

**Community Board No. 8
Berean Missionary Baptist Church
1641 Bergen Street
Brooklyn, NY 11213**

January 14, 2010

Members Present

Kim Albert
Akosua Albritton
Glinda Andrews
Edo Banach
Viola Bing
Julia Boyd
Gail Branch-Muhammad
Diana Foster
Fred Frazier
Holly Fuchs
Nizjoni Granville
Doris Heriveaux
Princess James
Xeerxeema Jordan
Shalawn Langhorne
Shirley Lee
Priscilla Maddox
Kwasi Mensah
Adelaide Miller
Clarine Miller
Atim Oton
Marlene Saunders
Patricia Scantlebury
Meredith Staton
William Suggs
Audrey Taitt-Hall
Launa Thomas-Bullock
Gregory Todd
Ethel Tyus
Sharon Wedderburn
Douglas Williams
Robert Witherwax
Vilma Zuniga

Members Excused

Dr. Flize Bryan
Helen Coley
Renaye Cuyler
Dr. Fred Monderson
Mary Reed

Members Absent

Teri Coaxum
Ede Fox
Jesse Hamilton
Marie Louis
Robert Matthews
Anyika Nance
Hasoni Pratts
Robert Puca
Tara Lai Quinlan
David Schatzkamer
Yves Vilus

Elected Official's Reps.

Alfred Chiodo, Councilwoman James
Carl Luciano, Councilman Vann
Arna Lipkind, Councilwoman Mealy
Maurice Robert, Senator Eric Adams
Carolyn Sanders James, Mayor's Office

CB 8 Staff

Michelle George
Julia Neale
Valerie Hodges-Mitchell, Intern

Ms. Granville called the meeting to order at 7:20 PM.

Acceptance of Minutes – The minutes of the last Community Board meeting were accepted as written.

Correspondence – CB 8 newsletter and other material were distributed.

Ms. Granville welcomed Ms. Lakisha Holland from the NY Blood Center.

New York Blood Center – Ms. Lakisha Holland

Ms. Holland thanked Community Board 8 for hosting tonight’s Blood Drive and announced that the NY Blood Center has been in operation for over 40 years. The precise match program is designed to get African American communities more inclined to donate blood because African Americans are the highest sufferers of sickle cell anemia. She stated that at the meeting, blood donations and free screenings for cholesterol and blood pressure were underway. She asked those present to donate, because as the poster states, you just might get it back some day. In addition, if you would like to organize a blood drive, speak to her at some point in time; NY Blood Center needs help reaching its quota so that it can come back to the community in the future for blood drives.

Ms. Granville thanked Ms. Holland for her information and suggested that those present donate blood or attempt to donate blood and also take advantage of the free screenings. She then asked for a report from Ms. Kate Kyung Ji Rhee of the Institute for Juvenile Justice at medgar Evers College.

Institute for Juvenile Justice – Ms. Kate Kyung Ji Rhee

Ms. Ji Rhee stated that of all the incarcerated youth in New York State, the majority of prisoners come from 7-10 communities. The Institute for Juvenile Justice (IJJ) has a three-prong attack for reducing these numbers: Raise the Age, which reflects the strategy of policing and law; Raise the Bar, reflecting community unity, knowledge, and involvement; and Raise the Youth, which focuses on the way youth are raised rather than legal changes. Presently, communities have moved beyond the “It takes a village” mantra to an individualistic approach—an approach that is obviously failing.

Ms. Ji Rhee stated that the age of liability, or the age at which one is considered an adult is 18 in most states. New York and North Carolina are the two states where 16 year olds are considered adults in the criminal justice system at all times. When arrested, 16 year olds go to Rikers Island rather than a juvenile detention center. Under the juvenile offender law, 13 year olds can be tried as an adult in certain crimes. Based on the facts, these policies do not reduce crime or act as an adequate deterrent. As a result, IJJ is calling on all community boards to host “Bar Sessions” as a way of gathering information and everyone getting involved in policy making at the community level. Ms. Ji Rhee then asked for a testimony from Ms. Chino Harden, an individual that has redeemed her life after constantly being involved with the system both as a youth and a young adult.

Ms. Harden stated that she has been working with the community for over a decade now. She recounted stories of her past and how hard her grandmother struggled to prevent her from becoming a child of the street to no avail. Like herself, there are other young people out there who are struggling to find themselves, and they can change with the proper guidance and assistance while changing the root issue of why young people are getting into trouble. The community as a whole needs to help parents raise their children correctly because the local community is one place where troubled youth always return after their prison sentence.

