



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 14, 2026, 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 2026-MARCH 2027

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

Inderpaul Ahluwalia	(0)(0)	Stephen Forte	(0)(2)	Cristal Rivera	(0)(1)
Sherry Algreto	(0)(1)	Albert Gamarra	(0)(2)	Brent Robles	(0)(0)
Faiuze Ali	(0)(3)	Daniel Grieve	(0)(0)	Philip Ross	(0)(1)
Zoila Bofill	(0)(1)	Jennifer Guzman	(0)(0)	Himmat Singh	(0)(1)
Maria Caba Marmol	(0)(0)	Sylvia Hack	(0)(0)	Mohinder Singh	(0)(5)
John Carter	(0)(2)	Alicia Hassin	(0)(2)	Raghbir Singh	(0)(1)
Swapan Chakraborty	(0)(3)	Joseph Iaboni	(0)(0)	J. Richard Smith	(0)(1)
Rick Chetram	(0)(1)	Carmela Isabella	(0)(2)	Esta-Joy Sydel	(0)(1)
Daniel Chu	(0)(1)	Adam Maraj	(0)(0)	Andrew Taranto	(0)(0)
Andrea Crawford	(0)(4)	Carina Nieves	(0)(0)	Alyssa Velez	(0)(2)
Rev. Ruben Cruz	(0)(2)	Fahlovi Noman	(0)(4)	Keith Villanueva	(0)(1)
Marilyn Custodio	(0)(2)	Kevin O'Leary	(0)(0)	Seth Welins	(0)(0)
Joan DeCamp	(0)(1)	Ijaaz Rahim	(0)(2)		

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Dulal Bhattacharjee	(1)(3)	Vanessa Fuentes	(1)(3)	Matthew Singh	(1)(3)
Kirpal Billing	(1)(3)	Rabbi Daniel Pollack	(1)(4)	Harpreet Toor	(1)(4)
Warlito DeLeon	(1)(3)	Regina Santoro	(1)(2)	Rebecca Tull	(1)(1)
Stephen Esposito	(1)(4)	Jarnail Singh	(1)(3)	Stacey Yearwood	(1)(1)

ALSO PRESENT

Irina Barayeva, Community Coordinator

LEGISLATORS/REPRESENTATIVES, CITY AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Rohenee Gocool, Rep. Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar
Shubhra Datta, Rep. Queens Borough President Donovan Richards
Norris Johns, Rep. Public Advocate Jumaane Williams
Ann Marie Costella, Rep. Senator Joe Addabbo
Micaela Oram, Rep. Council Member Lynn Schulman
Rokeya Akhtar, Rep. Queens District Attorney Melida Katz
Max Rose, Rep. Congress Member Gregory Meeks
Kevin Wisniewski, Rep. Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi
Darin Sawan, Rep. Mayor's Office of Mass Engagement
Jonathan Betancourt, Rep. Congress Member Nidia Velazquez
Police Officer Christopher Dimarco, 102nd Pct./Community Affairs
Police Officer Gurshan Singh, 102nd Pct./Community Affairs
Sgt. Zaun & Det. Cheema, 102nd Pct.

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

The new board members are:

- *Maria Caba Marmol, Woodhaven*
- *Jennifer Guzman, Ozone Park*
- *Adam Maraj, Richmond Hill*
- *Carina Nieves, Richmond Hill*
- *Brent Robles, Woodhaven*
- *Rebecca Tull, Woodhaven*

1. Opening of Meeting & Reading of Minutes

Chair Algreto asked if there were any corrections/additions to the March 10th, 2026, meeting minutes. There were none.

Alyssa Velez motioned to accept the minutes as presented. Steven Forte seconded the motion.

