



Donovan Richards
Queens Borough President

Community Board No. 2

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Anatole Ashraf
Chairperson

April 9, 2026

Community Board 2 Meeting Minutes

This meeting was held in person and teleconference on Zoom

Board Members – Present: Amparo Abel-Bey, Nellie Afshar, Cheryl Apicella, John Bahia, Karesia Batan, Danielle Brecker, Isabella Bustamante, Carlos Castell Croke, Lisa Charles (PV), Tannia Chavez (PV), Osman Chowdhury, Kevin Davis, Morry Galonoy, Alexandra Gonzalez (PV), Camille Gray (PV), Kenneth Greenberg, Leo Guttman, Corey Hannigan, Michelle D. Hernandez, Christine Hunter, William Jourdain, Prameet Kumar (PV), Patrick Martinez, Bill Murray, Eric Narburgh, Mario Nnani, Reilly Owens, Pia Rahman, Alyssa Sawicki (PV), Ryan Smith, Amaury Valdez (PV), Alaina Van Slooten, Leticia Vasquez, Michael Zoorob

Board Members – Absent

Unexcused: Nicholas Berkowitz, Stephen Cooper, Mohammad Hossen, Zaakirah Rahman, Phugelzen Sherpa

Excused: Melissa Aguirre, Anatole Ashraf, Evelyn Chango, Warren Davis, Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos, Bradford Leibin, Rafael Perez, Randy Plemel, Oumaya Saab, Lauren Springer, Zev Wineberg

Community Board 2 Staff: Rafael Nava, Community Assistant

Elected Officials / Representatives:

State Senator Kristen Gonzalez

Assemblymember Steven Raga

Adam Lee, Representing Congressmember Grace Meng

Tiffany Echevarria, Representing Congressmember Nydia Velazquez

Isamar Brito, Representing State Senator Kristen Gonzalez

Justin Martinez, Representing Assemblymember Claire Valdez

Jamey Battle, Representing Assemblymember Steven Raga

Nellie Vera Martinez, Representing Council Member Julie Won

Laura Shepard, Representing Queens Borough President Donovan Richards

Dan Brown, Representing Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz

Guests:

Marco Griego Duarte, Representing Woodside on the Move

City Agency Representatives

Julia Dowling, NYC Parks

“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”

Public Comment

Philip Leff, Jose Miranda, Rob Basch, Marco Griego, Reilly Owens

Note: Reference to the YouTube video and the associated time-in-meeting stamps are offered here as a service to community members who wish to review the meeting.

Time (Approximate, from YouTube Video)

YouTube Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LKc3r3s6Vxg>

0:00:00 At 6:33 PM, Queens Community Board 2 Second Vice Chair Nellie Afshar welcomed community members, elected officials, and guests to the meeting.

0:01:04 Anatole Ashraf, Chairperson of CB2, joined virtually and thanked outgoing Board Members for their service and welcomed incoming Board Members.

0:02:22 **Pledge of Allegiance**

Adam Lee, representing Congresswoman [Grace Meng](#), provided the following update:

- The Congresswoman introduced the ICE Badge Visibility Act and the Uniform Standards for Federal Law Enforcement Act.
- Congresswoman Meng voted against continued unauthorized military action in Iran and voted in favor of a War Powers Resolution requiring congressional authorization for further hostilities.
- The Congressman's office provided tax preparation and filing assistance during the 2026 tax filing season. The office also provides constituent services, including assistance with immigration-related concerns.
- Q&A

0:07:42 **Tiffany Echeverria, representing Congresswoman [Nydia Velázquez](#)**, provided the following update:

- Programming information, including the Congressional App Challenge held on April 18, 2026, at PS/IS 78Q.
- Congresswoman Velázquez called for the impeachment of President Trump.
- The Congresswoman submitted Community Project Funding requests for Fiscal Year 2027, including funding for Calvary Cemetery in Blissville and a joint project with the NYPD and Queens Together Inc.
- Q&A

0:12:26 **Justin Martinez, representing Assemblymember [Claire Valdez](#)**, provided the following update:

- The Assemblymember's office provided tax preparation and filing assistance during the 2026 tax filing season on Tuesdays.
- The Assemblymember supports policies to ensure delivery drivers receive workers' compensation and paid sick leave.
- Assemblymember Valdez is advocating for policies to increase unemployment benefits and extend their duration.

