



Community Board 7

Borough of Queens

Bay Terrace, College Point, Beechhurst, Flushing
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Chairperson

Marilyn McAndrews

District Manager

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING

MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2019

UNION PLAZA CARE CENTER

33-23 UNION STREET

FLUSHING, NEW YORK

PRESENT

Charles Apelian

James Cervino

Michael Cheng

Chin-Hsiang Chiang

John Choe

Kim Cody

Nicholas Corrado

Arlene Fleishman

Richard Forman

Fred Fu

Vincent Gianelli

Pablo Hernandez

Jeff Huang

Lawrence Hughes

Eugene Kelty

Phil Konigsberg

Esther Lee

Barbara McHugh

Selma Moses

Kim Ohanian

Millicent O'Meally

John Park

Terence Park

Kris Ram

Paul Rifino

Belal Salim

Marc Schiffman

Warren Schreiber

Kevin Shields

Matthew Silverstein

Joseph Sweeney

Alison Tan

John Tsavalos

Peter Tu

Harpreet Wahan

Dian Yu

Linna Yu

Lei Zhao

Jie Zhu

ABSENT

Alfredo Centola

Christine Colligan

Frank Macchio

Rev. McEachern

Joshua Sussman

Peter Sutich

Clarissa Wong

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 STAFF

Marilyn McAndrews, District Manager

Mary Zuliani, Community Assistant

Mary O'Neill, Community Associate

GUESTS

Brian Lam – Assemblywoman Nily Rozic's office

Joyce Choi – Councilman Peter Koo's office

Jason Antonopoulos - Assemblyman Edward Braunstein's office

Gilbert Hue – Senator Stavisky's office

Barbara Baruch – State Senator John Liu's office

Justin Connor – Councilman Suozzi's office

Sandra Ung – Congresswomen Grace Meng's office

Naureen Akhter – Congresswomen Alexandria Ocasio Cortez' office

Tim Thomas - Assemblyman Daniel Rosenthal's office

First Vice- Chair Chuck Apelian opened the meeting at 7 pm while Chair Kelty is attending an earlier committee meeting in an adjoining room. Vice-Chair Apelian asked everyone present to stand for the **Pledge of Allegiance** followed by a moment of silence in honor of our military serving abroad and here at home, as well as our uniformed services protecting us daily here at home. He then took the roll call attendance with **(38) Present (3) Excused and (3) Absent**

The following announcements followed:- ** Board member **Li Mei Li** has resigned because of her need to spend more time with her family, and thanked the Board for their service to the community.

**The School Construction Authority has some opening positions, as well as the MTA which is looking for Trainmasters, and Track, Power Systems & Structure Directors.

Our State Senator, **John Liu, is hosting an informational session on **STAR, eSTAR and TAX** programs this Thursday, March 14th from 3 to 5 pm at the Korean Community Services, 208-05 32nd Avenue.

Queens Borough President **Melinda Katz inviting all to the Bangladeshi Independence Celebration to be held at 6 pm Wednesday, March 13th at Borough Hall.

The February minutes were approved and seconded after one correction, i.e., Joseph Femenia was the President of College Point Civic Association, and not a member of CB #7 at the time of his death.

ITEM #5 — EASTERN QUEENS GREENWAY CONNECTORS - Michael Pedrone, Project Mgr. gave the DOT presentation of a Bike Network to go through Kissena Park Corridor to include bike paths, pedestrian walkways, traffic safety and Vision Zero. The existing bike network has low coverage, a very tight grid, with many streets bypassing downtown Flushing. The Vision Zero effort will alleviate the downtown area and reduce the car accidents (835) involving pedestrians (80) severely injured with 11 fatalities that occurred between 2009-2013. Maps showing dedicated bike & shared lanes between major destinations and Bike Smart booklets will be available. Shared lanes are to alert drivers to watch for cyclists and for both to understand the rules of the road. The DOT feels there will be no impact on parking or take anything away from driving lanes, but can discourage speeding. It will create safe places for riding, improve traffic flow, parking and the connection to parks and greenways.

Q. **Kim Ohanian-** You're putting a bike lane on my street (59th Ave. off Main St.) where there is no room. How do you expect it to work without someone getting killed.

