



## 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: [qnsqb5@nyc.rr.com](mailto:qnsqb5@nyc.rr.com)



Vincent Arcuri, Jr.  
*Chairperson*

Gary Giordano  
*District Manager*

### Minutes of Community Board 5 Public Meeting October 16, 2019

#### Board Members Present

Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Antonetta Binanti; Robert Cermeli; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Patricia Crowley; Brian Dooley; Jerome Drake; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Fred T. Haller; Fred Hoeffler; Richard Huber; Paul A. Kerzner; Edward Lettau; Mike Liendo; Patricia Maltezos; Edgar Mantel; Katherine Masi; Eileen Moloney; 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; Gyanal Thapa; Patrick J. Trinchesi; Michaeline Von Drathen; Crystal Wolfe; Nan Zhang

#### Board Members Absent

Steven Fiedler; Patricia Grayson; Mohan Gyawali-Chhetri; Maryann Lattanzio; John Maier; Margaret O’Kane; Connie Santos; Catherine Sumsky; Barbara Toscano; Maryanna Zero

#### Elected Officials

NYS Assemblyman Brian Barnwell, 30<sup>th</sup> AD  
Jessica Schabowski – Mayor Bill De Blasio  
Joseph Nocerino - Queens Borough President Melinda Katz  
Sarah Spellman – NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, 15<sup>th</sup> SD  
Alexa Arecchi – NYS Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi, 28<sup>th</sup> AD  
David Lee – NYS Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, 37<sup>th</sup> AD  
Christine Stoll – NYS Assemblyman Michael Miller, 38<sup>th</sup> AD  
Charles Vavruska – NYC Council Member Robert Holden, 30<sup>th</sup> CD

#### Staff Present

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

#### GUESTS

Elizabeth Horen – Business Outreach Network of Queens  
P.O. Brian Abbondanello, P.O. Eugene Lee and P.O. Deighton Shoy – 104<sup>th</sup> Precinct NCO Unit  
Benjamin Fang, the Queens Ledger; and Max Parrott, Queens Courier  
Sunil Ale – student at La Guardia Community College

Board Chairperson Vincent Arcuri called the monthly Board Meeting to order at 7:35pm, following the Salute to the Flag.

The Board Chairperson informed everyone that tonight’s Board Meeting will be live-streamed. He said that the video will be posted to YouTube, and will appear on our Community Board website at [www.nyc.gov/qnsqb5](http://www.nyc.gov/qnsqb5) sometime tomorrow.

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on October 16, 2019

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

### **PUBLIC FORUM**

Carmen Santana, a Board member, expressed her disapproval at the conduct of last week's Public Hearing regarding the proposed Homeless Shelter Residence in Glendale. She objected to the fact that she was not allowed to enter the building through the front entrance, but was instead told that she had to enter through the side entrance, which she said was very disrespectful to her. She said that the hearing should have been conducted by the Committee Chairperson, and local elected officials should have been seated at the dais on stage, with Board members seated in rows behind them. She said that she smelled hate in the air at the hearing, particularly when one woman said that she looks forward to the day when the building where the homeless shelter is proposed will be burned down instead. She said that only 12 speakers were given the opportunity to speak because the audience was so disrespectful. After that experience, she said that she doesn't want any further association with our Community Board and plans to resign. She left the meeting abruptly, after responding to harsh comments from a person who was sitting at the side table in back of her.

Raquel Namuche, a founding member of the Ridgewood Tenants Union, criticized the Board Chairperson's conduct of last week's Public Hearing regarding the proposed homeless shelter residence for 200 men at 78-16 Cooper Avenue in Glendale. She said that the Chairperson should have put a stop to the threats of violence that were aimed at herself and other protesters at last week's hearing, because they showed their support for homeless people. She said that was a disgrace. She said that the Ridgewood Tenants Union opposes luxury housing developments because they are one of the leading causes of gentrification which displaces low-income tenants who are most likely to become homeless as a result. She said that, in her opinion, Community Board 5 and Council Member Bob Holden only want to work with homeowners and property owners who belong to local civic associations, and don't care about tenants who are living in one of the 13,000 rent regulated apartments, or the 14,000 unregulated apartments, that are located in the Board 5 area. She said that as a tenant organizer, she felt disrespected by the entire Board.

Michaeline Von Drachen, a Board member, welcomed everyone to attend the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of Ridgewood Library's opening, from 6pm to 7:30pm tomorrow night, at 20-12 Madison Street. She said that the Friends of the Ridgewood Library will share historical photographs, documents and memorabilia from the last century. Light refreshments will be provided. She also announced that their monthly Book Sale will take place on Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 4pm in the lobby on the ground floor of the library.

Brian Dooley, president of the Glendale Property Owners Association and a Board member, commented that emotions ran high between homeowners and the group of protestors who attended last week's public hearing regarding the proposed homeless shelter residence. He said that for 15 years or more, he and many other local parishioners volunteered to operate an overnight shelter in the Sacred Heart School, providing food and clothing for homeless people who arrived by bus from the Human Resources Administration's emergency shelter site in the city. He said that their program hosted between 30 and 40 people per night through the winter months. He said that the program was discontinued because HRA representatives said that the cost of busing the homeless to and from their site was too expensive. He said that local homeowners should be given the benefit of the doubt in this case, because most of them are very compassionate and caring people. Speaking on behalf of the Glendale Property Owners Association, he said that they oppose the establishment of a transitional homeless shelter for 200 men in the proposed facility at 78-16 Cooper Avenue, in Glendale because it's a bad idea. He urged everyone to contribute to the fund-raising efforts of the Glendale-Middle Village Coalition to prevent the proposed shelter from happening.

