



Vincent Arcuri, Jr.  
*Chairperson*

## Community Board No. 5

Borough of Queens  
Ridgewood, Maspeth, Middle Village and Glendale  
61-23 Myrtle Avenue • Glendale, NY 11385  
(718) 366-1834  
E-mail: qnscb5@nyc.rr.com



Gary Giordano  
*District Manager*

### Minutes of Community Board 5 Public Meeting January 11, 2017

#### Board Members Present

Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Robert Cermeli; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Peter Comber; Henry Cross; Patricia Crowley; Brian Dooley; Jerome Drake; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Sarah Feldman; Steven Fiedler; Patricia Grayson; Fred T. Haller, III; Fred Hoefflerle; Paul A. Kerzner; John J. Killcommons; Kathleen Knight; Michael LoCascio; John Maier; Lydia Martinez; Katherine Masi; Eileen Moloney; Margaret O’Kane; Michael O’Kane; Donald Passantino; Michael Porcelli; Theodore M. Renz; Luis Rodriguez; Lee S. Rottenberg; Walter H. Sanchez; David Sands; Carmen Santana; Connie Santos; Lorraine Sciulli; Catherine Sumsky; Jean Tanler; Barbara Toscano; Maryanna Zero

#### Board Members Absent

Tobias Sheppard Bloch; Karamjit Dhaliwal; Thomas C. Dowd; Angela Giovanniello; Caroline Fuchs; Robert Holden; Alexander Maureau; Kelvin Rodriguez

#### Elected Officials

NYS Assemblyman Brian Barnwell, 30<sup>th</sup> AD  
Don Capalbi – US Representative Grace Meng, 6<sup>th</sup> C.D.  
Evelyn Cruz – US Representative Nydia Velazquez, 7<sup>th</sup> C.D.  
Neil Giannelli - NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr, 15<sup>th</sup> S.D.  
Alexa Arecchi - NYS Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, 28<sup>th</sup> AD  
Alison Cummings – NYS Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, 37<sup>th</sup> AD  
Carmela Isabella - NYS Assemblyman Michael Miller, 38<sup>th</sup> AD  
Stacey Eliuk – NYC Public Advocate Letitia James  
Sergio Galeano – NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer  
Dylan Cepeda - NYC Council Member Elizabeth Crowley, 30<sup>th</sup> CD  
Boris Santos – NYC Council Member Antonio Reynoso, 34<sup>th</sup> CD

#### Staff Present

Gary Giordano, District Manager, CB5 Queens  
Catherine O’Leary and Laura Mulvihill, Community Associates - CB5Q Staff  
Joseph Nocerino – Queens Borough President Melinda Katz

#### GUESTS

Mario Matos, Assistant Principal, Maspeth High School, 74-08 57 Avenue, Queens, NY  
P.O. Charles Sadler, Community Affairs Unit, 104<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct, 64-02 Catalpa Ave, Ridgewood, NY

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on January 11, 2017

Board Chairman Vincent Arcuri called the monthly Board Meeting to order at 7:45pm, following the Salute to the Flag. He introduced the first Item on the Agenda as:

### **PRESENTATION      Re: Wyckoff Heights Medical Center**

By Ramon Rodriguez, President and Chief Executive Officer

Ramon Rodriguez first thanked Board members for volunteering their time and energy for the benefit of the entire community. He also thanked two Board members for serving on the hospital's Board of Trustees, Vincent Arcuri, as Vice-Chairman, and Fred T. Haller, as Secretary.

Mr. Rodriguez began by saying that Wyckoff Heights Medical Center (WHMC) was founded 127 years ago at or near its present address in Brooklyn, one block away from the Brooklyn-Queens border. He said that the hospital has traditionally served residents from both boroughs since its inception. While most State officials in Albany think of WHMC as a Brooklyn hospital, he said that last year, 31% of the patients who were treated by the medical staff at WHMC were residents of Queens. And, he pointed out that WHMC is the closest hospital that is easily accessible to Ridgewood and Glendale residents. As he spoke, he pointed out where the local municipal and voluntary hospitals in Queens and Brooklyn are located, as displayed on a large illustrated map on a nearby stand.

