

MINUTES OF COMMUNITY BOARD 11
GENERAL BOARD MEETING

January 6, 2025
Paul DiBenedetto – Chair

PRESENT AT MEETING

CB 11 Staff:

Joseph Marziliano – District Manager

Christina Coutinho – Community Associate

Elected Officials and/or Representatives:

Patrick Jordan

Representing the Queens Borough President.

Allie Ziraschi

Representing Council Member Paladino

Jon Gallo

Representing State Senator Liu

Jess Mueller

Representing Assembly Member Braunstein

Kate Boehme

Representing Queens DA Katz

Lya Rothmann

Representing Council Member Lee

Lucia Paredes

Representing Council Member Ung

NYPD:

PO Tom Corey – 111th Precinct Community Affairs Unit

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM by Chair, Paul DiBenedetto.

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

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Karen Schlachter spoke regarding her displeasure on how the public hearing for the Windsor Park proposal was handled by the CB11 Chair.

Jaye Solomwitz spoke regarding her displeasure on how the public hearing for the Windsor Park proposal was handled by the CB11 Chair.

Benjamin Solomwitz spoke regarding his displeasure on how the public hearing for the Windsor Park application was handled by the CB11 Chair.

Sarah Solomwitz spoke regarding her displeasure on how the public hearing for the Windsor Park proposal was handled by the CB11 Chair.

Joseph Kuceluk spoke regarding his displeasure on how the public hearing for the Windsor Park proposal was handled by the CB11 Chair.

Mona Kuceluk spoke regarding her displeasure on how the public hearing for the Windsor Park proposal was handled by the CB11 Chair.

Gail Koerner spoke regarding her displeasure on how the public hearing for the Windsor Park proposal was handled by the CB11 Chair.

Ed Goyes spoke regarding his displeasure on how the public hearing for the Windsor Park was handled by the CB11 Chair.

George Spypoulus spoke regarding his displeasure on how the public hearing for the Windsor Park proposal was handled by the CB11 Chair.

Mr. DiBenedetto spoke regarding the process of a public hearing and explained the how the vote for the Windsor Park proposal was not unanimous. He stated a majority of the public speakers in attendance voiced support of the project: approx. 2/3rds of the public who registered spoke in favor of the proposal, while about 1/3 spoke against it. As well, about 60% of the CB11 members' vote was in support of the proposal, with ~40% against. That is but a slim majority as far as our typical vote tallies go and is evidence of a fair and unbiased meeting, filled with constructive debate. He said that the CB always makes a fair and educated decision, based on all points made and on the public response. He said that the community board vote is only a recommendation and if they are unhappy with this proposal, they should speak to their own coop board management. Also, folks can write to City Planning before the public hearing and voice their opinion.

Patrick Jordan stated that the Community Board Member application period is now open. He advised to apply on the Queens Borough President's website. This will remain open for the next five to seven weeks.

Allie Ziraschi spoke regarding upcoming events sponsored by Council Member Paladino.

Kate Boheme spoke regarding current cases the DA is currently working on.

Keith Felsenfeld introduced himself as the new Chief of Staff for the Office of Council Member Lee. He announced upcoming events.

Jon Gallo spoke regarding upcoming events.

Jess Mueller said their office had a successful toy drive.

Lya Rothmann stated that Senator Stavisky office is open, and they can be reached at 718-445-0004.

Lucia Paredes spoke regarding upcoming events.

PO Corey spoke regarding crime stats and current crime patterns. The 111th Precinct is sponsoring a blood drive.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

Adriana Aviles, Michael Budabin, Jessica Burke, Susan Cerezo, Sharon Chin, Carmen Collado, Victor Dadras, Paul DiBenedetto, Henry Euler, C. Omar Evans, Mario Ferazzoli, Michelle Fields, Elias Fillas, Albert Galatan, Joan Garippa, Rosemarie Guidice, George Hadjiconstantinou, Tim Hao, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Travis Kessel, Jena Lanzetta, Robert Liato, Matthew Mamak, Fleur Martino, Karen Mazza, George Mihaltses, Eileen Miller, Kenneth O'Keefe, Stephen Pivawer, Gunjan Rastogi, Megan Rha, Ralph Ruiz, Seihee Ryu, Christina Scherer, Jyothi Sriram, John Sullivan, Eileen Taylor, Benjamin Turner, David White, Sam Wong, Mina Youn

Members Absent

Lana Bind, Jack Fried, Michael Golia, Akshar Patel, Ann Pucket, Amesh Sarecha, Athena Wu

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the December 2024 meeting by Ms. Collado. The motion was seconded by Ms. Fields. There were no corrections or additions. A roll call vote was taken resulting 34 in favor, 7 abstentions and 2 present. The minutes were approved as written.

