



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 Community Board 5 Public Meeting

April 12, 2023

Board Members Present

Bhubaneshor Adhikari; Carol Benovic-Bradley; Antonetta Binanti; Jessica Boiardi; Eric Butkiewicz; Michael Byc; Rachel Caracci; Maritza Carmona; Ethan Chan; Deepak Chaudhari; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Salvatore Crifasi; Patricia Crowley; Nickolas Cuttonaro; Daniel De Brucker; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Steven Fiedler; Dorie Figliola; Fred Hoefflerle; Paul A. Kerzner; Edward Lettau; Katherine Masi; Margaret O'Kane; Donald Passantino; Michael Porcelli; Melissa Rebecca; Kenneth Rehberger; Theodore Renz; Luis Rodriguez; Lee S. Rottenberg; Walter H. Sanchez; Lily Scarabino; Dennis Stephan; Katarzyna Syta; Barbara Toscano; Jasmine Valle; Maryanna Zero; Brandon Zwagerman

Board Members Absent

Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Tobias Sheppard Bloch; Robert Cermeli; Derek Evers; Fred T. Haller; Maryann Lattanzio; Diego Leclery; Eileen Moloney; April Narsasian; Michael O'Kane; Gyanal Thapa; Patrick Trinchese

ELECTED OFFICIALS and STAFF

NYS Senator **Joseph P. Addabbo**, 15th SD and Staff **John D'Angelo**
NYS Assembly Member **Jenifer Rajkumar**, 38th AD and Staff **Vjola Isufaj**
Tiana Armstrong – US Representative Grace Meng, 6th C.D.
Johnathan Betancourt – US Representative Nydia Velazquez, 7th C.D.
Irena Stathatos – NYS Senator Michael Gianaris, 12th SD
Kevin Wisniewski – NYS Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi, 28th AD
Jolly Patel – NYS Assembly Member Steven Raga, 30th AD
Melissa Villalobos - NYS Assembly Member Juan Ardila, 37th AD
Charles Vavruska – NYC Council Member Robert Holden, 30th CD
Juan Mayancela – NYC Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez, 34th CD
Kate Boehme – 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 Chairperson **Vincent Arcuri's** absence, he will conduct tonight's Board Meeting. He called the meeting to order at 7:31pm, following a Salute to the Flag. He thanked local elected officials and members of the public for attending tonight's in person Board Meeting and said that this meeting is also being live-streamed via Zoom where anyone can watch this meeting at their convenience, by clicking on the link that's posted on our CB5Q Homepage at www.nyc.gov/qnscb5.

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As the first order of business, **Mr. Sanchez** asked all newly appointed Board Members who were present to introduce themselves to their fellow Board Members as he called their names in alphabetical order. **Carol Benovic-Bradley**, a Ridgewood resident for the past 11 years, said that she's been volunteering on community projects for years.

Michael Byc, a Middle Village resident, said that he works in a people management firm in the private sector and looks forward to working with the Community Board on local issues.

Maritza Carmona, a Glendale resident, said that she grew up in Ridgewood and has lived most of her life in this Board area, having graduated from local parochial and public schools. She said that she works for a non-profit organization and met with many different Community Boards in the City. She looks forward to serving as a Board Member on this Community Board.

Ethan Chan, who moved into Middle Village 2 years ago, said that he grew up in Queens and had worked as a pharmacist until he became a product manager.

Deepak Chaudhari, a Ridgewood resident for the past 15 years. He said that he serves on the boards of several non-profit organizations and works with the Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Salvatore Crifasi, said that he was born in Ridgewood and lived in Middle Village for 30 years and is a realtor for the past 50 years. He said that he serves on the Board of Directors of the Queens Chamber of Commerce, the Forest Park Trust Fund, and as President of the Middle Village Property Owners Association and Middle Village Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Sanchez thanked him for all his efforts to raise community awareness of the initial plans to establish a homeless shelter in Glendale on Cooper Avenue.

Daniel DeBrucker, a Glendale resident for the past 2 years, said that he's the Associate Pastor of the Ridgewood Presbyterian Church and a social worker by profession.

Dorie Figliola, said that she's glad to be back serving as a member of the Board now, after having resigned for a few years to take care of her 90+ year old father who has since passed on. She said that having been born and raised in Glendale, she's remained an active member of several Committees, and has been supervising groups of volunteers who help to plant, prune, weed and compost yard waste at the Glendale Community Garden on 88 Street, at 74 Avenue. She welcomed everyone to visit the garden on Saturdays through the Spring, Summer, and Fall, when the garden is open. She said that the produce from the garden is donated to local food pantries all year round.

