

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2015
UNION PLAZA CARE CENTER
33-23 UNION STREET
FLUSHING, NEW YORK

PRESENT

Charles Apelian
John Byas
Tyler Cassell
Chin-Hsiang Chiang
Kim Cody
Nicholas Corrado
Joseph Femenia
Arlene Fleishman
Rose Forkan
Pablo Hernandez
Jeff Huang

Eugene Kelty
Donald Kirchhofer
Phil Konigsberg
Peter Kwiath
Frank Macchio
Barbara McHugh
Selma Moses
Vana Partridge
Kris Ram
Jean Ren
Andrew Rocco

Marc Schiffman
Warren Schreiber
Kevin Shields
Matthew Silverstein
Joseph Sweeney
Carlos Talisaysay
John Tsavalos
Arnold Wagner
Clarissa Wong
Linna Yu

ABSENT

Timothy Chuang
Fred Fu
Esther Lee
Rev. R McEachern
James Cervino

Devon O'Connor
Kim Ohanian
Millicent O'Meally
Terence Park

Joshua Sussman
Peter Sutich
Peter Tu
Jie Zhu

GUESTS

Don Capalbi, Congresswoman Meng's office
Erin Rogers, Assemblywoman Rozic's office
Amhor Your, Assemblyman Braunstein's office
Vito Tantonico, Councilman Vallone's office
Allen Hsu, Councilman Koo's office
Adam Chen, Public Advocate James' office
Hye-Kyung Yang, City Planning Queens office

Chairperson Eugene Kelty called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence to honor our men and women serving in the military at home and abroad, especially those who gave their lives for us, and all our first responders on the home front.

Roll call was taken with **(32)** present **(5)** excused and **(8)** absent. Chair Kelty sadly announced that board member, Donald Kirchhofer, is leaving us the end of March after twelve years of service. He will be missed very much, but should expect phone calls from us when his expertise is needed. The February 9, 2015 minutes, seconded by Marc Schiffman, was unanimously approved by all board members present with the exception of Chair Kelty, who was absent at the February 9th meeting. Chair Kelty followed next with the announcements which will be available to view after the meeting or at the community board office tomorrow. He announced tonight's item #6 and #7 have been tabled from the agenda, leaving item #5, the A.K.A. Rider, to be voted on. The Regular Meeting will follow with now item #6, Education Update, and added to the Regular agenda will be the Board's Letter of Comment which also must be voted on.

Chair Kelty proceeded to introduce the first of four speakers, who asked to speak tonight. **Erin Rogers**, District Director for Assemblywoman Rozic, introduced herself and explained Assemblywoman Rozic is in Albany working on the budget. Ms. Rogers, who is part of the new staff, extended Assemblywoman Rozic's welcome invitation to their Open House on Friday, March 27th, 2015 from 2 to 5 p.m. at 159-16 Union Turnpike to meet staff and learn of the current initiatives they are working on. Also, if you have questions or need assistance, their office is open 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday, to all. **Vito Tautonico**, from Councilman Paul Vallone's office spoke briefly about the Participatory Budget coming up, which is basically Capital Funds given out every year by City Council to each district to be used for what is most urgent for the community. Last year Councilman Vallone received \$5 million of which \$1 million went to Bowne Park, \$1 million to Bay Terrace Library and the remainder dispersed between the Public Schools in the district for their needs. Hopefully they receive a like amount this year. Councilman Vallone is allowing participation to anyone living in District 19 to vote on one of 10 projects he lists on the ballot in need of funding this year. Voting will be held from April 11 to April 19 at 42-40 Bell Boulevard, Suite 507. Bring proof of residency (an ID, a bill, etc.) with you in order to vote or... call 718-619-8611 to find a voting site closer to your home.

Suzanne Cataggio, Commanding Officer of School Safety for the Police overseeing 8 Precincts, responsible for 480 agents and 189 schools, spoke at length about the Field Intelligence Officers tracking kids committing crimes on the street, Crime Prevention Units doing presentations at the schools, etching of school computers, proper camera positioning, Community Outreach Officers speaking on drugs and bullying, and measures to prevent becoming a victim of a crime, the most popular being cell phone theft. Theft of cell phones over \$1000 is considered grand larceny, under \$1000 is petit larceny, which becomes grand larceny if the phone is actually used. In the summer they offer a free camp in the 115th Precinct and this year will have one

also in the 114th Precinct. In almost every Precinct they have the Explorers Club where a para-military program is taught on how policing works and will be good on a resume.

