



Donovan Richards  
Queens Borough President

## Community Board No. 2

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YouTube Channel: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEHc2NP3nNr18zsOxYqwww\\_v7](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCEHc2NP3nNr18zsOxYqwww_v7)

**June 2, 2022**

### **Queens Community Board 2 Meeting Minutes**

**Board Members – Present:** Amparo Abel-Bey, John Laurence Bahia, Thalia (Karesia) Batan, Sandra Bigitschke, Kat Bloomfield, Danielle Brecker, Gianna Cerbone, Tannia Chavez, Osman Chowdhury, Stephen Cooper, Kelly Craig, Warren Davis, Lisa Deller, Morry Galonoy, Rosamond Gianutsos, Camille Gray, Kenneth Greenberg, Christine Hunter, Badrun Khan, Sheila Lewandowski, Benjamin Lucas, Patrick Martinez, Kristen McGowan, Thomas Mituzas, Reilly Owens, Clara Oza, Elliot Park, Karla Perez, Norberto Saldana, Laura Shepard, Ryan Smith, Caroline Spitzer, Lauren Springer, Phuntsok Tashi, Akello Thomas, Mary Torres, Anthony Tudela

**Board Members – Absent**

**Unexcused:** William Garrett, Somnath Ghimire, Mohammed Choudhury Jewel, Chhemang Lama, Steven Raga, Selena Romero

**Excused:** Anatole Ashraf, Nicholas Berkowitz, Sally Frank, Benjamin Guttmann, Frank Wu

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

**Elected Officials/Representatives**

Farah Salam, District Manager for Councilmember Julie Won

Daniel Bonthius, representing Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

Ernie Brooks, representing Congressmember Carolyn Maloney

Ben Geremia, representing Councilmember Robert Holden

Mercedes Jennings, representing State Senator Michael Gianaris

**Guests**

Teal Delys, Department of City Planning

Andrea Thomas, Sunnyside Community Services

Gretha Suarez, NYC Department of Transportation

Neil Carey, NYC Department of Transportation

*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 6:35 PM, Queens CB2 Chairperson Morry Galonoy welcomed the community together with elected representatives and other guests.

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

00:03:07 **Chairperson Galonoy** reviewed etiquette for participation in meetings and asked that speakers be brief. Only the chairperson may speak on behalf of the board. He asked for a moment of silence for the shooting victims in Uvalde, TX.

00:07:48 **Ernie Brooks**, representing **Congressmember Carolyn Maloney** – Contact: Tel.: 212-860-0606 or visit [Rep. Maloney constituent services](#). Redistricting has resulted in Queens not being part of Congressmember Maloney’s district. Until the end of the term, however, the present district lines apply. The congressmember is working in Washington to address the scourge of gun violence.

00:09:48 **Mercedes Jennings**, representing **State Senator Michael Gianaris** – Contact: Tel.: 646-598-8583 Senator Gianaris is in Albany working on legislation. Three of the senator’s bills passed: (1) A gun safety bill - in response to the shootings in Buffalo and in Uvalde, Tx. (2) The NYCHA Utilities Act, (3) A bill to allow existing officials – such as the respected Dr. Composto in District 30 - a chance to be considered to retain their current positions. Also, by 2023 the plans for greenspace in Blissville will be completed.

00:18:00 **Daniel Bonthius**, representing **Congressmember Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez** – Contact: Tel.: 718-662-5970 or visit Representative Ocasio-Cortez's [website](#). Congressperson Ocasio-Cortez’s office is now open for walk-ins from 9-5 Monday through Thursday. The congressmember is heartbroken about the recent school shootings and is working on legislation addressing gun violence. She held a virtual town hall at the end of May which may be viewed through links on their website. The Social Security Administration has a [new tool](#) for those who wish to check their eligibility for supplemental [social security income](#). They just wrapped up their congressional art competition and will be announcing the results. High school seniors interested in attending our nation’s service academies are encouraged to reach out to their office. There will be a service day at the end of the summer. Because of redistricting much of Sunnyside and Woodside will no longer be in the congressmember’s district next year.

