



Community Board 7

Borough of Queens

Bay Terrace, College Point, Beechhurst, Flushing
Malba, Queensborough Hill, Whitestone and Willets Point

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Donovan Richards, Jr.

Queens Borough President

Eugene T. Kelty Jr.

Chairperson

Marilyn McAndrews

District Manager

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING

MONDAY, JUNE 14, 2021

AUDIO AND VIDEO TELECONFERENCE

PRESENT

Charles Apelian
James Cervino
Kaily Cheng
John Choe
Kim Cody
Nicholas Corrado
Arlene Fleishman
Richard Forman
Fred Fu
Doreen Gatanas
Vincent Gianelli
Pablo Hernandez
Cody Herrmann
Jeff Huang
Lawrence Hughes
Eugene Kelty

Phil Konigsberg
Esther Lee
Dr. Wensong Li
Wendy Louie
Frank Macchio
Betsy Mak
Rev. R. McEachern
Barbara McHugh
Selma Moses
Sergio Nicolich
Kim Ohanian
Millicent O'Meally
John Park
Yacov Pshtissky
Frank Quatela
Kris Ram

Paul Rifino
Warren Schreiber
Kevin Shields
Matthew Silverstein
Joshua Sussman
Joseph Sweeney
John Tsavalos
Peter Tu
Harpreet Singh Wahan
Clarissa Wong
Maggie Wong
Dian Yu
Linna Yu
Lei Zhao
Jie Zhu

ABSENT

*Michael Cheng

*Michelle Miao

Terence Park

COMMUNITY BOARD #7 STAFF

Marilyn McAndrews, District Manager

Mary O'Neill, Community Associate

Anne Krzyzanowski, Community Aide

GUESTS

Susan Lui-Congresswoman Grace Meng's office
Mabel Tso-Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's office
Soojin Choi-Lee - State Senator John Liu's office
Brian Lam-Assemblywoman Nily Rozic's office
Sandra -Assemblyman Edward Braunstein's office
Destany Batista-Assemblyman Daniel Rosenthal's office

Vito Tautonico-Councilman Paul Vallone's office
Joonyong Ahn-Councilman Peter Koo's office
Elizabeth Bian-Queens District Attorney Katz's office
Katherine Brezler-Queens Borough President's office
James Mongeluzo-NYC Comptroller's office

***Excused**

The Public Hearing started at 7 pm via audio and video conference with the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag followed by a moment of silence to honor all our soldiers who fought for our freedom, especially those who died or came home with devastating injuries. Today, FLAG DAY, and every day, we honor them!

The attendance was taken by **Chair Gene Kelty** with **(47) Present (1) Absent (2) Excused ***

Announcements were made by Chair Kelty and several elected official liaisons. Call our office if you need further clarification.

APPROVAL OF MAY 2021 MINUTES - The minutes were unanimously approved.

A.K.A. – Ferrigno Place – 163rd Street between 33rd & 35th Avenue - Marjorie & Nick Ferrigno were activists and educators who founded the Broadway-Flushing Homeowners Association 60 years ago. The proposal has 500 signatures from friends, family and residents in CB7 and was approved by Councilman Paul Vallone. Kevin Morris, past president and homeowner in the neighborhood said Marjorie & Nick taught many of us how to run a Homeowners Association. He introduced current president Mary Becce who moved to the neighborhood in 1981 and applied herself to further improving their community and is the most qualified to honor Marge and Nicholas. She submitted an application within the CB guidelines and the support of CB7, Councilman Vallone, Civic leaders and organizations to honor deceased leaders who contributed to the betterment of their community, and considers herself privileged to be among those who were mentored by the Ferrignos. Ms. Becce said it would be impossible to document or mention every project undertaken by the Ferrignos. The list is long. However, one hallmark was the crucial Zoning correction which stopped the removal of a one family home on a 60 ft. plot to build three single family homes on it. Although it took years of work and perseverance, the one family home still stands. Had they let it happen, it would have changed the dynamics of their neighborhood. The one last selfless act was the donation of their home to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, whose deed protections remain in perpetuity. At Committee Chair Corrado's meeting, the motion to approve seconded by Chuck Apelian was unanimous.

DISCUSSION

First Vice Chair Apelian said we've had great civic leaders in Queens, but no one was better than the Ferrignos. **Chair Kelty** added Marge was a dynamic person but willingly stepped down to let others have the opportunity to take the mantle. She truly cared about the people in her community. **Frank Macchio** acknowledged their dedication as stewards to their community. Naming a street in their honor is a very fitting memorialization.

