



Community Board No. 5

Borough of Queens
Ridgewood, Maspeth, Middle Village and Glendale
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Vincent Arcuri, Jr.
Chairperson

Gary Giordano
District Manager

Minutes of Community Board 5 Public Meeting

March 13, 2024

Board Members Present

Vincent Arcuri, Jr; Antonetta Binanti; Tobias Sheppard Bloch; Jessica Boiardi; Eric Butkiewicz; Rachel Caracci; Deepak Chaudhari; Walter E. Clayton, Jr; Patricia Crowley; Dorie Figliola; Fred T. Haller; Fred Hoeffler; Paul A. Kerzner; Maryann Lattanzio; Edward Lettau; Katherine Masi; Margaret O’Kane; Michael O’Kane; Donald Passantino; Michael Porcelli; Melissa Rebecca; Kenneth Rehberger; Luis Rodriguez; Lee S. Rottenberg; Walter H. Sanchez; Lily Scarabino; Dennis Stephan; Katarzyna Syta; Gyanal Thapa; Barbara Toscano; Jasmine Valle; Maryanna Zero; Brandon Zwagerman

Board Members Absent

Bhubaneshor Adhikari; Carol Benovic-Bradley; Michael Byc; Maritza Carmona; Robert Cermeli; Ethan Chan; Salvatore Crifasi; Daniel DeBrucker; Derek Evers; Dmytro Fedkowskyj; Steven Fiedler; Diego Leclery; Eileen Moloney; Theodore Renz; Patrick Trinchese

ELECTED OFFICIALS and STAFF

Clare Collins – Queens Borough President Donovan Richards
Johnathan Betancourt – U.S. Representative Nydia Velazquez, 7th C.D.
Charles Vavruska - NYC Council Member Robert Holden, 30th CD
Linda Fogal – NYC Council Member Joann Ariola, 32nd CD
Anna Bessendorf – NYC Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez, 34th CD
John D’Angelo - NYS Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, 15th SD
Maria Valdez – NYS Senator Julia Salazar, 18th SD
Dolma Lama -NYS Assembly Member Steven Raga, 30th AD
Natalie Rajabian - NYS Assembly Member Juan Ardila, 37th AD
Viola Isufaj – NYS Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar, 38th AD

STAFF

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

GUESTS

Derek Jasmin – Queens Office of the Dept. of City Planning
Daniel Jeong – Con Edison Representative
Paul D. Sanders, Director of Public Affairs - NYCACC, 11 Park Place, NY, NY
Risa Weinstock, NYCACC President & CEO
Gregory Stanislaus, NYCACC Senior Manager of Training & Recruitment

Minutes of CB5Q Board Meeting on March 13, 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.

The Board Chairperson announced the first Order of Business as:

PRESENTATION RE: New Queens Animal Care Center to Open Soon at 1906 FLUSHING Avenue at Woodward Avenue, in Ridgewood, Queens by Representatives of the Animal Care Centers of New York City (NYCACC)

Paul Sanders, the Director of Government and Public Affairs of the Animal Care Centers of NYC (NYCACC), gave a power point presentation about their plans to open the first full-service open admission Animal Care Center located in Queens later this Spring. He introduced Risa Weinstock as the President and CEO of NYCACC, and Greg Stanislaus as their Director of Training and Recruitment. Mr. Sanders explained that NYCACC currently operates 3 full-service Animal Care Centers: one in Manhattan, another in East New York, Brooklyn, and the third one in Staten Island. He said that there's only a Resource Center located in the Bronx now, but they've begun working on the Design Plans for another full-service Animal Care Center to be built in the Bronx within the next few years. He said that the new state-of-the-art facility that's located on the southeast corner of Flushing Avenue at Woodward Avenue will have the capacity to shelter 72 dogs and 110 cats, plus provide group housing, and space for rabbits and guinea pigs. He said that this new Center will have a retractable roof on the new facility will allow sheltered animals to experience an outdoor environment while keeping them fully protected from outside elements.

Mr. Sanders pointed out that all their Animal Care Centers have a No Kill policy toward animals in their care.

Mr. Sanders welcomed community residents who are interested in applying for a job themselves, or telling their neighbors about this new facility, because they're planning to hire 80 to 100 additional staff to work on 3 different shifts around the clock on a 24/7 basis. He said that their preference is to hire locally.

He explained that, in addition to boarding animals in their Animal Care Centers, the NYCACC works with 350 partners in New York City who foster animals that have been fully vaccinated while in the process of adoption. He said that foster homes enable them to open space in their shelter system to admit new emergency cases and help with outreach to the community to find safe home environments for animals that are ready for placement. He said that, in addition to admitting animals to their facilities, they also have a very successful Surrender Prevention Program to provide resources for pet owners who can't afford to care for their animals because they're sick, injured, or require vaccinations, etc.

In closing, he said that volunteers are always welcome to visit their sites and sign up to assist in caring for and exercising the animals in their care for a few hours a month, or by doing outreach about the services that are provided free of charge to the surrounding community. Last year, volunteers logged in over 36,000 hours of service with their organization, he said.

Lastly, he pointed out that on-site parking spaces will be available for their guests and clients.

Risa Weinstock, the President and CEO of NYCACC, spoke briefly about their first meeting with members of the Community Board and the public over 6 years ago, before the construction process had begun. She thanked the Community Board for their unwavering support for this new facility, and especially the late NYC Council Member Paul Vallone who advocated strongly in favor of allocating the funds necessary to build this shelter. In recognition of his efforts, she said that this week, the City Council voted unanimously in favor of naming this new facility, The Paul A. Vallone Animal Care Center.

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As she spoke, she showed slides of their original site, the current site while construction was underway for the past 5 years, and the present site with a punch list of items to be completed before opening day. She said that Board Members will be invited to attend the ribbon-cutting ceremony that's planned for the grand opening of this new facility, the first of its kind in the City.

