

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

**Thursday, November 17, 2005
School**

at: I.S. 227, The Louis Armstrong

**32-02 Junction Boulevard
East Elmhurst, NY**

PRESENT

Patrick Beckles
Earline Berry
Cristina Borrero
Emma Brandt
Richard Cecere
Shiv Dass
Howard Dent
Vivian Dock
Margaret Dozier
Blanca Fonseca
Vasantraï Gandhi
Luis Gomez
Judy Grubin
Darryl Hoss
Joyce Hucless-Julian
Norma Jimenez
Capers Johnson
Edward Kiernan
Stephen Kulhanek
Grace Lawrence
Marta Lebreton
Ana Lopez
Liaison, DDC
Thomas Lowenhaupt
Martin Maier
Mgr. of
Lisa Mesulam
Ralph Moreno
Mayo Peralta
Thomas Raffaele, Esq.
Joseph Ricevuto
Leoncio Romero
David Rosero
William Salgado, Esq.
Crowley
Dr. Arturo Sanchez
Ackerman

ABSENT

Dr. Khaleeq Arshed
Jose Bernal
Mizanoor Biswas
Annette Hicks Gill, Esq.
Lorraine Kresse
John Moran
Felicitia Santiago
Jorge Zamora

GUESTS

Carlyle Cole, DDC
Wayan Brown, Construction

Joe Raskin, MTA
Joseph McDonough, Construction

Junction Blvd. Project
Rudy Greco
Len Maniace

Hon. Helen Marshall
Hon. Jose Peralta
Ron Reitman, B.P.O.
Barbara Jackson, Rep. Hon. Joe

Fiore Rodriguez, Rep. Hon. Gary

Jimmy Smith
Aubry
Arthur Teiler
Patricia Thomas
Augusto Tiongson
Orlando Tobon
Edwin Westley
Hamlett Wallace
Beninnida Yagual
William Young
Giovanna Reid, District Manager
Irene Voss

Murlaina Tindall, Rep. Hon. Jeff

Mary Sarro, Community Member

Approximately 40 Residents

Richard Cecere, Chairperson, opened the meeting at 7:40 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ruth Turville, an East Elmhurst resident, advised that the sewer/water main reconstruction project which started this week on Astoria Boulevard has already run into drawbacks – there is a broken water main break on Astoria Boulevard. Ms. Turville stated that she is looking forward to DDC’s presentation this evening. She will continue to monitor the project closely until completion.

Rudy Greco advised that on Sunday, December 18th @ 5:00 p.m. a “Jackson Heights Peace on Earth Procession” will take place -- *a non-partisan Holiday Season Candlelight Procession*. In the world’s most diverse community, people can come out and speak in one positive, dignified voice by giving peace a chance, he said. He welcomed all to bring a candle and their good spirits. Flyers were distributed for starting point locations.

Richard Cecere introduced Len Maniace, Chairman of “Friends of Travers Park, Committee member of the Jackson Heights Beautification Group and director of the St. Joan of Arc Youth Council.

Mr. Maniace advised that the Youth Council is a leading youth program in Jackson Heights that serves 500 children with low-cost basketball, soccer, track, softball, chess and art programs. Because of the severe shortage of park space, he is in full support of the upgrading of the ball field at Landing Lights Park. Removal of the back-stop would be terrible for the children of Jackson Heights, he said. The dire statistics on park shortage for this area comes from the latest survey by “New Yorkers for Parks”, the city’s leading advocacy group for parks. Mr. Maniace, therefore, urged C.B.#3 and City officials to maintain an ongoing dialogue and not remove the back-stop, but to renovate the ball field and focus in on expanding other park and recreation opportunities.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Borough President

Helen Marshall advised that she is substituting for Karen Koslowitz this evening, who had a death in her family. She stated that since she came into office four years ago, the Borough of Queens has grown dramatically. During that time, the “Marshall Plan” was implemented and a great deal has been accomplished, even though Borough Hall has been drastically downsized

from approximately 100 to 60 employees. Ms. Marshall stated that Queens is the most multi-ethnic county in the world, much of which has been part of the Queens tourism initiative. One of the most important bodies in the Borough are Community Boards because they keep our borough strong by empowering our citizens, she said. Citizens in the community can also go to their local council person, assembly, congress and senate for help. "311" also provides valuable services and emergency information, but is usually unable to solve a more complicated problem. Community Boards and elected officials have the ability to personally sit with constituents and share information in order to solve a serious situation. Ms. Marshall further advised that Chairs and District Managers attend monthly Borough Board and Borough Cabinet Meetings. She added that Giovanna Reid, District Manager, has made significant contributions to the discussion at the Borough Cabinet Meetings. Their role is to discuss and vote on zoning issues, construction, building codes and other important issues such as Homeland Security. Two representatives from each Community Board attend the Queens General Assembly that meet on a monthly basis to discuss diverse common issues. She stated that she continues to look forward to expanding the role of the Community Board because it is such an important body. The Borough President wished everyone a wonderful Thanksgiving.

