



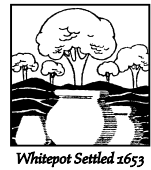
## COMMUNITY BOARD 6, QUEENS

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HEATHER BEERS-DIMITRIADIS  
CHAIR

DONOVAN RICHARDS  
BOROUGH PRESIDENT

CHRISTINE NOLAN  
DISTRICT MANAGER

### **CB 6 MEETING MINUTES**

**JANUARY 8, 2025**

#### **PRESENT**

HEATHER BEERS-DIMITRIADIS, CHAIR

PETER BEADLE, 1<sup>ST</sup> VICE CHAIR

KEITH ENGEL, 2<sup>ND</sup> VICE CHAIR

MARK LASTER, 3<sup>RD</sup> VICE CHAIR

SALUA BAIDA, SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION

L.T. CIACCIO, SECRETARY OF FINANCE/PERSONNEL

JOHN DERESZEWSKI, PARLIAMENTARIAN

E. ALFONSECA

R. ASHE

A. AYON

K. BATRA

H. BIRNBAUM

H. CHAIN

G. CHEN

K. CLARK

K. IMAS

DR. R. MEHRRA

P. MORGAN

S. MUNAWAR

N. PIENKOWSKA

J. POORAN

D. RACHNAEV

P. RODRIGUEZ

S. ROLNICK

M. SALTON

D. SCHANTZ

H. SCHONHAUT

A. PRATAP SHAH

E. SHVARTSMAN

J. SILVA

B. WINSTEAD

E. WONG

E. ZAKRY

#### **ABSENT**

D. ARONOV

J. AVILA

L. DAVIS

T. GAVRIELOF\*

B. GROSSBERG\*

S. JAIN\*

M. FERNANDEZ KONIGSBERG\*

M. LASHLEY-KABORE\*

K. LY

J. PRATT\*

G. SANDOVAL\*

M. TUCKER\*

\*EXCUSED ABSENCE

#### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

HONORABLE LYNN SCHULMAN

CHRISTINE NOLAN

JORDAN GOLDES

SEAN McCABE

GIANNA VALENTE

MERCEDES JENNINGS

AMPARITO ROSERO

KEVIN MCALEER

BARBARA VULICH

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL MEMBER

DISTRICT MANAGER

OFFICE OF CONGRESS MEMBER GRACE MENG

OFFICE OF SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO

OFFICE OF ASSEMBLY MEMBER ANDREW HEVESI

OFFICE OF SENATOR MICHAEL GIANARIS

OFFICE OF QUEENS BOROUGH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

OFFICE OF COUNCIL MEMBER LYNN SCHULMAN

COMMUNITY BOARD 6 STAFF

This meeting was held in person with a limited virtual option via Webex for individuals with extraordinary circumstances. The following CB6 Members joined the meeting via Webex: Anisia Ayon, Howard Birnbaum, Heidi Chain, Kandra Clark, John Dereszewski, Renee Mehrra, Diana Rachnaev, and Shari Rolnick. The meeting will be recorded and posted on YouTube ([www.tinyurl.com/cb6youtube](http://www.tinyurl.com/cb6youtube)).

Chair Heather Beers-Dimitriadis opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**GOOD AND WELFARE****CB 6 MEMBERS**

Heidi Chain:

The 112<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Council meeting is remote on Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at 7:30 pm. Anyone who wants to attend needs to get the Zoom link. They should email [council112@yahoo.com](mailto:council112@yahoo.com). Also, if you have any questions for the precinct, email them as well.

Mark Laster:

- I attended the Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board meeting on December 18 representing our community board. QSWAB addresses issues with solid waste and environmental issues. They recently had a change in leadership and laid out an ambitious program for the year. I was filling in for Matt Salton, who usually represents us at this meeting.
- Talking about solid waste, I signed up for the Trash Academy. Those of you who might be interested in learning more about this should sign up. Information about this was sent out in last week's email from the office.
- Representatives of the Forest Hills Green team were contacted by a local Bar Mitzvah boy to do a special project to celebrate his Bar Mitzvah. He arranged for the Forest Hills Green team to do a presentation about climate change at his school, The 30th Avenue School Q300 in Astoria this Friday. If anyone else is interested in inviting the Forest Hills Green Team to speak, please email us at [FHGTInc@gmail.com](mailto:FHGTInc@gmail.com).
- The Forest Hills Green Team will be partnering with the Civics Center, a nonpartisan voter registration group targeting 16- to 18-year-olds to register them to vote. Currently only 8.4% of eligible 16- to 17-year-olds in Queens are registered to vote and only 37.4 % of 18-year-olds registered. So obviously we need to get them registered. If you are interested in working with this group, please email me.
- Our next Breaking Bread, Building Bonds, will be on Sunday February 9, 2025, at 2:00 pm. We hope to have invitations ready by next week, so please check your email and sign up. We thank Megan Yuan, Queens Borough Coordinator for the Community Affairs Unit, Office of the Mayor, for securing funding for this luncheon

Jean Silva:

- The Willow Lake Trail at 72 Avenue and the Grand Central Parkway is closed for 8 months to 2 years. There was no notice posted. We are hoping they can post something there to let people know what is going on.
- Flushing Meadows Corona Park Conservancy is up and running. We have a new crew of people coming on board so if anyone wants to volunteer in the park, please let me know.

