



**THE CITY OF NEW YORK
BOROUGH OF THE BRONX
COMMUNITY BOARD 7**



RUBEN DIAZ, JR., BOROUGH PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MARTINEZ, CHAIRPERSON ISCHIA BRAVO, DISTRICT MANAGER

GENERAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Chair:	Emmanuel Martinez
Meeting Date:	Wednesday, June 23 rd , 2021
Time:	6:30 PM
Meeting Location:	Via Zoom Video/Teleconference
Minutes done by:	Yajaira Arias

Minutes:

I. Chair’s welcoming remarks

- a. Thank you to all members for all of their work during this year. Now that the city is opening, we should stay alert and communicate with our local NCO’s and elected officials
- b. DM - Ischia Bravo - Reading of executive order and zoom rules and commands

II. Community Board Business:

- a. Attendance taken - quorum met
- b. Nominating Committee Chair Sandra Erickson
- c. Ballots were emailed to all members
- d. Thank you to all involved in the nominations and voting process. Your assistance has been of great value to us all.
- e. Each candidate is welcomed to give a small pitch.
- f. Candidates:
 - i. Emmanuel Martinez, Barbara Stronczer, Erick Ascencio, Chad Royer, Andrew Laiosa, Helene Redd, Edgar Ramos, Yajaira Arias
 - ii. After the candidate’s pitch - voting by the members took place. In the meantime, last month’s minutes were reviewed (shared on the screen)
- g. Motion to approve minutes by Chair Emmanuel Martinez
 - i. Second by Barbara Stronczer



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ii. Motion passed

h. More time given to members to be able to vote. Nominating committee will be moved to a separate room to review votes

III. Motions:

a. Housing, Land Use, & Economic Development: Motion concerning the proposed health and fitness zoning text amendment.

- i. Recommended Action: Bronx Community Board 7 supports the proposed health and fitness zoning text amendment.**
- ii. Background: At present, health and fitness establishments, such as gyms, spas, martial arts studios, and licensed massage therapists, must obtain a special permit to operate. The special permit requirement is a 40-year old vestige, which affects no other similar retail business.**
- iii. Attitudes towards health and fitness establishments have changed dramatically and these establishments are now considered neighborhood amenities. Under the proposed zoning rules, health and fitness establishments would be permitted to open in commercial and manufacturing districts without a special permit. In certain commercial districts, gyms and spas would be limited to 10,000 square feet.**
- iv. Rationale for Recommendation: The Committee believes that health and fitness establishments are a neighborhood amenity. The public policy rationale which led to the special permit requirement no longer applies to these establishments. Therefore, the Committee sees no need to require these establishments obtain a special permit, which now only serves to create red tape.**

b. Board Members Q& A

- i. Helene Redd: How would this benefit our community?**



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- **Answer:** This would make it easier for spas and gyms to open up.
- ii. **Question:** Wouldn't you want them not to have a special permit?
 - **Answer:** Reasons done way long forgotten, reduction of red tape based on the current times.
- iii. **Betty Arce:** This does not preclude establish from following regulations and laws?
 - **Answer:** This only allows for the removal of the zoning requirements.
- iv. **Brief discussion** took place as to gyms and health concerns in our community.
- v. **Andrew Laiosa:** Reservations as to license massage therapist, we had issues in the past where establishments operated illegally.
 - **City Planning:** would provide more information to the board.
- vi. **Edgar Ramos:** Gyms are necessary as we need better health options
- vii. **Myrna Calderon:** We agree that gyms and better food options are needed in The Bronx. We have to be very careful
- viii. **Helene Redd:** How do we stop having a few chicken spots in the same blocks vs. having smoothies and healthier options?
- d. **Motion re- read with additional comment:** further analyzing license massage therapists in order to protect the community. CB7 encourages establishments serve healthy foods and provide RN component.
 - i. **Motion taken to vote:** Motion passes with corrections
- c. **Housing, Land Use, & Economic Development:** Motion concerning the proposed FRESH II zoning text amendment.



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- ii. **Recommended Action: Bronx Community Board 7 supports the proposed FRESH II zoning text amendment to promote the development of supermarkets.**
- iii. **Background: The Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) program provides developers with tax and zoning incentives for locating certified grocery stores selling fresh food in neighborhoods with an identified shortage of supermarkets. The proposed updates to FRESH are intended to prevent clustering of FRESH supermarkets, change glazing requirements to promote redevelopment projects, and modify parking rules in low density districts. While nearly all of Bronx community district 7 was already zoned for FRESH, the proposed zoning change would expand FRESH zoning to cover the entire district.**
- iv. **Rationale for Recommendation: The Committee support the objective of the FRESH program to promote the development of supermarkets in underserved areas. In 2020, Bronx CB 7 supported New York Botanical Garden and Douglaston Development's FRESH application to build a new apartment building and rebuild the existing supermarket (Cherry Valley) at 2856 Webster Avenue. The Committee believes Bronx CB 7 residents would benefit from additional supermarkets selling fresh and healthy foods.**

d. Board Members Q&A:

- i. **Chad Royer: Upon to know any special where the fresh program - fresh coupon or discounts to be given to community residents?**
 - **Alex Karman's Answer: This is not for that this is for special area for fresh produce in the supermarket.**



