



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, MAY 18, 2020
AUDIO AND VIDEO TELECONFERENCE

PRESENT

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

Phil Konigsberg
Esther Lee
Wendy Louie
Frank Macchio
Rev. R. McEachern
Barbara McHugh
Selma Moses
Sergio Nicolich
Kim Ohanian
Millicent O'Meally
John Park
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

*Kaily Cheng
*Jeff Huang
*Wensong Li

*Terence Park
*Peter Sutich
*Peter Tu

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 STAFF

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

GUESTS

Melinda Katz-Queens District Attorney
Tara Chester- Queens District Attorney's Office
Elizabeth Bian-Queens Borough President's Office
Hye-Kyung Yang-Queens Department of City
Planning
Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Mabel Tso-Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-
Cortez's Office

Barbara Baruch-State Senator John Liu's Office
Amber Yu-Assemblyman Edward Braunstein's Office
Destany Batista-Assemblyman Daniel Rosenthal's
Office
Vito Tautonico-Councilman Paul Vallone's Office
Joseph Iannelli-NYC Department of Sanitation,
Queens

*Excused-Absent

Chairman Gene Kelty opened at **5:00 P.M.** via audio and video teleconference. The Chairman thanked all Board Members for convening at an earlier time and expressed concern for their health due to (COVID-19) and wished them well. He welcomed **Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez** and **Queens District Attorney, Melinda Katz**. Only board members were given the opportunity to ask questions to the Congresswoman and District Attorney. The Chairman announced, anyone from **the public** can speak under public participation and is **limited to 3-minutes**.

Over **Seventy participants** attended.

Roll Call Attendance was taken by the Chairman with (41) Present (6) *Excused-Absent

*Kaily Cheng (work conflict), *Jeff Huang (family medical), *Wensong Li (work conflict), *Terence Park (personal conflict), *Peter Sutich (medical) and *Peter Tu (civic conflict).

Every day the office receives notifications from our elected officials: **Congresswoman Grace Meng, Assemblywoman Nily Rozic, Councilman Paul Vallone, Councilman Peter Koo, Assemblyman Daniel Rosenthal, and Assemblyman Edward Braunstein**. The office sends the information to board members, civic associations, business groups and house of worship.

Councilman Paul Vallone sends his good wishes and hopes everyone is doing well.

The following announcements were read by Chairman Kelty:

- **Friday, May 22, 2020**, the **NYC Economic Development** announced changes to the **NYC Ferry system** which will save \$10 million. The ferry will **end at 9:00 P.M.** during weekdays and weekends.
- **DOT** announced on **Wednesday, May 13, 2020**, that the city added another 2 miles of open streets and 1 mile of temporary bike lanes in Queens which will operate **from 8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.** **Chairman Kelty** stressed the practice of social distancing and the use of a mask when outside.
- **DOE** is providing free internet service and tablets for students to assist in remote learning, **call (718) 935-5100**.
- **Councilman Paul Vallone** extended senior transportation services with an additional \$150,000 in funding. The service remains during the coronavirus pandemic. To schedule a ride to an essential medical appointment call **Selfhelp Clearview Senior Center** at **(718) 224-7888**. You must notify the office the morning before.
- The **Board office** has web links and phone numbers for Food Assistance, Medicare, EPIC, Star, and SNAP program. Also contact **Assemblyman Daniel Rosenthal's** office to be on the monthly newsletter for this information.
- **Selfhelp** in Flushing offers the **Queens North Friendly Visitor Program**, go to <https://www.nycservice.org/organizations/3038> for information.
- Complete a **2020 Census** at <https://my2020census.gov/>.
- **NYC Health and Hospitals** offers temporary hotel stay for **COVID-19** families, visit <https://www.nychealthandhospitals.org/temporary-hotel-rooms-for-covid-19-patients-and-family/>.
- **Laws went into effect** to prevent price gauging on food deliveries from Grubhub.