Greg Stanislaus, the Director of Training and Recruitment, informed everyone about the range of the 80 to 100 jobs that they're looking to fill in their new Animal Care Center. He pointed out that not all the job openings involve working directly with animals. He said there are administrative positions, and customer service jobs, as well, with excellent benefits. He reminded everyone that their preference is to hire locally and encouraged everyone to spread the word to their friends and neighbors. In closing, he said that there's no experience required for most of the available positions, because newly hired staff can undergo in-house training, if required. Flyers were distributed.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION: Re: Con Edison's Energy Affordability and Efficiency Programs by Daniel Jeong, a representative of Con Edison

Daniel Jeong announced that In November 2023, Con Edison released a new Climate Change Resilience Plan (CCRP) which outlines the steps they are taking to build a system that's resilient, allowing for safe and reliable transmission of 100% clean energy by 2040. He said that these investments will reduce customer outages and help to restore power more quickly when there is an outage.

He said that Con Edison has spent more than \$1 Billion on Infrastructure Improvements since 2012, after Superstorm Sandy hit our area. He estimated that this work helped to avoid nearly 1.2 million customer interruptions to date. He said that since Tropical Storm Isaias in 2019, which caused over 300,000 electrical outages, Con Edison has invested over \$30 million in new technology, including Smart Meters, to help customers be prepared, report service problems, and stay informed during emergencies. In 2020, he said that Con Edison allocated over \$13 Million for tree trimming, and hazardous tree removal to prevent trees from interfering with overhead power lines. Since then, Con Edison has developed a comprehensive Climate Change Resilience Plan to prepare for a changing climate, he said. Mr. Jeong explained that all these required Infrastructure Improvements have led to the increased rate fees that Con Edison began charging customers in 2019. To defray the increased cost per kilowatt hour for electricity, Con Edison has initiated several incentives to conserve energy and improve energy efficiency for homeowners and renters, and small business owners.

He encouraged everyone to visit their website at www.ConEd.com to find more information about the subsidies that are offered to property owners who opt to install heat pumps and apply for this limited time offer by May 31st, 2024. He said that the installation must be complete by December 31, 2024. He explained that Con Edison will help cover the cost when you make heat pumps your primary source of heating because heat pumps let you heat and cool your home using the constant year-round temperature underground, resulting in a system that's 3 times more efficient than an oil-fueled system, with much lower emissions. He said that these incentives cannot exceed 50% of project costs, or 70% of project costs if you're located in a Disadvantaged Community.

In addition, he explained that Con Edison administers an Energy Affordability Program (EAP) with a range of programs and services that are available to eligible customers who receive benefits from: 1) The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP); 2) NYC Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (NYC SNAP); 3) Supplemental Security Income (SSI); 4) Direct Vendor or Utility Guarantee; 5) Temporary Aid to Needy Families (NYC TANF); 6) Safety Net Assistance (NYC SNA).

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He said that everyone can check their enrollment status on Page 1 of a Con Edison bill under Adjustment Information. He said that anyone who only receives benefits from the following programs **must** apply to enroll in the Energy Affordability Program: 1) Medicaid; 2) Federal Public Housing Assistance; 3) Veterans Disability or Survivors Pension; 3) Lifeline Telephone Service Program (Lifeline).

In closing, for more information about these programs and services, he welcomed everyone to email their office at EAP@conEd.com, or call their Service Center at 1-800-752-6633, or visit their Walk-In Center at 89-67 162 Street, in Jamaica between the hours of 8:30am and 5:00pm on weekdays. Brochures were distributed.

PUBLIC FORUM

Bree Mobley, a Ridgewood resident since 2016 and a member of Ridgewood Rides, which is a local bike advocacy group, spoke about the need for protected bike lanes and wide, clear sidewalks to be built along Cypress Avenue from Cooper Avenue to Cypress Hills Street, and on Vermont Place from Cypress Avenue to Highland Boulevard, and that an MTA/NYC Transit Bus Stop be added at the Ridgewood Reservoir in Highland Park.

She said that this park is the closest and largest public green space for residents of lower Glendale and Ridgewood to enjoy. She said that last month, she met with the members of the Transportation Services Committee to request safety improvements along Cypress Avenue and Vermont Place to provide safer access routes to the Ridgewood Reservoir. She said that the current routes are unsafe. She said that current access to this Park is designed for vehicles, not pedestrians or bicyclists. She asked the Board to support this request for safety improvements.

Duncan Ballantine, a Ridgewood resident and member of Ridgewood Rides, also requested that a safer access route for pedestrians and cyclists be created on Cypress Avenue, between the Ridgewood Reservoir and Cooper Avenue. He said that there's no safe ADA access route to the Ridgewood Reservoir and the sidewalk is missing on one side of Vermont Place between Cypress Avenue and the Ridgewood Reservoir. He cited accident statistics for the stretch of Cypress Avenue, between Vermont Place and Cooper Avenue, that show there have been 33 crashes involving pedestrians and cyclists over the past 10 years, including 9 pedestrians and 11 cyclists injured at the intersection of Cypress Avenue and Cooper Avenue alone, not counting all those who are injured in vehicular accidents. He said that he considers this intersection to be the most dangerous part of this route. In addition, he pointed out that a total of 229 accidents have been reported along this route over the past 10 years.

In closing, he asked the Board to prioritize safety improvements on this route to include:

- Install protected bike lanes on Cypress Avenue.
- Construct widened sidewalks on Cypress Avenue where there are pinch points and pave over areas where there are currently dirt paths instead of sidewalks, and install ADA-accessible pedestrian ramps at all Crosswalks.
- Widen and pave sidewalks and install bike infrastructure along Vermont Place, adjacent to the Ridgewood Reservoir.

