

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

October 8, 2009

Members Present

Kim Albert
Akosua Albritton
Glinda Andrews
Edo Banach
Viola Bing
Gail Branch Muhammad
Dr. Flize Bryan
Teri Coaxum
Helen Coley
Renaye Cuyler
Diana Foster
Ede Fox
Nizjoni Granville
Jesse Hamilton
Princess James
Xeerxeema Jordan
Shalawn Langhorne
Shirley Lee
Marie Louis
Priscilla Maddox
Kwasi Mensah
Adelaide Miller
Clarine Miller
Marlene Saunders
Meredith Staton
William Suggs
Audrey Taitt-Hall
Gregory Todd
Ethel Tyus
Yves Vilus
Sharon Wedderburn
Douglas Williams

Liaisons Present

Ben Columbo, Dept. of Buildings
Carolyn Sanders James, Mayor's Office
Saadia Adossa, KCDA's Office

Members Excused

Fred Frazier
Robert Matthews
Dr. Fred Monderson
Atim Oton
Robert Puca
Patricia Scantlebury
Robert Witherwax
Vilma Zuniga

Members Absent

Julia Boyd
Holly Fuchs
Doris Heriveaux
Anyika Nance
Hasoni Pratts
Tara Lai Quinlan
Mary Reed
David Schatzkamer
Launa Thomas Bullock

Elected Officials Present

Darlene Mealy, 41st Council District
Olanike Alabi, 55th Assembly District Leader

Elected Official Reps

Ry-Ann Hermon, Assemblyman Boyland
Carl Luciano, Councilman Vann
Jervonne Singletary, Assemblyman Camara
Alfred Chiodo, Councilwoman James
Maurice Roberts, Senator Adams

CB Staff Present

Michelle George

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

Acceptance of Minutes – The minutes of the last Community Board meeting were accepted with the following correction: Ethel Tyus was omitted from the attendance list and would be added to the list of members present.

Correspondence – CB 8 newsletter and other material were distributed.

Ms. Granville asked Mr. Luis Caridad of the Neighborhood Economic Development Advocacy Project (NEDAP) to make a brief presentation on President Obama's Homeownership plan.

NEDAP – Mr. Luis Caridad

Mr. Caridad began his presentation with a brief overview of what NEDAP is and provides to the community. He stated that in the past, the organization has helped homeowners with a variety of issues, including predatory lending, liens, foreclosures, etc. Mr. Caridad also stated that foreclosures are endemic in areas highly populated by minorities, and distributed a map of New York City that detailed the areas with the highest rate of foreclosure.

He stated that in March 2009, the Obama administration launched the "Making Home Affordable" plan to help homeowners avoid foreclosure. The main goal of the plan is to provide lenders and servicers incentives to work together to make monthly payments affordable. Under the plan, homeowners of owner-occupied 1 to 4 family dwellings that are able to afford loan payments may be eligible to either modify or refinance their mortgage loans. If you are behind on your payments, have a risk of falling behind on payments due to job loss or decrease in income, have a sudden change in family financial situation, suffer from increased household expenses (i.e., unexpected medical bills or increased mortgage payments due to an adjustable rate), or even have excessive household debt, you may be eligible for a loan modification, or a change to the terms of your loan to make your monthly payment affordable. If you are current on your loan payments and the amount you owe on the loan is not more than 105% of your home's value and the mortgage loan on the property is owned or guaranteed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac, you may be able to refinance into a lower rate loan. Most lenders have signed onto the plan, which make most homeowners eligible for relief in either one of the two forms.

The first step is to obtain either of these two assistance measures is to contact your lender or loan servicer to find out if you are eligible to modify or refinance under these conditions. The most important step, however, is to avoid scams that prey on individuals seeking a fix to their problems. This is a federally financed and endorsed plan, and therefore, will not have negative ramifications and repercussions as do most scams. You can easily determine scams by being aware of promises attached to fees and even being forced to pay upfront fees for counseling or loan modification help, or pressures to sign over your deed. In the end, if you fall for either of these tricks, at the very least you will be out of much needed money, or at the worst, out of your property and still saddled with a mortgage on it.