Lily Scarabino, a resident of Middle Village for 40+ years, said that she had worked in the Board Office as a College Intern about 20 years ago and loves this community. At present, she's married with one son, and works for St. John's University in their Compliance and Certification Office. She said that she looks forward to working with the Board once again.

Brandon Zwagerman, a resident of Ridgewood with a background in Urban Planning, said that he's attended many Board Meetings in person and online since he moved into the neighborhood in 2010. He's glad to have been appointed to serve on this Board because he looks forward to giving back his time and energy to the community.

Mr. Sanchez announced the next Item on the Board Agenda as:

PUBLIC FORUM

Luis Ross, a resident of Edsall Avenue in Glendale, spoke about ongoing problems with noise caused by the coupling of freight train cars in the middle of the night, and the train whistle sounding off for a long period of time at 3am and 4am, when he calls the NY & Atlantic Railway office to complain about the noise coming from their freight rail train operations. He said that the railway company should be held to account for what their employee is doing, particularly in the middle of the night, when all his elderly neighbors are ordinarily sound asleep.

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Thomas N. Toscano, CEO of Mr. T. Carting Corporation, located on Edsall Avenue between 73 Place and 73 Street, in Glendale, thanked the Board for their help in getting the trash alongside the RR tracks in Glendale cleaned up. He said that on the following day after the March Board Meeting, a work crew swept up all the trash and debris. He said that he plans to organize an Earth Day Event for a group of volunteers to clean up the area along the railroad tracks on Friday, April 21st, 2023. He welcomed anyone interested to join in this annual volunteer cleanup.

He suggested that installing Alternate Side of the Street parking restrictions signage along both sides of Edsall Avenue, between 71st Place and 73rd Place, in Glendale would help to curb the on-street parking of vehicles for long periods of time at this location. Mr. Sanchez said that the request would be referred to Committee for further consideration.

Chairperson's Report

Walter Sanchez, First Vice-Chairperson

Minutes

Mr. Sanchez asked Board members if they had received and reviewed the minutes from last month's Board Meeting that was conducted on March 8, 2023. Mr. Sanchez accepted a motion from **Katherine Masi** that was seconded by **Jasmine Valle** to approve the minutes as written. The motion was adopted by acclamation.

Mr. Sanchez Introduced the next Item on the Board Agenda, and read aloud the following 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) * **La Esquinita Latin Food Cuisine Corp.** 61-02 Myrtle Avenue, Glendale, NY 11385 – [R]
- 2) * **El Fanborjan Corp.** d/b/a TBD 465 Seneca Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385 – [B/T]

Liquor License Renewal Applications

- 1) **While in Kathmandu Inc.** 758 Seneca Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385 – [R]
- 2) **Fresh Pond Cocktail Club LLC** 64-18 Fresh Pond Road, Ridgewood, NY 11385 – [B/T]

New Wine, Beer & Cider License Applications

- 1) * **Topos Two Books LLC** d/b/a **Topos Bookstore Too** 59-22 Myrtle Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385 – [R]
- 2) * **SarK Food Group** d/b/a **Gunther's** 487 Seneca Avenue, Ridgewood, NY 11385 – [R]

Wine, Beer & Cider Renewal Applications

- 1) **GW Ridgewood LLC** d/b/a **Gyro World** 66-57 Fresh Pond Road, Ridgewood, NY 11385 – [R]
- 2) **Little Havana Cigar Company Inc.** d/b/a **Havana Dreams Cigar Company** 63-10 Woodhaven Blvd, Rego Park, NY 11374 – [B/T]

Other Notifications

- 1) ** **Hail Mary 7778 LLC** d/b/a **The Flying Fox Tavern** 678 Woodward Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 - [R]
- 2) *** **Cypress Café LLC** 1702 Stanhope St, Ridgewood, NY 11385 - [B/T]

* *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>.*

** ***Alteration**, seeking to open a backyard area and remove 'no backyard operations' from their Stipulations.*

*** ***Class Change** looking to go to a Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider License from their current Wine, Beer & Cider License.*

[B/T] = Bar/Tavern; [R] = Restaurant

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Mr. Sanchez asked for a clarification of the category “**Other Notifications.**” The District Manager explained that in the **Other Notifications** category, two establishments are applying to amend the terms of their existing licenses:

- 1) **The Flying Fox Tavern**, located at 678 Woodward Avenue in Ridgewood, seeks an **Alteration** that would allow them to use their backyard area as an extension of their bar, and lift the restrictions against use of the backyard as described in their original Stipulation Agreement; and
- 2) The **Cypress Café**, located on the corner of Stanhope Street in Ridgewood, is requesting a **Class Change** in the current license that permits the on-premises sale of Wine, Beer & Cider, in order to obtain a license to sell Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider on premises.

