

Board 4 Wants Precinct In Flushing Meadows Park

BY RICHARD GENTILVISO

A police precinct or substation in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park and funding for a new 110th Precinct house in Elmhurst were among the top items requested in the Fiscal Year 2008 capital and expense budget recommendations for Community Board 4 passed at its February meeting. Mayor Michael Bloomberg unveiled the city's \$57.1 billion preliminary budget for Fiscal '08 on January 25.

District Manager Richard Italiano said although site selection for a new 110th Precinct house has been approved, funding for the facility isn't scheduled until Fiscal Year 2011. "[That] means it will not be built until around 2015," Italiano said. So we've requested the funding be moved forward [to Fiscal '08]."

The 110th Precinct is the only police precinct

in New York City that is scheduled for new construction, said Italiano. The 110th is also responsible for policing the 1,255-acre Flushing Meadows-Corona Park. "We have requested [funding] for a [separate] police precinct [in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park] since Fiscal Year 2003," said Italiano.

After 44 crimes were recorded in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park last year, including a spree of violent attacks with one murder during the last two months of 2006, attention has been refocused on the issue of police presence in the park. "Everybody knows what has gone on there," said Italiano.

At a press conference held on January 29 at the New York Hall of Science where he called for a permanent police facility in the park, City Councilmember Hiram Monserrate, whose dis-

trict includes most of the park, asked the mayor for funding to build a permanent facility for NYPD and Parks Enforcement Patrol (PEP) officers in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park. Councilmembers Helen Sears, John Liu and James Gennaro also joined him at the announcement.

"We're going to advocate for some kind of [police] coverage in the park," Italiano said. "A mounted unit, a scooter unit. People should not have to walk [in the park] looking over their shoulders."

Board Member James Lisa said police do patrol the park, particularly when there is a special event. Italiano acknowledged there is a police facility at Shea Stadium under the command of Queens Patrol Borough North.

We're asking for [police] coverage 24/7," said

Italiano. "We do need coverage in the park."

Queens Borough Commissioner of Parks and Recreation Dorothy Lewandowski, has said that despite recent incidents in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, crime is at an all-time low and Parks Enforcement Patrol has been increased to work together with NYPD in the park.

The next round in the preliminary budget hearings takes place later this month before Borough President Helen Marshall at Borough Hall on February 22.

In her annual State of the Borough address Marshall cited the recent record of violence in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park and said the borough's largest park now had "the dubious distinction of being the most dangerous park in the city".

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