



Chairperson, Martha Taylor

The City of New York  
Borough of Queens

Community Board 8

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District Manager, Marie Adam-Ovide

Minutes of Community Board 8 Board Meeting held on Wednesday, April 13, 2022, via [WebEx](#).

**Attendance:**

**Board Members Present:**

Robert H. Block, Susan D. Cleary, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, Steven Konigsberg, Neeta Jain, Elke Maerz, Mary Maggio, Yaniv Meirov, Alan Ong, Tamara Osheroov, Frances Peterson, Seymour Schwartz, Douglas Sherman, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Martha Taylor and Amy Tse.

**Board Members Absent:**

Dilafroz Ahmed, Heather Bennett-Idels, Edward Chung, Kenneth Cohen II, Solomon Davydov, John Gebhard, Wendy Gennaro, Ashan Habib, Tami Hirsch, Mohammed Islam “Delwar”, Paul S. Lazauskas, Mitch Lisker, Jennifer Martin, David Mordukhaev, Dilip Nath, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov, Hersh Parekh, Simon Pelman, Mohammad Rahman, Charlton Rhee, Jesse Rosenbaum, Deepti Sharma, Harbachan Singh, Mohammed Tohin, Tamika Williams-Moore, Jacob Weinberg and Emanuel Yllescas.

**Others Present:**

Max Weprin representing Borough President Donovan Richards, Malik Sahbas representing Borough President Donovan Richards, Matthew Malloy representing Council Member James Gennaro, P.O. Timothy Gorman, 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Affairs, Elyse Foladare representing Eric Paatnik’s Office, CB8 District Manager and Jatnna Reyes, CB8 Staff Member.

**Call to Order:**

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

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*Chairperson Taylor stated that the attendance on Board Members was short because of religious observation (Passover & Ramadan).*

**Public Participation:**

**Seymour Schwartz** – Mr. Schwartz stated that on April 20<sup>th</sup>, the New York Landmark’s Conservancy will present its highest recognition and honor for the outstanding restoration of the T-Building located on the grounds of Queens Hospital. This will now serve as a home for 200 families along with an 8,600 sq. ft. community center inspired by this Community Board. Dunn Development will begin placing families next week. The designated administrator for the community center, “Common Point” is preparing to file its interior construction plans and apply for a Certificate of Occupancy. The community center will begin its operation in early fall with an opening program to serve Queens residents of all ages.

*Chairperson Taylor thanked Mr. Schwartz for his efforts and never giving up. The Community Board is very proud of him. In addition, thanks to Board Member Susan Cleary, former Board Member Florence Fisher and Judith Guttman for serving on the committee and contributing to this wonderful project.*

**Elected Officials' Announcements:**

**Matthew Malloy representing Council Member Gennaro** – Mr. Malloy stated that CM Gennaro’s office is available to assist everyone in any issues/concerns they may have. They are still in the process of moving into their new office. He will keep us posted. They can be reached at: 718-217-4969.

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*During the roll call, there was not a quorum. Only 18 members were present. A total of at least 26 is needed to take a vote on any items on the agenda.*

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**Salute to the Flag**

Chairperson Martha Taylor led the salute to the flag.

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**Approval of Minutes:**

Michael Hannibal made a motion to approve the minutes of March 23, 2022, seconded by Susan Cleary.

**No quorum present. A vote will be taken at the next Board Meeting on May 11, 2022.**

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**Chairperson’s Report – Martha Taylor**

- Chairperson Taylor welcomed our new Board Members: Neeta Jain, Yaniv Meirov, Mohammed Islam “Delwar”, Amy Tse and Emanuel Yllescas.
- The Board has hired a full-time Community Assistant. Her name is Sandra Aikens-Williams. She resides in our district and will start on Monday, April 25, 2022. The part-time position is still open.
- In the Board Member’s packet there is an updated contact list of all the Board Members. This information is to be kept confidential and is not to be shared with anyone. It is for CB8 Members’ use ONLY.
- Best wishes to Board Member John Gebhard who is recuperating. We expect to see him next month.
- Happy Pesach, Happy Easter, and Happy Ramadan to all those celebrating.

