

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING  
MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014  
UNION PLAZA CARE CENTER  
33-23 UNION STREET  
FLUSHING, NEW YORK

PRESENT-

Chuck Apelian  
John Byas  
Tyler Cassell  
Jm Cody  
Nicholas Corrado  
Joseph Femenia  
Arlene Fleishman  
Rose Forkan  
Fred Fu  
Pablo Hernandez  
Eugene Kelty  
Donald Kirchhofer  
Chin-Hsiang Chiang

Peter Kwiath  
Esther Lee  
Frank Macchio  
Rev. R. McEachern  
Barbara McHugh  
Selma Moses  
Devon O'Connor  
Kim Ohanian  
Millicent O'Meally  
Terrence Park  
Vana Partridge  
Kris Ram

Marc Schiffman  
Warren Schreiber  
Kevin Shields  
Matthew Silverstein  
Joshua Sussman  
Peter Sutich  
Joseph Sweeney  
Carlos Talisaysay  
John Tsavalos  
Arnold Wagner  
Clarissa Wong  
Jie Zhu

ABSENT-

James Cervino  
Timothy Chuang

Jeff Huang  
Phil Konigsberg  
Jean Ren

Andrew Rocco  
Peter Tu  
Linna Yu

Chairperson Eugene Kelty opened the meeting at 7:07 pm, first thanking Dr. Pelman, Administrative Director of Union Plaza, as well as Assistant Director Charlton Rhee, for allowing us the use their facility for our meetings. He reminded us it is a nursing home, and to be as quiet as possible at all times. He asked Boy Scout Troop #235, present at our meeting, to lead us into the Pledge of Allegiance. He asked we remain standing for our military personnel who have given their lives for us, those still serving and fighting around the world, and to keep them in our prayers never to be forgotten. He mentioned there will be an executive session at the

end of this meeting. The roll call was taken with **(36)** present **(6)** absent **(3)** excused. The Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing minutes were then approved unanimously. What followed next were the announcements by Chair Kelty. They will be available to view after the meeting as well as the next day at the community board office.

**ITEM #4 - Visiting Nurse Service of NY Queens Child Mobile Crisis Team** was tabled because of a no-show.

**ITEM #5 – Senior Citizen Alarm Installation Program** – Advised us they will arrive late.

**ITEM #6 - Environmental Update by James Cervino** - Tabled because of inability to attend meeting.

**ITEM #7 – 145<sup>TH</sup> Place between 15<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue – A.K.A. Rider “ROBERT C. LOHNES WAY”**  
Committee Chair Joseph Femenia read his committee report of September 17, 2014. The a.k.a. application was initiated by Brian Connelly and supported by Assemblyman Braunstein. Robert Lohnes was in the US Navy from 1955-1964; a NYPD Police Officer and Detective from 1962-1996, the Whitestone Volunteer Ambulance Corp. from 1976-1986, the Girl Scouts of America from 1980-1995 and the Boy Scouts of America Troop 235 from 1978-2014. He was also a member of the Rescue & Recovery Volunteers for 9/11. A caring and giving individual all his life for his fellowman and youth in need, the committee unanimously voted he met the criteria for the honor of naming a street in his name. Instead of giving a litany of his accomplishments, the applicant, Brian Connolly, read a poem “What Will Matter” by Michael Josephson in tribute of a man’s life to his Creator, his country and his fellowman. His loving wife, Natalie Lohnes, spoke of their life together, his absolute dedication to his family, neighbors, friends, children and even strangers. He was Uncle Bob to all the young people who earned his respect. Under his guidance, his Boy Scout Troop achieved the highest number of Eagle Scouts. Fifty reached this pinnacle where the norm is one or two from any given troop. His son, Robert Jr., spoke of his father as a gentle giant among men who gave every waking hour to his family and community. As veterans, father and son also joined the Whitestone VFW together. Although he was 76 years old when he passed, he actually gave 104 years of combined service to his country and community. Truly a man of all seasons. Sal Vasillo spoke of Robert Lohnes as an inspiration to all. His mantra was to help all in need and he lived it. Mr. Vasillo gave his verbal support to honor him with the street naming.

**The motion on the floor is to approve an A.K.A. Rider on 145<sup>th</sup> Place between 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue to be known as “Robert C. Lohnes Way”, and seconded by Marc Schiffman.**

**The vote taken was (35) Yes (0) No (1) left room during vote**

**Megan Chen** from Assemblyman Ed Braunstein’s office said about a year ago our board member, Joseph Sweeney, approached them regarding community boards not being alerted

bill into law in 2013. A proclamation plaque was issued by the Governor naming Joseph Sweeney and Chuck Apelian of our Land Use Committee for bringing this to their attention. Joseph Sweeney explained he initiated the request when he discovered a Brooklyn developer was removing contaminated soil from Brooklyn and dumping it in Whitestone, Queens without our knowledge. Joseph Sweeney thanked everyone for the plaque. Unfortunately he was disappointed when told it belongs to the office and not at home, but was a good sport about it.

