



Chairperson, Martha Taylor

*The City of New York
Borough of Queens*

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

Minutes of Community Board 8 Board Meeting held on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 via [Zoom Webinar](#).

Attendance:

Board Members Present:

Dilafroz Ahmed, Jagir Singh Bains, Heather Bennett-Idels, Carolyn Brown, Edward Chung, Susan D. Cleary, Kenneth Cohen II, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Florence Fisher, Carolann Foley, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Wendy Gennaro, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, Tami Hirsch, Steven Konigsberg, Paul S. Lazauskas, Mitch Lisker, Jennifer Martin, David Mordukhaev, Dilip Nath, Alan Ong, Tamara Osherov, Hersh Parekh, Simon Pelman, Mohammad Rahman, Charlton Rhee, Jesse Rosenbaum, Seymour Schwartz, Harbachan Singh, Douglas Sherman, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Jacob Weinberg and Albert Willingham.

Board Members Absent:

Robert H. Block, Solomon Davydov, Joshua Glikman, Elke Maerz, Mary Maggio, Frank Magri, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov and Frances Peterson.

Others Present:

Honorable Borough President Donovan Richards, Susie Tanenbaum representing Acting Borough President Donovan Richards, representing Honorable Council Member Rory Lancman, Davinder Singh representing Honorable Council Member Barry Grodenchik, Anthony Lemma representing Honorable Assembly Member David Weprin, Marie Adam-Ovide, CB8 District Manager and Jatna Reyes, CB8 Staff Member.

Call to Order:

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

Public Participation:

Ashwini Chhabra – Mr. Ashwini spoke on behalf of Voi Scooters. Voi is an electric scooter company applying for a permit in New York City’s upcoming E-scooter pilot program which will launch in March 2021. He informed us that the City Council passed legislation this summer to authorize the use of e-scooters in NYC. This program will work similarly to the Citi Bike program. More information will be shared with the Community Board via email.

Elected Officials’ Announcements:

Adam Suionov representing District Council 24 – Although CM Lancman is no longer in office, the council district office continues they continue to serve residents with their issues. You can call the office at: 718-217-4969 or email them at: District24@council.nyc.gov.

Anthony Lemma representing Assembly Member Weprin – On behalf of Assemblyman Weprin he wished everyone a Happy Holiday Season and blessing for the upcoming New Year. Their office continues to work remotely and serve residents with any issues they may have. You can call their office at: 718-454-3027.

Hudy Rosenberg representing Assembly Woman Nily Rozic – They continue to work remotely and help residents with their issues. You can call their office at: 718-820-0241.

Ashley Lin representing State Senator John Liu – Their office is fully operational. They are open Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. They can be contacted at: 718-765-6675.

Mohammed Rahman representing District Attorney Melinda Katz – Mr. Rahman wished everyone a Happy Holiday Season. They had a gun buyback program this past Saturday in Long Island. They recovered 45 guns off the streets. They are planning on having one of these events in the District. He will keep us posted.

Davinder Singh representing Council Member Barry Grodenchik – On behalf of Councilman Grodenchik, he wished everyone a Happy Holiday Season. They have masks and hand sanitizers in their district office for distribution. You can call their office at: 718-468-0137 for more information.

Approval of Minutes:

Marc A Haken made a motion to approve the minutes of November 18, 2020, seconded by Mitch Lisker.

Count in favor: **41** Opposed: **0** Abstained: **0**

Guest Speaker:

Frank LaChapelle representing Reconnect NYC – Mr. LaChapelle spoke about Reconnect NYC. It is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization which is mainly focused on engaging young adults ages 17-25 who are not in school nor working into a positive pathway for their future. Here is a brief summary of the presentation:

