



The City of New York  
Borough of Queens

Community Board 8

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Chairperson, Martha Taylor

District Manager, Marie Adam-Ovide

Minutes of Community Board 8 Board Meeting held on Wednesday, February 9, 2022, via [WebEx](#).

**Attendance:**

**Board Members Present:**

Dilafroz Ahmed, Heather Bennett-Idels, Carolyn Brown, Robert H. Block, Susan D. Cleary, Kenneth Cohen II, Solomon Davydov, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Wendy Gennaro, Ashan Habib, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, Steven Konigsberg, Paul S. Lazauskas, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Mary Maggio, Jennifer Martin, David Mordukhaev, Dilip Nath, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov, Alan Ong, Tamara Osherov, Hersh Parekh, Simon Pelman, Frances Peterson, Mohammad Rahman, Jesse Rosenbaum, Seymour Schwartz, Deepti Sharma, Douglas Sherman, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin and Jacob Weinberg.

**Board Members Absent:**

Edward Chung, Carolann Foley, Joshua Glikman, Tami Hirsch, Charlton Rhee, Harbachan Singh and Tamika Williams-Moore.

**Others Present:**

Kelly Wu representing Congresswoman Grace Meng, Honorable Borough President Donovan Richards, Max Weprin representing Borough President Donovan Richards, Michael Mallon, Chief of Staff, Borough President’s Office, Luna Fu representing Council Member Linda Lee, Honorable Council Member James Gennaro, Matt Malloy representing Council Member James Gennaro, Ashley Lin representing Honorable State Senator John Liu, Daiquan Llewellyn representing Honorable State Senator Leroy Comrie, Daniel Blech representing Assembly Member Daniel Rosenthal, 107th Precinct Deputy Inspector Kevin Chan, P.O. Timothy Gorman, 107th Precinct Community Affairs, Scott Solomon, Department of City Planning, Paul Graziano, Urban Planner, CB8 District Manager and Jatnna Reyes, CB8 Staff Member.

**Call to Order:**

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

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**Public Hearing:** *Chairperson Taylor announced that the ULURP item on 77-39 Vleigh Place has been tabled upon the applicant’s request for our next meeting which will be held on Wednesday, March 23, 2022.*

*Board Member Kevin Forrestal asked for adjournment of the Riker’s Island item that was going to be discussed tonight. He anticipated few months ago things going much faster, but they haven’t. They were going to react to some actions that they thought were imminent but turned out not to be. He will keep us posted.*

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**Public Participation:**

**Alan Sherman** – Mr. Sherman spoke about the ULURP application for 77-39 Vleigh Place. He stated that Kew Gardens Hills is overcrowded. They do not need high rise apartment buildings. Three to four stories yes, seven or eight stories no. Schools, stores, buses are all overcrowded, a walk to the subway is ridiculous with what they are

doing with Union Turnpike. The building is across the street from a special needs school. The school buses will not be able to get through. They do not need 300-500 more people in Kew Gardens Hills. He asked the Board Members to think before they vote.

**Reggie Atangan – NYC Health + Hospitals** – Mr. Atangan is a Registered Nurse at Queens Hospital. He is also a member of our community. He spoke on behalf of the nurses working at Queens Hospital on the challenges and difficult situations they have been put throughout this time. Understaffing being one of them. Over the holiday season cases exploded back in Queens to the point that the hospital has over 70-75% of its inpatient beds occupied by COVID-19 patients. Recently, the numbers have decreased but remains high in the inpatient units in the hospital. They are going through a chronic nursing shortage. He is asking the Community Board to exert its influence; help the hospital for nurses to get on board so that they can alleviate the patient ratio to the nurses at the hospital.

