

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2014  
UNION PLAZA CARE CENTER  
33-23 UNION STREET  
FLUSHING, NEW YORK

PRESENT

Chuck Apelian  
John Byas  
Tyler Cassell  
James Cervino  
Chin-Hsiang Chiang  
Kim Cody  
Nicholas Corrado  
Arlene Fleishman  
Rose Forkan  
Fred Fu  
Pablo Hernandez

Eugene Kelty  
Donald Kirchofer  
Phil Konigsberg  
Frank Macchio  
Rev. R. McEachern  
Barbara McHugh  
Selma Moses  
Kim Ohanian  
Millicent O'Meally  
Terence Park  
Andrew Rocco

Marc Schiffman  
Warren Schreiber  
Kevin Shields  
Matt Silverstein  
Peter Sutich  
Joseph Sweeney  
Carlos Talisaysay  
John Tsavalos  
Peter Tu  
Clarissa Wong  
Linna Yu

ABSENT

Timothy Chuang  
Joseph Femenia  
Jeff Huang  
Peter Kwiath

Esther Lee  
Devon O'Connor  
Vana Partridge  
Kris Ram

Jean Ren  
Joshua Sussman  
Arnold Wagner  
Jie Zhu

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 STAFF-

Marilyn Bitterman, District Manager  
Marilyn McAndrews, Community Assistant

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 P.M. by Chairperson Gene Kelty with the Pledge of Allegiance and a silent prayer for our Armed Forces around the world that they return home soon and to remember those who have lost their lives defending our country. While the Public Hearing agenda did not mention Public Participation, Chair Kelty said there will be participation

at the end of the meeting, if anyone wants to speak.

Since Attorney, Eric Palatnik and the owner/s of 137-61 Northern Boulevard have not arrived as yet, Chair Kelty, in the interim, introduced Fred Riley from Consumer Affairs who spoke about a Volunteer Program to start on January 31, 2015. Mr. Riley gave out sign-up sheets regarding the program initiated by the Dept. of Consumer Affairs to educate working class New Yorkers about earned income tax credit and child's care tax credit. They will be calling those who are eligible to take advantage of the program. It is important to remember you will need to apply every year for these tax credits.

Also while waiting for Attorney Palatnik's arrival, the Rev. McEachern reported on Macedonia Plaza's affordable house apartments which were to be chosen via a lottery system. Presently 30 apartments have been moved into and the remaining apartments will be moved into by the end of the year. Of the 40,000 applicants that filed, half were disqualified. The Reverend reiterated that 50% of the apartments were to be given to families living in the Community Board #7 area. A question arose regarding what would happen to a tenant who exceeded the necessary income limit the following year. The Reverend promised to check on it and give us the answer at our next meeting.

**Item #3 – 137-61 Northern Blvd., Flushing, NY – City Planning #120403ZMG** - With the arrival of Attorney Eric Palatnik, First Vice-Chair & Committee Chair Chuck Apelian gave a brief synopsis of the site. He referred to it as the old Sears site currently in a R6 District with a C2-2 commercial overlay. The owner would like to change it to a C4-3 commercial district with an eleven story 152,000 sq. foot mixed-use building with residential, commercial and community facility space. They've had conversations and formal discussions about this site over the years. It rekindled itself, however, and was certified in November of this year, which left us until the end of December to forward our recommendation to City Planning. First Vice-Chair Apelian thanked his committee and board members for meeting this last minute deadline with all the other land-use projects on our busy agenda this Fall/Winter. Attorney Palatnik was given the floor and described the site at the corner of Leavitt and Northern Boulevard, next door to the Flushing Town Hall and across the street from Patrol Borough North (Police). Floors 3 to 8 will be the Hotel with 191 rooms, 43 residential apartments on floor 9 to 11, a 7000 sq.ft. community facility on the second floor, and 10,000 sq.ft. retail on the ground floor. The proposed parking spaces for the entire building will be 155 spaces, when only 109 will be required. The change to a C4-3 is required basically for the Hotel. In discussions with the owner, Flushing Town Hall asked for a set back from the second floor and up to insure privacy of their gardens, as well curving part of the building to allow greater visibility of Flushing Town Hall along Northern Blvd. There will be a plaza area and glass curtain wall and glass atrium. It was agreed all entrances to the new hotel will be located at Leavitt Street at the eastern end of the street as well as placing the community facility space at the eastern end of the parcel to

minimize pedestrian and auto traffic to impact Flushing Town Hall. The applicant agreed to allow Flushing Town Hall and other community groups the use of the new community facility space for free, when needed and available. The applicant also revised plans to the committee's satisfaction about access and egress flow to the hotel lobby drop-off and to the underground parking.

