



Community Board No. 5

Borough of Queens
Ridgewood, Maspeth, Middle Village and Glendale
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Vincent Arcuri, Jr.
Chairperson

Gary Giordano
District Manager

Minutes of Remote Community Board 5 Public Meeting February 9, 2022

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; Maria de la Cruz; Derek Evers; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Steven Fiedler; Dr. Sukh Gurung; Fred T. Haller; Fred Hoefflerle; Richard Huber; Paul A. Kerzner; Maryann Lattanzio; Diego Leclery; Edward Lettau; Edgar Mantel; Katherine Masi; Eileen Moloney; Marcin Nadgorski; April Narsasian; Margaret O'Kane; 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; Barbara Toscano; Patrick J. Trinchese; Michaeline Von Drathen; Maryanna Zero

Board Members Absent

Brian Dooley; Kinga Kurzyna; Patricia Maltezos; Gyanal Thapa

STAFF

Gary Giordano, District Manager-CB5Q
John Maier, Community Associate-CB5Q

Before proceeding, the Board Chairperson welcomed everyone to join the meeting, at 7:35pm, and wished them a Happy New Year. Due to the COVID19 pandemic, our Monthly Board Meetings are being conducted remotely and livestreamed via Zoom. Board members, staff and guests were provided a link to participate. Members of the public can view this meeting livestream in progress, via YouTube, by clicking on this link: https://youtu.be/tMwOKuwVo_4 which has been posted on our CB5Q Homepage at www.nyc.gov/qnscb5.

Anyone wishing to address the Board during the Public Forum portion of the meeting is asked to submit a typed statement, by email, to our Community Board 5 email address at qn05@cb.nyc.gov no later than 2pm today, so that your statement could be read into the record of our Board Meeting.

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

PUBLIC FORUM

The District Manager Gary Giordano read aloud the following two statements from local not-for-profit organizations:

1) Statement from Jesenia Espinal, homeowner in Ridgewood

"Good Evening to the Queens Community Board 5 and Happy New Year. Hope everyone is staying well.

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Thank you for reviewing my questions this evening. I would like to ask how we can have the City's Dept. of Sanitation enforce clean-up of privately owned property in the Ridgewood Queens area, specifically Fresh Pond Road and Myrtle Avenue, along with the side streets to and from Mafera Park.

It's unfortunate to walk in our neighborhood and constantly see garbage everywhere in this beautiful area. As a homeowner, curb appeal is extremely important to me and the cleanliness of our community is crucial for our health and wellness.

Are there any neighborhood clean ups offering support, that those in the community can join? Lastly, any conversations around adding and maintaining green spaces in Ridgewood, Queens area?

Thank you for your time. Jesenia Espinal, a homeowner in Ridgewood, Queens"

2) Statement from Scarlett Coley, Ridgewood resident

"Dear Gary and Community Board 5,

I submit a request to be heard on the issue of public hazard at the site of 614/616 Woodward Ave. This lot owned by Silvershore Properties 64 LLC has long been a hazard to the community (at least 7 years). It is a dumping ground, the sidewalks are unusable and dangerous, and the rat population goes unchecked. It is apparent that the owners, one of the largest real estate holding companies in New York and known to be one of the [city's worst landlords](#), have no intention of doing anything productive with this lot. It's unreasonable for them to continue to be allowed to treat our neighborhood this way. It affects life on every level from property valuation and public health & hygiene, to the fact that our children in nearby nursery schools cannot walk down the block. My question to the board is how can we organize as a community to hold Silvershore Properties accountable? Thank you, Scarlett Coley"

3) Statement from Maeve McGee, Stop 'N' Swap Coordinator - Zero Waste Program of GrowNYC

"New Yorkers looking to reduce, reuse, and save money this year are invited to participate in Stop 'N' Swap, a free community reuse event organized by local non-profit GrowNYC. The average NYC household discards about 2,000 pounds of waste a year. By reusing through events like Stop 'N' Swap, NYC residents can take part in diverting over 40 million pounds of material from the landfill every year. Take a break from shopping, support a cleaner future, and join the ever-growing reuse community!

