

**Community Board No. 8
Brooklyn Children's Museum
145 Brooklyn Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11216**

November 10, 2011

Members Present

Kim Albert
Akosua Albritton
Glinda Andrews
Desmond Atkins
Leann Banks
Samantha Bernadine
Gail Branch-Muhammad
Helen Coley
Renaye Cuyler
James Ellis
Diana Foster
Fred Frazier
Nizjoni Granville
Curtis Harris
Doris Heriveaux
Xeexxema Jordan
Shalawn Langhorne
Robert Matthews
Adelaide Miller
Dr. Fred Monderson
Atim Oton
Cy Richardson
Marlene Saunders
Patricia Scantlebury
Meredith Staton
William Suggs
Launa Thomas-Bullock
Ethel Tyus
Yves Vilus
Sharon Wedderburn
Robert Witherwax
Deborah Young
Vilma Zuniga

CB Staff Present

Michelle George, District Manager
Julia Neale, Community Associate
Valerie Hodges-Mitchell, Comm. Service Aide

Member Absent

Princess Benn-James
Viola Bing
Julia Boyd
Dr. Flize Bryan
Ede Fox
Marie Louis
Priscilla Maddox
Kwasi Mensah
Alton Pierce
Angelino Pinto
Robert Puca
Mary Reed
Stacey Sheffey
Audrey Taitt-Hall
Gregory Todd

Elected Officials Present

Honorable Ola Alabi, District Leader

Elected Official's Representatives

R. Lipkind, Senator Adams's Office
Lee Church, Assemblyman Jeffries's Office
Simone Hawkins, Councilmember James's Office
Renea Murphy, Councilman Vann's Office
Anna Lipkind, Councilmember Mealy's Office

Liaisons Present

Eric Beaton, NYC Dept. of Transportation
Kate Mikuliak, NYC Dept. of Transportation
Zeph Parmenter, NYC Dept. of Transportation

Ms. Granville called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM.

CORRESPONDENCE –Information pertinent to the District was distributed.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES - The minutes of the last meeting were adopted with any necessary corrections.

BROOKLYN CHILDREN’S MUSEUM – Ms. Gwen Sumpter

Ms. Sumpter welcomed everyone to the Brooklyn Children’s Museum on behalf of President Georgina Ngozi. She encouraged guests to visit the museum with their children and/or grandchildren. Ms. Sumpter reminded everyone that a calendar of events thru the month of December is available. The Brooklyn Children’s Museum will host a pre-Thanksgiving event on November 17, 2011 which is the third Thursday of the month. There will be activities for children from 4pm-7pm.

OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT – Mr. Trevor Alexander

Mr. Alexander stated that the Office of Child Support Enforcement plays a major role in ensuring that the non-custodial parent provides financial support for their children. It also serves as a strong anti-poverty program for those who are making little to no money. Child support can help keep families financially independent and eliminate the need for cash assistance. The Office of Child Support Enforcement helps custodial parents and guardians, regardless of income and immigration status. Services include location of the non-custodial parent, summons service, custodial issues, medical support orders, and collection and enforcement of those orders.

Other services include DNA testing for \$30.00 per person. Families will be referred to a state-certified laboratory. The test will be brief and painless. It is not mandatory for both parents to be swabbed at the same time, nor do they have to go the same day as the other parent. The results will be mailed to approximately two weeks after all samples are received by the lab.

For more information, please contact Mr. Alexander at: trevor.alexander@dea.state.ny.us or 212-480-6644

FRIENDS OF BROWER PARK – Mr. Phil Hawkins

Mr. Hawkins announced that 18 months ago, Friends of Brower Park (FOBP) was formed with a mission of maintenance and beautification for the park. It went from that simple mission to a healing vehicle. He relayed three different scenarios where the park enabled help and healing for users. There have also been 3 successful “It’s My Park” days in the park, during which over 3000 tulip bulbs were planted. Senator Adams, Mr. Hawkins stated, has been very supportive in the efforts of Friends of Brower Park. Every time funds are sought, he is willing to provide. Furthermore, FOBP will be a 501c3 organization come next year, and will be able to do more in the park with private funds and public funds.

