

Community Board 1 Queens Full Board / Public Hearing Meeting Transcription

Tuesday June 18, 2024

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: We have a long evening ahead of us, so we want to get started. Welcome to our June full board meeting of Community Board 1. I want to start off by thanking Phyllis for bringing Donuts. Thank you so much Phyllis. We appreciate it, we're going to need that sugar tonight.

I think I just want to mention that we are going to have just a slight little change to the agenda, because we have two of our esteemed elected Representatives. We have State Senator Kristen, Gonzalez and State Assemblywoman, Jessica Gonzalez Rojas.

State Assemblymember Jessica Gonzalez Rojas: My name is a State Assemblymember Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas, I'm really thrilled to be here. I think some of us just came back from Albany. We just wrapped up our legislative session a week ago, so hence why we wanted to come by and say hello. I represent the 34th Assembly District, which includes the neighborhood of Jackson Heights, East Elmhurst, Corona, Woodside and Astoria. Thank you for squeezing me in so I'll be very brief.

We had a pretty robust session. We got a lot of work done and there's a lot more to do. The governor dropped the congestion pricing bomb on our lap in the last days of session, so I think there'll be some follow up. We might have to be sent back to Albany to figure out how to salvage and save our MTA system because now, there's a \$15 billion hole in the capital budget which impacts ADA accessibility and projects that are currently underway and future projects. So that's a really important issue for me as a strap hanger representing a district that has quite a number of strap hangers.

Also, I've been fighting for healthcare and access to healthcare. So if any of you or your neighbors have children on Child Health Plus, we were able to pass a bill that allows for continual enrollment from 0 to 6 years old, so you don't have to recertify every single year. Kids were dropping off the rolls at a number of 400,000 in the state. By keeping them on the rolls until they start kindergarten or first grade, it really helps them to stay healthy.

Just one other thing I'll mention is around reproductive health and rights. I know that's something important to many of us. We were able to get some resources for folks and clinics to provide reproductive healthcare across the state. There's a lot more around environmental justice around health access around housing that was done as well, but we don't have a lot of time, and I promised to be quick. I'm happy to answer any questions. I'm here with State Senator Kristen Gonzalez as well so you'll hear from her as well. We're really committed to bringing the voices of you all up to Albany to continue to fight. Again, we might have to come back. Usually the session is from January to June, but we envision having to come back to deal with the uncertainties of the MTA.

I was here not too long ago. It's a challenge that the meetings are often when we're in Albany so it's very hard, but my staff Brenda is here Brenda, say hello. Brenda is the representative. We often have someone else named Janggo Mahmud who's here and then my colleague Britney Walker is here as well. So again, I'm glad I'm able to be here in person. It means a lot to be here, but I wanted to stop by to say hello, but we always have a staff member here to share words and events that are happening. The one thing, I'll flag - we do lots of events. We just had a paper shredding event in the spring in Astoria Park. We will have backpack giveaways in the summer. We don't yet have the dates, but we do it in all parts of the district so keep your eyes peeled for backpack giveaways. We'll send it to the board to share. We want to get as many children who need backpacks, and we'll host it in one of the schools in Astoria. Any other questions.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: Thank you to our Assemblymember. We appreciate you. We know it's been quite a thing in Albany these past few weeks, so thank you for your work. Thank you for representing our community. Next up, we have State Senator Kristen Gonzalez, who will also give an update on things happening.

State Senator Kristen Gonzalez: Good evening. It's really good to be here with all of you and our incredible Assemblywoman, Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas. As you heard, we got back from the session a week before last, and it ended with a bang. So, of course we had the Governor's decision on congestion pricing. We were there. We vocally opposed that decision to unilaterally delay congestion pricing and, as you heard from the Assemblywoman, we're keeping an eye out for what happens next. I really do appreciate the work in organizing that has gone on in this community and also up in Albany. As you all probably know after she delayed or announced the delay, she tried to come to the legislature for a bailout that would potentially, permanently kill the program and I organized a lot in the Senate to make sure that my colleagues refused this bail out so that we could keep the door open for congestion pricing. So, even between now and then, there's been a significant amount of inside organizing in addition to outside organizing and we're going to need all of you to continue pushing. So thank you all for that.

Some personal updates on our office. We've so far introduced - now that we're at the end of the legislative session - 26 bills. We passed 14 bills through the Senate and then seven of those bills were passed by both the Senate and the Assembly. Some notable call outs: we had passed the strongest bill in the nation around the use of artificial intelligence in elections, to make sure that deep fakes aren't influencing, not only our state elections, which we saw some misinformation recently with Meta's Chat Bot, but that it's not influencing our Presidential election as we move into November. So we're really excited to have passed that and another bill that I'm really proud of, we passed, at the end of session, was the Loading Act, which was the first bill in New York State to regulate government use of artificial intelligence and the first bill in the entire country to have labor protections. So we've worked really closely with the AFL CIO, because it actually explicitly states that we shouldn't be automating certain government jobs and it's giving us, from a worker's rights perspective, a foundation to keep on organizing and legislating moving forward as we all navigate the future of the workforce together. A couple of other bills I really do want to call out in this district, we have a hospital closure, but we also have a healthcare crisis right. We don't have enough beds in New York and when we close hospitals in certain places, it actually impacts the entire system, so we helped introduce co-prime and sponsor the Lich Act, which gives community input in hospital closure processes. I think that's really important before the next crisis that, from now on, it will be mandated that our community has a voice in these closures and that's a seat at the table we didn't have before. In addition to that there is another bill that requires the Department of Health to do a study on what system wide impacts are on vulnerable communities when hospital closures are proposed. So I'm really proud of the work we've done there.

In this session we've brought back, between our operational and capital funding, \$9 million to the district. We've invested that in some of our local nonprofits in our parks in senior services. So we're very excited that in Queens alone, we've had several nonprofits Urban Upbound and Jacob Reis that we've been proud to fund, and then we recently did a few events, and as the Assemblywoman mentioned, we'll continue doing events. We had a shredding event in Queens view, we'll continue to do shredding events. I know they're popular. And then at the end of the summer we'll be looking to do backpack giveaways and partnering with the Board to make sure we're bringing some of that back to our community.

So, with that I'm happy to take questions and happy to talk about what we were working on this session. I just really appreciate the time.

Antonella Di Saverio: I know that there was \$10 million given for Long Island City to revitalize it. How is that going to impact our area here - this local area? I'm not talking about downtown Long Island City where it's all high rises and stuff, but our area here.

State Senator Kristen Gonzalez: That's a great question. So for folks who didn't see that the governor or executive has a downtown revitalization initiative, and they put \$10 million to Long Island City Partnership through the EDC and yes, we've been encouraging the executive to invest in our communities. I think it will cover Long Island City north, but I think there is a conversation to be had about what it would look to bring more money to Astoria. Specifically again, the EDC and the executive makes decisions on where they ultimately want to put that funding. So it's not something we directly can say tomorrow, let's do another \$10 million here, but we'll certainly be encouraging them to want to invest across our district.

Antonella Di Saverio: The big complaint is more garbage cans and recycling in terms of electronic recycling pickup every month or every 3 months at least so that people don't throw it in the garbage.

State Senator Kristen Gonzalez: I certainly share the frustration as someone who has a dog and walks my dog and has to carry the baggie around for several blocks, that we don't have enough trash cans. It is something that is a city-level issue. I know Tiffany, our Councilwoman, is very aware and has been working very hard to make sure that we have the resources in this neighborhood. That's something that we can ask their Rep as well. City trash cans are also better quality than the state level trash cans we provide. If you've ever been to Gantry Park, you'll notice the part that is state is not as good, and the part that is city has nice rectangular ones so good, to know. We'll definitely flag for the Councilwoman.

State Assemblymember Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas: I just wanted to add something. Our office has electronic recycling available. 75-35 31st Avenue, Suite 206. Just call our office before, but you could drop it off between 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., maybe 6:00pm. We're open till 6:00. If there's computers or old TVs - we hope to be helpful, but you do have to drop it off. Again we often do paper shredding events so people can shred their papers. Brenda has the information. There's only certain items that we can collect. There's quite a number we don't collect - batteries or light bulbs. I save my light bulbs to recycle them. There's no place to recycle them, so it's very frustrating but we're navigating with the city services available and trying to make it as accessible to the community as possible.

Board Member: One more question about the disposal of the batteries - AA batteries or lithium batteries or cell phone batteries,

State Senator Kristen Gonzalez: Brenda has the list, and we will get that circulated. Happy Pride month everybody.

State Assemblymember Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas: One thing on lithium batteries - we did pass a law in both the Assembly and the Senate that requires a give back program for e-bikes that have poorly made lithium batteries. I think we all know that there's been quite a number of fires here in Astoria and around the neighborhoods because of lithium batteries exploding, so we passed a whole suite of bills addressing that. I don't know if the Governor signed it yet and if it's in effect, but we'll keep our eyes on it and make sure we get it out to the community, because it'll give basically a buyback program so that we can get those dangerous batteries off the streets and off those vehicles and then have safer batteries on those e-bikes. Also the Assemblywoman and I have introduced legislation on e-bikes as well so another bill to come.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: Let's thank our State Senator Kristen Gonzalez and Assemblymember Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas again. Thank you for all the work that you do for the community. We really appreciate it.

Okay, so we're going to kind of just dive into our meeting tonight. I just wanted to review the agenda. Also, Antonella had asked about the Long Island City downtown revitalization initiative. Our business and economic development committee will be reporting on that because they did present to us that the applications for that are open now, but they'll get to that.

So, everyone knows, we are going to start with a public hearing. Item number one is our City of Yes Housing, Opportunity zoning text amendment. We'll be having a discussion on that and then taking a vote later during the business section. We will allow, right after the discussion, any questions to be answered by our city planning Rep and any members of the public to speak for or against. Then we will be going to the Department of Transportation, who will provide a presentation on the public realm and cycling corridor improvements for 31st Avenue. Again, we'll allow people to speak for or against then we'll head into our business session with committee reports and other reports. Then any other elected official updates and another public session at the end which can be any member of the public talking about anything. But we will have opportunities for people who want to speak for or against the public hearing items right after those presentations. I just want to make sure everybody knows that. Any questions before we get started.

The first item is the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity zoning text amendments. I hope everybody had the chance to read Liz's report. I want to thank Liz, Andreas and Gerry, and the land use committee for the discussions and thoughts and opinions that they gave to that report. I hope, again, everyone has had a chance to read it. We've certainly had a few presentations from City Planning as well, but at this point, I'm going to hand it over to Liz.

