

**Community Board 8
Weeksville Heritage Center
158 Buffalo Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11213**

September 11, 2025

Members Present

Akua Aidoo
Sharon Alexis-Pierre
Peter Anekwe
Princess Benn
Gail Branch-Muhammad
Barbara Cofield
Dian Duke
Benny Faygen
Drew Gabriel
Tamika Gibbs
Nizjoni Granville
Mohammed Hassan
Jamell Henderson
Jennifer Jordan
Frances Langley
Robert Lapointe
Lisa Maldonado
William Meehan
Kwasi Mensah
Fior Ortiz-Joyner
Taraya Pettway
Robert Puca
Yahya Raji
Conor Ross
Brian Saunders
Robin Smith
Meredith Staton
Mark Thurton
Ryan Tucker
Briana Uwa
Gib Veconi
Kimberly Watson
Irsa Weatherspoon
Sharon Wedderburn
Robert Witherwax
Deborah Young

Members Absent/Excused

Isaac Andino
Tafari John-King
Dr. Sarah Lazur
Mimi Mitchell
Anika Roach
Ezra Roth
Lesley Steele
Dina Tate
Katie Taylor
Dana Thompson
Esmond Turnbull
Regina Wilson

Elected Officials Present

Senator Zellnor Myrie, 20th Senate District
Assemblywoman Stefani Zinerman, 56th Assembly District
Councilmember Crystal Hudson, 35th Council District
Councilmember Darlene Mealy, 41st Council District

Elected Official Representatives

Connie Little, Councilmember Mealy's office
Tendai Watkins, Assemblymember Zinerman's office
Janay Pierre, Councilmember Hudson's office
Sean Gurl, Assemblymember Carroll's office
Amber Stephens, Assemblymember Stephani Zinerman
Justin Freeman, Assemblymember Souffrant-Forrest office
Uri Fraenkel, Mayor's Office
Pierre Gedeon, Mayor's Office
Adrienne Williams, Assemblymember Walker's office
Nicole Wright, Assemblymember Zinerman's office

CB8 Staff Present

Michelle George, District Manager
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

The regular meeting of Community Board 8 was called to order at 6:10PM by Ms. Irsa Weatherspoon, Chairperson. She welcomed public comments from the elected officials and their teams present at the meeting.

Senator Zellnor Myrie

Senator Myrie reflected on recent political violence and urged a solutions-focused dialogue. He reported that SUNY Downstate was preserved from closure through approximately \$1B in state investment; deed theft has been criminalized and the Attorney General has filed the first case under the new statute; an Office of Gun Violence Prevention has been established; and higher penalties for corporate crime were enacted. He is pursuing a private right of action to sue officials for rights violations and an enhanced homeowner repair tax credit for long-time owners in under-invested areas. Residents who suspect deed theft were encouraged to contact his office, the District Attorney, or the Attorney General, and he asked the community to support the pending homeowner credit bill. In response to questions, he reiterated that deed-theft complaints should be documented early and shared with multiple agencies to prevent irreparable transfers.

Council Member Crystal Hudson

Council Member Hudson echoed concerns about celebratory rhetoric around violence and emphasized the Board's role in facilitating hard conversations. Regarding AAMUP, she apologized for confusion and stated her understanding of the board's intentions and goals regarding MIH options within the plan. She committed to fostering clearer communication and maintaining ongoing dialogue to ensure that the Board's priorities are fully reflected in the AAMUP framework. This commitment includes additional briefings with the board and district residents. Chair Weatherspoon expressed appreciation to the Council Member for her continued dedication to Community Board 8. Council member Hudson also announced a five-session "Lunch & Learn" series for aging adults beginning September 19, covering benefits navigation, fall prevention, and digital literacy. Her office invited partnerships with local CBOs to expand programming reach.

Assembly Member Stefani Zinerman.

