



Community Board No. 5

Borough of Queens
Ridgewood, Maspeth, Middle Village and Glendale
61-23 Myrtle Avenue • Glendale, NY 11385
Tel (718) 366-1834 Fax (718) 417-5799
E-mail: qn05@cb.nyc.gov
www.NYC.gov/qnscb5



Vincent Arcuri, Jr.
Chairperson

Gary Giordano
District Manager

Minutes of Community Board 5 Virtual Public Meeting June 10, 2020

Board Members Present

Bhubaneshor Adhikari; Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Antonetta Binanti; Eric Butkiewicz; Robert Cermeli; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Patricia Crowley; Brian Dooley; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Shawn Fisch; Dr. Sukh Gurung; Fred T. Haller; Fred Hoefflerle; Richard Huber; Kinga Kalandyk; Paul A. Kerzner; Maryann Lattanzio; Edward Lettau; John Maier; Patricia Maltezos; Edgar Mantel; Katherine Masi; Margaret O’Kane; 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

Jerome Drake; Steven Fiedler; Mike Liendo; Eileen Moloney; Kelvin Rodriguez; Carmen Santana; Megan Tadio; Crystal Wolfe; Nan Zhang

Elected Officials

Joseph Nocerino – Acting Queens Borough President Sharon Lee

GUESTS

Chae No, Queens Community Liaison – NYC Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene

STAFF

Gary Giordano, District Manager

Laura Mulvihill, Community Associate

Following the Salute to the Flag, Board Chairperson Vincent Arcuri welcomed everyone to view this Remote Board Meeting which is being conducted and livestreamed in real time to the public tonight, due to the current constraints placed on the Board during the COVID-19 Pandemic. He informed everyone that next month’s Board Meeting on July 8th will most likely be livestreamed, as well.

The Board Chairperson announced the first item on the Board Agenda as:

Presentation re: Update on the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

By Chae No, NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene

Chae No began his presentation by giving a brief update on recent COVID-19 health statistics. As of today, he said that there have been a total of 2,010,961 confirmed COVID-19 cases, with a total of 113,097 fatalities due to COVID-19 in our country.

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Mr. No reported that over the past 10 days, New York City has been successful in meeting all three target thresholds that were set by NYS public health officials in order to halt the spread of COVID-19 in the City. For example, he said that the city had 52 hospital admissions for suspected COVID-19 cases yesterday, which is well below the daily threshold of 200 new cases; and the number of patients in intensive care was 337, which also falls below the threshold of 375; and, with 30,000 COVID-19 diagnostic tests performed per day citywide, less than 2 percent of New Yorkers have tested positive, which falls well below the 15% threshold for rate of spread.

He pointed out that in Queens, which is one of the City's hardest hit boroughs with over 32,000 cases, residents over the age of 65 who've contracted COVID-19 represent more than half of the 5,000+ fatalities due to this disease in Queens, since the beginning of March. He said that year-to-date, the overall death toll of NYC residents, due to confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19, is over 20,000. During the past 24 hours in NYC, he said that 664 new COVID-19 cases have been confirmed, and 67 deaths from confirmed cases were reported. He pointed out that these most recent statistics indicate that the rate of spread of this disease has significantly declined since the month of March, when the Governor issued the State of Emergency.

In recognition of the fact that Phase 1 of the State's Plan to Re-Start the Economy began in New York City on Monday, Mr. No congratulated everyone for adhering to the advice of state and local health officials. He urged everyone to continue to:

- Stay home if you're sick, and only leave your home for essential medical care, or other essential errands.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from other people.
- Keep your hands clean by washing your hands often with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Wear a face covering because you can be contagious without symptoms. Protect those around you by wearing a face covering.

He advised that anyone who is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath, to please contact their healthcare provider or telehealth program to discuss whether they should be evaluated for testing. Each coronavirus test provider will determine if testing is appropriate based on their symptoms, risk factors and test availability. He said to call the coronavirus test site before going there, to learn about their testing criteria, availability, and hours. This information is changing daily, he said.