Elizabeth Erion: Good evening, everyone. This was an enormous task that the committee had. As Evie said, I do hope that you took the opportunity to read what's going to be voted on tonight. It will have implications down the line in terms of the changes that are being proposed for the kind of development the size and of the development that will be allowed. I just want to say that we found there were several people who wrote to the office. There was one group, The Norwood Neighborhood Association, who was not in support of the zoning amendments. With regard to parking issues, the association believes that since 57.5% of people in Queens own a car, there should be no reduction in parking. They were not in favor of the small and shared housing aspect that was being proposed simply because it was out of character with many of the neighborhoods in the borough. They talked about businesses, which is the wrong set of text amendments at this point, and the ADU the accessory dwelling units, because they felt that people who lived in the back would be unsafe living if the garages were renovated to become homes. Those were their concerns. There were also three letters that came in emails to the Community Board that were in favor of all of the items that were related to the lower density issues - three separate items. As you know, the committee did not take a vote on a recommendation. We're looking to you with respect to the recommendation; if there are any issues you want to bring up, if you recommend changes to be made. I can tell you that the tenor of the committee in reviewing this is that it was overwhelming. We've never had this much, but I think I can say, everyone believed that it was really necessary that something be done to update the zoning resolution and so I think the issue that we've had to deal with is whether we support it with recommendations for changes or whether we deny it because there's so many things that can happen. At this point I don't have any other issues to bring up except to hear from you and to be able to make a recommendation for that from what you have to say.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: Just to be clear, we're not going to be taking a motion now. This is really just to talk through. If you saw something in Liz's report that you felt strongly about or you had a question about. You've heard the presentations. We do have Colin here from DCP - he can answer any final questions, but this is an opportunity to talk about those text amendments. There are many pieces to this, as Liz said - it is very overwhelming. It's not just one text amendment like we voted on in the past. This is a whole series of things which she outlined in her report. So, I feel this is a time where you can ask questions; you can bring things up; you can say how you feel, but we're not taking a motion now - that's going to happen in the business section.

Gerald Caliendo: I'd just like to make a couple of comments. First of all, Liz did an outstanding job in summarizing this text amendment for residential opportunity, but from my experience over the years as a practitioner, and just to explain a little bit further in layman's terms, what this means when you're developing a property there are certain criteria that's standard in the industry and the zoning resolution. One is floor area

ratio; the other is parking. Those are the inhibitors to development - density and yards and height, pretty much, that's it. FAR, floor area ratio, given the Astoria context, Astoria Community Board 1 context, we don't have any R1s, but one through R5 you get a 25% extra FAR across the board - pretty much. Parking is no longer so there's a give and take to that, they changed the yards to five and five instead of having eight and five. So now, if you have 5 ft you can't have a parking spot. So, they made the building bigger. The other yard situation, which I have a personal problem with, they reduce the rear yard from 30 ft to 20 ft, and we've always had issues in this Community Board with new development where a developer building and the people in the back are complaining because they're so close. So now, if you have 20 ft, they're even closer. I think that's going to be a problem. Density, which is the number of units you could have based on the square footage allowable, is greatly increased. So, I'll give you a little example: if you have a 40 by 100 lot and you have an R5 and you could build 1.5, FAR, you could build actually a six family where today, you can only build a three family with no parking. So, it's a significant change to what is today and there's all other little things.

Just to clarify what Liz was mentioning about some of the issues, the Economic Opportunity just passed. There were tweaks to that, which was the homeowner occupation, but pretty much it was kept almost the same as what it is now. That was done by the City Council. This major document is going to go through some hashing out just prior to December when it's voted on and there's going to be some things that are going to be eliminated. I personally think the ADUs are going to get wiped out because all the one family districts in Queens and throughout the city, they're going to say, what are you crazy? I'm not going to allow an apartment in my garage and my neighbor's garage next door because it changes the context of the neighborhood. So I think that's going to get eliminated. It may be good in California, but I don't know if it's going to be good in New York. It may be via a Community Board - I don't know how that's going to work because they can do that in the definition of ADUs in the definition portion of the zoning resolution. So what we're voting on now and what's being proposed now, just like the Economic Opportunity, will probably be something less than what we're voting on. I don't think it'll be more; it'll be less just like the Economic Opportunity. I don't want to say if I'm completely for or against. I mentioned I have some problems personally with part of it, but I think development is good from my perspective as an architect, and in the development business and we need housing, but that's my personal opinion.

Antonella Di Saverio: I just had a question for Gerry or Liz. When we're voting on this, this is citywide - not for our district. I remember when the gentleman was here last time, he said our area was already over capacity. I guess they already did the buildout in our area, and this is really for all the other areas in Queens to kind of absorb the excess need. Just curious as to what your comments are.

Gerald Caliendo: This is an aged housing stock, so people are always knocking down buildings or modifying buildings constantly. So there's an opportunity with the city to be able to just take it down to the foundation and build it up as an alteration and leave the foundation. It's so oversaturated, maybe because of the infrastructure, which is brought up many times, but as far as the housing stock - the city's growing every day, so there's a need for additional housing. Here's the problem - not the problem- the fact- this zoning is not designed for three-bedroom apartments. It's definitely not. You don't give the opportunity with more density for bigger units, it's squeezing them in. Even that shared apartment type of thing - that's an SRO - single room occupancy type of living that came into effect in the 50s or 60s because of all the homeless and people living on the streets back then. So it's being brought up because of the housing needs of both homeless and migrants. That's really what it comes down to, and even though they're saying to, it'll never pass, I firmly believe that they'll never have basement apartments because you got to change a multiple dwelling wall and housing in attics, unless somebody has to sprinkler the whole building because you have a life safety issue. The same thing with the apartments and garages. You have to bring a new sewer line in. The cost is prohibitive. So it's not factual not to mention the quality of life for those communities. This is definitely generated to just produce numbers of dwelling units to offset the problem that the city is going through today with their budget, which is out of whack with shelters, tents, and you name it.

Richard Khuzami: Liz did a great job on this and reading through it I think you really hit the nail on the head on what we discussed during the committee meetings. I'm going to be in favor of what you put together. A couple of points I want to make: first of all, on the parking issue - you always have to keep in mind that while it's not going to be required, you're going to find that developers are going to have to provide it in order to sell their units. There still will be parking available when it's appropriate - if you're not close to transit. So you're still going to see that happen. There was actually a situation where a friend of mine had to put parking in a building and had to create a curb cut, but there was a tree in the way, and it caused so much trouble that he had to hold this building up for over a year just because of that parking requirement. So I think in general, removing that requirement should not inhibit people's ability to get from point to point. I think that the marketplace will take care of that issue, and I think it'll actually reduce some bureaucratic issues.

The other point that I want to make that's really important to me is, even in the pipeline, even developments that haven't happened here, things like Innovation Queens, Astoria Cove, Astoria North, we've got over 6,000 units coming in this neighborhood - if they ever get built, depending on banking situations. I really do feel that the rest of Queens needs to bear some of this responsibility. What I like about this is the fact that it is citywide

changes, so everybody will have to deal with this, and they will have to do their own fair share of what has to be done to create more housing. If you just do rezonings in particular neighborhoods, area rezonings that can work to create more housing, however, you allow a lot more NIMBYism to get in there because you're going to get a lot of opposition to any change. I'm in favor of the way it's written.

Dino Panagoulis: Just want to echo - awesome job. I don't think I had many questions reading this because the volume of text, I think, is very overwhelming. I appreciate the kind of effort that you all put in. One of the questions that I do have is the removal of the required parking mandates. It speaks to the area that I live in, which is Dutch Kills, it says specifically about removing the parking regulations in the LIC Special District, and then it says similar provisions to the Manhattan core. I don't know if you can elaborate on that or kind of talk a little bit more about that.

Gerald Caliendo: I think you're not allowed to put parking garages in the Long Island City core and parking is not required right now, so I think that's the difference.

Colin Ryan: LIC Special District is convoluted and about 20 years old. Now there is currently no parking required in Long Island City so that might be what it is in reference to because it might be editing Special District text to remove that to make it a citywide initiative, but I haven't seen the proposal, which I'm sure is amazing, but I can't confirm.

Elizabeth Erion: Let me just say that when we reviewed this in committee and even afterwards, the regulations for the Long Island City Special District and other Special Districts, they were still working on them, so I think I have if I have a copy in here. I will take a look. I didn't look at it during the course of this review because I was focused on the zones that were related to district one, and that is R4 and R5, with the new ones being R 6 and 7. We didn't even talk about Innovation Queens. That was a whole different thing.

Adam Fisher-Cox: I just wanted to echo something that came up a couple times in the comments, which is just that Astoria has been pulling its weight a lot in terms of development in our area and there's restrictive zoning in other places. That means that other neighborhoods are not doing that, and so I really support this for a variety of reasons, but just to spread that responsibility of creating enough housing for the people who need it. We have more and more population coming in each day and we're not building enough to keep up with that, and we started out from a point of not having enough in the first place, so we're continually getting further and further behind. So these are just common-sense changes that should enable a bit of help. I don't think it's going to solve everything, nor does it seem to be intended to, but I think if we're serious about the housing crisis, this is a good set of solutions, so I definitely support that.

Huge Ma: Thanks to the chairs for the amazing write up. I also agree strongly in favor of this proposal. I grew up in Queens. I grew up in Astoria, now ready to look for a starter home and there's just nothing available and I think this proposal is going to add a little bit of housing in every neighborhood, which is great. Unfortunately, we need a lot, but this is a great start so I'm strongly in favor and I do want to speak a little bit to what Gerry mentioned about the SRO's and it being a pure numbers game about shelters and homelessness. I lived at home until I was 27 and while it was a privilege to not pay rent, thanks Mom, I also felt my adulthood was delayed because I couldn't find affordable housing and I think had an SRO been an option when I was in my 20s it could have been a different decade for me, but, that's just to say, there's a lot of different proposals in this and I'm looking forward for to get a motion.

