

**Community Board No. 8  
St. Gregory's Roman Catholic Church  
991 St. John's Place  
Brooklyn, NY 11216**

**September 10, 2009**

Mr. Matthews called the Public Hearing to order at 7:05 PM. The following items were presented:

**Community Board No. 8 District Needs for the Capital and Expense Budget for Fiscal Year 2011**

The Capital and Expense Budget was distributed to members and residents. Ms. Albritton and Mr. Witherwax alternately read the requests submitted by the Board.

Ms. Granville made a motion that the Capital and Expense Budget Requests for District 8 be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget and the agencies for FY 2011. The motion was seconded by Mr. Staton and passed with a final tally of 24 in favor, 0 opposed, with 0 abstentions.

**FRESH Zoning for Neighborhood Grocery Stores (Application #N 090412ZRY).**

Mr. Barry Dinerstein of the Dept. of City Planning reported that the FRESH Zoning Text Amendment is a zoning initiative designed to provide zoning incentives to get more grocery stores into the community. If such an application comes up, the applicant would be required to meet before the community board for approval. There are three different and separate zoning incentives:

1. If a developer agrees to put a grocery store in a new building, he/she would be able to get zoning compromises if they maintain the grocery store.
2. Some of the high parking restrictions that work as a deterrent have been removed from the zoning text.
3. The total amount of square footage for grocery stores will be increased without having to seek a variance.

Also, existing stores will have the ability to expand and apply for financial incentives.

A community resident asked what happens to existing stores that were unable to benefit from these changes and was informed that the amendments include financial assistance to upgrade and buy new energy efficient equipment to attract new and more customers.

Ms. Wedderburn asked on what basis was Prospect Heights (the area west of Washington Avenue) excluded from the plan, and why only certain portions of the City were targeted. She was informed that Prospect Heights is not an underdeveloped area and the zoning text amendment specifically targets underdeveloped areas. She also queried what happens if a particular grocery store goes out of business after the zoning amendments for a particular lot have been implemented. She was informed that the landlord/owner of the property would be required to rent the space to a new grocery operation. If he or she is unable to do so, he must be able to show cause that he tried to get a new grocery tenant and was unsuccessful.

Ms. Oton inquired as to whether or not there was any way to supersede community board approval and was informed that any store that chooses to accept the zoning incentives must come before the board. Another resident asked about job incentives and was informed that there are no job incentives or community job requirements unless the applicant seeks City funding.

A resident asked what happens to additional space if only a certain number of square feet can be used for the grocery store; she was informed that any additional space will be subject to the underlying zoning. Mr. Dinerstein reiterated that the program is intended and targeted toward smaller, neighborhood grocery stores. A minimum of 30,000 square feet must be retained for fresh produce and groceries. Another resident asked if the potential exists for this zoning to be abused

by sprawl-mart type shopping centers that sell fresh produce. She was informed that the square footage requirement for such sprawl-marts is vastly larger than the space allotted under this program.

The full Board voted with a final tally of 24 in favor, 1 opposed, with 3 abstentions to support Application #N 090412ZRY.

Mr. Matthews thanked Mr. Dinerstein for patiently answering all questions and asked Councilwoman James to swear in the new officers of Community Board 8:

Nizjoni Granville, Chairperson  
Shalawn Langhorne, First Vice Chair  
Robert Witherwax, Second Vice Chair  
Atim Oton, Third Vice Chair  
Akosua Albritton, Secretary  
Ede Fox, Treasurer  
Meredith Staton, Sergeant at Arms  
Robert Matthews, Chairperson Emeritus

Mr. Matthews closed the public hearing at 7:45 PM.

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**Members Present**

Kim Albert  
Akosua Albritton  
Glinda Andrews  
Edo Banach  
Julia Boyd  
Helen Coley  
Diana Foster  
Fred Frazier  
Holly Fuchs  
Nizjoni Granville  
Jesse Hamilton  
Princess James  
Xeerxeema Jordan  
Shalawn Langhorne  
Robert Matthews  
Kwasi Mensah  
Adelaide Miller  
Frederick Monderson  
Atim Oton  
Mary Reed  
Marlene Saunders  
Meredith Staton  
William Suggs  
Audrey Taitt-Hall  
Gregory Todd  
Sharon Wedderburn  
Douglas Williams  
Robert Witherwax  
Vilma Zuniga