This event has been re-scheduled from January 29th to this Saturday, February 12th, Lincoln's Birthday from 12 Noon to 3pm at The Shops at Atlas Park, 8000 Cooper Ave, Queens, NY.

The public is invited to bring clean, portable, reusable items to share with those who can use them. No one is required to bring something to take something — you can simply show up with a bag and see what's free for the taking. Books, toys, fashionable clothing, housewares, and electronics are just some of the offerings. Furniture and other large items are not accepted at the swap. Anything leftover at the end of the day is either donated or recycled. ***Proof of vaccination and face coverings are required for all attendees.***

Stop 'N' Swaps have developed a regular following among thrifty and environmentally conscious New Yorkers. After almost two years without swaps and in response to increasing demand for the events, GrowNYC has set a goal of hosting one swap in each of the city's 59 community districts each year.

Each year, GrowNYC serves 3 million New Yorkers, providing opportunities to make NYC truly livable - a place where every person can enjoy a healthier life. GrowNYC's Zero Waste programs are funded by the NYC Department of Sanitation. Learn more about it at: www.grownyc.org/swap."

4) Statement from Dorian Shahini and Florence Maloku re: Relax Café, Inc. of 68-17 Forest Avenue, Ridgewood

"We are pleased to introduce Relax Café Inc. doing business as Relax Café & Lounge to the residents and members of Community Board No. 5. Relax Cafe is a full-service Café and Mediterranean Restaurant

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located at 68-17 Forest Avenue and is an applicant for an on-premises beer, wine, cider and liquor license.

Relax Café is the fulfilment of a life-long dream of its owners, Dorian Shahini and Florenc Maloku, to own and operate a restaurant, serving the dining needs of families in the community. Patrons can experience a European-style coffee shop/café, enjoying tasty pastries or full breakfast in the morning and by day and/or Mediterranean fare in the evening. The restaurant will offer a wide array of dishes and offer specialty wines and cocktails to pair with any meal. Relax Café will cater to families looking for a kid-friendly option to eat breakfast, lunch or dinner in the neighborhood, to persons looking for a nice place to work remotely during the day, as well as to patrons looking for a place to relax and unwind after a long day. The introduction of Relax Café to the neighborhood will be beneficial to the community providing a place where everyone can go have a good time. The opening of a restaurant like Relax Café & Lounge, with its ethnic cuisine will add to the diversity of dining options available to the community and ultimately to the fabric of the neighborhood.

Relax Café & Lounge is strictly a full-service, family restaurant. The restaurant keeps regular kitchen hours, opening for breakfast and closing at 11pm weekdays. Patrons sit-down to dine and will order from skilled, experienced servers. If the on-premises application is approved, patrons who want to consume spirits with their meal will be asked for identification before being served. We intend to offer a pick-up and take-out service for members in the community who want to experience our menu on the go.

In our establishment there will be no loud music played on the premises. Crowds will not be allowed to assemble. There will be no dancing or cabaret. The restaurant will be fully staffed at all times and a manager and/or owner will be on location at all times. As a full-time restaurant, the premises is well lit, with comfortable lighting at all times. There is a front door for ingress and egress and there is an emergency exit in the back of the restaurant that will be used only in emergency situations. Furthermore, the restaurant will take reservations to prevent excess wait times for patrons on busy days. The safety of the community is paramount and in no way will be comprised.

Relax Café Inc. is a new tenant to the premises located at 68-17 Forest Avenue. We have no affiliation or knowledge of any previous tenants or establishments at this premises and we RELAX CAFÉ INC. intend to positively differentiate ourselves from any previous establishments at this location. We look forward to serving you in the future. If any other concerns exist, please feel free to contact us."

5) Gonzo's Restaurant, 52-35 Metropolitan Avenue, in Ridgewood

"Andy Polanco, the owner of Gonzo's Restaurant, is a very talented, young and ambitious entrepreneur with an Industrial Mechanical Engineer BA degree, dad of two incredible boys, a pure believer in God, family, unity and community, from Barquisimeto, a beautiful city in West Central Venezuela where you can find the best pepitos guaros, a famous traditional dish, just a piece of Venezuelan Heaven that you can only find in his restaurant at 52-35 Metropolitan Avenue. Andy is a passionate businessman who is optimistic at the opening of this business with his family. This is a new concept in New York, and as new member of this community, he brings a family ambiance with artisanal traditional food with a hint of Queens in Gonzo's beautiful dining room."

