

Community Board 1, Queens – Board Meeting Minutes

February 20, 2018

Board Member Attendees: List attached.

Opening: 6:30 pm

Chairwoman Marie Torniali opens the meeting; the Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Board of Standards and Appeals:

Chairperson Marie Torniali opened the public hearing for Board of Standards and Appeals Special Permit application, 2018-1BZ, to reduce the required accessory parking from 109 spaces to 54 spaces in order to facilitate construction of a new office building at 11-02 37th Avenue, Long Island City. The application was submitted on behalf of the New York Black Car Operators' Injury Compensation Fund, Inc.

Elizabeth Bennett, Esq. and Jerald Johnson of Fox Rothchild LLP., representing the Black Car Fund described the proposed building and intended use. The development is as-of-right under the existing zoning, however, the Applicant is requesting a 50% reduction in the number of required parking spaces. A Parking and Demand Study submitted for the project determined that the project would require only 52 spaces during peak demand and that on-street parking was available to pick up excess demand. The representatives also said the site has a high water table, making parking areas below grade difficult to provide. The Applicant's representatives supplied a letter dated February 16, 2018, that addressed several questions raised at the Land Use and Zoning Committee on February 7, 2018.

Chairperson Torniali opened the hearing to Board members:

Nancy Silverman asked if Black Car would encourage ride sharing and provide bicycle parking. Ms. Bennett responded affirmatively, stating that public transportation is encouraged.

Richard Khuzami stated there could be a future need for additional parking spaces should there be a different or an additional office occupant. The Black Car Fund may not be in existence in ten years. Ms. Bennett responded there is a restriction placed on the Certificate of Occupancy and if the use changes in the future they have to reapply to BSA.

Jerry Krill stated the number of spaces is exactly half what is required. Ms. Bennett responded that's what the parking special permit specifically allows. She added that the site is narrow, they fit in as many spaces as possible and the building cannot accommodate ramps for additional parking.

Fran McDonald stated the architect did not comply with the code and she finds no reason to vote yes.

There were no other speakers and the hearing was closed.

Land Use Committee Co-Chair Elizabeth Erion referred to the committee report in the Board Members' folders that details the committee's review of the application and its recommendation. She recapped a few points in the report:

- The application sets a precedent to reduce parking in an area with very limited mass transit options that is under considerable pressure to be redeveloped;
- The building is very spacious for the number of proposed workers and could be subdivided for other firms, increasing the need for parking for more on-site workers in the future;

- The applicant should reconsider the building design for the first and mezzanine levels to increase taller lifts or just do the necessary waterproofing to make a lower level usable for parking;

On recommendation of the Land Use and Zoning Committee, a motion to recommend disapproval of the Special Permit application 2018-1 BZ was made by Melanie La Rocca and seconded by Gerry Caliendo. By roll call vote, motion carried 33 in favor, 2 opposed and no abstentions.

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney Questions & Answers with the Board:

The Congresswoman stated she enjoyed hearing the Board’s debate and noted that the Board is working very hard for the Community. She wanted to come by and say hello. The Congresswoman addressed the following topics:

- Tasks in Washington
- Gun laws
- Past & Present Projects
- US Postal Service Issues including service & Mail fishing/Check Washing and the ongoing mail delays in all parts of the country.

The Congresswoman also addressed other items brought up by the Board including:

- US Mail Delivery- Rectification of Services
- Second Avenue Subway and Other Over Runs
- Hallet’s Cove Peninsula and Promenade Flood resiliency issues including and not limited to Astoria Houses remediation Post Sandy. She is willing to do a weekend meeting re this issue.
- Congresswoman Maloney said that Federal, State and City should get together to form the “Green Necklace”.
- Administration defunding the national criminal background check.

Chair Torniali thanked the Congresswoman for taking the time to address areas of concern to the community.

NYC Department of Transportation:

Dan Wagner, NYC Department of Transportation, Project Manager:

Proposal to transportation committee – Vernon Blvd., 30th Avenue, 8th Street and Astoria Boulevard.