- **New York on PAUSE** is continued until **11:59 P.M. on May 28, 2020**. **Governor Cuomo** extended **New York's PAUSE on evictions** until **August 20, 2020**.
- **Flushing BID** will donate boxed lunches to the FDNY, EMS, DSNY, Flushing Hospital Medical Center and Union Plaza Care Center.
- Starting **Sunday, May 17, 2020** the **FDNY** will **celebrate** EMS for a week.
- A **fundraiser** to donate food was sponsored by **A Better College Point** and **Coastal Preservation Network** organized by **College Point residents**, Jennifer Shannon, Cathy Shannon, Kathryn Cervino, Jim Cervino and Margaret Loughlin Homes. Meals were donated to essential workers at the Waterview nursing home in College Point.
- **Genaro's Pizzeria and Restaurant** in College Point donated 125 lunch meals on **May 5, 2020** to essential workers at the Waterview Nursing Home located in College Point.
- **Grace Episcopal Church in Whitestone** has a grab and go food assistance.
- **St. Fidelis Church in College Point** has a food pantry every **Wednesday** from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.
- **Food for Fearless** raised \$80,000 to First Responders, NY Hospitals, Police Precincts, and Firehouses.
- A **GoFundMe** is established for **Meals for Visiting Medical Workers in Queens** hosted by the **Adria Hotel** and **Best Western** on Northern Blvd.
- 14-year-old **Jeremy Golub**, a Bay Terrace resident helped deliver meals to Flushing Hospital Medical Center.
- If in **need of food** go to NYC.gov/GetFood or call 311.
- **Pet Hotline** (877) 204-8821 for pet owners who need assistance.
- **The office of Peter Koo** is having a webinar on **May 20, 2020** and **May 22, 2020** in Korean and Chinese.
- **Nily Rozic** sends a reminder on alternate side parking which resumes **Monday, May 18, 2020**. She also provided awareness on the **multi-system inflammatory syndrome** effecting children.
- **Congresswoman Grace Meng** sent the board office a link for medical insurance.
- Community Board 7 next Public Hearing is **June 15, 2020**.
- Reminder, the Primary Election is on **June 23, 2020**.

For more information about the announcements, please contact the board office.

Approval of April 27, 2020 Minutes

A motion was made to approve the Public Hearing Minutes of April 27, 2020 by Selma Moses. The motion was seconded by Linna Yu with (8) abstentions from board members because of excused absence on April 27, 2020. The motion carried.

*Esther Lee, *Wensong Li, *Wendy Louie, *Rev. R. McEachern, *Joshua Sussman, *Peter Sutich, *Harpreet Singh Wahan and *Dian Yu.

*(Excused-Absent)

Updates from Board Members

- **Health Committee Chair, Phil Konigsberg** has worked on providing the Health Committee with access to websites on the current crisis.

- **Chin-Hsiang Chiang** has taken over 300 Community Board 7 logo bags to distribute to College Point residents.
- **Harpreet Singh Wahan** announced a **Time for Faith**, an interfaith conversation on spiritual nourishment and faith-based tools for living through COVID-19 and beyond. The event is moderated by **Public Advocate, Jumaane D. Williams** and can be watched live on **Sunday, May 17, 2020 at 3:00 P.M.** via **Facebook.com/NYCPublicAdvocate**.

A Message from Our Elected Officials

Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez via video thanked the Community Board for having her. She just returned from Washington on Saturday and wanted to personally provide some legislative updates. A vote on the second stimulus package passed the House but still needs to be negotiated with the Senate. The **HEROES Act** was passed which includes a second \$500 stimulus payment. The package will be more inclusive. \$175 Billion is for rent and mortgage assistance. The package also includes suspension of student loans for a year and unemployment extended until **January 2021**. Anyone struggling to receive their stimulus can contact her office. Prior to contacting her office, payment status can be checked on the IRS portal at <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/get-my-payment>. The Congresswoman will host a virtual town hall meeting on **Thursday, May 21, 2020 at 6:00 P.M.** The meeting will focus on food assistance and domestic violence issues. In addition, the office has been following up with individuals who have been struggling with accessing unemployment. The office team raised approximately half a million dollars for the district. Her office is delivering meals every Friday to Lefrak and Corona to seniors and individuals who do not feel safe to go out to a pantry. Her office is humbled from the assistance which they were able to fund raise and is now elevating the goal to \$1 million for food and other assistance needed.

