



COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 9

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

JUNE 9, 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 2026 (Borough President's Attendance Policy)

Inderpaul Ahluwalia	(1)(1)	Stephen Forte	(0)(2)	Philip Ross	(0)(1)
Sherry Algreto	(0)(1)	Albert Gamarra	(0)(2)	Regina Santoro	(1)(2)
Faiuze Ali	(1)(4)	Daniel Grieve	(0)(0)	Himmat Singh	(0)(1)
Dulal Bhattacharjee	(2)(4)	Jennifer Guzman	(0)(0)	Jarnail Singh	(2)(4)
Zoila Bofill	(1)(2)	Sylvia Hack	(0)(0)	Mohinder Singh	(0)(5)
Maria Caba Marmol	(0)(0)	Joseph Iaboni	(0)(0)	Raghbir Singh	(0)(1)
John Carter	(0)(2)	Adam Maraj	(1)(1)	J. Richard Smith	(0)(1)
Swapan Chakraborty	(1)(4)	Carina Nieves	(0)(0)	Esta-Joy Sydel	(0)(1)
Rick Chetram	(0)(1)	Fahlovi Noman	(0)(4)	Harpreet Toor	(1)(4)
Daniel Chu	(0)(1)	Kevin O'Leary	(0)(0)	Alyssa Velez	(0)(2)
Andrea Crawford	(1)(5)	Rabbi Daniel Pollack	(2)(5)	Keith Villanueva	(0)(1)
Rev. Ruben Cruz	(0)(2)	Ijaaz Rahim	(0)(2)	Seth Welins	(0)(0)
Joan DeCamp	(0)(1)	Cristal Rivera	(0)(1)	Stacey Yearwood	(1)(1)
Stephen Esposito	(2)(5)	Brent Robles	(0)(0)		

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Kirpal Billing	(2)(4)	Vanessa Fuentes	(3)(5)	Matthew Singh	(2)(4)
Marilyn Custodio	(1)(3)	Alicia Hassin	(1)(3)	Andrew Taranto	(1)(1)
Warlito DeLeon	(2)(4)	Carmela Isabella	(1)(3)	Rebecca Tull	(3)(3)

STAFF PRESENT

Irina Barayeva, Community Coordinator

James McClelland, District Manager

LEGISLATORS/REPRESENTATIVES, CITY AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Melissa Thomas, Rep. Council Member Joann Ariola

Clare Collins, Rep. Queens Borough President Donovan Richards

Rokeya Akhter, Rep. Queens District Attorney Melida Katz

Ann Marie Costella, Rep. Senator Joe Addabbo

Anthony Lemma, Rep. Assembly Member David Weprin

Micaela Oram, Rep. Council Member Lynn Schulman

Max Rose, Rep. Congress Member Gregory Meeks

Jonathan Betancourt, Rep. Congress Member Nidia Velazquez

Capt. Evan Galane, Executive Officer, NYPD/102nd Precinct

Police Officer Singh, NYPD/102nd Precinct

1. Opening of Meeting & Reading of Minutes

Chair Algreto started the meeting by stating that last month was Memorial Day, and many commemorative activities were planned. In recognition of Memorial Day, the board took a moment to pay tribute to fallen service members.

A special guest, Sean Miller, resident of Richmond Hill, played "Taps" in honor of those who gave their lives so that we may enjoy the freedoms and rights that are celebrated today. The Chair stated that while only one day each year is officially dedicated to honoring their sacrifice, we should remember and appreciate those who have served and continue to serve our country every day. She recognized DM McClelland, who also served in the Army.

DM McClelland presented Mr. Miller with a Certificate of Appreciation.

Chair Algreto asked if there were any corrections/additions to the May 12th, 2026, meeting minutes. There were none.

EJ Sydell motioned to accept the minutes as presented. Alyssa Velez seconded the motion.

Motion # 1: To accept minutes as presented

Vote # 1: 31 in favor and 10 abstentions

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

The Chair reported that she attended the Queens Borough Board meeting on June 1. One of the topics discussed was the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) NYC Transit Borough Express community updates. It was noted that the proposed route does not run through Community Board 9 but instead passes through Community Board 5 and several other community boards. Therefore, should the matter come up for a vote, Community Board 9 is not expected to be involved.

The Chair also reported receiving an update from the NYC Department of Design and Construction regarding infrastructure projects in Queens. The presentation slides will be forwarded to board members once they become available.

