

meetings. Board members also like to have family outings on holiday weekends and given a choice would also have preferred a more convenient time. But in view of the above factors the 10 members of the Land Use Committee made themselves available that evening (May 29).

In reference to the question of notification of area residents and businessmen of the hearing I find it difficult to understand Ms. Dietrich's criticism. The board is only required to put a hearing notice in the City Record, which we did. But we also took out a paid announcement in the Advance, had it printed in the Community Board column in the Sunday Advance and distributed leaflets to local residents and merchants. Board members who live in the area also held community meetings to discuss the application.

Perhaps the most disturbing part of Ms. Dietrich's letter is the reference to the board "not paying attention to the taxpayers" and her reference to "feeling like we are living in Russia where the majority does not count." What more aptly describes the situation is not that the board failed to pay attention to the taxpayers (in fact at the full board meeting prior to our vote, I, as chairman, noted the number of opposition letters received and from what sources) but that on balance we felt we had to vote differently. There is a world of difference between ignoring someone and disagreeing with some one.

As we all know in this country we have a form of government commonly referred to as representative democracy. Both the majority and the minority viewpoint are given due consideration. Officials, be they elected or appointed, must consider all aspects of the issues before them, the sentiment of the majority, the rights of the individual applicant or service recipient or other minority viewpoint, and based on these considerations make a decision. Ordinarily the majority sentiment weighs most heavily and nine times out of 10 that is the way most elected or appointed officials vote. But to vote otherwise, where the situation warrants, for the type of reasons mentioned above doesn't make someone un-American as Ms. Dietrich's letter implies. In the last few years Community Board 1 has had many controversial issues before it. If we blindly voted the way the majority of those appearing at our public hearings wanted us to we would have rejected most, if not all, human service programs, senior housing proposals and

variances.

I hasten to point out that this latest criticism ironically is the antithesis of the usual criticism leveled at the board: that from builders and their associations, service agencies, health and social service professionals, etc., who often are critical of our overemphasis on the sentiment of the community and our insensitivity to the "special," "individual" or "long-range" needs of the district.

Ms. Dietrich argues that "an arcade, by its very nature, will bring undesirables into the neighborhood as has been demonstrated in every other area where they exist, whether they exist legally or illegally." She also states "invariably" there is "an exodus of reputable business and people following the establishment of arcades." It would seem that this is not an argument against this establishment per se but against all arcades present and future. What Ms. Dietrich should logically be asking for is a re-evaluation by the City Council of its action making such establishments legal. In view of the fact that they are now legal it seems to me somewhat unfair to direct one's criticism at those who are simply trying to work within the existing legal framework.

Before ending I think it also should be noted that on many of the peripheral issues Ms. Dietrich raises, i.e., the negative effects of OTB, lack of police patrol and youth and drug problems Board 1 has aggressively pursued positive solutions. Our Land Use chairman is vigorously following up on getting OTB to monitor and correct both their loitering and litter problems. As to police patrol services we are continuing to pressure the borough commander to increase foot patrolmen in all our North Shore neighborhoods. On the question of youth, the board has and continues to address ourselves to helping to provide legitimate and constructive youth activities, and in recognition of our efforts Board No. 1 recently received a grant from the New York Community Trust to be used for such purposes.

I hope this has clarified the board's position. It may or may not be the "right" decision — but it was an honest response to a difficult issue. As residents of the North Shore and members of numerous local civic and community organizations we are not indifferent to the needs and feelings of our neighbors and I am sure that as time goes on, although we may not always agree, we will continue to work together for the benefit of the entire community.

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