



# 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

30-50 Whitestone Expressway, Flushing, NY 11354 Ste. 205

Ph: (718) 359-2800

Fax: (718) 463-3891

Email: [qn07@cb.nyc.gov](mailto: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 Queens

### PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING

### Minutes

Monday, November 18, 2024

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

#### **Board Members Present:**

Charles Apelian

James Cervino

Kaily Cheng

Kim Cody

Nicholas Corrado

Arlene Fleishman

Richard Forman

Doreen Gatanas

Cody Herrmann

Jeff Huang

Lawrence Hughes

Eugene Kelty

Phil Konigsberg

Esther Lee

Dr. Wensong Li

Frank Macchio

Betsy Mak

Rev. Richard McEachern

Barbara McHugh

Selma Moses

Sergio Nicolich

John Park

Dr. Vipul Patel

Terence Park

Yacov Pshtissky

Frank Quatela

Kris Ram

Maureen Regan

Kevin Shields

Warren Schreiber

Matthew Silverstein

Josh Sussman

Saleem Syed

Joseph Sweeney

John Tsavalos

Peter Tu

Harpreet Wahan

Clarissa Wong

Lulu Yang

Dian Yu

Linna Yu

Rachel Zhang

**Excused:** Fred Fu, Vincent Gianelli, Wendy Louie, Paul Rifino, Maggie Wong, Lei Zhao

---

#### **Community Board #7 Staff**

Marilyn McAndrews, District Manager

Mary O'Neill, Assistant District Manager

Anne Krzyzanowski, Community Service Aide

**Elected Officials**

Tandeep Kaur Sawhney – US Senator Schumer’s office	Councilman Moya
Tianna Armstrong - Congresswoman Grace Meng’s office	Alie Ziraschi - Councilwoman Paladino’s office
Wei Lu Su - State Senator Liu’s office	Councilwoman Paladino’s office
Koshy O. Thomas - Assemblyman Braunstein’s office	Alexander Hart Councilwoman Ung’s office
Alan Ong – Assemblywoman Rozic’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 to never forget those who gave their lives.

Announcements from Elected Officials. Announcements from **Chairman Kelty**.

**Vice Chair Apelian:** We have a new 109 PCT Satellite Station. We started this process in 2022 when we met with the Mayor and was a condition for our approval for the 2023 Willets Point Phase II Soccer Stadium. I met repeatedly with staff from the New York City EDC and with top NYPD officials including 109th PCT Commanding Officer Inspector Coleman to make this happen.

**Public Hearing**

**Queens Future - AKA Metropolitan Park ULURP for a proposed City Map amendment to de-map streets and rezone to C8-4. Charles Apelian** – Land Use Chair

**Charles Apelian:** This is to only vote on a proposed City Map amendment. They ask for a zoning map amendment and rezone the area to C8-4. We are not voting on a casino approval nor a park alienation.

**Michael “Sully” Sullivan** (Chief of Staff to Steve Cohen, owner of NY Mets): We want to build something beautiful around Citi Field such as park space, live music, bars, restaurants and other fun things to do. During the past four years we studied the area and held numerous meetings with members from the community and asked them what they would like to have in the new park area. This input was used to plan a new 25-acre park & destination area. Currently this is a 50-acre asphalt parking lot.

Next summer we plan to submit a formal RFA (Request for Applications) proposal to NYS. A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) will be formed which will hold public hearings to review and vote on the gaming facility portion of this project. The casino will draw people here year-round and it will improve the economy of the area. Currently, there is not much to do before or after ballgames in this area.

We are partnered with Hard Rock Café, who constructs their buildings on budget and on time, and they also have excellent indoor live music. We also partnered with McKissack & McKissack, a program management and construction firm that is the oldest Black-owned architecture and construction company in the United States. We also partnered with Henry Cisneros and former City Comptroller Bill Thompson. Our design team has designed many projects in City Parks.

We will have a hotel, and a bandshell will be built so musicians can perform before or after games. We will have a food hall with many different types of food. There will be ballfields & parks for the community, including a playground for people on the Autism spectrum.

We will completely renovate the MTA 7 train station as part of a public-private partnership with the MTA. The current station is not ADA accessible.

We will provide private security to keep the site safe and clean and to encourage people to come.

