



COMMUNITY BOARD # 4Q

Serving: Corona, Corona Heights, Elmhurst, and Newtown

46-11 104th Street

Corona, New York 11368-2882

Telephone: 718-760-3141 Fax: 718-760-5971

E-mail: qn04@cb.nyc.gov

Sharon Lee
Acting Borough President

Louis Walker
Chairperson

Christian Cassagnol
District Manager

June 16, 2020

COMMUNITY BOARD ATTENDANCE

Board Members Attending:

Louis Walker
Lucy Cerezo Scully
Chaio-Chung Chen
Yi Chen
David Chong
Lorena Diaz
Michelle Dunston
Marialena Giampino
Sunil Mahat
Matthew McElroy
Rovenia McGowan

Ruby Muhammad
Gurdip Singh Narula
Alexandra Owens
Alexa Ponce
Ashley Reed
Oscar Rios
Cristian Romero
Clara Salas
Lucy Schilero
Gregory Spock
Marcello Testa

Board Members Absent:

Karin Abreu
Lynda Coral
Aridia Espinal
Kristen Gonzalez
Jennifer Gutierrez
Vincent Laucella
James Lisa
Salvatore Lombardo
Carol Machulski
Pat Martin
Sylvia Martin

Edgar Moya
Sandra Munoz
Georgina Oliver
Rupinder Raj
Neil Roman
Fernando Ruiz
A. Redd Sevilla
Alton Derrick Smith
Dewan Tarek
Izaida Valcarcel
Rosa Wong
Minwen Yang

ATTENDING:

Christian Cassagnol, CB4 District Manager
Margaret Silletti, CB4 Community Coordinator
Christian Long, CB4 Community Assistant
Cristian Romero, Congresswoman Grace Meng
Michelle Hernandez, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Office
Angela, Assembly Member Brian Barnwell's Office
Alexandra Owens, Assembly Member Catalina Cruz's Office
Jessica Schbowski, Office of the Mayor
Bernice, Council Member Francisco Moya's Office
Kelly Wu, Council Member Daniel Dromm's Office
John Perricone, Office of the Queens Borough President
James Mongeluzo, NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer's Office
Rodney Charles, Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz

NOTE: During the Board's virtual meetings, it may be difficult to determine Board members or legislator representatives or guests who were present if they were not actively engaged or participating in the dialogue or visually seen. Please notify the Board office if you were an attendee at any meeting and not marked present

COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING

DATE: Tuesday, June 16, 2020

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

PLACE: Online Via Webex

1. Call To Order (7:00 p.m. – 7:05 p.m.)

Chairperson Louis Walker called the meeting to order at 7:13 p.m.

2. Chairperson's Report (7:05 p.m. – 7:10 p.m.)

Chairperson Louis Walker read the following statement from Sue Mark:

"I am a resident of Elmhurst. In light of the new law passed in NY State, which is setting into motion local government planning for a new policing agenda, what kind of plans does Community Board 4 have for initiating this planning process?"

What are specific ways in which the public will be able to be involved in these discussions?

Thank you."

Chair Louis Walker asked District Manager Christian Cassagnol if he was aware of this. The District Manager responded no.

Chair Walker stated when we receive more information, we will follow-up. As yet, no information or requests have been received.

3. District Manager's Report (7:10 p.m. – 7: 15 p.m.)

District Manager Christian Cassagnol reported this is the last Board meeting before summer recess. The Board recesses during the months of July and August. He welcomed the new Board members. Notifications will be forthcoming to the new Board Members concerning committee choices.

District Manager Cassagnol continued the office is functioning in a limited capacity. Our main priority is stopping the spread of misinformation and act as a conduit for upcoming events.

Also, a while ago the NYPD had requested funding for a graffiti cleanup in the local neighborhoods. It was planned to use the City Council's discretionary funding to pay for the needed paint. Unfortunately, the funding could not be used. Instead, the Board's office budget was used to pay for the paint. Furthermore, it does not seem we will be receiving the stipend in the new fiscal year. More details will follow as we receive further information.

Next, District Manager Cassagnol reported Mr. John Wang, Queens Night Market, is under new management. The Elmhurst/Corona Recovery Coalition is Working Groups uniting together to access community services. Some of those organizations include Make the Road, Queens Museum, New York Hall of Science, Common Point Queens, District 24, and many more. The membership list is still growing but four committees are set for now. As more information is received, it will be presented to the Board or contact the District Manager.

As in the past, he will report throughout the meeting. Before concluding, he advised all to wear masks and following social distancing precautions.

