



*Donovan Richards*  
*Queens Borough President*

# Community Board No. 2

43-22 50th Street, 2nd Floor  
Woodside, New York 11377

(718) 533-8773

Fax (718-533-8777

Email [qn02@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:qn02@cb.nyc.gov)  
[www.nyc.gov/queenscb2](http://www.nyc.gov/queenscb2)

*Lisa Deller*  
*Chairperson*  
*Debra Markell Kleinert*  
*District Manager*

June 23, 2021

## Community Board 2 Meeting Minutes

THIS MEETING WAS RECORDED AND IS AVAILABLE ON YOU TUBE. PLEASE SEE RECORDING FOR FURTHER DETAILS

### Board Members - Present

Amparo Abel-Bey  
Czarinna Andres  
Anatole Ashraf  
Thalia (Karesia) Batan  
Nicholas Berkowitz  
Kat Bloomfield  
Danielle Brecker  
Tannia Chavez  
Osman Chowdhury  
Stephen Cooper  
Jake DeGroot  
Lisa Deller  
Sally Frank  
Morry Galonoy  
Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos  
Camille Gray  
Kenneth Greenberg  
Benjamin Guttmann

Christine Hunter  
Sheila Lewandowski  
Kristen McGowan  
Taina McShane  
Thomas Mituzas  
Clara Oza  
Karla Perez  
Steven Raga  
Selena Romero  
Katherine Sabal  
Norberto Saldana  
Laura Shepard  
Lauren Springer  
Mary Torres  
Anthony Tudela  
Julie Won  
Frank Wu

### Board Members – Absent

Sandra Bigitschke  
Johanna Carmona  
Gianna Cerbone  
Warren Davis  
William Garrett  
Somnath Ghimire  
Mohmed Choudhury Jewel

Jordan Levine  
Dominic Lippolis  
Elliot Park  
Steven Raga  
Regina Shanley  
John Vaichunas  
Adrienne Verrilli

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

Badrun Khan

Community Board 2 Staff

Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager  
MaryAnn Gurrado

Elected Officials/Representatives

Honorable Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, US Congresswoman  
Honorable Brian Barnwell, NY State Assembly Member  
Jack Bernatovicz, Representing Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer  
Najae Phillips, Representing Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Mercedes Jennings, Representing New York State Senator Michael Gianaris  
Joe Nocerino, Representing Queens Borough President Donovan Richards  
Vicky Garvey, Representing Queens Borough President Donovan Richards

**City of New York Parks and Recreation**

JoAnne Amagrande  
Paul Daley  
Diane Dreier  
Shirley Echevarria  
Christina Twomey

**Department of City Planning**

Teal Delys  
Eric Mattes  
Ben Max  
Alex Plackis

**Department of Transportation**

Craig Baerwald  
Shawn Macias  
Gretha Suarez

**Public Comment Speakers – Michael Davidson Playground**

Tammi Kenton  
Maggie Flattery  
Gerald Perrin  
Benjamin Lucas  
Devin McDonald  
Mellissa Ellingham  
Kathleen Nelson

### **Public Comment Speakers – 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bike Boulevard**

Joe LoBello  
Alan Baglia  
Jason Stahl  
Jeremiah Bornemann  
Alexander Zamudio  
Conrad Gangone  
Rayna H. Erlich  
Jennifer Kubicki  
Reilly Owens  
Philip Leff  
Mary Caulfield Davis  
Patricia Pan  
Tseyag Tenzin  
Andrew Gilbert  
Kathleen Nelson  
Max Diamond  
John D  
Joe LoBello  
Daniel Christopher Wendlek  
Fiona Smyth

### **Public Comment Speakers – General Public Comments**

Giovanni Garcia  
Brian L

Ms. Deller welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided the following announcement:

- We have a very full meeting tonight and many speakers signed up to provide testimony on the first two items on the agenda.
- We are going to forgo the regular business of the board tonight since this is a special meeting.
- There will be no vote on the minutes, no chairperson, district manager or committee reports except for those items we need to vote on.
- We will begin with the Pledge of Allegiance
- Comments by Public Officials
- We have our illustrious special guest Congressperson Alexandria Ocasio Cortez here with us tonight and we thank her for attending the meeting.

- Representatives of elected officials – due to the time constraints tonight, please submit reports to the board office or put anything time sensitive in the chat.
- We are going to hear the Presentation on the design plans for Michael Davidson Playground first and allow for public comment related to this item after the presentation.
- The DOT presentation on the 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bike Blvd will be 2<sup>nd</sup> and we'll hear comments related to that afterward.
- The two public hearings on the ULURP Applications for the Hotel Text Amendment and the Health and Fitness Text Amendment will come afterward.
- General public comments are welcome after these presentations and the Board votes.

Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Deller introduced and welcomed the following representatives:

**Honorable Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, US Congresswoman**

Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez provided the following report:

- Announced Isaiah Baxter from the CB 2 district is the winner of the Congressional Art Competition.
- Announced there will Joint Town Hall meeting with Representative Bowman this Friday.
- Provided information about the upcoming Child Tax Credits.
- Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez discussed legislative updates.
- Spoke about the Committee on Economic Disparity.

Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez entertained questions:

Sheila Lewandowski thanked Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez for attending the meeting and gave her kudos on the work she is doing to revive the Poverty Index and asked if we are making progress on this.

- Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez stated that last Congress she introduced legislation to have the Federal Government reassess our poverty line.

Ms. Deller asked that if someone received an extra \$300 check, it could make them ineligible for certain programs.

- Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez stated for some of the pandemic relief programs, it does not necessarily count towards your income.

Morry Galonoy asked for an update on the issue of data rights, algorithmic bias, and biometrics and asked if there is any new legislation on this matter.

- Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez reported that right now what is immediately on deck in the House is that they have this Infrastructure Bill and House Appropriation. What is also on deck is the potential for a Police Reform Bill.

Morry Galonoy reported that we can't limit it to just facial but all biometric data and asked if there is someone in her office that is dealing with this.

- Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez reported that Clarissa, from her office is the Legislative Assistant with the Oversight Committee which has jurisdiction over use of facial recognition.