A. We've heard this concern, but what we see is a visual narrowing of the roadway and reduced speeds. **Chair Kelty** said when he picks up one of our board members living on a narrow street 1 block from the LIE entrance, he must use a shopping center driveway for the pickup. **Lawrence Hughes** voiced his concern about Willets Point Blvd. at Utopia & Francis Lewis. **John Choe** said drivers ignore the existing bike lane on Sanford between Kissena & College Point. **Chair Kelty** said he has been trying to remove bike lanes on College Point Blvd. which causes cars to stop unnecessarily and given summonses, but now was able to convert into a shared lane, but Enforcement is important. **Mr. Pedrone** added it's an orphaned lane and this plan will connect it to a network serving the neighborhood. There will be a learning curve with bike lanes. **Lei Zhao**, who bikes all over the neighborhood and also owns a car, gave his perspective. Willets Point is wide and can accommodate a lane, but advises against Linden Place because the road condition is bad with a lot of bus and commercial traffic. Look to 160th Street or streets further east that are wide and have low traffic volume.

The questions and information kept coming: Why can't bikers carry licenses in NY? Massachusetts bikers do. Why don't drivers carry ID? Why don't they pay fees like car drivers do? One board member's car was hit by a cyclist while stationary. How do we enforce the laws for cyclists?

A. **Al Silvestre**, DOT- Enforcement on cyclists has increased twofold since Vision Zero went into effect, and cyclists are not pleased about it. When a cyclist is hit by a car, he pays a more serious price. Everyone needs to follow the rules, i.e., motorists, bikers and pedestrians.

A. From the Public's perspective. Using narrow streets near commercial areas for bikers to share with motorists is too dangerous. Try another route!

Q. **Phil Konigsberg** – How often are the lanes repainted:

A. Depends on how busy the street is and how fast the paint wears out.

In closing, **Chair Kelty** said the DOT is listening to the Board, and their plans are not verified as yet.

ITEM #6 - A.K.A RIDER – Cpl. John F. McHugh Way” – 156th Street betw. 14th Avenue & Cryder Lane.

Committee Chair Nick Corrado introduced the Renaming in honor of Cpl. John F. McHugh, a highly decorated soldier and hero of WWII who fought on D-Day Normandy Beach and the last survivor of that battle that came home to help build this country.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

***Paul Mannix**, a friend, didn't learn of his heroism until he was in his 20s. He was truly a part of the Greatest Generation and truly deserves to receive this honor.

***John McHugh**, the son of Corporal McHugh, said his dad just turned 95 yrs. of age. He is the recipient of the Silver Star and Bronze Star and the family greatly appreciate this honor of having a street to be named for him.

Committee Chair Nick Corrado read his March 6th meeting report which was approved with one dissent.

The motion now on the floor tonight is to approve the renaming 156th Street between 14th Avenue & Cryder Lane as “A.K.A. Cpl. John F. McHugh Way”, seconded by Millicent O’Meally.

DISCUSSION ON THE MOTION

* **Matt Silverman**, said at CB#11 we renamed a street after someone who wasn't a City resident. We were told they had to be, but It turns out these are just the guidelines. As long as the Councilman and Speaker of the Council approve, it's fine. If Councilman Vallone has approved this, I think we should approve it also.

* **Kim Cody**, Board member and Pres. of Greater Whitestone Taxpayers Civic Assoc. said John McHugh was his Coach and mentor, and instilled in him as a young man to what he's is today. “Although it's nice to honor someone after they've passed on, it's better to honor them while they're still here.”

* **Kevin Shields** thanked **Chair Corrado**, **Warren Schreiber** and **First Vice Chair Apelian** for their guidance and honoring **Cpl. John F. McHugh Way**.

The vote taken was (36) Approve (1) Disapprove (1) Not Present during Vote

ITEM #7 – DOT School Safety Zero Priority Plan - Transportation Chair Nick Corrado – The DOT presentation given last month on changes to one-ways and left turns on Northern Blvd, between 146th and 147th Street and the installation of hardened centerlines, pedestrian islands and left turn ban on 147th street, all for school safety in the area, is to be voted on this evening.

Kim Ohanian made the motion to approve the School Safety Zero Priority Plan, seconded by Warren Schreiber.

Discussion on the motion followed:-

Q. Selma Moses asked about a left turn signal on 149th Street & Northern to help move traffic flow in view of the changes on 146th & 147th.