Jason Gers, a resident of Ridgewood Place in Bushwick, introduced himself as a steward for the NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation who works at the Ridgewood Reservoir. He said that he commutes back and forth to work on a bicycle, riding along Cypress Avenue from Myrtle Avenue to his destination. He requested that bike lanes be installed on Cypress Avenue, between the Ridgewood Reservoir and Myrtle Avenue, to improve accessibility to the Ridgewood Reservoir for residents of Ridgewood who aren't drivers, because there's no public transportation along this route.

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He pointed out that creating a protected bike lane on Cypress Avenue, between Cooper Avenue and Vermont Place, would eliminate access to the curb for all the unlicensed car washers, who set up shop along the curb on Cypress Avenue, adjacent to the cemetery, and usually dump their trash on the street and sidewalk before driving away each day.

Anna Bateman, Stewardship and Development Manager of NYC H2O, explained that she's employed by NYC H2O to work with school groups and local volunteers on environmental stewardship projects, field trips and community cleanups at the Ridgewood Reservoir. She said that over the past year, she has hosted over 2,000 students and supervised 300 volunteers on site, with a goal of maintaining the landscape and keeping it green. She estimated that during a regular monthly community cleanup, volunteers collect from 500 to 1,000 pounds of trash that was illegally dumped on Vermont Place, between Cypress Avenue and the Ridgewood Reservoir. She said that improving pedestrian and cyclist access to the Ridgewood Reservoir will lead to a safer, more attractive environment for park visitors.

Maryann Lattanzio, a Board Member and Maspeth resident, said that she's very concerned about the plan to operate a shelter for migrants in the Jewish Center that is located on Grand Avenue, near the LIE Eastbound Service Road in Maspeth. She said that she'd like to know if the migrants in this shelter are known pedophiles, or sex offenders, or gang members. She said that there will be a 7pm timetable for migrants to arrive at the Center, but asked what happens to them after 7am when they each morning? She said that she worries about them just roaming the streets all day long. In closing, she said that a protest is being organized for this Saturday afternoon at 2pm in the vicinity of this new homeless shelter, where she hopes local elected officials will be on hand to answer questions about what arrangements have been made to ensure the safety of community residents.

Antonio Whitaker, Assistant Director of Community Affairs in the Dept. of Sanitation, announced that as of March 1st this year, all food-related businesses in the City of New York are now required to put their trash and compostable material in containers with secure lids. He said that in a few months, the Department of Sanitation will announce similar rules for private residences with one to nine dwelling units. In the meantime, he asked that when anyone sees any businesses, including restaurants, delicatessens, grocery stores, bodegas, caterers and chain stores, that are not putting their trash into containers with secure lids, to first report it to 311, and then call the Community Board with the complaint number, so it can be reported to his office and he'll make sure to follow up on it. He said that ultimately, enforcing this regulation will not only help to keep our streets clean, but will also help to reduce rodent infestation in local neighborhoods. He said that eventually, their goal is to dispose of 4 million pounds of trash from secure containers each day.

In response to a question from the Board Chairperson about plans to expand the current Pilot Program for placing large trash containers in the parking lane on the street in front of large commercial buildings, Mr. Whitaker replied that while this new Pilot Program in Harlem has proven to be successful this year, there are no plans to expand it beyond the most densely populated areas of Manhattan.

In response to a request for further clarification from the District Manager, Mr. Whitaker said that businesses and large residential buildings with more than 10 units are required to put putrescible waste or household garbage into containers with secure lids. However, recyclable materials can still be placed at the curb for collection in clear plastic bags and/or pails, the same as before, he said.

On a point of clarification, Mr. Whitaker informed everyone that durable plastic 55-Gallon containers with snap-on lids may be used to store household garbage for private homes with up to 9 dwelling units.

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Donald Passantino, a Board Member and Middle Village resident, asked if residents and homeowners could still put leaves and grass clippings into brown paper bags at the curb for collection. Mr. Whitaker replied that compostable paper bags may still be used to dispose of leaves and yard waste and pointed out that residents are permitted to mix leaves and yard waste together with food waste for disposal in the brown compost bins, because it's all organic material.

Paul Kerzner, a Board Member and Ridgewood resident, asked if brown compost bins are still being supplied to private homeowners in Queens by the Department. Mr. Whitaker replied that no brown compost bins are left for distribution to homeowners in Queens. He said that next year, they plan to expand the mandatory composting program to Staten Island, Manhattan, and the Bronx, when they'll begin to distribute brown compost bins to homeowners in those three boroughs.

Maryann Lattanzio, a Board Member and Maspeth resident, asked if residents are still permitted to put their household garbage in black bags at the curb after 8pm. Mr. Whitaker replied that for now, household garbage may still be put out for collection in black bags after 8pm, by homeowners with less than 10 units, but he warned that a summons could be issued for placing their household garbage at the curb before 8pm unless it's in a secure container. He said there's no timeframe yet for when all homeowners will be required to put household garbage into secure containers at the curb for regular collections. For the time being, these new regulations only apply to residential properties with 10 or more units, he said.

Anthony Rosario, a Glendale homeowner, spoke about problems with the management of the Ridgewood Glendale Middle Village Maspeth (RGMVM) Little League, whose home field is Seither Stadium, on Woodhaven Boulevard. He said that both he and his son had played ball in this league over the years, when there were as many as 700 youngsters, aged 3 to 19 years old, enrolled on team rosters. He said that it's the oldest Little League organization in Queens. However, over the past few years, he said that the league's roster dwindled down to about 100 players, since the president of the league was charged and convicted of embezzlement of the club's funds. He asked the Board to contact the proper authorities to request that derelict vehicles and large trucks that were abandoned on the vacant land that's adjacent to Seither Stadium be towed away.

