

Community Board 1
March 18, 2014

(Recorder not available for item 1 on agenda).

Mr. Vinicio Donato, Chairperson of Community Board 1, commenced at 7:00 p.m. by introducing public hearing item from the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA), Elizabeth Erion read Cal. # 28-12-BZ – Premises 13-15 37th Avenue. A revised application to legalize the existing attended accessory off-street rooftop parking and to permit a reduction in the required accessory off-street parking for office. Michael Narmias, represented the applicant and spoke of request to reduce the required number of off-street parking spaces for 17 vehicles. Discussion followed regarding the surrounding area and the impact the variance would have on it. Concusses was there would not be any negative impact.

Next item #Cal. # 35-14-BZ – Premises 40-06 Astoria Blvd. An application to permit the establishment of a physical culture (gym) on the second floor of the above noted address. Mr. Narmias, also represented the applicant, noted the gym will be used as a kickboxing instruction.

Mr. Piazza asked if they will be offering classes for different age groups. Mr. Perrino stated that their classes are for all age groups, but they will be offering pre-teen classes between the age of 10 and 14. Mr. Kevin Mullarkey asked if the facility is handicapped accessible. Mr. Perrino replied “Yes”. Ms. Evie Hantzopoulos asked if they have classes on the weekends. Mr. Perrino stated that they have two classes on the Saturday and on Sunday. Mr. Donato asked if there was anyone in the audience who wanted to speak for or against this application. There was no one. No further discussion. Item closed.

Mr. Joseph Risi, Chair of the Consumer Affairs Committee, read the public hearing item from the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) # 2342-2014-ASWC – Premises 28-11 23rd Avenue. (Telly’s Taverna). An application to establish an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 9 tables and 18 seats. Ms. Diana Loisille, owner, stated that she is asking for an unenclosed sidewalk café license for 9 tables and 18 seats, which they had before. She stated that they had to re-file since the operation is under new management. Mr. Risi asked how long they had an unenclosed sidewalk café under a different entity. Ms. Loisille replied “27 years”. Mr. Risi asked when she purchased the establishment. Ms. Loisille replied “May 2013”. Mr. Risi asked what type of restaurant do they operate and what the hours of operations were. Ms. Loisille stated that they operate a tavern and the hours of operation are from 11am to 12 am and on Friday and Saturday until 1am. Mr. Risi asked what at the proposed hours of operation for the sidewalk café. Ms. Loisille replied “the same”. Mr. Risi asked if they serve alcohol and do they plan on serving food and alcoholic beverages outside on the sidewalk. Ms. Loisille stated that they do serve alcohol and will be serving food and alcohol outside on the sidewalk. Mr. Risi asked if she was aware of the smoking and noise restriction for the sidewalk café. Mr. Loisille replied “Yes”. Mr. Risi asked if they had any residential apartments above the premises. Ms. Loisille replied “No”. Mr. Donato asked if any Board members had any questions for the applicant. Ms. Evie Hantzopoulos asked if the plans were the same as before with the same amount of tables. Ms. Loisille stated that they made the plans smaller with some alterations and it was the same plans that were used for the last renewal, but it is not what they started with. Mr. Risi asked what the difference is with the entity you presently have as opposed to the previous entity. Ms. Loisille stated that it used to be her mother’s restaurant and now it is hers. Mr. Risi asked if her mother’s restaurant (Telly’s Taverna) received any violations in connection with the sidewalk café. Ms. Loisille replied “No”. Mr. Donato stated that he stopped by and noted signs in the street saying reserved parking or valet parking. He has complained and they signs were removed. Ms. Loisille stated that the complaint that they heard of was that they were putting cones not the signs. Mr. Donato asked that she does not do that since the street belongs to everyone in the City. The Board reported two other restaurants doing the same thing. Ms. Loisille asked if she could put the sign outside. Ms. Lucille Hartmann, District Manager, stated technically no, A-frames are allowed on the sidewalk. Ms. Rosemarie Poveromo asked for clarification about the A-frame signs, since she has seen them in many places. Ms. Hartmann stated that the A-frame sign themselves are illegal and there is no permit to obtain for the A-frame sign. Mr. Donato asked if there was anyone in the audience who wanted to speak for or against the application. Seeing no one. No further discussion. Item closed.

