

EMAIL SENT 6/14/21:

Request for Assistance-Coram Civic Association

 ReillyCD@coramcivic.org

To: Senator Anthony Palumbo; Senator Mario R. Mattera; Assembl. Steve Englebright; County Executive Steve Bellone; Legislator Robert Calarco; Legislator Sarah Anker; Legislator Kara Hahn; Stuart Cameron; Inspector Patrick Reilly; Casey Berry; John Efstathiou; DA Timothy Sini; Sheriff Errol Toulon

Cc: Assembl. Joe DeStefano; Assembl. Jodi Giglio; Supervisor Edward Romaine; Councilman Michael Loguerccio; Councilwoman Jane Bonner; rich.causin@dot.ny.gov; Meg Danielson; Kerriann Souto; Kristin Mackay; Tywan Anthony; Howard Hafkin; Brendan Sweeney

Bcc: 'Gail Lynch-Bailey'; Scott Wood (swood74689@aol.com); 'E. James Freeman'; Bob Gluck; CDReilly; Erma Gluck; Frank Muraca; Jean Hartling; Kareem Nugdalla; Kathrine Soccia; Vana McClure; W. Paul Ziems

Mon 6/14/2021 11:55 AM

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Greetings all,

The Coram Civic Association is seeking your assistance in solving a long-term problem that continues to grow exponentially in our community. This problem has created financial obstacles for our commercial areas as well as increased personal safety issues and quality of life concerns for the residents of our hamlet of Coram and all the residents of our greater Longwood Community. This problem is vagrancy. Vagrancy has recently exploded, once again, into the forefronts of the minds of Coram residents with the forcible rape and strangulation of a woman on Thursday, May 27th in a wooded area off of Skips Road between Mill Road and Route 112 in Coram at 1:27 PM, *the middle of the afternoon!* That location is right across the street from the Suffolk County Transit bus stop (4-line transfer stop) located adjacent to the Home Depot in the Coram Plaza Shopping Center, a location long-known as a mass gathering spot for vagrants including drug dealers, drug users and prostitutes who hang out there all day long.

Vagrancy has been proliferating at an alarming rate for many years and, left unattended, seems to feed upon itself. Vagrancy exists in our community in many forms such as panhandlers, prostitutes, drug users, drug dealers, gang members, and the "long term unemployed." The results are the loss of potential customers who are fearful of shopping in these areas, tenants and landlords hesitant to invest any more of their time and money in building their businesses and beautifying these centers (with many relocating their business to a more inviting hamlet), and new businesses reluctant to consider opening in our growing number of vacant storefronts. We have been intermittently addressing these issues with our town, county, and state representatives along with our SCPD and have had periodic, short term, positive outcomes; however, emphasis is on the phrase "short term" ...and even those have been offset by the increasing growth of vagrants in our community.

Our commercial areas, specifically, the commercial four corners in Coram formed at the intersection at Middle Country Road and Fife Drive/Westfield Road (Coram Commons S/C, Coram East S/C, 7-Eleven, Tiano's Café), the Plaza 99 Shopping Center at 99 Middle Country Road at the corner of Martin St. just west of Fife Drive, as well as the Coram Plaza/Home Depot Shopping Center at the southeast corner of the Rtes. 112 & 25 intersection in Coram, have all been severely impacted by the ever-increasing presence of vagrants. These closely positioned commercial sections form the primary shopping district for Coram as well as, arguably, that of Middle Island, Gordon Heights, and Ridge. We, as the Coram Civic Association, have surveyed and met with the various tenants and landlords along with the concerned residents of these areas and the primary lament of all is the negative impact of the vagrants on their quality of life and the health of their businesses. Our shopping center vacancy rates in these areas range from a "low" of 37.5% to an alarmingly high of 77.8%...*and those are pre-pandemic figures!*

While we can all debate long, hard -- *and seemingly endlessly* -- on the causes of the vagrancy problem we face, our members and most all of the residents of Coram just want vagrancy dealt with and removed from our commercial centers. In resolving this issue, we are *not* looking to first solve the issue of homelessness, or unemployment, or single parent households, or drug rehabilitation, or any other "contributing" factors. What we feel is needed first is legislation back on the books regarding loitering and vagrancy. Shop owners need the legal right to insist that the loiterers, panhandlers, drug dealers, drug users, prostitutes and other vagrants must not congregate by their storefronts or in the shopping centers...and police need the legal authority to move these vagrants away from the commercial areas...and not through the tedious and onerous "Affidavit of

Trespass” process. This affidavit process has served more as a diversion from addressing the problem than as a solution to the problem. Store owners and shoppers need an *immediate* result, not a costly, drawn out, legal process.

We recently presented this community issue to SC District Attorney Tim Sini at our monthly membership meeting, and he pledged his support in addressing this issue. We have worked closely over the past six years with SC Legislator Sarah Anker and TOB Supervisor Ed Romaine. We are extremely thankful for the accomplishments that we have had together; however, we must now collectively address this proverbial “elephant in the room” – vagrancy – head on, or our commercial and residential deterioration will accelerate beyond the current critical levels. We, along with our membership, feel strongly that Coram deserves the same attention and investment as our north shore neighbors such as Stony Brook, Port Jefferson, Miller Place and Shoreham. ***Will you join with the residents of Coram in solving this vagrancy blight?*** Together – residents and elected officials -- we can work toward curing this corrosive attack on our commercial centers and the quality of life of our residents.

Please contact either Erma Gluck, civic president and/or Chris Reilly, civic vice president with your response to our question. At this stage, our Coram residents are asking for your current plans that directly address this issue and/or just a simple commitment to work with our Coram Civic toward developing such plans. Then we can all, *in unison*, plan and implement an effective actual resolution for the residents and business owners of Coram and our greater Longwood Community.

Respectfully yours,

Board of Directors
Coram Civic Association

Erma Gluck – President (egbgcats@optonline.net; 631-748-6920)

Chris Reilly – Vice President (ReillyCD@coramcivic.org; 631-681-9890)

Robert Gluck – Director

Jean Hartling – Director

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