Haley Malin, a long-time resident of Ridgewood and shop owner of Two Monster Pet Shop on Onderdonk Avenue, requested the Board's support for a Dog Park in Grover Cleveland Park, in Ridgewood. She said that there's a growing number of dog owners who live in that area of Ridgewood who'd like to walk their dogs there every day.

Ronald Trinidad, a Middle Village resident, spoke as the father of one of the children who played baseball in Seither Stadium for 8 years until 2021, as part of the RGMVM Little League. He said that when his son played baseball in their Rookies Division, there were 10 teams with 14 players on each team. This year, their roster has dwindled down to about 100 children who are on the team roster. He said that their organization needs a fresh start. He said that he plans to volunteer his efforts to turn things around, by restoring the community's trust in the Little League so that families will bring their children to sign up to play on a baseball team in this community.

The Board Chairperson thanked everyone for their input and closed the Public Forum.

Chairperson's Report

Vincent Arcuri

The Board Chairperson took the attendance of Board Members present. He recognized that Gary Giordano, the District Manager, and John Maier on the Board's staff were both present at the Meeting.

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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 reminded everyone that the online applications to become a Community Board Member are closed since February 16th. She said that new appointments will be announced on or before April 1st this year. She said that anyone with questions about the application process are welcome to contact Kahleel Bragg at Kbragg@queensbp.org. Ms. Collins welcomed everyone to attend the Queens Borough President's first annual Irish Heritage Celebration on March 25th, beginning at 5:30pm, in Sunnyside Community Services located at 43-31 39 Street, in Queens. She said that pre-registration for this event is required by visiting their website at: www.queensbp.org/RSVP.

On behalf of **Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez**, Johnathan Betancourt announced that the Congresswoman has returned home from Washington, D.C., after Congress finally passed the Consolidated Appropriation Bill of 2024 that includes \$16.2 Billion for Veterans Services and Mental Healthcare, \$7 Billion for the Women and Infant Children's Food Assistance Program (WIC), \$119 Billion for Supplemental Food Assistance Program (SNAP), \$10 Billion to upgrade our nation's Water Infrastructure, and \$15 Billion to combat the Climate Crisis. In addition, he said that \$1 Million was allocated toward Community Improvement Projects in her District.

Mr. Betancourt reminded everyone that the deadline to apply for benefits under the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is this Friday, March 15th.

He said that the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) has benefited 23 million households in the United States by providing them with discounts on their monthly internet and cable bills, half of whom are military families, and 4 million of them elderly residents. He said that the Congresswoman is seeking further funding for the 77,000 low-income and elderly households that live in her District because these funds will expire in April of this year.

Regarding legislative issues, he reported that Congresswoman Velazquez has signed on as a co-sponsor of The National Advisory Council on Unpaid School Meal Debt to help identify solutions to support students and guarantee the financial sustainability of school meal programs. He said that 96% of local school districts across the country report an increased number of students who are accumulating school meal debt during this school year.

In closing, he wished everyone a Happy Women's History Month, and a Happy Ramadan to those who celebrate the holiday. He said that their office is working with a team of Postal Inspectors who are investigating the problem of mail theft in this District and welcomed constituents to call their office at (718) 599-3658, to report any problems they've had with their mail delivery recently.

On behalf of **City Council Member Robert Holden**, Charles Vavruska reminded everyone that the deadline to file for property tax exemptions is this Friday, March 15th. He welcomed calls to their office if any homeowners need help filing their application online.

Mr. Vavruska announced that the Council Member will host two Electronic Waste Events soon on:

- Saturday, March 30th, from 10am to 2pm, at the Elks Lodge on Queens Boulevard, in Elmhurst; and
- Saturday, April 20th, from 12 Noon to 4pm, at the Maspeth Federal Savings Bank on Grand Avenue.

In addition, he said the Council Member is sponsoring two Paper Shredding and Vin Etching Events that will be held on Saturday, May 5th, from 10am to 2pm, in the Forest Park Bandshell Parking Lot, as well as on Saturday, June 15th, from 10am to 2pm, in Juniper Valley Park at 80 Street, in Middle Village.

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He said that, from 11am to 3pm on Wednesday, April 10th on the center green inside Atlas Park, in Glendale, their office will co-sponsor with Council Member Joann Ariola, an Outreach Session with a representative from the Office of Administrative Tribunals and Hearings (OATH), who will be on hand to answer questions about City summonses, the hearing process, and how to clear violations.

Lastly, he said that their office and Council Member Joann Ariola will co-sponsor a Blood Drive under the auspices of the NY Blood Center, next to the T-Mobile Store in Atlas Park, from 9am to 3pm on Sunday, March 17th, as well as on the following weekend, March 23rd and 24th, 2024.

In closing, he said that Council Member Holden is opposed to the new homeless shelter that's located in the Synagogue on Grand Avenue in Maspeth. He welcomed calls from constituents at (718) 366-3906, or via email to: district30@council.nyc.gov.

On behalf of **City Council Member Joann Ariola**, Linda Fogal reported that the Councilwoman is working on legislation that would require vape detectors in every school bathroom across the City. In addition, the Councilwoman plans to introduce legislation to ensure that our Veterans can secure adequate housing accommodations.

Ms. Fogal said that the Council Member is currently working with NYPD Narcotics Division to shut down smoke shops for good through nuisance abatement procedures. She asked anyone who'd like to report locations in their District, where smoke shops are operating illegally and sell contraband products, to please call their office.

In addition, she reminded everyone that the Council Member is sponsoring a Food Drive for Cereal and Breakfast Items for the Sacred Heart Food Pantry in Glendale until April 19th. She said food donations, including cereal, oatmeal, oats, pancake mix, syrup, peanut butter, and jelly, may be dropped off at their District Office, located at 93-06 101st Avenue, in Ozone Park.