Assembly member Zinerman offered condolences on the anniversary of 9/11 and highlighted a "State of the Streets" engagement effort and a Home Management Series addressing lead paint, waste, and alarms. She announced a Court Justice Series focused on elder protections and guardianship (with a session on September 22 at Restoration Plaza) and promoted African Restaurant Week (September 26–28). She invited residents to HealthCore training in Stop the Bleed, CPR/First Aid, mental health first aid, and Narcan, noting that the first trainings begin Saturday the 20th. She advised that SNAP/Medicaid eligibility rules now include work/school/volunteer requirements, that a free associate degree program is available for adults ages 25–55, and that HealthCore participation can support SNAP/Medicaid certification. She encouraged constituents to register early as class sizes are capped .

Council Member Darlene Mealy

Council Member Mealy noted that her office hosts immigration attorneys on Mondays, a housing attorney on Tuesdays, and Housing Connect support on Wednesdays, in addition to ongoing senior-center engagement and a quarterly OATH "Faith & Finance" program with Chase. Her next advisory meeting is scheduled for September 27 (11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.) at 220 Livonia

Avenue. She invited the Board to share casework trends so her office can schedule targeted clinics.

Chair Weatherspoon then invited Councilmember Mealy to swear in the newly elected board officers, new board members and reappointed members. Chair Weatherspoon thanked Councilmember Mealy for her support during the swearing-in of Community Board 8's members.

She then asked for the acceptance of the June minutes. The motion to accept the minutes with any necessary corrections was made by Ms. Wedderburn, seconded by Ms. Duke.

Chair Weatherspoon announced the following additions to the committees and asked for the following Committee Reports:

Ms. Lisa Maldonado, Vice Chair of Economic Development, Ms. Akua Aidoo, Vice Chair of Parks, Youth & Education, Ms. Jennifer Jordan, Secretary of Public Safety, Ms. Sharon Alexis-Pierre, Vice Chair of Seniors, Ms. Robin Smith, Chair of Veterans, Ms. Nizjoni Granville, Vice Chair of Veterans.

Cannabis Committee – Ms. Irsa Weatherspoon, Chair

The Cannabis Committee met on Wednesday, September 10, 2025 at the CB8 District office. The committee discussed the adult use retail dispensary application for Flatbush Pot Shop LLC d/b/a TICAL Brooklyn located at 972 Dean Street (between Grand and Franklin Avenues).

The applicant, Ms. Sephida Artis, and her team including the financier, developer, and architect, were in attendance to discuss their vision for the retail dispensary that eventually would scale up to a microbusiness and lab testing facility. Ms. Artis provided a brief introduction of her background in the cannabis industry, beginning with learning how to use the plant medicinally in treatment for her daughter, who at less than a year old, had a heart transplant with doctors expecting the child to require an extensive medication regimen for the duration of her life. Ms. Artis stated that in using cannabis, she was able to get her daughter from eight medications to just one.

A core component of the applicant's vision for the space and how it would integrate into the community was based around education and changing the culturally accepted perception of cannabis and its uses as medication and understanding how best to use it recreationally to dispel negative connotation of users. Additional details include:

- The building is part of the AAMUP exclusion zone to protect light industrial uses; as such, it does not have a residential overlay as part of the rezoning initiative.
- Hours of operation 9AM to 7PM Sunday; 9AM to 10PM Monday thru Thursday; 10AM to midnight Friday and Saturday
- Exclusive sale of one brand's products only: the TICAL brand created by the rapper Method Man
- Delivery anticipated with a radius of up to 10 miles depending on consumer demand
- Workforce training and development of careers rather than entry-level positions. This includes lab training, cultivation, processing, and sales. (Presently, in New York State, the workforce centers are struggling to find trained employees to put in a growing job market, leading to outsourcing to other states and imported employees. Their desire is to create the training and curricula to ensure that New Yorkers and Brooklynites specifically, can fill these

positions. They are working with Medgar Evers College on creation of these training programs since that is the premier City institution offering courses related to cannabis.)

