



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 January 14, 2015

Board Members Present

Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Robert Cermeli; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Peter Comber; Daniel Creighton; Henry Cross; Patricia Crowley; Venera Lucy Dolce; Brian Dooley; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Steven Fiedler; Dorie Figliola; Caroline Fuchs; Patricia Grayson; Fred Hoefflerle; Robert Holden; Richard Huber; Paul A. Kerzner; John J. Killcommons; Michael LoCascio; John Maier; 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; Connie Santos; Lorraine Sciulli; Catherine Sumsky; Jean Tanler; Barbara Toscano; Maryanna Zero

Board Members Absent

Jerome Drake; Angela Giovanniello; Fred T. Haller, III; Lydia Martinez; John F. Schell; Mercy Wong

Elected Officials

Evelyn Cruz – U.S. Representative Nydia Velazquez, 7th C.D.
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
Deidre Feerick – NYC Council Member Elizabeth Crowley, 30th CD
Kevin Worthington - NYC Council Member Antonio Reynoso, 34th CD

Staff Present

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

Guests

Mario Matos, Assistant Principal – Maspeth High School, 54-10 74 Street, Maspeth, NY 11378

Board Chairman Vincent Arcuri called the monthly Board Meeting to order at 7:35pm, following the Salute to the Flag. Chairman Arcuri requested a moment of silence in memory of two NYPD Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu, who were shot and killed in the line of duty on December 20th, 2014. He said that many public officials, friends and family of Officer Ramos attended the funeral service that was held in Christ Tabernacle in Glendale, in addition to thousands of police officers and local citizens who stood in long lines outside. He asked everyone to remain standing in order to welcome the latest addition to our Community Board family, Mercy Wong’s newborn daughter, Ona Mei Sawyer, as well as to honor Catherine Moore’s granddaughter on her recent induction into the U.S. Marine Corps.

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The Board Chairman announced the first item on the Board agenda as a power point presentation about the programs and services offered by Forestdale, Inc., a foster care agency located in Forest Hills, Queens. He introduced Zara Sheikh and invited her to address the board.

PRESENTATION RE: Forestdale Inc. Foster Care Services
by Zara Sheikh, Home Finding Recruiter

Zara Sheikh said that Forestdale, Inc. was established in 1854 in New York City, primarily to provide foster care and youth development programs for children who are referred to their agency by the Dept. of Social Services, or a Family Court judge. She said that their main goal is to strengthen family ties where possible, and thereby reduce the need for foster care. The Forestdale Campus is located at 67-35 112 Street in Forest Hills, and she said that their staff currently provides quality care and a temporary home for approximately 700 children, ranging in age from newborn to 21 years of age. She explained that most of the children in their program have experienced abuse, neglect and maltreatment and there is a great need for more foster care families in Queens. She estimated that today, there are 1,300 children in Queens who are currently waiting to be placed with foster families. And, she estimated that there are approximately 4,000 children who are waiting to be placed with foster families citywide.

Ms. Sheikh said that in her capacity as a homefinder, she works to recruit healthy adults over the age of 21, who are willing to provide safe and nurturing homes to help children achieve their personal, academic, and professional goals. She said the foster children who most urgently need placement are sibling groups, youth age 12+, teen mothers and their children, and children with emotional and behavioral problems.

Ms. Sheikh said that agency staff, volunteers, and parent support groups provide foster care families with a whole range of support services, including ongoing training and guidance, therapy services for children, an assigned case planner, and monthly stipends of up to \$1,000 to assist with the care of their foster children, with additional subsidies for daycare and afterschool programs. She pointed out that there are no income guidelines for potential foster parents, other than that you must be able to cover your own living expenses. And, she said that foster parents may be married or single, and either rent or own their home.

Ms. Sheikh said that their screening process involves attending an initial information session on how to become a foster parent, followed by training sessions that are conducted by their staff about the roles and responsibilities of foster parents, and personal interviews, home visits and background checks. If both parties agree, foster parents enter into a contractual agreement for a minimum of 6 months, which require foster parents to accompany their foster children to all of their medical appointments and/or therapy sessions. She said that in many cases, foster parents legally adopt foster children, but that it is not always possible.

