



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

January 11, 2023

Board Members Present

Bhubaneshor Adhikari; Antonetta Binanti; Jessica Boiardi Eric Butkiewicz; Rachel Caracci; Robert Cermeli; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Patricia Crowley; Nickolas Cuttonaro; Brian Dooley; Derek Evers; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Steven Fiedler; Fred T. Haller; Richard Huber; Paul A. Kerzner; Diego Leclery; Edward Lettau; Patricia Maltezos; Katherine Masi; Eileen Moloney; April Narsasian; Margaret O'Kane; Michael O'Kane; Donald Passantino; Michael Porcelli; Melissa Rebecca; Kenneth Rehberger; Theodore Renz; Luis Rodriguez; Lee S. Rottenberg; Walter H. Sanchez; Dennis Stephan; Catherine Sumsky; Katarzyna Syta; Gyanal Thapa; Barbara Toscano; Patrick J. Trinchese; Jasmine Valle; Michaeline Von Drathen; Maryanna Zero

Board Members Absent

Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Tobias Sheppard Bloch; Adam Bloom; Maria de la Cruz; Fred Hoefflerle; Maryann Lattanzio; Marcin Nadgorski

ELECTED OFFICIALS and STAFF

Statements submitted by:

Jonathan Arias – US Representative Grace Meng, 6th C.D.

John D'Angelo - Joseph P. Addabbo – NYS Senator, 15th SD,

Kevin Wisniewski - NYS Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi, 28th AD

Vjola Isufaj – NYS Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar, 38th AD

Craig Caruana – NYC Council Member Robert Holden, 30th CD

Juan Mayancela – NYC Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez, 34th CD

Maricela Cano, Director of Community Boards, Queens Borough President Donovan Richards

STAFF

Gary Giordano, District Manager-CB5Q

John Maier, CB5Q Staff

GUESTS

Daniel J. Ashe, P.E., Project Manager, Walter T. Gorman Engineering, 420 W. 48 Street, NY, NY 10036

Todd Dale, PC, Rothkrug Rothkrug & Spector, LLP, 55 Watermill Lane, Great Neck, NY 11021

Walter Sanchez, the First Vice-Chair of the Board, announced that in the Chairperson's absence, he'll conduct tonight's Board Meeting. He called the meeting to order at 7:33pm following a Salute to the Flag. He explained that Vincent Arcuri, our Board Chairperson, was hospitalized this month for an extended illness, and sends everyone his best wishes for a Happy New Year.

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Mr. Sanchez welcomed Board Members and guests to join the Board Meeting remotely on Zoom. He said that in an abundance of caution, due to the recent spike in the spread of Flu, variants of COVID19, and RSV, this Board Meeting will be conducted remotely. He said that members of the public are welcome to view this meeting in progress, by clicking on the You Tube link at:

<https://youtu.be/pcljTDKIEtg>. This link will also be posted on our CB5Q Homepage at www.nyc.gov/qnscb5 where the livestream video will be accessible for anyone to watch at their convenience.

Mr. Sanchez announced the first order of business as:

PUBLIC HEARING RE: BSA APPLICATION # 915-59 BZ for 59-12 FRESH POND ROAD, in Maspeth

IN THE MATTER OF an Application to the N.Y. City Board of Standards and Appeals by Walter T. Gorman, P.E., P.C., on behalf of Alliance Energy LLC, the owner of record, to amend a previously issued variance, to permit the erection of two (2) new metal canopies over the existing self-service pump islands, for the gasoline service station at 59-12 Fresh Pond Road (Block 2740, Lot 56), at the northwest corner of 59 Road in Maspeth, Queens, N.Y., in an R4-1 Zoning District.

Daniel Ashe, P.E., of Walter T. Gorman Engineering, spoke on behalf of Alliance Energy LLC, the owner of record, in seeking to amend their zoning variance on an existing gas station that is located at the intersection of Fresh Pond Road at 59 Road and 61 Street, in Maspeth. He said that this gas station has been in operation since the 1950s on a triangular shaped lot. He said that it's located within an R4-1 Residential Zoning District, which requires that the owners seek approval from the Board of Standards and Appeals prior to obtaining a Work Permit from the Dept. of Buildings to upgrade the gas station.

He displayed a map of the site while he explained the proposed changes that his client plans to make to this site:

- Install two new metal canopies over the existing gas dispensers to shelter patrons during inclement weather, about 25' x 25' each, covering both concrete pads;
- Convert an existing parking space into an ADA-compliant parking space on the east side of the small convenience store;
- Build a permanent enclosure for commercial refuse, along the rear property line on the west side of the lot, where there are a few parking spaces now.
-

Mr. Sanchez opened the floor to questions and comments.

In response to a question from the floor asking how long this construction work is expected to take, Mr. Ashe replied that all of the work should be completed within 3 months, if they install both overhead metal canopies at the same time.

Mr. Sanchez asked if there's overnight parking on this lot. Mr. Ashe said that the only vehicles that are parked overnight on this lot belong to patrons who are waiting to service their vehicles. He also asked for the dimensions of the convenience store. Mr. Ashe replied that it's only 150 sq. ft. and there are no plans to expand it.

Paul Kerzner asked him to point out where the closest house is to this site. Mr. Ashe pointed to the area on the map just north of the gas station, that abuts the back wall of the convenience store. He said that there's an 8 foot wall that separates these properties.

