



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 Queens

PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING

Minutes

Monday, December 9, 2024

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

Board Members Present:

Charles Apelian

Kaily Cheng

Kim Cody

Nicholas Corrado

Arlene Fleishman

Richard Forman

Doreen Gatanas

Jeff Huang

Lawrence Hughes

Eugene Kelty

Phil Konigsberg

Esther Lee

Frank Macchio

Betsy Mak

Rev. Richard McEachern

Barbara McHugh

Selma Moses

Sergio Nicolich

John Park

Terence Park

Dr. Vipul Patel

Yacov Pshtissky

Frank Quatela

Kris Ram

Paul Rifino

Kevin Shields

Warren Schreiber

Matthew Silverstein

Josh Sussman

Joseph Sweeney

John Tsavalos

Peter Tu

Harpreet Wahan

Maggie Wong

Rachel Zhang

Dian Yu

Linna Yu

Absent: James Cervino, Dr. Wensong Li, Clarissa Wong

Excused: Fred Fu, Vincent Gianelli, Cody Herrmann, Wendy Louie, Maureen Regan, Saleem Syed, Lulu Yang, Lei Zhao

Community Board #7 Staff

Marilyn McAndrews, District Manager

Mary O'Neill, Assistant District Manager

Anne Krzyzanowski, Community Service Aide

Elected Officials

Tianna Armstrong – Congresswoman Meng’s office
Wei Lu Su - State Senator Liu’s office
Marco Cruz -Assemblyman Berger’s office

Koshy O. Thomas - Assemblyman Braunstein’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 our country and never forget those who gave their lives.

Announcements from Elected Officials.

Announcements from **Chairman Eugene Kelty**.

Vice Chair Charles Apelian spoke about the groundbreaking, which he was instrumental in its realization, where the new soccer stadium “Etihad Park” will be built in Willets Point near Citifield.

He then presented an official shovel, that was used in the groundbreaking, to Chairman Kelty.

Approval of October & November 2024 minutes.

Public Hearing

BSA Calendar No. 156-03-BZ: 135-35 Northern Boulevard, Flushing. (Formerly known as RKO Keith’s) Variance and special permit. **Charles Apelian - Land Use Committee Chair**

Amendment of a previously approved Variance (§72-21) & Special Permit (§73-66) to permit the construction of a 17-story mixed-use building contrary to underlying bulk requirements. This building is a C2-2/R6 zoning district.

Applicant – Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jackson, LLP, for Queens Theater, Owner.

Applicant: They bought this building twenty-one years (21) ago. The interior is landmarked and must be preserved. The owner saved the inside plaster works, preserved it and will restore the artifacts. They put up a \$10 million completion bond to install all the old artifacts according to the Landmark Preservation Commission.

There will be a driveway that goes in the interior of the building to the rear parking lot. There lot can also be accessed from Farrington Street.

We plan to make a beautiful building. There will be a restaurant that seats about 240 people.

The interior portion that is landmarked doesn’t have windows which means that it cannot be used for housing.

The Board of Standards & Appeals allowed us to use more floor area because we won’t be able to build a building that has reasonable return. This will be a very expensive construction project.

We will have medical offices, community and commercial space; it will generate some traffic.

There will be some resident units facing Northern Boulevard.

Questions

Sergio Nicolich: What if there is an emergency, will there be room for emergency vehicles? How will the vehicles be able to get there?

Applicant: They would be able to park in front of the building. Same as the delivery trucks, they can come in from the driveway. There will be ventilation for vehicles that are in the building.

Paul Rifino: Why didn’t you build when it was approved in 2016 with 269 units?

Applicant: The LPC (landmark Preservation Commission) changed the requirements for what had to be kept from the old building causing the previous plans not to fit in the building.

Paul Rifino: If we approve your current plans, will you guarantee that you build this according to the plans?

Applicant: Of course, that's why we are here.

Yacov Pshtissky: If you will have medical offices, community facility and restaurant, will there be separate entrances for these?

Applicant: Yes, there will be separate entrances, egress and separate ventilation for each section of the building. BSA told us that this will be one of the most complicated buildings they have ever had to review.

Matthew Silverstein: What will be in the large space, a restaurant or catering hall?

Applicant: We need to use as much of the landmark space as we can. It will be a restaurant.

Kim Cody: How many parking spaces will there be?

Applicant: 238 spaces.

Dian Yu: What about parking spaces for the delivery services?

Applicant: We will have a truck loading bay.

Dian Yu: When will construction start?

Applicant: It will take about a year to get the final construction drawings to BSA and then we will start building. The construction will then take about 2 years to complete.

Lawrence Hughes: On the side of the building where there is two-way traffic, will there be any traffic control so pedestrians can walk there?

