



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 April 12, 2017

Board Members Present

Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Deborah Cox; Patricia Crowley; Brian Dooley; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Sarah Feldman; Steven Fiedler; Angela Giovanniello; Mohan Gyawali-Chhetri; Fred T. Haller, III; Robert Holden; Paul A. Kerzner; John J. Killcommons; Kathleen Knight; Maryann Lattanzio; Edward Lettau; 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; Christopher Sperrazza; Barbara Toscano; Patrick J. Trinchese; Maryanna Zero

Board Members Absent

Tobias Sheppard Bloch; Robert Cermeli; Peter Comber; Henry Cross; Jerome Drake; Patricia Grayson; Fred Hoeffler; Kelvin Rodriguez; Catherine Sumsky

Elected Officials

Don Capalbi – US Representative Grace Meng, 6th C.D.
Neil Giannelli - NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr, 15th SD
Meredith Wittmann - NYS Assemblyman Brian Barnwell, 30th AD
Alison Cummings – NYS Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, 37th AD
Carmela Isabella - NYS Assemblyman Michael Miller, 38th AD
Maggie Hayes - NYC Council Member Elizabeth Crowley, 30th CD
Boris Santos – NYC Council Member Antonio Reynoso, 34th CD

Staff Present

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

GUESTS

P.O. Charles Sadler, Community Affairs Unit, 104th Police Precinct, 64-02 Catalpa Avenue, Ridgewood, NY
Michael Nacmias – Eric Palatnik, P.C., 32 Broadway, New York, NY 10004
Michele Gretano, Manager– CrossFit Bridge & Tunnel, 16-45 Decatur Street, Ridgewood, NY

Board Chairman Vincent Arcuri called the monthly Board Meeting to order at 7:35pm, following the Salute to the Flag. He announced the first item on the Board Agenda as follows:

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on April 12, 2017

PUBLIC HEARING RE: BSA Cal. No. 2017-22 BZ – 1645 Decatur Street, Ridgewood

IN THE MATTER OF AN Application to the NYC Board of Standards and Appeals by Eric Palatnik, PC, Attorney At Law, on behalf of **Crossfit Bridge and Tunnel**, the owner of record, for a Special Permit, under Sections 73-36, 73-03 and 42-31 of the Zoning Resolution, to legalize the physical culture establishment (Crossfit), in an M1-4D Zoning District, at **1645 Decatur Street in Ridgewood**, Queens, NY.

Michael Nacmias, of the Law Office of Eric Palatnik, P.C., said that the owner of the Crossfit Bridge and Tunnel gym is requesting a Special Permit for a term of 10 years, under Sections 73-38, 73-03 and 42-31 of the NYC Zoning Resolution, to legalize the operation of a physical culture establishment at 1645 Decatur Street, in Ridgewood. He explained that Michele Gretano, the manager of this site, was not aware of the City's zoning restrictions that prohibit operating a physical culture establishment without a Special Permit. Mr. Nacmias said that she only became aware of the zoning restrictions, after the Dept. of Buildings disapproved her architect's filing for a new Certificate of Occupancy in December of 2016. He said that the architect did not inform her of the zoning restrictions, prior to the opening of the gym at this site.

Mr. Nacmias said that the gym currently occupies 5,000 sq. ft. of the existing 20,000 sq. ft. inside the warehouse. He said that the 1600 block of Decatur Street has a mix of residential and manufacturing uses, but there are no residential buildings adjacent to this site. At present, Mr. Nacmias said that his client has hired 6 employees to work in the gym, with at least 4 employees on-site during peak hours. He said that their hours of operation are: 6am to 9pm on weekdays, 9am to 3pm on Saturday, and 10am to 3pm on Sunday. He distributed several photos of the building, depicting street shots of the gym from various vantage points on the block.

Mr. Nacmias said that the gym's exercise space is an open floor, where personal trainers work with groups of no more than 10 people per class, which leaves plenty of room for patrons to stretch and exercise. He said that they use light, movable equipment, if anything.

Deborah Cox said that she noticed that three open violations are posted on the Dept. of Buildings website for this property, and the Alteration Plans that were filed for this site were disapproved. Mr. Nacmias said that the violations all pertain to operating a physical culture establishment without a new Certificate of Occupancy. His client is requesting a Special Permit to be issued by the Board of Standards and Appeals, in order to obtain a new Certificate of Occupancy for these premises, he said.

