

Neighborhood News

COMPILED BY LIZ GOFF

Trash Has Jackson Heights Fuming

Neighbors of a trash-strewn residential strip in Jackson Heights are up in arms over the city's failure to take action to force property owners to clean up the mess.

Folks who live near the eyesore properties at 73rd Street and 35th Avenue have filed dozens of complaints and raised questions about conditions there, residents said. Residents have repeatedly called 311 to report a trash dump in front of buildings along the strip. Other complaints include downed and damaged street trees, broken glass strewn on sidewalks and streets, broken and cracked sidewalks and repeated flooding in courtyard areas, along with illegal signage and heavy foot traffic at several allegedly illegal businesses along the strip.

A spokesperson at the city Department of Buildings (DOB) said area residents have complained more than 28 times about a building at 35-54 73rd St. DOB inspectors have issued almost two dozen violations for conditions at that building alone, the DOB spokesperson said.

The building, along with another at 35-48 73rd St., has been posted by the city with Orders To Vacate, which indicate conditions at the locations are "imminently perilous to life".

The DOB spokesperson said the notices apply only to the basement area of the premises. All other areas at the buildings

are considered safe, the spokesperson said. The agency will continue to inspect the properties, and will take any necessary action to remove illegal occupants from the two buildings.

Musharaf Hussain, who owns the building at 35-54 73rd St., attributed piles of trash in a front courtyard to tenants who toss their garbage on materials removed from the premises during ongoing renovations.

Sanitation officials said Hussain is required to hire a private contractor to haul away the discarded materials or "to place the materials, as required, for regular bulk curbside pickup". A Sanitation Department spokesperson said an agency inspector would pay a visit to the site this week to determine if the owner is in violation of city requirements pertaining to refuse removal.

Hussain said he has leased the first floor of the building to a tenant who has been advised that it is his responsibility to keep the front courtyard clear of trash.

Area residents said they are waiting for a response from the city Environmental Protection Agency, the local community board and the Mayor's Community Assistance Unit on actions taken relative to their complaints.

Residents said they have also sought assistance from City Councilmember Helen Sears and the local police precinct in their battle to clean up the strip.

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—Dan Miller



Photos Dan Miller

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