



## Community Board No. 5

Borough of Queens  
Ridgewood, Maspeth, Middle Village and Glendale  
61-23 Myrtle Avenue • Glendale, NY 11385  
Tel (718) 366-1834 Fax (718) 417-5799  
E-mail: [qn05@cb.nyc.gov](mailto:qn05@cb.nyc.gov)  
[www.NYC.gov/qnscb5](http://www.NYC.gov/qnscb5)



Vincent Arcuri, Jr.  
Chairperson

Gary Giordano  
District Manager

### Minutes of Community Board 5 Public Meeting

February 8, 2023

#### Board Members Present

Bhubaneshor Adhikari; Antonetta Binanti; Jessica Boiardi; Eric Butkiewicz; Patricia Crowley; Nickolas Cuttonaro; Brian Dooley; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Steven Fiedler; Fred T. Haller; Paul A. Kerzner; Maryann Lattanzio; Diego Leclery; Edward Lettau; Katherine Masi; Eileen Moloney; Margaret O’Kane; Michael O’Kane; Donald Passantino; Michael Porcelli; Theodore Renz; Luis Rodriguez; Lee S. Rottenberg; Walter H. Sanchez; Dennis Stephan; Katarzyna Syta; Gyanal Thapa; Barbara Toscano; Patrick J. Trinchese; Jasmine Valle

#### Board Members Absent

Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Tobias Sheppard Bloch; Adam Bloom; Rachel Caracci; Robert Cermeli; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Maria de la Cruz; Derek Evers; Fred Hoefflerle; Patricia Maltezos; Marcin Nadgorski; April Narsasian; Melissa Rebecca; Kenneth Rehberger; Catherine Sumsy; Michaeline Von Drathen; Maryanna Zero

#### ELECTED OFFICIALS and STAFF

Tianna Armstrong – US Representative Grace Meng, 6<sup>th</sup> C.D.  
Johnathan Betancourt – US Representative Nydia Velazquez, 7<sup>th</sup> C.D.  
John D’Angelo - Joseph P. Addabbo – NYS Senator, 15<sup>th</sup> SD  
Irene Stathatos – Michael Gianaris – NYS Senator, 12<sup>th</sup> SD  
Juan Ardila, NYS Assembly Member – 37<sup>th</sup> AD  
Victoria Leahy – Steven Raga – NYS Assembly Member, 30<sup>th</sup> AD  
Carlos Plaza – NYS Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar, 38<sup>th</sup> AD  
Timothy Chubinidze – Director of Civic Engagement - Queens Borough President Donovan Richards  
Kate Boehm – Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz

#### STAFF

Gary Giordano, District Manager-CB5Q  
John Maier, CB5Q Staff

Walter Sanchez, the First Vice-Chair of the Board, announced that, in the Chairperson’s absence, he will 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, is recuperating at home from an extended illness.

Mr. Sanchez welcomed Board Members, local elected officials and members of the public to attend tonight’s Board Meeting in person. He said that this meeting is also being livestreamed via Zoom where

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on February 8, 2023

anyone can watch this meeting in progress or afterward, by clicking on the link that's posted on our CB5Q Homepage at [www.nyc.gov/qnscb5](http://www.nyc.gov/qnscb5).

He announced the first order of business as:

**PUBLIC HEARING RE: THE FY 2024 PRELIMINARY BUDGET OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Mr. Sanchez opened this Public Hearing and reminded everyone of the Board's Top Ten Capital Budget Priorities for Fiscal Year 2024, as adopted last Fall.

**CB5 Queens FY 2024 Capital Budget Recommendations**

<b>RANK</b>	<b>PROJECT REQUESTED</b>
1	Redesign and Reconstruct Sewer System in Portions of CB5Q Area Having Worst Flooding Problems
2	Provide Stormwater Runoff Mitigation
3	Correct Cooper Avenue Underpass Flooding, Reconstruct LIRR and 71st Avenue Bridge Abutments Above Cooper Avenue Underpass, and Paint the LIRR Bridge
4	Make Capital Improvements to Improve Pedestrian and Vehicle Safety on Grand Avenue at 69th Street, at Grand Avenue/LIE East Bound Service Road, and at the 69 Street/LIE Service Roads Intersections
5	Reconstruct Deteriorated Catch Basins and Provide New Catch Basins in the CB5Q Area
6	Reconstruct Palmetto Street from St. Nicholas Ave. to Seneca Ave., and from Onderdonk Ave to Forest Ave
7	Reconstruct Sewer, Sidewalks, Curbs and Pedestrian Ramps along Myrtle Avenue, from Fresh Pond Road to Wyckoff Avenue
8	Reconstruct Wyckoff Avenue, from Flushing Avenue to Cooper Avenue
9	Continue Comprehensive Study of the Sewer System, in the CB5Q Area and Throughout Queens County, Considering Flooding Problems and Anticipated Future Growth
10	Replace Existing Bridge on Grand Ave over Newtown Creek in Maspeth