6) Lorraine Sullivan, a Maspeth resident, re: Principe Park (formerly Maurice Park)

"I would like the following topic addressed at tonight's meeting: Maurice Park (officially known as Principe Park now) - the playground needs a major face-lift. We need swings for older children. Tree stumps need to be removed from the basketball court, and the Park needs to be cleaned regularly. Our children shouldn't have to leave our neighborhood to go to a clean acceptable playground (Juniper Valley). Thank you in advance for your help in this matter."

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**Vincent Arcuri**

The Board Chairperson requested that the District Manager Gary Giordano read the following statements from local Elected Officials into the record:

Statement from Congresswoman Grace Meng's Office, submitted by Stancy Saji
"Announcement of the NY-06 Annual Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) Workshop"

- Rep. Meng will be hosting her annual Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) Workshop virtually on Tuesday, February 15 from 6:00pm to 7:30pm.
- The workshop helps houses of worship and non-profit organizations obtain NSGP funds, a program that provides nonprofit organizations, including houses of worship and religious facilities, that face a high risk of a security threats with funding for target-hardening and other physical security enhancements and activities.
- If an organization you belong to is interested in joining, have them RSVP by emailing MENG.RSVP@mail.house.gov no later than Sunday, February 13th, with their name and organization/house of worship name.

Introduced Legislation to Make Lunar New Year a Federal Holiday

- This week as Asian American's rang in the Year of the Tiger, Rep. Meng introduced new legislation to create a federal holiday for Lunar New Year.
- The measure would make Lunar New Year a federally recognized holiday in the United States, adding it to the list of eleven federal holidays that are currently recognized. The bill was introduced with 44 cosponsors.
- Rep. Meng first proposed closing New York City public schools for Lunar New Year when she was a member of the New York State Legislature in 2009, which paved the way for it to become a public-school holiday in 2016.
- Rep. Meng also reintroduced a House resolution that would recognize the cultural and historical significance of Lunar New Year, as well as wish a happy and prosperous holiday to everybody celebrating.

Co-sponsored the COVID-19 Price Gouging Prevention Act, H.R. 675

- Rep. Meng co-sponsored the COVID-19 Price Gouging Prevention Act, a bill that would prohibit price gouging during the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- This bill would help protect consumers against unreasonable price hikes that are exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This would apply to food, water, personal protective equipment, respirators, medical supplies, cleaning supplies, sanitizers, healthcare services, delivery services, or cleaning services."

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

Hope everyone is safe and staying well. Thanks again to board leadership and all members for your continued service.

Assemblyman Hevesi has been spending a lot of time Albany, with the Assembly negotiating 2022 budget priorities. As Children and Families Committee Chair, the Assemblyman is fighting to include \$5 billion to implement universal childcare in New York, funds for preventative services, and resources to help kids and families deal with the generational trauma as well as trauma that kids have experienced as a result of the pandemic.

The Assemblyman is also voicing his support for a number of other priorities. This includes funds for the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Equity Budget, measures to lower prescription drug prices in

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New York, funds for CUNY/SUNY campuses, and initiatives to increase accessibility in public transit, among numerous others. If you have any questions, or if there is an issue you would like to flag, as always you can call us at (718) 263-5595 or email hevesia@nyassembly.gov.

A few weeks ago, we participated in a very successful Catalytic Converter Etching event organized by Dorie Opitz Figliola, Borough President Richards, and the 104th Precinct, in an effort to deter theft of converters. With partnership from Congressmember Meng, Senator Addabbo, and Councilman Holden, we were also able to distribute more than 100 at home COVID rapid tests to those who attended the event, as well as KN95 face masks and hand sanitizer. We are still organizing regular distributions to keep everyone well stocked - the next distribution is this Sunday at 10am, at Juniper Valley Park (that will be at 80th St by the tennis courts). Given the high demand, supplies have been going very quickly at our distributions, so I want to remind everyone that they can always arrange a pickup at our district office, and in certain cases we have been able to deliver supplies to people's homes.

