Testimony of State Senator Jose Peralta City Council Hearing, *The December Blizzard of 2010: Evaluating the City's Response* January 21, 2011

It's good to see so many friends and colleagues here today. Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to address you about the city's response to last month's blizzard. And congratulations on a job well done. Far much more than a forum to vent anger and frustration, the Council's hearings have been highly informative and I think have delivered a loud, clear message that will resonate in City Hall for future mayoral administrations to heed.

I don't know of another area in the city where the consequences of the city's failed response to the blizzard were as devastating as in my district. But I'm not here to recount hours-long waits for emergency assistance caused by unplowed streets and the failings of the 9-1-1 call system, or the death, property damage and other misery that ensued.

Some of those heart-wrenching experiences will be recalled here far more insightfully and compellingly by those who lived them.

I have just a few simple points and questions and will be brief.

My first point is simply this: The city had capably responded to blizzards like the one that hit Christmas weekend, and worse, as far back as I can remember. I'm relatively young, but that's still a pretty long time.

What was different about the city's response this time? For all the mea culpas from city officials, admirable as they may have been, we have not gotten an answer.

It has been nearly four weeks since the blizzard. A 15-point action plan, featuring the use of GPS, video and the Internet, has been developed and made public. The plan is all well and good, but the fact is, the city didn't win battles against blizzards 20, 30 years ago using these technologies.

The city's failed response last month might have been better with the help of these technologies, but as we learned during the Council's first hearing, the failure was rooted in errors in judgment and decision-making, not electronics.

How could those errors in judgment and decision-making occur given the city's wealth of institutional memory, knowledge and experience, built up over decades successfully beating back the worst effects of storms as bad or worse than last month's blizzard?

Time and again over the years, plows and salt hit city streets if there was something more than a dusting in the forecast. And so if it snowed hard, we were still able to go about our business. Not without inconveniences, but the life of the city—in all five boroughs—went on.

Which is not to say that the city's response, at times, was not overkill. My point is that the "better-safe-than-sorry" approach has served us well, as it did when it snowed heavily last week.

Snow was forecast for the evening of Tuesday, January 12. At 8:30 in the morning that day, I saw a Sanitation Department truck laying down salt along Junction Boulevard, some 12 hours before snow actually began to fall.

What did the city do, or fail to do, Christmas weekend compared to other snow responses? It would not seem to require extensive research to answer that question. Hopefully, we will hear an answer soon, not to satisfy public curiosity, but as an assurance that what caused the failed response will not be repeated.

Unplowed streets, however, were only part of the problem for New Yorkers in need of emergency assistance. Just as troubling, and perhaps even more life threatening, were the problems with the 9-1-1 call system. I had several constituents tell me of dialing 9-1-1 over and over and not getting through to anyone for 20 minutes or more.

I did not hear of cases in which emergency responders were dispatched to wrong addresses, something that has occurred since the unified 9-1-1 call system was implemented in 2009. But I think that after what we saw during the December blizzard, it would make sense to revisit the effectiveness of the new, unified system as part of a comprehensive review of the 9-1-1 call system, including staffing and technology.

Whatever steps need to be taken to make the 9-1-1 system failure-proof must be identified as soon as possible.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address you about this important issue.



Assemblymember 24th District

THE ASSEMBLY STATE OF NEW YORK ALBANY

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Cities
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Governmental Employees
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TASK FORCE Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force

Testimony of Assembly Member David I. Weprin, representing the 24th Assembly District in Queens, NY.

Good afternoon. I am Assembly Member David Weprin, representing the 24th Assembly District in Northeast Queens, which encompasses parts of Auburndale, Bayside, Bayside Hills, Bellerose, Douglaston, Floral Park, Fresh Meadows, Glen Oaks, Hollis, Hollis Hills, Holliswood, Jamaica Estates, Little Neck, New Hyde Park, and Queens Village. I want to thank the New York City Council, the Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice Services, the Committee on Public Safety, the Committee on Oversight and Investigations, and the Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management for providing me and the residents of Queens the opportunity to voice our concerns and experiences with the recent snow removal efforts by the New York City Department of Sanitation. On December 30, I submitted a letter to Commissioner Doherty outlining my community's complaints, of which I am submitting a copy for your review.