Mr. No also cautioned everyone that there's a growing number of cases of Multi-Symptom Inflammatory Syndrome in Children (MIS-C) which is related to COVID-19. He said that it has proven to be fatal in several cases nationwide, and at least 89 cases have required hospitalization in NYC to-date. He described the common symptoms of MIS-C: fever, irritability or sluggishness, abdominal pain, diarrhea, vomiting, rash, red or pink eyes, enlarged lymph node ("gland") on one side of the neck, red cracked lips or red tongue or swollen hands and feet. He said that routine laboratory tests reveal evidence of inflammation and involvement of the heart, kidneys, lungs, skin, gastrointestinal, and neurologic systems as components of this new syndrome. He urged parents to consult their family physician if their child has a fever for more than 3 consecutive days.

Mr. No said that during this State of Emergency, any New Yorkers who do not have health insurance coverage can apply for individual and family health coverage through the New York State Government's website at <https://nystateofhealth.ny.gov/> or by calling 1(855) 355-5777.

Regarding Phase 1 of the State's Re-Start the Economy program, Mr. No said that a range of businesses are now permitted to go back to work, including construction, agriculture, manufacturing and wholesale

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trade. He advised local business owners to contact the Small Business Hotline to learn more about the proper guidelines to follow, at 1 (888) SBS-4NYC, or 1 (888) 727-4692. He said that all nonessential workers are asked to continue to work from home, if possible, until further notice.

Mr. No also informed everyone that NY State has begun a very aggressive program to Identify, Isolate and Trace anyone who has contracted or been exposed to COVID-19 in the State, performing 3.4 tests for COVID-19 infections per 1,000 residents in areas of the state where cases have been concentrated. He said that tests were performed on 60,839 residents today, and beginning next month, the State expects to expand the number of COVID-19 diagnostic tests to 80,000 per day. He said that the City's free COVID-19 Antibody testing sites are scheduled to open in July.

Mr. No said that there are more COVID-19 cases among people of color and the City is opening most test sites in areas where they live. He cautioned everyone that if their COVID-19 Antibody tests are positive, it does not mean that you are now immune to COVID-19.

In closing, Mr. No informed everyone that local hospitals in the Greater Metropolitan Area are facing a severe shortage of blood now. He said that the New York Blood Center is actively seeking blood donors who would be willing to donate their blood, particularly if they've recently tested positive for Antibodies to COVID-19. He said that the convalescent blood plasma would be used in a medical trial to assist patients who are currently hospitalized with COVID-19 to recover from their illness. He asked that anyone interested in donating blood to the NY Blood Center visit their website at www.nybc.org, or call (800) 933-2566, for more information.

Mr. No also pointed out that the rate of childhood immunizations has fallen to dangerously low levels since last year, to around 60% of the population, which could lead to epidemics of preventable diseases, such as, measles, mumps, pertussis, and pneumonia. He urged parents to contact their family physician in order to schedule a well child visit as soon as possible in order to get all of their recommended vaccinations. He said that if you don't have a family doctor, please call 1 (844) NYC-NYC4, or 1-(844) 692-6924, to schedule an appointment for your child's vaccination at a local public health clinic of your choice.

The Board Chairperson Vincent Arcuri opened the floor to questions and comments.

Dr. Sukh Gurung, a newly appointed Board member, asked if there are any COVID-19 testing sites that are located near Wyckoff Heights Medical Center by the Brooklyn-Queens border. Mr. No said that, right now, any hospital that is administered by NYC HHC is offering this test by appointment only. For information about the City's diagnostic testing sites, he said to go to nyc.gov/covidtest and then, type in the zip code where you live.

Lee Rottenberg, a Board member, asked what is the purpose of testing everyone. Mr. No replied that the City and State want to find out what the exposure rate is in local neighborhoods throughout NYC, as compared to the rest of the State. He said it would be helpful to know the rate of community spread in each community in order to determine where the hot-spots are.

Cathie Sumsky, a Board member, asked what's going to happen to the rate of community spread, if huge demonstrations that are planned in the city actually take place. Mr. No replied that it's a major concern for local and state health officials. He cited the example of the spike in COVID-19 infections after the Memorial Day Weekend when people crowded into local parks and beaches throughout the country. He said the Dept. of Health consistently issues public health warnings to wear face coverings whenever outside your homes, to practice social distancing, and to wash your hands frequently, but their warnings are not always heeded.

