



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/Public Hearing held on Wednesday, December 14, 2022.

**Attendance:**

**Board Members Present:** Dilafroz Ahmed, Heather Bennett-Idels, Robert H. Block, Edward Chung, Susan Cleary, Maria DeInnocentiis, Kevin Forrestal, James Gallagher, Wendy Gennaro, Ahsan Habib, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, “Delwar” Mohammed Islam, Steven Konigsberg, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Mary Maggio, Rabbi Yaniv Meirov, David Mordukhaev, Dilip Nath, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov, Tammy Oshero, Hersch Parekh, Simon Pelman, Mohammad Rahman, Charlton Rhee, Jesse Rosenbaum, Seymour Schwartz, Deepti Sharma, Douglas Sherman, Harbachan Singh, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Amy Tse, Jacob Weinberg.

**Board Members Absent:** Kenneth Cohen II, Solomon Davydov, Allen Eisenstein, Howard Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, John Gebhard, Tami Hirsch, Neeta Jain, Paul Lazauskas, Jennifer Martin, Alan Ong, Frances Peterson, Dr. Penny Stern, Tamika Williams-Moore, Emanuel Yllescas

**Others Present:** Evelyn Li representing Congresswoman Grace Meng, Max Weprin representing Borough President Donovan Richards, Luna Fu representing Council Member Linda Lee, Honorable Council Member James Gennaro, Akshar Patel representing State Senator Toby Stavisky, Norris Johns representing Leroy Comrie, Anthony Lemma, Jr. representing Assembly Member David Weprin, Marco Cruz representing Assembly Member Daniel Rosenthal, Susanna Go representing Assembly Member Nily Rozic, Matthew Molly representing Council Member James Gennaro, Craig Chin, NYC Department of Transportation and Israel Peskowitz of Chazach

**Call to Order:**

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

**Public Participation:**

**Elaine Young, President of West Cunningham Park Civic Association in Fresh Meadows** – New York City Department of Education is experiencing a steady decline in student enrollment. Now is not the time to expand P.S. 26 with a 4-story building extension that will expand the student population by 450 seats. She would like the community board to arrange a public hearing with SCA and other New York City officials to provide a presentation on this project, with a question and answer follow up session.

**Tammy Oshero** – She is troubled by the lack of a public hearing regarding the extension of P.S. 26. The community has not been informed of plans for the extension. Construction began at the site Thanksgiving weekend 2022. She has been in communication with State Senator Liu and City Councilwoman Lee’s offices about this issue. The [architectural] plans that they have seen suggest that the Department of Education is using space

allocated for the Department of Parks and Recreation. She would like a meeting with the Department of Education and School Construction Authority to review the building plans.

**Anne Staheli** – West Cunningham Civic Association in Fresh Meadows – Construction is about to begin on the expansion of P.S. 26. The community has not been informed of the details regarding the expansion plan. They want the School Construction Authority to hold a meeting to outline the details of the expansion plan.

**James Gallagher** – President of Friends of Fresh Meadows Library

Announced several meetings and events occurring in the community.

- NCO Sector A will be meeting at Young Israel at Hillcrest on December 15, 2022.
- On Monday January 9, 2023, a half fare mobile bus will be at 188<sup>th</sup> Street and Horace Harding Expressway
- On Thursday December 29, 2022, a MetroCard van will be servicing the community at Francis Lewis Blvd. and Foothill Ave.
- The fresh market at Cunningham Park is expected to return in April, 2023.
- The Fresh Meadow Library is anticipated completion of its remodel in February 2023. At the site, there is a mobile library available to the community on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- The City Council's Environmental Committee is meeting. A large topic will be vehicle emissions.

