

COMMUNITY BOARD #14

CITY OF NEW YORK - BOROUGH OF QUEENS

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Community Board #14Q
June Board Meeting
June 10, 2025, at 7:00pm

Knights of Columbus
333 Beach 90th Street
Rockaway Beach, NY 11693

BOARD MEMBERS:

Present: Ebony Beaty, Beverly Childs, Brittny Chong, Kimberly Comes, Rose Marie Duggan-Gulston, Jack Epter, Iona Folkes, Maria Foreman, Meishe Friedman, Yitzchok Goldstone, Josephine Gonzalez, Amanda Johnson, Lisa Johnson-Cooper, Damara Lee, Betty Leon, Sharon Lewis-Williams, Nancy Martinez, Helen Montero, Josmary Ochoa-Cruz, Dolores Orr, David Rood-Ojalvo, Aramiam Sacnite, David Shelborne, Karen Sloan-Payne, Monice Small, Israel Tavera, Christopher Tedesco, William Tietjen, Christina Torres

Absent: Amber Clinkscales, John Cori, Dr. Gerald David, Wayne-Neisha Fowels, Jacqueline Gutierrez, Avionne Gumbs-Cummings, Samuel Jaroslawicz, Patrick Kelly, Paul King, Richard Knott, Anette Lord-Cohen, Zina Moratti, Dr. Harold Paez, Shannel Parker, Eric Ramussen, Alexa Roberts, Vernell Robinson, Jose Santana, Jose Velez

ELECTED OFFICIALS/ REPRESENTATIVES:

Elected Officials: Councilwoman Brooks-Powers

Representatives: Congressman Meeks – Jose Reina, Senator Sanders – Hidelkis Nunez Hernandez, Assemblywoman Pheffer Amato – Maggie Bernath, Councilwoman Brooks-Powers – Renee Taylor, Councilwoman Joann Ariola – Stacy Spataro

GUEST:

101 Precinct – Sergeant Luckman, Transit D23 - Lieutenant Rosario, 100th Precinct - Deputy Inspector Hamilton, DEP – Queens Borough Commissioner – Alfonso Lopez, NYC Parks: Irene Papadopoulos, Shartine Van Vugt, Rebecca Kanfer

The Chair called the meeting to order at **7:09pm**. Quorum **was not** present.

Pledge of Allegiance

Discussion or Vote on May Minutes are on HOLD due to quorum not being present.

UPDATES FROM NYPD & ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Councilwoman Selvena Brooks-Powers

- **Committee on Transportation** hearing today focused on infrastructure and design-build programs within the Department of Design and Construction (DDC). DOT and DEP participated.



- **Executive Budget** hearing was recently completed. Key budget priorities include Education & Childcare (3K, 2K programs), Libraries (capital investments, especially in Arverne) and Food Insecurity
- **Trauma Center** is a top district priority, securing a Level 1 or Level 2 trauma facility in Rockaway. The state is currently offering Level 3 certification, with flexibility to staff it at a Level 1 or Level 2 facility. The Mayor committed land for the facility, but \$300,000 is needed for the land transfer (NYCHA-owned, requires HUD approval and environmental study). City Council supports funding in the preliminary budget response, but the mayor prefers the funds to come from elsewhere. Community action may be needed to keep this issue prioritized.
- **Community Events:** Summer movie nights begin June 21st with a showing of Mufasa. Father's Day celebration on Sunday, June 15th at Beach 17th and the bandstand.
- **Elections**, the Councilmember is running unopposed and will be on the ballot in November, not June.
- **Street renaming** at B54th Street for Pat Simon from Ocean Bay Development, on June 21st at 12:30pm.

100th Precinct – Deputy Inspector Hamilton

Although summer isn't officially here yet, the beaches are open and being enjoyed. The 100th Precinct would like to express our gratitude to the community for keeping the NYPD aware of what is going on. Things are going well overall in the 100th Precinct. Preparations are underway for the upcoming Fourth of July celebrations. She wished everyone a safe holiday.

101st Precinct – Lieutenant Galane

Lieutenant Evan Galane from the 101st Precinct introduced himself as the Beach Lieutenant for the summer detail. He shared that the precinct has organized two shifts of officers, sergeants and recently welcomed 17 new rookies who are being trained in priority areas through hands-on experience with field training officers. He proudly noted that crime is down for the year and closed by wishing everyone a safe summer.

