

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2015
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
Vincent Gianelli
Pablo Hernandez
Jeff Huang
Kevin Kang

Phil Konigsberg
Peter Kwiath
Esther Lee
Frank Macchio
Barbara McHugh
Selma Moses
Devon O'Connor
Kim Ohanian
Millicent O'Meally
Terence Park
Vana Partridge
Kris Ram
Andrew Rocco

Belal Salim
Warren Schreiber
Kevin Shields
Matthew Silverstein
Joshua Sussman
Peter Sutich
Joseph Sweeney
Alison Tan
John Tsavalos
Peter Tu
Arnold Wagner
Harpreet Wahan
Linna Yu

ABSENT

Tyler Cassell
Timothy Chuang

Joseph Femenia

Pablo Hernandez
Clarissa Wong

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 STAFF

Marilyn Bitterman, District Manager
Marilyn McAndrews, Community Assistant
Mary Zuliani, Community Assistant

GUESTS

Don Capalbi, Congresswoman Meng's office
James Ward, Senator Avella's office
Amber Yoon, Assemblyman Braunstein's office
Marilla Li, Assemblywoman Rozic's office

GUESTS, continued

Young Kim, Assemblyman Kim's office
Chae No, Councilman Koo's office
Vito Tautonico, Councilman Vallone's office
Elaine Fan, NYC Comptroller's office
Adam Chen, Public Advocate James' office
Susie Tannenbaum, Queens Borough President's office
Jeong-Ah Choi, Queens Borough President's office

First Vice-Chair Chuck Apelian, on behalf of our Chair Kelty, called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence in remembrance of our military forces protecting us at home and abroad, and also our emergency responders in harms way who keep us safe every day here at home. Keep them all in your hearts and prayers. He described our board as the largest in Queens geographically and in population. He introduced Community Board #7's Executive Board and staff.

The roll call attendance was taken with **(43) Present (1) Absent (4) Excused**

First Vice-Chair Apelian read the announcements of the evening with special mention of the passing of Matthew Silverstein's grandmother Marilyn Silverstein. Funeral information was given as well as the family's request for donations to the Parkinson's Disease Foundation, in lieu of flowers. Also, on July 1, 2015 the Bayside Historic Society is sponsoring an Independence Day celebration with fireworks at Fort Totten Park. You can walk, bike or be bused.

The motion to approve the minutes for March 9th, 23rd, April 13th and May 18, 2015 were seconded by Marc Schiffman, Phil Konigsberg, Rev. McEachern and Selma Moses respectively and unanimously approved by the Board members.

Item #5, the Sanitation Marine Transfer Station was tabled to our September 21, 2015 Public Hearing. On **Item #6** and **Item #7**, we await the arrival of representatives from the NYC Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene and the NYC Emergency Management Program respectively.

PUBLIC HEARING

ITEM #8 – NYPD College Point Tow Pound - #C 159339PCQ – Application by NYC Police Dept. & Dept. of Citywide Administrative Services pursuant to Section 197-c of NYC Charter for site selection and acquisition of property located at 31-22 College Point Blvd. for use as a tow pound and storage facility.

Vice-Chair Apelian introduced **Dale Laderson** from DCAS to discuss the request for approval of the continued leasing and presence of the NYPD Tow Pound, one of four (4) Tow Pounds in the City. The tow pound in question was operating under the Kosciusko Bridge until renovations to the bridge started two years ago, which led to temporarily bringing the tow pound back to College Point. In the interim, several sites were being checked out for a permanent location for the Pound. Only two were found to be viable. Review Avenue in L.I.C. was the ideal first choice location until Hurricane Sandy damaged it beyond repair. College Point, although the second choice, did meet the criteria necessary as well. DCAS also felt the impact on the community would be more amenable than a retail operation, which in the past has brought in more density, traffic, less parking, etc. Additionally, the existing property would not change it's footprint, but the exterior would be enhanced with improved fencing and landscaping, etc. The proposed real estate transaction would be for twenty years.