Mr. Rodriguez explained that over the past decade, WHMC has faced some very challenging financial situations, similar to several former community hospitals, such as, St. Johns Hospital in Elmhurst, Mary Immaculate Hospital in Jamaica, and Parkway Hospital in Forest Hills, which closed during bankruptcy proceedings. He said that on his first day on the job at WHMC in 2012, the hospital could not meet payroll expenses. However, working with the local community, elected officials, their Board of Trustees and medical personnel, he said that they have been making steady progress toward financial stability since then, admitting patients for surgery and treating an ever-increasing number of patients in outpatient facilities in their catchment area. He said that last year, WHMC was awarded a grant of \$60 Million from the State's budget to help defray the cost of providing uncompensated care for many of the uninsured patients who receive healthcare services in the hospital's facilities. He pointed out that WHMC employs 1,800 people, who live in the surrounding area for the most part.

And, over the past 5 years, he said that WHMC was successful in attracting 70 new doctors to their medical staff, including 3 head and neck surgeons who have just joined the staff recently. He also said that last year was the first year since 2012, that the number of patient discharges from the hospital showed an increase over the prior year's number of discharges. In addition, he cited the fact that 95,000 patients were treated in WHMC's facilities in 2012, as compared to 158,000 patients during the last 12 months. Furthermore, he said that he was happy to point out that WHMC's finances have improved to the point that they closed out last year's books with a positive balance sheet.

Mr. Rodriguez discussed the history of financial troubles that voluntary hospitals in Brooklyn's health care system. He explained that under State law, all hospitals and medical centers are mandated to provide treatment for anyone who enters their doors in need of medical treatment, regardless of their ability to pay. However, according to the NY Hospital Foundation's study, the reimbursement rates that Medicaid, Medicare and insurance providers paid last year for healthcare services to metropolitan hospitals varied by an average of 270%. The results of the study show that large, well-endowed medical centers with teaching facilities in Manhattan receive the highest reimbursements for the same medical procedures that are performed by medical staff working in local community hospitals in the City. He explained that the effect of this differential rate of compensation, for the healthcare services provided by local hospitals in the metropolitan area, has been recognized by the State legislature to have a disparate impact on their financial solvency. He said that WHMC falls into this category. He said that one explanation for this vast discrepancy in reimbursement rates is that while patients with private health insurance coverage account for a much higher percentage of the patient care load in the large hospitals located in Manhattan, WHMC's patient census includes a combination of 64% Brooklyn residents, most of whom are Medicaid-eligible, and 31% Queens residents, who are mostly covered by private insurance. Another reason for the financial troubles that many local community hospitals face today is

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the rapidly changing environment of the healthcare delivery system. For example, he said that there has been an increasing number of non-invasive medical procedures that are performed today in outpatient clinics to treat medical conditions that had always required major surgery, followed by a week-long hospital stay.

In response to the crisis in hospital financing in Brooklyn, the NYS Department of Health completed a feasibility study, known as the Brooklyn Study- Reshaping the Future of Healthcare, which is available on their website, Mr. Rodriguez said. The study provides an analysis of the financial troubles faced by several local hospitals in Brooklyn. Along with WHMC, 3 other financially troubled hospitals in Central and South Brooklyn that serve a large pool of poor and uninsured patients are included: 1) Interfaith Medical Center, located on Atlantic Avenue in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn; 2) Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center located on Linden Blvd at Rockaway Avenue in East Flatbush, Brooklyn; and 3) Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center, located on Schenectady Avenue in Crown Heights, Brooklyn. He said that their recommendations to resolve this death spiral in healthcare costs vs. reimbursements may include requiring WHMC to merge with these 3 other local hospitals. He said that next month, Governor Cuomo's administration plans to issue a request for proposals from organizations willing to undertake the state's goal of remaking and modernizing the area's healthcare system. Regarding the other 3 Brooklyn hospitals that were included in the study, he said that they have a different set of market dynamics and are pursuing a different strategy. He explained that over 80% of the patients who are treated in the other 3 hospitals are Medicaid-eligible, and only a small percentage of their patients are covered by private insurance. He also pointed out that there are a lot more hospital beds per capita in the borough of Brooklyn than there are in Queens.

