



BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD 13

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When ain't nostalgia just not what it used to be?

Nostalgia sweeps across the entire City of New York – not just Manhattan – as if a tsunami of reflective images is awash through the collective consciousness of an entire citizenry. There are those for whom the mind swirls with memories of families, friends, all flooding the Roxy, the Polo Grounds, the Columbus Circle Coliseum, Gimbel's, the Automat, Toffennetti's, and maybe even the pre-Disney Times Square with neon blinking streets of movie marquees. Or the political diatribes at Union Square; the double-decker Fifth Avenue Bus; or the elevated railways criss-crossing the borough of Manhattan before time and King Kong crushed them into urban mythology. While nostalgia remains a pleasurable element in an ever-changing, ever-challenging, ever-stressful 2010, nostalgia keeps alive the wonder of the era rather than the trials and tribulations that also took place at the same time.

Brooklyn and nostalgia merge magically, with clear kaleidoscopic images. Before it was thought, by City nabobs, as just 'one of the outer boroughs', Brooklyn was its own city, and it, still, sends forth treasured thoughts of a Downtown Brooklyn with its many first-run theaters complete with stage shows and their nearby bountiful restaurants. Of course, Ebbets Field creates memorable thoughts of smiles, disappointment, and vitality. Prospect Park before its neighbors insisted that it be closed to even the rudiments of traffic, was a daily adventure into a rustic world, complete with Saturday night Music Grove concerts. (More and more work on nearby Flatbush Ave. and the resultant emission-clogged, bumper-to-bumper traffic should urge a rethink of the total closing of the Park to traffic!) Row boats and launches, by the hundreds, pulled away from the Prospect Park Boat House dock, and paddle boats lazily moved along a nearby smaller lake. Thousands more memories rush in with the tides of memory - Lundy's and Tappen's, Gage & Tollner's, your neighborhood theaters, roller-skating rinks, the ornate wonderlands that called themselves the magnificent Loew's Pitkin (now a pitiful shell awaiting new uses), the similarly moribund Loew's Kings, the Kameo, the RKO Tilyou, the Loew's Coney Island, the Patio, the Fox – all of them and more transporting people to other worlds of glitz, glamour, and, sometimes, stark reality.

For the Community Board 13 area, nostalgia took on the most glittery of mental pictures, because this southern area of the borough, encompassing Brighton Beach, Coney Island, Sea Gate, and Gravesend, links to scenes of the most striking of time capsule mental snapshots. From the days of its 'discovery', tens of thousands of people have streamed into this shorefront vicinity: people from all over the world to visit an amusement district that thrived as much on the past as the present. Yes, even Sigmund Freud was dazzled by it! Cary Grant worked Surf Avenue on stilts; Rudolph Valentino provided the perfect dancing 'escort' for single damsels; Leon Trotsky appeared in Vitagraph movies filmed on the beach and nearby woodlands.

How could enterprising adventurers into the world of the new flickers, e.g. Brooklyn's own Vitagraph Studio, ignore their rich lode of readymade natural settings? And, more, the sea-swept recollections of the original touristy Luna Park, the glassed-encased Steeplechase and its famed Horses, Coney's scores of bathhouses, pools, Boardwalk attractions, Dreamland with its electrical wonderland, rides, foods, and spectacles. Then, whirling through the mind are thoughts of Shatzkin's knishes, skee ball, Brighton Beach Baths, the Thunderbolt, the Tornado, the seeming endless oom-pah-pah's of carousels, Bonammo's Turkish Taffies, the 'Toonerville' Trolley along Railroad Avenue, the Sodamat, Stauch's and Silver's Baths. Ravenhall and the Washington Baths. The Atlantis with its headliners of big band singers like Doris Day! 'Under the Boardwalk' where one could rent un-openable beach chairs and umbrellas as well as a place where beachgoers could buy Mission Orange Soda and where one could get some shade away from the red hot sand.

And Theaters --- the RKO Tilyou, Loew's Coney Island, the Surf and Mermaid, the Oceana and the Tuxedo. The Brighton Beach Theater where great stars appeared in Broadway touring companies. And the ethnic theaters. For those even older, the recollections of race tracks and boxing arenas.

BUT *NOSTALGIA* in C.B. does not mean meandering through a life in the past, gazing only at faded photographs or reading of a world as remote as Oz. *Nostalgia just ain't what it used to be!!* While the Palisades Amusement Park, Rockaway Playland, and Freedomland are just fodder for tomes on ye olde century, the everlasting, ongoing bloodline of Brighton Beach, Coney Island, the beach, the Boardwalk, Surf Ave., the Bowery, Brighton Beach Ave. have kept on serving and thrilling millions non-stop over the decades. Yes, the mammoth crowds of years past, for a while, may have dwindled thanks to a combination of air conditioned new lifestyles, the lure of the suburbs, the living room specters of bad and good TV, BUT, in spite of all these distractions, the Brooklyn southshore still thrived. The Cyclone roller coaster continued to send screaming carloads of people up and down its daunting wooden slopes; Deno's Wonder Wheel Park brought families into a world of fun and frolic, with its centerpiece 'wheel' whirling into the salt atmosphere. Nathan's remained the Mecca for the best in hot dogs with French fries. The New York Aquarium left Manhattan to bring its magic to a site once home to Dreamland. Nuts to nostalgia.... nothing could truly stop the pulse beat of these ocean swept areas. And, now, the name of *Luna Park*, as an example, no longer reflects an amusement park that had its final, devastating fire as World War II came to an end...nor does it mean a housing development that rose on the land that had once been filled with those towers of light. It NOW means a new and thriving amusement park, on the site of the time-honored Astroland. In 2010, Surf Avenue swarmed with crowds on the opening day of this brand new amusement center, already established as much a part of the modern day Coney Island as its giddy neighbors. And there are more wild rides planned for 2011!! Nothing stops the verve, spirit, excitement, and people-friendly salt air magnetism of C.B. 13's neighborhoods.

What has happened for this always-in-progress double-barreled renaissance of an already-thriving Brooklyn mainstay? Many elements have played a part -- but none more than the people who have never lost faith in its surfside grandiosity -- the residents, the visitors, the tourists, the entrepreneurs (who kept businesses going through good years and less-than-good years), and the eyes and ears of people who never let the area disappear into history books that would link it with the 'there- once-was' indexes in books about the history of the City of Brooklyn.

The south shore of Brooklyn, when it was still Breukelen with homesteading townships like Midwout, first proved to be a magnet for the magnates, who ruled Manhattan's southern tip, with a new century of commerce. Still, escape from the escalating crowds of that area meant that those who were amassing initial fortunes could boat over to the southern shoreline across from the East River and down to sites

where the Atlantic Ocean and Gravesend Bay sent waves onto pristine shores. Summer homes were built; streets emerged. Escape from crowds and business was the result. Soon, other peninsula areas began to develop in view of the cool ocean breezes, thanks to the latest in rail technologies that could carry throngs of less-wealthy who also sought the salt waters and the giddy amusements along its shoreline. The area had its own ‘Boss Tweed’, a nefarious gentleman named John McCane, but his power and rule finally sent him to prison. More and more people, nonetheless, found the peninsula and moved eastward on the land mass for summer dwelling in the Brighton Beach Hotel and other luxury retreats. Brighton Beach and Coney Island became the warm weather home for the growing population of a Metropolis that developed in its own unique fashion. The almost-legendary Elephant Hotel was built (its history a fascinating element in the brilliant recent novel *Dreamland*). Dreamland, itself, rose and vanished quickly after the turn of the 20th Century when one of Coney’s most disastrous fires sent its electrified wonders crashing into ground and the surf. BUT here, too, it never just faded into merely the lyrics of *Meet Me Tonight in Dreamland*. Today, the pilings of at least two of its pier pilings (Dreamland Pier and Iron Pier) have been found beneath the nearby surf and offer the opportunity to explore the renewal of ferry service and pier enterprises along the area. Even the first Steeplechase burned, but the latter rose mightier and more famous with its glass domed indoor-outdoor amalgam of Wonderland, the Arabian Nights, and an American-formed zany world of goofiness and fun. Still, nostalgia didn’t completely wipe out the final destruction of Steeplechase in the 60’s; its site is now the home for MCU Stadium, home of the Cyclones ball team, an arm of the Mets’ organization. And, in the future, there will be a Steeplechase park, around the Parachute Jump area, which will bring rides, children’s areas, rest zones, and the famed, newly-restored B&B Carousell (formerly on Surf Ave.) onto its site. Nothing has ever completely ended in Brooklyn’s south shore... it has merely awaited a return... and the return has started. The Past, The Present, The Future – all side by side in C.B.13’s neighborhoods. Despite all the changes in the city, these areas stubbornly have refused to be turned into a zone to be discussed only on some badly-investigated article in Wikipedia. Instead, despite all their changes, the one-of-a-kind New York City ‘let yourself go’ streets are alive and well, thriving and growing, with new ideas and new hopes..... but not without new problems..... . Such is this famous strip of land, itself a welcome beacon for those reaching New York City via water routes..... The landmarked Parachute Jump, though currently not in use is the first vision a seagoing visitor sees as he/she approaches the Island of Manhattan. A most fitting ‘Hello!’. And a reminder that Brooklyn is not now, nor has it ever been, just an outer-borough. It is the pulse of a mighty city of FIVE boroughs of which Manhattan is merely one despite its hold onto the term New York, New York.

