



*Donovan Richards*  
*Queens Borough President*

# Community Board No. 2

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*Anatole Ashraf*

*Chairperson*

*Debra Markell Kleinert*

*District Manager*

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

Revised

April 4, 2024

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

*This meeting was held in person and teleconferenced on Zoom.*

**Board Members – Present:** Amparo Abel-Bey, Anatole Ashraf, Ann Marie Baranowski, Karesia Batan, Kat Bloomfield, Danielle Brecker, Carlos Castell Croke, Tannia Chavez, Osman Chowdhury, Stephen Cooper, Warren Davis, Lisa Deller, Morry Galonoy, Somnath Ghimire, Dr. Rosamond Gianutsos, Camille Gray, Kenneth Greenberg, Mohammad Hossen, Christine Hunter, Lelin Kandel, Diana Kichler, James Kim, Prameet Kumar, Chhemang Lama, Sheila Lewandowski, Patrick Martinez, Thomas Mituzas, Eric Narburgh, Andie Olivares, Zeeshan Ott, Reilly Owens, Jolly Patel, Norberto Saldana, Laura Shepard, Caroline Spitzer, Lauren Springer, Akello Thomas, Mai Tran, Leticia Vasquez, Michael Zoorob,

## **Board Members – Absent:**

**Unexcused:** Nicholas Berkowitz, Alexandra Gonzales, Benjamin Lucas

**Excused:** Nellie Afshar (PV), John Bahia (PV), Lisa Charles (PV), Badrun Khan, Oumaya Saab (PV), Ryan Smith, Mary Torres

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

## **Elected Officials/Representatives**

Honorable Melinda Katz, Queens District Attorney  
Tiffany Echevarria, Representing Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez  
Evelyn Li, Representing Congresswoman Grace Meng  
Mercedes Jennings, Representing NY State Senator Michael Gianaris  
Shawna Morlock, Representing NY State Senator Kristen Gonzalez  
Dolma Lama, Representing NY State Assembly Member Steven Raga  
Nathalie Rajabian, Representing NY State Assembly Member Juan Ardila  
Julissa Garcia, Representing Council Member Julie Won

*Claire Collins, Representing Queens Borough President Donovan Richards  
Megan Yuan, Mayor's Office of Community Affairs (CAU) (PV)  
Tania Martinez, NYC Small Business Services  
Javiar Figaroa, Representing Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz*

**Department of City Planning**

*Bri Mejia*

**New York City Department of Sanitation**

*Adam Dobrzynski*

**Sunnyside Community Services**

*Jose Miranda*

**Guests**

*Angel Gil Orrios, Thalia Spanish Theatre  
Margaret Perrin  
Dana Ohlmeyer*

**Public Comment**

*Henry Watkins, Yolanda Jiminez, Beverly Brown, Marlene Dodes-Callahan, Fran Cimino, Ellen Kaye, Catherine Gao, Manny Gomez. Pat Dorfman, Cathrine Fullon, Cherr Watson, Eve Guillergan*

*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 not 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)**

**0:02:29** Queens CB 2 Chairperson Anatole Ashraf welcomed everyone to the CB 2 Meeting at Sunnyside Community Services.

### **0:02:35 Pledge of Allegiance**

**0:03:09 Anatole Ashraf** welcomed all new board members provided housekeeping rules. He requested everyone follow the WAIT Rule, (Why Am I Talking),

### **0:04:15 Honorable Melinda Katz, Queens District Attorney**

- Congratulated Anatole Ashraf and Danielle Brecker for being the former Chair.
- Thanked District Manager, Debra Markell Kleinert.
- Thanked all board members for their service.
- Discussed programs that keep young people out of the criminal justice system.
- Discussed the Trespass Affidavit Program that is a borough-wide program.
- Discussed Sex Traffic in the borough of Queens and provided an update on wrap around services to those who need help.
- Discussed old convictions of people who years later claimed their innocence. Since in office, DA Katz's office vacated 102 convictions.
- Acknowledged and honored Police Officer Diller, now Detective Diller who was killed in the line of duty and provided an update about this case.
- Provided an update about another case of attempted kidnapping.
- Provided an update on crime stats.
- Announced her office has a liaison whose sole job is to keep young people out of the court system.
- Reported there are 600 people in treatment courts, 3000 cases of guns in Queens, last year 49,000 arrests and 37,000 arraignments in Queens.
- Announced there is a 24-hour, 7-day a week hotline for domestic violence, the number is (718) 286-4410.
- Provided an update about various scams and Snap scams.
- Anyone who has any concerns may email: [katz@queensda.org](mailto:katz@queensda.org).
- Q & A

### **0:53:49 Evelyn Li, Representing Congresswoman Grace Meng** provided the following update:

- Announced an upcoming VA Session, by the Department of Veterans Affairs which will be held on April 11, 2024, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, at the Forest Hills Office 118-35 Queens Boulevard, Room 900, Forest Hills, NY. RSVP is recommended at (718) 358-6364.
- For Fiscal Year 2024, the Congresswoman submitted the 15 community funding requests, and all have all been approved for funding. The total amount is over \$13 million.
- For more information, visit their website at or call their office.

