



# Community Board 7

## Borough of Queens

Auburndale, Bay Terrace, Beechhurst, Clearview, College Point, Downtown Flushing, East Flushing, Flushing, Malba, Murray Hill, Queensborough Hill, Whitestone, Linden Hill, and Willets Point

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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 6, 2022

AUDIO AND VIDEO TELECONFERENCE

#### PRESENT

Charles Apelian

James Cervino

Kaily Cheng

Michael Cheng

Kim Cody

Derick Fang

Arlene Fleishman

Richard Forman

Fred Fu

Doreen Gatanas

Vincent Gianelli

Pablo Hernandez

Cody Herrmann

Lawrence Hughes

Eugene Kelty

Phil Konigsberg

Wendy Louie

Frank Macchio

Betsy Mak

Rev. Richard McEachern

Barbara McHugh

Michelle Miao

Selma Moses

Sergio Nicolich

Millicent O'Meally

John Park

Terrance Park

Yacov Pshtisky

Frank Quatela

Kris Ram

Paul Rifino

Warren Schreiber

Matthew Silverstein

Joseph Sweeney

John Tsavalos

Clarissa Wong

Maggie Wong

Dian Yu

Linna Yu

Lei Zhao

Jie Zhu

#### ABSENT

\* Nicholas Corrado    Wengsong Li

\* Jeff Huang            \* Kevin Shields

\* Esther Lee            \* Josh Sussman

Saleem Syed

Peter Tu

Harpreet Wahan

#### **\* Excused**

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#### COMMUNITY BOARD #7 STAFF

Marilyn McAndrews, District Manager

Anne Krzyzanowski, Community Assistant

#### GUESTS

Susan Liu - Congresswoman Meng's office

Mabel Tso - Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez's office

Soojin Choi-Lee - State Senator Liu's office

Howard Wong - Assemblywoman Rozic's office

Amber Yoon - Assemblyman Braunstein's office

Ido Shargal - Mayor's Office

Louron E. Hall -109<sup>th</sup> Pct Deputy Inspector

Councilwoman Paladino

Allie Zirasc - Councilwoman Paladino's office

Xin Wu - Councilwoman Ung's office

Elisabeth Bian -Queens District Attorney's office

Malik Sanders - Queens Borough President's office

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**Chairman Eugene Kelty** opened the Public Hearing at 7 pm via audio and video teleconference. Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag in honor of all who fought for our freedom and our country and to never forget those who gave their lives for freedom.

Announcements from Elected Officials, Mayor's Office, and Queens Borough Hall

Attendance was taken with ( 41 ) Present ( 9 ) Absent ( 5 ) Excused

**Louron E. Hall, 109<sup>th</sup> Pct Deputy Inspector** – Introduced himself as the new commander of the precinct.

**Joseph Sweeney, Public Safety Chair**- Asked for an update of crime rates in 109 Pct

**Dep Insp. Hall** – All types of crime have increased since last year, especially in downtown Flushing.

**Chairman Kelty** – We work closely with the 109 Pct Community Affairs Officers and the NCO's. We have the largest population of all the 59 community boards. The 109 Pct Council does excellent work, and the many civic groups here help to keep this area safe. Please send to the office any crime prevention information which we can distribute to the community. We purchased some paint rollers which can be used to cover graffiti. Welcome to Board #7, thank you for taking the time to speak to us.

#### **Announcements from Chairman Kelty:**

##### **Approval of the April 2022 meeting minutes**

#### **US Tennis Association – Update Presentation by Vanessa Rodriguez-Payne, Manager of Community Relations & Events and John Albert, Government & Community Matters**

Our mission is to maintain & preserve our communities. Billie Jean King Tennis Center is one of the largest tennis centers in the US. Their center is used for hosting graduations, job fairs, community service projects, and other events. They run programs such as ACES for children where they learn about the sport and how to play tennis. Other programs include Holiday Wishes, Queens Pride, Thanksgiving Mulch held at a local senior center, Light the Night Walk in support of Cancer patients and tennis programs in our supper camps. We also host First Responders events to thank them for everything they do. Our facilities were used during the height of the COVID pandemic. The US Open will start August 29th and go until September 11th. We will have two job fairs soon. Tryouts for the National Anthem and for ball crew.

#### **James Cervino:**

The US Tennis Association has been doing a great job. The US Open had a table for Earth Day at MacNeil Park.

**Councilwoman Paladino:** We got a lot done in our first six months. My office is also looking for young people to work as interns in my office this summer. I will be hosting a Town Hall on Public Safety. I have office hours every Thursday from 4-8pm and I will be there in person. My regular office hours are 9-5. MTA are hosting a meeting tonight. We will send out newsletters to keep the residents apprised of what is going on in my office.