He introduced Theodore Renz, an Executive Board Member, as the first speaker to testify on this topic. Theodore Renz introduced himself as the Executive Director of the Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement District and the Ridgewood Local Development Corporation, and gave the following statement:

"On behalf of the Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement District (BID), we thank you for supporting a new Capital Improvement Project for Myrtle Avenue in Ridgewood, as a high priority for Fiscal Year

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on February 8, 2023

2023. The last time Myrtle Avenue in Ridgewood between Wyckoff Avenue/Palmetto Street and Fresh Pond Road was included in a major capital project was in 1983 and 1984. At that time, the project, under the New York City Commercial Revitalization Program, included major improvements to the shopping corridor, including the following:

- New concrete sidewalks with decorative brick pavers building line to curbside, new street trees and new steel faced curbing, and
- Creation of three pedestrian plazas:
  1. Woodbine Street/St. Nicholas Avenue/Myrtle Avenue, now known as Venditti Square and named for NYPD Detective Anthony Venditti, who was shot and killed in the line of duty in January of 1986;
  2. Ridgewood Memorial Triangle, named for the Veterans of World War I, at the juncture of Myrtle Avenue, Putnam Avenue, and Cypress Avenue; and
  3. Times Triangle, now known as Clemens Triangle (named for the former owner of the Ridgewood Times).

Over the years, other improvements have included the installation of historic M Poles, World's Fair benches along various curbside locations and in the plaza areas, historic marker signs along the Avenue and in Plazas, historic marker signs on M poles, a new Plaza at 71st Avenue, Myrtle Avenue and Stephen Street, as well as a new raised planting area at the northwest corner of Myrtle and Catalpa Avenues. Many of these improvements, particularly the brick pavers imbedded in the sidewalk, have seriously deteriorated causing tripping hazards and unsafe conditions for pedestrians. This has also resulted in a number of lawsuits, in many cases also naming the BID, which has resulted in higher insurance premiums for the BID.

While there are a number of very important projects for this Board to support, we kindly ask for your continued support for this important improvement project.

Myrtle Avenue in Ridgewood is a major comparison-shopping corridor serving the Greater Ridgewood area, including Ridgewood, Glendale, Middle Village, Maspeth, in Queens, and Ridgewood/Bushwick in Brooklyn, and beyond. Along this corridor, there are approximately 345 retail and service establishments.

The improvements we are asking for may include, but are not limited to:

- New sidewalks without brick pavers and new curbing;
- New M poles on side streets within the boundaries of the BID;
- Removal of all Belgian blocks from over 300 tree pits;
- Installation of additional benches and other amenities.
- And, since the prior project only included a repaved street bed, it may be wise to consider a total reconstruction project, including new water and sewer lines, as well as upgrades to utilities.

We also want to thank the NYC Department of Transportation for making improvements over the past two years by installing new pedestrian access ramps at many intersections within the Myrtle Avenue BID. We support the continuation of this program until all intersections are upgraded. Additionally, we want to thank Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan for allocating \$450,000 in State Multi-Modal funding to add additional historic M Poles in the Myrtle Avenue BID shopping corridor.

Thank you again for your support."

As there were no other speakers, Mr. Sanchez gave the floor to District Manager Gary Giordano to explain the budget process. The District Manager informed everyone that the Mayor's Preliminary Capital and Expense Budget for Fiscal Year 2024 totals \$102 Billion, including NY State's contribution. He said that he's currently preparing the Community Board's response to the Preliminary Budget for FY 2024, which begins on July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. He said that the deadline to submit comments is February 17,

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on February 8, 2023

2023. He gave a brief outline of his proposed comments. In addition to advocating that funding be allocated toward our Board's Top Capital Budget Priorities as outlined by Mr. Sanchez, the District Manager said that he plans to advocate for adequate funding in next year's Expense Budget to hire:

- An additional 20 Police Officers for the 104<sup>th</sup> Police Precinct to address the recent spike in the number of crimes that have occurred in the past two years in the 104<sup>th</sup> Precinct;
- Sufficient field crews for the Dept. of Environmental Protection to decrease the backlog of sewer and water system repairs;
- Sufficient Inspectors in the Dept. of Buildings and Plan Examiners to reduce illegal property uses and questionable construction;
- More Sanitation Dept. Cleaning Personnel to clean illegal dump sites and for additional weekly litter basket collections;
- Funding for essential Fire Department services in order to keep all Engine and Ladder Companies open and reduce EMS Response times;
- Funding for Youth Education and Recreation Programs After-School and on Weekends, especially through the Dept. of Youth and Community Development;
- Sufficient Personnel to provide needed services for Senior Citizens, including the frail elderly;
- Sufficient Personnel for NYC Dept. of Transportation Traffic Safety Studies and for the Installation of pedestrian and traffic safety improvements;
- Sufficient Personnel for the Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development and Legal Services to address the problem of tenant harassment by landlords who want to evict their tenants so they could raise monthly rental rates to much higher amounts.

In addition, he said that adequate funding is needed for roadway resurfacing, and getting potholes filled in a timely manner.

As there were no further comments on the Budget, Mr. Sanchez encouraged Board Members to report any problems that they see on the street to the Board Office so that staff can address these issues right away. He closed the Public Hearing, and announced the next Item of Business on the Board Agenda as:

### **PUBLIC FORUM**

Janina Szkodzinski, a Ridgewood resident, announced that she plans to offer free Hypnotherapy sessions online via Zoom, beginning in March. She said that the main goal of this new service is to help Veterans to relieve stress. She asked for ideas and feedback from anyone with experience in hosting online classes to get in touch with her directly. She said that she'll be working on this project at 60-75 Myrtle Avenue, in Ridgewood. Mr. Sanchez directed her to speak with Mike Porcelli and Mike O'Kane, who are both Veterans who served in the Armed Forces, after the meeting.

Dawn Scala, a Glendale resident, asked everyone to send letters to the Dept. of Justice to register complaints about the noise and air pollution caused by the old railroad locomotives used by the NY and Atlantic Railway in the Glendale Railyard. She said that she has distributed sample letters to Board Members and local elected officials.

She said that air pollution emissions from railroad operations should be cut by 95%, in order to comply with federal regulations under the Clean Air Act. She also said that the loud noise that's generated by these old freight train locomotives should be reduced by anywhere from 75% to 85%, accordingly. Ms. Scala pointed out that these train engines are among the oldest locomotives in the country. She said that the Dept. of Justice recently prosecuted the Genesee and Wyoming Rail Services, Inc. for operating their red orange locomotives, with the letters P and W painted on them, to haul freight across this country in violation of the Clean Air Act. She said that the public comment period on the Consent Decree

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on February 8, 2023

issued in this case ends on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023. She encouraged everyone to send individual letters to the Dept. of Justice, stating that these standards should be applied in our neighborhoods, as well.

Luis Ross, a Glendale resident, spoke about the loud noise coming from the NY and Atlantic Railway trains, particularly when the train engineer blasts the horn full throttle at the railroad crossing at 73 Street, in Glendale. He said that he's called the railyard many times to report this situation, but no one has ever returned his phone calls.

Mr. Sanchez asked him if the noise occurs at the same time every day. Mr. Ross said that it happens intermittently, sometimes at 7:30pm, 11pm, or 2am. He said that the most alarming noise that's caused by the operation of this freight rail line is caused by coupling the rail cars between 3am and 4am in the morning.

Kevin Koeberl, a business partner of Richard Huber in Glendale, expressed his objection to the action taken by the Queens Borough President in removing Mr. Huber from the Board after last month's Board Meeting. He said that he was removed as he described the COVID19 virus as the "Wu-Flu" Virus during his comments that were made during the Public Forum at last month's Board Meeting. He pointed out that as his business partner for the past 35 years, they've never discriminated against anyone, and they've worked with people from all over the world and all backgrounds without reproach. He said that Mr. Huber has volunteered his services on the Community Board and for local non-profit organizations for decades and should be afforded an opportunity to answer the charge that his words were racist.

Thomas N. Toscano, CEO of Mr. T. Carting Corporation, located on Edsall Avenue between 73 Place and 73 Street, in Glendale, said that his family has been in business at this location for over 50 years. He complained that the number of commercial vehicles, ranging in size from large trucks to ambulettes, are parked alongside the freight railroad that separates Glendale from Middle Village. He said that last year, he and his workers organized a community clean up on Earth Day and removed all of the accumulated debris in that area. However, within one month, people who park their vehicles there keep discarding trash onto the ground and it looks as bad as it did before. Whenever he's reported complaints to 3-1-1, about drug use or illegally parked cars, he said that he's always received the same response: "complaint unfounded."

Regarding the NY & Atlantic Railway's use of the train tracks to couple their freight cars, he said that freight rail cars block the railroad crossing at 73 Street, in Glendale, for 30 minutes at a time during the day. He asked the Board's help in seeking a solution to these quality-of-life complaints.

