



Chairperson, Martha Taylor

The City of New York
Borough of Queens

Community Board 8

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District Manager, Marie Adam-Ovide

Library, Education & Youth Committee Meeting

Re: Hollis Library Renovations
Date: Monday March 31, 2025
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: **In-Person**

Alan Ong, Library, Education & Youth Committee Chair

Board Members: Saaif Alam, Bhitihara Martha-Fulton, James Gallagher, and Amy Tse

Non-Board Members: Susan Shiroma

Also, in attendance: Luisa Benedetto and Shannon Rockett of Queens Public Library; Ari Gershman, Justin Mouchayad and Anna Killion of Department of Design and Construction, Benjamin Goodman of NYC School Construction Authority, Alexander Betancourt of Department of Youth and Community Development, Keith Felsenfeld representative for Council Member Linda Lee, Lya Rosthmann representative for Senator Toby Ann Stavisky, DM Marie Adam-Ovide and CB8 Staff Member Soleil Griffin.

Committee Chairperson Ong called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. He welcomed all attendees and asked that they introduce themselves.

Luisa Benedetto of Queens Public Library

Ms. Benedetto is the Director of Government Affairs at Queens Public Library. She was joined by her colleague Shannon Rockett. The Department of Design and Construction (DDC) is managing the interior renovation of the Hollis Library. She thanked the elected officials who funded the project. They include, Council Member Linda Lee, Borough President Donovan Richards, Mayor Eric Adams.

Ari Gershman of DDC

Mr. Gershman is the Assistant Director of Community Affairs at the Department of Design and Construction (DDC). He introduced Justin Mouchayad who is managing the project.

Justin Mouchayad

Mr. Mouchayad is the Senior Project Manager for the construction of Hollis Library. He began the presentation to the Library, Education & Youth Committee. A slideshow presentation was shown.

These are some of the highlights of the presentation on the Hollis Library Renovation

- The renovation costs \$6.1 million and it includes:
 - modern reading rooms
 - increased computer space
 - enhanced accessibility for the community

- designated teen area
- enhanced reading spaces for children and adults
- multipurpose room
- ADA accessibility improvements
- new furnishings, computers, and equipment
- upgrades to all building systems to all electric
- The contractor had issues receiving permits from the Department of Transportation (DOT). DOT wanted to make sure the site logistics were in place. There were issues with the layout of the pedestrian walkway.
- There will be new windows and insulation for energy efficiency.
- The children's reading room and workstation will be in the back of the building.
- The building was built in 1973. They found asbestos which had to be removed. They completed the interior demolition.

Alan Ong – Will there be solar on top of the roof?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – The city leans toward green roofs.

Alan Ong – There are no worries about the grid hurting the community?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – No. Every equipment that is used has to pass an efficiency guild line.

Alan Ong – If noise becomes an issue, who can the community contact?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – We will have a sign posted of official numbers

Alan Ong – Should we recommend to the constituents to call 311 before calling DDC?

Answer [Ari Gershman] – If the residents call this office or any elected office, you can contact me. I also want to introduce my colleague Anna Killion who is the Outreach Coordinator for DDC.

Response [Anna Killion] – If there are any issues or complaints on any DDC project, you can share my contact.

Response [Justin Mouchayad] – Since this is an interior renovation, all the noise will be contained.

Alan Ong – Should we be concerned about the librarians settling in at a different location?

Answer [Luisa Benedetto] – It is protocol that staff goes to other locations. The plan is that they return to the library when it reopens.

Alan Ong – What is the length of the project?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – It can be completed within a year.

Committee Chairperson Ong opened the floor to questions from committee members.

Saaif Alam – What are the times in which the construction will take place?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – Between 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., unless they are working overtime. We do not work past 5 p.m.

Saaif Alam – How many days a week?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – Five.

Amy Tse – What is the contractor doing about the street around it (i.e. 202nd Street)?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – On Hillside [Avenue], there will be jersey barriers. They have to maintain five feet [clearance] from the bus stop. On 202nd Street, they are going to have a pedestrian walkway that is at the edge of the sidewalk. Permanent flag men will be there to direct pedestrians across the street. There will be “No Parking” signs.

Susan Shiroma – Can you tell us which libraries have converted to all electric?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – This will be the first.

Susan Shiroma – Will there be training for the facilities team to handle all electric or will there be consultants?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – I will speak with QPL [Queens Public Library].

Susan Shiroma – Do you know the capacity of the multipurpose room?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – I do not have that exact number.

Marie Adam-Ovide – Will they be using the west side for the 202nd Street sidewalk?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – Yes.