For more information about how to apply to become a foster parent, M. Sheikh welcomed potential foster parents to contact Forestdale, Inc. by email at: fosterparentrecruitment@forestdaleinc.org, or by calling the Homefinding Department at (718) 263-0740x602.

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

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 New Year.

On behalf of Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, Evelyn Cruz wished everyone a Happy New Year.

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On behalf of Congresswoman Grace Meng, Jordan Goldes informed everyone that the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has agreed to her request for additional airplane noise monitors in Queens. He said that the devices are designed to provide data on the impact that increased levels of aircraft noise have on communities throughout the borough, so that officials can develop a plan to help alleviate it. Monitors have been installed in Flushing, and will be installed soon in the Middle Village/Maspeth area. He said that last month, President Obama signed into law new bill sponsored by U.S. Representative Meng which seeks to make Queens historic sites that are associated with the Flushing Remonstrance, part of the National Park Service.

On behalf of State Senator Joseph Addabbo, Neil Giannelli said that the State Senator recently met with the Commissioner of the Department of Homeless Services and Mayor Bill de Blasio regarding adopting a new approach toward ending homelessness in New York City. He said that the Senator reiterated his opposition to the proposed homeless residence at 78-16 Cooper Avenue in Glendale. Mr. Giannelli mentioned that several major banking institutions recently agreed to a \$5.6 Billion settlement in the mortgage-backed securities case, and budget negotiations begin in Albany during this legislative session. 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. He wished everyone a Happy New Year.

On behalf of State Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, Lauren Capozzi reported that the Assemblyman recently introduced new legislation to prohibit vendors from shipping municipal solid waste without first bailing the waste, and would mandate that closed containers be used to transport the waste. In addition, she said that the Assemblyman has secured \$6 Million in funding allocations to upgrade the antiquated and polluting freight train engines that run through the district and upstate. And, the Assemblyman continues to advocate for increased State funding for measures that would either prevent or reduce homelessness in the State. Ms. Capozzi welcomed calls to their office at (718) 263-5595 for more information. Flyers were distributed.

On behalf of State Assemblyman Mike Miller, David Renz wished everyone a Happy, Healthy New Year. He announced that their office is currently working on a Valentines for Veterans Drive to distribute cards, gifts and good wishes to disabled American veterans in February. Flyers were distributed, along with the 2015 NYC Parking Calendar, which shows the dates that Alternate Side Parking regulations are suspended citywide. For more information, he advised constituents to contact their office at (718) 805-0950, or stop by their office at 83-91 Woodhaven Boulevard.

On behalf of City Council Member Antonio Reynoso, Kevin Worthington announced that February 20th is the deadline to submit requests for discretionary funding from their local Council Member.

PUBLIC FORUM

Jack Olszewski, a resident of Linden Street in Ridgewood, said that he was speaking on behalf of 15 block residents who are requesting that the Fresh Pond Road Street Festival be moved to another location that is not so congested. He said that every year, residents who live on the side streets between Fresh Pond Road and Traffic Avenue cannot drive their personal vehicles, due to the number of booths and rides that are blocking both sides of Fresh Pond Road for 4 days in September every year. He said that his neighbors object to the amount of garbage and litter that the festival generates, in addition to the noise, air pollution and traffic congestion that results from this festival every year. In closing, he asked the Board to disapprove the permit for this festival, or recommend that it be relocated.