Paul Kerzner asked if the Dept. of Buildings allows this type of usage, particularly since they disapproved the filing for a new Certificate of Occupancy. Mr. Nacmias explained that the Dept. of Building's objection to granting a new Certificate of Occupancy for this site is the zoning restriction, which requires that his client obtain a Special Permit. He said that typically, the Dept. of Buildings does not issue a vacate order for this type of usage, unless their inspectors find hazardous or unsafe conditions on the premises.

As there were no more questions or comments, the Board Chairman referred the matter to the Zoning and Land Use Review Committee for further consideration at their next committee meeting.

PUBLIC FORUM

P.O. Charles Sadler, in the Community Affairs Unit of the 104th Police Precinct, announced that Captain John Mastronardi was recently assigned as the new Commanding Officer of the 104th Police Precinct, replacing D.I. Mark Wachter. He reminded everyone that he plans to run a marathon around the track in Juniper Valley Park during this year's Relay for Life that is sponsored by the American Cancer Society, on the weekend of June 24th, 2017. He welcomed everyone to participate in this annual fund-raising event, starting at 12 Noon on Saturday,

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on April 12, 2017

June 24th and ending the next day, on Sunday afternoon. He said that thousands of people turned out for last year's event. He said that volunteers are needed to help with setting up for this event on Saturday morning, and cleaning up afterward, starting on Sunday morning. For more information about this event, he said to visit the Facebook page of the 104th Precinct Community Council's website at www.104pcc.org, or contact him by phone at (718) 386-2446. Officer Sadler informed board members of the recent arrest of a man who likely did many local burglaries.

Raquel Namuche, a founding member of the Ridgewood Tenants Union, and former CB 5 Board member, said that for the past year, she has been working with Ridgewood Housing Matters, a coalition of local community groups and agencies, to protect the rights of tenants in rent-stabilized apartment buildings from illegal evictions, harassment and fraudulent real estate practices. She said that she often works with tenants who are afraid to report housing problems in their buildings for fear of retaliation and/or eviction by their landlord. She also said that her organization objects to the over-development of residential properties in Ridgewood. She said that they are trying to reach an agreement with AB Capstone, the developer of the proposed construction of a 17-story tower on St. Nicholas Avenue at Palmetto Street, to provide some affordable housing units in their mixed use development. The Board Chairman said that, to his knowledge, the Ridgewood Tower development involves the new construction of a mixed-use commercial and residential tower, which will be built as-of-right.

Gregory Vasicek, co-founder of the Play 4 Autism Foundation, informed everyone that April is Autism Awareness Month. He said that his organization was founded in Glendale 5 year ago, and has grown to a membership that serves the needs of 130 children in the city who have been diagnosed on the autism spectrum. He said that today, his organization's main goal is to establish a center for autistic children in the community. Flyers about the program's services and fund-raising events were distributed.

Nancy Lorence, a Maspeth resident, advocated for the passage of legislation in the State Legislature, Senate Bill 809, known as the Child Victims Act, that would revive civil actions for certain sex offenses that were committed against a person less than 18 years of age. She informed everyone that currently, once childhood victims of sexual abuse are over 23 years of age, the statute of limitations runs out in New York State, prohibiting them from filing any claims against the sexual predators who abused them. In many cases, childhood victims of sexual abuse are traumatized for life, she said. She introduced two young women as childhood sexual abuse survivors, Connie Altamurano and Bridie Farrell. They spoke about their own personal histories, particularly the damage to their own personal identities that is directly related to the sexual abuse they suffered. They urged everyone to contact their local elected officials to support passage of this legislation.

Peggy O'Kane, a Board member, requested donations of socks for adults in the St. Matthias Church's Homeless Program in Ridgewood.

Richard Huber, a member of the Glendale Kiwanis Club, and former CB5 Board member, discussed the 2nd Amendment of the U.S. Constitution as it pertains to gun ownership. He cited a range of statistics, including that more people are killed in traffic fatalities every year than are killed by gun violence. He said that a growing proportion of gun fatalities involve self-inflicted wounds, including an average of 22 Military Veterans who commit suicide by shooting themselves on a daily basis. He also pointed out that over 50,000 lives were lost due to drug overdoses last year. In closing, he said that most gun violence is committed by drug dealers and gang members, not law abiding citizens, and he objected to any further restrictions on gun ownership in this country.

