

The City of New York
Brooklyn Community Board 15



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LAURA SINGER
DISTRICT MANAGER

Monthly Board Meeting - Minutes

May 25, 2021 Webex Conference 6:00pm

The meeting was called to order at 6:01pm, by Chairperson Theresa Scavo.
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chairperson Scavo reminded everyone that we are not entirely out of the woods with the Covid Pandemic and asked everyone to please take a moment of silence to keep Board Members who have been impacted by Covid in their thoughts and prayers. She then welcomed back Board Member Jay Lieberman, who was severely affected by Covid, but thankfully now on the mend.

Public Hearing:

Chairperson Scavo introduced Mr. Ronnie Tawil, Chair of the Zoning Committee who would run this part of the meeting:

Mr. Tawil explained the procedure for the Public Hearing and proceeded to call the presenters from both the MTA and City Planning to discuss the proposed Zoning Text Amendments before the Board:

Presenter Andy Ingelsby from the MTA spoke on Zoning for Accessibility (ZFA) regarding the implementation of Subway Station Elevators. Mr. Ingelsby explained through a PowerPoint presentation how New Yorkers would benefit from more accessible stations. He shared that of the 8.4 Million NYC residents there are 550,000 Residents with an Ambulatory Disability, 500,000 Children under 5 and 1.2 Million Residents over 65+ who require more accessible train stations. He shared those numbers continue to grow in NYC, nearly double that at 19.2% from 2005-2015, of the national average which is 7.5%, as people tend to age in place in NYC.

The MTA 2020-2024 under its' Capital Plan has dedicated more than \$5 Billion to making 77 Stations accessible, with the goal of having no subway rider more than 2 stations away from an accessible station. He assured us that Zoning Proposal would not eliminate the MTA's Capital Projects but work

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hand in hand in assisting them come to fruition. This Zoning proposal will offer much needed guidance and allowance on implementing where these elevators could now be placed throughout the transit system. Currently finding space in and around stations for elevator shafts has been particularly challenging due to, narrow platforms, limited entry and exit passages, highly complex utility infrastructures, narrow sidewalks, limited clearance between buildings and stations, with most stations requiring more than one elevator to be accessible. This proposal will create a Citywide Zoning Framework that creates more opportunities to increase accessibility in the transit system. This Zoning regulation will support the development of transit improvements, such as elevators and new entrances, improve street and sidewalk environment by moving entrances off sidewalks and help align private development with station accessibility through better configured stations. It will allow for Easement Provisions, a requirement when a station is adjacent to a site with limited areas for future accessible access to allow for an agreement with a property owner and transit to negotiate for an easement right to build an elevator. Zoning relief for easement use, may allow an owner more floor area and open space, height and setback and parking. In most zoning districts, a requirement for developments on sites of at least 5,000 sf and within 50 feet of a mass transit station is when zoning relief would apply.

Questions were asked about how commercial establishments may be impacted, using Brighton Beach as an example. It is something that will need to be studied further. It will be looked at and addressed on a case by case basis and the MTA will place the need for safe access and the safety of their riders above all else. A discussion on maintenance of these elevators and will there be a dedicated repair division? The MTA will take on the responsibilities of maintenance and repair. Who is paying for these elevators? The MTA will be footing the bill. It was mentioned our Community is a storm evacuation zone and will future pandemic concerns be given consideration in regard to building these elevators. The MTA will follow all necessary protocols for the safety of the public and its ridership.

A motion to approve was made by Ronnie Tawil and seconded by Ed Chalom. A committee vote was taken 10 yes and 1 abstention. The motion passed the committee. A full board vote would take place later in Executive Session.