**Julissa Ferreras-Copeland** (Public Affairs): We held sixteen (16) workshops to meet with people in the community and we listened to their input. We knocked on over 40,000 doors and obtained over 20,000 signatures in favor of this project. The top two requests were to expand open green space where people can bring their children to play, and good-paying jobs. They also wanted us to use local businesses. Most people described the area around Citifield as dark & desolate. We will continue to listen to the community. People asked to have access to the waterfront. People want to have entertainment nearby so that they don't have to travel to Manhattan.

**Greg Pastorelli:** The entertainment complex will have large columns similar as Lincoln Center or Kennedy Center. The hotel will have different heights to simulate a skyline and it will be located where it will cast the least amount of shadow. This project will be built using union labor. We will give back to local churches, not-for-profit organizations & civic groups.

#### **Questions from Board Members:**

**Arlene Fleishman:** Where will people park?

**Sully:** We will share parking facilities with the Soccer Stadium. Soccer and Baseball games will not be played on the same day. Parking will be under our new building. One layer will be above ground. This is a flood plain and buildings must be built 14 feet above the flood plain. There will also be garages. We want to make sure that there are enough parking spaces so people don't park on the grass or in the park.

**Joseph Sweeney:** When someone buys a game ticket will it be linked to parking?

**Sully:** Parking was studied by traffic & parking engineering firms. We saw that traffic was backed up on the nearby streets. When someone buys an event ticket, their parking will be located in a lot based on when they come from.

**Joseph Sweeney:** Will there be trains going to Manhattan after an event?

**Sully:** The MTA told us they will reopen the express tracks this May. Many people will also take the LIRR.

**Kim Cody:** Will the private security firm patrol the entire area?

**Sully:** Private security will patrol the entire park and maintain the park according to NYC Parks Department specifications. There is a holding cell at Citifield in case someone needs to be held.

**Phil Konigsberg:** Where is the access to the parking?

**Sully:** There will be an area for drivers to drop-off & pick up passengers. One level down will be for self-parking. We will work to improve the local road networks. We will add multiple lanes for entering & exiting. The parking garages will be available to anyone who wants to use them.

**Matthew Silverstein:** Will the Parks Department allow you to build anything you want?

**Sully:** Anything we build has to be approved by the Parks Department. Our landscape architects know what type of native plant & trees to use. This is technically park land. We want to make sure this park gets used year-round by having different types of events.

**Linna Yu:** If I want to go to a restaurant, do I still have to pay for parking?

**Sully:** Hard Rock will have a voucher program. People who come to an NYCFC or Mets game will pay for parking.

**Harpreet Wahan:** Will you be making an upgrade to the LIRR station as well as to the #7 station?

**Sully:** We will create a clear passage to get to the LIRR.

**Yacov Pshtissky:** Will there be shuttle buses from other locations not just from the airport?

**Sully:** It will be up to the elected officials where the buses go. We are willing to have shuttle bus service.

**Rachel Zhang:** Will you provide any gambling addiction services?

**Paul Pellizzari** (Hard Rock International VP global social responsibility): It's bad for our business when people develop gambling problems. We have worked for the past few years to prevent the effects of problem gambling. All our team members are trained to understand the signs of problem gambling. We have partnered with community groups that provide counseling for problem gamblers.

**Maureen Regan:** Will you replace the Night Market or copy it?

**Sully:** I do not want to compete with the Night Market. When we asked members of the community what they wanted, people did not want chain restaurants. We want to celebrate many different ethnic cuisines. We will invite small business owners here to sell food.

**Maureen Regan:** After you remove the asphalt, what will be here?

**Sully:** we want to make the entire site climate resilient. We will capture rainwater & have green roofs.

**Lawrence Hughes:** Do you have any plans to improve the bus transit in this area? Any possibility for charter bus service on the property?

**Sully:** We will have new bus stops here and bus routes that will go through the site.

**Cody Herrmann:** Does the city have a position on this project because this is NYC parkland?

**Sully:** No, just because we are collaborating with the City does not mean that they have a position on this.

**Cody Herrmann:** Is this area susceptible to flooding?

**Sully:** This project has to stay at the level of Citifield. It could flood, but drainage is in this area.

**James Cervino:** Why isn't this land in the brownfield agreement and why isn't it remediated to take out the PCB's and extremely high levels of lead and other waste in the soil? Also, as a result of the alienation, why can't we get parkland somewhere else like at the former Flushing Airport?

