



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

**OANA Meeting
May 14th**

Richard welcomed everyone in attendance for being present. He thanked Brooklyn Harvest and Costco.

Richard started with an update on community issues. He reminded everyone to support our local businesses. The new supermarket opened on the floor of the Durst building for Hallett's Point development.

They will be having great grand opening specials to introduce you to their store. The market is on 2nd street between 26th and 27th avenue. They are hoping to provide parking shortly to their customers.

There has been discussion about dog poop bags in the neighborhood. Civic organizations have joined with the population to provide dispensers for the doggie poop bags. We are hoping to receive feedback from the neighborhood. OANA would like to create a committee that could work on this issue. We are hoping that the Department of Sanitation is more amenable to placing trash cans on the corners of the streets. Additionally, Astoria has had the problem of being a dumping ground for abandoned cars. We have been working with the Department of Sanitization to address this issue as well as changing the street cleaning/alternate side parking to once a week as opposed to twice a week. We are hoping to have this started in the coming weeks.

Basil Gavalas inquired, "Do you have an outline of what that looks like?"

Richard replied that the schedule should be available in the next two weeks

Diane Kinsoto inquired, "What areas does that include? Does that include 30th Road and down near Socrates park?"

Richard replied its basically everywhere from Broadway to Astoria Park south.

Richard stated that OANA is attempting to put an arts district on the waterfront. The bill will be presented to the City Council next month to establish this arts district. There is a vast amount of artist that live here and work here. We have numerous cultural institutions that call Astoria home



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Astoria Library Renovations

Richard introduced Gus with the Astoria library. He stated that the following upgrades are being scheduled. There is \$50000 for technical upgrades, \$8.5 million for interior renovations and Americans with disabilities upgrades, \$200000 for self-check equipment. These renovations are scheduled to be completed by 2022.

The Astoria Library is one of the oldest libraries in New York City. It was the second library to open in Long Island City. The library opened on March 19th 1896. They were open 12 hours daily. You were only able to check out two books at a time, one had to be a nonfiction book. They had a very small staff. The library was a Carnegie building that was built with 5 million dollars donated by Carnegie for the creation of 16 libraries. The library originally had two chimneys.

Patrick inquired, “Why did they demolish that building to create that hideous building?” Gus replied that 85% of the building is still original. The windows are still the same.

Books for better babies was a program where doctors would come in to provide medical information for healthier babies. The program would occur once a week and was very popular and was free. The library was heavily renovated with the Federal Civil Works administration where two new windows were introduced in the 1930s. The library has been serving the children of Astoria for over a hundred years. We provide free homework help for children. STACKS is a program where help is provided for an hour and an enrichment program after the homework help. There was a WPA survey completed in 1938 and one chimney was removed. There were 5 panels of WPA Murals by Max Spivak and Eugenie Gershoy “The Circus” and “Grand Finale” are the two that remain in the library. Eugenie Gershoy created the minis that are displayed in the library. The library has a history of taking teens of the street. They have a partnership with St George Church. The children’s room will be moved down in the basement. The teens room will be held in the current location of the children’s room. The library is going up for a 35 million dollars ask. The postcards show the support of the community. We need the postcards to come back. They receive donations from citizens. The library is slated for a 2020 renovation. They cannot accommodate senior citizens because of the lack of handicapable accommodations.

Dominique Perrot commented that she learned to speak and read English by going to the library across the street. She presented a Top 10 information regarding Gus.

Gus informed that he needs help regarding the garden located at the library.



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Clare Doyle inquired, "What kind of books are you looking for?"

Gus replied that the only things they do not accept are encyclopedias, magazines and college text books. They accept DVDs, CDs, paperbacks and hardcovers. All donations are tax deductible.

Barbara Bains inquired, "When is this grant coming?"

Gus replied \$250k is approved for ADA accessibility. ADA accessibility would be satisfied with an elevator. He stated that there should be a ramp established as well as the elevator.

Sarah Balogh commented there a partnership with other Queens library for a student loan clinic. She inquired, "Are there any plans with this location to have those? Are there any other financial literacy or financial education programs that currently exist? How can we partner?"

Gus replied any program that free is welcome in the Astoria library. In regards of financial clinics, we currently do not have a large teen population that visit the library. The library hosted a SHSAT information session where only 120 people attended.

Claudia Coger commented we received a notice that they want to cut out the senior citizen funds. We have a problem. Why are they cutting so much of the budget? It's a rude awakening when they say they want to cut the funding to the library. Once they close the night programs, the teens went to other things. We need to be aware of this. They want to balance the budget on our teens, seniors and children.

David Matten commented that the after-hours book drop is closed after hours. He inquired, "Will that be rectified in this new reconstruction?"

Gus replied when they move to the 24-hour format there will be an ATM style book drop.

Larry Spiegel inquired, "Has anyone considered having one location where it is adult reading so that they can focus on concentration?"

Gus replied they did away with the notion of quiet when they allowed cell phones use. Now normal conversation is allowable. The creation of the teen room may allow better use by adults.

Diane Kinsoto inquired, "What is the amount that tis library will receive?"



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Gus replied they will receive \$8 million dollars. The HVAC units has to be renovated. The children's room will be moved downstairs. The auditorium downstairs is only used for performances.

Dominique Perrot inquired, "Are they planning to provide us with a library manager?"

Gus replied Yes we will hit the ground running.

