

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 10, 2013
UNION PLAZA CARE CENTER
33-23 UNION STREET
FLUSHING, N.Y. 11354

PRESENT

Chuck Apelian

John Byas

Dilip Chauhan

Tyler Cassell

Timothy Chuang

Tim Cody

Nicholas Corrado

Arlene Fleishman

Rose Forkan

Fred Fu

Pablo Hernandez

Kevin Kang

Eugene Kelty

Francis Keppel

Donald Kirchhofer

Phil Konigsberg

Peter Kwiath

Myungsuk Lee

Frank Macchio

Rev. R. McEachern

Barbara McHugh

Nicholas Miglino

Selma Moses

Kim Ohanian

Millicent O'Meally

Terence Park

Kris Ram

Andrew Rocco

Kevin Shields

Marc Schiffman

Warren Schreiber

Lynda Spielman

Joshua Sussman

Joseph Sweeney

Carlos Talisaysay

John Tsavalos

Paul Vallone

Arnold Wagner

Linna Yu

ABSENT

Arthur Barragan

James Cervino

Chin-Hsiang Chiang

Joseph Femenia

Jeff Huang

Valerie Kennedy

Esther Lee

Vana Partridge

Jean Ren

Peter Tu

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 STAFF

Marilyn Bitterman, District Manager

Marilyn McAndrews – Community Assistant

Mary Zuliani – Community Service Aide

GUESTS

Don Capalbi for Congresswoman Grace Meng
Angela DenDekker for Congressman Joseph Crowley
Colin No for Assemblyman Edward Braunstein
Munir Avery for Assemblyman Michael Simanowitz
Megan Kean for Assemblywoman Nily Rozic
Yuh-Line Niou for Assemblyman Ron Kim
Barry Grodenchik, Deputy Borough President of Queens
Jeong-Ah Choi, Queens Borough President's Office
Susan Tanenbaum, of Queens Borough President's Office

Chairman Eugene Kely is presently at a Borough Hall meeting and is expected later. First Vice-Chair Chuck Apelian called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence for our armed forces here and abroad and to those who gave their lives for us. He then introduced the executive board and staff and outlined the procedure for the evening. He reminded everyone we are in a senior nursing home and asked that we be as quiet as possible

A role call attendance was taken with 39 members present, 9 members absent and 2 member excused.

First Vice-Chair Apelian made several public service announcements with one in particular being the casting call for young people **tomorrow** at the FMCP Queens theatre for singing the national anthem at the 2013 U.S. Open. All announcements can be viewed at the end of the meeting or at the Board office tomorrow. Special congratulations to **Reverend McEachern** who just received his doctoral degree for his dissertation on spiritual formation. First Vice-Chair Apelian asked him to speak on the affordable housing project the Macedonian Church is engaged in, specifically the application process. Rev. Dr. McEachern could not talk specifics as yet on the selection process, interviews, marketing, etc. They are still working with HPD on the rentals costs for each size apartments. Rev. Dr. McEachern introduced **Ms. Carrie Rich**, Director of Operations for BRP Management, who will outline the possible time frame they anticipate. Macedonia Plaza, a 142 unit of affordable housing, 27 studios, 58 one-bedrooms, 55 two-bedrooms, and 2 special three-bedrooms will be marketed to the community and general public citywide. The apartments will be affordable to households earning up to 60% of the area medium income. A family of 4 using 60% AMI will be able to earn up to \$51,000. A smaller or larger family will be charged on a sliding scale, up or down. Units will be marketed through a **city monitored and administered lottery** by HPD and HDC with 50% (71 apts.) committed to community board #7 applicants, if found eligible. Also a 5% preference for the mobility impaired and 2% for the visual or hearing impaired, if found eligible. They will be meeting with HPD and HDC the latter part of June regarding marketing. In July, for the next 60 days, a community contact info letter will be sent out, advertisements will appear in local

citywide papers, agency websites, community and civic organizations and signs will be posted on the site. Persons interested can download applications on a web site or send for applications by regular mail. After the 60 day period, in September, eligible applications will be selected at random and by January 2014 they hope to commence the move in process.

Q. If found eligible initially and you move in, what happens if your income increases? Do you lose your eligibility?

A. No, you will have signed a rent stabilized lease and as long as you are a good tenant, you will remain with the stabilized rent.

Q. Will the rent, for example, of all the two-bedroom apts. be the same?

A. Yes!

Q. If a senior owns a home free and clear, but their income has reduced considerably to below the area medium income, can they try for affordable housing?

