



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

Attendance:

Board Members Present:

Dilafroz Ahmed, Heather Bennett-Idels, Robert H. Block, Edward Chung, Susan D. Cleary, Maria DeInnocentiis, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher, John Gebhard, Ashan Habib, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, Steven Konigsberg, Mohammed Islam “Delwar”, Neeta Jain, Yaniv Meirov, David Mordukhaev, Dilip Nath, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov, Alan Ong, Tamara Osheroov, Hersh Parekh, Frances Peterson, Mohammad Rahman, Charlton Rhee, Jesse Rosenbaum, Seymour Schwartz, Deepti Sharma, Douglas Sherman, Martha Taylor and Amy Tse.

Board Members Absent:

Kenneth Cohen II, Solomon Davydov, Allen Eisenstein, Wendy Gennaro, Tami Hirsch, Paul S. Lazauskas, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Mary Maggio, Jennifer Martin, Simon Pelman, Harbachan Singh, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Mohammed Tohin, Tamika Williams-Moore, Jacob Weinberg and Emanuel Yllescas.

Others Present:

Kevin Chan, Deputy Inspector; Officer Timothy Gorman, 107th Precinct Community Affairs; Kevin Williams, Chief PBQS, NYPD; Andrew Hoyles, DSNY; Rokeya Akhter, representing Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz office; Anonya Rajaraman, representing Assembly Member Nily Rozic’s office, Marie Adam-Ovide, CB8 District Manager, Jatnna Reyes and Sandra Aikens-Williams, CB8 Staff Members.

Call to Order:

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

Chairperson Taylor welcomed everyone to the return to in-person meetings. She reminded community board members not to speak out of turn; wait until you are recognized to speak. When called, speak into the microphone so that the meeting can be properly recorded.

Public Participation:

Andrew Hoyles (DSNY) – Senior Outreach Manager, Bureau of Recycling and Sustainability. Due to COVID restrictions this voluntary curbside weekly composting program was suspended. Beginning October 3, 2022, DSNY will be re-starting the program, with enhancements to better serve the community. The program seeks to collect food, leaf, and yard waste. Buildings with over nine units will automatically receive free, marked brown compost bins. Upon request building tenants will receive free indoor composting bins. He presented a copy of the letter sent to managers of buildings, notifying them of program particulars. He can be reached for additional information by email at ahoyles@dsny.nyc.gov.

Martha Taylor: Do you get in touch with high rise buildings’ superintendents?

Answer: [Andrew Hoyles] – Yes, we do. DSNY offers to conduct on-site training; webinar trainings; conduct an on-site review to assist with remedying challenging structural obstacles to program participation; and, DSNY also, participates in public events, to promote the program and provide training.

Dr. Neeta Jain: She is opening a new agency, approved by the NYC Board of Education to provide CPSC (community preschool and special education) testing.

Dr. Joe Levine: A psychologist will provide intake evaluations, then determine if additional evaluations are required in the specialty therapeutic areas of speech, occupational and/or physical. They further service the community by offering translators in Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Urdu, Gujarati, Russian, Mandurian, Maranti and Nepali.

Harry Milian: (member of the Steering Committee for Pickleball of Cunningham Park. Spoke about Pickle Ball being the fastest growing sport in America. Like tennis it uses a court; it just smaller. He thanked Marc Haken of the Friends of Cunningham Park.

Chung Lam: (member of the Steering Committee for Pickleball of Cunningham Park). He is asked for dedicated Pickleball court at Cunningham Park. He explained the sport. He invited the meeting attendees to join the game, the following morning.

Jessica Holt: announced on Saturday, September 17, 2022, there will be a Stop and Swap Event at Pomonok Gardens.

Zina Zimmerman a member of Neighborhood Advisory Board 8 of Queens. This is one of 41 spread throughout various neighborhoods designated low income They were created by NYC Department of Youth and Community Development. Each neighborhood development area has an advisory board. They are responsible to help identify programs, priorities and recommends to the DYCD Commissioner regarding community preferences. Her area covers, Briarwood, Jamaica Hills, Pomonok, Flushing Heights and Hillcrest. Currently, they are contacting community leads for assessment hearings throughout the city. These surveys should be completed by each Community group. There is a form, due by the end of September. If the date passes, still submit, they really want to hear from your organization.

Elected Officials:

Michelle Sanjose representing, Council Member James Gennaro's Office, announced:

An event at Rufus Park in recognition of Senior Month. She stated, Mayor Adams signed a law into effect. Homeowners will automatically receive a property tax rebate of one hundred and fifty dollars. If you do not receive it by November 13th reach out to Gennaro's office for assistance.

Anthony Lemma, representing Assembly Member David Weprin Office, Director of Community Relations, announced:

This office will be partnering with other elected officials throughout the month to honor seniors. There will be an event for senior at the Jamaica Muslim Center.