Kian Betancourt: I also want to echo the sentiment of great write up, really digestible. I recognized that there was a lot of text in there, so I really appreciate all the effort that went into it. I also wanted to speak about a personal anecdote. Also having been born and raised in Astoria, my parents purchased a house on 46th street and Ditmars in 1998. The price of that house was \$175,000. The price of that house now is about \$1.3 million. That is what young people are looking at in terms of the price of home ownership. 20% down - that's a lot of money, and then you start paying a five digit a month mortgage payment. That is just completely out of reach for most people here now, I recognize a lot of people come from a lot of different backgrounds. Maybe you bought at a time that was cheaper. That's awesome! A lot of us do not have that privilege, so I can't emphasize how important it is to keep building units to be able to keep those costs down so the people that want to inhabit our wonderful neighborhood can. I also just want to emphasize the nature of parking minimums. I just want to clarify what that is. There are currently mandates that are, if you look into the science of it, that are largely arbitrary, that determine how many parking spots get built in a certain development. This is not eliminating or requiring developers not to build them. In most cases, it is simply allowing, as Richard said, the market to dictate how many parking spots should be necessary. So if a developer says, hey, this thing is really far from transit. We really need to build some parking spots, they can, and they'll determine what the right amount is. It's just not mandated. I can't emphasize this enough. Every parking spot costs about \$150,000 for every developer to build. It raises the average cost of the rental in that building by about 17%. So these two things are directly related. I'm a firm believer in building places for people, and that takes precedence over places for cars. Not to say they can't coexist, but we have to prioritize in our very space-limited city. I just wanted to put that out there.

Elizabeth Erion: I do have the Special District with regard to parking. It says it would remove all residential parking requirements, as such, under these provisions, that modify the underlying residential parking requirements, would be removed. The M12 R5B district is what they're talking about. They refer me back to another section in the zoning resolution which I don't have, but in effect, what they're doing is making it the Manhattan Core, which is no parking required at all.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: Any other points anyone else wants to make before we close this discussion? No? What we're going to do now is move to public comment. If there is anyone here who wants to speak for or against, you can go up to the podium. Please state your name and whether you're a resident of the district. You're going to have up to two minutes.

Emily Chingay: My name is Emily Chingay. I am a resident. I live on 23rd Avenue and I wanted to speak in support of the City of Yes Housing Opportunity. I rent my apartment, and I love my neighborhood. I love everything around it, and I want to stay here. I know a lot of folks who live in their neighborhoods also would like to stay there without having the threat of being priced out and I think this is a great opportunity for more affordable housing. I do also want to speak on parking minimums and support lifting them. I think that it'd be a great opportunity, especially in transit, rich areas. We do have a great train. We do have a lot of great bus options, so lifting the minimums would be really great.

Will Thomas: My name is Will Thomas. I live just north of Queens Plaza in CB1. I'm also here to express my strong support for all of the City of Yes reforms. I believe they will only help deal with the city's profound housing shortage, but also make our neighborhoods more vibrant, economically diverse places where it is possible to raise a family. I assume I'm not alone in enjoying real estate listings. It's fun to dream about the future but I checked StreetEasy before I came here and across all of Astoria and Long Island City there are just 26 properties with two bedrooms or more for sale that are under \$1 million. That's in neighborhoods that have over 200,000 residents, I think it's crazy. There's very little on the market and what is on the market is able to jack up prices. There are quite literally no other options. These proposals will help to change that. They'll allow more housing in commercial corridors on campuses near transit. They'll remove unnecessary parking mandates. All of Long Island City under 41st street operates under that model. Sorry, 41st Avenue operates under that model. If developers provide parking where it's needed, a sky has not fallen. I think the impact will be much more positive in Astoria and Dutch Kills where the smaller apartment typologies prevail, these smaller, cheaper family-oriented projects are precisely the kind that come in feasible when you have very onerous parking mandates. I also want to express my support for the district tweaks. Most of Astoria and Dutch Kills are zoned for R5 or below, which see far less development. The areas that I'm aware of that are R6 or above, they see more development than R7 and R6 districts. Density is high enough where units can share the high cost of land, but construction costs are lower so that you can deliver a cheaper building. I hope you will vote yes.

Ryan Quinn: My name is Ryan Quinn. I'm an Astoria resident over on 30th Avenue. I'd just like to mark my support for the proposal to remove parking minimums from New York City Zoning requirements. Especially with the Governor's last-minute reversal on limiting congestion on New York City streets, I think it's even more urgent. Now that we find a way to reduce the subsidies that we give to driving at the expense of those who might not drive, especially in the city with the most public transit in the US. Building more parking lots at the behest of the city government is a roadblock to affordable rents in the neighborhood and encourages people to purchase cars and drive more when we should be doing the opposite and making it easier to bike, walk and take public transit. I'd also like to note, we have a record-breaking and unseasonal heat wave coming up this week, adding parking and incentivizing this car usage is a step backwards for Astoria and New York, If we want to have any realistic chance at limiting our emissions in New York, it needs to start with reducing the number of cars on our streets.

Kyle Gehring: I'm Kyle Gehring from 28th street. A lot of great things have already been said which I completely agree with. I'd like to add that the current housing shortage makes it very hard to grow a family in Astoria and anything that affects affordability and makes that easier I think is an unmitigated good thing. I also just had a challenge with my mother-in-law and know firsthand that it's very difficult to find affordable housing for seniors in the neighborhood. Again, even those single residence occupancies can make a big difference for my family and for a lot of other families. So again, echoing something that everyone else has already said here, I'm fully in favor of this proposal.

Anthony Pascocello: My name is Anthony Pascocello. I live on 28th Avenue and 23rd street and I'm totally against the City of Yes proposal. I'm also a Battalion Chief at the New York City Fire Department and I can tell you a couple of different things. Number one: like we saw with COVID no matter what rules are in place, whether they require sprinklers, a secondary means of egress or not, people will not follow that. We understood that after the COVID-19 situation, with the propane when we instituted very strict rules, and nobody followed that and we're still catching up on that problem today. The second thing is: people are complaining about the parking. I have a lovely lady that decided to park her car on the single hydrant on our block since this morning - this is a recurring problem. There is no parking in Astoria and it's getting worse every day. There are no rules. People are parking on the hydrant; they're parking in the no standing zone so the fire apparatus can't

make their turns. It's getting worse. As far as the single room occupancies, that's just going to keep increasing and no matter what rules you implement it'll get worse. My concern is with basement and attic apartments. That's going to be a risk factor for my personnel. We just celebrated the 25th anniversary of Captain Vincent Falon who died in a cellar in South Queens, and I fear that the infrastructure in this neighborhood can't handle this extra burden as it is now. You see that with the electrical situation and not only that, when it rains heavily you can walk everywhere from Astoria Boulevard going all the way up to 20th Avenue and see all the sump pumps and hoses outside people's property. The infrastructure can't handle this. Astoria is so overpopulated it's going to sink. So before you say that this is a great idea, it really is not. It's a very real estate rich idea and I understand the plight of the young people. I agree, because I work with a lot of people that are in the same situation that is driving 2 hours outside of the city to raise their families, but we'll have to look for a better solution, but I can tell you this The City of Yes is a city of disaster if this goes through.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: Anyone else for or against? I just wanted to make note that in addition to the letters that Liz mentioned - some letters in support of lifting the parking minimums and also a letter from a neighborhood association in opposition to a couple of the parts of City of Yes - we also got a few other letters, one of them suggesting we say no because there needs to be more transparency and things explained in detail - that a lot of it was very vague. There was also a letter regarding affordability - that this wasn't really going to build enough affordable housing, and then that was the real need here in the city. I just wanted to make sure we had those on record as well.

Is there anything else in the City of Yes? If not, we're going to close item one. We will be voting on the City of Yes in the Business Section.

We are moving to item 2; We are not taking a vote on the 31st Avenue redesign. This is informational, but again, we will have the opportunity for the public to speak for or against.

Presentation Department of Transportation Public realm in cycling corridor improvements for 31st Avenue.

Q&A

Kathleen Warnock: I really appreciate the presentation, and I totally support having discreet or separate bike lanes. But as you noticed yourself in your feedback, the main complaints are people who don't acknowledge roll rules, both the bikers and the people who park; the double parkers; the people who go into the bike lanes, etc. Some people kind of view it as almost cultural heritage to double park on Steinway Street on the weekends. So this is a great idea, but I don't know that it will actually work to everyone's satisfaction unless there is cooperation and specific enforcement of the people who are abusing their privileges, both the bikers and the drivers. And how are you going to deal with that very difficult question?

Joseph Patti, Department of Transportation: Very difficult question and it's something we grasp and tackle every day. I will say that having the markings on the street makes it easier. We do hear that from PD having more people use the street allows us to talk about it more with them. The double parking - it's a problem. We don't have the solution - would be lying to you to say we did. But I do think that this is a step in the right direction where we're trying to design the streets as best as possible to accommodate these things, and we will continue to work with PD to monitor how the street is working.

If there's loading zones that need to be integrated, we will make the change, and our great Borough Commissioner Nicole Garcia will make sure to hassle us as she does all the time.

Rod Townsend: Can we go to the side that shows the different directions for one way? I'd like to get a rationale for why each direction goes the way it does it. It seems that the directional nature of this is to support, and I'm guessing here, to support driving into Manhattan. I would say most people who are driving in Astoria are trying to get out of Astoria to the north and to the east. I could be wrong, but could you explain the rationale for each one of these directions?

Joseph Patti, Department of Transportation: It's a good point. I wouldn't say that the rationale is to get to Manhattan. I think you're probably noting Crescent - vehicles kind of filtering into Crescent is what you're saying. I think it's an important comment. That said, vehicles travel on Crescent, so our traffic engineers are worried about making sure those vehicles aren't going onto other streets excessively. I will say that the primary goal here is really to break up the traffic. I'm going to let you behind the scenes. This definitely is going east here. I'm not saying it's going to go east the whole way, but there's definitely still things that are going to be going east. I can't get into all the details, but basically what we were trying to do is get people to the major streets and keep people from moving along the entire corridor.

Rod Townsend: I just feel we're trying to get people off of Crescent, and this is leading people onto them.

I was involved in the Crescent sightings 5 years ago, and I think that to encourage people to get to 31st and then to the Grand Central and get them out of our neighborhood would be something that would be more logical to me.

Joseph Patti, Department of Transportation: I don't think anybody's going to use 31st to get out anymore. The point is here that they can get to other streets. That's it:

Corinne Wood-Haynes: I have three questions. My first is: what outreach has been done in the affected communities for feedback, if any? I'm a community leader and I don't know of anyone doing any outreach,

Joseph Patti, Department of Transportation: We've done a lot. We did a large survey, an online survey. We've done five popup workshops along the corridor, and then we did a merchant survey to the businesses that are along the corridor. We've done two in person workshops that I believe the electeds have been very heavily involved in and they've gotten the word out.