The Chair thanked everyone for their support of the Autism Walk. Despite unfavorable weather conditions, the event was well attended and included a mini parade. Photos and updates were shared on the board's social media platforms. The event received significant publicity, including front-page coverage, and PS 55 displayed several banners in support of the event.

The Chair expressed appreciation to all who attended, donated, volunteered, and contributed to the Autism Walk. She noted the importance of raising awareness and support for individuals with autism and developmental disabilities and stated that strong community participation made the event especially meaningful.

DM Maclelland wished a happy birthday to Board Member Inderpaul Ahluwalia.

Mr. McClelland reported that the City Council is currently negotiating the budget, which is expected to be finalized by June 30. He stated that the Board's capital and expense priorities have been discussed with Council Members Joann Ariola and Lynn Schulman. Appreciation was expressed for their support and advocacy on behalf of the Board's requests.

District Manager McClelland announced an upcoming rally against the proposed Homeless Shelter for 127 single men in Richmond Hill, scheduled for June 18 at 6:30 PM.

He reported having recently met with other district managers to discuss budget consultations for various city agencies. The DM further reported that district managers are in the process of developing a series of questions for approximately 14 city agencies concerning budgeting, staffing, programs, and services in preparation for future budget hearings.

DM McClelland introduced the summer intern who will be working at CB9 this summer and noted that the office will continue to operate throughout the summer, providing assistance to board members and addressing constituent complaints. He wished everyone a happy, healthy, and enjoyable summer.

3. 102nd Precinct Briefing

PO Singh provided several public safety updates for the community.

- A jewelry scam targeting seniors remains active. Individuals involved in the scam typically approach victims in a friendly manner, engage them in conversation, and distract them while removing jewelry such as chains or bracelets without the victim's immediate knowledge. In many cases, victims do not realize their jewelry is missing until hours later, after the perpetrators have already left the area. He urged residents to make family members, friends, and especially senior citizens aware of this ongoing scam.
- There is an increase in catalytic converter thefts, a crime trend that had previously declined but is now reemerging. While there is no guaranteed way to prevent these thefts, vehicle owners may consider having a protective cage installed around the catalytic converter. Although such devices do not completely prevent theft, they can act as a deterrent by making removal more difficult and time-consuming. Residents were encouraged to remain vigilant and share this information with family and friends.
- Cops and Kids Event has been rescheduled for June 28 at 4:00 PM at the 102nd Precinct due to weather-related issues affecting the original date. The event will run for approximately three hours and will feature activities for children of all ages, including: a game truck, police vehicles on display, food, including hot dogs and hamburgers, participation by law enforcement personnel, a possible rock-climbing wall, an appearance by the Mounted Unit and a bouncy house.

PO Singh stated that the precinct welcomes community support and donations to help make the event successful.

Capt. Galane answered board members' questions.

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

District Manager James McClelland gave a report on behalf of the Co-Chairs:

The Queens borough-based jail team presented their final design at the June 3 committee meeting. As with the previous meetings the committee had with them, the focus was on the interior and exterior design of the building, as well as the landscaping of the grounds. This is the culmination of a roughly year and a half-long process where the design team hosted meetings in person and on Zoom to solicit feedback from community members. Ultimately, the changes to the design that resulted from these input sessions were very minor in relation to the scale of the project.

They also did not provide any meaningful information about the jail's operations or its potential impact on issues such as traffic, parking, public safety, etc. When they were asked for clarification on when the committee can have conversations about those issues, they indicated that it would likely be closer to the jail's opening, meaning after construction is complete. The committee pushed back on that timeline, and a representative from City Hall agreed that there should be an ongoing line of communication between now and then. At this point, there are no details about what that communication might look like, or even whether the commitment was made in good faith, but the co-chairs will do their best to hold them to it.

5. Transportation & Traffic Committee Report – Stephen Forte, Chair

Mr. Forte reported on the meeting with representatives of the QueensLink project that took place a few weeks ago, during which the representatives provided a relatively brief but comprehensive presentation on the status of their proposal. Committee members asked questions regarding the project, including its projected timeline and other general matters.

During the presentation, Committee Chair Forte informed the representatives that he would encourage all board members to visit the QueensLink website to review information about the project, including its scope, projected costs, and other relevant details. However, he made it clear that the Community Board would not attempt to influence anyone's opinion. Each board member should review the available information independently and draw their own conclusions.

One issue discussed during the presentation was the estimated cost of the project. The representatives stated that previous estimates ranging from \$8B to \$12B were significantly overstated. According to their presentation, the project could be completed for approximately \$3B to \$3.5B. Additional information is available on their website for those interested in reviewing the details.