*Borough President Donovan Richards was in attendance. Chairperson Taylor invited him to say a few words.*

**Honorable Borough President Donovan Richards** – BP Richards mentioned that they worked extremely hard this last fiscal year to make sure that Queens Hospital got a feasible capital contribution (\$5.5M). This fiscal year they'll look to do more if they have more requests. He agrees with Mr. Atangan on the staff shortage at Queens Hospital. One of the things the Mayor came down to announce just a few weeks ago at Elmhurst Hospital was about NYC H + H receiving a specific allocation. He will make sure those allocations go directly to Queens Hospital being that Queens was the epicenter of the pandemic. Community Board applications are due by February 16, 2022. He encouraged all Board Members who are due for re-appointment to apply as soon as possible. On February 15<sup>th</sup>, they will have Department of Education, Chancellor Banks on a virtual Parent's Advisory Board. He will be the guest speaker. If anyone from the public has any questions, he encouraged them to attend. On February 16<sup>th</sup>, they will be hosting a fiscal executive budget event. You will be hearing from Lieutenant Governor Benjamin who will be presenting the Governor's fiscal plan and policy initiative for the State. He encouraged all those who are not vaccinated to get vaccinated for the safety of your community and your loved ones. There will be a lot of job opportunities at the airports coming soon. They made some announcements for doing Terminal 1 at JFK. They did a ribbon cutting ceremony at LaGuardia Airport. They anticipate that the MTA come up with their bus plan. He will keep us posted. They host a job fair, the third Wednesday of every month. On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, they will have a virtual Black History Month event at 6:30 p.m. He thanked the committee members for their help. They raised money for scholarships for students across the Borough. All information about events can be found on the Borough President's website at [www.queensbp.org](http://www.queensbp.org). He wished a Happy Lunar New Year to all those celebrating!

*Questions from the Board Members:*

**Heather Bennett-Idels** – In regard to the MTA, the lanes and making it more accessible for riders, please keep in mind the drivers. There are so many drivers in this neighborhood, and I know that when we go from our area to downtown Flushing to NY Presbyterian Hospital. It is a disaster with only one lane, and it is very difficult.

**Answer:** *[BP Richards]* – It's several things that we have now, obviously public safety is an issue since much more people are driving and are on the road. The Mayor has laid a plan. I will definitely share your concerns. It is all about balance and will see what the MTA will come up with.

*Chairperson Taylor thanked BP Richards for his words and invited him to attend any of our meetings whenever he wants to address the Board and the public.*

*Mr. Michael Athy wanted to speak about redistricting in Parkway Village. Chairperson Taylor mentioned to him that he could not be added to our agenda because he came to us late. In addition, there is nothing that the CB can do about redistricting, he will have to go his elected officials.*

**Michael Athy** – Mr. Athy stated that he did realize that redistricting is outside of the purview of the CB itself. Parkway Village is a relatively small cooperative. A little over 600 units. The issue came up last week when Governor Hochul signed the permanent redistricting for New York. The entire co-op will be moved from one assembly district to another (from 24 to 25). The co-op is going to split between two different senate districts. This will obviously impact their ability for constituent services and representation. They are planning to contact the group

of elected (state level) who had a hand in this. He contacted the CB because in the past, endorsement and/or resolution does carry weight when we contact City level and State elected officials. He sent a drafted resolution last week which is part of that effort. They want to remain in one piece whether in district 24 or 25. If they are split, it will lessen their representation and their access to constituent services.

**Viessa Regular – Ms. Regular wanted an update on the homeless shelter that is set to open at 138-50 Queens Boulevard. The last update she had received was in November 2020. She wanted to know what the latest news was the CB had about this shelter.**

**Answer: [Chairperson Taylor] – No. Try calling your local elected officials’ offices about that. We do not have any information on this proposal.**

**We have made several calls to our congress people, the Mayor and the Governor’s office. Last time, Seymour Schwartz who I believe is on this call, he had reached out to a managing agency to partner up and I was just wondering if anything had come with that.**

**Council Member James Gennaro – [to Ms. Regular] –** He has been in extensive negotiation with the Mayor’s Office. He is in contact with the Department of Homeless Services. He is in the process of drawing up a map that will show the potential impacts of this facility. It is in proximity to the proposed jail, playgrounds, library, and high school. He is scheduled to speak to the Chief of Staff of the Mayor. There is a lot of backrooms regarding this. He is cautiously optimistic that they will be successful. As the Council Member, he does not have complete control over this, but he is doing his best to use his influence with the new administration. That is how he did with the previous administration.