Nicole Garcia, Queens Borough Commissioner, DOT: So one of the things that we did in publicizing both the online survey and also the in-person events, my staff and my entire team walked up and down 31st Avenue. You also did a lot of the side streets and in fact we still have to go back and remove some of the flyers that we zip tied. We also made sure to communicate with the nearby NYCHA residences and other large buildings.

Corinne Wood-Haynes: Sorry I didn't see any of this anywhere other than the Community Board. My name is Corinne Haynes. I'm the resident leader for Queensbridge Houses and I beg to differ. No one's been in touch with me. I know there are two other developments - there's Ravenswood Houses and there's Astoria Houses and then there's Woodside Houses, who are all impacted by these same areas. We may travel in these areas for whatever reasons. I know where that closed off street is. So you can update me later - tell me about the email I missed, the second one is: how will it be safer if there's no regulation for bikers? I don't see any signs for bikers like there are for drivers. I'm a little confused about how it's supposed to be safer if there's no one regulating bikers with even helmets. There's no penalization for not wearing helmets. There's no penalization for their adherence, or the lack thereof, to road rules.

Joseph Patti, Department of Transportation: There's 35,000 plus tickets given out to cyclists each year. Those of us who cycle often get tickets. I get a lot of complaints from the other side on that. Helmets are not a law unless I believe you're under 13 years old. I totally understand your question and not to devalue it at all, I actually do think we're going to put a lot of signs up. If you can see some of the images, this is a wayfinding sign right here. This indicates where bikes can go. There's actually all sorts of do not enter signs. This is a two-way path, but you can see a lot of this stuff. All traffic except bikes.

Corinne Wood-Haynes: I got what you're saying, you don't have to go into details. But there's nobody regulating this. I drive all the time and cars and bikes are constantly in front of cars all over the place. So I don't think cars are really an issue. I think it's how we regulate bikes and cars. Who's regulating this? Cars have regulations, but bikes don't really have any regulations. You see those signs? Nobody's adhering to those and who is penalizing them when they don't? I don't ever see a bike get pulled over.

The third one is: where is the rerouted traffic? What does that look like? Because when the streets are closed off, you have to route to another area - to another street and to another street into another street. Where's the consideration for the imposition on those who do actually prefer to drive where they're going? I think it's a little imbalanced and I do think that more outreach needs to be done to get a better input from communities that are affected - that don't really know that this is happening. I know it because I'm here. It has not been brought to my community.

Joseph Patti, Department of Transportation: We will put this up online and it has some slides that directly address what you just said.

Corinne Wood-Haynes: Online is not effective outreach because everyone is not virtual. There are community leaders in all these communities that we speak about.

Mario Vergara: I don't really have a question, more of a comment and it's that this isn't about regulating the bikes, it's about giving the bikes a safe place to travel, because if you look at 30th Avenue, Broadway, 34th, 35th Avenue, you have all these other options for driving and right now, there's no way to get east and west on a protected bike lane in Astoria. You could get north and south through Crescent Street. There's other bike lanes throughout the neighborhood - there's no way to get east. One avenue out of all these other avenues is a drop in the bucket. It's not prioritizing bikes over drivers when they have all these other alternatives.

Adam Fisher-Cox: I just wanted to say thank you for putting together this plan. It's a really strong plan. I think it does a very good job of adjusting the usage of the street to be a little bit closer to the amount of people that are actually using it in different ways. There's a lot of space currently reserved for cars and a lot of pedestrians, taking a small amount of that space on the sidewalk, and this is an incremental but great step toward adjusting that to prioritize giving the space to the people who are put up onto the sides of every other street, more or less, in Astoria. One thing I do want to call out just as input before markings go down, is the stretch through the Open Street with the shared lanes. One thing I feel is that Open Street is such a gem of this neighborhood and creates just such a calm, nice town square space on the weekends when it's in effect. One thing that does sometimes disrupt that or make people feel a little nervous about fully sitting in the center of the street, is that

cyclists and mopeds do come through there and there's no clear delineation of where they should go on those blocks. While this design has been successful in other places in New York City. Perhaps we could have markings on the street that are accurate 24/7 so that during the hours the Open Streets are in effect, it's not unclear where bikes should go. If that could be something that could be strengthened in this plan - to keep a bike lane that could be always open, no matter whether the Open Street is in effect or not, and really reserve the rest of that space to be clear for the people sitting in it and increase the confidence in how that road is supposed to work, which is something I think this plan really excels at in the rest of this corridor - really making clear where the bikes will be, where the cars will be, where pedestrian space is. But thank you again for this plan.

Joseph Patti, Department of Transportation: Yes, we'll continue to look at it. It's a very valid point and it's something that we're struggling with, and I think that we're going to have to think hard about how we regulate these spaces as we implement more shared spaces. I also share some concerns, but that said, this is a very good design. That's worked in a lot of places, so we're going to have to keep working on it. It's an iterative process.

Athanasios Magoutas: Thanks for the presentation. I think I've seen it probably six times by now, but happy to see that it's coming closer to a reality in terms of updating everything and kind of making it more equitable across the board. A couple things: I think, last time or at committee, you said that the marked loading zone situation was not specific yet, but that you're working on it. I just think that's a kind of key to unlocking this whole thing is to give formalized use the clear notations. Then I personally like the updates. Yeah, adjustments might need to be made, but overall it's probably a net positive to start. We did get a couple of letters to the committee. We had some residents who live in the Open Street stretch who live between 30th and 31st, with easements which are the driveways that are midblock to access the rear of the buildings. Did you feel like in your studies there was any significant impact to accessing those or anything?

Joseph Patti, Department of Transportation: No, that's why it's designed as it is.

Tyrone Gardner: I have two comments. One is controlling traffic direction. You're saying you're going to cut off 31st right, so on 30th Avenue we know that the traffic is terrible. Once you get up to 31st with a train going towards Steinway, it's always double-parked cars, so that's the direction that most cars go up towards Steinway. But now, if you're cutting off 31st street to come back down Steinway, if you make the right, you have to go all the way to Broadway to come back down now, so that's going to create more traffic on Broadway. The second is: you spoke about regulating the bike lanes. It's not the cyclists that we're concerned with, it is the scooter riders that utilize those lanes. They don't pay attention to rules and regulations. They're creating more hazardous problems in those areas and those are the ones that should be regulated in some form of stop light for them or something of that effect so they can know that they have to respect the laws just like everyone else. Thank you.

Dominic Stiller: I also have seen this presentation more than a few times and I think that it is a game changer. I understand the comments in this room. I strongly do support this, for the reason that we want to design this change for ourselves. We want to get out and walk on this avenue and not always be concerned about people trying to drive through our place - people that don't live here - in the most efficient way. It's been proven that the wider you make the roads, the more vehicles fill those roads. As I was sitting here listening - if you zoom out from this presentation, 31st Avenue is the only avenue, of about 20 avenues, that go east | west in our area. So, it's a miniscule change. There will be change. There will be people that have to go around the block, and this won't be used as a through street anymore, but as time goes by, I'm hoping it works. Give it a chance. I know the devil is in the details regarding the loading zones and the markings. I hope that can all be right and the signs. Maybe a sign, no motorcycles. Because you call them scooters Tyrone, everyone calls them scooters. They're freaking motorcycles in reality and they're dreadful. You use the word regulation, but I think we need to use the word enforcement. I agree with you - signs saying no motorcycles would be appreciated. It wouldn't be a joke. But other than that, I strongly think this is going to be wonderful. Lastly, this is going to help the immediate properties around the area, because it's going to make it a really joyful and calm space.

Richard Khuzami: First of all, what Corinne said about not being aware of this, I'm with a civic association. I actually worked quite a bit with you guys on the 21st street renovation, but I never heard about this either. We were never notified, and we represent the area from 21st street to the river right through this area here. What I do like to hear, is about the traffic controls. We've always felt that there should be no bike lane without traffic controls. It's extremely important and I hope that down the road, we'll actually have sensors so we can actually know what kind of vehicles are using these bike lanes. Because it's very true what everybody's saying. I've actually ended up in situations close to fist fights over a moped and scooter driver going up and down bike lanes. They're not supposed to be there, and we've had confrontations and I've seen other confrontations because they totally ignore any kind of regulations. I'm not even sure signage is enough, because if you say motorcycles, they say, hey I'm on a moped, so that needs to be addressed. That is an issue that really needs to be expressed - they're using them as their own lanes - as a matter of fact, they're crowding out the bicyclists.

I want to know if this presentation is available so that the people in our organization can see it. Also I saw in your last one that you mentioned something about the Astoria Park bike lane. What is that?

Joseph Patti, Department of Transportation: We're looking at a bunch of Greenway related projects, but, like I said, I don't really want to get into that now. But this is something that we've had a lot of comments about, and it's something that we want to address in the near future with this TC.

Nicole Garcia, Queens Borough Commissioner, DOT: So Richard, the greenway plan is something that City Hall had announced by a mayoral press release and we're going to be focusing on and coming to the community and working with the community to develop. So this is kind of a preview to our commitment to building out the network and enhancing State safety in Astoria and also beyond. I mean the goal is to get people all the way to Flushing Meadows Corona Park. So that's something that will be coming to you later on in the year and then early next year and working with you all. So, more to come.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: I do think the PowerPoint went out to the board, but we'll send it out again:

Antonella Di Saverio: A lot of times the residents are coming home from shopping or whatnot, and when you have this street closed off, it pisses people off when they get stuck on a street trying to get home for 20 minutes. The remedy to that, I think, is to put signage at least at the access points - an avenue, two avenues up - an avenue, two avenues down before where the street starts closing up - a few blocks before so this way people can circumvent and try to get home some other way. I brought that up last time when we closed the street, but I don't see any signage, so I think that'll help mitigate a lot of the angst that goes around as a result of this. Thank you.

Amin Mehedi: People who live in that area know better what's going on there. We can make a plan here and we can think about a lot of things that are going to be affected. I am one person living there. One of them lives there. I am already hurt by the bike lane, but I'm not complaining about it. I supported it. I voted for it. But the way you are making the break down, the street is already overloaded and again you are bringing all the traffic to there. You are making a bad decision. That's not going to be a good decision. It's not going to work. I was there at the workshop the other day. I saw how many residents came there - almost nobody came. Please mail the residents so they will know what's going on in their neighborhood and they will know that better. I don't think you sent a letter. I didn't get any letter from the DOT. This is the planning that we are doing, so if you just mailed some people they will come. You're not going to accommodate them here - the people who are against these things. When you are there, you can feel the pain - when it was happening on the Open Street on 31st Avenue. I love the Open Street, but that's not the proper place to put it. I'm not against that - I love the bike lane, but 31st Avenue is big enough to make a two-way bike lane. You are keeping some space in the middle from 12th street to 31st Avenue, it's bigger than the other street. So if you make that a two-way bike lane there and keep the traffic regulation whatever we have is enough, if you need to eliminate any parking, you could do that. But still you should not make that break down that street that you are breaking. It's not going to be very helpful for the neighbor there.

