



Queens Community Board 13

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Melinda Katz
Borough President

Leroy Comrie
Deputy Borough President

Bryan J. Block
Chairman

Lawrence T. McClean
District Manager

April 28, 2014

Board Meeting

Bellerose Assembly of God Church

240-15 Hillside Avenue

Bellerose NY 11426

ATTENDANCE

Present: Isa Avery, Terence A. Banks, Corey Bearak, Alain Berrouet, Bryan Block, Verdell N. Boncoeur, Klue Bragg, Jacqueline Campbell, Tanya Cruz, Delroy Dawkins, Bess DeBetham, Bruno DeFranceschi, Terryl Ebony DeMondonca, Samuel Elliot, Charles Farruggia, Seymour Finkelstein, Robert Glover, Edward Harap, Fay Hill, Vernal Holder, Bonnie Huie, Mohamood Ishmael, Rhonda Kontner, Antony Kuncheria, Kangelia Moore, Marcia O'Brien, Nagassar Ramgarib, Anup Ramnauth, Peter Richards, Ashok Satkalmi, Sanu Thomas, Mathew Thomas, Pritpal Singh Walia, Clive Williams, Jackie L. Wilson, Jerry Wind.

Absent: Angela Augugliaro, Daisy Carew, James Delaney, Andrea A. Foy, Jack Friedman, Anthony Greene, Richard Hellenbrecht, Lloyd Hicks, Derrick Warmington.

Elected Officials/ Representatives of Elected Officials.:

Helen Ho representing Mayor DiBlasio's Office CAU, Jesse Hanson representing Senator Tony Avella, Meagan Chen representing Assemblyman Edward Braunstein, Jerry LaMura representing Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, Jahnelle Edwards representing Councilman Donovan Richards, Dara Bragg representing Senator James Sanders, Norman Jones, representing Assemblywoman Michele Titus, Anthony Lemma representing Assemblyman David Weprin, Sara Abiboutros representing Councilman Mark Weprin.

Staff: Lawrence T. McClean, District Manager, Stephanie Rainkie, Community Coordinator, Maxine Brannon, Community Associate.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30. Mr. Block introduced the new Board Members Terence Banks, Alain Berrouet, Jacqueline Campbell, Terryl Ebony DeMendonca, Vernal Holder, and Mathew Thomas.

Mr. Block announced that Lloyd Hicks is ill and hopes he will be back soon, and welcomed Eddie Harap back after an illness.

The March 2014 minutes were accepted by a motion from Mohamood Ismael and seconded by Bess DeBetham. Fay Hill mentioned one type-o on page 2 which was corrected.

Chairman's Report

On March 29th Mr. Block attended a function by Councilman Richards, a Women's Celebration, both Bess DeBetham and Marcia O'Brien received proclamations.

On April 7, Mr. Block attended Borough Board at Queens Borough Hall, he stated that York College had been chosen for a Start Up New York Program. He also mentioned that Downtown Jamaica will be a tax free zone, 10 year tax abatements.

On April 10th Mr. Block attended that Cambria Heights Civic Association meeting.

On April 13th Mr. Block attended the Queens Civic Congress Luncheon meeting.

On April 18th Mr. Block attended Congressman Gregory Meeks Dinner Dance. The Congressman gave out awards, and the highest award that a community person could receive was presented to Bess DeBetham.

Motion was made to accept Mr. Block's report by Kyle Bragg, and seconded by Pritpal Singh Walia.

District Manager's Report

Mr. McClean gave a street resurfacing report out to the Board Members. DOT will be sending us and the 105 Precinct the locations where they have relocated cars when they resurfaced streets.

Mr. McClean said that the NYPD Summer Youth Academy will have their registration in May.

There will be an FAA Tour scheduled for this summer.

National Night Out will be held on Tuesday August 5th at Cabell Park in Cambria Heights.

Mr. Ismael mentioned that he saw work being done on Jamaica Avenue at 215 Street and asked Mr. McClean what was happening. Mr. McClean said he would look into it as he had just seen it himself.

