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Christine Quinn's Endorsement From Home Club at Risk, Sources Say



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CHELSEA — [City Council Speaker Christine Quinn](#) might lose the endorsement of the political club that launched her to power, DNAinfo.com New York has learned.

The [Chelsea Reform Democratic Club](#), a bastion of progressive politicians since 1958, helped transform Quinn from a young housing advocate to the City Council Speaker. But now, many Chelsea residents, dissatisfied both with her performance representing their neighborhood and her job as speaker, have joined the club in a bid to ensure anyone but Quinn wins its mayoral endorsement.

Multiple sources told DNAinfo.com New York that several of Quinn's recent actions — from backing Mayor Michael Bloomberg's third term to supporting [a controversial expansion of Chelsea Market](#) — have convinced many residents that she no longer represents the interests of the neighborhood.

"People — lots of people — have joined to vote against her because of that," said one longtime club member who plans to oppose Quinn's endorsement.

That member, like many others interviewed for this story, asked not to be identified out of fear of retribution from Quinn.

"There's this feeling that people are scared because she wields a lot of power," said another politically-active Chelsea resident, who also asked to remain anonymous.

According to Paul Groncki, the club's treasurer, up to 90 people have signed up for the club in the past few months, mostly registering online.

Chelsea residents had until Feb. 4 to join the club in order to vote at its March 21 meeting, which will determine who it endorses in the mayoral election.

"We started getting an influx of members in September or October — this is one of the biggest open elections that I can remember," he said. "We're an open club and anyone can join."

The club's president, Steven Skyles-Mulligan said that the club is bigger than it is during a normal election year, and admitted that some new members were joining just for the endorsement vote.

"There are certainly people joining to support their chosen candidates or to oppose their chosen candidates," Skyles-Mulligan said. "My guess is I'll see a lot of them on endorsement night and not much else."

The new members include many opponents of Chelsea Market who specifically called out Quinn when she voted to approve the zoning change needed to expand the building. The club itself — particularly Groncki — was actively against the plan which Quinn eventually got passed.

Lesley Doyel, one of the leaders of neighborhood group Save Chelsea, joined CRDC along with her husband and daughter in December after working with the club in the group's battle against the Chelsea Market expansion.

"Like many other members in the community, I've been disappointed with her decisions," Doyel said.

"It may be surprising, the result of the endorsement," she said. "In her very own district and in other communities around the city, people are very concerned about her leanings towards special interest groups as manifested in the Chelsea Market approval."

A spokesman and advisor to Quinn's campaign did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

Sources said that in her role as a Speaker campaigning for Bloomberg's job, she's often neglected the district she represents, making it difficult for community groups and residents to access her.

Regardless, some longtime members at the club predicted that Quinn would win the CRDC's endorsement vote by landslide.

"Chris has just been a very loyal friend of Chelsea and of the Chelsea Reform Democratic Club and I think most people there recognize it," said Bob Trentlyon, one of the club's founders.

Groncki, who also was outspoken against the Chelsea Market expansion, said he was "by and large a fan" of Quinn's.

"I think there are people who are upset with Christine about the term limits and more recently with Chelsea Market," he said. "Whether there's enough dissatisfaction to deny her the endorsement, I'm not sure."

Even those who joined to oppose her are unsure of how the vote will go, but said Quinn likely won't get the kind of sweeping win that voters would like to see.

"She's probably going to win," said a community member, who joined in January specifically to oppose Quinn and asked not to be identified. "But I don't want her to win with the support of Chelsea, the real Chelsea."