

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD 11
GENERAL BOARD MEETING

DATE: November 2, 2015

PLACE: M.S. 158
46-35 OCEANIA ST.
BAYSIDE, NY 11361

ATTENDANCE:

Christine L. Haider, Chair	Present	Laura James	Present
Sila Asa	Present	Mohan Jethwani	Present
Edith Basom	Present	George Karahalios	Absent
Steven Behar	Present	Anthony Koutsouradis	Present
Lana Bind	Present	Linda Lee	Present
Susan Cerezo	Present	Robert Liatto	Present
Ocelia Claro	Present	Janet McEneaney	Present
Paul DiBenedetto	Present	Melvyn Meer	Present
Mary Donahue	Present	George Mihaltzes	Absent
Henry Euler	Present	Eileen Miller	Present
Mario Ferazzoli	Present	Douglas Montgomery	Absent
Joann Ferrari	Absent	Steven Newman	Present
Sonya Fierro-Gladwin	Present	Allan Palzer	Present
Jack Fried	Present	Chris Petallides	Present
Alim Gafar	Present	Stephen Pivawer	Present
Joan Garippa	Present	Christina Scherer	Present
Roy Giusetti	Present	John Shehas	Absent
Lawrence Gresser	Absent	Jessica Sin	Present
Bernard Haber	Present	Joseph Sollano	Present
Zion Halili	Present	Jyothi Sriram	Present
		Alex Yagudaev	Present

ALSO PRESENT:

Susan Seinfeld	District Manager, Community Board 11
Christina Coutinho	Community Associate, Community Board 11
Anthony Lemma, Jr.	Representing Congress Member Grace Meng
Tony Avella	NYS Senator
P.O. John Erdman	111 th Precinct, Community Affairs Unit
P.O. Luigi Galano	111 th Precinct, Community Affairs Unit
Scott Solomon	Representing the Dept. City Planning
Anthony Lemma	Representing Assembly Member David Weprin
Casey Lajszky	Representing Assembly Member David Weprin
Anne Marie Boranian	Representing the Office of the Queens Borough President
Megan Chen	Representing Assembly Member Ed Braunstein
Erin Rogers	Representing Assembly Member Nily Rozic
Oswaldo Pereira	Representing the Office of Public Advocate Letitia James
Patrick Jordan	Representing the Office of Public Advocate Letitia James
Kieran Mahoney	Representing Senator Tony Avella
Mike Yon	Representing Council Member Paul Vallone

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Chair, Christine Haider.

The Chair led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Chair asked for a moment of silence in honor of fallen NYPD Detective, Randolph Holder.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

David Kupferberg, urban studies major at Queens College, commented on the results of the Northeast Queens Bus Study.

P.O. Erdman gave the year-to-date crime statistics for 111th Precinct. P.O. Erdman introduced P.O. Galano who replaced Detective Blainey.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the Oct. 5th meeting. There was one correction. The motion was seconded by Edith Basom. The minutes were accepted as corrected.

CORRESPONDENCE

Christine Haider made the following announcements:

There will be a Citizen Preparedness training program for the public at Queensborough Community College on Wednesday, Nov. 4th at 6:00 pm.

Assembly Member David Weprin is collecting clothing and other personal items for veterans until Nov. 6th.

The Dept. of Environmental Protection is holding a public meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 17th, at Queensborough Community College from 6:00 – 8:00 pm for input on the Long Term Control Plan for combined sewer overflow.

Flyers for all these events are on the piano.

Next meeting of the NY Community Aviation roundtable is Tuesday, Nov 17th from 7:00 from 9:00 pm at Queens Borough Hall. The public is invited but only official members will be able to participate and vote. Melvyn Meer will represent the Board.

Mrs. Haider gave a special thanks to Douglas Montgomery for all his efforts in coordinating the Electronic Recycling Event at the Zion Episcopal Church.