#### **Fort Totten Infrastructure Update - Electrical Upgrade Project**

**Sean Cutler, Designer at Stantec**

**Presentation by Frack Macchio, Chair**

**Frack Macchio:** Fort Totten will get a new upgraded electrical service distributed throughout the Fort. The CB #7 Public Safety, Landmarks, and Parks Committees had a meeting on May 23rd about this new upgrade along with the NYC Parks, EDC, FDNY, Coast Guard, and the design team Stantec. This project was unanimously approved in committee.

**Joseph Sweeney (Safety Committee Chair):** The representatives from Stantec were beyond articulate and gave detailed information on what they will do. This project was started over 20 years ago because of the increase of water infiltration.

**Kim Cody:** Does this project have anything to do with the previous wind turbine project?

**Chairman Kelty:** That's a separate project, it's still on the schedule.

**Owen Foote, DDC:** It was mentioned that the budget is \$11 million. We are looking at a budget of close to \$40 million. This is a significant upgrade. This will provide reliable service. The Fort was built before electricity was invented and unfortunately it has not been upgraded since then. They won't need generators.

## Public Hearing

### 1. Waters Edge Playground at Cross Island Park

**Matthew Silverstein, Parks Committee Chair**

**Presentation by: Stacia Tull, Senior Director Landscape Architect**

The 1.5-acre park will be located at Waters Edge Drive and 24<sup>th</sup> Drive in Bay Terrace, adjacent to the Cross Island Parkway. The budget for this park is \$11.4 million funded by the Mayor. This park will be in the coastal flood plain, within the storm water flooding from the street. The area is empty now, with a DEP pump station on the corner. There will be two distinct areas. One space for the seniors which will be more passive and a space for younger people which will be more active. A circular loop will allow people to stroll with shaded seating along the path. There will also be picnic tables and open spaces for different opportunities. There will be fitness areas for adults which includes seating. A comfort station is planned for the future. This park will have new water, drainage, and an electrical system. New trees will be planted.

The inner area will have playgrounds for kids, one for 2–5 year-olds and another for 5–12 year-olds, as well as a spray shower to keep kids cool during the summer. There will be additional seating in the playground area. In the central area will also be lounge chairs with handles which will make it easier for more senior people to get up, and game tables and chairs. The inner area will have space for activities for all age groups. Different types of spray showers, overhead and ground spray, these are ADA accessible. Light colored pavement so that it will not be hot during the summer.

The site needs to be raised five feet above grade because it is in a flood plain. They will install an 8-foot fence between the park and the Cross Island Parkway. At least ten new light poles will be added. The trees selected where low maintenance and those that could survive in this park.

**Warren Schreiber:** Will there be an environmental study on this property?

**Stacia Tull:** Yes, we will bore and have an environmental study to check the condition of the soil.

**Warren Schreiber:** Will the new lights be LED?

**Stacia Tull:** Yes, they will be standard DOT which are LED.

**Millicent O'Meally:** Will there be a special section for disabled children?

**Stacia Tull:** Yes, they play equipment will be ADA accessible. The equipment for the 5-10 year old children will be at least 60% accessible.

**Betsy Mak:** A new school is proposed to be built nearby. There will be many parking spots lost if a park is built here. Will there be another location to accommodate parking for all the cars?

**Matthew Silverstein:** The cars that are parked here now are only parked during the summertime. They have an agreement with the private pool across the street. No one parks here after the pool closes at the end of August.

**Phil Konigsberg:** I just want to confirm that the comfort station is funded and just needs to go a little further in the design process. Is the maintenance access entrance for the public or only for the Parks Department?

**Stacia Tull:** Yes, the comfort station is fully funded and is already in the design process. We will need a community meeting for that, as well. The maintenance access will be open to the public, but it is not ADA compliant. We will install removable bollards so that maintenance vehicles can drive in.

**Phil Konigsberg:** We were told initially that there would be a small parking lot in the park. Can you give us an update whether angle parking along Waters Edge Drive was looked into, where DEP has their pumping station?

**Jim M.(Parks Department):** Parks policy is we don't put parking within neighborhood Parks only in regional parks. In regard to that policy, we brought it up with Parks administration and posed your question and it was denied to have parking within the park.

**Matthew Silverstein:** There is parking on the street along the park. We could work with DOT to possible change that to angle parking, then more cars could park here.

