



Vincent Arcuri, Jr.
Chairperson

Community Board No. 5

Borough of Queens
Ridgewood, Maspeth, Middle Village and Glendale
61-23 Myrtle Avenue • Glendale, NY 11385
(718) 366-1834
E-mail: qnscb5@nyc.rr.com



Gary Giordano
District Manager

Amended Minutes of Community Board 5 Public Meeting December 11, 2019

Board Members Present

Vincent Arcuri, Jr.; Antonetta Binanti; Robert Cermeli; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Patricia Crowley; Brian Dooley; Jerome Drake; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Steven Fiedler; Fred T. Haller; Fred Hoefflerle; Richard Huber; Paul A. Kerzner; 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; Kelvin Rodriguez; Luis Rodriguez; Lee S. Rottenberg; Walter H. Sanchez; Carmen Santana; Dennis Stephan; Megan Tadio; Barbara Toscano; Patrick J. Trinchese; Crystal Wolfe; Maryanna Zero

Board Members Absent

Patricia Grayson; Mike Liendo; Connie Santos; Catherine Sumsky; Gyanal Thapa; Michaeline Von Drathen; Nan Zhang

Elected Officials

NYC Council Member Robert Holden, 30th CD and Staff Charles Vavruska
NYS Assemblyman Brian Barnwell, 30th AD
Jessica Schabowski – Mayor Bill de Blasio
Joseph Nocerino - Queens Borough President Melinda Katz
Cristian Romero – U. S. Representative Grace Meng, 6th C.D.
Antziri Campos – NYS Senator Michael Gianaris, 12th SD
Kevin Wisniewski – NYS Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, 28th AD
Alison Cummings – NYS Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, 37th AD
Christine Stoll – NYS Assemblyman Michael Miller, 38th AD
Fatima Elmansy – NYC Council Member Antonio Reynoso, 34th CD

Staff Present

Gary Giordano, District Manager, CB5 Queens
Catherine O'Leary and Laura Mulvihill, Community Associates - CB5Q Staff

GUESTS

P.O. Haaris Hamid – Community Affairs Unit, NYPD Patrol Borough Queens North
Justin Carter and Gareth Solan, partners in NOWADAYS, 56-06 Cooper Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
Benjamin Fang, Queens Ledger

Board Chairperson Vincent Arcuri called the monthly Board Meeting to order at 7:07pm, following the Salute to the Flag.

The Board Chairperson informed everyone that tonight's Board Meeting will not be live-streamed because tonight's Agenda is very abbreviated. He welcomed everyone stay after our Board Meeting to celebrate the

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Holidays by sharing some light refreshments and good company. He said that donations of toys and gifts for young children are being collected at tonight's meeting for distribution to the Women, Infant and Children's Food Assistance Program (WIC) for low-income families, located at 55-05 Myrtle Avenue in Ridgewood. The Board Chairperson informed everyone that Board Member Mohan Gyawali-Chhetri plans to move out of state this month and resign from the Board.

He announced the first item on the Board Agenda as:

PUBLIC FORUM

Danielle Wohlenberg, a volunteer recruiter for the American Red Cross (ARC), announced that the ARC is recruiting local residents and welcomed anyone interested in serving as a Community Relations Ambassador for the Red Cross. She introduced Courtney, an AmeriCorps volunteer who was assigned to work with the ARC for the past two weeks, providing meals, clothing and shelter for hundreds of families in Southeast Queens who were evacuated from their homes due to a large sewer main break in the vicinity of North Conduit Avenue and 150 Street. Courtney said that her job has been very demanding, but it's even more rewarding to know that you can make a difference by helping people to survive emergencies. Flyers were distributed. For more information, Ms. Wohlenberg directed everyone to their website at: www.redcross.org/volunteer and distributed hand-outs. The Board Chairperson pointed out that there are two volunteers in the audience.

Carmen Santana, a Board member, questioned why the City decided to site a homeless shelter at 78-16 Cooper Avenue in Glendale. She said that this property is a brownfield site that must be decontaminated before anyone is permitted to occupy it, because it's environmentally unsafe. In addition, she said that the proposed site of the new Animal Care and Control Center in Ridgewood is a brownfield site and asked if any tests of the water and air have been completed in that area. She said that this site must be decontaminated prior to occupancy, as well. Regarding the Greater Ridgewood Youth Council's After-School and Summer Youth Employment Contracts, which were audited by the NYS Comptroller's Office earlier this year, she asked the Board to investigate the findings in this Audit Report, which she described as a scathing report. She said that GRYC was cited for charging parents from \$100 to \$900 to register their child in some of their After-School Program. She said that the last time that GRYC was audited by the Comptroller's Office was in 2007. Copies of the Audit Report were distributed to Board members for their review. The Board Chairperson replied that, to his knowledge, a year-long audit of GRYC's After-School and Summer Youth Employment Programs was completed by the State Comptroller's Office earlier this year. He said that the Audit results should be available for public review.

