

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

February 1, 2021

Via Zoom Telephone Conference

Michael Budabin – Chair

PRESENT AT MEETING

CB 11 Staff:

Joseph Marziliano – District Manager

Christina Coutinho – Community Associate

Jane Bentivenga – Community Coordinator

Elected Officials and/or Representatives Present:

David Fischer

Representing Assembly Member Braunstein

Susan Seinfeld

Representing Council Member Grodenchik

Jon Gallo

Representing State Senator Liu

Katherina Thompson

Representing Queens Borough President Richards

111th Precinct

Police Officer Galano – Community Affairs Unit

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM by the Chair, Michael Budabin.

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

There was a moment of silence for the passing of former Board Member Janet McEneaney's late husband, Patrick McEneaney.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

PO Galano gave the monthly crime statistics. He said that there has been an increase in burglaries. The Captain has started a monthly block watch meeting that is taking place at the Precinct. Currently it is in-person with a limit of 10 persons. PO Galano spoke regarding the proposed Homeless Shelter. He stated that the NCO's will patrol the area as normal. There will be security on site and the NYPD will respond if needed.

Jon Gallo stated that the Senator's office is open for questions.

Susan Seinfeld announced upcoming events sponsored by the Council Member Grodenchik.

Mr. DiBenedetto read a statement on behalf of Council Member Vallone; "Any bill that proposes to overhaul our existing zoning structures is always concerning especially when we have spent decades preserving our remaining residential communities. The current bill lacks the necessary clarity on who would oversee the proposed new entity and community input must be preserved to ensure low density residential zoning remains an option in NYC."

Katherina Thompson announced upcoming events sponsored by the Borough President Richards. She also spoke regarding board member applications. This year applications do not need to be signed by an elected official or notarized.

Paul Graziano, Urban Planner, spoke regarding Council Speaker, Corey Johnson's proposed legislation, Planning Together and Intro Bill 2186-20. Mr. Graziano stated that the idea of this proposal and bill is to create a new fundamental planning process that would supersede the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). He said that the ULURP process includes recommendations from Community Boards and the Office of the Borough President. This would be on a 10-year requirement for a vote for up-zoning an area with no public processes.

Brian Sheinberg, Bay Community Volunteer Ambulance Corps., thanked the Board for forwarding a letter of support.

Jena Lanzetta, Northwest Bayside Civic Association, read a statement from the Civic regarding Council Speaker Johnson's proposal, Planning Together. The Civic urged the City Council Members to vote against this proposal that would eliminate community input for up-zoning.

Austin Shafran said that he is disappointed with Council Speaker Johnson's proposal because it would rob communities of any input relating to land use projects. This could significantly impact the quality of life in northeast Queens, specifically when it comes to eliminating single-family homes.

Christina Scherer read a letter on behalf of Terry Pouymari Auburndale Improvement Civic Association, regarding the Council Speaker's proposal. They are against the proposal.

Michael Feiner, Bayside Hills Civic Association, spoke regarding the Council Speaker's proposal, bike lanes, the lack of vaccine sites in northeast Queens and the decaying walkway around Oakland Lake. He requested more information from local officials before any project is approved.

The following public speakers were registered regarding the shelter project at 243-02 Northern Blvd.

Walter Mugdan, Westmoreland Civic, stated some of the Civic's concerns are the density, transportation, selection review, and on street parking.

Sean Walsh, Douglaston Civic, read a statement that included concerns pertaining to the current variance on the property and less than 100 sq. ft. per client provided by the shelter. He suggested that the City Budget allow for permanent housing. He also spoke regarding his opposition to the Council Speaker Johnson's proposal.

Carol McCarthy, Douglaston Civic, stated there was a lack of consideration for the community. She suggested a better suited facility would be the Padavan Campus.

Colette Wong, Doug-Bay Civic, stated there was no transparency. The plans were requested and still not received. The location is too small for 72 residents. She requested the State's regulations for homeless shelters.

