

The City of New York

## Queens Community Board 3

82-11 37<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 606, Jackson Hts, New York 11372

### BOARD MEETING

**Thursday, June 15, 2006**

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

#### PRESENT

Khaleeq U. Arshed, M.D.  
Patrick Beckles  
Earline Berry  
Cristina Borrero  
Ann Brown  
Richard Cecere  
Shiv Dass  
Howard Dent  
Vivian Dock  
Vasantraï Gandhi  
Luis Gomez  
Judy Grubin  
Darryl Hoss  
Joyce Hucless-Julian  
Norma Jimenez  
Edward Kiernan  
Lorraine Kresse  
Stephen Kulhanek  
D.A.  
Grace Lawrence  
Marta Lebreton  
Ana Lopez  
Thomas Lowenhaupt  
Martin Maier  
Lisa Mesulam  
Ralph Moreno  
Michael Anthony Nardiello III  
Assemblyman Aubry  
Alfonso Quiroz  
Assemblyman Lafayette

#### ABSENT

Mizanoor Biswas  
Emma Brandt  
Charles Castro  
Margaret Dozier  
Annette Hicks Gill, Esq.  
Capers Johnson  
Leoncio Romero  
William Salgado  
Felicita Santiago  
Patricia Thomas

#### GUESTS

Elizabeth Koo, Grassroots Initiative  
Hon. Richard A. Brown, Queens  
  
Bridget Fisher, Chief of Staff, for .  
C.M. Hiram Monserrate  
John Fitzpatrick, President,  
Vaughn College

Murlaina Tindall,

Maureen Allen,

Joseph Ricevuto  
Edmund Rosenbaum  
David Rosero  
Dr. Arturo-Ignacio Sanchez  
Jimmy Smith  
Arthur Teiler  
Augusto Tiongson  
Orlando Tobon  
Hamlett Wallace  
Edwin Westley  
William Young  
Jorge Zamora

Veta Brome, District Leader  
Fior Rodriguez  
Media Reporters – Courier / Gazette

Giovanna Reid, D.M.  
Irene Voss

*Approximately 30 residents*

Vasantrai Gandhi, Chairman, opened the meeting at 7:40 p.m. and opened up the Public Participation segment of the meeting.

### **Public Participation**

#### **Grassroots Initiative** – Ms. Elizabeth Koo

Ms. Koo advised that Grassroots Initiative is a not-for-profit organization that reaches out to the community and encourages first-time candidates to run for political office. The organization is leading an unprecedented effort to attract, encourage and assist first-time candidates to fill more than 14000 vacant elected offices citywide. She stated that Grassroots Initiative can help navigate the road to election by:

- Finding vacant offices in your neighborhood;
- Learning how to get your name on the ballot;
- Seek walking lists of likely voters;
- Learn more about your local political party committee;
- Request a mentor

Ms. Koo stated that she strongly encourages communities to find out more about filling vacancies at local-level political offices, by logging onto their website, [www.go\\_grassroots.org](http://www.go_grassroots.org).

### **Public Information**

Vasantrai Gandhi, Chair, introduced the first guest speaker of the Public Information segment, Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown.

District Attorney Brown stated that in June of 1991 he left the Appellate Division to accept Governor Cuomo's appointment as the District Attorney of Queens County. He recently celebrated his fifteenth year as Queens District Attorney and is planning to run again next year.

He stated that he is proud to say that within his office, the level of professionalism has been maintained throughout the years.

D.A. Brown reported that for the third year in a row, Queens County has taken the lead in crime reduction – violent crime has dropped dramatically for the third consecutive year, while the quality of life of its residents has risen. The Queens D.A.’s office handles approximately 65,000 arrest cases each year. He further reported that more than 80% of the defendants are arraigned in less than 24 hours – cops are quickly back out on the streets and doing their job instead of hanging around courthouse corridors.

District Attorney Brown reported that the D.A.’s budget is a big concern – it has taken an 18% hit since “911”. He is hopeful that the numbers will be restored. He further reported that his office is looking to expand the D.N.A. database which dramatically helps solve sexual assault, homicide, and burglary cases. Forty-seven percent of convicted felons are required to give their D.N.A. The D.A.’s office is also looking for more funding to swiftly prosecute child and elderly abuse cases. Other priorities are identity/computer theft and Medicaid fraud.

District Attorney Brown reported that youth gangs have become a major problem in the Borough of Queens. With the help of the citywide N.Y.P.D. Youth Gang Unit, his office has set up a “Youth Gang Bureau. It is a very active and involved operation and is diligently addressing this escalating problem.

Lastly, D.A. Brown stated that he is very hopeful that this year’s budget will bring in significant funding for more summer jobs and crime prevention programs for our youth.

