



The City of New York
Borough of Queens



Chairperson, Martha Taylor

Community Board 8

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District Manager, Marie Adam-Ovide

Minutes of Community Board 8 Board Meeting held on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 via [Zoom Webinar](#).

Attendance:

Board Members Present:

Jagir Singh Bains, Carolyn Baker-Brown, Robert H. Block, Edward Chung, Susan D. Cleary, Kenneth Cohen II, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Florence Fisher, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Joshua Glikman, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, Tami Hirsch, Steven Konigsberg, Paul S. Lazauskas, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Mary Maggio, Dilip Nath, Tamara Oshero, Simon Pelman, Frances Peterson, Wendy Phaff, Jesse Rosenbaum, Seymour Schwartz, Harbachan Singh, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Martha Taylor, Jacob Weinberg and Albert Willingham.

Board Members Absent:

Dilafroz Ahmed, Dr. Allen J. Bennett, Carolann Foley, Robert Harris, Fakrul “Delwar” Islam, Bright Dae-Jung Limm, Frank Magri, Jennifer Martin, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov, Mohammad Rahman, Charlton Rhee, Douglas Sherman, Mohammed Tohin, Rachele Van Arsdale, and Stanley Weinblatt.

Others Present:

Honorable Councilman Rory Lancman, Corey Adams representing District Attorney Melinda Katz, Susie Tanenbaum representing Borough President Sharon Lee, David Noh representing Councilman Barry Grodenchik, Kristen Jeffries from Councilman Rory Lancman’s office, Daniel Blech representing Assemblyman Daniel Rosenthal, Marie Adam-Ovide - CB8 District Manager and Izabela Szczepanska, CB8 Staff Member.

Call to Order:

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

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 April 22, 2020, seconded by Michael Hannibal.

Count in favor 35 Opposed: 0 Abstained: 0

[Chairperson Martha Taylor asked Mary Maggio to begin the Elections for the Executive Officer.s](#)

Mary Maggio, Chair of Nominating Committee – In accordance with the By-Laws of CB8, nominations were held at the April meeting for the positions of Chairperson, 1st Vice-Chair, 2nd Vice-Chair, 3rd Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. In accordance with the By-Laws, elections are held for these positions in May. A roll call was taken for each position.

Chairperson – Martha Taylor.

Count in favor 35 Opposed: 0 Abstained: 0

Board Members against:

None.

Martha Taylor was re-elected Chairperson of Community Board 8.

Michael Hannibal for 1st Vice Chair.

Count in favor 35 Opposed: 0 Abstained: 0

Board Members against:

None.

Michael Hannibal was elected 1st Vice Chair of Community Board 8.

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Honorable Councilman Rory Lancman joined the meeting and was invited to speak.

Honorable Councilman Rory Lancman - CM Lancman informed us that the City Council had started their budget hearings via Zoom. He believes they are the only legislature in the country that is operating remotely. He stated that the budget outlook is terrible. It is estimated that the economy is projected to shrink by 6% and the private sector employment will shrink by 15%. They are trying to deal with a \$2.2B budget gap in this fiscal year and then an anticipated \$5B or more gap in Fiscal Year 2021 that starts on July 1st. He informed everyone that the Mayor proposed steep cuts within the budget especially things that effect kids (delay in pre-k expansion, cuts in art funding, end the summer youth employment program, ect.). Yesterday, along with other Council Member, they passed important bills protecting the restaurant industry. Since small business owners frequently must sign on for their own personal liability, they passed legislation to protect small businesses and lifted that liability. They are also protecting both commercial and residential tenants from being discriminated against and harassed relating to COVID-19. They have been giving out masks throughout the district through the generosity and cleverness of Borough President Sharon Lee, the Mayor’s Office, Local 3, Jamaica YMCA, Pomonok, and Queens Center for Progress. If someone needs masks to let them know. He thanked the Community Board, Martha Taylor, the Jamaica Estates Association and Maria DeInnocentiis from the Utopia Civic Association. He informed everyone that they were able to pause the bioswales. Tomorrow they are doing a virtual town hall meeting on civil legal services for people who might need assistance at 6:00 p.m. His office remains open (virtually), anyone can reach out via telephone: 718-217-4969 or reach him on his cellphone: 917-363-9004. They are also on social media: Facebook, Twitter, etc.