Marie Adam-Ovide – There is a fire hydrant on 202nd Street. Are you going to make sure there is access for the Fire Department?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – That will not impede it.

Marie Adam-Ovide – Will you be giving out flyers or post them?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – They will be posted.

Alan Ong – Who is responsible for when it snows?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – The contractor.

Committee Chairperson Ong opened the floor to questions from the public.

Keith Felsenfeld representative for Council Member Linda Lee – Will there be no parking the whole time or during construction?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – There will be no parking for 24hrs.

Keith Felsenfeld representative for Council Member Linda Lee – Will you notify the homeowner?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – As soon as they get the approval from DOT within the next two weeks, they are going to notify the homeowners and then post the signs.

Keith Felsenfeld representative for Council Member Linda Lee – How far down the block?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – It is going to go up to where the library ends.

Keith Felsenfeld representative for Council Member Linda Lee – Was there community notification of the asbestos?

Answer [Justin Mouchayad] – We posted it in the front of the library.

Saaif Alam – What will be the library hours after it is completed?

Answer [Luisa Benedetto] – The hours for Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays is 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. On Saturdays, it is from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays it is 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Thursdays are 12 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Alan Ong – Will there be a mobile library?

Answer [Shannon Rockett] – It is on Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

James Gallagher – Will the friends no longer exist?

Answer [Luisa Benedetto] – The friends are still around, we just transitioned to a different model. It is a network model under our Civic Engagement Department. There won't be individual chapters.

Chairperson Ong continued with the second part of the meeting with Benjamin Goodman from the NYC School Construction Authority.

Benjamin Goodman

Mr. Goodman is the External Affairs Manager for the NYC School Construction Authority. He provided an update on the John Bowne High School annex that is off Reeves Avenue and 146th Place. It is located at the back of high school property.

- There will be approximately 630 new seats, which is about twenty standard new classrooms. There will also be additional instructional spaces.
- It will be fully ADA compliant with an elevator and full accessibility.
- Construction for the new building will begin in May.
- During the week of Spring break, the contractor will be onsite placing the construction trailers. They are currently working on getting their permits from the Department of Buildings.
- The construction of the annex will take approximately two years to complete. It will open for students and staff in September 2027.

He can be reached at bgoodman@nyc.sca.org or 718-472-8026. The contact for the Department of Education is Julianne Bozzo jbozzo2@schools.nyc.gov. You can contact her about programing and/or academics at John Bowne High School.

There are other projects taking place within CB8:

- P.S. 216 - The new addition is on track for September 2026 opening.
- P.S. 26 – The new addition for the building is on track to open this September.
- Hillcrest High School – There is a walk-in freezer project for the cafeteria that is near completion.
- P.S. Q086 – there was an emergency order generated due to fallen debris. There was a shutter erected by the contractor. A project is currently in design to repair the exterior masonry of the side of the building.
- P.S. 131 – There is an external modernization project. This is the existing building masonry, which is the older building not the new addition. New windows, drainage work and flood elimination. There will also be a phase four existing building renovation. This will make the new addition and existing building cohesive. It should be completed by the summer of 2026.
- P.S. 200 – The exterior modernization project that should be completed in January 2027.
- P.S. 173 – The exterior modernization project should be completed shortly.

Alan Ong – In regards to the new additions at P.S. 216 and P.S. 26, are they electrified? Is there a boiler or other ventilation?

Answer [Benjamin Goodman] – They are both fully electric. That is the new standard for the SCA.

Committee Chairperson Ong opened the floor to questions from committee members.

Amy Tse – For the entrance of P.S. 26 bus pick-up and drop-off, will be on 73rd Avenue?

Answer [Benjamin Goodman] – There are two schools in the building. I believe they are keeping that at the other side of the property which is 69th Avenue or 67th Avenue.

Amy Tse – They would have to stagger with the main building?

Response [Alan Ong] – That would be determined by the principal.

Answer [Benjamin Goodman] – Yes. It will be determined by the principal; however, this project is unique because of the layout. The P.S. 26 building is keeping the existing entrance along 69th Avenue.

Saaif Alam – For John Bowne High School, what are the days and times the construction will take place?

Answer [Benjamin Goodman] – The construction will take place Mondays to Fridays between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. If there is a need to work overtime, we will. We will not be doing construction when there are major tests like regents’

week. If there are events, we work with the principal to make sure there is no heavy construction. As we get closer to the start of the construction, I will send CB8 our standard Dear Neighbor Letter sometime in April.

Alan Ong – Similar to P.S. 216, when they need to move in heavy machinery, they would let the neighbors and community board know.

