



Assemblywoman

MARGARET MARKEY

Reports to the People

DECEMBER 2013

Assemblywoman Markey Reports on a Year of Progress for the 30th District

Dear Friends: It has been an honor to represent you in the State Legislature and I am happy to present this report of some of my 2013 activities as I look forward to a new session in Albany in January.



I was proud to provide the state funding to bring the Doe Fund street maintenance back to the Grand Avenue shopping area, a project of the Maspeth Chamber of Commerce.



Borough President Helen Marshall, Publisher Victoria Schneps and I proudly display the new edition of "Queens in Your Pocket," the borough guide published by the Queens Tourism Council and the Queens Courier.



Momentum is building for my Child Victims Act bill and it is my highest priority in 2014.

Action in the Community to Benefit Our Neighbors

Support for Local Non-Profits – My state funding support in 2013 made it possible for the Maspeth Chamber of Commerce to bring back the Doe Fund street maintenance program to Grand Avenue.

I am also pleased to have provided community funding support to such diverse service groups as Woodside on the Move, the Central Astoria LDC and Maspeth Town Hall. The programs of many other senior centers and non-profit civic, health, educational, and veterans organizations also benefited from my allocations in 2013.

State capital funding I provided also helped the Queens Council on the Arts relocate to a new home in Long Island City, financed improvements at Maspeth Town Hall, and will support upcoming work in Juniper Valley Park. A major grant to the Queens Tourism Council has helped enhance its work in promoting tourist destinations in the borough.

Community Service Activities – My own service programs in 2013 included free flu shots for seniors provided by Elmhurst Hospital, park concerts, a toy drive, a senior resource fair, and a public forum on airplane noise in the community. In addition to handling a wide variety of constituent queries over the past year, my staff provided assistance to many homeowners this fall who were seeking a STAR exemption for their properties.



It was an honor to be part of the celebration for the expansion of Kaufman Astoria Studios.

Highlights of Our Work in Albany

Legislative Achievements for New Yorkers – It was a landmark year in Albany as we enacted a state budget that invested in schools and job creation and lowered taxes for New Yorkers to their lowest rate in 60 years. We created a \$350 tax credit per child that most families will receive this year to provide relief for parents struggling to meet the cost of raising children. We set the pace for the nation with far-reaching gun safety legislation, and we also raised the minimum wage and reformed the Workers' Compensation and Unemployment Insurance programs to save New York businesses millions of dollars annually.

My Work in the Assembly Leadership – I held two hearings as Chair of the Assembly Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts, and Sports Development as we worked with the Governor to help restore state parks and historic sites that had been devastated by hurricane damage. I also became a member of the influential Ways and Means Committee where I will now have a role in budget allocations in the year to come.

My Top Albany Priority in 2014 – I have seen support building for my Child Victims Act legislation that would eliminate the criminal and civil statute of limitations for child sex abuse crimes as more and more Assembly members sign on to co-sponsor the bill. Support was bolstered in 2013 as a public hearing on the subject this year documented new instances where institutional cover-up of abuse demonstrated the need for the change in the law. I continue to reach out to the State Senate and the Governor to convince them that 2014 is the year to make the Child Victims Act law in our state.

My very best wishes to you and your families in the New Year.

Sincerely,

Margaret M. Markey
Margaret M. Markey



Presiding at a meeting of my Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development Committee.

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COMMUNITY REPORT



BIG 6 TOWERS MARKS 50th BIRTHDAY

– It was a day of fun and memories as residents of Big Six Towers marked the 50th anniversary of this groundbreaking cooperative complex. I was

delighted to present a citation to mark the day from the New York State Assembly to Lorraine McAndrews, Board Chair, who organized the celebration. With us are Congressman Joseph Crowley and Senator Michael Gianaris.

CONTINUING TO HONOR MEMORY OF 9/11 HEROES – I am proud to participate in the many memorial events every year on September 11th as we pay tribute to those who lost their lives at the World Trade Center on that fateful day in 2001. In addition to this 12th anniversary commemoration at Memorial Square in Maspeth



this year, I also participated in the annual vigil at the 9/11 Memorial Garden in Juniper Valley Park sponsored by the 9/11 Candlelight Vigil of Queens and the 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at Doughboy Park in Woodside.

HONOR CENTRAL ASTORIA LEADERS – It was an honor to participate in the third annual Central Astoria Community Celebration at Astoria Manor as the organization honored community leaders for their service. Here, from left, are:



George Stamatiades, President and Marie Torniali, Executive Director, Central Astoria LDC; Honorable George Onorato; Tony

Barasman, Executive Vice President, Steinway Astoria Partnership; George Alexiou, President, Greek American Homeowners; and 114th Precinct's Deputy Inspector Stephen Cirabisi.

