February 12, 2015

**Members Present**

Kim Albert  
Akosua Albritton  
Ginda Andrews  
Desmond Atkins  
LeeAnn Banks  
Princess Benn-James  
Julia Boyd  
Gail Branch-Muhammad  
Dr. Flize Bryan  
Helen Coley  
Dian Duke  
Phu Duong  
James Ellis  
Diana Foster  
Fred Frazier  
Nizjoni Granville  
Curtis Harris  
Phil Hawkins  
Jamell Henderson  
Xeerxeema Jordan  
Shalwan Langhorne  
Tarves Lord  
Robert Matthews  
Kwasi Mensah  
Adelaide Miller  
Dr. Fred Monderson  
Atim Oton  
Robert Puca  
Meredith Staton  
Audrey Taitt-Hall  
Greg Todd  
Ethel Tyus  
Sheryl Vassell  
Gib Veconi  
Yves Vilus  
Sharon Wedderburn  
Rohon Williams  
Robert Witherwax  
Deborah Young  
Vilma Zuniga

**Members Absent/Excused**

Wayne Bailey  
Adem Bunkeddeko  
Mary Reed  
Patricia Scantlebury  
Stacey Sheffey  
Irsa Weatherspoon  
Greg Yerman

**Elected Officials Present**

Genine Edwards, Civil Court Judge  
Michael Gerstein, Criminal Court Judge

**Elected Official Representatives**

Kristia Beaubrun, Councilwoman Cumbo  
Akhurapa Ambark, Councilman Cornegy  
Arna Lipkind, Councilwoman Mealy  
Charles Jackson, Congresswoman Clarke  
Octavia Brown, Assemblyman Camara  
Nan Blackshear, BP Adams  
Kathleen Daniel, BP Adams

**CB 8 Staff Present**

Michelle George  
Julia Neale
The regular meeting of Community Board No. 8 was called to order at 7:25 PM by Ms. Granville, Chairperson. She asked the Secretary, Ms. Akosua Albritton, to call the roll.

**Acceptance of Minutes** – Ms. Wedderburn made a motion to accept the minutes with any necessary corrections. The motion was seconded by Mr. Staton and the minutes were unanimously adopted by the Board.

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

Ms. Granville asked Ms. Tia Powell-Harris, Executive Director of Weeksville Heritage Center to say a few words.

**Weeksville Heritage Center** – Ms. Tia Powell-Harris, Executive Director

Ms. Powell-Harris welcomed everyone to Weeksville and stated that 28 days is not enough for an adequate celebration of black history. She stated that it was pleasing to see so many people in such a historical place as Weeksville Heritage Center as black history is American history. Finally, she hoped that everyone comes back for a full tour of the historical site to learn more about the history of Weeksville, one of the first free black colonies in New York. To schedule a tour, call 718-756-5250.

Ms. Granville thanked Ms. Powell-Harris for hosting the Board and encouraged everyone to visit to learn more about the historical significance of the museum. She then asked for a report from the following committees:

**Economic Development** – Ms. Atim Oton, Chairperson

The Economic Development Committee met on Tuesday, February 10, 2015 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. In addition to the Chair, Ms. Atim Oton, also present were Duane Frankson, Yahya Raji, Maura Pagano, Michael Cox, Zulika Bumpus, and LeeAnn Banks.

Ms. Oton announced that the committee is working on bringing manufacturing businesses to the community. She stated that the wonderful thing about the work that the M1 committee is doing is that jobs can be encouraged to come into the District as well as housing. The committee is realistically looking at affordable housing options. We need to capitalize on the family make-up in this community, which is very much like what New York is—a true melting pot. We do not necessarily have traditional family structures in the District anymore. We need to encourage designers to think outside the box to develop something other than a standard building to accommodate the different types of family structures present in the District.

She stated that we have 2 years to think about what type of jobs will be here when manufacturing comes to the District after the M1 committee’s proposal is submitted to the Dept. of City Planning. While looking at that, we can also think of ways to increase tourism to the District to take advantage of our cultural institutions and vibrant culture and restaurant scene.

The next meeting of the Economic Development Committee will be on Tuesday, March 10, 2015 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn. All are invited to attend.
**Education** – Ms. Sharon Wedderburn, Chair; Mr. Kwasi Mensah, Vice Chair

The Education Committee met on Tuesday, February 3, 2015 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. In addition to the Chair, Sharon Wedderburn, and the Vice Chair, Kwasi Mensah, also present were Audrey Baker, Laurel Dagrosa, Xeerxeema Jordan, Adem Bunkeddeko, Zulika Bumpus, and Michael Cox.

