



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, November 18, 2020 via [Zoom Webinar](#).

Attendance:

Board Members Present:

Jagir Singh Bains, Heather Bennett-Idels, Carolyn Brown, Robert H. Block, Susan D. Cleary, Solomon Davydov, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Florence Fisher, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Wendy Gennaro, Joshua Glikman, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, Tami Hirsch, Steven Konigsberg, Paul S. Lazauskas, Mary Maggio, David Mordukhaev, Dilip Nath, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov, Alan Ong, Tamara Oshero, Hersh Parekh, Simon Pelman, Frances Peterson, Mohammad Rahman, Charlton Rhee, Jesse Rosenbaum, Seymour Schwartz, Harbachan Singh, Douglas Sherman, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Jacob Weinberg and Albert Willingham.

Board Members Absent:

Dilafroz Ahmed, Edward Chung, Kenneth Cohen II, Carolann Foley, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Frank Magri, and Jennifer Martin.

Others Present:

Haris Khan representing NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer, Susie Tanenbaum representing Acting Borough President Sharon Lee, Davinder Singh representing Honorable Council Member Barry Grodenchik, Former Honorable Council Member Rory Lancman, Ashley Lin representing Honorable State Senator John Liu, Anthony Lemma representing Honorable Assembly Member David Weprin, Daniel Blech representing Honorable Assembly Member Daniel Rosenthal, Deputy Inspector Denis Mullaney, 107th Precinct, Muhammad Rahman representing Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz, Scott Solomon, City Planning, Marie Adam-Ovide, CB8 District Manager and Jatnna Reyes, CB8 Staff Member.

Call to Order:

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

Public Participation:

Andy Pollack: Mr. Pollack has lived in this neighborhood for 15 years. He spoke about the drag racing complaints on Utopia Parkway. The residents have been dealing with this constant issue for a couple of months. He informed everyone that a legislation called the Furious act was introduced and is sponsored by Assemblywomen Nily Rozic and State Senator Brad Hoylman.

Jesse Rosenbaum announced that the drag racing was discussed before. The precinct is acting on it as best as they can, but they must catch the perpetrator in the act. There is nothing else we can do.

Former Honorable Councilman Rory Lancman – Mr. Lancman announced that he is currently working for the governor as the Special Counsel for Ratepayer Protection. He is trying to hold the utilities accountable for the services that they provide and sometimes fail to provide to the people of NYS. As a former council member and assembly member and community board member of 16 years he wishes he could have done this in person and shake hands. He thanked everyone for their friendship, support, and cooperation. He loved being on this community board

and loved representing this community. He lives in the neighborhood and will be visiting the board. The governor has kept him busy the last couple of weeks. This week there is going to be some big news. He can be reached at rory@rorylancman.com, if anyone needs any help.

Martha Taylor thanked former Councilmember Rory Lancman for all the years of service, and as a long-standing member of the community board.

Steven Williams: Mr. Williams represents a program called Accessible Dispatch Program. This program connects the community to wheelchair accessible taxis. This Citywide wheelchair accessible taxi service has 24/7 service in all five boroughs. No enrollment is necessary, and anyone is eligible. Passengers only pay the fare set by TLC. The drivers are trained to assist people. This is an on-demand service or you can make reservations by visiting www.accessibledispatch.com, downloading the Accessible Dispatch NYC app, or calling (646) 599-9999. If anyone has any questions, please call (646) 599-5999, email accessibledispatch@mtm-inc.net or visit www.accessibledispatch.com. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Marc A. Haken: Ms. Haken is President of the Hilltop Village Co-op #4. One of the items on the agenda is renaming a local street within their co-op after the former president of Hilltop Village Co-op #1. Mel Doby died of COVID-19. He was a police officer for several years including during 911. He moved to Hilltop Village years ago and subsequently became president. Thanks to his ideas there were all sorts of activities and 900 families at Hilltop Village came together as one. He was also an officer of the Queens Co-op and Condo Committee. He urges everyone to vote in favor of the co-naming of Foothill Avenue from Francis Lewis Boulevard west to the dead end to Melvin “Mel” Doby Way.

Jerome Phillips: Mr. Phillips has lived in this neighborhood since August of 1973. His mother’s home is on 164th Place and the Grand Central Parkway. He made it clear that the neighborhood is not growing exponentially. The house next door was built during World War 2. He would like to have as many parking spots as he can and does not want to have the streets crowded. When they built the dorms for St. John’s his mother was against it, but he was not. He prefers to have students than a methadone clinic. Instead of living in the dorms they are living in the area and taking up all the parking. He is very happy that the board is fighting for them in the neighborhood.

