

COMMUNITY BOARD #14

CITY OF NEW YORK - BOROUGH OF QUEENS

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Community Board #14Q
February Board Meeting
March 10, 2026, at 7:00pm

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

BOARD MEMBERS:

Present: Ebony Beaty, Beverly Childs, Kimberly Comes, John Cori, Rose Marie E. Duggan-Gulston, Jack Epter, Iona Folkes, Maria Foreman, Menashe Friedman, Yitzchok Goldstone, Samuel Jaroslawicz, Patrick Kelly, Paul King, Damara Lee, Betty Leon, Sharon Lewis-Williams, Annette Lord-Cohen, Nancy Martinez, Helen Montero-Hernandez, Zina Moratti, Josmary Ochoa-Cruz, Dolores Orr, Dr. Harold Paez, Alexa Roberts, Vernell Robinson, David Rood-Ojalvo, Aramiam, Sacnite, David Shelborne, Karen Sloan-Payne, Monice Small, Christopher Tedesco, William Tietjen, Jose Velez

Absent: Brittany Chong, Josephine Gonzalez, Jacqueline Guitierrez, Avionne Gumbs, Amanda Johnson, Lisa Johnson-Cooper, Richard Knott, Shannel Parker, Eric Rasmussen, Israel Tavera, Christina Torres

ELECTED OFFICIALS/ REPRESENTATIVES:

Elected Official: District Attorney Katz

Representatives: Congressman Meeks – Jose Reina, Senator Sanders – Lisa George, Assemblymember Anderson – Jeannine Agard, Councilmember Brooks-Powers – Renee Taylor, Council Member Ariola – Stacy Spataro, District Attorney Katz – Dan Brown, Queens Borough President – Oluwanisola “Sola” Olosunde

NYPD/ TRANSIT/ FDNY:

NYPD 100th Precinct – Lieutenant Jeff Thompson, NYPD 101st Precinct – Sergeant Desson

GUESTS:

NYC HHC – Michelle Lewis, Joseph P. Addabbo FHCC – Renee Hastick-Motes, Packaging Reduction & Recycling Infrastructure Act – Victoria Augustine (for Natalie Russianoff)

The Chair called the meeting to order at **7:03pm** and announced that we are officially Livestreaming on YouTube. Quorum **was** present.

Meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance

Betty Leon made the motion to accept February 10th, 2026, minutes. **Nancy Martinez** 2nd the motion. Vote was taken. Approve - 25, Oppose - 0, Abstain - 1. **Motion carries.**

UPDATES FROM NYPD/ ELECTED OFFICIALS:

District Attorney Melinda Katz: Expressed appreciation for the familiar faces in the audience and recalled seeing many of them at the recent Queens County St. Patrick's Day Parade. She noted that



she is now in her seventh year as District Attorney. Katz reflects on how dramatically the criminal justice landscape has shifted since she took office on January 1, 2020, which coincided with sweeping statewide changes to discovery laws and major bail reform in New York City. Only weeks later, the COVID-19 pandemic shut down the world, where she was among some of the first to contract COVID. Despite the unprecedented disruption, her office continued its essential responsibilities, ensuring defendants were arraigned within 24 hours, meeting the 144-hour indictment requirement for individuals held in custody, while maintaining public safety throughout the crisis.

Queens District Attorney's Office consists of 900 to 1,000 employees, including 420 attorneys, 400 support staff, and 100 detective investigators. She highlights several major initiatives her office has built to strengthen public safety and address emerging threats, such as the creation of a dedicated Hate Crimes Bureau, a Gang Unit, and a Strategic Enforcement Unit focused on removing gangs and guns from the streets. Office workload 70 to 110 arrests every 24 hours, long-term investigations into gangs, guns, and organized crime, in 2024 alone, 60,000 arrests and 47,000 arraignments. There are approximately 1,000 active gun cases, and her office has assisted 47,000 crime victims.

The DA's office is committed to accountability, not only to violent crimes but also to large-scale organized theft. She cites the largest retail theft takedown in Queens history, involving a **Home Depot theft ring** that spanned nine states, 128 stores, 345 thefts, and 13 defendants. Commits to meaningful engagement with the community, especially young people. Her **Youth Outreach** team visits middle and high schools to build trust, intervene early and provide support before problems escalate. She makes a point of attending food pantries, basketball games, and local events so that young people's first interaction with law enforcement is positive and preventive rather than punitive.

Significant cases her office is currently handling. The trial has begun for the defendant charged with the first-degree murder of **Detective Diller in Far Rockaway**, an incident widely seen online and deeply felt throughout the community. The officer's family is present in court daily, and the defendant faces life in prison. She also references recent murder arrests, including a February indictment for **second-degree murder in Far Rockaway** of Ms. Gonzalez, a resident at RiseWell residential facility. The **Cold Case Unit** has achieved major breakthroughs using modern DNA and genealogy tools, including solving a 40-year-old homicide after remains were found in a backyard and securing a conviction in the 1992 rape and murder of **15-year-old Nadine Slade** through preserved DNA evidence. She also asks the community for help identifying a **5-year-old child** who washed ashore on Beach 110th Street, in the Rockaways in 2005, explaining that new technology is being used but public information could be crucial.