Staff Member **John Maier** explained that any establishment that is issued a **Temporary Retail Permit** is permitted to sell alcoholic beverages until their full license application is approved, which can take months to process.

Mr. Sanchez said that if anyone has any concerns about any of these new or existing establishments, to report them to the Board Office so the information can be forwarded to the Members of the newly formed Liquor Licenses and Cannabis Committee. He suggested that the Committee meet monthly on Zoom, possibly on the first Tuesday of each month, to review and discuss these applications and make their recommendations to the full Board at the following month’s Board Meeting.

The District Manager pointed out that this Board’s policy has been that only recommendations in opposition to applications for the sale of alcoholic beverages, that are based on complaints about the premises, or the number of police reports on file, or serious concerns about the proposed location of an establishment, are presented to the full Board for a vote.

He said that, thankfully, there have been very few instances in which bars in our Board area have been regarded as a public nuisance and have not been shut down.

In answer to a question from the floor, the District Manager explained that the State Liquor Authority usually takes at least months to process new applications and renewals of licenses for the sale of alcoholic beverages before they issue and/or renew a license. He said the Committee has sufficient time to review tonight’s list of establishments before next month’s Board Meeting.

He said that the first step in the application process is the required 30-Day Prior Notification to local Community Boards, as the designated local seat of government.

DEMOLITION NOTICES

Mr. Sanchez reported that the Board received two demolition notices since last month’s Board Meeting: **59-37 56 Road, (Block: 2689; Lot: 61) in Maspeth** – 2-family house with accessory garage, filed in connection with construction of a horizontal addition; and **59-37 60 Street, (Block: 2729; Lot: 5) in Maspeth** – rear garage of 1-family house.

As there were no questions or comments about these sites, **Mr. Sanchez** announced the next Item on the Agenda.

STATEMENTS from LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

State Assembly Member **Jennifer Rajkumar** requested a Moment of Silence in memory of Louis Leschitz, a lifelong Glendale resident and American Veteran, who participated in many local events. She said that he passed away suddenly last week.

The Assembly Member said that, on March 29th, she sponsored the celebration of Women’s History Month by recognizing 22 women who live in her District for their leadership, energy and dedication to serving the needs of local residents. She said the following 5 women who live in the Community Board 5 area of Queens were given awards: Connie Altamirano, VP of School District 24 Community Education Council, and Child Advocate; Elizabeth De La Cruz, President, 104th Precinct Civilian Observation Patrol; Teresa Donahue, Past President of Glendale Kiwanis Club, Kerrie Hansen, Distinguished Past Lt. Gov. of

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Kiwanis Club Queens West Division, and Catherine Murawski, Community Media Person and Community Leader. Mayor Eric Adams was a surprise guest at the event who congratulated all the honorees for their awards.

In announcing upcoming events, the Assembly Member said that, at 6:00PM on Thursday, April 20th, her office is partnering with Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz to co-sponsor a webinar about Preventing Scams and Frauds. She encouraged everyone to Zoom into the webinar to learn how to avoid credit card fraud and identity theft by phone, internet, and mail.

She said that State Senator Addabbo and she will co-sponsor a Paper Shredding Event on Sunday, May 7th, from 10am to 2pm, and another E-Waste Event on Sunday, May 14th, from 10am to 2pm, in the Forest Park Bandshell area. She said this event will be held rain or shine and she welcomed everyone to participate.

Regarding this year's State Budget, she said that the budget is late because the legislators cannot agree on Public Safety items in the budget, especially Bail Reform. She said that she favors a common sense approach to fighting crime by giving judges more discretion in decisions about granting bail to criminals, particularly for approximately 2,000 repeat offenders who commit much of the crime in our city.

The Assembly Member said that she met with Sheriff Anthony Miranda yesterday to initiate a crack down on illegal unlicensed smoke shops, particularly those that are located near local schools.

Regarding her most recent legislative initiative, she said that she has introduced a Bill in the Assembly to create a new State Office of Innovation and Algorithmic Accountability to address all the ways that Artificial Intelligence (AI) affects our economy. She pointed out that 3D printing can be used to build affordable housing units at much lower cost than standard construction practices. In addition, she said that she's advocating for practical budget items, such as, the Child Tax Credit and Earned Income Tax Credit, that have proven to be effective in lifting families out of poverty.

In closing, the Assembly Member welcomed constituents to contact her office by calling (718) 805-0950 for more information or assistance.

On behalf of Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, **Kate Boehme** welcomed everyone to participate in the upcoming webinar about how to avoid becoming a victim of fraud and scams, which have been steadily increasing over the past 2 years.

