

**Community Board 1 Full Board Meeting, Tuesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – 6:30 P.M.**  
**Virtual on Zoom**

**Nicholas Siclari, Chairman**

**Members**

Joe Ahlstrom  
Michelle Akyempong  
Arguello, Tatiana  
Berksteiner, Dora  
Berksteiner, Doreen  
Joseph Bird  
Allison Brown  
Telee Brown, ab  
Christopher Campbell  
Loretta Cauldwell  
Andre Ciprut  
Kathleen Coen  
Christopher Corbo  
Anthony Cosentino  
Claudette Duff  
Samir Farag  
Omar Ferriera, ab  
Timothy Forsyth  
Selina Grey  
John Guzzo, ab  
Robert Holst  
Linda Huff  
Sunny Jain  
Linda Juarbe, ex

Lillian Lagazzo  
Peter Lisi  
Ali Lula, ab  
David McGoy  
Nicole Meyers, ab  
Mohan Radhakrishna  
Alina Nevradakis  
Friday Ogbewe  
Ernest Paige  
Francine Reali  
Joshua Renta  
Cindy Salzillo, ab  
Catherine Schiavone  
Anthony Scutari  
Anthony Sgarlato  
Sean Sheil  
Nicholas Siclari  
Jaclyn Tacoronte  
George Turner  
Siyda Williams, ab  
Steven Williams  
Nicholas Zvegintzov

**Office Staff**

Joan Cusack, District Manager  
Linda Maffeo, Community Coordinator

**Guests**

Marie LaFrancesca, BP Fossella Office, Makeda Campbell, Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton's Office, David Pena, CM Hank's Office, Agnes McBeth, DA McMahon's Office, Nick Robbins, AM Pirozzolo's Office, Mary Bullock, Jermaine Williams, Rosemary Algerio, Sarah Gowell, Victoria Carstensen, Andrew Dorman, Catherine Burke, Charlie Olson, Jenn Holder, R.V. Augusty, Mr. Lindy Peter Crescitelli, Alicia Boyd, Barbara Wood, Frederick Marte, Lisa Barbieri, A. Lawrence, Giomelly Barton, Elena Brady, CM David Carr's office, Shellise Rogers, Samantha Bright, Miriam Arnold, Nicole Brooks, Prince Cobbina, Marsha Russell, Michael Morrell, Jason Price, Jeanne Raleigh, Joe Pozzolano, Everett Wattle, Fitim Shabani, Bruce Lauria, Alicia Boyd, Rhonda Hogan-Brock

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Nicholas Siclari- 6:32PM

Roll Call and Attendance - Secretary, Loretta Cauldwell – Quorum present.

Chairman Siclari said with the winter storm and rising Covid and RSV cases, we shifted to a Zoom meeting. Hospitals have mask mandates again. If the area committee meets at RUMC, be aware of that.

A moment of silence for a fixture in the West Brighton Community, Dr. Louis Gianvito, a terrific man, practicing physician for a long time. He opened his house to everyone. He passed away Monday, 1/8/2024 at 96 years old. You'll be seeing it on SILIVE.

**Public Session - Friday Ogbele:**

David Pena, CM Kamillah Hank's Office: I'm glad the meeting is virtual as I am sick. Hope you had a happy holiday season and a start to the new year. The Discretionary Application season is opening and closing on February 20th. It's money that our office allocates for non for profits who do work in our district. You can apply on the City Council website or go to [DiscretionaryApplicationNYC.gov](http://DiscretionaryApplicationNYC.gov).

Nick Robbins, AM Sam Pirozzolo's Office: Wishing everyone a Happy New Year. The big fight is coming up on Congestion Pricing. The MTA has opened up the Public Comment Period for the final implementation and details of the Congestion Pricing Plan. The public is invited to provide comments online through email, phone and fax through March 11th. They will be holding hybrid, virtual and public hearings beginning on February 29th. Reach out to the MTA and make your voice heard. Please feel free to reach out to our office.