VOTING:

Ms Erion reiterated public hearing item from the BSA Cal. # 28-12-BZ – Premises 13-15 37th Avenue. A revised application to legalize the existing attended accessory off-street rooftop parking and to permit a reduction in the required accessory off-street parking for office. Ms. Erion said the committee met and recommends approval of the application, seconded by Ms. Mary O’Hara. Mr. Donato asked if there were any questions. . No further discussion. Mr. Donato called for a vote. Motion called and carried unanimously with 1 Against.

Next item Cal. # 35-14-BZ – Premises 40-06 Astoria Blvd. An application to permit the establishment of a physical culture (gym) on the second floor of the above noted address. Ms. Erion said the committee met and recommends approval of the application, seconded by Ms. Mary O’Hara. Mr. Donato asked if there were any questions. . No further discussion. Mr. Donato called for a vote. Motion called and carried unanimously with 1 Abstention for cause.

Mr. Risi reiterated public hearing item from DCA #2342-2014-ASWC – Premises 28-11 23rd Avenue. (Telly’s Taverna). An application to establish an Unenclosed Sidewalk Café with 9 tables and 18 seats. Mr. Risi stated that the committee met and the applicant has agreed to reduce the application to 6 tables and 12 seats by the removal of 3 tables and 2 seats from the outside of the sidewalk café plan. The committee is recommends the approval of the applicant subject to the applicant execution of the amendment to the application of 6 tables and 12 chairs, seconded by Mr. Ed Babor. There was no further discussion. Mr. Donato called for a vote.

GENERAL DISCUSSION:

Ms. Susan Jacob, Mayor’s office to Combat Violence, Director of Programs and Training, she stated she is present to inform the Board about the Mayor’s initiative to combat domestic violence. These centers provide free

confidential assistance with criminal justice, civil legal, and social services all in one location for victims of domestic violence, elder abuse, and sex trafficking. Anyone can walk-in from 9am to 5pm, Monday through Friday. They are located at 126-02 82nd Avenue, Kew Gardens, right next to the criminal court building. You can reach them at 718-575-4545. She brought flyers and asked that everyone spread the word about these services at the Family Justice Center.

Ms. Sharon Pope, public member of CB8M, she knows the Board member's commitment to the community and she appreciates all the activities of the Community Boards. She is representing Bike New York and the 5 Borough Bike Tour. From that point forward that is how she been biking. The 5 Borough Bike Tour will be taking place on May 4th and has 32,000 entries so far. They have several rest and water stations throughout the bike tour. She brought flyers of the event and asked if anyone would be interested in volunteering for the event. She could be reached by the information on the flyer.

Mr. Todd Lloyd and his land lady Ms. DiSanvirio, stated that a new establishment opened up on Steinway, 32-72 Steinway, and it's called Sunset Lounge which sounds more like a club. The establishment is basically in their backyard. They have call 311 due to the noise from this establishment. People can't sleep and neighbors can't put their children to sleep. This has become a huge issue and they have spoke to the owner about the noise. They have seen how the space was created by using plastic as a sound barrier. The establishment was not built correctly to handle loud music and the neighborhood is paying the price for it. Not everyone is aware of this problem because the establishment is not open consistently and now they are thinking of opening up a roof top lounge. Portions of the establishment are open to the air as well as being a duplex. They had some people go into the establishment and the owners openly talked about the club that is going to be on the roof. The noise is an issue now and they can't imagine what it would be like with a rooftop club. This is a problem that will only get worse. Mr. Donato asked if they have been in touch with the local 114th Pct. Mr. Lloyd stated that 311 informed him that the calls go straight there. When the police come to the front of the establishment on Steinway you can't hear the music, you have to go to 38th Street where is sounds like a block party going on. The sound is coming through back of the building. Mr. Donato stated that there is a representative from the 114th Pct. who is taking notes and The Board could send someone to test the loudness of the music. Mr. Lloyd stated that when the lounge turned down the music you then heard the 200 voices coming from the lounge. Mr. Donato asked him to call the Board and speak with Lucille and will meet with you. Ms. Hartmann stated that they can have someone from DEP come out to their homes to test the sound level. Mr. Piazza asked if the establishment has a cabaret license. Mr. Donato stated as far as the Board knows they do not have a cabaret license.

