



Community Board No. 5

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



Vincent Arcuri, Jr.
Chairperson

Gary Giordano
District Manager

Minutes of Community Board 5 Public Meeting November 4, 2015

Board Members Present

Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Tobias Sheppard Bloch; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Peter Comber; Daniel Creighton; Henry Cross; Karamjit Dhaliwal; Brian Dooley; Thomas C. Dowd; Jerome Drake; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Sarah Feldman; Steven Fiedler; Dorie Figliola; Angela Giovannello; Patricia Grayson; Fred Hoefflerle; Robert Holden; Paul A. Kerzner; John J. Killcommons; Kathleen Knight; 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; David Sands; Connie Santos; Lorraine Sciulli; Catherine Sumsky; Jean Tanler; Mercy Wong; Maryanna Zero

Board Members Absent

Robert Cermeli; Patricia Crowley; Caroline Fuchs; Fred T. Haller, III; Lydia Martinez; Alexander Maureau; Raquel Namuche; Walter H. Sanchez; Carmen Santana; Barbara Toscano

Elected Officials

Don Capalbi – US Representative Grace Meng, 6th C.D.
Evelyn Cruz – US Representative Nydia Velazquez, 7th C.D.
Neil Giannelli - NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., 15th SD
Lauren Capozzi – NYS Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, 28th AD
Mike Armstrong – NYS Assemblywoman Margaret Markey, 30th AD
Anne Krzyzanowski – NYS Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, 37th AD
Diana Santana - NYS Assemblyman Michael Miller, 38th AD
Pesach Osina – NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer
Deidre Feerick - NYC Council Member Elizabeth Crowley, 30th CD

Staff Present

Gary Giordano, District Manager, CB5 Queens
Catherine O’Leary - CB5Q Staff
Catherine Moore – Queens Borough President Melinda Katz
Thomas Smith – Associate Planner, Queens Office of the NYC Dept. of City Planning

Guests

Frank St. Jacques, Sheldon Lobel, P.C., 18 East 41st Street - 5th FL, New York, NY 10017
and Juliana Cerquiera Leite, owner of 1677 George Street, Ridgewood, NY 11385

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on November 4, 2015

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

PUBLIC HEARING Re: BSA Cal. No. 236-15 BZ – 1677 George Street, Ridgewood

In The Matter of an Application to the NYC Board of Standards and Appeal by Sheldon Lobel, P.C., Attorneys at Law, on behalf of George Acquisition LLC, the owner of record, for a variance, under Section 72-21 and 43-304 of the Zoning Resolution, to permit a bulk variance for the development of a 2 story and cellar commercial building at **1677 George Street**, in Ridgewood, Queens, NY, (Block: 3551; Lot: 68) which requires a waiver of the minimum front yard regulation.

Frank St. Jacques, of Sheldon Lobel, P.C., Attorneys-at-Law, spoke on behalf of his client, Juliana Cerquiera Leite, the owner of 1677 George Street in Ridgewood, regarding this request for a zoning variance. He said that this lot is currently occupied by a row of four garages, built to the property line along the rear lot line and on both sides of this property and is located in an M1-4D zoning district. His client proposes to build a new two-story and cellar structure that would be 30 feet, 4 inches in height. He said that the proposed first floor would contain two Use Group 9 artist's studios, each with 484 sq. ft. and 504 sq. ft. of floor space, respectively, and a 395 sq. ft. Use Group 9 eating and drinking establishment. Both of the artist's studios on the first floor would have skylights in the ceilings along the rear of the building to allow natural light into the artists' workspace. The commercial space would likely be occupied by a small coffee shop with prepared foods, catering to the studio tenants and local residents. He said that the second floor would contain a 1,038 sq. ft. studio with a skylight, and a 550 sq. ft. accessory caretaker's unit which the applicant, an artist, intends to use herself, and occupy the accessory caretaker's unit. The building plans also provide an enclosed off-street parking for one car on the first floor, he said.

