



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, March 10, 2021 via [Zoom Webinar](#).

Attendance:

Board Members Present:

Dilafroz Ahmed, Jagir Singh Bains, Heather Bennett-Idels, Carolyn Brown, Edward Chung, Susan D. Cleary, Kenneth Cohen II, Solomon Davydov, Allen Eisenstein, Florence Fisher, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Wendy Gennaro, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, Tami Hirsch, Steven Konigsberg, Paul S. Lazauskas, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Mary Maggio, David Mordukhaev, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov, Alan Ong, Tamara Osherov, Hersh Parekh, Simon Pelman, Frances Peterson, Mohammad Rahman, Jesse Rosenbaum, Seymour Schwartz, Douglas Sherman, Harbachan Singh, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Jacob Weinberg and Albert Willingham.

Board Members Absent:

Robert H. Block, Maria DeInnocentiis, Carolann Foley, Joshua Glikman, Frank Magri, Jennifer Martin, Dilip Nath, Charlton Rhee, and Dr. Penny M. Stern.

Others Present:

Max Weprin representing Borough President Donovan Richards, Susan Seinfeld representing Honorable Council Member Barry Grodenchik, Council Member Jim Gennaro, Henry Yam representing Council Member Jim Gennaro, Ashley Lin representing Honorable State Senator John Liu, Anthony Lemma representing Honorable Assembly Member David Weprin, Muhammad Rahman representing Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, Darryl White representing Attorney General, Marie Adam-Ovide, CB8 District Manager and Izabela Szczepanska, CB8 Staff Member.

Call to Order:

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

Public Participation:

Yolanda Rodriguez: She is the Outreach Director from the Josephine Herrick project, a non-for-profit organization. For over 70 years the project has transformed the lives of those living in under represented, under served, and mis-represented communities. Josephine Herrick was a photographer who used the camera as a social justice vehicle by putting cameras into the hands of wounded soldiers returning from World War II. They were able to tell their own visual story in their own words and truth about what they endured during the war. Since then these voices have included older New Yorkers, children, the disabled, or developmentally challenged people and veterans. The mission promotes an open door towards promoting personal creative expression but also to empower and give to those voices that might not otherwise be heard or might be misrepresented. She is here tonight to ask for help in identifying community-based organizations within the district that may be interested in partnering or collaborating with them to bring these services to constituents in Community Board 8.

Chairperson Martha Taylor announced that we do not respond to Public Participation or ask any questions. If anyone knows of any organizations to please forward them to DM Adam-Ovide and they will be forwarded to Ms. Rodriguez.

Elected Officials:

Honorable Councilman Jim Gennaro - The Councilman thanked Chairperson Taylor and District Manager Adam-Ovide for inviting him to the meeting. He thanked all members of the board. He stated that it has been a great pleasure knowing them this many years. He announced that he has retained the services of Rory's former Chief of Staff Henry Yam to be his Chief of Staff. This makes him very lucky since everyone knows and likes Henry. Henry is a great advocate for the office. When Rory left, Henry held it all together. They are currently rebuilding the staff. If anyone needs to get in touch with him or Henry, they are both available and at everyone's disposal. He appreciates everyone's service to the board and to the community. It has been a complicated time coming into office, ramping up and gearing up. He serves on nine committees of the NYC council and he is beginning a lot of coverage to the issues we all hold near and dear. He has great relationships with almost everyone on the board and he appreciates everyone's service to the community. He looks forward to working with everyone. He is happy to be back.

Chairperson Taylor announced that she is sorry to hear that Susan Cleary's husband is in the hospital. We hope that he has a speedy recovery and to keep in touch with what is going on with him.

