



Community Board No. 5

Borough of Queens
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Vincent Arcuri, Jr.
Chairperson

Gary Giordano
District Manager

Minutes of Remote Community Board 5 Public Meeting

October 13, 2021

Board Members Present

Bhubaneshor Adhikari; Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Antonetta Binanti; Tobias Sheppard Bloch; Jessica Boiardi; Alyssa Bonilla; Eric Butkiewicz; Rachel Caracci; Robert Cermeli; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Patricia Crowley; Brian Dooley; Derek Evers; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Steven Fiedler; Dr. Sukh Gurung; Fred T. Haller; Fred Hoefflerle; Richard Huber; Paul A. Kerzner; Kinga Kurzyna; Maryann Lattanzio; Diego Leclery; Edward Lettau; John Maier; Patricia Maltezos; Edgar Mantel; Eileen Moloney; Marcin Nadgorski; April Narsasian; Michael O’Kane; Donald Passantino; Michael Porcelli; Kenneth Rehberger; Theodore Renz; Kelvin Rodriguez; Luis Rodriguez; Lee S. Rottenberg; Walter H. Sanchez; Dennis Stephan; Catherine Sumsky; Katarzyna Syta; Patrick J. Trinchese; Michaeline Von Drathen; and Maryanna Zero

Board Members Absent

Maria de la Cruz; Katherine Masi; Margaret O’Kane; Gyanal Thapa; and Barbara Toscano

STAFF

Gary Giordano, District Manager-CB5Q

GUESTS

Joseph Nocerino – Office of the Queens Borough President Donovan Richards

Sid Berraha, Curbside Composting Program - DSNY Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability

Before proceeding, the Board Chairperson stated that due to concerns about community spread of the COVID19 virus, this meeting will be conducted remotely and electronically via **Zoom**. Members of the public can view this meeting in progress, via livestream on **YouTube**, by clicking on this link:

<https://youtu.be/l8l5yS5Twg>, or by clicking on the link to our Community Board’s Home Page at www.nyc.gov/qnscb5.

Following the Salute to the Flag led by Donald Passantino, the Board Chairperson announced the first item on the Board Agenda as:

Presentation Re: Resumption of Compost/Organics Collection Curbside

by Sid Berraha, NYC Dept. of Sanitation’s Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability
Sid Berraha, the Community Outreach Coordinator for the NYC Dept. of Sanitation’s Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability, gave a power point presentation on the DSNY’s Curbside Composting Program

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He explained that prior to the pandemic, 44 Community Districts were receiving Curbside Composting service. This year, in response to popular demand, the program is being brought back into effect nine months sooner than had originally been planned.

Mr. Berraha said that while service was automatic in pre-pandemic times, residents interested in participating in this program are now required to sign-up by calling 3-1-1, or visiting their website at nyc.gov/curbsidecomposting. He explained that this year, the department is resuming service on a rolling basis, designing efficient routes in areas where signups are most concentrated to minimize greenhouse gas emissions. He said that the department is taking this approach because it will allow them to best understand who is most interested in participating in this service and tailor truck routes in the most efficient way possible, as well as to communicate directly with participants in the program.

He said that anyone who's interested in restoring this service in their neighborhoods should encourage their friends and neighbors to sign up too, so that their food scraps, food-soiled paper, and yard waste could also be turned into compost or renewable energy. In addition, he pointed out that separating food waste and scraps from other household garbage and disposing of it in the brown compost bins with lids on top, helps reduce rodent infestations, keep neighborhoods clean and fight climate change. He said that registration for this service began on August 8th, and neighborhoods will become eligible for this service, based on the rate of requests for participation in this service that are registered each month. He said that, starting on October 4th, the department initiated a pilot project in Community Board 6 in Brooklyn that is currently being monitored for participation rates and effectiveness.

Mr. Berraha pointed out that, according to the DSNY's waste characterization study, roughly one-third of the City's waste stream is made up of organic material that could easily be diverted from landfills through participation in this Curbside Composting Program. He recommended that participants use the same brown bins that were originally distributed by the department years ago, and they should dispose of their compost material by putting it into a clear plastic liner or paper bag inside their pail to deter odors.

The Board Chairperson opened the floor to questions and comments from Board members.

Mr. Arcuri commented that the requirement that everyone register their residence for this service will deter a lot of people who had participated in this program when it was citywide. Mr. Berraha replied that the department wants to gauge the community demand for this service, because in the past participation rates were quite low in some areas of the City.

