



## 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

January 10, 2024

#### Board Members Present

Bhubaneshor Adhikari; Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Carol Benovic-Bradley; Antonetta Binanti; Jessica Boiardi; Eric Butkiewicz; Rachel Caracci; Deepak Chaudhari; Walter E. Clayton, Jr.; Salvatore Crifasi; Patricia Crowley; Daniel DeBrucker; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Dorie Figliola; Fred T. Haller; Fred Hoefflerle; Paul A. Kerzner; Maryann Lattanzio; Diego Leclery; Edward Lettau; Katherine Masi; Donald Passantino; Michael Porcelli; Melissa Rebecca; Kenneth Rehberger; Luis Rodriguez; Lee S. Rottenberg; Walter H. Sanchez; Lily Scarabino; Dennis Stephan; Katarzyna Syta; Patrick Trinchese; Jasmine Valle; Maryanna Zero; Brandon Zwagerman

#### Board Members Absent

Tobias Sheppard Bloch; Michael Byc; Maritza Carmona; Robert Cermeli; Ethan Chan; Nickolas Cuttonaro; Derck Evers; Steven Fiedler; Eileen Moloney; Margaret O'Kane; Michael O'Kane; Theodore Renz; Gyanal Thapa; Barbara Toscano

#### ELECTED OFFICIALS and STAFF

Clare Collins – Queens Borough President Donovan Richards  
Kate Boehme - Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz  
Johnathan Betancourt – U.S. Representative Nydia Velazquez, 7<sup>th</sup> C.D.  
Philip Wong, - NYC Council Member Robert Holden, 30<sup>th</sup> CD  
Linda Fogal – NYC Council Member Joann Ariola, 32<sup>nd</sup> CD  
Juan Mayancela – NYC Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez, 34<sup>th</sup> CD  
John D'Angelo - NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, 15<sup>th</sup> SD  
Irene Stathatos – NYS Senator Michael Gianaris, 12<sup>th</sup> SD  
Kevin Wisniewski – NYS Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi, 28<sup>th</sup> AD  
Victoria Leahy -NYS Assembly Member Steven Raga, 30<sup>th</sup> AD  
Nathalie Rajabian - NYS Assembly Member Juan Ardila, 37<sup>th</sup> AD

#### STAFF

Gary Giordano, District Manager-CB5Q  
John Maier, Board 5 Staff

#### GUESTS

Natasha Diaz, Queens Outreach Coordinator, Civilian Complaint Review Board  
John O'Neill and Derek Jasmin – Queens Office of the Dept. of City Planning  
Anthony Medina – Ridgewood Times

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on January 10, 2024

Vincent Arcuri, the Board Chairperson, welcomed everyone to 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 YouTube, where anyone can watch this meeting at their convenience, by clicking on the link that's posted on our Board's Homepage at [www.nyc.gov/qnscb5](http://www.nyc.gov/qnscb5).

The Board Chairperson announced the first Order of Business as:

### **PUBLIC FORUM**

Natasha Diaz introduced herself as the new Queens Outreach Coordinator of the Civilian Complaint Review Board. She reported that in the CCRB's Semiannual Report for 2023, which covers the first half of the year, it shows that they investigated complaints against 22 Police Officers from the 104<sup>th</sup> Precinct. She said that in 85% of all the cases citywide that involved mediation, 72% of the cases were closed in the first 6 months of last year without further investigation.

Carol Benovic Bradley, a Board Member and Vice President of the Friends of the Ridgewood Library, was very happy to report that the Ridgewood Library heating system has been repaired and the library reopened on January 3<sup>rd</sup>. She announced two new programs that are being offered this month:

- 1) an Adult Art Workshop beginning on Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, from 1pm to 2pm; and
- 2) a Science Baby Playshop for early learners, up to age 4, exploring Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) concepts by breaking them down into small ideas and words in a fun setting, beginning at 10:30am on Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup> in the Ridgewood Library, 20-12 Madison Street. She welcomed anyone interested in registering for these classes to call the library at (718) 821-4770.

Emily Kim, the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Zeta Charter Schools, and Jennifer Duran, the Director of Outreach, spoke about their plans to open a Charter School in Community School District 24, which overlaps with Community District 5 in Queens. Ms. Kim said that they currently have 2,700 students enrolled in pre-K to 6<sup>th</sup> Grade in seven public charter schools across five private facilities in the Bronx and Manhattan, and they plan to add one grade level each year until they reach the 12<sup>th</sup> Grade. Their approach to education involves a rigorous academic program, combined with a strong focus on their students' social and emotional well-being, she said. All students take violin, piano, or cello lessons, in addition to learning taekwondo, art, dance, and playing sports, such as soccer and/or basketball in their program.

