

Brooklyn Community Board 7 Meeting Minutes

June 16, 2021

Meeting hosted over Zoom

6:00PM-7:45PM

Minutes submitted by Secretary Cindy VandenBosch

- I. **Opening of the meeting** - First Vice Chair Julio Peña III opened the meeting and announced that he would preside over the meeting.
- II. **Adoption of the agenda for the meeting** - John Fontillas proposed an amendment for a vote for the Land Use/ Landmarks. Pat motioned to accept the agenda as amended and Joan Botti seconded. The amended agenda was adopted with unanimous consent.
- III. **Adoption of the minutes of the Board Meeting of May 19, 2021** - Motion to adopt by Pat Ruiz and seconded by Samuel Sierra. The minutes were accepted by unanimous consent.
- IV. **Adoption of the minutes of the public hearing of June 7, 2021** - Joan Botti made a motion to accept the minutes as written and Beverly Kleinman seconded. The minutes were accepted by unanimous consent.
- V. **Public Comment** - Cary Finnegan, Founder and Head of Brooklyn Rise Charter School, providing contextual details about the school's BSA application for 222 34th Street, and Nicole Hernandez Hammer, Community Environmental Scientist at Uprose, expressed opposition to the 222 34th Street application and to Waste Connections' application to modify their current solid waste management facility permit for the Waste Connections' 50th Street transfer station to allow the handling of construction and demolition debris.
- VI. **Committee reports**
 - A. **Sanitation/Environment Committee (No vote required)**
 - B. **Land Use / Landmarks Committee (Vote required)**
 1. **Presentation from the Department of City Planning on the Hotel Special Permit Text Amendment** - There was no vote in committee. Zachary Jasie motioned to support the hotel text amendment, seconded by Joan Botti. The motion was passed by the board members who were present with unanimous consent.
 - C. **Housing Committee (Vote required)** - Tabled to September board meeting
 - D. **Asian Affairs (Vote required)** - Tabled to September board meeting
 - E. **Bylaws Committee (Vote required)** - The bylaws revisions passed with unanimous consent.
 - F. **Parks Committee (No vote required)** - Community board members were referred to the report.
- VII. **Elected Officials and Representatives**

- A. Reports were made by Edward Cerna, Brooklyn Borough Director for the Mayor's Office and Melissa del Valle Ortiz from Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez's office, and Nancy Corona from Councilmember Carlos Menchaca's office. Also in attendance at the meeting were Donald De Rosa, Borough Director of the Office of the NYC Comptroller's Office, and Fawziyah Siddiqui from Councilmember Brad Lander's office.
- B. Christina Lem asked Edward Cerna, Brooklyn Borough Director for the Mayor's Office. They asked about the omission of the funeral service industry in the COVID-19 essential workers' tribute. Cerna did not have an immediate answer and invited Lem to send him an email about this issue.

VIII. District Manager's Report

- A. This Friday 6/18, the Board office will be closed. Maria Gonzalez is not here tonight. Her daughter is getting married that evening and the staff will be going to the wedding.
- B. Curbside composting is coming back and is returning in the fall. Program will be changed. People will need to sign up for it. To get curbside composting, go to nyc.gov/curbsidecomposting
- C. Economic Development Corporation - Sunset Park Task Force meeting will be on Tuesday 6/22 at 10am. This is a meeting open to the public and available for public participation. Recorded and available for everyone to see. They will be scheduling these task force meetings at different times. Link went out today to the entire CB7 network today.
- D. Notice from DOT that 21st Street will be a bike boulevard between 3rd and 7th Avenues. This is a replacement for the Open Streets program. Between 8am-8pm, there will be no through traffic. Bicycles, parking, deliveries, and emergency vehicles will be allowed.
- E. Chair Cesar Zuñiga met the DOT Commissioner Henry Guttman on a different issue with board member Katie Walsh. They delivered a letter to DOT demanding they delay the process for making changes to 7th and 8th Avenues and to allow CB 7, 10, and 12 to have input on this plan before anything is implemented, as is required by the city charter.
- F. There have been 9 liquor license applications and renewals, and they are available in the board office for review.
- G. The police department statistics are part of the package that was emailed out to our board members today.

