



Community Board 7

Borough of Queens

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

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Eugene T. Kelty Jr.

Chairperson

Marilyn McAndrews

District Manager

Sharon Lee
Acting Queens Borough President

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2020
AUDIO AND VIDEO TELECONFERENCE

PRESENT

Charles Apelian
James Cervino
Kaily Cheng
Michael Cheng
Chin-Hsiang Chiang
John Choe
Kim Cody
Nicholas Corrado
Arlene Fleishman
Richard Forman
Fred Fu
Doreen Gatanas
Vincent Gianelli
Lawrence Hughes
Eugene Kelty

Phil Konigsberg
Wensong Li
Wendy Louie
Frank Macchio
Betsy Mak
Rev. R. McEachern
Barbara McHugh
Michelle Miao
Selma Moses
Sergio Nicolich
Kim Ohanian
Millicent O'Meally
John Park
Yacov Pshtitsky
Kris Ram

Paul Rifino
Belal Salim
Warren Schreiber
Kevin Shields
Matthew Silverstein
Joshua Sussman
Joseph Sweeney
John Tsavalos
Harpreet Singh Wahan
Clarissa Wong
Maggie Wong
Dian Yu
Linna Yu
Lei Zhao
Jie Zhu

ABSENT

Pablo Hernandez
Jeff Huang

Esther Lee
Terence Park

*Peter Tu

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 STAFF

Marilyn McAndrews, District Manager
Mary O'Neill, Community Associate

GUESTS

Sandra Ung-Congresswoman Grace Meng's office
Mabel Tso-Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Office
John Liu-State Senator
Soojin- State Senator John Liu's office
David Fischer-Assemblyman Edward Braunstein's office

Vito Tautonico-Councilman Paul Vallone's Office
Joonyong Ahn-Councilman Peter Koo's Office
Elizabeth Bian-Queens Borough President's office
Vanessa Ordonez-Queens Borough President's office

*Excused

Chair Gene Kelty opened the meeting at 7:12 pm via audio and video teleconference. He thanked all board members present and expressed concern for everyone's health during COVID-19. Over 57 participants were in attendance. The public can only speak during public participation at the end of the meeting and will be limited to **3 minutes** speaking time. This evening Chair Kelty will do the announcements first before the roll call. Because of our heavy agenda this evening he asked board member Harpreet Singh Wahan to call the office tomorrow about the stop signs, but we are happy over the beautiful Meditation Garden results Harpreet spearheaded.

The Chair received a thank you card from our past District Manager, **Marilyn Bitterman**, over the sad news of the peaceful passing of her husband, **Jack Bitterman**, at 82 yrs., who we've known over the past 35 years. He was a true partner, a really great person, a good man, and friend, who will be sorely missed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The DOT and FIRE Department announced they now will allow outdoor restaurant dining with electric heaters, natural gas radiant heating and propane heating with proper permits in total compliance of regulations. Hopefully we will have a mild winter to take advantage of this ruling.
- The FIRE Department has notified us it's time to change your clocks back one hour on the evening of October 31st to daylight savings time, and to also check the batteries on your home smoke detectors.
- Due to COVID-19, HRA ruling, under the new emergency City Charter ruling #1043B2 increasing the burial allowance fee to \$1700 (was \$900), is now extended from December 31, 2020 to June 30, 2021. Will have further discussions on this again on June 20th of next year. Let us know if you want to be part of that video link.
- Councilman Koo has arranged for free Flu shots at the Queens Botanical Gardens, 43-50 Main Street for those 18 yrs. or older on October 28, 2020 from 3 to 6 pm with a photo Id and proof of age and confirmation letter. Pre-register by calling NY Presbyterian at 718-888-8747 in conjunction with Queens Botanical. Senior citizens should ask for the upgraded special shot because of their age.
- Borough President Office's Winter Coat Donations will be accepted at Borough Hall or Community Board Numbers. 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, & 12 from now until November 13th between 9 am and 5 pm.
 - Donations will be appreciated. Our past District Mgr. just donated all of her husband's new winter coats which the Chair delivered personally.
 - Common point Queens has teamed up with New York Health & Hospitals to help promote COVID-19 awareness by partnering with organizations to coordinate information 15 minute workshops/webinars and discuss setting up table events. Interested parties can contact Fadia Mohama via e-mail at FMohama@commonpointqueens.org.
 - Seminars on consumer products, Lead poisoning preventions for children and pregnant mothers, window guards, drinking water, etc. from Oct. 26 to Oct. 30 to be held by the DOH. Call the Board office for more details.
 - Early Voting sites in our area start on **Oct. 24th to Oct. 31st** from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm at the following locations, or at the Board of Elections on Metropolitan Avenue on **November 3rd**.
 - Korean Community Services at 203-05 32nd Avenue.
 - Helen Marshall Cultural Ctr. at Queens Borough Hall, 120-55 Queens Blvd.
 - Queens College, 65-30 Kissena Blvd.
 - Boy's Club of NY (Abbe Clubhouse), 133-01 41st Road.