Allison Landwehr: Ms. Landwehr currently lives in Briarwood. She discussed two issues that came to her attention. She spoke about the garbage along the streets and highways in her area. She would be happy to help clean the garbage. In the Manton Playground the softer platform is uneven. When the children are playing, they are tripping and may possibly hurt themselves. She is hoping for feedback and if there something she can do.

Elected Officials’ Announcements:

Anthony Lemma representing Honorable Assembly Member David Weprin– Assembly Member Weprin will have his South Asian Advisory Board zoom meeting on November 23rd. They have been doing many events with fellow elected official offices. They have been helping in mask and hand sanitizer giveaways in and around the district. On behalf of Assembly Member Weprin he wishes everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and hopes everyone stays safe.

Ashley Lin representing Honorable State Senator John Liu: Their office is fully operational. They have been handling a lot of Department of Labor cases. If anyone needs help getting through to the Department of Labor, please contact their office at 718-765-6675. They also have PPE to give out. If anyone needs any PPE, please contact their office.

Haris Khan representing NYC Comptroller Scott Stringer: Mr. Khan represents Comptroller Scott Stringer. If you are in central, eastern and parts of western Queens, they are doing a survey. The survey is a work family survey and is being created in response to this pandemic. They are trying to evaluate and see what the transverse they are seeing between folks and employers in types of industries that have been dealing with this pandemic. What kind of employers are fighting flexibility staggered schedules and what does it all look like. It is an anonymous survey. It will help identify what recommendations they need to make sure that folks are safe and healthy. Especially families with

kids or special needs, you can get accommodations from workplaces in the future as we learn from this pandemic. He wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Davinder Singh representing Honorable Councilman Barry Grodenchik: If anyone needs any PPE in District 23 to call their office. On behalf of Councilman Barry Grodenchik, he wished everyone a Healthy and Happy Thanksgiving.

Salute to the Flag

Chairperson Martha Taylor led the salute to the flag.

Approval of Minutes:

Mary Maggio made a motion to approve the minutes of October 14, 2020, seconded by Carolyn Brown.

Count in favor: **38** Opposed: **0** Abstained: **0**

Chairperson’s Report – Martha Taylor:

- Community Board 8 received a request from Jay Goldstein representing the Bukharian Jewish Congregation of Hillcrest for a new hearing to address the concerns raised at the last public hearing. He also requested the postponement of the Community Board’s vote on the BSA variance tonight. This item has been removed from the agenda tonight and will be reviewed at a later date. We will keep everyone posted.

Discussion:

Kevin Forrestal – He would like to point out that this is the second time that they requested a postponement. The last time it took about a year for them to come back with new plans.

- Due to concerns raised about a new civilian group, Queens Guardian Patrol Association, that has been patrolling neighborhoods within the Community Board, we met with the group yesterday. Area Chair Howard Fried, representatives from the Jamaica Estates Association and the District Manager were also present. They are supposed to observe; report to the police and not engage with the public. They are patrolling with marked and unmarked vehicles. We are opposed to the use of unmarked cars. This can potentially create more issues. We will continue to monitor this with the assistance of the 107th Precinct.

Discussion:

Marc A. Haken – Are they residents of our Community Board?

Martha Taylor – Yes.

Marc A. Haken – Are they patrolling the entire community from Briarwood to Hollis?

Martha Taylor – The people we met with live in Briarwood, Jamaica Estates, West Cunningham Park and Bayside. They do have other volunteers and apparently, they do live within the community board confines.

Carolyn Brown - Do we know what they have been doing or what they have done?

Martha Taylor – I know of one incident in Jamaica Estates. They stopped people and there is a controversy as to what they exactly said. The people who were stopped were concerned and afraid of them; however, they said they only asked them if they needed help because they looked like they were confused. We are not sure about that. Do you know of any other incidents Carolyn?

Carolyn Brown- No, I do not know. I do think it would be very confusing for people in the neighborhood who don’t know about them.

Martha Taylor – I think you are right, but we cannot tell them they can’t do it. As long as they stay within the boundaries of what the police who met with them told them they can and can’t do. However, if anyone sees them doing something that looks like it is not right, we want to know about it. Call 911 or your NCO people.

- Board Member Robert “Bob” Harris passed away last week. He served on the Board for 23 years and was an active member of several committees. He was also the president of the West Cunningham Park Civic Association for many years. We offer our sincere condolences to his wife Edna and his family.
- Best wishes for a speedy recovery to Member Marc Haken who had major surgery a few weeks ago.
- Best wishes for a speedy recovery to our staffer Jatnna Reyes who had major surgery last week. She will be out of the office while recuperating for a few weeks.