Gun Violence, Removing guns from the streets is one of her top priorities. Her office aggressively prosecutes illegal gun possession and partners with churches to conduct gun buybacks, resulting in 600 guns collected under her administration. Every surrendered gun is one that will never harm a family or community.

Katz addressed the frustration residents feel about **shoplifting and retail disorder**. To help local stores, she created a **trespass affidavit program** in partnership with the NYPD. Store owners can bar individuals who harass customers or disrupt business, and instead of immediate arrest, officers issue a trespass affidavit on body camera, warning the individual to leave immediately. If they return, they can be arrested. More than 2,500 affidavits have been issued, and only 120 individuals have returned, demonstrating strong deterrence. The program reduces petty crime and store disturbances.

DA Katz emphasizes the critical importance of **community engagement** in strengthening public safety and trust throughout Queens. She highlights the work of community liaisons, including Dan Brown for Community Board 14 district. His presence makes it easier for people to ask questions, seek help, and feel connected to the justice system. When residents trust law enforcement, witnesses are more willing to come forward, victims feel supported, and families are more likely to reach out early when a loved one is struggling, often preventing situations from escalating into criminal behavior. Strong community trust is essential to accountability, effective investigations, and meaningful support for those in need.

Katz also addresses the growing public safety threat posed by **unregistered and unlicensed scooters and motorbikes**. These vehicles lack plates and registration, making riders unidentifiable and crimes committed on them extremely difficult to solve. She recounts a recent incident in Elmhurst where two police officers were shot after stopping a scooter traveling the wrong way. The suspect fled and was later arrested. To combat this issue, her office has seized roughly 2,000 illegal scooters by using trucks to remove them from the streets when parked illegally. Katz underscores her message with a warning: riders may pass through Queens, but if they stop and leave an illegal scooter unattended, it may not be there when they return.

Katz then addresses the issue of **squatters and illegal occupancy**, a growing concern for homeowners. She makes clear that no one has the right to break into a home, change the locks, and claim legal residency. Police officers often arrive to find a homeowner with a deed and a squatter presenting a fake lease, forcing them to make quick decisions. The DA's Office steps in to review documents thoroughly, determine rightful ownership, and prioritize returning the homeowner to their property. She cites a case in which a squatter not only took over a home but illegally rented out rooms; he was charged with grand larceny and sentenced to two to seven years in prison. Katz also clarifies what does not constitute squatting: adult children who refuse to move out, in-laws who overstay their welcome, and tenants who remain after a lease ends, matters that fall under civil, not criminal, law.

During the **question-and-answer** portion of the meeting, District Attorney Katz is asked about street vendors. She explains that vendor enforcement does not fall under her jurisdiction and is primarily handled by the city and the police. Katz reiterates that she is always willing to answer questions and invites attendees to email her if they need assistance at: **katz@queensda.org**.

Katz urges homeowners to protect themselves from **deed theft** by registering their properties with the city's notification system at **acris.nyc.gov**. This service alerts homeowners if anyone attempts to take out a mortgage, transfer ownership, or file documents claiming inheritance of a property, an early warning system that can prevent devastating fraud.

Katz thanks the Community Board for its dedication. She expresses pride in the progress her office has made, reducing shoplifting, addressing community concerns, supporting vulnerable individuals, and strengthening trust between residents and law enforcement. Katz reaffirms her commitment to justice, public safety, and serving the people of Queens with integrity.

NYPD 100th Precinct – Lieutenant Jeff Thompson: Reports a small but noticeable increase in **petty larcenies** over the most recent **28-day period**, driven largely by two issues: unattended package thefts and vehicle break-ins. Both trends can be reduced significantly if residents take a few preventive steps and remain vigilant. There were 9 incidents of **unattended package theft** during the 28-day period, with 2 thefts occurring on each day of the week except Monday. 6 of these thefts happened between 7am and 3pm, with the most vulnerable window between 11am and 1pm, when 4 incidents occurred. More than half of the thefts took place in Sector **Adam** (B.59th St to B.90 St.). Thompson urges residents to closely monitor delivery alerts. He also recommends using tracking tools such as USPS Informed Delivery, which sends daily emails showing incoming mail and packages. To further reduce theft, the precinct's crime prevention officer has been working with building management, particularly along Shore Front Parkway, to conduct security surveys and encourage the installation of secure lockboxes where delivery drivers can safely leave packages.

Year-to-date, **vehicle break-ins**, thirteen incidents, with Fridays and Saturdays being the most active days. The vulnerable hours fall between 3pm and 11:30pm, Sector **Adam** has been the top location for these crimes. Most of the break-ins occur on the street, where cars are more exposed. Thompson explains that offenders look for the easiest opportunity, often checking door handles to see if a vehicle is unlocked. He stresses always locking car doors and, when possible, parking in a lot or well-lit area and to remove valuables from sight. While no strategy can eliminate risk entirely, simple precautions, locking doors, hiding valuables, parking in safer locations, and installing car alarms, can significantly reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim. **Crime prevention** is a shared effort, with a

combination of awareness, practical safety measures, and cooperation between residents and the precinct, the community can help drive these numbers back down.