The next speaker, **Inspector Michael Pilecki**, Commanding Officer of the Traffic Enforcement District, which includes all traffic agents throughout the city who tow vehicles, issue parking summonses, or direct traffic. With him is **Frank Sepulveda**, Director of Operations, who oversees all four tow pounds throughout the Boroughs. Inspector Pilecki proceeded to describe the operation of the Queens Tow Pound under the command of Traffic Manager **Dominick Russo**, including a uniformed gun carrying Sergeant and 70 staff members, 40 of which are tow pound operators. The pound is open for towing from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. and the redemption area is open 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. weekdays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays, and closed Sundays. There are 210 parking spaces available, with 40 to 48 vehicles towed daily, and on any given day an average of 130 vehicles on site and 35 vehicles to be auctioned. There are roughly 20 tow trucks, 3 sedans and 2 vans that are deployed borough wide. Employees park on the facility, and we have a private security company monitoring the facility 24/7.

Q. Why a private security company?

A. The decision is not ours, but tow pounds have used private security companies for years, and it makes sense that our police should be patrolling the community to reduce crime instead.

Q. What is the size of this facility?

A. (Answered by Ms. Laderson) The facility is on 4 acres/175,000 square feet. The building is two-stories with a mezzanine, approximately 66,000 sq.ft. The first floor is for NYPD administrative and ancillary activities for the tow pound itself, and the second floor is quartermaster for storage of office furniture, fixtures, office supplies and equipment purchases for the NYPD throughout the City.

Q. (Question posed by Environmentalist **Dr. James Cervino** of Coastal Preservation Network & Chair of Board #7's Environmental Committee). Why can't we revisit the Long Island City site? We have opened our arms to the Police Academy, and hosted the Marine Transfer Station. This area is already overburdened with non-retail and retail commercial businesses which already bring in enough vehicle and truck traffic. I've viewed the Long Island City site, and you if make use of above ground parking and build a structure to support it, it would work very well there.

A. Real Estate transactions take two parties at the table, The timing to revisit the site as well as the damage incurred by Sandy were detrimental in working through it. In the end the final deal wasn't feasible for our intended use.

Q. What about the Fair Share Criteria regarding the Police Academy and the Marine Transfer Station?

Before the question could be answered, **First Vice-Chair Apelian**, stopped the proceedings to welcome **Chair Kelty**, who just walked in. As everyone knows, Chair Kelty has had medical issues this past year and is recovering from recent surgery. We are all happy he was able to join us and he proceeded to describe the Fair Share Criteria, but only after **Vice-Chair Apelian** gave him the floor properly (Ha,Ha). **Chair Kelty** said the Fair Share Criteria applies to all City Agency facilities, i.e., Sanitation, Police, Fire, DCAS, DOT, etc. Each community should have a fair share of city facilities, and not have one community support all these facilities. Right now College Point alone has the Asphalt facility, the Police Academy, the Tow Pound, the Marine Transfer Station (a borough facility) and two Sanitation garages (one for Board 7 and one for Board 11). He also questioned why the quartermaster will now be at the Tow Pound in question, when originally it was to be at Police Academy?

A. Our quartermaster is strictly for toiletries, amenities for guests, friends, etc.

Chair Kelty replied that's support services for supplies, not quartermaster.

Q. Weren't we supposed to exchange the original tow pound facility for the Police Academy?

A. *The room went quiet. There was no answer given!*

Q. How many cars a day will be towed into the Pound?

- A. With two tours a day, a 16 hour period, approximately 60 cars will be brought in, of which the majority will be redeemed the same day or next day.
- Q. Is this a lease?
- A. (Answered by Vice Chair Apelian) Yes, it's a 20 year lease of the land.
- Q. What's the total amount of parking spaces available?
- A. With the improved ULURP, we will have an approximate total of 225 spaces.
- Q. What if additional tow trucks are added to the fleet?
- A. There is no need to increase the amount of trucks. We do violation towing only, not scofflaw which the City Marshall handles. Any car that remains more than two days is auctioned off within 10 days.
- Q. In the event of overcrowding at police lock and key lots, will this facility be used for any property evidenced for crime?
- A. No! Evidence vehicles maintained by the police property clerk division having nothing to do with violation towing.

