



Chairperson, Martha Taylor

The City of New York
Borough of Queens

Community Board 8

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District Manager, Marie Adam-Ovide

DEP/Sanitation Committee Meeting

DATE:	June 30, 2025
Committee Members Present:	Mohammed Tohin, DEP/Sanitation Committee Chair, and Ahsan Habib.
Committee Members Absent:	John Gebhard and Mohammad Rahman.
Other Board Members Present:	Bhitihara Fulton, Saaif Alam, Mohammed 'Delwar' Islam, James Gallagher, Maria DeInnocentiis.
Others in attendance:	Rabby Syed, Antonio Whitaker, Kevin Morris, DM Marie Adam-Ovide, and CB8 Staff Member, Soleil Griffin.

DEP/Sanitation Committee Chairperson Mohammed Tohin called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. He then asked the board members and speakers to introduce themselves.

Mohammed Tohin – We have an issue on Hillside Avenue with vendors blocking the sidewalk. There has been no enforcement. Every day, there would be new vendors occupying the sidewalk. There is also very little space for people to walk. How can we enforce this?

Antonio Whitaker, Assistant Director of Community Affairs of the Department of Sanitation

Based on the 311 complaints we have seen from Board 8 regarding street vending, we have our Queens team patrol around Hillside Avenue between 169th Street and 179th Street. In the last few weeks, we have conducted twelve inspections and confiscated four abandoned set-ups. Three of the four food carts were considered abandoned when sanitation enforcement arrived the vendors were unlicensed and ran off. After about twenty-five minutes, it is considered abandoned, and we can legally take it. If they stayed in the area, we would not arrest anyone; however, if they are unlicensed, we would issue them a summons, confiscate their items and then give them a voucher to pick the items up. They would have to pay fees and fines to get their items back. If they run off, we would take their stuff, and they would not be able to pick them up since they would not have voucher. We realized that there are a number of individuals who happen to own a lot of food trucks and carts around the city. They then hire people to handle the food carts. Some of them are properly licensed with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and some are not. We have composted about 100 pounds of food and donated over 2300 pounds of food to local food pantries and churches. These are foods that were taken from food carts that were then inspected by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to identify if they are in good condition. We are in the area often and plan to be in the area a lot more moving forward. This is the time of year when it is warmer. We expect to get a whole lot of complaints, especially on Hillside Avenue between

160th Street and Homelawn Street. If you have not seen us, that does not mean we are not there. We are usually there in the morning or late afternoon and sometimes during the weekend. If you are noticing vendors that you think are unlicensed or if they are not following the rules i.e. the twenty-foot rule. If a vending cart looks like they are close to the entrance of one of the local businesses, which is twenty feet, then that is a summons able violation. You can put in a 311 complaint and send it to community board 8.

Rabby Syed – I have a business owner and resident here. From our observation, your office has not conducted any inspection on Hillside Avenue from 164th Street to 169th Street, especially in front of Mannan Supermarket. There are so many illegal vendors there every single day conducting business. This is affecting the community and those businesses who are paying taxes. These vendors are creating garbage around the community. I would like to bring this to your attention because we have not observed any inspections conducted there; items being confiscated, or any other actions taken. I have videos and pictures that I can send to you.

Response [Antonio Whitaker] – Thank you. I appreciate your take on what you have seen and experienced in the community. That is something we rely on so that it will help us with our enforcement efforts. As I mentioned in my remarks, just because you do not see sanitation enforcement there, it does not mean that we have not been in the area.

Mohammed Tohin – Most of what he is saying happens in the evening. During the day, it is nice and quiet with not many vendors. When it is dark, that is when everyone is there.

Mohammed ‘Delwar’ Islam – When you said most of the activities happen on Hillside Avenue between 179th Street and 169th Street, that is partly incorrect.

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – I was referring to the data that we are seeing from the 311 complaints. There are a lot of people who believe that filing 311 complaints is nonsense. We actually do look at that data. People come to me all the time about issues they are seeing. When I asked if they put in a 311 complaint, they said no. So, we will not know what is happening in different areas if there is no data to support that.

Mohammed ‘Delwar’ Islam – It is mostly the language barrier, and the information is not out there to where people can complain. Although 179th Street to 169th Street is a problem, 164th Street to 169th Street is also a problem. I have seen sanitation enforcement confiscate vendors carts on 169th Street, but the next day they are there.