Motion # 1: To accept minutes as presented

Vote # 1: 30 in favor and 8 abstentions

2. Chairperson's Remarks & Exec. Report – Sherry Algreto

- Representatives from the Department of Youth & Community Development provided an overview of the Summer Youth Employment Program at the Borough Board meeting. They noted that while approximately 100,000 youth apply annually about 200,000 applications were received this year. Businesses and organizations may still apply to become worksites through May 8.
- The New York City Blood Center gave an update on blood donations in Queens and announced the opening of a new branch in Forest Hills. Donations have improved since the pandemic but remain below desired levels. CB6 issued a friendly challenge to CB9 to see which board can organize the most blood drives. The challenge was accepted, and more details will be shared soon.
- It was also noted that April is Autism Awareness Month. The annual Autism Walk, now in its fourth year, will take place on May 30, with a Rain Date of May 31.
- The board will lose 14 members this year and will be seeking active community members to apply.
- Chair Algreto reminded all to submit their committee preference sheets as soon as possible, as assignments will be made on Thursday.
- The Chair extended congratulations to Regina Santoro on the birth of her second grandchild.

3. Public Forum

Anthony Caraballo, Rep. for Kalli Banquet Hall Inc., spoke in support of the liquor license application for 131-10 101st Avenue, the former Fairfield Pavilion stating that the applicant, Mr. Kalli, has been a community resident for 40 years. Mr. Kalli has owned the building for 30 years and operated the establishment from 2008 to 2021.

Concerns raised at the Public Safety Committee meeting regarding prior operations and compliance with licensing requirements were acknowledged. It was stated that the previous tenant operator did not maintain the same standards as Mr. Kalli, and a sworn statement has been submitted confirming full compliance with all applicable rules and regulations.

It was also clarified that the establishment will operate as a private catering venue for weddings and upscale events, not as a nightclub or public bar, with approximately one to two events per week. The applicant's long-term residency and ownership of the property were cited as evidence of his commitment to the neighborhood.

Paul Cappocasale, Woodhaven Resident, clarified his opposition to the closure of Freedom Drive, citing his 65 years of experience living in the neighborhood. He stated that the closure has increased traffic on surrounding streets, including Woodhaven Boulevard, 98th Street, 109th Street, 110th Street, 111th Street, and Forest Park South. He noted concerns about truck traffic on 98th Street, accidents near 109th Street and 85th Avenue, and increased traffic near schools located on 109th and 111th Streets.

Mr. Cappocasale also emphasized the importance of emergency access to Victory Field, where he has volunteered for many years, stating that quicker access for police, fire, and EMS is critical during emergencies. He added that he has letters of support from emergency agencies favoring reopening the road.

Jennifer Lambert, Woodhaven Mural Project, stated that The Woodhaven Mural Project held its first fundraiser at the Maple Grove cemetery, which was well attended and considered a success. The event brought together community members to celebrate the progress of the project.

Ms. Lambert also attended the Queens Rising event at the Queens Museum, alongside community leaders and partners including Resorts World Casino and the Borough President's office. The event was described as inspiring and highlighted Queens as a diverse and welcoming borough.

Sol McCants, Richmond Hill Resident, noted that several issues often considered national or political in nature—such as Social Security, veterans' benefits, SNAP, and VA services—have direct local economic impacts on residents and should be viewed as community concerns. Concerns were raised about potential reductions to federal benefits and their impact on veterans, low-income families, and other residents.

Mr. McCants raised safety concerns regarding painted asphalt surfaces in public spaces, noting potential traction issues for bicycles, skateboards, and vehicles, and recommended further review of surface materials for safety.

Andrew Smith, Richmond Hill Resident, stated that decisions regarding Freedom Drive should rely on DOT traffic studies rather than hearsay. The speaker also recommended adding marked pedestrian and bicycle lanes when Forest Park Drive is repaved, reviewing gate systems on Forest Park Drive and Freedom Drive to improve cyclist and emergency access, and recording board meetings for online platforms to reach a wider audience.

Alina Knight, Friends of Smokey Park, thanked elected officials, Community Board 9, and NYC Parks for supporting the park improvement project. She said the planned upgrades at Smokey Park will benefit residents, seniors, youth, and adults. Ms. Knight also highlighted growing community programs, expressed appreciation to board leadership for their advocacy, and invited the public to upcoming spring festival and youth bicycle programs.

