



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

OANA minutes February 28th 2018

Richard Khuzami, president of the Old Astoria Neighborhood Association, welcomed attendees to the meeting and thanked Historic St George's Episcopal Church for allowing us to use their meeting space. He introduced our new Commanding Officer Captain Osvaldo Nuñez of the NYPD 114 Precinct.

Captain Nuñez discussed recent crime statistics, emphasized that we should all take care in not leave articles of value in automobiles to deter break-ins. He discussed recent crime statistics, noting that in general they were positive. He also discussed various services in the precinct, such as Crime Prevention, Domestic Violence, Traffic, and the Neighborhood Coordination Officer program. He also introduced our new Community Affairs Officer, P.O. Mujibulla Mashriqi. Captain Nuñez apologized for having to leave early because he had 2 more events that evening. But he promised to return for a more extended time in the near future.

Neil Herdan, co-chair of the Friends of Whitey Ford Field, gave the meeting an update on the group. Their ioby fundraiser was a huge success, raising \$3,000 that will go towards hosting park events and basic field maintenance. They are looking for local vendors for canopies with chairs, tarps, custom design t-shirts, pens, and foodstuffs. The Friends were also nominated for Partnership for Parks Queens Golden Trowel Award

Unfortunately Shirley Echevarria our new Parks Manager had to cancel due to a family emergency, we will try to reschedule her presentation.

Ayesha Williams from Assemblywoman Cathy Nolan's office addressed the meeting briefly and passed along greetings from the Assemblywoman.

Richard then introduced Samantha Dolgoff, the NYC Department of Transportation Community Board 1 Borough Planner. Samantha gave the meeting a presentation about the proposed Pedestrian Safety Improvement Project at Vernon Boulevard/30th Avenue/8th Street. The proposal includes reducing crossing distances, adding new crosswalks on 30th Avenue, expanding sidewalks, and extending curbs at various locations.

The plan includes converting Main Ave between 8th St and 30th Ave to one-way eastbound while reducing Astoria Blvd between Main Ave and 8th St from 2 lanes to 1 lane and installing back-in angled parking. The proposal lays out an increase in parking by an approximate net of 7 new parking spaces. The result of the proposal will be shorter pedestrian crossings; some crossings will be reduced by almost half.



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An attendee asked about the procedure for transferring a street from 2-way to one-way. Samantha said that DOT will generally only do that following a letter from the Community Board so petitioning your local Community Board if you want your street traffic pattern changed is a necessary first step. Neil Herdan asked when the Pedestrian Improvement Project is due to start. Samantha told us that the start date has not yet been decided but it will be in 2018. An attendee mentioned that buses go too fast in the area of the proposed improvement project. Samantha said that the new curb extensions and additional pedestrian space will help to slow down the buses.

There was a follow-up question about school buses that park at corners in the proposed improvement area. Samantha said that the new proposal will expand the spaces for pedestrians and reduce the spaces that buses will be able to occupy. There was some discussion about where and at what times of the day school buses are legally allowed to park. Samantha said that DOT will research the situation and will reach out to law enforcement if need be. Samantha believes that the Pedestrian project itself will reduce bad parking behavior as bus drivers will become aware that more attention is being paid to the area.

Kathleen Springer asked if the DOT owns air space over streets and whether there are any plans for pedestrian overbridges. She mentioned the increase in congestion in the neighborhood and that the conversion of streets from two-way to one way may lead to a reduction of routes, and wondered if elevated walkways could be an alternative. Samantha said that elevated walkways are very expensive to construct and generally only work over highways.

A question was asked whether the changing of Shore Blvd from two lanes to one lane of traffic was causing an access problem for the FDNY. Samantha said that the FDNY had been consulted before the switch and didn't anticipate any problems but DOT would be happy to consult with FDNY if it turns out that there are any problems.

Kathleen Springer asked about coloring speed bumps and Samantha said that this is not a federal standard. You should report speed bump markers that appear faded.

Claudia Coger mentioned that the intersection of 12th St and Astoria Blvd is a problem because cars park illegally there and block the crosswalks. Samantha said that the DOT would check the signage there and make sure it's up to date. The meeting discussed whether that portion of the street was in fact 2-way or 1 way, Richard said that OANA would investigate.



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Richard mentioned the "Trucks" sign at 8th St and 27th Avenue was misleading as it appears to direct trucks down 27th Avenue. 27th Ave. is not a truck route. Also, it was of a very old design. A new modern sign should direct trucks down 8th street which is a truck route. The truck traffic down 27th avenue has caused many large potholes to appear, and also forced truck traffic down 18th st, causing safety concerns especially for children and seniors. Richard added that OANA had been told that speed bumps had been approved for 18th St and wondered what the status of that was. This is an issue that needs to be addressed asap, a couple reported recently that their kid was almost hit on 18th St. Victor from the Family Church said that cars go very fast on 18th St: there is a lot of foot traffic around the church on Sundays from 10 am to 3 pm and the speed of traffic is a problem.

Florence Koulouris, District Manager of Community Board 1, mentioned that there had not been any calls to CB 1 about speeding on 18th St. She reminded attendees to call 311 but also to call your Community Board (718-628-1721) if you observe a problem. The Community Board is here to address neighborhood problems but if they're not reported CB 1 can't act.

Samantha confirmed to the meeting that she will check on the position of the 18th St speed bumps in the "queue." There is no school on 18th St and since requests for speed bumps for streets with schools on them are always moved to the top of the queue so this can slow down the process if there are a lot of proposals for speed bumps at school locations.

Richard asked what the prognosis is for "pothole season." Samantha told the meeting that winter storms and salting have produced a new crop of potholes, and asked OANA members to please report them. You can now upload a picture of the pothole to the 311 app, which will add geo location to your report. In Queens reports of potholes are generally responded to within 4 days. If it's been 2 weeks and you observe that the pothole you reported hasn't been filled in, call 311. Samantha added that if you hit a pothole that has been reported to the City, you can put in a claim for damage caused to your car by the pothole.

Richard gave the meeting a summary of various traffic proposals put forward by OANA to date. (Check our website for details of our proposals <http://oana-ny.org/press-releases/>)

Samantha reported that the proposals re angled parking did not fit the DOT specific standards for angled parking.

There was a discussion of sidewalk violations and the pros and cons for the homeowner for fixing the sidewalk themselves or waiting for the city to do it. If there is a crack in your sidewalk and someone falls



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there and is injured, the homeowner is liable. So it might make sense to report your own sidewalk in order to get a notice of violation from the city that will tell you exactly what and how to fix.

An attendee commented on the removal of parking spaces to make room for CitiBike docks, and mentioned that the need for parking was increasing with all the development in the neighborhood. A question was asked about removing bus stops to increase parking spaces. Samantha said that DOT would not do that though they may put in a bus stop, but only at the request of the MTA.

Richard said that a lot of good ideas had been aired and urged attendees to share their suggestions with OANA. If the Board approves the proposal OANA will bring it to the attention of DOT.

The Rev Karen spoke briefly mentioning that the Church was happy to host OANA meetings. Attendees are welcome at church events, please check the notices on the fence.

Richard thanked Samantha for her presentation and for answering all our questions and thanked the other speakers. The meeting was then adjourned.