Ahsan Habib – If someone has a license, are they allowed to do their business in the street?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – There are licensed vendors who are people that have gone through the process with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. If they sell other items than food, they will need to get their license from the Department of Worker and Consumer Protection. When they are properly licensed then they are allowed to sell their items.

Ahsan Habib – Are they allowed to sell anywhere in the street? Is there a specific space where they can sell items?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – There are specific streets in the city that are restricted to food vending. Hillside Avenue is not one of those streets. If I had a valid permit from the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and it has been inspected so that I can be a food cart vendor, I could sell on Hillside Avenue. I can be on the sidewalk as long as it is twenty feet from any store behind me. I need to be a minimum of six inches from the curb and a minimum of ten feet from the corner. I cannot block bus stops, park next to a fire hydrant or any other major city property. If I follow those specific rules, I am then okay.

Kevin Morris - There are also circumstances where you are prohibited from using things such as propane tanks to warm the food.

Response [Antonio Whitaker] – You can. If you are selling hot food from a truck or cart, you can use a propane tank.

Ahsan Habib – From 166th Street to 169th Street no one is following those rules.

Committee Chairperson Tohin requested that all members raise their hand so that everyone gets a chance to speak.

Bhithara Fulton – If I have a license and want to sell fruit twenty feet from a grocery store, I can do that? Is that legal?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – Yes. As long as you are licensed, and your food cart is permitted.

Bhithara Fulton – That is unfair.

Maria DeInnocentiis – I thought years ago; they were not allowed to do that. If I had a taco truck that was in front of a taco store, I could not park in front of that store and sell. I would be competing with a business. I would be forced to move. Are you saying that now they do not have to?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – No. As long as you are twenty feet or more away from the front entrance of that taco store.

Maria DeInnocentiis – What if you have a truck?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – If you have a truck, you would have to follow all on street vehicular rules. The one think that we see in regards to food trucks, is that they tend to park in metered parking spaces and tend to vend from these spaces. If I have a truck and pay for the meter, that is fine because you are parked legally and paying the meter. If I start selling food or anything else from that truck while parked at the meter, then that is a summonable offense which is a parking violation.

Maria DeInnocentiis – The police would have to do that?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – We can summons for that, not only the police. It is not a lot. The summons is about \$35.

Maria DeInnocentiis – You can only ticket them once a day?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – They can get the ticket for that one day. If we come back and they happen to be in that same spot, we can give them another ticket. There are a number of trucks in which we see that a lot. They are not necessarily in this area, but more so along Queens Boulevard, down in Forest Hills, Flushing, Long Island City, and Astoria especially in Steinway Street and Ditmars.

Maria DeInnocentiis – I know that area. There is no parking that isn't metered.

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – Right. They are all metered parking. Legally there is but so much that we can do if the truck is permitted and the vendor inside is licensed. If they are unlicensed and the truck is unpermitted, then we can confiscate it.

Marie Adam-Ovide – Before we move on to the next topic, this is something that I know the other District Managers bring up every time at the budget consultation meeting. Having someone sell tacos in front of a taco restaurant is unfair. At some point, that restaurant is going to close, and the city is going to lose even more revenue than from that one legit street vendor. Now that we have a new Chairperson of Sanitation, how do we push for that to change? Is that something that has to be done legislatively or is it something that the department can do with a rule change?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – Sanitation enforces the law as written. We do not promulgate any rules regarding vending. That is the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene and the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection. They promulgate those rules and we enforce them. To answer your question, that is a legislative matter.

Maria DeInnocentiis – Would that have to be the City Council?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – Yes. If the law changes, we would enforce whatever the law is.

Maria DeInnocentiis – You said that on 164th Street you had twelve inspections and confiscated four food carts on 164th Street. Then the next day, those people are there. Do your inspectors go back and do it repeatedly, or do they await weeks or months to reinspect?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – Yes. A lot of people think that when we say we are going to come back, we are going to come back the next day. The reality is that it is not tangible for us. We do return, but it may be a few weeks or the next month.

Mohammed Tohin – You will see most of the vendor at night. They know that nobody comes. We request additional resources and enforcement.