Public Participation:

Khan Harris representing NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer - Last week the Comptroller sent out a letter to the Mayor urging the administration to rescind Executive Order 101 section 2 without any further delay. It allows for suspension of checks and balances that govern our emergency procurement process which the executive has now used and used the pandemic as a shield to circumvent independent oversight that is in shrine with our long standing statues and our ruled. They are asking the administration to allow the independent oversight processes to continue. Mr. Khan spoke about the Comptroller's testimony to the City Council on the preliminary Fiscal Year 2022 budget. The Comptroller immediately shared some immediate needs that need to be addressed for working families and restaurants. He also highlighted areas of spending over the years where we have been spending money without any real results. This includes over \$400,000 a year to incarcerate one person on Ryker's Island while violence continues to climb. Over three billion dollars a year to homelessness. That is twice as much money that the City has been spending as they did seven years ago. We are also hitting an all-time high record of homeless individuals. Additionally, they spent over 200 million dollars on mental health programs in the middle of a mental health crisis by programs that don't have any sufficient accountability, data, or measurable outcomes to show for. The comptroller called the City Council to take that into account, evaluate and produce measurable results. They also announced that pension funds last year grew at a rate of over 14%. Throughout the beginning of the Comptroller's term until now it averages about 9%, which is higher than our target which was 7%. If anyone has any questions or concerns, he is available by email or telephone.

Salute to the Flag

Chairperson Martha Taylor led the salute to the flag.

Approval of Minutes:

Marc A. Haken made a motion to approve the minutes of February 10, 2021, seconded by Howard Fried.

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

Guest Speakers:

Darryl White – Attorney General – (a flyer was screenshared and forwarded by email) - Mr. White provided information about the Attorney General’s program “Protecting our Community”. The Attorney General wants to serve residents of Queens better than they have been. They tried to start this program last year and were looking at a few sites. Currently they only have a regional office in Brooklyn, but they hope in 2022 they will be able to find a home in Queens as well. They are seeking pop-up offices where they will be able to offer services to residents within Queens. They will share more information and flyers on locations and hours to the Community Board to share with residents. Representatives of the Attorney General’s Brooklyn/Queens Regional Office are available to schedule virtual appointments and receive complaints. The Queens DA had a scam awareness and fraud protection town hall meeting about elderly being scammed. The Attorney General does scam awareness, fraud protection and other things such as elder abuse, and fair housing. They want to come to as many monthly board meetings to spread word to different civic associations, tenant associations, and elected officials. These meetings can help communicate the kind of service they offer and to discuss future locations that will be good for them to set up pop up offices. What the Attorney General does is different from the DA’s office. They are more proactive. If anyone is being scammed, he asked to visit their website and file a complaint. There were Asian Americans in the flushing area getting scammed by a dealership. They also ask if anyone else is being scammed by the same dealership to report this to their office. They were able to get restitution for those that filled out the complaint form. He is sure that at some point in time they will have the Assistant Attorney General Michael Barbosa at a Community Board 8 meeting to talk more in depth on what they do. If anyone has any questions, they can call him or the office for assistance.

Discussion:

Marc A. Haken – Does the Attorney General have an office in the Bronx?

Darryl White – No, the main office for Attorney General is downtown Manhattan. There is an uptown office in the Harlem state office building that covers the Bronx. There is a Westchester office and the Brooklyn office that covers the region of Queens.

Marc A. Haken – And also covers Staten Island?

Darryl White – Yes, it does.

Kevin Forrestal – Just a suggestion, Darryl that you send a copy of your flyer to Marie for distribution, it was not very much to scale. It was very hard to read and it can get a wider audience that way.

Darryl White – Thank you Kevin. Absolutely, before your meeting is over your District Manager will have this flyer.

Martha Taylor thanked Darryl White for his presentation.

Chairperson’s Report – Martha Taylor:

- Community Board 11 drafted a letter to the editor to speak against bias incidents targeting the Asian-American Community. They are asking for the support of all Community Boards in Queens.

Kevin Forrestal made a motion to sign the drafted letter in full agreement, seconded by Howard Fried.

Discussion:

Hersh Parekh – Will this be sent only to the press? I think we should send a copy to our elected officials, so they also know that we are strongly standing in sulfidation against this type of violence.

Martha Taylor – Should we vote to join on this let us also amend our position to let them know that we want all the elected officials know. Right?

Everyone mutually stated yes.

A hand vote was taken.

