



*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, February 8, 2023, at Hillcrest Jewish Center.

**Attendance:**

**Members Present:**

Dilafroz Ahmed, Heather Bennett-Idels, Robert H. Block, Edward Chung, Susan Cleary, Kenneth Cohen II, Solomon Davydov, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, James Gallagher, Jr., Wendy Gennaro, Ashan Habib, Michael Hannibal, Steven Konigsberg, Mohammed “Delwar” Islam, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Mary Maggio, Jennifer Martin, Yaniv Meirov, David Mordukhaev, Dilip Nath, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov, Tammy Osherov, Hersh Parekh, Simon Pelman, Frances Peterson, Mohammad Rahman, Charlton Rhee, Jesse Rosenbaum, Deepti Sharma, Douglas Sherman, Harbachan Singh, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Amy Tse, Jacob Weinberg and Emanuel Yllescas.

**Members Absent:**

Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, John Gebhard, Marc A. Haken, Tami Hirsch, Neeta Jain, Paul S. Lazauskas, Alan Ong, Seymour Schwartz, and Tamika Williams-Moore.

**Others Present:**

Michael Sidell, Shubhra Datta representing Borough President Donovan Richards, Joyce Choi representing Council Member Linda Lee, Adam Suionov representing Council Member James Gennaro, Rokeya Akhter representing District Attorney, Akshar Patel representing State Senator John Liu, Norris Johns representing State Senator Leroy Comrie, Marco Cruz representing Assembly Member Daniel Rosenthal, Ananya Rajaraman representing Assembly Member Nily Rozic, Denise Downing representing Queens Public Library, Evelyn Li representing Congressman Grace Meng, P.O. Timothy Gorman, 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Affairs, P.O. Jerry Brown, Jr., 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Affairs, P.O. Alexis Alvarez, 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Affairs, P.O. Leonard, 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Affairs, P.O. Boitel, 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Affairs P.O. Jessica Mangold, 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct. and P.O. Nunez, 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct.

**Call to Order:**

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

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**Public Participation:**

**Michael Sidell, Community Activist** – He complimented Councilman James Gennaro for securing funding for The Doe Fund. He stated, as of April 2023 there will no longer be a Q73rd bus route. Due to the Board of Education’s staggered hours, he proposes that the Community Board find something for the students to do while they wait for their classes to start. It is taking too long for the NYPD to close unlicensed cannabis stores.

**Elected Officials’ Announcements:**

**Akshar Patel representing State Senator John Liu** - There will be a Department of Finance workshop on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Hillcrest Jewish Center.

**Evelyn Li representing Congressman Grace Meng** – Congresswoman Meng was appointed by Congressional Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries to the newly established Regional Leadership Council, representing Queens. [In this position she will liaison between congress and the White House to implement key legislation to benefit or area. She was also, appointed Vice Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Committee.] She requested this Community Board suggest infrastructure projects to push forward for federal funding. Please reach out to their office if you know of any postal tampering or theft. In the northside of Fresh Meadows they will be providing flood barriers to residents. The office staff will give additional information, please call.

**Rokeya Akhter representing District Attorney** – They have a Black History Celebration to be held at Rochdale Village, contact the office for additional information.

**Wendy Gennaro of Queens Center for Progress** – They have a fundraising food tasting event at Terrace on the Park, “An Evening of Fine Food.” A food tasting, casino, and entertainment night. Achilles’s International, Inc, a running group for persons with challenges and/or disabilities. In April there will be a Community Walk to raise funds for the group. They meet every Sunday by the Queens Theater at 9 a.m. All are welcomed to participate.

**Norris Johns representing State Senator Leroy Comrie:** Happy Black History Month! Senator visited the Yeshiva Center of Queens and visited with the students. DEP has a temporary amnesty program for residents who have penalty fees due to unpaid water bills. A resident can fill out a form to request forgiveness of the late fees. They have a bus going to Caucus Weekend.in Albany. They are coordinating a Prom Dress Giveaway. Please contact their office for details about these events.

**Adam Suionov representing Council Member James Gennaro** – Constituent Services is opened to the community, those seeking help must telephone to schedule an appointment.

**P.O. Timothy Gorman, 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Affairs** – They will be hosting the monthly Community Council’s meeting on February 28, 2023, at 7 p.m. at the [107<sup>th</sup>] precinct. He introduced five new officers assigned to the precinct. Officer Jessica Mangold was also present.