Mr. Lanzone stated that he would like to find out if the Board is aware of a rat problem where he lives, what can be done about it and what the Board can do. The location is Newtown Road and 41st Street, which is a block from Steinway and 30th Avenue. He complained last summer after seeing the rat himself, more than one in that area. It seems to have become a dumping area. He was told that new restaurants are open in the area. His first complaint was in January. Mr. Donato asked if he ever complained to the Board of Health. Mr. Lanzone stated that he called 311. Mr. Donato asked him to give the Board a call and speak with Ms. Hartmann.

Mr. Ronnie K. Minor, community advocate, stated that he is the community advocate for Reality House Inc., which is a non-profit organization that has been around since 1967 and originated in Harlem and moved to Astoria in 1997. They now have 30 state of the art apartments for veterans and outpatient chemical dependency program VA services for veterans and their families and for the community. He decided to side with Reality House because they had a social justice problem. We had nothing in the neighborhood that could give back to the community and serve the community at the same time. So we are now serving veterans and he supports Reality House. He noticed that on the agenda there were items on traffic and safety, which are all great things that are needed in the community. He also filed a complaint with DOT regarding the need for a traffic light or some type of bump on 27th Avenue and 4th Avenue where Goodwill is and all the handicapped people are housed. This is on the agenda and is being looked into. He added that housing is imperative, as per the NYS Housing Authority that there are about 167,500 people on the waiting list for housing and HUD has allocated \$21 Million to city housing throughout the country. They are responsible to ensure that our veterans have housing. Reality House is looking to build additional space to assist veterans when they come home.

Mr. Michael Mulian, resident, stated that he is a discharged US Marine and is currently working with the Veteran Service Center at LaGuardia Community College in order to obtain his degree. The Veteran Service Center has implemented programs to assist veterans in our neighborhood called the Veterans Upward Bound Program. This program assists in getting veterans back into society, college and getting the benefits that they need coming back from active duty. They have recently created a training program with the local cable company and provide placement within the cable company. All veterans are welcomed to find out more. They can contact Vicki Petals at 718-482-5386 at the Veterans Service Center.

Mr. Tex Crushiak, resident, stated that he has been out of town and recently came back to find that the DOT has changed the signs on Shore Blvd. They were changed in January 2014. He thanked everyone for their support and everyone in the neighborhood is a lot happier.

BUSINESS SESSION:

Mr. Donato motioned to accept the minutes of February's Board meeting. Motion seconded by Mr. Prentzas. Motion called and carried unanimously.

Mr. Donato reported that next month's Board meeting will be held on April 8th due to religious observances.

Ms. Lucille Hartmann, District Manager, reported that in everyone's folder there is a flyer on the Five Borough Bike Tour scheduled for May 4th and sponsors are looking for volunteers to staff the rest areas and water stations. The

Astoria Homeowners Association is sponsoring a Defensive Driving Course on Saturday, March 29, 2014. Flyers are in folders and will cost \$40. In addition, the application for summer youth employment are now available. The deadline for submission is April 25, 2014. If you know of anyone interested the contact information is on the enclosed flyer. There will also be a Town Hall meeting on Pedestrian Safety on Wednesday, March 19, 2014 at the Bohemian Hall from 7-9pm, flyers are enclosed. They will be discussing vision zero.

Ms. Elizabeth Erion, Chair of Zoning & Variance Committee, reported that there will be a meeting on March 19, 2014 at the Board office at 7pm. The meeting will be to get information from the developers and representatives of Astoria Cove Project. This is going to be a very significant project that they will be focusing on in order to be certified by next month. We will be dealing with many actions on this proposal. There are about 1,700 dwelling units along 9th Street, the northern part of the peninsula. We will be looking at text amendments for portable housing and exclusive housing. There will be changes to text amendment for the supermarket at that location, rezoning the area to three different zones, de-mapping of streets, large scale special permits, waterfront permits, and modification to public access. There will be a lot to review and she recommends that if your committee is involved in any of these issues please attend this meeting to provide input for this project. There is another meeting on March 31, 2014 to review another large scale project, this is probably the 3rd or 4th time we have been given a presentation from the Quadriad Group, who is proposing to develop the corners of 35th Avenue and Steinway Street. At this time we do not know the status of the proposal and they have come back to us a couple of time with changes. We will see what is being proposed at this upcoming meeting. This is another large scale project and everyone's participation is really appreciated. Comments, ideas and responses are really needed.