Edwin Wong:

- Lunar New Year is on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, and the Forest Hills Asian Association usually has a couple of different events to celebrate. One is in partnership with LIJ Forest Hills. We have a lion dance group come around and visit some of the businesses. We're finalizing the information right now and I'll share it with everyone once that's finalized. It's probably going to be early, or mid-February. If anyone is interested, there are a couple of different Lunar New Year celebrations going

around in the city. The 1st one is in Flushing on February 1<sup>st</sup> at 11:00 am. The 2<sup>nd</sup> one is in Chinatown on February 16 at 1:00 pm.

- I also wanted to share that we usually have a State of Forest Hills Civic event, which is all the different local civic groups get together to share information about what we're doing this year. We want to help increase awareness for these nonprofits in the community. That will be sometime in February.

## **PUBLIC FORUM**

Chair Beers-Dimitriadis reported that the board is going to move into the public comments. The Executive Committee decided to reduce the time allowed for individuals whether you are from the district or outside the district, it will be two minutes. If you are an organizational representative in or outside the district you will have three minutes.

### ***Jennifer Martin***

*My name is Jennifer Martin. I'm the director of community relations and a funeral director at Schwartz Brothers, which is down Queens Boulevard. We have four funeral homes under one roof. Schwartz brothers, which is the original Sinai Chapels, Parkside, and Forest Park funeral home, which is our nonsectarian funeral home. Last year we started hosting free events once a month. On Tuesday January 21, 2025, at 4:00pm, we have Naomi Rabinowitz coming and she's doing a flutes journey of Queens. She is going to play songs that were composed or sung by people from Queens. Whether they lived in Queens, went to school in Queens or the Beatles who performed at Forest Hills Stadium, they will be represented. By 4:00, our funerals are over, and our parking lot is available. This is free. Please join us. I love RSVPs because this tells me how much seating to put out and how many snacks to buy. So please let me know that you're coming and thank you again.*

### ***Jonathan Rinaldi***

*I'm here tonight to express my concerns in opposition to New York City's recently approved congestion pricing plan and the significant burden it would place on the Queens residents. While congestion pricing is framed as a solution to reduce traffic and fund public transit improvement, this policy unfairly targets outer borough residents like us, many of whom rely on cars for commuting, family responsibilities, and work. For Queens, this is not just about reducing traffic, it's about equity and fairness for our communities. Many small business owners and workers who depend on driving to transport goods and commute will face higher costs further straining our local economy. There is no guarantee of benefits for Queens. While congesting pricing promises to fund transit improvement, there's NO clear assurance that Queens will see any of those benefits. Past citywide initiatives have often left Queens underserved. We cannot allow Queens residents to be disproportionately taxed and burdened by a policy that fails to address the root causes of traffic congestion. I urge this community board to stand with us in opposition to this plan in advocating for a fair, more equitable solution. Thank you, and let's not forget that elections have consequences.*

*The election machines were down at PS 101 during the election in November and the working families had me arrested in front of the polling site.*

*Chair Heather Dimitriadis stopped Mr. Rinaldi as the Community Board isn't a platform for political speech.*

### ***David Kupferberg***

*Hi, my name is David Kupferberg and I am the Vice President of Bus advocacy at Passengers United. The MTA released the proposed final plan addendum to the Queens Bus Network Redesign on December 17. The MTA is slated to approve it at their committee meetings this month on January 27 and at their board meeting on January 29. The addendum has the Q10 and Q10 limited split into the Q10 and Q80 respectively. Both services would each have overnight service every 30 min significantly increasing service on Lefferts Boulevard. But the MTA wishes to make the Q10 a rush route, leaving local riders between Queens Boulevard and Rockway Boulevard with nothing.*

*The Q23 is still proposed to operate all times but NO longer serve the 7 train. This would be a big mistake. The Q 23 should continue to serve the 7 train, but at 111<sup>th</sup> Street. The addendum has a new daily route, the Q74 limited. The purpose of the Q74 is to connect Forest Hills with Fresh Meadows and Queensborough community college. Such trips currently require either indirect travel or three buses. The QM12 and QM42 which service South of Forest Hills may have low ridership now, but this could change now that congestion pricing has been implemented. The MTA must monitor ridership levels for this segment, then determine the correct course of action.*