Thomas Ryan: First, I would like to address the gentleman over there. You define what a bicycle is. You said it had pedals. So let's talk about everything that doesn't have a pedal that uses the streets. Bikes are fine. We've got e-bikes, razors, LED scooters, motorcycles, skateboards, dirt bikes, ATV, anything! That's what everyone's using. It's not just a bike lane. It's a two wheel I'm going to use it lane. This gentleman brought up a point that this is the only East | West connection. I disagree with him. Between 19th Avenue North and 47th Avenue South, I believe we have over a dozen East | West lanes that could be used. So I want to disagree with that. The other thing I noticed in the paper yesterday, the police seized, last year, over 13,000 mopeds - That's a lot of mopeds. Now I guess they're being seized or whatever, but it doesn't seem there's any diminishment of that. So we really have to think about it. We can't have all these vehicles on the street. We got cars; we got bikes; okay, fine, but everything else is insanity. And when you talk about delivery, no truck driver is not going to double park where he has to deliver and if you're making the single bike lane, there's no way anyone's going to get around that. So you got to keep that in mind. Also, when emergency trucks come, how are they going to know what the hell is going on in this zone? Are you going to put up digital signs? Are you going to put up something that says you can't do this - you can't do that? That's going to cause a lot of confusion and the other thing that really peeved me, you put out protected bike lanes and the bicycles don't use the protective lanes, they ride around because they are not fast enough. So I'm saying they take up the street. I'm driving slower, because I'm going to one lane and they're in front of me, because they don't want to use the protected bike lane. So why bother? They're not using it and the other thing I want to know is, how are you going to identify this zone, so everybody knows what they're doing when they come into the zone because that's going to be important! Thank you.

Joseph Patti, Department of Transportation: Well, number one: it'll be on the bike map which Google uses and it will be routing people through it. And we'll also have one-way signs up similar to other neighborhoods - similar to the way that it works, pretty much, everywhere throughout the city. That's a simple answer to your question, but I do think that there's going to be a learning process, and I know from my experience in many

other places, a lot of people have the same questions you just said, and I think that we do our best to get the word out. We do our best to work with PD to enforce and we do our best to use signage and key in drivers in the best way possible.

Huge Ma: Thanks for a very strong and thoughtful plan, I share Adam's concern about the shared space between 31st and 35th street, especially when the Open Street is not in session. I don't know, I think the protected bike lane bike network is only strong as its weakest link and you're asking vulnerable street users to share the road with multi-ton vehicles, and I don't think that is the recipe for true safety. So if there's a way, we could do a fast follow up on what would be I think it would be much appreciated.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: Thank you board members for your thoughts and your questions and your feedback. What we want to do now is allow members of the public to speak. I do know that the electeds wanted to comment first, so if you are with one of the electeds, please come up, speak first. I'm going to ask people to keep it to a minute and if you're, under a minute, that's great too.

Tessa Blum: I'm here on behalf of Councilmember Caban. Thank you for this presentation. I just want to share some words from our office about why we're supportive of the project. We hope that it'll be successful in bringing greater pedestrian and bike safety, facilitating community spaces and serving as a critical piece of the protected bike lane network in western Queens Astoria desperately needs a more Central East West, protected bike lane. Protected bike lanes increase safety for cyclists and all road users. We've seen too many crashes and fatalities due to unprotected bike lanes. So this will be a critical Improvement. The 31st Avenue Open Street is a thriving community space that brings people together and improves safety. Data shows that Open Streets reduce cyclist, motorist and pedestrian injuries and boost businesses along the corridor. This project will solidify the space that the Open Street has, making it safer and more reliable. Finally, the traffic diverters are an incredible tool to increase street safety for all road users. These will force drivers to drive more slowly, decreasing the chances of a serious crash. We know that this already has an incredible amount of support in Astoria. These improvements will save lives, and we look forward to working with you all to ensure the project is as successful and ambitious as possible. Thank you.

Mahfuzul Islam, State Senator Gonzalez's office: I'm Islam from State Senator Gonzalez's office. Senator Gonzalez wholeheartedly supports 31st Avenue Open Street and cycling corridor. It aligns with our commitment to fostering vibrant pedestrian friendly communities and helping our small businesses thrive. An open 31st Avenue with protected bike lane is a space where residents and visitors can safely walk, cycle and share outdoor space with our neighbors. This redesign represents a community centered approach to public spaces and having an East | West cycling connection is a thing our constituents are constantly calling for. Protected bike lanes encourage people to use them and result in healthier, more active Lifestyles and make the roads safer for our children and neighbors. Opening space for more pedestrians and cyclists means more versatile public space for dining, fairs and a variety of programming. We all love seeing local artists, performers and local businesses thrive. When you increase foot traffic and provide opportunities for outdoor dining and markets. We support the introduction of traffic diverters, as well - seeing the success of this type of traffic calming in other parts of Queens is encouraging. We would love to see these implemented. Thank you.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: If we have no other elected reps here, then any member of the public who wants to speak about the project for or against. We're going to ask you to keep it to a minute or less and Tyrone is keeping time.

Michael Banado: My name is Michael Banado. I live on 37th Street in the district between 31st and 30th Avenue. I'd like to start by saying I do support Open Streets. I think it's a great idea. My wife and I often take our children to the Open Street on 31st Avenue. We also walked up to the 34th Avenue Open Street in Jackson Heights, and it's a very pleasant experience. Bike lanes seem to be working well, except for the e bikes and scooters that seem to think that's a highway for them. My issue with this plan is mainly in my disappointment, in how it's been handled by DOT in the city like some board members expressed. I have never heard about this project until the last time they had a community session. I didn't find out about it until the day after they put up flyers on 31st Avenue. I don't know if the board has seen them. This is one of them. If you want to pass that around. They're not very clear. They were only put on 31st Avenue, not on 30th Avenue or Broadway, or on Steinway Street, where there's much more foot traffic going to the subways, where they might have been seen by the entire community instead of just people who use 31st Avenue. My other issue is that I don't see a whole lot of pedestrian protection here. There's no daylighting, there's no curb cutouts, except for in that Open Street corridor for those two blocks. I would like to see more of that and less concern with bike safety because my children and I have almost been run over by bicycles, so many times.

Joseph Patti, Department of Transportation: There's daylighting on every corridor with the protective bike lane.

Neil Hayden: I live on 31st Avenue and 36th Street, two blocks away from where they have Open Streets right now. I must admit, I didn't hear about the event either until I saw Caban's Instagram page.

Bobby: My name is Bobby. Astoria is my home and as someone who has lost friends due to traffic violence and as someone who walks and bikes in Astoria, I just want to say I'm in support of all of this. It's a great

project. I am very thankful for it and when we saw the first public meeting back in September last year, I was very grateful for all the things the DOT has been putting forward since then. So, thank you.

Miser: I am Miser and on behalf of myself and the 20,000 people in my micro mobility community, we could not be more excited for this plan by DOT. I just want to address one thing that I heard a little earlier here. I want everyone on this board to remember that the reason this all started was because we suffered several children being killed in our neighborhood - specifically, Dolma Naadhun who was 7 years old. She was killed by a car, not by a bike, as you might hear some members of this board elaborate on the danger. So I know this board doesn't have a lot of power, but I would urge all of you to learn about the issues before you come to this, because this will save people's lives. There are 300 car crashes every day in New York City. There are 100,000 people sent to the hospital every year and several hundred people are killed by cars. Not a single one is killed by a bike. There is less than one person every year killed by a bike. This is going to literally save lives, especially children's lives.

Sarose Klein: My name is Sarose Klein. I've lived in Astoria for 10 years; I'm born and raised in Queens. I'm lucky to be in Astoria, and now I am an organizer at the 31st Avenue Open Street. I share the concerns that a lot of you have shared tonight, and I also see some resolution for it all. I do not believe that allowing cars on 31st Avenue between the streets that we have designated as the Open Street during April to November on Saturday and Sundays, is the solution. I agree with a lot of you, but I do not believe that disbanding this program and limiting it is the solution to get what all of you want right now. So I just want you to think more creatively. That's why I'm here. I just really hope that we can expand our thinking beyond what is happening Saturday and Sunday. I think it's limiting us. Thank you.

John Surico: I'm the Chairperson of 31st Avenue Open Street Collective. I'm a resident of Astoria for over a decade and a native of Floral Park, which I believe is CB10. I'm here to share my vocal support for the DOT's proposal for Bike Boulevard on 31st AVE. Each weekend, a group of over 150 neighbors, many of whom are here tonight and live on the two blocks, make magic happen. We close the street at 12:00pm to traffic alongside support from the Horticultural Society and rather open it to people for completely free programming markets, safe passageway and outdoor seating. Sometimes, in fact, kids are anxiously awaiting for us to do it, so they can play games and ride their bikes. People tell us that the space is their front yard or backyard often because they don't have one themselves and I myself have developed deep bonds with people I didn't even know 3 years ago, one of which is here and is actually planning my wedding in November. That brings me the most joy in this dense isolating city, especially in the wake of the pandemic. So anything that makes that more of a reality and helps to expand those benefits of safety and community to more of our neighbors such as 39th Ave has done in Sunnyside and 34th Ave has done in Jackson Heights nearby. I wholeheartedly voice my support.

Chris E. Efthimiou: I am a lifelong resident of Astoria Queens. So this is the place for me. I really support this project. Thank you very much for doing this. I just see the good side of this. We need to calm traffic. There are options to take for drivers, I drive myself and I just see all the positives in this project. So thank you very much.

Emily Chingay: I also wanted to speak in support of the project. I think many others do. The Open Streets are a great way to connect with neighbors, learn about resources and organizations in the neighborhood and also, I think it'll be a lot safer for many different modes of transportation and I'm really looking forward to seeing it be implemented.

