



QUEENS CIVIC CONGRESS VIRTUAL GENERAL MEETING - October 15, 2024

QCC Officers in attendance

Warren Schreiber, Ashook Ramsaran, Jim Trent, Elaine Young, Michael Scotland, Rene Hill, Richard Hellenbrecht, Barbara Larkin, Henry Euler.

Elected Officials & Representatives

CM Vicky Paladino; Alexis Winters (CM Vicky Paladino), Evelyn Li (representing Congr Grace Meng); Scott (representing NYS Sen John Liu); (Amanda Vazquez representing (CM Linda Lee); Davis Schaeffer (representing NYS Sen Roxanne Persaud); Representative from NYS Sen Leroy Comrie's office; Timothy Chubinidze (Queens Borough President's Office).

Press: Athena Dawson

Civic Representatives

Sherry Reisner (Utopia Estates Civic), Bobby Sher, Claudia Valentino, Michael O'Keefe, Mohamed Ishmael, Arcella Cook, Paul Graziano, Maria DeInnocentis, Rhonda Kontner, William Anniello, Stanley Blackwell, Christine Wilkinson, Vic Starksy, Sylvia Johnson, Tracy Koutsoukdakis, Carol Marian, Karen Odaira, Cathy (ABCPCA), Steve Barrison, Joseph McAllister, Richard Boukas, Philip Borkouski, Annette Ehrich, Diane Viggiano, Welcon Cheng, Angela Castellano, Alicia Spears, James Cottone, Lourdes Hartick, Derrick Smith, Lori Maldenian, Maria Caruso, William Scarborough, Arlene Schlessenger, Carol Marian, Bernadette Ferrara, Joe Donovan, Latonia (Westerleigh St Mark).

Meeting convened by QCC President Warren Schreiber at 7:35 p.m.

Opening Remarks by QCC President Warren Schreiber

Welcome and thanks for attending this meeting, being recorded for accuracy and summarization.

Financial Report by Jim Trent, Treasurer

Queens Civic Congress \$3,402.18 as of 10/15/24 (\$32K to Paul Graziano for City of Yes project).

Queens Civic Congress Foundation \$11,466.05 as of 10/15/24

Paid up Dues: 2025 (4); 2024 (4); 2023 (63). Need to increase QCC membership.

Legislative Reception on 12/7/24. Venue: Douglaston Club or Bayside Historical Society if accessible.

Legislative Luncheon at Antun's on 4/26/25. Same cost as 2023

Legislative Reception

The meeting also focused on the upcoming event at the Douglaston Club on December 7, 2024 and the Queens Civic Congress's finances. James Trent confirmed the contract with the Douglaston Club and noted a decrease in membership for 2024. He also mentioned the balance for the corporation and the need to rebuild the bank balances.

QCC Officers 2024-2025

QCC Treasurer Jim Trent cast 1 vote for the 6/18/24 approved slate presented by Nominating Committee Chair Ashook Ramsaran as follows:

President, Warren Schreiber

Executive Vice President, Ashook Ramsaran

Executive Secretary, Seymour Schwartz

Treasurer, James Trent

Vice Presidents

Henry Euler, Richard Hellenbrecht, Rene Hill, Barbara Larkin, John McCaffrey, Charles Ober, Michael Scotland, Harbachan Singh, Denise Winters. Elaine Young.

Founder, Late Robert (Bob) Harris (d. November 2020)



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Casino at Citifield

Queen's Future proposal, which involves the potential development of an entertainment center, including a casino, on the parking lot of City Field. Despite potential opposition, it is believed that the proposal will be approved.

The ULURP process has started and likely to be approved as 6 Community Boards are involved but not voting on the casino. Queens Future is seeking the gaming licence. The alienation bill is likely to pass conditional on Queens Future obtaining the gaming licence. Possible actions are: Demap the parkland; demap portion of streets; zoning map amendment for development. Public hearing on 11/18.

Discussion on the possibility of a master lease arrangement with the Parks department for the management of the green space and the environmental impact, particularly in relation to flooding issues in Queens. The team agreed to seek clarification on these matters and discussed the profitability of the property if a gaming license was not granted. Maria Caruso (Community Board 10) shared her experience with Bally's, a company also seeking a gaming license, and mentioned their plan to present their proposal to Community Board 10.

Additional comments by: Richard Hellenbrecht, James Trent, Paul Graziano, Claudia Valentino, Elaine Young, Ashook Ramsaran, Vic Starskly and Arcella Cook.

“CITY OF YES”

Presentation by QCC Consultant Paul Graziano, including calendar of upcoming events (see below). Discussions on concerns about the “City of Yes” proposal, which could significantly impact zoning policies and community involvement in urban planning decisions. Attendees debated strategies for opposing the proposal, including preparing concise testimonies for upcoming hearings and emphasizing the need for community board voting power.

