

The City of New York
Queens Community Board 3
82-11 37th Avenue, Suite 606, Jackson Hts, New York 11372

BOARD MEETING

**Thursday, February 16, 2006
School**

**at: I.S. 227, The Louis Armstrong
32-02 Junction Boulevard
East Elmhurst, NY**

PRESENT

Khaleeq U. Arshed, M.D.
Patrick Beckles
Earline Berry
Cristina Borrero
Emma Brandt
Richard Cecere
Howard Dent
Margaret Dozier
Blanca Fonseca
Vasantraï Gandhi
Judy Grubin
Darryl Hoss
Joyce Hucless-Julian
Norma Jimenez
Capers Johnson
Edward Kiernan
Grace Lawrence
Marta Lebreton
Ana Lopez
Thomas Lowenhaupt
Martin Maier
Joseph Ricevuto
David Rosero
Arturo Ignacio Sanchez, Ph.D.
Jimmy Smith
Hospital Center
Arthur Teiler
York
Patricia Thomas
Solutions
Edwin Westley
the Park
Hamlett Wallace
A.C.S.
William Young
Giovanna Reid

ABSENT

Jose Bernal
Mizanoor Biswas
Shiv Dass
Vivian Dock
Annette Hicks Gill, Esq.
Luis Gomez
Lorraine Kresse
Stephen Kulhanek
Lisa Mesulam
Ralph Moreno
Mayo Peralta
Leoncio Romero
William Salgado, Esq.
Felicita Santiago
Augusto Tiongson
Orlando Tobon
Beninnida Yagual
Jorge Zamora

GUESTS

Chris Constantino, Elmhurst

Arlene Jovilan, City Year / New

Bintso Poggay, N.Y.C. Business

Andrew Ronin, Queens Theatre in

Qubbus Shaikh, Representative,

Janice Scurry, B.C.L. Day Care
Bob Passero / Anthony Romeo,

Irene Voss
Queens Library

Assist. Dir. Capital Programs,

Joseph Crowley

Barbara Jackson, Rep., Hon.

Jeffrion Aubry

Murlaina Tindall, Rep., Hon.

Peralta

Yonel Letellier, Rep., Hon. Jose

Mark Kemmerer, Rep. Helen Sears

Approximately 40 Residents

Vasantraï Gandhi, Chairman, opened the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Mr. Gandhi introduced the evening's first guest speaker for the Public Information segment, Mr. Chris Constantino from Elmhurst Hospital Center.

Public Information

Elmhurst Hospital Center

Mr. Constantino advised that if Governor Pataki's plan goes through, the FY 2006 budget cut for Elmhurst Hospital Center will be 7.5 million dollars. He provided E.H.C.'s budget update:

- Elmhurst Hospital Center achieved 10 straight years of balanced budgets between FY 1996 and FY 2005.
- There was an average budget surplus of \$15 million per year -- a total surplus of \$150 million over a ten year period. This was related to Medicaid funding, settlement monies and the ability to recruit fewer staff members than most other hospitals.
- The Governor's proposed Medicaid spending cuts of \$7.2 million have greatly impacted E.H.C. since municipal hospitals depend on incoming funds from Medicaid. E.H.C.'s expenses have gone up significantly, i.e. cost of living increases, fringe benefits, particularly pension benefits (early retirement).

Mr. Constantino urged the Community Board and the public to contact their legislators to restore the budget reductions proposed by the Governor and to increase funding to E.H.C. and other public hospitals in recognition of increased cost of labor and supplies.

City Year / New York

City Year is a national non-profit service organization and was founded in Boston in 1988. Its members are a diverse group of young adults who range in ages 17 to 24 who will do a year of service at one of 15 sites across the U.S. Members work in teams as

tutors / mentors in schools, run after-school programs, plan and host day camps for kids and rebuild neighborhoods. They find their purpose in meeting critical community needs. There are currently 10 teams throughout the five boroughs of New York--8 school based and 2 specialty teams.

Arlene Jovilan advised that she is serving her second year with City Year / New York. She is currently the service leader for the Corona community team at P.S. 92. A large event was recently held at Elmcor Youth & Adult Activities and P.S. 19. Over 700 volunteers painted more than 15 murals and revitalized the auditoriums, cafeterias and other rooms. Ms. Jovilan added that a lovely mosaic was created for P.S. 19. Ms. Jovilan advised that a City Year team of 10 members go to a particular school for an entire day teach where the team will implement literacy based programs, focusing on phonics, critical reading and comprehension. In addition, extra curricular services are employed, i.e. creating lunch clubs, hosting student government, and implementing school learning programs in schools that don't have them.