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**District Manager’s Report – April 2022**

**Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit (CAU)**

April is Sexual Assault Awareness month according to CAU. April 27<sup>th</sup> is “Denim’s Day” – a time to wear jeans with a purpose, support survivors, and educate yourself about sexual assault. The Italian Supreme Court overturned a rape conviction against a 45-year-old who raped an 18-year-old because she was wearing jeans - blaming the victim.

**Chometz Burning Stations**

We have returned to pre-COVID service for Passover. Sanitation, NYPD and FDNY are all set to do their part for the four chometz burning stations. The special Passover Collection will be done, and large bins will be placed at four locations this year.

**Department of Sanitation**

They are almost back to their pre-COVID numbers. They are working out the schedules for their refuse and recycling collection. There are areas that are on the 4 p.m. to midnight schedule for collection. Once we have more information, we will share them on the CB8 Newsletter.

**Department of Environmental Protection**

There were 448 service requests for the month of March. Of which, there were 120 vehicles idling, 91 noise complaints from lawnmowers, 37 knocked over hydrants, 27 sewer complaints and 24 running hydrants. DEP’s rain

barrel giveaway is back. DEP is limiting it to 50 barrels per event from now through June. They will re-evaluate the number in July.

**Department for Parks and Recreation (DPR)**

They are getting a new seasonal plan. The details are not known yet. Mariano Rivera is coming to do an event at Cunningham Park this spring/summer. The date is to be determined.

**Fire Department (FDNY)**

To schedule a virtual /in-person presentation call (718) 281-3888 before noon. They are willing to come to your events (i.e., block parties, meetings, schools etc.)

**Department of Transportation (DOT)**

DOT used to install new lighting from non-contiguous locations through capital projects. The Office of Management and Budget is no longer allowing them to do so. They must use their expense dollars to add new lighting. They are waiting for a new contract. A new traffic signal was approved for 186<sup>th</sup> Street and 75<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

**Department of Buildings (DOB)**

The 421a Program which offers a tax abatement for developers to build and provide a percentage of affordable housing is set to expire on June 15, 2022. For new buildings to receive this abatement, they must have filed for a new building (NB) application and have completed the foundation by June 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Department of for the Aging (DFTA)**

Commissioner Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez has been re-appointed at DFTA.

**Con Edison**

Beware of scams! Con Edison employees always carry a picture I.D. with a five (5) digit number. If someone comes to your door claiming to be a Con Edison employee, look at the picture; write the I.D.# and call 1 800 - 75CONED to verify. Only open the door once you have confirmed that they are indeed from Con Edison.

*Happy Birthday to Board Members: Dilafroz Ahmed and David Mordukhaev*



**Marie Adam-Ovide**

*During the District Manager’s report, Board Member Marc A. Haken announced that the New York Philharmonic will be at Cunningham Park on Thursday, June 16, 2022, followed by fireworks.*

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**Borough President Donovan Richards’ Representative – Max Weprin**

- On Behalf of Borough President Richards, Mr. Weprin thanked all the Board Members for their service to the community.
- On Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>, there will be an Inaugural Cannabis Conference at Borough Hall at 6:00 p.m. Also, on Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup>, there will be a recruitment job fair. You can RSVP for these events at: [www.queensbp.org](http://www.queensbp.org).
- On Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 p.m., there will be a Community Board swearing-in ceremony. Board Members should receive an email this week with information. Any questions or concerns, he can be reached at: [mweprin@queensbp.org](mailto:mweprin@queensbp.org) or by calling: 718-286-2678.

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**Public Hearing: Co-Naming:** Request for co-naming of 164<sup>th</sup> Place corner of Goethals Avenue as a tribute to late Detective Raymond Abear.

