

# MEETING MINUTES



## BELMONT PARK REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

**DATE/TIME:** March 7, 2024 / 6:00 pm EST  
**LOCATION:** Zoom

**SUBJECT/TOPIC:** Project Update  
**MEETING LEADER:** Empire State Development

### PARTICIPANTS:

NAME	ORGANIZATION / AGENCY
Hon. Leroy Comrie, Senator	NYS Senate
Hon. Michaelle Solages, Assemblywoman	NYS Assembly
Hon. Carrie Solages, Legislator	Nassau County Legislature
Angel Santana	Empire State Development
Anna Pycior	Empire State Development
Arden Sokolow	Empire State Development
Aubrey Phillips	CAC Member
Beth Carliner	Empire State Development
Brian Garrison	Value Retail
Robert Barker	CAC Member
Danielle Sessa	Sterling Project Development
Danilo Archbold	CAC Member
Dave Kapell	CAC Member
David Viana	Empire State Development
Dwight Collins	Value Retail
Edu Hermelyn	CAC Member
Haeda Mihaltzes	Sterling Project Development
Kevin Denning	CAC Member
Jon Johnson Sr.	CAC Member
Leonard Hookum	CAC Member
Lynette Battle	CAC Member
Michael Sciortino	UBS Arena
Mike Santeramo	Oak View Group
Mo Tavakoli	UBS Arena
Owen Hoffsten	Empire State Development
Sandra Smith	CAC Member
Tania Lawes	New York Islanders & UBS Arena
Theresa Whalen	CAC Member
Tiffany Capers	CAC Member
Zachary Klein	New York Islanders

**1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME**

David Viana, Assistant Vice President for Community Relations and Subsidiary Administration, and Belmont Project Manager at Empire State Development (ESD) started the meeting and welcomed Community Advisory Committee (CAC) members and members of the public. Mr. Viana proceeded to introduce Empire State Development staff, members of the project development team, and elected officials and staff in attendance.

**2. PRESENTATION**

Mr. Viana conducted a presentation that included an overview of the CAC for new CAC members and provided project updates. Mr. Viana introduced Danielle Sessa, Associate Director, Government and Community Affairs at Sterling Project Development who presented on the construction of the Belmont Park Village. Ms. Sessa turned it over to Mr. Viana who discussed the community benefits that have been completed, as well as those that are ongoing, as part of the Belmont Park Redevelopment project. Next steps for the project were also discussed. The full presentation from the meeting is available on the Belmont Park Redevelopment Project CAC page:

<https://esd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/Belmont-3724-CAC-Meeting-FINAL.pdf>.

**3. Q&A AND COMMENTS**

After completing his presentation, Mr. Viana then asked if any CAC members had questions. CAC Member Jon Johnson Sr. asked if the arena's local employment numbers could be shared with the CAC members. Mike Santeramo, Director of External Affairs at Oak View Group, noted that 49% of the local

hires for UBS Arena come from within four miles of the arena. Delaware North, which provides food service at the arena has a local hiring rate of 41%, and the parking operator SP Plus has a local hire rate of 65%. Mr. Johnson asked how many local hires are anticipated for the retail village and restaurants. Mr. Santeramo explained that he is unable to provide that information as most hiring has not yet occurred, however, they have a goal of 30% local hires. Mr. Johnson asked if a space is not found in a timely fashion, will NYAP and Oak View Group walk away from building a community center? Mr. Viana stated that ESD is committed to ensuring that everyone does their due diligence in identifying sites for the community space and noted that the lease agreement requires a payment to ESD should a community space not be built.

Senator Leroy Comrie asked if the development team can provide zip codes of the local hires. Mr. Viana stated that ESD will work with the development team to produce that information. Senator Comrie requested information on how and with what entities are the jobs being advertised. Mr. Viana noted that Tania Lawes, Director of External Affairs & Community Engagement at the New York Islanders & UBS Arena has a comprehensive list of local organizations, elected officials, and CAC members that are notified when job postings are available. Mr. Viana further noted that additional coordination with respect to job advertisements will occur with Value Retail as the project comes online. Senator Comrie commented that he would like local newspapers, community boards and local employment centers notified about the job postings. Senator Comrie asked if an update can be provided on which locations have been considered and what conversations have been had regarding the community space. Mr. Viana stated that various sites have been explored. Two sites that are potential contenders are 135 Elmont Road and 570 Elmont Road. ESD and the development team have been in contact with the Elmont School District regarding their district office located at 135 Elmont

Road. The vacant office building located at 570 Elmont Road is another candidate that is under consideration.

Mr. Santeramo thanked CAC member Sandra Smith for providing the development team with two additional sites located at 545 Elmont Road and 1285 Hempstead Turnpike. Mr. Santeramo further noted that he and Ms. Lawes will be visiting the sites next week to evaluate whether either site is a viable option for the community center.

Senator Comrie asked if any of the residents have been complaining of cracks or vibrations due to construction. Ms. Sessa stated that they have received some complaints from individuals complaining about vibrations and cracks in walls and have sent their engineers to investigate. Ms. Sessa noted that the development team uses vibration monitors and those alarms have not been triggered. Mr. Viana encouraged the Senator to also contact ESD directly should he receive any complaints from residents.