Walter Clayton, a Board member, asked if the department would distribute new counter-top pails for storing vegetable peels and other food scraps before they'd be thrown into a brown compost bin. Mr. Berraha replied that they are usually distributed to large apartment buildings with ten or more units. He said that he'd have to check with department personnel and get back to him on that.

Diego Leclery, a Board member, asked a question about the use of plastic bags as liners in the compost bins. Mr. Berraha said that plastic is separated out of the compostable materials during the sorting process in the City's new recycling facility.

John Maier, a Board member, asked if any districts have received enough sign-ups to start organics collections. Mr. Berraha replied that only Community Board 6 in Brooklyn has qualified, so far. Mr. Maier said that he looks forward to the day when Curbside Composting services return in our Board 5 area.

Edgar Mantel, a Board member, asked how much of the compost material that was collected prior to the pandemic was actually converted into compost. Mr. Berraha didn't have any response.

Don Passantino, a Board member, asked if the Dept. of Sanitation could schedule leaf collections this Fall, and discarded Christmas trees after the holidays, to make compost. Mr. Berraha replied that the

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department plans to schedule leaf collection in late Fall and Christmas trees in January. He said that more events will be announced soon.

Rachel Caracci, a Board member, asked if the Curbside Compost Program will be limited to residential properties only. Mr. Berraha replied that schools and not-for-profit organizations are already participating in this program. Businesses are not currently being targeted to receive this service, he said.

Richard Huber, a Board member, asked if people could use plastic bags for leaf collection. Mr. Berraha replied that the Dept. of Sanitation will begin distribution of brown paper leaf bags soon, but everyone could use clear plastic bags to collect leaves, but paper bags are preferred. He advised that no black or dark bags should be filled with leaves.

Ken Rehberger, a Board member, asked what happens if only a few people on the block register for Curbside Composting service but everyone on their block separates their organic materials for collection. Mr. Berraha recommended that everyone be asked to register either online or by calling 311.

The Board Chairperson thanked Mr. Berraha for his presentation and thanked everyone for their input, and announced the next item on the Agenda as:

PUBLIC FORUM

The District Manager read aloud the following statement.

"I am Kevin J. Forrestal, President of the Queens Civic Congress, Inc. This written testimony represents the views of the over eighty Queens County civic groups that Queens Civic Congress represents. It is our belief that all siting should be made by local government. "One size fit all" is not workable in New York State where communities include rural, suburban and urban categories, with a full range of densities from farms to massive high rises. Each of the local entities has unique housing needs and the solutions should be determined by those who live in the communities and best know the local conditions and needs.

Basement apartments

Most affordable dwelling units (ADUs) in New York City are illegal, below grade dwellings which pose serious danger especially in the event of fire or flooding. As we have seen recently, flooding appears to be a growing threat as a result of climate change. Emergencies can be life threatening to the residents as well as to first responders. It has been reported that there are between 100,000 and 300,000 such illegal units just in New York City. To legalize these apartments without eliminating dangerous conditions is to legalize "death traps". This, in addition to being immoral, may expose the government to legal jeopardy.

New York City undertook a pilot project in East New York to legalize such basement units. Special revisions to city regulations were employed to ensure safe living conditions, but the required building modifications proved very expensive. Even with low-cost loans and potential loan forgiveness, there were few takers to the pilot program. In addition to the construction costs, we believe a further disincentive is that most landlords do not report the taxable income from basement apartments. Legalizing the apartments would significantly increase their taxes and other legal burdens. Under current city regulations all cellars are never habitable and due to building condition or physical layout, many basements cannot be made safe for residential use. Therefore, in our judgement, basement apartments will not produce sufficient numbers of new, legal and safe housing units to meet the need. Garage and attic conversions face similar challenges and would produce very limited legal, affordable units.

Affordable Housing

We agree that a high priority must be placed on creating an adequate number of affordable dwellings to meet the growing demand for housing through our city. There continues to be a significant amount of

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development of residential buildings in very high-density districts. We suggest that regulations be enacted to require that a percentage of affordable units be mandated for all new development of residential units in all R6 and above zoning districts. Also, more precise boundaries should be used to determine the Average Median Income (AMI) to reflect the specific community's income for the development. Census tract units should be considered in determining AMI.

