



# COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 9

Queens Borough Hall  
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Sherry Algreto, Chairperson \* James S. McClelland, District Manager \* Donovan Richards Jr., Borough President

## APRIL 8, 2025, MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING

QUEENS BOROUGH HALL, ROOM 200, 120-55 QUEENS BOULEVARD, KEW GARDENS, NY 11424

### BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

ABSENCES AS OF APRIL 2025-MARCH 2026

2<sup>nd</sup> # Represents Absences as of January-December 2025 (Borough President's Attendance)

Inderpaul Ahluwalia	(0)(0)	Marilyn Custodio	(0)(0)	Jonathan Rodriguez	(0)(0)
Sherry Algreto	(0)(0)	Joan DeCamp	(0)(0)	Philip Ross	(0)(0)
Faiuze Ali	(0)(0)	Warlito DeLeon	(0)(0)	Himmat Singh	(0)(0)
Dulal Bhattacharjee	(0)(0)	Stephen Forte	(0)(0)	Matthew Singh	(0)(0)
Kirpal Billing	(0)(0)	Vanessa Fuentes	(0)(0)	Mohinder Singh	(0)(0)
Visnoonand Bisram	(0)(0)	Albert Gamarra	(0)(0)	Raghibir Singh	(0)(0)
Zoila Bofill	(0)(0)	Daniel Grieve	(0)(0)	J. Richard Smith	(0)(0)
Maricela Cano	(0)(0)	Sylvia Hack	(0)(0)	Esta-Joy Sydel	(0)(0)
John Carter	(0)(0)	Alicia Hassin	(0)(0)	Andrew Taranto	(0)(0)
Swapan Chakraborty	(0)(0)	Joseph Iaboni	(0)(0)	Harpreet Toor	(0)(0)
Rick Chetram	(0)(0)	Carmela Isabella	(0)(0)	Keith Villanueva	(0)(0)
Daniel Chu	(0)(0)	Kevin O'Leary	(0)(0)	Seth Welins	(0)(0)
Andrea Crawford	(0)(0)	Rabbi Daniel Pollack	(0)(0)	Stacey Yearwood	(0)(0)
Rev. Ruben Cruz	(0)(0)	Cristal Rivera	(0)(0)		

### BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Hilary Dvorkin	(1)(1)	Ijazz Rahim	(1)(1)	Alissa Velez	(1)(1)
Stephen Esposito	(1)(1)	Regina Santoro	(1)(1)		
Fahovi Noman	(1)(1)	Jarnail Singh	(1)(1)		

### ALSO PRESENT

James McClelland, District Manager  
Irina Barayeva, Community Associate

### LEGISLATORS/REPRESENTATIVES, CITY AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Ann Marie Costella, Rep. Senator Joe Addabbo  
Linda Fogal, Rep. Council Member Joan Ariola  
Max Rose, Rep. Congress Member Gregory Meeks  
James Mongeluzo, Rep. NYC Comptroller Brad Lander  
Anna Sargeant, Rep. Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar  
Rokeya Akhtar, Rep. Queens District Attorney Melida Katz  
Michael Carlier, Rep. Queens Borough President Donovan Richards

Max Leonardo, Rep. Council Member Lynn Schulman  
Jonathan Betancourt, Rep. Congress Member Nydia Velazquez  
Ariella Davidov, Rep. Queens Borough President Donovan Richards  
Daquin Llewellyn, Rep. Senator Leroy Comrie  
Kevin Morris, Rep. Mayor Eric Adams

Chair Algreto paid tribute to Lisa Gomes, the former district manager who passed in January at the age of 65, as well as longtime Chair of Queens CB7 Gene Kelty, who died last month at the age of 70.

Chair Algreto welcomed the new board members to Community Board 9 and asked them to introduce themselves.

The new board members are:

- Maricela Cano, Richmond Hill
- Hillary Dworkin, Richmond Hill
- Vanessa Fuentes, Ozone Park
- Fahovi Noman
- Ijazz Rahim
- Philip Ross, Woodhaven
- Harpreet Toor, Richmond Hill
- Alyssa Velez, Kew Gardens
- Keith Villanueva, Kew Gardens

## **1. 102<sup>nd</sup> Precinct Briefing**

Captain Maldonado, the Commanding Officer of the 102<sup>nd</sup> Precinct, addressed the board. She discussed the recent increase in car break-ins and burglaries, as well as strategies for preventing them.

Captain Maldonado also stated that with the warm weather approaching, the precinct is preparing to address various quality-of-life issues, such as loud music complaints, loitering, and other related concerns.

Question and answer period followed.

Chair Algreto invited Michael Carlier, Queens Director of Community Boards, to introduce himself and explain the role of a Community Board Member to the newly appointed members.

