



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>

**February 2, 2023**

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

*This meeting was teleconferenced on Zoom*

**Board Members – Present:** Amparo Abel-Bey, Anatole Ashraf, John Bahia, Thalia (Karesia) Batan, Sandra Bigitschke, Kat Bloomfield, Danielle Brecker, Osman Chowdhury, Stephen Cooper, Warren Davis, Sally Frank, Morry Galonoy, Somnath Ghimire, Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos, Camille Gray, Kenneth Greenberg, Christine Hunter, Badrun Khan, Chhemang Lama, Sheila Lewandowski, Benjamin Lucas, Patrick Martinez, Kristen McGowan, Thomas Mituzas, Reilly Owens, Clara Oza, Laura Shepard, Ryan Smith, Caroline Spitzer, Lauren Springer, Akello Thomas,

### **Board Members – Absent:**

**Unexcused:** Gianna Cerbone, Kelly Craig, William Garrett, Benjamin Guttmann, Mohammed Chowdhury Jewel, Elliot Park, Karla Perez, Selena Romero, Phuntsok Tashi, Frank Wu

**Excused:** Nicholas Berkowitz, Tannia Chavez, Lisa Deller, Norberto Saldana, Mary Torres

**Community Board 2 Staff:** Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager

### **Elected Officials/Representatives**

Evelyn Li, Representing Congresswoman Grace Meng  
Honorable Juan Ardila, New York State Assembly Member  
Melissa M. Villalogos, Representing New York State Assembly Member Juan Ardila  
Honorable Kristen Gonzalez, NY State Senator  
Mercedes Jennings, Representing New York State Senator Gianaris  
Victoria Leahy, Representing Assembly Member Steven Raga  
Farah Salem, Representing New York City Council Member Julie Won  
Vicky Garvey, Representing Queens Borough President Donovan Richards  
Javier Figaroa, Representing Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz

### **Department of City Planning**

Teal Delys

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

## **Public Comment**

### **Guests**

Bryce Wisemiller, Army Corp. of Engineers  
Charles Yu, Long Island City Partnership  
Luda Spajic, LaGuardia Community College  
Dan Egers, Greenberg Traurig, LLP  
Chase Villafana, Planet Fitness  
Maria Platis, Property Manager, Big Six Towers

*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)**

0:01:25: Queens CB 2 Chairperson Danielle Brecker welcomed everyone to the CB 2 Meeting.

#### **0:01:27 Pledge of Allegiance**

**0:02:19** Danielle Brecker wished all a Happy Lunar New Year, Happy Black History Month, Happy Valentine's Day.

0:03:10 **Honorable Kristen Gonzalez**, NY State Senator discussed the following:

- Covers District 59, encompassing parts of Brooklyn, Manhattan, and CB2 district.
- Committee Assignments include serving on Internet and Technology, Disability, Energy and Telecommunications, Ethics, Consumer Protection, Contracts and Procurement
- Introducing legislation on Personal Privacy and Protection Modernization Act.
- Labor Fights, NYCNA, Unemployment Bridge Program, Included Workers Fund Criminal Justice and was part of the effort to insure that Judge LaSalle was not confirmed.
- Does not have a district office as of yet, but has an Albany Office,
- Introduced her members of her staff.
- Q & A

0:20:56 **Honorable Juan Ardila**, New York State Assembly Member

- Provided an update on campaign promises such as Build public renewables, qualified immunity, addressing climate crises unemployment bridge gap to raise minimum wage, solutions not suspensions act.
- Visited Sunnyside Community Services and the wrap around services they are providing.
- Celebrated Lunar New Year with Council Member Won and NY State Senator Michael Gianaris.
- Conducted a Community Clean up with Woodside on the Move.
- New Office is located at: 45-10 Skillman Avenue, ground level. Phone number: (718)784-3194.
- Announced St. Pat's for All March is approaching.
- Q&A

**0:35:02 Mercedes Jennings**, Representing New York State Senator Michael Gianaris

- Senator has been pushing for Animal Welfare Legislation.
- Community Survey requested everyone fill it out.
- Contact their office with any concerns.
- Q & A