NYPD 101st Precinct – Sergeant Desson & Officer Farese: Reports that, **year-to-date**, the precinct has **towed 18 vehicles**, including several that residents have repeatedly complained about. He mentions specific problem vehicles, such as one on Shore Front Parkway and the red Camaro that many residents have called about and explains that recent snowstorms have slowed removal efforts. He keeps a running list in his office and assures the community that his team is actively working through it. Responding to ongoing **quality-of-life** concerns, the team has issued **1853 parking summonses** this year, many of them generated from **311 complaints** submitted by residents. They have also issued 120 summonses for offenses such as open-container drinking, public urination, and other behaviors that degrade neighborhood conditions. He emphasizes that his officers take these issues seriously and work hard to maintain the quality-of-life residents expect. He highlights a recent arrest for **graffiti near Beach 14th Street**, the same location where the precinct handled a homicide in December, as an example of their continued enforcement efforts.

Desson stresses that community cooperation is essential. As warmer weather approaches, he anticipates an increase in **illegal dumping**, particularly in the back of the bay streets. He urges residents to call the precinct or his office directly if they witness dumping or other suspicious activity. The precinct is receiving 27 **new officers** this week, which will strengthen their ability to respond to community concerns. Drawing on his experience as a former **Field Training Sergeant**, he encourages residents to introduce themselves to the new officers they see on Mott Avenue and throughout the precinct. He acknowledges that **robberies** are slightly elevated this year, driven largely by youth activity around locations such as McDonald's on Mott Avenue. The precinct's **youth officer** is working closely with schools to intervene early and prevent further escalation.

Officer Farese, the 101st Precinct's **Crime Prevention** Officer, explains that the precinct's merchant trespass program, referenced earlier by the District Attorney. It is managed directly through him because there is no electronic system that tracks which businesses are registered and which defendants have been trespassed. He maintains the records manually. He has created a simplified information sheet outlining several key programs, including the merchant trespass initiative, the FUSES program, and the precinct's camera-integration system that helps detectives streamline investigations. He encourages store owners and managers to register before the busy summer season, when the peninsula typically experiences an uptick in disorder and theft. He asks residents to share his information with any business that may benefit from these programs.

Office of Congressman Gregory Meeks – Jose Reina: Office phone number: 718-725-6000

The congressman's office has recently received a growing number of calls from residents with family members in the **Middle East** who are seeking assistance with departure due to the ongoing conflict. In response, the **U.S. Department of State** is advising all affected individuals overseas to enroll in the **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program** and complete a crisis intake form. The congressman's office can help constituents navigate this process, especially in situations involving medical concerns, minors, or religious observances that may require additional communication or coordination with the State Department. Their role is to help escalate urgent or sensitive cases to ensure families receive appropriate guidance. **Federal policy updates**, government is revising work-requirement rules for adults aged 18 to 64 who are considered able to work. While the standard requirement involves completing 80 hours per month of approved work activity, several groups are exempt. These include adults with medical disabilities, parents responsible for a child under 14, and pregnant women. For individuals who fall into these categories, the work-requirement rule does not apply.

The **federal tax filing deadline is April 15, 2026**. Taxpayers who want to check the status of their refund can do so by visiting the IRS website at [IRS.gov/refund](https://www.irs.gov/refund).

Office of Senator James Sanders Jr. – Lisa George: Office phone number: 718-327-7017/ 718-523-5069

Extended warm greetings in honor of International Women's Day and Women's History Month. She thanks the Community Board for approving the installation of a **lift at Beach 17th Street**, an issue that is meaningful and important to the community.

Bill S3071-A, has passed in the State Senate, establishes a task force to study existing school transportation policies and recommend improvements. The task force will examine current state laws, regulations, and safety programs related to school buses, with the goal of reducing accidents and preventing future tragedies.

In recognition of **Women's History Month**, Senator Sanders will host the 6th Annual Women's History Month celebration, honoring women in the Armed Forces. The nomination period has closed, and approximately 16 women from the community, many of whom residents know personally, will be recognized. The event will take place on March 22nd at the Rochdale Village Grand Ballroom from 3 - 6pm. It is free and open to the public, and attendees can RSVP by scanning the QR code on the flyers or by calling the senator's office.

The **New York State Educator Recognition Program** nominations are open until March 31st, and she encourages residents to think broadly about who qualifies as an educator. It does not have to be a classroom teacher; it can be a librarian, a coach, an after-school staff member, a volunteer who reads to children, or anyone who works with young people and inspires them. The program aims to honor individuals who go above and beyond in supporting youth and contributing to student success. Flyers with details are available for anyone interested in submitting a nomination.

Office of Assemblymember Khaleel Anderson – Jeannine Agard: Office phone: 718-327-1845

Highlighting two major events the office recently hosted. In February and March, they held their 5th annual **State of the District**, many community members attended and the office also hosted its **Women's History Month** celebration last weekend and among those honored were CB14 DM **Felicia Johnson**, community member **Vernell Robinson**, and **Madison McKenzie** from QCJC.