0:14:52 **Jamey Battle, representing Assemblymember [Steven Raga](#)**, provided the following update:

- The State Budget process remains ongoing.

- Assemblymember Raga is seeking increases in benefits provided through programs such as SCRIE and DRIE.
- Programming information was shared, including an Immigration Legal Intake session in partnership with the Emerald Isle Immigration Center on April 28, 2026, at the Assemblymember's district office.
- Q&A

0:19:00 **Laura Shepard, representing Queens Borough President [Donovan Richards](#)**, provided the following update:

- She welcomed incoming and reappointed community board members and invited them to the 2026 Queens Community Board Member Orientation and Swearing-In Ceremony at Queens Borough Hall.
- Programming information was shared, including cultural events and the Education and Wellness Call to Action Summit on May 7, 2026, to be held as a hybrid event at Queens Borough Hall.

0:22:40 **Dan Brown, representing Queens District Attorney [Melinda Katz](#)**, provided the following update:

- Programming information was shared, including an annual Memorial Day observance on May 21 at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Elmhurst Park.
- The Queens District Attorney's Office led the closure of an unlicensed storefront cannabis dispensary operating at two locations in Southeast Queens. Hundreds of pounds of cannabis, as well as tobacco products and a machete, were seized, and five individuals were arrested and charged with various offenses related to the criminal possession of cannabis.

0:25:08 **Nellie Vera Martinez, representing Council Member [Julie Won](#)**, provided the following update:

- Council Member Won's office hosted an informational session on the Sunnyside Yard Master Plan at Sunnyside Community Services.
- The City Council passed the Newtown Creek CSO Storage Tunnel Project ([Click here to view a presentation previously shared with the Community Board by the office](#)).
- Participatory budgeting voting was held from April 11, 2026, through April 19, 2026.
- The City Council concluded preliminary budget hearings, and Executive Budget hearings are scheduled for May.
- The Council Member's office shared condolences following the death of Nishath Jannath at Roosevelt Avenue and 62nd Street. The office is working with NYC DOT on safety studies and infrastructure improvements in the area.

Public Comments

0:29:45 Philip Leff of the Phipps Garden Tenant Association was recently elected Co-President of the association. He shared that he looks forward to working with elected officials in CB2 to improve tenant conditions and build community, and encouraged residents and others familiar with Phipps to get involved.

0:31:30 Jose Miranda of [Sunnyside Community Services](#) provided programming information, including a caregiver conference led by the organization's Older Adult Program. He also shared that a rally will be held on March 9, 2026, to oppose the relocation of a bus stop in Sunnyside used by many seniors who go to Sunnyside Community Services.

New York State Senator Kristen Gonzalez

0:34:16 New York State Senator [Kristen Gonzalez](#) provided the following update:

- The New York State Budget process remains ongoing.
- Senator Gonzalez disagrees with Governor Hochul's attempts to roll back parts of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.
- The Senator has introduced an immigration bill that would protect students from ICE and ensure an opportunity for students to find a guardian if a parent is deported.
- Senator Gonzalez supports the Corporate Fair Share Act.
- The Senator introduced a gender-affirming care bill that includes a fund to cover care for those seeking services from smaller providers.
- Q&A

Public Comment Resumed

0:53:34 Rob Bash, President of the [Hunters Point Parks Conservancy](#), shared programming information, including an "I Love My Park Day" event on May 2 at Gantry State Park, with activities for the public. He expressed the need for additional park space, including Hunters Point Parcel D, a city-owned property that he and many other residents would like to see converted into a sports park. A petition with approximately 1,300 signatures has been submitted in support.