Ms. Boehme announced that, a couple of weeks ago, Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz was joined by NYPD Commissioner Keechant L. Sewell in announcing one of the largest gang takedowns in the history of the office: a 151-count indictment brought against 33 alleged gang members, 5 of whom are charged with 2 separate murders of young men in Queens. She said that this indictment is the result of a nearly 3-year long investigation into more than 22 shootings that were reported in and around Baisley Park Houses and nearby communities. She said that the defendants are charged with conspiracy, criminal possession of a weapon and criminal use of a firearm. She said that the District Attorney is doing everything possible to remove illegal firearms from our streets because far too many innocent victims are being injured or killed by senseless gang violence.

In closing, she distributed newsletters to those present and welcomed calls for information or assistance to her office at (718) 286-6295.

On behalf of State Assembly Member Juan Ardila, **Melissa Villalobos** reported that during this session, he introduced 11 separate Bills for consideration on the floor of the Assembly, and co-sponsored over 110 Bills regarding the State Budget this year, which is still being negotiated in Albany.

Ms. Villalobos said that one of the Bills that he sponsored that was passed into law will make it easy to synchronize multiple medical prescriptions and the other one clarifies provisions of the law related to the State's program of all-inclusive care for the elderly. Another Bill that he sponsored and was passed by both houses of the legislature is still pending the Governor's approval. This Bill provides employers

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and business owners with the opportunity to register for emergency alerts from New York's Public Safety Alert mass notification system.

In closing, **Ms. Villalobos** said that their office collected over 2,000 articles of clothing for needy families during clothing drives co-sponsored by the Topos Coffee Shop & Bookstore at 815 Woodward Avenue, and the Ridgewood-Y, opposite the 104th Police Precinct on Catalpa Avenue. She thanked everyone who participated for their contribution to this clothing drive.

In closing, she said that their office is sponsoring an upcoming Immigrant Resource Fair, as well as a Community Clean-up in Maspeth soon, and welcomed calls to their office for more information at (718) 784-3194.

On behalf of Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi, **Kevin Wisniewski** wished a Happy Easter, Happy Passover, and Ramadan to everyone who observes any of these holidays. He reported that the Assemblyman is up in Albany, working on budget negotiations to pass the State Budget this month.

Mr. Wisniewski announced the dates of their Spring Cleanup Series, from 10AM to 2PM on several weekends in April, May and June, beginning with a Cleanup on Metropolitan Avenue in Forest Hills on Saturday, April 29th, 2023. He said that on May 6th, the following Saturday, the group of volunteers will meet together on Cooper Avenue at 88 Street and then head along Cooper Avenue into Glendale to sweep the area clean. Flyers about the Cleanups were distributed to all present.

Regarding legislation that the Assembly Member sponsored and was recently passed in Albany, **Mr. Wisniewski** said that a Bill that he wrote calls for a study of the number of children in foster care with intellectual disabilities, to make sure that they are referred for appropriate support and services. For more information on legislative or local issues, he invited everyone to contact their office at 718-263-5595.

On behalf of State Assembly Member Steven Raga, **Jolly Patel** introduced herself as the Director of Community Relations in the 30th Assembly District office. She said that the Assembly Member is up in Albany working on budget negotiations this week along with his colleagues. She said that this week, he will introduce a Resolution in the Assembly to commemorate the Thai New Year, which is known as Sankranti, and is generally celebrated in January. She said that they're planning to schedule a Rain Barrel Giveaway Event in May, as well as legal clinics for constituents. For more information, she advised everyone to contact their District Office at (718) 651-3185.

On behalf of State Senator Michael Gianaris, **Irena Stathatos** informed everyone that the Senator is up in Albany working to pass the State Budget this month. She welcomed school children to participate in their annual Earth Day Poster Contest, and reminded everyone that the deadline to submit entries is this Friday, April 14th.

Regarding the backlog in applications for U.S. Passports, she advised anyone interested in travelling abroad to apply for their Passport at least a year in advance.

Regarding a fire hydrant that was knocked over in front of 75-20 64 Place, she said that she's been informed by the Dept. of Environmental Protection that it's scheduled to be replaced as soon as the car that has been parked on that corner has been moved out of the way.

In closing, she welcomed calls to their office at (718) 728-0960.

