



The Next Queens Civic Congress Meeting:

Monday, November 17 at 7:30 p.m.

A vote on whether to join the lawsuit on term limits (see page 7 inside); Also: Organizing new civics, School Governance, Agenda for Albany, Aqueduct, Willets Point, and more.

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

Saturday, December 6th at 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

11th Annual

Legislative Reception

See page 3 for exciting details

Articles Inside This Congressional:

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President's Message

Dear Members,

Queens Civic Congress welcomes some progress on the downzoning. Our stalwart planning leader Patricia Dolan provides an update on page five. In addition, it looks like our call for a new R1-2A zone, providing similar protections where R2A replaced R2 zones, will be introduced soon. Queens Civic Congress continues to advocate and monitor progress on zoning text reforms and smarter zoning that better serve Queens communities.

BUDGET BLUES

The State and City budget crises, in part due to the meltdown cursing the financial markets and industries it support, and the continuing financial shortfalls experienced at the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, make plain the need for community voices. Make your voice, your communities voice heard. Your elected officials and the agency heads who need to respond to them need to know our priorities on programs, projects and, most importantly, revenues (aka taxes, fees, etc.). My personal mantra is first fund the services we need and then the administrators and above; too often when government tightens its belt, it cuts the worker who provides our service and keeps on those who serve us not at all. Queens Civic Congress continues to advocate against any hike in our property taxes (see page four) and call on City Hall to advance our reforms; we also question the “draconian” cuts to programs serving our seniors(see page six). The coalition Queens Civic Congress joined last year under the leadership of my predecessor, Sean Walsh, last month submitted proposals to the “Ravitch Commission,” appointed by Governor Paterson; Queens Civic Congress recommendations stand out highlighted in prior *Congressional*s and at www.queensciviccongress.com. Ultimately the legislation decides after receiving the Ravitch proposals due December 5; make sure your state senators and assembly members know where you stand; many news reports suggest a new push for tolls (aka congestion tax) on our free East River bridges which Queens Civic Congress opposes.

TERM LIMITS

Queens Civic Congress advocates, following a vote of our members in September opposed any change in the two-term limit for city elected officials by legislation (as opposed to voter referendum). This month, we consider a recommendation to join or support a lawsuit that questions the legality of the local law passed by a narrow vote in the Council and signed into law earlier this month by the Mayor. See page 7 for the proposed motion. Find more material, including a copy of our statements and testimonies on this issue, and the lawsuit at www.queensciviccongress.org.

I hope to see everyone at our November 17 meeting and our Legislative Reception next month. Best wishes for Thanksgiving and the upcoming holiday season.

Sincerely,

Corey

Corey B. Bearak (718-343-6779; Bearak@aol.com)

**Queens Civic Congress
Foundation presents...**
*11th Annual
Legislative Reception*



Saturday, December 6, 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 \$25 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 2008.

Reservations by November 29
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

New Borough Building Commissioner

The word from Staten Island: We just may be very pleased. New commissioner Ira Gluckman is a "gentleman" and "he is as responsive as anyone can be given the nature of the DOB system."....."He's a good man"..... The Staten Island bottom line: "sorry to see him leave".

Excerpts from the October 31 NYC Department of Buildings news release follows:

BUILDINGS COMMISSIONER ROBERT LIMANDRI ANNOUNCES EXECUTIVE STAFF REORGANIZATION

First Deputy Commissioner Appointed, Borough Commissioners Rotated to New Boroughs Buildings Commissioner Robert LiMandri announced an executive staff reorganization today designed to further standardize the Department’s operations across the five boroughs. The reorganization, which will take effect next month, will shift experienced professionals into new leadership roles to ensure builders, developers and property owners follow construction safety standards and help better protect millions of New Yorkers.

As part of this reorganization, Commissioner LiMandri has appointed Fatma Amer as First Deputy Commissioner. Amer, a New York State licensed Professional Engineer, will oversee all borough offices and work to ensure consistent inspection and plan examination protocols are employed across the City. She has served the City for more than 25 years, most recently as the Department’s Deputy Commissioner for Technical Affairs and Chief Code Engineer. Under Local Law 39 of 2008, the Department’s Commissioner or First Deputy Commissioner must be a licensed architect or engineer.

The following reassignments will take effect on November 17, 2008:

Ira Gluckman, R.A., Queens Borough Commissioner – Ira Gluckman, who is a New York State registered Architect, joined the Department in 2006 as Deputy Staten Island Borough Commissioner and later became Borough Commissioner in January 2007. Prior to joining the Department, Gluckman operated his own firm, Gluckman & Scire-Chianetta Architects, and was a Field Inspector for Merritt & Harris Engineers, where he worked on construction projects for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Rest in Peace – Nancy Cataldi

From the The Richmond Hill Historical Society:

We are very distressed to report that the Society's President, Nancy Cataldi, died unexpectedly yesterday at her home in Richmond Hill.Nancy's death leaves a terrible void in our community, our organization, and our personal lives, and we cannot imagine how that void will ever be filled.