Q. Since there are schools nearby, how would children be picked up by bus?

A. Same as before on Leavitt Street.

Q. There are already many hotels in the area. Why another hotel?

A. Queens is #1 for tourism in the world. There is a definite need.

Q. As an "as of right building" you can build an 11-story in an R6 also. So why change to C4.3?

A. The difference is how the 4.8 bulk is broken in between. The R6 is basically residentially driven whereas the C4-3 is commercially driven to allow a hotel.

Q. What are the size of the hotel rooms and the residential apartments?

A. The hotel rooms are approximately 400 sq.ft. and the apartments can range from 800 to 1000 sq.ft.

Q. How many people in an average apartment?

A. One to three people. Also they can buy into hotel services if they want.

Q. Will they be Co-ops or Condos?

A. Condos!

Q. What kind of events will the community space be used for?

A. The 7000 sq. feet could be used as a meeting room, or private functions, by residents living in the building as well as the community at large (Boy Scouts, church groups, etc.). Usage will be free.

Q. What is the breakdown of floors?

A. Ground floor is retail, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is the community facility, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> is the hotel, 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> is residential.

Q. Where is the pedestrian entrance located?

A. The shared entrance to the hotel and residential apartments is on Leavitt Street. Entrance to retail is on Northern Blvd.

Q. Any hotel amenities?

A. There is a fitness center, but no spa or pool.

Q. What consideration will be given to the 2-story homes behind on Carlton Place.

A. City Planning asked that we set back the building by 12 feet, making the imprint 30 ft. from the rear yard and 60 ft. from the second floor.

Q. The loading dock for the entire building can only accommodate one vehicle. What will happen if you have more than one truck making deliveries for each of the facilities?

A. Many deliveries will be at night. The height limit of 14 ft. will limit deliveries to smaller trucks similar to panel trucks. The retail stores will have to have their deliveries in and out as quickly as possible.

There being no further questions, the following speakers asked to be heard:

**Speaker Sunny Han's** comment was that developers have no respect for the community. They will build for their maximum profit with no thought to the damaging effects to our community. This is the most historical section of our community, and we must voice our concern to protect our heritage. We have worked very hard to protect Flushing Town Hall. We ask that you please vote against this project!

**Speaker Vincent Amato** complained today there is too little local pride. There is no sense of a place having had a history anymore. Civics is no longer taught in schools. Flushing Town Hall, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, was once the **seat of government** when it was a village. It is listed on the national register of historic places. Buildings like Flushing Town Hall have national significance. There are very few places like it in our nation. The loss of our heritage would be a national tragedy. No offense to the architect or developers, but this new building looks like something out of Miami Vice, completely out of character. The argument is they're not moving it, just building right next to it. It would be like building a 70 story building right next to the Eiffel Tower. He strongly urges the committee to vote against it.

**First Vice-Chair Apelian** read his December 4, 2014 committee report and explained the existing overlay of 150 feet is being reduced by 25 feet which is the rear area of Carlton Place. So the overlay is gone and only 125 feet would be remapped as C4-3. What's favorable with this application is you are not building a bigger building. The overall bulk was 4.8 of which 2.42 was residential and the balance for some retail and a community facility. The bulk for the new building is still 4.8, but the configuration is more commercially driven with the hotel, with smaller portions for residential, retail and community facility. In addition the applicant agreed to allow Flushing Town Hall and other community groups to use the community facility space when needed and available at no cost. The committee approved the application 14 to 0.

**The motion now on the floor is to approve the application to rezone the R6 district zone with a C2-2 overlay to a C4-3 commercial district and allow the 11-story mixed-use building with residential, commercial (retail and hotel) and community facility use, seconded by Pablo Hernandez.**

**The vote taken was (24) For (9) Against (0) Abstention**

There being no further public participation, the meeting ended at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Zuliani