COMMUNITY BOARD 13

COMMUNITY BOARD 13 is made up of the peninsula neighborhoods (Brighton Beach, Coney Island, Sea Gate) as well as locations north of the Belt Parkway and Coney Island Creek i.e. Gravesend, Bath Beach, along with portions of Bensonhurst and Homecrest. All are further linked by the sounds of waves washing onto their shores. the Atlantic Ocean (lapping against the perfect beach), Gravesend Bay and the nearby Narrows, as well as Coney Island Creek. Co-terminus with the areas served by the 60th Police Precinct, it is bounded on the south by the Ocean; on the wet west and north by Gravesend Bay; the east and north by Corbin Place (which leads into nearby Manhattan Beach and Sheepshead Bay), 26th Avenue, 86th Street, Avenue Y, Coney Island Avenue, and Cass Place. Over the last few years, with universal concern about Global Warming, these neighborhoods may well be threatened by flooding in the future; water surges have damaged the shore vicinity in the past. All City agencies have set up preparedness for any potential deluge, and C.B. 13 works diligently with the 60th Precinct, the Fire Department, and the Office of Emergency Management in planning the methodology of evacuation of the ‘island’ in case of hurricane or

other disaster. C.B. 13 has organized a CERT Team (Community Emergency Resource Team) that has been trained to assist where and when needed. In these latest days of large crowds and growing populations in C.B. 13, with more housing units in the planning stages, there is inevitable concern about egress from the peninsula 'when and if' it is required. Concerns focus on the few streets that can take people away from a flooding zone i.e. Cropsey Avenue, Stillwell Avenue (both of which are linked to the 'mainland' by bridges), along with Ocean Parkway and Shell Road. Careful thought has been given by all involved, and, should such an emergency appear, it is believed that the exodus can be handled well with inland sites available for emergency use. Still, the high-rise buildings, notably in the western end of the peninsula indicate the huge crowds that would be involved. Hopefully, there are early signs of any huge storm approaching, and there will be adequate time to assess who should leave the area and how they should leave. OEM would be working with the Precinct, Fire, CERT, et al to monitor all in safe and anxious-less fashion. But all of this is just precautionary; Coney Island and Brighton Beach have survived storms in prior years. True, Sea Gate is vulnerable, at this moment in time, because its shoreline has greatly diminished since the Federal Corps of Engineers replenished the Brighton-Coney beach strip and created an over-extended T-Groin at West 37th Street, which separates the private Sea Gate community from the rest of the island. The result of this Federal work inadvertently meant the movement of sand from the south beaches to the northern shore of the island and yanking away sand from the Sea Gate beaches. Thus, a nor-easter can be a difficult problem, and, in the not-too-distant past, waves washed upon its streets and even hurtled one of its famed buildings into the sea. As a result, the threat of any major rainfall brings OEM and CERT and the private Police force of Sea Gate and the 60th Precinct into tandem work to prevent damage and/or injury. Plans are currently in the works for the placement of additional T-Groins along Sea Gate's shoreline that would prove helpful against flooding although they would be constructed to prevent the further movement of sand from one end of the island to the other. Congressman Nadler, and others, has found funding and it is hoped that work, long in the talking stages, can actually begin. The aged infrastructure of the rest of the peninsula, though, indicates further issues. Flooding is common with each and every rainstorm of note. With proposals for additional construction of buildings of height in the area, and with additional commercial enterprises, it is considered imperative that work be done to bring the infrastructure – its sewers, catch basins, water lines – up to contemporary standards. All planning by the **DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**, which should be ongoing, must involve the area's many nursing homes, senior residences, high-rise structures and New York City Housing Authority buildings, Coney Island Hospital, and all agencies. Perhaps, the problem seems more intense in the light of recent resurgences of crowds to Coney-Brighton. There are still only those few streets out of the area, and the attempts to improve ingress-egress streets have proven difficult to solve, and DOT is still in the process of determining the best, safest, and fastest routes in and out of the areas involved.

There has been no dearth of headlines concerning the neighborhoods of C.B. 13 during 2009-10. Perhaps, the most striking has been the reactions to the initial resultants of the half-decade work of the Coney Island Development Corp. (CIDC), which, linking with the Mayor's Office, the NYC Economic Development Corp., Councilman Domenic M. Recchia, Jr., Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, among scores more legislators, businesses, and civic leaders, saw the onset of the work. Throughout the year, eyes were focused on the property that had long drawn people to Astroland; the land had been bought by Thor Equities a few years ago. Last year, a disappointing amusement zone, called 'Dreamland', had not brought positive attention to the area. This year, the City bought back a good deal of the Thor land, and one of these properties was that of this Astroland-faux Dreamland site. The result was the interest of Italy-based Central Amusement Int., LLC, and a situation that has resulted in the new Luna Park on that property. It has proven to be a major impetus in the first chapter of the revitalized Coney Island. But this

does not mean that Thor has abandoned its plans for its remaining land in the amusement area, and there are many unanswered questions. A plea to landmark the aging Henderson Building, the W. 12th St. Bank Building, among others, has not drawn a favorable response from the Landmarks Commission, and there is concern, among the amusement operators and others, that Thor's ultimate plans might still fail to fit in with the dreams of a larger, even more crowd-pleasing amusement zone. Rumors, at this time, include concerns that the Henderson Building (Stillwell & Surf) will be razed, along with the others. All of these buildings have historic value to old Coney, and there is wonderment as to what might replace them. (The Surf Ave./W 12 St. Child's Restaurant Bldg., occupied by Coney Island USA, appears to be on the landmark acceptance trial as is the old Loew's Coney Island Theater Bldg. (Shore Theater).

The long-delayed plans for downzoning in Brighton Beach failed, partly, at least, in part to the long delay in its studies. During that time, considerable changes had occurred within that area. Bungalows and one family homes were bought and razed by developers to be replaced by condos (not all of them yet occupied). Other civic and business situations developed during the decade of delay, and the neighborhood residents opposed to the downzoning thus far outnumbered those in favor. The changes were given the thumbs-down.

National Grid (nee KeySpan nee Brooklyn Union, nee Brooklyn Union Gas) completed the clean-up of Coney Island Creek and the land around it (from Shell Road to Stillwell Ave.) and is now working on its plans for the final phases including its water treatment plant on the site. Part of this cleansed land had been planned for the new home of the C.B. 13 & C.B. 15 Sanitation Garage. In the meantime, National Grid has worked on a State-mandated edict to check out the site of the long-gone Dangman Park facility, a smaller operation than BUG but one that serviced gas to the area at the turn of the 20th century and now the site of the Trump Village shopping Center and environs. Land has been studied for the possibility of lingering environmental problems, with the cooperation of Trump and the Shopping Center, without concern. So far, the results have shown no problems for that area. Dangman Park may return to the annals of the area without any further disturbance to the community. The cleanup of the Creek, however, poses hopes for a grand plan for this waterway. Should the remainder of the Creek, from Stillwell to the Bay, be completed, the waters could prove home to environmental programming, to kayaking, to fishing, to a whole new addition to the peninsula's tourist lifeblood.

