

# Next meeting: Oct. 8 at 8 PM

**Meetings at the Bellerose Baptist Church (basement), Braddock Avenue at 241<sup>st</sup> Street**



## Creedmoor Civic News

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

October, 2007

*"UNITED EFFORT REAPS UNITED GAIN"*

VOL. 76, NO. 8

## **HALLOWEEN PARADE SET FOR 10/27**

**One of Creedmoor Civic's most successful endeavors is about to kick off again. See the flyer on page four of this newsletter for route and time.**

This rain-or-shine event pulls out a sizeable crowd each year, usually about 80 people. It is designed to appeal to the children of our area. You do not need to be a member of Creedmoor Civic to participate. We invite the surrounding community as well. You do not need to reserve a place, either. The parade ends up at the Catholic War Veterans clubhouse on 92<sup>nd</sup> Road where the children (and adults that accompany them) are treated to Halloween cookies and orange soda. Costumes are encouraged.

### **SIKH CHURCH GETS STOP WORK ORDER**

What was posted as a minor construction project of building handicapped ramp has turned into a three-story mega project behind what used to be the Harley-Davidson motorcycle shop on Braddock Avenue between 242<sup>nd</sup> Street and the Cross Island Parkway. Some years ago the building was purchased by a religious group. With steel girders the size often seen used in high-rise office buildings, the Building Department issued a stop work order. Creedmoor Civic does not at this writing have the particulars of what the violations are. It is not clear what exactly was being built on the wing which fronts on 91<sup>st</sup> Avenue.

### **GENERAL CONTRACTORS NOW NEED LICENSES**

General Contractors who build one, two, or three-family homes will now have to be registered and regulated by the Department of Buildings. The new law (co-sponsored by several Council Members, including David Weprin), will require general contractors to maintain minimum liability insurance coverage and issue warranties to buyers of their

services. If an unlicensed or unregistered contractor is found working at a site that requires a license and registration, this law gives the city the authority to seize the contractor's vehicles and tools.

### **GRAFFITI NEWS UPDATE**



**Queens Colony Civic's Angela Augugliaro, Michael Augugliaro, and North Bellerose Civic's Bruno DeFranceschi paint a fence in our area that had been hit with graffiti. We thank our helpful neighbors.**

The person responsible for the tag "DEEP" was arrested last month. This person is responsible for tens of thousands of damage to property, including homeowners' fences, throughout our part of Queens.

One of the ambulances at the QVHB Ambulance Corps was vandalized by graffiti on the night of September 12. Fortunately, cameras picked up the two vandals, and the images were forwarded to the 105<sup>th</sup> Precinct.

## Creedmoor Civic News

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## Around the Town

❁ **Renovations:** EOK Bakery is not out of business, they are closed for major interior renovations including a new store front. The owners have been diligent in trying to rebuild the business that was once a local institution when it was owned by the Reinwald Family. Please give them your patronage.



**This diner on Hillside Avenue opposite Creedmoor Hospital has happily re-opened after being closed for renovations.**

## BUSINESS DISTRICT HOSTS LUNCH

Once again the Bellerose Business District will hold its annual luncheon. This year it will be on November 3 at 1 PM at Nancy's Restaurant on Jericho Turnpike in Floral Park, Queens. Tickets are \$35 for a four-course lunch, the price of which includes tax and tip. If you are interested in going, please contact James Trent at 718-343-8830. Guest speaker is State Senator Craig Johnson of Great Neck. Several awards will be presented to those who have been helpful to the business district and Bellerose in

general during the last year. We always have a good time at these luncheons which have been going on for the last 11 years. The food at Nancy's is excellent if you've never been there before. We always get a good turnout from our immediate neighborhood, so why not join us.

## President's Message

### Hello, Neighbors!

**Last month's newsletter mentioned the new "Lawn Litter" law, sponsored by Senator Padavan and Assembly Member Weprin. This law allows homeowners to refuse delivery of unsolicited circulars. Details are being worked out as far as the sign requirements. I recently saw a photo of State Senator Maltese with his own version of a lawn litter sign, and it was in two different languages. I certainly hope the official requirements do not require homeowners to place signs in multiple languages. I personally would find it insulting, and several people I've spoken to would, also.**

**I hope to see you at this month's Halloween Parade on Saturday, October 27th. Let's see if we can break 100 participants this year. And remember, if you can't join in, at least come out and wave as we pass down 241 St., 88th Ave, and Gettysburg St.**

Your Neighbor,

*Rick Duszkiewicz*

## SANDWICH SIGNS COMPLAINTS

Recently, there's been a surge in the number of complaints about real estate "sandwich signs."

These are the signs that are typically placed at the intersection closest to an Open House. Most people ignore them, but there have been a few reported problems. Some homeowners have their doorbells rung every weekend because prospective buyers see the signs by the curb and mistakenly think the house closest to the sign is for sale. Another problem is the sheer number of these signs that appear every weekend. It's not unusual to drive east on Hillside Avenue on a nice weekend and see several dozen of these signs on the corners.

