

QUEENS CIVIC CONGRESS, INC.

The Queens Civic Congressional  
PO. Box 238, Flushing, NY 11363

David Kulick, Editor

Corey Bearak, President



[www.queensciviccongress.org](http://www.queensciviccongress.org)

NOVEMBER 2007

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 6

## *Queens Civic Congress*

*Invites you to an Open Executive Committee Briefing:*

**Monday, November 19, 2007 at 7:30 p.m.**

at Union Plaza Nursing Home, 33-23 Union Street, Flushing

*Update from Department of Buildings -  
Deputy Commissioner Robert LiMandri*

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*Willets Point Development Plans -  
Former Borough President Claire Shulman*

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*Public Financing of State Election Campaigns -  
A Presentation by Pam Bennett, Citizen Action of NY:*

This special briefing is open to ALL Queens Civic Congress Members

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*Annual Queens Civic Congress Legislative Reception*

*See Inside, Page 3 For Details.*

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*Preservation & Landmarks Workshop set—see inside page 5 for details*

## President's Message

Dear Members:

At the outset, thank you to all who found me worthy as a successor to my friend, Sean Walsh. Thank you to all who have shared their messages of congratulations and good will. On behalf of all of our members, THANK YOU to Sean Walsh for a decade of service leading Queens Civic Congress since its incubation. Sean continues as President of the Queens Civic Congress Foundation and as President Emeritus. Thank you also to our installing officer and my Assembly Member, Barbara Clark, our Installation Keynote speaker, Cathy Nolan and for their words of support for Queens Civic Congress: Senator Frank Padavan, Assembly Member Rory Lancman and Council Member David Weprin.

I hope – with everyone's help – to maintain Queens Civic Congress' reputation as a dynamic and pro-active voice and influence in the life of our borough, its neighborhoods and our city. Our communities face many challenges; through our coalition, partnerships and advocacy efforts, Queens Civic Congress stands to make a difference.

Throughout my professional life, I worked for elected officials. Since leaving government, elected officials, institutions, labor and others have engaged my services. Where I get involved professionally, I disengage that from my civic (and, for that matter, my other community) involvement. Two clearcut examples: my non-participation in mayoral debates Queens Civic Congress sponsored in 2001 (I served on a candidate's government staff) and 2005 (A campaign later engaged me as a policy advisor, which was not unexpected). The Queens Civic Congress became an early opponent of the Congestion Tax, and our CIVIC 2030 platform reflected this position before I even knew a coalition of Congestion Tax opponents would approach me to become a policy advisor and later act as a spokesperson. Since that first contact, even before I agreed to the engagement, others— primarily Sean Walsh and our transportation chair, James Trent — took the lead on this for the Queens Civic Congress; Jim Trent, who delivered excellent testimony before the NYC Traffic Congestion Mitigation Commission late last month, remains our voice on this issue.

Our Zoning Enforcement Committee led by Joe Amoroso and new co-chair, Vice President Harbachan Singh, will follow Building activities with a keen eye and speak out where necessary as we prod this agency to more carefully scrutinize construction plans that skirt, if not violate, existing zoning and codes. New Vice President Kathy Masi, who chairs our renamed Historical Preservation and Landmarks committee (Paul Graziano who recently became president of the Historic Districts Council will remain on the committee), and Executive Vice President Patricia Dolan put together an excellent workshop (read more on page five). Pat continues to be a force on land use issues, speaking out on concessions reform, making sure our concerns get heard on the Yards text and working with communities on their zoning concerns. New Vice President Barbara Larkin testified at the City Council's Consumer Affairs Committee on the need to protect homeowners from wanton insurance cancellation. I testified against City Hall's plans to hike our water tax bill 18.5% mid-year before the Council's Finance and Environmental Protection Committees. The Officers and committee chairs of Queens Civic Congress represents a wealth of talent, expertise and knowledge and we rely on them to make our coalition serve our needs. We want to further use these talents and that of our members— that means you—so please let me know your interests so we can include more of you in our committee work. Happy Thanksgiving.

Sincerely,

*Corey*

The Queens Civic Congress Foundation presents...