Kat Bloomfield asked about the regular cycle for the community project funding, how often does it happen and how far in advance and the time for questions that may be asked regarding where projects can fit best.

- Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez said since this the first year that community project funding has returned in the House. The process from a House perspective and House appropriations was a little rushed and they did a community engagement process and announced them at their town halls.
- Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez announced that she will send over the list of the projects that have been submitted and they will find out which ones have been approved in the next couple of months or sooner. It is a good idea for people to begin to get ready for next year.

Kat Bloomfield asked when the applications will be out next year and how much time there will be to ask questions and the due date.

- Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez stated that the application should be available on their website when it opens.

Kat Bloomfield requested that she makes sure to publicize her priorities ahead of the application deadline so that we know what is a priority and whether sponsored projects would be included.

- Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez said they never want to exclude people and discussed some projects that were so great they could not say no to.

Laura Shepard stated that Greenway advocates all over the city are trying to get dedicated funding for New York City, because we have a lot of gaps in our greenway network and closing them would provide transportation and recreational equity to so many of our communities. She was wondering if the Congresswoman would support this, and it is like the what the Connecting America's Active Transportation Systems Act would do and that it is part of the Senate Bill, and we need something similar in the House.

- The Congresswoman stated she would be more than happy to join in on this as we have a lot of infrastructure work that is currently going through the processes of getting approved in the House. The reality is that there are several infrastructure bills. They will keep an eye on greenway pedestrian and cycling investments federally and we will see if there are other amendments that they can tuck in where they have the opportunity.

Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez announced Najae Phillips is a Wounded Warrior Fellow and joined in April and has been attending CB 2 meetings since April. She and can be reached at [ocasio-cortez.house.gov](mailto:ocasio-cortez.house.gov). She announced anyone can sign up for their email newsletter. The link to the Child Tax Credit information will be there. Reach out to Najae and Noreen and many other staff members at the office will be able to help connect to the legislative staff in DC on specific policy issues.

Lisa Deller thanked Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez for attending the meeting.

**Joe Nocerino, Representing Queens Borough President Donovan Richards**

Joe Nocerino provided the following report:

- Thanked Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez for her report.
- Borough President Donovan Richards sends his regards.
- Announced the IDNYC Program has been extended at Borough Hall until the end of August. Anyone interested may contact him directly or register on the website.
- Queens Borough President Richards Office has partnered with the Queens County Farm Museum and will have a farm stand every Thursday, weather permitting starting the 1<sup>st</sup> week of July outside of Borough Hall
- The Borough President opened the Immigration Center, the first in Queens Borough Hall. It will provide free guidance to immigrants in our community. Register on-line
- Joe Nocerino thanked everyone and said it is his honor to be the liaison for CB 2.

**Mercedes Jennings, Representing New York State Senator Michael Gianaris**

Mercedes Jennings reported on the following:

- If there are any constituents having problems with unemployment, they are working with the community to help them get connected to their unemployment benefits.
- She stated that for those constituents who have been asking her questions, she will follow up.
- The Senator just finished the session and has passed the most bills that he has in the past 10 years he has been in tenure passed over 20 bills that will benefit our community.
- Senator Gianaris sends his thanks to CB 2.

**Jack Bernatovicz, Representing Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer**

Jack Bernatovicz provided the following report:

- Last week Council Member Van Bramer along with the United Forties Civic Association honored long time CB2 member and Sunnyside advocate Don McCallian by co-naming the intersection of 40th Street & Greenpoint Ave. Don was a great man who worked for our community for decades. He was kind and generous and served in dozens of civic organizations. The Council Member wanted to thank all that joined, including Lisa Deller, Carol & Bobby Burch, and the McCallian family.
- This month senior centers across the city have reopened for in person services. CM Van Bramer joined seniors at Sunnyside Community Services and Ravenswood Senior Center last week and was excited to see seniors laughing and talking together again.
- Council Member Van Bramer joined QPL President Dennis Walcott in celebrating the Queens Public Library's 125th anniversary! To mark this milestone of public service they gathered at the [Astoria](#) branch along with scholars from PS 171 to bury a time capsule and hear from students what their world may look like in 25 years.
- The Queens Public Library anticipates reopening all available QPL locations for at least limited service by mid-July. Till then, the Hunters Point, Woodside, and Sunnyside locations are currently open for in person services and computer access.
- In the Council, Intro 1572 was recently passed, which will create a citywide equitable development data tool and require racial equity reports for ULURP applications. These reports will include expected rents for both market rate and affordable units and the incomes needed to

afford them for resident proposals. This bill had been supported by CB2, and CM Van Bramer was an early co-sponsor of the Public Advocates bill.

- Also, the City Council will be voting on the FY21 Budget later this month, and as always, the Council Member will be fighting for a more just and equitable budget which must include culture and libraries as priorities.
- Also, in advance of DOT's presentation tonight on the 39th Ave Bike Blvd, Council Member Van Bramer wanted to voice his support for the Bike Blvd program and is eager to hear CB2 and the community's comments. The Council Member believes that protected bike lanes, more space for pedestrians and cyclists, and eliminating speeding make our streets safer for everyone.
- Again, Happy Pride Month.

Jack Bernatovicz entertained questions.

Lisa Deller welcomed everyone who ran for office and is back to the Community Board and congratulated them for representing this Board in a fabulous way and thanked everyone for talking about the issues of concern to us. She thanked them for their service and wished good luck to those who are in the running.

### **Parks – Presentation on Design Plans for Michael Davison Playground**

Diane Dreier, Design Director for the Queens Capital Team introduced her colleagues.

- Eric Mattes, Team Leader of Queens Capital Team
- Christina Twomey, Project Manager
- Paul Daley, Project Manager

The park is located at the corner of 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 50<sup>th</sup> Street in the Borough of Queens

- Total Budget \$4.815 Million Total, FY 2017 & 2020
- Funding provided by Council Speaker Cory Johnson & Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer
- Project Size 0.23 acres

Christina Twomey provided a power point presentation and discussed the goals for the construction of the Lt. Michael Davison Playground:

- Provide play equipment and water play for ages 2-12.
- Element to honor Lt. Michael Davidson.
- Separate passive space.
- Restoration and incorporation of existing structures.
- Provide an aesthetic that is appropriate for the site's historic context.