**0:36:54 Farah Salam**, Representing New York City Council Member Julie Won

- Wished all a Happy Lunar New Year and Happy Losar.
- Provided an update on constituent services and announced they are accepting donations for asylum and refugees throughout the district. Anyone interested may donate winter clothing and baby supplies at the following locations: Mosiac Food Pantry and/or Evangel Food Pantry.
- CUNY Law Partnership where they host a housing lawyer. Have served over 40 individuals. Anyone in need can reach out to their office.
- Will be hosting a NYLAG event on February 26 2023 in front of their new office, walk in or make an appointment.
- In partnership with NY City Council Member Tiffany Caban they will be hosting CUNY citizen ship now event on March 4, 2023. Will share the flyer with the CB 2 office. Will be hosted at CUNY Law school in Court Square. Reach out to their office for more information.
- Legislation – Discussed the Council Member's position on Admin Code 12-126 regarding retirees and their health care. She is pushing to have the contract looked into and exploring other options.
- Discretionary and capital and expense applications have opened encouraged organizations to apply. [https://www.grantrequest.com/SID\\_5404?SA=SNA&FID=35031](https://www.grantrequest.com/SID_5404?SA=SNA&FID=35031)
- Q & A

**0:41:03 Evelyn Li**, Representing Congresswoman Grace Meng

- Announced they are excited to be working with this community.
- Realize the main office is not convenient for members of this community, they are trying to see what they can do about this.
- Trying to do more mobile office hours in this area.
- If there are any organizations or locations to partner with, to let them know and they are open to suggestions.
- Congresswoman has is concerned about flooding and infrastructure and has been pushing for funding and measures that can be taken from the federal level. Contact their office with any concerns at: <https://meng.house.gov/contact/email-me>
- Announced a Passport event on Sunday, February 5, 2023 at Main Street Post Office 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. They will try to do more events. Any suggestions to reach out to their office.
- They welcome all ideas.
- Q & A

0:47:49 Javier Figaroa, Representing Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz

- Community Engagement Unit, covering wester Queens.
- Will be covering LGBTQIA within the unit.
- If anyone has any questions, he may be reached at [jwfigaroa@queensda.org](mailto:jwfigaroa@queensda.org) or call (929) 919-3913.
- Announced Black History Event will take place on February 22, 2023, and will forward the information to the CB 2 Office.
- Q & A

0:49:56 **Victoria Leahy**, Representing New York State Assembly Member Steven Raga

- Office is up and running and located in former Assembly Member Barnwell's office in Maspeth.
- Their office provides in language service in Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hindi, Japanese, Napali and Thai.
- On February 11, 2022 will be co-sponsoring a Lunar New Year Event with Council Member Shekar Krishman and Assembly Member Catalina Cruz, and Congress Member Grace Meng
- On February 16, 2023, will be co-hosting a Citizens Committee Microgrant Info Session for anyone interested reach out to their office to rsvp. Will forward a flyer to the CB 2 Office.
- Q & A

0:52:27 David **Espinosa**, Representing, Sunnyside Community Services

- Announced seeking volunteers for senior services program. Anyone interested can visit the website at [scsny.org](http://scsny.org) and look up Friendly Visitor's Program and contact the program coordinator.
- SCS is pleased to host the monthly CB 2 Meeting.

0:53:35 **Luda Spajic**, LaGuardia Community College, External Affairs

- February 28, 2023, is the deadline to register for spring classes. Anyone interested in applying there are a few days left. <https://www.laguardia.edu/registrar/>
- Q & A

0:57:01 Guest Speaker Bryce Wisemiller, NY District COE, Army Corps of Engineers regarding the NYNJHAT Coastal Storm Risk Management

- Presented a presentation on the New York-New Jersey Harbor and Tributaries Coastal Storm Risk Management Study. Briefing to Queens Community Board 2.
- Discussed Study Background, alternative plans evaluated, tentatively selected plan, schedule/next steps.
- There are many resources on the study website at <https://www.nan.usac.army.mil/nynjhats> and story map portal at <https://hats-cenan.hub.arcgis.com/>
- Q & A

1:48:11 **Charles Yu**, Long Island City Partnership & LIC BID

- Announced proposed plans to expand the BID to areas adjacent to the current BID.
- A virtual public meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, February 9, 2023, at 6:00 pm. Register at [www.licqns.com/publicmeeting](http://www.licqns.com/publicmeeting)
- Met with Land Use Committee to present proposed plan.
- Q & A
- 

1:52:09 **Public Hearing – ULURP Application – Proposed Planet Fitness - 61-10 Queens Boulevard**