**10TH ANNUAL  
2007 LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1:00 - 3:00 P.M.

At the beautiful and historic  
Douglaston Club  
(former Van Zandt Mansion, built 1819)  
600 West Drive - Douglas Manor Historic District

Tickets are \$20 each and include light refreshments.

Enjoy an opportunity to meet Queens  
and Citywide elected officials on a one-on-one basis.

Open to Queens Civic Congress members only.  
Members must be paid up through 2007.

Reservations by November 24  
Mail to James Trent, QCCF Treasurer  
242-33 90th Avenue  
Bellerose Manor, NY 11426-1115

Make checks payable to: Queens Civic Congress Foundation  
Please include the name of your civic and the names of your intended attendees.

For information, [Jtrent8830@aol.com](mailto:Jtrent8830@aol.com)

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## **Joint Statement of Queens Civic Congress and Queens Coalition for Parks & Green Spaces**

New York City must work to preserve its historic natural areas; these historic settings must receive much the same treatment as historical landmarks. The destruction or loss of any natural areas negatively impacts the quality of life for the surrounding communities bordering these green spaces. It flies in the face of what City Hall advocates for parks and preservation in PlaNYC. Ridgewood Reservoir should be preserved as such and the monies (some \$46 million) to destroy this green area's natural settings should be re-allocated to purchases to preserve other threatened historical natural areas which also include historical structures -- such as St. Savior's, the Klein Farm, Iris Hill and the former Cornell Farm. What we destroy today cannot be restored tomorrow.

City Hall needs to take a hard look and re-evaluate what needs to be done to preserve natural areas before they cease to exist. This includes re-thinking any plans that threaten natural parks and historic settings such as Ridgewood Reservoir, St. Savior's, the Klein Farm, Iris Hill and the former Cornell Farm.

## **G Train Still An Issue QCC Is Fighting**

The Queens Civic Congress, together with such groups at the Tri-State Transportation Campaign and some Brooklyn groups, is still fighting with the MTA over its continued neglect of the hapless G train. A recent article in a local newspaper pointed that the infrequent service and overcrowded trains has a noticeable impact on property values in Williamsburg and Greenpoint. Real estate brokers were quoted that apartments closer to better served transit such as the L goes for more money than buildings nearer the G. Crain's New York Business did a story in September in which QCC's Transportation Chair James Trent was quoted. QCC still maintains that truncating the G at Court Square only serves to shunt potential Brooklyn residents who would shop at the major shopping center at Woodhaven and Queens Boulevards, to simply shop at Herald Square or other Manhattan stores instead.

QCC recommends that cars from the underused V service be given back to the G (from whence they were taken) to lengthen G trains from the current four cars back to the original 6 cars;; that the V be rerouted to 63rd Street; the F be restored to 53rd Street; and that the G be restored 7 days a week to its terminus at 71st Street - Continental Avenue.—Jim Trent (Creedmoor Civic)

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## **QCC Files Protest Over Congestion Pricing**

Queens Civic Congress showed up at the Queens hearing held on congestion pricing that was sponsored by the committee that was set up by the Mayor and State to investigate the public's support and the logistical and financial feasibility. James Trent, QCC's Transportation Chairman, spoke for the QCC at York College where the hearing was held on October 30. Queens Civic Congress identified other ways to generate income to support the expansion of mass transit and that the congestion "pricing" which we prefer to call congestion "taxing" enjoys no widespread support in Queens.

In fact, most spoke in opposition including Borough President Helen Marshall, Senator John Sabini, Assembly Members Cathy Nolan and Rory Lancman, and Council Members David Weprin and Leroy Comrie. —Jim Trent (Creedmoor)

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## **Dorms for CUNY?**

We need to evaluate the need for dormitories at Queens College. CUNY is supposed to be for disadvantaged city residents, and it is clear that dorms at CUNY institutions means that students who can afford to live in dorms will be accepted over students with similar credentials who cannot fill the dorms.

