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THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Community Board 2
BOROUGH OF STATEN ISLAND

Minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting of the Full Board
Tuesday, September 19, 2023 - 7:00 P.M.

Community Board 2 held its Full Board Meeting on Tuesday, September 19, 2023, at 7:00 P.M. at the Joan and Alan Bernikow Jewish Community Center of Staten Island, 1466 Manor Road, Staten Island.

Chair Fred R. Guinta called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M. with the pledge to the Flag of the United States of America. lag.

Secretary Shawn Abraham called the roll. A quorum was present.

Board Members Present:

Shawn Abraham, Olu Ajayi, Igor Baboshkin, Rosanne Clift, Simone DiTrapani, Julie Freeman, Roy Garlisi, Fred Guinta, Jordan Hafizi, Gurdev Kang, Mohammad Khalid, Michael Lanza, Diane McNamara, Mendy Mirocznik, Dr. Allan Perel, Florida Qello, Leutrim Qoku, Gerard Ruggiero, Dr. Donna Seminara, Stephen Zaderiko, Steven Zboinski.

Board Members Absent:

Benjamin D'Amato, Zafar Durmaz, Anselmo Genovese, Dr. Ram Raju.

Board Members Excused: Dr. Deborah Cognata

Staff Present: Debra Derrico, District Manager

Representatives of Elected Officials Present:

Marie Carmody-LaFrancesca, for Borough President Vito Fossella
Lily Zafaronloo, for Congress Rep. Nicole Malliotakis
Ian Yanda, for City Council Member Tannousis
Dylan Fossella, for City Council Member Joseph Borelli
Loren Marie Centineo, for City Council David Carr
Vanessa Limani, for State Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton

Guests Present:

Jennifer Miller, NYC Parks & Recreation
Annemarie Calucci, DOT
Gene and Joan Guerra
Eileen Bardel
Mary Di Gregorio

Amanda Caputo
Osvaldo Rosado
Judy and Santo Borello
Kwynn Hogan
Joe Masterson

Scott Herkert
Joe Shmoe
Meredith Forsyth
Joe Valente

Chair Fred R. Guinta called for a motion to accept the proposed agenda. The motion was made seconded and unanimously approved.

Chair Guinta called for a motion to accept the June 20, 2023 Full Board Minutes. The motion was made and seconded to accept. The minutes were unanimously accepted.

Officers' reports:

Chair Fred R. Guinta: refer to YouTube

First Vice-Chair: Gerard J. Ruggiero - No report.

Second Vice-Chair: Rosanne Clift - No report.

Third Vice-Chair: Ben D'Amato - No report.

Secretary: Shawn Abraham - No report.

Treasurer: Roy Garlisi - The Treasurer's report is on file in the board office.

Chair Guinta introduced guest speaker, Assembly Member Sam Pirozzolo.

Guest Speaker: Assembly Member Sam Pirozzolo said, "I had asked for a little bit of speaking time because there were some things happening within the community board district and one of them is the proposed battery site for Travis. I know, there's a lot more going on, and I certainly would take some questions, but I just wanted to make sure you know that everybody knows that they're looking to put a 650-megawatt lithium-ion battery site along Victory Boulevard right across the street from the park's nurseries. I did share a proposal with the board. I don't know if anyone else has received it. If you would like to see what they're talking about you can follow my Facebook page, you don't have to follow, but just go to my Facebook page, Assembly Member Sam Pirozzolo. Hecate Grid is the name of the manufacturer in charge of the site. This site is going to be so large that they tell me that it's going to have at least two full-time personnel that are going to be there all the time."

One other thing is that the mayor has passed the City of Yes. The city is now saying that sites like this can be put in as of right without having to appear before community boards, before community members, or before elected officials. So, there's a lot of what I would say, negative things going on. It's certainly the city of yes. As far as when the mayor wants to do something, but as we see what's happening with battery sites, and shelters opening on Staten Island, we certainly aren't being consulted in any meaningful way.

I think they're expecting it to be complete in 2026, so I would imagine they will, probably start in 2024. The biggest problem I have is that it's not coming to this community board. I don't know how involved we're going to be. As far as the process is concerned, I've already met with these people.