0:56:15 Marco Griego, of [Woodside on the Move](#), shared upcoming programming information, including a Spring Carnival at PS 11.

Q&A

0:59:36 Reilly Owens spoke about the death of Nishath Jannath on March 29, 2026, at 62nd Street and Roosevelt Avenue and urged the Mayor and NYC DOT to expedite safety improvements on Roosevelt Avenue. He said that such tragic deaths create ripples in communities and that families are devastated for generations.

ULURP Application #C260089 PCQ – Queens CD Walk To Parks Site Selection / Acquisition

1:03:51 Prameet Kumar, Chair of the Land Use Committee, provided a brief summary of the Committee's position on the ULURP application.

1:07:41 Committee members asked questions, which were answered by Prameet Kumar.

QueensLink Presentation

1:25:25 Miriam Bensman and Noelle Hunter provided a QueensLink presentation ([Click here to view](#)). Information shared included that the project would:

- Create Queens' first north-south rail transit line
- Create up to 33 acres of new parkland along the right-of-way
- Help reduce commute times between certain locations in Queens
- Q&A

New York State Assemblymember Steven Raga

2:03:50 Assemblymember [Steven Raga](#) provided the following update:

- He shared that the New York State budget process has been delayed and remains ongoing.
- His priorities include securing funding for the district, including support for schools, infrastructure, and nonprofit organizations.
- He congratulated and welcomed new Community Board 2 members.

2:05:19 Transition to Board Business

Attendance

Board Members Present in Person: 27 Board Members Excused: 11

Board Members Present Virtually: 7

Board Members Absent: 5

Quorum: Yes

Approval of Minutes:

2:10:14

- Amparo Abel-Bey made a motion to approve the February 5, 2026, Community Board meeting minutes, which was seconded by John Bahia.
The motion carried with all in favor, none opposed, and 6 abstentions.
- Amparo Abel-Bey made a motion to approve the February 12, 2026, Community Board meeting minutes, which was seconded by John Bahia.
The motion carried with all in favor, none opposed, and 7 abstentions.
- Amparo Abel-Bey made a motion to approve the March 5, 2026, Community Board meeting minutes, which was seconded by Christine Hunter.
The motion carried with all in favor, none opposed, and 8 abstentions.

2:14:43 **Nellie Afshar, who was chairing the meeting, delivered the Chairperson's report.** She shared the following:

- There is a lot going on throughout the world and the country affecting our neighbors and encouraged people to take care of one another, check on loved ones and neighbors, and take breaks from the news when needed.
- She announced and welcomed new board members.

2:17:49 **Michael Zoorob, Treasurer, delivered the Treasurer's report** ([Click here to view](#)).

- Topics discussed included the Community Board's role in the NYC budget process, including timelines, and the components of the Board's Statement of Needs.
- Several preliminary agency responses from Community Board 2's Statement of Needs submitted in November 2025 were also reviewed.

2:30:07 **Rafael Nava, Community Assistant, delivered the CB2 Office report.** He shared the following:

- He welcomed new community board members, welcomed back those who were reappointed, and thanked outgoing members for their service.
- He provided an update on website improvements and constituent cases for the month.

2:31:50 **Vote on the ULURP Application #C260089 PCQ – Queens CD Walk To Parks Site Selection / Acquisition** ([Click here to view previous presentation](#))

A motion was made by Danielle Brecker to support the initiative with conditions and seconded by Amparo Abel-Bey. A roll call vote was conducted. 30 Board members were in favor, one opposed, and zero abstentions. The motion carried.