D.D.C. – Project #SEQ002586 – The reconstruction of combined sewers and water-main along Astoria Boulevard.

Carlyle Cole, Community Board Liaison, New York City Department of Design and Construction introduced Mr. Wayan Brown, Community Construction On-Site Liaison for the Project.

Mr. Brown advised that work started on November 14, 2005 and approximate completion date is April, 2006. The project location runs from Astoria Boulevard between 86th and 87th Streets; 87th Street from Astoria Blvd. to 23rd Avenue and 89th Street between 23rd Avenue and Astoria Boulevard. Over the years the area has been inundated with water back-ups into basements necessitating the installation of a new sewer system and catch man basins. The mains and the pipes leading into the homes are over sixty years old, he said. Mr. Brown reported that because of a major problem in the water-main, the water supply had to be turned off the other day. Mr. Brown advised that the residents should now have their water restored. He advised that water interruption will not be a daily occurrence – only in the event of an unforeseen problem.

Pat Beckles -- How was the community informed about the water shut-down?

Mr. Brown – On the day before shut-down, he personally hand-delivered water turn-off notices to every house in the catch-man area.

Emma Brandt – How will the project affect traffic?

Mr. Brown -- Only the parking lane was closed temporarily. Barriers and flagmen are being set up, when needed, on 88th Street where the work is presently taking place. So far, no bus routes have been affected, although the Bus Company, as well as the Police Department and Fire Department have been notified.

Ruth Turville – Sewers bring rats, what is being done about pest control?

Mr. Brown -- Rat abatement is part of the project contract.

M.T.A. – Joseph Raskin, Assistant Director of Community Relations

- Updates on the Junction Boulevard Subway Station Upgrade
- 74th Street Subway Station

Joseph Raskin advised that he is being joined this evening by Joseph McDonough, Construction Manager for the Junction Boulevard Project. He reported that they are at the start of the Junction Boulevard station rehab and the completion of the 74th Street/Roosevelt Avenue project. The Junction Boulevard Station revamp is on a much smaller scale than the 74th Street project. Mr. Raskin and Mr. McDonough updated the Board on the Junction Boulevard revamp project as follows:

- A.D.A. Accessibility – The installation of elevators for the disabled and elderly and will be retrofitted for access. There will be a total of three elevators. All the stairs from the mezzanine to the platform will remain – one emergency staircase from the bridge will be added.
- The elevators will be small and slow-moving – the maximum capacity is approximately eight passengers. They were basically designed to accommodate the disabled and the elderly.
- An emergency call-button will be located up in the transfer passage way. There will also be a call-button in the elevators themselves that will alert subway personnel. In the event of an emergency and/or power failure, the elevators will be monitored from the token booths. The elevators are also installed with a “power pack” allowing them to move down to the lowest level and open up. The “power pack” will also provide some illumination inside the elevator.
- It is estimated that the elevators will be in full service by the end 2006.
- This weekend girders will be placed over the subway station and a 600-ton crane will be maneuvered on Junction Blvd. The crane will lift up the 100 foot truss. In addition, the transfer bridge and the two smaller towers will be installed. For safety reasons, during installation, train service will be temporarily suspended.
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74th Street Subway Station

Mr. Raskin reported that the 74th Street / Roosevelt Avenue Station is fast approaching completion.

They are working out the final details of completion to assure that everything is working “A” O.K.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Richard Cecere advised that BSA-1888-61 BZ – 93-10 23rd Avenue has asked for a postponement.

BSA-19-94 BZ – 37-18 75th Street -- An application for the renewal of a special permit that will allow for the operation of a parking garage.

Augusto Tiongson, Land Use Committee Chair, introduced Walter Schwarzin, owner of the parking garage. He stated that he has come before this Board to ask for an extension of the variance for an additional ten years.

Grace Lawrence – The last time they came before this Board, there were complaints from residents about the lights from the parking lot impacting apartments nearby. BSA, at that time, recommended a cover or for them to be placed in down-light position.

Mr. Schwarzin advised that the lights were placed in a downward position.