Donations in memory of Nancy may be made to Bobbi and the Strays.

This is a major tragedy in the preservation world of Queens and NYC.

- Jim Trent, Treasurer, Queens Civic Congress; President, Queens County Farm Museum

Queens Civic Congress to Mayor: No to Real Property Tax Hike

Letter to the Mayor, November 6, 2008

Dear Mr. Mayor:

On behalf of Queens Civic Congress, I write concerning the need to recast much of your revenue proposals to balance the City budget mid-year and anticipate revenue shortfalls in the next fiscal year. Nearly one month ago Queens Civic Congress addressed your administration's talk of what would be nothing less than a real property tax gouge and proposed a sound and practical alternative. Your administration re-acted with silence and ignorance and moved forward with the plans to hike our taxes. Further and with absolutely no notice, you stopped the \$400 rebate checks New Yorkers expected to receive last month. Queens Civic Congress, in its CIVIC2030 platform, outlines revenue and fiscal reforms more sensible and preferable than the same old menu of moldy measures announced one day after our nation made history. Time still exists to give the careful and merited consideration to Queens Civic Congress revenue proposals, including the Queens Civic Congress real property tax system reform that also would re-introduce equity and fairness. Your administration can make a real difference by advancing this change for good rather than a stale resort to hiking property taxes across the board.

As I wrote just over one month ago, "Queens Civic Congress – in testimonies, statements, other advocacy and, most recently, our "REAL Property Tax Reform" forum – advocates an improvement that bring equity, fairness and transparency to the City's antiquated, inequitable and unfair real estate tax regime AND nets the City some five billion dollars – yes, \$5,000,000,000, without gouging middle and working class homeowners, businesses and tenants."

Queens Civic Congress advocates most of the net revenues to help the city strategically reform its tax system, address long-term borrowing issues and re-structure its out of whack budget. Clearly, this sound reform also covers the need to address core services for our needy.

It remains clear from much can be done to raise revenue and at the same time give the middle and working class (homeowners and tenants) a break. For more details, [click here](#). Instead of taxing New Yorkers, many of them struggling in tough economic times, implement the Queens Civic Congress REAL Property Tax Reform. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Corey Bearak

President, Queens Civic Congress

Zoning Marches On

Despite an almost glacial pace in 2008, the Department of City Planning continued rezoning Queens neighborhoods. Dutch Kills, on the edge of booming Long Island City, zoned for mixed manufacturing-residential use, has been invaded in recent years by hotel developers. New zoning tools were used to rezone much of Dutch Kills, leaving the wide streets available for development while protecting narrow streets. Most residential properties will be protected from further overdevelopment. In Rockaway Park, civic leaders pressed for a downzoning of their part of the Rockaway Penninsular and succeeded in protecting the residential enclaves around Beach 116 Street. Many locals remain dissatisfied with the Department of City Planning's upzoning of the Beach 116 commercial corridor, which they believe cannot sustain increased development. Waldheim, south of Downtown Flushing, was rezoned after a decade-long fight. The plan, advanced by the Waldheim Association with assistance from neighboring Kissena Park Civic, will slow overdevelopment of one of Queens's oldest residential neighborhoods. Laurelton's rezoning plan was certified during the summer and is now undergoing public review.

- PATRICIA DOLAN, QCC EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND PLANNING AND LAND USE CHAIR

Draconian Budget Cuts to Aging and Social Work Services are Indefensible

From Bobbie Sackman, M.S.W., Director of Public Policy, Council of Senior Centers and Services of NYC

The Bloomberg administration proposes \$37 million in cuts to DFTA which include senior center closings, and elimination of a sixth weekend meal given out on Friday at senior centers, mental health social work program, renovation funds, across-the-board cuts and of City Council discretionary funds which pay for core operating costs of senior programs. This also means the loss of elder abuse services, intergenerational programs, transportation, ESL for elderly immigrants and more. DFTA's budget 75% city-funded, is the human service agency most dependent on city money. Losing \$37 million sets back at least a decade in progress made to build a community-based system. Forcing seniors to lose a decade of progress is inappropriate social and economic policy as nutrition and other preventive services allow seniors to age in place while saving medical costs. (Read entire article at <http://www.naswnyc.org/g3.html>)

Queens Civic Congress Urges Mayor Bloomberg to Save Services for Our Seniors

October 30, 2008

Dear Mr. Mayor:

The Queens Civic Congress is a coalition of more than 100 community and neighborhood based organizations that work on behalf of Queens' two million residents, at least 350,000 of whom are over 65. We are writing to you out of concern for the threatened cuts in federal, state and city funding for senior services. In these economically challenging times, when the cost of living is soaring, thousands of Queens seniors are relying more every day on community based senior programs and support.

At a time when the cost of food, fuel, transportation and housing are rising, cutting funds for services to the most vulnerable among us is not a thoughtful response to economic conditions. It is rather an expression of a heartless lack of concern and respect for the New Yorkers who have given so much to their city and country.