Brandon Zwagerman, a Ridgewood resident, said that it's great to see the City encouraging more people to ride bicycles through the neighborhood through the expansion of Citi Bike stations in Ridgewood and Maspeth. He pointed out that he rode a Citi Bike to tonight's Board Meeting, leaving the bike at the new docking station in front of the Metro Mall. He asked the Board to prioritize improving safety along bike routes in the Board 5 area by requesting additional protected bike lanes, along Metropolitan Avenue, and the Cypress Avenue route to the Ridgewood Reservoir at Vermont Place, on the Glendale border.

Richard Huber, a former Board Member, said that he is a lifelong resident of Glendale, and that he objects to the characterization of remarks that he made about the Coronavirus as racist, during last month's Public Forum. He said that COVID19 apparently originated in Wuhan, China which is a site, not a race. Furthermore, he said that during prior epidemics, diseases have customarily been referred to in terms of their point of origin, such as, the Spanish Flu, Ebola Virus, Zika Virus, German Measles, and West Nile Virus. In closing, he objected that his First Amendment Right to Free Speech has been violated by this arbitrary action that was taken by the Queens Borough President Donovan Richards.

Mr. Sanchez thanked everyone for their input at tonight's Board Meeting.

## Chairperson's Report

### Walter Sanchez, First Vice-Chairperson

Mr. Sanchez said that he looks forward to meeting in person on a continuing basis from now on, provided there's no serious outbreak involving new variants of the Coronavirus. He reported that he attended the Queens Borough Board Meeting on Monday night and said that the Borough President reminded all Board Chairs to inform Community Board Members that whenever they're speaking in public, they serve as a representative to the public. He advised that if any Board Members encounter someone with a complaint about City services, they should refer that person to contact the District Manager or another staff member in the Board Office. He said that at their Meeting, they were informed by the Army Corps of Engineers about plans to install floodgates at several locations in Queens: at Newtown Creek, Flushing Bay, and Jamaica Bay in order to hold back flood waters in the event of an emergency. He said that a series of public hearings will be conducted regarding these plans. Mr. Sanchez also reminded Board Members that February 16<sup>th</sup> is the deadline to reapply to serve as Board Members.

Introducing the next Item on the Board Agenda, Mr. Sanchez asked the District Manager 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 Applications*

- 1) \* Gazoo LLC. d/b/a **TBD** 68-22 Forest Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) **Two Era Events Corp.** 48-05 Metropolitan Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385

#### *Liquor License Renewal Applications*

- 1) **Seneca Fiesta Corp.** 603 Seneca Avenue., Ridgewood, NY 11385
- 2) Ridgewood Moose Lodge #1642 d/b/a **Loyal Order of the Moose** 72-15 Grand Ave, Maspeth, NY 11378
- 3) Patrizia's of Maspeth LLC d/b/a **Patrizia's** 69-35 Grand Ave, Maspeth, NY 11378
- 4) Soranpub LLC d/b/a **Bukowski's** 69-47 Grand Avenue, Maspeth, NY 11378

#### *New Wine, Beer & Cider License Applications*

- 1) **Queens Beer Garden, LLC** 80-60 Cooper Avenue, Glendale, NY 11385

#### *Wine, Beer & Cider Renewal Applications*

- 1) 6265 Exclusive Rosa's Corp. d/b/a **Rosa's Pizza** 62-65 Fresh Pond Road, Ridgewood, NY 11385

#### *New Beer & Cider License Applications*

None Reported

\* *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>.*

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

Mike Porcelli, a Board Member, asked if from now on, this list would include additional information, such as, whether each establishment is a Bar, Restaurant, Club, or store.

### DEMOLITION NOTICES

Mr. Maier reported that the Board received no demolition notices since last month's Board Meeting.

### Minutes

Mr. Sanchez asked Board members if they had received and reviewed the minutes from last month's Board Meeting that was conducted on January 11, 2023. Mr. Sanchez accepted a motion from Paul Kerzner, seconded by Antonetta Binanti, to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was adopted by acclamation.

Mr. Sanchez asked Mr. Maier to take attendance of Board Members present.

Mr. Sanchez reported that last Monday night, the Executive Committee met in the Board 5 Office with the applicant's representatives of the proposed Street Fairs in our Board area for the coming year. He said that the Committee reviewed applications that were submitted online to the Mayor's Office and discussed each one with the respective applicant. He said that the Committee voted unanimously in favor of approving four of the five applications, except for the Fresh Pond Road Street Festival where there was a difference of opinion.