*To the MTA, this addendum only shifts around services in order to prevent service cuts. This is not better bus service. Go back to the drawing board. Thank you.*

**Paul Pogozielski**

*My name is Paul Pogozielski and I'm the president of the Middle Village Property Owners and Residents Association as well as the Middle Village Roller Hockey league. So, I just wanted to thank Community Board 6 for letting me come down here tonight. If anyone knows any young people that are looking to get out, get healthy, we started the Middle Village Roller Hockey League about a year and a half ago and we're over a hundred families in there. It's a safe competitive environment. It's a great way for parents to bond with their kids. They have a lot of tenacity in there, but the kids are really good with each other, and it shows a lot of sportsmanship and it's a great program. So please look us up. It's MVProller.com and we're really happy about that. Also, Middle Village Property Owners has our meeting tomorrow and we have the DSNY coming to talk about the new garbage cans and the new restrictions for sanitation and the violations that'll be happening like is it going to be a one-time thing? or will they increase each time? And then as well we have the NYPD 104 Build the block that's also going to be coming to the meeting. The last thing we're going to do is a small presentation on a broad, a very broad overview of the city of yes. So, thank you guys for your time. I appreciate all the work that you guys do. I know that the community board is open for new members, so if you know anybody, please, this is how things get done and you guys are a great advisory for our city councilman and the rest of our elected officials, so thank you for your time.*

**Irina Vovsha**

*Today I'm going to speak about children. Do you have children? Do you love your children? Do you want to protect them? Do you want them to be smart and successful? Yes, of course. Then why does our community board do nothing to protect the children of 8000 people who live next to the stadium? Do you know that these children are deprived of sleep? Do you know that actually noise pollution resulting from almost 40 events held by the stadium have started to torture our kids by exposing them to that unbearable noise. Do you understand how detrimental this noise is to the children's health and development, in fact, they have nose bleeds. Some children have anxiety. This vibration from the noise breaks our houses, do you understand what happens to these fragile bodies of our children. The 75 decibels that our children are exposed to? It means that they have learning disabilities. What does it mean? I have seen these children. They are exposed to the noise all the time, they have this in their heads, and they go to school, they don't learn anything because the voice of the teacher is this noise. Do you understand what these concerts do to our children? It's time for the board to represent those people and the children of our community. It's time to stop these concerts. Moreover, I can tell you, we already have all the information that permits were illegally given. And now we know that many laws were broken. I have so much information today and I'm telling you we will not stop. You don't stop. Thank you.*

**Karla Fuentes**

*Good evening members of the community board. My name is Karla Fuentes and I am a parent member of the school leadership team at PS 174 in Rego Park. I'm here to highlight the safety concerns and propose a revenue neutral solution for the dangerous traffic situation that we have around PS 174. 174 has recently grown in capacity, which is great. However, more kids at the school has increasingly led to a more dangerous traffic situation because the infrastructure of the roads are really not able to handle the capacity of the vehicles, especially for morning drop offs. Two-way traffic at both entrances to the school on Ellwell and Dieterle has kids running across the street out of the line of sight of oncoming traffic. Congestion has led to cars making U-turns on the sidewalk in front of the school. I do emergency management for a living, and my nightmare is a kid in this neighborhood getting hit by a car because of the traffic around the school in the morning. There's a way that we can protect the kids at our school, but we need the community board's help. We used to have a crossing guard for our school and understand that budget cuts have eliminated that position. However, a one-way traffic pattern on Ellwell, 65<sup>th</sup> Drive and Dieterle could solve a lot of the issues that we are facing. One-way streets on the roads immediately surrounding 174 would make traffic flow much more efficient, reduce the bottlenecks that have led to cars on the sidewalk and reduce stress for both parents and drivers. In a perfect world, we would have an officer from the 112<sup>th</sup> Precinct directing traffic around the school in the morning or crossing guard again. But in light of the ongoing city budget limitations, the solution could make drop offs significantly safer for the kids in Rego Park without a large economic investment. Thank you for your time and I appreciate any support that the board can provide.*

**Tommy Patchell**

*I'm here to say I am opposed to the concerts at Forest Hills stadium. The liars lie because they know that the truth is 10% of people who live next to the stadium sign the petition to stop the concerts. That's the truth. More than 500 people registered their noise complaints. During the last concert season, concerts were planned by organizers, the DEP*

*measured the noise level of only 13 of those concerts. 11 of those concerts were issued violations, which means 80 % of the concerts violated the noise code.*

