

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 117<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS

## IN RECOGNITION OF THE OLD ASTORIA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION ARTS DISTRICT

**HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY  
OF NEW YORK IN THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Madam Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to the Old Astoria Neighborhood Association (OANA) in support of their efforts to create a dedicated arts district located along the waterfront in Astoria, New York. OANA, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization founded in 2014 by President Richard Khuzami, has displayed a long-lasting commitment to the community and promotes quality of life, economic growth, and culture throughout Astoria.

The Astoria Waterfront Arts District (AWAD) proposed by OANA would stretch from Astoria Boulevard south to Rainey Park along the waterfront, housing hundreds of graffiti artists, abstract painters, sculptors, muralists, and many more who contribute to the landscape of the community. The district would be the second arts district established in Astoria following the creation of the Kaufman Arts District in 2014. It would aim to showcase artwork by many of the world's most highly recognized artists and sculptors in addition to hundreds of works by community artists. The district would encompass many cultural institutions in Western Queens, among which are the Socrates Sculpture Park, the Noguchi Museum, and the Welling Court Mural Project.

Socrates Sculpture Park, established in 1986 by the artist Mark di Suvero with other artists and community members, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to supporting artists in the production and presentation of contemporary public art. The park serves as both an internationally renowned outdoor exhibition space and studio program as well as a neighborhood park that offers a wide variety of free community events, programs, and services. Socrates Sculpture Park offers an extensive roster of inclusive public and educational programming for individuals of all ages, supporting life-long learning through an engagement with art and the natural landscape of the Park.

The Noguchi Museum, founded in 1985 by category-defying artist Isamu Noguchi and chartered as The Isamu Noguchi Foundation and Garden Museum, was the first museum in the United States to be established, designed, and installed by a living artist to show their own work. Located in Long Island City, Queens, the Museum itself is widely viewed as among the artist's greatest achievements. The Museum today remains a place for the exploration of individual artistic endeavor and creative collaboration through exposure to Noguchi's wide-ranging practice. Through an active exhibition and

public programming schedule, coupled with ongoing education, preservation, and research projects, the Museum continues to illuminate the enduring influence of Noguchi in dialogue with contemporary culture.

The Welling Court Mural Project began in 2009 when the organization Ad Hoc Art was invited by the community of Welling Court to add to the aesthetics of their neighborhood. The first project debuted in May 2010 with over 44 murals, fitting for the diverse and lively inhabitants. Each year since, spectacular crews of legendary and groundbreaking artists have come together to transform the neighborhood into a creative celebration and public art experience. Now featuring over 150 murals painted by artists from all corners of the globe, the Welling Court Mural Project is regarded as one of the leading collections of contemporary graffiti and street art.

OANA is a firm believer that the art presented by these cultural institutions not only unifies the local community, but also attracts individuals from different parts of the world who travel to Astoria to observe and expand on the district's works. The location is easily accessible to all New Yorkers thanks to the centrally located Astoria Ferry Landing. Additionally, the AWAD is located close to the New York City Housing Authority Astoria Houses campus and would connect residents with more artistic programming.

Diversity is the banner of the cultural institutions that define the AWAD. Art is presented in differentiating forms by individuals who interpret the world through distinct feelings, opinions, views, and perceptions. As the local population expands, the neighborhood is experiencing a demographic shift towards greater multiculturalism and ethnic diversity. This shift exposes new generations and cultures to the creative inspirations of different groups and opens a dialogue to build the future of art in New York City.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the Old Astoria Neighborhood Association for its dedication to arts and culture throughout Astoria. The Astoria Waterfront Arts District's incorporation into the neighborhood, in consultation with and subject to approval by municipal government entities, would strengthen Astoria's already vibrant culture, support local artists, and be a welcome addition to the artistic community, both throughout the city and our country.

*Carolyn B. Maloney*

**CAROLYN B. MALONEY**  
*Member of Congress*