He opened the floor to discussion on each application separately.

Michael O'Kane, a Board Member, said that he has always objected to holding any Street Fairs because each year that he attends the Street Fairs, he has witnessed some vendors selling bootleg DVD's, and other booths that offer massages that he traced back to illegal massage parlors in Brooklyn. He said that until there's better enforcement against illegal vendors, he will be opposed to these events. Mr. Sanchez agreed with him and said that the Board would request more enforcement at this year's event. Theodore Renz, a Board Member, said that inspectors from the Dept. of Health, Sanitation, and Consumer Affairs inspect the booths at Street Fairs. He said that he'd follow up with Clearview Productions about this complaint.

## **STREET FAIR APPLICATIONS in CB5 QUEENS in 2023**

### **1) RIDGEWOOD LDC MYRTLE AVENUE FESTIVAL**

MYRTLE AVE btw Wyckoff Ave & Fresh Pond Rd – Ridgewood - 11 blocks

**SUNDAY – April 23rd** from 10am to 6pm (Street closing 8am to 8pm)

SPONSOR:– RIDGEWOOD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION – Theodore Renz, Exec. Director

CONTACT: Clearview Productions: SAPO@clearviewfestival.com (646) 230-0489

Mr. Sanchez said that the Executive Committee's recommendation is that the Board has no objection to holding this Street Fair, as proposed. Theodore Renz said that he will abstain from voting on this matter due to his employment as Executive Director of the Ridgewood Local Development Corporation. As there were no objections from Board Members to the Committee's recommendation, it passed unanimously.

### **2) GRAND AVENUE FAIR**

GRAND AVENUE btw 65 Street to 72 Street - Maspeth - 7 blocks

**SATURDAY - April 29th** from 10am to 6pm (Street closing 8am to 8pm)

SPONSOR: MASOETH CHAMBER of COMMERCE and THE LIONS and KIWANIS CLUB

c/o David Dario, Maspeth Chamber of Commerce

CONTACT: Clearview Productions: SAPO@clearviewfestival.com (646) 230-0489

Mr. Sanchez stated that the Executive Committee's recommendation is that the Board has no objection to holding this Street Fair, as proposed. As there were no objections from Board Members to the Committee's recommendation, it passed unanimously.

### **3) MYRTLE AVENUE FESTIVAL in Ridgewood**

MYRTLE AVENUE from Fresh Pond Road to Forest Avenue in Ridgewood - 4 blocks

**SUNDAY - July 23rd** from 10am to 6pm (Street closing 8am to 8pm)

SPONSOR: KIWANIS CLUB OF GLENDALE – Joe Aiello, Past President

CONTACT: Mike Hyatt at Meteor Festivals info@streetfairsny.com – (718) 444-6028

Mr. Sanchez said that the Executive Committee's recommendation is that the Board has no objection to holding this Street Fair, as proposed. As there were no objections from Board Members to the Committee's recommendation, it passed unanimously.

### **4) MYRTLE AVENUE BID FESTIVAL**

MYRTLE AVENUE btw Wyckoff Ave & Fresh Pond Rd – Ridgewood - 11 blocks

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on February 8, 2023

**SUNDAY – Aug. 20th** from 10am to 6pm (Street closing 8am to 8pm)

SPONSOR: MYRTLE AVENUE BID – Theodore Renz, Exec. Director (718) 366-3806 CONTACT: Clearview

Productions: SAPO@clearviewfestival.com (646) 230-0489

Theodore Renz said that he will abstain from voting on this matter due to his employment as Executive Director of the Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement District.

Mr. Sanchez stated that the Executive Committee's recommendation is that the Board has no objection to holding this Street Fair, as proposed. As there were no objections from Board Members, the recommendation passed unanimously.

## **5) FRESH POND ROAD STREET FESTIVAL**

FRESH POND ROAD btw Woodbine St & Menahan St – Ridgewood – 5 blocks

**Thursday - Sept. 7th** from 5:30pm to 11pm (Street closing 12 Noon to 12am)

**Friday - Sept. 8th** from 5:30pm to 11pm (Street closing 12 Noon to 12am)

**Saturday - Sept. 9th** from 5:30pm to 11pm (Street closing 12 Noon to 12am)

**Sunday - Sept. 10th** from 5:30pm to 11pm (Street closing 12 Noon to 12am)

SPONSOR: Federazione Italo-Americana di Brooklyn and Queens –Tony DiPiazza – (718) 366-9077; Mike Hyatt at Meteor Festivals [info@streetfairsny.com](mailto:info@streetfairsny.com).

