



COMMUNITY BOARD 6, QUEENS

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HEATHER BEERS-DIMITRIADIS
CHAIR

DONOVAN RICHARDS
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

CHRISTINE NOLAN
DISTRICT MANAGER

CB 6 MEETING MINUTES DECEMBER 11, 2024

PRESENT

HEATHER BEERS-DIMITRIADIS, CHAIR	SALUA BAIDA, SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION
PETER BEADLE, 1 ST VICE CHAIR	L.T. CIACCIO, SECRETARY OF FINANCE/PERSONNEL
KEITH ENGEL, 2 ND VICE CHAIR	JOHN DERESZEWSKI, PARLIAMENTARIAN
MARK LASTER, 3 RD VICE CHAIR	

E. ALFONSECA	M. FERNANDEZ KONIGSBERG	S. ROLNICK
D. ARONOV	P. MORGAN	M. SALTON
A. AYON	S. MUNAWAR	G. SANDOVAL
K. BATRA	N. PIENKOWSKA	A.PRATAP SHAH
H. BIRNBAUM	J. POORAN	E.SHVARTSMAN
H. CHAIN	J. PRATT	J. SILVA
L.T. CIACCIO	D. RACHNAEV	M. TUCKER
L. DAVIS	P. RODRIGUEZ	B. WINSTEAD
S. JAIN		

ABSENT

R. ASHE*	H. SCHONHAUT*
J. AVILA	D. SCHANTZ
G. CHEN*	E. WONG*
K. CLARK	E. ZAKRY*
T. GAVRIELOF*	
B. GROSSBERG	
K. IMAS	
M. LASHLEY-KABORE	
K. LY	
DR. R. MEHRRA	

*EXCUSED ABSENCE

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

CHRISTINE NOLAN	DISTRICT MANAGER
JORDAN GOLDES	OFFICE OF CONGRESS MEMBER GRACE MENG
JAVIER FIGARO	OFFICE OF DISTRICT ATTORNEY MELINDA KATZ
KAROL GUAMAN	OFFICE OF ASSEMBLY MEMBER STEVEN RAGA
SEAN McCABE	OFFICE OF SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO
MARIA CONCOLINO	COMMUNITY BOARD 6 STAFF
BARBARA VULICH	COMMUNITY BOARD 6 STAFF

This meeting was held in person with a limited virtual option via Webex for individuals with extraordinary circumstances. The following CB6 Members joined the meeting via Webex: Heidi Chain, Pat Morgan, Shari Rolnick and Salua Baida. The meeting will be recorded and posted on YouTube (www.tinyurl.com/cb6youtube).

Chair Heather Beers-Dimitriadis opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

GOOD AND WELFARE

CB 6 MEMBERS

Mark Laster:

- Thursday, December 12 at 6 pm Forest Hills Library. Let's Talk Democracy presents an evening of listening and healing energy with music, art, reiki, meditation and more. Join for community conversations in person. Free, all invited.
- Affordable Housing Rehabilitation Program in the 2023 Legislative Session. A J51 replacement with stronger protections for tenants and more narrow eligibility, this program offers tax abatements for capital projects in multifamily affordable housing. The City Council approved Intro 654 (Sanchez) last Thursday. Although the program applies to affordable rentals as well, this information will focus on its applicability to co-ops and condos. Note: Unlike the previous J-51, this program has substantial protections for tenants, including requiring 15 years of rent stabilization, prohibiting MCI rent hikes and attestations against tenant harassment. I attended a rally celebrating this passing and I want to give a shout out to Council Member Sanchez, who looked like she was about to give birth at the rally.
- The next Breaking Bread Building Bonds luncheon is scheduled for Sunday, February 9, 2025, at 2 PM at Brain Power Wellness, which is right next door to the 112th Pct. If you have not been receiving invitations to previous Breaking Bread Building Bonds luncheons, please email me at fhginc@gmail.com and I will add you to our distribution list.
- The Save Our Compost coalition is in the process of developing a 2025 strategic plan for policy advocacy. This is a comprehensive plan to promote community composting, and I have been encouraging community boards to reach out to support these efforts as we did in our budget priority process. For those who have Netflix, I strongly encourage you to watch "Buy Now", the shopping conspiracy. One of the people who is featured in this documentary is Anna Sachs, the head of the Save Our Compost coalition.

Jean Silva:

I'm going to speak a little bit about volunteering. Right now, all the 501-C3 and all the individual volunteer groups and any other group out there that are trying to introduce themselves are in dire need of volunteers. It doesn't take a lot, any hour or two a month it could be some change from a dollar being put in a change pot start collecting some change. There are two groups over at Flushing Meadows Corona Park. One group is the alliance for Flushing Meadow Corona Park which was established after the settlement of the USTA tennis needing less than an acre of Parkland for the anchor of the additional building roof over Arthur Ashe Stadium they received \$10.5 million to start the alliance. Please go to the website [alliance for Flushing Meadow Corona Park.org](http://allianceforflushingmeadowcoronapark.org). There's also a second group called Flushing Meadow Corona Park Conservancy, I happen to be the president of that organization; we have been around since 2002. Normally over these past several years we receive finances from the Borough President; Council Members for donations. This past year we only received \$5,000.00 to run programs for our events. All the information is on the sheet that I gave out and you can go to our website: fmcpc.org, it's a little outdated because of the pandemic and losing so many volunteers. We can hardly keep it up. You can go to the websites and enjoy the pictures and see our events. We are looking for qualified people to help out by volunteering to work on the website, and people that do marketing. We need people who just want to volunteer and have a good time and fun at our event, signing in people and meeting families. Please come and talk to me about volunteering, and the information is on the sheet that I handed out.

PUBLIC FORUM

Chair Beers-Dimitriadis reported that the board is going to move into the public comments. The Executive Committee decided to reduce the time allowed for individuals whether you are from the district or outside the district it will be two minutes. If you are an organizational representative in or outside the district you will have three minutes.