Q. What about kill switches on phones?

A. Yes, it is suggested the credit card or phone company be notified as soon as possible which can prevent escalation to a felony, but it doesn't excuse a crime was committed.

Q. Are there any presentations given in schools that teach how to interact with police if they're stopped on the street or in a vehicle?

A. It's not something we do, but is part of the Explorers para-military program on investigative procedures, road stops, etc. However, it might be a good idea to add to school presentations and will be suggested.

Q. Do you handle school truancy during school hours?

A. No, we do not participate in truancy, but the precincts do.

Q. If a crime is committed in school, how does it work? Do you call 911?

A. The school safety agents are already in the building and will report it to the Level 3 Sgt. in the building. However, we try to avoid police action. If possible, we report the lesser crimes to **Ms. Barker** at our Youth Court where they are judged by their peers and who choose the punishment, which more often than not, is community service with a 90% success rate. When a parent wants to press charges, we do the arrest!

Q. Has there ever been a safety discussion about parents and buses double and triple parked letting children off at school and causing undo chaos?

A. I consider myself the new regime and feel we need more school safety agents and crossing guards at all the schools. We need approval of a pilot program wherein our safety agents can issue violations to parents if they will not move. As far as crossing guards, the Precincts presently supply us with guards at our request, but I believe it should fall under our jurisdiction and at our direction. That said, I would point out, as an example, that if 9 years ago we had 10 schools with 20 safety agents, today with 20 schools we still have only 20 agents. We still work closely with the school principals, but with the shortage of agents and guards we resort to robbing Pete to pay Paul.

Q. What about placement of cameras at the schools.

A. The cameras are effective when agents are watching from inside a room in the building, but a camera at the main entrance is not always visible to the agent who must address visitors entering and exiting. The cameras are highly effective when rewound to catch a crime being committed.

Q. How do you communicate with the students?

A. We do not enforce the rules of the classroom. We leave that up to the educators. If called upon for an infraction, we will use positive interaction with the student to work it out and point out the consequences to their behavior.

Q. What about the pilot program?

A. It requires approval by the department. What's good about the pilot program is that it will alleviate the pressure from the Precincts officers, if we are trained to do our own thing.

Q. Are you permitted to make arrests?

A. Yes!

Joseph Lin, from IDNYC Outreach Organization, spoke about receiving a free identification card from IDNYC enrollment centers across the City to be able to enter schools and City buildings, access many City services, interact with the NYPD, open a banking account, and use as a library card. You can apply, regardless of immigration status, if you are a resident of NYC, have proof of identification, and are at least 14 years old. As a cardholder you can receive one-year free membership at over 30 cultural institutions, discounts at movie theatres, health and wellness centers, and have access to Big Apple Rx, the City's official prescription discount card program. For a list of enrollment centers, contact 311 or visit www.nyc.gov/idnyc or text 877877.

Board Member, Linna Yu, said the Flushing Queens Library would not accept it. Mr. Lin said they will be accepted at the Libraries. Ms. Yu repeated it doesn't work at this time! He said he will look into it, but since they are constantly opening new centers and new times to keep checking with them. Board Member, Tyler Cassel, questioned the length of time to get a card and was advised it would take until August of this year. At this juncture Chair Kelty said we shouldn't have to keep calling. The program should have been fully in place before it was released to the public.

Q. Do we have a choice of an appointment when we want?

A. There will be a calendar available with dates available to pick from.

Speaker, **Alan Chen's**, update from Public Advocate Leticia James' office advised that Public Advocate James introduced legislation to establish a retirement fund for all New Yorkers who work in private industry. She also spoke with a coalition of student activists at The New School about The Campus Safety Act she introduced into the City Council towards eliminating campus sexual assaults.