In light of this situation, he said that the Board of Trustees of WHMC wrote a letter to Governor Cuomo to express their opposition to the conclusions outlined in the study. He said that this issue definitely requires further investigation. He said that the Board of Trustees agrees that WHMC cannot remain a stand-alone hospital, and for this reason, this year they directed the hospital staff to prepare a request for proposals to recruit a joint-venture with other healthcare systems. As a result, WHMC entered into an agreement with Northwell Health (formerly known as North Shore-LIJ) in February of 2016, as a first step toward becoming an integral part of the Northwell Health system of healthcare within the next 5 years. He said that in 2016, with the help and support of Northwell Health, WHMC was able to obtain a grant of \$70 Million to complete renovations on the first 4 floors of the hospital, including the emergency room area. He welcomed Board members and guests to tour the hospital's facilities with him in the coming year.

In closing, on behalf of the staff of WHMC, he said that they look forward to providing excellent health care services to local residents and the surrounding community for the foreseeable future.

On behalf of Vicky Morales, the Queens Director of Community Boards, Board Chairman Arcuri extended her thanks for the excellent medical care that her family member received in a recent medical emergency. Jerry Drake said that he has become a fan of Wyckoff Hospital, based on his own personal experience in the hospital last year. He asked if WHMC is interested in affiliating with New York Presbyterian Hospital. Mr. Rodriguez replied that when a prior hospital administrator was contacted regarding a possible affiliation with NYP some years ago, they did not pursue it. Mr. Rodriguez pointed out that WHMC welcomes local primary care physicians to affiliate with Wyckoff Hospital, even though the physician may have a long-standing affiliation with another medical facility or institution. For more information on this subject, he welcomed calls to his office at (718) 963-7272.

The Board Chairman opened the floor to questions and comments.

In response to a question from Robert Cermeli, Mr. Rodriguez replied that there is no way of knowing what impact any changes in the Affordable Care Act (ACA) will have on the delivery of healthcare in New York State. He said that 20 million people in the USA now have insurance who didn't have it previously, and New York State covers more health care services than other states do.

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He said that it is too early to tell whether any changes to the current ACA will be helpful or not, because no one knows what those changes will be, as yet. He said that he'd be willing to give a presentation on this topic next year, once more details become available.

Regarding the Safety Net Hospital bill that was vetoed by Governor Cuomo today, Mr. Rodriguez said that this bill would have provided operating funds for municipal hospitals, not voluntary hospitals, such as WHMC. He said that statistics show that City hospitals treat between 20% and 25% of patients who have absolutely no insurance coverage, arrive there in emergency situations and may not have any personal identification on them. In these cases, he said that the healthcare services provided for these patients is usually uncompensated care, which could cost hundreds of millions of dollars each year. He said that the reimbursement rate for this uncompensated care provided by City hospitals is negotiated as part of the State budget each year, as part of the Safety Net Hospital bill. Lee Rottenberg, a Board member, agreed. He said that while he worked in Bellevue Hospital for 13 years, he had witnessed many cases of foreigners, who were flown into New York and driven straight to Bellevue Hospital where they were operated on by the surgical staff, and then, flew back home immediately afterward.

In response to a question about the charity care pool in the State budget, Mr. Rodriguez said that this term refers to funds that are set-aside in State and Federal budgets to defray the cost of providing healthcare services for patients who are not covered by any insurance plan and cannot afford to pay for their care. He said that the government provides anywhere from 25% to 30% of the cost of care that is provided in these cases.

Eric Smith, of the NY State Nurses Association, said that Wyckoff Heights Medical Center provides an extremely valuable service to many Medicaid-eligible patients who are local residents. He thanked the staff at Wyckoff Hospital, which he considers to be a safety net hospital, similar to other local hospitals, such as, Woodhull in Brooklyn, and Elmhurst and Queens Hospital Center. He said that while richly-endowed Manhattan hospitals could afford to remain open for a year without receiving any reimbursement whatsoever, local community hospitals, such as Wyckoff Hospital, do not have that luxury. He said that he hoped that Wyckoff Hospital would continue to cooperate with Woodhull Hospital, and other municipal hospitals, in delivering excellent medical care for low-income community residents, regardless of their ability to pay. Mr. Rodriguez thanked him for the compliment, and said that the hospital's entire staff and the Board of Trustees are planning to do that.

