



Chairperson, Martha Taylor

The City of New York
Borough of Queens

Community Board 8

197-15 Hillside Avenue
Hollis, NY 11423-2126
Telephone: (718) 264-7895
Fax: (718) 264-7910
Qn08@cb.nyc.gov
www.nyc.gov/queenscb8



District Manager, Marie Adam-Ovide

Minutes of Community Board 8 Meeting held on Wednesday, March 13, at Queens Centers for Progress at 81-15 164th Street, Jamaica, NY 11432.

Attendance

Board Members Present

Robert H. Block, Edward Chung, Kenneth Cohen II, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Wendy Gennaro, Michael Hannibal, Mitch Lisker, Mary Maggio, Jennifer Martin, Dilip Nath, Tammy Osherov, Hersh Parekh, Tobias Paris, Simon Pelman, Frances Peterson, Jenna Citron Schwab, Seymour Schwartz, Deepti Sharma, Harbachan Singh, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Martha Taylor, Amy Tse and Jacob Weinberg.

Board Members Absent

Dilafroz Ahmed, Heather Bennett-Idels, Susan D. Cleary, Solomon Davydov, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Ahsan Habib, Neeta Jain, Mohammed “Delwar” Islam, Steven Konigsberg, Elke Maerz, Rabbi Yaniv Meirov, David Mordukhaev, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov, Alan Ong, Mohammad Rahman, Charlton Rhee, Jesse Rosenbaum, Douglas Sherman, Mohammed Tohin, and Rabbi Mayer Waxman.

Others Present

Anthony Iuliano representing Mayor Eric Adams, Shubbhra Datta representing Borough President Donovan Richards, Ruo Cheng Chen representing Councilwoman Linda Lee, Joshua Simanowitz representing Assembly Member Samuel Berger, Evelyn Lee representing Congresswoman Grace Meng, P.O. Gorman, Captain Tsang, P.O. McCarthy representing NYPD, Faith Chojar representing DOT, Scott Solomon representing DCP, Scott Sieber representing Senator John Liu, CB8 Staff Soleil Griffin, and Nettie Norris.

Call to Order

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

Public Participation

Wendy Gennaro – representing Queens Center for Progress (QCP)

Thanked everyone for attending the meeting. She provided historical context of the building and listed the services QCP offers.

Chairperson Taylor informed the residents that we cancelled our February 2024 board meeting due to a gas leak at Hillcrest Jewish Center. We hope to return to Hillcrest in April.

Irving Poy – representing Pickleball

Supports pickle ball. He provided data of the increase of pickleball players.

Jennifer Martin – representing Schwartz Brothers- Jeffer, Sinai Chapels, Parkside Memorial Chapels & Forest Park Funeral Home

Informed us of three programs that the funeral home is hosting. Flyers were provided.

Peter Hart – representing Pickleball

Supports having a pickleball court.

Cheung Lam – representing Pickleball

Supports pickleball.

Stephen Difede – representing Pickleball

Supports pickleball.

Tanny Chang – representing Pickleball

Supports pickleball.

George Hadjiconstantinou – representing Queens Chamber of Commerce

Listed programs that the Queens Chamber of Commerce is hosting. Flyers were provided.

Elected Officials’ Announcements

Joshua Simanowitz – representing Assembly Member Sam Berger

The Assembly Member is hosting a Q & A with the President of Queens College about the college and Jewish community on March 28th. The street Co-naming for Nettie Mayersohn is April 14.

Evelyn Lee - representing Congresswoman Grace Meng

The Congresswoman is working alongside her colleagues on a bill to prevent a partial shutdown. The V.A. has expanded healthcare for veterans exposed to hazardous conditions during their years of service. The enrollment started on March 5th.

Ruocheng Chen - representing Council Member Linda Lee

Council Member Lee is working with the DPR to address the pickleball courts.

Jill Cheatham

Stated that she wants the bus stops to remain on 164th Street and Parsons Blvd. She provided suggestions on how to make the bus routes more efficient.

Chairperson Martha Taylor requested a roll call.

A quorum was present.

Chairperson Taylor

Stated that Steven Konigsberg has resigned. The following board members have excused absence:

- Dilafroz Ahmed
- Mohammed “Delwar” Islam
- Mohammad Rahman
- Ahsan Habib
- Mohammed Tohin

Chairperson Martha Taylor led the salute to the flag.

Chairperson Martha Taylor called for a motion to approve the minutes.

Approval of Minutes: Michael Hannibal made a motion to approve the minutes of Wednesday, January 10, 2024, seconded by Kevin Forrestal. The motion passed unanimously with no abstention.