Larry Ng

I am reaching out to Queens Community Board 6 to make you aware of an exciting project I am working on for Queens. Please visit the website www.queens-nyc.com to learn more about it. The 3D letter statue "Queens, The World's Borough" celebrates Queens' diversity of people and cultures. Queens is home to 2.2 million people representing 138 nationalities and 160 languages spoken. It is in the Guinness Book of World Records for the most diverse urban areas on earth. This statue is six feet high and twenty-two feet wide. This statue will be at MacDonald Park between Queens Boulevard and Yellowstone Boulevard. The target date for the dedication is March 20, 2025, the 1st day of spring. The project has been approved by the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation. The statue is being fabricated, and the funding has been mostly raised. So far, everyone loves the project. We should celebrate Queens! If you are interested in seeing this project you can google the world's borough statue or queens.nyc.com.

Michele Cohen

I would like to express my strong opposition to the proposal for the 17-story housing development on Queens Boulevard and 68th Avenue. I'm a resident on 68th Avenue, and I understand the need for affordable housing. I am a social worker, and I believe in people's rights to housing. I am concerned about the lack of light on my side of the building, that my apartment building will experience. I don't want my children to have no light coming into their room and will be facing a brick wall. This building will cast a shadow on Yellowstone Boulevard. This will greatly impact our quality of life. Never mind the construction for two years that we will have to endure. I am also concerned about the overcrowding. My children attend J.H.S. 157 Stephen A. Halsey that has 1,600 students in the school. It is the most overcrowded school in all five boroughs, 1,600 for three grades. Adding a 17-story building to that zone is going to increase overcrowding in that neighborhood. I feel like this building is servicing the owners who are looking to fill their own pockets and not anyone in the neighborhood.

Amy Fink

I am here with my three children, I currently work at Russel Stage, P.S. 190. My older daughter attends J.H.S. 157 Stephen A. Hallsy and my two other children P.S 101. All the schools are overcrowded. I am opposed to a 17-story building being constructed. The children are already losing one on one time with their teachers and adding more students to their classes, which is going to be much harder for them to learn. My children would like to say something. My name is Alexa Fink, I am in the seventh grade, and I go to JHS 157 Stephen A. Halsey. I'm here to inform you that this 17-story high-rise will negatively affect our community. For example, so far this year I have been pushed everyday in the process of going to my next class. This is due to the overcrowding. I have been pushed down the stairs and have fallen on top of my friends. I can't imagine what the halls of the school will be like with more children. In both sixth and seventh grades, I had to sit on a stool in class, which resulted in cramp and uncomfortable working space. We don't have enough desks for each student, how can we possibly fit more students in our school. Overall, this shows how a high-rise building contained with children will only negatively affect our community and our school's environment. My name is Samuel Fink, I am in the third grade, in kindergarten I had 19 children in my class now I have 31 children in my class. If I get more children, there will be no space. My name is Emily Fink, and I am in the third grade, and I have 31 children in my class. If more students join our school, students will not get the attention to learn, before more apartments are built more schools should be built.

David Schneier

Thank you, Community Board 6, for the work you do and for allowing me to be heard. I live next to this proposed project. I ask you to vote no on the proposed 17-story building at 102-51 Queens Boulevard. Less parking spaces here will not mean less congestion. Parking and congestion are already a problem. Double-parked trucks already cause cars to blare their horns. The Q60 bus is right in front of this building and will be further slowed down. The developers need a variance for this project. The apartment buildings in this area are 6 stories high. Parker Towers is 20-stories high but has a whole campus for cars and trucks to park in front of Birchwood Towers and Gerard Towers have crescent-shaped driveways for the same purpose. Apartments for whom? By what guidelines? We have all too often seen affordable apartments too expensive. Affordable or too many in our neighborhood. This will also do nothing for older adults on a fixed income. Getting rid of parking spaces just allows the developers to build more apartments and make more money. How many would be 2 or 3-bedroom apartments for families? Studio and 1-bedroom apartments have a high turnover rate which quickly becomes expensive. Offering fewer parking spaces will not wish away the traffic, local businesses,

medical offices, and the nearby hospital need. There is not a lot of egress in the back or the front of this property. This would be a blight on the neighborhood that will encourage other developers to build as high as possible to make the most money possible. I ask you to vote no. No ifs, and, or buts.

Allison Zaken

I live directly behind the DaMikel restaurant. This area is not zoned for a 17-story building. It is zoned for a maximum eight-story building. Changing the zoning laws doesn't change the fact that we are not equipped to handle a high rise of that magnitude, the construction alone will contribute to massive pollution. It will disturb the foundation of the building which is going to affect our building with mice and all kinds of other vermin. In the summer the restaurant makes a lot of garbage that stinks up the parking lot and comes into our building. What is going to happen with a 17-story building making enough garbage for hundreds of people that they can't control now. We all know that restaurants have bugs and vermin, and it will be worse with families, not to mention the insufficient parking. The emissions from the cars alone. The overcrowding of the schools, that some have addressed. We are small tight-knit community, which is part of the charm of Forest Hills. This 17-story building will put stress on those businesses that is not set-up to handle that. Here is an overview of our concerns in regard to the construction of a high-rise in this area which will negatively affect the local environment, infrastructure, property values, community dynamics, and the overall character of the neighborhood. This is a bad idea, I'm not saying this because I live next door, and my window will be completely blocked from sunlight. It will cast a shadow across the whole neighborhood and across the street, the New Yorker.