Chairperson Taylor thanked Honorable Councilman Rory Lancman and asked Mary to proceed with the election of officers.

Seymour Schwartz for 2nd Vice-Chair.

Count in favor 35 Opposed: 0 Abstained: 0

Board Members against:

None.

Seymour Schwartz was re-elected 2nd Vice-Chair of Community Board 8.

Stanley Weinblatt for 3rd Vice-Chair.

Count in favor 35 Opposed: 0 Abstained: 0

Board Members against:

None.

Stanley Weinblatt was elected 3rd Vice-Chair of Community Board 8.

Chairperson Taylor announced that if there is no other nominee it can be asked if anyone is opposed. Chairperson Taylor asked if anyone is opposed to the Treasurer being Harbachan Singh. Noone opposed.

Harbachan Singh for Treasurer.

Unanimously approved.

Harbachan Singh was re-elected Treasurer of Community Board 8.

Carolyn Baker-Brown for Secretary.

Chairperson Taylor asked if anyone is opposed to the Secretary being Carolyn Baker-Brown. Noone opposed.

Unanimously approved.

Carolyn Baker-Brown was re-elected Secretary of Community Board 8.

Mary Maggio, Chair of the Nominating Committee closed elections for all categories.

Chairperson’s Report – Martha Taylor:

- Chairperson Taylor announced that District Manager Marie Adam-Ovide signed the agreement that is done every year. It was unanimously approved by the Executive Committee and Marie will stay with Community Board 8 for another year. She is very happy and hopes everyone is too. She thanked Marie and welcomed her aboard for another year.
- Chairperson Taylor announced that Community Board 8 received a notice from DDC that they were going to start installing bioswales in Jamaica Estates today. She stated that it was contradictory to everything that they agreed to do. She and Marie contacted several people and a few Elected Officials. By the end of the day it was decided that they will pause the construction until further notice. She stated that several residents stated that with the City’s budget cuts the bioswales should not be installed. The money for bioswales should be used for more important things. There were a few civic groups that were involved, They are all against these bioswales and the way it was done.

District Manager’s Report – May 2020

SANITATION

Due to budget cuts, some sanitation services have been suspended. The composting program has been suspended as of May 5th until June 30, 2021. If brown bins are placed out for collection, DSNY will just pick them up as regular garbage. The agency is encouraging residents to continue with composting on their own for their gardens. Once I receive more information, I will include it in our next newsletter. The

electronic recycling has also been suspended and the drop off sites are now closed. Our superintendent stated that we should hold on to the electronics and return them to the electronics stores (i.e. Best Buy, P.C. Richards etc.). Despite the alternate parking suspension, the neighborhoods within CB8 are being kept clean.

TRANSPORTATION

The Mayor and Speaker announced plans to have 7 miles of “Open Streets” and are encouraging organizations to apply. These “Open Streets” will be closed to traffic but open to pedestrians. The organizations must be able to have staff to monitor them. They will be in contact with the NYPD and DOT. They will be responsible for allowing emergency access, contact NYPD if social distancing guidelines are not being followed. They may be able to get barriers from the Police Department. We received concerns regarding an “Open Street” on 193rd Street near Cunningham Park. DOT confirmed that this location was proposed not approved. The residents of the street and the West Cunningham Park Civic Association informed CB8 that they were opposed. Chairperson Martha Taylor informed Deputy Commissioner Albert Silvestri DOT that she is strongly opposed to this as well. DOT will share the list of approved “Open Streets” with us for CB8 once it becomes available.

BUILDINGS

The number of 311 complaints made for our district has been drastically changed. In March we had a 66% decline and in April we had 135% decline in complaints. As you know, under the Governor’s Order only essential construction work can take place. The Department of Buildings is using their inspectors to conduct sweeps throughout the city. They received 29 complaints in Queens of which three (3) locations were substantiated so far.

CON EDISON

They are still concerned with scammers. As a rule of thumb any calls that include a payment should be initiated by the customer. The customer should call the number listed on their bill for payment. Con Edison doesn’t accept payment by bitcoin, gift cards etc. Any visit from Con Edison will be pre-arranged. When in doubt call Con Edison before you open your door to someone claiming to be from their company.

QUEENS PUBLIC LIBRARY

They will send us flyers that we can include in our eNewsletter and/or share with residents on how to apply for the Queens Public Library’s eCards.