- Discussions on the Flushing Bay Promenade Visionary Improvements to be held on 10/29/20 and 11/18/20 at 7 pm at the Promenade at Flushing Meadows Corona Park. You must register to attend. Flyers will be sent out to the Civic groups.
- If you plan to do any excavations around your home, make sure you notify Con Ed or National Grid by calling 311 ten days before you start. They will come and mark your gas pipelines and utility lines for your safety.

Roll call was taken with the following: (45) Present (4) Absent (1)* Excused

Speaker John Lui scheduled to speak tonight happened to attend our last meeting and briefly gave us a run-down of events then. Tonight he added the early election voting will surpass last year's turnout all over the country, which is gratifying and is pleased by it. Possibly in need of some changes in the voting system in the future. Knowing you have no questions for him tonight, he will be happy to return any month, when you have a lighter agenda of course. Great to see you all. In answer to who's your favorite Board, he stood up wearing Board Seven's blue shirt for all to see.

Sandra Ung from **Congresswoman Grace Meng's** office is present with nothing new to relate but willing to listen. If anyone has questions, she'll be happy to answer them.

Mabel Tao from **Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's** office is present. Because of this evening's time constraints we are always available at 718-672-5900 or Miss Ocasio-Cortez at 929-388-6141, if you have any important questions.

A motion was made to approve the minutes for **June 15, 2020** by Phil Konigsberg and seconded by Sergio Nicolich with (36) present (3) absent, (2) excused (2) missed/lateness

The second motion to approve the minutes for **September 14, 2020** was approved by Warren Schreiber and seconded by Millicent O'Meally with the (36) present.

P U B L I C H E A R I N G

A.K.A. Msgr. John C. Tosi – Renaming Clintonville St. & Locke Ave. Committee Chair Nick Corrado – To Marilyn Bitterman, our prayers are with you on the loss of your husband. We refer to the street renaming request by **Enrico Ergo, Grand Knight of Msgr. Francis Dillon Council Knights of Council, Whitestone** which was approved by **Councilman Paul Vallone**. The virtual committee meeting was held on 8/25/20 with Enrico Ergo and Joseph Governale of the Knights of Columbus of Whitestone, both who strongly felt it would be more than appropriate to honor a man of the cloth who had an enormous impact on the people of all the communities he served during his entire life with consuming love and commitment. The motion was approved by all except one member of the committee.

Committee Chair Nick Corrado gave his report of the 8/25/20 meeting and although most members did not know **Monsignor Tosi**, all felt it was appropriate to honor a man of the cloth who shared his message of love and faith with all. He made himself available to all in need of help.

The motion now on the floor is to approve the renaming of Clintonville Street & Locke Avenue to Msgr. John C. Tosi, seconded by Kevin Shields.

DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS

Father John Costello, pastor of St. Luke’s Church of Whitestone, successor to Monsignor Tosi. Under his leadership, he was larger than life, a man to be reckoned with and a tireless fighter for the community. The St. Luke’s rectory is being named after him, and Father Costello is also behind the renaming of this street in his honor.

Board Member Kevin Shields spoke about his family’s longtime friendship with the Monsignor. If a family member wasn’t in church, he would call to see if everyone was okay. He wished his successor the very best knowing he would be following in Msgr. Tosi’s shoes.

The vote taken tonight was (36) For (7) Against (3) Absent (2) Late

17-45/55 Frances Lewis Blvd. – BSA 132-58-BZ – Committee Chair Warren Schreiber - Application filed With BSA to amend the extension of ten year term which expired on 6/18/20 and to obtain a new COA pursuant to NYC Zoning Resolution Section 11-41. The variance was granted previously under the 1961 Zoning Resolution permitting the operation of a gasoline station with a separate auto repair shop on the Premises. The property is located in a C1-2/R3-2 zoning district.

The virtual committee was held on 9/17/20. Questions posed by our committee were 1) Were there any complaints received by the 109 Precinct about this station. 2) The permission for a backup generator to be used in case of a power outage. At this meeting the applicant stated no additional illuminated signage would be installed and that there are no open spill violations. The motion was made to approve 8 to 0.