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In response to questions from the floor, Mr. Ashe said that his client has no plans to replace any of the 5 gasoline storage tanks on site or change the Mobile Service Stations signs above the pump islands or at the southern tip of this property. He also stated that there are no plans to change the entrance or exit, either. Instead, their plans include new pavement markings that delineates the lanes of traffic into and exiting the station, in addition to the proposed parking area.

In closing, he said that typically, in these kinds of cases, the Board of Standards and Appeals issues zoning variances with a 10-year term limit.

As there were no further questions or comments, Mr. Sanchez closed the Public Hearing and thanked Mr. Ashe for his presentation. He referred the matter to the Zoning and Land Use Review Committee for further deliberation, and said that the Committee recommendation would be reported to the full Board for a vote at our next monthly Board Meeting on February 8th, 2023.

PUBLIC HEARING RE: BSA APPLICATION # 2022-89-A and 2022-90-A for 61-10 and 61-12 MENAHAN STREET, in Ridgewood

IN THE MATTER OF an Application to the N.Y. City Board of Standards and Appeals by Rothkrug Rothkrug & Spector, LLP on behalf of Sheng Liu, the owner of record, pursuant to General City Law Section 35, to permit the development of two (2) semi-detached, three (3) family-buildings, each located within a portion of a mapped but unbuilt street (61st Street) at **61-10 and 61-12 Menahan Street**, (Block 3523, Lots 37 & 38), on the south side of Menahan Street, between Fresh Pond Road and 60 Place in Ridgewood, Queens, N.Y., in an R5B Zoning District.

Todd Dale, of Rothkrug Rothkrug & Spector, LLP, spoke on behalf of his client, Sheng Liu, the owner of record of the existing property at 61-12 Menahan Street, on the south side of Menahan Street, between 61 Street and Fresh Pond Road, in Ridgewood. He said that his client plans to demolish the existing 2 ½ story house on this site at 61-12 Menahan Street, (Block: 3523; Lot: 37) along with the existing rear garage and shed in the back yard. He said that his client is seeking permission to build two new semi-attached 3-family dwellings on this site which occupies a total of 4,455 sq.ft. and has a width of 45.5' and depth of 98.08'. He said that while the proposed development will be built on two separate tax lots, it remains one zoning lot. He also pointed out that the proposed residential development has a 1.35 floor area ratio, with open space on 51.9% of the entire lot, and a 10' setback from the front sidewalk.

Mr. Dale pointed out that the proposed building plans call for a 5' setback along the easterly property line, where there's currently a shared driveway between the existing house at 61-12 Menahan Street and the adjoining 2-family house at 61-16 Menahan Street. He pointed out that the house located at 61-08 Menahan Street was built from lot line to lot line, so there's no setback requirement along that property line on the west side of this lot. He also pointed out that there are no windows that face east from 61-08 toward his client's property.

In addition, he said that new building plans include 4 off-street parking spaces, including one enclosed space and three parking spaces in the rear yard. The proposed plans include a new 30' wide curb cut along the rear lot line (61st Street). He said that the proposed building plans are fully compliant with existing zoning restrictions in an R5B Zoning District.

Mr. Dale explained that in 2021, his client sought the City's approval to subdivide this property into two new Tax Lots 37 & 38. He described the new dimensions of Lot 37 at 61-10 Menahan Street as 20.25' in

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front with a depth of 98.08'. He said that the new Lot 38, with the house address of 61-12 Menahan Street, has a frontage of 25.25' and depth of 98.08'.

As he spoke, Mr. Dale displayed several photos and diagrams of this site and a map of the surrounding area that shows where the existing house on this lot was originally built, in the bed of a mapped but unimproved street, namely 61 Street, which abuts the rear yard of this house, in back of the garage and shed that were built on the rear lot line. He pointed out that 61 Street runs north/south between Menahan Street for 3 blocks to Metropolitan Avenue. The segment of 61 Street that runs between Grove Street and rear property line of 61-12 Menahan Street is not aligned with the continuation of 61 Street that runs north of Menahan Street to Metropolitan Avenue. He pointed out that prior to extending 61 Street, between Menahan Street and Grove Street in the bed of this mapped but unimproved street, the City is mandated to acquire several residential properties on this block at fair market value, then demolish them, before any capital improvement project could begin. He also pointed out that 61 Street is not a through street. It ends on the north side of Grove Street, he said. For all of the above reasons, he said that any future development of this site by the City is not economically feasible.

Mr. Dale explained that the purpose of this public hearing, and any future hearings before the Queens Borough President, City Council, and City Planning Commission, is to serve notice to the City of New York that his client plans to develop this plot of land for residential use, pursuant to General City Law Section 35. He said that even though the City has no plans on file to develop the mapped but unimproved portion of 61 Street that lies between Menahan Street and Grove Street, the land use review process requires that his client seek approval for the proposed residential development via this series of public hearings.

In closing, Mr. Dale said that these proposed development plans are fully compliant with existing Zoning Regulations in an R5B Zoning District. He said that these two proposed semi-attached residential homes are similar in size and bulk to most of the homes across the street, and only slightly larger than most of the existing homes on the south side of this block.

After a brief general discussion, Mr. Sanchez closed the Public Hearing and thanked Mr. Dale for his presentation. He referred the matter to the Zoning and Land Use Review Committee for further deliberation and said that the Committee recommendation would be reported to the full Board for a vote at the next Board Meeting on February 8th, 2023.