*The tennis club collected signatures of 25,000 people to support the stadium. We don't want to destroy the stadium; we want to stop the concerts that destroy our lives. These 25,000 of the concert goers are the abusers of us, the 8,000 people living next to the stadium. In addition, Mr. Shapiro claimed that 70,000 people live in Forest Hills but Forest Hills is big and only 8,000 live next to the stadium and a little more than 10 % have signed our petition. As a tenant, I had the right to a quiet environment. I had the right to restore my health by sleeping and resting in my residence that I pay for. Who, when, and how was the permission given to hold open air music concerts in a residential area. The laws that were broken were R3 and R4. The laws were broken, and you the board have the duty to stop the lawlessness. These concerts must be stopped, and they will be stopped. Thank you.*

#### **Daniel Solow**

*Good evening community boards. Thanks. Good evening public and happy new year. I'm here tonight to speak on behalf of congestion pricing and the promise that the tolling plan holds for our great city. Today on day three or four depending on how you count, news media outlets continue to report surges in mass transit use on the New Jersey transit, New York City subway, and the Long Island railroad. People have already taken to social media to note the improvements in their commute. We need to make sure that New York State is using the revenue raised to run additional trains, upgrade our signal technology and expand ADA access as promised. I do want to take this opportunity to ask all our elected officials and their representatives in the room to resist the urge to pander to special interest groups and to gut congestion pricing. As was quoted by Streetsblog this morning, there are currently over a dozen bills introduced in Albany to give exemptions to special interest groups. Some of the bills are asking for the extinction of congestion pricing. It has only been a few days people, and we are still learning about the impact of the tolling program on our city. Instead of pandering I'm asking us to please share leadership and negotiate in good faith with the MTA and work out productive legislation that helps your constituency. The entire point of this tolling program is to cut down on congestion to free up road space for those who must use it such as delivery workers, professionals in the trades and our active-duty emergency personnel. It is not a scam; it is not a tax. If your commute time can be cut by 15 to 20%, without unnecessary car travel, that seems like a win to me. Thank you.*

#### **Maria Ramirez**

*Good evening members of the Community Board. My name is Maria Ramirez, and I am the president of the Parent Association of PS 174. I echo the comments of my SLT colleague Karla Fuentes and I'm Speaking today to bring attention to an issue affecting our children and families.*

*Morning drop-offs at PS 174 have become increasingly hazardous, our school is surrounded by four two-way streets and it's creating a chaotic and unsafe environment for young children, their families and pedestrians. This is compounded by a significant uptick in reckless driving around the school's perimeter. It's worth noting that about five years ago we had a crossing guard assigned to assist families in navigating these busy streets. That support is NO longer in place. Adding to the problem, our school is situated near Woodhaven Boulevard, a major thoroughfare. Drivers often use the surrounding streets around PS 174 as shortcuts, exacerbating congestion and increasing the risk of accidents. We urgently need measures to ensure the safety of the children in the community, whether it's reinstating the crossing guard, implementing traffic calming measures such as making perhaps two out of the four streets, particularly Ellwell or Dieterle Crescents, one-way streets instead of two-way streets or even increasing enforcement. Something must be done before an unavoidable tragedy occurs with a child or family member around PS 174. I have personally witnessed several drivers doing illegal u turns literally right in front of PS 174. Please, I urge you to bring attention to this matter. Thank you for your attention.*

Chair Heather Beers-Dimitriadis closed the public forum and reminded the public that if you know anyone who couldn't attend tonight's meeting, they can submit their comment by the end of business this Friday.

#### **MINUTES**

One change was made to December 11, 2024, minutes to mark Ephraim Zakry and Tamara Gavrielof as excused absences. A motion to accept the minutes with this change was made by Brently Winstead and seconded by Sabah Munawar. All were in favor.

#### **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair Heather Beers-Dimitriadis announced the following:

- Community Board Applications are open. CB Members must renew their membership every 2 years. If you are not sure if you are up for renewal, please reach out to the office. In addition, we ask that you share the application with your networks and on your social media. The deadline is February 14, 2025. If they don't live in this community, they can apply for other Community Boards.
- We had a successful site visit with DEP in December. We met to discuss a variety of drainage and flooding issues along the Grand Central Parkway Service Road near Forest Hills High School and the surrounding streets. The new Queens commissioner for the DEP has been very hands-on and very responsive and so we are very thankful for his work. The DM and I were joined by Herb Schonhaut, and Transportation Committee Co-Chairs Peter Beadle and Edgar Alfonseca.
- I had the opportunity to visit PS 174 right before the holiday break and I was amazed at how beautiful their new space is. They had an extension added onto the school and it is beautiful. I just wanted to say thank you to the School Construction Authority because these are big and important changes that this board advocates for. We advocate for more classrooms and that is exactly what this project has done, which is great because that corridor is seeing a lot more construction happening. We have a big project on Woodhaven Boulevard, and we have the Shalimar Project, so we know that this area is going to need these additional seats.
- If you are the parent of a public school student or have friends who are the parents of public school students and they're interested in leadership, specifically for the public school system, the CEC, Community Education Council, the election process has begun and if they're interested in running, they should talk to either their school principals or they can go to the New York City Public Schools website and pull up all the information if they want to run for one of those seats. I know that most of the time there is a specific need for parents who have children who are on IEPs or are part of District 75. So, please feel free to push that information out to people that you know are advocates for education.

