



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, Chair / Joseph Marziliano, District Manager

TO: All Board Members
FROM: Victor Dadas, Transportation Committee Chair
Henry Euler, Environmental Committee Chair
DATE: October 29, 2020

On October 28, 2020, a joint Transportation and Environmental Committee meeting was held via Zoom teleconference to discuss various issues that involve both Committees.

Present

Michael Budabin, Board Chair
Victor Dadas, 2nd Vice Chair and Transportation Committee Chair
Henry Euler, 3rd Vice Chair and Environmental Committee Chair
Adriana Aviles (E)
Lander Bravo (T)
Ocelia Claro (E)
Lourdes December (E)
Mary Donahue (T)
Barbara Gillespie (T)
Laura James (T) (E)
John Kelly (T)
Eileen Miller (T)
Stephan Popa (T)
Christina Scherer (T) (E)
Benjamin Turner (T)
Mary Bandziukas (E - non-Board member committee member)

CB11 Staff

Joseph Marziliano, District Manager
Jane Bentivenga, Community Coordinator
Christina Coutinho, Community Associate

Dept. of Sanitation

Michael Carolan, Deputy Chief
John Ottoman, Supervisor, Queens East Snow/Night Plow Operations
Stephan Caruso, Citywide Community Affairs Supervisor
Joe Ottomanelli, Community Affairs, Queens Liaison

Residents

Joby Jacobs

Mr. Marziliano began the meeting by announcing that representatives from the NYC Department of Sanitation (DSNY) were present to address specific concerns regarding snow plowing in certain areas of CB11.

Mr. Dadras welcomed and thanked all for attending. He reviewed the items that were to be discussed at this evening's meeting. He then passed the introduction of DSNY over to CB11 Environmental Chair, Henry Euler.

Mr. Euler recognized Mrs. Donahue as the first speaker regarding issues with snow plowing. Mrs. Donahue first spoke about center dividers on 46 Avenue between 192 and 195 Street; residents in that area have very narrow sidewalks, no grassy area and high walls surrounding their properties. Due to this, when plows come through, the snow is pushed onto the sidewalk that residents have already cleared. Residents have sometimes had to shovel snow three times. There is a school nearby and many parents and children have had to walk into the street to avoid the snow-covered sidewalk. Mrs. Donahue suggested that snow be piled somewhere and carted away later. The second concern is the salt that is used for the streets ends up on these center dividers (malls). These malls are green spaces; one year, the salt killed 28 shrubs. The salt also goes onto their driveways with some reaching their garage doors. The third concern is the speeding of some of these trucks. Mr. Caruso stated that salt spreaders are set to pre-determined settings. Adjusting them for different streets is not practical. As a matter of safety, it is better they use too much salt than not enough. Mr. Budabin suggested less "passes" in these areas. Mr. Caruso responded that this cannot be left up to the individual drivers. Mr. Budabin only wants a channel of communication regarding these issues. Deputy Chief Carolan suggested a protective tarp be placed over the green spaces for the winter. He also said they can speak to the operators about not pushing the snow onto the sidewalks, but they are required to clear lanes as much as possible.

Ms. Scherer suggested the trucks travel in the opposite direction of the traffic for those three blocks so that the snow doesn't get pushed onto sidewalks. DC Carolan said there are legal issues with traveling the wrong way and the salt that was already on the ground would be mixed with the snow they are plowing and end up on the malls. Mrs. Donahue does not feel it is a good idea to push the snow onto the malls. Mr. Budabin suggested that trucks travel as slowly as possible through this area to minimize the impact of how much and how far the snow is pushed in an area with no grassy buffer. DC Carolan said they can speak to the operators about that. He also said he was going to visit the area to assess the situation and speak to QE11 Superintendent Kauke.

Mr. Kelly agreed with the issues that were already raised but wanted to point out this is a district-wide concern; it should not be individualized. He also asked how residents should reach out in the event they see operators speeding, streets not being cleared, or snow being pushed onto sidewalks. DC Carolan said all complaints should be reported to 311 so there is City-wide tracking, not only a complaint at the QE11 District office.

Mr. Budabin and Mr. Euler thanked the DSNY representatives for attending this meeting and stated they look forward to continuing to work with them in the future.