Elizabeth Horen, a graduate student Intern at Pratt Institute, informed everyone she will be working closely with Theodore Renz, the Executive Director of the Ridgewood Local Development Corporation, to identify properties

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on October 16, 2019

in the Ridgewood Industrial Business Zone (IBZ) that are currently available for commercial and/or industrial use. For more information about this project, she welcomed everyone to contact her at [ehoren@bocnet.org](mailto:ehoren@bocnet.org).

Richard Huber, a Board member, commented that with regard to last week's Public Hearing on the Proposed Homeless Residence at 78-16 Cooper Avenue, the hearing was in effect high-jacked by disruptive protesters and the City will do whatever they want to do, regardless of public input. He said that for years, the City had plenty of affordable public housing, called NYCHA. But, after years of the City's mismanagement and corruption, NYCHA is now on the brink of bankruptcy with thousands of vacant units. He referred to the recent tragic deaths of 4 homeless men who were bludgeoned to death by a younger homeless man last week, asking if anyone in City administration would be held accountable. He said that it's not just a coincidence that the City's plan to create a homeless shelter in Glendale for 200 adult males is being advanced at a time when the City administration plans to close the prisons on Rikers Island. He closed by saying that you get the government you deserve.

Portia Dyrenforth, the NYC Dept. of Parks Administrator for Highland Park, said that she is seeking input from local residents on what types of programs and services they'd like to participate in at Highland Park, which includes the Ridgewood Reservoir. She said that, for example, new yoga classes, painting and arts and crafts programs have been introduced in many local parks this year. She welcomed local residents to call her office at (212) 235-4100 with their suggestions.

Mike Papa, a member of the Glendale Middle Village Coalition against the Proposed Homeless Shelter in Glendale, objected to the conduct of last week's Public Hearing about the proposed homeless shelter. He said that he believes the Community Board needs new leadership to stand up to the City administration, not just obey the Mayor and follow his agenda. He said that the proposed plan will not be a shelter, but a halfway house.

Joey De Jesus, a Ridgewood resident, objected to being characterized as a hipster from Bushwick, by saying that he is a long-time resident of Ridgewood, he's a poet and is employed as an adjunct professor at Manhattan Community College. He said that he believes that housing is a human right, not a luxury. He said that when he attended a recent Public Meeting regarding plans to build an Animal Care and Control Center in Ridgewood, no one objected to that proposal. And yet, he said there was near unanimous opposition to a shelter for homeless human beings at last week's Public Hearing, which he described as racist.

### **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

**Vincent Arcuri, Jr.**

Chairperson Arcuri recognized the staff present: the District Manager Gary Giordano, and Community Associates Catherine O'Leary and Laura Mulvihill. The Chairperson invited elected officials' representatives to address the Board.

On behalf of Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, Joe Nocerino welcomed everyone to attend the Annual Veterans Day Ceremony at 11AM on Thursday, November 7th, in front of Queens Borough Hall, at 120-55 Queens Boulevard. He said that in the event of inclement weather, the Borough President will preside over the ceremony in the Helen Marshall Cultural Center on the first floor of Queens Borough Hall. He requested that attendees RSVP in advance, either via email to: [www.queensbp.org/rsvp](http://www.queensbp.org/rsvp), or by calling the Borough President's Office at (718) 286-2661. Food and refreshments will be served. Flyers were distributed.

On behalf of NYC Council Member Robert Holden, Charles Vavruska reported that the Council Member is hosting a rally on the steps of City Hall today to oppose the proposal to close the prisons on Rikers Island. He said that the Council Member remains strongly opposed to the planned homeless shelter at 78-16 Cooper Avenue.

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on October 16, 2019

He welcomed local residents to attend a High School Fair from 6pm to 8pm in PS/IS 49 on 80 Street in Middle Village, where prospective students and their parents can learn more out about the application process for public high school admissions.

On behalf of State Senator Joseph Addabbo, Sarah Spellman announced that the Senator will hold mobile office hours in the Maspeth Public Library at 69-70 Grand Avenue from 5:30pm to 7pm on Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, and again on Thursday, November 21, from 5:30pm to 7pm, in the Woodhaven Public Library at 85-41 Forest Parkway.

On behalf of Assemblyman Daniel Hevesi, Alexa Arrechi announced that their office, in cooperation with Crystal Wolfe and Catering for the Homeless, is hosting a Toiletry Drive for homeless families and individuals until Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. Items needed include non-perishable food items, soap, Vaseline, detergent, wipes, pampers, bottles of Pediasure, juice, baby formula and powdered or evaporated milk. She said donations could be dropped off at their office at 70-50 Austin Street, Suite 118, in Forest Hills.

