



*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, March 15, 2023, at Hillcrest Jewish Center.

**Attendance:**

**Members Present:**

Heather Bennett-Idels, Robert H. Block, Edward Chung, Susan Cleary, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher, Jr., John Gebhard, Wendy Gennaro, Ashan Habib, Steven Konigsberg, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Mary Maggio, Jennifer Martin, Dilip Nath, Hersh Parekh, Simon Pelman, Mohammad Rahman Seymour Schwartz, Harbachan Singh, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Amy Tse and Jacob Weinberg.

**Members Absent:**

Dilafroz Ahmed, Kenneth Cohen II, Solomon Davydov, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, Tami Hirsch, Mohammed “Delwar” Islam, Neeta Jain, Paul S. Lazauskas, Yaniv Meirov, David Mordukhaev, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov, Alan Ong, Tammy Oshero, Frances Peterson, Charlton Rhee, Jesse Rosenbaum, Deepti Sharma, Douglas Sherman, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Tamika Williams-Moore and Emanuel Yllescas.

**Others Present:**

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 Melinda Katz, Akshar Patel representing State Senator John Liu, Anthony Lemma representing David Weprin, Lya Rothman representing State Senator Toby A. Stavisky, Marco Cruz representing Assembly Member Daniel Rosenthal, Ananya Rajaraman representing Assembly Member Nily Rozic, P.O. Timothy Gorman, 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Affairs, Kevin McCarthy., 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Affairs, Marva Dudley of Flushing Suburban Civic Association, D.M. Marie Adam-Ovide and Sandra Aikens-Williams CB8 staff..

**Call to Order:**

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

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**Guest Speaker:**

**Joseph Ottomanelli, NYC Department of Sanitation, Community Affairs** –Waste setout time for trash, recyclables and compost, weighing under 55 pounds, will change effective April 1, 2023. There will be one month grace period. Non-compliant businesses and residents will receive written warnings until May 1, 2023. Businesses with lid closed waste containers can setout one hour before closing. Those setting out bagged garbage can do so after 8:00 p.m. Residents with lid closed waste containers can setout after 6 p.m. and those placing garbage in bags can setout at 8:00 p.m.

**Martha Taylor: Are you going to come up driveways that are for example 150 feet, in the dark.? If someone is physically limited, how can they be expected to comply?**

**Answer [Joseph Ottomanelli]:** Residents have the option of using lids on their containers and that will allow them to setout at 6 p.m.

**Martha Taylor: Raccoons, rats and mice will come up driveways to get at garbage. The difference between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. will not change [animal behavior].**

**Answer [Joseph Ottomanelli]:** The emphasis for the change is to reduce the amount of time garbage is on the streets.

**Charles Henry: I came here to get clarification about 73<sup>rd</sup> Ave., what if I put out a blue barrel without a cover. I was told I must place a cover. I know the cover will get blown away. It was suggested I place recyclables in plastic bags. That, I am allowed to do?**

**Answer [Joseph Ottomanelli]:** Yes.

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**Public Participation:**

**Shannon Lacorte, Director of Crime Strategies, and Intelligence Unit of the Queens D.A. Office.** – This program was initiated, by Melinda Katz, 2 years ago.. It is a new model of prosecution called Precision Prosecution or The Intelligence Driven Model Prosecution. The office collects data around trending types of crimes occurring in Queens County. The assigned Assistant District Attorneys, Intelligence Analysts and Detectives delve deeper into people, place and trends that are driving crimes in Queens [County]. Recently, this unit arrested defendants possessing 31 ghost guns using this model. The office will focus on illegal cannabis retail shops and retail shop thefts.

**Rokeya Akhter** – Queens District Attorney’s Office - D.A. Melinda Katz’ office sponsored a Women’s Day celebration on March 23<sup>rd</sup>. Please contact her if you would like to be on the Queens D.A. newsletter mailing list, at 929-232-9016. Martha Taylor will be honoring Linda.

