

QUEENS CIVIC CONGRESS, INC.

The Queens Civic Congressional
PO. Box 238, Flushing, NY 11363

David Kulick, Editor

Corey Bearak, President



www.queensciviccongress.org

JANUARY 2008

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 1

The Queens Civic Congress

Three Upcoming Events:

Monday, February 4, 2008, 7:00 – 7:45 p.m. (note change in time)

Queens Civic Congress Executive Committee

followed at 7:45 p.m. by

MTA Capital Plan Forum

featuring MTA Executive Director/CEO Elliot Sander

See Page 3

Tuesday, February 26, 2008, 7:00 p.m.

Historic Preservation and Landmarks Workshop

See Page 5

Monday, March 31, 2008

Zoning Forum, including R1-2 and Row Houses

See Page 7

Just Scheduled!! **Thursday, January 24, 6:00 p.m.**

**Officials Public Hearings on City's Congestion Tax Commission Plan
York College Performing Arts Center, 94-20 Guy R Brewer Boulevard,
between Liberty Avenue and Archer Avenue, Jamaica.**

Go to <http://KeepNYCFree.com> or the QCC website to download the hearing reply form. It essential all Queens Civics testify and/ or attend.

President's Message

Happy New Year. 2008 begins a rather busy year for the Queens Civic Congress. MTA CEO Elliot Sander—for the third time in less than a year visits us, this time at our special forum of the MTA's capital plan (see page three opposite this message). Please come with your questions and proposed service improvements. The MTA seeks our support with our legislators and we certainly want their support on subway, bus, and rail service. Our executive vice president Pat Dolan organized some excellent forums and workshops, including February's program developed with vice president Kathy Masi on Historical Preservation (see page five inside) and the March zoning program (see page seven).

Queens Civic Congress fought back City Hall's proposed mid-year water rate tax hike with help from Speaker Quinn, Finance Chair Weprin and Environmental Chair Gennaro. We still need everyone's help because City Hall still plans to move a double digit hike this Spring. Our website's media section has all the details and arguments. Working with Assemblyman Weprin and Senator Padavan, we look forward pressing Governor Spitzer to sign legislation to extend Access A Ride across the city line so our seniors and disabled can get to their medical appointment with one bus instead of switching to Nassau's Able service at L.I. Jewish Medical Center. The Senator is also assisting us with the City Planning Department on our zoning issues

Building on the two meetings last year with the Department of Buildings, our Zoning and Code Enforcement co-chairs Joe Amoroso and vice president Harbachan Singh keep up the pressure to make sure the agency responds to civic complaints. Joe will report at our February executive committee meeting on the successes and look for an update in the next Congressional. Pat Dolan also spearheads our effort to attack the zoning texts the American Institute of Architects' NY Chapter seeks to get passed and permit greater development in contravention of our successes with R2A.

Thank you to our Treasurer Jim Trent, also QCC's Transportation chair, for his advocacy for us against the city's congestion tax. Please check our website and Keep NYC Congestion Tax Free's site (KeepNYCFree.com) for the hearing reply form so you can testify Thursday, January 24 at York College. We know the notice is short but we know the issue is big so let's turnout in numbers and testify.

Thank you also to Parks co-chair vice president Barbara Larkin and Hollis 11423 Block Assoc. Pres. Sandra Atwell for their testimonies to the City Council on our behalf. QCC continues to stand with our members on issues in their communities. You can contact me direct or the relevant committee where we can help.

Sincerely,



Corey B. Bearak

The Queens Civic Congress

Invites you to its

MTA Capital Plan Forum

Monday, February 4, 2008 at 7:45 p.m.

at Union Plaza Nursing Home

33-23 Union Street, Flushing, NY

[five blocks north of Northern Boulevard]

featuring

MTA Executive Director/CEO Elliot Sander

Mr. Sander will make a presentation followed by a brief Queens Civic Congress funding proposal and a Question and Answer period

Please note that the doors to the public will open at 7:25 p.m.

Limited Seating; Reservations recommended

A scheduled meeting of the Queens Civic Congress Executive Committee open to all Queens Civic Congress members precedes this public forum and takes place at 7:00 p.m. through (not later than) 7:45 p.m. Queens Civic Congress members who wish to add an agenda item, please call Corey Bearak (343-6779) or email Bearak@aol.com at least 24 hours in advance.

****Refreshments****

RSVP: (718) 343-6779 or email Bearak@aol.com (through February 1)
for more information on the Queens Civic Congress, go to www.queensciviccongress.org

Challenging Your Assessment

The Queens Civic Congress and the Kew Gardens Hills Civic Association are co-sponsoring a free workshop for property owners who want to challenge their real estate assessments. The workshop will be led by an real estate professionals. Participants should bring their most recent assessments and information about recent sales of similar properties in their neighborhoods. Instructions for obtaining the forms to challenge the assessments will be available with the assessment notices or from 311 when the assessments are received in the mail.