He invited all to the Swearing-In Ceremony which will be held at Helen Marshall Cultural Center on Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6 PM.

## **2. Opening of Meeting and Reading of Minutes**

Chair Algreto asked if there were any corrections/additions to March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, minutes and motions. There were none. Joe Iaboni motioned to accept the minutes as presented. Inderpaul Ahluwalia seconded the motion.

**Motion # 1:** To adopt minutes as presented

**Vote # 1:** 30 in favor and 11 abstentions

## **3. Chairperson's Remarks & Exec. Report–Sherry Algreto, District Manager's Report–James McClelland**

DM McClelland presented the Center for Employment Opportunities with CB9's Certificate of Recognition.

Chair Algreto provided a brief recap of the issues discussed at the Borough Board meeting. She invited all to the annual Autism & Development Disabilities Walk & Resource Fair taking place on

Saturday, May 31, 2025, 2 PM – 5 PM at Phil “Scooter” Rizzuto Park.

This event is co-sponsored by Senator Joe Addabbo and Community Board 9 with support from Assembly member David Weprin, Council Member Lynn Schulman, NYPD, and Emblem Health.

District Manager McClelland’s report:

- DM McClelland wished a happy birthday to Swapan Chakraborty, Ruben Cruz, Andrea Crawford, and Stacey Yearwood.
- He stated that the office is undergoing an EEO Compliance Audit.
- Welcomed the new members and expressed that he looks forward to working with each of them.
- Shared that he is currently collaborating with legislative officials to address homeless hotspot areas, including Jamaica/Van Wyck Triangle, Stop & Shop in Ozone Park, Jamaica Avenue & 100th Street, and Bessemer Street & Babbage Street.
- Thanked the NYPD and DSNY for their assistance in removing a trash trailer from 131<sup>st</sup> Street.

#### 4. **Public Forum**

Sol McCants III, Richmond Hill Resident, testified against the jail as well as against the antisemitic movements in NYC colleges (testimony submitted).

Neil Giannelli, Woodhaven Resident, spoke about the Woodhaven Mural Project. This project consists of a small number of longtime residents of Woodhaven wanting to beautify the underpasses dividing the two neighborhoods of Woodhaven and Richmond Hill, with the involvement and engagement of neighbors.

#### 5. **Health & Social Services Committee Report –Carmela Isabella, Chair**, reported on the following topics that were presented/discussed at their committee meeting:

- The Kevin and Avonte Program, a Safe Home Program, implemented by the NYPD, whose mission is to reduce the number of deaths and injuries among individuals with dementia or other developmental disabilities who are prone to wandering from safe environments.
- April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and May is Mental Health Awareness Month.

#### 6. **Land Use & Housing Committee Report – Sylvia Hack & Andrew Taranto, Co-Chairs**

Mr. Taranto stated that the committee participated in DDC’s workshop for the design of a Kew Gardens jail facility on Thursday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at Helen Marshall Cultural Center:

“Late last month, DDC representatives presented the design of the Queens-based jail. The meeting was tense, as community questions were dismissed as outside the scope of the presenters, who focused only on design elements. A follow-up Zoom with DDC had similar limitations. A suggestion was made to host a forum with other agencies like DOT and DOC to address broader concerns like traffic, security, and contracts. No update on that yet. The issue remains unresolved, with both the mayor and the city council speaker acknowledging the city is off-track on closing Rikers and economic challenges further complicate the project”.

Co-Chair Hack added that the jail, that will be located at 126-02 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, is permitted to be up to 195 feet tall with 40 feet of clearance for utilities.

It is expected to cost \$4B and to open in 2031, which is four years behind schedule.

#### 7. **Cannabis Committee Report – Regina Santoro, Chair** *(not present to give a report)*

DM McClelland stated that the new On-Premises Retail Dispensary Application submitted by Alka Life LLC, located at 82-66 Austin Street in Kew Gardens, was withdrawn following its rejection by the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM). He said the board received 36 emails opposing it and only two in

favor. Chair Algreto said that the majority of emails opposing the new dispensary claimed it would affect other businesses in the area and quality of life in the neighborhood.

**8. Public Safety & Consumer Affairs Committee Report/Public Hearing (Letters of Intent Received)  
Albert Gamarra, Chair**

**a. On Premises Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider License Application – Renewal**

Heat Caribbean Kitchen & Lounge  
100-05 Atlantic Avenue  
Richmond Hill, NY 11418 *No speakers*

Mingle #1 Inc., d/b/a Mingle's  
130-18 101<sup>st</sup> Avenue  
Richmond Hill, NY 11419 *No speakers*

Antojitos De San Cecilio Inc.  
90-04 Jamaica Avenue  
Woodhaven, NY 11421 *No speakers*

El Puerto Mexicano II Corp.  
84-28 Jamaica Avenue  
Woodhaven, NY 11421 *No speakers*