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Fred Hoefflerle asked when the NYS Dept. of Motor Vehicles will reopen for in person visits. Mr. No said that as far as he knows, the DMV will resume in person transactions under Phase 3, which is scheduled to begin on July 1st. He advised that people contact the DMV on-line at www.dmv.ny.gov.

Peggy O'Kane said that she mailed her driver's license renewal application to the DMV this Spring, but still hasn't received any documents. The Board Chairperson replied that any licenses that expired after March 27th have been automatically extended until the DMV catches up on the backlog.

Edward Lettau, a Board member, said that after having been exposed to COVID-19 at work, where several people had come down with it, he returned to work on May 26th where everyone has been issued personal protective equipment and barriers have been installed. He asked if it's safe to assume that he won't contract COVID-19 at this point. Mr. No replied that it's always advisable to get a Flu shot to boost your immune system. Furthermore, he said that even though both State and local health guidelines advise you how to minimize your risk of contracting this disease, there's no guarantee that you won't be susceptible to it because it's a highly contagious disease, and everyone's immune system is different.

Dmytro Fedkowskyj, a Board member, said that anyone who's been exposed to the COVID-19 virus can call 1(888) 364-3065 to ask the State Dept. of Health for information on where their testing sites are located. He said that during the intake process, they determine if you meet their criteria for testing. If so, they call you back to set up an appointment to be tested. It usually takes 3 to 5 days to receive the test results. He asked if the State keeps any records of the test results, and if they've ever discovered someone who's come down with COVID-19 a second time. Mr. No said that the State Dept. of Health is required to keep case information for at least 7 years. Since this patient information is confidential, it's only available to patients and their doctors, and no follow up studies have been undertaken. In the meantime, he said that everyone should take the proper precautions to avoid contracting this disease, whether their test results were COVID-19 positive, or not.

Maryann Lattanzio, a Board member, asked what agency is charged with enforcing the Dept. of Health's guidelines regarding wearing face coverings and social distancing in local parks. She said that she has seen large crowds picnicking in Forest Park and in Juniper Valley Park on weekends, without wearing face masks or social distancing. Mr. No said that this is a common problem throughout the City. The Parks Police are responsible for enforcement inside local parks, otherwise, it's up to the NYPD to enforce the Dept. of Health's guidelines for maintaining social distancing, etc.

As there were no further questions or comments, the Board Chairperson thanked Mr. No for his presentation.

The Board Chairperson welcomed the newly appointed Board members at tonight's Board Meeting and asked them to introduce themselves. Bhubaneshor Adhikari informed everyone that he is Vice President of the local Nepalese Community Association in Ridgewood and is looking forward to working with members of Community Board 5 on local issues. Eric Butkiewicz, a Middle Village resident, said that he's grown up in this community, and he is looking forward to working with members of Community Board 5 for the betterment of the entire community. Shawn Fisch, a Maspeth resident, said that he works for the United Federation of Teachers Teacher Training Program, and that he moved into this area with his family last year, and loves it. Dr. Sukh Gurung said that he's been a Ridgewood homeowner for almost 20 years, and a recently retired civil engineer. As an immigrant from Nepal himself, he said that he wants to get more involved in the community, and help to foster the expansion of the local business sector, now that his children have grown up and he has more free time. Kinga Kurzyrna-Kalandyk said that she became an American citizen last year and has been working as a lawyer in Bay Ridge since she graduated law school. She said that it's a pleasure to work with the members of Community Board 5 for the public benefit.

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The Board Chairperson informed the newly appointed Board members that they will receive a package of information about our Community Board, along with a copy of the Board's By-Laws, in a few days. He said that the Executive Committee plans to meet to review the membership of the Board's Committees, and they will receive a letter informing them about what their new Committee assignments will be in the year ahead.

He also informed everyone that two Community Board members have chosen not to renew their membership this year due to health concerns: Connie Santos, and Patricia Grayson.

The Board Chairperson offered his congratulations to Deputy Inspector Victoria Perry on her recent promotion in rank from Captain and Commanding Officer of the 104th Precinct. He said she will remain in command of the 104th Police Precinct. He read a report that was prepared by the 104th Police Precinct's Community Affairs Officer Michael Berish, including the crime statistics for the past 28 days in our Precinct area. He said that the number of Rapes reported have declined by 4 since last month; the number of Robberies declined by 2 during the same period; the number of Grand Larcenies reported declined by 8; and the number of Grand Larceny Auto crimes have declined by 3 since last month. The number of Felony Assaults reported to the precinct has increased by 1 since last month; and the number of Burglaries reported has increased by 7 since last month.

