



## Community Board No. 5

Borough of Queens  
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Vincent Arcuri, Jr.  
Chairperson

Gary Giordano  
District Manager

### Minutes of Community Board 5 Public Meeting, as Amended

June 14, 2023

#### Board Members Present

Bhubaneshor Adhikari; Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Carol Benovic-Bradley; Antonetta Binanti; Jessica Boiardi; Eric Butkiewicz; Michael Byc; Rachel Caracci; Maritza Carmona; Robert Cermeli; Deepak Chaudhari; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Salvatore Crifasi; Patricia Crowley; Nickolas Cuttonaro; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Dorie Figliola; Fred T. Haller; Fred Hoefflerle; Paul A. Kerzner; Maryann Lattanzio; Diego Leclery; Edward Lettau; Katherine Masi; Eileen Moloney; Margaret O'Kane; Michael 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; Patrick Trinchese; Jasmine Valle; Maryanna Zero; Brandon Zwagerman

#### Board Members Absent

Tobias Sheppard Bloch; Ethan Chan; Daniel De Brucker; Derek Evers; Steven Fiedler; April Narsasian; Gyanal Thapa

#### ELECTED OFFICIALS and STAFF

Johnathan Betancourt – US Representative Nydia Velazquez, 7<sup>th</sup> C.D.  
Tianna Armstrong – U.S. Representative Grace Meng, 6<sup>th</sup> C.D.  
John D'Angelo - NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, 15<sup>th</sup> SD  
Jolly Patel – NYS Assembly Member Steven Raga, 30<sup>th</sup> AD  
NYS Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar, 38<sup>th</sup> AD and Chief of Staff Vjola Isufaj  
Thomas Ehringer – NYS Assembly Member Catalina Cruz, 39<sup>th</sup> AD  
Craig Caruana – NYC Council Member Robert Holden, 30<sup>th</sup> CD

#### STAFF

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

#### GUESTS

Derek Jasmin – Dept. of City Planning  
Kate Boehme – Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz  
Osbert Orduna, CEO of The Cannabis Place, 74-03 Metropolitan Avenue, Middle Village, NY 11379

The Board Chairperson Vincent Arcuri welcomed everyone to attend tonight's Board Meeting and called the meeting to order at 7:35pm, following a Salute to the Flag. He said that this meeting is also being livestreamed 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](http://www.nyc.gov/qnscb5).

The Board Chairperson announced the first order of business as:

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**PUBLIC HEARING I Re: PROPOSED CITY OF YES CARBON NEUTRALITY CITYWIDE ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT (APPLICATION #: N 230113 ZRY)**

The NYC Dept. of City Planning states that they seek to modernize the City's Zoning Resolution to facilitate climate action, clean energy, and resiliency by removing barriers to greener energy in buildings, transportation, water, and wastewater systems upgrades – all steps that will lead to the city reducing its carbon footprint.

Derek Jasmin, our Community Board Liaison at the Dept. of City Planning, gave a power point presentation on this proposal to update current zoning regulations to help meet the City's climate goals, by building and/or upgrading energy efficient: buildings, transportation, water, and sewer systems. He explained that the City of Yes for Carbon Neutrality Citywide Zoning Text Amendment is the first of three projects that the Department of City Planning is working on, as part of the Mayor's broader Initiative to charge agencies to revise outdated regulations that hold New Yorkers back from investing in their homes and businesses all over the City. He said that the other segments of the Mayor's Initiative, regarding Economic Opportunity and Housing Opportunity, are slated to begin the public engagement process later this Summer. He said that sometime this Fall, the segment on Economic Opportunity will be presented to local Community Boards for their review, and the Housing Opportunity segment is slated to be presented to all the Community Boards in the City by early next year. To-date, he said there have been four Information Sessions about this Initiative, between October, 2022 and March, 2023. Mr. Jasmin said that the purpose of this Zoning Text Amendment is to deliver zoning relief to home and building owners who propose to undertake smart retrofit projects to cut energy costs, and to help the environment, but are prevented from doing so by the existing zoning regulations. He said the four main goals of this Carbon Neutrality Initiative are to:

- 1) Support a renewable energy grid by making it easier for building owners to add rooftop solar panels;
- 2) Remove obstacles to clean, efficient building construction and renovation projects;
- 3) Allow for more electrical vehicle charging stations on city streets; and
- 4) Reduce carbon emissions by minimizing landfill waste, stormwater processing, and encourage sale of locally grown food.

By way of background on the overall City of Yes Initiative, Mr. Jasmin stated that in keeping with the City's overall plan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 80% by the year 2050, also known as the '80 by 50' Plan, we'll need to switch from relying solely on fossil fuel-powered electricity to renewable energy sources, like solar and wind. He said that it will mean moving away from fossil fuel and coal-fired furnaces, and boilers, to newer electrically powered technologies for heating and cooling, particularly heat pumps. He pointed out a chart in his power point presentation to illustrate his point.

Mr. Jasmin said that since the building sector is the key driver, by far, of the City's carbon emissions, in order to achieve our '80 by 50' goals, we'll need to retrofit almost every building in our City to become highly efficient, and generate energy by putting all of our rooftops across the City to work for us. He also noted that there's a strong correlation between buildings and the zoning laws that govern them. Consequently, the Dept. of City Planning took their first step to address climate change issues in 2012, by issuing the **Zone Green** guidelines. He said that these guidelines serve as the basis for the comprehensive overhaul of the City's Zoning Resolution to remove zoning impediments to the construction and retrofitting of green buildings. He said that under the **Zone Green** guidelines, building owners have more leeway in their investment choices to save energy, save money, and improve environmental performance such as, for example, the installation of rooftop wind and solar power units. He said that the proposed Initiative would ensure that a roof can be completely covered by a solar canopy, even in a residential zone. He said that this same principle would apply to parking lots, where

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the 8,000 acres of open parking space in our City could be completely covered with solar canopies, to generate many additional kilowatt hours of energy per site per year.

