#### Community Board 1, Queens - Board Meeting Minutes

#### February 16, 2021

Meeting opens with Chairperson, Marie Torniali at 6:30 p.m.

Marie Torniali, Chair said, Welcome, Good Evening to the February 16, 2021 meeting Community Board 1 Queens Senator Gianaris has joined us, he would like to make some comments.

State Senator Michael Gianaris - It is good to see you all virtually. I am used to seeing you all at the Astoria World Manor. Thank you for giving me a couple of minutes to speak. I do try and come back periodically like when we were meeting in person and share what is going on with all I am doing. Along those lines I wanted to say hello as a former Board Member of Board, it is good to be back with you to see Florence, Marie and Tom and the whole group. Those of you who have been around long enough remember I begun fighting powerplants in the neighborhood back in the day. We had some success along the way. We had the Poletti plant shut down on 19th Avenue which was the biggest polluter in the state. We passed the nation's leading climate change legislation under our Senate Majority in the last couple of years which I am really proud of that we are continuing to fight power plants as we have, in this community, for a long time and now with the NRG proposal where they are telling us they want to shut down something that is there but they want to replace it with another fossil fuel burning plant. We are on tract, thanks to the law we passed to get New York off of fossil fuels by 2040 and so building a brand new one right now even if they tell us in the future they expect it will be phased out is not something I trust or believe. We are still living with plants in Long Island City that were supposed to be temporary 21 years ago when they put them there. So, building a brand-new facility right now I have a hard time believing it will be actually gone in time, so we are continuing to fight that. The State has not given its final approval yet. I know a lot of people on this call are part of the effort to stop that from happening. We are going to continue fighting. The other thing I wanted to mention, obviously we are in the middle of a pandemic. I have been working really hard together with my small business advisory committee. I have a growing group of small businesses that are a part of that. We lost a lot of great businesses in the last year, unfortunately. We are trying to keep as many of them growing as possible. I have proposed numerous items of legislation to try and do that, to provide rent relief for them. We did succeed in having a very strong commercial eviction moratorium to keep these businesses from being booted out, but they still have accumulating obligation, accumulating rent. It is similar to what residents are facing. We are trying to deal with businesses and residents. Our State budget is due at the end of next month. I just communicated with the Governor a couple of weeks ago that I think we need several billion dollars committed to rent relief both for residential and commercial tenants to help them survive the pandemic and the difficulties that they face from it. That is connected to the fight over revenues and taxes. I believe we need to increase taxes on the wealthy to help us get through this and provide that kind of support. The Governor is less supportive of that but has not closed the door entirely. That is a discussion we will be having over the next month and a half in addition in trying to get aid out of the federal government. Hopefully since now our Senator is the Majority Leader, Chuck Schumer, we will be able to see better results than we have in the past out of the federal government, and the Biden Administration. We are going to keep working on all of that because I have seen too many of our restaurants and other businesses go down in the last year. I am going to do my darndest to keep those that have survived, live and to the point where they can start re-hiring workers and get back work and continue to keep Astoria the great community that it is and it is known for its food among other things. We definitely want to keep that going. I will leave it at that. I want to thank you all for your service to the Community, it is incredibly important now more than ever. I will leave you with this, if anybody needs PPE, help with unemployment claims or vaccine appointments please contact our office. We have been doing a lot of that kind of work for folks the last several of weeks and months. You can reach us at my email at: gianaris@nysenate.gov or calling the office at: 718-728-0960.

Marie Torniali – Thanked the Senator for being there and for all the work he does for this community and New York State and stated she will include his contact information in the Chat.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING ITEM:**

#### **Board of Standards and Appeals**

BSA Application: 2017-286 BZ, 22-06 31<sup>st</sup> Street – The Rock Health & Fitness (Block 844, Lot 40) Application by KCOR Ditmars to amend a previously granted Physical Cultural Establishment special permit to enlarge and reconfigure the first floor of a gym for a term of ten (10) years.

Presentation given by Elyse Foladare, Associate, Eric Palatnik, P.C. (See Presentation Attached) Ms. Foladare said this is an amendment to an already approved PCE gym application at the Board of Standard and Appeals. It is expanding by a floor; it is in the T.J. Maxx building. You can see this site is located at 22-06  $31^{st}$ Street in Queens. It has an existing zoning of C4-2A R5-D zoning district. We are looking to expand this Physical Cultural Establishment; it is in the same building as T.J. Maxx. The expansion of the existing PCE would make it a total of 18,863 square feet of building area spread across the cellar and  $1^{st}$  floor. You can see it is in a new building. (Displayed photo) You can see it is in a commercial district that is on  $31^{st}$  Street and Ditmars Boulevard. The sign is Rock and Fitness, it is already existing. They have been in existence since November of 2020. (Displayed Plans) This is the  $1^{st}$  floor plan, and this is what will be added, it is already existing, so it will be legalized. This is the layout of the gym, you can see where the lines are dashed, that is where the exits are. There are two means of egress. (Displayed next photo) This is what was already approved in 2018. If there are any questions, I do not want to take up your whole night. She shared the hours of operations which are: Monday through Friday, 5 a.m. – 10 p.m., Saturday, 7 a.m. – 9 p.m. and Sunday 7 a.m. – 8 p.m.

The Chair, Marie Torniali thanked her and turned it over to Elizabeth Erion.