Chairperson's Report

Chairperson Taylor extended her condolences to Heather Bennet-Idels on the passing of her grandmother. May her memory be a blessing.

Congratulations to board member Steven Konigsberg on his new job as Court Attorney-Referee with the office of Court Administration. As a result, he had to resign as a CB8 member last week. Steve served on the board on behalf of his community for 28 years. He was one of our best members and we wish him well. He was our Land Use and Zoning Chairperson. He did a magnificent job. As a good member, a good person and someone we respected, it will be hard to replace him.

Community Board 8 will have representatives from the Department of Buildings' Administrative Enforcement Unit (AEU) in our office next Friday, March 15, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. to address unresolved DOB violations. If you are aware of anyone who needs this service, please encourage them to call and sign-up for assistance. If this event is not well attended, we may no longer be able to provide such services again.

Congratulations to Dilip Nath for the publication of his book. LaGuardia Airport is now the number one on the list of airports. Congratulations to the Port Authority and anyone one who is affiliated with it.

The Department of Parks and Recreation is looking into converting at most 3 of the 6 handball courts at Farm Playground into pickleball courts. These courts have low usage. They would keep the wall so that one side could be used for handball and the other side would be pickleball. They could always convert them back if necessary. This is not yet funded. Parks will not replace any tennis courts at Cunningham Park for pickleball.

Guest Speakers:

Commanding Officer Mo Tsang, 107th Precinct

Thanked everyone for inviting him to the Community Board 8 meeting.

Anthony Iuliano – representing the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit

The application to join the Neighborhood Support Team is open. This gives members of the community boards, community-based organizations, council members and business improvement districts an opportunity to push projects that affect quality of life. The deadline for the application is April 4th.

The mayor's office is working with the Sheriff's Department to target smoke shops that are selling cannabis. There were fifty (50) cease and desist notifications that were released throughout the five (5) boroughs to property owners who lease to smoke shops. Assemblymember Jenifer Rajkumar is trying to pass a bill to give the city more tools to combat the smoke shops.

The mayor, Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York and Vicinity (BCTC) President Gary LaBarbera, and Cirrus Workforce Housing Advisors, LP (Cirrus) announced a first-of-its-kind partnership to build workforce housing. Pension funds affiliated with BCTC members and other Building Trade unions, along with Cirrus, have pledged more than \$100 million in an initial fundraising stage to invest in a series of multi-family workforce housing development and redevelopment projects in New York City at levels their members can afford. Workforce housing is for union members, city employees, and members of the uniform services.

Michael Hannibal

There has been reporting that though the city is going after illegal cannabis shops, there is not any enforcement. Is there any type of enforcement to get the compensation for the city?

Anthony Iuliano

I would have to get back to you on how much has been compensated.

Wendy Gennaro

Are there certificates that are displayed in the window to show if someone is operating a legal shop?

Anthony Iuliano

The dispensaries are managed by the state. They haven't really rolled out yet.

Jacob Weinberg

Would you consider informing the IRS of the illegal shops?

Anthony Iuliano

When it comes to the income, a couple of stores closed because they were buying the cannabis products from California. The marijuana must be grown in the state of New York.

Amy Tse

Do you have any stats on the number of people who have died with the products?

Anthony Iuliano

I would have to get that information from the Department of Health. I can try to get that information from you and share it with the community board.

Shubhra Datta – representing Borough President Donovan Richards

Announced that the Community Board application is closed. The Borough President's office received 592 new applications throughout the borough and 843 reapplicants. If anyone has any questions, they can reach out to the Director of Community Boards, Kahleel Bragg.

The Borough President is also hosting a few events that could be found on their website at queensbp.org/rsvp.

District Manager's Report

Police Department (NYPD)

Crime is down overall. They have issues with parents dropping off their children who are not obeying the traffic and parking rules. They try to rotate traffic and parking enforcement near the schools.

They announced that the 107th Precinct will have some detail near the seven mosques in the district for Ramadan.

Department of Transportation

They anticipate a new sidewalk contract this spring or summer. They will let us know if they will be doing any work within our district once the information becomes available.

Department of Design and Construction (DDC)

DDC Project I.D: SEQ200558 - In Jamaica Estates, they were working on sanitary sewer work the week of March 4, 2024, at Eton Street between Barrington and Somerset Street. Community Construction Liaison (CCL) Gina Modoo has been keeping us abreast of the work as it proceeds. She can be reached at (917) 832-8935 or via email at etonstreetccl@gmail.com

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

There were 279 complaints called through 311 for Community Board 8 last month. The top five complaints were:

Air, smoke, and vehicular	80
Hydrant knocked over	24
Dirty water	17
Noise from construction	17
Leak	16

Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)

The third budget cut did not go through. They started interviewing for summer staffing. When asked about the status of the pickleball courts, he stated that they may be in design. He will follow up with more information soon.