Mr. Tawil called upon the next presenter from City Planning, Katherine Richard who spoke on the Citywide Hotel Special Permit Zoning Text Amendment. She stated the proposed text amendment would create a special permit for hotel development citywide. It is intended to create a consistent

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framework for hotel development and ensure that hotels do not negatively affect the surrounding area. She stated from 2009-2019, NYC experienced a record growth in the tourism industry and hotel pipeline. Unfortunately, now deeply impacted with the Covid Pandemic. She reiterated that Zoning districts, under this Amendment, where hotels are currently allowed will require a special permit for any new hotels and conversions. The proposed citywide special permit will replace existing special district special permits.

Questions from the floor, a statement was made that this amendment is pandering to the Hotel Association as a political favor by the current administration, so they will now know, with the extra hurdles being put in place, where a hotel is being built, so they can strong-arm a developer to use only union staff. A statement of concern about how hotels are being used now to house the homeless, causing unnecessary stress and problems for communities. One size does not fit all, and the outer boroughs are not Manhattan. Some spoke out in favor stating that this special permit will now give the community a voice and a say as to where these hotels are placed in the community. Lastly, the issue of neighborhood character was brought up and if City Planning clearly defined that term it would eliminate a lot of the zoning issues communities as a whole face, such as this Hotel one.

A Committee Vote was taken, 6 yes, and 5 no. The motion passed the committee. A full board vote would take place in Executive Session.

Ronnie Tawil introduced Katherine Richard again from City Planning who presented the third and last Proposed Text Amendment the Health & Fitness Citywide Text Amendment. She stated Gyms, Spas and Licensed Massage Spas are desirable community amenities. Currently, a special permit is required to open these businesses almost anywhere in NYC. She added that these establishments have significantly changed over the past 40+ years since the special permit was created, but despite being recognized as valued neighborhood services, our current zoning creates a major regulatory barrier for these small businesses which can be very costly in lawyer's fees. The permit often takes 6 months to be granted, limiting opportunities for entrepreneurship and access that promotes health. These uses are not allowed along many retail streets that permit other retail businesses such as restaurants, salons, and drug stores. The current requirements prevent desired businesses, such as these, from moving into local retail streets where vacancy are high and expected to rise. This proposal will remove the special permit requirement. Small gyms and spas will be treated similarly to a range of local retail stores such as drug stores, restaurants, and salons. Higher-impact gyms, such as those with significant weights or exercise equipment, will be required to submit documentation to the Department of Buildings certifying they are designed to sufficiently reduce noise and vibration before being issued a

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Certificate of Occupancy. Low-impact activities such as yoga, will not be required to demonstrate compliance with additional noise and vibration standards.

Questions: Concerns were discussed about how these establishments seem to pop up now sort of haphazardly. Noise concerns were discussed. The Board discussed that it was better to have a say as to where these businesses appear in the community.

A motion was made to approve by Ronnie Tawil and seconded by Ed Chalom.

A Committee Vote was taken, 0 yes, and 11 no. The motion did not pass the committee. A full board vote would take place in Executive Session.

Mr. Tawil called upon the next presenter Eric Palatnik, attorney for ULURP # C 2002203 ZMK and N 200204 ZRK – Sheepshead Nursing and Rehabilitation Center located at 2840 Knapp Street Rezoning – for a 5,096 square foot enlargement for a Dialysis Center on site, request from an existing R5 to a proposed R6 to accommodate.

Mr. Palatnik stated they are looking to legalize an error made in 1969 when developing this site. They want to build an in-house dialysis center onsite and eliminate the need to transport patients elsewhere. This project will be on the Brigham Street side and will alleviate transportation vehicles currently on its Knapp Street side. They are also looking to create an additional 20 parking spots to accommodate the dialysis staff and minimize their impact on the residential parking in the community.

Questions from the floor: Why legalize it now? The answer is they want to make it legal having recently caught the error and having identified the need to construct a Dialysis Center onsite will require a proper Certificate of Occupancy to operate. Another question brought up that during a preliminary discussion, regarding this property by changing the zoning designation this property owner may flip the property and gain a large financial advantage to build a much larger building. The Zoning Committee requested a deed restriction so that the property would remain at the size it is with the dialysis addition. Mr. Palatnik was asked to include a deed restriction and the Board's approval would be contingent on that clause.