Vice Chair Apelian added a reasoned response to the question as "We don't know....down the road in 20 years a lot can change".

Q. What thoroughfare are you using to tow cars to the Pound?

A. They will utilize the roadway shortest and closest to the Pound, which is 32nd Avenue.

Vice Chair Apelian said one of our councilmen introduced a Law to combat the amount of commercial traffic on some of our major streets and 32nd Avenue, although not a commercial route, is being used as one.

Board Member, **Vana Partridge's** comment was if a commercial retail establishment were to take the Pound's place, there would be 60 vehicles an hour instead of 60 vehicles a day to contend with.

Board Member, **Warren Schreiber** added that to retrieve one's car would require someone else to drive them to the pound which would increase it to 120 vehicles a day.

Q. Long Island City is experiencing a boom in housing making real estate more expensive, whereas College Point is in housing decline. Did price enter into the decision?

A. No, pricing is only one of many components; i.e, size, square footage, use, occupancy, zoning, entry/egress, location, servicing, landlord entity, etc.

Q. Are you presently there now:

A. Yes, the operation has been there since 2013 with no major challenges or complaints lodged, so the proposed continued use would have very little impact on the community.

Q. You asked for a 20 year lease? Why not a 10 year lease?

A. The economic terms under a 20 year are much more favorable.

Q. How many vehicles will be parked overnight or permanently?

A. Tow trucks will park overnight as well as Department vehicles assigned to the Pound, and some sedans, but none from other locations. The Employees will park only during their tour hours, and then will leave.

Q. Is this a three story building with inside parking?

A. It's a two story building with a mezzanine level, employee amenities, but no bunking, and no inside parking.

Chair Kelty voiced his concern over the added sixty or more cars a day. When the ULURP application and environmental impact study for the Police Academy came up in 2009, City Planning never talked or knew about the Tow Pound coming into the arena, which is right at the head of the Police Academy.

Ms. Laderson said they were in the market looking at many sites, but because of the consequential damages across the eastern seaboard done by Sandy in 2012, many sites were virtually wiped out.

Vice Chair Apelian said he had great difficulty with Ms. Laderson's comment that the whole City of New York was at a standstill and the only other site in the entire 10 million population was ours. Board Member **Matt Silverstein's** pointed out that the current use was not anticipated since the site was planned for a Printing & Packaging Company. **Chair Kelty** added, however, it would not have had 60 cars or more coming and going, and the complete disregard to promises made to the community. In response Owner/Developer, **Jerry Filippidis** spoke about their current economical and marketing problems here and in Brooklyn, as well as the site being best suited for tow traffic than retail traffic. **Vice Chair Apelian** said Mr. Filippidis could speak about his business decisions later since the issue at present is the Police Department and the agreements we have in place.

Q. Why was the NYPD given the Tow Pound site in 2013.

A. We were never made aware of it. A temporary lease was signed, and only then, when it was operational, were we told they were there.

Q. If this is approved today, and while everyone is present, can we get a decision on the much needed College Point police kiosk or sub-station NOW?

A. The people that are here tonight are not policy makers. However, we can bring the question up for a response by the proper party.

Vice Chair Apelian said it just came to his attention as recently as today that the Police Department was considering swapping this site for a sub-station. In response to Vice Chair Apelian's statement, **Captain Vic Ferrante**, Executive Officer of the Office of Deputy Commissioner of Management & Budget said as of this morning the Police hasn't confirmed any swap out, kiosk or sub location. **Vice Chair Apelian** replied it was being considered, not confirmed.

Q. How many sites were being considered and where were they?

A. There were 6 to 8 sites all in Queens; Long Island City, Springfield Gardens, College Point, and Maspeth. We settled on Review Avenue in Long Island City. After Sandy, 31-22 College Point Boulevard presented itself.