Discussion:

Marc A. Haken – Thank you everyone for the fruit arrangement that came the other day.

Marie Adam-Ovide – Jatnna received the fruit basket as well and thanks everyone.

- Thank you, Elke Maerz, who oversees the Sunshine Funds for sending out the fruit baskets on our behalf. We are running out of funds and we are asking for contributions. If you would like to contribute, please send a check to the Community Board’s office made out to *Elke Maerz* earmarked for the Sunshine Fund.
- The City schools are closed tomorrow due to the increase in Covid-19 case being 3% and above throughout the City. I encourage everyone to continue wearing their masks and to maintain social distancing. Please avoid congregating in large groups and get tested often.

Discussion:

Kevin Forrestal – In zip code 11432, which some of us live in the rate of contagion is 4% now.

Martha Taylor – All of 11432 or just pieces of it?

Kevin Forrestal – They don’t break it down much further. They are going to put you in a red or orange zone. They break it down by streets but otherwise the screening is by zip code.

District Manager’s Report, November 2020

A week ago, a list of tentative dates for the Board Meeting was sent out to the Board Members. There were a couple of dates that we had some issues with, and we changed those dates. I will be sending the finalized list to everyone.

Sanitation

The agency informed us that we are in “night plow” schedule. They request that all garbage and recyclables be placed the night before for pick up – After 5 p.m. The baskets along Hillside Avenue are still being abused and used for household garbage. He asked that the commercial establishments maintain the cleanliness of their sidewalks and clean where there are tree pits.

Department of Transportation

Since the Restaurants/Outdoor Dining Program has been made permanent, outdoor heating will be done. On the sidewalks, they can use propane tanks or gas. For the propane tanks, FDNY permits are required. For the gas lines, DOB permits are needed. Only electrical heating can be used for outdoor sitting in the street.

Parks

They are still very low on staffing. They had issues with vandalism at Emerald Playground and at Pomonok. They burned garbage cans and sprayed political themed graffiti inside the restrooms. This is partly due to the inadequate staffing. They currently have seven less staffers than they usually have. There are also four staffers on leave.

Department of Design and Construction

Most of the rain gardens have been completed. Some locations are getting plantings now and others are getting plantings postponed until the spring. There are some locations on hold. This is usually when they must coordinate with other city agencies or a utility company.

NYC Commission on Human Rights

The agency had asked the youth to submit artwork to depict social issues that are important to them. Out of the submissions, there are about 20 artworks displayed on their sites. Feel free to go on look at them.

The agency received 10,015 reported cases of discrimination for Fiscal Year 2020. They were mostly based on race or gender during employment. The agency assessed \$7.5M in damages and \$6.5M in penalties

Department of Homeless Services

The agency is planning to have a shelter at 138-50 Queens Boulevard in Briarwood. A preliminary meeting was held with the Department of Homeless Services and Westhab which is the social service agency. It is for 175 single adult males. The agency’s plan is to have it built and open in 2022. A public hearing will be held, and the affected residents will be notified.

Department for the Aging

The agency has a volunteering program named “Friendly Voices” which connects a volunteer with a senior citizen via telephone or zoom to prevent loneliness and isolation. Those who want to volunteer can call Housing Connect at (212) 244-6469. The Medicare Enrollment period started on October 15th and ends on December 7th.