I live up the block from Holliswood Hospital, located at 87-37 Palermo Street New York 11423. Hospital administrators knocked on my door at approximately 2:30 pm on Monday December 27th to advise me that the streets in front of the hospital and the intersecting roadways had yet to be plowed. This created a very hazardous situation for the patients and staff currently at Holliswood hospital, and also for other individuals seeking treatment there. After repeated phone calls and emails to local sanitation supervisors, the hospital perimeters were finally plowed the following morning.

On Tuesday, December 28th, my staff fielded hundreds of calls and e-mails from constituents still stuck inside their homes because vehicles plowing the main road had inadvertently blockaded their streets with snow from the main roadways. Many of the side roads in the area had yet to see DSNY vehicles plowing their street.

Four days after the December 26th storm, I was still receiving calls at my district office from constituents who are unable to leave their homes because of the large amount of snow on their streets. Several streets had still not been plowed once.

Cleanup efforts after the smaller January 11th storm markedly improved in most areas of my district, but were still below standards in many crucial areas. PS 221Q, The North Hills School, located at 57-40 Marathon Parkway in Little Neck, just up the hill from my District office, reported treacherous road conditions in front of the main entrance of their

school. The students at this school use the 60th Avenue entrance to enter and exit the building. Buses also use the 60th Avenue entrance to pick up and drop off students each day. On Wednesday January 12, after Mayor Bloomberg declared conditions were safe enough for schools to open, the students and teachers of PS 221Q were met with impassable, unplowed roads. A bus traveling down 60th Avenue skid and was stuck in the road. As 60th Avenue was impassable, children were forced to be dropped off on the heavily trafficked Marathon Parkway and cross the icy street to get to school. It is unacceptable to put our children in such a dangerous situation.

While there were definitely many issues with snow removal efforts this season, I must point out that Michael Cianciotto and his colleagues at First Deputy Commissioner Sullivan's office were extremely helpful in getting local Sanitation boards to dig out some of my elderly constituents who had been repeatedly plowed in by DSNY trucks. Some sanitation boards in my district were highly responsive to faxes and e-mails from my staff regarding unclear roadways, during both storms, making it a point to promptly contact my office after the roads were cleared. I would also like to thank and recognize many of my communities volunteer ambulance corps, including but not limited to; The Glen Oaks Volunteer Ambulance Corp who remained in service handling Emergency medical calls.

I hope that, in light of these public hearings, we can maintain an open dialogue and work alongside the NYC Department of Sanitation in a more cooperative and collaborative manner in both Assembly District 24 and the rest of New York City.

Submitted at the New York City Council public hearing on January 21, 2010 at Queens Borough Hall in Kew Gardens, New York.



THE ASSEMBLY STATE OF NEW YORK ALBANY

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TASK FORCE Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force

DAVID I. WEPRIN Assemblymember 24th District

December 30, 2010

John Doherty, Commissioner New York City Department of Sanitation 125 Worth Street, Room 720 New York, New York 10013

Dear Commissioner Doherty:

I am writing on behalf of my constituents of the 24th Assembly District, in Northeast Queens. As you are aware, twenty (20) inches of snow covered New York City's streets between Sunday December 26th and Monday December 27th, 2010. It is my understanding that the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) responded as quickly as possible to the inclement weather. Unfortunately, for the residents of my district, this was not fast enough.

On Monday, December 27th, many of my constituents woke up to completely covered, untouched snowy roads in front of their homes. Most did not see a plow come down their street until late Sunday night, leaving them stuck in their homes, unable to go to work or gain access to supermarkets, doctors, or hospitals.

On Tuesday, December 28th, my staff fielded hundreds of calls and e-mails from constituents still stuck inside their homes because vehicles plowing the main road had inadvertently blockaded their streets with snow from the main roadways. Many of the side roads in the area had yet to see DSNY vehicles plowing their street. In an effort to assist DSNY, my office complied and forwarded lists of unplowed locations to local Sanitation boards within my district (8, 11, and 13) hourly.

As of today, 4 days after the storm, I am still receiving calls at my district office from constituents who are unable to leave their homes because of the large amount of snow on their streets. Several streets have not even been plowed once. This is completely unacceptable and has created an extremely dangerous situation. Many people are still stranded in their homes, unable to access essential medical services and food. My office continues to contact local Sanitation boards and the Mayor's office to assist with cleanup efforts.

