



# 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*

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

Monday, April 8, 2024

Meeting was held in the basement of St Luke Church, 16-34 Clintonville Street

#### PRESENT

Charles Apelian

James Cervino

Kaily Cheng

Kim Cody

Nicholas Corrado

Arlene Fleishman

Richard Forman

Pablo Hernandez

Jeff Huang

Lawrence Hughes

Eugene Kelty

Phil Konigsberg

Esther Lee

Wendy Louie

Frank Macchio

Betsy Mak

Barbara McHugh

Selma Moses

Sergio Nicolich

Terence Park

Dr. Vipul Patel

Yacov Pshtissky

Frank Quatela

Kris Ram

Maureen Regan

Paul Rifino

Kevin Shields

Warren Schreiber

Matthew Silverstein

Josh Sussman

Joseph Sweeney

Peter Tu

Harpreet Wahan

Clarissa Wong

Maggie Wong

Lulu Yang

Dian Yu

Rachel Zhang

**Absent:** Dr. Wensong Li

**Excused:** Michael Cheng, Fred Fu, Doreen Gatanas, Vincent Gianelli, Cody Herrmann, Rev. Richard McEachern, John Park, Saleem Syed, John Tsavalos, Linna Yu, Lei Zhao

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#### COMMUNITY BOARD #7 STAFF

Marilyn McAndrews, District Manager

Mary O'Neill, Community Coordinator

Anne Krzyzanowski, Community Assistant

#### Elected Officials

Susan Liu - Congresswoman Meng's office

Jeff Montoya - Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez's office

Justin Connor - Congressman Suozzi's office

Wei Lu Su - State Senator Liu's office

Josh Simanowitz - Assemblyman Berger's office

Koshy O. Thomas - Assemblyman Braunstein's office

Assemblyman Kim

Alexis Winters- Councilwoman Paladino's office

Councilwoman Ung

Xin Wu - Councilwoman Ung's office

Georgia Katsalis - Queens Borough President's office

**Chairman Eugene Kelty** opened meeting at 7 pm. Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag and a moment of silence in honor of all who fought for our freedom and our country and never forget those who gave their lives.

Attendance was taken with (38) Present (1) Absent (11) Excused  
Announcements from Elected Officials.  
Announcements from Chairman Kelty  
Approval of March 2024 minutes

**John P. Albert, Shelby Ponder, Daniel Zausner and Chris Studley** from the USTA gave an update on the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center.

### Public Hearing

**45-29 Kissena Blvd., Flushing, BSA Calendar#2024-07-BZ** - A special permit pursuant to Section 73-434 of the Zoning Resolution to allow a reduction in the number of off-street accessory parking spaces required for existing affordable independent residences for seniors, in order to construct an additional 114 senior units.

**Betsy Mak, Committee Chair**

**SelfHelp:** Selfhelp has been in Flushing for over 60 years. The first residents were Holocaust survivors. They run two Older Adult Centers, affordable Senior Housing residences, offsite senior care services, case-management and many other services which benefit our seniors. To address the urgent need for more affordable housing for seniors, we applied for a parking reduction permit at our existing site. Plan is to add more housing units for people earning 50% or below of the area AMI and provisions for people who have experienced homelessness, and ensure no one pays over 30% of their income. The adjacent Benjamin Rosenthal Older Adult Center will be open during the construction.

Buildings constructed after 2016, the available number of parking spaces must be 10% of the number of affordable senior housing units. The old buildings are still subject to the 72 spaces. We are here today for a BSA special permit to request that the number of parking spaces for old buildings will have the same requirements as the new buildings. If we don't reduce the number of parking spaces, we will not be able to construct the new building.

This will not have undue adverse effects on the residents, businesses, or community facilities in the surrounding area. Our study shows this will not affect parking in this area. Improvements to the landscape design and vehicular circulation improvements will be made. We are hoping for BSA approval sometime this year. Construction is planned to start in the middle of 2025 and will take approximately 24 months.

**Arlene Fleishman:** What is low income or affordable housing?

**Selfhelp:** 60% of the areas AMI is around \$60 - 62,000/year. To qualify for an apartment here, income is about \$50,000 for a studio and \$56,000 for a 1-bedroom. No resident will pay more the 30% of their income.