Thanks again for all of your efforts and stay safe. Kevin G. Wisniewski, Senior Advisor to State Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi"

Statement from State Assemblywoman Jenifer Rajkumar, 38th AD, submitted by Vjola Isufaj

"Dear Community Board 5, Thank you so much for your tireless work for our community. I am proud to report that our community won in the redistricting process. Thanks to our collective advocacy, my Assembly District remains intact. I will keep all the same neighborhoods for the next 10 years including the beloved communities of Glendale and Ridgewood. I look forward to continuing to serve you.

I am proud to announce that I was appointed as one of only 6 Senior Advisors on the Transition Team of Mayor Eric Adams. As we build a new administration to lead this city, please let me know your priorities. I have also recently backed the Mayor's aggressive plan to combat the rising crime that plagues our city.

Last month, I spearheaded a massive free at-home COVID test kit giveaway at my office as we battled the Omicron variant. We distributed 1,000 test kits. Additionally, our office gave away countless free N95 masks and hand-sanitizer bottles.

It is now budget season in Albany. The Governor has proposed a \$212 Billion Budget, and I am working every day to ensure the funding will flow to our institutions and civic groups in Glendale and Ridgewood, as well as to our veterans, seniors, and youth. In Albany, I have questioned the heads of several state agencies on spending and budgetary priorities.

I am proud of the bills that I have introduced in the Capitol this Session for the benefit of our community. Three of my bills focus on the men and women who serve our country by expanding public housing options for veterans, granting veterans easier access to college credits in city and state universities, and ensuring public employees called to active military duty do not lose their benefits. I also introduced a bill to help students with disabilities succeed in their post-high school education by expanding support and services for these students.

Please note that our Veterans Breakfast scheduled for the Valentine's Day weekend was postponed out of an abundance of caution due to Omicron. Stay tuned for the new date.

My office remains fully open and you can always reach me at 718-805-0950 or by email at rajkumarj@nyassembly.gov. It is an honor to serve you and to work with you. Very truly yours, Jenifer Rajkumar, 38th AD"

The Board Chairperson asked if there was any report from the Queens Borough President's Office to read aloud at tonight's meeting. The District Manager replied that Joe Nocerino, the Community Coordinator who covered our Board Meetings, has just retired from the Borough President's staff, and there's been no replacement, as yet.

Statement from P.O. Michael Berish – Community Affairs Unit of the 104th Police Precinct

“Members of Community Board 5, I hope all is well. Unfortunately, we cannot attend tonight's virtual meeting, but here is some information that you can share.

We are proud to report that for the year 2021, the 104th Precinct led Patrol Borough Queens North with the largest decrease in crime, compared to all of the other precincts in Queens North. We would like to thank the community as they played a pivotal role in this success.

As for 2022, thus far, we have seen an increase in crime to start the year, for the 28-Day Period in January, we have seen a significant increase in Robberies and Burglaries, more specifically in the Glendale and Ridgewood areas. We urge everyone to properly secure their windows and doors in their residence. In addition, please do not leave your vehicle running with the keys or the key fobs inside the vehicle, as this accounts for a portion of our theft of vehicles. This is important.

Over this past weekend, Officers from our Public Safety Team conducted a vehicle stop which resulted in the removal of a firearm and two individuals placed under arrest. This took place in Glendale.

As always, please call or write Police Officer Michael Berish, 104th Precinct Community Affairs at (718) 386-2446, or Michael.Berish@nypd.org.”

The Board Chairperson directed John Maier, on the Board staff, to take attendance of the Board Members present at the meeting. He said that, according to his records, four Board members were absent: Brian Dooley, Kinga Kurzyna, Patricia Maltezos, and Gyanal Thapa. Mr. Maier commented that Kinga Kurzyna has decided to resign from the Community Board. The Board Chairperson clarified his statement, by saying that Kinga Kurzyna decided not to renew her Board membership this year.

