

Next meeting: May 10 at 8 PM

Meetings at the Bellerose Baptist Church (basement), Braddock Avenue at 241st Street



Creedmoor Civic News

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE CREEDMOOR CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.
Founded 1927, Incorporated 1938

MAY, 2004

"UNITED EFFORT REAPS UNITED GAIN"

VOL. 73, NO. 5

MAJOR DEMONSTRATION SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 2 TO PROTEST OVERBUILDING

A coalition of civic and preservation groups throughout Queens plan to converge on Borough Hall in Kew Gardens the afternoon of June 2 (a Wednesday) to protest the overbuilding of Queens.

The Queens Preservation Council spearheaded the drive, and the Queens Civic Congress with its 100 civic association members is supporting the event.

At our May 10 meeting, we will discuss the possibility of renting a bus, possibly shared in expense with several other Bellerose/Queens Village civics, to take people down. The protest is scheduled to kick off at 3 PM. Bus rentals are costly, so this is not a sure thing. A bus and subway trip to Kew Gardens, however, is one fare and only takes about 35 minutes.

The issues that need to be addressed legally are:

- 1.) A permissive Board of Standards and Appeals that hardly ever meets a variance it doesn't approve.
- 2.) A Landmarks Preservation Commission that swoons over districts in other boroughs but has nothing but contempt for Queens.
- 3.) A Building Department that can't get easy access to buildings (unlike the Fire Dept.) and is lax in enforcement of codes.
- 4.) A Dept. of City Planning that saddled Queens 40 years ago with inappropriate zoning that has permitted non-contextual construction.

BELLEROSE-HILLSIDE CIVIC TO BE DOWN-ZONED

Community Board 13 has approved a recommendation of its land-use committee to down-zone the Bellerose Hillside Civic Association from an R3-2 designation (general residence), to

R2 (one-family) north of Hillside Avenue, and to an R3-A (one and two family on smaller lots) south of Hillside Avenue. Hundreds of homes are affected, but not one property owner came to the two public hearings to oppose the down-zoning. Bellerose-Hillside Civic is located between 87th Avenue and Union Turnpike, and between Creedmoor Hospital and the Cross Island Parkway. However, City Planning officials pointed out that even with the down-zoning, nothing can stop a one-story house from being redeveloped as a two-story. Our own civic used to be R4 (row houses) and was rezoned to R3-A by dint of our civic's efforts many years ago.

Meantime, Floral Park (Queens side) is being destroyed as



This behemoth being built on 263rd Street and 83rd Avenue, in Floral Park is with virtually no yard space.

all the post WWII Cape Cods are slowly being demolished for McMansions, mostly by developers, not homeowners.

Creedmoor Civic News

Published since 1931

Published 10 times per year by the Creedmoor Civic Assn., Inc.
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Around the Town

❖ **Welcome New Neighbors:** Welcome to Mr. & Mrs. Edward Castillo of 89-20 239th Street.

❖ **Congratulations** to Rick Duskwicz, our CCA president, on getting a law signed by the Mayor which he initiated that makes the posting of stickers, such as locksmith ads on doors, illegal. This is now classified as graffiti and is illegal even if on private property. He was present at the press conference and could be seen on TV on the Crosswalks channel.

❖ **Puzzling picture:** The Farm Museum has produced a 513-piece jig-saw puzzle of a fall scene outside the Farmhouse. They are \$12, tax included. We will have some available at our May meeting. Great gift idea.

❖ **Potted Plant disappears:** Civic member Domenica Chironno gave a plant to Bella Napoli on Braddock Avenue and it was stolen from the store recently. The plant had been placed outside for air and sunlight. It was large and it must have taken two people to make off with it.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

In March, Mike Augugliaro of Queens Colony Civic Association and Rick Duskwicz assembled a list of 137 signs that were illegally posted in our neighborhood and the surrounding area. This list was sent to Councilman David Weprin, who contacted the Sanitation Department

and asked them to inspect these locations for violations. Several of the locations were referred to the Parks Dept., because the signs had been nailed to trees. Ninety signs will be removed by Sanitation, and violations will be sent to the offenders after investigation. We are waiting on a response from the Sanitation Dept. to explain why the remaining unsightly signs were not considered illegal, even though they were nailed to the city's utility poles.

President's Message

Hello Friends:

Please keep in mind one thing: This is your civic. If you have any suggestions for us, let us know.

The recent flurry of sidewalk violations, especially along 88th Ave, has confused many residents. I spoke with a rep from the Dept. of Transportation, and Susan Seinfeld from Councilman Weprin's office, and here are some facts:

1. If you honestly feel that you do not have enough of a sidewalk defect to warrant a violation, contact Tectonic Engineering at 718 391-9259 for a reinspection within 45 days of receiving the notice. A different inspector will reinspect your sidewalk to determine if it falls within the city's guidelines for defective sidewalks. You may be disappointed to find the reinspection confirms the first inspection result. The city has tough standards they use to cite for violations.

2. There are no fines associated with this type of violation. There is a cost, obviously, to repair the sidewalk.

3. You may choose to do the work yourself, or hire a contractor, but you must apply for a permit, which costs \$70. Surface repairs will probably not be acceptable to the city's inspectors.

