



Donovan Richards
Queens Borough President

Community Board No. 2

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Danielle Brecker
Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert
District Manager

You Tube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@queenscb2>

2nd Revision as of April 11, 2023

March 2, 2023

Queens Community Board 2 Meeting Minutes

This meeting was teleconferenced on Zoom

Board Members – Present: Amparo Abel-Bey, Anatole Ashraf, John Bahia, Sandra Bigitschke, Kat Bloomfield, Danielle Brecker, Tannia Chavez, Osman Chowdhury, Stephen Cooper, Warren Davis, Morry Galonoy, Somnath Ghimire, Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos, Camille Gray, Kenneth Greenberg, Christine Hunter, Badrun Khan, Chhemang Lama, Sheila Lewandowski, Patrick Martinez, Thomas Mituzas, Reilly Owens, Clara Oza, Norberto Saldana, Laura Shepard, Ryan Smith, Caroline Spitzer, Lauren Springer, Akello Thomas, Mary Torres

Board Members – Absent:

Unexcused: Thalía (Karesia) Batán, Gianna Cerbone, Sally Frank, William Garrett, Benjamin Guttmann, Mohammed Chowdhury Jewel, Kristen McGowan, Elliot Park, Karla Perez, Selena Romero, Phuntsok Tashi, Frank Wu

Excused: Nicholas Berkowitz, Kelly Craig, Lisa Deller, Benjamin Lucas,

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

Public Members – Present

Sarah Orbatis
Patricia Pan

Elected Officials/Representatives

Evelyn Li, Representing Congresswoman Grace Meng
Daniel Wiley, Representing Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez
Mahfuzul Islam, Representing Senator Kristine Gonzalez
Melissa M. Villalagos, Representing New York State Assembly Member Juan Ardila
Mercedes Jennings, Representing New York State Senator Gianaris
Victoria Leahy, Representing Assembly Member Steven Raga

Farah Salam, Representing New York City Council Member Julie Won
Javier Figaroa, Representing Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz

Department of City Planning

Teal Delys

NYC Department of Sanitation

Joe Ottomanelli, NYC Department of Sanitation

Public Comment

Theodora Scarato

Guests

Monica Guzman, Sunnyside Community Services
John Sanchez, 5 Borough Housing Movement

Note: Reference to the You Tube Video and the associate 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 no considered part of these minutes.

Link to You Tube Video of this meeting <https://www.youtube.com/@queenscb2>
(Approximate elapsed time stamps provided in these minutes refer to this video)

Link to <https://blockparty.studio/Archive> where you can navigate to a transcript of this meeting.

Time: (Approximate from YouTube Video)

0:00:35: Queens CB 2 Chairperson Danielle Brecker welcomed everyone to the CB 2 Meeting.

0:00:42 Pledge of Allegiance

0:01:54 **Evelyn Li, Representing Congresswoman Grace Meng** discussed the following:

- Discussed the Call to Action Survey, for more information, reach out to their office for more information.
- On March 19, 2023 there will be Passport Event in at the Jackson Heights Post Office.
- Flyer will be sent to the CB 2 Office.
- Q & A

0:04:04 **Farah Salam, Representing NYC Council Member Julie Won** discussed the following:

- CUNY Citizenship Now Immigration event will be held on Saturday from 10:00 to 2:00 pm at the CUNY Law School in Court Square.

- Hosting a Tax Webinar on March 15, 2023 in conjunction with the Queens Chamber, LIC Bid and Sunnyside Shines.
- Anyone in need of individual Tax Preparation Help are being sent to Woodside on the Move.
- Legislative updates: Council Member Won attended a rally for Into 941 for free Universal Child Care.
- There was an announced for Welcome NYC for \$2.2 million initiative that will fund organizations that provide critical wrap around services to immigrant New Yorkers.
- Participatory Budgeting under way to prep for get out the vote week on March 25 – April 2, 2023, once they have info it will be sent out.
- Will be marching at the St. Pat's For All Parade.
- Q & A

0:07:58 **Chairperson Brecker** thanked the Council Member for the Town Hall that she helped to organize.

