



Donovan Richards  
Queens Borough President

# Community Board No. 2

43-22 50th Street, 2nd Floor  
Woodside, New York 11377

(718) 533-8773

Fax (718-533-8777

Email [qn02@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:qn02@cb.nyc.gov)

[www.nyc.gov/queenscb2](http://www.nyc.gov/queenscb2)

Morry Galonoy  
Chairperson

Debra Markell Kleinert  
District Manager

February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## Environment Committee Meeting Minutes

*this was a teleconference zoom meeting*

### Attendees

Frank Wu  
Morry Galonoy  
Steven Raga  
Laura Shepard  
Lauren Springer  
Anthony Tudela  
Danielle Brecker  
Shelia Lewandowski

### Absentee

Dominick Lippolis  
Karla Perez

### Community Board 2 Staff

Debra Markell Kleinert, CB2 District Manager

### Guests

Joby Jacob, Professor La Guardia College  
Willis Elkins, Newtown Creek Alliance  
Isaac Blasenstein, Council Member Julie Won's Office  
Mitch Waxman  
Noah Kaufman  
Wing Szeto, DEP  
Sonny Kohn  
Taylor Carol  
Robert Olivari, DEP

Frank Wu welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Frank Wu introduced Willis Elkins from Newtown Creek Alliance.

- Willis Elkins was joined by Professor Joby Jacob from LaGuardia College.
- This is Newtown Creek 20<sup>th</sup> year as an organization.

*“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”*

- They were here to discuss an issue that is right behind LaGuardia College on 29<sup>th</sup> Street and 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- A Shoreline on Newtown Creek, the Dutch Kills Tributary, is collapsing into the Creek and has gotten significantly worse.
- Safety of the roadway that is adjacent to the shoreline. The roadway is just a few feet from falling into the water, large trucks and pedestrians use this roadway.
- Willis Elkins showed an aerial view of the location.
- The area belongs to the MTA, however, the DOT uses that area.
- Pictures were shown of how close the collapse is to the roadway.
- Newtown Creek Alliance wrote a letter addressed to MTA, because they own the land, DEC because they oversee shoreline construction and would hold the owner responsible for shoreline collapse and the DOT.
- The letter details the issues.
- This is an opportunity for this shoreline to be rebuilt in a way that would allow for public access.
- This area of Newtown Creek has basically been a dumping ground for so long.
- Letters have been sent in the past to DOT but no action has been taken.
- Frank Wu asked about the bridge and larger boats coming through.
  - The bridge located at the mouth of the tributary is rusted shut and large boats cannot go through
  - It needs to get addressed as a superfund site to bring sizable equipment in to deal with the contamination at the bottom of the creek.
  - The bridge is a separate issue from the shoreline issue on 29<sup>th</sup> Street.
  - The Borden Avenue Bridge and Hunters Point Avenue Bridge is the responsibility of DOT.
  - The bridge at the Dutch Kills Tributary is the responsibility of MTA because it is a rail line.
  - Frank Wu asked if the businesses there would want this waterway opened up for use as using the waterways would be better environmentally.
  - Willis Elkins mentioned they haven't heard of any mention of this as this waterway has not been used for over 20 years.
  - The bridge that doesn't open is called the DB Cabin Bridge 1919 Swing Bridge which carries the LIRR lower Montauk Tracks over Dutch Kills from the recently open Wheelstar Yard to Blissville Yard.
- Newtown Creek Alliance is in encouragement of maritime use of the creek but they are aware that by opening the bridges it does cause traffic.
- In order for the the students at LaGuardia College to learn and collect samples of Newtown Creek they have to travel to Brooklyn to access the Creek.
- Joby Jacob stated that access to the Creek is much needed for educational use and would benefit Queens residents.

Noah Kaufman, Founding Director of LIC Roots Community Garden -

- Noah Kaufman spoke about this Garden and how it is unique that there are no neighbors looking at it.
- No residents in the M1 manufacturing zone.
- It is underserved
- It is on an existing street but it is not mapped.
- LIC Roots does support the LaGuardia College greenway plan to the 47<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor.
- 29<sup>th</sup> Street North and South along the canal are very important components to any open space planning.
- The city is not moving past the use of industrial use

Mitch Waxman, Newton Creek Alliance and CB1 Transportation Committee Chair

- Discussed the urgency of a two level solution that is needed
- Short term solution of the undermining of 29<sup>th</sup> Street
- He is requesting letters of support for this issue.
- 29<sup>th</sup> Street will collapse within the year.
- 3 blocks from the Court, and 1 block from LaGuardia College
- There are no sidewalks, no street lighting
- 1 block away from the Falchi Building
- 2<sup>nd</sup> collapse happened after Thanksgiving weekend.