District Manager Gary Giordano informed everyone that there were two peaceful protests that took place in our Board 5 area recently. He said that there was a protest march along Onderdonk Avenue, in Ridgewood, and another protest was held inside Juniper Valley Park, in Middle Village, over the weekend.

District Manager Gary Giordano pointed out that while the citywide crime statistics have gone down by 2.46% year-to-date, our Precinct's crime statistics have gone up 17% year-to-date over last year's figures. He said that Robberies have increased by 22%; Felony Assaults have increased by 70%; and Burglaries by 81%. The number of Rapes reported has declined by 64%, when compared to last year's crime statistics in the 104th Precinct. The Board Chairperson replied that the number of Burglaries has increased because there are so many vacant storefronts now, as compared to last year. And, he said, most of the Felony Assault cases involve domestic violence which has spiked during the current Lockdown.

Richard Huber commented that he believes the recent increase in crime statistics is largely due to the release of hundreds of inmates from the City's jail system since last year.

Public Forum

The District Manager read into the record, the statements from local residents and organizations:

RE: American Red Cross - NYS Fatality Support Mission

The American Red Cross across the regions of New York State have developed a program in response to COVID-19 to support individuals and families who have lost family members to death as a result of COVID-19. The program will link crisis counselors with families to provide emotional and spiritual support, as well as targeted short-term case management to assist with navigating through the challenging processes they might be faced with as a result of the death. This might include challenges with moving the family member's body through the hospital, nursing home, medical examiner and funeral home systems in this time when those systems may be overwhelmed and their processes may be different than they normally are. They may also include linkage to legal resources for estate, custody, immigration or other issues related to the death. The following links to an online intake form can be submitted by a family member, a friend who thinks someone needs help, or an agency on behalf of the family. For those without access to the needed online technology, the phone number will link the caller

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to an intake person who will assist with the initial steps for getting assistance. For more information, go to their website at: www.redcross.org/NYSCOVIDFamilySupport. or contact them by phone at 585-957-8187. The program is expected to operate for as long as families will benefit from the service or through the month of September.

Kerry Herlihy, a resident of Cypress Avenue in Ridgewood, requested that enforcement of the new Bus Lane on the southbound side of Fresh Pond Road be prioritized this year. She also said that she is opposed to the proposed budget cuts for the NYPD. And, she requested that the Dept. of Sanitation restore the curbside compost collection program in the Board 5 area. The Board Chairperson referred the enforcement issue to the Transportation Committee for further discussion. He said that the request for curbside compost collection will be referred to the Dept. of Sanitation, and her opposition to the proposed budget cuts to the NYPD will be relayed to Mayor Bill De Blasio.

Kelly Mancuso, the owner of a small salon in Ridgewood, requests the Board's assistance in reopening her business, despite the landlord's threats to evict her. The Board Chairperson referred the matter to Theodore Renz, Executive Director of the Myrtle Avenue BID, and Angela Mirabile, Executive Director of the Greater Ridgewood Restoration Corporation.

The District Manager reported that residents have requested the Board's support the proposed budget cuts to the NYPD's budget, in correspondence that was sent to the Board Office. The Board Chairperson referred their requests to the Public Safety Committee for further discussion.

Chairperson's Report

Vincent Arcuri

MINUTES

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

LIQUOR, WINE and BEER LICENSE APPLICATIONS and RENEWALS

New Liquor License Application

1. * Avanti d/b/a **Un Altro** 65-17 Fresh Pond Road, Ridgewood, NY 11385

Liquor License Renewal Applications

1. * Grand Jammer LLC d/b/a **Windjammer** 552 Grandview Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
2. * Grove Productions d/b/a **Nowadays**, 56-06 Cooper Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
3. **Nostro Joe's** d/b/a **Joe's Restaurant** 66-11 Forest Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
4. **Brisas del Mar** 675 Woodward Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
5. Outerborough Arts d/b/a **The Footlight Bar**, 465 Seneca Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385