Elizabeth Erion said, I do not think there are any additional questions, but I do have clarification on 2 points. Can you clarify the name of the corporation, is it Ditmas or Ditmars? We are talking about 2 different boroughs, and we need to be correct. KCOR Ditmas or KCOR Ditmars?

Elyse Foladare responded; it is KCOR Ditmars (regarding typo on the document).

Elizabeth Erion said, you have an approved plan which the Community Board approved last March. What made you deviate from the approved plan when you went into construction?

Elyse Foladare said, do you mean why did we want to expand?

Elizabeth Erion said, yes, first of all, the BSA approved a specific site plan and how it is supposed to be built. You guys went ahead and built something different than what was approved. Can you explain?

Elyse Foladare responded, what happened was, I believe the landlord just gave approval for that one floor, so we wanted to have everything possible on that one floor then we were permitted to expand, and the business was doing well enough that it was worth expanding into another floor.

Elizabeth Erion said at the Committee meeting, there was one issue that was raised about the signage needed to be cleared up.

Elyse Foladare responded, yes, the owner was there and took note of it and he is putting a sign within the building that is more obvious where you can enter and exit.

Elizabeth Erion said, to reiterate, the Committee looked at the questions had to do with the hours of operations which are fluid at this point because of the pandemic.

Elyse Foladare responded the last time we came here we asked for 24 hours. Now we are asking until 10 p.m. because of the pandemic.

Elizabeth Erion said the Committee reviewed the BSA findings and the plan and they found that there being no complaints about the previous location, they recommended approval for this particular proposal.

The Chair, Marie Torniali asked if any Board Members had any questions.

Daniel Aliberti asked, in light of the fact that these changes were made so soon after we approved the project and they have only been open for 3 months, 90 days basically. How do we know they are not going to do this again, then come back and ask to legalize it, and do it again and ask to legalize it? Do we have anything to go on with that?

Elizabeth Erion asked, in terms of the Committee. Dan, it that a question to the Committee or the presenter?

Daniel Aliberti responded, to both, the Committee and also to the presenter. What can the presenter tell us that would let us know this is not ongoing behavior and from the Committee, what can we do?

Elyse Foladare said, I guess, unfortunately the Board of Standards and Appeals takes a really long time, so when you get an opportunity, you have to wait to go to the hearing sometimes 6 months to a year. But this cannot expand anymore, but we did not know we could expand to another floor. Once given that opportunity and want to obviously take it. So that is what happened. But there is no room for expansion other than this floor. Unfortunately, a lot of your applications for these are legalization but it takes a really long time to go through BSA so that is how we come to this decision.

Gerry Caliendo said, I have no objections to this. The Rock Fitness was across the street for many years. I was the original architect across the street, I am not the architect for this. I do know the operators and they operate a very good facility. It is a very necessary use in the area, and I think the reason possible for which may not have come up, they probably could not rent the ground floor to a retail operation with this pandemic. They took the Rock Gym and they jumped on it. I do not know; it is just speculation. In any event I think it is a welcomed use, I have no objections to them being there. I think it is good for the neighborhood.

Elizabeth Erion said, I just wanted to respond to Dan's comment about what the Committee can do. There is not really much that we can do unless one of the Committees sees something that should not be there, report it to BSA and can follow up from there. We react to applications that come before us. There is not much the Board can do, unless they keep an eye on what is going on. It is a matter of compliance that is the jurisdiction of DOB. If they see something, they can be given violations.

Gerry Caliendo said, I have one more thing, I believe The Rock first opened up in this area, there was a recommendation by the Board to facilitate, for them to look into, and reach out for programs for the seniors, or young kids and to the schools to have additional programs. It did not come up in our Committee Meeting, but maybe we can ask that question now.

Elizabeth Erion responded, it did come up and the applicant at the time of this last meeting said that they were agreeable to putting in some kind of Silver Sneakers.

Richard Khuzami commented, I actually do use that gym and I use it under the Silver Sneakers program. It is a program through Medicare where you get your, seniors over 65 and all the fees are paid for. Only certain gyms will accept it.

Elizabeth Erion said, we are not approving the programming, we are approving the overall PCE permit to operate there. It is something that will be noted in the letter that goes to BSA.

Pauline Jannelli said, I know the hours were changed because of this pandemic. Are you considering changing the hours back to 24 hours after this pandemic is gone? Elyse Foladare responded, I believe that the owner wants to keep it at 10 p.m. and that is what he has proposed.

Pauline Jannelli asked, well how did the 24 hours work when they were in effect?

Elyse Foladare said, I do not know that he ever actually had them operate like that because of the pandemic. I think it is just limited to 10 p.m.

The Chair, Marie Torniali thanked everyone and said, seeing that no other Board Members have questions but does anyone else have any.

Jennifer Lopez (Constituent) – You expanded without authorization however your excuse for that was longevity of the application for that, what is to say that will not happen again. As a resident very close to the area trying to make ends meet. The prices at your facility are outrageous to me, they are 6 times higher than your competitor, Planet Fitness.

Elyse Foladare responded, first, it will not happen again because there is no more space in the building. I do not want to say that this operator did try to operate in good faith and when they wanted to open, we did file the BSA application. They were trying to do that but because of the pandemic as Gerry pointed out this was the right business decision. They were not trying to do anything out of bad faith. I can talk to the owner about pricing but that is not a BSA matter, so I have not discussed it with him.

