

Brooklyn Community Board 7 Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2021

Meeting hosted over Zoom

6:00pm-7:49pm

Minutes submitted by Secretary Cindy VandenBosch

I. Opening of the meeting

Chairperson Cesar Zuñiga opened the meeting.

II. Adoption of the agenda for the meeting

Julio Peña motioned to adopt the agenda. Pat Ruiz seconded. The agenda was adopted unanimously with no objections.

III. Adoption of the minutes of the Board Meeting of November 18, 2020

Pat Ruiz motioned to accept. Julio Peña seconded. The minutes from the December board meeting were adopted by unanimous consent.

IV. Public comment

John Santore spoke briefly about a resolution that came out of the Waterfront & Economic Development Committee that is calling for a meeting about the Sunset Park Task Force, an organization that was created in 2015 to create a new RFP for the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal (SBMT), which will host a wind farm assembly business by Equinor. This resolution is calling for a public meeting with the task force with the goal of discussing publicly what the future of what that organization is and how it should operate. He believes more public transparency and conversations are important regarding the development of the waterfront and that institutional structures need to be put into place so that people's voices can be heard. The Sunset Park Task Force was created to receive public input. The next step forward should include the board and the community to discuss steps that the Sunset Park Task Force takes. The Sunset Park Task Force was created to facilitate public input and he thinks the community should have a say in what form this task force takes, including public access to conversations about economic development, especially projects like the Made in NY Campus, a \$320M plan that is moving forward, and the North portion of the campus, a \$218M proposal by NYCEDC. John advocated for ensuring that the community has its voice heard about whether that makes sense and whether that goes forward. He encouraged board members to support the resolution and that it continue to advocate for ways in which institutional structures can be created to gather community input for economic development matters that affect Sunset Park.

Pat Ruiz stated that she is disappointed that the community board has stopped saying The Pledge of Allegiance. The board stopped saying it together during covid. She expressed her support for bringing it back to the agenda. Beverly Kleinman also expressed support for bringing back this tradition. Cesar stated he will take it into consideration, and that this issue should have been raised in new or old business.

V. Committee reports

A. By-laws committee (no vote required) - Committee Chair Julio Pena indicated that they did hear back from a lawyer regarding the revisions to the by-laws, that the committee will meet, and return to the full board once they've approved revisions.

B. Economic development-waterfront (vote required)

1. Chairperson Dan Murphy reported that the committee met on January 14, 2021 via Zoom with representatives from NYCEDC, the long-term leaseholder of SBMT on behalf of the City of New York, and Equinor, a Norwegian energy company, to discuss the Equinor off-shore wind facility at SBMT. They came to speak with the board about \$5M that will be used for economic development purposes that will support the local community. There was discussion about having a community process regarding the allocation and distribution of these funds. Murphy reported that questions from the assembled included types of employment and workforce development programs, levels of energy produced, storage, delivery to end users, and ultimate price to end users. There were also questions about mitigating effects on marine life where the wind turbines will be sited. There were requests about BP, which is a partner in the project, to create the facility, as well as requests that they implement zero emissions policy and support a traffic study in conjunction with the Department of Transportation. Last but not least, there was a request that they fulfill obligations to act on community benefits. See committee report for details.
2. RESOLUTION presented by Committee Chair Dan Murphy to the board: The Committee voted unanimously to recommend the following resolution to the full board for a vote, with the exception of one committee member who was present but not eligible to vote: "Whereas the Sunset Park Task Force has been given direct influence over \$5M fund to be created by Equinor in support of New York's offshore wind industry and whereas the SP Task Force is currently reviewing its policies internally but has not stated if the public will be involved in those conversations, resolved that EDC, SBIDC, and Councilman Menchaca's office should host a public meeting as practically allowable to the public to comment on the future of the SP Taskforce, its rules, responsibilities, and operating procedures."
3. DISCUSSION
 - a) Board member Cindy VandenBosch disclosed that she has a professional conflict of interest with NYCEDC and could not vote on this resolution.
 - b) Board member Alexa Aviles asked for clarification on the \$5M allocation. She wanted to know whether this was a request or an offer that is part of the work. Dan Murphy clarified that the \$5M is

the commitment targeted to support local economic development, but was unsure of the timeline or plan for allocation. For example, it is unclear whether the Sunset Park Task Force would be the steward of those funds, as it isn't a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

