



Community Board No. 5

Borough of Queens
Ridgewood, Maspeth, Middle Village and Glendale
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Vincent Arcuri, Jr.
Chairperson

Gary Giordano
District Manager

Minutes of Remote Community Board 5 Public Meeting September 9, 2020

Board Members Present

Bhubaneshor Adhikari; Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Eric Butkiewicz; Robert Cermeli; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Patricia Crowley; Brian Dooley; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Shawn Fisch; Dr. Sukh Gurung; Fred T. Haller; Richard Huber; Paul A. Kerzner; Kinga Kurzyna; Maryann Lattanzio; Edward Lettau; John Maier; Patricia Maltezos; Edgar Mantel; Michael O’Kane; Donald Passantino; Michael Porcelli; Kenneth Rehberger; Theodore Renz; Luis Rodriguez; Lee S. Rottenberg; Walter H. Sanchez; Dennis Stephan; Catherine Sumsky; Gyanal Thapa; Barbara Toscano; Patrick J. Trinchese; Michaeline Von Drathen; Maryanna Zero

Board Members Absent

Antonetta Binanti; Jerome Drake; Steven Fiedler; Fred Hoefflerle; Mike Liendo; Katherine Masi; Eileen Moloney; Margaret O’Kane; Kelvin Rodriguez; Carmen Santana; Megan Tadio; Nan Zhang

Elected Officials

Joseph Nocerino – Acting Queens Borough President Sharon Lee

GUESTS

P.O. Michael Berish – 104th Pct Community Affairs Unit

STAFF

Gary Giordano, District Manager

Laura Mulvihill and Catherine O’Leary, Community Associates

Following the Salute to the Flag that was led by Donald Passantino, the Board Chairperson Vincent Arcuri welcomed everyone to attend this remote Board Meeting that is being conducted and livestreamed in real time tonight. He said that due to current constraints during this health emergency, all our Board’s public meetings and committee meetings will be conducted remotely until further notice. He announced the first item on the Board Agenda as:

PUBLIC HEARING Re: The Fiscal Year 2022 Capital and Expense Budget Needs of the City of New York, as they relate primarily to the Ridgewood, Maspeth, Middle Village and Glendale Communities.

The District Manager, Gary Giordano, explained that Capital Budget items generally involve construction projects and major public works, such as, sewers, parks, libraries, roadways and bridges. He said that Expense Budget items involve allocations for salaries for agency personnel, and supplies. He said that the Executive Committee plans to meet next week in the Board office in order to review the Board’s current Capital and Expense Budget Priorities, and formulate the list of FY 2022 Capital Budget Requests that will be distributed to Board Members, in a survey. He said that the Budget Survey package will include explanations of all of the Board’s Capital and Expense Budget Items.

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The District Manager requested that Board members fill out their Capital Budget Survey, sign, date and return them to the Board office as soon as possible. Regarding the Board's Expense Budget Priorities, he said that they're usually the same each year, but Board Members can recommend changes. Police personnel assigned to the Precinct has always been a top priority, he said. He explained that Community Boards are limited to submitting no more than 25 Expense Budget Priorities each year.

The District Manager said that Board staff would tabulate the survey results for the Executive Committee's review at their next committee meeting, and the Executive Committee's FY 2022 budget recommendations will be presented to the full Board for a vote at next month's Board Meeting, on Wednesday, October 14th, 2020. In closing, he said that the Board's FY 2022 Capital and Expense Budget Recommendations will be submitted to the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget, as well as to local elected officials, on or before October 31st, 2020.

The District Manager read aloud the following budget testimony submitted by Theodore Renz, Executive Director of the Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement District. He said that Mr. Renz began by thanking the Board for their support for a new Capital Improvement Project for Myrtle Avenue in Ridgewood, which was Community Board 5's number 3 priority last year.

"The last time Myrtle Avenue in Ridgewood between Wyckoff Avenue/Palmetto Street and Fresh Pond Road was included in a major capital project was 1983/1984. At that time, the project was awarded under the New York City Commercial Revitalization Program and included major improvements to the shopping corridor, such as:

- New concrete sidewalks with decorative brick pavers, building line to curbside, new street trees, and new steel faced curbing;
- Creation of three pedestrian plazas:
 - 1) The plaza at Woodbine Street/St. Nicholas Ave./Myrtle Avenue, now known as Venditti Square, and named for Detective Anthony Venditti who was killed in the line of duty in January, 1986;
 - 2) The Ridgewood Memorial Triangle, which was named for the Veterans of the First World War, at Myrtle Avenue/Putnam Avenue/Cypress Avenue; and
 - 3) Times Triangle, now known as Clemens Triangle and named for the original owner and editor of the Ridgewood Times.

Other capital improvements have included the installation of Historic M Poles, World's Fair benches along various curbside locations and in the plaza areas, Historic Marker signs along the avenue, in plazas as well as on M poles, and a new raised planting area at the northwest corner of Myrtle and Catalpa Avenues.

Over the years, many of these improvements, particularly the brick pavers imbedded in the sidewalk, have seriously deteriorated, causing tripping hazards and unsafe conditions for pedestrians which has resulted in a number of lawsuits, which in many cases name the Myrtle Avenue BID, and has subsequently resulted in higher insurance premiums for the BID.

While there are any number of very important projects for this Board to support, we kindly ask for your continued support for this important improvement project.

Myrtle Avenue in Ridgewood is a major comparison-shopping corridor serving the Greater Ridgewood area, including Ridgewood, Glendale, Middle Village and Maspeth, in Queens, and Ridgewood/Bushwick in Brooklyn and beyond. Along this corridor are approximately 345 retail and service establishments. The improvements that we are requesting may include, but are not limited to, new sidewalks without brick pavers, new curbs, new M poles on side streets within the boundaries of the Myrtle Avenue BID, removal of all Belgian blocks from over 300 tree pits, additional benches and other amenities. Since the last project only included repaving the existing street bed, it may be wise to consider total reconstruction of the roadway, including new water and sewer lines, as well as upgrades to utilities.

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Thank you again for your support.”

The District Manager read aloud the budget testimony submitted by Derek Evers, the newly elected Democratic District Leader in AD37B, which includes, Ridgewood, as follows:

“First and foremost, I want to introduce myself to the Board and any residents who may be watching on YouTube. Please know you can always reach out to me directly via email at derekjeversforad37B@gmail.com, which you can also find on the Queens County Democrat’s website at: www.queensdems.com/districtleaders.

Secondly, I’m writing to offer my testimony regarding the FY 2022 budget as it pertains to the Ridgewood, Maspeth, Middle Village and Glendale Communities.

When I was running for District Leader, the biggest concern of the constituents I spoke with was the enormous NYPD budget and their continued presence in areas like Schools, Public Transit, Homelessness outreach, Parks and Traffic Enforcement. The community’s concerns have amplified in recent weeks as the quality of our parks and streets have been ravaged by cuts to the Parks and Sanitation Department, and acts of aggressive driving and accidents have increased dramatically.

Time and again, they asked me why, if the NYPD provides little enforcement of every-day quality of life crimes like littering or speeding or running red lights, can’t we remove these duties from the hands of armed police and put them back into the hands of service-based departments like the Parks or DOT so our community can get the services we already pay for?

They asked why, during Covid-19, when we’re more dependent on parks than ever before, should we expect the Parks Department to cut their meager budget at a far greater percentage than the NYPD? They asked why, during a pandemic, would we consider laying off nearly 400 emergency medical technicians and more than 700 uniformed sanitation workers before asking the NYPD to make a few sacrifices?

No department or Union wants to face budget or staffing cuts and I understand this is a polarizing topic that often falls along political lines. Which is why it’s important to try to remove emotion and discuss the budget in unambiguous terms.

The budget for the NYPD has increased more dramatically under Bill de Blasio’s watch than any other city department. The NYPD is currently the third-largest department by budget in all of New York City. I was happy to see our City Councilman Bob Holden sign on to a letter calling to reallocate NYPD funds to parks enforcement patrol, and even NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea has been quoted as saying he could support a reallocation of funding to better community services.

We’ve seen what a reduction to the daily services we rely on have done in a short time to our parks, roads and public transportation. And history has shown us that the safest community is a well-funded community. For the sake of and on behalf of the constituents who voted me in to this position, I implore this Board to take a stance of no new cuts to any service-based departments and instead, ask the NYPD to make the necessary cuts to help balance the budget.”

The Board Chairperson directed staff member Laura Mulvihill to take attendance, and she called the roll.

Public Forum

The District Manager reported that Board member Crystal Wolfe submitted her letter of resignation from the Board, stating that she was resigning due to a combination of personal and health reasons. He said that, to his knowledge, she has relocated out of town, following a domestic violence dispute. On behalf of Acting Queens Borough President Sharon Lee, Joseph Nocerino made several public service announcements. Firstly, he reminded everyone that this month is the last month to respond to the U.S. 2020 Census. He said that staff in Queens Borough Hall are coordinating outreach efforts to assist Queens residents to fill out their Census questionnaire this month, in partnership with 6 Queens Public

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Libraries where “Get Covered, Get Counted” Pop Up stations have been set up 3 days a week, and volunteers will distribute face masks and hand sanitizer to anyone who participates in the 2020 Census Count. He said that more and more people have been filling out the Census questionnaire at each site. For more information, he directed everyone to visit the Queens Borough President’s website at: www.queensbp.org/2020Census.

Mr. Nocerino encouraged everyone interested in attending next Wednesday’s Virtual Queens Job Recruitment Fair which will be sponsored by the Queens Borough President in partnership with 14 local agencies and businesses, from 2pm to 3:30pm on September 16th, to **RSVP** by Tuesday, Sept. 15th on their website at: www.queensbp.org/RSVP.

Lastly, he welcomed everyone to attend free Drive-In Movie Nights in the parking lot of the Queens Hall of Science in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, that begin at 8pm on Wednesday night, and are sponsored by the Queens Borough President this Summer. He said admission is \$30 per car on weekend nights.

Chairperson’s Report

Vincent Arcuri

The Board Chairperson requested that the District Manager read our local elected officials’ statements into the record. Mr. Giordano read the following statements:

Announcements from the Mayor's Office submitted by Jessica Schabowski

The Mayor has been advocating for the Federal government to provide a stimulus and for the State government to provide long-term borrowing authority. The pandemic's impact on the economy has created a \$9 billion revenue loss in the City's budget. The City had to make budget cuts across the board and is working to prevent the layoffs of 22,000 city workers.

The Test and Trace Corps has been working to get the word out on free resources to stop the spread of COVID-19 in New York City. If community organizations would like to partner in this effort, we have been organizing presentations from the team and distributing palm cards in multiple languages. We encourage all New Yorkers to get a COVID-19 test. To find a test site, including mobile testing sites, please go to nyc.gov/covidtest.

Please fill out your 2020 Census and encourage your friends, family, and neighbors to do so at my2020census.gov. We have 21 days left to get an accurate count and this data will impact the City for the next 10 years.

Last week, the NYPD made 160 gun arrests. It is the most gun arrests in a single week in 25 years. The City is working on deepening community policing in an effort to keep New Yorkers safe as we address the perfect storm of challenges.

More than 10,000 restaurants are now participating in New York City's outdoor dining initiative, Open Restaurants. In just over 3 months, this program has saved an estimated 90,000 jobs across the 5 boroughs. The Mayor will announce a decision regarding indoor dining in the next few days.

NYC Care launched in Queens on September 1st. New members will receive a primary care appointment within two weeks, a membership card, access to language interpretation services, expanded pharmacy hours within the NYC Health + Hospitals System, and a 24/7 customer assistance line. Those who are eligible and want to enroll in the program should call **646-NYC-CARE**. For more information, please go to nyccare.nyc.

On September 16th, schools will begin engaging students in learning and orienting them to the new school year prior to their first in-person day on September 21st. The City's plan for reopening schools is the strongest in the country and among the most rigorous in the world with its blended learning model, socially distanced classrooms, mandatory masks, widely available testing, and contact tracing program.

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The City will only open schools if transmission stays below 3%, exceeding the 5% standard set by the World Health Organization and New York State.

Today, New York City malls are opening at 50% capacity and New York State casinos will open at 25% capacity.

Restaurants will be allowed to reopen on September 30th. They will be subject to rigorous inspection protocols and strict occupancy limits. Some requirements for restaurants include:

- Serve customers at a maximum of 25% capacity
- Conduct temperature checks at every front door
- Collect Test & Trace data from at least one customer at each table
- Close bar tops for seating
- Offer COVID-19 protections like PPE for employees
- Space tables six feet apart

However, if New York City hits 2% in COVID-19 positivity rates, the City will immediately reassess.”

Statement to the Community Board on behalf of NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer – by Haris Khan

“Good evening, My name is Haris Khan, I’m the new City Comptroller Liaison for Central Queens, including CB5. Our office manages the investment portfolio of NYC retirement systems, investigates and audits inefficiencies by City agencies, reviews City contracts, sets and enforces prevailing wage laws, among other responsibilities.

Feel free to contact me if there is any way our office can assist, my number is 929-512-1946 and my email address is hkhan@comptroller.nyc.gov. I look forward to working with you, Haris”

Statement to the Community Board by Council Member Robert Holden

“Hello neighbors, Community Board 5 members, and fellow elected officials. I hope that you all enjoyed your summer while staying safe and healthy, and I thank you for your continued work and volunteerism as we navigate this challenging year together. Our city continues to make great progress during the COVID-19 pandemic as the infection rate is approaching 30 days at below one percent, and that is thanks to all of our collective efforts to practice social distancing, wear masks and practice good hygiene.

In recent weeks, we have unfortunately heard reports of many troubling incidents surrounding the homeless shelter at 78-16 Cooper Avenue in Glendale. We have also seen an increase in incidents of indecent exposure, drug use, harassment, trespassing, attempted sexual assault, and threats of violence against members of our community that may or may not be tied to residents of the shelter. However, the 104th Precinct has not been exercising its due diligence in filing reports for many of these incidents. I have been in touch with the Police Commissioner and commander of Patrol Borough Queens North about this issue, and will continue to work with the 104th Precinct to make sure it is adequately investigating these complaints.

With the current New York City budget being slashed by billions of dollars, our Sanitation and Parks Departments have been hit particularly hard. Because of this, I recently reallocated discretionary funds to the Sanitation Department to restore public waste basket collection, and I brought another non-profit sanitation company into our district to conduct more cleanups along our commercial strips. My office will also be leading a volunteer community cleanup on Saturday, September 26, and I welcome everyone who would like to help clean our communities together. We will be sending out more details about this soon.

As Chair of the City Council Committee on Technology, I led a hearing yesterday to conduct oversight of the 311 and 911 systems related to the city’s response to Tropical Storm Isaias, and we heard from several constituents who said they could not reach 911 operators during the storm. I will continue to

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work with the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications, NYPD, FDNY and other agencies to bolster these systems especially in times of need.

Lastly, I have joined the call to bring back indoor dining in New York City, given our successful efforts to flatten the curve of the coronavirus. Our restaurant owners, employees, and their families are struggling, and we must allow them to make a living again before it is too late. Nearly half of all small businesses that closed permanently during the pandemic were restaurants.

As always, feel free to contact my office with any of your questions or concerns. Thank you again for your continued dedication to our communities, and I hope to see all of you in the near future.”

Statement from NYS Assemblyman Brian Barnwell’s Office submitted by Victoria Leahy

“Good Evening Everyone,

We hope that everyone is doing well and staying healthy. We have a few announcements that we would like to share with the public this evening.

As we continue to work remotely for the time being, we want to remind everyone, please do not hesitate to call our office; we are available and are more than happy to help. We can be reached at 718-651-3185. If you are not able to get through to us, please leave your name, number and a brief message describing your issue. We will call you right back. Thank you and be well.”

MINUTES

Walter Clayton made a motion to accept the minutes as written, seconded by Lee Rottenberg, which was adopted by acclamation.

LIQUOR, WINE and BEER LICENSE APPLICATIONS and RENEWALS

The Board Chairperson read into the record the list of new applications and renewals of liquor licenses and/or beer and wine licenses for establishments in the Board 5 area who submitted the notifications since our last Community Board Meeting.

Liquor License Renewal Applications – as of August 12, 2020

- 1) **Lugo Lounge & Restaurant Corp.** 1089 Cypress Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) Ridgewood Coffee & Liquor Company, Inc. d/b/a **Onderdonk & Sons** 566 Onderdonk Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385

New Wine and/or Beer License Applications

- 1) ***Evertz’s Café Corp.** 65-53 Myrtle Avenue, Glendale, NY 11385
- 2) **L’Oasis Open Grill Inc.** 54-06 Flushing Avenue, Maspeth, NY 11378

Other Notifications

- 1) **The Ridgewood Ale House Inc.** 57-28 Myrtle Avenue, Ridgewood will be submitting a Corporate Change application to the NYS Liquor Authority to remove Louie Selemaj as President.
- 2) ***Charlie Work LLC d/b/a Evil Twin Brewing,** 1612-1616 George Street, Ridgewood, will be submitting an alteration application to the NYS Liquor Authority to add another service point to their existing outside area customer bar.
- 3) ***Black Fish LLC d/b/a K&A Bar,** 66-48 Myrtle Avenue, Glendale, will be submitting a Corporate Change Application to the NYS Liquor Authority, removing Allan Windsor and Kathryn Sullivan as Corporate Members, and proposes James Fu.
- 4) ***While in Kathmandu,** 758 Seneca Avenue, Ridgewood, will be submitting a Class Change Application to the NYS Liquor Authority from a Restaurant Wine License to a full OP Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider License
- 5) **Fajitas Sunrise Restaurant Bar,** 59-24 Myrtle Avenue, Ridgewood, will be submitting a Corporate Change Application to the NYS Liquor Authority, removing Francisco Cruz as Officer, and adding Heidi Cruz as the new Officer.

***Indicates Outdoor Area**

New Liquor License Applications – as of Sept. 9, 2020

- 1) ***Louis Auguste d/b/a Scorpion Records** 792 Onderdonk Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385

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- 2) ***Kantu Peruvian Cuisine Inc.*** 74-17 Metropolitan Avenue, Middle Village, NY 11379

Liquor License Renewal Application

- 1) ***Sherwood's Keep*** 205 Cypress Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385

Wine and/or Beer License Renewal Application

- 1) ***Rico's Chicken*** 74-27 Metropolitan Avenue, Middle Village, NY 11379

Other Notifications

- 1) Greenbay Partners LLC d/b/a ***Pita Gyro & Grill*** 66-39 Fresh Pond Rd, Ridgewood, NY 11385 will be submitting a Class Change application to the NYS Liquor Authority to change their Restaurant Wine License to a full On-Premises Liquor, Wine, Beer and Cider License.
- 2) We received notification from the NYS Liquor Authority that they will be conducting 500' Hearings on behalf of ****Table one for Two***, 68-38 Forest Avenue, in Ridgewood, and ****65-17 Fresh Pond Corp. d/b/a Rustico***, 65-17 Fresh Pond Rd, in Ridgewood.
- 3) ***MIFRA Corp.*** 779 Wyckoff Avenue, in Ridgewood, will be submitting a Corporate Change Application to the NYS Liquor Authority, replacing Ana Prine as President, and removing Francisco Valerio.

****Indicates Outdoor Area***

DEMOLITION AND EXCAVATION NOTICES

The Board Chairperson announced that the Board received the following demolition and excavation notices since our last Board Meeting:

Glendale

80-97 Cypress Avenue – Excavation for new construction of 66 affordable housing units

Maspeth

56-19 Grand Ave – Interior Partial Demolition of connectors to adjacent structure

Ridgewood

62-67 60 Place – former convent of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal

80-80 Cypress Avenue – Partial Demolition, in conjunction with Alterations to convert from a one-family house into a 2-family house

The Board Chairperson urged Board Members to be extra vigilant and to report any questionable construction activities.

District Manager's Report

Gary Giordano

The District Manager reported that work on the Dept. of Transportation's In-House Roadway Resurfacing schedule is now underway in our Board area, including residential streets in Maspeth and Middle Village, and, hopefully, portions of Onderdonk Avenue and Woodward Avenue in Ridgewood. Mr. Giordano informed everyone that the rate of COVID-19 infections has dropped below 1% in our Board area for almost 30 consecutive days, which is very good.

The District Manager reported that the sewer and water main project in the vicinity of Penelope Avenue and 74 Street in Middle Village was completed this Summer. He said that work on the sewer project that extends south on 70 Street, from Calamus Avenue to the Long Island Expressway, is on schedule.

The District Manager reported that there was a large fire in the commercial building on the corner of 69 Place at Grand Avenue, in Maspeth, on Sunday. Fortunately, the Fire Department did a great job and extinguished the fire quickly, he said.

The District Manager said that felonious assaults are reportedly up in the 104th Precinct, mainly due to the number of domestic violence incidents.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Safety Committee

Maryann Lattanzio

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Maryann Lattanzio reported that the Public Safety Committee met remotely by Webex last night, September 8th, beginning at 7:30pm. In attendance from the 104th Precinct were: Deputy Inspector Victoria Perry, Captain Barran and Police Officer Michael Berish.

Ms. Lattanzio said that at their meeting, D.I. Perry reported that the crime rate year-to-date is up 13.8% in our Precinct, and in the past 28-day period it's up 11%, with most of the crimes reported as Felonious Assaults, Burglaries and Grand Larceny Auto crimes. D.I. Perry said that the Felonious Assaults mainly involve domestic violence; the burglaries mainly involve commercial properties that are closed down now; and the Grand Larceny Auto crimes are mostly electric scooters. The number of murders, rapes, and robberies are down in the Precinct, and the Deputy Inspector pointed out that there were no murders in the 104th Precinct in the past 28-day period.

D.I. Perry explained to the Committee that the increase in domestic violence cases this year is related to the COVID-19 mandate to stay at home, particularly if you're sick, which has led to too much competition for scarce resources in the home. The 104th Precinct's Domestic Violence Unit has closed out 75% of these cases with arrests, she said. The Unit follows up with house visits and phone calls to ensure the safety of the victims in these cases. She said that the 104th Precinct also has a Warrant Squad to arrest any perpetrators who aren't in the vicinity when police arrive on the scene. D.I. Perry noted that the incidence of domestic violence and felonious assaults has declined over the past two weeks. D.I. Perry informed the Committee that there was a recent incident in which, before calling the police, someone had posted information on social media about an incident that took place recently in the Liberty Park area of Glendale. She said that hurt their investigation, and she urged everyone in the community to please report incidents directly to the police, and not to post any information on social media without consulting with the police first, because it can greatly impede the prosecution of the case.

Regarding the homeless shelter on Cooper Avenue in Glendale, D.I. Perry told the Committee that the shelter has their own private security, and the police are not permitted to patrol inside the shelter. Police are responsible for patrol outside the shelter, and the Deputy Inspector reported that, as of August 5th, 2020, 11 people from the shelter had been arrested.

P.O. Berish told Community Board members that since then, 2 more shelter residents were arrested, one for committing a lude act at a local park, bringing the total number of arrests of shelter residents to 13. Officer Berish said that, to his knowledge, there are currently 100 men living in this shelter. During the Committee meeting, the Committee discussed various quality of life issues with the police, particularly in and around local parks. Ms. Lattanzio said that D.I. Perry informed the Committee that two motorcycles parked outside Mafera Park were towed away, and the volleyball net was taken down inside the playground. D.I. Perry said that she personally warned one woman who was deep frying food there to stop immediately, and she complied. The Deputy Inspector said that they're working with the Parks Department to enforce the prohibition against open flames inside the park.

Regarding enforcing the social distancing mandate, D.I. Perry informed the Committee that the NYPD is not enforcing this mandate, community ambassadors are handling the issue instead. The Deputy Inspector also informed them that Auxiliary Police of the 104th Precinct have been handing out face masks and hand-sanitizers in local parks, as needed.

Ms. Lattanzio reported that another topic of discussion at their Committee meeting was the newly adopted Bail Reform legislation that appears to be a contributing factor in the increase in crime, not only in the 104th Precinct, but citywide. At their meeting, she said that the Deputy Inspector agreed that it seems to be related to the increased number of burglaries.

Ms. Lattanzio said that the Committee also discussed the matter of the number of abandoned vehicles that remain on the street for months, or longer. Committee members asked if any additional Rotation Tow companies were added to the City's list of contractors. She said that Officer Berish replied that two

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towing companies are available to tow away abandoned vehicles, but there is not much room in the NYPD's Tow Pound to put them, which is causing this backlog.

Ms. Lattanzio reported that the Committee discussed issues with people disrespecting the police generally. The Deputy Inspector replied that in the 104th Precinct, the community is overwhelmingly supportive of the police, but it is a problem in other parts of the city and the U.S.A.

Ms. Lattanzio said that when the Committee discussed the impact of the Diaphragm Law on policing, D.I. Perry stated that Police Officers cannot restrict breathing while making an arrest. She said that when faced with resistance, she advises her officers to call for backup, and to put the perpetrators in handcuffs behind their backs when necessary.

When the Committee discussed the incidence of speeding vehicles throughout our Precinct, Ms. Lattanzio said that Captain Barran reported that there's been a 59% increase in speeding violations over last year, with 912 speeding summonses issued year-to-date. In addition, the Captain told the Committee that cyclists have also been disobeying traffic laws and causing accidents. In response to this situation, he told the committee that the 104th Precinct is monitoring difficult intersections and has made initial recommendations to the NYC Dept. of Transportation, especially for parts of Metropolitan Avenue and Myrtle Avenue.

Ms. Lattanzio said that there have been numerous complaints about tractor trailers heading down 69 Street and then turning onto Eliot Avenue toward Fresh Pond Road. She said that truck drivers need to know where they're permitted to drive, and the 104th Precinct should enforce the rules.

Ms. Lattanzio said that the Committee discussed the issue of pedestrian safety, particularly since there's been a steady increase in the number of traffic fatalities involving pedestrians since 2018. She said Committee members discussed making flyers about pedestrian safety to hand out to residents and community groups.

In closing, Ms. Lattanzio said that the Committee discussed the increase in graffiti vandalism in the 104th Precinct. Officer Berish explained to Board members that the District Attorney will not accept handwriting or tags to identify graffiti vandals anymore. He said that Police Officers must see the graffiti in progress in order to apprehend the graffiti vandals. In addition, he said that graffiti is classified as a misdemeanor, which means that graffiti vandals are issued a desk appearance ticket instead of facing jail time. He said that the Maspeth NCOs organized a Graffiti Clean Up Day recently which was successful, and it was suggested to Sgt. Reiman that all NCOs sponsor a Graffiti Clean Up Day in their sector.

When asked for a clarification about D.I. Perry's request not to post information on social media about incidents that have occurred in our area, Officer Berish stated that posting information about a suspect or possible crime on social media can impede a police investigation because defense attorneys might claim that the case was based on misinformation and is therefore prejudicial to their client's case.

P.O. Berish informed Board members that the Precinct has initiated a Safe Passage program to provide regular patrols at arrival and dismissal times in the vicinity of schools that are located in close proximity to the homeless shelter on Cooper Avenue, in Glendale. The Board Chairperson pointed out that both Sacred Heart and St. Margaret Catholic schools are back in session today. Fred Haller asked who will be assigned to Sacred Heart School, for example. P.O. Berish replied that this program will rely heavily on the NCO Units to patrol the area around schools. The Board Chairperson asked if it would be possible to station a patrol car in the vicinity of local schools during arrival and dismissal times, even if there's no passengers inside.

Cathie Sumsky asked how many crimes have been committed in the homeless shelter on Cooper Avenue, because she said she sees a lot of police activity on site. P.O. Berish replied that police respond to a lot of aided calls at the homeless shelter, but it could be for any number of reasons, such as, seizures, or when an emotionally disturbed person is acting strangely.

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Ms. Sumsky asked who is being placed in the shelter. P.O. Berish replied that there are currently about 100 adult males. He said that the Precinct was notified that one occupant is a registered sex offender. The Board Chairperson replied that Kathy Masi and the District Manager can request information from the service provider at the next Community Advisory Board Meeting about who's being placed in this shelter, and what type of job training they're receiving.

Brian Dooley asked why the District Attorney's policy has changed regarding identifying graffiti tags as evidence in court, because they're considered the equivalent of a person's signature. The Board Chairperson requested that we consider formulating a statement to present to District Attorney Melinda Katz's office.

Regarding recent crime statistics for the 104th Precinct, P.O. Berish said that for the most part, the felony arrests that have been made this month involve domestic violence cases, where both parties know each other. He said that there's been an increase in Grand Larceny Auto cases also. He said that too many of these cases result from someone leaving keys in the car's ignition, or leaving the engine running, while the driver runs into a local store to buy something. He urged everyone to stay alert and aware of their surroundings, and not to leave keys or any personal valuables inside your car while it's parked on the street.

Transportation Services and Public Transit Services Committees

John Maier

John Maier, Co-Chair of the Public Transit Committee, reported that the Committee met remotely via Webex with several representatives of the MTA/NYC Transit agency on Tuesday, August 18th to review the progress on the capital project to remove the lead paint, repair and repaint the elevated structure of the M Train in our Board area.

Lucille Songhai, NYC Transit's Community Liaison, gave a power point presentation of this In-House project showing the completed portion of this project, where the structure has been scraped, cleaned and painted with 3 coats of paint. The Committee was shown before and after photos, as well, he said. This project began in April, 2019, but was halted due to COVID-19 until recently. Mr. Maier stated that 12% of the structural painting has been completed, 61% of the steel repairs are reportedly complete, and the painting of the M train structure at Seneca Avenue is expected to be complete this season. The next leg of this project includes work on the M train station structure near Fresh Pond Road.

Mr. Maier also reported that the Grand Street Bridge Project over Newtown Creek is now in the design stage; and the status of the Wyckoff Avenue Reconstruction Project between Flushing Avenue and Cooper Avenue is delayed due to concerns about the extent of thorium contamination from the Wolff-Alport Superfund site on Irving Avenue at Cooper Avenue, in Ridgewood.

Mr. Maier reported that the Committee reviewed the proposed list of local streets to be resurfaced this year. He asked that any complaints about the street resurfacing work be reported to the Board 5 office at (718) 366-1834. He pointed out that there is a time lag between first milling the street and then repaving it. He said that the Dept. of Transportation marks the pavement once the milling and repaving work is finished.

In closing, Mr. Maier said that the Committee continues to review many traffic and pedestrian safety requests that are submitted each month. The next remote Committee Meeting will be scheduled for Tuesday, September 29th, 2020 at 7:30pm.

The Board Chairperson, Vincent Arcuri, stated that the projected start date for the planned replacement of the Grand Street Bridge is 2026, with a completion in 2029.

Walter Clayton said that 69th Road is dangerous, and that all way stops and possibly speed bumps are needed. He said someone was recently hit on 69 Road at 75 Street.

Zoning and Land Use Review Committee

Walter Sanchez

Walter Sanchez informed everyone that during a recent video conference with Amazon's representatives, he, Vincent Arcuri and Gary Giordano discussed Amazon leasing the large site at 55-15 Grand Avenue, in Maspeth, where they plan to build a warehouse and 4-level parking garage for 300 delivery vans. Construction is expected to be complete by 2023 on this site, he said. According to Amazon's plans, vans will leave this site at 9:30am, and reportedly make deliveries within a 45 minute drive.

Regarding Amazon's use of the ground floor site in the Metro Mall, at 66-26 Metropolitan Avenue, in Middle Village, Mr. Sanchez said that Amazon has signed a long-term lease for this site where renovations are currently underway to convert retail space into one large warehouse on the ground floor. He said that this site will have at least 75 delivery vans, reportedly leaving the site daily at approximately 9:30am and returning to the site after 6:30pm. He explained that there's enough room inside their lot for their vans to maneuver without blocking traffic on Metropolitan Avenue. He said that installation of a new traffic light on Metropolitan Avenue is under consideration., and a traffic signal will likely be needed at the planned Grand Avenue site considering safety concerns. Mr. Sanchez said that it is important for businesses like Amazon to be responsive to community concerns.

Board Chairperson Vincent Arcuri pointed out that merchandise at these 2 sites will be sorted overnight, and that Amazon is expected to provide significant employment opportunities. He said that Amazon is selling franchises for delivery vans. Ken Rehberger asked about infrastructure needs if Amazon plans to have electric vehicles within a few years. He also asked if the infrastructure can hold up to 300 vans being used to deliver goods. John Maier said that the Metro Mall site is essentially a self-subsisting facility. He spoke of potential problems with the way delivery drivers drive and double parking. He suggested looking at the possibility of unloading zones.

Mike Porcelli asked about the possibility of installing solar power on Amazon site rooves to charge electric vans. The Board Chairperson said that he would raise that question during their next teleconference with Amazon's representatives.

New and Old Business

Brian Dooley stated that the Jack Zwerenz Way sign that was installed, at the intersection of Myrtle Avenue at 82 Avenue, should be re-installed on the 82nd Avenue sign pole on the block where he lived.

Eric Butkiewicz asked when work on the Running Track and Soccer Field Project would begin at Juniper Valley Park. The District Manager replied that capital projects have been stalled due to COVID-19. He said that, to his knowledge, the funding is still in place.

Cathie Sumsky said she is concerned that All Faiths Cemetery doesn't seem to be run by anyone, and conditions in and around All Faiths Cemetery are a mess, and something should be done about it.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, the Board Chairperson adjourned the public meeting of Community Board 5, Queens on a motion from the floor at 9:21pm.