Sarah Feldman, a Board member, announced that the Ridgewood Tenants Union is hosting a Community Day in the Greater Ridgewood Youth Council's Community Center at 776 Fairview Avenue this Saturday afternoon,

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on April 12, 2017

April 15th. She said that the teenagers who participate in programs at the Center will discuss demographic changes in the community, and how to preserve their cultural identity. She welcomed everyone to attend.

Tyler Myers, co-director of the Knockdown Center, said that they are submitting an application to the State Liquor Authority (SLA) to renew their on-premises liquor license at 52-19 Flushing Avenue in Maspeth, with two alterations from the existing one: to allow their hours of operation to be within state and county statutes; and to allow the maximum occupancy to be increased to the DOB approved capacity of 3,100 people and add another bar within the existing space on premises.

Mr. Myers said that in May of 2016, the SLA issued a temporary on-premises liquor license, with some stipulations. He said that they have been operating successfully at this location over the past year, and is requesting that their application be approved without stipulations at this time.

Fred Haller asked why the SLA granted only a temporary liquor license last year. Mr. Myers said that the Dept. of Buildings had issued a temporary Certificate of Occupancy, due to technical issues related to the number of sprinkler heads in the sprinkler system, which delayed the issuance of a new Certificate of Occupancy. He said that last summer, they obtained the proper work permits and performed all of the required alterations. He expects a new Certificate of Occupancy to be issued this year, once the required building inspections are completed. In the meantime, he said that they have been operating in compliance with their temporary Certificate of Occupancy.

Katy Knight said over the past year, the Board has requested that all local establishments serving alcoholic beverages to their patrons agree to stipulations to close by 2AM on weekdays. Mr. Myers said that since their business operates in a largely industrial area, their hours of operation have a very low impact on the residential community in Maspeth. He said that over the past year, they have provided lots of day time arts programs for the benefit of the entire community.

The Board Chairman said that he would report on the Executive Committee's recommendation regarding this matter during his report later this evening.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Vincent Arcuri, Jr.

Board Chairman Arcuri announced that Queens Borough President Melinda Katz appointed six new Community Board members to replace Board members who had moved away or resigned for personal reasons. He welcomed the newly appointed Board members to introduce themselves to their fellow Board members. Deborah Cox, a life-long Maspeth resident, said that she is a practicing attorney, an active member of the Maspeth Lions Club, and previously served as a member of the Board of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

Edward Lettau, a life-long resident of Ridgewood, said that he is active in St. Matthias Church and the Ridgewood Democratic Club, and is currently unemployed due to health complications.

Mohan Gyawali-Chhetri, a Ridgewood resident and local realtor, said that he entered this country as an immigrant in 1996, from Nepal where he was born.

Maryann Lattanzio, a long-time Maspeth resident, said that she is active member of the Maspeth Lions Club and the 104th Precinct's Civilian Observation Patrol.

Christopher Sperrazza, a long-time resident of Middle Village, said that he is currently enrolled as student in Hunter College and is active in the Young Democratic Club and the Association for a Better New York.

Patrick J. Trinchese, a long-time resident of Middle Village and Vice President of Juniper Park Civic Association, said that he works for the NYC Transit Authority.

Board Chairman Arcuri asked if everyone had received their copy of the Equal Employment Opportunity package, and if so, he asked that they sign the receipt for it that is being passed around at tonight's meeting. The Board Chairman welcomed representatives of local elected officials to address the Board.

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on April 12, 2017

On behalf of Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, Joseph Nocerino wished everyone a Happy Passover, and Happy Easter. He reminded newly-appointed Board members and reappointed Board members that their attendance is mandatory at the Community Board Training Session and Swearing-In Ceremony scheduled to take place from 5:30pm to 9:00pm in the Helen Marshall Cultural Center in Queens Borough Hall, at 120-55 Queens Boulevard, in Kew Gardens.

On behalf of Council Member Elizabeth Crowley, Maggie Hayes thanked everyone for their input in the Participatory Budgeting process for FY 2018, which begins on July 1st, 2017. She welcomed everyone to attend the Community Recycling Day which is being co-sponsored by Maspeth Federal Savings Bank, between 12 Noon and 4PM on Saturday, April 22nd, 2017 in the Bank's parking lot at 69 Street and Grand Avenue. She said that this event includes electronic and paper recycling, and vin-etching of cars, bikes, Smart phones and personal computers, and it is open to the public.