CM Gennaro mentioned Governor Hochul’s proposal on her last State of Address that will end single family zoning. It has to do with what she calls Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU). He thought by now this would have fallen out of the conversation, but it is still on the budget. He saluted Board Member Kevin Forrestal and the Queens Civic Congress for all the work that they have done on this. His office is working on a major campaign to push back against this. From the local perspective, he is doing whatever he can to put this on the public line. He is meeting with the Speaker of the Council Adrienne Adams tomorrow to speak about this. His office will be reaching out to community members and civic leaders to see if they can be a real voice of reason in this discussion.

Budget season has begun. Those of you who have association with group that get funded through his office or the Council in general, now is the time to be in contact with his Chief of Staff/Budget Director. They are soliciting people who are in need of funding for various organizations. The deadline for this is sometime later this month. He suggested that those interested contact his office.

They are getting a new district office which will be ADA compliant. It will be on Union Turnpike and 180<sup>th</sup> Street. Construction is still being done but will open soon. He has been one of the major supporters of the Mayor’s anti-crime blueprint. They are looking to have better reform laws to combat violence and keep the community safe.

*Chairperson Taylor reiterated that all residents who signed up to speak at the public participation portion of the Public Hearing, which was tabled tonight, will have the chance to do so at our next CB8 Meeting on March 23, 2022.*

*Chairperson Taylor asked all of the elected official’s representatives who were present to give their update/report via chat since the agenda for the night was extensive.*

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*Chairperson Taylor welcomed the 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct Officers who were present. 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct’s Deputy Inspector Kevin Chan was in attendance. She invited him to say a few words.*

**D.I. Kevin Chan – 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct**

- D.I. Chan stated that crime has gone up in the 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct. They have seen a spike robberies, larcenies, and grand larcenies of autos. They have seen a spike in robberies along Hillside Avenue between the 103<sup>rd</sup> Precinct and the 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct. One individual committed seven robberies in the area and has been apprehended for

that. Scams with skimming devices are still on the rise. He asked everyone if they are using debit/credit cards at an ATM to please cover their pins. They have pin hole cameras and they record your pin and duplicate your card. There have been several larcenies on autos (tires, rims, catalytic converters, etc.). He asked everyone not leave valuable items in your car. He mentioned an auto theft that happened in broad daylight in Fresh Meadows. Someone went to grab coffee and left the car running and unattended, someone came and took off with the vehicle. Personal checks are also being forged. People are stealing them from the mail. He suggested everyone put a fraud alert in their accounts as a safety measure. Telephone scams are still on the rise. Never give your personal bank information, social security, etc. over the phone.

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**Salute to the Flag**

Chairperson Martha Taylor led the salute to the flag.

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**Approval of Minutes:**

Marc A. Haken made a motion to approve the minutes of January 19, 2022, seconded by Michael Hannibal.

