

Owners are mum on Leviton property

by Jason Pafundi, Chroniole Contributor | Posted: Thursday, December 1, 2011 12:00 pm

Since it closed in 2009, the former Leviton manufacturing site at 59–25 Little Neck Parkway in Little Neck has been virtually empty.

The property was purchased by Steel Equities, a commercial real estate developer headquartered in Bethpage, LI, in 2010. But according to Susan Seinfeld, district manager of Community Board 11, and Jerry Iannece, the board's chairman, the only activity on the 1.3-acre site — aside from an environmental cleanup — has been the storage of vehicles by North Bay Cadillac, a dealership in Great Neck. Calls to both firms were not returned by press time.

Iannece said that his office and that of Borough President Helen Marshall have tried to contact Steel Equities to see what progress has been made with the property, but have been unsuccessful in speaking with anyone.

"Sometimes these things take time and sometimes there's nothing to say," Iannece said. "We had a hard time getting a first meeting with them when they bought the property. This is par for the course."

When the company made the purchase, CB 11 and the Borough President's Office met with Steel Equities to find out what it expected to do with the site.

"Their plans were to clean up the property and then market it for a renter," Iannece said. "We wanted them to keep a dialogue with the community so that whatever they put there would be as least unobtrusive as possible."

Iannece said that at first the company couldn't find a renter, but they did do some environmental work on the property, including cleaning up some old wells used by Leviton — which manufactured copper wiring, among other things, and used certain chemicals in that process.

"There were certain underground tanks, nothing that was catastrophic or major, but they had to clean it up," Iannece said.

The Leviton property is zoned M1 for manufacturing, and Iannece said leasing the land to a dealership falls within those zoning regulations.

"I guess for the time being they are looking to make some money, so a

temporary lease agreement to store vehicles does that,” Iannece said. “And whether we like it or not, there’s nothing we can do about it.

“It’s not bringing in traffic or detracting from the community, and I haven’t heard many complaints about it. It is what it is,” he added.