



# Community Board 7

## Borough of Queens

Bay Terrace, College Point, Beechhurst, Flushing  
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Donovan Richards, Jr.

*Queens Borough President*

Eugene T. Kelty Jr.

*Chairperson*

Marilyn McAndrews

*District Manager*

### COMMUNITY BOARD #7 PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING

MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2021

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

Pablo Hernandez

Jeff Huang

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 Pshtissky

Kris Ram

Paul Rifino

Bill 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

Esther Lee

Terence Park

Peter Tu

#### COMMUNITY BOARD #7 STAFF

Marilyn McAndrews, District Manager

Mary O'Neill, Community Associate

Mary Zuliani, Community Associate

Anne Krzyzanowski, Community Aide

#### GUESTS

Susan Liu-Congresswoman Grace Meng's office

Mabel Tso-Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's office

Soonjin Choi-Lee - State Senator John Liu's office

Suzi Montevetri -Assemblyman Edward Braunstein's office

Destiny Batista-Assemblyman Daniel Rosenthal's office

Anthony Iuliano-Deputy Director, Qns. Community Engagement, DOB

Joonyong Ahn-Councilman Peter Koo's office

Jessica Schabowski-Mayor's Community Affairs Unit

Elizabeth Bian-Queens District Attorney Katz's office

Katherine Brezler-Queens Borough President's office

Vanessa Ordenez-Queens Borough President's Office

Elaine Fan-NYC Comptroller's office

**\*Excused**

Chair Gene Kelty opened the meeting at 7:07 pm via audio and video teleconference. He thanked all board members in attendance, and asked we Pledge Allegiance to our Flag in honor of all those who fought for our freedom, and to never forget those who died for us and those who came home seriously injured and in need of care. A reminder, the public can only speak during Public Participation at the end of the meeting.

**The attendance was taken with (47) Present (3) Absent**

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS:

**Susan Liu - Congresswoman Grace Meng:** Reach out to our office at 718-358-1660, if in need of our assistance.

**Mabel Tso-Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez:** Our Office is always available for casework.

**1) At the Town Hall** last month Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez answered questions on COVID-19 and recorded it on their YouTube page: @RepAOC

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCE6XBnproA\\_ydn-b0A](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCE6XBnproA_ydn-b0A)

**2) Legislative Updates:**

a. The American Rescue Act extending \$1400 stimulus checks, funding for City & State vaccine distribution and also funding for schools and businesses.

b. The Senate removed the \$15 Minimum wage and returned it to the House for the final vote.

c. The House passed the George Floyd Justice Policing Act transforming policing by addressing systemic racism, curbing police brutality, and also passed The People Act (HR1) expanding ballot access, strengthening ethics, reducing influence of big money.

**3) Relief Programs:**

a. Window for PPP loans closes 3/9/21 at 5 pm for businesses with 20 employees or less. Will share a SBA website link in chat.

b. Shuttered Venue Operators Grant: For eligible venues affected by COVID.

<https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/shuttered-venue-operators-grant>.

**4) Wounded Warrior Fellow:** Two-year paid role working from Queens or Bronx Office still open.

<https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/586500100>.

**5) Congressional Art Competition:** High School nationwide participation - Opportunity still open to participate. Winning entries to be displayed in the Capitol.

**Soojin Choi - State Senator John Liu:** No upcoming events. The Bayside office is open for services by appointment only at **718-765-6675**.

**Suzi Montevedri - Assemblyman Ed Braunstein:** No announcements.

**Destiny Batista - Assemblyman Dan Rosenthal:** Our office is open. You can reach us by phone at **718-969-1508**.

**Joonyong Ahn - Councilman Peter Koo:** No updates.

**Comment by Chair Kelty.** Had recent phone conversation with **Jim Gennaro**, who is taking over the 24<sup>th</sup> District of Councilman Rory Lancman.

**Anthony Iuliano - Dept. of Buildings:** Storefront signage moratorium by City Council. No enforcement actions for the next two years to help businesses during COVID-19 recovery. Also, Local Law #152 for multiple dwellings for any exposed gas piping must be tested. Your area will be up for inspection in **two years**. <https://queensbpoffice.com>

**Vanessa Ordenez - City Planning:** No updates to report.

**Kat Brezler-Borough Pres. Donovan Richards:** The State of the Borough address is viewable on the YouTube website <https://www.queensbp.nyc.gov>.