PUBLIC FORUM

The District Manager read aloud statements from the public during the Public Forum, as follows:

"All entrances to Forest Park Drive in Forest Park (where closed to vehicle traffic) are designed to be inaccessible to bikes, strollers, and wheelchair users. NYC Parks should either: (1) install new accessible gates; (2) add clear a few feet on the side of the gates so that bikes, strollers, and wheelchairs can get by; or (3) build sidewalk ramps so the sidewalks can be used. The current design requires bike riders to mount the curb to the sidewalk and then dismount the sidewalk to re-enter Forest Park Drive. It's really a small thing that would make the park much more enjoyable. Thanks, **Nicolas Karat.**"

"I am beyond thrilled to see that Citi Bike is coming one step further into Queens. I have had an annual membership since Citi Bike was first launched. It has been a tremendous asset, providing me with door to door one way transportation in areas all around the city...except where I live!

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I was deeply concerned when the plan to expand into CB5 was stalled, because if it got blocked there, it wouldn't go further into Queens. It would be an amazing asset to be able to Citi Bike one way to Forest Hills to catch the LIRR, or get to express train stops, or get around the massive transit gap between Queens and Brooklyn. I used to frequently use the Q38 to get to the M train at Metropolitan, but not for going home because waiting for the bus at night on Metropolitan is just miserable. If there were a Citi Bike station there, I could just hop on and be home in minutes without having to wait for the bus. I look forward to having access to this vital transportation tool so much closer to home!"

Jessame Hannus, Queens resident."

"Hello CB5, I was very excited to hear about the forthcoming expansion of Citi Bike stations in CB5, including to where I live on Fresh Pond Rd. The expansion is going to be a great assistance for me and other residents in getting around Ridgewood, as well as to other places in the city. I would like to note that with the expansion of the Citi Bike stations, we also need to see an expansion of bicycle infrastructure. There are a lot of places in Ridgewood that would benefit from the installation of bike lanes, such as Cypress Avenue. Cypress Avenue is currently a very busy street that leads directly to Ridgewood Reservoir, but there is no bike lane. With the growth in bicycle ridership that will come through the expanded Citi Bike stations, we need to install a protected bike lane on Cypress Avenue to support safe cycling and to improve access to Ridgewood Reservoir. Thank you, **Rachel Albetski**, a Ridgewood resident."

"Dear Community Board 5, I am excited to learn that the expansion of the Citi Bike network into the remainder of Ridgewood and parts of adjacent neighborhoods is finally moving forward (after a half-year's delay due in part to actions of certain elected officials and civic organizations).

Many local residents depend on means other than personal cars to travel to work, patronize businesses, and access parks. The initial 2019 Citi Bike expansion into part of Ridgewood has been a great benefit in providing an additional transportation option to residents, including those who might also have personal bikes, use transit, or even own motor vehicles. The bike share system allows for the flexibility of one-way trips and is also a great alternative for those who may not have easy access to secure bike storage in their buildings; in Ridgewood's high density, multi-family buildings, this is often a very real consideration. The pedal assist models in particular are great for longer-distance trips or routes that include steep climbs over the bridges or up hills.

I live just outside of the boundary of the existing service area, and many friends and neighbors live too far of a walk from the nearest dock to conveniently use the system. This expansion phase means all of Ridgewood and parts of adjacent neighborhoods will be given equal access to this transportation option, which was previously offered in only half of the neighborhood and nearby neighborhoods in Brooklyn and Western Queens.

As we all know, street space is a valuable public resource. In the same space currently being allocated to subsidize the free storage of an individual's private property (motor vehicle), a Citi Bike dock can serve dozens or even hundreds of users over the course of a day. While some have complained about the repurposing of a handful of free motor vehicle parking spaces, the insignificant percentage of street space that will be repurposed for bike share use in a neighborhood that has overwhelmingly dedicated its public space to motor vehicles is very little to ask. Stations should be placed in the roadbed wherever possible rather than occupy the very limited percentage of public right-of-way dedicated to pedestrians. While it is disappointing that some stations will be placed on sidewalks, ultimately it is just encouraging that implementation is finally happening.

Ridgewood is well-served by transit and is of a density suited for walking and cycling; connecting the remainder of the neighborhood to the citywide bike share network is one more way to leverage those characteristics. I ask that the Board give priority to users of transit, pedestrians, and cyclists to

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encourage increased usage of these modes when considering future DOT programs and infrastructure changes and look forward to DOT implementing the expansion phase in CB5 this month without further delay. Thank you, **Brandon Zwagerman**, a Ridgewood resident.”

“Hello, I would like to share my enthusiasm for the expansion of the Citi Bike program in Ridgewood, Glendale, and Maspeth. This is a huge win for folks in these neighborhoods, the majority of which do not use cars as their primary transportation. With increased access to bikes, we will certainly see an influx of cyclists on the road. So, I’m asking the Transportation Committee to take the necessary steps to keep us safe. Our community desperately needs improved infrastructure, like dedicated bike lane – not just shared roads – and protected bike lanes in areas like Cypress Avenue and Myrtle Avenue which we know are deadly to pedestrians and cyclists. I celebrate the expansion of access to bikes, but now we must ensure we are keeping ourselves and our neighbors safe in the streets. Thank you. **Mallory Woods.**”