Upcoming Initiatives: Civic-engagement series called "**Let's Get Civic**," designed to help residents better understand how government works and how to participate effectively in civic life. The program is being brought to different neighborhoods across the district- Rosedale and South Ozone Park, and Springfield Gardens on March 21st from 10am – noon – see flyer.

The office is actively **recruiting volunteers**. This initiative aims to give community members, especially students seeking college credit or community-service hours, an opportunity to learn how an elected official's office operates and to support local events and outreach.

HRA benefits enrollment event, scheduled for Thursday, March 19th 10:30am - 4pm at the district office located at 1931 Mott Ave. The event is intended specifically for enrollment assistance; any concerns or casework issues can be handled separately by the office. The office hosts **HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program)** appointments every Friday from 10am - 2pm for those struggling with utility bills. Appointments are required for anyone needing support.

Office of Council Member Selvena Brooks-Powers – Renee Taylor: Shared highlights from the Councilwoman's **State of the District** address, which took place the previous Sunday. The event drew more than 400 community members, partners and served as an opportunity for the Councilwoman to reflect on her accomplishments, outline the progress made in the district, and present her vision for the next four years. This is the Councilwoman's final term in office, making her commitment to delivering meaningful results even more significant. Two community members, **Ozzie Edwards** and **Ebony Beauty**, were honored for their **outstanding service and contributions** to the neighborhood. For those who were unable to attend, the full program is available on the Councilwoman's Facebook page. **Upcoming Events: Quality of Life Town Hall** scheduled for March 19th at the Idlewild Environmental Center in Springfield Gardens. Representatives from multiple city agencies (DOT, DEP, DSNY) will be present to address concerns and answer questions. In recognition of **Women's History Month**, the office will also host its annual **Fireside Chat** on March 26th at 6pm at Swift River, Rosedale. This year's featured guest is Cathleen McFadden Benjamin, a member of Governor Kathy Hochul's executive chamber. **Spring Festival**, which will take place over two days. On Saturday, April 25th, at

Brookville Park from noon - 4pm, on Sunday, April 26th, at O'Donohue Park on Beach 17th Street also from noon - 4pm. Both events will feature community resources, family-friendly activities, and opportunities for neighbors to come together and enjoy the season.

Office of Council Member Joann Ariola – Stacy Spataro: Office phone: 718-318-6411

Several issues the Council Member is closely monitoring. The ongoing **New York City budget** negotiations, noting that Council Member is following the process carefully. At this stage, she explains, there is no cause for alarm despite the political tension between the mayor and the governor over funding priorities. The office will notify residents if any developments arise that could impact homeowners or taxpayers.

Legislative initiatives the Council Member is preparing to introduce regarding fire hydrant safety. The proposals would require the **Department of Transportation** to place clear markings on both sides of the street where hydrants are located, ensuring drivers and cyclists are unmistakably aware that these areas are no-parking zones. She adds that the **FDNY** has begun issuing criminal summonses, ranging from \$2,500 to \$4,000, to vehicle operators who block hydrants in situations where fire response has been delayed. These penalties reflect the seriousness of the issue and the need to always keep hydrants accessible. **Sanitation policy** -the city is now enforcing compliance with mandatory composting. Residents must place compost bins out on their designated recycling day. Official **New York City compost bins** are available exclusively through Home Depot, either in-store or via delivery services such as Uber Eats and DoorDash. CM Ariola will be meeting with the **Parks Department** to discuss lifeguard staffing for the upcoming summer season. She is eager to learn how many lifeguards have been hired and how they will be assigned across the beaches to ensure equitable coverage throughout the district. Discussions with the **Department of Transportation** regarding ongoing parking concerns along Shore Front Parkway. Updates will be shared with the community as soon as DOT provides further information.

Community event at the Knights of Columbus on March 19th featuring **Disney's The Little Mermen**. All are welcome to attend, and additional details can be found on the Council Member's website.

Office of the Queens Borough President – Oluwanisola "Sola" Olosunde: **Cultural and Community events** taking place this month and next. Earlier this evening, Queens Borough Hall hosted a **Holi celebration**, bringing together community members to honor the vibrant festival of colors. March 26, the BP will host the **Irish American Heritage Cultural Celebration** at Queens Borough Hall at 6 p.m. Thursday, April 3rd at noon, the BP's office will hold its annual **Salute to Gold Star Spouses** ceremony, honoring the surviving spouses of military service members who lost their lives in the line of duty. On April 3rd from 6 - 8pm, the office will host a **College and University Fair** at Richmond Hill High School. The fair is designed to connect students and families with higher-education opportunities, admissions reps, and resources to support their academic planning.

RSVP for any of these events through the Borough President's website, queensbp.nyc.gov.