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

The motion was approved unanimously. Chairperson Taylor announced to let CB11 know that we are with them and we would like it to also be sent to elected officials as well as the press.

- As stated, a few months ago, our sunshine funds were depleted, and we asked our members to donate. Only a handful of members have donated so far. We are asking you again, if you have not done so, to please send a check, made out to Elke Maerz, to the CB8 office earmarked for the sunshine fund.
- The Dr. Steven Dillingham, Director of the U.S. Census Bureau recognized Community Board 8 Queens with a certificate that will be prominently displayed at the CB8’s office. It read that we are “an invaluable member of the 2020 Census Community Partnership and Engagement Program”. The Census Bureau appreciated our efforts in making the Partnership Program a success and in helping them achieve a successful 2020 Census.

District Manager’s Report, March 2021

Department of Buildings

There has been an increase in work without complaints and illegal conversions for CB8; however, the zoning complaints have decreased. Overall, the number of all complaints are about the same. Local Law 196 – the moratorium on storefront signage enforcement was due to expire this year on February 6th; however, the City Council has extended the moratorium to 2023.

Local Law 152 – this requires 3+ family homes and commercial properties to have inspections of exposed gas piping hallway, cellars, and basements to test for leaks. They are currently doing CB1, 3 and 10. We understand that CB8 will be done in 2022. We are waiting for confirmation from DOB.

Department of Design and Construction

Green infrastructure work resumed this month. They are addressing some of the assets that were on hold. They are working on Jewel Ave, Horace Harding Expressway and 164th Avenue. They should be there for a few weeks. They will then start planting and seeding.

NYPD

They are down in crime from all categories. They recently made arrests on burglaries that occurred in Sector B. Please watch out for IRS scams especially now that we are in tax season.

NYC Emergency Management

They have a paid fellowship program. The deadline to apply is March 22nd. Please go to: <http://www.nyc.gov/johndsolomonfellowship>.

Queens Public Library

The Queens Public Library continues to administer “To-Go” sites. You can either reserve your books online or call 718-990-0714/0728. They also have a virtual pre-literacy program for children 3 to 5 years old. It has seven (7) sessions; however, you must pre-register. To register, please visit: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc_FUrtJ1SscRx1HqV_8OP7Q59ZWjpPnk7iCereGWmQhLnF_A/viewform or email k2k@queenslibrary.org for other questions.

NYSDOT

They expect work to start on Hillside Avenue and the Van Wyck Expressway in April. We should have more information as we get closer to the start of the project in that area.

NYC commission on Human Rights

Regrettably anti-Asian hate crimes are still happening. The agency has been conducting by-stander intervention training. They are planning an event this week (info to follow). On another note, they have information on loss of income protection available on their website

Sanitation

This year we will not have the burning stations due COVID-19 and social distancing guidelines. We will arrange for the special collections as we did last year. We hope to resume the burning stations in 2022. This year the first night of Passover falls on Saturday (March 27, 2021), the special collection will occur from Thursday night into Friday morning to end at noon. Please place all your refuse by 4 p.m. on Thursday to avoid missed collections.

Discussion:

Steve Konigsberg – Do you know if Sanitation is going to put out the large collection bins as well even though they do not have the burning station.

Marie Adam-Ovide – No, they will not put the large collection bins. They do encourage people to start putting garbage out if they can in regular collection days to put more garbage out and start the cleaning up earlier. They also have concerns with people gathering at the large collection bins and at times people have burned hametz at those bins which is also unsafe. Hopefully everything will be behind us and next year we will resume and have all the services that we are accustomed to having for our community.

Happy Birthday to Board Members: Michael Hannibal, Dilip Nath and Harbachan Singh.