The snow storm on December 26th was only the first storm of the winter season. Clearly, the existing response plan has proven to be ineffective. I would appreciate if you and your staff would review the current snow removal initiative and advise us accordingly, as to prevent reoccurrence of this week's catastrophe.

I am not pointing this out to be critical or to "pile on" what has already been much criticism by the public and press; I am merely pointing out the situation in my district so we can better work together in the future in the event of another snowstorm.

Thank you for your attention and assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

DAVID I. WEPRIN

Member of Assembly

DIW: lmd

CC: Mayor Michael Bloomberg

Park I Vin.

Deputy Mayor Stephen Goldsmith

City Council Speaker Christine Quinn

City Council Sanitation Committee Chair Letitia James

City Council Transportation Committee Chair James Vacca



Queens Community Board 13

219-41 Jamaica Ave. Queens Village, NY 11428

> Telephone: (718) 464-9700 Fax: (718) 264-2739 www.cb13q.org

Helen Marshall Borough President

Barry Grodenchik Deputy Borough President Bryan J. Block Chairman

Lawrence McClean
District Manager

JOINT COMMITTEE HEARING ON THE CITY'S RESPONSE TO THE DECEMBER 2010 BLIZZARD

Borough President Helen Marshall, Speaker Christine Quinn, and Honorable Council Chairs Letitia James, Elizabeth Crowley, Peter Vallone, and James Vacca. Community Board 13 Queens wishes to thank you for holding this hearing.

Good day, my name is Lawrence T. McClean, I am District Manager for Community Board 13 Queens.

First and foremost what defines the resident of Community Board 13 Queens as can be said of New Yorkers throughout the five boroughs is their resiliency. No matter the tragedy or obstacles they will find a way to persevere. They can only deal with the situation at hand, however, if there is a clear picture of what is going on.

On this level, communication and sensitivity as to what our constituents were going through proved to be a systemic failure.

From the perspective of the District Office of Board 13 Queens, the level of aggravation is compounded by the following facts.

I have been serving as a District Manager for almost twenty years. Starting with Board 9

Manhattan on the West Side, and for the past three years in Southeast Queens, in my home borough. For the last fifteen years I have developed a Snow Removal Policy via our District

Service Cabinet. (attachment)

This was the first storm where no attempt was made to adhere to the plan. In fact, the previous two years the community residents applauded the responsiveness of our Sanitation workers commending them in writing. The key to this success was our Superintendent. In the winters of 2009 and 2010 if we received reports of streets missed there was an immediate response. More importantly, if we received reports of seniors, diabetics or cancer patients unable to get off their streets for medical treatments from Bellerose, south to Rosedale once this information was relayed within half an hour the block was cleared. This year despite our complaints, we lost this invaluable asset to our District, which is at 13 square miles, as big as Savannah Georgia, when the Superintendent was reassigned. In fact, at a Public Safety Hearing chaired by Jonathan Raines held on November 18, 2010, in Laurelton, the residents raised concerns with the Sanitation representative from Worth Street about snow pick-up with a new Superintendent, we were assured that snow removal would continue to be on point.

With this storm calls to the Sanitation Department went unanswered. Our current Superintendent did not respond to e-mails sent to him by Bryan J. Block, Chair of Board 13Q, until January 13, 2011.

Reports were published in the newspaper that by Tuesday at 4PM 60% of the tertiary streets in Queens had been plowed. So as civilians, we are impelled to ask for a DEFINITION of the word PLOWED, for with my experience I did not see it.

The Honorable Vivian E. Cook, Assemblywoman for the 32nd District reported to me that many of the drivers she observed seemed poorly trained in operating plows in her area which includes Community Board 12 Oueens.

Our plans call for major roads and bus routes to be done. Instead the Q84 and Q77 were not running, the Q4 was still on Wednesday December 29th stopping twenty blocks before its destination leaving riders at Linden and Francis Lewis Boulevards, the Q83 could not negotiate unplowed hills and the Q88 and Q27 buses could not get out of Flushing.

Here we must fault the MTA who failed to notify the riding public of the rerouting or cancellation of buses. Hundreds of residents were stranded and had they known the existing condition would not have even ventured out. With no subway service in Southeast Queens, BUS SERVICE IS OUR LIFELINE. Simply putting out a radio alert or announcement at bus terminals would have benefited thousands of Southern Queens residents. This even led Susan Noreika, one of my eighty + year old Board members, when her attendant could not reach her to declare that our community was "DISSED".

