



Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association

action news

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Volume 40 Number 2

1935

79 Years

2014

March 2014

Thursday, March 6, 2014, 8:00 pm

Discussion of Snow Related Problems and ICCC Hearing (see pg. 2)

Holy Trinity Church Basement, Corner 87th Avenue and Commonwealth Blvd.

Next Meeting: April 3, 2014 at 8:00pm

Visit Our Website: www.bccaqueens.org

The Gavel

Dear Bellerose Neighbors,
I guess it's not news at this point that the winter of 2013-2014 has been especially harsh. Despite a few days of 40 degree temperatures there's still 10 inches of snow on our lawns and most parking spots are still unusable. We thought it would be timely to discuss the problems we encountered during the storms and in the aftermath. We also want to discuss some solutions. It would be nice to compile some suggestions and send to the mayor. Some of the repeated complaints from the storms are sidewalks not shoveled, shoveled sidewalks covered by DOS snow plows, cars and driveways plowed in and garbage or recycling not picked up for weeks. Come on down and discuss. We've invited a representative of the Community Board to discuss the issues.

Queens Civic Congress Luncheon

The Queens Civic Congress is hosting its biennial luncheon on April 27 at Antuns. The QCC, The Queens Civic Congress is a coalition of over 100 major neighborhood based civic, co-op and condo associations that represent thousands of tenants and homeowners in

every part of the borough is headed by our own Rich Hellenbrecht. We would like to host a table at this great opportunity to meet other civic activists and our elected officials.

Bayside Historical Society

Bayside Historical Society is celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year. As part of their celebration the Board of Directors is sponsoring a Civic Expo on March 11th, 2014 at the Castle in Fort Totten Park at 7:30 pm. All Civic members are invited.

There will be light refreshments served as well as a tour of the Castle. It will be an opportunity to interact and network with other concerned civic people.

They are also cordially inviting us to their 50th Anniversary Gala on May 3rd, 2014. It will be held at the Castle in Fort Totten Park.

More information will be provided at the Civic Expo. Please let us know if you are interested in attending. We need to RSVP. Email us at info@bccaqueens.org if you are interested.

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Holy Trinity News

Holy Trinity has 2 services on Sunday at 9am and 10:30am. We would love to have you join us. Sunday School classes continue and the children are dismissed from the early service for Sunday School classes. Children have a great time Join us!

We continue to collect food for the All Saints Food Pantry to help those in our community in need. - Drop off non-perishables or we can shop for you. (checks payable to Holy Trinity or All Saints Food Pantry) Young at Heart meets the second and fourth Wednesday of the month at 12:30 pm. Enjoy lunch and some social time.

Youth Club for Middle and High Schoolers meet the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from 7-9:30pm. No charge - attendees decide on activities which include games, movies, talent events - chaperoned by Diane Gilroy. Questions? call the church or send an e-mail holytrinitybellerose@yahoo.com. Diane could use a few parents to occasionally help, think about helping.

Yoga continues on Fridays at 6:30pm - all levels. \$15 per class (we usually meet in the school)

March/April Calendar:

March 4 - Shrove Tuesday - Pancake Dinner (\$8 per person)

March 16 - St. Paddy's Dinner of Ruebens

Lenten Services - Wednesdays at noon - starting March 12

For any questions about anything contact Carol Robinson at holytrinitybellerose@yahoo.com or at 718-470-1756.

ICCC Submits Slightly Reduced Towers

The ICCC has submitted a revised variance application to NYC's Board of Standards and Appeals, the City agency responsible to review and approve variances. A public hearing was held on Tuesday, February 25 in Manhattan. We have asked someone to report on the results of the hearing. We cannot know at this time whether this will be the final hearing and decision or if more hearings will follow. BCCA and other local civics have worked closely with Senator Avella and attorney Mitch Ross to review the submission.

This revision seeks approval for two six-story apartment buildings, down from nine stories. The project is on a commercial lot that does not allow residential construction by zoning resolution. The BCCA has joined with every local civic association to fight this application since the project site is immediately next to residences just like ours. Approval of construction such as this would also set a precedent that may permit high rise apartment buildings in our area. All the civics work very hard together to protect the beautiful, low density residential area that we all can enjoy.

The seven civic associations plus the Queens Civic Congress have signed a letter to the Board of Standards and Appeals laying out numerous objections under the zoning code that this proposal must not be approved.