**Elizabeth Bian - Queens District Atty. Melinda Katz:** Tax season brings a rise in fraud which will be the subject at our webinar's <https://www.queensda.nyc.gov> multilingual presentation on 3/10/21 to help address fraud prevention and scam awareness. Also their Hate Crime Bureau's Help Line number is 718-286-7010.

**Comment by Chair Kelty** - Our office has mailed a "Scammer Awareness & Fraud Protection" notice to alert the community.

**Elaine Fan - Comptroller's Office:** No announcements to report

**Jessica Schabowski - The Mayor's Office:** At this point we can vaccinate half a million or more a week, but still have issue with the supply. However, **Johnson & Johnson** vaccine has been approved. So take whatever vaccine you can. All will prevent serious illness and hospitalization. The Defense Dept. has **Merck** partnered with **J&J** to ramp up production. We could be giving 25 thousand more vaccinations to New Yorkers, if there weren't a like amount of out-of-towners coming in to receive it. DIFTA home delivered meals are being administered by the Police Department and Fire Department. This Sunday, 3/14/21, will be **COVID-19 REMEMBRANCE/MEMORIAL DAY** in New York City.

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/covidmemorial/>

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Ranked Choice Voting explaining** the new system **for** non-profits and civic leaders on Wednesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> from 12 pm to 1:30 pm. Registration information will be sent to you.

<https://www.nycfb.info/nyc-votes/ranked-choice-voting/>

**Daylight Savings Time** – Saturday, March 13<sup>th</sup> change your clocks back one hour.

**Carpenters Union/Building apprentice training-** March 22<sup>nd</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> with seven hour sessions each, virtual or in-person, with a strict attendance policy. It's free to attend but with no paid training. Apply with educational documents to [buildingswork395@gmail.com](mailto:buildingswork395@gmail.com). A drug test is also necessary. A four year apprenticeship could lead to a Career as a union carpenter. Call our office tomorrow for more info.

**MTA NEW HIRES - 646-376-0123 or [www.mta.info/mta/employment](http://www.mta.info/mta/employment)**

1. **Deputy Chief Info Security Officer** - \$122K starting salary. Two Broadway, Manhattan
2. **Cybersecurity Specialist** - Breaches & Incidents – **Level #3** - \$71K, **Level #5** - \$83K, Also at Two Broadway.
3. **Lead IT Security Architect/Planning** - \$101K salary – Deadline to apply is tomorrow.

**Motion to Approve the February 2021 minutes was put forward by Arlene Fleishman and seconded by Linna Yu. The Board voted to approve unanimously with one exception due to absence at last mtg.**

**Donald Kirshoffer**, one of our former CB7Q members and member of the Greater Whitestone Civic & Taxpayers Association as well as the Whitestone Boosters Civic Association, passed away recently. He was a terrific, fantastic guy, extremely knowledgeable. He will be missed.

**Learning Tree STEM-Arts School** - Nicole Bailey is Principal of this private school located at **149-34 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Flushing**, originally a charter school. This is a FREE DOE program funded by DYCD for Public School students only, from Monday to Friday 8 am to 3 pm with breakfast and lunch provided.

In the next few weeks, the school will also be offering evening and weekend programs as follows:

1. Performing Arts Programs (instrumental music, drama, dance) Grades K-8
2. Media Arts Program (film making, photography, etc.) Grades 6-9
3. COVID Relief Programs – Families
4. Adult Education Programs

QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

**Q. Linna Yu (LY):** Will students have to pay for the programs?

**A.** No, it's free.

Comment by **Chuck Apelian (CA):** The Learning lab is during the same hours as school.

**A. NB:** DOE has it so students are not always at their school every day. When they're not, they're at our Learning lab.

**Q. Arlene Fleishman (AF):** Are you a Charter School?

**A. NB:** No, we're a private school.

**Q. AF:** Are you meeting all the standard curriculums for City & State mandates?

**A. NB:** Yes.

Comment by **AF:** I'm surprised I haven't heard of your school.

