

**Community Board 8
Webex Virtual Meeting
January 14, 2021**

6:15 PM

Members Present

Kiermoni Allison
Desmond Atkins
Lisa Atkinson
Wayne Bailey
Princess Benn-James
Gail Branch-Muhammad
John Buckholz
Robert Callahan
Nora Daniel
James Ellis
Kevin Farley
Andrea Ferris
Fred Frazier
Drew Gabriel
Tamika Gibbs
Nizjoni Granville
Igenie Harris-Blenman
Marva Henry
Xeerxeema Jordan
Sarah Lazur
Kalvis Mikelsteins
Robert Puca
Adam Sachs
Audrey Taitt-Hall
Mark Thurton
Greg Todd
Ethel Tyus
Gib Veconi
Kimberly Watson
Irsa Weatherspoon
Robert Witherwax
Deborah Young

Members Absent/Excused

Glinda Andrews
Julia Boyd
Hanjy Charles
Helen Coley
Regina Kinsey
Mireille Lemaine
Elaine Mahoney
Yahya Raji
Brian Saunders
Meredith Staton
Karmisha Superville
Yves Vilus
Sharon Wedderburn
Vilma Zuniga

Elected Officials Present

Senator Zellnor Myrie, 20th SD
Senator Stefani Zinerman, 25th SD
Assemblywoman Diana Richardson, 43rd AD

Elected Official Representatives Present

Kim Robinson, Councilwoman Alicka Ampry-Samuel
Karen Chambers, District Attorney Eric Gonzalez
Godfrey Bayalama, Senator Zellnor Myrie
Orlando Ross, Congresswoman Yvette Clark
Lucien Allen, Councilwoman Laurie Cumbo

CB 8 Staff Present

Michelle George, District Manager
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

The regular meeting of Community Board 8 was called to order at 6:20 PM by Ms. Ethel Tyus, Chairperson.

Roll Call

Acceptance of Minutes – The minutes of the December 2020 meeting were accepted with the following changes to the attendance: addition of Kiermoni Allison and Drew Gabriel to Members Present as both were left off, and changing the attendance status of Kimberly Watson from Absent/Excused to Present.

Correspondence – The District office forwarded information to the community in lieu of a monthly newsletter, which was not available at the time of the meeting.

Updates from Elected Officials

Assemblywoman Stefani Zinerman of the 56th Assembly District, thanked Board members and community residents for their volunteerism and hard work. She announced that as the freshman Assembly person, she would maintain her office in Restoration Plaza, which is the location of the previous administration for the seat, but will move into a different office space. Currently, office staff is working remotely, but they go into the office often to handle work assignments that cannot be handled remotely.

Just completing her first week in office, Assemblywoman Zinerman stated that her Chief of Staff is Jarvis Handley, the contact number is 718-399-7690, the email is zinermans@nyassembly.gov. Hiring and training of constituent liaisons continues, and the entire staff should be available for introduction at the February general meeting.

Assemblywoman Zinerman announced that she has re-introduced a number of bills initially sponsored by Senator Montgomery and Assemblywoman Tremaine Wright. The bills include Pathways to Graduation, Raising the Age Legislation, and Homeowner Protection Bills. She was appointed to five committees, four of which were of her choosing. The NYS Aging Committee, where she looks forward to working on legislation to help make the state a wonderful place for older adults; Agriculture Committee, citing that the COVID-19 Pandemic has illustrated just how important health and healthy eating habits are, and also the importance of viewing agriculture as an important career path; the Labor Committee; People with Disabilities Committee; and the final committee was just made permanent recently as a committee versus a subcommittee, the Tourism, Arts, Parks, and Sports Development Committee.

Finally, the Assemblywoman stated that she looks forward to having COVID conversations, especially about the vaccine and dispelling fears around it.

Senator Zellnor Myrie from the 20th Senatorial District wished everyone a Happy New Year, hoping that everyone is staying safe as the pandemic rages on. He stated that he was personally shaken up watching the events at the Capitol the previous week and how people responded to it. The pandemic is getting worse in many areas due to lack of coherent leadership to follow. However, New York State is in great shape and is fighting back against it, leading the health charge for other states to follow.

Recently, New York State passed the strongest eviction moratorium legislation in the nation to stop home foreclosure. Homeowners and tenants alike can submit hardship declaration to landlords and mortgage companies to stop foreclosure and eviction due to lack of funds to pay. In the coming days, the Senate will be passing a commercial version of the hardship declaration to keep commercial spaces open.

Like Assemblywoman Zinerman's office, Senator Myrie informed the Board that his office is still closed and staff working remotely, but appointments can be scheduled if an issue cannot be resolved over the phone.