In addition, Mr. Jasmin said that under existing Zoning regulations, Community Solar Programs are currently categorized as commercial uses. He said the proposed Initiative would update the regulations to allow these solar power installations on large residential campuses, hospitals, schools, and colleges in residential districts.

He also said this Zoning Initiative would ensure that safe energy storage facilities that are designed and built under the review of the FDNY and Dept. of Buildings would be permissible in residential districts, instead of being restricted to industrial zones.

Lastly, he said that under existing zoning regulations, onshore wind installations face strict limits as to where they are allowed to locate. He said that the goal of this Initiative is to provide some relief from the current restrictions, particularly where greater heights may be warranted and appropriate. He said that future applicants for permits to build onshore wind facilities would be required to undergo a public review process, without involving the City Planning Commission.

To this end, architects, engineers, and climate activists have been working alongside City planners and government officials to identify many areas for improvement, as outlined in the **Zoom Greener** Report by the Urban Green Council, which is posted on the website at [www.nyc.gov/CityOfYes](http://www.nyc.gov/CityOfYes). He said that according to the Report, at present, 300 to 400 megawatts of rooftop solar energy is being generated per year in our City. He pointed out that under the City's Climate Mobilization Act, our goal is to generate 1000 megawatts of rooftop solar energy citywide each year by the year 2030. He said that the proposed Initiative takes a fresh look at the existing zoning restrictions with a view toward eliminating the limits that are placed on rooftop solar canopies in many Zoning Districts. He said the proposed Zoning Text Amendment would accelerate our City's progress toward a more resilient and energy efficient environment in the following three key ways:

- 1) Greater flexibility in zoning regulations to accommodate the increasing need for outdoor equipment, such as heat pumps, which are currently restricted from being built in basements, cellars, or on rooftops in residential areas.
- 2) Greater discretion to permit home improvement projects that include adding an additional layer of insulation on the exterior walls of a building, creating a more energy efficient structure.
- 3) Incentivize construction projects that improve energy-efficiency by building thicker exterior walls, by awarding them a small amount of additional floor area, for using the industry's best practices to achieve the highest efficiency standards.

For more information about available funding from federal, state, and local government offices for the above-mentioned energy efficient measures, he welcomed calls to the NYC Accelerator Program in the Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice.

Mr. Jasmin said that the first major goal of this Initiative addresses the need for decarbonization of our City's energy grid, in keeping with international protocols and national, state and city legislation that calls for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere. He cited the 2016 Paris Agreement, which set a goal of limiting overall global warming to 2 degrees Celsius by curtailing greenhouse gas emissions, and the City's Climate Mobilization Act, particularly Local Law 97, that sets forth a schedule of fines on large buildings that don't reduce their carbon emissions in 2024 and each year thereafter, and Local Law 154 that requires all newly constructed building to be electrified, and prohibits the use of fossil fuel-based equipment on new projects in the City. He also said that a major goal of the State's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) is to foster the generation of a 100% renewable-based energy supply in a renewable energy grid. And, in line with CLCPA, he said the City seeks permission to develop large amounts of offshore wind and bring in more clean hydroelectric power from upstate, as well as Canada.

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Regarding the second main goal of the proposed Initiative, Mr. Jasmin said that, in addition to accelerating the installation of rooftop solar energy units, energy storage systems (ESS) will be needed as a back-up for renewable energy sources. He explained that battery energy storage systems, known as BESS or ESS, take energy out of the electrical grid when demand is low and put it back when demand is high. He said that by using stored energy from renewable and traditional sources, these systems help to level peak energy demand and off-peak energy generation throughout the day and thus, help to prevent blackouts during heat waves and other periods of high demand. In addition, he said that battery energy storage systems (BESS) also help to lower greenhouse gas emissions by reducing our overall dependence on fossil fuels.

However, under existing Zoning regulations, he said that battery energy storage systems have been mistakenly classified in the same Use Group as electrical substations, thereby requiring special permits by the City Planning Commission through the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP). He said that this has seriously impeded the development of battery energy storage systems throughout the City. He described electrical substations as being massive in size and said that they're used to transform high voltage electricity so that it can be transferred over long distances. On the other hand, BESS units are compact, and store energy for future use and transfer it only a short distance, when needed, he said. He explained that each BESS is designed to serve only a limited geographic range, namely, a neighborhood. Because it connects directly to electrical lines in the grid, he said that multiple systems may be needed to cover one single neighborhood. He cited the example of a typical 10,000 sq. ft. BESS as serving about 4,000 residences at one time. He said that as part of this proposed Initiative, a new Use Group would be designated for battery energy storage systems (BESS), thereby eliminating the need for discretionary zoning approval. In any event, he said the materials, specifications, and site preparation for the BESS and ESS units would still undergo extensive technical review by professional staff in the Department of Buildings and the Fire Department, in consultation with Underwriters Laboratories, the largest and oldest independent testing laboratory in the United States. Under the proposed Initiative, he said that the siting of these units would no longer be confined to specific locations in industrial zones.