As there were no further questions or comments, the Board Chairman thanked Mr. Rodriguez for his informative presentation, and referred the matter to the Health and Human Services Committee for further consideration.

### **PUBLIC FORUM**

Carmen Santana, a Board member, spoke about some of her concerns related to housing, particularly the fact that seniors, tenants who are disabled and families with small children are being evicted from their apartments. She said that providing funding for legal services is extremely important for poor and indigent tenants who cannot afford to pay for an attorney.

Regarding a recent incident involving a 2 month old baby in critical condition in a Bronx hospital, due to child abuse, Ms. Santana said that she began advocating to adopt measures to prevent child abuse 20 years ago. But, many of the recommendations were never adopted, she said. For example, one of the recommendations to the Child Protective Services Agency was that any case involving an unwed mother with an infant or toddler requires immediate attention, she said.

P.O. Charles Sadler, introduced himself as an officer in the Community Affairs Unit of the 104<sup>th</sup> Precinct, who works on the 3pm to Midnight shift in the stationhouse. He said that he has been assigned to attend the Board's monthly meetings this year. He welcomed calls or questions to the office phone at (718) 386-2446, or via email at [charles.sadler@nypd.org](mailto:charles.sadler@nypd.org).

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On behalf of the 104<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct, P.O. Sadler welcomed everyone to participate in the American Cancer Society's annual fund-raising event, the Relay for Life, which is scheduled to take place in and around the Brennan Field Running Track in Juniper Valley Park beginning at 3PM on Saturday afternoon, June 24<sup>th</sup> and ending at 8AM on Sunday morning, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017. He said that volunteers are needed to help set up, beginning at 8AM on Saturday, and for clean-up operations, beginning at 8AM on Sunday. He said that donations toward this event will be accepted via the Precinct Community Council's website at: [www.104pcc.org](http://www.104pcc.org).

P.O. Sadler also invited everyone to attend the 104<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Council's Dinner Dance, honoring Det. Thomas Bell as Cop of the Year, and the Glendale Kiwanis Club as Community Partner of the Year, which will be held between 7PM and 11PM on Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in the Villa Erasmo, at 69-61 Juniper Boulevard South, in Middle Village. He said that tickets re available for \$70 per person. Flyers were distributed.

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**Vincent Arcuri, Jr.**

Board Chairman Arcuri welcomed representatives of local elected officials to address the Board.

On behalf of Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, Joe Nocerino welcomed everyone to attend the State of the Borough address starting at 10AM on Friday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017 in York College, located at 94-20 Guy Brewer Boulevard, in Jamaica, Queens. He advised Board members to RSVP either by calling their office at (718) 286-2661 or via email at: [www.queensbp.org/rsvp](http://www.queensbp.org/rsvp). Invitations to the State of the Borough were distributed, along with copies of the Borough President's Winter Newsletter for 2016-2017.

State Assemblyman Brian Barnwell wished everyone a Happy New Year. He said that he was proud to represent the 30<sup>th</sup> Assembly District in Albany, and that on January 1<sup>st</sup>, he and his staff began working in the former Assembly Member's office at 55-19 69 Street, in Maspeth. He welcomed constituents to call his office at (718) 651-3185 in order to meet with him on Saturdays, by appointment only.

On behalf of Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, Evelyn Cruz reported that an attempt to pass legislation that would eliminate the Office of Congressional Ethics was defeated in the House of Representatives today. She also said that the Congresswoman opposes attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA), without a replacement plan that guarantees healthcare coverage for all 2.7 million New Yorkers who are Medicaid recipients and another 1.6 million working New Yorkers who are currently enrolled in the ACA plan. She said that the Congresswoman also opposes a proposal to convert the existing Medicare coverage plan into a voucher system. In addition, the Congresswoman has reintroduced the Landlord Accountability Act, which she had sponsored last year in the Congress, which they will work toward passage in this session of Congress.