- c) Alexa Aviles stated that the resolution has two separate asks: 1) a call for increased transparency around the Sunset Park Task Force's processes and protocols; and 2) questions concerning the administration and allocations related to the \$5M fund.
- d) John Santore clarified that the resolution is calling for a public meeting that would allow the public to comment on the future of the task force. According to notes that were produced by EDC and sent to CB7, he summarized that Equinor is going to establish a \$5M fund to establish a job pipeline for the offshore wind industry. According to those notes, the fund will be spent down over a decade and the Sunset Park Task Force has an advisory role. NYCEDC and Equinor will have the final say on how the funds are spent, but the Sunset Park Task Force is the organization that will have an advisory say in how the \$5M are spent. Because the Sunset Park Task Force will presumably have an advisory role in the distribution of the \$5M, John Santore explained that the resolution is designed to encompass both and feels it is urgent to talk about the future of the task force since it will have advisory input over the \$5M fund.
- e) Community board member David Estrada noted that he serves on the Sunset Park Task Force and expressed support for using the CB7's voice in the spirit of the resolution to call on the NYCEDC on the points of the current status of the task force, transparency, and in what ways the community can be informed and a part of that process. He also shared that the task force is broadly advisory and is not determinant of allocation of funds or an entity that would handle funds. Since it is very early in the process, he emphasized that focusing the resolution on transparency and internal governance of the task force going forward would be the most actionable course of action for the community board at this stage.

4. AMENDMENT

- a) David Estrada PROPOSED AN AMENDMENT to relegate references to some specific amount of funds and some terms that were announced as part of the deal with the tenant to points that are mentioned in the resolution, but not necessarily specific items until we have more facts about them. Additionally, he noted that much of what is being discussed is probably governed by leases and that's why the request for transparency is important. He

doesn't want us getting ahead of ourselves before we have more information. The task force is reconvening and redefining itself and that requires transparency.

b) Dan Murphy ACCEPTED THE AMENDMENT

5. REVISED RESOLUTION

a) "Whereas Sunset Park Task Force has been given direct influence over a \$5M fund (Murphy noted that he will change this language to more accurately reflect the actual numbers and roles, per David Estrada's amendment), whereas Sunset Park Task Force is currently reviewing its policies internally but has not stated if the public will be involved in those conversations, resolved that NYCEDC, SBIDC, Councilmember Menchaca's host a public meeting as soon as practical to allow for public comment on the future of the Sunset Park Task Force, its rules, responsibilities and operating procedures."

b) VOTE

- i. The motion carried with unanimous consent barring Cindy VandenBosch voting present

VI. Public Officials

A. Assemblyperson Marcela Mityanes, District 51

1. Mityanes is currently reviewing the Governor's Executive Budget and has been assigned to serve on the following committees: Education, Transportation, Children and Families, Banks and Judiciary. Mityanes is setting up a district office and will be hosting a town hall on eviction moratorium. The assemblymember introduced Director of Constituent Services David Sosa.

B. Edward Cerna - Brooklyn Borough Director for the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs

1. In the last 24 hours, there have been 40,000 vaccine doses administered. There are some supply issues, as the Moderna vaccines have been delayed resulting in 23,000 vaccines being rescheduled as a result.
2. The mayor is asking the state and federal government to open up the existing supply of vaccines.
3. The mayor's office has announced its goal to vaccinate 50,000 seniors in NYCHA, and is working with TLC and other resources to provide transportation for those seniors.
4. Check the state's website regarding the criteria for eligibility. NYC started off with folks 75 and older and now that's been lowered to people who are 65 and older and folks who are immunocompromised. If you are eligible, go to vaccinefinder.nyc.gov or call 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692).
5. There was a change in mobile food vending enforcement. The Department of Consumer, Wellness, and Protection is now the coordinating agency for street vending activity. As coordinator, the

agency will manage and track vending complaints, inquiries, and referrals from the public, community boards, BIDs, advocates, and elected officials. On the enforcement side, it will be multi-agency: DOHMH will be enforcing health & safety protocols and violations of food safety; DCWP, Parks, Sanitation, DOT, and DEP. NYPD's role in the new approach is limited but it will include criminal violations and seizure, for example, for counterfeit goods. There will be a phased in approach because they want to focus on education rather than enforcement. There will be walkthroughs with commercial avenues in conjunction with the BIDs and engagement with the boards.