MINUTES

The Board Chairperson asked Board members to review the minutes of last month's remote Board Meeting which was conducted on January 12, 2022. The Chairperson accepted a motion from Walter Clayton, seconded by Kathy Masi, to accept the minutes of last month's Board Meeting, as submitted. The minutes were adopted by acclamation.

The Board Chairperson requested that the District Manager Gary Giordano read aloud the following Liquor License notifications that were received at the Board office since last month's Board Meeting. He said that this list was distributed to all Board members prior to tonight's Board Meeting.

LIQUOR, WINE & BEER LICENSE APPLICATIONS AND RENEWALS**New Liquor Licenses**

- 1) *PergjonVI V&P Corp. d/b/a **Mon Cheri** 64-14 Fresh Pond Rd., Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) **Cabanas Jorge Restaurant** Corp. 688 Seneca Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 3) ****Café Restaurant El Parce Inc.** 758 Woodward Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 4) The Grand Palazzo Inc. d/b/a **The Grand Palazzo Lounge** 73-30 Grand Ave., Maspeth, NY 11378

Liquor License Renewals

- 1) Hungry Burrito Taco Inc. d/b/a **Hungry Burrito Taco** 811 Seneca Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) **Rogner** LLC; 63-59 Forest Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 3) Cahill Enterprises Inc. d/b/a **Glen Patrick Pub** 53-73 65th Place, Maspeth, NY 11378
- 4) 299 Wyckoff LLC d/b/a **Bonus Room** 991 Wyckoff Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 5) Bermeo Food Corp d/b/a **El Manaba Restaurant** 341 St Nicholas Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 6) Chicken Soup & Rice LLC d/b/a **Sundown Bar** 68-38 Forest Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385

New Wine, Beer & Cider Licenses

None Received

Wine, Beer & Cider Renewals

None Received

*****Temporary Retail Permit**

- 1) **Grace Thai 2** Inc. 57-42 Myrtle Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385 (WB&C)
- 2) **** Hail Mary 778 LLC d/b/a **The Flying Fox Tavern** 678 Woodward Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385 (LWB&C)
- 3) **Royal Pizzeria of Myrtle** Corp. 55-06 Myrtle Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 (B&C)
- 4)**** Mansions Worldwide LLC d/b/a **TBD**, 46-63 Metropolitan Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 (LWB&C)

- * This is the third 30 Day notice received for this location since 2018 with no business ever opening, the most recent was in October of 2021.
- ** Also seeking a Temporary Retail Permit
- *** Information about **Temporary Retail Permits** can be found on the SLA Website [here](https://sla.ny.gov/node/13981):
<https://sla.ny.gov/node/13981>. The categories include: B&C: Beer & Cider -- WB&C: Wine, Beer & Cider -- LWB&C: Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider
- ****Currently has a full license pending with the SLA

The Board Chairperson asked everyone to contact the Board 5 office about any questions or concerns they have about any of the above-mentioned locations.

He informed everyone that there are no **Demolition Notices** to report since last month's Board Meeting.

The Board Chairperson announced the next item in his Executive Committee Report as the review and recommendation of this year's five applications to hold Street Festivals in our Board 5 area. He read aloud the list of Street Festivals, as follows:

1) RIDGEWOOD LDC MYRTLE AVENUE FESTIVAL

MYRTLE AVE btw Wyckoff Ave & Fresh Pond Road, in Ridgewood
SUNDAY – April 24 - 10am to 6pm (Street closing 8am to 8pm)
SPONSOR: Ridgewood Local Development Corporation

2) GRAND AVENUE FAIR

GRAND AVENUE btw 65 Street & 72 Street, in Maspeth
SATURDAY-April 30 - 10am to 6pm (Street closing 8am to 8pm)
SPONSOR: Maspeth Chamber of Commerce-Lions-Kiwanis Club

3) MYRTLE AVENUE FESTIVALin Ridgewood

MYRTLE AVENUE btw Fresh Pond Road & Forest Avenue, in Ridgewood
SUNDAY - July 24 - 10am to 6pm (Street closing 8am to 8pm)
SPONSOR: Kiwanis Club of Glendale

