



Old Astoria Neighborhood Association (OANA)
www.OANA-NY.org

OANA minutes
October 14th, 2015

The meeting was commenced by having its first award for 'Neighborhood Contributions' given to George "Tex" Cruikshank for the creation and maintenance of Bugsy's dog run. The dog run has serviced both dogs and dog owners since 1994. Tex gave a small speech; mentioning the life around Astoria Park and that Astoria has greatly improved throughout the years since he moved here. He talked about how he saved his own dog, Henry, who was originally abandoned at the dog run. He mentioned his dedication to the dog run and thanking his wife who also had a great contribution. He thanked Richard Khuzami and the association for the honor.

Richard continued the meeting by talking about some of the resolutions that were mentioned in the last meeting, also mentioned that because of the death of the young girl on 19th street and Ditmars Blvd over the summer, there has been a lot of attention paid towards the traffic around Astoria Park including one call to remove all vehicles on Shore Blvd. DOT is having a planning session sponsored by the Councilman Constantanides and Assemblywoman Simotas at the Bohemian hall on Wednesday the 28th at 7-9pm, and Richard encouraged people to go down to participate with their opinions as to whether they would want this or not. Florence Koulouris, District Manager of Community Board 1, stated that it was doubtful that they would close the street, most likely turn it into a one-way street instead. Richard responded that nothing was a done deal, many people were expected to come to the meeting and this should not deter your participation.

The guest of honor was for this meeting was Kenneth Lazar, from Department of Buildings (D.O.B). He gave some general information, some of which including the use of backyards of businesses (For restaurant outside seating) to which the surrounding residents are displeased with due to noise volume. Often these are not constructed legally. The use of the backyard must have a permit to do so and up to code for any emergency situation to the restaurant and the surrounding residences. If anyone should believe that a backyard is being used illegally by business owners to call 311.

Diane Kontzoglou asked if a client buys a home in NYC that was just renovated, but was done so illegally without their knowledge, what could be done. Kenneth stated that the current owner is responsible for the property, complying with all zoning resolution and building codes. He recommended that turn to 'Title Insurance', which is usually required for all home purchase. Title Insurance will hopefully pay to have things brought up to code.



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Kevin Hernandez asked a question involving a violation after a stop work order was issued. He had just finished blocking a wall because of safety concerns, but was still issued a violation. Kenneth answered that when a stop work order is issued any work, regardless of safety, must be called in to the person or unit who issued the stop order before any work is done. The person or unit that is to be called for this type of request is on the form in which the stop order was given, taking his/her name and get their verbal approval for the safety work. The purpose is that they have to know that someone is working on the site. Any event or doubts going on in the site, call for their supervisor. Several questions about excavation were also in questioned, in which the head of forensic engineer was the suggested contact for this type of situation.

Florence Koulouris, District Manager of Community Board 1, talked about some of the previous resolutions mentioned earlier and in the last meeting, including the trash receptacles on street corners that still have Peter Vallone's name on it, responding that Vallone had paid for those which explain why they are still in use today. Also that the main reason trash bins were not on every neighborhood was because of overflow that it would cause. She also mentioned the alternative side parking for on street cleaning by sanitation that is being requested for 25th road, stating that a petition is needed with signatures from everyone in the neighborhood claiming that they want this, to be handed to the community board.

Another question was asked about what to do when a neighbor's property has things falling apart to a dangerous level. Kenneth responded to put the complaint in to 311, specifying exactly what is falling apart or not properly maintained. He also suggested putting the complaints in two parts, with a wait period, claiming that it does more of an effect. Howard Hernandez asked if the D.O.B gave seminars or information, to which Kenneth responded that on their website, there is a newsletter, in which people can sign up and get the latest information, some others website links he mentioned were My buildings' and signing up for 'Alerts'. Kenneth stated that the D.O.B website is one, if not the most, frequently used website in New York from the '.gov' category. They're currently in the works of increasing their bandwidth, which will allow more users to be on at the same time. He also pointed out 'Buildings on My Block' on the website which allows you to see the developments that are happening in that area.

Someone else asked when they receive in the order for demolishing, do D.O.B require a certified mail from building department. Kenneth answered that they are now allowed by email because they can prove they sent it.

Kenneth mentioned once more to the Developers in attendance that if they should have issues with the inspectors, asks for the supervisors to make the resolution much easier.



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No further questioned were asked and Richard thanked everyone for coming.