**b. On Premises Wine, Beer & Cider License Application – Renewal**

9019 LLC, d/b/a Caridad Restaurant  
90-19 Jamaica Avenue  
Woodhaven, NY 11421 *No speakers*

GSFA Restaurant Corp.  
D/b/a The Classic Diner  
117-33 Myrtle Avenue  
Richmond Hill, NY 11418 *No speakers*

Kew Gardens Cinéma LLC  
81-05 Lefferts Boulevard  
Kew Gardens, NY 11415 *No speakers*

Restaurant De Marina Inc.  
D/b/a La Cabana Restaurant & Bar  
102-24 Jamaica Avenue  
Richmond Hill, NY 11418 *No speakers*

8423 Pollaria Inc.  
D/b/a Mistura Peruana Restaurant  
84-23 Jamaica Avenue  
Woodhaven, NY 11421 *No speakers*

**c. Method of Operation/Class Change Application**

8522 Jamaica Avenue Corp.  
D/b/a Pop's Restaurant  
85-22 Jamaica Avenue  
Woodhaven, NY 11421

*No speakers*

Letters of **no opposition** to the above renewal applications will be sent to the SLA.

The next Public Safety & Consumer Affairs Committee Zoom meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Ann Marie Costella, Rep. Senator Joe Addabbo, gave a summary of the Senator's opinions on current policy debates:

- Involuntary Commitment
- Discovery Law Reforms
- The Mask Ban
- The Cellphone Ban

Linda Fogal, Rep. Council Member Joan Ariola

Community Announcements:

- A special *Night at the Opera* event will be held on April 15 at Russo's on the Bay. Reservations are required. Contact the office at 718-738-1083 to reserve your spot.
- Spring Food Distribution - During this holiday spring season, many families in the district may be in need of food support. The office will be distributing pre-cooked meals on Wednesday, April 16 from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM at AutoZone Park office. Reservations are required. Please call 718-738-1083 to sign up.
- Composting Legislation Update - While all understand the importance of composting, Council Member Ariola believes it should be a voluntary program, not mandatory. She is working with her colleagues on legislation to ensure composting remains optional. A key concern brought forward was how this could impact households with disabled or developmentally challenged individuals, who may not be able to comply with complex sorting rules. No one should be penalized for circumstances outside of their control.

Max Rose, Rep. Congress Member Gregory Meeks

- Free Tax Filing with Direct File is available now. Customers can now use Direct File, the IRS's new online tool, to file their federal taxes for free. It's quick, secure, and easy to use. Available in English and Spanish. Use it on mobile phones, tablets, or computers.
- REAL ID Reminder for New York State Residents: If your New York State license or ID does not have a star or flag on it, it is not REAL ID compliant. Starting May 7, 2025, you'll need a REAL ID or valid passport to board a domestic flight within the U.S.; enter certain federal buildings. A REAL ID is a federally compliant DMV-issued driver's license, permit, or non-driver ID.

Contact Congress Member's office for help at 718-725-6000.

James Mongeluzo, Rep. NYC Comptroller Brad Lander

- Stated that the office is doing everything they can to help people recover money they are owed.

The Bureau of Labor recently identified approximately \$4 million in unpaid wages. These were supposed to go to around 1,500 individuals who worked for contractors receiving government contracts but were not paid the prevailing wage.

- The office is pursuing securities litigation against Tesla.
- The Comptroller's Office released a new report on New York City tourism. While the number of both domestic and international tourists has slightly decreased, most tourism-related employment sectors have returned to near-2019 levels. The full report is available on our website.
- An audit was conducted of NYC express buses and found significant accessibility issues: many buses cannot accommodate wheelchair users, which is a major concern they are working to address.
- Mr. Mongeluzo stated that CB9 staff did an excellent job maintaining control over expenditure and operations throughout the year. Their diligence helped minimize the impact of these structural challenges.

Anna Sargeant, Rep. Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar, stated the following:

- Ms. Sargent congratulated all the new members of the Community Board and thanked the returning members for their continued dedication and service.
- During budget season the Assembly Member is working hard in Albany to ensure that the community gets everything it needs and deserves.
- AM Rajkumar recently introduced two important pieces of legislation: one focuses on addressing the issue of repeat offenders—specifically targeting the approximately 9,000 recidivist cases that continue to impact safety on our subways and transit systems. The second bill would establish a command center where individuals can report suspicious or dangerous activity occurring on our public transit systems.
- Office phone number is 718-805-0950.

