



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, November 8, 2017 at the Hillcrest Jewish Center, 183-02 Union Turnpike in Flushing, New York.

**Attendance:**

**Board Members Present:**

Dilafroz Ahmed, Jagir Singh Bains, Carolyn Baker-Brown, Dr. Allen J. Bennett, Robert H. Block, Edward Chung, Susan D. Cleary, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Joshua Glikman, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, Robert Harris, Tami Hirsch, Fakrul “Delwar” Islam, Steven Konigsberg, Bright Dae-Jung Limm, Mark J. Lefkof, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Jennifer Martin, Tamara Osherov, Charlton Rhee, Seymour Schwartz, , Harbachan Singh, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Rachele Van Arsdale, Jacob Weinberg and Stanley Weinblatt.

**Board Members Absent:**

Kenneth Cohen II, Monica Corbett, Florence Fisher, Carolann Foley, Paul S. Lazauskas, Mary Maggio, Frank Magri, Rabbi Shlomo Nisanov, Simon Pelman, Frances Peterson, Jesse Rosenbaum, Steven Sadofsky, Douglas Sherman and Albert Willingham.

**Others Present:**

Facia Class representing Congresswoman Grace Meng, Stacey Yearwood representing Councilman Barry Grodenchik, Mykela Martinez representing State Senator Tony Avella, Andrew Taranto representing State Senator Leroy Comrie, Muhammad Rahman representing Assemblyman David Weprin, Hudy Rosenberg representing Assemblywoman Nily Rozic, Marie Adam-Ovide, CB8 District Manager and Jatna Reyes, CB8 staff member.

**Call to Order:**

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

**Public Participation:**

**Jorge Villatoro** – Mr. Villatoro is a Community Outreach Coordinator at the Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City (BBBS of NYC). He was accompanied by Ms. Bridgette Thomas who is also a Community Outreach Coordinator of this organization. Ms. Thomas stated that BBBS of NYC is a non-profit organization. They focus on one to one mentorship. Mentors age 21 and over are matched with 7 to 18 year old youths who are in need of mentorship. Mr. Villatoro stated that BBBS of NYC is increasing their participation in Queens. Most of their mentorship programs are from Manhattan and Brooklyn. He advised everyone that if they know someone who might be interested in joining this program to reach out to him. Flyers and business cards were left at the table. Mr. Villatoro asked if there were any questions. Board Member Susan Cleary had a few questions but Chairperson Taylor informed her that no questions can be asked during the public participation portion. She can do that after the meeting.

**Alan Sherman** – Mr. Sherman is a resident of Community Board 8. He stated that he spoke before the board about two years ago. He stated that they are having a serious problem with regards to cars not stopping for children. A child almost got hit the other day. He stated that one of his colleagues will speak about that later. They want the DOT to walk around the neighborhood with them and the parents who know what is going on on these streets. Cars go up to 100 mph and do not stop. Parents have to watch their children when these cars pass out of control. They need the Police, DOT and everyone to work with them to fix this situation.

**Rachel Orchenbauch** – Ms. Orchenbauch stated that her daughter almost got hit by a speeding car. The school bus stopped; the stop sign was out; the door was open and all the kids were lined up to exit the bus and the car flew past the bus. They submitted pictures showing the traffic situation on 137<sup>th</sup> Street between 72<sup>nd</sup> Road and 77<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Kew Gardens Hills. She mentioned that in this particular stretch, there are no stop signs or crosswalks anywhere. It has become a speed zone where people just speed. This is a very high traffic area for children. P.S. 164 is on the corner of 137<sup>th</sup> Street and 77<sup>th</sup> Avenue with the adjacent Queens Valley playground. They have private school bus stops for pretty much every school in the area. They also have a house of worship on that corner, Beis Medrash of Kew Garden Hills. The pictures will show that this is a residential block. She would like to look out for the safety of all members of the community and see what can be done about fixing this issue, to improve the safety of everyone in the community.

**Marc A. Haken** – Mr. Haken is the President of the Friends of Cunningham Park. Friends of Cunningham Park is a 501 (c) (3) organization whose mission is to maintain Cunningham Park as a premier park in north east Queens. Last Thursday, he attended a town hall meeting at Martin Van Buren High School with Mayor Bill de Blasio sponsored by City Council Member Barry Grodenchik, Assembly Member David Weprin, State Senator Leroy Comrie and several other Elected Officials. During the course of that meeting, a great thing happened for Community Board 8. Several board members were in attendance. He wants to thank Mayor de Blasio and City Councilman Barry Grodenchik and any of the other legislators who may have had input into the great thing that Martha will tell you about.