“Hello, I’m requesting street sweeping on Catalpa Avenue, between 65th Street and 64th Street. I’ve contacted Council Member Robert Holden’s office and was told to make a request with District 5. Our block has not been swept in over a year and cars never move frequent enough for neighbors to clean in front of their homes. For a brief time, the 104th Precinct would put No Parking signs up once a month, but then it stopped. Parking in general in the neighborhood has become an issue with vehicles parked on corners, blocking crosswalks, as well as parking in No Standing zones, particularly on 65th Street. Thank you for your time. **Blaise Miller**”

“Hi, my name is **Dean Emerson**. I am a teacher at PS81Q on Cypress and a resident of Ridgewood. When I first moved to Ridgewood, the real estate broker billed the apartment as part of Bushwick. I learned very quickly that Ridgewood is Ridgewood, plain and simple. In my two years here, I’ve fallen in love with Ridgewood’s incredible history as an enclave for immigrants from Germany, Poland, Italy, Dominican Republic, and Ecuador, to name a few. I saw a living, breathing community: a community of families, children, parents, grandparents that gather at Rosemary’s Playground for a picnic on a Saturday or worship together at St. Matthias on Sundays; a community of small business owners proudly displaying their work in the bakery windows and putting on local Halloween dog parades with ten times more dogs than it had the year before; and not least, a community of fighters who banded together to create constructive outlets for youth, such as the Greater Ridgewood Youth Council, or more recently, mutual aid groups to assist our families affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

As a teacher and community member, I am proudly laying roots with my fiancée. We are growing closer with Ridgewood’s families, many of whose parents attended PS81 when they were kids. But I am seeing a growing number of families being uprooted by the rising cost of housing. Three days ago, I learned that my downstairs neighbors, a married, working couple with a newborn, are being evicted by our landlord. They are great neighbors, great tenants, and great people. The wife is a criminal defense lawyer and her husband is finishing an engineering degree and taking care of their baby. Two days ago, my fiancée overheard a conversation between a broker and our landlord in the hallway of our apartment. It is easy to connect the dots as to why they are being evicted. On the Ridgewood Facebook and Reddit forums, I have seen a growing panic from community members in response to the growing unaffordability of housing in the area. At the same time, I have seen posts both by and about investors looking to purchase rent-stabilized buildings with intent to convert them to market rate apartments. Last month, one of my first-grade students came in late. He was distraught. I asked him what happened. His mother was evicted from their apartment, despite working three jobs, because she could not afford the new rent imposed. I know his mother personally. She is a good, hardworking woman who grew up in Ridgewood and helps out at church on Sundays. They are currently in a shelter near JFK. I have not seen him since we returned from break.

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It's clear that companies, like Evergreen Realty and AB Capstone, are actively seeking to turn Ridgewood into an expensive, transient area, much like we've seen with Williamsburg and Bed Stuy. They do not care about you. They do not care about your children. They do not care about your family. They do not care about your small business. They have profit and only profit in mind. I grew up in the suburbs of Washington, D.C., a city that has seen a major overhaul in the past 20 years. I've witnessed communities that were once strong, family-oriented, working-class people dissolved by wealthier, temporary occupants. These new residents could not care if they were here or there and often leave the area after a year or two. I have witnessed the local mom & pop stores— the Valentino's, the Rudy's, the Fajita Sunrises— turned into corporate strip malls. At first, it's exciting. We get a Target. We get a Trader Joe's. We get a Chipotle. But, after a decade or two and an economic downturn, they become vacant, void of any culture, or memory of what existed prior.

I've witnessed families and homeowners priced out by corporate realty and a government tilted to favor developers. The property tax on the home they bought 30 years ago is suddenly unaffordable because market rate development inflated property values for profit. They are forced to leave the home that has seen a lifetime of Christmases, birthdays, and marriages, simply because a faceless developer wants to "curate" their neighborhood. I'm sure many of us have read the article in Time Out that ranked Ridgewood "fourth coolest neighborhood" in the world. It is clear that this article was not an act of charity, but a concerted effort by real estate investors, such as AB Capstone, to advertise that Ridgewood is for sale. I know several members of this Board grew up in Ridgewood, may have run sports leagues back in the day, and may be running bakeries their parents owned before them.

I know we are the jewel of Queens, a diamond that continues to shine despite external pressure. And I know that gentrification is not an invisible force that is inevitable. It is a choice. It is a decision by local governments in bed with corporate realty to choose profit over people and corporate greed over community. It does not see "Bushwick" versus "Ridgewood," "Ridgewood" versus "Glendale," "Glendale" versus "Middle Village," or "Middle Village" versus "Maspeth." It does not see district lines. I'm calling on our Board to show our community, our families, our schools, our places of worship, and, most importantly, corporate realty that Ridgewood is not for sale. Thank you."

Fred Haller, a Board Member, commented that at each monthly Board Meeting, bicycle enthusiasts who represent 1% of our population lobby for more bicycle lanes and stations. He said that with each new extension, these amenities take away more and more driving lanes and parking spaces that are used by the rest of our population.

Mr. Sanchez replied that the public is permitted to speak during the Public Forum, and usually, only 3 people per issue are permitted to speak during the Board Meeting.

Diego Leclery, a Board Member, said that he believes the purpose of the Public Forum is to hear from the public, regardless of how many people they're speaking for.

Richard Huber, a Board Member, said that unfortunately, with so many house fires caused by the new bicycles with electric batteries that explode, it would be a good thing to keep them outside, at a distance from local residences. He pointed out that the Mayor has stated publicly that he looks to create a model city, one that eliminates cars in New York City. And, car owners will have to take their cars and move out of state to a free state, such as, Texas or Florida.