- Founded in 2010 by Father Jim O’Shea and Efrain Hernandez.
- They are located at the Bishop Malloy Retreat House at 86-45 Edgerton Boulevard in Jamaica.
- They are constructing social enterprise: graphic shop, community garden etc. The concept that they are trying to build at this place as they renovate is a hydroponic system for more agriculture experience. They will eventually have a kitchen where they will serve people from the community.
- They projected to hire 15-20 young people a year with a 3-month employment, 20 hours a week with a salary of \$15.00/hr.
- Their model is community, formation and preparation. He started with Reconnect NYC three years ago which cultivated into what he is doing now. He became an intern for them, and it’s been an incredible experience.
- Essentially, the youth disengagement pre-covid was estimated at 172-200,000 disconnected youth throughout the City. Within District 8, there is 10% of the youth disengagement rate, between District 12 and 13, it varies between 11-13%. During COVID, that number has increased with an additional 35% since a lot of organizations have lost funding during this crisis. They are in good attending as other organizations/foundations have funded their program.

Chairperson Taylor open the floor for questions from the Board Members.

Marc A. Haken – [to Mr. LaChapelle] – You gave statistics before. I have to get those statistics in my head since I am the Youth Committee chair. Where did you get those numbers from?

Answer: [Mr. LaChapelle] – I can send some information via email if I get an address where I can send it to. Well, you just gave a number, you said CB8 is 10%, CB12 and CB13 are between 11-13%. Where do you get the numbers from? I think CB12 and CB13 are higher than what you’re saying and CB8 is less.

Answer: [Mr. LaChapelle] – The CEO received some information regarding these rates.

DM Adam-Ovide – asked Mr. LaChapelle to send the information to our general email so that it can be provided to Mr. Haken.

Chairperson's Report – Martha Taylor:

- Board Meeting dates for the 2021 year were sent to all Board Members via email. Meeting dates are now final.
- There will be a virtual Public Hearing on December 14th by the Area 7 Committee at 7:30 p.m. to discuss traffic patterns on 191st Street off Hillside Avenue. Everyone will get a notice via email.
- Scott Solomon will give a presentation at a virtual Zoning Committee meeting about the zoning resiliency text amendment on Tuesday, December 15th at 7:30 p.m.
- Condolences to Board Member Marc A. Haken on the passing of his sister Claire.

During the Chairperson's report Honorable Borough President Donovan Richards joined the meeting. Chairperson Martha Taylor invited him to say a few words.

Honorable Borough President Donovan Richards

- Honorable Borough President Richards thanked everyone for their support. He got sworn-in last Wednesday and had a lot of work on his hands. It is an honor for him to serve this borough and he looks forward to working with each and every one of us.
- He offered condolences to Board Member Marc A. Haken on the passing of his sister last week.
- He thanked all the Board Members for their service to our community. This is what makes Queens great.
- He encouraged everyone to continue to get tested for COVID-19. Cases are still on the rise in Queens and one way to bring those cases down is getting tested and make sure everything is okay. He invited everyone to get advantage of the Health & Hospitals Corporation sites to get tested. He went to get tested on Monday and it was a smooth procedure.
- He will be doing a tour at all Hospitals across the Borough to check on the status or where we are at and make sure everyone has enough PPE. Now that vaccine is coming along, he will be one of the first one in line. He understands there are a lot of concerns about the vaccine, but he encouraged everyone to considered getting vaccinated.
- Queens was one of the epicenters of the virus, he feels we should get prioritized in a lot of different aspects and help our small business as they will be closed again. One of the things they are stressing to the Governor and Mayor's office is relief for small businesses. They are working hard on grant programs for small businesses. He will keep us posted.
- They had a virtual job fair event today. There are a lot of opening available. For more information, please visit: www.queensbp.org/recruitment.
- On December 14th, they will be having a land use hearing. More information is available on the BP's website at: www.queensbp.org.
- He wished everyone a Happy and Safe Holiday Season!

Chairperson Taylor opened the floor for question from the Board Members.

Mohammed Rahman – Thank you for visiting our Mosque. Everyone was very happy with your presence. Everyone is expecting a lot of great things from you as our new Borough President.

Answer: [BP Richards] – I look forward to serving everyone and work closely with each and every one of you.

