

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

May 2, 2022

Via Zoom Teleconference

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

Katerina Thompson

Representing Queens Borough President Richards

Amber Yoon

Representing Assembly Member Ed Braunstein

Casey Lajszky

Representing Council Member Linda Lee

Nicole Kiprolov

Representing Council Member Vicki Paladino

Jon Gallo

Representing State Senator Liu

James Mongeluzo

Representing NYC Comptroller Brad Lander

111th Precinct:

Police Officer Luigi Galano – Community Affairs Unit

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Chair, Michael Budabin.

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

Mr. Budabin thanked former Board Members, Carin Bail, Lander Bravo, Jason Chen and Stanley Jin, for their service to the community.

The following guests made their monthly announcements:

PO Galano gave the monthly crime statistics for the district. He spoke regarding the increase in catalytic converter crimes. He said when the catalytic converter is being removed, sometimes, there will be a car playing loud music to drown out the sound of the hand saw. He advised if loud music is being heard to call 9-1-1 for a noise complaint. PO Galano stated that the perpetrator for the robbery at 73rd and Bell Blvd. is in custody. The perpetrator for the Citywide bank robberies (one being, Chase Bank at 73rd and Bell Blvd.) has been arrested. The perpetrator that shot the Cardozo HS student has been arrested. PO Galano spoke regarding incidents at 48 Avenue and Bell Blvd. during school hours. There will be increased foot patrol in that area.

Katherina Thompson announced the upcoming events sponsored by the Borough President. She announced that May 3rd is the Swearing in Ceremony for appointed Board Members. Save the date for the State of Borough on June 3rd.

Casey Lajszky stated that Council Member Lee hosted a Town Hall meeting with the 111th Precinct to discuss the increase in crime in Oakland Gardens. She announced upcoming events. There will be a debris and graffiti clean-up within Council District 23. Locations should be called into the Council office.

Nicole Kiprolov spoke regarding upcoming events that Council Member Paladino is hosting.

Jon Gallo stated that the State Budget has passed. He spoke regarding items that were included in the budget. For additional information regarding budget items, please contact the State Senator's office. He announced upcoming events hosted by the State Senator.

Amber Yoon announced events that Assembly Member Braunstein is sponsoring.

James Mongeluzo stated that any issues related to the Comptroller's office can be forwarded by email to him at jmongel@comptroller.nyc.gov. He spoke regarding events hosted by the Comptroller. Mr. Mongeluzo said additional information on several different City matters can be obtained on the Comptroller's website under news and reports.

ROLL CALL

Members Present

Dawn Anatra, Adriana Aviles, Lana Bind, Michael Budabin, Jessica Burke, Susan Cerezo, Justin Chew, Sharon Chin, Carmen Collado, Victor Dadras, Lourdes December, Paul DiBenedetto, Henry Euler, C. Omarr Evans, Mario Ferazzoli, Elias Fillas, Jack Fried, Albert Galatan, Joan Garippa, Roy Giusetti, Michael Golia, Bernard Haber, George Hadjiconstantinou, Christine Haider, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Jena Lanzetta, Yosef Lee, Robert Liatto, Karen Mazza, George Mihaltses, Eileen Miller, Douglas Montgomery, Allan Palzer, Akshar Patel, Wendy Pelle-Ber, Stephen Pivawer, Stephan Popa, Gunjan Rastogi, Christina Scherer, Jyothi Sriram, Seena Sweet, Benjamin Turner, Sam Wong

Members Absent

Mary Donahue, Christopher Fuentes-Padilla, Rosemarie Guidice, John Kelly, Fleur Martino

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A motion was made to accept the minutes of the April 4, 2022, meeting by Mr. Euler-with two corrections – Michael Golia was present and Carin Bail is no longer a Board Member. The motion was seconded by Mr. Popa. A roll call vote was taken resulting 38 in favor and 3 abstentions. The minutes were approved with corrections.

(In-Favor - Dawn Anatra, Adriana Aviles, Lana Bind, Michael Budabin, Susan Cerezo, Justin Chew, Carmen Collado, Victor Dadras, Lourdes December, Paul DiBenedetto, Henry Euler, C. Omarr Evans, Mario Ferazzoli, Elias Fillas, Jack Fried, Albert Galatan, Joan Garippa, Roy Giusetti, Michael Golia, Bernard Haber, Christine Haider, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Jena Lanzetta, Yosef Lee, Robert Liatto, Karen Mazza, George Mihaltses, Eileen Miller, Douglas Montgomery, Allan Palzer, Akshar Patel, Wendy Pelle-Ber, Stephen Pivawer, Stephan Popa, Gunjan Rastogi, Christina Scherer, Jyothi Sriram, Seena Sweet, Benjamin Turner, Sam Wong – Abstain – Jessica Burke, Sharon Chin, George Hadjiconstantinou)

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

The following Committee meetings have taken place over the past month; Douglaston Zoning, Education and Public Safety and Licensing, Government Affairs and Legal, and the CB11 Budget. There will be a Transportation Committee meeting on May 11th at 7:30 pm over Zoom. Board Member Committee assignment selection sheets are due by May 13th.