Paul Daley discussed the two structures on the site both are landmarked. Their approach to both buildings is to restore them to their historic appearance using historically appropriate materials and historic paint colors.

The shed building served as a comfort station for the site, and it was divided into a two-stall toilet plan. In the redesign, they are proposing to bring it up to code and ADA compliance.

The pavilion sits low and the head room for adults does have not much clearance. They are proposing to elevate the building and as they lift the building that will afford them the opportunity to work on the

vertical posts that support the structure, put in new concrete pier foundations, and will do necessary framing and structural repairs, introduce lighting, power, and new roofing. The color pallet is historic green.

Christina Twomey discussed the following:

- Separation of Active and passive areas across the site.
- They wanted to honor Lt. Davidson with an element that felt traditional and stoic.
- There will be an engraved Maltese Cross with Lt. Davison's engine company and badge number as it appears on his helmet.
- 20'-0" Flagpole, which will be the first thing people see as they enter the park.
- Discussed play equipment and colors
- Spray feature
- Site furnishings
- Paving patterns
- Proposed 4-foot fencing.
- Proposed Trees and Shrubs

Questions were entertained.

Stephen Cooper raised concerns about the bathroom and the 4-foot fence and asked them to reconsider the bathroom and the recreational area.

Christine Twomey stated that she hears his concerns and that there was a lot of feedback from the public meeting. They take all the comments and put them into a spreadsheet and analyze them very carefully and that there were a lot of conflicting desires for the space. They will take his comments into consideration and can't promise that they will do things differently but that we have heard you and that they did very carefully consider all the feedback and look at the numbers and do this as a democratic process. It came down to the numbers which were split 50/50 play programming and passive programming. They tried to allocate the space in the park that way. It was all based on the numbers that they collected that night.

Stephen Cooper asked what percentage of the \$4.8 million is being used for plumbing and bathroom. Christine Twomey said she could not tell him exactly off the top of her head, it's a significant cost but is difficult because there was a number of costs associated with putting in those utilities. It is costly but she could not tell exactly the percentage of the budget.

Sheila Lewandowski asked about the following:

- Will there be access to power in the park?
- Lighting in Park - because there is a canopy of trees, and as Co-Chair of Transportation and speaking to DOT about re-designing lighting fixtures to be able to light the ground without being intrusive into people's homes. She also discussed safety for the people on the ground under the trees will be safe.
- Supports the comfort station
- Rules for Friends Group to Open and Close the park
- Fence should be higher



- Separation between passive and active area because she watches in the park near her house the signs are confusing for adults and senior citizens who may want to sit in the passive area and whether they are allowed to be in there because of the playground area.

Paul Daley said they will be bringing power out to the shelter for events, and it will be in a locking device/ receptacle. There will be power going to the comfort station and there will be a small light fixture in and around the entrance door so if its late at night parks workers don't struggle with finding the key. These will be a whole new utility run from 50<sup>th</sup> Street, details not figured out just yet. Engineering teams are working on this. Comfort Station has been laid out well, so everything will fit.

Christina Twomey stated there will not be power available for public use outside of the pavilion. She also reported they will be using park standard improved lighting.

Diane Dreier stated in all the parks they provide security lighting new LED's that shines the light down as opposed to up and out. Parks are always lit for security reasons. She also discussed the process for a Friends Groups and said Parks is always happy to have Parks have a group of friends and to do this they would have to reach out to Commissioner Dockett.

Sheila Lewandowski spoke about conflicting things with giving Friends permission to open and close the park from dusk to dawn and asked if they are commonly doing.

JoAnne Amagrande reported that the team is doing a great job presenting. She said they would work with the friend's group on whoever would step up to be the liaison for the friend's group and said yes, they would give a key with an MOU. Parks is always looking for people to volunteer and to lock the parks and are looking to work with the community.

Lisa Deller said that we talked about this at the Land Use Committee, and it wasn't clear at that time and that we would have to organize to get a friends group.

JoAnne Amagrande said the Park is still about two years out by the time the Park is done and constructed, and we have a lot of time to get a real grass root friends' group to talk about programming, etc. as we have a lot of planning and are excited to work with everyone.

Kristen McGowan mentioned there are many families that are requesting inclusive equipment as there is only one swing in the entire neighborhood that special needs children can use and asked if it could be incorporated.

Christina Twomey said this is something they always try to take into consideration when they are designing, unfortunately, this park didn't have room for a swing, but she had a conversation today with the manufacturers to look closely at how they design both 2 to 5 and 5 to 12 to ensure a lot of the ground play opportunities that create inclusive space that encourage group play. They have taken this into consideration and have very limited space and done the best they could.

Tom Mituzas said he is very pleased with the design and have asked about the breakdown of cost of items and wants to know the cost associated with the memorial flagpole and asked if they could find the information and present it to Community board 2.

Diane Dreier said she would try to get the information to the Board.

Christine Hunter discussed the following:

- Seniors are among the least well served by the existing facilities in the neighborhood.
- One of the aspects of this is absence of places where they can convene and interact and not just facing a playground or facing a running track.
- Reiterate that the passive seating area be re-evaluated or reconfigured to allow seniors to see each other and not just be looking at other people and there is a new planted island, and all the benches are facing away from that island in different directions. It would be nice if the passive recreation area had the new planted island as a feature to sort of define an area that people are looking at.
- Restroom is important for seniors as it is for young children.
- Lighting issue is important and that the grove really separates the active part of the park from 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue. It will be critical to light the space, so people see into it and lighting within the grove as well.

Diane Dreier stated they will make sure it is well lit and there will not be any dark areas. They will accommodate the benches in the final design.

Lisa Deller asked who would do the maintenance of the park.

JoAnne Amagrande stated it is a regular park and it will be maintained by the Parks Department and doesn't know yet if it will be a fixed post as budgets change every year and we are a couple of years out. There will be a mobile crew.

Lisa Deller asked about Windmuller Park. JoAnne Amagrande said she is unable to answer at this point as it is much too early. They don't know what their budget will be.

Tai McShane discussed the following:

Parks came in and put in an eight-foot fence and asked how strongly they would reconsider the fence height given they have already found it necessary to give it that the extra height now.