She said that their schools ranked in the 94<sup>th</sup> to 95<sup>th</sup> percentile on this year's standardized Statewide Reading and Math test scores. She said that they're now in the process of applying to the State to expand their base by offering students in School District 24 an opportunity to attend a Zeta Charter School in either District 24, 25 or 30, in Queens. They haven't decided on a specific location yet. Ms. Duran pointed out that over 2,000 Queens families have requested them to open a new school in Queens. Since they haven't decided on a specific location yet, she said they'd like to partner with the community in finding an appropriate site, and she welcomed input from residents and the Community Board.

The Board Chairperson opened the floor to questions and comments.

Lee Rottenberg, a Board Member from Middle Village, asked what grades would be taught in the proposed school, and if there are any fees charged to enroll in their schools. Ms. Kim replied that they

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on January 10, 2024

would start with Kindergarten or First Grade classes, with 30 students per class. She said that they would add one grade level each year after their first year, up to the 12<sup>th</sup> Grade.

Ms. Kim explained that Zeta Charter Schools are free public schools that are privately operated, and there are no fees associated with attending their schools. There are four times as many applicants as there are seats available in their schools, so they've decided to hold an admissions lottery each year, she said. She pointed out that students who live in the community are always given preference in the admissions process.

Jasmine Valle, a Board Member and Ridgewood resident, asked about their timeline for opening their new school. Ms. Kim explained that they're applying to the State to open a school in a new site in the beginning of February and expect their application to be approved sometime later this year. She said that 4 of their 5 existing school buildings are completely new buildings. She expects their new school building would likely open in 2025.

Ms. Kim said that their Charter School Network receives State funding on a per pupil basis, depending on their school enrollment in each school on an annual basis.

Jessica Boiardi, a Board Member and Middle Village resident, asked if there are any caps on student enrollment in the proposed school. Ms. Kim said that there's no actual cap on their enrollment, except to say that it would depend on the size of the potential site that is acquired for their new school.

Ms. Boiardi said that there's a great need to expand the number of seats in classrooms for children with special needs in this School District and asked if children with special needs would be eligible for enrollment in their new school. Ms. Kim replied that all their schools are general education schools that are fully accessible to wheelchairs from top to bottom, with two elevators in each school.

Ms. Kim further explained that during the enrollment process, a student with special needs is given individual assessments before they decide on an Individual Education Program (IEP). She said that each child's IEP includes a full spectrum of educational services, including Physical, Occupational, and Speech Therapy. She pointed out that there's a significant percentage of students with special needs, as well as English Language Learners, who are enrolled in their network of schools and perform at a very high level because of all the individualized support services that they receive in school. She said that children from low-income families make up over 80% of their student enrollment, so family finances are not a barrier to enrollment in any of their schools.

First Vice Chairperson Walter Sanchez, a Maspeth resident, asked if each school in their network has its own Board of Directors. Ms. Kim said the Board of Trustees of their Education Corporation operates all their schools.

The Board Chairperson, a Glendale resident, asked if they've narrowed down their search for an available site to a specific neighborhood in the Board 5 area. Ms. Kim replied that they're looking for sites that are near public transportation, so that it would be easily accessible for their staff, students, and their families. Furthermore, she said that they've only opened schools in areas where there's a high demand and a need for their services.

Mr. Arcuri asked how the Zeta Charter School Network compares to other Charter Schools, in terms of their academic performance. Ms. Kim replied that they've ranked consistently among the top four Charter School Networks in New York City.

Walter Clayton, a Board Member and Middle Village resident, asked where their teachers come from, and if they plan to hire Union teachers. Ms. Kim replied that they're looking to hire the best teachers in the world in New York City. She said they love to hire locally, and in most cases, they build from the

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on January 10, 2024

ground up to make sure that the school is fully accessible, with at least two elevators in each school. She said that they bring lots of jobs to the communities they serve.

Katherine Masi, Co-Chair of the Education Services Committee, and a resident of Glendale, asked if they'd be available to meet with Committee Members in the Board Office to discuss their plans in greater detail. She suggested January 24<sup>th</sup> as a tentative meeting date. The Board Chairperson referred the matter to the Education Services Committee for their consideration.

### Chairperson's Report

Vincent Arcuri

#### Minutes

The Board Chairperson asked Board members if they had received and reviewed the minutes from last month's Board Meeting that was conducted on December 13, 2023. On a motion from Walter Clayton, that was seconded by Dan DeBrucker, the minutes were adopted, as submitted.