A. Chair Corrado already talked to DOT who will review it.

First Vice Chair Apelian moved to accept the motion, seconded by Lei Zhao. The vote taken was unanimous. (37) Approved (0) Against

ITEM #8 – 18-10 Utopia Parkway, Cal . #58-99-BZ - In the absence of Committee Chair Frank Macchio, his committee report was read by Chair Kelty. This is a variance renewal for a gas station at the location for over seven decades with no impact on the neighborhood for another 10 years, after it expires October 2019. A new canopy will be installed, another island added (making it 3), trash enclosure expanded, one more parking space added, and some sidewalk trees. A motion was made by Linna Yu and seconded by Rev. McEachern to approve with a stipulation to maintain the fences and the perimeter.

Discussion on the motion:-

Mark Schiffman moved to accept the motion, seconded by Arlene Fleishman. The vote taken was unanimous (37) Approved (0) Against

ITEM #9 – 46-15 Kissena Boulevard (KIMCO) #c-190202-ZMQ – Committee Chair Chuck Apelian –CB #7 received ULURP certified by City Planning January 19, 2019 proposing a change in existing zoning from R3-2 to R7A with commercial overlay from a C2-2 to C3-2 and Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) with the proposal to build a mixed use residential, commercial, community use building. At the pre-meeting held in October of 2016, CB #7 expressed the site was too bulky, negatively impacted the area, not enough parking provided, the rear of the site abuts onto two-family homes, and that Kissena Blvd. is a tough route to navigate. At the 2nd meeting, with many of our members, the Councilman and his staff, the civic associations, and the Land Use committee voted to disapprove since our same concerns were not met. KIMCO asked for a third meeting on March 6, 2019 and presented the following changes to their Application:

- 1) Change the proposed R7A zoning district to R6A, thereby reducing the density by 25% and removing over 60,000 square feet of floor area and 60 dwelling units from the project.
- 2) Increase the provided parking to ensure there would be at least one (1) parking space for every dwelling unit including the affordable housing dwelling units, in addition to satisfying the commercial parking requirements for those uses located within the Proposed Development. This action would be codified in a restrictive declaration filed against the Property.
- 3) Eliminate all Community Facility use as the Committee had concerns that many Community Facility uses that could occur at the Site such as Day Care and Medical would generate a large and continual flow of short-term traffic. This action would be codified in a restrictive declaration filed against the Property.
- 4) Decrease the area of the Rezoning Application by pulling back the R6A district line 145' from the corner of Laburnum Avenue and Kissena Boulevard to exclude the majority of Lot 32 on Block 5208 (46-40 Laburnum Avenue) to allow a buffer between the R6A and the existing R3-2 zoning district.
- 5) Set-back the Proposed Development eight (8') feet from the rear and side property lines to ensure that the Proposed Development will not be located directly on the property line of the existing R3-2 residential neighbors. This action would be codified in a restrictive declaration filed against the Property.
- 6) Provide aesthetically pleasing rear and side walls of Proposed Development that face the existing loading, parking and garbage facilities into the cellar and sub-cellar levels of the Proposed Development.
- 7) Provide a 45-foot residential tower, rear yard setback to provide an increased distance beyond the 30-foot rear yard between the residential portion of the Proposed Development and the rear neighbors adjacent to the Property to the east. This action would be codified in a restrictive declaration filed against the Property.
- 8) Reduce the vehicular access points into the Proposed Development to one 30-foot Combined vehicular entrance and egress driveway located across from Kalmia Avenue. However, Kimco still needs to work with DOT to ascertain the following:
 - Move the existing traffic light at the intersection of Juniper Avenue & Kissena Boulevard to the intersection of Kalmia Avenue & Kissena Boulevard.

Introduce a left turn lane southbound on Kissena Boulevard at Kalmia Avenue into the Proposed Development to allow through traffic to move southbound on Kissena Boulevard without experiencing a delay from the traffic turning left into the Proposed Development.

- Provide a right turn lane into the Proposed Development northbound on Kissena Boulevard just north of Laburnum to allow through traffic to move northbound on Kissena Boulevard without experiencing a delay from traffic turning into the Proposed Development.
- Provide a crosswalk at the intersection of Kalmia Avenue and Kissena Blvd.
- Optimize traffic signals along Kissena Boulevard to allow traffic to move through and alleviate and mitigate the existing conditions and the future conditions with Proposed Development.

9) Provide free parking for the commercial parking spaces by providing vouchers for customers Shopping within the Proposed Development.