Chairman Kelty thanked **Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez** for her legislative updates.

Chairman Kelty read the following comment and question from board member **John Tsavalos**:

“**Mayor De Blasio** stated that all New York City beaches will remain close for swimming. New York City beaches are a respite for New York City families. State beaches and surrounding regions such as Nassau County, Suffolk County, New Jersey, and Connecticut will be opening their beaches. This will add more demand on these beaches and increase traffic flow from New York City residents going to these beaches.”

Q. As the weather is getting warmer and people will start to go to the beach, “Do you think it is better for us as a region to have all beaches reopen with safety protocols in place from the beginning which will allow all to better manage beach openings, as opposed to having beaches which service millions of residents stay closed and unfairly over burden surrounding beaches that are open?”

A. **Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez** responded, “When families go to the beach there is going to be neglect with social distancing practices and the last thing a family needs is a ticket or fine. If we reopen the right way, we can slowly get back to business. My concern with the beaches is swimming among people where bodily fluids can be exposed and people can get sick. I am glad that swimming is banned. Therefore, we need to be careful. I am concern that if we reopen the beaches, it will go Hot

from a public perspective. My recommendation is if you are compromised in any way, please be careful and take social distancing serious.”

A second comment and question was read by **Chairman Kelty** from **John Tsavalos**:

“In view of numerous global warning signs of the pandemic in January, **NYC Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot** touted Lunar New Year gatherings in February and failed to take decisive action to not contain the virus early and flatten the curve. Her inaction led to New York City to become the epicenter of this pandemic. In addition, Dr. Barbot had crass remarks about the NYPD’s virus mask requests.”

Q. “Do you agree with **Mayor De Blasio’s** decision not to terminate her and if so, “Why do you think this public official should be allowed to continue to be the NYC Health Commissioner in view of her inactions to contain the virus early in New York City and since she clearly does not support our NYPD officers?”

A. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez responded, “The State did not shut down early enough. Schools were open too long. There is failure across the board to not act sooner. We are seeing the differences in the outcomes between New York and California. We all must take responsibility. As for the disparaging comments, I think we are all better than this. In terms of her resignation that is up to the city.”

Chairman Kelty Opened the Floor for Questions and Comments

Q. Pablo Hernandez asked, “Why doesn’t the government empower people to make their own decisions regarding CDC guidelines?”

Q. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez asked, “Do you mean about masks or about reopening businesses?”

A. Pablo Hernandez responded, “Yes, the masks.”

A. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez responded, “This is different. We have the science. We know if 80% of people wear masks the virus can be stopped. It does not feel great to have these requirements, but this is going to have to be a process. This is just one step. It will not last forever. Even if it is my choice not to wear a mask it is not someone else’s choice to be at risk. We are so close to being successful, but it is so delicate. I understand people do not like to be told what to do, but I hope we make this decision together out of compassion for our nurses, doctors, and seniors. If we can just hang on a little bit, we can save the progress we made and start the important work of reopening our business.”

Q. Warren Schreiber thanked the Congresswoman for joining the meeting. “There are some national parks and beaches in New York such as Gateway National Recreation Area.” “Do you know when these beaches and recreation areas will open?”

A. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez responded, “This is an excellent point about us having federally protected lands. Right now, we have a national emergency declaration due to COVID-19. **Mabel Tso** is also on the teleconference and will get back with an answer.”

John Choe commented, “During the protesting of The Special Flushing Waterfront District, many residents were against the displacement of low income residents. How do you feel against large developments that displace low income residents and small businesses?”

A. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez responded, “This particular development is Congresswoman **Grace Meng’s** district, but it is close to my district and I have been paying close attention. The cost of housing is at a high point in New York City. Housing needs to be built but must be affordable and sometimes housing goes up that is not affordable. I support developments that do not promote displacements in our community. A certain development may drive up the cost of housing or displace families that have been there for generations and we need to find a better way. I engage in the environmental concerns such as the sewage impact from Flushing Bay.”