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

Mr. Arcuri requested that anyone who 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. He read aloud the list of Liquor License Applications and Renewals, which was distributed to all Board Members, as follows:

#### New Liquor License Applications

- 1) \*Pajeffca Corp. d/b/a **Restaurante Asadero Mis Tierras Colombianas** 60-39 Fresh Pond Rd, Maspeth, NY 11378 [R]

#### Liquor License Renewal Applications

- 1) **Café Rum Ltd.** 1050 Wyckoff Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 [R]
- 2) Maspeth Public House LLC d/b/a **The Gibbons Home** 54-12 69<sup>th</sup> St, Maspeth, NY 11378 [B/T]
- 3) **Cabanas Jorge Restaurant Corp.** 688 Seneca Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 [R]
- 4) 582 Seneca Avenue LLC d/b/a **The Seneca** 582 Seneca Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 [B/T]
- 5) BierWaxQueens, LLC d/b/a **Aftermath NYC** 1680 Madison St, Ridgewood, NY 11385 [B/T]

#### New Wine, Beer & Cider Applications

None Reported

#### Wine, Beer & Cider Renewal Applications

None Reported

#### Other Notifications

- 1) \*\* Poppers Locarno LLC d/b/a **Holo** 1563 Decatur 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>.

\*\* Application for a Corporate Change.

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

#### Demolition or Construction Notifications

The Board Chairperson reported that there have been no demolition or construction notices received by Board staff since last month's Board Meeting.

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on January 10, 2024

The Board Chairperson took attendance of Board Members who were present, and informed everyone that Peggy O’Kane is absent tonight due to a serious medical issue. He recognized both District Manager Gary Giordano, and Staff Member John Maier as present, and thanked them for their work.

The Board Chairperson recognized the representatives of local elected officials who were present and invited them to address the Board, as follows:

On behalf of **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr**, Clare Collins wished everyone a Happy New Year. She announced that applications for Community Board Membership are now posted on their website at [www.queensbp.org](http://www.queensbp.org). Kahleel Bragg, the Director of Queens Community Boards, recently sent notifications to all Board members who are up for renewal this year that the deadline to renew their Membership is on Friday, February 16th, 2024. She said that if any Board Members need a hard copy of the renewal application, they can call (718) 286-2974 to make an appointment to pick it up from their office on the 2nd Floor in Queens Borough Hall, 120-55 Queens Blvd, in Kew Gardens.

Ms. Collins welcomed everyone to attend the Celebration of Haitian Independence at 6:30pm on Wednesday, January 24th, in the Helen Marshall Cultural Center in Queens Borough Hall. She advised everyone who plans to attend to RSVP at [www.queensbp.org/rsvp](http://www.queensbp.org/rsvp).

In addition, Ms. Collins announced that the Queens Borough President is hosting the Queens Tech and Job Fair that will be held in the Jamaica Performing Arts Center at 153-10 Jamaica Avenue, from 10am to 2pm, on Saturday, January 27, 2024.

Lastly, she said that the Borough President is hosting a Basketball Challenge Game between his staff and those of other Queens Elected Officials, from 1pm to 3pm, on Saturday, January 27th, in the Gym of St. Francis Prep School at 6100 Francis Lewis Blvd, in Bayside. She welcomed everyone to attend and advised them to RSVP at [www.queensbp.org/rsvp](http://www.queensbp.org/rsvp) if they plan to be there in person.

In closing, she cautioned everyone about the recent surge in COVID19 cases in New York City. She welcomed everyone to pick up some free test kits on the back table at tonight’s Board Meeting and said representatives of nonprofit organizations are welcome to call their office at **(718) 286-2974** tomorrow to arrange to pick up a supply of free test kits to distribute to the community.

**On behalf of the Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz**, Kate Boehme announced that, last month, 11 defendants were arraigned on drug and gun charges, following a 15-month investigation into a drug trafficking ring. She said that the investigation centered around a series of undercover drug buys that were made inside Major Mark Park in Jamaica, where undercover cops made a total of 26 buys, allegedly acquiring both heroin and cocaine from 4 of the 11 defendants. She said that several of the defendants were members of the same family. She said that all the heroin seized was mixed with fentanyl, a potentially lethal substance. All told, she said, this investigation resulted in the seizure of one and a half kilograms of heroin laced with fentanyl; over 10,000 glassine packets of heroin; 4 kilograms of cocaine; and more than 250 vials of crack cocaine. In addition, she said that during this investigation, police recovered 8 guns, including an assault weapon hidden in a compartment in their storage shed; and over \$100,000 in cash from various locales in Jamaica, Queens, and both Suffolk and Westchester Counties. In closing, Ms. Boehme welcomed calls for assistance to her office at **(718) 286-6295**.