The Chairman thanked District Attorney Brown for his informative presentation. He introduced the second guest speaker of the Public Information segment, Ms. Bridget Fisher, Chief of Staff for Council Member Hiram Monserrate.

### **Willetts Point Land Use Study -- The “Iron Triangle”**

On behalf of Council Member Monserrate, Ms. Fisher briefed the Board on the Willetts Point Land Use Study that the Councilman commissioned independently for Hunter College. Ms. Fisher touched on some highlights of the report, mainly on how EDC will be presenting proposals for the redevelopment of Willetts Point. The Land Use Analysis Report, including maps, describes the infrastructure and facilities that serve as barriers that cut off pedestrian access from nearby residential neighborhoods and commercial centers

Ms. Fisher provided a general and brief overview as follows:

- A survey was done by Hunter College graduate students and professors of the business owners and employees in the Willetts Point Triangle. The “Triangle” is an active business district with 225 firms employing an estimated 1,400-1,800 people. Eighty-eight percent of the businesses are auto-related – 82% are renters. Sixty-eight percent of the businesses have been thriving for more than five years.

- The majority of jobs are diversified and competitive within the auto market industry. These are also firms that provide jobs for a mostly Spanish-speaking workforce from nearby Corona and throughout Queens as well.
- There is only one vacant lot in Willets Point that is empty and not being used.

Ms. Fisher stated that the project needs more involvement and input from the communities affected by the proposal as to what will eventually be built there.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

**LAND USE** (*Augusto Tiongson, Committee Chair*)

### **BSA / 66-06BZ – 22-40 90<sup>th</sup> Street (Vaughn College)**

An application for a variance to allow for the construction of a three-story 200-bed dormitory facility on the premises of the college in a M1-1 manufacturing zone. In addition, a separate application has been filed with the Department of Transportation for a Revocable Consent to close a portion of the service road of the Grand Central Parkway from 86<sup>th</sup> Street to 90<sup>th</sup> Streets located behind the College's campus.

Augusto Tiongson, Land Use Chair, advised that a Public Hearing was conducted on Tuesday, July 13, 2006 at Vaughn College. Many community members and area residents attended the hearing. Mr. John Fitzpatrick, President of Vaughn College presented the proposal this evening.

Mr. Fitzpatrick reported that the institution was established in 1942. During the last years of W.W. II, over 20,000 technicians were trained for the military in that facility. The institution was known for this country's largest producers of air-frame and power plant technicians. In 1964 the facility was authorized by the New York State Education Department to begin offering associate degrees. At that time, Vaughn College became a not-for-profit, private college. Mr. Fitzpatrick advised that there are approximately 200 students presently enrolled. The majority of them are undertaking academic subjects -- i.e. Bachelor of Science degrees in engineering, electrical, aeronautical, mechanical and mechatronics engineering technology. Mr. Fitzpatrick advised that there is now a need to compete with other institutions and bigger programs and build a residence hall to house these students who are looking for that more traditional college experience. Architects have been hired to develop the new three-story 45,000 square feet facility – all required codes have been met.

Augusto Tiongson, Chair welcomed comments from the public.

Judy Grubin inquired why a portion of the service road has to be closed?

Pat Beckles stated that the service road is actually Ditmars Boulevard.

Mr. Tiongson advised that a separate hearing will be scheduled in September pertaining to Ditmars Boulevard. It is an independent issue and is separate and apart from the construction of the dormitory.

Ed Westley inquired about student demographics, i.e. -- the number of students from each borough that will attend? The racial make-up – the number of Whites; Hispanics; African-Americans? He stated that he was under impression that student enrollment would grow. From what Mr. Fitzpatrick has stated, it appears that the students who are presently enrolled will take that housing.

- Mr. Fitzpatrick advised that 50% of the college student population comes from Queens, followed by Brooklyn and the Bronx;
- The ethnic make-up of the students will be reflected in those the communities in which they live.
- There is a present demand on campus for students who want a more traditional college experience. It is however intended to bring in new students from the outside as well – Once the dorm is built, it is anticipated that the 100 additional beds will be filled by students from other areas;

Norma Jimenez – How will the additional demand for parking affect the neighborhood? She further stated that the neighborhood is an eyesore. She urged residents to join their block associations in an effort to beautify and improve the area.

Mr. Fitzpatrick – The parking demand on campus has declined over the last few years. The parking lot is never really full. Thirty-four slots are set aside on site for the resident students. It would be at the discretion of the college as to who would get privileged parking.

Martin Maier – The site is not properly zoned for a college--the entire zoning structure of the property needs to be examined. One suggestion would be to consider zoning other than industrial. Further, would it be feasible for the architects to look into roof-top gardens?

