

COMMUNITY BOARD #1 VIRTUAL FULL BOARD MEETING - September 14, 2021, 6:00 P.M.

NICHOLAS SICLARI, CHAIRMAN

MEMBERS

Vincent Accornero
Joseph Ahlstrom
Anjail Ameen-Rice
Larry Beslow
Joseph Bird
Telee Brown
Loretta Cauldwell
Norman Light
Anthony Cosentino
Megan Delmar
George Doyle
Claudette Duff
Linda Eskenas
Timothy Forsyth
John Guzzo
Celeste Holmes
Robert Holst
Sunny Jain
Lisa Lattanzio
Ali Mir Masum
John McBeth
Friday Ogbewele
Ole Olsen
Ernest Paige
Catherine Paradiso
Amy Poirer
Mohan Radharkrishn
Fran Realii
Chris Rooney, Excused
Anthony Scutari
Nicholas Siclari
George Sona
George Turner
Kevin Washington
Daniel Williams
Steven Williams
Camille Zarrelli, Excused
Nicholas Zvegintzov

OFFICE STAFF

Joseph Carroll, District Manager
Lisa Crosby, Community Coordinator
Linda Maffeo, Community Associate

GUESTS

Donald DeRosa, NYC Comptrollers' Office
Lisa Thompson, Rep. DA McMahon
Troy McGhie, Rep. Councilwoman Rose
Joe Cucci, Office of Michael Tannousis
Elena Brady, Rep. Councilman Matteo
Jermaine Williams, DSS/HRA
Nicole Brooks, NYC Parks & Recreation
Frank Fontana, Dept. of Buildings
Robert Gibbs, NYPL, St. George Branch
Mario Buonviaggio
Miriam Arnold
Larry Cirillo, Carpenters' Union
Juliana Curreri
Neil Berry
Mourin Fawzi
Everett Wattley
Clifford Frasier & Wagner College Students
Debbie G.
Victoria Gladys
Mary Bullock
Sarah Gowell
Kendra Hall
Luke Jakubauskas
Lillian Lagazzo
Bruce Lauria
Andy Levison
Michael Max
Michael Morrell
Jacob Morris
David Nussbaum
Linda Walters-Newton
New York Muslim Action Network
Olivia Paczkowski
Rogelio Ramos
Sistah Rogers
Patricia Rondinelli
Marsha Russell
Rz2GSy
Madison Sak
Beatriz Suzuki
Ian T.
Katarina Andiel
Ritaj Abbasi

Chairman Nicholas Siclari called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
Nicky Siclari led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC SESSION

Jermaine Williams, DSS/HRA - Rent terms will soon be lifted. We are pushing for ERAP (Emergency Rental Assistance Program). This is issued through the State for people who had a hardship from March of 2020 to Present. If they were unable to pay their rent or utilities, they would qualify and not have to pay it back. You must qualify though. If denied, they can bring their case to the HRA. We are part of the IDA disaster team, now moved to CSI. People were affected by Ida even if they weren't in a flood zone. The President declared it was a disaster so people could claim some type of coverage for whatever their insurance doesn't cover. Having Sandy, caused a lot of structuring changes of building going forward and rezoning as far as flood zones. We are here to help.

Lisa Thompson - District Attorney Michael McMahon's Office - It's great to be back with you all after the summer. Everyone's beloved Pet Calendar is back. The contest is officially open. This is to raise awareness on animal welfare and cruelty. Please submit your photos to Contacts@RCDA.NYC.GOV. The deadline to submit is Friday, October 1st. Please send a photo with a high resolution. Announcement regarding the scam's awareness. There was a data breach with iPhone owners. There was some malware installed onto iPhone owners, macs and watches without the owner knowing. Update your devices to the most recent update. Information in the chat. I am also joined by an ADA Beatriz in our office today and if you have any questions and we will address those issues.

Frank Fontana, Buildings - Announcements: Hurricane Ida. Fortunately, the Hurricane relief center is present. If any homeowner needs construction for their home, we are waiving the permit fees. We are here to help. Any questions or issues please reach out. DOB recently announced a homeowner relief program to one- and two-family homes. If you did not receive a violation in the past 5 years, DOB will allow you to deter those violations without the associated penalties. Class II & III violations which are not nearly hazard like a Class I, have been extended from 40 days to 60 days. Hope this helps with those property owners. Also, the department did a zero-tolerance sweep. They went to visit 7,000 construction sites throughout the city. In Staten Island they went to 390 sites and issued stop work orders. There has been a lot of construction-related incidences. We want people to come home at the end of the day with no injuries and no deaths. This was successful.

Joe Carroll asked if the department is counting the illegal basements in Staten Island? Do they know where they are? Several people were killed in the storm. I was wondering if the department was doing anything because of Ida.

Frank said, we are looking at the Certificate of Occupancy. A lot of times we don't know about it. We don't know about the conversion of these properties. I know Queens had a home with three deaths. There were people living in the cellar with no windows and no way out. I will double check on this.

Troy McGhie, Councilmember Debi Rose Office - FEMA will be at the CSI until further notice to help with Hurricane Ida problems. They will be there from 8am to 7pm every day. We have a NYC initiative, VACCS to Schools. There will be pop up vaccination in middle schools and high schools across the island. If you want to be vaccinated, you can do so. It's that time of the year again for the Community Fair at Tappan Park, Saturday, October 2nd from 11:00 am to 3 pm. Fun had by all. Music, fun, bands, rock climbing provided by the Police Department. There will be vendors and a lot of fun for all.

Everett Wattley - Thank you for allowing me to address you. The resolve of the Democratic Party of Richmond County of Community Board 1 was tested on August 3rd. Stephanie Shavo the Vice Chair stated in an email that was sent to me and city and state legislatures. Stephanie said, "What, don't tell me Diane Savino was taking credit for this and oh, I hate Staten Island and the handkerchief heads." She was referencing an article in the Staten Island Advance regarding Diane Savino's ability to bring the city and state DOT together and set a resolution for a sidewalk on Trantor Place. She represents Diane Savino in District 49. It's references to a black person that is subservient to a white person. Stefanie Shavo frequently sits in community board meetings. She is to act as a liaison. Her remark calls to question her integrity. There is an adage, when someone tells you who they are, believe them. The Community Board took no position. It should be concerning to us. The refusal of community board sends a clear message that this behavior is tolerated.

Robert Gibbs - St. George Library, Managing Editor. All libraries are open except for the Port Richmond Library that is going through renovations. Starting September 27th, the library will be having an after-school program. No registration is required. This is a drop-in program for free tutoring and homework help, ages 6-12. It will be from Monday to Thursday, 3pm-6pm at St. George, Mariner's Harbor and Stapleton libraries. I will post a link and info in the chat. College and careers ways counseling. Things like applying for college, financial aid. Students can participate in this program at the St. George and Mariner's Harbor Library.

Jacob Morris - What are your procedures and guidelines regarding street. Lisa said I will message you and give you my phone number. Please call me and I will help you. Jacob said he is looking forward to discussing this.

Mary Bullock, Port Richmond Strong - Welcome back. Port Richmond Strong did not take the summer off. In July, Brownies Pro and Sport Hobbies, started 15 years ago by George W. Brown Jr., Navy and Veteran. Our clean initiative goes ahead full steam. We have been cleaning Veterans Park In addition, Veterans Park was one of four, take back our parks. On July 5th, we had a food festival there from Staten Island and from Bayonne New Jersey. We had NYPD there, 24 vendors and face painting, kids' activities, and ice cream. We will be working with the Principal of PS20, Erica Padin to take back our park for the school children. We had storm water run-off from two record rainfalls which set a flood record in July and August. We organized and gathered flood reports from several streets and gave direct aid to those affected. Staten Island topographical will be used to see the streams and benefit the communities because of rain fall. The natural course of streams has been saturated by development. Meeting in August with Nicole Malliotakis, Diane Savino, and Camille Hanks. We had flood damage reports from Bay Street, Bayonne Court, Derby Court, Cortlandt Street, Dryden Court, Kramer Place, Haughwout Avenue, Palmer Avenue and White Place. We are investigating Staten Island streams. Over Labor Day Weekend at the Richmond County Fair, we promoted our Port Richmond Banner Project and 4 related veterans event coming to the Reformed Church in October.

Mario Buonviaggio - Just to echo what Mary said. We have taken a strong part at Veterans Park to keep it clean. We conflict with, we are using community dollars, the NYC Parks department is absent. NYC Parks department is not cleaning it. I am asking to have these personnel to work harder or take disciplinary action. I was unaware they were taking two-hour lunches. NYC department of traffic, we have submitted four petitions to have speed reduced. We have seen 5 speed cameras installed in Port Richmond. That is a record. Why are we taking baby steps to get speed reducers on the island? They want it. NYC DOT to work harder. Streamline these speed reducers. Today is the first day of school and traffic was horrendous.
Public session concluded.

Secretary Loretta Cauldwell took roll call attendance, quorum present.
Motion made, seconded, and approved to accept June 2021 Board Minutes.

OFFICERS' REPORTS

FIRST VICE-CHAIRMAN, ANTHONY COSENTINO – No report. However, if I may do the budget finance at this time. We are working on set up for the next fiscal year. We don't know if it will be on Zoom or in person. It's all up in the air. I will let you know as soon as I know.

SECOND VICE-CHAIRMAN, TIMOTHY FORSYTH - Nothing to report. Stay safe.

THIRD VICE-CHAIRMAN, FRIDAY OGBEWELE - No report. We are coming back from the Summer session.

SECRETARY, LORETTA CAULDWELL - No report.

TREASURER, LARRY BESLOW – Report with packet.

CHAIRMAN, NICHOLASSICLARI - Today we are going to have one vote. CB 3 & 2 have already decided. The Governor has stated that being the situation as it is, we can either go in person starting in October or we can go virtual up until January. We have to weigh the pros and cons on this. If we do go in person there are logistics. You would have to show vaccination card or negative Covid test. Social distance. Fill out a health screen and take your temperature. My opinion, I have been back to work since June 2020. In Manhattan West, we had 493 people in the building. people were wearing masks, they were screened. The US Open happened with no incidence. I don't expect the people with underlying health issues to be there. The gentleman tried to call our office. Private businesses are back. I know there are pros and cons. I am going to leave this up to the board. It shouldn't just be a rubber stamp. We are doing the best we can with Zoom. It's time. It's up to you guys. Let's have a discussion. January we will be in person. The question is if the board collectively would like to meet in person or wait until January.

Cathy Paradiso asked: Who will do the screening and for people who really can't come can we do partial remote and Zoom? Some people are afraid of the vaccinations.

Chairman Siclari said, Lisa and Linda will be doing the screening. No one will be penalized for not attending.

Ms. Cauldwell said I hate all the requirements in order to be in person.

Mr. Carroll said we would have to start at 6:30 pm to take care of Covid protocols/screening and start the meeting at 7pm.

Mr. Cosentino asked if we must show vaccination? Lisa said yes and a negative test within 4 days before the meeting.

Ms. Lattanzio said with the Delta Variant, I wouldn't want to be responsible for people getting sick. It's what we must do right now. If the Delta didn't pop up, I would say okay, but I think we may be jumping the gate. Staten Island is still at a high rate and why can't we wait until January just to be safe.

Mr. Sunny Jain said he was vaccinated in January and February and later he came down with Covid. Mr. Carroll said that same thing. He was vaccinated and he got Covid.

Mr. Nicholas Zvegintzov. asked where we are meeting?

Mr. Carroll said we have several places we are looking at.

Fran Reali said she was vaccinated and has been traveling and been going to many meetings. A month ago, I came down with Covid. I got the infusion and believe we are social animals, and we need to be able to meet in person.

Mr. Beslow asked, with respect to the attendance, how you going to control the public coming in? If you have a large public hearing, how will that be controlled. They can tell you they were tested and don't want to show proof, what will we do? We are a public forum. He said that's a big undertaking because you can't stop the public from coming in.

Ms. Paradiso added, we still must know what will happen in January.

Chairman Siclari asked about the breakthrough cases if it is so rare? They are getting Covid. Ms. Paradiso said it is not rare.

Ms. Duff said we need to check the ventilation system of the venue. Make sure it's up to code.

Chairman Siclari said he already changed his opinion.

Mr. Cosentino said we will not come to a logical conclusion at this time. See how well these sites can accommodate us. We can check the ventilation system and continue the conversation next month.

Chairman Siclari said I just want to see where the board is leaning. The breakthrough cases are not that rare. They can't even update our ventilation system at One Edgewater Plaza.

Mr. Ogbewele said due to the uncertainties of Covid, I think it doesn't hurt to wait to January. Time flies anyway. it will give us another few month of precaution.

Ms. Poirer said she was against in person until the last minute. A child in a school was released because a teacher contracted Covid. I heard within the next two weeks because of school being back, I expect the numbers to skyrocket. She said she wouldn't come in person.

Ms. Reali and Mr. Carroll said they have underlying conditions, so it varies. It's like a cold/flu with aches and pains, no taste but you won't be put on a ventilator.

Mr. Washington asked what are other community boards throughout the city and how are they handling public access? Joe said he can ask other boards; we only know about Staten Island CB 2&3.

Ms. Anjail Ameen-Rice said can we put out a survey because everybody is clear in their reasoning. We can do this for three hours.

Ms. Paradiso said we don't know where we are going. I would make the decision if I knew that.

Ms. Cauldwell added it is only three months more.

Mr. Carroll said All Saints, Mount Carmel, or Salem Church.

Mr. Accornero said only three months? Now it's 15 months. Is this only until January regardless of what the President or Governor said. "We are living like the boy in the plastic bubble."

Ms. Lattanzio said we can't go against the President.

Mr. Carroll said as per guidance from above, there is no clear-cut easy way to do this. It's not a well-oiled machine.

Chairman Siclari called the questions.

Ms. Cauldwell mention the vote is to continue to meet on Zoom until January.

Roll call vote taken, Vote passed 21-9-0.

Chairman Siclari thanked everyone, I wanted all of you to be part of this. This is a Democracy and you all spoke. I'd rather be safe than sorry. I changed my mind. I appreciate each one of you. As much as I would like to see everyone in person, we can survive three more months. Thank you for being part of the process.

DISTRICT MANAGER, JOSEPH CARROLL - I just want to welcome everyone back. It's too bad we can't meet in person. This Zoom stuff has run its course. Let's take a minute to remember Pearl. She was very good with Youth Services and Pearl Minsky will be missed.

Chairman Siclari - Let's take a moment of silence for Pearl Minsky.

FUNCTIONAL COMMITTEE REPORTS

LAND USE, VINCENT ACCORNERO - I'm sure most of you remember the amount of time we spent discussing River North. If you followed the news, the application despite our objection passed. I will read the motion again.

The motion made by the committee:

WHEREAS, this application seeks to rezone the proposed area from an R6/C2 District within the Special Hillside Preservation District to an R7-C3/C2-4 within the Special St. George District

WHEREAS, this application is in the Special Hillside Preservation District which was designed to give oversight to building in steep slope; and,

WHEREAS, the application seeks to obliterate the Special Hillside Preservation District in an area of the steepest slope in Community Board #1, and

WHEREAS, it is unprecedented for any proposal to be removed from the Special Hillside Preservation District; and,

WHEREAS, the existing R6 District provides the greatest bulk and height of any district in SI, and,

WHEREAS, The Special St. George District provides parking and other development controls designed and adopted specifically for this area, and,
WHEREAS, this development is asking for multiple authorizations and waivers all intended to maximize density and bulk in a district that can be developed without this extreme contorted level of relief, and,
WHEREAS, this application has been extremely fast tracked through the Department of City Planning and will saddle new representatives and administration with a decision that should be left for them to debate, and,
BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED THAT: Community Board #1 opposes all the actions proposed by the application and strongly suggests they build within existing zoning controls so as not to completely disregard all previously crafted zoning.
Passed our Full Board 28-1 with 1 ineligible. Nearly unanimous.

I proposed a letter to Councilmember Debi Rose. Regarding the Application for River North, as you know CB#1 had a discussion that was well-attended. The Land Use Committee and Full Board spent time prior to familiarize themselves with the proposal after discussion and debate. CB#1 nearly unanimously approved the following resolution (just read). CB#1 had a preliminary discussion with the developer and had an extremely lengthy public hearing. We provided voluminous testimony and it was well-attended. We are extremely disappointed. The City Planning Commission ignored our resolution, not including Commissioner Cerullo, and approved this application and disregarded our vote. We implore you to support our position and vote against the application and lobby your colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Carroll said the Councilwoman is the only person/chance to stop it.

Reverse roll call vote taken. Vote passed unanimously.

Chairman Siclari asked Mr. Accornero to brush up on BJ's and how that transpired. It will be coming up.

Mr. Accornero said I thought the Governor said we can't shop in big box stores. The economic development corporation which is the agency with jurisdiction of the Richmond County Ballpark and the wheel site which has failed, took their time out to share their vision with us for swings and benches. Chairman Siclari said, they did give us the fast ferry.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AMY POIRER – Chairman Siclari welcomed Ms. Poirer back.

WATERFRONT, OLE OLSEN – No report.

PUBLIC SERVICES, SUNNY JAIN – Luis Lopez Playground had their opening ceremony. They did an excellent job. It's where I most likely contracted Covid. I stopped by there and there was a tournament. It is a heavily used park. I think the parks department should be commended.

Mr. Accornero asked if anyone is here from Parks. He asked the status of Mariner's Harbor Park. Ms. Brooks answered, the park is not scheduled to open until March 2022. There are things going on behind the scenes. Nicole said it's the paperwork. Some of that may lead to more construction but that is what is holding it up. It does look great. It does look like it's ready to go. Vinny said there have been some adults in the park. Can you investigate that before they damage it before the kids get to enjoy it?

YOUTH SERVICES, ERNEST PAIGE – No report.

RULES AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS, CHRISTOPHER ROONEY – No report.

BUDGET & FINANCE, ANTHONY COSENTINO – Reported under First Vice-Chairman

TRANSPORTATION, NICHOLAS ZVEGINTZOV – Chairman Siclari said he’s in love with the fast ferry to the Hudson River side and wishes it would start earlier. Mr. Zvegintzov said the Borough President reminded that we originally asked for a ferry to Brooklyn so we will see what happens. Bayonne walkway is open 24/7 for three months now. Cautious about opening at night. Want to know if we have any complaints. The fast ferry is responsible for the elevator by the outlets at the north exit of the Ferry terminal, which is now working. I believe EDC which is responsible for the lease for the Empire Outlets forced them to do it. Thank you for that. Transportation committee is rebuilding the bridge over the expressway by Richmond Avenue. It seemed to be sound in an engineering way controlling traffic. They are also working on Woolley Avenue and Bradley Avenue. Staten Island Expressway built the same time and all falling to pieces at the same time.

AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORTS

LABOR, ROBERT HOLST - No report.

PARKS, NORMAN LIGHT – No report.

AREA COMMITTEE REPORTS

WEST BRIGHTON/ST. GEORGE, LORETTA CAULDWELL – No meeting in June. However, we will meet next month with a few things on the agenda. Watch for emails that will be sent out. It will be on Zoom. We can’t meet at the Park House.

SILVER LAKE/SUNNYSIDE/WESTERLEIGH, TIMOTHY FORSYTH/CAMILLE ZARRELLI – Ms. Zarrelli and I have discussed this. We no longer have access to the Silver Lake Tennis House. We have been had liquor licenses and we can continue doing them by email. If we get pertinent agenda items, we will have a small meeting at the board headquarters in October.

ROSBANK/FT. WADWORTH, JOHN GUZZO - Ms. Crosby said John has a meeting scheduled at Mount Carmel, 3rd Tuesday of the month. It will be posted on Facebook and sent out. (At the time of typing this, the Rosebank meeting was canceled in September).

MARINERS HARBOR/PORT RICHMOND, JOHN MCBETH - We did not meet in the Summer as we usually had in the past. We will meet next week and will resume minutes. It will be on Zoom although the initial plan was to meet at Faber Park House. Those plans were withdrawn.

CLIFTON/CONCORD/STAPLETON, LARRY BESLOW – No meeting or minutes.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Doyle had a question to Nicole Brooks about Stapleton Park. When are they going to cut the grass? It is out of control? Ms. Brooks asked if it was on the field? Mr. Doyle said it was on the field. Ms. Brooks will investigate it.

Mr. McBeth extended the offer to use his Zoom account to all the Chairs for their meetings since they weren’t meeting in person.

Ms. Cauldwell said she will be using it in October. The West Brighton/St. George meeting cannot be held in person at the board office due to having two presentations and there will not be enough room for community members with social distancing.

Mr. Accornero asked if there were any restrictions for meetings outdoors?

Chairman Siclari responded "these are all great questions since September and October are still very nice and if we had a place where we can be outside." There are no guidelines for this.

Mr. Carroll said it would be considered safer. If we had a place, we would need to distance three feet.

Mr. Accornero said if we have a Land Use meeting in October, it will be outside.

Ms. Reali said she spoke with Pastor John of Salem. They asked that we put together a proposal and email it. How often are the meetings, how many people? He said \$250 or less.

Ms. Crosby said send an email to her and she will take care of it tomorrow.

Mr. Carroll said we investigated renting the place, but they withdrew the offer to rent because of the issue with cleaning before and after the meeting. They killed us with the cleaning.

Ms. Reali said at this point, she thinks they'll be happy to host us. We can send the email and if we don't like what they tell us, we don't have to use it. I think it's a great spot. Has parking.

Mr. Cosentino said several months ago, Forest Avenue between Broadway and Elizabeth, speed cameras were there for the school but shut down at 10pm. Can we have that extended to a regular speed camera? At 2am you are taking your life into your hands. Two weeks ago, a 26-year-old woman came down Forest Avenue at a rate of speed, lost control and hit the guardrail. Engine flew out of the car and hit the windshield. Fire Department cut her out of the car. This situation needs to be prevented. Lisa said she'll follow-up on it.

Mr. Doyle Doyle mentioned the email regarding Tompkins Avenue and Hylan Blvd. Paint the box. This hasn't been done yet. Also, they put a left turn signal there, but it does not solve the problem. People congregate and block the box. Ms. Crosby responded it was put in and she will follow up Lisa said she will investigate it.

Mr. Accornero added that he didn't think a speed camera would stop the person speeding that Tony mentioned on Forest Avenue. That is someone that is driving irrationally without thought of anything.

More discussion about the speeding on Forest Avenue that Mr. Cosentino mentioned ensued. Tony said there was a blind spot when coming up the hill. There were approximately 28 accidents in a short period. Not talking about 30 in a 25, talking about 50 mph or more. Loretta mentioned the speed camera is going the opposite direction. There is none coming downhill where the woman was coming. Lisa mentioned about a camera by I.S. 27 in the opposite direction. Mr. Carroll said the camera is not an effective tool. That area needs signage, lighting, and flashing yellow lights.

Ms. Rice had two issues. Decker Avenue and Forest Avenue between 2pm and 4:30 pm is a nightmare. The school on Forest near O'Neill's since it's open. There is a crossing guard, but she is overwhelmed. She can't handle the volume at that time. Coming down Decker Avenue, approaching Crystal, it splits. An accident waiting to happen. IS51 kids coming out also. Maybe a second crossing guard is needed or police directing traffic like they do by New Dorp H.S.

2nd issue. Same intersection with flooding. Capacity limits for that Sewage Treatment Plant. The rain came too fast during the storm and sewers couldn't handle it. People rescued by boats. Our infrastructure can't manage the volume. We warned about this for years. We had the first test and we failed as an island. DEP has to be held accountable. Basements not being cleaned out. Can we have a

letter to address this? Joe mentioned his son-in-law had to be rescued from his car also and the car was destroyed.

Mr. Zvegintzov said this was out of order and no time for a speech about numerous issues. Ms. Rice answered that she knows what Mr. Zvegintzov is saying but it's not new business or old business, it's come to fruition. Ms. Crosby said a letter will be written to DEP and will address the traffic issues from Mr. Cosentino and Ms. Rice.

A non-board member asked about what Mr. Zvegintzov said during his transportation report that it was mentioned BP Oddo and CB#1 had asked for a fast ferry to Brooklyn. Is your board planning to do anything to press on that issue like write a letter to the Department of City Planning? Mr. Zvegintzov answered that he did not say we would take any action. I will follow up on it. It's not City Planning but EDC. He will coordinate with Ms. Crosby Thank you for mentioning it.

Motion to adjoin.

