



*The Next Queens Civic Congress Meeting:*

**Monday, September 15 at 7:30 p.m.**

**Agenda:**

- 1) Nominations Committee Report**
- 2) Civic Forum: Term Limits**
- 3) Assembly Member Audrey Pheffer**
- 4) Invest to Save on your electric bills**

**Queens County Farm Museum,  
72-50 Little Neck Parkway, ¼ mile north of Union Tpke.**

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## President's Message

Welcome back from as we move from summer to a beautiful Autumn as we commence our 2008-09 year at the Queen County Farm Museum. Once again, Queens Civic Congress plans an ambitious program from updating our dynamic CIVIC2030 platform to a series of forums on important issues, from informal conversations with those who seek to lead our borough and city in 2010 (election next year) to a May forum that we expect to feature all those who wish to be our Mayor.

Congratulations Parkway Village residents who prevailed against JP Morgan Chase which had refused to allow financing the development needs to improvement its heating system. The Juniper Park Civic Association (JPCA) pulled one out for the civic movement with a victory over notorious developer (best known for destroying the landmarked RKO Keith in Flushing) who illegally constructed a house at 57-39 Mazeau Street in Maspeth in 2006. The NYC Buildings Department determined the house was built contrary to its approved plans and in violation of the community's R4-1 zoning. The developer removed the top story and a section on the side of the house that encroached on the lot next door. At that time I stated: Queens Civic Congress calls on all would-be violators of the City's Zoning laws and its Building code to be on notice. No excuses. Either comply with the law and the code or any illegal structure you build will need to be cut down to its rightful and legal size. This simple message should resonate throughout the industry.

We need to continue our focus on our beautiful nabes. As EVP Patricia Dolan wrote in the NY Times this summer, "Queens's residential neighborhoods are still caught up in a building boom whose major accomplishment seems to be tearing down older homes and replacing them with the behemoths described in your article. While the new houses may be legal, paving over every square inch of open space and walling in the product to create a fortress is not. Residents of these neighborhoods have been fighting for a minor change in a zoning resolution that would save these graceful older neighborhoods – but the Department of City Planning has been too busy accommodating developers whose plans are closer to the mayor's vision of an ever-growing city than the aspirations of longtime homeowners in Queens."

Queens Civic Congress welcomed a May 13 reply from City Planning Chair Amanda Burden, the first response in at least three years to numerous letters from our members regarding needed neighborhood rezonings and new districts. While Queens communities welcomed an acceleration of protective initiatives in 2005, and the commencement of ULURP on rezonings noted in Planning Chair Burden's letter (Dutch Kills, The Rockaways, Waldheim and Laurelton), the pace of these efforts took a considerable backseat to development projects that consume many of the staff and other resources needed to continue the efforts that ceased since late 2005. We shared this view with the Mayor: urging City Hall "to accelerate protective efforts to preserve under- and unprotected Queens neighborhoods."

Too many Planning Department actions to date suggest that City Hall lacks information it ought to be provided. Queens rezonings did not just happen. Queens Civic Congress, its predecessor organizations and its member organizations have advocated for specific neighborhoods for more than two decades. The first occurred under then Borough President Shulman during the Koch Administration; another 25 came about during the Giuliani administration. While City Planning Department continues at its current slower than a snail's pace, too many blocks in too many neighborhoods get overbuilt into "non-conformance." The Koch administration created low density contextual zones in less than six months; no reasonable explanation exists why this administration resists these clearly needed zoning reforms: "One Family Narrow Lot", "One Family Row House" and "R1A".

Sincerely,

*Corey*

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



# Queens Civic Congress Position on *Term Limits*

**Approved by the Executive Committee  
for  
Consideration by the Membership  
Monday, September 15, 2008**

1. Queens Civic Congress – representing the civic movement in the borough of Queens – calls on ALL public officials and those who aspire to public office to commit to the use of referendum to attempt any change in the City Charter enacted in that matter, and state that position publicly.
2. The public voted two separate times, first to enact term limits and second to reject its repeal. Consistent with this position, any change in term limits, from revocation to extending or reducing the number of terms must only be enacted by the same process of voter referendum that enacted the two-term limits on municipal office holder.
3. Queens Civic Congress takes no position on the substance of term limits; some in the civic movement support term limits; some oppose it; others support it for some offices but not all. Queens Civic Congress says “let the voters decide.”
4. Simply put, Queens Civic Congress opposes any plan to change the term limit law as currently exists except through a public referendum.
5. If City Hall and the City Council seek to repeal or modify terms limits, anything other than a voter referendum smacks of illegitimacy.