Senator Myrie stated that New York State is facing an extremely large budget deficit and gap for this coming fiscal year. There are ways to close the gap and fill the deficit, but they will all require cooperation. There are a large contingency of wealthy people that have fared very well during the pandemic, achieving massive profits, but that have not paid their fair share in taxes. Senator Myrie

stated that he is hopeful that government legislators will require the wealthy to pay a bit more as they can afford to do so, as a short-term tax increase will provide necessary financial assistance.

Mr. Thurton asked if candidates that apply for the hardship would have any defects on their credit report cleared up. He was informed that the hardship does limit credit reporting companies from harping on a poor payment history if a person has applied for the COVID hardship declaration; however, full credit protection must be finalized by the federal government.

Dr. Lazur thanked Senator Myrie for supporting the Housing Justice for All platform, and asked if the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act (TOPA) would be part of the legislation. Senator Myrie informed her that TOPA will be introduced shortly in the Senate by himself as the sponsor. If a building is up for sale, he agreed that the tenant(s) should have opportunity to purchase it, especially as the housing market is distressed.

Princess James inquired about working tenants that have not had a disruption in income during COVID that refuse to pay their rent, recounting an issue that she has been having as a small landlord getting her tenant to pay rent for the last few years. Senator Myrie informed her that tenants that cannot prove hardship due to COVID are not eligible for the COVID hardship, and also cannot use COVID as their reasoning during the moratorium. In fact, such tenants are not protected by the eviction moratorium at all. To prevent fraud, all documents in the COVID hardship application are legal and binding.

Assemblywoman Diana Richardson from the 43rd Assembly District echoed Senator Myrie, stating that it is imperative during the legislation session that legislators focus on legislation that fosters equity, not pitting one group over another as more important or less important than another. The goal is to move forward together to ensure an equitable response to the global pandemic.

The Assemblywoman announced that she serves on a number of committees, all of which are important in garnering equity. She is the Chair of the Committee on Government Administration, and a member of the following: Banks; Corporations, Authorities, and Commissions; Education; labor; Mental Health; Small Business; and the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Caucus. She welcomed the junior member, Assemblywoman Zinerman, and stated she looks forward to doing great work together.

Finally, Assemblywoman Richardson stated that her district office is looking to move to a new location as the ceiling has collapsed multiple times. If anyone knows of a space conducive to her needs, please contact her office at District43@nyassembly.gov.

Ms. Branch-Muhammad thanked the Assemblywoman for her assistance in having fresh food delivered to seniors in the district, especially to the seniors at David Chavis Apartments.

Ms. Tyus thanked the elected officials for their updates and asked representatives if they had anything to share.

Elected Official Representatives

Ms. Karen Chambers from Kings County District Attorney's office brought greetings on behalf of DA Eric Gonzalez. The District Attorney will be hosting a Human Trafficking Awareness Event from January 25th thru 27th that includes training on spotting human trafficking to be able to report and assist. An official flyer will be emailed to the district office for distribution.

Ms. Kim Robinson from Councilwoman Alicka Ampry-Samuel's office wished everyone a Happy New Year. She informed the Board that applications for non-profit funding is open and will close on February

16th. For more information on how to apply and who is eligible, call 718-953-3097. Finally, staff continues to work remotely; however, an appointment can be scheduled if necessary. The office number will re-route callers accordingly.

Mr. Orlando Ross from Congresswoman Yvete Clarke's office announced that the Congresswoman is in favor of a second impeachment of Donald Trump, and is encouraging Senators to support the House initiative that recently passed. He also announced that the Congress has passed another COVID Relief Bill, and everyone should be looking forward to getting additional assistance. Included in the new relief bill that the Senate will need to pass is a critically needed eviction moratorium. Included are provisions for small businesses in the Paycheck Protection Program. Finally, Congress is currently working on DACA immigrant legislation to have it not only reinstated, but also strengthened.

Ms. Tyus thanked the elected official representatives for the information and invited Ms. Delicia Marshall, Community Liaison with NYC Health and Hospitals, to make a presentation on the small business initiative, "Gotham Health Works," provide an update on the Crown Heights Health Clinic located at 1218 Prospect Place, and give an update on COVID testing locations.

Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC) – Ms. Delicia Marshall, Community Liaison

Ms. Marshall announced that HHC offers many services to residents, including adult medicine, OB/GYN, pediatric care, and extensive COVID testing among others. COVID testing is available at several sites in Brooklyn and across New York City. COVID testing is free for everyone, and as such, testing is encouraged. Ms. Marshall asked her colleague, Michelene Baker, to discuss the HHC program, Gotham Health Works (GHW).