On behalf of State Senator Addabbo, **John D'Angelo** congratulated all the newly appointed Board Members on their appointment to the Community Board. He announced several events that the Senator is sponsoring, as follows:

- 1) from 10am to 1pm, on Saturday, April 15th, Senator Addabbo will host a Paper Shredding and Clothing Donation Event inside Atlas Park on Cooper Avenue in Glendale;

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- 2) from 9am to 3pm, on Saturday, April 29th, a Blood Drive will be held in Atlas Park;
- 3) from 10am to 2pm on Sunday, April 30th, there's a Paper Shredding E-Waste Event in Atlas Park which is co-sponsored by Assemblywoman Rajkumar; and
- 4) from 10am to 2pm, on Sunday, May 7th, there's another E-Waste Event in the Forest Park Bandshell parking lot.

On behalf of U.S. Representative Nydia Velazquez, **Johnathan Betancourt** wished a Happy Easter, Passover, and Ramadan to all those who celebrate these holidays. He reported that, last month, the Congresswoman held a Press Conference at the site of an e-bike explosion in Bushwick, to announce that she introduced a new piece of legislation on the House floor that would create grants for local governments and municipalities to build public, accessible and safe charging stations for all electric mobility devices. He said that the proposed legislation will hopefully reduce the number of fires that are being caused throughout the city during the process of charging electric batteries.

Regarding the current shortage of ADHD medication, namely, Consortia and Adderall, the Congresswoman has written a letter to the Food and Drug Administration requesting that their agency take steps to alleviate this nationwide shortage of medications.

Mr. Betancourt also reported that the Congresswoman met with Jennifer Granholm, the US Secretary of Energy, yesterday at the Ravenswood Generation Station in Long Island City, to announce plans to transform it into a clean energy Hub that will generate over 20% of the City's energy. He said that this project will help the City reach the goal of a 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. He said that they also visited the Public Library in Greenpoint, which is being powered by new solar panels on the rooftop. Flyers and brochures were distributed to all present.

Mr. Betancourt welcomed calls for more information or assistance to their office at (718) 599-3658.

On behalf of US Representative Grace Meng, **Tiana Armstrong** reported that in response to complaints about the long processing time for obtaining a U. S. Passport, the Congresswoman met this week with the Inspectors General of the U. S. Dept. of Commerce and the U. S. Dept. of Justice, and Anthony Blinken, the U.S. Secretary of State. She asked for an update on their plans to reduce the long wait times involved. She said that since part of the problem is the fact that passport appointments are booked solid for the next few months, their office has arranged for the Forest Hills Post Office to open from 9AM to 3PM on Sunday, April 23rd, to give U.S. citizens an opportunity to apply for a passport. She said that applicants would be served on a first-come, first-served basis.

In terms of new legislation sponsored by the Congresswoman, **Ms. Armstrong** said that she introduced a Bill, known as "A New Deal for New Americans," which would establish new programs to assist refugees and immigrants that are already here legally, to overcome common issues in the journey to become American citizens. She said this Bill would also strengthen coordination between federal, state and local government agencies to support the social, economic and civic integration of immigrants and refugees.

On behalf of City Council Member Robert Holden, **Charles Vavruska** thanked everyone for volunteering to serve as Members of Community Board 5, Queens. He announced the following events:

- 1) Thyroid Scans from 4PM to 7PM on Thursday, April 20th, in PS 49 on 80 Street at Juniper Blvd. South;
- 2) Electronic E-Waste Recycling Event from 12 Noon to 4PM, on Saturday, April 22nd, at Maspeth Federal Savings Bank at 69-18 Grand Avenue, in Maspeth;
- 3) Veterans Benefits Information Seminar from 10AM to 12 Noon and from 1PM to 4PM on Wednesday, April 26th, in their District Office;

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- 4) Regular Veterans Care Center from 9AM to 5PM, in their District Office, on the following Wednesdays: April 19th, May 3rd; and May 17th;
- 5) Helmet Fitting and Distribution Event, from 11AM to 12:30PM, on Saturday, May 13th at Frank Principe Park; and
- 6) Blood Drive, from 9AM to 3PM, on Saturday, April 29th at the Shops in Atlas Park, Glendale

Regarding the recent spike in mail thefts in our Board area, **Mr. Vavruska** said that their office is working with the U.S. Postal Service and local authorities to crack down on this criminal activity. He announced that their office will sponsor a Rain Barrel Giveaway Event soon and asked that anyone interested in obtaining a free Rain Barrel to contact their Office, by calling (718) 366-3900 to find out the details.

In closing, he said that, as Chair of the Veterans Committee in the City Council, the Council Member is working to increase funding for the NYC Dept. of Veterans Affairs, as well as local service organizations, such as, the Veteran Halls and Posts, that would enable them to complete repairs on their buildings.