BCCA was a signatory to this letter and we participated in a fund to pay an attorney to assist in fighting this variance. The buildings would create 84 co-op apartments of one to three bedrooms, many with balconies, allegedly for seniors but sounding quite luxurious. However, it appears through our analysis of their financial documents that monthly charges would exceed \$2,000 plus co-op purchase price and mortgage charges. This greatly exceeds the monthly rental for comparable units in nearby garden apartment complexes that have sufficient vacancies for this number of seniors. Our analysis also revealed that ICCC has been operating at a deficit for years and shows no income at all.

BCCA Officers:

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 Juan Zubizarreta, Vice President
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| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
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| | Gulen Zubizarreta |

Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Assn.
 P.O. Box 260225

Bellerose Misc.

Directional Signage

BCCA requested that New York City Department of Transportation install overhead directional signage on southbound Little Neck Parkway at Jericho Turnpike showing which lanes can turn left, right or go straight only. This follows several complaints about confusion and near-miss accidents as the pavement markings are not really visible when rain slicked or snow covered and many drivers seemed to go any which way. Previously the right lane was marked for right turns only, but now the right lane can go straight to Tulip Avenue or right onto westbound Jericho Turnpike.

We have received a letter from DOT that they have taken action regarding signage. DOT noted that overhead signs might interfere with line of sight to traffic lights and other impacts. They would instead install signage on posts at 87th Drive for higher visibility.

TNT, Public Storage and other businesses

One of the biggest blights on Jericho Turnpike disturbing many civic leaders was the liquidation store, TNT near Little Neck Parkway. TNT took over the sidewalk outside the store with mostly junk items and really cheapened the area. In addition, the inside of the store was dangerous and tight and always seemed to be a fire hazard with a wooden loft and rickety stairway. TNT has recently closed as have several nearby businesses. We understand that a storage facility will be built in that spot all the way to Little Neck Parkway. We are awaiting additional info if this will be related to the U-Haul, which has storage, or a separate business.

We note also that several business changes have taken place on Jericho Turnpike and on Hillside Avenue. Dancin' Queens has moved to much larger quarter where the pet food store was and they're now at the hardware store (former lumber yard). A Buy Gold store is now where Dancin' Queens was. On Hillside there is a new liquor store at 252nd Street. Jackson Diner has opened where the old Joe's 2 was at the corner of 256th Street. Also, several circular "bike racks" have popped up at various locations. We haven't seen 'em used too much—but who rides bikes in snow storms. We understand that on Union Turnpike the city has also installed street furniture there, we're not sure if any will be placed on Hillside or Jericho.

BCCA Website (www.bccaqueens.org)

Please be sure to check in often at the BCCA website. Its changing all the time and many hours have been devoted by our VP and Webmaster Juan Zubizarreta scanning newsletters and old documents and publishing the site. The latest additions are many photos—check out the 1976 BCCA meeting photos in the Pictures section and see who you can pick out. Also, someone located actual minutes of board meetings from the 1950s, which are scanned and on the site. Go see what problems we were dealing with way back then.

Participatory Budgeting—Playground Reading Garden

Continuing from last year's successful launch of Participatory Budgeting (PB) in Councilman Mark Weprin's 23rd Council District, the 2015 budget process is underway and Councilman Weprin has again dedicated \$1 million for some number of programs to be determined by his constituents. There will be a PB polling taking place in late March/early April in several locations in the district. Exact times and locations will be sent out as soon available. We appealed to people of Bellerose to make a special effort last year and the Councilman was very pleased with a first effort of over 1,000 votes in our area. Eight projects were on the PB ballot last year and five were awarded. While none were within our civic area, we do benefit by the award of technology improvements at Martin Van Buren, several park enhancements at Cunningham Park and emergency generator at the Glen Oaks Volunteer Ambulance Corps. These projects are now funded and in planning for procurement and contracting necessary to implement.

The current PB program will have at least one BCCA-area project and we hope to get everyone out to help win funding for the following project

Bellerose Playground Reading Garden

Bellerose Playground is the park behind PS133. On the east side there is a fenced off area that has been underused for decades and has attracted dog walkers and loiterers. A Bellerose resident has proposed fixing this area up for reading and quiet contemplation. We would hope to get the entire park upgraded, but with the limitation on the PB program, we can hope that this project gets approved. BCCA will continue to seek City and Borough funds to get the rest of the park improved. A meeting with project presentations will take place before you read this, but email readers will get it.

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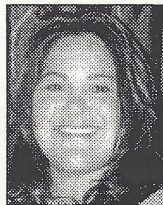
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