



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, JUNE 28, 2021
AUDIO AND VIDEO TELECONFERENCE

PRESENT

Charles Apelian
James Cervino
Kaily Cheng
John Choe
Kim Cody
Nicholas Corrado
Arlene Fleishman
Richard Forman
Fred Fu
Vincent Gianelli
Pablo Hernandez
Cody Herrmann
Jeff Huang

Lawrence Hughes
Eugene Kelty
Phil Konigsberg
Esther Lee
Wendy Louie
Frank Macchio
Betsy Mak
Rev. R. McEachern
Barbara McHugh
Selma Moses
Sergio Nicolich
Kim Ohanian
Yacov Pshtissky

Kris Ram
Paul Rifino
Warren Schreiber
Matthew Silverstein
Joshua Sussman
Joseph Sweeney
John Tsavalos
Clarissa Wong
Dian Yu
Linna Yu
Jie Zhu

ABSENT

*Michael Cheng
*Doreen Gatanas
Dr. Wensong Li
Michelle Miao
Millicent O'Meally

John Park
Terence Park
Frank Quatela
*Kevin Shields
Peter Tu

Harpreet Wahan
Maggie Wong
*Lei Zhao

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 STAFF

Marilyn McAndrews, District Manager
Mary O'Neill, Community Associate
Anne Krzyzanowski, Community Aide

GUESTS

Susan Lui-Congresswoman Meng's office
Mabel Tso-Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez's office
Soojin Choi-Lee - State Senator Liu's office
Brian Lam-Assemblywoman Rozic's office
Dave Fischer -Assemblyman Braunstein's office

Vito Tautonico-Councilman Vallone's office
Joonyong Ahn-Councilman Koo's office
Elizabeth Bian-Queens District Attorney Katz's office
Monica Gutierrez-Queens Borough President's office

*Excused

Chair Kelty opened the meeting at 7 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag followed by a moment of silence to honor all our soldiers who fought for our freedom, especially those who died or came home with devastating injuries and those still serving.

The attendance was taken with (37) Present (9) Absent (4) Excused *

Announcements made by Chair Kelty and by several elected official liaisons. You can review these announcements with our office staff. A special announcement from New York City DOT of a five year “Streets Plan” to improve the quality, accessibility and safety of our streets which will engage the public in a series of virtual workshops with the date for our community of Friday, July 23, 2021 from 8:30 am to 10:30 am. nyc.gov/streetsplan.com

ITEM #1- Speaker Ben Goodman - NYC School Construction Authority’s Project recent selection is in Bay Terrace, Block 5958, Lot 30 for a 572 seat Primary school at Waters Edge Drive and 24th Avenue. The environmental design, together with traffic solutions, safety environment, noise solutions, etc. are yet to be completed. But together with the current construction of PS 169 and PS 32 it will bring the total number of seats to over 1500 seats for District 25.

Chair Kelty asked for questions from our Education, Transportation and Land Use Chairs.

Q. CB7Q Transportation Chair Nick Corrado: The area is somewhat of a dead-end area and not a main thoroughfare. What about the increase in traffic problems, transportation, possible traffic pattern changes, and concerns of the residents already living in the neighborhood? Also, what can be done about the lack of any public transportation from and to this area for children to use to get to school.

A. Gail Mandaro, SCA Real Estate: We will be doing studies in partnership with the DOT to overcome any and all transportation issues, especially the issue of transporting the children to and from this school. Don’t have a lot of answers as yet.

Comment by CB7Q Education Chair Arlene Fleishman (AF): Bay Terrace needs a school and our District 25 still need more schools. We currently operate at 127% utilization and our schools still are overcrowded. I’d rather deal and work with the BOE and NYC-SCA rather than with a developer’s agenda which never considers our children’s needs.

Q. Warren Schreiber - You spoke about the new capacity. How is that generated?

A. Michael Mirisola – Capacity is generated by a multitude of agencies including City Planning, Dept. of Education, Demographic experts, how many children born in a year, where they currently reside, the projected and actual enrollment of children in a given year, etc. Demographics change every year.

Q. Warren Schreiber – What other agencies will you consult within the next six months, and the name of the Demographic experts you use?

A. Gail Mandaro - The DOT, School Safety, and FDNY. Mr. Mirisola will get you the name of the demographic expert.

Comment by Mr. Schreiber, with due respect to Arlene’s statement, during a visit on Election day to P.S. 169, the staff informed him they have a shortage of students.

Q. Matt Silverman - Is Bay Terrace part of the Sub District which is part of College Point & Whitestone, and if so, will our children be allowed to attend? Also, why is the lunchroom presently in the left wing and the kindergarten in the right wing?

