

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, October 13, 2021 via [WebEx](#).

Attendance:

Board Members Present:

Heather Bennett-Idels, Carolyn Brown, Robert H. Block, Edward Chung, Susan D. Cleary, Kenneth Cohen II, Solomon Davydov, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Florence Fisher, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Joshua Glikman, Ashan Habib, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, Tami Hirsch, Steven Konigsberg, Paul S. Lazauskas, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Jennifer Martin, David Mordukhaev, Alan Ong, Tamara Osherov, Hersh Parekh, Simon Pelman, Frances Peterson, Mohammad Rahman, Charlton Rhee, Jesse Rosenbaum, Seymour Schwartz, Deepti Sharma, Douglas Sherman, Harbachan Singh, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Mohammed Tohin and Jacob Weinberg.

Board Members Absent:

Dilafroz Ahmed, Jagir Singh Bains, Carolann Foley, Wendy Gennaro, Mary Maggio, Dilip Nath, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov, Martha Taylor and Tamika Williams-Moore.

Others Present:

Max Weprin representing Borough President Donovan Richards, Honorable State Senator John Liu, Ashley Lin representing State Senator John Liu, Precinct Commanding Officer Kevin Chan, Harold Miller, NYC Racial Justice Commission, CB8 District Manager and Jatnna Reyes, CB8 Staff Member.

Call to Order:

1st Vice Chair Michael Hannibal called this Board Meeting to order at 7:45 p.m.

Chairperson Martha Taylor was having technical difficulties and was unable to start the meeting.

Public Participation:

Soma Syed – Ms. Syed is a Democratic Nominee for the Civil Court Judge for Queens County. She has been practicing law for more than 17 years. She is the immediate past president of the Queens County Bar Association and the current chairperson of the New York State bar association Law referral. She is looking forward on serving the people of Queens. She thanked all the Board Members for the hard work they have been doing.

Kevin Forrestal – Mr. Forrestal stated that all Board Members should have received a testimony that he submitted for a hearing today concerning accessory dwelling units. This bill will legalize a lot of things that are not legal now (i.e., basements, building on your property, converting garages/basements, etc.). He asked that they read it at their earliest convenience.

Kevin Burns – Mr. Burns spoke about the Briarwood Community Supportive Agriculture (CSA) group. They set up on Sunday mornings from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. by the Briarwood library. They are the host of the food scrap drop-off site. It’s back, you can drop off food scraps at your earliest convenience. They also have arts & crafts and composting events. He invited everyone to get involved with the CSA and use them as a resource.

Guest Speaker:

Honorable State Senator John Liu – Senator Liu stated that he was happy to see everyone. He wished it was in person. COVID-19 really though us lessons and hopefully we will get back up. At the beginning of the summer time, when we weren’t no longer in a state of emergency, public bodies were allowed to meet in person; however, they went to Albany and this law was changed for community boards and others to meet virtually until next year. They finally got all the educational funding in place to all public schools throughout the state. The funds are available, but tax rates had to be increased. *Regreably, Senator Liu was having technical difficulties and lost connectivity, he tried to log back in but was unsuccessful.*

Salute to the Flag

2nd Vice Chair Michael Hannibal led the salute to the flag.

Approval of Minutes:

Marc A. Haken made a motion to approve the minutes of September 14, 2021, seconded by Mitch Lisker.

Count in favor: **40** Opposed: **0** Abstained: **0**

Guest Speaker:

Harold Miller, Deputy Executive Director of External Affairs – NYC Racial Justice Commission– Mr. Miller spoke about the Charter Revision. These are some of the main highlights of the presentation:

- The Racial Justice Commission was founded earlier this year by the Mayor on March 23rd. It is empowered as a Charter Revision Commission and appoints 11 Commissioners including Chair Jennifer Jones Austin and Vice Chair Henry Garrido.
- The NYC Charter sets out the structure, powers, and responsibilities of New York City’s government,
- The Charter Revision Commission conducts comprehensive review of the charter, report on findings, recommends proposes to amend, draft proposed amendments to the charter for consideration by voters.
- The commission empowers with the legal authority to seize the transformative potential of this moment in history to identify and propose structural changes. This work is necessary because systematic racism has been and continues to shape our reality.
- Their vision for racial equity is tom make sure that worth, talents, and contributions of all people in society are valued and recognized; race is not determinant of economic, political, social, or psychological outcomes, as it neither confers privilege nor denies opportunities.
- Their mission-supporting methodology is creating capacity and ensuring accountability.
- They have themes of public engagement which include access to capital and similar resources, accessibility of government services to all people across difference, accountability, budget justice, civic participation, community ownership, asset building etc.
- They will have public engagement in October-November 2021. Their final report and ballot proposals will be in December 2021. To learn more about the Commission’s work, you can visit their website at: www.nyc.gov.racialjustice.