Ken Rehberger, a Board Member, agreed with the prior statement. He said that he also agreed with the statement made earlier during the Public Forum, that shared roadways that were designed by DOT for bikes and vehicles to travel on Myrtle Avenue together, as well as Fresh Pond Road, Cypress Hills Street, and Cypress Avenue, are not safe for drivers or cyclists. Mr. Sanchez thanked everyone for their input.

Chairperson's Report

Walter Sanchez, First Vice-Chairperson

Mr. Sanchez said that he looks forward to meeting in person at next month's Board Meeting, provided the current spike in the spread of virus subsides. He reported that he attended the Queens Borough Board Meeting on Monday night where they discussed proposals about making NYC schools more energy efficient and resilient to climate change. He said that the Queens Borough President Donovan Richards discussed the need for emergency flood planning in our borough. He said that our Board has been advocating for capital improvements to expand the capacity of our sewer system for decades. Thankfully, he said, there are over \$20 Million in sewer projects currently underway in our Board area. He personally thanked Brian Dooley for his efforts in chairing the Environmental Services Committee for the past 10 years, or so.

Mr. Sanchez also reminded Board Members who are up for renewal this year to submit their applications online so they can continue to serve as Board Members.

Minutes

Mr. Sanchez asked Board members if they had received and reviewed the minutes from last month's Board Meeting that was conducted on December 14th, 2022. Peggy O'Kane, who serves as a Member of the Executive Committee and as Chair of the By-Laws Committee, clarified the minutes by stating that she was speaking on behalf of the Executive Committee, not the By-Laws Committee, when she reported that they unanimously recommend the proposed amendments to the Board's By-Laws, as read into the minutes. She requested that the minutes be amended accordingly. As there were no other corrections, Mr. Sanchez accepted a motion from Katherine Masi, seconded by Robert Cermeli, to approve the minutes with that clarification. The motion was adopted by acclamation.

Mr. Sanchez asked that copies of the Board's By-Laws be distributed to all Board Members. Mr. Maier said that he would send a copy of the By-Laws, as adopted in 1997. He said the By-Laws Committee is working on editing it now. He also asked Mr. Maier to take attendance of Board Members present.

Mr. Sanchez asked John Maier of the Board staff to read aloud this month's list of applications for alcoholic beverage licenses and renewals in the Board 5 area.

Liquor, Wine & Beer License and Renewal Applications

New Liquor License Application

- 1) * *Pomodoro, Inc. d/b/a Joe & John's Pizzeria*; 59-08 & 59-10 Myrtle Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385
(Currently has Wine, Beer & Cider License)

Liquor License Renewal Applications

- 1) *JNS Venture Ltd. d/b/a Vixen* 60-07 Metropolitan Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) *Frank Kowalinski Post #4* 61-57 Maspeth Ave., Maspeth, NY 11378
- 3) *Gottscheer Central Holding Co. Inc.* 655 & 657 Fairview Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385

New Wine, Beer & Cider License Applications

- 1) * *Regal Cinemas Inc. d/b/a Regal Atlas Park Stadium 8* 80-28 Cooper Ave., Glendale, NY 11385
- 2) * *Masala Kitchen and Lounge LLC* 71-04 Grand Ave., Maspeth, NY 11378

Wine, Beer & Cider Renewal Applications

- 1) *Carlo Pizza of Metropolitan Ave Inc.* 74-02 Metropolitan Ave., Middle Village, NY 11379
- 2) *Craft Culture NY Inc. d/b/a Craft Culture* 59-04 Myrtle Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 3) *Raheny 5 LLC d/b/a Walsh's Pub* 68-67 Fresh Pond Rd., Ridgewood, NY 11385

New Beer & Cider License Application

- 1) * *El Mariachi Restaurante Inc* ; 602 Seneca Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385

* Also Seeking a Temporary Retail Permit -- Information about the Temporary Retail Permits can be found on the SLA Website at <https://sla.ny.gov/node/13981>.

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Mr. Sanchez opened the floor to questions and comments from Board Members.

Edward Lettau, a Board Member, asked if an existing liquor license becomes null and void when an establishment closes because he recently saw a sign posted on the front façade of The Acre, at 68-38 Forest Avenue, just south of Catalpa Avenue in Ridgewood, stating that they were closed as of Thanksgiving.

Mr. Maier replied that if a business is not active, then the SLA reclassifies their license as inactive. He said that the business owner may apply to the SLA for permission to transfer their license to another business temporarily, while the new applicant is in the process of submitting their application for a new license under their own corporate name.

On a point of clarification, Ken Rehberger, a Board Member, asked if Regal Cinemas at Atlas Park is applying for a license to sell wine, beer and cider to patrons in their movie theatre. Mr. Maier replied that is true. He said several movie theatres in New York City serve food and alcoholic beverages to patrons on premises.

DEMOLITION and CONSTRUCTION NOTICES

Mr. Maier reported that the Board received one notice about demolitions in our Board area since the last Board Meeting: **Glendale: 82-07 Cypress Hills Street** – Demolition of Building A, Building B, & Garage (Block: 3750; Lot:705) in Mt. Neboh Cemetery. He said that their plans include demolition of Building A, with a garage, and Building B inside the cemetery. He pointed out that this is the second notice of demolition that the Board has received from Mt. Neboh Cemetery since September, 2022. Board Members are urged to be extra vigilant and report any questionable activities.