- Dan Egers, Greenberg Traurig, LLP presented plans for proposed Planet Fitness Facility at 61-10 Queens Blvd.
- Introduced Chase Villafana, Planet Fitness and Maria Platis, Property Manager, Big Six Towers Tim Gohene, Planet Fitness Architect
- This is an application to change the commercial overlay at 61-10 Queens Blvd from C1-2 to a C2-4 to facilitate a conformance of a 16,000 square foot gym instead of a 10,000 square foot gym. Located at 61<sup>st</sup> Street and Queens Blvd and is part of the Big Six Towers complex.
- Will open in July.
- This used to require a special permit by BSA, but the Health and Fitness Citywide Text Amendment enacted in December 2021 ended the requirement.
- Q & A
  - Board members urged the applicant to provide and maintain appropriate ventilation for the facility, as well as proper care of full- and part-time staff.

The Land Use Committee voted to support the application with the agreements and stipulations.

2:10:40 Transition to Board Business:

2:10:48 **Attendance**

- Board Members Present: 31 Board Members Absent: 15 Unexcused: 10 Excused: 5  
Quorum: Yes

2:15:30 **Motion:** To approve the January 5, 2023 Community Board 2 Meeting Minutes;  
Board Members reported the minutes were not received.

Motion made to Table the January 5, 2023 Community Board 2 Meeting Minutes

**Motion carried:** All in favor with none opposed, and no abstentions.

02:17:53 **Chairperson's Report** (Danielle Brecker)

- Reminded all board members to be on camera when at a CB 2 meeting.
- Reminded members if they are corresponding on behalf of the Community Board, they need to copy the board on this correspondence.
- Reminded everyone that only the Chairperson speaks for the Board.
- Attended Sunnyside Shines MLK Day celebration at Sunnyside Community Services.
- Announced Laura Shepard has taken over as Chair, Environmental, Parks and Recreation Committee.
- Announced she will be working together with Laura Shepard on an overarching environmental plan for CB 2 and how it will impact everything we do.
- Announced she attended a vigil with Sheila Lewandowski, Rosamond Gianutsos and Laura Shepard, Council Member and Assembly Member Juan Ardila on Saturday for Tyre Nichols who was killed by Police in Memphis.
- Wished everyone, Happy Lunar New Year, Happy Black History Month, Happy Valentine's Day.

02:22:38 **District Manager Report** (Debra Markell Kleinert)

- 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.
- All board members that are up for reappointments must fill out applications on the borough presidents website and submit to borough hall. Applications are due February 16, 2023.
- Reminded everyone to submit their current contact information changes, email, address and phone number please contact the CB2 office and alert us with the new information.
- Attended the State of the City with other colleagues in government.
- Presented and attended the Borough President's Preliminary Budget Hearing.
- Remember if you have community complaints, quality of life issues please submit to the CB 2 board office for follow up.
- CB 2 had approximately 21 complaints from January 1, 2023, through January 31, 2023, we are still waiting for updates, however the top complaints were:
  - Department of Transportation
  - Signals and various other issues

- NYPD
  - Double parking
  - Sanitation (DOS) – garbage issues
- Department Environment Protection - Rain Barrel giveaways will start in mid spring to end of summer 2023.
- MTA
  - #7 train – 69<sup>th</sup> street and 50<sup>th</sup> street stations will be getting a significant upgrade (stay tuned)
  - New renovated mezzanines, ADA compliance staircases, platforms, better quality of experience at these stations.
  - By 2055 all the stations will be ADA accessible.
- Department of Health - DOH is working on addressing all rat complaints.
- Parks Department
  - The roof on the comfort station at hart playground has been completed.
  - As requested by CB 2, Parks is working and saving the bulletin boards some of them are in question need extensive rehabs plus there may be issues with removing them from the sites. Parks plan n is to purchase new ones with city council discretionary funding.
  - When they go under construction, there will be an attempt to salvage them.
- Queens Public Library (QPL)
  - On Thursdays throughout February QPL is hosting virtually baby basics new classes for parents.
  - QPL now has language line. Language line is an interpretation and translation service that has access to over 240 languages.
  - Every QPL has free Covid 19 tests to take home.
- CB2 has been posting more information on our facebook, twitter, and website.
- Thanked LaGuardia College for their partnership and the intern that works with us.
- On behalf of all the staff CB 2 we want to wish you and your families a Happy President's Day and Valentine's Day.
- The next Community Board 2 meeting will be held on Thursday, March 2, 2023, at 6:30pm.