*Chairperson Martha Taylor mentioned to Mr. Haken that he forgot to mention that she is the founder of Friends of Cunningham Park founded in 1984.*

**Alan Ong** – Mr. Ong is a member of the Fresh Meadows Homeowners Civic Association. He is the President of the Community District Education Council 26. He introduced himself as the new president of the Union Turnpike Merchants Association. He is looking forward to working closer with everyone in the community.

**Tamara Osherov** – I am just here to announce that there is going to be a Queens Town Hall here at the Hillcrest Jewish Center but not in this room. It will be in the Prince Room. There is going to be a Town Hall there. It is organized by the Empire Indivisible. There are indivisibles throughout the country, thousands of them but this particular organization or group has an interest in the IDC which is the Independent Democratic Conference. In New York State there are eight Senators, including Senator Avella who is part of the IDC. The Town Hall pretty much is going to explain what our senator, Senator Avella and what his effects are on the state. *(During Ms. Osherov's announcement Board Member Mark Lefkof approached Chairperson Taylor and objected to Ms. Osherov's announcement as it was political).*

**Chairperson Martha Taylor** – *[to Ms. Osherov]* - Excuse me Tammy. I want to apologize to you but we don't do politics here. This is strictly a political event and it is inappropriate for you to discuss it here. You can have flyers.

**Answer:** [Tamara Osherov] – I do have flyers.

**Answer:** [Chairperson Taylor] – Alright, but we cannot have a discussion of it. It's political.

**Answer:** [Tamara Osherov] – I thought I could say anything in the public participation.

**Answer:** [Mark Lefkof] – Not of a political mention.

**Answer:** [Tamara Osherov] – I am just explaining what the Town Hall is about.

**Answer:** [Chairperson Taylor] – Okay, alright.

**Answer:** [Tamara Osherov] – Anyway, so it's going to be on December 7, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. here at the Hillcrest Jewish Center. There is going to be a panel to discuss education issues, health care and housing. All are welcome!

**Mark Engel** – Mr. Engel is a resident of Community Board 8. He lives on 137<sup>th</sup> Street in Kew Gardens Hills. He stated that there is a speed limit sign during school hours posted for a 25 mph maximum. Every car is not doing this at all. They are speeding during all hours of the day. They are young kids driving around in their cars literally going 70-80 mph, all hours of the day. We have many kids going to school, we have a synagogue, playground. A fatality can happen. In all honesty when it does happen, we talked about it, we knew about it. On Queens Boulevard we had major issues. The City came together, and they put all those barriers up and they corrected the problem. We need the same thing to happen with the support of your community work to solve our problem as well.

**Mitch Lisker** – Mr. Lisker stated that he wanted to talk about the same issue everyone was talking about tonight. He lives on 137<sup>th</sup> Street. On the weekends he notices that cars do time trials. They come down on 73<sup>rd</sup> Terrace and go onto 137<sup>th</sup> Street and to 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, around 136<sup>th</sup> Street around his block, which is a long block, and back again onto 73<sup>rd</sup> Terrace. There are two young boys who are doing this. He has spoken to the police about it. They said that they may want to see a study done at this location. He stated that 137<sup>th</sup> Street is a long stretch and kids like to do this, pick up speed and go straight down the block. He thinks this is something very important for us as parents, as community members to look into how to rectify this issue. He will really appreciate it if this gets taken care of.

*Chairperson Martha Taylor introduced Daniel Rosenthal as the Assembly Member Elect for District 27th.*

**Assembly Member Daniel Rosenthal** – Good evening everyone! My voice is totally gone at this point so I'll be brief. It has really been a pleasure to work with all of you over the past few years, also working with Council Member Rory Lancman. I look forward to continuing to work with you as your State Assembly Member. It is actually a special election and he will not have to wait until January to get sworn in. Once the results are certified he'll be sworn in. Hopefully, within the next week and a half to two weeks. Unfortunately, the district office is currently closed as of Election Day. At the moment there is no district 27<sup>th</sup> office. The office is not going to move from its location, it will be at the same address but it is closed temporarily.

He introduced Henry Yam as the new Community Liaison for Council Member Rory Lancman. He will be replacing him and will be working with Community Board 8. He looks forward to working with all of us (*everyone applauded*).