Answer [Benjamin Goodman] – Yes. That is a DOB requirement that the contractor has to let the community board know.

James Gallagher – Will P.S. 173 and P.S. 26 have upgraded air conditioning in the gymnasium and auditorium?

Answer [Benjamin Goodman] – The air conditioning units are not something that SCA does. The city's Office of Budget Management has deemed air conditioning units to not be capital eligible. Air conditioning units and window units are done by the Division of School Facilities and NYC Public Schools.

Response [Amy Tse] – I thought we got funding from our former Council Member Barry S. Grodenchik.

Answer [Benjamin Goodman] – If there is funding, there is something called split unit systems. Those systems are done by SCA and funded by elected officials through resolution aid program. These are grants given to us to do smaller capital improvements to our schools.

Alan Ong – Can you help us find out if there is a Reso A for P.S. 26?

Answer [Benjamin Goodman] – Yes. I will get back to Marie tomorrow or Wednesday.*

Committee Chairperson Ong opened the floor to questions from the public.

Keith Felsenfeld representative for Council Member Linda Lee – Does SCA or DOE have any jurisdiction over the trail that is next to P.S. 26?

Answer [Benjamin Goodman] – The trail located at the front of the property on 69th Avenue and 73rd Avenue is part of the Department of Parks [and Recreation]. We did most of the work we needed to do for the addition, but we need to come back starting next month to do the playground. The playground area is still a construction site. We are waiting for the planting season to come and do the rest of the work we need to do for the playground. Our construction trailer is located at the front of the main entrance of P.S. 26 on 69th Avenue.

Chairperson Ong continued with the third part of the meeting with Alexander Betancourt from the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD).

Alexander Betancourt

CB8 has a significant investment in programming in community schools. These investments are in compass elementary school programs and compass middle school programs.

- There are about thirty to forty schools in the district that are participating in programming services directly from DYCD.
- There are about twenty to twenty-five nonprofits who either work with the schools or work as a solo agent inside of the schools.
- The partnerships in a compass middle school include New York Edge, New York Junior Tennis League, Queens Community House. These cover the Queens Gateway to Health Sciences Secondary School, P.S. 219, Junior High School 217, and Queens Collegiate.
- Samuel Fields YM & YWHA covers P.S. 178, P.S. 200 The Magnet School of Global Studies and Leadership, and P.S. 164 in Queens Valley.
- Other organizations that are participating include Greater Ridgewood Council, Queens Community House, and the Child Center of New York.

The program models are intended to be best practice after-school activities that build on the needs of the children after a school day. The providers provide homework help and recreational activities. The second biggest investment is inside Beacon Schools. A beacon is a six day a week community center model focused on young people and adults. These programs are located in Junior High School 216-The George Ryan School, and I.S. 250-The Robert

Kennedy Middle School. There is also a Saturday Night Lights program that is being managed by the Child Center of New York.

There has been an investment for the employment needs of our young people. The candidate selection process is approaching SYEP. The program will start on July 1st. They have an additional program that takes place with the Office of Neighborhood Safety which is a youth engagement services program. Their intent is to reduce the violence in neighborhoods that have gun violence. This is a partnership DYCD has with the Precincts and DOE. SYEP covers older youth, school base for young people who are in school, Learn & Earn, Trade & Earn, and Work Learn and Grow. Work Learn and Grow is an advanced model for young people who want to see themselves in careers post high school. DYCD is currently under budget negotiations.

Alan Ong – Is Ladders for Leaders part of SYEP?

Answer [Alexander Betancourt] – It is a different program model, but it is an extension for the older schools who aged out of SYEP.

James Gallagher – Have you heard about 107th Precinct working with various youth groups?

Answer [Alexander Betancourt] – Can you send me that information?

Bhithara Martha-Fulton – Do you have a database where all this information is readily available?

Answer [Alexander Betancourt] – I can send it to you; however, I do not want to send it without the budget allocation information. I can send it tomorrow without the budget allocation.

Bhithara Martha-Fulton – Do you have any handouts that are available to the community?

Answer [Alexander Betancourt] – We ask the providers to do formal outreach.

Saaif Alam – Will the list consist of nonprofit organizations that you partner with?

Answer [Alexander Betancourt] – Yes. The list will show you the pairing between every community-based agency and their school.

Marie Adam-Ovide – I would like to create a pullout for my newsletter so that it can go out to parents in time for September.

Answer [Alexander Betancourt] – We have a website that has a portal where you can put your address in and find the different programs within walking distance and a mile away from your home. I will send you an orientation kit.

Amy Tse – Who will be doing the internship training? Who are the private businesses that you will be partnering with?