4) FRESH POND ROAD STREET FESTIVAL

FRESH POND ROAD btw Woodbine Street & Menahan Street, in Ridgewood
THURSDAY, Sept. 8th to SUNDAY, Sept. 11th - 5:30pm to 10pm
SPONSOR: Federazione Italo-Americana di Brooklyn and Queens

5) MYRTLE AVENUE BID FESTIVAL

MYRTLE AVENUE btw Wyckoff Ave & Fresh Pond Road, in Ridgewood
SUNDAY, Sept. 25 - 10am to 6pm (Street closing 8am to 8pm)
SPONSOR: Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement District

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The Board Chairperson reported that the Executive Committee recommends approval of all five Street Fair applications this year. He opened the floor to questions and comments on the Committee's motion.

Dennis Stephan, a Board member, asked if the Fresh Pond Road Festival has always closed the street down at 12 Noon every day, as they appear to be doing this year. Peggy O'Kane, a Board member who lives nearby, replied that Fresh Pond Road has always been closed to local traffic at 12 Noon on the first day of the Street Fair, in order to set up booths and rides that jut out into the street.

Edgar Mantel, a Board member, asked why all of the Street Fairs are being voted on at once this year. The Board Chairperson replied that's the Committee's recommendation and that's the motion on the floor right now.

Peggy O'Kane, an Executive Committee member, said that she's concerned about the possibility of a flash mob appearing in the middle of these Street Fairs, and for that reason, she opposes all mass gatherings in public.

Barbara Toscano, a Board member, reminded everyone that last year, our Board voted to approve all five applications, when there was a high rate of transmission of the COVID19 virus in our district. She said that the spread of the Omicron variant is declining rapidly now, and she welcomed the motion to approve all five Street Festivals together in a single vote.

Walter Sanchez, First Vice-Chairperson of the Board, agreed that Fresh Pond Road closes at Noon on the first day of the Street Festival every year, to give their vendors time to set up booths and rides before the actual event starts. He also said that if there's a dangerous spike in COVID19 cases this year, the Mayor's Office will decide on mitigation measures, including possibly withdrawing the permits for street closings throughout the City. He said that is not the Community Board's responsibility.

Ken Rehberger, a Board member, said that the permit states that the Street Festival will end at 10pm, but does that include time to clean up? The District Manager replied that he'd look into it further.

Fred Haller, an Executive Committee member, disclosed that he's a member of the Glendale Kiwanis Club, and said that to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest, he'd refrain from voting on the Myrtle Avenue Festival which is sponsored by the Glendale Kiwanis Club. The Board Chairperson replied that since he's not an officer of the Kiwanis Club, he's not required to recuse himself from voting. Theodore Renz, an Executive Committee member, disclosed that he serves as the Executive Director of the Ridgewood LDC and Myrtle Avenue BID, and therefore, he would not take any position on this motion.

Michaeline Von Drathen, a Board member, asked for clarification on the Committee's recommendation. The Board Chairperson replied that the Committee recommends approval of all five Street Festival applications that were submitted to the Mayor's Office.

As there were no further questions or comments from the floor regarding this matter, the Board Chairperson requested a Roll Call vote on the Committee's recommendation in favor of granting permits for all five Street Festivals this year, which carried by a vote of - 28 – in favor; - 14 – opposed; - 2 – not voting; and - 4 – absent.

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Regarding another matter, the Board Chairperson announced that Fresh Pond Road and Myrtle Avenue, in Ridgewood, have for qualified to be listed in the Federal Register of Historic Districts, as of January 26, 2022.

The Board Chairperson reminded everyone that applications for Board membership are available online on the Queens Borough President's website, and the deadline to apply or reapply is fast approaching. He said that Community Boards are a branch of City government, and the Chairperson serves as an agency head. He pointed out that in the event of any legal dispute over an official action that the Community Board takes, the City's Corporation Counsel provides the Board with free legal counsel, because each Community Board speaks for the City of New York. On the other hand, he said that the Board Chairperson acts as the head of a Mayoral agency, and any action the Board takes, says or does, he can be held liable for. He gave the floor to the District Manager to elaborate further.