**Kevin Forrestal – Area 3 Chair** – This is a street co-naming for Detective Raymond Abear. He grew up on 164<sup>th</sup> Street. He was in his early 40s and he became a Police Officer. He worked for many years in the special police unit. He was recommended by multiple people. He presumably contracted COVID-19 on duty and died. There was a petition signed by over 50 individuals throughout New York. Letters of testimony from multiple people within the

police department, fire department talking about his extraordinary work as a Detective. He has four (4) children of which one (1) was born only 4 months before his passing. Tonight, marks two years of his death.

*Mr. Forrestal asked for a motion to approve the street Co-Naming 164<sup>th</sup> Place corner of Goethals Avenue as a tribute to late Detective Raymond Abear.*

*Marc A. Haken made a motion to approve the street Co-Naming of 164<sup>th</sup> Place at Goethals Avenue as a tribute to late Detective Raymond Abear, seconded by Howard A. Fried.*

*Chairperson Taylor mentioned to everyone that we still do not have a quorum.*

**Mr. Forrestal stated that this is a recommendation to hold until the next meeting. He also asked for a recommendation for the Riker’s Island letter to Mayor Eric Adams to be drafted and sent.**

*Chairperson Taylor stated that a vote can be made but it will only be advisory. It will not be an official vote because there is not a quorum.*

A hand vote was taken.

Count in favor: **23** Opposed: **0** Abstained: **0**

**The motion was approved.**

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**Public Hearing:**

**BSA Cal. No. 214-06-BZ – 196-23 Hillside Avenue/BBL 4-10509-265** – This is an application to extend the term of a variance, which expires on April 10, 2022, at the above referenced automotive station originally granted under BSA Cal. No. 673-53-BZ on February 23, 1995, in an R3-2 zoning district.

**Presentation by Ms. Elyse Foladare from Eric Palatnik’s Office representing the applicant** *A copy of the plans was provided to the members.*

This application is for a gas station located at 196-25 Hillside Avenue corner of 197<sup>th</sup> Street and Hillside Avenue. Originally, it was going to be an amendment to enlarge the building and make it a convenience store. They are no longer pursuing this. They want to keep the gas station exactly the same. They are proposing to add ADA ramps and more ADA compliance. It is a BP gas station. All the BP stations are upgrading to this change. They want to do the same for this one. This is the only amendment they are seeking. The station has four islands, 18 x 50 sq. ft. masonry building that has a service station in it with three bays. It is located on an R3-2 zoning district. It is a residential district. They have been at this location since February 23, 1955. That was the first time that it went to the BSA. It expired a few days ago on April 10, 2022. They are asking for an additional 10-year extension. Their first hearing at the BSA will be either on April 25<sup>th</sup> or April 26<sup>th</sup>. It is a 24-hr gas station. The automotive repair shop is open from Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., on Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and closed on Sundays.

**Questions from the Board Members:**

**Marc A. Haken – Were the sidewalks in front of it on 193<sup>rd</sup> Street repaired? There were broken sidewalks there.**

**Answer:** *[Ms. Foladare]* – I believe so. I went to the site myself and it looks really nice, but the BSA will take another look and if they see additional cracks that they don’t like, we’ll have it done again.

**Thank you. I am only asking because this is just down the block from the Community Board office.**

**Answer:** *[Ms. Foladare]* – Okay. No problem. Good point.

Susan Cleary – To [Marc A. Haken] – You meant 197<sup>th</sup> Street not 193<sup>rd</sup> Street.

Answer: [Marc A. Haken] – Yes.

**DM Adam-Ovide – I just wanted to say that I did reach out to them before and asked them to repair the sidewalks. They did repair the sidewalks. One of the things that used to happen was that they used to move the trucks and park them on the sidewalk when people couldn't find parking. They stopped doing that. I'm thinking it's because they were coming to our Board; so, I hope that they continue by not parking on the sidewalk if the board recommends approval. I want them to continue to obey the rules, even though, they are coming back to us in 10 years.**

**Answer:** [Ms. Foladare] – Totally understand that. If you want to put that as a condition, we understand that. It will be a condition also at the Board of Standards and Appeals. It's always a condition that they keep the sidewalks clear.

