



# Community Board 7

Borough of Queens

Bay Terrace, College Point, Beechhurst, Flushing  
Malba, Queensborough Hill, Whitestone and Willets Point

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Melinda Katz

Queens Borough President

Eugene T. Kelty Jr.

Chairperson

Marilyn McAndrews

District Manager

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2017

UNION PLAZA CARE CENTER

33-23 UNION STREET

FLUSHING, NEW YORK

## PRESENT

Arthur Barragan

Tyler Cassell

James Cervino

Michael Cheng

Chin-Hsiang Chiang

John Choe

Arlene Fleishman

Richard Forman

Fred Fu

Vincent Gianelli

Pablo Hernandez

Jeff Huang

Lawrence Hughes

Eugene Kelty

Phil Konigsberg

Peter Kwiath

Esther Lee

Li Mei, Li

Frank Macchio

Rev. R. McEachern

Barbara McHugh

Selma Moses

Kim Ohanian

Millicent O'Meally

Terence Park

Kris Ram

Belal Salim

Kevin Shields

Marc Schiffman

Warren Schreiber

Matthew Silverstein

Joshua Sussman

Peter Sutich

Joseph Sweeney

Carlos Talisaysay

Alison Tan

John Tsavalos

Peter Tu

Arnold Wagner

Harpreet Wahan

Clarissa Wong

Linna Yu

Lei Zhao

Jie Zhu

## ABSENT

Charles Apelian

Nicholas Corrado

John Byas

Vana Partridge

Kim Cody

## COMMUNITY BOARD #7 STAFF

Marilyn McAndrews, District Manager

Mary Zuliani, Community Assistant

Mary O'Neill, Community Assistant

Sherine Perez, Community Service Aid

## GUESTS

Jason Antonopoulos - Assemblyman Braunstein's office

Timothy Hopper - Congressman Meng's office

Justin J. Connor - Congressman Tom Suozzi

Isabel Pulgarin - Assemblywoman Nily Rozic

Joyce Choi - Councilman Peter Koo's office

Vito Tautonic - Councilman Paul Vallone

Chair Eugene Kelty opened the meeting at 7:10 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a silent prayer in honor of our armed forces around the world keeping us from harm. Because of the recent hurricanes in Florida, Texas, Puerto Rico and the earthquake in Mexico, there is a dire need for everyday items to survive including diapers, baby food, batteries, feminine hygiene products, etc. The following is a list of some locations accepting contributions;

**The City of New York** – Their web site is [nyc.gov/helpnownycdonationsite](http://nyc.gov/helpnownycdonationsite). Follow by giving your area code and you will be given the closest site available. Hours are 7 am to 9 pm. You can also call **311** or **212/639-9675** for information.

**Hurricane Maria Relief Fund** – Same items needed! Donations will be accepted at the following Queens Fire Department locations: **Engine 316** at 27-12 Calumny Street, East Elmhurst - **Engine 289 & Ladder 138** at 97-28 43 Avenue, Corona – **Engine 307 & Ladder 154** at Northern Blvd. & 81<sup>st</sup> Street.

**Attendance roll call was taken with ( 43 ) present ( 1 ) absent and ( 4 ) excused**

Chair Kelty continued with monthly announcement happenings in our community. With regard to Community Board #7, our past District Manager, Marilyn Bitterman recently had a hip replacement and was sent our best wishes for a speedy recovery; Board member Vana Partridge is stepping down and will be missed; Our 2nd Vice Chair Warren Schreiber has been named President of the LGA Aviation RoundTable, Susie Tanenbaum will no longer serve as liaison to Queens Borough President Katz, and sadly Sarah Margaret Washington Whiting, a long time past member passed away.

**ITEM #5 - Dept. of Sanitation - Jason Chen & Leanne Spaulding** gave a presentation on the` successful launch of their pilot on organic collection composting. Their goal is to reduce waste by producing compost and clean energy, supply better soil quality for parks and gardens and, in turn, reducing the rodent population . Brown bins will be delivered to homes or buildings with less than 10 apartments with an official notice on the preparation and handling of compost, followed by agents who will answer any questions that may arise. Buildings with more than 10 apartments must submit an inquiry to [nyc.gov/request-organics](http://nyc.gov/request-organics) to allow DSNY to speak to the building management. If the management agrees, bins will be delivered. These brown bins should only contain actual food scraps and yard waste. Sanitation asks that we give it a try.