**Charles Apelian:** DOT will allow angle parking is if the street is wide enough. The streets here are not wide enough.

**Matthew Silverstein:** That was part of the committee report. When this park was first announced, the press release stated that there would be parking here. We would like to have it put back in.

**Charles Apelian:** This site is not big enough to include a parking lot. You were asking to take space from the park to use for parking off the street. That is what they denied. We would have to ask DOT for angle parking along Waters Edge Drive. I don't see that happening because the street is not wide enough.

**Matthew Silverstein:** That was bought up at the Committee meeting, to have DOT and Parks Department talk to see if it was possible.

**Frank Macchio:** We are asking for angle parking and for Parks Department give up 10 or 15 feet of this park. I understand this is not their policy.

**Matthew Silverstein:** One of the requests at the Committee meeting was for Parks Department to ask DOT to see if it was possible to have angle parking.

**Frank Macchio:** The curb line would have to be moved. Parks would have to coordinate with DOT.

**Sergio Nicolich:** Will the pool club still be open or is it closing down for good?

**Matthew Silverstein:** The pool club filed for bankruptcy. A new owner purchased the property and will keep it open for a few summers. The new owner will assess what they want to do with the property.

**Sergio Nicolich:** It will be difficult for the residents to park here.

**Charles Apelian:** What is the logic that there will be a foot rail installed on Waters Edge Drive versus allowing people unimpeded access?

**Matthew Silverstein:** Currently, there is a very low metal rail, there are no sidewalks. I believe they will install sidewalks and push back the metal railing. [like the ones along the highway].

**Charles Apelian:** Why would you want that versus having bikes being able to go in without having a problem or handicapped people?

**Matthew Silverstein:** That is what the Parks Department proposed

**Charles Apelian:** Why are you accepting that? Wouldn't you want unimpeded access? Someone with a stroller, or a bike, or a walking disability can't walk into the park because there is a two-foot barrier in front of them.

**Matthew Silverstein:** The discussion was that this is also for security reasons. This park is tucked away on a one-way street. There was some concern about what could be going on after school. They created one entrance into the park.

**Charles Apelian:** I don't get it. Bowne Park is many blocks long and everyone can access the park at any point.

**Sean Cutler:** We don't want kids to run out into the street. We proposed to have an entrance at Waters Edge Drive and 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The rest of the park will be surrounded by a low guardrail. The guardrail will also keep vehicles out of the park and prevent dumping.

**Charles Apelian:** I disagree. Down the road when people complain that they can't get into the park because there is a 2' high footrail, let it be known that it's been addressed here. There will be problems getting strollers & bikes into the park.

**Matthew Silverstein:** The maintenance access entrance will be open to the public.

**Sean Cutler:** There are three entrances. One is the main entrance, second is at the corner of 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue & Waters Edge Drive and the third one at the dead end of 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue. There are no steps, nothing to impede strollers or wheelchairs.

**Barbara McHugh:** Is everyone allowed to enter through the maintenance entrance?

**Sean Cutler:** It will have bollards so that the trucks can drive in, but no other vehicles are allowed. People can walk in, and strollers will fit between the bollards. This entrance is a little steep for wheelchair users.

**Barbara McHugh:** I agree with Chuck, there should be more access to the park.

**Warren Schreiber:** This is a new public park. It should have equal access for everybody. All entrances should be accessible.

**Stacia Tull:** We will look into this. The maintenance entrance is designed to give parks vehicles access.

**Sean Cutler:** We will try to make it at 5 percent grade.

**Matthew Silverstein:** On May 24th, 2022 the Parks Committee met to discuss the Cross Island Parkway/ Waters Edge Drive park project. Representatives from NYC Parks Department, the Bay Terrace Community Alliance, the nearby co-op, Cord-Meyer Development, and Councilwoman Paladino’s office. Parks Department was given \$11.5 million. The site is 1.5 acres. This is across the street from a proposed elementary school. The project will take about 2-2.5 years to complete.

**Chairman Kelty:** There are no comments from the public.

**Matthew Silverstein:** The motion was made to approve this project on the following conditions: (1) Parks should provide an 8-foot fence on the eastern side next to the Cross Island Parkway. This is to keep people from coming up from the Parkway and to keep children from running into the Parkway (2) Install security cameras inside the park (3) Put back the parking lot (4) build a visible entrance (5) the comfort station should be worked on at the same time as the park project.

**Chairman Kelty:** We have a motion on the floor to accept this. Seconded by Warren Schreiber.

**Pablo Hernandez:** Parks Department really should take into consideration accessibility for handicapped people for any of their projects. Whenever they cut funds, they cut funds for handicapped accessibility or handicapped comfort stations.