This failure to declare an Emergency, to alert the public to the severity of conditions, or to assure results that were not evident, to not provide awareness to service conditions, or to display a lack of awareness or empathy to the hardship our residents were enduring falls in to the definition Board 13Q sometimes utilizes. That is BUREAUCRATIC MALICE".

A crisis of confidence now so exists that it led some young men that I observed on December 29th after dislodging stalled vans off McDonough Street in East New York, Brooklyn to say "We need Rudy back".

By now you have received a plethora of suggestions as to what should or should not be done, as well as responses from the administration, as to it's efforts to make corrections. Speaking for Community Boards many of whom have as 13 Queens does, a community contact list to follow up District wide on services, that at the VERY LEAST Sanitation must stay in a regular dialogue with Community Boards during crisis such as these.

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Thank you.

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Lawrence T. McClean
District Manager

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District Manager
January 21, 2011

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Queens Community Board 13

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Helen Marshall Borough President

Barry Grodenchik
Director of Community Boards

Bryan J. Block Chairman

Lawrence McClean
District Manager

DATE:

Wednesday, December 1, 2010

TO:

Bryan J. Block, Chairman

FROM:

Burging on a

Lawrence T. McClean, District Manager

RE:

Community Board 13 Queens Snow Removal Policy Winter 2010/2011

MEMO

Listed below are the priorities for **Snow Removal** in our Board, based on the discussion in the District Service Cabinet;

- 1. **Snow Removal** facilitated on Primary Highways, Boulevards & Avenues designated by DOT as Snow Emergency Routes,
 - 2. Major Emphasis on cleaning around Essential Facilities:
 - a. 105th Precinct & Satellite
 - b. Firehouses
 - c. Long Island Jewish Hospitals
 - d. Bus depots (in conjunction with MTA)
 - e. DEP stations,
 - 3. Bus Routes ESPECIALLY on side Streets (Q36, Q77, Q83, Q84, Q85 & Q110),
 - 4. Keeping Corners around Schools & Day Care Centers clear of Snow Piles for better driver visibility,
 - 5. Requesting Home Owners with Fire Hydrants in front of their property to dig them out,
 - 6. Board 13 Policy to have vehicles blocking streets to plowed Towed if necessary,
 - Having School Custodians plowing the paths of adjoining Parks playgrounds (per request to DOE),
 - 8. On streets with center Malls (Murdock Avenue, 253rdStreet 85th Ave to 97th Drive), plowing Towards the median so as not to cover cars & block drives,
 - 9. Emphasis on keeping intersections at the base of inclines (i.e. Francis Lewis Boulevard at hillside Avenue) clear to avoid cars attempting to stop skidding in to traffic,
 - 10. Sanitation utilize any special hires to clear path on sidewalks adjacent to Bus Stops,

Cc: Honorable John Doherty, Commissioner Sanitation
Deputy Commissioner Maria Termini
District Superintendent, CB13 Sanitation
DSC Members,
CB13 Members

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

BRYAN J. BLOCK, CHAIRPERSON - TANYA CRUZ, FIRST VICE. CHAIR - ANGELA AUGUGLIARO, SECOND VICE. CHAIR ANUP RAMNAUTH, TREASURER - SANU THOMAS, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

COMMUNITIES SERVED:

Bellaire Bellerose - Cambria Heights - Floral Park - Glen Oaks - Laurelton - Meadowmere - New Hyde Park
Parkside Terrace - Queens village - Rosedale - Springfield Gardens - Warnerville



Community Board 6, Queens

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January 7, 2011



Helen M. Marshall Queens Borough President

Joseph C. Hennessy Chairman

Frank P. Gulluscio District Manager

Gail M. Gordon ı" Vice Chairwoman

Steven Goldberg 2nd Vice Chairman

Elizabeth Anderson Vice Chairwoman - Secretary

Todd Reisman Vice Chairman - Finance

Norman Tepper, P.E. Vice Chairman - Land Use

Lynn C. Schulman Vice Chairwoman - Scoping Shannon K. Manigault Legislative Council New York City Council 250 Broadway, 14th Floor

New York, NY 100071

Subject: City Council Survey on City Blizzard Response

STORM WREAKS HAVOC – LEAVES A TRAIL OF DISASTER

Residents of the City, and particularly residents of Community Board 6, were left to regroup after a storm ripped through the area damaging cars, stranding motorists, causing general chaos and economic stress, followed by a clean up effort from this past week's snow storm, which appeared to be right on target. During this last snow storm snow plows were in abundance and streets were cleared immediately. A response New Yorkers deserve and have come to expect.