Asked how flexible programming is and said once the park is open, people may go to the deli and drink beers on the benches and if they find there is a problem, will there be an opportunity to reprogram.

Christina Twomey said in terms of Capital Improvement coming and changing, she could not speak to that. The fence is something they can discuss as a team although there is a large initiative citywide at Parks where they are trying to make their parks more welcoming and less fenced off especially at the street level. They want things to feel more welcoming. She does understand that previously there was a security issue and people were getting into the fence and there was activity unbeknownst to them and they will discuss it.

Diane Dreier said that if the Community Board feels that fence should be higher than they should write a letter to Commissioner Dockett and Commissioner Silver. Other CB's have done this and then it gets re-evaluated at this level. At their level they are following their initiative of lowering the fences and making parks feel like they are part of the community as opposed to being closed off and jailed off by a 7-foot-high fence.

Lisa Deller stated this is something that was discussed at the Land Use Committee and consider this as a board. She requested to put the commissioner's contact information in the chat.

Laura Shepard stated there have been a lot of requests from the community for space for composting since there has been a lot of interest from many of our master composters and a lot of our local drop off sites often fill up. Asked if this can be accommodated.

Christina Twomey reported this is above her level.

JoAnne Amagrande reported that right now they are going forward with the design as presented tonight. They did not add a space for composting and there is no composting right now.

At the last meeting, it was stated that they would table this discussion for another meeting or if they want to write a letter to the Commissioner. For right now they are not discussing composting in this design.

Diane Dreier stated this is a very small site and they are getting what they can for the whole community not just certain aspects of it and are getting a playground for more children and getting a lot of seating and opportunities for programming underneath the shelter.

Laura Shepard said that by and large that the design is very good and is just asking for something that there are in the small parks throughout the city that doesn't take up that much space.

Lisa Deller stated we had this conversation at Land Use.

#### **Public Comment Speakers – Michael Davidson Playground**

Tammi Kenton - Thanked for the design work and remains concerned about the lack of accessible playgrounds in our neighborhood and said there are more ways to incorporate features that can be accessible to all children with grants, other types of structures that don't require climbing. Asked for them to reevaluate this play structures.

Christina Twomey said that we look at the structure in 3D and evaluate all the little spaces and little play areas and although it looks that it goes vertical, majority of the play value is on the ground and is designed with the specific intention of creating opportunities for inclusivity for everyone. They have done their best to create a space that will be welcoming, engaging and fun for children of all needs.

Maggie Flattery - Reported the design is beautiful and thanked Parks for putting it together. She asked for as much accessibility and inclusivity in the play structure as possible. If there is a slide and a ramp to access the slide these are pieces that are super important. As a parent with a child who has limited mobility, being able to access a playground so he can play with his friends as it does not exist in the neighborhood and this an opportunity to leverage something new as a community and make sure that every point of play can be accessed by any child who visits.

Christina Twomey said she will look at it very closely as a team to make sure they have done everything they can.

Gerald Perrin - The Courtly Garden Coalition has been working to get this 1/4-acre space as a quiet green space for over 10 years. Twice in the past, the Community Board voted unanimously in favor of our project to create a passive garden which former Parks Commissioner Adriene Benepe said it was too small to be a viable playground and that there are approximately 30 times more playground space for all ages that already exist within 5- or 10-minutes' walk from this site, not the one that was mentioned in the presentation. There are three parks within a very short walking distance that each one has gigantic playground space that couldn't possibly be accommodated in this small area.

At the Parks Department Scoping meeting, hundreds of participants heard our community ask over and over to make it green, to make a garden and to make it environmentally responsible but the initial design fails this.

If you look at the diagram and measure how the space is used the little island of several benches for senior people only occupies 5% of the space. Leaving the grove is great but it's impossible to do a decent job of accommodating everything here. It's more of chance of deciding are we going to make it principally a green space or a playground space. Read a quote from Commissioner Mitchell Silver.

Christina Twomey said she hears his concerns and there is a process they follow presented at the scoping meeting and do it by the numbers. It was right down the middle and equal for programmatic for play and programmatic for passive green space. There is a lot that goes into design spaces that you may not be able to see on the surface. Clearance for vehicles, access for maintenance etc. that dictate and how they can do things. She appreciates that he has been a part of the space much longer than she has and wants to assure that in terms of how they decided on what the programming would be they responded very directly to the information that they collected from the people that participated in the community outreach.

Devin McDonald

- Wants to see places where people could put out picnic blankets
- Requested information about the recent rodent testing
- Discussed the water issues and said there could be drainage issues.

Christina Twomey spoke about the rodent issue and said they don't know where that sign came from. Green space can't incorporate the grassy area unless it's a significant size and don't have the ability to maintain them. Grass is not something they could accommodate space wise.

Regarding the water and drainage, they made it a very small compact site that will have its very own dedicated catch basin and the spray shower area is graded so to avoid drainage issues

Mellissa Ellingham - Lisa Deller stated that she had to leave and that she supports Gerry Perrin's comments.

Kathleen Nelson - The design is lovely. Spoke about quiet contemplative green space. Spoke about the need for green space during COVID and those seniors need to have a place to sit and gather. Asked if Parks can bump this need up.

Diane Dreier stated that we came up with this park design being 50/50 active program and passive areas and that they don't have any other parkland except for the one they spoke about already. She suggested reaching out to the council people to request funding for Parks.

Stephen Cooper said that Parks should be what the community wants and asked if they could tell us when they polled the community what does that mean to the community. His impression is that it is a small little park, and we are not going to get people from 2 miles away who are going to drive over to search for parking spots for two hours to go to the park. It is going to be people within 2 or 3 blocks at most who will use this park. Asked if anything was done at that meeting to determine where the various input came from.

Diane Dreier said no, and that everyone was invited to the community meeting. She said Parks is seeking a letter of support from CB 2.

Lisa Deller said we have a lot of playground types of parks and to the extent that parks can accommodate some of the additional comments provided tonight to address the needs of seniors, handicapped accessibility the small geographic area that we are serving, the fencing would be well appreciated.