Q. Don't get me wrong, but the College Point site is near the water, as was Review Avenue. Shouldn't you be concerned?

A. There was no damage at this site from Sandy.

Q. Is there sufficient parking for the employees and the impounded vehicle operations?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you had any complaints from elected officials?

A. To my knowledge, no serious parking issue complaints were ever received except when the first trailer drops came at the site under emergency circumstances.

Q. Where do these tow trucks come from?

A. The entire borough of Queens.

Q. Why did you choose to develop the property for the Tow Pound instead of for retail or commercial businesses that wanted it and where you would have made more money?

A. We did have many other retailers, restaurants, etc. that wanted the site and would have made more money, but I live here too. The Marine Transfer Station is going to be on 31st Avenue, which already has a lot of Sanitation trucks, and private carting coming through the neighborhood. The Tow Pound very minimally uses the 31 Avenue gate, and uses the College Point entrance on and off. Traffic is already heavy, but with more retail development, like 20th Avenue, it would be much worse.

Point of Information by **Chair Kelty**. The Marine Transfer Station, Campbells and other construction companies were there for years. It was an Industrial area long before Mr. Filippidis' property entry. You could have gone in with Con Edison who is in need of a parking facility in the area for their employees. **Vice Chair Apelian** asked Mr. Filippidis if he cared to respond, and he did. His background spans over 25 Years in the community and knows many people from the 109 Community Council, College Point Civic, College Point Board of Trade, Queensborough Hill Civic and many religious organizations. The trouble In building in College Point is the soil problem which necessitated pilings at four times the normal cost, so we had to downsize the building originally. As a small business ourselves, we didn't want to hurt the other businesses, so when the Police Dept. came to us, we realized it was the best option and would bring the least amount of traffic.

Q. Was there an impact study done regarding main thoroughfares, like 32nd Avenue, Linden Place and Whitestone Expressway, that may grid lock the area now used by the Police Academy?

A. Since this use generates only 60 trips per day, it does not meet the volume threshold for a detailed traffic analysis.

Q. Are those trailers going to remain there?

A. We need to come up with a lease with the Tow Pound so we can transfer the offices from the trailers into the building.

Q. What's the history of the ownership of the building?

A. The property was City owned since 2003. Ares Printing purchased the property with the plan to move from their rented Brooklyn facility to a new building they would construct in Queens.

Unfortunately, the property purchased required substantial pilings which led to going over budget, the construction of a smaller building and continued rental in Brooklyn.

Chair Kelty reminded the owner/developer that he was warned about the sub-surface problem at every meeting he attended. If anything, he should sue his architect who could have warned him of the cost.

Speaker **Don Capalbi**, as a satisfied customer, stated there is no burden on the community for this Tow Pound, and added he has known Jerry Filippidis for the past 20 years and that you can count on his responsibility to and for the community. Speaker, **Astrid Rodriguez**, spoke on behalf of Tom Palma and read his letter stating the Tow Pound has been operating since 2013 without any complaints from the community and has minimally affected traffic. Had the building been used for retail, it would heavily Impact traffic and contribute to congestion, not to mention the large retail businesses closing out the small mom and pop businesses. Speaker, **James Tweedie**, a resident of College Point for 38 years and civic member, said the Pound has been a good neighbor these past two years. He reminded everyone you know what you have; you don't know what you are going to get. Speaker **Steve Mahler** spoke about knowing the Ares Group on a personal and business level the past 25 years. He equated 60 cars in an 8 hour day to 7 ½ cars an hour. Even with 120 cars it amounts to only 14 cars an hour, and is better than dealing with retail traffic similar to 20th Avenue. Speaker, **Chrissy Voskerichian**, Pres. of 109th Community Council dealing with complaints daily, and supports the NYPD Tow Pound. She has never received a complaint about them. In fact many are unaware it's even there. The owner of the building, Jerry Filippidis, is a valued member of the community, active in several Civics, is supportive of NYPD, and most important is not an absentee landlord. Speaker, **Rhea O'Gorman**, Pres. of Station Road Civics, said this facility is not detrimental to small businesses, is not overcrowding the neighborhood, and their hours of operation are extremely reasonable. For all the reasons heard, it is the best type of operation to have in any community, bar none! Speaker, **Devin Rincon**, is a College Point resident for 27 years,

