



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 Meeting held on Wednesday, September 13, 2023, at the Hillcrest Jewish Center at 183-02 Union Turnpike, Queens, NY 11366.

Attendance:

Board Members Present:

Dilafroz Ahmed, Heather Bennett-Idels, Robert H. Block, Edward Chung, Solomon Davydov, Maria DeInnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Wendy Gennaro, Ashan Habib, Michael Hannibal, Mohammed “Delwar” Islam, Steven Konigsberg, Mitch Lisker, Elke Maerz, Mary Maggio, Jennifer Martin, Dilip Nath, Alan Ong, Tammy Osheroov, Hersh Parekh, Tobias Paris, Mohammad Rahman, Jesse Rosenbaum, Jenna Citron Schwab, Seymour Schwartz, Deepti Sharma, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Amy Tse, Rabbi Mayer Waxman and Jacob Weinberg.

Board Members Absent:

Susan D. Cleary, Kenneth Cohen II, Kevin Forrestal, Bhitihara-Martha Fulton, Neeta Jain, Rabbi Yaniv Meirov, David Mordukhaev, Rabbi Shilomo Nisanov, Simon Pelman, Frances Peterson, Charlton Rhee, Douglas Sherman and Harbachan Singh

Others Present:

Shubhra Datta representing Borough President Donovan Richards, Tanbir Chowdhury representing James Gennaro, Council Member James Gennaro, Rokeya Akhter representing District Attorney Melinda Katz, Ari Inniss representing Senator Leroy Comrie, Lois Marbach representing Councilwoman Linda Lee, Sam Verstanding representing Assembly Member David I. Weprin, Scott Sieber representing State Senator John Liu, Marva M. Dudley President of the Flushing Suburban Civic Association, Curtis Ewing Jr representing the Flushing Suburban Civic Association, Lee Israel Vice President of NAMI Queens/Nassau, Daniel Ashe representing Global Montello Group, D.M. Marie Adam-Ovide [CB8 Staff Soleil Griffin, and Nettie Norris].

Call to Order:

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

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Public Participation:

Felicia McNair

Representing St. John’s University Center for Psychological Services which offers mental services for children and psychological services. The facility currently has openings for child therapy and adult therapy. Services are provided by students in training who are supervised by a licensed Psychologist.

Jason Rollins

Requested the community to sign a petition for the beautification of Hillside Ave.

Marva Dudley

The Flushing Suburban Civic Association and residents expressed opposition on the proposed smoke shop located at 75-09 Parsons Blvd.

Lee Israel

Requested help from the community to create a petition to stop trucks from exiting the underpass at 73rd Avenue near the Clearview Expressway.

Jesse Rosenbaum asked that Lee Israel see him to further discuss the issue.

Wendy Gennaro

The Exxon Gas Station on 178th Street and Union Turnpike is donating a penny per gallon at one of the gas pumps to support Queens Centers for Progress (QCP). The gas pump has the QCP logo on it.

Elected Officials' Announcements:

Ari Inness representing Senator Leroy Comrie

The Senator sends his regards and hopes to attend a meeting before the end of the year. The office is hosting multiple events such as Senior & Veterans Job Fair & Expo on September 15th; Parent to be Baby Shower on September 23th; Breast Cancer Mammogram Bus; A taste of Monte Carlo Casino night on October 5th. If you have any questions, please feel free to call their office at (718) 765-6359.

Sam Verstanding representing Assembly Member David Weprin

The office is hosting a Health Fair and Yoga event in honor of Senior Appreciation Month on September 20th. All are welcome to attend. Please RSVP.

Guest Speaker:

The Honorable City Councilman James Gennaro

- He acknowledged the birthdays of our CB 8 Board Members.
- The Adams Administration put out their second round of regulations for Local Law 97. Council Member Gennaro has been working with his colleagues to determine how they are going to pay for Local Law 97. There is a billion dollars allocated for safer energy upgrades. The federal government placed money in the Inflation Reduction Act. New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has a case financing program. As long as the buildings do the work by 2024 or have a carbon reduction action plan, they won't have any penalties if they complete the work in time.
- John Bowne High School has an Agricultural Program that received \$5 million to get the farm up and running.
- Asylum Seekers are here legally since New York City is a sanctuary city. New York City is a right to shelter city which is rooted in the state constitution. There are 10,000 people coming to NYC per month. There is a total of 110,000 people who have migrated to NYC.
- He wished everyone a Happy Rosh Hashanah.
- The Association of Community Employment Programs (ACE) replaced Diversified Opportunity Fund (Doe Fund) and Wildcat. Wildcat ran out of business. If there's graffiti that needs to be cleaned-up, please alert their office.

