

## Officials Want Newtown Creek Designated As Superfund Site



Newtown Creek on the Queens-Brooklyn border, a victim of “the largest coastal oil spill in American history”, should be designated a Superfund site to make it eligible for \$15 million in federal cleanup funding, Congressman Anthony Weiner declared on Monday.

Weiner and Congressman Nydia Velázquez said in a letter to the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that preliminary tests should be conducted on the creek to determine whether it contains high levels of toxic chemicals.

If so, the lawmakers said, the entire Newtown Creek area could be included on the federal Superfund list and be eligible for federal funds.

Weiner and Velázquez said that to date, an estimated 9.4 million gallons of oil have been cleaned from the creek. Between 17 and 30 million gallons were spilled over an area which covers 55 to 60 acres. They said estimates indicate it will take until at least 2020 to finish the remediation.

The spill allegedly came in part from an

oil company facility in Williamsburg on the Brooklyn side of the creek. The letter to the EPA identified four hazardous waste facilities, a copper smelting plant and a coal gasification complex, all now inoperative.

The officials, who were joined by Assemblymember Joseph Lentol (D-Williamsburg) said the Superfund designation would trigger a lengthy four-point process, the initial one of which would be an immediate stabilization, including a one-year cleanup to stop any immediate threats to the community if necessary. This might include erection of a security fence or repairing a hazardous waste storage unit.

Weiner, who has been trying to get the creek cleaned up for many years, said, “While the oil companies lag in their cleanup responsibilities the health and safety of Newtown Creek’s residents hang in the balance. Testing these four sites will help us find answers to basic questions about the spill’s health risks and give this national environmental disaster national attention.” — **John Toscano**

## 114th Precinct Blotter Highlights

COMPILED BY LINDA J. WILSON

### Tuesday, July 15:

A 28-year-old Asian male was charged with burglary and criminal trespass after he was observed on a fire escape at 35-40 11th St. without permission or authority.

### Monday, July 14:

- A 40-year-old white male was charged with criminal possession of stolen property, possession of burglar’s tools and petit larceny after he was found at Broadway and 34th Street in possession of license plates and tools to remove the license plates. He had no permission or authority to remove the plates.

- A 26-year-old Hispanic female was charged at the 114th Precinct station house, 34-16 Astoria Blvd., with assault and harassment after she was observed following a victim and then lunged at the victim and made contact, causing the victim to suffer bruising and swelling.

### Sunday, July 13:

- A 47-year-old white female was charged with assault and harassment after she refused needed medical attention and struck numerous Emergency Medical Technicians. The incident occurred at 18-25 26th Rd.

- Six Hispanic males, one 16 years old, one 19 years old, one 20 years old and three 24 years old, were charged with assault and harassment after they hit a victim with a garbage can and struck the victim with closed fists multiple times. The incident took place at 34-38 38th St.

- Three Hispanic females, two 17 years old and one 29 years old, were charged with assault after they punched a victim, causing bruising and swelling, at Broadway and 42nd St.

### Saturday, July 12:

A 35-year-old Hispanic male was charged with criminal mischief after he was observed by a victim damaging property at 21-16 35th St.

### Friday, July 11:

A 48-year-old white male was charged with

assault after he punched a victim and pushed the victim to the ground, causing bruising and swelling, at 33-47 14th St.

### Thursday, July 10:

- A 25-year-old Hispanic male was charged with burglary, criminal contempt, criminal mischief, resisting arrest, acting in a manner injurious to a minor and harassment after he entered a victim’s house on 60th Street against an active Order of Protection and damaged furniture in the victim’s house.

- A 31-year-old white male was charged with assault and harassment after he punched a victim in the face, causing bruising and swelling, at 28-06 Astoria Blvd.

- A 33-year-old white male was charged with assault and harassment after he hit a victim with a bottle at 28-06 Astoria Blvd.

- A 28-year-old male was charged with menacing and criminal possession of a weapon after he made threatening comments to a victim while brandishing a knife at 25-05 Steinway St.

### Wednesday, July 9:

- Three black males, one 19 years old and two 21 years old, were charged with grand larceny, criminal possession of stolen property, criminal trespass and unauthorized use of a vehicle after they were observed at 37th Avenue and 32nd Street with multiple items without permission or authority, loading the items into a rental vehicle.