Ms. Wedderburn asked Ms. Ji Rhee if there is a time limit on the Bar Campaign and was informed that the IJJ is just beginning the program and such information has not been determined as of yet. Presently, all that is required is a minimum of 5 community residents interested in roundtable discussions. She asked those interested in receiving periodic updates to provide their email addresses for future information.

Ms. Granville thanked Ms. Ji Rhee and Ms. Harden for their information and asked Mr. Kelly from the NYC Coalition against hunger for a report.

NYC Coalition Against Hunger – Mr. Terrence Kelly

Mr. Kelly reported that the NYC Coalition against Hunger is presently involved in pre-screening for food stamp benefits. There is now a paperless enrollment office, where applicants can submit applications at the community group rather than at the Dept. of Social Services office. He supplied information fliers to those present.

Ms. Granville thanked Mr. Kelly for the information and asked for a report from Mr. of the Andrew Barrett of Craig Murrey Fellows for a brief report.

Craig Murrey Fellows – Mr. Andrew Barrett

Mr. Barrett announced that he is a part of a group that provides emergency food programs. He stated that there is a need in the community for community supported agriculture projects. Basically, the project entails buying directly from farmers. Consumers pay in advance for fresh, organic food, and it benefits them and the farmers. There is also a pay scale project that low income families can participate. Higher income people pay more, and lower income people can volunteer to help pay for their participation. Hebron Seventh Day Adventist Church has been chosen as a distribution center.

Ms. Wedderburn asked what the anticipated price for the upcoming season is and was informed that the organization is still in the process of identifying farmers to participate. However, the full price per share is anywhere between \$400 and \$800 depending on the farmer. Low income residents can participate for as little as \$150 a season.

Ms. Granville thanked Mr. Barrett and asked for a report from the following committees:

Housing/ULURP – Ms. Nizjoni Granville, Chairperson

The Housing/ULURP Committee met on Thursday, January 7, 2010 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. The committee heard a presentation by Mr. Farid Assad, owner of Old Brooklyn Bagel Shop located at 645 Vanderbilt Ave.(corner of Prospect Place), who is seeing community support for the installation of redesigned exterior with a metal front laminated in ebonized wood and an external exhaust vent on the side of this facility. Given that the area is now landmarked, permission is needed from the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) to redesign the exterior and install the ventilation system as the hood will be visible at some point from the Street. The owner was represented by Urban Engineering, P.C. (Izar Corey, principal) and indicated that the owner entered into the lease with the cooperatively-owned building after discussions about the planned redesign and verbal acceptance by that Co-op Board. They presented drawings and indicated that they have provided the same to LPC. Given that no addition letters of support were presented and that the applicant's hearing before LPC is scheduled for 1/19/10, the committee discussed at length putting the item to a conditional vote. The representative from Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council (PHNDC) indicated that the review period was too short for PHNDC to be able to provide a letter prior to the hearing with LPC.

The committee's condition for support was that Mr. Assad bring a letter from the co-op board of the neighboring building to the general meeting. Unfortunately, a letter was not received. Subsequently, based on the precedent set at the previous month's community board general meeting (regarding 191 Park Place), the Board could not vote on the item, and instead voted to send a neutral letter to the Landmarks Preservation Commission stating that a position was not taken based on the fact that Community Board 8 requirements were not met. The final tally on sending such a letter was 29 in favor, 1 opposed, with 1 abstention.

In addition, the committee discussed an application by the NYC Dept. of City Planning for a city-wide text amendment to clarify, revise and introduce new regulations to preserve and enhance the streetscape character of residential neighborhoods at the December 3, 2009 meeting.

The text amendment would strengthen front yard planting regulations; further restrict front yard parking in one and two family residence districts; restore the original intent of residential parking and planting regulations as they affect existing buildings in order to be consistent with a court decision affecting the definition of the term "development"; restore curb cut prohibition for narrow lots in R4B, R5B R6B, R7B and R8B districts; and introduce new curb cut regulations for residential parking spaces in various residential, commercial and special purposed mixed-use districts citywide where none exist today.

There was a prolonged discussion about the Residential Streetscape Preservation Text Amendment. Most people agreed that a city-wide amendment with more restrictions on curb-cuts is a good idea. Mr. Staton brought up the fact that there are many illegal curb cuts in our District. Mr. Mensah stated that the text amendment should specify that illegal curb cuts are more targeted rather than speaking in generalized terms about curb cuts. He stated that the text amendment appears to be penalizing those that follow the proper guidelines.