At the Public Hearing the applicant’s attorney gave a history starting from the original application for a gas station with minor auto repairs in 1959 extending the term every ten years until 2001, adding along the way a convenience store, and changes to the canopy and dispensers. In 2020 they seek to revise signage to the convenience store and auto repair, legalize a vacuum along 17th Rd. near the underground gasoline tanks, legalize four sheds and a generator behind the repair shop, legalize “Nor Cross Service Station,” relocate signs mounted between service bays, remove “Gulf” pole sign on 18th Avenue, and remove “Gulf Express” sign on side of convenience store and install a car lift off 18th Avenue **outside** of the auto repair shop. They still do not plan to have additional lumination.

Committee Chair Warren Schreiber stated the original application approved at our 9/17/20 committee meeting did not include the installation of an outdoor lift. We would also like repairs to the asphalt cracks around the drains. We can send you photos tomorrow.

Q. Phil Konigsberg: How many vacuums do you have and the hours of operation?

A. Two, one along 17th Rd. and the other on 18th Avenue. Hours of operation will be seven days a week from 7 am to 6 pm Monday thru Saturday and 8 am to 5 pm on Sunday.

Q. Millicent O’Meally: What is to be stored in the four legal sheds?

A. Don’t know for sure, but probably supplies for the repair shop.

Q. Millicent O’Meally: What if its flammable material or liquids?

A. I don’t think so, but will find out for you.

Comment from Gene Kelty: The station is open 24 hours a day seven days a week, Millicent, and if the sheds have flammable material and are next to the generator, they will definitely require Fire Dept. Permits.

Q. James Cervino: Will the vacuums be coin operated, and can they actually be turned off after 6 pm or not? Also what about the noise from the generator, since it faces the homes in the neighboring area; will it cycle daily, monthly, etc. and at any time during the day or night?

Comment from Gene Kelty: Usually generators are tested once a month or so. We need answers to these questions soon, please.

- Q. Barbara McHugh: Will the signs between the garage doors that are to be relocated be on poles?
 - A. Yes, they will be relocated and will be on poles. *(He pointed to several locations on his diagram).*
 - Q. Richard Forman: Any traffic pattern changes on the side streets of 17th Rd. and 18th Ave.?
 - A. None.
 - Q. Kris Ram: Are there any open violations?
 - A. Yes they had one in 2002 lack of a Certificate of Operation, but they finally are taking care of it.
 - Q. Kris Ram: Are there any safety standards for a car lift indoors or outdoors, especially to fit large trucks?
 - A. We are just now applying for it with BSA. It will have to receive final approval from the Dept. of Buildings.
 - Q. Chair Kelty. Is the outdoor car lift going to be in an enclosure? If completely outdoors, the noise created working on very large trucks in the neighborhood will not bode well. I'm not for this idea.
 - A. It's to be outdoors for the large trucks which cannot fit in the garage.
 - Q. First-Vice Chair Apelian agrees the car lift would be problematic, especially in winter. Also, he questions the statements regarding "legalizing additional things." Is it because the additions are technically illegal and not permitted or what?
 - A. The original application referred to signage as legal signage, and they would like the record to reflect the same wordage going forward.
 - Q. Kim Cody: If we approve their application, can they at least forego payment for the air pump and give air for free?
 - A. We can ask the owners.
 - Q. Michelle Miao: Has lived in area for years and uses this gas station and finds them very friendly. Shouldn't they have a special study done on this outside lift?
 - A. All the changes we knew didn't require an environmental impact study. The outdoor lift just came Up today.
- Comment from Sergio Nicolich: The idea of an outdoor lift for very large trucks across from the Clearview Gardens Co-op apartments on 18th Avenue handling noisy electric pneumatic tools, hydraulics, compressor etc., will definitely affect these neighboring co-ops.
- Q. Barbara McHugh: Won't the outside lifts be impacted by fluid oil pan overflows which can become a dangerous contaminant.
 - A. Chair Kelty: Any liquid that gets out into the street will have to be addressed environmentally.
 - Q. Paul Rifino: The original zoning is R3-2/C1-2 which states no business can be transacted outside the enclosed building on site. Doesn't that negate the lift?
 - A. Chair Kelty: They've been in business in our community for many years. Let's see where the Board takes this to.
 - Q. James Cervino: In answer to Barbara's question, cleaning under the car lifts must be done by hosing with water to dislodge any contaminants after every use and at the end of the day these chemicals will go into the dry well. So testing the dry wells every so often is a must. Are they applying for a storm water pollution prevention plan? We need to know how and where the oil, grease and chemicals will be contained?
 - A. No permits have been requested yet. We'll get more details and answers from the owner.