Q. Lawrence Hughes also thanked the Congresswoman for her time. He asked, “Some of the provisions in the **CARES Act** includes assistance for the aviation industry and cruise line industry yet here in New York City so many people depend on intercity buses yet the intercity bus industry has been left out.” “Where is congress going with this industry or is it being ignored?”

A. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez responded, “I had little problems with the **CARES Act** package; however, this was one of the main issues. We have to make sure that our upcoming packages are addressing our small businesses and that they receive the help they need.”

Kevin Shields commented, “Many restaurants closed down and will not open again.”

A. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez responded, “There are so many aspects such as Grubhub and price gouging. Grubhub can take 30% to 40% per order which completely wipes out a restaurant. I have introduced legislation with **(MA) Senator Elizabeth Warren** to stop mergers that will monopolize during a pandemic.

Kevin Shields commented, “Many of my employees won’t come back because they are getting more from unemployment.”

A. Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez responded, “The unemployment supplement in some cases is competing with existing wages. The legislation bill that I am fighting for and has been introduced by **U.S. Representative Pramila Jayapal** is the **Paycheck Guarantee Act**. It gives individuals a one-time paycheck to go back to work when the business reopens and gives a business owner money to offer employees a competitive salary. As a result, the employees are rewarded with a financial benefit because they are taking on a risk to come back to work. However, more support from the House is needed to have the act pass.

Kevin Shields added, “The board looks forward to seeing you in person when the pandemic is over.”

Chairman Kelty thanked **Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez** for her time and thanked her office representative **Mabel Tso** for doing a fantastic job in providing our office with updates from the Congresswoman’s office.

Barbara Baruch, Community Representative for Senator John Liu commented, if anyone needs assistance contact Senator Liu’s office.

Chairman Kelty introduced **District Attorney Melinda Katz** via video to inform everyone on what is going on in the office. The District Attorney thanked **Chairman Kelty, District Manager Marilyn McAndrews** (Mac) and **First Vice Chair Charles Apelian** for their leadership and for their well wishes when she was ill. The District Attorney's office is operating 98% by video conferencing including appellate arguments by Skype. The office is getting ready to reopen when the Governor lifts the order. It has been an amazing few months, since I have been in this office. The bail laws changed then changed again and then a pandemic. The office has been looking at applications for people to be released from Riker's Island due to health reasons. At the same time, I am making sure to keep people safe. In addition, the office opened a **Criminal Enterprise Bureau, Human Trafficking Bureau, Housing and Worker Protection Bureau.**

The District Attorney also provided a few reminders to everyone. The suicide rate has increased exponentially so please follow up with someone who is living alone. It is important to maintain contact with family. Domestic violence is vastly underreported. People who are at home with their abusers cannot go to work or walk into the Family Justice Center and the police officers cannot go into the home of the victim. The office has created a **Domestic Violence hotline** (718) 286-4410 and you will be asked if you need services or would like to speak to an ADA. There is a lot of price gouging incidents that are happening. No one will call you from the government or call you to inform you that you have a check waiting due to COVID-19 or ask you for your bank account or social security number. Please be careful about the information you give out. If you have any questions, contact the District Attorney's office.

Next weekend is Memorial Day and on **Thursday, May 21, 2020 at 11:00 A.M. the Queens Borough President's Office** and I will be doing a **virtual commemoration**. The District Attorney stated, "Even though I'm in a different capacity I am always at your service." For the most relevant information go to <https://twitter.com/MelindaKatz>. The District Attorney thanked **Chairman Kelty** for his volunteered services.

Chairman Kelty commented, "Selfhelp is doing outreach on suicide prevention."

District Attorney Katz remarked, "The rate has doubled from what it was last year."

Phil Konigsberg had a follow up question regarding absentee ballot applications. He requested from the **Board of Elections** an application by phone and from their website. He asked, "When can I expect to receive the absentee ballot application in the mail?"

Chairman Kelty informed **Phil Konigsberg** to contact the **Board of Elections** at (718) 730-6730.

Destany Batista from **Assemblyman Daniel Rosenthal's Office** provided the link <https://nycabsentee.com/> to request an absentee ballot.