Regarding the planned homeless shelter at 78-16 Cooper Avenue in Glendale, the Chairperson replied that when the District Manager recently requested the status of the Environmental Impact Statement for this site, he was informed by the Dept. of Homeless Services that the study is not complete.

Regarding the site of the new Animal Care and Control Center, the Chairperson said that the Zoning and Land Use Review Committee conducted a public hearing on the proposed project in September, and the Community Board subsequently approved their application based on the applicant's signed agreement with the State Dept. of Environmental Conservation to remediate this site in accordance with State and Federal guidelines, including daily on-site monitoring.

Brian Dooley, a Board member, and president of the Glendale Property Owners Association and member of Civics United for Railroad Environmental Solutions (CURES), spoke about the need to address two separate issues related to freight rail operations in our Board area. He said that new legislation should be passed by the State Assembly that would protect the air, public health, and quality of life in local residential communities. He said that Assembly Bill, A3269, which is similar to Bill S2490 which was already passed by the State Senate, would mandate that solid covers be placed on all freight rail gondolas that are filled with construction and demolition debris, and/or municipal waste, and transported through residential communities in NY State. He

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said that this Bill is sponsored by Assembly Member Brian Barnwell and co-sponsored by Assembly Member Mike Miller. He asked that everyone contact State Assemblyman Steve Englebright, the Chairman of the NYS Assembly Environmental Conservation Committee, to urge him to move this proposed legislation out of committee this year. Postcards were distributed.

In addition, Mr. Dooley asked Board members to advocate that funding be allocated to replace the highly polluting rail freight engines that are currently in operation by NY and Atlantic Railway in the Fresh Pond Railyard in Glendale. He said that over the past decade, only one of their freight hauling diesel engines has been upgraded to Tier 4 level. He thanked everyone for their support.

Ernie Searle, the past president of the Friends of the Ridgewood Library, announced that Michaeline Von Drathen was elected this year as the newly elected president of this group. He said that he plans to continue helping volunteers to form their own separate Friends groups in other local libraries, in order to improve services and programming at each site.

Justin Carter, a co-owner of NOWADAYS, located at 56-06 Cooper Avenue in Ridgewood, said that their business has moved indoors into vacant space in the large warehouse that's adjacent to the beer garden. He reminded everyone that when they opened, they were planning to close during the winter months and reopen every spring. Over the past year, he said that the Evil Twin Brewing Company had been operating out of the warehouse space, while they waited for renovations to be completed at their new site at 1616 George Street. He said that it was a very successful arrangement. He said that a Japanese sushi restaurant will be serving food all year-round at their site in the coming year. He introduced one of his partners, Gareth Solan, who welcomed everyone to visit their establishment.

Maryann Lattanzio, a Board member, and 2nd Vice President of G-COP, welcomed anyone interested in joining with them to patrol local streets and neighborhoods to please call their phone line at (718) 497-1500 to register. She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Walter Sanchez, 1st Vice Chairperson of the Board, welcomed everyone to sing Happy Birthday to our Board Chairperson Vincent Arcuri in celebration of his upcoming 80th Birthday. He informed everyone that Mr. Arcuri, who was first appointed to the Community Board in 1975, serves as a role model for all the Board Chairs in Queens. He received a standing ovation.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Vincent Arcuri, Jr.

The Chairperson thanked everyone for their good wishes and invited elected officials' representatives to address the Board.

Council Member Robert Holden wished the Board Chair a Happy Birthday and thanked him for all his years of service to the Community Board. He pointed out that he's met him volunteering to serve Thanksgiving meals in a local senior center, on patrol with G-COP, as a member of the Glendale Kiwanis, in addition to serving as a Board member of local non-profits.

The Council Member said that this year, he successfully advocated that the City Council pass legislation that provides that the NY Police Department tow trucks may remove unattended vehicles that are obstructing a sidewalk, crosswalk, fire hydrant, bicycle lane, or bus lane if the vehicle poses a threat to safety or would inhibit the safe and expeditious passage of MTA buses. He said that this bill would also require the Police Department to issue a report in January of 2021 that includes, for each month in 2020, the number of vehicles towed disaggregated by police precinct.

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The Council Member also said that he visited the site of Creedmore State Hospital in Queens today, where there are numerous vacant buildings that have been left to rot away. He said that these buildings could be put to better use for housing the homeless, particularly anyone who has psychiatric problems, instead of warehousing them in vacant factories and hotels all over the city.