Q. Can the Public Advocate's office introduce Legislation?

A. Yes, the Public Advocate can.

Item #5 – A.K.A. Rider – “Heroes Memorial Way” – Corner of 154th Street & 26th Avenue

Chair Femenia's first committee meeting on October 21, 2014 was for an A.K.A. Rider for Vincent Cangelosi, who died on 9/11, requested by his cousin, Daniel Naimoli, for placement at 154th Street & 26th Avenue, adjacent to the 9/11 Memorial Park also created by Daniel Naimoli, designer and landscape architect. With many questions still to be answered the committee meeting was tabled to February 5, 2015. The A.K.A. Rider itself falls under guideline #5 and #6 as an event recognition. Since Mr. Naimoli acknowledged he built the Memorial Park for all heroes, the committee suggested renaming the corner “A.K.A Heroes Memorial Way” instead of “Vincent Cangelosi Way”, to honor all killed in the line of duty, acts of heroism and on 9/11. Mr. Naimoli informed the committee his cousin's name is already on a plaque inside the Park, and plaques for recently murdered Police Officers Ramos and Liu will be added. Future names will be approved and added by the creation of a foundation for that sole purpose. Mr. Naimoli was open to questions.

Q. Is it next to St. Mel's?

A. No, St. Mel's is across the street and Queens North Presbyterian Church is down the corner

from the Memorial Park

Q. Who owns the property?

A. Queens North Presbyterian.

Q. Is it going to be memorialized as “Vincent Cangelosi Memorial Way”

A. No! It will now be known as “Heroes Memorial Way”

Q. What was the iron plaque for?

A. That was for my cousin.

Q. What is the plan for the slain Police Officers, Ramos and Liu?

A. They will be memorialized in the Park, as will any of our District’s heroes from 9/11, Police Dept., Fire Dept., war veterans or civil servants.

Q. Who will be funding it?.

A. They’re in the process of forming a foundation to be responsible for future control.

Chair Kelty reminded everyone we are just identifying the memorial Park with the A.K.A. Rider sign and nothing else beyond that.

Q. You have a memorial park in Whitestone on 149th Street & 14th Avenue. Why isn’t there a street naming there.

A. The park was named McKinsey Park in honor of WW2 war veterans by the VFW. Nobody asked for a street naming! We can call the VFW and suggest they submit the application.

Committee Chair Joseph Femenia read his committee report with the vote 6 to 0.

The motion on the floor is to approve the A.K.A. Rider Heroes Memorial Way at the corner of 154th Street and 26th Avenue. The vote taken was unanimous to approve the motion.

Item #6 – Education Update - (P.S. 24, 141-11 Holly Avenue & P. S. 107, 167-02 45th Avenue)

Committee Chair of Education, Arlene Fleishman, referred to the push to do away with the trailers used as classrooms presently in some of the school yards. The plan to remove the trailers at P.S. 24, that house 4 classes, as well as 4 classrooms that are attached to the school will result in less seats for the children presently enrolled, and will lead to future overcrowding conditions. Funds have been allocated to expand P. S. 24 by 500 seats, but will require housing five kindergarten classes temporarily for 3 years at P.S. 107. Buses will transport the children daily. Each kindergarten class will return to P.S. 24 to start first grade. P. S. 107 has sufficient space and their Principal has graciously agreed to it and is working together with the Principal of P.S. 24. The CEC, the Councilman’s office and the Borough President’s office also are in agreement, but are asking for CB #7’s vote of approval. Unfortunately some P.S. 107 parents are not in favor of this temporary solution. However, the funds will be rescinded if the plan does not go forward and the children will be the losers.

The motion on the floor is CB #7’s approval of the temporary re-siting and co-location of P.S. 24’s kindergarten classes only to P. S. 107, beginning September 2015 for three years and seconded by Marc Schiffman

Discussion followed:

