



Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association

action news

Volume 38 Number 6

1935

77 Years

2012

September 2012

Thursday, September 6, 2012, 8:00 pm

Joint BCCA/QCCA Candidates' Night

For Senate: Tony Avella and Joseph Concannon

For Assembly: Dem. Primary: Clyde Vanel

Refreshments will be served

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

Watch for Special October 2012 at 8:00pm

The Gavel

Dear Members,

I hope everyone has enjoyed their summer. As you can tell with all the articles written, many meetings and new developments have occurred during the last two months. One development was that Mr. Steve Digilio requested I put in the newsletter about a football program he is trying to start up here in Queens. Many years ago there was a football program for kids, called the Long Island Tomahawks. They are in need of any boys or girls that want to play football. If you want any information, please send an email to litomahawks@yahoo.com.

I hope you can stop by the meeting on Thursday and learn more about the candidates' positions on the issues that affect us.

Inside—please read articles on:

New Poling Place and/or District Number
September and October Candidates' Nights - BCCA
Leaders' meeting with Speaker Quinn
Leaders' meeting with Van Buren H.S. Principal
What's Happening in our Commercial District
Sikh Commemoration
Participatory Budgeting—Join the Fun!

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WATER WATCH—The area has been attacked by mosquitoes this year for a variety of reasons. While this is inconvenient, with West Nile Virus it can also be dangerous. Please check your yards and surroundings for standing water in puddles, old tires, bird baths, gutters, etc.

Holy Trinity Church is proud to announce has installed a **new carillon** to replace their old bell. Neighbors in Bellerose should already hear the call to worship on Sunday and noon and 6pm . They are adjusting volumes as necessary and would like to hear any feedback.

We think the two upcoming meetings are excellent and unique to meet and ask questions of our candidates for critical State and Federal representatives. Please come and bring a friend.

Lourdes V. Hartrick, President

Watch for New Polling Place

We are not sure if this affects any of our readers but we have heard of many complaints from around the borough of long-time and familiar polling places being changed due apparently to changes in election districts based on the 2010 census and redistricting effective this year. You have recently received a mailing from Elections. Be sure to carefully check the location of your polling place.

Candidates' Nights—New Congressional District

We are pleased to present two candidates' nights in conjunction with Queens Colony Civic Association in September and October. On September 6 we will host Clyde Vanel for the Democratic State Assembly Primary. Clyde is challenging Assemblymember Barbara Clark. Ms Clark will be at the Democratic Convention, but will be invited to the October meeting if she is successful in the Primary on September 13. For the State Senate general election bid we have invited State Senator Tony Avella and his Republican opponent, from Bellerose, Joseph Concannon.

Bellerose and several other eastern Queens communities were redistricted to Congressman Steve Israel's district. In October we have invited Congressman Israel (D-LI) and his Republican opponent Stephen Labate. We are awaiting confirmations to set the exact date—either October 4, or 11th. Watch Action News or BCCA's email blast if you are on our list (contact rch.brecht@verizon.net to be added to the email blast list for regular updates on happenings and issues in Bellerose.)

Speaker Quinn Comes to Eastern Queens

Community Board 13Q sponsored a meeting in August bringing City Council Speaker Christine Quinn and most of our local elected officials and civic leaders to a breakfast at Antuns to find out about problems and issues in eastern Queens. The Speaker announced a major new program against gun violence and other city programs as well as initiatives to make it easier to start and run a business in New York. Civic leaders brought up problems in our area including: possible zoning protections against inappropriate new businesses in commercial areas, such as food carts, pawn shops, bodegas, "spas" and gaming cafés; the 30 year old demand for a new precinct. The Speaker promised to follow up on many of these issues and called upon Councilman Weprin and Comrie to work on zoning issues and she will get back to us on possibilities of addressing crime issues and the new precinct.

Meeting the New Principal of Van Buren

Martin Van Buren High School is very close to Bellerose, yet very few Bellerose families chose to send their kids to this school. Sam Sachet, a twenty two year DOE veteran with half that time as an administrator, has taken over as Principal. Mr. Sachet has a vision for Van Buren to bring it to a much higher level and he has already started to execute that vision. Sam called several area civic leaders into the school to let us know his plan for the future. He started with some physical improvements, such as fixing the huge clock that's been stuck for years and restoring the tennis courts for school and community use. More importantly, he has already gotten "downtown" approval for exciting new academic programs, including Pre-Engineering and Robotics and Anthropological Studies for advanced placement in sociology and psychology program. The equipment and staff are already in place. He is implementing technology based communications with parents and students for assignments, etc.