**Guest Speakers:**

**Honorable James Gennaro – Council Member**

- A bill banning criminal background checks for potential renters, loan officers, etc. is circulating the City Council. He will not be supporting this bill. He suspects it will not pass.
- Currently, there are no plans to make changes to the rules of the City Council. They do plan to streamline and strengthen some of their processes. For example, any person or group can introduce a bill. They would like a rule stating it must first pass City Council's legal division's scrutiny.
- He recommends homeowners install a back flow prevention device to reduce water damage from street overflows. He sponsored a bill in city council to help homeowners with financing.
- He recommended residents get COVID booster shoots and wear a mask.
- His office has COVID at home tests that are available through his office.
- His office has free inflatable flood barriers for homeowners.
- Starting in Kew Gardens Hills, he would like to bring Shomrim, a program that works with volunteers from the community to reduce street crime. They will not be armed.
- To address the community's anxiety regarding a recent shooting, his office is having a Public Safety Town Hall in Pomonok Houses on Thursday, December 15, 2022.
- He acknowledged the upcoming birthday of Seymour Schwartz.
- Happy holiday season to everyone.

*Chairperson Taylor invited Deputy Inspector Kevin Chan to address the board members and guests.*

**Deputy Inspector Kevin Chan –**

- A man is alleged to have received multiple stab wounds from a group of Asians. The crime is under investigation.
- There have been six victims of persons having negotiated a price and meeting place on-line, the buyer is robbed of the product. He suggests for safety, that sellers meet buyers at the police station.
- Be careful when crossing the street at night. Wear bright colors to be seen by drivers. He asked that drivers slow down for pedestrians.

### **Elected Official's Announcements:**

**Norris Johnson representing Honorable State Senator Leroy Comrie** – They have HEAP representatives coming to the office to help advise homeowners regarding assistance with heat costs.

**Anthony Lemma representing Honorable State Assemblyman David Weprin** – The office is sponsoring their annual toy drive until December 20, 2022. Also, on December 20, 2022, the New York Office of Trials and Hearings will be at their district office in Fresh Meadows to help residents with outstanding summons, defend against a summons, schedule a hearing, or pay the summons on-line with city agencies. On Saturday, December 17, 2022 the Faith Assembly of God Church they did a food and clothing giveaway.

### **Salute to the Flag**

Chairperson Martha Taylor led the salute to the flag.

### **Stevie Feig – New York City Department of Transportation – Carshare Program:**

This program provides short term access to a fleet of vehicles. This is a 2-year pilot program using vehicles owned and maintained by Enterprise (Getaround) and Zipcar. This program is expected to reduce roadway congestion, reduce an individual's carbon footprint, open access to a vehicle for low-income families.

*The pilot program in the CB8 area will be at three locations [submitted after the meeting]:*

- 1. 87<sup>th</sup> Road, between 144<sup>th</sup> Street and 148<sup>th</sup> Street – Northside*
- 2. 72<sup>nd</sup> Road, between 150<sup>th</sup> Street and 147<sup>th</sup> Street – Northside*
- 3. Parsons Blvd., between 41<sup>st</sup> Ave. and Barclay Ave. - Westside*

**Hersh Paresch – Does the reservation include gas?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – No, it does not include gas.

**Hersh Paresch – What size vehicles do the companies [Getaround and Zipcar] plan to offer?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – The majority of the vehicles will be small compact cars.

**Edward Chung – This seems like a cool idea; can you drive round trip to New Jersey?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – You can drive wherever you would like, so long as you return it to the designated spot. Zipcar allow you 180 miles, per day. Getaround allows you 200 miles, per day. There are no restrictions regarding where to go.

**Edward Chung – I must return the car to the same spot [after the rental time has elapsed]?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – Yes.

**Jesse Rosenbaum – Is there a background check beyond the driver's license?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – Yes, they check the DMV records and perform a background check.

**Susan Cleary – Is this just a cheaper car rental, while it takes away parking spaces in the neighborhood?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – (No audible answer.)

**Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov – This is a great idea. When you are a tourist travelling this is the best way to get around. [Are] both companies planning to offer services in our area?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – Both companies will be in this community board. Zip cars has selected four parking spaces and Getaround will have two parking spaces.

**Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov – What happens if you run out of gas, due to the previous user’s neglect?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – This is company specific question, you would call Carshare customer service.

**Wendy Gennaro – Is there a difference between the companies in terms of who they serve or the pay rate?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – There is an annual fee which breaks down to approximately \$12.00, per hour. There is a difference depending on the size of the vehicle shared. With Getaround there is no annual membership fee. Rates are adjusted during weekend dates.

**Mary Maggio – Queens College has Zipcar spaces. Are these incorporated into this program?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – That is a separate from that program.

**Deepti Sharma – I think it is a great program. Is there a plan to expand this program?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – This is a pilot program, and we plan to expand this program. We will be getting daily usage statistics and will monitor the data. We intend to adjust accordingly.

**Amy Tse – I am concerned that we will be taking parking spots away, especially around large apartment complexes. It would be better if the program were to use parking lots. Will Zipcar and Getaround mechanically service the cars?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – The Carshare company will be responsible to maintain the car.

**Steven Konigsberg – What percentage of the earnings of carshare revenue will be ear marked for public transportation.**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – I do not have that answer. I can ask.

*After this meeting an answer to BM Steve Konigsberg’s question became available.*

*NYC DOT doesn’t direct where revenue goes but funding from the program goes back to the general fund providing money for transit and many other city services.*

**Mitch Lisker – If there is an accident, were will the liability be placed?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – The user will be responsible to report the accident.

**Mitch Lisker – If a renter hits a tree and doesn’t notice will the next renter be responsible?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – Just like any car rental, the renter is responsible to spot and report body damages before excepting the vehicle. The current renter will then not be responsible.

**Mohammed Tohin – It is taking away our limited parking spaces. When is this program going to start?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – We are not looking to start the program before the new year. The Commissioner is looking for the Community Board’s input regarding spots selection. We probably will not be looking at site selection until February 2023.

**Jacob Weinberg – Who is responsible for alternate side of the street parking?**

**Answer:** *[Stevie Feig]* – The program’s cars are exempt from alternate street parking. Carshare companies are required to keep their section of the street clean.

**Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov – Is the program in effect now?**

**Answer:** [*Jesse Rosenbaum*]- Those listed had only one location in our service area.

*Chairperson Martha requested that Ms. Feig send a copy of the presentation to the CB8 office, for distribution to all board members.*

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**Approval of Minutes:**

Marc A. Haken made a motion to approve the minutes of November 9, 2022, seconded by Michael Hannibal.

The minutes were unanimously approved.

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**Chairperson’s Report – Martha Taylor**

- She acknowledged and congratulated Seymour Schwartz on his award presented by the Civic Association Congress.
- Applications for Community Board membership will be available on the Borough President’s website on January 4, 2023. It will close on February 16, 2023. The district manager forwarded an email from the Borough President’s office to all the Community Board 8 Members who are up for renewal as a reminder.
- At our District Service Cabinet, Kevin Morris of the Mayor’s Community Affairs Unit announced the termination of the contract with Exodus to provide transitional services at the Mayflower Hotel in Fresh Meadows. The new provider is Housing Works. Furthermore, its use as a transitional facility will be winding down for the next six months. No information was given as to its use once the contract with Housing Works ends. Housing Works is a reputable organization and might use the facility to provide social services to the community.

*Chairperson Taylor requested that DM Adam-Ovide, for the January board meeting, follow-up on any known future use of the building.*

- Our office was copied on a letter to Mayor Eric Adams from our elected representatives [*Council Member Linda Lee, Congress Member Grace Meng, Assembly Member Nily Rozic, and State Senator John Liu*] requesting the return of monthly Community Advisory Board (CAB) meetings starting this December. They requested a commitment from the Administration about the long-term plans for this hotel and the termination date for the contract with Housing Works.
- On November 17th, she attended a meeting with Council Member James Gennaro and all stakeholders (DOE representatives including the principal, two superintendents, DOE Intergovernmental Liaison, Deputy Inspector Kevin Chan, NYPD School Security, Committee Chair Marc A. Haken, a representative of the Kew Gardens Hills, and District Manager Marie Adam-Ovide). State Senator Leroy Comrie and a representative of Assembly Member Daniel Rosenthal were also in attendance. This was to discuss the concerns regarding the recent murder that occurred near the North Queens Community High School located at 141-25 77th Road in Kew Gardens Hills.