On behalf of Congresswoman Grace Meng, Don Capalbi announced that a representative from the Department of Veterans Affairs will be available once a month in their main district office at 40-13 159th Street, on the corner of Northern Boulevard, in Flushing, to meet with local veterans and/or their beneficiaries to address any issues or concerns that they may have such as questions about VA benefits and services, information on pending claims, and assistance with filing claims. He advised that appointments to meet with a VA representative in their office must be made at least four days ahead of time, and the office phone number is 718-358-6364.

He also announced that Congresswoman Meng was recently appointed to serve on the House Appropriations Committee, one of the most important committees in Congress. He wished everyone a Happy New Year.

On behalf of State Senator Joseph Addabbo, Neil Giannelli wished everyone a Happy New Year, and said that the State Senator expects to be very busy in Albany for the next 10 weeks, working on budget negotiations in the State legislature.

On behalf of Assemblyman Mike Miller, Carmela Isabella said that their office is once again hosting their annual Valentines for Veterans Drive. She said that donations of toiletries, cards, candy (sugar-free snacks preferred) and new clothing items for men and women veterans will be collected at their office at 83-91 Woodhaven Blvd. until February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017. For more information, please contact their office at (718) 805-0950. Flyers were distributed. She wished everyone a Happy New Year.

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On behalf of State Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Alison Cummings wished everyone a Happy New Year, and said that she looked forward to working together with Board members and local residents on the community's concerns. She welcomed calls from constituents to their district office in Long Island City, at (718) 784-3194.

On behalf of Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, Alexa Arrechi thanked Board members for being the first Community Board in the City to endorse the Assemblyman's proposed Home Stability Support Initiative, which addresses the continuing crisis in homelessness in our City. She said that there has been growing support for this initiative over the past month, including Queens Community Boards 1, 2, 10 and 12.

On behalf of NYC Public Advocate Leticia James, Stacey Eliuk wished everyone a Happy New Year. She reported that their office issued a report on salary inequality in NYC which indicates that women are paid \$5.8 Billion less than men in the workforce over the course of their careers. She said that for this reason, the Public Advocate supports legislation that was introduced in the City Council in 2016 that would prevent employers from asking prospective employees to answer questions about their rates of pay in their employment history.

On behalf of NYC Council Member Elizabeth Crowley, Dylan Cepeda announced that free immigration services will be provided to constituents who visit their district office in Atlas Park, at 71-19 80 Street, Suite 8-303 in Glendale, on Wednesdays this year. He advised anyone interested to call their office at (718) 366-3900 to schedule an appointment.

On behalf of NYC Council Member Antonio Reynoso, Boris Santos announced that the Council Member will deliver his State of the District address at 6PM on Thursday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, in the school auditorium of PS 257, which is located at 60 Cook Street, in Williamsburg. He welcomed all of their constituents to attend.

He said that they received lots of ideas from local residents at last month's Visioning Session for the Starr Street Playground renovations, which was conducted in cooperation with the NYC Department of Parks. At present, while \$2.5 Million has been secured for this project, the estimated cost of including all of the proposed improvements would be over \$6 Million. Due to budget constraints, he said that they plan to conduct another Visioning Session in the Spring regarding this project, in order to prioritize the capital improvements that are requested. Copies of the Council Member's Newsletter were distributed to all.

### MINUTES

The Board Chairman asked Board members to review the minutes of the December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Board Meeting. John Maier corrected the minutes on Page 7 to read that his friendly amendment was "not accepted." The minutes were accepted, as amended, by acclamation.

The Board Chairman introduced staff members present at the meeting: District Manager Gary Giordano, and Community Associates Catherine O'Leary and Laura Mulvihill. He recognized the press corps in attendance at the meeting, and thanked them for reporting on Community Board matters and events.

### LIQUOR, WINE and BEER LICENSE APPLICATIONS and RENEWALS

The Board Chairman read aloud the list of establishments in the Community Board 5 area that are in the process of applying for liquor, wine and beer licenses since the last monthly Board Meeting on December 14, 2016. Each Board member received a copy of the list.