0:08:40 **Mahfuzul Islam, Representing NY State Senator Kristen Gonzalez** discussed the following:

- Legislative news: NY State Senate Internet and Technology Committee advanced the Secure Our Data Act.
- Senator is currently in Albany to fight for district 59.
- Senator's Office will participate in the Queens Budget Forum
- Senator Gonzalez continues to call for Safer Streets for pedestrians and cyclists.
- The Senator's office staff was present at the meeting for Borough President Richards Borough on Your Block.
- The Senator's office is always available.
- Q & A

0:12:51 **Victoria Leahy, Representing Assembly Member Steven Raga** discussed the following:

- Senior Citizens Home Exemptions and the Veterans and Disabled counterparts deadline is March 15, 2023. Call their office for assistance.
- If anyone is applying for SCRIE or DRIE the senior citizens rent increase exemption, there is no deadline. Call their office for assistance.
- March 25, 2023 Women of Distinction for Women's History Month will be hosted at the Queens Public Library in Elmhurst. Invitation will be sent to CB 2
- Series of mobile office hours coming up.
- Q & A

0:23:00 **Monica Guzman, Sunnyside Community Services** discussed the following:

- Sunnyside Community Services is advocating for funding from elected officials and cost of living adjustments.
- Job Openings at Sunnyside Community Services, visit their website for more information www.scs.org

- March 10, 2023 deadline for Pre-K enrollment, families must go to the Department of Education website. If anyone is interested in Sunnyside Community Services, please reach out to them as they are in the process of setting up tours and list them in the application.
- Looking for volunteers to help at Sunnyside Community Services, please contact SCS.

0:25:21 Joseph Ottomanelli, Department of Sanitation discussed the following:

- Setout Time Change goes into effect on April 1, 2023.
- This new rule will reduce the time trash obstructs sidewalks making our streets cleaner and reducing rats.
- Residents have two options to set out trash and recycling and curbside composting: After 6:00 pm in a container of 55 gallons or less with a secure lid, or after 8:00 pm if putting bags directly on the curb.
- To ensure collection all waste must be set out by midnight.
- Outreach is being conducted to residents and businesses.
- For questions email: customerservice@dsny.nyc.gov.
- Q & A

Public Comment:

0:29:08 Theodora Scarato, Executive Director of Environmental Health Trust discussed the following:

- Her organization focuses on environmental health issues with the focus on wireless radiation.
- She discussed the 5G Pole.
- For more information visit the website at: <https://ehtrust.org/>
- Q & A

0:41:31 Mercedes Jennings, Representing New York State Senator Michael Gianaris discussed the following:

- Senator Gianaris attended at a Vigil for 7 year old, Dolma Naadhum who was fatally struck on 45th Street and Newtown Road. The Senator is diligently calling for a stop light there.
- Senator Gianaris is working on bills.
- Working on Green Light Bill passes to help prevent accidents with youth in the community.
- Q & A

0:46:04 Presentation by John Sanchez, Executive Director, 5 Borough Housing Movement – Affordable Housing Proposals for Office Conversions discussed the following:

- The 5 Borough Housing Movement advocates changing the state multiple dwelling law (MDL) to allow flexibility for office buildings to convert to residential housing.
- Lift the state Floor Area Ratio (FAR) cap to allow more housing to be built.
- Provide a tax incentive for permanently affordable housing.
- Seeking a letter of support.
- For more information visit the website at: <https://5borohousing.org/>
- Q & A

1:23:34 Transition to Board Business:

1:23:40 Attendance

- Board Members Present: 30 Board Members Absent: 16
 - Unexcused: 12 Excused: 4 Quorum: Yes

1:31:34 **Motion** to approve the January 5, 2023 CB 2 Meeting Minutes
 (Motion made by Amparo Abel-Bey and seconded by Thomas Mituzas)
 Motion carried: All in favor with none opposed and one (1) abstention
<https://www.nyc.gov/site/queenscb2/meetings/meeting-agendas-minutes.page>

1:32: 03 **Motion** to approve the February 2, 2023 CB 2 Meeting Minutes
 (Motion made by Amparo Abel-Bey and seconded by Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos)
 Motion carried: All in favor with none opposed and one (1) abstention
<https://www.nyc.gov/site/queenscb2/meetings/meeting-agendas-minutes.page>

1:32:54 **Chairperson's Report (Danielle Brecker)**

- Attended the Borough Board Meeting about the Preliminary 2024 City Budget and push back on the budget.
- Reported that she attended along with Christine Hunter and Ros Gianutsos the Town Hall on the Army Corp Sea Wall Plan.
- Invited all to march or man the table at the St. Pat's For All Parade on Sunday March 5, 2023.
- Announced that on Wednesday March 8, 2023, from 5 to 9 pm. She will be speaking at the Girija Prasad Koirala (GPK) Foundation America who will be celebrating Women's History month, Black History Month and the Foundation's 3rd Anniversary Annual Gala Dinner at the Gulshan Terrace. The CB 2 Board Members have also been invited to attend the event.
- The next Community Board 2 Meeting will take place on April 13, 2023 due to Passover and Easter. To all who celebrate she wished happy holidays.

