



Chairperson, Martha Taylor

The City of New York
Borough of Queens

Community Board 8

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District Manager, Marie Adam-Ovide

Minutes of Community Board 8 Board Meeting held on Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at the Hillcrest Jewish Center, 183-02 Union Turnpike in Flushing, New York.

Attendance:

Board Members Present:

Carolyn Baker-Brown, Robert H. Block, Susan D. Cleary, Florence Fisher, Kevin Forrestal, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Joshua Glikman, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, Robert Harris, Tami Hirsch, Fakrul “Delwar” Islam, Steven Konigsberg, Paul S. Lazauskas, Bright Dae-Jung Limm, Elke Maerz, Dilip Nath, Tamara Oshero, Simon Pelman, Frances Peterson, Wendy Phaff, Mohammad Rahman, Jesse Rosenbaum, Harbachan Singh and Dr. Penny M. Stern.

Board Members Absent:

Dilafroz Ahmed, Jagir Singh Bains, Dr. Allen J. Bennett, Edward Chung, Kenneth Cohen II, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Carolann Foley, Howard A. Fried, Mitch Lisker, Mary Maggio, Frank Magri, Jennifer Martin, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov, Charlton Rhee, Seymour Schwartz, Douglas Sherman, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Rachele Van Arsdale, Jacob Weinberg, Stanley Weinblatt and Albert Willingham.

Others Present:

Susie Tanenbaum representing Acting Borough President Sharon Lee, David Noh representing Councilman Barry Grodenchik, Kristen Jeffries representing Councilman Rory Lancman, Anthony J. Lemma representing Assemblyman David Weprin, Daniel Blech representing Assemblyman Daniel Rosenthal, Marie Adam-Ovide, CB8 District Manager and Izabela Szczepanska, CB8 Staff Member.

Call to Order:

3rd Vice Chair Michael Hannibal called this Board Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Public Participation:

Wendy Phaff – Ms. Phaff is a CB8 Member and stated that she is the Director of Development for Queens Centers for Progress. They provide programs and services for people with mental disabilities. She invited everyone to their major fund raiser benefit on March 3rd, “Evening of Fine Food” in Terrace on the Park. On March 28th they will have their annual Footsteps for Progress 5k run/walk in conjunction with St. Johns (*flyers were left on the table*).

Daniel Blech: Mr. Blech announced that on February 20th, there will be a Department of Buildings Resource and Outreach Fair from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Kew Gardens Hills Library. Representatives from DOB will be onsite to answer questions related to building issues. On February 19th there will be an MTA Queens Bus Redesign Presentation in partnership with Assemblywoman Nily Rozic. Representatives from the MTA will be discussing the newly designed bus routes (*flyers were left on the table*).

Salute to the Flag

3rd Vice Chair Michael Hannibal led the salute to the flag.

Michael Hannibal introduced Guest Speaker Allie Gumas from the Department of Sanitation.

Guest Speaker:

Allie Gumas – Ms. Gumas is an Outreach Coordinator for the DSNY Organics Program. She urged those in neighborhoods that have brown bins to use them. Apartment buildings that didn't get them can automatically sign up for the program and get as many bins for free as they need (*nyc.gov/composting*). The outreach campaign is called, "make compost not trash". They give out bags, finished compost that is made from food scraps and compostable dining sets. They clean up parks, rake leaves, take care of street trees, remove litter and beautify the neighborhood, one tree pit at a time. Since July of 2019, they have worked with volunteers, Community Board 2, Community Board 5 to knock on over 1,200 doors and ask questions or provide information about the brown bins. If a bin is lost or stolen, they can replace it for free. This is an opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Organic materials put into the brown bins, are taken to their facilities, and turned into finished compost that they give back to the neighborhood. On March 26th in Sunnyside, Queens there we will be a presentation open to all residents. They will have more in depth information with delicious food.

On March 1st the plastic bag ban is going into effect. Within NYC, there will be a charge of five cents per paper bag. This five-cent fee is not applicable to anyone who receives SNAP [or WIC]. There will be key exceptions for plastic bags (*inside each bag was a flyer explaining the ban and exceptions*). The biggest changes will be in supermarkets and large chains. They hope that people will bring and use their own reusable bags. Elected Officials and Community Boards in NYC were given reusable bags to give out to residents.

**Over 200 residents were in attendance. Reusable DSNY bags and reusable Community Board 8 bags were distributed.*

Approval of Minutes:

Kevin Forrestal made a motion to approve the minutes of January 15, 2020, seconded by Simon Pelman.