**Elected Official's Representatives**

Arna Lipkind, Councilwoman Mealy  
Jervonne Singletary, Assemblyman Camara  
Alfred Chiodo, Councilwoman James  
Gregory Stewart, Assemblyman Boyland

**Members Absent/Excused**

Viola Bing  
Gail Branch-Muhammad  
Flize Bryan  
Teri Coaxum  
Renaye Cuyler  
Ede Fox  
Doris Heriveaux  
Shirley Lee  
Marie Louis  
Priscilla Maddox  
Clarine Miller  
Anyika Nance  
Hasoni Pratts  
Robert Puca  
Tara Lai Quinlan  
Patricia Scantlebury  
David Schatzmaker  
Launa Thomas-Bullock  
Yves Vilus

**Elected Officials Present**

Councilwoman Letitia James  
District Leader Ola Alabi  
District Leader Jesse Hamilton

**Liaisons Present**

Carolyn Sanders-James, Mayor's Office  
Ann Marie Adamson, BP's Office  
Ben Columbo, Dept. of Buildings

**CB 8 Staff**

Michelle George  
Julia Neale

Ms. Granville welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the new Fiscal Year.

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES** – The minutes of the last meeting were unanimously accepted as written.

**CORRESPONDANCE** – CB 8 newsletter and other information was distributed.

**BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S OFFICE** – Ms. Anne Marie Adamson

Ms. Adamson congratulated the newly sworn in Executive Board and welcomed the newly appointed members as well. She presented a proclamation from Borough President Markowitz to Mr. Matthews in recognition of his hard work and many years of service both as a member and as Chairperson for 16 years.

Councilwoman James stated that Mr. Matthews was chair for an extremely long time prior to her being elected to the City Council. He always speaks his mind, but does so in an effective and fair manner. She said it was an honor to work with him then, and it will be an honor to continue working with him as Chair Emeritus and working with the new officers of the Board.

Mr. Matthews thanked Ms. Adamson and Councilwoman James for their kind and heartfelt words and stated that he loves the City of New York and loves Community Board 8. He will be with the Board to the end, and will continue to support Ms. Granville and Board 8 in their endeavors. While he may no longer be the active Chairperson, he is still with the Board, and will continue to serve it as a functional member in good standing.

Ms. Granville thanked Ms. Adamson and Councilwoman James for their kind words toward Mr. Matthews and asked for a report from the following committees:

**Economic Development** – Ms. Priscilla Maddox, Chair; Ms. Atim Oton, Co-Chair

The Economic Development Committee met on Tuesday, September 8, 2009 at CNR. The committee discussed the following new liquor license application:

The proprietor of Kelso Restaurant, Inc. made a favorable presentation for the establishment located at 648 Franklin Avenue (between Bergen Street and St. Marks Avenue). Kelso will operate Sundays thru Thursdays from 11:30 AM to 8:30 PM and Fridays and Saturdays from 11:30 AM to 10:30 PM and will serve beer and wine. There will be approximately 7 employees with video cameras providing security.

Officers from the 77<sup>th</sup> Precinct were present to advise the committee and offered no police objection to the application. As a result, full board supported the committee’s recommendation to support the application with a final vote tally of 22 in favor, 2 opposed, with 1 abstention.

In addition, the committee also discussed the following renewal liquor license applications:

1. Heights Coffee, 335 Flatbush Avenue (7<sup>th</sup> Avenue/Park Place)
2. Winners Delight, 171 Utica Avenue (Prospect/Park Places)
3. Abigail Café and Wine Bar, 807 Classon Avenue (corner St. John’s Place)
4. World Class People Grocery-Deli, 663 Franklin Avenue (corner St. Marks Avenue)
5. Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway (corner Washington Avenue)
6. Le Gamin Café, 556 Vanderbilt Avenue (Dean/Bergen Streets)
7. Barette, 601 Vanderbilt Avenue (corner Bergen Street)

Ms. Taitt-Hall inquired as to whether or not Barette removed the striptease from the restaurant and was informed by the owner that the location is being converted into a home-style family restaurant that will cater to families and wholesome fun. In addition, the name will change from Barette to Pequeñas.

There were no police objections to either of the above applications and the full Board voted to support the renewals with a final tally of 25 in favor, 2 opposed, with 0 abstentions.