The committee discussed collaborative efforts relating to education and is planning a joint meeting with their counterparts at CB’s 2, 3, and 9.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn. All are invited to attend.

**Environment/Sanitation** – Helen Coley, Chairperson

The Environment/Sanitation Committee did not meet in the month of January. The next meeting will be a joint meeting with the Transportation Committee on Tuesday, February 24, 2014 at 7 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn. All are invited to attend.

**Health and Human Services** – Mr. Kwasi Mensah, Chair; Dr. Flize Bryan, Vice Chair

The Health Committee did not meet in the month of February. The next meeting will be held on Monday, March 2, 2015 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn. All are invited to attend.

**Housing/ULURP** – Ms. Nizjoni Granville Chair; Ms. Ethel Tyus, Vice Chair

The Housing/ULURP Committee met on Thursday, February 5, 2015 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. The committee discussed the following items:

**Proposed Special Permit Application with Dept. of City Planning (DCP) and Proposed Variance with Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA)—170 Buffalo Avenue, Block 1362, Lot 1, 371 (Old St. Mary’s Hospital)—Convert Hospital to 280 Bed Nursing Home**

Mr. Eric Palatnik, Attorney, and Mr. Ben Diamond from Centers for Care (CFC), made a presentation on a preliminary discussion preceding a Board of Standards and Appeals (BSA) and Dept. of City Planning (DCP) application to convert the former St. Mary’s Hospital located at 170 Buffalo Avenue into a 280 bed nursing home with a 30 space parking lot on the T-shaped lot. The building will be kept at its current height.

Mr. Palatnik and Mr. Diamond explained that they are coming to the Community Board in a preliminary fashion to help speed up the process to be able to come in an official capacity. City Planning applications can take an extraordinarily long time to be reviewed, and in the time it takes, the hospital will continue to languish, serving as a blight on the community. While they are seeking community support, it is only in the capacity to disclose the intention of applying for a BSA and DCP application. A BSA variance is needed because of a technicality in the way the hospital was built. Usually, buildings of that girth are required to have a set-back starting on the 4th floor, but hospitals are not subject to the sky exposure plane rule. Without the variance, 30 feet from the top two floors will have to be cut out to make space for the set-back. CFC is
seeking the variance to keep the building as it is, as without the variance, it would be required to adhere to the sky exposure plane definition. DCP requires a variance because the number of nursing home beds in District 8 will exceed the city-wide average if the facility opens. According to Section 74.90 of the zoning requirements, a variance is needed to put another facility in a community because of over-saturation concerns. Currently, the city-wide average is 5.5 and CB 8 is at 5.6 beds per capita. If the nursing home opens, the per capita ratio will be around 6.0.

The location of the existing 215 bed nursing home is 1455 Coney Island Avenue in Brooklyn. However, the space is a converted movie theater and is not conducive for the proper level of care patients require and need. As such, CFC is seeking to relocate the nursing home to the St. Mary’s site. That is also one of the main reasons the facility will not be converted to an urgent care center. CFC is one of the largest private companies in New York that own and operate health care systems. It is a for-profit company specializing in all realms of the post-acute world. An estimated 180 community jobs will be created with the completion of the project, or 60% total jobs available at the site. The jobs should be well paying, not menial, and in all fields necessary for successfully operating the nursing home.

Responding to a question of why the building could not be used for much needed affordable senior housing, Mr. Diamond explained that the building is bulky and would have required many cut outs to provide the necessary light and air requirements. Also, it cannot be a mixed use building because of security concerns for nursing home residents.

Residents of ProMark Condos, adjacent to the long end of the T-shaped lot expressed concerns over rodents and parking. They were assured that CFC, since purchasing the property, has been addressing the rodent concerns. The parking lot will be grassed over and will not exceed 30 spaces for numerous reasons, including elevation levels (the lot has a raised elevation from the homes). Mr. Diamond also stated that he believes there will not be a need for more than 30 spaces. The site will be fenced on all sides and parking spaces will be given back to the community in the form of reduced curb cuts. All deliveries will be made on site, using smaller delivery trucks. The St. Marks Avenue loading dock will be active for larger deliveries, but the entry and exit to the parking lot will be on Prospect Place. Additionally, CFC is trying to maximize green space and minimize impact on neighbors. There will be a sitting area on the St. Marks side for residents. Mr. Diamond stated that he is willing to talk with and review the plans for the space with ProMark residents in case they had any revisions they would like to see made.

The committee voted 18 in favor, 0 opposed, with 1 abstention to support asking the Dept. of City Planning to expeditiously review the plan to start the process of the BSA and DCP variance applications.