4. Open Session #1 (7:15 p.m. -7:30 p.m.)

(At this time, the microphone will be unmuted, and only members of the Board may speak. This will be done alphabetically. Members of the public, and City Agencies who submitted testimony will have their statements read during the Chairperson's Report).

Chairperson Louis Walker called on the following Board Members:

Lucy Cerezo-Scully – In attendance

No questions or comments.

Chaio-Chung Chen – In attendance

Regarding his report last month, E-mails were sent to Governor Cuomo, Mayor de Blasio, and the NYS Attorney General's office but only one response was received.

Yi Chen (New Board Member) – In attendance

No questions or comments.

David Chong – In attendance

No questions or comments.

Lynda Coral – No response

Lorena Diaz – (New Board Member) – In attendance

No questions or comments.

Michelle Dunston – In attendance

No questions or comments

Aridia Espinal – No response

Marialena Giampino – In attendance

No questions or comments.

Kristen Gonzalez – No response

Vincent Laucella – No response

James Lisa – No response

Salvatore Lombardo – No response

Sunil Mahat – (New Board Member) – In attendance

No questions or comments.

At this point, District Manager Christian Cassagnol announced if you dialed in there is no way to know you are present, therefore, we are not taking formal attendance. You will not be marked absent. He noted you will not be able to actively speak.

Chair Walker continued calling on the Board Members:

Patricia Martin – No response

Sylvia Martin – No response

Matthew McElroy – In attendance

Board Member McElroy expressed concern about the census falling behind because the focus is on other issues. He also commented Board Member Rovenia McGowan is following the meeting on his speaker phone.

Rovenia McGowan – In attendance

No questions or comments

At this point, District Manager Cassagnol addressed the concern regarding the census. Before the pandemic, the Board held a job fair which was very successful to promote the census.

Although the pandemic slowed our outreach, we are still actively reaching out to the census representatives and the numbers are lower. Just this past week we were in contact with a representative from the Census Bureau and coordinating with the Board's Census Committee Chair Kristen Gonzalez.

District Manager Cassagnol noted State Senator Jessica Ramos will be having their Census Webinar with the U. S. Census Bureau at 5:00 p.m. tomorrow June 17.

Edgar Moya – No Response

Ruby Muhammad – In attendance

Sandra Munoz – No Response

Gurdip Singh Narula – In attendance

Georgina Oliver – No Response

Alexandra Owens – In attendance

Alexa Ponce – In attendance

Welcomed the new Board Members.

Rupinder Raj – No Response

Ashley Reed – In attendance

Oscar Rios – In attendance

Neil Roman – No Response

Cristian Romero – In attendance

Fernando Ruiz – No Response

Clara Salas – In attendance

Welcomed the new Board Members.

Lucy Schilero – In attendance

Regarding the census, the Queens General Assembly and the Borough President's Office will have a phone in primarily for Mandarin and Chinese to obtain census information. Please call the Borough President's office for more information.

A. Redd Sevilla – No Response

Alton Derrick Smith – No Response

Gregory Spock – In attendance

Board Member Gregory Spock welcomed the new Board Members. Black Lives Matter and is very thankful for the diversity on Board 4. He has learned much from the Board Members and feels the Board is stronger because of its diversity.

Dewan Tarek – No response

Marcello Testa – In attendance

Izaida Valcarcel – No response

Rosa Wong – No Response

Minwen Yang – No Response

5. **Reports From Elected Officials**

Senate

Charles E. Schumer

No Report. No representative present.

Kristen Gilibrand

No Report. No representative present.

House of Representatives

Grace Meng

Board Member Cristian Romero presented the following updates:

The Congresswoman returned to Washington D.C. twice last month. First to pass the House Democrats Coronavirus Stimulus Bill The Heroes Act which put families and frontline workers first. Secondly to vote on the House passage Protection Program Disability Bill to provide more flexibility for the already programmed small businesses. This Bill was passed. On the legislative front, some progress is being made. The Congresswoman is hearing everyone's concerns and is advocating for those necessary Bills and pieces of legislation.

On the local side, the Congresswoman's office is working remotely. Please call if you have any concerns. Someone from the office will return your call in the next 24 hours or less.

At this point, District Manager Cassagnol reported on Memorial Day Congresswoman Meng, Board Member Cristian Romero, and himself distributed face masks. In a matter of 45 minutes, 1,000 masks were given away on Memorial Day.