Count in favor: **42** Opposed: **0** Abstained: **0**

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**Guest Speaker:**

**Paul Graziano, Urban Planner** – Mr. Graziano spoke about Governor Hochul’s proposed legislation on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) which is the elimination of one-family zoning and Transit Oriented Development (TODs) in Queens County. He provided a brief study and analysis. He believes that all Community Boards and Elected Officials will lose influence over land use issues and other issues with this bill. This can potentially eliminate single family zoning in NYS. These are some of the main highlights from the presentation:

- He watched Governor Hochul 2022 State of the State televised speech where she briefly mentioned her plans for changing land use across New York State. In her speech she stated: “We’ll fix outdated land use laws that hold back housing supply. We’ll encourage transit-oriented development and the conversion of hotels and office to housing is also part of our housing strategy”.
- This basically means that one-family zoning will be eliminated in the State of New York by requiring all municipalities to allow at least a minimum of one additional unit per lot. For example, if you have a single-family lot (R1 & R2 zone). This lot will be allowed to have at least one ADU and it could be three or four. It would all depend on how it is written within the law. It can be a basement, attic, garage conversion, a new house behind a house. This would affect literally, every single family zoned in the State of New York.
- He mentioned the proposal of “Planning Together” which was proposed in the past He presented that to the Board back in the beginning of 2021. They fought very hard against that.
- If this legislation passes, it will take away the “home rule” from local municipalities, the villages, towns, and cities of NYS, by removing their ability to author and control their own local land regulations.
- It will mandate a blanket “amnesty” program for the tens of thousands of illegally converted houses in NYC, rewarding decades of criminal behavior by unscrupulous property owners who: charge market-rate rents with no protections for tenants, create dangerous and sometimes deadly conditions and negatively impact the quality of life.
- This ADU proposal will create a kind of say, an affordable housing across the State of New York. It is not true! It is market rate housing. We know that based on what has happened with the illegal conversions in Queens, this amnesty will also not make the people who have these illegal conversions bring them up to code. They would not have to be under multiple dwelling law and will not have to be on their Certificate of Occupancy (C of O) which is what makes people pay more taxes.
- The second bill which is Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) will propose legislation to foster multi-family construction in zones drawn by municipalities around rail transit stops within commuting distance to NYC. The State will provide assistance to municipalities for drafting the ordinance changes, easing the

burden on smaller municipalities. This action will expand housing options and job access for New Yorkers while reducing their need to own a car and minimizing traffic impacts. *[a map of the long island railroad stations in our District were screen shared for everyone to see].*

- He is calling for these two parts (AA & EE) be removed from the legislation under bills S8006/A9006. He asked the Community Board to come up with a resolution against these two bills.
- They have created a Statewide coalition along with several other people called: [www.save1familyny.org](http://www.save1familyny.org). More information and resources are available on this website.
- Other CBs have been involved on this. CB11Q passed a resolution on Monday, CB13Q has a meeting on Monday, CB1 in Staten Island passed a resolution last night against this.

*Chairperson Taylor thanked Mr. Graziano for his presentation. Before opening the floor for questions from the the Board Members, she suggested that a motion be created.*

**Marc A. Haken made a motion to create an Ad Hoc Committee to draft a resolution in opposition of these two points of the Governor's Hochul legislation proposal seconded by Michael Hannibal.**

**Discussion:**

**Chairperson Taylor** – asked for three to five members to be part of this committee: Kevin Forrestal and Michael Hannibal. Does anyone else volunteers?

**Answer:** *[Maria DeInnocentiis]* – I volunteer.

**Answer:** *[Howard Fried]* – I would like to be part of this committee as well.

**Who wants to be the fifth person?**

**Answer:** *[Kevin Forrestal]* – It is fair to say that there have been several very good resolutions passed already, we can incorporate them and go beyond and also incorporate what hasn't been said. If this proposal does not produce in the end, the right number of houses of the right type that are affordable. It is going to cause great destructions with very little if any benefit.

**Chairperson Taylor** – Let me give you an example of that. There is a site in Jamaica Estates [ Somebody sold the property, whoever bought it tore down the garage, built a two-story two-bedroom house on the lot where the garage was on. It was done without any permits and then he put it in the market for \$1.1M. How does this help affordable housing? How does that help the homeless people? It doesn't. It's crazy, it makes no sense, and this is the kind of things that will then be given amnesty through all the fines that been laid on the property. It has been taken off the market. The Buildings Department is planning to take it to court.