**George Penesis, Fresh Meadows Homeowners Association** - The hotel on 188<sup>th</sup> Street, Mayflower Hotel, continues to operate as a homeless shelter. He is waiting for it to close down. He wants everyone to complain by calling NYC311.

**Jennifer Martin** – She is an employee of Schwartz and Bros. Funeral Home in Forest Hills. They will be Hosting “An Empty Seat At The Seder Table Event.” A free bereavement event for people entering the Passover holiday missing a loved one.

**Elected Officials’ Announcements:**

**Akshar Patel representing State Senator John Liu** – Thank you Martha Taylor for supporting our efforts on behalf of this community.

**Marco Cruz representing Assembly Member Daniel Rosenthal** – They will be hosting an Electronic Waste Event on March 26, 2023.

**Anthony Lemma representing Assemblyman David Weprin** – The office hosted a South Asian Advisory Board meeting. Happy St. Patrick’s Day. Happy St. Joseph’s Day.

**Marva Dudley, President of Flushing Suburban Civic Association** – She represents area residents opposed to the street closing at the former Parsons Junior High School 168, on 160<sup>th</sup> Street between 76<sup>th</sup> Road and 76<sup>th</sup> Avenue. This would be Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. and starting July 1, 2023, until June 30, 2024.

The students, teachers and staff currently have five outdoor spaces free from traffic. This plan is not fair to the residents, it takes away valuable parking spaces.

**Martha Taylor: Marie, does this go to the Transportation Committee and is there time for it?**

**Answer [Marie Adam-Ovide]:** We are planning a hybrid Area 4 Committee meeting for March 30<sup>th</sup>.

**Adam Suionov representing Council Member James Gennaro** – A newsletter is coming out every other week. DEP has an amnesty program for penalty fees accrued due to late fees regarding gas bills. The property owner forgiveness can be up to ten thousand dollars. This program will end on April 30, 2023. The Gennaro office has reopened, by appointment only, for resident meetings on Mondays and Wednesdays. To schedule a meeting call 718/217-4969.

**Heather Bennett-Idels: Why would I pay my bill if I can just get late fees forgiven, a reward?**

**Answer [Adam Suionov]:** I would not call it a reward, it’s people who are in trouble.

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

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**Salute to the Flag:**

Chairperson Martha Taylor led the salute to the flag.  
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**Approval of Minutes:**

John Gebhard made a motion to approve the minutes of February 8, 2023, seconded by Susan Cleary.

Count in favor: 26                      Opposed: 0                      Abstained: 0

**Chairperson’s Report:**

1. The new Community Assistant, Jay Wild was introduced.
2. The Borough President and District Attorney are hosting a Women’s Day event on March 23, 2023 at Queens College. Jennifer Martin will be honored.
3. Community Board 8 will arrange for the special Passover collection, large bins will be distributed to 5 locations. Martha thanked D.M. Marie Adam-Ovide for again securing the success of this event.

**District Manager’s Report:**

*A Statement: D.E.P. realized there are over 200,000 delinquent accounts, owing a total of \$1.2 billion dollars. When collected, these monies can be used to fund infrastructure projects.*

### **Department of Health & Mental Hygiene**

The agency is making strides in pest control. Complaints that used to take 2 to 4 weeks to be addressed are now being addressed within one to two weeks. Ricky Wong has returned to his position as Assistant Commissioner at the Department of Health.

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

Good news! Our district gained six more Parks employees. They will be added to the night shift and available to close the Parks' restrooms at night. They will also assist in keeping the whole district maintained.

It was also noted that they are having issues with e-bike riders using the walking paths endangering pedestrians of all ages. They are pushing for more enforcement.

### **Partnership For Parks**

They are working with a couple of residents who showed interest in forming a Dog Park Volunteer Group. They are looking to do an "It's My Park Day" clean-up project.

### **Mayor's Community Affairs Unit**

The mayor has a new initiative called Breaking Bread. It is to create partnership through hosting a series of dinners with different groups. When Neo Nazi groups are pushing hate (i.e., Jewish Day of Hate), our city wants to stand against all forms of hate.