Mary Parisen, Chair of Citizens United for Railroad Environmental Solutions (CURES), thanked the Community Board members for showing support for their efforts to improve the freight rail transportation in Queens County. She said that the Port Authority of NY and NJ just released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Cross Harbor Freight Program, as part of a study to improve the flow of freight into and out of New York City. She said

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that the Port Authority of NY and NJ has scheduled a series of public hearings to obtain public input on several different options that are included in the lengthy DEIS document. CURES is currently reviewing the Draft EIS and plans to present their comments in writing at the public hearing scheduled for January 29th, 2015 in Queens Borough Hall. She said that while the goal of the Cross Harbor Freight Program is to reduce truck traffic into New York City, the local freight rail system is already congested by the amount of freight that is being hauled daily through the Fresh Pond Rail Yard in Glendale. She said that according to the proposed plan, an additional 16 to 21 trains a day could be hauling freight through local residential communities. She said that the public comment period for this DEIS ends on February 29th, 2015. She encouraged everyone to voice their objections to the negative environmental impacts, including increased air pollution, noise, vibrations, congestion and dirt, that this plan would generate in local residential communities.

Ms. Parisen concluded by saying that this tunnel and all that might be required will cost more than \$10 Billion, which amounts to \$500 Million a mile. She suggested that instead of wasting the scarce public funding, CURES calls for planning and action that includes technological updates for the existing rail freight system, such as, upgrading the antiquated diesel engines that are used to haul freight on the LIRR railroad tracks through residential areas.

Board Chairman Arcuri said that representatives of the Port Authority of NY and NJ gave a power point presentation at the Queens Borough Board meeting on Monday night in Queens Borough Hall. He said that questions about where in Brooklyn or Queens is there sufficient acreage to efficiently off-load the additional freight cars on the existing freight rail system. He said no answers were given. The Board Chairman explained that currently, any freight traffic that is hauled by rail through the New York area, heading out to Long Island, has to travel on freight rail lines located in the Community Board 5 area. He said that freight cars bottleneck in the Fresh Pond Rail Yard in Glendale on the existing freight rail lines now, with the current amount of freight that is being hauled. He questioned where and how any additional freight traffic would travel. He said that the Sunnyside yard is a passenger rail yard and right of way, which does not meet the standard requirements of freight rail traffic.

Dawn Scala, a Glendale resident and member of the Glendale-Middle Village Coalition, gave a brief update on the status of the Article 78 Proceeding, to oppose the proposal to establish a transitional housing facility at 78-16 Cooper Avenue, in Glendale. She said that the Coalition recently responded in writing to the City's original reply to their petition, and a hearing before a judge will be calendared soon to allow their lawyer to present aural arguments in this case. She asked whether local elected officials plan to present any additional arguments in this case.

Mario Matos, Assistant Principal of Maspeth High School, welcomed everyone to attend the student performance of "Stand and Deliver" in the high school theatre at 7 PM on January 22nd and 23rd, 2015. He said that he was happy to report that 90% of the graduating class expects to graduate with Regents Diplomas this year, and most of them plan to attend college. He said that Maspeth High School is located at 54-10 74 Street, between Grand Avenue and 57 Avenue in Maspeth.

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 December 10, 2014 Board Meeting. John Maier made two corrections to the minutes, by saying Board member Margaret O'Kane is listed as present, when she was absent from last month's Board Meeting; and on the second line of Page 6, the Board vote should include: -0- abstentions. Richard Huber made a motion to approve the Minutes as amended, seconded by Daniel Creighton. The minutes were accepted by voice vote.

The Board Chairman informed everyone that the Executive Committee will soon meet with the sponsors of Street

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Festivals in the Board 5 area, who submitted their applications to the Mayor's Office for the coming year. He read aloud the following list of Street Festival applications:

- 1) The RIDGEWOOD LDC's MYRTLE AVENUE FESTIVAL, on Myrtle Avenue from Wyckoff Avenue to Fresh Pond Road in Ridgewood, planned for Sunday, April 19th, 2015 from 12 NOON to 6PM
- 2) The MASPETH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE-LIONS CLUB-KIWANIS CLUB's GRAND AVENUE FESTIVAL on Grand Avenue btw 65 Street and 72 Street in Maspeth, planned for Sunday, May 31st, 2015 from 12 NOON to 6 PM
- 3) The MYRTLE AVENUE BID's MYRTLE AVENUE FESTIVAL on Myrtle Avenue from Wyckoff Avenue to Fresh Pond Road in Ridgewood, planned for Sunday, September 13th, 2015 from 12 NOON to 6PM
- 4) The FRESH POND ROAD STREET FESTIVAL sponsored by the Federazione Italo Americana di Brooklyn & Queens on Fresh Pond Road from Menahan Street to Woodbine Street in Ridgewood, planned for Thursday, Sept. 3rd, through Sunday, Sept 6th, 2015 from 5:30 PM to 10 PM daily, except for Sunday, when their hours of operation will be 2 PM to 6 PM
- 5) The Glendale Kiwanis Club's MYRTLE AVENUE FESTIVAL on Myrtle Avenue from Forest Avenue to Fresh Pond Road in Ridgewood, planned for Sunday, August 16th, 2015 from 12 NOON to 6 PM
- 6) The Glendale Kiwanis Club's METROPOLITAN AVENUE FESTIVAL, on Metropolitan Avenue btw 73rd Place and 79 Street in Middle Village, planned for Sunday, May 3rd, 2015 from 12 NOON to 6 PM

The Board Chairman said that the Executive Committee will meet to review their applications, and present their recommendations to the full Board for a vote at next month's Board Meeting.

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) ***Taqueria Kermes Inc**, 66-36 Fresh Pond Road, Ridgewood, NY 11385
(Previously reported as **Kreden's**)
- 2) **Fonda Cubana**, Inc, 913 Wyckoff Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
(Previously reported as **Los Compadres Bar and Restaurant**)
- 3) **The Ridgewood Ale House**, 57-38 Myrtle Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 4) * Allan Windsor & Kathryn Sullivan d/b/a **Black Fish LLC**, 66-48 Myrtle Avenue, Glendale, NY 11385
(Previously reported as **Farrell's Pub**)
- 5) **The Bad Old Days**, 1684 Woodbine Street, Ridgewood, NY 11385

Liquor License Renewals

- 1) **Mickey's Little Garden**, Inc. 61-21 Fresh Pond Road, Middle Village, NY 11379
- 2) **Richie's Pub**, Inc. 69-47 Grand Avenue, Maspeth, NY 11378
- 3) **Ridgewood Lodge 1642** Loyal Order of Moose Inc. 72-15 Grand Avenue, Maspeth, NY 11378
- 4) *GISS Restaurant Corp. d/b/a **Paradise Bar Restaurant & Garden**
678 Woodward Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 5) **Nicole Kelly Pub**, Inc. 62-10 Woodhaven Boulevard, Rego Park, NY 11374
- 6) JNS Ventures, Ltd. d/b/a **Vixen** 60-07 Metropolitan Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 7) Frank Kowalinski Post #4 **Polish Legion of American Veterans** 61-57 Maspeth Ave, Maspeth, NY 11378
- 8) **Gottscheer Central Holding Company**, Inc. 655/657 Fairview Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 9) **TJ's Sports Bar** 60-54 Fresh Pond Road, Maspeth, NY 11378

Wine and/or Beer License Renewals

- 1) 6265 Exclusive Rosa's Corp. d/b/a **Rosa's Pizzeria** 62-65 Fresh Pond Rd, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) CBC Pizza Corp. d/b/a **Glendale Pizza**, 68-27 Myrtle Avenue, Glendale, NY 11385
- 3) **Carlo Pizza of Metropolitan Avenue**, Inc. 74-02 Metropolitan Avenue, Middle Village, NY 11379

Corporate Change

- 1) Woodhaven Blvd. Restaurant, Inc. d/b/a **Woodhaven House**, 63-98 Woodhaven Blvd, Rego Park, NY 11374

* 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 attended the funeral service of NYPD Patrol Officers Rafael Ramos and Weijang Liu, along with people from all over the country. He said that their tragic death in the line of duty touched the hearts of everyone there. He said that the overall crime statistics for the entire City indicate that our City is much safer than it was 20 years ago, and New Yorkers should be grateful to local patrol officers for risking their lives to keep the peace in our communities.

