

New Noise Code Means Quieter Precinct

BY RICHARD GENTILVISO

Although it's almost three months away, it wasn't hard to imagine summertime when temperatures soared above 70 degrees last week. But the lazy, hazy, and noisy days of summer will also see the advent of a new noise code this year, revised by the city for the first time in over 30 years when it takes effect on July 1.

Signed into law by Mayor Michael Bloomberg more than a year ago (Local Law 113 of Dec. 29, 2005), the code is intended to alleviate noise complaints, which continue to be the number one quality of life issue for city residents. "There is an average of 1,000 noise complaint calls to 311 every single day," the mayor said on Aug. 21, 2005 during his week-

ly radio broadcast.

In 2002, Bloomberg came to Astoria Park to announce "Operation Silent Night", a citywide initiative by the New York Police Department that specifically targeted areas with chronic and disruptive noise. Among the areas cited were 30th Avenue to Newtown Road, 30th to 33rd Street, Shore Boulevard, Ditmars Boulevard and Astoria Park South, all in the 114th Precinct.

"I know about Astoria Park, I know about Shore Boulevard," said Captain Ralph Forgione, the new executive officer of the 114th Precinct at the March meeting of the community council. Reviewing prior complaints, Forgione said he expected more this

summer, especially about motorcycles.

"[The] motorcycles start coming in waves around 11 at night," said a resident of Astoria Park South. "If they're not registered or inspected, I will ticket and confiscate [the motorcycles]," said Forgione.

A representative of the Queensview co-op complained of constant noise from an auto repair shop on 21st Street, across from the cooperative. "They are doing repairs 24/7," she said. "Air hammers, lifts, repairs on the street."

Community Affairs Officer Paul Chatham said the 114th Precinct has issued numerous summonses to the auto shop in the past if repairs were done out on the street. But he said the problem in the warmer weather is the bay

doors of the repair shop are left open and the noise carries out.

According to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the new noise code allows for easier interpretation and enforcement by prohibiting sound from a source that is plainly audible at a specific distance instead of decibel limits that require the use of a noise meter. Whereas the old code requires the use of a handheld decibel meter to issue many summonses, NYPD officers and DEP inspectors will soon be allowed to issue summonses for numerous violations including car stereos, loud music, barking dogs and loud mufflers, using a commonsense standard and without a noise meter.

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