#### New Liquor Licenses DONE

- 1) **La Oficina Bar Corp.** 859 Wyckoff Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) Ran NY Group LLC d/b/a **Joya Hall** 63-108 Woodhaven Boulevard, Rego Park, NY 11374

#### Liquor License Renewals

- 1) Gottscheer Central Holding Corp. d/b/a **Gottscheer Hall** 657 Fairview Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) JNS Ventures, Ltd. d/b/a **Vixen** 60-07 Metropolitan Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 3) **TJ's Sports Bar** 60-54 Fresh Pond Road, Maspeth, NY 11378
- 4) **Nicole Kelly Pub, Inc.** 62-10 Woodhaven Blvd., Rego Park, NY 11374

#### New Wine and/or Beer Licenses

- 1) **Fuji III Japanese Cuisine Inc.** 70-11 Grand Avenue, Maspeth, NY 11378

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- 2) **Angel Fire Buffet Inc.** 341 St. Nicholas Ave, Space 6, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 3) **Taj Village** 79-28 Metropolitan Ave, Middle Village, NY 11379

### Wine and/or Beer License Renewals

- 1) 6265 Exclusive Rosa's Pizza d/b/a **Rosa's Pizza & Pasta** 62-65 Fresh Pond Road, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) \***Julia's Beer Wine Bar** 818 Woodward Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 3) **Carlo Pizza of Metropolitan Avenue Inc.** 74-02 Metropolitan Ave, Middle Village, NY 11379

\* Outdoor Area

### Corporate Changes

**East Coast Burgers Inc.** 53-21 Metropolitan Avenue in Ridgewood sent an amendment to their original notification, allowing the basement of the premises to be licensed, as well as providing an update of their landlord's contact information.

Peter Comber asked if the use of the basement complied with the City's Building Codes. The Board Chairman said that it does comply, because the revised floor plans show a secondary means of egress through a shared party wall into the adjoining property, which is owned by the same party, as well as place of refuge in the event of an emergency.

Katy Knight requested to see a copy of the questionnaire that was filed by La Oficina Bar Corp. at 859 Wyckoff Avenue in Ridgewood. The Board Chairman directed staff to provide a copy.

### **Demolition and Construction Notices**

The Board Chairman reported that there were no demolition or construction notifications to the Board since last month's Board Meeting. He asked Board members to remain vigilant and to advise the Board 5 staff about any questionable construction work in the Board area, so they can investigate further.

## **District Manager's Report**

### **Gary Giordano**

The District Manager requested a moment of silence in memory of NYPD Detective Steven McDonald, who died of a heart attack yesterday, 31 years after he being shot and paralyzed from the neck down while on duty in Central Park. He reminded everyone that Det. Anthony J. Venditti was shot and killed on the same day, January 21, 1986, while working undercover on Myrtle Avenue, one block from the Brooklyn border. Subsequent to that incident, Board members, local businesses and community groups publicly advocated for the creation of the Anthony J. Venditti Plaza on Myrtle Avenue, between St. Nicholas Avenue and Wyckoff Avenue, where it is located and maintained by the Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement District today.

Regarding the major water and sewer main reconstruction project in the vicinity of Penelope Avenue in Middle Village, the District Manager said that the contractor completed all of the 8" and 12" water main installations in October. He said that work on Phase 2 of this project includes the installation of catch basins and combined sewers, as well as installation of manholes and chambers, which is proceeding on schedule.

Regarding the 69 Street/Calamus Avenue water and sewer reconstruction project, the District Manager reported that work on this \$29 Million project was stalled last year, due to some unanticipated design issues. The contractor is expected to resume work on this project this month, and the project is expected to be completed in 2018.

Regarding the water main replacement project on Cypress Avenue between Cypress Hills Street and Cooper Avenue, the District Manager said that the contractor is back to work on this job this month, and as a result, traffic has been snarled in that area. He said that the contractor is expected to complete work on this project in about 3 months.

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Regarding the Emergency Bridge Deck Replacement project at Fresh Pond Road and Metropolitan Avenue, he said that this project is slated to cost \$14 Million and was originally scheduled to begin in July. He said that there is no definite start date for this project, as yet, but he expects that work will begin soon. John Maier said that he saw an excavation, inside the lot on the northeast corner of Fresh Pond Road and Metropolitan Avenue today. He said that the contractor will have to work around the schedule of the emergency replacement of the M train trestle bridge that is located between Fresh Pond Road and Metropolitan Avenue, that is slated to begin in July, 2017.

