

June 9th, 2015

OANA minutes

The president of the Old Astoria Neighborhood Association, Richard Khuzami, commenced the meeting by welcoming everyone and introducing the special presenters, including the borough planner for Queens for the Department of Transportation, Samantha Dolgoff, and two NYPD officers.

Richard mentioned having a walk through in the area with Samantha a month ago to discuss various transportation and traffic issues in the neighborhood. The first issue discussed was changing the direction of 18th street between Astoria Blvd and 27th Ave, right now its south bound and want to change it to northbound. The main issue is that trucks often are coming eastbound on 27th Ave when they turn right on 18th street, they can't make the turn left towards Astoria Blvd. Samantha's suggestion was to have D.O.T review the street and see if it can be turned northbound since the rest of 18th street is already northbound above 27th Ave. This is something that requires a letter from the community board saying they support it, but that is something that D.O.T can look at. A new law has passed to allow negative signage for trucks to be put up; this is something that will be beneficial going forward. The next item on the agenda is making 14th street 2 ways from 30th Ave to Broadway, providing more alternative northbound routes coming from Broadway. This will also feed more traffic onto Astoria Blvd where there are businesses and help on their exposure. Some people were against this because it will cause more traffic issues and that it was safe as it is. Before a study is made, support from the community board and requesting the study would be necessary before continuing. A vote on the conversion was taken into account, majority in the meeting favoring for the conversion, and a petition for it was to be made going forward.

The next topic discussed was to create speed bumps on 18th street. Drivers often go too fast down the street where there are children and families playing. For this to happen, one can request speed bumps directly to D.O.T, anyone can, but when D.O.T does the study then they send a letter to the community board, letting them know that they found feasible in asking for a letter. A vote was taken on who favored this, almost everyone raised their hands. The following issue at hand was creating a loading zone on the northwest corner of 21st street and Astoria Blvd, in front of the Excel building. This is because they often have loading trucks such as FedEx or moving trucks, blocking one lane and causing traffic backups on a daily basis. Richard asked if such creation was possible since it was a residential building, not a commercial building, to which was answered that it was more up to the building for the loading

zone to be put in place and loading zone were more for commercial businesses who need to have load and unload regularly; and trucks like FedEx are for personal deliveries, either way Samantha said she put in a request to see if anything could be done within regulations to allow this. The following discussion was to have speed bumps on 27th Ave between 21st street and 8th street, speeders again facing the issue like on 18th street, endangering children and causing future issues with potential buildings going up in the area. Samantha stated to have put in the study for this. It was questioned where the future trucks would be coming in from if such a speed bump was created, which was answered that they could enter from 30th Ave or Astoria Blvd. Everyone was in favor of the speed bump on 27th Ave.

Subsequently was to have a left turn signal from 21st street to Astoria Blvd, making it easier for drivers trying to making a left turn rather than waiting until the light turns red. Very few left hand turns are in the area of Astoria where there are plenty of cars and can help ease congestion. The meeting room all agreed to have D.O.T pursue this. Next was to have 'right on red after stop' on 21st street and Astoria Blvd on the west bound side, especially since the light changes quickly and doesn't allow for much time for the cars to turn. D.O.T planner also saying they will have this looked at. The next item on the list was to remove night restrictions on Shore Blvd from November 1 to April 30. The night restriction itself seems to have been working well for those in the area; however issues with parking seem to be faced, especially in the winter months. What wants to be done is similar to what is happening in the Rockaways, with seasonal night restrictions, which seems to be working, enforcing it on Shore Blvd as well. The police officers present said they would definitely look into it.

Following after was 'daylighting on 9th street and 27th Ave', issues with not being able to see traffic when leaving 9th street, making a 'no standing anytime' sign on each corner to allow more view of the area for drivers and for safety reasons. Some argued that it would claim many parking spots that are greatly needed for residents. Suggestion a study to be done to evaluate the area and see if a solution could be done, though Samantha stated that they use federal warrants to have such signs put up and if it's not a busy area or not enough accidents have happened then it doesn't trigger the warrant for the signal, suggesting to wait a while instead. Everyone agreed to have the daylighting removed from the request for now, holding it off for a few more months before having the study made. The next item that had a request put in was 'no trucks allowed except local deliveries' signage on 27th Ave from 21st street to 8th street, everyone agreeing with this signage.

At the Astoria Cove project, between 9th street and 4th street, it was mentioned how crimes seem to occur, especially with young adults, and if more surveillance or

police officers could be placed to watch the area. Captain Mullan, from the NYPD, answered that the area has been trying to keep officers on it and even cameras have been (or will be) put into place to help keep the area more secure. Another questioned or request made was if more officers can be placed in the Astoria area considering how large it is and will only get bigger in terms of people, even have police officers on bicycles. Another questioned asked was what could be done about people running through stop signs, the NYPD and Samantha both stated that it was a citywide problem that needed to be addressed. A questioned was also asked on how high are speeds bumps supposed to be, which Samantha answered that they are 4 inches on a school zone, and 3 inches on a non-school zone.

Richard mentioned that today they issued 50 trash cans to Astoria Park, both Kevin and Richard donated the money for the trash cans. Parks enforcement is also a huge concern, people throwing large bags of garbage on park trash cans and irresponsible pet owners not pick up after their dogs, etc., but tickets can't be issued unless P.E.P officer is present, which makes it harder for the laws to be put into place when one isn't around. What is being suggested is to have a letter sent out to allow supervisors of the park to be able to write tickets and summons to those violating park laws.

The last topic discussed was the answers EDC had on the proposed ferry; a hardcopy was distributed to those present, one of which is its going to happen in the south side, which is seemed safer, of the peninsula and completed by 2017.

The meeting was concluded and Richard thanked everyone for coming out.