Cormac Nataro: This fall is going to be my 10th year living in Astoria. I'm very excited for this bike Boulevard to come to Queens. It's going to make it a lot easier for me and a lot of people I know to get around. I also just want to point out that it's a great thing to give people alternatives to driving. I think a lot of the drivers who are concerned about taking a little bit of extra time having to go around the block looking for parking, are going to benefit in the sense that again giving people alternatives to driving gets more people off the road and makes more room for other people to drive during the pandemic. I used to have a car in Astoria and when I realized that a bike could get most of my needs done, I stopped driving, which meant I was no longer competing for parking. I was no longer in front of you at the red light. I was no longer part of traffic. So I think this is a great plan. I'm looking forward to seeing it happen.

Maureen Neary: I have lived in Astoria for 74 years on 37th street between 30th and 31st Avenue. I found out about this when they had the variety club meeting. No notification to any of the people on my block and all the blocks around us that there was this project. If you only put it on 31st Avenue, it should have been on all the avenues, or we should have got it in a mailing at home so we would have known about this. I totally object to it, because the community didn't know about it.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: I want to encourage everybody here, if you don't subscribe to the Community Board 1 newsletter, to sign up for that. If you have an email address, you can sign up because we do send out the notifications. I appreciate the feedback that many people didn't know about this, but I want to encourage everybody, not just for this, but for other things that are coming up - sign up for our newsletter.

Cali Percenos: I've also been here from when I was born. I was raised in Astoria - 36th Street between 30th and 31st Avenue. When it comes to politics - you are so quick to send something to the house so that we can vote for everybody, but we didn't get anything, and I found out from a neighbor. We're in an association called the Norwood Gardens Association. Nobody reached out to that association. We have the alleyways in the back. We are homeowners for years and pay taxes. We have to go around because sometimes people double park. We cater to the flea market on 30th Avenue that uses our alleyways to go around. They go through in and out of our alleyways - wear and tear. Nobody picks that up. We have to do it. So we're asking to rearrange this where we can go down 36th Street, make a right turn on 35th to go around to our houses and a left on 37th to go around to our houses. Open streets were great during COVID because nobody had anything to do. We wanted to go outside right now. It's creating a lot of congestion.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: Time is up. We did get your letter also and it was forwarded to the Transportation chairs and also to the DOT - might have been today. So thank you for that letter.

Alexander Schaffer: I'm a resident of Astoria. I strongly support this plan, and I encourage the board to do so as well. The only thing I want to add is that I'm not a bicyclist, I'm a pedestrian. When Crescent went into place, the change there, that was a game changer and a life changer for me for how safe it felt just walking up and down Crescent. Whenever I walk north and south, that's the road I use because it feels so much safer than the rest of the other north | south streets. So I see 31st Avenue as the same thing just going east and west, so I hope that the board votes to support this safe haven for pedestrians.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: Thank you. Just to clarify, we're not actually taking a vote on this. it's not an item, but we wanted to give people a chance to speak out and give feedback.

Laura Shepard: I'm a Queen's organizer at Transportation Alternatives and I could not be more excited about this project. There's been an urgent need for an east-west bike route in Astoria for many years. Last year began with a cycling fatality on 24th Avenue and Mara Kuchikow was killed by a truck driver while riding east. There's just no way to get across safely. Protected bike lanes save lives. The data is in and when we have them more women ride more families, more children, more seniors, more people, just doing more things, have more options. This is good for everybody. People who want to shop, eat dine, get around go to the park and I really commend the Department of Transportation on a hell of a public engagement operation. The survey on this project received more responses than nearly any other project. They were out on the Open Street weekend after weekend, the elected officials got the word out. So thank you.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: This will be the final comment. You can always send comments to the board office, and we can forward them.

Heather: My concern is that they say it's about safety, but there's more avenues that are unsafe than 31st Avenue. If you look at the motor vehicle collision crashes, a report from open data from New York City, 34th Avenue is more dangerous. 35th Avenue is more dangerous. 37th Avenue is more dangerous. Broadway is more dangerous. Astoria Boulevard is more dangerous. If you're looking to have something where everyone can work together and not fight with each other, it seems like we could have a two-way street with a protected bike lane and then everybody can get what they need. Thank you.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: Thank you all for your comments. I appreciate people coming out to speak about that. Thank you to the DOT for the presentation. Again. If you have any further things that you want them to know, you can send it to us, and we'll forward it to them.

Next is our business section and we want to start with the adoption of the May 2024 minutes, which you all received. Can I have a motion to approve?

Motion to Approve: Amin Mehedi Second: Tom Ryan Voice Vote - Motion Passed Unanimously

Chair's Report

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: I'm really not going to give a report other than to say that we still have not sent out the public member application, but that will be going out - just to keep people up to date on that.

District Manager's Report

Florence Koulouris: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. It's nice to see you all here tonight. Our office is in the process of preparing for fiscal year '25. We recently met with District Managers to prepare for all the necessary agency meetings prior to our local meeting in September for public comments.

We have been scheduling committee meetings and have sent out the capital expense kits for the committee's use. The office has sent all the chairpersons of committees committee kits for attendance, minutes and committee lists. We have not received your minutes emailed to the office. Please send your attendance lists and minutes for the committees you chair. Additionally, we have made phone calls for the new personal information list for sharing. I have copies of the form with me tonight. If you have not filled out a form and wish to allow your email and phone number to be shared with the membership, we will need you to fill out this form.

Our office has sent EEO booklets by mail and by email. Additionally, we have brought them to meetings. Several of you have not signed off on EEO. If you have not signed off on EEO, we must have these forms for Queens Borough Hall. Please see me for the sign off as they are mandatory. Approximately 25 people have not returned the sign off. Please do so tonight or we must receive an email confirming you have received the EEO booklet. In closing out the fiscal year, this is a very important part of your membership to be completed.

The New York City task force has continued to work on automobiles and trucks in the streets of our community that have been violating traffic regulations. Towing has occurred by their agency. FDNY has completed the hydrant inspections with any repairs necessary being reported to DEP for their attention.

Cooling centers are open and listed on our Facebook and Twitter. Queens Public Library is being used as a cooling center and senior centers will offer services to our seniors.

We have received approval for a traffic signal at 36th Avenue and 28th street, and a No Standing sign on the north side of 19th Road between 77th and 79th Streets.

The Mayor's Office sent appreciation for the assistance provided for the preparations for the Mayor's Town Hall at Frank Sinatra School. Approximately 100 people were in attendance.

DOT red light cameras will be increasing from 150 to 600 by approximately 2027 citywide.

Lastly, Astoria Park Pool is scheduled to reopen at the end of June for use. Have a wonderful hiatus and if you have any comments, concerns, questions or complaints please email the office at QN01@cb.nyc.gov or call Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. Thank you for all you do for our community. Volunteering shows your dedication to the district, and you all make a big difference. Thank you.

Committee Reports

Business, Economic Development

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: Brian Martinez is not present tonight, but I guess Brian Hunt isn't either. I will just give a quick summary of that meeting.

We did hear from Central Astoria Local Development Corporation on the 360 Grant that they received. I don't know if you want to say anything about that grant, Marie. You know it better than me. We also heard a presentation from a state representative regarding the Long Island City Downtown Revitalization Initiative that is a \$10 million grant. It is going to be awarded for different projects in the focus area which does include up to 36th Avenue, so it's Long Island City, but up to 36th Avenue, so I encourage everybody to go and look at that website. LICDRI.com. There's a call for projects. It opened up June 13th and they go until August. I don't know the exact date off hand, but groups of people can apply for funding to implement projects that revitalize that area. So this is really important. We'll send out some information to the board and we're kind of relying on you to also send it out to people in your network because again, I'm not really sure how great the outreach has been about this particular project. So I just wanted to make sure people know about that. It's an important pocket of money that we want to make sure lots of people have access to apply for.

Capital Expense and Budget

No Report

Communications and Public Outreach

Huge Ma: We have a meeting. We finally got down the date for our first meeting. It will be next Wednesday, so please come bring all your ideas. It'll be fun.

Consumer Affairs and Licenses:

Kathleen Warnock: We met last night and as you know, we are doing sidewalk cafes as well as dispensaries and examining liquor licenses and making recommendations. So there were no dispensary applications this month. There were three applications for sidewalk cafes: two actually on the sidewalk and one on the road. We interviewed all three applicants, some of whom have already been running sidewalk cafes - getting into the new Dining Out New York program, they've all submitted the appropriate documentation. They acknowledge that they will follow the rules regarding the height, removability and all of the very specific dimensions that are required now for sidewalk and roadway dining. Once again, the roadway dining will go away between November and April - no more built up, sheds or small buildings. So in terms of that, I think that the feeling on the committee was that we should vote to approve their applications.

The liquor licenses: You've been given the list for the ones that we are looking at in June. We did not have the community police there last night, but they were in communication with Florence, and she said that there were none that were specifically standing out as people who could be having nuisances with 311 and 911 calls. So, overall, all of the people did put in all of their appropriate documentation and indicated what they're going to have, what they're not going to have, and live music as well as food. So there were no problematic ones. In general, the feeling was that it would be okay to approve these applications, both the new ones and the renewals for the liquor licenses on the June list.

Motion to Approve Sidewalk Cafe Applications on the June List: Kathleen Warnock

Seconded: Richard Khuzami No Discussion Motion Passed Unanimously

Tom Ryan: All the outdoor cafes created during COVID - some of them are not being used - what's the story with the city with that? They're saying you have to start all up again and give a new permit?

Kathleen Warnock: They created the COVID New York website, which has for everybody who wants to do dining either on the sidewalk or in the roadway, a series, an application which requires them to have specific style and kind of seating and tables and tells them they can't have permanent things there and also makes the roadway dining seasonal. So before anybody gets an approval, they have to say that they will be doing all these things. So some of these people have been doing sidewalk cafes for many years, but now that we have this new program, they are required to apply again and say that they will follow these regulations. They have to apply by August 3rd if they want to continue.

Motion to Approve Liquor Licenses on the June List: Marie Torniali Seconded: Doreen Mohammed No Discussion Motion Passed - Two Abstentions

Kathleen Warnock: That will be it for now. We are aware that we're moving into a very busy season for the entertainment venues here in Astoria and we will be keeping track of anybody who becomes a problem actor and urge you, if you're having issues in your neighborhood, to contact both Florence and 311. Thank you so much.

Education and Libraries

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: Diana is not here, but I do know they have a meeting on June 24th. Everyone should have gotten a notice about that.

Health and Human Services

Shahenaz Hamde: We're going to have our meeting on June 20th. We're going to have the Health Department and also going to review the capital and expense budget. Please attend.

Environmental and Sanitation

Antonello Di Saverio: I really don't have a report except happy summer and if you have any budget, capital or expense just let Florence know that relates to sanitation or environmental issues.