Paul Kerzner, a Board Member, said that he objects to this 4-Day Festival on Fresh Pond Road, because it's the only north-south corridor in the Board 5 area that connects Grand Avenue in Maspeth to the neighborhoods of Ridgewood and Glendale on Myrtle Avenue. He said that traffic is tied up on Fresh Pond Road for the four days of this Festival each year, and it's very unfair to local residents and businesses. He suggested that this Festival should instead be relocated to Eliot Avenue from Fresh Pond Road to Metropolitan Avenue.

Peggy O'Kane, a Board Member, also objected to holding this Street Festival on Fresh Pond Road each year because it causes severe traffic tie-ups, particularly when the vendors for the commercial rides block lanes of traffic on Fresh Pond Road. She said that many drivers take a detour route onto Traffic Avenue where all kinds of infractions occur because there's no police presence. She said that it's an unfair imposition on residents and local businesses. Mr. Sanchez replied that the applicant said that they will not hire any commercial rides that block lanes of traffic on Fresh Pond Road any more this year.

Kathy Masi, a Board Member, pointed out that all of the proceeds from this event are donated to several organizations in the community, including the 104<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Council and the Peter Cardella Senior Center on Fresh Pond Road, in Ridgewood.

Theodore Renz, a Board Member, pointed out that ever since the Moratorium on new Street Fair applications went into effect, applicants are not permitted to change their original application which was filed several years ago.

Diego Leclery commented that when he has attended this event for the past 10 years, he's found that local families enjoy meeting their friends and neighbors there, and everyone has a good time. He said that it's a safe, clean environment for a few days. .

After a general discussion of this matter, Mr. Sanchez requested a Roll Call vote on the Committee's recommendation to have no objection to holding a Street Festival on Fresh Pond Road, as submitted. The motion carried by a vote of – 18 - in favor; - 12 – opposed; - 0 – abstentions; and – 0 – not voting.

Mr. Sanchez recognized members of the press who were present: Elijah Hamilton of the **Times Newsweekly**, and Jessica Meditz of the **Queens Ledger**.

## **STATEMENTS from LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS**

State Assembly Member Juan Ardila introduced himself as the newly elected Assemblyman representing the 37<sup>th</sup> Assembly District in Queens. He said that Assembly Member Catherine Nolan retired from office last year, leaving this seat vacant. He thanked the Assembly Member for her many years of service.



## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on February 8, 2023

He informed everyone that he's been appointed to serve on several Committees: Labor, Education, Social Services, Libraries, Alcoholism and Drug Abuse.

In closing, he said that as a lifelong Queens resident, and first-generation American and New Yorker, he's putting his heart and soul into public service. He said that both of his parents are immigrants to this country, and he has first-hand knowledge of the hardships of working class families in this City. He thanked everyone who put their trust in him by voting for him and said that he looks forward to working with this Board to meet the needs of this community and to improve their quality of life.

On behalf of Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, Timothy Chubinidze reminded everyone that the deadline to renew their Board membership is next Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023. He said that the Board Member application is posted on the Queens Borough President's homepage at [www.queensbp.org](http://www.queensbp.org), under the Community Board tab. He encouraged everyone who's eligible to reapply as soon as possible. He said that if anyone has trouble logging into their website, they should contact Maricela Cano, the Director of Community Boards, at (718) 286-2974, or via email at her email address: [mcano@queensbp.org](mailto:mcano@queensbp.org). 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(s) no later than April 1st, 2023, he said.

In addition, he announced that their Annual Black History Month celebration is scheduled for next Thursday, from 6pm to 8pm, in the Helen Marshall Cultural Center at Queens Borough Hall. He advised everyone interested in attending this event to register online beforehand at [www.queensbp.org/RSVP](http://www.queensbp.org/RSVP). Mr. Chubinidze also informed Board Members that he's working to establish a Young Adult Council for youth between the ages of 12 and 17 years old. He said that applicants are welcome to apply online on the Queens Borough President's webpage at [www.queensbp.org](http://www.queensbp.org). The deadline to apply is Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. He welcomed adult mentors to join this Council, as well.

In closing, he invited anyone interested to participate in the Civic Engagement Committee that was launched by the Queens Borough President in March of 2021. He said that this group meets remotely on Zoom once a month when guest speakers cover a whole range of topics that they're interested in exploring. He said that, last month's guest speaker answered questions about the status of the Open Streets Program. This month, they had a lively discussion focused on smoke shops and cannabis, what's legal and what's not.