The meeting concluded without any commitments or endorsements being made by the Community Board. A few days later, the Community Board received a thank-you letter from the QueensLink representatives, along with a proposed resolution requesting formal support for their project. Upon review, it appeared that the resolution not only expressed support for the QueensLink proposal but also contained language that could be interpreted as diminishing the QueensWay project. In response, we advised that the Community Board would not take a position favoring one project over the other.

The Committee further suggested that, if the project sponsors are seeking public support, they should conduct outreach throughout all communities that would be affected by the proposal and provide residents with sufficient information to make informed decisions regarding the competing projects.

On Thursday, June 11, the MTA will provide a Zoom presentation regarding proposed accessibility improvements at Briarwood Station, located at Queens Boulevard and Main Street. The project is intended to bring the station into greater compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Although the station is located outside our district, it is situated very close to CB9 boundary. For that reason, the committee agreed to host the presentation. Anyone interested in learning more about the proposed improvements is encouraged to attend the committee meeting. A Zoom link has been distributed to all board members.

6. Elected Officials Liaisons Briefing

Melissa Thomas, Rep. Council Member Joann Ariola, reported that the council member is advocating for greater accountability in the city budget process and questioning delays in funding for capital projects. She announced that DSNY will begin issuing fines for noncompliance with the official NYC garbage bin requirement on September 8, with penalties ranging from \$50 to \$200. She also promoted several upcoming events, including the America 250 and Flag Day Festival on June 13 at Forest Park, the annual beach fireworks event on June 20 at Beach 94th Street, and encouraged residents to attend the upcoming Woodhaven Residents' Block Association meeting, where DOT representatives will be present to address community concerns.

Rokeya Akhter, Rep. Queens District Attorney Melida Katz, encouraged all to review the office's monthly newsletter and website for updates on cases and community information.

She reported that Richard Swygert, who was convicted in connection with the New Year's Day 2021 homicide at the Umbrella Hotel, was sentenced to 75 years to life in prison.

Ms. Akhtar also highlighted the District Attorney's continued efforts to combat illegal cannabis sales and gun violence. She noted that, in coordination with the NYPD and the New York City Sheriff's Office, authorities conducted an enforcement operation at an illegal cannabis shop on Bell Boulevard. The operation resulted in the seizure of thousands of pounds of cannabis and cannabis-related products, as well as flavored tobacco products that were being stored both in the shop and in an apartment above the business.

She added that numerous illegal firearms were recovered during the previous month.

Anthony Lemma, Rep. Assembly Member David Weprin, stated that the New York State budget has been finalized after being delayed by 53 days. He noted that there will be no cuts to funding for the New York City Department of Education despite declining enrollment, and that funding for senior-related programs and projects remains largely unchanged.

Mr. Lemma said that the budget outcome appears favorable overall and that additional details will become clearer as implementation moves forward.

Ann Marie Costella, Rep. Senator Joe Addabbo, announced that local veteran Dominic Pepe, adjutant of Woodhaven Post 118, was inducted into the New York State Veterans Hall of Fame.

In response to constituent concerns, Senator Addabbo funded the installation of two NYPD ARGUS cameras at Babbage Street and Bessemer Street.

Ms. Costella also highlighted several public safety investments included in the State budget, including funding for first responder emergency operations, local sheriff's office grants, continued NYPD subway patrols, capital grants for volunteer fire departments, and support for professional and volunteer firefighter organizations. Additionally, she outlined Tier 6 pension reforms, including provisions allowing teachers to retire at age 58 with 30 years of service, reducing contribution rates for many members, adjusting contribution brackets to reflect current salaries, and increasing the amount of overtime that may be included in pension calculations for police officers, firefighters, and other public employees.

Clare Collins, Rep. Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, announced that the Borough President's annual Pride Celebration will take place on June 24 at 6:00 p.m. in the atrium of Queens Borough Hall. She also announced upcoming mobile constituent services hours. Staff will be available at the Briarwood Library on June 16 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., and at the Windsor Park Library in Bayside on June 30 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. She stated that additional information about these and other events is available on the Queens Borough President's Office website.

Micaela Oram, Rep. Council Member Lynn Schulman, stated that in partnership with NYC Parks, a screening of *Monsters, Inc.* will be held at Phyll 'Scooter' Rizzuto Park on July 11 as part of a community movie series.

