

The City of New York

Brooklyn Community Board 15



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DISTRICT MANAGER

Monthly Board Meeting - Minutes

June 23, 2020 Webex Conference

The meeting was called to order at 6:04pm, by Chairperson Theresa Scavo. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chair Scavo opened the floor to Stanley Cho from the New York City Parks Department who was presenting the redesign of Kelly Park's comfort station. He explained their goals for using the \$1.4 million of Mayoral money was to make the comfort station ADA compliant by increasing the size of the bathrooms, increase natural light and ventilation by adding a window and two roof top sky lights, improve energy efficiency by adding a zinc roof and renovating exterior facade. The new design will provide 4 larger stalls for the women's side with updated sinks and a baby changing station and two stalls, with 3 urinals for the men's side with new sinks and a baby changing station. They are taking down existing walls to largen the two bathrooms and make Park's Staff quarters slightly smaller. With the pending park upgrades to Kelly Park itself, they are hoping to make the new comfort station more welcoming, safer and user friendly for park goers. The start date is estimated to be Fall of 2021. Questions from the floor asked why so expensive, the plumbing and building already exist. Board members asked if a budget break-down could be provided. It would take time which would further delay the project and they are seeking a letter of support asap. ADA compliancy was questioned if a wheelchair user could maneuver themselves into a stall. Parks stated the design was approved by their ADA compliancy officer. How long till completed? Parks stated they expect within 12 months. Someone asked what the plans were for the basement? It was stated that the updated utilities would be housed in there and they plan to shore up any concrete beams that provide support. A motion was made by Alan Bendel to send a letter of support which was seconded by Victor Shine. The vote was 39 yes, 2 no and 1 abstention for cause.

Chair Scavo welcomed the next presenter, Dr. Neil Vora from the New York City's Health Department who is heading up New York's Test and Trace Corps. Dr. Vora spoke about his 10 years of credentials and how he has been

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with the Department of Health for 5 years. He stated his dad was saved from smallpox back in India thanks to help of a track and trace program they developed in the 1970's. He understands in New York City this is a large undertaking and they will face challenges. He also believes that New Yorkers lowered the curve and they will unite again as they have in other challenges such as Superstorm Sandy to a curtail this pandemic. He encouraged everyone to get tested, 5 days after being exposed to a large gathering and sooner if you start to exhibit symptoms. The goal is to suppress Covid-19 through interrupting chains of transmissions. You may be tested on multiple occasions. If you test positive you will receive a call from a tracer, they will educate you on Covid-19 and ascertain where you were or who you may have been exposed to. They can provide you a hotel room if you are unable to isolate, food and medicine should you require assistance. They will check on you to see how you are feeling. They will let you know when it is safe for you to leave quarantine. The testing will not inquire about your immigration status, so anyone is eligible. He provided a list of testing sites in and near the district. He said a tracer # always begins with a 212 540 or 212 242 so don't think it's a spam or scam number please pick up the call. If we work together with honesty and clarity, we can help suppress this disease. Questions about tracking people through a phone program were asked. Dr. Vora said although such a program exists, they are not using that in New York City. Another question was asked why something wasn't done sooner? lives were lost. Dr. Vora stated that pandemics run a certain course where they accelerate at alarming speeds, they begin and end. In the beginning the numbers way exceeded what was traceable. We are at a phase now where such a program can be successfully put into place to suppress this pandemic. He is counting on New Yorkers to once again do the right thing. Questions about how you trace a person who attended a protest with countless strangers? He stated we do not question if you were at a protest, that is your right to attend. So, no they can't trace but get tested 5 days later so we can learn if you are positive to isolate and stop the spread. Last question was about children, can they be tested too? He said absolutely. We want to get them attended to immediately should they exhibit any signs. We want to hear from the public, and from experts, we want to evolve to learn to better serve New Yorkers and suppress Covid-19 until a cure is found.

GENERAL BOARD MEETING:

PUBLIC SESSION:

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Chair Scavo welcomed Senator Andrew Gournardes to speak, the Senator had another meeting to get to, but he said his office was working remotely handling calls about Covid-19, unemployment issues, disseminating 50,000 meals to those experiencing food struggles at this time. He understands fireworks have become a public nuisance, he's experienced it himself and knows that the Mayor is forming a task force with the police and FDNY to put an end to this unlawful activity by cutting off the supply chain. There have been discussions concerning an uptick in crime and he is meeting regular with the police to ascertain and stay on top of any issues. His office will reopen on a limited basis in the next week or so and they will be taking in office complaints, but in the interim continue to email or call his office. Reeves will be staying on at the meeting so reach out to her with any issues.