On behalf of Assembly Member Jennifer Rajkumar, Carlos Plaza introduced himself as the Director of Community Affairs in her office. He welcomed anyone who's looking for free legal counseling services to contact their office by calling (718) 805-0950 to find out when the next information session will be held. He said that their office also hosts Free Mammogram Exams on a rotating basis. Last but not least, he said that their office is hosting their Annual Valentine's for Veterans Day drive next week. He said that anyone interested in making a donation of a card or gift for a Disabled Veteran may call their office at (718) 805-0950 for more information.

On behalf of the newly elected State Assembly Member Steven Raga, Victoria Leahy introduced herself as the Assemblymember's Chief of Staff. She said that the 30<sup>th</sup> District includes the neighborhoods of Woodside, Elmhurst, Maspeth, Middle Village, and parts of Astoria, and Jackson Heights. Their office remains at the same address as before: 55-19 69 Street, in Maspeth.

Ms. Leahy welcomed anyone interested in celebrating the Lunar New Year with the Assembly Member this year, to join them this weekend at Moore Homestead Park, in Elmhurst, from 11am to 1pm. She also announced that their office will host a Citizens Committee Micro-Grant Info Session on Zoom for small groups, non-profits, small businesses or community groups to learn about applying for mini-grants that are typically about \$3,000. She advised anyone interested in attending to call their office at (718) 651-3185.

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on February 8, 2023

On behalf of State Senator Mike Gianaris, Irene Stathatos introduced herself as his Deputy Chief of Staff. She said that they plan to move out of their current District Office and will inform the Board as soon as they get settled into their new quarters. She said that she currently handles all constituent calls about immigration, citizenship, Passports, eligibility for Social Security, Senior Citizen Homeowners Tax Exemptions and the STAR Program, as well as homecare programs for seniors.

On behalf of Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, Kate Boehme said that she was glad to meet everyone in person at tonight's Board Meeting. She said that she looks forward to working with the Board on any issues that are brought to her attention. She welcomed everyone to contact her directly by calling her office at (718) 286-6295.

On behalf of State Senator Addabbo, John D'Angelo informed everyone that the Senator is up in Albany this week working on passing legislation to lower the cost of prescription drugs in New York State, among several other pieces of legislation. He said that they're planning to host a free Electronics Recycling and Paper Shredding Event this Spring in the Forest Park Bandshell parking lot on the last Sunday in April. He welcomed calls to their office in Middle Village at (718) 497-1630.

On behalf of US Representative Grace Meng, Tianna Armstrong announced that the Congresswoman has been chosen to lead the new Regional Leadership Council for New York. In this new role, she will serve as a liaison between Congress and the White House to implement key pieces of legislation. She pledges to make sure that New Yorkers feel the benefits of new federal legislation. She also reported that this week, the Congresswoman was elected Vice-Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Committee. Regarding the problems with mail theft that are reported to their office, Ms. Armstrong said that the Congresswoman has written to the US Postal Service to request reductions in the time that mail is left in drop boxes, adding safety locks to these boxes, and increased transparency when mail has been stolen from them.

On behalf of US Representative Nydia Velazquez, Jonathan Betancourt gave a brief accounting of the Omnibus Bill that was enacted into law last year. In terms of major updates, he said there was a monumental government funding bill that the Congresswoman helped pass for 2023. Within the funding package, Congresswoman Velazquez helped to secure over \$153 Billion for SNAP, (formerly known as Food Stamps) as well as \$134 Billion for the Dept. of Veterans Affairs to expand access to health care and deliver key benefits to Veterans who've served our country. He thanked all Veterans present at the Board Meeting for their service. In light of the recent spike in the number of Veterans who have committed suicide this past year, he said that \$13.9 Billion in funding is slated for Veterans Mental Health Care. He said that this Bill also addresses the recent spike in the number of mass shootings, with 60 mass shootings taking place since January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, by allocating \$2.8 Billion for Mental Health Services. In addition, this Bill includes Billions of dollars for Section 202 – Supportive Housing for Low-Income Senior Citizens. This Bill also allocates \$360 Million for Section 811 – Housing for People with Disabilities. In closing, he said that the Congresswoman also secured \$16 Million in funds for local capital projects, including \$250,000 for NYC H2O a non-profit organization that has led clean up and preservation efforts at the Ridgewood Reservoir, and \$250,000 for the Greater Ridgewood Youth Council.

State Assembly Member Steven Raga introduced himself as the newly elected Assemblyman from the 30<sup>th</sup> AD which covers Maspeth and a few blocks south of the Long Island Expressway in Middle Village.

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on February 8, 2023

He said that prior to being elected to office, he was the Executive Director of Woodside on the Move and he served 6 years on his local Community Board. He said that he really appreciates all the work that the Community Board does and looks forward to working with everyone in the future. He welcomed calls from constituents to his office at (718) 651-3185.