The workshop will be held on **Thursday, February 28 at 7:15 PM** at the Rabbinical Seminary of America, 76-01 147 Street, Kew Gardens Hills. To register, call 718 263-1760.

AIA—No Friend Of Queens

The American Institute of Architects (AIA), whose Queens chapter mounted an unsuccessful effort to defeat the R-2A zoning amendment, is at it again. The Queens Civic Congress successfully advanced R2-A to brake the proliferation of "out-of-context" overdevelopment in neighborhoods across Queens (and our city). This time, AIA's New York Chapter — read Manhattan — convinced the Department of City Planning to certify for public review AIA's proposed zoning text amendments that would reverse our hard-fought gains.

The proposed amendments would encourage development of undersized lots in zones R6 through R10. In a bow to AIA's Queens brethren, AIA-NYC proposes zoning amendments that would waive side yard requirements, by special permit, in R3-1, R3-2, R4 and R5 zones and would allow dormers to extend into rear setbacks.

It is highly unusual for a private party to ask the Department of City Planning to advance a text amendment and it is unprecedented for the Department to act within days of receiving an application as it has done for the AIA. An interesting twist to AIA's attempt to obtain new zones for its members to develop, the Department of City Planning never posted the proposals on its website. Even more noteworthy is the DCP-AIA's timing in certifying the proposals just as the holidays began--with a public comment period timed that already expired this past January 9!

The proposed text amendments are available at [http://www.aiany.org/planningurban/AIA Text Amendments Full Text.pdf](http://www.aiany.org/planningurban/AIA_Text_Amendments_Full_Text.pdf). Related materials may be found at www.aia.org, including their "spin" -- [http://www.aiany.org/planningurban/AIA Text Amendments.pdf](http://www.aiany.org/planningurban/AIA_Text_Amendments.pdf) -- which we all should review to know the opposition's false claims. In an email to our members last month, QCC President Corey Bearak wrote: The AIA is trying to make by their [presentation](#) that their proposal as just about aesthetics when it has real impacts that will open the door wide open to abuses and reinterpretations as we already experience with the McMansions. If they were above board on this, the AIA would first have reached out to Queens Civic Congress and that FAILURE says it all to me. The text amendment must be rendered to the scrap heap."

QCC urges all member associations to alert their Council Members to the dangers implicit in the AIA amendments and to demand they vote them down if they come before the City Council for approval. [Editor's note: See January 23 meeting bottom page six; the City Planning Commission's hearing is February 13.]

Tuesday, February 26, 2008, 7:30 p.m.

Queens Civic Congress
Historic Preservation and Landmarks Workshop

Atlas Park Community Room, The Shops at Atlas Park
80-00 Cooper Avenue, Glendale

[Free parking available in the SOUTH GARAGE near Amish Market]

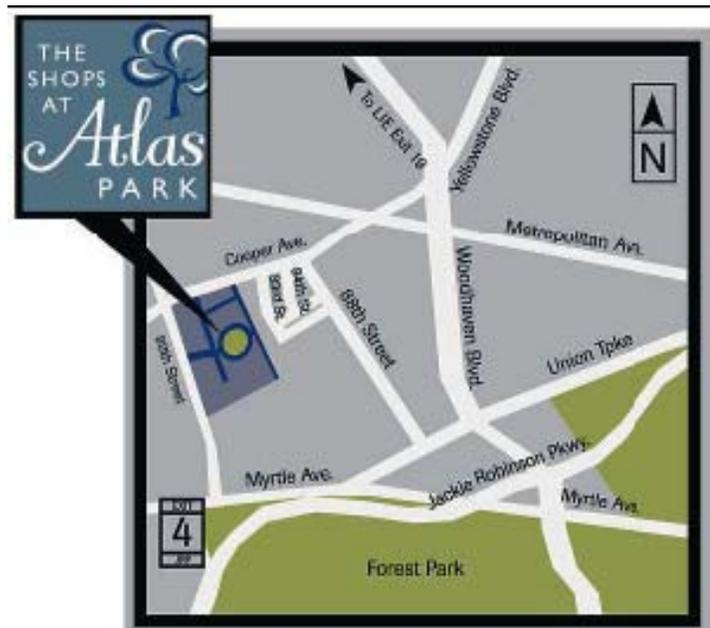
Hon. Jessica Lappin, *Chair, City Council Subcommittee on Landmarking*
Simeon Bankoff, *Executive Director, Historic Districts Council*
Frank E Sanchis III, *Senior Vice President, Municipal Arts Society*
Herb Reynolds, *Director, Sunnyside Gardens Preservation Alliance*
Kevin Wolfe, *architect & preservationist, Douglaston & Little Neck Historical Society*