Queens Theatre in the Park

Andrew Ronin, Director of Audience Development of Queens Theatre in the Park, updated the Board and community residents on upcoming events. A special offer for C.B. #3 is "two-for-one" tickets to see "Philadanco" (a Philadelphia Dance Company) on March 4th and 5th. The premier African-American company dances their history and culture -- it is an emotional, energetic and dynamic performance. He further advised that the Theatre has been working with the Arts and Education Program at the Renaissance School. They are teaching in-school drama and acting classes with the 9th grade class. At the end of April the students will be putting on their own performance at Queens Theatre. Through the *Cultural Adventures Program*, funded by City Council, Queens Theatre has been working with 3rd and 4th grade students at P.S. 127 in an after-school drama/acting program.

Mr. Ronin further reported that at the end of February, the Caribbean Cultural Theatre will hold a story-time workshop at the Langston Hughes Library.

N.Y.C. Business Solutions

The Chairman introduced Mr. Bintso Popgay, a counselor at N.Y.C. Business Solutions in Jamaica, Queens.

Mr. Popgay advised that his office handles all inquiries related to small business matters in Queens. 311 calls related to small businesses are directed to N.Y.C. Business Solutions. A business owner may have questions about financing, about available N.Y.C. programs, licensing, or other documentation that an individual needs help with. Mr. Popgay advised that his office also promotes other City programs, such as training grants and special awards for women ventures. Periodic workshops are also offered relating to marketing, financing and other operational activities that are undertaken by small businesses. Mr. Popgay advised that in collaboration with the

Greater Jamaica Development Corporation, a free business workshop is being held on March 15th. If anyone is thinking about starting a business, there is a basic monthly business seminar covering all important topics/issues that a new business owner needs. He further advised that if an individual needs professional help but cannot afford to pay, N.Y.C. Business Solutions will refer them to “for profit” and/or “not-for-profit” organizations.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Gandhi advised that Augusto Tiongson, Land Use Committee Chair is on vacation. Board Member, David Rosero will preside over the Land Use issues this evening.

BSA-131-05-BZ – 72-01 / 72-11 Roosevelt Ave.; 37-61 / 37-69 72nd Street; 72-18 Broadway (Broadway Plaza)

An application for variance relief for parking and zoning requirements that would allow for a five-story office / retail building.

David Rosero advised that the attorneys for the applicant have asked that the matter be postponed. Patrick Jones, Esq. accounted for the adjournment as follows:

Mr. Jones advised that because the Land Use Committee’s primary focus is on parking and traffic issues in the vicinity of the project, they have again asked the Community Board to adjourn the matter for one more month. C.B. #3’s proposals are being compared to the parking requirements that we have proposed, i.e. a hotel on the site would reduce parking significantly and/or dividing up the property into smaller lots so that the smaller retailers would require fewer parking spaces. Mr. Jones further advised that they would show the Board the results of their investigation.

Discussion ensued:

Darryl Hoss – Has the applicant reached out to the larger department store type retailers?

Mr. Jones -- No. The desire is to have “class A” retailers at this site. So far, it has been premature to reach out to specific retailers until we get further along into the review process.

What must be met are the specifications of the zoning resolution – we need to give the Community Board and BSA good justification as to why we can’t.

Judy Grubin – Does the Community Board have access to an environmental impact study as well as a traffic study?

Mr. Jones – What we have provided to the Community Board is the City’s required environmental assessment statement which includes 25 impact categories using the city’s Environmental Quality Review Manual.

CPC Application #C 050473 PQQ – 34-10 108th Street (BCL Day Care)

An application submitted to the ACS and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services for the acquisition by lease of the above referenced property for continued use as a day care center.

David Rosero introduced Mr. Qubbus Shaikh, representative for the Administration for Childrens' Services.