Transit Unit District 23 “A” Train – Lieutenant Scott Hughes

Lieutenant Scott Hughes from Transit District 23 introduced himself as one of the special operations lieutenants. He noted that the “A” train service has resumed for now, but during the interim period, personnel were deployed along key transit points from Beach 116th Street to Mott Avenue, including Broad Channel. These officers were transferred from the 106th Precinct and assigned to patrol duties starting at 7:30PM. There was a slight uptick in incidents at times, and additional personnel were deployed.

Office of Congressman Gregory Meeks – Jose Reina

- **Congressional Casework Support** has noticeably increased related to IRS tax refunds, Passports, Social Security, and Immigration. He emphasized that technical issues often stall immigration cases, and the congressman's office can help move them forward. Constituents experiencing difficulties in any of these areas are encouraged to reach out for assistance. With summer travel approaching, Reyna advised travelers to plan ahead, especially for passport appointments, as availability is tightening, next openings begin June 18th.
- **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)** is recommended to enroll in the State Department's free Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, which provides safety alerts and helps U.S. consular

officers assist travelers in emergencies. Constituents can contact Congressman Meeks' office at 718-725-6000.

Office of Senator Sanders – Hidelkis Nunez Hernandez

Senator Sanders is currently in Albany working on legislation.

- **Community Events:** Father Fest Jazz & R&B Festival, Sunday, June 15th, from 1:00 PM to 7:00 PM at the Beach 17th Street amphitheater. Flyers are available in the back for more details. Senior Tech Study event on Tuesday, June 17th from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Queens Community Justice Center on Beach 20th Street. The program will help seniors learn how to use their phones, email, internet and download apps. Flyers are available, and seniors interested in attending should call the office to RSVP.

Office of State Assemblymember Stacey Pheffer Amato – Maggie Bernath

Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato is currently in Albany, working on legislation. She recently secured a flat 20-year pension plan for city sanitation workers and varsity collection officers—similar to the plan she helped pass earlier this year for NYPD personnel. Additionally, she ensured that the City of New York will continue contributing 7% to every government employee's pension, benefiting teachers, police officers, public nurses, and other civil servants. With just a few days left in the legislative session, more bills are expected to pass.

Office of City Councilmember Joann Ariola – Stacy Spataro

Councilwoman Ariola met with Chief McIntosh, the newly appointed Chief of Patrol for Borough South.

- **Beach 116th Street** Kicked Off the 2nd annual summer event. It was a great success. The beach at 116th Street is now open for sand play & will soon be open for swimming. The councilwoman is working with NYC Parks to increase lifeguard coverage and install lifeguard chairs on under-resourced beaches.
- **Legislation:** Councilwoman Ariola has introduced a bill to limit operating hours for legal cannabis dispensaries to 9:30 AM–9:30 PM. She is advancing legislation to ban ATV possession within city limits. Another proposal is to provide sign-on and retention bonuses for NYPD officers. The councilwoman is involved in the “City of Yes” lawsuit, with the first court date set for July 8th in Staten Island.
- **Upcoming Events:** Flag Day Festival on June 17th from 4–7PM in Broad Channel. Flag Day Fireworks on Rockaway Beach, June 14th is rescheduled. Hosting an e-waste recycling and free compost giveaway on June 21st from 10 AM–1 PM at the Rockaway office. Residents are invited to drop off electronics and pick up compost.

Chairperson's Report – Dolores Orr

- **John Cori** tragically lost his son, Christopher, this week. The funeral mass was held earlier today. The community is asked to keep the family in their thoughts and prayers.
- **QM15 express bus** typically ends its route in Howard Beach, even though it depots in Rockaway. For years, we've asked that it be extended to carry passengers into Rockaway, especially since it runs until 10 PM and operates on weekends, making it a valuable transit option. Despite repeated requests, there was no movement—until the recent 17-week train shutdown. During that time, the extension was finally implemented, and the good news is it's continuing. The MTA will be monitoring ridership closely, so if you're traveling to Manhattan on weekends and need to return home in the evening, the QM15 is available. We'll be sharing

the full schedule and Rockaway bus stop locations soon. But here's the bottom line: if we don't use it, we risk losing it. Let's make sure this service stays. A flyer will be coming.