#### **DOT Presentation – 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Bike Boulevard**

Gretha Suarez, Borough Planner, at the Queens Borough Commissioner's Office introduced herself and introduced her colleagues:

Craig Baerwald  
Shawn Macias

#### **Gretha Suarez reported on the following:**

Presented this at Transportation Committee meeting earlier this month. She said that in May the Mayor announced a bike boulevard in each Borough and 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue was selected to be a Bike Boulevard.

Presented a slide presentation and discussed the presentation overview and project proposal.

Location is on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Barnett Avenue and Woodside Avenue and reiterated they are going to call it a bike boulevard but is a traffic calming project. It makes it safe to bike, walk and drive. It is improving safety by reducing conflicts and speeding. And improving connections through this neighborhood and the surrounding area.

Lisa Deller stated that she lives on 45<sup>th</sup> Street off 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue and when she goes down the street and takes a right-hand turn there is an open street barricade which creates an obstacle course on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue and hardly anyone uses the space. During the Pandemic it was a beautiful thing. How will these permanent barriers make driving for cars easier because part of the problem is that it is an obstacle course and it needs to be common sense and sensible, she asked why not put the Bike Boulevard on Barnett Avenue and how do you go east bound?

The response was you will have to be able to go East on Barnett Avenue up to 48<sup>th</sup> Street to access Northern Boulevard or to go south.

Lisa Deller stated you can do many things to slow traffic, and she proposes that they move this to Barnett.

Gretha Suarez stated Open Streets were first selected in neighborhood residential areas. Because it has an eye on the street and it allows for those residents to use that space. She understands that during the height of the pandemic it was that open street segment that was used by pedestrians and has become more car usage and less pedestrians walking on it. The traffic calming feature of the barriers have allowed a sense of how much more can we do here to make improvements to service all the types of road users. It is a measure that has been used around the country and the bike boulevard is formalizing and organizing the roadway for cyclists, local traffic, and pedestrians. It will be going to treat 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue as a local street rather than a throughway that is being used and paying attention to current bike usage that is already there.

Barnett Avenue had some challenges being narrow and not being a residential area and because it was already an open street this was one of the criteria at looking at open streets in the five boroughs in electing a bike boulevard, we saw it was a good fit between Woodside and Sunnyside connectors. It needs to highlight further how much it does improve the pedestrian crossings. Currently, where there aren't crosswalks that connect from south to north curb this project is looking at adding traffic controls and adding those crosswalks and they will be paying attention to pedestrians and local deliveries, pick up and drop offs and vehicles will be allowed to enter and the parking lane will still be maintained. You will be able to park your vehicle and will only be enhancing all these features for all the road users and pedestrians.

Stephen Cooper said he was disturbed, during the Pandemic he went into Manhattan, yet it took him two or three times longer to drive any place in Manhattan and said bike lanes and delayed turning. He likes bikes but is a car owner and this will make it very difficult for the residents of Sunnyside Gardens to get around, to unload their groceries. He likes the calm streets and is willing to slow down if he must, but he doesn't understand why we continue to put dedicated bike lanes on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue after our experience with Skillman and 43<sup>rd</sup>. Is there a time when we say bicycling is great, but we must share the road?

Gretha Suarez stated they will still be allowed and maintain parking and people will still have the same ability to get out of their cars, unload their groceries and go their residence.

They didn't show in the presentation where they are taking a parking lane from any of these blocks. Conversations that they have had from people in the area 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue there is a lot of truck traffic, speeding that has been observed and it is diverting through traffic and traffic cutting through the segment of 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue into the other streets and allowing vehicles to slow down.

Gretha Suarez stated they are not making it more difficult for residents to live, park their vehicles or get into their home.

Stephen Cooper said the diagram shows parking lanes out in the middle of the street between 51<sup>st</sup> Streets and 49<sup>th</sup> Street on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He is assuming that they are not going to make people do zig zag all the way, but they will continue this down the length of 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue to correct him if he is wrong.

The fact that trucks are travelling illegally down 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a problem that Sunnyside Gardens residents have been complaining for at least 30 years and the DOT refuses to do anything about it, the police won't do anything about it, and he assumes that won't change. You are going to force individuals out into the middle of the street and every street who has put in the parking lanes have lost parking spot, yet every block that has been done has lost at least two parking spots if not more. We have asked for something called the Philadelphia Plan for the last 50 years and DOT won't consider this, but DOT will consider eliminating parking spots once again for bicycle. Where do bikes have more rights than everyone else.

Craig Baerwald said it's not necessarily about rights but about making the road safe for road users. There are crashes happening out there and they do have something in the tool kit to make the streets safer. They do have a lot of data that bike lanes particularly protected bike lanes do make the streets safer

Lisa Deller stated there are a lot of bike lanes in the neighborhood now and that there are a lot of advocates for this for Transportation Alternatives and having more bike lanes and that there is a war on cars there are plenty of people that do have cars. With this plan can we get resident parking. Will DOT enable this to be a resident parking permit neighborhood for residents. Lisa Deller discussed when she lived in Boston that she had a parking permit.

Gretha Suarez reported this would require the state legislature to change. Lisa Deller asked if she would check this out.

Christine Hunter discussed a sensitive location on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue at the T intersection and 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 49<sup>th</sup> Street, the only entrance to the Sunnyside Gardens Park and the presentation doesn't show any specific change at this location. The Park Association has often asked for a crosswalk and DOT said it doesn't meet the criteria for a crosswalk. She urged him to study this location.

Craig Baerwald said they are looking into the location.

Gretha Suarez said we are looking to add crosswalks and all the locations that do not have crosswalks they are looking into

Amparo Abel-Bey stated she is thrilled at these upcoming safety improvements and asked the following:

- Asked about loading zone installations and is concerned about truck traffic and deliveries and using the bike lane as a loading zone.
- Asked about Bike Corrals and if they will be placed on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The response was they will look at this issue. They will be looking at bike corrals and bike parking where feasible.

Gretha Suarez said they are always open to the board and to connect them with businesses that are interested in loading zones. She spoke about a pilot program for Delivery Zones. Let them know and they will evaluate the locations.

Kristen McGowan spoke about emergency access and that it will slow response time and what has been the input on this.