Ms. Hayes also welcomed everyone to pick up a free tree to plant on their property at next month's Tree Giveaway event, from 11am to 3pm on Saturday, May 13th, in the parking lot of Atlas Park in Glendale. In closing, she thanked everyone for their input at the Visioning Session for Rosemary's Playground in Ridgewood, which was held at 6pm on Thursday, March 23rd, in Greater Ridgewood Youth Council's Community Center.

On behalf of State Senator Joseph Addabbo, Jr., Neil Giannelli welcomed constituents to participate in their free Recycling Event from 10am to 2pm on Sunday, April 30th, in the Forest Park Band Shell Parking Lot. He said that they will accept household electronic items, paper, clothing and shoes, as well as small appliances, toys, bikes, jewelry, kitchenware, small furniture and eyeglasses. He said that, due to NYC regulations, they will not be accepting air conditioners, paint or old tires. Flyers were distributed.

Mr. Giannelli also reported that funding for senior centers was recently restored, during the annual State budget negotiations between the legislature and Governor Andrew Cuomo.

On behalf of State Assemblyman Brian Barnwell, Meredith Wittman welcomed calls for assistance from constituents at (718) 651-3185, and said that their office is located at 55-19 69 Street, in Maspeth.

On behalf of Congresswoman Grace Meng, Don Capalbi announced that a representative from the Department of Veterans Affairs will be available to meet with local veterans and/or their beneficiaries, to address any issues or concerns that they may have about VA benefits and services, information on pending claims or assistance with filing claims, on Wednesday, April 26th in their main office at 40-13 159th Street, in Flushing. He advised that appointments to meet with a VA representative in their office must be made at least four days in advance, and the office phone number is (718) 358-6364.

Mr. Capalbi also announced that their office is currently accepting submissions for the Congressional Art Competition from high school students in their district. He said that the winning piece from each congressional district will be displayed as part of a year-long national exhibition in the Cannon Tunnel that connects the Cannon House Office Building and the U.S. Capitol. He said that the deadline to submit artwork for this year's competition is April 19th. For more information about it, he welcomed calls to their office at (718) 358-6364.

On behalf of Assemblyman Mike Miller, Carmela Isabella announced that from 9am to 12 Noon on Sunday, May 7th, the American Italian Cancer Foundation will provide free breast cancer screenings in their Mobile Care Clinic parked in front of the Assemblyman's district office at 83-91 Woodhaven Blvd. She advised anyone interested in this free screening program to call their office at (718) 805-0950, to schedule an appointment.

Ms. Isabella also announced that on Sunday, April 30th, Assemblyman Miller and State Senator Addabbo will co-sponsor this Spring's free Electronic Recycling and Paper-Shredding event in the Forest Park Band Shell Parking Lot. For more information, she welcomed calls to their office at (718) 805-0950. Flyers were distributed.

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on April 12, 2017

On behalf of State Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Alison Cummings reported that the Assemblywoman pushed to secure an additional \$1 Billion in State education funds that will be allocated to NYC for public schools this year. She welcomed calls from constituents to their district office at 47-40 21 Street, in Long Island City, at (718) 784-3194.

On behalf of NYC Council Member Antonio Reynoso, Boris Santos thanked everyone who participated in this year's Participatory Budgeting process.

MINUTES

The Board Chairman asked Board members to review the minutes of the March 8th, 2017 Board Meeting. The minutes were approved by acclamation, on a motion to accept them as written by Dmytro Fedkowskyj, seconded by Walter Clayton.

The Board Chairman introduced staff members present at the meeting: District Manager Gary Giordano, and Community Associate Catherine O'Leary. 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 March 8, 2017. Each Board member received a copy of the list.

New Liquor Licenses

- 1) **La Gringa Food Corp.** 63-36 Woodhaven Blvd, Rego Park, NY 11374
- 2) *Lon Ballinger or Entity to be Formed d/b/a **To Be Determined** 582 Seneca Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
(*Transfer of Ron Reagan's Leotard Inc. d/b/a **Bierleichen***)

Liquor License Renewals

- 1) **Serbian Association of NY** 72-54 65th Place, Glendale, NY 11385
- 2) **San Cecilio Restaurant Inc.** 853 Wyckoff Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 3) *Ron Reagan's Leotard Inc. d/b/a **Bierleichen** 582 Seneca Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
(*transferring license to Lon Ballinger*)

