



QUEENS CIVIC CONGRESS, INC.

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February 23, 2014

Hon. Carl Weisbrod, Chair
City Planning Commission
22 Reade Street
New York, NY 10007-1216

Dear Commissioner Weisbrod:

Re: Establish Row House Zoning District

I am writing about a serious gap in the residential zoning resolution that is destroying significant neighborhoods in Queens as well as Brooklyn, Bronx and Staten Island. The Queens Civic Congress is a coalition of over 100 major neighborhood based civic, co-op and condo associations that represent thousands of tenants and homeowners in every part of the borough. Queens Civic Congress requests a meeting with you to discuss the following case and the importance of continuing the work of the Queens office to ensure community preservation in Queens.

In 2008, QCC submitted a request to establish a Row House Zoning District (Attachment 1, proposed district definition) that would limit occupancy in established row house districts to one family in order to protect these vital areas, avoid congestion and improve the quality of life. The district proposal was endorsed by Community Board 8 in the attached letter and resolution dated November 19, 2008 (Attachment 2). A Queens Civic Congress report dated November 16, 2009 states that a meeting had been held recently with Director John Young of the Queens office, and several meetings and photo trips have been conducted with John and borough office staff over the years.

Our fears of overdevelopment in these vibrant neighborhoods are well justified as illustrated by the current construction on a row house at 146-15 56th Road. This block has very comfortable but small houses with narrow frontages and very limited parking. This is ideal for single family occupancy, but two or more families would create serious congestion. Since there is no appropriate zoning district for row houses, most such neighborhoods are in R4 or an R4

contextual zone, which, among other things, permits two or more dwelling units and more shallow front yards, regardless of adjacent properties. As shown in the attached photo in the February 21 Times Ledger article (Attachment 3), the subject parcel meets the permissive R4 zoning, but completely destroys the established bulk and envelope of the neighborhood.

It is now five and a half years since Community Board 8's request and there has been no action by City Planning. QCC believes it is imperative to maintain attractive, affordable housing in Queens and the other boroughs so the city can attract middle class families and not lose them to the suburbs. We would like to meet and discuss this and other zoning issues with you as soon as possible.

I can be reached at 646-732-5784. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Richard C. Hellenbrecht, President

Cc: Hon. Peter Koo