**Sully:** We cleaned up what had to be cleaned up. The people in the community wanted the parkland to be created here, not somewhere else.

**Terence Park:** What type of medical assistance will you provide, given the large number of people who come here?

**Sully:** We will have private ambulances here, same as at Citifield.

**Betsy Mak:** How do residents apply for your community grants?

**Sully:** There will be a website, and the application process will be simple.

**Public Comments:**

***Spoke in favor of this project:***

Tom Grech (President & Chief Executive Officer, Queens Chamber of Commerce)  
Kenny Cohen (Local 3)  
Costa Constantimides (CEO Variety Boys & Girls Club)  
Donovan Finn  
Ahyoung Kim (Asian American Federation)  
Tony Chung (Youth Director, Chinese Planning Council)  
Hyun T. Lee (Korean American Association of Queens)  
Winston Liao (Metro Athletic Dragons)  
Sharon Levy (Advocate & Parent)  
Kelly Cho (Korean American Family Service Center)  
Larry Gallegos (Parent)  
Erica Ford  
Alan Sherman (longtime Queens Resident)  
Brian Chen (Chinese American Planning Council)  
Keith Felensfeld  
Helen Arteaga  
Yoselin Estralla  
Robert Dorsky-Kaisen (longtime resident of Corona)  
Peter Cheng (CPC Nan Shan Senior Center)  
Liang Ming (Glow Community Center)  
Ted Teng (Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce)  
Henry Lo (Hamilton House)  
Elly Chu (Hamilton House)  
Shanel Thomas  
Jonathan Forgash (Founder Queens Together)  
Nicole Bailey (Learning Tree School)  
Moe Chan Liu (Local Union #3)  
George Stein – with better security & if not flooded

***Spoke against this project:***

Brandon Ramirez (Hispanic Not-for Profit organization)  
Mario Mendez  
Rebecca Pryor (Guardians of Flushing Bay)  
Margaret Flanagan  
Carmel Wilson  
Cheri Colan  
Xinia Jaime  
Ryan Chen  
John Park  
Heitha Lo  
Connie Liu  
Nabil Khatri  
Omar Chatila  
Kara Fan

**Charles Apelian:** Our Land Use Committee was overwhelming in favor of this project. We are not voting on a casino; and park alienation is up to the NY State legislature. The community benefits of this project will provide \$163 million dollars to local organizations over 30 years. Gene Kelty asked for and was accepted by the Applicant that someone from this Community Board has a seat on the committee that decides where to distribute the funds.

Twenty years ago, NYC2012 tried to get the Olympics for NYC. As part of their bid, a once in a lifetime \$200 million was allocated for improvements in FMCP. Unfortunately, NYC did not get the Olympic bid and Queens never saw any money for the Park. This is again, a one-in-a-lifetime chance to get funds for our community. I was blown away when they said that they would spend \$500 million to renovate the #7 train station. The MTA does not have the funds to repair this train station and probably never will unless this project is approved. I believe this project will greatly improve or community.

**The Motion is to approve the City Map amendment.**

Seconded by **Frank Quatela**.

#### Discussion

**Warren Schreiber:** I was unsure about this project as my main concern was the parkland. I was troubled about the casino portion. I listened to others talk about how they were supportive of this project, many of the speakers tonight bought up good points. I will vote 'yes'.

**Cody Herrmann:** The developers held many workshops about this project. The attendees wrote their comments on Post-it notes®. I don't believe that people left enough comments at the workshops. There was a lot that was left out and many people's voices were not heard. There were a lot of back-room deals.

**Maureen Regan:** I am in favor of this proposal, with conditions. This park is a dump. Years ago, a conservancy was going to raise funds to clean up this park. I spoke to this community board about this years ago about improving Kissena Corridor Park and creating a Mediation Garden there. Now we have the opportunity to get another Mediation Garden.

**Terence Park:** This project is the best project I have seen since I have lived here.

**Matthew Silverstein:** I attended one of the listening sessions. I have never seen a developer with such hospitality and include us in their project plans. This will create many union jobs.

**36 – In favor**  
**4 – Against**

**0 – Abstention**  
**0 – No vote**

**8 – Absent**

**Meeting ended: 10:36 pm**  
**Respectfully Submitted**  
**Anne Krzyzanowski,**  
**Community Assistant**