Mr. Sachet wants to vastly improve the 54% graduation rate with 60% of them college bound. He is very pleased with parent coordinator Mr. Chu and looks forward to re-establishing an active PTA. He will be going to local schools to promote Vanny to upcoming graduates. He clearly wants Van Buren to be the school of choice for Bellerose. It will take a while, but KEEP YOUR EYES ON VANNY.

Commercial District Happenings

Hillside Avenue—A while ago **Off The Hookah Lounge** opened on Hillside Avenue and neighbors have been keeping a close eye on it. The lounge has recently filed for a liquor license. Neighbors have complained about loud music until the wee hours, made worse when they leave the rear door opened. Youths hang out on nearby 252nd Street where beer bottles and litter are increasing. These matters will only be made worse by adding liquor to the mix. The age limit for a Hookah lounge is 18 years old, while liquor is 21. How would they control that? With the serious complaints by local residents, Community Board 13 has filed an objection to the license that the lounge will have to appeal.

Super Halal—this market on 253rd Street has continued to be a thorn in the sides of neighbors on the street as well as causing dangerous traffic conditions on Hillside Avenue. The store has operated in violation of numerous zoning and buildings codes, with thousands of dollars in violations and no Certificate of Occupancy. Yet the City has been powerless to enforce its own rules. We understand Halal finally filed acceptable (to Buildings) plans, but the owner has not picked the permits up.

Jericho Turnpike—Your civic has also been working with Queens Colony and the Bellerose Business District to fight the incursion of inappropriate businesses. Recently a proposed “Gaming Café” filed to operate in the former OTB location. The gaming café raised community fears of a gambling parlor bringing lots of unwanted traffic. The owners say they want to attract lawyers to complete their paperwork and communications on the computers. Right! Lawyers working on public computers. In addition, there has been NYPD Vice activity with arrests at an unlicensed massage parlor. We will continue to work with our friends in local civic associations, the Bellerose Business District and Community Board 13 to hold off inappropriate development and attract desirable businesses.

Recent Mass Murders & Sikh Commemoration

Everyone must be disturbed and maddened by the July mass murder at the Batman movie in Aurora Colorado and the murder of six at a Sikh Temple in Oak Creek Wisconsin on August 5. The shootings in Wisconsin are particularly disturbing in that it was clearly aimed at a religious group in violation of everything America was founded on. In solidarity with the large and growing Sikh community in the Bellerose/Floral Park area a commemorative ceremony was held on August 10 at Gurdwara Sant Sagar Temple on Braddock Avenue. Senator Avella, Assemblywoman Clark, Councilman Weprin and many local civic and congregation leaders expressed their sympathy and hopes for a better future. This should be a time for learning and understanding, both ways with our new neighbors. We hope to see many more of our South Asian and other new neighbors at our meetings.

Participatory Budgeting

The City Council is exploring a new way of budgeting in an attempt to get more public input into the budgeting process. A pilot program from last year has been expanded to 8 council districts. Mark Weprin, our Councilman, is one of the volunteers who has dedicated \$1 million of his discretionary money to be determined by two committees and a series of assemblies where ideas will be discussed and explored and by next Spring several capital budget items sponsored and voted at the assemblies by the public will be included in the 2014 budget.

The committees are open to the public. While they have recently been formed, there is room for additional members and ideas can be submitted by anyone who lives or operates a business in the district. At the final assembly, everyone who comes (open to the whole district public) will be given a ballot listing all the suggestions with proposed funding amounts. The results will be tallied and items funded up to the final amount the Councilman designates (it could be more than the initial \$1 million). The first 4 participating districts are very happy with the results and this process could grow to city-wide in the years to come. Interested residents should contact Councilman Weprin's office at 718-468-0137 and watch for our regular updates on progress of the Participatory Budgeting process.

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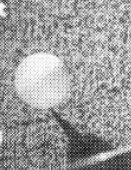
First United Presbyterian Church of Queens Village
Join us in welcoming our new Pastor Rev. Bradley A. Crump of Bellerose.
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