



Chairman, Alvin Warshaviak

*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 11, 2015 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, Dr. Allen J. Bennett, Robert H. Block, Edward Chung, Susan D. Cleary, Kenneth Cohen II, Monica Corbett, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Mary Maggio Fischer, Carolann Foley, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, James Gallagher Jr., Joshua Glikman, Marc A. Haken, Robert Harris, Tami Hirsch, Fakrul “Delwar” Islam, Mitch Lisker, Mark J. Lefkof, Elke Maerz, Frank Magri, Jennifer Martin, Tamara Osherov, Frances Peterson, Samuel Rodriguez, Steven Sadofsky, Michael F. Sidell, Harbachan Singh, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Alvin Warshaviak, Jacob Weinberg, Stanley Weinblatt and Albert Willingham.

**Board Members Absent:**

Brian DeMasters, Florence Fisher, Michael Hannibal, Steven Konigsberg, Bright Dae-Jung Limm, Paul S. Lazauskas, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov, Simon Pelman, Charlton Rhee, Jesse Rosenbaum, Annie Salvatore and Seymour Schwartz.

**Others Present:**

Anthony Lemma Jr. representing Congresswoman Grace Meng, Daniel Rosenthal representing Councilman Rory Lancman, Anthony Lemma Sr. representing Assembly Member David Weprin and Marilla Li representing Assemblywoman Nily Rozic, District Manager Marie Adam-Ovide and Alma Karassavidis, CB8 staff member.

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Alvin Warshaviak called this Board Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

**Public Participation:**

**Dennis Frank**- My name is Dennis Frank and I am from the NYC Office of Child Support Enforcement. I want to take this opportunity to tell you about some of the services and programs we provide. Our agency is trying to re-brand ourselves and focus more on family support and family sustainment programs. We are trying to get away from just being known for the enforcement actions that we have been stigmatized for. We want the communities to understand that both parents need to participate in the lives of their children. Our agency offers the following services:

1. *Mediation Services* – This is a very powerful resource that we have available in our communities as an alternative for law enforcement in case Mom and Dad get into an argument. Not only do they offer consultation services for child related issues, but also for relationship related issues. These services are absolutely free and locally based.
2. *Parent Pledge Project* – It takes Family Court out of the equation. Mom and Dad are given an opportunity to sit across from each other at the table with either a community based organization or a faith based organization

to discuss how they are going to raise their children. They come to terms on how much they want to pay, how much time they want to spend with their kids and just how they want to raise their kids in general.

3. *Child Support Debt Reduction Programs* – This offers the non custodial parents who have fallen behind in their child support debt an opportunity to waive some of the debt, and in some instances alleviate the debt in general. These parents are offered the opportunity to get back on their feet when they do gain a good sustainable income. It also gives them the opportunity to get back into the child’s life and engage with their children.

I strongly advocate these programs as a resource for our community. It is important the fathers and mothers maintain a good relationship so that they can actively participate and engage in their children’s lives.

*Mr. Frank left copies of all literature available on these programs with CB8.*

**Michael Sidell**- I am against the Rapid Bus Transit for several reasons. Our cross county streets going north-south on 164<sup>th</sup> Street, Kissena Boulevard and Main Street are too narrow to add these buses. In order for one of those accordion buses to pull into a stop, it has to go out and block the left lane and then come back into the right lane. If select buses are added in Kew Gardens Hills, it will just make things worse. In Fresh Meadows, Jewel and 73<sup>rd</sup> Avenues are one block apart. In Kew Gardens Hills all 3 of those locations are 10 blocks apart. I was waiting for the Q20 at 72<sup>nd</sup> Ave this evening. The bus stop is on a median and is not handicapped accessible. I did not stand on the pile of ice that was not cleared and the bus driver tried to pull into the stop and told me to get out of the street. It is not safe, neither is the stop at 75<sup>th</sup> Ave. When you cross 73<sup>rd</sup> Ave to get to the 75<sup>th</sup> Ave triangle you walk right in front of the Vleigh Place shuttle bus stop.

**Salute to the Flag**

Chairman Warshaviak led the salute to the flag.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Alvin Warshaviak made a motion to approve the minutes of January 14, 2015 *with corrections*, seconded by Marc A. Haken.

