



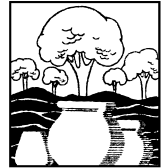
## COMMUNITY BOARD 6, QUEENS

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Whitepot Settled 1653

HEATHER BEERS-DIMITRIADIS  
CHAIR

DONOVAN RICHARDS  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

FRANK P. GULLUSCIO  
DISTRICT MANAGER

## CB 6 MEETING MINUTES MARCH 8, 2023

### PRESENT

H. BEERS-DIMITRIADIS, CHAIR

P. BEADLE, 1<sup>ST</sup> VICE CHAIR

M. LASTER, 3<sup>RD</sup> VICE CHAIR

K. ENGEL, 2<sup>ND</sup> VICE CHAIR

J. DERESZEWSKI, PARLIAMENTARIAN

A. AYON  
K. BATRA  
M. BERFAS  
H. BIRNBAUM  
H. CHAIN  
K. CLARK  
L. DAVIS  
S. JAIN  
J. LI

R. MEHRRA  
S. METZ  
J. MILNER  
P. MORGAN  
E. NEWTON  
D. RACHNAEV  
S. ROLNICK  
G. SANDOVAL  
D. SCHNEIER

H. SCHONHAUT  
J. SILVA  
S. WANDERMAN  
A. WEITZMAN  
J. WESTON  
B. WINSTEAD  
E. WONG

### ABSENT

M. ARCATI  
L. CIACCIO  
A. DIAZ-HOUSTON  
K. IMAS  
B. LEONG

K. LY  
J. MEDINA  
T. PADGETT  
H. POLLACK  
P. SCHNEIDERMAN

T. SIMMONS  
R. TAMAYEV  
I. TAMAYEVA  
M. TUCKER  
T. YASUKAWA

### OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

FRANK GULLUSCIO  
RAIMONDO GRAZIANO  
JORDAN GOLDES  
KEVIN MCALEER  
ARI INNISS  
MERCEDES JENNINGS  
VIANNY ENCALADA  
AMPARITO ROSERO

CB6 DISTRICT MANAGER  
OFFICE OF SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR.  
OFFICE OF CONGRESS MEMBER GRACE MENG  
OFFICE OF COUNCIL MEMBER LYNN SCHULMAN  
OFFICE OF SENATOR LEROY COMRIE  
OFFICE OF SENATOR MICHAEL GIANARIS  
OFFICE OF ASSEMBLY MEMBER CATALINA CRUZ  
OFFICE OF BOROUGH PRESIDENT DONOVAN RICHARDS

This meeting was held in-person with a limited virtual option via WebEx for individuals with Extraordinary Circumstances. The following CB 6 Members joined the meeting via WebEx: Miriam Berfas, Dr. Renee Mehrra, Julie Milner, Shari Rolnick.

Chair Beers-Dimitriadis asked Board Member David Schneier to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

All requests for public comment must be submitted via email to [QN06@CB.NYC.GOV](mailto:QN06@CB.NYC.GOV) by 3pm on the day of the meeting. Public comments submitted by Friday at 5pm will be included in the minutes.

**ODETTE WILKENS, WIRED BROADBAND, INC.**

*Good evening, I'm Odette Wilkens, President and General Counsel of Wired Broadband, Inc., a non-profit in Forest Hills focusing on safe technology for the public. I am also a technology attorney and have been for over 20 years. I am also a long-time resident, since 1976.*

*The process of considering whether to install Link5G cell towers should have been open to full public participation and to the full Board.*

*Link5G cell towers are 3 stories' high, with multiple antennas from multiple telecom companies.*

*The Executive Committee on Feb 15, 2023, heard a presentation by OTI on Link5G cell towers and voted to allow the towers but to move one of them from PS 144 to Selfridge and Yellowstone Blvd. They sent a letter to OTI with their recommendation. The other tower is being installed at 92-24 Queens Boulevard in front of the post office.*

*There are apparently two others in Rego Park that were installed without community input.*

*The process should have been opened up for full public participation and the full participation of the entire board.*

*The Chair and I exchanged numerous emails on this for a couple of weeks before that Executive Committee meeting. The Chair refused public participation.*

*There is a point of order – the Executive Committee took final action at their meeting on Feb 15, 2023 that was not authorized by the CB6 By-Laws. The Executive Committee decided, on their own initiative to give themselves final decision making authority, to move the Link5G tower from one location to another, without bringing it to the Board for discussion and a vote.*

*With respect to the substance of the issue of the Link5G towers, I had provided a written submission for the Board of the many issues and risks associated with these towers, which I am re-submitting along with these comments.*

*OTI has asserted that the FCC regulates emissions. While the FCC sets the wireless emission limits, it does not measure whether telecom carriers are in compliance. They have no resources to do so, and they don't track cell towers below 200 feet as they are not required to register with the FCC.*

*Even if the carriers are in compliance with the FCC wireless exposure limits, those limits are a safe harbor for industry to provide immunity from liability for personal injury from wireless exposure. They are no safety limits to protect the public.*

*1. There has been no safety testing prior to rolling out 5G.*

*2. The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer classified wireless radiation (2G and 3G) in 2011 as a possible human carcinogen. The WHO is now examining whether to classify it as a carcinogen.*

*3. A 2000 study commissioned by one of the major telecom carriers found high risk of certain types of cancer and neurological disorders, with special caution for children.*

*4. The International Association of Firefighters have opposed cell towers near fire stations, calling for a moratorium. Brain abnormalities were found in firefighters and their delayed reaction and inability to find a fire from mental disorientation were directly attributable to wireless radiation exposure*

*OTI claims that the telecoms need more capacity for future demand. But, OTI has not been able to produce reports of any gaps in phone service. In fact, there are already about 7500 4G/5G small cells installed on street poles, in addition to rooftop antennas.*

*A federal district court in NY ruled that installing towers for increased capacity does not rise to a federal mandate; instead, a carrier has the burden to show evidence of a significant gap in phone service, and that it is using the least intrusive means to fill that gap.*

*Where are the reports of a significant gap in service? OTI confirmed that they have none. And the towers are most intrusive, as close as 10.6 feet from one's home. Link5G towers fail on both counts.*

*OTI has not established a need for these towers, especially since many residents are saying that they do not need them and they do not want them. Therefore, CB6 can and should reject them.*

*OTI has not been transparent in their process. FOIL requests have been outstanding going back to October 2021 and since then for radio-frequency reports, FCC compliance reports, antenna model numbers, antenna power potential, frequency/bandwidth at which the antennas will be operating, electrical and engineering drawings, and much more. No information has been forthcoming.*

*To put the FCC emission limits in perspective, a prominent federal appellate court ruled against the FCC in 2021 on its outdated 1996 limits because of the FCC's failure to examine the 11,000 pages of scientific studies showing biological harm below those limits. The FCC's limits have still not been updated.*

*NYC residents have already been injured, some permanently, from exposure to wireless radiation. We don't want more New Yorkers to become statistics, especially not the children.*

*Therefore, the issue of Link5G towers proposed for CB6 should be added as an agenda item for next month's Board meeting, and opened up for public participation. OTI offered an extension of time at the Executive Committee meeting of Feb 15, 2023, and the Committee declined. CB6 should reverse course immediately and ask for an extension of time so that the process can be "open" to the public and to have full Board and public participation.*

*Using the argument that OTI/the City is going to do what they want anyway is no justification for the Board to relinquish its responsibility to protect the interests of the residents. The telecoms would have us believe that "our hands are tied." They are not. There is no federal mandate to bring these towers into our district. In fact, there are already eight community boards that have voted to disapprove or voted for a moratorium on the Link5G cell towers in their districts, and the numbers are growing. Our Community Board 6 should be one of them.*

*At the very least, ask OTI for an extension of time so that the Board and the public can participate in the process and fully consider the issues and risks associated with these Link5G towers to our district.*

*Our recommendation is for full disapproval of all Link5G towers in our district, including those that have already been installed without community input (i.e., they should not be made operational).*

### **CLAIRE HASSID**

*Like many people, I have a love-hate relationship with technology. I love it for most part and embrace whatever is new after the Beta Testers have checked it out. Today, I'm not loving 5G. I believe we need to relook at its implementation.*

*There are two reasons why:*

*First, 5G towers are visually overbearing structures that impose on the intended look of a street and community.*