Chair Scavo invited any one from the Public who would like to speak:

Joseph McCarthy with his neighbor Mr. Wong reside on East 29th Street, btw Avenue U and Avenue T are having difficulty with 2901 Avenue U, which was once a Telco Parking Lot, being utilized as a tree stump removal business. They operate woodchippers and chainsaws from 7:00am to 11:00pm at night. These machines run on diesel fuel. It's an illegal business and 311 calls are being ignored. Mr. McCarthy was asked to email the Board Office with all the complaint numbers and any information he can provide so that the Board can pursue his issue further to resolve.

Reeves Eisen from Senator Gournardes' Office said hello and that the Senator basically covered everything but to please call their office with any concerns or issues at 718 238-6044 or visit their website.

Glenda Silva from Borough President Eric Adam's Office sent her condolences to anyone who may have lost a loved one during the pandemic. They are still working remotely but trying to triage any issues or concerns that come into the office. They have acquired quite a lot of PPE so anyone requesting masks, or sanitizer should reach out to his office she will share a link with the Board Office. They have received 800 requests and will get them out to the requesters as they are approved by the Borough President. They have had to cancel events but she will also send a link to the Borough President's monthly newsletter so you can follow what he and his staff have been busy working on during the pandemic.

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Leonid Markh, representing Assemblyman Cymbrowitz's Office announced the office has re-opened but it is by appointment only and you must wear a mask to enter. Please call 718 743-4078.

Mariyah Markh from the Mayor's Office thanked Theresa and Laura for arranging the Department of Health's Dr. Vora to speak about the Test and Trace program. She would like to eliminate any stigma to Covid and encourages everyone to get tested, especially if you are experiencing any symptoms. She mentioned, that Senator Gournardes, already discussed the Mayor's task force on fireworks. We have entered Phase 2 of re-opening for those who aren't clear on what businesses can reopen she can provide you with a link for more information. She puts out a daily email blast, taking the weekends off unless something important needs to be shared, you can ask to sign up to receive it by emailing her at mmarkh@cityhall.nyc.gov

Yehuda Shupper representing Assembly Member Helene Weinstein stated the office is still working remotely. However, they are planning to open safely for the staff and public within the next 2 weeks. They will probably open like Assembly Member Cymbrowitz' office by appointment only. Currently they have amassed supplies of PPE and are offering them to local organizations who can arrange to pick them up through their office. Helene is doing well having recovered from Covid and has attended several Covid distribution events in the community.

Sam Chuprik representing Congressman Hakeem Jeffries office stated they are still working remotely, but that the Congressman is working on a third Town Hall most likely to discuss police reform. No details have been officially released yet, but probably by tomorrow further details will be emailed out.

Nancy Lulu from Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez's office stated their office is open and they have hosted multiple food distribution events. To report quality of life issues, call their hotline # 718 250-2340.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A Roll Call Attendance was taken by Chair Scavo; with a Quorum present, Chair Scavo asked for the adoption of the Board Meeting Minutes of May 19, 2020.

A motion to adopt the May 19, 2020 minutes was made by Howard Katz and seconded by Robert Gevertzman.

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Chair Scavo called for the first Committee Report:

Environmental Committee – Committee Chair Raisa Chernina reported on a meeting held on May 26, 2020 to discuss upgrades to the Coney Island Treatment Plant located on Knapp Street. The Project summary stipulates that in partnership with the New York Power Authority, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) proposed to upgrade the facility's existing engine generators with energy efficient ones. The new system will maximize use of the facility's digester gas generation as a source of standby power in the event of a power outage. In addition to the new engines, the scope includes construction of an addition to the Pump and Blower Building to house the upgraded switchgear system, reconstruction of the guard house and construction of digester gas conditioning system adjacent to the Old Powerhouse, allowing the reuse of gas more efficiently. Lastly, restoration of the perimeter landscape on the east side of Knapp Street where it will be disturbed by construction. The project cost is \$125 million dollars. The estimated construction start is 2022, ending is estimated to be 2026. During construction, standby power will be provided by three interim generators staged in the parking lot for an estimated two years. The Committee voted to support this project but with the condition they set the digesters back away from the proposed street-lined fence and utilize mature vegetation to better conceal this machinery that appeared to be visible from the street in their sketches to avoid defacing or vandalism.

