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December 17, 2025

Land Use & Housing Committee Meeting Minutes

This meeting was held in person and teleconferenced on Zoom

Land Use & Housing Committee Members – Present

Christine Hunter (Chair), Danielle Brecker, Tannia Chavez (PV), Morry Galonoy, Bradford Leibin, Lauren Springer, Michael Zoorob (PV)

Land Use & Housing Committee Members – Absent

Prameet Kumar (Vice Chair), Karesia Batan, Nicholas Berkowitz, Stephen Cooper, Lisa Deller, Kenneth Greenberg, Sheila Lewandowski

Community Board Members – Present

Patrick Martinez

Community Board 2 Staff

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager
MaryAnn Gurrado, Community Coordinator

Department of City Planning

Feigele Lechtiner
Katie Crawford (Virtual)

Guests

Kimberly Murphy, ESKW Architects
Connie Cheng, ESKW Architects
Kenny Zucker, ESKW Architects
Molly Hogan, AKRF Inc
William Meaxas, the School Construction Authority
Julia Dowling, the Department of Parks and Recreation
Colleen Alderson, the Department of Parks and Recreation
Ricky Razade

Christine Hunter, Chair of the Land Use and Housing Committee, welcomed everyone to the committee meeting.

DOT Revocable Consent at 23-10 43rd Avenue

Kimberly Murphy, along with other design consultants, and William Natitis of the New York City School Construction Authority, provided an overview of the school to be built at the site and explained their decision to pursue a revocable consent. They presented a PowerPoint presentation (Attachment 1) and provided the following information:

- The project site is located at 23-10 43rd Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101.
- The School Construction Authority has been working with ESKW Architects on this project since the spring of 2023.
- The existing site is a five-story office building that will be demolished to construct a 547-seat school serving Pre-K through 5th grade students.
- The current building has two ramps in the public right-of-way along the sidewalk on 43rd Avenue that provide accessibility to the raised first-floor height of the building.
- The school will reuse the existing foundation and maintain the first-floor height. As a result, the design must continue to provide an accessible route from the sidewalk grade to the elevated first-floor height of the lobby.
- In the current design, there is an as-of-right design permitted under the building code, which results in a long, narrow ramp within the public right-of-way measuring 3 feet 8 inches wide.
- Due to site constraints, the parties are pursuing a revocable consent petition. Approval of the revocable consent would allow for a wider ramp at the 43rd Avenue entrance. The ramp will maintain the existing first-floor elevation, improve efficiency, reduce the overall footprint in the public right-of-way, and enhance accessibility for those in need.
- A consultant noted that a ramp projecting more than 34 inches into the right-of-way would be best; approval of the revocable consent would allow this.
- There will also be stairs at the 43rd Avenue entrance (renderings are included in Attachment 1).
- The distance between the face of the ramp and the nearest tree pit will be 8.6 feet.
- The distance between the bottom face of the stairs to the closest tree pit will be 7.7 feet.
- The distance from the bottom of the stairs to the curb will be 12 feet.
- There will be ample space between the ramp, stairs, and tree pits.
- There will also be an entrance on 24th Street; however, the main entrance for students and families will be on 43rd Avenue, as it is a two-way wide street.

- The school will also have an exit in the backyard.

A motion was made by Patrick Martinez to accept the request and send a letter to DOT in support of the revocable consent. The motion was seconded by Danielle Brecker. All committee members were in favor, and there were no oppositions or abstentions.

Continued Discussion of Extending Construction Hours on Saturdays at Phipps Houses on Barnett Avenue

At the November 19, 2025, Land Use and Housing Committee meeting, Elan Peskin, representing Mega Contracting Group, the general contractor for the building owned by Phipps Houses, along with Matthew Washington, Chief of Staff at Phipps Houses, requested an earlier Saturday construction start time of 7:00 AM and a letter of support from the community board. The committee decided to wait for input from the Phipps Houses Tenant Association and reiterated that it would make its own decision.

At the December 17, 2025, Land Use and Housing Committee meeting, the committee revisited the request and discussed the following:

- Although Mr. Peskin and Mr. Washington did not attend the meeting, the Tenant Association reported to the CB2 office that it held a meeting at which its members voted unanimously to inform management that they do not support earlier construction hours on Saturday. The association added that since the project began, workers and trucks arrive as early as 6:00 AM, creating noise disturbance.
- An individual who claimed to have attended the Tenant Association meeting emailed the CB2 office. He shared that construction starts before 7:00 AM Monday through Friday. Additionally, construction workers drill consistently on the roofs. They also buzz into apartments before 7:00 AM to access the roof.
- The committee discussed the Tenant Association's position. Mr. Zoorob noted that, according to CB2's survey, affordable housing was identified by a majority of respondents as the most important issue in the district.

A motion was made by Morry Galonoy to oppose the extension of Saturday construction work hours. The motion was seconded by Lauren Springer; two other committee members voted in favor of the motion, and four voted in opposition. There were no abstentions. The motion was not carried.

