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**THE CITY OF NEW YORK
COMMUNITY BOARD No. 11**

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BROOKLYN COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 11 DISTRICT NEEDS

STATEMENT

On September 11, 2001, our city and our country changed. We no longer take for granted the freedom to which Americans are accustomed. We also have found new respect and admiration for those who protect our city and its residents, with no regard to their own personal safety.

Our city is now faced with the fiscal responsibility and burden of providing funding for anti-terrorism initiatives. Nationally our economy is slowing and the city's economic future is uncertain. Mayor Bloomberg and the City Council must make tough decisions while recognizing the need to provide quality services to our residents.

Community Board 11 is prepared to assist in cooperating with this administration and is prepared to do whatever is necessary to make our city a better place to live and raise our families.

INTRODUCTION

Community Board 11 encompasses four major neighborhoods: Bensonhurst, Mapleton, Bath Beach, and Gravesend. The north, south, east, west limits of 61st Street, Gravesend Bay, 26th Avenue, Avenue U, McDonald Avenue and 14th Avenue bind the Board. The ethnic make up is approximately 65% White, .4% Black, 23% Asian, and 8% Hispanic. The population is by no means static, as evidence by the ongoing settlement of Asian and Russian Jewish immigrant families as well as people from other sections of Brooklyn. The economic level of the population is best defined as middle class with a considerable blue-collar emphasis.

The housing stock consists of one and two family homes with pockets of six story buildings of 50-60 units; four and five story walkups of 16 to 40 units built in the late 1920's.

In 1652, Cornelius van Werkoven, a representative of the Dutch West India Company, purchased from Indians the land that would become the town of New Utrecht. In 1783, with the end of British occupation, residents erected a "liberty pole" in front of the New Utrecht Reformed Church, which attained landmark status on January 13, 1998.

Along with the church, the Landmarks Preservation Committee designated the New Utrecht Reformed Dutch Cemetery landmark status. The cemetery located at 8401 16th Avenue established around 1653, before the church was organized, is an important reminder of the towns' earliest period of development. The cemetery was centrally located on the villages' "Main Street", now 84th Street. It encompasses approximately one acre of land and contains gravestones and memorials from the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. It includes the plots of the earliest New Utrecht families, including the Van Brunts, Cortelyous, Woenhovens, Cropseys and Bennetts, a communal unmarked grave of American Revolutionary War Soldiers, and an area near the intersection of today's 16th Avenue and 84th Street, where church members of African descent were buried. In the past three centuries close to 1,300 people have been interred in this cemetery.

By the late 1870's many wealthy families had begun to build summer homes and yacht basins in the wooded farming community.

Bensonhurst gets its name from the Benson family farm, which had been part of the cabbage-end and Potato-growing Township of New Utrecht, and in 1890, was sold, in 20-by-100 foot lots.

For a while, it looked like Bensonhurst might become a second Coney Island. An amusement park called Bensonhurst-by-the-sea, with racetracks and luxury hotels, was built in the late 1890's, but it never succeeded, and today none of the grandeur of the seaside resort remains.

In 1915, with the completion of the Fourth Avenue subway line, many Italian and Jewish immigrants from Manhattan's lower east side moved to Bensonhurst and began building homes that fanned out from the liberty pole. Many descendants of the neighborhoods' original families still remain. Today, along with that Italian majority, a small Jewish community remains in Bensonhurst, as well as some Irish and Polish families. More recent arrivals have come from Puerto Rico, Mexico, China, Taiwan, Viet Nam, Korea, Russia and Pakistan.

During the construction of the Belt Parkway in the late 1930's, Community Board 11's shoreline from Bay Parkway north to Bay Ridge was vertically bulkheaded which provided a waterfront promenade but inhibited direct access to the water. The Belt moved inland from Bay Parkway to Coney Island Boat Basin leaving a large unbulkheaded area on its' waterside.