Responding to a question to how long it will take for the facility to open after construction begins, Mr. Diamond stated that it will take 8 months to a year to complete construction when the variances are granted. Mr. Palatnik stated that the purpose of the preliminary visit to the Board is to get support for City Planning and the Board of Standards and Appeals to accelerate the review process.

Mr. Leroy Reid asked what type of opportunities will be available for jobs. He was informed that Centers for Care (CFC) is looking to create about 150 or more jobs for the community. It was announced that CFC makes it a point to employ local people at their facilities. A Human Resources department will be set up and a number to call for information for jobs when they become available will be given to the Community Board to help disseminate information.
Mr. Palatnik stated that the organization is also hoping to have a job fair to match up the right applicant with the right job when the facility is closer to opening.

Mr. Matthews asked when would construction begin and how long it would take to complete. He was informed that interior demolition is completed and a request has been made to the city to proceed with construction at their own risk. ULURP (Uniform Land Use Review Procedure) takes some time, so by coming to the Board preliminarily and by continuing to work, they are hoping to shave off a few months of construction time and opening.

Mr. Harris asked if community labor is being used during interior demolition. He was informed that it was not because all hospital construction work is heavily regulated. All contractors have to be vetted and approved medical contractors. The contractor they are using works with approved laborers. However, the organization will bring in community laborers once the project is complete. Mr. Harris stated that not hiring from the community during the demolition and construction process is a problem. It is akin to saying that “we are making changes but we are not allowing you to be part of the change.” Mr. Palatnik stated that they would like to hire locally but there is a reason why they cannot at this time, and that reason is because it is a highly specialized trade.

Dr. Monderson reiterated Mr. Harris’ point that all contractors brought in should be well aware that when they come into a community, they should be prepared to hire locally. Mr. Palatnik and Mr. Diamond both reiterated that the organization will be providing 150 good paying jobs to the community once construction is completed.

Ms. Oton stated that CFC might be interested in creating a training and apprenticeship program during construction. Right now, the community is asking for a solution to the local hiring dilemma during construction and the solution is an apprenticeship program to help local contractors gain more skills.

Ms. Vassell asked how many beds are in the current facility now and how many will be coming to the new location. She was informed that there are 240 beds, all of which will come over. The facility on Coney Island Avenue is shutting down. She was informed that regardless of the number of beds and people coming over, there is a lot of turnover in this type of facility and consequently, no density in any one population.

Ms. James noted some inconsistencies in what was said at the Housing Committee meeting versus what is being said tonight including the number of beds and jobs to be created. Mr. Witherwax asked for clarification of the discrepancies. Mr. Diamond stated that there is an estimated 180 to 200 staff members at the current facility and they are looking to hire an additional 100 to 150 persons for a total 300-350 new staff members when the new facility opens.

Dr. Monderson stated that it seems fair to say that with the wholesale relocation of beds into the community, the people that are serving them now will continue to serve them in the future. Mr. Diamond informed him that the people that are coming over and the staff coming over are in a building with less than 1/3 the amount of space as the St. Mary’s site. The job numbers being discussed are on top of what is coming over.

Ms. Albert stated that she is glad to see that something is being done with the building. However, there is a question about parking. With the over 200 people that work there and only 30 spaces
for visitors, she asked what they plan to do about the people that will drive to work, especially when there is 4 day a week alternate side parking. Mr. Diamond stated that the majority of the staff use public transportation. Outside of the 30 spots, there is provisional space for ambulances and ambulettes on the Prospect Place side of the facility. CFC will be closing several curb cuts and returning the space to on street parking except for a 10 foot curb cut. The projection is not to have a massive number of people driving to work, but rather using public transportation. The facility will run courtesy shuttles for visitors so family members can visit their loved ones and avoid a log jam of vehicles in the area.

Mr. Ellis brought people back to the idea that something is going to come in and re-energize an area that sat vacant for 8 years. He admonished us to look at the positive opportunities.

Ms. Angela Weeks, a community resident, asked if any type of environmental study was done before demolition. Mr. Diamond stated that before any demolition was done, phase 1 and 2 environmental testing was done on the property. All of the medical waste had been removed prior to them acquiring the property. The site was tested for asbestos and several other environmental hazards.

Ms. Tyus stated that it will go into the support letter that we will be asking for apprenticeship programs. Mr. Diamond stated that the apprenticeship program will depend on the contractor hired, but CFC will work with the Community Board to figure out the best path to take. They have not selected a contractor yet, but will seek to get 10 apprenticeships from the 3 contractors they are looking at hiring for the project.

Mr. Palatnik reminded everyone that this is preliminary, and they will have to come back in an official capacity once DCP and BSA have signed off on the variance. It will be at that time that all minutia can be hashed out entirely and concretely.