Commanding Officer Kevin Chan – 107th Precinct

- They had a homicide back on October 2nd. It was the first one of the years in the 107th Precinct. It was also the first one since January 2019. Unfortunately, this happened late Saturday night on this day around 11:45 p.m. on 165th Street and 85th Avenue, north of Captain Tilly Park. The victim was found on the floor on Sunday morning when an individual called 911. EMS responded and was pronounced dead at the scene. Investigation is still ongoing.

- The agency’s biggest concern right now is grand larceny of autos. They have had a spike on this due to the fact that people are leaving their vehicles unattended and running. He suggested to everyone not to leave their cars on, not even for a one minute, turn it off to prevent this from happening.
- They also have had several burglaries in the area. One of them was in a synagogue on 147th Street and 73rd Avenue, this happened last week, luckily an individual that lives on the block called 911 and they were able to apprehend the perpetrator.
- Phishing Attacks – Scams are happening more than often now. They are happening via email. He asked everyone to verify where the email is coming from and do not reply, make payments, or forward any suspicious emails.
- He also suggested all homeowners to have security cameras on the outside of the property for security purposes. In case of an emergency, there is footage to show the occurrence.

Commanding Officer Chan asked if there were any questions from the Board Members.

Jesse Rosenbaum – As Chairman of the Transportation Committee, I am a little up to date more than others. We have been receiving numerous complaints about drag racing, muffler backfiring and noise. What has the precinct been doing in that regard?

Answer: [C.O. Chan] – They are aware of this situation. He has asked his guys to patrol the area when they are on assignment. When they do get calls and my guys get there, the cars get going. He asked them not to chase any cars. He doesn’t want anyone getting hurt for a simple vehicle infraction. They are working on it specially in the area of Fresh Meadows.

2nd Vice Chair Michael Hannibal thanked Commanding Officer Chan for attending our meeting. He informed everyone that if there were any other questions or concerns to forward it over to the CB and we will forward it to Captain Chan for action.

Chairperson’s Report – **Michael Hannibal:**

- The issue raised by Kevin Forrestal on behalf of the Queens Civic Congress (QCC) should be addressed by the Buildings and Housing Committee chaired by Florence Fisher.
- We received notice that Project #HWS2020Q2 started this month to repair the sidewalks damaged by Storm Isayah last year. Our office has been in contact with Christy Germain, the DDC Liaison for the project. While she has not submitted a detailed work schedule for us are yet, she assured us that DDC is scheduled to complete work at 147 locations in Queens by Thanksgiving. This includes 38 locations in CB8. They are working in several community districts simultaneously. They are currently working in CBs 14, 13 and 12. We expect a schedule by the end of next week.

Kevin Forrestal made a comment on the portion of having Florence Fisher review the issue he raised on behalf of the QCC. He suggested that it be considered that the Zoning Committee also be involved. Any of these actions effectively totally eliminate small dwelling, low density rather zoning particularly the R1 zones.

District Manager’s Report, October 2021

Department of Transportation

As you know, the Department of Transportation implemented safety changes to the 188th Street /64th Avenue circle including traffic lights, new markings, and lane changes. We received many complaints from the community. Some changes have been made to the timing of the signals. Since then, traffic flow has improved. They are also going to remove the parking meters near Starbucks. Bike racks will be installed there this fall.

There is another safety improvement being implemented in CB8 at McLaughlin Avenue and 188th Street. Our Transportation Committee had requested two right turning lanes on Mclaughlin Avenue heading south and turning north onto 188th Street to accommodate the influx of cars trying to get on the Grand Central Parkway and alleviate congestion. Unfortunately, DOT found that it was not feasible. They claim that making such a change would create accidents (i.e., sideswipe of vehicles), they have added more time to allow vehicles to turn instead.

They also announced that it is Biketoberfest in NYC! They are celebrating Bike Month with events centered around bike riding safety. They encourage residents who are interested in bicycle events to Google: Biketoberfest NYC for more information.

Queens Public Library

The Queens Public Library suspended all late fees. If you have a book that is more than 28 days past due, you will be charged for the cost to replace the book. If you return the book, you will be refunded/credited.

NYC Commission on Human Rights

While only those who are vaccinated can dine indoors, service establishments must offer reasonable accommodations for those who cannot receive vaccines. (i.e., A restaurant can offer to sell food for takeout or offer outdoor seating as an alternate to dine-in). They continue to encourage business owners to go to their website to see examples of reasonable accommodations and access the Legal Enforcement Guidance:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/fair-chance-act.page>

Department of Design and Construction (DDC)

We learned that a rain garden had to be rebuilt at Main Street and 76th Road. DDC informed us that business owners are dumping cooking oil into it - that is not allowed. Business owners must properly dispose of grease. Information to properly do so is available online at DEP:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dep/water/disposing-of-grease-as-a-business.page>

Fire Department (FDNY)

We learned that the FDNY received less calls in 2021 than in the previous year - 2020. The FDNY had about 8,000 calls last year. So far this year, they had about 5,800 calls. There were eight probationary firefighters “probies” recently assigned to Battalion 50.