New Wine and/or Beer Licenses

- 1) Kharel Group Inc. d/b/a **Fresh Pond Spice** 64-02 Fresh Pond Road, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) **Pravue Café LLC** 70-02 Fresh Pond Road, Ridgewood, NY 11385

Wine and/or Beer License Renewals

- 1) Deecee Corporation d/b/a **DISH Ridgewood NY** 57-42 Myrtle Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) Little Havana Cigar Company Inc. d/b/a **Havana Dreams** 63-10 Woodhaven Blvd, Rego Park, NY 11374
- 3) Saint Mark Deli & Grocery Inc. 60-79 Fresh Pond Road, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 4) Giuseppe Barretta d/b/a **Corato I Pizza & Rest Corp.** 66-94 Fresh Pond Road, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 5) Tocojo, Inc. d/b/a **Three Son's Pizzeria** 57-27 61st Street, Maspeth, NY 11378

*Outdoor Area

Alteration/Corporate Change Notifications

- 1) **The Maspeth Pizza House Inc.**, 55-60 60th Street, Maspeth, NY 11378 submitted notification of their intention to submit an Alteration application, to the NYS Liquor Authority, to expand their dining area into the adjacent store front of the building south of the existing establishment. This will add 10 tables with 40 seats and 1 employee bathroom, office and closet. All cooking operations will continue to be performed from the existing kitchen area.

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on April 12, 2017

2) **DMI Inc. d/b/a Knockdown Center**, 52-19 Flushing Avenue, Maspeth, NY 11378 has submitted an Alteration of an On-Premise Liquor License Application to “allow their operating hours within the state and county statute”, and to allow for the maximum occupancy to be increased to the DOB approved capacity of 3,100, and to add another bar within the existing space.

3) **Fuji III Japanese Cuisine Inc.**, 70-11 Grand Avenue, Maspeth, NY 11378 revised their notification of Dec 15, 2016. The new licensee name will be **Mitoushi 8 Queens Inc.**

Demolition and Construction Notices

The Board Chairman reported that the Board received one demolition notice since last month’s Board Meeting for the demolition of a vacant 1-family house at **52-54 68 Street in Maspeth.**

The Board Chairman 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.

Board Chairman Arcuri reported that the Executive Committee reviewed the application of DMI, Inc. d/b/a The Knockdown Center, located at 52-19 Flushing Avenue, in Maspeth, at last night’s committee meeting. He said that the committee recommends in favor of granting an on-premises liquor license at this establishment, with the following stipulations:

- 1) Their permit to serve be limited to 1,800 patrons with alcoholic beverages on 15 dates annually, and
- 2) Their permit to serve alcoholic beverages be limited to no more than 1,000 patrons on all other dates, and
- 3) They agree to adhere to the Community Board’s request that they stop serving alcoholic beverages to patrons at 2am on five nights a week, Sundays thru Thursdays, and are permitted to serve alcoholic beverages until 4am on the remaining two nights a week.

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 - 34 – in favor; - 4 – opposed; - 0 – abstentions; and – 0 – not voting.

The Board Chairman also reported that upon careful review of the Board’s Internal Budget for both FY 2017 and FY 2018, the Executive Committee recommends that the District Manager be granted a 9% increase in his annual rate of salary, retroactive to last September.

As there was no further discussion on the matter, the Board Chairman requested a Roll Call vote on the committee recommendation, which carried unanimously by a vote of - 38 – in favor; - 0 – opposed; - 0 – abstentions; and – 0 – not voting.

District Manager’s Report

Gary Giordano

The District Manager thanked the Board members for voting in favor of granting him a salary increase at tonight’s meeting.

Regarding the major sewer replacement project on 69 Street and Calamus Avenue on the Woodside/Maspeth border, he reported that C.A.C. Industries, Inc., the contractor for this \$25 Million project, is back to work on this job. He said that this project is expected to be complete by mid-year in 2018. He said that work on the Penelope Avenue sewer replacement project was also halted temporarily for a few months, and pointed out that C.A.C. Industries, Inc. is the same contractor for both this job, and the sewer replacement project on 69 Street and Calamus Avenue.

Lee Rottenberg complained that the double-yellow lines that were recently painted in 69 Street, from Calamus Avenue to 47 Avenue, are too close to the parking lane on the west side of the street.

