



COMMUNITY BOARD #14
MONTHLY VIRTUAL BOARD MEETING
MAY 10, 2022

PRESENT

COMMUNITY
BOARD #

Audrey Amsterdam-Handy, Mark Anaya, Lailah Boyd, Natasha Carter, John Cori, Dr. Gerald David, Rose Marie Duggan-Gulston, Jack Epter, Menashe Friedman, Eugenia Gibson, Yitzchok Goldstone, D. Brian Heffernan, Paul King, Maggie Larkin, Caren Lee, Betty Leon, Luquan Lloyd, Denise Lopresti, Annette Lord-Cohen, Nancy Martinez, John McCambridge, Evelyn Miller-Stuber, Sonia Moise, Al Moore, Dolores Orr, Dr. Harold Paez, Eugene Pasternak, Vernell Robinson, David Rood-Ojalvo, Karen Sloan-Payne, Chris Tedesco, Wanda Warden, Lisa Williams

COMMUNITY BOARD #14
City of New York
Borough of Queens

ABSENT

DOLORES ORR
Chairperson

Gabrielle Bennett, Yaakov Berger, Giselle Carter, Louis Caucig, Eric Diaz, Temina Feldman, Jaden Gaab, Avionne Gumbs-Cummings, Randy Hall, Felicia Johnson, Brian Kelly, Rosalyn Mason, Isa Mitchell, Helen Montero, Daniel Mundy, David Shelborne, Jose Velez

JONATHAN GASKA
District Manager

GUESTS

City Council Member Joann Ariola, City Council Member Selvena Brooks-Powers, Ciara Donely – Rep. City Council Member Joann Ariola, Sandee Doremus- Rep. State Senator Joseph Addabbo Jr, Annmarie Castella – Rep of State Senator James Sanders, Gregory Slade – Rep of Assemblymember Stacey Pheffer-Amato, Joseph Edwards – Rep. Congressman Gregory Meeks, Dan Brown – Rep. Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, Deputy Inspector Carlos Fabara - Rep. 100th Police Precinct

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:15pm.

MINUTES FROM APRIL 12, 2022

-Denise Lopresti stated that the minutes be corrected to indicate that she was present at the April 12, 2022 board meeting.

Paul King made the motion to accept the minutes with the stated correction. Betty Leon seconded the motion. The motion carried.

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REPORT OF THE CHAIR

The Chair requested a moment of silence for the family of lifelong Rockaway resident Firefighter Timothy Patrick Klein / Ladder Company 170 who lost his life in the line of duty on Sunday, April 24, 2022 trying to save a resident in a home who also sadly perished in the fire.

 The Chair informed all of the following:

- Rockaway Rides – has the potential for the District #14 to be awarded a grant of \$3.5 Million from NYS Energy, Research and Development Authority, which would provide electric vans for free or low cost for areas which have no public transportation for travel within Rockaway. Jamaica Bay Rockaway Park Conservancy is instrumental in arranging visioning sessions. There are three sessions: May 9th - Beach Dunes on Beach 45 Street. May 10th - Beach 20 Street and May 11th 0 at the Rockaway Hotel. The purpose of the visioning sessions is to hear ideas, concepts and input from residents. This is an innovative mobility options that helps solve our community desert transportation issues in neighborhoods such as Sommerville, Bayswater, Seagirt Avenue, the Sandcastle complex and the Mott Creek neighborhood communities where there is no public transportation.

There are a lot of beach issues going with the larges is the ongoing construction of groins and at least 3 construction projects all going on in the same area on Shore Front Parkway. The Board, elected officials and the Parks Dept. are working together to obtain the schedules of the groin construction locations and dates in writing from the Army Corp of Engineers.

REPORT OF THE DISTRICT MANAGER

Jonathan Gaska, District Manager reported that the board has set up a Land-Use & Housing / Parks & Public Safety Committee meetings this month along with agenda items for discussion. As a reminder details of all committee meetings and web ex access information is available of the board's website.

New board members have been emailed the board's committee list and have been notified that they may request up to 3 committees to participate on. And after review of current committee membership numbers, new board members will be given committee assignments.

As a reminder, please call the office to report locations of dump outs, and ponding conditions that could cause mosquitos and potholes.

ELECTED OFFICIALS REPORT

CITY COUNCIL MEMBER JOANN ARIOLA

Councilmember Ariola reported that she has introduced legislation (Intro. 210) which would create an office of marine debris disposal and vessel removal. The proposed legislature is being co-sponsored by Assembly Member Selvena Brooks- Powers. The proposed legislature also has support of 11 other council members that boarder waterfront communities that have

the same issues. In addition, the legislature would allow boat owners to surrender their boats or other marine debris that is no longer useable/wanted to the Parks Dept. with no additional cost to taxpayers.