*Second, too many well-respected scientists feel we do not have the research to support the rollout of 5G.*

*Interestingly, over 400 of them in the European Union have come together to ask for a moratorium on these non-ionizing waves that heat up skin.*

*Just "Google" 5G and see what comes up:*

- *From Prevent Cancer Now – "Is 5G bad for your health? It's complicated say researchers."*
- *From the British Medical Journal: "Stop global roll out of 5G networks until safety is confirmed."*
- *This one hit close to home from Environmental Health Trust: New York Community Board 8 Votes for a Moratorium on 5G*

*We should not be Beta Testers, only to find out years from now 5G has a negative impact on health. Too many times this happens. Just think about all the times companies, governments and even doctors said something was safe when, years later, it turned out not to be.*

*I will say it's better to have pain now than pain later. It's better to do the painful thing now to ensure the NYC Office of Technology and Innovation places a moratorium on 5G. That's better than pain later. "Pain later" might mean health issues from which there is no turning back.*

**DIANE ELKAN AND BARBARA NEALE – READ BY CHAIR**

*We write to you today, as long-term residents of Forest Hills, to express our concerns about the current proposed plan for New York City Office of Technology and Innovation 5G Towers in our communities. Since being proposed, we have heard from countless neighbors about the siting of these out scale towers, the safety issues that they will bring and the opaque review process for their approval.*

*While we understand the importance of expanding access to telecommunication tools, community level input is essential and required. We are aware that OTI has begun installing overly intrusive 24-foot 5G towers throughout the City. In our district, we have been advised that two towers have already been installed in Rego Park without prior notice to the community or to this Board. OTI apparently plans on installing a tower in front of PS 144 as well as on Queens Boulevard next to a restaurant and an apartment building. And OTI has plans to install many more 5G Towers in our CB6 community. The 5G Towers will emit unsafe amounts of radiation to our neighbors in addition to being eyesores in our residential communities.*

*We request a moratorium on further expansion of the 5G Towers before residents can weigh in on the proposed sites. The OTI expansion must be transparent with ample time allowed for City agencies and the Borough President to inform the public about these installations and a process for community feedback established.*

*We therefore ask that CB6 read this letter aloud at the March 8, 2023, meeting, and place this very serious issue on the agenda for discussion at the April Community Board 6 meeting. Thank you for your leadership, your time and attention to this important matter.*

**COURTNEY GILARDI, PITTSFIELD INJURED & CONCERNED CITIZENS**

*Good evening community board members, my name is Courtney Gilardi, I live in Pittsfield Massachusetts and am speaking on behalf of myself as someone injured by wireless radiation and our community group, Pittsfield Injured and Concerned Citizens.*

*Digital equity is vital, however 5G macro towers placed everywhere is not equitable and is not the answer. Your community board website, it says you deal with issues relevant to the wellbeing of your residents. This is that issue. This is an issue that we need you to act on.*

*Your public deserves due process. They have not been provided that. In late summer of 2020, a Verizon cell tower was made active in my neighborhood. My young daughters, along with at least 20 others reported experiencing symptoms such as headaches, nausea, dizziness, palpitations, insomnia, vomiting, skin rashes, tinnitus, hormonal changes, daytime fatigue, memory loss and others. Neighbors who were in remission from cancer, after living next to the tower, had their cancer returned. The Board of Health conducted an investigation and issued an emergency cease and desist against the Verizon cell tower for being a hazard, nuisance and rendering our homes uninhabitable. It is currently in litigation.*

*There is a health and safety cost to wireless connectivity that we can no longer ignore. And it is the job of every single person who is responsible for the wellbeing of their community to get involved in this conversation. It is not enough to say, our hands are tied because they are not. Doctors have identified that RF/ EMF exposure has profound effects on children, pregnant women, the elderly and those with preexisting health conditions. Science shows that RF/EMF has broad effects on the body and negatively affects nearly every system in the body. RF/ EMF exposure also leads to debilitating neurological effects. These negative effects contribute to the growing epidemic of chronic diseases and the increased awareness of certain health risk behaviors.*

*This technology has a medical impact. It is your job to not allow it to be rolled out without concern for the health of the people or the environment. State and local boards of health and city leaders are hearing from those who have been harmed and those who want their health protected. Doctors and health care professionals are advising people to hardwire at home to reduce their exposure. You cannot reduce exposure if there is a macro 5G tower literally feet outside your bedroom window.*

*There is no pre or post market safety testing, and no central registry of harm to record injury for those who become injured. Tower companies do not provide insurance when people are harmed, even if they have a documented medical diagnosis of harm. People are forced to leave their homes or shelter in their cars or stay in experience debilitating symptoms. These injuries are a source of not just injury and disability but of job loss, homelessness and helplessness.*

*New York residents need your help in maintaining our homes as a sanctuary from the non-consensual exposure to RF/ EMF radiation we are being advised to avoid by our doctors. You have the right under the telecommunications act to choose where cell towers and antennas can be sighted within your community. You can say NO to these*

macro towers near homes and schools. These industrial structures do not belong in neighborhoods. Constituents are pushing back and we need you as our representatives and leaders to do the same. As LinkNYC cannot provide relevant documentation, abide with FCC guidelines, tell you there will be staff to test RF emissions to confirm their towers will be in compliance, as there is no documentation of any gap in service and there has been no public input into the placement of these towers, we ask you to stand with the eight planning boards that have disapproved. Please, as they have done, call moratorium until you learn about this issue as those other boards have, and give residents and experts an opportunity for proper public input into the placement of wireless infrastructure. Please put this on your agenda and thank you for your support.

**ANDREW MOLNAR, ITHACANS FOR RESPONSIBLE TECHNOLOGY**

Hello. My name is Andrew Molnar and I help lead Ithacans for Responsible Technology. I am a Cornell alumni and have been the director of several organizations, currently in practice as a management consultant. I also suffer from EMS, electromagnetic sensitivity, a condition of millions of Americans that's covered by the American Disabilities Act. Whenever I get near a cell tower, I get a headache and feel dizzy. And within minutes of leaving the area, I feel better. The millions of us who suffer from this are the canaries in the coal mine regarding cell radiation. Thousands of peer reviewed studies have shown that cell radiation is harmful, especially to children who are up to 10 times more vulnerable. Unfortunately, because this radiation is invisible, many do not worry about it. At least not yet. I believe this is changing, as shown by the comprehensive New Hampshire state study about this issue. After a year of study, a group of scientists concluded that indeed this radiation is harmful, and towers should be kept 500 meters away from people.

Three years ago, I began my first foray into political activism, helping to organize hundreds of people in Ithaca NY to stop new towers from going in. When we first approached our city council, we were met with skepticism by every member of the council, and even some ridicule. After doing hundreds of hours of research, though, I knew the science was on our side. I also remembered Gandhi's famous quote: "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win." Over months of educating council members and city staff, we pushed hard to change the local codes.

The fight wasn't easy, in part because of the 1996 Telecommunications Act which prohibits local governments from considering env and health effects when deciding about cell towers. This clause was inserted by telecom. I have come to believe this is one of the more immoral laws passed in our country's history. Most towns, including Ithaca, have as their fundamental reason for their codes to protect the health and safety of their residents. Yet, here was the federal government saying that health can't be a factor. That is unethical and ridiculous. That said, we worked with expert attorney Andrew Campanelli to create codes to go around this law. And, despite having no support when we started our campaign, the science and ideal of the precautionary principle won the day. Our members were persuaded by our arguments about the threats to people's health, as well as the concern of aesthetic impacts. In the end, all by one council members voted to pass new codes which contained almost everything we wanted, making the mission of the city code to minimize redundant cell infrastructure while maintaining local control. The new codes basically force telecom companies to prove a clear need before any new towers go up. I urge you in your area to follow the lead of Ithaca and so many other towns who are stopping unnecessary cell towers. Pause on your new proposed towers, change your codes as needed, give your public due process, and only allow new towers that prove a significant gap in coverage. With the public's growing awareness of the harm of cell radiation, we need you, our local officials, to lead on this issue and do the right thing. Thank you.