00:22:45 **Farah Salam**, representing **Councilmember Julie Won** – Contact: Email: District26@council.nyc.gov Tel.:718-383-9566. The councilmember’s team expressed concern about the recent school shootings. Legislative updates include introduction of two bills: (1) Intro 440 – Public Wi-Fi in Public Spaces and (2) Intro 441 – Virtual User Testing. The councilmember co-sponsored a package of bills insuring universal, inclusive childcare. Constituent services offered by the councilmember this month included: a CUNY Citizenship Now event where they helped 70 individuals apply for citizenship or a

green card, a NYLAG event with free legal services to over 40 persons. The councilmember hosted a virtual “Rat Academy” and they have been visiting neighborhoods offering testing kits.

00:27:50 **Ben Geremia, representing Councilmember Robert Holden** – Contact: Tel.: 718-366-3900. Email: [bgeremia@council.nyc.gov](mailto:bgeremia@council.nyc.gov). Office, located at 58-38 69th Street, Maspeth. Events announced: Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> a Movie Under the Stars at Uncle Vito’s Playground; Saturday June 4<sup>th</sup>, Italian Night at Juniper Park; Thursday June 9<sup>th</sup>, a thyroid screening at PS/IS 119; Friday, June 10, Movie Under the Stars at Juniper Park; Thursday, June 16 a sing-along Disney Concert at Juniper Park; Friday, June 17<sup>th</sup> Movie Under the Stars at Reef Park; Saturday June 18<sup>th</sup>, Water Day at Juniper Park; Thursday June 23<sup>rd</sup>, a Strawberry Fields Concert in Juniper Park.

00:29:59 **Andrea Thomas, Sunnyside Community Services** – Contact: Email: [AThomas@scsny.org](mailto:AThomas@scsny.org) Tel: 929-335-7801 Announcements: (1) Sunnyside Community Services (SCS) is seeking to place high school students (ages 16-18) into internships for 6 weeks, 25 hrs/wk. (2) The social adult day program at SCS has open slots for people with cognitive impairments.

#### 00:33:00 **Public Comment**

00:34:52 **Andrew DiCamillo** expressed concerns about rats, especially because restaurants are not putting food waste in containers.

00:38:00 **Sara Obraitis** invited all to a block party hosted by the Court Square Civic Association on Saturday, June 19<sup>th</sup> in Long Island City.

00:39:50 **Maroua Righi** of the Civilian Complaint Review Board introduced the CCRB as the city agency which investigates police misconduct. They have resumed hybrid meetings. They will also provide representation and give aways for community events. Contact: Email: [mrighi@ccrb.nyc.gov](mailto:mrighi@ccrb.nyc.gov)

#### 00:43:50 **Public Hearings**

(1) **DOT represented by Gretha Suarez on Protected Bike Lanes for LIC** Nick Carey, lead engineer of the DOT Bicycle Unit, showed the DOT [plan for protected bike lanes in Long Island City](#) originally presented at the April Transportation Committee.

00:59:00 Questions and comments by board members

Mary Torres voiced concerns about the loss of parking near the Pulaski Bridge. She stated that this would be difficult for small businesses, unless DOT would convert some of the 12 hour parking on Borden Ave. to 2 hour.

Camille Gray asked about alternatives for people who now park in the spaces to be lost. DOT voiced no plans. Their mission is to provide safe paths of travel for bikes in the hopes that that will be an alternative to car use and parking.

Laura Shepard stated that she appreciates these plans which prioritize safety for all road users.

Benjamin Lucas encouraged DOT to provide more data on crashes, including lives saved and reduction of car rides.

Reilly Owens supported this plan, as he commutes regularly by bike. He wants a network that will be safe for families and deliveries by bike.

Stephen Cooper would like to DOT to follow up with review, e.g., within 30 days, following the completion of projects.

Caroline Spitzer is a recent rider and appreciates the protection offered by these lanes. She would encourage DOT to add bike parking.

Tom Mituzas voiced a need for more advanced notice to the community of changes. Further discussion of outreach on DOT projects ensued.

Sheila Lewandowski seeks balance based on her experiences as a caregiver and more recently as a person with medical conditions which require her use to drive. Not everyone can use alternatives to driving.