6. Issues at Brooklyn Army Terminal vaccination megasite - There was a tweet that caused a huge amount of people to go to the Brooklyn Army Terminal for vaccinations last week. There were crowds that gathered there. Crowds were dispersed.
 7. Questions / Comments for Edward Cerna from the board:
 - a) Cesar Zuñiga noted that the Brooklyn Army Terminal incident was distressing and people have questions about how this happened and what can be done to prevent this from happening again. People are anxious about the pandemic and the administration of the vaccines. He requested that someone from the administration come before the board to describe what happened and how we'll move forward in an orderly way that manages people's expectations about the process.
 - b) Pat Ruiz asked what constitutes as immunocompromised and whether documentation needs to be shown. He indicated that there should be a presenter from Test & Trace to come before the board to answer those questions.
 - c) Julio Peña asked that communication be streamlined from Health & Hospitals or make sure that any kind of communication goes through official channels so we can avoid a social media frenzy. It was chaotic, and I was guilty of that myself. He expressed readiness to be a part of the solution.
 - d) Alexa Aviles wanted to know what education efforts in the community will be like, especially education in languages that are accessible. She noted that there have been barriers with registration, including for the Chinese community. Curious about education efforts in the community. Many people in the community have been having problems. Edward responded that there will be a meeting with the DOE regarding children's education and invited people to join. Alexa Aviles clarified that she's asking about educational outreach about the vaccinations to the neighborhood. Are there organizations that are being allocated resources to increase outreach for vaccinations, including what it is and how to access it? Edward Cena said that outreach is taking place through
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Test & Trace and we've contracted some of that work out. He said that he would circle back with her about educational outreach and children after the meeting.

C. Freda Zurita from Senator Myrie's office

1. Eviction Prevention Hardship Declaration form that's now available on their website for anyone who has lost income or had increased costs during the pandemic are protected until May for non-payment. Property owners who have lost income or had increased costs due to the pandemic are protected from foreclosure and tax liens as well.
2. Flatbush Leadership Academy - The Academy is offering a youth mentorship program serving both males and females based in Central Brooklyn between the ages of 16-21. It's a 12-week innovative program, which recruits and supports at-risk youth through mentorship and leadership development.
3. Chinese American Sunshine House - Mental Health workshops will be taking place starting Feb 18th every Thursday from 4-5pm via Zoom. Parenting classes will be starting Spring 2021, also starting February 18th from 3-4pm. Both are 8-session programs.
4. Question for Senator Myrie's office:
 - a) Victor Swinton asked a question regarding renters and owners. Is there a plan for resolving this issue after May 1st? Renters and owners are going to have some problems after that time. He asked about the long-term plan. To her awareness, she was not aware and said she would circle back with him about this issue.

D. Jenny Zhang, Incoming Chief of Staff to Marcela Mityanes

1. They are in the process of building and opening our district office.
2. They are planning on having a Housing Rights Town Hall 1/28 at 7pm. This will focus on the moratorium that goes until May 1st and canceling back rent owed.
3. Q&A with Jenny Zhang regarding impending housing crisis:
 - a) What is the long-term plan out of Albany to address what will likely be a large eviction and monetary conundrum for a large portion of the city? He noted that 45% of the NYC's revenue is derived from property taxes, and he believes there's \$4-\$5B unpaid rent to landlords. There is pain for tenants and landlords. When the crisis is over, there needs to be a plan towards that end. He asked if she could speak to that.
 - b) There is a proposal being developed by assembly members to create a landlord hardship fund, specifically to address struggling landlords that may have lost rent during this period. Zhang also noted that we are also seeing declining tax revenues at the city level and property valuations are also coming down. There are proposals at the state level to increase tax revenues by primarily taxing the wealthy. If people are interested in learning more, reach

out to the three of us. Reach us at jenny@marcelaforny.org or david@marcelaforny.org. We know a big crisis is coming and we want to be prepared.

- c) Community board member Marilyn Melman commented on her opposition to taxing the wealthy and the impact it will have on NYC.

E. John Watkins from the Brooklyn District Attorney Gonzalez's office:

1. Since the fall, DA Gonzalez and his staff have been busy helping with food distributions in all corners of Brooklyn, as well as a toy drive during the holidays.
2. On January 25th and January 27th, the DA's office is hosting a human trafficking event. January 25th will be a training for clergy to be aware of human trafficking and what they can do when they see these issues and who to report it to and how to take action. On January 27th, it will be an open forum for the community via Zoom. They will begin at 5pm.