Notifications

- 1) ***Julia's Wine & Beer Bar LLC, 818 Woodward Avenue, Ridgewood** submitted notification that they intend to submit an application to the NYS Liquor Authority to add Geneva Williams as a Principal, and to change their method of operation from a Tavern Wine License to a full Liquor, Wine & Beer License.
- 2) The NYS Liquor Authority Notified our Board office that they will conduct a 500' Hearing on behalf of ***Baby Johnson Café Corp., 1684 Woodbine Street, Ridgewood.**

Demolitions

The Board Chairperson announced that the Board recently received a notice that the owner of **78-41 84 Street**, in Glendale has submitted plans for a partial demolition of his property. He asked for further

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clarification on this, and asked Board members to remain vigilant and report any questionable construction activities to the Board office.

As there were no comments or questions on these applications, the Board Chairperson announced the next Item on the Board Agenda as a statement from Joseph Nocerino, on behalf of the Acting Queens Borough President Sharon Lee.

Mr. Nocerino welcomed the newly appointed Board members, as well as all of the reappointed Board members, to serve on this Board. He urged everyone to fill out their 2020 Census forms if they haven't done so already, either by going online at mycensus2020.gov, by calling their toll free phone number at 1-844-330-2020, or by filling it out and mailing back your Census questionnaire. He asked everyone to spread the word about this year's Census.

He also reminded anyone who's eligible to vote in the Democratic Presidential Primary on Tuesday, June 23rd to vote, either at the polling site or by filling out, signing, dating and mailing in your Absentee Ballot which must be postmarked on the day before the election. He said that Democratic candidates for the Queens Borough President's Office, as well as state and federal elected officials will be on this month's ballot. Early Voting sites will open beginning this Saturday for anyone who's interested in voting before Election Day.

Mr. Nocerino announced that Sharon Lee, the Acting Borough President, will host several virtual events at Queens Borough Hall this month: a Queens Pride Event at 2pm on Thursday, June 18th; a Job Recruitment Fair at 2pm on Wednesday, June 24th, and later that same day, the Phillipines Independence Day Celebration at 5pm; and at 5pm on Thursday, June 25th, a Celebration of Jerusalem.

The District Manager read into the record the following statements from local elected officials:

Congresswoman Grace Meng's Statement:

We would really appreciate it if you can announce this at this month's Board Meeting. Similar to last month at the Glendale Memorial Triangle, we will be giving out about 750 masks tomorrow, Thursday, June 11th, from 10:30am to 11:30am, at the Glendale Community Garden, located at 74-10 88 Street.

Announcements from the Mayor Bill De Blasio's Office

NYC Care will be expanding to Queens four months ahead of schedule. This is a Citywide effort to guarantee healthcare for all New Yorkers by providing access to low-cost and no-cost primary care for those who have been ineligible or can't afford insurance, and helps fight healthcare disparities made clear by COVID-19. For more information, please go to www.nyccare.nyc.

Phase 1 of re-opening New York City began on Monday. The industries that can now re-open include construction; retail (clothing and electronic stores, limited to curbside or in-store pickup); manufacturing; and wholesale trade. Our dedicated Business Restart Hotline is [888-SBS-4NYC \(888-727-4692\)](tel:888-SBS-4NYC). Workers who call 311 will be connected to the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection for immediate assistance. NYC Small Business Services is coordinating with Business Improvement Districts and Chambers of Commerce to provide 2 million face masks to small businesses citywide. In Community Board 5, Small Business Services has partnered with the Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement District.

Our daily health indicators continue to remain below the thresholds. We expect Phase 2 of re-opening to begin either at the end of June or the beginning of July. The Mayor announced a plan to expand restaurant outdoor seating once the City enters Phase 2, to temporarily use outdoor space to support

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the city's restaurants while maintaining social distancing. This will include curbside seating (convert parking spaces to use the roadbed, Open Streets (we have 45 miles of Open Streets and will be expanding to 100 miles), and sidewalk seating (this will require establishments to maintain paths for pedestrians and people with disabilities).

The City has the capacity to perform 20,000 COVID-19 tests per day now. For an interactive map that shows all known testing sites, you can go to nyc.gov/covidtesting or call 311. We encourage all New Yorkers to get tested, especially those who have recently attended a protest. If you need a hotel to self-isolate, please go to nyc.gov/covidhotel. Our Test and Trace team was launched on June 1st and includes 1,700 Community Engagement Specialists and Case Investigators, speaking 40 distinctive languages.