Infrastructure

In most of Queens, infrastructure is out of date and is not adequate to meet the current needs of the population. If the population is to be expanded schools, hospitals, water supply and treatment, electricity and transportation infrastructure must be improved in order to sustain the growth. The Queens Civic Congress opposes the approval of the various ADU types as proposed which would conflict with local ordinances. Zoning has been successfully used, along with strong public review requirements, to ensure that new development will be appropriate and compatible with existing physical conditions, jobs, amenities and infrastructure. Local government must continue to be the ultimate arbiter of development to protect the safety and quality of life for its residents."

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Vincent Arcuri

The District Manager took attendance of Board members who were present at the meeting.

MINUTES

The Board Chairperson asked Board members to review the minutes of last month's Board Meeting which was conducted on September 14, 2021. The minutes were adopted by acclamation on a motion by Walter Sanchez that was seconded by Maryann Lattanzio.

The District Manager read aloud the following Liquor License notifications that were received at the Board office since last month's Board Meeting:

New Liquor Licenses

- 1) **EL MONTANERO BAKERY RESTAURANT INC.** 55-21 Myrtle Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) Sol Factory Corp. d/b/a **Maspeth Pizza House** 55-60 60th Street, Maspeth, NY 11378
- 3) *SLR Management Group LLC d/b/a **Lotus Lounge & Grill** 66-48 Myrtle Avenue, Glendale, NY 11385

Liquor License Renewals

- 1) Ran NY Group LLC d/b/a **Joya Hall** 63-108 Woodhaven Blvd, Rego Park, NY 11374
- 2) 5 TIME CHAMPS d/b/a **COURTSIDE LOUNGE** 69-08 Myrtle Avenue, Glendale, NY 11385
- 3) **COYOTE BOHEMIO INC.** 55-19 Myrtle Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 4) ***Super Pollo Restaurant Inc.** 865 Woodward Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 5) * **Seafood Boil Inc.** 55-25 Myrtle Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385

Wine, Beer and Cider License Renewals

- 1) POLLOS A LA BRASA d/b/a **PIO PIO** 62-30 Woodhaven Blvd, Rego Park, NY 11374
- 2) **CHIQUITA'S RESTAURANT LLC** 60-59 Myrtle Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 3) OneFourNine LLC d/b/a **Porcelain** 880 Woodward Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 4) *Leone's Pizzeria & Restaurant Inc. d/b/a **Biagio's Trattoria** 84-02 Cooper Avenue, Glendale, NY
- 5) ***MANOR OKTOBERFEST** 80-28 Cooper Avenue, Glendale, NY 11385
- 6) E-Chiban Asian Inc. d/b/a **E-Chiban Sushi Japanese Restaurant** 66-47 Fresh Pond Rd, Ridgewood, NY 11385

Other Notifications

Chicken Soup & Rice LLC d/b/a **SUNDOWN BAR** 68-38 Forest Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385 notified us that they're planning to provide live and recorded music for patrons in their establishment.

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Demolitions

The District Manager announced that the Board Office received no demolition notices since last month's Board Meeting.

The District Manager read aloud statements to the Community Board from our local Elected Officials:

Statement from Assembly Member Brian Barnwell, 30th AD

"We hope everybody is doing well and staying safe. We wanted to let everybody know that the Landlord Rental Assistance Program is now accepting applications. The program provides landlords with up to 12 months of rental arrears payments. Landlords may be eligible, if they have tenants who did not apply for the Emergency Rental Assistance Program. For questions of eligibility, what documentation is needed, and/or how to apply, please visit the link below and/or contact 844-691-7368 or

<https://otda.ny.gov/programs/landlord-rental-assistance/>

Our Community Cleanup Volunteer team is on the streets every day. We are seeking volunteers of all ages. We are sweeping, removing garbage, planting flowers, placing mulch, and removing graffiti all throughout the district. The more volunteers we have, the more areas we can clean up. If you know somebody who is interested in volunteering, please call our office at 718-651-3185, and/or email barnwellb@nyassembly.gov.

We are also accepting turkey donations and toys for our upcoming Thanksgiving and Christmas drives. Please call/email the office if you are interested in donating. Thank you. Brian Barnwell"

Statement from Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi, 28th AD submitted by Kevin Wisniewski

"Good Evening, Hope everyone is remaining well.

In partnership with the Parks Department and Friends of Mafera Park, Assemblyman Hevesi is sponsoring a park cleanup/daffodil planting at Mafera Park this Saturday, October 16th, from 10am-12pm. Cleaning/gardening supplies and PPE will be provided, along with opportunities for students to receive service hour credits. We are sharing our flyer with the board, if you are interested in attending you can RSVP by contacting our office at (718) 263-5595 or by emailing: hevesia@nyassembly.gov.

