

Queens Lawmakers Ask For Bar Moratorium

Concerned over the opening of many new bars in her district, Assemblymember Catherine Nolan has asked the state Liquor Authority to set a moratorium on issuing any more on-premises liquor licenses in Queens.

"The situation deserves close study and a moratorium will give us the opportunity to do that," Nolan said.

The moratorium request by Nolan (D-Ridgewood) follows closely on the heels of a moratorium set in Manhattan by the SLA recently.



Besides Nolan, state Senator Frank Padavan (R-C, Bellerose), also addressed the problems that agency is presently having in enforcing state liquor laws in some neighborhoods.

Nolan didn't specify how long a moratorium she wants in Queens but the SLA will keep it in force in Manhattan for four months, during which, one official said, the agency would try to establish a comprehensive strategy to deal with problem bars.

Nolan said she made her request because, "Some of our communities are being overwhelmed by [problem bars]. A moratorium would help us to better assess the situation and determine the best course of action to ensure the quality of life for our residents."

Among the communities which Nolan said have seen a swift increase in the number of bars is Hunters Point in Long Island City. Nolan said that area is home to no less than five bars now with a sixth trying to move in as well.

Nolan said all the bars are within 500 feet of each other and causing the residents of that neighborhood "significant headaches".

Padavan said he attended a recent hearing held by a senate committee that was searching for other ways for the SLA to keep taverns and cabarets orderly.

He declared, "The SLA needs to adhere more to community input and enforcing existing laws, like the 500-foot rule, and they must accept more responsibility for their licensed facilities so that the nature and character of our neighborhoods are protected and preserved."

Padavan was the sponsor of the 500-foot rule which was adopted in 1993.

TUITION LOANS IN SORRY STATE: As college tuitions are rising, federal student loan aid is going the other way, Congressmembers Anthony Weiner and Carolyn Maloney said in a report they issued last Sunday.

The two Queens lawmakers said federal Pell grants should be increased and student loan interest rates must be reduced and families must be given a \$3,000 tax credit to help cover tuitions.

Maloney (Queens/Manhattan) and Weiner (Queens/Brooklyn) said in their report that the average cost to attend SUNY and CUNY has risen 30 percent over the past four years, while the average Pell grant to city residents increased only 4 percent during the same period.

MAYOR LAUNCHES VOTE EFFORT; HELPS LIEBERMAN: In his first-ever campaign to get out the vote, Mayor Michael Bloomberg last week launched "Voter Awareness

Month." In doing so, he declared: "Having just observed the fifth anniversary of 9/11, we are reminded that the freedoms that we enjoy in this country come at a price. Throughout history, brave men and women have put their lives on the line so that we may enjoy our liberties—the most precious and fundamental of those liberties is the right to vote."

As part of the month-long campaign, the city's voter Assistance Commission and more than 20 other civic organizations will hold registration drives, public forums and other events to encourage New Yorkers to register to vote by October 13 so they'll be eligible to vote in the November 7 general election.

In an other election matter, this one in Connecticut, the mayor will host a fundraiser for United States Senator Joseph Lieberman at his Upper East Side townhouse in Manhattan. The mayor, with former U.S. Senator Alfonse D'Amato and former Mayor Ed Koch, will be co-chairs of the event, which will be held on November 1. The mayor will also do a fundraiser for Lieberman on October 25 in Chicago.

Lieberman lost the Democratic Party primary recently to Ned Lamont and is running against Lamont on November 7 as an Independent.

LIU ON MAYOR'S GAS PRICING BILL OVERRIDE: Commenting on the Council's override of Bloomberg's veto of the Council Gas

Pricing Bill, Councilmember John Liu (D-Flushing) said the veto missed the point.

"We are not telling owners how to run their businesses," he explained. "We are cracking down on the most egregious price gougers."

Also commenting on the veto, Councilmember Leroy Comrie (D-Jamaica) stated that the mayor had put the concerns of multi-billion dollar corporations before consumers' interests.

Last Wednesday, September 13, the council overrode the mayor's veto of the Gas Pricing Bill by a vote of 43 to six.

WEPRIN FIGHTS FOR CIG TAX DUPES: Councilmember David Weprin (D-Hollis) has gone to bat for purchasers of cigarettes over the Internet who were not charged any sales taxes by the sellers, but are now being pursued by the city Department of Taxation and Finance to pay sales taxes on the tobacco products.