Amparo Abel-Bey thanked DOT for designs which protect lives and urged an increased provision for bike parking.

Christine Hunter is concerned that the elimination of on-street parking may raise costs which is especially burdensome for lower-income residents. She asked if there is any possibility of developing a permitting process for neighborhood parking. DOT has to defer to elected officials. Kat Bloomfield noted that in a 2013 study, bike lanes actually led to an increase in retail sales. Many other studies have supported that finding.

Rosamond Gianutsos resonated to a point made by Kat that there are persons who are unable to drive based on disability. These people need safe street designs which enable pedestrian and alternative vehicle mobility.

Stephen Cooper asked about the rules for use of bike lanes by different kinds of bicycles, e-bikes and mopeds. DOT provided a [chart](#) to explain where different kinds of bikes can ride. Karesia Batan asked DOT to publicize this information, especially to businesses which make deliveries.

#### **01:51:45 Public Comment for Protected Bike Lanes in LIC**

**Jesse Nover** lives in Sunnyside. His daughter was recently struck by a cyclist as she exited the mews onto the sidewalk. He was also struck by a FedEx driver while he was cycling on Vernon Blvd. He favors this plan and improved safety in road design, while being concerned about parking and education of road users.

**01:54:31 Sammi Weissman** spoke in favor of the bike lane plan, but also as a pedestrian and runner she would like better education of cyclists as to the rules. She asked about the safety of pedestrian islands. DOT explained that they are intended to shorten the crossing distance and make the crossing safer at intersections. Pedestrian injuries have dropped the most following installation of protected bike lanes.

**02:00:34 Maya Saab** is a power wheelchair user and driver. She was concerned that the doctor was implying that people with disabilities can not drive (Dr. Roz clarified – she indicated that it is only some disabling conditions which prevent people from driving safely.) Maya has now upgraded to an accessible handicapped van. Unfortunately, parking is difficult

for her as protected bike lanes are on the right side and she needs to drop her entry/exit ramp on the right side. When she uses her power wheelchair, she is almost hit by speeding bikers. Bikers should be liable and follow the traffic rules.

02:06:21 **Manny Gomez** asked about community outreach by DOT, e.g., to businesses, children, seniors, and firefighters. DOT stated that they review all their plans with partner agencies, including FDNY.

02:10:25 **Vlad Pavlyuk** is a car and bike user who lives on Borden Ave, and so will be directly affected by this “wonderful” plan. He asks DOT if there has been any improvement to the bike lane off ramp to the Pulaski Bridge. DOT recognizes the need for improvements in bike to bridge access and will be coming to us with plans soon.

02:14:13 **Kathleen (Katie) Reilly** is a bicycle commuter who works in Queens Plaza. She has found cycling stressful in LIC near her workplace. Last year she was doored by a driver while she was in a sharrow-type bike lane. She is grateful for the proposed plan.

02:16:45 **Ellen Day** is a business owner on 44<sup>th</sup> Drive between 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. They and other businesses need loading zones for deliveries. Presently there is much double parking and parking along the center median. DOT indicates that they will be including loading zones and provision for curb access, even though they are not shown in the diagrams.

02:24:10 **Nabil Khatri** voiced support for the LIC protected bike lane plan. Agreeing with other suggestions, he added that DOT should provide for handicapped parking.

02:25:23 **Ben Turner** supported this plan, appreciating how it promotes connectiveness of the bike network. He reminded us that much as some people can not bike, many can not drive. Fewer than half the people in our district have a car. The streets should be useful and safe for everyone.

02:28:35 **Chong Jennifer (CJ) Bretillon** a Dutch Kills resident supported the plan because it protects people, promotes connectivity, and is climate-friendly.

02:30:14 **Alexa Jakob**, an Astoria resident and a newly graduated engineer who rides regularly to Brooklyn, supported DOT’s plan. It is consonant with the oath that engineers, like herself, take to protect the well-being of the public.

02:31:55 **Huge Ma** is an Astoria resident who spoke in favor of the DOT LIC protected bike lane plans. He lives on Crescent St. where the two-way protected bike lane has had a “transformative impact” on his quality of life.