Nomination Committee – Committee Chair Leonid Markh stated the Nominating Committee met online and in accordance with our April 21, 2020 Board Meeting vote they recommended to keep the existing officers in place.

For Chair the Nominating Committee's recommendation is Theresa Scavo, he asked if anyone from the floor would like to come forward, with no one stepping forward, Secretary Allen Popper cast a ceremonial vote in support of Theresa Scavo as Chairperson. Congratulations Theresa Scavo.

For First Vice- Chairperson the Nominating Committee's recommendation is Ronald Tawil, he asked if anyone from the floor would like to come forward, with no one stepping forward, Secretary Allen Popper cast a ceremonial vote in support of Ronald Tawil as First-Vice Chairperson. Congratulations Ronald Tawil.

For Second-Vice Chairperson Nominating Committee's recommendation is Raisa Chernina, he asked if anyone from the floor would like to come forward, with no one stepping forward, Secretary Allen Popper cast a

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ceremonial vote in support of Raisa Chernina as Second Vice-Chairperson. Congratulations Raisa Chernina.

For Treasurer the Nominating Committee's recommendation is Jack Erdos, he asked if anyone from the floor would like to come forward, with no one stepping forward, Secretary Allen Popper cast a ceremonial vote in support of Jack Erdos as Treasurer. Congratulations Jack Erdos.

For Secretary the Nominating Committee's recommendation is Allen Popper, he asked if anyone from the floor would like to come forward, with no one stepping forward, Jack Erdos Treasurer cast a ceremonial vote in support of Allen Popper as Secretary. Congratulations Allen Popper.

For Executive Committee the Nominating Committee's recommendation is Mitchell Shpelfogel, Edmond Dweck, Howard Katz, Robert Gevertzman, Ed Chalom, Morris Harary. Ira Teper, Francis Chick Pallotta, Pearl Siegelman, and Richard Warner and he asked if anyone from the floor would like to come forward, with no one stepping forward, Secretary Allen Popper cast a ceremonial vote in support of all. Congratulations to all.

Parks Committee – Committee Chair Al Smaldone discussed a Parks Committee Meeting held on May 20, 2020 to discuss the upgrades at Kelly Park for \$10 million dollars funded by Senator Simcha Felder. The park is being developed to be an inclusive park with ADA features to accommodate everyone. It's highly interactive with natural features. It will be State of the Art when completed and is quite frankly one of the best Park's projects I have seen come before this Board. My Committee voted in favor and I am glad tonight you voted in favor of the upgrades to the comfort station. Having this new Park without upgraded bathrooms would not have made sense.

Public Safety Committee – Committee Chair Chick Pallotta stated the Committee met online May 21, 2020 in attendance was the 61st Precinct Captain, Gaby Celiba. Based on the seven major crime complaint categories, the year to date comp stats looking at May 11-17, 2019 as compared to May 11-17, 2020 shows an uptick of 8.2%. With the Pandemic and Quarantine more people are home, burglaries are down almost 30% but with more cars in the driveway grand larceny on cars is up 700%, no cars stolen in 2019 as opposed to 7 in 2020 during the same 28-day period. Social distancing and not wearing a mask are handled on a case by case basis, so it's not zero tolerance. It's at the police's discretion. To satisfy a question asked by Board Member Morris Harary, at an earlier meeting, regarding statistics of reoffenders regarding bail reform. CompStat does not address that category..

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It would be too time-consuming an undertaking to compile that data from each precinct. It is evident that the dramatic crime increase has been impacted by bail reform. Recently it was reported that a man punched a senior woman, unprovoked, knocking her down to the ground after being just recently released. This was his 100th event of acting violently in public and being arrested, but because of bail reform again he's released. He ended by stating he whole heartedly believes that New York City still has the best police force.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: Chair Scavo dissolved the Nominating Committee.

Board Member Morris Harary spoke about the New York City Police Department and his concerns. He feels retraining and sensitivity training are needed, but defunding has our police disheartened, despondent, fearful and not as committed to enforce the law. We need to push back against the effect this is having on our police force. If they are rendered ineffective, it will be a calamity here in the city. We need to stand with our police and not remain silent.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Edmond Dweck and seconded by Al Smaldone. The meeting was adjourned at 7:56p.m.

This is not a verbatim account of the meeting but a synopsis of the main points.