4. 102nd Precinct Briefing

PO DiMarco reported that Captain Maldonado was unable to attend due to a citywide meeting on crime statistics. He said that Detective Salomone has transferred to the Technical Assistance Response Unit, which oversees cameras and drones, while Sergeant Zaun and Detective Cheema have joined the Quality-of-Life Team.

Two major incidents since the last meeting were discussed: a shooting at Hangar Bar, located at 119-11 Metropolitan Avenue, related to a gang dispute originating outside the Community Board 9 area, in which the victim was an unintended target, and a homicide by stabbing on 86th Avenue. Both investigations remain active, suspects have been identified, and police stated there is no ongoing threat to the community.

PO DiMarco added that patrols have increased in the affected areas and will continue focusing on quality-of-life issues as warmer weather approaches. Overall crime was reported as low and down in most categories.

Question and answer period followed.

5. Health & Social Services Committee Report – Carmela Isabella, Chair

Ms. Isabella stated that the committee previously met at Outreach, a certified community behavioral clinic located near Myrtle Avenue and Hillside Avenue. Representatives from the clinic presented their services, and a flyer with details was distributed to the board members.

Outreach provides addiction and mental health treatment for adults, children, teens, and families, including counseling, psychiatric care, and crisis intervention services.

Committee Chair said that she intends to invite them to present again at a future full Community Board meeting so more residents can learn about the services they offer.

6. Parks, Recreation & Environment Committee Report – J.R. Smith, Chair

J.R. Smith reported that the Parks Committee held a Zoom presentation with the Parks Department regarding proposed improvements to Phil “Scooter” Rizzuto Park). The Department presented plans for a new playground to be installed at the site.

Mr. Smith stated that the committee is requesting a vote from the Board to approve the proposed work. The related letter and project details were included in the Board members’ packets for review.

Motion # 2: To support the proposed reconstruction of the sports courts and adult fitness area at Phil “Scooter” Rizzuto Park

Vote # 2: Unanimous

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

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

Kalli Banquet Hall Inc.
131-10 101st Avenue
Richmond Hill, NY 11419

No speakers

Motion # 3: Not to oppose the new On Premises Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider License Application

Vote # 3: Unanimous

El Puerto De Mexico Restaurant Corp.
84-28 Jamaica Avenue
Woodhaven, NY 11421

Jackie Ramos introduced herself as a representative for El Puerto de Mexico Restaurant Corp. She explained that her client, Sylvia Cardova, recently purchased the restaurant and is taking over ownership. She noted that the previous owner passed away in January, and the transition in ownership took effect around April 1st.

Committee Chair Gamarra clarified that the previous establishment at the same address had held a liquor license, and the owner had passed away. The new owner/landlord is applying for a new license.

There is concern about compliance with the “three licenses within 500 feet” rule and whether the prior license at that address has been properly vacated. DM McClelland is expected to follow up with the SLA to confirm that the previous license has been removed and that the location is compliant with the 500-foot rule. However, the SLA has not yet responded.

The committee emphasized that aside from this unresolved licensing verification, there were no other substantive objections to the application.

A motion was made and then amended so that the committee would not oppose the application, but with a condition (contingency) that:

- The DM confirms with the SLA that the previous license has been properly removed, and
 - The location complies with the three-licenses-within-500-feet rule before the final letter is sent.
- The motion was put to a vote, with the conditional approval language included, and members were asked to indicate their position accordingly.

Motion # 4: Not to oppose the new On Premises Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider License Application with a condition

Vote # 4: 34 in favor, 2 opposed and 2 abstentions

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

Majestic Marquise Corp., D/b/a Majestic Marquise
88-03 101st Avenue
Ozone Park, NY 11416

No speakers

Rancho Tequila Inc., D/b/a Rancho
105-13 Jamaica Avenue
Richmond Hill, NY 11418

No speakers

c. On Premises Beer & Cider License Application – Renewal

Jophsua 19 Grocery Restaurant Corp.
134-06 Jamaica Avenue
Richmond Hill, NY 11418

No speakers

The appropriate letters regarding the above applications will be sent to SLA.

