



COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 11

*Serving Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston,
Hollis Hills, Little Neck & Oakland Gardens*

46-21 Little Neck Parkway, Little Neck, New York, 11362

Tel: (718) 225-1054 Fax: (718) 225-4514 e-mail: QN11@cb.nyc.gov

Website: www.cb11q.org

*Steven Newman
Chair*

*Susan Seinfeld
District Manager*

*Helen Marshall
Borough President*

*Karen Koslowitz
Deputy Borough President*

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS FY 2010

Community Board 11, located in Northeast Queens is bounded by Nassau County on the east; Little Neck Bay and 26 Avenue on the north; Utopia Parkway and Fresh Meadow Lane and 210 Street on the west and the Grand Central Parkway and Horace Harding Expressway on the south. The District is comprised of the neighborhoods of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston, Hollis Hills, Little Neck and Oakland Gardens. These neighborhoods are residential in zoning and character with the major portion of the District comprised of 1, 2 and 3 family houses and several cooperative and condominium apartment complexes, developed 50-60 years ago and a scattering of rental apartment buildings. Douglas Manor and Douglaston Hill are landmarked communities within Board 11. The shopping needs of the residents are met by the commercial strips, all of which are C1 and C2 zoning overlays in residential districts. Bell Boulevard officially became a Business Improvement District (BID) with the help of dedicated business owners and the Small Business Administration. The BID will help channel funding into improvements along the Bell Boulevard commercial strip.

Community Board 11 is an upper middle income community of approximately 118,000 residents based on the 2006 American Community Survey. The District remains a culturally and ethnically diverse community. Approximately 39% of the population is now foreign born, the majority (32%) of which is Asian.

The District is known for its approximately 775 acres of parkland. Alley Park, which is a large regional park, has areas under Federal and State tidal and fresh water wetland protection, as does Udall's Cove in Little Neck. The shoreline in Bayside is part of the Greenway system and supports a marina for recreational boating and fishing and a bicycle and jogging path. Adjacent to this shoreline is Crocheron Park and John Golden Park which have large open spaces with ball fields, playgrounds and tennis courts. Part of Cunningham Park is in CB11 including the historic Vanderbilt Motor Parkway. Additionally, there are smaller parks and playgrounds, a golf course and numerous Greenstreets throughout the district. The preservation and maintenance of these natural areas has been a priority of this Board for years.

All public transportation is provided by bus lines terminating at the Flushing and Jamaica subway lines and the Port Washington branch of the Long Island Railroad, both of which are used primar-

ily as commuter transportation to Manhattan. The areas of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston and Little Neck adjacent to the Long Island Railroad stations are congested during commuting hours and parking is at a premium. With increased building development and with an ever increasing population, neighborhoods are starting to experience more local traffic congestion. Besides the LIRR, residents must use buses. CB11 has advocated for more express bus service, limited stop service, additional buses to the LIRR stations and Park and Ride lots at Shea Stadium and Aqueduct Race Track.

BUILDING AND ZONING

The Department of City Planning (DCP) rezoned 350 blocks of Bayside in 2004 and 135 blocks of Douglaston and Little Neck in 2006. We have been urging DCP to rezone other areas of our board including Auburndale, Hollis Hills and Oakland Gardens. Many residents are concerned that further development will continue to negatively affect the character of these neighborhoods.

The Buildings Department has added more inspectors and plan examiners resulting in an increase of prompt responses to complaints. Owners must be held responsible when they circumvent the law and work without obtaining a permit or build beyond the scope of the zoning regulations. DOB has increased the cost of many types of fines; higher fines should help to be a deterrent. The Commissioner must have the authority to refuse new permits to those owners with outstanding violations and fines. The frustration of “no access” reports in illegal conversion and occupancy complaints continue to upset residents. Access warrants are difficult to obtain and the complainants feel that nothing is being done to stop illegal conditions. Unfortunately, in many cases this may be true but balancing private property rights with government enforcement continues to be a dilemma. Greater cooperation through a multi-agency task force comprised of the Department of Buildings, the Fire Department and Police Department personnel would help with illegal conversion and illegal building enforcement.

EDUCATION AND YOUTH:

This school year approximately 16,500 students are enrolled in School District 26 in its 19 public elementary and secondary schools located in CB11. There are three high schools in the district; Bayside, Benjamin Cardozo and Francis Lewis High School with a total population of approximately 12,000 students. The population in all three high schools has increased greatly with utilization rates at 151%, 138% and 170% respectively. With students housed in buildings meant for half the number, the already overutilized schools have become dangerously overcrowded. Both Cardozo HS and Bayside HS have transportable classrooms, but permanent building space should be added to the school. The Community Board supports the continued funding for computer upgrades in our schools.