**ARNOLD GORE**

I'm Arnold Gore from Brooklyn, NY Prospect Heights. I'm opposed to the installation of LinkNYC kiosks and Wifi poles. There have been numerous studies documenting the health problems including elevated brain cancer rates and decreased fertility rates associated with wireless. See [ehtrust.org/science](http://ehtrust.org/science) Insurance companies will not insure the safety of wireless networks, adding to the burden shifted to the people and the city. The District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals, one level below the Supreme Court, has ordered the Federal Communications Commission to update their 25-year-old safety standards for wireless exposure on August 13, 2021. In a year and a half, they have not done that. We should be able to determine the technology used. Wired technology is much superior to wireless. See presentation of Dr. Timothy Schoecl, PhD at [newyorkers4wiredtech.com/media](http://newyorkers4wiredtech.com/media) Page down to his presentation to community board 1 in Queens.

*The city council can stop this deployment of towers. The Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 still affirms the right of localities to permit installation of equipment for transmission of cellular telephone calls. The telecom must show that there is a gap in service., There usually is not. If there is a gap in service, they may install a facility enabling service, This is far below the power usually requested. It is necessary that the city enact zoning and siting regulations. A good law was adopted in Woodstock, NY as a model, but it must be tailored to our city.*

**MICHAEL MUADIN, THE ALLIANCE FOR MICROWAVE RADIATION ACCOUNTABILITY**

*My name is Michael Muadin. I am the President of the Alliance for Microwave Radiation Accountability, a non-profit corporation based in New York State. We work for the victims of Microwave Radiation Syndrome. I wish to speak to you tonight about the 32-foot tall 5G monopoles that are planned for deployment in your district and warn you about the danger to the health, safety, and welfare of your residents. As President of AMRA I have heard countless stories from the many millions of people across the United States who have been disabled by Microwave Radiation Syndrome. 5G installations have been rolled out before proper scientific testing has been done. We have been given false assurances of safety without anything to back up the claims being made. Tonight, I am submitting into evidence two of the first case studies on the health effects of 5G. To quote from the summary found in one of these studies: "In this report two previously healthy persons developed symptoms of the microwave syndrome after installation of a 5G base station. The rapidly emerging symptoms were typical for the microwave syndrome with neurological symptoms, tinnitus, fatigue, insomnia, emotional distress, skin disorders and blood pressure variability. The RF radiation levels in their apartment were well below the limit proposed to be "safe" . . . These now presented symptoms of the microwave syndrome were caused by non-thermal effects from RF radiation". Honorable Board Members, please know that anyone can develop Microwave Radiation Syndrome from enough exposure. In the beginning, the body heals and recovers from the effects, but as the illness worsens, the body loses it's ability to recover. Sensitivity increases and symptoms can be triggered by lower doses of radiation and by briefer periods of exposure. The longer that your people are exposed to radiation from the 5G towers proposed for your district, the worse their health will become. They will lose their ability to recover, even if they are no longer being exposed. When their condition is so bad that they can't recover, the victims will be forced to withdraw from society. They won't be able to stand any exposure to radiation from any source, including wifi and a room full of people with cell phones. The injured will lose their civil rights and access to medical care, the legal system, and government. They won't be able to walk into City Hall, a courthouse, a library, a bank, or a hospital. They won't be able to go shopping for food or clothing. Every store will be off limits due to the radiation from wifi and cell phones. Any additional exposure to radiation will rob the victims of the rest of their ability to use any electricity or electrical devices. It will crash their immune system, destroy the rest of their physical and mental health, and finally end their lives. Honorable Board Members, you have a chance to prevent this tragedy before it unfolds all around you, afflicting the people you were elected to protect, devastating the health, safety, and welfare of your district. It takes a certain fearlessness to turn the tide of events and shape the course of human history. I urge you to have the courage to halt this deployment and to bear witness to other political leaders in your city and across this nation. Thank you for your time and kind attention.*

**DANIEL SOLOW**

*I wanted to thank the CB6 Transportation Committee for asking the DOT for a study of Austin Street. The pedestrian experience is dangerous and not safe for vulnerable users. This study will allow us to know what is feasible for making the street safer. I am looking forward to what comes from the DOT's field research.*

**HON. RENEE COLLYMORE**

*I'm calling you tonight because of the urgency of this issue. I sent out an email to folks to make them aware of what's happening in our city and not only is the health risk factor of something urgent we should pay attention to. The fact that Government is willing to put in 2000 towers across the city in front of people's homes without asking, without giving public discussion without offering a public notice in the neighborhood. And without public hearings*

*from the government. I think this all should be something that you should really consider. I don't trust anything where they're going to force something and just put it in and we're supposed to accept it. This community and this city, these boroughs and the residents who live here did not ask for this. There has been nowhere that we saw where people came out and say we need this just like they're fighting for affordable housing. You see people fighting for affordable housing, you see people fighting for the homeless, you see people fighting for a better education, budget cuts etc. But you don't see people advocating for 5g towers. That's an indication that is that us asking for it. Here we go with money makers wanting to make more money off the health of the innocent people who live here in New York and it's unfair. A woman came to my door, and she said I've never been sick before in my life until they put this 5g tower in front of my door. And now she's losing weight, she feels kind of discombobulated and can't sleep, back pain. I'm telling you; we have to be very leery of this and I'm asking you please don't support it. This will not do anything for our city that's good. I went into a business yesterday with a 5g tower right at the corner. They said they are always having issues with their computer. The Internet is down again. Even with the 5g tower right here. So, we don't need the 5g towers. We're doing fine without it before. Thank you so much and please.*

**JAE (JAY) YONG EOM – READ BY CHAIR**

*Thank you for voting on the resolution requesting a DOT study on Austin Street. I am looking forward to the results to help us make a more informed decision on how to make our neighborhood safer.*

**ANTONELLA DISAVERIO**

*I would like to offer my comments during the public comment period tomorrow regarding the proposed installations of the NYCLink kiosks. I am the CBI Queens Environmental and Sanitation Committee chair and would like to mention that our board voted to write a letter to disapprove the installation until we can review for safety. We also had testimony by an Astoria resident who has been harmed from a 5G install in front of his home which prompted us to look into this technology further. We didn't take this decision lightly because we know it's a hot topic but as a community board we needed to make sure that anything being deployed on a mass scale is safe for our residents and is not going to cause undue and irreversible harm — so we had a number of experts speak at our committee meeting alongside OTI and Citybridge. We concluded that we did not have enough info beyond a reasonable doubt that this technology was not going to cause harm, but rather the opposite -which happened to be in line with the effects suffered by one of our Astoria residents. B/T/w, the committee meeting is posted and viewable if you would like to see it.*

**MARK MORRLL – READ BY CHAIR**

*As a resident of Kew Gardens who frequently travels to Austin St to shop and go out to eat, I am thrilled to see that steps are being taken to make Austin St more pedestrian friendly. These efforts have worked beautifully in other areas of the city and I hope the DOT acts quickly to find a solution that works to reduce the danger to pedestrians frequenting Austin St*

**ANDY GUO – READ BY CHAIR**

*I am eagerly anticipating the progress that will be made in order to create a safer and more pedestrian-friendly Austin St. Thank you for initiating this effort, and I hope that the DOT acknowledges the concerns and gives priority to this issue.*

**CHRISTINA OR – READ BY CHAIR**

*There are so many times I see cars backing up or trying to make a U-turn on the already narrow road on Austin St, creating a bottleneck in the traffic. Other times, I see cars going too fast on the road, and there are too many close calls to crashes, even while it's the pedestrian's right of way. I am so happy to see this step towards pedestrianizing Austin St coming to fruition to make it safer for the neighborhood overall.*

**CLAIRE NOWACOSKI – READ BY CHAIR**

*I just heard about Pedestrianizing Austin Street and I think it is a wonderful idea and can't wait for it to be implemented! The cars on Austin are aggressive to pedestrians and often are doing dangerous illegal maneuvers*

*that the local cops do nothing about. Plus I have seen what great things other neighborhoods have done with car-free areas and I can't wait for the same in Forest Hills!*

**PEDRO RODRIGUEZ, NEIGHBORS FOR A SAFER AUSTIN STREET**

*My name is Pedro Rodriguez and I am a member of the local grassroots group Neighbors for a Safer Austin Street. We want to say thank you to the Transportation Committee for voting to request that DOT study a redesign of Austin Street, with pedestrian safety and comfort as the priority. Though the safety aspects are the main goal of our group, this is also an opportunity for us to re-imagine Austin as not just a transit hub and commercial strip, but as a community center, where our community can come together and become stronger through it. The extra space will not only make pedestrian safety a priority but also allow locals and visitors to enjoy the businesses, the Tudor-style architecture, and even more frequent events on the strip.*