Q. Marc Schiffman -What handicapped parking will there be?

A. 15% as mandated by code.

Q. John Tsavalos- Can you tell us the existing bulk?

A. 0.6 FAR for residential. New will be 3.6 FAR. Current sq.ft. 70,000. Proposed total 250,000 sq.ft.

Q. Vincent Gianelli - Is what's there conforming?

A. No. The commercial overlay doesn't go all the way back.

Q. Kim Cody – Will the garage be open to the public?

A. Yes, some spaces will be for shoppers who will have vouchers from the stores.

Q. Joseph Sweeney - What about the adjacent restaurant and rezoning?

A. We had issues rezoning the restaurant to the South but that's been removed. You've heard over the years spot zoning is not allowed. City Planning requested only the 2 apartments to the North that are overbuilt are to be rezoned.

Mr. Sweeney expressed concern if we rezone the 2 apts., then the adjacent restaurant will apply for rezoning and you'll have another development coming in eventually.

Q. Warren Schreiber- Why can't you have two zones without the connector?

A. That would be two spot zones which the City will not allow.

Q. Phil Koenigsberg- If this doesn't go through, what happens to the existing non-conforming bldgs?

A. Nothing. They're legal but not compliant.

Q. Alison Tan- Since 30% of the units will be affordable, will the parking spaces be more affordable for them.

A. The percentage of affordable residences hasn't been determined as yet, as well as the parking issue.

Q. Arlene Fleishman- What is affordability, and are they condos, co-ops or rentals?

- A. A family of 4 is about \$50,000, and the apartment type hasn't been discussed as yet.
- Q. Arlene Fleishman- What will the community space be for? We are already inundated with adult Service vans.
- A. We had concerns also, and will have further discussions on it.
- Q. Will it impact the volume of people in greater Downtown Flushing?
- A. It will impact the area around itself, but not necessarily Downtown.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Cathy Kennedy, Kissena Park Civic –“My family has lived in the community since 1945. In answer to your claimed benefits....There are none! The homeowners of the R3-2 zones don't need jobs. We already have jobs. The jobs will be going to go to outsiders. The existing community doesn't need affordable housing and there's no community benefit to those living behind this property. Local schools are operating at 172% capacity, and adding more children will not benefit anyone, not to those already there nor people who will move in. Existing parking and traffic issues can be resolved without a 7-story building. In Long Island City they approved building the Citi Group Bldg. and now it's all skyscrapers. If we wanted to live in a dense neighborhood, we would have moved. I urge the community board to vote against this proposal. This will not benefit anyone except KIMCO.”

VINNY STELLATO -32 BJ SEIU – We recommend you incorporate into your proposal the owner pay service workers prevailing wages and estimate this building will create 6 building service jobs for local Community members and let them remain in the community.

JIM CAMPBELL – A member of the community for 50 years advised you can't put an elephant in a sandbox. There are 5 schools in 3 blocks with grammar school kids and high school kids. Driving down Kissena Blvd. at 9 am, you have buses face to face on Holly Ave. Overbuilding the community brings in more traffic.

BEVERLY McDERMOTT–“ Pres. of Kissena Park Civic and 75 year resident of the community said make no mistake, the residents of this neighborhood, adjacent to and surrounding it, are against a zoning change of any kind. We refuse to be bullied into accepting overdevelopment. It affects our hospitals, schools, parking and traffic. We choose to maintain our present zoning and hope CB#7 supports us.”

DOROTY WU – Holly Civic Association - The present infrastructure is insufficient to support more dense housing. Even with R3-2 Zoning, there are multi-family homes already. Traffic will not be resolved. The community will receive less funding for roads, schools and parks. People say affordable housing attracts young people. Please tell me how many of your kids have come back to Flushing?

CHUCK WADE – Many years ago, we had a zoning challenge given with 45th as the line. Everything north was considered eligible for high-rise and everything south to be low-rise. Now it appears they want to change the zoning and go down to Kissena Blvd. There's going to be a high-rise built on 45th Avenue and could be as high as Skyline Towers. Hold the line with the old zoning and keep our neighborhood safe.

HENRY EULER – Auburnale Improvement Association – Came to support my neighbors in Kissena Park and Holly Civic Associations. We feel this is a spot rezoning. The area underwent contextual rezoning in the past and should be left as is. We had a similar situation in Douglaston where the developer was seeking what amounted to a spot rezoning for a large apartment buildings. This is a dangerous precedent and urge the community board to reject this proposal.

ED CHIN – Lives a block away from Gold City since 1973. In addition to the 4 bus Lines on Holly, the #17, #25, #34 and #27, there's the Fire Dept. and Police Dept. that need to use Kissena Blvd. Add double parked vehicles to the mix and the area becomes choked up. He urges everyone to vote against it.

