

Russell Squire  
Chair

Will Brightbill  
District Manager



505 Park Avenue, Suite 620  
New York, N.Y. 10022-1106  
(212) 758-4340  
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)  
www.cb8m.com – Website  
info@cb8m.com – E-Mail

**The City of New York**  
**Community Board 8 Manhattan**  
**Voting Reform Task Force**  
*Thursday, January 26, 2023 - 6:30 PM*  
*Conducted remotely on Zoom*

*Please note: The resolutions contained in the committee minutes are recommendations submitted by the committee co-chairs to the Community Board. At the monthly full board meeting, the resolutions are discussed and voted upon by all members of Community Board 8 Manhattan.*

**Minutes**

**Resolutions for Approval**

**Item 1: Review NY Independent Redistricting Commission's proposed NY Assembly Map**

**Board Members Present:** Michele Birnbaum, Saundra I. Coleman, Ed Hartzog, Addeson Lehv, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Rita Popper, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider, Russell Squire, and Sharon Weiner.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30.

**Item 1: Review NY Independent Redistricting Commission's NY Assembly Redistricting MAP**

Weiner stated that the purpose of the meeting was to strategize and organize opposition to the NY Independent Redistricting Commission (the Commission) proposed new Assembly District boundary lines for the 73<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District and 76<sup>th</sup> Assembly District. The proposed plan moved approximately 60 blocks between East 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and East 61<sup>st</sup> Street east of Second Ave. and Roosevelt Island to the 36<sup>th</sup> Assembly District based in Astoria, Queens. Weiner pointed out that the proposed plan was very similar to the proposed redistricting plan for City Council Districts proposed by the NYC Districting Commission which had been recently rejected.

Weiner gave some background on why the Assembly maps were being redrawn. The Assembly maps drawn earlier this year by State Lawmakers had been allowed to stand for the 2022 election instead of being redrawn by a court appointed Special Master. But in subsequent legal challenges, State judges ruled that the Assembly maps were invalid and would have to be revised by early 2023.

Assemblymember Rebecca Seawright of the 76<sup>th</sup> Assembly District who represents the east side of Manhattan and Roosevelt Island addressed the meeting. She gave an overview of the process, and she expressed the hope that the Assembly Republicans and Democrats would be able to reach an agreement as to the new boundary lines. This would avoid a court battle and the appointment of a Special Master. Seawright said she had an appointment with the Assembly Speaker to strongly state her request to keep Roosevelt Island in the 76<sup>th</sup> Assembly District.

Weiner reported she had also invited Assembly Member Bores of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District to attend but he had a previous commitment and could not attend. Bores did contact Weiner to see how the meeting went.

Several speakers spoke to the absurdity of proposed new Assembly district boundaries which had just been rejected for City Council District boundaries.

Many groups and Community Boards were present at this organizing meeting including Judy Schneider of the East 60's Neighborhood Association, Chris Collins of the Sutton Place neighborhood, Sharon Pope-Marshall of Civitas, Letty Simon of CB6 (which covers Sutton Place) and Danielle Brecker of CB2 of Queens.

Ms. Brecker reported that with this proposed plan CB-2 would have 5 Assembly Districts within its boundaries. She expressed her concern over the misconception that would occur if the Manhattan based hospitals were moved to a Queens Assembly District. This would make it appear that there were numerous hospitals in the 36AD in Queens when in reality there was only one.

Sharon Pope-Marshall, wearing her Civitas hat, announced that Civitas had taken the position that Roosevelt Island should remain in Manhattan. She pointed out that with the eastern side of Manhattan and Roosevelt Island added to the Queens based district the per capita income would increase by \$40,000 per person which would be a disadvantage to the residents of Queens in qualifying for state and federal funds.

As the same arguments applies to CB8's opposition to the Assembly redistricting as to the City Council redistricting, Pope-Marshall made a motion to repurpose the original CB8 resolution to use in opposition to the proposed Assembly redistricting. It was seconded by Weiner.

Birnbaum objected to the motion as she wanted to know the wording of the resolution.