Mr. St. Jacques said that the lot coverage of this property is 2,224 sq. ft., and that it is approximately 46 feet deep. He said that currently, a one-story garage that is in disrepair stands on this site, and is planned for demolition. He said that the proposed use is permitted as-of-right on this site and pointed out that the proposed development on this lot falls within the maximum 2.0 floor area ratio in the M1-4D district.

Mr. St. Jacques described the properties on this block of George Street, located between Cypress Avenue and Wyckoff Avenue, as primarily occupied by a row of two-story residential attached wood-frame houses, with a couple of small factories on the other half of this block. He pointed out that the great majority of the buildings on this block are built out to the property line along the sidewalk, on both sides of the street. He said that the applicant plans to build a new 2-story building out to the lot line, as well. While there are no setback requirements in manufacturing districts, in this case, he said that a 20' setback is required in the front yard area due to the fact that the R5B zoning district boundary line extends down the middle of this street. Photos of the site and streetscape were circulated to Board members.

In closing, Mr. St. Jacques said that his client is seeking to waive the 20' setback requirement in the front yard of this site because the lot is only 46 feet deep. He said that as a result of this lot's uniquely narrow and shallow dimensions, strict compliance with Zoning Section 43-304 creates practical difficulties and an undue burden in this case because it prevents use of nearly half of the available lot area. Besides, he said that most of the existing attached row houses on this block are built to the lot line, including the 4-story apartment house next-door at 966 Cypress Avenue. He said that the proposed use and scale of the new building are compatible with the neighborhood character.

Chairman Arcuri opened the floor to questions and comments.

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on November 4, 2015

Peter Comber asked if the applicant plans to serve alcohol in the café on the ground floor of the proposed building on this site. Mr. St. Jacques replied that the owner is not likely to do so. He referred the question to Ms. Cerquiera Leite, who was present at the meeting and agreed that she has no plans to serve alcohol in the cafe.

In response to a question from Jean Tanler, Mr. St. Jacques said that the proposed caretaker's unit would only require a restrictive declaration to be issued by the Commissioner of the Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development.

Theodore Renz, a Board member and Executive Director of the Ridgewood Local Development Corporation, stated that the M1-4D zoning designation restricts all new housing construction to sites which were previously occupied by residential uses. He said that, to his knowledge, this site has always been occupied by the existing row of commercial garages. Thomas Smith, an Associate Planner with the Dept. of City Planning, agreed that very few exceptions to the rule are granted in these cases. He said that any residential development of this site would have to be very limited in scope.

In response to a question from Dorie Figliola about the hardship in this case, Mr. St. Jacques replied that since this lot is only 46 feet deep, building on the remaining half of this lot, in compliance with the 20 foot front yard setback requirement, would not allow the owner a reasonable return on investment in this case.

Tom Dowd and Kathy Masi pointed out that the proposed building on this lot would block the side windows of the adjacent home on the west side of this lot. Board Chairman Arcuri replied that because the existing structure is built out to the lot line, the adjoining property owner is permitted to build out to the lot line also. Connie Santos suggested that the new building's footprint might be altered to include air shafts along that side of the property.

Mercy Wong asked when did his client buy this property. Mr. St. Jacques replied that in 2014, when his client bought the property, she was not aware that the 20 foot front yard setback in the R5B zoning district across the street would apply to this site.

Jean Tanler asked if this request for a zoning variance is denied, would the owner then consider building a 4-story structure at this location. Mr. St. Jacques replied that it would be much more costly to build a 4-story structure, which would not be financially feasible for his client.

As there were no more questions or comments from the floor, Board Chairman Arcuri referred the matter to the Zoning and Land Use Review Committee for review and recommendation at their next meeting in the month ahead.

