



Community Board 7

Borough of Queens

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

133-32 41st ROAD · 3rd FLOOR · FLUSHING, NY 11355

(718) 359-2800

Fax: (718) 463-3891

Email: qn07@cb.nyc.gov

<https://www1.nyc.gov/queenscb7>

Donovan Richards, Jr.

Queens Borough President

Eugene T. Kelty Jr.

Chairperson

Marilyn McAndrews

District Manager

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING

MONDAY, APRIL 12, 2021

AUDIO AND VIDEO TELECONFERENCE

PRESENT

Charles Apelian

Kaily Cheng

Michael Cheng

John Choe

Kim Cody

Nicholas Corrado

Arlene Fleishman

Richard Forman

Fred Fu

Doreen Gatanas

Vincent Gianelli

Pablo Hernandez

Cody Herrmann

Jeff Huang

Lawrence Hughes

Eugene Kelty

Phil Konigsberg

Esther Lee

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

Terence Park

Yacov Pshtissky

Frank Quatela

Kris Ram

Warren Schreiber

Kevin Shields

Matthew Silverstein

Joshua Sussman

Joseph Sweeney

John Tsavalos

Clarissa Wong

Maggie Wong

Dian Yu

Linna Yu

Lei Zhao

Jie Zhu

ABSENT

James Cervino

*Paul Rifino

Peter Tu

Harpreet Singh Wahan

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 STAFF

Marilyn McAndrews, District Manager

Mary O'Neill, Community Associate

Mary Zuliani, Community Associate

Anne Krzyzanowski, Community Aide

GUESTS

Mabel Tso-Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's office

Akshar Patel - State Senator John Liu's office

David Fischer - Assemblyman Edward Braunstein's office

Destiny Batista-Assemblyman Daniel Rosenthal's office

Vito Tautonico-Councilman Paul Vallone's office

Joonyong Ahn-Councilman Peter Koo's office

Councilman James Gennero

Ruby Benitez, Councilman James Gennero's office

Elizabeth Bian-Queens District Attorney Katz's office

Katherine Brezler-Queens Borough President's office

Jessica Schabowski- The Mayor's Community Affairs office

Elaine Fan-NYC Comptroller's office

***Excused**

Chair Gene Kelty opened the meeting at 7 pm via audio and video teleconference. He 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.

The attendance was taken: (46) Present (3) Absent (1) Excused *

Our new Board Members are **Cody Herrmann** from Auburndale, who has a background in Urban Ecology and **Frank Quatela** from Whitestone who is an architect and the 3rd President of the AIA.

ANNOUNCEMENTS were made by Chair Kelty

APPROVAL OF MARCH 2021 MINUTES – Corrections on last page:

Black History Month moment, **Millicent O’Meally** said it should read “Black History is being made twelve months a year. “

Kevin Shields corrected the June 6th date should state “tentatively scheduled.”

Minutes were approved.

METROPLUS HEALTH – Presentation by Victor Lee, Asst. Sales Director

PASSARELLE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT – **Janice Melnick** of NYC Dept. of Parks & Recreation introduced the Passarelle Improvement Project and a presentation was made by **Michal Mrowiec**.

Goals:

- 1) Rebuild the Passarelle overpass in relationship to New Air Train Guideway /Terminal.
- 2) Retain/restore historic World’s Fair elements.
- 3) Provide ADA accessibility to all access ramps.

Existing Conditions:

- 1) Deteriorated wood parts will be replaced with concrete.
- 2) Canopy to be reinstalled.

Proposal:

- 1) Alignment almost similar to original as well as geometry and configuration.
- 2) Ramps longer and ADA compliant.
- 3) Material will be concrete, but convey historical elements.
- 4) Paving will have textured concrete finish with layout that evokes abnormal blocks.
- 5) Railings to be galvanized steel and raised to 54” to be code compliant.
- 6) Install a curved 14ft. Davit Light Pole lamp, similar to historic lights.
- 7) Fifty historic flag poles for a strong visual perception.
- 8) 1964 World’s Fair style benches.

Exterior Building Masonry: The focus is on the deteriorating brick façade of the administration building with its many layers of paint which is in needs of restoration.

DISCUSSION:

Q. Warren Schreiber (WS) - If the Passarella was totally demolished and replaced in the exact same location without being shifted, what's the difference in price?

A. Janice Melnick (JM) - The budget of \$124 million hasn't changed since AirTrain was introduced. It was never determined whether it would have to be demolished or not.

Q. Cody Herrmann (CH) - Is the money for this coming from the PANYNJ AirTrain project?

A. Matt Discenna (MD) - The City has funds budgeted to replace the Passarella with funds going back to 2014, and is totally protected. Any cost overruns will be covered by the Port.

Q. (CH) - How can the Port be involved without an EIS? Will the surface be totally smooth? Will there be a bike lane?

A. (JM) - It's not planned and not designated as part of a bike route. It's a pedestrian path, and not intended for bikes.