Rokeya Akhter representing District Attorney Melinda Katz

The DA's office is working with the NYPD and Sheriff's Department to take down the illegal smoke shops. Since November 2022 the DA's office recovered the following throughout Queens:

- Over 750 lbs of cannabis edibles, including gummies and candy bars.
- Over 950 lbs of cannabis flower.
- Over 8,000 cannabis vape "pens."
- Dozens of packages of edible psilocybin, also known as "magic mushrooms."
- All of which has an estimated total value of over \$5.4 million.
- They also recovered loaded firearms, tasers, stun guns and knives from these locations.

The DA's office also has a paid internship for high school students. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the DA's office at (929) 232-9016.

Scott Sieber representing Senator John Liu

Their office has a Senior Appreciation Month Event on September 29th. The office is rescheduling their paper shredding event and will notify the community when more information becomes available. If the community has any questions or concerns, they can contact the office at (718) 765-6705.

Lois Marbach representing Council Member Linda Lee

Their office has different events in celebration of Senior Appreciation Month. They have an interactive dance party event taking place on September 19th. Their next Heath Fair is on October 8th.

Deputy Inspector Kevin Chan:

- There has been an increase in the number of car thefts, especially cars manufactured by Honda, Dodge Charger and Kia. He recommends placing a tracking device in your vehicle.
- There is an increase in commercial vehicles having tools stolen.
- Apartments on Wexford Terrace had four (4) apartment burglaries.
- Three (3) commercial robberies took place on September 1st on Union Turnpike right off Parsons Blvd., 168th Street and Main Street.
- The 107th Precinct is hosting a Car Wash on September 17th.
- The next Precinct Community Council Meeting is scheduled for September 19th in-person and virtually.

Chairperson Martha Taylor called for a roll call.

Salute to the Flag

Chairperson Taylor called for a motion to approve the minutes.

Approval of Minutes: Amy Tse made a motion to approve the minutes of Wednesday, June 14, 2023, seconded by Mary Maggio. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairperson, Martha Taylor’s Report

Just a reminder, our packets are now being emailed to all board members a few days before the meeting. This should give you enough time to read it ahead. The paper packets would only be given to board members who sign-up or request them by Tuesday before the meeting.

The Queens Community Boards follow the Queens Borough President’s Equal Employment Opportunity Policy. The policy is being distributed to all board members as per Lisa Atkins the EEO officer for the office of the Borough President Donovan Richards. We have until mid-October for all members to acknowledge receipt of this document. Please sign for yours, if you have not done so yet, before you leave.

Chairperson Taylor introduced Nora Daniels from the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ) to discuss the Mayflower Hotel/Housing Works.

Nora Daniels representing Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice

The Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice contracted with Housing Works to provide services and transitional housing for formally incarcerated individuals who stay at the Mayflower Hotel.

Chairperson Taylor addressed Michael Clarke from Housing Works

Martha Taylor

Mr. Clarke are you going to resume Community Advisory Board (CAB) meetings?

Michael Clarke representing Housing Works

Yes. We are waiting for approval from the Mayor's Office to give the agenda. We could start meeting again in another month.

Martha Taylor

There's a requirement under the city charter to have CAB meetings. Why do we have to wait for anyone to approve anything? It has to be done since it's required.

Michael Clarke representing Housing Works

When the CAB meetings resume, we hope to discuss the services that we are providing, the things we were able to change since we've been here, things that are on the agenda, and hear from the community regarding your priorities for that site.

District Manager's Report, September 2023

Mayor's Community Affairs Unit

Representative Kevin Morris stated that New York City has been working with NYS Attorney General Letitia James to eliminate "kettling" which has been deemed to be a violation of the residents' 1st Amendment rights. Kettling is when protesters are barricaded by the police department, rounded up and arrested during a protest.