A. Mr. Goodman & Mr. Mirisola - Both agree it is, but Sub Districts are not widely referred to and, of course your children can attend. Furthermore, their web site has it listed. As far as the two separate wings, we don’t have the final plans in front of us on this expansion, but we know the safety of the children always comes first during any reconstruction. The situation today is that the children’s area is overcrowded with 172 children because of current construction constrictions, but on completion the situation will relieve itself.

Q. Josh Sussman – How many teachers will be on staff, and the need for these answers now to vote properly.

A. Mr. Mirisola - Staffing can only be answered by the Dept. of Education.

Comment by Chair Kelty – Unfortunately, they can’t answer the transportation question because they haven’t done a traffic study yet. The SCA has nothing ready, no environmental study, no DOT plan, but need our vote.

Q. Pablo Hernandez – What percentage of the people in the area are moving out of state and how often is a survey done?

A. Mr. Goodman – There is a high need of seats for the District and Sub District, which is severely overcrowded, and still in need of 1500 seats. Our analysis is constantly ongoing and adjusted.

Q. Cody Hermann- What are we exactly voting on?

A. Mr. Mirisola – We need a resolution with your concerns and questions on what you would like.

Q. Cody Hermann to Chair Kelty - Do you agree to that?

Chair Kelty - They have said that all along. The current School Construction Authority Act is inappropriate because it comes before us completely void of any vital Information for us to comment on, and once our response is given, it never comes before us again.

Q. Cody Hermann – Will we have a trigger to come back to you and get involved again after the fact?

A. Mr. Goodman & Ms. Mandaro – We are open to comments from the Board and the public as we go forward and when fully approved by the City and State.

Q. Cody Hermann - Do you know the exact walking distance from the bus stop to the School front door?

A. Ms. Mandaro - No, we don't know where the front door will be, nor anticipated transportation, vehicle, and pedestrian problems.

Q. Cody Hermann - Do you anticipate cycling infrastructure?

A. Ms. Mandaro - That is outside our province. DOT will engage in their concerns only.

Listed Comments & Questions by Chair Kelty

- When we received the SCA presentation, it listed block #5958 and lot #30 and other parts of the site and nearby sites on Waters Edge Drive. Our Land Use Chair Apelian objected to the filing because of “other parts of the sites and nearby sites.” We were told that’s the standard wording, and we still object to it.

- What is the starting time for construction? The response was two to three years after final approval.
- Several Board members said they don't ever recall getting so little information in the past.
- Another member said the property has been on the market for several years. Also, there was flooding in the basement and elevator shaft which led to a foundation problem.
- The parking for teachers will already overburden the parking spaces that are available in the area for those who live there.
- This two-way street is very narrow. The working sanitation trucks already block the street and stop traffic. The street may need to be changed to a one-way and still need to deal with school buses, and parents dropping off children too young to travel or walk great distances.
- SCA needs our resolution but **without any input and information from them**. Our District is in dire need of 1500 seats for our children. Our concern is who's best to know their needs but their family and their community.
- Will the new building be ADA compliant 100%? SCA says Yes, new buildings must be compliant.
- How many of the young children will be using buses to get to school or will parents drive them? Probably both.
- How many older kids will have to walk to the school front door (wherever the door is) from the MTA Bus stop at Bell Blvd, which is a long walk?
- Will the SCA give out the fair market value of the property? No, they prefer not to disclose until a signed contract and a done deal is made.
- The building is 44,000 sq. ft, possibly four stories high. Fair market value unknown; cannot reveal until contract signed and deal done.
- Regarding Cushman & Wakefield's property site across the street, (The Bayside Waterfront Development at 23-50 Waters Edge Drive) one of our Board members said the Internet lists its value at \$12 million.

Executive Board member Frank Macchio said the site across the street is of great significance. The SCA does not have an answer for that location, but Danielle Shaft can find out. We need to know before construction. It appears the site across the street may be owned by Parks Dept. If it does and is still, we need to know the actual status, and SCA should include it. It may include the Swim Club that Parks owns, which may be up for sale and a dirt lot as well. While it brings a recreational component with it, Parks has never been known to build parking spaces to their land, only ancillary ones like playgrounds or jointly-owned parks (JOP's). However, we are not sure if Parks is the owner.

Q. Phil Konigsberg (PK): How can we now decide to vote? If the school is built, who is to be responsible if the building collapses?

Matt Silverstein - Based on the recent building collapse in Florida, it is a vital question. The sub structure of 7 or 8 buildings in the area were built in marsh land.