and also Supervisor at the Linden Hill Post Office. As a resident, he said the Tow Pound has not posed any threat or obstacle to the community or the Post Office. Actually the greatest obstacle is the condition of the road bed.

Jerry Filippidis thanked everyone and reiterated it has been two years already with no complaints and asked everyone's continued support for the Tow Pound.

George Filippidis summarized that it's the right decision for the community. The old Tow Pound was **almost 2 million square feet (showed photos) and in comparison we now have 175,000 square feet** (showed photos), a very small imprint. The Police Dept. has even agreed to put a fence and shrubbery without our asking for it. When we were originally planning to put our printing plant on this site, the traffic study approved us for 224 cars per hour. The Tow Pound is the right decision for the community.

Vice Chair Apelian said at the College Point Corporate Park meeting on May 20, 2015 they voted to disapprove the Tow Pound. He made it clear then and now it's not personal nor is it about the landlord. **It's all about Fair Share.** In 2009 we received a phone call from Deputy Mayor of Operations, Ed Skyler, asking if we would like to switch the old Tow Pound **once and for all** for a Police Academy on 20th Street. **The agreement clearly was the tow pound would not return.** Ultimately it evolved to 5000 people and all Police operations from the five boroughs, from Fort Bennett Field, Rodman's Neck, etc. We explained to them the land is not Manhattan or Bronx bedrock, but College Point marshland. The overburden on the infrastructure and the roads would be massive. As you can see the small portion of the road leading to their facility was redone by them. The remainder of road repairs will be our problem! They offered us nothing in the way of capital funds, expense funds, or road renewal. Nobody brought up the College Point Corporate Park redistricting performance standards entered into 5 years ago which state "All Operations Are To Be Enclosed." The Tow Pound operation is not. The cars are stored outdoors and not according to zoning. The tenancy will be given over to the Police Department, and after that the landlord will no longer be in control. For the record, there was a comment just recently about possibly swapping this location for the long sought after sub-station. Tonight they are saying it was never discussed. We've had discussions with EDC and 1 Police Plaza and agreed to the short term lease until they find a new location for the tow pound. We are a strong supporter of the 109th Precinct, and have a great relationship with the Commanding Officers and their men over the years. However, over a period of time, Police Operations, similar to some other applicants, developers, etc., patently ignore the decisions agreed upon, followed by the infamous line "you must have misunderstood us." With a 20 year lease, you will see more of that happening.

The motion on the floor is to disapprove the Tow Pound at this site, seconded by Millicent O'Meally.

Discussion followed:

Board member **Warren Schreiber** commented that past applicants looking for approval would give the worst possibilities to insure their application would be approved. In this particular case it was said the site could be used for a strip club or a big box store, etc. When applicants use this type of analogy, he likens it to a veiled threat, instead of informational. Future applicants should rethink this type of strategy. Board member **Barbara McHugh** found fault with the developer stating the nearest residential home is a mile or more away from the facility. She said there are homes as close as a block away. **Chair Kelty** commented on all the police and other agency related services the Community Board #7 has accepted from Police Operations in the past up to today; i.e., Queens Patrol North, Sanitation for

