



COMMUNITY BOARD # 4Q

Serving: Corona, Corona Heights, and Elmhurst

46-11 104th Street

Corona, New York 11368-2882

Telephone: 718-760-3141 Fax: 718-760-5971

e-mail: cb4q@nyc.rr.com

Helen Marshall
Borough President

Louis Walker
Chairperson

Karen Koslowitz
Director of Community Boards

Richard Italiano
District Manager

COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING

DATE: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2009

TIME: 7:25 P.M.

PLACE: FLANDERS FIELD VFW POST 150
51-11 108 STREET
CORONA, NEW YORK

I. The Chairperson Louis Walker called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

II. The District Manager Richard Italiano took the roll call. A quorum was present.

III. Vote on the Minutes (October 06, 2009)

Mr. Tom McKenzie made a motion, seconded by Ms. Laraine Donohue, to **accept** the minutes.

By a voice vote, the Board voted 33 in favor, 0 opposed, with 0 abstentions. Motion passed.

IV. REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON

Chair Louis Walker reported on *The Community Dialogue Forum* held on Thursday, October 29, 2009, at the New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111 Street, Corona, NY. Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, her Queens General Assembly and Community Board 4 held a neighborhood dialogue. Participants included school principals, PTA presidents, pastors and reverends, and many other people. The Forum was a huge success and more will follow. Volunteers, military cadets, and young adults were also present.

V. REPORT OF THE DISTRICT MANAGER

District Manager Richard Italiano presented further details on *The Community Dialogue Forum*. The District Manager reported in the Spring 2009, Queens Borough President Helen Marshall sent correspondence to all Queens Community Boards asking if anyone was interested in conducting a forum in their community for the purpose of bringing the community together. The intent of the Forum was to unite the community, to assemble people from all different walks of life, nationalities, religions, including schools etc. in a room to establish a dialogue and talk with one another on community issues of mutual concern.

Since Community Board 4 is the most diverse, the District Manager was anxious to start the series, noting a Forum will be conducted in every Community Board. The Forum was so successful that participants at the end of the evening asked, "What's next?" A great deal of positive feedback was received. For upcoming sessions, the District Manager plans small break-out groups consisting of 10-20 groups. Meetings to be held at the Board office on specific subjects such as youth, health, school or quality of life issues, to name a few. Moving forward, more sessions are planned with interested people for future conversations. Discussion ensued on follow-up meeting locations and priorities.

Continuing with his report, the District Manager reviewed flyers included in the Board member packages:

- Citizens Committee For NYC – Apply For Grants for Community Organizations
- New York City Taxi & Limousine Commission – New For Hire Vehicle Rules
- New York City DOT - Lane Closures on the Belt Parkway

At this point, the District Manager reported on the completion of the street conversion of 47th Avenue and 109th Street from two ways to a one way operation. The changes are as follows: 109th Street one way S/B; 47th Avenue one way W/B 109th to 108th Street; 47th Avenue one way E/B 109th to 111th Street. Primarily, the street conversion was done for the safety of the children attending P. S. 28, which will eliminate speeding around the school.

Next, Community Board 4 had been notified by Con Edison of scheduled work on 108 Street. This project will begin this month and last until end of January. This will include:

Two trailer locations to maintain freezes – Martense Avenue near 108 Street in Corona and on 108 Street near 71st Avenue in Forest Hills

Four splicing "huts" or trailers at four manhole locations:

- 108th Street south of Martense Avenue
- 108th Street and 62nd Road
- 108th Street and 67th Avenue
- 108th Street and 71st Avenue

Next, rehabilitation work will be performed on the wall and abutments of the Long Island Railroad structure along 44th and 45th Avenues between 108th Street and 94th Street. This work will require full street closures between the hours of 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m., Monday – Friday. This work will not affect pedestrian traffic. Look for more details in the Board's December Newsletter.

Next, the District Manager reported Queens Borough President Helen Marshall, working with U. S. Census officials and New York City's Census Coordinator, announced on Tuesday, November 10, the formation of a multicultural and multilingual committee to help ensure Queens will not be undercounted in the 2010 Census. All residents must answer the census form, which will be short forms.

