



NEWS FROM COUNCIL MEMBER

SPRING 2014

COSTA CONSTANTINIDES

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COSTA CONSTANTINIDES

22nd District, Queens

DEAR RESIDENTS OF THE 22ND COUNCIL DISTRICT:

We've been busy working around the community and in City Hall since taking office in January. We'd like to keep everyone updated on our projects in this district and city-wide. Please visit our website Council.NYC.gov/Costa for more information on these important issues.

I look forward to working with you as we move forward in this session.

Sincerely,

Costa

BRINGING CLEANER STREETS TO ASTORIA



We are excited to announce that our office brought The Doe Fund to Astoria to keep streets cleaner and more navigable to residents and visitors. Seven days a week, 7 hours a day these men and women will be working to keep our major business thoroughfares clean.

When I speak with constituents, this is the issue I hear them discussing time and again. Earlier this year, I joined my colleagues Senator Michael Gianaris and Assemblywoman Aravella Simotas to call upon the New York City Department of Sanitation to help rectify the litter situation. The Doe Fund will provide reinforcements and additional resources to make the sidewalks cleaner and the corner trash cans clearer for residents and visitors.

The Doe Fund is an organization that employs recently homeless or incarcerated individuals as part of its Ready, Willing, and Able transitional work program in which trainees earn stipends above minimum wage.

EXCITING NEW OPPORTUNITIES



Photo credit: William Alastriste

After taking office in January, I was honored that Speaker Mark-Viverito named me to chair the City Council's Sub-Committee on Libraries. I was also named to sit on seven standing committees: Civil Service & Labor, Contracts, Cultural Affairs, Environmental Protection, Oversight & Investigations, Sanitation, and Transportation.

Our libraries are the keystone of our educational system. They provide valuable services to the public regardless of their age, economic status, or their stage in life. Our libraries serve as the great equalizer for the City of New York. I look forward to working with my colleagues to preserve these vital institutions.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Keeping our streets safe has also been a top priority for me this year. We have held rallies, met with city agencies to discuss implementing Vision Zero initiatives in this district, and brought the community together for a Town Hall meeting with New York Department of Transportation (DOT) Commissioner Polly Trottenberg to discuss pedestrian safety and better traffic planning.

While many members of the audience at the Town Hall were able to ask their questions directly to the panelists, not everyone had a chance that day. Our co-host Congressman Joseph Crowley (D-NY-14) and I sent a joint letter to the DOT in which we included the remaining questions in writing.

We also held a rally calling for better traffic and pedestrian safety on 21 Street, one of the most frequently used thoroughfares in Astoria. I called upon the DOT to conduct a traffic study to examine calming effects, to add countdown clocks and traffic lights for pedestrians, and to add flattened crosswalks so there will be no physical impediments to crossing the street for pedestrians with disabilities or children in strollers. Our neighborhood has seen recent residential and economic growth and we need to make sure our infrastructure keeps up with this increase in traffic.



ELIGIBLE FOR SNAP/ FOOD STAMPS?

SNAP is the new name for the Food Stamp Program. There are about a half-million New York City residents eligible for this program that are not enrolled. Could you be one of them? SNAP benefits are placed on a debit card, can be used at most supermarkets and farmers' markets, and can help free up money for other household expenses. It's easy to find out if you're eligible and, if so, to get help submitting an application. The NYC Coalition Against Hunger can provide a quick, confidential screening over the phone and various options for submitting an application. You'll need to provide some basic information such as household income, rent/mortgage expense, childcare expenses, etc. **Call 212.825.0028 x207, 245 or 213.**

THE WATERFRONT:
OUR NEW FRONTIER



Photo credit: William Alastriste

I was proud to introduce a bill to make our ferries more green and efficient. INT #54 mandates that city ferries be powered with at least 5% energy efficient biodiesel by July 1 of this year and with 20% biodiesel by January 1, 2020.

As a member of the City Council's Environmental Protection Committee, I believe a clean environment and better air quality are a top priority. I also believe in using our city's resources to their fullest potential - this biodiesel blend is made here in this city. This bill will improve our air quality while staying committed to expanding the use of green energy, creating local green jobs and making our city more sustainable.

Ferry service has the ability to transform our city. Ferries make it easier for us to get around our entire city in ways not currently imagined. We are a city surrounded by water and we need to use the resources we already have - our waterfront. Better utilizing the city's waterways is the new frontier.

IN THE COMMUNITY



GREEK
INDEPENDENCE DAY

We celebrated the 193rd Anniversary of Greek Independence at City Hall with Council Members Paul Vallone and Vincent Gentile, in conjunction with Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. The celebration honored Greek-Americans who have dedicated themselves to serving their neighbors and who, in keeping with the spirit of Greek heritage, have helped spread democratic values to all.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

We paid tribute to Astoria's leaders as part of a collaborated Black History Month celebration "Still I Rise," along with Senator Michael Gianaris and Assemblymember Cathy Nolan. We honored Astoria Houses Tenants Association President Claudia Coger, Vice President Renee Edwards, and Center of Hope International Pastor Bishop Mitchell Taylor, the Floating Hospital, the Minor Miracles Foundation and Alternative Escapes.



GOVERNMENT ON
YOUR CORNER

Assembly Member Michael DenDekker and I met with residents of Jackson Heights at our co-hosted "Government On Your Corner" event that included free paper shredding services. I enjoyed meeting and speaking with residents about important issues facing our community. We had the opportunity to meet one-on-one and provide free document shredding - a great protection against identity theft.