On behalf of **Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez**, Johnathan Betancourt wished everyone a Happy New Year. He announced that New York will receive nearly \$69 Million through the Environmental Protection Agency’s first Clean School Bus Program Grants Competition. New York City School Bus Umbrella Services is slated to receive \$29.5 Million to purchase 100 clean school buses and 100 bus charging stations throughout the City. He said that these funds were made possible through President Biden’s

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on January 10, 2024

Investing in America Agenda to improve the environment, particularly the air quality of our children and families.

Mr. Betancourt reported that their office will continue to monitor plans to clean up the toxic waste at the Wolff-Alport site on Irving Avenue in Ridgewood and plans to meet with the Environmental Protection Agency staff about the community's concerns in this case. He said that updates on the status of this project will be provided.

In closing, he reported that the Congresswoman plans to meet with representatives of the Federal Railroad Administration soon to discuss holding a Workshop on how to establish a Quiet Zone in residential areas adjacent to rail lines. He said that information will be provided when their plans are finalized. He welcomed calls for information or assistance to their office at **(718) 599-3658**.

On behalf of **City Council Member Robert Holden**, Phil Wong wished everyone a Happy New Year. He announced that all not-for-profit community-based organizations that wish to apply for Councilmanic Discretionary Funding for Fiscal Year 2025 are invited to submit a Council Application no later than Tuesday, February 20, 2024. He said that the FY 2025 application form is posted on the Council's website at <https://council.nyc.gov/budget/>

In cooperation with the Ridgewood 321 Kiwanis Club, Mr. Wong said that their office is collecting donations of toiletries, candies, T-shirts, socks, underwear, and sweatshirts for men and women Veterans living in the New York State Veterans Home in St. Alban's Queens. He asked that donations be limited to only items that have never been used. He welcomed everyone to drop off donations at the offices of State Senator Addabbo, Council Member Joann Ariola, State Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar, as well as their own office at 58-38 69 Street, in Maspeth, until the end of business on February 12<sup>th</sup>.

In closing, he announced that on Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, from 10am to 3pm, representatives from the Dept. of Finance will be on hand in the Council District Office to review the property tax assessments of small homeowners who disagree with their latest assessment, or who may wish to apply for a property tax exemption on their home. For more information, he welcomed anyone interested in this event to call their office at **(718) 366-3900**.

On behalf of **City Council Member Joann Ariola**, Linda Fogal announced that the Mayor's proposed budget cuts to the Police and Fire Departments were restored, which means that a new class of 600 Police Cadets will graduate from the Police Academy in April, and the Fire Department's Engine Companies will retain their fifth firefighter to help prevent fire fatalities.

She said that the Council Member has joined with the Common Sense Caucus in the City Council, who oppose the City Council's proposed legislation, commonly known as How Many Stops, that would require cops to document more of their interactions with the public. She said that the Council Member stands with Mayor Adams in opposing this legislation.

Ms. Fogal invited graduating high school seniors from Ozone Park and Howard Beach to attend a Senior Prom on Tuesday evening, February 13, that's being sponsored in cooperation with the Ozone Park-Howard Beach Little League. She advised that anyone interested in participating in this event to call their office at (718) 738-1083 for more information.

Ms. Fogal announced that their office will be collecting Valentine's for Veterans again this year. She welcomed all donations to be dropped off to their office at 93-06 101 Avenue, in Ozone Park.

In closing, Ms. Fogal said that small homeowners, who want to challenge their most recent property tax assessment, are welcome to call their office at **(718) 738-1083** to arrange to meet with staff who will review their property tax assessment notifications and assist them to file a challenge, on or before the

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on January 10, 2024

deadline in March. She said that appointments are available for Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays only, until the end of next month. Copies of their newsletter are available for everyone present, she said.

On behalf of **City Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez**, Juan Mayancela reported that, this year, the Council Member has reintroduced a Bill to mandate Universal After School Programs in all public schools in the City. He said that she's always advocated for more funds for after-school programs. Regarding the Participatory Budget process for Council District 34, he said that their office received 70 ideas for Capital Budget items in their District, as of last November. He said that they're inviting constituents to participate in the budget process by serving as delegates who will meet to draft the ballot measure that will be used to decide which projects are recommended for funding in next year's budget.

In closing, he said that, on February 21<sup>st</sup>, their office will begin assisting senior citizens who receive SSI, Social Security or Public Assistance, to file their Income Tax Returns. He said that constituents who live in the 34<sup>th</sup> Council District must make an appointment first, by calling their office at **(718) 963-3141**, beginning on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

On behalf of **NY State Senator Addabbo**, John D'Angelo wished everyone a Happy New Year. He welcomed donations to their Valentines for Veterans to be dropped off at their District Office at 66-85 73 Place, in Middle Village. He also invited property owners to pick up a free Rain Barrel from their office in Middle Village. He said the Rain Barrels vary in size: 4 feet, 6 feet; and 12 feet high, and hold varying amounts of rainwater accordingly.

