Attendance of Community Board 11, s General Meeting

Held on Thursday, January 13, 2022, at 7 PM,

Via Zoom Videoconference

Present: Bart Allegretti, Ross Brady, Reuvain Borchardt, Jay Brown, Lilibeth Chang, Irene Chu, Angelo Cucuzza, Victoria Curto, Salvatore D’Alessio, Linda Dalton, Claudio DeMeo, Paul DiSpirito, Alan Esses, Leon Freue, Michael Garthaffner, William R. Guarinello, Jeffrey Harris, Roy Jung, Edward Lai, Eileen LaRuffa, Man Wai Lau, Dr. Tim Law, Lorraine Mazzola, Rabbi Gary Pollack, Lenny Salama, Briar Sambolin, Sonia Valentin, Andrew Windsor, Laurie Windsor, Sai Chuen Yeung

Absent: Sofia Annunziata, Vincent Chirico, Charles Farrauto, John Garvey, Laura Gottlieb, Albert Milone, Ahmed Nasser, Janet Perry, Karen Sardell, Antonio Troia, Robert Whittaker, Linda Zhang, Nicholas Zimmitti, Daniel Zurek

Excused: Rosa Casella, Ruben Colon, Nicholas Miraglia

Elected Officials: Antonio Reynoso- Brooklyn Borough President, Assembly Member Colton, Council Member Alexa Avile, Council Member Ari Kagan

Guests: Michael Marquez – Bensonhurst Volunteer Ambulance Corp., Ken H., Patricia Capuano, Libby Silber – Sen. Gounardes, Olena Kirichenko – Jewish Community House of Bensonhurst, Edward Cerna – Council Member Avile, Susan Chin, Nancy Tong – Assembly Member Colton, Shirley Grant – CB 11 Staff, Irina Belenkiy, Tambe John – New Utrecht Library, Joyce Minault – AHRC NYC, Hannah Weinerman – Rep. Nadler, Denise Daniello, Concetta Bologna, Henry Williams, Surgery Chuprik – NYC Comptroller, Rose Uscianowski – Transportation Alternatives, Captain Tao Chen – 62nd Precinct, Frank Fontana – Dept. of Buildings, PO Carmelo Vendra – 62nd Precinct

Minutes of Community Board 11’s General Meeting

Held on Thursday, January 13, 2022, at 7PM,

Via Zoom Videoconference

The meeting was opened with Borough President Antonio Reynoso having the honor of the pledge.

Moment of Silence

Mr. Guarinello requested a moment of silence on behalf of the 17 people who tragically lost their lives in the Twin Parks housing development in the Bronx.

Brooklyn Borough President

Chairman Guarinello introduced and congratulated our new Borough President, Antonio Reynoso.

Borough President Reynoso thanked everyone for the warm welcome. He spoke about his vision for Brooklyn and community boards and sees an opportunity to grow and learn through courses on land use, transportation, and education.

BP Reynoso stressed that community boards are on the front lines fighting for their communities and his goal is to assist the boards in their professional growth.

Mr. Guarinello thanked BP Reynoso for joining our meeting and stated that this board will help in any way possible to make our neighborhoods a better place.

Public Portion

Hannah Weinerman, representing Congressman Nadler, provided an update on the US Small Business Administration COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program. The deadline to submit applications was December 31st; however, SBA will continue processing applications, including reconsiderations. This deadline does not apply to increased requests.

She further advised that Congressman Nadler, along with Congresswoman Maloney introduced the Low-Revenue Recipient Paycheck Protection Program Relief Act, which will ensure that small businesses are eligible for loan forgiveness that would otherwise be excluded.

Frank Fontana, representing the Department of Buildings, provided updates on various programs available to property/homeowners.

Concetta Bologna, an area resident, spoke regarding drivers double-parking, blocking hydrants, and the bus stop in front of the Doctor’s office on Bay Parkway and Benson Avenue. She advised that the 62nd Precinct is responsive, but this needs to be addressed.

Tambe John, branch manager of New Utrecht Library, announced that the library is offering vaccinations for children, ages 5 to 11. The walk-in vaccine clinic is in partnership with NYC Health and Hospitals Test and Trace Corps.

She urged everyone to check the library’s online event calendar to view upcoming events and programs.

The Chairman inquired if anyone else from the public sought recognition. Hearing none, a motion was made by Eileen LaRuffa to close the public portion of the meeting. Seconded by Lilibeth Chang. Unanimously adopted.

Minutes

A motion was made by Ross Brady to accept the minutes of the December 9, 2021, meeting. Seconded by Bart Allegretti. Unanimously adopted.

Assembly Member Colton

Assembly Member Colton advised that there would be a rally on Sunday, January 23rd at 1:30 PM, regarding the proposed homeless shelter at 137 Kings Highway.