02:33:04 Committee Reports and Deliberation

2:33:06 **Land Use and Housing 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 that this facility is not an enlargement it has always been this big. The Committee asked about bicycle parking and it is primarily going to be used by

Big Six and surrounding residents and public support. Big Six is more than happy to amplify the bike parking if need be. The Land Use Committee voted to approve the application.

2:14:48 ULURP Application - 61-10 Queens Boulevard

(Motion made by Stephen Cooper and seconded by Anatole Ashraf)

**Motion carried** by All in favor; none opposed and no abstentions

- Christine Hunter reported she attended the January CB 2 Meeting in Brooklyn who are forming a task force. They want to present jointly with CB 2.
- Christine Hunter recommended that the Transportation Environment and Land Use Committee try to discuss this at their upcoming meetings in February and asked for volunteers to connect with the Greenpoint Board.
- Discussion of a joint task force took place with the two Community Boards on each side of us.

2:54:09 Department of City Planning (**Teal Delys**)

- Discussed the Army Corp. Presentation and will follow this closely.
- 58-02 Northern Blvd. was not approved by the City Council. No rezoning will go forward there.
- 61-10 Queens Boulevard, next step will be the Borough President's Review.
- 23-10 Queens Plaza South, the CPC is scheduled for a public hearing on February 15, 2023, all are welcome to sign up and speak and written testimony can be submitted.

2:57:33 **Transportation Committee (Sheila Lewandowski)**

- **Welcomed new public members**
- Committee Members shared what is their commitment and where do they interact with Transportation to focus on needs and priorities.
- The minutes are posted on the website at:
  -
- Reported that she attended a walk through together with EDC, and the Council Member to visit the ferry renovation and location.
- 

03:00:45 **Engagement and Inclusion Committee (Nick Berkowitz, Tannia Chavez)**

- No Report

3:00:46 **City Services & Public Safety Committee (Stephen Cooper, Danielle Brecker)**

- Stephen Cooper reported on the review of a dozen or so Liquor Licenses and that the committee is trying to find out what more they can do.
- Danielle Brecker announced the next meeting will take place on February 8, 2023 at 6:30 pm and she will chair the meeting in Steve's absence.



02:50:13 **Health and Human Services & Education Committee** (Lauren Springer)

- January meeting was cancelled.
- February meeting will take place on February 13, 2023 at 5:00 pm with two presentations by Sunnyside Community Services and ACQC.

3:53:16 **Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee** (Thalia (Karesia) Batan)

- Sierra Brown, LIC Partnership attended to discuss upcoming events.
- Stephane Acosta, Dance/NYC Engagement Coordinator discussed about Dance Industry Census Roundtable Event.
- Carolina Gil from Council Member Won's Office discussed Discretionary Funding for FY 2024. Hosting Free Workshops to navigate this process.
- Asian American Art Alliance spoke about micro grant opportunity.
- DOT Art RFP for murals is active.
- Two new public members
- Ed Jo Wheeler attended the meeting.
- Next meeting is February 14, 2023, and will be celebrating Black History Month.
- Requested outreach for active engagement on the ground for Board Membership.
- Tony Vaccaro, photographer passed away at the age of 100.

3:02:47 **Environment, Parks and Recreation Committee** (Laura Shepard)

- Environment did not meet this past month.
- Next meeting will take place on February 23, 2023 at 6:30 pm.
- Forming a locally created a climate action plan.
- Attended the Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board meeting. Curbside composting will resume on March 27, 2023, citywide by October 2024.
- Skipped the Stuff bill passed.

3:23:02 **Technology and Access Committee** (Anatole Ashraf)

- Overlap with Engagement and Inclusion Committee.
- Clayton Banks attended the meeting.
- Will follow up on a meet up for the district.

3:22:03 **Small Business and Local Economy** (Kenny Greenberg)

- Very low turnout at the meeting.
- Introduced new public member Sarah Obratis.
- Continue discussion on Bid Expansion and Queens Together to expand their work with restaurants and working with small business community.
- February 28, 2023, at 6:00 pm

3:26:40 **Danielle Brecker** announced St. Pat's for All Parade will take place on March 5, 2023.

03:27:25 Sheila Lewandowski made a motion, and it was seconded by Camille Gray to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:

MA Gurrado  
CB 2 Staff

Reviewed/Revised and approved for distribution by:

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

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