In addition to the successful planting efforts, there was also a successful skateboard area constructed in Brower Park courtesy of funds provided by Senator Adams. There have also been

movie nights in the park, Shakespeare in the Park—all of which will be continued traditions. In addition, there was a Save Our Streets (SOS) unity gathering in the park after a march through the neighborhood. SOS is on the streets, intervening and protecting youngsters from violence.

In addition to the above, FOBP is seeking to bring in additional programs such as yoga, tai chi, soccer, drumming, and even a piano series to complement the Shakespeare in the park series. The piano series was a part of “Sing for Hope,” where 88 pianos were placed in parks across the city. Brower Park was selected as one of the sites.

Mr. Hawkins announced the annual tree lighting ceremony for Brower Park on Wednesday, December 7, 2011 at 6 PM and invited everyone to attend. For more information about Brower Park, email friendsofbrowerpark@gmail.com.

Ms. Granville thanked Mr. Hawkins for his information and asked for a report from the following committees:

AGING/HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES – Ms. Marlene Saunders, Chair; Dr. Flize Bryan, Co-Chair

The Aging/Health & Human Services Committee met on Monday, November 7, 2011 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation.

Ms. Saunders explained the grading system for restaurants. An “A” grade is 0-13 points for sanitary violations, a “B” grade is 14-27 points, and a “C” grade is 28 or more points. For more information on the grading system, visit nyc.gov/health.

The Chair reminded everyone to be careful of what you eat during the holiday season and abstain from overeating. Those with health and diet issues should stick to their diets and not go overboard with the things they are not supposed to eat.

The next meeting will be Monday, December 5, 2011 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue. It will serve as the committee’s Christmas Party. All are invited to attend.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – Ms. Priscilla Maddox, Chair; Ms. Atim Oton, Co-Chair

The Economic Development Committee met on Tuesday, November 8, 2011 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. The committee discussed the following new liquor license applications:

1. The proprietor of M. Helen’s Kitchen & Bar, which will be located at 636 Carlton Avenue (between Prospect and Park Places) made a presentation before the Economic Development Committee for his establishment that is seeking a full liquor license. The bar/restaurant will operate 7 days a week from 8AM thru 11 PM and accommodate 30 seats throughout the entire establishment including a maximum of 7 seats at the bar. The maximum capacity for this location as mandated by the New York City Fire Department is 49. M. Helen’s Kitchen & Bar will employ 12 individuals from the local community

including security. Other security measures will include management and staff as well as three 24hr security cameras indoors and outdoors. The proprietors of M. Helen's Kitchen & Bar are also the owners of Burrito Bar & Kitchen which is located at 307 Flatbush Avenue (corner of Prospect Place).

M. Helen's Kitchen is not in compliance with the 500 foot rule. Presently, there are 3 other establishments within 500 feet of the site that have full liquor licenses. There were no police objections to the application, but those present at the committee meeting voted to reject the application, citing too many establishments with liquor licenses in close proximity. The proprietor of the proposed establishment made a public plea before the Board, asking it to review his track record in the community for the last 6 years. He also stated that Helen's will not be a drinking establishment; it is an eatery focusing on farm fresh food. Burrito Bar, the other establishment owned around the corner from Helen's, has received 3 commendations in the last 3 years for the greenest block in Brooklyn. The reason a full liquor license is being sought is so that the restaurant can be competitive in this current economic climate.

Ms. Banks asked what the purpose of the 500-foot rule was in terms of the community. She also asked the proprietor what would happen if he didn't obtain a liquor license. She was informed by Ms. Oton that the purpose of the rule is to make sure that one area does not become oversaturated with alcohol serving establishments. The proprietor informed her that if he fails to obtain the liquor license, he would not be able to be competitive and would probably not open.