CARSTEN GLAESER – Kissena Park Civic Association- He reminded everyone of Jane Jacobs and her activism against Robert Moses. Ms. Jacobs' vision highlighted the human element of the community where people wanted to live, and directly challenged and helped end the Robert Moses era. Today's mega leap from a low-density R3-2 to R6A, non-contextual, is a one-sided pro development proposal and urges CB#7 to vote against it.

ED ABRAMS – A street smart activist involved in many communities and the many people who know him said yesterday an Asian woman came to him for help to sign a petition against the new building. People who purchased one and two family homes want to keep it that way.

Land Use Chair, Chuck Apelian, gave his final report of the last couple of meetings confirming we have an R6A development, with a revised proposal.

1. Increase provided parking to ensure one parking space per dwelling unit, on top of commercial parking requirements, which would be codified in a restrictive declaration. No confirmation of parking rates being made affordable.
2. Community Use completely removed because it could bring additional traffic & parking, also to be codified in a restrictive declaration.
3. The rezoning area to be pulled back to exclude the restaurant at Laburnum Ave. & Kissena and allow for a buffer.
4. Proposed development will be 8 feet away from the property line, also codified in a restrictive declaration.
5. Relocate existing loading/garbage in sub-cellar.
6. Agreed the residential tower would have a 45 foot setback from the rear, codified in a restrictive declaration.
7. Vehicle access points combined in one entrance/egress opposite Kalmia Avenue and signaled by
 - a) Remove the signal at Juniper Avenue.
 - b) Add a southbound left-turn lane northbound on Kissena into the garage.
 - c) Right turn lane northbound on Kissena.
 - d) Parking would be removed
 - e) Add crosswalk at Kalmia
 - f) Optimize traffic signal timing
8. Free parking via voucher system for commercial use.

Despite all the above changes, our committee and civics still felt the proposed development is still too large for the community on many levels. The committee voted to disapprove unanimously.

The motion now on the floor this evening is to disapprove the proposed development, seconded by Kim Ohanian

DISCUSSION ON THE MOTION

JAMES SWEENEY – If this proposal is approved, you will be setting a precedent for others to follow. The zoning laws are to protect communities. Allowing this proposal will only benefit KIMCO,.

SELMA MOSES – Consider the schools! P.S. 24 on Holly is having an annex built to bring back the students sent to other schools for lack of space. We have serious overcrowding issues. Lets talk about Schools when involved in new projects.

PETER TU - We never got the 50% of the affordable housing we were promised. We don't have the power to change this.

CHUCK APELIAN - We do have the power. It was already changed once because of the Board. After this, it goes to the Borough President for 30 days, then 60 days at City Planning and then finally at City Council. I think with continued dialog between everyone and KIMCO, we may succeed. Maybe we'll have a project....or maybe not.

JAMES CERVINO- How many homes would be affected by the rear yard?

CHUCK APELIAN – 10-15 homes

JAMES CERVINO – I think my job is to listen to the community.

KIM OHANIAN – Bottom line here is it's a low-density zoned area and should remain.

JOHN CHOE – I disagree that young people are not moving into Flushing. Maybe it's because it's too expensive. Some developments received 84,000 applications for affordable units. Also, getting 1:1 parking encourages more cars, traffic, etc., and City Council is not the only place to stop this.

CHUCK APELIAN: The Board, the Borough President and City Planning only provide advisory opinion. It's City Council that makes the LAWS. If you don't like the parking resolution, you can vote **NO**.

The vote taken was (35) Disapproved (2) Abstained with Conflict (1) Abstained without cause

P U B L I C P A R T I C I P A T I O N

Beverly McDermott – Kissena Park Civic Association – Kissena Park is the only park that’s underfunded. The lake is polluted and the paths are dangerous. We are asking everyone concerned to e-mail or phone Peter Koo’s office for help. He’s on the Parks Committee.

Jennifer Tavers – Deputy Commissioner, TLC – 31-89 123rd Street - We’re interested in leasing this lot to house 200 staff and enforcement officers on three shifts with 60 to 100 at any one given time, 130 vehicles owned by TLC including parking for our staff. Lease is to be reviewed by CB#7.

Gene Kelty responded the Board will not support or endorse this “temporary” move for 5 years, since they did not involve us or go through the proper channels and post it properly in the fair share criteria, which goes to all 5 boroughs.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 pm.

Respectfully

Mary Zuliani