Jennifer Martin – One of the things we are having issues within Queens is with a lot of tree stumps that have been left with open sidewalks that are protruding pedestrian crossing in Flushing on 72nd Drive. We have gone.

Answer: [BP Richards] – I remember one time the Parks Department had budget cuts for the tree stump program. This year is the same situation due to the budget crisis.

The issue with the sidewalk is that the tree is complete uprooted. If we get a snowstorm, they are not going to know how to go to Main Street or go shopping. The Parks Department keeps giving a story after a story.

Answer: [BP Richards] – Susie from my staff is on. Provide her with the addresses and we'll work on it.

Susie Tanenbaum – If you guys compile a list, you can send it to me or put it on the chat log. We'll take care of it.

Wendy Gennaro – The Queens Center for Progress was on the recruitment event at the beginning of the year. I hope you continue doing it. We had a great success out of it.

Answer: [BP Richards] – We will be doing it every year.

Chairperson Taylor thanked Borough President Richards for being here with us tonight. We expect to see a lot of great things from him.

District Manager’s Report – December 2020

Sanitation

The agency received 220 missed collection complaints for the month of November. Our superintendent asked that I remind our residents that the agency is following the “night plow” schedule until mid-April. Please remember to place all garbage and recyclables the night before your scheduled pick up day – after 4 p.m.

Department of Transportation

For restaurant and outdoor dining, the barriers used in the street must be filled with sand or other materials to provide more safety for patrons.

Department of Buildings

Some restaurants have built structures for outdoor dining on the sidewalks due to the pandemic. A few restaurants have built permanent structures and that is not allowed. All structures should be temporary. Please file a complaint if you notice such structures. Additionally, the department has been stretched thin and it may take longer to inspect complaints.

Parks

The Farmer’s Market has been extended until December 20th at Cunningham Park. They are there from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Department of Design and Construction

The Community Construction Liaisons informed us of the following:

Project	CCL	Total	Completed	Outstanding
GCTI10-4B	Judith Ogoe	325	200	40 for plantings
GCTI10-03	Evelyn Garcia	312	83	Spring plantings
GCTI10-4A	Femaria Joseph	200 (approx.)	76	Spring plantings
GCTI10-02	Tonia Walker	151	107	83 for plantings

Department of Homeless Services

Following up on the proposed shelter, the agency could not confirm whether Westhab had purchased or entered a long-term lease with the current owner of the property. They did not have a copy of the proposed plans for the building either. No application had been made to the Department of Buildings.

Common Ground

We are now in Code Blue. This means that when the temperature falls below freezing between 4 p.m. and 8 a.m. anyone who is homeless will be sheltered.

Queens Public Library

As of November 30th, the following libraries have been open for “To-Go” service: Fresh Meadows, Hillcrest, Briarwood and Hollis. The Kew Gardens Hills Library’s use for COVID-19 testing has been extended to the end of December.

107th Precinct

There has been an increase in grand larceny auto (GLA) of unattended vehicles in the district. Please turn off your engines, locks the doors and do not leave valuables in the vehicle. There has been an increase in mailbox phishing. Please use indelible ink on your checks. The shooting that occurred a couple of weekends ago is being investigated. There were no reported injuries.

Con Edison

The utility company is currently replacing meters. If anyone claims to be from their company and is requesting payment for these meters, it is a scam. The meters are being installed free of charge by Con Ed. The company has resumed meter readings. Readings will be suspended in areas that become a red zone and the company will issue estimated bills.



Happy Birthday to: Al Eisenstein, Jesse Rosenbaum, Steve Konigsberg, Sey Schwartz, Bhitihara Fulton, Tammy Osherov, Stanley Weinblatt, Tami Hirsch, Charlton Rhee, Simon Pelman, Dr. Allen Bennett and Fakrul "Delwar" Islam.

Marie Adam-Ovide

During the District Manager's report, Honorable Council Members Rory Lancman and Barry Grodenchik joined the meeting. Chairperson Martha Taylor invited them to say a few words.