**Dilip Nath – Madam Chair, I would like to serve on this committee.**

**Answer:** *[Chairperson Taylor]* – Okay, now we have five.

**DM Adam-Ovide – Madam Chair, I spoke to Joe, my colleague from Board 11. He will share his resolution with us.**

**Paul Graziano** – I forwarded Staten Island's CB resolution.

**Hersh Parekh** – To *[Mr. Graziano]* – The Queens legislators for the portions that you showed us on the map, have they been engaged on this issue through your coalition?

**Answer:** *[Paul Graziano]* – Some. Our goal is to get obviously as many elected officials in NYC to oppose to this. The impetuous are coming from several state senators and assembly members, mostly from Manhattan and some parts of Brooklyn and Queens.

**In terms of the opposition that you have heard and shared with us today, has it been to the substance of the bills, meaning eliminating the single-family housing or has it been to what you have described what is state overreach into what it has historically been local government function or both?**

**Answer:** *[Paul Graziano]* – The answer is yes. As well as the unbelievable possibility. A blanket amnesty in the city sets up a situation for a blanket amnesty in every other City in town in the State of New York. All of these folks in Westchester, Nassau & Suffolk see the writing on the walls. If it happens here, it will definitely happen there. They are totally opposed to this.

A roll call vote was taken.

Count in favor: **32** Opposed: **0** Abstained: **0**

**Members who voted in favor:** Dilafroz Ahmed, Heather Bennett-Idels, Carolyn Brown, Susan D. Cleary, Solomon Davydov, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Wendy Gennaro, Ashan Habib, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, Steven Konigsberg, Paul S. Lazauskas, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Mary Maggio, David Mordukhaev, Dilip Nath, Alan Ong, Hersh Parekh, Mohammad Rahman, Jesse Rosenbaum, Seymour Schwartz, Douglas Sherman, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Martha Taylor and Mohammed Tohin.

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

- She offered condolences to our Board Members Edward Chung on the passing on his mother and Kevin Forrestal on the passing of his brother-in-law.
- They have been in contact with Deputy Inspector Chan and his team regarding illegal parking of commercial vehicles. They have increased enforcement of commercial vehicles that illegally park in the neighborhood. With the assistance of traffic enforcement, as of last week they issued over a dozen violations. She understands there is a problem with getting a tow truck. They will ask the Borough President and with the help of our Council Members to fund a large vehicle that can tow away these trucks that are parked illegally in our neighborhood.

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**District Manager’s Report – February 2022**

**Queens Public Library**

The Queens Public Library offers remote printing for those of you who do not have a printer at home. A library card is needed. It may take up to two days to retrieve the document.

**Department for Parks and Recreation (DPR)**

Mulchfest 2022 was successful. They had 466 trees that were mulched at the upper parking lot. They reportedly have 234 staffers and three (3) supervisors. The seasonal staff was extended until the end of June. He reiterated that it is DPR’s policy that smoking is not allowed at the parks except in the parking lot or on the sidewalks. That policy includes both cigarette/tobacco products and marijuana.

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservancy (DEC) will be partnering with Parks to have a chemical waste collection event at Cunningham Park. Date to be announced.

**Fire Department (FDNY)**

The agency doesn’t have a replacement yet for Commissioner Nigro who recently retired. The agency will be sending fire safety information to our office and asked that we share them with the community.

**Department of Transportation (DOT)**

Stop signs have been approved for the following locations near schools in our district:

- 67th Avenue and 174th Street near P.S. 173.
- 75th Avenue and 162nd Street near P.S. 164
- Goethals Avenue and 161st Street near Gateway to Health Sciences H.S.

DOT’s representative spoke about the 1,000 raised crosswalks that Mayor Adams announced. They asked if we had locations. I asked for more information about the criteria. We are still waiting for that information.