*But I would like us to look at the bigger picture. Though there have been 71 reported crashes, with 83 injured, 50 being pedestrians or cyclists, on Austin Street between Yellowstone Blvd and Ascan Ave between Jan 2018 and Nov 2022; in that same period, there were 2,047 reported crashes in total in Community Board 6. With 2,732 injured, 667 being pedestrians or cyclists, and tragically, 7 deaths.*

*This is not acceptable, or just the price of "modern life". Every single traffic death and serious injury is preventable, that's why New York City joined the Vision Zero Network in 2014. And while other cities in the network have managed to reach Vision Zero, such as Hoboken in New Jersey, New York City is still way behind. So as this study is underway, we as a community need to ensure that any design proposed is truly safe and will help us reach Zero deaths and injuries. Once again, I would like to thank the Transportation committee for their vote. As well as all the neighbors and visitors of Austin St who signed our petition, on the streets as well as online. And to the businesses who signed our letter of support for the study.*

**ERIC ZOLOV – READ BY CHAIR**

*As a long-time resident of Forest Hills (over 10 yrs), with three children having attended PS101 and now enrolled in public middle- and high-schools, I am writing to express my strongest endorsement for the board to consider an innovative approach to the current Austin Street environment. It is no revelation to state that Austin Street is dysfunctional: cars backed up, increasing evidence of "driver rage" (with numerous near-miss accidents and worse), and an increasingly unpleasant experience are what now characterize the area.*

*I urge the Board to register the deeply felt concerns by those who have signed the petition that led to the recent request of a DOT study. Businesses, residents, and pedestrians ALL share the same underlying goal: to transform Austin Street into a more pleasant shopping and community experience.*

*The Board has an opportunity to listen to the concerns from all sides and to act in a manner that reflects both balance and vision. This should include consideration of a transformation of portions of Austin Street into fully pedestrianized zones. These zones will become vibrant hubs for commerce and culture, as parts of Manhattan and numerous examples from cities abroad clearly demonstrate.*

*Let's take advantage of this once-in-a-generation opportunity to recapture the spirit of a "public square" by reimagining what the heart of Forest Hills can look like*

**JONATHAN HOWARD**

*Thank you to transportation committee for Austin Street safety study. In the same vein of safety and preserving life, I would like to talk about Queens Boulevard. I was excited to hear about the extension of the bike lane barriers from Yellowstone to 73rd Ave. However, it is not as if the lanes east of 73rd Ave are safe, or as though the people who use them don't matter. So, I am appealing directly to the board, and I also to the transportation committee, and to the street safety subcommittee, to complete the hard protection of the Queens Blvd bike lane all the way to union turnpike. The union turnpike end of the bike lanes features some of the worst safety conditions of the entire project. Drivers routinely use the bike lane to park, to stand, or as a passing lane if they are tired of waiting. Truck drivers often use the bike lane for deliveries. In the afternoons the bike lane is completely taken over by cars and trucks and unsafe for use. The bike lane is not a car lane, nor a truck lane, nor a loading zone, nor a passing lane. It is for bikes, scooters, people in motorized wheelchairs, and other personal mobility devices. Remember, even if you don't use the bike lanes, they are essential to the members of our community who do, and the small businesses of our communities whose deliveries depending on it. If you order food for delivery in our community, you are a user of the Queens Blvd bike lanes. The people doing that work to feed you deserve to do so with the protection of hard*



barriers to prevent injury or death. So, in summary, I ask again for the board to support and push DOT To extend the hard barriers not only to 73rd Ave but beyond to Union Turnpike, because traffic safety is important throughout the entirety of CB6, and not just a portion.

#### **HOWARD GOODMAN**

Hello, my name is Howard Goodman, and I'm a long-time resident of Forest Hills. I'm here to express my opposition to the construction and activation of 5G cell towers in the neighborhood, of which I understand a total of 3-4 are to be placed. My objection is that they are to be placed in primarily residential areas as opposed to the more commercial parts such as Austin and 108th Streets. I'm concerned primarily about the health effects of these towers and their radio frequency emissions, which scientists have authoritatively linked to any number of diseases. You have already heard from others tonight about the harmful effects, and others will follow me in discussing this.

Secondly, the height of these towers, which are about 30 feet tall, are too obtrusive for our community. I have seen them in other parts of the city, and nowhere have I found them to be well-integrated into the fabric of a neighborhood, and even more so in a place like Forest Hills.

Thirdly, how has the need for these towers in Forest Hills been shown? Have there been gaps in service which have communicated to the Board, as may exist in other parts of the city?

Finally, I view the imposition of these towers on our neighborhood as another example of a top-down dictate by the city, something as unwanted by the majority here as the bike lanes in recent years, and more recently the concrete road dividers separating those bike lanes. Thanks for the opportunity to address the board.

#### **JILL MCMANUS, NYERS FOR WIRED TECH**

Has a large cell tower been erected in front of your building yet? If not, it may happen soon. Some 4 000 and ultimately 7,500 large cell towers, some called "Link 5G kiosks" are planned for the five boroughs. These large cell towers are thick, 32-foot-tall structures that reach the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor windows of an apartment building and can be as close as 10 feet from your window. They are intrusive and present obstacles on our narrow sidewalks. They may catch on fire from an electrical fault or fall in a storm. All the towers emit radio microwave radiation. Add this to our exposure from rooftops arrays and small wireless boxes on street poles on every other street. Exposure is cumulative. Yet aggregate levels of our exposures are not being calculated.

No Federal agency monitors the emissions from these towers. The FCC has no staff for the task nor any health expertise. The FDA has no authority to regulate cell towers or radiation. No studies have been done by the telecom industry on the biological effects of 5G on human health. Insurance companies do not cover harms from microwave radiation. Remember asbestos, lead, tobacco and PFAs? Huge liabilities could lie ahead. Who will pay for harms? The NYC Office of Innovation and Technology (OTI) has been less than transparent: for a year it not answered FOILs requesting details and specs on power level, radius and range of emissions, quality checking of the equipment, or details about monitoring it. The large 5G cell towers and Link 5G kiosks were planned without the consent of the public, or any input except on their design. Installation is done with no notice to residents. If Community Boards are correctly contacted, they are given only 60 days to inform and gather comment. Hyped by Mayor De Blasio as a way to close the the "digital divide," the towers were meant for underserved commercial areas. Why then are many with advertising screens being placed in upscale residential or landmark preservation areas? Why the big rush to install? Future capacity for the expected profit from the Internet of Things? People near the towers may not notice effects consciously, but the living bodies of humans, pets or plants register disturbances, especially from the uneven signals pulsing thousands of times per second looking for a connection. What is already known from peer-reviewed scientific and military studies is that exposure to radio frequency radiation (RFR) causes insomnia, memory loss, headaches, nosebleeds, rashes and dizziness, causes neurological and behavioral problems like ADHD, variability in the heart rate (atrial fibrillation), and impairs fertility. It affects metabolism and hormones and can lead to diabetes and thyroid problems. Tower signals can interfere with pacemakers and other devices. About 10-30% of the population has become electromagnetically sensitive and is unable to work near wireless equipment.

Children and are particularly vulnerable: they absorb more radiation as their skulls are still forming and their skin is thinner than adults'. In 2020, New Hampshire commissioned a 5G Health Study. The Board's report recommended that a cell tower should be no closer than 1,640 feet from a school!