Lastly, she said that their office is hosting a food distribution event this Spring, beginning at 9:30am on Wednesday, March 27th in their Ozone Park Office. For more information about how to participate in this event, she welcomed calls to their office at (718) 738-1083. Flyers were distributed.

On behalf of **City Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez**, Anna Bessendorf introduced herself as the Council Member's Chief of Staff. Regarding their annual Participatory Budget Process, she reported that three separate projects in Ridgewood will be on their final ballot for a vote this year, including one School Project at IS 77 on Seneca Avenue, and two Parks Projects that are both in Grover Cleveland Park. Ms. Bessendorf announced that seniors, over the age of 62, and disabled adults, who are interested in applying for affordable housing, will have until April 15th to apply for an apartment in a senior housing development located at 15 Montieth Street, in Bushwick. She welcomed anyone who needs help filling out the online application to contact their office.

In addition, she said that their office is assisting unemployed adults, and senior citizens who receive SSI, Social Security or Public Assistance, to file Income Tax Return forms IT 210 and NYC 214. She advised constituents to call their office for an appointment at **(718) 963-3141**,

Lastly, she welcomed input from constituents regarding the Dept. of City Planning's Proposed City of Yes Zoning Text Amendment for Housing Opportunity by calling their office.

On behalf of **NY State Senator Addabbo**, John D'Angelo reported that the Senator is currently in Albany working on budget negotiations which will hopefully be concluded by April 1st.

He announced several upcoming events that the State Senator is sponsoring:

Paper Shredding & Recycling Events

Saturday, April 13th, 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM in The Shops at Atlas Park, in Glendale; and

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Sunday, April 28th, 10:00AM - 2:00 PM in the Forest Park Bandshell Parking Lot, Woodhaven, NY 11421
Narcan Training with JCAP / Acacia Network

Sunday, April 14th, 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM at the Street Fair by MacDonald Park, Forest Hills

In closing, Mr. D'Angelo said that their office compiled statistics from the District Surveys that were sent to their constituents to request their opinion about what's the most important issue facing their community. He said that Glendale, Maspeth, and Middle Village residents identified crime, taxes, and the economy as the top 3 issues and areas of concern to them.

On behalf of **NY State Senator Julia Salazar**, Maria Valdez announced that the Senator sends her regards, and that she supports the members of Ridgewood Rides requests for improvements to bike routes and pedestrian pathways that lead up to the Ridgewood Reservoir in Highland Park. Flyers were distributed about upcoming events hosted by their office.

On behalf of **NY State Assembly Member Steven Raga**, Dolma Lama wished everyone a Happy Women's History Month and said that the Assemblyman is up in Albany now while budget negotiations are underway in Albany.

Ms. Lama announced that their office will host a Know Your Rights session with representatives of Queens Legal Services in their office on March 21st, from 10am to 1pm. In addition, she announced that their office is hosting Taxpayer Assistance Sessions in partnership with Urban Upbound every Saturday, starting March 16th until April 12th, to provide free tax services to those who make \$85,000 or less. She said that those interested in attending do **not** need to live within Assembly District 30th to schedule an appointment with us. She announced the details as follows:

- **Dates:** Every Saturday beginning March 16th until April 12th
- **Time:** Appointments available from 9 AM-4PM
- **Location:** 55-19 69th Street, Maspeth, Queens 11378
- **RSVP:** Please call our office at [718-651-3185](tel:718-651-3185) to make an appointment.
- **Required Materials:** A physical copy of Social Security card, photo ID, Tax Return(s), and any additional tax documents (ex: W2, 1099, Social Security Statement).
- **Note:** RSVP is on a first-come, first-served basis; prompt arrival to scheduled appointment is crucial.

Ms. Lama announced that on March 23rd, their office will host a Women of Distinction Ceremony in the Auditorium of Elmhurst Hospital where local women leaders will receive awards from the Assemblyman. She also announced that they will hold Mobile Office Hours at the Maspeth Public Library on Grand Avenue, from 2pm to 4pm on Wednesday, March 27, when the Assemblyman will be on hand to discuss local issues and concerns with constituents.

In closing, regarding concerns that were expressed earlier tonight about the new Migrants Homeless Shelter that has opened in the Maspeth Jewish Center on Grand Avenue, she said that their office is seeking a meeting with one of the principals who are operating this shelter to ensure their constituents' safety. She welcomed calls for information and assistance to their District Office, located at 55-19 69 Street, in Maspeth at **(718) 651-3185**. Flyers were distributed.

On behalf of **NY State Assembly Member Juan Ardila**, Natalie Rajabian reported that the Assemblyman is currently up in Albany during this legislative session. She informed everyone that their staff have been assisting families who were displaced due to a structural house fire in Maspeth when a total of 50 tenants were displaced, in the early afternoon of President's Day, February 19th. Their office hosted a food and clothing drive to assist all those who were safely evacuated, as well as helped to set up a GoFundMe page for them.

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Ms. Rajabian welcomed everyone to recommend exceptional Middle School and High School students who live in the Assemblyman's District so they can receive the recognition they deserve. She welcomed calls for assistance and information to **(718) 784-3194**. Flyers were distributed.

On behalf of **NYS Assembly Member Jenifer Rajkumar**, Vjola Isufaj informed everyone that the Assemblywoman is currently up in Albany working on budget negotiations as well as passage of several important pieces of legislation. She said that the Smoke Out Bill is gaining traction and is expected to pass both Houses of the Legislature by the first week of June. She pointed out that three illegal smoke shops on Myrtle Avenue were closed recently but reopened within days, after paying a hefty fine. She said that the new legislation would enable law enforcement to completely shut down these illegal businesses. She said that another Bill that the Assemblywoman has been lobbying to pass involves requiring that E-bikes be registered, licensed, and operated in compliance with the existing rules and regulations of the State Dept. of Motor Vehicles.