PUBLIC FORUM

Caitlin Shann, a Glendale resident, said that she lives across the street from 64-02 68 Avenue, where Sweet Jane's, a new bar, plans to open soon. She said that she is opposed to their opening in this location, which is a very residential area, with a local park and pre-school program nearby, citing comments posted on a website about the Cobra Bar, which is a bar in Bushwick with the same proprietors. She said that in consideration of the fact that the surrounding area is mostly residential, a bar at this location should be required to close no later than 2am, and an outdoor café would not be suitable to operate at this corner property.

Julia Kengren and Nicole Koch, owners of We Are 138 LLC d/b/a Sweet Jane's, at 64-02 68 Avenue, in Glendale, spoke about their plans to open a new venue at this location. Ms. Koch said that they do, in fact,

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on November 4, 2015

own and operate the Cobra Bar in the industrial area of Bushwick, in Brooklyn. She said that they're planning to open a bar with a family-friendly atmosphere in their new location at 64-02 68 Avenue. She pointed out that while their application to the State Liquor Authority indicates a 4am closure, they would be willing to consider changing their closing hours. Ms. Kengren said that there are no complaints on record about noise or disturbing the peace in connection with their bar in Bushwick. She agreed with her partner's statement about their proposed plans to create a family-friendly venue in their new location.

Mercy Wong said that she and her baby girl have both enjoyed attending the music classes that are held on weekday mornings at this site. She said that she hopes they will be able to continue to do so. Peter Comber asked what would guarantee that this new bar would be a family-friendly bar. Board Chairman Arcuri replied that the Board sent a questionnaire to the new management to request more information about their plans. He said that both he and the District Manager plan to schedule a meeting with the applicants at their earliest convenience to discuss their plans, and report back to the Board at next month's Board Meeting.

Francesca Pellot and Norma Canepa, who both live in Maspeth, adjacent to the Metropolitan Oval Soccer Stadium, spoke about their concerns about the fact that all Summer long, the alcoholic consumption, public urination and loud music on weekend nights created a public nuisance in and around this stadium. Mrs. Canepa said that there is no security on site, and her husband received a disorderly conduct citation when he tried to curtail the patrons' abusive behavior. They submitted a copy of a petition containing over a hundred signatures of local residents, stating their objections to the unsafe conditions and public nuisances that have become commonplace in the immediate vicinity of the stadium on weekend nights. They asked the Board's assistance in correcting these conditions.

David Kupferberg, a public transit advocate, requested that the B-13 Bus be re-routed from Cypress Hills Street onto Cypress Avenue in Ridgewood, and then continue travelling west toward Williamsburg, in Brooklyn. He pointed out that the B-18 Bus route was eliminated in Queens 13 years ago, and there's been no public transportation to serve local residents who live south of Myrtle Avenue on the former B-18 Bus route in Ridgewood. He also recommended relocating the Q39 Bus route to travel along Fresh Pond Road instead of Forest Avenue, and extending the current Q38 Bus route from Eliot Avenue and Fresh Pond Road to Forest Avenue in Ridgewood. The Board Chairman referred the matter to the Transportation and Public Transit Services Committee for further consideration.

Kerry Adams, a local resident and founder of Citizens Against Massage Parlor Prostitution (CAMPP), expressed concerns about the proliferation of illegal massage parlors that are cropping up overnight on commercial strips in the Board 5 area. She said that apparently as soon as one illegal operation is shut down in one storefront, another one opens in a different storefront. She asked the Board for assistance in closing them all down, once and for all. Tom Smith, of the NYC Department of City Planning, said that massage parlors are classified as physical culture establishments, and must comply with regulations promulgated by the Board of Standards and Appeals. He said that complaints about any suspicious establishments should be reported to the NYC Department of Buildings for compliance inspections.

Ryan Chang, a member of Maspeth High School's student government, thanked the Board for their assistance in obtaining a grant from the Citizens Committee of NYC. He said that the students and faculty are planning to give the area around the school a facelift, by planting flowers in the tree pits, painting and cleaning up where needed. He asked for suggestions on future local projects that both students and faculty of Maspeth High School could participate in.