*The FCC is captured by the industry it oversees. But now its exposure guidelines are in question. After the FCC refused in 2019 to review its outdated and inadequate 1996 guidelines, the Environmental Health Trust et al. appealed the case to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. The judge ruled in Aug. 2021 that the FCC's refusal to review the thousands of pages of science and hundreds of personal testimonials was "arbitrary and capricious," especially regarding fetuses, women and the environment. They were ordered to return to explain their decision to the Court. To date they have not done so.*

*In a recent decision against an Extenet cell tower in Flower Hill, Long Island, the NY Second Circuit Court judge ruled that precedent cases take priority over FCC rulings, and that a telecom company must prove need for a cell tower, and they must install minimally intrusive equipment. Extenet met neither criterion. So legislators and state agencies cannot make the false claim that their "hands are tied."*

*New York City should have forced Verizon to finish wiring fiber optic cable to the premises that was promised to all New Yorkers by 2014. During the pandemic kids in all areas of the city could have done their homework at home. Instead, the telecoms quietly switched fiber funds to a fast buildout of wireless for the "last mile." Wireless is unreliable, slower, less secure than fiber optic connection. Fiber lasts longer and by itself emits no radiation. Funds should be restored to finish fiber to the premises as a regulated public utility.*

*5G cell towers enable authorities to tap into our phone conversations. Each cell phone, antenna and "smart" gadget is a software node that can be hacked. Therefore 5G presents a security risk – to your children, to personal privacy, and to the security of electric and other grids.*

*About a dozen Community Boards have already rejected the planned cell towers in their district. NY State Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright plans to introduce a bill for a moratorium on any further buildout of the 5G towers until the health risk are further known.*

*I urge QCB 11 to disapprove the cell towers and ask for a citywide moratorium to protect the safety and health of residents.*

#### **ARTHUR MILLER**

*Thank you and I'm a 40 resident of the area I wanted to comment briefly about the presentation Committee's resolution requesting that the DOT study pedestrianizing Austin Street.*

*My issue is I think while there are serious problems with what's in the street in the community DOT is not the mechanism to do that. DOT has promised us that they were going to make Queens Boulevard safer, that they were going to increase business, they were going to make our streets wonderful with the outdoor dining and things like that. What we have now are unsightly sheds, rats, dirt, more traffic which emits more pollution.*

*We have unlicensed delivery mopeds scooting every which way. One of the complaints at the Transportation committee meeting was the lack of space on the sidewalks.*

*Well, if there's no enforcement, if there's no licensing and things like that chaos is what we have. The track record of the DOT is causing a lot of chaos that has spilled over onto Austin St. So to ask them to spearhead a study is wrong. I do think we need some kind of study, but I think that it needs to incorporate the economic aspects and the environmental aspects. I am a fan of Marx who said "who ya gonna believe, me or your own eyes". You can see what's going on in our community. I was down by Target in Elmhurst the other day and with all of this construction and buildings built very close to the sidewalk, it's gotten dark, it's gotten more crowded, you have vendors all over the place. These are the kinds of things that I think we need to consider for Forest Hills, it should not just be a sort of black and white issue, either your for cars or against cars, for pedestrians or against them. We need to look at the whole aspect and maybe DOT shouldn't be doing that. We need to have independent studies. Perhaps there is money available from different groups that may be able to do that.*

*Leslie from the Forest Hills Chamber told me that they had 300 stores that have said that they're not in favor. So, I think we need to consider all of these aspects before we do anything, but we do need to do something. Let's do it together. Yeah, thank you so much.*

#### **LEONARD LAW – READ BY CHAIR**

*I'm super happy to hear that the Pedestrianizing Austin Street initiative is moving forward. Too many times I've seen impatient drivers try to run red lights, speed down the street and near-miss pedestrians, pull off dangerous U-turns. Too often the sidewalks are cramped while cars are sitting idle stuck in traffic, causing noise and air pollution. Drivers often double park and make the already horrible traffic situation worse. After seeing how*

*pleasant other pedestrianized streets are throughout Queens and Manhattan, I'm excited to see Austin street start along the same path to become more friendly for people of all walks, not just those that are in cars.*

**ED MURRAY – READ BY CHAIR**

*I have been a resident of Forest Hills for more than ten years now. I am also a former Community Board member who very much understands and appreciates the good work that you, Frank, and staff do on behalf of the community. I write to thank the Board and specifically the Transportation Committee for adopting a resolution this past month requesting that DOT study how to make Austin Street safer and more pedestrian friendly. Having spent time talking to Austin Street businesses and community members about possible reforms to Austin Street, I know there are strong opinions on the topic and that it is not a simple debate with businesses on one side and pedestrians on the other. So I appreciate the Community Board's leadership here and am hopeful that the resolution will spur productive discussion and ultimately meaningful action by the City to address the congested and unsafe conditions on Austin Street.*

**LAUREN BOND**

*With concern regarding the Giant 5G tower installations:*

*I know of 2 buildings in Manhattan, East Village and Manhattan Plaza, with tenants suffering constant exposure to emf from small 5g cell towers, living in their bathrooms, sleeping on their floors or in their cars, seeking a way to escape the exposure. Please know, along with immediate emf from local towers, there is radiation from more distant small 5g towers that increase emf levels people are receiving.*

*My own experience,*

*On Feb. 21, 2020, nine “5G” cell towers began operating outside my apartment windows on the roof of the building across to my apartment. Six towers were approx.40 feet, and three were within 90 feet from my windows. During the two weeks following the start of their operation, I experienced severe symptoms, which my doctor confirmed:*

*Constant tinnitus, burning skin, shortness of breath, palpitations, increased pain in eyes (limiting visual function), insomnia, severe migraines, vertical disturbances through cranium and occipital region simultaneous with horizontal intercranial disturbances extending through the ear canal and sharp stabbing pains extending into all 4 extremities.*

*The injuries started on Feb 21, 2020. The following is a chronology of my injuries from my contemporaneous notes at the time:*

*2/21/20 Very loud tinnitus began immediately and has continued to present.*

*2/25/20 Began waking after only 3 hours. Unable to return to sleep each night.*

*3/1/20 At 2 AM, I am wakened from a deep sleep because I'm gasping for breath.*

*Something heavy is rhythmically pressing on my chest. My heart is racing. I am now sharply alert and not knowing why. I am seemingly paralyzed. Then, a strong, fiery energy core feeling 6 inches in diameter, enters with a sharp, searing stab through the top of my head. It is excruciating. I observe it surging through the center of my brain. Next it begins searing outward through my ear canals with long-burning razor-like piercing through my head. My brain feels sectioned in 4 quadrants. I remain flattened and pinned on the mattress despite efforts to move and run out of the room.*

*I am horrified, this fiery surge is now continuing to course through my neck to the heart. How far is this going? The fiery energy core is so large, charges through and around my heart at once, as though no vessel is there, and now to my arms and hands. It continues straight down the core of my torso. It is extending through my legs. I am fully engulfed in burning, piercing energy.*

*It isn't over. It now flows up through my body in reverse, and surges down through my body again. This wave descends and ascends through me in the same sequence through my entire body as it had begun, in large, repeated surges. Still, as much as I try, I can't move.*

*This lasted a half hour. The pain is so much, I can't return to sleep after it stops. It feels unsafe to sleep. My skin is burning. My ears are ringing and burning. I don't know what happened, nor the source of this and how to protect myself, and when it might happen again. I am awake for the rest of the night and unable move. I am very weak.*

*The following days, burning skin and ringing in my ears are constant, and increase when I am inside the apartment. The intensity of energy present in the apartment is like being inside a fire and incredibly challenging to concentrate on any matter or to sleep.*

Now eyes burn with increased intensity and does not abate with more applications of eyedrops. Focusing is more painful. Concentration is strenuous. There is heavy pressure on my heart. The only changes in this building's vicinity are the cell towers. I identify the company and research the purposes of these cell towers across from me; pursue the owner of that building; and inquire with my apartment manager in getting information. After multiple tries, we get no response from the owner. I continue researching. Opening the door to the apartment and walking in, I'm met with a wave of constant sense of fire to the skin, heavy pressure on the heart, rapid heart rate, and an electrical burning and pressure through the brain, and shortness of breath. This was not present in the hall. Being inside the apartment, my condition worsened, and I could not continue living in my apartment. The severe damage to my central nervous system and pain continued to increase. My apartment was not safe.

The following days I'm extremely concerned being inside the apartment and stay out. I arrange bedding on the bathroom floor, very nervous to sleep in the bedroom anymore. Trying for a couple of nights, the wave is present there, and I was still waking after 3 hours. Reading on ways to deflect, I gather all items that I have, setting them in the bedroom to secure relief from the constant wave penetrating the apartment and trying sleeping in the bed once more. I'm looking into what to purchase as it is affordable, none of it is, and how to work with the open-air HVAC units under my windows. Learning more on this radiation, I discover there is no protection that can be designed to prevent its passage as these HVAC units must remain open.