We have seen a number of tenants and landlords benefit from the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP), as funding has started to move out the door. Additionally, the state launched its Landlord Rental Assistance Program last week for landlords experiencing difficulties with ERAP. First priority for this program will be given to landlords with fewer than 20 units, but all are encouraged to apply. We're still continuing to assist individuals experiencing difficulty getting in touch with the NYS Department of Labor and with small business grant applications, among numerous other programs. If you need assistance, we encourage you to contact our office.

Legislatively, Assemblyman Hevesi identified a problem in New York State law that prevents parents of adult children, with developmental disabilities, from having full due process rights when deciding where their child will be residing, after aging out of youth treatment facilities. This means that those with such disabilities can currently be placed in facilities unsuitable for their needs, which can cause them to regress. Assemblyman Hevesi has started developing legislative solutions to address this issue while working with the Governor's office and the Office of People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) to resolve a number of outstanding cases that are currently under review.

Aside from this, we are continuing our Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) distributions and can also arrange for pickups of PPE supplies at our office, or deliveries to those who may be homebound or have difficulties traveling. For more information or assistance on any other matter, we again welcome you to contact us at (718) 263-5595. Thank you, and hope everyone remains safe and well."

Statement from State Senator Joseph Addabbo submitted by John D'Angelo, Community Liaison

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“Good Evening, and I would like to introduce myself to everyone at Community Board 5. My name is John D'Angelo and I am the incoming office manager of the Middle Village office. Sarah Spellman has joined the Senator's Albany office staff.

Our office continues to assist constituents with issues such as unemployment benefits, damages caused by Hurricane Ida, and National Grid/Precision Pipeline Solutions. The Senator continues to be in contact with Con Ed regarding their pilot program to place their utility wires underground and improve service. Our office is also closely monitoring the situation of unruly gatherings at the former hardware store on Metropolitan Avenue at 73rd Place. If we can of any assistance to you, do not hesitate to contact our office at: (718) 497-1630. The Middle Village office hours are Monday through Friday, from 9 AM to 5 PM. If you call our office after hours, a service will take your message and relay it to us the next day, unless it is an emergency.

Among upcoming Events that the State Senator is sponsoring is a Virtual 3 Day Job Fair co-sponsored by Senator Addabbo and Resorts World Casino that is scheduled for October 26th to October 28th, from 10 AM to 2 PM. The Hyatt Regency Hotel at Resorts World is holding their own Career Day on Tuesday, October 19th, from 10 AM to 1 PM.

The Senator is also hosting several Meet & Greet/Hand Sanitizer Giveaways and Java with Joe Events throughout the district, beginning on Saturday, November 6th at the Glendale Diner, from 10:30am to 12pm. and Saturday, November 20th at the Stop N Shop Supermarket in Maspeth, from 10:30am to 12pm.”

Statement from NYC Council Member Robert Holden, 30th CD

“Hello neighbors, Community Board 5 members, and fellow elected officials. I hope you are all staying safe and healthy, and I thank you for your continued work and volunteerism. This Saturday, October 16, from 12 PM to 4 PM (rain or shine), together with Maspeth Federal Savings and the 104th Precinct, we are hosting an Electronic Waste Recycling Event in the parking lot of the Maspeth Federal Bank. We'll also have paper shredding, and the NYPD will be doing VIN sketching for your vehicles. With Halloween upon us, I am hosting two Halloween festivals for our young children and their parents to enjoy. The first festival will be at Uncle Vito Maranzano Glendale Playground on Saturday, October 23, at 12 Noon. The following week, Saturday, October 30, also at 12 Noon, we will be hosting the Juniper Valley Park festival. At the festival, we will partner with the East Coast Car Association to host a Trunk or Treat event right on 80th Street. We welcome all of you to enjoy these great events.

My office is actively engaging with the NYC Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Mayor's office in addressing the many issues my district suffered during Hurricane Ida. I will be meeting with DEP Commissioner Sapienza next week to tour the district and address the concerns that my office has received. Please remember that my office is always at your disposal, so do not hesitate to give us a call at 718-366-3900, email at District30@council.nyc.gov, or visit us safely in person at 64-69 Dry Harbor Road in Middle Village. Thanks again for volunteering and have a good night.”