**AGENDA #8 – Little Bay Soccer Field** – Parks Committee Chair Kim Ohanian gave the committee meeting report of September 18 2014. The plan is to re-grade the natural turf by raising it one foot with sand and soil to prevent flooding, adding a new drinking fountain, 9 new benches, galvanized steel goal posts, native trees and plants, trash receptacles including recycling bins, and a quick coupler to hand sprinkle the grass. The break in the guard rail will be widened to accommodate handicap access. The money, \$1.6 million, is coming from City Council. Construction from start to finish will be about one year, starting in the Fall of 2015, during which time the site will be fenced off. The schedule will be on line for public to viewing. Although the signage is not adequate, it is not part of the project, but it will be looked into. Also, they are hoping to use one field while the other is under construction. If this is not possible they may have to find an alternative space during the construction. However, everything depends on money. The committee approved the design as presented, seconded by Warren Schreiber.

Q. Since it does not appear the plan includes new lighting, Chairperson Kelty asked whether new lighting can be put in, if there is money left over, or at least placement of the electric components into the bases for the future ?

A. Parks Chair Ohanian said it could be looked into since additional funds may be forthcoming.

Q. Is this the park where the dog run is?

A. Yes, it is but it's at another location.

**The motion on the floor is to approve the project design, and seconded by Selma Moses.**

**There being no discussion the vote was taken as follows:-**

**(36) For (1 late arrival) (0) Against (0) Abstained (1) left before vote**

With the arrival of Christopher Hogan of the FDNY, Chair Kelty introduced him as the next speaker.

**ITEM #5 - Senior Citizen Alarm Installation Program – Christopher Hogan, FDNY** spoke about the senior community based alarm program originated after Hurricane Sandy. It did so well they decided to expand it. They chose areas with large senior populations (such as Flushing) and are offering Fire safety reviews as well as FREE of CHARGE lithium powered combination Smoke and CO Alarms with FREE installations. Funding is by Assistance to Firefighters Fire Prevention as well as the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security. It's also available to those with

special needs as well as the hard of hearing. To make it a success, they ask the community board to get the word out to civics, senior groups, churches and temples, ashrams, etc.

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He left us with cards for distribution.

Q. Is it only for north Flushing area?

A. It's for all of community board #7 and #4, #5 Bronx, #3 Staten Island, #12 and #13 Brooklyn so far.

Q. What about seniors who live in apartments?

A. It applies to any and all seniors.

Q. Will you speak to a civic association meeting, if asked ?

A. We will be happy to.

Chair Kelty mentioned, if given enough cards, we can enclose them in our monthly mailing that goes out to the community, businesses, civics associations, tenant associations, etc., but we would need 700.

A. Not a problem, since we have over 7000 cards.

Q. A lot of seniors do not get out. What about using "Meals on Wheels" to get the word out?

A. Chair Kelty responded that it's a good idea and will contact them about distribution to those who are home bound.

Q. Since a lot of people in downtown Flushing are Chinese and do not speak or read English, can we get cards translated in their language.

A. Since it's not a city funded program but a foundation program, we have a limited budget with no funds for translators.

Chair Kelty said we can ask the translation center at Queens College to translate the message in Chinese or Korean so it can be sent out to the community. Also, civic associations can arrange for a translator to be present when you visit their member meetings.

Q. As president of a Co-op, we are required to have a combination alarm. Are the alarms you have different than what we have?

A. Yes, the new alarms are with lithium batteries that will last for 10 years. We want to reach seniors who don't realize they need an alarm or the alarm they have is ancient. Also, we recently have developed an alarm device for the hard of hearing which is a bed shaker.

Q. What do you do if the house is like "Collier's mansion" with newspapers & books piled high everywhere.

A. There is a City agency that handles that type of situation.

Chair Kelty added that there are CO meters or smoke detectors that have a tape recorded voice of the parents on them. A survey recently found that children do not pay attention to a high tone alarm going off, but will hear the urgency of "Mary, Susan get up...there is a fire in the house".

Chair Kelty gave the floor to visiting Assemblyman Ron Kim, and mentioned there was an SLA meeting today we were never notified of. District Manager Bitterman added it 's not the first time we've been left out. Although Assemblyman Kim didn't stay till the end of the SLA meeting, he said SLA Commissioner Rosen was present the first time in 20 years. Assemblyman

Kim promised he will let us know of any future meetings. He then spoke about legislation raising the income level on seniors and disabled from \$29,000 to \$50,000 exempting them from

rent increases. This would help almost 25,000 additional seniors and disabled. He asked that we put the word out. He mentioned the Mayor promised 130 million dollars for Parks capital improvements in Queens, which is in great need. He also spoke of the need for more parking in congested Flushing. Chair Kelty took the opportunity to mention the mayoral override, by then Mayor Bloomberg, on the Macedonia affordable housing project built without the necessary parking facility needed. Community Board #7 at the very beginning warned against the lack of a parking facility. Recently, however, the Queens Chronicle's incorrectly reported it as being a new issue when it clearly was not!

