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May 5, 2022

Queens Community Board 2 Meeting Minutes

Board Members – Present: Anatole Ashraf, John Laurence Bahia, Kat Bloomfield, Danielle Brecker, Tannia Chavez, Osman Chowdhury, Stephen Cooper, Kelly Craig, Warren Davis, Lisa Deller, Sally Frank, Morry Galonoy, Rosamond Gianutsos, Camille Gray, Kenneth Greenberg, Christine Hunter, Badrun Khan, Chhemang Lama, Sheila Lewandowski, Benjamin Lucas, Patrick Martinez, Thomas Mituzas, Reilly Owens, Clara Oza, Elliot Park, Karla Perez, Steven Raga, Laura Shepard, Ryan Smith, Caroline Spitzer, Lauren Springer, Phuntsok Tashi, Akello Thomas, Mary Torres, Anthony Tudela, Frank Wu

Board Members – Absent

Unexcused: Thalia (Karesia) Batan, Sandra Bigitschke, Gianna Cerbone, William Garrett, Somnath Ghimire, Benjamin Guttmann, Mohammed Choudhury Jewel, Selena Romero, Katherine Sabal, Norberto Saldana

Excused: Amparo Abel-Bey, Nicholas Berkowitz, Kristen McGowan

Community Board 2 Staff: Debra Markell Kleinert (District Manager), MaryAnn Gurrado

Elected Officials/Representatives

Farah Salam, District Manager for Council Member Julie Won
Daisy Munoz, Representing Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney
Craig Caruana, Representing Council Member Robert Holden
Mercedes Jennings, Representing State Senator Michael Gianaris
Tara Chester, representing Queens District Attorney

Guests

Jonah Gensler, Sunnyside Community Services

Note: Reference to the You Tube video and the associated time-in-meeting stamps are offered here as a service to community members who wish to review the meeting. The video and Block Party transcript are not considered part of these minutes.

Link to [You Tube Video](#) of this meeting

(Approximate elapsed time stamps provided in these minutes refer to this video)

Link to [Block Party archive](#) where you can navigate to a transcript of this meeting.

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

Time (Approximate, from YouTube Video)

00:00:40 At 6:32 PM, Queens CB2 Chairperson Morry Galonoy welcomed the community together with elected representatives and other guests. Welcome, especially to new members who have joined the board.

00:01:00 **Pledge of Allegiance.**

00:02:27 **Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney** – Contact: Tel.: 212-860-0606 or visit [Rep. Maloney constituent services](#). Congresswoman Maloney highlighted concerns about the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the recent leaked draft of the Supreme Court decision overturning Roe v Wade. COVID numbers are increasing – the congresswoman herself contracted it. She has funded vaccination and testing at public housing sites and is especially concerned about the inequities in healthcare. She is pleased that a bill that she authored was signed into law to put the US Postal Service on a firmer financial footing. She also spoke of the urgency of spending funds already allocated for parks, especially at the base of the Kosciusko Bridge.

00:16:00 **Daisy Nuñez, representing Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez** – Contact: Tel.: 718-662-5970 or visit Representative Ocasio-Cortez's [website](#). Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez's office is now open for walk-ins from 9-5 Monday through Thursday. The congressperson is acting with others to counter the Supreme Court's expected decision regarding abortion rights and implication for other individual rights. She is proposing to investigate perceived improprieties by Justice Thomas. She had a Town Hall in Astoria on April 20. She reported on 10 Green New Deal projects which have been funded, including \$800,000 for an offshore wind energy workforce development program at SUNY Maritime. There has been an extension on the due date for submission of Medicare premiums to December 2022.

00:19:40 **Mercedes Jennings, representing State Senator Michael Gianaris** – Contact: Tel.: 646-598-8583 Senator Gianaris is in Albany working on legislation. The budget has been passed. The senator continues his support for women's rights and marital rights. Concerns were expressed about expediting the parks work by the Kosciusko bridge and passing legislation in the Crash Victim Rights and Safety Act this term. Chairperson Galonoy suggested the senator is welcome to personally attend our meetings.

00:27:00 **Farah Salam, representing Council Member Julie Won** – Contact: Email: District26@council.nyc.gov Tel.: 718-383-9566. The councilmember's team recently toured Blissville with Queens CB2 board members Mituzas and Davis. Their work continues. The following events were announced: (1) CUNY Citizenship Now on May 14th at LaGuardia Community College will help community members with citizenship applications. There will be multilingual support. (2) NYLAG bus to provide legal services will be in "Little Bangladesh" on 36th Ave. (3) Virtual "[Rat Academy](#)" hosted by the

Department of Health at 4 PM on May 18 to address rodent concerns from constituents especially in areas with small business or construction. CM Won introduced three bills reflecting her role as chair of the Contracts Committee. The councilmember is also working on access to WiFi in city buildings and public participation in the development of on-line applications for the city. Another bill would require the city to establish an office of immigrant wage justice. Her team continues to distribute COVID tests in parks. Ms. Salam responded to concerns expressed re traffic calming, shelters, and the need for green space.