The Chair, Marie Torniali stated, the hearing is closed, and this will go to vote during the business section.

#### **ELECTED OFFICIALS/REPRESENTATIVES – Announcements**

The Chair, Marie Torniali introduced Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney.

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney - It is wonderful to see everybody at the Community Board. I just wanted to say we voted in Congress, a package that got through Congress at 1.9 trillion dollars. 350 billion went through my committee. Which was an aid to cities and states. It did very well for New York. I will send you a listing of everything we got. I am having a Press Conference Saturday on it. Just 8.8 billion for mass transit, the MTA, which is very important. Money to help keep people in their homes to keep from being evicted. Just aid directly to cities and states for this amount of money for vaccines, he has committed another 200 million doses. We really need the vaccines; we have the sites, but we do not have the vaccine. On the local area, I wanted to report on Florence's good work of bringing it all together for the Community Board in support of the seawall in Astoria. It has a huge hole, cannot use the waterfront, for years we have been trying to get it repaired. The Community Board asked me to get the Mayor to partner with it. I did meet with him on it. He agreed to become a partner with the Army Corp of Engineers. They are going forward with it. So, this is something specific to your Community Board. I know the Community Board often goes late into the night. I do not want to take up your time. I just wanted to say help and money are on the way, so I would say there is health and hope on the way. We have to get the package through the Senate and to the President's desk and the direct payments to individuals of \$1400 dollars, the enhanced unemployment money. Very important enhancement for our community and Queens did very well. That is, it, I yield back unless there are questions.

The Chair, Marie Torniali said, thank for being here and for all the good work you do for this community and all others.

The Congresswoman responded, thank you.

The Chair then introduced Assemblyman Zohran Mamdani.

Assemblyman Zohran Mamdani – Thank you all for coming to tonight's Board meeting. Thank you for having me. I just wanted to give a brief update on the work we have been doing and keep everyone up to speed. The first thing I wanted to let everyone know is that last Thursday night we had our offices first Town Hall. This is something we are going to be doing regularly. We have not our next one, but we will be sure to update all members of Community Board 1 about that as soon as we have something to report. Our Town Hall was about introducing our office to our community talking about the eviction moratorium and the hardship declaration form and opening up a 30-minute conversation to take any questions and comments. With that being said, I wanted to update everyone on the eviction moratorium. Last December tenants across New York State won an eviction moratorium. What it means is that most evictions are not permitted until May 1<sup>st</sup>. However, after February 26<sup>th</sup> tenants need to fill out a declaration of hardship. Our office is doing a door hanging effort to spread the word as well virtual and in person assistance across our district to make sure they are protected any my communications office meeting will be putting that information in the Chat. I also want to update everyone on the nursing homes and the cover up and the

Governor's team covering up and refusing to share information. Our office as well as other legislators are pursuing legislative action in response to that and I just sign onto a statement that is looking to revoke the Governor's emergency powers and start an investigation that if any criminal activity is found to pursue impeachment as well as a resolution. Additionally, we are going to be sharing information about the vaccine and the ways people can access and sign up for vaccine appointments. The roll-out has been horrific, it is one of our office's goals to make that information as readily available as possible. To build off of Senator Mike Gianaris' point earlier, we have a poster here that says Stop the Astoria Energy, it is a big focus of our office to make sure in fact we do not build a fracked gas power plant in our district to the cost of \$1 billion dollars. There will also be a comment placed in the Chat where individuals can submit a public comment to ensure our neighbors' voices are heard. We do not want the most polluted air in Western Queens, in the entire borough of Queens to continue to be polluted by yet another fossil fuel infrastructure plant. Thank you all for your time. We are working here to fight for our neighbors to fight for our constituents to bring back dignity back to the life of Astorians and we look forward to serving you every single day. Thank you.

The Chair asked him for the location of his office and contact information.

Assemblyman Mamdani responded, we are located in the office of our predecessor at 24-08 32<sup>nd</sup> Street. Because of the pandemic we are not accepting any in person walk-ins. We do have other information we will drop into the Chat as well as an email. I would encourage you all to reach out whether it is for issues. Senator Gianaris spoke with regards to resolving unemployment issues or getting further information about vaccinations or if it is a question you have, and you are not sure where to go. We would love to be of help and of service to help you find your way. Thank you, Marie.

The Chair, Marie Torniali thanked him.

Assemblywoman Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas – Hello everyone my name is Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas. I am an Assembly Member right next to Zohran in the 34th Assembly District. I only have a few blocks of your Community Board, but I am thrilled to be here. My colleague Shamima Rahman is on and is listening and will be taking notes. I want to say welcome and share information about our office. We are located in the Jackson Heights Shopping Center not far from the Bulova Building at 75-35 31st Avenue in East Elmhurst. We are also not taking walk-ins, but please call us or email us if you have questions if our office can assist you. There is a Queens Small Business grant that is available by the New York City Economic Development Corporation that is something my colleague Shamima can leave in the Chat as well for small business owners. There is also the Paycheck Protection Program we can also apply for. We recently held 2 COVID-19 tests, not vaccines, tests in our office on Tuesday and Thursday of last week. We also held a paper shredding event. We are planning to have several more throughout the vears in different parts of the district. My district includes Jackson Heights, East Elmhurst, Corona, and Woodside. We recently gave toys to over 300 families in partnership with Make the Road New York. I along with my colleague Zohran also signed the letter on the Governor's powers being really critical on what has happened and withholding information on the matter of nursing homes. We are also fighting for funding for our district, it is budget season so a lot of us are fighting for a budget that is actually going to invest in our communities, many of us are co-sponsor of the Invest in our New York package which is 6 bills that allow for taxing the most wealthy among us, we can get the money we need to provide for our communities. I am here to champion our communities, thrilled to see you all. Thank you for having me on.