Robert Schirling, Divine Wisdom Academy, stated that DWA believes the density of the shelter does not support resident dignity and spoke about how the area is a transportation desert. They submitted written questions to the Dept. of Homeless Services and have not received a response.

Ray Lustig stated that his family is against the shelter because the space is too small for 72 persons and there is limited transportation in northeast Queens.

Alexandra McMenamy stated that she once lived adjacent to a Samaritan Village facility that was poorly managed. She said that this location is too close to a school. She asked the DHS to rescind their proposal.

Irene Sollano stated that transportation is an issue and the space is too small. She suggested the population be cut in half. She mentioned no backyard and asked how garbage would be disposed of.

Debbie Zammit asked if this proposal is a done deal or is the community just venting. Mr. Budabin said Board Member discussion will take place later on during this meeting.

Arasu Jambukeswaran stated that he is member is the Westmoreland Civic Association. He stated that the dignity aspect is important. Mr. Jambukeswaran said if this project is moving forward, we need to find a positive experience. We need to benchmark from the shelters that are doing well.

Marcel and Charlie Abikaram stated that they live across the street from the proposed shelter. They are opposed to the location by stating there is nothing in this area to help the residents. Mr. Abikram stated that he has not seen homeless in the area. He discussed his concern of drugs being used outside the facility and drug dealers waiting on the block.

Dr. Helen Schleimer stated that homeless persons are dealing with several different issues. A shelter is successful when it has useful services and proper living arrangements. The women will need comprehensive care. She suggested a location in an area where all their needs are meet in order to succeed.

Dr. Angela Scicutella spoke regarding the disposal of waste and fire safety. She asked for a fire contingency plan. She said this location was an office building; how can this be converted to a shelter? She also asked about signage on the outside of the facility. Dr. Scicutella stated that the DSS did not thoroughly think through this location.

George Ramirez stated that this facility is 200 feet from a school playground. He spoke regarding how the owner and Samaritan Village are in partners with each other. His suggested the community unite and reach out to local elected officials and the NYC Public Advocate.

Marie Marsina asked how this happened without community input. She asked why the Community Board was not consulted for different sites. She asked for answers from elected officials on how this happened without addressing the concerns of the community. She wanted to know how this could be avoided in the future.

Sal Colletti stated that the community needs resources for children. He stated that this location is not a good choice. He spoke regarding the credentials of Samaritan Village.

Madeline Maisano spoke regarding the vendor of the shelter. She requested the Standard Operating Procedure Manual and that the Community Advisory Board (CAB) process start in the next coming weeks. She wanted to know how the staff is trained for medical issues and how often the facility will be inspected.

Dawn Racan stated that there are three elementary schools within a mile and half of the shelter. She said this is not a good solution. She suggested permanent housing.

Christine Wehle asked if the Community Board requested an impact study. If not, it is important for the Community Board to push for an impact study.

Michele Dragan stated that Samaritan Village's business plan is substance abuse and recovery. She said no one is talking about what Samaritan Village really is. This location is too close to schools. She asked what is the selection process and how will the children from the schools be protected?

Mr. Marziliano stated that DSS just joined the meeting.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

Sila Asa, Adriana Aviles, Lana Bind, Michael Budabin, Susan Cerezo, Justin Chew, Sharon Chin, Ocelia Claro, Carmen Collado, Victor Dadrás, Lourdes December, Paul DiBenedetto, Mary Donahue, Henry Euler, Mario Ferazzoli, Jack Fried, Albert Galatan, Joan Garippa, Barbara Gillespie, Michael Golia, Rosemarie Guidice, Bernard Haber, Christine Haider, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Linda Lee, Yosef Lee, Robert Liatto, Fleur Martino, George Mihaltses, Eileen Miller, Douglas Montgomery, Allan Palzer, Akshar Patel, Wendy Pelle-Beer, Stephen Pivawer, Stephan Popa, Gunjan Rastogi, Christina Scherer, Jyothi Sriram, Benjamin Turner, Sam Wong

Members Absent

Carin Bail, Lander Bravo, Elias Fillas, Stanley Jin, John Kelly

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the January 4, 2021 meeting by Douglas Montgomery. The motion was seconded by Albert Galatan. Mrs. Donahue made a correction adding the sidewalk on 46 Avenue and two other neighbors on the avenue. A roll call vote was taken resulting 39 in favor and 6 present. The minutes were approved with corrections.