I will say just one thing and I'm not saying this as in go ahead and do the lithium-ion battery site, but that is a lot of property that is there. Sooner or later, this property is going to become valuable enough that something else is going to go there. So, I think the people of Travis must make a choice and the people standing everywhere.

Do we want to change our community the way it looks and the way it works, and you know how we shop in the community and what I mean when I say that is last year during the budget process, the governor was trying to do a housing compact, which also would have superseded community boards and zoning

regulations and would have allowed I believe up to a six-story apartment building to be placed anywhere that it fits. So, we have a problem right now with the majority.

There's no balance as far as Albany is concerned, and the parties are just doing whatever they want. So, I think consideration is going to have to come somewhere in the future with one project or another, communities are going to have to decide what it is that they would like to do. Maybe two months ago there were two independent lithium-ion battery sites that were on fire.

The standard operational procedure is to let them burn out for three reasons - number one, the water hitting the batteries as they burn becomes toxic and will poison the ground, two, it will seep into the ground and poison the groundwater and three is, as these batteries burn whether there is a master switch to turn them off or not to turn them off, an individual battery may now catch on fire and put electricity out into the water which may be occupied by firefighting personnel right, so you got to watch them go. The process is terrible, and I think that this is not good for our community. I don't see why they can't be put out in the middle of the West Shore swamp. You know put them out there and run the lines on the water, but that costs more money. And that's really you know what the problem is. I tried to introduce legislation. All the assembly members from Staten Island - Charles Fall, Michael Riley, Michael Tannousis, and myself. We all signed on to this legislation, but it's still dying in committee so to speak.”

A motion was made to oppose Hecate Grid’s proposal for a lithium-ion battery energy storage system at 3657 Victor Boulevard, Staten Island.

Secretary Shawn Abraham read the following Resolution:

Resolution Against the Construction of a New Battery Site for Community Board 2, Staten Island

WHEREAS, the proposal to construct a new battery site within Community Board 2, Staten Island, has been presented for consideration; and

WHEREAS, we, the residents and members of Community Board 2, Staten Island, express our concerns and objections to the construction of this new battery site for the following reasons:

1. **Environmental Impact** We are deeply concerned about the potential adverse environmental impact of constructing a new battery site in our community. Battery manufacturing and storage facilities have the potential to generate hazardous waste, release harmful chemicals into the air and water, and pose significant risks to our local ecosystem.
2. **Health and Safety Concerns** The construction and operation of a battery site may pose health and safety risks to our community members. Batteries can contain toxic materials and may present fire or explosion hazards. We are concerned about the long-term health and safety of our residents, especially those living close to the proposed site.
3. **Property Values** The presence of a battery site can negatively affect property values in the surrounding area. Potential buyers and investors may be deterred from purchasing property near such a facility, leading to a decline in property values for homeowners in the vicinity.
4. **Quality of Life** Noise pollution, increased traffic, and disruptions during construction and operation can significantly impact the quality of life for our community members.

Our neighborhood has historically been a peaceful and residential area, and the introduction of an industrial battery site could disrupt this tranquility.

5. ****Community Engagement**** We believe that decisions that impact our community should be made with active community input and engagement. The proposal for the battery site should undergo a thorough and transparent public review process, including input from residents before any construction is approved.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the undersigned members of Community Board 2, Staten Island, oppose the construction of a new battery site within our community due to the concerns and objections.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we request that local authorities, government agencies, and relevant stakeholders carefully consider the potential risks and impacts associated with this project and prioritize the well-being and safety of our community in any decision-making process.

Roll Call vote was taken; vote passed unanimously

Swearing in Ceremony - Marie Carmody-LaFrancesca, Borough President's Director of Constituent Services & Capital Budget swore in two new members, Joseph Torre, and Valerie Aliffi-Maroney.