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on April 12, 2017

Eileen Moloney asked how homeowners could resolve their problems with any property damages that were caused by the contractor's digging a deep trench in Calamus Avenue between 69 Street and 71 Street. The District Manager replied that pre-construction photos are always taken prior to project's start date. And, the Board Chairman replied that property owners are required to file a claim for property damages, within 90 days of occurrence, with the City Comptroller's Office.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Library Services Committee

Sarah Feldman

Sarah Feldman reported that the committee met in the Board 5 office on Monday, March 20th, with Sara Espanol from the Glendale Public Library, Jonathan Chung, the Queens Library's Director of Governmental Relations, and staff members Zia Dawood and Luisa Benedetto, to review the status of the rehabilitation plans for the Glendale Branch Library, located at 78-60 73 Place, at the corner of Myrtle Avenue, and other libraries issues.

Ms. Feldman said that the Glendale Library was originally built in the 1930's under the Work Progress Administration (WPA) with a large stone staircase at its front entrance, on 73 Place. She said that \$3.5 Million has been allocated for this rehabilitation project, which includes renovating the interior space, the installation of an elevator in order to make the facility handicapped-accessible, and restoring the decorative plaques on the exterior walls. This project is slated to go out to bid this month. And, construction is expected to begin by the end of this year and finished in 2019, she said. For the duration of this project, a book mobile will be dispatched by the Central Library two days a week to accommodate visitors to the library.

Ms. Feldman pointed out that Council Member Crowley secured \$500,000 for a new roof over the Maspeth Public Library, but that project is still on hold. She also said that the Middle Village Public Library is very hard to locate, because the entrance is set very far away from the sidewalk, on the ground floor of a large residential building. She said that it needs more visible signage and better lighting outside the front entrance of the building so that more people could see it.

She said that the committee plans to encourage residents to establish Friends of the Library groups in their neighborhood, as only the Ridgewood Library currently has a Friends group.

Special Committee on Homeless Issues

Dmytro Fedkowskyj

Mr. Fedkowskyj reported that the committee met on April 5th in the CNL Room of Christ the King High School. He said that Amanda Nasner, the Queens Director in the Office of External Affairs of the NYC Dept. of Homeless Services (DHS), gave a power point presentation about Mayor de Blasio's new initiative and Five-Year Plan, known as "Turning the Tide on Homelessness." She said that as part of this new initiative, 90 new homeless shelters are planned, and 30 existing shelters will be expanded citywide. She said that under this plan, the new borough based lodging accommodations will keep people in their communities, with a goal of replacing cluster sites by 2021 and commercial hotel use by 2023.

Ms. Nasner told the committee that another goal of the new policy is to improve transparency, by strengthening notification protocols for proposed sites and ensuring that the DHS sites are better neighbors as NYPD officers will now oversee the security at homeless shelters. She explained to the committee that this new policy involves informing elected officials and community boards at least 30 days before a site opens, establishing a community advisory board for every new facility, and coordinating with elected officials to conduct a community meeting in advance of the facility opening, in order to address feedback from the community and answer questions.

At the committee meeting, Ms. Nasner said that the new initiative, "Turning the Tide on Homelessness," was released on March 1, 2017, and can be found online at:

<http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/turning-the-tide-on-homelessness.pdf>.

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on April 12, 2017

Ms. Nasner also told committee members that through this new initiative, DHS would be able to:

- 1) Do more to keep people in their homes by making housing more affordable and stopping illegal evictions;
- 2) Make long-needed operational reforms to better serve people in shelters and neighborhoods;
- 3) Remove people from all cluster apartment units by the end of 2021 and commercial hotel facilities by the end of 2023;
- 4) Cut the total number of shelter facilities by almost 45%;
- 5) Keep homeless people as close as possible to their own neighborhoods and on a path to get back on track.

Mr. Fedkowskyj said that committee members raised questions and concerns about the homeless situation in general and, in addition, requested answers to questions about the presentation that could not be answered during the meeting. As of today, he said that the District Manager has not gotten answers to our questions, but they will be shared with the committee and the entire Community Board when they are available.

He reported some of the committee's concerns, statements and questions, as follows:

1) There are far more than 2,800 homeless people sleeping in the streets, and far too many of them are in need of mental health support and aren't getting the services they need. This situation presents a public safety concern.

2) The presentation spoke about an affordable housing update that identified 10,000 apartments for hardworking New Yorkers, seniors and Veterans, but only 500 of these units would be allocated to Veterans. He said that they questioned how the allocation was developed, since the perception of 500 units for Veterans seems very low.