NYS Assemblyman Brian Barnwell announced that he is sponsoring an annual Turkey Drive for low-income families in the neighborhood. He said donations can be dropped off at his office at 55-19 69 Street in Maspeth until Wednesday, November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019. In addition, he said that his staff organizes local graffiti clean-ups on an as needed basis, and welcomed calls for more information to his office at (718) 651-3185. In closing, he thanked everyone for their donations of peanut butter and jelly this month for volunteers to make sandwiches that are handed out to homeless people in his district.

On behalf of Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan, David Lee wished everyone a Happy Halloween. He welcomed calls for assistance from constituents at (718) 784-3194. Copies of the newsletter was distributed.

On behalf of Assemblyman Michael Miller, Christine Stoll announced that their office is sponsoring a Thanksgiving Food Drive for needy families until Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019. In addition, their office is co-sponsoring a Toiletry Drive for homeless families, along with Crystal Wolfe and Catering for the Homeless. She said that donations of toiletries will be accepted at their office at 83-91 Woodhaven Boulevard until Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. She welcomed calls for assistance from constituents at (718) 805-0950.

## MINUTES

The Board Chairperson asked Board members to review the minutes of last month's Board Meeting conducted on Sept. 18, 2019. The minutes were adopted by acclamation on a motion by Richard Huber, and seconded by Walter Clayton.

## 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 the last monthly Board Meeting on Sept. 18, 2019. Each Board member received a copy of the list.

### *New Liquor Licenses*

- 1) Cahill 1106 Corp. d/b/a **Glen Patrick's Pub** 53-73 65 Place, Maspeth, NY 11378
- 2) **Manual Pasan** 71-28 Fresh Pond Road, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 3) S. Jablonowski Inc. d/b/a **Eliot Ale House** 82-11 Eliot Avenue, Middle Village, NY 11379
- 4) **El Parcha Bakery & Restaurant LLC** 67-14 Fresh Pond Road, Ridgewood, NY 11385

### *Liquor License Renewal*

- 1) The Corner Venture Ltd. d/b/a **The Live Oak** 59-93 Fresh Pond Road, Maspeth, NY 11378

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on October 16, 2019

**New Wine and/or Beer Licenses**

- 1) Fontana Pizzeria Inc. d/b/a **Corato I Pizza** 66-04 Fresh Pond Road, Ridgewood, NY 11385

**Wine and/or Beer License Renewals**

- 1) **Buon Gelato & Euro Bar of NY Corp.** 74-02B Eliot Avenue, Middle Village, NY 11379
- 2) **Pollo a la Brasa Pio Pio Inc.** 62-30 Woodhaven Blvd., Rego Park, NY 11374

**Demolition Notices**

The Board Chairperson reported that the Board received the following demolition notices since last month's Board Meeting on Sept. 18th: **64-72 84 Place** – demolition of a residential garage, in **Middle Village**.

The Chairperson asked that anyone with questions or comments about any of these locations to please contact the Board Office at (718) 366-1834.

The Board Chairperson reported that the Executive Committee met earlier this week to review the FY 2021 Budget Survey results and unanimously agreed on the following list of Capital and Expense Budget Priorities for the coming year. He gave the floor to the District Manager to read the list of budget recommendations.

The District Manager said that 41 Board members completed their Budget Surveys. Copies of the proposed list of FY 2021 Capital Budget Priorities were distributed to all Board members. He read aloud from the list, as follows:

- 1 Redesign and Reconstruct Sewer System in Portions of CB5Q Area Having Worst Flooding Problems
- 2 Reconstruct Deteriorated Catch Basins and Provide New Catch Basins in the CB5Q Area
- 3 Reconstruct Sidewalks, Curbs and Pedestrian Ramps along Myrtle Avenue, from Fresh Pond Road to Wyckoff Avenue
- 4 Replace Existing Bridge on Grand Ave over Newtown Creek in Maspeth
- 5 Make Capital Improvements to Improve Pedestrian and Vehicle Safety on Grand Avenue at 69<sup>th</sup> Street, at Grand Avenue/LIE East Bound Service Rd, and at the 69 Street/LIE Service Rd Intersections
- 6 Complete the Children's Play Area, and Reconstruct Softball Field Area at Rosemary's Playground
- 7 Rehabilitate Ridgewood Reservoir - Phase II and the Surrounding Area, Including Portions of Highland Park
- 8 Construct New School Space, where Needed, in the CB5Q Area, Including a New High School In Queens and Perform Capital Budget Upgrades to Existing School Buildings
- 9 Provide New Street Tree Plantings, and Provide Funding for Stump Removals, Planting of Replacement Trees, and Street Tree Removals
- 10 Provide Replacement of the Synthetic Turf Field and the Running Track at the West End of Juniper Valley Park
- 11 Extend Street/Roadway Widening along the South Side of Metropolitan Ave. - Woodhaven Blvd. to Aubrey Avenue
- 12 Provide Safe Public Access to Newtown Creek and Construct an Athletic Field at the DEP Newtown Creek Aeration Facility Property at 58-26 47 Street, in Maspeth
- 13 Reconstruct South Middle Village Streets
- 14 Reconstruct Dry Harbor Playground - Phase II to Also Include Nearby Tunnel and Pathways
- 15 Improve Myrtle Ave Commercial Strip from Fresh Pond Rd to 82<sup>nd</sup> Street
- 16 Continue Comprehensive Study of the Sewer System, in the CB5Q Area and Throughout Queens County, Considering Flooding Problems and Anticipated Future Growth
- 17 Reconstruct Wyckoff Avenue, from Flushing Avenue to Cooper Avenue
- 18 Replace or Repower Polluting Stage Zero Freight Engines Hauling NYC Municipal Waste through District 5, Queens
- 19 Reconstruct Fresh Pond Road from Myrtle Avenue to Eliot Avenue, and Provide Traffic Facilitation Improvements
- 20 Reconstruct Palmetto Street from St. Nicholas Avenue to Seneca Avenue, and from Onderdonk Avenue