In the past there was an issue with a beehive in a city tree. Parks claimed it was a Department of Health issue and DOH stated it was Parks. I contacted the Mayor's Office, and they are still trying to determine who is responsible.

Department of Transportation

Joseph Patti will no longer be our borough representative, as he has been reassigned. Cristy Vanterpool-Germain will be our new representative from the Department of Transportation. She formerly served as the DOT Representative for CBs 1, 2 and 5. She also worked previously for the Department of Design and Construction.

NYPD

We had several armed robberies in the precinct. It appears to be a trend in the city. No suspect has been arrested yet. They are investigating. The annual 107th Precinct Car Wash will be on September 17th at 158-40 Jewel Avenue. It is \$10 and you get a hot dog/hamburger with a drink. 107th Precinct's Trunk or Treat is back at Cunningham Park on October 22nd at 10 a.m. at the upper parking lot – near 193rd street and Aberdeen Road. Donations of candy and volunteers are welcome.

Be aware of "gypsy scams". The perpetrator would ask you to try on some jewelry for sale from a vehicle. As you try them on, they proceed to remove and steal your jewelry. For your safety, it is best to purchase jewelry from legitimate jewelry stores and not from unknown individuals on the street.

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Our representative Chae No left his position as of today to take a new position at the MTA. He was a very good resource; he will be missed. No one has been assigned to replace him yet.

NYC Commission on Human Rights

It is no longer required to be there in person to file complaints with the NYC Commission on Human Rights (CCHR). Complaints can be filed by calling their office at (212) 416-0197. They can also schedule a video conference for you with an attorney.

The agency is partnering with the Queens Borough Presidents Office for a Breaking Bread event on June 22nd at Borough Hall. RSVP is required. A flyer is forthcoming.

Aging NYC

Each precinct has an older adult liaison. This person is there to provide information and access to services for older adults. The name of the representative was not available. We'll keep you posted.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

There were 143 complaints received for CB8 in August. The top five complaints were:

- o 19 catch basins
- o 15 sewer back-ups
- o 12 noise
- o 10 leaks
- o 7 noise/barking dogs

Fire Department

October is fire prevention month. When you change the time on your clock, please also change your batteries. They also reiterated that the smoke house is only available for events being held by schools and camps.

Happy Birthday to Board Members Wendy Gennaro and Dr. Penny Stern who will celebrate their birthdays this month!



Marie Adam-Ovide

Martha Taylor, Chairperson announced Shubbhra Datta.

Shubbhra Datta of Borough President's Representative – The Queens Brough President has been going to two Community Boards every six (6) months and does events throughout the week. The last two (2) Community Board their office visited was CB 12 and CB 13. They did CB 1 and CB 2 last April and CB 3 and CB 4 over the summer. The events consisted of job fairs, bike giveaways, self-defense classes and more. They plan to have events for CB 8 in the coming future.

Their office has a few events such as the Queens Climate Expo on September 20th where they'll touch on Local Law 97 and have different organizations that are targeting different environmental issues. The Borough President has provided funding for the following locations in FY 23:

- Queens Museum has a phase 2 expansion for the improvements and creation of the Children's Museum Creativity and Play which is \$500,000.
- Hillcrest High School had bathroom upgrades.
- PS 117Q Joyce Keld/Briarwood School have \$200,00 towards STEM room.
- Queens College received \$1 million towards the renovation of Rathaus Hall
- Hollis Library received \$500,000 for their renovation.

- Samuel Field YM & YWHA, Inc. received funding of \$250,000 for their T Building – Initial outfitting.

Chairperson Taylor introduced special guest Sam Berger who won the special election for Assembly District 27. Assemblymember Berger replaced Assemblymember Daniel Rosenthal.

Sam Berger

Daniel Rosenthal’s office will be his office along with the staff. He’s being sworn in on Thursday, September 14th.