In addition to posing a burden for the local community, CUNY has a special mission, and dorms for wealthier students as well as out of state students would seem to be a betrayal of that mission. As Queens College approaches maximum capacity, and we expect a million new residents by 2030, Queens College President Muyskens needs to focus his attention on his core mission.—Dave Kulick (Flushing on the Hill)

## Special Neighborhood Preservation Meeting

### The Queens Civic Congress presents a Neighborhood Preservation Panel

**Date: Tuesday February 26th 7:00 pm**

**Location: Atlas Park Shopping Center Community Room, 71-19  
80th Street, Suite 8-312 –Glendale**

The Panel will include **Herb Reynolds**, a leader of the successful effort by Sunnyside Gardens to obtain landmark district designation and **Simeon Bankoff**, executive director of the Historic Districts Council and the Municipal Arts Society. Council Member **Jessica Lappin**, chair of the Council Landmarks Committee has been invited.

Civics that are seeking landmark designation are encouraged to participate in this exciting event. For more information, call QCC Preservation Chairperson, Kathy Masi, (718) 275-9771 (after 6:00 pm) or QCC executive vice president Pat Dolan, (718) 263-1760. - Patrica Dolan (Kew Gardens Hills)

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## Coastal Insurance Position Testimony

On October 30, VP Barbara Larkin Testified for QCC before the NYC Council Committee on Consumer Affairs to urge protections for homeowners from insurance companies' cancellations of Homeowners Policies for many residing in or near coastal communities. QCC supports Resolution No. 430-A which calls upon the NYS Legislature to pass legislation that would lower the percentage of homeowners insurance policies that a company may cancel or refuse to renew without the approval of the NYS Insurance Department.

Last year Allstate Insurance Company canceled or did not renew 28,000 homeowners' policies in NYC, Long Island and Westchester. Since this number represents less than 4% of Allstate's total policies in NYS, the company slips under the State Insurance Law threshold to notify the NYS Department of Insurance of its plans or take any steps to ensure that the company's rejection of this clientele is conducted in a manner that minimizes the disruption sure to result when so many homeowners abruptly find themselves having to obtain replacement coverage. Additionally, under current law, Allstate faces no requirement to demonstrate any kind of financial rationale for dropping these policyholders, many of whom have had coverage for decades, leaving them to find coverage elsewhere. S.2269, introduced by State Senator Klein, would require insurers to demonstrate potential risk or loss to justify cancellations or non-renewals before securing approval by the Department.

The QCC finds this legislation would protect consumers and ensure stability in the insurance market and supports its enactment. QCC has already discussed introducing a companion bill in the State Assembly, and Barbara has spoken to Assemblywoman Audrey Pheffer, Chair of Committee on Consumer Affairs, and she has confirmed she and her members are working on similar legislation. The New York City Council's message of support, as demonstrated through the passage of Resolution 430-A, would help this cause greatly.

## Emerald Awards Recognizes QCCers

The Queens Coalition for Parks and Green Spaces, and New Yorkers for Parks, presents its fourth annual Emerald Award ceremony honoring several volunteers for outstanding service. Honorees include QCC members— Bruno and Lucy DeFranceschi (North Bellerose Civic) and Carsten Glaser (Kissena Park Civic).

Date: Thursday November 29th at 7:30. Tickets are \$30.

Place: Holy Trinity Lutheran Church—246-55 87<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bellrose

Full course dinner prepared by Skalberg caterers, music, door prizes, raffles.

To RSVP and for more information email [Herr281761@aol.com](mailto:Herr281761@aol.com).

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## More Green and No Hard Yards

In response to QCC's longstanding charges that widespread paving of yards is an environmental and aesthetic blight, the City Planning recently proposed a zoning text amendment that will limit paving. Also, in response QCC, the Department proposed to limit height of walls and walls and fences in R-1—R-5 residence districts.

In residence districts R-1 through R-5, property owners will be required to landscape front yards based on frontage ranging from 20% for narrow lots (less than 20' wide) to 50% or lots 60 feet or wider. Parking in R-1 and R-2 front yards will be banned. The new rule will reduce the increasingly frequent practice of paving over front yards in some residential neighborhoods.

The new zoning amendment also limits the height of fences to no more than four feet along frontages and six feet along the property lines that **do not** face the street line—another QCC platform demand.

And finally, the text amendment will protect corner lots from overdevelopment by requiring side lots of at least 20 feet and will also require a 30 foot open area behind every building segment (rowhouse) to ensure a useable rear yard for all homes. Under present rules, corner lots were defined to include all lots within 100 feet of a corner.

