

DRAFT - Brooklyn Community Board 7 Meeting Minutes

December 15, 2021

Meeting hosted over Zoom

6:00PM-8:00PM

Opening of the Meeting

Chairperson Zuñiga officially called the meeting to order.

Agenda adoption

A motion to adopt was made by Pat Ruiz and seconded by Joan Botti. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

Adopt minutes of 11/17/2021 board meeting

A motion to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2021 Board Meeting was made by Pat Ruiz and seconded by Joan Botti. The motion was approved by unanimous consent.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Committee Reports

1. Special Subcommittee on Last-Mile Trucking Facilities (Vote Required)

- a. Katherine Walsh provided an overview of the committee meetings that have been held since May of 2021 to address concerns about last-mile trucking facilities in and near the district and introduced a letter to be sent to the new administration, elected officials, and several agencies to request a call to action and attention to the issue. The letter was distributed to board members for review with the board packet.
 - i. **MOTION:** Walsh requested unanimous consent to approve sending the letter.
 - ii. **VOTE:** Motion passed by unanimous consent.

2. Parks / Ability and Access Committee (Vote Required)

- a. At the joint meeting on December 1, 2021, Steiner Studios presented a proposal that they will be submitting to the Public Design Commission (PDC) on updates to the southern portion of Bush Terminal Park, including an accessible playground, more accessible picnic and seating areas, a new entrance, extended paths, a parking lot, and other features that are outlined in detail in the minutes and are also available via Brooklyn Community Board 7's YouTube recording of the meeting. Representatives from NYC Dept. of Parks & Recreation attended the meeting and had reviewed the plan and the design for the playground is accessible to their standards for all parks. The Parks Committee voted unanimously in favor of sending a letter of support for the proposal, but Ability & Access did not reach a majority position because two voted in favor and two voted present.
 - i. **MOTION:** Victor Swinton motioned to send a letter of support from CB7 to the Public Design Commission for plans laid out by Steiner Studio for the

design of the playground and southern portion of Bush Terminal Park in Sunset Park, including consideration for incorporating the Naval Armed Guard Memorial as part of the plan.

- ii. **VOTE:** The motion passed in a roll call vote, the results of which were 38-Yes, 0-No, 2-Abstentions, 1-present.
- b. At the December 1, 2021 joint committee meeting, the Parks Committee also voted to approve a resolution for the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) to hand over the infrastructure and operation management to the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation of Bush Terminal Piers Park. The motion passed within the Parks Committee by a vote of 5-0 in the affirmative.
- i. **MOTION:** Approve a resolution for the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC) to hand over the infrastructure and operations management of the Bush Terminal Piers Park to the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation.
 - ii. **DISCUSSION:**
 1. Alexa Aviles expressed concern about transferring responsibility of Bush Terminal Park to the NYC Parks Dept without a plan for equipping the agency with sufficient resources. The department is already underfunded and faces difficulties with maintaining existing parks. If NYCEDC transfers responsibility to NYC Parks Department without providing sufficient operating capital, it will be a set-up for failure.
 2. Cindy VandenBosch noted that an offer was made at the meeting by NYCEDC representative, Christine Paglialunga, to respond to questions about the structure of the relationship between NYCEDC and the Parks Department and their respective responsibilities under the current arrangement. VandenBosch acknowledged the lack of attention and repairs to the park and how clunky it is to have NYCEDC and NYC Parks involved in Bush Terminal Park, when other city parks are managed by NYC Parks. If there was going to be a transfer, what would it look like? VandenBosch also disclosed that her business has a permit with NYCEDC and will be voting present. In closing, she articulated that the board did not have the chance to dig in on the contractual relationship between NYCEDC and Parks at the meeting, and why EDC is responsible for managing the site in the longer term.
 3. Katherine Walsh, who introduced the resolution, provided additional context for putting it forward. In the Parks Committee meeting and in other meetings, the board has discussed the lack of investments that have been made over time at Bush Terminal Park. Walsh noted that it is evident in these meetings that NYCEDC doesn't have a handle on what they are responsible for with regard to infrastructure and capital investments in the park. Responsibility for the park is currently split between NYC Parks for

operations and maintenance and NYCEDC for infrastructure and capital investment. In Walsh's opinion, it's not the community board's responsibility to determine what a new structure should look like. Rather, this is about the principle of the matter, which is that in every other borough, parks are managed by the Parks Department. Why is Sunset Park being treated differently? As a community, we aren't getting what we want out of this park and we need to have accountability. She expressed that she hears that there is a need for transparency and a better understanding of EDC's role, as well as NYC Parks' role.