A. Absolutely, they can try and see if they are selected.

At this point First Vice Chair Apelian reminded us that two years ago it was agreed between Rev. McEachern and Board #7 that 50% of Macedonia Plaza affordable housing would be open to our community. Any further questions can be asked him by phone in the ensuing months. The dialogue will be continual.

First Vice-Chair Apelian then introduced board member **Peter Kwiath** who announced that New York Hospital's EMS Department is no longer part of the hospital. In its place, Hunter Ambulance Services has taken over providing six ambulances and two private vehicles and maintaining the original EMS personnel at the same rate of pay, if they so desired. He then gave the floor to **Tom Dirby**, Vice President of Hunter who spoke of the transition, which was done without interrupting service to the community, and it will continue as before without any loss to the community.

Q. Did you approach New York Hospital with the suggestion for this change?

A. No! New York Hospital reached out to us as they could no longer afford to give this service and needed an alternative to continue this service while they allocated their resources to other tertiary services.

First Vice Chair Apelian asked board members to discuss this outsourcing at their June 19th meeting since NY Hospital is an integral part of our community and its growth is essential to our needs, especially in the light of several hospital closings. We've worked with them many times in the past and now more than ever it warrants a meeting to ensure this internal change from the hospital to the community outreach is successfully performed.

Q. Have there been other hospitals that have done this?

A. Yes, many have, about 10 or 12, but I can't come up with names right now.

Q. Who dispatches the ambulances?

A. Same as before, 911.

Q. Is the hospital in financial trouble?

A. I cannot answer that as I am not a representative of the hospital

First Vice Chair Apelian said it's a question you can ask at the June 19th meeting.

ITEM #4 - M.T.A. – Whitestone Bridge Update – Ray Webb

Ray Webb, Director of Bridges East, and his staff, Joyce Mulvaney, Public Affairs, Chris Saladino, Facility Engineer at Whitestone Bridge and Harry Abbys, Superintendent of Maintenance at the Whitestone Bridge gave their report. Since Fall of 2011 they've come a long way and are almost at the halfway point. In fact they are approximately 20 days ahead of scheduled. The next stage of the project started June 1, 2013 on the Queens side of the Whitestone Bridge with the first lane closure to commence on the roadbed itself. By June or July of 2014 they expect to be opening the traffic to six lanes. They anticipate 100% completion by January 2015, or even as soon as November 2014. Landscaping will begin at the conclusion.

Q. When will the Third Avenue exit open?

A. As soon as the traffic lanes are open.

Q. Is traffic enforcement resources at 20th Avenue and Whitestone Expressway to continue?

A..Yes, with constant evaluation and changes using six men, 2 shifts per day including Weekends. It will continue to the end of the project.

Comment by some members stating sometimes the traffic enforcement people are standing on the corner, but not doing anything.

A. If you feel a traffic officer is not performing when needed, please let us know.

Q. When are the Throggs Neck Bridge lights supposed to go on, because sometimes they are not on?

A.They are on a timer and usually light up at dusk, but they will be rehabilitated with new functional up-to-date lights.

Comment by a board member praising the signage that was placed by the MTA at our request.

Q. How are the falcons doing on the Bronx Tower?

A. They are doing well! They had to boys and a girl and are almost ready to fly.

Q. The new playground is larger. When the bridge work is completed, what will happen To it.

A.No, the new playground will remain as a recreational relaxation type of area with handball and basketball courts, seating, decorative lighting and plantings.

Q. And the children's playground?

A. That will stay where it is.

Q. Will the bathrooms be upgraded?

A. No, Parks Dept. will leave them as is.

Chairman Eugene Kelty gave the floor to **Deputy Borough Pres. Barry Grodenchik** who announced the capital budget funding under Queens Borough President Helen Marshall as follows: \$1 million to McNeil Park seawall; \$192,00 to Fire Dept. for transportation vehicles; \$1.7 million to Joe Michaels Mile for renovating pathways and lighting; \$2 million for site selection of Mitchell Linden Library replacement facility;

\$383,000 for Queens Medical Imaging equipment; \$500,00 for Bowne House; \$150,000 for Queens Botanical Garden; \$500,000 for Poppenhusen Institute; and a lot of monies, but not enough, for Flushing Meadows Corona Park, which is shared by several community boards. After the funding news, he gave the 10 year awards to board members Selma Moses, Josh Sussman, Tyler Cassell and Donald Kirchhofer. The 25 year awards went to First Vice Chair Chuck Apelian and board member Millicent O’Meally.

ITEM #5 – 154-11 Horace Harding Expwy – Calendar #615-57-BZ – Application filed pursuant 11-411 of the Zoning Resolution seeking to extend the term of a variance granted by the BSA that permits the operation of an automotive service station on the premises. The current variance term is set to expire on June 5, 2013.