Ms. Granville stated that the Dept. of City Planning is merely asking for the opinion of the Community Board, not particular input as it is a Citywide amendment, not just focused on certain communities. Ms. Merriman stated that the amendment is needed to regulate curb cuts because of new constructions that impact existing parking.

After debating certain key points further, the full Board voted to support the text amendment with a final tally of 28 in favor, 3 opposed, with 1 abstention.

The next Housing/ULURP Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, February 4, 2010 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue. All are invited to attend.

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

The Economic Development Committee met on Tuesday, January 12, 2010 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation at 6:30 PM.

1. The committee discussed a beer and wine application for “Basil Pizzeria and Wine Bar,” which is located at 268 Kingston Avenue (near Lincoln Place). The proprietors of the establishment stated that the establishment will serve kosher pizza during lunch hours, and will also serve as a coffee shop/bakery during the morning hours. Basil will operate Sunday thru Thursday from 7 AM to 2 AM (or until “last slice served”), Friday from 7 AM to 2 PM, and Saturday from sundown to 2 AM (or last slice served). There will be a total of 30 seats at tables, 10-15 seats at the bar and a walk-up window for patrons to order pizza to go. Basil will employ 5 full time staff members and additional wait staff dependent upon business requirements.

The committee had concerns regarding the tenants in the 4 apartment units above the establishment. Support for the venture was contingent upon the letters of support from the tenants at tonight’s meeting. Also, the committee has concerns regarding the establishment’s proximity to Arista Preparatory School, which is located on Eastern Parkway at Kingston Avenue. However, under the NYS Liquor License guidelines, because the applicants are seeking only a beer and wine license, the 200 foot rule does not apply to them.

Ms. Albert expressed concerns that a sit-down pizzeria might attract a large number of youth to the establishment. She also expressed concerns that alcohol might be served to underage individuals. The proprietors assured the Board that identification would be checked prior to any alcohol being served, and also that beer and wine would be served only at night.

There also were no police objections to the application, and the full Board voted to support the application with a final tally of 24 in favor, 5 opposed, with 3 abstentions.

2. The committee also discussed an alteration application for “The Vanderbilt” located at 570 Vanderbilt Avenue. The proprietors of the Vanderbilt are seeking to add an

unenclosed sidewalk café on the Bergen side of the establishment that will seat 30 patrons at 15 tables. The Vanderbilt has an interior max capacity of 150 patrons, with space for 90 seats at tables. The outdoor seating area will operate during the warmer months on Sunday from Noon to 11 PM, Monday thru Thursday from 5 PM to 11 PM, and Saturday from 10 AM to 12 AM. There will only be a movable barrier separating patrons from passerby, and the required permit from the NYC Landmark Preservation Commission has already been obtained.

Members of the committee suggested that the outdoor seating area close at 11 PM rather than midnight to Saturday to avoid any potential problems that may arise with tenants in the area. The proprietors were amenable to the idea, and reminded the committee that the outdoor seating hours were merely projected, and subsequently subject to change. Aside from a few noise complaints regarding establishments in the area, there were no specific police complaints regarding the establishment or the alteration application. As a result, the full Board approved the application with a final tally of 21 members in favor, 7 opposed, with 3 abstentions. .

3. The following renewal applications were discussed as well:
 - a. Bar Sepia, 234 Underhill Avenue (Lincoln Place/Eastern Parkway)
 - b. Restaurant Gen, 659 Washington Avenue (Bergen/St. Marks)

Aside from a noise complaint regarding Bar Sepia, which has since been resolved between the owner and a neighbor at 286 St. John's Place, there were no police objections to the two renewal applications. Full Board voted to support the applications with a final tally of 27 in favor, 5 opposed, with 0 abstentions.

4. Lt. Secular of the 77th Precinct's Special Operations Unit presented the committee with a disturbing report regarding The Palace Hall located at 713 Nostrand Avenue (near Sterling Place). He stated that the proprietors prematurely opened the establishment on New Years Eve without their license and was promptly shut down with all liquor confiscated by the precinct. The committee, feeling as though the proprietors violated the verbal agreement to do everything legally regarding the Palace Hall in return for supporting the venture amidst concerns over the size of the space and the troublesome location, is suggesting the Board revote on the item and submit another letter to the State Liquor Authority—this time urging the SLA not to issue a liquor and cabaret license for the establishment. The reasoning is that if the proprietors attempted to open without a license two weeks after the contentious vote and after pleading for an opportunity to succeed with the community's support, they never intended to run a wholesome operation.