**Chairman Kelty:** The motion is to approve

20 – In favor      19 – Against      9 – Absent      2 – left early

**2. 134-16 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue BSA # 2021-55-BZ – applicant seeks a special permit to allow for the construction of a 12-story mixed use building that is located within the flight obstruction area**

**Chaired by Lei Zhao, Land Use Committee Chair  
Elyse Foladare, Associate Attorney, Eric Palatnik, PC**

**Lei Zhao:** The proposal is for the applicant who is seeking to build a mixed use building 12 stories high. Approximately 98,000 SF. with residential, commercial & community space. This building is to the west of the old RKO building. The building has an as of right. The question is whether to permit them to exceed the height restriction near the airport.

**Elyse Foladare:** Zoning District is R6 C2-2. Six-story as of right development on Lot 55 (135-25 Northern Boulevard) and 12-story mixed use development on adjacent lot 1250 (134-16 35th Avenue). A portion of this development seeking a special permit to exceed the maximum height permitted in the vicinity of a major airport. We have both Port Authority of NY & NJ and FAA approval determination for this building. The site goes from Northern Boulevard to 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue, between Prince & Farrington Streets. This building maximum height allowed 145 ft and this building’s proposed height is 143.9 ft.

**Lei Zhao:** This building is as of right. The FAA & the Port Authority signed a letter of ‘no hazard to air navigation’.

**Chairman Kelty:** Any question from Board Members?

**Betsy Mak:** The building on Northern Boulevard will be 6-stories. The tower on 35th Avenue will be 12-stories high. Why are they different height instead making these the same height?

**Elyse Foladare:** There are different uses for the buildings. They just happen to be on the same zoning lot.

**Charles Apelian:** This is one zoning lot, which according to NYC Department of Buildings records this has not been sub-divided. If this has been sub-divided, I have concerns about the reasons it this has been sub-divided and if the use of this lot is proper. I would like a better explanation, even though they claim it is as-of -right. I am not quite sure if everything is according to “Hoyle”. I feel there is something else about this building that needs to be addressed. I would like to ask BSA about this.

**Lei Zhao:** We didn’t get into that at the committee meeting or its prior history.

**Charles Apelian:** I don’t consider the height an issue. There is something about this project that makes me feel uneasy. We should have a detailed conversation with the Applicant to make sure this development is correct. We can write a letter to BSA to make sure everything is correct, and this is not a self-imposed hardship.

**Chairman Kelty:** Then we will not take the vote tonight.

**Charles Apelian:** I am making a motion to table this.

**Chairman Kelty:** We have a motion to table this.

**36 – In favor**

**1 – Abstention with conflict of interest**

**1 – Abstention without conflict**

**Chairman Kelty:** The motion carries to table.

**Public Participation**

**Michelle Schombs:** I am impressed with this forum. I am a Registered Nurse at NYPQ and I do community outreach.

**Chairman Kelty:** I spoke with Phil Konigsberg, Chair of the Health Committee to add you to our Health Committee,

**Billy Joe Cruz:** I live on Underhill Avenue. The trucks from the DDC project go in and out all day. Sometimes the workers come on Saturday & Sundays. The place is a mess with dirt all over the place. If I said something to the workers, they threatened us with physical violence. The workers have threatened other people in the neighborhood.

**Arlene Fleischman:** The first day of school will be September 8,2022 and the last day will be June 27, 2023. The new curriculum will include Asian American Pacific Islanders Community history, culture, and accomplishments. Changes to class size- Pre-k 20 children, Kindergarten 23 children, the rest will be 25 children.

**Maurice Pinzon:** The homeless transitional shelter in downtown flushing is moving forward. I would like to encourage the Community Board and people in the community to make it work. We need transitional housing. This community is not overburdened with facilities like that. Hopefully no one would ever need them.

**John Kelly, Kissena Park Civic Association:** This Saturday we will have a general membership meeting at the boathouse near the lake. This is open to everyone.

**James:** I live near Bowne Parks and have a question about the renovations at the parks. The construction workers are pulling out work that was just done eight years ago. Did CB #7 have any input on this and did the Parks Department ask CB #7 for their input? Are the renovations what the neighbors want? Because to me it seems that they are adding maybe 2 or 3 more benches.

**Maroua Righi:** I work with the Civilian Complaint Review Board. We have resumed our board meetings. CCRB is hiring.

**Meeting ended: 09:45 PM**

**Respectfully Submitted**

**Anne Krzyzanowski,  
Community Assistant**