*\*\*\*In light of the public discussion about changing term limits for City elected officials (Mayor, Public Advocate, Comptroller, Borough President, City Council Member), members of the civic movement sought out the position of Queens Civic Congress. Our CIVIC2030 and prior platforms did not speak to the issue. We researched our public statements and meeting minutes and found no position. There may have been positions by our predecessor regional civic councils that merged to create Queens Civic Congress more than a decade ago. (As you may recall the public referendums enacting term limits occurred before the civic movement founded Queens Civic Congress.) The Executive Committee recommends the five point position to the membership. Queens Civic Congress will publicize the adopted position statement, including on our [www.queensciviccongress.org](http://www.queensciviccongress.org) website.\*\*\**

## Grants Available

Citizens Committee for NYC offers small grants for volunteer-led projects that improve and strengthen communities, and that involve neighbors in a meaningful way.

Its grants are for grassroots community groups in economically under-resourced neighborhoods. It does not award grants to individuals, agencies with paid staff, religious, fraternal, or partisan organizations.

### **New Yorkers for Better Neighborhoods Awards:**

Through New Yorkers for Better Neighborhoods, Citizens Committee offers grants of \$500 to \$3,000 to grassroots community groups in economically under-resourced neighborhoods to work on creative community improvement projects that bring neighbors together. Download the application [300 KB PDF] at <http://www.citizensnyc.org/grants.attachment/nybn/NYBN.pdf>

Applications are accepted twice a year. The next application deadline is September 30, 2008.

### **Mollie Parnis Dress up Your School Awards:**

Through the Mollie Parnis Dress Up Your School Awards, Citizens Committee offers grants of \$500 to \$3,000 to support student led projects that beautify schools or neighborhoods immediately surrounding schools.

Download the application [300 KB PDF] at <http://www.citizensnyc.org/grants.attachment/mpdys/MPDYS.pdf>

Applications are accepted twice a year. The next application deadline is September 30, 2008.

### **Mollie Parnis Dress up Your Neighborhood Contest:**

Through the Mollie Parnis Dress Dress Up Your Neighborhood Contest, Citizens Committee offers \$1,000 awards to 12 grassroots community groups in economically under-resourced neighborhoods to work on beautification projects that bring neighbors together. The winning group gets an additional \$3,000 to use toward another community building project. For more information, email Citizens Committee at [grants@citizensnyc.org](mailto:grants@citizensnyc.org) or call Lixian Hantover or Arif Ullah at (212) 989-0909.

Applications are accepted once a year. The next application deadline will be March 2009.

## Regional Transportation Plan Workshops

### **Sponsored by the New York Metropolitan Transportation Council**

*"This is your chance to help plan transportation improvements in your community for the next 25 years.  
Your concerns and issues matter!"*

Two meetings will be held on the same day at each location to include as many people as possible. The September 18 workshops will be webcast live and archived for viewing at your convenience on [www.NYMTC.org](http://www.NYMTC.org), where you can also find more information and share your comments, ideas and suggestions through October 31, 2008.

**Queens Meetings: Friday, September 19, 2008, 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.,**  
Queens Borough President's Office, Room 213, 120-55 Queens Boulevard, Kew Gardens, NY 11424

For more information please contact: Jan Khan at 212.383.7251 or [jkhan@dot.state.ny.us](mailto:jkhan@dot.state.ny.us)

# *Make a Difference*



## *Participate in Queens Civic Congress*

# *"Platform Revision & Update"*

Queens Civic Congress Secretary Sey Schwartz chairs the revision of our 2007-2008 Platform, known as **CIVIC2030**. A hard copy was distributed in the Summer 2007 to every civic leader and our electeds officials. It also remains available on our [www.QueensCivicCongress.org](http://www.QueensCivicCongress.org) website. Go to our Platform link on the left navigation bar or type this URL – <http://queensciviccongress.org.platform/CIVIC2030.pdf> – in your browser.

The process involves Queens Civic Congress member civics reviewing the platform and making suggestions through the end of November. All recommendations must be emailed to President Corey Bearak at [Bearak@aol.com](mailto:Bearak@aol.com). The executive committee will consider all proposals and where necessary refer items to Queens Civic Congress committees. Sey will put the document together for dissemination in the Spring with the goal to adopt the document no later than our June 2009 meeting.

## News from the Queens Coalition for Parks and Green Spaces

by Frederick Kress, President

### ***NEXT MEETING***

The next regular meeting of the Queens Coalition for Parks and Green Spaces takes place Thursday, September 25, 2008, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the Overlook at 80-30 Park Lane in Kew Gardens. Light refreshments will be served. Bring your park issues and problems and ideas to the meeting which is open to all.

### ***EMERALD AWARD NOMINEES SOUGHT***

The Coalition Emerald Awards, traditionally held in November of every year, is being planned right now. The Coalition seeks recommendations (nominations) of outstanding parks volunteers. You know the kind of people the Coalition seeks to honor – those who are out there making our parks cleaner, safer and greener. Some of the Coalition's criteria follows: Volunteering for at least two years, plantings (like daffodils etc) and “getting down close with nature,” being an inspiration to others. and doing this in Queens parks or green spaces. If you know people that fit this criteria, please write a brief about what they do that would show how they are deserving of this very special award. Sorry, no one being paid can be an Emerald Award winner! Please submit by September 15 so the selection committee can go through the nominees to select the winners. By email( preferred) [Herr281761@aol.com](mailto:Herr281761@aol.com) or by regular mail to: Queens Coalition for Parks and Green Spaces, PO BOX 300050 JFK AIRPORT, JAMAICA NY 11430.