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

Marie Adam-Ovide

Borough President’s Representative – Susie Tanenbaum

- On behalf of Borough President Lee, she offered condolences to Community Board 8 on the passing of longtime Board Member Robert Harris. She was able to do a zoom Shiva visit and had a conversation with Edna and her daughter. Bob loved his community and defended it against proposals that could have negatively impacted the quality of life in the community. He would always share articles to pass to the Borough President. He had real compassion and will be missed very much. He will not be forgotten.
- The Borough President’s 11th Virtual Recruitment Fair took place today. It remains an important tool to connect job seekers and organizations. 800 people registered for this event and about 350 people showed up. They have excellent opportunities that offer training, good benefits, and support. They had 16 organizations and potential employers participate. Another 5 organizations are waiting to participate in the next event. To date, close to 1,450 participants have made connections as a result. All of this is the work of my colleague, Sharn Anderson the Borough President’s Director of Economic Development. For more information, please visit: www.queensbp.org. The next fair it will be coming up in two weeks and will be posted.
- Yesterday, the Borough President and the Queens Complete Count Committee held a zoom event called Farewell to the Census. The purpose of this event was to celebrate all the accomplishments that our community partners and Census leaders had together over the last 21 months. In promoting, organizing, and helping people get counted in the 2020 Census. Over 65 members as well as Jeff Baler from US Census Bureau and Joe Salvo Chief Demographer of City Planning and others attended. Since it was a virtual event, they couldn’t offer people anything tangible. Queens achieved a Census self-response rate of 62.8%. Considering the pandemic and the early threat of a citizenship question on the Census form, this is a very respectable response rate.
- She thanked Martha Taylor, for having approved the formation of a Census Committee at CB8, being the only community board that did that. She also thanked Kevin Forrestal, Carolyn Brown, Michael Hannibal, Shery Reisner, Ashook Ramsaran, Dr. Penny Stern and former Board Member Delwar.
- Next, the Census data now must undergo quality control and it will be compiled and presented to the White House. There is some litigation when it comes to reapportioning and redistricting. The Census may be over, but the process will continue. We are just very grateful to have collaborated with Board 8 and its members.
- She wished everyone who did celebrate Diwali a belated Happy Diwali and everyone have a Happy, Safe, and Healthy Thanksgiving.

Committee Reports:

Health Minute with Dr. Penny Stern, Health Committee Chair: Severe Maternal Morbidity (SMM) refers to unexpected outcomes of labor and delivery that result in significant long-term or short-term consequences to a woman’s health. SMM has been increasing in the U.S. in recent years and has affected tens of thousands of women annually. The overall rate of SMM increased almost two hundred percent between 1993 and 2014. It is not entirely clear why SMM is increasing, but changes in the overall health of the population of women giving birth may be contributing to increases in complications. For example, increases in maternal age, pre-pregnancy obesity, preexisting chronic medical conditions, and cesarean delivery have been documented. Infants that were born to mothers with SMM are 39% more likely to die. Between 1990 and 2016 the U.S. was the only high inclined country in which maternal mortality increased. The U.S. also experiences large racial and ethnic disparities in maternal mortality with black non-Latino women and indigenous women dying at rates two to three times out of white women. What is hoped for now is to bring these facts to wider community attention and make it easier for clinicians to recognize these at-risk women. To manage their treatment and if necessary, refer them for additional care in a timely fashion. So much of this problem seems preventable interdisciplinary teams are working in many health systems to ensure that any clinician involved in the care of women or contemplating pregnancy or who are pregnant. Any clinician is aware of this problem will be trained to prevent these negative outcomes. I urge you all to wear your masks, wash your hands, maintain social distancing, and when a vaccine becomes available please do not turn this into a political issue. These are great mRNA [messenger RNA] vaccines with very few if any side effects. This may be the turning point for COVID. Happy Thanksgiving to all.

Transportation Committee Jesse Rosenbaum: Mr. Rosenbaum announced that there was a request to co-name Foothill Avenue to Melvin “Mel” Doby Way in honor of Melvin Doby, Hilltop Co-op president and former NYC Police Officer who received many honors after 911. He was a leader of the community serving as president of Hilltop Village Co-Op #1 and on the President’s Council of Cooperatives and Condominiums of many years. He worked to improve the quality of life of this community. The request was also accompanied by a petition with 128 signatures. The concept was presented to the Transportation Committee and it passed overwhelmingly.

Mary Maggio made a motion to send a letter of support, seconded by Marc A. Haken.

A hand vote was taken.

Count in favor 38 Opposed: 0 Abstained: 0

Census 2020- Kevin Forrestal – Mr. Forrestal announced that numerous speakers spoke about the Queens Complete Count Committee being the best in the State and the City. They praised both Susie and Tim who coordinated the effort. They worked tirelessly to get this accomplished. With all the obstacles because of Covid and the Trump Administration it was still a huge success, better than ten years ago. Thanks to Susie and Tim. Congratulations to both of you.

Scott Solomon – City Planning:

- Mr. Solomon informed everyone that on October 19th, City Planning referred out the zoning for coastal flood resiliency or ZCFR. It is essentially making permanent the zoning rules that were changed post Sandy. They were enacted on an emergency basis and added some lessons learned.
- He spoke to District Manager Adam-Ovide to set up a meeting with the land use committee. It will be a 15-minute discussion. It may be less than fifteen minutes because CB8 is landlocked. It is not really going to have much. It is a city-wide text amendment, so we want to make sure that we have a briefing. If anyone has any questions or concerns to contact him at: ssolomon@planning.nyc.gov.

Adjournment

Marc A. Haken made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:34 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Izabela Szczepanska, CB8 staff
December 1, 2020*