



Community Board No. 5

Borough of Queens
Ridgewood, Maspeth, Middle Village and Glendale
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Vincent Arcuri, Jr.
Chairperson

Gary Giordano
District Manager

Minutes of Community Board 5 Public Meeting December 10, 2014

Board Members Present

Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Robert Cermeli; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Peter Comber; Daniel Creighton; Henry Cross; Patricia Crowley; Brian Dooley; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Steven Fiedler; Dorie Figliola; Angela Giovannello; Patricia Grayson; Fred T. Haller, III; ; Richard Huber; Paul A. Kerzner; John J. Killcommons; Michael LoCascio; John Maier; Katherine Masi; Eileen Moloney; Michael O'Kane; Donald Passantino; Michael Porcelli; Theodore M. Renz; Luis Rodriguez; Lee S. Rottenberg; Walter H. Sanchez; Connie Santos; John F. Schell; Catherine Sumsky; Jean Tanler; Barbara Toscano

Board Members Absent

Venera Lucy Dolce; Jerome Drake; Caroline Fuchs; Fred Hoeffler; Robert Holden; Lydia Martinez; Margaret O'Kane; Lorraine Sciulli; Mercy Wong; Maryanna Zero

Elected Officials

NYS Assemblyman Margaret Markey, 30th AD, and Staff Mike Armstrong
NYC Council Member Antonio Reynoso, 34th CD
Jordan Goldes - U.S. Representative Grace Meng, 6th C.D.
Neil Giannelli - NYS Senator Joseph Addabbo, 15th SD
Lauren Capozzi - NYS Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, 28th AD
Anne Krzyzanowski - NYS Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, 37th AD
David Renz - NYS Assemblyman Michael Miller, 38th AD

Staff Present

Gary Giordano, District Manager, CB5 Queens
Catherine O'Leary & Laura Mulvihill - CB5Q Staff
Catherine Moore - Queens Borough President's Office

Guests

Abraham Markowitz, YGS Yeshiva, 74-10 88 Street, Glendale, NY 11385

Board Chairman Vincent Arcuri called the monthly Board Meeting to order at 7:35pm, following the Salute to the Flag. He thanked everyone who generously donated gifts for the benefit of pre-school aged children of families who are enrolled in the Women and Infant Children Food Assistance Program in Ridgewood. He invited everyone to stay after the Board Meeting is adjourned, to celebrate the holidays with Board members and enjoy light refreshments.

The Board Chairman welcomed local elected officials and their representatives to address the Board.

NYC Council Member Antonio Reynoso wished everyone a happy holiday season, and announced that the NYC Landmark Preservation Commission has approved the designation of the Central Ridgewood Historic District. He said

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that the district comprises 990 buildings that are located on predominantly residential blocks in Ridgewood, including 69th Avenue, Madison Street and Catalpa Avenue. He said that prior to this section of Ridgewood, the North Ridgewood and South Ridgewood Historic Districts were approved by the Landmark Preservation Commission. He supports further expanding landmark designation to adjoining sections of Ridgewood, he said.

Council Member Reynoso said that over the past year, he worked with City Council members to draft a report regarding the declining manufacturing base in New York City. As a result, he is sponsoring legislation to spur industrial development in vacant industrial areas throughout the city, in order to create more jobs for local residents.

The Council Member said that he plans to secure \$250,000 in funding for new street tree plantings in the Board 5 area in the coming year. And, he said that he was successful in passing legislation to ensure more funds are allocated to hire additional school counselors in local public schools where needed, particularly where there is a ratio of one school counselor per 250 students, because providing these social support services is critically important to families with young children in need.

In the coming year, he said that he plans to work on reforming the City's current property tax structure. In addition, he supports expanding the total number of buildings in the City's Alternative Enforcement Program (AEP). He explained that the AEP is a program administered by the Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development, in which the City hires contractors to make emergency repairs in residential buildings that are owned by some of the City's worst landlords, and then place a lien on their properties once the repairs have been completed. He said that this program is a cost-efficient way to retain housing stock throughout the City.

The Council Member reminded everyone that this year, the income guidelines for the Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption Program were increased to \$50,000 per year/per household, provided the tenant spends more than one-third of their income toward their monthly rent.

