



Jamaica Estates home gets OK for expansion

By Howard Koplowitz

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Community Board 8 gave its approval for the owner of a Jamaica Estates single-family home to enlarge the dwelling's second floor and attic and also voted in favor of extending a special permit for a Fresh Meadows women's gym during its monthly meeting last week.

Steve Konigsberg, chairman of CB 8's Zoning Committee, said a public hearing was held March 28 about the home at 181-30 Aberdeen Road in Fresh Meadows and that the committee voted 9-0 in favor of the application.

Konigsberg said the home's interior space would increase by no more than 10 percent and that the alteration has nothing to do with an increase in occupancy. The whole board voted 36-3 in favor of the application.

The board also approved an extension for a special permit for the Meadow Spa at 61-19 190th St. in Fresh Meadows. The special permit, for a physical culture establishment, expired Jan. 29 and the owner was seeking a renewal and an amendment to the gym's layout.

Konigsberg said the gym would be moving to the basement of the property but will be providing the same services. The Zoning Committee voted 10-1 in favor of the application.

A CB 8 member expressed reservations, saying the building's architect said there were problems with asbestos at the site and that the board should wait to approve the application until the asbestos is removed.

But Konigsberg said that had nothing to do with the application and the board agreed, voting 40-0 in favor of extending the permit.

The board also heard from Herman De Jesus of the Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project, who told CB 8 about the organization's foreclosure prevention programs.

De Jesus said banks are "unwilling to help folks" who are in danger of foreclosure.

"It's very common of these lenders not to be willing to help out," he said. "Folks are sadly ending up in homeless shelters as a result of this process."

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De Jesus told the board members to be wary of companies looking to help modify mortgages or rescue homeowners from foreclosure, saying they charge exorbitant rates and that there are many nonprofits that offer the same services for free.

“There are a lot of companies looking to benefit and profit off of’ foreclosures, he said.

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