- Congresswoman Meng's Office is seeking a local Veteran, Gold Star family member or active-duty spouse for a two-year paid position at their office. If anyone is interested, [ny06casework@mail.house.gov](mailto:ny06casework@mail.house.gov).
- Q & A

**0:56:53 Mercedes Jennings, Representing New York State Senator Michael Gianaris** provided the following update:

- Announced on March 12, 2024, the State Senate had passed the one-party budget. The Senator addressed lot of issues our district is dealing with. Provided an update on some of the highlights.
- The Senator is pushing to promote environmental supports including addressing climate change in the district.
- The Senator is pushing for \$200 million for Clean Water Act and to include the Superfund Act.
- The Senator is trying to stop allowance of Foundation Aid which becomes fair funding in NYC. The Senator is trying to stop the process of this funding so the mayor or anyone who controls the DOE can't take the money away from schools.
- Their office is located at 45-02 Ditmars Boulevard and are open Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.
- Q & A

**1:01:19 Megan Yuan, Representing the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs,** provided the following update:

- Thanked Chairperson Anatole Ashraf and all the Board Members for their service.
- Thanked District Manager, Debra Markell Kleinert.
- On behalf of the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs, Megan Yuan offered condolences to the family and colleagues in honor of Detective Diller who lost his life in the line of duty.
- Recognized Transgender Day which was celebrated on Sunday.
- Q & A

**1:03:39 Shwana Morlock, Representing New York State Senator Kristen Gonzalez** provided the following update:

- Announced monthly office hours event at Astoria Houses on April 22, 2024, from 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm.
- Announced their office is taking applications for discretionary funding requests.
- Provided an update on the G Train shut down over the summer, trying to get a full line of cars and extend it back into Forest Hills where it used to be.

- Discussed Mt. Sinai and Beth Israel potential closure and are fighting to try to keep it open. Their office has introduced legislation to put a moratorium on hospital closures across the entire state until the DOH does an assessment to find out where the weak spots are.
- Q & A

**1:07:28 Claire Collins, Representing Queens Borough President Donovan Richards** provided the following update:

- The Community Board process has end and they are proud to announce they have appointed 117 new appointees throughout the 14 boards in the Borough.
- All applicants whether appointed or not have been notified.
- Welcomed and congratulated all the newly appointed board members who have been chosen.
- If anyone has any questions about the process, to please reach out to Khaleel Bragg, Director of Community Boards, email address: [kbragg@queensbp.org](mailto:kbragg@queensbp.org).
- Announced the State of the Borough will take place on April 12, 2024, at 10:00 am, it may be also viewed online at [www.queensbp.org](http://www.queensbp.org).
- On April 17, 2024, their office will mark the end of Ramadan with an Eid al-Fitr Celebration at Queens Borough Hall. RSVP at [www.queensbp.org/rsvp](http://www.queensbp.org/rsvp).
- April 26, 2024, Sweats and Sweets for young adults at Queens Borough Hall for high school and college students to unwind and socialize and enjoy interactive activities.
- April 30, 2024, there will be a Virtual Advisory Parent Board meeting. RSVP at [www.queenbp.org/rsvp](http://www.queenbp.org/rsvp).

**1:09:38 Dolma Lama, Representing Assembly Member Steven Raga** provided the following update:

- Announced Woman of Distinction was held last month in at Elmhurst Hospital.
- Their office will be hosting Tenant Legal Clinic on April 9, 2024, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm at their district office.
- Each week their office offers a free tax prep session. To RSVP call: (718) 651-3185.
- For Earth Day of Action, announced they will be hosting a Community Clean Up in Woodside, on April 20, 2024, from 9:00 am. Anyone interested in volunteering may contact their office.
- Will be partnering with Assembly Member Cruz and NYC Council Member Krishnan for another community clean up on Roosevelt Avenue.
- Will be joining with Maspeth Federal Savings on April 20, 2024, for an e-recycling event.
- Their office will be hosting mobile office hours.