- 1. Environmental Concerns:** Some environmental concerns are as follows. *The loss of green space:* Forest Hills is known for its suburban, tree-lined streets and proximity to natural areas like Yellowstone Park. A high-rise development would impact space that could otherwise be used to preserve local greenery that contribute to the neighborhood's aesthetic value. *Increased pollution:* the construction process itself would generate significant noise, air pollution, and disruption to wildlife in the area. Long-term, increased traffic from the residents of the high-rise would result in more air pollution, contributing to a decline in local air quality. A 17-story building would increase the amount of garbage in the neighborhood and increase the amount of vermin in the surrounding area, negatively impacting our building, which is right next door. Our building is already impacted by the stench of garbage in the summer created from the restaurant. A 17-story building will only compound that problem ten-fold. *Stress on local ecosystem:* local wildlife and plant species, which thrive in Forest Hills' current environment, could be harmed by the disruption of their natural habitat. Additionally, stormwater management could be compromised, increasing the risk of flooding.
- 2. Infrastructure overload: strain on public transportation:** Forest Hills is already served by the Q60, the R subway line, and the LIRR station at continental. The area has limited capacity to absorb the large influx of people that a high-rise development would bring. Increased foot traffic will overcrowd stations and public transit, leading to delays, inefficiency, and overcrowded conditions during peak hours. *Insufficient parking:* a high-rise would add hundreds of new residents to the area, yet available parking is already limited. Increased demand for on-street parking would lead to congestion and frustration for existing residents. *Traffic congestion:* high-rise buildings generate more car traffic, particularly in an area with narrow roads like Forest Hills. This would likely result in gridlock, longer travel times, and increased traffic accidents. The neighborhood's infrastructure may not be equipped to handle these additional vehicles.
- 3. Impact on property values: decreased property value of surrounding homes.** The construction of a high-rise apartment complex could significantly lower the property values of single-family homes all the way up to 110th street and smaller apartment buildings in the immediate vicinity. The new building could detract from the aesthetic appeal of the area, leading to a decline in demand for other properties nearby. *Change in neighborhood demographics:* the influx of tenants into the new high-rise could lead to gentrification. As property values rise in the area, long-term residents may be displaced, making it more difficult for middle-class families in Forest Hills.
- 4. Disruption of community character: loss of community identity.** Forest Hills is celebrated for its residential charm, tree-lined streets, and low-rise architecture, which is distinct from the surrounding areas. The construction of a high-rise would significantly alter the architectural harmony of the neighborhood and disrupt the tight-knit community vibe. *Overcrowding of local amenities:* Forest Hills is home to a variety of small businesses, schools, and cultural venues that are beloved by the community. A large high-rise population would place immense pressure on these local businesses and public services, resulting in overcrowding and diminished service quality. *Shifting socioeconomic landscape:* the introduction of high-rise apartments is likely to attract a more affluent demographic, which will erode the existing social fabric and sense of community that many long-term residents value.
- 5. Risk of decreased quality of life: increased noise and light pollution:** The construction of a high-rise complex would bring significant noise during the building phase and from the increased number of residents once the complex is operational. Additionally, the towering structure could introduce air pollution and lower light levels, thereby diminishing the quality of life for nearby residents who enjoy the quiet suburban atmosphere of Forest Hills. *Overcrowding in schools and parks.* Local schools and parks, which are already operating at capacity, would struggle to accommodate an influx of new families. This could lead to overcrowded classrooms, fewer resources, and diminished recreational opportunities for local children. *Reduction in privacy:* a high-rise apartment complex would likely disrupt the privacy of nearby residents by towering over homes and reducing the space between properties. The dense population could lead to increased noise and the intrusion of more people into spaces that were previously peaceful.
- 6. Legal and zoning concerns, zoning restrictions.** The area designated for

construction of the high-rise was not originally zoned for such large-scale development for a reason. It's not as simple as just changing the zones. We can not ignore the impact of simply changing the zones. If the zone is changed and the project is approved, there could be legal challenges and opposition from local residents and community groups who feel that the construction is inconsistent with the existing zoning laws and the character of the neighborhood. Risk of future development: once a high-rise apartment complex is constructed, it could set a precedent for future developments that may lead to further high-rise construction in the area. This could create a cascade of development that fundamentally alters the neighborhood, leading to significant loss of green spaces and the overall suburban feel of Forest Hills. In conclusion. The construction of a high-rise apartment complex in Forest Hills would introduce a host of negative impacts on the environment, local infrastructure, property values, community cohesion, and quality of life for current residents. The area's suburban charm, green spaces, and close-knit community are integral to its identity, and the development of a high-rise would likely disrupt these qualities. Given these significant concerns, it is essential to carefully consider the long-term consequences of such a project and explore alternative ways to accommodate growth in the region without sacrificing the character and livability of Forest Hills. Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Phyllis Zimmerman

We all know that affordable housing is one of the biggest issues facing our city. Legislation such as the City of Yes aims to alleviate this. But, just as that plan was scaled back to be more reasonable, the same must be true for future construction. This community is not unrealistic. We understand neighborhoods cannot remain untouched for generations and some rezoning and new construction must occur to create more affordable units. However, you cannot have a blanket plan that allows as many high-rise buildings as you can fit. Take into account the size, density, infrastructure, transportation, parking, seats in schools, hospitals, and generally what the neighborhood can realistically handle and absorb before it becomes too much. Many high-rise buildings have gone up and are going up on Queens Blvd. in Rego Park and Forest Hills. So, when these builders say there's not enough construction on Queens Blvd., that's nonsense. Forest Hills is a small neighborhood that cannot support this additional level of population growth and if construction continues at the present rate, the neighborhood long considered the "Jewel of Queens" will become a dirty overcrowded mess. One of the chief defenses of this super-structure is that we've already seen this in Manhattan and other parts of Queens like Long Island City. But we don't aspire to be those places. We don't need or want Queens Blvd to be a concrete canyon. And most importantly, not every building needs to be 15 to 25-stories. This is a 17-story building, but if it was a 7 or 8-story building, I don't think so many people would object as strongly. You want to bring more affordable housing to this area? Then do just that. Build a 7-story building that fits into the architecture and style of the neighborhood and provides units people can afford - not this fraction of units available to a lucky few, lost in the glitzy gigantic eyesore being proposed. Please vote no or scale this back considerably.