Lastly, Chair Beers-Dimitriadis thanked the members for coming out tonight. I know it is very, very cold. We appreciate it. We have quite a few board members who are sick tonight so we were concerned that we wouldn't be able to meet quorum. In this room today we have 24 people. The quorum is 23 people.

## **DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT**

District Manager Christine Nolan reported the following:

- It is time for the Community Board to vote for the logo competition entries. All CB Members get to choose their top 5. Once the top 5 are determined, it will go to a public vote for a winning entry.
- We will be having a briefing for Committee Chairs on Tuesday, January 21, 2025. It will be virtual via Webex.
- Committee Meetings and Briefings are part of your role as a CB6 Member. They are not optional. If you can't attend a committee meeting or briefing, please let the CB Office and your chair know. It isn't fair to committee members when half of the committee doesn't attend the meeting. This is true for CB Meetings also. We understand when things come up, people get sick but just a simple phone call or email to let us know helps the meetings run smoother.
- Last, I wanted to speak briefly about the CB6 Office. Shortly before I officially became District Manager, I instituted a complaint log. This makes it easy for us to see how many complaints we are currently working on and how many total complaints we have received for any given issue. From May 2024 to the end of the year the office worked on approximately 317 cases. 274 have been closed out and 43 are still open. Many of the open complaints are things that require studies by the agencies, etc. and these things just take time. If you see something in your community, call 311 and then call us or email us so we can follow up.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTIONS**

First Vice Chair Peter Beadle announced that nominations for the Executive Committee were held on December 11, 2024, and the nominations were:

Heather Beers-Dimitriadis – Chair

Peter Beadle – First Vice Chair

Keith Engel – Second Vice Chair

Mark Laster – Third Vice Chair

Salua Baida – Secretary of Administration

LT Ciaccio – Secretary of Personnel and Finance

John Dereszewski - Parliamentarian

Since there were no other nominations for Chair, the Secretary of Administration, Salua Baida cast one ballot for Heather Beers-Dimitriadis as Chair.

Chair Heather Beers-Dimitriadis announced:

Since there were no other nominations for First Vice Chair, the Secretary of Administration, Salua Baida cast one ballot for Peter Beadle as First Vice Chair.

Since there were no other nominations for Second Vice Chair, the Secretary of Administration, Salua Baida cast one ballot for Keith Engel as Second Vice Chair.

Since there were no other nominations for Third Vice Chair, the Secretary of Administration, Salua Baida cast one ballot for Mark Laster as Third Vice Chair.

Since there were no other nominations for Secretary of Administration, the Parliamentarian John Dereszewski cast one ballot for Salua Baida as Secretary of Administration.

Since there were no other nominations for Secretary of Finance and Personnel, the Secretary of Administration, Salua Baida cast one ballot for LT Ciaccio as Secretary of Finance and Personnel.

Since there were no other nominations for Parliamentarian, Secretary of Administration, Salua Baida cast one ballot for John Dereszewski as Parliamentarian.

As a note, per our By-Laws, Executive Committee Members can only serve 4 one-year terms in their current position. Therefore, several members of the current Executive Committee will no longer be able to run for their current position next year. If you are interested in running for a position in the future, feel free to reach out and ask questions. There are a lot of things that the Executive Committee members do in their various positions behind the scenes.

## **COUNCIL MEMBER LYNN SCHULMAN – DISTRICT 28**

Council Member Lynn Schulman congratulated the Executive Committee on their re-election and said that she was proud of the relationship she has with the board.

CM Schulman spoke briefly about the following:

- City of Yes
  - o She voted no in the Zoning Committee and No in the Council
  - o While it's true that we have to change the zoning laws that haven't been changed since 1961, it was something that was done too quickly. There are parts of the City of Yes that are very good and we asked if we could split them off and do those and they said No. You either vote for it as

a whole or nothing. There have been times when people like Robert Moses changed the infrastructure of the entire city, and we now are dealing with the aftereffects of that, and a lot of things have to be changed as a result. We need to have a more methodical process.