Pope-Marshall withdrew her resolution. Weiner then read CB8's City Council resolution making appropriate revisions i.e. NYC Districting Commission to NY Independent Redistricting Commission. Birnbaum made a motion to approve the resolution and seconded by Weiner. Weiner called for a vote to be taken.

CB8 will send the following resolution to the New York Independent Redistricting Commission expressing its opposition to the Commission's proposed boundary lines for 73<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District and 76<sup>th</sup> Assembly District moving parts of the East Side of Manhattan and Roosevelt Island to 36<sup>th</sup> Assembly District Queens based assembly districts.

**WHEREAS**, the New York Independent Redistricting Commission (the "Commission") is in the process of redrawing Assembly district boundaries to reflect population and demographic changes; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission is seeking public input into the redistricting process from different stakeholders which includes Community Boards; and

**WHEREAS**, Assembly District 73 and Assembly District 76 overlap with the boundaries of Community Board 8 Manhattan; and

**WHEREAS**, CB8M's Voting Reform Task Force has reviewed the new boundary lines proposed by the Commission for 73<sup>rd</sup> and 76<sup>th</sup> Assembly Districts and has concluded that the proposed 73<sup>rd</sup> and 76<sup>th</sup> Assembly Districts boundary lines do not comport with the Commission's own redistricting criteria; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission's proposal to add a portion of Manhattan and all of Roosevelt Island to a Queens based Assembly District does not conform to the requirements of the State Constitution. Such requirements include:

- Voting rights protections where districts cannot deny or abridge racial minority voting groups;
- An equal population standard where districts must contain equal numbers of people (one- person, one-vote);
- Requirements that all districts consist of contiguous territory and be as compact in form as practicable;
- A prohibition on drawing districts that discourage competition or that favor or disfavor incumbents or partisan candidates; and

- A requirement to consider maintaining the cores of existing districts or pre-existing political subdivisions and to consider “communities of interest”; and

**WHEREAS**, the Commission proposes that thousands Manhattan Island residents and 12,000 Roosevelt Island residents be moved to 36<sup>th</sup> Assembly District where these residents will not receive the representation, attention and funding to which they are entitled due to their small percentage of the total 36<sup>th</sup> Assembly District population; and

**WHEREAS**, CB8M understands that restoring the Manhattan areas currently drawn into the 36<sup>th</sup> Assembly District into the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 76<sup>th</sup> Assembly districts will likely require the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 76<sup>th</sup> Assembly Districts to be larger than average and to exceed the re-districting ideal population, which we are willing to accept in the interest of keeping those areas in Manhattan districts; and

**WHEREAS**, the eastern portion of the East Side and Roosevelt Island have major differences with 36<sup>th</sup> Assembly District such that the proposed combination may result in a significant diminution of services to, amongst others, senior citizens and people with disabilities which populate a large share of those areas; and

**WHEREAS**, the practical difficulties of having a two Borough Queens-Manhattan district cannot be ignored; and

**WHEREAS**, the areas being proposed to be moved to the 36<sup>th</sup> Assembly District contain numerous parks and green acres, which are critical open spaces for the neighborhood and which would be separated from most of the neighborhood residents who use them; and represented by an assembly member with no long term connection to the residents and their prized parkland and open spaces, and

**WHEREAS**, there are several ongoing issues affecting the East Side, including congestion pricing and the historical zoning in the neighborhood, and residents and the community would be disserved by having a part of their community of interest combined with other neighborhoods in a different borough that do not share these issues; and

**WHEREAS**, Roosevelt Island was created to be part of Manhattan and historically has always been considered and treated as part of the Borough of Manhattan and it should remain in 76<sup>th</sup> Assembly District; and

**WHEREAS**, the only public elementary and middle school on Roosevelt Island, PS/IS 217, a Manhattan District 2 school, can only cater to 600 out of several thousand local children – with only 15 seats for 3k and approximately 34 seats for 2k, 6th , 7th and 8th graders – and with the rest of the public school children attending District 2 schools in the 76th Assembly District – the proposed map fails to give Roosevelt Island’s children equal representation in the Assembly and separates an important community of interest; and