We have a bill coming up to introduce a \$6,000 tax deduction to veterans who are honorary discharged and remaining in New York State. We are losing too many veterans to other states who treat them better in that regard.

Regarding the Budget, Governor Hochul outlined her State of the State. Look at the Assemblyman's statements on his website and social media to see how he feels about the Governor's proposals today. We want to hear your priorities going into the budget season.

Agnes McBeth, DA McMahon's Office: We continue to do the work to keep Staten Islanders safe. Certain avenues of crime are down 20% over last year. Staten Island continues to be the safest borough in the city. Our Fentanyl Task Force has just wrapped up their sessions and have put together their recommendations for the Governor by way of funding. We will be hosting a Press Conference within a day or two about the findings of our Fentanyl Task Force. Lastly, we will continue to prosecute crime. There was a recent arrest of a school secretary from P.S. 21, Michele Cenci, facing an 18-count indictment for stealing funds that were supposed to go to programs for kids of the school. We will continue to prosecute her heavily and all those who break the law. Happy New Year to everyone. I, too have been under the weather so thank you for this pivot.

Anthony Scutari, CB1 Board Member: Happy New Year. The Bread of Life Food Drive is coming, Tentative date, March 23rd, 6:00 AM at Farrell High School. It ends as fast as we unload the trucks. Picked up on Friday and distributed on Saturday. Last year we collected over 100,000 pieces of food from all the schools on Staten Island and 20 schools in Brooklyn. We distributed to 27 recipients in Staten Island and Brooklyn. All hands are needed. We need students. We usually get the Football Team. Nick Siclari, Bobby Holst and myself have been doing this for 31 years. It started with Bob Griswald's van and a van from Forest Electric. It's up to about 7 box trucks from my union alone, 5 from Notre Dame club rentals. When we started the need was there but now it's getting worse. We are the richest country in the world where no child should go hungry. I see a lot of food pantries popping up. There is one on Forest Avenue by Lowe's. It's sad to see. In Brooklyn especially. They see the vans coming, people are waiting outside. You can see the desperation in their faces. I will have further details next month. I will speak again next month or Robert Holst or Nicholas Siclari.

Mary Bullock, Port Richmond Strong: Happy New Year everyone. I appreciate the Zoom meeting. We have a deadline coming up for our Military Banners which is January 31st. If you ever thought of honoring a veteran in your life, now is the time. You go to our website and click on the form. Their banner and biography will remain on the website as-long-as there's a website.

Jermaine Williams, NYPD Community Liaison: Happy Prosperous New Year. I am now in charge of missing seniors due to Alzheimer's or Dementia and Youth, 12-18 years of age. The Blue-Chip Mentoring Program which is free and twice a week. Once the child is in the program, we will pick them up and drive them home for safe passage. We have Basketball, Flag Football, Pickle Ball, Volleyball and we are starting to rollout Golf. We have a golf professional, Commissioner Lynn. We continue with our Quality of Life concern. This is a multi-agency concern. Please send any concerns to me or the Community Board. Please stay off the highways. It is really bad out there with flooding, etc. Stay safe everyone.

Chairman Siclari said it looks like the meetings will be dictated by the weather. I'm not in the business of getting anyone sick. If this were all snow, we'd be trapped for days. Thank God we have a remote option which we can do on the fly. If the area committees want to use our Zoom account, please do. West Brighton/St. George meeting, not sure you want to wear masks at RUMC?

Makeda Campbell, Community Liaison for Senator Scarcella-Spanton's office: Happy New Year to everyone. Veteran's Non-Profit Capital Project, Round II. The application due date is April 19th. I have a flyer I can share. The meeting will be via Zoom. There will be a couple of sessions. We continue to do mobile offices. Tomorrow, we will be at CHASI on Richmond Terrace, 3:30PM to 5:30 PM. On Thursday, we will be at St. Joseph's Bingo Hall at 4:00PM. On Friday we will be at the Albanian Islamic Cultural Center at 11:30AM. The Senator is taking on Congestion Pricing. It places an unfair financial burden, health threats, causing traffic/pollution, and detrimental effects on our air quality. Senator Scarcella-Spanton is proud to support the Borough President, Vito Fossella in the lawsuit to stop this from being implemented.