Mr. Giordano said that, in the past 32 years that he has been working as District Manager, in addition to the 8 years prior serving as a Board member, he's always done his best to represent the interests of the entire neighborhood, which sometimes clashed with an attorney's narrow point of view, which most likely benefited their client's interests. He said that, in any event, the Board must be careful not to engage in slander, libel or what could be construed as illegal deal making. In closing, he said he's not aware of any threats of legal liability that have been leveled against this Board's actions, to-date.

In response to a question from Peggy O'Kane about last month's election of an At-Large Member of the Executive Committee. The District Manager replied that he'd announce the new member on the Executive Committee as part of his report.

District Manager's Report

Gary Giordano

The District Manager requested a Moment of Silence to honor the memory of two NYPD Officers, P. O. Wilbert Mora and P. O. Jason Rivera, who were both killed in the line of duty recently. He said that, unfortunately, we now live in a society where it's not difficult for criminals to outgun the police. In this case, he said the perpetrator had stashed an AR-15 under his mattress.

The District Manager reminded everyone that there's no trash, curbside composting, or recycling collection this Saturday, which is Lincoln's Birthday, February 12th, and celebrated as a Holiday. He said that residents who normally receive **Saturday trash or curbside composting** collection may place their material at the curb between 4 p.m. and midnight **Sunday** evening for collection beginning **Monday**. He said that delays are to be expected, holidays and winter storms.

Regarding the residents who normally receive Saturday recycling collection, he said that they should place their material out at curbside between 4 p.m. and midnight on **Friday, February 18th**, for pickup on Saturday, February 19th, 2022.

The District Manager also informed the Board that local residents have told him about very high electric bills that they received this month, as much as three times higher than usual. He said that, in one case, the house was actually vacant this year. He said he read in today's newspaper that this is a widespread problem, and he plans to contact Con Edison to find out more about it.

Eileen Moloney, a Board member, said that she and other homeowners on her block have all received electric bills totaling \$300 or more. When she contacted Council Member Bob Holden's office, the staff said that he's looking into this matter now, she said. She advised everyone who has received extremely high electric bills, to report it to State Senator Addabbo's office because the State Public Service Commission regulates the utility service in New York State.

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Edward Lettau, a Board member, said that it could be due to the fact that Con Edison was sending estimated bills to the residents, before they installed the new Smart meters in their houses. He said that in many cases, the new bill reflects the difference between the last actual usage on the old meter and the current reading on the new Smart meter in their house.

The District Manager said that may be the case in some instances, but he intends to look into it further.

Patrick Trinchese, a Board member, said that when he checked his most recent Con Ed bill, he noticed that the rate per kilowatt hour has gone up by 9 cents. He said that rate increase accounts for the majority of the increase in his bill. He said that Con Edison has just applied to the Public Service Commission for another rate hike this year.

Alyssa Bonilla, a Board member, said that in addition to the rate increase per kilowatt hour, Smart meters show the cost of energy is much higher during peak hours, which may account for the spike in recent bills, too.

Cathie Sumsky, a Board member, asked everyone to consider how high their electricity bills will go when drivers begin charging their electric vehicles overnight for the next day.

The District Manager also informed everyone that there was a very serious fire, involving one fatality, in a home at 52-66 62 Street, near 52 Avenue, in Maspeth, on Saturday, January 29th. He said that the cause of the fire is still under investigation by the Fire Department.

The District Manager urged any Board member who's up for renewal to please reapply online before the deadline on Wednesday, February 16th. He reminded everyone that Joe Nocerino, our Community Liaison at the Queens Borough President's Office, has retired and wished him well.

The District Manager also congratulated Edgar Mantel, a resident of Middle Village, on his election at last month's Board Meeting to serve as an At-Large Member of the Executive Committee. He said that Walter Clayton was also a candidate in that election.

