



The City of New York

Queens Community Board 11

Serving the Communities of Auburndale, Bayside, Douglaston, Hollis Hills
Little Neck and Oakland Gardens

Paul DiBenedetto, Chair / **Joseph Marziliano**, District Manager

TO: All Board Members
FROM: Paul DiBenedetto, Ad-Hoc Committee Chair
RE: 'City of YES' Zoning Text Amendments
DATE: November 21, 2023

On November 21, 2023, an Ad-Hoc Committee meeting was held to discuss the 'City of YES' zoning text amendments N 240010 ZRY and N 240011 ZRY.

Present

Paul DiBenedetto – Chair
Victor Dadras – 1st Vice Chair
Henry Euler* – 2nd Vice Chair
Fleur Martino – 3rd Vice Chair
Joan Garippa – Committee Member
Jena Lanzetta* – Committee Member
Eileen Miller* – Committee Member
Douglas Montgomery – Committee Member
Sam Wong* – Committee Member

*** - Denotes Committee Members
who could vote but were not
counted towards quorum.**

Christina Scherer – Board Member
Laura James – Board Member
Robert Liatto – Board Member
Ben Turner – Board member
Matthew Mamak – Board Member
Jyothi Sriram – Board Member

Joseph Marziliano – District Manager
Scott Solomon – NYC Planning
Joseph Concannon, Resident
Carin Bail, Resident

The meeting started with Mr. DiBenedetto explaining that this meeting was to discuss two proposed zoning text amendments (N 240010 ZRY and N 240011 ZRY), known as City of YES. The amendments seek to support economic growth and resiliency in New York City and to add new Manufacturing district options.

Mr. Solomon gave a brief presentation:

Slides →

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/dxh6pgttws122red65s8h/COYEO-CB-Presentation_CD-11.pdf?rlkey=r34tzg90qgifqf92dwgn71hy0&dl=0).

This proposal seeks to improve the challenges businesses face in NYC. Namely, where businesses can open, zoning uses, and expansions. The zoning resolution is over 60 years old, and is loaded with outdated rules such as cabaret laws, loading dock regulations, etc. This is a deregulatory program.

There are 18 proposals, with four main goals including: 1) To make it easier to find space and grow, 2) Support growing industries, 3) Foster vibrant neighborhoods, and 4) New opportunities for businesses. This will impact CB 11 most by simplifying district types, where similar zoning districts have distinct borders, make it easier for commercial businesses to use upper floors, and modernize use terms (therefore expanding the definition of uses such as home occupations). These measures also seek to support growing businesses which were previously more restricted such as indoor agriculture, life sciences, nightlife, and amusements (arcade and virtual reality). There will also be a focus on micro distribution warehouses for local delivery and reduction of conflict with auto repair shops.

Residential Zoning Districts would be substantially changed including an eased pathway to reactivate vacant existing storefronts, updated rules for home occupations (as previously mentioned), a new zoning tool to permit local retail, services, and maker-space at NYCHA and other residential campuses, and create process to potentially allow new corner stores in residential areas. The expansion of home occupations would allow for up to three employees on site.

Mr. DiBenedetto noted that this is a vast proposal. He then opened the forum to questions from Board Members. Mr. Euler inquired about the expansions for amusements, arcades, and nightlife. He noted that these are the establishments that pose a public safety threat and asked if there will be anything within the proposal to address those concerns. Mr. Solomon noted that the restriction on these businesses has been asked for from other communities during DCP's listening tour. Ms. Miller asked if this was related to Carbon Neutrality. Mr. Solomon stated that this is different. Ms. Garippa asked if this would impact the Landmarked District in CB11, and Mr. Solomon stated that it would not. Ms. Sriram asked if the agricultural use has anything to do with Cannabis stores, and Mr. Solomon stated that no, the agriculture use updates agriculture use beyond greenhouses. Mr. DiBenedetto thanked Mr. Solomon for the presentation and his time.

A motion was made by Mr. Euler to recommend approval of the City of YES proposal, seconded by Mr. Montgomery. Mr. Liatto stated that he believes that the old zoning resolution does not seem to need such a large overhaul. Mr. Turner stated that it is important to remember that this is a very large plan and we do not have all of the details yet. Ms. Garippa feels that the plan is too expansive in favor of businesses in quiet, low density, residential areas. Mr. Marziliano stated that the proposal of this omnibus zoning change utilizes two zoning text amendments and over 18 proposals. The most digestible changes such as terms and definitions could have been passed on their own as department rule changes. Ms. Martino stated that a lot of being proposed seems altruistic but not well formed for being so expansive. She stated that there is about 660 pages of this plan, which the Board cannot ignore. Ms. James stated that there are good elements from this proposal, but zoning needs are not uniform citywide, and smaller stores on many street corners are not best for every neighborhood. She is also not in favor of this omnibus approach.

Ms. Lanzetta thinks that this proposal is too dense a package to support, and the expansion of home occupations is alarming. Mr. Mamak stated that this plan is very large and seems inapplicable to our community based on the impact proposed. Mr. DiBenedetto stated that this proposal is a mixed grouping of good proposals and some areas which do not seem to be positive. He also stated that this community district was recently rezoned in the early 2000's, which was updated since the 1960's and has still not grown past its intended growth targets.

A roll call vote was taken, and the motion did not pass.

These zoning text amendments will be heard at the December 4, 2023 Public Hearing.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.