F. Nancy Corona from Councilmember Menchaca's office:

1. Reminder that our office has a partnership with the CUNY Citizenship Office now. Every Tuesday, CUNY Citizenship hosts appointments for anyone who needs any support related to DACA since most of DACA has been reinstated. Call our office to be directed to our office.
2. Another issue is IDNYC and the lack of pop-up sites and the inability to get a NYC-issued ID. At this time, there are many people who do not have any form of ID. Their office is working with the City's administration to secure locations in the district, locations being scouted right now. They want to make sure the locations are safe for in-person renewals.
3. The discretionary funding capital and expense application filing period is in full swing and is open for CBOs.
4. Question from CB7 staff member: Is it possible to arrange for in-person meetings with the councilmember or staff? What is the best way for people to reach out to the office if they want to speak with someone? Nancy noted that they haven't been able to restart in-person services. The best way to reach out is by phone. When you look up the office, the phone line connects to three languages.

G. Fawziya Siddiqui - Councilmember Brad Lander's Community Liaison

1. Their office is still collecting Fresh Direct bags for food distribution and there are four drop-off locations. I will drop my email in the Q&A unless anyone has any questions.

H. Taeka Haraguchi - Comptroller Scott Stringer's office.

1. Paid summer internship posting is open for matriculated college students. App deadline is March 5, 2021. Must apply via website. The internship will last nine weeks and will involve 28 hours of work per week, Monday - Thursday.
2. The Comptroller released a plan to make sure that NYC small businesses get their fair share of the PPP program as the program reopened. It is

intended to support small businesses, however analysis found that NYC lagged far behind in its share of businesses. During the first draw, 12% of NYC small businesses received loans while 20% of small businesses in South Dakota, for example, received loans. Nonprofits are also getting minimal support through the program.

3. Comptroller released the Fair Shot NYC Plan for vaccine equity. Plan to ensure equitable access to vaccines as the city ramps up distribution. More transparency and more access to communities of color, low-income, and immigrant New Yorkers. His office is encouraging that data be released in realtime and mandate businesses to pay for vaccinations.

VII. District Manager's Report

- A. Sunset Park library - Grab and Go starts at Sunset Park Library next Tuesday, January 26th. Not sure exact startup date. Plan to have 50 of 60 branches open for Grab and Go Service by mid-Feb. No word for the WT library.
- B. Department of Homeless Services - Not considering a site on 25th street. That was just a rumor.
- C. Updates about upcoming meetings:
 1. Ability & Access
 - a) There will be a proposal to increase public bathroom access at the committee meeting on Jan. 25th
 - b) Closed captioning - Zoom has launched automated live captioning. Click the CC button on your screen to view them. As such, there is no longer a need to post a slide throughout the meeting to support captioning.
 2. Parks
 - a) On January 28th, a part of the agenda about an art installation at Sunset Park. Steiner Studios will also be coming to begin the discussion on scoping for the new playground for Bush Terminal Park. They want as much buy-in as possible. Invite as many people as possible. All materials will be in English, Spanish, and Chinese, and the board has requested live interpretation at the meeting.
 - b) At the end of December, we were given a half hour's notice with the Office of Management and Budget to inform us that community boards will be getting a budget cut of about \$3,600 this year. The district managers met afterwards and resisted giving them a cut plan. Likely going to be a Feb budget mod, however we know that President Biden has proposed a new covid relief package, which also has money for cities, which could relieve the city and state of some of its worst budget cuts. In addition to that, all community boards have a cut of \$8K in 2022.
- D. Brooklyn Army Terminal vaccine situation - District Manager Laufer noted that the community board was misinformed in a meeting that the information that went out over social media about extra vaccines was a hoax. The CB7 therefore

informed the public via social media that it was a hoax, as it seemed the safest decision at the time. A reminder to everyone to get their vaccines. Even if the supply runs out, do not lose hope. He shared that his mother was rescheduled and her vaccine was only delayed by two days.

- E. Liquor licenses - There have been 27 liquor license applications in the last month.
- F. Police Department statistics are available upon request

VIII. Chairperson's report

A. Public Safety Committee

1. Chairperson Zuñiga thanked Samuel Sierra for serving as CB7's public safety chair and announced his appointment of Cynthia Felix as the new chair of this committee, and Felix has accepted.
2. This committee will address complaints about quality of life and public safety issues related to the homeless shelters. We also want to be empathetic and supportive of people who are homeless who live in our community, which is why we have a homelessness issues committee. As such, there will be a joint meeting between the homelessness issues and public safety committee to hear from neighbors and start to bring some pressure onto the administration to help with some of these ongoing issues.

B. Vaccinations - A big item for us to attend to through our committee structure is vaccinations. There are concerns and anxieties about the vaccine. Alexa Aviles mentioned earlier the issue of the need for general education about vaccines. We need that in this community. We need to dispel some of the myths about this vaccine and vaccinations in general. Through our Health and Mental Health Committee, we should engage the city to hold some kind of event to talk in a more public way about the vaccination and its roll-out.