Mr. Giordano also mentioned that Cathie Sumsky, a Board member who lives in Middle Village, has requested that the Board recognize the efforts of an elderly local volunteer who sweeps up the litter and debris that collects on 73 Place in South Middle Village every day. He said that the Board Chairperson has directed staff to draft a certificate of appreciation to be awarded to him for his daily efforts to keep the area clean.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Transportation Services and Public Transit Services

Combined Committee

Vincent Arcuri

Tobias Sheppard Bloch, Co-Chair of the Transportation Services Committee, reported that the Committee met jointly in-person and remotely to discuss the status of several current capital projects in our Board 5 area, including the current "M" Train Project to Remove Old Paint, Repair the Structure and Repaint the "M" Train Structure. He said that work on this project has stalled due to the inclement weather this Winter and staffing shortages, due to a recent spike in the rate of COVID-19 infections among the MTA's work crews.

He said that the Committee also had a brief discussion of Governor Hochul's plan to repurpose some rail capacity to create the Interborough Rail Line in light of the constraints that freight operations along the LIRR Bay Ridge Line might pose to MTA passenger rail service.

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Mr. Bloch also reported that the MTA-NYC Transit plans to hold a series of public hearings this Spring to present new Queens Bus Route Design Plans to receive feedback from the public on the proposed revisions to local bus routes throughout Queens.

Regarding the Planned Reconstruction of Wyckoff Avenue, he reported that this proposed project is still stalled, due to the EPA's plans to remediate the area in the vicinity of the former Wolff-Alport site that's located on Irving Avenue, off Cooper Avenue, in Ridgewood. He said that a thorough study of the surrounding sewer system will be conducted to determine the extent to which radioactive contamination could possibly have leaked into the sewer system in that area.

In closing, Mr. Bloch said that the Committee reviewed a variety traffic safety and parking requests. He welcomed Board members to contact the Board office to report any unsafe roadway conditions to staff to be forwarded to the Transportation Committee for their consideration.

He said that the next meeting of the Transportation Committee will be held at 7:30pm on Tuesday, February 15, in the Board 5 Office.

Peggy O'Kane reported that the 104th Precinct still isn't enforcing the prohibition of private vehicles being driven in the dedicated Bus Lane on Fresh Pond Road, in Ridgewood, after 3pm on weekdays. She also commented that she lives nearby the Fresh Pond Rail Yard and there hasn't been much traffic on the existing freight rail line through that railyard, except on the overnight shift.

Old Business

Peggy O'Kane reported that the 104th Precinct still isn't enforcing the restrictions against driving in the dedicated Bus Lane on Fresh Pond Road, in Ridgewood, after 3pm on weekdays.

New Business

Alyssa Bonilla, a Board member, reported that she and several of her friends have experienced sudden interruptions of their cell phone and internet reception lately. She said that there's a dead zone in Ridgewood for internet service connections. Apparently, Verizon considers it to be a low priority area because it doesn't have a high service need. She asked if the Board would advocate for improved internet service reliability throughout Ridgewood, particularly since more and more Ridgewood residents work from home now. She asked what City agency handles complaints about internet service connections.

Rich Huber, a Board member, asked that this matter be directed to the Public Safety Committee for further investigation. He said that with most people using cell phones now, if they can't call 9-1-1 on their cell phone, then it's a public safety concern.

Regarding the proposed Interborough Express Rail system, Fred Haller asked if anyone knows where the stations would be located. The Board Chairperson replied that hasn't been determined yet.

Theodore Renz said that since the 1920's, there's been talk of reactivating this rail line for passenger service. He said that our Board should advocate for where we'd like to see the new stations on this line.

Maryann Lattanzio asked if the Board received Lance Lovejoy's statement about conditions in Principe Park. The District Manager said that he read Lorraine Sullivan's statement about conditions in Principe Park tonight. He said he'd look for Lance's statement in the file.

Derek Evers thanked the Board for requesting a COVID19 testing site at 769 Onderdonk Avenue, in Ridgewood. He said that they've been providing free COVID19 tests to the public on weekdays for the past month. The Board Chairperson said that there are several Mobile Test Units in the Board 5 area. Fred Haller said that anyone with school-aged children will receive in the mail two test kits per child, courtesy of Governor Kathy Hochul.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, the Board Chairperson entertained a motion to adjourn at 9:07pm.