Chairperson's Report – Dolores Orr: Update on several ongoing issues and initiatives affecting the district. The **QueensLink** project (many residents are familiar with) is an effort to restore rail service that would connect Southeast Queens to Midtown Manhattan. The competing Parks-side proposal recently lost its federal funding, which she views as a positive development for the rail-side plan. With that obstacle removed, the QueensLink process has advanced another step. Representatives from QueensLink will be invited to a future CB meeting, so they can present the project in detail and gather community support.

Parks Department provided an update on the replacement of the synthetic turf field at Beach 32nd Street. The Parks Dept meeting was held via Zoom. Present at the meeting were Parks Dept staff members, CB14 – Dolores Orr and Jose Velez. It was unfortunate that J&J Soccer Club, FRANC, Heart

of Rockaway and Edgemere Civic, though invited were not in attendance. Parks presented the initial layout and timeline, explaining that the full process will take approximately two years. José requested that shade structures be added around the field as part of the improvement plan. Parks agreed to explore the idea, though they could not commit, due to the high cost, approximately half a million dollars per structure. Still, the request is officially on the table.

New **Community Board** members will be appointed as of April 1st. At that time **committee assignments** are reviewed as they are each year. She encourages members to begin thinking about whether they want to remain on their current committees or request changes. Assigning committees is a complex process because she works to ensure that each committee includes representation from every ZIP code in the district. Members will receive an email with instructions and deadlines for submitting committee assignment requests.

Updates from the monthly Borough Board meeting of Queens Board Chairs and the QBP. -Draft of the **Borough Budget**, approximately 75 pages. Because the document is not final and voted on the Borough Board, it cannot distribute it yet, but once the final version is available, Board Members may request a copy or review it in the office. She provided several key takeaways about Queens' standing in citywide funding allocations. Queens has a population of roughly **2.5 million, making it the second-largest borough** after Brooklyn. Despite this, Queens consistently receives the lowest per-capita funding across multiple categories. Community Boards in Queens receive \$1.75 per resident, compared to \$2.52 in the Bronx. The Borough President's expense budget is also the lowest per capita at \$2.34 per person, while Staten Island receives \$9.90 per person. Queens has only nine hospitals serving its 2.5 million residents, while Manhattan has 23 and Brooklyn has 16. Cultural funding is similarly disproportionate: Queens receives \$4.00 per capita, while Manhattan receives \$20.65 and Staten Island receives \$14.60. She notes that these disparities are longstanding and have not changed in the years she has served as chair. The Mayor ultimately controls these allocations and encourages residents to contact the Mayor's office to advocate for fairer funding.

District Manager's Report - Felicia Johnson: Topic first raised in September - preparations for the upcoming **FIFA World Cup**, which will bring significant international attention and tourism to the region. Although the event is a joint venture between New York and New Jersey, Queens is expected to experience substantial spillover activity. During a recent District Cabinet meeting, representatives from FIFA and the **Queens Economic Development Corporation (QEDC)** outlined potential benefits for the borough. Ms. Johnson reminds the community that she has pushed for Queens, especially the Rockaway peninsula, to be included meaningfully in planning rather than being treated as an afterthought while attention centers on stadium-adjacent areas. CB14 received an invitation to a March 6th meeting at Borough Hall with the QEDC, led by Ben Guttman. The meeting was framed as an opportunity for communities to discuss events they might host to capitalize on the World Cup. The information presented differed from earlier assurances. The other two DMs present expressed concerns that outer-borough communities were being looped in far too late in that the grant deadline for World Cup related programming was March 13th. **World Cup – related programming.** The grant was available to nonprofits or community groups sponsored by nonprofits. Recognizing the urgency, the application link was shared through the board's email blast and social media. Several ideas were discussed with QEDC that could take advantage of the peninsula's beach and boardwalk, including a "sip and stroll" featuring local vendors, watch parties at the Beach 17th and Beach 94th performance spaces, and soccer-themed activities for children. interested groups could apply through ABNY.org.

Concerns were also raised about the slow pace of information from organizers, noting that global uncertainties may be affecting planning. With only 97 days remaining until the World Cup stresses the need for clearer communication and more inclusive coordination. She challenges assumptions made during the meeting, such as the belief that most visitors will arrive through LaGuardia Airport, arguing that **JFK**, as the international airport, will likely receive the majority of travelers and should mirror any welcome-center setup planned for LaGuardia and insisted that Rockaway should benefit from the increased tourism and visibility.

CERT training is an ongoing priority. The Joseph P. Addabbo Health Center has agreed to host CERT sessions, and residents are urged to register. The first orientation will be held on March 26th at 6:30pm. Every residential building, faith institution, and community group should have trained CERT members, recalling the community's struggles during Hurricane Sandy and emphasizing the importance of local readiness. The previous administration committed to bringing CERT training to Rockaway regardless of enrollment numbers but is confident the community can easily meet the 50-person goal.

District Cabinet meeting: **DEP Queens Borough Commissioner Alfonso Lopez** will leave his role in two weeks to transition to City Hall as Senior Advisor for Aging, Health, and Veterans. Before departing, he will conduct a commercial corridor walkthrough on March 16th. SAPO clarified that even on designated Open Streets, any event still requires a **SAPO permit**.

