

Next meeting: Oct. 11 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

OCTOBER, 2004

"UNITED EFFORT REAPS UNITED GAIN"

VOL. 73, NO. 8

3RD RAIL MAY SHOCK BELLEROSE

The Long Island Rail Road is funding a \$4 million study to build a third track on the Main Line from Bellerose to Hicksville and the future of the Bellerose station is in doubt.

In reality, because there are already two Hempstead tracks at Bellerose, this "third track" is really a fifth track. We understand that no taking of property will be necessary, but the tracks will now be placed right at the edge of Superior Road properties, not something the Bellerose Village or Terrace residents are happy about. The railroad claims that an increase in reverse commute customers makes this 10.5 mile express track necessary.

But we've also heard that there is the possibility of closing the Bellerose station, something that no one in our community will likely approve. Although it is true that for the Village, cars racing to the station in the morning are a major source of annoyance and danger, Village residents don't want the station to close. Property values in our area are somewhat tied to the convenience of the train station that whisks riders to Penn Station or Flatbush Avenue in about 30 minutes, versus well over an hour by bus and subway. Also access to Long Island can be achieved by a ten minute ride from Bellerose to Jamaica, then a transfer to eastbound trains. The closing may be related to the need to demolish all the stations from Bellerose to Mineola and a cost saving might be to close some stations to avoid the expense of rebuilding.

The railroad also announced this past July that it wants to cease service on the West Hempstead and Oyster Bay branches and end service east of Ronkonoma. Since the threat of closing these three lines has been made periodically for decades, one doesn't know if it should be taken seriously. The railroad says it wants to concentrate on its "core area" which is defined as the run between Manhattan and western Suffolk, (minus West Hempstead and Oyster Bay) thus the new interest in the third track to Hicksville.

Interestingly, while the Villages of Bellerose, Floral Park, and New Hyde Park are all abuzz about this proposed project and

have appointed task forces to deal with it, no one seems to think that the Queens residents would be interested and we have not been engaged by the railroad to be involved. Yet the number of Queens residents using the Bellerose station probably exceeds the number of Nassau residents. Bellerose Village would like to lobby for a more picturesque station if it is demolished and rebuilt, something on the order of the original station that was bulldozed when the tracks were elevated in Floral Park in the 1960s.

**The 105th Pct's Commanding Officer
Captain Stephen O'Brien will be our
guest speaker for October 11.**

CONST. PROJECTS UPDATE

- ❖ The former "Cedar Lane" property on Braddock Avenue and 224 Street is being developed for a 24-hour Laundromat. According to the NYC Dept of Consumer Affairs Legal Department, because of its close proximity to P. S. 33, no video games will be allowed.
- ❖ The former "Unlimited Motorsports" property on Braddock Avenue and Gettysburg Street has been cited by the Department of Buildings for work beyond the scope of its permits. It is expected that a Stop Work Order will be placed on the property until it is resolved.
- ❖ Work on converting the old Pitz Stop bar at the corner of 242nd Street and Braddock Avenue to offices led to two Stop Work orders from the DOB, one which required the police to intervene to get compliance. Work is now legal.

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Published since 1931

Published 10 times per year by the Creedmoor Civic Assn., Inc.
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President's Message

The newspaper ad didn't look much different from many others; an Open House for a 2-family home on the 88 block of 238th St in Bellerose, with a "full finished basement." After a couple of phone calls from concerned residents, we decided to go see for ourselves.

It was a nice house, but we were more concerned about the lowest level, the cellar. The phone calls from the neighbors expressed concern about the possibility of a rentable apartment. Nearly everything was in place, a 3-piece bathroom, a gas stove, and a kitchen counter ready for hook up as a kitchen sink.

When we asked Hugo Salvatierra, the licensed Real Estate broker from Re/Max who showed us the house, he explained that "many houses on this block are renting the basements." In fact, Mr. Salvatierra handed us a sheet showing how our monthly payments would be only \$1919 a month, and the rent on the cellar apartment could be \$850 a month.

The house has already received a violation in the past for illegal plumbing fixtures in the cellar. In 2001, an affidavit was filed claiming that the violations had been removed, and the plumbing lines capped. Apparently it wasn't too difficult to hook them back up again.

It seems like every month or so, we read about deaths from fires in unsafe apartments. The owners of these buildings take a terrible risk by renting out these firetraps that have only one means of exit. Now we're hearing more and more about Real Estate brokers that violate the law and destroy our neighborhoods by promoting the illegal conversion of these homes. In fact, this was mentioned in this newsletter last month, too.

A survey that was distributed by our civic a few years ago clearly indicated that the number one complaint by residents was the illegal conversion of the homes in our area. The only way to fight this problem is to fight back. Real Estate companies and brokers must be told that we will not stand for this assault on our neighborhood. Complaints have been filed with the Department of State and the Department of Buildings.

Your Neighbor,

Rick Duskwicz

Around the Town

❖ **Condolences to:** Daisy, the worker at His 'n Hers Salon on Gettysburg Street on the loss of her brother and father within a short time, and who is now herself in the hospital for surgery. We wish her a speedy recovery.