Rokeya Akhter, representing Queens District Attorney Melinda Katz office, announced:

A gun buyback event. On September 24, 2022, at Assembly of God Church Calvary Church in Far Rockaway. Participants will receive a \$200.00 gift card and an iPad; they will receive up to \$600 for the first 3 guns. Our Queens D.A. is doing her best to get illegal guns off our streets.

Luna Fu, representing Linda Lee's office, announced:

Their office is fighting against large commercial trucks parking on residential streets. They offered training for seniors regarding scams. Senior Appreciation Month Events are being finalized.

Alam Saais representing Leroy Comrie's office, announced:

The office hosted a virtual event for seniors. Pre-fall Paper Shredding event, sponsored by the Department Sanitation, at Comrie's office on September 24, 2022.

Marco Cruz, representing Dan Rosenthal's office:

Introduced himself.

Anonya Rajaraman, representing Assembly Member Nily Rozic's office, announced:

Family Fun Day on October 23, 2022, at P.S. 26 and The Queens Farm.

Salute to the Flag

Chairperson Martha Taylor led the salute to the flag.

Guest Speaker:

NYPD Queens Borough South Commander – Kevin Williams: There has been a continued reduction in shooting violence throughout the borough. As of September 11, 2022, there has been a 20% reduction in crime. NYPD continues to see dividends from their strategies to combat gun violence. In South Queens they are up by 30% in overall crimes. In the 7 to 8 categories, we are judged on we are up in 6 to 7 categories throughout Queens. This is something we are going to continue to work on here in Patrol Borough Queens South, as we enter the last quarter of the year. Just as important as crime are quality of life issues. Patrol Borough Queens South took a broad aggressive approach to overnight commercial truck parking. It started as a pilot program shared with the 103rd, 105th and 113th Precincts. They streamlined the towing process by conducting efficient towing practices. Working with the community, in this case Montefiore Cemetery, we were allowed to use their open lot as a temporary base of operations and storage for two weeks. This coordinated effort yielded over 1,100 summons, 148 booted commercial truck tires and towed over 100 large commercial trucks. Some owners are not able to redeem the truck, others forfeited to the Sheriff's Department due to overdue tickets and others were held due to active liens. He thanked the Department of Sanitation and DOT for their collaborative support.

Jesse Rosenbaum: Some literature on this subject said you can get a ticket for \$65.00 and others state, \$250 for the first offense, raising to \$500 for the second offense and towing of the vehicle for the third offense. What is the current scale of penalties?

Answer: [Borough Commander Williams] There are various levels of summons. In the past few years legislation has passed to clarify commercial plated vehicles with respect to size. Additionally, by executing strategies aimed at summoning, ticketing, and booting, moving through various targeted locations. When truckers must redeem their vehicle from Whitestone, it is inconvenient. NYPD is going to continue to monitor and ticket violators.

Chairperson Taylor acknowledged the presence of Community Affairs Officer Gorman.

Deputy Inspector Kevin Chan:

End of Summer, 2022 highlights –

- Shootings in Pomonok, 3 shootings
 - 1- 3 shootings at the end of July 2022
 - 2- 2 shots fired (not gang related, believed to be domestic violence)Robberies, assaults, and social media robberies are up.
- There is a raising area of crime – social media. A person advertises an item to be sold, agrees to a price and a place for the transaction to occur. The person is then robbed and often assaulted. NYPD recommends persons conducting this type of transaction, they should meet at the local precinct.
- At the Walgreens, CVS and Rite-Aid stores managers are being threatened.
- Grand larcenies have increased in frequency.
- Incidents of thieves stealing credit cards from cars are on the raise.
- Drivers are leaving keys in running cars and enter stores, thieves drive away in their car.
- Checks are being washed of the original disbursement amount and an increased amount is written and cashed.
- Sheriff's department collaborated well with NYPD to ticket large commercial vehicles.

Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov: After hours on Main Street motorcyclists are racing without wearing a helmet. I have called 911. What is the 107th Precinct doing to reduce the number of this type of incidents?

Answer [Deputy Inspector Chan]: We try to target them, but sometimes they won't stop or will speed off. We have issued summons and arrested perpetrators.

Amy Tse: How does it work, checks being stolen?

Answer [Deputy Inspector Chan]: Several ways:

- They used to fish out the mailer from the mailbox. Mailboxes are now retrofitted so that this cannot happen, in this area.
- They used to get a duplicate mailbox key. Many mailboxes are locked digitally, now.
- The postal service hires temporary help. Some of them steal the checks.
- Thieves steal the checks from the delivery box and wash your name and amount. They then have an altered check.

To avoid all of this use a pen with unwashable ink.

Dilip Nath: The school where my children attend is on a street with abandoned cars and piled up garbage. This is where teachers should be able to park.