- April 19, 2024, Woodside Public Library from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm.
- April 24, 2024, Maspeth Public Library from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm.
- Q & A

**1:12:38 Tiffany Echevarria, Representing Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez**

provided the following update:

- Announced the Congresswoman has introduced supporting the American Entrepreneurship Act of 2024.
- Community Project Funding requests for 15 proposals for non-profit organization status groups. Anyone interested in applying may reach out to their office.
- Their office has reached out DEP to address some local flooding issues in Blissville.
- Attended meetings about the Long-Term Control Plan. Urging them to pick up the pace with their modifications.
- Announced funding for the Borden Avenue Veterans Shelter Flood Resilience Project.
- Congresswoman gives her support for the former Bliss Theatre Community Cultural Use.
- Q & A

**1:24:22 Nathalie Rajabian, Representing New York State Assembly Member Juan Ardila**

provided the following update:

- The Assembly Member joined his colleagues in fighting for a fair and progressive state budget.
- Discussed Foundation Aid and that Governor Hochul announced that she has removed her proposed changes to the Foundation Aid which means public schools will remain fully funded.
- The Assembly Member has pushed for the inclusion of \$50 million dollars for housing access voucher programs, \$40 million for homeowner protection program, tenant protection such as Good Cause Eviction and enhanced labor standards like prevailing wages for affordable housing construction to be added in any housing package that gets included in the final budget.
- Discussed the NY Heat Act.
- Discussed Tier 6 Reform.
- Discussed Sammy's Law.
- Their office is seeking exceptional honor students from elementary and high schools in our community. If anyone is aware of a student that fits the criteria, please reach out to their office at: (718) 784-3194.
- Q & A

**1:26:45 Julissa Garcia, Representing New York City Council Member Julie Won** discussed the following:

- Announced the Rat Academy training on March 27, 2024, was cancelled due to an emergency, and has been rescheduled to Tuesday, May 21, 2024, from 5:00 pm. To register please email their office at district26.
- Announced their office has launched a survey as part of the ongoing Northern Boulevard and Roosevelt Avenue Land Use Study. Requested all take part in this 5-minute survey it is in several languages and is open until April 30, 2024.
- Provided an update on Participatory Budgeting Budget, this will take place on Saturday April 6, 2024, to Tuesday April 16, 2024. There is a total of eight (8) projects that will be on the ballot, and it will be on their district website.
- Announced their office has spoken with DEP to schedule a time to touch base regarding the Blissville Civic Association regarding the sewer back up and abandoned trucks. DSNY is working on removing the trucks and is pending investigation.
- Announced that at Dutch Kills Green, DSNY will pick up multiple bags of trash.
- Q & A

**1:31:11 Tania Martinez, NYC Small Business Services** provided the following update:

- Discussed the free resources to help business owners and job seekers. They have free businesses courses to help navigate government.
- Announced that SBA has launched a business resiliency grant for businesses in flood plane areas, the grant is for \$5,000.
- Their office offers resume prep.
- They have many resources and offer information in different languages.
- Q & A

**1:33:17 Jose Miranda, Sunnyside Community Services** provided the following update:

- Announced there will be a Community Health Fair at Thomas P. Noonan playground on April 13, 2024, from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm at 42nd Street and Greenpoint Avenue.
- Announced they serve free lunch Monday through Friday at SCS at 1:00 pm and ask for a small contribution of \$2.00.

**1:35:09 Javier Figaroa, Representing Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz** provided the following update:

- Announced that he had flyers and would remain till the end of the meeting if anyone had any questions.

#### **1:36:14 Public Comment**

**1:36:15 John Sisca**, requested the Board save the Bliss Theatre, currently the Jehovah's Witness Hall. He requested it be landmarked and saved from demolition.

**1:38:56 Laura Heim**, spoke about the City of Yes Housing Opportunity Proposal. She requested CB 2 stay actively involved in the conversation.

**1:41:52 Dirk McCall, Executive Director, Sunnyside Shines** spoke about the prospect of the community coming together to help secure and preserve the Bliss Theatre.

**1:42:55 Angel Gil Orrios, Director of Thaila Spanish Theatre** spoke about his organization and is requesting to save the Bliss Theatre as an Arts and Culture Center.

**1:45:49 Jenny Sunday, Co-Founder of Sunnyside Social** announced there will be a Community Clean Up on Sunday, April 21, 2024. Will be meeting under the 7 Line at 46<sup>th</sup> Street from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Social gathering to follow. For more information visit their [Instagram@sunnysidesocial.nyc](https://www.instagram.com/sunnysidesocial.nyc).