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on November 4, 2015

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Vincent Arcuri, Jr.

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

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

On behalf of Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, Catherine Moore announced that there will be a Veterans Day Ceremony in the Memorial Garden in front of Queens Borough Hall, at 120-55 Queens Boulevard, this Friday at 11am. She welcomed everyone to attend.

Ms. Moore also announced that the Borough President plans to deliver her annual State of the Borough address at 10 am on Thursday, January 21, 2016, in the Colden Auditorium of Queens College. She explained that the State of the Borough address will include milestones reached in the recent past, as well as the Borough President's vision and plans for the future of the borough. She welcomed everyone to attend this event, which is open to the public, but cautioned that pre-registration is strongly encouraged. All those interested in attending may register by calling their office at (718) 286-2661, or on-line at: www.queensbp.org/rsvp.

On behalf of State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Neil Giannelli announced that anyone who wishes to donate items to Sacred Heart Church's current food drive through Christmas may drop them off their Middle Village district office, located at 66-85 73rd Place, during normal business hours. He said that nonperishable food donations, including canned goods, boxed goods, rice, soup and pasta, and paper goods, such as napkins and storage bags, are in short supply this Holiday Season. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

On behalf of NYC Council Member Elizabeth Crowley, Deirdre Feerick requested the Board's support for the proposal to establish passenger rail service between Long Island City and Glendale. Board Chairman Arcuri replied that the Transportation Services Committee plans to review the proposal at their next meeting, and report their recommendations to the full Board at next month's meeting on December 9th, 2015. Jerome Drake asked if there are any specific locations in the proposal where stops might be located. John Maier replied that stops could include Metro Mall, Atlas Park, and in Long Island City. Ms. Feerick announced that the NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation plans to hold a Visioning Session on Wednesday, December 2nd, 2015 from 6pm to 8pm in Maspeth Town Hall, at 53-37 72 Street, regarding the proposed Reconstruction of Frank Principe Park, located on Maurice Avenue and the Long Island Expressway Service Road, in Maspeth. She said that the preliminary rendering of the proposed ball fields inside the park would be available for review at this meeting. Flyers were distributed.

On behalf of Assemblywoman Margaret Markey, Mike Armstrong announced that their office is working with Elmhurst Hospital to provide free flu shots for local residents on Thursday, November 19th, 2015 from 9:30am to 12 Noon at their district office, located at 55-19 69 Street, in Maspeth. He said that anyone interested in obtaining a flu shot must call for an appointment by contacting their office at (718) 651-3185. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

On behalf of Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, Evelyn Cruz reported that the Congresswoman recently introduced new gun violence legislation in the House of Representatives this month, that is aimed at reducing the number of guns in circulation, bolstering anti-violence and mental health programs and addressing the issue of lost and stolen firearms. Ms. Cruz also said that the Congresswoman is advocating for the expansion of the Zadroga Compensation Act, to provide health insurance coverage for first responders who were called to duty at the World Trade Center disaster on September 11th, 2001, and in the

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on November 4, 2015

immediate aftermath.

Ms. Cruz said that their office is also working to extend benefits to businesses who have suffered severe economic losses in the wake of Super Storm Sandy.

MINUTES

Board Chairman Arcuri asked Board members to review the minutes of the October 14, 2015 Board Meeting. John Maier made a motion to approve the Minutes, seconded by Walter Clayton. The minutes were accepted by voice vote.

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.

New Liquor Licenses

- 1) Brenda Rosero or An Entity to be Formed d/b/a **Victor's Bar Restaurant** 67-01 Forest Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) Obrero Corp. d/b/a **Ambar Restaurant & Bar** 392 Woodward Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385 (formerly **Sabores Restaurant & Bar**)

Liquor License Renewals

- 1) *Woodhaven Blvd Restaurant Inc. d/b/a **Woodhaven House** 63-98 Woodhaven Boulevard, Rego Park, NY 11374
- 2) ***Ero's Café Bar Inc.** 66-28 Forest Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385

Wine and/or Beer License Renewals

- 1) Exotic Seafood Inc. 62-27 Fresh Pond Road, Middle Village, NY 11379
*Indicates Outdoor Seating Area

We also received a "Notification for All Night Permit Notice" from Carlos Lenis, president of **El Montanero Bakery Restaurant Inc.** located at 55-21 Myrtle Avenue, in Ridgewood, informing us of their Intention to apply for a permit to serve alcohol all night on New Year's Eve.