(In-favor- Sila Asa, Adriana Aviles, Lana Bind, Michael Budabin, Susan Cerezo, Justin Chew, Sharon Chin, Ocelia Claro, Carmen Collado, Victor Dadrás, Lourdes December, Paul DiBenedetto, Mary Donahue, Henry Euler, Mario Ferazzoli, Jack Fried, Albert Galatan, Joan Garippa, Michael Golia, Rosemarie Guidice, Christine Haider, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Linda Lee, Yosef Lee, Robert Liatto, Fleur Martino, George Mihaltses, Eileen Miller, Douglas Montgomery, Allan Palzer, Akshar Patel, Wendy Pelle-Beer, Stephan Popa, Gunjan Rastogi, Christina Scherer, Jyothi Sriram, Benjamin Turner, Sam Wong – Present – Sila Asa, Ocelia Claro, Bernard Haber, Barbara Gillespie, Stephen Pivawer, Benjamin Turner)

Mr. Budabin spoke regarding how the March 2021 Board elections will be handled over a virtual meeting. According to the CB11 By-Laws, there must be a paper ballot. A motion was made by Mr. Montgomery that (1) if the elections are contested, the Members in real time will email a CB11 staff member (as designated). Mrs. Donahue and Mrs. Garippa will have to call, (2) that the monthly correspondence continued to be emailed with the exception of Mrs. Donahue and Mrs.

Garippa. The motion was seconded by Stephen Popa. Discussion ensued with a conclusion that this is only for March 2021 election. A roll call vote was taken resulting in 36 in favor and 5 present. The motion carried.

(In-favor- Adriana Aviles, Land Bind, Michael Budabin, Susan Cerezo, Justin Chew, Sharon Chin, Carmen Collado, Victor Dadras, Lourdes December, Paul DiBenedetto, Mary Donahue, Henry Euler, Mario Ferazzoli, Jack Fried, Albert Galatan, Joan Garippa, Barbara Gillespie, Michael Golia, Rosemarie Guidice, Christine Haider, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Linda Lee, Yosef Lee, Robert Liatto, Fleur Martino, George Mihaltzes, Eileen Miller, Douglas Montgomery, Allan Palzer, Akshar Patel, Wendy Pelle-Beer, Stephan Popa, Gunjan Rastogi, Christina Scherer, Jyothi Sriram, Sam Wong – Present – Sila Asa, Ocelia Claro, Bernard Haber, Stephen Pivawer, Benjamin Turner)

Mrs. Miller stated that CB7 used an outside agency to handle their elections.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Mr. Budabin stated that on January 12th, there was a joint Douglaston Zoning and Health and Human Services Committee meeting. On January 15th, there was an Executive Committee meeting with a presentation by Paul Graziano: there will be discussion later tonight. On January 21st, there was a Public Safety and Licensing Committee meeting. Also, on January 21st, there was a Health and Human Services Committee meeting: the Committee approved a letter of support for the Bay Community Volunteer Ambulance to extend their services into the Bayside Community. At this meeting, the Committee also approved a letter to the NYC Health Commissioner requesting vaccine sites in northeast Queens. On January 26th, there was a Transportation Committee meeting. Lastly, on January 28th, there was another joint Douglaston Zoning and Health and Human Services committee meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Euler circulated an update on Board of Standards and Appeals cases prior to tonight's meeting.

Mr. Montgomery stated that there are several people in attendance for tonight's meeting. He spoke regarding how there was Community Board participation regarding the proposed shelter. The City forced this on the community. He understands there is a need to shelter the homeless, but it must be done correctly. In his opinion, he feels this was not presented fair and neutral and all the facts are not being presented. He spoke to the audience by saying the Community Board had nothing to do the site location; this site was already approved when it came before the Board.

