



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, November 14, 2018 at the Hillcrest Jewish Center, 183-02 Union Turnpike in Flushing, New York.

**Attendance:**

**Board Members Present:**

Dilafroz Ahmed, Jagir Singh Bains, Carolyn Baker-Brown, Robert H. Block, Edward Chung, Susan D. Cleary, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Florence Fisher, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, Robert Harris, Tami Hirsch, Fakrul "Delwar" Islam, Steven Konigsberg, Paul S. Lazauskas, Bright Dae-Jung Limm, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Mary Maggio, Jennifer Martin, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov, Tamara Osherov, Simon Pelman, Frances Peterson, Charlton Rhee, Jesse Rosenbaum, Seymour Schwartz, Douglas Sherman, Harbachan Singh, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Jacob Weinberg, and Albert Willingham.

**Board Members Absent:**

Dr. Allen J. Bennett, Kenneth Cohen II, Monica Corbett, Carolann Foley, Joshua Glikman, Frank Magri, Dilip Nath, Rachele Van Arsdale and Stanley Weinblatt.

**Others Present:**

Susie Tanenbaum representing Borough President Melinda Katz, Davinder Paul Singh representing Councilman Barry Grodenchik, Anthony Lemma representing Assembly Member David Weprin, Daniel Blech representing Assembly Member Daniel Rosenthal, Hudy Rosenberg representing Assemblywoman Nily Rozic, Marie Adam-Ovide, CB8 District Manager and Jatna Reyes, CB8 Staff Member.

**Call to Order:**

Chairperson Martha Taylor called this Board Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**Public Participation:**

**John Amato** – Mr. Amato is a resident of Community Board 8. He spoke about the need for funds to be allocated for the Parks Department for the maintenance of street trees (i.e. planting, pruning, sidewalk repairs damaged by trees, etc.). He requested that the Community Board writes a letter to all Elected Officials requesting funds so that more staff is hired for the maintenance of trees in our community.

**Richard Reif** – Mr. Reif is a resident of Kew Gardens Hills. He requested that 77<sup>th</sup> Avenue between Park Drive East and Vleigh Place be converted into a one-way street. He stated that it is an accident waiting to happen when parents are dropping their kids off at P.S. 164, between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and during dismissal time at 2:00 p.m. In addition, he is requesting that the Q74 bus service be resumed on Union Turnpike near Queens College that was shut down several years ago.

**Daniel Blech** – There will be a FREE Lead Testing event on Tuesday, November 27<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at their District Office [159-06 71<sup>st</sup> Avenue]. No appointment needed. Walk-ins are welcome.

There will also be a FREE Flu Shot event on Thursday, November 29<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at their District Office. You need to make an appointment prior to getting the flu shot. You can call: 718-969-1508.

**Davinder Paul Sing** – There will be a Medicare Enrollment presentation on Tuesday, November 27<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Bayside Senior Center [221-15 Horace Harding Expressway]. To RSVP, you can call: (718) 468-0137. In conjunction with Governor Cuomo’s office there will be a NYS Citizen Preparedness Corps Training Program on Saturday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at Martin Van Buren High School [230-17 Hillside Avenue]. All participants must register in advance at: [www.prepare.ny.gov](http://www.prepare.ny.gov).

**Dada Ananda Marga** – Mr. Marga is from the Ananda Marga Yoga in New York organization. It is a charitable non-profit spiritual-social organization. Their mission is to provide spiritual and social activity such as yoga, to increase social; development and progress on others. Their center is located in Flushing. They are offering their center for anyone who is willing to use it for meditation and yoga services.

**Anthony Lemma** – There will be a “Fighting Fire and Fraud” event on Friday, November 30<sup>th</sup> at the Hillcrest Jewish Center from 10:30 a.m. to Noon. For more information you can contact their District Office at: (718) 454-3027.

**Salute to the Flag**

Chairperson Martha Taylor led the salute to the flag.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Kevin Forrestal made a motion to approve the minutes of October 10, 2018, seconded by Mary Maggio.

Count in favor   38                        Opposed:   0                        Abstained:   0  

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**Chairperson’s Report – Martha Taylor:**

- Welcome back to Carolyn Baker-Brown!
- Best wishes to Board Member Dr. Bennett who is in rehab. She spoke with him recently and he is looking forward to integrate himself to the Board soon. He sent his regards to everyone.
- She thanked everyone who offered their deepest condolences to her on the passing of her husband Bob Taylor. It’s been a difficult time and she thanked everyone for their support.
- The Executive Committee asked Kevin Forrestal to attend a City Council Public Hearing regarding Intro 1004 and report to the Board. This bill is to establish a pilot program in East New York to facilitate the creation and alteration of habitable apartments in basements and cellars of certain one-family and two-family dwellings. He will give a report during the Committee Reports section.
- A letter was drafted to the Mayor’s Street Activity Permit Office *[included in Board Member’s packet]* regarding the proposed renewal of the Moratorium on Street Festivals. Only Street Festivals for multi-day and or multi-blocks that were held in 2018 will be allowed in 2019. We are against that.
- Board Member Elke Maerz is collecting money for the sunshine fund tonight.