**Count in favor    31                      Opposed:    0                      Abstained:    0**

**Board Members who approved the minutes:**

Dilafroz Ahmed, Jagir Singh Bains, Carolyn Baker-Brown, Dr. Allen J. Bennett, Robert H. Block, Edward Chung, Susan D. Cleary, Monica Corbett, Allen Eisenstein, Mary Maggio Fischer, Carolann Foley, Kevin Forrestal, James Gallagher Jr., Marc A. Haken, Robert Harris, Fakrul “Delwar” Islam, Mark Lefkof, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Frank Magri, Jennifer Martin, Tamara Osherov, Samuel Rodriguez, Steven Sadofsky, Michael F. Sidell, Harbachan Singh, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Alvin Warshaviak, Jacob Weinberg and Stanley Weinblatt.

**Board Members who did not approve the minutes:**

None

**Chairman’s Report:**

- The Executive Board discussed a very obvious procedural change which came up with one committee. In this particular case it was an organization requesting a street permit. On any vote, if someone Chairs that organization and the permit comes to them for approval, they should not be the one to approve it. In other words, anyone that has any interest, they should turn it over to the Vice Chair or anyone else so that there is no conflict. We agreed that it should be for any committee.
- Susie Tanenbaum notified us that she is under the weather and she may not be able to be here. If she comes, ignore what I am going to say now and let her say it again. The Borough President, Melinda Katz has named a new Deputy Borough President, Melva Miller. She succeeds former Deputy Borough President, Leroy Comrie. Since 2007 she has served as Director of Economic Development for the Queens Borough President’s office. She was the founding Executive Director of the Sutphin Boulevard

Business Improvement District. If anyone wants to know more, or see her picture they can make a request to read her bio (*available upon request*).

***Chairman Warshaviak called upon Marc A. Haken to take the floor for a moment.***

**Marc A. Haken** – I spoke at the last meeting and mentioned that Harbachan and I are members of the Borough President’s African Heritage Committee and that we had the Martin Luther King Day event. On February 23<sup>rd</sup> we will have our African American Heritage Committee Event in the faculty dining room at York College at 6:00 p.m. You are all invited. We will give out Borough President Awards to various community people in the arts, in civics, in providing jobs for youth, etc. We will be giving out eight (8) \$1,000.00 Scholarships. One of them will be going to a student from a school in this district. Harbachan and I invite you all on the 23<sup>rd</sup>.

***Chairman Warshaviak introduced Darnley Jones, Queens Outreach Director and Emergency Coordinator for DFTA to address the Community Board.***

**Darnley Jones**- I am the Community Coordinator for Emergencies for the Department of the Aging (DFTA) as well as the Outreach Director. I cover all 14 Community Boards in the borough of Queens. It is a privilege and an honor to be here.

- There are 17 carriers providing services to the Access-A-Ride Program, covering the 5 boroughs. Changes are necessary with the way that trips are scheduled.
- Access-A-Ride drivers are taking the long routes as they are paid by mileage.
- Rather than sending one vehicle per person, scheduling should be modified by picking up several passengers from the same general area that are going to the same general destination at around the same time.
- Drivers do not have to make change so be prepared ahead of time and have correct change.
- MTA fare going up to \$2.75 as of March 22.
- You must cancel a trip at least 3 hours ahead of time or you will be penalized.
- If you belong to a Senior Center, you can use DFTA transportation to go to doctors appointments, shopping or they will bring you to the Senior Center. DFTA does not travel from borough to borough, ex: from Brooklyn to Queens. In those situations it is best to use Access-A-Ride services.
- Access-A-Ride goes to Nassau County within 5 miles of the Queens border. If you need to go further than the 5 miles into Nassau County you will have to use Able-Ride, Nassau County’s Para-Transit.

Since I use Access-A-Ride myself, I can offer a few suggestions based on my own experiences:

1. If there is a problem with your operator, file a complaint with Access-A-Ride. Be sure to provide pertinent information including name of carrier and vehicle number.
2. If you feel you have been denied Access-A-Ride unjustly, you should file an appeal.
3. Allow plenty of time to arrive at your destination on time. Access-A-Ride is a shared service and you should expect occasional delays.
4. You should not be on an Access-A-Ride vehicle for more than 2 ½ hours.

To contact Access-A-Ride, call 1-877-337-2017 for eligibility, reservations, applications or to file a complaint. You will receive an application in the mail in 2-3 days. It must be filled out and all proper documentation must be attached. Be sure to make copies of all paperwork for your records. You will receive a number and date to come in. You must have a photograph of yourself. When applying for Access-A-Ride, allow 21 days to hear back with approval or denial. You can find further information at [www.mta.info/nycparatransit](http://www.mta.info/nycparatransit)  
*Mr. Jones can be reached at # 212-602-4264.*

***Chairman Warshaviak asked what can be done if people have bad experiences with Access-A-Ride services.***  
Mr. Jones advised that letters of complaint can be written to the MTA Para-Transit Division and also through the complaint accommodation number. They will respond back to you in writing.

