

BY THOMAS COGAN

Most of the items that appeared on the agenda of Community Board 2's June meeting and those that were brought out in the course of the meeting were relatively narrow in scope. Two restaurants were applying for Consumer Affairs licenses for outdoor cafés, now that summer is approaching; aLaGuardia Community College official spoke of a building demolition near the school that could cause disruption for a while; when the committees reported, there was further news about cleaning up Newtown Creek. The most discussed topic, though, was bicycle lanes in Sunnyside and Long Island City. Bicycles and their riders have lately been drawing criticism, as a counterforce to the fervent advocacy they also attract.

The flap about bicycle lanes began at the May meeting, when descriptions of the lanes on Vernon Boulevard and their part in the Greenway project struck some board members as less than enchanting. At the June meeting, bike lane installations on Skillman and 43rd Avenues in Sunnyside added to the controversy. They were hailed at the public forum segment of the meeting by Amelia Crotty, a Sunnyside resident whose main purpose was to publicize the Tour de Queens bicycle run that took place a few days later. Al Volpe, a board member, said that rather than have the lanes on the largely commercial Skillman and 43rd Avenues above 43rd Street, it would be better if they ran on the non-commercial 39th Avenue between 60th and 43rd Streets and then cut over on 43rd Street, bypassing

Bike Lanes Head Agenda At Bd. 2 Meeting

Skillman and turning right on 43rd Avenue. Crotty replied that bike riders would seek their own route anyway, which would probably put them on Skillman or 43rd Avenues, not 39th Avenue. Terry Adams, a store owner in Long Island City, then brought up opposition to the Vernon Boulevard route again, adding that there had been clashes between merchants and bike riders on 49th and 50th Avenues over alleged property damage. In another part of the meeting, Board 2 Chairman Joseph Conley said the Vernon Boulevard bike lanes entail loss of several precious parking spaces, so he, like several others such as Adams, was in favor of bike lanes on the parallel but wider 11th Street. Penny Lee of the Department of City Planning said she had talked to Karen Overton of the Parks Department, who said she would try to mediate between merchants and bike riders in their dispute. Dorothy Morehead, a board member, said that as far as Skillman and 43rd Avenues were concerned, the Department of Transportation had mapped their bike routes as part of a larger mapping plan reaching all the way to Flushing; she spoke in reply to Steve Cooper, also of the board, who complained about what he saw as arbitrary decisions by DOT. At the end of the evening, Volpe made a motion about his 39th Avenue

plan and the board took a hand vote that favored it, though Morehead and Jimmy Van Bramer cast dissenting votes. There was no motion regarding Vernon Boulevard or 11th Street, but the issue will surely be there when monthly board meetings resume in September.

The first of the restaurants considered for its outdoor café application was Bar 43, the latest in a line of bar/restaurants that have each tried to become a permanent fixture near the corner of 43rd Street and 43rd Avenue. Bar 43's passing predecessors have had Irish, British and techno themes, and several others perhaps, but all have been typically enclosed. Bar 43, in the current weather anyway, has an open look that, for instance, allows non-patrons to view sports events from across the street. The owner wishes to fill some of that open space with 10 tables and 20 seats. Debbie Mulhall, speaking for the owner, said he had repaired the sidewalk in front of the place, presumably for the benefit of restaurant and neighborhood. With the stipulation that the café be closed at 11 p.m., unanimous approval for the application was granted. Harmony Two, a restaurant at 47-57 41st St., was warmly endorsed by Luke Adams, executive director of the Sunnyside Chamber of Commerce, and its application for an

enclosed sidewalk café was backed by him and others. Again specifying that the café be closed at 11 p.m., the board voted approval of the application, also unanimously.

Richard Elliott, vice president of administration atLaGuardia Community College, announced to the meeting that the school-owned two-story garage that has stood at the corner of Skillman and Thomson Avenues since 1916 is dilapidated and must be torn down at a cost of \$4.7 million. It was to be closed Friday, June 20.LaGuardia hopes that outdoor parking facilities in the space that remains will be ready for use by the end of 2009. Elliott warned that demolition and subsequent construction, along with the temporary loss of parking spaces, could have a disruptive effect in the vicinity of the college. Dorothy Morehead, chairwoman of the board environment committees, said that several of the huge, bulb-like digesters that have appeared along Newtown Creek are now in operation as part of the \$1.9 billion water treatment plant that is digging into a century and more of industrial pollution.

The June meeting was, of course, the last before the two-month summer vacation, but Conley brought it to everyone's attention that the next Board 2-sponsored meeting about the Hunters Point South residential building project, the fourth, would be held Monday, June 23 at Sunnyside Community Services. He expressed his disappointment that the Long Island City turnout was small at the last HPS meeting, held at the 2 Court Square Citibank building May 28.

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