

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 28, 2014
UNION PLAZA CARE CENTER
33-23 UNION STREET
FLUSHING, NEW YORK

PRESENT-

Charles Apelian
John Byas
Tyler Cassell
James Cervino
Chin-Hsiang Chiang
Timothy Chuang
Kim Cody
Nicholas Corrado
Joseph Femenia
Arlene Fleishman
Pablo Hernandez
Eugene Kelty

Donald Kirchhofer
Phil Konigsberg
Peter Kwiath
Esther Lee
Frank Macchio
Barbara McHugh
Selma Moses
Devon O'Connor
Kim Ohanian
Millicent O'Meally
Terence Park
Vana Partridge

Kris Ram
Jean Ren
Marc Schiffman
Warren Schreiber
Kevin Shields
Matthew Silverstein
Peter Sutich
Joseph Sweeney
John Tsavalos
Arnold Wagner
Clarissa Wong
Jie Zhu

ABSENT-

Rose Forkan
Fred Fu
Jeff Huang

Rev. R. McEachern
Andrew Rocco
Lynda Spielman

Joshua Sussman
Carlos Talisaysay
Peter Tu
Linna Yu

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 STAFF

Marilyn Bitterman, District Manager
Marilyn McAndrews, Community Assistant
Mary Zuliani, Community Assistant

GUESTS

Michael Stinson, Congressman Israel's Office
Elaine Fan, Comptroller's Office
Don Capalbi, Congresswoman Meng's Office
Rich Stein, Senator Avella's Office
Susan Jacobs, Mayor's Office
Young Kim, Assemblyman Kim's Office
Courtney Cariello, Assemblywoman Rozic's Office
Vito Tautonico, Councilman Vallone's Office
Allen Hsu, Councilman Koo's Office
Jeong-Ah Choi, Queens Borough President's Office
Susan Tanenbaum, Queens Borough President's Office

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 P.M. with roll call attendance taken. After introductions, new members Devon O'Connor, Matthew Silverstein, Clarissa Wong and Jie Zhu, were welcomed by all board members. Chairperson Eugene Kelty made two announcements. 1) Port Authority's invitation (received today too late to attend) to participate in the first Roundtable scheduled for this evening, and 2) Tuesday, May 20, 2014 10 am to 4 pm at New York Hospital to speak about Strokes, the fourth leading killer in the U.S. today, and their important Stroke Assessment Program You can register in advance by calling 800/282-6684.

A reminder, if you are interested in joining the NYPD mailing list, kindly fill out the form in your package tonight to be given to the 109th Precinct at the end of this meeting.

With the exclusion of the new board members, the **March 10, 2014** minutes were approved unanimously and seconded by Marc Schiffman.

Chair Kelty received two announcements from the Borough President's Office regarding 1) the May 18, 2014 World's Fair 50th Anniversary with many planned events throughout the day ending with evening fireworks, and 2) the attendance of board member re-appointees and new appointees for training on May 8, 2014 at 5:30 pm at the Hall of Science.

After 38 years active service, **Chair Kelty, Councilman Vallone and Community Board #7** gave tribute to one of the founding members of Board #7, **Arthur Barragan**, who is leaving for personal reasons to spend more time with his wife. With mixed emotions and deep regrets he sadly said his goodbyes and thanked everyone for their support. In his honor **Councilman Vallone** presented him with a citation for his 38 years of service, which will be read into the Council tomorrow. Although he will be sorely missed, the Board will continue to send him committee meeting and public hearing updates and call him for his sage advice.

Councilman Paul Vallone, after welcoming the new members, spoke about the City Council's proposal to the Mayor asking that funding for all districts be equal. He also spoke in favor of

the application submitted by Holy Cross, since presently the school is reduced to using trailers in their parking lot for the overflow of children. Working together with Holy Cross, QSAC School and the Whitestone Ambulance, he made a request for different dismissal times, as well as a request to implement of a 4-way stop sign by the DOT. Also, the family who lost their daughter to suicide (Chrissy's Wish Foundation) will be honored by the Mayor and Speaker tomorrow.