In closing, the Council Member welcomed everyone to attend a Tenants' Forum that his office is co-sponsoring with the Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development from 6:30pm to 8pm, on Thursday, December 11th, 2014 in P.S. 120, located at 18 Beaver Street, in Brooklyn. Flyers were distributed.

NYS Assemblywoman Margaret Markey thanked everyone for their service as Board members and wished everyone Happy Holidays and Happy New Year.

On behalf of Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, Catherine Moore welcomed everyone to attend the annual State of the Borough Address, scheduled to begin at 10 AM on Thursday, January 22nd, 2015 in the Colden Center Auditorium at Queens College. She said that parking is available on campus. She advised anyone who wishes to attend to RSVP by calling the Borough President's Office at (718) 286-3220. In closing, Ms. Moore wished everyone a Happy Holiday Season and Happy New Year.

On behalf of State Senator Joseph Addabbo, Neil Giannelli wished everyone Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year. He welcomed constituents to contact their office at (718) 497-1630, or visit their office located at 66-85 73 Place in Middle Village between the hours of 9am and 5pm, from Monday to Friday.

On behalf of State Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, Lauren Capozzi reported that the Assemblyman co-chaired a public hearing with State Assemblywoman Michele Titus yesterday regarding the State's 2014-2015 budget, as it relates to homeless service programs throughout New York State. She said the Assemblyman is advocating for increased funding for measures that would either prevent or reduce homelessness in the State, since the number of homeless adults, children and families in New York City has now reached record levels.

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Ms. Capozzi announced that Council Member Karen Koslowitz and Assemblyman Hevesi are co-sponsoring a Holiday Toy Drive for the benefit of children between the age of 3 and 5 years old who are enrolled in the Interdisciplinary Center for Child Development in Bayside. She said that all donations can be dropped off at their district office located at 70-50 Austin Street, Suite 110 in Forest Hills, on or before December 18th, 2014. In addition, she said that their office is coordinating with New York Cares to sponsor a Coat Drive this year, and welcomed calls to their office at (718) 263-5595 for more information. She wished everyone a Happy Holiday and Happy New Year. Flyers were distributed.

On behalf of State Assemblyman Mike Miller, David Renz thanked everyone who donated food items for last month's Food Drive. He welcomed everyone to their Holiday Party, co-sponsored by State Senator Joseph Addabbo, on Monday, December 15th, from 6pm to 8pm in their district office, located at 83-91 Woodhaven Boulevard. He wished everyone a Happy Holiday Season, and a Happy New Year. Flyers were distributed.

On behalf of Congresswoman Grace Meng, Jordan Goldes announced that the Social Security Administration office, located at 63-44 Austin Street in Forest Hills, will be closed for renovations for the next 3 or 4 months. He said that while the repairs are underway, local residents will have to travel to either one of the other local offices that are located in Flushing or Jamaica, in Queens. He wished everyone a Happy Holiday Season and Happy New Year.

On behalf of State Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Anne Krzyzanowski wished everyone a Happy Holiday Season, and a Happy New Year.

Board Chairman Arcuri introduced the first item on the Board Agenda as:

PUBLIC FORUM

Jean Tanler, coordinator of the Maspeth Industrial Business Zone and a Board member, spoke about the new application for a liquor license at 56-06 Cooper Avenue, that is located in the Ridgewood Industrial Business Zone. She said that the purpose of creating the Ridgewood IBZ district was to separate industrial areas from competing commercial and residential uses. She said that small industrial businesses and entrepreneurs have been driven out of manufacturing districts throughout the City, such as Williamsburg, largely due to real estate speculation and the higher rents and rising real estate values that accompany competing uses, including bars and restaurants. She said that the City Council is currently considering legislation to address this issue, but passage of new legislation that would protect the integrity of industrial zones throughout the City will require some additional time. In the interim, she asked that Board members recommend denial of this application.