Joanna Mierzwicka

I am opposed to the construction of this monastery. Our neighborhood can't handle an apartment building of this size. The street behind this building slopes down. The size of this building 17-stories will cast a shadow not just at my building on 68th Road it will block sunlight towards Yellowstone Boulevard and beyond. We have one supermarket that is right next door to the building that can not handle additional people using the supermarket. Everyone speaks about Forest Hills/Continental train station, we are at 67th Avenue, we don't have a lot of infrastructure right where we are. We don't have great restaurants; we don't have any additional supermarkets. Well, now Trader Joes opened up, so that's great. But we don't have anything nearby that can support a building of this size. Now I know that the space is currently zoned for an eight-story building, which is already tall. Why can't that building have affordable housing? Why weren't plans for that building shown at the last board meeting? Only this 17-story monastery. We can't we come up with a compromise and have a building that will fit into our neighborhood. Our little enclave of Forest Hills that can still provide some affordable housing for residents. Why does it have to be 17-stories, as other people have said this is a money grab. We are completely oppose to this building. Please scale it back to eight stories so that the residents can still have their sunlight. I bought my apartment for that reason and please consider your neighbors.

Irina Vovsha

I love concerts, I love music it heals people not destroy them. What I want to say is that the concerts at Forest Hills Stadium must be stopped and they will be stopped. This is the file with 900 people, 10% of the population that lives next to the stadium. They all said stop these concerts. Why, because people cannot live anymore. Today, I have the evidence, we have found all the documentation that these permits were given illegally. 1) Do your research, people in this area are zoned for R3/R4. Why is this commercial area of that magnitude 40 concerts this season was allowed to be there? Because of the money. 2) The noise instead of 45 decibels which is allowed in the city, it was raised by NYPD. Does NYPD have the right to change the laws? They are supposed to enforce the laws. The NYPD raised the noise level to 75 decibels, the concerts have the noise level to 125 decibels. By the time it hits the ear it is 100 times more than it is allowed in the city. 3) Alcohol consumption, the stadium benefitted by selling a lot of alcohol, \$15 Million in alcohol sales. We witnessed the concert goes intoxicated, and screaming through the neighborhood.

Sheryl Fetik

I am a lifelong resident and homeowner in Rego Park. I am speaking about the ULURP process for a new building being proposed for 102-51 Queens Blvd. I believe that we should be asking many questions about new developments for the Rego Park/ Forest Hills community. We should be asking what type of neighborhood and community we want to live in, and how these new developments will affect local residents and businesses. We already have so many new large buildings being constructed. Although there is a need for some new construction and additional housing, we may be adding too much to the congestion, and use of our local facilities, such as subways, buses and schools. With more buildings, we may be overly burdening our local facilities and taking away the light and air of residents who live in surrounding buildings. What analysis, if any, has been done to determine the impact on the local 67th Avenue subway stop? Is there enough safe capacity for transportation, cars and pedestrians? I have noticed that some new buildings in the area have no trees planted. We should be planning for green spaces, light and air and quality of life. When we decide to permit more construction, we should be considering the real impact on the quality of life for our community.

The following comment was submitted in writing for the minutes:

Jon Blumenfeld

The City of Yes is just another nail in the coffin of this city. Ever wonder why many of the most worthwhile people are leaving this place? Wonder no more this place is rapidly approaching a third world city courtesy of the current state and city governance.

Mr. Allen

To whom it may concern. I recently have been made aware of a proposed plan to build a 17-story high-rise at 102-51 Queens boulevard. As a long time, resident who has lived in this neighborhood for over 60 years, and who was born and raised in this neighborhood, I oppose completely this plan to build said building at 102-51 Queens Boulevard. It will add nothing positive to the boulevard and destroy the character of neighborhood. It sounds to me like another move by greedy developers who care nothing about the neighborhood, and who already have plenty of money to make more. Furthermore, having a meeting this Wednesday (today) is a good first step. However, it is not enough! Why wasn't an effort made to make everybody in the neighborhood aware of this? Or is somebody trying to pull a fast one here? More people in the neighborhood need to know about this! There should be multiple meetings to give people a chance to voice their opinions. An effort should be made by the community board and the city to let everybody in the neighborhood know about this proposed construction. Please deny permission to construct this huge out of place building immediately. And yes, you can read this email at your meeting today.

Elizabeth Fennelly

I am a resident of Forest Hills I live in the boulevard apartments around the corner from where the construction is going to start. My concerns are as follows: property value will decrease, the noise from the construction, quality of life during construction, the area is not zoned for a high-rise building, sunlight and privacy, overcrowding, and increased traffic.

Norman Tiller

Please reject the plan to develop a tower at 102-51 Queens Boulevard. I don't know what city planners are thinking. Traffic on Queens Boulevard is already at a crawl and more residents will cause this traffic artery to clog more than it already is. I support development and keeping the neighborhood vibrant, but this will make life miserable for the residents.

Ivy & Steven Hammer

I am writing to show that I am against the building of another high-rise building in the neighborhood. I am a teacher and have lived in this neighborhood for almost 37 years and teach here as well. There are many reasons for this. One important reason is that the schools are severely overcrowded regardless of families leaving NYC. By 2025, schools are being asked to reduce class size. This will be virtually impossible in most schools because of over enrollment and space constraints. When they were going to build The Vista, I spoke to Karen Koslowitz and asked her to build a school on the property at the other end of that block where the blind store was. The lot is still empty, but we need another school over there for the kids to not have to cross Queens Blvd to go to school and because of the overcrowded schools on the north side of Queens Blvd. There are already two new high-rise buildings on Queens Blvd. One is The Vista which is completed, and the other is the one on 99th Street that is still under construction for a ridiculously long time. All of the small businesses needed to leave including the iconic Tower Diner. These were business that were necessary and utilized by the community and now they are gone. Under this new proposal, the businesses on Queens Blvd are welcome to come back after construction, but when will that be? If it takes as long as the building on 99th Street, we may never see those stores and businesses in the near future. The Tower Diner will likely never return to 99th Street. On 63rd Drive, we lost the Shalimar Diner because of the high-rise building, which is still under construction and the Tower Diner closed in 2018! The entire character of Forest Hills and Rego Park is changing because of these high rises. We want to patronize small businesses, but they are disappearing with all this new construction. Also, rents are exorbitant in these new