Queensborough Community College, located in Bayside, continues to grow and be a premier community college with recently upgraded computer and science classrooms, an art museum and a Holocaust Center is to be built on the campus.

The Beacon Programs at Middle School 158 and Middle School 172 operated by the Samuel Field “Y” continue to be successful serving the youth and community groups of our district. Additionally, Out of School Time Programs operate at four schools and City Council funds have helped provide programming at four other locations. There are several sports groups run by volunteers that are funded privately and, in some cases, with support from our local officials.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The Alley Creek Drainage project, which has been a Board priority since 1972, is in the final stages. The project is now concentrated on the south side of Northern Boulevard with the installation of the water pumps and pipes that will bring combined sewer overflows to the Tallman Island water treatment plant. A wetland mitigation, known as Phase III, for the Oakland Ravine Area and Oakland Lake by Department of Environmental Protection with the Department of Parks and Recreation, will start by the end of 2008. Additionally, the Parks Department needs funding in order to improve the walkways around Oakland Lake that are wet due to the natural spring source that feeds the lake and reconstruct the stairways leading to the lake from Springfield Boulevard and 46 Avenue.

Street cave-ins and depressions account for one of the most frequent service complaints to DEP. We are pleased that some trench restoration projects are commencing or planned over the next few years. In particular, Gaskell Road trench restoration is scheduled for late 2008 along with 222 Street between 41 Avenue and 41 Road, 215 Place between 32 Road and 33 Avenue and the JFK Circle at 218 Street and 68 Avenue. More funds are needed as the wait for the commencement of these projects, once the need is determined, takes an excessive number of years.

Throughout the remainder of the District, there are areas of intersection flooding. Catch basin flooding complaints always account for the second highest number of service complaints to DEP from our district. Repairs are backlogged often over a year from the time of complaint to repair. Broken and sinking catch basins pose a hazardous condition at corners. More funds and personnel are needed for regular catch basin cleaning and for repair. It is important that catch basin and sewer installation projects be ongoing in cases of flooding conditions. The district has many seepage basins and the installation of new ones have been stalled as DEP has found that many seepage basins fail after a short time. We urge DEP to find a solution to this problem through combined sewer projects.

A major concern is the poor storm water drainage on 223 Street between 37 Avenue and 42 Avenue. Presently, storm water runs along a ditch along the eastern edge of 223 Street. This project will require joint planning with Department of Transportation since capital reconstruction of the street is necessary. It is now in the planning stages.

HEALTH

This past winter for the second time, Board 11 sponsored a flu vaccine clinic with St. Mary's Hospital and the NYC Department of Health. It was very successful and we were able to vaccinate 125 people. We look forward to providing this service in the fall of 2008. This year we hope to include pneumonia vaccines for seniors.

Once again this past summer, the DOH sprayed areas of Alley Pond Park with pesticides to prevent mosquito infestations as well as the city-wide larviciding in catch basins.

LIBRARIES

Community Board 11 has started a campaign for a new library to replace or add to the Little Neck/Douglaston Library. Its space is inadequate to meet the needs of the residents. We are working with the Little Neck Pines Civic Association, Friends of the Library and the Douglaston Women's Club to garner support and funding from the Queens Public Library System, the Mayor and our local legislators.

PARKS & RECREATION

The acquisition of designated lots in Alley Park and Udalls Cove Ravine continue to take place. One lot is in active acquisition but there are still eight more lots that are of concern because of the potential for development, therefore, the City must continue to dedicate funds for further acquisition.

Several playgrounds adjacent to schools need various improvements: fences, safety surfaces and handball court rehabilitation. The Challenge Playground at PS 177 needs more extensive work, including the removal of an old wading pool and plumbing work. Fields in Alley Pond Park and John Golden Park need new turf. The Douglaston Golf Course is a beautiful public course. Unfortunately, the residents across the street are not happy with the errant golf balls that hit their property. Funding is needed to install tall fence netting.

Community residents met with CB11 this year to gain support for the Parks Department to acquire from the City Dept. of Housing, Preservation and Development, a strip of land in Doug Bay for a park.

This park district has insufficient personnel and vehicles to clean and maintain our parks. With over 775 acres of park and Greenstreets, the two crews assigned to our district struggle to meet the demands. More park workers are needed to just maintain Alley Pond Park and additional staff is needed for playground and Greenstreet maintenance.

It is imperative that the Queens Forestry Division be funded at a greater level for street and park tree pruning and maintenance. Forestry complaints account for the greatest number of “3-1-1” calls from our district residents. The new pruning cycle has been reduced to seven years. However, the City is planting more trees under the Million Trees NYC project and, therefore, a concern about the ability to prune the existing and additional trees exist. Public safety is being compromised by ignoring hazards caused by trees when not pruned regularly. The Parks Department still has an enormous backlog of stumps to be removed; approximately 1000 in CB11.

