



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.nyc.gov/queenscb11

*Jerry Iannece
Chair*

*Susan Seinfeld
District Manager*

*Helen Marshall
Borough President*

*Barry Grodenchik
Deputy Borough President*

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY DISTRICT NEEDS FY 2012

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 Meadows 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. Community Board 11 is an upper middle income community of approximately 125,000 residents. The District remains a culturally and ethnically diverse community. Approximately 38% of the population is now foreign born, the majority (30%) of which is Asian.

All public transportation is provided by bus lines, from the district, terminating at the Flushing and Jamaica subway lines and the Port Washington branch of the Long Island Railroad, both of which are used primarily as commuter transportation to Manhattan. Due to MTA budget cuts two bus lines were eliminated, the Q75 and Q79. The Q79 was the only north-south bus line in the eastern part of the district and accessed the LIRR station in Little Neck.

BUILDING AND ZONING

The Department of City Planning (DCP) rezoned 350 blocks of Bayside in 2004, 135 blocks of Douglaston and Little Neck in 2006 and 50 blocks of North Flushing/Auburndale in 2009. 418 blocks of Auburndale and Hollis Hills and Oakland Gardens were rezoned in the fall of 2010. The goal of rezoning was to curtail overdevelopment and maintain the low density nature of the district. New zoning designations were also introduced for single family homes, R2A and R1-2A, to limit the size of the homes.

The Buildings Department has added more inspectors and plan examiners last year re-

sulting in more timely responses to complaints. We hope that due to budget cuts the agency will not lose these staff positions. After a period of decreased new building applications and alterations, we are now seeing increases in numbers of applications in our district, despite the continuing economic downturn.

Enforcement continues to be a problem. We continue to see owners paying fines but not complying with building regulations. We see this with businesses that operate without valid Certificate of Occupancies and in cases where BSA variances are required, owners have let them expire without impunity. More must be done legislatively to strengthen enforcement. Legislation has been introduced to allow the Commissioner to 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.

Economic Development:

Bell Boulevard, between Northern Boulevard and 35 Avenue, is a Business Improvement District (BID). The BID helps fund improvements along the Bell Boulevard commercial strip. Bell Boulevard increasingly has more restaurants and bars and less and less small retail stores due to high rents and competition with large discount stores. This is a concern here as well as in parts of Douglaston.

Fairway Markets is leasing space at the Douglaston Shopping Center where Waldbaum’s vacated the space. The building will be expanded and a new grocery store will be welcome by local area residents.

Two hotels and 18 two-family homes are being built along the Long Island Expressway service road near Utopia Parkway. This project has caused great concern to residents. Due to delays in the certification of the Auburndale rezoning plan, the area was downzoned to a C1-2 district, but not before the owner had been able to lay foundations. The impact on traffic and congestion will be formidable.

Last year, Leviton, a large manufacturer and distributor of electrical supplies, vacated their offices on Little Neck Parkway, CB 11’s only M1-1 zone. We are waiting for information on its future use.

More commercial buildings have been developed along Northern Boulevard. Unfortunately, due to the economy many of the spaces remain empty.

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. These highly performing schools attract many students who apply to attend. Overcrowding is severe in all three schools with populations of 3590, 3841 and 4416, respectively, operating at 200% of capacity. Both Cardozo HS and Bayside HS have transportable classrooms, but permanent building space should be added to the schools or space must be leased

to relieve overcrowding. We have brought this concern to the attention of the Chancellor and the Mayor.

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 the Kupferberg Holocaust and Research Center.

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 elected 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 reconstruction of the pumping station that will bring combined sewer overflows to the Tallman Island water treatment plant. DEP is also renovating the Douglaston pumping station at the LIE and Cross Island Parkway. Wetland mitigation, known as Phase III, for the Oakland Ravine Area and Oakland Lake by the Department of Environmental Protection with the Department of Parks and Recreation has also started and will make needed improvements around the lake.

Street cave-ins and depressions account for one of the most frequent service complaints to DEP. We are pleased that several trench restoration projects have been completed. The time frame from identification of necessary projects and design and funding takes an excessive number of years.

Throughout the remainder of the District, there are areas of intersection flooding. Catch basin problems always account for the one of the 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 which fail over time. The only solution is the funding of combined sewer projects. There are five projects in design for combined sewers and sanitary sewer installation. Funding for these projects cannot be delayed.