Demolition Notices

The Board Chairman reported that the Board was notified about several building demolitions over the past month, including: **336 and 350 St. Nicholas Avenue** and **54-27 Myrtle Avenue**, attached 1-story commercial buildings on the west side of Venditti Square; **801 and 819 Wyckoff Avenue**, attached 1-story warehouses located on the block between Madison Street and Putnam Avenue; **1814 Bleecker Street**, a 2-family house; and **59-35 Menahan Street**, a 2-family house and garage.

Dorie Figliola asked if a permit is required when only part of a building is demolished. The Board Chairman replied that a permit would be required in that case. He asked Board members to remain vigilant and to advise the Board 5 staff about any questionable construction work in the Board area, so they can investigate further.

DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT

Gary Giordano

The District Manager wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Mr. Giordano reported that the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey released the Final Environmental Impact Statement regarding the Cross Harbor Freight Project about a month ago. He said that the Board had already taken a position to oppose the proposed plans to build a freight rail

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on November 4, 2015

tunnel underneath the New York Bay in order to haul freight between New York and New Jersey, earlier this year. He said that he had submitted a letter of opposition to this project, and requested the Board's support to do so once again. Copies of the recommendation were distributed to Board members for their review, as follows:

The Transportation Services and Public Transit Services Committees of Community Board 5, Queens met on Tuesday, October 20, 2015 to discuss the Tier I Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Cross Harbor Freight Plan. Of the 11 options presented in the Draft EIS for this project, 2 were chosen by those preparing the Final Tier I EIS as the preferred options. These preferred options include the Enhanced Railcar Float Alternative and the Rail Tunnel Alternative.

Committee members again discussed the fact that our communities have been overwhelmed by the amount of freight currently being transported by rail, since all freight transported by rail to and from Long Island (Queens, Brooklyn, Nassau and Suffolk) has to come through and be sorted at the Fresh Pond Rail Yard which is located in the Glendale area of District 5, Queens. This small rail yard, and much of the nearby tracks, support rail car sorting operations which have been performed all night long, in very close proximity to the residential communities that comprise large portions of the CB5Q area. These sorting operations are very loud and their seismic impacts have kept too many residents awake from 11pm through the early morning hours. Because of daytime rail track usage constraints throughout the rest of the Long Island Rail Road system, the great majority of freight rail operations in our communities occur from late in the evening until the early morning hours.

This daily, all night operation results in an approximately 100 car train, comprised of putrescible waste, construction and demolition debris, stone and other aggregates that is then taken north to Selkirk, NY where the train is taken across the Hudson River. Considering the extensive negative impacts that this current one-train-daily level of freight service has had in our communities, our committees do not see that the construction of the Cross Harbor Freight Tunnel can be justified. A freight rail tunnel from New Jersey to Brooklyn could, according to projections in the Draft EIS, bring an additional 20 to 25 trains onto the Bay Ridge Line of the LIRR daily, with 16-21 of these trains passing into Fresh Pond Yard.

The members of our Committees recommend that the Federal Highway Administration of the U.S. Dept. of Transportation and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey cease to pursue any plans for further study or construction of a Cross Harbor Freight Tunnel for the following reasons:

There is only one rail freight line in Brooklyn and Queens, and this LIRR Bay Ridge Freight Line cannot reasonably manage the sorting and operations of one 100 car train daily, without serious negative community impacts. The thought of more than 20 full trains travelling along this one freight line is far from reasonable, and would create impossible conditions.