Answer [D.I. Chan]: After the meeting, give me the location and I will investigate it.

Carolann Foley, President of 107th Precinct Community Council, announced:

There will be a Car Wash event to help raise funds. On October 22nd, there will be Trunk or Treat event, with music, costume contests, rock climbing and decorations. Please try to attend the 107th Precinct Community Council meetings, on the 4th Tuesday of the month.

Informational Meeting:

Chairperson Taylor reminded board members that they do not vote on group homes; this is an informational meeting.

Representatives of Birch Family Services are, Matthew Sturiale, CEO; Lisa Sterrantino, Director of Community Services; and Stephen Markovic, Director of Facilities and Property Management.

They will be opening a residential facility at 138-07 Coolidge Avenue, for six young adults (Three males and three females). The agency was founded in 1975 by Phyllis Susser. The Israel Center for Conservative Judaism, on 168th Street, is where they began with the first location and continue to provide services at that location. She believed children with severe special needs were not receiving a free and appropriate education. Her mission is to empower people to reach their fullest potential. This means individualized designed services. Birch Family Services provides supportive services to over two thousand persons annually. The agency offers services including respite care, evaluations, housing, and education. They have 1,100 employees spread thorough out their facilities located in Queens, Manhattan, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. The residents of this location will have a diagnosis of autism and/or mild developmental disability. Staff will assist the residents with life skills, assessing their community and health maintenance. There will be staff on-site 24 hours a day.

- Direct Support Professionals – they work directly with the residents and minimally have a high school diploma; some have an associate degree.
- Manager
- Assistant Manager
- Senior Manager, he/she provides senior level management to several houses
- Various disciplined therapists, Nurse and a Psychologist provide resident evaluation and staff training.

Questions from the Board Members:

Marc Haken: Will there always be staffing?

Answer: [Matthew Sturiale] - There is always an administrator on-site, we have direct care staff throughout the day. There will be a team of four during the day and less at night when the residents are asleep. In addition, specialists will go to the home to provide care.

Marc Haken: Will there come a time that a resident(s) is able to live independently?

Answer: [Matthew Sturiale] The residential homes that we operate are long term. The residents will probably live there most of their lives. Some may become independent; however, as time progresses, they may have to return to a more supervised setting.

Heather Bennett-Idels: My daughter was a worker in a special needs home. It was an enriching experience for her.

Answer: [Matthew Sturiale] - This is Direct Support Professionals' Week. If you know of anyone who does this type of work, please thank them for their service. During the pandemic they manned their post for the safety of persons with disabilities, just like the firemen, nurses, etc.

Marie Adam-Ovide: I just wanted to add that Birch Family Services reached out to the community board to inform as they went door to door to their neighbors. I think this was commendable.

Answer: [Matthew Sturiale] Putting being a good neighbor into action, we will create a Community Advisory Board. They will collaborate with St. John's University to develop an intern program and to fill vacant positions. Currently, we anticipate about 25 employment vacancies. They will also work with high schoolers to introduce them to the special needs' population.

Martha Taylor: When do you plan to open this facility?

Answer: [Matthew Sturiale] We are aiming for the first quarter of 2023.

Jesse Rosenbaum: Parking in that section of Briarwood is very tight. Where will your staff park?

Answer: [Matthew Sturiale] - Some of our staff drive, others take public transportation. Others are members of the interdisciplinary team and will only come occasionally.

Susan Cleary: To accommodate the six residents will there be six bedrooms?

Answer: [Matthew Sturiale] – The house was built as a 4 bedroom. We will do minor renovations, so that each will have their own private space.

Chairperson Taylor thanked Birch Family Services for their presentation.

Fiscal Year 2024 Capital and Expense Budget Report – Marc A. Haken

Per the NYC Charter the Fiscal Hearing is being held, for our residents, regarding expenditures from July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. There are two budgets:

1. Capital Budget used for major construction.
2. Expense Budget for all other needs.

These items will be reviewed by the Capital and Expense Budget Committee and ranked in priority order. These items will be voted on in the next month, before the submission to the Office of Management and Budget, at the end of October. He reminded board members that street resurfacing requests must go through the Transportation Committee. The meeting to prioritize these items will be held on October 24, 2022. It will be an in-person meeting.

Approval of Minutes:

Michael Hannibal made a motion to approve the minutes of June 8, 2022; seconded by Kevin Forrestal.

Chairperson's Report – Martha Taylor

The Executive Board met with Commonpoint Queens, last week. They will be providing services at the T-building. The construction is at 60% completion. They anticipate the ribbon cutting ceremony sometime the end of October 2022. They will have:

- programs for children five years and up,
- a kitchen for culinary arts
- training labs,
- job placement,
- mental health clinic
- digital food pantry
- fitness classes
- conference room for meetings.