Weprin called for a moratorium on the 30-day period during which the buyers must pay the back taxes or face more serious consequences.

During the moratorium, he said, "an equitable resolution can be worked out where average consumers (not distributors) who were tricked by the [Internet] companies do not have to pay the owed taxes."

Amnesty from the taxes would be granted

solely to those who purchased cartons of cigarettes only for their own personal consumption, under Weprin's plan. The back taxes would have to be paid by distributors or individuals who bought with the intention of reselling the merchandise.

The city has already collected between \$5,000 and \$25,000 from some of the Internet companies who misled customers into buying the cigarettes and not paying taxes because the buyers were told no taxes were due.

As Weprin sees it, "The public simply thought they were buying cigarettes at a cheaper price." Some distributors bought in large quantities, he noted, but most of the purchasers are average people who bought only for their own consumption without knowing that two to three years later they would be sent a bill for the taxes due.

M.V. COMMUNITY DAY: The first ever Middle Village Community Day was held recently at Juniper Valley Park, with a good sized crowd turning out for it. The event was arranged by Councilmember Dennis P. Gallagher (R-C), the local representative, the local Chamber of Commerce and the city Parks Department. The day included a wide variety of activities including music, clowns, a magician, basketball clinics, performances by local dance academies and free rides and games for children.



From top to bottom:
Assemblymember Nettie Mayersohn, state Senator Toby Stavisky, City Councilmember James Gennaro and Congressman Anthony Weiner

Political Officials Help To Rid Building Of Cat Odor

Assemblymember Nettie Mayersohn, state Senator Toby Stavisky, City Councilmember James Gennaro and Congressman Anthony Weiner are engaged in an all-out effort to combat serious problems existing at 70-20 Parsons Blvd. in Pomonok Houses. At one time, it was reported that Rose and Thomasina Maggio, the residents of Apartment 1A, housed as many as 20 cats.

The elected officials were made aware of the noxious odors that emanated from this apartment when the post office refused to deliver mail to the building. The mailboxes are located next to the offending apartment and were considered to be hazardous to the health of the postal employees. As a result, the residents are forced to pick up their mail at the Pomonok Post office between the hours of noon and 4 p.m. For many disabled and elderly this presented a problem; for working people, it was impossible for them to get to the post office in time.

Mayersohn, Stavisky, Gennaro, and Weiner then contacted the city Health Department, which sent inspectors to the building on August 10. The occupants of the apartment were issued violations both for the odors and for denying access to the inspectors. They were scheduled to appear for a hearing before the Department of Health Tribunal on August 25. The elected officials waited at the tribunal office, but the tenants did not appear.

Since then, Mayersohn, Stavisky, Gennaro and Weiner have held extensive meetings with the Mayor's Office, the New York City Housing Authority, the Health Department, and the Human Resources Administration to coordinate activities and keep residents

informed. The New York City Housing Authority has since sent workers to the apartment to have it professionally cleaned. Reportedly, the Maggios denied them access to one of the rooms where it is believed that the cats are housed. Deodorizers have also been installed in various areas of the building. In addition, the post office and the Housing Authority have come to an agreement on installing a temporary cluster box outside the building for mail delivery until the odor issues are completely resolved.

On September 12, a hearing, which again was attended by the elected officials, was held in Queens Supreme Court. At that time the court ordered that a temporary guardian be appointed to monitor and remove any cats in the apartment.

"The multiple cats in the apartment are causing serious health concerns for the residents of the building," Mayersohn said. "I am most grateful for the help of our local elected officials, the mayor's office, the New York City Housing Authority and the numerous city agencies who have been working overtime to get this matter resolved."

"The residents of Pomonok Houses are entitled to live and enjoy their apartments," said Stavisky. "The noxious odors prevent this, as well as pose a health hazard."

"My fellow elected officials and I will not rest until this intolerable situation is resolved to the complete satisfaction of the good families of 70-20 Parsons Boulevard," Gennaro said. "We will prevail."

"Today's decision will improve the quality of life for residents of Pomonok Houses and eliminate a serious health risk," said Weiner. "The cats are finally gone."