The Chair thanked her for being here.

#### Jessica Schabowski, Mayor's Office of Community Affairs Unit -

- Last week was our best week ever for vaccination since vaccinations began in December with 317,000+ doses administered. We could be doing 500,000 vaccinations each week if only we were given the supply by the Federal government. We need the State government to provide us with our fair share of vaccine. If we got our fair share of the State allotment, we would be administering at least 25,000 more vaccinations per week. For appointments, eligible New Yorkers can go to nyc.gov/vaccinefinder or call 877-VAX-4-NYC.
- Beginning this week, the City will launch on-site senior vaccination clinics at DFTA retirement communities and HPD Senior Buildings. With the help of City agencies, such as FDNY, and our home health care partners, the City will begin using the Johnson & Johnson vaccine when it is available

to provide in-home vaccination for homebound seniors. To minimize risk for homebound seniors throughout the month of February, the City will aim to vaccinate 25,000 home health aides over the next month, offering dedicated appointments in the areas where they live and work.

• The Mayor announced last week the launching of the community engagement effort for New York City's first comprehensive Environmental Justice for All Report. The public comment period for the environmental justice report is open now, from February 2021 - April 2021 to amplify community voices: nyc.gov/ejstudy

### Jack Bernatovicz (speaking on behalf of Deborah Tharrington), Office of Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer –

- Our office is still working from home, and Team JVB is available to help with any issues. I will put our office contact info in the chat, and feel free to reach out with any issues or concerns.
- Recently, neighborhoods in CB1 are still seeing high COVID-19 positivity rates, with rates of 7.63% in parts of the district. Remember to keep social distancing, wear your masks, get tested, and get vaccinated when eligible.
- We received big news from DOT with the closure of the Queens Borough Bridge Southern Outer Roadway. The Roadway will become a dedicated pedestrian walkway, opening up the Northern Roadway to bikes. CM Van Bramer has been fighting for this for the past 5 years along with activists, residents, and members of CB1.
- Introduction 1116 was passed, expanding the number of Street Vendor permits and creating a new enforcement unit and Street Vendor Advisory Board to oversee the enforcement of permits. This is a big win for immigrant food vendors and business owners, creating opportunities and support for work and CM Van Bramer was proud to be a sponsor of this bill.
- The Council also passed legislation creating a Rank Choice Voting education campaign to help prepare voters for upcoming elections, and passed a reformed tax lien sale which includes a COVID-19 exemption and the study of transferring properties subject to a lien to community land trusts, land banks, and mutual housing associations. This is a step forward in correcting a policy that has long prioritized profit over community.
- On January 28th, the Council Member was out at Queensbridge Houses with the Department of Environmental Protection, NYCHA, and residents to assess the burst pipe and associated water damage. Water and power were restored in a timely manner.
- Also, this past month, Parks held a virtual community scoping meeting for Queensbridge Baby Park. Parks is still collecting feedback online until February 26th, and I will be adding the link to submit ideas in the chat. <u>https://www.nycgovparks.org/planning-and-building/capital-project-tracker/project/9576</u>
- Also, on Friday, Feb 26th, Council Member Van Bramer will be holding a virtual Black History Month Celebration.

The Chair, Marie Torniali thanked him.

#### Haris Khan, Office of the City Comptroller Scott Stringer -

- NYC Mayor, Comptroller, and Pension Fund's trustees announced a historic \$4 billion dollar divestment from fossil fuels. Comptroller has also called for a moratorium on all fossil fuel infrastructure.
  - <u>https://comptroller.nyc.gov/newsroom/mayor-de-blasio-comptroller-stringer-and-trustees-announce-estimated-4-billion-divestment-from-fossil-fuels/</u>
- Last week our office released a compressive plan with immediate city, state and federal recommendations to combat food insecurity and close gaps in the social safety net. Comptroller Stringer called for the City to allocate \$25 million to fill the gaps in food pantries and their demand, expand SNAP outreach and purchasing power, and increase cultural competence by including Halal and Kosher foods in the City's current food programming to ensure food access to all New Yorkers.
  - <u>https://comptroller.nyc.gov/newsroom/comptroller-stringer-unveils-comprehensive-food-security-plan-to-combat-hunger-in-new-york-city/</u>
- Comptroller Stringer has been focused on the need for a fast, transparent, and equitable vaccine distribution, and concerned with the twin failures of outreach and technology under the Administration's vaccine rollout. Comptroller Stringer outlined his recommendations.

- <u>https://comptroller.nyc.gov/newsroom/comptroller-stringer-releases-fair-shot-nyc-plan-for-vaccine-equity/</u>
- Lastly, Comptroller Stringer published a blueprint for a new approach to public safety. Stringer's plan, which builds on his June 2020 analysis of the New York Police Department (NYPD) budget, would move responsibilities away from the NYPD, address serious crime and the recent increase in shootings, improve accountability and civilian oversight of the NYPD, and reinvest police dollars into communities.
  - <u>https://comptroller.nyc.gov/newsroom/comptroller-stringer-releases-blueprint-for-strengthening-public-safety-in-new-york-city/</u>
- As always feel free to reach out to me if there is any way our office can be of assistance. My email address is <u>hkhan@comptroller.nyc.gov</u> and my number is 929-512-1946.