The Complete Count Committee will focus on efforts to ensure that the population of Queens is not undercounted as believed that it was in the 2000 Census.

The District Manager will schedule a Board presentation on the census in the beginning of 2010.

He urged all Board members to encourage their community organizations and affiliates to make every effort to get the word out on the upcoming census.

The census is vital in determining that adequate services are obtained for all people living in the district. The census is taken every ten years.

Next, the NYC Department of Transportation's Expedited Sidewalk Repair Pilot Program was mentioned. Flyers were available for those interested.

Next, the District Manager gave an update on the auction sale of St. John's Queens Hospital and Mary Immaculate Hospital. A U. S. bankruptcy judge has cleared the way for the hospitals' sale to developer Jack Guttman. The judge denied the request to reopen the auction on behalf of the runner-up group.

Guttman had originally not planned to use the sites for health care, but is now ready to work with the community and the Borough President to explore development opportunities that will make sense for Queens. According to a statement issued by the Borough President, "If they can't be used as hospitals, we would at least like to see some of the space used as an urgent care or diagnostic center or some similar use."

VI. REPORT OF THE TREASURER

The District Manager reported the Board's operating budget is in good shape. A budgetary cut was received July 1, 2009; however, the Board has adequate funds to operate until June 30, 2010. An uncommitted balance of \$593 is presently available for expenditures.

The District Manager expressed concern about agency cuts across the board later in the year. Board members will be kept advised.

At this point, the District Manager called for questions on the budget. Mr. Tom McKenzie asked if mandatory raises for the Board staff were taken into account.

The District Manager replied the Board staff are members of DC 37, and those raises are fully funded by the City of New York. Whatever the dollar figure, the money is added to the Board's operating budget.

Since there were no other questions, the Chair moved to the next agenda item.

VII. ULURP & ZONING COMMITTEE

Vote: BSA #227-09 BZ, Block 1609 Lot 8

Vote: Resolution – DOB 45 Day Statute of Limitations

ULURP Committee Chair Miriam Levenson reported the Committee unanimously voted to **approve** the variance with the provision planting was included in the back.

Therefore, Mrs. Miriam Levenson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Tom McKenzie, to **accept** the variance as presented.

Is there any discussion on the motion, asked the Chair? No discussion

By a voice vote, the Board voted 32 in favor, 1 opposed, with 0 abstentions. Motion passed.

For the next ULURP item, the District Manager explained the issue. Community Board 8 Queens passed a resolution and asked for the withdrawal of the 45 day complaint period limitation and further opposes any ruling or proposal that limits the right of members of the public to file a complaint or challenge building construction at any time with respect to zoning regulations or building codes. According to Community Board 8, the process should be open ended where complaints on the property can be filed any time.

Mr. Tom McKenzie made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Miriam Levenson, to **agree** with Community Board 8 Queens' Resolution to support the withdrawal of the 45 day complaint period limitation and further opposes any ruling or proposal that limits the right of members of the public to file a complaint or challenge building construction at any time with respect to zoning regulations or building code.

Is there any discussion on the motion, asked the Chair?

Mr. Diego Freire brought up 45 days is a short period of time. The period of time to comment should be longer however, an indefinite period of time to comment was not reasonable.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Schilero pointed out sub-basements in buildings; some located on Junction Blvd., which are not discovered until later. The time limit should be kept open, and she was in agreement with Community Board 8's Resolution.

The Chair called for any other comments. Since there were none, the Chair called the question.

Before the vote, the Chair reiterated the motion is to agree with Community Board 8 to keep the time period open ended (unlimited time to file a complaint against building code or zoning regulations). A yes vote is to support the motion. Voting no vote does not support it.

By a roll call vote, the Board voted 25 in favor, 8 opposed, with 0 abstentions. Motion passed.

VIII. PRESENTATIONS

A. Urban Health Plan Plaza Del Sol Update on Clinic

Ms. Jessica Ramirez, Office Manager, of Plaza Del Sol Family Health Center, located at 37-16 108 Street, Corona, New York, provided an update on services offered. Flyers were on hand listing hours of operation and services.