- Will have no fewer than 30 employees with about 8 on each shift. Employees will include off-site marketing team, security, part-time employees, bud tenders, inventory specialists, and others. They will partner with NYS Cannabis Connect to help with staffing.
- The testing lab is a key component as it will be the city's first testing facility.
- As it is a 3-story industrial use building, will seek to create a "cannabis co-working space" to facilitate growth and success for other cannabis entrepreneurs as well as scaling up to the micro business license. The entire building will be used for purposes that align with the vision of MCROWN and light industrial uses outlined by the AAMUP follow-up corrective actions.

Members felt that the applicant was well prepared, knowledgeable, and understanding not only of the District, but the needs of the community at large. Members were especially impressed by the vision of growth and complete use of the building to enhance transferable skills and workforce development. In addition, members were also impressed with the work that Ms. Artis has completed and continues to complete with OCM and NYC Small Business Services in terms of understanding the cannabis industry.

The committee voted unanimously with 10 in favor to support the application as presented and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

There was a question about whether the store would focus on medical marijuana – the answer was yes. Before voting, Mr. Veconi wanted to confirm whether this store was a carveout within AAMUP, which it is. Finally, Mr. Anekwe made a comment affirming the application and that they are providing a full community service with their store, not just the product itself.

A motion was made by Mr. Henderson to support the committee's recommendation and was seconded by Ms. Ortiz-Joyner. The motion passed with 32 in favor, with 2 abstentions.

Housing and Land Use Committee - Ms. Sharon Wedderburn, Chair

The Housing and Land Use Committee met on Thursday, September 4, 2025 at StuyPark House. The committee discussed the following LPC applications for Certificate of Appropriateness:

1. 1219 Dean Street, Crown Heights North Historic District

Application is for window replacement

This building was flagged by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for transom windows located on the third floor, above operable windows. At the time of purchase in 2019 there were no stained glass in the transoms above the windows. According to the applicant, a neighbor attested that the stained glass was removed approximately 30 years ago. (A period that preceded landmarking.) The exterior renovation has included facade repair, historically correct paint and new mouldings.

In Crown Heights North Association's (CHNA) letter to the applicant, it was noted that given that at the time of landmarking, the clear glass windows, Furthermore, there were stained glass windows present on the parlor floor. Given that CHNA has asked that if it is at all possible, they would like to see if the stained glass window transoms can be restored to the facade. CHNA is in support of this project.

The applicant asks that given the brand new windows and one over one transoms on the third floor, the committee would support the renovation as completed. There was no mention of the stained glass windows when the applicant received approval for the new windows.

Queries from the committee and community members included:

Did the LPC give a certificate of no effect? A certificate of no effect was issued in June 2024. However, there was a violation issued for the removal of a stained glass window.

Were the stained glass windows noted in the April 2007 historic designation report? Yes, the stained glass windows were noted.

Will the applicant reside there? The applicant is in the process of making that decision now with consideration to financial implications.

A motion was made and seconded that the committee support the applicant's currently installed rectangular one over one transom window located on the second floor.

The committee voted 17 in favor, 2 against and 1 abstention.

Deborah Young reported that CHNA would support the application **provided** the historic stained-glass window is reinstalled, and the Board clarified it would expect any replacement to be of appropriate quality. Mr. Veconi expressed sympathy for the owner's situation—acknowledging it's difficult to discover prior modifications after purchase—but stressed the need to preserve district character. The applicant stated that his architect coordinated with LPC but experienced delays and was never informed of the stained glass; he noted the application had to be resubmitted and that substantial façade improvements have already been made. He added that restoring stained glass would exceed his budget. Mr. Veconi and Mr. Witherwax both responded that the public records confirms a stained-glass window previously existed.

Mr. Veconi then moved to support the application contingent upon reinstating the stained-glass window; Mr. Tucker seconded. Mr. Puca asked why the committee's earlier position had changed, and Ms. Young explained CHNA's updated stance prompted the shift. Sharon Wedderburn and others closed with broader reflections on what defines a historic home and neighborhood and the importance of visible historic features.

The updated motion passed with 21 in favor, 7 against, with 7 abstentions.