Ms. Baker announced that GHW offers many services including primary care, dental care, pediatric care, and behavioral health care. GSW has been on the frontlines helping small businesses stay open during the pandemic by providing the "PPE Starter Kit," which includes sneeze guards, window decals, stickers for the floor, masks, and sanitizer for staff.

A member asked if HHC and GHW are offering vaccinations at their locations. It was stated that vaccines will be offered, but the agency is still following CDC guidelines and protocols for rollout eligibility.

Ms. Tyus thanked Ms. Marshall and Ms. Baker for the information and encouraged businesses to take advantage of the PPE Starter Kit and other offerings. She then invited Ms. Stephanie Hill-Wilchfort from the Brooklyn Children's Museum to make a presentation on the Museum's Rooftop Planter Project.

Brooklyn Children's Museum – Ms. Stephanie Hill-Wilchfort, President and CEO

Ms. Hill-Wilchfort announced that the museum is still open despite the ongoing pandemic. She thanked the community for its support over the last few months. Despite reduced hours, the museum is open on weekends and will have free community hours on Thursday starting in February. Entry is by timed ticket only, and tickets must be purchased in advance. This allows slots to be reserved for patrons to maximize attendance for the day.

Regarding the rooftop planters, Ms. Hill-Wilchfort stated that the planters and greenery on the roof were installed many years ago as temporary structures. The museum is currently trying to make the structures permanent as they have been well-received by visitors and make the rooftop not only beautiful, but also more accommodating during events. The canopy has already been approved and was quite beneficial during the COVID pause for events held outdoors. She presented a slideshow that

provided not only illustrations of the planters, but also what the planters look like in real time. All structures are movable if necessary.

Mr. Ellis inquired why the Public Design Commission has oversight over the rooftop space that is not part of the public realm. He was informed that PDC has oversight due to the city ownership of the building. Additionally, Mr. Ellis stated that with his work with the North Flatbush Avenue BID, he realized that the planters used on the street for beautification need to be elevated to allow for proper drainage and cleaning to prevent the buildup of mold and mildew. He asked if the museum had a plan for this or if the planters were already elevated. He was informed that the museum has a contract with Future Green, a landscaping company that does yearly maintenance. Finally, Mr. Ellis inquired as to whether or not the museum had plans on commodifying the rooftop space, especially with service of libations. He was informed that at the start of the pandemic, the museum amicably terminated contact with a local vendor that had been contracted to provide food and beverages during events. The museum will open an RFP, or request for proposals to partner again with a local vendor.

After a few additional questions and answers, Mr. Todd asked if the museum would be willing to partner with some of the gardeners at Imani Garden, many of whom are active perennial planting bed partners and herbalists, to allow them to assist with selecting plantings and labeling of the existing plants. Ms. Hill-Wilchfort suggested that they speak offline to coordinate.

Mr. Ellis made a motion to support the proposal as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Branch-Muhammad, and carried with a final tally of 26 in favor, 0 opposed, with 1 abstention.

Ms. Tyus thanked Ms. Hill-Wichfort for the information and asked for a report from the following committees:

Land Use Committee – Ms. Ethel Tyus, Chair

The Land Use Committee met on Thursday, January 7, 2021 via Webex. The committee discussed the following applications:

1. LPC application for full demolition of existing building at 285 Kingston Avenue, Crown Heights North Historic District

There was no appearance by any representative for this application nor any documents provided. The Crown Heights North Association provided a letter withholding support for the demolition. On motion made by Gib Veconi and seconded by Irsa Weatherspoon, the Committee voted unanimously 15 in favor to withhold support for the proposed demolition. We hope the full Board will support the Committee's recommendation.

Mr. Ellis made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bailey and carried with a final tally of 29 in favor, 0 opposed, with 0 abstentions.

2. Re-visiting LPC Application LPC-19-41363 for a Certificate of Appropriateness to Legalize a Door and Small Terrace on Rear Façade for Rear Deck at 294 Albany Avenue, (Crown Heights North Historic District)

Miriam Kapanade presented for Alexander Lotovsky on the owner's plans for: exterior renovation and front façade restoration, entry door replacement; window and brickmold replacement; and a small rear-yard deck over an existing one-story extension. Given that this was a second attempt to review the

plans for this project, the Committee had some familiarity with the overall concept. The Crown Heights North Association provided a letter of no objection. Ms. Kapanade indicated that the rear wall over the sliding door to the deck will be painted beige, and not the black paint in the photo provided. The sliding door to the proposed rear deck is not visible from a public thoroughfare. On motion made by Robert Puca and seconded by Gib Veconi, the Committee voted 13 in favor of support with one abstention. We hope the full Board will support the Committee's recommendation.