**Chairperson Taylor asked for a motion to approve this application.**

*Marc A. Haken asked if the vote will be advisory. Chairperson Taylor stated that it will be advisory only as we do not have a quorum.*

*Marc A. Haken made a motion to approve BSA Cal. No. 214-06-BZ – 196-23 Hillside Avenue to extend the terms of a variance for 10 years, seconded by Susan Cleary.*

A hand vote was taken.

Count in favor: **23** Opposed: **0** Abstained: **0**

**The motion was approved.**

*Chairperson Taylor stated that the vote is in favor and advisory. BSA will be notified about that.*

**Ms. Foladare – asked if it is possible that at our next meeting in May, this advisory opinion can be brought up and a vote be taken. She will let the BSA know that the Board needs this time before they take their final vote.**

**Answer:** [Chairperson Taylor] – Ok.

**Thank you so much.**

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**Committee Reports:**

**Health Minute with Dr. Penny Stern, Health Committee Chair** – Dr. Stern spoke about MRIs. It is a Magnetic Resonance Imaging device used in radiology to collect pictures of the anatomy of certain parts of the body. She informed us that they have created a portable MRI machine. It can be moved around the hospital hallways, to the bedside of the patients so that they don't have to be transported to the MRI room. It also costs about a tenth of regular MRIs. When people have to make rapid clinical decisions and the time that is wasted. In trying to find out when something is a possible stroke or what not, this is going to cut time on that.

**Prostate Cancer** – There is a new approach to treat this disease, especially in men that have the advance disease and have not done well in standard treatments. The new treatment involves driving radiation directing it into a cancer cell while sparing the healthy tissue that's around it. They do this using a compound that's called PSMA-617. It is used to home in on a protein that is found entirely in prostate cancer cells. This is currently being reviewed by the FDA and will receive a review very soon.

**Sickle Cell Disease** – This disease happens when the red blood cells are not formed properly. They do not flow smoothly through blood vessels but they clog-up and cause incredible pain and other problems. There have been lots of treatment options over the years. They really have improved, including the use of bone marrow transplants which are complicated and dangerous. In 2021, a scientist working at a Children Hospital used a virus to add a gene that triggered sickling of the cells by turning it off. After the treatment, healthy non-sickle red blood cells were produced.

The initial group of patients who were participating in this study made amazing progress. The treatment completely caught the most severe symptoms of the disease which is a big deal.

*These were some of the advances that have been reported while everyone was focused on COVID-19. She encouraged everyone to think about this with optimism as we go forward and be grateful that there are people still researching every day.*

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**Guest Speaker:**

**Richard David, Director of Regional Community Affairs - Con Edison** – Mr. David spoke about the increase in Con Edison bills. He spoke about the reasons why the bills are being generated the way they are. He spoke about what the company is doing to help customers. These are some of the main highlights from the presentation:

- There are three parts to a Con Edison bill:
  1. **Supply Cost** – The supply cost is the market rate that energy has. As everyone knows, the market rate on energy has gone up. Energy prices are through the roof. During COVID-19, most individuals were home and energy consumption also increased. Con Edison does not own any power plants. They purchase energy from the power plants, and they distribute it to their customers. They purchase it at the rate that it is being sold at. This is the supply cost. Con Edison does not benefit from this. They cannot bill customers more than what they pay for that electricity. They are a regulated utility company, and they are regulated by the Public Service Commission.
  2. **Delivery Charge** – This is the part where Con Edison is directly involved and directly engaged. The delivery charge is all of the pipes, the wires, everything underground and overhead that you see to bring energy to your home. They take pride in being the most reliable energy company within the United States. The rate that they charge for delivery, if you look at your bill, it did not really change. It changed marginally. The delivery charge is regulated by the Public Service Commission and anytime they [Con Ed] want to raise the electricity bill, it goes through a regulated process with public input. Con Edison is not raising your bill.
  3. **Surcharges & Taxes** – Each of these three parts are a third of your bill. They are about equal amounts. The surcharges and taxes are about 33% of your bill. They are as much as the energy itself. Con Edison is New York City’s largest taxpayer. They pay about \$2.5B in taxes. Surcharges and taxes do not go to Con Edison. They go directly to the city, and this is what they use to maintain roads and other expenses they may have (schools, major infrastructure, etc.).
- They have several programs that may help customers struggling with their bills:
  1. **Level Payment Plan** – also called the budgeting plan. It makes your budget easier, and you can avoid seasonal spike by spreading your payments evenly. It will give you an average for each month.
  2. **Payment Assistance Program** – They assist customers struggling with paying with their bills. They can work with you and help you enroll in this program.