Community Resident -- How many cars does the garage hold? -- What are the hours of operation?

Mr. Schwarzin – 56 cars. -- Twenty Four Hours of operation.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Richard Cecere, Chair, opened Executive Session with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of the Agenda

The Chairperson requested that the Agenda be amended to include “*Traffic/Transportation*” under “*Committee Reports*”

Motion #31 – 2005

Upon motion duly made by Augusto Tiongson, seconded by Grace Lawrence and unanimously carried, the amended November 17, 2005 was adopted.

MOTIONS BY COMMITTEE

BSA-19-94 BZ – 37-18 75th Street (Land Use)

Augusto Tiongson, Chair, advised that the Land Use Committee met and disagrees with the owner’s interpretation of a down-light. The Committee’s recommendations are as follows:

- That floodlights be replaced with shield on lamp-tops to minimize or eliminate glare to apartment windows and still provide the same level of lighting at the garage lot.
- That strip of soil and planting of vines be provided, allowing the vines to eventually cover the chain link fence.
- That the size of the signs be in compliance with the N.Y.C. Building Code.
- That the permit renewal be limited to five (5) years.

David Rosero – A chain link fence with slots does prevent glare from the lights. In addition, the chain-link fence meets the requirement by BSA. A five-year permit is too short a period of time. Further, the Board should lean towards being pro-business, not anti-business.

Augusto Tiongson – We are not asking to remove the fence, but to plant ivy.

Tom Lowenhaupt -- the applicant has not followed the Board’s recommendation -- only a five-year permit should be granted.

Shiv Dass -- Stated that he is very familiar with the operation of the business -- a ten-year permit should be granted.

Ana Lopez – The employees are nice and very helpful. In addition, their parking fee is reasonable.

Emma Brandt – Give the applicant thirty days to comply with the down-lighting – if they do comply, grant a ten-year permit.

Augusto Tiongson – Provide a shield on top of the lamp that reflects upwards.

Darryl Hoss – Do we have complaints on file?

A. -- *Yes, one complaint.*

Dr. Sanchez – Lighting from the parking garage not only shines in one apartment, but other apartments are impacted as well.

Augusto Tiongson – An inexpensive extended arm would be another solution.

Motion #32 – 2005

Upon motion duly made by Augusto Tiongson, seconded by Tom Raffaele, with a vote of 37 in favor and 4 opposed, the Board recommended to extend the permit for ten years and require that the owner use whatever technology that is available to reduce the impact of lighting.

BY-LAWS

Vacancies

Tom Lowenhaupt introduced a proposal to amend the By-Laws regarding filling vacancies. In the event of the death, resignation, discharge, or the inability of any officer to serve, a new election shall be held to fill such vacancy for the remainder to the current term. The election would take place at the meeting following the regular monthly meeting when such vacancy is announced. Discussion ensued and at its conclusion Mr. Lowenhaupt made a motion to recommend approval.

Motion #32 -2005

Upon motion duly made by Tom Lowenhaupt, seconded by Tom Raffaele and unanimously, carried the motion to amend the By-Laws to fill vacancies was approved.

Term Limits

Tom Lowenhaupt read from the By-Laws that states: “However, no officer elected may serve more than three consecutive terms and shall not be eligible for re-election to said office for a period of two years. This provision shall apply to all officers, current and future. ;In the event that a current officer has served in that capacity for more than three consecutive terms, he/she shall complete his/her current term but shall not be eligible for the reelection at the end of that term.

The proposal was presented to the membership with the following language:

- Should Community Board #3 eliminate Term-Limits?
- A “NO” vote retains the current 3-year Term Limits.
- A “YES” vote strikes the above term-limits clauses from our By-Laws and allows current and future office-holders to run again for their current offices without limitation.

Mr. Lowenhaupt informed the Board that his Committee made no recommendation for Term-Limits and put the motion on the floor for review and vote. Discussion ensued – several of the Board Members were opposed to changing the By-Laws related to Term Limits. Many expressed that term limits have worked in the past and allows all members of the Board to assume a leadership role. Most concurred with a member’s statement that, “if it is not broken, let’s not replace it.”

Motion #33 -- 2005

Upon motion duly made by Tom Lowenhaupt, seconded by Judy Grubin to eliminate Term Limits, the motion was defeated with the vote -- 31 "No" and 11 "Yes".

Richard Cecere advised that the Nominating Committee will be announced next month.

He further advised the Board that the remainder of the Agenda will be addressed at the December meeting and concluded the meeting at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Voss