Mr. McCleans report was accepted by unanimous decision.

Mr. Block acknowledged the Elected Officials/or Representatives present.

Seymour Finkelstein questioned if anyone had read in the newspaper about Con. Edison asking for a raise. He was concerned if possibly the Board wanted to take a position on this. Bess DeBetham agreed that some action should be taken, Con Edison and the water bill seem to go up every quarter.

Corey Bearak said that the Board could go on record against any increases.

Mr. Block introduced Helen Ho from that Community Assistance Unit of the Mayor's Office. She is the new Queens Director of CAU. Mr. Block asked Ms. Ho to take our concerns of increases back to the Mayor and to the Commissioner.

Mr. Block stated that the Board will be reaching out to all three Councilmen on this matter as well.

Ms. Ho spoke on Vision Zero, Councilman Donovan Richards is holding a panel this Thursday (May 1, 2013) at IS 231 from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. There will be two workshops held on Vision Zero to help identify dangerous streets and intersection. One will be held on May 21 in Astoria, and one on May 29th at York College, and one in Bayswater at 2335 Healy Avenue.

Ms. Ho stated that “CAU” stands for Community Affairs Unit. They are working on the Mayor’s Special Initiatives which includes Vision Zero, and Municipal ID Cards in the near future. She stated that she was there to listen to the concerns of the residents and help where she could.

Mr. Berrouet stated that he lives in Laurelton and his barber was the person who stabbed a young man who passed away. There was an altercation at the barber shop. Mr. Berrouet said that he got his Masters Degree at John Jay in Sociology and Criminology. He said that he feels that Mediation classes should be part of the curriculum in our schools, and also Political Literacy classes, so they would be made aware of how government works. Ms. Ho said that she agreed with Mr. Berrouet.

Bess DeBetham asked what time the workshop at the Jamaica Arts Center was, Ms. Ho said 6:30 or 7:00 PM.

There was a brief question and answer session, on subjects such as graffiti, motor cycle profiling etc.

Ms. Phyllis Knight Whetstone who is a resident of Laurelton and a motorcyclist herself as well as a member of ABATE said that they are trying to get the attention of the Mayor, they would like to discuss NYC bikers and their rights. She asked Ms. Ho who to get an audience with the Mayor to discuss what their needs are, as well as motorcycle profiling. ABATE has launched a 311 initiative for motorcyclists as well as drivers to call in every pothole to 311. Ms. Ho said she would stay and speak with Ms. Knight-Whetstone. Ms. Ho stated that when you call 311 they give you a complaint number so that you can call to check on the progress of your complaint in the future.

Seymour Finkelstein said that he has made 311 calls and he is concerned that these are not anonymous calls. Mr. Finkelstein said that the 311 operator gave out his name and address and phone number to a city agency. He feels that if you call 311 the call should remain anonymous. Ms. Ho said that you can choose not to give 311 your name and address, Mr. Finkelstein said he did not, that they probably have Caller ID.

Fay Hill stayed that they have problems with dog waste, and it needs to be enforced. The owners of the dogs do not pick up after their dog. Ms. Ho stated that the homeowner or business owner is responsible for cleaning in front of their home or business, even if the dog waste does not belong to the homeowner.

The next speakers were the Coalition for Bernard Fineson. The speaker stated that the Governor said that in 2017 that facility is slated to close. This facility has 200 individuals in 8 houses on the Creedmoor property. The individuals are mentally retarded, they have been in this new facility for three years. The Governor wants to give this service out to private agencies. They are not saying that a private agency cannot do this job, but they cannot do it as well. They have been working with these individuals for 15/20 years and some of them can now tie their shoes, which is a major accomplishment. The Bernard Fineson facility has been there for 29 years and was a school so the people that reside there have been there all that time. They are coming before the Board to help them save the 8 houses they have. This is also saving the parents of these individuals from traveling upstate to visit, the parents are elderly and some do not drive.