A motion was made to approve by Ronnie Tawil with the deed restriction on the building's height in place and seconded by Robert Gevertzman.

A Committee Vote was taken, 11 yes, and 1 no. The motion passed the committee. A full board vote would take place in Executive Session.

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PUBLIC SESSION:

Chair Scavo called upon guest speakers:

Debra Greif stated that the Brooklyn Developmental Disabilities Regional Office's (BDDRO) local Office for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), currently located at 888 Fountain Avenue will be relocating to 750 Vandelia Avenue to accommodate a new building that will provide affordable housing for people with disabilities on June 1, 2021.

Evan Burr representing Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams' office sent greetings. He stated that it is Asian-American Pacific Islander Heritage Month and that Borough Hall is sponsoring a virtual event and all are welcome to attend. He provided the information in the chat:

<https://www.brooklyn-usa.org/bbh-virtual-events/>

He wished everyone a safe and Happy Memorial Day Weekend.

Michael Benjamin from Senator Persaud's Office sent Greetings from the Senator and asked everyone to stay vigilant in regard to Covid and get vaccinated. He stated the Senator has an ongoing e-waste disposal program going on, Fridays at her District Office from 2pm-5pm, located at 1222 East 96th Street. If you wish to call ahead or for any reason the office number is 718 649-7653. Please restrict your items to common household e-waste such as standard sized televisions and computer monitors. Please do not drop off bulk items such as major appliances such as washing machines, dryers, or refrigerators. He stated please stay well!

Reeves Eisen from Senator Gournardes' office stated the Legislative Session will be coming to an end on June 11th. The Senator is working to pass legislation he introduced to combat excessive noise from drag-racers and other motorists who tamper with vehicle mufflers and exhaust symptoms to make loud popping noises. The bill, known as Stop Loud and Excessive Exhaust Pollution (SLEEP), would increase fines for excessive noise using detection devices, similar to traffic cameras to catch culprits and issuing violations via mail without the need for a police officer. The Senator is sponsoring neighborhood clean-ups, you can call the office at 718 238-6044 to volunteer or make suggestions. He is also working on summer events, such as the annual concerts, which will resume late July on Wednesday and Sundays in Marine Park, and Yoga in the Park.

Sergey Chuprik sent greetings Comptroller Scott Stringer's office. He mentioned the Comptroller's reports can be found on their website. He spoke about a budgetary report on Fiscal Year 2021 with the Comptroller's recommendations is available now. He also stated the Comptroller found that

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New York City was short-changed out of \$2 million in ventilator equipment it acquired during the height of the pandemic, but never received.

Stephannia Cleaton sent greetings from Kingsborough Community College President, Dr. Claudia V. Schrader. She wished everyone a Happy Memorial Day weekend. She shared that Kingsborough will be holding its' Virtual Graduation, online on June 12 and a tuition fundraiser program with prominent featured guests on June 24th.

Yehuda Schupper, Chief of Staff, for Assemblywoman Helene Weinstein stated they are almost back to regular office operations and are seeing constituents but prefer that an appointment is made first. They have had several meetings with the Department of Transportation and have made their opposition clear to the proposed bike lane planned for Emmons Avenue. The Assemblywoman feels the area is too congested and the proposed loss of parking to the community is too great a sacrifice. With the opening of Brigham Park adding to the mix it is not a safe area to place a bike lane. Her office has asked them to look at alternative streets for the proposed bike lane to connect to Sheepshead Bay.