There has been no close to the fights over the proposed Waste Transfer Station, only blocks out of the C.B. 13 are in the Shore Parkway area. Although C.B. 11 approved this measure, there remains anxiety over the possibility of garbage spills, though not considered a threat by DOS or DEP, that any spillage could threaten the waterways so important to the health and safety of C.B. 13. Then, too, master plans for Dreier-Offerman Park, also along the Shore route but within C.B. 13, have looked promising, but as of summer 2010, the proposed revitalized park area is rumored threatened by an EIS that may well indicate difficulties with poisonous substances just below the dirt level, the result of which would mean an extensive clean-up before any Dreier work could be done. There has been no verification on this latest potential problem prior to development. Should the delayed DOS Garage near a starting date for the old National Grid property, questions still remain as to the impact of DOS truck routes in and out of this area, particularly on the Shell Road side (Stillwell Ave. provides no egress).

C.B. 13's offices are at 1201 Surf Ave., in the midst of the amusement area of the district, but the office allows easy movement to all sectors of the Board's responsibilities. The staff consists of a District Manager, an Assistant, and a part-time Secretary. The office is easily reached by all C.B. 13 residents and, thus, is constantly busy with visitors. The office offers easy visibility to the sights and sounds of the amusement area and can also view the still-empty lots that remain from the razing of structures by Thor Equities. True, some of this emptied area will be used by Luna Park operators to construct still more exciting rides for

summer 2011. Others, owned by Thor (also owner of potential razed area on Stillwell, W. 12 St. and the Bowery) serve now as areas for dumping of trash and now-barren and unused lots in the middle of the thriving, crowded district.

The Board, as in its mandates, receives phoned-in complaints, all day, from the north-south-east-and west of the District. As of this writing, calls have been coming in about illegal vending and sales of alcoholic beverages on the beach; about Boardwalk complaints and unfinished work on it; on illegal gambling; on potholes and brownouts; on traffic hazards and transit cut-backs that keep ripping into the ease by which people reach the area especially during the weekend. And there are more... the phone is a constant, and there are calls, with '311' reported complaint numbers without any action yet taken. The Board office then follows up on the number and the incidents involved.

The zoning issues throughout C.B. 13 are always in question. Residents come into the office to complain about additions to buildings on their blocks, or about new construction. But, if the zoning allows such activity, there is little that can be done. Nonetheless, the Board office has a solid relationship with city agencies, and reps from this governmental arts do check the complaints, many of which are diligently gone over during the monthly District Cabinet meetings, chaired by the D.M. Certainly, the Dept. of Consumer Affairs has worked with the other agencies to monitor the zoning misdemeanors, but, often, roadblocks are thrown in the way. Illegal furniture stores still mar the entire northside of Surf Avenue from W. 8 Street to Stillwell e.g. Luna Park furniture (now under a new name even after it had promised to shutter), Astroland Furniture, and Coney Island Furniture. The latter is well known for placing mattresses and furniture on the sidewalk in front of the store. Thus, people leaving the revamped Stillwell Avenue Terminal, bringing tens of thousands to the area, leave the building to possibly trip over mattresses on the sidewalk. Visitors cross the street instead. Actions have been taken, over many years, against these businesses, which are in violation of the C7 zoning. Yet, there they are... year after year after year. Summonses, violations, court visits—no matter what actions, they remain!! The result? The avoidance of the Surf Ave. northside which led to the loss of the B&B Carousell on that side (it is being refurbished for Steeplechase Park). What does thrive on the northside --- bars and clubs, some of them that require careful watch by the 60th Police Precinct. Amusements remain on the southside of Surf.

Growth takes time, and it takes vigilance in correcting matters that halt progress. Throughout C.B. 13, the 21st century has begun with promise but still has to deal with traffic issues, with transit woes, with homeless, with unoccupied new condos, with illegal vending on streets and beaches, with potential ecological problems, and much more. Still, C.B. 13 is very much alive and very much aware of what must be faced... and what has to be corrected. But there is a positive attitude towards the future, and there is an unique unanimity in seeing that this future will be in the best interests of all.

GRAVESEND, HOMECREST, BATH BEACH

Pleasant communities dot the areas north of the Belt/Shore Parkways and Coney Island Creek, all in C.B. 13. The Gravesend-Bath Beach area remains filled with one and two family homes, along with some higher-rise, well-maintained residents (Contello Towers, Waterview Towers, Harway Houses). All of these developments have nice open space areas, and the very popular Little Dreier-Offerman Park offers an unique respite center in the Contello vicinity. This park, now safely protected by fences so that the toddler community cannot face the perils of traffic, features a bocce area as well as benches and room for youngsters to cavort. Many mom-and-pop stores still serve the community on the main drag (Cropsey Ave.) as well as along its side streets. It is served well by the Ulmer Park branch of the Brooklyn Public

Library on Bath Avenue near the 26th Avenue C.B. 13 terminus. Several senior homes are in the area, but most of the larger ones are north of 26th. Condos have also been built throughout Gravesend/Bath Beach, and the neighborhood is served by Most Precious Blood Church, Shore Parkway Jewish Center, and others. Extensive work, over the last few years, has involved the updating of the Avenue V Pumping Station, and the result have been lane changes and street closures, many of them along Cropsey but, here too, much of the work is in the C.B. 11 area. Plans had been made to inform all residents when work would take place on their blocks i.e. Cropsey, Harway, Bath, et al. This procedure has been followed, and very few complaints have been received at the C.B. 13 office. The work continues, but much of the most difficult activities are completed. Nonetheless, Cropsey, north of 26th Ave., still offers some obstacles to motorists, but the impact has not been severe. As has been mentioned, there is some concern about the proposed Waste Transfer Station work, just a block or two north of 26th Ave.

Just south of the Cropsey Bridge, the shuttered Retro Diner (nee Nebraska Diner) has reopened successfully under new management as the Parkview Diner. A large Pathmark abuts it, with a large parking area. A Burger King operates diagonally across from the Diner, and it has outlived its Board's BSA approval. Complaints had been received from residents about what appeared to be illegal curb cuts at the Burger King, and the Board awaits answers as to the current status of this business. Why has there been no further BSA extension sought? If there is a logical reason, a simple answer would suffice for all. An Iron Works facility also stands on this Cropsey stretch, just south of the Belt exit where cars stream into the peninsula. However, trucks entering and leaving this facility often block Cropsey, delaying traffic. Ditto all of the auto shops that line both sides of Cropsey, as well as Neptune and Stillwell Avenues, north of Neptune Ave.

A bridge links the Contello/Little Dreier Park area to the much larger park on the other side of the Belt i.e. Large Dreier-Offerman Park a/k/a Calvert Vaux Park. Work on the bridge had been planned years ago, but there is not yet any starting date. At the same time, the Parks Department has issued a formidable Master Plan for Large Dreier, which would include additional ballfields (the Park is used now by soccer and baseball teams from the area and nearby communities), Park House, ecological center, and much more. The plan was greeted warmly, because there have been many years of discussions regarding the future of this wide expanse. However, rumors now have arisen as to the environmental safety of the park. An EIS has been prepared, and there are widespread recollections of the area as a dumping ground for all sorts of materials, some of which may have been toxic-involved. Much of this potential greensward is made up of materials barged over to the site during the construction of the Verrazano Bridge. The Master Plan is ambitious and a potential strong 'plus' for the young people of all of C.B. 13, and, so, it is hoped that the involved issues can be resolved, and work can start.