Assemblyman Kim thanked Community Board #7, its executive board and members for inviting him to speak and praised the good work and effort it continually provides for their community.

Chair Kelty was asked by board member, Kris Ram, to advise that the Affordable Care Act/ Obama Care's open enrollment starts November 15, 2015 to February 15, 2015. Any civic association that would like a "Help First" open enrollment presentation at no cost can contact Kris at 646/ 233 – 6022.

**Item #9 – Capital & Expense Budget Submissions FY 2016** - Committee Chair Kim Ohanian's Budget meeting was on September 29, 2014 with John Byas, Joe Femenia, Peter Kwiath, Millicent O'Meally, Warren Schreiber, Arnold Wagner present. Chair Kelty suggested we start with the capital budget first. Added was **#11** "Reconstruction of 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Linden Place to College Point Blvd and 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue extended to College Point Blvd's service road." Also added was **#3** "Kissena Corridor Park installation of the sidewalk on the 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue side", and item **#6** "McNeil Park installation of the sidewalk on Poppenhusen side of the park" was also added." The new "Police Precinct for Flushing Meadows Corona Park", item **#26**, was added because of the serious increase in vandalism and crime in that area. Item **#4** " was changed to "Reconstruction of Union Street from Northern Blvd to 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue because 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Willets Point Blvd. was completed under SE809. Item **#2** " Little Bay Comfort Station" was removed and placed under Continued Support . Joseph Femenia questioned why the Sports Field at College Point was not in the budget this year, as it was in the past. District Manager Bitterman said it was never in the budget, which was corroborated by Joanne Amagrande in conversation. There is some kind of funding available, but you must contact your elected official for this type of allocation, but not through the budget.

Board member, Rev. McEachern, suggested we should highlight the changes to the Budget List by using underlines, italics, asterisks, or even color to differentiate the old from the new.

Vice Chair Apelian suggested that special effort should be made to items that were promised, but we are still waiting for "under continued support", prior to submitting the new budget.

**The motion on the floor is to approve the Capital Budget as drafted, seconded by John Byas. With no discussion, the vote taken was (29) Yes (0) No (4) Abstain/conflict (4) left before vote**

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We reviewed the Expense Budget and it was agreed to increase our budget under item #3. Also, Item #19 will change to #20 and item #20 will become #19. Under Item #8, the curb replacement allocation was eliminated. Vice Chair Apelian raised the question as to why the support of muni-meters. Chair Kelty said using muni-meters gives access to more parking spaces per block. He reiterated new changes in Capital & Expense Budgets will be highlighted.

**The motion was then made to approve the Expense Budget as drafted and seconded by Arnold Wagner.**

**With no further discussion, the vote taken was (30) Yes (0) No (3) Abstain/conflict (4) left before vote**

#### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Board Member, **Millicent O’Meally**, spoke about the terrific job performed by 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Chair Warren Schreiber at the last Public Hearing when Chair Kelty, 1st Vice Chair Apelian and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair Macchio were not present because of prior commitments. However, she was bothered by the behavior of our board members and guests, the shouting and interruptions. Whether we agree or don’t agree, we need to be more professional!

**Robert LoScalzo** brought up the Executive Session mentioned at the beginning of the meeting. He emphasized there must be a vote authorizing it, otherwise it’s unlawful. Also, on October 8, 2014 there was a quarterly update meeting with Willets Point Redevelopment Group and Community Board #7. He reminded us that last year their Group filed a Brownfield Program application without notifying Board #7, which violates their agreement with the Board. Obviously, it didn’t deter them since they submitted a remedial investigation workplan without involving Board #7. Instead they placed a copy of the plan at the Flushing Library without giving a copy directly to Board #7. They continually say to your face they want to work with you, but proceed to exclude you. You must be on guard and hold their feet to the fire.

**At the end of Public Participation, Chair Kelty made the motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the Chairman of the Community Board’s health problem. The motion was seconded by Arnold Wagner and was passed by all members in attendance.**

Chairperson Kelty gave an update on his medical condition. He explained to the members that he notified the District Manager and Executive Board of his condition in April. He asked the Executive Board to monitor the operation of the Community Board so that it would not be compromised. He stated that if conditions change in his health, he would step down from the

position of Chairperson. He further advised the membership he was in good health at this time, but at times he may have to miss certain meetings and committees depending upon his

condition on that day. There was no discussion on this and the meeting concluded within 15 minutes of session.

Respectfully.

Gene Kelty Chairperson

The meeting ended at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Zuliani