Justin Carter, one of the partners of Grove Productions, Inc., spoke about their application to open a seasonal, family-oriented entertainment venue at 56-06 Cooper Avenue, Ridgewood. He said that they intend to hire approximately 50 employees to work at their events, where they plan to serve food, wine and beer for up to 999 patrons. He explained that the property owner will lease the factory space to a separate business that will be closed whenever they host events at this site on weekends from April through October. He introduced his partner, Eamon Connell, who said that their employees would be paid a minimum of \$14.50 an hour, which is considered a living wage in the industry. Mr. Carter said that he and his partners would agree to any terms and conditions that Board members might require in this case. The Board Chairman stated that the Zoning and Land Use Review Committee report and recommendation on this matter would be delivered later this evening.

Dawn Scala, a Glendale resident and member of the Glendale-Middle Village Coalition, said that she submitted testimony for the public hearing in Albany yesterday regarding the need for increased funding for preventive services for at-risk families and individuals on the verge of homelessness in New York State. She said that more funding is needed to help expedite the placement of these individuals and families into permanent housing, instead of relying on the use of transitional homeless shelters where they often stay for months,

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or years at a time. She cited several instances of waste, fraud and abuse that were exposed in recent news articles that describe policies and practices adopted by a couple of homeless service providers.

The Board Chairman announced the next item on the Board Agenda as:

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Vincent Arcuri, Jr.

The Board Chairman recognized the press corps in attendance at the meeting, and thanked them for their reporting on Community Board matters and events.

MINUTES

Board Chairman Arcuri asked Board members to review the minutes of the November 12, 2014 Board Meeting. Peter Comber made a motion to approve the Minutes, seconded by Dorie Figliola. The minutes were accepted by voice vote.

The Board Chairman reported that he met with the NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer recently in order to remind him that our Community Board and local elected officials have all opposed, and will continue to oppose the proposed transitional homeless residence located at 78-16 Cooper Avenue, in Glendale.

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 last month. Each Board member received a copy of the listing.

New Liquor Licenses

- 1) ***69-38 Grand Avenue Restaurant Inc.** d/b/a To be determined 69-38 Grand Ave, Maspeth, NY 11378 (Formerly **Crux**)

Liquor License Renewals

- 1) Juventus Sport Caffè Inc. d/b/a **Amici Café** 73-11 88 Street, Glendale, NY 11385
- 2) **Baha Lounge Corp.** 83-38 Woodhaven Blvd., Glendale, NY 11385
- 3) **Seneca Fiesta Corp.** 603 Seneca Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385

Wine and/or Beer License Renewals

- 1) **The Big Apple Deli Grocery Store** 61-01 Grand Avenue, Maspeth, NY 11378

* Indicates Licensed Outdoor Area

Demolition Notices

The Board Chairman reported that there were no notifications about building demolitions in our Board area this month. He asked Board members to remain vigilant and to advise the Board 5 staff about any questionable construction work in the area, so they can investigate further.

STAFF REPORT

District Manager Gary Giordano

District Manager Gary Giordano said that communities in the Board 5 area should be grateful this year for the good, and often excellent, police officers and supervisors in the 104th Police Precinct for their efforts in making our neighborhoods a safe place to live. He cited the year-end crime statistics in the 104th Police Precinct, by saying that year-to-date crime has decreased more than 6% in the 104th Police Precinct, as of 11/30/2014. He said robbery is

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down 29.4%; felony assaults have decreased by 14.5%; and burglaries are down 17.7%. He said that he is concerned that rapes have increased from 15 in 2013, to 18 in 2014, and that most of these are reportedly situations where the victim knows the perpetrator. He said that a lot more attention must be given to address the problem of domestic violence that so many families experience. In addition, he said that there should be a concentrated effort to convince people to show respect for each other throughout the City. He said that the overall crime statistics for the entire City indicate that our City is much safer than it was 20 years ago.

The District Manager said that improvements in public safety are likely the main factor making our City a place where more people want to live. As a result, housing prices have risen significantly, which is very good for current property owners, but increased prices are putting great pressure on many who rent apartments. As a result, he said that there are lots of families who are living doubled-up with others in their residential apartments.

Regarding current capital improvement projects in the Board 5 area, the District Manager said that the contractor has begun work on the \$20+ Million project to replace the combined sewer and water mains along Calamus Avenue, between 69 Street and 74 Street, and in 69 Street, between Calamus Avenue and 47th Avenue. He said that under this contract, a 5 ft. by 8 ft. reinforced concrete box sewer will be installed in Calamus Avenue and in 69 Street, along with new water mains.