The potential benefits of a rail tunnel are minimal, considering that estimates are that there would only be a 2.5% reduction of trucks using eastbound Hudson River and harbor crossings, in a 23 county area. This does not justify an expenditure of \$7 to \$11 billion to construct a rail tunnel.

Projections related to a freight rail tunnel in the DEIS indicate that, when trains are processed at various proposed rail yards in Brooklyn and Queens, there would be a tremendous number of truck trips generated with freight from the rail cars. The increased truck trips generated by a freight rail tunnel would overwhelm our city streets, significantly increase air pollution in Queens & Brooklyn communities, and would utilize roadways not built to accommodate truck traffic.

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on November 4, 2015

Our research informs us that “Port Authority Chairman John J. Degnan expressed doubts about the freight rail tunnel alternative in light of competing demands on Port Authority resources, including the Gateway Project passenger rail tunnel under the Hudson, which is estimated to cost \$20 billion, and a new Port Authority Bus Terminal costing up to \$10 billion. He is quoted as saying that it is hard for him to imagine, given competing demands for federal government funding for other projects, that it would commit to funding on that order of magnitude”. (Wikipedia.org)

The continuation of this project will waste additional scarce public funds, while so many rail infrastructure needs, such as a new Hudson River Tunnel for Amtrak’s North East Corridor, are much more viable, necessary and urgent.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey is already developing the Cross Harbor Float, so there is no reason to waste scarce funds further to serve private shippers that have shown little interest in a route which a freight rail tunnel might provide.

As stated by the Regional Plan Association, instead, our rail operating environment and our investment strategy should be comprehensively rethought, including focusing on improvements to existing signaling, rail equipment, weight issues and train operating rules. For instance, the locomotives currently leased by New York and Atlantic Railway from the LIRR, for freight rail operations, are polluting Stage Zero locomotives that are long overdue for replacement.

CSX Railroad, the primary class I railroad serving the area, stated in comment 5-88 that the vast majority of freight to and from New York City is west-west in orientation, and crosses New York State between Buffalo and Selkirk, and would travel the same distance south to N.Y. City whether on the west side or east side of the Hudson River.

Much of the current freight rail traffic carried by CSX is putrescible solid waste, and since one of their main customers, Waste Management Co., has a new landfill in Rochester, NY, there will almost certainly be much less need to transport NYC waste south. CSX transports approximately 90% of all rail freight into and out of NYC, and since they seem to have virtually no interest in using any planned freight tunnel as proposed, building a freight rail tunnel seems even more superfluous.

Therefore, for the reasons listed herein, the Cross Harbor Freight Project study should go no further and a freight tunnel, as proposed, should not be built.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Zoning and Land Use Review Committee

Walter Sanchez

In Walter Sanchez’s absence, the District Manager delivered the committee report regarding the NYC Department of City Planning’s proposed Zoning for Quality and Affordability Text Amendment, under ULURP Application No. N160049 ZRY. He said that the application states that, as part of the City’s coordinated efforts under Housing New York – the Mayor’s Five Borough 10-Year Housing Plan, the Dept. of City Planning is proposing a set of targeted changes to zoning regulations to support the creation of new

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on November 4, 2015

affordable housing and encourage better residential buildings. The application further states that the primary categories of changes under the proposal are intended to: make it easier to provide the range of affordable senior housing and care facilities needed to meet the varied needs of an aging population, and to help seniors remain in their communities; enable Inclusionary Housing buildings, which provide mixed-income housing; and to free up resources to create more affordable housing by enabling cost-effective, transit-accessible affordable housing, through modifications to parking requirements.

The District Manager said that at their most recent meeting, the committee voted to recommend that the Board oppose this proposed Text Amendment, for the following reasons:

- The increased height allowance in R4, R5, R6 and R6B and R3-2 Zoning Districts could negatively affect neighborhood character significantly in specific parts of Community District 5, Queens; and
- Significantly reducing parking requirements for senior housing would limit the mobility of many senior residents who are close to the age of 65, and would likely be a deterrent to many seniors otherwise seriously considering moving into a senior housing development.

