

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

*September 8, 2025
Paul DiBenedetto – Chair*

PRESENT AT MEETING

CB 11 Staff:

Joseph Marziliano – District Manager

Christina Coutinho – Community Associate

Elected Officials and/or Representatives:

Patick Jordan

Representing Queens Borough President Richards

Evelyn Mallo

Representing Council Member Paladino

Sila Asa

Representing Council Member Lee

Lucia Paredes

Representing Council Member Ung

Jess Muller

Representing Assembly Member Braunstein

Kate Boehme

Representing Queens DA Katz

Jon Gallo

Representing State Senator Liu

Dept. of City Planning

Mary Charlotte Gitlin (DCP)

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

Girl Scout, Emilia McKinny, spoke regarding a study on John Golden Pond. A group spearheaded by Ms. McKinny tested the water and performed environmental studies of John Golden Pond. Ms. McKinny asked for a meeting with DEP, Parks and DOT to discuss the negative results they found.

Leela Fiorino, a retired City worker and former Board Member, spoke regarding maintaining health benefits for City retirees. She requested a meeting with the CB11 Government Affairs/Legal Committee.

Jim Colasante spoke in opposition to the proposed application to the Dept. of City Planning to rezone 217-14 24th Avenue to a R6-A from an R1-2.

Paul Graziano, Urban Planner, spoke in opposition to the proposed application to the Dept. of City Planning to rezone 217-14 24th Avenue to a R6-A from R1-2.

Sylvia Johnson, representing the Bay Terrace Community Alliance, also spoke in opposition to the proposed rezoning application.

Gary Jacobowitz, representing the Bay Terrace Community Alliance, also spoke in opposition to the proposed rezoning application.

Jessica Mueller, representing Assembly Member Braunstein, gave an update on events.

Kate Boheme, representing Queens DA Katz, spoke regarding an arrest of a squatter in Auburndale.

Evelyn Mallo, representing Council Member Paladino, spoke regarding the upcoming events that the Council Member is working on.

Lucia Paredes, representing Council Member Ung, spoke regarding the upcoming events that the Council Member is working on.

Patrick Jordan, representing Queens Borough President Richards, spoke regarding the upcoming events that the Borough President is working on.

Sila Asa, representing Council Member Lee, spoke regarding the upcoming events that the Council Member is working on.

Jon Gallo, representing State Senator Liu, spoke regarding the upcoming events that the State Senator is working on. Senator Liu will be at the October 6th monthly meeting.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

Lana Bind, Jessica Burke, Sharon Chin, Victor Dadras, Paul DiBenedetto, Dilcia Erazo, Henry Euler, C. Omarr Evans, Mario Ferazzoli, Michelle Fields, Jack Fried, Joan Garippa, Michael Golia, C. Kevin Green, George Guan, Rosemarie Guidice, George Hadjiconstantinou, Melanie Harster, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Zhengyu Kang, Bernadette Kelly, Jena Lanzetta, Matthew Mamak, Fleur Martino, Karen Mazza, Eileen Miller, Kenneth O'Keefe, Stephen Pivawer, Megan Rha, David Ro, Ralph Ruiz, Amesh Sarecha, Christina Scherer, Jyothi Sriram, Eileen Taylor, David White, Sam Wong

Members Absent

Elias Fillas, Vanessa Guest, Tim Hao, Travis Kessel, George Mihaltses. Gunjan Rastogi, John Sullivan, Athena Wu, Mina Youn

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A motion was made to accept the minutes of June 2025, by George Hadjiconstantinou. The motion was seconded by Joan Garippa. A vote by show of hands resulted unanimously in favor. The minutes were approved as written.