Saaif Alam – Are there any surveillance cameras between 166th Street and 169th Street? If there are cameras, it would be easier to enforce and remove illegal vendors.

Answer [Kevin Morris] – That would be something we would discuss with either NYPD or DOT. They would be the ones putting up the enforcement cameras.

Response [Antonio Whitaker] – DSNY does not have enforcement cameras on Hillside Avenue. The enforcement cameras that DSNY puts up are used to catch people who dumping from vehicles. If we have evidence of someone dumping from a vehicle, we have their license plate and the make & model of their vehicle. The camera feed is directly sent to the NYPD for them to run the VIN on those cars. We would confiscate and impound the car. The owner of the vehicle would receive a \$4,000 fine.

Mohammed ‘Delwar’ Islam – As a business person, all businesses are to have commercial [garbage] pick-up. Every business is supposed to have a sticker on the door. I have seen that most of the businesses on Hillside Avenue do not have their own pick-up. The second-floor use to be residential and now it is commercial. The commercial would put their trash and everything at the corner. The second thing is that the licensed vendors know the rules and regulations. They are following it through. The others would know the hours in which sanitation would not come and block the sidewalk. Just taking the merchandise is not enough. Once they start paying fines, they may realize not to come back.

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – It sounds like you are saying that the vendors on that stretch of Hillside Avenue come later in the evening.

Response [Mohammed ‘Delwar’ Islam] – Yes.

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – Are there specific days?

Response [Mohammed ‘Delwar’ Islam] – Every day. You will see them right now.

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – I can let our enforcement team know that the next time they are in the area, they should come later in the evening.

Mohammed Tohin – When it comes to the commercial establishments with no private carter stickers, the commercial and residential pick-up has been confusing. People have been dumping. How are we going to enforce this?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – If you own a commercial property, you have to have your garbage carted away by a private carter. Sanitation only does residential pick-up. This means that your carter sticker needs to be in a conspicuous location where a sanitation supervisor can easily see it and inspect it at any given time. If you do not have the sticker, you can receive a fine for that. If you do not have a private carter, you can also receive a fine for that. The first fine starts at \$100. The third fine you are paying well over \$500. If you have a multi-use building with residential on the top and commercial overlay on the bottom, then the commercial property has to have their garbage carted. Upstairs, the landlord of that building needs to provide bins for the residents to put their trash in and put their trash out on the scheduled sanitation days. If there are commercial properties that are not using the private carter, please let Marie and Soleil know. They will then let me know so that I can forward that information to commercial enforcement. If the landlords or property owners are not providing trash bins for their residents to use, than it is something that we can look into.

Rabby Syed – Vendors are very aggressive, and they do not care about the time. They would start at 2 p.m. or 3 p.m. and on the weekends noon. At the end of the meeting, I would like to provide my concluding remarks.

Marie Adam-Ovide – The issue that Delwar raised about having commercial activity happening upstairs, since Kevin is here from CAU, I think it is not just a sanitation issue, it might be a Department of Buildings (DOB) issue. If it is a mixed-use building, the bottom is commercial, and the upstairs must be residential. It cannot be a mixed-use building, and they are using the whole building for commercial. If you have addresses and you want to let me know, I can have DOB check. On the issue of the stickers, I know that the businesses are supposed to have the sticker and they know about private carting. I believe in giving people a chance. I wish that sanitation could do some sort of outreach for that section for businesses to know what is expected and know that sanitation will be coming back around to make sure they complied. If you could, do some kind of outreach for them in their language and then come back as a two-step process.

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – We have already begun that process. For private carting, we have broken up the city into multiple zones. There is a zone called Queens Central that consists of Corona, Elmhurst, Flushing, and comprises a couple of community boards. In that particular zone, we have conducted a number of outreaches in multiple languages. Every business in that particular zone has to choose a specific private carter that has a contract with DSNY. Right now, in the private carting space, businesses have different carters that come at different times. We are going to start the process in the Bronx. Then we are going to move to Brooklyn and come back to Queens in this area and the eastern part.

Marie Adam-Ovide – Will it happen this year?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – It is not going to be this year. This will be a multi-year effort. We want to make sure we offer competitive pricing to businesses and normalize pick-up operations so that pick-up will be done between midnight and 5 a.m.. That is something we are going to be doing in the area, but it is coming down the pipe.

