

The City of New York
Brooklyn Community Board 15



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LAURA SINGER
DISTRICT MANAGER

Monthly Board Meeting – Minutes

GENERAL BOARD MEETING

Tuesday May 21, 2024, 7:00pm

Kingsborough Community College, 2001 Oriental Boulevard, Brooklyn, NY
11235, Faculty Dining Room U112

The meeting was called to order at 7:01pm, by Chairperson Theresa Scavo. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Chair Scavo asked that everyone remain standing for a moment of silence for World Peace. Chair Scavo welcomed returning Board Members, Ed Jaworski and Sam Tsang and then proceeded to welcome new Board Members Hanna Glikman, Janet Guerra, Moses Massry, William Matheson, Lakimja Mattocks, Victor Popovsky, and Usha Singh.

PUBLIC HEARING / PUBLIC SESSION:

ZONING COMMITTEE:

Chairperson Scavo introduced Mr. Ronnie Tawil, Chair of the Zoning Committee, who explained the procedures for this part of the meeting. Mr. Tawil called up the representatives from The Department of City Planning: Lucia Cappuccio – Borough Planner, Laura Smith, Deputy Executive Director of DCP and Alex Sommer, Director of the DCP Brooklyn Office.

DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING PRESENTATION:

City of Yes : Housing Opportunity

The NYC Department of City Planning is proposing a citywide zoning text amendment to expand opportunities for housing within all zoning districts, and across all 59 of the City's Community Districts. These changes to the City's Zoning Resolution would enable more housing and a wider variety of housing types in every neighborhood, from the lowest-density districts to the highest, to address the housing shortage and high cost of housing in New York City.

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City Planning gave out handouts and outlined step by step why they felt the need for this proposal and the solutions they have devised to address the affordable housing crisis the city is currently facing.

Questions and concerns from the floor, ranged from stating the failure of the city in having infrastructure keep up with building requests. Community and Board members spoke of flickering lights on their block because of power drains, antiquated sewer systems and future concerns for the inability to flush a toilet properly. Concerns for overcrowding in apartments were shared. Concerns for flood zones and sinking problems for certain neighborhoods such as Gerritsen Beach and Marine Park with the proposal bringing heavy over inundated construction causing further sinking. Congestion and lack of parking were discussed at great length. City Planning was asked about their attempt to evaluate and navigate local streets in the area to see how traffic is often at a standstill, taking 10 minutes to go down one block. Someone asked where are the new schools, new parks, and new hospitals to coincide with the building of all these new properties, bringing in new people? It was stated that buildings under 6 floors are not mandated to put in an elevator, precluding ADA tenants their ability to participate in these new Zoning Proposals and apply for these apartments, becoming shut out of the process. Concerns about changing the quality of life for current residents. Concerns for the need for more Police, Fire and Emergency personnel were discussed. Some felt the Zoning Laws were in place for a reason and these changes would make more properties “As of Right” no longer allowing the community to weigh in on what is being built in their community.

In Support a Board Member spoke of her struggle to find affordable housing. Many younger folks of her generation hitting the job market, can't afford the current cost of rent, let alone the dream of home ownership today in New York City and are forced to remain at home longer with their parents.

Chair Scavo stated that the Board Office received 1 letter in support from a community member, which she read to the Board at the author's request.

It stated: “ Good evening. My name is Michael Sutherland, and I am a lifelong resident of Gerritsen Beach. Although I am not able to make it in person tonight, I wanted to voice my support for the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity proposal. We are facing an affordable housing crisis in our city, and I believe this proposal can achieve its stated goal — making sure we create a little bit of housing everywhere, rather than forcing one or two neighborhoods to bear the brunt of development. This proposal would increase supply, create new ways to make housing more affordable, and unlock units by letting supply and demand tell us how much parking is needed to be built. If this proposal were to pass, it would make it easier to

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find housing in our neighborhoods that I can afford to live in — and be a big step towards solving our housing crisis. Thank you."

A motion was made to approve by Robert Gevertzman and seconded by Allen Popper.

A Committee Vote was taken, 2 yes, 11 no and 0 abstention. The motion did not pass the committee; however, a full board vote would take place in the Executive Session.

PUBLIC SESSION:

Chair Scavo opened the floor and invited Elected Officials, their representatives, agency representatives and community members to speak:

Board Member, William Truscio, spoke about the audio issues on the B49 bus in Sheepshead Bay and stated his complaints to the MTA have been ignored. He asked fellow members of the community who take mass transit to put in complaints as well to address this issue. He is hoping that with numerous complaints the issue will be taken more seriously and resolved.