1:37:07 **District Manager's Report (Debra Markell Kleinert)**

- Reminder, please note all CB2 official meeting requests and agency correspondence must go through the CB 2 office. All CB 2 scheduling of events, presentations and meetings must be coordinated through the CB 2 office.
- Committee attendance records are important they are submitted to Borough Hall. Everyone must participate on and attend at least one committee meeting a month as required.
- Reminder if your contact information changes, email, address and phone number please contact the CB2 office and alert us with the new information.
- Remember if you have community complaints, quality of life issues please submit to the CB 2 board office for follow up.

- Attended the Borough President Donovan Richards town hall in your district. All of the agencies were in attendance to respond to local issues.
- CB 2 had approximately 36 complaints from February 1, 2023, through February 28, 2023, the top complaints were:
 - NYPD
 - Double parking
 - Illegal smoke shops
 - Illegal vendors
 - Department of Transportation
 - Signals, potholes
 - Sanitation (dos) – garbage issues
 - DEP – bioswales, leaky fire hydrant
- Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
 - CB2 has requested dep have the bioswales cleaned within CB2. If you have any bioswale locations, please let us know.
- Parks Department
 - CB2 reported snow conditions at the location of Lt. Michael Davidson playground and parks sent a crew to the location.
 - Reminder to change clocks on March 12, 2023 daylight savings time – spring ahead 1 hour. Check your smoke alarms.
 - Remember it is Woman’s History Month.
 - Happy St. Patrick’s Day – St. Pat’s parade for all it begins approximately at 1pm. At the location of 43rd and Skillman.
 - CB2 has been posting more information on our facebook, and website.
- The next community board 2 meeting will be held on Thursday, April 13, 2023, at 6:30pm.
- Please check the website for updated information at: Website www.nyc.gov/queenscb2

1:40:52 **Department of City Planning (Teal Delys)** provided the following update:

- Two projects in ULURP are:
 - 23-10 Queens Plaza South vote for this project at the CPC will be on March 15, 2023. The application will proceed to City Council Review
 - 61-10 Queens Boulevard Planet Fitness Rezoning. This application will have its public hearing on March 15, 2023
- Q & A

1:46:06 Committee Reports and Deliberation

1:46:35 **Land Use Committee Report (Christine Hunter) - The Committee held their meeting and minutes are posted to the website:**<https://www.nyc.gov/site/queenscb2/meetings/committee-agendas-minutes.page>

- Christine Hunter discussed the 5 Borough Housing Movement are seeking a letter of support for this initiative for an action in the state budget. The Land Use Committee made a motion for a letter of support with the following stipulations. These have to do with the mandate that there be an incentive for affordable housing initiative and the six stipulations are listed as follows:

Incentives for office to residential conversion would require:

- ✓ Lower the proposed AMI (area median income) affordability tiers:
 - ✓ Permanent affordability
 - ✓ Preferences for permanent apartments to accommodate the underhoused
 - ✓ Preference for affordable homeownership
 - ✓ A mix of bedroom sizes to accommodate larger families
 - ✓ Protections for existing businesses.
- Tom Mitzuas requested the proposed amendment to include staple services such as grocery stores, green public spaces, public library, schools.

(Motion made by Tom Mituzas and seconded by Stephen Cooper)

Motion carried by All in favor; 0 opposed and 4 abstentions

2:20:23 **Dan Wiley**, Representing Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez discussed the following:

- Thanked Danielle Brecker and the others for attending the Army Corps Meeting.
- Discussed the resiliency study on how to protect the area around Newtown Creek.
- Opportunity for the groups around Newtown Creek who raised concerns.
- Can make comments by deadline of March 7, 2023
- Discussed a Town Hall Meeting that will take place at Sunnyside Community Services on Monday, March 6, 2023 from 6 to 8 pm to meet with Congresswoman Velazquez.
- Q & A

2:23:21 Recommendations of New York New Jersey Harbor and Tributary Study (NynyHATS) – Coastal Storm Risk Management – Newtown Creek

- Christine Hunter discussed the Army Corps presentation at the February 2023 CB 2 meeting with regard to their region wide study and draft plan for resiliency and protection against storm surge and increasing danger based on sea level rise. The Army Corps mandate is to protect and recommend changes to waterways. The deadline for comments is March 7, 2023.
- Draft bullet points were distributed with the Land Use Minutes.
- Christine Hunter discussed the bullet points as follows:
 - QNS CB 2 appreciates the comprehensive scope of the United States Army Corp. of Engineers (USACE) draft study with regard to examining and reducing the risks of sea

level rise and storm surge flooding across New York City and adjacent regions to the north and west.