Salute to the Flag

Chairperson Martha Taylor led the salute to the flag. She asked that everyone stand in their own way.

Borough President's Representative – Susie Tanenbaum

- Ms. Tanenbaum stated that her and her colleagues are very excited to have Borough President Richards on board. They look forward to serving the community as usual under his new administration.
- She attended the U.S. Census 2020 thank you webinar along with the Queens Complete Count Committee members. She learned that the Census Bureau continues to do data collection in between the decennial census. They are still hiring field representatives. If you know anyone who is interested in working with the Census Bureau, they can go to www.usajobs.gov and apply.
- She also offered condolences to Board Member Marc Haken. She understands that it is hard to lose a loved one especially under the crisis we are undergoing.
- She wished everyone a Happy and Healthy Holiday Season!

Committee Reports:

Health Minute with Dr. Penny Stern, Health Committee Chair:

- Dr. Stern spoke about mRNA Vaccines. Messenger RNA vaccines (mRNA vaccines) will soon be available for use. These vaccines cause an immune response and build immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19. mRNA vaccines do not use weakened or inactivated versions of a virus or parts of a virus. mRNA vaccines use strands of genetic material called mRNA inside a special coating. The coating protects the mRNA from

being broken down by enzymes. The coating also helps the mRNA enter muscle cells near the vaccination site.

- mRNA provides the ‘instructions’ for the cell on how to make a piece of the “spike protein” that is unique to the COVID virus. Since only a piece of the protein is made, it doesn’t harm the person being vaccinated in any way. It just elicits an immune response, which causes antibodies to be produced and T-cells to be activated. These antibodies are specific for the COVID virus and that’s how they protect against future infection.
- Finally, the cell breaks down the mRNA and disposes of it using enzymes in the cell. What’s important to keep in mind is that the mRNA strands never enter the cell’s nucleus or affect genetic material. There is **no truth** to the idea that mRNA vaccines alter or modify your genetic makeup. mRNA vaccines have benefits compared to other types of vaccines including that they use a non-infectious viral component and they require shorter manufacturing times.

So, what are the key points for you to know?

- Like all vaccines, COVID-19 mRNA vaccines will have been rigorously tested for safety before being authorized for use in the United States
- mRNA technology is new to many people, but not to research scientists. It has been studied for a number of years.
- mRNA vaccines do not contain a live virus and do not carry a risk of causing disease in the vaccinated person.
- mRNA from the vaccine never enters the nucleus of the cell and does not affect or interact with your DNA.
- She hopes this information has been useful information to understand about the COVID-19 vaccines. She encouraged everyone to continue to practice social distancing, wear your mask and wash your hands, even after you receive the vaccine.
- She wished everyone and Happy, Health and Safe Holiday Season!

**This update on the mRNA Vaccines provided by Dr. Stern was based on CDC and FDA documents and information.*

Marc A. Haken – [to Dr. Stern] – I was reading an article from Times Magazine today on the vaccine. It stated that the vaccine does not protect you from getting COVID, but you can get COVID and the effects are far less.

Answer: [Dr. Stern] – Like the flu shot, sometimes, people actually do get the flu shot when they have been vaccinated against the flu but when you get it is much different from when you get non-vaccinated. For most people it should probably work to protect you but there may be people who get it and would not get sick in the way they would get sick before. So far, is performed incredibly well much better than the average flu shot to the tune of like 95% which is amazing. This still means that people should do what they have to do to stop this infection, one of them is wearing a mask which many people have a tremendous resistance for reasons that I don’t quite understand. Practicing social distancing, wearing a mask and washing your hands. These things are key no matter what even after vaccinated.

Kevin Forrestal – [to Dr. Stern] – Penny could you briefly discuss the side effects of a day or two after and why is still beneficial.