- **JFK Redevelopment Committee** meets monthly. Key concerns discussed at the meeting included the national shortage of air traffic controllers:
 - Starting salary is only \$45,000–\$50,000.
 - Mandatory retirement age is 56 due to job stress.
 - High attrition: 35% drop-out during training; 20% leave after starting.
 - Controllers work six days a week, 10-hour shifts, with only four days off per month.
 - Public is encouraged to appreciate and thank air traffic controllers.
 - JFK's IT infrastructure upgrade is scheduled for 2029. It is partially funded, with four years left to secure the remaining budget.
- **Charter Revision** proposals will appear on the November ballot and could significantly impact land use review processes:
 - Currently, Community Boards have 60 days to review and comment on land use proposals (ULURP); the revision would reduce this to 30 days.
 - This change would severely limit the board's ability to provide meaningful input.
 - There's concern that council members may lose their vote on ULURP matters, weakening local representation.
 - Example cited: Councilwoman Selvena Brooks-Powers successfully advocated for affordable co-ops in Far Rockaway, demonstrating the importance of council member involvement.
 - A flyer will be created to inform the public and encourage opposition to the proposed changes.
- **Early Voting & Voter Registration** - Early voting from 6/14 to 6/22. Rank Choice only on city positions, not judges. If you're not registered, you can register and vote, by registering before 6/14.
- **Queens Borough Board Meeting** for Board Chairs.
 - **Urban Design & Planning Feedback** City Planning and Urban Design architects presented ideas for future development, emphasizing parks near every building. The chair challenged their assumptions, citing Rockaway Village's lack of playgrounds and the disconnect between planning ideals and community realities. Highlighted the health impact of limited outdoor space for children and criticized the lack of community input on public art installations.
 - **Parks Leadership Update** Commissioner Donoghue, retired. Iris Perez Rodriguez-Rosa has been appointed as the new Parks Commissioner. She previously served as Deputy Commissioner and postponed retirement to help address lifeguard staffing and beach operations. Her appointment is welcomed with enthusiasm.
- **Community Recognition** Felicia Johnson was honored with the Dr. Edward Williams Citizen Award by the St. John's iCare Foundation.

District Managers Report - Felicia Johnson:

- **Recognition**, I am honored to receive the Dr. Edward Williams Community Service Award from the EHS, iCare Foundation.
- **Emergency Preparedness & OEM Concern**, a recent presentation at the monthly Cabinet meeting of Queens District Managers, was criticized for being inadequate, offering only a yellow map and QR code as an evacuation plan. The QR code failed to provide clear evacuation center details (e.g., pet-friendly, handicap accessible). Concerns raised about

Rockaway's digital divide, transportation challenges, and vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors, nursing homes, adult homes). Rockaway still lacks an active CERT (Community Emergency Response Team). The Borough President has agreed to restart hurricane preparedness meetings; OEM will be invited to present a more robust plan in September.

- **Correspondence & Infrastructure Update**

Letters sent to **DOT**:

- Supporting a temporary electronic VMS board at Beach 73rd and Rockaway Beach Blvd.
- Supporting alternate side parking signage between Beachfront Road and Beach Channel Drive.

- **DEP** received approval for over \$25 million to repair and reconstruct stormwater interceptor linings—large pipes that carry runoff to treatment centers.

- **Parks & Recreation**

- Parks Department approved \$267,000 for design services to reconstruct the Broad Channel American parking lot and Shad Creek Road.
- Bayswater Park restroom renovation budget increased to \$3.7 million.

- **DOT**

- DOT approved a limited local access "Open Street" designation for Seagirt Avenue (Beach 6th to Beach 3rd), primarily for pedestrians and cyclists. Applied for by Rockaway Nassau Safety Patrol. Runs July 18–December 28, with designated hours Friday–Sunday.
- A visibility study at Rockaway Beach Blvd. and Beach 48th Street found no issues; residents were encouraged to continue submitting 311 complaints if problems persist.

- **Housing & Development:** HPD permits filed for a new 57-unit condo at 155 Beach 30th Street, including 29 enclosed parking spaces.

- **District Service Cabinet with Queens Borough President**

- The Mayor's Office presented on Neighborhood Support Teams—nonprofits that identify local issues requiring interagency collaboration (e.g., graffiti removal). Eligible nonprofits must submit proposals involving two or more city agencies. Limited slots available citywide; interested groups can contact the office for application details, (718)471-7300
- Signage & Evacuation Advocacy: OEM suggested signage isn't needed due to Rockaway's single entry/exit point—this was strongly challenged. Council members and DOT may need to be pressured to provide proper evacuation signage. Emphasis on the need for clear, accessible evacuation plans for residents and tourists alike.

- **CERT** training is in Brooklyn after hours (6-9pm). Seeking interested individuals in order to support a local training site.

Public Speaking: The Chairperson opened the floor for public speaking. 16 individuals signed up to speak. They were recognized and heard. Public speaking was closed.