Tree roots account for the lifting and destruction of many sidewalks. The Tree and Sidewalk Program is the answer for many homeowners; however, it needs to be funded at a higher level to meet the need.

POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The 111th Precinct, which is located on Northern Boulevard in Bayside, patrols the 9.4 miles of Community Board 11. This precinct has seen a decrease in crime and is a safe, low crime area. However, burglaries of private residential homes remain the predominant and troubling crime statistic in the precinct. Youth on youth crime has had a slight increase, especially the stealing of expensive electronic devices and cell phones. There was a slight decrease in the number of officers this year and we hope that the precinct maintains the number and not lose more officers.

There is a concern with the alarming increase in graffiti, since the Police Department states that this often leads to future criminal activity. The precinct is actively working on enforcement, eradication and education to combat this quality of life crime.

The 111th has had an active Community Precinct Council for years, but they receive no funds and the fundraising they can do is insufficient. In the past, the city has provided funds for councils. The Council has advocated more foot patrols and bicycle patrols. There is no money funded for

bike repair and not enough officers are receiving the special training required. The interior of the precinct house is showing its age and is in desperate need of renovation and remodeling.

SANITATION

CB11 continues to be among the top rated Community Boards in the borough for cleanliness. However, in order to maintain the good record, we must have a dedicated litter basket crew six days a week. The adopt-a-basket program is thriving in CB11 and contributes to the high street cleanliness ratings the Board receives. CB11 receives three day a week broom crews in our commercial areas. There are no regular broom services in residential areas and we need sweeping in these areas also, particularly in the autumn, with the falling of leaves from street trees. The Board urges DOS to maintain broom service at least three times a week and provide brooms for residential areas also.

Our District contains several miles of street malls and triangles which need to be cleared of weeds and litter during the summer and autumn months. Weeds interfere with visibility and they must be cleared regularly. Public safety depends on good visibility at all intersections. DOS needs the proper equipment like weed whackers, blowers and lawn mowers.

SENIORS AND AGING

The 2006 American Community Survey indicated that there are almost 18,000 seniors aged 65 or over representing about 16% of the population living in Community Board 11. The district has the second highest median age in the City, 41.6. Although there has been a decrease in population of 60-75 year range since the 2000 census, there is an increase in seniors over 75 years of age. Senior programs and services must be available to a senior population with possibly greater needs. As the baby boom era population continues to age, the City must be prepared to meet the needs. The Bayside Senior Center is the only major senior center in our district, funded by the Dept. of the Aging. The Samuel Field YM-YWHA operates the C.A.P.E. program for homebound seniors and Alzheimer patients and their families. The "Y" also has a small senior leisure center and operates the Deepdale NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community) Senior program. The Little Neck Pines Civic Association has been working with the Borough President's office and the Department for the Aging to establish a new center in Little Neck.

TRANSPORTATION

Curb repair and replacement has been non existent. Curbs are deteriorating and causing trip hazards. Curbs provide a course for rain water runoff. Without curbs, areas adjacent to the street wash away. The Department, this past year, funded some curb repair work but only where DOT vehicles broke the curbs. Much more must be done.

In Douglas Manor a capital project, in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Protection, is urgently needed to reconstruct a section of Shore Road that is collapsing. In the southern area of Douglaston, sidewalks are needed on Commonwealth Boulevard just north of the Grand Central Parkway especially for students walking to and from the Glen Oaks Campus schools. CB11 has asked repeatedly for the reconstruction of the streets between Francis Lewis Boulevard and the Clearview Expressway and between Northern Boulevard and 48th Avenue. While DOT has acknowledged the need, they consistently do not fund the project. We urge DOT to make this a priority in FY 2010.

State Senator Frank Padavan secured funds to create a “Quiet Zone” at the Little Neck LIRR station, a request made by this Board on behalf of the residents who live near the station. We have also asked DOT to commit some of these funds along with other funds from Congressman Gary Ackerman, to reconstruct the parking lot at the station to make it safer for pedestrians and drivers.

Traffic has become a serious problem. There are more cars and trucks on our roads. Safety concerns are growing. NYC DOT should look at creative traffic calming methods. We are pleased to see that the “Strategic Plan for DOT -2008 and Beyond” looks at more of these initiatives. We look forward to the improvements that the Truck Traffic Study has recommended to improve signage, develop new routes and educate truckers on the City regulations.

Our commercial areas are underserved with available parking. The most severe condition exists in the area of Bell Boulevard and the LIRR station. Commuters and shoppers compete for very limited muni-meter parking and greatly impose on the adjacent residential streets for parking. The new Business Improvement District (BID) will be working on this matter with DOT to find solutions. The City must provide assistance to northeast Queens to develop parking areas.

Steven Newman

Chair

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District Manager