In September 2010 a tornado whipped through the City of New York ravaging communities and causing a great deal of destruction. Community Board 6 was hit hard. At that time, city, state and federal agencies came together immediately. This time our reliance upon 311 and the Office of Emergency Management failed to deliver the guidance needed to deal with the snowstorm. For example, why wasn't a snow emergency called?

Community Board 6, with its large senior constituency, was especially vulnerable. Our seniors did not know what was happening with some of the general services that they receive, for example, the Meals on Wheels Program. They also experienced great difficulty getting to dialysis treatments, or receiving any needed medical assistance. We are

concerned about solutions, considering the number of people who were in danger, especially on a holiday weekend.

The blizzard may be over and the snow melted, but as one member of the City Council said, "missing a few streets is a mistake, missing a borough is a scandal". Let's not forget the avalanche of phone calls from angry constituents left stranded on unplowed streets and the horror of seeing ambulances unable to bring patients to the emergency room. It was outrageous. It should not have happened in the first place, and it must never be allowed to happen again.

If the city had reacted to the snow storm, which you do expect in the winter, the same way they reacted to an unexpected tornado in September, there would not have been so many citizens put in harm's way.

Frank P. Gulluscio District Manager



COMMUNITY BOARD 10

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Statement of Community Board 10
To the
New York City Council

Committee on Oversight and Investigations Services; Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice; Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management; and Committee on Public Safety Regarding the December Blizzard of 2010: Evaluating the City's Response

> at Queens Borough Hall January 21, 2011

If quotes from Charles Dickens come to mind during the Christmas season, they are usually those found in "A Christmas Carol". This year, some from Dickens' "A Tale of Two Cities" seem to be more apropos. Lines such as "it was the worst of times", "it was the age of foolishness", "it was the epoch of incredulity", and "it was the winter of despair" come to mind. Clearly the negative perception that we have two "cities" — Manhattan and the outer boroughs — was strengthened among Queens residents by the city's inadequate response to this blizzard.

The snow cleanup in our district was far less than satisfactory. Major roadways and our commercial strips generally were plowed on Monday 12/27/10. Overall, residential streets not blocked by abandoned vehicles were plowed on Wednesday, 12/29/10 although a few were done earlier. Our residents were not just inconvenienced; their lives and homes were endangered because of a situation where the movement of emergency response vehicles was impeded for an inordinate length of time.

Emergency services were impacted as the ability of emergency vehicles to navigate was hampered by streets that were impassable due to lack of plowing and/or private vehicles left stuck in snow by drivers who were on the roads during the storm and in the hours immediately after the snowfall stopped. The closest hospital facility to our area is Jamaica Hospital, which is located in Community Board 9. The hospital's Director of Public Affairs indicated to us that although the Van Wyck Expressway was plowed on Monday, its service road and other local streets were not plowed until Tuesday night (with some not plowed until Wednesday). He reported to us that the hospital was not able to get deliveries of medical supplies or food and that to his knowledge at least 9 ambulances were stuck in snow.

Community Board 10 is one of the few areas in the city served by a volunteer fire department as well as the FDNY. The West Hamilton Beach Volunteer Fire Dept. has indicated to us that their ability to respond was severely curtailed. It should be noted that there is only 1 roadway providing vehicular access or egress to Hamilton Beach and many streets in that community are of narrow widths. That community is immediately adjacent to JFK Airport where the possibility of a disaster is always present. Even though planes were not flying, the fuel tanks and other airport facilities are still there. The Hamilton Beach area is also subject to tidal flooding during many nor'easter storms. During major storms like this recent one, the area often requires special attention. Unfortunately, this time it did not get immediate attention and luckily there was no high tide flooding along with this storm. Fortunately, there was not an event requiring FDNY fire or ambulance response in the Hamilton Beach area during this storm that we are aware of while the area was completely cut off. Many roadways in other areas in our community like Lindenwood and Richmond Hill were also impassable. Ozone Park and South Ozone Park fared no better.