Rokeya Akhtar, Rep. Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz

- Mail Theft Alert: There's been a rise in mail theft recently, and it's something all need to stay vigilant about. One case involved someone stealing union workers' checks by using fake ID at the post office. He managed to stop the original checks and come back days later to collect over two dozen of them — totaling more than \$80,000. Thankfully, a sharp-eyed supervisor noticed something suspicious and contacted the authorities. The individual was arrested soon after.  
People should always keep an eye on their bank account. When writing checks, use a gel pen—it's harder for thieves to wash and alter the ink. These small steps can help to protect people from fraud.
- Housing Protection Issue: Many of you may have heard about the situation in Flushing that made the news: a landlord illegally converted a home into multiple units for profit. He's now serving a two-year sentence. If someone is experiencing housing issues, please reach out to DA's office, 718-286-6000.
- The DA's office hosts monthly Mobile Office events at Queens libraries. This Thursday, we'll be at Woodhaven Public Library from 2:30 to 4:30 PM. ADA assistance will be available, and it's a great opportunity to get help with personal or sensitive questions.  
So far in 2024, the DA's office visited 30 libraries, had 55 ADA staff join us, and served over 900 individuals.

## **9. Budget & Finance Committee Report**

CB9 Budget Summary - Most of the financial information regarding Community Board 9 has been detailed in the NYC Comptroller's Audit Report, which found **no issues** with the office's financial practices. Mr. Kirpal outlined the monthly expenses and mentioned support for the Autism Walk. Currently, there is a surplus of approximately \$22,000, which will be allocated towards upcoming community events and merit-based increases for CB9 staff.

Max Leonardo, Rep. Council Member Lynn Schulman, stated that the Easter Event, sponsored by the Council Member will be rescheduled, and the office will be notified.

Jonathan Betancourt, Rep. Congress Member Nydia Velazquez

- Public Safety and Street Racing Concerns: The Congress Member is aware of the recent street racing activity on Rockaway Boulevard. These incidents pose a serious risk to public safety, and both the Metropolitan Police Department and the DOT have reviewed the intersection in question. Congress Members Velazquez is committed to ensuring any improvements are made with full community input and support.
- Head Start Office Closure: Earlier this month, the Trump administration announced the closure of five regional Head Start offices—one of them here in New York. Along with three of his colleagues, Mr. Betancourt sent a letter to the administration expressing deep concern over the abrupt closure and the potential harm it poses to children and families, particularly those affected by autism. Head Start programs provide vital early education and support and must be protected.
- Budget Proposal and Its Impact: The current budget resolution proposes approximately \$880B in cuts. If passed, it could lead to severe consequences: \$180B in cuts over the next decade, \$230B slashed from Medicaid, and 47,000 SNAP recipients affected. These cuts would delay benefits for over 10,000 federal workers, 7,000 Social Security recipients, and 1,000 veterans.

Ariella Davidov, Rep. Queens Borough President Donovan Richards spoke about community updates and events/spring season highlights.

QBP Richards is currently appointing members to the Community Education Council (CEC). Candidates that are interested in applying don't need to live in the area. They can also qualify if they own a business or have a special interest in the district. Appointments are made by the Borough President. Details on their website.

Daquin Llewellyn, Rep. Senator Leroy Comrie

Highlighted several key initiatives included in the projected \$252B budget which require attention and support. These critical items will have a significant impact on our communities:

- Increased funding for the Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP) to help prevent foreclosures across New York State.
- A new weekly and monthly city ticket that includes discounted transfers between subways and buses, improving transit affordability and convenience.
- Additional funding for utility bill assistance, legal aid, and HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) to support households facing economic hardship.
- Expansion of eligibility for HEAP and related programs to 200% of the federal poverty level, and the extension of benefits to commuter rail systems.
- Increased investment in nursing education across all 28 campuses of the state university system.
- More funding for the MWBE (Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises) Lending and Development Program, to foster inclusive economic growth.

Mr. Llewellyn reminded everyone about the upcoming Real ID deadline. To help residents prepare, they are hosting an event this Saturday to assist with the application process. All are encouraged to attend.

Kevin Morris, Rep. Mayor Eric Adams

Announced a full transition in transportation payment system. By next year, riders will be able to add funds to their transit cards at over 470 stations across the city, or online via an OMNY account.

This transition aims to: eliminate MetroCards entirely, reduce weekly travel costs—no more paying over \$17 per week just to ride, and make travel more accessible and manageable for New Yorkers.

The subway system is evolving to meet the needs of modern commuters. He encouraged everyone to consider getting an OMNY card now to prepare for the upcoming changes and enjoy a smoother, more efficient transit experience.

**10. Old/New Business**

Joan DeCamp thanked Chair Algreto for controlling the meeting with DDC.

Rabbi Pollack thanked the office for organizing the special Passover trash/recycling collection.

**11. PUBLIC FORUM** *no speakers*

**12. Executive Session**

Joan DeCamp made a motion to go to an Executive Session, Joe laboni seconded the motion.

Andrea Crawford made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Rabbi Pollack seconded it.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chairperson at 9:30 PM.