First Vice-Chair Chuck Apelian brought out his concerns about Council Introduction #164, a resolution to change term limits for board members to only 10 years in 2 year increments. If the rule went into effect today, twenty-seven of our members would be out. It's not done for pay, obviously, but by people with a strong commitment and pride in their neighborhoods and civic organizations with experience and knowledge to benefit their community. It's not an elected role, salaried or political. A review by the Borough President is every two years and is based on meeting attendance and the member's desire and ability to continue. First Vice-Chair Apelian has reached out to Barry Grodenchek, Director of Community Boards for Queens, Councilmen Koo and Drumm, Assemblyman Weprin and John Mancione to question the resolution. The sponsoring Council is Ben Kallis.

Q. Did the sponsoring Council give his reason why?

A. Don't know.

Councilman Vallone said there are a lot of reforms and progressive thinking lately in the mix, but surprisingly Mr. Kallis submitted an 80 page brief on this one resolution. It's important you make your voice heard on this before it goes any further.

Third Vice-Chair Schreiber stated he agreed with everything Chuck said! Further, the City Charter does not mandate term limits for Community Board. This is an end run around the Charter and could end up in court. **First Vice Chair Apelian** responded it is a resolution and not a mandated law, but we must speak up now since we don't know where it can lead to, if left alone. **Board member Selma Moses** asked for the list of names that can be contacted.

Councilman Vallone said he would gladly have his office send a list of all the council member e-mail addresses so each and everyone can send the one e-mail to all the council members.

Second Vice-Chair Macchio emphasized this board is self-policing. Also, in committee when a long term board member's recall of a particular file, up for the second or third time over the course of years, brings to light important knowledge for the younger members that add to the outcome. This continuity of experience is invaluable to our board and community at large.

Board Member Arlene Fleishman's comment "Don't let Community Boards go the way of School Boards".

Chair Kelty introduced **Susan Jacobs** from the Mayor's Office who spoke about the Family Justice Center located in each of the five boroughs to combat domestic violence. These Centers, under the Mayor's Executive Order 41, give undocumented crime victims of domestic violence, human traffic, and elder abuse, etc. the help they seek without the fear of being judged/deported. We also give legal assistance, including Family Court for divorce proceedings,

immigration attorneys, and a program for counseling children who witness violence. The Center in Queens is in the Criminal Court Building on Queens Boulevard in Kew Gardens, next to the District Attorney's office. They are open Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm. The service is free and confidential

AGENDA #6 -16-16 Whitestone Expressway – Calendar #326-13-BZ - Application for special permit pursuant to Section 73-44 of NYC Zoning resolution to permit the alteration and enlargement of an existing office building Use Group 6, B-1 parking category without the required off-street parking spaces.

Committee Chair Chuck Apelian spoke of the February 27th and March 31st, 2014 meetings regarding the enlargement of this building owned by Local 30 of the Int'l Union of Operating Engineers, and a request to reduce the number of required parking spaces on the current two levels, neither of them connected. Also, although the Union will occupy the building, they intend to rent out part of it. He then introduced **Adam Rothkrug**, Atty for the applicant, who spoke of the enlargement from 31,000 square feet to 57,000 square feet for offices only, and the number of parking spaces available from 96 to 138, which is more than the 120 spaces required by zoning. There will be two entrances with signage and an inter-com system. The Union will eventually expand and use the entire office building for itself.

Q. How did you arrive at the number of parking spaces needed?

A. Based on the reduction of office space, you would require at least 128 parking spaces.

Q. How many spaces will the Union be using?

A. Not sure, but the Union has a low usage per square foot. However, we can always add stackers.

Q. Will you be having classes and, if so, the amount of members?

A. Yes, some seminars and classes, but will be given after hours.

Q. How many members are there in the Union?

A. Do not have the figures for them presently.

Q. How often would you have classes?

A. Once a month.

Q. Are they a member of Corporate Park?

A. Yes and will contribute to the fund.

Q. Can you enhance the buffer between this building and the Church?

A. The Church has encroached into the City buffer. Will work with EDC. The 60 ft. buffer wall was put in years ago as a requirement of the City.