- I met with a lot of different groups in the district (Forest Hills, Richmond Hill, Kew Gardens) and the majority of people were against it.
- The revisions that were made to the City of Yes were not presented to the Council until the day of the vote. So, there were pieces of it that we weren't clear on, and we just asked if we could have more time.
- It takes away the influence of community boards and City Council Members.
- On the day of the vote on the City of Yes, the mayor announced a charter revision commission, and he said that one of his goals was to take away all land use powers from the community boards and from the City Council.
- She will have the Land Use Division and DCP come out to make a presentation to the Community Board on how it affects their part of the district.
- There is a Joint Committee Hearing with the Health Committee, The Hospitals Committee, and the Committee on Civil Service and Labor this Friday regarding a doctor's strike by the Doctors Council. The strike has been postponed for now, but it affects Health and Hospital Facilities, such as Queens Hospital Center. We're going to look at the issues that they present, staffing levels, etc. The committee hearings are streamed on the City Council Website.
- I introduced a bill to make sure that family building benefits were applicable to city employees across the board because my office received complaints that the LGBTQ community was being pushed out of those benefits for IVF and other things. There was a hearing on the bill and then the Mayor's Office called and said they are planning something even better than would be possible with this bill. This is the first major city to announce family building benefits up to \$10,000 a person for everyone who is a managerial employee and works for the city. This includes IVF, adoption, surrogacy, and some other benefits. We will look at the usage and see if it can be expanded on.
- I announced with Speaker Adams, a new NYC Council funding initiative to support expectant mothers with a guaranteed income program. It has been shown in different places to be very beneficial to improve maternal health and reduce child poverty.
- I also got together with the Health Committee staff and people in the Governor's office, City Hall and also in the state legislature to talk about ways that we can "inoculate" ourselves against some of the healthcare issues that may come down from the new Federal Administration.
- Healthy NYC was codified which is trying to extend the life expectancy of New Yorkers to the age of 83 by 2030. In order to do that, we need to take care of the seven drivers of premature death, one of which is chronic disease, diabetes, and heart disease, so we're going to be rolling out some special things around that.
- The budget season is starting now and the portal for nonprofits is open. If you have any questions, you can speak to Kevin McAleer.
- Proud to be a part of the First female majority-led City Council

Council Member Schulman then took questions from the Board.

#### **UPDATE FROM NORTHWELL HEALTH**

**LORRAINE CHAMBERS-LEWIS (PRESIDENT OF LIJ FOREST HILLS)**

**NIRMAL PANDYA (VP OF AMBULATORY FOR NORTHWELL)**

Ms. Chambers Lewis thanked the board leadership, Council Member Schulman and Community Board Members for all they do in the community.

Ms. Chambers Lewis made the following presentation:

- We are a community hospital, LIJ Forest Hills Hospital. Local access to care matters. You always hear about life expectancy, and it is oftentimes determined by your zip code.



- LIJ Forest Hills received an “A” leapfrog safety rating in 2023 and 2024. We're one of the few hospitals that are getting A's and we're really pushing hard to keep up those quality metrics and those grades.
- Branding: Part of our branding is about the community and the diversity of the community that we serve. Whether it be language issues or cultural issues, we really try to make sure that we're listening to our patients and really creating an acute care environment that is really going to be servicing them so that they feel comfortable. Being in healthcare, going to a hospital is a very vulnerable thing to do. You're not wearing your clothes, you're not eating your food, you're not with your family. So, it's really important to make people feel comfortable so they can communicate with us and that we can better serve them in this situation.
- Robotic Surgery Center of Excellence. We have three Davinci robots, and we also have a Mako robot for orthopedics.
- Baby Friendly Status. We are the 1<sup>st</sup> hospital in Northwell's 21 hospitals to get that baby-friendly designation. This is an international designation. We are really helping mothers and their babies bond. It really makes a difference long term for the community and the health of people as they grow older to be breastfed. We have a sensory birthing center now. It's really based on science in terms of aromatherapy, ambient lighting and affirmation messages that are there as well as the visual components and the breathing techniques, really helping moms have a calmer, more natural experience.
- Age Friendly Awards. There is a high population of people in this community over 65. We have specific services to address the specific needs of seniors.
- Community hospitals can take care of about 90% of what you would need. We are connected with our tertiary hospitals like LIJ or North Shore or Lenox Hill Hospital, but local access to care is very important. Some of the services that we have include Urology, General Surgery, Thoracic Surgery, Bariatric Surgery, Imaging, Women's Health, Advanced Endoscopy, Gastroenterology, and many others.