Mr. Jasmin said that the third main goal of this proposed Initiative supports decarbonizing over 2 million private vehicles that are currently registered in New York City, where less than 1% of the vehicles that are driven and owned by New Yorkers are currently zero emission vehicles. He pointed out that under the CLCPA, all new vehicles sold in this State will have to be zero emission vehicles by 2035. He said that over the next 10 years, the growing number of Electric Vehicles (EV) would necessitate designated parking accommodations, as well as charging stations in public areas. As an aside, he said that the more trips taken by bike, scooter, on foot, or by transit, the better it will be for our health, the environment, and our City. He said that this Zoning Initiative proposes making the following five key changes:

- 1) Allow commercial charging facilities in all Commercial and Manufacturing Zoning Districts. They are currently prohibited in about half of the city's Commercial districts.
- 2) Allow building owners to designate a portion of their existing parking spaces to be offered up as public Electric Vehicle (EV) charger sharing spaces. These are the same rules that currently apply for car sharing vehicles in existing parking garages and lots.
- 3) Allow for more flexible use of public parking lots, public parking garages and commercial accessory parking facilities by allowing car rental/car-sharing commercial vehicle storage and public EV charging within these facilities, as well.
- 4) Expand special rules, that now only apply to Manhattan, which allow for indoor automated parking facilities to be available to everyone, city-wide.
- 5) Update our parking rules to acknowledge the need for public bicycle parking and allow bike parking facilities in all Commercial Zoning Districts.

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Finally, Mr. Jasmin said that the fourth main goal of this proposed Zoning Initiative is to reduce our City's emissions by reducing the volume of storm water runoff that ends up in our sewers and gets processed in the City's energy intensive sewage treatment plants, mainly by clarifying the zoning regulations that require greater permeability on the surface of our public and private streetscapes, to allow water to penetrate the soil, right where it falls.

In addition, he said that this Zoning Initiative proposes to cut in half the amount of energy associated with hauling and processing garbage by creating a uniform set of guidelines for building owners to follow, instead of throwing yard and food waste out with household trash. Furthermore, he said that this Initiative proposes to reduce the carbon emissions associated with our consumption of food by promoting more local food production in rooftop gardens citywide.

Mr. Jasmin also stated that this Initiative proposes to update Zoning Regulations regarding Street Tree Planting Requirements that would encourage new high performance tree bed types, such as, connected tree beds, and green gardens.

In closing, he said that this Zoning Initiative proposes to update our Zoning Resolution to reflect the extent to which both the recycling and composting sectors of our economy have expanded, and set up guidelines to help these sectors grow, within a set of parameters of where and how they are permitted to operate. He explained that in the past, existing zoning regulations have held up the construction of rooftop greenhouses throughout the City, because they've only been permitted on top of non-residential buildings, upon certification by the Chairperson of the City Planning Commission. He said that the proposed Initiative would streamline this requirement by allowing the Department of Buildings to review applications for building permits, and cut costs associated with creating new rooftop greenhouses for food production in communities.

Regarding the public review process for this proposed City Of Yes Initiative, Mr. Jasmin said that all 59 Community Boards are concurrently reviewing this proposal with their Borough Boards and Borough Presidents. In August, the City Planning Commission plans to hold a Public Hearing on the proposed changes in the Zoning Text Amendment, along with all the public input that they've received to-date. He said that once the Commission votes to approve or modify this proposal, the City Council will have 60 days to review their recommendation and vote on it, before it goes to the Mayor's Office for final approval.

The Board Chairperson thanked Mr. Jasmin for his presentation and opened the floor to questions and comments.

Paul Kerzner, a Board Member, recommended that the City should match the 30% tax break from the State to property owners for their investments into rooftop solar systems on their properties. He also said that the existing restriction against the installation of rooftop solar systems that cover the entire rooftop of a building were initially at the Fire Department's insistence. He said that, in his opinion, relaxing these restrictions would make solar rooftop installations more appealing to homeowners. Mr. Jasmin thanked him for his support for this proposal to amend the Zoning Text Amendment.

Robert Cermeli, a Board Member, asked if the cost savings associated with rooftop solar systems would accrue to tenants who live in multiple dwellings. Mr. Jasmin replied that tenant would benefit from cost savings in the form of lower monthly electric bills.

Kathy Masi, a Board Member, asked if tenants in multiple dwellings would be required to absorb some of the costs of installing rooftop solar units. Mr. Jasmine replied that initially, the costs of installation would be borne by landlords, which could then be offset by grants that are available to property owners who invest in energy efficient building improvements. Eileen Moloney, a Board Member, pointed out that the offsets for the cost of installing rooftop solar panels may only apply to owner-occupied buildings in the City of New York. Mr. Jasmine said that he wasn't aware of that.

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Patrick Trinchese, a Board Member, asked what could be done to provide heat in buildings if/when the temperature drops below 32 degrees, and the heat pumps don't work effectively. Mr. Jasmin replied by stating that one of the multiple goals of their policy is to facilitate the re-cladding of the outside of buildings and provide better insulation so that homes retain heat through the Winter and yet remain cool in Summer. He said that he couldn't answer the question about heat pump constraints.