Turning to education, Schools **Chancellor David Banks** visited Beach Channel High School for a listening tour. Attendance was low due to the parade, but the Chancellor promised to return. The Youth Services and Education Committee will be scheduled to meet, as major changes are under discussion, including a possible merger of two schools at Beach Channel. District 27 is also slated to receive 2K seats. Location and number of seats unknown at this time. **Community Board 14** received the highest number of applications borough-wide for new board appointments.

Infrastructure and environmental issues. DEP, DOT, and the Army Corps of Engineers are coordinating on temporary measures **for Beach 69th Street**, where infrastructure remains unstable. The Army Corps' major reconstruction project is expected to begin in 2027, so interim solutions are being explored. A **Transportation Committee** meeting is scheduled for March 24th at Episcopal Health Services. DOT is aware of widespread potholes, with over 11,300 complaints citywide, with more than 5,000 from Queens alone. Residents are urged to call 311 and send photos to the Community Board. Seasonal staff have begun work, which should accelerate repairs. Residents were reminded to report traffic signal outages by calling 911 first, then 311, and finally forwarding the complaint number to the board.

Addressing sanitation - **Local Law 122** has officially decriminalized **street vending**. As a result, sanitation will no longer issue tickets or summonses to vendors. Residents who frequently complain about crowded sidewalks, particularly on Mott Avenue, will now need to adjust, as enforcement has changed. Police may still intervene in cases of blatant illegal activity, but routine vending is no longer penalized.

Housing and land use, -several **ULURP** items are upcoming. The **Arverne East** project continues to progress, and residents in Edgemere should expect traffic disruptions on Beach 35th and 36th Streets due to electrical work. The 101st Precinct will assist with traffic control. She also coordinated communication between the Arverne East team and the Liner Interceptor Project team, who were unknowingly planning work in the same area.

MTA Bus Network Redesign survey remains open and encourages participation. Representatives from both MTA and DOT will attend the March 24th Transportation Committee meeting.

Parks – Rockaway Community Park reconstruction, covering Almeda Avenue, Norton Avenue, Beach 58th, Somerville, the basin, Beach 49th, and Conch Basin, was scheduled to begin on March 2nd, weather permitting. The project will restore natural areas and is expected to take two years.

PUBLIC SPEAKING: The Chairperson opened the floor for public speaking. **2 individuals** signed up to speak. They were recognized and heard. Public speaking was closed. 3 minutes per speaker.

PRESENTATIONS:

NYC HHC – Michelle Lewis

Joseph P. Addabbo FHCC – Renee Hastick-Motes

Renee Hassick-Moltz, Chief Executive Officer of the Joseph P. Addabbo Family Health Center, begins by introducing herself and explaining that Addabbo operates two federally qualified health center (FQHC) sites in the Rockaways, one on Central Avenue and the other on Beach Channel Drive. As an FQHC, Addabbo is funded to serve all patients regardless of insurance status or ability to pay, and currently receives roughly 10,000 appointment requests per month, though only about 7,000 patients

are actually seen due to capacity limits. She emphasizes that the community's geographic isolation and limited healthcare resources make coordinated services essential. Standing alongside Michelle Lewis, CEO of Gotham Health, Renee expresses full support for Gotham's plan to open an additional FQHC in the Rockaways in 2027. She stresses that this is not a competition but a partnership, and that both organizations are committed to expanding access and improving health outcomes for local residents.

Michelle Lewis then introduces Gotham Health, describing it as one of the largest FQHC networks in the country and part of NYC Health + Hospitals, the nation's largest public health system. Gotham operates 29 sites across all five boroughs and serves more than 113,000 patients annually, offering world-class care regardless of immigration status or ability to pay. She outlines Gotham's plans for a state-of-the-art health center located near the last stop on the A train, which will offer adult care, pediatrics, women's health, cardiology, pulmonology, dermatology, cosmetic dentistry, child development services, and a full imaging center with CT, mammography, X-ray, and DEXA scanning. She emphasized Gotham's commitment to collaboration with Addabbo, St. John's, and local partners, noting that her team has already visited Addabbo to learn from their best practices. Gotham also conducts extensive financial screening to help patients obtain insurance through MetroPlus or Healthfirst, offers sliding-scale fees, and never turns anyone away.

Gotham's goal is to create a modern, welcoming facility that reflects the dignity of the community "a place where Bill Gates could walk in and receive care, and so can anyone else, regardless of ability to pay." There are plans to explore additional services such as physical therapy, strengthen partnerships with local pharmacies, and ensure that the new center hires from within the community. Recruitment will begin in late summer, and Gotham intends to host job fairs so residents can be first in line for employment opportunities. Gotham will have a 's long-term commitment to the Rockaways, emphasizing that the new center is not just another clinic but a major investment in the community's health, sustainability, and future.