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**District Manager’s Report, November 2018**

**City Planning** – The Kew Gardens Hills Rezoning (P2018Q0025) has successfully passed a fatal flaw review by the Department and will undergo a full, comprehensive review. A fatal flaw review is by design a quick review by the Department to (1) confirm that all necessary components are

sent, (2) the information in the package is clear, and (3) that all expected changes from previous iterations have been incorporated (if relevant).

A full review of the application will follow. Once certified, I will share it with the Board and community for public hearing.

**DFTA** – Mr. Jones had the opportunity to take a ride in the new Access-a-Ride vans that are now equipped with the new GPS system. He was in the van for about 4 hours from Queens to Staten Island and to Manhattan. He thought it was better than before but not as good as “Waze” for example. The new vans have room to sit only three people and accommodate two wheelchairs. He is also concerned that the vehicle didn’t seem too sturdy.

There will be a Newcomers to Medicare Seminar on November 19<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. at Mount Sinai located at 10 Union Square in Manhattan. Space is limited. To reserve a seat, please call (212) 420-4247.

For those who plan to switch medical plans, he advises that seniors make sure that all their medications are covered in the Part D plan before they sign up. If they are not, they stand to spend hundreds of dollars out of pocket for their prescriptions. The deadline is December 7<sup>th</sup>.

**HRA** – The agency has launched the “On Demand SNAP Interview Line” (718 –SNAP-NOW). They are available from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from Monday through Friday. They can call when it is convenient for them and speak to someone directly for a telephone interview in private. They can submit their application on line and call for an interview the same day. There is also a full range of language offerings. The applicant can speak in the language that they are most comfortable speaking in.

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) started on November 13<sup>th</sup>.

**DOB** – There were 188 complaints received for the month of October – about 12 more than the previous month. CB7 had the most complaints with 419 reported and CB4 had the least number of complaints with only 14 reported. The top complaints were: illegal conversion, work without permit, work contrary to plans and no certificate of occupancy. Starting on December 10, 2018 Place of Assembly and Temporary Place of Assembly permits must be submitted *online* through **DOB Now: Build** (*notice was attached to Board Member’s packet*).

**FDNY** – The agency has dropped off batteries for distribution to our residents. This is to encourage changing the batteries for their smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. This is part of the FDNY Fire Safety Education Program. You may also consider purchasing new smoke and carbon monoxide detectors that comes with a built-in battery (*batteries were distributed to the Board Members and audience*).

**DOT** - The Chicane Pilot Program has been postponed to next spring. Through this pilot program, the agency uses rubber speed bumps, advisory signage, and thermoplastic markings to calm traffic by creating a curvy road. There is no loss of parking involved. This will be implemented in five areas throughout the City of New York. One of these location is in CB8 on 71<sup>st</sup> Avenue between Kissena Boulevard and 150<sup>th</sup> Street - adjacent to P.S. 165Q.

**Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA)** – The agency filed charges against Berkeley College for deceptive and predatory practices. The lawsuit alleges that they misled students about financial aid; tricked students into taking loans directly from Berkeley; deceived students about institutional loans; deceived students about transfer credits, majors and careers; violated local debt collection when collecting debt even debt that is not owed.

**DEP, Parks, NYPD and HPD** did not attend the District Service Cabinet.

New Your State passed a law whereby all those employed in New York **must** do a sexual harassment training and the employers must keep a certificate on file. This requirement also pertains to members of the Community Boards. All our members will receive a letter from the Borough President’s office within or week or so requesting a copy of that certificate.

Most of you who are employed in New York State should have already taken the training and I encourage you to send a copy to the Community Board office as soon as possible. For those who are not employed or are retired, you will be **mandated** to attend a training. That training will probably be held at One Center Street in Manhattan. The Borough President’s office is trying to look into possibly having the training done at Queens Borough Hall for the Queens CBs. I will keep you posted.



*Happy Birthday to: Florence Fisher, Robert Block, Marc Haken, Doug Sherman and Jim Gallagher, Jr.*

*Marie Adam-Ovide*

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**Chairperson Martha Taylor –**

- Chairperson Martha Taylor spoke about the approval of the NYC Charter proposal on the Elections held last week. The Campaign Finance, Civic Engagement and Community Boards proposal all got approval from voters. She feels that not all voters understood what they were voting for and decided to vote yes for all three proposals.
- Mayor Bill de Blasio sent letters to hundred thousands of New Yorkers encouraging them to vote “YES” on the proposals, as well as on TV and robot calls.

