

BY JOHN TOSCANO

Appearing again before the Board of Standards and Appeals last week, state Senator Frank Padavan reiterated his opposition to a request by a major consumer electronic chain for a variance to permit it to move into the Douglaston Plaza shopping center in Northeast Queens.

Accompanied by representatives from Community Board 11 and about a dozen major civic and community organizations from Douglaston and Little Neck, which also oppose the variance, Padavan (R-C, Bellerose) stated he wanted "to convey to the strongest extent possible my opposition to the variance".

The application to the BSA was made, Padavan said, by the Ashkenazy Acquisition Corporation to permit Best Buy to take over the space expected to be vacated by a Waldbaum's Supermarket in the shopping center at 212-02 61st Ave., Douglaston.

Padavan, Assemblymember Mark Weprin (D-Little Neck) and others have cited traffic and environmental concerns that would adversely impact Douglaston and nearby areas, including Alley Pond Park.

Padavan appeared before the BSA at a hearing on Tuesday, Sept 18 and said afterward that he expected a decision by the board shortly.

In his testimony, Padavan stated to the board, "Area civic leaders, community representatives and residents have expressed to me their unequivocal dis-

## Padavan, Civics Oppose Best Buy Outlet In Douglaston Mall

**"Area civic leaders, community representatives and residents have expressed to me their unequivocal displeasure at the introduction of a massive nationwide electronics store in the second largest building at this complex..."**

pleasure at the introduction of a massive nationwide electronics store in the second largest building at this complex. Their sentiment, as is mine, is that this space would be better utilized to fulfill the needs and interests of our community, for instance, by another store that provides vital necessities to the surrounding area, conveniently located at this site, substantially benefitting seniors and others with transportation concerns, serving a much wider base of consumers.

"In view of the above, I ask that you comply with the wishes and best interests of our community by ultimately rejecting this unwanted and ill-advised variance application."

Previously, Padavan had written to City



Planning Commission Chairperson Amanda Burden to express his opposition to the Best Buy application. He also included a letter from Anna Levine, of Little Neck, chairman of an Ad Hoc Committee of Board 11.

Padavan said the letter "outlined in great detail the failure of the applicant to present accurately and honestly the current situation involving Waldbaum's and the owner of this property".

The lawmaker said he agreed fully with Levine's analysis, particularly as it relates to traffic and environmental impact. He added, "Statements by the applicant that Waldbaum's is an unprofitable entity which is no longer viable at this location are outright falsehoods."

Padavan's letter to Burden concluded, "I strongly request that you fully review the contents of Ms. Levine's letter and urge the Board (BSA) to deny the applicant's request for a variance."

Levine had written to BSA Chairman Meenakshi Srinivasan asking that the application be denied citing the applicant's failure to act in good faith with Board 11 and the community.

Summing up, she wrote: "We urgently request that the Board, in all fairness, look at this issue and see how the placing of these huge 'box' stores can ruin the environment. We are all struggling nowadays to maintain the 'greenness' around us. Across the street from this site is a huge Alley Pond Park area that harbors animals and birds of all kinds.

"Nearby is Alley Pond Park itself, with many acres of green trees and other animals living there. We want to keep it that way. We want to keep pollution away from our families, from our growing children and grandchildren. There are over 3,000 families living in close proximity to this site. Please take this into consideration when arriving at your decision."

The community groups opposing the variance include Deepdale Gardens, Commonwealth Civic Association, Doug-Bay Civic Association, Douglas Manor Association, Douglaston Civic Association, Douglaston-Little Neck Park Association, Little Neck Bay Civic Association, Little Neck Community Association, Little Neck Pines Civic Association and Beech Hills Cooperative.



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