Mr. Atkins asked if the space is vacant and for how long. He was informed that the proprietor is using two stores, one of which has been vacant for the last 6 years, the other of which was occupied by a locksmith that recently relocated.

While the committee voted to reject the application, the full Board did not support the recommendation to deny and voted to support the application with 20 members in favor of approval, 6 opposed, with 7 abstentions.

2. The proprietor of Velvet Peach Café located at 335 Flatbush Avenue (between Park and Prospect Places) made a presentation before the committee regarding their establishment that is seeking a full liquor license. Velvet Peach previously operated with a wine/beer license that has since lapsed. There will be 6 seats at the bar, and 22 additional seats throughout the café that has a maximum capacity of 56 patrons. There will be live music, karaoke, and a DJ on certain nights. Soundproofing will be installed to mitigate the noise heard by the tenants above the establishment. Velvet Peach will operate from 7 AM to 11 PM.

While Velvet Peach is in compliance with the 200 foot rule, it is not in compliance with the 500 foot rule. Presently, there are 3 other establishments within 500 feet that have full liquor licenses and a fourth that has applied for one. There were no police objections to the application and those present at the committee meeting voted to reject the application, citing too many establishments with liquor licenses in the vicinity. The full Board upheld

the committee's recommendation, voting to deny the application with 18 members in favor of denying it, 12 in favor of support, and 3 abstentions.

The committee also discussed the following renewal applications:

- a. Weatherup & Co., 589 Vanderbilt Avenue (Dean/Bergen Streets). There were no police objections to the application and those present voted to support the application with the stipulation that the owner/operator validate their backyard space to serve alcohol. The full Board voted to support the application with 29 members in favor, 3 opposed, and 1 abstention.
- b. JG Hospitality Inc., 583 Vanderbilt Avenue (corner of Dean Street). There were no police objections to the application and the full Board voted to support the application with a final tally of 29 in favor, 3 opposed, with 1 abstention.

The next meeting of the Economic Development Committee will be Tuesday, December 13, 2011 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue. All are invited to attend.

EDUCATION – Ms. Sharon Wedderburn, Chair; Mr. Kwasi Mensah, Co-Chair

The Education Committee met on Wednesday, October 19, 2011 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. Ms. Wedderburn announced that District 17, which covers part of Community Board 8, is ground zero for charter schools and co-location. Plans for charter schools and co-location are not disclosed to parents in a timely fashion. She pleaded with parents and adults that know school aged children to join their child's school Parent Teachers Association (PTA). It is imperative that there is more parental involvement in schools. Community participation is the key to keeping students out of jail and in school.

Ms. Langhorne asked how many schools in District 8 are slated for closure, and was informed that only one physically located in the District is scheduled: PS 22 located on St. Marks Avenue at Classon Avenue. Two other schools on the outskirts of the District, PS 316 and PS 161 are also slated for closure.

The next meeting of the Education Committee will be held on Wednesday, November 16, 2011 at 7 PM followed by December 21, 2011, both at 7 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue. All are encouraged to attend.

ENVIRONMENT/SANITATION – Ms. Ede Fox, Chair; Ms. Helen Coley, Co-Chair

The Environment/Sanitation committee met on Tuesday, October 18, 2011 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation but did not have a report. The next meeting will be held on November 15, 2011 followed by December 20, 2011 at 7 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue. All are invited to attend.

FIRE/SAFETY – Mr. Robert Witherwax, Chair

The Fire/Safety Committee met on Wednesday, November 9, 2011 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. The Chair implored the public for greater participation and membership. He also asked people to submit problem areas: buildings that could be fire traps, that could be perfect sites for squatters, dilapidated buildings that may have structural issues, and the like. These buildings should be watched with a keen eye to prevent fires.