- QNS CB 2 needs more time for Board Members to review USACE draft study in depth, review latest NYC/NYS plans for future flood proofing and resiliency, and consult with adjacent Community Boards that have similar or related issues, in order to formulate a more detailed response. We agree with Brooklyn CB 1 that the comment period should be extended, ideally for 12 months.
- QNS CB 2 believes that local engagement and input are essential to the creation of a viable long run workable plan with political and economic support. However, it does not seem feasible for the USACE to engage individually with the myriad local and regional stakeholder groups that have valid environmental concerns. Going forward, we strongly recommend the creation of Task Forces to cover sub-districts of the draft plan. Each Task Force should include representatives from the covered Community Boards as well as local environmental and social justice advocacy groups, and should communicate with and solicit input from all their stakeholders.
- QNS CB 2 believes that the Army Corps needs to coordinate their base data with the latest data being used by New York City and New York State agencies, and to coordinate their recommendations with the planning initiatives of those agencies. In particular, the Army Corp's recommended water-based measures to mitigate storm surge need to be fully evaluated and coordinated with land-based measures to mitigate inland flooding and improve storm drainage throughout the city. The Army Corps needs to examine and prevent any unintended consequences or spillover effects of their proposed water-based measures on adjacent low-lying areas of the city.
- QNS CB 2 concurs with the letter from the NYC and NJ Urban Tributaries Working Group to the USACE dated 2/23/2023, expressing multiple concerns about the USACE study including an over-reliance on in-water barriers, the absence of modeling of inland flooding impacts, inadequate consideration of natural and nature-based features (NBBF's) and the absence of protection for many waterfront areas such as the neighborhoods along the Bronx River.
- QNS CB 2 has specific concerns about the construction-phase and long term environmental impacts of the proposed new storm surge gates near the mouth of Newtown Creek. These concerns include the potential inhibition of tidal flow, the inhibition of the functioning of new sewage retention tunnels planned by NY City, coordination with the on-going Superfund cleanup of contamination in and around Newtown Creek and potential re-contamination, interference with on-going shipping uses along the Creek, and potential additional induced flooding during torrential rain events. We concur with the recommendations of both Brooklyn CB 1 and the NYC and NJ Urban Tributaries Working Group that an alternative to the proposed storm surge gates should be developed.
- QNS CB2 feels that it is essential that any plan for new infrastructure intended to mitigate the effects of coastal storm surge also include measures such as the proposed sewage retention tunnels to eliminate the continuing harmful effects of the 13

Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) outfalls which currently discharge into Newtown Creek.

- QNS CB 2 recognizes that the design and proposed range of shore-based measures (SBMs) along the Long Island City waterfront are very preliminary. However, we feel that measures which would block waterfront views and access as well as impede the functioning of the existing waterfront parks are unacceptable, as these parks have been constructed at major public expense and are heavily utilized. When and if they are required, we strongly urge the use of flip-up walls rather than fixed seawalls which would permanently block visual access to the water. New measures to protect the Long Island City waterfront will also need to be coordinated with on-going and expanding ferry service and ferry stops as well as existing transit and vehicular tunnels under the East River.
- QNS CB 2 urges the Army Corps to further evaluate the LIC waterfront north of the Queensboro Bridge, and to consider recommendations for additional low lying areas such as the area around Astoria Houses at the northwest corner of Queens, which have experienced flooding in the past.
- QNS CB 2 recognizes that the Army Corps' jurisdiction is limited to waterways and shorelines, however it is essential that the Army Corps, NY City and NY State coordinate their analyses and plan effectively to achieve a resilient city. Additional resources must be invested in greenspace and permeable surfaces throughout the Community Board 2 to improve local flood resiliency, while providing natural cooling and tree cover. Significant investments must also be made to upgrade, expand, and make mass transit fully accessible, as well as greenways, and other low-emission transportation options to reduce carbon emissions and increase local resiliency.
- QNS CB2 concurs with the concerns of the Blissville Civic Association as expressed in their separate letter to USACE dated 3/6/2023, and urges consideration of more green infrastructure mitigation efforts in that very vulnerable and underserved community.
- QNS CB 2 advocates specifically for additional artificial wetlands and graded shores to protect NYC and further from the consequences of out of control emissions of CO₂, by increasing local resilience to floods, and capturing CO₂ through photosynthesis, locking CO₂ in the plant material, and finally into the soil/sediments.
- QNS CB 2 Environment, Parks & Recreation Committee will be developing a Climate Action Plan over the next few months to address local needs and challenges, by soliciting local input. The USACE should refer to and incorporate these recommendations throughout this lengthy process.