Answer [Alexander Betancourt] – The orientation to the business community happens in two directions. The first is the grounding of our young people and the opportunities awarded to them along with the expectations we have of them. Then we ask our partners to do an orientation about the world of work through socialization. This happens wherever the student is placed and the type of industry they are working in.

Susan Shiroma – Which high schools in CB8 are you getting the most applications for Ladders to Leaders?

Answer [Alexander Betancourt] – I can find out. Do you have any high schools in particular?

Response [Susan Shiroma] – Hillcrest High School, John Bowne High School, and Francis Lewis High School.

Answer [Alexander Betancourt] – We have organizations inside of those schools who are doing promotions.

Susan Shiroma – Is it the guidance counselors or nonprofit who nominate the student?

Answer [Alexander Betancourt] – The nonprofit can help identify students.

Alan Ong – Does the guidance counselor have a hand in it also?

Answer [Alexander Betancourt] – The guidance counselor also has a voice in it. Hillcrest High School has a Work Learn & Grow program. The Child Center of New York manages that program. They also work out of the Jamaica

Gateway to the Sciences. You also have another partnership with the Samuel Field Parson Boulevard School. It is with an organization called the Samuel Fields YM & YWHA which is a Train & Earn program.

Saaif Alam – There is a Neighborhood Advisory Board in CB8, can you let us know who the point person is?

Answer [Alexander Betancourt] – I am the person who is designated to work with the boards.

New Business

Alan Ong

A member of the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP) contacted CB8. PEP is the highest parent leader group that makes decisions for schools citywide. The Panel for Educational Policy Community Education Council elect for Queens sent an email to help host a candidates' forum for those parents who want to apply to the CEC. I can be considered political, but I am waiting to find out. I think it would be a good idea to collaborate so long as we are fair and equal to everyone. CB8 covers a little bit of the schools in District 26, District 25, District 28, and District 29. CB 7, CB11, and CB12 need to also be involved.

Amy Tse – Is the candidate forum meant to give information to the parents in the districts about what the CEC is?

Answer [Alan Ong] – No.

Amy Tse – Is it for people who have applied and want to give a speech that is already on their website?

Answer [Alan Ong] – Yes. People that will be applying will join the candidate's forum and questions will be asked by the PEP CEC representative.

Amy Tse – What will the PEP's involvement be?

Answer [Alan Ong] – She is elected by the CEC to sit on PEP for Queens. She wanted to make sure people know about it and who is running.

Marie Adam-Ovide – What month is she looking to do this?

Answer [Alan Ong] – I do not know. The elections are starting soon.

Marie Adam-Ovide – If it is in May, we can put it in our newsletter for people.

Answer [Alan Ong] – Correct.

Marie Adam-Ovide – If we have to collaborate with other community boards, I know that CB11 would want to collaborate. I'm not sure if CB12 and CB13 will be on board.

Answer [Alan Ong] – It is up to her to reach out and get everyone buy in.

Amy Tse – Will this all be virtual?

Answer [Alan Ong] – It can be or in-person.

Marie Adam-Ovide – Since the lines are different, I think she should have it by Community Education Council districts and still have the boards be part of the event.

Answer [Alan Ong] – The line bud up with each other. If we do not get everyone, it is not a fair and equitable thing.

Marie Adam-Ovide – Whatever is happening in CEC 29, we would support it and do the same thing in CEC 26. Keeping it within the district makes sense, and still have the boards take part in giving out information.

Answer [Alan Ong] – I think she was aiming to have the community boards do it, which is a big undertaking.

Marie Adam-Ovide – There should be a candidate forum for each school district, but we can still participate.

Answer [Alan Ong] – Correct. I will work with her or Marie to find out more information and report back to the committee.

Alan Ong

We represent all schools in our community board. We should let the schools know that we are here to support them. I am asking that the committee members come up with ways to better represent the school community. If you know of a school that you have a good relationship with, reach out and maybe we can do a school visit. Before you do that, run it through the committee to see if anyone is interested in joining you.

Amy Tse – Go to the PTA meetings and talk?

Answer [Alan Ong] – The PTA is a good start, but it is better to speak with the principles and see what they want. Alex was talking about the budget. SAC has their own budget. CEC does school visits to find out the top five priorities.

Saaif Alam made a motion to adjourn this meeting at 9:00 p.m.

* Benjamin Goodman sent a follow-up email on April 3, 2025.

- Q026 does not have a forthcoming Reso-A supplemental cooling project.
- Q173 does not have that either.
- SCA will be stating scope on a Reso-A engineering study shortly.

*Respectfully submitted,
Soleil Griffin, CB8 Staff
April 8, 2025*