With masks also donated from the Mayor's Office and the Comptroller's Office, it is the Board's intent to hold a mask giveaway sometime within the next 7 to 10 days.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

Michelle Hernandez welcomed the new Board members and presented the following legislative updates:

Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez introduced legislation Prohibiting Law Enforcement Use of Chemical Weapons Act to ban tear gas. Tear gas is a chemical weapon banned in war. This proposes a ban on the use of tear gas by Federal Law enforcement and local law enforcement.

Also, the Congresswoman co-sponsored the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2020 which was introduced by House and Senate Democrats in response to calls to address police brutality.

Lastly, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez voted in support of the Paycheck Protection Flexibility Act which will improve the Paycheck Protection Program also known as PPP which is the federal loan program for small businesses struggling due to COVID-19.

She was proud to announce the Congresswoman's Office had opened their 1,000 case to assist constituents. Cases also handled include: immigration, which is 80% of their intake, as well as veteran's benefits, social security, postal services and the IRS.

Before concluding, she spoke about the Census. Currently, East Elmhurst and Corona are around 40% which is a 10-point jump from last month but is still below the national average which is about 60%. It is important to get the word out to participate and answer the census.

The Board was thanked for its work with the Census outreach.

The Congresswoman's office is operating via tele-work. Staff is available via phone and website. Please reach out if you need assistance.

NYS Assembly

Brian Barnwell

Angela reported on an event on June 18. Call for an appointment at 718-651-3185.

The office has also created a COVID-19 Resource Guide which includes information and resources for individuals impacted by COVID-19.

The Assembly Member's office is open and functioning via telework and the office will continue to serve its constituents.

Michael DenDekkar

No Report. Representative not in attendance.

Jeffrion Aubry

No Report. Representative not in attendance.

Catalina Cruz

Board Member Alexandra Owens reported the office is distributing food from 12:30 p.m. until the food runs out. Also since the need is so high for diapers, people have to make an appointment. Please reach out to Assemblywoman Cruz's office if you have any issues and need assistance. The office is working remotely and will assist.

NYS Senate

Michael Gianaris

No Report. Representative not in attendance.

Jessica Ramos

No Report. Representative not in attendance.

Toby Ann Stavisky

No Report. Representative not in attendance.

Office of the Mayor

Jessica Schbowski announced:

NYC Care will be expanding to Queens four months ahead of schedule. This is a citywide effort to guarantee healthcare for all New Yorkers by providing access to low/no cost primary care for those ineligible or cannot afford insurance. Despite the health care disparity benefit exacerbated by COVID-19. For more information log on to nyccare.nyc.

Phase 1 reopening began Monday, June 8. Industries that can open are construction, some retail, manufacturing, and wholesale Trade. The dedicated business hotline is 888-sbs4nyc. Workers who call 311 will be connected to the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection for immediate assistance if there are concerns about employers that are not practicing safe workplaces or are not providing ppe's.

The City is distributing 2 million face masks citywide to small businesses and employees. SBS and DCWP are working with businesses and partnering with organizations throughout the five boroughs including CB4 with outreach work on 40th Road. For more, information she would send the link with SBS. It is on the agency's Twitter account.

Next, Ms. Schbowski reported on the Restaurant Revitalization Program last week focusing on the 27 communities hardest hit by COVID-19 which includes Community Board 4. This program will support underemployed restaurant workers with grants up to \$30,000 each subsidized wages up to \$20 an hour for at least six weeks. The initial goal is to save 100 restaurants across the 27 communities supporting 1,000 workers. Looking at the daily health indicators, which remain below the threshold anticipating reopening end of June or beginning of July more towards the beginning of July.

The Mayor announced plans to expand restaurant outdoor seating once the City enters Phase 2 to temporarily give space to the city's restaurants while maintaining social distancing which includes curbside seating and open streets and sidewalk seating.

Lastly, the City is supporting tens of thousands COVID-19 tests per day noting one day last week 33,000 people were tested. For an interactive map showing new testing sites, go to nyc.gov/covidtesting or call 311.

All New Yorkers are encouraged to get tested especially those who have recently attended a protest.

If a hotel is needed to self-isolate or you live a multigenerational home and need to isolate away from for parents or grandparents, please go to nyc.gov/covidhotel.

At this point, District Manager Christian Cassagnol brought up concerns that social distancing is not being observed. For example, he mentioned Corona Plaza and the food, mask, and glove vendors where no social distancing was being observed.

Also, a testing site was on the Plaza and people were shoulder to shoulder with each other. He talked about NYPD not enforcing yet, but this could lead to a serious relapse of two months ago. Specific attention is needed around public plazas such as Corona Plaza where many people gather.