**1:46:45 Pat Dorfman, Sunnyside Artists** spoke in favor of Angel Gil Orrios proposal. Encouraged all to sign his proposal.

**1:47:34 Yolanda Jimenez, Board Member** of the Co-op Board at CityLights spoke about the working with Rob Basch from Hunters Point Park Association to address several conditions due to the proliferation of food trucks who operate 24/7 on Center Boulevard. Seeking a change in parking regulations and a qualify of life signage for no parking from 10 am to 7:00 am. Seeking support from CB 2.

**1:50:19 Eve Guillergan**, Sunnyside Resident and Board Member of Thalia Spanish Theatre, spoke in favor of the proposal for Thalia Spanish Theatre and to preserve the Bliss Theatre.

**1:52:19 Many Gomez, Sunnyside Artists** spoke in favor of the proposal for Thalia Spanish Theatre and to preserve the Bliss Theatre.

**1:54:12 Henry Watkins**, resident of CityLights and serves on the Board spoke about the food truck issue on Center Boulevard. Seeking a No Parking Sign from 10:00 pm to 7:00 am.

**1:55:20 Beverly Brown**, Resident of Hunters Point spoke in favor of parking regulations on Center Boulevard and is seeking a No Parking Sign from 10:00 pm to 7:00 am.

**1:56:24 Marlene Dodes-Callahan** Director of CityLights Board spoke in favor of parking regulations on Center Boulevard and is seeking a No Parking Sign from 10:00 pm to 7:00 am.

**1:57:22 Fran Cimino**, CityLights spoke in favor of parking regulations on Center Boulevard and is seeking a No Parking Sign from 10:00 pm to 7:00 am.

**1:58:11 Ellen Kaye**, CityLights spoke in favor of parking regulations on Center Boulevard and is seeking a No Parking Sign from 10:00 pm to 7:00 am.



## **2:31:20 Transition to Board Business**

### **2:05:35 Attendance**

- Board Members Present: 41                      Board Members Absent: 4
- Present Virtual: 2      Excused: 3              Quorum: Yes

**2:10:51 Motion** to approve the February 1, 2024, and March 7, 2024, CB 2 Meeting Minutes.

Christine Hunter proposed a friendly amendment as the February minutes were not amended with the corrections that she requested.

Kat Bloomfield proposed a friendly amendment and requested there be two separate votes as she was not present for one of these meetings.

**(Motion** made by Anne Marie Baranowski and seconded by Thomas Mituzas) to approve the February 1, 2024, CB2 Meeting Minutes with Christine Hunter's friendly amendment.  
Motion carried: All were in favor of the motion with; None (0) opposed and no (0) abstentions.

**(Motion** made by Christine Hunter and seconded by Amparo Abel-Bey) to approve the March 7, 2024, CB2 Meeting Minutes.

Motion carried: All were in favor of the motion with; None (0) opposed and six (6) abstentions.  
<https://www.nyc.gov/site/queenscb2/meetings/meeting-agendas-minutes.page>

**2:15:26 Chairperson's Report (Anatole Ashraf)** provided the following update:

- Welcomed all the newly appointed Board Members.
- Will be sending out a check-in survey.
- Announced there will be link for public membership.
- Will be hosting an introductory meet and greet.
- Will be working on an onboarding document.
- Orientation will take place on April 15, 2024.

**2:17:02 Kat Bloomfield, CB 2 Board Member** announced this will be her last Community Board 2 Meeting and will be moving to Indianapolis, however her organization will not be leaving.

**2:18:42 Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager** provided the following update:

- Thanked all the outgoing members who served on CB 2:
  - *Kelly Craig, Phuntsok Tashi, Kalsang Yangtso*
- Congratulated all the new CB 2 board members.
  - *Lisa Charles, Alexandra Gonzales, James Kim, Andrea (Andie) Olivares, Jolly Patel, Mai Tran, Michael Zoorob*

- Announced all new board members are required to sign the EEO Policy.
- Reminder the Borough Presidents Community Board Swearing will be held in person at 5:30pm at Queens Borough Hall on Monday April 15, 2024.
- Announced that a meeting will be scheduled for new members to come and that she and Anatole will work together to set this up.
- Community board 2 attended an update by the MTA on the repairs of the #7 train line. The anticipated completion will now be 2026.
- Attended the Dining Out Presentation with Steve Cooper.
- CB2 will be mailing you a form to fill out to provide your full contact information.
- Remember if you have community complaints, quality of life issues please submit to the
- CB 2 had approximately 20 complaints for the month of March 2024. The top complaints were:
  - Department Of Transportation - Signage, Signals, Potholes
  - PD
  - DEP
  - Construction will begin on Woodside Memorial Plaza on March 11, 2024, and the reconstruction will continue for about one year.
- Wished everyone a Happy Passover, Happy Earth Day, Administrators Day and the end of Ramadan.
- Announced the next Community Board 2 meeting will be held on Thursday, May 2, 2024, at 6:30pm.