The next meeting of the Economic Development Committee will be on Tuesday, October 6, 2009 at 6:30 PM, at CNR, located at 727 Classon Avenue. All are invited to attend.

### **Housing/ULURP**

The Housing Committee met on September 4, 2009, at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. The Committee heard a presentation from Mr. Michael Zeh from Standard Architects who gave details about plans to make changes to the structure of 390 Park Place, located between Underhill and Washington Avenues, in what has recently been designated the Landmark District of Prospect Heights. The plan includes the removal of an existing bay window in the rear, along with a steel deck, and the addition of two stories and a bay window in the rear yard with 214 square feet on the basement level and 158 square feet on the first floor.

The owner of 390 Park Place, Mr. Ben Michaels, also attended, along with two of his neighbors, including one of the owners of the building next door at 392 Park Place. During the discussion that followed, the owner of 392 said that she had no opposition to the plan. Mr. Michaels told the Committee that he has spoken to the Block Association about his plans and to the Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development. He is scheduled to meet with PHNDC on Tuesday, September 8. Mr. Zeh stated that the two of them had not been able to reach the neighbors at 388 Park Place. Before the Board will approve the plans for 390, we must see proof that all of Mr. Michael's neighbors have been notified about the changes he intends to make. Ms. Tyus suggested that he send two letters to the property owners of 388 Park Place, one by certified mail with return receipt requested, and one by regular mail, with a certificated of mailing. The owner assured the Committee that he would have the proof of notification prior to the Board meeting on September 10.

In order for the project to move forward, the Landmarks Commission requires a letter of support from Community Board 8. The Housing Committee voted in favor of issuing the letter of support, and the full Board unanimously supported the committee's recommendation with 26 members present.

In addition, Ms. Granville also informed the Board of a meeting held at Borough Hall on Wednesday, September 3, 2009, regarding the Bedford-Atlantic Armory. Representatives from CHRM, CHNA, and Community Board 8 met with staff from the Brooklyn Borough President's office, who is presently in the process of setting up a meeting with Commissioner Hess of the Dept. of Homeless Services.

Sandi Taggart of CHRM made it clear that residents are opposed to an intake center in Brooklyn. Ms. Ann-Marie Adamson stated that while the Borough President is also opposed to an intake center, realistic plan to provide necessary services for the current residents of the shelter is also necessary. She suggested developing a plan that will help the community and DHS to co-exist peacefully rather than unrealistically expecting the shelter to shut down in entirety. These necessary services would include GED classes, literacy programs, job search and independent living skills. The provision of these services would mean that instead of the homeless being turned out every day at 8:00 AM to roam the neighborhood, there would be reasons for them to remain within the shelter during most of the day in a variety of service related programs.

Ms. Taggart was not in favor of enrichment services because she believed that acceptance of such programs or even making such a suggestion would weaken the community's strong position against an intake center at the Atlantic Avenue Men's Assessment Shelter/Bedford Armory. She also reminded us that our elected officials, State Senator Adams, State Assemblyman Camara, and State Assemblyman Jeffries, have applied pressure on the state level to keep the intake center out of District 8. Ms. Adamson stressed that it is essential to create a facility that works for the community, and that we need to begin any meeting with DHS with the unsuitableness of the Armory for its present use and the negative impact which that use has had on the community. Committee members expressed concern that these programs should have been offered from the beginning. Ms. Taggart would like a public guarantee that there will be no public intake center for the homeless in Brooklyn before we consider asking for "enriched services". Ms. Taggart doesn't want the community's advocacy for increased services for the homeless at the Armory to be perceived as our consent to increase the number of residents. Ms. Tyus stated that a coalition of mayoral agencies is needed to resolve the problem of enriched services, namely HPD and HRA along with DHS.

Mr. Staton attacked the ethics and morals of those that believe it is human to barter with people's lives by offering to bring services for the intake center that should already be present at the facility. His outrage was echoed by many in the audience.

The next meeting of the Housing/ULURP Committee will be Thursday, October 01, 2009 at 6:30 PM at CNR, located at 727 Classon Avenue. All are invited to attend.