In addition, committee members that were absent from the initial committee meeting brought up other concerns that the committee had been ignorant about, such a riot a number of years ago between teens that had been utilizing the space. The 77th Precinct also stated that such a large crowd presents tremendous complications with crowd control

and breaking up rowdy fights. As a result of the information provided by the 77th Precinct, members supported the Economic Development Committee's motion to send a letter to the NYS Liquor Authority not to issue a license to The Palace Hall with a final tally of 29 in favor, 0 opposed, with 3 abstentions.

The next Economic Development Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 9, 2010 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue. All are invited to attend.

Fire/Safety – Mr. Douglas Williams, Chair

The Fire/Safety Committee met on Tuesday, January 12, 2010 at the Haitian American Day Care Center, located at 1491 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. Mr. Williams announced that there is a new Fire Commissioner, Mr. Salvatore Cassano, and he has vowed to reinstitute the 5th member of Engine Companies to assist with battling fires.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 9, 2010 at 7 PM at the Haitian American Day Care Center, located at 1491 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. All are invited to attend.

Youth/Family Services – Ms. Akosua Albritton

The Youth/Family Services Committee met on Wednesday, January 6, 2010 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. Members present discussed the upcoming Men's Conference, and decided that additional sponsors were needed on the flyer, which should be slightly altered. Assignments were distributed among committee members, and each member would present the results of his or her task at upcoming committee meetings.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, February 3, 2010 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue. All are invited to attend.

Police – Ms. Shalawn Langhorne, Chair

The Police Committee met on Monday, December 21, 2009 at the 77th Precinct, located at 127 Utica Avenue.

The Police Committee will not meet in January in honor of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. The next meeting will be Monday, February 15, 2010 at 7 PM, also at the 77th Precinct. Anyone interested in police/community relations are encouraged to attend.

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

The Parks Committee met on Tuesday, January 5, 2010 at the St. John's Recreation Center, located at 1251 Prospect Place. Ms. Andrews announced the "King Klassic" teens versus elected officials basketball game on Monday, January 18, 2010 at 2 PM at the St. John's Recreation Center. The game is open to any youngster under the age of 17. For more information, contact Vernetta Diggs at 718-771-2787.

In addition, the committee mentioned that The Friends of Brower Park completed their application with the Parks & Recreation Department. The first thing on their agenda is to try to meet with a core group of people who is interested in advocating for Brower Park. One of their concerns is to obtain funding for proper lighting installation for Brower Park. A proposal will be established to present to the Merchant Association on Kingston Avenue. More meetings will be held to brainstorm for future activities to advocate for Brower Park.

The next Parks Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 2, 2010 at the St. John's Recreation Center at 6 PM. All are invited to attend.

Transportation – Dr. Frederick Monderson, Chair

The Transportation Committee met on Tuesday, December 15, 2009 at the Haitian American Day Care Center. Members discussed the proposed MTA bus service cuts on the B45, 65, and 25 lines, and vowed to continue fighting for the 3 bus lines. It was reported at the January general meeting that the B25 was recently removed from the proposed cut list.

The committee also discussed the MTA Transit meeting at Brooklyn College on the “Brooklyn Rapid Transit” route. The B44 change will ‘buy’ 12 minutes. It will eliminate the Limited from Emmons to Flushing Avenues, provide one single lane for the special buses down Nostrand to Emmons Avenues; on return at the Junction when Express and Local veer to New York Av, the special bus will go down Rogers Avenue joining Bedford Avenue at Pacific Street to continue its regular route from Bedford to Flushing Avenues. In general, the response seemed to question the expense involved in reorganizing traffic, building curb cuts and stands, beautification, signage, information outreach, to gain only an average of 12 minutes. Nevertheless, the fact that the BRT will replace the Limited B44 and impact the Local suggests a give-back to the community. One give-back idea would have two (2) B44 routes (e.g., 44A, 44B) to alternate between the routes (Marcy Av, Nostrand Av). Marcy Avenue is under-served. There could be a point at which one bus (44A) would travel Bedford Avenue, one bus (44B) would travel Marcy Avenue, with a hookup by, say, Park or Flatbush Avenues.