The District Manager wished everyone a Happy New Year.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS** **Zoning and Land Use Review**

#### **Walter Sanchez**

Walter Sanchez said that the Landmarks Preservation Commission recently designated a large section of Ridgewood as part of a Landmark District. He said that their staff has been consulting with several property owners regarding changes that were made to the exterior of their buildings, and informed the Community Board about their findings. He said that 60-47 68 Road, in Ridgewood, is one location and 60-81 69 Avenue is another. At present, the property owners are involved in consultations with the Landmarks Preservation Commission's staff, in order to resolve the outstanding issues.

Sarah Feldman said that she lives in one of Ridgewood's Landmark Districts, and would like to know more about what type of housing improvements are permitted on buildings that are located in Landmark Districts. Mr. Sanchez replied that the Landmarks Preservation Commission only concerns itself with work on the front exterior of the buildings, such as, doors, windows, façade, parapet, etc.

Carmen Santana said that the State Division of Housing and Community Renewal should also be made aware of building complaints in multiple dwellings. The Board Chairman said that all complaints regarding properties in the City of New York should be reported to the City's complaint line, which is 3-1-1.

### **Special Committee on Homeless Issues**

#### **Dmytro Fedkowskyj**

Dmytro Fedkowskyj reported that the committee met with Jacqueline Simone, a representative of the Coalition for the Homeless, on January 4<sup>th</sup> in the CNL Room of Christ the King High School in order to discuss possible solutions to the homelessness crisis in the city. He said that the Coalition for the Homeless is a not-for-profit organization that has been providing services for the homeless population in the city for the past 35 years. He said that over the years, they have developed 11 front-line programs to address the immediate needs of homeless individuals and families, including food assistance programs, crisis intervention, housing referrals and vouchers. Ms. Simone said that at present, they provide services for more than 3,500 people on a daily basis. Ms. Simone gave a power point presentation on the housing crisis that included some possible solutions to the crisis. Ms. Simone informed the committee that their agency is currently working on 5 separate endeavors that are targeted toward ending homelessness in the city, including:

- Creating more permanent supportive housing for people with special needs, which provide on-site services. Ms. Simone said that Mayor Bill de Blasio has committed to creating 15,000 units over 15 years in the city, and Governor Cuomo has committed to providing 20,000 units over 15 years in the state;
- Adoption of the Home Stability Support Program. Mr. Fedkowskyj said that the District Manager wrote a letter to Governor Andrew Cuomo and local elected officials, attaching our Board's resolution in favor of adopting this initiative.
- Fight against source of income discrimination. Ms. Simone pointed out that NYC law prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of lawful sources of income, including rental vouchers and subsidies.



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- Utilize Affordable Housing Resources. Ms. Simone said that her agency is advocating that NYCHA increase the number of placements into permanent housing to 2,500 households per year; that the number of vouchers for Section 8 housing units and apartments administered by the Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development be increased to 2,500 placements per year; and that additional units of affordable housing be created by the city, especially for those having very low-income.
- Passage of the Right to Counsel by the City Council. Ms. Simone informed committee members that while 90% of landlords in Housing Court are represented by attorneys, most tenants are not. She also stated that nearly 22,000 evictions were processed in 2015, with evictions being the leading cause of homelessness in the city. She said that passage of Intro-214-a by the City Council would establish a right to counsel in Housing Court for tenants at or below 200% of the poverty line. She said that presently, 42 Council Members support this bill, which is estimated to save the city as much as \$320 Million per year. She said that this bill is still under consideration in committee, however the number of housing evictions dropped since additional funds were recently allocated to provide free legal services for eviction cases involving low-income families.

