



The Queens Gazette

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Editorials

March 5, 2008

City Planning Evasive

To The Editor:

Over 100 concerned people attended the February 19 meeting of the Auburndale Improvement Association, Inc. The main topic of discussion for the evening was the need for contextual rezoning for communities not yet rezoned, including Auburndale.

Although we tried to pin down the invited City Planning representatives as to what time frame we were looking at for the rezoning of Auburndale and other communities, we could not get a commitment from them, just more generalities and excuses. Our organization will continue to press Mayor Michael Bloomberg, City Planning Commissioner Amanda Burden, Queens Director of City Planning John Young and Borough President Helen Marshall to rezone Auburndale. We will not stop until that process is successfully completed.

Our organization received a lot of support at the meeting to lobby for rezoning. We would like to thank Councilman Tony Avella and Senator Frank Padavan for coming and speaking on behalf of the Auburndale community as well as advocating for community preservation in general. Urban specialist Paul Graziano also gave an informative presentation and he deserves our thanks for this continued dedication and effort to protect the character of our neighborhoods.

Corey Bearak, president of the Queens Civic Congress, sent Pat Dolan and Tyler Cassell to speak, and provided a written statement advocating for rezoning of all areas in Queens not yet rezoned. We are fortunate to have such an organization fighting for our interests.

Many community groups sent representatives including Station Road Civic, North Flushing Civic, Broadway-Flushing Civic, Cunningham Park Civic, Juniper Park Civic and the Bayside Civic Database. Chuck Apelian, zoning committee co-chair from Community Board 7 was present as well as several members from Community Board 11. There were also members from the Queens Preservation Council and the Four Borough Neighborhood Preservation Alliance present supporting our goals.

Terri Pouymari, president of Auburndale Improvement, and our executive board were all very pleased with the response and support that we received. We appreciated the press coverage, and of course, the residents who showed up and demanded action.

All in all, it was a very successful evening and a lot of attention was focused on the need for contextual rezoning of all communities not already completed. In Northeast Queens, Auburndale, Oakland Gardens, Hollis Hills, North Flushing, Broadway-Flushing, Waldheim-Holly and sections of Bayside and Bellerose are still waiting after years of broken promises from City Planning. These communities want the same protection from overdevelopment and inappropriate development that communities have that have already been rezoned.

Now that the American Institute of Architects has withdrawn their self serving proposal to change parts of the zoning text, the City Planning Commission should have additional time and staff available to conduct rezoning initiatives in those areas awaiting contextual rezoning.

Henry Euler
Zoning and Housing Chair
Auburndale Improvement Association, Inc.