The FDNY is partnering with the Department of Education to give virtual fire safety presentations to the schools. If there is a public school interested in the presentations, we can get them in contact with Community Affairs at the FDNY.

Police Department (NYPD)

On October 23rd, the 107th Precinct Council will have a Halloween celebration, “Trunk or Treat”. It is from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the upper lot in Cunningham Park. For more information. Please contact Community Affairs’ office at 718 969-5974.

Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)

The Redwood Playground will be closed until October 31, 2021 as repair work to the comfort station and spray shower are underway. Seasonal Staff will continue to work through the Fall and end on December 31, 2021. Mayor De Blasio appointed a new Citywide Parks Commissioner Gabrielle Fialkoff. 30 Volunteers from Resorts World conducted a bench painting event on October 8, 2021 at Cunningham Park.

NYC Emergency Management

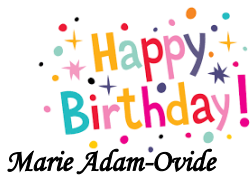
They encourage residents who sustained damage from Hurricane Ida to go nyc.gov/Ida for assistance.

Department of Buildings (DOB)

If property owners sustained damage from Hurricane Ida, The Department of Buildings is waiving fees to make the repairs. The licensed professional must state to the DOB that the repair is hurricane related to have the fee waived.

We also learned that there is a 90-day program where fines are reduced by 25% from the Office of Administrative Trials and Hearing (OATH). It is in effect until December 20, 2021.

Happy Birthday to Board Members Susan Cleary, Howard Fried, and Ahsan Habib who are celebrating their birthdays this month!



Borough President’s Donovan Richards Representative – Max Weprin

- On Thursday, October 14th, there will be an Italian Heritage Month celebration at Queens Borough Hall at 5:00 p.m.
- On Monday, October 18th at 6:00 p.m., they will be hosting a virtual re-districting townhall. On Tuesday, October 19th, they will be hosting a South East Queens Regional townhall at York College at 6:30 p.m. On Wednesday, October 20th, they will be hosting a Domestic Violence Awareness panel and resource fair from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Queens Borough Hall.
- On Thursday, October 21st, there will be a virtual Job Recruitment Fair event at 2:00 p.m. Also, at 4:00 p.m., they are hosting a virtual FEMA and Comptroller Claim support session.
- On Monday, November 1st, they will be hosting a Diwali Celebration at the Hindu Temple Society of New York in Flushing. You can RSVP for all these events by visiting the Queens Borough President’s website at: www.queensbp.org/RSVP.

Committee Reports:

Capital & Expense Budget Committee – FY 2023 Capital & Expense Budget Priorities:

Marc A. Haken, Budget Director: The Committee met regarding Capital and Expense Budget Priorities. A Public Hearing was held, and no new items were received from the public. Packets of each budget was sent previously. He asked everyone to review them before a vote is taken to approve them.

Approval of the Expense Budget Priorities – A new item was included requesting additional police officers for the Precinct.

Kevin Forrestal made a motion to accept the Community Board 8 Expense Budget Priorities, seconded by Seymour Schwartz

Budget Director, Marc A. Haken asked if there was any discussion on the motion, seeing none, a hand vote was taken.

A hand vote was taken.

Count in favor 40 Opposed: Abstained: 0

Approval of the Capital Budget Priorities – Capital budget items are almost the same as last year. Some items were completed or were underway and were taken off the list. Some items were moved to continued support.

Seymour Schwartz made a motion to accept the Community Board 8 Capital Budget Priorities, seconded by Jesse Rozenbaum.

Budget Director, Marc A. Haken asked if there was any discussion on the motion.

DM Adam-Ovide mentioned that Bhitihara-Martha Fulton stated that Mauro Playground construction has been completed and no longer needs to be on the continued support section. Budget Director Haken stated that the item will be removed.

A hand vote was taken.

Committee Reports:

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

- Dr. Stern spoke about the FDA was asked by Merck, the drug company, to authorize emergency use for its pill called Molnupiravir for COVID-19 treatment in adults who are at risk for either severe disease, hospitalization, or both. If approved, it will be a very effective use with the vaccine since the vaccine is for prevention and the pill will be for treatment. It will be the first pill to be used as treatment.
- She reminded everyone that there is still about 68 million in the United States who are eligible to be vaccinated who have not gotten vaccinated, which makes it really essential to have effective drugs to control the future waves of infections that are yet to come. The case load in the U.S. has dropped below 100,000 on average for the first time in over two months. Death are now down from about being 2,000 a day to 1,700. It is still not where we want it to be, but it is certainly looking brighter. She asked everyone to take care of themselves and be well!

Adjournment

Howard A. Fried made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:46 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Jatna Reyes, CB8 staff
October 22, 2021*