In closing, he said that, on the back table, there's a Press Release about legislation that was passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Governor Hochul at the end of their session in December. He said that he's personally very grateful for the Queens Resident Toll Rebate Program that was sponsored by State Senator Addabbo. He said that it authorizes rebates for all residents with vehicles registered in Queens who use EZ Pass for all trips across the bridges that span over Jamaica Bay, starting in February, this year.

On behalf of **NY State Assembly Member Michael Gianaris**, Irene Stathatos wished everyone a Happy New Year. She said that the new legislative session began on January 9, with Governor Hochul's State of the State Address. She reported that the State Senator continues to advocate for the passage of the Clean Deliveries Act, to amend the environmental conservation law, in relation to establishing an indirect source review for certain warehouse operations. She said that this Bill will address the impact of e-commerce mega warehouses, by establishing an indirect source rule to regulate air quality and emissions from vehicles associated with the operations of certain heavy distribution warehouse facilities, to expedite attainment of federal air quality standards and to ensure compliance with state mandates under the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act. She said that this Bill would require the State Dept. of Environmental Conservation to conduct a study regarding the establishment of zero emissions zones. For more information about this bill, she invited calls to their office at **(718) 728-0960** to request copies of the proposed legislation.

On behalf of **NY State Assembly Member Andrew Hevesi**, Kevin Wisniewski wished everyone a Happy New Year. He said that when this year's legislative session in Albany began last week, the Assembly Member introduced a new Bill to expand Child Care access for families with parents who work outside the hours of 9am to 5pm, including those who work in the gig economy, the service industry, students

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on January 10, 2024

working part-time jobs, as well as anyone who works fluctuating work shifts. He estimated that this measure would save the average working family thousands of dollars per year in childcare expenses. On another matter, he said that the Assembly Member continues to work with State Senator Gianaris in advocating for increased funding for enhanced security measures for private and religious schools. Regarding recent complaints their staff received from residents about traffic safety issues on Penelope Avenue in Middle Village, he said that their office has reached out to several mobile driving apps to ask them to reroute drivers to other local thoroughfares nearby that are designed to handle much more traffic than Penelope Avenue. In addition, he said they've written to the Dept. of Transportation to request traffic safety studies be performed in the vicinity of Penelope Avenue. Mr. Wisniewski informed everyone that, due to scheduling conflicts, they had to cancel their Mobile Office Hours this month, and they're looking forward to holding the event at PS 128 in Middle Village next month, subject to confirmation.

On behalf of **NY State Assembly Member Steven Raga**, Victoria Leahy wished everyone a Happy New Year. Regarding yesterday's State of the State address delivered by Governor Hochul in Albany, she said that the Assembly Member looks forward to implementing some new initiatives that would invest in mental health and geriatric healthcare programs, as well as traffic safety measures. She announced that they're sponsoring a Food Drive in partnership with the Solution to Hunger, a local nonprofit organization. She welcomed donations of canned food, non-perishable food items, and toiletries to be dropped off at their office Monday to Friday, between 9am and 5pm. She reported that their annual Toy and Sock Drives, in partnership with Child Center of New York and the Solution to Hunger, enabled them to help hundreds of people in need, and she thanked everyone very much for their support. In closing, she welcomed constituents to contact their office for assistance with filing applications for property tax abatements, including STAR, Senior Citizen Homeowner Exemption, or renewal of their tax abatement. She welcomed calls for information and assistance to their office at **(718) 651-3185**.

On behalf of **NY State Assembly Member Juan Ardila**, Nathalie Rajabian wished everyone a Happy New Year. She said that in response to a fire that swept through a two-family house in Ridgewood two weeks ago and displaced the tenants, she said that their office has been working to assist the fire victims by providing access to local food banks, temporary shelter, legal aid, and more. She said that the cause of the fire is still under investigation. Ms. Rajabian reported that the Assembly Member joined with Assembly Member Rajkumar in co-sponsoring new legislation, known as the Smoke Out Act, to give this City the authority to shut down unlicensed pot shops that have opened in our community. In closing, she welcomed calls for information or assistance from constituents at **(718) 784-3194**, Mondays to Thursdays, or via email the Assembly Member himself at: **ardilaj@nyassembly.gov**.