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on October 16, 2019

- to Forest Avenue
- 21 Evaluate the Structural Condition of the Elevated Portions of the “M” Train Line in the CB5Q Area, Perform Repairs, Abate Lead, etc. and Paint the Structure
  - 22 Reconstruct DeKalb Ave, Halsey Street & Jefferson Street BMT-L Train Stations
  - 23 Reconstruct and Widen the East Sidewalk of 80<sup>th</sup> Street, on the 80<sup>th</sup> Street Bridge, Over the LIRR and Review the Structural Stability of the Bridge
  - 24 Establish a Community/Recreational Center at a Site in Maspeth
  - 25 Reconstruct Evergreen Park, Phase II
  - 26 Reconstruct LIRR and 71<sup>st</sup> Avenue Bridge Abutments above the Cooper Avenue Underpass and Paint the LIRR Bridge
  - 27 Rehabilitate the 104<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct Interior
  - 28 Reconstruct 75<sup>th</sup> Street from Eliot Ave to Juniper Blvd North
  - 29 Provide a New Elevator for the I.S. 93 Main Building
  - 30 Provide Funding for the Establishment of a Dog Run in CB5Q
  - 31 Provide Toilet Facility in Area of Juniper Valley Park bordered by 80<sup>th</sup> Street, Dry Harbor Road, Juniper Boulevard North & Juniper Boulevard South
  - 32 Provide Decorative Lighting and Restore Deteriorated Curbing along Fred Haller’s Union Turnpike Mall (Myrtle Avenue to Woodhaven Boulevard)
  - 33 Provide Funding for the Historic Restoration of St. Savior’s Church

The Board Chairperson pointed out that new catch basins were installed on Edsall Avenue btw 71<sup>st</sup> Place and 73<sup>rd</sup> Place this year, as well as new curbs on the north side of Edsall Avenue, which should resolve the street flooding problems in that area of Glendale.

As there were no questions or comments about the proposed list of budget priorities, the Board Chairman requested a Roll Call vote on the Committee’s recommendation which carried unanimously by a vote of – 33 - in favor; - 0 – opposed; - 0 – abstentions; and – 0 – not voting.

Regarding the Executive Committee’s recommendations for Queens Community Board 5’s FY 2021 Expense Budget Priorities, the District Manager said that copies of the list of our Board’s 25 Expense Budget Priorities for FY 2020 were sent to all Board members. He said that the list of proposed Expense Budget priorities remains the same as last year, including:

1. Assign Additional Personnel for the 104<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct Patrol Force
2. Provide Field Workers for the Bureau of Water and Sewer Operations
3. Hire Inspectors and Plan Examiners, in Sufficient Numbers, to Cope with Illegal Uses of Property and Questionable Construction
4. Provide Sanitation Department Cleaning Personnel to Clean Illegal Dumping and for Litter Basket Collection
5. Provide Funding for Educational and Recreational Programs for Children and Teens
6. Provide Funding for Fire Department Services
7. Provide Needed Services for Senior Citizens
8. Provide More Frequent Garbage and Recycling Pick-up for Schools and Institutions
9. Allocate Funds for the Operation and Enhancement of the Division of Forestry in Queens
10. Provide Sufficient Personnel for Traffic Safety Inspections, Sign Installations, Pavement Markings and Sign Manufacturing
11. Fund Additional Street Maintenance for Queens Roadways
12. Provide Six-Day-a-Week Service at Local Libraries
13. Increase the Number of Sanitation Police and Enforcement Agents, Especially in Plain Clothes, to

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on October 16, 2019

### Significantly Reduce Excessive Abuse of Litter Baskets and Illegal Dumping

14. Assign Sufficient Personnel for Maintenance of Parks in District 5, Queens
15. Provide Funding for Rental Assistance Programs to Combat Homelessness
16. Allocate Funding for Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development Services
17. Hire Traffic Control Agents, School Crossing Guards and Additional School Safety Officers
18. Hire Additional Personnel for Pest Control to Combat the Enormous Rat Population in our City
19. Continue Funding of the Ridgewood Family Health Center
20. Hire Operations Staff for the Bureau of Wastewater Pollution Control
21. Hire Forestry Personnel
22. Provide Funds for Tools and Equipment for Local Fire Department Personnel and for Fire Prevention Program Supplies
23. Fund a Bureau of Child Welfare Satellite Office in Queens
24. Improve Arterial Highway Cleaning and Maintenance
25. Increase Funding for Community Consultant Contracts

As there were no questions or comments about the proposed FY 2021 Expense Budget recommendations, the Board Chairman requested a Roll Call vote on the Committee's recommendation which carried unanimously by a vote of – 33 - in favor; - 0 – opposed; - 0 – abstentions; and – 0 – not voting.