Jessica Schbowski responded the social distancing team is made up of multiple city agencies such as enforcement for public parks. Seeking community partners who may be interested in helping out but not to get anyone in trouble rather to focus on education. A crowd that builds up in front of a restaurant will be the responsibility of the business owner. All that can be done is to educate people and not force people to practice social distancing.

Regarding Phase 1 reopening Chairperson Louis Walker inquired about construction, specifically for construction sites and their offices which may be in an office building.

Jessica Schbowski responded the target is construction sites. The Department of Buildings is visiting all construction sites to ensure requirements are being followed and practicing education campaigns to ensure all are on board after 30 days.

Ms. Schbowski asked for clarification about the office building mentioned specifically on or off site.

Chairperson Louis Walker responded the office building is connected to the site but do not support those sites. Some are key personnel to the sites, but not all of them. Two companies opened their offices with staff Monday under the pretext of Phase 1.

Ms. Schbowski asked Chair Walker to send the location of the construction site and she would check it out. Generally, offices are opening in Phase 2.

NYC Council
Francisco Moya

Bernice gave the following updates:

Council Member Moya could not attend tonight's CB meeting because he is hosting his Virtual Town Hall meeting with the NYC Departments of Finance and Small Business Services.

An upcoming Town Hall meeting is planned for June 23 with the Department of Education. Please follow on Facebook for more information.

She reported on the police reform legislation supported at the city level. NYPD officers would be required to be NYC residents and in support of legislation banning chokeholds.

Daniel Dromm

Kelly Wu reported the Council Member's office working remotely and is available for any assistance you may need. Call 718-803-1917. The office offers legal services for general matters and immigration issues. Call for an appointment.

Office of the Queens Borough President

John Perricone reported:

All new and returning members were welcomed.

The Borough President is encouraging all to fill out the census form and to vote on June 23. Please send in your absentee ballot before the deadline.

The following events are virtual meetings that can be accessed on the Borough President's website at queensbp.org

- The PRIDE Month Celebration, June 18, at 2:00 p.m.
- The Queens Borough President's Recruitment Fair, June 24, at 2:00 p.m.
- The Queens Borough President's Annual Philippine Day June 24, at 5:00 p.m.
- Annual Celebration of Jerusalem, June 25 at 5:00 p.m.

Staff members are in the office between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Call 718-286-3000 with any questions or issues.

NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer

James Mongeluzo presented the following updates:

The Comptroller's Office recently released the City's Quarterly Cash Report and the City's Cash Balance Projections.

These are the statistics for the third quarter of the current fiscal year, which covers the quarter January through March. It does not capture much of the time when the pandemic started. As a result, the numbers are not as bad as many people would think.

The City's cash balance is lower than it was during the same time last year, noting more people would be interested in the fourth quarter numbers. A report will be given in the near future.

Next, there has been an annual claims report shows the number of claims filed against the City decreased compared to last year and the year before. Therefore, the number of claims settled decreased. Claims against the NYPD resulted in the City having to pay out 36% of the total money to NYPD related claims. Meanwhile, the total amount of money in claims paid out due to NYPD incidents was lower this year compared to the year before.

He shared the office is continuing to hold MWBE workshop which give information on how to kick start their business as the pandemic continues and more businesses reopen. If you do not find any of the identity categories of minorities and women owned, you can still sign up as there is much information to be had. Information includes loans that are available to many small business owners.

Lastly, the Comptroller's Office has released a proposal for cutting funding to the NYPD about 1.1 billion dollars over four years which would involve removing certain responsibilities from the NYPD, which the Mayor has done on enforcement related to street vendors.

The proposal also involves non police responses to those having mental health episodes and looks at the work that has previously been done in Eugene, Oregon, and Camden, New Jersey, and other municipalities that were able to shift enforcement duties and health services away from the Police to other agencies. Part of the way the budget will be cut too is by not replacing officers when they retire and cutting the number of officers to those that served between 2011 and 2016, which numbered 35,000. Currently, the number of officers serving is between 36,000 and 37,000. No one would be laid off, cuts would be made through attrition.

Mr. Mongeluzo will send links out via email.

NYC Public Advocate Jumaane Williams

No Report. Representative not in attendance.

Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz

Rodney Charles did not present a formal report, but informed the Board he was present on behalf of the Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz. Follow the District Attorney on Twitter at *queensdakatz* and Instagram.

VI. Committee Reports

Census

No Report. Committee Chair not in attendance.

Consumer Affairs

Committee Chair Alexandra Owens reported the neighborhood has dramatically changed from a few months ago where it was a ghost town but now some stores have reopened.

She expressed concern about the bars relating to social distancing. Bars are allowed to serve liquor outside but people are gathering and ignoring social distancing.

