

Brooklyn Community Board 7 Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2021

Meeting hosted over Zoom

6:00PM-8:00PM

Minutes submitted by Secretary Cindy VandenBosch

- I. **Opening of the meeting** - Cesar Zuñiga opened the meeting

- II. **Adoption of the agenda for the meeting** - Zachary Jasie proposed an amendment to the agenda to include a vote for the joint committee meeting that was held by Land Use and Landmarks, Transportation, and Ability & Access Committees. Pat Ruiz motioned to accept the agenda with the amendment and Zachary Jasie seconded. There were no objections and the agenda was adopted by unanimous consent.

- III. **Adoption of the minutes of the Board Meeting of April 19, 2021** - Motion to accept from Pat Ruiz and a second by Joan Botti. The minutes were accepted by unanimous consent.

- IV. **Public Comment** - There were no members of the public who signed up at public comment.

- V. **Committee reports**
 - A. **Economic Development - Waterfront Committee (No vote required)** - Community board members were referred to the report.
 - B. **Joint Committee Meeting with Ability & Access, Land Use/Landmarks, and Transportation Committees (Vote required)**
 1. The Department of City Planning (DCP) and The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) presented a proposal for "Elevate Transit: Zoning for Transit Accessibility" (CEQR21DCP136). See meeting notes for details.
 2. MOTION proposed to send two letters, one to MTA New York City Transit and the other to Department of City Planning, in support of the Zoning for Accessibility text changes with the following considerations:
 - a) MTA should consider use of ramps instead of elevators wherever possible to provide a non-mechanical means of providing access.
 - b) MTA shall also consider less expensive approaches to provide access such as stair lifts, platform lifts, inclined lifts, or other means that do not require significant expenditures or property to implement, where acceptable. If these means are provided, additional funds shall be provided to maintain the apparatus for the life of the development.
 - c) MTA and DCP should explore incentives for developers to motivate them to provide or allow for more effective accessibility to stations. Review additional incentives such as exempting

easement floor area from zoning floor area, permitting additional height and setback variances in exchange for the easement, exempting required parking, allowing temporary uses within the easement and retail uses within 30 feet of the easement or larger zoning bonuses to increase possibility for developers to provide access.

- d) MTA to provide early notification to Community Boards of pending negotiations with developers regarding potential easements.
- e) Explore expanding the overlay zone beyond a 50 foot distance from the streetline. At some stations, suitable transit easements may lie beyond the 50' distance from the street corner. The zoning boundary should allow for additional sites at these locations, particularly at mezzanines under street intersections.
- f) CB7 appeals to MTA to increase accessibility throughout the system as soon as possible, including accessibility at all stations. CB7 understands the funding limitations that restrict the number of stations that can be improved, however, equal access to the city's primary public transit system is a civil right and must be given first priority in future capital improvement plans. These improvements should also consider accessibility for those citizens who are hearing or sight-impaired. A system-wide plan for accessibility with clear timelines, goals and objectives should be developed and made public for review.

3. MOTION APPROVED - John Fontillas made the motion, Joan Botti seconded, and the motion was approved by unanimous consent

- C. **Special Sub-Committee on Last Mile Trucking Facilities** (outstanding report) - Once submitted, the report will be distributed to the board. Chairperson Katherine Walsh provided a verbal report. Issues and impacts were discussed ranging from traffic to fatalities to air quality and environmental health, schools, housing. Concerns were vocalized about impacts. This was a fact-finding meeting and elected officials, DOT, local nonprofits, and community members were invited. DOT did not attend. Representatives from elected officials did attend, including City Councilmember Carlos Menchaca's office, Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, and NYS Assemblymember Marcela Mityanes.
- D. **Parks Committee** (no vote required) - Community board members were referred to the report
- E. **Economic Development - Waterfront Committee** (No vote required) - Community board members were referred to the report
- F. **Housing Committee** (No vote required) - Community board members were referred to the report
- G. **Transportation Committee** (No vote required)
Committee chair Zachary Jasie provided an update on 7th and 8th Avenue one-way conversion. We've been waiting for a presentation to CB7 and CB10 from DOT and it is scheduled for June 23rd. A week ago, we were informed that our

approval would no longer be necessary for this to move forward. Presentation is informational, but no approval is required for the project. Jasie noted that this is the latest example of DOT and the City government downgrading our role as citizens and is another example of them seeing the community board as an impediment to them. Jasie encouraged everyone to attend this meeting.

- H. **By-laws committee** - Peña read the final draft of by-laws revisions. See attached. In June, we will be voting on the by-laws revisions.