02:34:10 **Tracy Hinder** is an upper East Side who frequently uses the 44<sup>th</sup> Drive bike lane. She supports the plan, especially the provision of daylighting. She asked if there were any plan to implement speed cameras in that area. DOT reported that they will investigate whether recently passed legislation will allow speed cameras in this area.

02:36:32 **Jim Burke** is a resident of Jackson Heights who leads bike rides for children. He has avoided leading them to LIC and will appreciate being able to do so once the LIC protected bike plan is implemented.

02:39:40 **Public Comment on Board of Standards and Appeals – 45-40 Vernon Blvd** – There was no presentation (since we had one last month); however, the board provided time for the public to comment.

02:41:42 **Natalia Hertel** is a local resident. She expressed outrage that the experienced developer is seeking an expedited variance. They should go through the usual (ULURP)

process which allows for negotiation. The proposed building is out of character for the neighborhood.

02:44:35 **Amber Barth**, a long-time resident of Long Island City, urged the board to vote no because there is little consideration to preserving the arts and features unique to the neighborhood. She expressed concern about the loss of sunlight. It goes against the character of Vernon Blvd. She asserted that the developers must have known about the clean-up costs – it was common knowledge.

02:46:21 **Jamilah Grizzle** is associated with Harbor Lab, an non-profit which seeks to promote equitable access to our local water systems. She stated that her organization is looking forward to working with Quadrum Global, the developer. They would provide benefits, including ample bike parking, storage space for her organization's kayaks, an ADA accessible dock, and other climate-friendly amenities. In response to board members, it was acknowledged that Harbor Lab has no formal commitments from Quadrum, the developer.

02:52:50 **Public Comment for By-Laws for Queens Community Board 2, Sheila Lewandowski**  
No one signed up to comment.

02:53:17 **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.

02:54:00 **Attendance** Board Members Present: 37; Absent: 6-Unexcused, 5-Excused.  
Quorum: yes

02:58:50 **Motion:** To approve the May 5, 2022 Community Board 2 Meeting Minutes. (Motion made by Tom Mituzas and seconded by Danielle Brecker.)  
**Motion carried:** All in favor, none opposed, and 1 abstention (Amparo Abel-Bey).

03:00:08 **Chairperson's Report (Morry Galonoy)** – Chairperson Galonoy announced that:  
(1) he and the District Manager will attend the Borough President's State of the Borough address on June 3rd;  
(2) a meet and greet social is scheduled for Queens CB2 members and families;  
(3) he attended a meeting on public safety with the leadership of the police department;  
(4) he attended the vigil for gun shooting victims convened by Councilmember Julie Won;  
(5) Our new Small Business and Local Economy Committee held its first meeting  
(6) he and Warren Davis attended the CAB meeting for the Borden Ave Veterans' Shelter.  
Chairperson Galonoy asked for committees to work on their mission statements and stakeholders' listings so they may be dropped into the shared Google drive.  
The digital newsletter was released. He encouraged the community and board members to sign up for Queens CBT digital newsletter . Contact the office for a hard copy.

Capital expense priorities need to be worked on over the summer with changes and additions reported by Sept. 6, 2022.

Chairperson Galonoy reported that 33 complaints were received by the district office this month (DOT signage and potholes, fire hydrants, rat sightings, and enforcement issues for the police department).

Again, please subscribe to our YouTube Channel.

Chairperson Galonoy recognized the Juneteenth holiday, Father's Day and Pride Month. Our next meeting is Sept. 8, 2022

**03:08:03 District Manager's Report (Debra Markell Kleinert)** – The District Manager reported that the office has closed 25 of the 33 complaints received this month. The Kiwanis Club's Flag Day parade is on June 11th. Web site upgrades continue thanks to the Queens CB2 staff and board members, especially the Tech and Engagement Committees. The office remains open during the summer and will include work on the budget.

**03:12:00 Department of City Planning (Teal Delys)** – In September, the committee should expect a ULURP proposal for a zoning variance at 58th and Northern to allow construction of an automobile dealership.