Carmen Santana, a Board member, said that the Housing Codes that were adopted by the City Council do not make any accommodation for handicapped accessibility. She said that, for example, the code mandates that all apartment doors in hallways of 6-family buildings automatically close behind you when you enter or leave your apartment. Board Chairperson Arcuri responded that the regulation for self-closing doors in apartment buildings was adopted by the City in 1938 as a fire prevention measure and, as such, it is not subject to ADA regulations. In closing, Council Member Holden thanked everyone on the Board for their service to the community and he wished everyone Seasons Greetings and a Happy New Year. He welcomed everyone to attend the street naming ceremony for Lorraine Sciulli Way at the intersection of 77 Street and 62 Avenue in Middle Village at 10 am on Thursday, December 19th, 2019.

On behalf of Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, Joe Nocerino wished everyone Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year. He welcomed everyone to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony at 10am on Friday, December 20th, for the Queens Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Elmhurst Park. He also announced that all are welcome to attend a Menorah Lighting Ceremony in front of Queens Borough Hall at 4:15pm on December 23rd, as well as a Kwanzaa celebration in Queens Borough Hall at 5pm in the Helen Marshall Cultural Center on Thursday, December 26th.

Jessica Schabowski, Queens Borough Director in the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit, reported that the Community Resource Fair that was held in PS 239 on Weirfield Street in Ridgewood last week was co-sponsored by Assembly Member Mike Miller and was very well attended. She also informed everyone that identification cards that were issued through the IDNYC program are required to be renewed every 5 years. Anyone who uses that type of ID card should check the expiration date on it this year, she said.

Kathy Masi, a Board member, asked her if the Mayor is aware of the community's concerns regarding the selection of the site at 78-16 Cooper Avenue for a homeless shelter. Ms. Schabowski replied that she had attended the Community Board's public hearing this year and expressed the community's concerns to the Mayor. When asked what's the Mayor's response, she replied that the Mayor is very aware of the current situation.

On behalf of Congresswoman Grace Meng, Christian Romero reported that the Congresswoman co-sponsored two new Bills in Congress: 1) Closing the Homework Gap, that would provide funding for schools and libraries to install mobile hot spots, enabling students to access the internet in order to complete their school assignments; and 2) the 21st Century Entrepreneurship Bill, that would make it easier for Americans to start their own businesses in this country.

On behalf of Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, Kevin Wisniewski announced that they are collecting donations for their Holiday Gift Drive for homeless mothers and those at-risk of becoming homeless until Friday, December 13th. Donations can be dropped off at their office at 70-50 Austin Street in Forest Hills. He wished everyone Happy Holidays and Happy New Year.

NYS Assemblyman Brian Barnwell thanked the Board Chairperson Vincent Arcuri for his 45 years of service to the community, which is truly outstanding, he said. He welcomed donations for their annual Coat Drive this Winter either by dropping them off at his office at 55-19 69 Street in Maspeth, or by calling his office at (718) 651-3185 to request that his staff pick it up. In addition, he said that they are accepting donations of toys for children in

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need until the end of December. He welcomed calls for assistance from his constituents at (718) 651-3185. In closing, he wished everyone Happy Holidays.

On behalf of Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, Alison Cummings wished everyone Happy Holidays and a safe and healthy New Year. She welcomed calls for assistance from constituents at their office: (718) 784-3194. The Winter newsletter was distributed.

On behalf of Assemblyman Michael Miller, Christine Stoll said that they will be accepting donations at their office at 83-91 Woodhaven Boulevard toward their annual Toy Drive for needy children until the end of the year. Copies of their newsletter were distributed. She wished everyone Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year.

Officer Haaris Hamad, Community Affairs Unit at Patrol Borough Queens North, introduced himself to the Board and wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Chairperson Arcuri recognized the staff present: District Manager Gary Giordano, Catherine O'Leary and Laura Mulvihill, Community Associates. He thanked the press corps for covering our Board Meetings.

MINUTES

The Board Chairperson asked Board members to review the minutes of last month's Board Meeting conducted on November 13, 2019. The minutes were adopted by acclamation on a motion by Kathy Masi, that was seconded by Richard Huber.

LIQUOR, WINE and BEER LICENSE APPLICATIONS and RENEWALS

The Board Chairperson 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 since last month's Board Meeting on November 13, 2019. Each Board member received a copy of the list.

