

**MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD 11
GENERAL BOARD MEETING**

*November 4, 2024
Paul DiBenedetto – Chair*

PRESENT AT MEETING

CB 11 Staff:

Joseph Marziliano – District Manager

Christina Coutinho – Community Associate

Elected Officials and/or Representatives:

Melinda Katz

Queens District Attorney

Koshy Thomas

Representing Assembly Member Braunstein

Evelyn Mallo

Representing Council Member Paladino

Ruocheng Chen

Representing Council Member Lee

Megan Youn

NYC Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit

NYPD:

PO Tom Corey – 111th Precinct Community Affairs Unit

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 PM by Chair, Paul DiBenedetto.

Mr. DiBenedetto led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Paul Kutschera spoke regarding his opposition to the installation of a bike lane on 46th Avenue. The new configuration of 46th Avenue is very dangerous. He asked the Board for their support to remove the bike lane. Mr. DiBenedetto stated that the Board has worked very hard on giving the DOT recommendations for improved bike lanes.

Melinda Katz, Queens District Attorney, discussed the following topics in length: ghost guns, property deed fraud, pattern scams, hate crimes, and the raising problem with squatters.

Megan Youn spoke regarding upcoming events held by the Mayor.

Koshy Thomas spoke regarding upcoming events.

Ruocheng Chen spoke regarding upcoming events.

Evelyn Mallo spoke regarding upcoming events.

P.O. Corey gave the monthly crime statistics. The next 111th Community Police Council meeting will be held on November 7, 2024.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

Adriana Aviles, Lana Bind, Jessica Burke, Victor Dadras, Paul DiBenedetto, Henry Euler, Michelle Fields, Jack Fried, Albert Galatan, Joan Garippa, Michael Golia, Rosemarie Guidice, George Hadjiconstantinou, Tim Hao, Mohan Jethwani, Travis Kessel, Jena Lanzetta, Robert Liatto, Matthew Mamak, Fleur Martino, Karen Mazza, Eileen Miller, Kenneth O’Keefe, Stephen Pivawer, Ann Puckett, Megan Rha, Seihee Ryu, Amesh Sarecha, Christina Scherer, John Sullivan, Benjamin Turner, Sam Wong

Members Absent

Michael Budabin, Susan Cerezo, Sharon Chin, Carmen Collado, C. Omarr Evans, Mario Ferazzoli, Elias Filas, Laura James, George Mihaltses, Akshar Patel, Gunjan Rastogi, Ralph Ruiz, Jyothi Sriram, Eileen Taylor, David White, Athena Wu, Mina Youn

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the October 2024 meeting by Benjamin Turner. The motion was seconded by Jack Fried. A voice vote was taken resulting 30 in favor and 2 abstentions. The minutes were approved as written.

(In-favor - Adriana Aviles, Lana Bind, Jessica Burke, Victor Dadras, Paul DiBenedetto, Henry Euler, Michelle Fields, Jack Fried, Albert Galatan, Joan Garippa, Michael Golia, Rosemarie Guidice, George Hadjiconstantinou, Tim Hao, Mohan Jethwani, Jena Lanzetta, Robert Liatto, Matthew Mamak, Fleur Martino, Eileen Miller, Kenneth O’Keefe, Stephen Pivawer, Ann Puckett, Megan Rha, Seihee Ryu, Amesh Sarecha, Christina Scherer, John Sullivan, Benjamin Turner, Sam Wong *– Abstained –* Travis Kessel, Karen Mazza)

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

- 1) On Tuesday, October 22, 2024, the City of Yes Housing Opportunity proposal was heard by the Zoning & Franchises Committee of the City Council. This was the only public hearing for the City of Yes. Over 700 people registered but a large number were not able to speak. Several people that were opposed were not able to speak due to, in my opinion, an inadequate hearing process which is a failure of democratic values as citizens. I was able to testify and on behalf of CB11: I used many points that our Board discussed. There is a QR code to scan to hear my testimony.
- 2) A letter was sent to Ameriland Brook, LLC, a developer that has built several new homes within CB11 regarding the proliferation of illegal signage and advertisements posted on their construction fences. This kind of signage is visual pollution and is against NYC Department of Building Code §3307.4.6. If this signage is not removed the office will begin to report the sites to 311 for inspection.
- 3) NYC is officially under a drought watch. DEP has reached out asking everyone to conserve water. The reservoirs in the Croton system are noticeably lower than usual. Please do your best to help.
- 4) The Mayor’s office has been vigorously going after illegal cannabis shops in our district.
- 5) The District Manager and I were invited to the grand opening a NY State legal cannabis dispensary on Union Turnpike. All the OCM protocols were closely followed.
- 6) Council Member Paladino did an excellent job hosting former Council Member Paul Vallone’s street co-naming in Bowne Park.
- 7) The DM and I were invited to attend a domestic violence presentation on October 30, 2024, at DA Katz’s office. I did not make it, but Mr. Marziliano did.
- 8) Tomorrow is Election Day, and everyone should exercise their right to vote.