The motion was based on the following recommendation from the Land Use & Housing Committee:

“Queens Community Board 2’s Land Use & Housing Committee unanimously recommends approval with conditions of the NYC Parks “Walk to a Park” Neighborhood Initiative. We recognize its importance as a step toward improving equitable access to open space while noting that it does not, on its own, fully address the district’s longstanding park shortages. The Board recommends that the City commit to baselined capital funding for parkland acquisition and development; acknowledge that significant underserved areas will remain (including specific areas of greatest need where this process yielded no identified sites) and that additional actions will be required; continue and expand the initiative with updated data and site identification; integrate park planning with broader land use changes such as rezonings, housing growth, and infrastructure capacity; and maintain transparency and ongoing engagement with Community Boards through regular updates on progress, funding, and implementation.”

Committee Reports

2:41:20 Amparo Abel-Bey, Vice Chair of the Health and Human Services and Education and Unhoused & Shelter Committee, provided the following update:

- She wished everyone a Happy Black Maternal Health Week.
- A summary of the March 9, 2026, Health Committee meeting, noting that the committee is working on a follow-up letter to the Department of Homeless Services regarding several shelters in Community Board 2 to learn more about their operations. The meeting minutes are available at the following link: [Health Committee Meeting Minutes](#)
- She attended the NYC DOE Chancellor’s Five Borough Listening Tour on March 17, 2026, at the Queens Innovation Center, which focused on academic rigor and integration.

2:42:30 Karesia Batan, Chair of the Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee, provided the following update:

- She provided a summary of the March 10, 2026, Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee meeting. The meeting minutes are available at the following link: [Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes](#)
- She announced that she was appointed as Co-Chair of the Arts and Culture Subcommittee of the Oversight Committee for OneLIC.

2:43:45 Prameet Kumar, Chair of the Land Use Committee, provided the following update:

- He provided a summary of the March 18, 2026, Joint Land Use Committee meeting. The meeting minutes are available at the following link: [Joint Land Use and Environment Meeting Minutes](#)

2:45:13 Carlos Castell Croke, Chair of the Environment Committee, provided the following update:

- The Environment Committee held a separate meeting on March 26, 2026, and he provided a summary of that meeting. The meeting minutes are available at the following link: [Environment Committee Meeting Minutes](#)

2:46:14 Morry Galonoy, Chair of the Small Business and Local Economy Committee, provided the following update:

- At the March 24, 2026, Committee meeting, plans for a small business fair in the fall were discussed, as well as support for a small business rent stabilization bill currently in the NY Assembly and Senate.
- The potential to change the committee meeting day and time to increase attendance was discussed.

2:47:40 **Amaruys Valdez, Vice Chair of the Engagement and Inclusion and Tech Committee**, provided the following update:

- The Committee is working on a public tracker with board members for the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan to monitor whether commitments are being followed.
- He attended Pursuit's hackathon and encouraged board members to participate in one.

2:49:30 **Reilly Owens, Chair of the Transportation Committee**, provided the following update:

- He provided a summary of the April 7, 2026, Transportation Committee meeting. The meeting minutes are available at the following link: [Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes](#)
- He shared that he attended a Zoom meeting with NYC DOT, the MTA, and Sunnyside Community Services, where the rationale for moving a bus stop located near Sunnyside Community Services was discussed. The Committee is discussing whether to request future capital funding to return the stop to its original location.
- The Committee will discuss low traffic neighborhoods and encouraged those who may need such treatments in their area to reach out.

3:00:05 **Danielle Brecker, Co-Chair of the City Services and Public Safety Committee**, provided the following update:

- She provided a summary of the April 8, 2026, City Services and Public Safety Committee meeting. The meeting minutes are available at the following link: [City Services and Public Safety Meeting Minutes](#)
- She shared that an applicant at the recent meeting expressed interest in using their event space for community use and that she would inform Karesia Batan about this for potential programming opportunities.

A motion to adjourn was made by Amparo Abel-Bey and seconded by Morry Galonoy.
The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rafael Nava

Reviewed / Revised and approved for distribution by

X Anatole Ashraf, Chairperson, CB2

X Ryan Smith, Secretary, CB2