The District Manager said that he plans to submit the Board's FY 2021 Capital and Expense Budget recommendations to the Mayor's Office of Management and Budget on or before October 31st, 2019. The Board Chairperson thanked everyone for their input in the budget process.

### **District Manager's Report**

#### **Gary Giordano**

District Manager Gary Giordano answered the criticism directed at the Board Chairperson and himself at tonight's Board Meeting by stating how many years they have spent volunteering on behalf of local causes and charitable organizations, as well as their years of service to Community Board 5 and other local agencies. The Board Chairperson said that the derisive comments directed at him earlier tonight reminded him of the discrimination that he and other Italian Americans had faced early in his career in the construction industry. He said he'll always be grateful to those who had the vision and good heart in his industry, who gave him the opportunity to succeed in his work life.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Special Committee re Homeless Issues**

##### **Dmytro Fedkowskyj**

Dmytro Fedkowskyj, Committee Chairperson, reported that the committee met for two hours last Thursday night, on October 10<sup>th</sup> in the Cafeteria of Christ the King High School to discuss the recent Public Hearing on the proposed homeless shelter at 78-16 Cooper Avenue. He said that that hearing ended much earlier than expected due to the ongoing disruption of the audience. The committee suggested a different format for the next public hearing, which would give Board members an opportunity to address the representatives of the Dept. of Homeless Services and Westhab, the service provider, on the stage.

He reminded everyone that the committee was formed three years ago to work on opportunities to help fix a broken system that is supposed to help homeless people who are identified as in need of services by the NYC Department of Homeless Services. In addition, he said that the committee has been working with local elected officials and community residents in order to contribute thoughts on the current crisis in hopes of finding some real solutions. He said that the committee worked to better understand how and why people become homeless, the process of what homeless people have to go through to obtain lodging and services, and how they can get out of their current situation.

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on October 16, 2019

He said that at their committee meeting, members expressed their concerns about Westhab, the service provider's ability to deliver on their promises that were made in their opening statement at the public hearing. He said that the committee questioned their competence because their past experience is based on operating smaller single male and female shelters or residences, and they produced little or no proof that they could operate a shelter with 200 single men. In addition, he said that members expressed their concerns about the impact that a shelter of this size could have on the surrounding community, which is made up of one and two family homes for the most part. He said that, based on research cited by the Coalition for the Homeless, there is a strong probability that many homeless men will either be recently released from incarceration, or include a large percentage of homeless men who will be suffering with either untreated serious mental illness, or poor mental wellness. That being the case, he said that the proposed facility would add additional pressure and stress on the already stretched resources of the 104<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct.

In addition, he said that committee members expressed their concerns about the possibility that residents of the proposed facility may be permitted to leave the premises during the day and roam through the neighborhood, given its proximity to six local elementary schools. He said that they also expressed concerns that this homeless shelter would be used as a substitute for a mental health facility.

He reported that committee members were in agreement that we need to do our fair share to help serve our district's share of homeless people by creating smaller shelter residences serving up to 25 people, which has proven to be a successful model for the homeless population and many service providers. He advised that when and if these smaller shelters are established within the Board's boundaries, it is imperative that Community Board members serve on each shelter's Community Advisory Board. He said that while committee members favor smaller homeless facilities, they are not in favor of converting the warehouse at 78-16 Cooper Avenue into a homeless shelter for 200 single men. He said that the committee supports the following Resolution, which was distributed to each Board member:

The following is a report from the Special Committee Re: Homeless Issues of Community Board 5, Queens, in response to a Plan by the N.Y. City Human Resources Administration, the Dept. of Social Services and the Dept. of Homeless Services to Establish a Homeless Shelter Residence for 200 Men, Who Are Either Employed or Seeking Employment, at 78-16 Cooper Avenue in Glendale, Queens, NY.

It should be known that the Special Committee on Homeless Issues has spent the past 3 years studying the problems of those who are unfortunately homeless, and has had representatives of various organizations very familiar with homelessness give presentations to the committee.

On August 28, 2019, the Community Board was formally notified in a letter from Erin Drinkwater, Deputy Commissioner of Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs, that N.Y.C. agencies intend to open a shelter residence and employment shelter for 200 single adult men experiencing homelessness at the subject location, which is a large, former factory site. This notification letter further states that Westhab, a non-profit social service provider, would manage this shelter residence.

The property at 78-16 Cooper Avenue consists of a 66,050 sq. ft. lot on which a 4 story factory building, with 51,000 sq. ft. of usable floor area, was constructed decades ago. This large building was previously used for manufacturing, and, to our knowledge, sat idle for more than 20 years. Site contamination and contamination nearby is an issue, considering previous uses of this site, and the fact that Independent Chemical, a distributor of chemical compounds, had their storage facility on 79 Place adjacent to 78-16 Cooper Avenue.