Plaza Del Sol Family Health Center is a not-for-profit organization. As a family health center, clients are seen with or without health insurance. Moreover, a payment scale for people without insurance is also offered. The sliding fee scale is charged per medical consultation according to income and dependents.

Services include x-ray, pediatrics, adult, laboratory, optometry, and nutrition, including health education. Open 7 days a week, the Center is convenient for many people.

Most insurance is accepted and if you need help with insurance forms, the Center will gladly assist.

Since this is a satellite clinic from the Bronx facility, patients from the Bronx come to see specific doctors to continue care with those doctors. The Health Clinic not only serves Corona, but other boroughs as well.

Ms. Ramirez urged all to visit the building and see the good work being done there.

Mr. Alirio Orduna asked about doctors' fees and medication prescriptions needed to be filled at pharmacies. Ms. Ramirez responded doctors are paid under Urban Health Plan according to medical consultation, adding there are pharmacies for those patients who do not have insurance that have a \$10 for three month program for specific medications.

Mr. Tom McKenzie asked if Plaza Del Sol Family Health Center was having difficulty obtaining payments from insurance companies.

Ms. Ramirez responded no.

What hospitals are the Center affiliated with, asked Ms. Georgia Oliver?

Ms. Ramirez responded they work with Elmhurst and Forest Hills Hospitals or if there is a specific hospital the patient would like to be seen at for specialty care, the Center will make the appointment.

The majority of health insurances are accepted such as Medicare and Medicaid and Oxford Health Insurance. Private plans not accepted include Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Well Care, GHI, HIP, and AmeriGroup Insurance.

PRESENTATIONS

B. Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project (NEDAP)

Luis Caridad: Overview of Project

Mr. Luis Caridad, Coordinator of Community Education, reported NEDAP is a non-profit resource and advocacy center for community groups in New York City on all issues pertaining to economic justice and economic development of communities, which includes predatory lending, the lack of access to affordable credit and financial services, and debt collection issues.

Reporting on the foreclosure crises affecting the city, in Queens and particularly Board 4 and the five boroughs, maps were distributed depicting 2008 Foreclosures in those areas. Foreclosure maps for 2009 are in progress. So far, foreclosures in 2009 have increased. More may be reported as the year ends.

In 2008, there were close to 14,000 foreclosures in the city. For this year, 15,000 foreclosures have been reported already.

Mr. Caridad pointed out while foreclosures are city-wide they are clustered in different neighborhoods. The main reason for that is those neighborhoods for decades were targeted for high cost predatory mortgages. These are mortgages too expensive from the beginning, which is one of the drivers of the current foreclosure crises. In addition, the current economic recession which has exacerbated the pattern makes the existing problem city-wide much worse.

At this point, Mr. Caridad presented options to homeowners facing foreclosures. or are having difficulty paying their mortgage. Mr. Caridad reported on the Obama administration's "Making Home Affordable" plan to help homeowners avoid foreclosure. If you cannot afford your mortgage, you may be eligible for a loan modification. A loan modification is a change in the mortgage so that the payment is more affordable. Lenders can achieve this by lowering the interest rate or by extending the terms. This plan was optional for the lenders, however, most big banks and lenders are a part of it. For every mortgage they modify, the government will give them an incentive.

The best way for a homeowner to determine if they qualify is to work with a non-profit counseling organization or legal services agency to assist. Call 311 to find a free foreclosure prevention counselor or legal services attorney who can help determine if you are eligible under the plan, or if you have other options. A resource guide of organizations was distributed that partner with the Center for NYC Neighborhoods that offer a range of services to homeowners, including foreclosure prevention legal services, counseling, and loan remediation.

Watch out for loan modification scams cautioned Mr. Caridad. Different types of scams by companies charge thousands of dollars in up-front fees that often disappear with the money or arrange a bad modification leaving the homeowner in worse financial shape.