The next Public Safety & Consumer Affairs Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 28th, 2026.

8. Cannabis Committee Report – Regina Santoro, Chair, *not present*

Chair Algreto summarized several concerns raised during review of a proposed dispensary application:

- The proposed location is within proximity - less than 500 feet - to a school that is already planned and in development. The committee emphasized that a school cannot be “grandfathered in” after an application is filed, and therefore the proximity remains a key concern under state guidelines.
- Additional concerns were noted about other unlicensed or “illicit” storefronts appearing in the area, as well as the site’s proximity to the Richmond Hill Library and a proposed men’s shelter located within approximately one block.
- The applicant did not fully respond to a previously sent committee questionnaire, providing only a lease agreement. Based on these factors, the committee indicated its intent to make a motion to oppose the application.

During the discussion, the applicant’s attorney argued that the site had been approved by the state Office of Cannabis Management and disputed the school setback concern, stating that the school is still in development and not yet a fully operational facility. He also emphasized plans for community engagement, including local hiring and job fairs, and requested community board support despite acknowledging the board’s role is advisory.

Open Dove LLC
119-07 Jamaica Avenue
Richmond Hill, NY 11418

Motion # 5: To oppose the Cannabis Retail Dispensary Premises Application

Vote # 5: 30 in favor, 4 opposed and 4 abstentions

Chair Algreto acknowledged the legislative representatives who gave their updates.

Rohenee Gocool, Rep. Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar, shared the following community and legislative updates:

- With street repaving season underway, the Assembly Member is holding the DOT accountable and advocating for repairs to dangerous potholes throughout the district. Residents are encouraged to report potholes to the office.
- In Albany, she is advancing Penny’s Law to protect pets and Priscilla’s Law to improve public safety by requiring license plates for e-bikes.
- The Assembly Member is also introducing legislation to support immigrants facing new financial barriers when seeking to visit loved ones, with the goal of keeping families together.

Shubhra Datta, Rep. Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, stated that all newly appointed community board members are required to attend the upcoming swearing-in ceremony on Monday, April 20th. Members were encouraged to make every effort to attend. Anyone with questions was advised to contact the Community Board office.

Norris Johns, Rep. Public Advocate Jumaane Williams, announced the launch of the Build the Budget interactive tool, which allows New Yorkers to explore revenue options and attempt to balance the city budget. This tool highlights the importance of increasing revenue and providing tax relief to preserve city services. For more information visit the website: advocate.nyc.gov/build-the-budget.

Legislative Updates:

- The Public Advocate worked with the Street Vendor Project to establish street vendor services aimed at helping small business owners address challenges related to licensing, inconsistent enforcement, and regulations. The initiative is intended to provide vendors with resources and support to help their businesses succeed.
- Following more than a decade of advocacy for safer city infrastructure, the Public Advocate joined Mayor Mamdani to announce the creation of the Office of Community Safety. The new office is intended to advance innovative approaches to public safety and support long-term community well-being.

Ann Marie Costella, Rep. Senator Joe Addabbo, stated that the Senator is currently in Albany working on the budget. His priority is to achieve a responsible, well-balanced budget, not simply meeting a deadline. Under Gov. Kathy Hochul, each of the past three budgets has been enacted after the deadline. Senate staff and members are actively working through the coming days and weekends to finalize the budget as expeditiously as possible.

Several policy issues remain under negotiation, including:

- Establish buffer zones for protests near religious institutions.
- Potential extensions of environmental compliance deadlines under the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.
- Auto insurance reforms aimed at reducing fraud and lowering premiums.
- Revisions to the State Environmental Quality Review Act to facilitate responsible development.
- A targeted fiscal support package for New York City.
- Reforms to Tier 6 to improve public employee retirement conditions.

Micaela Oram, Rep. Council Member Lynn Schulman, stated that this week they are conducting their Participatory Budgeting process. Constituents who live in District 29 get to help decide how the office spends \$1 million in the district.