A Union representative spoke and asked the Board to help with this fight to keep Bernard Fineson open. They requested the Board to write a resolution to the Governor to keep Bernard Fineson open.

Parent Advocates asked for the help of the Community Board. She stated that it would be very traumatic for some of these individuals to be shipped off to another area they are not familiar with, and be separate from people they have been with their entire life. She stated that two buildings that were built are sitting abandoned and considerable amounts of money were spent to build them. They have 10-12 residents per building. She invited the Board members to come over and see the facility, 80-45 Winchester Boulevard, Avenue C.

Kyle Bragg suggested that the Board write a resolution to support Bernard Fineson, and Kangela Moore seconded it.

Seymour Finkelstein said that we should send it to all of our State officials, so they are all aware of what is going on.

All Board members agreed, there was 1 abstention.

Nominating Committee:

The nominees for the Committee were Verdell Boncoeur, Bess DeBetham, Clive Williams, Robert Glover Dr. Ashok Satkalmi, Kyle Bragg and Fay Hill. Mr. Block asked Verdell Boncoeur to be the Chair of the Committee.

Committee Reports:

Mr. Block stated that the Land Use Chair was not present, but he did a proposal that should be in the Board members packets.

Mr. Block said that the Mayor's Office have been discussing this, possibly legalizing basement apartments to fill needs for affordable housing. Nothing has come forward officially from the Mayor's Office.

Mr. Finkelstein said that these basements apartments have been illegal all these years, their communities are becoming saturated with illegal apartments, and this is posing a serious parking problem. Rhonda Kontner seconded it. Bess DeBetham also said the Board should support the motion. Mr. Block stated that there is NO motion of the floor. Mr. Block said

that the Land Use Committee had not met, but Mr. Hellenbrecht wanted this to be discussed or voted on.

Seynour Finkelstein made a motion that the Board support this, it was seconded by Eddie Harap.

Ms. Ho said that the Mayor is coming out with his "Affordable Housing Plan", she said that the Board could chose to vote on this or not. She stated that things may change as early as next week.

Kyle Bragg suggested that this be held over until next month's meeting. Mr. Finkelstein said he would table the motion.

Parks Committee: Chair, Peter Richards

The Parks Committee will be having of tour of the parks in Board 13 on May 31st at 10am. Committee members will meet at the Board office, Parks will supply transportation for the Committee Members. Any Civic leaders interested will meet at their parks, schedule will be mailed out before May 31st.

Youth and Education Committee: Chair, Rhonda Kontner

Ms. Kontner said she went to the Borough President's Parents Advisory Board which the new Borough President has tried to reconvene. Some of the issues they will be looking into are Co-Location issues, use of trailers, and full day p-tech. There was also discussion on the Horizon Program which is due to open in Rosedale or on 164th Street and Hillside Avenue. The Horizon Program is a program for Autistic children.

Ms. Kontner also went to the District 26 meeting . At the April 24th meeting they introduced the prospective interim acting principal from the new P-Tech program at Martin Van Buren High School. (Ms.Kontner had some brochures she passed out).

Ms. Kontner said that the new principal was very impressive, she had a lot of good information about the program. There will be internships with SAP, the German business solution company, which is a multi-national company. This program will provide an Associates Degree. There was one Open House at Queensborough College on March 20th but nobody knew about it, the other Open Houses were in Manhattan, although the school will only be taking local students. 149 students attended Open Houses and 108 students were chosen. 10 students from District 26, and the rest are coming from Districts 24, 25, 27, 28 and 29 the breakdown was not available.

Short discussion followed.

Kangela Moore said she would like to Chair " Senior and Special Needs" Committee. Ms. Moore believes that this is a group that has been overlooked.

Health Committee: Chair Bonnie Huie/ Dr. Ashok Satkalmi

Ms. Huie said that the Health Committee wanted to make sure that you are aware of the things going on with your health. The Health Committee did meet on April 17th. They had a visit from "Health Care At It's Best". They came to just sit in on the meeting. The Committee is still planning a forum for 2015 with the hospitals. May 11-May17th is Women's Health Week.