Q. (CH) - No space for vendors either? We've had vendors there in the past.

A. (JM) - That's a different process.

Q. Chuck Apelian (CA) - You're asking for a letter of recommendation. Are we the only Board involved?

A. Kim Ohanian (KO) - No, Boards 3 and 4, as well as 7.

Q. John Choe (JC) - I'd like to echo some of Ms. Herrmann's concern about a bike path. Will there be any study on the parking spaces the Port will build on the site, because there will be congestion from this.

A. (JM) - No, because the ramp itself doesn't affect parking.

A. (MD) - Also, the parking structure and associated traffic is analyzed by the FAA EIS, which the NYC DOT reviewed and commented on in the draft and final versions for more AirTran and PA questions, we're looking to do more public meetings later this spring to get answers to specific questions.

Q. (CA) - Is the layout of this ramp changing?

A. (JM) - It's still a pedestrian bridge connecting Roosevelt Ave. to the middle of the park. The parking itself is not related to the Passarella, but to the AirTrain, which we are not here to discuss.

Q. Pablo Hernandez (PH) - Is COVID affecting the budget for this project?

A. (JM) - No, the money was set aside in 2014.

Q. (PH) - If funding already allocated, what stopped it from being started earlier?

A. (JM) - Originally it was to be a City project, but because of the AirTrain potential, we agreed to wait and have it designed by the Port and their team.

Q. (CH) - If FAA doesn't approve the EIS, will the Port take away this design?

A. (JM) - The project still will go forward.

Q. Michelle Miao (MM) - Does the budget only include the Passarella?

A. (JM) - Yes.

Q. (MM) - How long will the project take?

A. (JM) - It will take 2 to 3 years, during which major events like the US Open will take place.

COMMENT BY M. DISCENNA - Willets Point LIRR station project must be completed before the Passarelle portion is completed. A temporary bridge structure with the same functional level of service as the existing Passarelle Bridge will allow sufficient capacity for safe passage for everyone.

Q. (WS) - The Port's consultants are the engineers, architects, and designers of the project. Where does the project go next?

A. (JM) - Although the Port hired the consultants, Parks Capital Division has a project coordinator for this project with Parks planning as part of the process and with the Port every step of the way.

Q. (CH) - The FEMA flood maps show it's an ecologically vulnerable area. Are there any resiliency considerations?

A. (JM) - I'm not sure who on our team can answer that. We may have to get back to you.

A. (MM) - The short answer is yes. The surface of the current bridge is wood, so water drips through it. But we will provide drainage to a separate storm sewer system, not into the CSO.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: The committee voted to approve the design, with one disapproval.

The motion is to approve with the stipulation that we have signage that cyclists must dismount and riding is not permitted on the Passarelle.

DISCUSSION ON THE MOTION:

JC: While the bridge is for pedestrian use only, many cyclists do use the bridge. It is also attached to a major parking facility that increases congestion.

PH: I understand those interested in having bikes and pedestrians, since I've biked for years, but I'm more concerned with safety.

Lei Zhao (LZ): If you provide visual separation of bikes and pedestrians, then you reduce safety concerns.

CA: But bikes aren't technically allowed on this.

LZ: If bikes aren't allowed, then at least post a sign for them to dismount.

The Vote on the motion is: (42) For and (2) Against.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Dharam Mathur: CUNY School of Medicine at City College, NY, is doing a project on Flushing Community Health. Anyone over 18 in the community can participate in a 5-minute survey.

Kris Ram: The 109th Precinct Community Council is this Wednesday, 4/14/21.

KO: Anyone still not vaccinated, York College was the best experience. In and out in 20 minutes. Very efficient and with parking across the street.

Richard Forman (RM): Opt-in period for returning to schools. First Day will be 4/26/21. There was a change in school closures. Previously, Contact & Trace Corps found 2 cases because of close contact. Now it's up to 4. They'll test 40% weekly now, if there's close contact. Summer school will be in person this Year since kids need to catch up.

LZ: Expressed appreciation to Terence Park, John Choe, Rev. McEachern, Chair Kelty and Dist. Mgr. Mac who rallied against violence towards Asians and Asian Americans. An attack on one is an attack on all of us.

Belal Salim: (BA) Lei, thanks for bringing up the topic of anti-discrimination. Although I handed in my paperwork to the Borough President, I was not reappointed. As a community and country, we tend not to think about others as much as ourselves. We need our communities and cities to be diversified. As the only Muslim on the Board the last six years, it was disheartening not to be reappointed. I represented my community as a Muslim and an American, and had a good attendance record. It is Ramadan and I encourage you all to visit your local mosque and participate in interfaith activities.

Chair Kelty: We definitely forwarded his reappointment papers.

Terence Park: I recommended Belal Salim for a Community Board member seven years ago. It's frustrating to hear he's not with us. I will follow up with Gene about the problem and see what we can do. Thank you LZ for acknowledging our efforts against discrimination and violence against all groups

CA: We welcome Cody Herrmann and Frank Quatela wholeheartedly. Belal Salim's non-reappointment does not pertain to their appointment.

BS: Thank you all who supported me these past six years.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45 pm.

**Respectfully
Mary Zuliani**