3/5/20 After 3 hours sleep, again, I am awakened gasping for breath. The full event repeats exactly as it occurred 3/1/20 for one half hour. I was truly hoping the first night was a one-off. It is clear this is a schedule. I am not in any way, prepared for this and have yet a place to go. I need more time. I'm harmed and weaker. I cannot live through a third night of this. I'm seriously injured now, and I don't know that I could survive one more event with this. After spending days researching ways to address or accommodate this environment, I'm finding none. I've been continuing contact with the building management with these concerns and seeking a safe room however temporary.

3/10/20 Contacts inquiring about cell towers and protections and recourse of safety for New York City residents.

1. Emailed Mayor DeBlasio, no phone number available. Received case # email.

2. Called Speaker Corey Johnson's office; referred me to DOITT

3. Left message: Commissioner Bret Sikoff, DOITT. No response was ever given

4. Left message: Asst Commissioner for Franchise Andrew Manshel. Responded after one week.

Explained DOITT expressly for city properties, not residential.

5. Spoke with DOITT Imani Charles, explained DOITT information from City Council ofc inaccurate, as it involves city properties, not residential. Recommends 311.

6. Emailed Manhattan Borough office. Left message. No response was ever given.

7. Called 311. They refer to DOITT although I explain DOITT states city properties only, not residential. Manager at 311 viewed resources and suggested:

a. Dept of Bldg, special investigation unit 212-825 2413 for permits and zoning/ No response was ever given.

b. NYS Pub Serv Commission 800-342-3377 m-f 8:30-4/ No response was ever given.

c. Community Board #4 212 736 4536: Delores Rubin, Dist. Mgr, Manhattan Community Board. No response was ever given. Jesse Bodine Manhattan Community Board. [jbodine@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:jbodine@cb.nyc.gov) 1st Wed @ 6:30, 3rd Wed 10 am Emailed/ No response was ever given. Left phone messages. No response.

There is no provision nor protection for individuals' rights and safety concerning cell towers or emf waves. I lost my home. Just like that. Please don't allow this to be happening in here in your community.

## **DANIELLE ORSINI**

Good evening. My name is Danielle Orsini, some of you may know me from around town. Either volunteering at park clean ups, rallies for accessibility, chatting at the farmer's market, or just recently walking from business to business during our wonderful lunar new year celebration. I moved to Forest hills in 2019 and I consider Forest Hills my home, so much so that I want to see it thrive. I even just recently started my second term as my building's vice president of our co-op board because I have great pride and passion in making my co-op and forest hills my home.

My parents used to live on Ascan Avenue and Austin Street and when my husband and I decided to start growing

our family, we decided to look into homes here. One of the reasons we decided on Forest Hills was the beautiful mix of historical and modern, with one our major draws being Austin Street. Austin is one of our most bustling streets, but it has flaws. Austin can be a dangerous place to be, but by focusing on pedestrian safety, it can be a wonderful place for all people from different walks of life and different ages to come together as a community. Living here in Forest Hills makes me feel connected to the past and my late mother, walking the streets she used to walk, frequenting the restaurants that are thankfully still here today. And the resolution that you sent to the DOT makes me feel hopeful for the future, that my little boy, when he's old enough, will be able to walk up and down a safer Austin street with his friends and enjoy this beautiful neighborhood; not having to think about being safe, just enjoying his youth.

So I wanted to take this time to say thank you to the community board for realizing that changes needed to be made, that our streets need to be safe for everyone, and for taking action.

### **JULIE MARDIN**

Thank you for this opportunity to say a few words. My name is Julie Mardin. I'm a New Yorker, I was born and raised here, and I care about this city. I just wanted to add my voice in support of all the people today speaking up to encourage the Board to have a full community meeting the Link5G project so that the public can have more time to consider.

The Public Design Commission, in approving these, in a somewhat drawn out and protracted fashion, did stipulate that the Community be consulted, especially for residential districts, of which three of these poles are in. This is still a pilot project, so the important time to look into them is now. Otherwise we might end up with 2000, 4000, possibly 7500 on our city streets.

There are many basic questions that still need to be answered. I am sure many have already been brought up. One of the basic ones that I would like to know is how the city could tag this project onto the same Environmental Assessment Statement as for the LinkNY kiosks.<sup>2</sup> It is a false equivalency. LinkNY kiosks provide public WiFi, and are much smaller in structure, while the Link5G are 32' poles which will house five different types of antennas, using much higher frequencies and phased array antennas, which have never been used on such a broad municipal scale before. Also, I think it's problematic that we are just to take the city and the telecom's word for what they are seeing or are foreseeing as a gap in service. The placement of these poles should not be taken lightly, and the city should be able to produce the coverage maps that prove the reasoning.

I would also like to know what kind of input they got from the industry to ensure these poles are future proof, as they said that they did. It would be good to know just what it is they are foreseeing for the future. If they do not release this type of information, we can only speculate by looking at the engineering schools or the latest industry conferences. The last 6G Conference in Brooklyn for instance talks about self-driving cars, the Metaverse and Digital Twinning. This is where physical objects are tagged with all sorts of sensors which then relay back information to the digital twin in real time, so that predictions can be made about its health and future. There is an expectation that every possible thing that makes sense to chip will be chipped by 2030. In order to handle all this new data and all these new data streams would require networks to deliver some 100 GBytes per second, according to Nokia's President and CEO.<sup>3</sup> These can only be delivered by much higher frequencies and a much denser infrastructure. What would this mean for any sense of privacy, for our health, the health of other living beings and plants and trees? There is no concern or knowledge of all these

different areas of study. And that is where the problem lies. Still the Metaverse has been calculated by City Investment Bank to engender \$13 TR by 2030, more than half of US GDP today. Is this what is blinding so many of our incredibly talented engineers? Even if these were completely benevolent projects, shouldn't all of society have a say in what kind of technologies will be defining their lives? Most everybody has adequate phone service, and broadband connectivity would be better served by completing fiber to the premises for all, as Verizon had been charged to do, and which we all already paid for. To me it seems as though these poles are about more than phone or internet capacity, but about future technologies that there should be more of a conversation about. The bottom line is we need more information, more proof of a gap in service, more transparency about future visions of how this technology will be used. So I believe this is a historic moment where we as a community have to take a moment to study the direction society is going on, so that we can have a say in what that direction is. So please do recognize that you have every right, in fact a duty, to pursue this line of action, and have a broader discussion with the community about whether they want these poles at all.

### **PHILLIP RONCORONI – READ BY CHAIR**

*I would just like to thank the board for voting in favor of the resolution calling on DOT to conduct a safety study for Austin Street. As a pedestrian who walks along Austin Street on a daily basis, and who has been hit by a car before while crossing the street (although not on Austin Street), I would very much like to see some level of pedestrianization of the area, to reduce traffic, pollution, and increase general safety. While there are legitimate concerns that need to be addressed, we can improve on the current design which is serving nobody well, and the area is abundant with public transportation options, which is one of the reasons I moved here to begin with.*

### **HAZAL TURGUTLU – READ BY CHAIR**

*I would like to thank you and the transportation committee for the courage to ask DOT for a study of pedestrian improvements on Austin Street. For the last 2 years, my husband and I shopped on Austin and walked past small shops. It is our preferred route to the LIRR and the subway system. I also started my recent design job on Austin. Although there are many great destinations on the strip, the current road conditions make it a very dangerous place for me to walk. This study symbolizes a recognition of those conditions and a genuine interest in making improvements. I am confident that we can balance the needs of our merchants with the needs of residents who want a safe place to walk.*

### **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair Heather Beers-Dimitriadis started her report by clarifying some things about the 5G cell towers that many public comments referred to:

1. We were asked to comment on 1 (one) cell tower for our CB. Another one was slated to be installed in the FH Gardens but was removed from the list when the city was informed that the location was on a private street.
2. Any towers that were previously installed did not come before us for comment as this is a new process for Office of Technology & Innovation (OTI)
3. The letter we received from OTI states “below are the new sites proposed for community board 6. Because we want to bring links to your area within a short time frame, we ask that you provide any comments on this site as soon as possible and by March 5.
4. The Executive Committee met on February 15, 2023 and discussed the site slated for 93-02 69th Avenue, in Forest Hills. This is the text of letter we sent to OTI:  
*As Queens Community Board 6 will not be able to effectively halt the installation of the proposed 5G tower, we take no substantive position on the merits of this action. However, if the tower is to be installed, we prefer that it would be situated on the commercial strip on Yellowstone Boulevard between Juno Street and Ingram Street, instead of the previously proposed 69th Avenue location. Our preferred location will have less of an impact upon both this largely residential community and a local elementary school.*
5. Chair Beers-Dimitriadis and the Executive Committee didn't feel this required a Public Hearing and Full Board Presentation for one cell tower.
6. The Community Board is only an advisory agency. We can only offer our opinion.