Answer: [Dr. Stern] – Everybody should know that when you get a vaccine, you do get a side effect, that is a good thing. It means that your immune system is revving up and responding. If you feel nothing and have no pain on the injection site and you feel absolutely nothing, that’s not such a great sign. It’s a better sign if you’re feeling something uncomfortable because it means your immune system is responding. In terms of the effect, what they have described after if you get a two-shot sequence, after the first shot most people feel kind of minor things. After the second one, really revs up and boost the immune system. People can have up to 36 hours of maybe headache, pain at the site and feeling unpleasant but it is limited. It is certainly not as bad as getting COVID for sure.

Edward Chung – Dr. Stern after the first inoculation, how long do you have to wait for the second inoculation?
Answer: [Dr. Stern] – You have to wait an amount of time but it all depends on the vaccine you get. After the first one you have some protection but after the second one, you're fully protected.

Kenneth Cohen II – I know we are now shifting in sort of vaccine mode because of everything from COVID. I was reading about hospitals in the New York City area that sort of handled COVID patients who got to hospitalization better than others. I was just wondering, based on your experience and expertise are there any hospitals that are closed to the Community Board area that are preferred or better than others when it comes to treating severe cases of COVID.

Answer: [Dr. Stern] – That's a difficult question. I think most of the hospitals around here, you have got Northwell, New York Presbyterian and you got the Health and Hospitals Corporation. They have now so much experience in dealing with COVID than at the beginning. Where even somebody goes, they will be in reasonable hands. I come from Northwell. I also part of Cornell and Mount Sinai. These are all great institutions. I think is basically getting to care in a timely fashion. You have to see somebody. Call your provider and follow instructions.

Hersh Parek – I know we are still months away from getting the vaccine. Is there a timeframe of when and where the general population will be able to get the vaccine?

Answer: [Dr. Stern] -I am hearing it will be available at pharmacies, personal physicians. It will probably be within a couple of months since they are trying to give it to the first responders and the health care people, those who live in nursing homes and the vulnerable people first. I will say by late Spring in about 6 months. Until you get the vaccine, take precautions and take care of yourself.

Committee Reports:

Area 2 Committee – Proposed Briarwood Shelter

Seymour Schwartz, Chair – Mr. Schwartz stated that Chairperson Taylor, DM Adam-Ovide and he attended a virtual meeting with representatives of the Department of Homeless Services and the plan operator Westhab where they learned that a homeless shelter is being proposed to be built at 138-50 Queens Boulevard. It will accommodate 175 single male residents. It is to be a permanent facility and it is to be designed to serve all populations, this will include those with substance abuse. The client selection will be conducted by the Department of Homeless Services with preference for residents of Briarwood and to transfer who might currently be in an existing shelter. The facility will be arranged in an open floor dormitory style with a single community bathroom on each floor. Rooms will only have a warming kitchen and clients will be served three meals a day provided by an outside vendor in a cafeteria style room.

The plan calls for up to 40 personnel with 6 or 8 on each shift. They were told that Westhab has operated for many years two shelters in Westchester county. They relatively newcomer to New York. They currently operate two homeless shelters in the Bronx and in Queens in College Point and Glendale. They have already applied to operate five additional programs in the Bronx and plan for about 12 more around the City. They are willing for the Community Board to visit these sites but will have to wait for another opportunity due to the circumstances we are undergoing. Westhab is expected to open this shelter in the Spring of 2021. They expect clients to move in a year later in September of 2022. Minimal work is expected to be done on the outside of the facility. The operator may consider extra community patrols perhaps by car or by foot and that a community advisory board will be created to assure community participation.

Having heard all of this, he has alerted all the major property owners adjacent to and surrounding the proposed site. They of course are very concerned and aroused and very strongly opposed. They await their participation in any plan response that will unfold to this proposed facility. The community board executive committee met and discussed this issue last week. It was recommended that the full Board opposes to this planning of the homeless shelter on Queens Boulevard in Briarwood.

Apparently, the original owner is still in possession of the building. It is a huge union local of some sort. The property is now under contract. Interestingly enough, New York City has not received any request for permits. There is still

some mystery surrounding the state of this proposal. He asked Marc A. Haken to make a motion to oppose to the proposed Briarwood Shelter in Community Board 8 on behalf of the Executive Board.