Mr. Shaikh advised that 34-10 108TH Street is a two-story building and BCL Day Care has been providing child care services since 1971. The facility has been renting since that time and their lease expires in August 2006. The building contains approximately 22,000 sq. ft. of interior floor area and 5000 sq. ft. of roof-top area. The day-care center occupies the entire building and serves approximately 100 preschool and 40 school-age children. Mr. Shaikh advised that the facility is required to go through the ULURP process to exercise the option to renew and/or extend their lease for the next ten years. The center is licensed and subject to the established standards of ACS as well as federal, state and city regulations.

Janice Scurry, stated that she is the Chairperson of this wonderful facility. She advised that B.C.L. Day Care Center encompasses a variety of activities and programs which are determined by the child's age. Ms. Scurry noted a few of the programs/activities that the facility offers -- a computer lab; a game room and a kitchen where the children can learn how to cook during after-school hours. The facility continues to grow and expand. She requested the community's continued support for this much needed day care center.

Discussion ensued:

Milady, stated that her son presently attends B.C.L. and as a child she also attended the center, over 25 years ago. She stated her concern, not only for her children, but for the community as well, of the possibility that the lease may not be renewed.

The building is owned by a private landlord/corporation and the City of New York goes directly into a lease agreement with the owner. The landlord/corporation is responsible for maintaining the structural work of the building. The day care center is responsible for maintaining the interior of the building.

Ed Westley – Why doesn't the facility propose that the City of New York buy the building?

Mr. Shaikh – The City in general is moving away from buying buildings like this – they do not want the liability of maintenance upkeep. It is much more cost effective for the City to lease from private landlords.

David Rosero – The City of New York does not want to buy any more real estate.

V. Gandhi – Money is a major factor – municipal agencies always try to minimize capital expenditures.

Jimmy Smith -- B.C.L. Day Care Center is an outstanding asset in the community.

CEQR # 06QPL001Q / Application # C 060087 PCQ -- 95-08 / 14 Astoria Boulevard

An application submitted by the Queens Borough Public Library and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services for site selection and acquisition for a library expansion in East Elmhurst.

David Rosero introduced Bob Passero and Anthony Romeo, Assistant Directors of Capital Programs for Queens Library System.

Through the Borough President, the money has now been raised for the proposed expansion of the East Elmhurst branch library. The current building is 7500 sq. ft. and the addition will be 4000 sq. ft. As in libraries throughout Queens, radio frequency technology will also be brought into the East Elmhurst Branch.

Discussion ensued:

Judy Grubin – Was the property adjacent to the library purchased as well?

Bob Passero – Yes, it is in the process of being purchased.

Grace Lawrence – How long will the project take to build once the property is acquired?

Bob Passero – You don't have to wait until full possession of the property is acquired in order to proceed with the expansion.

Jimmy Smith stated that the derelict cars stored on the adjacent vacant lot must be removed. A dangerous condition exists because of the gas tanks.

Bob Passero – Yes, the City will remove the vehicles as soon as the property is acquired.

Hamlett Wallace -- Will the soil be tested before the work begins?

Bob Passero – Yes, the City will follow-up with soil testing.

Patrick Beckles stated that the people of East Elmhurst sorely need the expansion of this library. Among the many immigrants that frequent the library, a catholic school is located next door. The students utilize the library and attend various after-school programs. Further, the derelict cars that are stored on the vacant lot adjacent to the library are illegal – they are unlicensed and unregistered. The property has no proper drainage and there are no curbs-cuts. Mr. Beckles requested that the Queens Library provide a drawing outlay of the property the next time they attend our meeting.

Bob Passero advised that the City has shown in the past with other properties, that once the lot has been acquired the vehicles will be removed.

DCA / 39-20 104th Street (La Officina) – An application for the establishment of a cabaret will be heard in March 2006.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairperson Gandhi opened Executive Session with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion #4 -- 2006 -- Adoption of the Agenda

Upon motion duly made by Grace Lawrence, seconded by Emma Brandt and unanimously carried, the February 16, 2006 Agenda was adopted.

The Chairman introduced his newly elected colleagues: Grace Lawrence, First Vice-Chairperson; Norma Jimenez, Second Vice-Chairperson; Darryl Hoss, Secretary and Arthur Teiler, Treasurer. Members At-Large – Howard Dent; Luis Gomez; Stephen Kulhanek and Edwin Westley.

Mr. Gandhi stated that many of the newer Board members are not familiar with the full Board. He, therefore, suggested that Board Members introduce themselves by stating their name, the community in which they live and how many years they have served on the Board. In this way, the name can match the face, he said. Each Board member present introduced themselves.