Recently, the mayor created the Mayor's Office of Children and Early Education. The Commissioner is Michelle Paige. They will offer wraparound services for children (i.e., 3k for all)

### **Con Edison**

Please call Con Edison at 1 800-75CON ED to confirm that the person at your door is really from Con Edison. Imposters with criminal intent are pretending to be Con Ed employees to enter people's homes.

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

DOT is promoting its "We Are Walking Here," a competition that encourages students to think about and discuss ways we can change dangerous driver behavior and better protect ourselves in the traffic environment in order to prevent traffic fatalities and injuries. Students from K through 12 are eligible to participate in creating a PSA for the opportunity to win \$1,000 prize. This competition runs from March 6<sup>th</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup>.

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

They reminded us of DEP's Amnesty Program. There are over 23,000 delinquent accounts owing \$1.2 billion that may be eligible. About 85% of these accounts belong to residential property owners.

Under this program, those who owe more than \$1,000 for over year, all or part of the interest is forgiven as follows:

- When paying 100% of your bill, 100% of the interest is forgiven.
- When paying 50% of your bill, 75% of the interest is forgiven.
- When paying 25% of your bill, 50% of the interest is forgiven.

For more information call DEP at (718) 595-7000 or email them at [amnesty@dep.nyc.gov](mailto:amnesty@dep.nyc.gov). This program runs until April 30<sup>th</sup> this year.

### **Breaking Ground – Homeless Outreach**

New York City is implementing a new program to address homelessness. Homeless individuals with unaddressed mental issues are being removed from the street and placed in appropriate facilities. The Department of Homeless Services is going out with clinical workers to evaluate the homeless. So far, two individuals were removed.

### **Department of Sanitation**

Compost collection will resume on March 23, 2023. Community Board 8 has arranged for the special Passover collection, large sanitation bins and Chometz burning stations at five locations in the district.

1. In front of the Young Israel of Kew Gardens Hills located at 70-11 150<sup>th</sup> Street.
2. In front of the Young Israel of Jamaica Estates located at 83-10 188<sup>th</sup> Street.
3. In front of the Young Israel of Queens Valley located at 141-55 77<sup>th</sup> Avenue, near the parking lot.
4. In front of the Young Israel of Holliswood located at 86-25 Francis Lewis Boulevard.
5. In front of the Kehillat Sephardim located at 150-62 78<sup>th</sup> Road.

*Happy Birthday to Board Members: Michael Hannibal, Dilip Nath and Harbachan Singh*



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

- They are hosting several Women's Day events.
- Their office is offering immigration assistance.

### **Dr. Penny Stern – Health Minute**

Dr. Stern is ill and unable to present this evening. Her Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month informational sheet is in the board members' packets.

### **Kevin Forrestal - Building and Housing Committee Report**

On March 7, 2023, the committee drafted and approved a letter addressed to Governor Kathy Hochul. The letter addresses the goal to increase affordable housing by 3%. The requirements include that it must be built around the MTA subway system or the Long Island Railroad. There must be an increase annually of 3% of new available dwellings. Any township that fails to meet these guidelines, there will be consequences. We spoke to our objection of the plan. It is a policy plan and should not be in a budget proposal. Both houses of the state legislature have rejected this plan almost totally. This fight is not over it can change, up until the budget is passed. The budget is scheduled to be passed by April 1, 2023. Board Members are asked to sign and send a copy to their state legislative representative. There will be two public information hearings regarding this matter, the first on March 21<sup>st</sup> and the second on March 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Martha Taylor: The insulting aspect of this proposal is that it allows for circumventing zoning laws. The legislature has proposed a new budget – we will see what will happen. We have at least four Queens state senators who are opposed to this plan and are fighting against its implementation.**

**Adjournment:**

Mary Maggio made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:10 p.m., seconded by Susan Cleary.

Respectfully submitted by,

Sandra Aikens-Williams, *CB8 staff*

March 28, 2023