*Chairman Warshaviak opened the floor to questions.*

**Mark Lefkof** – You indicated that we should contact the Access-A-Ride company that is in that borough where we want to travel to. Answer: No, what I am saying is that is what they should do in scheduling trips, they don't do this now.

*Chairman Warshaviak asked if any of the board members who use Access-A-Ride wanted to say something or ask a question.*

**Stanley Weinblatt** – I have been using Access-A-Ride since its inception thanks to ADA since November 1990. Because of Access-A-Ride I was able to work 7 years longer. I would have had to retire 7 years earlier and I wasn't ready. I am very grateful.

I have been on the receiving end of very good service and pretty rotten service. I agree that the scheduling can be and should be improved. I am a member of the Para-Transit Advisory Board and we meet with the MTA in Long Island City every other month. We bring the concerns of the community to that body and they try their utmost to improve the service. Fortunately, we have robocalls, which we never had in the past. They call you 15 minutes before your vehicle is there so you don't have to be outside and freeze. Frequently those calls that are 15 minutes in advance are 30 minutes late. On the plus side, they have made remarkable improvements through the years. We are working on helping them make more. It is a very complicated service. All transportation services have their problems, buses, subways. Certainly Access-A-Ride is no exception. We have about 150,000 riders every day. We have a number of vans, which are much more expensive to operate. The cars take people who don't have the mobility problems that I have. I urge people to appeal when Access-A-Ride turns you down. Insofar as the Center, you have to go in person to bring your application and photographs. They require two passport size photos. They keep one in their records and the other one becomes part of the ID card that you carry. Remember it is a "shared ride" service; those are the magic words "*shared ride*". It is not the same as a car service, where you call up and they will pick you up and take you to your destination. As an example, years ago I went to the theatre district and Access-A-Ride took me. At that time I was a lot more mobile than I am now. They stranded me and I never got home by Access-A-Ride. I called them and they gave me permission to take a taxi service. At that time, from Broadway in Manhattan to my home, cost \$55.00. I was reimbursed for all but the fare. I am just grateful that I have access. I hope for the best but sometimes expect the worst.

**Michael Sidell** – I do not use Access-A-Ride but would like to add that one of the other committees I belong to is the MTA/ADA Compliance Committee. It is open to the public, anyone can attend the meetings. You do have to call ahead if you plan on coming to a meeting for security reasons, as the meetings are held at 2 Broadway. I will give the phone number to CB8. They hold a separate Para-Transit Meeting after the meeting.

**Marc A. Haken** – I just want to make a quick comment. The only reason why the City of New York does this is because the Federal Government says they have to do it. They want to get out of the business. As they make more of the subway stations and buses handicapped accessible, as much as you say they are working to improve access service, I don't believe it. They have made the requirements stricter and they want to shift people from Access-A-Ride to the bus and subway. I don't believe that they are trying to make tremendous improvements.

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District Manager's Report, February 2015

**NYPD**

The 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct was ranked the 4<sup>th</sup> best precinct in crime reduction out of the five boroughs for 2014. The month of January had an increase in crime compared to last year. Community Affairs stated that last year we had a very low number of crimes due to more snow fall in January. The number of crimes is expected to be lowered in the coming months.

Telephone scams are always an issue. Do not give your personal information over the telephone nor use prepaid cards to pay bills over the telephone. Naloxone [Narcon] nasal spray was used by the NYPD to save the life of a 21 year-old that was overdosed on heroin on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. We thank them for their efforts.

### **DOB**

There was a 50% increase in Department of Building complaints in January. Most of the complaints were for illegal conversion and zoning. The department is looking to extend the time for the Homeowner's Night. The current schedule is 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Tuesdays. DOB is looking to have it from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. This would allow more time for people who work during the day to attend in the evening. They are also looking to have it on the same day [Tuesday] of the week in all five boroughs.

The DOB has a new program called ACELA where QOL (Quality of Life) building inspectors can give real time information. The disposition will be posted no later than 24 hours from the date of the inspection.