Count in favor 27 **Opposed:** 0 **Abstained:** 0

3rd Vice Chair –Michael Hannibal:

- Announced that we are asking for contributions for the sunshine fund. This is used in case someone is sick, has a death in the family, or has surgery. This is to send them flowers or a nice fruit basket (*money was collected during the DSNY reusable bag distribution*). He thanked everyone who contributed.

Kevin Forrestal made a motion to recess for five minutes. He announced that those who will stay until the end of the meeting will receive more than one reusable bag.

District Manager's Report, February 2020

Buildings – Good news! The department started a pilot program where a half-day inspector will be assigned to address the issues brought to them by the Community Boards and elected officials. Now the inspectors are given an electronic route sheet instead of a paper sheet. They no longer need to come into the DOB office. They go straight to the sites for inspection from their home which saves time. They can now get to 13 to 15 locations on average. They submit responses electronically to a supervisor who reviews the violations for quality assurance.

Fire Department – They are encouraging residents to reach out to the Red Cross 877-RED CROS to request installation of smoke and CO detectors. The service is free.

Department of Environmental Protection – The agency wanted to remind participants that the deadline for the Annual Water Resource Art & Poetry Program is March 24th. If you would like more information, please contact artandpoetry@dep.nyc.gov or 718-595-3506.

If you recall a few months ago, we sent a letter to DEP about their new representative Tommy Lin. Since then Martha and I met with Karen Ellis. She has been monitoring our complaints and responses received by the agency. We have seen much improvement in complaint resolution.

Parks – Parks Manager Gabe Echevarria stated that we should have heard from the Mayor’s office regarding the proposed miniature soccer fields for Utopia, Fresh Meadows and Pomonok playgrounds [*A Parks Committee meeting has been scheduled for February 18th at the CB8 office to review the proposal*].

They removed a Homeless encampment at Captain Tilly Park recently in collaboration with DHS and Breaking Ground. They offered the homeless person services. They are reseeding Cunningham Park along Francis Lewis Boulevard and Union Turnpike. We may receive complaints as the cricket field will not be able to be used until the fall. The other field at Hollis Hill Terrace and 73rd Avenue can be used. There are two cricket leagues that use these fields. There will be a meeting at the Overlook on February 18th at 10 a.m. with them to work out a schedule.

The dog run cover flew away at Cunningham park.

Sanitation – They collected about 1,200 real Christmas trees at curbside which is more than they did the previous year. The e-waste is still successful; even though, it is now on Wednesdays. The maximum location serviced is 25. They usually get about 22 locations scheduled for pick-up at a time. They are still on night plow in preparation for snowstorms. Remember to place garbage the night before starting at 4 p.m.

They are still having issues with the car collection bins. They are an eyesore. Even after the issuance of summonses and towing, they replace them within days.

NYC Commission on Human Rights - Free lancers are now included and have rights against discrimination for employment

Department of Homeless Services – They are looking to increase save haven beds by 1,000 citywide. They are beds for the chronically homeless – those who have been in the streets for 90+ days. There is one location in Richmond Hill that serves 10 clients at least a day. Elmhurst will have 75 beds. They are also looking to revive the church beds program.

Happy Birthday to Board Members: Kevin Forrestal, Paul Lazauskas and Bright Dae Limm.



Marie Adam-Ovide

DM Adam Ovide thanked everyone who donated to the homeless. She stated that this is something that Borough President Sharon Lee is doing as a way to give back to the less fortunate. The office will be collecting items until the end of this week.

Borough President’s Representative – Susie Tanenbaum

- On behalf of Borough President Sharon Lee, she invited everyone to attend the annual Black History Month celebration at the Queens Borough President’s Office in the Helen Marshal Cultural Center on February 26th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. She congratulated and thanked Marc Haken and Harbachan Singh who serve on the Borough President’s African American Heritage Committee.
- The deadline for Community Board Membership Applications was extended to March 13, 2020. The goal is to ensure a diverse pool of candidates for all 14 Community Boards. She announced that if anyone is interested in applying, they should visit the Borough President’s website [*Queensbp.org*]and fill out an application.
- She thanked everyone who participated in the Borough President’s socks for the homeless initiative. This is part of a broader effort to organize social service efforts with all the Community Boards. She thanked Community Board 8 for their participation.

- At the January Queens Complete Count Committee Meeting, District Manager Adam-Ovide shared the idea that every time a constituent comes into the office or calls, she and the team will end the conversation asking about the 2020 census and if they responded. She stated that she will encourage everyone to do the same including the Borough President's office. She thanked Marie for her contribution.
- They need as many ideas and collaborations as possible since they must count about 2.4 million people.