CITY COUNCIL MEMBER SELVENA BROOKS-POWERS

Councilmember Brooks-Powers informed all that there was a gas leak on Mott Avenue and Beach 20th Street that caused merchants and offices to evacuate the premises. The merchants in Downtown Far Rockaway are resilient but enough is enough already and calls were made to obtain some kind of resolution for the merchants as in the form of the contractor's insurance company being held liable.

In addition, the Council is working towards legislation that would provide a financial reward for information leading to capturing hit and run drivers which has been on the rise across the City in the last few months.

CONGRESSMAN GREGORY MEEKS

Joseph Edwards reported that Congressman Meeks attended Congressional CODEC along with House Speaker, Nancy Pelosi traveled to Ukraine and he has returned back to Washington D.C.

In Addition, Congressman Meeks office was surprised along with other elected regarding the Wave article on beach closures. The office already reached out to the commissioner of the Parks Dept. and the Army Corp. of Engineers requesting answers within the next 24 to 48 hours. When the office receives the information, it would be forwarded to the elected and public.

STATE SENATOR JAMES SANDERS JR.

Annamarie Costella reported that Senator Sanders is promoting home ownership and is having 2 different orientation sessions that complement each other by having the option of attending both or one or the other. The orientations are held May 12th & 17th, 2022 at 6pm via zoom in partnership with Council Member Selvena Brooks-Powers. The first orientation will talk about \$100,000 in grants through HPD. The second session would focus on \$15,000 in grants from Sonyma and other important need to know information on homeownership.

ASSEMBLY MEMBER STACEY PHEFFER-AMATO

Gregory Slade announced that Betty Leon has been appointed to the New York Racing Association Board which gives the community a voice at the table when proposals are made that effect our community.

Assembly Member Amato had historic legislation passed that allows women to have further control and options when with regards to their body before and after breast cancer treatment.

STATE SENATOR JOSEPH ADDABBO JR.

Sandy Doremus reported that Senator Addabbo is also unhappy with the beach closures and is working on determining plans that would not close the entire beach during the summer.

Senator Addabbo will hold mobile hours at the Peninsula Library on May 19, 2022 from 5:30pm to 7:00pm.

GUEST SPEAKER

NYC PARKS & RECREATION – Re: Art in the Parks

Temporary Art Installation

Camilla Morales, representing Artists of Buena Onda Collective announced that they are requesting Community Board #14 support for temporary art installation called Breathing Together: A Love Story from June 1, 2022 to July 1, 2022 at Beach 96 Street and Shore Front Parkway in Rockaway Beach. The summary of design and components of the exhibition have been emailed out to the board and the public already,

Mrs. Morales stated that the art is a collective comprised of herself and Dominic Costello, both are Rockaway residents, that have been working a lot with the community and creating social public artworks that is not only sculptures and installations but also hold community workshops where we share our process and enjoy talking about ecology and environmental impact.

John Cori made the motion for the Board to support the proposed temporary installation of Sculpture “CARE” at Beach 96 Street and Shore Front Parkway. Rose Marie Duggan-Gulston seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC SPEAKING: The Chair opened the floor for public speaking. Five individuals signed up to speak. They all were recognized and heard. Public speaking was closed.

INFORMATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Health and Hospitals Corp. – Re: Demolition of Neponsit Hospital located at 149-25 Rockaway Beach Blvd. to allow construction of a new lifeguard facility.

Oscar Gonzalez, Assistant Vice-President for Health and Hospitals explained that he is responsible for the capital development group within the office of facilities development overseeing all of the capital projects which involves the introduction to discuss the demolition of the old Neponsit Hospital which will also allow for construction of a new lifeguard facility.

The importance of the demolition presentation is to bring awareness to the life and safety of this very old building and a lot of conditions that could be a safety hazard. The site has 3 main structures which is a power plant, an old nurse station and the main building parking lot which is next to the power plant that is the current lifeguard station which is just trailers that the parks department utilizes.

Nat Borrancó, overseeing the demolition explained that the current conditions inside and outside of the building consists of missing/cracked/crumbling bricks, flooded main floors, broken windows, missing doors and collapsed connecting walkways and elevators. Health and Hospitals have already filed and completed NYS Historical Preservation application, NYS Environmental Quality Review (SEQRA) and NYS DEC/DEP Storm Water Regulation notice. In addition to permits from NYC Dept. of Buildings.