Presentations:

NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)- Alfonso Lopez - Queens Borough Commissioner

Alfonso Lopez expressed appreciation for the Rockaway community and its leadership. Commissioner Lopez reported successful completion of a joint DEP-DOT project near St. John's Hospital on 20th Street and encouraged residents to report issues like sinkholes, ponding, or catch basin problems via 311. He asked that follow-up emails with complaint numbers, photos, and descriptions be sent to queensdep@dep.nyc.gov, and CC'ing CB14.

He introduced two key resources: the "Rainfall Ready" guide, which offers storm preparedness tips for homeowners and businesses, and the 2024 Water Quality Report, which outlines DEP's efforts to deliver clean, safe drinking water.

Commissioner Lopez emphasized the importance of storm season preparedness, especially for Rockaway, which faces heightened risks from stormwater, coastal flooding, and groundwater impacts. NYC storm sewers are only designed for 1.5 to 1.75 inches per hour—last year dropped over 3 inches per hour, causing backups and flooding.

He explained how combined sewers, which carry both wastewater and stormwater, can overflow during extreme weather, leading to flooding through manholes, catch basins, and basement connections. He recommended flood sensors, sump pumps with extended hoses, and physical barriers to protect basements, especially converted ones. He encouraged residents to disconnect downspouts, use rain barrels, and avoid unnecessary water use during storms to reduce system strain. He warned against flushing "disposable" wipes, which can combine with grease and debris to form massive clogs known as fatbergs. He plans to distribute educational materials to help prevent these issues. He also urged homeowners to review their insurance coverage, especially for service line breaks, and consider American Water Resources (AWR) for supplemental protection.

He recommended downloading the Notify NYC app for real-time emergency alerts. Commissioner Lopez confirmed that DEP receives data from flood cameras installed in Rockaway and uses it to escalate issues to engineers or street teams. Stormwater outflow system along the western peninsula, where a flap is designed to prevent bay water from backing into the streets during high tide. He confirmed that DEP has reviewed several tide gates in the area, and said repairs are underway. He added that DEP is exploring valve installations in manholes as a more effective solution than sealing them. Finally, Lopez confirmed that DEP has a regular maintenance schedule for these systems but can escalate repairs when needed. He offered to provide a breakdown of inspection and repair timelines.

NYC Comptroller Brad Lander's Office - James Mongeluzo

James Mangaluso, Queens Borough Director for the NYC Comptroller's Office, introduced the role of the Comptroller as the city's chief fiscal officer—an independently elected position since 1884. The office plays a critical role in auditing, budget analysis, contract oversight, and public accountability. The Community Action Center, staffed by experienced professionals who help resolve constituent issues that may stall at other government offices. Residents can reach out for help navigating city agencies.

Auditing is a major function—covering every city agency, borough president, and community board. Recent audits include express bus accessibility, nonprofit payment delays, and NYCHA operations. Residents can suggest audit topics, and Rockaway residents have participated in NYCHA's audit committee.

The office also reviews and registers city contracts. If residents suspect fraud or poor performance by vendors, they can report it, and the Comptroller can decline to register problematic contracts. For personal or property damage caused by the city, residents may file claims through the Bureau of Law and Adjustment, which can result in compensation if liability is found.

Other functions include:

- **Budget Bureau:** Analyzes city spending and tracks project funding.

- **Public Finance:** Manages city bonds and infrastructure investment.
- **Asset Management:** Oversees pension funds for city workers.
- **Accounts Bureau:** Handles internal financial operations.

Jame shared his direct phone number, (646) 689-6509 and encouraged residents to call or text anytime with questions or concerns.

School Construction Authority (SCA) - PS 106Q – Danielle Schaaff

SCA announced plans to build a new, state-of-the-art replacement facility for PS 106 on a city-owned parcel located between Beach 39th and Beach 40th Streets on Rockaway Beach Blvd. The current PS 106 building is significantly undersized and lacks adequate amenities, including administrative space.

The new school will offer 547 seats, including 96 for District 75 students, and will serve grades pre-K through 5. This marks a major expansion from the current building's 128-seat capacity. The site will span 44,521 square feet and be fully accessible and air-conditioned. The project is intended to meet growing demand due to nearby housing development. SCA clarified that while it oversees construction, zoning decisions and school assignments fall under the Department of Education and other city agencies. Community engagement is underway, with input from Principal Johnson and the interim superintendent to shape the building's design and programming.

The timeline includes:

- 12 months for design (starting now)
- 3–4 months for bidding and contractor selection
- Several months for permitting
- 24–36 months for construction

The projected opening is September 2029. More details on amenities and design features will be shared in future updates as planning progresses.