A motion was made by Christine Hunter to approve an extension of Saturday construction work hours with the condition that construction begin no earlier than 9:00 AM, with no exterior work, and no noise from trucks idling. The motion was seconded by Danielle Brecker; four other committee members voted in favor of the motion, and two voted in opposition. There were no abstentions.

Department of Parks and Recreation – Queens Walk to Park Site Selection

Representatives from the Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) provided an update on the Queens Walk to Park Site Selection initiative. Parks and committee members shared the following information and requests:

- As part of the ULURP application, Parks is identifying specific sites that may be acquired and developed into parks and may have willing sellers. All the sites on the application are privately owned. Parks would be limited to acquiring what is approved on the ULURP application.
- The ULURP application will be certified on January 5, 2026.
- Parks provided clarification on the methodology used to identify Walk to a Park Gap area.
 - Sites excluded from the analysis include cemeteries without regular public access, historic houses, parkways, park strips, green streets, community gardens, managed sites, and undeveloped sites, operational facilities, and sites that are less than 0.2 acres.
 - Included in the analysis are parks that are open to the public and greater than 0.2 acres, some publicly accessible waterfronts, a few state and federal parks, and schoolyards to playgrounds. The latter are sites where Parks partners with the Department of Education to make schoolyards available to the public outside of school hours. DOT plazas greater than 0.2 acres are also included in the analysis.
 - Privately Owned Public Spaces (POPS) are counted as open space if they are greater than 0.2 acres. Parks noted that Citicorp at Court Square is the only POPS site in CB2.
- Parks acknowledged the committee's concerns regarding the lack of parks in eastern Woodside and Sunnyside area south of Queens Boulevard. Parks looked at these areas and noted that they are largely residential sites and don't have many vacant sites.
- The committee previously suggested that Parks partner with other agencies to acquire properties for the initiative. Parks noted that it is pursuing something similar with NYCHA, where Parks is reconstructing a site that will be open to the public.
- Another site the committee previously requested that Parks consider for the initiative is the underutilized site at 58-02 Northern Boulevard. Parks conducted a site visit and noted that while the site was not originally included as a secondary site because it is not located within a walk gap, Parks is considering including it because it could serve residents living in a gap area.

- Mr. Leibin emphasized the need for public space in eastern Woodside and Sunnyside south of Queens Boulevard. He acknowledged that while Parks is seeking sites of at least 5,000 square feet, the residential character of these areas may make it difficult to identify sites that meet this threshold. Mr. Leibin encouraged Parks to consider reducing the minimum site size requirement for acquiring sites in these areas.
- Parks stated that they are open to acquiring adjacent lots that may be combined to meet the 5,000-square-foot requirement if they are owned by the same owner. DCP, added that while negotiations with different owners are possible, it would be much more difficult.
- Parks provided definitions for primary and secondary sites.
 - Primary sites must be vacant and be more than 5,000 square feet.
 - Secondary sites are not vacant and must be in a walk gap. Parks noted that there are discussions to define a walk gap, such as distinguishing sites that are in a walk gap with those close enough to a walk gap that serve a residential population.
- Parks noted several changes to the ULURP application since its previous presentation.
 - A site on Vernon Boulevard and 47th Avenue that the committee previously recommended for the Queens Walk to Park Site Selection initiative is now included as primary site.
 - The Tesla site adjacent to the New Calvary Cemetery was initially a primary site but is now a secondary site; the site remains included in the ULURP application.
 - Parks presented a map identifying primary and secondary sites and shared that, following site visits, heavily industrial areas in Maspeth were not suitable for park space. These areas are near the Long Island Expressway, with one on 48th Street between 53rd and 54th Avenue, another on 46th Street between 54th Avenue and 53rd Avenue, and the third one on 48th Street between 54th Avenue and 54th Road.
- Mr. Leibin recommended that Parks consider a vacant lot located at the northwest corner of 69th Street and Queens Boulevard for the Queens Walk to Park Site Selection initiative. He added that the site is at least 5,000 square feet and has been vacant for at least 4 months.
- The committee also noted that larger lots along Queens Boulevard that become vacant after demolitions are often fenced, and some become taxi yards. While these sites may be sold in the future, the committee noted that they are close enough to residential areas to potentially meet the criteria for the Queens Walk to Park Site Selection initiative and should be monitored.

- Mr. Martinez encouraged Parks to consider keeping some of the sites in the industrial Maspeth area, noting that residents should have access to green space.

Department of City Planning Update

Representatives from the Department of City Planning provided the following update:
All projects currently in the pipeline are still in the pipeline.

- The next project anticipated for certification is the Walk to the Parks Site Selection initiative ULURP in early January. Once the ULURP is certified, there would be two CB2 board meetings and two Land Use and Housing Committee meetings in the 60-day review period, and Parks may be able to attend one of those meetings.

Committee Update

- Christine Hunter announced that she will step down as Chair of the Land Use and Housing Committee. Committee members thanked Ms. Hunter for her leadership as Chair; she will remain a member of the committee.

A motion was made by Patrick Martinez to adjourn, and it was seconded by Morry Galonoy.

The meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by,

Rafael Nava