On behalf of Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, Joe Nocerino reported that the Queens Borough President sends his regards. He announced that tomorrow night, the Borough President will host the celebration of Italian American Month in the Helen Marshal Cultural Center in Queens Borough Hall. He said that he was happy to announce that our Board Chairperson Vincent Arcuri is one of the honorees at tomorrow night's event. Mr. Nocerino welcomed Board members to join this celebration of Italian heritage and culture with food, entertainment and presentations. He said that COVID-19 rules and guidelines will be followed. Proof of vaccination or a negative-COVID test must be presented at registration. This event is co- sponsored by St. John's University's Italian Heritage and Culture Committee, NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr., Council Member Paul Vallone, Council Member Jim Gennaro, and Council Member Eric Ulrich. He said that light refreshments will be served at 5:30 pm

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and the celebration begins at 6 pm. He congratulated Mr. Arcuri on his nomination and reminded everyone who plans to attend to RSVP at www.queensbp.org/RSVP

In addition, Mr. Nocerino announced that the Queens Borough President will host a Virtual Redistricting Town Hall on Zoom, at 5:30PM on Monday, October 18th, in order to hear from experts about the redistricting process and what you can do to make your voice and your community heard. He said that the U.S. Constitution requires that legislative and congressional districts get redrawn at least once every 10 years using new census data to guarantee equal representation. He asked that anyone who intends to participate in this Town Hall to RSVP on the Borough President's webpage at www.queensbp.org/RSVP.

VOTE REGARDING THE FY 2023 CAPITAL & EXPENSE BUDGET PRIORITIES OF CB5Q

The Board Chairperson reported that the Executive Committee members reviewed the results of the 47 Capital and Expense Budget Surveys that the Board received from Board members this month. He said that the Executive Committee recommends that the Board's Capital Budget Priorities for FY 2023 be adopted, as tabulated. Each Board member received a copy of the tabulated list of Capital Budget Priorities for FY 2023.

The District Manager read aloud the list of the Top Ten FY 2023 Capital Budget recommendations, as presented, as follows:

- 1 Redesign and Reconstruct Sewer System in Portions of CB5Q Area Having Worst Flooding Problems
- 2 Provide Stormwater Runoff Mitigation
- 3 Reconstruct Wyckoff Avenue, from Flushing Avenue to Cooper Avenue
- 4 Replace Existing Bridge on Grand Ave over Newtown Creek in Maspeth
- 5 Reconstruct Sidewalks, Curbs and Pedestrian Ramps along Myrtle Avenue, from Fresh Pond Road to Wyckoff Avenue
- 6 Reconstruct Deteriorated Catch Basins and Provide New Catch Basins in the CB5Q Area
- 7 Rehabilitate Ridgewood Reservoir - Phase II and the Surrounding Area, Including Portions of Highland Park
- 8 Reconstruct Benninger Playground in Ridgewood
- 9 Reconstruct Mafera Park, especially the Turf Field
- 10 Provide Replacement of the Synthetic Turf Field and the Running Track at the West End of Juniper Valley Park

The Chairperson recognized Walter Clayton, who asked a question about the status of the current capital project in Juniper Valley Park where the contractor had begun work on replacing the synthetic turf field and running track. The District Manager replied that the contractor found that a few of the smaller drainage pipes under the turf field and running track were collapsed and that in another pipe there was a concrete blockage. Now, he said, the Parks Department is working with the contractor to determine what has to be done to complete this job.

Fred Haller, a Board member, asked for a clarification of the Board's boundaries along Wyckoff Avenue. The District Manager replied that the portion of Wyckoff Avenue between Grove Street and Flushing Avenue is located in the Borough of Brooklyn, but it has been included in this overall capital project.

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Regarding the Board's Capital Budget Priorities for FY 2023, the Board Chairperson accepted a motion from Kenneth Rehberger and seconded by Walter Clayton, to adopt the Executive Committee's recommendations, as stated. As there were no further questions or comments on the motion, he requested a Roll Call vote on the matter which carried unanimously by a vote of – 45 - in favor; - 0 – opposed; - 0 – abstentions; and – 0 – not voting.