The Chair thanked him.

Destiny Cruz (speaking on behalf of Daniel Bonthius), Office of Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez -

- The Congresswoman hosted a virtual town hall Tuesday, February 9, and was joined by Commissioner Chokshi from the City and Special Adviser Ruth Hassel-Thompson from the State to discuss the vaccine rollout. You can watch on our YouTube page: @RepAOC (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6XBnYptBnproA\_ydn-b0A).
- Sign up for our newsletter in either English or Spanish.
  - o English Newsletter: <u>https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/contact/newsletter-subscribe</u>
  - o Spanish Newsletter: https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/contact/boletin-espanol
- The Congresswoman signed onto a letter asking HUD and the Treasury to repeal Trump-era guidelines which are delaying emergency rental assistance by requiring overly burdensome documentation.
- The FEMA Funeral Assistance relief legislation that the Congresswoman led alongside Majority Leader Schumer and Representative Lee will be available to constituents soon.
- The office of Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez will be hosting a Wounded Warrior Fellow. To apply and review eligibility requirements, visit USAJOBS - Job Announcement.
- If you are interested in participating in this year's Congressional Art Competition, please contact Destiny Cruz via email at <u>Destiny.Cruz@mail.house.gov</u>
- The Small Business Development Center at LaGuardia Community College is able to assist with the SBA PPP and the SBA EIDL applications. You can reach out at sbdc@lagcc.cuny.edu or 718-482-5962.

The Chair, Marie Torniali thanked her.

**State Senator Jessica Ramos** – While speaking tonight, I am in transit. Legislatively we have been working very hard towards getting the best budget possible. The next few weeks are critical for budget negotiations the State budget is due April 1<sup>st</sup>. We continue to advocate for funding for those excluded workers, for those people who did not qualify for any stimulus check or people who did not qualify for any unemployment benefits. Locally we are in the middle of our series of Town Halls and our Astoria Town Hall is on March 9<sup>th</sup> in English and Spanish on March 11<sup>th</sup>. These flyers will be up on our social media very shortly and everyone will be able to share them. I will also be happy to share them with Community Board 1. I know Mary Jobaida from my team is also here. I want to give a shout out to her because she has been working really hard. We are advocating for a lot of resources in different ways. Evictions are up, unemployment is up. Now we have to start fearing inflation going up. These are serious challenges to our economy. I think that is why you see me out there so loudly on many things. From a hometown perspective, more importantly our small businesses are going through a really rough time. If you are spending all your money on Amazon or on any other websites or anything, please consider buying from your small businesses instead. They need us, all they have is us. So, if can get out there and support them it would be a great help to our local economy. Our small businesses give our neighborhoods character that is certainly true of our beloved Astoria.

The Chair thanked the Senator. She said we always say shop small and shop local. Thank you for that.

#### **BUSINESS SESSION:**

The Chair, Marie Torniali asked for a Motion to Adopt the January 2021 Minutes.

Motioned by Edward Babor; Seconded by Thomas Ryan

#### Chair Report:

Marie Torniali said, I would like to encourage anyone who is watching, of course the current Community Board Members should have re-applied by now. The Board is still looking for new members as all the Community Boards are, you have until this Friday to apply if you are interested. The current Borough President Donovan Richards made it easy to apply. If you go on: <u>https://www.queensbp.org/community-boards/</u> the application is right there. There is no notary necessary. It is a simple process. If you have an interest in helping constituents of this neighborhood, please apply and apply by Friday. Thank you.

#### District Manager Report:

Florence Koulouris stated the Community Board Office has been working with the Mayor's office and the NYPD to deal with the location operating as a night life establishment. The Mayor's Office and CAU have been remarkably helpful. NYPD and NCO's and the New York State Liquor Authority have been helpful as well. We are working towards a resolution and intend to bring in the Sheriff's Division for assistance. We are requesting when you see something, to say something. Call 311, put in your complaints when you see something happening as they are occurring. This will help us for documentation of any local issues. We want to be able to help you and documentation is key for our process. That is my report Madam Chair. Thank you.

The Chair thanked her.

#### Committee Reports:

Rod Townsend, Community & Economic Development Committee – Good evening everyone. We have been working towards getting a meeting with small business services.

Avninder Aujla (submitting for Eric Mouchette), Consumer Affairs Committee – Good evening everyone. If you checked your email from February 9<sup>th</sup>, there was a spreadsheet with the new applications and renewals for the month of February. Please take a quick look. We did not have a meeting this past month as everything was proforma and there were no issues with the 114<sup>th</sup> Precinct when they reviewed all the applications. As a result, we are asking that the stipulations that were executed be approved by the Board. If there is any opposition, please let us know.

The Chair, Marie Torniali asked if there were any oppositions - seeing none. Motion carries.

#### Motioned by Thomas Ryan; Seconded by Mitchell Waxman

The Chair stated it is unanimous.