STATEMENTS from LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS read aloud by Gary Giordano, District Manager **Statement from US Representative Grace Meng, 6th CD, submitted by Jonathan Arias**

“Dear Community Board 5, My name is Jonathan Arias, and I am the District Special Assistant to Congresswoman Grace Meng. I hope you all had an amazing Holiday Season and a Happy New Year. In terms of major updates, there was a monumental government funding bill that the Congresswoman helped pass for 2023. The bill itself avoids a potentially devastating government shutdown and ensures crucial federal agencies can continue to operate. Within the funding package, Congresswoman Meng secured over \$21 Million for 15 community projects in Queens. A few of those include:

- \$7 Million to finally make the LIRR Forest Hills Station ADA accessible.
- \$1 Million for the Queens Chamber of Commerce Small Business Program for immigrant and small businesses.
- \$750,000 for helping those experiencing homelessness attain affordable housing.
- \$1 Million for NYC Health and Hospitals/Elmhurst to renovate the Infectious Diseases Clinic and more.

I know it has been a major priority of this Community Board to fix the flooding problems that continue to exist within the neighborhood. It has been a major focus for the Congresswoman as she was able to secure \$120 Million for upgrading environmental infrastructure in Queens as part of the House-passed National Defense Authorization Act, H.R 7776. This will directly improve water and wastewater infrastructure as well as storm water management.

I am grateful for the opportunity to listen and hear from our community directly. I hope everyone enjoys the rest of their night. If there are any questions, please reach out to me at: Jonathan.arias@mail.house.gov. Sincerely, Jonathan Arias, District Special Assistant”

Statement from Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, submitted by Kate Boehme

“Greetings Community Board 5, Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz extends Best Wishes for the New Year and would like to thank the Board for all your hard work.

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I'd like to take a moment to tell you about three upcoming events sponsored by the Queens DA's office: Tomorrow, January 12th from 5:30pm to 7:30pm, in conjunction with York College, we will be hosting a Martin Luther King Day Commemoration at York College, in Jamaica, Queens. You must register in advance, and this can be done on our website at www.QueensDA.org.

Next week, on Wednesday, January 18th, we will host a Lunar New Year celebration at Queensborough Community College. This event will be co-sponsored by Council Member Linda Lee and Council Member Sandra Ung. The refreshment hour begins at 5 PM and the performances are from 6 PM to 8 PM. Again, advance registration is required. Please go to our website: www.QueensDA.org.

And, on Wednesday, January 25th, in observance of National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, DA Katz will be hosting "No Price on a Child's Life: Combatting Youth Exploitation and Trafficking Webinar." This is a very important topic, and we hope you can join us.

For more information or to register for any of these programs, please go to our website, www.QueensDA.org. Thank you for your time and I hope to see you all soon. Sincerely, Kate Boehme"

Statement from NYC Council Member Robert Holden, 30th CD, submitted by Craig Caruana

"Dear Chairman Arcuri, District Manager Giordano and Community Board Members, Thank you for your time and dedication to serving all the residents of Queens Community Board 5. My office and I continue to focus on improving the quality of life in our Council District.

This past month, we have worked extensively with the Department of Transportation (DOT) on several issues. As the Community Board is aware, my office, along with the Juniper Park Civic and the Community Board's Transportation Committee were disappointed by the plan to install bike stations at the expense of parking. After several meetings, DOT has agreed to keep about 40% of the parking spaces they originally targeted for elimination. We also expressed our frustration that the Community Board was not part of the discussion from the beginning.

There are also several lighting issues I have addressed with the DOT. I asked the Commissioner to study the efficacy of LED streetlights, which are not illuminating our streets adequately. Additionally, after the lights were out for over four weeks at Principe Park and on the LIE overpass, I spoke with DOT and had them fixed. I met with the DOT, Con Edison, NYPD, and the Office of Emergency Management about the last power outage in our neighborhood. Our electrical infrastructure is struggling to meet demand and our overhead lines are suffering too many failures during rainstorms. These agencies should no longer be surprised when a power outage occurs, and they need to have a plan in place. In the last outage, after several phone calls, the 104th Precinct was provided additional resources 5 hours after the outage occurred. The timeframe must be shortened going forward. The DOT will look at models in other European cities where traffic lights have solar panels activated in the event of a power outage.

I am working with the NYPD and the DOT to reduce auto accidents. We have already had two terrible accidents in the new year. I have asked for aggressive enforcement to help reduce collisions and injuries in our neighborhoods. I also spoke about making the area around the Maspeth 9-11 Memorial and the 69th street overpass safer. We have had several accidents in this area with vehicles ending up on the sidewalk.

We are meeting with several city agencies to address trucks parking illegally along Principe Park. The trucks often have no tractor and are parked there for several days at a time.

Thank you for your hard work and for all the hours you put into serving our community as volunteers. You are all appreciated. Sincerely, Robert F. Holden, Council Member, District 30"

Statement from NYC Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez, 34th CD – submitted by Juan Mayancela

"Dear Community Board 5, I am wishing everyone a Happy New Year! I hope this year is filled with love and health for everyone.

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My office is in active contact with the 104th Precinct about the recent uptick in robberies. The 104th has increased presence throughout the border of Ridgewood and Bushwick. If anyone has been a victim, please make a police report.

As the cold weather increases, if you have no heat or hot water, please contact our office and we will follow up.