The District Manager said that another major sewer and water main improvement project in the Board 5 area is scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2015 in the Penelope Avenue area, in Middle Village. He said that this project should alleviate the severe street and basement flooding that has occurred after heavy rainfall in this section of Middle Village. This project will also include new water main installation.

The District Manager reported that last month, he attended the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's briefing for elected officials and representatives, regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to evaluate alternatives that will enhance the transportation of freight across New York Harbor. He said that construction of a rail freight tunnel from New Jersey to Brooklyn would put tremendous pressure on our community, since the Bay Ridge line of the LIRR comes directly into Fresh Pond Yards in Glendale. He explained that the Board 5 area has the only freight rail yard in either Queens or Brooklyn. All freight traffic entering or exiting Long Island has to come through the Fresh Pond Yards, in Glendale, which has resulted in too many sleepless nights for residents living along much of the freight line, and created air pollution problems, as well.

In closing, the District Manager wished everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukah, and Happy New Year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Zoning and Land Use Review Committee

Walter Sanchez

Mr. Sanchez reported that the Committee met on December 8, 2014, in the Board 5 office to review and discuss the application submitted to the NYC Board of Standards and Appeals, by Gonzalez, Saggio and Harlan, LLP, Attorneys at Law, on behalf of Marmel Realty Associates Corp., the owner of record, for a Special Permit, under Section 73-36 of the Zoning Resolution, to have a physical culture establishment for **Lucille Roberts Women's Gym** at **55-05 Myrtle Avenue**, Block: 3450; Lot: 1, in Ridgewood, Queens. He said that this business was located in the basement of 54-32 Myrtle Avenue until recently, when they moved into the 2nd and 3rd floors in the newly renovated commercial building that is located at 55-05 Myrtle Avenue, between St. Nicholas Avenue and Madison Street.

Mr. Sanchez said that the committee voted unanimously in favor of recommending no objection to the proposed physical culture establishment for the Lucille Roberts Women's Gym at its present location, at 55-05 Myrtle Avenue In Ridgewood.

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After a brief general discussion, Board Chairman Arcuri requested a Roll Call vote on the committee's recommendation, which carried unanimously by a vote of – 31 – in favor; - 0 – opposed; - 0 – abstaining; and - 0 – not voting.

Regarding the new beer and wine application, submitted by Justin Carter for the seasonal outdoor food and beverage business in the rear yard of 56-06 Cooper Avenue, in Ridgewood, for up to 999 patrons, Mr. Sanchez reported that the committee met with the applicants in the Board 5 office on Monday, December 8th, 2014, to review their application and discuss their proposed plans.

Mr. Sanchez said that the Board received supportive correspondence regarding the proposed operators, from the district manager of Community Board 7, in Brooklyn, where they have an alcoholic beverage license, under the business name Mister Sunday.

In addition, he said that our Board received positive feedback regarding these business operators from patrons living in the Community Board 5, Queens area, who have expressed a need for this type of social gathering venue. He said that the applicants for a wine and beer only license in the outdoor rear area of 5606 Cooper Avenue, in Ridgewood, Queens, are Justin Carter, Mark Connell, and Eamon Harkin, under the business name Grove Productions LLC. They are applying for a Seasonal License from April through October 2015.

Since our Community Board will have a mechanism to review a Seasonal License each year, our Board could oppose renewal of this wine and beer license at the proposed 5606 Cooper Avenue site, if their operation causes community problems, he said.

Therefore, the Zoning and Land Use Review Committee of Community Board 5, Queens recommends that our Board have “no objection” to the proposed Seasonal Wine and Beer License, providing that: the applicant provides at least one qualified security staff for every 100 patrons, that music and dancing is limited to Sundays, as proposed to our Board by the applicants, and that the applicants appear before our Community Board annually regarding operation of their business at 56-06 Cooper Avenue.

After a general discussion of the matter, the Board Chairman requested a Roll Call vote on the committee recommendation, which carried by a vote of - 24 - in favor; - 7 - opposed; - 0 – abstentions; and – 0 – not voting.