For more information, Mr. Caridad suggested homeowners either contact 311 to find a free foreclosure prevention counselor or legal services attorney in your area that can help you determine if you are eligible under the plan and give you additional options you may be eligible for. Or you can contact NEDAP at 212-680-5100 or visit the website at www.nedap.org.

Ms. Cuyler asked if the foreclosure map applies only to single family homes and was informed that it applies only to 1 to 4 unit homes, regardless of owner occupation. Greg Todd asked if the Obama plan applied to condos or co-ops and Mr. Caridad stated that he was not sure, as with Mr. Suggs' question as to whether or not NEDAP is still partnering with the Human Rights Commission.

Ms. Granville thanked Mr. Caridad for his report 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, October 6, 2009 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. The committee discussed the following new liquor license applications:

1. The proprietors of Thirst Bar Inc. located at 629 Classon Avenue (between Atlantic Avenue and Pacific Street) made a favorable presentation before the committee complete with letters of support from local businesses and

block associations. Thirst Bar is seeking a Restaurant/Wine license for their establishment that can seat thirty-three individuals and will operate from Tuesday thru Sunday from 9 AM to Midnight. There will be an alarm system and video cameras to provide security measures for the establishment.

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

2. The proprietors of Lotus 45, Inc. located at 293 Flatbush Avenue (between St. Marks Avenue and Prospect Place) made a favorable presentation before the committee complete with letters of support from local businesses and residents in the vicinity of the establishment. Lotus 45 is seeking a Beer and Wine license and will operate Monday thru Sunday from 12:30 PM to 10 PM and will employ five people. There will be seating for a maximum of 48 individuals and video cameras will provide security for the establishment.

There were no police objections to the application and the full Board voted to support the application with a final tally of 27 in favor, 2 opposed, with no abstentions.

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

1. Grand Avenue Café Corp., 417 Prospect Place (Grand/Classon)
2. 95 south, 778 Franklin Avenue (St. John's/Lincoln)

There were no police objections to Grand Avenue Café Corp., and the committee was made aware of only minor community complaints such as noise and small group gatherings in front of 95 south. Overall, there was no objection to either establishment obtaining a renewal liquor license and the full Board voted to support the two applications with a final tally of 27 in favor, 1 opposed, with 1 abstention.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 10, 2009 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. All are invited to attend.

Housing/ULURP – Ms. Nizjoni Granville, Chair

The Housing/ULURP Committee met on Thursday, October 1, 2009 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. A presentation on the Contextual Rezoning project was made to the Brooklyn office of the Department City Planning on 9/29/09. Councilmembers Letitia James and Al Vann were in attendance. The proposal was fairly well received with some reservations on the part of City Planning regarding the development of affordable housing in the manufacturing zone along Atlantic Avenue. City Planning also appears to be of the opinion that new construction is less expensive than rehabilitating existing buildings. City Planning indicated they needed approximately 6 weeks to review the proposal and will schedule the next meeting to include the City's Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

Prospect Heights resident Wayne Bailey provided photographs showing the MTA's progress in moving the train tracks down toward Vanderbilt Avenue as part of the Atlantic yards project, and reported that the MTA is spending \$54 million to move the tracks.

Ms. Tyus made an announcement regarding the Bedford Atlantic Armory and the proposal to relocate the men's intake shelter to the site. She stated that based on community efforts along with local elected officials, an agreement was reached with Dept. of Homeless Services Commissioner Hess that the intake center will not be relocated to the armory within the year as initially planned. The issue will be revisited later on by DHS, but for now, the plans have been rejected.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 05, 2009 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. All are invited to attend.

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 informed the Board that she attended a scope meeting regarding the comfort stations at St. John's Park, and that the project should be completed by 2010.

Dean Street Playground will open to the public on Friday, October 9. Also, "It's My Park Day" will be held on Saturday, October 24, 2009. Join thousands of New Yorkers to care for and celebrate NYC's parks while enjoying free events and participating in clean-up and beautification efforts.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 10, 2009 rather than the normally scheduled first Tuesday in honor of Election Day. The meeting will be held at 6 PM at St. John's Recreation Center, located at 1251 Prospect Place, Brooklyn, NY. All are invited and encouraged to attend.

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

The Environment/Sanitation Committee met on Tuesday, September 15, 2009 but did not have any action items. Ms. Fox announced that there are multiple locations in the District presently undergoing sewer reconstruction, which will help homeowners eliminate flooding and sewer back-up issues. The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 20, 2009 at 7 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. All are invited to attend.