QR codes were placed on the table in the back for those who'd like to participate. Please scan the QR code and cast your vote. Many of the ballot proposals focus on school improvements or technology upgrades, and there are also two proposals related to parks.

Rokeya Akhtar, Rep. Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, stated that five years after legalization of recreational marijuana, illegal cannabis storefronts and pop-up operations remain a concern. The District Attorney's Office, with partner agencies, continues enforcement efforts to shut down unlicensed operations, particularly those selling unregulated products that may appeal to children.

A recent action closed two unlicensed dispensary locations on Merrick Boulevard in Laurelton, resulting in the seizure of cannabis flower, vape products, edibles, and flavored tobacco items. The locations operated as a single illegal business. To date, 345 illegal shops in Queens County have been shut down since May 2024. The District Attorney's Office will continue coordinating with the NYC Sheriff's Office, NYPD, and New York State Police to address illegal operations and protect public safety.

Max Rose, Rep. Congress Member Gregory Meeks, reported on the following:

The IRS reminded last-minute filers that the April 15 tax deadline is tomorrow. Taxpayers were encouraged to use resources available on IRS.gov to file on time or request an extension if needed.

Legislative Updates (Congress):

Congress Member Meeks, ranking member of the House of Foreign Affairs Committee, along with Congress Member Keating, ranking member of the Subcommittee on Europe, introduced the End Russian Oil Windfalls Act. The legislation seeks to limit Russia's financial gains from global energy price increases and reduce funding for its war in Ukraine.

Kevin Wisniewski, Rep. Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi, reported on the annual volunteer series being relaunched this month, beginning with two community cleanup events on Saturday, April 25 and Saturday, May 2. Approximately 100 volunteers participated last year, and the events continue to provide an opportunity for community engagement, including working alongside neighbors and elected officials.

He gave a brief update on the Lefferts Boulevard restoration project, which was previously raised in February. The project has experienced delays due to coordination with the MTA and LIRR. The MTA has completed a cost estimate report, but it is still under internal review and has not yet been released publicly. While the report was expected in April, the timeline is still being monitored and follow-up will continue.

Darin Sawan, Rep. Mayor's Office of Mass Engagement, introduced the office and its mission to work with community boards and local stakeholders on local issues.

She noted that a recurring concern in Queens community boards is the shortage of crossing guards, as well as related street safety issues such as medians. The office plans to support outreach efforts to recruit additional crossing guards and encourage residents to apply.

Ms. Sawan also highlighted that community boards may advertise monthly meetings for free on LinkNYC kiosks to help increase public awareness and engagement. The office looks forward to continued collaboration with community boards, the district manager, and local partners.

Jonathan Betancourt, Rep. Congress Member Nidia Velazquez, provided federal updates noting ongoing disruptions affecting airport operations due to staffing and funding issues tied to Department of Homeland Security operations and broader budget negotiations between the House and Senate.

Mr. Betancourt also referenced preliminary federal budget discussions for the upcoming fiscal year, including proposed changes in defense spending and potential impacts on domestic programs such as infrastructure, education, broadband access, and social services.

9. Old/New Business

John Carter noted that a demolition notice was received for 118-02 Jamaica Avenue and requested clarification regarding the intended future use of the site, including whether it may be considered for a shelter location associated with a nonprofit application.

Cristal Rivera stated that they had received information indicating that the Queens Borough FDNY Commander issued a public statement asserting there was no measurable impact on fire department response times regardless of whether Freedom Drive is open or closed. She requested that the Community Board verify this claim and provide the board with official data or confirmation regarding FDNY response times in relation to conditions on Freedom Drive to support data-driven decision-making.

Chair Algreto informed the board that she is working in coordination with elected officials to organize a public rally against the proposed homeless shelter. The date has not yet been confirmed due to scheduling conflicts, including upcoming graduations and City Council budget-related obligations.

10. PUBLIC FORUM *no speakers*

11. Executive Session

The board members went onto Executive Session.

Alyssa Velez motioned to adjourn the meeting. Steven Forte seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chairperson at 9:08 PM.