Eileen O' Brien sent greetings from Councilmember Alan Maisel .The Councilman is having an E-Waste Event on Friday May 28, from 2pm-5pm at his district office located at 2424 Ralph Avenue. She encouraged everyone to remember the significance of Memorial Day while barbecuing this weekend and honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Lenny Markh, Chief of Staff for Assemblyman Steven Cymbrowitz, stated the Assemblyman sent Greetings. He spoke about the 2.4 Billion Rental Assistance Relief Bill that the Assemblyman helped to pass and that applications will be available for submissions on June 1st. The website to apply is being administered through the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). Their website is www.otda.ny.gov They can assist with up to 12 months in rent arrears and possibly a few months more. Lenny added that the Assemblyman was also in contact with DHS about the proposed homeless shelter at 100 Neptune Avenue and DHS is actively looking for an alternate site. They will keep us updated with any new information, as it becomes available.

Matthew Pitt, Deputy Chief of Staff for Council Member Farah Louis sent greeting for the Council Member for District 45. Mr. Pitt stated the Councilwoman with respect to the Month of Ramadan organized an event to commemorate Eid Mubarak to acknowledge our city's wonderful and diverse Muslim Community and their contributions. This event brought together leaders of all faiths sending a strong message of unity. He stated our office is located at 1434 Flatbush Avenue and can be reached at 718 629-2900. Our

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Legislative Office is located at 250 Broadway in NYC. You can sign up for our e-newsletter by texting CMFARAHLOUIS to 22828.

Nancy Lulu from Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez's office welcomed Board Member Jay Lieberman back, stating she was glad to hear he is on the mend. DA Gonzalez is hosting a virtual Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Event on May 27th at 4:00pm. They are honoring Deputy Inspector Loo from the Asian Hate Crimes Task force and Main Street Patrol Founder Teresa Ting. Two Asian American heroes who help make the city safer last year. The DA was strongly opposed to the recent Anti-Semitic attacks against our citizens and synagogues and has zero tolerance for Hate Crimes. He is working closely with the NYPD to see these perpetrators are apprehended. To report a Hate Crime 718 250-4949. The Brooklyn DA's Action Center can be reached at 718 250-2340. Ms. Lulu also provided her email which is Lulun@BrooklynDa.org

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 April 27, 2021. With the correction of a typo on the spelling of Mariya Markh's name, a motion to adopt the April 27, 2021 minutes was made by Debra Greif and seconded by Robert Gevertzman.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

Chair Scavo stated she received a request for a letter of support for the formation of a NORC (Naturally Occurring Retirement Community) from Sheepshead/Nostrand Houses. She requested permission from the Board to send a letter of support.

A motion was made to approve by Debra Greif and seconded by Lenny Markh.

LIQUOR LICENSES- Month of May 2021

RENEWAL – Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider

LAN Spirits Inc.
154 Avenue U
11223

722 Bar & Grill
722 Kings Highway
11223

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RENEWAL – Wine, Beer & Cider

Café Renaissance LLC
802-4 Kings Highway
11223

Living Room Restaurant & Lounge Inc
178 Avenue U
11223

Ginza Sushi 88 Inc.
2809 Ocean Avenue
11229

ODA House Brooklyn Inc.
2027 Emmons Avenue
11235

RENEWAL – Liquor & Wine

Dident 884 LLC
Dba 5 L's Wines & Liquors
2312 Knapp Street
11229

NEW APPLICATION – Wine, Beer and Cider

FFG Services Corp.
Dba Pizza D'Amore
3003 Avenue U
11229

Chair Scavo stated if you know of any issues with these establishments, please share those concerns with the Board Office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Nominating Committee:

Chair Scavo called upon Nominating Committee Chair, Edmond Dweck to report and conduct this part of the meeting:

Edmond Dweck thanked his Committee who met remotely and presented their recommendations for Board Officers and Executive Committee:

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For Chairperson: Theresa Scavo was the only name submitted for Chairperson. The floor was opened for nominations, with none from the floor, the nominations for the office were closed and Secretary Allen Popper cast the one vote needed. Congratulations were offered to Theresa Scavo.

For First Vice-Chairperson: Ronald Tawil was the only name submitted for First Vice-Chairperson. The floor was opened for nominations, with none from the floor, the nominations for the office were closed and Secretary Allen Popper cast the one vote needed. Congratulations were offered to Ronald Tawil.