**Police** – Ms. Shalawn Langhorne, Chair

Ms. Langhorne thanked everyone on the committee that participated in the gang forum in June for 5<sup>th</sup> thru 8<sup>th</sup> graders. She also thanked everyone that attended the forum and all other forums hosted by the committee. The goal of the Police committee is to help build a strong relationship with the police department and especially officers of the 77<sup>th</sup> Precinct. Anyone concerned about police issues should attend committee meetings to express their concerns and have issues addressed.

The Police Committee meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month at the 77<sup>th</sup> Precinct, located at 127 Utica Avenue. The next meeting will be September 21<sup>st</sup>, and all are invited and welcomed to attend.

**Aging/Health and Human Services** – Ms. Marlene Saunders, Chair

The Aging/Health and Human Services Committee did not meet for the month of September due to the holiday. The next meeting will be Monday, October 5, 2009 at 5:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, which is located at 727 Classon Avenue.

Ms. Saunders announced that September is substance abuse treatment month. As a result, and also to show solidarity, there will be a march across the Brooklyn Bridge this Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup> beginning at 8:30 AM. Substance abuse is a very deadly affliction, and we all have an obligation to help our loved ones with a substance abuse problem, seek the treatment they need.

**Parks** – Ms. Glinda Andrews, Chair; Mr. Robert Witherwax, Co-Chair

The Parks Committee met on Tuesday, September 1, 2009 at the St. John's Recreation Center. Ms. Andrews announced that Borough President Markowitz has allocated funding to begin the construction of a comfort station at St. John's Park. Councilman Al Vann allocated funds for Phase 2 of the project over the summer, which included a portion of the comfort station. Now that all funds have been received, construction should begin shortly and will take up to 2 years to complete.

Mr. Witherwax encouraged anyone with an interest in their local park or playground to participate in the "Friends of Parks" outreach efforts. The "Friends of Parks" group assists in maintaining the care of our local parks and playgrounds as well as assisting in fundraising events. There is a severe litter problem in many of our parks and playgrounds, and we must all play our role in being vigilant about not littering and also taking care of our parks and playgrounds.

Ms. Andrews also thanked everyone for attending the Community Awareness Day event that occurred this past June at St. John's Recreation Center. Based upon the success of the event, it will continue yearly on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in June. The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 6, 2009 at 6 PM at the St. John's Recreation Center, located at 1251 Prospect Place, Brooklyn. All are invited and encouraged to attend.

**Environment/Sanitation** – Ms. Ede Fox, Chair; Ms. Helen Coley, Co-Chair

Ms. Coley announced that the Environment/Sanitation committee meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month. The next meeting will be Tuesday, September 15, 2009 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, which is located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn, NY, at 7 PM. All are invited to attend.

**Youth and Family Services** – Ms. Akosua Albritton, Chair

The Youth and Family Committee met on Wednesday, September 2, 2009 at CNR, located at 727 Classon Avenue. The committee discussed the upcoming event for men that will take place in December 2009. She implored men to attend the meetings to address their concerns and be a part of the planning for the event. It is difficult for women to plan and event that will cater to men and attempt to address their needs, and subsequently, the input of men is direly needed.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 7, 2009 at CNR at 6:30 PM. All, especially men, are encouraged and invited to attend.

**Fire/Safety** – Mr. Douglas Williams, Chair

The Fire/Safety Committee met on Tuesday, September 8, 2009 at the Haitian American Day Care Center. Mr. Williams announced that this week is fire prevention week and next month is fire safety month. We must all be diligent in our efforts to prevent fires because the majority of them occur because of human negligence. Change the batteries in your smoke detectors every 6 months as required, make sure your smoke detectors are functional, avoid haphazard habits such as smoking while lying down, leaving candles near combustible materials, etc.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 6, 2009 at the Haitian American Day Care Center, which is located at 1491 Bedford Avenue, at 7 PM. All are invited to attend.

**Transportation** – Dr. Fred Monderson, Chair

Dr. Monderson provided a recap of the summer's street co-namings and announced that there are 2 additional co-namings to be held. One is for Carlos Lezama on September 18<sup>th</sup> at 11 Am at the corner of Brooklyn Avenue and St. John's Place, and for Benny Lyde on Saturday, September 19<sup>th</sup> at 1 PM at the corner of Lincoln Place and Brooklyn Avenue. He then relinquished the remainder of his speaking time to Mrs. Robin Lyde.