District 34th trash force has been a success. My office has worked with DSNY to clean various locations in Ridgewood. If you have any location in the 34th District that is problematic with trash, please submit your 311 complaints at bit.ly/TrashForce311.

The Discretionary Funding application is now open! If you would like to apply you will need to complete the steps established by the city, but if you would like to be considered from my end, please complete the following form: <https://forms.gle/WJ5n47NQrct1S1m48>.

Friendly reminder: My office has been planning Community Town Halls throughout my District. I am excited to announce that Ridgewood's Town Hall will be on February 13th, 2023, at PS81Q, located at 559 Cypress Avenue, from 6 pm to 8 pm, and we will be focusing on the cultural and business community. I will send the Board the official flier, and hope to see many of you on the 13th!

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to my office at 718-963-3141. You can also reach out to Juan Mayancela, Ridgewood community organizer. Best regards, Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez"

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

"The Senator would like to again wish a happy and healthy New Year to everyone at Community Board 5. He would also like to take this opportunity to wish a fond farewell and happy retirement to his former Chief of Staff, Neil Giannelli, while also welcoming his new Chief of Staff, Raimondo Graziano.

Due to the redistricting that took place, our District Office is scheduled to move to 84-16 Jamaica Avenue in Woodhaven on January 11th. The telephone number for the District Office will still be (718) 738-1111. The Satellite Office in Middle Village will remain as is, and the number is (718) 497-1630.

This month, the Albany legislative session and budget process begins. The Senator encourages his constituents to weigh in on high priority issues such as public safety, health care, education, the environment, jobs, transportation, senior, and veteran programs, or any other issue of concern.

Updates

An additional \$63 Million in Federal funding has been allocated for the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) benefit amounts. As a result of higher Federal funding, the HEAP Regular Benefit component amounts increased for the 2022-2023 program year.

Effective January 1, 2023, all individuals in receipt of Social Security Retirement, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (RSDI) and/or SSI receive a federal COLA of 8.7 %. For the purposes of Cash Assistance and SNAP benefits, this is unearned income, and this increase may impact eligibility and/or benefit levels. The NYS Office of Temporary Disability Assistance (OTDA) will send notices to all affected households.

Upcoming Events

In partnership with Councilman Holden, a Blood Drive will be held at the Shops at Atlas Park on Sunday, January 29th, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM."

Statement from State Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi, 35th AD submitted by Kevin Wisniewski

"Hi Everyone - Happy New Year, hope you all are safe, well, and had a chance to spend time with loved ones over the holiday.

Assemblyman Hevesi was back up in Albany this week to kick off the 2023 Legislative Session. This will be his second term serving as the Children and Families Committee chair. In his first term -- his accomplishments included:

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- The passage of legislation to give children in foster care with developmental disabilities adequate support;
- The signing into law of his bill to prevent kids under 11 years old from being arrested/processed except in instances where homicide has occurred, and instead redirects such children towards appropriate support services;
- The mandating that people who work with kids are required to be able to identify signs of childhood trauma;
- The advocating for the first installation of the Children and Families Reinvestment Act (CFRA), which included making more than 400,000 kids eligible to receive adequate childcare.

This year, Assemblyman Hevesi will be continuing his push for such initiatives, starting with his advocating for the second iteration of the CFRA, to build on last year's accomplishments.

Last year, we also distributed more than 50,000 protective masks, 16,000 rapid test kits, and thousands of other supplies directly to our communities. We have resumed appointments to pick up free protective supplies at our district office. With the increase in viral infections, it's important that people have access to necessary supplies -- which will include KN95 face masks, rapid test kits, and hand sanitizing wipes, amongst other things. To arrange an appointment, we may be contacted at (718) 263-5595 or hevesia@nyassembly.gov. Additionally, we encourage anyone to contact us with other local concerns, or with legislative inquiries.

Finally, we are making plans to resume our community cleanup series and will keep the board apprised as we lock in dates. We look forward to continuing to work with you all this year. Thank you all for everything you do, stay safe, and remain well. Kevin Wisniewski, Senior Advisor"

Statement from State Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar, 38th AD – submitted by Vjola Isufaj

"Dear CB 5 Board, Happy New Year! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season. I enjoyed spending it with so many of you. I loved joining the entire community for the tree lightings at the Glendale Triangle and Atlas Mall. The G-COP holiday party at The Avenue was also a highlight. As we start a new year, I want to thank you for re-electing me by a landslide 98.5% of the vote. It is a privilege and honor to serve you. I started 2023 by doing my favorite thing—serving my constituents.

I hosted a free legal clinic at my office, in which many came for free legal counsel from lawyers on a range of civil matters. It is one of my priorities to bring access to justice to my constituents.

On January 1st, I was honored to attend the Governor's inauguration. Just yesterday, I attended the Governor's State of the State Address held in the Assembly chamber, the People's House. I spoke to the Governor and her senior staff personally about the needs of our district and am in constant dialogue with them. Currently, I am working on the state budget. As always, you have a champion in me to ensure that the funding flows into our district for our schools, libraries, first responders, parks, healthcare, sanitation, and community organizations. During this year's budget hearings, I will be questioning the heads of state agencies to ensure the efficiency of their government programs.

In a widely covered event, I joined the Mayor at City Hall to announce new initiatives to combat our city's mental health crisis. I am now partnering with both the Mayor and Governor to combat the crisis of mental health and drug addiction. Our initiatives include coordinating the work of different agencies to ensure that the mentally ill do not get lost in the system, expanding access to mental health treatment and increasing the capacity of the city's own services.