For Second Vice-Chairperson: Raisa Chernina was the only name submitted for Second Vice-Chairperson. The floor was opened for nominations, with none from the floor, the nominations for the office were closed and Secretary Allen Popper cast the one vote needed. Congratulations were offered to Raisa Chernina.

For Treasurer: Jack Erdos was the only name submitted for Treasurer. The floor was opened for nominations, with none from the floor, the nominations for the office were closed and Secretary Allen Popper cast the one vote needed. Congratulations were offered to Jack Erdos.

For Secretary: Allen Popper was the only name submitted for Secretary. The floor was opened for nominations, with none from the floor, the nominations for the office were closed and Secretary Allen Popper cast the one vote needed. Congratulations were offered to Allen Popper.

Lastly, Edmond Dweck stated our Executive Committee is comprised of 10 Board Members, and it is with a heavy heart that we lost two devoted member this year Ira Teper and Howard Katz. May they rest in Peace and we are thankful for their service. The nominations submitted for Executive Committee are:

Edmond Chalom
Edmond Dweck
Robert Gevertzman
Morris Harary
Francis Pallotta
Mitchell Shpelfogel
Pearl Siegelman
Richard Warner
Rabbi Melvin Burg submitted by Oswald Heymann
Dr. Alan Ditchek

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The floor was opened for nominations, with none from the floor, the nominations for the Executive Board were closed and Secretary Allen Popper cast the one vote needed. Congratulations were offered to our Executive Board Members.

Public Safety Committee:

Committee Chair, Chick Pallotta stated the Committee met online via Webex on Monday May 3, 2021 at 5:00pm. Representing the 61st Police Precinct was its Commanding Officer, Captain Derby St. Fort. Present from Community Affairs division of the 61st Pct. was Detective, Sam Shaya and Police Officer, Lauren Au. The Captain advised our Committee that an added police presence was placed in Manhattan Beach to satisfy vehicle speeding complaints. The latest CompStat report now presented to our committee covered the period of 5/17/21 through 5/23/21. Based on the (7) major crime complaint categories, comparing 2021 with 2020, year to date statistics, the 61st Precinct was down 22.6 %. Continuing year-to-date comparisons: Robbery down 39.1%, Felony Assault down 13.3%, Grand Larceny down 26.4%, Grand Larceny Auto down 37.5%, Burglary, up 4.3%. In the category of Burglary, it is up slightly at 1.6%.

Zoning Committee:

Mr. Ronnie Tawil, Chair of the Zoning Committee proceeded with the 3 Citywide Text Amendment Proposals heard earlier for the Full Board to vote on.

The first was Zoning for Accessibility:

A motion was made to approve by Ronnie Tawil and seconded by Debra Greif. The Vote was 37 yes and 0 no and 2 Abstentions. The motion passed.

The second, Citywide Hotel Special Permit Zoning Text Amendment:

A motion was made to approve by Ronnie Tawil and seconded by Robert Gevertzman was 25 yes and 11 no. The motion passed.

The third and last, Health & Fitness Citywide Text Amendment:

A motion was made to approve by Ronnie Tawil and seconded by Debra Greif. The Vote was 3 yes and 30 no. The motion did not pass.

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Mr. Ronnie Tawil, Chair of the Zoning Committee proceeded with the ULURP item heard earlier for the Full Board vote:

ULURP # C 2002203 ZMK and N 200204 ZRK – Sheepshead Nursing and Rehabilitation Center located at 2840 Knapp Street Rezoning – for a 5,096 square foot enlargement for a Dialysis Center on site, request from an existing R5 to a proposed R6 to accommodate.

A motion was made to approve with the deed restriction by Ronnie Tawil and seconded by Al Smaldone.

The Vote was taken 36 yes, 0 no. The motion was approved.

OLD BUSINESS: Chair Scavo discharged the Nominating Committee.

NEW BUSINESS:

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Debra Greif and seconded by Pearl Siegelman. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15pm.

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