Mr. Ellis made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Veconi and carried with a final tally of 27 in favor, 1 opposed, with 0 abstentions.

Other items discussed in committee included a BSA (Board of Standards and Appeals) application for Eastern Athletic Club (17 Eastern Parkway), seeking to 1) extend the term of a previously granted Variance (§72-21) for the continued operation of a Physical Culture Establishment (Eastern Athletic) which expired on May 19, 2017; 2) extend the time to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy which expired on December 14, 2011; 3) amend the BSA's conditions on term; and 4) waive the Rules for R8X zoning district. The item was tabled pending additional information and corrections to the application. Also, the committee heard a presentation from Elie Pariente of EMP Capital Group, accompanied by architect Nick Liberis, on a project that they have begun to plan for 1034-1042 Atlantic Ave. (between Classon Ave. and Grand Ave.). This was a pre-ULURP discussion, as they will be filing a private rezoning application; the proposed building would have an FAR of 7 on one side, and an FAR of 8.5 on the other. Pariente and Liberis suggested that the ground floor could house a nonprofit-run youth center, but sought community feedback on the idea, and expressed interest in signing a binding community benefit agreement (CBA) analogous to the one they signed for the Grand Ave and Pacific St project. Questions from the meeting attendees involved the FAR sought, infrastructure needs in the area, the appropriateness of a public seating area alongside the traffic of Atlantic Ave. Meeting attendees also called attention to the M-Crown resolution's zoning proposals regarding FAR (6-7) and use category restrictions, recalling the organizing principle of enabling job creation. Pariente and Liberis said that they will return with a fuller presentation for the February Land Use Committee meeting.

The next Land Use Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, February 4, 2021 via Webex. Details can be found on the Board's website calendar.

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

The SLAC Committee met on Monday, January 4, 2021 via Webex. The committee discussed the following applications:

A. RENEWAL LICENSES:

- Imperial Bikers, 652 Franklin Avenue (Full)
- Oxalis, 791 Washington Avenue (Full)
- Sunshine Co, 780 Washington Avenue (full—sidewalk café)
- Washington Commons, 434 Park Place (full—outdoor space)

The committee voted to support the above four renewal licenses as presented with any corresponding documentation received. All was received by the District office and forwarded to the committee. The committee hopes the full Board will support their recommendation.

As owner of Imperial Bikers, Ms. Gibbs announced that she would be recusing herself from the vote. Dr. Lazur made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Witherwax and carried with a final tally of 28 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, with 1 recusal.

B. Renewal Application for Finn's Corner, 660 Washington Avenue – Full license

There was extensive discussion on this application as the establishment has used its backyard w/o an appearance to CB8 or documents stipulating legal use of this space. There are also a litany of complaints from noise to illegal use of the backyard and a lack of response from CB8 correspondence. However, the committee voted to support application w/o use of backyard until method of operation changes with a final vote of 7 in favor, 5 opposed, with 1 abstention in hopes that the full Board supports its recommendation.

Mr. Veconi informed the Board that it appears as though the bar owners have moved some televisions to the sidewalk.

Mr. Bailey made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gibbs and carried with a final tally of 26 in favor, 2 opposed, with 1 abstention.

C. New Application for Love Republic d/b/a The Nuaa Table, 576 Vanderbilt Avenue/638 Bergen Street –Full License

Details:

- Indoor seating with 12 Tables with 28 Seats; 1 Bar with 5 Seats; max capacity 33
- Hours of operation Sun-Thurs: 11am-11pm, Fri & Sat: 11am-12am.
- Speaker system for background music
- Outdoor seating available in two fenced in patios within the lot line around the perimeter of the building. The seating capacity is 12 to 16 seats total in both spaces (Vanderbilt Avenue: 66' x 5': 4-5 Tables / 8-10 Seats; Bergen Street: 15' x 5': 1-2 Tables / 4-6 Seats)
- The outdoor space will have the same hours of operation as indoor
- Proposed placement of speakers outside

The committee voted to support the new liquor license application with the condition that the applicant remove the outdoor speakers, and amend outdoor hours to 10 PM Sunday thru Wednesday and 11 PM Thursday thru Saturday. The vote carried 12 in favor with 1 abstention. The committee hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Mr. Bailey made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Veconi and carried with a final tally of 27 in favor, 0 opposed, with 1 abstention.

