

BY THOMAS COGAN

Having handled the third, hastily scheduled, ultimately long, Sunnyside Gardens landmark meeting just two days earlier, Community Board 2 was content to make its regular March meeting a modest one. There were a few speakers, a few announcements and a few reports, the total handled in about an hour's time.

Betsy Imershein, director of the Maspeth Industrial Zone, was at the meeting to introduce herself, since CB 2 encompasses some territory south of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. Board Chairman Joseph Conley was more interested in Long Island City than Maspeth and asked Imershein if she could explain why there are so many hotels being constructed there, when it would seem that business and industrial buildings were more called for. Imershein did not know the answer, but said she would inquire at the Mayor's Office of Industrial and Manufacturing Businesses, out of which she works.

A visitor to the public comment segment was Isabel Cuervo, who was trying to enlist Board 2 as a participant in Make Music New York, an event on Thursday, June 21 that will turn sidewalks, parks, community gardens and other such spaces into impromptu music and dance sites. Thus far in Queens, there are events on schedule in Flushing, Jamaica, Jackson Heights, Elmhurst and Woodside, among other places. The Woodside event, for example, is to be held in the children's garden of Woodside Houses at 49th Street and Broadway, and just outside it; the fare is to be blues, jazz and Latin music. Cuervo said that anyone interested in getting an event started elsewhere should inquire about getting a permit, a process she explained when the meeting was not in ses-

Board 2 Ponders Unexpected Number Of Hotels

sion. Vitold Rak, former board member, took the microphone to wonder why the Pledge of Allegiance is recited after the public officials' speaking time and the public comment segment. He said he intended to keep asking until the Pledge is recited at the very beginning of each meeting. Conley could not explain why the Pledge is placed where it is at community board meetings, saying that he took the custom as he found it. Others at the meeting immediately expressed interest in this issue, so it appears the recitation will be moved to the start of the meeting or they will know the bureaucratic reason why it should not.

Carol Massiello, a board member of long standing and head of its committee on youth services, is leaving for a year or so in order to go back to school and earn credits in educational administration. The board presented her with a certificate of achievement, which surprised her greatly. She said she might try to return to the board after her school year has passed.

Ron Casey of the veterans' committee led the part of the meeting devoted to committee reports, asking for volunteers. He then said that Mayor Michael Bloomberg's task force on veterans' affairs seems to be made up of persons eager to put their names on the roster of a prestigious-sounding committee without bothering to get serious about veterans' affairs. He said nobody connected with

it has made any attempt to get in touch with local veterans' committees, such as his, which deals with the homeless veterans' shelter on Borden Avenue. He wasn't even invited to the press conference where formation of the task force was announced, he added. Dorothy Morehead of the environmental committee said that the February 22 meeting at All Saints' Episcopal Church on 46th Street welcomed John Miller, an environmental engineer who delivered what she called a frightening message about the damage we have done to our surroundings. Conley took the opportunity to bring up the air monitoring issue once again, saying that a Department of Environmental Protection study of air quality in the Community Board 2 district is imperative. Patrick O'Brien of the city services and public safety committee said that the committee has been dealing with nightclub matters, and also a firehouse and a couple of proposed dog runs. He said that Las Gatitas, a "gentlemen's club" on Roosevelt Avenue between 52nd and 53rd Streets, has allegedly been bringing in a lot of female companions for the gentlemen and has aroused the suspicions of law enforcement. He said the firehouse at Greenpoint Avenue and 33rd Street would be closed a year and a half for renovations, beginning this summer. The proposed dog run at Torsney Park, Skillman Avenue and 43rd Street, might succumb to a Parks

Department decision that it is too expensive to build, O'Brien reported; but the one proposed for the tiny space called Sherry Park, on Queens Boulevard next to exit 40 of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, could be under construction by June.

Lisa Deller, head of the land use committee, was not present at the meeting, so Conley spoke for her. He said a subcommittee is needed to study the matter of practical and affordable housing at the Queens West South site. He said he would press for the city to assume control of the entire park there, rather than share it with the state, as it does now. He said he would like to look at the plans from the Department of Buildings for what he called the overbuilt hotel under construction at Van Dam Street, Queens Boulevard and Thomson Avenue. He said he would bring it up with the DOB official Thursday, March 22, the day this month when CB 2 gets a half-day with the department, according to the new DOB policy. Wilton Sekser of the board asked if reduction of an overbuilt building would actually be enforced. Conley said that it had been done on several overbuilt Tommy Hong projects in Flushing. He told Sekser he shared his skepticism but remained hopeful.

Conley's word on the latest Sunnyside Gardens meeting was to repeat a warning he had made there: that if Sunnyside Gardens is ultimately declared a historic district, it is imperative that the Landmarks Preservation Committee and the Department of City Planning see to it there is no "black hole" period when large changes could be made to the houses and green areas in the neighborhood before new preservation strictures could go into effect.

Board Chairman Joseph Conley asked if there were an explanation why there are so many hotels being constructed in Long Island City, when it would seem that business and industrial buildings were more called for.



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