Regarding the Board's Expense Budget Priorities for FY 2023, the Board Chairperson opened the floor to questions and comments. The District Manager reported that there was only one revision submitted regarding last year's list of Expense Budget Priorities. He said that everyone else supported the same priorities as were submitted by our Board last year. He read aloud the Board's Top 10 Expense Budget Priorities as adopted last year, as follows:

- 1) Assign additional personnel for the 104th Police Precinct Patrol Force
- 2) Provide Field Workers for 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 Collections
- 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

The Chairperson pointed out that all Board members received a copy of the FY 2022 Expense Budget Priorities along with their Capital Budget Surveys. He accepted a motion from the floor from Walter Clayton, and seconded by Antonetta Binanti, in favor of adopting the FY 2022 Expense Budget Priorities, as the FY 2023 Expense Budget Priorities of CB5Q.

The Chairperson opened to the floor to questions and comments.

Richard Huber, a Board member, said that the patrol strength in the 104th Police Precinct is expected to drop this year due to many senior officers who are eligible for retirement, and so much anti-policing rhetoric on the street. He said that he was thankful to live in a community that supports the police and vice versa.

As there was no further discussion on the matter, the Board Chairperson requested a Roll Call vote on the motion to adopt the FY 2023 Expense Budget Priorities as presented to Board members via email during the past month. The motion carried unanimously by a Roll Call vote of – 45 – in favor; - 0 – opposed; - 0 – not voting; and – 0 – abstentions.

The Board Chairperson thanked everyone for their input in the budget process this year.

District Manager's Report

Gary Giordano

The District Manager reported that there have been several new party places in the Board 5 area that have become public safety problems for the surrounding community. He said that the first one is across the street from the Board Office at 61-18 Myrtle Avenue, in Glendale. He reported that in the early hours of the morning on July 25th, the police responded to this location after 17 shots were fired either in front of this establishment or nearby. He said that three of the gun shots entered buildings adjacent to the Board Office.

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He said that, thankfully, it's been quiet since then. However, just recently, he said that the former Midville Hardware Store at 73-02 Metropolitan Avenue was converted into a party place that attracts large crowds of rowdy patrons who hang out outside and smoke weed and disturb the peace in an otherwise quiet neighborhood. He said that complaints have been reported to the Police Precinct, Dept. of Buildings as well as the Dept. of Health.

The District Manager also reported that the Dept. of Transportation has begun milling a large section of Glendale, west of 80 Street, and several blocks in Ridgewood, including Gates Avenue and adjacent streets. He said that DOT plans to mill the local streets on the list first, and then should return in the next two weeks to resurface them. He said that they've started resurfacing some streets in our Board area this week.

The District Manager also announced that the Executive Committee has agreed to his recommendation to hire John Maier, a Board member, to work in the Board Office in Laura Mulvihill's position.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Safety Services Committee

Maryann Lattanzio

Maryann Lattanzio reported that the Committee met remotely, via Webex, at 7:30pm on Thursday, October 7th, 2021, with Lt. George Hellmer, Sgt. Michael Mercurio, P. O. Michael Berish and P. O. Dilsia Bonilla in attendance.

Regarding the most recent crime statistics for the past 28 Day Period, P. O. Berish reported that there were no murders, and year-to-date, there's been one murder within the confines of the 104th Precinct. He also reported that for the past 28 days, the number of rapes is down by 1, and up by 9% year-to-date; the number of robberies has increased by 7% over the past 28 days, and down 28% year-to-date; the number of Felonious Assaults is down by 1 for the past 28 days, and down 19% year-to-date; the number of burglaries are down 64% for the past 28 days, and down 33% year-to-date; the number of Grand Larceny crimes are up 12% for the past 28 days, and down 11% year-to-date; and the number of Grand Larceny Auto crimes is up 5% for the past 28 days, and up 25% year-to-date. He said that overall crime statistics for the 104th Precinct are up 5.6% for the past 28 days, and down 15% year-to-date. He explained to the Committee that the majority of Felonious Assault cases involved domestic disputes and are often closed by arrests made.

Officer Berish gave the Committee a breakdown of crimes that were reported in each sector of the 104th Precinct, as follows:

In Sector A, Glendale: over the past 28 days, there's been a 52.9% increase in crimes, a majority of them are Grand Larceny cases involving scams, and year-to-date, there's been a 9.2% decrease in the number of crimes reported.

In Sector B, Ridgewood: During the past 28 days, 57 crimes were reported, while year-to-date, the number of crimes fell by 17.1%. Grand Larceny crimes and Robberies are up generally speaking. Over the past 28 days, Robberies are up to 14, compared to 8 last month. He said that for the most part, Robberies occur during late evening or early morning hours.