Public Session Speakers:

Scott Herkert – “My family and I currently reside next door to the migrant shelter at St. John Villa. I first want to start out by saying that I'm not anti-immigration, but what's going on isn't normal at any level - we are all immigrants, but we went through a process. Not one of those processes is in place now. Health checks for diseases, criminal background checks, and sex offender checks. No consideration was taken for the safety of our children or how it would impact the three schools in our community because of the lack of transparency and honesty. The community can only assume the worst, especially when it was done in secret people don't feel safe anymore. It has been stated that this shelter will be for women and children. However, mostly men ages, 17 to 35 have been coming in and out. The building cannot handle the amount of people they want to bring in. The plumbing doesn't work properly, so the sewage is being pumped out daily. All the neighbors are subject to the smell. There are no showers in the building. The men are showering outside, which is visible to my neighbors and their daughters, bedrooms, and my family as well, and is visible from the hilltop of the all-girls high school Saint Joseph Hill Academy. They are taking showers and coming out, half-dressed with clothes and underwear hanging on the fence. This is not acceptable. I'm here asking for community support to shut down the Migrant Center at St, John Villa, and to stop migrants from coming from coming into Staten, Island in secret and without knowledge. Now, here's a list of sites on Staten Island that are on the table: Fort Wadsworth, Miller Field, Wolf's Pond, Park, the old ShopRite, the Armory, St. John's University, the Christmas Tree Shop in Tottenville, and the Alice Austin House in Rosebank. I hope we can galvanize the people of Staten Island and gain their support to put a stop to their goal to house migrants at St. John Villa, establish a safe neighborhood, where we can continue to raise our family in a safe community, give people a chance to live in a community that values and respects everyone. Today, I'm fighting for my home. Tomorrow, it could be yours. We need a united front on Staten Island to stop our government from doing this without our input, knowledge, or planning from the community.”

Assembly Member Michael Tannousis said “my parents were immigrants. They came here worked, and never received anything. The MOA started first grade not speaking English. He learned he became a part of the community. These past few weeks have been crazy. MOA Tannousis was a prosecutor and a litigator. Scott LoBaido with his office filed a lawsuit regarding the shelter at St. John Villa, on the grounds of 50 feet from an elementary school and all-girls school, and other grounds as well. Judge Ozzy

reserved the decision but, signed an emergency vacate order. Within 3 hours the City appealed, and an Appellate Judge overturned his decision. MOA Tannousis stated, "Never in my years of practice or in government have I heard or seen an appeal happen within 3 hours." We are waiting for Judge Ozzy to decide which should be very soon. Things need to change; we can't just keep letting people across the border. Just today the City brought migrants to Fr. Cappadonna Boulevard, Island Shores Senior Center with no notice to Elected Officials, the community, or anyone after we spoke to representatives from the City, representatives from the Department of Homeless Service who said they would advise us. We will continue to fight."

Gene Guerra – "I spoke at the land use meeting last week about the lithium-ion site. The Lithium-Ion battery site as I was told, just as you know, our assemblyman mentioned earlier, doesn't even come before the land use committee, and doesn't come before the community board. I am a Travis resident. I am the former Travis Civic Association president. I've fought many a battle, and this is going to be the biggest battle presented to us. We talk about the size of sites but this site here that they're proposing is 650 megawatts. The biggest site either in New York or in the country is like seven megawatts, so you figure that one out 650 megawatts on eight acres of land on Victory Boulevard, hundreds of feet from residential homes from schools. The reason I'm here tonight is I know that it's not going to come before the board, but just as this young lady mentioned earlier, we need the support of the board. We need the support of Staten Island because, if it gets into Travis mark my words, it's going to get into your neighborhood too. Maybe not as big as Travis, but certainly in your neighborhood, and you don't want it, we don't want it. I'm speaking for Travis, 100 opposes this site and there will be protests."