Mr. Fedkowskyj gave a brief synopsis of the statistics that were included in Ms. Simone's power-point presentation, as follows:

- In 2016, the homeless population reached a total of 62,840 individuals at one point, including 15,899 homeless families, with 24,251 homeless children, who were sleeping in NYC Shelters. He said that during FY 2016, there were 127,652 homeless men, women and children sleeping in NYC Shelters, at one time or another, which is 82% higher than 10 years ago.
- In 2015, 28% of homeless families came from the poorest neighborhoods in the city, and had at least one adult working on a regular basis.
- In 2015, 11% of homeless families listed their last address as being outside of NYC.
- Homeless single adults, much more so than families, have mental health problems. Ms. Simone informed the committee that studies have shown that a large majority of street homeless people suffer from mental health issues.
- The average cost per day per single adult in the City's shelter system is \$94.57, and \$120 per family.
- African Americans constitute 58% of the homeless population in the City's shelter system.

Mr. Fedkowskyj said that the Coalition for the Homeless receives funding from a combination of sources, including some government grants, but the majority of their funding comes from private foundations and individual donors.

John Maier recommended that the committee inspect the conditions inside homeless shelters and the range of services provided for the homeless population by the service providers, and rate them according to the quality of services provided to the homeless population. Mr. Fedkowskyj said that Homeless Services United, a local nonprofit organization, already does that. He said that he would invite one of their representatives to attend a future committee meeting.

Carmen Santana expressed concern that currently, funding for housing advocacy programs designed to assist the homeless, or families who are facing eviction, is very inadequate. For example, she said that there is a continuing shortage of legal representation for indigent tenants who face eviction, while almost all of their landlords have a lawyer representing them in court.

## **Transportation and Public Transit Services Committee**

### **Vincent Arcuri**

Board Chairman Arcuri reported that the committee did not meet this past month. The next committee meeting is scheduled to begin at 7:30pm on next Tuesday, January 17, 2017 in the Board 5 office.

The Board Chairman reported that Phase I of the Kosciuszko Bridge replacement project was completed, on time and under budget. He said that Phase II of this project is fully funded, and the State Dept. of Transportation

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plans to go out to bid with a request for proposals to design and build the Phase II portion of this cable-stayed bridge project as soon as possible. He said that representatives of the State DOT plan to invite stakeholders on this project to a walk through on the new bridge span very soon. He said that the plans include the installation of LED lighting on the cables and towers of the new Kosciuszko Bridge, with color changes in the LED lights to commemorate holidays and special events in the city.

### **New Business**

Connie Santos distributed flyers for a fund-raising event for the blind, which is sponsored by the Lions Club, who will provide tickets and transportation to and from a Broadway show, A Bronx Tale, as well as dinner following the play on Sunday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2017. She said that the bus leaves from 80 Street at Juniper Valley Park at 1:30pm. Tickets are available for \$160 per person, by calling either Andy Gouzoulis at (718) 386-4680, or herself at (646)732-1019. She said all are welcome to attend this event.

Fred Haller announced that the Glendale Kiwanis Club and Wyckoff Heights Medical Center will once again be sponsors of the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life on June 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> this year, in conjunction with the 104<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct Community Council. He said that this event is a lot of fun and attracts more and more people every year. He welcomed everyone to participate. For more information about the event, he said to visit their website at: [www.relayforlife.org/MiddleVillageNY](http://www.relayforlife.org/MiddleVillageNY), or contact him directly.

Lee Rottenberg said that he and his wife have noticed that more food products in local supermarkets are close to expiring. He advised everyone to be careful to check the expiration dates on food items, prior to purchasing them.

Katy Knight asked whether the Board will participate in the HOPE count of homeless people in our district this month. Kathy Masi was critical of the HOPE count, because when she volunteered for it 2 years ago, she discovered that volunteers are not permitted to ask whether someone with a shopping cart full of their belongings and sitting inside a McDonald's restaurant, or sleeping in a bank lobby next to an ATM, is homeless. She said that you are only allowed to count homeless people who remain outdoors all night, despite the cold. John Maier said that Ms. Simone, from the Coalition for the Homeless, concurred with that assessment, when that subject was raised during last week's Special Committee meeting.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, Board Chairman Arcuri adjourned the public meeting of Community Board 5, Queens on a motion from the floor at 9:25pm. He welcomed everyone to celebrate the holidays by joining the festivities immediately following the meeting.