## 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](mailto:Bearak@aol.com) at least 24 hours in advance.

*\*\*\*\*\*2008-2009 Meeting Schedule\*\*\*\*\**

*Monday, September 15, 2008 (details front page)*

*Monday, October 6, 2008 (Open Executive Committee meeting)*

*Monday, November 17, 2008*

*Saturday, December 6, 2008 (Legislative Reception at The Douglaston Club)*

*Monday, February 2, 2009 (Open Executive Committee meeting)*

*Monday, March 16, 2009*

*Monday, April 20, 2009*

*Sunday, May 17 (Legislative Forum)*

*Monday, June 15, 2009 (Parks)*

*\*\*\*Additional special issue meetings and workshops will be announced as they get added to the schedule\*\*\**

Additional Topics to be covered at Upcoming meetings and Special Forums (dates to be added to the calendar)

Education: Mayoral Control – Extend it, Change it, End it

Economic Development – Neighborhood Impacts

Real Estate Tax Assessments in Queens: Are they accurate?

Community Facility Notification

Accessing Government Services

Department of Building and Code Enforcement Update

Zoning to enhance our neighborhoods

Landmarking to preserve historic structures and districts before we lose them

*A weekend day, March, 2009, 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Going Green In Queens** sponsored by by Queens Civic Congress, Queens Coalition for Parks & Green Spaces Partnership for Parks and the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation. For more details, check [www.queensciviccongress.org](http://www.queensciviccongress.org)

**On line at [www.QueensCivicCongress.org/Media](http://www.QueensCivicCongress.org/Media):** Juniper Civic Claims Victory Over Developer ♦ CAGE in Rosedale removes another 127 illegal street signs ♦ SCA Impacts Rare Flushing Wych Elms ♦ Rockaways need lifeguards ♦ Reform, not raise NYC Property Taxes.

## Nominating Committee Report

The QCC Officer Nominating Committee was elected in June. According to our bylaws, The officers are: President, Executive Vice President, Vice Presidents (no less than one and no more than eleven, as determined by the Congress), a Treasurer, a Secretary, and the two Founders. All officers sit and vote as members of the Executive Committee. Save for the Founders, all officers shall serve one-year terms. CC's Nominating Committee consists of five persons, of which three shall be elected by the Executive Committee (including its Chair) and two by the Regular Members.

The Committee recommended the membership re-elect our current team of officers Anyone nominated must be a delegate representing a Regular Member to the Congress. Candidates for President must have served on the Executive Committee in the year prior to their nomination. If no nominations occur from the floor, nominations will be closed and the secretary will cast one ballot for their election.

### Queens Civic Congress Officers

President:	Corey B. Bearak (North Bellerose Civic Association)
Executive Vice President:	Patricia Dolan (Kew Gardens Hills Civic Association)
Treasurer:	James Trent (Creedmoor Civic Association)
Secretary:	Seymour Schwartz (Briarwood Community Association)
Vice Presidents:	Tyler Cassell (North Flushing) Richard Hellenbrecht (Bellerose-Commonwealth) Paul Kerzner (Ridgewood Homeowners and Property Owners) David Kulick (Flushing on the Hill) Audrey Lucas (Southeast Queens Concerned Neighbors) Nagassar Ramgarib (Queens Village Civic Association) Edwin Westley (Jackson Heights Beautification Group) Dorothy Woo (Holly Civic Association) Harbachan Singh (Holliswood Civic Association) Barbara Larkin (Belle Harbor Property Owners Association) Kathy Masi (Glendale Civic Association of Queens)
Founders:	<i>President Emeritus</i> Sean M. Walsh (Douglaston Civic Association) Albert Greenblatt, Esq. Robert I. Harris (West Cunningham Park Civic Association)

## USEFUL LINKS:

***<http://nyc.everyblock.com/>***

*Enter any New York address for fresh updates of nearby restaurant inspections (<http://nyc.everyblock.com/restaurant-inspections/>), property sales (<http://nyc.everyblock.com/property-sales/>), media coverage (<http://nyc.everyblock.com/news-articles/>) and more (<http://nyc.everyblock.com/news/>)*

Credit Rick Duskiwicz, Creedmoor Civic for this one:

***[www.causs.org](http://www.causs.org)*** Join fellow sharkies or sign sharks (that's what sign removers are called) in most of our states and learn what is being done to combat this blight.

Credit Fred Kress, CAGE-USA-NY-Brooklyn/Queens

## 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 / Kathy Masi  
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  
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 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