Kwynn Hogan – "I want to thank everyone for coming out here tonight. Everyone is passionate, and I listen to all of you with an open mind and open heart. So, I really hope you do the same. Staten Island has always been a proud borough and one that has always helped its own and they think the divisive issue here is that we do not see these migrants as our own. Me, personally, I'm a fourth-generation Staten Islander. I have Irish, Italian, French Canadian, you name it it's in my background and my family. They came over here in 1910. I want every one of you to ask yourselves what year your family came to Staten Island has always been made up of migrants. We're proud to be Italian on St Joseph's Day when we get our pastries and we are proud to be Irish during the Forest Avenue parade. Yet we have forgotten this and have put the blame on people who are just looking for a better life. People like every single one of our ancestors think back to the stories that we grew up with of times when newspaper articles reported the Irish were stealing our jobs, of times when signs read no guineas allowed, think back to those stories. Our ancestors have been subjected to the same hate that was displayed at St John Villa a few weeks ago. The sad difference now is that the bullies are the children of immigrants. If you wouldn't say go back to your country to your Nona, you should ask yourself why you are so willing to say it to a black and brown person a lot of time. I am not here to tell any single one of you that your feelings are not valid or that they don't matter. The main concern is that they have that they are not discussing the positives like how funding has helped local non-profits. They are not discussing how this funding has brought your local Catholic churches out of poverty because they are getting multiple. Hundreds of thousands. Lily Zafaranloo of Congress Member Nicole Malliotakis' office said I'm, a first-generation proud, American and I happen to work for Congresswoman, Nicole Malliotakis. I think we all are compassionate people. There's no reason for you guys to be yelling and screaming at each other. This is a room full of love. You know that and you all know it. We've seen it in Sandy, we've seen it in 911. There is nothing like the passion and compassion that people in Staten Island have and I'm proud of us for that, proud of you guys for that. Yelling or screaming regardless, we can be reasonable. This is a serious situation folks. I'm just here to beg you not to turn this political, it's a crisis. This is a bad situation we are in. It is not sustainable. People aren't getting vetted. There are drugs coming in. Fentanyl is on the rise. Tuberculosis is up. People are sick, they're hurting, they're, struggling. I see a lot of co-workers in this room from the Democratic and Republican sides. Ask them how many people call our offices and scream and beg for help because they're poor and they know where to live, and they have nowhere to live and

nothing to eat. Think about those people. I used to think they were at the bottom of the level. I didn't know that there could be lower than the bottom because now they're going to be even further than where they need to be, because people that came to the border illegally are going to be taking all of our resources, and this is a situation that we need to work on and I say it respectfully. We are trying to fix this. Hey, I feel bad for my Representatives. I feel bad for Assemblyman Tannousis and Sam Pirozzolo who are here because they're fighting an issue that starts federally - - starts in my office and we're trying okay. There is a Bill, HR2 -Secure the Border Act 2023. It passed in Congress months ago. This can help issues at the border. It's been sitting in the Senate's office, but they won't bring it up for a vote. If you want to help us as a community call, Chuck Schumer's office call Jill Gillibrand's office tomorrow, and please ask them why it's sitting there because can be done to fix the situation. Thank you so much I appreciate you."

Meredith Forsyth – "My name is Meredith Forsyth and I am a proud alumna of St Joseph Hill Academy High School, class of 2015. I am appearing here today on behalf of more than 200 alums of St Joseph Hill Academy and fellow community members who have signed our petition standing expressing our solidarity with migrants and asylum seekers being housed at the vacant former St. John Villa Academy, directly adjacent to our school property. While I don't speak for the school or for all alums of St. Joseph Hill those of us who have signed our petition want to affirm that at St. Joseph Hill, we were taught the importance of service to our community. Our alma mater instilled in us the values of being confident, independent thinkers and compassionate leaders. As students, we proudly and joyfully embraced our role as Hills Angels volunteering our time for various causes including cooking and serving weeknight dinners at shelters for unhoused Staten Islanders through Project Hospitality. The current humanitarian crisis unfolding in our city is no different than the many other causes that we have supported over the years. In our petition, we have urged the school to uphold its values of service and stewardship to our community and to explore ways to support migrants and asylum seekers. Our petition, which I would be happy to share and submit via email to the board, also specifically asks Community Board 2 to call upon the city to establish a liaison to respond to any reasonable community safety concerns associated with the placement of the migrant shelter resources, not rejection. We are urgently calling for more resources, cooperation, and support from the city and local officials to improve the migrants, shelter site conditions, and provide the necessary resources for migrants and asylum seekers to integrate into our community."