The response was they spoke to FDNY about the bike boulevard in general but once they get more into the detail they will get into specifics.

By converting it one way for these segments they do have enough space to have emergency access along the curb line where possible. They will not be impairing this and anywhere where they do have a diversion, they will be sure to allow for emergency access.

How will it connect to 43<sup>rd</sup> Street? The response was it will be on Barnett Avenue and 43<sup>rd</sup> would be standard bike lanes.

Laura Shepard thanked the DOT for the presentation and said it is very exciting and badly needed and a key bike route from 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Jackson Heights to the Skillman and 43<sup>rd</sup> protected bike lanes. Many people asked about 39<sup>th</sup> and its good the street is getting some attention and asked if they investigated improving the connection from 45<sup>th</sup> Street to Skillman and 43<sup>rd</sup> Street, paint is not protection, and it is insufficient and wants to say that we have 10 years to mitigate the worst impacts of climate change. We need these transformations that make alternative walking and biking safer.

Have they investigated upgrading the connection on Barnett Avenue and 43<sup>rd</sup> as well as the connection from Woodside Avenue and 39<sup>th</sup> to 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue?

The response was not yet and not in any great detail, but they will.

Gretha Suarez said they took the comments at the Transportation Committee meeting and took it into account.

Tai McShane spoke about the absence of stop signs and a traffic light how will they get cyclists and motorized vehicles to stop. She uses bike lanes all the time but there are so many motorized vehicles on these lanes, and they typically don't obey lights at it is and how will this protect kids as it is dangerous and how will they manage this.

The response was they are conducting traffic counts and they are looking to do traffic controls there. At 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, a traffic signal will be going there, and they are evaluating the other intersections to add those traffic controls.

Dr. Gianutsos asked if they can commit to KSI's and discussed how often people are killed by bikes and nonmotorized vehicles.

Questions were entertained.

#### **Public Comment - Speakers 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bike Boulevard**

18 people spoke in support of the proposal

7 people spoke in opposition to the proposal



Stephen Cooper said he took offense at one of the speakers who made a comment about passing through on the way to Putnam Valley. He has lived in Sunnyside Gardens for more than 50 years and the pandemic is what took him out of Sunnyside Gardens and, hopefully, the Pandemic is nearing its end and he will be able to return to Sunnyside Gardens returning to a home that his wife has lived in for all her life.

He doesn't know how many people look at the chat that goes on and at the last Community Board meeting someone spoke about them being a part of the minutes and he hopes they certainly are not. They are filled with racist attacks, filled with homophobic attacks, and filled with personal attacks and he said he doesn't know that they are only from CB 2 Members, and he thinks anyone can chat what they want and is asking that people be a little more civil.

He said there were comments made about newbies and said someone decided to call this a racist comment and he said he doesn't think it is a question of newbies versus people who have been there as a matter of racism. Everyone is racist to some extent, no matter how much we try not to be, the point is that people have the right to have an opinion and sometimes that opinion is not yours but that does not mean that opinion is wrong nor right, but it should be listened to and respected if placed in a civil way and we should all listen to each other.

His reservation about this is as he pointed out is because it had to do about his concern about parking because he is getting older, and he moved in 50 years ago and he would have loved to have banned cars and we could bicycle around. He is now in his 70's and doesn't bicycle as well anymore and maybe he has a little bit of prejudiced, but the point is that this is something to be worked out. If calming the streets is the purpose of the DOT plan, then they have a good purpose, then that should be done. His only question is why it is necessary to have a dedicated bike lane. If we can calm the streets which apparently everyone agrees to that point, then it is fine.

Lisa Deller stated that we two ULURP application that we are required by the City Charter to vote on. The first one is due on July 12 and the second one is due on July 27. This was not meant to be a town hall about the bike boulevard. The TC committee requested the DOT present this to the full board. She appreciates everyone's comments and there was a fairly through dialogue tonight and there were more letters that CB 2 received both for and against. At this point we need to close the transportation presentation. The DOT is seeking a letter of support from CB 2 for the Bike Boulevard.

Lisa Deller thanked Gretha Suarez and the DOT Team for their presentation.

#### **Citywide Hotel Text Amendment ULURP #N210406ZRY CEQR #21DCP111Y**

A zoning Text Amendment to analyze and understand the potential impact of a citywide City Planning Commission (CPC) hotel Special Permit in NYC.

Teal Delys introduced her colleagues:

Eric Mattes  
Ben Max  
Alex Plackis

Teal Delys provided a presentation on the Citywide Hotel Special Permit.

Project Overview – The proposed text amendment would create a new special permit for hotel development citywide. It is intended to create a consistent framework for hotel development and ensure that hotels do not negatively affect the surrounding area.

Teal Delys entertained questions.

Ms. Deller asked her to list the exclusion for this application.

Teal Delys provided the following information:

The main exclusion is the sighting of homeless shelters, JFK and LaGuardia typically are excluded and M1 Districts have their own special permit, and they are not a part of this either.

Tom Mituzas asked about the Special Mixed-Use Zone.

Alex Plackis stated that any mixed used district paired M1 R district commercial district that allows hotels today, they will need a special permit to develop a hotel.

Tom Mituzas asked that if the M1 Zoning Text Amendment remains in place, are we saying the exclusions contained in the M1 get nullified, because in the M1 Zoning Text Amendment there does exist exclusions. The M1 zone paired with residential the special mixed-use zones, JFK LaGuardia. As he reads the M1 Zoning Text Amendment, those areas do not require a special permit. He asked if this changes with the city wide.

Alex Plackis responded that it does change with the citywide, JFK and LaGuardia retain the exclusions, then there are certain projects that have already gone through public review certain projects in the pipeline from the DOB that also have exclusions because they have met certain parameters.

Tom Mituzas discussed a certain part of LIC that is in an M1 Zone, under the citywide can a hotel build as of right there and not get any special permit?

The response was that in an M1 zone they require a special permit since 2018. Paired with residential they will require this new citywide hotel special permit. Tom Mituzas stated this is important because it has not been clarified.

Tom Mituzas stated that in the LIC Mixed-Use zone will in the M1 Zone Text Amendment you can build a hotel there without a special permit because its mixed use does this change under the citywide.