- Q. Are they going to bus kindergarten kids?
- A. Of course, they do it now even with pre-K kids!
- Q. How much funds are they talking about?
- A. I didn't dwell on the amount, but it's in the proposal which I'll leave for everyone to read.
- Q. You said currently it was 160% overutilized and if you don't put it in, it will go up to 176%. If they do put it in, what will it drop to?
- A. With the increase of 500 seats, and by estimating the past five years they've approximated it would be down to the norm.
- Q. What were some of the parents concerns?
- A. Some felt it would change the culture of the school; some felt it would change the school program, and others just didn't want them and gave any excuse.
- Q. Who is going to finalize it?
- A. PEP will make the final decision based on the input of the community.
- Q. Chair Kelty asked who do we address the letter to?
- A. I'll let you know.
- Q. As a parent of a child in P.S. 107, one of the reasons for our concerns is the fact that we've had major fluctuations and changes the past 4 years, lost a principal of 25 years, and lost our AP. Our current principal and AP are young and new in the system, but did have valid concerns.
- A. Both principals may be young, but they know their responsibilities are for the children first and foremost. They have been working together to that end.
- Q. Where are these schools?
- A. P.S. 24 is at 141-11 Holly Avenue and P.S. 107 is at 167-02 45th Avenue, a mile away.
- Q. Has the principal of P.S. 107 taken any particular position?
- A. Yes, she is open to the relocation to her school.
- Q. What happens if they have a large increase in enrollment?
- A. The 5-year study is done to prepare them for that eventuality.
- Q. How is the bus situation to work? Will the children meet up at P.S. 24 first and then be bused to P.S. 107?
- A. I suggested it to the principal in the event an older child brings the younger one to P.S. 24, the younger child can then be bused to P.S. 107. They are also considering a later arrival for these kindergarten children from P. S. 24 so as not to conflict with P.S. 107's regular students arriving for class. Remember, however, all children who are bused are picked up from their home.
- Q. After three years, will this move solve the problem?
- A. Yes, because they will have 500 more seats?
- Q. Suppose enrollment exceeds 500 seats with a need for 1000 seats. Are their projections always 100% accurate?
- A. Based on my experience of the past 27 years on the school board, their projections have always been on the mark.

Chair Kelty asked for a motion to send a letter endorsing the re-siting and co-location of P. S. 24's kindergarten classes temporarily to P. S. 107 for a period of 3 years only, commencing September 2015, and including sufficient bus service during this period of time in anticipation of solving the overcrowding at P. S. 24 with their plans for expansion.

Discussing followed:

Board Member Corrado, while understanding the need for the relocation, feels the main problem is that the school construction authority is not acquiring the land and building the schools they are supposed to.

The vote was taken with (30) For (2) left before the vote (0) Abstained

Item #7 – Letter of Comment – The Letter of Comment was distributed to the board members for their review and approval. Board member **Arnold Wagner** asked that under Department For Aging we change the word “frail” to “needful” seniors, which will be done. Board member **Barbara McHugh** asked that under Dept. of Transportation, under reconstruction “14th Avenue to 22nd Avenue” we extend it to 23rd Avenue, and Board member **Matthew Silverstein** asked that we mention something about the Mayor and Borough President’s recent plan for Flushing Meadow Corona Park Pavilion. Both requests cannot be included since this Budget was already submitted in September 2014 and voted on at the Public Hearing. It can be added to our budget next year, or we can ask our elected officials, who have not voted on the Budget as yet, to add your requests.

Board member Selma Moses recommended that we accept the draft with the one word change, and to ask our elected officials to include extending the DOT reconstruction to 23rd Avenue when they vote, seconded by Marc Schiffman.

The vote taken was (30) For (0) Against (0) Abstained

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Speaker **Aaron Hernandez**, Skills Training Outreach Coordinator for the St Nicholas Workforce Development Center in Brooklyn said they are interested in a relationship with the Queens community. They offer two programs available. One is for people with previous experience in construction and one is for people with experience in the Commercial Driving field. These programs are for those with strong backgrounds, and are designed to give real New York State certification, professional development and job placement at no cost. This is for those who are tired of seasonal work or side jobs, but want to secure full time work specializing in your field and create a career.

Chair Kelty asked for flyers we can give out to our data base of business groups and civic associations and organizations.

Q. Do you have to go to Brooklyn and is it a 501C organization?

A. Yes, you would have to go to Brooklyn, and it is a 501C3 organization.

Q. Do you have upstate apprenticeship programs?

A. Currently, no, although applicants that come through the program have certifications that have allowed them to get into Local 79 MTA programs.

Q. Where are they getting the training you speak of?

A. We work with Big Apple, Inc. in NYC as well as North Shore Driving School not far from here.

Q. Isn't Big Apple a demolition company?

A. No it is not. It is a school that works specifically in asbestos and OSHA training, etc.

Q. Are your programs approved by the New York State Dept.?

A. Yes, they are.

Q. Who funds these two programs?

A. Among them is the Rodney Foundation, and others including Tiger Foundation. You can find this information our web site, www.facebook.com/StNicksAllianceWorkforce.

The meeting ended at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Zuliani