The proud Lafayette High School structure stands tall in the area, but the changes in the educational setup of New York City has altered its historic *raison d'être*. It is now a 'complex' with separate specialized schools sharing its space, the one that has garnered the most attention and publicity being the High School of Sports Management, which is supported by the Brooklyn Cyclones and the New York Mets' organization and which has already indicated scholastic growth. Nearby is John Dewey High School, with its large campus. Ultra-modern and aimed for scholastic high marks only a few decades ago, the school is now in a state of flux. The community awaits word on its future. Nearby is the large NYCHA complex, The Marlboro Houses. Over the years, reports of neglect and crime issues have been reported, and there have been many steps taken to make this large development safer and friendlier to its neighbors, its young people, and its residents. Playgrounds are still in somewhat shabby shape, including a former roller skating area near Ave. X. It stands vacant and baking in the hot summer sun. Though it had been used for concerts

some years ago, the Rink site proved, to the producers, to be a problem with disparate elements in the development each seeking separate, divergent leadership roles. Hopefully, all of these in-house, NYCHA issues are being faced well now. Across from Marlboro is the Ty Cobb Field, which abuts the edge of the City's Railroad Yard which stretches across to the easterly sectors of C.B. 13. The Ty Cobb Field needs work to make it more useable for its teams, but, for years, it had been debated as to maintenance responsibility. Was it the domain of the Transit Authority or the Parks Department? An athletic association now uses the field, but it would be wise to assist in making this needed sports center more amenable to all.

The Rail Yards separate this section of C.B. 13 from the area that includes Beach Haven Houses and Shell Road. There, one finds more nicely-kept one-family houses alongside the Trump-developed Beach Haven. There have been some complaints about construction of higher buildings on the side streets, but the plans conform to the zoning. The West Street Park, in the middle of this area, is a well-kept park with an improved soccer field and amenities for all ages. It is widely used. The Gil Hodges Field is widely used on Shell Road near the Belt overpass. A larger field was lost to the Grace-Gravesend Athletic Assn. when the initial KeySpan/National Grid clean-up of their land was mandated by the State; the field was on KeySpan property. Shell Road also shows signs of incomplete condo construction – a development has been boarded up at the Shell & Ave. Z corner. The area, though, is well represented by a supermarket, pharmacy, pizza parlor, liquor store, and Laundromat.

The east-most end of this CB 13 area is Coney Island Avenue, and temporary traffic changes have altered the patterns followed by motorists. The cause has been the necessary razing and reconstruction of the East 8th Street/Guider Avenue Ramp over the Belt Parkway. Most work is done during the day, but some night work has been made necessary. Cars traveling west on the Belt must leave the Parkway at Coney Island Ave., drive north to Avenue Z where they must make a left turn and drive a few blocks before making another left turn to return to the Belt. There was some initial concern but the NYC DOT-Bridges has worked closely with the community, the legislators, and the Board in ongoing data dissemination. There is an on-site representative, and all questions can be answered. One sad element, though, has been the increase in the rat population of the area; construction usually disturbs rat habitats, and the Guider operation has been no exception. The NYC Dept. of Health – Rat Control has been working closely to monitor the complaints and has remained close to the D.M.'s Cabinet meetings to indicate work that is being done to correct the health problem.

The routes in and out of Gravesend, Brighton Beach, and Coney Island do have some critical traffic issues that are apt to become worse in the future. Traffic issues must be found for the future growth. Additional housing construction will be part of the future of the peninsula. Auto shops, in particular, are plentiful along Neptune-Stillwell-Cropsey, and their work often creates difficult situations for motorists and for pedestrians. A high demand for the auto shop work has meant that businesses place cars on the sidewalks or into one Cropsey lane meant for auto passage. To add to the difficulties, DOT altered some of the street directions, during 2010, in an attempt to deal with the growth in vehicular traffic to the south. The results have not been favorable, and, in some cases, residents complain about chaotic back-ups on Neptune Ave. and the side streets leading in and out of that thoroughfare. DOT representatives have noted the problems, for example, at W. 19th St. and Neptune where a southbound turn was altered into a northbound from Surf and Mermaid into Neptune. W. 19th St. is only one block from the ultra-busy Cropsey-Neptune intersection, one that has proven a problem for decades. Cars trying to make turns from W. 19th, left or right, face bumper-to-bumper gridlock during many hours of the day. In addition, West 17th Street, which had been a two way street, was changed into a one-way southbound route so that Cropsey traffic could move swifter to the peninsula, and to enable those attempting left turns to the east to do so

without potential collisions. But, here too, the results have not been satisfactory, and DOT is once again studying the situation. (CB 13 had suggested, over years, that a simple left turn signal for southbound cars turning left would alleviate much of the woe.). The 60th Precinct has been successful, over the last decade, in working out patterns to enable those leaving the ballpark and the amusement area to move quickly. Nonetheless, the future does hold plans for further housing development, and now is the time to work out a better solution for traffic mobility in and out of the busy areas of the south. Off-street parking for visitors has been urged by the community, but none is yet in the offing or in the planning. Stronger enforcement is needed along the entire strip, particularly Cropsey, where cars all merge and where motorists leaving the Belt join other drivers coming south on Cropsey, drivers leaving Home Depot and Pathmark on Cropsey, among others. Too often, the designated right turn lane from Cropsey into Neptune is riddled with trucks and double-parked cars, some from a Cropsey Iron/Metal establishment of long standing. Sometimes, one finds trailer trucks, sans cabs, left on the Stillwell Bridge itself and thus backing up traffic even further. All of these issues indicate the massive jam-ups that can occur in an area that is home to Belt/Shore Parkway exits and entrances, routes to the amusement area and to Brighton Beach (and beyond to Sheepshead Bay). People living in the west end of the Coney Island peninsular have reported that on some days, (e.g. July 4th, Memorial Day, and holidays), they have had to struggle for almost an hour to go from Sea Gate to Cropsey. Some have indicated that they turn back on those days. Some fear that any emergency can create panic for those attempting to leave the area. The Gravesend Traffic Study, recently issued, misses many of these points so vital to the future.

Adjacent to Large Dreier is an elongated spit of land (West Shore Ave.-Hunter Ave.-Bay 43 St.) which had been the site for a new development called Rose Cove. It was completed in large part, with a marina and work being done on an underground garage and a street that would link it to the Shore Parkway entrance. The project, for some reason, was abandoned, and, after years of neglect, fire, vandalism, et al, the buildings were razed. Since that time, Rose Cove has occasionally been the site of what appeared to be the start of new work, but the fenced-off large area now seems a ghost area again. It is a valued swatch of land that juts into the Creek as it enters Gravesend Bay, with a superb view. All are awaiting decisions as to the future of the land.

BRIGHTON BEACH

Brighton Beach, a shadow of its historic grandeur several decades ago, has reemerged as one of the busiest business and residential centers in New York City. Brighton Beach Avenue, itself, pulsates with restaurants, mom and pop stores, clothing shops, banks, and other main artery establishments. For years, many of the stores had been empty, but the influx, several years ago, of former residents of the Soviet Union changed the entire topography. The older and larger apartment houses still fill the landscape between Brighton Beach Ave. and the Boardwalk; one and two family homes are found on side streets, but there have many changes on these streets. Over recent years, developers have come into the Brighton district, bought up some of the one and two family homes...as well as those in the almost-historic bungalow district... razed them and put up condos and co-ops. Streets have become even more crowded as a result, and, as a result of the current fiscal woes of City and Country, some of these condos remain unoccupied. There are other smaller buildings, and former large one-family buildings, that are now abandoned – by developmental hesitation and, often, by fire that may have had any one of several causes including their use by those who manage to break into the buildings illegally. Vandalism may be seen in these woe begotten structures (several on Oceanview Ave.). It may well be that there are those that are the victims of absentee landlords who may simply seal-up the structures by demand of the Dept. of Buildings, but who remain non-seen, ghostly figures with rotting buildings. The bungalow area had thrived for many years as a summer retreat,

but, later, some of them were turned into nice year-round residences. Some, though, were neglected, and, to add to the problems of the area, the lanes on which they stand may not be city-mapped. The infrastructure of the neighborhood suffers as a result, with sewer and catch basin backups. Trash may accumulate, because DOS trucks cannot navigate into these lanes. Buildings of larger mass have also gone up on these unmapped streets, and there have been meetings to address the problems that emergency vehicles might have in reaching these structures in time of need. DOT has attempted to deal with the problems with changes in parking regulations so that trucks can indeed reach the buildings, but the result has still caused anxiety within the neighborhood.

