

Police and Public Safety Committee Report of June 15, 2009

The Police and Public Safety Committee met on Tuesday, June 9, 2009 at the Community Board Office on Fifth Avenue at 7:15 PM. We met to discuss summer quality-of-life issues in the community.

Those in attendance were committee members Judith Collins, Anna DeMetz, Michael Festa, George Fontas, Susan Pulaski, Chair of the committee, Dean Rasinya, Chair of Board and Josephine Beckmann, District Manager. Also in attendance representing the 68th Precinct were Police Officers Joe Trischetta, Marco Venezia and Lt. Gulotta, special operations lieutenant ; Barbara Albanese from Councilman Gentile's office; and seven concerned community residents.

Since these residents were attending our meeting for the first time, I went over the procedure that our committee and board follow to address quality-of-life complaints. Then we went over the list compiled by Josephine of quality-of-life complaints for June and two recent quality-of-life memos that were sent to the precinct. The problem areas are in our parks and night-life locations; and with youth related issues and noise and idling complaints. The parks that have had complaints are Dyker Beach Park, Russell Pederson Playground, Leif Ericson Park, Steadman Square, Pigeon Park, McKinley Park and Owls Head Park. Complaints varied at some locations, but generally they centered on vandalism, late night disorderly groups, drug dealing and barbequing. The police have been notified of five locations for homeless, several residential blocks for drug dealing; prostitution has been identified in several establishments in addition to several public places. The police have established a program for the summer that will be monitored by the police school units that are being released from school duty because of the school closings in the summer.

In youth related issues, a big problem is the groups of teens that congregate each morning at 83rd Street and Third Avenue outside of Sally's restaurant. The groups are unruly, loud and disrespectful to residents, mostly to seniors. The teens arrive one hour before classes begin at Fort Hamilton High School, which is down the block from Sally's to "hang out." They take over the entire sidewalk area and leave residents only the middle of the street to walk on. We received additional feedback on this situation from some of the residents attending our meeting. The police said they will have a presence there and also speak to the owner of Sally's and perhaps other businesses in the area which are, most probably, having their business affected because of this situation.

13th Avenue from the 70's to the 80's was discussed with recurring teen problems. Two police officers have been assigned this avenue in order to keep on top of the issues there. It was noted that the situation at the Dunkin Donuts on the avenue has improved since they have been working with the police to remedy the large groups that have been congregating outside their place and also several summons have been written.

Fort Hamilton Parkway in the 70's was next on the list with the complaint of teens hanging out in the evening. The police will look in to this area also.

Then the school yard at Dyker Intermediate School and the nearby park at 81st Street between 11th and 12th Avenues; and PS 176 school yard and deli across the street from it were addressed. The police will look in to these areas as well and also noise and idling complaints resulting from ice cream trucks.

Lastly, we turned our attention to the largest problem located at the southeastern corner of 77th Street and 4th Avenue. This is a recurring problem with a family of four that live in the apartment house at this corner. Members of this family terrorize the residents of this building as well as residents of the 77th Street block between 4th and 5th Avenues. The residents who attended our meeting elaborated on the problems that they have, namely, cars coming by all the time; fighting; large groups of teens, as many as 50 to 100 congregating outside the apartment house; residents being threatened verbally and with machete's; muggings, etc. These conditions occur day time and night time. When the police come to deal with the situation, the teens disappear down the subway stairs in to the 77th Street train station. The owner of the building is not cooperative to the situation. The residents came to our meeting to tell us of their problem and to seek help in its remedy. There were four arrests in the afternoon prior to the start of our meeting and the police said that they would have a police presence daily on the block until the situation was solved. I went by the following day, and a police car was parked on the block and there was police foot patrol present. Note: There are around 20 professional offices on this block, three of which are located in the apartment house in question. This situation is not good for business. Also, one of the muggings was of a doctor who has an office on the block.

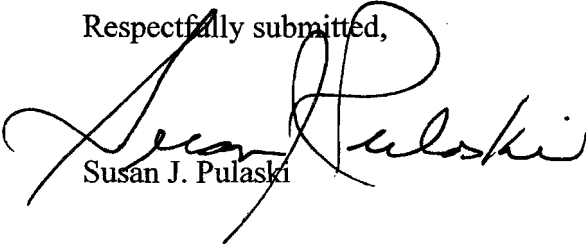
Then we discussed night-life locations going over present and past locations to make sure that any problems we presently have or have had in the past summer are made aware of at the beginning of the new season to the police department. Trouble spots, mostly noise related problems, are on 5th Avenue between 80th and 82nd Streets and between 87th and 88th Streets; 3rd Avenue around 75th Street and between 84th Street to 89th Streets with Shenanigan's receiving the majority of the complaints. It was mentioned again that sound proofing, as well as keeping the doors closed, helps to contain noise emanating from bars. However, noise from open restaurant backyards can't be contained.

One of the local residents mentioned that possibly through education in our local schools, teens could be taught their civic responsibility of being good citizens. Since civics is no longer in a school's curriculum, Josephine said she would reach out to the Assistant Principal at FHHS to see what might be done via an educational approach.

Finally to our last topic of the evening, a Mr. Jim Kirrane, a life-time local resident, came to make a presentation of plans he and his sons have to open a restaurant/bar in Bay Ridge. The establishment is designed to be a family/neighborhood pub, styled after a British model. They plan on filling the gap left by Harry Grattin's and Griswold's closings. After looking over the entire neighborhood for an ideal and cost effective location for this type of restaurant, Mr. Kirrane contacted the owner of the building were Peggy O'Neill's had been located and spoke with the owner about a turnkey rental of this

space for his new establishment. Mr. Kirrane said he has fond memories of the old Peggy O'Neill's which was a favorite Bay Ride eatery in his younger years. Mr. Kirrane is well aware of the problems the community has had with the most recent Peggy O'Neill's, so he felt it would be good to come our Police & Public Safety Committee meeting and make a presentation before he proceeded with his proposal. He asked if the Community Board and community would stand in his way if he pursued his plans. After listening to his presentation and getting our many questions answered, the committee discussed the situation as to whether the board and community would want another restaurant or bar at that location. We noted that the Peggy O'Neill's location is being advertised and that eventually someone will want to open another establishment at this location. Owners are varied, as we observe first hand, in our neighborhood. Mr. Kirrane appears to have well thought out and favorable plan and is agreeable to working hard in being a good neighbor in the community. So, we decided to not make any objections, at this time, to the SLA should Mr. Kirrane decide to proceed with his endeavor.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Pulaski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "S".

Susan J. Pulaski