



DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING
CITY OF NEW YORK

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Amanda M. Burden, FAICP, *Director*
Department of City Planning

May 13, 2008

Mr. Corey B. Bearak
President
Queens Civic Congress, Inc.
Post Office Box 238
Flushing, NY 11363

Mr. Bearak,

On behalf of Mayor Bloomberg, thank you for your May 12th letter. I am pleased to provide you with additional information regarding the issues you raised about City Planning's activities in the Borough of Queens.

Since 2002, the Department of City Planning has completed 28 rezonings in the Borough of Queens covering more than 3,400 blocks, or approximately one quarter of the borough, an unprecedented amount for any five-and-one-half year period. As we continue to advance our ambitious agenda within Queens, we are committed to pursuing the same successful strategy to protect the character of the borough's distinguished neighborhoods by developing fine-grained, neighborhood specific contextual rezoning proposals that closely match zoning districts to predominant building types and forms.

Since the City Council's adoption of City Planning's rezoning proposal for Briarwood at the end of February of this year, the Department has been completing work, including detailed analyses and thorough community outreach, to begin public reviews for rezoning more than 580 blocks in four locations across the borough of Queens. City Planning's proposal to comprehensively update zoning on 280 blocks in five communities on the Rockaway peninsula was certified at the end of April. The public review process is expected to start shortly on Dutch Kills (40 blocks in western Queens), Laurelton (220 blocks in southeastern Queens) and Waldheim (44 blocks in northern Queens). The remainder of the neighborhoods you identified are under study or consideration by the Department.

Concerning your request for new One-Family Narrow Lot, One Family Row House, and "R1A" zones: While we have significantly expanded our zoning toolbox and ability to protect neighborhood character with new contextual zoning districts, we are aware of concerns that existing zoning tools do not always provide an exact match with every built

Amanda M. Burden, FAICP, *Director*
22 Reade Street, New York, N.Y. 10007-1216
(212) 720-3200 FAX (212) 720-3219
nyc.gov/planning

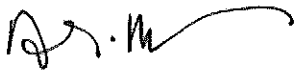


form. Creation of new zoning districts, however, requires considerable and careful analysis as to the city-wide implications. We continue to examine how to best address the issues that have been raised in this regard.

Finally, regarding your suggestion that Community Facilities zoning require a special permit for any bulk beyond what the existing zoning allows: We have amended zoning regulations in one-and two-family residential zoning district to require a special permit for community facility medical offices exceeding 1,500 sq ft because of the burden increasingly regional community facilities placed on these low-scale neighborhoods. However, the City's long-standing policy for community facility regulations reflects the importance of community facilities to the City and its neighborhoods, ensuring that they are able to operate and provide important services where needed. We believe your concerns can best be addressed by continuing to move forward with neighborhood specific contextual zoning districts, which establish firm height limits, predictable building envelopes, and equalize the floor area allowed for community facility and residential developments.

DCP continues to participate on the Queens Borough President's zoning task force and welcomes the input of civic organizations such as the Queens Civic Congress. We look forward to continuing our partnership with you as we work to address the most critical need for zoning adjustments within the borough and the city.

Very sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A.M. Burden', with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Amanda M. Burden