The Queens Civic Congress is troubled that that services for seniors like community based centers, home delivered meals, case management and transportation are regarded as first on the list of targets for the bean counters in your administration. Coming on the heels of the Department for the Aging's decision to centralize services for seniors in the face of unanimous expert opinion that stresses community based services for older Americans, these draconian budget cuts are indefensible.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
(signed) Corey B. Bearak, President

Last Call - Queens Coalition for Parks and Green Spaces Emerald Awards

Thursday, November 20, 2008, 7:15 p.m.

at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 246-55 87th Ave., at Commonwealth Blvd., Bellerose NY 11426.

\$30 per person. Please R.S.V.P. By November 15. Sponsored by our Friends at New Yorkers for Parks. 2008 Honorees: Anthony Zalak, Pullis Farm Cemetery Historical Landmark; Dana Matteson, Friends of Gantry Neighborhood Parks; Don Dodelson, Friends of Gantry Neighborhood Parks; Yvonne Richardson, Friends of Roy Wilkins Park; Katie Ellman, Greenshores NYC/Astoria-LIC Waterfront Parks Alliance; Carol Rupp, Friends of Ft. Totten Parks. The Altenburg Family; The Cornucopia Society. Tickets are going fast.

Queens Civic Congress Calendar

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]

Meetings of the Executive Committee are open to all QCC members and take place at 8:00 p.m. (unless otherwise noted) If you wish to add an agenda item, please call Corey Bearak (343-6779) or email Bearak@aol.com at least 24 hours in advance.

******Updated 2009 Meeting Schedule******

Monday, February 2, 2009 7:30 p.m.

(Open Executive Committee meeting followed by Forum on Education at 8:00 p.m.)

Monday, March 16, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

(Regular Meeting and Economic Development Forum)

Monday, March 30, 2009, 7:30 p.m. (note date change)

(Zoning to enhance our neighborhoods and Landmarking to preserve historic structures and districts before we lose them)

Monday, April 20, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

(Queens Civic Congress Regular meeting featuring Buildings Commissioner LiMandri)

Sunday, May 17, 9:30 a.m.

(Legislative Forum 2009: The Race for Mayor)

Tuesday, May 19, 2009, 8:30 p.m.

(Queens Civic Congress Regular Meeting and Parks Forum co-sponsored by Queens Coalition for Parks and Green Spaces and the Belle Harbor Property Owners Association @ PS 114 – the Belle Harbor School, Cronston Avenue and Beach 134 Street in The Rockaways)

Monday, June 15, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

(Queens Civic Congress Regular Meeting: Transportation Commissioner Janette Sadik-Khan)

Proposed Motion to Join Lawsuit Overturning Term Limits Extension:

Motion by *President Emeritus/Founder* Sean Walsh: *Queens Civic Congress signs on as a formal plaintiff if the current plaintiffs agree and if they do not in the alternative submits an affidavit of support.*

Explanation Submitted by the maker of the motion: I did not agree with term limits when it was raised in the two previous public referendums but more than anything I respect the democracy in which I live. I understood and could empathize with the voters frustration in enacting the term limits. How must those voters feel now that their votes have been thrown in the gutter? The most significant democratic principle is the vote of each citizen and the second most important democratic principle is the form of our government. Without trust or faith in one or both our democracy is doomed. We can not let this injustice of tyranny go answered.

If you want to change the term limits as I would like to do (two term limits for executives only) then have a public referendum. Reject the tyrant and junta government at city hall that has fallen in love with the power of being driven to the express stop on the Lex line and then driven the last few feet to his office -- a true common man. He has sought to divide this city with congestion pricing and deny elderly seniors a hot meal to live on. I can no longer recognize the Mayor or City Council as legitimate government.

2008 Committee Chairs

Audit / Phil Ragusa, CPA
By Laws / Albert Greenblatt
Aviation & Noise / Richard Hellenbrecht
City Infrastructure & Capital Program / Dorothy Woo
Community & Civic Outreach / Robert Harris & Audrey Lucas
Community Facilities / Tyler Cassell
Congress Platform / Seymour Schwartz
Co-ops & Condos / Marc Haken
Creedmoor Task Force / Bernard Aquilino
Economic Development / Chris Collett
Education / Edwin Westley
Health & Human Services / Kevin Forrestal
Historical Preservation & Landmarking / Paul Graziano
Legislation / Paul Kerzner
Newsletter / David Kulick
Nominations/ Helene Zaro
Parks & Cultural Affairs / Barbara Larkin & Kim Ohanian
Planning & Land Use / Patricia Dolan
Public Safety / Nagassar Ramgarib
Tenants & Affordable Housing / Florence Fisher
Transportation / Jim Trent & Kathy Masi
Zoning & Code Enforcement / Joseph Amoroso & Harbachan Singh

Queens Civic Congress Membership

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 Elmhurst Corona Civic Association ♦ 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 ♦ Kew Gardens Improvement 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 Neighborhood Association ♦ Oakland Terrace/ Gardens Community Council ♦ Off Broadway Homeowners Association ♦ Our Neighborhood Improvement Association ♦ Our Neighbors Civic Association of Ozone Park, Inc. ♦ 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