It appears that one of their students was targeted and killed near the school. The perpetrator was not a student at the school. In light of this tragedy, a request was made for additional security officers at the school. As of the date

of the meeting they had already assigned additional personnel. Another request was made for digital cameras around the school.

- Happy Holidays!

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

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

CAU’s Representative Kevin Morris announced that Exodus will no longer be the provider for the transitional facility in Fresh Meadows. The new provider will be Housing Works. Additionally, its use as a transitional facility is winding down within the next six months – until June 2023. When asked about the plans for the facility after the current residents leave, he stated that it is unknown at this time.

Mayor Eric Adams announced there will be new ways to access the Housing Stability Program for victims of intimate violence. They will be able to do so from the comfort of their home by going online. This is to address the fear they experience when they have to show up at a facility.

There is also new legislation to fight rats. It includes the hiring of a Rats Czar in addition to streamlining the Department of Sanitation’s pick-up of refuse. The agency will work to limit the number of hours that garbage is left in the streets and accessible to rats.

**Sam Yang (NYC Commission on Human Rights)**

The NYC Commission on Human Rights will have in-person evaluation for those who experienced discrimination or harassment. These services are provided at the Queens Community Service Center is located at 153-01 Jamaica Avenue on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor in Jamaica, on Mondays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Additionally, the agency is available to do outreach to small business owners about the new wage transparency legislation that has now taken effect. They did an outreach recently in collaboration with Councilman Francisco Moya and the Department of Small Business Services in Flushing.

**Police Department (NYPD)**

Crime has increased including assault, burglary and GLA (Grand Larceny Auto). They have added plain clothes officers on patrol. They have the gang unit on patrol. They will also have officers near houses of worship for Hannukah.

There will be a Christmas Tree Lighting event in front of 161-06 Jewel Avenue on Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m. and the 107<sup>th</sup> Precinct will have a Toy Giveaway. On the same day at 4 p.m. the Utopia Jewish Center will have a Menorah Lighting Ceremony at Cunningham Park at 4 p.m.

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

The agency is transitioning from DFTA to NYC Aging. It is no longer using the term “senior citizen” and will now use older adults. The term senior has negative connotations. Some of the “senior centers” have changed their names to “older adult centers”.

**Department of Buildings (DOB)**

New regulations have recently passed regarding rat abatement that includes new requirements from DOB. They will take effect in 180 days from the bill signing date. [*Intro 460-A requires buildings that receive two or more rodent-specific housing maintenance code or two or more rodent-specific health code violations to use approved rodent-resistant containers for at least two years.*]

All elevator inspections are due by December 31, 2022. Structurally compromised buildings must have an engineer file a report with the Department of Buildings. This information will be added to the DOB's database.

**Department of Transportation (DOT)**

The DOT construction embargo is currently in effect until January 2, 2023. No construction activity can occur on major thoroughfares like Hillside Avenue, Union Turnpike, Queens Blvd, Main Street, etc. Exceptions are given to those who have applied and can show that the work cannot wait until after the holidays.

Gridlock Alerts Days are days when there is high traffic volume. During these days, residents are encouraged to use mass transit and leave their vehicles behind.

Borough President's office is holding a Kwanza event on December 28, 2022 at Borough Hall.



