

Dear Neighbor,

I am writing to alert you to a serious quality of life issue in our neighborhood. Many of you have learned about the Homeless shelter being proposed in the now vacant Pride of Judea building on Northern Boulevard. We have all heard sad and frightening tales of the homeless who have made many inner city New York neighborhoods unsafe and unruly. This is coming to Douglaston and Little Neck if this projected shelter goes forward as planned.

Many residents (220+) were part of a Zoom meeting on January 12, 2021 with Community Board 11, where the project was discussed. The details are truly frightening. The plan is to house 72 women over the age of 50 in a dormitory type setting. Of course, City officials may decide to change the population without consultation with the community. The need may be greater for males than females and thus a change could happen.

We were all surprised and upset that a bike lane appeared suddenly on Northern Boulevard without notice to the residents of this community who could have rejected or altered the path of the bike lane. Now the City wants to go forward with this homeless shelter in the same manner. We cannot let this happen.

If this shelter is to house 72 individuals it gives them less living space than prisoners enjoy on Rikers Island. The living conditions would be overcrowded, inhumane, unsafe and dismal, forcing residents to leave the shelter and roam our streets looking for relief. Some of these residents may have criminal backgrounds, mental illness or addictions.

Even if you feel distance from the site and feel compassion for the homeless, this should not be forced upon us. This is a "SLUM DUMP", a "WAREHOUSE OF DESPAIR".

We MUST join together to contact our elected officials, Mayor, City Council and all our local elected officials and let them know that we will remember their stance on this matter in the next election cycle. The Douglaston Civic Association will be providing contact information to its members for elected officials to use to express our feelings about this crisis. I ask that you pass that information on to all your neighbors.

Please make an effort to discuss this with your neighbors. The Covid restrictions make it more difficult to communicate but we must act. I ask that you reach out to others in your community who are not English speaking. They are probably unaware of this crisis and deserve to be notified.

Write, Call, E-mail, ACT!!

A very concerned neighbor