(In-favor - Lana Bind, Jessica Burke, Sharon Chin, Victor Dadras, Paul DiBenedetto, Dilcia Erazo, Henry Euler, C. Omarr Evans, Mario Ferazzoli, Michelle Fields, Jack Fried, Joan Garippa, Michael Golia, C. Kevin Green, George Guan, Rosemarie Guidice, George Hadjiconstantinou, Melanie Harster, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Zhengyu Kang, Bernadette Kelly, Jena Lanzetta, Matthew Mamak, Fleur Martino, Karen Mazza, Eileen Miller, Kenneth O'Keefe, Stephen Pivawer, Megan Rha, David Ro, Ralph Ruiz, Amesh Sarecha, Christina Scherer, Jyothi Sriram, Eileen Taylor, David White, Sam Wong)

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Welcome to our new monthly meeting location, Bayside High School Auditorium. Thanks to Principal Tracy Martinez and her staff for making it all happen.

I attended the 7/14/25 Borough Board Meeting at Queens Borough Hall. There will be new EV chargers coming to JFK on city property that was sold to Wildflower JFK North, LLC. During the Public Safety Overview portion of the meeting, I asked, Queens North Deputy Chief Ortiz, if the woefully understaffed 111th Pct. could expect more manpower? He kindly but unfortunately answered that our “beautiful precinct” will not receive more officers due to priorities within the Dept. Let’s hope that changes.

Some unfortunate news - there was a fire in our community board office. We are extremely grateful that no one was hurt, but the damage to the space has closed the office for an extended period. Joseph, Christina and Jane are working from home. I ask everyone to please have patience while we negotiate this difficult situation. All committee meetings will temporarily be held on Zoom only.

Several of our committees met through the summer: By-Laws, Parks, Public Licensing & Safety, Economic Development, Landmarks and the Executive Committee. Thanks to all the Committee Chairs, Board Members, public and staff who attended. This is a good time to bring up and to emphasize the importance of board members attending their respective committee meetings. Truly, the work of the community board is done at the committee level. That is where the business at hand is brought forth, questions are raised, opinions heard and ultimately, where the details are distilled for the full board to hear at our monthly meetings. Attendance has been less than stellar at some committee meetings and as such, quorum is not always reached, which leaves us without a motion for the full board to work from. Without strong committee attendance, we will be having longer monthly meetings. So again, please READ your emails from CB11 and attend your assigned committee meetings.

Some news about the CB11 Landmarks Committee and the Landmarks Preservation Commission. Front-facing solar panels are now allowed in historic districts in NYC, and one is coming to a home in our own Douglas Manor Historic District, as per the LPC’s decision after our CB11 committee hearing. This is not a good precedent to set for our protected districts and will be closely watched by the committee going forward.

This Thursday, September 11, 2025, at 7:00 PM, Bayside Hills Civic Association, will be commemorating the 24th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. The location is at the North corner of Horace Harding Expressway and Bell Boulevard. I will be attending.

Thank you, Joseph Marziliano, for attending the grand reopening of the Bayside Marina. The entire facility, from the parking lot to the docks and clubhouse, there has been major renovations, so please be sure to get out there to support the new vendor. They have made the clubhouse more of a destination location for people to frequent. We are proud of our CB’s work to ensure that dockside service to the moorings in Little Neck Bay was restored.

Joseph, Christina and I all attended and chaired a table at the 111th Precinct’s annual National Night Out event. It was very well attended. Our own Jack Fried, 111th Community Council President, was presented with multiple citations for his lifetime of work with the precinct.

There is an extremely important North Bayside/East Flushing Zoning Committee meeting coming up on Sept. 16th, to review a ULURP application (for our newer board members, this is an acronym

for the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure) that proposes the largest, single, spot-zoning change I have ever seen proposed in my 21 years on this board. It proposes an absurdly large, dense, high-rise building to be built via a singularly massive upzoning to R6A from what is now currently R1-2, which is the least dense zoning area and classification in all of CB11. A 217,000 sq. ft. building with 255 units. This is more than double the number of units for the entire Bayside Gables and the houses on 24th Ave, combined. This is being proposed on the current site of the Bay Terrace Country Club/Pool located at the end of 24th Avenue, just across the street from the current large scale school construction that is taking place (and the daily pounding of massive steel support beams into wetlands across from residents). This application will be voted on by the full board at the October 6th General Meeting. Community Board 11 has a long-standing and steadfast commitment to protecting our low-density zoning and quality of life from OVERDEVELOPMENT.