Youth/Family Services – Ms. Akosua Albritton, Chair

The Youth/Family Services Committee met on Wednesday, October 7, 2009 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. The committee discussed the upcoming Men's forum. Some of the topics of discussion are: Getting passed alcohol and marijuana usage; Accepting women in executive positions; Financial literacy; Job preparedness & interview skills; Gang membership; Fathering skills for young men; Relationship goals between men & women; and What men's magazines are telling/selling you. The target audience is men between the ages of 16 and 24 years of age. She urged men to attend her meetings to assist with planning the forum.

The Campaign for Summer Jobs is sponsoring a letter campaign directed at the NY Times and Associated Press to support more jobs for our youth via SYEP. This past summer, more youth, because of Federal funds, were able to participate in the program. Email brief letters in support of Federal stimulus funding to letters@nytimes.com. Make sure your name and address is on the letter, as this serves as your signature.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, November 4, 2009 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. All are invited to attend.

Police – Ms. Shalawn Langhorne, Chair

The Police Committee met on Monday, September 23, 2009 at the 77th Precinct. The committee addressed several concerns including the lack of police presence at the last general community board meeting and some parts of the community district., lack of response from the precinct and some elected officials concerning reported calls to 911 and 311, ongoing drug activity on Pacific and Nostrand, decline of quality of life issues within the community including an incident on Labor Day with a resident and Auxiliary Officer.

Committee members and community residents reported that they are not getting a response from reporting to 311 and the precinct. There are times when there is no one available in the precinct and there is no answer machine to take messages. The members feel that there is a decline amongst the relationship with the community and the precinct. Thus, it is reflective in their quality of life. Furthermore, the committee feels that a lack of response and presence from some elected officials is problematic and would like to see more engagement and resources within the community board. These resources include additional police officers, more cameras throughout the district and a decline of violent crimes.

To address these concerns, Ms. Langhorne announced that she attended a meeting last Friday with Councilmember Albert Vann and Deputy Inspector Cosgrove to discuss community issues. who seemed open to the idea of working with residents to address their concerns and fears.

An announcement was made informing the committee of the resignation of Jesse Hamilton as co-chair to the committee. The committee was asked to recommend another person. Diana Foster, a new board member expressed an interest. The committee chairperson will bring it before the Chair of the board and executive committee.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for October 19, 2009 at 7:00 PM at the 77th Precinct, located at 127 Utica Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. All are encouraged and invited to attend.

Fire/Safety – Mr. Douglas Williams, Chair

The Fire/Safety Committee met on Tuesday, October 6, 2009 at the Haitian American Day Care Center. The committee discussed recent fire statistics and trends within the District. The projected closure of 17 engine companies was temporarily shelved through Aug-Sept late budget manipulation in an effort to save about \$18 million annually. The committee stated that it would fight the proposal. In addition, the FDNY reported in September faster response times to fires. This could be due to a change in what is called 'response time' – e.g., the type of vehicle fastest to the fire, nothing to do with fighting the fire. Indeed, oftentimes the first FDNY vehicle to arrive at a location is the chief's truck, which has no equipment or apparatuses on it. However, because FDNY personnel are on the scene, it is considered a low response time.

Mr. Williams thanked the FDNY for supplying batteries for distribution at this evening's meeting. He reminded everyone in attendance to take one battery so that they can change the battery in their smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 10, 2009 at 7 PM at the Haitian American Day Care Center, located at 1491 Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. All are encouraged and invited to attend.

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

The Aging/health Committee met on Monday, October 5, 2009 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. Ms. Saunders announced that October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and reminded women to perform self breast examinations and to schedule their yearly mammogram. In addition, we are entering flu season; in order to avoid contracting the illness, and its even more dangerous cousin, H1N1, you should always practice good hygiene. Wash your hands periodically throughout the day, cough not in your hand, which can touch and spread germs at multiple points, but rather into your bent arm or on a cloth.

October is also Stroke Awareness Month. She urged everyone to pay attention to his or her health and obey warning signs of illness.

The next meeting will be Monday, November 2, 2009 at 5:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. All are invited to attend.