The vote on the motion this evening was unanimous in favor (47) For (0) Against

A.K. A. – Timothy Motto – 28th Avenue & Ulmer Street - Committee Chair Corrado and his committee reviewed this A.K.A. request which originated from friends in the New York Police Department. Tim Motto worked at the 28th Precinct in Harlem and was part of several fraternal organizations. When Patrolman Phillip Cardillo was killed viciously in the line of duty, Patrolman Motto made it his job to keep his memory alive.

Retired Detective Rudy Andre said Timmy Motto made it his mission to help the Cardillo family out wherever possible. He took the family out to various police events, to their son's annual procession to his grave, and basically helped them for whatever was needed. Timmy's giving to others included his time and resources to find a way to bury unwanted babies. He retired in 1993, but went to Ground Zero after 9/11, which was a contributing factor to his cancer. Three days before he died, a vigil for Timmy outside his home was attended by 300 persons who knew him, and included many dignitaries.

Chair Corrado's committee met on April 29, 2021. Kim Cody made the motion to approve seconded by Selma Moses and then unanimously approved.

DISCUSSION – None

The vote on the motion this evening was unanimous in favor (47) For (0) Against

VOTE TO INITIATE REMOVAL PROCEEDINGS OF A COMMUNITY BOARD #7 QUEENS MEMBER

Chair Gene Kelty (GK) introduced First Vice-Chair Apelian, who made certain allegations against Board Member John Choe. Following Article XVII of our by-laws, if the motion passes tonight, I will appoint a Special Committee to investigate the allegations. Board Member Choe will have the ability to call witnesses, cross examine, and have the right of legal counsel. Once the Special Committee makes a recommendation, the Board will reconvene to consider the recommendation.

First Vice-Chair Charles Apelian (CA)

- A notice of motion was sent via e-mail and, by certified mail to John Choe.
- Grounds for removal
 - Violation of NYC Charter Section 2604 – Emails sent by Board Member Choe to many board members asking for campaign contributions for his City Council campaign.
 - Speaking publicly on behalf of CB 7 without being duly authorized by the Board or the Chair. A Facebook page was created that implied it was an official CB 7 page. However, neither the CB Chair nor any members knew of this page. The content was all pertaining to organizations Mr. Choe is associated with. This created difficulty removing the page. We had to get the Department of Investigation to intervene.
 - Poor attendance record or leaving early to avoid voting, and numerous abstentions without conflict for other votes, which were insufficient to meet your obligations as a board member.
 - Defamation of other community board members. Mr. Choe verbally defamed community board members of corruption at numerous hearings last year, and also in writing on social media.
 - Mr. Choe made remarks that his vote could be bought during testimony at a Queens Borough President's Public Hearing.
- The Board will vote tonight whether to investigate these allegations, and not to remove John Choe. First Vice-Chair Apelian made the motion to proceed with removal proceedings against John Choe.
 - Kevin Shields (KS) seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION ON THE MOTION

- Cody Hermann (CH) I think some of the reasons listed are misconstrued. For example, the fifth one. If you watch the live video, you'll realize it was a joke. The timing of this, I'm wondering why this is being proposed right now?
 - GK: In November 2020, when one of these issues occurred, I sent a letter to DOI to look into what CA was talking about. I needed transcripts as to whether they would substantiate their investigation.
 - CA: This is something that's been going on for a while - for the past year or so. Every time we've tried to work things out, it didn't. Finally, when the campaign contribution e-mail solicitations came out in December, many board members contacted the Board office. John Choe was up for reappointment and we were informed by Councilman Koo he would not recommend his reappointment, so we delayed, but he was reappointed, and that's why we're here today.
- John Choe – GK, this is a kangaroo court you're instituting it right before my election. I don't know why it's taken this long for you to bring these absurd charges against me. For you to put this on the agenda right before my election, I have a concern about this as a board member and private citizen that public resources are being used for political purposes. This is an embarrassment to the entire CB system. You're accusing me of all these things that have no evidence. You're besmirching my name. All I've been trying to do is be a good CB member. The first thing I asked for was you put the meeting date on social media. When taking the initiative to share public information, I'm now being called a criminal? I'm actually doing my job. My attendance record is exemplary. I've been helping people get fed and helping small businesses. I don't know what the CB has been doing besides these monthly disasters you call public hearings. I'm now accused of making things up about Mr. Apelian. I know I hurt his feelings, but I don't think it's appropriate for him to use public resources before an election. I'm only repeating what he told me that he's taken money from developers in his career. I consider that's corrupt. Mr. Apelian you should really think what you say to the public. You're not only embarrassing yourself by doing this, you're actually promoting the corruption happening on this community board. You're taking money from developers to review applications as the Land Use Chair and First Vice-Chair. I can't be silent on this kind of corruption. I think this whole charade is a huge embarrassment to the CB, and object vehemently to this entire process. To say that I was soliciting a bribe in front of the Queens Borough President, I was asking for public parks, schools. That was not a bribe. If I wanted to get a bribe, I'd be taking lessons from you, going behind closed doors. I hope you'll reconsider this course of events, and remove this motion before you cause more embarrassment for the NYC government.
 - CA: I am not being brought up on charges tonight. It wasn't my discussion. He blamed many other board members on CB 7 as a whole, not me personally. Public resources are not being used for this, and this doesn't affect our budget.