Ms. Tyus suggested that representatives from affected city agencies such as the HPD Anti-Abandonment unit and Landmarks Preservation Commission be present at the next meeting. She cited 951 Prospect Place and 119 Kingston Avenue as two prime examples of vacant buildings that could be fire traps.

The next meeting of the Fire/Safety Committee will be held on Wednesday, December 14, 2011 at 7 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue. All are encouraged to attend.

HOUSING/ULURP – Ms. Nizjoni Granville, Chair; Ms. Ethel Tyus, Co-Chair

The Housing/ULURP committee met on Thursday, November 3, 2011 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. The committee discussed the following Landmark Preservation Commission applications:

1. 597 Vanderbilt Avenue—Prospect Heights Historic District: The owner of the property is seeking support for his venture to install new storefront infill and signage. 597 Vanderbilt Avenue is an Italianate style store and flats building designed by John Doherty and built circa 1878. Owner Mr. Robert Cody (who is also the architect on the project) appeared to request the Board's support for LPC's issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness for changing the façade to thin steel frame columns. Mr. Cody has been working with LPC and has already presented the drawings but not the renderings. The design has been kept in harmony with the other facades on the streetscape and will not include an awning or a gate. The premises will be leased to a Japanese restaurant—Inaka—that will have a backlit sign highlighting the lettering. Mr. Cody's proposal has been reviewed by the Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council's Landmarks committee, and they have approved the project.

Based on the committee's recommendation, the full Board voted to support the application with 32 in favor, 1 opposed, with 3 abstentions.

2. 580 Carlton Avenue—Prospect Heights Historic District: The owner of the property is seeking support for his venture to construct a rear yard addition, reconstruct the facades, and alter the front door and stoop. 580 Carlton Avenue is an Italianate style wood frame row house built circa prior to 1855 with later alterations. Ms. Rachel Frankel, Architect, appeared to present the owner, Mr. Vladum Brodsky's application. Mr. Brodsky plans to reside on the property with his family. The rear yard addition will be visible from the street. Notwithstanding the encroachment on the rear yard open space, the neighboring landowner indicated that he had few reservations on the rear yard addition given that the proposed project will curtail the demolition by neglect that is presently occurring on the property. The abutting house does not have windows on the side facing the rear yard

addition which will have one window. Amongst other major changes, the proposed renovations will align the front door lintel with that of its neighbor and deepen the floor at ground level so the ceiling height meets building code at 8 feet instead of the current 6.5 feet. Members of the Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council in attendance were supportive of the proposal.

Ms. Oton asked what the square footage of the addition would be, and was informed by the owner that it would be about 63% of the current size of the house, including the cellar. The usable space would be about 50%. The cellar addition will be used for mechanical space.

A community resident asked for what purpose would the 1st and 2nd floor additions be used for, and was informed by the owner that the kitchen and dining room would comprise the 1st floor, and a bedroom on the 2nd floor.

Based on the recommendation, the full Board voted to support the application with 30 members in favor, 2 opposed, with 1 abstention.

The next meeting of the Housing/ULURP Committee will be Thursday, December 1, 2011 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue. All are invited to attend.

PARKS – Ms. Glinda Andrews, Chair; Ms. Kim Albert, Co-Chair

The Parks Committee met on November 1, 2011 at the St. John's Recreation Center. Ms. Andrews announced that the director at St. John's Recreation Center, Ms. Vernetta Diggs, will be retiring at the end of the year.

She also stated that there is a need for community members to lobby Councilwoman Mealey to allocate funds to renovate the playground area at Lincoln Terrace Park instead of allocating funds for the tennis courts. The Councilwoman needs to know that people care about the state of the playground just as much as the tennis association cares about the state of the tennis courts.

The next meeting will be held on December 6, 2011 at 6 PM at the St. John's Recreation Center located at 1251 Prospect Place. All are invited to attend.