**WHEREAS**, self-identity is very important. Historically, all residents of the East Side and Roosevelt Island have considered themselves to be Manhattanites. They have bought their residences on Roosevelt Island with the expectation that they would be represented by a Manhattan Assembly Member who would be locally accessible, would give their complaints and concerns priority and provide the necessary municipal services; and

**WHEREAS**, two-borough districts that have existed in the past have been comprised of neighborhoods that are contiguous, have similar demographics, share similar public transportation, public education and other services, while the Manhattan and Queens areas of the proposed 36<sup>th</sup> Assembly District do not have these similarities.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that Community Board 8 **disapproves** of the Commission’s proposed redistricting map which removes a large area of the easterly side of the East Side and Roosevelt Island to a Queens-based City Assembly District, a similar proposal which was just recently rejected by the New York City Districting Commission Redistricting City Council Districts, and strongly urges that these areas remain in Manhattan- based Assembly Districts.

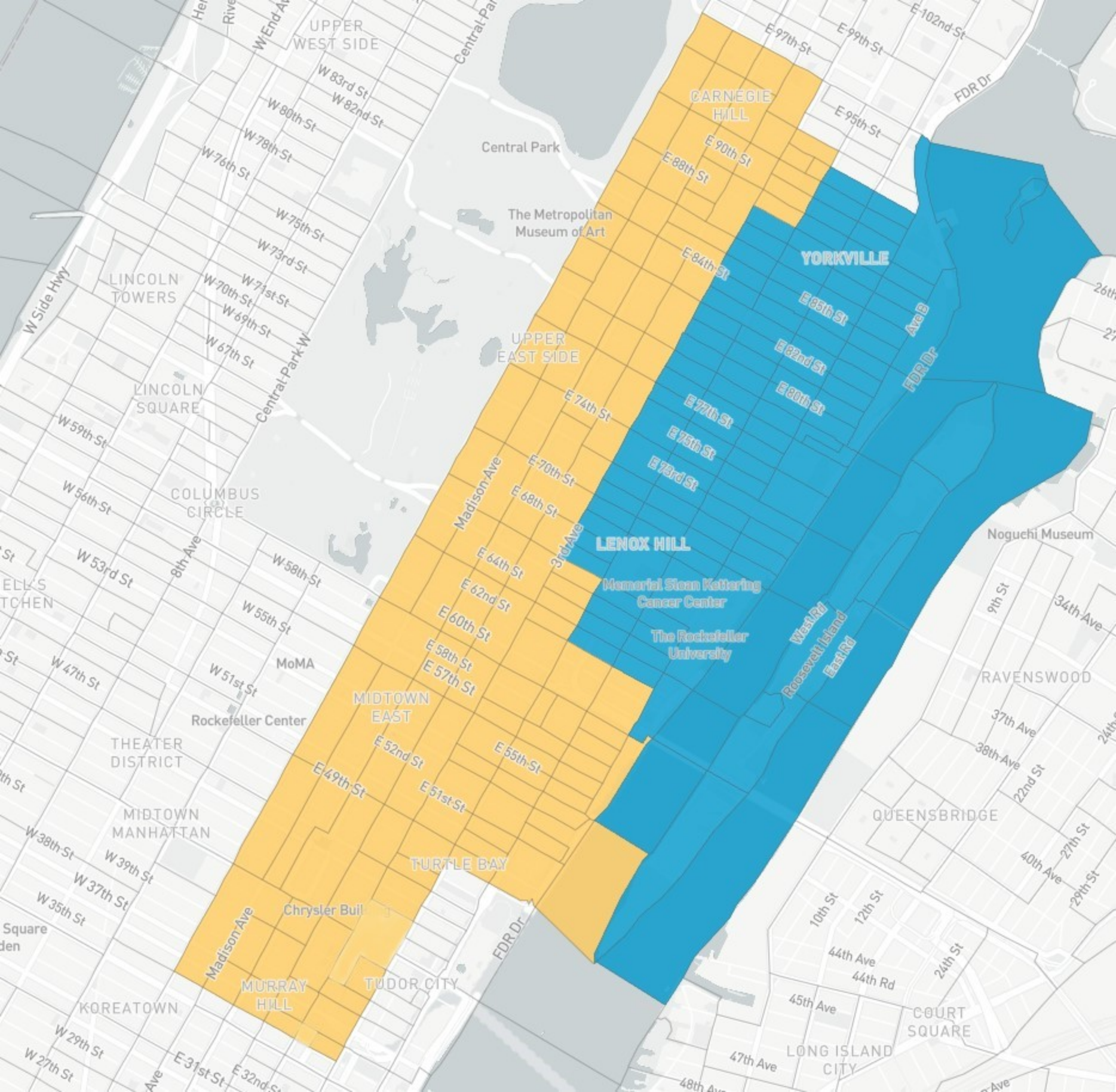
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, CB8M proposes the enclosed map of the 73rd and 76th Assembly Districts, which are substantially similar to the 2022 district maps, except that the 73rd Assembly District is proposed to extend further North to take in more of Carnegie Hill to join that area with the larger Upper East Side neighborhood of which it has historically been a part.

