



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

### Meeting December 10<sup>th</sup> 2019

Richard welcomed everyone in attendance for being present. He thanked Brooklyn Harvest & Costco for providing the refreshments for this evening's meeting

Richard reminded that cars are passing school buses and ignoring the bus's stop sign.

Gail Gualotuna stated that recommendations offered by OANA have been sent to Department of Transportation. DOT replied that they would look into the information.

Richard stated alternate side parking has been implemented. Residents have commented that they have been able to find parking now because the cars do not sit for months. He commented there should be dedicated traffic signals for bicycles.

Sophia Cunningham inquired, "How do you have the power to do that?"

Richard commented that this country is based on democracy. It is based on people expressing their views. OANA reaches out to the agencies and electeds to facilitate the process on behalf of our neighbors.

### **III. Dept of Sanitation Chris Velez & Joe Ottomanelli**

Richard introduced them. Chris thanked everyone for allowing him to speak with the audience. He is a sanitation worker and has worked with DOS for a long time.

One of the major rules is that it is the responsibility of the home owner is to clean up into the curb and up to 18 inches into the street. The 18 inches are for streets where there is no alternate side. This is to ensure that garbage does not accumulate. The streets are cleaner. All residents are required to clean that. Tickets are written are between 8AM-9AM and 6PM-7PM. Secondly, e-waste is a big issue in the neighborhood. Electronic waste can be picked up from your residence. Computers are shredded for parts, and information is completely destroyed. Thirdly, Drop off sites. Where can you can get rid of paints, oils, florescent lights, old drugs and needles. If you are unsure, there are special waste sites. College Point is the location in this borough. It is open every Saturday 10AM-5PM They will receive everything except refrigerators and air conditioners.

Next is organics. Everything thrown out is compostable. We give away mulch for free for the community to use. It is not mandatory but it will be. Chris suggests that residents become



Old Astoria Neighborhood Association (OANA)  
[www.OANA-NY.org](http://www.OANA-NY.org)

accustomed to it. The more usage of the participants and the use will switch. Organic pick-ups and paper will be two times a week.

Richard inquired, "What's status of organics collection?"

Mr. Velez stated it is currently district wide not city wide. There will be dates that will be listed to ensure that everything is implemented correctly.

Sophia stated she did project citizen on composting; "is it for gardening?"

Mr. Velez stated that is exactly what we do. They make mulch for everyone.

Lastly, snow is coming. Building residents have 4 hours to shovel. To ensure that once the snow stops it is their responsibility to clean their sidewalk. The rule is to clean 48 inches from side to side to create a path. It is for the safety of residents.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that it is cleaned before the next day. Complaints of why did the plow shovel the snow onto my property. The plows are right angled to give enough distance. They are tilted to the right because most turns are right turns.

Suggestions are the salt is seeded as a proactive measure by the elected officials. They will start using a liquid salt to ensure proper coating.

Mark Goldberg inquired, "When you put some e-waste out? Do you need to have a sign because there's a schedule?"

Mr. Velez commented no you don't have to put anything out, as long as it's in front of your house during the correct time and date.

Delcia Perez inquired, "What can we do on 30th Avenue. There's a constant pile of trash. What can be done about that?"

Mr. Velez inquired, "What kind of trash is it? Is it a building that is doing that?"

Delci stated she was unsure if it was a school but it was right next to a park and a school.

Richard reminded that if anyone sends correspondence to Sanitation please cc OANA so that they may follow up.



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

Mr. Velez stated whenever you have an issue, always start with 311. It is a written record and they can escalate it from there. It helps them and the caller.

Beverly Jordan stated it seems it may be a personal dumping.

Mr. Velez commented that calling 311 assists with the report to ensure that everything is done correctly.

Mr. Velez stated the reason they may not have picked it up because certain days are bulk days. They may not have picked up ensure the truck is not overloaded.

Richard inquired, "If a pickup is missed what do you do?"

Mr. Velez stated in those instances where there is a missed pickup, call 311 and wait 24 hrs. The trucks may get full and not reach your street. If after 24 hours call DOS informing that that there was no pickup. A truck will be sent to pick up your trash.

Neil Herdan inquired, "What if you live in an apartment? What do you do if your depending on the super?"

Mr. Velez stated for apartment buildings with 10 or more units, there are metal cages so that the e-waste can be held. Once filled, an appointment may be made to pick it up. There is no expense on the super or anyone for the cost of this. Make an appointment, we cannot serve 15 residents for pick up.

Aria Foster inquired, "What kind of bags go into the brown bins?"

Mr. Velez stated the official rule is any bag will be accepted. May 2020, plastic bags will no longer be available in supermarkets. Paper bags will be \$.05. They will give out reusable bags.

Joe Page inquired, "What are the street sweepers doing for the neighborhood? There are like a set of stairs that revolve around that kicks debris underneath and sucks it in the elevator and goes into the container.

Mr. Velez stated if you see a street sweeper, please be careful. Do not cut in front of the street sweeper. Your car may lose it tires to the sweeper. It is very dangerous being around the street sweepers.



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

Richard inquired about the lack of trashcans.

Diane Turik stated she walks from 30<sup>th</sup> road up along the Queens Bridge. There is not one garbage pail. There are people eating and throwing their food on the floor. Who do I complain to?