Landlords Beware

We've received reports that tenants of illegal basement apartments are finding out that they can withhold their rent and the landlords are finding it to be a long and drawn-out process to have them evicted. Judges in landlord/tenant courts are very hesitant to evict a tenant for non-payment of rent when the apartment is illegal.

Cease and Desist Law Renewed

New York State has apparently decided to renew the Real Estate Cease-and Desist List. We believe this is due in large part to the civic-minded members of the community who attended the hearings that were held by the Department of State, and of course, State Senator Frank Padavan. You MUST sign up to be on this new list. At Monday's meeting, we will have cards to sign, or you may sign up online at:

<http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lcns/cdform.asp>

Illegal Signs Update

Every one of the 112 illegally posted signs on Springfield Blvd that were on Mike Augugliaro and Rick Duskwicz's list has been removed by the Dept of Sanitation. A beautiful sight, indeed!

Bellerose Business District to Dine

The Joint Bellerose Business District will celebrate it's ninth year of activity at a luncheon at Nancy's Restaurant on October 23. Tickets are \$30. Call Jim Trent, luncheon chair, at 718-343-8830 for information or to buy tickets. Creedmoor Civic will be represented by 10 board members. State Senator Frank Padavan is the guest speaker. In fact, he has secured another \$10,000 for the group's work. Creedmoor Civic's treasurer, Jim Trent, is this year's honoree. The regular meetings of the District are the first Tuesday of the month at Bellerose Village Hall at 6:30 PM.

YOUR CITY COUNCIL AT WORK

❖The mini motorcycles that have caused many complaints have always been illegal to use in NYC, but they are perfectly legal for stores to sell. The City Council recently voted to approve legislation that would prohibit the sale of these bikes within NYC limits. The mayor is expected to veto this legislation.

❖The sale and installation of car alarms that do not reset after 3 minutes was outlawed last week when the City Council overrode the mayor's veto.

❖A bill introduced yesterday by Councilman Dennis Gallagher (R-Middle Village) seeks to impose "a juvenile curfew" for those under 18. It calls for kids to be barred from public spaces between midnight and 6 a.m. In summer months, the curfew will begin at 12:30 a.m. Some exceptions such as work or school are included.

BELLEROSE BUSINESS DISTRICT'S LATEST PROJECT IS ALL A FACADE

The Joint Bellerose Business District Development Corporation has completed eight facade renovations and a ninth is about to start. Using funds provided by State Senator Michael Balboni and State Senator Frank Padavan, the District has been providing 100% of the costs for design and regulatory agencies, and 75% of the cost of renovation up to a cap of \$10,000 in construction costs (that means a match cap of \$7,500 from the District.)

The design concept is to reduce clutter, upgrade deteriorating facades, and coordinate designs with adjacent stores. For example, Frankie & Vinnie's Tavern and the adjacent Central Home Remodelers were both done with matching black awnings and matching wood signs. The string of stores west of Commonwealth Boulevard and immediately west of the Fiddler's Inn are all owned by the owner of the Bellerose Delicatessen. These stores now have identical green awnings and lettering. The most recent renovations include the Allstate Insurance Company and the Larry's Model Cleaners which is currently under way. One of the District's requirements is the removal of solid roll down gates and their replacement, if at all, with open mesh gates. The Cleaners has already received many compliments from residents on the look of their store just from changing the gates. Their signage, awning, and lighting work hasn't even begun! Just the gate change has made a vast improvement.

There is a waiting list for this program and not nearly enough money to do all the stores that want to be in the program. The District will fight for more funds in the future. The program is open to Braddock Avenue stores as well, but none are in the first phase which consisted of the aforementioned nine stores.

HALLOWEEN PARADE SET FOR OCTOBER 30

Don't forget our annual Creedmoor Civic Halloween Costume Parade set for Saturday, October 30. Please make copies of the poster on the back page of this newsletter and post it around. The parade is open to all residents of Bellerose and Queens Village, you need not be a resident of Creedmoor Civic.

OEM MEETING UPDATE

Last month we had the wrong starting time (9 PM when it should have been 7:30 PM) and neglected to mention that the OEM meeting is being sponsored by eight local civic associations, including Creedmoor Civic:

On Thursday, October 14, a special meeting will be held by OEM that will discuss different types of emergencies and how to prepare for them. This includes weather, terrorism, blackouts, etc. The meeting will be held at 7:30 PM at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church on Commonwealth Blvd between Jamaica and Hillside Avenues .

HOME SWEET HOME



Jamaica Estates - who would believe. This shot was taken on Wexford Terrace, just off Midland Parkway. Grass strip at curb was just paved over, possibly causing the ultimate girdling of the street tree, while an ugly and pointless wall goes up at left and piles of garbage lie in the street. No wonder the president of the Jamaica Estates Association wrote in a local weekly that her family was moving to Nassau because Jamaica Estates was finished. The fault lies with the City Planning, Transportation, Building, and Environmental Protection Departments that look the other way while Queens is being destroyed.