Alternate Side Parking will be suspended through June 21st. The City may extend the suspension, based on street cleanliness and workforce availability.

Statement from State Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi:

"Good evening. Hope everyone is doing well. As the legislature has reconvened, we are pushing a new set of initiatives to help the state further adapt to the pandemic. This includes legislation to help youth in foster care, the homeless population, and people who have been exposed to trauma and adverse childhood experiences. In the coming weeks we are also hosting a series of roundtables to evaluate the state's response to the homelessness crisis during the outbreak and determine best practices moving forward. Some constituents are still experiencing issues with unemployment, we're continuing to work with Department of Labor to address these issues. If this is affecting you or anyone you know, please have them reach out to us, and feel free to reach out with any other questions or concerns you may have. Thanks again to Board leadership and each member for continuing to serve the community, and please stay safe and well."

Statement from State Assembly Member Brian Barnwell:

"Maspeth Federal Savings Bank has donated over 11,000 KN95 masks to local hospitals, first responders, nursing homes, and local businesses in Queens. Both Elmhurst Hospital and Jamaica Hospital received a shipment of 1,500 masks, and others were given to our local FDNY Houses, NYPD Precincts and Nursing Homes. The bank partnered with my office to coordinate the deliveries.

"My office was working hard to obtain vital masks for hospitals and emergency workers fighting the virus, but we needed a community partner," said Barnwell. "Immediately, the team at Maspeth Federal stepped up and generously contributed the funds to make this happen."

Because of their generosity and contribution, over 11,000 masks were purchased and secured for hospitals, emergency workers, and those at risk, he added. We truly cannot thank Maspeth Federal enough for what they did.

To date, Maspeth Federal Savings has pledged over \$50,000 to address needs arising from the pandemic, a number that is sure to grow over the coming weeks.

In addition to the mask donation, the bank has partnered with local restaurants, delicatessens, and other food service providers to offer free weekly meals to first responders.

The bank is also donating murals to Elmhurst, Jamaica, and Flushing Hospitals to honor our healthcare heroes.

Thanks to partnering with Maspeth Federal Savings, Splashes of Hope artists are creating murals honoring our healthcare heroes on the front lines. Three murals will be donated to Elmhurst, Jamaica, and Flushing Hospitals in Queens, as these hospitals are in the center of the epidemic."

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Council Member Robert Holden’s Statement:

“Hello neighbors, Community Board 5 members, and fellow elected officials. I hope that you are all staying safe and healthy, and I thank you for your continued work and volunteerism as we navigate this challenging year together. Our city is now beginning to reopen businesses as the spread of COVID-19 has slowed dramatically, and that is thanks to all of our collective efforts to practice social distancing, wear masks and practice good hygiene.

My office in Middle Village remains closed, but my staff and I gladly continue to serve our constituents every day while working from home. Please do not hesitate to call (718)-366-3900 or email (district30@council.nyc.gov) my office any time when you need assistance.

The City Council has continued its work over the past month to hold remote hearings and pass legislation related to the COVID-19 pandemic and other topics. During the most recent Stated Meeting, I voted “no” on a bill that will create a local conditional release commission, with all members appointed by the mayor, to identify possible candidates for early release from incarceration. I also voted against a bill that bans the use of the word “alien” in city documents and regulations. As we consider legislation related to police reforms, I am not in favor of large cuts to the NYPD budget as our officers need the proper resources to do their jobs while the rates of several major crimes have risen in 2020.

I have also continued my work on the local level to always improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods. After advocating since March for the residents of the Cooper Avenue homeless shelter to be moved into hotel rooms during the pandemic, the Department of Homeless Services finally informed me that it will be doing so this week. In addition, the city recently launched its Text-to-911 system after several delays, which will give domestic violence victims, the hard of hearing, and others who can’t call 911 the ability to contact the authorities safely during an emergency. This was one of my priorities as chair of the Technology Committee, and I’m proud that New Yorkers can finally utilize this service.