(In-favor - Adriana Aviles, Susan Cerezo, Sharon Chin, Carmen Collado, Victor Dadras, Paul DiBenedetto, Henry Euler, C. Omar Evans, Mario Ferazzoli, Michelle Fields, Elias Fillas, Albert Galatan, Joan Garippa, Rosemarie Guidice, George Hadjiconstantinou, Mohan Jethwani, Travis Kessel, Jena Lanzetta, Robert Liato, Matthew Mamak, Karen Mazza, George Mihaltses, Eileen Miller, Kenneth O'Keefe, Megan Rha, Ralph Ruiz, Seihee Ryu, Christina Scherer, John Sullivan, Eileen Taylor, Benjamin Turner, David White, Athena Wu – Abstention – Michael Budabin, Jessica Burke, Laura James, Fleur Martino, Gunjan Rastogi, Jyothi Sriram, Sam Wong – Present – Tim Hao, Stephan Pivawer)

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

- 1) There was a Winter Festival at the Douglaston Plaza.
- 2) Congestion Pricing is in effect. This will affect businesses and the cost will be passed onto the consumer.
- 3) The Queens Civic Congress has started a lawsuit against the City of Yes proposal.

- 4) This month there are three committee meetings scheduled: Central South Bayside Zoning, Public Relations, and Public Safety and Licensing.
- 5) The public hearing regarding Windsor Park was conducted fair. In large public meetings, order must always be maintained for safety of all participants and for board members to make fair decisions, uncluttered by unjust threats. Our decision was for one building to be erected, not two, which was based on it being more economical, less invasive/intrusive to the park's design and for the fact that the single building height is similar to other buildings already existing on the property. When major building projects are proposed it is never easy. Indeed, it is difficult. Additionally, the CB's vote is a non-binding recommendation. A question and answer period followed regarding the election of a co-op board and how residents should engage in the process there.

BOARD MEMBER NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Turner said that there are some benefits to congestion pricing. Asthma is a real problem.

Mr. White said that he can understand the frustration of the residents of Windsor Park Co-ops. The decision should be at the resident level and the Co-op board should be listening to their residents. Mr. White said he is a national registered parliamentarian and sees this problem in other co-op boards. Mr. White agreed with Mr. Turner regarding congestion pricing.

Board Members must reapply every two years.

Mr. Euler said he knows Mr. DiBenedetto over 20 years, and he has always been respectful. When there is meeting with several people there must be structure. Mr. Euler voted against the proposal and ended this topic by saying Mr. DiBenedetto did a wonderful job conducting the meeting. Mr. Euler gave an update on the Board of Standards and Appeals open cases. He mentioned that there is a problem with the Board of Standards and Appeals website.

Mr. Hadjiconstantinou said that the Queens Chamber of Commerce is collecting information for a grant to see who shops in College Point. He asked if this survey link could be added in the CB11 weekly digest. He also spoke regarding the public hearing for Windsor Park, and he disputed what the public speakers said regarding the Chair's conduct.

Ms. Martino said she respects the Windsor Park resident's comments tonight. She said there is no opportunity to have a co-op board election and in her opinion, she and other residents feel blindsided by the co-op board. She gave an update on events she conducted as the Public Relations Committee Chair.

Ms. Collado stated a chair, or an executive of a meeting sets the rules. She said she voted against the Windsor Park proposal and felt Mr. DiBenedetto conducted the meeting professionally.

Mr. Mamak said he voted against the Windsor Park proposal, and he felt Mr. DiBenedetto conducted the meeting fairly.

Ms. Miller said Mr. DiBenedetto conducted the meeting fairly especially since there were so many registered speakers.

Ms. Burke said she was not at the meeting, but she believes that the Board would not allow the Chair to do something that is not right. Urban Park Rangers will be at Crocheron Park conducting an advanced campfire building class.

Mr. Galatan said he disagreed with the other Board Members and feels that Mr. DiBenedetto was biased regarding the Windsor Park public hearing.

Mr. DiBenedetto said he has no reason to be biased; he does not live there.

Mr. Jethwani said he has never seen Mr. DiBenedetto be biased on any topic, and he believes if someone said that, they could have a biased motive.

Mr. Pivawer said that Mr. DeBenedetto did nothing wrong, and as Board Members we take voting very seriously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:53 PM