structures. Yes, there are some apartments designated for lower income housing, but not most of them and people cannot afford to pay \$2K - \$4K a month in rent. Everyone is complaining about the economy and high prices in the stores. They complain that they cannot afford their rent now. Who is going to occupy these new buildings with the high rents? I think many of them will remain empty. Parking is another issue as is congestion in our neighborhood. Who needs more cars here? It is very crowded now and these building just bring in more and more cars to the area. Our infrastructure cannot handle this many people in our neighborhood. The bottom line is money. They are building all these buildings just for the money. They don't care about what it does to our quality of life as long as they make a buck. My husband and I both say NO to adding another building to this area.

Tara Ezer

I trust all is well. It was brought to my attention that there is a meeting being held this evening to potentially vote on a zoning change to allow for the building of a structure that sounds like it would be very out of place to support the beauty of the neighborhood. The haphazard and unsightly infrastructure of the neighborhood has created unpleasantness and further reduced the charm of Forest Hills and Rego Park. Please let this email serve as a written statement that can be read out loud at the meeting in objection of this project as I unfortunately am unable to attend in person. Looking forward to mindful decision making to ensure that the beautiful neighborhood we all love remains as it should be.

Lauren Siegel

As a resident of 103-30 68th Avenue, I request that Community Board 6 reject a private developer's request to "up-zone" 102-51 Queens Blvd. from R7-1/C1-2 to R8X/C2-4 classification. Last night, at the CB6 meeting, we were shown renderings of the 17-story apartment tower the developer has proposed. Though the rear sections of the building are lower in height, the main 17-story portion is overwhelming. The need for affordable housing is undeniable and change is inevitable. A seven or eight-story building would blend in with (rather than dominate) our neighborhood. Food Universe, which is modest in size, is the only supermarket in easy walking distance. 68th Avenue which runs uphill, the ingress for a parking garage at 102-51 Queens Blvd., ends at a traffic light at the intersection of 68th Ave and Queens Blvd. Delivery vehicles that double-park on 68th Ave. already create challenges. Finally, over-development will exacerbate overcrowding in neighborhood schools. The number of behemoths constructed on Queens Boulevard in the past five years IS changing the character of the Forest Hills and Rego Park communities. Will developers not be satisfied until every bit of natural light and breathing room is blotted out? Thank you for your consideration of my viewpoint.

Riva Abramov

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed construction of a 17-story building at 102-51 Queens Boulevard. As a resident of 103-26 68th Ave, Forest Hills, I believe this development will significantly and negatively impact the character of our area, as well as my personal enjoyment of my home. One of my primary concerns is the obstruction of the scenic view that I and many other residents currently enjoy. This view not only enhances our daily lives but also contributes to the overall aesthetic and value of our community. The towering structure would create an imposing, unwelcoming presence, lack of natural daylight and drastically alter the landscape that defines the charm and appeal of our neighborhood. Additionally, I am concerned about the broader effects this project may have, including increased traffic congestion and strain on local infrastructure. Potential reduction in property values due to overcrowding and loss of aesthetic appeal. Environmental impacts, such as disruption of natural light and airflow. While, I support development that aligns with the needs of the community, I urge the City Developer to consider alternative options that respect the existing character of our neighborhood and preserve the unique qualities that make our community a desirable place to live. I kindly ask that my concerns, along with those of other residents, be taken into serious consideration during the planning process. I am hopeful that a solution can be reached that balances progress with the preservation of our community's integrity. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this issue further and look forward to your response.

Jan Culley

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Jan Culley and I've been a resident of 68 Ave (near the north side of Queens Boulevard) since 1998. I attended the CB6 meeting on Wednesday 12/11/24 and was more than a little dismayed that alternatives to a 17-story building were not really actively pursued at the meeting. I was born and raised in Staten Island and can assure you I've seen the absolute havoc unchecked development can wreak. While I'm a HUGE proponent of affordable housing (I lived in Section 8 housing for seven years after an impoverishing divorce), and Forest Hills needs to welcome same, I see no reason that this project can't be scaled back to 7 or 8 stories with reasonable rents for those who need a helping hand. Please consider the input of local residents who would have to live with the nightmare of the proposed light blocking, neighborhood blighting 17-story tower. Additionally, the single lane's width of both 68 Ave and 68 Rd will NOT be feasible as a point of egress/entrance for the development's parking accommodations as both those streets are regularly heavily blocked by double parking and delivery vehicles. Finally, this neighborhood has NO provision for adding the infrastructure needed to support such an overwhelmingly large residential building. Our schools are already overcrowded with no new schools even proposed. I thank you for the opportunity to be heard concerning this matter.

Chair Heather Beers-Dimitriadis closed the public forum and reminded the public that if you know anyone who couldn't attend tonight's meeting, they can submit their comment by the end of business this Friday.

MINUTES

A motion to accept the minutes from the November 13, 2024, meeting was made by Natalie Pienkowska and seconded by Howard Birnbaum. All were in favor.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Heather Beers-Dimitriadis announced the following:

- Class size updates: The class size to support an establishment of a working group for the implementation of the class size. Several Decembers ago, we passed a measure to support it. For an establishment of a working group for the implementation of the class sized mandate which mandates smaller class sizes for all of our schools. That group did complete its work and now each district is working hard to put their individual plans together. Our principals will be submitting their proposals on how to use their space in order to meet that class size mandate to New York City Public Schools on December 20th. I am going to be joining that working group for our district as I'm a chair of this board and hopefully I will be able to give you updates as appropriate.
- A quick update on the Forest Hills train station project. We received an update from Congress Member Meng's office on Monday that the Long Island Railroad is looking to restart the work at the Long Island Railroad Station, in Station Square rather quickly. There are ongoing discussions with Forte, the contractor, that we met with as to how best to proceed. We were bundled with two other stations, and one of the stations was able to get their work done. They are going to reexamine how they're going to bundle this. We will have a better idea in the coming days of how this will work.
- The District Manager and I attended an event the Leadership of Queens North before Thanksgiving and raised concerns about the desperate need for crossing guards in our district. We tried to compel them to think about the job a little differently. What they are doing with the role is not working because I've been told the same thing for five years. We will be following up with them with a letter to address those concerns.

DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT

District Manager Christine Nolan made an announcement to the public, if you have your comments written down, please email them to our office for the accuracy of the minutes.

District Manager Nolan reported the following:

- As of Friday November 29th, all roadway dining structures needed to be removed for the winter. If an establishment applied for roadway dining in the Dining Out Program, they could put their setup back up in April. If you see restaurants that still have their setups, you can call or email the office, and we can report it to DOT.
- CB6 is co-sponsoring a Toy Drive with Forest Hills Stadium and some other local businesses. The toy drive is to benefit children at Queens Community House. Friday is the deadline so if you wish to donate, please drop off a toy to our office by Friday.
- Committee Chairs, if you are planning to hold a meeting in January / February, please reach out to me because the January calendar is almost full.
- Hope everyone has a happy and healthy holiday season.

We will now go into nominations. I will call up Peter Beadle to start the nominations for Chair.

First Vice Chair Peter Beadle opened the floor for nominations to be accepted for the Executive Committee and the election will be held on January 8, 2025. All positions are open for nomination to all board members. Nominations are as follows:

Chair: Heather Beers-Dimitriadis was nominated by Brently Winstead and was seconded by Howard Birnbaum. Heather Beers-Dimitriadis accepted the nomination.

First Vice Chair: Peter Beadle was nominated by Sabah Munawar and was seconded by Anisia Ayon. Peter Beadle accepted the nomination.

Second Vice Chair: Keith Engel was nominated by Peter Beadle and was seconded by Martha Tucker. Keith Engel accepted the nomination.

Third Vice Chair: Mark Laster was nominated by Gladys Sandoval and was seconded by Anisia Ayon. Mark Laster accepted the nomination.

Secretary of Administration: Salua Baida was nominated by John Dereszewski and was seconded by L.T. Ciaccio. Salua Baida accepted the nomination.

Secretary of Finance & Personnel: L.T. Ciaccio was nominated by Brently Winstead and was seconded by Edgar Alfonseca. L.T. Ciaccio accepted the nomination.

Parliamentarian: John Dereszewski was nominated by Mark Laster and was seconded by Eugene Shvartsman. John Dereszewski accepted the nomination.

The executive committee nominations are closed, and we will have an election in January.

LAW/BY-LAW COMMITTEE REPORT- UPDATES TO EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES RESOLUTION

Committee Chair John Dereszewski spoke about the updated extraordinary circumstances resolution which allows and facilitates board members to attend meetings remotely.

- The following proposed revisions to Section 2 of the Board's Extraordinary Circumstances provisions governing online attendance at public meetings appear below. The new items appear in **Bold**; the deleted word is in Brackets.
- For purposes of these procedures, the term "extraordinary circumstances" includes disability, **childbirth, including the pregnancy, labor and post-partum periods**, ongoing or sudden illness including health-related issues related to family members or other residents of the household, caregiving responsibilities that are related to the care of one suffering from a physical, medical or mental health infirmity, [and] death in the family, **scheduled conflicting out-of-town employment obligations, scheduled vacations and the need to perform military or other compulsory service.**
- In drafting this revision, the committee reviewed the Excused Absence provisions in our Bylaws and included all items that conceivably could trigger extraordinary circumstances requests. These included the period around childbirth, which obviously cannot be called an illness, and compulsory service. While these were not discussed at a previous Executive Committee meeting that addressed this subject, they fall into the same general criteria. The committee also added the word "scheduled out of town conflicting" into the employment obligation item to eliminate such requests as "I was late at the office" appeals from being considered for Extraordinary Circumstances purposes.
- The addition of these items should not provide any incentive for members to "game" the system by encouraging them to join online when they otherwise could be present since, in these circumstances, they would physically not be able to attend the meeting in person.
- It should also be noted that these additions do not change the provision that these requests be submitted at the earliest reasonable time, preferably not later than two business days prior to the meeting date and that no emergency requests can be entertained after 4 PM on the meeting date.

On behalf of the By-Law Committee, John Dereszewski made a recommendation to add this to the by-laws. A roll call vote was taken and was unanimously passed, 31 Yes, 0 No.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS / CULTURAL AFFAIRS / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Gladys Sandoval, Co-Chair, gave the following report:

Liquor License Applications:

CB6 received the following new liquor license applications:

1. BUEN SABOR LATINO, INC. 96-07 METROPOLITAN AVENUE, FH
This is a Restaurant serving breakfast, lunch and dinner. They are applying for a wine and beer license. The owner has a bread company, and he plans to have a bakery section on premises as well.
2. DIRTY PEIRRE'S 13 STATION SQUARE, FH
There is a change in ownership. Everything about the establishment will remain the same.
3. FOREST CAFE 68-04 BURNS STREET, FH
This is a coffee shop. We have a history in the business through our family restaurant (China Cocina) in Corona, Queens. This establishment does hold an active beer/wine license and has been open for about 30 years. With this license, we are hoping to provide a space for people to enjoy a light beverage and snack that usually isn't common in a conventional coffee shop. Additionally, we are hoping to provide a space for concert attendees to congregate instead of wandering around the neighborhood.

There were no reported issues from the 112th Precinct.

CB6 received the following renewal liquor license applications:

1. KATSUNO CORP. 103-01 METROPOLITAN AVENUE, FH
2. CHEBURECK, INC. 96-30 QUEENS BLVD., RP

There were no reported issues from the 112th Precinct on the new or renewal applications. The committee's motion is to approve the new liquor license and renewal liquor license applications. Motion passed on a roll call vote. New applications 30 Yes, 1 No. Renewal applications - All were in favor.

