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Borough President

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Joseph Russo
Chairperson

Matthew Cruz
District Manager

Executive Board Meeting
May 16, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

Present: J. Russo, T. Accomando, R. Bieder, P. Cantillo, C. Isales, M. J. Musano, L. Popovic, N. Rosario

Absent: Taisha Chambers, Terrence Franklin and Angela Torres (all appeared virtually)

Chairperson Russo commenced the Executive Board at 7:00pm with the pledge of allegiance followed by two moments of silence for Board Member James McQuade and the victims of the Buffalo mass shooting.

Chairperson Russo discussed last Wednesday's Borough President's program honoring the longest serving members of the community board. Our very own Chairperson Joseph Russo, the late James McQuade and Colonel Chin. We congratulate them and are grateful for their many years of service.

District Manager Cruz announced the final arrangements for James McQuade:

- Wednesday/Thursday: 2pm-8pm at Schuyler Hill Funeral Home
- Service on Friday at 11:00am at St. Francis Church*

*All CB#10 staff will be at the funeral so the office will be closed for about two (2) hours while at the funeral.

Chairperson Russo discussed this the upcoming Public Hearing/Full Board Meeting on Thursday, May 19th at 7pm at St. Benedict's Church. Specifically, the Housing and Zoning Committee's resolution to disapprove the Bruckner up-zoning proposal.

Chairperson Russo explained that we would be a little more pro-active. Board members should feel free to vote in favor of the proposal and express their opinions. As leaders we all must help people to be respectful and prevent the public from behaving unruly. Moreover, we should encourage our fellow board members to do the same. District Manager Cruz asked how long we should allot for the public portion of the meeting and Chairperson Russo responded 45 minutes but we could play it by ear and requested a headcount from DM Cruz of how many people requested to speak. R. Bieder suggested public speaking portion mention highlights only. DM Cruz stated that much of the public provided a form letter with signatures. R. Bieder mentioned re-institution a sergeant-at-arms to help maintain order. T. Accomando observed that the 45 only provided two officers who remained in the back and left altogether when the meeting started. Bishop N. Rosario re-iterated that police presence is required at this public hearing. R. Bieder suggested announcing that people will be asked to leave if they behave unruly or disrupt the meeting.

Board Member Janine Thomas-Smith appeared before the Executive Board to discuss her concerns about the upcoming full board meeting. Member Thomas-Smith expressed feeling intimidated, threatened and unsafe at the last full board meeting. She mentioned hearing comments from the public that members who didn't vote against the proposal would be removed from the Board. She further expressed that she did not feel comfortable speaking at the last full board. She stated that we have responsibility to ensure people's safety and to make sure that people are respected as we represent the Mayor and the Borough President as well as the community and that we must set the tone for the meetings. Chairperson Russo expressed appreciation for her input. T. Accomando asked J. Thomas-Smith if she wanted to speak at the last full board meeting to which she replied that she did and that it was the second time, during her tenure, that she felt unsafe speaking or expressing her opinion at a full board meeting. T. Accomando asked when was the first time to which J. Thomas-Smith responded that she didn't recall and shouldn't have to explain where or when. No one should feel fearful about expressing their opinion or voting against the majority. Chairperson Russo stated that it's not up for debate...no member of the board or public should be made to

feel intimidated or threatened at a board meeting. L. Popovic asked that we make sure there is a police presence. J. Thomas-Smith stated that the public should've been controlled better. R. Bieder, L. Popovic and Chairperson Russo agreed. We need the entire Board's help to control/manage the crowd. P. Cantillo suggested we must notify the police that they have to step in when people become unruly and warn the public that they will be escorted out if they become disruptive. C. Isales suggested that the comments be kept under 3 minutes perhaps 2 minutes or less.

J. Thomas-Smith left the Executive Board at 7:20pm.

P. Cantillo asked if the developers would be presenting again. DM Cruz asked if we wanted them to speak. Chairperson Russo said yes but no more than 10 minutes since they gave a full presentation at last month's Full Board meeting. We will start the meeting with the presentation by the developers, then public comments. DM Cruz said we would allow those to speak who haven't spoken previously. Chairperson Russo mentioned that he and DM Cruz were walking around trying to control the crowd when the meeting became unruly, and the acoustics and the speakers were bad and that contributed to the situation. L. Popovic asked who the person was who spoke in favor of the up-zoning proposal at last week's Housing and Zoning meeting and was he a member of the community. R. Bieder stated that anyone was allowed to speak at our meetings. A. Torres mentioned that she was also approached and felt threatened at the last Full Board meeting and the people threatened to get her off the Board. A. Torres also suggested that we should clarify to the public that we are not the final say in this proposal and that the misinformation is adding to the drama, fear, and concerns to wit: some members of the community have asked if they should sell their homes. T. Chambers commented that three (3) board members were very rude, disrespectful and incited the audience. She also mentioned that the presenter was merely an employee and was treated very disrespectfully. She suggested that they be spoken to prior to the next Full Board. She also mentioned that she spoke with CCM Velasquez who mentioned concern that the members of community were against the proposal but failed to suggest solutions; that the city council has money to use and the developers came up with ideas. We need new or different ideas to give the City Council something to negotiate with. And, further that the three CCM members should meet with the community leaders and come up with ideas. Chairperson Russo said that the time to do that was a year ago and not at this upcoming meeting and that it is up to the CCMs to have those meetings. Chairperson Russo re-iterated that the community was not opposed to development just up-zoning. P. Cantillo mentioned that CCM Salamanca who is the head of the Economic development committee had a meeting about this proposal. M. J. Musano mentioned that the BIDs and community leaders have been meetings about this and have been educating the community about up-zoning and have met with the developers repeatedly prior to these meetings and have educated the community about the ULURP process many, many times. R. Bieder stated that this upcoming meeting was not the time or place to start these conversations again.