Q. What is the maximum occupancy of the C of O?

A. Will be determined by the Dept. of Buildings and Fire Dept. The rule is one employee per 250 square feet or 120 parking spaces.

Q. If needed, can stackers be installed?

A. Yes, if needed. There are only two levels of parking, and the deck is high enough.

Q. Is there a term for renewal?

A. No, it stays with the building. However, any future modifications will require

re-application with the BSA.

With no public speakers, Committee Chair Apelian read his committee report. His only concern with the application was that the two parking levels were not connected and the impact of cars on the service road of the Whitestone Expressway. Also, he would want the BSA to review this Section of the law.

The motion to approve was made with the two stipulations asking for the two parking levels to be connected and the BSA review the Zoning Section, seconded by Marc Schiffman.

The vote taken was (35) For (0) Against (0) Abstention

AGENDA #7 - 12-03 150th Street, Whitestone – Calendar #15-14-BZ – Greek Orthodox School

Application for a variance to permit proposed enlargement of existing not-for-profit school building that will not comply with zoning resolution Section 24-111 (Community Facility Floor Area); Section 24-54 (Sky Exposure Plane); and zoning resolution Section 25-31 (Accessory Parking Spaces).

We are reminded that this application falls under the Federal Religious Land Use Law which was distributed to all board members. Two meetings, February 12th and March 12, 2014 were held on this application. **Committee Chair Joseph Sweeney** started his committee report stating the proposed enlargement did not comply with current zoning resolution requirements on floor area, sky exposure and accessory parking, which is the reason for the variance. Removing the current 2nd floor and replacing it with classrooms would increase the student population by 70 for a total of 250 students. The after school classes from 4 to 6 pm for 100 students will remain the same. He observed minor traffic problems during drop off and pick up of students, but saw the same problems at other area schools. He introduced the Attorney for the applicant, **Ron Mandel**, who advised that presently the current Nursery to third grade school is on the first floor. Enlargement of the second floor will bring it up to fifth grade. Making changes to the Church's parking lot across the street will provide more parking spaces for the school. The school's attic will also be built out. Committee Chair Sweeney read the remainder of his report regarding the traffic study with the recommendation of a One Way sign to be posted at the 12th Avenue entrance to the parking lot with the exit onto 150th Street from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Children can then be picked up in the parking lot instead of the street, with school staff providing direction. The committee was concerned there was no "Stop" sign at 150th Street and 12th Avenue. A letter was sent to the DOT urging them to do so, as well as assign a crossing guard on school days by September. Also, an e-mail was sent to the DEP regarding idling. The committee then went over the five (5) criteria needed for variance approval and voted to approve with conditions, i.e., one-way signs in and out of their parking lot for drop-off and pick-up of children; use of special parking lot spaces for staff instead of on local streets; fifteen minutes early dismissal for the very young; and CB 7 and Councilman Vallone to pursue the installation of a stop sign and crossing guard.

Committee Chair Sweeney then read the motion into the record with the conditions reached by the committee.

Discussion followed:

Speaker Vito Tautonico, Councilman Vallone's liaison said their main concern was the need for a Crossing Guard, and approval of an All Way Stop sign at 12th Avenue and 150 Street by the DOT. Staggering dismissal times would help, even though QSAC would be unable to do so, and reconfiguration of the Church parking lot is a plus. He mentioned Local Law 115 which states the DOT must install a minimum of 50 speed humps per year around schools.

Speaker Katarina Zouzas spoke about the school being a magnet for growing families, and emphasized the Church has willingly complied with every recommendation the Community Board came up with.