IX. Chairperson's Report

- A. First Vice Chairperson Julie Peña III acknowledged and welcomed new board members who have been appointed to the board: Ramon Acevedo, Xueqin (Nicole) Huang, John DeLooper, and Sandra Alfonzo
- B. Early voting is happening through Sunday, June 20th. Visit voting.nyc to learn more about ranked choice voting. You can rank up to 5 candidates. Encouraged everyone to vote early and/or educate people on ranked choice voting

X. Old Business - No old business

XI. New Business

- A. Questions were asked by board members about whether meeting start times would shift back to 6:30pm when the board returns to in-person meetings and whether it would be possible to continue committee meetings via Zoom to increase attendance.
- B. Speaking on behalf of the Boricua Festival committee, Pat Ruiz reported that unfortunately there will be no festival this year.
- C. Open Streets: Announcements were made that there are volunteer opportunities with the Open Streets Community Coalition. Open Streets will be from 45th-47th and 39th-42nd where there will be programming throughout the summer through October 30th. One board member expressed concern about parking as a result of Open Streets combined with outdoor seating for restaurants.

XII. Public Comment

- A. Winnifred Lee from Grow NYC reminded everyone that the 4th Avenue farmer's market between 59th and 60th will reopen on July 10th and is celebrating its 20th year in that location. There's also the 7th Avenue and 44th Street farmer's market that is year-round and one at Bartel Pritchard greenmarkets, one on Wednesday and one on Sunday.
- B. Vanessa Cordero grew up on 55th Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues across from NYU Langone Hospital. The street was closed down on 55th between 2nd and 1st Avenues. During high congestion traffic times, there's a lot of back-up and traffic around the hospital, with police and EMS vehicles, taxis dropping people off. Cordero expressed that it is a dangerous area right next to the park. District Manager Jeremy Laufer invited Cordero to call or email to discuss this issue.
- C. Maria Roca asked whether the community-led Open Streets' organization will be accessible for comments and suggestions to improve safety within the closed areas, and wants to see more traffic safety enforcement to ensure children and adults are safe.
- D. Tom Murphy expressed concern that the school construction project at 43rd and 4th closed down 4 lanes to 1 lane causing a quarter to half-mile back-up. There's one lane for pedestrians, one for the project, one for the bike lane. Murphy is concerned about how long this project will be blocking and backing up traffic, and the reduction in parking spaces close to 5th Avenue.
- E. George Cardona proposed removing Citibikes to make room for parking and expressed concern about the number of bike lanes in the neighborhood and safety issues due to the arrangement of a bike lane on 4th Avenue between the parking lane and sidewalk. Cardona suggested changing the arrangement so that people who park cars don't have to cross a bike lane.

- F. Cary Finnegan responded to concerns from Uprose about 222 34th Street building. Finnegan will provide details in response to concerns in advance of the September board meeting.
- G. Nicole Hernandez Hammer spoke from Uprose that the organization conducted research in partnership with scientists from RAND, Pratt, and Lifeline, part of a NIH-funded study, and found lead and lead compounds, ethylene, and ethylene glycol. Additionally, they expressed concern about the citing of the charter school at 222 34th Street due to its vulnerability to storm surges.
- H. María Roca expressed concern about traffic safety, especially during Open Streets, and requested that the DOT and NYPD look at 41st Street and 6th Avenue, as well as other nearby intersections that get backed up where cars are running red lights. Roca also expressed concern about the car traffic, bikes, e-bikes, and motorcycles that present safety risks for children and families enjoying the Open Streets initiative.
- I. **Adjournment** - Beatrice DeSapio motioned to adjourn the meeting and Pat Ruiz seconded. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45pm with no objections.