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*Chairperson Taylor had each officer introduce themselves and on behalf of the Community Board expressed our happiness to have them serve our community.*

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*The niece of the late Dr. Allen Bennett expressed her and her family’s gratefulness for the kindness that so many showed toward her family during this time of their bereavement.*



**Salute to the Flag:**

Chairperson Martha Taylor led the salute to the flag.



**Approval of Minutes:**

Michael Hannibal made a motion to approve the minutes of January 21, 2023, seconded by Susan Clear. The minutes were unanimously approved.



**Public Hearing:**

**Denise Downing of Queens Public Library –**

The library is promoting its service to permanent and temporary homebound residents. With a [homebound services designated] library card you can receive up to 4 loaner books/magazines by mail for use up to 45 days. The shipping costs are free. This service is offered to persons of ages who live in New York State. The library card holder is also eligible to join on-line activities, such as, book club, art and craft programs and an ability to speak with a librarian. There are also opportunities to volunteer at the library.

**Jesse Rosenbaum: I understand that our local library at Union Turnpike and 188<sup>th</sup> Street is about to close for the next nine months, is that correct?**

*Answer [Denise Downing]:* Yes, they are doing a roofing project. They will provide limited service, once a week via a book mobile.

**James Gallagher, Jr.: I am President of the Friends of Fresh Meadows Library.**

**I just wanted to remind everyone the Fresh Meadows Library reopened about a week ago, after a nine-month closing for renovations.**

*Answer [Denise Downing]:* The Friends of the library groups are a vital component of the library’s ability to be inactive with the community.

**Martha Taylor: While the library is closed, why can’t the mailing service extend to the residents of the community effected?**

*Answer [Denise Downing]:* Mailing service is structured for the homebound. This why we have the mobile unit scheduled for service.

**Raida Hossain Queens Community Liaison Organ Donation for Live On NY –**

This organization works with over 100 hospitals. In the New York State to facilitate organ donation. They assist families of the organ donors, as well as advocate for those waiting for a transplant. They work on behalf of residents within the 5 boroughs, Nassau County and Suffolk County. There are approximately nine thousand persons in New York State waiting an organ transplant, of which, eight thousand people are within their organization’s service area. New York State is lagging in its number of organ donor. Tragically on average, one person per day in New York State dies while awaiting an organ donation. The easiest methods to declare willingness to donate your organs is for a person sign up as they register to vote or apply/renew for a driver’s license. A doctor will only be allowed to harvest the organs once a patient is declared deceased. All patients awaiting a donation are placed on the national registry. The registry matches the patient to the organ based on blood type and body type. Ability to pay is not a factor. The doctors that treat the patients are not the ones that make harvesting decisions. A donor can be of any age. Every major religion supports organ donation. There is never a cost to the donor nor recipient. One organ donor can affect as many as eight lives. This number can increase to seventy-five when tissue donation is incorporated.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Susan Cleary made a motion to approve the minutes of January 19, 2023, seconded by Michael Hannibal.

Count in favor: 39

Opposed: 0

Abstained: 0

### **Chairperson's Report:**

- A full-time Community Assistant has been identified and is being processed, Jay Wild. We are continuing our search for a part-timer. The position is for 21 hours, making the staffer eligible for city benefits.
- The Comptroller's office met with all the Board Managers of Queens, at the Borough President's office, earlier today. They will be conducting an audit of timekeeping, personnel practices and purchase documents. This is a routine oversight process. They are required to conduct this audit every four years.
- Board Member Harbachan Singh invites you [Community Board Members and Staff] to the Annual Black History Month Celebration at Borough Hall on Thursday February 16<sup>th</sup> from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. You should have received an emailed invitation today from the office. Harbachan Singh and Marc Haken are the only non-African American members on the committee. We commend our Board Members for their commitment.

### **District Manager's Report:**

#### **Police Department (NYPD)**

Crime went down in all categories except assault. There are some staff changes to the NCOs, once I receive the information, it will be included in the Newsletter.

Be aware of scams! These may come in the form of an email, telephone call and now by text messaging. They usually contact you to alert you of suspicious activities on your account and ask that you contact them. Once you do, they get your personal information, that is later used to scam you.

Check washing is on the rise. They recommend the use of a fine "Sharpie" type pen for check writing.