**A. NB:** We've operated since 1996.

Contact information:

Cell: 516-425-7716

School: 347-732-4167

Email: [nbailey@tltstemarts.org](mailto:nbailey@tltstemarts.org)

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

**ITEM #1: 172-11 Northern Blvd., Flushing – Special Order Calendar BSA #437-58-BZ – Frank Macchio**  
*To waive the rules of practice and procedure pursuant to section I-07.3 (b) (2) so as to permit a late filing and extend term of variance in accordance with section 11-411 of Zoning Resolution for a period of ten (10) years past December 4, 2019.*

**Committee Chair Macchio** held a virtual meeting on February 4, 2021. The gas station property has existed under the variance since 1958 as a non-conforming commercial property in a residential zone with some brief modifications, i.e. some signage upgrades, movement of vacuum machines, and C of O upgrading. The attorney for the applicant, **Dolly Reyes**, is asking to extend the variance by 10 years, legalize the air towers and vacuums moved from 172 St. to Northern Blvd. and adding one more of each, the removal of three (3) signs, the Pegasus, Quick Lube, and Snack Shop sign, still leaving us above compliance. Also, a guardrail installation to prevent cars backing up onto sidewalk on Utopia Parkway. Since the variance expired in 2019, there is no current C of O.

DISCUSSION & Q/A

**Q. Phil Konigsberg (PK):** Were pictures shown from last February?

**A. Dolly Reyes (DR):** Yes, from last February

**Q. Lei Zhao (LZ):** What is the zoning on the lot?

**A. DR:** R2, R4B, R3X.

**Comment by Frank Macchio (FM):** Similar to Taco Bell across the street.

**Q. Pablo Hernandez (PH):** Any violations or complaints?

**A. FM:** No outstanding violations.

PUBLIC COMMENT

**Henry Euler (HE)** from the Auburndale Improvement Association: We have had no complaints about the service station. Sometimes the rear enclosure is open with old tires stored. Concerned about the mosquitoes present, so have tires removed. Also is there any truth the station is to be sold?

**A. DR:** No truth. The owner is looking to extend the variance.

**Comment by CA:** Even if the lot is sold, it would still be subject to the waivers/variances.

**Committee Chair Macchio** gave his committee report which addresses the variance including the approval of minor site modifications, the air and vacuum machines, the removal of some signage the DOB requested, and the need for a C of O update. The committee added the following stipulations:-

1. Reduce glare and lighting at adjacent houses by pointing lighting towards Northern Blvd.
2. Additional planting/landscaping especially at SE corner of the property
3. Building address number more visible from the street.
4. Bollards/guard rail at NE corner to separate parking from sidewalk.
5. Provide parking and directional striping per renderings.

**The motion by Warren Schreiber to approve the variance updates and stipulations was seconded by Kim Ohanian. The committee vote taken was 7-0 in favor.**

**The committee motion now on the floor was seconded by Frank Macchio is to approve the variance with above stipulations.**

DISCUSSION ON MOTION

**(PK):** I personally use this station. Am pleased with how they take care of the station and individuals.

**Vote taken to approve the variance with stipulations was (45) For (0) Against (2) Left (3) Absent.**

**ITEM #2: 150-55 Cross Island Pkwy, Whitestone - Special Order Cal. BSA #129-92-BZ–Warren Schreiber** Request extension of term variance granted under BSA Cal. #129-92 BZ allowing Use Group 16 automobile laundry (car wash) in a R3-2/C1-2 district where it does not comply with applicable Use regulations, approval of minor changes to previously approved plans and waiver of application filing procedure.

**Chair Schreiber** said the committee discussed extending the 20 year variance to operate a car wash that expired in October 2013, and adding minor changes to perimeter fence, canopy and exterior wall. He then introduced **Lisa Orrantia**, Attorney for Whitestone Plaza Associates, who filed the application in December 2020. **Existing conditions:** **1)** Constructed 2500 sq. ft. building on 7000 sq. ft. zoning lot in 1996 after variance granted 1993. **2)** Car washes not allowed as-of-right in R3-2/C1-2 zone. **3)** Lot has uneven lot lines and depth dimensions. **4)** Located on heavily trafficked two lane service road between two gas stations. **5)** Rear lot line abuts a physical therapy building. **6)** Side yard adjoins 3 rear yards of residential buildings, each 70 ft. deep. **Operations:** 15 employees, open 7am to 7pm Mon. to Thurs., 7am to 8pm Fri. & Sat., Sun. 7am to 6pm, with DCA car washing license, no residential uses opposite, and no convenience or retail allowed in this district. **Site Plan:** **1)** Irregular shape, 30 ft. frontage not usable. **2)** Viable business operating 23 years. **3)** Standard mechanical equipment. **Minor Deviations:** **1)** Replaced wood fence with corrugated metal fence for security along rear property to prevent vandalization. **2)** Rear northeast corner landscaping was removed to stop debris from collecting. **3)** 450 ft. canopy installed southwest portion of lot to reduce sound and to shelter employees and equipment. **4)** Exterior wall 9'x 6' to keep customers dry.