Marc A Haken made a motion in opposition to the site of this homeless shelter for single men, many of whom may be substance abuse participants seconded by Mitch Lisker.

Seymour Schwartz – statute that all motions must be in the positive. If anyone is opposed to the shelter, then you must vote against the motion.

Answer: [Steve Konigsberg] - Marc made the motion in the negative.

I'm sorry Marc. I miss that. Can we leave it that way?

Answer: [Marc Haken] – I don't know how to. Marie?

DM Adam-Ovide – All motions are supposed to be in the positive.

Answer: [Steve Konigsberg] – You need to withdraw the motion.

Marc A. Haken withdrew his motion and substituted it.

Marc A. Haken made a motion to approve the proposed homeless shelter for single men, many of whom may be substance abusers as presented seconded by Mitch Lisker.

A roll call vote was taken.

Count in favor: 2 Opposed: 39 Abstained: 0

Members who voted in favor: Dilafroz Ahmed and Kenneth Cohen II.

Members who voted against: Jagir Singh Bains, Heather Bennett-Idels, Carolyn Brown, Edward Chung, Susan D. Cleary, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Florence Fisher, Carolann Foley, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Wendy Gennaro, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, Tami Hirsch, Steven Konigsberg, Paul S. Lazauskas, Mitch Lisker, Jennifer Martin, David Mordukhaev, Dilip Nath, Alan Ong, Tamara Osherov, Hersh Parekh, Simon Pelman, Mohammad Rahman, Charlton Rhee, Jesse Rosenbaum, Seymour Schwartz, Harbachan Singh, Douglas Sherman, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Jacob Weinberg and Albert Willingham.

Committee Reports:

Parks Committee

Bhitihara Martha Fulton, Chair – The Parks Committee met on November 30th via Zoom webinar to discuss a proposal from the NYC Soccer Initiative and the creation of mini soccer fields at Vleigh Playground/P.S. 165. These are some of the highlights of the proposal:

- The Mayor’s Fund to Advance New York City, is a not-for-profit organization committed to promoting partnerships between the City and the private sector in support of high impact public programs. This initiative is a five-year initiative that is privately funded with a \$3M in funds.
- The goal is to install 50 soccer pitches. They have now entered the fifth and final year of the initiative. They have built 37 fields.
- Three of those fields have fallen in Community Board 8 [Utopia Playground, Pomonok Playground/P.S. 201, Fresh Meadows Playground/P.S. 173Q] thanks to the Parks Department. With with free programming and maintenance fund or \$600,000 dollars. This program will operate 24 weeks out of the year.
- They will not be regulated. One group cannot dominate a group by signing up for a permit. They will not be issued. This is an initiative for the neighborhood to connect more.

- Letters of support were received from the PTA and the Principal of P.S. 165Q. At the meeting, there were 4 Board Members present and all voted in favor. They all came to a consensus that this be presented to the full Board for a vote as well.

Carolann Foley made a motion to approve the installation of a mini soccer field at Vleigh Playground/P.S. 165Q seconded by Marc A. Haken.

Discussion:

Steve Konigsberg – Out of the numerous youth programs located within Community Board 8, how many leaders/directors were asked if they were in favor of utilizing their space for a soccer field.

Answer: [Bhitihara Martha-Fulton] – Well, it is my understand that they were. Each of the schools were asked that if they wanted to do this and they all agreed but I should have truly verify that. Also, the Parks Department approved this.

What days of the week does the program run?

Answer: [Bhitihara-Martha Fulton] – I am not sure if it is every day or if one playground has one day a week.

Marc A. Haken – Any group can use the space.

Tami Hirsch – Does it include utopia Park?

Answer: [Steve Konigsberg] - No, this is about Vleigh.

Chairperson Martha Taylor asked for an I vote.

Count in favor: 40 Opposed: 0 Abstained: 0

Adjournment

Carolann Foley made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:55 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Jatna Reyes, CB8 staff
December 16, 2020*