He stated that these types of shelters benefit the developers and non-profit providers but do little to help the homeless. There is a need for permanent affordable housing, which the Governor highlighted in her State of the State speech.

He further stated that we need to move in a different direction from the prior administration’s proposals relating to homelessness; we need to move away from temporary shelters and have both city and state programs to provide permanent affordable housing.

Assembly Member Colton wished all a happy and healthy New Year and Lunar New Year, which is on February 1st.

Councilmember Kagan

Council Member Kagan expressed his excitement to be attending his first Community Board 11 meeting as a councilmember. He advised that he plans to keep the Stillwell Avenue district office, and while it is being prepared the staff continues to be available virtually.

He advised that he would continue to fund Wildcat Services, the non-profit organization that provides supplemental sanitation services on the district 47 commercial corridors, as well as snow removal for senior citizens and people with disabilities. Residents can send requests to the district office.

He further stated that he has spoken with the Mayor and Governor regarding the homelessness crisis, crime situation and the need for bail reform to be corrected, as it relates to violent and hate crimes.

Councilman Kagan further discussed the need for school children who are quarantined due to COVID-19, to have a remote learning option.

Councilmember Alexa Aviles

Councilmember Alexa Aviles, representing District 39, introduced herself and advised that the district office is open and is located at 4417 4th Avenue. They can be contacted at 718-439-9012 or by email at District38@council.nyc.gov

She advised that she has been advocating for sufficient Covid-19 testing, sufficient supplies and a temporary remote option for schools.

Additionally, she will be working on the affordable housing crisis, which have deep impacts throughout the city, and Covid-19 recovery and ensuring that residents have the services, food, housing security and access to healthcare to stabilize families.

62nd Precinct

Captain Tao Chen, the Commanding Officer of the 62nd Precinct, announced a gun buyback event will be held on Saturday, January 15, 2022, from 10AM to 4PM, at Vanderveer Park United Methodist Church, 3114 Glenwood Road.

He further announced upcoming Build the Block meetings and the 62nd Precinct Community Council meeting. All meetings will be virtual, and the information will be posted on social media.

Chairman’s Report

Mr. Guarinello advised that the NYS legislature extended the provisions to permit any public body to hold meetings remotely and without in-person access during the Covid-19 state disaster emergency. The legislation is awaiting the signature of the Governor.

He further advised that the Department of City Planning certified the land use application for 2300 Cropsey Avenue. The planning and zoning committee will be meeting virtually on January 25, 2022, at 6:30 PM to review the application. The meeting information and link will be shared publicly and will be livestreamed.

The board will hold a public hearing on the matter at the February 10, 2022, general meeting.

Chairman Guarinello reminded board members whose term expires on March 31st, that they should have received a notice from the borough president’s office. Those interested in applying for re-appointment should complete the application before the February 18th, deadline.

Mr. Guarinello wished the community and all those celebrating a happy lunar New Year.

District Manager’s Report

Marnee Elias-Pavia addressed the double-parking issue that was brought forward at the public portion of the meeting. She advised that the 62nd Precinct Neighborhood Coordinating Officers have been enforcing the parking rules and are scheduling a tow operation.

In addition, it has been brought to our attention that there may be a house of worship inside of the Doctor’s office, and on behalf of the resident’s a complaint was filed with the Department of Buildings.

She further advised that the Department of Transportation announced the launching of the Greener Roadways Training initiative, a program where New Yorker’s are paid $24.50 an hour to care for greenspaces and roadway plantings.

Under the guidance of landscape professionals and instructors, trainees will cultivate and preserve street medians. In our district this will be the median located on West 6st and Quentin Road.

Trainees will receive industry-level certifications and mentorship for continuing careers in horticulture.

The program starts in 2022 from March through June, for both full-time and part-time positions. Anyone interested can apply via uariascorp@gmail.com or call 718-874-7217.

The information will be shared in our newsletter.

The District Manager provided an update on the 17th Avenue Bridge. The contractor re-started work this week. It was previously reported the contractor began staging and closed the bridge. She expressed her concerns that if permits weren’t in place and waived for the holiday embargo, then the bridge should never have been closed to the residents of our community.

She further advised that there are Covid-19 mobile testing sites throughout the district, while information will be shared publicly in our newsletter; the information changes quickly and those seeking testing should confirm the locations online.

National Grid is in the process of installing new gas mains on 17th Avenue between Benson and 86th Street. The utility has informed area residents of the work.

In closing, she reported that she met with the Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit, Commissioner Fred Kreizman. She advised that she worked with him in the past and she is confident that we will “get stuff done”.

A motion was made by Ross Brady to adjourn. Seconded by Bart Allegretti. Unanimously adopted.