On behalf of City Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez, **Juan Mayancela** announced that they plan to host Mobile Office Hours at the Greater Ridgewood Youth Council's Center, on the corner of Madison Street and Fairview Avenue, from 2PM to 6PM on Tuesday, April 18th, 2023. He said that the Queens Chamber of Commerce will join them at this event, to offer professional advice to small business owners in Ridgewood. He welcomed everyone to attend.

Regarding an abandoned building on the corner of Woodward Avenue at Linden Street, he said that their office has requested a multi-Agency walkthrough of the dilapidated structure.

He said that from 10AM to 2PM, on Wednesday, April 26th, Make the Road organizers will be on hand in their office at 244 Union Avenue in Brooklyn, to offer advice to tenants who live in apartments with lots of violations about how they could improve their living conditions.

In addition, he said that they're planning to organize several local community cleanups in Ridgewood, Bushwick and Williamsburg soon.

In closing, he proudly announced that City Council District 34 had the highest rate of participation in the City's Participatory Budgeting Process during this last cycle. He also announced the first in a series of Yoga sessions to be held in Grover Cleveland Park, from 10Am to 11AM on Saturdays, beginning on April 29th, 2023.

Due to his late arrival, State Senator **Joseph Addabbo** took the floor to welcome new Board Members to Community Board 5, and then gave a brief update on the state of current budget negotiations in Albany, among other news. He explained that this year's State Budget, totaling over \$220 Billion, is late due to disagreements between legislators over proposed changes to the Bail Reform legislation. In his opinion, he said that it's more important to get it right this year, than to pass a budget on time. He said that he favors giving judges more discretion over setting bail for criminal defendants, as well as giving District Attorneys more time to conduct a thorough investigation of evidence in criminal cases, during the discovery phase of Indictment Proceedings. He said that he has co-sponsored 3 Bills in the Legislature to address crime: 1) a Bill that would elevate to Grand Larceny, the crimes committed by repeat offenders for anyone who's arrested and convicted more than twice within 2 years for shoplifting offenses; 2) a Bill that would elevate an assault on retail workers and/or customers to a Class D Felony; and 3) a Bill to permit District Attorneys sufficient time to collect evidence in criminal cases which would reduce the number of cases that are dropped due to lack of evidence.

In closing, he said that he's working with the NYPD to shut down any unlicensed or illegal smoke shops in his District, particularly the ones that sell their products to minors. He asked that if anyone suspects that there's an illegal smoke shop in their neighborhood to please report it to Sean McCabe, in his office in Middle Village, by calling (718) 497-1630.

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He also announced that he's sponsoring a Senior Job Fair for anyone 55+ years old, who's looking for employment, hosted by the Queens Community House, 80-02 Kew Gardens Road, from 10AM to 2PM on Friday, May 5th, 2023.

Mr. Sanchez asked him how much revenue is generated by licensing and taxing the Wagering, Gambling and Betting Industry in New York State. As Chair of the Racing and Wagering Committee in the State Senate, Senator Addabbo replied that the State receives about \$4 Billion a year in revenue from the overall industry. He said that roughly 85% of this revenue stream goes to support the State's K through 12 school system each year. In addition, funds are directed to gambling addiction prevention programs throughout the state.

Mr. Sanchez recognized a member of the press who was present: Elijah Hamilton of the **Times Newsweekly**.

He thanked everyone for their input at tonight's Board Meeting and announced the next Item on the Board Agenda as:

District Manager's Report

Gary Giordano

The District Manager announced that at next month's Board Meeting, nominations of officers to serve on the Board's Executive Committee will be open, in accordance with the Board's By-Laws. He said that Vincent Arcuri, our present Board Chairperson, has missed many Board Meetings this year, due to his poor health. He said that, over the past 10 years, Mr. Arcuri visited the Board Office a few days each week, to offer his professional advice regarding building construction sites, capital projects, and other issues related to the Board's work. He said that he hoped to see his continued recovery this year. Regarding the nominations of Board Members at next month's Board Meeting, the District Manager said that he'll provide a brief bio of those who are nominated to the positions of Board Chairperson, First Vice-Chair, Second Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary and the four Members-at-Large, for the benefit of new Board Members who may not be familiar with their backgrounds. He encouraged new Board Members to participate in Committee work, because Committees play a key role in the Board's overall decision-making process.

Regarding the City's annual budget, the District Manager said that it appears that the Dept. of Sanitation may be the only City agency that's able to increase services for residents and businesses. He said that dump outs and drop off locations are getting cleaned regularly now, which is faster than ever before, to his knowledge. Nevertheless, there's an ongoing problem with people who continue to dump their trash and belongings under the train trestle on Cypress Hills Street, on Otto Road, and 60 Lane along the RR embankment, he said. He's happy to see that Matt Barry, the new Superintendent of our Sanitation District 5, is very good at his job, he said.