DISCUSSION Q&A

**Q. WS:** Could one of the owners explain why the delay to apply for the extension?

**A. LO:** They hired someone in 2012 for \$15,000 to file for the extension, with no results whatsoever. After waiting for years, they contacted Steve Sinacori's office, who followed through.

**Comment from CA:** **We had this conversation with BSA and the City. Expiration notices should be sent out without delay. It's odd this went on for almost 8 years...almost as long as some variances in their entirety.**

**Q. Kris Ram (KR):** What is Use Group #16?

**A. LO:** It's the zoning category for car washes with unique conditions. Since conditions have remained the same, they can seek an extension.

**Q. PK:** Is this next to the Exxon station?

**A. LO:** Yes

**Comment by Gene Kelty (GK):** Years ago when this came to us I didn't vote to approve it because of water in winter on the service road hill creates ice conditions, but they kept the site clean. There was never a complaint, and proved me wrong.

**The Committee motion was unanimous to approve.**

**The motion seconded by Kevin Shields is to approve the variance with existing conditions and minor changes listed above.**

**The vote taken was (45) Approved (0) Against (2) Left (3) Absent**

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

**Pablo Hernandez (PH):** Concerned about experience CA went through representing the CB. It's unacceptable and I'm not sure he received an apology.

**Comment by CA:** BSA requested I give further testimony for the McDonald's on Willets Point Blvd. When I logged on and was recognized, the Chair cut me off after about one minute through my remarks. She said "I don't want to deal with it and I'm muting you." I wrote a letter and did not get a response. I've heard this is not uncommon with others. It's on YouTube and you can watch it on BSA.

**Comment by PH:** I went to YouTube and observed it as a member of CB #7 and colleague of many years. If it can happen to you, it can happen to anyone.

**Kevin Shields (KS):** The owner of McDonald's is also upset by BSA Chair's treatment of CA. Unrelated, the tentative street renaming date of "McHugh Street" is June 7, 2021. No notice on renaming for Monsignor Tocci.

**Richard Forman (RF):** New Chancellor of the Schools System announced NYC High Schools will open on 3/22/21. Faculty's coming back 3/18/21. Approximately 70% of students will remain remote.

**Kris Ram (KR):** Joe Sweeney and I distributed over 300 masks as well as CB #7 handbags by the LIRR station between 3:30 and 4 pm last Thursday.

**GK:** Other board members also distributed 500 masks.

**Kevin Gao -** Been in the neighborhood for two years and noticed an uptick in postal theft and petty crime, and reported this to Paul Vallone's office and the NCO's at the precinct, but they don't seem interested. It's referred to as a small enough crime you can get a refund. Can we increase the police budget for patrols? I've contacted the 109 Precinct Supervisor.

**CA: Call our office tomorrow and give Mary or Ann all your information. We have the opportunity to speak to the Commander and Community Affairs.**

**Serge Nicolich (SN):** If it's mail theft, you can speak to US Postal Police. If its Amazon packages, that's the Police Dept.

**KR:** We have a Pct. Community Council meeting this Wednesday evening with a virtual link!

**Nick Corrado (NC):** Thanks Gene for the letter you sent to the City Council Speaker regarding the new planning proposal. It was difficult to understand, however. Can we discuss this at a future meeting?

**GK:** As Chair we get the accolades, but in all fairness Chuck and the team drafted this letter. I have strong Chairs backing me. The DCP Chair defended the planning process. The City Planning Chair pushed back about race. The Speaker of the Council proposed something similar when being term-limited out.

**CA:** This was not a ULURP, just an introduction to a plan and that's **why** we only went to committee with it. We did a broad stroke on it, and the opposition among civics and elected officials was uniformly opposed. I have no further desire to discuss this and also think it's a violation of due process. The Council needs to decide whether to hear this proposal for a change in planning. The Mayor apparently is against this project and so is Councilman Paul Vallone.

**GK:** The comparisons to Seattle and Minneapolis were not necessarily good ones.

**CA:** Our community board is almost as big as these cities, let alone the entire City.

**PK:** I'm going to take a look at the video regarding Chuck's treatment by the BSA. Any behavior against a board member or officer is an affront to us.

**Millicent O'Meally:** I want to remind everyone that Black History is American History, and it's being made twelve months a year.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully,

Mary Zuliani