City Planning - Scott Solomon –

- Mr. Solomon introduced himself to everyone. He stated that he will be replacing Nolan Gray. He is relatively familiar with the district since he worked on the Kew Garden Hills rezoning. He is mostly working in Queens Borough Hall, Room 201. He stated that if he is not in the office, he can be reached by telephone or email. He will leave his contact information and if anyone has any questions, he will be available in the back.

Committee Reports:

Health Minute with Dr. Penny Stern, Health Committee Chair:

- The coronavirus has infected more than 44,600 people and killed at least 1,113 people in China. Coronaviruses are a family of viruses that can cause the common cold and some more serious diseases, including SARS, which killed many people 17 years ago.
- The virus was named COVID-19. This new type of coronavirus was first identified in Wuhan, China. The origins have been linked to illegally traded wildlife at Wuhan's seafood market. The exact source of the outbreak has not been identified. It can spread from person to person usually through respiratory droplets. If someone with the virus coughs or sneezes and the person is close to another person who breathes it in, then it can spread.
- There are cases in the US but those are all people that have been to Wuhan or were exposed to people that were. Currently, it is not spreading in communities in the US. The greatest risk of infection remains for people who are in China, recently traveled to China, and people who have been in close contact with someone who has been infected.
- The symptoms may appear in as few as two days, or fourteen days after exposure. There is currently no vaccine to prevent the 2019-nCoV illness. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus, wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and avoid close contact with people who are sick. Stay home when you are sick.
- Wearing a mask is not going to prevent you from getting somebody else's germs. Those masks work to prevent other people from getting sick.

Census 2020 - Kevin Forrestal -

Mr. Forrestal informed everyone that the information provided to the Census is protected by law. The Census can also be used to find out more information about ancestors. On or about March 12th the Census Bureau will be sending out mailings to candidates to respond by computer. There will be a second mailing in paper form. He encourages that everyone uses the provided number when responding on the internet. He stated that it would match and if there was a small discrepancy in what was filled out, then that would be eliminated, and they wouldn't have to follow-up. He discussed and explained the Census questions on the application step by step (*informational copies were available in the Board Member packets*). He stated that this information will be sent out. It is important for everyone including immigrants to respond. He asked the Board Members to ask and inform others about the Census when they go to meetings.

Kevin Forrestal asked if anyone had any questions regarding the Census.

Dilip Nath – What do you do after the tenth person?

Kevin Forrestal – We will get an answer for that. I will ask for the Community Board to send that out to the members and to put it into the March newsletter.

Marie Adam-Ovide – Absolutely.

Susie Tanenbaum – You can tell them about the telephone option.

Kevin Forrestal – There are four options: first is the computer, second is the paper, third is by phone, the last option is for someone to come to your home. When the Census doesn't get responses, they are going to speak to neighbors. That is not going to be as accurate as if they spoke to the people who are living in the house.

DM Adam-Ovide – The Community Board is planning on having three days of Census in our office from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on March 25th, March 26th, and March 27th. We will have computers available in the conference room for any member of the community who does not have access to a computer. We will be able to help them. We would also like to have anyone from the board to volunteer, especially if you speak, read, and write another language. We would appreciate that. So far, we have French, Haitian/Creole, Polish, and Spanish.

Simon Pelman – For gender you have male or female, but you don't have any other alternatives.

Kevin Forrestal – The Federal Government under our present administration chose not to give any other choices. Hopefully by 2030 that will not be the case.

Susan Cleary – They don't have to answer that question at all.

Kevin Forrestal – Correct, it is encouraged that you answer based on your best identity. The more questions you don't answer the more difficult it is for the Census Bureau to process the application.

Susie Tanenbaum – There is a tipping point, but they won't tell us what it is. If you don't answer x amount of questions.

Kevin Forrestal – I think if that is the only question you didn't answer you will be alright. If you don't answer some other ones, then the tipping point might be reached. Then they are going to have to reach out to you or your neighbors.

Michael Hannibal thanked Kevin Forrestal and welcomed Marc A. Haken back.

Capital and Expense Budget Committee - Marc A. Haken, Committee Chair -

Mr. Haken thanked everyone for the lovely fruit basket he received after his eleven days in the hospital. The budget requests were submitted. The City answered all budget requests. The responses were the same as it has been for about 30 years. He stated that it is the board's responsibility to respond to their responses that are asked year after year. He asked the Board Members to look over the responses to the City's responses (*found on the lilac page*). He thanked Kevin who did all the work and had helped him put everything together on Monday nights meeting.

Kevin Forrestal made a motion to approve the letter as presented, seconded by Simon Pelman.

Count in favor 27 **Opposed:** 0 **Abstained:** 0

Adjournment

Kevin Forrestal made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:26 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Izabela Szczepanska, CB8 staff
February 21, 2020*