Adult Use Retail Cannabis Dispensary Application:

Soho Dispensary Corp., 107-29A 71st Avenue, Forest Hills, NY 11375

This location is less than 1,000 feet from Curaleaf (a dispensary that is already open) and would need an exception from the Office of Cannabis Management to open. This location would like to offer on-site consumption in the future. The committee did a straw poll with three voting no and two voting yes.

John Dereszewski made a motion and was seconded by Mark Laster to approve Soho Dispensary Corporation, despite the proximity to another establishment. Motion passed on a roll call vote, 17 Yes, 14 No.

LAND USE, HOUSING, LANDMARK COMMITTEE REPORT ULURP – 102-51 QUEENS BOULEVARD, REZONING

Keith Engel, Chair, reported that there was a presentation and public hearing on this application at the Land Use, Housing, Landmark Committee Meeting on November 21, 2024, a zoning map and text amendment from an R7-1/C1-2 zoning district to an R8X/C2-4 district to facilitate a new 17-story, mixed-use residential/commercial development is being sought by a private applicant, IBM Properties LLC at 102-51 Queens Boulevard (Block 2137, Lots 1, 11, 6 & 8) in Forest Hills, CD6 Queens. At the committee meeting we received six public testimonies, four were against. The chair also stated the City of Yes was passed for Housing Opportunity by the city council. The chair asked the applicant to speak about any aspects of the design that are directly affected by the new zoning provisions.

Eric Palatnik, Land Use Attorney for the developer made the following presentation:

Project Overview:

Existing Conditions

- Development Site: Block 2137, Lot 1, 6, 8 & 11

- Total Lot Area: 25,590 SF
- Existing Uses: Commercial, Parking
- Existing Zoning: R7-1/C1-2
- Maximum Permitted FAR: 4.0 (Residential) / 2.0 (Commercial)

Proposed Actions

Proposed rezoning from R7-1/C1-2 to R8X/C2-4 which would encompass the Development Site, Block 2137, Lots 1, 6, 8 & 11
Zoning Text Amendment to Appendix F to make a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Area coterminous with the Project Area.

Proposed Development

- 17-Story/ 175' Mixed-Use Residential and Commercial Development with ground-floor retail
- 184,042 sf of total floor area (7.19 FAR), 166,166 sf of residential space (6.49 FAR), 17,876 sf of commercial space (0.70 FAR)
- 216 total units, 54 of which will be permanently affordable (85 studios, 85 one-bedrooms, 23 two-bedrooms, 23 three-bedrooms)
- 87 parking spaces (all for residential use)
- The lower right corner is 6-story, lower left side is a 7-story.

Other things to note:

- The property is zoned R7-1 which allows an eight-story apartment building. With City of Yes approved, you can build a 7-story building without any affordable housing, or an 8-story with some affordable housing.
- All existing businesses have been invited back to the new building.
- Total affordable housing created in Rego Park/Forest Hills, 271 MIH affordable units. This project would increase the number of affordable units by 20%.
- Sustainability features will include solar-ready, low-flow plumbing fixtures, high-efficiency heating and cooling, Energy Star appliances, and electric vehicle charging.

Chair Keith Engel stated a few comments: Forest Hills saw a 12% rent increase, second highest in the entire city next to the West Village, citywide there is currently a 1.4% vacancy rate which means higher rent i.e. one bedroom is going for \$3,000.

The committee's recommendation is to approve the application with the following conditions: to reduce the amount of parking to provide more affordable housing units, modify the rear facade of the building to provide more visual appeal, and to increase the distances along the rear property line.

The committee also recommended that we add a note to our recommendation that the Queens Boulevard corridor in the entirety of Community Board 6 be reviewed by City Planning and the associated city agencies for upzoning and infrastructure upgrades. This is separate from our recommendation on the application. We will have a separate discussion and a separate vote on this at a later date.

Questions and comments were taken.

When you say affordable housing, does that mean those units will be paid by the government? What kind of people are you attracting and what is the difference between market rate and affordable rate?

Response: *The City of New York doesn't help anyone with housing, unless you are dead broke. You would have to qualify for welfare, and you go into NYCHA housing. The city created MIH (mandatory inclusionary housing) also known as Universal UAP. If builders want to build, they need to give 25% of the units at the rates the government tells us. This is meant to attract people who are working hard not people who are destitute.*

What percentage of housing units are going to be reserved for the district residents?

Response: *None*

Why do you have parking on the second floor and the cellar, then use the second floor for housing?

Response: The way the building has been designed is it's sitting on the parking pedestal, the parking space on the second floor and the parking in the cellar doesn't count as floor area. The building is maxed out of floor area.

From the studies you have done, are you seeing a demand for parking in the building?

Response: Yes, everybody who has come into Trylon and other buildings is asking for parking. They're out of parking spaces and people are upset.

I just want to confirm that this project won't receive any HPD financing or government money.

Response: No government money at all.

When the committee voted, they voted for more affordable housing and less parking. Now you're telling us you are not going to do that. You spoke about FAR; the City of Yes passed the UAP not to mention the reduced parking of 50%. Why are you not using UAP to build more affordable housing?

Response: It's not that we don't want to do that, there are reasons. The first thing is the parking, you are in a transit zone, and all residential parking is waived. You have no parking requirements here. Parking below 23 feet is waived out of floor area which hasn't changed. All that would happen is that you lose one story.

For the UAP, the district right now has an R7-1 zoning in the district. The UAP would allow the FAR to go from a four to a five, and that one FAR would be all affordable housing and would be picking up 25,000 square feet of affordable floor area, which would work out to 125,000 square foot building and you would produce 15 units of affordable housing. This is a 175-foot-tall building producing 50 units of affordable housing. You are creating three times as much affordable housing with this proposal.

Keith Engel responded: A UAP would be an as of right so therefore the board or the public doesn't have enough opportunity to comment on it.