Regarding the new Liquor License and Cannabis Committee, the District Manager said that he looks forward to working with Committee Members regarding the troublesome locations in our Board area. He said that, in the past, the Board Chairperson and he would schedule a meeting with the owners of establishments that were creating a public nuisance. He said that at their meeting, they'd request that the owners sign a stipulation stating that they'd close at 2AM on weekdays and prohibit the use of the backyard in a residential area. He said that the 104th Precinct has always supported this approach. He said that one of the first liquor license applications that the Committee will review is for the bar that's located at 678 Woodward Avenue in Ridgewood, where the owners seek a Change of Operation, namely, to lift the restrictions on the use of their backyard and the limit on their hours of operation on weekdays.

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In closing, the District Manager reminded everyone to put their household garbage, recycling and compost materials out at the curb for collection by the Dept. of Sanitation after 8PM, on the night before their regular collection day. He advised that everyone put their household garbage and compost into sealed containers to alleviate a serious citywide rodent problem this year.

Mr. Sanchez asked that new Board Members remain in the room for a few minutes after tonight's Board Meeting to discuss their preferences regarding Committee assignments which will be decided by the Executive Committee in the coming month.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Transportation and Public Transit Services Committee

Eric Butkiewicz

Eric Butkiewicz reported that the Committee met on Tuesday, March 28th in the Board Office, to discuss complaints about excessive noise and other problems with freight rail operations with James Bonner, the president of the NY and Atlantic Railway. Regarding complaints about the noise coming from the horns blowing as the freight trains approach the 73 Street rail crossing in Glendale, he said that the sound is not controlled by the motorman, it's programmed to operate the way it does in compliance with federal train safety standards. He said that the Committee is looking into whether the designation of a Quiet Zone in the residential area that abuts this rail crossing would be feasible.

In addition, he said that Mr. Bonner told the Committee that modern freight locomotives run much quieter and burn fuel more efficiently than the old diesel engines, that comprise most of their fleet that is leased from the LIRR. As a result, the Committee plans to advocate that the LIRR acquire quieter, more energy efficient locomotives to be leased to the NY and Atlantic Railway, he said.

Mr. Butkiewicz said that the Committee continues to review new traffic safety requests for signals, signs and traffic calming measures on local streets at every meeting. He asked that anyone with any traffic safety concerns and pedestrian safety requests to please forward them to the Board Office so the Committee can review them.

In closing, he said that the Board staff are compiling a new list of street repaving requests that is based on input from residents, businesses, and their own observations. He asked everyone to report any problem street conditions that they see to the Board Office so they'll be given priority by the Dept. of Transportation.

He announced that the next Committee Meeting will be conducted in person at 7:30pm, on Tuesday, April 25th in the Board 5 Office.

Education and Youth Services Committee

Katherine Masi, Co-Chair

Katherine Masi reported that the Committee met together on Wednesday, March 29th in the Board Office to discuss some problems that had arisen this year, when a portion of the student population in Bushwick High School was relocated and began attending class in IS 77Q, located at 976 Seneca Avenue in Ridgewood. She said the Committee learned that the problems associated with the co-location of the two different school populations have been resolved. She said that Gina Pluvio has been appointed the new Interim Acting School Principal of IS 77Q, and she developed a good working relationship with the Principal of Bushwick High School.

Ms. Masi also reported that the Committee reviewed the youth programs and services that are currently being provided by the Greater Ridgewood Youth Council and Maspeth Town Hall. She requested that the written reports that were provided to the Committee for their review be emailed to Board Members, as well. Greater Ridgewood Youth Council offers After-School Programs in most of the public schools in our District. However, due to a lack of funding, parents are charged \$100 per month to enroll their children in some After-School Programs. As a result, she said that the Committee plans to advocate

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for additional funding to help defray the costs associated with providing After-School Programs in our District.

Parks Services Committee

Steven Fiedler

Steven Fiedler reported that the new turf soccer/football field and running track in Juniper Valley Park is completed and open to the public. In addition to \$400,000 of exercise equipment recently installed at the west end of the Park, he said that there's a beautiful new cover over the sand pit in the Playground area inside the Park.

Regarding the Rehabilitation of Starr Playground, located on Onderdonk Avenue in Ridgewood, he said that Phase 2 of this project, which involves the south side of the playground where the basketball courts are located, is moving along nicely. He said that Phase 1 of the project was completed early last Summer.