In addition, it was reported that there will be numerous street closures in the footprint of the Atlantic Yards development project. Mr. Williams, who provided the Transportation report in the absence of the Chair, stated that many of the street closures are premature and will undoubtedly create massive confusion.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 19, 2010 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue at 7 PM. All are invited to attend.

Education – Ms. Sharon Wedderburn, Chair

The Education Committee met on Thursday, December 17, 2009 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. The Committee discussed the pending closures of Paul Robeson High School and the mini school housed within the Maggie Walker School located at Park Place and Troy Avenue in Community Board 8. Ms. Wedderburn provided a brief background on the process of selecting

a school for closure. If a school receives a “C” grade for 3 consecutive years, it is scheduled to close. Maggie Walker had not received 3 consecutive “C” grades (received a C, B, followed by another C) until the Dept. of Education changed its grading rubric. In addition, Maggie Walker has 11 official classes, 7 of which are special education classes, and it logically entails that special education students will do poorer on standardized tests than regular education students because of the lower standards of achievement. Furthermore, Maggie Walker should not be on the list closure because they have an implemented plan for improvement in place.

Paul Robeson is one of the few comprehensive high schools left in New York City. Small schools do not have to accept “over the counter” students—students that are new to the neighborhood, new English learners, special education students—and this poses a problem for the community for various reasons.

The next meeting of the Education Committee will be held on Thursday, January 21, 2010 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue at 7 PM. All are invited to attend.

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

The Environment/Sanitation Committee met on Tuesday, December 15, 2009 at CNR but did not have any action items. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 19, 2010 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue at 7 PM. All are invited to attend.

Aging/Health & Human Services – Ms. Marlene Saunders, Chair; Dr. Flize Bryan, Co-Chair

The Aging/Health & Human Services did not meet for the month of January. The next meeting will be held on Monday, February 1, 2010 at 5:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. All are invited to attend.

Ms. Granville thanked the committee chairs for their reports and opened the floor to public comments.

Ms. Debra Griffin read an open letter to the new owner of the building that houses the Starlight Lounge located at the corner of Bergen Street and Nostrand Avenue regarding the gentrification of the community. She also asked for continued support from the Board and its residents in keeping the Starlight Lounge open in its current location.

Mr. Greg Todd announced the winners of the holiday lighting contest hosted by the Crown Heights North Association. He also stated that the Crown Heights North Association has received a \$1,000 grant from the Citizens NYC Foundation to promote repair and restoration of historic structures in the area.

Ms. Carolyn Sanders-James of the Mayor’s office announced that the Mayor’s office is collecting monetary donations for Haitian relief efforts. Anyone interested in donating or even volunteering for the relief efforts are advised to call 311 to avoid scams.

Mr. Maurine Roberts from Senator Adams' office announced that Senator Adams is hosting his annual open house party with free refreshments on Saturday, January 16th from 4-9 PM at his District office located at 572 Flatbush Avenue.

Ms. Granville thanked the speakers for their public comments and also announced that Community Board 8 is accepting non-perishable donations for Haitian relief as well. Items can be dropped off at the District office located at 1291 St. Marks Avenue Monday thru Friday, 10 AM to 4 PM. Items such as food, medical equipment, personal hygiene products and the like are being accepted. At this time, the Board is not seeking monetary donations.

Ms. Granville also thanked those present that either donated blood or attempted to donate blood at the blood drive. She then adjourned the meeting at 9:30 PM. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 11, 2010 at 7 PM at the Brooklyn Children's Museum, located at 145 Brooklyn Avenue. All are invited to attend.

Guests

Donna C.
Shirley Mondesir
Melissa Cerezo
Anthony Caraballo
Desmond Atkins
Ryan Hall
Debra A. Griffin-Daza
Eugene Matkou
Jacqueline Welch
Michael Pane
Moseley Michael
Albert Walker
Hazel Hurley
Abdul Abdel Aziz
Duke Saunders
Faried Assad
Deborah Young
Dennis Parrut
David P.

Andrea Phillys-Merriman
V. Nero
Detective McLean
Dorothy Bembry
Willard Hawkins
Lula Staton
Jean Best
Audrey Andrews
Damon Holmes
Valorie Bowers
Consuela Lawlers
Lisa Talcaler
Vinnie V.
Saul Bolton
Josemae Boyce
James Boyce
Kristie Beaubrun
Peter Krashes