POLICE – Ms. Shalawn Langhorne, Chair

The Police Committee met on Monday, October 17, 2011 at the 77th Precinct. Deputy Inspector Capocci and Senator Eric Adams both made presentations at the meeting. She stated that the time is now to begin putting information gathered about the T.B.O.C. (Take Back Our Community) program into effect. Organize your blocks, select block captains, and report crime.

The next meeting of the Police Committee will be Monday, November 21, 2011 followed by Monday, December 19, 2011 at the 77th Precinct, located at 127 Utica Avenue. All are invited to attend.

TRANSPORTATION – Dr. Frederick Monderson, Chair

At the October 13, 2011 Community Board 8 general meeting, the NYC Dept. of Transportation and NYC Transit made a Power Point presentation regarding Select Bus Service (SBS). SBS will replace regular southbound service on the B44 bus route along Nostrand Avenue. The northbound limited B44 will operate along Rogers Avenue and the northbound local B44 will continue to operate along New York Avenue.

SBS entails the following: Bus lanes where it makes sense, signal priority at traffic lights, and fare prepayment to speed boarding of buses. Prepayment will occur at a kiosk in the bus stop. Transfers for SBS prepayment will work the same as if you swiped your metrocard on the bus. The only difference is that you swipe your card at the kiosk and receive a receipt to present when requested. Occasionally, bus monitors will check to make sure that riders have their ticket signaling that they prepaid at the kiosk to board the bus legally. There will be a \$100 fine for fare evasion. In the beginning of the process, however, bus monitors will show leniency as people learn the system and get accustomed to it. Each bus will have three doors for entry and exit.

The left most lane of traffic on Nostrand Avenue will be a moving lane at certain points of the day in certain areas. Other times, it is a bus only lane. This will help keep traffic moving and the bus operating smoothly. On the right side of the street, there may be truck loading zones. At certain points, the bus loading zone will result in an extension of the curb into the street.

The Transportation committee discussed the presentation at their meeting on September 27, 2011 and October 25, 2011 and supported the plan provided DOT and MTA NYC Transit consider reopening the Bedford Avenue entrance to the A train station. Ms. Oton asked if the consideration was being taken into account and was informed that a study was being conducted.

Ms. Davis asked if there would be a full educational program in high schools to teach the students how the system operates. Mr. Beaton of the Dept. of Transportation informed her that there would be a representative at every stop in the beginning to explain how the system works. Pamphlets will also be distributed to high schools for students.

The full Board voted to support the SBS project with a final tally of 26 members in favor, 2 opposed, with 4 abstentions.

The next meeting of the Transportation Committee will be held on Tuesday, November 22, 2011 at 7 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 727 Classon Avenue. There will not be a meeting for the month of December.

YOUTH/FAMILY SERVICES – Ms. Akosua Albritton, Chair

The Youth/Family committee met November 2, 2011 at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation. In attendance were Bill Suggs, Angeli Rasbury, Audrey Taitt-Hall, Princess James, Barry Cooper, Nicole Raymond and Akosua Albritton.

The committee reviewed NYS legislation on alcoholic beverages known as “Alcopops.” Alcopops contain between 7% and 12% alcohol content which is higher than beer and the packaging is designed to attract young consumers. Currently, these beverages are sold in

convenience stores, placed in the refrigerated display cases beside wine coolers. In some instances, they can be found beside fruit juices and other non-alcoholic drinks.

The legislation seeks to move Alcopops off convenience stores shelves and into liquor stores, thereby requiring NYS-issued identification as proof of age to purchase. The body discussed the strength and weakness of the legislature as written. Angeli Rasbury made a motion to support New York State legislation on Alcopops with modifications that reclassify Alcopops as spirits, limiting sales to liquor stores and that the reclassification is based on a specified alcohol volume threshold. Princess James seconded it. The committee supported the legislation with a vote of 7 yes, 0 abstain, 0 no.