4. If you do nothing, the city will eventually send their own contractor to replace the problem sections of concrete, and send you the bill. It may be possible to pay in installments.

5. Until the bill is paid, a lien will be placed on your property. This will become a problem when it's time to sell the property or refinance.

6. If the defect is caused by a street tree, there should be an "X" on that section of the plans you received. If so, that section will be replaced by the city at no charge to you.

Why were the inspectors here in the first place? It could be that there was an accident in the area, and the city is attempting to protect itself. There may have been a complaint in the area, and the inspector traveled a little while in the neighborhood, we don't know, and the DOT won't say.

I hope this helps a little.

There were a few problems with our printed membership last month. I apologize for that. I hope we got everyone's name right this time.

Your Neighbor,

Rick Duskwicz

BIKE LANE UPDATE

Ever since the bicycle lanes were painted on Winchester Blvd in 2003, there is a lot of confusion when approaching the intersection of Winchester and Hillside Ave.

In response to a letter written by your civic, the Dept of Transportation has agreed to place "No Standing" signs near that intersection, and "jog" the bike lanes over towards the curb. The DOT still has not determined whether a right turn only lane, or a left turn only lane would be more appropriate for that intersection. Because of the decrease in usable road width created by the bicycle lanes, DOT will not allow two lanes to be used for straight ahead travel. We will keep you posted.

2003 DUES ROSTER ADDENDA

Following are additional names forwarded to the Creedmoor Civic News as paid-up member for 2003:

88 Ave: Sparacino, Denara

89 Ave: Foerst, Lollo

90 Ave: Martori

Lyman St./88 Block: Mooney, Cribillero, Thomas, Zayas, Faraone

Gettysburg St./88 Block: Cabrera

237 St./88 Block: Fenelon, Stemmler

238 St./88 Block: Kashyap

238 St./89 Block: Palau

239 St./88 Block : McDermott

239 St./89 Block: Porter, Carlson, Beekharry, Ramcharter, Deangkinay, Chironno, Castillo

240 St./89 Block: Butcher

241 St./88 Block: Pabon

241 St./89 Block.: Beneat, Fernandez

242 St./88 Block: Bunjumea

242 St./89 Block: Mango

Donations were gratefully received from the following:

Christman - Moline St.

Robinson - 237th Stret

Surujballie - 238th Street

Pabon - 241st Street

Fernandez - 241st Street

3-STORY BUILDING PROPOSED

The owners of 247-39 Jamaica Avenue, a one-story manilla brick store, want to cash in on the rape of Queens now going on. They propose converting the building into a 9-family, three-story apartment house that would be the tallest building in Bellerose, apart from the Bellerose Theatre. Community Board 13 rejected the requested variance after the Bellerose Business District testified against it as did the

Creedmoor and Queens Colony Civic Associations. However, the Board of Standards and Appeals has the last word. A variance is needed because the building would be taller than allowed. The owners claim conforming to the current zoning which was in place at the time they bought the building five years ago, would be a "hardship."

CEDAR LANE GOES DOWN MEMORY LANE



Cedar Lane interior is being gutted. It is anticipated that the building will probably be totally torn down.

The Cedar Lane Superette located on Braddock Avenue and 224th Street for the last quarter century bites the dust. The owner has retired and decided not to sell the building to another supermarket. He owns the land and is going to redevelop the property to some other use. Problem is, the construction fence is illegal because no permit has been secured. In fact, it appears that no permits have been pulled from the Department of Buildings for any work at all.

A BATTLE ROYAL FOR ROYAL RANCH

Community Board 13 has heard and voted for a down-zoning for the Royal Ranch community in Floral Park (located east of Little Neck Parkway, just south of the Glen Oaks Golf Course. Unlike the Bellerose Hillside down-zoning that may have affected 400-500 homes yet with no objections, the Royal Ranch issue only affected 13 homes, but was contentious. Almost half of the 13 owners vociferously objected to the down-zoning maintaining they had a right to destroy the neighborhood as they moved out and cashed in on the building craze. All of the remaining Royal Ranch community is zoned R2, although their 60-foot lot sizes entitled them to an R1-1. The local civic decided to act when one house came down in the R3-2 area and was replaced with a four family building with another owner proposing to do the same.



STOP THE OVERBUILDING OF QUEENS

DEMONSTRATION

Wednesday, June 2, 2004

3 P.M.

IN FRONT OF QUEENSBOROUGH HALL
120-55 Queens Boulevard, Kew Gardens

IF YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH WITH:

⊗ THE PAVING OVER OF LAWNS

⊗ THE WALLING OFF OF HOMES AND THE CLUTTERING OF OUR STREETSCAPES WITH GARISH FRONT YARD FENCES

⊗ THE REBUILDING OF EXISTING HOMES WITH OVERSIZED, NON-CONTEXTURAL ARCHITECTURE

⊗ INAPPROPRIATE ZONING

⊗ ILLEGAL CONVERSIONS

⊗ THE DEMOLITION OF OUR HISTORIC BUILDINGS

⊗ ***A BOARD OF STANDARDS AND APPEALS THAT TOO READILY GRANTS VARIANCES
—THEN THIS RALLY IS FOR YOU!!!***

...sponsored by an ad hoc Coalition of Civic and Preservation Groups in Queens

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