A. Mr. Goodman & Mr. Mirisola - The SCA is responsible, but we are always very serious about safety.

A. Ms. Mandaro - Appropriate public boring controls before and during construction will be in place, with adherence to construct codes at all times.

Q. Pablo Hernandez - Will you be using daily monitors to pick up vibrations and, if so, what company will you use?

A. Danielle Shaft. Whether owned by Parks or not, valuation studies will be done before being built. Also, lengthy , arduous studies and constant vibration studies will be performed and monitored. Mr. Mirisola will name the company.

Chair Kelty - The Public has the following comments:

Joseph DiBenedetto - We need state of the art schools for children so they can reach their highest level.

Sylvia Johnson - Opposed the location because of the same issues brought up by many Board members.

William Diropolis - Longtime resident said the area not centrally located, street too narrow, dangerous for school buses, congestion and children's safety.

Christine Coniglio - Feels we are all jumping the gun. We need more schools and fully supports building them. However, we need more information from SCA.

Corinne DeStefano - Having no basement will take away needed space from the children. Also, it will be too close to the 23-50 building.

Alan Goldberg - Will the Environmental and Transportation information be made available to the public? Also, were there other multiple sites they were looking into?

Chair Kelty said there were four other locations.

COMMENT BY MONICA from SCA - District 25 has the most overcrowded schools in all the Districts. A site as big as this is not easy to come by. SCA is a very dedicated group who work around the clock, and always available. They have the best engineers and architects and have built schools close to water many times with never a problem.

Chair Kelty reiterated we asked all the necessary questions. However, even though we need schools desperately in our district, we cannot give our decision because there is no valid information available to contemplate and vote on. They just want a resolution approving what was described to us verbally but without corroborating paperwork. Based on this loose information given us at our Committee Meeting, **Board member Joe Sweeney made the motion to NOT approve the school site in question, seconded by Warren Schreiber. The committee voted (16) Yes (3) No**

Arlene Fleishman repeated her earlier statement and added If a developer picks up this site, you may regret it even more.

Nick Corrado - As a past CEC President, he understands the problems. I remember parents, teachers, school officials, etc. begging us to have schools built. There was never a school project that came before us without problems. We asked for the information, but they couldn't give it and left it up to us to consider the bigger picture, i.e., the need for schools now.

Chuck Apelian - The problem is the complete insult to all our planning intelligence honed over years. It's not because it's not a perfect site. It's because they gave us no information at all. If the shoe were on the other foot and we asked them we wanted to build a school, they'd ask "Do you have a count of kids? No. Do you have a budget? No. We just want another school! They'd laugh us out of the meeting. Yet they come to us, very deep in the process, patting themselves on the back but they wouldn't delve into the process with us. None of this has been shared with us. The site very well could be perfect for a school, but it wouldn't be if a number of issues had to be reviewed about traffic, parking, offsite, easement issues, safety, etc. SCA needs to send us a full report. Then we wouldn't need to deliberate 2 ½ hours on "what ifs". If a developer came to us in this manner, we would deny approval of the site.

Richard Forman, said at the first meeting I voted it down, but looking at past school sites built by SCA, I realized they always did a great job.

Warren Schreiber, said we actually need schools but in the right locations, but this isn't one. It's about school safety for students, school buses, pickup/drop of children by parents, narrow street, buses for older students, parking for teachers, etc.

Pablo Hernandez and **Phil Konigsberg** both agree with Chuck and Warren, and **Matt Silverstein** agrees with Warren that it's not the right site at all.

Yackov Pshtissky needs to know what “are we actually approving,” if anything at all.

Lawrence Hughes added Sec. 1731 controls what the SCA has to do and is looking for comment. A resolution goes beyond 1731 and requires something more to persuade us to support a resolution in favor of this. I can't see supporting a resolution.

Chair Kelty said it has taken us hours to discuss the number of issues that might need to be changed, but without their plan, we cannot approve anything nor the site(s).

Chair Kelty placed the motion on the floor to disapprove the school sites at Waters Edge Drive as proposed by SCA, seconded by Pablo Hernandez.

The vote taken was (24) disapproved (13) to approve.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Danny Sheehan - Needs to make a vertical enlargement of his home in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. Unfortunately, the Chair advised his architect must submit the plans first to the BSA and if it meets the criteria necessary, it will come before us for review and a vote.

Julie Wong has 2 children, lives on 6th Ave where construction on the Throggs Neck Bridge is taking place; the construction noise, welding, working day and night, parking their cars, and changing their clothes on the street, etc. She can't live through this for next 2 years. The Chair and our District Manager will look into it.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05

Respectfully,

Mary Zuliani