*Happy Birthday to: Al Eisenstein, Jesse Rosenbaum, Steve Konigsberg, Sey Schwartz, Bhitihara Fulton, Tammy Osherov, Deepti Sharma, Tami Hirsch, Charlton Rhee, Simon Pelman and Mohammed "Delwar" Islam.*

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**Max Weprin representing the Honorable Borough President Donovan Richards.**

Tuesday, December 20, 2022 at Queens Borough Hall, they are going to have a menorah lighting ceremony. January 19, 2023 they will be hosting a Luna New Year Celebration at 7 p.m.

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**Executive Committee**

*Chairperson Taylor requested the full board review two letters endorsed by the Executive Committee.*

The first letter was sent by Councilman James Gennaro to Governor Houchul. It addressed the issue of the judiciary applying a "dangerousness standard" to defendants, allowing judges the discretion to remand due to prior repeated violent offenses.

*Although the letter to Governor Houchul was approved by the Executive Committee and prepared for a full board vote, the letter was presented however, no vote was taken.*

The second letter requests the Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) to halt consideration on BSA Cal No. 202-83-82 at 80-74 188<sup>th</sup> Street This is a proposed new synagogue. Some of the stakeholders are involved in a criminal court case. The Executive Committee is requesting the BSA halt consideration of their variance request be halted pending final disposition by the U.S. District Court. Some parties associated with this application are named as defendants. The committee is requesting a stay of consideration until the court makes a ruling.

*Chairperson Taylor asked for a motion to send the letter addressed to the BSA.*

Kevin Forrestal made a motion to accept the drafted letter addressed to the BSA [BSA Cal No. 202-83-82 at 80-74 188<sup>th</sup> Street] as written, seconded by Mitch Lisker.

**Steven Konigsberg -What is this about? What are they being prosecuted for?**

**Answer:** [Chairperson Taylor] – **It is a criminal case.**

**Steven Konigsberg – What kind of criminal case?**

**Chairperson Taylor asked Kevin Forrestal to address the question.**

**Answer:** *[Kevin Forrestal]* – Due to this unresolved criminal matter the Eastern District has placed a freeze on the property. There is a 1,600-page document [outlining the details]. I recommend we proceed with having hearings and discussions about it, while the people involved resolve this issue. The parties have until January [2023] to respond. If they respond and their status is clear, then we can proceed.

**Steven Konigsberg** – Did the applicant receive notice that this was on the agenda tonight and given an opportunity to explain?

**Answer:** *[Chairperson Taylor]* – No

**Susan Cleary** – Can we move the question?

**Answer:** *[Chairperson Taylor]* – – No

**Susan Cleary** – We already turned it [this motion] down.

**Marc A. Haken** – I move to take a vote to table this motion.

**Martha Taylor** – We must have a motion to table the motion. Seconded by Seymour Schwartz.

**Jesse Rosenbaum** – I endorse the letter as written.

**Susan Cleary** – I am not sure what we are voting for now.

**Martha Taylor** – There is a motion to send this letter to the BSA and there is a motion to table that motion so that we hold off on it. We are now voting to table the motion.

**Steven Konigsberg** – If this motion is rejected then we vote on Kevin’s motion to send it.

**Seymour Schwartz**- The priority is tabling the motion.

**Martha Taylor** – If we table the motion, we don’t send the letter and the motion comes back next month.

Marc Haken’s motion to table the vote to send a letter to BSA requesting to halt all consideration of variance for 80-74 188<sup>th</sup> Street pending final court disposition of a criminal case against some of the owners, seconded by Seymour Schwartz.

Count in favor: **12** Opposed: **24** Abstained: **0**

**Martha Taylor** – we are going to vote on Kevin’s motion to send the letter.

Kevin Forrestal made a motion to send a letter to BSA requesting to halt all consideration of a variance for 80-74 188<sup>th</sup> Street pending final court disposition of a criminal case against some of the owners.

Count in favor: **31** Opposed: **2** Abstained: **0**

*Chairperson Taylor stated that there would not be a Health Minute, due to Dr. Penny Stern’s absence.*

### **Adjournment**

Mary Maggio made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:52 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Sandra Aikens-Williams, CB8 staff  
December 30, 2022*