In concluding his presentation, Mr. Caridad brought up the law signed by Governor Patterson to slow down or stop foreclosures in the state. The main aspect of this law was to provide homeowners facing foreclosure the right to meet with the mortgage lender to try to devise a solution. Called A Settlement Conference, this meeting is directed by a court appointed referee. Every homeowner that received a mortgage categorized under the law

as a high cost non-traditional or sub-prime, by law, has the right to meet with the lender before the lender can move forward with the foreclosure. More details followed.

Mr. Caridad stated the best a homeowner can do is to prepare well in advance by working with a non-profit mortgage counselor or legal services agency on what to do and how to prepare, and how to make the best of the opportunity when meeting with the lender.

At this point, Mr. Caridad took questions.

Ms. Ann Coyne asked if NEDAP assists co-ops. Mr. Caridad responded the organization does not work with homeowners, however, NEDAP works with groups that assist homeowners and many do work with co-ops.

Ms. Beth Anna Moon Ray Ferguson asked about the time frame, for example 18 months, in New York State for filings on foreclosures.

Mr. Caridad explained the foreclosure process is a lengthy one—it usually takes at least six months, but it also can take up to a year or two, which is not always the case. It is important for homeowners to know when facing foreclosure it is not immediate, but at the same time, no one can predict the length of time, however, the homeowner needs to act as soon as possible.

Mr. Gurdeep Narula asked about a short sale. Mr. Caridad explained this is when the homeowner makes an agreement with the bank. The bank agrees with the homeowner that if the home is sold at a lower price than the mortgage, as a result of the sale, the bank will accept it. The homeowner will not owe the bank the difference. However, Mr. Caridad pointed out there are tax implications for every short sale, therefore, it is important to coordinate with a mortgage counselor to work out the details.

At this point, the Chair asked if there were any other questions. No other questions were raised.

NOTE: NEXT AGENDA ITEM HEARD OUT OF ORDER.

IX. REPORT OF THE LEGISLATORS

Mr. George Onuorah, representing Council Member Helen Sears, complimented Board Chairperson Lou Walker and District Manager Richard Italiano on The Community Dialogue Forum. It was a very important step toward bridging the communities together as well as addressing very important issues faced within the district.

Secondly, Council Member Helen Sears continues to work very hard addressing a vital issue: *The Medicare Rights Program*. Council Member Sears has scheduled a Medicare Care Rights Forum at the Jackson Heights Jewish Center, on Wednesday, November 18, at 10:30 a.m. More information will be forthcoming.

The term of office for Council Member Helen Sears will expire on December 31, 2009. She still continues to work very hard on issues that need to be addressed and are dealt with.

At this time, Mr. Onuorah expressed appreciation for having had the opportunity to represent Council Member Sears at the Community Board level, at Lefrak City, and at Sherwood. Moving forward he expressed optimism on continuing to work together as a group.

Next, Ms. Yoselin Genao, representing Council Member Julissa Ferreras, announced new office hours. Without appointment, the office will be open on Monday until 8:00 p.m., which will accommodate working families. Legal counseling is available on Mondays and Wednesdays afternoons.

Secondly, A Town Hall Meeting will be held on Thursday, November 12, 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. at P. S. 19. A flyer was distributed with more information. She urged all to attend and invite neighbors, organizations, and community groups. Many community issues will be discussed, and all were encouraged to attend.

In addition to this upcoming Town Hall Meeting, one was already held in August in East Elmhurst, and more will follow in other area locations.

Next, Ms. Fior Rodriguez, representing Congressman Gary Ackerman reported office constituent services in the community are very well utilized, and the Congressman's office is also open every other Saturday of the month to accommodate community residents.

Ms. Rodriguez also reported on the passage this week by a very close margin on the health care reform bill. The Congressman held meetings with doctors, constituents, and many others and had polled opinions and read decisions.

Careful deliberation and thought was given by the Congressman on who will benefit by the new reform.

Health care is needed for all, especially senior citizens, small businesses, individuals, and all citizens of the United States. Ms. Rodriguez noted "undocumented aliens" will not benefit by this law.