Mr. Sanchez reported that at their meeting, the committee also discussed the framework of new legislation that is under consideration in the City Council to address the issue of a shrinking manufacturing base in the City of New York. He said that, as announced by Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito last month, the Council is considering legislation that would establish a Comprehensive Platform to Reinvigorate Industrial and Manufacturing Sectors of New York City. He said that this initiative would section off areas that are zoned for manufacturing for industry from commercial and/or residential development. He said that the report describes innovative zoning frameworks and mechanisms to address this overall long-term goal, through the creation of the following zoning districts:

1) Industrial Employment District – A zoning district which reserves space for the industrial sector, which is critical to the economic well-being of thousands of New Yorkers and the health of the overall economy. In places where a concentration of manufacturing and industrial activity exists — in many of the existing “Industrial Business Zones” for instance — a re-writing of the use regulations to focus on the protection and growth of these industries is essential, as is allowing for additional density to create the option for more space for new and existing firms to expand. Combined with new strategic incentives and targeted enforcement, these districts will provide a stable regulatory framework for investment.

2) Creative Economy District –With additional commercial density added to a protected core of industrial space, these districts would create dynamic new mixed-use employment centers and provide space for the growing “creative” sectors of technology, media, arts, and design. Job growth in these districts would no longer be hindered

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by competition for land with incompatible uses like mini-storage or nightlife, or blocked-out by unproductive warehousing of property in hope of future residential rezoning. With additional commercial density, property owners would gain much more lucrative development opportunities than under the current zoning while growing the City's employment base. Robust workforce development strategies will need to be implemented in tandem with these new districts to ensure a wide variety of New Yorkers will have access to these new jobs.

3) A Real Mixed-Use District – Mixed-use industrial-residential-commercial neighborhoods have a unique dynamism that has made them tremendously desirable. Other cities are increasingly trying to emulate the dynamic synergy of these mixed-use neighborhoods. A zone which supports and requires the creation of commercial and compatible industrial space alongside residential would create dynamic new neighborhoods instead of just residential development.

Mr. Sanchez said that at their most recent committee meeting, the Committee voted to recommend in favor of adopting the above-referenced legislation, as outlined.

After a general discussion of the matter, the Board Chairman requested a Roll Call vote on the committee recommendation which carried by a vote of - 24 - in favor; - 7 - opposed; - 0 – abstentions; and - 0 - not voting.

Transportation Services Committee

John Schell

John Schell, Co-Chair of the Transportation Services Committee, reported that at their committee meeting in the Board 5 office on November 18th, 2014, committee members discussed the recent release of the Tier I Draft Environmental Impact Assessment (DEIS) by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) and the Federal Highway Administration for the proposed Cross Harbor Freight Program. He said that the DEIS presents the regional benefits and potential environmental effects of 10 Build Alternatives and a No Action Alternative. The purpose of this review process is to evaluate alternatives designed to improve the movement of freight across the New York Harbor between the east-of-Hudson and west-of-Hudson regions. The public comment period for the proposed project will remain open through February 27, 2015, he said.

Mr. Schell explained that years ago, the PANYNJ had proposed plans to build a rail-freight tunnel under the Hudson River between New York and New Jersey for the purpose of hauling freight from the east side of the Hudson River to the west side of the Hudson River. He said that right now, the vast majority of freight cargo arrives in New York City transported by large tractor trailers that travel over local bridges. Any cargo that is transported by rail is hauled all the way up to Selkirk in New York State before it can be hauled on railroad tracks that cross the only rail freight bridge over the Hudson River, he said.

Mr. Schell said that Committee members plan to review the proposed Draft (DEIS) and deliver a report, along with recommendations on the proposed Cross Harbor Freight Program, before the monthly Board Meeting in February, 2015.

New Business

Lee Rottenberg commended the Greater Ridgewood Youth Council for providing an excellent after-school program and facilities for local school children. He said that his daughter regularly attends their program, along with hundreds of other children who receive homework help and recreational services.

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 8:17pm. He welcomed everyone to stay to share good food and good wishes with their colleagues.