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**COMMUNITY'S CONCERN A CATALYST FOR CHANGE:  
BRIARWOOD ACTION NETWORK: NEIGHBORHOOD CHANNEL FOR ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION**

In an era when complaints of apathy and ennui on the part of the citizenry are rampant, residents of Briarwood, Queens, have mobilized together to improve conditions such as garbage collection, commuter transportation, traffic safety, and of course, crime prevention and detection. The Briarwood Action Network (BAN) has been the driving force in transforming complaint into action. Whether it's participating in a summit with Borough President Helen Marshall, other elected representatives and numerous city and state agencies to address the impact on Briarwood of the Kew Gardens Interchange Project, or, launching a new website ([www.briarwoodactionnetwork.com](http://www.briarwoodactionnetwork.com)) with up-to-date hurricane preparedness info, BAN provides residents with a forum to be heard and informed on issues affecting Briarwood.

Briarwood has been singularly affected by the ongoing Kew Gardens Interchange Project along the Van Wyck Expressway. Besides traffic pattern changes along Queens Boulevard, bus stops and subway entrances have been eliminated and changed. A BAN protest rally in August resulted in the summit held in the Borough President's office on October 15<sup>th</sup>, organized by NYS Assemblyman Michael Simanowitz who represents part of Briarwood. Helen Marshall praised BAN's role as community advocate and encouraged the NYS DOT to move swiftly in realizing its promised commitment to provide Briarwood with a community liaison (with office space) for this project. Present were officials from the NYS and NYC Departments of Transportation (DOT), NYC Transit, NYPD/Transit and NYC Department of Sanitation.

NYC Transit promised BAN that a temporary bus stop for the Q20 bus would be implemented across the street from the Briarwood branch library to provide an easier transfer to the relocated entrance of the Briarwood/Van Wyck stop for the E and F trains. And Captain Michael Telfer, Commanding Officer of the NYPD's Transit District 20, stated he had established an above ground patrol in the area around the new station entrance near the southbound Van Wyck service road to provide additional security to residents. Karen Koslowitz, NYC Council member and summit attendee (part of whose district includes Briarwood) was especially concerned about security at the subway entrance, which is in a secluded area across from Maple Grove Cemetery. Koslowitz made a commitment to BAN to provide a security camera near that entrance.

In announcing its new website, BAN president, Aida Vernon acclaimed, "This site is just one part of BAN's mission to provide a forum for all kinds of information to the neighborhood. We have everything from emergency preparedness, to contact info for elected officials and police precincts, to a community bulletin board." Vernon says, "WWW.BRIARWOODACTIONNETWORK.COM will be the focal point for residents,

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schools and businesses to promote issues, events and activities. We envision that this site will become the primary format for information flow throughout the greater Briarwood community.”

BAN has also mobilized community pride, demonstrated by its sponsoring of its third project to beautify Hoover Park and Hoover Playground on October 21, as part of the citywide It’s My Park Day initiative.

Photo shows NYS Assemblymen for Briarwood, Michael Simanowitz and Rory Lancman with Zina Zimmerman, BAN’s Director of Community Service at “It’s My Park Day,” co-sponsored by BAN and NYC Partnership for Parks, held at Briarwood’s Hoover Park on October 21<sup>st</sup>.



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