SENIOR RESOURCE FAIR – Residents in Woodside had the opportunity to get advice and counseling on issues of importance to seniors when I brought several city and state agencies and non-profit organizations together at St. Sebastian's Parish Center. Agencies had information on Food Stamps, Medicaid, EPIC and other benefits. Visitors could consult with housing experts and CUNY Elder Law counselors. FDNY's Fire Safety Lt. Visconi and Firefighter George Tabeek were also there to demonstrate fire safety techniques and equipment.



HONOR FOR GERALDINE FERRARO – The spirit of the late Geraldine Ferraro, who represented Queens in Congress for many years, lives on in the careers of the many women, including me, who have succeeded in government and other non-traditional jobs for women. That is why it was a special honor to participate in the dedication of the Geraldine Ferraro Campus on Metropolitan Avenue with public



officials from every level of government, education leaders and John Zaccaro, her husband, and members of her family. The new campus will house The ACE Academy for Scholars and will open in the fall of 2014. Gerry really cared about issues, particularly those affecting women, and advocated passionately on their behalf. Her courageous campaign as the first woman on a national ticket for Vice President demonstrated her strength and intellect and paved the way for future generations of women.



TOYS FOR HOUR CHILDREN THANKS TO YOU

It was another bountiful year for my annual Holiday Toy Drive, conducted again in cooperation with Central Astoria Local Development Corporation. I want to thank all those constituents who made generous donations of toys to help make Christmas brighter for youngsters at Hour Children, the Astoria-based non-profit that works with women who were formerly incarcerated and their children. Central Astoria's Marie Torniali and I joined Hour Children Director Sister Tesa for the presentation of gifts, with George Stamatiades of Central Astoria filling in for Santa.



TREE LIGHTING IN WOODSIDE

I joined Woodside on the Move at ceremonies to officially switch on the annual Woodside Holiday Lighting program. Here, we pose with Santa in front of the tree at Sohncke Square. From left are Adrian Bordoni, Executive Director, and Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer.

Air Traffic, Airport Experts at My Forum Respond to Concerns about Airplane Noise, but Many in the Audience Not Satisfied with Answers

Complaints have recently increased from residents of Middle Village and Maspeth about excessive noise and the quality of life impact from commercial airplanes passing over our neighborhoods to land at LaGuardia Airport.

Following up on discussion at a forum sponsored by the civic group COMET, I brought officials from the Port Authority of NY & NJ and the Federal Aviation Administration to a community meeting to answer questions about residents' complaints. Many of them wanted to hear why we seem to have increased issues with airplanes that are too low, too loud, and too smelly.

We heard from the Port Authority officials who are responsible for the operation of LaGuardia, and experts from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which is responsible for directing airplane traffic and safety in the air.

While I am grateful that the FAA's Mark Guiod and Edward Knoesel of the Port Authority and their associates readily responded to the many questions from the audience, the responses and explanations did not seem to square with the experiences described by our neighbors.

Officials said that there had been no recent changes in landing procedures that would account for the various anecdotal descriptions of excessive noise that seem to be affecting the quality of life our communities experience underneath the descending planes. Technical explanations about the height of aircraft above ground level, weather-related variations in landing procedures, and the occasional change in traffic patterns as a result of runway construction did not satisfy many in the audience.

The Port Authority reported on a new noise-monitoring program now being implemented that seemed to hold a



Port Authority's Ed Knoesel presents a new plan for increased monitoring of airplane noise that will soon be deployed. Seated with me are Mark Guiod (L), who heads the regional FAA air traffic control office, and Brian Simon, PA's Director of Government & Community Relations.

positive possibility for us. When implemented, individuals will be able to access a Port Authority website that would help pinpoint the identity in real-time of an airliner which appears to be causing excessive noise. New fixed and portable noise-monitoring equipment will also be deployed to help identify offenders.

Clearly, air safety is the paramount concern of aviation officials and important to all of us. But many other communities in Queens also have issues with airplane noise and we all deserve answers and explanations. I plan to work with other Queens elected officials and organizations as well as our new Borough President to see how the airports and airlines can be better neighbors and find solutions to quality of life issues whenever it is possible to do so.

Strong Agreement that Development Proposal for Sunnyside Gardens is Inconsistent with Spirit and Character of Historic District

Residents of the Sunnyside Gardens Historic District are justly proud of the spirit and character of their community and have strongly reacted to an inappropriate plan for development of a vacant lot in their district.

To support their views, I and other elected officials and community leaders joined many individuals and organizations that also turned out to testify at a public hearing on the proposal in October at the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) in Manhattan.

We all asked the LPC to reject the application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a project that would include eight units of new housing and also incorporate the historic 1931 "Aluminaire House" on the site of a former playground at 39th Avenue and 50th Street.

The Sunnyside Gardens community and its representatives fought hard to win the historic district designation the Commission granted in 2007. It was an achievement all of us believed would prevent just such out of context developments as the one proposed and I asked the Commission to deny this application.