Next, Council Member-elect Daniel Dromm thanked the Board Chair and District Manager for their untiring efforts in addressing the problems of the community. Taking office January 1, 2010, Mr. Dromm looks forward to serving in the position to make our community a better place to live.

Council Member-elect Dromm thanked Council Member Helen Sears for her many years of dedicated service to the community and the tremendous job she has done and also remarked Council Member Sears is well deserving of all the respect and support of the community.

Council Member-elect Dromm also thanked the Community Board members for its service to the community and explained some times the role of the Community Boards is overlooked and people do not fully understand what Community Boards are about. The Boards accomplish many tasks with little funding and volunteering much time and effort devoted to the community. Mr. Dromm looks forward to working closely with the Board for the benefit of improving our neighborhoods.

As a public school teacher for 25 years, Mr. Dromm hails from a background of working with children, and expressed the need for good quality schools and a good education which is vital for all children. Both District 24 and District 30 remain tremendously overcrowded. A capital plan is sorely needed to address those concerns, and an emergency Marshall type plan is needed to bring in capital resources to ensure lower class size and reduce school overcrowding.

Council Member-elect Dromm reported he had spoken with Chancellor Klein on those issues and that he had also spoken to Congressman Crowley about bringing health care resource centers into the community and was very pleased to learn of the good work of both Plaza Del Sol Family Health Center and NEDAP on foreclosure prevention since our community is tremendously affected by both issues. Quality of Life issues are also very important. Overcrowding, congestion, over development, single room occupancies and illegal conversions and its devastating effects, citing the tragedy the recent fire in Woodside had that claimed the lives of three people. Work needs to be done to reduce those dangerous conditions people live in.

Other issues such as noise, pollution, crime, and the creation of jobs are tremendously important to Council Member-elect Dromm. A 10.2% unemployment rate is unacceptable.

Working together for the benefit of our community to find solutions to those concerns, we will make our neighborhoods more livable and safer. Your support is needed to be successful.

Before concluding his presentation, Mr. Dromm expressed his intent to attend as many Community Board meetings as possible to hear issues and address concerns of the community first hand, and looks forward to working very closely with the Board sharing thoughts and ideas.

NOTE: NEXT AGENDA ITEMS HEARD IN ORDER.

X. PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
VOTE: SLA APPLICATIONS

Committee Chair Lucy Schilero reported on the following liquor licenses:

New Applicants

<u>Establishment's Name</u>	<u>Establishment's Address</u>	<u>Committee Recommendation</u>
7532 Cellar Corp. (Renotification) Tavern Wine License	75-32 Broadway Elmhurst, NY 11373	Approved
Fu City Restaurant Restaurant Wine	83-31 Broadway Elmhurst, NY 11373	Approved
Golden 8 Lounge Restaurant Wine	86-22 Broadway Elmhurst, NY 11373	Approved
Grehmi Corp. D/B/A Tambo's Restaurant Restaurant Wine	107-02 Corona Avenue Corona, NY 11368	Approved
Los Valdes Restaurant Corp. On-Premises Liquor	42-18A Junction Blvd. Corona, NY 11368	Denied. Sale to minors.
Rancho Jarabacoa Corp. Restaurant Wine	102-06 43 Avenue Corona, NY 11368	Denied. Assault

Renewal Applicants

America's Restaurante of Corona Restaurant Wine	103-10 Roosevelt Avenue Corona, NY 11368	Approved
CoCo South East Asian Cuisine, Inc Restaurant Wine	82-69 Broadway Elmhurst, NY 11373	Approved
El Chino Latino, Inc. D/B/A El Paisa Restaurant Restaurant Wine	93-26 Corona Avenue Elmhurst, NY 11373	Approved
Elks Lodge Club Liquor	82-20 Queens Blvd. Elmhurst, NY 11373	Approved

Mr. Tom McKenzie made a motion, seconded by Ms. Priscilla Carrow, to **accept** the Committee's report as presented.

By a voice vote, the Board voted 33 in favor, 0 opposed, with 0 abstentions. Motion passed.

XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Consumer Affairs

No Report. Committee Chair not in attendance.