Mr. Borrancó explained that the entire project will begin after beach season this year and would take up to a year to complete with focus being construction of a temporary fence, removal of hazardous materials and disconnecting old utility connections in the buildings. For more detailed information the presentation and community concerns can be addressed by contacting Adriene Kanter, Outreach Manager for the project at office: 1-929-220-5647 or Email:kanter@stokescg.com.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Economic Development Committee

John Cori, Co-Chair of the committee reported that a virtual meeting was held on April 13, 2022. The agenda items for discussion was regarding an update on SYEP and youth programs within CB#14 from Kevin Alexander, Executive Director of Rockaway Revitalization and Development Corporation (RDRC).

Members of the board questioned the outreach for job opportunities for local youth summer programs provided by RDRC. We were assured by Mr. Alexander, the Local employment of residents and local youth in general would have priority for all job opportunities. RDRC was asked for and committee to provide a list of business in Rockaway that have been contacted about providing positions to SYEP youth from our community.

John Cori reported that Kevin Alexander gave a presentation on economic development to the committee regarding RDRC's Business Guide and a Far Rockaway vacancy report that was already emailed out to board members and to the public for review.

At the meeting there were questions from the Committee and the public that were focused on the ongoing projects in downtown Far Rockaway pertaining to the poor communication for street and sidewalk closures and economic damages to businesses in Far Rockaway, the dangers to pedestrians with the haphazard sidewalk closures and questions about how outreach was being done.

Mr. Alexander assured the committee that social media and local media were being used for all outreach. In addition all efforts are being made to make sure the voices of the public and businesses were being heard and he would pass along all information to agencies involved in the Downtown Far Rockaway project.

NOTE: as of tonight's Board meeting RDRC has not provided the information requested.

2. Transportation Committee

Chris Tedesco, Chair of the committee reported that a virtual meeting was held on April 18, 2022. The agenda items for discussion were regarding:

1. NYC Transit/MTA- LINK: 2022 Bus Draft Plan Queens Bus Redesign: Some highlights to be aware of: Q53 is back in the plan. Q22 would cut the western end point at Beach 116 street with the Q35 extending east to Beach 108 street. On the eastern end, the Q22 will extend to the Five Towns Shopping Center. None of the lines are marked to get more frequent service. The community engagement event will be held online/virtually on June 2, 2022 at 7:00PM.

- South Channel Bridge: we asked for better communication between marine traffic and MTA dispatchers as well as an alert system that would notify subway riders that a bridge opening is going to happen.

- Bus stop in front of Neponsit Hospital site will be covered by a presentation to full board and public at the Board's May 10, 2022 meeting. The MTA does not see the need to move the east bound bus stop on RBB & Beach 149 Street to accommodate demolition of the building. A Train service - There was a brief discussion regarding the infrequency of A train service when compared to every other subway line and branch in the system. The Far Rockaway A train has, by far, the least number of trains per hour at every hour of the day and night. Reasons given by Ms. Songhai included the distance the route covers, the need to get trains back into the system, and the lack of ridership. The committee asked for a comprehensive evaluation on the A and C lines, as well as other trains that share parts of the route, to come up with a more efficient route that better serves our neglected route.

2) DOT – represented by Andrew Arcese, and from DOT Safety projects and programs division Ayla Alvarez, and Alicia Posner. The committee was presented with a slightly revised and updated version of the Seagirt Boulevard Safety Project. This was first presented to the committee in October 2021, and much of the project is the same. From Beach 9th to Beach 35th street, it would reduce travel lanes from 3 to 2, add a protected bike lane, add painted pedestrian space for safer crossings, implement signal timing improvements, and add turn calming/daylighting markings. Left turn bays would be added at Crest Rd, Beach 20th and Beach 13th streets. At Rockaway Freeway/B35th/Seagirt, signal timing would be changed to allow more time for WB Seagirt Blvd traffic as well as new turn lane designations.

Notes on Seagirt Plan: -The original plan (Oct 2021) eliminated 72 street parking spaces. The revised plan eliminates 64. -We asked for emergency evacuation measures and signage to be part of this project. Page 19 of the plan offers a few generalized points regarding the issue, but nothing of substance was added. -Bus layover between Beach 20 and Beach 21 Street was not addressed in new proposal. This will be a problem. -New left turn bays will not have protected arrows/turn signals. -guiding lines will be painted at Camp Rd/B26th & Seagirt where road markings are not aligned - Some committee members questioned the plan for the complicated intersection of Seagirt/Rockaway Freeway/Beach 35th Street UPDATE from Andrew Arcese (DOT) – A left turn signal has been approved and installed for WB traffic on Rockaway Beach Blvd at Beach 62nd Street.

A motion was made and seconded to adjourned meeting after 10:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted By: M. Dunning