Applicant: We will install whatever traffic controls BDS or DOT will tell us that we should have here. We will do whatever we can do to promote safety.

Kris Ram: Where will be the emergency exits?

Applicant: The emergency exits are required by the Department of Buildings codes. We will comply with all the building codes. There will be ample exits throughout the entire building.

Terence Park: What type of parking facility will it be that can accommodate so many cars?

Applicant: There will be car stackers. There will be attendants who will park cars. There will be about 12 spaces for cars to queue to wait to be parked.

Phil Konigsberg: You showed on the diagram stairs going up, what about for accessibility to go up?

Applicant: There will also be elevators in the building.

Chairman Kelty: Sometimes the airplane pilots going to or from LaGuardia Airport get affected by the reflections from window. Will there be any problems like that with the windows in this building?

Applicant: Thank you for informing us. We will consider the façade when building this.

Doreen Gatanas: Will they close parts of Northern Boulevard during construction?

Applicant: There will be a crane parked on Northern Boulevard because we have to get the steel over the building. We want to be finished using the crane as soon as we can.

Betsy Mak: Will the apartments be rental or condominiums?

Applicant: THE plan right now is for condominiums.

Betsy Mak: Will you convert some of the community space into larger condominiums and sell these for higher price?

Applicant: We have turned some of the community space into amenity space, but these do not bring in income. We have looked at apartments in the community space, but we can't have bedrooms or living rooms there. We won't make more by adding some dwelling units that are bigger or deeper.

Yacov Pshtissky: Do you know what will be the waiting times to park or to get out of the parking lot during rush hour?

Applicant: We don't anticipate a half-hour wait to wait to park. There are many uses in this building, and we do know that there will be people coming in and out at different times.

Paul Rifino: Why can't they park the crane on the side?

Applicant: The side street is too narrow to place the crane, it's only 16 feet wide. We long steel beams that we have to move over the building.

Joseph Sweeney: How long will the crane be there?

Applicant: About 18 months.

Joseph Sweeney: How much will they charge for parking?

Applicant: We will have a parking operator. They will decide how much to charge for parking.

Discussion

Charles Apelian: This project has been going on for over 21 years. This Board rejected their plans previously. The applicant went to the BSA and to the Queens Borough President to ask for 7.9 FAR (ratio of total building floor area to the area of its zoning lot). We had concerns of the size of the building. It is 16,000 sq feet of community space which will most likely cause lots of traffic. There could be hundreds of people to a facility with such a huge community space. And people come and go all day long. There will be lots of delivery trucks stopping at this building. The issue is not how high it will be what happens on the street level.

The Land Use unanimously committee denied the application.

Chairman Kelty: This building will cause a lot traffic in the area, on Northern Boulevard, Farrington Street and the other side streets. I'm not happy with their traffic plans. It will be very difficult for the cars to come out of the parking lot.

Joseph Sweeney: I feel that this building will be a total disregard for community purposes. The traffic will cause people to be late. The reason that I asked about parking costs is that it will be too high and I, and others, won't park there. I think that they overpaid for this building. We will be left with this for many, many years. Then the developers will go somewhere else, and we will be stuck with this. There is a High School a couple of blocks away and many other buildings here. It is not fair. It is our responsibility to protect the community. I don't think they are respecting the community.

Paul Rifino: Are we rejecting this because of the community facility?

Charles Apelian: Yes. All the objections were around the community facility. My opinion is that if the community facility were eliminated, we would vote in favor of this. City of yes does not apply to this property because of the zoning.

Dian Yu: This has been vacant for so many years, now we have a chance that someone will build here.

Yacov Pshtissky: They had many issues before and have not improved anything.

Selma Moses: Many years ago I asked if there will be children living in the building. They said that they don't intend to have children living here because there were only studio apartments. I wonder if anything has changed.

The motion is to disapprove the proposed variance for 135-35 Northern Boulevard.

Seconded by **Joeseeph Sweeney**

Vote

35 – In favor

0 – Abstention

11 – Absent

2 – Against

0 – No vote

The motion carries.

Public Participation

Moses Yi, NYC CERT: From the NYC Emergency Management. He is looking for locations and community events where he can present information.

Warren Schreiber: The NYC Council approved the "City of Yes". Queens Civic Congress has started a 'Go Fund Me' page to file an article 78 lawsuit against NYC to stop the "City of Yes".

Kim Cody: I want to thank the Community Board. A year ago, we approved Willits Point II and in doing that we negotiated a satellite Precinct for the 109th Pct. This will give us more police to patrol College Point & Whitestone. I have been advocating for a new precinct for over 40 years.

Meeting ended: 9:15 pm

Respectfully Submitted

**Anne Krzyzanowski,
Community Assistant**