BOARD MEMBER NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Euler said that tonight's BSA application will be heard at the Board of Standards and Appeals on Wednesday. Mr. Euler said he attended the City of Yes Housing Opportunity public hearings. He discussed how it was very disorganized, especially for public speakers. Mr. DiBenedetto said that letters could still be written and forwarded to City Council speaker Adrienne Adams.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

BSA Cal. No. 374-71BZ 205-11 Northern Blvd. *An application to the Board of Standards and Appeals for the above-referenced location, Star Toyota for an extension to the term of variance.*

North Bayside/East Flushing Committee Co-Chair, Jena Lanzetta reviewed the Committee report of October 16, 2024. Ms. Lanzetta stated that the Committee members had questions. Several questions were not answered by the applicant's representative. There is a neighbor that has several problems with the owners of the site encroaching on their property. The applicant's representative, Todd Dale, over Zoom discussed the application. He said that this application is to extend an expired variance, the property is an L-shaped lot that is approximately 15,000 sq. ft. The existing building is approximately 7,530 sq. ft. The eventual floor area of the building would be approximately 10,000 sq. ft. There will be one story with a 28' mezzanine. Part of this site is in a C2-2 Commercial District and the other portion is in R3-2 zoning. This application is to extend the term of the variance for 10 years, with all the prior conditions and to include the enlargement in the plans. There are DOB approved plans, and a permit issued for the enlargement. Mr. Dale spoke regarding the licensing agreement with the neighbor. This case went before a judge, and a two-year license agreement with compensation was agreed on. The Board Members questioned Mr. Dale. There will be an increased number of offices, the total height of the extension will be 28 ft. Parking will be increased per Mr. Dale. There are conditions in the variance for parking. Discussion ensued regarding the neighbors and the index number of the motion on their license agreement. There are 16 parking spaces and that will not change. There was a concern regarding the how Star Toyota employees disregard the community and how cars are parked in the residential area. The following public speakers voiced their opinion: 1) Max Chau, his property abuts Star Toyota, said that he believes there is a license proposal and only one check has been received. There is scaffolding on his property, the construction crew climbs on the roof of his garage. There was lengthy discussion regarding the license agreement and the issues Mr. Chau is having in trying to correct the monies that are listed on the agreement. 2) John Capozzi stated that construction started before any safety precaution were put in place. Star Toyota owns several showrooms in the near vicinity and vehicles are parked in the residential area.

3) Seon Chung stated that Star Toyota's air conditioning unit releases waste into her garden.

4) Jem Chau stated one check was received from the Licensing agreement and they have not cashed it. Mrs. Chau discussed how cars are parked on the sidewalk and cars are parked illegally on the residential street. Customer parking lot is used for new vehicles. She stated that this establishment never follows the conditions or rules of the variance. Several photos have been sent to Board showing the debris in her yard and construction workers on her roof.

A motion was made to approve this application to extend the term of the variance for 10 years by Albert Galatan. The motion was seconded by Michele Fields. There was a lengthy discussion stating that this establishment has never followed the rules. The extension will change the air and sunlight quality for the neighbors. Mr. Dale said tonight's vote is for an extension of term for a variance and waiver for late filing. Construction for the vertical enlargement is approved by the DOB and is as right, if the construction stays within the C2-2 District. The variance is for the residential use of the lot. Mr. Euler said that on the BSA website, it states the application is for extension of term and building. The Committee report states the application also seeks to update the plans to reflect the Dept. of Buildings approval for a vertical enlargement and obtain a waiver

for the delay in filing. A roll call vote was taken resulting in 31 opposed and 1 abstention. The motion was denied.

(Opposed - Adriana Aviles, Lana Bind, Jessica Burke, Victor Dadras, Paul DiBenedetto, Henry Euler, Michelle Fields, Jack Fried, Joan Garippa, Michael Golia, Rosemarie Guidice, George Hadjiconstantinou, Tim Hao, Mohan Jethwani, Travis Kessel, Jena Lanzetta, Robert Liatto, Matthew Mamak, Fleur Martino, Karen Mazza, Eileen Miller, Kenneth O'Keefe, Stephen Pivawer, Ann Puckett, Megan Rha, Seihee Ryu, Amesh Sarecha, Christina Scherer, John Sullivan, Benjamin Turner, Sam Wong – Abstain – Albert Galatan)

Adoption of Community Board 11's Capital and Expense Budget priorities for Fiscal Year 2026. Capital and Expense Committee – Paul DiBenedetto, Chair, discussed how the Committee met and reviewed the budget priorities. The list was updated, and additional lots were added for Udalls Cove. There was one public speaker, Walter Mugdan. Mr. Mugdan discussed funds that the City has to purchase two parcels. He asked the Board for support to purchase the other parcels. A question and answer period followed. A motion was made to approve the budget priorities by Travis Kessel. The motion was seconded by George Hadjiconstantinou. A vote by show of hands was taken and resulted unanimously in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM