



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 December 9, 2020

Board Members Present

Bhubaneshor Adhikari; Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Antonetta Binanti; Eric Butkiewicz; Robert Cermeli; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Patricia Crowley; Brian Dooley; Dr. Sukh Gurung; Fred T. Haller; Fred Hoefflerle; Richard Huber; Paul A. Kerzner; Kinga Kurzyna; Maryann Lattanzio; Edward Lettau; John Maier; Patricia Maltezos; Edgar Mantel; Katherine Masi; Eileen Moloney; Margaret O’Kane; Michael O’Kane; Donald Passantino; Michael Porcelli; Kenneth Rehberger; Theodore Renz; Luis Rodriguez; Lee S. Rottenberg; Walter H. Sanchez; Dennis Stephan; Gyanal Thapa; Barbara Toscano; Patrick J. Trinchesi; Maryanna Zero

Board Members Absent

Jerome Drake; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Steven Fiedler; Mike Liendo; Kelvin Rodriguez; Carmen Santana; Catherine Sumsky; Megan Tadio; Michaeline Von Drathen; Nan Zhang

GUESTS

Queens Borough President Donovan Richards and Staff Joseph Nocerino

STAFF

Gary Giordano, District Manager-CB5Q
Laura Mulvihill, Community Associate-CB5Q

Before proceeding, the Board Chairperson stated that due to the current health emergency, our Public Hearing and Monthly Meeting are being conducted electronically. Board members, staff and guests have been provided a link to participate. Members of the public are welcome to view the livestream of this hearing and Board Meeting on YouTube, which will be posted on our CB5Q Website Homepage at www.nyc.gov/qnscb5.

Following the Salute to the Flag led by Donald Passantino, the Board Chairperson introduced the newly elected Queens Borough President Donovan Richards to address the Board.

Borough President Richards wished everyone Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year. He thanked the Board members and staff for their years of service to the Board, particularly the Board Chairperson and District Manager. He also commended the work of the Acting Borough President Sharon Lee who preceded him in office. He welcomed everyone’s suggestions and ideas about improving public services

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and agencies in local government via email at drichards@queensbp.org, or by contacting Joe Nocerino, as well as other staff members in Queens Borough Hall.

The Queens Borough President urged everyone to get tested for COVID19 at their local hospital because the rate of spread in the community has been steadily increasing this month. He said that we need more testing done in Queens, and he's requested that additional testing sites be set up in order to improve outreach to residents in local neighborhoods where there's been a high rate of spread. He said that medical staff have just begun to administer vaccinations in the city, and he will push to start administering vaccinations throughout the borough as soon as possible.

Borough President Donovan also pointed out that very many small businesses in Queens are struggling to stay open. He said that he'll meet with Mayor DeBlasio this month to discuss a new grant program to help our small businesses to survive through this pandemic. He said that he toured Queens with the Commissioner of the Dept. of Small Business Services recently to point out the need for targeted grants in hard hit areas. He said that, after seeing Queens residents help each other to survive through Superstorm Sandy, he's confident that we'll survive this pandemic together.

Board Chairperson Arcuri suggested that his office should reach out to Wyckoff Heights Medical Center to provide testing and administer vaccinations to our local population, since 30% of their patients live in Queens.

PUBLIC FORUM

The District Manager Gary Giordano read the following statements submitted by local elected officials and their representative:

Statement from Jessica Schabowski, Queens Borough Director in the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit:

"The NYC Low-to-Moderate (LMI) Storefront Loan can be used by businesses to restart or continue operations after experiencing challenges from COVID-19. Phase 2 eligible zip codes, which include 11385, can submit applications starting 12/14 for zero-interest loans up to \$100,000. Businesses must employ between 2 and 99 employees. Businesses must also have been in operation since or before 01/01/2018. For more information, please go to: <https://www.nyc.gov/storefrontloan>.

COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations are increasing rapidly in New York City. The City stockpile has now amassed over 150,000 pieces of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) after announcing its plan to maintain a 90-day stockpile earlier this year. Adults over 65 and people with underlying health conditions should limit activities outside of their home and avoid public spaces/gatherings. New Yorkers are advised not to travel this holiday season.

COVID-19 vaccines may not be available to the general public until mid-2021. We expect the first Pfizer vaccine shipments as early as 12/15/20 and the first Moderna shipments a week later, on 12/22/20. We are working closely with the State of New York on a distribution plan with an important focus on those who have the greatest need, including health care workers, nursing home residents, and people who work in our nursing homes. The Pfizer vaccine requires ultra-cold storage and special freezers — we're shoring up capacity for both to be prepared. We will use our citywide immunization registry to monitor inventory and administration and help make sure everyone gets both doses.

Wishing everyone a happy and safe holiday season."

Statement from US Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez, 7th C.D.:

"Hope everyone is well and safe. The Congressional session is ending but there are two items on the Congresswoman's agenda that I want to highlight for the Board.

1. **USDA Farmers to Families Food Box Program** (original letter attached): The letter asks USDA to provide information on the food banks receiving deliveries, the number of food shipments

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eliminated, the processes used, and what protections the program has in place to prevent community groups from facing additional costs. By requesting a formal investigation, the lawmakers are seeking more information on how USDA can best address the issue to ensure the program is reaching New Yorkers in need and suffering from the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. **COVID Relief:** Both the House and Senate presented their proposals, and a formal offer has been submitted by the White House for consideration. The Member recognizes the urgency for family and small business relief in her district. Financial and food insecurity are central to the Congresswoman's items of concern in the negotiations and will advocate for a response that matches urgent needs.

Our office is still working remotely, all Federal agency concerns or pending case work (IRS, USCIS, USPS, etc.) can still be sent our way. Our office number remains: 718-599-3658. Happy Holidays! Julio Salazar, julio.salazar2@mail.house.gov"

Statement from NYC Council Member Robert Holden, 30th CD:

"Hello neighbors, Community Board 5 members, and fellow elected officials. I hope you all enjoyed the month of November while staying safe and healthy, and I thank you for your continued work and volunteerism as we navigate this challenging year together. I also hope that you all had a great Thanksgiving. Our city continues to battle the novel coronavirus, and we must continue our collective efforts to practice social distancing, wear masks, and practice good hygiene.

My office has been hard at work on behalf of Ridgewood, Glendale, Maspeth, Middle Village, Woodhaven, and Woodside. The problem of illegal car meet up's in the confines of Community Board 5 persists. My constituents have had enough of this assault on their quality of life, whether loud music emanating from stadium size speakers or illegally modified vehicles with straight pipe exhausts or car horns and gongs. Together with Assembly Member Brian Barnwell, we met with City Hall representatives and top brass from the NYPD to demand that actions be taken. I also met with Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, asking that her office become more involved in this matter, and prosecute these individuals who also drive while under the influence or intoxicated and put the lives of the public at risk. All of this ties into a recent op-ed I wrote for the New York Post titled "Broken City:" How New York forgot the ABCs of public virtue." In the op-ed, I describe how elected officials have stopped encouraging lawful behavior and have made it impossible for the police to enforce laws. It hits on the theory of "Broken Windows" and how vital it is to crack down on quality of life issues like graffiti, abandoned cars, noise pollution, littering, and others, before it spirals into something larger. I invite you all to read it, and I welcome any input.

Community Board 5 member Gyanal Thapa recently reached out to my office regarding the NYC Department of Education. I met with him in my office, where he relayed that the current city curriculum has misinformation on the birth-place of Siddhartha Gautama, also known as Buddha. I understand that CB5 District Manager Gary Giordano has played an instrumental role in this and that the DOE has acknowledged that they will work on fixing the issue. Hopefully, we see some resolution on this before the start of the new school year."

Statement from the Office of State Assembly Member Brian Barnwell, 30th AD:

"Our office hopes everyone and their families had a nice Thanksgiving. Assemblyman Barnwell and our team would like to thank the community for donating to our annual Turkey Drive. We are happy to have given turkeys to families in need, and we again thank anyone who participated.

As a reminder, our office will be also holding a Toy Drive for families in need. Since our office remains closed due to COVID, all donations can be set up by calling us at 718-651-3185 or emailing barnwellb@nyassembly.gov Please note that the last day to donate will be December 21st.

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If you or anyone you know needs help with any issue, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office. We wish everyone a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season!"

Joseph Nocerino, Community Coordinator in the Office of the Queens Borough President, announced that tomorrow at 6pm, their office will host a Virtual Parent Advisory Board Meeting. He said that the link to participate in the meeting is posted on the Queens Borough President's website at www.queensbp.org. He wished everyone a Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas, and a Healthy Happy New Year.

Richard Huber, a Board member, said that our community has always worked very hard to deter and remove graffiti wherever we see it. He said that, to his knowledge, the police are no longer allowed to identify graffiti vandals by their TAGs but instead, police officers must witness the graffiti in progress in order to apprehend them. He asked if that is the case, and what can be done about it.

Ken Rehberger, a Board member, asked for a clarification of the COVID19 guidelines regarding dining in restaurants. He asked why patrons are not permitted to eat indoors in restaurants, and yet dining in enclosed outdoor structures is permitted. Mr. Nocerino said he'd look into it.

Staff member Laura Mulvihill took attendance of Board members and staff who were present.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Vincent Arcuri

Minutes

The Board Chairperson asked Board members to review the minutes of last month's Board Meeting which was conducted on November 18, 2020. The minutes were adopted by acclamation on a motion by Patrick Trinchese, seconded by Maryann Lattanzio.

LIQUOR, WINE and BEER LICENSE APPLICATIONS and RENEWALS

Staff member Laura Mulvihill read aloud the list of establishments in the Community Board 5 area that are in the process of applying for liquor, wine and beer licenses and/or renewals since last month's Board Meeting on November 18, 2020.

New Liquor License

- 1) ***Cabanas Jorge Restaurant Corp.*** 688 Seneca Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) ****Fresh Pond Cocktail Club LLC*** 64-18 Fresh Pond Road, Ridgewood, NY 11385

Wine and/or Beer License Renewals

- 1) ***Frank Kowalinski Post 4*** 61-57 Maspeth Avenue, Maspeth, NY 11378
- 2) ***Zenith Thai Inc.*** 70-02 Fresh Pond Road/60-98 70 Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385

Other Notifications

- 1) **The City Diner Corp., 65-35 Grand Avenue, Maspeth**, will be submitting a change of class application from a Restaurant Wine, Beer and Cider License to an On-Premise Full Liquor License.

*Licensed Outdoor Area

Demolition Notices

Staff member Laura Mulvihill reported that the Board received one demolition notice since last month's Board Meeting on November 18, 2020: Full demolition of 51-51 69th Place, a 2-family house, in **Woodside**.

District Manager's Report

Gary Giordano

The District Manager wished everyone Happy Holidays and pointed out that it's been 9 months since our Board met in person, due to the pandemic. He said that hopefully, we'll be able to hold meetings in person next year.

Regarding the sewer reconstruction project on 70 Street between Calamus Avenue and the Long Island Expressway, in Maspeth, he reported that a huge sinkhole developed overnight on November 26th, on 70 Street just north of 52 Avenue, and a parked car fell into it. He said after the car was towed away, the contractor investigated whether there were any other voids in the street nearby, but none were found. With the Holidays fast approaching, the contractor planned to begin excavating a 30' wide shaft to a depth of 60 feet on Grand Avenue this month. However, this work would only leave sufficient space for one driving lane in each direction on Grand Avenue, from 69 Lane to 72 Place, and eliminate curbside parking on both sides of Grand Avenue, he said. Instead, he asked the contractor to delay this part of the project until January, in order to avoid any further disruption to local businesses over the Holidays.

The District Manager also reminded everyone to put their household garbage out for collection before 12 Midnight on the night before their regular collection, since the Dept. of Sanitation is now operating on a snow preparedness schedule.

He also announced that Community Board staff is working to prepare a FACEBOOK page that could possibly go online in January. He said that everyone will be notified when it's up and running.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Zoning and Land Use Review Committee

Walter Sanchez

Walter Sanchez reported that the Committee met remotely with Joy Chen from the Dept. of City Planning on Monday, December 7th, to discuss the proposed citywide zoning text amendment known as the Coastal Zone Flood Resiliency Text Amendment, which was presented to the full Board at last month's Board Meeting. He said that Ms. Chen gave an excellent presentation at the Board Meeting.

On a point of clarification, Dr. Sukh Gurung, a Board member, asked if the West Maspeth Industrial Area would be affected by this zoning text amendment. Mr. Sanchez replied that only the area that borders Newtown Creek, and low-lying adjacent properties in that area would be affected.

Mr. Sanchez reported that Committee members had no objection to adopting the proposed Coastal Zone Flood Resiliency Text Amendment, as presented.

As there was no further discussion of the Committee's recommendation, the Board Chairperson Vincent Arcuri requested a Roll Call vote on the matter, which then carried unanimously by a vote of -29- in favor; - 3 – opposed; - 0 – abstentions; and – 0 – not voting.

Mr. Sanchez reported that the committee also discussed the possibility of rezoning a portion of Cypress Avenue, between Decatur Street and Summerfield Street, in Ridgewood, including the property at 1086 Cypress Avenue, for mixed use residential and commercial use.

Transportation Services Committee

John Maier

John Maier, Co-Chair of the Transportation Services Committee, reported that there are no recent updates on the status of capital improvement projects since their last Committee Meeting on November 17th, 2020.

He requested a moment of silence in memory of the late Roland Belay, a former member of the Transportation and Public Transit Services Committee, who passed away at home last week, after an extended illness. He said that the Committee owed him a debt of gratitude for his professional expertise in engineering when they commented on the proposed plans of capital projects.

Regarding a request from Broadway Stages for designated parking spots on Cooper Avenue, btw 82 Street and 83 Street, in Glendale, Mr. Maier reported that the Committee took no position on this matter and referred the applicant to the NYC Dept. of Transportation for a determination.

He said that their next Committee Meeting will be held remotely at 7:30pm on Tuesday, January 26th.

Library Report

Board Chairperson Vincent Arcuri reported that the Glendale Library Renovation Project is proceeding on schedule and is slated to be substantially completed by April 28th, 2021. He said that it's one of the few library projects where work has continued during the pandemic. He said that the delivery and installation date of the exterior book return machine has yet to be determined. Verizon is slated to provide internet connectivity to this site on December 14th, 2020.

Fred Haller asked that the American flag above the entrance be replaced, now that it's in tatters.

New Business

The Board Chairperson urged everyone to get both tests for the COVID19 virus. There's one test for antibodies to detect if you've been exposed to the virus; the other one is a blood test to determine if you are currently infected with the virus, he said.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, the Board Chairperson wished everyone a Happy Hanukkah, Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. He entertained a motion to adjourn at 8:08pm.