On July 2nd, Joe and I attended the Mayor's Town Hall at PS 46 in Bayside Hills. During the Q&A period, many topics/questions were asked of Mayor Adams by local community activists, from increasing funding for Bayside High School, to rolling back disastrous City of Yes zoning changes for our low density communities, and one from yours truly: why the City Charter Commission he convened just 4 days after the City of Yes was passed in the city council was proposing changes to limit community board involvement in the ULURP process and eliminating local council member deference on zoning changes. These ballot questions will be on the November ballot, and the CB will look further into them before that date.

The Bayside Historical Society, located in beautiful Fort Totten Park in Bayside has a new exhibit: "From Backyard to Boulevard: the Legacy of the Bell Family" that details the long and colorful history of the Bell family in Bayside and how their long driveway that ran from Northern Blvd to their farm and homestead eventually transformed into the busy boulevard, shops, community and the classic early 20th century homes and apartments that we all enjoy today. CB11's own Laura James and I helped to work on the exhibit. Please check the Bayside Historical Society website under "Events" for the viewing hours. Baysidehistorical.org. You can also register for the 24th Annual Totten Trot 5K Run and Fundraiser on the same website (Sunday, October 26th).

BOARD MEMBER NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Euler reviewed open cases with the Board of Standards and Appeals.

Ms. Burke discussed having more information on what the Board is serving the community and how the CB budget be used to help the community. She spoke regarding events; more information could be obtained at Friends of Crocheron Park. Ms. Burke spoke regarding various topics. She will draft an email to be sent out.

Mr. White, Public Relations Committee Chair, announced the Committee Members. He designed (with his wife's help) two URL codes to access the weekly digest and website. Mr. White spoke regarding his agenda for the Public Relations Committee for 2025-2026.

Ms. Lanzetta spoke regarding upcoming events for Northwest Bayside Civic Association.

Mr. Hadjiconstantinou, Economic Committee Chair, gave a review of the Committee meetings held over the summer for outdoor dining applications. There were five applications.

Ms. Gitlin, representing DCP, discussed filed (not certified) applications submitted to DCP. This information is available on the DCP website.

COMMITTEE REPORT

CB11 By-Laws – Committee Chair, Matthew Mamak stated the CB11 By-Laws have not been updated since 1997. A final draft copy was sent to each member. Mr. Mamak said he has reviewed the draft. Mr. DiBenedetto thanked Karen Mazza for help in updating the By-Laws. Mr. Marziliano said the General Counsel at Borough Hall and Law Department have approved the draft. A motion was made to approve the By-Laws as written by Mr. Mamak. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mazza. Discussion ensued regarding changes. Mr. Hadjiconstantinou asked for clarification on voting present and abstaining. Present means present but not voting (still part of quorum), abstaining with cause (conflict) is not counted as a no vote and abstaining without cause counts as a no vote. Joan Garippa discussed how executive officers' term limits are extended to 8 years from 5 years. Mr. DiBenedetto said this was changed because of the current 8 year Board Member term limits set by the City Charter. Ms. Garippa stated she was unhappy with some of the language in this draft. This draft was sent to Board members for review in June 2025. A roll call vote was taken resulting in 35 in favor, 2 opposed and 1 present. The motion carried.