NYC COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

They have been tracking all incidents against Asian Americans. There were 248 of them from February to April. They started a COVID 19 Unit to address them. It is comprised of two attorneys and two support staff.

FIRE

For information about preparedness, safety tips, the Fire Department encourages residents to go to: FDNYSmart.org.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES

The agency has been moving senior citizens to isolation sites - hotels. There are 10 sites currently being used. When asked about the outreach being done in the subways, specially to address homeless individuals with mental issues, she stated that Clinical Social Workers are used for that type of outreach. Tessa Ladnow [*Common Ground - Homeless Outreach*] corroborated that and asked that we contact 311 if we know of any homeless person that could benefit from street outreach.

We received a follow-up email from DHS stating that on May 5th they approached 252 homeless individuals in the subway system and 130 of them accepted their assistance.

DEPARTMENT FOR THE AGING

All DFTA's meal programs have been moved to the Get Food NYC Program. Seniors must call 311 and they will be put on the program for up to 30 days at a time.

DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

- **Jenny Cheng, CCL for HW100FJM** – Reconstruction of Main Street SBS
The contractor is addressing the punch list.
- **Judith Ogoe, CCL for GCTI10-4B** – Green Infrastructure in Flushing Creek Area
They are currently doing saw cutting in Kew Gardens Hills [79th Avenue/141st Street/Union Turnpike/77th Road] in preparation for the project.
- **Evelyn Garcia, CCL for GCI10 -03** - Green Infrastructure [rain gardens at multiple locations]–
Project on pause.



to Board Members who celebrated their birthdays in April and May!

April: Dilafroz Ahmed and Carolyn Brown

May: Edward Chung, Mitch Lisker, Mary Maggio and Jacob Weinberg

Marie Adam-Ovide

Susan Cleary announced that Alternate Side Parking is back for a week. District Manager Adam-Ovide announced that after the week it will be suspended once again. An email was sent out to everyone.

Borough President's Representative – Susie Tanenbaum

- Ms. Tanenbaum hopes everyone is keeping well. She stated that it was lovely to see everyone even if it was remotely.
- She congratulated the Executive Committee and looks forward to working them in the year ahead.
- Borough President Lee and the office have remained very busy. Most of them are working remotely and a couple of her colleagues are working from the office every day.
- She mentioned that Borough President Lee had another virtual job recruitment fair from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. This was co-sponsored by the Child's Center for NYC, The Council for Airport Opportunity, Queens Center for Progress, The U.S. Census Bureau, Watch Guard 24/7, and Workforce One. The last one was very successful. She stated that since this happened in the afternoon, she did not have a report on it yet. She imagined that it was also very successful.
- The Operation Five Borough Food Drive is a collaboration that Borough President Lee participates with Fresh Direct and will now continue thru mid-July. Everyday Fresh Direct delivers 500 grocery bags and beverages to non-profit community-based organizations in the borough. This includes organizations serving senior citizens, low income residents and other vulnerable populations in all fourteen community districts. She informed everyone that more than 11,000 Fresh Direct grocery boxes have been distributed to community-based organizations in Queens.
- Fuel the Frontline provides meals specifically to essential workers. She stated that this also supports small food service businesses. It is a collaboration between the Borough Presidents Office, Queens Economic Development Corporation and Queens Night Market. She stated that this has also been extended and there is an effort to raise funds for it. If anyone is interested they can visit: www.queensbp.org/fuelthefrontlines.
- Ikea offered the Borough President a very large donation. She believes that it was worth about \$50,000. The donation included bedding, towels, and children's toys. Borough President Lee and her team

broke it up and made it available to 15 community-based organizations and shelters for distribution to Queens families.

- She informed everyone that next month they will be promoting two initiatives:
 - Get out the count so that everyone is counted in the census.
 - Get out the vote. Everyone can apply for an abstention ballot by visiting: www.nycabstantee.com
- Community Board appointments will be made by the end of May. The Borough Presidents Office received over 500 applications. She thanked everyone for the work that they do.

Chairperson Taylor thanked Susie Tanenbaum. District Manager Adam-Ovide announced that Scott Solomon could not attend this meeting.