Regarding the Ridgewood Reservoir area of Highland Park, he said that he plans to tour the basins with Portia Dyrenforth, the Park Administrator, to see where they're removing invasive species which have overtaken the site, and planting trees and shrubs that are native to this area. He said that there have been sightings of homeless encampments on the grounds of the Reservoir over the years.

Kathy Masi asked for an update on the status of plans to ensure the safety of pedestrians on the new pathway into Forest Park, off Myrtle Avenue, in Glendale. **Mr. Fiedler** replied that the Parks Department plans to build a higher berm there, to create a safety barrier between pedestrians and vehicles as they are driving to the Entrance Ramp of the Jackie Robinson Parkway. He said that they've relocated the park benches in that area of Forest Park, so they're out of the path of any fast-moving vehicles. Regarding Frank Principe Park in Maspeth, **Mr. Fiedler** reported that the Parks Dept. plans to hold a scoping meeting for the play area inside the Park to receive community input during the design process.

Health and Human Services Committee

Barbara Toscano, Vice-Chair

Barbara Toscano reported that the Committee met virtually on Wednesday, February 15th to hear presentations from two guest speakers about health services that are available to community residents. She said that both of them gave power point presentations.

Ms. Toscano said that the first presentation was given by Claudia Duarte, Outreach Coordinator for Meyer Cancer Center of Weill Cornell Medicine/New York Presbyterian. She said that the Committee learned that Glendale and Ridgewood are high priority neighborhoods, where the risk of being diagnosed with cancer is very high and people die prematurely, before the age of 65, from cancer in both neighborhoods. She said that they believe this is due to a lack of access to care, particularly at the early onset of disease.

She said that the Committee was informed that they offer free cancer screening for 4 kinds of cancer that they believe are preventable, as follows: 1) They give free PSA tests to detect prostate cancer; 2) They provide free Mammograms to detect breast cancer; 3) They hand out free stool-based kits to detect colorectal cancer; and 4) They perform a risk assessment of your lung capacity to detect lung cancer.

Ms. Toscano said that they've been doing outreach at local community organizations, churches, barber shops, and street festivals to educate people and provide free screenings.

Ms. Toscano said that the second presentation was about LiveOnNY, which is Not-for-Profit Organization committed to helping New Yorkers live on through organ and tissue donations, and it was given by Raida Hossain, Community & Government Affairs Liaison for their organization.

Ms. Hossain told the Committee that her organization deals with donations of organs, eyes, and tissue and that they serve all 5 Boroughs in NYC and the Lower Hudson Valley.

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At the Committee Meeting, she told everyone that the kidney is the number one priority for organ replacement, and that 75% of the people on the waiting list are people of color. She said that their organization helps to educate the community on how to get on an organ transplant list, and they also provide support services and care for the family members of donors.

Ms. Hossain pointed out that of the 9,000 New Yorkers who are on the waiting list for organ donations, 8,000 of them live in New York City. She also informed the Committee that one donor can save eight lives and improve the lives of 75 patients through tissue donation. Unfortunately, only 45% of New Yorkers are registered organ donors.

She explained that you can register yourself as an organ donor on a Voter Registration form, or when you're applying for either a Driver's License, or Non-Driver's License at the Dept. of Motor Vehicles. However, a doctor must refer a patient to a transplant program, she said.

She said that you're never too old to be an organ donor, because the oldest person she knows who is registered as an organ donor is 95 years old.

Ms. Toscano said that the power point presentations are available in the Board Office and could be printed out for anyone who's interested.

Old Business

Theodore M. Renz, Executive Director of the Myrtle Avenue Business Improvement District, spoke about the need for additional funding to cover the cost of installing historic streetlight "M" poles on both sides of Myrtle Avenue in the BID District in Ridgewood. He said that, before she left office, former Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan secured \$450,000 from the State, which was allocated to the NYC Dept. of Transportation's Queens Office for the purpose of purchasing an additional 40 "M" poles on the side streets of the BID District.

Mr. Renz said that +Queens Borough Commissioner Nicole Garcia informed him that the Public Design Commission requires that the local Community Board submit a letter of support for this project, prior to their consideration. He pointed out that they're scheduled to meet to review the proposed project in the coming month.

As there were no questions or comments on this matter, **Mr. Sanchez** accepted a motion from **Walter Clayton**, that was seconded by **Margaret O'Kane**, to prepare of letter of No Objection to the proposed installation of historic "M" streetlight poles in the Myrtle Avenue BID District, as proposed. The motion carried unanimously.

Regarding the Myrtle Avenue Street Fair in Ridgewood on Sunday, April 23rd, **Mr. Renz** welcomed everyone to participate and bring their families along with them.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, **Mr. Sanchez** adjourned the Board Meeting on a motion from the floor at 9:05pm.