Q. Will regular collection be cut back with this new program?

A. No, not at the onset. Sufficient participation in the program is necessary for that to occur.

Q. Will my organics get picked up on holidays?

A. Organic collection will be picked up on the next available business day. *This does not apply to recyclables.* The use of *clear* plastic bags as liners are recommended or the use of compostable bags. Organic collection should be quicker to fill up than actual garbage.

Q. Are there items that can't be composted and pose a risk to the environment?

A. Industrial scale composting and backyard composting are not the same. Industrial composters cook the compost and kill the bacterial agents.

Q. Do you have multilingual literature for buildings that want to implement organic collection?

A. Yes, Chinese, Korean, Spanish and 17 other languages.

Q. How is the program being paid for?

A. With City-funded taxpayer dollars.

- Q. Has 311 been informed of the program:  
A. Yes, it will begin the first Friday of October.
- Q. How many bins would a large building get?  
A. It would be based on the number of building residents and would have to be determined by the Building Management. The largest the City has are 21 gallon bins.
- Q. Is yard waste permissible?  
A. Yes.
- Q. Will property managers of larger buildings receive information about this program?  
A. Yes, mailers were sent out. Also other outreach efforts are underway.
- Q. Does the literature say it's a voluntary program?  
A. Yes.
- Q. Is commercial organic pick-up voluntary?  
A. No, there is a law currently on the books, but at this time only implemented for large arenas like Baseball stadiums.
- Q. Will it save tax dollars in the future?  
A. Yes, by reducing overall landfill waste, it will lower expenditures on exporting to other sites.
- Q. Where is the compost being sent to?  
A. Givebacks will be sent to schools, parks, residents, etc.
- Q. Are non-profits eligible for this program?  
A. Yes!
- Q. Have you spoken to private waste collectors?  
A. Not as yet, but we will do so.
- Q. Where can I find out how to get compost?  
A. Go on the DSNY website, [www.nyc.gov/organics](http://www.nyc.gov/organics) and they will inform you.
- Q. Have you contacted sustainability coordinators at schools?  
A. Yes, half of all schools are enrolled.
- Q. Will the program eventually become compulsory?  
A. We will keep expanding throughout the city till end of next year. It will require City Council action to be mandatory.
- Q. When they pick up the organics, will they take the plastic bags out with the collection?  
A. Yes, but it will be sorted out by the composting company.

**ITEM #6 – 124-14 20<sup>TH</sup> Avenue, College Point – BSA #2017-204-BZ** - Eugene Kelty reported in the absence of Committee Chair Apelian. Owner's application seeks a variance to allow inclusion of additions on either side of pre-existing automotive garage on a corner lot, currently not in compliance and not conforming to R4A zoning. The property was originally a corvette restoration facility. The current owner lost his lease at a location several blocks away and purchased this property to store vehicles. The Dept. Of Buildings, in error, gave him permits to repair the sheds adjoining the property and the building itself. He hired an engineer and expeditors to sign off on the electrical and plumbing, but when an audit was done it was determined the DOB was in error to give its permission because it was not in compliance nor conforming in the R4A zone. Based on an R4A zone corner, lots must be not less than 30' x 100' with 10' front yards, one 8' side yard and one side yard of 20' and an FAR of 0.75. However, 44% of the buildings in the area have FAR's of over that. This particular site has an FAR of 0.86. Also, it was determined that 22% of the buildings in the area are non-compliant with 61% of the lots without legal front yards, 27% do not have legal side yards, and only 1% with legal backyards. Since the hardship was not self-created and will not financially sustain any kind of residential development,



the need for a variance is minimal. Also, restoring vehicles will not be done on premises, only the assembly of re-furbished parts. The committee voted to approve unanimously.