00:45:40 **Tara Chester, representing Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz Office.** Contact: Tel: 718-286-6472 Email: TLChester@QueensDA.org The [DA's office](#) has a unit which addresses Crime Victim Rights Tel: 718-286-6812 Events Announced: AAPI month event May 24 and a Memorial Day ceremony at Elmhurst Park May 26. The DA remains concerned about guns and appreciated the new regulations about "ghost" guns signed by President Biden and Governor Hochul. Last month the DA's Office held their 6th gun buyback event and through these events have taken 335 operable guns out of the community. Recently, there has been an uptick in theft of personal vehicles.

00:43:44 **Craig Caruana, Legislative Director, representing Council Member Robert Holden –** Contact: Tel.: 718-366-3900. Email: ccaruana@council.nyc.gov. Office, located at 58-38 69th Street, Maspeth. It was announced that Councilman Holden supports the one way changes to 51st Ave and 63rd St to be presented by the Department of Transportation later in this CB2 meeting. He also continues to propose legislation especially focused on quality-of-life issues (e.g., noise abatement). He supports a proposal to require a 2/3 vote of the Council in order to raise taxes. Events Announced: (1) Mother's Day Event - Plant the Seeds of Kindness, Thursday, May 12th, 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm at "Uncle" Vito F. Maranzano Glendale Playground, Central Ave. between 70th St. & 71st Street, Glendale, 11385. (2) Free Carotid Artery (Stroke Risk) Screening – call our office for an appointment.

00:58:26 **Jonah Gensler, Sunnyside Community Services –** Contact: Email: JGensler@scsny.org Tel: 929-335-7801 Jonah Gensler spoke on the opening of Sunnyside Community Services' new Caregiver and Employment training center in Parcel C on the waterfront. They announced a [free concert](#) on May 7th.

Public Comment

00:50:51 **Lisa Goren –** long time LIC resident asking Queens CB2 to reject the BSA height, density and use variance for 45-40 Vernon Blvd.

00:54:10 **Angel Hart** from Long Island City Business Improvement District (LIC BID) and LIC Partnership announced their festival called LIC Springs! A neighborhood street festival scheduled for June 18 on Vernon Boulevard. They invited local organizations who wish to participate to contact them at LICQNS.com. They reported that they have

promotions and discounts on their website to celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week (May 1-7).

00:56:50 **Aileen Nielsen** – homeowner on 49th St off Skillman asked to consider redesign of 39th Ave Bike Boulevard because it takes her much longer to drive her disabled father home on 52nd St.

00:59:40 **Gil Lopez** – spoke about two public land sites where there has been encroachment by private entities, one of which now seeks a DOT permit which Mr. Lopez would like Queens CB2 to oppose and favor the use of the land for public purposes. They announced a clean-up at the Borden Ave site was scheduled for May 7. Mr. Lopez has presented to the Environment, Parks and Recreation Committee and links to this will be posted.

01:03:46 **Maria Bravo** expressed concern about the “Romantic Depot” adult products shop at 47-02 Queens Blvd. Stated that it has window displays inappropriate for children which is very near the “Little Friends” pre-K school on 47th off Queens Blvd. Mr. Cooper of the City Services and Public Safety committee will investigate the legalities.

01:06:54 **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

(1) 01:07:12 **Department of Transportation (DOT): 51 Ave/63 St one-way conversion requests** – Gretha Suarez and Bhavin Patel of DOT presented and explained a plan to convert residential streets in Wynwoode to reduce commercial and cut-through traffic.

- a. 01:14:07 The DOT responded to board members and
- b. 01:34:22 community members.
 - i. 01:34:35 Aileen Nielsen concerned re broader impact on traffic, informing community
 - ii. 01:38:20 Pat Florio is concerned about adverse effects on street safety, truck traffic with dust and noise. She is aware of frequent crashes and there’s a need for traffic calming. She appreciates DOT’s redesign. DOT indicated nearby area design is on hold because of the Queens bus redesign.

(2) 01:48:55 **Landmark Application – 41-12 47th Street** Replacement of a chain link fence with a new wrought iron fence.

- a. 01:50:34 Applicant Tom Keenen presentation
- b. 01:53:04 No members of the public offered comments or had questions.

(3) 02:01:50 **Landmark Application – 47-18 Skillman Avenue** Replacement of a chain link fence with a new wrought iron fence.

