan, representing Westmoreland Civic Association, thanked CB11 for reading their letter at the January 12, 2021 meeting. He stated how his association recognizes that our community should help carry the load of helping homeless people but there are several concerns; 1) the CAB needs to be established as soon as possible. DHS said that information would be sent, and it has not been; 2) there should be a strong commitment to the population of the shelter; 3) the plans of the shelter were requested and we were told by DHS they would be forwarded; 4) the space provided and dormitory style is not adequate to assure personal dignity; 5) since there is no parking for the facility, how will parking for employees and residents impact the residential area. Mr. Budabin said the office has been in touch DHS regarding the CAB and they are working on it. Mr. Marziliano stated that DHS is having technical difficulties with forwarding the plans but are continuing to work on correcting them.

Mike Feiner, representing Bayside Hills Civic Association, requested the Board to watch over to assure that the shelter does not impact the community in a negative way.

Colette Wong, Doug-Bay Civic Association, had several questions; 1) she requested the NY guidelines to operate a homeless facility and the floor plans; 2) how and who will help prepare residents for obtaining employment and a new place of residence if they do not have a job; 3) how will a resident be treated if they have a medical condition (COVID, mental illness); 4) Samaritan Village does not properly train staff and does not pay for overtime, information received that staff takes money from residents, assists in helping with obtaining drugs for residents, and physical assaults on residents from staff. Mr. Budabin answered some of Ms. Wong's points. He said that plans will be coming shortly, and the office will follow up. He also said that standard operating procedures will be requested. Lastly, Mr. Budabin said that Samaritan Village will be asked how the staff is trained and the other concerns relating to staff will be addressed.

Mr. Budabin reminded the audience again to register to speak for the February 1, 2021 meeting. He also stated that the Board does not have a formal role in this process, the Board is acting as a liaison to voice the concerns of the community.

Mr. Montgomery, Douglaston Zoning Chair, and the Committee members discussed their points. Mr. Montgomery stated that the building already has a variance which supersedes anything that will be built there. Mrs. Guidice and Mr. Haber spoke regarding the plans of the building and added that the dormitory style sleeping arrangements is not healthy for the residents. The sleeping quarters are too small. Mr. Fillas spoke regarding the developer that purchased the site. The developer has other contracts with Samaritan Village. Mr. Fillas stated that other developers were interested in the site for a medical facility. Mr. Fillas asked once Samaritan Village receives funding, what is the plan if they deviate from the regulations? How will this impact the community? Discussion ensued regarding a servicing agreement. Ms. Pelle-Beer stated that if there is problem with the contractor running the shelter, funds would not be stopped as a penalty. There is a complaint process that involves HPD, DHS and HUD. The contractual services and complaints are monitored. Discussion ensued if any shelters have been closed due to poor management. It was discussed that the focus should be on the services and meeting the obligation to the residents. Ms. Aviles spoke regarding the negative reviews for the Pan American Shelter. The Samaritan Village representative stated that the Pan American site is operating great and Ms. Aviles stated that the information that was given is not true; there are several problems at that site. Mr. Haber asked for the calculation of how many residents per square footage is allowed. Mr. Montgomery asked for information from the 110th precinct regarding the Pan American Shelter. Ms. Sriram asked what training will the staff receive and will they receive medical benefits. Ms. Miller read a letter with a statement that this site is not ideal for a shelter due to transportation. Lack of transportation will make thriving almost impossible. Mrs. Haider suggested a letter be forwarded with concerns. She spoke regarding what services will be offered. Mr. Euler said there is a concern regarding enforcement in relation to the school adjacent to the site. Discussion ensued regarding the process if the community did not approve of the shelter. Taking an advisory role would not stop this project. This is not an application with a mandated vote. Mr. Marziliano discussed who would be on the CAB.

Mr. Budabin asked what do the committees want to propose to the full board.

Mrs. Miller suggested a letter to activate the CAB and if the community is against the shelter that should be included in the letter. In conclusion, Mrs. Miller believes that this site is not fit for a shelter due to the lack of public transportation.

Discussion ensued regarding a men's shelter at the St. Anastasia annex. The Pastor for St. Anastasia said there was never a shelter at the annex.

Ms. Cerezo spoke regarding hotels versus shelters. Discussion ensued that hotels are not feasible.

It was again mentioned how the space is not adequate for the better of the residents.

Ms. Donahue said she has a concern that the shelter is next to a school.

Mr. Haber said that after the testimonies are heard on February 1, 2021, a letter should be drafted.

Mrs. Haider made a motion that the Board send a letter to DHS and Samaritan Village summarizing the questions and concerns from this meeting and the meeting on February 1, 2021 within two weeks. Discussion on the motion. Mrs. Miller asked what the next step is if the community does not want the shelter. Mr. Haber mentioned asking for the advice of the NYC Public Advocate. A committee roll call vote was taken resulting unanimously in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 pm.