Ms. Granville asked people to please email their questions and concerns to the District office and encouraged people to attend the housing committee meetings because it is in the committee meeting that there is sufficient time to on each item and ask questions.

Mr. Puca made a motion to approve a letter of support for the expeditious review of the plans on the agreement that the contractor will add at least 10 apprenticeships to construction jobs. The motion was seconded by Ms. Oton and passed with a final tally of 37 in favor, 2 opposed, with 1 abstention.

Ms. Tyus announced that on the last Monday of the month there will be the follow-up meeting with M1-1 subcommittee. Following that meeting, the M1 committee will bring a refined resolution to the next Housing committee meeting. Finally, the Crown Heights North Association’s next meeting will be held on February 25, 2015 at St. Gregory’s Roman Catholic Church on the corner of Brooklyn Avenue and St. John’s Place at 6:45 PM. All are encouraged to attend.

The next Housing/ULURP Committee meeting will be Thursday, March 5, 2015 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn. All are invited to attend.
The Parks Committee met on Tuesday, February 3, 2015 at the St. John’s Recreation Center. In addition to the Chair, Ms. Glinda Andrews, and the Vice Chair, Kim Albert, also present were Karla Harby, Desmond Atkins, Thomas Montford, Robyn Berland, Jeff Cooler, Farrell Coates, Zsabatta Champion-Taylor, Liesl Zitman, Emily Sherrod, Yakima Whitehurst, Leila Knight, Junstine H., Gustavo Frindt, Ron Taylor, and Phil Hawkins.

The committee heard a presentation from two teachers from the Granville T. Woods School (PS 335), who are seeking a letter of support to gain access to a city-owned vacant lot located at 1662 Bergen Street. They plan to convert the lot to a community garden. The teachers stated that the city currently has no plans to build on the lot. A petition with 150 signatures in support of the proposal was submitted to the committee.

The committee voted to support the project in hopes that the full Board supports its recommendation.

Mr. Atkins stated that he is a member of the Parks Committee and was very impressed with the presentation. The teachers plan to put the garden in a spot that is blighted. It is important that young people get an idea of where food comes from.

Ms. Tyus inquired from Ms. Taylor whether or not the ground has been soil tested. Ms. Taylor informed her that right now, the ground is pure concrete. As part of the garden project, they are looking to raze it.

Ms. Andrews stated that we learned today that the city is planning to build housing on this lot in the future. However, we support the Granville T. Woods school use of the lot until such time as the city converts the land for housing.

Ms. Banks made a motion to support the committee’s recommendation. The motion was seconded by Dr. Monderson and carried with a final tally of 37 in favor, 0 opposed, with 0 abstentions.

Ms. Andrews stated that the Parks Department made a presentation regarding the design for Stroud Playground. The Parks Department will present their design to the full Board in May.

Ms. Oton asked if the Parks Committee is going to deal with the fact that city is planning to use community gardens for development. Ms. Tyus suggested that we as a Board and community work with City Planning and the Dept. of Housing Preservation and Development to maintain gardens because we don’t have a lot of open space in our community despite the large population. We must make sure that the number of open spaces and people balances out. We should be fighting for open space and looking for fallow houses to build affordable units as there are innumerable fallow buildings that would benefit from development.

The next Parks Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 at 6 PM at the St. John’s Recreation Center located at 1251 Prospect Place, Brooklyn. All are invited to attend.
Public Safety – Ms. Shalawn Langhorne Chair; Mr. Desmond Atkins, Vice Chair

The Public Safety Committee met on Tuesday, January 20, 2015 at the 77th Precinct. In addition to the Chair, Shalawn Langhorne, also present were Vice Chair Desmond Atkins, Deputy Inspector Eddie Lott, 77th Precinct Commanding Officer, Police Officer Jason Marsimam, Kim Albert, and Judith Campbell.

P.O. Marisman, one of the Crime Prevention Officers, gave a brief overview of his position at the 77th Precinct and offered assistance and resources to anyone interested. The committee discussed the ongoing positive relationship that the precinct has with the community and how we can continue to maintain such partnership.

Due to the upcoming deadlines for request of capital and expense funding from both the Brooklyn Borough President’s Office and the City Council, the committee discussed the needs of the precincts within the district. There is a request for additional police personnel and additional marked and unmarked vehicles (3 of each).

Ms. Langhorne announced that Chief Gerald Nelson will retire as Chief of Brooklyn North after 40 years of service. Chief Maddrey will become the new Chief of Brooklyn North. His walk out ceremony will be held on Friday, February 13, 2014 at Brooklyn North Command on Wilson Avenue at 2 PM.