The response was that if that area is zoned in a way that allows for as of right development, which he assumes it is, then now it requires a special permit.

Tom Mituzas stated this is important information because this is not what was presented at during the workshop that he attended and said it is significantly different from what he heard before.

Alexis Plackis discussed that the gray area on the presentation required the special permit, the M1 Hotel Text Amendment, the pink is where hotels can develop as of right today in the district, if this text amendment is adopted, they now require the hotel special permit and cannot develop as of right.

Lisa Deller asked what area in the CB 2 district can still be developed as of right. Teal Delys reported there wouldn't be any more since this is a citywide hotel special permit. Every hotel would require a special permit to be developed and, on the map, the white areas are where hotels aren't allowed, so they couldn't develop with a special permit or not.

Tom Mituzas stated he would like to recommend a correction to the slide if you look at the second main bullet point, where it says "The existing M1 hotel special permit will remain in place" we need to add there that it will remain in place, but the exclusions contained in the M1 hotel special permit will be removed.

Teal Delys stated that one way to think about it is more of a layering of the special permit where the M1 applies to the gray areas and right now there is text regarding the paired districts.

Tom Mituzas said the lighter of the colors next to Calvary Cemetery, can a hotel be built there as of right.

Alex said you will need a special permit.

Tom Mituzas stated that in the M1 Zone Text Amendment it permits it because of the exclusions.

Lisa Deller asked if this would override the exclusion in the M1 Zone Hotel Text Amendment the existing one.

Alex Plackis stated the exclusion of paired M1R you now need to obtain the citywide.

Tom Mituzas stated we need to correct the second bullet point that the M1 continues but the exclusions for the paired M1 zone and the special mixed-use zone in LIC is now removed and those exclusions do not exist, and you need a special permit in those areas.

Teal Delys said there are still two different special permits that is the point that is important here. The M1 special permit is similar but it is different than the citywide, it has more specific findings than the citywide.

Tom Mituzas stated in the M1 it says you can build a hotel in an M1 zone paired with residential, you don't need a special permit and in a special mixed-use zone that exists in LIC, you don't need a special permit.

Lisa Deller asked is the citywide text amendment going to override the existing M1 Text Amendment.

Alex Plackis stated that in the text itself in the zoning resolution there will be strike throughs taking out these exclusions saying there is now a special permit in those areas.

Alex Plackis stated that in the paired M1 R districts you will need these citywide special permits to build a hotel, you will have to come to City Planning and go through the ULURP process and similarly in the mixed-use district, you will need the special permit.

Tom Mituzas stated that during the workshop he was told that the exclusions in the M1 would continue under the citywide and said this is a major issue and we need to know a yes or a no answer.

Teal Delys stated the M1 special permit it is in place in these M1 districts, and she mentioned there are special districts that the M1 special permit does not apply to and in this proposal the citywide special permit would apply to those special districts and that is why we are getting into weeds of the two different permits, it is about which permit the hotel would be apply. It the mixed-use zone this would apply.

Tom Mituzas stated that in the 2018 Text Amendment and M1 zone paired with residential is exempt from getting a special permit and it also says in and mixed-use zone you don't have to get a special permit.

Christine Hunter said perhaps the graphics are not totally correct. There may need to be a correction to the map.

Tom Mituzas stated the exclusions contained in the M1 Zoning Text Amendment that exclude M1 zones paired with residential and mixed use from getting a special permit those exclusion no longer exist in the M1 zoning text amendment because of the citywide text amendment.

Lisa Deller asked if the vote could include this when we go to vote.

Stephen Cooper stated that Tom Mituzas brought up some valid points.

Jake DeGroot stated the exclusions in the M1 Text Amendment that Tom has brought up would still be in place for an M1 Special permit but the new special permit would catch those areas so the new special permit would be required even though they don't require the permit under M1.

Teal Delys stated this is exactly what we want to purport, as she doesn't not know exactly which text is or isn't struck out in terms of the M1 special permit, but the bottom line is any hotel that goes into development will need the special permit under this proposed text amendment.

Mary Torres asked about exceptions.

Teal Delys said the only exceptions are homeless shelters because they are not commercial hotels and JFK and LaGuardia airport.

Mary Torres asked if a new hotel goes up with the intention not to be a hotel at all but to homeless shelter than it needs to go as a homeless shelter and not a hotel pretending to be a hotel but really be a homeless shelter.

Kenny Greenberg asked to be reminded of what the actual findings are under the new amendment.

Teal Delys reviewed the slide presentation and said the finding are proposed to be that the hotel use shall not impair the future use and development of the surrounding area.

Kenny Greenberg pointed out that for people who were not at Land Use, this talks about impairing future use and development and it makes no reference to the current character of the neighborhood.

Lisa Deller stated we had an extensive discussion about this at Land Use that if a new hotel goes for a special permit and affecting the existing character of the neighborhood is not part of the criteria for an approving it. We are missing an opportunity.

Teal Delys thanked them for bringing this up and it is not a finding at this time and said it could be in the recommendation.

#### Health and Fitness Text Amendment – ULURP Application N210270ZRY

Teal Delys provided a power point presentation on the Health and Fitness Citywide Text Amendment, which is a proposal to reduce barriers for gyms, spas, and licensed massage.

Teal Delys entertained questions.

Ben Max discussed the map update and asked if it worked for color blind individuals.

Morry Galonoy said it is better to not give color alone as the indicator but to do a pattern to prevent it from being one way which is color.

#### Attendance

Board Members Present: 35

Board Members Absent: 14

Quorum: Yes

Christine Hunter reported that to her recollection the Land Use Committee voted in favor of the hotel text amendment with the requested change that language be added to address Kenny Greenberg's concerns that neighborhood character should be part of the findings and not altering or disturbing the neighborhood should be part of the findings required for the special permit.

Kenny Greenberg stated it was to vote no, unless.

Christine Hunter said we must add Tom's comment to the resolution as well.

Dr. Gianutsos stated that the guidelines in Roberts Rules that the motion should be stated in the affirmative and she said she would abstain from voting.