Richard asked to Gus to present the questions so that OANA can help address them.

NYC Ferry Update

Richard introduced the representatives of Hornblower EDC, Franny Civitano & Sharene Ojelibi NYC Ferry.

NYC Ferry has 6 routes, East River, Rockaway, South Brooklyn, Astoria, Lower East Side and Soundview. There current service features are 7-day year-round service. The fare is currently the same price as the fare for the subway fairs. As of Monday, they will have 21 landings. There was a mayoral announcement in January that NYC ferry would be expanded. In Summer 2019 the Brooklyn Navy Yard will be added to the Astoria Route. In 2021 the Coney Island route will connect Bayridge to Manhattan. Additionally, the Throggs neck stop with be added to the Soundview route. The Report will be available on www.nycedc.com/ferry-feasibility-study For everyone to review. The Brooklyn Navy Yard will be between 34th street to pier 11. Navy Yard is a growing job center that is expecting to have 20,000 by 2020. Non-Brooklyn tenants can access the Brooklyn navy yard by walking to Bldg. 77. There will be travel time changes. Currently the route goes from Astoria to Roosevelt Island to Long Island City to East 34th St to Wall street. Starting May 20th, the summer schedule will be implemented. The schedule will move from 30 minutes peak & 45 minutes off peak to 25 minutes peak to 34 minutes off peak. Astoria ridership is the 2nd highest ridership on the system. The NYC ferry system has seen over 8.7 million riders, Astoria has seen over 1.4 million.

Richard mentioned there was a petition drafted by OANA for an extension of the Astoria line into the Upper East Side.

Franny mentioned the proposal to connect the Upper East Side to the Astoria Line. It is a very interesting thought and suggestion. They are looking into seeing where more stops will be feasible. Regarding the MTA connection, the MTA is retiring their MetroCard in 2023. They will



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be introducing their new fare system. They are attempting to see if they can be on the same payment system as the MTA.

Jack Ichenbaum commented that the conflicts with the MTA is very important he recommended to look at Istanbul. They have trans, subways and ferries and work on one card and it works.

Franny replied the BQX is an EDC project that is currently being worked on. It mimics the ferry system. Regarding the airport she asked everyone to look at the feasibility study of LaGuardia Airport.

Justin Potter commented to encourage to incorporate with the MTA to have bus service so that the bus is there when the ferry arrives.

Franny replied that they met Economic Development Committee & Transportation committee of CB1 regarding more coordination with lines dropping off passengers closer to the ferry stops.

Joan Jardine inquired, "Why is that the ferry doesn't have different fares?"

Franny replied yes the current fare is a monthly fare. They are attempting to find a way to offer single ride discounted passes. How do we validate a single ride passes if a system to recognize these passes?

Liz Chir inquired, "Is there any plans to extend the ferry later?"

Franny replied no we have set hours from 6:30AM-10PM

Larry Epstein commented that schedule disruptions are communicated badly.

Franny replied that they are always trying to improve communications of service changes since they first launched.

Richard added that everyone would like signage or community board or notice center at each landing to be notified of community events & cultural events.

Franny commented we have discussed this with the community board. We are working on establishing better DOT signage. Regarding the landing, we are hindered. We are not allowed to advertise at the landing. They are working on a landing highlights page.



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Dominique Perrot commented would that she would like to thank the NYC Ferry. The reason that the ferry is so clean and efficient is that it is not part of the MTA.

Aiysha Mayfield inquired, "Is there a process to remove and return the signs every night?"

Franny replied if you see any signage being removed please let us know.

Claudia Coger inquired, "Would you consider putting bicycle stands?"

Franny replied yes we would love to put bike racks at the Ferry landings.

David Matten inquired, "Is some education for the pilots were the water swashes over the benches at the landing?"

Franny replied yes, we will see how they're coming into the landings.

Neil Hutton commented the alignment between Astoria and the Upper east side is wacky. The 90th Street is right against the FDR. There should be proper bus connections. The locations are not in the right place.

Rosalie Mollica inquired, "The beautiful old dock? What will happen to it? "

Franny replied there are plans for that area.

Richard commented the councilman Constinides has worked on a kayak launch for that location.

Joe Page commented Astoria Park is always buzzing. He inquired, "Why wasn't a stop put there?"

Franny replied we would have to look at the feasibility study. There was a discussion between the current location and that location.

Diane Kinsoto inquired, "Is the ferry pet friendly?"

Alana replied we are pet friendly. The policy is no paws on deck. If you place your pet in a carrier or a bag, they may ride with you.



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Marsha Ann Henry commented there are changes going on. She inquired, “What went into the thought process? Anything to encourage this change before 2021?”

Franny replied many people love the ferry. They are currently committed to the locations that are committed to launching. There are many considerations to be included.

Clare Doyle inquired, “Can extra services be provided for the large events that occur?”

Franny replied no if they want to charter extra service. They connect them to operators to make that happen

Larry Epsten inquired, “When are the larger boats expected to be delivered?”

Franny replied They have 4 boats that are in service currently. One arrived in NY that needs to be entered into service.

Marsha Ann Henry inquired, “Was the 90th Street ever part of the feasibility schedule?”

Franny replied it was on the feasibility report prior to 2017.

Richard thanked everyone for coming and Brooklyn Harvest Market and Costco for providing the food for tonight’s meeting.