The District Manager reported that the plans to convert the vacant factory at 78-16 Cooper Avenue in Glendale into a transitional housing facility were disapproved by the Department of Buildings on December 17th, 2014. He said that two lots in this site were merged into one zoning lot recently.

Kathy Masi asked that the Community Board object to the property owner's request to grant a waiver of a requirement to obtain approval from the LIRR to build such a large structure adjacent to their railroad tracks in Glendale. After a general discussion of the matter, the Board Chairman said that he would address a letter to Queens Borough Commissioner Derek Lee, stating the Board's objection to building this structure adjacent to the railroad tracks.

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 on 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 foot by 8 foot reinforced concrete box sewer will be installed in Calamus Avenue and in 69 Street, along with new water mains. He said that the new sewer mains will increase the capacity of the sewer system which should alleviate flooding conditions during rainy weather. He thanked Brian Dooley, as chair of the Environmental Services Committee, for all of his efforts to improve the water and sewer system in our Board area.

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.

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The District Manager reported that he plans to attend the public hearing in Queens Borough Hall on January 29th, regarding the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's Draft Environmental Impact Statement. He said that the Transportation Services Committee plans to review and discuss the matter at their next meeting on January 27th in the Board 5 office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Health and Human Services Committee

Robert Cermeli

Robert Cermeli reported that the Health and Human Services Committee met on Monday, January 5th, 2015 at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center with the President and Chief Executive Officer Ramon Rodriguez, who gave them a guided tour of the hospital's facilities on the 4th and 10th floors, showing the planned renovations for improved space to provide outpatient services.

Mr. Cermeli reported that in the past three years since Mr. Rodriguez was hired as president, new skilled managers were hired in each department, and an almost entirely new Executive staff. He said that the Clinical staff has been changed at every important part of the organization, including a new Chief of Surgery and new Chief Nursing Officer. In addition, all of the Emergency Room physicians are now Board-Certified. He reported that the Obstetrics satisfaction rate of their patients is up from 60% to 80% approval rating.

Mr. Cermeli said that a higher percentage of Medicaid patients, than Medicare patients, are treated at the hospital. He said that the trend in patient counts in the hospital is toward increasing outpatient care, and reducing inpatient care wherever possible. For example, he said that in the past year, there have been 13,000 hospital admissions and 25,000 more outpatient cases. The Emergency Room had 89,000 patient visits last year. And, for the last three years, the hospital had budget surpluses, he said.

Mr. Rodriguez informed the committee that obesity and diabetes is a major problem in the community. Committee members stressed the need for better health and physical education classes in local schools to address this situation.

Mr. Cermeli expressed the committee's concern that there appears to be a systemic problem with providing adequate funding for local hospitals. He pointed out that in the past decade, at least four hospitals located in Queens closed after filing for bankruptcy. He said that the list includes:

- 1) St. John's Hospital in Elmhurst which was a 450-bed facility, with 2,500 employees, and treated about 200,000 people annually, and closed after 118 years of delivering health care services to the community.
- 2) Peninsula Hospital in the Rockaways was downsized to a 173-bed facility, with 1,025 employees, and closed after 104 years of serving the community.
- 3) Mary Immaculate Hospital in Jamaica, which was a 139-bed facility, plus an affiliate nursing home with 115 beds, was closed after 72 years of providing health care to the local community.
- 4) Parkway Hospital in Forest Hills, with 251 beds, and 600 employees, closed after 46 years in existence.

Mr. Cermeli said that at present, there are 10 hospitals left in Queens to provide health care services to over 2,230,000 residents in Queens, not to mention commuters and travelers arriving by plane at one of our airports.