Bess Kalamotouskis, an educator and 33 year resident of Whitestone, spoke in favor of the expansion. It was a loss when Emmanuel Lutheran School closed 10 years ago. She feels community schools like Holy Cross teach not only academics, but community pride, civic awareness and social responsibility, unlike QSAC who has made more of a negative impact on the community.

Dina Skokos, who has a child in first grade at Holy Cross, said the school's environment is completely loving and nurturing.

Chris Koukounas, who moved from Roslyn back to Whitestone to give his son the opportunity to grow up in a community giving the best education possible as well as learning about their heritage. **Danielle Koukounas** added she never felt more a part of a community as she does now.

Rev. Johnson, Pastor from Immanuel Lutheran and a resident of Whitestone for 14 years, voiced his approval of the expansion and the investment made by Holy Cross for the children. He feels very privileged to have Holy Cross as a neighbor.

Bill Gournelus raised his three children and asked that there be room for his grandchildren.

Dan Lampiopoulos thanked Community Board #7 for giving them a voice and the remaining seven individuals from the area all concurred their approval including 2nd Vice Chair Frank Macchio, who lives in the area. **Father Dionysis of Holy Cross** ended by saying he waited for over 30 years for this expansion to come about. With over 650 families and growing, the community is flourishing with our children and parents co-existing with everyone.

The motion to approve the variance to permit the proposed enlargement of the existing Holy Cross not-for-profit school building was made and seconded by Arlene Fleishman

First Vice-Chair Chuck Apelian took the opportunity to compliment **Committee Chair Joe Sweeney** for the terrific job he did on researching this application. We learned about the Church about a year ago. The Church, under the direction of Father Dionysis, was extremely cooperative and agreed to whatever we asked.

The vote then was taken with (35) For (1) Against (0) Abstained

AGENDA # 8 – 150-65 Cross Island Parkway – Calendar #129-97-BZ – Amendment for the proposed conversion of existing lubritorium (Use Group 16) to commercial retail establishment (Use Group 6) and enlargement of 1,412.81 square feet on the basement level.

Committee Chair Peter Sutich held the committee meeting on March 19, 2014 to discuss the above conversion. He introduced the applicant's representative, architect **Gerald Caliendo**, who said the original variance in 1997, which expires in Nov. 2018, was an enlargement of the gas station building to include a lubritorium in a C1 zone. Today, they are asking for the removal of the lubritorium, enlarging the space by 1400 sq.ft. and using it for commercial retail use. The only violation sustained a few years back was when a patron stepped on the gas instead of the brakes and went into the storefront, but it was taken care of.

Questions followed:

Q. How many stores will you put in?

A. With roughly 3900 square feet, and figuring 1000-1500 square feet per store, we hope to get one store.

Q. What about parking and is the convenience store to remain?

A. Original variance allowed 14 spaces, which will not change, and the convenience store will remain.

Q. Are we using the same curb cuts for entrance and exits?

A. Yes, and the offices upstairs have their own entry on Clintonville.

Q. Why do they want to remove the lubritorium?

A. No enough profit, and it's a dirty business.

Q. What type of building?

A. Non-combustible, completely concrete and steel.

Q. How do you handle oil? Was there any contamination?

A. No contamination since it was all handled by containers.

Committee Chair Sutich said there was discussion of the traffic flow with possible removal of the air pumps for an easier flow. **Mr. Caliendo** mentioned the driveway is two and a half cars wide.

Q. Once approved, how long to convert?

A. The BSA will take maybe three or four months to complete the case. A couple of months for the DOB approval and then four or five months for the physical work.

Committee Chair Sutich said flyers were distributed in the neighborhood and no complaints were registered. The committee voted to approve.

The motion on the floor is to approve the conversion of the lubritorium into a commercial retail space, seconded by Marc Schiffman.

Chair Kelty's only concern is that the owner only allows a retail store that will not make a problem for the neighborhood.

The vote taken was (36) For (0) Against (0) Abstained

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Speaker **Phil Konigsberg**, who came in late this evening, too the opportunity to welcome the new board members.

The meeting ended at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Zuliani