Boards #7 and #11 in College Point, the Marine Transfer Station, IDO site services, the Police Academy and now the Tow Pound. And what about the Kosciusko site. In each instance agreements and promises made were dissolved or changed by the Agency to suit themselves. We do not object to the police agencies moving into our area per se, but object to how they come in. It appears the Fair Share Criteria does not apply to them and agreements and promises can be made and broken. Listening to Jerry Filippidis' statement that the Police on their own agreed to plant shrubs in the area is reminiscent to what was originally promised and never done at the first Tow Pound. He urged the Board to vote against it. Board Member **Phil Konigsberg** said he was undecided but after Vice Chair Apelian's evaluation and the oratory by Chair Kelty, he will vote to disapprove. Resident and Board Member of College Point **Andrew Rocco** praised Jerry Filippidis as a good neighbor of the community, and pointed out the Tow Pound has already been operating for two years without effecting traffic at all, whereas 20th Avenue with its numerous retail operations have been causing just the opposite. He will vote to approve. Board Member **James Cervino** said he would approve the Pound if we were given at least one patrol car for College Point. Board Member **Peter Kwaith** wasn't even aware the Pound was there the past two years, and should not be penalized now.

Board Member **Vana Partridge** agrees and will vote yes for approval. A point of information by **Vice-Chair Apelian**, the area is zoned manufacturing. Retail is only one possible use in manufacturing. Board Member **Peter Sutich** said it's great that it doesn't have any impact on traffic, but do we want another government agency for every piece of land, and what's wrong with retail. They're not strip joints? Board member **Millicent O'Meally** commented College Point is not the only community available. Cars have to get to the Tow Pound using 32nd Avenue, and it's not done by drone. Board Member **Kim Ohanian** said it comes down to a matter of trust. She didn't say the Tow Pound was a bad idea, but that the NYPD enters into agreements with us and then use their authority to do something entirely different without our knowledge. That's being deceitful and disrespectful to us and urges them to rethink their relationship with us. Board Member **Matt Silverstein** commented we've been fighting for more police units and received nothing. Board Member **Terence Park** voiced no complaints and is fine with it. However, he suggested a letter on file limiting the use of tow trucks to 65 a day. Board Member **Arnold Wagner** clarified the vote has to be **NO** to approve the Tow Pound and **YES** to disapprove. After listening to all the facts, he will vote NO to allow the Tow Pound to lease the properties for 20 years. Board Member **Nicholas Corrado** passes the lot every day and never knew the pound was there. That coupled with fact that many said they are good neighbors clinched his vote as NO to approve.

The motion is to deny with a YES vote and to approve is with a NO vote

The vote was taken as follows: (29) No – to approve (14) Yes - to disapprove

ITEM #6 – NYC DEPT. OF HEALTH & MENTAL HYGIENE – Tuberculosis Awareness – Shailaja Rao from the Dept. of Health spoke about Tuberculosis as a serious disease spread from person to person through the air. The good news is with proper care and treatment, it can be prevented and cured. Last year we had 508 filed cases in NYC, of which 36% were in Queens with most cases in West Queens and Flushing. You have to be around someone for a long time to get it in your system, and if you test positive it may mean it is still latent in your body. If your immune system is compromised at any time with diabetes, HIV, etc. and you develop the infection, you can take medication to prevent it from becoming active. Symptoms include coughing, night sweats, fever. If anyone is found to have it, their family, friends,

workers, etc. will also be tested. The Health Dept. offers free TB testing at four locations, with the one in Corona Queens. The top population in Queens that tested for TB are foreign born from Ecuador, China, South Asia, Mexico and Nepal. We have posters and/or postcards available to everyone.

Q. Do you have these available in languages other than in English?

A. Yes, in 21 different languages. What language do you want?

Q. Chinese?

A. Yes, it's English on one side and Chinese on the other.

Q. Do they still do vaccinations in the US?

A. Not here in New York, but small children in other countries are still vaccinated, but you still can get TB later in life.

Q. Are people from other countries allowed to come to this country if they are infected?

A. Yes, but if they have the disease, we do ask them to take medication for 3 months before coming here.

Q. Years ago when people came to this country, they had to go to Ellis Island and be tested. Now they come by plane? Are there testing stations for new immigrants?

A. No, but again, if you have the disease and are symptomatic, a doctor's note stating medication was administered for 3 months prior to arrival is needed to enter.