- a. 02:02:20 [Applicant presentation](#) Applicant Aileen Nielsen presentation
- b. 02:07:45 No members of the public offered comments or had questions.

(4) 02:13:00 **Board of Standards and Appeals – 45-40 Vernon Blvd** - CAL NO. 233-15-BZ. This application was revised on behalf of CSC4540 Property CO LLC for a variance pursuant to Section 72-21 of the Zoning Resolution to facilitate a mixed residential and commercial development located at 45-40 Vernon Boulevard, Long Island City, Queens. The proposed property consists of the residential conversion of an existing four-story manufacturing building and the construction of a 23-story addition containing residential and commercial uses. In the chat a link to [supporting documents](#) was posted.

- a. 02:13:55 Applicant presentation by Amir Setayesh, managing director of the developer and majority owners - Quadrum Global. Additional presenters included, Jeff Mulligan, urban planner, Allison Schwartz, architect, Rick Parisi, landscape architect, joined by Gary Tarnow, Michael Bogin, environmental attorney, Jack Freeman, financial consultant, Alec Militec, environmental consultant.
- b. 02:42:17 questions from board members and
- c. 03:35:00 public comment
 - i. Thomas Paino, lives a block from site and spoke in opposition.
 - ii. Charles Yu, LIC Partnership, spoke in support.
 - iii. Brendan Leavy, Queens Chamber of Commerce, spoke in support.
 - iv. Jason Hilliard, Director of Government Affairs, NY Building Congress, spoke in support.
 - v. Melissa, LIC resident for 26 years, spoke in opposition.
 - vi. Lisa Goren, spoke in opposition.
 - vii. Diane Hendry, spoke in opposition.

(5) 03:51:54 Proposed new Queens CB2 By-laws Sheila Lewandowski, Chairperson of the By-Laws Committee introduced the proposed by-laws and members of the committee presented different portions. There will be an opportunity for public comment before the voting at the full board meeting on June 2, 2022.

04:20:42 Transition to Board Business - Chairperson Galonoy announced we will now be transitioning from the portion of the meeting during which the public can participate to the board business session where the public can observe the Board discussing and deliberating board business.

04:22:15 **Attendance** Board Members Present: 36 Absent: 13, (3-Excused) Quorum: Yes

04:26:25 **Motion** Rosamond Gianutsos moved as follows, seconded by Thomas Mituzas to approve the April 7, 2022, Community Board 2 Meeting Minutes.

Motion carried: all were in favor, with none opposed, and 3 abstentions.

04:27:00 **Chairperson's Report (Morry Galonoy)** – Chairperson Galonoy encouraged all to register for Borough President's State of the Borough address scheduled for June 3rd. The Chairperson announced that new members were sworn in at Borough Hall and committee assignments for new members are forthcoming. Existing members may express a wish to change or add committees. There is a new section on the Queens CB2

website containing [Letters of Support and Correspondence](#). He encouraged the community and board members to [sign up for Queens CBT digital newsletter](#) (coming soon) and subscribe to our [You Tube channel](#). He reported that 36 complaints were received by the district office this month. The top complaints were DOT signage and potholes, rat sightings, and enforcement issues for the police department. Committee chairs are asked to finalize their mission statements and stakeholders' listings and put them in the CB2 shared Google drive. The chairperson acknowledged mothers and veterans on their respective holidays. He reminded the community that this is AAPI month.

04:29:40 **District Manager's Report (Debra Markell Kleinert)** – Debra Markell Kleinert expressed gratitude to Jason our intern from LaGuardia College who has completed his service to CB 2. She announced the interns have been helpful. She announced that Intern Jocelyn is still working in the office and helps the CB2 office as we are currently short-staffed. Ms. Markell Kleinert reminded the board members to advise the board office of any changes to their contact information.

04:31:40 **Department of City Planning (Teal Delys)** – No report, the representative was unable to attend.

04:31:50 **Land Use and Housing Committee (Lisa Deller)** – The committee unanimously voted to approve landmark applications for 41-12 47th St and 47-18 Skillman Ave to replace chain link fences with wrought iron fences.

04:34:30 **Motion:** Mary Torres made and Kenneth Greenberg seconded a motion to approve both applications to replace chain link fences with wrought iron, deferring the matter of the height to the Landmarks Commission. **Motion Approved** Unanimously by show of hands with none opposed and no abstentions.

The committee also discussed a ULURP proposal for a zoning variance at 58th and Northern to allow construction of an automobile dealership.