Committee Chair Rose Giordano-Forkan gave the May 28, 2013 committee report on the extension of variance for another 10 years. Cumberland Farms owns the property that merged with Gulf Oil. They leased it to operator Sukhbi Sandhu in 1997. There have been no complaints from the community for the past 10 years. The motion to extend was approved, seconded and passed unanimously at the meeting

Q. Is there ancillary parking allowed on the premises?

A. There is parking allowed for three vehicles.

Q. Are there any violations present?

A. There are no open DOB or ECB violations.

Q. What are the operations hours of the mechanics?

A. There are no auto repairs on the premises. The station is only for gas and the convenience store.

Q. Can you give clarification of the ancillary accessory parking?

A. No parking overnight.

Q. Are the tanks located underground?

A. Yes!

Motion from the floor to approve the extension of the variance for another ten years, seconded by Marc Schiffman.

The vote taken was (36) For (0) Against (0) Abstentions (Three members left the room during the vote)

ITEM #5 – 166-05 Cryder’s Lane – Calendar #90-13-BZ – Application for a variance from the requirements of the Zoning Resolution to permit within a R1-2 zoning district the construction of a modest single-family dwelling which would create a non-compliance with respect to open area requirements on the zoning lot and is therefore Contrary to ZR Sections 23-891. Committee Chair Frank Macchio gave his April 16, 2013 committee report. The construction of a house on this corner Lot #1, after the zoning change of 2008, will cause adjoining house on Lot #3 to become non-conforming.

Before 2008 homes within 100 feet of the corner did not require rear yards. Now, they require a rear yard of 30 feet deep. Unfortunately Lot #3 is only 24 feet deep. Approval of the applicant's construction plans, therefore, were denied by the City and now the applicant's plan for a conforming home will require a variance. The committee voted unanimously to accept the applicant's appeal.

Q. Doesn't the applicant's request for a variance require approval from the other owner?

A. The other owner already had signed an agreement to allow it.

The motion on the floor is to approve the variance to allow construction of a single-family dwelling which would create a non-compliance.

Speaker Debbie O'Connor spoke out against allowing the variance stating it was contrary to the 2008 Rezoning and is being done selectively because the applicant is a senior citizen, thus opening the door to future misuse.

The vote taken was (37) For (0) Against (0) Abstentions

ITEM #7 – Education Committee Update – Arlene Fleishman

In order to make a correct decision regarding the resolution to do away with mayoral control of the Public Education System, Education Chair Arlene Fleishman and Community Board #7 sent all board members a copy of the Montgomery/Weprin bill in advance to be discussed at the June 10, 2013 Public Hearing. Presently the Public Education System does not include Community Education Councils. Committee Chair Fleishman reviewed the current decline of educational achievement under the Mayor's control and the need for action by all the community boards, civic associations, teachers and parents. The Montgomery/Weprin bill is a step in the right direction and our involvement is crucial

Q. What is the status of the Montgomery/Weprin bill?

A. It hasn't been submitted as yet.

Board Member Corrado voiced his opinion that the CEC needs more authority.

Q. What do you mean by removing Mayoral control? Give it back to whom?

A. No one should have complete control. The Mayor will have some control, but it will be limited. Also, the City Council will share in the responsibility, but we need more safeguards and would like some representation and voice.

Q. How much weight does Community Board have?

A. We need initiative and strength in numbers with a voice

Executive Board Member Spielman said we must communicate the message and encourage all the community boards to join in. Community Boards could be the first wave to start the change.

Q. Are you asking for a resolution?

A. Yes, and it should be sent to everyone!

Board Members Paul Vallone and Tyler Cassell gave their support!

Chairman Kelty added we are not going to change the law, but while we support the legislation, there are some parts we would like to add our input. We will draft a letter with our recommendations which will go to all board members for their approval or not.

If the majority of the members agree with the letter, with some minor changes, the letter will go forward.

The motion on the floor is to send a draft of our letter with our resolutions to all board members.

The vote taken was (33) For (1) Against (0) Abstentions

Don Capalbi, liaison to Congresswoman Meng, spoke about the change in their address to **32-26 Union Street, 1st Floor, telephone #718 445 7860**. They will have another address in Forest Hills in the near future.

Speaker **Camille Barrett**, from Queens Library spoke about the reductions in their budget and asked for our help and support by signing their petition for more monies. Thus far the 35% city funded library budget has been reduced to 29.6% causing 62 library closings so far and over 400 staff members losing their jobs. Chairman Kelty said we cannot sign the petition and the District Manager will follow up regarding the Council Appropriation for the Libraries.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Zuliani