There will be a 5K run starting at Mary Louis Academy. This will affect traffic but only for a short time. They have a program for etching catalytic converters. It does not prevent the crime; however, they can arrest people for selling or buying stolen property.

#### **Department of Consumer and Worker Protection**

The agency is offering free NYC Tax Prep again this year for individuals earning \$56,000 a year or less and/or families earning \$80,000 a year or less in 2022. You can visit [www.nyc.gov/taxprep](http://www.nyc.gov/taxprep) or call 311 for more information.

#### **Fire Department (FDNY)**

The fire chief spoke about the fire that occurred in our district on January 25<sup>th</sup>. He also spoke about the dangers of lithium batteries and e-bike in Kew Gardens Hills. Do not charge them when you are not home. Do not place them near the exit(s). The City Council is looking for things that can be done legislatively to address these concerns.

February is Burn Awareness Month. They are going to events to speak about burn prevention. They have a new system to schedule CPR training. These are now done online by using this link:

<https://www.fdnysmart.org/cpr/>.

#### **Department of Parks and Recreation**

The pathways construction at Cunningham Park [Motor Parkway] will be tentatively completed in the summer. They have had issues with people cutting through the fence. This has caused some delays.

They are short staffed. They anticipate losing some of their seasonal employees. They have many openings for the entry level positions.

### **Department of Buildings (DOB)**

Samuel Schechter will no longer be our contact with DOB. Mr. Luquan Lloyd. He is new to DOB; however, he comes with years of experience in constituent services.

They announced that properties with retaining walls of 10 feet higher must have a safety inspection done every five (5) years.

### **Department of Transportation (DOT)**

Andrew Arcese will no longer be our borough planner. Joseph Patti has been assigned to CB8. They also have an engineering job fair coming up. They will send a flyer for us to share. The agency is also requesting feedback on the car share presentation.

### **Department of Environment Protection (DEP)**

They announced an amnesty program that forgives the interest charges to water bills. For more information call DEP at (718) 595-7000 or email them at amnesty@dep.nyc.gov. This program runs from January 30<sup>th</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup> this year.

Happy Birthday to Board Members: Kevin Forrestal, Paul Lazauskas, and Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov.



### **Marie Adam-Ovide**

**James Gallagher, Jr.: A comment on DEP's Amnesty Program [to relieve homeowners from the penalty fee of their late water bill]. Two hundred thousand homeowners have late fee penalties attached to their water bills. This totals \$1.5 billion dollars.**

### **Shubhra Datta representative of Borough President's Donovan Richards –**

- Applications for Youth Council membership is open.
- They are holding Rent Increase Workshops.

### **Michael Hannibal: What ages are you considering for membership on the Youth Council?**

**Answer [Michael Hannibal]:** There are two groups the first is from thirteen to seventeen and the second is from eighteen to twenty-five.

### **Capital and Expense Budget Committee Report:**

*Due to illness Marc Haken is unable to present his report, Harbachan Singh will substitute.*

The committee has drafted and sent a proposed budget for fiscal year 2024. He met on February 6, 2023 with Marc Haken, Budget Director and Marie Adam-Ovide, District Manager, as well as other members of the CB8 Budget Committee and members of the community to draft the budget. All areas of the budget were reviewed. He commended Marie Adam-Ovide for collecting all of the responses, which were included in the draft. Our report is time sensitive and must be submitted to the mayor's office soon.

Howard Fried made a motion to accept the budget for Fiscal Year 2024, seconded by Jesse Rosenbaum.

By show of hands vote board members voted in favor. The motion carried.

**Medical Minute by Dr. Penny Stern**

February is recognized as American Heart Month. Heart failure is the leading cause of death for women. The American Heart Association has a “Go Red” campaign. It voices the need for a multi prong approach to women’s healthcare both here and around the

world. Cardiac failure is prevalent among working aged adults. In America, in every 34 seconds an adult dies of cardiac disease. Black adults are the most likely to suffer from heart conditions and their related health consequences. African Americans die [from heart failure] at a rate two times higher than Caucasian adults. A Million Hearts Initiative in collaboration with the CDC Foundation has a program, “Live To The Beat.” This is a campaign aimed to reduce cardiac disease among African Americans, 35 to 54 years old. This program supports participants taking meaningful steps to reduce the risk factors associated with heart disease by controlling, hypertension, high cholesterol, and high blood sugar.

**Adjournment:**

Mary Maggio made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Aikens-Williams, *CB8 staff*

February 22, 2023