She also provided an update on participatory budgeting outcomes, noting that two winning projects were selected at Richmond Hill High School: one for bathroom upgrades and another for improvements to the school's weight room. Ms. Oram thanked the community for participating in the voting process and wished everyone a safe and enjoyable summer.

Max Rose, Rep. Congress Member Gregory Meeks, reported that Congress Member Meeks, along with Lydia Vázquez, has reintroduced the Habitable Housing Conversion Pilot Program for 2026, also known as the "Basement Bill." The proposed five-year pilot program would provide grants to homeowners to convert basement spaces into safe residential units. The initiative aims to help address housing shortages for low- to moderate-income residents while allowing homeowners to generate rental income. In coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the program would prioritize homes in areas most vulnerable to natural disasters, with the goal of improving safety and financial resilience in the face of climate-related risks. Mr. Rose also noted that information flyers regarding constituent services would be available at the back of the room. Constituents were encouraged to follow Rep. Meeks on social media or visit the official website for additional information, and to contact the office directly with any questions.

Jonathan Betancourt, Rep. Congress Member Nidia Velazquez

Mr. Betancourt congratulated Chair Algreto on the success of the recent autism awareness event and provided updates on federal SNAP eligibility changes, housing legislation, and the Congress Member's positions on federal policy issues. He also reported that the amended 21st Century Road to Housing Act passed the House and is awaiting Senate consideration.

He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to attend Community Board meetings over the past three and a half years and thanked the Board and community members for their partnership and support.

7. Presentation: Queens Holocaust Memorial Garden Project, Michael Nussbaum, President Holocaust Memorial Garden Inc.

Mr. Nussbaum provided an update on the proposed Queens Holocaust Memorial Garden project. He noted that his involvement in government spans more than 50 years, including service during the administration of Mayor John Lindsay and work with the Office of Neighborhood Government, which helped establish the concepts of district service cabinets and district managers.

Mr. Nussbaum, currently President of Queens Holocaust Memorial Garden, Inc., a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, described the origins of the project, noting that several years ago community members approached local Jewish organizations with the idea of creating a Holocaust memorial in Queens.

Following discussions with the Queens Borough President's Office, a site adjacent to Queens Borough Hall, formerly known as the Redbird site, was identified as a potential location.

The proposed memorial would occupy approximately 24,000 square feet and serve as both a Holocaust memorial and a public garden. The speaker stated that the project is intended to honor the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust while also recognizing other victims and communities persecuted during World War II.

According to the presentation, the project is expected to be funded through a combination of public and private support. To date, more than \$8 million has been raised or committed toward an estimated total project cost of \$11M to \$12M. Funding commitments have reportedly been secured from the Mayor's Office, the Queens Borough President's Office, State Senator Stavisky, State Senator Comrie, and private donors, including Steve Cohen through his family foundation.

The speaker presented conceptual renderings of the memorial, which include a Garden of Remembrance, a reflective pool and fountain, landscaped pathways, weeping willow trees, and design elements intended to symbolize the experiences of Holocaust victims. He emphasized that the designs remain conceptual and will be subject to further review through the NYC DDC and approval processes.

The memorial is planned as an open public space and will include security features, lighting, and ongoing maintenance. The speaker stated that community engagement would continue as the project advances through the approval and design stages.

Question and answer period ensued.

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 – New

Blend Restaurant & Ultra Lounge LLC
127-07 94th Avenue
Richmond Hill, NY 11418

No speakers

Motion # 2: To oppose the new On Premises Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider License Application

Vote # 2: 40 in favor and 1 abstention

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

Sohna Punjab Indian Restaurant LLC
117-10 Atlantic Avenue
Richmond Hill, NY 11419

No speakers

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

Vote # 3: Unanimous

c. On Premises Beer & Cider License Application – Renewal

Noya Corp.
77-15 Jamaica Avenue
Woodhaven, NY 11421

No speakers

d. Method of Operation Change Application

Flor A. Garcia, D/b/a El Rinconcito de Nagua
76-20 Jamaica Avenue
Woodhaven, NY 11421

The appropriate letters regarding the above applications will be forwarded to the New York State Liquor Authority.

Committee Chair Gamarra requested Board approval to authorize the Public Safety Committee to review and process SLA renewal applications during the summer recess in accordance with the Board's established protocols and procedures.

Brent Robles made a motion to approve. Joe laboni seconded it.