Our Community Board conducted a Public Hearing regarding this important matter during the evening of Monday, October 7, 2019 in the auditorium of Christ the King High School, located at 68-02 Metropolitan Avenue in Middle Village, Queens. This hearing was attended by more than 1,000 people.



## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on October 16, 2019

In attendance representing the city agencies who would like to establish this residence for homeless men were: Annabel Palma, Deputy Commissioner for the NY City Dept. of Social Services; Matthew Borden, Assistant Commissioner for the NY City Dept. of Homeless Services; and Iris Rodriguez, Deputy Commissioner. Representing Westhab, the not-for-profit organization selected to operate this proposed homeless shelter residence, were: Jim Coughlin, Senior Vice President; Valerie Smith, Programs Director and Kevin Lyles, Director of Security.

After a Salute to the Flag, Vincent Arcuri, Chairperson of Community Board 5, Queens opened the Public Hearing. He explained that the purpose of the hearing is for the Community Board to gather input from community residents and businesses regarding the Proposal to Establish a Homeless Shelter Residence for 200 Men, Who Are Either Employed or Seeking Employment, at 78-16 Cooper Avenue in Glendale, Queens, so that the Board can formulate recommendations related to this proposal.

The Board Chairperson explained to those in attendance at the hearing that the rules of hearings conducted by Community Board 5, Queens state that speakers and people in the audience should maintain proper decorum and that personal attacks and trials by accusations are not permitted. He asked everyone present show respect and allow those present to hear those who are speaking. Mr. Arcuri then explained that we will first have a presentation from the representatives of Dept. of Homeless Services and Westhab, regarding their plans to establish a homeless shelter residence at 78-16 Cooper Avenue. He introduced Matthew Borden, Assistant Commissioner for the Dept. of Homeless Services, and asked Mr. Borden to begin their presentation.

Mr. Borden introduced the Dept. of Homeless Services staff in attendance with him, as well as from Westhab.

He said that, in 2017, Mayor DeBlasio put forth the Turning the Tide on Homelessness Initiative which he said was the first comprehensive plan to deal with the problem in our city. Mr. Borden stated that, since this plan was put into effect, there has been a budget increase of 20 times for the amount of funds for legal assistance to prevent eviction and that evictions have decreased by more than 33%. He said that one of the pillars of this plan is to get people off the street and into shelter, and that 120,000 people have been moved from shelters to permanent homes. According to Mr. Borden, the number of street outreach workers has been doubled, and 2,200 homeless people living in the street have been convinced to accept shelter. He said that sub-standard shelters have been closed, and new shelters have been opened by high quality providers who would provide services for those that need them. Mr. Borden said that the plan includes establishing a community advisory board that would meet monthly, at least in the early days of the shelter operation.

Jim Coughlin, Westhab's Vice President, said that the only way the shelter can be successful is with a partnership with the community, and that Westhab seeks a community partnership. He further stated that Westhab, based in Yonkers, was founded 40 years ago. Over the years, Westhab has now become the largest services provider in Westchester County and currently operates 6 programs in N.Y. City, including 2 single-men's shelters and a shelter for females. It should be noted that these programs are operated on a much smaller scale than what is being proposed at the Cooper Ave location. Mr. Coughlin said their goal is to provide a full spectrum of services to their clients beginning with their first day on site. He said that security is at the top of the list of services and that they take pride in the condition of their shelters. He said that Westhab promotes a sense of community and safety in the shelters they operate.

Iris Rodriguez, Deputy Commissioner of the Dept. of Homeless Services, said that a primary Case Manager will be assigned to each person from day one. She said that the goal is to get those in shelter placed in permanent housing. Employment specialists, job developers, job trainers and an internship program will be in put in place

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on October 16, 2019

to provide real world employment experience, she said. She also stated that licensed social workers would be at the shelter site to help with issues, such as, substance abuse. She said that during the past 9 months, Westhab has exceeded placement targets at their sites, and that they are not willing to push people back into the community who are not ready.

Mr. Lyles, Westhab's Director of Security, said that Westhab does not manage shelters, they manage communities. He said that all of their staff are trained in mediation and violence de-escalation. In previous discussions with representatives of Community Board 5, Queens, Westhab has stated that they are planning to have 46 professionally trained security staff assigned to the proposed shelter residence to cover different shifts each week. They also stated that they would have a minimum of 6 security guards and 2 security supervisors assigned to this site during a shift, and they are planning to have more than 70 security cameras installed at the proposed site at 78-16 Cooper Avenue. He said that security staff assigned to the site will patrol the surrounding community to assure safety.