Liquor License Renewals

- 1) 5103 Building Corp. d/b/a **Knights of Columbus** 79-03 Myrtle Avenue, Glendale, NY 11385
- 2) **The Gibbons Home** 54-12 69 Street, Maspeth, NY 11378

Wine and/or Beer License Renewals

- 1) **Coyote Bohemio Inc.** 55-19 Myrtle Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) 71-08 Restaurant Corp. d/b/a **Glendale Diner** 71-08 Myrtle Avenue, Glendale, NY 11385
- 3) **El Fogon Rest Inc.** 1701 Palmetto Street, Ridgewood, NY 11385

Corporate Changes and Other

- 1) Corp. to be formed by David Kornbluth d/b/a **Onderdonk & Son's, 566 Onderdonk Avenue, in Ridgewood**, will be submitting an alteration application to the NYS Liquor Authority to reconfigure the seating inside the premises.
- 2) The following establishments have informed us of their intention to apply to the NYS Liquor Authority for An All-Night Permit for New Year's Eve:
 - DMI Inc. d/b/a **The Knockdown Center**, 52-19 Flushing Avenue, Maspeth (expecting a crowd of 2,300)
 - **The Maspeth Pizza House Inc.**, 55-50 60 Street, Maspeth
 - Bermeo Food Corp. d/b/a **El Manaba Restaurant**, 341 St. Nicholas Avenue, Ridgewood

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Demolition and New Construction Notices

The Board Chairperson reported that the Board received the following demolition notices since last month's Board Meeting on November 13th: **56-19 Grand Avenue, in Maspeth** – demolition of a vacant factory; **19-06 Flushing Avenue, in Ridgewood** – construction of a 3-story building to begin on/before 12/10/2019. For more information about work permits that have been issued for construction at these locations, click on this link to the NYC Dept. of Buildings website at: www.nyc.gov/buildings.

The Chairperson asked that anyone who has questions or comments about possible illegal construction in our Board area to please contact our Board 5 Office at (718) 366-1834.

District Manager's Report

Gary Giordano

District Manager Gary Giordano thanked everyone for all their good work and wished everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa, and Happy New Year. He also thanked Toni Binanti, a Board member, for donating the birthday cake and cookies for tonight's Board Meeting.

Regarding Carmen Santana's comments about the Greater Ridgewood Youth Council's recent Audit, the District Manager said that he will contact Bob Monahan, the Executive Director of GRYC, to request more information about it. He pointed out that without the GRYC, we would not have After-School Programs in so many schools in our district.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Housing Services Committee

Katherine Masi

Kathy Masi reported that at their most recent meeting in the Board 5 office on November 21st, the committee discussion focused on the need for more senior housing units in our Board area. She reported that Meghan Tadio, a Board member, said that the Senior Affordable Rental Apartments (SARA) Program is funded through the NYC Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and provides gap financing for the construction and rehabilitation of rental apartments for seniors. Ms. Masi asked the District Manager to reach out to Catholic Charities regarding senior housing needs in our community.

At their meeting, the District Manager Gary Giordano informed the committee that a representative of HPD told him that most of the senior housing developments in the City are built on city-owned land. She said the committee requested him to obtain a list of the city-owned properties in the Board 5 area for their review.

In addition, she said that Christian Romero, a staff member of Congresswoman Grace Meng, said that their office will look into the availability of federal funding for senior housing developments.

In closing, Ms. Masi said that two committee members, Meghan Tadio and Patricia Maltezos, have volunteered to co-chair this committee, pending the Executive Committee's approval.

Transportation and Public Transit Services Committee

John Maier

John Maier, co-chair of the committee, reported that representatives from the Dept. of Transportation and the 104th Police Precinct met recently on Fresh Pond Road in order to coordinate enforcement efforts on the Dedicated Bus Lane on the southbound side of Fresh Pond Road in Ridgewood. He said that they agreed to meet once again in January to assess the situation.

Mr. Maier reported that work on the "M" elevated train line painting project is not proceeding on schedule this year. He said that the committee plans to meet with a representative of the MTA in January to discuss this situation.

He also reported that the MTA is currently studying data on the usage and productivity of bus routes in Queens, as part of their plan to Redesign Bus Routes in the coming year.

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He announced that the next committee meeting is scheduled for 7:30pm in the Board 5 office on Tuesday, January 28th, 2020, and welcomed everyone to attend.

Ed Lettau said that passengers always stand too close to the rear door of the bus when exiting. For safety purposes, the rear door won't open until they step back far enough away from the door. He said that it always delays the bus driver from resuming the Bus route. He recommended painting a yellow striped line that passengers should stand behind before exiting the bus.

Carmen Santana said that the Q58 and B38 Bus turn off their Bus routes onto local streets, such as, Forest Avenue and turn onto Catalpa Avenue in Ridgewood, where parked cars have been hit by the bus at least twice. Mr. Maier asked her to provide more details, including the number of the bus, the time and date of an accident, so that the committee could investigate further.

Meghan Tadio, a Board member, said that drivers don't obey the Stop sign at the intersection of Woodward Avenue and Putnam Avenue. She requested that a STOP message be painted on the pavement to alert drivers to stop there.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, Board Chairperson Arcuri wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and adjourned the public meeting of Community Board 5, Queens on a motion from the floor at 8:15pm. He welcomed everyone to stay to enjoy the light refreshments and festivities.