Mr. Cermeli said that the cost of health care in all its phases is going up. He said that in his view, some of the problems experienced by local hospitals are: overuse of emergency room services by uninsured patients;

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Insurance companies paying out different rates to different hospitals; competition between hospitals with larger or specialty facilities; the rising costs of salaries and benefits; the cost of latest technical equipment; a local Hospital's reputation – real or perceived; and facility maintenance and upkeep.

He pointed out the advantages of having local hospitals serving local residents in the event of natural or man-made disasters or pandemics, such as the H1N1 Flu virus, and to have sufficient capacity in the hospital care delivery system to keep down Emergency Room wait times, in addition to providing quick and easy access for patients to obtain care in emergencies, as well as for their caregivers to visit them.

As a member of the Board of Trustees at Wyckoff Hospital Medical Center, Board Chairman Arcuri commented that 86 % of the patients who receive treatment in the hospital each year are covered by Medicare or Medicaid. He explained that whenever the majority of patients who are treated in any one hospital are low-income residents without private health insurance, it leads to a disproportionate share of charity cases in that facility, particularly since New York State introduced a "cap" on Medicaid spending. He said that there should be a more adequate hospital reimbursement rate for Medicaid and Medicare patients.

Zoning and Land Use Review Committee

Walter Sanchez

Mr. Sanchez reported that the Board recently received a notarized statement from Justin Carter, one of the co-owners of a new seasonal entertainment venue at 56-06 Cooper Avenue, stating that Grove Productions will abide by Board's stipulations regarding hiring at least one qualified security staff for every 100 patrons, that music and dancing is limited to Sundays, and that they will appear before our Community Board annually regarding operation of their business at 56-06 Cooper Avenue, where they propose to sell beer and wine.

Mr. Sanchez also reported that the YGS Yeshiva recently filed new building plans at the Department of Buildings, in connection with their plans to construct a new dormitory for 700 to 1,000 students, adjacent to the Yeshiva located at 74-10 88 Street in Glendale.

He said that the plans are currently under review by plan examiners in the Dept. of Buildings. He believes that under the City's Zoning Resolution, approval from the Board of Standards and Appeals will be required in this case.

Transportation Services Committee

Vincent Arcuri, Jr.

Board Chairman Arcuri reported that demolition work has begun on the Queens side of the Kosciuszko Bridge, in preparation for construction work to start on the new Kosciuszko Bridge which is expected to begin later this year. He explained that first, a new parallel bridge will be constructed with towers and cables on the south side of the existing bridge, and then the Department of Transportation will bid out the work for a design/build contract for a parallel bridge with towers and cables to be constructed on the north side of the existing bridge. He said that construction of the new Kosciuszko Bridge will begin as soon as State funding has been allocated.

Regarding the Metropolitan Avenue Bridge over the LIRR at the intersection of Fresh Pond Road and Metropolitan Avenue, Chairman Arcuri reported that this project is currently in the design stage. He said that the Department of Transportation has indicated that they're planning to eliminate one set of railroad tracks under the bridge. He advised against this measure, particularly in light of the increased freight rail traffic through our Board area.

The Chairman reported that the rehabilitation of the Grand Street Bridge project is slated to begin the design phase in 2016. Regarding the rehabilitation of the Jackie Robinson Parkway, he said that the installation of new signage, lighting and roadway resurfacing is expected to begin this Spring.

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The Board Chairman also reported that the committee discussed the dangerous pedestrian crossing at the intersection of Myrtle Avenue, Wyckoff Avenue and Palmetto Street in Ridgewood. He said that traffic safety improvements at this intersection should be addressed in the planned reconstruction of Wyckoff Avenue from Flushing Avenue to Cooper Avenue. In the meantime, the MTA proposes to change the local bus routes of the Q58 and B52 buses at this juncture.

Peggy O’Kane said that she never sees anyone riding their bikes on a new bike route that was installed on Catalpa Avenue between Forest Avenue and Fresh Pond Road in Ridgewood. The Board Chairman said that the committee plans to hold a follow-up meeting with representatives from the Department of Transportation regarding the new bike routes in our Board area.

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 8:52pm.