Marie Adam-Ovide

Borough President’s Representative – Max Weprin – He announced that they will have a virtual small business town hall tomorrow, March 11, 2021 from 10 a.m. to Noon. Small businesses will be able to hear from leaders of city agencies and learn about the resources available from the City and the Department of Small Business Services. They will have another virtual Fire Safety Education presentation with the FDNY on March 17th at 6 p.m. There will be another Queen’s job recruitment fair on March 18th at 2 p.m. and a virtual gender justice summit on Tuesday, March 30th in celebration of Women’s History month. It will dive deep into women’s rights across the spectrum. You can RSVP to all these events on their website at: queensbp.org. The Borough President delivered his first State of the Borough Address last week and it is available for viewing on their website. Their swearing-in and orientation for new community board members will be on April 1st *. He left his email in the chat if anyone had any questions. He wished everyone a Happy early Passover, and early Spring.

Elected Officials:

Ashley Lin representing Honorable State Senator John Liu: If anyone needs any assistance to please contact their office at 718-765-6675.

Henry Yam representing Councilman James Gennaro – When he said goodbye to everyone it was premature. He is back. He was able to keep his old council email, if anyone has any questions, they can email him. He will be back on the phone’s tomorrow.

Hudy Rosenberg – They are in Albany this week with the budget coming up and a lot going on in State government. Their offices are open if anyone has any questions especially with the new vaccine categories, they can call their office at 718-820-0241.

Mohammad Rahman representing District Attorney Melinda Katz – They had their scam awareness webinar. There was a lot of good information. The District Attorney was really pushing the event. Hopefully everyone was able to join the webinar. Everything else is operating on a 10% capacity at their office. A lot of their hearings are taking place over Zoom. If anyone has any questions to please contact him or the office.

Chairperson Taylor asked if Hersh Parekh has a question.

Discussion:

Hersh Parekh – I do, for Max Weprin from the Borough Presidents Office. Can you share with us Max what is the Queens Civic Engagement committee that the Borough President is convening?

Max Weprin – The Queens Civic Engagement Committee with our office? Yes, we are having a committee just to basically start a community engagement to reach out to elected officials, non-profits, and everything. I can get more information. I am not too involved with that, but I know that we started it and it is up and running. It is going to start up and running soon. Any other specific questions?

Hersh Parekh – Yes, I was just curious to learn more about it and how it may interact with the Community Board.

Max Weprin – I can definitively reach out to you tomorrow or this week and get you more information on that.

Hersh Parekh – That would be great thank you.

Chairperson Taylor announced that Hersh Parekh suggested before for DM Adam-Ovide to send all the members an email about the Sunshine Fund and where to send it. DM Adam Ovide stated that an email will be sent with the information.

Kevin Forrestal – I will be sending an email to Marie about an article I read today titled “Don’t Close Rikers Island”. It gives a critical assessment of Rikers Island. Even after COVID and all the bell reform, the current population of the City’s jails is a third greater than the capacity of borough jails population when it is complete.

Martha Taylor – Yes, I received that article from you. I thought it was very interesting and I think we should send a copy to everyone.

Kevin Forrestal – We will put it on the agenda for the next executive committee so we can take some action and make some statements for the next meeting.

Martha Taylor – In the meantime I would like everyone to see that letter.

Marc Haken – Max, I was wondering, the committee that Hersh referred to. Who sits on the committee and how are they selected for that committee?

Max Weprin – The Civic Engagement Committee is new, and I will get all that concrete information because I don’t want to give any wrong details. I have not been really involved with it, but I know that it is starting up and will be running soon. I will send an email with all that information and I will reach out to some board members on the side as well. He will get the information out as soon as possible.

Marie Adam-Ovide – On that committee it’s something that was voted on the last time that they changed the City Charter. They are appointment by the Mayor Office, and they are not from the Borough President’s Office. They are the ones that conduct training for the Community Boards. They are supposed to be helping the Community Boards. I don’t know that it is working.

James Gallagher – Sunday, at 2 a.m. starts daylight savings time. People will turn their clocks ahead one hour and the sun will set at 7 p.m. on Sunday. On Saturday, March 20th we will begin Spring. We have a Build the Block meeting coming up for Sector B on June 16, 2021.

Adjournment

Susan Cleary made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:46 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Izabela Szczepanska, CB8 staff
April 8, 2021*

**This date has changed to April 19, 2021.*