CAC member Aubrey Phillips asked if the CAC can be provided with the titles of the local hires to get a better understanding of the types of jobs that are being filled. Mr. Viana stated that the information is not available at the moment, but ESD will discuss with the development team to see what information is available. Mr. Phillips asked what the future role of New York Arena Partners (NYAP) will be as it relates to the community center and for how long. Mr. Viana explained that per the agreement with ESD, NYAP's role is to design, construct, operate and maintain a community space. Mr. Phillips asked when 135 Elmont Road became a possible location. Mr. Viana stated that he did not know the exact date, however, it has been part of the discussion since he began working at ESD. He also stated that the location has been discussed with the school district. Mr. Phillips asked what the penalty payment

to ESD is if the community space is not built. Mr. Viana stated that he will check ESD and will confirm whether it can be shared publicly. Mr. Phillips asked when the deadline is to build the community center. Mr. Viana stated that ESD is in active discussion with the development team and as that discussion evolves, ESD will come back to the CAC and provide an update.

CAC Member Sandra Smith asked if meeting dates have been finalized and if there is a timeline for completing the remaining funding agreements. Mr. Viana stated that additional CAC meetings have not been scheduled and noted that the funding agreements have been completed one by one. The agreement with the Elmont School District was the first to be finalized, and the Nassau County agreement was just executed and will receive payment in the coming weeks. Next will be the Town of Hempstead. Ms. Smith asked if the funding agreement amounts can be forwarded to the CAC members. Mr. Viana replied that ESD can share updates on the amounts and the structure of the funding agreements as they are executed and reminded the CAC that the amounts will vary year to year. Ms. Smith asked if ESD will continue to receive the funds prior to its disbursement to the school, Town, etc. for the next 49 years. Mr. Viana confirmed that the current payment structure will remain the same.

CAC member Lynette Battle noted that she sent an email informing the team about an upcoming PTA meeting that will focus on summer youth employment but have not heard back. Mr. Viana stated that he has not seen the email but asked that she send the email to [BelmontOutreach@esd.ny.gov](mailto:BelmontOutreach@esd.ny.gov) for follow up. Ms. Battle stated that the Atlantic Yards project has stronger community benefits and expressed that local community groups have not been able to rent the UBS Arena at a reasonable rate for community events. Ms. Battle asked what can be done to make that process better. Mr. Viana

noted that the Belmont project is already in the middle of construction, however, if there are ways to better engage the community, the project team welcomes those suggestions. Anna Pycior, Senior Vice President for Community Relations, reiterated that ESD is not in the position to reopen the existing community benefits agreement, but ESD is working closely with the development team and elected officials to ensure that it is hearing outreach ideas, actively reaching the community and picking up where anyone has identified gaps. Ms. Pycior further noted the purpose of reconvening the CAC is to hear ideas like this. Ms. Battle stated that at one of the school board meetings, they heard that the elementary school received \$2.4M and \$1.8M and asked for further clarification on the \$1.8M that was received. Mr. Viana replied that the \$2.4M number is correct but expressed that he is not familiar with the \$1.8M Ms. Battle mentioned. Mr. Viana stated that he would look into the reported \$1.8M payment further.

CAC member Theresa Whalen asked if there would be benefits to Floral Park given that the community borders the project site. Mr. Viana stated that the community benefits were established at the beginning of the project and the package that was negotiated included renovations at Elmont Road Park, Hendrickson Road Park, the construction of a community space, and local hiring requirements that cover not only Elmont, but Floral Park and all other zip codes within a four-mile radius of the development site. Mr. Viana noted that the Village of Floral Park was at the table at the beginning of the project, including for all discussions pertaining to the arena development and the north parking lots which abut Floral Park. Mr. Viana noted the development team and ESD remain available to answer any questions or concerns. Ms. Whalen asked if Floral Park residents are aware of the job openings. Ms. Lawes replied that they are notified.

CAC member Dave Kapell asked for an update on the drainage issue at Elmont Road Park. Ms. Sessa stated that the development team had a meeting with the Town of Hempstead and had their engineers go on site last April after heavy rain. Through discussions, it was determined that everything was put in place properly and was operating in a manner that it was intended to.

Mr. Johnson said his understanding was that the Town of Hempstead will be fixing the drainage problem by taking out the grass field and installing turf. Due to weather conditions, a start date has not been determined. CAC member Kevin Denning stated that he will speak with the Town of Hempstead's Commissioner of Parks and will get an update on the project's status.

Mr. Kapell emphasized the need to build the community space. Mr. Viana reiterated ESD's commitment to make sure the obligation is met.

Mr. Phillips asked if the deadline to construct the community space is flexible? Ms. Pycior stated that the details on the deadline, as well as the amount that the developer must pay ESD if they fail to construct the community space, is something ESD will have to get back to the CAC on. Mr. Phillips also asked to confirm whether the Elmont School District funds included "catch up" funds from previous undisbursed years. Mr. Viana stated that he will confirm the total amount disbursed and a breakdown of what was included, but reiterated that the total amount should not be considered as the amount that will be disbursed annually.

Mr. Viana closed the meeting by thanking those who attended.

#### 4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.