**Kevin Forrestal** – The NYC Council’s Charter Commission is starting to meet on its 2019 revisions. He is meeting with them on the third Tuesday. He will suggest that the meetings give sufficient time to allow people to rate the issues that are involved including the representation on the Community Boards. Also, the amount of changes that had been made in the last five years.

**Discussion:**

**Chairperson Taylor –**

- The Council can amend the Charter. The proposals were all absurd and a waste of money. The first one had to do with changing rules on Campaign Finance, the second one was for Civic Engagement which the Mayor seems to think we need, that will have fifteen (15) Board Members and eight (8) of them will be appointed by the Mayor. This is a set-up to instruct all new community board members because in eight (8) years most of us will be out.
- New community board members have a lot to learn before they really understand what’s going on in their Community Board. They will then be quickly term limited out. Community Boards will not have much power. One of the few things we do advise on its land use and development. I really don’t believe people really know what they were voting on. Let’s hope the City Council can reverse this.

**Marc A. Haken** – May I suggest that the Community Board send a letter to all City Council Elected Officials expressing our dismay on the results of this election.

**Chairperson Taylor** – Are you making a motion on this?

Answer: [*Marc A. Haken*] – If it does require a motion. I make that motion.

*Marc A. Haken made a motion for a letter to be drafted to all City Council Elected Officials into how dismayed the Board is on the results on this past elections on the NYC Charter Proposal on Community Boards seconded by Seymour Schwartz.*

*A hand vote was taken.*

Count in favor   37              Opposed:   1              Abstained:   0  

**Opposed:** Bright Dae-Jung Limm

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**Dr. Penny Stern** – Dr. Stern mentioned that before the election she asked several people about the proposals. Not one person could explain to her what they meant. They didn't have any understanding of anything and still voted in favor.

**Robert Block** – That's what the Mayor wants.

**Chairperson Taylor** – The Mayor wants control of land use and development in the City of New York. That's what the Mayor wants.

**Simon Pelman** – Not that everybody understood any of those three propositions, having said that, there must be a better way than just eliminating everyone in eight years. What we may want to see in ourselves is for everybody to get two years off [the Board] of the next eight years and come back.

*Answer: [Chairperson Taylor]* – Well, that's part of the thing, you have eight years then you offered two and then you can come back if you want to.

**Simon Pelman** – So in eight years, everybody here is looking at the same time.

**Marc A. Haken** – No. Some in seven years, some in eight years. Those who were appointed last April, this first year count as year one. Then you have seven years to go. Those who will be re-appointed this April (2019) will get a full eight years.

**Simon Pelman** – That's not my point. My point is, that after seven or eight years everybody here is off the Board. All the years of experience will be gone. In that period there will be a new Board. I was proposing that after doing year five, six, seven and eight and rotate.

*Answer: [Chairperson Taylor]* – Are you suggesting that we voluntarily resign at various points and then come back after two years.

*Answer: [Simon Pelman]* – Yes, because since we are allowed to go back two years later. We can get re-appointment and we don't lose the years of experience and knowledge we have.

*Answer: [Chairperson Taylor]* – There is no guarantee you'll be re-appointed. You don't know who your Council Member or Borough President is going to be. I think maybe people should consider Shimi's proposal, but I will not sign on that tonight.

*Answer: [Simon Pelman]* – I am just throwing it out there, because after year seven and eight that means at least one full year one of us will not be representing. Queens is going to be a disaster.

*Answer: [Chairperson Taylor]* – Right. It is going to be a disaster. Absolutely, a disaster!

**Robert Block** – Isn't this based on the idea that there are significant more people salivating to be on the Community Board? Nobody has ever asked me what do I have to do to get on the Community Board.

*Answer: [Chairperson Taylor]* – People have asked some of us, yes. There are Boards that are never full because nobody in those districts wants to get on those Boards. We are unpaid.

**Kevin Forrestal** – There are 75 empty seats in Queens. There have been 300 appointments since Melinda Katz came in.

**Answer:** [Chairperson Taylor] – So, it is not true that everybody is on forever.

**Answer:** [Kevin Forrestal] – No. The average is twelve years.

**Answer:** [Chairperson Taylor] – There is a lot to think about. I think the push is to go to the Council and say please reverse this. They can do it.