The next public safety committee meeting will take place on Tuesday, February 17, 2015 at 6 PM at the 78th Precinct located at 65 6th Avenue, Brooklyn. All are invited to attend.

Seniors Committee – Ms. Kim Albert, Chair

The Seniors Committee met on February 4, 2015 at David Chavis Apartments. The committee heard a presentation from Mr. McLeod from the New York Memory Center on dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.

Ms. Albert advised everyone to sit down with seniors and talk with them before they forget their past. It will help us with historical facts and events, learn more about our family, and help seniors relive moments and keep them active mentally.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 4, 2015 at 6 PM at David Chavis Apartments located at 230 Kingston Avenue, Brooklyn, NY.

SLA and Sidewalk Café Review Committee (SLAC) – Mr. James Ellis, Chair; Mr. Robert Witherwax, Vice Chair

The SLAC Committee met on Monday, February 2, 2015 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. The committee entertained the following applications:

Renewal applications:

1. The Saint Catherine, 660 Washington Avenue (corner Bergen) – Full
2. Eve’s Lounge, 769 Washington Avenue (Sterling/St. John’s) – Full (no complaints)
3. Basil, 268 Kingston Avenue (corner Lincoln) – Beer/Wine (no complaints)
4. Kimiya, 708 Washington Avenue (St. Marks/Prospect) – Beer/Wine (no complaints)
5. Chuko, 552 Vanderbilt Avenue (corner Dean) – Beer/Wine (no complaints)
6. Crown Heights Supper Club, 1082 St. John’s Place – Full (no complaints)
7. Glady’s, 788 Franklin Avenue (corner Lincoln) – Full (no complaints)
8. Nostrand Pub, 658 Nostrand Avenue (Bergen/St. Marks) – Full (no complaints)

The committee voted to support all 8 renewal applications in hopes that the full Board supports its recommendation.

Ms. Tyus made a motion to support the committee’s recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lord and carried with a final tally of 37 in favor, 0 opposed, with 2 abstentions.

1. New applications:

a. **Entity to be Formed, 722 Nostrand (Park/Prospect), FULL**

- Proprietors currently own Bearded Lady, 686A Washington Ave
- 35 seats indoor, 32 outdoor
- Letters of support from community and business owners; Notification of neighbors
- Hours of Operation: Seeking 12 PM to 4 AM seven days a week.
- Rear yard: seeking 12 PM to 12 AM seven days a week, noise mitigation and greening intended

The committee voted to support the application with the following stipulations:

i. Rear yard closes 10 PM Sun-Thu, 12 AM Fri-Sat
ii. Rear yard soundproofing and greening to be done as shown in drawings submitted with application
iii. Rear tables will have umbrellas
iv. No Smoking permitted in rear yard

The final vote tally was 13 in favor, 1 opposed, with 0 abstentions.

Ms. Tyus noted that the property is part of the Crown Heights North Historic District and also part of the National Register. The commercial renter can work with the landlord to get tax credits for the build-out.

Ms. Vassell stated that it is a busy area with a public school across the street and there are a lot of children in the area. She was informed that because of the way that the 200 foot rule is written, this location does not violate the 200 foot rule despite the school being so close because of the location of the main entrance of each establishment.

Mr. Williams stated that his shop is a neighbor of Bearded Lady and that he lives right across the street. The bar is very organized and well run.

Ms. Tyus made a motion to support the committee’s recommendation. The motion was seconded by Dr. Monderson and carried with a final tally of 30 in favor, 6 opposed, with 4 abstentions.

b. **Sumi Sushi, 287 Flatbush Ave (St. Marks/Prospect), FULL**

- Seeking to operate sushi restaurant.
-20 seats, No outdoor space
-Hours of Operation: close 11 PM Sun-Thu, 12 AM Fri-Sat
-Letters of support from residents of building

The committee voted 14 in favor, 0 opposed, with 0 abstentions to support the application as presented and hopes that the full Board supports its recommendation.

Ms. Tyus made a motion to support the committee’s recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Staton and carried with a final tally of 34 in favor, 4 opposed, with 2 abstentions

c. Oaxaca, 417 Prospect (corner Grand), FULL

-Seeking to operate Mexican restaurant.
-20 seats, No outdoor space
-Hours of Operation: close 12 AM Sun-Thu, 1 AM Fri-Sat
-Letters of support from residents of building

The committee voted 14 in favor, 0 opposed, with 0 abstentions to support the application as presented in hopes that the full Board supports its recommendation.