- Q & A

Sheila Lewandowski requested the following stipulation to redirect the use of Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO's) from Newtown Creek.

(Motion made by Sheila Lewandowski and seconded by Tom Mituzas)

Motion carried by All in favor of the motion with one (1) opposed and no abstentions

2:59:43 Transportation Committee (Sheila Lewandowski)

- Announced the next Committee Meeting will take place on March 7, 2023.
- Grateful to new public members who joined us.
- Trying to make seniors and disabled have not been properly represented enough and looking for more input on how to support the needs of the disabled and seniors in transportation issues.
- Discussion took place concerning Stephen Cooper's request to review tweaks on 50th Street and 39th Avenue.
- Tom Mituzas reported that at the next meeting there will be a presentation by the Friends of the QNS at the next Transportation Committee Meeting.
- <https://www.nyc.gov/site/queenscb2/meetings/committee-agendas-minutes.page>

3:03:02 Engagement and Inclusion Committee (Tannia Chavez)

- Join the next meeting on March 8, 2023 at 5:30 pm
- Seeking suggestions for Engagement and Inclusion to support
- <https://www.nyc.gov/site/queenscb2/meetings/committee-agendas-minutes.page>

3:06:04 City Services & Public Safety Committee (Danielle Brecker)

- Approved State Liquor Authority (SLA) Applications and one application for Taxi and Limousine.
- Requesting Police Department (PD) attend the April Board Meeting.
- Requested Morry Galonoy take the lead on conducting a joint town hall with local elected officials with regard to cannabis.
- <https://www.nyc.gov/site/queenscb2/meetings/committee-agendas-minutes.page>

3:09:42 Health & Human Services & Education Committee (Lauren Springer & Clara Oza)

- Presentation from Sunnyside Community Services regarding Elder Justice Program.
- Presentation on March 13, 2023 Health Equity and Access to Care Project run by CUNY School of Public Health.
- <https://www.nyc.gov/site/queenscb2/meetings/committee-agendas-minutes.page>

3:10:34 Arts & Cultural Committee (Kenny Greenberg)

- Sculpture Center came to speak.
- May 10, 2023 Public Exhibition
- Black Village Arts attended
- Sharona Silver from the Queens Public Library Woodside spoke about programs there.
- <https://www.nyc.gov/site/queenscb2/meetings/committee-agendas-minutes.page>

3:11:43 Environment, Parks and Recreation Committee (Laura Shepard)

- Discussion on the Army Corps Proposal.
- Discussion on upcoming agendas.
- March 23, 2023 Meeting there will be discussion about a CB 2 Climate Action Plan.
- General park and green space needs.
- Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board met and if anyone is interested in attending let her know.

- Compost resumes March 27, 2023.
- Discussed the DEP Pumping Station.
- <https://www.nyc.gov/site/queenscb2/meetings/committee-agendas-minutes.page>

3:14:22 Technology and Access Joint with Small Business Services (Anatole Ashraf/Kenny Greenberg)

- Discussion of creating a directory of small businesses.
- Clayton Banks attended, Silicon Harlem to sponsor a tech meet up in the district
- Next Small Business & Local Economy Meeting and Tech Committee meeting will take place on March 28, 2023 at 5:00 pm and 6:00 pm, respectively.
- <https://www.nyc.gov/site/queenscb2/meetings/committee-agendas-minutes.page>

3:16:41 Amparo Abel-Bey made a motion and it was seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:

MA Gurrado
CB 2 Staff

Reviewed/Revised and approved for distribution by:

☒ Anatole Ashraf, Secretary, CB2
☐ Danielle Brecker, Chairperson, CB 2
☐ Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager, CB 2

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