Questions followed:

Q. How many vehicles can be on site at any one time?

A. Six or seven cars at the most, with nothing on the street.

Q. Are there any concerns with loading on the sidewalks?

A. Owner uses the sidewalk sparingly, only to off load parts. The sidewalks are very wide in the area, Nothing is ever left outside and there have never been any complaints or summonses for blocking the sidewalk.

Q. Are the sheds listed on the existing CO's?

A. Yes, they were included!

**With no further discussion. The motion on the floor is to approve the variance to allow inclusion of additions on both sides of the pre-existing automotive garage on a corner lot, currently not in compliance and not conforming to R4A zone, seconded by Marc Shiffman.**

**Vote taken was: ( 42 ) In Favor ( 0 ) Against ( 0 ) Abstained ( 1 ) Left the room**

## REGULAR MEETING

**ITEM #7 - Input on Preliminary Budget – Committee Chair Kim Ohanian** - Board members were asked for their input and submissions on the current budget list requests for the year 2018-19, which will be forwarded to the Budget office for consideration during the budgeting process.

Q. When will the service road leading to the Whitestone Bridge be completed?

A. It is a long project and is still a work in progress.

Q. What about the lighting for the Meditation Garden in Kissena Corridor Park?

A. The path is already funded. We will ask our local political representatives to fund this also.

Q. What about the Willets Point Blvd repairs from Parsons Blvd. to 150<sup>th</sup> Street

A. It's a resurfacing issue, not a capital budget issue.

Q. Can we get trash bins between College Point Blvd. and Prince Street on Roosevelt Avenue?

A. It's considered a DSNY enforcement issue, not a capital budget issue.

**ITEM #8 - Edgestone Development in Whitestone** - A closing note from **Committee Chair Joseph Sweeney regarding** the Edgestone (**Water pointe**) development which was approved to allow **52 single Family homes**. The previous owner wanted to build 102 two-family homes but was approved for only 52 single family homes with the added stipulation they would first have to clean up the Brownsfield Contamination with an agreement to do so. However, in removing the contaminated soil, they replaced it with worse, highly contaminated soil, and now were in violation of the clean-up agreement.

They were told it would take \$500,000 to clean up. However, the clean-up now will cost \$3 to \$4 million. Last Wednesday a fact sheet from the NYSDEC was received as follows:

- a) Since the developer was in violation of the original agreement to clean up the Brownsfield, the parcel was being changed from Tract 2 to Tract 4. The latter would only allow multi-family homes.
- b) Committee Chair Sweeney spoke to many individuals in NYS Administrations.
- c) NYSDEC called Chair Sweeney back and stated they would issue a correction and only allow 52 single-family homes.
- d) Normally, more density and homes adjoining would allow for a more efficient single venting system.

If Committee Chair Sweeney hadn't called the State representatives and recommended a law requiring notification about zoning changes to local community boards (which was actually drafted and passed), we would never have found out about this!

Chair Gene Kelty reminds all board members about the importance of committee level participation.

**Public Comments regarding the budget.**

Property and business owner in Willets Point, **Mr. Sam Sambucci**, asks that we continue to push to advance the resurfacing of the extremely dangerous road conditions on Willets Point Blvd.

**Mr. Steven Lin**, also a Willets Point business owner, reiterated the same request. **Mr. Dian Song Yu** brought up the accelerated growth of Downtown Flushing with all the new developments. The downside to this growth is that 2300 affordable parking spots have been eliminated with only Muni Parking Lot #2 remaining. He ask that we consider preserving and expanding affordable parking.

**Assemblyman Ron Kim** commented on the recent charter bus accident on Main Street and Northern Blvd. The law on the books requires a rigorous certification process via the DMV, but there is a loophole that allows companies to self-certify. He is trying to update and reform the law and remove the loophole. Also he is proposing a new law to allow local stakeholders to ban entry of charter buses from certain congested areas. However, since charter buses are under federal regulation, there's a conflict of jurisdiction. He will continue to push for the safety of our community. **The North Flushing** residents made it known they feel isolated geographically and socially. Suggestions should be looked into.

The meeting ended at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
Mary Zuliani