Q. First Vice Chair Apelian: You're talking about dry wells. Where are the dry wells? Isn't it going into the sewers?

A. We'll check with the owner if and where the dry walls are.

Q. Josh Sussman: Do they own other gas stations? Are any with outside lifts?

A. Yes, there is one at 157-30 Willets Point Blvd and another one, address unknown, but none with outside lifts.

Committee Chair Warren Schreiber said the application as originally submitted and approved at our committee meeting on 9/17/20 was amended earlier today to include the installation and operation of an outdoor vehicle lift. **We were not advised of the change until this evening.** The lift would be used to accommodate large vehicles and trucks.

A friendly motion by First-Vice Chair Apelian was entered to disapprove the outside lift from tonight's application.

DISCUSSIONS FOLLOWED with the following recommendations

- Tire air pumps with signs showing hours of operation.
- Coin operated vacuums to be turned off every evening at 6 pm with daily hours of operation posted.
- Damaged asphalt surfaces on gas station property to be repaired.

The motion now on the floor is to approve the application without the outside car lift, but with the recommendations listed above, seconded by Josh Sussman.

The vote taken was (43) For (0) Against (2) Abstain/Conflict

CAPITAL AND EXPENSE BUDGETS FOR 2022

Chair Kelty explained discussions on the budget start in July of each year with our Budget Committee to determine the Capital Needs our community agencies need as well as their Expenses. However, you will note this year's lists may still have unfulfilled ongoing requests from past years or show partially completed projects in our area. Sometimes a City official may use funds allotted to us for a project they want done in our area. Other times a City official from our area may use their own unused funds and donate it to one of the agencies in our area, which is always appreciated.

In the 2022 Capital budget, we have (28) Capitol projects and another (6) under Continued Support. In the Expense budget, we have (25) projects proposed. The City's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) office approves or disapproves the amount to be given each year through the City Register notification sent to us. If OMB cannot fund a request, funding streams may be available from other sources, i.e., local elected officials, the Borough President, the Mayor, or we may have to wait another year. This year COVID-19 may have made funding a little more difficult, and we may have to make ends meet.

QUESTIONS ON CAPITOL EXPENSE

1. At our last budget consultation meeting, budget member, James Cervino, asked about the installation of the stored cobblestones in McNeil Park? A. Jim, I was told by Parks that as soon as the paving pathway is ready, the cobblestones will be installed.
2. ITEM 27 - Correction “Northern Boulevard” should be changed to “Northbound.”
3. ITEM 22 - Correction “Senior Centers” should be changed to “Seniors & Day Care Centers.”
Gene also included the Cultural institutions like Flushing Council of the Art and Bayside Historical Society and the new bathrooms for the 109 Pct. Also, to Matt Silverstein, we did not get ITEM 24 from SNAP because they are a Federal agency. We tried reaching you for the City agency that must be contacted.
4. ITEM 25 – Phil Konigsberg asked about the MTA #7 subway station at Roosevelt Ave. & Main Street. A. We’ve asked for years to extend the mezzanine exit/entrance to Prince Street. Still no plans in place yet.

EXPENSE BUDGET

1. ITEM 7 - It’s important to keep up our budget for our senior centers and continue with their funding.
2. ITEM 21 – Q. John Choe asked if we can get funding for hiring people that can speak immigrant Asian languages? A. Not a problem John, we can look into it, but being the largest board in Queens we still represent a very diversified population. What we do for one, we must then do for all.
3. Q. John Choe asked if we will receive another \$40,000 this year, like last year?
4. Q. John Choe then asked for an accounting of last fiscal year’s \$40,000 by City Council. A. Yes, we can do that. That’s not a problem.

CONTINUED SUPPORT

(Arlene Fleishman corrected Gene on ITEM 7. It’s the North Flushing Senior Center... not the Mitchell Linden Center... that was to be re-established and refinanced, not that there’s money available).

Chair Kelty explained to new board members when any project is 95% completed, it is moved into Continued Support and then it gives us the opportunity to add a new project in the Budget itself.