Mr. Velez stated when it comes to DOS bins, they are not on residential streets. The big issue is the misuse of the garbage cans. They are thrown everywhere. Also, too many times household garbage is put in these cans, mostly because people are too lazy to sort for recycling. We can determine if there are certain places we can place a garbage basket. There are a lot of places we cannot put baskets in. If you the baskets are abused, it will be removed.

Richard reminded us that every dollar that is received from the federal government is based on the census. He introduced Jaime Fay Bean & Susie Tannenbaum.

Ms. Tanenbaum stated the census is an incredible exercise in democracy that we must all participate in. The census count determines how much federal funding will come to our borough. This will be utilized for essential services such as schools, hospitals, libraries as well as roads and bridges. It also determines how many congress members represent us for the next ten years. New York is at risk of losing 10 congressional seats. The Queens Complete Count Committee is a network of trusted community advocates who are committed that their communities get counted. People may join the complete count committee. They currently have 115 trusted community partners. There are two criteria for joining the CCC, firstly being active in your community and second attending our monthly meeting.

Queens is most diverse county in the use. It has the most nationalities and racial/ethnic groups. This presents two challenges; the first our African American and Caribbean communities are undercounted. They are concerned that this will occur again. Under the current political climate, immigrants are afraid to fill out a questionnaire that will be going to the federal government. They need residents who speak different languages that can go into these communities to inform them it is beneficial for everyone to be counted.

The census bureau has a three-part model

1. The census is important
2. The census is easy
3. The census is safe.



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www.OANA-NY.org

The federal government will allocate \$675 billion in funding nationwide. The only way for Queens to receive its share is for everyone to be counted. Queens has 2.359 million people living in this borough. Borough President Katz is committed to having every one of those 2.359 million counted.

There are four ways you may answer the census questionnaire.

1. You can answer it online
2. You can answer it by making a phone call
3. You can answer it the traditional way by filling out the questionnaire and mailing it back.
4. You can wait for an enumerator to come knocking on your door to ask you the 10 questions that are on the census form.

Suzie asked that everyone not wait for the enumerator. We are the best person to answer these questions.

The Census Bureau will never ask you for your social security numbers. They will not ask for money or donations. They will not ask for anything on behalf of a political party. They will also not ask you for your credit card number.

All information provided in the census is protected under the US Constitution Title XIII. Census workers must take an oath of confidentiality. If they reveal any data regarding any individual they may have to pay a fine up to \$250000 as well as serve jail time.

The Census bureau will be providing the census available online and via telephone in 12 languages. There will also be online guides in 59 languages. Queens residents speak close to 200 languages.

In March 2020 everyone with email will receive an invitation to participate in the census. There will be a reminder letter sent at the end of March. In April you will receive the paper questionnaire and a reminder at the end of the month. From May to July, the enumerators will come in to do their jobs.

Anastasia Cunningham inquired, "Is there a plan for Greek to be on the census?" The last census Greek residents were one of the most underreported communities.

Suzie stated they can ask for the census 101 materials available in Greek.



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Jamie informed that members of the Complete Count Committee are currently translating the information into other languages.

The Sunnyside Smiles is the business improvement district for the neighborhood committed to invigorate the economic life of the neighborhood. They manage two plazas under the elevated 7 train. They had pop up markets in the plazas as well as cultural events such as an artistic activation. They are engaging their immigrant business owners who are major employers of individuals of hard to count communities. They are seeking to establish semi-permanent pop centers to assist residents with the census.

Vanessa Jones Hall commented that there are currently jobs that there are jobs they are looking to fill. The positions that are being sought to fill are the enumerators. It is best that these enumerators be residents that are familiar with the community. She asked that everyone pass this information to friends and family for these open positions. Everyone is properly trained and given the tools to do the job successfully.

Neil Herden inquired, "How are you going to combat the actions taken by President Trump's administration regarding the omission of the citizenship question?"

Vanessa stated it is very important when you address the residents that your speech and body language be humbling.

Suzie stated that the census should be viewed positively. It should be viewed as a celebration. Census BBQ's were established years ago where people were able to eat food and receive help with the census.

Mark Goldberg inquired, "Is there going to be a large enough media blitz at that time to stress the information is not to identify you as a citizen but for federal funding? Is there any way we can get resident listed instead of a name?"

Suzie stated yes there will be a massive media campaign that will be multilingual.

Jamie stated there will be official communication as well as nonprofits reaching out through social media.

Richard introduced Anastasia Cunningham the owner of Aloria Bakery. She started making cakes for her children's birthday cakes. As they grew older the cakes became more elaborate,



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after encouragement she sought out the means to start her business. It is a custom order bakery. She provides custom cakes for weddings, birthdays and other occasions. The shop is located on Astoria Blvd. between 18th & 14<sup>th</sup> streets.

Tameka inquired, “Do you make vegan cakes as well?”

Anastasia stated that she makes a few vegan items. Most Greek desserts are vegan. She has vegan cookies, muffins and other items.

Cassandra Canelo inquired, “Do you have more cupcakes?”

Anastasia stated no I brought 60 cupcakes.

Richard reminded everyone to support the local business

Richard thanked everyone for coming and Brooklyn Harvest Market and Costco for providing the food for tonight’s meeting. The next meeting will take place next month on January 14th.