Environmental

Committee Chair Oscar Rios reported on June 15, the stores banned the use of plastic bags, noting the ban is good for the planet. Many of the stores have stopped giving out plastic bags. He mentioned stores that have plastic bags in stock may give them out, but as soon as the supply runs out, no more will be issued.

At this point Jessica Schbowski commented there was a delay in the plastic bag ban. Because of COVID-19 there was a stay in enforcement.

Health

Committee Chair Ashley Reed urged all to wear face coverings when out and observe social distancing and mentioned the numbers have been going down. She thanked all who volunteered their time giving out masks and food. Special Thank You given to Board Member Michelle Dunston for coordinating all the volunteer efforts for Lefrak.

Parks

Committee Chair Gregory Spock reported the U. S. Open Tennis Tournament will take place as scheduled this summer. The event will begin without fans in the stands because of the continued spread of the Coronavirus. Already some of the pro players have said Good Luck getting us here as it is a selfish decision. As the vice-chair of the Flushing Meadows-Corona Park CAB, he supports that sentiment. A year ago, the Comptroller's Audit was released reporting the USTA had underpaid the city \$311,202. Chair Spock will be creating a petition noting there are two entities associated with the Park. The other is the Alliance for Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, which its Board voted to for Daniel Zausner, the President of the USTA, as its Chair. With parks being the lifeblood of the city now more than ever, Chair Spock feels this decision will jeopardize the safety of players and the community. Players' security is at risk.

Public Safety

Committee Chair Lucy Schilero reported the Committee met June 9 via phone conference and a quorum was present. CERT which covers Boards 3 & 4 reported no funding is received for CERT. To be clear, this is volunteer work. She continued members are out working with the military distributing boxes ranging from 25 to 30 pounds going out to churches, non for profits, legislators offices and other religious groups.

Also, surveys are being done for the homeless and the COVID-19 victims looking for hotels that may have more room.

Additionally checking on neighbors that need food or companionship via phone.

The Fire Department reported no cases of COVID-19 in the three fire department divisions.

Fires occur where people cooking and forgetting to turn off the stove knob and as a result fires in the kitchen. Pots simmer and a small fire occurs.

In the Police Department no one has been affected by COVID-19, the department is very busy attending the Brooklyn marches. She expressed concern our neighborhoods do not have enough coverage since the officers are being sent elsewhere and noted the Precinct is working very closely with the 115. The response was there is coverage for our neighborhoods. There are various 12 hour shifts: 5:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. even longer to protect our community.

At the Queens Center Mall and Queens Place Mall there has been some looting. Several dozen people tried to break into the malls after a post on social media called for a loot out. Store windows were boarded up and Police Officers were sent to prepare for the riot. Officers also had to control the vandalism and crowding.

Although barriers were placed along storefronts on Roosevelt Avenue and Junction Blvd. fortunately nothing happened.

Both the 110 and 115 Precincts covered all areas they were stationary: no one was taken away. More than enough manpower was on hand to handle the situation.

Meanwhile, burglaries and stolen cars increased while grand larcenies and felony assaults decreased.

Next domestic violence was brought up. Call the 110 Precinct at 718-476-9321. Since we are in challenging times, reach out to the Precinct for family issues.

Outreach for the homeless along Broadway is being implemented with some of the churches including parts of Whitney Avenue. Working closely with Breaking Ground, to get them off the streets and with the help of CERT they will go to a designated hotel.

Mentioning graffiti, the Board office had emailed waivers in English, Spanish, and Chinese for property owners for graffiti removal from their property. No one can sign the form, but the owner or someone legally responsible for the building.

During this time, the Committee will give establishments a break on liquor licenses. She reported on the question of security cameras. A full count on cameras was not available that were active, shutdown, or not working. More details will be provided at the next meeting.

Meanwhile, many gang related problems were seen where people were threatened. The police are investigating and it is documented in the Committee's report. This will be followed up.

Transportation

No Report. Committee Chair not in attendance.

ULURP/ZONING

No Report. Committee Chair not in attendance.

Youth

Chair Alexa Ponce said to stay safe during these challenging times.

Before adjourning, Chair Louis Walker thanked all for attending and stated he does not know what will happen in September. He noted the Board is to have an Election at the end of the year and a Nominating Committee must be formulated in October to nominate members for Board positions.

There being no further business, the Board meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

NOTE: During the Board's virtual meetings, it may be difficult to determine Board members or legislator representatives or guests who were present if they were not actively engaged or participating in the dialogue or visually seen. Please notify the Board office if you were an attendee at any meeting and not marked present.