### **Fire Department**

There is a new initiative whereby FDNY will notify Community Boards when a fatal fire occurs. The year-to-date stats for Community Board 8 are as follows:

- 33 more responses than last year
- Total fires decreased

The department advises not to overload extension cords. Residents should refrain from using kerosene and propane heaters to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Abandoned cars during/following a snow storm can become a life threatening situation, as it may block access for emergency vehicles.

The Fire Department will host a block party to celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> year anniversary sometime in June or September. The firehouse located on 197<sup>th</sup> Street a few blocks south of CB8 has been chosen. I will keep you posted

### **DOT**

Jack Lynch is the acting Borough Commissioner for Queens. The Department of Transportation has hired two new Borough Planners for Queens. Richard Gippetti who has been with DOT for a few years has been assigned to Community Board 8 [He comes highly recommended by other DMs].

About 42 additional spaces were created on 134<sup>th</sup> Street between Union Turnpike and Hoover Avenue in Briarwood to mitigate the closure of the Municipal Parking lot near Borough Hall

### **HPD**

Richard DeRosa has been appointed as the head of enforcement for Queens. Hot water and heat complaints can now be filed through the 311 apps from your mobile telephones.

### **Department of Design and Construction**

#### **QED 1001** *(Briarwood)*

They have completed 71% of the water main replacement work. They are currently working on 164<sup>th</sup> Street between 85<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Hillside Avenue. They are expected to be there for about a month. Any work that requires water shut-off cannot occur when the temperature falls below freezing.

The agency received a few complaints regarding rough surfaces following water main replacement. It is important to know that it takes about 40 days for the ground to settle. This must occur before they can proceed with final restoration work.

**Happy Birthday to:** Samuel Rodriguez, Alvin Warshaviak, Kevin Forrestal, Paul Lazauskas and Bright Limm who are celebrating their birthdays in February.

*Carolann Foley mentioned that those officers who saved that young woman's life are being awarded on February 24<sup>th</sup> at the Community Council Meeting.*

**Committee Reports:**

**Zoning Committee:**

**Dr. Allen Bennett, Area 1 Chair**

Public Hearing was held, ULURP #N 130329 ECQ concerning L'Bella Restaurant, which is on Main Street and 69<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Basically it was a reorganization of management and they had to re-apply. Many of us use L'Bella, we like the place, there were no negative comments by anyone.

**Mark Lefkof made a motion to approve ULURP# N 130329 ECQ. The motion was seconded by Dr. Allen Bennett.**

**Vote:                      **In Favor: 38**                      **Opposed: 0**                      **Abstained: 0****

**Voted for:** Dilafroz Ahmed, Jagir Singh Bains, Carolyn Baker-Brown, Dr. Allen J. Bennett, Robert H. Block, Edward Chung, Susan D. Cleary, Kenneth Cohen II, Monica Corbett, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Mary Maggio Fischer, Carolann Foley, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, James Gallagher Jr., Joshua Glikman, Marc A. Haken, Robert Harris, Tami Hirsch, Fakrul "Delwar" Islam, Mark Lefkof, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Frank Magri, Jennifer Martin, Tamara Osherov, Frances Peterson, Samuel Rodriguez, Steven Sadofsky, Michael F. Sidell, Harbachan Singh, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Alvin Warshaviak, Jacob Weinberg, Stanley Weinblatt and Albert Willingham.

**Voted Against:** None

*Chairman Warshaviak noted that the vote passed unanimously.*

**Government Affairs Committee:**

**Harbachan Singh, Chair**

A previously scheduled meeting had to be rescheduled due to bad weather. The new date for the meeting is March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is invited to attend the meeting on Term Limits for Community Board Members at the District Office.

**DEP/Sanitation Committee:**

**Kevin Forrestal, Chair**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of February we are going to have a meeting with reference to the Multi-dwelling Smoking Ban Proposal that was put forward. Everyone is invited to attend.

**Transportation Committee:**

**Dr. Allen Bennett, Area 1 Chair**

We have asked MTA and DOT for a joint presentation regarding the Bus Rapid Transit Proposal. They are not ready. The amount of opposition in Kew Gardens Hills involves tens of thousands of people who have signed a petition not to allow the destruction of Kew Gardens Hills. If allowed, this bus lane will be a disaster, destroying parking and businesses. We are waiting to hear what they have to say.

**Adjournment**

Carolann Foley made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:28 p.m., seconded by Mary Maggio Fischer.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Alma Karassavidis, CB8 staff  
February 17, 2015*