In Sector C, Maspeth: The overall incidence of crimes is down year-to-date by 15.6%. Officer Berish warned everyone to beware of scams.

Edward Lettau asked if cybercrimes are a problem, particularly through emails, Officer Berish replied that these types of crimes are an ongoing problem, particularly for seniors and elderly victims.

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In Sector D, Middle Village: The incidence of crimes has gone down by 6.3% in the past 28 day period, and has gone down by 14.2% year-to-date. Again, Officer Berish cautioned everyone present not to leave anything of value in their cars, and they should never leave their car engines running while they run into a store. He said that catalytic converters can be stolen very quickly and resold for the value of their metal parts.

Patrick Trinchese, Vice-Chair of the Committee, said that there appears to be more criminal activity in Middle Village recently, based on the uptick in the number of 911 and 311 calls that don't result in arrests. Rich Huber, a Committee member, advised him that crime victims must file a police report.

Regarding the number of crimes reported at the Cooper Avenue Homeless Shelter, Officer Berish told Committee members that year-to-date, there have been 24 arrests made on site, usually involving residents attacking each other.

Officer Berish reported that the 104th Precinct handled 2,800 311 complaints over the past month this year, as compared 3,500 311 complaints during the same time period in 2020. He said that for the most part, 311 complaints have resulted in summonses for parking violations.

Regarding the increased number of shootings, stabbings and violent crimes citywide, Officer Berish reported that there has been an increase in the number of shootings and many of the perpetrators have been repeat offenders. In the 104th Precinct, he said that there were 19 gun arrests in 2021, as compared to 13 arrests year-to-date last year. And, he said that there have been 3,500 gun arrests citywide year-to-date, compared to 2,900 gun arrests during the same period in 2020. Officer Berish reported that there have been 3 documented confirmed shootings year-to-date in the 104th Precinct, including one at 59 Drive and Flushing Avenue, another incident that involved one person who was shot on Cooper Avenue by Myrtle Avenue, and a recent shooting after a party at 73-02 Metropolitan Avenue, as well as shots fired after a party at 61-18 Myrtle Avenue in late July.

Richard Huber commented that he remembered when a person could be sentenced to a year in jail for being caught with an illegal handgun. Lt. Hellmer replied that one problem with reduced penalties is the impact that the pandemic has had on the Criminal Court system now that it's operating at a much slower pace. Committee members discussed how Bail Reform legislation has also kept more criminals out of jail.

Regarding the incidence of Hate Crimes and Hate Crime Graffiti in the 104th Precinct, Officer Berish said that there's been an increase in the incidence of graffiti in our area. He told the Committee that Precinct staff have organized graffiti removals at highly visible targets this year. However, the number of graffiti arrests is down as compared to last year, partly because police are required to apprehend the graffiti vandalism in progress. Lt. Hellmer pointed out that there were 4 graffiti arrests in the past 28 days, with 17 arrests year-to-date as compared to 13 arrests year-to-date for the same period in 2020. Lt. Hellmer said that it's important to remove graffiti as quickly as possible to deter offenders.

Officer Berish reported that there have been several incidents of graffiti that involve Hate Crimes, including a tag that read "Free Palestine" on 88 Street, and a similar tag in Maspeth. In addition, he said that a few Swastikas were drawn on property in Maspeth, and there was one Hate Crime incident in the Cooper Avenue Shelter this year.

He said that local houses of worship are an important resource for the community to stem Hate Crimes. The 104th Police Precinct pays special attention to houses of worship during their holy days.

Ms. Lattanzio pointed out that residents have complained to her about not getting any response from the Neighborhood Coordination Officer (NCO) in their sector. Sgt. Mercurio replied that his NCO Officers

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have been getting reassigned to cover for Officers who are out sick or on extended leave. He welcomed everyone to contact him whenever they can't reach their NCO Officer directly.

Regarding the number of summonses that have been issued in the 104th Precinct this year, Officer Berish reported that: 6,833 parking violation summonses have been issued year-to-date; and 4,059 moving violation summonses have been issued year-to-date, including:

- 874 summonses for Speeding
- 85 summonses for Failure to Yield
- 436 summonses for Not Obeying a Stop Sign
- 427 summonses for Texting While Driving
- 515 summonses for Driving Thru a Red Light
- 300 summonses for Not Wearing a Seat Belt
- 39 summonses for Not Driving on a Local Truck Route
- 383 summonses for Unlicensed Operators
- 74 summonses for Obstructed License Plates

Richard Huber asked the police to pay more attention to people who ride pedal-assisted bicycles and other micro-mobility devices through Stop signs, traffic signals and the like. Officer Berish said that he would ask Precinct Supervisors to give this problem more attention.