Another text amendment requires property owners to plant additional trees in the sidewalk strip adjacent to lots where new construction or substantial alterations occur.

"QCC welcomes these text amendments, which come after years of QCC's advocacy. QCC will continue to advocate for a ban on paving rear yards as well. While we would prefer an outright ban on fences and walls on properties in low-density neighborhoods, the text amendments will greatly benefit Queens neighborhoods," said former QCC president Sean Walsh. "We are especially pleased with the new requirements for yards on corner lots."

The public comment period for the amendments will close on November 15 and the new rules are expected to become effective by the end of the year. The proposed text amendments are available at [www.nyc.gov/planning](http://www.nyc.gov/planning). Demands for the new rules are part of the QCC Platform 2030.

-Patricia Dolan (Kew Gardens Hills)

## More on Park Concessions

QCC, joined by major advocacy groups for parks, testified at long delayed Council Parks Committee hearing in October.

QCC executive vice-president Pat Dolan called for reforms of current concession rules to require timely public review of major concessions including, marinas, parking lots, large scale restaurants, and other businesses in parks. QCC also encouraged the Council to consider allowing concession revenues to be devoted to maintenance and operations of the park generating the revenue. At the same hearing, QCC supported calls for greater public oversight of private businesses that manage parks.—Patricia Dolan (Kew Gardens Hills)

## FEMA Reminder

**November 16, 2007** is the last day for people to register with FEMA to be eligible to apply for funding to pay for their losses from the August 8th storm and make repairs. FEMA has flyers available in the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, Creole, Hindi, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Urdu and Yiddish. For more information call Lisa Safier at 212-437-0463.

## Meeting Schedule

All meetings, excluding Legislative Reception, unless otherwise noted take place at:

Union Plaza Nursing Home, 33-23 Union Street [five blocks north of Northern Boulevard]

*February, 4, 2008, 7:30 p.m.*

### **Queens Civic Congress Executive Committee**

at Union Plaza Nursing Home, 33-23 Union Street Flushing

*Tuesday, February 26, 2008, 7:00 p.m.*

### **Queens Civic Congress Historic Preservation and Landmarks Workshop**

Atlas Park Community Room, 71-19 80th Street, Suite 8-312, Glendale

*Monday, March 31, 2008*

### **Queens Civic Congress – Zoning Forum, including R1-2 and Row Houses**

at Kew Gardens Community Center, 80-02 Kew Gardens Road, Suite 202, at Union Turnpike and Queens Boulevard, Kew Gardens, NY 11415

*Sunday, April 6, 2008, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.*

### **Queens Civic Congress biannual Luncheon, Invitation to Governor Eliot Spitzer to Keynote [watch for more details and honoree]**

at Antun's, 96-43 Springfield Boulevard, Queens Village, NY 11429

*Sunday, May 18, 2008, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.*

### **Legislative Forum: Real Estate Tax Reform**

sponsored by Queens Civic Congress and Northeast Queens Jewish Community Council at the Samuel Field Y, 58-20 Little Neck Parkway, Little Neck, NY 11362

Includes Free *light* breakfast courtesy of Parker Jewish Institute

## 2007 Committee Chairs

Audit.....	Phil Ragusa, CPA
By Laws.....	Albert Greenblatt
Aviation & Noise.....	Seymour Schwartz
City Charter & Governance.....	James Walsh
Community Facilities.....	Tyler Cassell
Coops & Condominiums.....	Marc Haken
Creedmoor Task Force.....	Bernard Aquilino
Economic Development.....	Chris Collett
City Infrastructure & Capital Program.....	Dorothy Woo
Congress Platform.....	Richard Hellenbrecht
Health & Human Services.....	Kevin Forrestal
Higher Education.....	Kimberly Francis
Legislation.....	Paul Kerzner
Newsletter.....	David Kulick
Nominations.....	Helene Zaro
Parks & Cultural Affairs.....	Audrey Lucas & Kim Ohanian
Planning & Land Use.....	Patricia Dolan
Public Education.....	Edwin Westley
Public Safety.....	Mary Anderson
Historical Preservation & Landmarking.....	Kathy Masi
Tenants & Affordable Housing.....	Florence Fisher
Transportation.....	Jim Trent
Workshops.....	Robert Harris
Zoning & Code Enforcement.....	Joseph Amoroso & Harbachan Singh