- Install 2 new crosswalks which would shorten distance for crossing the street;
- Install 5 new curb extensions which would heighten visibility to pedestrians and motorists at the stop signs;
- Turn Main Avenue between 8th Street and 30th Avenue from a 2 lane to a 1 lane;
- Expand Greenstreets triangle with curb extensions; and
- Implement right turn ban.

Overall project benefits includes improving pedestrian network; adds 7 new parking spaces; simplifies the traffic network and improves visibility between pedestrians and drivers. The proposal also includes putting in reflective posts; markings on the street will also be reflective.

The Department of Transportation is seeking a Letter of Support from the Board.

Chairwoman Torniali asked the Board if they had any thoughts.

Vanessa Jones-Hall

- Addressed Mr. Wagner - Glad this is happening we spoke about this matter – this is a very dangerous area for not only children but also the elderly and handicapped.

Andre Stith

- Very happy with the proposal but also look at 27th Avenue & 4th street – where there is a bus stop and cars don't stop because there is no visibility of a stop sign. Please put signage there as a school is located there and children constantly have to go around buses to see if the coast is clear.

Bob Piazza – Chair of Transportation Committee

- Based on meeting with the NYC Department of Transportation, the committee unanimously approves the proposal.
- Show of hands in agreement - Motion passed unanimously.

Chairwoman Torniali then asked if any elected officials would like to speak.

Joseph Nocerino

- Queens Borough President's State of Borough Hall Address - Please visit our website to either watch or read it. He then advised that Borough Hall continues to reiterate the support for a solution that provides citizenship to the dreamers of our country. Dreamers are our children and our neighbor's kids.

RoseMarie Poveromo

"I quote from press releases Senator Gianaris has sent out":

- On February 6, 2018 Senator Gianaris introduced legislation to combat gun violence in communities across New York State.
- This proposal would extend the waiting period to 10 days from current 3 for a complete background check.
- The bill also includes provisions to require firearm dealers to alert law enforcement of attempted criminal purchases of weapons.
- He requested this prior to the Parkland, Florida shooting which killed 17 people. More responsible gun laws will keep our community safer.
- It had been determined that if a background check didn't come back within the 3 day waiting period, firearms dealers would give the guns to the purchasers anyway.
- Over 300,000 checks were not including in the 3 day waiting period in 2016.

Chairwoman Torniali asked members of the public to sign in if they would like to speak during the public session.

Public Session:

Ronnie Minor – Opened discussion about 20th Avenue dangers, went on to discuss Halletts Cove (2 Coves) project and opportunity to work during new projects. Stipulations were in place. He said he wanted to revisit the issue that they (Urban Upbound) are entitled to be present before contractors commence work. He also stated that they (Urban Upbound) should be at the pre-bidding negotiations, not after the fact and requested the Board's support.

Pat Lowenhaupt – Queens World Film Festival

- She advised the 8th Annual Queens Film Festival will start on March 15, 2018;
- Over 600 films seeking selection from all over the world;
- 189 chosen from 37 countries - 29 film makers from queens and 7 films from Astoria.

Sheila Lewandowski – She stated that The Chocolate Factory has a new building in CB1 which supports the arts and they are the hosts of Taste of Long Island City.

Neil Herdan – Advised that he is raising \$1,000 a week for the Whitey Ford Project. He advised that he just received a gift from Sally Ann Francis, the daughter of Whitey Ford.

Frank Arcabascio – President of 30th Avenue Business Association

- MTA is hurting the businesses in his area;
- He noted 2nd Avenue businesses raised 30% after the train station was complete – but what about when you close the station. As you get closer to the train station and construction begins at least 40% -60% of business will be lost.

Roseann McSorely – owner of Katch Restaurant

- Reiterated Frank’s discussions and pleaded for the Board’s help.

Chairwoman Torniali advised that she is willing to have a meeting with the MTA and will keep up the pressure; maybe another meeting with the MTA and elected officials. She asked for a shuttle bus – the MTA doesn’t provide shuttle bus for transportation; but should provide a shuttle bus for good will. Chairwoman Torniali assured the public that the Board is working very hard on this issue behind the scenes.

The Community and Economic Development Committee offered their services to help the small businesses of Astoria with this crippling situation.

Motion to approve Minutes of January 16, 2018: Vanessa Jones-Hall made the Motion; Andre Stith seconded same.

