



Chairperson, Martha Taylor

*The City of New York
Borough of Queens*

Community Board 8

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District Manager, Marie Adam-Ovide

Area 7 Committee Meeting Minutes

Public Hearing - Street Co-naming – Portion of 85th Road to Ahmadiyya Way

Date: Monday, June 26, 2017
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Re: Co-Naming of portion of 85th Road
Place: Community Board 8 Office
197-15 Hillside Avenue
Hollis, NY 11423

Board Members: **Mark J. Lefkof, Area 7 Committee Chair**
Jesse Rosenbaum, Chair of the Transportation Committee
Marc A. Haken and Kevin Forrestal

Also in attendance: Irene Cheung representing Council Member Barry Grodenchik
Rabbi Edward Klein, Resident
Tahir Ahmed, Resident
Abdul Ghafoor, President, Ahmadiyya Muslim Community
Alma Karassavidis, Community Board 8 Staff

Area 7 Chair, Mark J. Lefkof called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. This meeting is regarding the request by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to co-name the street next to their location. The request is for the portion of 85th Road east of the eastbound entrance to the Grand Central Parkway to 188-48 85th Road to be co-named to Ahmadiyya Way.

Public Participation:

Rabbi Edward Klein – Edward Klein is the Rabbi of the Humanist Jewish Congregation of Queens. Rabbi Klein stated that his congregation meets at the Ahmadiyya Mosque. Rabbi Klein met with the Iman of the Mosque prior to holding their meetings there. He found that they are a sincere and peace-loving group of people. Rabbi Klein’s congregation has been holding their meetings there for approximately 2 years. The Mosque does a blood drive each year as an outreach to the community. Rabbi Klein supports the co-naming of the street.

Tahir Ahmed – Mr. Ahmed lives next door to the Mosque. He stated that from his experience, everything that they do is very helpful to the neighborhood. They volunteer with the blood drives, help the elderly, feed the needy; all around they are really good people. Mr. Ahmed supports the co-naming.

Jesse Rosenbaum – May I ask your home address?

Tahir Ahmed – 188-48 85th Road.

Jesse Rosenbaum – Are you the only other house located there in addition to the Mosque?

Tahir Ahmed – Exactly.

Mark J. Lefkof – Would the co-naming go up to your location?

Tahir Ahmed – Yes.

Area 7 Chair, Mark J. Lefkof closed the Public Participation portion of the meeting at 7:33 p.m. He opened up the floor to the Members present for discussion.

Jesse Rosenbaum – Can you please give me a little bit of background history on the sect that is occupying the Mosque?

Abdul Ghafoor – The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been in the United States since 1922. Our first headquarters were in Philadelphia, then we moved to Chicago. Since 1982 we have been in New York. First we were in Brooklyn, then we moved to 86-71 Palo Alto Street. In 2008 we purchased the Jewish Synagogue which is now our Mosque, for \$6.5 million. We are very peace-loving people. Our neighbors know us very well. The Honorable Mark Weprin was at our celebration today and last week he and Council Member Grodenchik attended another celebration we held. We are not rich but we help the community as well as others.

Kevin Forrestal – How long have you been at that location?

Abdul Ghafoor – First we were at 86-71 Palo Alto Street. We have been here on 188th Street since July 2008.

Mark J. Lefkof – So you were at this location for about 7 or 8 years?

Abdul Ghafoor – Yes.

Marc A. Haken – I have no questions, but I have advocated for this since the idea was put forward. I am very familiar with the Mosque since prior to 2002. I have been to several inter-religious events there. One of the events I attended had 4 different types of food in order to accommodate all the different individuals who were there. They benefit the community greatly and I urge my fellow Board Members to vote in favor of this.

Area 7 Chair, Mark J. Lefkof asked for a motion.

Marc A. Haken made a motion to accept the application for the co-naming of 85th Road after the Grand Central Parkway's eastbound entrance up to 188-48 85th Road to Ahmadiyya Way, seconded by Jesse Rosenbaum.

Discussion:

Kevin Forrestal – Everything I have heard about this Mosque has been positive. I don't question anything that has been said. I have also heard great things about Hillcrest Jewish Center, Holy Family Church, St. Nicholas of Tolentine and Young Israel. These institutions have been around for decades doing similar things for the community. I voted in favor of this at the Transportation Committee Meeting because I didn't want it to be rejected. This is an organization that is doing charitable work along with hundreds of others doing charitable work. I had asked to give an example of some other institution that had a street named after it. One of the members did mention Trinity Church which goes back to the Civil War. There is also Cathedral Parkway. The organization is doing great things for less than 10 years. I don't think it earns this type of award. If this sets a

precedent, we will have every institution wanting to name a street after them. Generally co-naming is done for an individual who has passed away as a memorial.

Marc A. Haken – Every issue is voted on individually. Setting a precedent should not be feared. If any other group should come before this Board and request that a portion of a street be co-named, I will look at it as optimistically as any other request and will vote on its merit.

Jesse Rosenbaum – I would like to ask the neighbor who spoke on behalf of the applicant if he is a member of the Mosque?

Tahir Ahmed – Yes, I am.

Jesse Rosenbaum – So you have a vested interest.

Area 7 Chair Mark J. Lefkof took a hand count for those in favor of approving the co-naming.

Count in favor 3 Opposed: 1 Abstained: 0

In favor:

Marc A. Haken, Mark J. Lefkof and Jesse Rosenbaum

Opposed:

Kevin Forrestal

Area 7 Chair Mark J. Lefkof stated that since we did not have a quorum present tonight, this will be presented to the full Board at our September 13, 2017 meeting for a recommendation.

Adjournment 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Alma Karassavidis, CB8 staff

June 27, 2017