Although we did not receive any specific information detailing response problems from the local police precinct or fire companies located in our Board area, it would seem that, given the overall level of uncleared and/or blocked streets in our area and all of the outer boroughs, emergency response to any type of emergency was severely impacted.

Although there may have been some salting on major roadways prior to Sunday 12/26/10, we are not aware that any salting was done. It would have probably lessened negative impact if Crossbay Blvd.; Rockaway Blvd.; Liberty Avenue; Lefferts Blvd. and North & South Conduit Avenues in our district had been salted prior to snow falling.

In the past following heavy snowfalls we have experienced some isolated problems with specific streets and/or areas within our Board, but they were addressed quickly when the responsible agencies were notified of them. Overall, we have not seen a district-wide unacceptable set of conditions like this for decades. Our residents have experienced that although there are always some problems in major snowstorms, by and large the city's response to them has been acceptable over the years. Therefore, our residents' dissatisfaction now is exacerbated by their anger because of their knowledge that the city is capable of doing an acceptable snow clean-up and in December it didn't.

Among the very serious issues raised by the calls we received after the storm were those of people depending on meals on wheels or needing to get to medical appointments such as dialysis or chemotherapy. The inability to travel or receive deliveries of meals created an untenable situation for some of our most vulnerable citizens.

In the preliminary report prepared for the mayor following the uproar raised by the city's poor response, six problems were identified generally as being:

Lack of a declared snow emergency

Lack of real-time information regarding actual conditions

Insufficient and delayed asset deployment

Lack of private resources deployed

Insufficient communication within city government and with the public

Emergency communications overload

We agree that these are main issues, but it is not an all-inclusive list.

From the perspective of our Community Board, it is imperative that issues relating to the 311 system be resolved. Many of those who called us had already tried unsuccessfully to reach 311. We found that when our staff tried to reach 311, there were inordinate delays in 311 answering. Callers who did manage to connect to 311 were not being given complaint numbers.

We have spent years educating people to make sure they get their complaint numbers so that appropriate follow-up may be done when needed. It would be helpful in evaluating response in our area if the Council required data to be provided on the number of storm-related calls, the time and date of those calls, and the primary indicator of the complaint (e.g.: street not plowed; abandoned vehicle; etc.) from 311 to all of the 59 Community Boards for the time period 12/26/10-12/31/10.

It would also be helpful for a clear protocol to be developed regarding how Community Boards should input complaints and receive information in future emergency situations. If people are calling us because they cannot reach 311, it makes no sense that we are also trying to call 311. The city's reliance on 311 as the mechanism for complaints to be made by residents needs to be re-evaluated and improvements must be made to insure that residents may make complaints and receive information in a timely manner.

The lack of real time information regarding actual conditions could be partially addressed by Community Boards having dedicated lines to call in emergency situations to share local input since we are located out in the neighborhoods and our members, and in the case of Community Board 10 all of our staff, live in the neighborhoods we serve.

Overall in our area mass transit was severely impacted by this storm. To our knowledge, no busses were running in the area on Monday and there was very limited service on Tuesday. Anecdotally, our office is located where a number of bus lines pass. Our staff observed very few busses on Rockaway Blvd. or Lefferts Blvd. at our location on Tuesday or Wednesday. This is problematic, as large sections of our area are not served by the subway and all subway service in our area in either elevated or surface, not underground. People faced days of inability to get to work and for many that inability to get to work translated to loss of pay, which is very problematic given the current economic climate.

The "A" line subway train reported in the media as being stuck between the Aqueduct Station and Rockaway Blvd. Station overnight during the storm is of concern as this occurred in our Board area. It is not uncommon during any snowstorm for service on the Rockaway segment of the "A" to be curtailed. Therefore, we are concerned that MTA dispatched that particular train in the midst of a blizzard. We are also concerned that it appears no attempt was made to remove those persons stranded to a safer location or to provide some water or food to them. From our understanding of where the train was stalled, there are 2 schools and a police precinct in the immediate vicinity. Had that train been held in the Howard Beach station, at least those passengers would have been stranded in one of the city's newest, cleanest, and heated stations and one that has sanitary facilities.