*Moderated by **James Trent**, President Metropolitan Historic Structures Association*

Event Co-Chairs:

Patricia Dolan, Executive Vice President, (Pres., Kew Gardens Hills Civic Association)
 QCC Kathy Masi, Vice President-QCC (Pres., Glendale Civic Association)

Limited seating;
 Doors open at 7:15 p.m.
 Free on-site parking
 courtesy of the Queens
 Civic Congress Foundation
 to all preregistrants.
 RSVP and for parking info
 call (718) 343-6779 or
 (718) 275-9771 or e-mail
 bearak@aol.com



Call For Dues

Dues notices for 2008 have been mailed out. More than one may have been received by a civic to insure that the proper person has received the notice in the event one of the leading officers is out of town, this being the winter vacation season. Please be prompt in responding. Second and third notices cost money to send, and are time consuming for people who are not getting paid to do this. We had an excellent year last year, with 99 civics paid up, and only a few in arrears. Let's see if we can break the 100 mark in 2008! Make checks (\$35, unless you owe more for past years) payable to Queens Civic Congress and mail to Post Office Box 238, Flushing, NY 11363. -James A. Trent CC Treasurer

Meeting Schedule

All meetings, excluding Legislative Reception, unless otherwise noted take place at: Union Plaza Nursing Home, 33-23 Union Street, [five blocks north of Northern Boulevard]. Meetings of the Executive Committee are open to all QCC members and take place at 8:00 p.m. (unless otherwise noted) If you wish to add an agenda item, please call Corey Bearak (343-6779) or email Bearak@aol.com at least 24 hours in advance.

February 4, 2008, 7:00—7:45 p.m.

Queens Civic Congress Executive Committee

Sunday, April 6, 2008, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Queens Civic Congress Biannual Luncheon, Invitation to Governor Eliot Spitzer to Keynote [watch for more details and honoree] at Antun's, 96-43 Springfield Boulevard, Queens Village, NY 11429

Sunday, May 18, 2008, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.

Legislative Forum: Real Estate Tax Reform

sponsored by Queens Civic Congress, Northeast Queens Jewish Community Council and Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty at the Samuel Field Y, 58-20 Little Neck Parkway, Little Neck, NY. Includes Free *light* breakfast courtesy of Parker Jewish Institute

Monday, May 19, 2008, 6:30 p.m.

Queens Civic Congress Executive Committee

Location to be announced

Monday, June 16, 2008, 8:00 p.m.

Queens Civic Congress Executive Committee

Guest Speaker: Council Member Peter F. Vallone, Jr, chair, Committee on Public Safety

Topics: "The lack of Police Officers in our Precincts and its affect on Queens" and "An Update on the Graffiti Wars".

Monday, March 31, 2008, 7:30 p.m.

Zoning Forum
including R1-2 and Row Houses
at

Kew Gardens Community Center
80-02 Kew Gardens Road at Union Turnpike
and Queens Boulevard, Suite 202
Kew Gardens, NY 11415

Speakers:

Christopher Collins, Esq., Vice Chair,
NYC Board of Standards & Appeals

John Young, Queens Director,
Department of City Planning

Paul DiBenedetto, President,
Bayside Civic Database;

Henry Euler, Zoning & Housing Chair,
Auburndale Improvement Association
(in formation)

Informational Community Meeting on AIA Proposal to Amend Zoning Text for Contextual Zoning Districts

Wednesday, January 23, 6:30 p.m.

at the General Society for Mechanics & Tradesmen, 20 W. 44th Street. (Located in third floor classrooms of The Institute of Classical Architecture & Classical America)

The Queens Civic Congress co-sponsors with our friends, The Historic Districts Council, this important public meeting to make sure residents and property owners who fought to preserve the traditional scale and humane qualities of their communities in all five boroughs have access to information about the ramifications of the zoning changes proposed by the NY Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (the full proposal is available at: <http://www.aiany.org/planningurban/>. RSVP hdc@hdc.org or (212) 614-9107. For more information, see the article - "AIA—No Friend Of Queens" - on page four.