Motions By Committee Land Use

CPC Application #C 050473 PQQ – 34-10 108th Street (BCL Day Care)

An application Submitted to the A.C.S. and the Department of Citywide Administrative services for the acquisition by lease of the above referenced property for continued use as a day care center.

David Rosero advised that the Land Use Committee met and reviewed the application. The day care center has no record of complaints nor are there any outstanding violations on file. The Committee recommended that the application be approved for acquisition by lease for an additional (10) ten years.

Discussion ensued:

- B.C.L. Day Care Center has been in our community for many years. The families and children of the community are fortunate to have this center.
- The community is proud to have this facility.
- The day care center is diverse and tends to the needs of the community.

Motion #5 – 2006

Upon motion duly made by Ana Lopez, seconded by Jimmy Smith, to approve the extension of the lease for ten (10) additional years was unanimously passed.

CEQR # 06QPL001Q / Application # C 060087 PCQ -- 95-08 / 14 Astoria Boulevard

An application submitted by the Queens Borough Public Library and the Department of Citywide Administrative Services for site selection and acquisition for a library expansion in East Elmhurst.

The Land Use Committee met with Peter Magnani of the Queens Library System. Mr. Magnani explained the plan and timetable for the expansion of the East Elmhurst library. It was the Committee's recommendation to approve the application.

Discussion ensued:

The site selection for the expansion of the existing library is required to go through the City Planning process. Approximately 4,500 sq. ft. will be added on. C.B. #3 approves the use of the Borough President's funds and capital budget capital funds.

Motion #6 – 2006

Upon motion duly made by Pat Beckles, seconded by Judy Grubin and unanimously carried to approve the application for site selection and acquisition for the expansion of the East Elmhurst Library with the following provision:

- that the derelict cars be removed from the adjacent lot as soon as the City of New York takes possession of the property.

Traffic/Transportation – Street Closing Guidelines

Edward Kiernan, member of the Traffic/Transportation Committee represented Stephen Kulhanek, Committee Chair. He advised that at the December 15, 2005 meeting, the Board amended C.B. #3's "Street Closing Guidelines". This evening the Board will vote on the final items as they were amended as follows:

*On Page 2, Paragraph 1 (Under Mixed Commercial / Residential Blocks) – "...or by written request of at least 75% of merchants located on the affected street" – **add Civic Associations.***

*Page 2, Paragraph 1 (Under Festivals and Multiple Street Closing Applications) – "...to a recognized Block Association Home-owners Group...." -- **add and/or Civic Associations and delete the word recognized.***

Discussion ensued:

Tom Lowenhaupt proposed that the application be posted on the website with the name, date and location of the event. In this way the community will be informed when a street event is going to take place.

Edward Kiernan advised that the Guidelines per se do not discuss the lay-out of the application itself. The guideline is solely for the applicant to follow specific rules when applying for a street permit.

Giovanna Reid advised that the Guidelines submitted to the Board this evening were originally adopted in the 1980's; many of the members may not be familiar with the rules

and regulations that guide the office in processing street and sidewalk applications. The Community Board plays a role in the approval process, however, it is the Mayor's Street Activity Permit Office that makes the final determination. She added the permit is issued directly to the applicant and generally mailed out by the Mayor's office a few days before the actual event.

Motion #7 – 2006

Upon motion duly made by Edward Kiernan, seconded by Tom Lowenhaupt, to approve the amended street closing guidelines and to post street closing events on the website, was passed with a vote of 26 in favor and 3 abstentions.

The following Board Members explained their abstention:

Judy Grubin -- Website postings are separate and apart from the C.B.#3 guidelines governing street activities.

Dr. Sanchez -- The website should have a mechanism in place -- participation in public space is a way of achieving recognition that people are part of the community.

District Manager's Report

Giovanna Reid congratulated Mr. Gandhi, the newly elected officers and welcomed Board Members to the second meeting of the year. Included in the Board Members' packages is the District Service Cabinet report which briefly outlined the issues that were discussed at the February 7th meeting. Giovanna Reid reported that traffic congestion is the foremost problem within our district – Traffic Enforcement and the 115th Precinct issued more than 6,000 summonses in the month of January. Sanitation is the second most reported problem. Sanitation workers had a huge task before them following the recent snowstorm. She advised that after a snow storm, the main arteries are undertaken and cleared; then the side streets are done.