Ahsan Habib – On Hillside Avenue from 169th Street to 167th Street, there are businesses without carter sticker. Most of the retail stores are on the second and third floor. There are no residences over there. Most of the retail stores have a travel agency above them. Whose responsibility is it to check if they have a private carter sticker or not? On the second floor, all of them are office spaces.

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – From a sanitation standpoint, we would not have anything to do with office spaces. If the commercial establishment has a private carter, then they would have a private carter sticker that can be inspected.

Maria DeInnocentiis – What he is saying is that the second floors are commercial. Where they are a travel agency or whatever. They do not have stickers. Who is responsible for making sure that those offices have commercial stickers?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – That would be us.

Ahsan Habib – They are never going to choose to have a private carter because no one inspects over there.

Marie Adam-Ovide – They are also operating out of their Certificate of Occupancy since they are supposed to be residential. It is also a Department of Buildings issue.

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – If those upper levels are supposed to be residential according to DOB and they have a travel agency, it is probably illegal.

Maria DeInnocentiis – Even so, they are creating garbage, and the garbage is being dumped in the street instead of it being carted away. I had a business in Jackson Heights and one of our problems were that people who did not have stickers were putting their garbage with my carter. When I complained, they sent an inspector around the whole area to make sure the businesses had stickers. If they did not, they were ticketed which helped. If there is a second story building and they have a business, sanitation should be treating them like a business even if they are illegal until we can get DOB to do something about it.

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – If you have a specific address, please give that to the board and we can check that out.

Maria DeInnocentiis – Do you randomly send out inspectors?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – For commercial establishments, we would send them out randomly, but generally, we focus on specific areas or addresses.

Mohammed Tohin – If there is a mixed-use building, the commercial should have a private carter, and residential pick-up will be by the city?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – Correct.

Mohammed Tohin – One of the buildings received a notice from DSNY that it was a mixed-use building and that their garbage has to be picked-up by a private carter.

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – That is why I asked for specific addresses.

Bhitihara Fulton – If the bottom floor has a grocery store, the second floor is a travel agency, the third floor is residential, you can be sure those residence do not have the appropriate bin. People are putting their bags on the street and there is no enforcement.

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – The landlord or property owner would need to provide the residents with the appropriate bin.

Response [Bhitihara Fulton] - **Do you really think the landlord is providing these people with anything?**

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – Some buildings are and some buildings are not. We know that there are areas of the city where the landlords have actively told their residence to dump their garbage at the corner because they do not want to provide the appropriate bin. For those landlords that we know of, we have approached them. If you know of landlords that are doing that, please let us know.

Mohammed Tohin – If anyone sees any buildings that is supposed to be mixed-use, bring it to my and Marie’s attention. Then I will go to Kevin to make sure those buildings follow the Department of Buildings code.

Marie Adam-Ovide – If you do not feel comfortable saying it right now, you can call us and let us know separately. Complaints that are being filed come from CB8. None of the board members or residents’ names are used with our complaints.

Mohammed Tohin – Delwar, how many times do they pick-up the garbage?

Answer [Mohammed ‘Delwar’ Islam] – Two days.

Response [Mohammed Tohin] – Two days is not enough.

Response [Mohammed ‘Delwar’ Islam] – For commercial, it is three days.

Mohammed Tohin – What is your suggestion for the cleanliness of Hillside Avenue?

Answer [Mohammed ‘Delwar’ Islam] – Mostly remove the vendors. On 168th Street and 167th Street, the residence would bring their trash to Hillside Avenue. In the past, sanitation would open up the bags to find a letter or something with an address to find out who it is.

Response [Antonio Whitaker] – We still do that.

Mohammed ‘Delwar’ Islam – There is a dentist office that has a camera on Hillside Avenue and 167th Street. He has been complaining that there are piles of garbage in front of his area.

Response [Bhitihara Fulton] – People do not want to buy a bin.

Bhitihara Fulton – I was hoping that DSNY could do a demonstration with someone who is multilingual to show what goes into the four bins. Can we also teach people to pick-up their own garbage?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – That is an uphill battle. People need to take responsibility for their own trash.