### **District Manager's Report** **Gary Giordano**

The District Manager wished everyone a Happy, Healthy and Joyful New Year. He thanked all of the staff of local elected officials for their information and assistance. Mr. Giordano cautioned everyone to be careful during the rainstorm that's predicted to hit the New York area this Friday, when 50-70 MPH winds and 2" or more of rain are forecast. He said that over the past year, the rainstorms have been stronger, with most hurricanes being more violent, and they've caused Billions of dollars in storm damage all over the country. He said that the warmer air in the



## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on January 10, 2024

atmosphere over the past year has contributed to this change in the weather pattern all over the world, which is often referred to as climate change. He said that we, as citizens, and our local and multinational corporations should be proactive in adopting energy conservation measures in our homes and our businesses to try to avert these disasters wherever feasible.

Regarding Committee assignments, the District Manager reported that there are a few Committees that need Chairs, including the Library Services Committee and the Environmental Services Committee. He said that Members of the Library Services Committee plan to meet on Monday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> in the Board Office, with Board Member Carol Benovic-Bradley chairing the Meeting. He said that if any Board Members are interested in chairing the Environmental Services Committee, he'd like to hear from them. He reminded everyone to put their garbage and recycling out the night before the regular collection day to avoid any missed collections.

After consulting with the Board Chairperson, Mr. Giordano suggested that the date of next month's Board Meeting be moved up to February 7th, 2024, at the same time and place as tonight's Meeting, so as not to conflict with Valentine's Day celebrations on February 14<sup>th</sup>, which falls on the 2nd Wednesday of next month. The District Manager said that he'd have to confirm the availability of the school cafeteria before sending out the Board Meeting Notices and posting it on our webpage at [www.nyc.gov/gnscb5](http://www.nyc.gov/gnscb5).

The District Manager gave a brief update on the status of the toxic contamination cleanup that is planned by the Environmental Protection Agency at the Wolff-Alport Superfund site, located at 1127-39 Irving Avenue, between Cooper Avenue and Decatur Street, in Ridgewood. He said that in response to the community's concerns that were raised during the EPA's Public Information Meeting in December, trucks will no longer be using Knickerbocker Avenue as their truck route to and from this site.

He said that under the revised plan, trucks will be entering the former Wolff-Alport Chemical Company property at 1127 Irving Avenue, from the south end of the property at Moffat Street and exiting the site directly onto Cooper Avenue. He said that trucks will travel southbound from the site along Cooper Avenue to Atlantic Avenue, to avoid using Knickerbocker Avenue. The plan is to have only three trucks per day entering and leaving the property between the hours of 9 AM and 2 PM to minimize the impact on the neighborhood, he said.

The District Manager also reported that in response to complaints from community residents, lighting was recently installed along the perimeter fencing. He explained that they're currently relying on a generator to power the ongoing work and lights during work hours, and on solar panels that were recently installed to provide electricity for the lights during non-work hours. In closing, he said they expect to begin demolition of the former Wolff-Alport Chemical Company buildings on this site at the end of this month.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Liquor License and Cannabis Committee

#### Patrick Trinchese

Patrick Trinchese, the Committee Chairperson, reported that the Committee met in the Brewery Keenan Heiser American Legion Post 1815, at 68-01 Cooper Avenue, in Glendale, on Wednesday, January 3rd, to review the notifications that the Community Board received from 9 potential applicants for Retail Adult Use Cannabis Dispensaries in our Board area.

He said that the first applicant that they met with was for a Cannabis Microbusiness located at **83-34 Woodhaven Blvd, in Glendale**. He said that this location is across the street from Victory Field. He said that after the applicant answered all their questions satisfactorily, the Committee unanimously agreed to recommend no objection to the proposed site.

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on January 10, 2024

As there was no further discussion on the matter, the Board Chairperson requested a Roll Call vote on the Committee recommendation for no objection to the proposed site. The motion carried by a vote of - 32- in favor; -3- opposed; -0- abstentions; and -0- not voting.

Mr. Trinchese reported that the second potential applicant on the Committee's Agenda was for a Retail Adult Use Cannabis Dispensary in the former bank building at **70-24 Myrtle Avenue, in Glendale**. He explained that when the Committee originally considered this site in November, the prior applicant never responded to the Board's requests for information and failed to attend the Committee Meeting. He said that at that time, the Committee unanimously opposed the proposed site because of its location within close proximity to the closest school, Forte Preparatory Academy, and directly adjacent to McDonald's, in Glendale.

In this case, unlike the first time they considered this site, the current applicant met with the Committee and replied to their questionnaire in full. However, at last week's Meeting, the Committee voted 6 to 1 in opposition to the proposed site for the same reasons as before.

After a general discussion of the matter, the Board Chairperson requested a Roll Call vote on the Committee's recommendation to oppose the proposed site which carried by a vote of -28- in favor; -7- opposed; -0- abstentions; and -0- not voting.

