

Astoria post office spared closure

by Jason Pafundi, Chronicle Contributor | Posted: Thursday, October 20, 2011 12:00 pm

Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D–Manhattan and Queens), state Sen. Mike Gianaris (D–Astoria), Assemblywoman Aravella Simotas (D–Astoria) and a representative of Councilman Peter Vallone Jr. (D–Astoria) announced Wednesday that the Grand Station post office in Astoria will not be closed.

The United States Postal Service had the post office on its list of potential closings, but the elected officials responded after hearing an outpouring of concerns by residents. Maloney delivered a petition with over 1,000 signatures to Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe.

“Because of the community and the hard work of the elected officials, we have kept this post office open,” Maloney said.

According to Maloney, the Grand Station post office, located at 45–08 30th St., not only serves a community with elderly and disabled residents, but businesses along Steinway Street use it as well, and its closure would have been devastating for the community.

“For residents and businesses, Grand Station provides vital services,” Maloney said. “I thank the postal service for hearing our concerns and keeping this important community institution open for business.”

Gianaris said that in a growing neighborhood, it was important to put a priority on keeping the post office open for business.

“As our neighborhood continues to grow, we cannot afford to lose important services,” he said. “I am thrilled we were able to save this community resource.”

The effect the closing would have on the number of seniors in the area was a main concern for the elected officials.

“This news comes as great relief to the many seniors, people with disabilities and working men and women who rely on Grand Station for essential services,” Simotas said.

All the elected officials agreed that closing the Grand Station post office would have lead to overcrowding and long lines at neighboring facilities. They also said

that because a significant number of residents in the area do not have cars, it would likely add at least a half-hour trip to get to the nearest facility.

Maloney said the decision to keep the post office open sends a strong message to the community that the officials “listened, worked hard, responded and were successful.”

Gianaris agreed.

“Government listened to the community and made a decision intelligently,” he said. “Government needs to cut back, but as we’re making these difficult decisions, we need to make them based on criteria that makes sense.

“In a community that has a lot of seniors, and is growing, it was the wrong place to close a post office. Hopefully the rest of the decisions the government makes can be so smart as the one it made here.”