Nirmal Pandya gave the following information about local Northwell Outpatient Services:

- Northwell has over 50 locations in Queens and treats more than a million residents a year.
- The goal is to have care close to home and at a time when you need it.
- Whether you are calling to make an appointment or doing it online, you can specify your zip code and the specialty you need, and they will give you options close to you.
- Northwell at Rego Park (95-25 Queens Boulevard)
  - o Have been in this building since 2009 but we recently expanded to provide even more services. These include pediatrics, rheumatology, endocrinology, imaging, pharmacy, maternal-fetal medicine, urology, ambulatory care, neurosciences and oncology, physical therapy, surgical specialties
  - o Recently added valet parking to accommodate patients
- Rego Park Cancer Center
  - o Brand new space
  - o No need to travel for quality cancer care
  - o Patients can speak to the provider in the language of their choice
  - o Nutrition, social work, nurse navigation and imaging are all in the same building
  - o Infusion services (80 SF Space, beautiful views, calm and relaxed atmosphere)
- Northwell Health at Kew Gardens – Primary Care, Cardiology, OBGYN, Orlin and Cohen Orthopedics
- Northwell Health at Glendale – The new facility that opened 1 year ago includes: ophthalmology, cardiology, general surgery, endocrinology, and several other specialties.
- Midwife Practice in Forest Hills if you want a different birthing experience throughout your pregnancy.

Last, Ms. Chambers-Lewis spoke about what Northwell is doing in the Community:

- Northwell High School of Health Sciences at 53-16 Northern Boulevard will begin with 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the Fall of 2025 and will offer the following clinical pathways: Pre-Nursing, Medical Assisting, Behavioral and Mental Health, Healthcare Management
- Community Advisory Board – Connects LIJFH with the community to gather insights promote services and partner on outreach, and advocacy to improve healthcare programs and facilities. They had 3 meetings in 2024.

- Six events in the community focused on careers including career counseling and career management.
- Stancy Saji, Government and Community Relations, has coordinated Northwell's participation in various events throughout Queens to connect Northwell with the community including the Hong Kong Dragon Boat Race, Lunar New Year Events, Parades, etc.

The following questions were asked and answered:

I would like to applaud Forest Hills for having a Division of Women's Health specifically related to the Emergency Room headed by local Forest Hills physician, Dr. Jessica Army.

*Response: Women's Health is really important to our entire organization*

What is being done for Mental Healthcare?

*Response: We are doing a lot in that area. We have Zucker Hillside Hospital, which is a hospital that specializes in behavioral health. It is on the border of Queens and Nassau County. We also have some outpatient mental health services, but we are looking to expand that. There are a number of initiatives including questionnaires that will help providers recognize when their patients might need additional mental health services, and they are referred accordingly.*

With the expansion of 95-25 Queens Boulevard, the CB has received concerns that there isn't enough parking designated for ambulettes to drop off or pick up patients. We requested additional spots, but DOT said it wasn't necessary. If you feel it is necessary, would you partner with the Community Board to request this from DOT?

*Response: Yes, we receive this complaint from our practices a lot. We will partner with you on this request.*

Why doesn't Northwell Go Health have chairs with arms and high chairs for disabled patients or those recovering from surgery?

*Response: We will bring this to the attention of the Go Health Team.*

People in the community don't realize that Forest Hills Hospital doesn't offer mental health services.

Therefore, if a family member is in a crisis and taken to the local hospital, once they are stabilized, they will be moved to another hospital. Sometimes it is difficult for the family to visit them.

*Response: In an emergency, you should always go to the nearest hospital emergency room. Once the patient's situation is stabilized, we want them to be where they will receive the best care and in this type of situation, it is usually Zucker Hillside Hospital since their entire hospital specializes in behavioral health and mental health.*

Does Forest Hills Hospital have a program like Lenox Hill House Calls?

*Response: We currently don't have this program out of Forest Hills Hospital, but it is still part of the Northwell system. The goal is to bring healthcare programs to Queens, no matter what hospital offers the program.*

I was told that when a child is treated through Zucker Hillside Hospital, once they turn 18 and transition to adult services, their insurance (Medicaid) isn't accepted.

*Response: I was not aware of that, but I will look into it.*

I have been told by EMS workers that Forest Hills Hospital has been so crowded lately that they can't bring patients there and when they do, the Emergency Room is very crowded.

*Response: This is currently true of all local hospitals. It is the season for: RSV, Flu, COVID, Norovirus, etc. A lot of these illnesses can require a visit to the hospital. It seems to be improving but we do have systems in place to mitigate this as much as possible.*

As a clinical social worker, what is the mechanism to refer clients to your outpatient mental health services?