Public Hearing:
BSA Cal. No. 84-08-BZ

Steven Konigsberg, Zoning Committee Chair

Tonight’s Public Hearing is BSA Cal. No. 84-08-BZ to extend the terms of the special permit for a period of ten (10) years from October 28, 2018, to operate a gas service station at 67-20 Main Street aka 68-12 Main Street in Flushing. This is also to amend the resolution to allow a canopy. Is the applicate here? If so come and make your presentation.

Daniel Ashe representing Global Montello Group

Yes. I am here to make the presentation.

Steven Konigsberg, Zoning Committee Chair

Following the conclusion of the presentation, we will open for questions from the members of the board followed by comments from the public. No one signed-up to speak for the Public Hearing. As follows, there will be a motion, second discussion and another motion.

Daniel Ashe representing Global Montello Group

The gas station is on Main Street around 68th Avenue right by the cemetery. The gas station has been there since 1948. Being that it’s located in a residential area, it requires a variance to operate. The variance can be renewed every ten (10) years. We are looking to extend for another ten (10) years and add a canopy so that people can fill up their gas tanks in the rain. The landscaping and gas pumps will remain the same. There are no other changes that are being made to the station.

Zoning Committee Chair Steve Konigsberg opened the floor to board members for questions.

Maria Deinnocentiis

Why did you wait five (5) years to extend the permit when it was supposed to be renewed on October 28, 2018?

Daniel Ashe representing Global Montello Group

The station has changed operators. They didn’t know that they had to renew until 2020 when the new owner took over. Once COVID-19 took place and they were redesigning the look of the station, a lot of time went by.

Jesse Rosenbaum

Is this the gas station on the east side of Main Street?

Daniel Ashe representing Global Montello Group

The station is right next to Seasons Grocery store.

Edward Chung

Are there any outstanding violations?

Daniel Ashe representing Global Montello Group

No. The site has no DOB violations, no DEP violations, no spills, no fire department issues. It's a clean site.

Steven Konigsberg, Zoning Committee Chair

Can you speak on the canopy lighting? There's a commercial strip on one side, cemetery on the other side and some private houses towards the back. There's also a wide line on Main Street. How will the lighting impact the neighbors?

Daniel Ashe representing Global Montello Group

There are lights on the premise without the canopy. Those lights will come down and the canopy lights will go up. The lights are far enough away from the residential area.

Steven Konigsberg, Zoning Committee Chair

Are the sidewalks in good condition?

Daniel Ashe representing Global Montello Group

The sidewalks look okay. If the board notices anything, you can notify us.

Zoning Committee Chair Steve Konigsberg called for a motion to support the extension of the permit and allow a canopy.

Mary Maggio made a motion in support of the extension of the special permit and allow a canopy, seconded by Michael Hannibal.

Vote:

Heather Bennett-Idels, Robert H. Block, Edward Chung, Solomon Davydov, Maria Deinnocentiis, Allen Eisenstein, James Gallagher Jr., John Gebhard, Wendy Gennaro, Ahsan Habib, Michael Hannibal, Mohammed "Delwar" Islam, Steven Konigsberg, Elke Maerz, Mary Maggio, Jennifer Martin, Dilip Nath, Alan Ong, Tammy Osherov, Hersch Parekh, Tobias Paris, Mohammad Rahman, Jesse Rosenbaum, Jenna Citron Schwab, Seymour Schwartz, Dr. Penny M. Stern, Martha Taylor, Mohammed Tohin, Amy Tse, Rabbi Mayer Waxman, and Jacob Weinberg. The vote passed unanimously.

Health Minute with Dr. Stern

The grey tsunami is a catastrophic term that an organization called the National Center to Reframe Aging led by Gerontological Society of America created to describe the growing population of older people. This is a view in which they are trying to change. Ageism harms us all because it shapes the way we think about ourselves and others. Instead of relying on old terms like "aging dependents" or "elderly" or "seniors", try using more neutral terms like "older people". They suggest that aging be viewed as a dynamic process rather than a 'struggle' or 'fight' or 'battle' which are conflict-oriented words used by many to describe the aging experience. Let's commit to finding creative solutions to ensure we can thrive as we age.

Motion to adjourn meeting was made by Mary Maggio and seconded by Seymour Schwartz at 8:37 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Soleil Griffin CB8 Staff
September 15, 2023*