Board Chairperson Arcuri then called registered speakers to the microphones. The majority of the Public speakers were opposed to the proposed homeless shelter residence and made the following points when they spoke:

- That more than \$2 billion is now spent for homeless shelter & services in N.Y. City each year.
- That with more than \$2 billion spent annually on shelter and services, and \$1.5 billion spent for tax abatements related to shelter properties, permanent homes can be built for those who are homeless instead of housing people in shelters.
- That there are more than 1,000 vacant lots in N.Y. City, owned by the City of New York, where permanent housing should be constructed.
- That this proposed shelter site for 200 men is too large in a community of one and two family homes, and much smaller shelter residences are a more reasonable option to house those who are homeless.
- That the State of New York, led by the Governor, and the City of New York, led by the Mayor, should be doing much more to establish affordable housing for city residents so that more and more people are not being fed into the shelter system.
- That too many of those likely to be placed in this proposed shelter may be coming out of prison or could be sex offenders.
- That 54% of people coming out of prison are going into the N.Y. City Shelter System.
- That taxpayers should have a voice on how tax dollars are spent in their neighborhood.
- That people opposed to shelters are fighting for their homes.
- That the number of homeless has increased no matter what actions have been taken.
- That men in the shelter are too likely to be substance abusers.
- That shelter residents with mental health problems often do not take their medication.
- That they are fearful for school children and women walking in the community, especially for those going to and returning from the Numerous Nearby Schools in the surrounding community.
- That there is a Youth Sports Facility adjacent to the proposed shelter site, and a Gymnastics School and a Dance School right across the street on Cooper Avenue.
- That a Day Care Center is being constructed immediately east of 78-16 Cooper Avenue.
- That there are not nearly 200 men, who previously lived in the Community Board 5, Queens area, who have sought shelter from the City of New York in a given year.
- That those in this proposed shelter could be wandering the community all day long, if they refuse services planned by Westhab.

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on October 16, 2019

In response to some of these concerns, and in response to questions from the floor, representatives of the NYC Dept. of Homeless Services and Westhab, who were on stage at the hearing, said that a small percentage of those planned for placement at this site might be men released from prison.

Jim Coughlin, Westhab Vice President, stressed that anyone who is unemployed and living at this proposed shelter will be expected to participate in on-site educational and training programs.

At least one of the representatives associated with the proposed shelter stated that people who are substance abusers can often still work. Representatives of Westhab stated that if any of the residents are found to be not ready to be employed they would be transferred to another facility.

There were several registered speakers who were concerned about those who are homeless, pointing out that very often those who become homeless are just people who unfortunately lost their job and therefore couldn't afford their rent, or are victims of domestic violence, or are victims of gentrification.

At least one of these speakers said that housing is a human right. While these speakers said that shelter is but a short term solution for homeless individuals and families, they stated that the State of New York, including the Governor, and the City of New York, including the Mayor, need to do much more to develop affordable housing so that so many people are not having to enter shelter.

It is important to state that much of this Public Hearing was very loud, that all the noise made it difficult to hear what the speakers were saying, and that several registered speakers made what the committee considered inappropriate, mean-spirited comments toward homeless people generally. Board Chairperson Arcuri chaired most of the hearing, not from the stage but within the crowded, contentious auditorium, in a valiant effort to get those present to be respectful. Although the auditorium where the hearing was conducted was available until at least 9:30pm, the hearing was adjourned at approximately 9:10pm, because too many present would not stop their loud disruption of the hearing. It was noted by numerous residents present that the majority of those who were the most disruptive did not live in the nearby community and were looking to incite disrespect.

The Special Committee on Homeless Issues met on Thursday, October 10, 2019 to discuss the Public Hearing and to formulate recommendations regarding the Proposal to Establish a Homeless Shelter Residence at 78-16 Cooper Avenue in Glendale, Queens, NY. After discussion, committee members agreed to recommend that CB5Q oppose the proposed homeless shelter residence for the following reasons:

- 1) The proposed location of 200 men at this site is an unreasonably large number, considering that the surrounding community is comprised of 1 and 2 family homes. Homeless residences of 20-25 people would be much more appropriate for CB5.
- 2) The site in question is within walking distance of at least 4 public schools, 2 parochial schools, a gymnastics and a dance studio for youth which is located across the street on Cooper Avenue, a youth sports facility is located adjacent to the site, and a child care center is under construction at 79-40 Cooper Avenue. This is a significant risk concern considering that homeless single adults have a much higher rate of serious mental illness and addiction disorders, which is confirmed by research and stated by the Coalition for the Homeless.
- 3) The large factory building at this site is in a manufacturing zone and should be used for business purposes, preferably manufacturing, but the property owner has warehoused this building for decades, reportedly refusing offers from businesses wanting to locate at this site.

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on October 16, 2019

- 4) This proposal is another instance of trying to warehouse homeless individuals. It is much better to subsidize apartment rent for homeless people, instead of the City paying an exorbitant cost for taxpayers of at least \$3,500. Per month to warehouse single people in large shelters and hotels.
- 5) While members of Community Board 5 along with residents of our district are very concerned about the homeless crisis, we believe there are other locations within Board 5, which are smaller in size and will seamlessly fit to create a shelter/residence for those in need who come from Board 5. It would be much more appropriate and reasonable for homeless shelter residences in our low-density communities to house a maximum of 20 people. Westhab's strength is known to be providing housing for the homeless in smaller settings.
- 6) The entrance and exit to this site is located on heavily trafficked Cooper Avenue, which is a truck route, and where the sidewalks on the 78-16 Cooper Avenue side of this street are very narrow. This is not a safe location for pedestrians.
- 7) There isn't any direct bus service to this site; the closest buses are the Q29, Q47 and Q54, which too often have inconsistent service; and the nearest train station is about a mile away.  
If Westhab intends to transport potential homeless residents by van or bus, this will add to traffic issues.
- 8) The sewers in the immediate area are overtaxed already and area homes have too often been flooded during rainstorms. Adding 200 homeless men, plus staff, as proposed, will put more pressure on an already overtaxed sewer system.
- 9) The proposed location of 200 men at this site, in this community of low density residential development, would be severely out-of-character with the surrounding residential community.