Mr. Pivawer asked Mr. Budabin to explain the function of the Community Board in the process of the shelter location for the audience to understand. Mr. Budabin said that the Board does not have a formal role in this process; there is no Board approval and there is not a mandated vote up or down to be taken. The role of the Board is as a community source of communication between the residents and City.

Ms. Cerezo questioned the rumor regarding the closing of Stop and Shop. Mr. Marziliano stated that the CB office has not received any formal notice. Ms. Aviles stated that she inquired with Stop and Shop's corporate office and was advised that the closing was due to low sales. Ms. Aviles

stated that there is a petition circulating and social media is another source for the community to express their concerns.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee – Mr. Graziano gave a presentation regarding Council Speaker Johnson’s Planning Together report. There was no formal recommendation by the Committee. Mr. Budabin opened the floor to the Committee and Board Members. Mr. DiBenedetto stated that we have heard from Council Member Vallone and several Civic Associations; that all oppose this proposal. He said that this district has had several rezoning applications and there were no issues. The Board has worked well with City Planning and several zoning changes were voted on. The Board has always worked well with City Planning and the District has seen land use growth. Mr. DiBenedetto stated that the Speaker brought this before City Council with no public review. He stated that one of the purposes of the Board is to give recommendations on land use. Lastly, he said that New York has 15% single family zoning. We must protect our low density, suburban community. He made a motion that Community Board 11 send correspondence to Speaker Johnson and copy our elected officials with the following message: We oppose the “Planning Together” report and accompanying bill “Intro. 2186-2020” for the following, including but not limited to: 1) If approved, this proposed law would remove, not enhance, input from neighborhoods, Community Boards and elected officials in land use decisions, 2) Mandatory up-zonings required every decade in each Community Board area to increase high-density housing development and create a *new housing* quota system, 3) Due to the tone of the proposal, and examples provided within, there is potential elimination of single-family zoning and off-street parking requirements in the entirety of the City of New York. In addition, we are greatly disappointed in the lack of communication from the Speaker and his staff to the Community Board, the branch of government closest to the general public, when this report was released and the bill introduced, as its potential impact cannot be overstated. Eileen Miller seconded the motion. Amendments to the motion were made; 1) Copy to all City Council Members, NYC Comptroller, Mayor, Borough President, Public Advocate and local press; 2) Add “new housing” before “quota system”. Amendments were accepted. A roll vote was taken resulting in 39 in favor and 2 present. This motion carried.

(In-favor- Adriana Aviles, Lana Bind, Michael Budabin, Susan Cerezo, Justin Chew, Sharon Chin, Ocelia Claro, Carmen Collado, Victor Dadrás, Lourdes December, Paul DiBenedetto, Mary Donahue, Henry Euler, Mario Ferazzoli, Jack Fried, Albert Galatan, Joan Garippa, Barbara Gillespie, Michael Golia, Rosemarie Guidice, Bernard Haber, Christine Haider, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Linda Lee, Yosef Lee, Robert Liatto, Fleur Martino, George Mihaltses, Eileen Miller, Douglas Montgomery, Allan Palzer, Akshar Patel, Wendy Pelle-Ber, Stephen Pivawer, Stephan Popa, Gunjan Rastogi, Christina Scherer, Jyothi Sriram, Sam Wong – Present – Sila Asa, Benjamin Turner)

Ms. Collado urged everyone to testify when this is brought to a public hearing. Mr. Graziano stated that a petition is circulating and he is meeting with several other boards.