Regarding the proposed legislation in the State Legislature to make it a crime to assault an Auxiliary Police Officer while On-Duty, Ms. Lattanzio asked the Committee members to consider making a recommendation in support of this legislation. Copies of the legislation were distributed to all Committee members, in addition to being emailed to Board members prior to tonight's Board Meeting. She said that the committee voted unanimously in favor of supporting this piece of legislation. Officer Berish informed the committee that there are between 40 and 50 Auxiliary Police Officers who assist the police on patrol in the 104th Precinct in a variety of ways.

Patrick Trinchese, Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, explained that the proposed legislation would offer the same protection to Auxiliary Police Officers as is currently afforded Transit Authority personnel or any other worker on-duty. The District Manager stated that the proposed pieces of legislation are currently: A-6997 in the State Assembly, and S-374 in the State Senate.

As there were no other questions or comments on the Committee's recommendation, the Board Chairperson requested a Roll Call vote on the recommendation to support NYS Legislation to increase penalties for assaults against On Duty Auxiliary Police Officers, which carried by a vote of – 44 – in favor; - 1 – opposed; - 0 – abstentions; and – 0 – not voting.

Transportation and Public Transit Services Committee

Vincent Arcuri

John Maier, Vice-Chair of the Public Transit Services Committee, reported that the Committee met on Tuesday, September 21st, to review two presentations that were given by representatives of the NYC Dept, of Transportation.

He said that the first presentation addressed traffic safety issues in the vicinity of the Ridgewood Reservoir in Highland Park, on the Brooklyn-Queens border, and outlined several sidewalk improvements that would improve public access to the Reservoir area. He said that most of the work will start in the Spring when the sidewalks alongside Vermont Place and Highland Boulevard will be replaced and aligned with the roadway, and adjustments will be made to signal timing at cross walks around the perimeter of the Reservoir to allow pedestrians enough time to cross the street between the parking lot and recreation area over to the Reservoir.

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Rich Huber, a Transportation Committee member, commented that when Don Passantino visited Highland Park and the Ridgewood Reservoir recently, he saw that there was a large tree planted in the middle of the sidewalk at one busy intersection and said that the tree didn't look healthy. He said that some consideration should be given to removing that tree. Mr. Maier agreed.

Derek Evers asked about No Parking signs that had apparently been removed on Cypress Avenue between Clover Place and Vermont Place. Mr. Maier asked him if he would send a more detailed report of the location in an email to the Board Office so the staff could look into it further.

Mr. Maier said that the second presentation that was given to Committee members concerned DOT's plans to replace the Grand Avenue Bridge over Newtown Creek in Maspeth which is long overdue. He pointed out that the Bridge has been closed for structural repairs on most weekends since the Spring. He said that DOT is working to obtain all of the permits necessary to proceed with this project while it's still in the preliminary design phase. He said that once the final design phase is completed, construction of a new bridge would begin in 2026 and is slated for completion in 2029. He said that DOT is planning to form an advisory committee made up of community residents and local business representatives and other stakeholders to give input on the entire construction process.

Zoning and Land Use Review Committee

Walter Sanchez

Walter Sanchez reported on a pilot program in East New York that the City's Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development initiated last year, to create more affordable housing units in existing residential homes, by converting basements into separate apartments. He said that after investing \$12 Million into this pilot project, the City has backed away from this idea. He said that, for the most part, in his opinion, landlords are not willing to let building inspectors inside their door to inspect the existing conditions of their homes, which was an essential part of this pilot project.

Ed Lettau, a Board member, pointed out that when landlords in Ridgewood began renovating the 6-family buildings and converting basements into apartments, they sometimes removed support beams that caused structural damage to the building. He said that landlords should be required to consult a structural engineer before making any decisions about building renovations.

New Business

Fred Haller announced that the Halloween Parade will take place on Myrtle Avenue in Glendale, starting at 2pm at 65 Street by the Stop N Shop Supermarket, and heading over to St. Pancras School Parking Lot, where the judges will be on hand to award prizes for the best costumes in each category. He welcomed everyone to participate with their families.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, the Board Chairperson entertained a motion to adjourn, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:31pm.