

News Of The Neighborhoods

COMPILED BY LIZ GOFF

Building Codes Impact Queens

Mayor Michael Bloomberg's plan to overhaul building codes includes a series of safety measures that would impact both new and existing residential units throughout the borough. Bloomberg's proposal, dubbed "The New, New York City Construction Codes", calls for the installation of sprinkler systems in all residences with three or more families, along with smoke alarms that keep on running through a building's power supply—rather than on batteries.

The proposed legislation calls for changes to a system that has not seen change since 1968. Changes in construction codes for new commercial units include fee rebates for "Green" buildings that feature ways to conserve water, renew energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and for developers who find ways to recycle construction waste and utilize formerly condemned properties.

Citing lessons learned from the collapse of the Twin Towers when they were attacked on Sept. 11, 2001, the plans call for stronger stairwells and elevator shafts, greater structural integrity for buildings with unique designs and a requirement for increased wind load capacity for all high-rise units.

Under the mayor's proposal, applications for building permits could be filed online to help expedite the process. Developers and contractors would have a one-year grace period to adapt to the new codes before they are complied by law to conform.

The revisions, which must be adopted by the City Council by July 1st, would go into effect on

July 1, 2008 and would become effective in early July 2009. "If this massive revision to building code is approved by the city council, outdated regulations that are unnecessarily complex and convoluted will be replaced," Bloomberg said.

Mets Fan Sues

The Mets fan whose back was injured when an allegedly inebriated fan fell on her on Opening Day at Shea Stadium has filed a lawsuit against the ball club and their beer vendor, Aramark Concessions.

The lawsuit, filed last week in Queens, seeks an unspecified amount of damages for "great pain and mental anguish" suffered by Ellen Massey, 58, who suffered a broken vertebrae when the fan fell on her. Doctors who operated on Massey inserted two rods in her back to help repair the damage.

The lawsuit states Massey contends that the man who fell on her was falling-down drunk, and that vendors at Shea Stadium should have refused to serve him alcohol long before he fell from his seat. The court papers went on to maintain that he had been acting in a rowdy, boisterous and dangerous manner for a long period of time before he tumbled from his seat and fell on Massey. The papers went on to state that Aramark vendors and Shea personnel knew or had reason to know from his behavior that he was already intoxicated and that due to their negligence he became unruly, uncoordinated and [he] fell.

Massey's attorney, Stephen Kaufman, said Mets officials are still trying to identify the fan who left the stadium after the incident.

The lawsuit further charges it was "the duty and obligation of Aramark not to sell alcoholic beverages to spectators and patrons who appear to be intoxicated at Shea Stadium."

A spokesperson for Aramark said they are reviewing the lawsuit, and are in the process of investigating the April 9 incident. A spokesperson for the Mets said team owners believe the lawsuit has no merit. Team officials refused further comment on the incident, in light of the pending lawsuit.

Should Beaches Be Open Past Labor Day?

Parks Department officials said last week they are studying the feasibility of extending the Big Apple beach season past Labor Day, and extending beach closing hours past 6 p.m.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg said he would examine the possibility of keeping beaches open past 6 p.m. and past Labor Day, and pleaded with beachgoers to stay out of the water when there are no lifeguards on duty.

"We will review the request," Bloomberg said. "But we don't want anybody to even think about going into the water if there is no lifeguard."

The Parks Department hires approximately 1,100 lifeguards each summer but is eager to hire more lifeguards to work through Labor Day. Anyone interested in applying for a lifeguard position is urged to call 311 for information, the spokesperson said.

Teach Youngsters To Ride A Bike

The non-profit "Bike New York" organization is inviting parents and guardians of children to attend its free, two-hour "Teach Your Child To Ride A Bike" classes, available through the Department of Parks and

Recreation.

Bike riders are taught the basics of balancing, starting, steering and stopping a bicycle. All participants must wear a helmet that fits their head size, and must bring a bicycle suited to their height and individual needs—youngsters must be able to rest their feet flat on the ground while seated on the bicycle seat.

The next class is scheduled for 10 a.m. on May 19 at Equity Park, 90th Street and 88th Avenue in Woodhaven, Queens. The classes are free of charge, but participants must pre-register.

For dates and class locations, or to download an application to attend the classes go to www.nycgovparks.org or www.bikenewyork.org.

For more information contact Rich Conroy at Bike New York, richc@bikenewyork.org or call, 212-932-2453, ext.159.

Community Council Scholarships

Officials at the 110th Police Precinct Community Council last week announced that they will award \$500 scholarships to graduating high school seniors who live in the Elmhurst/Corona communities who plan to continue their education.

Students who wish to qualify are asked to submit a 500-word essay on "How To Improve The Quality of Life" or "How To Reduce Crime" in the Elmhurst/Corona area.

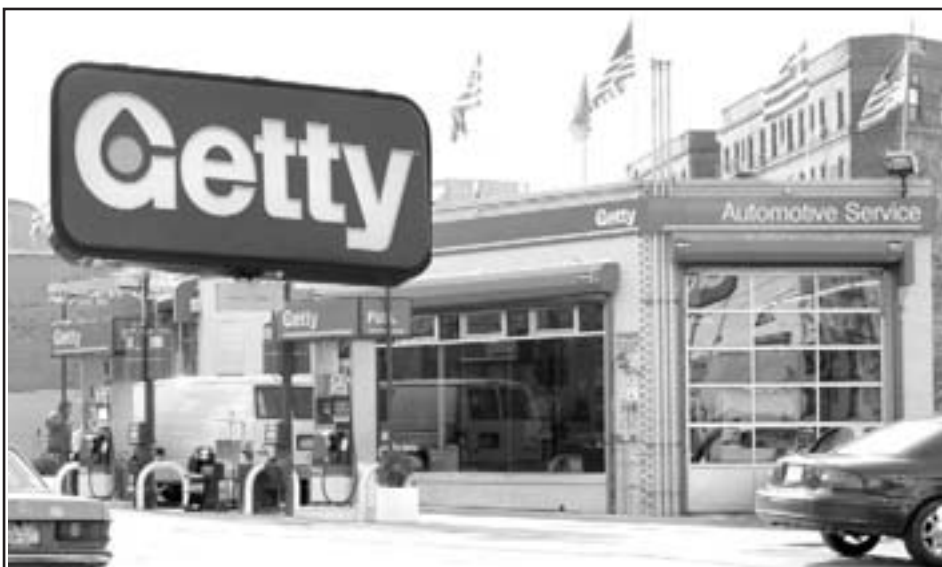
All essays should focus on how to assist police in attaining these goals.

Essays must be postmarked no later than June 1, 2007 and should be submitted to:

Debra Pagano Cohen, St. John's Queens Hospital, 90-02 Queens Blvd., Elmhurst, NY 11373. For more information call, 718-558-0228.

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