NYC Parks & Recreation – Irene Papadopoulos, Rebecca Kanfer, Alex Sokol, Elizabeth Walsak, Sharline Van Vugt.

Arverne Playground, Current conditions: 2 entrances, 4 handball courts, 3 basketball courts. Asphalt playgrounds. Some shade, naturally.

Irene, Deputy Chief of Staff to the Queens Parks Commissioner, led a presentation on the Arverne Playground redesign in Rockaway, Queens. She was joined by Parks staff including Alex Sokol, Elizabeth Walsak (Rockaway Administrator), and members of the Capital Projects team. Rebecca from the design team presented the schematic plan for the site, which spans approximately one acre and carries a total budget of \$7.7 million—funded by Borough President Donovan Richards (\$3M), Council Member Selvena Brooks-Powers (\$1.5M), and Mayor Eric Adams (\$3.2M). Arverne Playground is located within a 100-year floodplain and has a high-water table. The playground currently includes play equipment, swings, handball courts, and basketball courts (the latter being reconstructed under a separate contract).

A February community meeting identified key priorities: interactive and sensory play features, climbing structures, seesaws, vibrant colors, more trees and seating, and a future public restroom. The

design incorporates these elements while maintaining the two existing entrances (mid-block at the top and bottom of the site).

- **Design Features:** Double-gated entry from Arverne Blvd, with new seating near the basketball courts. Space is reserved for a future restroom building (currently unfunded) Central Gathering Area: Distinctive paving and shaded seating connect various play zones. Play Zones: Ages 2–5, Ages 5–12. Water play area. Repurposed Handball Courts: Three of four courts will be converted into adult fitness stations, ping pong tables, and seating areas. One court will remain for handball.
 - The prior Community input meeting resulted in requesting the following Additional Features: A low basketball hoop for younger children, a bucket shot game, high/low drinking fountains with bottle fillers, and security lighting throughout.
- **Infrastructure & Safety** -Stormwater management features include bioswales and planting beds to improve site permeability by 10x.Fencing will be lowered around the playground for better visibility and safety, with lockable gates at entrances. Feedback from Friends of Auburn group was mixed, but Parks noted that lower fencing combined with lighting improves safety. Barbecuing will not be permitted, per Parks policy.
- **Planting & Sustainability** -The planting plan includes shade trees, flowering understory trees, and a coastal palette to suit the site's floodplain conditions. Sustainability measures focus on permeability, stormwater capture, and climate resilience.

The presentation concluded with an invitation for public comment, noting that three individuals had signed up to speak. Parks staff emphasized their commitment to continued community engagement and welcomed feedback on the design.

Public Hearing:

Three community members expressed strong support for the Arverne Playground redesign but voiced firm opposition to the proposed reduction in fence height. The current 8-foot fence is seen as essential for safety, given the neighborhood's environment and concerns about crime. Speakers argued that lowering the fence to 4 feet would compromise security, making it easier for individuals to reach over or enter the playground, especially during large gatherings. They cited past events with over 800 attendees where the existing fence helped maintain order.

Safety was emphasized as the community's top priority—for children, seniors, and all residents. In addition to fencing, speakers advocated for the inclusion of a public restroom, noting that while the \$3.3 million cost is high, the fact that the site has been designated for future construction signals a real commitment. Community needs Parks Department to maintain the current fence height and prioritize restroom installation to ensure safety and accessibility.

Community members largely supported the proposed playground redesign, but they reiterated strong opposition to lowering the perimeter fence from 8 feet to 4 feet, with 8-foot fences being chain link and less visually appealing, the community's priority is protection, especially for children and students in the area. There was frustration expressed over the perception that Parks would ultimately override the community's preference due to citywide design policies. Parks were urged to reconsider, stressing that residents live in and understand the neighborhood's safety needs firsthand Parks representatives explained that the 4-foot fence is part of a citywide design standard but acknowledged community concerns and agreed to revisit the issue internally.

Regarding the handball courts, it was clarified that the physical handball wall will remain intact. One open court will be striped for flexible use, allowing either handball or activities like pickleball, though users will need to bring their own nets. This approach mirrors recent conversions at other parks, such as 105th Street.

Motion: Betty Leon made a motion to approve the overall design for the Arverne Playground with one key exception: the proposed 4-foot fence would be replaced with an 8-foot fence, based on community safety concerns. (This motion was not intended to delay the project but to formally document the community's insistence on a taller fence.) The motion was second by Nancy Martinez.
23 in Favor, 4 Opposed, 1 Abstention. Motion Caries.

The meeting was adjourned at **10:04pm.**

Submitted by:
Jeanette Garramone