Chairwoman Torniali’s Report:

- She has listened to complaints from businesses and residents regarding the transit situation.
- Even if the Board makes suggestions, the MTA will not follow these suggestions.

District Manager Koulouris’ Report:

- Our District hosted the Queens Borough President’s State of the Borough at Frank Sinatra School;
- We also hosted the Queens World Film Festivals at the Museum of Moving Image;
- Councilman Van Bramer and the Queens Borough President hosted a visioning session for Ravenswood Playground;
- LaGuardia Airport installed an art exhibit in Marine Air Terminal which is in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institute named “A Place for All People” which will change each month.
- Councilman Costa Constantinides hosted a State of the District and invited the new speaker of the NYC Council Corey Johnson to our District.

Committee Reports:

Consumer Affairs – Chair Andy Aujla

- February Liquor License – had a review with the 114 Precinct on 2 stipulations with no issues.

Motion to approve the February Liquor Licenses: Melanie La Rocca made the motion; Antonella Di Saverio seconded - No opposition.

Environmental Protection – Chair Antonella Di Saverio

- On February 8, 2018 Environmental Protection and Health Committees met with Organics from Sanitation Department. In May, 2018, Astoria and Long Island City home owners will get a 13 gallon brown bin container to contain food roughage.

- . She stated that at least 1/3 of your garbage is food which will be recycled into fertilizers.

Land Use and Zoning - Co Chair Elizabeth Erion

- She noted that last month when the Board voted on the 35-10 Astoria Blvd. Rezoning Application, there was a text amendment which we disapproved. The City Planning Commission pulled it and didn't want to jeopardize the current project it was attached to. The City Planning Commission will figure out a better way to enter the application and will attach to another project in the future.

Parks, Recreation & Cultural - Chair Nancy Silverman

- The Committee met with the Park's Department who did a presentation of the reconstruction and stabilization of the Hallett's Cove Seawall and will include the esplanade and fencing. The Committee met and discussed it and voted unanimously to recommend a Letter of Approval.
- Motion – Nancy Silverman requested Board's approval of the project. All in favor.
- Big 10 Network painted a mural (and resurfaced) to improve the basketball court at the Triborough Bridge Playground Basketball Court. They wish to provide basketball clinics the day of the ribbon cutting – work has already started and opening is February 28, 2018 from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm.

Chair Torniali made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Vanessa Jones Hall.

Meeting adjourned: 8:40 pm.

COMMUNITY BOARD 1, Queens

DATE 2/20/18

Community Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	Community Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.
Rose Anne Alafogiannis			E	Richard Khuzami	✓		
George Alexiou	✓			Nancy Konipol	✓		
Daniel Aliberti			E	Jerry Kril	✓		
Loren Amor	✓			Melanie La Rocca	✓		
Avninder Aujla	✓			Frances Luhmann-McDonald	✓		
Edward Babor			E	Antonio Meloni	✓		
Jose Batista	✓			Prabir Mitra	✓		
Ann Bruno	✓			Stella Nicolaou	✓		
Giselle Aida Burgess	✓			Norma Nieves-Blas	✓		
Edwin Cadiz	✓			Mary O'Hara	✓		
Gerald Caliendo	✓			Robert Piazza	✓		
Jean Marie D'Alleva			E	RoseMarie Poveromo	✓		
Antonella Di Saverio	✓			Yawne Robinson	✓		
Katie Ellman	✓			Thomas Ryan	✓		
Elizabeth Erion	✓			Manuel Salce		✓	
Mackenzi Farquer			E	Rodolfo Sarchese	✓		
Dean Feratovic	✓			Nancy Silverman	✓		
Evie Hantzopoulos			E	Dominic Stiller		✓	
Amy Hau	✓			Andre Stith	✓		
Helen Ho		✓		Danielle Tharrington			E
Pauline Jannelli	✓			Marie Torniali	✓		
Vanessa Jones-Hall	✓			Rod Townsend	✓		
George Kalergios			E	Judy Trilivas	✓		
Number Board Members Present <u>35</u>							
Present <u>35</u>		Absent <u>3</u>		Excused <u>8</u>			
Oct 17							