The construction of the Belt Parkway led to filling in the lowland areas of Gravesend and Bath Beach. Both communities subsequently realized substantial increases in population.

Commercially, Community Board 11 is well served, as is all southern Brooklyn by 86th Street. This comparative commercial shopping street running from 14th Avenue to 25th Avenue is extremely viable and doing well. There are virtually no vacancies and rents are high. Additional strong commercial strips serving the Board are 18th Ave, Bay Parkway, New Utrecht and Avenue "U", and Bath Avenue.

The Capital and Expense Budget priorities submitted for Fiscal Year 2009, were carefully targeted to meet the needs of the entire community. Planning for Fiscal Year 2010 will continue the Board's efforts to get adequate governmental assistance for all of Community Board 11.

PARKS

During the past fiscal years, we saw the renovation of four of our local parks, Seth Low Park, the 17th Avenue Park at Shore Parkway, Milestone Park which includes Garibaldi Park and Satellite Park at New Utrecht Avenue and 71st Street. These four rehabilitation projects have enhanced our community significantly. Residents of our neighborhoods utilize the parks in great numbers. There is a tremendous need for additional personnel to maintain our parks.

The Board would like to see the reconstruction of Bensonhurst Park with the inclusion of a band shell. Our community would like to see an increase in quality entertainment. A band shell will provide the proper facility for such functions.

One problem issue for the Board has been in the area of forestry. While Community Board 11 this year will have many trees planted, there still exists a 3-4 year waiting time to get trees pruned.

Community Board 11 supports the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Shore Parkway Promenade from Bay 8th Street to Bay Parkway. Residents and visitors alike, who enjoy bike riding, jogging, fishing, and walking while taking-in the breathtaking views of our harbor, utilize this waterfront property. Capital

improvements of the promenade are needed to make it a safe enjoyable destination for all.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

The Department of Transportation has prioritized many streets in our district, which are in need of capital improvements. High priority should be given to the inclusion of the streets surveyed by this department.

Provisions should be made for a milling machine as standard equipment to eliminate ponding and flooding conditions in our district.

Community Board 11 opposes the proposed "Safety Initiative" on 86th Street. The Department of Transportation needs to address pedestrian safety on Bay Parkway from Shore Parkway to 61st Street, in order to prevent any additional fatalities.

As our priorities reflect, we would like to see high-density lighting installed on New Utrecht Avenue between 61st Street and 86th Street. This commercial area is the only corridor located under the elevated train that does not have these lights.

DEP

Planning, including storm, sanitary and drinking water data would be useful for the waterfront area running east off Bay Parkway. This is needed to determine the extent of development the area can reasonably sustain.

SANITATION

There is a need for additional personnel and equipment, specifically to handle cleaning activities. Too often on alternate side of the street sweeping days, no sweeper appears due to mechanical failure.

There is also a need for an increase in Sanitation Police to attack the illegal dumping in vacant lots in our Board area, which results in rat and mice infestation. This is quite detrimental to the quality of life of residents living near these abandoned properties.

POLICE

Over a period of years, the manpower level at the 62nd Precinct has increased. However, a need for increased manpower still exists to a level where the patrol services can adequately handle emergency calls. Last year our precinct handled 50,458 calls for service and the number of calls is on the rise. It should be pointed out that at times only three radio cars patrol our approximately one hundred miles of streets and 149,000 people.

Our community has a large population of day laborers that congregate in front of residential, as well as commercial locations. Recently the Mayor's Office appointed the New York City Temporary Commission on Day Laborer Job Centers. The Commission is examining the feasibility of fostering public/private partnerships to develop and implement job centers for day laborers in New York City. After a process of study and review, the Commission will produce a report on its findings and recommendations on whether such initiatives are feasible.

If our community is chosen as one of the locations for the job centers, how will the Police Department keep the day laborers off the street and into the job centers?