Questions & Responses:

Board members questioned Gotham Health's entry into the Rockaways, raising concerns about pharmacy partnerships, duplication of services, and impacts on long-standing providers like St. John's and Addabbo. Gotham CEO Michelle Lewis said a meeting with the pharmacy in their building was already scheduled and noted the new site lacks space for an on-site pharmacy but will rely on medication delivery and collaboration to ensure access. Board members emphasized the need for genuine partnership and complementary, not duplicative, services. Ms. Lewis said Gotham, as an FQHC, must provide primary care but will also offer specialties including cardiology, pulmonology, dermatology, cosmetic dentistry, and full imaging. Behavioral health was a major concern, especially pediatric services. Ms. Lewis confirmed it will be included, while Addabbo CEO Renee Hassick Moltz said Addabbo is rebuilding and expanding its own behavioral health program and noted its pharmacy serves only its patients, underscoring the need for Gotham to secure its own pharmacy partner. Board members also questioned Gotham's location near the A-train terminal. Ms. Lewis said it was chosen for visibility and accessibility, adding that multiple FQHCs often cluster because community needs exceed capacity, and future expansion elsewhere in the Rockaways is possible. Ms. Hassick- Moltz said Addabbo also has long-term expansion plans. Concerns about ambulance availability were raised as well; Ms. Lewis agreed emergency referral impacts must be planned with St. John's and city agencies and clarified Gotham's FQHC status, funding structure, and federal reporting requirements, emphasizing that Gotham serves all patients regardless of ability to pay. The meeting closed with both CEOs reaffirming their commitment to collaboration and coordinated care, and a board member expressing appreciation for seeing two women leading major healthcare institutions in the community.

Packaging Reduction & Recycling Infrastructure Act – Victoria Augustine: Speaking on behalf of Beyond Plastics (filling in for her colleague, Natalie Russianoff), the Climate Reality Project, and as a graduate of the New York Trash Academy. She proposed the Packaging Reduction and Recycling

Infrastructure Act (PRRIA). Plastics are made from fossil fuels and more than 16,000 chemicals, three-quarters of which have never been tested for health impacts. Because plastics contain so many chemical components and are overwhelmingly used for single-use packaging, they are extremely difficult to recycle; the U.S. recycling rate is below 6%. The environmental and human-health consequences of plastic pollution, noting that 15 million tons enter the oceans annually equivalent to a truckload every minute and that microplastics and nanoplastics are now found in human organs, including the heart, lungs, brain, and reproductive system. Emerging research links plastic exposure to heart disease, dementia, strokes, childhood leukemia, and infertility. Also, the financial burden on New York City, which spends half a billion dollars each year exporting waste, with plastics and packaging making up nearly 40% of the city's trash. Waste transfer stations and incinerators of which New York State has more than any other state disproportionately impact frontline communities, contributing to higher rates of cancer, asthma, low birth weight, and other health disparities.

Ms. Augustine then outlined the core components of the PRRIA bill, an extended producer responsibility (EPR) measure that shifts the cost of waste management from taxpayers to the corporations that create packaging waste. The bill would require large companies, those earning over \$5 million annually or producing more than two tons of packaging, to reduce plastic packaging by 30% over 12 years, cut secondary shipping packaging by 50%, and ensure that 75% of remaining packaging is recyclable or reusable. She demonstrated how companies can redesign packaging using recyclable materials, showing a Costco product that replaced plastic backing with cardboard. The bill bans 15 toxic chemicals commonly found in plastics, including PFAS, lead, mercury, and formaldehyde, and establishes a strict definition of recycling that excludes incineration and chemical "recycling," both of which release toxins. EPR policies do not raise consumer prices packaging accounts for only about 2% of product cost and that major corporations have ample resources to comply. The bill would save New York State an estimated \$1.3 billion and New York City \$818 million over ten years through reduced trucking and waste-export costs.

She concluded by highlighting the broad coalition supporting the bill: 73% of New Yorkers, more than 300 environmental and community organizations, major medical associations, faith leaders, the NYC Council, and both the current and former mayors. She urged Community Board 14 to pass a resolution of support and send it to state legislators including Assembly Member Stacey Pheffer Amato, Assembly Member Khaleel Anderson, Senator James Sanders, Speaker Carl Heastie, Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins, and Governor Kathy Hochul to help counter intense lobbying from corporations such as Nestlé, Amazon, ExxonMobil, and Coca-Cola, which are fighting the bill. Augustine stressed that community-level resolutions empower legislators to stand firm against industry pressure and advance meaningful action on plastic pollution.

Questions & Responses:

A board member asked whether other states had enacted similar legislation and what results they had seen. Ms. Augustine explained that several states, including California, Oregon, Washington, and Michigan have adopted packaging-reduction laws, though New York's proposal is the strongest in the country. She added that industry lobbying has weakened earlier versions of the bill, reducing required plastic-packaging cuts from 50% over 10 years to 30% over 12 years, and emphasized that chemical recycling is not true recycling. Another board member expressed skepticism about the bill's projected costs, questioning whether packaging changes would truly have minimal impact on consumers. Ms. Augustine responded that only plastics labeled #1 & #2 are meaningfully recyclable, that most packaging ends up in municipal waste rather than recycling streams, and that packaging accounts for only about 2% of product cost. She reiterated that the bill targets producers not consumers and is designed to reduce waste, pollution, and taxpayer burden.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Environmental Committee – David Shelborne:

Although the committee did not have a quorum at its recent meeting with presenter Natalie Rosenoff, the members who were present reached a clear consensus in support of the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act. He noted that the information shared during the committee meeting aligned fully with the presentation the full board had just heard.