The one-time Brighton Beach Baths' site itself is now the huge Oceana housing development, and the Oceana Theater building unites a catering facility on the ground floor and a performing space on the second. Both of these elements are close to one of the most dangerous criss-cross intersections within C.B. 13! – e.g. the intersection of Coney Island and Brighton Beach Aves. Always a difficult site, it was served by a Barnes Dance arrangement which has since been halted by DOT. There are distinct problems at this corner – the elevated train turns onto Brighton Beach Ave. here; traffic emerges from all of the involved streets; pedestrian movement is tricky. The Barnes Dance was also eliminated at West 5th St. & Neptune Ave., the high rise intersection that brings together Trump Village and Warbasse Houses, an area that houses a very large senior population (as does the formerly noted Brighton site). People are still pleading for extension of crossing time and/or return of Barnes Dance measures.

It would be remiss to think of Brighton Beach as a neighborhood that is home only to people of the former USSR or of elderly longtime residents. Neptune Avenue and other streets in the area are home to Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Italians, South Americans, Pakistanis, and others. Neptune Ave. is also filled with mom and pop stores, restaurants, and more. There is unanimity, within the neighborhood, as to its biggest problem – PARKING. One remaining Municipal Lot stands between Brightwater Court and the Boardwalk, and half is reserved for local residential parking, and the remainder for visitors. The future of this site has been discussed for years – housing with parking? Multi-level garage? Whatever the eventual outcome, the entire neighborhood of Brighton Beach screams out for any kind of solution to its mammoth parking problem. Restaurant-goers, from other areas, may use the valet parking services, but shoppers, with cars, may drive for long periods before finding parking. And residents search frantically for spaces. The addition of the new condos has not alleviated any of the problem.

No matter how dynamic the work of the Brighton Beach Business Improvement District and the long-standing Brighton Neighborhood Assn., there are a handful of storeowners who ignore the City rules and regulations in a number of circumstances. Some produce stores utilize much more space on the sidewalks than they are permitted, and Task Forces, of several agencies, occasionally have to come to the street to issue summonses. Grease and rotted fruit may often be hurtled down sewers, and the resultant clogs, flooding, backups, and stench create environmental annoyances. Illegal vending also creates havoc on the narrow sidewalks, proving difficult for pedestrians to pass, and damaging the economic stability of rent-paying storeowners selling the same merchandise. It is also known that some side street residents cart their family trash to city garbage cans on the avenue. Trash pile-ups may also be visible at the end of the non-mapped lanes, because residents find no recourse considering the fact that DOS trucks do not have enough room to enter the street.

The Shorefront 'Y', at the foot of Coney Island Ave. and the Boardwalk, is a vital part of the community, but there is a great need for additional off-street services for the large population of young people and seniors. Cut-backs in funding to such organizations as the aforementioned Brighton Neighborhood Assn. mean curtailment of worthy programming.

The Riegelmann Boardwalk, along with the beach, runs the entire length of the peninsula from Brighton Beach to West 37th Street and the entrance to the private Sea Gate community. It is one of the most important elements in C.B. 13, and one that unites neighborhoods and brings huge crowds during the warm weather months. The beach and Boardwalk are pivotal to the healthy economy of the entire C.B. 13 area. Sadly, parts of the wooden walkway had fallen into major disrepair, some of which followed the replenishment of the beach by the Federal Corps of Engineers, a program that meant that sands were piled up beneath the Boardwalk, eliminating space between the wood and the sometimes-soggy sand. Rotting pilings resulted, and replacement of destroyed walk space has been a constant. New methods currently are being used by the Parks Department to determine the best way to see that the Boardwalk is safe to strollers. Trip hazards must be corrected, and jutting nails indicate problems with the structure. The methods for replacing damaged wood have been slow in implementation, a situation that fortunately has not deterred crowds. But the methods have caused considerable attention in that concern remains as to which of the methods will last longer and keep the wooded dignity of the walkway. The entire process is being watched closely. While some residents and businesses ask that the Boardwalk remain strictly made of wood, it appears that such a situation is unlikely considering the cost of replacing rotted areas with the original wood materials. Much of the old wood came from areas that are now environmentally endangered, in much the same way as the rain forest' areas. The melodic strains of *Under the Boardwalk* can still be heard very often on stages and on the radio, but the song most reflective of the shaded spots 'neath the walkway would be *Those Were The Days...* . Today, the uses of areas under the wooden stretch are limited. But the entire length of the Boardwalk does still offer a refuge for the homeless, many of whom know how to squirrel through the sands to create living quarters under it. The results have been sad, often humorous, and still more often dangerous. At one time, the Captain of the Precinct and the D.M., in a lookout for homeless encampments, found one complete with all the necessities of home (mattresses, table, chairs, etc.). But there were addenda.... The D.M. and the Captain found a working FAX machine, television, and other items. No one should ever underestimate the skills of many homeless people. But there is another side of the problem in that, during cooler weather, the homeless might light fires for warmth in the same areas. The threat is to the Boardwalk, and fires have occurred in the past, destroying the above wood, and, at least in one case, parts of a restaurant and an apartment house dwelling. The homeless, struggling to find a place for themselves in a world they think has abandoned them, may be found throughout C.B. 13 in a wide range of sites. They may be seen in parks, along the Ocean Parkway benches, hillsides near Coney Island Hospital as well as using the E.R. waiting room. There are other refuge areas such as Large Dreier-Offerman Park, areas abutting Coney Island Creek and alongside Home Depot, abandoned buildings, the Stillwell Terminal, as well as on the streets of Brighton Beach and Coney Island. There is constant 'watch' by the Precinct, the Board office, and local residents as to where the disenfranchised are living. But, to the homeless, there are obstacles to leaving their on-street lifestyles. For years, armories were known as perilous to them, and new plans for the homeless in neighborhood apartment homes are not always greeted well by nearby citizens. Nonetheless, answers must be found in the light of the current recession and the growing numbers of people who have lost their jobs and who may have been tossed out of their living quarters for any number of reasons. Yes, some homeless people are alcoholics, drug addicts, and those prematurely released from hospitals and mental institutions. They need help, but so do other homeless people who are seeking a route out of their recession-created loss of jobs and homes.

CONEY ISLAND / SEA GATE

Page One articles about Coney Island have been printed throughout the world. Over the last decade,

multitudes of news articles and features have focused on the current status of the peninsula and the work and debate that has taken place as ideas for its future have been developed. The work and proposals of the Coney Island Development Corp. have involved tens of thousands over the last half-decade, with countless meetings with City officials; Local, State, and Borough legislators; civic groups and community leaders; amusement area businesses; to name but a few. And, now, in 2010, after years of projects' consideration and debate over each and every one of them, advances into the future are being taken. The summer of 2010, despite a debilitating heat wave, indicated the power of the shorefront communities in attracting interest. On the Memorial Day Weekend, every means of transportation brought record crowds to the coastline. Crowds poured through the subway exits, from the bus stops, as well as from the highways and local streets. The new Luna Park was a draw, but so were all of the amusement area attractions, the Aquarium, the ballpark, the vast clean beach, the Boardwalk, the eateries of all kinds. This bonanza weekend was quickly followed by other days equally magnetic for huge crowds. But success always comes with a price, and traffic was at its most difficult. Parking problems, as the days progressed, grew worse. Only the most optimistic about what would happen as the 'new' joined the 'familiar' could possibly have imagined the widespread renewal of appeal of the public to the shoreline. The pluses were obvious --- jobs for localites were sparked by CIDC and other groups; new rides and colorful events (The Mermaid Parade, the Friday fireworks' nights, the Village Voice Siren Festival, etc.) all proved magnets for the masses. The fact that Thor Equities' lots were devoid of activity seemed less of a problem as throngs rushed to Luna Park, the Cyclone, Deno's Wonder Wheel Park the Eldorado, rides and amusements on the Bowery and Surf, and to the old and new restaurants.