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**Borough President’s Representative – Susan Tanenbaum**

- Ms. Tanenbaum spoke about the NYC Charter Commission’s Ballot Proposal results from the election. Borough President Katz’s counsel offered her information from their Legal Department in the Mayor’s Office on the Charter Revisions Board Member term limits. She read an excerpt from the letter which stated, “This proposal will limit appointment of Community Board Members to four (4) consecutive two-year terms on which appointments or re-appointments are made on or after April 1, 2019; however, members appointed for re-appointment for a term commencing on April 1, 2020 could be reappointed for up to five (5) consecutive two-year terms in order to prevent a heavy turnover of community board member membership in 2027 and 2028”.
- On behalf of Borough President Katz, Ms. Tanenbaum offered deepest condolences to Chairperson Taylor on the passing of her husband Bob Taylor.
- Lastnight Borough President Katz hosted her first 2020 Census Town hall. The purpose of this meeting was to get into a borough wide conversation about the 2020 Census. What is going to mean for our borough and to make sure everyone gets counted. The census determines representation in the Congress, how much Federal funding our borough will get for ten (10) years. Members of Community Board 8 were in attendance representing our Board: Kevin Forrestal and Fakrul Delwar Islam. A PowerPoint presentation was made by Joseph Dalvo. She will send it to us via email so it can be shared with the Board.
- Borough President Katz announced the formation of the Queens Complete Count Committee. This committee will focus on messaging to different communities to urge people to fill out the census form to get an accurate count. They will be having various programs/events beginning next year. She will keep us posted.
- Sharon Lee is now the new Deputy Borough President. She is replacing former Deputy Borough Present Melva Miller who is moving forward in her career.
- On behalf of Borough President Katz, she wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving!

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**Committee Reports:**

**Parks Committee** – Proposal for a domed soccer/cricket stadium at Cunningham Park – ***Bhithara***

***Martha-Fulton – Parks Committee Chair*** – Ms. Fulton stated that a Parks Committee meeting was held on October 25<sup>th</sup> at the Community Board 8 office. A presentation was made by Mr. Asim Deen regarding this proposal. In the course of discussion, it was determined that Cunningham park is not an ideal location to build this stadium. He is looking for a stadium with the capacity of 30 to 50 thousand people. This will bring many issues to the area (*i.e. Traffic congestion, loss of parking etc.*). It was suggested that he looks into other locations (*i.e. Flushing Meadow Corona Park, Belmont Park etc.*). Chairperson Taylor thanked Ms. Fulton for listening to Mr. Deen and his proposal. Obviously, there is no space in Cunningham Park for anything like this and she hopes he understood.

**Susan Cleary** – I am not happy about you throwing FMCP under the bus. I’m sorry I missed the meeting. I had to be somewhere else. First off, FMCP does not have the parking availability that you guys seem to think it has. There is no space for a stadium. Throw them under the bus some place else.

**Answer:** [*Bhithara Fulton*] - It was just a suggestion. We spoke to the Parks Commissioner and they understand that sooner or later, they’ll receive a proposal from them.

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*The CB8Q Meeting Dates for 2019 were finalized with one minor change. Due to Ash Wednesday being on March 6, 2019, the Executive Committee will meet on March 5, 2019 (1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday) and the full Board will meet on March 13, 2019.*

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**Committee Reports:**

**Kevin Forrestal** – Mr. Forrestal attended a City Council Public Hearing regarding Intro 1004. This bill is to establish a pilot program in Brooklyn Community Board 5 to facilitate the creation and alteration of habitable apartments in basements and cellars of certain one-family and two-family dwellings.

He stated that this public hearing was held because we are currently experiencing a housing crisis. Some people in the City Council and the Mayor’s Office have thought that converting basements and cellars of properties into apartments will be a way of helping alleviate the problem. This demonstration program would facilitate and allow for specific alterations that would render basements both safe and legal, creating new, legitimate apartments, and increase the property values of owners whose basements are renovated as a part of this program. It will be managed and administered by HPD. It is a five-year plan and a \$12M project. Our Community Board is not affected by this yet. The Board will be apprised of any news or any other information pertaining to this legislation after becoming law.

**Discussion:**

**Susan Cleary** – Where is this community located?

Answer: *[Kevin Forrestal]* – Bed Stuyvesant.

**DM Adam-Ovide** – Since it’s not just basement apartments, but it’s also cellars, have they talked about any issues with flooding in that particular area?

Answer: *[Kevin Forrestal]* – This topic was not brought up. The assumption is that they will not be going any further in the cellar.

**Marc A. Haken** – What is the difference between a basement and a cellar?

Answer: *[Kevin Forrestal]* – A basement is a little bit over half above ground. The cellar could be all below ground [52% to 100%].

**Michael Hannibal** – Is there a tax responsibility for someone that is renting their apartment to the City?

Answer: *[Kevin Forrestal]* – The owner has to take the person back if they were relocated. They have to have a proposed rate increase for the years out and it has to be renewed.

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**Adjournment**

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

*Respectfully submitted,  
Jatna Reyes, CB8 staff  
November 21, 2018*