**Hudy Rosenberg representing Assembly Member Nily Rozic** – Ms. Rosenberg stated that Assembly Member Nily Rozic has a series of Alzheimer's Awareness events across Queens in different Queens Library branches as well as a resource fair for City agencies next Thursday, November 16 at their District Office. Flyers were left at the table.

**James Gallagher Jr.** – Mr. Gallagher mentioned that the new TD Bank branch that was just built in Fresh Meadows on Utopia Parkway will officially open on Saturday, December 2, 2017. He informed us that he recently came from a meeting with Barbara Foote from New York Hospital. There will be a half marathon in CB7 [north of CB8]. If you are traveling that way on Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, there may be traffic jams and the buses might be delayed. He will provide us with a map of the route of the marathon. He also mentioned that the new Marriott Hotel in Fresh Meadows on Horace Harding Expressway is almost open to the public. They have already removed the construction fence around it and it will most likely be open by the end of the year.

## **Salute to the Flag**

Chairperson Martha Taylor led the salute to the flag.

## **Approval of Minutes:**

Mark J. Lefkof made a motion to approve the minutes of October 18, 2017, seconded by Dr. Allen J. Bennett.

Count in favor   36                        Opposed:   0                        Abstained:   0  

## **Board Members who approved the minutes:**

Dilafroz Ahmed, Jagir Singh Bains, Carolyn Baker-Brown, Dr. Allen J. Bennett, Robert H. Block, Edward Chung, Susan D. Cleary, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, Kevin Forrestal, Howard A. Fried, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Joshua Glikman, Marc A. Haken, Michael Hannibal, Robert Harris, Tami Hirsch, Fakrul “Delwar” Islam, Steven Konigsberg, Bright Dae-Jung Limm, Mark J. Lefkof, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Jennifer Martin, Tamara Osherov, Charlton Rhee, Seymour Schwartz, Harbachan Singh, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Rachele Van Arsdale, Jacob Weinberg and Stanley Weinblatt.

## **Board Members who did not approve the minutes:**

None

## **Chairperson Martha Taylor introduced Guest Speaker Ahuva Yelizarov from the Central Queens YM & YWHA to discuss the array of services they provide to the public.**

### **Guest Speaker:**

**Ahuva Yelizarov, Central Queens YM & YWHA** – Ms. Yelizarov introduced Ms. Denia Tavarez who was the one to give the presentation. Folders with flyers of various events were given to everyone for guidance.

**Denia Tavarez, Director of Business Development** - Ms. Tavarez stated that Central Queens Y just merged with Samuel Field Y. They are now one entity, which allows them to provide a wider and more comprehensive workforce employment program.

These are some of the main highlights of the services provided by the Central Queens Y:

- Their workforce employment program is for youth in and at school as well as adults.
- They work with the City of New York for many of the in-school programs. If you have a youth between the age of 14 and 15 to about 24 years old that is in school, they have employment programs for them.
- If you have youths who are not in school, they have what they call the out-school youth program.
- The E.V.E. Program provides free medical and IT training program for young adults between the ages of 16-24. They have day, evening, and weekend classes to work around your schedule. Free certifications and medical training on the following: CompTIA A+- IT Training, Solar Panel Technician, CNA Nurses Aid, Phlebotomy & E.K.G., Pharmacy Technician, Medical Billing, Dialysis Tech, HSE/GED Classes, Paid Internships/Job Placement and Work Readiness Trainings.
- Anyone over the age of 24 can also connect themselves to the Allied Health field. If you receive SNAP benefits, you may be eligible for free training in: Home Health Aide, Certified Nurse’s Assistant, Medical Billing/Coding, Pharmacy Technician, Dialysis Technician or Security Guard.
- They also have a food pantry. Their food pantry is very special because it caters to the Jewish Community. They have kosher food on site. You are able to pick the items that you like. Back

in the day you would go to a food pantry and pick up a box and you wouldn't know what was inside that box. This food pantry allows you to pick your items so you can prepare your food with confidence and plan your groceries according to what is available.