David Shelbourne made a motion that Community Board 14 issues a letter of support for the Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act. **Samuel Jarlowarlic** 2nd the motion. Vote was taken. Approve - 24, Oppose - 1, Abstain - 2. **Motion carries.**

Economic Development Committee – Paul King – Committee Member:

Paul presented the Economic Development Committee report, outlining the February 12th meeting at the Far Rockaway Library, where a quorum was reached with six of eleven members present. The committee unanimously reaffirmed Community Board 14's prior letter to the State Liquor Authority (SLA) opposing a liquor license for El Duro Bar & Lounge, located across from Redfern Houses. Paul elaborated that the February meeting had been intended as El Duro's chance to address community concerns and potentially reverse the board's opposition, but only the owners' accountant, David Guillermo, appeared. He stated that the owners had corrected their application to reflect that the business is a bar and lounge rather than a restaurant, and he argued that the owners are hardworking Rockaway residents who plan to hire private security. He also reported proposed hours of operation from 6pm – 1/2am, six days a week, with live music. Committee members and residents raised concerns about crime, alcohol-related impacts, and the owners' absence, stressing that business owners seeking community support must show up in person. Because the owners did not attend either the committee meeting or the full board meeting, the District Manager had already submitted a second letter to the SLA noting that although the application had been amended, the board's concerns remain unchanged.

A second agenda item regarding the repurposing of 10-18 Beach 20th Street from a medical space to a community space for Margert Community Corp. was tabled because the applicant did not attend.

Reverend David Cockfield, a resident, proposed exploring ways to activate vacant homes and lots in Edgemere and Arverne to expand first-time homeownership opportunities.

Questions & Responses:

Board members debated whether El Duro should be given another chance to appear. Some argued that the owners' failure to attend meetings was disrespectful and grounds to deny further consideration. However, the chair clarified that the SLA cannot deny a license simply because applicants do not appear before the community board; attendance is encouraged but not required by the SLA. They stressed that the board's opposition must be based on substantive concerns, not procedural issues. The chair reiterated that the letter to the SLA cited legitimate issues raised by residents, the Redfern Tenant Association, the local youth center, and the NYPD including the bar's proximity to a church and youth facility, fears of increased crime and loitering, and quality-of-life impacts not the owners' absence. District Manager noted that the accountant had been informed that the owners could attend either the full board meeting or a future committee meeting, and that the SLA could choose to delay its decision if the applicants wished to engage further. Committee members pointed out troubling inconsistencies during the February meeting, including the accountant's unfamiliarity with the liquor store next door and his inability to answer basic questions, which raised doubts about the owners' credibility.

Nancy Martinez made a motion to affirm the committee's motion to stand behind the existing letters opposing the liquor license unless and until the owners earn community support. Vote was taken. Approve - 25, Oppose - 0, Abstain - 2. **Motion carries.**

OLD BUSINESS/ NEW BUSINESS:

Jose: Briefly reported that SLT would finally be striping the roadway between Beach 35th Street and Beach 8th Street within the next three weeks, noting ongoing issues with drivers cutting each other off in the unmarked lanes.

Rose Marie: Asked about committee assignments, prompting the Chair to reiterate what she had stated in her report earlier this evening that all committees will be reviewed in April when new board members are appointed. She explained that every board member will receive an email, as they do every April, with instructions to indicate whether they wish to remain on their current committees or request changes, ranking up to four preferences. The chair emphasized that committee assignments require significant work to ensure representation from every ZIP code across the peninsula. A board member expressed frustration that an earlier email seeking clarification about committee placement had gone unanswered, and the chair clarified that she could not address committee-assignment questions during the meeting itself but would follow up separately.

Betty: Raised concerns about the traffic light at Beach 9th Street and Empire Avenue, explaining that the current configuration causes backups and confusion. She also noted that a fire truck recently struggled to pass through the bike-lane area near Beach 28th Street. The chair responded that DOT's Queens Borough Commissioner had already requested expedited street markings for the Beach 9th intersection. Although the new traffic signals have been recalibrated twice, the striping and pedestrian crosswalks cannot be completed until temperatures are warm enough for paint to adhere properly. Once the markings are installed, DOT will recalibrate the lights a third time to restore proper turning movements. The chair added that DOT is also attempting to assign a traffic agent to assist pedestrians at the intersection. She encouraged residents to attend the upcoming Transportation Committee meeting on March 24th, rescheduled from February due to the blizzard where DOT representatives will be present and the Beach 9th/Empire issue is already on the agenda. She noted that the agenda would be emailed to the board and is posted on the website.

Helen Montero-Hernandez made a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Paul King** 2nd the motion. The meeting was adjourned at **9:52pm**.

Submitted by:
Jeanette Garramone