- D. Defacto Denials:** The committee voted to withhold support for the renewal application or King Tai, 1095 Bergen Street and Inaka, 597 Vanderbilt Avenue as the applicants did not appear at the meeting or send documentation. The vote in favor of withholding support was 13 in favor.

The committee hopes the full Board will support its recommendation.

There was extensive discussion on King Tai's defacto denial, culminating with a separation of the two items for the vote. The representative for King Tai stated that they did not receive any notification of their hearing, followed by a statement that COVID should cause the Board to soften their denial stance. Board member Robert Callahan suggested that the Board support the renewal application since the

establishment's representative attended the full Board meeting and explained the situation. District office staff verified email addresses with the representative.

Mr. Bailey made a motion to support the committee's original recommendation to not support either of the two renewal applications despite King Tai's allegations. The motion was seconded by Mr. Todd and failed with a final vote of 11 in favor, 9 opposed, with 8 abstentions.

Motion bailey, second todd

Mr. Witherwax made a motion to support the committee's recommendation on Inaka, to not support the application due to the applicant's failure to appear and send information. The motion was seconded by Mr. Veconi and carried unanimously.

Ms. Branch-Muhammad made a motion to send a letter to the SLA on behalf of King Tai, stating that they did not appear before CB 8, but the business has been an asset to the community, and the Board subsequently supports its recommendation. The motion was supported by Mr. Mikelsteins and carried with a final tally of 19 in favor, 3 opposed, with 4 abstentions.

Youth and Education – Ms. Nora Daniel, Interim-Chair; Ms. Marva Brown, Interim-Vice Chair

Ms. Daniel announced that the Youth and Education Committee are currently working on a series of youth directed contests, and their upcoming meetings will be centered on organizing them. The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 9th via Webex, details of which can be found on the CB 8 website calendar.

Environment, Sanitation, Transportation (EST) – Mr. Robert Witherwax, Chair; Ms. Irsa Weatherspoon, Vice Chair

Mr. Witherwax announced that the EST Committee will meet on January 26th via Webex. The committee will discuss two local streets projects, including the Open Streets and Open Restaurants Initiatives. Details of the meeting can be found on the CB 8 website calendar.

Health and Human Services – Ms. Elaine Mahoney, Chair; Ms. Tamika Gibbs, Vice-Chair

Ms. Gibbs announced that the Health Committee met on December 17th and discussed a number of potential meeting presentations. At the next meeting on January 21st, the committee will hear a presentation by Ms. Kimberly Watson on youth trauma.

Additionally, Ms. Gibbs announced that NYC Health and Hospitals Corporations (HHC) sites offer free and quick COVID testing. She encouraged everyone to visit an HHC site for COVID testing rather than flooding urgent care centers with testing requests.

Details for the next meeting can be found on the Board's website calendar.

Housing (Advocacy) – Ms. Nizjoni Granville, Chair

Ms. Granville announced that the next Housing Committee meeting will be held jointly with the Land Use Committee to continue discussing the HPD lots on Bergen and Dean Streets. Ms. Granville also announced that the committee will be moving forward with their letter writing campaign to the elected officials.

Public Safety –Mr. Mark Thurton, Chair

Mr. Thurton announced that the Public Safety Committee will continue to meet monthly on the 4th Monday of the month. Mr. Ellis informed the Board that the 78th Precinct has a new commanding officer, promoted from the Executive Officer position. He informed the Board that the CO of the 78th will be on military duty the next few weeks, and that an interim CO will be in place until he returns.

Seniors –Ms. Gail Branch-Muhammad, Chair; Ms. Regina Kinsey, Vice Chair

Ms. Branch-Muhammad stated that the Seniors committee did not meet in January. She is working with the District office to create a generic flyer with call-in information for upcoming meetings that they can keep from month to month. The next meeting will be February 3rd via freeconferencecall.com. The committee will play Name that Tune.

Ms. Henry informed Ms. Branch-Muhammad that an elderly member of the Public Safety committee attended their last meeting and mentioned another active member that had passed away due to malnutrition. Ms. Henry stated that as a Board, we need to take a more active role in checking in on prideful shut-ins that might reject outright help.

Ms. Tyus thanked all committee chairs for the information and asked members to keep Ms. Glinda Andrews in prayer as she recently lost her sister. She then opened the floor for public comments.

Ms. Granville announced that the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) has made all of their programming available virtually. This allows more people to be able to participate in programming this year, thus widening the net of interest.

With no further information to be discussed, the meeting was adjourned at 9 PM. The next meeting will be held on February 11th at 6 PM via Webex, details of which can be found on the Board's calendar and website.