Augusto Tiongson – stated that “sustainable design” is becoming very popular because of the ever-increasing cost of energy. Roof-top landscaping saves on heat and insulation. To maintain the gardens, a rainwater collection system would fit well into the design plan.

Mr. Fitzpatrick – The variance that is being sought allows for a three story building or, approximately 100 additional beds. The facility is situated 45 feet away from residential zoning. Although proper zoning is being taken into consideration, it is a lengthy process.

Ann Brown – With 1200 students attending the college, what measures of security are being taken? Will off-campus security be patrolling the neighborhood?

Mr. Fitzpatrick – There will be full security on campus. An off-campus security plan is not in place at this time.

Darryl Hoss – If the college is planning to expand the student body, how long will 200 rooms suffice?

David Rosero stated that he fully supports the application.

Mr. Fitzpatrick – The project is designed to house no more than 1500 students in a three-story, 200-bed facility.

**TRAFFIC/TRANSPORTATION:** – *(Stephen Kulhanek, Committee Chair)*

**Speed Hump**

A request by P.S. 149 for a speed hump at 93<sup>rd</sup> Street between 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Northern Blvd.; and at 94<sup>th</sup> Street between 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Northern Boulevard.

Stephen Kulhanek, Chair encouraged the public to comment on the proposal.

Judy Grubin inquired whether the Southridge co-ops were notified? If so, was there any opposition or comments from the residents?

Steve Kulhanek stated that the residents of the area were notified -- no concerns or comments were reported.

**Speed Hump**

A request by School of the Transfiguration for a speed hump at 98<sup>th</sup> Street between 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> Avenues; and at 99<sup>th</sup> Street between 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> Avenues.

Mr. Kulhanek again encouraged the public to come forward with comments on the proposal.

No comments or concerns were expressed.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Vasantrai Gandhi opened Executive Session with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Motion #25 – 2006 Adoption of the June 15, 2006 Agenda**

Upon motion duly made by Grace Lawrence, seconded by Darryl Hoss and unanimously carried, the Agenda was adopted.

**MOTIONS BY COMMITTEE**

**Land Use**

**BSA / 66-06BZ – 22-40 90<sup>th</sup> Street (Vaughn College)**

Augusto Tiongson reported that the Land Use Committee met following the Public Hearing and proposed the following recommendation:

Approval of the request for a variance with the proviso that additional plantings and hedges be added along the perimeter of the campus parking lot.

Grace Lawrence stated that the expansion of the school's dormitory will be an asset in the community.

### **Motion #26 – 2006**

Upon motion duly made by Augusto Tiongson, seconded by Grace Lawrence and unanimously carried, the Board recommended approval of the variance for a 200-bed dormitory facility on the premises of Vaughn College, with the following proviso:

- That the applicant provide shrubbery around the perimeter of the college and especially fronting 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue.
- *The proposal for revocable consent to DOT to be reviewed at the September 2006 Board Meeting.*

### **Speed Hump Proposals (2)**

#1. A request by P.S. 149 for a speed hump at 93<sup>rd</sup> Street between 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Northern Blvd.; and at 94<sup>th</sup> Street between 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Northern Boulevard.

Arthur Teiler stated that he does not approve of speed humps at that location. The 115<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct is situated on Northern Boulevard between 93<sup>rd</sup> / 94<sup>th</sup> Street and emergency vehicles go up and down those streets every day.

Edwin Westley inquired if a complaint has been registered by the 115<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct about the installation of speed humps.

Stephen Kulhanek stated that there have been no complaints from the Precinct.

### **Motion #27 – 2006**

Upon motion duly made by Stephen Kulhanek, seconded by Jimmy Smith, with a vote of 37 in favor, 2 opposed and 1 abstention, for a speed hump at 93<sup>rd</sup> Street between 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Northern Blvd.; and at 94<sup>th</sup> Street between 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Northern Boulevard was passed.

Ralph Moreno stated that he abstained for the reason that speed humps at this location is an impediment to the many emergency vehicles that must get through.

### **Speed Hump Proposal #2**

A request by School of the Transfiguration for a speed hump at 98<sup>th</sup> Street between 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> Avenues; and at 99<sup>th</sup> Street between 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> Avenues.

## **Motion #28 – 2006**

Upon motion duly made by Augusto Tiongson, seconded by Hamlett Wallace and unanimously carried, to approve a speed hump at 98<sup>th</sup> Street between 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> Avenues; and at 99<sup>th</sup> Street between 37<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> Avenues.

## **District Manager's Report**

Giovanna Reid advised that in each Board Member's package is a schedule of all street activities that will occur in the district as it relates to street closings through October 2006. The list does not include parades -- the Police Department approves parade permits and generates that report.