C. Pledge of Allegiance - Zuñiga noted that it makes sense to re-engage with the pledge even though the board stopped doing it when it shifted to Zoom for virtual meetings.

D. Questions for Chair:

1. Food truck accident:

- a) Pat Ruiz indicated that a food truck exploded in Sunset Park a few weeks ago and requested that the public safety committee host a meeting to look into the safety of food trucks for the community and food vendors.
- b) Cesar Zuñiga noted that they would include it in the agenda. There was a fire on a food truck within the past month that comes under the domain of public safety. Zuñiga asked District Manager Laufer to reach out to the NYPD and NYFD for reports on the incident to get information. He also asked what safety plans are in place for food vendors. There's also an economic development issue. He clarified that he didn't want this to create any issues for

our street vendors. But this situation warrants a conversation about food trucks and safety in particular.

- c) Cynthia Felix, the new public safety chairperson, saw the food truck catch on fire. Thankfully, no one was hurt. The propane tanks did not blow up. It brought to light concerns about the safety of food trucks. Now there are more coming to Sunset Park, a residential area, versus commercial districts. The worker pulled over and his truck was on fire. The Fire Department did come. It was a scary moment for the block, and not getting information about it made me want to be on this committee. She also looks forward to working with the Homelessness Issues committee.
 - d) Cindy VandenBosch shared her concern about the food truck incident and noted that, if the meeting does take place within the context of public safety, it should be a constructive conversation focused on this specific incident that is informed by agencies that are involved in regulating and enforcing fabrication of the trucks, such as DOHMH and the Department of Consumer Affairs. She also said that there are myriad other agencies involved in regulating street vending, and that the Street Vendor Project should also be invited to present since they have expertise about how these regulations across agencies intersect. She said that she would hope the meeting would be targeted and constructive versus turning into a referendum on street vending in general. She also disclosed that she has worked with street vendors for many years in her professional life and that it is an over-regulated industry.
 - e) Nicholas Azadian recommended bringing in the Fire Department's kitchen hood unit. Their expertise in terms of safety would be useful there.
 - f) Rovika Rajkishun shared that if we will have a public safety meeting on street vendors, actual street vendors from the community who are affected by these rules and regulations should also be invited.
 - g) Zuñiga noted that the owner of the truck should also be present for the meeting. He would also like the board to reach out to the owner.
2. Speaking of transparency, Gladys Bruno asked whether there was any word on the main break on 52nd and 7th Avenue. What caused it? People didn't have water until the next day. People on the block never heard anything back. The District Manager will reach out to DEP for answers.
 3. Gladys Bruno asked whether the NYPD rep from 72nd Precinct could be present at the meeting. They were invited but were not at the meeting.

IX. Old Business

A. Pledge of Allegiance

1. Beverly Kleinman - She indicated that the community board has always started with the Pledge of Allegiance for the 18 years she has served. Kleinman wanted to know why there needed to be discussion about it.
2. Cesar Zuñiga responded by reinstating the Pledge of Allegiance and asked the District Manager to put it back on the agenda
3. Kleinman showed her flag and everyone pledged allegiance

B. Vaccines

1. Joan Botti got the flu shot yesterday and would recommend it to everybody that is eligible. She feels fine. When everybody is able to get it, please get it. She went to Coney Island Hospital and it was very nice and professional there. They gave her the appointment for the next shot. Keep in mind that there's nothing wrong with the shot. When your age group comes up, go get it.

X. New Business

- A. Grisel Amador wanted to inform everyone that the United Senior Center of Sunset Park continues working with the seniors. They continue making wellness check calls and other activities, and are encouraging seniors in the district to get the vaccine and helping coordinate with organizations in the community regarding where they can get their vaccines if they want to get them.
- B. They are also coordinating lunches for seniors. Let the United Senior Center of Sunset Park know if you know of any seniors who need lunch.

XI. Public Comment

- A. Loren Avellino is the Manager of Community Affairs at NYU Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital.
 1. Vaccines - NY Presbyterian can do vaccine education in English, Spanish, and Chinese.
 2. The hospital has free support groups and programs.
 3. Outpatient clinic - The hospital is about to launch the Center for Community Health, the largest outpatient clinic in Brooklyn, opening in stages beginning with chemotherapy infusion patients and in March with a bigger opening with same-day surgery.

XII. Adjournment

Pat Ruiz motioned to adjourn and Nick Azadian seconded. The meeting ended at 7:49pm.