3) Service providers became a topic of discussion because clearly some providers are doing a better job than others. The committee asked how they are graded and held accountable for the services they provide. The concern is that the City administration is using vital resources and tax payer dollars to pay providers, without providing the necessary oversight. We requested that they be graded, reviewed and held accountable to best practices standards that will improve the client's situation, using a transparent process.

4) Questions were raised about cluster sites and why the Mayor is closing them, when they can provide lodging. The answer was that far too many of these cluster apartments were in disrepair, and that none of these sites offer on-site social services for homeless clients. Committee members replied that the Dept. of Buildings, working in coordination with other agencies, could force building owners to repair the residential units in their buildings, and that all homeless people aren't in need of on-site social services.

5) Concerns were raised about the City's delay in reimbursing expenses to providers, which results in a reduction of future services for homeless clients, if the provider does not have sufficient funding of their own to provide necessary services.

6) Since the new initiative called for 17 new shelters to be built in 2017, committee members asked when and where they would be located. He said that one has to question the new plan, if they intend to open 17 shelters during the next year and can't share any information now.

Mr. Fedkowskyj also reported that the committee discussed the creation of new Community Advisory Boards. He said that it was not clear when the new Boards would be created, before or after the 30-day notification period, or who would run them, and who would become members. He said that Ms. Nasner told the committee that she and the service provider would run the Community Advisory Board, and that local elected officials, the District Manager, CB 5 members and members of local civic organizations would be part of the Community Advisory Board. He said that this format did not sit well with committee members, because we would likely have little say with the provider, and we have existing concerns about how some providers operate.

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on April 12, 2017

Mr. Fedkowskyj said that committee members expressed some confusion about the planned creation of the 90 shelters. He said that committee members asked if the shelters would be part of a borough-based plan or a community based plan, so communities could take care of their own homeless. He relayed some of their remaining questions, as follows:

- 1) This ambitious plan appears to be very expensive. Who will be funding the 90 new shelters and why is the homeless population only expected to be reduced by 2,500? He said that the plan doesn't seem to be cost effective.
- 2) About the opening of 90 new shelters - it's not clear as to the types of shelters that may need to be opened over the next 5 years, since the basic homeless population (excluding medical support) consists of single males, females, couples, adult families and families with children. How will the development of facilities be determined to accommodate populations, to keep them residing in their community? He said that it doesn't seem possible that each community can accommodate all of these populations.
- 3) Who will determine where people in the shelter system had previously lived, and can we have these findings confirmed by a third party, let's say the controller's office? If not, why not?
- 4) How will shelter decisions be made for people coming from correctional facilities? Will the same method apply, which reviews where they had lived before serving time?

In closing, he said that the next committee meeting is scheduled to begin at 7:30pm on Wednesday, May 3rd in the cafeteria of Christ the King High School. He said that he does not plan to invite a guest speaker to next month's meeting, so the committee will have time to work on a position paper.

Transportation and Public Transit Services Committee

Vincent Arcuri

John Maier reported that on Tuesday, March 28th, the committee met in the Board 5 office to discuss numerous traffic safety requests, including the traffic congestion related to the current Emergency Bridge Deck Replacement Project on Metropolitan Avenue at Fresh Pond Road, over the LIRR tracks. He said that the committee will continue to monitor this situation and try to resolve these problems.

Mr. Maier also reported that the service disruptions on weekends began on the M train elevated line this month, due to work on track replacement and in preparation for the Myrtle Viaduct/Fresh Pond Bridge project, which is slated to begin in July, 2017. He said that for the next few months, there will be no M train service on most weekends, between the Myrtle Avenue-Broadway station in Brooklyn and the Metropolitan Avenue station at the end of the line in Middle Village. He said that shuttle bus service will be provided, at each of the stations on the M train line, from 12 AM on Saturday until 5 AM on Monday, for the duration of this project.

Mr. Maier stated that the MTA is scheduled to give a presentation regarding the upcoming M train capital project, at our next monthly Board Meeting on May 10, 2017.

Katy Knight asked for an update on the status of a request for an All-Way Stop sign on the corner of Woodward Avenue at Woodbine Street, in Ridgewood. Mr. Maier replied that the Dept. of Transportation decided to conduct a traffic study of the intersection, but we do not have the results yet.

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 9:30pm. He welcomed everyone to stay to enjoy a cup of coffee or tea immediately following the meeting.