Regarding the next Item on their Agenda for an application to operate a Retail Adult Use Cannabis Dispensary at **56-34 Myrtle Avenue, in Ridgewood**, he said that the applicant withdrew their application, so the Committee took no action in this case.

Regarding the proposed site for a Retail Adult Use Cannabis Dispensary at **88-50 Myrtle Avenue, in Glendale**, Mr. Trinchese said that the applicant did not respond to the Committee's questionnaire about their proposed plans, nor did he attend their Committee Meeting. He said the Committee voted unanimously to oppose the proposed site because it's located a block away from St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church and a Charter School at 88-24 Myrtle Avenue, in Glendale.

As there was no further discussion on the matter, the Board Chairperson requested a Roll Call vote on the Committee recommendation to oppose the proposed site which carried unanimously by a vote of -35- in favor; -0- opposed; -0- abstentions; and -0- not voting.

Regarding the proposed site for a Retail Adult Use Cannabis Dispensary at **64-29 Myrtle Avenue, in Glendale**, Mr. Trinchese said that the applicant did not respond to the Committee's questionnaire about their proposed plans, nor did he attend their Committee Meeting. He said the Committee voted unanimously to oppose the proposed site because it's directly opposite Saints Church at 64-34 Myrtle Avenue in Glendale.

He pointed out that this storefront business opened for business recently, and they've reportedly been selling marijuana on site ever since, without a license. Ms. Lattanzio reported that she witnessed teenagers going into the store to purchase some of their products and no one inside the store requested to see if they had proper identification.

After a general discussion of the matter, the Board Chairperson requested a Roll Call vote on the Committee recommendation to oppose the proposed site which carried unanimously by a vote of -35- in favor; -0- opposed; -0- abstentions; and -0- not voting.

Regarding the proposed site for a Retail Adult Use Cannabis Dispensary at **60-42 Myrtle Avenue, in Ridgewood**, adjacent to Dunkin' Donuts on the corner of Summerfield Street, Mr. Trinchese reported that the potential applicant answered the Committee's questionnaire and attended their Committee

## Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on January 10, 2024

Meeting. He said that the Committee recommends no objection to this proposed site. He said that it was pointed out to them that a Cease-and-Desist Order was issued to the prior owner of the business for the illegal cannabis sales.

Eric Butkiewicz, a Board Member and Middle Village resident, said that the Committee should investigate this business further before making a recommendation to the Board.

Kathy Masi, a Board Member and Glendale resident, pointed out that this business is a block away from the Greater Ridgewood Youth Council's headquarters on Summerfield Street, in Ridgewood.

Fred Haller, a Board Member and Glendale resident, pointed out that there's also a Church located across the street from the Greater Ridgewood Youth Council on Summerfield Street, at the corner of Forest Avenue, in Ridgewood.

Diego Leclery, a Board Member who lives next-door to the Greater Ridgewood Youth Council, requested that they move the question.

As there was no further discussion on the matter, the Board Chairperson requested a Roll Call vote on the Committee recommendation for no objection to the proposed site. The motion failed by a vote of - 17- in favor; -18- opposed; -0- abstentions; and -0- not voting.

The District Manager said that he intends to include information about the previous owner's citation for illegal cannabis sales in this storefront, when he writes to the Office of Cannabis Management with the Board's recommendation regarding this proposed site. He said that in this case, the comment period is limited to 60 days.

Regarding the proposed site for a Retail Adult Use Cannabis Dispensary at **465 Onderdonk Avenue, on the corner of Harman Street, in Ridgewood**, Mr. Trinchese reported that the applicant responded to the Committee's questionnaire which was sent to all of the applicants, and all their questions were answered satisfactorily at their Meeting. He said that the Committee unanimously agreed to recommend no objection to this proposed site.

As there was no further discussion on the matter, the Board Chairperson requested a Roll Call vote on the Committee recommendation for no objection to the proposed site. The motion carried by a vote of - 33- in favor; -2- opposed; -0- abstentions; and -0- not voting.

Regarding the proposed site for a Cannabis Microbusiness at **58-45 47 Street, in Maspeth**, Mr. Trinchese said this 1-story warehouse is a corner property that's located on the west side of the MTA Bus Depot on Grand Avenue in the industrial area. He said that the applicant attended the Committee Meeting and answered the Committee's questionnaire satisfactorily. He said that at their Meeting, the Committee unanimously agreed to recommend no objection to this proposed site.

As there was no further discussion on the matter, the Board Chairperson requested a Roll Call vote on the Committee recommendation for no objection to the proposed site. The motion carried by a vote of - 33- in favor; -2- opposed; -0- abstentions; and -0- not voting.