Mr. Witherwax made a motion to support the committee’s recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Staton and carried with a final tally of 33 in favor, 1 opposed, with 4 abstentions

3. Alteration application for Island Czs, 743 Franklin Ave (corner Sterling), from beer/wine to FULL and longer Hours of Operation
-Long time business/residents in the community
-Proposed Hours: open at 1 PM, close at 11 PM Sun-Tue, 12 AM Wed, 2AM Thu, 4 AM Fri-Sat
-Committee advised earlier opening, later closings mid-week

The committee voted 13 in favor, 0 opposed, with 1 abstention to support the application with the following conditions:

i. Doors and windows will be closed by 10 PM
ii. Hours of Oper: Open 11 AM, close 12 AM Sun-Wed, 2 AM Thu, 3 AM Fri-Sat

The committee hopes that full Board supports its recommendation.

Ms. Wedderburn made a motion to support the committee’s recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Williams and carried with a final tally of 35 in favor, 0 opposed, with 3 abstentions.

Mr. Ellis congratulated Island Cz for being in business for over 30 years and Kenneth Binns of Crown Heights Supper Club for being in business for over 50 years.

The next meeting of the SLAC Committee will be held on Monday, March 2, 2015 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn. All are invited to attend.
Transportation Committee – Dr. Frederick Monderson, Chair; Mr. Robert Witherwax, Vice Chair

The Transportation Committee did not meet in the month of the January. At the next meeting, the committee will discuss the Gowanus Bioswale project which affects Prospect Heights. Mr. Witherwax directed everyone’s attention to the Move New York Fair Transportation Forum on Thursday, February 19, 2015 from 6 to 8 PM at the YWCA on 3rd Avenue and Atlantic Avenue (Downtown Brooklyn). The event is co-sponsored by Community Boards 2, 6, and 8. The plan is to resolve the great inequity of the free bridges versus the pay ones across the city.

The next meeting of the Transportation Committee will be held on Tuesday, February 24, 2015 at 7 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn. It will be a joint meeting with the Environment/Sanitation Committee. All are invited to attend.

Youth and Family Services – Ms. Akosua Albritton, Chair

The Youth and Family Services Committee met on Monday, February 9, 2015 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. In addition to the Chair, Ms. Akosua Albritton, also present were Gresham Pierre, Zulika Bumpus, and Esther Lok. The committee finalized their K2 and Bath Salts fact sheet for distribution. They are currently working on a press release to give to media outlets.

The committee discussed details about the Dept. of Youth and Community Development’s (DYCD) Community School program. The program is the means for various nonprofits to get contracted to provide nutrition, mental health, fine art, college prep, and family services within a public school during the day. Having these services will achieve a continuum of care for students and their families.

The committee brainstormed ideas for the community conversation on K2. The Chair expressed a concern for the elements that involve teens and adults. Gresham Pierre wanted to expand from a 2-hour sit down event to one where there are workshops and an open mic. She is currently collaborating with some churches to develop a program.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 9, 2015 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn. All are invited to attend.

Executive Committee – Ms. Nizjoni Granville, Chair

Mr. Witherwax explained that, according to the By-Laws, Section 8.3, the By-Laws committee is an adhoc committee that must be terminated. Ms. Wedderburn made a motion to disband the committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Atkins and passed with a final tally of 34 in favor, 0 opposed, with 1 abstention. Mr. Witherwax thanked Ms. Tyus, Mr. Bunkedekko, and Ms. Banks for their input on the committee.

Ms. Granville thanked the committee chairs for their reports and introduced Ms. Nan Blackshear from Borough President Eric L. Adams’ office.
Ms. Nan Blackshear, the Brooklyn North Director for BP Eric Adams stated that her role is to be the eyes and ears for the Borough President for northern part of the borough. The borough is divided by precinct boundaries. Many people say Eastern Parkway is the dividing line, but it is not the official dividing line. Any events, meetings, or anything crucial to the community that the Borough President should be aware of should be sent to her. You can contact her at 718-802-3863 with information on the event.

Ms. Blackshear also announced that the new liaison for CB 8 is Ms. Kathleen Daniel from External Affairs and Marketing. Ms. Daniel announced that BP Adams is hosting a town hall meeting on community and police relations to hear how to improve relations. The town hall will be held on February 22, 2015 from 3-5 PM at Maxwell High School on Pennsylvania Avenue in East New York, Brooklyn. She also announced the Clergy Breakfast at Weeksville Heritage Center February 19, 2015 and directed clergy of all faiths to contact Borough Hall to participate in the event. Ms. Daniel and Ms. Blackshear distributed fliers with black history month celebratons. Ms. Daniel also announced that BP Adams is honoring businesses that have been in business 20 years or longer. Nomination forms can be found on the BP’s website at www.brooklyn-usa.org.

