

# News From The Neighborhoods

COMPILED BY LIZ GOFF

## Homeowners Must Clear Ice, Snow

City Sanitation Commissioner John Doherty, joined by City Councilmember Peter Vallone Jr. this week reminded Queens homeowners to pay heed to city snow removal regulations.

To ensure the safety of pedestrians, home and business owners are required to remove all snow and ice from sidewalks on their property within four hours of a snow or ice storm, Doherty said.

If accumulated ice is too difficult to remove, property owners are required to spread a chemical salt product, sand or other de-icer within the four-hour period, Doherty said.

Sanitation officials urge property owners to wait until snowplows have completed clearing streets and roadways before shoveling the contents of sidewalks and driveways into the street.

Doherty also urged property owners to call 311 for assistance if snowplows do not arrive to clear streets within the four-hour period.

## Sunnyside:

### Turning Trash Into Cash

Officials at Sunnyside Community Services (SCS) are urging Queens residents and nonprofit groups to bring printer cartridges, cellphones and other electronic discards to SCS headquarters for disposal.

SCS officials are in the process of designing a program that would turn the discarded items into trash for the nonprofit. Leaving such items at the curb for pickup by city and private sanitation crews is dangerous, since they contain hazardous materials like lead, arsenic, mercury

and/or cadmium, SCS officials said.

For more information on the disposal program, contact Sunnyside Community Services at 718.784.6175.

## Astoria, Long Island City:

### • Parking Woes Cause Sales Slump

Construction crews began work recently on a new, low-income senior housing project located on the site of a former municipal parking lot at 30th Street and Astoria Boulevard.

Local business owners said they welcome the new senior housing, but expressed concern over the dwindling sales they are experiencing since the parking lot closed last month.

Plans for the housing, to be owned and operated by the Hellenic American Neighborhood Action Committee (HANAC), call for construction of 184 units with a 69-space garage that will provide short- and long-term public parking.

The business owners pointed out that the project isn't slated for completion until 2008, and the state Department of Transportation (DOT) said there are no plans for alternate parking in the area to make up for the loss of spaces in the former lot.

Meanwhile, area business owners said they're registering 25 per cent fewer sales as a direct result of the lost parking spots, and they're asking DOT officials to offer them some short-term assistance.

HANAC Executive Director John Kaiteris said he believes businesses in the area will make up for losses when they reap benefits from seniors who move into the new units.

"These seniors will want to be able to walk

to local shops to make purchases and obtain services," Kaiteris said. "They are loyal shoppers who prefer to do business with neighborhood merchants."

State DOT spokesperson Ted Timbers said the agency has no plans in place to deal with the lost parking spaces.

### • Power Plant Expansion Imminent

Officials at the New York state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) are finalizing plans for the renewal of a pollution-discharge permit for the Astoria Generating Station, along with plans for expansion of the plant.

The Astoria Generating Station at 18-01 20th Ave., is located within the Astoria Con Edison site. The station is one of several plants located in Astoria, where approximately 60 per cent of the city's electricity is generated.

The plant, formerly owned and operated by Orion Power and Reliant Energy, is now the property of U.S. Power Generation, officials said. State environmental officials approved expansion of the site in 2003 under plans that call for replacement of four boiler units with six turbines—changes that would increase total output by 550 megawatts, increasing output from 1,250 to 1,800 MW, officials said.

The increased production is not expected to affect air quality in the surrounding communities, state officials said. New turbines slated for installation under the plan are more efficient, and would burn natural gas as a primary fuel, they said. Boilers currently operating at the site use natural gas and oil; both generate pollutants, the officials said.

The new equipment would use approximately 95 per cent less water from the East River for its operation, significantly reducing impact on aquatic life in the river, state officials said.

DEC officials are expected to modify the permit prior to final approval to give plant owners an opportunity to study the effects of the plant's operation on fish and other organisms in the East River.

For further information or to register comments with DEC officials, write to Christopher Hogan at the state Department of Environmental Conservation, 625 Broadway, Albany, N.Y. 12233, call Hogan at 518.402.9167, or e-mail [depprmt@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:depprmt@gw.dec.state.ny.us).

### City Won't Confirm Cop's Death From Toxins

The city chief medical examiner last week informed the wife and son of 52-year-old retired cop Cesar Borja Sr. that cop died of pulmonary fibrosis—but stopped short of confirming that the condition was caused by toxins at Ground Zero in the days following the collapse of the World Trade Center.

Borja's death from the rare disease inspired President George W. Bush to budget \$25 million for health care for responders who worked to clear the site. Chief Medical Examiner Charles Hirsch said samples of Borja's lung tissue are still being studied at Mt. Sinai Medical Center's 9/11 health monitoring program, where doctors are trying to determine how and where the Bayside resident contracted the disease.

Borja's son, Ceasar Jr., attended Bush's State of the Union Address and met with the president to shed light on the medical needs of 9/11 responders. Family members believe Borja, who died on January 23, contracted the disease by breathing toxic air at Ground Zero, where he worked 16-hour shifts following the collapse of the Twin Towers.



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