



Queens Civic Congress

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QUEENS CIVICS SUPPORT BAYSIDE REZONING

Prepared and Presented

By

Patricia Dolan, Executive Vice President for Zoning & Planning

to

City Planning Commission

[C 050 149-ZMQ]

The Queens Civic Congress is a one-hundred member coalition of neighborhood based civic organizations representing homeowners, condo and co-op owners and tenants living in every part of Queens County.

The Queens Civic Congress is pleased to support the zoning proposal by the Department of City Planning to appropriately preserve and maintain the low-density fabric of Bayside's currently R-2 zoned blocks.

The new R-2A will save Bayside residents from abuses of the Zoning Resolution that attack the very character of the community they cherish so dearly: the blend of modest homes that fit small parcels of property, lending many blocks the charm of early 20th century planned towns.

Existing R-2 land use regulations do not sufficiently protect many low-density neighborhoods. Loopholes in the 1961 Zoning Resolution encourage speculators and developers to promote the almost universally loathed and detested "McMansion," most recently ridiculed by the New York Times as a "double cheeseburger." These behemoths, on small lots, hulk over their neighbors, blocking sun and light and robbing their neighbors of their privacy.

Less than ten months ago, hundreds of Queens residents demonstrated their anger at what was happening to their lives on the steps of Queens Borough Hall. They expressed their anguish at what overdevelopment is doing to their low-density neighborhoods. Supported by many Queens residents and their elected officials, they are deeply troubled at the loss of the physical character and fabric that make Queens communities like theirs great places to live and raise families. The Queens Civic Congress looks at the R-2A text change and the related mapping

actions as the first of a series of rezonings to correct a great wrong against too many of our Queens communities. The Congress stood with these communities last year and continues to stand with them today.

The R-2A text responds to the abuses created by the loopholes in the Zoning Resolution that allow basement/first floors to go uncounted and attic space undercounted. Most neighborhoods currently zoned R-2 could benefit from this protection as well.

We urge the Planning Commission to use its authority to implement zoning changes that will eliminate “exempt” space in R1, the current R-2 and all R-3 districts as well as R4A, R-4B and R-4-1 low density contextual districts. Communities that wish to benefit from the same protections being provided to Bayside by the R-2A designation must be given the same protections in a timely fashion.

The Commission knows logjams in zoning applications occur at the beginning of the process within the Department of City Planning. The Queens Civic Congress urges the Commission to direct the Department to expedite certification of zoning applications from low-density districts seeking the new R-2A designation, especially those from neighborhoods that recently completed the rezoning process. Closing the same loopholes in the R-1, R-2, R-3 and in the R-4 contextual zones will equally protect these neighborhoods from the abuses that afflict neighborhoods across the borough and city.

The Congress urges the Commission to close a longstanding loophole in the Zoning Resolution: the absence of a zone for one family occupancy row houses, the most common low-scale housing configuration in the boroughs outside Manhattan. The Congress urges the Planning Department to create a one-family occupancy row house district that will give those low scale neighborhoods the same protections afforded other low-density communities.

The Queens Civic Congress thanks the Bayside community leadership and the public officials who worked long and hard for their neighbors, the members of Community Board 11, Community Board 11 Chairman Jerry Iannece, Senator Frank Padavan; Council Member Tony Avella; City Planning Department Queens director John Young; Queens Civic Congress zoning chairperson Paul Graziano and especially Brixton Doyle for their vision, commitment and dedication to the best of Queens--and of New York.

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The entire Queens Civic Congress Platform may be viewed on the internet at:
<http://www.queensciviccongress.org/Platform/final2004Platform-forvote.pdf>

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