Fire Department (FDNY)

Fire Chief Eysser informed us that there was a broiler fire at Hillcrest when school was not in session. The issue was addressed. Everything was alright the next day, and the students did not miss a day of school. The department is going to the local stores that sell lithium batteries to ensure they are selling safe products. Engine 298 just received a new apparatus [fire truck]. Due to the supply chain issue, it is taking longer than usual to have their equipment replaced.

They raised concerns again about the lack of parking that will occur with the new construction on both sides of Hillside Avenue. They met with DOT virtually on this issue.

Department of Buildings (DOB)

We are all set for our event DOB in Your Community Board for March 15th to assist residents with correcting DOB violations. We encourage you to spread the word and call in to save your spot.

Mayor's Community Affairs Unit (CAU)

The application for the Neighborhood Support Team is now open. Those who applied and did not get picked can now re-apply. To apply or learn more, please go to: <https://www.nyc.gov/site/cau/Initiatives/support-teams.page>



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

MTA Public Hearing – Lucille Songhai representing MTA

The MTA reviewed a few bus routes that affect CB 8. They informed the community that the proposed Q73 bus route is no longer in the MTA plan. The MTA will post in-person open houses in the coming months.

Evan Bialostozky representing MTA

The purpose of redesigning the bus routes is to keep up with the changing needs of bus riders. Customers stated that they want more reliable service, faster travel, better connections within Queens and other boroughs, and simplified service.

Tammy Osherov

The Q30 has a Little Neck Parkway route and a Queens Borough Community College route. Will the new bus route go all the way to Little Neck Parkway?

Matt Lazo representing MTA

That will be replaced by the proposed Q75.

Kenneth Cohen II

The Q31 services students that go to Bayside High School. How would those students have bus access to the school?

Matt Lazo representing MTA

The bus stop to Bayside High School remains.

Mary Maggio

There are some bus stops that have three (3) buses. Is there a way to not have three buses at one stop?

Chairperson Taylor requested for Mary Maggio and Tammy Osherov to assist with any recommendations to improve the bus service. She also suggested that MTA and the board members who are knowledgeable about different bus routes to meet separately.

Howard Fried

Are the bus stops that are coming from further east going to bypass stops after 188th Street.

Lucille Songhai representing MTA

Yes. The QM6 and QM36 since it is usually crowded.

Harbachan Singh

On Hillside Avenue between 193rd Street and 179th Street, only bus QM1 stops. Each time that the bus comes in the morning, it says “Next Bus Please”. There are buses that are not crowded, and they bypass the stop which leads to people waiting 20 – 30 minutes for the next bus.

Lucille Songhai representing MTA

We emailed a PDF version of the proposed bus route booklet to CB8. If anyone has any comments regarding specific bus routes, please send it to the CB8 office.

Community Board 8 members were unable to vote on the Gaming Text Amendment, the Mayor’s Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2025, and BSA Calendar 2023-64BZ – Block 9702 Lot 10 - AKA 144-08 87th Avenue due to lack of quorum.

Gaming Text Amendment – Scott Soloman representing Department of City Planning

The text amendment would allow New York City to be considered as a possible location for a Gaming Facility when the State looks to approve up to three casino licenses in the Downstate region (NYC, Long Island, and Westchester, Putnam, Rockland counties). Gaming facilities, such as casinos and racetracks, are not currently, legally permitted in the city.

Capital & Expense Budget Committee – Harbachan Singh

Budget Director, Harbachan Singh, requested that the board members review CB8’s response to the Mayor’s Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2025. Community Board 8 members were unable to vote on the response due to lack of quorum. They will vote on it during the April board meeting.

BSA Calendar 2023-64BZ – Block 9702 Lot 10 - AKA 144-08 87th Avenue

The BSA will be voted on during the April Community Board meeting.

Health Minute with Dr. Stern

March represents colorectal cancer awareness month. Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in both women and men globally. Colorectal cancer is raising in people under 50. Among this younger population, patients are being diagnosed at later stages. There are different types of screening tests. You can do the stool-based tests, which can detect cancer early, such Fit and Cologuard, and can be done in the comfort of your home. However, the only screening test that both prevents and detects colorectal cancer early is colonoscopy. Colorectal cancer is a highly preventable disease and survival is highest when it is found early. Get screened to protect you and your family.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by,
Soleil Griffin, CB8 Staff
April 1, 2024*