**Yacov Pshtissky:** Will there be enough parking spaces for visitors so that they are not discouraged from visiting?

**Selfhelp:** Out of the 73 spaces, 27 are utilized by the residents, there is no charge for parking.

**Frank Quatela:** Did the Fire Department approve this project?

**Selfhelp:** The FDNY review is in progress. Their trucks have to access the building using the driveway.

**Frank Quatela:** Have you considered excavating under the building to provide more parking?

**Selfhelp:** We did consider this. We cannot get the funds for it.

**Sergio Nicolich:** There are bollards at the driveway entrances. How will emergency vehicles get in?

**Selfhelp:** These are removeable.

**Pablo Hernandez:** How many parking spaces are required?

**Selfhelp:** Twenty-seven currently and 12 for the proposed building. Forty spaces are proposed. None of the spaces are allocated for staff.

**Dian Yu:** There are very few parking spaces on the street. I have to circle the block many times to find a spot.

The motion is to approve the above Zoning Resolution, seconded by **Frank Macchio**.

**Charles Apelian:** I have worked with Selfhelp on various projects. They have one of the best organizations in NYC for senior housing, senior services, assisted living care and providing meals. CB #7 used to have our offices in their building, so I am very familiar with the site. I know parking is difficult on Kissena & Union Street, but Selfhelp is a tremendous asset to the community and they have always been operated true to their word. The new building will be contextual to the surrounding buildings, so I support this application and encourage our board to approve it.

**Frank Macchio:** I wish we could find more people like Selfhelp to build buildings like this. I am supporting this.

**Josh Sussman:** I live near their facility on 26th Avenue. They do a fantastic job. I don't think parking is a concern because most of the residents don't drive.

**Sergio Nicolich:** Selfhelp has been a lifesaver for me. I have been caring for seven years for my mother who has dementia. Selfhelp has really helped me out.

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

**37 – In favor**

**1 – Abstention**

**12 - Absent**

**0 – Against**

**0 – No vote**

**A.K.A. - Street co-naming on the corner of 45th Avenue and Bowne Street, Flushing as BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir Lane.**

**Nicholas Corrado, Transportation Chair**

This co-naming was requested by **Dr. Vipul Patel** (now a board member) and Ashook Ramsaran. This co-naming was approved by the 109<sup>th</sup> Pct Council, NYS Senator John Liu, Assemblyman Ron Kim, Assemblywoman Nilly Rozic, Assemblyman David Weprin, and Queens BP Donovan Richards.

**Dr. Vipul Patel:** The committee voted unanimously for this application. This would be a fitting tribute to recognize the tremendous contributions of the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir. We have special events throughout the year. The Temple will celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year. It first started in the basement of a home and then its congregation grew bigger. We now have six temples. BAPS has been focusing on health, education, environmental, community service and humanitarian work. We provided community service to the Flushing area by giving to the food pantries, running health fairs and blood drives. We also provide tutoring for children.

**Maureen Reagan** (speaking for **Denise Winters**, President of Holly Civic Association, who had to leave): We support the street co-naming. They have been an asset to this community by running food banks and other services.

**Chairman Kelty:** The motion is to approve the Co-naming of the corner of 45th Avenue and Bowne Street, Flushing as BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir Lane. Seconded by **Warren Schreiber**.

**Charles Apelian:** I am concerned about some of their history. There was a lawsuit involving some of the workers. I am not supporting this co-naming.

**Harpreet Wahan:** I have known this organization for many years. During COVID they supplied meals to the community. I am in strong support of the co-naming.

**Paul Rifino:** Can we table this and research this organization some more?

**Lawrence Hughes:** I also read about the lawsuits. It dealt with construction of facilities in New Jersey. The street co-naming is for the service provided to the Flushing community and not for the construction work or employment records in NJ. I had supported this at the committee meeting notwithstanding the controversy in NJ.

**Chairman Kelty:** A motion to table comes before any other motion on the floor.

**Paul Rifino:** I am not voting for something that had lawsuits against them. If this organization is worth it, then we can go ahead and vote for the street co-naming. I am making a motion to table.

**Chairman Kelty:** Motion is to table. There is no more discussion. The motion is to table the above street co-naming, seconded by **Phil Konigsberg**

**31 – In favor**

**0 – Abstention**

**12 – Absent**

**7 – Against**

**0 – No vote**

**Chairman Kelty:** This will go back to a committee meeting.

**Public Participation**

**Gabrielle Cavazos** spoke about New York Presbyterian Hospital.

**Dao Yin** spoke about his campaign for New York State Assembly District 40.

**Shi Sheng** lives at 45-16 Union Street and is against the expansion of the Selfhelp building.

**Meeting ended: 10:00 pm**

**Respectfully Submitted by**

**Anne Krzyzanowski,**

**Community Assistant**