A major concern is the poor storm water drainage on 223rd Street between 37th Avenue and 42nd Avenue. Presently, storm water runs along a ditch along the eastern edge of 223rd 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 fall, Board 11 sponsored their annual 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. The DOH sprayed the Alley Pond Marsh areas, again this year, due to the

detection of West Nile virus infected mosquitoes. Catch basins throughout the city were treated with larvacides.

LIBRARIES

A new library building or expansion is a necessity for 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. The circulation in this library with only 5,700 sq. ft. of space, is far greater than other libraries half the size.

PARKS & RECREATION

CB 11 is fortunate to have approximately 800 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. Oakland Lake is a natural spring fed lake and hosts a large population of turtles, geese and ducks. The Alley Pond Environmental Center, located at the base of Little Neck Bay, is an education center focusing on the preservation of the wetlands areas.

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 was reduced to seven years but now due to budget reductions the cycle is likely to decrease again. The City is planting more trees under the Million Trees NYC project but no money has been added to the budget to to prune the existing and additional trees.. Public safety is being compromised by ignoring hazards caused by trees when not pruned regularly. In the summer of 2010, two young men were severely injured when a large branch fell from a tree in Little Neck, not two weeks later, another branch of the same tree fell during a storm. The tree damage in Little Neck and Douglaston, highlighted the problems when the Dept. of Parks fails to prune trees and remove dead trees.

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.

The Parks Department needs funding in order to improve the walkways around Oakland Lake that are always wet due to the natural spring source that feeds the lake. The Borough President has provided some funds for the repair of a section of the walkway and reconstruction of stairways leading to the lake from Springfield Boulevard.

Several playgrounds adjacent to schools need various improvements: fences, safety surfaces and handball court rehabilitation including Francis Lewis Playground and Seven Gables Playground. The Challenge Playground at PS 177 needs more extensive work,

including the removal of an old wading pool and plumbing work. Ball fields in Alley Pond Park, John Golden Park and Underhill 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. The Alley Pond Environmental Center building, which was damaged during the Alley Creek project, has obtained funding to renovate and expand the existing building. This wonderful center educates numerous school children and adults throughout the year.

This park district has insufficient personnel and vehicles to clean and maintain our parks. With over 800 acres of park and Greenstreets, more park workers are needed just to maintain Alley Pond Park and additional staff is needed for playground and Greenstreet maintenance.

The acquisition of designated lots in Alley Park and Udalls Cove Ravine continue to take place. There are still eight more lots that need to be acquired because of the potential for development, therefore, the City must continue to dedicate funds for further acquisition.

POLICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

The 111th Precinct, which is located on Northern Boulevard in Bayside, patrols the 9.4 miles of Community Board 11. They do this with minimal staff levels and not as adequate as desired. This precinct has seen a decrease in crime and is a safe, low crime area, however, burglaries of private residential homes and auto thefts remain the predominant and troubling crime statistic in the precinct. Youth on youth crime continues to be a problem, especially the stealing of expensive electronic devices and cell phones. There is a concern with any 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 interior of the precinct house is showing its age and is in desperate need of renovation and remodeling. Money has been in the budget for renovations of the front desk but the work has not started. We also support funding for the replacement of aged out vehicles.

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. This year, due to budget cuts, that number is in jeopardy. 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.

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 runs the Deepdale NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community) senior program. S.N.A.P., Services Now for Adult Persons provides case management in CB 11 offering assistance to coordinate necessary services such as meals on wheels, transportation and health services.

TRANSPORTATION

Curb repair and replacement must be funded. 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 only curbs that have been installed are in conjunction with sidewalk projects. Center island malls on Union Turnpike and on 42 Avenue desperately need curbs. Metal rebar sticks out of the curbs on Union Turnpike causing a serious safety hazard.

In Douglas Manor, a capital project, in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Protection, has been funded to reconstruct a section of Shore Road that is collapsing. The work should start in 2011.

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 2012.

State Senator Frank Padavan and Congressman Gary Ackerman 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. MTA/LIRR and NYCDOT are starting work on this project.

Traffic has become a serious problem. There are more cars and trucks on our roads. With increased building development and with an ever increasing population, neighborhoods are starting to experience more local traffic congestion. We receive many requests for various traffic safety measures, stop signs, speed humps, traffic signals etc. 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. The areas of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston and Little Neck adjacent to the Long Island Railroad stations are also congested during commuting hours and parking is at a premium.

Jerry Iannece

Jerry Iannece
Chair

Susan Seinfeld

Susan Seinfeld
District Manager