Joint Douglaston Zoning and Health and Human Services – Proposed Homeless Shelter 243-02 Northern Blvd. Mr. Marziliano reviewed what was voted on at the second joint Committee meeting on January 28, 2021. He stated that floor plans were just sent to the CB Office and will be forwarded. The Committee made a motion to send correspondence to DHS (Dept. of Homeless Services to ask for floor plans and forward questions and concerns. Mr. Marziliano contacted CB7 and CB4 regarding other Samaritan Village shelters. Both CB’s stated that Samaritan Village is a good neighbor. Both said there were some issues in the beginning. The CAB for both did get involved. The shelter in CB7 has been closed due to COVID-19. Mr. Budabin opened up the floor

for Board Member discussion. Mrs. Miller asked that a sentence stating that most of the community is not happy with the shelter being added. Mr. Montgomery said that he was furious with the lack of information that the DHS gave the community and the Board. Mr. DiBenedetto suggested making a motion that legislation be passed that CB's are notified when a shelter is coming to an area. Mr. Haber discussed the dimension of the property. Ms. Guidice discussed that dignity of the women and suggested reducing the number of residents. Ms. Aviles spoke regarding open violations and asked how they will be handled. It was discussed that 50% of Samaritan Village's shelters have open violations. Ms. James said that this is the wrong location for many reasons. She said the site is too small for 72 women, close proximity to schools, a church and an adult home facility. She also added that transportation is poor. Mr. Pivawer suggested investigating the owner and their relationship with the developer. Ms. Chin stated that the floor plans that she just received shows 81 beds, not 72. She asked Mr. Marziliano to follow up. Ms. Collado stated that she is a social worker and has worked with shelters in the past. She stated that this shelter is being presented but there is no discussion regarding services to help the residents. She also added that she is familiar with the site and there is not adequate space for 72 residents. Ms. Garippa said that there are other communities that have fought against a proposal of a shelter. She discussed the resident selection process. Mr. Haber suggested that 30-45 studio apartments should be constructed and that would be better for the residents. Mr. Budabin stated that he has listened to a lot of residents and Board Members over the past weeks. He said he understands the concerns of the residents living near a public service facility. He said he takes the concerns of the community very seriously. Mr. Budabin said as Board Chair, is it important that the Board take these concerns and address them; for these reasons, he is quite comfortable with drafting a letter voicing the concerns brought before the Board. Mr. Budabin said his own personal view is when it comes to comments regarding location, the community is expressing what any community would feel when a public facility is proposed near where they live or work. He discussed how he is frustrated with some of the communication process and is concerned with transportation issues, the density of the site, safety concerns and that the CAB is operating properly. He expressed how he understands residents worrying about their community, but he feels it is our responsibility as a community to help carry the burden. Mr. Turner said homelessness is a major issue citywide. He said we need to open our hearts to those who are less fortunate and understand we can't worry more about the location than the homeless persons sleeping in subzero weather. Discussion ensued on the action the Board will take. Board Members made suggestions. Mr. DiBenedetto said the developer is Bay Rock LLC. Mr. Montgomery made a motion to write a letter to DHS and Samaritan Village to complain about the procedure of choosing this sight for the community and to raise the questions and concerns but not specifically request a location change. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Haider. A roll call vote was taken resulting in 36 in favor, 3 opposed, 2 abstentions and 2 present)

(In-favor- Adriana Aviles, Michael Budabin, Susan Cerezo, Justin Chew, Sharon Chin, Ocelia Claro, Carmen Collado, Victor Dadras, Paul DiBenedetto, Mary Donahue, Henry Euler, Mario Ferazzoli, Jack Fried, Albert Galatan, Joan Garippa, Barbara Gillespie, Rosemarie Guidice, Bernard Haber, Christine Haider, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Linda Lee, Yosef Lee, Robert Stephen Pivawer, Stephan Popa, Gunjan Rastogi, Christina Scherer, Jyothi Sriram, Sam Wong - *Opposed* – Lana Bind, Wendy Pelle-Beer, Benjamin Turner – *abstain* – Lourdes December, Akshar, Patel – *Present* – Sila Asa, Michael Golia)

Transportation – Victor Dadras, Committee Chair reviewed the Committee report of January 26, 2021. He also stated that the Committee voted in favor of requesting a safety study for Utopia Parkway.

MONTH AHEAD

Mr. Budabin announced the upcoming Committee meetings for February 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 11:14 PM.