Mr. Joseph Risi, Chair of Consumer Affairs Committee, reported that the committee met with several applicants regarding on premise liquor licenses. He introduced Detective Edwin Negron of the 114th Pct. Detective Negron has comments regarding the premise at 32-02 Broadway Realty Corp who seeking renewal of their license d/b/a Ethos Café and Ice Lounge at 33-04 Broadway. Detective Negron stated that about a year and half ago the 114th Pct and CB1 teamed up and started having extensive information sharing meetings regarding their problematic license premises so that when their license came up for renewal we were able to get an idea if they were deserving of continuing business in this community. So far he thinks that it has been doing well in that we can send educated recommendations to the State Liquor Authority (SLA). Whenever there are reports made from 911 or 311 it is directed to his office. They send out their special operations unit who work from 8pm to 4am. One their main objective is to target problematic licensed premises. In this case ICE is a problematic and well known by the 114 Pct. From January 1, 2013 to March 3, 2014 which when a report was submitted to CB, they experience 15 reports of crime all ranging from violence to property crimes (stolen purses, stolen bags, people getting punched in the face). That is what they mainly saw from the club, they issued 40 C-Summonses during that 15 month period. This is a lot and the 114th Pct. is dedicating a lot of resources to this one club. A year ago the figure was just under 300 establishments operating near the 114Pct. and every year it has been increasing. He feels that this is something that should be paid attention to. The 114Pct. can't revoke liquor license just like that, there is a procedure and it is difficult to have these places shut down for 3 nights, let alone for good. A very basic way of looking at it is the SLA looks at how many serious crimes have occurred in a year period. Serious crime in their eyes would be prostitution, drugs, and after hours sales. The summonses that the 114Pct. issued may be serious but not all were issued in one year. There were 12 unreasonable noise summonses, no security guards license, and 1 sale of alcohol to a minor. In the 114Pct. eyes they are a very problematic premise, but they are not able to shut them down. This report hopefully gives the CB1 a good idea of what is happening, and it would be very, very helpful if they did not operate with a liquor license. Mr. Risi stated that the Consumer Affairs committee met with the applicant in connection with a renewal application for a liquor license and the 114Pct submitted a premises report. They received several complaints from members of the community who are opposing the renewal of this license. The committee after due consideration and deliberation is recommending that the SLA be advised that CB1 not only has reservations but objects to the renewal of the on premise liquor license as this establishment has severely, adversely affected our community which is made evident by the 114Pct. premise report for the period of 1/1/13 to 3/3/14. The committee relies on the recommendation of the 114Pct. which has in this instance advised us that the reissuance of this license would not be in the best interest of our community and the committee concurs with this conclusion and recommends that the SLA be inform of our adverse recommendation, seconded by Mr. Robert Piazza. Mr. Donato called for a vote. Motion called and carried. Mr. Donato stated that the Board will send a strong letter. Mr. Risi stated that this may be new to the Board, but starting in April CB1 will be sending out a questionnaire to all new applicants for liquor licenses as well as renewal applicants. In addition to the questionnaire that will be sent out, we will be asking each applicant to post in their front window information that they applying for a new license or for a renewal license. If any member of the community has any objection or any support of the license they can contact CB1 of their objections or support of the applications. Mr. Donato asked for all in favor of the changes to raise their hands. Motion called and carried.

Ms. Joan Asselin, Chair of Environmental Protection Committee, asked how many people received a letter about purchasing insurance for your water that comes into your home and how many are going to purchase this insurance. A few people stated that they purchased the insurance for the water and sewers lines leading to their homes. She is not sure how reliable this insurance company is. Ms. Hartmann stated that Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is sanctioning this. Ms. Asselin stated that they want to charge each month. Mr. Jerry Caliendo stated that we should ask someone from DEP come and explain this. He feels that it is a scam. He does not believe that DEP is selling insurance. He has called and no one picks up the phone. Ms. Hartmann stated that DEP is not selling the insurance but is sanctioning the sale of the insurance. A Board member stated that if you go to NYC.gov/DEP, all the information about that company is on that website, even how many people signed up for it.