Chair Beers-Dimitriadis also reported that the Executive Committee made the decision to establish a select committee to oversee the Rockaway Beach Right of Way. The committee will be under the leadership of Keith Engel and will consist of approximately 10 members. Invitations have gone out to these members and the first meeting is anticipated to take place in May.

Chair Beers-Dimitriadis announced that next month we will be getting several new appointees to our board and several members are leaving the board. This will change the makeup of committees.

Committee appointments will happen different this year. New committees will be formed in September. The new members will be asked to choose committees on an interim basis for April-June and then will be asked to choose permanent committees in June that will take effect in September.

Chair Beers-Dimitriadis announced that there is a new press release process that we will follow for CB Events, which was designed by the Public Relations, Social Media Committee. It will be sent out to CB Members shortly.

Last, Chair Beers-Dimitriadis reported that she voted yes to a resolution at the Queens Borough Board supporting carbon free and healthy NYC school buildings. In New York City, the public school system spends \$275 million annually on energy costs that can be dramatically reduced through deep energy, efficient building, retrofits, and installation of renewable energy systems, such as solar panels. If you've been on the education committee, you know the solar panels have been a project that we wanted to put on every public school; this resolution will address that. This will eventually come down to our district.

## **DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT**

District Manager Frank Gulluscio announced that it is International Women's Day. Mr. Gulluscio recognized the staff of women at CB 6 as well as the Chair.

District Manager Gulluscio also announced the following:

- The Community Board is a city agency; not a civic. We need to follow the NYC / NYS charter and other guidelines when we make decisions.
- There will be 14 new members appointed to CB 6 in the next few weeks

## **VIRTUAL PRESENTATION BY OFFICE OF CANNABIS MANAGEMENT**

Pascale Bernard and Phillip Rumsey made a presentation about Cannabis in New York State.

What is legal in NYS – Possessing Cannabis

- Adults over 21 can buy and possess
  - o Up to three ounces of cannabis flower
  - o Up to 24 grams of concentrated cannabis (oils, tincture, edibles, vapes, etc)
- Cannabis can be consumed in a private home or state licensed on-site consumption site
  - o Currently there are no licensed on-site consumption sites
- Vaping and smoking cannabis is not allowed anywhere vaping and smoking tobacco isn't allowed

Marihuana Regulation & Taxation Act (MRTA)

- MRTA was signed into law on March 31, 2021, and it created the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM), overseen by a 5- member Cannabis Control Board (CCB)
- There is a 20-member Cannabis Advisory Board
- Legalized adult use cannabis (recreational marijuana) while also expanding the State's medical cannabis and cannabinoid hemp (CBD) programs
- Legalization represents a shift to a public health framework for cannabis policy
- MRTA emphasizes Social and Economic Justice
  - o Record Expungement
    - Automatically clears an individual's past marijuana convictions.
  - o Equity in the Market
    - Set a goal to award 50% of all adult use licenses to social and economic equity applicants. Development of a Social and Economic Equity Plan and programs to help licensees be successful
  - o Community Reinvestment

- Invests 40% of the adult-use cannabis tax revenue toward rebuilding communities impacted by disproportionate policing during cannabis prohibition

#### Adult Use Cannabis Taxation

- Weight-based tax replaced with a THC per mg tax with different rates depending on final product type:
  - o \$.03 per mg THC edible, \$.05 per mg THC cannabis flower and \$.08 per mg THC concentrate
  - o THC tax can help push consumers to lower potency products by making high potency products more expensive, helping achieve public health goals.
- 9% state excise tax on the sale of cannabis products by a retailer to a cannabis consumer
- 4% local excise tax rate at retail price (25% to county, 75% to city/town/village). Villages within towns may establish their own revenue distribution agreements.

#### NYS Cannabis Revenue Fund

- All cannabis revenue deposited into this fund
- Community Grants Reinvestment
  - o Grants to non-profit and community-based organizations in communities disproportionately impacted by cannabis prohibition and other social equity initiatives as determined by the Cannabis Advisory Board
- Drug Treatment and Public Education
  - o Develop and implement statewide public education campaigns and provide substance use disorder treatment programs for youth and adults.

#### OCM Enforcement Actions

- MRTA gives OCM enforcement power over licensed businesses
- OCM works with local authorities to address issues related to unlicensed cannabis businesses
- Efforts include identifying unlicensed operators, seizing illicit cannabis, fines and store closures.

#### Illicit Sales

- OCM's Enforcement Division has been conducting investigations (locations, owners, products sold, etc.) on all illicit cannabis operations since January of 2022
- The Enforcement Division routinely confers with local DA's and law enforcement across the state about strategies in cannabis enforcement
- OCM investigators work on multiagency task forces to shut down illicit store fronts
- The Enforcement Division continues to staff up and engage in enforcement actions across the state
  - o Visiting illicit stores
  - o Issuing cease and desist letters to stores conducting themselves contrary to existing law
  - o Assisting local law enforcement in their investigations involving illicit stores

#### Enforcement

- Information about activities that may be in violation of the Cannabis Law can be sent to OCM via email or through our web site
  - o Suspected violations or complaints can be reported at [complaints@ocm.ny.gov](mailto:complaints@ocm.ny.gov) or <https://cannabis.ny.gov/report-an-incident>
  - o Whenever possible, please include the following information when submitting a complaint
    - Name of business, time of alleged illicit activity, pictures of alleged illicit activity, indicate if there has been previous police contact, proximity to



sensitive use locations (school or house of worship), contact information of the person reporting the alleged illicit activity.

#### Role of Community Boards in the process

- Per Cannabis Law, Community Boards and municipalities are allowed the opportunity to express an opinion on whether they support the Cannabis Control Board's approval of a retail dispensary, on-site consumption, or registered organization with dispensing license in their area
- Community Boards do not have a role in other cannabis license types (i.e. nursery, cultivator, processor, distributor)
- People or businesses who apply for a cannabis retail dispensary, including registered organizations with a dispensing license or on-site consumption should submit a notification that their proposed location is within the boundary of the Community Board prior to filing their application
- Applicants must be mindful that the Community Board's opinion will become part of the record upon which the Cannabis Control Board shall grant or deny an application for a cannabis license
- Applicants should afford the appropriate amount of time needed for the Community Board to opine on the proposed cannabis location.

#### Staffing and Training

- Staffing (Employee in Charge, Age Requirements)
- Training (Written manual, curriculum requirements, record keeping)

#### Advertising and Signage

- Retail locations
  - o External signage limited to 2 signs (no images, logos or symbols)
- Delivery locations
  - o No external signs
  - o Website must include age gate and comply with Packaging Marketing Labeling and Advertising Guidance

### **TRANSPORTATION, PUBLIC TRANSIT, STREET SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Peter Beadle, Chair, reported that the Committee met on February 23, 2023, and discussed the following:

- The new DOT representative, Craig Chin, was there for an introduction. He will be invited back to update us on pending issues in our community when he gets acclimated.
- The new Access A Ride Evaluation Center that opened in Queens still has issues. The Community Board sent a letter to MTA outlining the issues and requesting a more centralized office that is easily accessible for all Queens residents.
- The committee voted to approve a request to the DOT to conduct the study on improving safety on Austin Street specifically with respect to pedestrian space and having a pedestrian lens when creating that study. This is not a request to pedestrianize Austin Street. It is a request for a study. We are asking DOT to put together data about Austin Street.

Last, Peter Beadle announced that the Community Board received a request for a Street Co-Naming in honor of Past CB 6 Member and long-time Forest Hills pediatrician Dr. Karl Neumann. The CB received a petition with over 50 signatures in favor of this.