(In-favor - Lana Bind, Jessica Burke, Sharon Chin, Victor Dadras, Paul DiBenedetto, Dilcia Erazo, Henry Euler, C. Omarr Evans, Mario Ferazzoli, Michelle Fields, Jack Fried, Michael Golia, C. Kevin Green, George Guan, George Hadjiconstantinou, Melanie Harster, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Zhengyu Kang, Bernadette Kelly, Jena Lanzetta, Matthew Mamak, Karen Mazza, Eileen Miller, Kenneth O'Keefe, Stephen Pivawer, Megan Rha, David Ro, Ralph Ruiz, Amesh Sarecha, Christina Scherer, Jyothi Sriram, Eileen Taylor, David White, Sam Wong – Opposed – Garippa, Martino – Present – Guidice)

Parks Committee – Laura James, Committee Chair, spoke regarding phase two of a phase three project of the reconstruction of Challenge Playground located at 61-07 261 Street. Little Neck. Key features would include a 380-foot track, seating areas, play equipment, and fitness stations. The design incorporates color-sealed asphalt, safety surfaces, and native plantings to improve sustainability and accessibility. This project will remove four unhealthy trees but add more shade trees overall and will include features requested by the community such as ADA-accessible play equipment and sensory elements. The design aims to serve both the general public and PS811, a specialized school for students with disabilities. The design and operations will include drinking fountains and bottle filling stations. This project will take three years to complete. The Committee discussed the lack of space for teenage recreation, lighting and safety concerns. A Committee vote was taken to write a letter supporting the project with stipulations, including investigating permeable asphalt, adding more water fountains, and ensuring there be sufficient basketball facilities for neighborhood children. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of proposed project. A motion was made in support of the reconstruction of Challenge Playground with the conditions by Ms. James. The motion was seconded by C. Omarr Evans. A vote by show of hands resulted unanimously in favor. The motion carried.

(In-favor - Lana Bind, Jessica Burke, Sharon Chin, Victor Dadras, Paul DiBenedetto, Dilcia Erazo, Henry Euler, C. Omarr Evans, Mario Ferazzoli, Michelle Fields, Jack Fried, Joan Garippa, Michael Golia, C. Kevin Green, George Guan, Rosemarie Guidice, George Hadjiconstantinou, Melanie Harster, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Zhengyu Kang, Bernadette Kelly, Jena Lanzetta, Matthew Mamak, Fleur Martino, Karen Mazza, Eileen Miller, Kenneth O'Keefe, Stephen Pivawer, Megan Rha, David Ro, Ralph Ruiz, Amesh Sarecha, Christina Scherer, Jyothi Sriram, Eileen Taylor, David White, Sam Wong)

Executive Committee – Paul DiBenedetto, Chair, discussed a resolution supporting changes to the admission process and funding for Bayside High School. Mr. DiBenedetto said that there is not enough funding for specialized programs to enhance the learning of all the students of Bayside HS. There were two public speakers: Dr. Alan Queens, PTA President, stated he is in support of the resolution. Bayside HS has been a 100% Career Technical Educational (CTE) school since 2018 with six NYS approved CTE programs and yet the school is underfunded. The Dept. of Education has given only excuses as why not to fund the school. The next speaker, Dani Queens, President of Bayside High School Senior Council, spoke regarding the benefits of CTE programs. Funding is needed for printers and supplies. A motion was made to approve the resolution by Victor Dadras. The motion was seconded by C. Kevin Green. Ms. Mazza stated that she supports this resolution. The students, including Dani Queens, help the Center for Women of New York and the job they do is amazing. Principal Martinez spoke regarding the benefits of the CTE program. She asked for the Board's support. A roll call vote was taken resulting in 34 in favor and 3 present. The motion carried.

(In-favor - Jessica Burke, Sharon Chin, Victor Dadras, Paul DiBenedetto, Dilcia Erazo, Henry Euler, C. Omarr Evans, Mario Ferazzoli, Jack Fried, Joan Garippa, Michael Golia, C. Kevin Green, George Guan, George Hadjiconstantinou, Melanie Harster, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Zhengyu Kang, Bernadette Kelly, Jena Lanzetta, Matthew Mamak, Karen Mazza, Eileen Miller, Kenneth O'Keefe, Stephen Pivawer, Megan Rha, David Ro, Ralph Ruiz, Amesh Sarecha, Christina Scherer, Eileen Taylor, David White, Sam Wong - *Present* – Guidice, Martino, Sriram)

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 PM