Antonella Di Saverio, Environmental Protection Committee – We had a presentation by 2 power companies. One to the Environmental Protection Committee the other to Florence, Marie and myself. These companies are going to help with New York's goals of meeting 70% renewable energy by 2030. The first presentation was from Champlain Hudson Power Express they are a hydro powered company from Canada. Energy is going to be delivered to New York City via cable. It is a 4-year project. The second presentation was from 174 Power Global it is located where the old Poletti Power Plant was, in Northern Astoria. They are going to use Tesla storage batteries for back-up power. It is expected to go into operation possibly in 2023. Both have a goal to alleviate extra load during peak periods. That is all I have for tonight, thank you.

Elizabeth Erion, Co-Chair, Land Use & Zoning Committee – You should have all received a report from the Land Use Committee concerning the item on The Rock, the request to amend their existing special permit to legalize the expansion. As I mentioned before the questions that the Committee did have were answered, there were no issues raised. In reviewing the BSA findings that they have to meet we found they did comply with all of the findings. At the end of the meeting the Committee unanimously voted to recommend approval of this special permit for a period of ten (10) years.

#### Motioned by Thomas Ryan; Seconded by Gerry Caliendo

The Chair, Marie Torniali asked for a Roll Call vote.

Amy Hau did the Roll Call vote.

#### The Chair stated the Motion carried; Affirmative/Yes - 30; Opposed/No - 0

Elizabeth Erion stated, something that the Chair brought to my attention and something we had tried to talk about, but did not, is Councilman Corey Johnson's proposal to propose a change in The City Charter that would change the way that the Community has input into Land Use decisions. There is a proposal that will require a series of reports coming out in a period of every 10 years that would ultimately create a long-term comprehensive plan for development that is coordinated with the City budget and with other governing bodies that deal with development. The key thing here is that ultimately there would be a long-term strategic committee and a long-term plan that is produced and when this plan is approved, the Council will only call up and review development projects or city actions on a voluntary basis. Right now, The Charter defines specifically what has to be reviewed by the Council, by Community Boards and other agencies. What this does, it makes it sort of voluntary for the Council to review these and therefore the Community to have input on all the ULURPs, what we see as ULURPs now, changes in zoning, revocable consents text amendments for the zoning resolution. If it all complies with the plan that is adopted, that is a comprehensive plan. We will not have that kind of review anymore. But what I wanted to let you know is that on Tuesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 10 a.m. is the first Zoom Meeting that the Council is having at which this proposal is going to be presented and they will have time for speakers. The name of the Bill is Intro 2186, it is a Local Law to amend The City Charter that would require a comprehensive long term plan, and as I said, this is a Public Hearing and I do recommend that we all listen in when we can, at the very least to the presentation but this is an item that we are going to be bringing up at The Land Use Committee on the City Council's site they do have a link to their report which is called Planning Together: A New Comprehensive Planning Framework for New York City. You can go through the Executive Summary; they also have the legislation there that is being proposed. The next meeting of the Land Use Committee, may be another long one, it is on March 3rd, 6:30 p.m. and you all will receive a Zoom invite. At the last meeting we had a presentation by the Wildflower Studios that is proposed near the Luyster Creek. They are returning to follow up on some of the issues that were brought up, and answer the questions and talk about the status of their meeting with Sanitation Department and Steinway Creek as they like to call it, the waterfront access that they have been working on. So that is Wednesday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30 p.m. That concludes my report.

Katie Ellman, Parks/Recreation/Cultural Committee – We had our meeting last week and we had a presentation by BIG Reuse on their Community Compost site under the Queensboro Bridge. We also had a presentation by the Parks Department for an Art project that will take place in Queensbridge Park which Kathleen will talk about in a moment. We met with BIG Reuse and as a Committee we voted in favor of supporting their endeavor to stay at their present location under the Queensboro Bridge, we have drafted a letter of support. You should have received this letter from the Board Office, and we are asking for a Motion from the Full Board to support BIG Reuse to remain in its present location and the Parks Department to work with them to obtain and secure a long-term lease.

The Chair, Marie Torniali asked if anyone was opposed. She stated, seeing none, the Motion carries.

Katie Ellman – The second piece has to do with a Public Art Project in Queensbridge Park that was presented by *worthless studios* and the artist, Tanda Francis. It was an informational presentation to share the work that will be on display in the Park starting in the spring through October. The Committee is in full support of the Project. We submitted a letter of support to the Parks Department on behalf of the group and Kathleen can probably add a little bit more about the project details.

Kathleen Warnock – Their name is *worthless studios* the name is kind of a pun on what they do. They take materials that have been thrown away or used for one purpose and discarded, they upcycle them into works of art. This particular project that they are doing will have pieces in all 5 Boroughs, uses plywood that has been used to board-up businesses during the pandemic and during last summer's protests. Rather than it being thrown away or pulped, several artists are creating artwork using it. It will be on display. The work for Queens will be at the Queensbridge Park and the artist's name is Tanda Francis and it will be inspired by the work of Maya Angelou. It was a very good presentation. The work that they are doing is both smart and sustainable. We were very impressed by their presentation.

Katie Ellman – Parks Department is still accepting volunteer efforts you do need to have all permitted and all COVID precautions are in effect. We are going to be at the clean-ups in the spring.

Kathleen Warnock – Part of the way they may use that new arts legislation to present programming yet right now they have not released the application for events starting March 1<sup>st</sup> that should be coming up anytime now soon.

