

## Board 2 Meets New 108th Precinct Commander

BY THOMAS COGAN

The December meeting of Community Board 2 was an opportunity for Captain Tom Kavanagh, the new commander of the 108th Police Precinct, to make an introductory appearance. The late November meeting of the Landmarks Preservation Commission concerning the status of Sunnyside Gardens was reviewed, there was some good news from Newtown Creek and the sidewalks of Woodside and an update on the needle exchange program in Long Island City.

Kavanagh has been at his new post for a month. In that time, he told the board meeting, he has found a neighborhood very much "plugged into the city". He took questions almost immediately and was promptly asked about graffiti and burglaries. He said that known graffiti vandals are constantly tracked, especially since some of them by now have done jail time. Most local burglaries are residential, he said, though there have been some commercial raids lately, including a stolen truck at Dial-a-Mattress and stripping of copper wiring from a Citibank office. The captain was struck by the abundance of yards in his new precinct. He is a veteran of the housing police force in Manhattan, where yards are fewer. Yards, he theorized, attract burglars. Wilton Sekzer, another board member and a former policeman, asked about manpower. Kavanagh said he could always use more officers but works with what he has. He emphasized to the board members that only headquarters at 1 Police Plaza can decide what precincts get how many officers.

The board members who went back over the Landmarks Preservation Commission meeting on Sunnyside Gardens, held a week and a day earlier, seemed to believe that the LPC's determination to conclude all

inquiries and get landmark status applied to the neighborhood in the next few months was justified. The doubts and hesitancy that some attendees at that meeting expressed puzzled them; they felt the landmark issue has been debated long enough.

But the feasibility of regulating and enforcing building and grounds standards made them wonder also. Community Board 2 Chairman Joseph Conley asked if enforcement could be real, and Steve Cooper, vice chairman, Sunnyside resident and the person reporting about the meeting, said that it certainly could; as an attorney he has counseled clients in enforcement cases in Douglaston. Making her report from the Department of City Planning, Penny Lee said her department would be conferring with Landmarks soon to see how zoning would be affected in Sunnyside. She said she was not currently well informed on the landmarks process but should know more about it after meeting the LPC.

Committee reports included an environmental report from Dorothy Morehead, who said that Newtown Creek Stakeholders, a business group, is busy aerating the waters of the creek, further cleaning a waterway once believed to be polluted beyond hope. Composting dead tree leaves has become so popular, Morehead said, that in 2007 it will be mandatory, so homeowners will have to pack the fallen leaves in the special paper bags issued by the Department of Sanitation. Reporting for the veterans' committee, Ron Casey said that the Queens County American Legion has become quite active at the veterans' shelter on Borden Avenue in Long Island City. He praised the group for its support. Casey is heavily involved in the needle exchange

program of the AIDS Council of Queens County (ACQC). He said a recent meeting at the ACQC building in Long Island City did not include anyone in attendance from Community Board 1, though the board was invited. Carol Terrano, Board 2 member, said the program is absolutely necessary, and Board 1 is simply foolish to disdain it, since its territory is certainly affected by drug addiction. Pat O'Brien, of the cities services committee, said there should be a moratorium by the State Liquor Authority on bar/restaurant licenses on Roosevelt Avenue, which is overloaded with such establishments, and also on other thoroughfares in the district.

The 421A tax abatement program has been in the news, with some implication that its granting to builders as an incentive to build affordable housing, even amidst a site that is to contain luxury housing, is too restrictive. Conley countered that it must be limited to affordable housing, adding that such housing should be built onsite, not merely within a mile radius of the main (luxury) structure.

Penny Lee, in her City Planning report, also spoke of the connection that is supposed to be made between the Court Square subway station and the 45th Road elevated station, a stop on the No. 7 line. The plan was to make the connection in conjunction with the construction of the second Citibank building, now nearing completion. The operation has been stalled by engineering complications,

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