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Features

'Expert' Tells Public How To Fight Parking Tickets

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City Traffic Supervisors Hear Complaints at 'Fed Up' Forum

By Harold Egelin
Brooklyn Daily Eagle

BENSONHURST — "It's now 7 p.m. and the parking meters are off. You won't be ticketed now," said Councilman Vincent Gentile, introducing his Parking Ticket Forum on Wednesday evening as city traffic enforcement supervisors, the police and a traffic ticket-fighting expert fielded complaints and told of solutions to ticket problems.

Glen Bolofsky, president of the national ticket-fighting tips and help web site www.parkingticket.com, called it "the first-ever grassroots forum exclusively held on the topic, an historic ground-breaking occasion." He thanked Gentile for "being a leader on the issue." The "Fed Up? Fight Back!" forum was held at the local Loyal Order of Moose Lodge in Bensonhurst.

"I've heard from many angry and frustrated constituents who believe that ticketing in our neighborhoods is too aggressive," said Gentile.

A notorious incident last year involved an elderly man from Dyker Heights, Eugene Iannicelli, who was ticketed for double parking for a few seconds as his wife Mary left a medical center on 86th Street. Although he fought against paying the \$115 fine, an administrative judge ordered that he pay it. Gentile paid it for him.

Standing with Gentile at the forum, hearing similar complaints, were Frances Nelson, NYPD Brooklyn Traffic Management borough commander; and Brenda Baker, NYPD Brooklyn South enforcement traffic manager. They did not speak, but Capt. James Grant, 62nd Precinct executive officer in charge of traffic enforcement, spoke.

"I recently pulled over to let my wife out of my car at the corner of 86th Street and Fifth Avenue. Immediately, two DOT cops came over, one in front of my car and one at my door," said Ron Galluccio, a disabled Vietnam War veteran and TV actor.

"They told me that I was in violation, that I'm not allowed to park there in a no-standing zone, and I said that I'm not standing, just letting my wife out. I got a summons in the mail a week later with a late fee. Tell what do we do to fight the system?" said Galluccio, who has gotten 15 tickets.

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Grant replied, "I'm sorry. That's unfortunate. I will bring your complaint back to the precinct so we can look into the matter."

Ticketing for discharging and picking up people is one of the biggest complaints called into his office, said Gentile. "It's a public safety issue. We don't want anyone to get hurt or killed," said Capt. Grant. A woman who parked in a no-standing zone for "one minute" to get her baby out and put it into a stroller was ticketed. Like others, she asked if "discretion can be used"

"I understand that this is a fine-run city. But we need more discretion by traffic agents in such situations mentioned here," said Stanley Roher, former president of the Bensonhurst Board of Trade and the Boards of Trade of Brooklyn.

Grant agreed, saying that police and agents are taught to exercise discretion when appropriate.

Tips and Ways To Fight Tickets

"This system is rigged against us all," said Bolofsky, in the forefront of fighting parking tickets for over 25 year. He created the ParkingTicket.Com web site with retired Parking Violations Bureau judges, police and traffic agents.

"The city took in over \$820 million parking violation fines last year. Over 10 million tickets were issued last year, and 40,000 are issued daily," said Bolofsky. He noted that 238 additional ticket agents were hired in June, and new city tow trucks are on the road as traffic agents roam and aim to meet their quotas.

There is no penalty if a ticket is fought immediately, he advised. On the summons, he said that "not guilty" should be marked. The summons should not be returned in the payment envelope provided by the agent, but people should use their own personal stamped envelopes, he said.

He also urged people to use the services of parkingticket.com, which has easy on-line steps to deal with fines, getting them either dismissed or reduced. Gentile spoke of the new plan by the city's Department of Finance that can reduce fines by as much as \$35.

Further information about the reduced parking ticket fee program can be obtained from Gentile's district office at 8703 Third Ave. or at (718) 748-5200.

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