2008 Committee Chairs

Audit / Phil Ragusa, CPA

By Laws / Albert Greenblatt

Aviation & Noise / Seymour Schwartz

City Infrastructure & Capital Program / Dorothy Woo

Community & Civic Outreach / Robert Harris & Audrey Lucas

Community Facilities / Tyler Cassell

Congress Platform / Richard Hellenbrecht

Co-ops & Condos / Marc Haken

Creedmoor Task Force / Bernard Aquilino

Economic Development / Chris Collett

Education / Edwin Westley

Health & Human Services / Kevin Forrestal

Historical Preservation & Landmarking / Kathy Masi

Legislation / Paul Kerzner

Newsletter / David Kulick

Nominations / Helene Zaro

Parks & Cultural Affairs / Barbara Larkin & Kim Ohanian

Planning & Land Use / Patricia Dolan

Public Safety / Nagassar Ramgarib

Tenants & Affordable Housing / Florence Fisher

Transportation / Jim Trent

Zoning & Code Enforcement / Joseph Amoroso & Harbachan Singh

Queens Civic Congress Membership as of December 2007

Association of Old Forest Hills ♦ Auburndale Improvement Association ♦ Bayside Civic Database ♦ Bayside Clear-Spring Council ♦ Bayside Hills Civic Association ♦ Bayswater Civic Association ♦ Bay Terrace Community Alliance, Inc. ♦ Bellaire-BellVill Civic Association ♦ Belle Harbor Property Owners Association ♦ Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association ♦ Bellerose Hillside Civic Association ♦ Bell Park Manor Terrace Community Council ♦ Bowne Park Civic Association ♦ Briarwood Community Association ♦ Cambria Heights Civic Association ♦ Civic Association of Utopia Estates ♦ C.O.M.E.T. (Communities of Maspeth-Elmhurst Together) ♦ Concerned Citizens of Laurelton ♦ Cornucopia Society ♦ Creedmoor Civic Association ♦ Deerfield Area Association ♦ Doug-Bay Manor Civic Association ♦ Douglas Manor Association ♦ Douglaston Civic Association ♦ Dutch Kills Civic Association of Long Island City ♦ East Flushing Civic Association ♦ Federated Block Associations of Laurelton ♦ Federation of Civic Associations of Southeast Queens ♦ Floral Park Community Council ♦ Flushing Heights Civic Association ♦ Flushing on the Hill Taxpayers Association ♦ Forest Hills Chamber of Commerce ♦ Forest Hills Crescents Association ♦ Forest Hills-Van Court Association ♦ Fresh Meadows Homeowners Association ♦ Georgetown Mews ♦ Glendale Civic Association of Queens ♦ Glen Oaks Village Owners, Inc. ♦ Greater Astoria Historical Society ♦ Greater Whitestone Taxpayers Civic Association ♦ Harding Heights Civic Association ♦ Hillcrest Estates Civic Association ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #1 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #2 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #3 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #4 ♦ Hollis 11423 Block Association ♦ Hollis Hills Civic Association ♦ Holliswood Civic Association ♦ Hollis Park Gardens Association ♦ Holly Civic Association ♦ Hyde Park Gardens Cooperative ♦ Jackson Heights Beautification Group ♦ Jamaica Estates Association ♦ Jamaica Hill Community Association ♦ Juniper Park Civic Association ♦ Kew Gardens Civic Association ♦ Kew Gardens Hills Homeowners Association ♦ Kew Gardens Improvement Association ♦ Kissena Park Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Bay Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Pines ♦ Long Island City Alliance ♦ Malba Civic Association ♦ Meadowlark Gardens Owners ♦ Middle Village Property Owners Association ♦ Mitchell Linden Civic Association ♦ Neponsit Property Owners Association ♦ Newtown Civic Association ♦ North Bellerose Civic Association ♦ North Flushing Civic Association ♦ North Hills Estates Civic Association ♦ Northwest Clearview Homeowners Association ♦ Norwood Neighborhood Association ♦ Oakland Terrace/ Gardens Community Council ♦ Off Broadway Homeowners Association ♦ Our Neighborhood Improvement Association ♦ Our Neighbors Civic Association of Ozone Park, Inc. ♦ Parkway Village Historical Society ♦ Queensboro Hill Neighborhood Association ♦ Queens Colony Civic Association ♦ Queens Community Civic Corp. ♦ Queens Village Civic Association ♦ Ramblersville-Hawtree Civic Association ♦ Richmond Hill Historical Society ♦ Ridgewood Property Owners and Civic Association ♦ Rockaway Park Homeowners/Residents ♦ Rocky Hill Civic Association ♦ Rosedale Civic Association ♦ Royal Ranch Association. ♦ Southeast Queens Concerned Neighbors ♦ South Ozone Park West Association Civic ♦ Springfield/Rosedale Community Action Association ♦ Station Road Civic Assoc. of Auburndale ♦ Sunnyside Gardens/Harrison Place Homeowners ♦ Surrey Estates Civic Association ♦ Union Turnpike Merchants Association ♦ United Forties Civic Association ♦ United Mutual Veterans Housing, Inc. ♦ Waldheim Neighborhood Association ♦ Wayanda Civic Association ♦ West Cunningham Park Civic Association ♦ Westmoreland Association ♦ Woodside Community Council