2. 302 Prospect Place, Prospect Heights Historic District

Application is for the following:

- Exterior alterations to an existing townhouse including a new 2-story rear yard addition of 15ft depth from the existing rear wall spanning the width of the lot
- A new 1-story roof addition 27.5 ft deep and spanning the width of the lot
- Mechanical, plumbing, electrical work in the existing townhouse and new additions.
- The new additions are planned for use as part of a single family private residence.

The owners and their architect are applying to enlarge their single family home in the Prospect Heights Historic District with an eight foot addition to their roof and a one story fifteen foot

addition to the rear yard. There will not be a roof impact to make it less impactful visually. The applicant seeks not to demolish anything that they do not have to.

The addition in height and rear extension are largely masked by 300 Prospect Place, an alteration that was completed in 2009 prior to the landmarking of the district. Also, the applicants presented two letters of support from their immediate neighbors.

Queries from the committee and the community include:

How long have you owned the house? It was purchased in 2019 and the applicants have lived there since 2020.

What is the scheduled hearing date? September 16, 2025.

How many homes on the block have added extensions or roof additions. There are 71 houses on the block, with 38 extensions of some sort. Some are decks and some are fully enclosed. There are fewer than 5 roof additions with a fewer number of bulkheads.

Mary Shuford as a representative of the Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council stated that PHNDC did not have any objection to the rear yard extension. However, the proposed roof addition was visible from the main thoroughfare.

A motion was made and seconded to not support the roof top addition and support the rearyard extension.

The committee voted 14 in favor, 8 against and 4 abstentions.

The architect, representing the owner, noted that the LPC hearing was postponed to October 28, 2025 to incorporate feedback, including plans to lower the roof addition in response to a recent letter. An initial motion was made by Mr. Anekwe and seconded by Mr. Mensah, after which Ms. Wedderburn suggested the applicant return at the next meeting so the committee could review the revisions. Chair Weatherspoon then moved to table the issue until the next meeting, seconded by Mr. Witherwax; Mr. Puca asked which motion had precedence and whether the first should be voted on before the motion to table. It was determined that we would table the vote until the next meeting.

SLA and Sidewalk Café Review Committee (SLAC) - Ms. Irsa Weatherspoon, Chair

The SLAC Committee met on Monday, September 8, 2025 and discussed the following Dining Out applications:

Sweet Chick, 636 Carlton Avenue (sidewalk café measuring 9 feet x 40 feet with 6 picnic tables and benches)

The committee voted unanimously with 11 in favor to recommend approval as presented, noting that the physical footprint and dimensions, pedestrian flow and existing curb use do not present any conflicts and are keeping within the requirements.

Altar, 635 Sterling Place (sidewalk café measuring 5.3 feet x 34 feet with 13 tables and 34 seats)

The committee voted unanimously with 11 in favor to recommend approval as presented, noting that the physical footprint and dimensions, pedestrian flow and existing curb use do not present any conflicts and are keeping within the requirements.

Ms. Gibbs made a motion to support both applications as presented, seconded by Ms. Staton. The motion passed with 32 in favor, with one abstention.

Economic Development – Ms. Lisa Maldonado, Vice Chair

The committee meets on the second Tuesday at Brower Library. This year, it is shifting merchant-walk focus from Franklin Avenue to Utica, Nostrand, and Kingston Avenues, and it is actively recruiting volunteers to help with outreach and documentation.

Priorities include addressing small-business pain points, conducting a storefront vacancy census, challenging policies that incentivize long-term vacancies, and building a small-business resource directory covering permits, financing, legal clinics, and BID contacts.

Council Member Mealy requested a written position on the outdoor-vendor legislation that the Council passed and the Mayor vetoed, and the committee will circulate a draft for Board feedback.

Next meeting will be held on October 14, 2025 at Brower Library at 6pm.

Environment, Sanitation, and Transportation – Mr. Robert Witherwax, Chair

The committee meets on the fourth Tuesday at 801 Dean Street, which is its new space, and it encourages broad participation.

In response to questions about the Brooklyn Bus Redesign, Mr. Tucker asked about timing, and Witherwax noted that a rollout is alleged for this fall or winter, although delays are possible.