Land Use and Zoning

Elizabeth Erion: Item #1: N240290ZRY City of Yes for Housing Opportunity (CoYHO) Zoning Text Amendment - I'd like to make a motion to approve the zoning text amendment with the following conditions: 1) Increase the setbacks on new buildings to 10 ft. This is in an R5 to keep the context of the street wall. 2) keep the existing district yard requirement - no reduction in the yard requirements.

When you think about it, the new 5ft yard requirement that they're talking about as minimum - if you have a house that's on that requires 2 yards and the minimum is five, yes, it has to go up to 13, but they're going to try to - you can't even squeeze a car through - at that point, you can't access your backyard with a vehicle or whatever. So the condition would be to maintain existing requirements for yards

3) Under the universal affordability preference - this is where the city will give a 20% additional floor area bonus to any building as long as that bonus is used for affordable housing. What is appropriate is to mandate within that allowance the AMIs be low and medium income - 40% AMI

4) This condition has to do with infill provisions on NYCHA campuses. We have a number of apartment complexes that are affected by that. Any infill proposal should require a ULURP review and should be low and medium income - 40% AMI for the entire building.

I don't know what to say about ADUs, unless there is an issue with the basement. Under the landmarks - there are two landmarks in our district that might be able to sell. One might be able to sell their air transfer rights, one is the Michael Smith Homestead, the other is the latest landmark, which is the Barker Levan Office Pavilion in Ravenswood, which has a very large piece of property and could transfer their development rights. I don't know if there's any issue that the Community Board has. I don't and we don't.

Motion to approve Item #1: N240290ZRY City of Yes for Housing Opportunity (CoYHO) Zoning Text Amendment with the following conditions:

1) District Fixes: Increase setbacks to 10 feet;

2) District Fixes: Keep the existing district yard requirement - no reduction in the yard requirements;

3) Under the Universal Affordability Preference - the AMI for the additional 20% floor area will be low and medium income - 40%;

4) Any infill provisions on NYCHA campuses shall require a ULURP review and a 40% AMI for all infill units:

Second: Gerald Caliendo

Discussion:

Christopher Hanway: When you spoke about the NYCHA infill, that was citywide. Was that not at all in the City of Yes before? Was there no mention of infill on NYCHA property? What exactly is being amended?

Gerald Caliendo: In the Economic Development- they also added in NYCHA that you could go and put commercial uses. We're not talking about commercial now, we're talking about residential. There was no mention of infill in the initial residential in the Economic Development.

Richard Khuzami: I just want to make sure that we don't have a situation where the 20% becomes unaffordable for somebody to add on to their home. Having it at 40% may be a situation where the banks may not see enough income to loan. We have a lot of developments in this area that don't get done, because the numbers don't work. 60% AMI which is the lowest end of what they're currently proposing, might be a good compromise for that I'm just saying it might actually work better.

Gerald Caliendo: The whole purpose of this whole text change is to create affordable housing, and this has been an argument from this Community Board forever that we don't have enough affordable housing. If a developer wants an additional 20%, they should give it to the lowest income and make it work.

Christian Batres: I wanted to say if any development is going through the 421A and 485X, I really believe that we as a Community Board should send that to a ULURP process, and there has to be some kind of language on that. Since we're talking about affordable housing, these developers are coming to our neighborhoods. using our tax money to develop, which is great, but there needs to be some language on that by us to keep every standard wage because I heard at the beginning of the meeting that we were talking about we can't afford to live in our own neighborhoods because the rent is jacked all the way up and it's very expensive. We just need to keep that in mind.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: The motion was to approve with the following conditions:

- 1) District Fixes: a 10-foot setback;
- 2) District Fixes: maintain existing requirements for yards;
- 3) Universal Affordable Preference or UAP - the extra 20% that they're able to add be at AMI in low and medium ranges - 40% AMI;
- 4) Infill: Any infill should require a ULURP. Any development should be low- and medium-income tiers - 40% AMI.

So that is the motion that's on the floor right now.

Discussion:

Tom Ryan: Gerry put this up last time, but we never got the answer from the official. Accessory dwelling units, basements, attics sheds, cottages. Are they going to be subject to building codes?

Colin Ryan: The short answer is yes, but Matt from our zoning division here can help clarify if there's any more nuance you'd like to see.

Matthew City Planning: To answer your question, there's a whole lot of other codes that deal with any development that goes on. ADU is one of them. It has to go through the building department as all other proposals do. Just keep that in mind and also the fire department, DEP, all that. So all these codes restrict what you can actually do or how much you can do.

Tom Ryan: So if I want to build any of these things I have to follow the same code that I would for my house.

Doreen Mohammed: I'm going to reiterate what I reiterate at every Community Board meeting rezoning thing - these AMIs are never affordable enough. While I appreciate the motion to try to aim for the low and medium, that's still not affordable and accessible to most New Yorkers. We Know City of Yes, it's not meant for the working-class New Yorker. It's not meant for the average New Yorker that Census 2020 is talking about where the income is \$40,000. So this is still a horrendous plan, even though I appreciate the motions being put in and we as a Community Board, if we're fighting for working class New Yorkers, for poor New Yorkers, people in NYCHA with 20% AMI rents and less, black and brown New Yorkers, people like myself as well, we should be voting no on this. We should stop dignifying Mayor Adams land grab, REBNY real estate stuff, I think this plan can honestly eat shit. I'm just so tired of all the drama. But thank you.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: Just watch the language - thanks.

Athanasios Magoutas: I understood the thrust of the point regarding the yards and keeping existing yard regulations to keep as much permeable land as possible, but maybe we just need to word it differently. I don't know if the answers came from Colin or someone else, but it says here that the existing requirements technically allow you to pave over your entire yard already. So do we not want to then say that we want to remove the right to pave over the yard as the amendment or did I misunderstand something there?

Gerald Caliendo: What Colin mentioned - you are allowed to pave over, but you have to keep the water, the storm water, rain, water on your property. Now, in order to do that, you have to create or build retention on your property or detention in your yard. So if you keep making your yard smaller, you have no place to put the retention, because retention means you have to build a dry well because a sewer can only take so much rainwater. So when you reduce your rear yard, you reduce your side yard, you have no place to put the absorption which is dictated by DEP. Even if it's grass it still won't hold because you have the rainwater for your roof, which they're allowing you to build a bigger roof. 5-foot side yards on each side and 20-foot rear yard and most of the front yards are only 10 feet. So now look at that surface area increase. It's enormous.

Where is that rainwater going to go? It can't be retained on your property physically, unless you dig a dry well 3 feet down to China. It's just like the ADUs - these things are proposed, but they're not practical. So the reality is, especially what I mentioned at the initial thing about yards now, you're starting to bring people so close together and it's ruining the character of the neighborhood by being smaller rear yards and people are going to pave, they are going to pave. But if you pave-and you don't have your drywell, you get a fine because a neighbor will complain because then the rainwater is going into your neighbor's property and that's the problem with that and I think that's part and parcel of that there's numerous issues with reducing the yards. It's the rainwater. It's the proximity of buildings together too close. It eliminates the ability to even have a parking spot if you want to have a parking spot. So it's a multifaceted problem and I think that's why it is, and I agree, leaving the yards where they are.

Frank Fredericks: Perhaps in echoing Doreen's concerns, but maybe looking, I might interpret it differently. I would just affirm the agreement that once again AMI is a terrible metric. We should be tying it to minimum wage. That's not a thing we're going to solve. This does not deal with the mini units that are basically financing, feasibly unable to be updated because of zoning issues, I forget, the exact term for it, but basically, people who have things that are rent controlled, can't update them because they can't afford to, and it doesn't deal with the fact that the city could be offering a substantial amount of low APR to zero APR funding available for investment via the capital stack the deck side. This doesn't solve these big structural things, but there's a lot of great stuff in there. These amendments all take wonderful steps in the right direction. So, despite sharing these concerns about significant structural problems, these are great steps in the right direction of what we need to walk several miles together and I'm happy to endorse it with that and I hope others do too.

Richard Khuzami: Even though I don't agree with the 40% I agree with Frank that this whole project is a positive thing to move forward, so I will support it also. I hope that it ends up actually being able to be utilized financially, that's my only concern but I think it's a good step forward.

Rod Townsend: Call the Question

Motion Passes: Aye 23 Nay 8 No Abstentions

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: I really want to just thank Liz. We are going to buy you a drink later

Legal/Legislative/Parliamentary

Rod Townsend: Tiny note - Community Board 2 is using our parliamentary guide, so good on us. Have a great summer. No report, otherwise.

Office Budget and Staff

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: Just a reminder, we're having a very short meeting after this meeting once the full board meeting is over. We did meet to discuss the budget and unspent funds and came up with a plan. So that's just a quick update from the office and budget committee.

Parks/Recreation/Cultural

Richard Khuzami: We had our first meeting, and we're privileged to have Socrates, Noguchi and the Long Island City boathouse and the Welling Court Mural Project present on their upcoming summer, Socrates discussed their programming. We had a wonderful discussion on their current programming. We had Toshiko Tajaazu - it was a great presentation. Also of Interest, coming up is Valerie Green space at the Museum of the Moving Image. They're going to be having a dance, entropies performance, and it's going to be this Sunday at 3:00 to 4:00. Also in your packet, we were contacted by the Parks Department. As you may all know, there was a wonderful renovation done at Charybdis Playground in Astoria Park when innovatively they took the northern end, the sprayer pool of the historical pool complex and instead separated it from the pool, complex and added it within the playground, and it really is a wonderful Innovative idea within a landmarked facility. It seems that there is an award they're actually looking for support for from the New York State preservation League Excellence Award, which, quoting from their website says, allows us to shine a light on the people who are using historic preservation to make all of our lives better through exemplary restoration projects, indispensable publications, individual action and organizational distinction. You'll see in your packet that there is a letter we would like to support the Parks Department in their endeavor to receive this award. So I would ask a motion if somebody would give a motion to accept sorry.

Motion to Approve: Amy Hau Seconded: Tom Ryan Motion Passed Unanimously

Public Safety

Christopher Hanway: Just a reminder, we are going to hold off on having our first meeting until September. I'll reach out to Florence to talk about how that works in terms of getting it scheduled. We will do it hopefully early enough, so that we can discuss any Capital requests that we'd put in. Frank and I are going to meet this evening to start mapping that out and I do want to commit that as co-chair we will continue to engage with the Community Advisory Board for the 114th Precinct and make sure that we're working together on all of those initiatives.