Walter Sanchez, Chairperson of the Zoning and Land Use Review Committee, questioned how reliable the supply chain is to provide all the heat pumps, solar panels, electric vehicles, and battery charging stations that will be required to meet expectations associated with the proposed Zoning Initiatives. He said that, for example, there are no electric charging stations in the entire Community Board area right now. Michael Porcelli, a Board Member, agreed stating that, to his knowledge, there aren't enough trained electricians in the automobile industry, not to mention the necessary auto parts, to meet the existing demand. Since the proposed Initiative is designed to accelerate growth, he urged City planners to foster the workforce development programs that are required to meet future demand. Otherwise, these proposals are worthless, he said.

Michael Byc, a Board Member, said that all this new technology relies on a supply of minerals from African mines, and other continents, where the workforce is made up of slave laborers.

As there were no further questions or comments on this matter, the Board Chairperson thanked everyone for their input, and announced the next item on the Board Agenda as:

### **PUBLIC HEARING II: PROPOSED ADULT-USE CANNABIS DISPENSARY AT 74-03 METROPOLITAN AVENUE IN MIDDLE VILLAGE, QUEENS, NY 11379**

The community board has received notification from Social Equity CAURD JV LLC, doing business as The Cannabis Place, that this entity intends to file an application for a cannabis dispensary at 74-03 Metropolitan Avenue, with the NY State Office of Cannabis Management.

Osbert Orduna introduced himself as the chief executive officer of The Cannabis Place, a New York State licensed delivery operation for adult use of marijuana and gave a power point presentation about the proposed Cannabis Place, located at 74-03 Metropolitan Avenue, in Middle Village. He said that he's a native New Yorker, who grew up in Woodside. He said that he's a disabled American Veteran, having served in the Marine Corps during the conflict in Iraq. He said that he's also worked as a 911 First Responder, after retiring from a career in public service with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. For the past 10 years, he said that he's been a successful entrepreneur, and at present, he serves as a founding member of the Advisory Committee of the Cornell University and NYS Workforce Development Institute, with a focus on prioritizing diversity, equity and creating quality jobs in the emerging cannabis industry.

Mr. Orduna explained that his company is currently operating a New York State Licensed Cannabis Delivery Service in NY State. He said that he plans to open this NY State Licensed Conditional Adult Use Dispensary at this site, under a long-term lease agreement. To-date, he said that he's hired 10 employees and plans to create full-time unionized positions in his company and to operate in full compliance with New York State Law. He said that one of his goals is to hire a workforce made up of at least 50% disabled veterans at the Cannabis Place. There have never been any complaints about the operation of his business, he said. He cited information from various publications about the legalization of cannabis products, and statistics that show that there's no correlation between crime rates and the use of marijuana in any given locale.

Mr. Orduna stated that last Fall, he testified on behalf of the National Cannabis Industry Association and Service-Disabled Veterans, before the State Senate about the proposal to legalize cannabis production

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and consumption in New York State. He said that he recently noticed that there are several unlicensed and illegally operated businesses located within a few blocks of their proposed location on Metropolitan Avenue and plans to report them to local authorities. He said that he shares the community's concern about crime and drug abuse, and he plans to do what he can to prevent it from occurring when and wherever he can. He said that to this end, he's already met with several local business people and shop owners in Middle Village, to share information about illegal drug abuse, recent crimes in the area, and crime prevention tactics.

Mr. Orduna also said that he's proud to point out that his company does not have any financial backing from wealthy Wall Street firms or individuals, but solely relies for support from his family, friends, and business partners.

The Chairperson opened the floor to questions and comments.

Dorie Figliola, a Board Member, asked what steps he'd take to prevent crime and drug abuse in the neighborhood, and if he would allow patrons to smoke in front of his shop. Mr. Orduna replied that prior to opening a store at 74-03 Metropolitan Avenue, a new surveillance system will be installed and fully operational on-site to ensure the safety and security of his employees and customers, as well as the surrounding community. He also pointed out that they will screen all their patrons by requiring proof of personal identification upon entry into his shop. Besides, he said that he's noticed that there are two unlicensed dispensaries that are operating illegally on either side of his shop. He said that he plans to contact local authorities to request that they be shut down, because the illegal businesses provide an easy target for robbery. In addition to installing a new surveillance system, he said that he plans to hire security officers to provide round the clock protection on site.

Michael Byc, a Board Member, asked why this site was chosen, because it's not near any transit hub, and there's not much foot traffic. Mr. Orduna replied that, according to a market survey that was conducted a few years ago, this site would be a convenient location for a large concentration of his delivery patrons, who live in Middle Village or the surrounding neighborhoods.

Eric Butkiewicz, a Board Member, asked him if he had reported the unlicensed dispensaries to the Community Board. He expressed concern that minors walking past the proposed site could be exposed to secondhand smoke and fumes there, in addition to possible visual exposure to the product for sale. Mr. Orduna replied that members of the Liquor and Cannabis License Committee were already aware of these illegal businesses before he brought it to their attention. He also said that the interior of the shop will not be visible from the street, so pedestrians will not be able to look inside the shop when they're walking past. In addition, he said that their products will not be on display shelves inside the store but will be kept in a storage area instead, where it's not readily available to patrons, like an Apple Store, for example.

Robert Cermeli, a Board Member, asked if Mr. Orduna knew what Union would represent his employees. Mr. Orduna said that his employees would have an opportunity to join the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) whenever they set up shop.

Frank Artim, a resident of 74 Street in Maspeth, said that the applicant's presentation was very thorough. He said that, in his opinion, it's better to have someone like this applicant selling marijuana than someone who's selling it illegally.