She said that they've resumed scheduling regular mammogram screening for women over the age of 40, who live in their district, in partnership with staff from Mt. Sinai Hospital, at their office at 83-01 Woodhaven Blvd. She said that these screenings are scheduled by appointment only, by calling **(718) 805-9050**.

Minutes

The Board Chairperson asked Board members if they had received and reviewed the minutes from last month's Board Meeting which was conducted on February 7, 2024. On a motion from Lee Rottenberg, that was seconded by Walter Clayton, the minutes were adopted, as submitted.

Alcoholic Beverage License Applications and Renewals

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 Alcoholic Beverage Applications and Renewals, which was distributed to all Board Members, as follows:

Liquor, Wine & Beer License Applications and Renewals

New Liquor Licenses

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1) 702 Seneca Bar LLC <i>d/b/a TBD</i> 702 Seneca Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 | [B/T] 1 & 2 |
| 2) Homemade Taqueria II Corp. 71-03 Grand Ave, Maspeth, NY 11378 | [R] |
| 3) El Fanbrojan Corp. 465 Seneca Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 | [B/T] 1 & 5 |

Liquor License Renewals

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| 1) Woodward 652 LLC <i>d/b/a Aunt Ginny's</i> 652 Woodward Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 | [B/T] |
| 2) Mansions Worldwide LLC <i>d/b/a Mansions</i> 46-63 Metropolitan Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 | [B/T] |
| 3) Hail Mary 7778 LLC <i>d/b/a The Flying Fox Tavern</i> 678 Woodward Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 | [R] |
| 4) Seneca Bar Corp. 681 Seneca Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 | [B/T] |
| 5) El Montanero Bakery Restaurant Inc. 55-21 Myrtle Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 | [R] |
| 6) 1 New Farm Deli Inc. <i>d/b/a Las Margaritas Bar & Restaurant</i> 67-12 Fresh Pond Rd, Ridgewood | [R] |
| 7) Mary Restaurant Corp. <i>d/b/a Estrella Del Mar</i> 552 Seneca Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 | [R] |
| 8) Beer LLC <i>d/b/a The Avenue Restaurant Bar & Grill</i> 71-22 Myrtle Ave, Glendale, NY 11385 | [R] |
| 9) Chicken Soup & Rice LLC <i>d/b/a Sundown Bar</i> 68-38 Forest Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 | [B/T] |

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New Wine, Beer & Cider

- 1) **Loledo LLC** 880 Woodward Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 [B/T] 1
- 2) **Brothers M Taqueria Corp.** 52-20 Flushing Ave, Maspeth, NY 11378 [R] 1
- 3) Miyama NY Inc. d/b/a **Miyama** 349 St. Nicholas Ave, Ridgewood, NY 11385 [R] 1 & 3
- 4) **La Flor Del Paraiso de Tenares Restaurant Corp.** 1715 Cornelia St, Ridgewood, NY 11385 [R] 1

Other Notifications

- 1) SSC Group LLC d/b/a **Sugarcoat-Aroma** 63-40/42 Woodhaven Blvd, Rego Park, NY 11374 [R] 4

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

2 - Previously notified us of their application for a new Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider License in October 2022. The SLA required them to amend their Notice to include a) "Security as Needed" to their "Method of Operation" and b) to add "basement storage" in the "List of Floor(s)" at the Establishment.

3 - Previously notified us of their application for a new Wine, Beer & Cider License in May of 2023, and while they've been working on their application with the SLA, the previous notice has expired.

4 - Class Change: from Wine, Beer & Cider to Full Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider; and Method of Operation Change: to add DJ Music.

5 - Applying again, though CB5Q previously voted against this application at May, 2023 Board Meeting.

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

Peggy O’Kane, a Board Member, said that the dining shed in front of the bar on Fresh Pond Road is dilapidated and looks filthy. She said that people have seen vermin around it so they won’t sit inside. She requested that it be removed. The Board Chairperson referred the complaint to staff.

Regarding the bar located at 465 Seneca Avenue, the District Manager pointed out that the Community Board is on record as voting to oppose granting a liquor license for a bar located at 465 Seneca Avenue in Ridgewood. He said that last year, the State Liquor Authority issued them a Temporary License which is about to expire.

Regarding the Seneca Bar located at 681 Seneca Avenue, he said that there have been complaints about noise coming from this bar at least 4am and fights breaking out there, similar to complaints that the Board had received about the bar that was formerly known as El Equinoxio, located at 465 Seneca Avenue. He asked the pleasure of the Board regarding this location. Paul Kerzner, a Board Member, made a motion to recommend denial of their application to renew their liquor license at 681 Seneca Avenue, which was seconded by Walter Clayton.

As there was no further discussion on the matter, the Board Chairperson requested a Roll Call vote on the motion on the floor which carried unanimously by a vote of -33 – in favor; - 0 – opposed; with – 0 – abstentions; and – 0 – not voting.

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.

The Board Chairperson asked Margaret O’Kane, the Board Secretary, to report on the Executive Committee’s recommendation regarding the proposed Revisions to the Community Board’s By-Laws.

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Ms. O’Kane reported that the final version of the Revisions to our Community Board’s By-Laws were distributed to Board Members at last month’s Board Meeting, and through the mail. She said that the By-Laws were streamlined, in consultation with the Queens Borough President’s Corporation Counsel. The Board Chairperson opened the floor to questions and comments.

Eric Butkiewicz, a Member of the Executive Committee, offered a caveat on the adoption of the By-Laws by saying that the Executive Committee reserves the right to correct typographical errors in the By-Laws and add a more detailed Table of Contents to them. As there were no objections, the Board Chairperson requested a Roll Call vote on the recommendation to adopt the Revisions to the Community Board’s By-Laws, with the caveats that were recommended by Eric Butkiewicz. The motion passed unanimously by a vote of – 33 – in favor; - 0 – opposed; - 0 – abstentions; and – 0 – not voting.