- A 46-year-old white male was charged with criminal mischief, auto stripping, criminal possession of stolen property and petit larceny after he was observed at 36-50 51st St. damaging a victim’s window to enter without permission or authority and removing multiple items from the vehicle.

### Tuesday, July 8:

A 33-year-old black male was charged with criminal possession of stolen property and violation of a local law after he was observed urinating in public and was in possession of marijuana in public at 31st Avenue and 35th Street.

## Dutch Kills Rezoning Plan Reaches Land Use Hearings

BY THOMAS COGAN

The Dutch Kills rezoning plan was an item at the Borough President’s Land Use Hearings in the second week of July, sharing space with cases from Auburndale, Forest Hills and other parts of Queens— including Willets Point, some of whose advocates staged a protest by picketing in front of Queens Borough Hall and invading the hearings site, Room 213, just before the Dutch Kills hearing began. As John Young, Queens director of the Department of City Planning, was introducing Joy Chen, who would present the department’s computerized review of rezoning in Dutch Kills, red-shirted members of the housing group ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) started chanting for housing justice in Willets Point. Being in charge of the day’s hearings, Borough President Helen Marshall raised her own protest, telling the ACORN people they had to leave. They did, chanting their way out of the room, and the Dutch Kills moment was allowed to proceed.

Chen spoke of City Planning’s “three years of close, cooperative work in the neighborhood” to establish the new zoning guidelines. Breaking the ban on residential expansion and improvement was one of the reasons new zoning was drawn

up, she said. She showed how that prohibition led to abandonment of some houses (George Stamatiades of the Dutch Kills Civic Association and Community Board 1 added that the old zoning plan, put into effect in 1961, “condemned residents to death” and over the years emptied the local schools and houses of worship) and has allowed only one exceptional expansion of a local residence since 1989. But Marshall suggested that consideration of manufacturers in Dutch Kills had been largely overlooked by City Planning but was partially righted by Community Board 1 at its June meeting. The new zoning as drawn up by City Planning reduced the floor area ratio (FAR) for Dutch Kills manufacturers from 5 to 2. Community Board 1 raised the building height limit from 40 to 50 feet for manufacturers, and Marshall told Young such a step was necessary. Gale Baron of the Long Island City Business Development Corporation seconded Marshall a little while later.

Three main contending groups have emerged from the Dutch Kills rezoning history, two of them only recently. The Dutch Kills Civic Association, a residents’ group, has been speaking up longest, and it is the DKCA that City Planning has worked with during the three years

Chen cited. The industrialists in the area have largely neglected the issue or were oblivious to it, although several of them participated at meetings devoted to it, but they lacked definite organization until early this year when they considered the implications of downzoning and found an attorney, Eric Palatnik, to state their case. The third group emerged only in the spring. The residents of 32nd Street between 36th and 37th Avenues live in what appears on the zoning map to be a peninsula separating them from the residential area to the southwest that DKCA has made the source of its concern. They rallied behind the leadership of Chris Lundgren and formed the 32nd Street Block Association. They charged that the rezoning plan they were presented with left them in an “engulfment” between 31st and 33rd Streets. Surrounded by commercial owners and developers who are empowered to build far higher than they, the homeowners, would be allowed to build, they further charged that they are in a position to be literally obscured and ultimately taken over and wiped out. They are asking that their current M1-2/R5B rezoning status, allowing them to build only to a height of 33 feet (and blacklisting them from consideration for rebuilding loans, one homeowner said) be changed to

M1-2/R6B, allowing them an additional seven feet. Their current status gives them a color code of yellow on the zoning map, while the commercial people’s color code is red. “Look at this: we’re yellow, surrounded by red,” Dinesh Thakur of the block association declared at the hearings. “Why was this done?”

At the beginning of the year, DKCA was worried about getting the new rezoning plan approved in time to fend off the hotel builders that had come into Dutch Kills through a loophole and were putting up buildings much higher than the ones residents feared their local industrialists would be erecting. Now, after the addition of modifications by Community Board 1 inclined toward the industrialists, further modifications are asked by a rump group of residents. The next meeting in the approval chain is at the Department of City Planning’s Manhattan headquarters on Wednesday, July 23, at which time the opinion of Borough President Marshall’s office should be known and the procedure will move one step closer to final judgment by the City Council. Barring further complications, the Dutch Kills rezoning issue should be settled before the year is over.