Public Hearing

BSA Calendar No. 2020-9-BZ, 26-11 123RD Street, College Point- Application for a variance pursuant to the provisions of the NYC Zoning Resolution Section 72-21 to obtain relief of certain zoning requirements to permit the development of a two-family, two story dwelling in an R4A zone with a 20 foot by 97.38 foot lot. Sections 22-12, 23-142, 23-22, 23-461(a), 23-631 (b) and 25-621 (a) of the NYC Zoning Resolution is to be varied.

Chairman Kelty introduced **Committee Chair, Lei Zhao**. Lei informed everyone that the Committee met on **February 27, 2020**. The applicant had physical constraints because the lot is zoned R4A and the applicant is going to need a waiver. The lot's narrowness is unique. **Belal Salim** put forward a motion to **approve** the application. The motion was **seconded** by **Millicent O'Meally**. The **vote passed in favor** with a **Vote of (5) for Approval** and **(2) Against**.

Frank J. Quatela of **Quatela Architects** along with **Paul B. Bonfilio**, Architect presented the application.

Chairman Kelty Opened the Floor for Questions

Q. First Vice Chair Charles Apelian asked, "What are the waivers?"

A. Frank Quatela responded, "The required lot width is 30 feet, the subject lot is 20 feet. The maximum street wall is 21 feet and we are proposing 27 feet for the top of the roof. Since the side yards are eliminated, parking is provided in the front and garage. The FAR would normally be .75 and it is 1.27."

Q. First Vice Chair Charles Apelian asked, "Can you explain the split lot?"

A. Paul Bonfilio responded, "With reference to R4A, M1, 3 feet of the lot is divided by the district's boundary done by City Planning. It is a minor M1. The section of the zoning law states the allowance of moving the district boundary of the proposed development no more than 50% of the width of the lot and no more than 25 feet which we are proposing to do. The applicant has an As of Right for the permission of a second variance to move the boundary line from an R4 M1 to an R4A."

Q. Warren Schreiber asked, "On the proposed site (via diagram), "Can you explain to me what exactly we are looking at with the front and rear elevations?"

A. Frank Quatela responded, "In the front elevation there is a garage door and stairs that go up to the front door. This is shared by both families with entry to both first and second floors. The rear elevation has rear bedrooms on the second floor and the first floor has a door to access the duplex apartment."

Q. Barbara McHugh asked, "Were the residents notified?"

A. Paul Bonfilio responded, "Everyone was notified within a 400 foot radius."

A. Frank Quatela responded, "Notification was sent by mail."

Q. John Tsavalos commented, "The proposal alters the character of the neighborhood."

A. Frank Quatela responded, "R4A is a residential zone. The site analysis indicates residential low density in a manufacturing zone which is the College Point Industrial Park."

Q. Millicent O'Meally asked, "Is this an attic or crawl space?"

A. Frank Quatela responded, "No attic. It is a flat roof."

Q. Pablo Hernandez asked, "How many families?"

A. Frank Quatela responded, "Two-family. One apartment has two bedrooms and the other apartment has three bedrooms. There is one parking space per family."

Q. Joseph Sweeney asked, "Did local civics attend the Committee Meeting?"

A. Barbara McHugh responded, "I attended the meeting and I am on a civic."

A. James Cervino responded, "I also attended."

First Vice Chair Charles Apelian recommended to have a meeting with local civics to ask if they have any opposition.

Chairman Kelty informed **Committee Chair Lei Zhao** to contact local civics and the adjacent business owner for concerns regarding the application.

Chairman Kelty asked several times, "Does anyone from the public want to speak on this issue?"

No response from the public.

First Vice Chair Charles Apelian made a friendly motion **to approve** the application as presented with an amendment that **Chair Lei Zhao** will follow up with local civics, the adjacent business and applicant to see if they have any concerns. **Lei Zhao** accepted. The motion was **seconded** by **Arlene Fleishman**.

No Further Discussion on the Motion.

The **vote passed in favor** with a **Vote of (34) for Approval, (2) Against, (5) Left the Hearing, and (6) Excused-Absent**. The motion carried.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No Speakers.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danielle Pennise