The residents of this large area had been involved in the planning from 'day one' and there were many positive signs for their continued role in the developments planned for the peninsula in terms of jobs and economic growth. Coney Island Commons, which will be physically linked to the new 'Y' community center, remains a strong impetus for the future as does the Parachute Jump Park, the master plan for the Aquarium, the omnipresent Nathan's and Gargiulo's, the potential growth of housing -- affordable as well as condo and/or coop...and the potential of a hotel or hotels. Young people have joined programs to help them prepare for careers in this new Coney Island; construction and other workers see a plentiful amount of job possibilities in the near future. The landmarking of the Loew's Coney Island Building a/k/a Shore is one element that might indicate the strong aim of the CIDC to turn Coney Island into more of a year-round destination. Should that structure finally be utilized for activities that would operate all year, crowds could come down to the area by subway, and the year-round audiences would help to develop more and more restaurants of all kinds, as well as other indoor-outdoor venues. The goal of Taconic is the construction of condos with affordable housing and commercial space; thus, greater concentrations of residents can be expected in the area next to the boom town atmosphere of the amusement zone. The goal(s) of Thor Equities seem not have changed since their first Master Plan, and speculation is rampant especially when people learned that Thor had planned to raze several of the mainstay area buildings on Stillwell and Surf Aves., as well as the West 12th Street Bank Building. Curiosity, and in some areas concern, has been heard about such moves and where they may lead. People also wonder about the future of the popular Abe Stark Ice Skating Rink, which, in recent years, has become a renewed magnet for the young of all ages. The MCU Parking Lot area, in some plans, vanishes into housing with parking areas donut-ed into the central areas. What happens to the Rink should that plan develop? Will there be adequate parking for the new residents as well as those who visit the Island?

There is no doubt that concern and anxiety does dot residents of buildings in western Coney Island. Although there is a firm commitment that Coney Island-ers remain Coney Island-ers, some high rise renters fear that

the growth of commerce and housing eventually could open the door to higher living costs and perhaps an economic upsurge that would force them out of their lifelong housing. It is a case of free-floating anxiety that cannot easily be erased. It must be noted that Astella Development has done a yeoman job, over many years, of building homes in Coney Island and revitalizing its Mermaid Avenue shopping strip, of many mom-and-pop stores, larger shops, medical centers, and more. There was enormous concern over a medical center, dealing with former addicts, which would open on a residential block. Many opposed the site for the Center, conceding that, though the Center may be needed, it is wrongly placed on a residential block.

After years and years of discussions, there is still no solution to the future of the West 8th Street- Surf Avenue Overpass that links the W. 8th St. station with the Boardwalk. This span carries crowds from the station, over Surf, with steps leading down to the street and Aquarium, on its way to its terminus at the Boardwalk. But for over a decade, the bridge has shown signs of aging, deterioration, and spalling. DOT has been checking it out yearly, and protective materials were placed under its base to halt materials falling into the street. The steps to the street and Aquarium are blocked off as trip hazards, and the Aquarium has rightfully closed off the walkway, under the span, that takes people from Surf into the Aquarium lot and entrance. Wooden protective fencing is seen on the bridge, and aged paint pulls away from the exterior and falls onto the street. What is to be done with this bridge? Should it be torn down and rebuilt, or simply razed? The latter possibly would be a method to revitalize the northside of Surf Avenue, because people would use this street after leaving the station. The Aquarium does not want the bridge any longer, even though it initially may have been built to assist its growth. The Aquarium is now quite healthy, and the need for the span as an aid for people to get to the institution is specious at best. Who is to maintain the remaining years of the bridge, and who would be required to maintain it after it might be rebuilt? The following have all nixed any responsibility for long-term watch over it – the Aquarium, Transit, Parks, Traffic. And, so, year after year passes without any resolution. A long-ago blueprint for its reconstruction still sits, with dust upon it, in the C.B. 13 office. But, eventually, the safety element will no longer be able to be avoided; the span needs work.

Conflict has been the norm for the plans for Asser Levy Park (Seaside Park) , that runs from Ocean Parkway (east) to West 5th Street (west) and from Surf Ave. (south) to Sea Breeze Avenue (north). For decades, the Bandshell has been used for scores of events, including the widely-attended Thursday night summer concert series hosted by Borough President Marty Markowitz. The park has needed more than spruce-up work for years, and the Bandshell itself needs work to serve the many performers and others who use it. Disputes have arisen over a plan that would see the construction of a new Shell with an overhang that would keep audiences and technicians dry in the advent of rain. There would also be a higher area at the eastern end of what has been called an ‘amphitheater’ that would allow more seating during the popular concerts. Debate literally has now raged over the project, its sound range, its park acreage, the movement of a children’s playground, parking, and more. Two synagogues on Sea Breeze Ave., seemingly never opposed to the events, along with a group of local residents from Trump, Warbasse, Brightwater, and western Brighton Beach Ave. have led a fight against the plan. Others, however, have indicated that they feel the park has been underused for years, that the ‘amphitheater’ would be a fine addition to the growth of Coney Island as it is the entranceway to the district. There has been further dispute over the actual geographic name for the area. Seaside Park and the Aquarium site was once a unit, remaining that way until Surf Ave. was extended to Ocean Parkway. The Aquarium is part of Coney Island, but there are those who insist the Trump-Warbasse area is ‘West Brighton’. There appears to be no easy solution to the park conflict, but all continue talking in the hopes of finding one. Rumors have been overwhelming, and one even insisted that the world-famous handball courts, on the southside of Surf, would be demolished.

Such was never in a plan, although the courts might be assisted with a placement of bleachers for the many spectators who enjoy watching the best players in the sport.

Kaiser Park, on Neptune Ave. further west into Coney Island, is a vitally important site, and Councilman Recchia has made its revitalization part of his urgent work in the area. Its decaying Park House was shuttered some years ago to await renovation, and work has started and stopped several times. It is now slated to be finished in the Fall of 2010 with bathrooms, meeting rooms, Parks' office, storage, and more. Meanwhile, there are no 'facilities' for the many that use the park. Porto Sans must be on hand. The Councilman's plans have resulted in a fine new running track, ballfields, and, now, work on the basketball courts. More will follow. Tennis players use fine facilities in the park, but there is conflict over those who use the courts without permits, or without concern for the amount of time they are on the clay. Others, with permits, complain that they are not able to use the courts. When a Parks' person is finally in the Park House, this problem can be ended.

SEA GATE is the westernmost portion of this peninsula, and it is filled with beautiful homes, some of them dating back a century. It is a private enclave with residents paying dues to the Sea Gate Assn., but, of course, it is also a part of the City with individual needs that may not be able to be solved on its own. It has a Police force and other units that watch over its streets, beaches and homes, but it also must rely on services from the City. For residents of this area, there are several problems that must be corrected. The beaches of Sea Gate have virtually disappeared since the Federal Corps of Engineers replenished the Coney Island sand stretch. An elongated T-Groin at W. 37 St. has been blamed for much of the problem; it was extended too far into the waterway. Sand was pulled away from the south beaches to the northside of the island at Bayview Ave. where the resulting sand dunes proved a major problem for homeowners. The Federal Corp. now insists that the problems can be corrected with additional T-Groins on the Sea Gate side that, incidentally, would replenish the Sea Gate beaches while they do the job of halting sand movement from the south peninsula to the north and Gravesend Bay. Plans have been presented to Sea Gate officials, and a starting date has always said to be close thanks to the work of Congressman Nadler. It is hoped that this needed work starts soon to prevent further flooding of the area. A nor'easter in the past caused considerable damage to the area's shoreline. Residents of the community are also concerned about the growing traffic created by the renewed energies of Coney Island. During busy summer days, motorists from Sea Gate contend that it can take them an hour to go from West 37th St. to exit the peninsula at Cropsey Ave. then, too, public transportation from the western end of Coney, including Sea Gate, is sometimes very slow, and reports indicate that people may wait longer for buses than TA reports insist. Dollar cabs move back and forth from the Stillwell Terminal as a way for people, in western Coney and Sea Gate, reach destinations. Slow-downs in buses and changes in their termination prove difficult, as do the subway line shifts that negatively impact the TA terminus at Stillwell Avenue. Weekend changes of lines and time schedules are more than confusing to residents and to those attempting to reach Brighton Beach and Coney Island. The Gravesend residents' transit issues are similarly awkward.