Education – Ms. Sharon Wedderburn, Chair

The Education Committee met on Wednesday, September 16, 2009 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation but did not have any action items. Ms. Wedderburn announced that every child that attends a NYC public school will be profiled on the website www.arisparentlink.org. The New York City Department of Education's Achievement Reporting and Innovation System (ARIS) provides a single place where our educators can go to find and study important information about your child. Principals and teachers use this information to find out how best to help your child. ARIS Parent Link makes this same important information available for you, so you can work together with your child, principal and teacher to help your child learn. ARIS Parent Link uses secure login procedures to be sure that a child's information can be seen only by authorized members of his or her family.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, October 15, 2009 at 7 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue, Brooklyn, NY. All are invited to attend.

Transportation – Dr. Frederick Monderson, Chair

The Transportation committee met on Tuesday, September 22, 2009 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation but did not have any action items. The next meeting will be Tuesday, October 27, 2009 at the Haitian American Day Care Center, located at 1491 Bedford Avenue at 7 PM. All are invited to attend.

Ms. Granville thanked the committee chairs for their reports and asked Councilwoman Darlene Mealy if she had anything to share with the Board.

Councilwoman Darlene Mealy (41st Council District)

Councilwoman Mealy thanked everyone for their show of support in helping her win the Democratic primary in September. She congratulated all the new members and Executive officers of the Board. Councilwoman Mealy stated that change begins at the grass roots level, and change cannot occur if we all do not get along. She reminded everyone how important it is to vote on November 3rd. If you know of any young people that have dropped out of school or in danger of dropping out, Brownsville Academy, an alternative school in Brownsville, is available. Only individuals between the ages of 17 and 26 with 10 credits are eligible to attend the school. To find out more information, she advised everyone to contact her Brooklyn office at 718-953-3097.

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

Public Comments

Ms. Ry-Ann Hermon, Chief of Staff for Assemblyman Boyland's office, introduced herself to the Board and announced that there are monthly advisory Board meetings at the Assemblyman's Brooklyn Office. The next meeting is this Saturday, October 10 from 10 AM to Noon at 367 Thomas Boyland Street. All are welcomed to attend.

Mr. Tyrone McDonald of Neighborhood Housing Services announced that NHS provides free homeowner counseling and mortgage services. Also, there are low-income cooperatives available for purchase at 1509 Bergen Street, a 47 unit cooperative that is presently on the open market. 24 of the 47 units must go to residents of CB 8. He distributed flyers on the specifics of the cooperative and asked everyone to look into the information available. An open house will be held on October 15th and 29th. For more information, call 718-469-4679.

Debra Griffin, Director of the Damon S. Allen Foundation announced that there are multiple businesses in the community that are being forced out by increased rent. One such business is Syl's Place, the trophy store on Nostrand Avenue. We as a community must address the situation.

Ms. Granville thanked everyone for their announcements and adjourned the meeting at 9 PM. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 12, 2009 at Marcus Garvey Nursing Home located at 810 St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn, NY at 7 PM. All are invited to attend.

GUESTS

Thaddeus Owens
Dorothy Barber
Caulette Briggs
A.R. Montgomery
D. Lyde
R. Lyde
James Caldwell
Debra Griffin
Geoffrey Davis
Christopher
Burwell
Andrea Merriman
Delia Henley
Kim Adossa
Tracy Walker
Tyrone McDonald
Ray Dawkins
Tania Khalfani
Jacqueline Welch

L. Goureia
Lee Susan
Lakisha Holland
Bertrand Lesser
Vincent Haynes
Mark Winston Griffith
Joan M. Eastmond
Andrea Harnett-Robinson
Luis Caridad
Clive Campbell
Kasha Harmon
Webster Blades
Kay Dunham
Roy Simmonds
Lula Staton
Jack Mirkinson
Hazel Hurley
Eric Steiner
Desmond Atkins

Linnette Grant
Audrey Andrews
Vera Peterson
Lisa Washington
Michelle Mercuris
Michael Yarmark
Emilia Valencia
Oriel Creese
Shirley Netram
William Hawkins
Dorothy Benbriy-Loves
Joanie Thompson
Wayne Bailey
Sara Pellegrini
Pengguang Cai
Mark Thurton
John Harris