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Paul Kerzner, a Board Member, said that he recognizes that marijuana may have medicinal properties, but he's opposed to its use for recreational purposes because it can have negative side effects. He cited the story about a teenager who died of an overdose from using marijuana. He also said that teenagers who smoke marijuana have lower grades in school because it degrades their ability to think clearly. Lastly, he was concerned that drivers under the influence of marijuana may cause traffic accidents.

Charles Vavruska, as a parent who lives in Middle Village, objected to granting a license to operate a cannabis dispensary at this location because he said that, since they've legalized the use of marijuana, you can smell pot whenever you walk to the store in Middle Village now. He said that you can smell smoke from pot coming out of car windows as they drive past you, too. And, he said that the smell of pot smoke hangs in the air in local park playgrounds, where young children play all day long.

Susan Vavruska, the previous speaker's wife, said that she's also opposed to granting a license to operate a cannabis dispensary at this location because it's located so close to local schools, including a day care center across the street, where young children and families will walk past every day. She suggested that this type of business would be more suitable in a shopping mall area, not a residential area.

Saul Guerrero, Local 338 RWDSU-UFCW, (Retail, Wholesale, Dept. Store Union & United Food and Commercial Workers) said that he supports the proposed application to open a Cannabis Dispensary at this site, because this business will provide steady employment that pays a living wage and quality health care benefits for the workers.

As there were no further questions or comments on this matter, the Board Chairperson thanked everyone for their input, and closed the Public Hearing. He announced the next Item on the Board Agenda as:

### **PUBLIC FORUM**

John Sendlein, Ridgewood resident, said that it's very difficult to find on-street parking in Ridgewood anymore. He requested the Board to advocate for the construction of public parking lots that would be equipped to charge Electric Vehicles (EV), so that residents could rent parking spaces for a monthly fee where they could charge their vehicles, and not waste any time driving around looking for a parking spot on the street.

Maryann Lattanzio, a Board Member, said that the 104<sup>th</sup> Precinct's Civilian Observation Patrol (COP104), is holding a Recruitment Drive for volunteers to join their organization. She said that it has grown into one of the oldest, largest and most active group of local volunteers working with local Auxiliary Officers to ensure public safety by providing additional crowd control during parades, street fairs, processions and other public events. She said that members of COP104 also serve as additional eyes and ears of Precinct personnel, while they patrol the Precinct in their own personal vehicles. She said that Vincent Arcuri, our Board Chairperson, was one of the local volunteers who formed the organization over 40 years ago, when it was known as the Glendale Civilian Observation Patrol (GCOP). She invited anyone interested in volunteering with 104COP to speak with her after the Board Meeting.

Emil Bovbjerg, Vores LLC, introduced himself and his wife, who held their baby daughter, as the new proprietors of the AMA Coffee Shop at 60-47 Myrtle Avenue, in Ridgewood, which is a small café that's been vacant for over a year. He said they plan to serve coffee with breakfast, freshly cooked meals for lunch, and a light supper along with craft beers, wine, and cocktails daily. He welcomed everyone to come and visit their restaurant, near 60 Lane, in Ridgewood.



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On behalf of Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, Kate Boehme reported that a Jury recently convicted one of the suspects who was apprehended by the Cold Case Unit this year, in connection with the murder of a 31-year-old Ridgewood resident, Peter Pollizzi, in 2011. She said that the defendant now faces 25 years to life in prison at sentencing. She urged anyone with information about any unsolved crimes to call 1-800-577-8477 so the family and friends of crime victims will see justice served one day.

David Pambianchi, a resident of Middle Village, spoke about the issue of Climate Change and Carbon Neutrality. He questioned whether our City's economy will ever be 'carbon neutral' because we rely so heavily on energy generated by fossil fuels, including electric and gas utilities, the entire manufacturing sector, and so forth. In addition, he said that manufacturing lithium storage batteries depends on a continuing supply of rare earth minerals to be mined, processed, and shipped from other continents, which will consume vast amounts of fossil fuel-based energy in the process.

The Board Chairperson thanked the speakers for their input at tonight's Board Meeting and closed the Public Forum. He introduced the next Item on the Board Agenda as:

### **Chairperson's Report**

**Vincent Arcuri**

The Board Chairperson requested that Board Members introduce themselves to each other by stating their names, how many years they've served as Board Members and what Committees they serve on. He congratulated Paul Kerzner for being the longest-serving Board Member of our Community Board, having joined the Board in 1972. He also recognized staff present: Gary Giordano, the District Manager and John Maier, Community Associate.

### **STATEMENTS from LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS**

Dasheeda Dawson, Founding Director of Cannabis NYC, who works in the Office of Small Business Services, said that she supports Mr. Orduna's application for a license to operate The Cannabis Place at 74-07 Metropolitan Avenue in Middle Village. She said that she'd be happy to answer any additional questions in connection with the proposed site. The Chairperson said she spoke out of order because he was recognizing local elected officials and their representatives.

On behalf of U.S. Representative Nydia Velazquez, Johnathan Betancourt announced that an additional \$30.5 Million from FEMA's Emergency Food and Shelter Program will help defray the costs of providing food and shelter for the influx of immigrants into our City. In addition, he said that under the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023, which was signed into law last Saturday, funding will be available to ensure Medicaid coverage for 21 million Americans this year. He said that the Bill also preserves:

- The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) that provides Food Stamps for one million children and their families.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility for Veterans, people who are homeless, senior citizens, and low-income college students.