According to the chart on page 16, the AMI is 22 units at 40%, 15 units at 60% AMI, 17 units at 80% AMI, I don't see any studios listed here. Why is that?

Response: It is a mistake, there are studios that will be in there. I will get that corrected for you; I will get that to the board.

What keeps you from making this building 75% affordable housing instead of adding 54 units instead of 271? The more people you help who make less than \$50,000 a year will better serve the community.

Response: The sole reason is that the builder is doing it with their own money and there's no government funding. The funding is coming out of the market rate units, it's a balancing act that is the maximum they can provide.

Don't they get tax breaks for affordable housing?

Response: Yes, you get a tax abatement a 485-tax abatement, which is a tax break, it's not cash. You get a reduction in your tax bill, which alleviates future obligations and helps make the building feasible. but it doesn't put capital in anybody's hands.

Are you charging for the parking spots?

Response: I don't think the parking has been determined. I think it might be included in some of the rent on the market units.

Eugene Shvartsman proposed an amendment to remove the section that reads to "reduce the amount of parking to provide more affordable housing units" and was seconded by Gladys Sandoval. After some discussion, a roll call vote was taken, 22 No and 8 Yes and therefore amendment stays.

Chair Beers-Dimitriadis proposed an amendment to have a carve-out of 15% affordable units for supportive housing for people with special needs. Salua Baida seconded the motion, all were in favor. Motion passed on a voice vote

Keith Engel re-iterated the committee's recommendation, to approve the application with the following conditions. 1) to reduce the amount of parking to provide more affordable housing units, 2) modify the rear facade of the building to provide more visual appeal and to increase the setback distance along the rear property line and 3) provide a carve-out for 15% supportive housing units and on-site supportive services within the building. Motion passed on a roll call vote 23 Yes, 6 No, 0 Abstentions.

REPORTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS' REPRESENTATIVES

NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLYMAN STEVEN RAGA

Karol Guaman reported the following:

- December 16th sock and toy drive at our office.
- Toy giveaway and holiday party in Elmhurst at St. James Church.
- Wednesday, December 18th, from 10 AM to 1 PM a know your rights session on government benefits.

SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO

Sean McCabe reported the following:

- We are collecting for our veterans at St. Albans Hospital, until the end of the month, clothes, prepackaged underwear, socks, bedding, sheets and toiletries. They can be dropped off at our Middle Village or Woodhaven office.
- December 15th from 12 PM to 3 PM, an artist showcase at the Forest Hills Jewish Center.
- December 17th from 3 PM to 6 PM, holiday party at Senator Addabbo's office 84-16 Jamaica Avenue.

CONGRESSMEMBER GRACE MENG

Jordan Goldes reported the following:

- The Congresswoman was elected as the new Chair to the Congressional Asian-Pacific American Caucus.
- The house passed legislation that included the Congresswoman's measure to authorize the Army Corp. of Engineers to spend nearly \$190 million to help combat flooding in Queens. President Biden is expected to sign that into law. It follows the \$120 million that was authorized last year.
- Two new bills were introduced to promote family-friendly workplaces and legislation calling for Medicaid to cover menstrual products.

QUEENS DISTRICT ATTORNEY MELINDA KATZ

Javier Figeroa reported the following:

- He distributed information regarding ACRIS, a guide to help property owners from deed fraud and protect themselves from squatters.

QUEENS BOROUGH PRESIDENT DONOVAN RICHARDS

Amparito Rosero reported the following:

- The Community Board applications will open on January 7th, 2025. For all those interested in applying, please follow up with our office when we make our formal announcement and launch the application link. The announcement will be made via our social media, official email newsletter, and on our website.
- Borough President Richard's ongoing Winter Coat and Clothing Drive to support families in need across Queens during the cold weather months. We are collecting new or gently used jackets, scarves, gloves, hats, and thermals, as well as new socks. Your generosity will make a real difference in our communities, as we ensure all our neighbors are warm this winter. You may drop off donations at the Queens Borough Hall Lobby (120-55 Queens Blvd, Kew Gardens, NY) on weekdays between 9 am-5 pm. Donations may also be dropped off at the offices of Assembly Members Jessica Gonzalez Rojas and Catalina Cruz who are partnering with us!
Assemblymember Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas' District Office is located at 75-35 31st Ave, Suite 206B (2nd Fl), East Elmhurst. Items can be donated Monday-Friday from 10 am-5 pm.
Assemblymember Catalina Cruz's District Office is located at 41-40 Junction Blvd, Corona. Items can be donated Monday-Thursday from 10 am-6 pm, and on Friday from 10am-2pm. Thank you to both our partners in the Assembly on this important cause!
- On Monday, December 30th at 5 pm we will be hosting our Annual Kwanzaa Celebration, cosponsored by the African American Heritage Committee. Join us as we celebrate Kwanzaa with cultural performances, words of wisdom, refreshments and more. This will be at Queens Borough Hall in Kew Gardens. You can always RSVP to these events on our website at queensbp.nyc.gov

- Looking further ahead, on Wednesday, January 15th from 6-8 pm, we will be partnering with NYC Parks to host a “Vital Parks for All” forum. NYC Parks Commissioner Sue Donoghue and BP Richards invite you to this public forum on how we can equitably strengthen our city’s health, environment and communities through our Borough’s parks system. For this event, you must RSVP by emailing rsvp@parks.nyc.gov
- Finally, we want to remind folks that the holiday season can be a tough time for some folks. So please be considerate of your fellow neighbors and your mental health. It is OK to seek help! The mental health hotline in New York City is 988, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You may call or text 988. Or you may chat online at 988lifeline.org, 988 is a free, confidential service that offers crisis counseling, mental health and substance use support, information and referrals, risk assessment, and referrals to behavioral mental health services. Support is available in numerous languages over the phone.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM on December 11, 2024.

The minutes were submitted on December 11, 2024, by Maria Concolino, Community Service Aide.