Ms. Mary O'Hara, Chair of Housing Committee, reported that in everyone's folders there is a letter from Congressman Crowley regarding the insurance companies increasing insurance rates for private homes, rental buildings, and car insurance base on the crime statistic that includes Rikers Island. She asked everyone to take a moment to look at it.

Mr. Antonio Meloni, Chair of Public Safety Committee, reported that there has been a rash of burglaries in the area and has been in the news. They are not sure if it is one person or a group of people, but they are entering the apartments by going to the roof and coming down the fire escape into open windows. A lot of people tend to keep their window unlocked and they are making it easy for the criminals to get into their apartments. If you know anyone who lives in a row house or an apartment and has a fire escape please tell them to lock their windows and secure their A/C. Especially now that Spring is coming. The 114Pct. has increased and assigned specialized units into the area due to the increase in break ins on Steinway, Newtown, and 34th Avenue. The 114 Pct. also provides free security assessment of your home.

Mr. Robert Piazza, Chair of Transportation Committee, reported that in everyone's folder there is the Transportation Committee Recommendation based on with the Department of Design and Construction and with the Department of Transportation Monday, March 10th regarding the necking out of the bus stop along 31st Street at Broadway, 36th and 39th Avenue. The committee approved the plan with the following recommendations:

- Signs must be installed, sufficiently in advance on intersecting Avenues., indicating the height restrictions, under the "El" structure for truckers. These signs should be placed from Northern to Ditmars Boulevards.
- Move the current traffic lights under the El, facing north and south, on 31 St. back one pillar length. This change will facilitate safe turns from the avenues onto 31st St. for emergency vehicles, trucks and buses, as well as, create improved pedestrian safety.
- The Walk/Don't Walk signs at the corners, on the sidewalk, must remain

Mr. Piazza motioned for an approval, seconded by Ms O'Hara. Mr. Donato asked all those in favor of the recommendation to raise their hands. Motion called and carried unanimously.

Mr. Jose Batista, Chair of Youth Committee, reported that you can go online to sign up for the summer youth employment program. It is available online. The applications will be taken up to April 25th.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS:

Ms. Rosemarie Poveromo stated that the UCCA will be holding a Town Hall meeting with Assemblymember Aravella Simotas to address "Community Concerns" on Thursday, April 3rd from 6:30pm to 9:30pm at the Museum of the Moving Image, 36-01 35th Avenue. The panel will consist of Agency Commissioners and Elected Officials and hopefully there will be able to answer questions and address issues or concerns that anyone may have. All are welcomed. Door open at 6pm and refreshment will be served. Meeting will start at 7pm.

Mr. Rudolph Sarchese stated that they are offering Defensive Drivers Course that is sponsored by Astoria Heights Homeowners on March 29, 2014 at 45-05 Ditmars Blvd. The course is \$40 and it is for the 6 hour course, 7 hours with lunch. It starts at 9:30am.

Mr. Gus Prentzas requested that a letter be sent to the MTA regarding a study for Ditmars Blvd train stop for handicapped accessibility for seniors and handicapped to access the train. Mr. Donato stated that the MTA has already chosen Hoyt Avenue for handicapped accessibility. This was in the budget. Mr. Kevin Mullarkey stated that they did not have enough in the budget to do Ditmars Blvd that is why they are doing Hoyt Avenue. Mr. Donato stated that they been asking for handicapped accessibility for the train.

Ms. Mary O'Hara stated that she wanted to make Detective Negrón aware that from 51st to 61st Street there were a number of muggings coming from the Northern Blvd Independent line station going up toward 28th Avenue. Both male and female muggings and it seems that they have found a quite little corner in Queens. Even a punching incident has occurred. Detective Negrón asked if that was reported to the 114th Pct. Ms. O'Hara stated she assumed that they were reported. She added that on January 24, 2012 she reported that there was a need for a cruiser in that area. She herself has walked in that area and there is a need for a cruiser since all the stores are closed.

There was no further business before the Board Ms. Erion motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Nieves-Blas. Motion called and carried unanimously.