He said that last week, the Congresswoman attended the Business Improvement District's annual meeting to discuss local issues with small business owners in her district. He said that this month, she plans to meet with the Fire Commissioner to discuss fire safety issues, particularly, E-bikes that explode into flames. In closing, Mr. Betancourt said that their Community Resource Fair on Saturday afternoon, May 20th, from 12 Noon to 3PM, at IS 93 School in Ridgewood, was well attended and he thanked everyone for their participation. He wished everyone a Happy Father's Day.

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On behalf of U.S. Representative Grace Meng, Tianna Armstrong reported that the Congresswoman is proud to introduce the Mental Health, Workforce and Language Access Act in Congress this year. She said that this Act would establish a new grant program to provide federal funds to community health centers to hire mental health professionals who are fluent in languages other than English to ensure that more people will have access to mental health services.

She also welcomed everyone to attend the Veterans Information Session at 1pm on Wednesday, June 28<sup>th</sup> at Maspeth Town Hall, at 53-37 72 Street, to learn about one of the largest healthcare investments in the history of the Veterans Administration, the PAC Act, which was signed into law last year. She said that this Information Session will also be broadcast on Zoom. She said that the Zoom link is available upon request at [meng.rsvp@mail.house.gov](mailto:meng.rsvp@mail.house.gov).

On behalf of City Council Member Robert Holden, Craig Caruana said that this year, the Council Member has sponsored a Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign legislation to fully repeal the Institutions for Mental Diseases Exclusion from the Social Security Act to allow states to use federal Medicaid funding, to provide mental health and substance use disorder treatment services to adult Medicaid beneficiaries at Institutions for Mental Diseases. He said that the Resolution is set to pass in the City Council on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023. He said it would be an important step forward in providing mental health services for homeless people who live on the street.

Mr. Caruana also reported that the Council Member has written to the Dept. of Transportation about the traffic congestion caused by the recent installation of a new traffic signal at the intersection of 69 Lane and LIE Westbound Service Road. He welcomed calls for assistance to their office at (718) 366-3900.

State Senator Addabbo thanked all the Board Members for their service on Community Board 5. He said he was reminded of the 10 years that he served as a Board Member in Community Board 10. Regarding the legalization of marijuana and the licensing of retail shops, he said that he has voted against it when he saw the proliferation of illegal shops and products for sale in our communities. He said that Sean McCabe, the Deputy Chief of Staff in his office, will work closely with local law enforcement to follow up on complaints about the illegal shops and work to shut them all down.

He said that he looks forward to seeing the Governor sign the legislation that just passed in both houses in the State Legislature, to mandate the use of hard covers on top of freight rail cars to reduce the air and noise pollution, and smell coming from these cars as they travel through local residential communities.

On behalf of State Assembly Member Steven Raga, Jolly Patel reported that on May 13th, their office sponsored a Rain Barrel Giveaway in partnership with the Dept. of Environmental Protection, where over 100 rain barrels were distributed to local homeowners. She said that they plan to hold another Rain Barrel Giveaway in late August. She said that on that same day, they held the annual Paper Shredding Event in the parking lot of Maspeth Savings Bank on Grand Avenue. The events were very well attended, she said.

On behalf of State Assembly Member Jennifer Rajkumar, Vjola Isufaj said that the Assemblywoman apologizes because she had to leave tonight's meeting so abruptly to attend another event where she's the keynote speaker.

Ms. Isufaj reported that, last month, the State Assembly passed new legislation that the Assemblywoman sponsored, known as the Waste Bill – A04928, mandating that certain waste that is transported by rail be covered with hard tarping, to reduce the odor and air pollution caused by

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contaminants in debris that's hauled by rail through New York State. She said that this Bill has since passed in the State Senate, with State Senator Addabbo's help as one of its co-sponsors, and now awaits the Governor's signature.

Ms. Isufaj also reported that, this year, the Assemblywoman was proud to sponsor legislation that would designate Diwali as an official holiday in New York State. She said that Senator Addabbo sponsored a similar Bill in the State Senate, which is now pending approval by the Governor.

In closing, she informed everyone that the Assemblywoman also voted against the legalization of marijuana because there's been no effective law enforcement against its use and distribution around local schools, or while driving a vehicle. She welcomed constituents to contact their office, located at 83-91 Woodhaven Blvd., by calling (718) 805-0950 for more information or assistance.

On behalf of State Assembly Member Catalina Cruz, Thomas Ehringer reported on several recent events at their office. He said that in cooperation with the Furry Friends organization, they provided 100 free vaccinations and microchips for their constituents' pets, and a Mammogram Mobile Unit to provide free mammogram screenings for constituents, regardless of their insurance coverage. He said that over the past month, they've also hosted a Tenants Workshop to provide information about resources that are available to renters. This coming weekend, he said that they'll join with Assembly Member Hevesi's staff in organizing a volunteer Community Clean Up in Rego Park. He welcomed constituents who live in Middle Village to call their office at (718) 458-5367.

### Liquor, Wine & Beer License and Renewal Applications

The Board Chairperson said that if anyone has any concerns about any new or existing establishments, to report them to the Board Office so the information could be forwarded to the proper authorities, and members of the Liquor and Cannabis License Committee. He gave the floor to the District Manager to read aloud the list of Liquor License Applications and Renewals, which was distributed to all Board Members.