Hindsight certainly indicates that a "snow emergency" should have been declared. Given that this blizzard occurred on a holiday weekend, it is reasonable to assume that had a snow emergency been declared by Saturday night perhaps far fewer people would have ventured out on the roads during the storm for non-essential trips. Since this storm was predicted early on to have a possible track that would severely impact the city during a major holiday weekend, it is also reasonable to assume that "erring on the side of caution" would have been a better choice for the administration. All equipment should have been readied with plows and chains before the weekend began and the city's emergency command center should have been activated earlier. The Notify NY system should have been issuing alerts. Perhaps the Notify NY system should be expanded so that in situations such as this all phones in the city receive an alert, not just those signed up for Notify NY. Practically every elected official or candidate manages to reach us with robo calls during election season. It would seem that we could come up with an emergency alert system for residents that does not require them to sign up for it.

There also needs to be better cleanup in the aftermath of such storms in terms of the snow mounds created when our commercial streets are plowed. It is understandable that they are created when the plowing is done. It is understandable that they are not removed immediately. But after a few days, they need to be better addressed, particularly in a borough like Queens, where many of our local shopping strips have little or no off-street parking. Snow mounds just left to eventually melt, diminish available parking, prevent deliveries, and clog traffic along our commercial strips.

People's perceptions are not always accurate reflections of reality, but those perceptions are "reality" for many, many people. We can strengthen procedures; we can fix the "nuts and bolts" of what went wrong in this storm. The response to the early January storm, although not a blizzard of the same magnitude, easily showed that this city can address a heavy snow adequately. However, it's going to be far harder to address and alter the viewpoint among large segments of this city's outer borough residents that they were ignored at a time of serious need. We are one city and all of our people and the neighborhoods they live in must be equitably served and our people must be able to recognize that they are being equitably served.

Community Board 10 thanks the City Council for this opportunity to offer some comment regarding the effects impacting our area during the December 2010 blizzard.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Braton Chairperson

Cedar Grove Civic Queensboro Hill Homeowners Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 671072 Station 'C' Flushing, NY 11367-7072 Telephone: (718) 939-2540 Mobile/SMS: (917) 774-7983 Facsimile: (718) 228-6153

Friday, January 21, 2011

Testimony of Walter Kowsh Jr, President before City Council Investigative Committees

My area of civic concern is in Queens Community District #7 located to the south of the LIE and the West of Main Street. We are in City Council District 24 and surrounded on three sides by the Mt. Hebron Cedar Grove Cemetery. We have always been the last on the list to be plowed out unless we complain loudly. Once in the middle 1990s we had a blizzard that lasted an number of days and we only received an emergency plow out by a single pay loader that sped down our two major north south streets and never did the inter connecting east west streets. The snow continued for a number of days thereafter and calls to Sanitation District 7, Community Board 7, and the then local council member went unanswered. We documented these events on video tape and then went to the Green Book and began calling everyone from Deputy Commissioner on down at Sanitation Headquarters leaving a message on their voice mail about our plight. The streets were plowed out the next day and have been fairly well handled until the December 2010 snow storm. Clearly now advanced salt spreading was done during the early hours of that storm and follow up occurred only after I contacted Thomas at Councilman Gennaro's office and sent an email to the Sanitation Commissioner on NYC.COM.

I make the following proposals:

(OVER)

Street Location Address: 6408 136 Street, Flushing, NY 11367-1113

- 1. The medium duty dump trucks operated by both the Department of Transportation and Department of Environmental Protection should be fitted with plows and salt speeders just like the suburban Counties, Towns, and Villages that boarder NYC have. They should be deployed early to handle the side streets such as our area.
- All snow storms should be supervised by the Department of Emergency
 Management which will monitor the deployment and operation of all City and MTA
 snow removal equipment.
- 3. Local civic associations who hold title to their streets such as Douglas Manor have their own snow plow from the DMA club and city resources. Community

 Improvement Districts should be constituted to allow local areas such as mine to purchase similar services from local contractors. Both the Abruzzi Construction

 Company and the Cedar Grove Cemetery have snow removal equipment that we could rent for snow removal provided that a fund was created from local property taxes to pay for these emergency services. This would lessen the burden on City resources during these crisis periods.

4. All City Vehicles should be equipped with tire chains or studded snow tires.

All City Vehicles should be equipped with tire chains or studded snow tires.

