



News...

FROM COUNCIL MEMBER **TONY AVELLA**



District Office • 38-50 Bell Boulevard-Suite C • Bayside, NY 11361 • (718) 747-2137 • Fax (718) 747-3105
• City Hall Office • 250 Broadway-Room 1731 • New York, NY 10007 • (212) 788-7250

January 10, 2008

Press Release

For further information please call: Tony Avella 718-747-2137; 917-723-3289

Avella Calls Upon AIA To Withdraw Zoning Text Proposal

Council Member Tony Avella joined leaders from various civic organizations and Community Boards at a press conference today to call upon the American Institute of Architects (AIA) to withdraw their zoning text amendment application.

"I was shocked to learn that AIA is trying to rush changes to the zoning code through an expedited ULURP (Uniform Land Use Review Procedure) process without prior consultation and negotiation," stated Avella. "Some of their proposals will clearly have a very negative effect on the many positive rezoning actions we have already implemented to protect residential neighborhoods throughout the City from overdevelopment."

AIA's proposed amendments would affect/allow:

- Increase lot coverage on small corner lots and allow multi-family buildings on small lots in R6 – R10 Districts and their respective commercial equivalents.
- Allow rear dormers in rear setbacks and allow taller maximum base heights in R6 – R10 Quality Housing buildings.
- Amend Bulkhead rules.
- Allow for a waiver of side yard requirements in R3-1, R3-2, R4 and R5 residential districts through a special permit issued by the Board of Standards and Appeals.

Avella stated, "If AIA fails to withdraw their application, I have advised them that I will vote against their proposal when the matter comes before me as Chair of Zoning for the City Council. It is equally disturbing that the Department of City Planning has allowed AIA to push these changes, since their members will obviously benefit financially from them."

"In what the Queens Civic Congress and many others consider a bizarre action, the City Planning Commission 'certified' for ULURP, a zoning text proposed by the AIA, not in the public interest," stated Corey B. Bearak, President of the coalition representing more than 100 civic, community, condo, co-op, tenant and other organizations in the borough. "It is really a private interest scheme."

January 10, 2008

Avella Calls Upon AIA To Withdraw Zoning Text Proposal

Page 2

"Queens Civic Congress urges legislators to commit NOW to publicly oppose the AIA zoning proposal," stated Patricia Dolan, Executive Vice President of the Queens Civic Congress and Chair of its Land Use and Planning Committee. "We can wait for ever for the certification of a zoning proposal we want to move forward. Here, for a private industry, a city agency apparently jumped through hoops, rather than sitting on this dangerous proposal."

"Our Community Group whole heartily supports Council Member Tony Avella's stance on the AIA's back door handling of their self-serving Zoning Text Amendment application that is before the City Planning Commission. Along with Brooklyn Community Board 7, we are demanding they withdraw their application from CPC voluntarily and allow proper public scrutiny and review, since the majority of their proposed changes will have major negative impact on lower density neighborhoods. These proposed amendments are nothing more than a Trojan Horse that will allow the AIA to further exploit zoning resolution to benefit their clients: real estate developers in NYC," stated Aaron Brashear, Co-Founder of the Concerned Citizens of Greenwood Heights.

"Responsible community planning is essential, it is the best way for the government to represent the people," stated Jordi Reyes-Montblanc, former Chairman for Community Board #9 in Manhattan.

"Some architects have often been accused of working too closely and in conjunction with unscrupulous developers," Avella added. "Their actions thus far with respect to this application have only succeeded in reinforcing that view with many community leaders."

Also in attendance were representatives from the South Canarsie Civic Association, Juniper Park Civic Association, Auburndale Improvement Civic Association, Hollis 11423 Block Association, and the Four-Borough Neighborhood Alliance.

Photo Caption (From Left to Right): Elias J. Weir, South Canarsie Civic Association; Ed Kampermann, Juniper Park Civic Association; Mary Ann Salustro, President of the South Canarsie Civic Association; Council Member Tony Avella, Chair of Zoning and Franchises; Jim Trent, Four Borough Neighborhood Alliance; Henry Euler, Auburndale Improvement Civic Association; Bob Harris, West Cunningham Park Civic Association; Corey Bearak, President of the Queens Civic Congress.