CITY SERVICES- POLICE/FIRE/PUBLIC SAFETY

It has been decades since the various elements involving public safety have been faced with the enormous crowds that have engulfed Summer 2010 in C.B. 13. Yet, there can be no faulting in the highly effective and 'ready-to-move' men and women of the 60th Police Precinct, still strategically located on West 8th Street, between Surf and Neptune (and Sheepshead Bay Road). The amusement district is across the street; Brighton, Coney Island's western end, Gravesend are all able to receive assistance quickly. Transit District 34 is equally able with its main office in the Stillwell Terminal, one of the busiest hubs in the City. Housing PSA

1, on Mermaid Avenue, remains within yards of the high rise structures that have been on the map since the 60's. The formidable growth of the amusement district has meant that the men and women of the 60th must monitor situations that can prove harrowing to the throngs who come down for everyday fun, as well as for crowd-involving attractions like the Mermaid Parade, Nathan's Hot Dog Contest, the July 4th Weekend, the baseball fans streaming in and out of MCU Park, the Friday night fireworks' displays, the Village Voice annual 'Siren Festival' of rock bands and displays, etc. Over the last decade, the 60th has proven its worth in the handling of cars in near-gridlock status. The 60th has worked out traffic patterns to ease ingress and egress from MCU Park (including unsnarling issues at the busiest intersections), as well as traffic knots at the Tuesday night concerts at Asser Levy Park, and the normal – and abnormal – day by day activities in the busiest areas of the entire C.B. 13 district. A Russian-speaking, bright member of the Force proves to be of enormous aid in working with the men and women of Brighton Beach. With the omnipresent specters of terrorism, the Precinct is ever on-the-ready and works closely with Coney Island Hospital, C.B. 13 CERT, all of the agencies serving the district. There is a highly successful outreach programs to all parts of C.B. 13, with excellent and experienced men and women able to work with civic leaders and community residents. Crowds have meant an upsurge in unfortunate crimes. Reports are made by people who find that their property left on the beach has been stolen; and by people who report car break-ins, because they have left visible materials on the seats. There have been incidents of stabbings and shootings in C.B. 13, a rare upsurge that might be the result of any number of reasons, but the 60th is on constant watch. More personnel are vitally needed – particularly during the summer but throughout the entire year as well. Crowded Brighton Beach and Coney Island mean greater need for Police work – on the streets, undercover, controlling crowds. The summer detail should be increased, with the men and women better informed as to the rules and regulations of the areas. But the needs do not stop during July and August. Beach and Boardwalk small vehicles are needed, as are four-wheel vehicles, and unmarked cars for surveillance purposes. With the diligence of the Police in C.B. 13, these needs can mean greater safety for all.

To have watched the men and women of the FIRE DEPARTMENT prevent a conflagration that could have negatively impacted all of the work to see Coney Island's amusement district alive and well in 2010 would have made everyone proud of the C.B. 13 FIRE personnel. Only days before large crowds were anticipated in the area, a large Arcade, Bowery & West 12 St., went up in a major blaze. The Department had to struggle to prevent the forceful fire from moving to nearby Bowery enterprises, a situation that could have endangered the very essence of summertime in the amusement area. The nighttime blaze was stubborn, and the Department handled it with skill and determination. While anxious nearby summer business people watched with great anxiety, they saw the Fire Department work, on all angles, to prevent the Arcade fire from creating chaotic results. The incident was only one of the many effective moments in the 2009-2010 service. Closure of any of the local firehouses would be totally unacceptable for many reasons --- the large crowds, the aging high rise buildings, and the turn of the century buildings that still stand and serve a vast public. Then, too, the Department must be on the ready for fires that emanate from apartments and houses that have had illegal construction; and that can arise from basements that are also utilized without permit for business and residences. These are but a few of the ongoing crises dealt with effectively. Are more men and women needed? Definitely. Are there needs for smaller vehicles so that the Department and its EMS components can reach beach/Boardwalk situations easily? Yes. The Department has also been most effective in outreach--- issuing smoke and carbon dioxide detectors. That practice should be upgrade as well; the need is evident. The men meet with the Cabinet monthly in order to discuss the problems that mean that all agencies must have command of important information.

CITY SERVICES – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

So much has happened within the last few years in C.B. 13! The work of the Coney Island Development Corp., has resulted in a powerful step in the redevelopment and growth of the peninsula. With summer temperatures soaring daily into the 90's, it was evident that huge crowds returned to the shorefronts of Brighton Beach and Coney Island, with their amusements, foods, restaurants, and shops. CIDC proved enormously effective, and the results can be seen with the new Luna Park amusement center, with the strengthening of the other operations throughout C.B. 13. Work continues on the future and its impact on the economy of this large area. CIDC and the support of the NYC Economic Development Corp. cannot be understated. Support for their continued work is imperative. Meetings and debates and effective resultants were common all year. The Cyclone roller coaster still moves along its whirlwind tracks, and it is exciting to see noted writer-historian Charles Denson operating a Coney Island History Project operation right beneath the sounds of screams of delight as the cars zoom up and down the tracks. But the future of the amusement area depends on the urgency of creating more of a year-round indoor-outdoor life. CIDC must thrive to deal with landmarking and proper use of the existing structures; planning for housing – affordable and condo; parking and traffic controls; beach and Boardwalk maintenance; assisting the growth of restaurants and commercial enterprises; and general cooperation between all of the vendors, operators, business people, and others who have shown renewed interest in the beachfront communities. Similarly, support is needed for Astella Development, with its long and effective work on Mermaid Avenue businesses and the construction of homes in the area. Support must continue for Brighton Beach Business Improvement District work, so that this crowded zone can ably deal with continued growth and ultimate changes. Thought must eventually be given to the economic development of busy Neptune Avenue, with its multi-ethnic, highly diverse population. And the Brighton Boardwalk is replete with restaurants and activities. It, too, may well need assistance as the businesses expand. The nearby one remaining parking lot is a key factor. The areas north of the Highway and the Creek also need help with businesses e.g. Home Depot, Pathmark, Parkview Diner, as well as other new and proposed additions to Cropsey Avenue and nearby streets.

CITY SERVICES – PARKS & RECREATION

One may look at the responsibilities of the men and women of C.B. 13's Parks & Recreation team, and wonder how much can be accomplished with the small number of personnel. First and foremost is the huge, famous beach that yawns its way from Corbin Place on the east to West 37th St. on the west. Parallel to the sandy stretch is the Boardwalk, and these pages have indicated the urgency of keeping this walkway in safe condition. But the work does not end there – one thinks of the large use of other Parks' units – Asser Levy (with its Bandshell, concerts, and plans), Kaiser (with its sports events, still-unfinished Park House, track and tennis, basketball, baseball and soccer), Calvert Vaux/Large Dreier-Offerman (used by soccer players and on the long-range horizon as one of the city's primary parks), Nautilus Playground, Babar Yar Park, West Street Park, Little Dreier-Offerman (on Cropsey Ave.), Grady Park (with questions as to shared responsibilities with the Dept. of Education); Six Diamonds Ballfield (adjacent to Home Depot and another small walkway-bench park that lines the Creek side of Depot); the Surf Ave. handball courts; the maintenance beneath the Boardwalk; among more playgrounds, school yards, and more! An amazing list of responsibilities and a screaming need for more workers to handle this expansive district that offers local residents and New Yorkers in general a chance to get away from it all!! Then, too, there is the work with the plans and projects of the City, the CIDC, and others. Small vehicles are needed for Boardwalk work. Communication must be improved with the needs and plans of other agencies. Publicity must be sharper regarding special events in all of the above areas. It is a wide range of responsibility. It is thus of

the most imperative need for knowledgeable men and women to be added to the C.B. 13 district to keep it clean, safe, and fun for all.