The Board Chairperson wished a Ramadan Mubarak to all those who celebrate it, and a Happy St. Patrick’s Day and Happy St. Joseph’s Day next week, as well. He requested that all female Board Member stand up so the Board could recognize them and wish them all a Happy International Women’s Day. He announced that next month’s Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on April 10th.

District Manager’s Report

Gary Giordano

The District Manager asked the elected officials’ staff if they could submit their reports in writing to the Community Board in the future, to meet with the time constraints of completing Board business and leaving the building by 10 pm.

He wished a Happy Women’s History Month to all the women present.

The District Manager said that residents have complained about a property located at 70-01 Forest Avenue, formerly occupied by Capital One Bank, which has recently been converted into a party place. He said that this property is located right next-door to the Ridgewood Presbyterian Church on 70 Avenue, where there’s shelter with beds for up to 15 migrants overnight. There haven’t been any complaints regarding the shelter, he said. In response to complaints about the garbage and debris on this site, the Dept. of Sanitation has issued violations. The District Manager said that he recently wrote to the State Liquor Authority to advise against granting them a temporary liquor license, given their poor maintenance of this site and unresolved building issues.

The District Manager asked everyone to report problem buildings that they know about to the Board staff, so the proper authorities could be alerted. He said that emails should be directed to QN05@cb.nyc.gov.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Environmental Services Committee

Toby Sheppard Bloch

Toby Bloch reported that the Committee met last week in the Board Office to review a power point presentation on the Proposed Plans to Rehabilitate and Upgrade the Pumping Station at the Cooper Avenue Underpass in Glendale.

He said that the Glendale Pumping Station was last upgraded in 2014. At their Meeting, the Committee was informed that due to the history of flooding in the Cooper Avenue, the pumping station will be retrofitted with two new pumps that will have twice the capacity of the existing pumps, with 2.4 million gallons per day (GPD) being pumped into the sewer system during heavy rainstorms. He said that the electrical gear will be brought from below grade and built under an enclosure adjacent to the bridge. He said that the estimated time for the construction of this project is approximately 7 months.

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In addition, Mr. Bloch said that the Dept. of Environmental Protection is accepting requests for additional Rain Gardens and Bioswales throughout the Community Board area. He asked everyone to contact the Community Board Office with potential sites where they could build them.

Regarding the Wolff-Alport site on Cooper Avenue at Irving Avenue in Ridgewood, he reported that the Committee Members also reviewed a presentation from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) about their plans for remediation of this hazardous waste site. He explained that over 70 years or more ago, the Wolff-Alport company operated out of this site for the purpose of refining precursor materials for the Manhattan Project during World War II. He said that, as part of their normal course of business, a significant amount of material was stored on the grounds and subsequently contaminated the building, the soil at this site and seeped into the sewer system. After the site was declared a hazardous waste site in 2002, it was designated as a Superfund site and slated for clean up by the EPA.

He said that the contractor has begun removing subsurface material from this site. He said that the demolition of the 4 buildings on this site is scheduled to begin in April. Once demolition is complete, the contractor will begin to remove tons of subsurface material, and truck it away to a disposal site somewhere out West. He said that this project is expected to take more than a year to complete.

Lastly, Mr. Bloch informed everyone that the Committee spoke with a representative of the Phelps Dodge Corporation, regarding pollution in Newtown Creek. He said that the Committee was told that now they plan to perform a pilot remediation project in some of the tributaries of the Newtown Creek to see if they can use emerging technologies for remediation that may work faster and prove to be more effective than what's been done to-date. He said that it will likely take decades to clean up the pollution in Newtown Creek.

Education Services Committee

Patricia Crowley

Patricia Crowley reported that when the Committee met on February 28th in the Board 5 Office with representatives of the Community School District Superintendent's Office, they were given a power point presentation on the school enrollment figures for this school year, and the results of last year's standardized test scores in English and Math proficiency. She summarized the presentation as follows: She said that there are currently 37,193 students enrolled in CSD 24 public schools, with 24,677 students who identify as Hispanic; 6,289 who identify as Asian; 4,072 who identify as White; 490 who identify as Black; 316 who identify as multi-racial; and 202 who identify as Native American.

Ms. Crowley reported that the Committee was informed that 18% of the students in CSD 24 have disabilities, which means these students require an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for each one of them. She said that the Committee was informed that 19% of the students in our District are housing insecure, which means that they're either living with another family or in homeless shelters. She said that 77% of our District's students are considered economically disadvantaged, and 35% of our students are multi-lingual.

She went on to say that the English and Math proficiency test scores fell below the Citywide average, with only 44% of the students considered proficient in English, and only 46% of them are considered proficient in Math.

Ms. Crowley also reported that in 2022, the State Legislature passed a law mandating smaller class sizes in NYC public schools. However, Community School Districts have 5 years to comply with this law which went into effect in September of 2023. She said that under the new State Law, the maximum class size for kindergarten is 25, and it would be 20 students per class in Grades 1 to 3, while the maximum capacity size is 32 now. The maximum class size for Grades 4 to 8 under the new State Law is 23, but it's 32 students per class now.

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Ms. Crowley reported that there's a shortage of teachers in bilingual education and special education. She said that District 24 is offering incentives to teachers that are already certified to become dual-certified to respond to the critical shortage of teachers in this field.

She also pointed out that District 24 schools do not have enough seats to serve the needs of students with special needs, who are children who have challenges that require special programming. She said that PS 305 on Seneca Avenue in Ridgewood is currently underutilized. District 24 proposes to open a District 75 school to co-locate with that school, she said. At this point, it's only a proposal, she said.

Ms. Crowley said that copies of the power point presentation are available in the Board Office.