1. Meditation Garden - This project is complete and only needs the pathway lights installed. Nice job.
2. Most of reconstruction in Little Bay Park is complete except for the fitness track which was never funded since we never knew who asked for it. However, we are keeping the project open for the future.
3. Warren Schreiber added there is a track for running and a bike path in Ft. Totten which is always open.
4. First Chair Apelian needed address clarification of ITEM 4 (140-15 126th Street).
5. Frank Macchio asked what happening with the office move? A. The money is in place for the move. What remains is the paperwork between DCAS, the contractor and the owner. Hopefully January 2021 will see us moving.
6. ITEM #2 -Michelle Miao asked if the Capitol Budget for 56th Avenue’s pathway lighting at the Meditation Garden already has the funds or waiting for funds. A. It depends on how much funding was approved, and how more is needed to complete it, but it is moving forward. Unfortunately the Corona-19 virus has interfered with everyone’s budget.

The motion on the floor is to approve the Capitol Budget, the Expense Budget and the Continued Support for Year 2022 and seconded by John Parks.

The vote taken was (40) For (1) Disapprove (3) Abstain Conflict (1) left before vote

P U B L I C P A R T I C I P A T I O N

Speaker Paul Benedetto, a 14 year member of CB 11 and President of Bayside Historical Society, spoke on behalf of the Society formed in 1964. Tens of Thousands of students came to the Society over the years to participate in school programs, etc., as well as thousands of men and women participated in diversified cultural programs. Mr. Benedetto stated he has been the President for the past eight years and your board member, Phil Konigsberg is also a long time member of the Society

We have four important projects including the Historical Society building which is in need of repairs as well as the Officer's Club, known also as The Castle Library. The landmarked Chapel and the barracks are in bad shape. Also the building to the right of us is the Willets family Farmhouse built by the Willets family and the Thorne family. The building built in 1830's, has had two renovations over time, but is in need again and important to be put to use with the right tenants. We know the Fire Dept. has first dibs on it otherwise it will become parkland, and they are considering letting the Dept. of Corrections use it for training. In any case, we need all the buildings restored. Most of our budget is raised from the rentals, the classes held, the special events, the period costumes shows and the membership fees.

Chair Kelty was very happy to have Mr. Benedetto this evening since they are a part of what we are all doing in this community and we should work together where ever possible. He asked Mr. Benedetto to call our office tomorrow, since we've never had any feedback with him before, and would like very much to hear from them more often. Chair Kelty added that we spoke to the Fire Department about the Dept. of Corrections request at Fort Totten. Joe Sweeney, our Public Safety Chair, will be having a meeting with the Fire Dept. about the installation of a windmill pilot program to generate electricity in the area. We would prefer the Fire Dept. and EMS Dept. retain the use of the building for the safety of our neighborhood, our kids and our senior citizens. We'll keep you in the loop.

Speaker Lisa Saneta from the WHIP Program for pregnant women and their children and would like to connect with CB #7. We are part of the N.Y. State Health Dept. and provide services to over thirty thousand applicants at nine City locations by appointment only. They are a one stop for food stamps And health insurance and provide programs on obesity, diet, smoking, nutrition, alcohol use, immigration, immunization, provide referrals, etc. We would appreciate your support.

The Chair asks that you call us tomorrow and speak to Mac because we have a large data base with all the City agencies, community organizations and businesses in our district, and will need all the information you can give us to distribute. You should also attend our District Service cabinet meetings monthly.

Speaker Steven Williams from **Accessible Dispatch Program.** They connect the community to wheelchair accessible taxis throughout the five boros of the City. You pay the same fee as a regular taxi, but the driver is trained in wheelchair service for both the disabled and seniors. He will give us their phone number.

Chair Kelty asked Mr. Williams to please call our office tomorrow morning also so we can get more Information with your phone number, e-mail address and any flyers we can distribute. We are not happy with Access-a-ride. It was a great concept but doesn't live up to the needs of our community.

Board Member Richard Forman said the Chancellor informed them that starting next week from November 2nd to 15th children will receive remote instructions for in-house learning, which is scheduled to start on November 30th. Chair Kelty asks that you send him a copy he can forward to everyone.

Board Member Kris Ram advised the 109th Precinct now has a new commander, Capt. John O'Connell. Chair Kelty wishes him Good Luck in his new position and is very happy for him.

Board Member Nick Corrado, asks that Rich Forman's information be sent to all board members for our children. Also he wants to help BHS Pres. Benedetto and will get him in touch with the new Fire Chief

Chair Kelty wishes everyone a Happy and safe Halloween!

Meeting ended at 9:55 pm

Respectfully submitted
Mary Zuliani