While we can’t host or attend many events these days, my staff and I have organized a pair of mask giveaways outside my office where we donated thousands of masks and bottles of hand sanitizer to the local community. We have also donated masks and sanitizer to our local cemeteries and food pantries, and I recently took part in a pet food giveaway for people who have lost their jobs due to COVID-19. Going forward, we will continue to provide all the help we can to our community during this time. Now that the city has entered the first phase of reopening, I am confident that we can fully reopen in the coming weeks if we all continue to do our part. My staff and I welcome any and all of your questions or concerns, so please do not hesitate to contact us. I look forward to seeing all of you soon.”

District Manager’s Report

Gary Giordano

The District Manager reported that the Dept. of Parks has pushed back the order-to-work date for the contractor to begin work on the capital project to replace the turf playing field and running track inside Juniper Valley Park. He said that only emergency projects are underway, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He also reported that the contractor has begun work on the installation of a big box sewer main under Calamus Avenue between 69 Street and 70 Street in Maspeth. The project calls for sewer upgrades in the vicinity of 70 Street and 52 Avenue, and will extend south along 70 Street to the LIE, in Maspeth. He said that work on this huge project is progressing on schedule.

He said that work is finally nearing completion on the sewer main project in the vicinity of Penelope Avenue/74 Street, and adjoining side streets, in Middle Village. The contractor expects to complete the roadway restoration on Penelope Avenue between 71 Street and 74 Street, and on 74 Street between Juniper Boulevard South and Juniper Valley Road very soon, he said.

The District Manager also reported that a large trunk water main installation project is currently underway on Troutman Street between Flushing Avenue and Cypress Avenue, in Ridgewood.

Economic Development

Theodore Renz

Theodore Renz, Executive Director of the Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement District, informed Board members that approximately 70% of the stores on Myrtle Avenue were closed, due to the Lockdown that went into effect due to COVID-19 pandemic in March. He said that the remaining 30% of the local businesses are mainly food service businesses. He said that most restaurants are closed, except for the Chinese take-outs. Under a Small Business Services grant that the Myrtle Avenue BID had acquired, he said that the BID has hired a crew of workers to clean graffiti off storefronts, utility poles and other amenities, sanitize the muni meters on the shopping strip, and store away street furniture that has been available for shoppers and pedestrians in the 71 Avenue Plaza, in Ridgewood.

He reported that several landlords in the Myrtle Avenue BID have been illegally locking their tenants out of their buildings, and he's been working with the store owners to reach a compromise solution with these property owners. He said he'd like to bring back all of the local shops and businesses along this commercial strip, once the Lockdown ends. He said that he's worried that many local businesses may decide to declare bankruptcy instead, due to this Lockdown.

Mr. Renz said that Council Member Reynoso sponsored a new Bill to allow outdoor seating for restaurants, which was co-sponsored by Council Member Holden.

He publicly thanked Antoinetta Binanti of Rudy's Bake Shop for donating so much food for healthcare workers at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center, who worked through the pandemic.

Election of Board Officers

Board Chairperson Arcuri announced that all of the newly-appointed Board Members are eligible to vote in this annual Election of Executive Committee Members. He read a copy of Patricia Grayson's letter of resignation to the Board members, and gave the floor to the District Manager Gary Giordano to conduct the election.

The District Manager explained the process of election, and said that the goal is to have at least one representative from each of the communities of Ridgewood, Maspeth, Middle Village and Glendale serving on the Executive Committee. He read aloud all the names of Board Members who currently serve on the Executive Committee and said that copies of the list were emailed to all Board Members. . The District Manager opened the floor to nominations for the position of Chairperson, and he pointed out that Vincent Arcuri was nominated for this position at last month's Board Meeting, and accepted the nomination. As there were no further nominations from the floor, Mr. Giordano closed the nominations, and Board Secretary Margaret O'Kane cast one unanimous ballot to elect Vincent Arcuri, the Chairperson of Community Board 5, Queens. The District Manager opened the floor to nominations for the position of First Vice- Chairperson, and pointed out that Walter Sanchez accepted his nomination at last month's Board Meeting. As there were no other nominations for this position, Mr. Giordano closed nominations, and Board Secretary Margaret O'Kane cast one unanimous ballot to elect Walter Sanchez, as First Vice-Chair of Community Board 5, Queens. The District Manager opened the floor to nominations for the position of 2nd Vice- Chairperson, and pointed out that Dmytro Fedkowskyj was nominated to fill this position at last month's Board Meeting and he accepted. As there were no other nominations, Mr. Giordano closed the nominations, and Board Secretary Margaret O'Kane cast one unanimous ballot to elect Dmytro Fedkowskyj, as 2nd Vice-Chair of Community Board 5, Queens. The District Manager opened the floor to nominations for the position of Treasurer, and pointed out that Katherine Masi, was nominated for this position and accepted her nomination at last month's Board Meeting. As there were no other nominations for this position, the District Manager closed the nominations, and Board Secretary Margaret O'Kane cast one unanimous ballot to elect Katherine Masi,