Mr. Joginder Singh- Foxx Car & Limo Service

Mr. Singh's son spoke on his father's behalf. They came before the Board asking for a "no objection Letter" to open a car service at 247-07 Jericho Turnpike. He just recently obtained permission to park his vehicles at 237-08 Braddock Avenue, the Braddock Super Bazar. They agreed to give him 5 parking spaces for Foxx Car & Limo drivers only. This is for a period on one year, April 1, 2014 until April 1, 2015.

Mr. McClean explained to the Board that when this application was submitted they went to the local civic associations as is the Board policy.

The Queens Colony Civic Association was opposed as well as Councilman Weprin. Mr. McClean wrote a letter to the Taxi & Limousine Commission indication that the Board was opposed to this license based on the civic association opposition. Neither parties have given any indication that they want to rescind their decision.

There was a lengthy question and answer period that followed. Mr. McClean stated that the opposition was because of a lack of parking in the area. Cars could not legally park behind the local businesses. Mr. McClean said that he understands that Mr. Singh has laid out money but some of his responses were disingenuous.

The Board cannot insist that a Civic Association meet with anyone or invite anyone to their meetings.

Clive Williams was concerned and wanted to know why the Civic refused to meet with them. He feels that we as a Board have a responsibility to accommodate business. Mr. Williams said that we should revisit the civic and ask them to meet with Mr. Singh.

Mr. McClean asked Mr. Singh if he had a deadline from the Taxi & Limousine Commission. It was stated that the deadline was May 26th. Mr. McClean said that he would ask the civic association once again if they would meet with Mr. Singh.

Mr. Williams asked that if a referee was needed, maybe the Executive Board could sit in on this meeting.

We need to have a response back by the May 19th Board meeting.

Corey Bearak said that if we do this, we will have to continue doing it everytime this type of issue arises. Mr. Bearak said that the Board cannot assert themselves into Civic matters. Bonnie Huie said that if the Civic made a determination, we cannot tell the Civic what to do.

Mr. Clive Williams said that no reason was given to Mr. Singh as to why the Civic didn't want to meet with him, now that he has no parking problem.

Mohamood Ismeal requested that Mr. McClean go back to the Civic Association and ask them once again to meet with M.r Singh, or overturn our decision to oppose the Taxi & Limousine license.

Rhonda Kontner said that the Board should not get involved with decisions made by Civic Associations.

Mr. McClean said that Civic Associations will not work with The Board if we overturn their decisions.

Tanya Cruz suggested that both parties come before the Board on May 19th and state their case, she requested it be put on the agenda.

Mr. Ramgarib stated that he feels that the Civic Association still has a right to say yes or no.

Ms. Cruz said that there is a need for transparency here.

A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Block said that he doesn't see us interjecting into their business, he thinks that what some of the members are saying is that the Civic took a position and everybody wants to know why, what's the reason, and why they didn't want to meet with Mr. Singh.

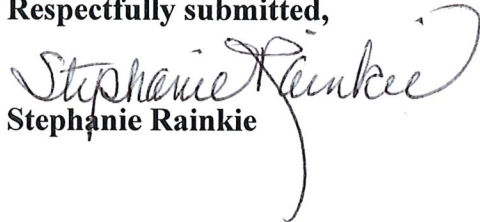
The Civic could come back and say that scheduling wouldn't allow it.

Mr. Block stated that usually this Board goes along with whatever a Civic Association goes with. Mr. Block stated that maybe this whole discussion should be held in the Community Board office, rather than take up the time at the meeting.

Kyle Bragg stated in order for him to make an informed decision he would need more information in order to vote. Mr. Bragg said there is no rational for the Civic to deny this, so they should come in and address the Board and make their argument.

Meeting was adjourned at 10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephanie Rainkie". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Stephanie Rainkie