Mrs. Haider wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Capital & Expense Budget Committee – Joan Garippa and Steve Newman, Co-Chairs. Mr. Newman explained that a committee meeting was held to discuss Capital and Expense Budget submissions and that an official vote was not taken because there was no quorum. He said that the committee made a recommendation list that was supported by the clear majority present at the meeting. There were no questions or comments. A motion was made to accept the Capital and Expense Budget Priorities. The motion was seconded by Henry Euler. A roll call vote was taken resulting in 28 in favor and 4 opposed (In favor - Asa, Basom, Bind, Cerezo, Claro, DiBenedetto, Donahue, Euler, Ferazzoli, Fierro-Gladwin, Fried, Garippa, Haber, Haider, Halili, James, Jethwani, Lee, Liatto, Meer, Miller, Newman, Palzer, Petallides, Pivawer, Scherer, Sin, Sollano – opposed – Giusetti, Koutsouradis, McEaney, Sriram) The motion carried. Mr. Newman asked the members who were opposed to please state why so they are informed for next year. Mrs. Garippa reminded the committee that this is one of the meetings that attendance is important. She stated that opposing now is too late.

Proposed site selection for the construction of a new 739-seat high school facility at 203-05 32 Avenue – Laura James and Alim Gafar, Co-Chairs. Michael Mirisola, representing the School Construction Authority, reviewed the Notice of Filing pursuant to §1731 of the New York School Construction Authority Act. A notice has been filed for the proposed site selection of Block 6030, Lot 40, and any other property in the immediate vicinity which may be necessary for the proposed project. The proposed school will be an approximately 739-seat high school facility in Community School District No. 26. The proposed site is approximately 54,000 square feet (1.24 acres) of lot area and is located on the north side of 32nd Avenue between 203rd Street and 204th Street. The site is privately owned and occupied by the Bayside Jewish Center. Comments regarding the proposed action are to be submitted to the New York City School Construction Authority at 30-30 Thomson Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101 or by email to sites@nycsca.org. Comments will be accepted until Nov. 20, 2015. Mr. Mirisola stated that high schools in the Borough of Queens are significantly overcrowded and, in particular, high schools in District 26 have the most serious challenges. Mr. Mirisola gave the Enrollment, Capacity and Utilization Report for School Year 2014-2015: Francis Lewis Blvd. HS - 199%, Cardozo HS - 148%, Bayside HS – 161%, Martin Van Buren HS – 75%, Business Tech. Early College HS – 140%, Queens High School of Teaching – 106%. He said that the SCA agrees with CB11's position as noted in their 2016 Statement of District Needs stating that District 26 has become dangerously overcrowded and a new high school needs to be built to relieve the overcrowding. The Bayside Jewish Center was marketed publicly by the owner. The site is adjacent to the Bayside High School's Athletic Field and the site has served as a home to a private school for a number of decades. Mr. Mirisola stated that following the completion of their due diligence, the SCA submitted an offer to the owners, the price was negotiated, an agreement was reached and the offer was accepted. The contract is signed with no scheduled closing date. The closing is contingent upon successful completion of the SCA public approval process.

Education Committee Co-Chair Laura James summarized the joint committee report of October 30, 2015. Ms. James stated that Committee Members asked about studies conducted by the SCA to evaluate new sites. The SCA representative explained that consultants conduct a prescribed environmental impact study which includes evaluation of the groundwater, soil conditions, traffic patterns and public transportation. It was stated that there is no design for the building until the site is fully approved. Reference was made to a site in Whitestone that was rejected by the SCA. The SCA explained that the site has no sewers, water or power and there was no funding to install infrastructure. Ms. James stated that questions were also asked in regard to over-enrollment in the local high schools. Committee members stated that the DOE's Office of Enrollment was assigning too many students to the three high schools in District 26. Also discussed was on-site parking and the potential use or type of school that the DOE could consider. The SCA indicated that many former Catholic school buildings are being used by the City. Residents at the meeting asked about construction damage and noise. A committee motion was made to approve the SCA's proposal to build a new high school of approximately 739-seats in School District 26, located at 203-05 32 Avenue, Block 6030, Lot 40. The joint committees voted on the motion which was unanimously defeated.