Lisa Deller stated that she should consider that a yes vote goes into the yes and resonates as a yes and said that she will see if she looks at the DCP website that they post the yes vote and no votes and there is a wide variety of yes and no votes. Lisa Deller stated that Dr. Gianutsos would be welcome to abstain.

Lisa Deller stated that a "no vote" with stipulations are listen to closely.

Mary Torres stated that she appreciates wanting to be within Roberts Rules but at the same time knowing how NYC works, she would rather be in a no pile having our recommendations read and considered than being in a pile of yeses and nothing ever gets reviewed.

If we get into a yes pile, anything we suggest may not even be heard or acknowledged because they will not dig deeper but being in a no pile and knowing that we will have our conditions read and communicated to her is more important and is better than following Roberts Rules.

Jake DeGroot, do we have an example where we have a no with stipulations vote where it has changed the outcome of the development.

Stephen Cooper stated there are and he thinks the first time it happened was along the Long Island City waterfront and the Citibank proposal.

Mary Torres reminded everyone about the library.

Kenny Greenberg discussed the OCA development and that is why there is no graduate housing there because we insisted on graduate housing, and they were not able to deliver and why the Queens Council on the Arts is there.

### **Citywide Hotel Text Amendment ULURP #N210406ZRY CEQR #21DCP111Y**

A zoning Text Amendment to analyze and understand the potential impact of a citywide City Planning Commission (CPC) Hotel Special Permit in NYC.

Kenny Greenberg made a motion, and it was seconded by Christine Hunter to oppose the Application unless:

- An additional special permit finding would be added to include the preservation of neighborhood character as a criterion to be considered in the approval of a hotel location.
- The exclusions in the existing M1 Hotel Text Amendment are stricken except for the airports, homeless shelters, and projects already undergoing ULURP review.

The vote was 15 in favor; 11 opposed and 3 abstentions.

Ms. Deller discussed the applicants for the BSA special permits come to Land Use year after year because these uses were not in the zoning text for being eligible to exist in the City. This text amendment allows for these various functions to be allowed. The Land Use voted in favor of approving the special permit.

### **Health and Fitness Text Amendment – ULURP Application N210270ZRY**

Proposal to amend the Zoning Resolution to modify regulations related to gyms, spas, licensed massage therapy, and other health and fitness facilities defined as “Physical Culture or Health Establishments.” The proposed text amendment will remove the requirement for such facilities to receive a special permit by the Board of Standards and Appeals (ZR 73-36)

Christine Hunter made a motion, and it was seconded by Anatole Ashraf to approve the application. The vote was unanimous with 30 members present and voting; none opposed and no abstentions.

Christine Hunter discussed Lt. Michael Davidson Playground.

She reported that at the Land Use Committee there were not as many issues as raised as there were tonight.

She reported that overall, the Land Use Committee supports the design presented by the Department of Parks which replied to multiple priorities expressed by the community residents and honors the memory of firefighter Lt. Michael Davidson, however the Land Use Committee suggest reconfiguring the passive seating area on the Norwest quadrant of the site particularly to benefit seniors who are the least well served by other existing open spaces in the neighborhood. Benches at right angles are facing each other rather than facing the play areas of the street would encourage quiet conversation or peaceful enjoyment of the new planting bed of that area.

There were more issues raised tonight and to put this in historic perspective, she believes there were initial conversations about this proposal that were supported for quiet passive use. Then there was a proposal which was not originally on the table to use the park to honor the memory of Lt. Michael Davison who was a firefighter who grew up in Phipps and used the park when it was a Phipps playground, and it got a lot of support. This is where the change in use came about. This is hard to ignore, and this is the history of why the use of the park got more complicated as the process developed.

Lisa Deller discussed the public scoping meeting, and the response was 50/50 from people who wanted more active recreation and people wanting more passive recreation. We heard numerous times from seniors who felt there was no place for them in the private park and they wanted space at the Lt. Michael Davidson Park to sit.

Christine Hunter said originally the sentiment was to use the whole space for passive recreation but the desire to honor Lt. Michael Davidson elicited a lot of support.

Ms. Deller said it is a very small space and they are trying to fit programming for so many audiences into this park. For the Parks Department they have a significant amount of funding, and they need to move forward with the design as it is in the Parks budget cycle to move forward with the design, they are looking for a letter of support from CB 2.

Christine Hunter said the committee voted unanimously voted in favor.

Tai McShane made a motion, and it was seconded by Norberto Saldana to send a letter of support for the parks design and the building of the park with the stipulation that it includes the following:

- Request installation of 6-foot height fence rather than current proposed fence height of 4 feet.
- Play equipment includes adaptive/accessible equipment for children.
- That the passive recreation benches face each other in the newly landscaped area.

The vote was 29 in favor of the motion with 1 opposed and 0 abstentions.

#### **Department of Transportation – Vote on 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bike Boulevard**

Amparo Abel-Bey made a motion, and it was seconded by Laura Shepard to send a letter of support for the Bike Boulevard.

Kristen McGowan discussed the issue of crosswalks. Lisa Deller asked if Amparo Abel-Bey would accept a friendly amendment to the motion and said she would not accept a friendly amendment to the motion.

Tai McShane discussed this location is a major artery for school busses.

A discussion followed.

Laura Shepard and Camille Gray recommended sending a letter of support.

Christine Hunter discussed developing a design in relation to the comments before sending a letter of support.

It was suggested that the DOT contact School District 30 to discuss the bike routes.

Lisa Deller discussed truck traffic on 48<sup>th</sup> Street, and enforcement, she discussed speed bumps, traffic lights, etc.

Stephen Cooper made a motion to table, and it was seconded by Christine Hunter. The vote was 10 In favor of the motion to table 21 opposed and 1 abstention.

Amparo Abel-Bey made a motion to support the 39<sup>th</sup> Avenue Bike Boulevard Proposal and it was seconded by Laura Shepard. The vote was 21 in favor 11 opposed and 0 abstentions.

#### **Public Comment**

Giovanni Garcia - Discussed problems with noise in the rear yard of Flynn's Garden at 4-08 Skillman Avenue

Francisco Hui - Discussed Penn Station access line and environmental issues.

Tom Mituzas invited him to attend a Transportation Committee Meeting.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:  
MA Gurrado

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