

Queens Civic Congress welcomes the progress on this important community need. We congratulate the community advocates leading this effort. Read our [testimony](#) at Community Board 5 supporting these efforts.

St. Saviour's in Maspeth gaining steam to change from old church site to parkland after delays

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Farriella for News

Long time resident Tom Vitale in front of the former site of Saint Savior Church.

Spurred by problems at the former St. Saviour's Church property in Maspeth, local leaders have stepped up efforts to turn the site into parkland.

They just have to get the owner to agree.

Queens Borough President Helen Marshall said on Tuesday she and City Councilwoman Elizabeth Crowley are trying to get a grant from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund to purchase the 1.5-acre property at 57th Road and 58th St.

Neighbors have flooded the city's 311 hotline with complaints about crumbling walls, inadequate fencing and other problems at the site, where the owner, Maspeth Development LLC, has been leveling the ground with heavy construction equipment.

The city Buildings Department stepped in last week and slapped the owner with violations and a partial stop work order. Since then, a chain link fence has been erected around the vacant lot, which once housed the church.

But civic activist Christina Wilkinson charged the city dragged its heels and only took action after she posted video and photos of dangerous conditions on the Internet, including the deteriorating retaining wall and a backhoe swinging its shovel just a few feet from parked cars.

"Either they are woefully understaffed or their judgment is seriously flawed," she said of the Buildings Department.

Agency officials said that they acted promptly as soon as they became aware of the complaints.

St. Saviour's was saved from demolition last year after the owner agreed to let preservationists dismantle the 1847 building. It is in storage and scheduled to be reconstructed at All Faiths Cemetery in Middle Village.

Neighbors said they hope the site will be turned into much-needed parkland.

"There's really not much around here," said Tom Vitale, who lives across the street. "Everyone really wants a park."

Activists said the owner is open to the idea. But Maspeth Development declined comment on Tuesday.

City Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe has also said he would like to see a park there - if elected officials can come up with the funds.

"This is the last sizable open space left in this community," said Wilkinson. "Another opportunity such as this will not likely present itself in our lifetime."

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The former site of Saint Savior Church on 57th Road in Maspeth, Queens.



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