VOTE ON THE MOTION

- This vote requires a 2/3 majority to pass.
- Motion taken to approve was **(43) Approved (3) Against (1) Abstain /Conflict**

- GK: We'll have to check whether Lei Zhao can abstain.
- CH: How can LZ know he's already on the committee?
 - GK: Because CA and myself would have to be excused from the committee. The remaining three Executive Committee members and two other Board members will take our place.
 - CH: How will the other two members of the Special Committee be chosen:
 - GK: This is at the discretion of the Chair.
 - CH: Can anyone reach out if they're interested?
 - GK: Yes, they can.

PUBLICATION PARTICIPATION

Steven Williams, Accessible Dispatch Program - This larger wheelchair accessible taxi costs the same as a regular taxi. You can book on their website, call their website center or download their app for now or book future trips. We will e-mail the information to the CB 7 office for all members and your community to have.

Kevin Sheilds – On D-Day, June 6th we celebrated the street naming for Colonel McHugh with the American Legion there in support. Queens Chronicle wrote the article that renaming was not possible unless the person is deceased, which isn't true in every circumstance. The City Council approved it.

Arlene Fleishman – The new Community Education Council now allows all parents to vote. The results are not in yet. St. Agnes High School in College Point is closed. Holy Trinity in Whitestone, which has two Pre-K classes, is now in construction. P.S. 129 in College Point and P.S. 32 in Flushing had extensions approved. Citywide public schools are down 400,000 in enrollment due to COVID-19. District 25 anticipates an increase of 500 students.

- **GK:** School Construction Authority is looking for a location to build a new school in the Bay Terrace area. They want the CB to respond by July 2. I've assembled a select number of Transportation, Land Use and Education committee members and members from the area on June 16th to review the proposal.

Kim Ohanian – Park Updates - Parks found these interesting five concrete animal structures that were "retired" years ago, and will now serve out the remainder of retirement in Flushing Meadow Park in a setting with trees and shrubs, etc. Since its unknown where they came from, it's suggested people, or better yet, children come up with some backstories. A letter of support will come from the Board.

Matt Silverstein - Last week the executive committee of Bay Terrace Community Alliance passed two motions- 1) To oppose building a school at the proposed site at Waters Edge Drive and 2) Called for a resolution for the City to build a park on the vacant lot across from the proposed school site.

Lei Zhao – Want to wish our Chinese diaspora, Chinese board members and community a happy Dragon Boat Festival. Commemorating the poet-statesman Qu Yuan who was exiled after advising his king not to ally with another kingdom during a period of civil war. He ended up being right, and his kingdom was conquered. He committed suicide and dragon boat racing originally was inspired by efforts to save him.

Fred Fu – Wanted to vote yes on all motions.

Warren Schreiber – LGA has what's called the **perimeter rule** which prevents planes departing or arriving traveling more than 1500 miles, with the exception of flights to Denver, Co. We're concerned the airlines want to lift this rule. PANYNJ has the authority to make this change. Larger planes could fly over our communities and cause more noise and pollution. At the urging of the New York Community Aviation Roundtable and Sen. John Liu, the perimeter will be codified in State law.

Jim Cervino – Two major mitigation projects, Pugsley Creek & Westchester Creek were cleaned up. The \$10 Million allocated to both was moved from our cleanup of Flushing Bay/College Point to the Bronx.

Warren Schreiber – At all the ESI meetings I attended for LGA Air Train, this was never brought up. The intrusion on wetlands was never raised.

Jim Cervino - Whenever LGA is extending landscape or piles for Air Train and the damage to the coastal Zone by adding more land, they have to ask for permission from the NYS DEC. DEC comes in and says: If you're going to take this amount of land, you need to find offsite acreage to mitigate.

Brian Howard, from Bklyn – The reason Denver flights are allowed to LGA is because these predate the perimeter rule. Also, right before your vote to proceed with removal proceedings against John Choe, you voted to move to questions, but not the actual removal procedure. You should be more careful with Robert's rules.

Laura Shepard – I want to echo that this proceeding has been mishandled. I've worked for John Choe many years. I don't believe any of this is fair or justified. When Sharon Lee asked what it would take to change his vote, he said 500 units of affordable housing and a fair EIS. That's not a bribe. Shame on all of you.

Winnie Lee of GrowNYC – Farmer's Market is returning July 7th Wed. 8 am to 3 pm at Maple Playground.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 pm

Respectfully,

Mary Zuliani