The committee also discussed the upcoming youth conference. Topics will include resume and essay writing workshops for middle-school age children because preparation for higher education needs to begin at this age, as well as fragmented families and communities and grandparents raising their grandchildren.

The Chair also announced that there is a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Out of School Time programs. The deadline for submission is December 6, 2011. The RFP is for technical assistance and vending opportunities. It is a 39 month contract starting in September 2012. Unfortunately, the price per child is very low. Visit www.nyc.gov/dycd for more information or to complete the RFP.

Metro PCS Leaders and Scholarship Program is offering a \$2500 scholarship to students in the metro NYC area in 11th and 12th grades. Visit <http://sms.scholarshipamerica.org/metropcs/> for more information or to apply. The deadline for applying is November 30, 2011.

The next Youth/Family Services Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 7, 2011 at 6:30 PM at the Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation, located at 727 Classon Avenue. All are invited to attend.

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

Ms. Olanike Alabi, District Leader, announced that on November 17, 2011, the Teen Challenge Center is hosting a community food drive for 2 pantries in the District. There is a strong desire and request for food assistance in the community, and it is up to each person capable of providing to do so to help their fellow humans in need.

Mr. James Ellis announced that November 26, 2011 is Small Business Saturday, a nationwide program designed to promote support for local businesses. It is a great opportunity to help support small business rather than large chains. You can register your American Express card, and if the business you're shopping at has registered as well, you get \$25 back for spending over \$25 in the store that participates.

Ms. Emi Wang of the Citizens Committee for New York City announced "Love Your Block Grant Awards". Love Your Block Grants range from \$500-\$1000 and help with block transformations and beautifications. Support from certain city agencies is given as part of the grant. To download an application, please visit

www.citizensnyc.org/grants/love_your_block.html. To learn more about the grant, contact Saleen Shah at 212.822.9566 or via email at sshah@citizensnyc.org.

Mr. William Suggs announced that the American Association of Blacks in Energy is accepting scholarship applications for the summer energy academy for middle school students. It is an opportunity to introduce youth to the energy industry. For more information or to apply for the scholarship, visit www.aabe.org.

Ms. Marlene Saunders announced that the YMCA has a free program for diabetics and pre-diabetics. Participants can receive help and nutrition information for dealing with the ailment.

Ms. Lisa Fitzpatrick, Deputy Commissioner of the Human Resources Administration stated that HRA has made a number of improvements in how people can apply for food stamps. An office visit is no longer required to apply; it can be done online or via telephone interview, and also through Access NYC. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/hra.

Ms. Granville thanked Deputy Commissioner Fitzpatrick for attending and providing such helpful information. She thanked everyone for attending and wished everyone a happy and healthy holiday season and adjourned the meeting at 9:45 PM. The next meeting of Community Board No. 8 will be held on Thursday, December 8, 2010 at the Haitian American Day Care Center, located at 1491 Bedford Avenue at 7 PM. All are invited to attend.

Guests

Trevor Alexander, Child
Support Enforcement
Troy Schneider
Zeph Parmenter
Alexa B
Nicholas Kaufmann
Maurice Lee
Geraldine Buchanan
Thomas Rogers
Tyrell Jones
Valerie Nero-Reid
Veronica Nero
Betty Davis
Ralph Poynter
Erick Thomas
Lawrence Brown

Hellen King-Denman
Hazel Hurley
Christopher Brown
Roy Simmons
D. Duke
Suvro Banerji
E Thomas
Antony Taylor
Willard Hawkins
Dorothy Bembry-Guet
Earlene Hope
Myrna Despyve
Emi Wang
Kendra Elvis
Lizzie Dewan
Jerri Whitehead

Kesha Harmon
Rebekah Alexander
Sophonie M
Dieynaba Sy
Marlon Peterson
Ruby-Beth B
Kimberly Jean
Mark Thurton
Shanice James
Francine B
Keziah S
Nickeisha G
Dwight S
Shyan James
Akedah F