#### Officers' Reports

First Vice-Chairman, Anthony Cosentino - No report.

Second Vice-Chairman, Timothy Forsyth - No report.

Third Vice-Chairman, Friday Ogbewe - No report.

Secretary, Loretta Cauldwell - Happy New Year. Welcome back. Looking forward to a very productive year.

Treasurer, Sunny Jain - Report is in the packet.

Chairman, Nicholas Siclari - At Land Use, the City of Yes, we have the second component, Economic Opportunity. We sent out the PDF presented to us. Presently, only Peter Lisi and I filled out our worksheet. The entire document is 1,000 pages. Some of it has really great aspects, for example complaints about auto repair shops. There are things that are not great. The city is trying to encompass a 5-borough document. Some may never apply to us. The one thing that bothers me is the agricultural part. It's not going to be vegetables, but Cannabis. Take the time to look at it and fill it out all 18 points, deadline January 31st. We will see what happens next month with Covid and RSV cases and the weather.

District Manager, Joan Cusack: Happy New Year. Everyone looks great. Looking forward to moving ahead with all the issues coming up this year. Nick spoke about the City of Yes. January 31st is the deadline to return the worksheet. If we want to have a voice, we need to get those forms in. We are working with Community Board 2. They are doing the same. We are trying to get DDC to come to our Waterfront meeting either January 23rd or February 27th to give us an update on the Mary Cali Dalton Recreation Center Project which starts in February. We will send the notification to everyone in case others want to come. (The meeting changed from in-person to a Zoom meeting). Everything is going well on the day to day operations. Linda and I decided to get our own Zoom account for the office. For the area committee meetings, you may feel more comfortable if someone on your committee has their own Zoom account. Finally, we need board members on the Land Use Committee and Cultural Affairs Committee. Linda will send an email asking for new members. The Land Use Committee is the most important committee according to the City of New York. We should have at least 15 board members. Presently, we have 10 members.

#### Functional Committee Reports

Land Use, George Turner- We had two applications.

**27 Wetmore Road** – Special Hillside Preservation District. Asking for our endorsement to keep certain conditions that have appeared to be built at this property's backyard without filing plans with the city. We don't have the authority to approve this. It's more of a city planning issue on one hand and the Department of Buildings on the other hand. We call these "non-invasive approvals". It's not going to affect anyone. These are small single-family home issues. We usually don't have a problem with this in terms of supporting it. This proposal will have some issues with DOB and City Planning before it needs to come to us. The Land Use Committee had no objections to the improvements, pool, deck, and gazebo-type structure as long as they receive City Planning approval and DOB approval. I think they will have to modify the improvements to get the approvals. A yes vote would be to support our letter that we will send to City Planning and Buildings that they would bring it up to code. The Land Use Committee voted yes unanimously with 8 out of 10 members present.

Roll Call by Loretta Cauldwell - Passes unanimously. 36-0-0.

**City of Yes, Economic Opportunity** – There are four goals to this. Most of these will not affect Staten Island. The committee thought there were a lot of positives but the document is 1000 pages at which 850 pages has nothing to do with Staten Island. 18 Proposals.

Goal 1: Make it easier for businesses to find space and grow.

Goal 2: Boost growing industries.

Goal 3: Enable more business-friendly streetscapes.

Goal 4: Create new opportunities for businesses to open.

No vote was taken at the Land Use Committee due to their being 18 components to look over more carefully. We will have the Full Board members look over the materials and send in the worksheet by January 31st deadline.

Alicia Boyd from Brooklyn spoke. Political activist. Has done a lot of research on these proposals. Website: MTOPP.org. They broke down these proposals.

Chairman Siclari said this is very encompassing. Please look over these and send them in. There will be one more component in the Spring: Housing.

**Waterfront, Joe Ahlstrom** - Meeting on Tuesday, January 23rd at 6:30PM (changed to a Zoom meeting from an in-person meeting due to having DDC to speak about the Mary Cali Dalton Recreation Center Project starting - they prefer Zoom).

**Public Services, Sunny Jain** - No snow yet. On the homeless shelter, we have tried to contact them numerous times with no response back to my three emails. They haven't opened yet. Supposed to open in November 2023. Tatiana Arguello said they are open. We will have to get in touch with them.

**Youth Services, Katheleen Coen & Mohan Radhakrishna** - No meeting. Looking at our agenda for the next month meeting. We received a flyer from the office. Emergency drop-in services for young people. Operating out of Project Hospitality Facilities. We are working on having that program director come speak to us.

Chairman Siclari said the Youth Committee chairs are doing a great job. In the warmer months you can get in touch with Robert Holst, Labor Committee, youth input on jobs, etc.

**Rules & Legislative Affairs, Anthony Cosentino & Timothy Forsyth** - No meeting.

**Budget & Finance, Anthony Cosentino** - No report.

**Transportation, Nicholas Zvegintzov** - Meeting on Monday, January 22nd on Zoom. The Zoom link is in the report. We will be talking about "Daylighting" which is making sure we can see around corners. There is a state law about Daylighting but the situation is "murky". (We will have a speaker from DOT and hopefully the NYPD). On December 12th, we passed the resolution to approve the North Shore Rapid Transit (BRT). This is the old North Shoreline, a dedicated separated, does not cross any other traffic, right of way for 5-1/2 miles from Arlington to St. George. This by far would be the fastest transit of the North Shore. The MTA seems to be reasonable wanting to do this which is good news and we approved it. We do not want buses on Richmond Terrace near the Ferry Terminal. A certain agency objected to the buses going under the Ferry Terminal into the SIRT station. Things have changed there and we hope to get their approval now. We hope to get the buses turned around in the older platforms of the station. Someone wants to know why the express buses do not go to St. George. There was no secret agreement as far as I can tell. Premium buses are expensive. There is an \$11.79 subsidy per passenger. The MTA does not want to use these buses hanging around in traffic and it's too expensive. If you start an express bus at St.

George, it will take, to the Verrazzano Bridge, 10-24 minutes in rush hour. To the Bayonne Bridge, 14-26 minutes and to the Goethals Bridge, 16-35 minutes. In that time, you may as well have caught a ferry and gone to Manhattan. The BRT may be a big help here. The city will "rue the day" that they let the SIRT South Beach branch goes down and they sold off the right of way but it goes dead to the center of the Verrazzano Bridge Plaza. It's sad that that dedicated right of way got built over.

Chairman Siclari said Nicholas Zvegintzov's level of diplomacy has gotten better as he aged a bit and then you shot that right out of the water. Nicholas, you did a wonderful job on the BRT. Charles Fall did ask for a letter from the Community Board that he will present to the Governor on Thursday. Thank you and your committee for doing a wonderful job. The U.N. will call you for diplomacy at any given moment.

Lillian Lagazzo made comments to the MTA to tweak that project. Areas from Snug Harbor to the Richmond Terrace site. Eliminating parking wasn't good and will impact businesses for which I am not in favor. You're only saving 5.6 minutes in travel time from south near the Hilton to the Ferry. They have \$1.3 billion with \$34 annual million for operating expenses and \$64 million to buy the vehicles.

Question: Lindy Peter Crescitelli said Snug Harbor reached out to us at New Brighton Civic with concerns about the way the BRT and its current design raised and blocking their view and eliminating their dock. Has Snug Harbor reached out to you?