As there was no further discussion on this matter, the Board Chairman requested a Roll Call vote on the committee recommendation which then carried by a vote of – 37 – in favor; - 1 – opposed; - 0 – abstentions; and – 1 – not voting.

The District Manager reported that at their most recent meeting, committee members raised no objections to the proposed Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Text Amendment – ULURP Application No. N160051 ZRY. He explained that this application states that even with substantial rates of new housing creation, the growth of NYC’s population and employment has placed increased demands on the city’s housing supply, exacerbating already high housing costs. It states that rents have risen faster than incomes, and the share of New Yorkers who qualify as “rent burdened” now constitutes almost 55 % of all renter households, an increase of 11% since 2000. According to the application, “the proposed zoning text amendment would require permanently affordable housing set-asides for all developments over 10 units, or 12,500 square feet within the MIH areas, or as an additional option for developments between 10 and 25 units, or 12,500 to 25,000 square feet, a payment into an affordable housing fund. The East New York, Brooklyn rezoning will be the first to include a mapping of an MIH area, as part of the land use action.”

Margaret O’Kane, a member of the Zoning and Land Use Review Committee who attended the committee meeting, said that the meeting ended very abruptly and there was no recommendation regarding this amendment during the committee meeting. Paul Kerzner made a tabling motion to refer this matter back to committee for further deliberation, which was seconded by Ms. O’Kane.

The Board Chairman advised that in the absence of a committee recommendation, the tabling motion takes precedence and he referred the matter back to committee.

Transportation Services and Public Transit Services Combined Committee Vincent Arcuri

Board Chairman Arcuri gave the floor to Theodore Renz, the Executive Director of the Ridgewood Local Development Corporation, to give a report on the status of the capital improvement project at the Glendale Memorial Plaza, where Myrtle Avenue, Cooper Avenue and 70 Street meet.

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on November 4, 2015

Mr. Renz reported that the project design is nearing completion, and the NYC Department of Transportation requested that his organization sponsor this year's Glendale Tree Lighting celebration on the triangle. He said that the RLDC will host a One-Day Plaza Event from 5pm to 8pm on Sunday, December 6th, 2015 when the tree lighting is scheduled to take place, and Santa Claus will be on hand for the ceremony. He said that the Department of Transportation will provide tents and seating for the occasion. He welcomed everyone to attend.

The Board Chairman reported that Phase I of the proposed bike routes through the Community District 5, Queens area have been installed, and that the Department of Transportation began installing Phase II of the bike route project last month. He said that the committee is in the process of reviewing the proposed plans for Phase III of the bike route network through our Board area.

The Board Chairman also reported that the Department of Transportation has re-timed the traffic signals at the intersection of Myrtle Avenue, Forest Avenue and George Street, in Ridgewood, in connection with the city's Safe Streets for Seniors initiative.

The Board Chairman reported that both he and the District Manager met recently with representatives of the NYC Department of Transportation's Division of Bridges to review the preliminary set of plans for the rehabilitation of the Metropolitan Avenue Bridge over the LIRR at Fresh Pond Road, in Ridgewood. He said that the committee plans to review these plans as soon as they become available.

John Maier announced that the next Committee Meeting is scheduled to take place at 7:30pm on Tuesday, December 1st, 2015 in the Board 5 office. He welcomed Board members to attend.

Old and New Business

Kathy Masi reported that the State Supreme Court Judge recently denied the Glendale Middle Village Coalition's Article 78 petition in opposition to the proposed transitional housing facility at 78-16 Cooper Avenue in Glendale. She said that the Coalition plans to appeal the judge's decision, and asked Board members and community residents for their continued support in this effort.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, Board Chairman Arcuri adjourned the public meeting of Community Board 5, Queens on a motion from the floor at 9:25pm.