Mr. Beadle made a motion to approve the street co-naming at 70<sup>th</sup> Road and 110<sup>th</sup> Street/112<sup>th</sup> Street. Mark Laster seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

## **CONSUMER AFFAIRS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE REPORT**

Elizabeth Newton, Co-Chair, reported that CB 6 received 1 new application:

1. Sushi Ya Inc. 97-11 Queens Boulevard, RP

*This is a change in ownership from one family member to another.*

CB 6 received the following renewal applications:

1. Mojo 70-20 Austin Street, FH
2. Il Poeta 98-04 Metropolitan Avenue, FH
3. Chipotle Mexican Grill #1987 70-28/70-30 Austin Street, FH
4. TGI Fridays 70-00 Austin Street, FH

There were no issues / complaints from the 112<sup>th</sup> Precinct.

The committee motion was to approve the new and renewal applications. This motion passed unanimously on a voice vote.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION / BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

Kavish Batra, Co-Chair, reported that the committee met on March 2. CB 6 Park Manager Ronald Taylor attended the meeting and answered questions from the committee. Mr. Taylor informed the committee that they are currently surveying and replacing damaged flags / flagpoles within the parks. The committee discussed ways to increase partnerships with local schools and their respective parks. Last, the committee is working on a letter to the Mayor asking to increase city park budgets to at least 1% of the city budget.

## **GOOD & WELFARE**

### **CB 6 MEMBERS:**

Peter Beadle announced that the following members would not be renewing their CB 6 membership in April: Alex Cohen, Alexa Weitzman, Teresa Simmons, Sheridan Chu, David Schneier, Susan Wanderman, Joan Weston, Irina Tamayeva, Alejandra Diaz Houston.

He thanked them for their service to the board and welcomed them to stay involved in the Community Board as public members.

Mark Laster announced the following:

- March 23, 2023, at 7pm – Central Queens Against Hate Coalition will be sponsoring a presentation by the NYPD and DA about reporting a hate crime. This will be a hybrid presentation and will be held at Commonpoint Queens.
- March 30, 2023, there will be a Virtual Intergenerational Panel on Immigration. They are looking for an older man who immigrated here from Asia or Russia to join their panel. If you know anyone that would be interested, please contact Mark.

Chair Beers-Dimitriadis announced (on behalf of Heidi Chain) that the 112<sup>th</sup> Precinct Council Meeting will be Wednesday, March 15, 2023, at 7:30pm at the Ridgewood Savings Bank (107-55 Queens Boulevard).

Pat Morgan spoke about the struggles that disabled individuals face including difficulty getting a Lyft vehicle. The vehicles / drivers are not accessible for seniors and disabled individuals and the software they use is not practical.

## **ELECTED OFFICIALS' REPRESENTATIVES:**

### **SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO, JR.**

Raimondo Graziano announced:

- It is budget season. If anyone has any input on the budget or any other concerns, please contact the office at 718-738-1111.

### **SENATOR LEROY COMRIE**

Ari Innes announced the following:

- Two bills the Senator is working on:
  - o S5546 – NYC Police Commissioner should be elected to office
  - o SS559 – 2% cap on increases from utilities
- Prom dress giveaway – Saturday, May 6, 2023, at 12pm at the Institute for Health Professions at Cambria Heights.
- Income Tax Prep Assistance every Saturday in March and the first 2 Saturdays in April. Also, free income tax prep on Tuesday March 21, 2023, and Thursday March 30, 2023. For an appointment or for more information, please call 718-765-6359.

### **ASSEMBLY MEMBER CATALINA CRUZ**

Vianny Encalada announced:

- In the past few weeks, the office held the following events: Customer service day with Con Edison and a homeowners benefit information session.
- If you need assistance, please call 718-458-5367 and follow the Assembly Members social media.
- The office is at the corner of 42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue and Junction Boulevard.

### **COUNCIL MEMBER LYNN SCHULMAN**

Kevin McAleer announced that the Council Member is interested in hearing any comments residents have about the budget.

Council Member Schulman's bill to create a citywide diabetes reduction plan has recently reached 40 sponsors.

### **SENATOR MICHAEL GIANARIS**

Mercedes Jennings announced the following:

- Senator Gianaris has been supporting a resident that lost their 7-year-old daughter after being hit by an SUV at 45<sup>th</sup> Street and Newtown Road. The Senator has been pushing DOT to install a traffic light at this location.
- Released a statement against anti-Asian hate following an assault on the 7 train.
- Marched in the St. Pats for All Parade this past Sunday.
- Youth Leadership Recognition Program to honor high school students in the district. They can apply on the Senator's website until 3-24.
- Earth Day Event - Essays, poems, or artwork to support Earth Day can be submitted by April 14, 2023.
- For more information, contact 718-728-0962 or [gianaris@nysenate.gov](mailto:gianaris@nysenate.gov).

## CONGRESS MEMBER GRACE MENG

Jordan Goldes announced:

- March 19, 2023, there will be a passport event at the Post Office in Jackson Heights. There will also be one planned for the Forest Hills Post Office.
- App contest for HS and MS students. Winner was announced yesterday, and the app will be displayed at the Capitol and on the House of Representatives website.
- Congress Member was elected Vice Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Committee.
- Congress Member Meng attended the Pool Opening at Flushing Meadows Corona Park.

## QUEENS BOROUGH PRESIDENT DONOVAN RICHARDS

Amparito Rosero announced the following events that will be held at the Atrium at Queens Borough Hall - 120-55 Queens Boulevard, Kew Gardens, NY 11424. RSVP at [queensbp.org/rsvp](http://queensbp.org/rsvp):

- Bangladesh Independence Day Celebration - Thursday, March 16, 2023, 6–8pm
- Women’s Health Fair - Tuesday, March 21, 6–8pm
- Vaisakhi Celebration - Tuesday, April 11, 6–8pm

Borough President Richards is hosting a Period Product Drive from March 1, 2023 to March 31, 2023. Period product inaccessibility poses a serious threat to the physical and mental wellness of women and girls across New York City, especially young people and those without the financial means to afford them. To help break the cycle of period inequity this Women’s Herstory Month, Borough President Donovan Richards Jr. will hold a Period Product Drive, with donated items being distributed to individuals in need throughout the month of March. Items being collected include new, sealed tampons, pads, liners, menstrual cups and period underwear, which can be dropped off in the lobby of Queens Borough Hall 24 hours a day.

*For more information about how to donate, please contact [adavidov@queensbp.org](mailto:adavidov@queensbp.org).*

Last, Borough President Richards’ State of the Borough Address will be on Friday April 28, 2023, at 10am at the Queens Theatre.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Christine Nolan  
Community Coordinator*

<b>CB 6 VOTING SHEET 3-8-23</b>	<b>NEW LIQUOR LICENSE APPLICATION</b>	<b>RENEWAL LIQUOR LICENSE APPLICATION</b>	<b>STREET CO-NAMING DR. KARL NEUMANN</b>
MICHAEL ARCATI	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
ANISIA AYON			
KAVISH BATRA			
PETER BEADLE			
MIRIAM BERFAS			
HOWARD BIRNBAUM			
HEIDI CHAIN			
L.T. CIACCIO	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
KANDRA CLARK			
LATRICE DAVIS			
JOHN DERESZEWSKI			
ALEJANDRA DIAZ-HOUSTON	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
HEATHER DIMITRIADIS			
KEITH ENGEL			
KAREN IMAS	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
SARINA JAIN			
MARK LASTER			
BEATRICE LEONG	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
JONATHAN LI			
KEVIN LY	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
JACK MEDINA	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
DR. RENEE MEHRRA			
STEVEN METZ			
JULIE MILNER			
PAT MORGAN			
ELIZABETH NEWTON			
TANIA PADGETT	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
HOWARD POLLACK	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
DIANA RACHNAEV			
SHARI ROLNICK			
GLADYS SANDOVAL			
PETRINA SCHNEIDERMAN	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
DAVID SCHNEIER			
HERBERT SCHONHAUT			
JEAN SILVA			
TERESA SIMMONS	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
DR. ROBERT TAMAYEV	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
IRINA TAMAYEVA	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
MARTHA TUCKER	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
SUSAN WANDERMAN			
ALEXA WEITZMAN			
JOAN WESTON			
BRENTLY WINSTEAD			
EDWIN WONG			
TITILAYO YASUKAWA	ABSENT	ABSENT	ABSENT
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>ALL IN FAVOR</b>	<b>ALL IN FAVOR</b>	<b>ALL IN FAVOR</b>