James Matheson spoke against the way the migrants are entering the country. They should come into the country legally. Mr. Matheson's Grandfather fled to Argentina after World War II and came to the United States legally as a nuclear physicist. We need to have the limited resources that are available go to the Staten Island people who need the help, we are letting our own down by giving resources to the migrants.

Francesca Gallelli of District Attorney Michael McMahon's Office spoke about public safety due to the migrants in Staten Island. Francessca said that since the migrant's first arrival, there have been no arrests and no police reports. There are 24/7 private and Police security at all location's migrants are being housed. If there was a crime committed by a migrant, they would be prosecuted in Staten Island and, if convicted would serve their sentence here before deportation was executed. The District Attorney supports the other local politicians' sentiments and has signed on to the letter that was written that we do not have the resources to house and provide support to the migrants here on Staten Island.

Standing Committee Reports:

Aging: Dr. Donna Seminara made a public service announcement for those over the age of 65, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene along with the CDC, has recommended three vaccines this year. One of them is for the flu vaccine. One is for RSV and one is for the Covid-19 Vaccine. If anybody has any questions about these, they can address them with me directly, but certainly, I wanted to give you the information that is recommended.

Capital & Expense Budget: Roy J. Garlisi - No report.

Environmental Protection: Stephen W. Zaderiko asked the Board to support a letter to the New York State Senate and NYS Senate for a New York State Bond Fund has agreed to purchase 25 acres of Serpentine Hillside on Richmond Road above where the old Damian's Night Club once was. This will allow protection of the Land and allow only for Park Land. A motion was made by Chair Fred Guinta and seconded by Jordan Hafizi to table the above-referenced request.

Health: Dr. Ramanathan Raju - No report.

Parks: Jordan Hafiz - No report.

Public Service: Michael Lanza - No report.

Land Use: In the absence of Land Use Chair Ben D'Amato, Shawn announced the application and read the resolution.

BSA Application Number 2023-30-A

625 Midland Avenue, Block 3813, Lot 1

Proposed alteration to an existing Community Facility to comply with the Flood Zone regulation contrary to General City Law Section 35 in a C1-1/R3-2 Zoning District

Resolution "Community Board 2 is on record of being opposed to building in the bed of a mapped street but will approve BSA Application Number 2023-20-A for 625 Midland Avenue, Block 3813, Lot 1, for an alteration to an existing Community Facility to comply with the flood zone regulation to General City Law Section 35 in a C1-1/R3-2 zoning district with the condition that said property at 625 Midland Avenue is used only for and remains as a Senior Day Care Center.

A roll call vote was taken. 19- In favor of approving the application, 2-Opposed, 0-Abstentions, 0-Not-Entitled

Law, Legislative Review & Ethics: Mendy Mirocznik read CB2's Procedures for Hybrid Meetings.

A motion was made to adopt CB2's Procedures for Hybrid Meetings. Shawn Abraham read the resolution and the procedures were adopted by unanimous vote.

Community Board 2's Adopted Procedures for "Hybrid Meetings"

New York State Open Meeting Law Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2022 amended Section 103(c) and added Section 103-a of Public Officers Law ("the Open Meetings Law", which will be effective June 9, 2022, and will sunset July 2024).

Pursuant to Public Officers Law § 103-a (2)(b), Community Board 2, Staten Island will adopt the following procedures governing member and public attendance at meetings conducted by use of videoconferencing (the Procedures).

These Procedures shall apply to all public meetings of the Board conducted by use of videoconferencing and to all public meetings of any committee or subcommittee of the Board.

Each member of the Board who wishes to attend and participate in a public meeting of the Board shall be physically present at a meeting location that is open to the public and identified in the public notice for such meeting.

If, due to extraordinary circumstances, a member of the Board who wishes to attend and participate in a meeting is unable to be physically present at a meeting location that is identified in the public notice and open to the public, such member may submit a written request to the Executive Committee to attend the

meeting via videoconference from a location that is not open to the public. The written request must be submitted two weeks prior to the meeting to allow the public notice for the meeting to be revised to indicate that the meeting will be conducted by use of videoconferencing) and must identify the general nature of the extraordinary circumstance that causes such a member to be unable to be physically present at a meeting location that is open to the public and identified in the public notice.