Health

Committee Chair Priscilla Carrow reported the Committee did not meet.

Environmental

Committee Chair Tom McKenzie reported and gave details on three problems:

1. Garbage receptacles not picked up.
2. No street sweeping on the south side of Broadway.
3. Committee members are needed to serve on the Environmental Committee. An announcement was placed in the "Newtown Crier".

Clean neighborhoods are the #1 priority of the Environmental Committee followed by quality of life issues such as noise, water, sewage etc.

Committee Chair McKenzie informed the Board no meetings will be held for the balance of this year, however in January, if enough people join the Committee, a meeting will be held. More people are needed to oversee the district.

Before concluding his report, Mr. McKenzie invited all to the Veterans affair on November 11 at Elmhurst Memorial Hall. See him for tickets.

Parks

Committee Chair Tony Caminiti reported on Monday, November 30, at 6:30 p.m., the 29th Annual Christmas Tree Ceremony will be held at William Moore Park on 108 Street. Everyone is invited to attend. After the ceremony, a reception will follow at VFW Post 150. All are invited to attend.

Postal

No Report. Committee Chair not in attendance.

Transportation

Committee Chair Joseph DiMartino reported the Committee did not meet.

Youth

Committee Chair Clara Salas reported on the UFT Conference, which she had attended. It was truly excellent. Every year new material is presented. It is a true learning experience, and the seminars and workshops are outstanding.

A meeting of the Youth Committee will be held in January, 2010, at Elmhurst Hospital. The Committee is waiting for the Mayor's Office to release the new education plan. Any items for discussion you would like to be placed on the agenda for the Youth Committee's January meeting, please contact Ms. Salas. Another meeting following the January meeting is also being planned.

A Board member asked if we will be getting any new charter schools.

Ms. Salas replied we must wait until next year; however, talks are in the works. The school slated for Queens was given to the Bronx. By April, we will know, replied Ms. Salas.

For the Public Forum, the Board Chair asked if anyone from the public would like to speak.

XII. PUBLIC FORUM

Board member Lucy Schilero introduced the Delligatti family who live in the vicinity of Linden Park/Park of the Americas. They need help with a serious situation regarding the ball field at Linden Park.

Mrs. Josephine Delligatti owns a home in the vicinity and her parents live across from Linden Park. She explained the following problems need immediate attention:

Baseball playing

The fence needs to be made higher. Her father's window was broken, and he had to pay \$400 for repair as a result of the adult ball playing. Police reports were filed on the damage done to their window, garage door, and vehicle. She suggested not to eliminate the ball playing altogether, but rather to make the fence higher by adding netting in the one area of the fencing.

The Board Chair asked if this family were the only ones affected by this problem.

Mrs., Delligatti replied yes mainly because their home is located directly across the ball field.

The District Manager stated this problem was brought to the attention of the Board office in the spring, and the Parks Dept. was notified to investigate and talk to the family. Linden Park is manned by the Parks Dept., which has an office in the Park. Discussion ensued.

Picking Up The Leaves

Mrs. Delligatti said leaves get picked up on the 41 Avenue side of the Park, but not on the 42 Avenue side. Leaves are a constant problem.

The District Manager will look into those problems and contact the complainant after reviewing the records.

Next, a member of the public brought up graffiti removal. Junior high and high school students would like to participate in graffiti removal. Organizing the students toward this endeavor would make the neighborhoods very clean.

Mr. James Lisa provided information about the 110th Precinct's Graffiti Removal Program. Discussion ensued.

At this point, some Board members shared information on activities and upcoming events sponsored through affiliated community groups or organizations.

Before adjourning the meeting, the Board Chair asked the Board's preference with regard to food and refreshments served at its upcoming Annual Holiday Party. Call the District Manager with suggestions.

Next, the District Manager asked if anyone is computer literate who can serve as a consultant with the Board office computers. Call the District Manager if you can assist.

A moment of silence was observed for the victims in Texas and Florida.

There being no further business, Mr. Alirio Orduna made a motion, seconded by Ms. Priscilla Carrow, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.