She further advised that the C.B. #3 Health Fair, held on June 10<sup>th</sup>, was an enormous success.

Giovanna reported that there has been an increase in flooding around the district due to heavy rains. She noted that flooding also occurred in the basement of the building where Community Board #3 has its office.

Giovanna Reid further reported that the reconstruction project of sewers/water mains on 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Astoria Boulevard is nearing completion but noted that there is still much to be done. She will be meeting with D.E.P. in the next few months to discuss flooding conditions and attempt to pinpoint the problem areas in our district.

On behalf of Ivonne Garcia who represents Office of the Borough President, Giovanna Reid congratulated and presented *Ten-Year Certificates for Community Service* to the following Board Members:

- David Rosero
- Stephen Kulhanek
- Norma Jimenez

Giovanna Reid wished all a very happy and healthy summer.

## **Committee Reports**

Vasantrai Gandhi, Chair, advised Board Members that the following two committees will be dissolved:

- Olympic Impact 2012
- Capital Projects Ad Hoc

A hand-count was taken at the request of the Chair, to dissolve the two committees. The proposal was passed.

The Chairman advised that in the June "View From The Chair", he reported that Dr. Arturo Sanchez and Mr. Richard Cecere will Co-Chairing, *Immigrants / Newest New Yorkers* Committee. Further mentioned in *the "View"*, Mr. Gandhi requested that young people be included to serve on various committees.

Mr. Gandhi advised that further appointees named to Committees are as follows: Vivian Dock as *Co-Chair of Sanitation*; Hamlett Wallace as *Co-Chair of Land Use*; and Edward Kiernan as *Co-Chair of Traffic / Transportation*.

Mr. Gandhi advised that members will be informed of any further appointments.

### **Motion #29 -- Adoption of the April 11, 2006 and May 18, 2006 Minutes**

Upon motion duly made by Grace Lawrence, seconded by Shiv Dass and unanimously carried, the April and May 2006 Minutes were adopted.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Health / Social Services**

Vivian Dock, Committee Co-Chair, advised that the Health Fair held on June 10<sup>th</sup> was a tremendous success. This year's Health/Social Service Committee, comprised of Board Members and non-Board Members, attended many meetings and participated in hours of community outreach. Along with Co-Chair Ana Lopez, Vivian expressed heartfelt thanks and appreciation to everyone -- the planners, volunteers, health providers, food providers, elected officials, Giovanna Reid and C.B. #3 staff, Jennifer, Irene and Sue, who truly made the event a labor of love.

#### **Landmarks**

Martin Maier, Chair, noted that very few applications have come in for review by Committee. He briefed the Board as follows:

#### **79-06 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue Violation**

A metal façade was mounted to the top section of this co-op building. For reasons unknown, the applicant withdrew the application.

Mr. Maier reported that an E-Mail was received from the N.Y.C. District Council on Historic Preservation urging that a letter be sent to Speaker Quinn. The letter should request a \$500,000 budget increase for Landmarks Preservation Commission staff. L.P.C. is so poorly understaffed and overworked that the problems that "historic districts" face throughout the city are not being addressed.

Mr. Maier further reported that sometime during the summer, flyers will be slipped under doors and put into mail boxes. Owners and tenants in a landmark district need to know that a permit is required in order to make changes to a structure.

#### **Technology Advisory**

Tom Lowenhaupt, Chair, advised that Committee met on May 16<sup>th</sup>. The “City Youth Program”, initiated by the Municipal Art Society, did a presentation. High school kids are trained on mapping and using the internet and offered to Community Boards. Students in turn can attend committee meetings, board meetings and present maps on a projector screen that are appropriate for that particular application. The Board will decide on whether we want to use this program for our meetings when we meet again in September.

From a land use standpoint, Augusto Tiongson stated that mapping is a valuable tool. He made a resolution that the Board invite these high school kids to our meeting in September and to participate in the “City Youth Program”.

The resolution was passed via hand count.

Pat Beckles and Tom Lowenhaupt advised that there will be a Flushing Bay and Creek Meeting. The City is under a federal court order on how to clean up the Bay.

### **Legislators Report**

On behalf of Assemblyman Ivan Lafayette, Maureen Allen, Chief of Staff sends greetings. The Assemblyman is presently in session until sometime next week. She extended congratulations to all the new Board Members and wished everyone a healthy and safe summer.

### **New Business**

Grace Lawrence stated that the City’s budget will cut funds to the Queens Library. She requested that a letter be sent to the elected officials protesting the budget cuts and to restore funding to our libraries. The resolution was passed via hand count to send a letter to the elected officials to protest Queens Libraries budget cuts.

Vasantrai Gandhi, Chairman, thanked the public and Board members for their participation and adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Voss