Committee Reports:

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

- Dr. Stern spoke about weight gain in quarantine. Staying at home 24/7 can bring on many challenges. Here are some tips to help avoid putting on excess weight during this time:
 - Keep track of your daily eating habits. Choose three balanced meals a day. If you are hungry between meals plan one or two snacks two or three hours apart from your meals.
 - Keep in mind that home cooked meals are healthier. They are often lower in calories, fat, sodium and sugar.
 - Avoid grazing. A nibble here a nibble there. It adds up and causes you to lose track of how much you are eating at the end of the day.
 - Eat mindfully. That means before you eat something pause and ask yourself if you are physically hungry. If the answer is no find something else to do to distract yourself.
 - Leave the junk food in the store. If you don't buy it, you can't eat it.
 - The best snacks are fresh fruit, nuts, string cheese, whole grain crackers, yogurt with fresh fruit, ext.
 - Stay hydrated. If you do not like water, try seltzer.
 - There are a lot of hidden calories in alcohol. A lot of people have been drinking now more than ever now that they are home. If you drink a lot, you will gain a lot. So be sure to limit how much alcohol you consume.

Jesse Rosenbaum, Transportation Committee Chair -

Community Board 8 received a request from a member of our board to co-name the southwest corner of Utopia Parkway and Union Turnpike. The proposed re-naming is St. Johns Way in honor of the University's 150th Anniversary. No negative impact letters were received from affected merchants or residents. A positive letter from a merchant was received. The Transportation Committee unanimously approved this. They had nothing negative to say in this regard. It is a single sign. There are large signs that have been installed that would not affect the visibility or the motorist perception of where they are located.

Jesse Rosenbaum asked if anyone had any questions or concerns.

Susan Cleary – Yes, when was this meeting?

Jesse Rosenbaum – It was the last one we had in March.

Steve Konigsberg made a motion to approve the co-naming seconded by Marc Haken.

A hand vote was taken.

Count in favor 34 **Opposed:** 1 **Abstained:** 0

Board Members against:

Susan Cleary.

Marc A. Haken, Budget Director – A letter was emailed to all Board Members. He stated that it is an awful time to be a kid. Most kids have no socialization. Councilman Rory Lancman mentioned all summer youth activities have been eliminated. He stated that we are very distressed about that since our youth is our future and will be the future members of our board. A week or two ago the Beacon Program at the Parsons School, Middle School 216 and Forest Hills Community House had a town hall meeting. He was asked to generate a letter to the mayor asking to restore funds at least for some virtual summer youth employment jobs. He was on the original committee when it was created. They provided real experience and stipends to approximately 25,000 youth and last year the program provided job opportunities to about 75,000 youth. He asked for the board’s approval to send this letter.

Seymour Schwartz made a motion to approve, seconded by Susan Cleary.

A hand vote was taken.

Count in favor 35 Opposed: 0 Abstained: 0

Board Members against: None

Marc A. Haken asked if there were any comments with respect to the motion.

Kenneth Cohen II – I ask that we include one thing in our action. I don’t know what the other Community Boards across the city are doing. I think it’s important that we rally them to also support this. One letter coming from Community Board 8 is nice but if we can encourage the other boards to send letters as well would be even better.

Marc A. Haken – The letter is going to all the Community Boards around the City. A former member of our board, Deep Gosh who was a vice president of the Child’s Center of New York recently resigned that position and has now become a foremost consultant in youth services in the City of New York.

Chairperson Martha Taylor thanked Marc A. Haken. She would like it to be restored and not just virtually.

Kevin Forrestal – Census 2020 -

Mr. Forrestal stated that COVID-19 created a great turnout for the Census since it was supposed to be done by computer. All the planning and the outreach was largely based upon personal contacts all of which have been severely tampered with. He asked that when everyone on the Board speaks to anyone or organizations remotely that they remind them of the Census. He informed everyone that they will be receiving information from the last meeting from the regional director and a report from the Mayor’s Office for the Census. He announced that the telephone self-response has been extended. The door knocking campaign was supposed to be done from July 31st to August 11th. There is a request for the legislature to delay the requirement for the Census Bureau Department of Commerce to give the finer report to the commerce by the end of the year. There was a request for a 120-day extension. He stated that after all these issues are over, he would like to see some real action (i.e. To try to get a constitutional amendment to allow a more scientific approach to the census). He stated that you can use sampling which is more accurate and would be a lot less expensive. If anyone has any questions, he and Michael would be glad to answer them.

Adjournment

Mary Maggio made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:33 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Izabela Szczepanska, CB8 staff
May 21, 2020*