When the Sunnyside Gardens Historic District was designated, the Commission itself described it as one of the "most significant planned residential communities in New York City." Even though the proposed development may involve a truly worthy architectural structure in its own right, it does not belong here. It is totally inconsistent with the spirit and character of Sunnyside Gardens.

The application to put the "Aluminaire House" and the related new construction will be discussed at a new public meeting of the Commission in early 2014 after which it will render its decision.

Maspeth Firehouse Deserves Landmarking

Another landmarks issue has arisen in Maspeth where an initiative inspired by Middle Village resident Steve Fisher and supported by Community Board Five seeks to give landmarks designation to the Maspeth Firehouse. This historic house marks its 100th anniversary in 2014 and is the home of Engine Company 288 and the FDNY's Haz Mat Unit, companies which lost 19 firefighters at the World Trade Center on 9/11. This sacrifice and the 100th anniversary along with the unique view of the distant WTC site from the firehouse door were not strong enough reasons for landmarking according to the Landmarks Preservation Commission. I agree that the Maspeth Firehouse deserves this special recognition and will work with the community to overcome the rejection of the proposal.

Environmental Shield, Sewer Construction Coming

Two construction projects will begin soon in our community. The State Department of Transportation says it has awarded a contract for the construction of an environmental shield along the east-bound lanes (south side) of the Brooklyn Queens Expressway near 65th Street. The shield will be mounted above the existing wall on the elevated portion of the BQE and is intended to improve the quality of life for residents in the vicinity. The nearly \$1 million project, which is expected to be completed by

summer, has been funded by grants secured by me and Congressman Joseph Crowley.

In another construction project to come to our area, the City's Department of Design and Construction has announced it will soon begin construction of a combined sewer project on 69th Street between Queens Boulevard and Calamus Avenue. The work will be by C.A.C. Industries, Inc.

New Queens Museum Space and Movie 'Back Lot' in Astoria are Exciting Additions That Will Boost Tourism and Job Creation in Our Borough



EXPAND KAUFMAN MOVIE COMPLEX

U.S. Senator Charles Schumer headlined the guests who saluted the courage and commitment of George Kaufman in making the former film production complex into the largest production facility on the East Coast. We cut the ribbon for the new "back lot" underneath the new signature movie entrance gate, with, from right, George Kaufman, Councilmember Jimmy VanBramer, Senator Schumer, State Senator Michael Gianaris and Assemblymember Aravella Simotas.

I was delighted to join in welcoming this new "back lot" to the creative facilities available right here in our borough. The block-long outdoor streetscape will permit productions to shoot exterior and special effects shots outside in a controlled environment.

All of us in Queens are proud of the many television shows and movies that are brought to life at this complex. We are also proud of the enormous impact that George Kaufman and Hal Rosenbluth and their team have made to the economy of Queens and New York City. With this new outdoor set we look forward to the "starring role" that 36th Avenue will have in new productions as the streets of New York come alive right here on this new back lot.

As Chair of the Assembly Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts and Sports Development, I have a state-wide perspective on the tourism sector and its importance to the state's economy. But over the past few months I have been particularly proud of developments right here in our own borough of Queens that promote tourism and jobs creation.

DOUBLE MUSEUM'S EXHIBIT SPACE - The Queens Museum, located in Flushing Meadow Corona Park was created for the 1939 World's Fair and became the first home of the United Nations General Assembly from 1946-50. I was excited to be present when the Museum reopened in November after a \$69 million renovation that included \$16 million in support from New York State.

The work has doubled exhibition space at the Museum, added work space for artists and promises to herald a huge increase in annual visitors. Museum Director Thomas Finkelpearl told me that he expects to double attendance from 100,000 to 200,000 visitors a year.

Of particular interest to generations of school children and city visitors is the Museum's Panorama of the City of New York, an intricately detailed scale model displaying every building in New York City, created for the 1964-5 World's Fair, updated in the 1990s, and with newer landmarks like CitiField also added.

MORE MOVIE JOBS TO COME - It was exciting to be at Kaufman Astoria Studios in December for the inauguration of an imposing new entrance gate and production space at the Long Island City movie complex.



QUEENS MUSEUM RE-OPENS TO BIG APPLAUSE

Museum Director Tom Finkelpearl (left) was beaming as Mayor Michael Bloomberg led Queens officials and arts leaders in cutting the ribbon on the \$69 million renovation of the historic building that doubles space available for art exhibits.



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NEW BOCCI COURTS COMING TO JUNIPER VALLEY PARK

Parks and elected officials were joined by avid bocci fans to help break ground for long-awaited new bocci courts in Juniper Valley Park. I was happy to join Deputy Borough President Barry Garodnick, City Councilmember Elizabeth Crowley and Borough Parks Commissioner Dorothy Lewandowski in getting the project underway. I have recently allocated \$50,000 for other improvements soon to come to the park.