**Department of Buildings (DOB)**

They are very short staffed during the last 8 weeks due to COVID. While the staffers are still working their full shifts, they are spending limited hours physically in the office. Inspections are delayed, especially the compliance inspections for the Homeowners Relief Resolution Program. DOB staff is available to attend community/civic meetings virtually. If interested, please send us a request.

**Department of Environmental Protection**

The DEP’s art and poetry contest for students from 2<sup>nd</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade is underway. The deadline is March 5<sup>th</sup>. Information is available on their website. The new DEP Commissioner is Rohit Aggarwala. Deputy Commissioner for Intergovernmental/Public Affairs Michael DeLoach has been re-assigned and Ms. Mikelle Adgate is currently the Acting Deputy Commissioner.

**Department of for the Aging (DFTA)**

Due to COVID, seniors may not have access to in person assistance. They recommend that seniors reach out to Aging Connect at (212) 244-6469.

**NYS Office of Cannabis Management**

I attended a meeting last week about the NYS Legislation about the legalization of cannabis. The Queens Borough President also discussed this issue at his Borough Cabinet meeting yesterday. The State is in the process of making the rules which will be shared at the end of this winter season or early spring. There will be a sixty (60) day public comment period. They anticipate an application review process similar to that of on-premises liquor licenses. There will be nine adult-use license types: cultivator, nursery, processor, distributor, retail-dispensary, delivery, on-site consumption, adult-use cooperative, and microbusiness. One entity cannot own more than one or have interest in any other adult-use license type. A goal has been set to award 50% of all adult-use licenses to social and economic equity applicants (i.e., minority, women, distressed farmers, people from communities most affected and their immediate family). The state’s cannabis revenues will be deposited into the NYTS Cannabis Revenue Fund. Forty percent will go to education; 40% will go to community grants reinvestment funds and 20% to drug treatment and education fund. There will be an advisory board formed to determine how to spend the funds. Chairwoman Tremaine Wright of the NYS Cannabis Control Board encouraged those interested to sign-up for updates online at [www.cannabis.ny.gov](http://www.cannabis.ny.gov) or to follow them on Twitter @nys\_cannabis.

*Happy Birthday to Board Members: Kevin Forrestal, Paul Lazauskas and Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov.*



**Marie Adam-Ovide**

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**Borough President’s Donovan Richards Representative – Max Weprin**

- Nothing to report.

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**Scott Solomon – Department of City Planning**

- Mr. Solomon is looking forward to the discussion on the ULURP for 77-39 Vleigh Place next month.

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**Committee Reports:**

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

- Dr. Stern spoke about heart health. February is known as heart health month. It is the time when take precautions for risks of cardiovascular disease and what can be done to improve our health.
- Physical activity each day is one of the most important things we can do for our well-being. Taking every opportunity to move as much as we can, taking into account of course, every mobility limitation you may

have. Aiming for 150 minutes of activity over the course of the week is ideal. Making your diet heart healthy, concentrating on nutrient dense and fiber filled foods: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, low-fat food. Keeping your weight at a healthy level meaning a weight that is right for you, a weight which you can carry out all of your activity with ease. Blood pressure of course is of key importance and the maintenance of cardiovascular health, making sure that your blood pressure falls within the normal range. If you require medication, it is vital to take it as prescribed. Maintaining blood sugar levels in the optimal range is important, this is part in the effort to prevent the development of type two diabetes. Keeping cholesterol levels controlled is another essential component of cardiovascular health.

- If you are a smoker, make every effort to stop, smoking is one of the most destructive habits there is. It impacts negatively on every body system: the heart, the lungs, the blood vessels, even the skin. Alcohol should only be consumed in moderation. Also, make sure you keep your stress in check. Take time for self-care, relaxation breaks, meditation and/or yoga. You can make February a true heart health month for you and your loved ones.

### **Adjournment**

Marc A. Haken made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 9:07 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Jatnna Reyes, CB8 staff  
February 15, 2022*