**2:26:24 Department of City Planning (Bri Mejia)** introduced her colleague Katy Crawford, new Boro Planner.

**2:27:06 Department of City Planning (Katy Crawford),** provided the following update:

- Announced City of Yes for Housing Opportunity, the next informational session is scheduled for Wednesday, April 17, 2024, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. This will be live streamed on their You Tube Channel.
- Announced One LIC Long Island City Neighborhood Planning Meeting will take place on Monday, April 15, 2024, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at Queens Bridge Houses in the community center gym.
- For more information visit the website at [www.licplan.nyc](http://www.licplan.nyc).

**2:38:52 Christine Hunter, Land Use and Housing Committee** provided the following update:

- Reminded everyone that on April 27, 2024, a workshop presented by the LIC Coalition about their waterfront study.
- Discussed the resolution for the Preservation of the Bliss Theatre.

**2:40:46 Karesia Batan, Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee** provided an update on the draft resolution for the preservation of the Bliss Theatre at 44-17 Greenpoint Avenue and conversion to community/performance.

**2:42:50 Christine Hunter**, discussed landmarking of the Bliss Theatre.

(**Motion** made by Stephen Cooper and seconded by Sheila Lewandowski) to approve sending a letter to the Landmarks Commission to calendar it for consideration as a landmark.

**Motion carried:** All were in favor of the motion with; none (1) opposed and no (0) abstentions.

(**Motion** made by Stephen Cooper and seconded by Patrick Martinez) to approve sending a letter to all the city, agencies and elected officials and ask them to support it.

**Motion carried:** All were in favor of the motion with; none (1) opposed and no (0) abstentions.

**3:00:53** A discussion about inviting the owners to attend the Land Use Committee meeting took place.

Stephen Cooper withdrew the motion.

**3:01:32** Tom Mituzas discussed a draft letter on the following:

- Green Asphalt Company, which is in the Blissville section of LIC at 37-98 Railroad Avenue and has been cited for violations of the NY State Air Pollution Control Law that has been referred to the State General Council.

(**Motion** made by Thomas Mituzas and seconded by Stephen Cooper) for CB 2 to call upon all our elected officials and ask them to reach out to the General Council to make sure they understand the concerns of the community and for Council Member Won as Chair of the City Council's Contract Committee to investigate NYC DOT's use of the facility that is poisoning her constituents.

Sheila Lewandowski made a friendly amendment to include all the elected officials.

Christine Hunter made a friendly amendment to clarify how DOT currently utilizes the facility.

**Motion carried:** All were in favor of the motion with all the friendly amendments; none (0) opposed and no (1) abstentions.

**3:10:54 Reilly Owens, Chair, Transportation Committee** provided the following update:

- Discussed the presentation by the MTA concerning the G Train shut down. The committee made a motion to have a dedicated bus lane for the shuttle bus.
- DOT presented the Queensboro Bridge South Outer Roadway.

**(Motion** made by Laura Shepard made a motion seconded by Kat Bloomfield) to have the Board send a letter to the DA and the NYPD asking them to stop seizing property of delivery workers off the sidewalks.

**(Motion** made by Stephen Cooper and seconded by Patrick Martinez) to table the motion until the Transportation Committee reviews.

**Motion Carried:** All were in favor to table the motion; with (4) opposed and (0) no abstentions.

**(Motion** made by Morry Galonoy and seconded by Lisa Deller) to support the community's request for a no parking sign to be put up from 10:00 pm to 7:00 am.

**(Motion** made by Laura Shepard and seconded by Sheila Lewandowski) to table the motion.

**Motion Carried:** All were in favor of the motion to table with (10) ten opposed and (0) no abstentions.

**3:22:14 Stephen Cooper, Chair, City Services & Public Safety Committee** provided the following update:

- Reported new rules going into effect for sidewalk and street cafes. CB 2 will have 30 days to act. Requested everyone to go out into your neighborhood and let CB 2 know which ones are problems ahead of time.

**3:23:04** The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:  
MA Gurrado  
CB 2 Staff

Reviewed/Revised and approved for distribution by:

**X**Anatole Ashraf, Chairperson, CB2  
  Ryan Smith, Secretary, CB 2  
**X**Debra Markell Kleinert, District Manager, CB 2

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