Senator Avella spoke against the purchase of the BJC. He cited the suburban nature of the area and the decrease in the quality of life and property values should the school be built. He is concerned that shadowing from the school would negatively affect the adjacent homes. Senator Avella handed out a statement objecting to the school acquisition process and he questioned the legality of the contract signed between the BJC and the SCA. He stated that he has FOILED all documents related to this contract.

There were 16 registered speakers, 14 stated their objection and 2 stated that they were in favor. Mrs. Haider extended the questions from the public for 10 minutes. Some reasons for opposition to the SCA's proposal were traffic congestion, the negative impact to the community and how building the proposed

school is not the solution to relieve overcrowding in the high schools in District 26. Two speakers spoke in favor stating that a specialized school is needed in the District. Mr. Mirisola addressed a question raised by a speaker in regard to the use of eminent domain by the SCA to require properties adjacent to the school. Mr. Mirisola stated that eminent domain is not part of this proposal. He had read standard language from the Notice of Filing. Senator Avella requested that the Board Chair, Christine Haider ask everyone opposed to the school to please stand. There was an estimate of 176 people in the audience that stood up. Mrs. Haider asked Mr. Mirisola to answer some questioned raised. Mr. Mirisola stated that the high schools in the Borough of Queens are over utilized, students are not bused, and however, students can apply to any high school in the City. He said that if the Community Board was to vote against the school, the SCA would not withdraw their proposal at this time.

Ms. James made a motion to approve the proposal of a high school at the BJC site. The motion was seconded by Alim Gafar. Discussion period followed. Mel Meer spoke in opposition to the proposal. He stated that the DOE is overcrowding the high schools in District 26 with students from all over the borough and even Manhattan and Brooklyn. Students in the area do not want to go to the local high schools because they are too crowded. Mr. Meer, in his opinion, said a new high school is not needed, what is needed is relief from the overcrowding that exists in the local high schools. Mr. Meer spoke in regard to the proposed high school site in Whitestone and how Council Member Vallone had spoken in opposition to that site. He concluded stating that “stuffing” 739-1000, out-of-district students into a building that is not large enough for a fully, self-sustaining high school is why the Bayside community is opposed. Janet McEaney spoke in opposition to the proposal and how eminent domain can be used. She made reference to a NY Times article where DOE Deputy Chancellor Elizabeth Rose reported “If you look at the total enrollment in all of our buildings in aggregate and compare that to the total capacity of all of our buildings in aggregate, there are, in fact, enough seats. The challenge is, not all of those seats are in exactly where we would want them to be.” Steve Newman reviewed enrollment capacity for elementary and middle schools school’s in District 26 to show that more space will be needed for high school seats. Mohan Jethwani stated that the Board is not against education but this is not the site for a High School. Steve Behar stated he was opposed to the school and the SCA site selection process. Anthony Koutsouradis and Zion Halili said that residents should reach out to Council Member Vallone and voice their opinion. Paul DiBenedetto stated that students want to come to District 26 high schools because they are good schools. He said that the money should be spent in areas that need help. A roll call vote was taken resulting in 1 in-favor, 31 opposed and 1 present (In-favor - Newman – Opposed – Basom, Behar, Cerezo, Claro, DiBenedetto, Donahue, Euler, Ferazzoli, Fierro-Gladwin, Fried, Gafar, Garippa, Giusetti, Haider, Haili, James, Jethwani, Koutsouradis, Liatto, McEaney, Meer, Miller, Palzer, Petallides, Pivawer, Scherer, Sin, Sollano, Sriram, Yagudaev – Present - Lee) The motion was denied.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made and seconded by Henry Euler. The meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.