4. Cynthia Gonzalez proposed adding language into the resolution that includes guaranteed funding/budgets for ongoing operations and maintenance of the park.
5. Zachary Jasie expressed concern that if capital were released by NYCEDC to NYC Parks, it would go into the general capital budget for NYC Parks and it would not be used for this park. There is an operational system that is used for funding capital improvement projects by NYC Parks, and there would be no way to guarantee that capital from EDC would be used for Bush Terminal Piers Park. That's why there are organizations like Prospect Park Alliance or Central Park Conservancy.
6. Karen Rolnick understands that we need to assure that this park will be maintained properly and maybe we need to look into setting up a conservancy. Rolnick expressed concerns that turning over the infrastructure and maintenance of the park to NYC Parks could end up backfiring.
7. Victor Swinton doesn't want the funds from NYCEDC to be allocated for Bush Terminal Piers Park if funds are transferred to NYC Parks for capital improvements and infrastructure.
8. Cesar Zuñiga asked board members to reflect our values related to management, accountability, and transparency in this resolution, and that we can also take steps articulated by board members.
9. Katherine Walsh noted that this is the spirit of what we want to say, what came out of the Parks Committee meeting is that we need to have real discussion and accountability around the infrastructure and capital planning for this park. NYCEDC isn't doing it and NYC Parks Department is a city agency that is responsible for parks. This is how all other parks are being handled.
10. Zachary Jasie expressed that there should be a written resolution that reflects these nuances.
11. Gloria Rodriguez-Novoa asked that we look into establishing a conservancy to ensure control over how funds are allocated.

- iii. **VOTE:** The motion **did not pass** in a roll call vote, the results of which were 9-Yes, 25-No, 4-Abstentions, 1-Present.

3. Housing Committee (No Vote Required)

- a. Affordable Housing application deadline - Housing Chairperson Antoinette Martinez announced that January 13, 2022 is the deadline to apply for the Sunset Park Library affordable housing development. For more information or assistance with the application, call the Fifth Avenue Committee's community service line at 347-844-0220.
- b. Local Law 152 - Martinez reported that the housing committee met to review requirements of Local Law 152 on December 14, 2021. Nicholas Azadian reported that Local Law 152 is a law passed last year by the City that requires all building types with the exception of R-3 to have the gas inspected by a licensed master plumber. Even if your building does not have gas, the letter has to be sent to the Department of Buildings signed and sealed by an architect or engineer that your building does not have gas. Non-compliance can levy a fine of up to \$10,000.

Elected officials who addressed CB7 during the meeting

Freda Zurita from Senator Myrie's Office announced that their office is holding a toy giveaway for the holidays on Saturday, December 18.

Senator Myrie spoke concerning several items that his office is currently working on including what they will be working on in Albany. He announced the Homeowners Assistance Fund will be open for the next month. Nicholas Azadian inquired about the repeal of the 421A Bill, which helps bolster the construction of affordable housing, and asked what will replace it if this tax incentive goes away. Myrie noted that the 421A buildings have not reflected actual affordability for local residents. He discussed that he is interested in alternatives that are more effective. Cynthia Gonzalez underscored the need to support incentives and state legislation that support the nonprofit organizations, such as the Carroll Gardens Association, that provide housing to low-income and very low-income residents. Jimmy Li indicated the need to provide subsidies to developers to enable pathways for affordable homeownership. Senator Myrie has introduced the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act that would subsidize tenants to purchase buildings to enable equity co-op models. Zuñiga thanked Senator Myrie for his support of addressing the broadband infrastructure issues in Sunset Park.

District Manager's Report

District Manager Jeremy Laufer reported on the following issues:

- 1) As of December 14, 2021, there are new covid-19 vaccine proof requirements for indoor activities. As of yesterday, children ages 5-11 will be required to have proof of vaccination for public indoor activities with proof of at least one dose. Starting on December 27, 2021, people 12 and older participating in indoor activities will have to show proof that they have received two doses, unless they received one dose of

- Johnson & Johnson. Through the middle of January, we do not have to hold in-person meetings. We are looking for guidance from the Borough President's office.
- 2) Green-Wood Cemetery was awarded two grants. One grant was for almost \$1.8 million for their stormwater management project. Green-Wood also received a \$1.5 million grant to support construction of their Education and Welcome Center, which the board approved.
 - 3) NYS is holding a virtual Public Hearing on 1/11/22 by order of Gov. Hochul to determine if additional real estate cease and desist zones should be established in all or part of Brooklyn. Cease and Desist Zones are designed to help prevent aggressive real estate solicitation from brokers, agents, and real estate speculators from targeting private residences. The deadline to testify was January 7, 2022.
 - 4) On December 2, 2021, Jeremy Laufer and David Estrada attended a UN/UM Stakeholder Kickoff. This group from NYU won a grant to map the subsurface infrastructure in two parts in NYC, one in the southern part of Sunset Park and one in Midtown Manhattan. We will be part of this project to show us exactly the infrastructure that exists beneath the ground, including where our sewer connections are so we can address flooding issues.
 - 5) DOT's email informed the board that they will be reinstating two dozen parking spaces along 20th Street and more signage. They have not addressed anything else related to 19th Street. At Park Circle, they have eliminated a traffic light inside the park since there is no vehicular traffic inside the park.
 - 6) There have been two new/renewal liquor licenses since the November board meeting.
 - 7) Police Department statistics have been mailed to all board members. Comparing stats of the seven major crimes between 2020 to 2021, the district is up 7%.

Chairperson's Report

Chairperson Cesar Zuniga thanked Ms. Aviles for all her work on the board and informed her that he looks forward to working with her as the new Councilmember. Ms. Aviles stated that it was an honor to work with the board and wants to continue a dialogue with the board to improve the community. Several board members congratulated Ms. Aviles on her new title as the District 38 Councilmember.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Public Comment

Mary Eyster spoke about NYC Mesh to improve internet access and provides free access to people within the community.

Adjournment

Pat Ruiz made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Julio Peña III. The meeting was adjourned at 7:58pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Cindy VandenBosch