I am also working to solve a problem that has plagued our district for years—that of solid waste transported by rail, whose emissions harm our air quality and respiratory health. I have introduced legislation to require this waste in trains to be covered with hard tarping.

I am also sponsoring bills to create a fund for Veterans organizations, improve school safety, and help Veterans to access jobs and housing.

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This month, I will be hosting a free mammogram screening at my office on Monday, January 23, in partnership with Mt. Sinai Health. A simple breast cancer screening can save your life. I encourage women to contact my office to schedule an appointment.

I also continue to work for your safety. I have been in contact with the 104th Precinct regarding last week's tragic accident where a motor vehicle struck a 2-year-old girl at Central Ave and 70th Street, leaving her in critical condition. I will do whatever I can to help the family and vigilantly work with DOT to ensure safe streets. Recently, I brought FDNY Chief of Department John J. Hodgins to tour the Engine 286/Ladder 135 Firehouse on Myrtle Avenue. I met with all the personnel, and discussed future plans to promote fire safety. My fire safety work will include reintroducing my bill to create a tax credit for the conversion of cocklofts, a fire hazard that is common in South Queens homes.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve. Very truly yours, Jenifer Rajkumar, Assemblywoman, 38th District."

On behalf of Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, Maricela Cano, the Director of Community Boards in Queens, wished everyone a Happy New Year. She reminded everyone that the deadline to renew their Board membership is February 16th, 2023. She said that the Board Member application is posted up on the Queens Borough President's homepage at www.queensbp.org, under the Community Board tab. She said that a list of Board Members who are up for reappointment have already received notifications. She welcomed anyone who is unsure about their appointment to contact the District Manager, or herself at mcano@queensbp.org. She said that all new applicants will receive a phone interview from a member of the Queens Borough Presidents Office, and final candidates will be notified of their appointment no later than April 1st, 2023.

Ms. Cano made several announcements about upcoming events in Queens Borough Hall, including: Lunar New Year Celebration from 6pm to 8pm on Thursday, January 19, 2023; and Haitian Independence Day from 6pm to 8pm on Thursday, January 26, 2023.

She advised everyone interested in attending to register beforehand at www.queensbp.org/RSVP.

In closing, Ms. Cano announced that the Queens Borough President's Office, in conjunction with the Mayor's Office of Public Engagement, will offer assistance to landlords and tenants who are eligible to apply for NYC Homeowner's Tax Exemptions, as well as the Senior Citizen Rent Freeze, from 10:30am to 2:30pm on Wednesday, January 18th and 25th, 2023.

District Manager's Report

Gary Giordano

The District Manager reported that earlier today, he was notified about a water main break on 74 Street between Eliot Avenue and 60 Avenue in Middle Village. He advised neighboring residents to check their house lines for brown and/or discolored water. He advised everyone to be careful driving in the vicinity of that break in the roadway. He assured everyone that the Department of Environmental Protection is aware of this situation and repairs will be completed as soon as possible.

Regarding the potential for a strike by nurses who work in Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx, and a Division of Mt. Sinai Medical Center, along with Wyckoff Heights Medical Center, he said that he hopes the administration(s) will settle this labor dispute as soon as possible. Given the shortage of nurses in the New York area, it's very important to ensure that there's adequate staffing of nurses, particularly during the current epidemic.

The District Manager said that in addition to a nationwide shortage of nurses, there's a shortage of professionals who are psychologists and psychiatrists to treat patients with mental illness. He emphasized the need to promote education of trained professionals in these fields.

Mr. Giordano also announced that the Board received notification from the Mayor's Street Activity Permit Office that all the same applicants have submitted applications to hold Street Fairs in our Board 5

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area once again this year. He said that the Executive Committee will review their applications at their next meeting. He said that the meeting is a public meeting and welcomed anyone interested in attending to contact the Board Office for more information about when it will be scheduled. The District Manager asked everyone to keep the Board Chairperson Vincent Arcuri in their prayers. He said that he's undergoing physical therapy this month, and seems to be doing better, day by day.

Richard Huber, a Board Member, commented that many health care workers have left their jobs rather than get vaccinated against COVID19, which he described as the Wu Flu. He also said that he's heard on the radio about dangerous side effects from this vaccine, including many unexplained deaths of healthy adults, between the ages of 18 and 64 years old. He ended by saying that he believes the vaccine is a gene altering therapy.

Derek Evers, a Board Member, stated in response to Mr. Huber's comments, that he condemns the racist language that was used in the anti-vax rant.

Fred Haller, who serves on the Board of Wyckoff Heights Medical Center, said that the hospital administration continues to negotiate with the nursing staff, and hopefully, they have reached an agreement today. He said that due to the current shortage of nurses in New York, they're sponsoring scholarships to cover the cost of tuition for local high school and college students who enroll in nursing school, with the understanding that they'll work in WHMC upon graduation.

Old Business

Michael Porcelli, a Board Member, reminded everyone to advocate for the return of trade school education and CTE programs in all public high schools. Otherwise, we'll run out of trained professionals in lots of essential industries.

In closing, Mr. Sanchez announced that the next full Board Meeting is scheduled to begin at 7:30pm on Wednesday, February 8th, 2023 and will be conducted in person if possible.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Sanchez adjourned the Board Meeting on a motion from the floor at 9:11pm.