Giovanna Reid further advised the Board that a Police Academy Civilian Training Class is coming up. The training is a fifteen week program that commences in mid-March. If anyone is interested, please call the District Office or, see Giovanna after the meeting.

Chairman's Report

Mr. Gandhi advised that he attended the Borough President's Budget Hearings last week. He noted that the Borough President highly commended Giovanna Reid for her testimony and stated that she is doing a good job.

Vasantrai Gandhi stated that Board members received a copy of a draft application requesting information and details from non-profit organizations. Mr. Gandhi included in the Board mailing the following:

- 1- Proposed C.B. #3 "community service recognition breakfast" application.**

Edwin Westley -- Why ask an organization about the amount they receive in funding? It seems that this is too sensitive an issue. A better suggestion would be to ask the organization to list any major accomplishments that it has made over the past five years.

Grace Lawrence -- Many organizations are not going to respond because they have to reveal their financial resources. The emphasis should be placed on their accomplishments.

Dr. Sanchez – Demographic changes are being made in a large way -- the new population is organizing, although not around 501c (3). This means that we are keeping the newest New Yorkers out of this process. There are new groups out there and we should seek out new approaches. Further, the organization should have the option to answer the question or not -- although, 501c (3) is absolutely necessary to receive any type of public or private money.

Every grant requires 501c (3) – leave the question optional.

Jimmy Smith – Form a Committee to resolve the issue and present it at next month's meeting. We need to research it more.

Dr. Sanchez -- 501c(3) turns people off. When this committee gets together it could be moved to another place and we will get a higher response rate.

2- Proposed an “Adopt-A-Tree” program

Mr. Gandhi stated that our community is close to LaGuardia airport. Trees are the best means of minimizing the effects of pollution. Many trees on the streets of our community are missing. If we can convince non-profit organizations or businesses to adopt-a-tree, that would be a very good thing. It would be handled by the Parks Committee and they would work out the details.

Adoption of the January 19, 2006 Monthly Minutes

Motion #8 -- 2006

Upon motion duly made by Emma Brandt, seconded by Marta Lebreton and unanimously carried, the January 2006 Minutes was adopted.

Committee Reports

Parks

Grace Lawrence, Chair, reported that on Tuesday, January 17, 2006, the Committee held a public hearing to discuss the disposition of the “landing lights” property located at 25th Avenue between 79th and 78th Streets (#93A). The meeting was held in Our Lady of Fatima Church -- Dept. of Parks & Recreation District Manager, Renee Herrera and approximately 75 residents were in attendance. Over the years, the Parks Department and the Community Board have received complaints from residents about ball playing in a fenced area – the complainants requested that the back-stop be removed to prevent individuals from ball playing in the park. Other issues and concerns voiced were: Adults trespassing at night, parking, blocked driveways, urination, littering,

broken windows, offensive language and loud music. After listening to residents who wanted the field and others who did not, most agreed that it was important to keep the ball field. The meeting concluded in a positive manner and most issues were well resolved.

Grace Lawrence requested that Board members fill out the tree planting form enclosed in the monthly Board mailing.

Website

Jimmy Smith, Chair reported that the Committee met last week – under discussion was how to get the C.B. #3 Website up and operating to full potential. The staff in the district office does not always have adequate time to post information, he said. Because the Website has not been running as smoothly as anticipated, each Committee member will be gathering information to be posted on the Website. Mr. Smith stated that if there is an event or pertinent information you want to place on Community Board #3's calendar, send it to cb3events@gmail.com. We need to do this as soon as possible, he said.

YSPC

Norma Jimenez, Chair, reported that the Committee is enthusiastically getting ready for the upcoming 2006 Youth Fair to be held on March 23rd at I.S. 227. Ms. Jimenez requested the Board's cooperation in making this year's convention even more successful than last year's.

Legislator's Report

Yonel Letellier, Chief of Staff, representing Assemblyman Jose Peralta, briefly updated the Board as follows:

- The Assemblyman reintroduced the "Doe Fund" on 37th Avenue and has allocated another \$25,000 for another year. The "Fund" was also introduced on Roosevelt Avenue from 82nd thru 74th Streets. The major thorough-streets in our district are now being cleaned up.
- Bill (A9776) – retail stores will provide 5000 employees with the proper health care.

Vasantrai Gandhi thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Voss