**YES (UNANIMOUS) 10:** Michele Birnbaum, Saundra I. Coleman, Ed Hartzog, Addeson Lehy, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Rita Popper, Barbara Rudder, Judy Schneider, Russell Squire, and Sharon Weiner.

The discussion then turned to whether CB8 needed to propose its own boundary line like it did for the City Council Redistricting. Unfortunately, Will did not feel qualified to attempt this new map. Squire stated he was looking at the software to do so but felt we should find out if either Seawright or Bores have come up with own proposed district boundaries. Squire will speak to the Assembly Members to see if that is the case. If so, we will add their proposed boundary line to our resolution as an additional be it resolved clause.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 PM.

*Anthony Cohn and Sharon Weiner, Co-Chairs*



UPPER WEST SIDE

CARNEGIE HILL

YORKVILLE

Central Park

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

UPPER EAST SIDE

LENOX HILL

Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

The Rockefeller University

MIDTOWN EAST

TURTLE BAY

MURRAY HILL

TUDOR CITY

Noguchi Museum

RAVENSWOOD

QUEENSBRIDGE

COURT SQUARE

LONG ISLAND CITY

W Side Hwy

W 56th St

W 47th St

W 38th St

W 29th St

COLUMBUS CIRCLE

MoMA

Rockefeller Center

MIDTOWN MANHATTAN

KOREATOWN

Madison Ave

E 64th St

E 60th St

E 52nd St

Chrysler Buil

E 31st St

E 70th St

E 68th St

E 62nd St

E 58th St

E 51st St

FDR Dr

E 74th St

E 70th St

E 68th St

E 60th St

E 55th St

3rd Ave

E 32nd St

E 84th St

E 82nd St

E 80th St

E 77th St

E 75th St

E 73rd St

E 90th St

E 88th St

E 84th St

E 82nd St

E 80th St

E 77th St

E 75th St

E 90th St

E 90th St

E 88th St

E 84th St

E 82nd St

E 80th St

E 77th St

E 90th St

E 95th St

E 93rd St

E 91st St

E 89th St

E 87th St

E 85th St

E 95th St

E 97th St

E 95th St

E 93rd St

E 91st St

E 89th St

E 87th St

E 97th St

E 99th St

E 97th St

E 95th St

E 93rd St

E 91st St

E 89th St

E 99th St

E 102nd St

E 100th St

E 98th St

E 96th St

E 94th St

E 92nd St

E 102nd St

FDR Dr

Ave B

West Rd

Roosevelt Island

East Rd

10th St

12th St

9th St

34th Ave

37th Ave

38th Ave

22nd St

40th Ave

27th St

26th St

27th St

24th St

24th St

27th St

29th St

7 Ave