The committee heard the presentation for 45-40 Vernon Blvd seeking a variance for construction of a 23-story mixed use building, restoration of an old paint factory, and creation of public space giving direct access to the waterfront. There will be no vote on this tonight. Related documents will be posted on the Queens CB2 website and the matter will be considered further at the committee level before it returns for the full board vote at our June 2 meeting. Eventually this request will go to the Board of Standards and Appeals

04:38:30 **Transportation Committee (TC) (Thomas Mituzas)** – Thomas Mituzas announced that the Transportation Committee met on May 3, 2022 and received updates from the MTA regarding the ADA elevator at Court Square.. Tom noted that the elevator will not go continuously from street to different levels due to the way the street is designed. The MTA also addressed questions at the May 3, 2022 meeting on the [Queens bus network redesign](#). Members of the committee requested that the MTA conduct more in person outreach. It was also noted that there was very low attendance from CB2 at the bus redesign meeting and members were encouraged to attend a future session to see the plan and provide feedback there. The 108th

precinct participated and received feedback about need for increased enforcement of parking, improperly registered vehicles, drivers breaking rules, including parking and driving on sidewalks. DOT expects to present the final plans for locating CitiBikes in the district in May and this will include the feedback they have received from the community. The committee will ask the full board to review and vote on the DOT plan for a [Protected bike lane network in LIC](#) in June. The committee has previously voted in favor of the plan. Much concern was raised over the death of an elderly pedestrian as she crossed 48th Street and was struck by a driver. The committee unanimously voted to ask DOT to study this area to consider traffic calming measures. The committee also voted unanimously to ask the board to support the DOT [proposal for a one-way conversion on 51st Ave and 63rd St.](#) in Wynwood Gardens.

04:42:13 **Motion:** Tom Mituzas proposed and Mary Torres seconded a motion to support the DOT plan for one-way conversions in Wynwood Gardens. **Motion Approved** Unanimously by show of hands with none opposed and no abstentions.

04:43:12 **Health and Human Services & Education – (Lauren Springer)** At the April meeting guests were Janet Dominguez, Parent Coordinator and Letitia Vasquez, PTA president from Children’s Lab School. Committee member, Clara Oza, also contributed from her perspective as a Parent Coordinator at the Children’s Lab School. They will appreciate outreach and information sharing with the community, both through parent coordinators and other venues, including tabling at farmers’ markets. The Health, Human Services and Education Committee continues to work on its mission statement and list of stakeholders.

04:46:35 **City Services and Public Safety (Stephen Cooper)** indicated that details of their recent meeting is in the [committee minutes](#). He then introduced Danielle Brecker, the new [Co]-Chair of the Committee, who gave a report on her recent attendance at the Precinct Council. About 75 people were there, many from Long Island City. The precinct leadership were forthcoming and promised to investigate and collect data about where crime is happening. Concerns were noted on the issues of traffic safety, quality of life, and violent crime. Many in the community are confused about when to call 911 and when to call 311. A meeting regarding the food trucks is expected soon which will bring together the several agencies involved – including police, fire, health, transportation departments. It was stated, as an Open Data Ambassador, Anatole Ashraf may be able to educate the community about the role 311 “requests” play in data collection and evaluation of community needs.

04:51:56 **Arts & Culture Committee** (Kenny Greenberg) Details are in [the minutes](#). The Committee met with Edjo Wheeler, Executive Director of the Culture Lab. Wheeler spoke about a collaboration with TF Cornerstone to create a sculpture park between two of their buildings. They also met with the new Executive Director of Sunnyside Shines BID and with the new manager of programming at the Hunters Point Parks Conservancy. These efforts represent a ramping up of activities as we emerge from the height of the COVID pandemic.

04:53:30 **Environment, Parks and Recreation Committee (Frank Wu)** Gil Lopez came to [present](#) on instances of private entities encroaching on public land at Borden Ave under the LIE elevated highway in a manner that has adverse environmental effects. He would like Queens CB2 to write a letter asking for the DOT not to issue a permit (now being requested by these entities)

and, instead, to approve a more environmentally friendly and public use. The committee drafted a letter to the HPD which is about to issue an RFP for the only remaining public land on the Queens CB2 waterfront. This letter requests that the land be kept as an active open parcel.

04:56:22 **Technology and Access Committee (Anatole Ashraf)** – Jason Myles Clark, new Executive Director of Tech: NYC was the guest speaker at the April meeting. Ashraf reported that the organization is a technology non-profit that is very active in our district . Work continues on the Queens CB2 newsletter and website updates continue. The committee works both to facilitate technology for the board in its internal operations, but also for the community.

04:59:22 **Meeting Adjourned** Christine Hunter moved, and Sheila Lewandowski seconded, that the meeting be adjourned. **Motion Carried:** The meeting adjourned at 11:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Rosamond Gianutsos, Secretary

Reviewed / revised and approved for distribution by

☒ Rosamond Gianutsos, Secretary

☒ Morry Galonoy, Chairperson

X Debra Markell Kleinert