Paul Graziano explained that the City Council must vote on the land use issue, and if they do not take action, it becomes law. He mentioned that the hearing will be held on October 25th, and the Council must vote by December 6th, likely around Thanksgiving. Evelyn confirmed that Council Member Vickie Palladino has been a firm 'no' on this issue from the beginning. Maria DeInnocentis suggested submitting a longer written testimony in addition to the spoken testimony at the hearing. Paul encouraged everyone to emphasize that council members represent voters, not special interest groups, in their testimonies.

Paul Graziano to distribute report on City Planning Commission hearing to Queens Civic Congress for dissemination. Warren Schreiber to send email distribution list sign-up information to meeting attendees. Queens Civic Congress members to attend and testify at City Council hearing on City of Yes proposal on October 22, 2024. Council Member Vickie Paladino to continue gathering information on how other City Council members plan to vote on City of Yes proposal.

QCC members urged to submit written testimony o land_use_testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72 hours after the hearing. Council Member Vickie Paladino to send information about proposed two-way bike lane plan to Warren Schreiber.

Queens Civic Congress members to attend rally against City of Yes proposal at City Hall Park on October 23, 2024. Queens Civic Congress members to emphasize representing entire communities, not just paid membership, in testimony. Council Member Vickie Paladino to follow up with Speaker Adrienne Adams about her alternative plan to City of Yes.

Queens Civic Congress to continue media outreach efforts for upcoming rallies and hearings



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Calendar of events (rallies, hearings) and tips on giving testimonies – see below

Additional comments by: Sherry Reisner, CM Vicky Paladino, Richard Hellenbrecht, Claudia Valentino, Arcella Cook, Richard Boukas, Steve Barrison, Maria DeInnocentis.

CITY OF YES IMPORTANT EVENTS CALENDAR

Tuesday, October 15th, 2024, 7:30 pm:

Queens Civic Congress Zoom meeting/City of Yes strategy session.

All civics across the city are invited to attend – link at the bottom of this email:

Wednesday, October 16th, 2024, 11 am:

WBAI (99.5 FM) show Living For the City with host Michael G. Haskins will interview Paul Graziano on the dangers to our communities of Mayor Adams’s City of Yes for Housing Opportunity if adopted.

Wednesday, October 16th, 2024, 4 pm:

Brooklyn Rally and Press Conference – 3000 Fillmore Street at Marine Park

Thursday, October 17th, 2024, 3 pm:

Bronx Rally and Press Conference – 778 Castle Hill Avenue in front of CM Farias’s District Office

Thursday, October 17th, 2024, 5 pm:

Queens Rally and Press Conference –
Southern Field at North Conduit Avenue & 115th Street

Saturday, October 19th, 2024, 12 pm:

Staten Island Rally and Press Conference –
Hylan Blvd & Tysens Lane in front of Bank of America

Monday, October 21st, 2024, 1 pm:

Rally and Press Conference at the south end of City Hall Park

Tuesday, October 22nd, 2024, 9:30 am Start Time:

Testify at the City Council Hearing

City of Yes for Housing Opportunity

Tips

- 2 Minute Maximum to Speak
- Keep it Short, Sweet & To The Point
- Practice Speaking & Time Yourself
- Keep it Local & How CoYHO Affects You
- Identify Your Civic/Organization
- Speak for Your ENTIRE Community

Sanitation

CM Vicky Paladino, Sherry Reisner (Utopia Estates Civic Association), Maria DeInnocentis (Utopia Estates Civic Association), and Warren Schreiber discussed the city's new garbage system, which includes the purchase of new garbage cans from the City at a cost of \$50 to \$60. Implementation Date: April 2026. They expressed concerns about the necessity of this expense, especially considering the current economic situation and the City's other pressing issues such as crime. CM Paladino suggested that the city should not force homeowners to buy new garbage cans and that the taxes they already pay should be sufficient to cover the cost. They also discussed the timeline for the implementation of the new system, with CM Paladino questioning the urgency of the City’s mandates.



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Creedmoor

Update provided by Richard Hellenbrecht:

Migrant tents in July 2023 were planned for 1,000 migrants, now currently housing 1,200.

There are lots of complaints from neighbors over the past year.

A proposal in Albany calling on Queens Borough President to close out the facility.

Mayor Adams decided to close out the Randall's Island facility (3,000 persons) by February 2025

CM Vicky Paladino pointed out that the influx of migrants continues due to the City's policy and that the migrant center at is a problem.

Additional comments by: Claudia Valentino, Bobby Sher and William Anniello .

Meeting was adjourned at 9:22pm.

CALENDAR

Following Meeting: November 19, 2024 at 7:30pm (Virtual)

Legislative Reception: December 7, 2024 at 1:00pm

Minutes prepared by Ashook Ramsaran. (Some excerpts from AI generated summary)

Issued on November 3, 2024