Chairperson Russo said the meeting would start with the presentation, followed by public comment and then the vote on the up-zoning which would begin with the Executive Committee, then the Housing and Zoning committee members then the rest of Board members. Chairperson Russo mentioned that when we voted for the road diet proposal, most everyone voted against the proposal and then at the meeting half of the Board changed their mind when we conducted the vote alphabetically. The presumption being that the members were pressured by hearing how other were voting. T. Chambers suggested that Housing and Zoning Chair start the vote by mentioning that the committee voted to approve the resolution to reject the up-zoning proposal. C. Isales argued that People have the right to change their minds and that arranging the vote in the way Chairperson Russo was proposing deviated from the norm, gave the appearance of impropriety and was an attempt to also sway the vote in a certain direction. C. Isales also expressed concerns about the tone and tenor of the last meeting and the behavior of certain Board members. C. Isales suggested that if certain Board members were proponents, advocates of and held a personal, vested interest in the proposal and wanted to speak at the public portion of meetings that they should not sit with Board but rather sit with the audience, again to avoid the appearance of impropriety and not hold undue influence with the public and appear or represent that they are speaking for the Board. At which point P. Cantillo asked that we vote on the issue of how to take the vote. R. Bieder agreed that to change the way we normally take the vote, alphabetically, raises more questions with the public. L. Popovic asked if that choice was at the discretion of the Chair. R. Bieder confirmed that it was but that it gives the appearance of impropriety and does not inspire confidence in the Community Board process. Bishop N. Rosario expressed

that we shouldn't change it until after this upcoming Full Board vote. Chairperson Russo stated that we would inform everyone that the Housing and Zoning Committee resolved that we would reject the up-zoning proposal and decided to keep the voting alphabetical. L. Popovic asked at what point would the public speak and suggested maybe after the developer's presentation. Chairperson Russo asked what elected officials would be there. DM Cruz stated CCM Velazquez. Chairperson decided that we would begin the developer's presentation, City Planning, then CCM Velazquez, then the Board, the public portion and then the vote. P. Cantillo asked if someone would speak with the three(3) members prior to Thursday's Full Board meeting.

Chairperson Russo discussed the rest of the agenda for the Full Board Meeting on Thursday, May 19, 2022: Public Hearing on the Up-zoning resolution, presentation, public portion and vote. Afterwards we take a 5 minute recess and then the Full Board meeting, public portion, resolutions and the votes on the resolutions.am-4pm

DM Cruz asked if the CB #10 office and staff could implement summer hours of 8am-4pm as opposed to the normal 9am-5pm. The Executive Board voted unanimously to approve summer hours.

A. Torres reported that all the recently laid-off superintendents and deputy superintendents had to re-apply for their positions and that part of that process was appearing at Town Hall meetings to answer questions from the community. School Board District #8 would conduct their town Hall this Friday, May 20th at 7:15pm on zoom. Members of the community could submit their questions through the chat. Chairperson Russo asked what District #8 encompassed and when will the other educational districts within CB#10 be conducting theirs? A. Torres would have that information on Tuesday, May 17th and that the process would be done in the next week or so because the new superintendents and deputy superintendents start June 15th. R. Bieder stated that Cb#10 encompasses School Board Districts # 8 and 11. DM Cruz will confirm and provide us with a list.

R. Bieder brought up that we need to educate the new community board members on what "New Business" is. He has noticed that it is being used by new community board members to bring up any and all grievances. He mentioned that any New business has to be placed on the agenda three(3) days prior to the meeting. DM Cruz stated that eh would consult our parliamentarian. Chairperson Russo clarified that "New Business" is limited to issues that are actionable.

At 7:56pm, Chairperson Russo asked if there was a motion to close. T. Chambers made a motion to close which was seconded by L. Popovic. The Executive Board meeting closed at 7:57 by vote of adjournment.

R. Bieder made a motion to move to the Executive session which was approved. DM Cruz left the meeting and the Executive session began at 7:57pm.

L. Popovic moved to close the Executive session which was seconded by T. Accomando at 8:00pm. Motion to adjourn the Executive Board meeting was made at 8:01pm and was seconded by R. Bieder. The executive board meeting was adjourned at 8:01pm.