Nicholas Zvegintzov said yes they did. Snug Harbor first brought this to my attention that we had a deadline on the reaction. The Snug Harbor problem, the right of way of the old North Shore line fell into the water. The engineers said they could build back on the right of way. That's the good news. The bad news is that if you do new construction, you are not grandfathered in and you have to be 25 foot above sea level. Hurricane Sandy was 23 foot above sea level. That's the situation.

Lillian Lagazzo said she doesn't know where all the elected officials feel about this BRT but the State Senator Scarcella-Spanton had some objections that she was presenting to the MTA. Police turnaround times and other factors that need to be resolved.

We sent a letter by the 22nd that we support this but to solve the problem of the buses turning around in St. George.

**Small Business & Non-Profit, Jaclyn Tacoronte** - January 8th, we hosted our committee meeting at Mariachi a new spot that is owned by a minority woman business owner at 10 Minthorne Street. We had Christopher Campbell, Peter Lisi and Dr. Allison Brown. A few sick absences. We discussed needs assessments. There is an outstanding DRI funding, \$1.2 to \$1.6 million. We requested to Governor Hochul's office for this to be distributed to two merchants associations. One in Stapleton and one in St. George. Also for DOT lighting, sidewalks, landscapes, garbage cans, welcome banners, etc. There are some updates to the BOA announcement. Brownsville Opportunity Assessment that is management by SIEDC. SIEDC had some internal reconstructing, staffing, etc. We have some recommendations that we would like to discuss to Joan, Nick or CB1 for the next steps. City Council Discretionary Funding by Kamillah Hanks. The application deadline is 1/20/24. On January 18th there is a Passport session that Non-Profit of Staten Island is hosting. You have to have a Passport account. The city mentioned a second rollout about 90 days ago. The website crashed. It's a challenge. If you're dealing with city contracts, you should join. January 25th, Non-Profit Staten Island is hosting a member and non-member event at the St. George Theater. Next meeting is Monday, February 5th. 6:00 PM at the old Bin 5 location. It is now called Mello Bistro, 1233 Bay Street.

District Manager, Joan Cusack asked if anyone from the West Shore Industrial BID has reached out? Jackie said this was five years ago and it went stagnant. Once the funding was received and there was a change of new leadership at SIEDC. I haven't heard much. DM Cusack asked Jaclyn if she could get more information because CB2 said CB1 is involved. Jaclyn said SIEDC has rolled out several knew merchants associations including the Rosebank Merchant's Association.

George Turner asked Jaclyn if she can take a look at the City of Yes information as it applies to the North Shore "semi-urban". Your insight on how the businesses work and what's needed. Jaclyn said don't be upset if I call out all the things that need to be changed.

Anthony Sgarlato asked about the Rosebank Merchant Association with SIEDC? Jaclyn said the DA Michael McMahon hosted a meet and greet with him about 9 months ago due to a lot of break-ins and burglaries in restaurants including Vinum and Don Cheech. Rosebank Merchant Association is different from a Business Improvement District. \$400,000 to \$700,000 signed off by a Councilmember. A merchant association is a collective group of small business owners work together to beautify the neighborhood. They manage, vote on behalf of safety, lighting, garbage cans, etc. The West Shore BID and the New Dorp BID they are all Business Improvement Districts that receive funding at the time it was through Steve Matteo's office. The Rosebank Merchant Association are still in their 'infancy' stages. They just hosted a holiday event and Council member Hank's had sponsored. Our involvement with CB1 is very minimal because they receive funding from the city. Unless there's a liquor license, rezoning, land use, etc. CB1 has an opportunity to insert themselves to help them flourish. There was Liz and Ely but now with the restructuring, I'll find out who is there now.

**Labor, Robert Holst** - A letter we would like CB1 to sign off on in support of the Ferry workers. Senator Spanton talked about it. We want to send to the other elected officials. The letter is for legal protections for Ferry workers. Clear and severe penalties will act as a deterrent. Training and support programs for ferry workers to de-escalate conflicts. Establish support systems to workers who have experienced trauma. To enhance security measures with security personnel and surveillance systems. Public awareness campaign to let everyone know how serious this is and promote a culture of respect to the workers.