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- ii. **Yajaira Arias: Reminded members that we discussed this matter back in 2019. This relates with supermarkets having specific space for the keeping of fresh produce.**
- iii. **Motion taken to vote: Motion Passes with 1 No (Jhenelle Robinson)**
- e. **Parks' Recreation & Cultural Affairs: Design Build Procurement**
 - i. **Recommended Action/motion: A letter be sent to the three councilpersons covering the CB#7 area requesting their support for the adoption of the Design Build concept for procurement and construction in our local parks.**
 - ii. **Background: The committee received a letter from Laborers Local Union 1010 requesting our support for the use of the Design Build concept in Parks' Dept. construction and tree planting. The concept became state legislation in 2019 and would combine the design and construction project bids into one contract. This would save millions on public construction projects and speed up the completion of the work.**
 - iii. **Rationale for Recommendation: Currently tree planting is costing the City close to \$3,400 per tree. The time period for the completion of construction projects in parks is often 3-5 years. The time period often escalates the costs before the project is completed.**
 - iv. **Motion second by Emmanuel Martinez**
- f. **Board Members Q&A:**
 - i. **Edgar Ramos: Who is Laborers Local Union 1010 affiliated with?**
 - **DM's Answers: Local 1010 Pavers and Road builders is an affiliate of the NYC Building & Construction Trades Council.**



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ii. Motion taken to vote: Motion Passes with 2 abstentions

IV. Announcement of Board Election Results by Sandra Erickson

- a. Chair - Emmanuel Martinez**
- b. 1st Vice Chair - Barbara Stronczer**
- c. 2nd Vice Chair - Chad Royer**
- d. 3rd Vice Chair - Andrew Laiosa**
- e. Treasurer - Edgar Ramos**
- f. Secretary - Yajaira Arias**
 - i. No abstentions and no write ins**
 - ii. For count - please contact committee**
 - iii. Congratulations to all.**

V. Veterans Affairs Committee Motion: Link NYC To Dedicate Ad Space for Veterans Public Announcement

- a. Recommended Action/motion: Motion for Bronx Community Board 7 to formally request Link NYC to dedicate advertisement space on Link NYC street kiosks for public announcements designed to reach out to veterans.**
- b. Background: Many veterans citywide may not know where to look for certain resources or know what services are available. One of the main challenges is determining how to communicate to veterans when we do not know where all of them are.**
- c. Rationale for Recommendation: The question came up regarding how we can use technology to communicate to veterans through the city or city agencies. Many veterans are homeless, wind up in the hospital, and remain unidentified. However, Link NYC kiosks are present in various areas of the neighborhoods like in plazas, near hospitals, on commercial shopping areas, near parks and other public places, and the presence of a public announcement or a public message regarding veterans can be seen by any veteran who is**



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outside. The kiosks can display many messages, and one of them can provide a veteran an opportunity to seek help if the veteran knows what number to call and where to go.

d. Board Members Q&A:

i. Lowell Greene: Can we CC letter to our elected officials?

- The more people we more notify (council members) the better. Also, they may not know that this service exist.
- Emmanuel Martinez - Agrees that we should notify elected officials
- DM's clarification - Elected officials are automatically notified.

ii. Motion taken to vote: Motion Passes with 2 Abstentions

- Motion to Close Board Business: Motion second by Emmanuel Asamuah

VI. Public Session Opened:

a. Bronx Borough President's Office - Ish González

- BP Monthly report was sent out last week. Feel free to reach out
- New appointments to be made within the month of July.

b. Bronx District Attorney's Office - Ericka Diaz

- D.A. hosting Gun Buy Back Event - No questions asked event \$200 gift card and iPad

c. State Senator Gustavo Rivera's Office - Rachel Ferrari

- Senator Passed the Safe workers in Hospitals and Nursing Homes Opioid settlement funds to ensure settlements are allocated to harm reduction services
- 2 events in the coming weeks - licensing for marijuana which start in 2022. Summer event at Tremont Park.



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- iii. Assistance with Emergency Rental Assistance program, other benefits the community may need especially resources related to COVID, and other issues facing the community. We can be reached at 718-933-2034 or grivera@nysenate.gov.**
- d. Senator Alessandra Biaggi - Tyler**
 - i. Applications for excluded workers fund will be available in August. Senator welcomes any feedback or concerns**
 - ii. ***CB7 Board would like to obtain a copy of a report of the bills being worked on by our elected officials*****
- e. Dilleta Pina wanted to provide information to the board and community. Please see the information she placed on the chat below:**
 - i. CERT is a fully trained Community Response Team that is deployed when emergencies happen. The volunteers receive a free training from the City of New York and the trainers are firefighters, police officers, and emergency management personnel. The training prepares community residents to be fully prepared in case of any emergency.**
- f. Gloria Bent - New health bucks provide to the community board and for the board to participate in the farmers market (Jerome Avenue by Tracey Towers). North Central will be having their annual Health Fair on July 19th. CB7 always participates.**
- g. If anyone see any unsheltered individuals that need assistance, please email Ischia or the board. We will contact Bronxworks. Please keep in mind that these individuals must be willing to receive assistance.**
- h. Cirio Guerino - Invite everyone to the last 52nd Precinct Council Meeting (3100 Webster Avenue)**



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- i. Block AT A TIME - July 1, 2021 at Aqueduct Walk - hopes to see everyone there. Last month the first Guerinos against graffiti awards were given. Wishes everyone a happy Summer.**
- j. Alek Karman - Utility shutoff moratorium will be expiring in a couple of days. If anyone needs assistance with arrears utility, con edison, cable - call service provider and inform them your we were financially affected due to covid self certified and protect your account for another 180 days. The link below provides more information**
 - i. <https://www3.dps.ny.gov/W/AskPSC.nsf/All/D3BB77AFE92D6FFF852585EE0051A13E?OpenDocument>**

- VII. Chair presents motion to close - Motion second by Sandra Erickson**
 - a. Meeting closed at 9:01 pm**