BOARD MEMBER NEW BUSINESS

Douglas Montgomery announced that there will be an electronics waste recycling event on May 21st in the parking lot of St. Anastasia Church starting at 10:00 am.

Benjamin Turner stated that on May 14, he is organizing a family bike ride starting at Peck Park at 58th Avenue and Underhill Avenue which will continue to the Vanderbilt Motor Parkway to Alley Pond Park. Mr. Turner said all are welcome to join.

PUBLIC HEARING

ULURP #210394 ZMQ – 231-06 Northern Blvd. An application to NYC Dept. of City Planning for a zoning map amendment to establish a C2-2 commercial overlay on an existing R1-2 zoning district to facilitate a 15,834 square foot enlargement of an existing 7,076 one-story restaurant (Mizumi) and permit local retail within the rest of the project area. Douglaston Zoning Chair, Douglas Montgomery, stated that at the Committee meeting, the members were split on their approval. Mr. Budabin introduced the applicant's representative, Lauren George. She gave a presentation with slides. The presentation included a diagram of the proposed floor plan. This application is the same as the proposed BSA (Board of Standards and Appeals) application that CB11 approved a few years ago. Ms. George introduced Josh Rinesmith, who is also representing the applicant. Mr. Rinesmith reviewed the slides. This proposal would increase the square footage of the restaurant and rezone the entire block. This area has not been rezoned since the 1960's. Currently, Mizumi is operating with a BSA variance. R1-2 would allow for low density residential; a homeless shelter would be permitted with the overlay. The owners of Mizumi have purchased the adjacent property (former Getty Station) and is seeking to increase the restaurant for catering, 183 parking spaces would be included. There were four registered speakers. Sean Walsh, President of Douglaston Civic Association, stated that they opposed the application due to spot zoning. In summary, he said that they are very supportive of the restaurant; they are a good neighbor but that the Board should carefully note that while this appears to be an application for the restaurant, this zoning change is for multiple lots. The BSA process will help protect the nature of the area. He asked that his letter stating all 30 events that took place in that area be added to the file. Next speaker, Brandon Levy, Queens Chamber of Commerce, stated that they are in-favor and said the owners of Mizumi have done a lot to keep the business afloat during Covid-19. This proposal will create jobs and a community place to gather. Next speaker, Walther Mugdan, Udalls Cove Preservation Committee, said they have been working since 1969 to preserve and restore the wetlands in and around a Little Neck Bay, therefore, they oppose the requested zoning change. They believe the highest investment use of these parcels would be their eventual acquisition by the NYC Parks Department followed by removal of the structures and environmental restoration. These parcels were all historically wetlands and they are subject to flooding during large storms like Hurricane Sandy. Due to accelerating climate change, these storms are likely to increase in frequency. The wetlands are a buffer against flooding. The current zoning also provides for greater community control over what kinds of businesses may operate on these parcels. We know that each of the companies operating their businesses understood the zoning and legal processes that were available to them to either maintain or alter their operations and footprint, so there is not any unfairness about maintaining the current zoning.

The last speaker Paul Graziano, Land Use Consultant, said the owners are not bound by the proposed plans once approved. He stated that it is very important for everyone to understand that the current building is the original diner building which is 6800 square feet. The lot they have now, they could build a building with almost 69,500 square feet, which is over 10 times the size of the existing building. In addition, the other sites would be rezoned and each of them could build five times the size of their existing building. He thinks it is important and that the community be heard. As a Land Use Consultant, he believes this is a terrible idea and owners should be moving by the variance process which is already in place. A lengthy Board member discussion followed with the main concerns on what plans will be for water runoff and why was the BSA application was denied? Mrs. Garippa said it was long promised to the community that the area would be parkland. She felt this was a bad idea and the proof is that the BSA application was denied. Mr. Haber gave the history of the proposed site back to the 1960's. He said that elected officials tried to preserve the wetlands and Mayor Lindsay pledged that all the properties from Little Neck Bay to the Long Island Expressway be purchased by the City when available. With a C2-2 commercial overlay there are several businesses that can be occupied by property owners. Mr. Popa spoke regarding climate change. He felt the Board should have input as to what is developed in the proposed area by a BSA variance for several reasons including climate change. Mr. Euler also felt the proposed area should stay with the current zoning. He stated that there is letter written by APEC that is being used as a letter of support, but it does not mention any support of the rezoning, it endorses the owner of the property. Mr. DiBenedetto asked why the BSA denied the application. Mrs. Haider asked about ground contamination. Ms. James said that this is not a Mizumi issue, it is a zoning issue. She urged the Members to look at what could be built there. Ms. Sriram said the wetlands are a beautiful source for artists. She was against this proposal. Mr. Budabin said that the BSA has been a successful process and he would like to know why it failed for this application. Ms. Sweet said this area should remain wetlands. Mr. Jethwani was surprised that the City has not obtained the properties. Mr. Rinesmith said that site will be under government control when it comes to remediation. There has been remediation but there will be additional required signoffs before building permits are issued. He said that the BSA application is very costly. The applicant went back the BSA several times and was asked for additional information. The applicant finally withdrew the application. He said that it is very difficult to obtain a BSA variance for an enlargement like this proposal. Mr. Rinesmith said the wetlands are 100 ft. away from the development. Ms. Scherer said she doesn't understand why the BSA application was not approved. Mr. Rinesmith said that the BSA application must meet five findings as part of their requirements. He said that the BSA did not feel the applicant could not fulfill the requirements and the applicant informally withdrew the application. Ms. Collado said she was against the proposed application. Mr. Budabin made a motion to approve the application. The motion was seconded by Mr. Galatan. A role call vote was taken resulting in 40 opposed and 3 abstentions and 1 present. The motion was denied.