ITEM #7 - NYC Emergency Management – Hurricane Preparedness Program – Tabled for no show!

ITEM 8A – RKO KEITH'S – Calendar #156-03-BZ – Vice Chair Apelian – The BSA asked that we vote on the special permit requiring the height waiver and approval from FAA and Port Authority. We already voted on it. However, they need a letter from the Community Board giving our approval to allow the special permit under #73-66 Zoning resolution.

A motion made by Arlene Fleishman is to approve, by letter to the BSA, the special permit requiring the height waiver and approval from the FAA And Port Authority, seconded by Selma Moses.

The vote taken was unanimous (41) Approve (0) Deny (2) Left before vote

ITEM #9 – EDUCATION – Arlene Fleishman's Education Committee meeting of May 26, 2015 included members of our Executive Board, at the request of First Vice Chair Apelian, as well as Dr. Richard Forman, Principal of Clara Barton High School. The focus was on three important issues, i.e., Common Core Standards, Mayoral control and the proposal of a new High School to be located at 30-48 Linden Place. **Common Core Standards** was decided by individuals outside the field of education, but directly associated with the federal government's initiative to award States funding who committed to it, even before it was written. The writers insist it would prepare students for community college level work. In essence it has left students so far behind, they will be unprepared for selective colleges. Problems in elementary and middle schools have compounded the problem into high schools. Some states are rejecting the funding, allowing them to withdraw from Common Core while many parents across the country have refused to allow their children to take the tests. New York State received \$700 million with a commitment to adopt it. Further meetings will be held on the issue with a positional statement to be considered. **Mayoral Control** of New York City public schools is not supported by all, but no alternative plan has been offered. The Mayor wants control made permanent. Presently the Assembly bill calls for a 3 year extension, while upstate Republicans want a 1 year extension. If no action is

reached by the end of June, there will be no new law in place and the Dept. of Education would revert back to 32 school district, which is unlikely. **High School 895** - The Dept. of Education is being challenged by the Mitchell-Linden Community from opening a High School at 30-48 Linden Place. The site is in a highly congested area surrounded by Pathmark Shopping Center, the Whitestone Bowling Lanes, two new hotels, two Nursery Schools, two senior centers and two Public Schools.....all on 31st Road within a half block to three and a half blocks of the site. Linden Place is a heavily traveled main artery to the Whitestone Expressway, the Van Wyck Expressway and the Grand Central Parkway. Mitchell-Linden is asking for Community Board #7's support and will present a statement after discussion with legislators and our Land Use Committee.

Vice Chair Apelian said the simple fact is that children, his grandchildren included, are not being taught the 3 R's, penmanship, grammar or spelling. We have to hire tutors because the educators are not being allowed to teach. Our job is to make a resolution and awareness of what's causing the problem. We must sit down with our elected officials and have a dialog with them, and make them realize what is happening. When parents hear "Common Core" it's like listening to a foreign language, but if you tell them their **children are not being taught**, it resonates. Board Member **Kim Cody** said he too had to hire tutors for his grandchildren. **Committee Chair Fleishman** said, unfortunately, parents have been pushed out of the picture by Mayoral control. Politics should have no voice in education. This is more important than any land use activity on our agenda. This is about the future of our children who will be the future of our communities as well.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Speaker **Peter Sutich** said he is against the proposed High School on 32nd Avenue where the Jewish Temple is and brought up the same point as H.S. 859. It's not about "not in my backyard" because they're already in our backyard with a fair share of students and traffic.

Speaker **Mikki Roman-Acosta** is against the RKO being changed into a condo and said we need more parks, halls of music or a gem like the original RKO Theatre. Our past is as valuable as our future. Please do not destroy the history and character of our community.

Vice Chair Apelian said the Board will give her the date of the BSA Public Hearing on the RKO Keiths. This being the last meeting until September, he thanked everyone for their participation in all the committee meetings and wished everyone a healthy, happy summer.

The meeting closed at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully,

Mary Zuliani