VI. Elected Officials and Representatives

- A. Reports were made by representatives of Congressmember Yvette Clarke's office, Assemblymember Marcela Mityanes' office, and Congressmember Nydia Velazquez's office, Edward Cena from the Mayor's Office, Brooklyn Borough representative. A Representative from the Comptroller's Office was also present.
- B. U.S. Senator Charles Schumer addressed the community board and thanked them for their community board service.
 - 1. Schumer described his experience of the events on January 6, 2021, both his reactions to the results of the Georgia run-off election and the attack on the U.S. Capitol Building.
 - 2. Senator Schumer also highlighted a range of bills that have been passed, including the ARP bill that was passed and funding for vaccines and vaccine access, state and local aid, extended unemployment benefits, federal reimbursements for paid sick leave and family leave for the next year, housing vouchers, increased SNAP, transit, schools restaurants, funerals and burials, and Pell grants for incarcerated people. They will double the child tax credit and the earned income tax credit. Conveyed how important it is to get the word out about these allocations.

VII. District Manager's Report

- A. DOT reached out last Friday and District Manager Jeremy Laufer responded that he would not participate in the community advisory committee outside of the community board's process. Assemblymember Peter Abbate is upset that DOT has changed their process and he will reach out to the DOT commissioner to let them know he is not happy.
- A. Parks Department contacted the CB7 office to provide notification that the Sunset Park handball courts rehabilitation will begin this week and will be shut down for one year but there will be a new facility at the end of that time.
- B. Public Meeting on May 27th at 6pm regarding changes to real estate tax.
- C. The community board has complained about the chronic dumping area on 36th and 37th between 5th Avenue and Fort Hamilton Parkway, which has been a chronic dumping area. District Manager Laufer recognized the Department of Sanitation and MTA, as well as the private contractor that has been hired by Green-Wood, for greatly improving the situation. Laufer noted that they are hoping this kind of strategy can be employed beneath the Gowanus Expressway.

- D. Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce provided a presentation and information about resources available for businesses for recovery at the Economic Development and Waterfront Committee. Translation into Spanish and Chinese was provided. Laufer asked people to direct businesses to the YouTube page for Brooklyn Community Board 7.
- E. There have been 17 liquor license renewals since the last meeting.
- F. NYPD stats were sent today
- G. CB7 staff will be in the office this Thursday and Friday, but there will be a deep cleaning of the office and there will be limited mobility due to the cleaning crews.

VIII. Chairperson's Report

- A. Flag at the Community Board building - Standard protocols have not been followed and there has been a tattered flag flying outside the community board building. Chair Zuñiga indicated that the board is looking into ways to properly care for the new flag and to properly comply with protocols. The board shares the building with the NYPD and needs to discuss how the flag can be properly cared for both with the NYPD and the City. Karen Rolnick noted that the flag can be up as long as it is illuminated.
- B. Committee assignments - Members of the public have been reaching out with an interest in joining committees and the board is continuing to assign appointments. Zuñiga also indicated that they want to make sure new incoming board members have the opportunity to select their choices first. As soon as new board members have their committee assignments sorted, Zuniga indicated that they will return to assigning non-community board members to committees.

IX. Old Business - No old business

X. New Business

- A. The Chairperson of the Land Use/ Landmarks Committee noted that there is a land use meeting coming up that will focus on two topics: 1) DCP presentation on hotel text amendment; 2) Residential proposal for 369 51st Street, an introduction to the development proposal. They had come to the board wanting to do a presentation, not something that we'll be voting on.

XI. Public Comment

- A. Melissa Del Valle Ortiz inquired about the use of the community board room for yoga classes to address mental health issues. CB7 staff will connect with her about this.
- B. Kenneth Lazar from Department of Buildings made three announcements:
 - 1. No Penalty Deck Retaining Wall and Business Sign Inspections - Call 311 and DOB will come out and inspect without the fear of a violation. No penalty inspections will be conducted between May 1st and June 30th.
 - 2. The City has extended the moratorium on business sign violations to January 1, 2023. DOB will not issue violations for business signs that

existed before February 9, 2019. Exceptions are if the sign presents an imminent danger to the public. They also have no-penalty business sign inspections.

3. Upcoming deadline for Local Law 152 - Gas pipe inspections. CB7 deadline is December 31, 2021.

C. Tom Murphy inquired about the status of the housing lottery for the 51st Street building that was being handled by the Fifth Avenue Committee. Can the board provide an update on what is going on with the lottery? Specifically, he wants to know whether 50% of the lottery recipients are from the community board area. District manager noted that there will be a presentation on June 1st on this topic.

II. **Adjournment** - Motion Julio Peña, Pat Ruiz seconded.