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as Treasurer of Community Board 5, Queens. The District Manager opened the floor to nominations for the position of Secretary, and pointed out that Margaret O’Kane was nominated for this position, and she accepted her nomination at last month’s Board Meeting. As there no other nominations for this position, Mr. Giordano closed the nominations and Board Secretary Margaret O’Kane cast one unanimous ballot to elect Margaret O’Kane, as Secretary of the Board.

The District Manager read aloud the names of candidates who were nominated to serve as At-Large Members at last month’s Board Meeting, including Theodore Renz, from Middle Village; John Maier, from Ridgewood; Paul Kerzner, from Ridgewood; Fred Haller, from Glendale; and Walter Clayton, from Middle Village.

He opened the floor for any additional nominations for the 4 Members-at-Large positions.

John Maier nominated Maryann Lattanzio; Walter Sanchez nominated Patricia Crowley; and Kathy Masi nominated Edgar Mantel, all of whom accepted their nominations.

Laura Mulvihill informed everyone that Patricia Grayson had asked if the Board’s elections could be postponed until later this year, because she will be confined to living in an assisted living facility until Fall. The Board Chairperson replied that the Board’s By-Laws call for the Election of Officers in June.

The District Manager read aloud the names of the eight candidates who were nominated to fill the four positions of Member-At-Large on the Executive Committee, and who have accepted their nominations, as follows: Walter Clayton of Middle Village; Patricia Crowley of Glendale; Fred Haller of Glendale; Paul Kerzner of Ridgewood; Maryann Lattanzio of Maspeth; John Maier of Ridgewood; Edgar Mantel of Middle Village; and Theodore Renz of Middle Village.

After discussion, it was agreed that ballots could be sent via email to all Board members.

The District Manager informed everyone that paper ballots would be prepared and sent via email to all of the Board members as soon as possible, and he asked that everyone print their name, sign and date their ballot, before either delivering it to our Board 5 Office, or mailing it back to our Office. He asked that Board members reply with their votes as soon as possible so that the election results could be tallied prior to next month’s Board Meeting.

New Business

Ken Rehberger asked if there was any response to a request for a meeting with representatives from Amazon regarding their proposed alterations to the front entrance, sidewalk, ramps and curb cuts at Rentar Plaza, located at 66-26 Metropolitan Avenue, in Middle Village. John Maier asked if we could obtain a copy of their site plans. The Board Chairperson said that he would inquire about it.

Edward Lettau urged all registered voters to participate in the upcoming Presidential Primary Election on June 23rd. He said that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all voters are eligible to vote by Absentee Ballot this month. He pointed out that voters must choose candidates that are listed on both sides of each ballot, and Absentee Ballots must be signed in ink, and dated, and mailed back by June 22nd, the day before election.

John Maier suggested that our Board post a message on our Community Board 5 website that states that we accept comments or questions from the public for consideration at the Board Meeting, but they must be submitted in writing on the day before each Board Meeting.

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Maryann Lattanzio reported that CityMD, opposite Stop and Shop on Grand Avenue, in Maspeth, is providing diagnostic testing for COVID-19. The Board Chairperson replied that if you need the full test, you may have to make an appointment at a local hospital.

Robert Cermeli urged everyone to complete the 2020 US Census as soon as possible, and to encourage their friends and neighbors to do so. He said that New York could lose two Congressional seats if there's an incomplete count, as was the case after the undercount that occurred during the 2010 US Census.

The Board Chairperson announced that our next Board Meeting will be conducted remotely on July 8th, and adjourned the Board Meeting on a motion from the floor at 9:47pm.