Motion # 4: To authorize the Public Safety Committee to review and process SLA renewal applications during the summer recess in accordance with the Board's established protocols and procedures

Vote # 4 : Unanimous

Next Public Safety & Consumer Affairs Committee meeting is June 23rd, 2026 (contingent on applications received).

9. Public Forum

Mr. Jim Ryan, a resident of Kew Gardens, addressed the Board and raised several issues:

- Explained that community boards, public schools, libraries, and police precincts may be eligible to use the LinkNYC platform for public information and outreach purposes. He encouraged the Board and the local police precinct to explore these opportunities and offered his assistance if needed.
- Expressed his concern regarding the Community Board's online information. He urged the Board to ensure that its website and publicly available information are accurate and up to date.
- Additionally, Mr. Ryan raised concerns regarding accessibility and accommodation at the meeting venue. He explained that he has undergone multiple back, knee, and shoulder surgeries and requires the support of a table while seated. He requested that the Board ensure suitable seating and table accommodation are available for members of the public to attend meetings.

Sol McCants, Richmond Hill Resident, addressed the Board regarding education, hate speech, and immigration-related concerns. He encouraged greater public education about the Holocaust and other historical instances of persecution and forced labor and suggested promoting anti-racism and anti-hate initiatives. He also expressed concerns about hate speech and discrimination, urging communities to work together to combat intolerance.

Rev. Ruben Cruz, Resident of Richmond Hill, stated the following:

- LinkNYC kiosks can be utilized as free advertising space, provide free phone calls and other public services.
- Raised concerns regarding deteriorating road conditions throughout the district. While some pothole repairs along Liberty Avenue were completed, significant potholes remain on Park Lane South between Metropolitan Avenue and 112th Street, and on Jamaica Avenue between Woodhaven and Lefferts Boulevards.
- Provided an update on the proposed beautification project at 110th Street and 86th Avenue. Safety concerns were noted, including improperly installed stop signs, missing street signs, and roadway narrowing that limits two-way traffic flow.
- Announced a new volunteer Legacy Protection initiative that helps homeowners in preventing deed theft by promoting property fraud alert registration and public awareness.
- Spoke about the expansion of the City's Playground Program, which increases public access to school playgrounds outside of school hours.

Varinder Singh, Resident of Richmond Hill, expressed support for addressing homelessness but urged the city to take a broader approach to shelter siting and long-term solutions. It was suggested that workforce development, job training, and educational programs be prioritized alongside shelter development to help individuals achieve stable employment and reduce reliance on emergency services.

Helen Day, Richmond Hill Resident, thanked Chair Algreto and Community Board 9 for organizing the rally and providing a forum for public input. The speaker encouraged strong community participation, expressed opposition to the proposed shelter location due to its proximity to a school and nearby businesses, and emphasized the importance of community involvement in local land-use decisions. Ms. Day also thanked the Chair for the invitation to the Autism walk and expressed interest in participating again next year.

Destiny Burns and Kristen Wolf, Empire State Development (ESD), provided an update on the Aqueduct Redevelopment Project. They explained that ESD is leading the development of a community-driven master plan for the approximately 100-acre Aqueduct site, including the racetrack and barn areas that will become vacant once racing operations move to Belmont Park.

The presenters emphasized the importance of community participation in shaping the future use of the site and noted that the planning process is intended to gather public input before any redevelopment plans are finalized. They described the project as a once-in-a-generation opportunity with significant potential impact on surrounding communities.

Ms. Burns invited all to participate in upcoming public workshops, including an in-person session at John Adams High School and a virtual session the following day. Additional information, registration details, FAQs, and project materials are available through the project website.

10. Old/New Business

Chair Algreto announced that National Night Out will be held on the first Tuesday in August. Although she has attended every National Night Out event since its inception, she will be unable to attend this year because it coincides with her 25th wedding anniversary.

Mohinder Singh invited fellow board members to attend a celebration honoring a revered saint and educator whose contributions significantly advanced education within the community. He explained that, prior to the 1947 Partition of India, four high schools had been established through the saint's efforts in what is now Pakistan. Following the Partition, those institutions continued serving communities in India. The event is scheduled to take place on Sunday, June 14.

The Chair thanked Mr. Mohinder Singh, Himmat Singh, Kirpal Billing, Ragbir Singh, and others who staffed an information table at a recent community event, helping to distribute informational materials and refreshments to attendees.

She praised the office staff for their hard work and dedication.

Brandon Robles motioned to adjourn the meeting. Kevin O'Leary seconded the motion.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chairperson at 8:45 PM.