#### New Liquor License Applications

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 1) Gas Gas NYC Inc. d/b/a <b>TBD</b> 57-36 Myrtle Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 | [R] * & ** |
| 2) <b>Cattleya Latin Cuisine</b> 62-42 Forest Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385     | [R] *      |
| 3) <b>Space 54 Bar Lounge Inc.</b> 54-20 Flushing Ave, Maspeth, NY 11378   | [B/T] *    |

#### Liquor, Wine & Beer License Renewal Applications

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1) <b>La Casita Mexicana</b> 62-36 Forest Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385                             | [R]   |
| 2) Mama's Corner Pizzeria Corp. d/b/a <b>Julie's</b> 675 Onderdonk Ave., Ridgewood, NY 11385    | [R]   |
| 3) KRG Pub Inc. d/b/a <b>Bridies Bar &amp; Grill</b> 63-28 Woodhaven Blvd., Rego Park, NY 11374 | [R]   |
| 4) Coche Payaso LLC d/b/a <b>Bar Freda</b> 801 Seneca Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385                  | [B/T] |
| 5) Kalimkosella Group LLC d/b/a <b>Pan</b> 1563 Decatur St. 1st Floor, Ridgewood, NY 11385      | [R]   |
| 6) <b>O'Neill's of Maspeth Inc. d/b/a O'Neills</b> ; 64-15/64-23 53 Drive, Maspeth, NY 11378    | [R]   |
| 7) <b>Panina</b> 68-38 Forest Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385  | [R]   |

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

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| 1) Lunch Lady LLC d/b/a <b>TBD</b> 565 Woodward Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 | [R] * |
| 2) <b>Miyama NY Inc.</b> 349 St. Nicholas Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385       | [R] * |

#### Wine, Beer & Cider Renewal Applications

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1) <b>7306 Toyo Japanese Cuisine Inc.</b> 73-06 Metropolitan Ave, Middle Village, NY 11379 | [R] |
| 2) A & J Juniors Pizza Corp d/b/a <b>Maspeth Pizza</b> 71-09 Grand Ave., Maspeth, NY 11378 | [R] |

#### New Beer & Cider License Application

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 1) Ukosata Pizzeria Inc. d/b/a <b>San Remo Pizza</b> 56-01 Myrtle Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 | [R] |
|--|-----|

### Class Change

1) **Zenith Tahi Inc.** 70-02 Fresh Pond Rd., Ridgewood, NY 11385 [R] currently holds a **Wine, Beer & Cider License** and is applying for a **Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider License**.

\* 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>

\*\* Amended their 30-Day Notice to include "Live Music" and "Disc Jockey" in their Method of Operation list that had already included "Recorded Music" and "Karaoke." They had originally notified us in October of 2022, and afterward their representative sent us a new 30-Day Notice in February of 2023, which makes this their third Notice to us with this amendment.

[B/T] = Bar/Tavern, [CA] = Catering, [CL] = Club, [R] = Restaurant

### CONSTRUCTION and DEMOLITION NOTICES

Mr. Giordano reported that over the past 30 days, the Board received two notices about the demolition and construction planned on two adjacent lots located at 63-07 and 63-09 62 Avenue, in Middle Village, where the two existing private homes and garage will be demolished in order to construct two new 3-story, 2-family homes along with a one-car garage.

### Minutes

Mr. Arcuri asked Board members if they had received and reviewed the minutes from last month's Board Meeting that was conducted on May 10, 2023. He accepted a motion from Walter Clayton that was seconded by Robert Cermeli to approve the minutes as written. The motion was adopted by acclamation.

### District Manager's Report

**Gary Giordano**

The District Manager wished all the fathers present at tonight's Board Meeting a Happy Father's Day. Firstly, he thanked Don Passantino for all his help over the years with setting up and monitoring the sound equipment that's used to record our Board Meetings each month. Then he congratulated Paul Kerzner on having reached the milestone of serving as a Board Member of Community Board 5 for the past 50 years.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### Homeless Services Committee

**Katherine Masi**

Katherine Masi reported that the Committee met together in the Board 5 Office at 7pm on Wednesday, May 24<sup>th</sup> to discuss issues related to two large homeless residences in our Board area, and what the community could do to assist them. She asked the District Manager to email all Board Members a copy of the minutes from their meeting, since the hour is late, and there's a lot more business to conduct.

#### Liquor License and Cannabis Committee

**Patrick Trinchese**

Patrick Trinchese reported that the Committee met via ZOOM on Monday, June 12th, to review the most current list of applicants for new liquor, wine, and beer applications and renewals, as their first order of business. There were no objections to any of the establishments on this month's list, as opposed to last month when the Committee opposed two establishments in Ridgewood. In the meantime, he said that both establishments were granted liquor licenses despite the Board's objections at their last meeting, by the State Liquor Authority. He said that he was happy to find out that one of the

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establishments has already been shut down by the police. He said that the Committee will continue monitoring the situation at the other establishment.

Regarding the application for a cannabis dispensary at 74-03 Metropolitan Avenue, with the NY State Office of Cannabis Management, Mr. Trinchese reported that the Committee did not vote on any resolution regarding this application. He explained that since the sale of marijuana is now legal in New York State, and this applicant is already licensed to sell marijuana and has been operating his business in compliance with the law, it would be a better use of their time to concentrate their efforts on shutting down the unlicensed businesses that are selling marijuana illegally in our Board area. He said that those illegal businesses present the greatest danger to the community.