It is important to state that Community Board 5, Queens recently voted overwhelmingly in favor of a Proposed Community Residence of 66 Units at 80-97 Cypress Avenue, in Glendale. The plans presented to our Board by representatives of WellLife Network is to have 20 units at this site for people who have a history of mental health issues, 20 units for people who are either homeless or at-risk of becoming homeless, and another 26 affordable housing units. This is a prime example of CB5Q being reasonably open to housing those in need on a smaller scale.

As regards Community Board 5, Queens being able to house the estimated 240 people from District 5, Queens who are currently in the city shelter system, this one proposal is to house 200 homeless men at 78-16 Cooper Avenue, and we are informed by the Dept. of Homeless Services that they intend to shelter 132 families at 1616 Summerfield Street, off the corner of Wyckoff Avenue, in Ridgewood. This could easily mean having two shelters, housing approximately 600 people, which is more than double the number of people in the city shelter system who list their last address as somewhere in the Community Board 5, Queens area.

**THEREFORE, BE IT, RESOLVED,** that Community Board 5, Queens is opposed to the Establishment of a Homeless Shelter Residence for 200 Men in the former factory building at 78-16 Cooper Avenue, in Glendale, Queens, NY, for the numerous reasons given in this report.

The Board Chairperson asked the pleasure of the Board regarding this Board Resolution, which carried unanimously on a motion by Lee Rottenberg, seconded by Walter Clayton, by a vote of - 33 – in favor; -0- opposed; - 0 – abstentions; and – 0- not voting.

## **Transportation and Public Transit Services Committee**

**Vincent Arcuri**

The Board Chairperson reported that the committee met on Tuesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, in the Board office to review the Kosciuszko Bridge construction project, which opened to the public ahead of schedule this year. He said that the flow of truck traffic over the bridge has improved but vehicular traffic flow has not, due to the limited number of lanes in the southbound direction of the BQE. He said that the committee also reviewed the Dept. of Transportation's proposal for a Dedicated Bus Lane on the southbound side of Fresh Pond Road from Bleecker Street to Putnam Avenue, between the hours of 3pm and 7pm. He said that DOT has not completed their analysis of the traffic signal system on Fresh Pond Road from Metropolitan Avenue to Myrtle Avenue, in Ridgewood.

Regarding the Reconstruction of the L Train Tunnel connecting Manhattan and Brooklyn, he said that it is progressing ahead of schedule and under budget.

Regarding the Reconstruction of Wyckoff Avenue, he said that this project is still in the final design phase. He said that the committee continues to review many traffic safety requests at their monthly meetings. He announced that the next committee meeting is scheduled for 7:30pm on Tuesday, October 22nd, 2019.

### **Old and New Business**

Fred Haller welcome everyone to participate in the annual Halloween Day Parade on Myrtle Avenue in Glendale that will take place at 7pm, starting at 68 Street in St. Pancras School Yard and ending in the Stop and Shop Supermarket Parking Lot. He said that prizes will be awarded for the best costumes at the end of the parade.

Theodore Renz, Executive Director of the Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement District, announced that the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Ridgewood Stroll will take place from 12 Noon to 5pm on Saturday, October 26<sup>th</sup> at Myrtle Avenue, Seneca Avenue and Catalpa Avenue, in Ridgewood. He welcomed everyone to participate.

Kathy Masi said that it should be noted that for three years, the members of the Special Committee received very little assistance from Amanda Nasner, the Dept. of Homeless Services Queens Borough Manager. She also questioned the qualifications of Westhab, the service provider that was selected by the Dept. of Homeless Services to develop and operate the proposed homeless shelter at 78-16 Cooper Avenue. She asked why so many people prefer to live on the streets instead of accessing the City's shelter system.

Richard Huber reminded everyone to change the batteries in their smoke detectors at home during this season.

Brian Dooley reminded everyone to go out and vote on Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup> to elect a new Queens District Attorney, several local judges and vote on 5 Ballot Proposals to Change the City Charter.

Mike Liendo announced a fundraiser for Autism Speaks that will be held in Yer Man's Pub on 88 Street in Glendale from 7pm to 12 Midnight, on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

The Board Chairperson announced that Gottscheer Hall, located at 657 Fairview Avenue in Ridgewood, will celebrate their 95<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of service to the community on Sunday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2019. He also announced that the Ridgewood Y will host a fundraiser, A Taste of Ridgewood, in their facility tomorrow night. Donations of \$60 per person will be requested at the door. CB5 member Barbara Toscano is an honoree.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, Board Chairperson Arcuri adjourned the public meeting of Community Board 5, Queens on a motion from the floor at 9:20pm.