Over the last several years, area residents have ongoing concerns regarding the proliferation of large tractor-trailers travelling throughout the community. While legislation has been enacted to increase the penalties to truckers that are off the designated truck route, additional enforcement personnel are needed to ensure compliance.

There is also a need for additional traffic agents to address double parking conditions, which exists on many of the bus routes.

FIRE

Community Board 11 supports upgrades to the communication equipment utilized by the Fire Department to ensure the safety of its members.

We further ask that no cuts be made to the Fire Department's budget.

HOUSING PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Through a state grant, the Bensonhurst Redevelopment Corporation was set up in our community. This group has been assisting property owners in

obtaining the necessary funds to rehabilitate and modernize their buildings. It is vital that adequate assistance be given to the Board through programs administered by the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, particularly Article 8A loans and increase community development funding for housing programs. Additionally, the Department should work closely with the housing groups in our area.

HEALTH & HOSPITALS CORPORATION

Community Board 11 is in need of an ambulatory health care facility. Long distances hamper the elderly population from easy access to Coney Island Hospital or Maimonides Hospital. It is vital that health care be made more accessible by having an outreach clinic in Community Board 11.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The Child Health Care Station at 8658 16th Avenue has been closed. Families from our area must go to Luna Park for "well baby care".

The Health Department must open a new facility in our area to accommodate the needs of the families in our area.

HUMAN SERVICES

While the need for health and day care services in this area have been well documented by our budget requests, services to prevent child abuse and neglect are emerging, as a priority need. Expansions of services to older adults prevent unwarranted evictions and other housing problems are also a need.

Community Board 11 supports programs for pregnant and parenting teens. Programs such as these have been introduced recently and are needed in this area.

YOUTH SERVICES

Community Board 11 supports a variety of activities for youth, including community based counseling, recreational, tutorial, and cultural programs.

However, the existing needs in our community far exceed the services available. Due to the many problems faced by youth and the lower socioeconomic character of our community today, increased services are needed in all of the above-mentioned categories.

Additional needs, which must be addressed, are free/low cost day care programs, job opportunities for youths, summer programs/day camps at a

reasonable cost, and, due to the growing immigrant population, special programs for immigrant youth.

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

There is a need for an increase in the number of inspectors.

There has been an increase in the number of illegal activities, such as non-approved construction, alterations and zoning violations and the lack of inspectors leads to a slow response time in addressing these illegal activities. In addition, once a violation is written, there is little follow-up on re-inspection and enforcement.

Community Board 11 believes that the Buildings Department needs to be given increased enforcement authority. For example, in our Community District there are many illegal curb cuts, which have received multiple violations. We believe that the Buildings Department should be permitted to make the necessary repairs to restore these illegal cuts and bill the property owner(s).

Changes need to be made regarding the issuance of building permits. Property owners with serious Building Department violations should not be issued any new building permits without first resolving the outstanding violations.

CITY PLANNING

City Planning recently completed the re-zoning of most of the R6 designation within Community Board 11. We would like City Planning to study the remaining portion of Bensonhurst for possible re-zoning.

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION & TECHNOLOGY

Community Board 11 supports and lauds the newly implemented 311 system. A mechanism needs to be incorporated that will enable Community Boards to obtain monthly reports on-line regarding the complaints received and their dispositions.

TAXI & LIMOUSINE COMMISSION

Over the past several years communities like ours have seen an increase in the number of livery base stations. Many of these locations are in business districts. Drivers often are parking in metered spaces that are valuable to area small businesses. Increased enforcement agents must be hired to address this problem, in order to monitor that the off-street parking rules are being adhered to.


CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Community Board 11 supports the implementation of a more user friendly system for both constituents and city agencies when dealing with the Department of Consumer Affairs.

Although there is a state law, which provides that gas stations must charge self -service prices to handicapped drivers. In NYC, gas station operators often do not comply with this law. The Department of Consumer Affairs must provide regulations outlining the gas stations responsibility, as well as, making sure that the appropriate signs are posted.

Respectfully submitted,


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