They do not have a parking lot; they will have bike racks. The agency will have a fleet of buses that could be used to transport people to their location. Community Board 8 is in discussion with them to offer more programs for senior citizens and adults.

Health Minute with Dr. Penny Stern, Health Committee Chair – A written report was distributed.

District Manager’s Report – September 2022

NYPD

According to the CompStat report, there has been an increase in crime, especially robberies. There were 14 last year while we have 22 this year for the same period. The officers are leaving administrative duties and focusing on crime. You might have reached out to Community Affairs and seen a delayed response. These officers are also helping with policing. There was a hate crime in the district involving three male Caucasians who removed a pride flag and stomped on it.

Queens Public Library

All of Queens Public Library locations will go back to six day a week service starting Saturday, September 10, 2022. The funding is in place for this service. Unfortunately, due to COVID 19, they had staffing issues. That has been resolved.

Fire Department (FDNY)

As of our District Service Cabinet held last week, Chief Eysser stated that it has been relatively quiet in our area.

Department of Transportation (DOT)

Reminded everyone that the speed cameras are on 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Please slow down. Hillside Avenue which borders several CBs is being considered for curb-to-curb resurfacing. This work must be done overnight. They are also looking at 188th Street for resurfacing. If they cannot do curb-to-curb this season, we ask that they do a “strip paving” before the winter – this is when they repair a large section of the drivable part of the street. We are waiting for a response.

Department of City Planning (DCP)

The Vleigh Place ULURP has been modified from an R6 to an R6B. This means less housing units (from 119 to about 89 units). This also means that the number of affordable housings will be reduced, and the number of floors reduce to no more than six.

The City Planning Commission already had its public hearing for the 79-18 Parsons Boulevard’s ULURP and should be voting on this soon.

Department of for the Aging (DFTA)

The agency announced that they received an additional \$3 Million for home delivered meals. Additionally, they have a new process for CBO who wish to get a DFTA presentation. They must first complete a webform.

NYC Commission on Human Rights

The agency has workshops on variety of topics (i.e. age discrimination, worker protection and understanding the Jewish Community etc.). They are being offered both in-person and virtually.

Department of Sanitation

He reminded us that the organics collection will start on October 3, 2022. Organics collection will stop at the end of December and will resume in March 2023. If you do not have the brown bin, you can dispose of the organic material in your regular garbage bins labeled organics. I understand that there are decals that can be affixed on regular bins to be used for the organics collection. I requested that the DSNY provide them to our office for distribution. I also requested that the DSNY representative bring some with them to our meeting

tonight. Additionally, the Borough President's office is planning a brown bins giveaway on October 1st. At the Borough Cabinet meeting with the Borough President

yesterday, the DSNY representative stated that they are considering a separate day for organics collections. We should have more information before October.

Our superintendent stated that he is still working on the requests to have our medians cleaned. They are looking for assistance from the lot cleaning unit that has more equipment and manpower. This issue was also raised at the Borough Cabinet by the Borough President. I asked for the agency to have a plan to address the median from spring to the end of autumn. They should not wait to receive complaints to get median cleaned and the weeds cut.

Department of Parks and Recreation

Captain Tilly Parkhouse & Comfort Station will start construction on September 19th and will be closed for two years. There will be a DSNY Waste Disposal Event on October 8th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Cunningham Park. They are preparing for fall events, trail maintenance and leaf removal.

Department of Buildings (DOB)

The Homeowners Relief Program's lack of follow-up inspection was discussed. Our contact spoke to the higher ups, and they are working on getting the follow-up inspections completed.

Polio - Borough President's Office held a briefing last week about Polio. Most of us read or heard about polio found in the NYC waste system last month and the case of paralytic polio in Rockland County. There have not been any cases in NYC; however, the NYC Department of Health and NYS Department of Health and Human Services are being very proactive. The push is to get all children vaccinated, especially those under the age of 4 years old. So far, 86% of individuals are vaccinated citywide and 89% are vaccinated in Queens. Polio is one of the mandated vaccines in NYS and there is no longer a religious exemption. The Department of Education is making sure that those who attend schools are vaccinated. They even require that those who are homeschooled be vaccinated. While they cannot enforce it for those homeschooled, if they take part in extra curriculum activities they can.



Happy Birthday to Board Members: Wendy Gennaro and Dr. Penny Stern

Borough President Donovan Richards' Representative – Max Weprin

The Borough President Office will be hosting two events:

- Queens Wellness Day
- Senior Appreciation Day at the Queens Botanical Gardens

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During Max Weprin's report, the District Manager asked for flyers announcing the event where the Borough President's office will be distributing composting bins. Answer: Max Weprin will get flyers to the office for distribution.

Adjournment

Marc A. Haken made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:51pm.

*Respectfully submitted by,
Sandra Aikens-Williams, CB8 staff
September 26, 2022*