Laura Shepherd suggested adding the Department of City Planning to the letter regarding Newtown Creek. She spoke about how this endeavor will take funding and coordination within the agencies. A grant might be needed.

Willis Elkins mentioned that the Newtown Creek Alliance did have a good relationship with the Department of City Planning.

Regarding funding MTA is the named responsible party for the contamination of Newtown Creek. Newtown Creek is always looking for funding.

A question was asked by a committee member about what else can be done to resolve this issue? It was answered if an Elected Official would want to allocate money to do an engineering study that could be a start. There are three components to the study, you want to remove the hulks, a restoration that makes sense and have an area for public space. It has to be figured out which agency is most responsible for this area. The land basically belongs to MTA LIRR, which is a state responsibility.

The issue is more public safety than property safety. Litigation is not the way to go, according to Noah Kaufman, LIC Roots. It is appropriate to support the LaGuardia Community Greenway plan and to promote waterfront access.

Frank Wu introduced Wing Szeto from the NYC Department of Environmental Protection. (presentation attached)- Borden Avenue Pump Station

- Wing Szeto is the Counterble (Project) Manager during the design phase of the upgrade of the Borden Avenue Pump Station.
- This project was presented to CB2 back in 2015.
- The project back then was to provide an aeration system and to upgrade the Pump station.
- Aeration System was required by NYS DEC to improve the water quality of Newtown Creek and Dutch Kills Tributary and close to the pump station.
- Moving forward the Pump Station still needs to be upgraded as equipment is old minus the aeration system.
- The design is completed.
- Construction should proceed Spring/Summer 2022
- Two years for construction.
- Construction Management will be in touch with CB2 regarding the updates of this contract.
- This project is mainly connected with DEP, community organizations would not be involved. It is an existing pump station that is getting upgraded.
- The physical size of the building will be upgraded.
- Footprint of the building will go from currently 550 sq. ft. to 2750 sq. ft.
- Physical size of pump station is getting increased now because of a future project.
- The capacity of pump station is currently 3.9 million gallons per day to 26 million gallons per day.
- Replacing all equipment in the pump station.
- The original pump station was built in the 1950's.
- The pump station will be underneath the LIE on a traffic island on Borden Avenue and Review Avenue and 29<sup>th</sup> Street.
- It was mentioned from committee members if greenery and art could be included around this pumping station.
- Willis Elkins mentioned that back in 2015 the Newtown Creek Alliance did ask for more greenery.
  - Willis Elkins also reminded everyone that this project is being upgraded due to a combined sewer problem going into the Dutch Kills Tributary.
  - This will result in a 70% reduction of sewer waste into Dutch Kills Tributary.
  - Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) basically exist because there are so many paved surfaces.
  - Willis Elkins continued by saying how important it is for all city agencies to incorporate more green infrastructure when making improvements. It reduces local flooding and improves air quality.
- Robert Olivari mentioned that DEP has been engaged in most of the city for green infrastructure where it is applicable. DEP has been implementing rain gardens and next working on implementing porous pavement where it is applicable

- The pump station works as a mechanical device to help the sewer system move water.
- Robert Olivari mentioned that he will speak to the green infrastructure team to incorporate more greenery in gray area.

Frank Wu led a discussion with the committee for a letter of support on the collapsing bulkhead along 29<sup>th</sup> Street. A recommendation was made with no opposition from the Environmental Committee to do a letter of support.

#### DEP Presentation on Borden Avenue Pump Station

Laura Shepard made a motion that we send a letter to the Department of Environmental Protection to incorporate green infrastructure in the project area and evaluate the Percent for Art Program and try to incorporate it.

Frank Wu suggested to invite DEP to another Environment Committee Meeting to discuss if there were any updates.

#### Old Business

Danielle Brecker mentioned to the committee that there will be a Public Hearing on March 15, 2022 regarding the peeka plan in Astoria. It is important to notify people of this hearing and to encourage board members to testify in opposition.

Every meeting the committee records the existing CO2 air quality. Today's reading was 420.31 parts per million up from 416 parts per million a year ago..

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Kim Waber