Ms. Daniel announced that February 15th is the deadline for reappointment applications and new applications for CB membership. You can download applications by visiting www.brooklyn-usa.org or obtain one by calling 718-802-3771. She had a number of applications available for interested persons and for current CB members that had yet to submit their reappointment applications.

Ms. Granville thanked Ms. Blackshear and Ms. Daniel for the information and asked Judge Genine Edwards to say a few words.

**Civil Court Justice Genine Edwards**

Justice Genine Edwards thanked Ms. George and Ms. Granville for the opportunity to speak at the meeting and address the community. Justice Edwards stated that she is an acting Supreme Court Justice and current Civil Court Justice that has sat on the bench for 10 years.

Civil Court is located at 141 Livingston Street, Downtown Brooklyn. It has a jurisdiction of up to $25,000. Anything over that goes to Supreme Court. Civil court is like people’s court because most people are not represented by counsel. Civil Court also houses Housing Court and Small Claims Court, where cases involving monies of up to $5,000 are heard. Cases are heard Monday-Wednesday during the day and Thursday in the evening for Small Claims Court. Most small claims are trial cases, where people must prove 2 things: the person they are suing is responsible for any damages accrued, and that the suing party had to come out of pocket. There may be counter claims against you in small claims court, but all claims must have proof.

A lot of cases settle and do not go to trial, but you must remember that the settlement is a contract to which you must adhere. If you are sued in any court, please answer. If you do not answer, you may lose the case or lose your rights in the case. The suing party may get a default judgment against you and your bank accounts may be seized and your wages garnished. If you’re not paying your utility bills, the utility company may seize the meter. The key is answering the summons when a claim is filed against you.
Ms. Lord asked what the proper way to serve someone legal documents is. She was informed that under the law, a person can be served by mail or a substitute person. If you do not feel as though you were properly served, that can be your defense when the case is heard.

Mr. Reid asked if you have any rights to countersue for harassment if you are sued continuously. He was informed that rights do exist depending on the value of the case. You can go to civil court and file a claim, but again, you must be able to prove the suit. She admonished everyone to keep all of their files to be able to present them to the judge.

Ms. Granville thanked Judge Edwards for the information and asked for a brief description of the services that the National Alliance on Mental Illness provides.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – Ms. Celeste Farmer

Ms. Farmer thanked CB 8 for the invitation to discuss mental illness and the services that NAMI provides to assist those afflicted and their families with coping. She stated that 25% of the population suffers from mental illness, with many sufferers hidden because of the shame and stigma associated with mental illness. Mental breakdowns are not funny, but we don’t take them as seriously as it should be. She provided a few examples of how people mock and make fun of mental illness while comparing how mocking other ailments is perceived as no laughing matter.

NAMI provides education and information operating out of Kings County Hospital and Downstate Medical Center. On the 1st Thursday of each month at Downstate, located at 395 Lenox Road, there is a support group for consumers, or those suffering from mental illness, and a support group on 3rd Thursday of the month for family and friends of those suffering.

NAMI has signature programs, including NAMI Basics, a 6 week course that is free for parents of children with mental illness. Parents have the ability to speak with clinicians to provide services. Connections is a program for those suffering from mental illness to sit with others to discuss their conditions, what they have done to help themselves, and where to go to get help.

Family to Family is a program where family members are trained to help other family members. It is a 10 week free program where each week, caregivers are given information on history, types and classes of medications, how to advocate for rights under HIPPA law, and other pertinent information.

Peer to Peer is a program for consumers to work with each other to discuss how they have navigated their way through the mental health system. Ms. Farmer explained that a lot of times, it is difficult for consumers to navigate through the system to find programs and assistance. The purpose of Peer to Peer is to get people talking and make it easier for newly diagnosed or those that have suffered in silence to get the assistance they need. Many people believe mental illness is something where recuperation is not possible. This is simply not true. With the right medication, resources, and support, recovery is possible.

NAMI walk is a yearly fundraiser to raise funds for various organizations. In our Own Voice is a program series where consumers speak to people about their condition. Many times, you would not be able to tell that these people suffer from mental illness. There is no face of mental illness and you never know who is affected, which is why some jokes can be really offensive.
NAMI is there to help people get the services and resources they need. In many cases there is late onset of mental disorders. Ms. Farmer reiterated the severity of mental illness and how important it is to seek help if you or a loved one appears to be suffering. Depression is not the only symptom of mental illness. If you notice that your friends and family members are not acting like themselves or seem distracted, easily angered, frustrated, or lacking interest in some of their favorite pastimes, talk to them about seeking help. Kings County has a mobile crisis unit that you can call and they will come out to community events and direct you to places to get help.

Ms. Granville thanked Ms. Farmer for the helpful information and acknowledged elected officials, elected official representatives, and opened the floor for public comments and announcements.