- They offer free digital literacy classes. They have a computer lab and classes are offered on the following: computer basics, Microsoft Office, job search, how to apply to online job postings the right way and how to properly create a resume and a cover letter. They have workshops almost every Friday at the CQY Workforce Lab located at 67-09 108<sup>th</sup> Street in Forest Hills. To sign up for classes, please contact Courtney Wiggins at [Cwiggins@cqy.org](mailto:Cwiggins@cqy.org).
- They have partnered with the Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services for a recruitment event on Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. Open positions include: care coordinator, program coordinator and social work positions. If you know anyone who has a Master's or Bachelor's Degree in Social Work and is looking for employment? You can have them reach out to her at 718-268-5011 ext. 162 or email at: [dtavarez@cqy.org](mailto:dtavarez@cqy.org).
- They also work with NYLAG, they will go and talk about financial tips during economic hardship. They can help in preparing to take control of your finances, basic budgeting, expense prioritization and gross income targets. NYLAG has helped their clients in getting their credit report, working out arrangements with bill collectors and much more.

*Ms. Tavarez ended her presentation by saying that whenever you are in a situation where you feel lost, or a little hopeless or you want some support and/or guidance, think of the Central Queens Y. They have close to two-hundred employees. They are passionate, dedicated professionals who are there to help you and serve the community.*

#### **Chairperson's Report – Martha Taylor:**

- Chairperson Martha Taylor congratulated Board Member Dr. Penny Stern as she was the honoree at the Queens County Medical Society Gala celebration on October 28, 2017. She was honored as the immediate past president of the society.
- Last Thursday, there was a Town Hall meeting hosted by Honorable Council Member Barry Grodenchik. Mayor Bill de Blasio was in attendance. One of the things that the Mayor announced was of particular importance to this board. The Mayor has funded the renovation of Cunnigham Park. The funds will be used for the Redwood Playground and the Upper Playground. The Vanderbilt Motor Parkway which has not been renovated in decades will also be redone. She thanked Mayor Bill de Blasio and all others mentioned previously by Marc A. Haken for this amazing gift.
- In light of the funding received. She requested that they add lighting to the dog run. Many people use it after work and it is dark. Lighting is much needed.
- An Informational Hearing on Bioswales/Rain Gardens was held on November 6<sup>th</sup> with the Department of Environmental Protection. Residents had some very good questions. Some had to do with maintenance and liability for property damage. Response from the agency is still pending.
- In the Board Member packets, a list of meeting dates for next year was included. There were no objections, the dates are now final.
- A letter of support was drafted for the Spectrum Communications Local 3 workers. This letter is also to encourage other NYC Community Boards to join CB8 in this support.

#### **District Manager's Report, November 2017**

##### **DOB**

Department of Buildings informed us that CB8 had 223 applications for development last year. This year we have about 166 as of the end of October. About 44% out of the total number of zoning complaints filed with the Department of Buildings are for locations in Queens.

**HRA** – The HEAP Program starts on November 13<sup>th</sup>. Packets have already been sent to those individuals who were in the program last year. They should submit them right away. It is on a first come, first serve basis. The program ends each year once the funds are depleted.

**DFTA** – The agency announced that there is a welcoming center for the hurricane evacuees. It is at the Julia de Burgos Latino Cultural Center located at 1680 Lexington Avenue between 105<sup>th</sup> and 106<sup>th</sup> Streets. They are open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The evacuees can call 311 ahead of time for an appointment or they may come and wait on line. They will provide social service programs in different languages. They can also enroll their children in school from Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Parks** – District 8 is still without a Parks Manager.

There were several “It’s My Park Day” events in our parks this year. Volunteers cleaned Cunningham Park, Captain Tilly Park and Hoover/Manton.

Phase I of the Cunningham Park Project which included the pathways of the core area has not been completed as scheduled. Now that the temperature has fallen, they will not be able to do concrete work. The contractor has until June 2018 to complete the whole project (Phase I and II). At this time, the area near the comfort station and the picnic area is being worked on. The bases have been set-up for the exercise machines. They will be added in the spring.



**Happy Birthday to Florence Fisher, Robert Block, Marc Haken, Doug Sherman and Jim Gallagher, Jr.**

**Marie Adam-Ovide**

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*DM Adam-Ovide informed everyone that FREE paper bags are available for distribution after the meeting. She encouraged everyone to take some home for friends and neighbors.*

**Kevin Forrestal** – Mr. Forrestal commented on the DOB section of the District Manager’s Report. DOB presented how many permits they approved. There are no metrics to say how good a job they do on the enforcement and the review of applications.

*Chairperson Martha Taylor informed everyone that Susie Tanenbaum was unable to attend our meeting tonight to represent Borough President Melinda Katz.*

**Adjournment**

Dr. Bennett made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 8:17 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Jatna Reyes, CB8 staff  
November 13, 2017*