## Zoning and Land Use Review Committee

### Walter Sanchez

Walter Sanchez reported that the Committee met on Monday, January 8, to review the Proposed City of Yes for Economic Opportunity City-Wide Zoning Text Amendment by the NYC City Dept. of City Planning (**N240010ZRY & N240011ZRY**). He explained that this Initiative is outlined in a 1200 page document, with 18 strategic areas of change being proposed that would encourage a more favorable environment for sustainable economic development in New York City, and act as a catalyst for growth where needed. He thanked John O'Neill and Derek Jasmin, from the Dept. of City Planning, who were present at

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on January 10, 2024

tonight's Board Meeting, for meeting with the Committee several times to explain the 18 different proposals that make up this Initiative.

Mr. Sanchez said that large portions of Maspeth, Middle Village, and Glendale predominantly consist of one and two-family homes, with a commercial corridor in the center of their neighborhoods. By contrast, in Ridgewood, there's a large concentration of multi-family homes, with mixed use commercial and industrial uses in adjacent sectors. He pointed out that there's a large historic district in Ridgewood, as well.

Mr. Sanchez explained that this Initiative is designed to remove outdated restrictions on where businesses can locate; make it easier for businesses to find space or expand; simplify rules regarding which type of businesses are allowed in commercial areas; allow more types of businesses on ground floors, and, in some cases on upper floors; and amend how Zoning Rules classify businesses. He said that, according to the Dept. of City Planning, the overall goal of this Initiative is to create new opportunities for some growth, by identifying more space to grow, support new industries and foster vibrant neighborhoods.

He said that, at their Meeting, there was not a quorum present in-person, so the Committee could not make a recommendation regarding the proposed Zoning Text Amendment for Economic Opportunity. He said that he would instead read a draft of the proposed recommendation for the Board's consideration at tonight's Meeting, as follows:

"Community Board 5, Queens opposes the City of Yes for Economic Opportunity because:

- 1) This plan further limits the input from neighborhoods and Community Boards in the planning, zoning and land use process through an increase of as-of-right conditions where presently commercial uses are limited or prohibited under the existing zoning regulations;
- 2) Furthermore, it allows commercial development on residential blocks throughout Community Board 5; as per several of the proposals included in this Initiative,
- 3) This plan could have a significant and lasting impact on our community and, therefore, should be rejected in its entirety."

Walter Clayton, a Board Member and Committee Member from Middle Village, made a motion to oppose the Proposed City of Yes for Economic Opportunity City-Wide Zoning Text Amendment, for all of the foregoing reasons, as stated. Kenneth Rehberger seconded the motion.

The Board Chairperson opened the floor to questions and comments.

Mr. Sanchez replied to a question from the floor regarding the fact that existing zoning regulations already permit some businesses to operate in private homes. He agreed that currently, up to 25% of the ground floor area of a private home is permitted to be used by the homeowner for some business purposes, with one employee per unit. But, he said, the proposed Zoning Text Amendment would permit up to 50% of the floor area to be converted into commercial use, and up to 3 employees at a time would be allowed on site. He said that by creating this loophole in existing zoning restrictions, it could change the character of residential neighborhoods forever.

Paul Kerzner, a Board Member and Committee Member from Ridgewood, said that this Board succeeded in rezoning most of our Board area over 20 years ago, for the purpose of protecting the residential character of local neighborhoods. He said that this proposal appears to put 'the camel's nose in the tent' by attempting to reverse all the protection that our Community Board has gained.

Eric Butkiewicz, a Board Member from Middle Village, asked what action has been taken by other Community Boards in the City regarding this Initiative.

Mr. Sanchez replied that it hasn't been well received, there's been widespread opposition to it.

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on January 10, 2024

After a general discussion of the matter, the Board Chairperson requested a Roll Call vote on the motion on the floor to oppose the Proposed City of Yes for Economic Opportunity City-Wide Zoning Text Amendment, which carried by a vote of -31- in favor; -3- opposed; -1- abstention; and -0- not voting.

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

#### **Eric Butkiewicz**

Eric Butkiewicz reported that the Committee did not meet during the month of December. He said that they plan to hold their next Meeting on Tuesday, January 30th in the Cafeteria of Christ the King High School, where representatives of the MTA-NYC Transit will give a presentation on the revised Queens Bus Network Redesign Proposal. He welcomed everyone to attend and looked forward to hearing their input on the proposed Bus Routes in our Board area.

The District Manager said that next month's Board Meeting will be conducted on February 7<sup>th</sup>, to avoid conflicting with Valentine's Day on February 14<sup>th</sup>, which is the second Wednesday of next month. He said that he'd confirm that the same location is available for next month's Board Meeting.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, the Board Chairperson adjourned the Board Meeting on a motion from the floor at 9:25pm.