



*The City of New York  
Borough of Queens*



Chairman, Alvin Warshaviak

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

## Government Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Tuesday, March 3, 2015  
**Time:** 7:30 p.m.  
**Place:** Community Board 8 Office  
197-15 Hillside Avenue  
Hollis, NY 11423

**Harbachan Singh, *Government Affairs Committee Chair***

**Board Members:** Marc A. Haken

**Also in attendance:** Marie Adam-Ovide, District Manager, CB8  
Alma Karassavidis, Community Board 8 Staff

Mr. Singh called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

**Purpose:** To discuss Intro 585 which proposes to establish term limits for Community Board Members and to come up with a resolution which validates our opposition to this proposal.

**Marc A. Haken:** Were we able to secure from Mr. Dromm the reasoning behind this proposal?

**Harbachan Singh:** This is his statement which was presented when he introduced the proposal.

**Marc A. Haken:** This says nothing.

**Harbachan Singh:** There is nothing of substance. In this newspaper article there is more.

**Marc A. Haken:** Correct. There is nothing of substance.

**Harbachan Singh:** The change in the bill only adds one sentence; that those appointed after April 2016 will have the limitation of so many terms, which equals a total of twelve (12) consecutive years.

**Marc A. Haken:** Yes, this is done so that the people like you and me say, we don't care; it does not affect us, and we will go along with it. I think in some way we should extrapolate the points that Melinda Katz made and try to work them into whatever resolution we come up with.

**Harbachan Singh:** Yes. In addition, Karen Koslowitz made a convincing statement in this editorial article. She covers most of the angles.

**Marc A. Haken:** She was Coordinator of Community Boards, so she is very knowledgeable.

**Harbachan Singh:** Therefore she knows that there is established control.

**Harbachan Singh:** Mr. Dromm quoted that Silver was there too long and if we had term limits this would not have happened. How can he compare that with volunteers.

**Marie Adam-Ovide:** He is talking about term limits as a whole?

**Marc A. Haken:** He quotes here "One only has to look at what is going on in Albany."

**Harbachan Singh:** There is nothing to compare. They are paid, they are elected; it is different.

**Marie Adam-Ovide:** What I truly believe is he does not want to make the tough decision of telling someone in the community that he is not recommending them for re-appointment. Then they automatically just leave after twelve (12) years. This will make the board weaker.

**Marc A. Haken:** This exceeds the term of the Council person. A Council person can only serve eight (8) years. If they serve twelve (12) years, that will be four (4) years beyond that. I am trying to figure out where he is coming from with this.

**Harbachan Singh:** He did not say anything stronger than Silver's case. Even the statement that his director made was nothing much to go on.

**Marie Adam-Ovide:** It does not make any sense at all.

**Marc A. Haken:** Did you put anything together for us to work on?

**Harbachan Singh:** Either we write a letter or we prepare a resolution.

**Marc A. Haken:** This is just a letter, not a resolution from CB11.

**Harbachan Singh:** Yes, this is a letter.

**Marc A. Haken:** Do we know why they did not do a resolution?

**Harbachan Singh:** No

**Marc A. Haken**: How strong do we want this?

**Harbachan Singh**: I think we can be very strong.

**Marc A. Haken**: Do we want to do a letter or a resolution? Needless to say I think a letter would be easier than a resolution. Or should we prepare both and present them to the board and let the board decide?

**Harbachan Singh**: I think a resolution is stronger.

**Marc A. Haken**: Do you think a resolution is stronger than a letter?

**Marie Adam-Ovide**: I don't know that one is stronger than the other.

**Harbachan Singh**: The resolution would be from the board as well as the letter, right?

**Marie Adam-Ovide**: Yes.

**Mark A. Haken**: Yes. Any letter that carries the chair is coming from the board. It is not coming from an individual.

**Marie Adam-Ovide**: We need to make sure that they understand. For our Community Board we have people who really want to come on the board. That is not the case for all Community Boards across New York City. There are areas where people do not care or do not want to be on a Community Board. They are going to have a hard time replacing someone who has certain knowledge, like someone who is an architect or who understands zoning.

**Marc A. Haken**: We are doing a resolution.

WHEREAS, Legislation has been introduced to impose term limits on members appointed to Community Boards after April 2016 (limiting them to no more than six (6) consecutive terms as a voting member); and

WHEREAS, this creates a 2-tier Community Board with some members being re-appointed every two (2) years forever and others being able to serve no more than twelve (12) years; and

WHEREAS, Council Members have the ability to not re-appoint members at their discretion, and the Borough President has the power to not allow the re-appointment of board members at her discretion; and

WHEREAS, Board Members are often appointed predicated on their area of expertise; and

WHEREAS, individuals are also appointed because of their community involvement (Civic Associations, Block Association, Places of Worship, etc.); and

WHEREAS, in every two-year appointment cycle, there are sitting board members who do not seek re-appointment because of different reasons (health, relocation, time constraints); and

WHEREAS, there is now and always has been substantial turnover in the board's compositions; and

WHEREAS, effective board members are not easily replaced,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, Community Board 8 opposes Intro 585 and urges the New York City Council to vote it down.

**Harbachan Singh**: The present mechanism has all the checks and balances necessary to prevent any fraud or excess absences because the control is still with the Council Members and the Borough President.

**Marc A. Haken**: I would send the resolution to all the Community Boards in the city as well as the entire City Council.

**Marie Adam-Ovide**: Yes, we will.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Alma Karassavidis, Community Board 8 Staff  
March 10, 2015*