Technically these signs are illegal if they block pedestrian traffic in any way, or if they create any type of hazard. The worst offenders are the homeowners who sign up with Foxton's. Foxton's tells the homeowners to leave their signs out for weeks at a time. We hope the real estate industry decides to police itself before the proper City agencies start to enforce the existing laws, or before someone trips over one of these signs.

By the way, Foxton's, the real estate company known for its 2% commissions and illegally posted signs is closing its doors, blaming the housing market.

## Donation Received

Seven Brothers Contracting, Gettysburg St. Thank you!

## “DESIGN DISTRICTS” PROPOSED

About a year ago it was proposed by our civic that the City of New York should emulate the architectural review boards of Nassau County’s incorporated villages as a means of controlling property owners from altering homes in a way that degrades the entire block. There’s a reason Nassau villages are so attractive and Queens neighborhoods are so ugly: Committees with the power of the government behind them make aesthetic judgements to keep neighborhoods attractive. For example, in nearby Bellerose Village fire damaged a vintage one-family wood-frame home. The Village granted approval for the demolition of the house, but the new house had to look like a 1920s house. Now as one drives down the block, it is almost unnoticeable that anything on that block had changed. This preserves property values and respects the fact that when someone buys a house, that person also buys the ambiance of the general neighborhood. For someone to alter the character of the block under the distorted notion that they have a right to do what they want with their own property negates the rights of neighbors to continue to live in a neighborhood that remains just as the neighbors found it when they moved in.

After a year of researching the laws of municipalities around the country, it was decided that a law for New York City would have to operate quite differently than in Nassau and similar jurisdictions. Instead of imposing architectural review boards across all low-density neighborhoods where resistance might make the bill difficult to get passed, it was decided instead to craft a bill wherein neighborhoods can opt to join the program rather than have it mandated.

The way it would work is that once a community decided it wanted the protection of what would be called a “design district”, a manual of standards would be prepared that would define the character of the neighborhood and outline what changes would allowed or banned. By having this manual, the committee that will pass on the proposed changes would have guidelines to follow so that decisions are not arbitrary, inconsistent, or capricious. However, the committee would have the right to deny a change if it was felt it would alter the appearance of the neighborhood or violate the protocols of the design manual.

The Design Districts would not have the right to deny a property owner the right to expand a house if it were permitted under zoning. The only role of the design

district is insure that the expansion respects the style, quality, and character of the homes that surround the proposed expansion.

This proposal goes a long way to solving the problem of neighborhoods whose architecture and history do not rise to the level of securing landmark status, but do not want changes to occur that will create visual chaos and spoil the ambiance of the community. Our community would never meet the standards of a landmark district, so something else is needed. Something less restrictive, but tight enough to keep our neighborhood the attractive way it has remained for 80 years.

This proposal was discussed at the September meeting of the Creedmoor Civic Association and was favorably received. Without the benefit of actual legal language to vet (the bill hasn’t been written yet), the members merely expressed their opinion about the concept. The feeling was unanimous that such a law would benefit our neighborhood. Since our civic area is architecturally homogeneous except for the west side of Moline Street and the three-story apartments built on the corners with Braddock Avenue, our community is ideally suited to fit within the parameters of the proposed law.

Anyone who has driven through Queens Village and seen the hideous changes that have been made with front yard fences and porticos in front of colonial-style homes with giant Corinthian columns understands how serious the problem is getting. Or visit through Floral Park, Queens and see how three-story pink brick McMansions looking-like catering halls have destroyed the character of some blocks of modest post World War II Cape Cod homes.

### CITY PLANNING PROPOSES LAWN RULES



**This six-foot fence on Little Neck Parkway would be banned under proposed City Planning rules and by Design District protocols.**

In a somewhat related move, the Department of City Planning is proposing new regulations regarding front yard fences and the paving over of front lawns. It would reduce the allowable height of front yard fences to four feet, and require that open space on a lot not occupied by the house itself must be green, not paved. These proposals came about in part because of recent rains that caused the flooding of Queens subways and the flooding of Queens basements. The sewers in Queens were designed with the expectation that much rainwater that falls would

be absorbed by lawns but lawns are increasingly diminishing. The Queens Civic Congress of which Creedmoor Civic is an active member supports the DCP initiative but thinks it should go farther to mandate greenery in rear yards and ban front yard fences totally.

# HALLOWEEN PARADE

Sponsored by

**Creedmoor Civic Association, Inc.**

***Saturday, October 27, 2007***

(Rain or Shine)

Creedmoor Civic will host another free costume parade in observance of Halloween. Line up is at Breinger Park (Braddock Avenue at 239 Street) at 1:45 PM. Parade kicks off at 2:00 PM and concludes at St. Anne Post, Catholic War Veterans on 92 Road (across from the Bellerose post office.)

Refreshments will be served at the conclusion of the parade. This event is for local children up to 12 years old and must have adult guardians. Parade route will be beginning at Breinger Park, cross Braddock Avenue heading north on 241 Street to 88 Avenue, along 88 Avenue west to Gettysburg Street, Gettysburg Street south to Braddock Avenue, cross Braddock Avenue to St. Anne's Post at 237-20 92 Road.

Information: 718-464-3369