Mrs. Lyde stated that of the co-namings we held, 2 of the honorees lost their lives to violence. We as a community need to step up to make sure that unnecessary violence is eliminated from our streets and communities. It is unfortunate that it took the death of her son to make her come to that realization and desire to be more active in the community. Regardless of the circumstances, she stated that she is proud to see the community come together the way it has, to fight for things residents feel they need, and to empower themselves through action. The battle against violence is just beginning, and we all have a role to play in combating it.

**Education** – Ms. Sharon Wedderburn, Chair

Ms. Wedderburn announced that the NY Association of Black Journalists has an initiative for high school students interested in a career in journalism. For more information on the program, contact the NY Association of Black Journalists at [info@firsttakenyc.com](mailto:info@firsttakenyc.com).

The next meeting of the Education Committee will be on Wednesday, September 16<sup>th</sup> in the cafeteria of the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue, at 7 PM. All are invited to attend.

Ms. Granville thanked the committee chairpersons for their reports and asked Ms. Green from the Weeksville Society Heritage Center for an update on the museum construction.

**Weeksville Society Heritage Center** – Ms. Pamela Green, Director

Ms. Green extended her appreciation to Mr. Matthews for his support over the years. She announced that construction has begun on the museum portion of the Weeksville capital reconstruction project; if you drive past the center, you will notice that there is scaffolding around the lot where the museum will be erected.

The museum will be a 2-story building on the corner of Buffalo and St. Marks Avenues. She presented graphic images of the L-shaped building with a capacity of 19,000 square feet. The building will allow the Heritage Center to bring all staff

to the center rather than having staff members dispersed throughout different parts of Brooklyn. There will be a glass tube connecting the multi-cultural center and the theater, which will have a capacity of 200 seats. An exhibition gallery will be present and the area will be re-landscaped to reflect 19<sup>th</sup> century African American landscaping. Although the compound will be fenced, it will be an inviting fence that will hopefully encourage visitors. The completion goal is June 2011.

Although the funding for the project has been allocated, the Heritage Center is stumbling in accruing operational funds. There is a grass roots campaign to raise \$5 million by the time the building opens.

Ms. Green also informed those present that there is a farmers market every Saturday from 9 AM to 2 PM, consisting of produce either grown in the garden or by upstate and local farmers. More often than not, the produce is organic. Anyone interested in eating healthy should attend the market and support local business.

Ms. Granville thanked Ms. Green for her report and opened the floor for public comments.

### **Public Comments**

**Arna Lipkind** from Councilwoman Mealy's office distributed flyers regarding the Environmental Control Board's ticketing issues and standards. She also announced that the Councilwoman is hosting a street fair on Sunday, September 13, 2009 from 10 AM to 5PM on Utica Avenue between Union and President Streets. All are invited to attend.

**Carolyn Sanders-James** of the Mayor's Office/Community Assistance Unit announced that 23 new schools have opened in September. Also, there will be a house tour sponsored by the Crown Heights North Association from 10 AM to 5 PM, on Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>. The tour will convene at St. Gregory's Roman Catholic Church.

Ms. Granville thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 9:30 PM. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 8, 2009 at Berean Missionary Baptist Church, which is located at 1641 Bergen Street (between Utica and Rochester Avenues) at 7 PM.

### **Guests**

Phyllis Grannum	Vincent Haynes
Lamont Quisar	Belinda Cooper
Saquan Jones	Roy Simmonds
K. Darpoh	Ja'Mella God-Allah
Edu Hermelyn	Sarah Pollack
Richard Burbridge	Janice Bennett
Debbie Bowen-Spinelli	LaCheryl James
Desmond Atkins	Adrian Straker
Audrey Andrews	Yahya Rajo
Shirley Mondesir	Andrea Phillips-Merriman
Ben Michaels	Sandy Taggart
Jack Mirkinson	Jacqueline Gilchrist
Maurice Golden	Hayden Hester
Veronica Parker	Kay Dunham
Anthony Taylor	Olivia Lyde
Jonathan Berman	Robin Lyde
Cinda Farmer	Abigail Hitchcock
Carole Rose	Adele Allen
Brian Mason	Denice Muckle
Nadia Whitty	Randy Binto
Lula Staton	Clive Campbell
Connie Pentony-Brown	Damon Holmes
Zaiah Martinez	