Board Member, Morris Missry, stated he is also on the Kings Highway Beautification Committee, and they are asking for the Board's help in extending regulations to keep Kings Highway a mobile vendor free zone. Two food trucks have taken up residency between McDonald Avenue and Ocean Parkway, taking up valuable parking spaces blocking the dedicated bus lane from being able to flow unimpeded and hurting existing local food establishments. Currently mobile street vendors are prohibited on Kings Highway from Ocean Avenue to Ocean Parkway, but those regulations need to be extended to encompass Ocean Parkway to McDonald Avenue, as well. He is seeking Chair Scavo's help and the Board's help to rectify this issue and make the request on behalf of his organization.

Board Member, Ed Jaworski, who is also Vice President of Madison Marine Homecrest Association spoke about the merging of his organization with the Marine Park Alliance. He stated that City Planning doesn't plan, they rezone. The City of Yes Housing Opportunity is just a way to legalize all the illegal construction that has been taking place in the community. If the City would do its job and collect the \$ 1 Billion dollars owed in fines, it would be a revenue that would assist in the city's financial crisis and discourage the dangerous construction practices that are going on unchecked today.

Board Member, Debra Greif, announced that the Brooklyn Developmental Disabilities Council is having an in person 31st Annual Family Support Fair on Wednesday June 5, 2024, from 9:30am – 2:00pm at Brooklyn College Student

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Center, 2705 Campus Road, Brooklyn NY 11210. There will be over 50 City, State, and Intellectual Developmental Disabilities (IDD) agencies on hand to assist you with any inquiries. She left flyers on the front table with more information.

Tyler Reynolds, Construction Liaison, for the Manhattan Beach sewer replacement project stated they are working with two crews now, one doing installation work of curb valves and the other restoration work. They are currently working on Hampton Avenue and Beaumont Street. He will be taking a two-week vacation, but you can reach his direct supervisor Johnson with any issues at 646-560-2703 or dial his direct line which will transfer to his supervisor automatically.

Hunter Rabinowitz, representing Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso, sent greetings from the Borough President, and welcomed New Board Members and returning Board Members. He announced that the Borough President, would be partnering with Council Member Mercedes Narcisse's office to assist with your Con Edison bills on Wednesday May 22, 2024, from 1:00pm-6:00pm at her office located at 5827 Flatlands Avenue, Brooklyn NY 11234. The New Board Member Swearing in and Orientation Day was rescheduled to Monday June 24, 2024, at 5:30pm. It is mandatory for New Board Members to attend and unfortunately due to space limitations members of the public will be unable to attend. Please RSVP. Lastly, he stated on April 27, 2024, the Borough President's Office ran a successful SCRIE and DRIE program. Educating Brooklynites on these important programs.

Solomiya Momot representing Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton's Office stated the Senator sponsored legislation to exclude squatters from being considered tenants, and it passed into law. This legislation was to address a recent issue in the district with squatters taking over 178 Mackenzie Street. The Senator held a press conference on May 9th to address the issue. The second legislation she had passed was making assaulting a retail worker a felony. The signage alerting the public to this new law is available and offered in many languages and can be placed prominently in the store. The Senator is also working on legislation to close unlawful Cannabis shops, allowing the city to take immediate action against these illicit stores. They are working to secure a new date for their Catalytic Converter Etching, that was postponed due to weather, she believes sometime in mid-July and will provide a date as soon as she receives confirmation. Lastly, she placed flyers on the table for two upcoming events Senator Scarcella-Spanton is sponsoring, a Shredding Event on June 7th and No-Cost Mammogram on June 9th in our neighboring Coney Island, Community Board 13 area.

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Nancy Lulu, representing the Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez's office spoke about the concerns for cryptocurrency scams going on throughout the Borough. She provided a flyer on the front table with further details on how to avoid getting caught up we these illicit schemes. The DA's office is investigating and trying to shut them down, but she cautioned everyone to never invest with someone they don't know. If you think you may be a victim, please reach out to their hotline at 718 250-2340, to report it. She stated they recently sponsored a prescription drug take back event, netting 110 pounds of unwanted prescriptions. She thanked the NYPD for their continued partnership in this program, which is usually held twice a year. She welcomed New Board Members and thanked the returning Board Members for their continued service.

Chair Scavo acknowledged Sayed Joseph, Chief of Staff for Council Member Mercedes Narcisse's office.