Mitchell Waxman, Transportation Committee – We had a meeting last week with NYC Department of Transportation (DOT) with some previous problem we had pointed out to them and were discussed notably the situation surrounding the Evangel Food Pantry on Crescent Street and the delivery situation. John O' Neill, the Borough Planner from DOT reports that he has been working with the Church and the Pantry, he is close to coming up with a solution. DOT also presented about creating a permanent form of the temporary bike lane that was installed on Northern Boulevard between 41<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Broadway. The plan also expands that bike lane to make a turn on to Broadway and proceed to 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue. As they were discussing it the Committee brought up a number of issues that we have seen emerge on Crescent Street and other places both bicyclists, drivers and pedestrians had a say and we asked DOT to take our comments and come back at a later meeting and present again with a little bit more of a realized plan. We are going to do a meeting next month; I believe on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

#### **PUBLIC SESSION:**

Glenn Dewar (Constituent) - Against Citi Bikes and bike racks, it is not progressive, and it is attacking the poor.

Ron (Constituent) – Would like politicians to be responsive on both sides. Florence responds. Against the street vendor on 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue because he is not sanitary, no kitchen to wash hands, no sanitizing and no mask while we are still in a pandemic. The bike lanes block driveways.

Mario Di Antoni (Constituent) – Bike lane on Crescent Street, needs a happy medium because of disabled seniors and people cannot access their homes. Have written letters to the Board, attended meetings and nothing has been done.

Enrica Sacca (Non-Profit community-based organization, Plant Powered Metro New York) - Whole food plantbased nutrition is reversing disease. Looking for airtime through different places in the Community to give a presentation. <u>enrica@ppnny.org</u>

Dino Panagoulias (Board Member) – New grocery owner received a \$1000 fine for not having a COVID temperature check-in chart for his employees, he is his only employee. He showed inspector all his licenses, small business. Where can this small business owner turn to help him, there should be more about education especially for new businesses.

The Chair, Marie Torniali – I am aware of several instances of this. The rules were apparently made clear when the business opened/re-opened. That was a tool that they needed to file for their employees. You can call the office tomorrow. I would suggest that he contact Consumer Affairs.

Alex S. (Constituent) – Sanitation and the current state in Astoria garbage piled up everywhere asking if there is anything that can be done to increase pick-up.

Alexandra (Constituent) – Citi Bikes are out of control, share roads, share responsibility. What is Community Board 1 doing to address delivery drivers not following driving/traffic laws. She contacted Senator Gianaris via Instagram and via phone, no satisfaction.

The Chair, Marie Torniali – We would need more enforcement, perhaps you could write directly to your local elected official as well.

Jennifer Lopez (Constituent) – Supportive of Citi Bikes because she does not own a car. Complained about noisy cars at all hours. She shared that she put in her application to be a part of the Board. Asked if NYPD (the 114<sup>th</sup> Precinct) attend these Board meetings.

The Chair responded, be assured the NYPD Community Affairs Office is on the call, Carlos Chacon is here. She introduced Officer Chacon.

Officer Carlos Chacon, Community Affairs Office, 114<sup>th</sup> Precinct – Good evening everyone, I would like to say that some of these complaints such as the loud mufflers and the bicycles are not isolated problems to the 114<sup>th</sup> Precinct. This is the entire city and outside the City as well. It is not like these cars are driving quietly outside the 114<sup>th</sup> Precinct and then once they get to our neighborhood, and into Astoria they turn their mufflers all of a sudden on as loud as they are once, they get into Astoria. That is not the case, it is an issue the entire city is facing, and we are as a city are addressing. As far as the bicycles, we have limited resources, limited amount of police officers that focus more on motorized vehicles that are more dangerous by law of numbers as opposed to the bicycles. So, for our officers to start aggressively enforcing bicycles taking red lights or bicyclists using cell phones, unless it is done in a very reckless manner, maybe to the point of causing an accident. That is where we stand.

Steven Bodzin (Constituent) – I am a cyclist and appreciate bike lanes. They have decreased the danger, more people riding bikes means less cars.

Adam Schreiber (Constituent) – Is a volunteer with volunteer group Proud Astorian. Requesting to restore Sanitation conditions in Astoria discussed negative impact budget cuts have had most effect on litter baskets.

Jesse Cerrotti (Constituent) – Is a volunteer with Proud Astorian. Spoke about accomplishments of the group and stated they have over 250 volunteers. Cannot be resolved by calling 311, suggests CB1 start an emergency Sanitation Committee to assist in obtaining funding, acknowledge problem.

Eli (Constituent) – I am the BBQ guy on 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue, it was approved by DOT and was part of a charity event, money is given to Astoria Mutual Aid or Astoria Food Pantry, no profit motivation. Requesting if CB1 can create a way for neighbors to come together to discuss differences to minimize animosity regarding bikes, bike lanes and 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue closing streets.

The Chair, Marie Torniali – We will give some thought to this. It is not a bad idea. Next time you have this issue you may want to call the Community Board Office. Everything is more difficult because nobody can talk in person.

Laura Shepard (Constituent) – Thanks Transportation Committee regarding Northern Boulevard bike lane protection. She is a cyclist and the protected infrastructure helps.

Christine (Constituent) – Against the bicycle lane on Crescent Street by Mount Sinai because difficulties accessing hospital Emergency Room. Against closed streets by Astoria Park, she has no access to waterfront. Not against Citi Bike – just the amount they have brought to Astoria and the effects on small business owners.