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QUEENS COMMUNITY HOUSE

Blizzard of 2010 and it's emergency personnel...the unsung heroes...

Given the facts and what we saw before us, on the night of Sunday 12/26, the management of QCH determined it would be wise to close on 12/27/2011 due to the storm and it's obvious impact on street conditions.

All departments were immediately notified, and established emergency plans were set in motion...Sunday night, our Social Adult Day Services staff ... made calls to 24 individuals and/or their families who were scheduled to attend on Monday, to advise of closure and inquire after any special needs during the emergency...

Our transportation coordinator... made the trek to the FH site to post a closure notice... made calls to her transportation participants scheduled for service, and offered to go the site on the morning of Monday the 27th to personally inform all who sought service of the status...

Our case managers were well prepared for an emergency, as <u>their standard practice</u> is to maintain a list of their high risk clients at home for just such an event. They placed calls to all and were assured ... first and foremost of the individual safety. On Tuesday, the 28th the case managers spent the entire day speaking with clients and assessing needs. They remained in contact with the HMDL's provider who sent them a list of 78 meals clients at 4:20 PM to advise that meals could not be delivered due to the impassability of the streets on which they lived.... All 78 clients were contacted before staff left.. even some who would no longer have employment effective January 1, 2011 as a result of the cuts to this lifeline program... no special acknowledgement asked or received from DFTA...

Our senior center programs returned to normal on Tuesday and served the weary who managed to brave the elements and dangerous street crossings (such as they were), offering welcome, a warm cup and the benefit of being with "extended family".... Followed by a nutritious lunch and a little bit of play!

The heroes, oh the heroes are those who every day give of themselves to support older adults in their efforts to remain in the community, and to live with the dignity and respect we were all raised to believe is our right. Oh and the other heroes???? Those elderly who were called and responded... thank you so much for thinking of me.

Appearance Card
I intend to appear and speak on Int. No Res. No in favor in opposition
Date:
Name: Marilyn Mays Address 702-02 109th HVF
Address: 202-02 107 FVE
I represent:
Address:
THE COUNCIL
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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No Res. No
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Name: Charles L Norris St
Name: 120-4/2005+
I represent: Clargy Laited
Address: 89-31 1615+
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Name: KOBURT VALDES CLAUSELL
Address: 87-10 515 AVE
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Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

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Name: Chan Jamoona Address: 107-06-123 St.
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Name: MARTIN BROYSOLY Address: 98-11 QUEENS BLUD		
I represent: SELF		
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Name: Michael Feinel Address: Poi Dox 640246
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Name: Cynthia Calisky - Ola
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I represent: Querys. Jewish Community Ou
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Name: Too Ball III
Name: Derick Echeminia Address: 1700 Broadway My Ny 12039
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Name: Paul Schubert
Address: Community Advocate 147 Beach 113 St. NYC NY 11694
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Name: JOSEPH & HENNESST Address: 62-27 108-57 F1+ 11375
Address: 62-27 108-57 F14 11375
I represent: P6 Funus HILLS POOP
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Name: Michelle Orenstein Address: 21-02 160 St. Whitestone
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Name: GARY GIORDANO
Address:
I represent: Community Board J, Queens
Address: 61-23 Myrtle AV Glendale, Ny 11385
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Name: MIKE MUL VANT
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Name: Grace Meng.
Address: 136-20 38th Avenue 10A Flushing My 11351
I represent: MS Assembly - DISTRICT 22.
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I represent: Comm	nunity Board	13 DUPERS		
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Name: ROBER RAPO
Address: 043 6151 AU
I represent: United Spinor association
Address: 245-32601 AVE Noto
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DALLAN (PLEASE PRINT)
Name: MANDI SOLOMOIN, IRBS, CLARGERG
I represent: 3 Cooper Building in Bridings
Address: Sariage, Tulene Eden Rock
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THE COUNCIL
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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No Res. No
in favor in opposition SAN. TATION - SNOW Date:
Name: WILLIAM F. JOHNERT
Name: NILLIAM F. JOHN.=121 Address: RE-19 86 AV.=
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I represent: Self
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(PLEASE PRINT)				
Name: Vishny Mahadeo				
Address: 127-21 Liberty Aso.				
I represent: Richmond Hill EDC.				
Address:				
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Name: Naomi PS- Althum				
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I represent: Quelus Comm House & Self				
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