(Opposed - Dawn Anatra, Adriana Aviles, Lana Bind, Michael Budabin, Jessica Burke, Susan Cerezo, Justin Chew, Sharon Chin, Carmen Collado, Victor Dadrás, Lourdes December, Paul DiBenedetto, Henry Euler, C. Omarr Evans, Mario Ferazzoli, Jack Fried, Albert Galatan, Joan Garippa, Roy Giusetti, Michael Golia, Bernard Haber, Christine Haider, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Jena Lanzetta, Robert Liatto, Karen Mazza, George Mihaltses, Eileen Miller, Douglas Montgomery, Allan Palzer, Wendy Pelle-Beer, Stephen Pivawer, Stephan Popa, Gunjan Rastogi, Christina Scherer, Jyothi Sriram, Seena Sweet, Benjamin Turner, Sam Wong – Abstain – Elias Fillas, George Hadjiconstantinou – Present – Yosef Lee)

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CB11 Budget Committee – Mohan Jethwani, Committee Chair

The meeting went into Executive session to discuss salary increases for the staff. It was discussed to give the staff a 6% increase. A motion was made to approve a salary increase of 6% for Jane Bentivenga and Christina Coutinho by Mr. Budabin. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jethwani. There was discussion on the motion. A roll call vote was taken resulting in 41 in favor, 2 abstentions and 1 present. The motion carried.

(In-favor - Dawn Anatra, Adriana Aviles, Lana Bind, Michael Budabin, Susan Cerezo, Justin Chew, Sharon Chin, Carmen Collado, Victor Dadrás, Lourdes December, Paul DiBenedetto, Henry Euler, C. Omarr Evans, Mario Ferazzoli, Elias Fillas, Jack Fried, Albert Galatan, Joan Garippa, Roy Giusetti, Michael Golia, Bernard Haber, George Hadjiconstantinou, Christine Haider, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Jena Lanzetta, Robert Liatto, George Mihaltses, Eileen Miller, Douglas Montgomery, Allan Palzer, Akshar Patel, Wendy Pelle-Beer, Stephen Pivawer, Stephan Popa, Gunjan Rastogi, Christina Scherer, Jyothi Sriram, Seena Sweet, Benjamin Turner, Sam Wong – Abstain – Jessica Burke, Karen Mazza – Present – Yosef Lee)

A motion was made to approve a salary increase of 6% for Joseph Marziliano by Mr. Budabin. This motion was seconded by Mrs. Haider. There was discussion on the motion. Mr. Budabin did a roll call vote resulting in 42 in favor, 1 abstention and 1 present. The motion carried.

(In-favor - Dawn Anatra, Adriana Aviles, Lana Bind, Michael Budabin, Susan Cerezo, Justin Chew, Sharon Chin, Carmen Collado, Victor Dadrás, Lourdes December, Paul DiBenedetto, Henry Euler, C. Omarr Evans, Mario Ferazzoli, Elias Fillas, Jack Fried, Albert Galatan, Joan Garippa, Roy Giusetti, Michael Golia, Bernard Haber, George Hadjiconstantinou, Christine Haider, Laura James, Mohan Jethwani, Jena Lanzetta, Robert Liatto, Karen Mazza, George Mihaltses, Eileen Miller, Douglas Montgomery, Allan Palzer, Akshar Patel, Wendy Pelle-Beer, Stephen Pivawer, Stephan Popa, Christina Scherer, Jyothi Sriram, Seena Sweet, Benjamin Turner, Sam Wong – Abstain - Jessica Burke – Present – Yosef Lee)

MONTH AHEAD

Mr. Budabin said to look for upcoming committee meeting notices. Committee assignments are due May 13, 2022.

The meeting adjourned.