Extraordinary circumstances shall include

- a. Disability
- b. Illness
- c. Caregiving responsibilities; and
- d. Any other significant or unexpected factor or event that precludes such member's physical attendance at such meeting at a meeting location that is open to the public.

Regardless of the provisions in these procedures that permit members to attend a meeting via videoconference from a location that is not open to the public, the Board shall not be permitted to conduct a meeting unless the number of members physically present at the location(s) where the public can attend is at least equal to the minimum number of members necessary to fulfill the Board's quorum requirement.

If such quorum requirement is satisfied, the members physically present at location(s) where the public can attend, and the member(s) attending the meeting via videoconference from location(s) not open to the public may participate in the meeting and vote at the meeting.

When videoconferencing is used to conduct a meeting, then except in the case of executive sessions, the Board shall ensure that each member participating in the meeting, whether at a location where the public can attend or from a remote location that is not open to the public, can be heard, seen, and identified, while the meeting is being conducted, including but not limited to any motions, proposals, resolutions, and any other matter formally discussed or voted upon.

Members participating from a remote location shall ensure that their visual and audio connections are operational and must identify their full name on the videoconferencing software so that it appears on the screen.

A member who is qualified to participate in a meeting from a remote location that is not open to the public shall not be permitted to participate in the meeting from such remote location if the member's visual and audio connections are not operational and/or do not permit such member to be heard, seen, and identified, while the meeting is being conducted.

Members participating from a remote location shall ensure that their visual and audio connections are operational and must identify their full name on the videoconferencing software so that it appears on the screen. A member who is qualified to participate in a meeting from a remote location that is not open to the public shall not be permitted to participate in the meeting from such remote location if the member's visual and audio connections are not operational and/or do not permit such member to be heard, seen, and identified, while the meeting is being conducted.

When videoconferencing is used to conduct a meeting, the meeting minutes must identify which, if any, member(s) participated remotely and shall be available to the public pursuant to Section 106 of the Public Officers Law.

When videoconferencing is used to conduct a meeting, the public notice for the meeting must inform the public that videoconferencing will be used; must specify where the public can view the meeting (and when public participation in the meeting is authorized, shall specify where the public can view and/or participate in the meeting); shall identify the physical location(s) for the meeting where the public can attend; and shall otherwise comply with all applicable requirements of the Open Meetings Law.

When videoconferencing is used to conduct a meeting, the meeting shall be recorded, and the recording of the meeting shall be posted or linked on Community Board 2's website. Minutes of meetings where there was virtual participation must be posted within the time set forth in Sec. 106 of the POL (two weeks).

When videoconferencing is used to conduct a meeting, the public may attend the meeting at any location that is open to the public, and, in addition, the Board shall provide the opportunity for members of the public to view such meetings via video. Videoconferencing authorizes the same public participation or testimony as in-person participation or testimony.

When videoconferencing is used to conduct a meeting, the Board requires members of the public who wish to attend the meeting remotely by videoconference to register for the meeting by filling out the webinar registration form on CB2's website – nyc.gov/sicb2.

Page 10 - Full Board Meeting – September 19, 2023

Community Board 2's Adopted Procedures for "Hybrid Meetings" continued.

Neither the in-person participation requirements of these procedures nor the in-person quorum requirements of these procedures shall apply during a State Disaster Emergency declared by the Governor pursuant to New York State Open Meeting Law Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2022 amended Section 103(c) and added Section 103-a of Public Officers Law ("the Open Meetings Law.")

Traffic and Transportation: Gerard J. Ruggiero - No report.

Youth Services: Simone DiTrapani - No report.

proposal, which would narrow Lincoln Avenue from two chaotic lanes to one between the Grant City Staten Island Railway stop and Midland Beach. Steven Zboinski asked that the Commissioner be invited to the next Board Meeting regarding the status of the proposal.

Annemarie Cantasano, Executive Assistant to SI DOT Borough Commissioner Rosann Caruana stated that she would stay after the meeting to answer any questions or concerns that anyone may have.

Old Business: Steven Zboinski wants the board to invite SI Borough Commissioner Roseanne Caruana to give the board an update

New Business: None

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.