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

**Gary Giordano**

The District Manager announced that the Health and Human Services Committee will hold their next meeting remotely next Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 7pm. He welcomed anyone who wants a link to attend the meeting to contact the Board Office at (718) 366-1834. He said that Robert Cermeli is the Committee Chair and Barbara Toscano is the Vice- Chair of this Committee.

He also reported that the Sanitation Committee is tentatively scheduled to meet on Thursday, February 23, 2023.

The District Manager said that there are several major thoroughfares in the Board area that need to be resurfaced in the coming year, including Myrtle Avenue in Glendale, Fresh Pond Road from Eliot Avenue to Flushing Avenue, and Seneca Avenue, particularly in the vicinity of DeKalb Avenue, in Ridgewood. He reminded everyone to put their household garbage and recycling out at the curb the night before their collection day because the Department of Sanitation is still on their Snow Season schedule.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

**Eric Butkiewicz**

Eric Butkiewicz reported that the Committee met on Tuesday, January 31<sup>st</sup> to review the status of the Citi Bike installations in our Board area. He said that a total of 53 new bike share docks will be installed, with about half of them on the sidewalk and the other half located in the street. He said that the Dept. of Transportation relocated a number of bike stations from being in the street to the sidewalk, particularly where the sidewalk was wide enough to accommodate them. He said that a finalized Map of the bike stations has been posted on DOT's website. He commended Committee members and community residents for their input on this project.

Regarding the redesign of our local Bus Route Network, Mr. Butkiewicz said that the Committee addressed the concerns of local residents regarding several bus lines that serve both Brooklyn and Queens residents and commuters. He said that Liberty Park residents object to the proposed elimination of Bus service in their area, with the re-routing of the B-13 Bus to Cypress Avenue, instead of Cypress Hills Street, in Glendale. He advised everyone to visit the MTA's website to see the proposed changes in the Queens Bus Route Redesign project at <https://new.mta.info/project/queens-bus-network-redesign>. There's a section on the website where you can Click on the screen to enter your opinion about all of the proposed changes, he said.

He also reported that the Committee discussed complaints about the number of large tractor trailers that are parked overnight and most of the day alongside Frank Principe Park in Maspeth. He said that in many cases, their engines are left idling, resulting in heavily polluted air inside the Park.

Mr. Butkiewicz said that the Committee discussed the continuing problems caused by the operation of the NY & Atlantic railway in Glendale. He said that the Committee will continue to work to alleviate the noise and air pollution coming from these railway cars. He said that the Committee is seeking decibel readings of the noise caused by the freight train cars coupling which they plan to report to the proper authorities. He said that the Committee will continue to work to resolve these issues.

In closing, he announced that the next Committee Meeting will be conducted in person at 7:30pm, on February 28<sup>th</sup> in the Board 5 Office. In the meantime, he asked that anyone with any traffic safety

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on February 8, 2023

concerns and pedestrian safety requests to please forward them to the Board Office so the Committee can review them.

## **Zoning and Land Use Review Committee**

### **Walter Sanchez**

Walter Sanchez reported that the Committee met in the Board 5 Office at 7pm on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023 to review two separate applications that were presented to the full Board during Public Hearings at last month's Board Meeting. He said that the first application they discussed was regarding the Board of Standards and Appeals (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.

Mr. Sanchez reported that the Committee unanimously recommends that the Board have no objection to the proposed alterations, as outlined in their application.

As there was no further discussion on this matter, he requested a Roll Call vote on the committee's recommendation which carried unanimously by a vote of – 29 – in favor; - 0 – opposed; - 0 – abstentions; and – 0 – not voting.

Regarding the second application that the Committee reviewed, he said that it was submitted to the Board of Standards and Appeals under **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.

Mr. Sanchez reported that the Committee unanimously recommends that the Board have no objection to the proposed development, as outlined during the Public Hearing that was conducted on this matter. After a general discussion of the matter, he requested a Roll Call vote on the committee's recommendation which carried unanimously by a vote of – 29 – in favor; - 0 – opposed; - 0 – abstentions; and – 0 – not voting.

### **Old Business**

Steven Fiedler, Parks Committee Chair, informed everyone that there have been two recent vehicular accidents in the vicinity of the seating area at the new Entrance to Forest Park, off Myrtle Avenue, in Glendale. He said the Board should continue to advocate for increased safety measures be taken there, such as, the installation of jersey barriers for the time being, while other ideas are under discussion.

In closing, Mr. Sanchez announced that the next full Board Meeting is scheduled to begin at 7:30pm, on Wednesday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023. He said the Meeting 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 9:25pm.