In response to a question from the floor, she said that she doesn't know the ethnic breakdown of each school in District 24 because only the overall statistics for our District were reported to the Committee.

Public Safety Services Committee

Maryann Lattanzio

Maryann Lattanzio reported that the Committee met with Detective Michael Berish of the Community Affairs Unit in the 104th Precinct in the Board 5 Office on Tuesday, March 5th. She said that Detective Berish informed Committee Members about year-to-date crime statistics for the 104th Precinct as follows: Murders remain at Zero. Regarding the number of reported Rapes, there were 3 reported this year, which remains the same as last year. In addition, the number of Robberies reported this year is 37, with 52 Felony Assaults reported year-to-date, and 37 Burglaries reported year-to-date. He told the Committee that the number of Grand Larceny crimes reported increased to 137 this year, as compared to 108 last year. She said that the Detective told Committee Members that the increase is mainly due to scams. The number of Grand Larceny Auto cases has increased over last year's statistics, with 62 cases so far this year, as compared to 53 cases reported to-date last year.

Regarding the past 28 days, she said that Det. Berish told the Committee that there were no Murders reported in the 104th Precinct; 3 Rapes, with 2 cases that involved Domestic Violence; 17 Robberies were reported, as compared to 13 Robberies for the same period last year; 21 Felony Assaults vs. 30 cases last year; 23 Burglaries vs 17 cases last year; 50 Grand Larceny vs. 56 cases last year; and 26 Grand Larceny Auto cases vs. 28 cases last year.

When asked by the Committee if many crimes are committed by migrants, Det. Berish said that they don't have statistics in that specific category, but he doesn't think that's an issue in the 104th Precinct. Regarding the number of calls for assistance from the Glendale Shelter on Cooper Avenue, he said that year-to-date, there were 95 complaints called into 311 and 911, and 76 of those calls were 911 calls, 46 being Ambulance-related.

He told the Committee that 11 arrests were made of residents from the shelter, but 6 arrests were made in connection with crimes that took place elsewhere. He said that there are approximately 200 residents in the shelter now.

The Committee reviewed staffing levels at the 104th Precinct with Det. Berish, who said that the Precinct is short-staffed now. He said that there are 20 to 23 police cadets that are assigned to the 104th Precinct but get reassigned to Roosevelt Avenue in Flushing because it's a high crime area. He told the Committee that currently, there are 130 Police Officers and 24 Supervisors assigned to the 104th Precinct. He explained that each tour has approximately 10 Police Officers, which equates to one patrol car per sector.

Ms. Lattanzio said that Det. Berish explained that the Sheriff's Office enforces the law against illegal smoke shops in our Precinct, and Patrol Officers only get involved when the Sheriff calls for back up.

Ms. Lattanzio reported that year-to-date, a total of 1,240 moving violations were issued in the 104th Precinct. In addition, 1,200 parking violations and 1,130 blocking fire hydrant summonses were issued. Another 173 summonses were issued for illegal scooters; 275 Speeding tickets and 178 Red Light tickets

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were issued; 76 tickets for tinted car windows; 86 for texting while driving; 145 tickets for disobeying signs; and 72 tickets for Failure to Yield the Right of Way to Pedestrians.

Ms. Lattanzio said that the Committee discussed the problem with illegal truck traffic on Eliot Avenue and attempts to get apps to stop directing truck traffic away from the designated truck routes. She said that the Committee also discussed the high rate of recidivism for former convicts who don't seem to learn anything good while they're incarcerated.

After a general discussion of the topic, the Board Chairperson announced the next Item on the Agenda.

Transportation and Public Transit Services Committee

Eric Butkiewicz

Eric Butkiewicz reported that the Committee met in the Board Office on February 27th to review a continuing series of pedestrian and traffic safety requests. He thanked the District Manager and the 104th Precinct for helping to make the neighborhood safer by pushing for additional signage where it's needed, and the enforcement to slow drivers down. He asked everyone to continue sending complaints and requests to the staff in the Board Office so that we can continue to improve safety throughout our Community Board.

He said that the Committee continues to review proposed changes in the Revised Queens Bus Network Design with representatives from the MTA-NYCT. He welcomed comments from the public about the proposed Revised Queens Bus Network as well.

Regarding the requests for pedestrian and traffic safety improvements in the vicinity of the Ridgewood Reservoir and Highland Park, he said that Committee Members have been working to improve access to that Park and will continue to advocate for better access to such a beautiful public park on Vermont Place. He said the Committee agreed to consider the Ridgewood Rides group proposal to install a protected bike lane on Cypress Avenue. However, after concerns about their proposal were raised by Board Members and a general discussion of the matter took place, it was referred to the Committee for further consideration.

Mr. Butkiewicz announced that the next Committee Meeting will take place at 7:30pm on Tuesday, March 26th in the Board Office.

Zoning and Land Use Review Committee

Walter Sanchez

Walter Sanchez reported that the Committee met on Wednesday, March 11th in the Board Office, to review the Proposed Rezoning at 460 Troutman Street (Block: 3190, Lot: 12) in Brooklyn. He said that the owner of the 1-story factory is seeking a zoning change that would permit the construction of a 7-story building that will be partially occupied for manufacturing purposes. However, he said that their application is still in the Pre-Certification stage in the Dept. of City Planning, so it isn't under consideration at this time. He said that it's a very unusual request because most of the rezoning cases that came before our Board have involved at least some floors of residential development.

Peggy O'Kane, a Board Member, pointed out that the building is just on the other side of the Brooklyn-Queens border.

As there was no further business to come before the Board, the Board Chairperson announced that the next monthly Meeting of Community Board 5 Queens is scheduled for 7:30pm on Wednesday, April 10th, when he'll announce that nominations will begin in May for the Elections of Board Officers in June. He adjourned the Board Meeting on a motion from the floor at 9:55pm.