Reverse roll call by Loretta Cauldwell. Passes unanimously with 1 ineligible.

**Parks & Recreation, Anthony Cosentino** - No meeting.

**Cultural Affairs - Anthony Sgarlato** - Added board member to committee, Andre Ciprut. Chairman Siclari thanked Tony Sgarlato for taking over this committee.

**Health and Human Services, Fran Reali** - On Thursday, I will be installed as the 62nd President of the Staten Island Board of Realtors. I've been busy. We did not have a meeting. I need to sit with Nick and Joan to see what I need to do with this role. I reached out to both hospitals to get stats on Covid and RSV. The response was see us next week. Chairman Siclari said the mask mandate is back in the hospitals and congratulated Fran Reali.

**West Brighton/St. George, Claudette Duff & Anthony Cosentino** - December 18th, had a small and short meeting. Liquor licenses and one Cannabis license on Forest Avenue. We approved the first Cannabis license. Anthony and I would like to see more members at these meetings. We are the largest committee in CB1. We are only getting 6-7 board members at these meetings. We are not having a quorum. The meeting is every third Tuesday of the month. Normally at RUMC but will consider doing Zoom if the weather is bad. Next meeting will be January 16th.

Chairman Siclari said that West Brighton/St. George has the most members. It's tough to get a quorum. Hopefully Zoom will help us.

Lillian Lagazzo asked for a written agenda on the area committee meetings in advance so we know who is attending. People just show up at the meeting.

There was a discussion from Anthony Cosentino that the committee agendas should go to all members of the committee and not just the chairs of the committee. That will be worked on.

**Silver Lake/Sunnyside/Westerleigh, Timothy Forsyth** - No meeting. Next meeting is 1/17/24 at Safari Realty weather permitting.

**Rosebank/Fort Wadsworth, John Guzzo** - Anthony Sgarlato said no meeting.

**Mariner's Harbor/Port Richmond/Elm Park, Selina Grey & Dora Berksteiner** - We had a meeting on December 18th. We had 4 liquor licenses with votes taken. Minutes are in the packet. Chairman Siclari said we are recommendation only. You should give reasons when you vote no and be restrictive with times. The next meeting is on 1/16/24 via Zoom. Chairman Siclari said the chairs are doing a great job with this committee.

Clifton/Concord/Stapleton, Peter Lisi- Chairman Siclari thanked Peter for the only one who sent in the City of Yes Worksheet. Peter asked everyone to send theirs in. I heard other boroughs are listening to the Community Board and adding things. No meeting/no agenda. A lot of exciting things happening along our waterfront. Our meetings are every third Thursday of the month at the Stapleton Library. We need a quorum. If you can't make the meetings, please remove yourself so we can get someone else. City of Yes, my area is very unique from the rest of Staten Island. A lot of it is good but some will not be good. Other boroughs have a uniqueness that SI doesn't have to these proposals. Landscape, occupancy etc., is so different than the other boroughs and it should not apply. The urban agriculture, it's great to have agriculture but we don't want saturation of blocks of marijuana growers. They need to limit the amount of marijuana growth sites. Monitor and enforce them. Life sciences, longevity and health but there is also a hazardous waste problem. We don't want saturation of life science businesses. Limit nightlife establishments in one area. Home occupation allow entrepreneurs to do business in their homes to start out so they can expand. Fortune 500 companies like IBM and Amazon were started in garages. You have to make sure you don't get saturated mechanic shops. Corner stores, will allow within 100 feet. Majority of blocks are under 100 feet. Dell's, Bordegas, smoke shops should be limited. I appreciate all of you trying to better your community, environment and society. Keep it up.

Old Business -

New Business -

Motion to Adjourn, 8:14 PM