Mohammed ‘Delwar’ Islam – I suggest that there should be some literature in our language and call every vendor to let them know that they should not be there. If that does not work, we will need to work

with the Borough President's office and City Council Members to have a community meeting to hold everyone accountable.

Saaif Alam – Is it possible to do a demonstration for our schools in the area?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – The DOE has been doing a phenomenal job with that. If you go into any DOE school, their lunchroom will have an area in which students can separate their food and liquid waste. Kids are doing that and are being taught to do that at a young age.

Mohammed Tohin – If we want to create an event and bring in all the businesses people do discuss the garbage law can we do that? Would you make yourself available?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – That is a good idea. We want to be helpful. I am never going to say no to doing something that would really reinforce the rules. I have to admit, I have never been asked to bring full sized bins. Maybe that is something we can do. I would have to bring it up to the Commissioner's office to see what they say.

Bhitihara Fulton – I have been fighting for the last six or seven months about three properties that are a block from my house. I have gotten help from Marie, yet the situation keeps evolving back to the mess it was in. Inspectors have gone there. On 85th Avenue and 162nd Street, there is a one-story house that was illegally converted by the owner to a three-story house. I would put in a 311 complaint and would get a message saying that they could not find anything. That is because, the garbage is not picked-up in front of the house, but around the corner by the garage. Back in January, the garage had piles of black garbage bags that were set on fire. We are getting some compliance, but there is a mattress in the driveway and bins that do not have lids. Across the street is a huge house that had tall grass. With the office help, we got the grass cut down. There is about twenty-five garbage refuge bags that is currently on the property. Two houses down is another property that has garbage in front of the house (*she showed images of the garbage bags*).

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – That is on their property. We cannot legally go on that property.

Response [Bhitihara Fulton] – But you can tell them what to do with it.

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – If you can provide the board with the addresses, we can take a look at it.

Response [Bhitihara Fulton] – They have already done that. Marie drove around the neighborhood, wrote the addresses down and sent them letters.

Rabby Syed – On Hillside Avenue between 169th Street and 164th Street, there is only two garbage cans. Businesses are growing and there are a lot of people around. We have brought this to your office so many times. I am urging that your office takes immediate action on this.

Marie Adam-Ovide – Thank you for cleaning the medians along Hillside Avenue and Francis Lewis Boulevard. I understand that you guys have a plan to take care of all of the medians. I do not know if the plan is ready yet. I do not want the medians to have three feet of weeds before anything is done. I also know that the Borough President stated that he was in contact with the Commissioner about this. I am aware that there are over two hundred locations on the list.

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – On the 23rd of June, the median on Francis Lewis Blvd. between Hillside Avenue and 86th Road was trimmed. On the 24th of June, the median on Francis Lewis Blvd. between 86th Road and Epon Course was trimmed. On the 25th of June, the median on Hillside Avenue between Francis Lewis Blvd. and Midland Parkway was trimmed. On the 26th of June, the median on Hillside Avenue between Midland Parkway and Homelawn Street was trimmed. On the 27th of June, the median on 69th Avenue between 195th Lane and 198th Street was trimmed. Also on the 27th of June, the median on 164th Street between LIE Expressway - Service Road and Grand Central Parkway. On the 28th of June, the median on 164th Street between 65th Avenue and 67th Avenue. On the 30th of June, the median on 164th Street between 67th Avenue and Jewel Avenue.

Marie Adam-Ovide – Are all the others coming up like Union Turnpike, Main Street, Queens Blvd.?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – The Union Turnpike locations are probably going to be done in the next two to three weeks. Those are the ones in CB8 that were deemed the ones we need to do first.

Marie Adam-Ovide – We look forward to the plan so that this continues.

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – The plan started at the end of May beginning June. Last year, we started a little later. The plan moving forward is to start as early as possible by starting in mid-May.

Maria DeInnocentiis – We had a lot of rain. Once we had a lot of rain all the medians bloomed.

James Gallagher – Are there any plans for Union Turnpike?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – In a few weeks they will be served.

James Gallagher – What about Utopia Parkway?

Answer [Antonio Whitaker] – Yes. The medians around St. John’s University going up to Union Turnpike.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by,
Soleil Griffin, CB8 Staff
July 14, 2025