Irena Khlenver, Deputy Director of Constituent Services, for Councilmember Mercedes Narcisse, mentioned the upcoming Con Edison Customer Assistance Day, jointly sponsored by the Council Member and Borough President, previously addressed by Borough Hall Representative, Hunter Rabinowitz. She spoke about legislation the Councilmember has sponsored regarding the Reporting of Sickle Cell Cases with the Department of Health to address this issue. The Councilmember feels Community Service is of the upmost importance and so she is sponsoring many services and events such as food give aways every Monday and the MTA bus once a month. She provided a booklet of flyers on the front table and welcomed all to partake. The office is available to assist during business hours 9:00am-5:00pm, Monday through Friday.

Chair Scavo asked if anyone else would like to speak? With no one coming forward she moved on to Executive Session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A Roll Call Attendance was taken by Secretary Allen Popper, with a Quorum present, a motion to adopt the April 16, 2024, minutes was made by William Truscio and seconded by Debra Greif.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

Chair Scavo read the Liquor and Cannabis licenses the Board received:

Renewal, Wine, Beer & Cider

Khinkali Factory Corp
1105 Quentin Road

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Brooklyn, NY 11229

New Application, Wine, Beer & Cider

Shawarma Factory Inc.
1111 Quentin Road
Brooklyn, NY 11229

Renewal, Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider

Living Room Sushi & Steak House Inc.
192 Avenue U
Brooklyn, NY 11223

The Gather Inn Again, Inc.
2718 Gerritsen Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11229

16th Street Tavern Inc.
1602 Gravesend Neck Road
Brooklyn, NY 11229

500 Foot Hearing

El Jaguar Restaurant & Bar
158 AVENUE U
Brooklyn NY 11223

Cannabis License:

Retail Dispensary

Dank Heaven LLC
1601 Avenue U
Brooklyn, NY 11229

Chair Scavo stated if you know of any issues with any of these establishments, please let the office know so that we can reach out to the State Liquor Authority and the Office of Cannabis Management.

The address for Dank Heaven at 1601 Avenue U was a concern because an illegal shop has been operating there for some time called the Smokey Joint. Is this a new business or a way to legalize an already proven bad actor who operated above the law and was already shut down once by the Board. It was asked that we put the Board's concerns in writing to the Office of Cannabis Management.

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Nominating Committee:

Chair Scavo called upon the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Edmond Dweck. Edmond Dweck thanked his fellow Committee members Robert Gevertzman, Chick Pallotta, Al Smaldone and Morris Dweck, stating they conducted a meeting on May 12, 2024, to address the members applying for Officer and Executive Committee roles. He stated their recommendations were as follows:

The Officers:

For Chairperson: Theresa Scavo was the only name submitted- The floor was opened for nominations, with none from the floor, the nominations for the office were closed and the Secretary Allen Popper cast the one vote needed.

For First Vice-Chairperson: Ronald Tawil was the only name submitted–The floor was opened for nominations, with none from the floor, the nominations for the office were closed and the Secretary Allen Popper cast the one vote needed.

For Second Vice –Chairperson: Raisa Chernina was the only name submitted- The floor was opened for nominations, with none from the floor, the nominations for the office were closed and the Secretary Allen Popper cast the one vote needed.

For Treasurer: Jack Erdos was the only name submitted - The floor was opened for nominations, with none from the floor, the nominations for the office were closed and the Secretary Allen Popper cast the one vote needed.

For Secretary: Allen Popper was the only name submitted- The floor was opened for nominations, with none from the Floor, the nominations for the office were closed and Robert Gevertzman cast the one vote needed.

The Nominating Committee recommendations for Executive Committee were as follows:

Edmond Chalom
Marc Cohen
Dr. Alan Ditchek
Edmond Dweck
Morris Dweck
Robert Gevertzman
Morris Harary
Jack Kishk
Al Smaldone
Eli Zami

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The floor was opened for nominations, with none from the floor, the nominations for the office were closed and the Secretary Allen Popper cast the one vote needed.

Public Safety Report:

Public Safety Chairperson, Frances Chick Pallotta, prepared a statement read by Chair Scavo as follows: The Public Safety Committee meeting was held in person at the 61st Precinct on Wednesday, May 8, 2024, at 5:30pm. Representing the 61st Police Precinct was its Commanding Officer, Captain Joseph Antonio. In attendance also from the 61's Community Affairs Office was Detective Lauren Au and Police Officer Chris Alvarado. Public Safety Committee Members were forwarded in advance the link to the 61st Police Precinct CompStat Report. Presented to the Full Board is the latest Comp Stat Report covering the week of 5/13/2024, through 5/19/2024, (Volume 31, Number 20). Year-to-date statistics, overall, the 61st Precinct was down 3%. No murders have been recorded thus far in 2024, compared to 3 murders in 2023. We have had 5 rapes in 2024, compared to 5 rapes in 2023. Continuing to the remaining major crime complaint categories, robberies, down 8.8%; 62 robberies in 2024, compared to 68 robberies in 2023. In the felony assault category, the 61 is up 8.1%, 93 felony assaults in 2024 compared to 86 in 2023. Burglaries, down 28.8%, 57 burglaries so far in 2024, compared to 80 burglaries in 2023. Grand Larceny, down 5.4% - 243 so far in 2024, compared to 257 in 2023. Grand Larceny Auto, up 32.4%, 90 in 2024 compared to 68 in 2023.