*Response: Currently, mental health services are referred by our providers. We do anxiety screenings, depression screenings, etc. throughout our specialties. It is hard to recruit mental health professionals, but we are always looking to expand.*

## **CONSUMER AFFAIRS / CULTURAL AFFAIRS / ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT**

Brently Winstead, Co-Chair, gave the following report:

### **Liquor License Applications:**

CB6 received the following new liquor license applications:

**1. MIRANI GROUP INC, 97-26 63RD ROAD, RP**

*This is a Glatt kosher Georgian restaurant. The applicant doesn't have experience in the restaurant industry, but the management team does. The team brings 11 years of experience in providing fine cuisine and drinks. They have a solid background in managing high-quality establishments, ensuring a professional approach to running this business. The business is undergoing a selling-purchase transaction. Marani Group Inc. is acquiring the business from Marani Restaurant Inc.*

**2. PHO THAI INC 95-26 QUEENS BOULEVARD, RP**

**\*THIS APPLICATION WAS APPROVED BY CB6 IN MARCH 2024 BUT IT WAS SUBMITTED WITH THE WRONG ADDRESS (95-25 INSTEAD OF 95-26) \***

*Vietnamese & Thai full-service restaurant. Principles/ Operators have many years of experience in operating a restaurant. They currently operate Pho Tan Restaurant, another Vietnamese & Thai restaurant located at 147-34B Northern Blvd Flushing, NY since March 2021.*

CB6 received the following renewal liquor license applications:

- 1. COBBLESTONES PUB – 117-18 QUEENS BLVD, FH**
- 2. COBBLESTONES PUB (BEER GARDEN) – 117-18 QUEENS BLVD, FH**
- 3. VILLAGE GRILL – 73-01 YELLOWSTONE BOULEVARD, FH**
- 4. NEW PINANG CUISINE – 111-10 QUEENS BOULEVARD, FH**
- 5. CABANA 70 ASSOCIATES – 107-10 70TH ROAD, FH**
- 6. GULA – 70-17B AUSTIN STREET, FH**
- 7. AUSTIN HOUSE RESTAURANT, 72-04 AUSTIN STREET – FH**

There were no reported issues from the 112<sup>th</sup> Precinct on the new or renewal applications. The committee's recommendation is to approve the new liquor license applications and renewal liquor license applications. Peter Beadle made a motion to accept the committee recommendations. Effy Zakry seconded this motion. Motion passed on a voice vote. All were in favor.

## **REPORTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS' REPRESENTATIVES**

### **SENATOR JOSEPH P. ADDABBO**

Sean McCabe reported the following:

- Faran Shariff is new to the team, replacing the late Sandee Doremus who worked for the office for 22 years before she passed away.
- Senator Addabbo put out a flyer last year about community concerns. The Senator takes these concerns very seriously.
- Budget Season is starting up.

### **SENATOR MICHAEL GIANARIS**

Mercedes Jennings reported the following:

- Feel free to contact our office with any issues.
- Senator is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Majority Leader, so he is back in Albany.
- If anyone wants to set up a meeting with the Senator in Albany, please reach out.
- There will be more Real ID events coming up again this year. Please reach out if you would like an event closer to Forest Hills and Rego Park. This saves the residents a trip to the DMV.

#### ASSEMBLY MEMBER ANDREW HEVESI

Gianna Valente reported the following:

- Today is the first day of the legislative session in Albany and the Assemblyman is looking forward to another year as the Chair of the Children and Families Committee
- Congestion Pricing started on Sunday. If anyone needs information about the city's low-income discount and tax credit for residents or disability exemptions, please reach out to the office.

#### CONGRESSMEMBER GRACE MENG

Jordan Goldes reported the following:

- The \$190 million Congress Member Meng got authorized to combat flooding and was actually signed into law this past weekend by the president. This calls on the Army Corps of Engineers to work with the city on the project, so we will keep you updated.
- We'll be doing more weekend office hours this Sunday, January 11, 2025, from 10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M. at our Forest Hills office and at the Northeast Queens office on February 9, so feel free to come on by.
- We will also be doing VA office hours again in March over at the American Legion Hall on Metropolitan Avenue in Forest Hills. We do this every couple of months where we have the Department of Veterans Affairs, come to the district and sit down with any veterans who have issues with the VA.
- The congresswoman was sworn into her new term this past Friday and it is a true honor to continue being your voice in the nation's capital, and of course always feel free to continue reaching out if there are any federal issues that we could be helpful with.

#### QUEENS BOROUGH PRESIDENT DONOVAN RICHARDS

Amparito Rosero reported the following:

Queens Borough President Donovan Richards will be holding a Parent Advisory Board Meeting on Parent and Community Engagement featuring Dr. Cristina Melendez, the NYC Public Schools Deputy Chancellor for the Division of Family, Community, and Student Empowerment on Tuesday, January 14, 6 pm via Zoom.

RSVP to [queensbp.nyc.gov](https://queensbp.nyc.gov).

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM on January 8, 2025.

Submitted by,  
Christine Nolan, District Manager