Mr. Dadras introduced the next topic to be discussed which is the upcoming Bike Workshop. Albert Silvestri, Deputy Queens Commissioner, of NYC DOT has advised that the workshop is scheduled for Monday, November 16, 2020 via Zoom. The ad-hoc committee (Michael Budabin, Victor Dadras, Ben Turner, Lander Bravo and Barbara Gillespie) met and connected via email several times over the last month to formulate the following items which were presented by Mr. Bravo:

Background Bullet Points

- Vehicular injury/death is a serious concern for residents of Northeast Queens
- Safer streets are better for residents, regardless of mode of travel, and we want family-safe routes in our community
- The parks within Northeast Queens are some of the most valuable public assets in the area
- Northeast Queens has limited transportation options, both for internal travel and to other areas of the City
- Biking as a mode of transportation is increasing in urban areas globally, around America and in New York City, and increasing bike lanes is supported by the NYC DOT
- Notwithstanding the growth of biking as a mode of transportation, driving remains an important mode of transport for residents in Northeast Queens

Conceptual Bullet Points

- Quality over quantity: proposing a couple of well-designed, protected lanes in the area is better than proposing multiple unprotected lanes that may have less use and may cause more disruption
- Consider one protected East-West bike lane running through Northeast Queens to connect the community and its parks with the transportation hub in Flushing and one protected North-South bike lane connecting residential areas and areas of community interest within Northeast Queens (such as schools and commercial shopping) with each other and with area parks
- Endeavor to have a net zero loss of parking spots as a result of new bike lanes
- Protection of bike lanes by parked cars as opposed to concrete barriers is optimal as it's more aesthetically pleasing
- Potential lane narrowing along the bike lane route would have additional safety impact
- Focus on signage along the route to increase safety
- Focus on installing public bike racks at areas of interest in the community so that bikers can safely store their bikes

Ms. Gillespie emphasized that we are trying not to take a “one size fits all” mentality. She noted that CB11’s public transportation options are sparse and wants to ensure that future bike lanes integrate well with motor vehicles. She feels that no loss of parking is very important. Mr. Bravo agreed and stated that is why they are taking a “complete street” approach not just a

bike lane approach. Mr. Turner added that drivers are very well served in Northeast Queens and we must remember that not everyone in CB11 drives a motor vehicle as we represent everyone. Ms. James suggested it may be a good idea to investigate the “safe street” that is being proposed on 34 Avenue from Woodside through Jackson Heights, Elmhurst and Corona. Parking will not be taken away and there will be a very low speed limit if you wish to drive onto the street to park a vehicle. Mr. Dadras added that we do not want to approach this bike workshop with an “us against them” approach. Mr. Turner agreed. The goal is to make streets safer for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians alike.

Mrs. Claro stated that drivers and cyclists need to have a mutual respect and learn to share the road. She is pleased that the ideas presented are inclusive of all. Mr. Dadras wholeheartedly agreed and stated that the Department of Parks will also be included in this workshop regarding running trails and green spaces. Mr. Kelly requested that we ask for 24-hour protected bicycle lanes, as some do shut down at night. He also suggested that we change the phrasing in the bullet points to “at least” one north/south and east/west bike lane. At this point, Mr. Budabin explained the next steps that will be taken over the next month regarding what we will bring to the bike workshop and then subsequently vote on. Ms. Gillespie reminded everyone that we need to contact neighboring community boards about this issue. Mr. Budabin stated that this workshop is for all Eastern Queens. Mr. Popa suggested one bike lane east of Alley Pond Park and one west of Alley Pond Park at a minimum. He mentioned Marathon Parkway on the east and the Clearview Expressway service road on the west. Mrs. Donahue asked if there are detailed bike maps. Mr. Dadras replied that there are, however, better signage is also needed.

Ms. Bandziukas suggested identifying, reaching out to and getting the “average” bike rider who rides to Bell Blvd. to shop, due to a lack of parking, more involved. Many more bikes can fit into the space that is allotted for a vehicle. She also spoke regarding the poor condition of the pavement of many bike lanes; maintenance should also be addressed. Mr. Kelly pointed out that road condition is a result of the weight they bear. He also advised everyone to get the word out to all their friends and contacts on social media. He also requested the Zoom information for this workshop as soon as it is available. Ms. Gillespie mentioned the study that the Hunter students completed. Mr. Marziliano stated that NYC DOT connected two, 2-mile stretches of bike lane on 73 Avenue after these students identified the issue after researching and working with the CB11 Transportation Committee. Mrs. Miller stated that the Bayside Hills Civic Association is not interested in having additional bike lanes in their area. She does feel, however, that this is a very comprehensive, well-thought out plan. Ms. Aviles wanted to clarify that this workshop is proposing additional bike lane(s) to the one on 73 Avenue. She reiterated Mr. Kelly’s suggestion of getting the information out via social media. She recommended doing it individually via Facebook, Twitter etc., not just through group notifications.

Mr. Budabin commended the Committee for their work on this issue. He spoke about accident statistics from 2017, 2018 and 2019 that he will share at the CB11 Board meeting on Monday evening.

Respectfully submitted 10/29/2020