In the Hate Crimes category, year to date, 15 of those crimes in 2024, compared to 6 in 2023. That's up 150%.

Captain Antonio provided us with "moving violation" stats issued by the 61st Precinct. From 1/01/23 through 5/05/23, 2,124 moving violations were issued. From 1/01/24 through 5/05/24, 2,319 moving violations were issued. That's a 9.2% increase or 195 more over 2023. Moving violations occur when a vehicle is in motion and violates a traffic law. Those infractions include speeding, running a red light, failing to come to a complete stop at a stop sign and texting while driving.

Finally, Captain Antonio reviewed the 61st's sector map as the precinct is divided into 4 patrolling areas, Sectors A, B, C and D, aligned with the Neighborhood Coordination Officers, connecting those officers and its residents.

Our Committee continues to monitor the numerous quality of life matters that affect Community Board 15.

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Transportation Committee:

Chair Scavo called up, Oswalt Heymann, Chairperson of the Transportation and Transit Committee to give his report. Transportation Chair Heymann, stated the Committee met on Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at 6:00pm and reviewed two presentations.

The first improving the safety of Avenue W and Avenue X from McDonald Avenue to Ocean Parkway. Avenue X being mostly commercial with schools and Avenue W mostly residential with a school. In the last few years there were 145 crashes with injuries on both avenues combined and 20 percent were vehicles making left turns. DOT will conduct additional community outreach until early summer and then the project will begin. It will include such DOT claimed improvements as: Curb extensions, left turn calming measures (black and yellow strips on the asphalt), longer bus stops to accommodate articulated buses, and since it was found that most deliveries were between 9:00am and 1:00pm, alternate side of the street parking rules will be adjusted to facilitate the deliveries, a new traffic light will be installed on East 2nd Street and Avenue X, the banning of left turns onto Avenue X from McDonald Avenue going south, day lighting at some intersections (total reduction of parking spaces is supposedly about two), the creation of pedestrian refuge islands at Ocean Parkway and Avenue X eliminating left turns traveling northbound, and on Ocean Parkway and Avenue W eliminating left turns going southbound. The reasoning is to shorten the distance in traffic for pedestrians crossing at the intersections.

Project Benefits Summary to Improve Corridor Safety:

- Shorten crossing distances for pedestrians
- Calm traffic and slow turning movements
- Increase pedestrians' visibility
- Provide new crossings
- Improve curb management/access
- Reduce conflict points between motorists and vulnerable road users
- Improve accessibility
- Negligible net parking loss anticipated (around 2 spaces per block total)

The second presentation was regarding the installation of distinctive street lighting on Avenue U from McDonald Avenue and Ocean Parkway.

We were told that while there is only funding available for the aforementioned stretch of avenue the entire Avenue from Bensonhurst to Bergen Beach was studied. This was to be able to be ready if funding for other portions of Avenue

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U became available in the future. The project still needs NYC Arts Commission approval. The LED lights expected to be installed will be on what's called Flatbush Avenue style poles. The project could move or add poles to assure consistent lighting throughout the area, DOT expects Arts Commission approval and then the project will be put out for bid.

Zoning Committee:

City of Yes : Housing Opportunity

The NYC Department of City Planning is proposing a citywide zoning text amendment to expand opportunities for housing within all zoning districts, and across all 59 of the City's Community Districts. These changes to the City's Zoning Resolution would enable more housing and a wider variety of housing types in every neighborhood, from the lowest-density districts to the highest, to address the housing shortage and high cost of housing in New York City.

A motion was made to approve by Debra Greif and seconded by Al Smaldone.

A Full Board Vote was taken, 5 yes, 34 no and 0 abstention for cause. The motion did not pass.

OLD BUSINESS: Chair Scavo thanked the Members of the Nominating Committee and dismissed them from service.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Allen Popper and seconded by Debra Greif. The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

*This is not a verbatim account of the meeting but a synopsis of the main points. *