The Chair - Please send an email to the Board Office regarding that statement please.

Sam (Constituent) - Feels older Astorians are neglected but newer residents' concerns are addressed.

Josh Tjaden (Constituent) – Speaking for Proud Astorian. Wants to model success of CB1 that can be applied to Sanitation. Shared that CB4 Manhattan wrote a letter to the Mayor in response to fiscal year 2022 on behalf of their constituents.

The Chair, Marie Torniali – That is a great idea. Maybe Proud Astorian can send a letter to the Community Board. We will then take that under advisement and draft our own letter in support of restoring the budget cut.

Isabella Duenas (Constituent) - Proud Astorian volunteer, there needs to be a push to escalate efforts.

Juan Restrepo, Queens Organizer for Transportation Alternatives - We have a diverse population in Astoria, and we should be welcoming of all opinions. Keep open mind to not be simplistic.

Kate Peterson (Constituent) – Volunteer of Proud Astorian, emphasized severity of the sanitation problem in Astoria. You do some amazing things for the Community, need to act on proposed budget as a community.

Maria Zois (Constituent) – Bicyclists and drivers need to keep open mind of each other's needs; it is not black or white. CB1 could have a Committee that looked out for seniors and the disabled to find alternatives to keep cyclists and drivers happy.

The Chair – We have a Committee for Health & Human Services and that is not a bad place to start for something like this.

Thomas Ryan (Board Member) – The role of the Community Board is to advise and recommend, that is the extent of our abilities to accomplish things. Regarding sharing of the roads, bikes, cars and pedestrians, I have witnessed people not following traffic laws. We have all these protected bike lanes, but bikes go into car lanes. We cannot have it both ways, use one or the other. We need to share the road.

The Chair, Marie Torniali – I am sure we can all learn to share the road and Astoria each in our different ways. I think we have managed all these years. I am a long time Astorian too. I think the old timers and the new timers can come together to find common ground. We just have to be a little patient. Thank you all for being here.

The Chair, Marie Torniali Motioned to Adjourn.

Motioned by Thomas Ryan; Seconded by Dino Panagoulias

Meeting Adjourned: 8:40 p.m.

COMMUNITY BOARD 1, Queens

DATE \_\_\_\_\_\_

### ATTENDANCE FULL BOARD MEETING

Community Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	Community Board Member	Yes No	Abs.
Rose Anne Alafogiannis	1	•	E	Jerry Kril		
George Alexiou	V			Hannah Lupien		1
Daniel Aliberti		1		Jeffrey Martin	V	
Loren Amor		V		Amin Mehedi		1
Avninder Aujla	1			Antonio Meloni	V	
Edward Babor	1	1		Eric Mouchette	,	E
Louise Bordley		V		Stella Nicolaou	V.	1
Ann Bruno	V			Norma Nieves-Blas	V	
Gerald Caliendo	VI			Mary O'Hara		
Irak Dahir Cehonski	V	1	-	Dino Panagoulias	V	1
Jean Marie D'Alleva			K	Juliet Payabyab	¥ 1	1
Antonella Di Saverio	V.		1 0	Robert Piazza		*
Katie Ellman	V,	i		RoseMarie Poveromo	V	
Elizabeth Erion	V	1		Yawne Robinson	IV	
Mackenzi Farquer		V		Thomas Ryan	.VI	
Dean Feratovic	V			Rodolfo Sarchese	V ,	
Shahenaz Hamde	V.			Dominic Stiller	V	
Evie Hantzopoulos	V			Andre Stith	1	
Amy Hau	V			Marie Torniali	V	
Helen Ho		İ	F	Rod Townsend	VI	
Pauline Jannelli	V		N	Judy Trilivas	V	
Vanessa Jones-Hall				Kathleen Warnock	VI	
Richard Khuzami	V			Mitchell Waxman		
Nancy Konipol	V					
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Present <u>33</u>	Abse	nt	10	Excused <u>4</u>	-	
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## 22-06 31st Street Queens February 2021



22-06 31st Street, Queens Quick Facts

### 22-06 31st Street

- **Proposed Actions:** Proposed amendment of a previously granted special permit (2017-286-BZ) pursuant to ZR Sections 73-36 and 73-03 to expand and enlarge the existing physical culture establishment (PCE).
- Existing Conditions:
  - Queens Community District 1
  - Development Site: Block 844, Lot 40
  - Lot Area: 7,251 sq feet
  - Existing Floor Area: 27,723 sq feet (3.82 FAR)
  - Existing Zoning: C4-2A, R5D/C1-3

#### • Proposed Conditions:

• Expansion of the existing PCE to a total of 18,863 sq ft of floor area spread across the cellar and first floor of the building.

# Existing Conditions

Aerial Map (Area)
Aerial Map (Surrounding Uses)
Zoning Map

4. Photographs



22-06 31st Street, Queens Aerial Map (Area)



#### 22-06 31st Street, Queens

Aerial Map (Surrounding Uses)



#### 22-06 31st Street, Queens Zoning Map



















## Proposed Actions

1. Tax Map

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2. Radius Map



#### 22-06 31st Street, Queens Tax Map



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#### 22-06 31st Street, Queens Radius Map



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Prepared for Eric Palatnik, PC., by Urban Cartographics

## Proposed Conditions

1. Existing-Proposed Plans









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