CITY SERVICES – HOMELESS

The City's homeless population is counted once a year, with teams covering every neighborhood in every borough. Yet, it appears obvious in C.B. 13, with areas that attract the disenfranchised, that the homeless populations know when the count will be done...and they try to find ways of avoiding being 'accosted' by those seeking to help them. They don't want to be shunted to shelters where they feel even more anxious and fearful. They may well prefer to brave it out in the minus-32-degree temperatures at the beachfront than take the offers of assistance that might come along. Therefore, the counts seem much lower in number than the actual real situation. There are proposals announced every year as to methods for giving these people a better, safer, and more promising future. The 'Street to Home' data was presented; homeless were also placed in empty buildings, a situation that has proven to be of concern for residents in the affected neighborhoods. Yet, despite the continuing attempts to deal with this metropolitan enigma, the numbers of those sans living quarters may well be on the rise. The recession continues (some would even use the 'D' word to describe the economy). Who is on the street? Those released from institutions without a direction for stability; frightened drug addicts and alcoholics; those lost between the cracks of a bureaucracy that acts too slowly to deal with those faced with foreclosures on their homes or lost jobs without other opportunities for employment. Work must be done to offer stronger attention to these residents of the city. In C.B. 13, they may be seen almost everywhere – from the Boardwalk Pavilions and sandy areas beneath the walkway; on Ocean Parkway benches; behind bank buildings and in parking lots; along Parkway hillsides; in shantytowns along the Coney Island Creek, in Dreier-Offerman Park; alongside ballfields; leaning against buildings on Brighton Beach and Stillwell Avenues; pleading for help in outdoor shopping areas; to name but a few. While there appears to be no definitive way of helping these people find a newer way in life, there is no denying that the problem exists. C.B. 13 cannot close its collective eye to this ongoing problem. There must be joint agency work, and funding, to search for better solutions to an ever-chronic problem.

CITY SERVICES – HEALTH

The connections between the future further development of the peninsula and the needs of the populace it will continue to serve is most obvious with the work of Coney Island Hospital, and the Neptune Avenue offshoot, known as the Ida Israel Center to many longtime residents. The E.R. at the Hospital is widely used, and it is obvious that the long-sought expansion of the E.R. and its services must be on the drawing board NOW. With many low-income families, and those in threat of job loss, the needs of the Hospital become more and more evident with each passing day. There are obvious, some secretive, health issues in the area that need correction. The HIV-AIDS status is one of these problems, and the word is that this seldom discussed issue may be much worse than initially believed. Then, too, there are reports indicating that prenatal and postnatal care of babies and children also is dire, with a sizeable percentage of youngsters in need of help, and large numbers of single women requiring aid and assistance during pregnancy and beyond. These problems are added to with health epidemics and threats of future problems. A great many smaller, and often very efficient, medical centers dot C.B. 13's streets, from Mermaid Avenue to the side streets of Brighton Beach. Many do superlative jobs. The public, though, may not be aware of the effectiveness of some of these operations, and jam the E.R. room of the Hospital. The need for health assistance in C.B. 13, with its high-rise buildings, its many senior nursing homes and residences, remains key to an area that also plays host to tens of thousands of people during the summer and which will, with a decade, be home to tens of thousands of more people.

CITY SERVICES – SANITATION

Any cutbacks in personnel for C.B. 13's DOS lead to dangerous situations. During the summer, the trash/garbage problems are manifold, and the men and women of the force are pressed into extraordinary and difficult work e.g. the amusement area after a warm weather weekend, the streets of Brighton Beach, and the unfenced lots where garbage is hauled and/or deposited by passersby and motorists looking for dumping sites. Then, too, important vehicles, needed on a DOS daily basis, are often borrowed by other Sanitation Garages. Such a move is counter-productive and opens the door to further health issues and the preponderance of rats in various sections of the District. As has been noted, the need for the new Sanitation Garage, which supposedly is set to handle trucks from C.B. 13 and 15, grows every year. During the winter months, trucks are left running in the extant building on Neptune Avenue so that they can be used without fear of stalling, but the practice is annoying to nearby residents and another addition to the environmental quality of life in the area.

CITY SERVICES – YOUTH AND AGED

C.B. 13's Youth Services Committee, some years ago, worked hand in glove with DYCD in helping to determine which youth groups serving the area were deserving of assistance from, the City. Board members knew the sites and visited them. Meetings were held with DYCD. Then, the entire process was dropped even after C.B. 13's role was altered to simply 'read' without discussion, the youth group applications!! How, in the world, can such a method provide the needs of a huge population of young people? The process is denounced, but it remains even sadder to see that there is little, if no, insight sought from the community in finding funds for groups. Some important operations for young people have disappeared; others have been greatly hampered by a dearth in funding (Fund raisers and other outreach operations often fail because all groups are going to the same sources in an area that lacks a heavy economic base). The Madison Square Boys and Girls Club, operating in Manhattan, literally dumped the well-run Carey Gardens Youth Center, even removing the computers and equipment. The Center is now largely the home of the well-run and productive Coney Island Prep, but there is an absence of a home for programs for other youths. The new 'Y' in Coney Island Commons is one answer, but help is needed by other operations that serve, and serve well e.g. Grace-Gravesend Youth, BNA, South Brooklyn Youth Consortium, among others. As has been noted, C.B. 13 takes care of large populations of the elderly. Nursing homes dot all part of C.B. 13; a new senior housing development will be added to the landscape of western Coney Island, and the demand for apartments was huge; Home-ridden seniors may be found throughout all of the neighborhoods, and many seniors are terrified over cut-backs to Social Security and threats to all sorts of health aids. The JCC of Greater Coney Island is on the scene, along with Salt and Sea Mission, churches, synagogues, and others. Access-a-Ride has drawn some criticism for delays; but it is vitally needed in the area

As the future of the dynamic neighborhoods of C.B. 13 gains still greater interest, EVERY AGENCY must be involved to ensure that the work is done to cover all of the prospective needs of the coming century as well as the needs of the day. The infrastructure of Coney Island MUST be addressed by DEP before any further housing, of all kinds, can be built, and before further large businesses (including hotels) should be thrust onto the scene. Flooding and backups, blocked sewers at catch basins, and other health and environmental matters must be updated. The same must be said for Brighton Beach, where aging lines must handle a great deal of demand, and where unmapped streets have little or no ability to correct existing needs.

TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION must be in the forefront of consideration for the renaissance of southern Brooklyn. Transit for localites is hampered by the curtailing of bus and train service. It is important that an

express train be created to go to and from Manhattan. At the same time, ferry service must be explored in depth, and its plus factor, considering the growth of the population of the area and the potential explosion of tourism. DOT must take greater actions regarding the ins and outs of the area, with concern over what can be done with Stillwell-Cropley-Neptune Avenues. Gridlock, in an era that draws large crowds and thus has an overhang of terrorism anxiety, can lead to enormous difficulties at crisis times of any kind. Biking lanes are a problem as well, with Neptune Ave. lanes adding to traffic confusion and leading to potential injuries and even deaths on the streets. Are they needed? Ocean Parkway's bike path runs from Prospect Park to Surf Avenue; are helter-skelter lanes elsewhere necessary? Few are seen using the Neptune and other bike lanes, and no one in the City should expect south Brooklyn residents from biking their way to the Brooklyn Bridge and to businesses in Manhattan. Total nonsense!! Plans for more and more bike lanes should be studied with more logic involved (the Prospect Park West lane has rightly been lambasted with a long bike lane only yards away throughout Prospect Park). The TRANSIT situation threatens the populace. Curtailment of bus and train service, no matter the reasons, is anti-people. Weekend halt of some service and movement of line-to-line ('I started on the F and wound up in a neighborhood I didn't know!!') confuses the many that rely on the shoreline for their summer needs.

C.B. 13 is on the cusp of a century of excitement, progress, and economic upswings, but its current status indicates that much must be done before effective and safe steps are taken into this future. Communication and correct studies must be used as all of C.B. 13 is transformed from the past into the future, while its past also must be protected as much as possible. Its shore, its Boardwalk, its shopping centers, its parks, its amusements, its current and future housing, its tourism --- nothing exists unto itself. The next decade means enormous growth in the City of New York --- all of the City of New York. C.B. 13 is NOT just a part of an 'outer borough'...it is a thriving group of neighborhoods that add to the vibrancy of a mighty metropolis that has its scores of virtues... but that also must find improved methods of handling its resultant problems.

Eddie Mark

Eddie Mark
Board Chair

Chuck Reichenthal

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District Manager