

Bellcourt Civic Association
Steering Committee Meeting Minutes
Inaugural meeting: June 1, 2018

1. Introductions
 - a. Attendees were Roseann Henry, Paul Di Benedetto, Margaret Foley, and Manuel Mergal
2. Could not review the 1905 Bellcourt deed restrictions – no one has a copy
 - a. Paul Graziano may have a copy. Unclear whether these show up on title searches for new sales, and if they don't that would make them difficult if not impossible to enforce. Need at least one of us to review title search results for our own homes.
 - b. NYC will not enforce deed restrictions, only zoning code
 - c. Goal would be to get developers to work with us so we don't dog them with complaints
 - d. Historic district designation is difficult to obtain, but we can keep trying. Manuel to call Landmarks to inquire about district designation, also to inquire about requesting landmark status for apartments at 38th Avenue and 213th Street
3. Discussed mission statement for the new association
 - a. Base it on Broadway-Flushing Homeowners' Association,
 - i. Below and at <http://broadwayflushing.org/purpose/>
 - ii. Draft is on Bellcourt.org (and below)
 1. Amend to put protecting scale second, enforcing zoning third, encouraging cooperation fourth, advocating fifth
4. Discussed the structure of the association
 - a. We should be an LLC – it costs \$200 and the instructions are here: <https://www.ny.gov/services/start-limited-liability-company-llc>
We will need this to open a bank account – need Articles of Organization (see below for sample)
Check NYS for separate registration process for nonprofit organizations.
5. Finalize the name for the association
 - a. Bellcourt Civic Association or Bellcourt Neighborhood Association?
 - i. The first is more official sounding; the second is friendlier
6. Discuss and revise the copy for the association web site
 - a. Should we extend our definition of Bellcourt western boundary to Francis Lewis Blvd? Web site currently says Bellcourt is Bell Blvd. to the Clearview. Original documents suggest the farmland/development ended a bit west of where the Clearview is now.

- b. Add section of resources, with links to look up property ownership and tax records, file complaints, see sales and houses on the market
- 7. Review at-risk homes and discuss a watch list for them
 - a. See updated list attached – would be nice to assign certain homes to certain people, or create a committee to watch monthly. New homes go on the market or become abandoned every day and someone should be watching.
- 8. Review ideas:
 - a. Plaques/certificates
 - i. Roseann will get price quotes
 - b. Database of homes
 - i. Decided not to pursue for now
 - c. Tree list
 - i. Added gallery of trees to web site; won't further pursue this right now, but we will keep an eye on trees within 10 feet of curb, which are technically street trees even if they are on the yard side of the sidewalk. Watch out for the copper beech on 212th between 38th and 36th Avenues – the house is now on the market and the tree will be a target for removal.
- 9. Decide next steps in developing the association
 - a. Board
 - i. Need to establish an interim board until elections can be held. Consider expanding the steering committee to spread the work around.
 - b. Dues/legal fund
 - i. Need to establish a small membership fee to get started – board members will need to cover costs in the interim. So far they are minimal – web site, some copying costs, and next will be the LLC filing
 - c. Eligibility
 - i. See Broadway-Flushing – homeowners within the boundaries are eligible for membership if they share the goals of the association. No membership for those who disagree with the principles.
 - d. Articles of incorporation/bylaws
 - i. See below/attached
 - e. Address/PO Box
 - i. We will need a PO box as the address of the organization
 - f. Bank account
 - i. Need LLC first
 - g. Logo
 - i. Use text for now – defer design until down the road
 - ii. RH to mock up a letterhead and possible newsletter layout
 - h. 501(c)(3) status
 - i. Need LLC first; then apply for tax-exempt status

- i. Next meeting?

From broadway-flushing homeowners' association web site:

The purpose of this Association is:

- To conserve the Association area as a single-family, detached residence district.
- To unite and encourage all homeowners and residents to maintain and improve the community of Broadway-Flushing.
- To further our agenda by appropriate representation and other courses of action before the various City and State governmental agencies.
- To keep the community informed about proposed zoning changes and their impact.
- To alert the community to apparent violations of current zoning laws and Rickert-Finlay covenant provisions.
- To keep our political representatives informed of important issues facing our Association.
- To cooperate with other neighborhood and civic associations in promoting cultural events for the area homeowners.

From Bellcourt.org

The Historic Bell Court Civic Association is dedicated to...

- Fostering a sense of community among the residents of this unique neighborhood;
- Encouraging cooperation between and among our diverse residents;
- Protecting the scale and charm of our neighborhood;
- Advocating for the common interests of our community;
- and resolving any disputes quickly and amicably.

Updated to:

1. Fostering a sense of community among the residents of this unique neighborhood;
2. Protecting the scale and charm of our neighborhood;
3. Enforcing existing legal single-family R2A zoning;
4. Encouraging cooperation between and among our diverse residents; and
5. Advocating for the common interests of our community.