**Judge Michael Gerstein** announced that he is an elected Civil Court judge, acting judge in Supreme Court, and sits on the bench in Criminal Court. There are more than 10,000 pending cases in criminal court, but only 100 are pending for over a year. On the brighter side, he invited everyone to the Black History Month celebration in the lobby of Brooklyn Criminal Courthouse located at 120 Schermerhorn Street at 1 PM on Friday, February 20, 2015.

**Ms. Kristia Beaubrun** from Councilwoman Cumbo’s office announced the Councilwoman’s State of the District Address on Sunday, March 1, 2015 from 3-5 PM at the Brooklyn Museum of Art located at 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn. To reserve your seat, RSVP by calling 718-260-9191.

**Mr. Akhurapa Ambark** from Councilman Cornegy’s office announced that tomorrow and next Friday is discretionary funding Friday. Come to the Councilman’s office between 10 AM and 1 PM for an open house on how to apply for the funding. It is on a first come first served basis. He also announced the Councilman’s State of the District Address will be held on Saturday, February 21, 2015 from 11 AM to 2 PM at Uncommon Charter High School located at 1485 Pacific Street. Reserve your ticket online by visiting [http://sotd36.eventbrite.com](http://sotd36.eventbrite.com) or calling 718-919-0740.

**Mr. Charles Jackson** from Congresswoman Clarke’s office announced that the open enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act deadline is February 15th. Anyone between the ages of 18 and 30 are encouraged to call the Congresswoman’s district office at 718-287-1142 to have their questions answered.

In federal news, Mr. Jackson announced that the FCC has decided to leave the internet open for now. There was talk of censorship in the past few months. He stated that he would forward information to the District office for individuals to send comments to the FCC about keeping the internet open.

**Ms. Dweynie Paul**, Community Director of Metropolitan Black Bar Association (MBBA) announced Community Law Day on Saturday, February 28, 2015 at Restoration Plaza located at 1360 Fulton Street, Brooklyn from 11 AM to 3 PM. A team of volunteer attorneys will be on hand to answer questions and give legal information on various areas of the law including civil, criminal, and wills and probate. She also distributed a snow and ice liability fact sheet. It contains rules and laws around snow and ice removal.
Ms. Valerie Figueroa, Executive Director of the St. John’s Family Center announced the LINK program initiative that gives a 15% annual rent incentive to property owners encouraging them to rent to low income individuals. The LINK program is in need of additional units of housing. Since June 2014, the family center was able to place 63 families into permanent housing due to this program. She thanked CB 8 for its assistance in reaching out to the community and encouraging donations during the center’s hygiene drive. She thanked everyone for their wonderful and plentiful donations of toothpaste, soap, hair products, socks, underwear, and the like.

Ms. Leotha asked for assistance on a project that she has been working on. She explained that she has been calling out to different agencies to find ways to get help for individuals that cannot get the help they need from existing agencies. The purpose of her venture is to help those that would like to own property, design a business, or own a business. She stated that while she is aware that there are agencies that give help in many areas, there is a need for an all-in-one agency that can help in areas other agencies cannot. Ms. Oton suggested that she attend the next Economic Development Committee meeting to discuss the initiative further and to brainstorm ideas on how to make this happen.

With no further business to be discussed, Ms. Granville adjourned the meeting at 9:50 PM. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 12, 2015 at 7 PM at Calvary Community Church located at 1575 St. John’s Place (corner of Buffalo Avenue). All are invited to attend.

**Guests**

Patricia Allen  
Zacy Williams  
Mitch Polo  
Nathaniel Styer  
Asha Sands  
Patrick Clarke  
Stanley Godfrey  
V. Avsum  
Shermaine Hendy  
C. Dymond  
Valerie Figueroa  
Kyle Williams  
Izabela Suster  
Yahya Raji  
Dean Sullivan  
Morris Nenmark  
James Sato  
Munsun Park  
Teresa Johnson  
Angela Cuthbert  
Eddie Wu  
Rena Harrison  
Rashad Kareem  
Mark Thurton  
Dweynie Paul  
Kenneth Erie  
Bill Wilkins  
Alexander Chack  
Brad Nicholl  
Juan Bayes  
Leroy Reid  
Thomas Yung  
Patrick Britton  
Zsabatta Champion-Taylor  
Kashari Stokely  
Maura Pagano  
Larry Weekes  
Deborah O’Uhuree  
Lula Staton  
Pat Constantine  
Khalisha Lewis  
Michael Cox  
Ken Marable  
Celeste Farmer  
Siyu Quian  
Rachel Smith  
Rebecca Bairn-Remba