



**IN YOUR OPINION:  
Time For Action**

Thursday, June 5, 2008

To The Editor:

The Auburndale Improvement Association, Inc., the oldest Civic Association in Queens County, has been actively lobbying the New York City Planning Commission for contextual rezoning of the Auburndale community for the past several years. Although we have received assurances of the Commission that Auburndale would be rezoned, there has been no progress in even beginning the process.

As the zoning and housing chair of this organization, I have witnessed first hand the effect that this inaction has had in Auburndale. Since some surrounding communities have been contextually rezoned, certain developers have zeroed in to the Auburndale community to take advantage of its vulnerability by constructing out of character buildings and multi-family structures that overpower the existing housing stock. Large areas of this community are currently zoned with designations that permit too dense development. This affects the quality of life in these areas and puts this severe strain on the infrastructure. If these areas were zoned with the appropriate zoning classification, the overdevelopment problems would be mitigated.

In 2005, we were promised that the rezoning work would begin at the beginning of 2006. That did not happen. Then we were told that we would have to wait for the Douglaston-Little Neck rezoning initiative to be passed. It passed. Nothing happened in Auburndale. Next, we were told that the Jamaica Rezoning plan was taking up the time of most of the Queens office of City Planning. That rezoning plan had been held up for months because many residents did not approve of the upzoning aspects of that plan. That plan has now passed. Auburndale still waits. Other areas of northeast Queens like North Flushing, Oakland Gardens, Hollis Hills and sections of Bellerose, also are waiting to be rezoned.

At our regularly scheduled association meetings, the question of rezoning frequently comes up. People want to know when their turn will come. Many are at the ready to volunteer to help survey the community in order to assist City Planning with the task of rezoning. Hundreds have signed letters addressed to the Planning Commission pleading for rezoning to curb overdevelopment of their areas. Copies of these letters were sent to all local elected officials. And still no progress toward rezoning.

The time for action in Auburndale and the other non-rezoned communities is now before they become completely unrecognizable due to inappropriate development.

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