## Queens Civic Congress Membership as of November 2007

Association of Old Forest Hills ♦ Auburndale Improvement Association ♦ Bayside Civic Database ♦ Bayside Clear-Spring Council ♦ Bayside Hills Civic Association ♦ Bayswater Civic Association ♦ Bay Terrace Community Alliance, Inc. ♦ Bellaire-BellVill Civic Association ♦ Belle Harbor Property Owners Association ♦ Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association ♦ Bellerose Hillside Civic Association ♦ Bell Park Manor Terrace Community Council ♦ Bowne Park Civic Association ♦ Briarwood Community Association ♦ Cambria Heights Civic Association ♦ Civic Association of Utopia Estates ♦ C.O.M.E.T. (Communities of Maspeth-Elmhurst Together) ♦ Concerned Citizens of Laurelton ♦ Cornucopia Society ♦ Creedmoor Civic Association ♦ Deerfield Area Association ♦ Doug-Bay Manor Civic Association ♦ Douglas Manor Association ♦ Douglaston Civic Association ♦ Dutch Kills Civic Association of Long Island City ♦ East Flushing Civic Association ♦ Federated Block Associations of Laurelton ♦ Federation of Civic Associations of Southeast Queens ♦ Floral Park Community Council ♦ Flushing Heights Civic Association ♦ Flushing on the Hill Taxpayers Association ♦ Forest Hills Chamber of Commerce ♦ Forest Hills Crescents Association ♦ Forest Hills-Van Court Association ♦ Fresh Meadows Homeowners Association ♦ Georgetown Mews ♦ Glendale Civic Association of Queens ♦ Glen Oaks Village Owners, Inc. ♦ Greater Astoria Historical Society ♦ Greater Whitestone Taxpayers Civic Association ♦ Harding Heights Civic Association ♦ Hillcrest Estates Civic Association ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #1 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #2 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #3 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #4 ♦ Hollis 11423 Block Association ♦ Hollis Hills Civic Association ♦ Holliswood Civic Association ♦ Hollis Park Gardens Association ♦ Holly Civic Association ♦ Hyde Park Gardens Cooperative ♦ Jackson Heights Beautification Group ♦ Jamaica Estates Association ♦ Jamaica Hill Community Association ♦ Juniper Park Civic Association ♦ Kew Gardens Civic Association ♦ Kew Gardens Hills Homeowners Association ♦ Kissena Park Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Bay Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Pines ♦ Long Island City Alliance ♦ Malba Civic Association ♦ Meadowlark Gardens Owners ♦ Middle Village Property Owners Association ♦ Mitchell Linden Civic Association ♦ Neponsit Property Owners Association ♦ Newtown Civic Association ♦ North Bellerose Civic Association ♦ North Flushing Civic Association ♦ North Hills Estates Civic Association ♦ Northwest Clearview Homeowners Association ♦ Norwood Civic Association ♦ Oakland Terrace/ Gardens Community Council ♦ Off Broadway Homeowners Association ♦ Our Neighborhood Improvement Association ♦ Parkway Village Historical Society ♦ Queensboro Hill Neighborhood Association ♦ Queens Colony Civic Association ♦ Queens Community Civic Corp. ♦ Queens Village Civic Association ♦ Ramblersville-Hawtree Civic Association ♦ Richmond Hill Historical Society ♦ Ridgewood Property Owners and Civic Association ♦ Rockaway Park Homeowners/Residents ♦ Rocky Hill Civic Association ♦ Rosedale Civic Association ♦ Royal Ranch Association. ♦ Southeast Queens Concerned Neighbors ♦ South Ozone Park West Association Civic ♦ Springfield/Rosedale Community Action Association ♦ Station Road Civic Assoc. of Auburndale ♦ Sunnyside Gardens/Harrison Place Homeowners ♦ Surrey Estates Civic Association ♦ Union Turnpike Merchants Association ♦ United Forties Civic Association ♦ United Mutual Veterans Housing, Inc. ♦ Waldheim Neighborhood Association ♦ Wayanda Civic Association ♦ West Cunningham Park Civic Association ♦ Westmoreland Association ♦ Woodside Community Council