**Questions from the Board Members:**

**Maria DeInnocentiis – How are the surcharges and taxes related to the supply cost? The supply cost was really high in February, why did the surcharges double?**

**Answer:** [Richard David] – Surcharges and taxes go to the government. They are the ones that collect the tax and the surcharge.

**Amy Tse – Can you explain a little bit about peak hours?**

**Answer:** [Richard David] – Absolutely, we have peak hours in New York. Peak hours, I don’t know the exact hours.

**Midnight?**

**Answer:** [Richard David] – No. Midnight will actually be non-peak hours. Some of the energy use has mostly increased because a lot of energy used was consumed immensely throughout the pandemic.

**Alan Ong – What is the difference between the supply cost and the energy/demand delivery charge? What is that exactly?**

**Answer:** [Richard David] – Out of the three parts, that all goes into the demand section. It is all on the infrastructure, utility and the people that work at Con Edison. This part is regulated by the Public Service Commission. They cannot charge you automatically. That it will differ the following month.

**I would like to show you something later on. The bill for my business was extremely high, I received assistance from CM Gennaro, but I would like to understand why the bills are so high. I can't continue business like that.**

**Answer:** [Richard David] – I will be available for questions and any assistance anyone needs after the meeting.

**Richard David** – Smart meters are the easiest and smartest way to have control of your energy at your fingertips. You are able to monitor and control your energy from your mobile phones.

**Susan Cleary – I have three requests. One, can you get back to us on what are your peak hours. Two, smart meters, how come in a letter it said, if you are not home at the time of the reading, they'll charge me \$100. Lastly, how come I get bills that say \$0.00 on it?**

**Answer:** [Richard David] – You get bills like that because we are still deploying our smart meter technology and part of the deployment continues in Queens. When you get those bills at home, you can see that it also says that it is just an estimate. It is just a transmission period of time until all meters get replaced. You have the right to retain your old meter; however, that's when you will incur a charge to send someone to your home to read that meter.

**Richard David** - Mr. David stated to beware of scams. There are a lot of individuals impersonating Con Edison workers. All Con Edison workers carry a photo ID with their credentials. When in doubt, feel free to call: 1-800-752-6633 to double check and make sure they are indeed Con Ed workers.

*Chairperson Taylor thanked Mr. David for his presentation.*

**Committee Reports:**

**Riker's Island Letter to Mayor Eric Adams** – Kevin Forrestal, *Executive Committee Member* – A letter was drafted to the Mayor to reconsider the Riker's Island decision on project for the Borough Based Jails in Kew Gardens. There have been a lot of things that have happened since it was first approved. There were two proposals as an alternative, one by somebody who used to work for the Mayor in that area. They thought it was a bad idea to continue with this plan. There was another proposal which was presented in a Power Point presentation with pictures which showed the site and the proposed plans. He asked that Board Members approve sending a letter supporting Community Board 9's letter sent to the Mayor in support of this new Borough Based Jail proposal.

A hand vote was taken.

Count in favor: **22** Opposed: **1** Abstained: **0**

**Members opposed:** Susan Cleary

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**Adjournment**

Mary Maggio made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:33 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Jatnna Reyes, CB8 staff  
April 21, 2022*