Transportation

Dominic Stiller: On June 3rd, we had a meeting with the MTA. I guess I'm a little depressed about the congestion pricing change so that affects MTA implementations, but I won't get into it. Not sure it affects this one, but the MTA did a presentation about elevator installation at Broadway N train - didn't need a vote on that. It was a good presentation which would bring elevators from the ground up to directly to the train platform, and so there was a lot of discussion about the layout of why it's not going to the mezzanine and it just to be a cost savings, measure and rather than going to the mezzanine, they were putting more turnstiles or cash check-in points up at the platform level, so it was interesting and then they also talked about a little known traffic calming installation somewhere here, I don't know a thing about it: 31st Avenue - we saw the presentation on tonight, so we've seen that we saw that at the committee meeting and we've talked about it, a bunch so I'm not going to mention anymore. Have a nice summer.

Rod Townsend: Can the committee take up the way DOT does outreach in the community because we heard repeatedly tonight that it sucks.

Dominic Stiller: Yes. I think that they really have, guys. I think that you can take it up, but you saw the documentation that they had on that screen. They truly did more outreach here than they ever did before.

Daniel Aliberti: I had an issue about one of the items in that meeting and that the placement of the elevator for accessibility is halfway down the block. It's not at the station at the corner and the issue that I had was that people in wheelchairs are going to be coming out of that stop out of that elevator halfway down the block they'll have to wield all the way down to the corner, go past stores and homes or whatever ever that may or may not shovel their sidewalks and the MTA said that they will shovel. However, they only shovel three feet from the door of the elevator and so I had a big issue with that on behalf of people who use wheelchairs, crutches, canes, rollators and all that kind of stuff.

Public Session

Homeris (Sanchez): I'm here from Urban Dove Team Charter School. I'm one of the recruitment assistants. I'm just here to introduce the school to them. We have a new location here in Astoria. The high school is for students that have 0 to 8 credits failing the 9th grade. So essentially just failed the 9th grade - 0 to 8 core credits and also if they have that they can apply for our school. I'll leave some information on the table. Some goodie bags with more information, it's for students that really have a hard time focusing. Two teachers in every classroom. The classrooms are very small, no more than 20 students. Please send the kids. We assign them a coach when they begin and it's only a three-year program, so if they fail the 9th grade, they are placed in 10th grade, basically because it's only 10:11 and 12. Okay, thank you.

Claire Collins: I work for Donovan Richards, Queens Borough President. I'll just do our events really quickly on Thursday June 20th we're having our Philippine Independence Day celebration at Queens Borough Hall. Then June is recognized as gun violence awareness month, so Borough President Richards is going to hold his third annual Queens Promotes Peace Conference on June 24th at 400 p.m. Happy Pride Month. Also, the main thing I'm going to talk about tonight is this Reimagine Ravenswood. Our office is doing a study right now with support from Rise Light and Power, which are the owners of the power plant, the Generating Station in Ravenswood, and they have committed to turn that power plant site into a renewable energy hub, but what we need from the community, anyone that lives works or plays in that area, we want your opinions on what to do with it now. So we have a survey. The flyers I'll leave this one over there and there's more on the table there. Please take 5 minutes. We want your opinions. I know everybody here has an opinion. You all have a lot of those. So we want them. Scan this, fill out the survey please, and if anybody who lives in Queensbridge or Ravenswood or not even in those particular but just in the general area, please have them fill out the survey. Thank you.

Beck: I'm Beck from Councilmember Caban's office. Just a quick legislative update. We're in the middle of the budget season and our office is really focusing on ensuring the city fully funds all central services for all New Yorkers, as council member Caban talked about when she was here. For example, we've been fighting hard to protect and expand funding for childcare, including for Universal Pre-K and guarantee funding for Promise NYC a program that provides crucial childcare services to undocumented families. We're also pushing a number of legislative priorities, including the secure jobs act, which some people ask great questions about last

time, which we recently reintroduced in consultation with our coalition partners, and which would give New York City workers additional protections against unfair dismissal. Some district and office events if you know anybody who could use immigration consultation services, please contact our office and we can have them meet with representatives from community citizenship at our next meeting with them - so there will be in person appointments as we do every month and also we'll be hosting Astoria Houses satellite office hours again with several of our fellow electeds on June 24th from 12: to 5: p.m. thanks.

Tiffany Echevarria: Everyone, my name is Tiffany from Congresswoman Nidia Velazquez's office. Happy June, happy summer. Just want to give some legislative updates. She's been very busy legislatively. I have a flyer here that has all of the letters that she introduced this month. She introduced 10 letters in Congress right now. I'm going to leave it in the front because it's a lot to talk about, but you guys could go more into details to know exactly what the congresswoman is doing. Some few examples are she is trying to advocate for \$132 million for teachers, quality partnership grants. This is basically Federal funding to help fund teacher preparation programs at higher education institutions. Another one to talk about, throwing it out there, she's advocating for more Federal funding for Hepatitis, B and liver cancer research, and this is only two out of the 10 that she has introduced. So please take a look at it to see if you're interested or want to learn more. One act that she delivered this month is called the Liver Act or Liver Illness Visibility, Education and Research Act. So this basically is just talking about how liver cancer is one of the deadliest forms of cancers and I believe in 2018 about 1,000 people alone died from this disease. So she's trying to spread more awareness. If you want to learn more, please look into it. Again. I have flyers with all of the things that she's done this month. It'll be on the table because I can't put this all in two minutes but thank you so much for your time.

Angela Sherpa: My name is Angela and I'm with the office of Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio Cortez. I just have two updates to share tonight. The Biden Administration recently announced an executive action allowing certain undocumented spouses and children of US citizens an opportunity to apply for a program for parole in place which would shield them from deportations and offer them work permits if they have lived in the country for at least 10 years. If anyone that might be interested in learning more about this program feel free to contact our office directly and then the second update is that we're hosting our next grants webinar soon. I'll be sending out an email this week and we'll be hosting representatives from the National Endowment for Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. If your organization is interested in attending, you can always email me directly or you can email us at ny14grants@mail.house.gov. We are always available at our Astoria office, every Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. by appointment and our Hunts Point Flagship office open from Mondays through Thursdays 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Javier Figaroa: My name is Javier, I'm from District Attorney Katz's office. I have one big announcement. I want to share. I know we touched on it earlier in the meeting about the scooters. It's from the office itself, so I'm just going to read it really quickly. The DA announced the seizure of 99 additional scooters parked illegally on the sidewalk and on streets across the borough. The crackdown is part of an ongoing operation involving the District Attorneys' Detective Bureau and local police precincts to address the persistent, increased use of scooters and crimes such as drive-by, shootings and robberies. That brings a total up to 515 scooters, two motorcycles and one dirt bike that has been removed from Queen's neighborhoods since the start of the joint operation in February. This is an ongoing issue that is borough wide, and this number will probably continue to go up when we come back from the summer. This is just one big announcement: I want to share because I know we touched on it earlier in the meeting.

Neil Herdan: Neil Herdan put my other hat on. I'm the co-chair of Friends of Whitey Ford Field. Florence - thank you for fixing the lighting. Every Open Streets are absolutely fantastic. I love them. Regarding our group, we're going to be having a big cleanup on Saturday, the 22nd everybody should come down. We need volunteers fairly badly. We are not a very big group. We should be on all the link NYC terminals in Community Board 1. I want to wish everybody a happy summer. Thank you very much.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: So before we motion to adjourn, I just want to wish everyone a wonderful summer. I want you to be thinking about Capital expenses in the fall in our priorities list and thinking about what our community needs. Look at the list that was sent out, committee chairs, Amy and Corinne will be in touch with you as well, but just thank you for putting in the work for a long meeting tonight as well and appreciate all the work that everyone is doing. So, thank you so much and yes,

Kathleen Warnock: Tiny little thing - early voting is on now the Primary is next Tuesday. Please everybody go out and vote.

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: I kind of forgot, new business and old business. I know someone has talked about DOT and outreach. Do you want to elaborate on that?

New Business

Rod Townsend: We heard from multiple residents who lived on streets that are next to 31st Avenue, that they heard nothing from DOT. We heard from leaders of community organizations, Old Astoria and another block association that they heard nothing from DOT, so to say that they are doing a good job of outreach, which the Commissioner feels that she is doing, is not reflected in the community feelings and I would, if I can help the transportation committee to think about this, I'd be happy to attend a meeting. That's it!

Chair Evie Hantzopoulos: Thank you. Any other new business, old business? No. May I have a motion to adjourn?

Motion to Adjourn: Amy Hau

Second: Marisela Santos Motion Passed Unanimously

**COMMUNITY BOARD 1, Queens
ATTENDANCE FULL BOARD MEETING**

DATE 6-18-2024

Community Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	Community Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.
George Alexiou		✓		Huge Ma	✓		
Daniel Aliberti	✓			Raga Maddela		✓	
Cristian Batres	✓			Athanasios Magoutas	✓		
Kian Betancourt	✓			Patricia Mahecha			E
Ann Bruno			E	Jeffrey Martin			E
Gerald Caliendo	✓			Brian Martinez			E
Jean Marie D'Alleva			E	Amin Mehedi	✓		
Antonella Di Saverio	✓			Andreas Migias	✓		
Katie Ellman		✓		Doreen Mohammed	✓		
Elizabeth Erion	✓			Stella Nicolaou	✓		
Dean Feratovic	✓			Dino Panagoulis	✓		
Adam Fisher-Cox	✓			Juliet Payabyab	✓		
Frank Fredericks	✓			RoseMarie Poveromo	✓		
Tyrone Gardner	✓			Thomas Ryan	✓		
Shahenaz Hamde	✓			Marisela Santos	✓		
Evie Hantzopoulos	✓			Dominic Stiller	✓		
Christopher Harway	✓			Marie Torniali	✓		
Amy Hau	✓			Rod Townsend	✓		
Brian Hunt		✓		Judy Trilivas	✓		
Jacqueline Ibarra	✓			Mario Vergara	✓		
Vanessa Jones-Hall			E	Kathleen Warnock	✓		
Richard Khuzami	✓			Quinella Williams			E
Cristina Lastres		✓		Corinne Wood-Haynes	✓		
Diana Limongi		✓		Thomas Wright			E
Ethan Lowens		✓		Rosemary Yelton		✓	
Number Board Members Present _____							
Present <u>34</u>				Absent <u>8</u>			
				Excused <u>8</u>			
						50	Apr-24