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

### **Eric Butkiewicz**

Eric Butkiewicz reported that the Committee met on Tuesday, May 30th in the Board Office, to review a presentation on the proposed QNS Light Rail Line that would travel along the Lower Montauk Line tracks between Jamaica and Long Island City. He said that the proposed line would operate during the day only, with freight cars traveling on the same set of tracks to transport cargo at night. He said that the Committee raised concerns about how much the noise and fumes caused by the rail freight operations would impact the surrounding community if their hours were to be limited to overnight only. He welcomed input from Board Members on this issue.

He said that the Committee also reviewed a power point presentation by a representative from the State Dept. of Transportation regarding roadway safety improvements they are planning to make on the Jackie Robinson Parkway. He said the design phase for the planned improvements are slated for completion this Summer and include new overhead signs that are easier to read, more merging traffic lanes at the Parkway entrances, and new lighting. He said that construction is slated to begin next Spring and be completed by the following Summer, 2025.

Mr. Butkiewicz said that the Committee continues to review traffic calming requests, as well as traffic signals and All-Way Stop signs, and roadway markings, particularly in school speed zones. He said that requests should be emailed to the Board Office ahead of time, to give Committee Members enough time to investigate the locations prior to their Meeting so they'll be prepared to discuss them in a timely manner.

In closing, he announced that the next Committee Meeting will be conducted in person at 7:30pm, on Tuesday, June 20th in the Board 5 Office.

## **ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS FOR CB5Q EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE POSITIONS**

Mr. Arcuri gave the floor to the District Manager to conduct the annual election of Executive Committee members at tonight's Board Meeting.

The District Manager opened the floor to nominations and asked if there were any nominations for the position of Chairperson, which is currently filled by Vincent Arcuri. He said that Mr. Arcuri was nominated for this position at last month's Board Meeting. Mr. Arcuri then accepted this nomination. In addition, he said that Walter Sanchez was nominated for the position at last month's Board Meeting, and he accepted the nomination.

As there were no other nominations from the floor for this position, the District Manager closed nominations and distributed ballots to all Board Members present, asking them to print their name on their ballot, date it and vote for the candidate of their choice before returning it to him tonight.

The District Manager announced the vote tally for the position of Board Chairperson as: Vincent Arcuri with 21 votes, and Walter Sanchez with 18 votes.

For the position of First Vice-Chairperson, the District Manager opened nominations from the floor and announced that Walter Sanchez currently serves in that position, and Katherine Masi was nominated for

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the position of First Vice-Chairperson at last month's Board Meeting. Walter Clayton nominated Walter Sanchez for the position of First Vice-Chairperson and Ms. Masi declined her nomination. As there were no other nominations from the floor, the District Manager closed nominations and asked the-Secretary Margaret O'Kane to cast one ballot to elect Walter Sanchez to serve for another year as First Vice-Chairperson of Community Board 5, Queens. The Secretary then cast one ballot to elect Walter Sanchez as First Vice-Chairperson.

The District Manager asked if there were any other nominations for the position of Second Vice Chairperson, besides Dmytro Fedkowskyj, who was nominated for this position at last month's Board Meeting and accepted his nomination. There being none, the District Manager closed nominations for this position and asked the Secretary Margaret O'Kane to cast one ballot to elect Dmytro Fedkowskyj to serve for one more year as Second Vice-Chairperson of Community Board 5, Queens. The Secretary then cast one ballot to elect Dmytro Fedkowskyj as Second Vice-Chairperson.

The District Manager asked if there were any more nominations for the position of Financial Secretary, besides Eric Butkiewicz, who accepted the nomination at last month's Board Meeting. There being none, he closed nominations for this position and asked the Secretary cast one ballot to elect Eric Butkiewicz to serve as Financial Secretary of Community Board 5, Queens. The Secretary then cast one ballot to elect Eric Butkiewicz as Financial Secretary.

The District Manager asked if there were any additional nominations for the position of Secretary, besides Margaret O'Kane, who accepted her nomination at last month's Board Meeting. There being none, he closed nominations for this position and asked the Secretary cast one ballot to elect Margaret O'Kane to serve for another year as Secretary of Community Board 5, Queens. The Secretary then cast one ballot to elect Margaret O'Kane as Secretary.

Regarding nominations for the four At-Large Members of the Executive Committee, the District Manager pointed out that 5 candidates were nominated and accepted their nominations at last month's Board Meeting, as follows: Walter Clayton of Middle Village; Fred Haller of Glendale; Paul Kerzner of Ridgewood; Jasmine Valle of Ridgewood; and Maryanne Lattanzio of Maspeth.

The District Manager asked if there were any more nominations for At-Large Members of the Executive Committee. Eric Butkiewicz nominated Katherine Masi, but she declined the nomination. As there were no further nominations from the floor, the District Manager closed nominations. Ballots were distributed to all Board Members with instructions to print their name at the top, date their ballot, and vote for no more than 4 candidates for the positions of At-Large Members of the Executive Committee. When all the votes were counted, the District Manager announced that the following candidates were elected: Maryann Lattanzio, with 34 votes; Jasmine Valle, with 33 votes; Fred Haller, with 31 votes; and Walter Clayton, with 29 votes.

## New Business

Maryann Lattanzio made a motion to challenge the proposed location of The Cannabis Place at 74-03 Metropolitan Avenue in Middle Village, since it's located less than 500 feet from Positive Beginnings, a local preschool, at 72-52 Metropolitan Avenue in Middle Village. The motion was seconded by Patricia Crowley. Rachel Caracci offered a motion to table the matter, in view of the time. The Board Chairperson requested a voice vote on the tabling motion which carried.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Arcuri adjourned the Board Meeting on a motion from the floor at 10:50pm.