**03:14:00 Land Use and Housing Committee (Lisa Deller)** – The committee has prepared a letter detailing reasons why it recommends that the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) reject the application 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. Lisa Deller and Christine Hunter summarized the letter.

**03:34:08 Motion:** To support [the letter](#) which details the Board's opposition to the variance application. (Motion proposed by Stephen Cooper and seconded by Kenneth Greenberg)

**Motion passed** by roll call vote: 34 Yes; 1 No; 1 Abstain; 1 not voting

**03:42:00 Transportation Committee (Sheila Lewandowski and Thomas Mituzas)** – The committee has not met this month. In April the committee voted in favor of the DOT plan for a [Protected bike lane network in LIC](#) which was brought to the full board for review.

**03:44:35 Motion:** to support the DOT plan for a [Protected bike lane network in LIC](#) with the stipulation that DOT (1) consider the need for loading zones and handicapped parking, (2) advise the community in advance regarding the loss of parking, (3) upon completion, evaluate the project and report to the board within 30 days; and (4) conduct education for persons using bicycle lanes regarding the rules of use. (Motion proposed by Amparo Abel-Bey and seconded by Mary Torres.)

**04:05:07 Motion Passed** by show of hands: None opposed and 2 Abstain (Lisa Deller and Sheila Lewandowski.)

04:10:25 **By-laws (Sheila Lewandowski)** The proposed by-laws were posted a month ago. The only change was to consolidate duplicative language on conduct into one section that will apply to all – members, staff and attendees.

04:13:37 **Motion:** to approve [the by-laws](#) (Motion proposed by Lisa Deller and seconded by Tom Mituzas)

04:17:35 **Motion Passed** by roll call vote: 33 Yes; 0 No; 0 Abstain; 4 not voting

04:19:34 **Health and Human Services & Education – (Lauren Springer)** The committee had a guest speaker, Chae No, from the Queens Borough NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), who provided information on the COVID pandemic and the DOHMH's activities in Queens. Details are posted in the [committee minutes](#). Chairperson Springer announced that Clara Oza is now co-chair of this committee with a focus on education and youth. Further discussion ensued regarding the committee mission statement and stakeholders data base.

04:20:33 **Subcommittee on Unhoused and Sheltered (Thomas Mituzas)** Mr. Mituzas expressed gratitude for the board's support for the [letter](#) regarding shelters in our district which was sent out to elected officials. He described a rapid and constructive response including: (1) an audience with the Commissioner of the Department of Homeless Services with Borough President Richards in attendance; (2) a long-delayed CAB meeting for the Borden Avenue Veteran's Shelter; (3) outreach to the provider of the CitiView shelter by Warren Davis. A meeting has been scheduled with the provider, DHS and Queens Community Board 2.

04:21:52 **City Services and Public Safety (Stephen Cooper)** indicated that details of their recent meeting is in the [committee minutes](#).

04:23:25 **Arts & Culture Committee (Karesia Batan)** The committee heard presentations by (1) Paz Tanjuaquio, Executive Director of Topaz Arts. They are a gallery and studio space celebrating 25 years in Woodside. (2) Isabella Bustamante of Teen Art Salon discussed their work with youth. Located near PS1, they are looking to partner with middle schools. (3) Elizabeth Masella is the Senior Public Arts Coordinator at NYC Parks discussed plans for a mural at a basketball court in Murray Playground in LIC. Details and announcements are in [the minutes](#). The Arts and Culture Committee welcomed two new board members: Akello Thomas and Ryan Smith.

04:25:22 **Environment, Parks and Recreation Committee (Laura Shepard)** The committee heard a presentation by people from Smiling Hogshead Ranch about their work.

04:25:45 **Technology and Access Committee (Anatole Ashraf)** – The committee did not meet this month.

04:27:21 **Motion:** to adjourn the meeting. (Tom Mituzas proposed, and Lisa Deller seconded)  
**Motion passed:** without opposition and the meeting adjourned at 11:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Rosamond Gianutsos, Secretary



Reviewed / revised and approved for distribution by

☒ Rosamond Gianutsos, Secretary

☒ Morry Galonoy, Chairperson

☒ Debra Markell Kleinert