Chair Weatherspoon stated that DOT will present to the full Board next month rather than only to EST to discuss the B41 center-lane alignment on Flatbush Avenue. The committee will also discuss AAMUP street improvements and an Atlantic Avenue redesign.

In response to Veconi's question, the Street Improvement Project has been announced for Fall 2025. EST will request clearer milestones and a district overlay map before the next update.

Health and Human Services – Ms. Tamika Gibbs, Chair

The committee will be meeting at a new location, Concern Rochester, 151 Rochester Avenue on the third Thursday of odd months. It highlighted sign-ups for free CPR training as noted by Council Member Mealy and is coordinating with partners to expand access to basic health services, including first-aid, blood-pressure screenings, and referrals. The committee will compile a brief calendar of pop-up offerings so senior centers, schools, and libraries can cross-promote them.

Parks, Youth, and Education – Ms. Kimberly Watson, Chair

The committee met on September 2, 2025 and will meet next on October 7 at Brower Library. It set goals for the new CB8 year, including establishing two recurring annual programs with youth and family components as well as a small slate of additional events. The discussion covered strengthening community ties at Mount Prospect Park through stewardship and programming. They also discussed plans to address a leak at Brower Park. The committee will draft a short community survey to prioritize park amenities ahead of the spring capital cycle.

Public Safety- Mr. Mark Thurton, Chair

The next meeting will be held on September 22, 2025 at the 77th Precinct at 6:30 p.m., and the regular cadence is the fourth Monday, rotating between the 77th Precinct and Concern Rochester, 151 Rochester Avenue. The NYPD is shifting from Neighborhood Coordinating Officers to Quality of Life (QOL) officers focused on 311-driven issues such as noise and double-parking. The committee will meet the new team, request quarterly complaint and response statistics, and set annual goals, including a youth-safety focus in partnership with the Parks, Youth & Education Committee.

During Q&A, Ms. Davis asked whether QOL would dilute the focus on shootings and whether it is citywide, and the response confirmed that QOL is citywide, that NYPD will still handle 311, and that the dedicated subset aims to improve responsiveness. A prior public session was canceled due to low turnout.

Tamika Gibbs noted that QOL involves multiple agencies, and the Brooklyn Borough Director added that the approach is expected to improve response times. Members were encouraged to provide feedback.

Seniors – Ms. Gail Branch-Muhammad, Chair

The committee met through the summer, and regular meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month. It informally self-funds light meals, with members offering to contribute one dollar each. Council Member Mealy is sponsoring a free fall senior cruise on Spirit of New York on October 3, 2025, the committee will share and coordinate dates with her office.

Veterans – Ms. Nizjoni Granville, Vice Chair

The committee meets on the third Tuesday every other month. Its current focus is monitoring federal healthcare changes that could impact seniors and veterans, and it plans to convene a resource session on benefits navigation and appeals. Ms. Granville stated that she looks forward to working with new Chair Robin Smith.

The next meeting will be on September 16, 2025 at Concern Rochester, 151 Rochester Avenue at 6:15 pm.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked the committee chairs for their reports and updates and opened the floor for public comments.

Jamell Henderson: He announced a new initiative focused on Black women's health, recruiting 1,000 men starting October 1 to advocate around fibroids—an issue that disproportionately

affects Black women (noted during July's Fibroids Awareness Month). He asked for support on related state legislation, emphasizing sustained advocacy and long-term voting power.

Gail Branch-Muhammad: She asked Council Member Mealy for more information on the 2025 ballot proposals and requested that someone from the Council join a future meeting to brief the community.

Council Member Mealy: She flagged concerns that the City of Yes package would reduce community power by compressing timelines for developer engagement to 30 days, and encouraged the Board to stay engaged with the Council process. Chair Weatherspoon noted that the newsletter contains details on all of the ballot measures and encouraged members to review it.

Peter Anekwe: He urged the community to make public comments pressing the Governor to pursue missing Atlantic Yards funds from the developer.

Gib Veconi: He highlighted a petition calling on the Governor to collect monies due from the Atlantic Yards project and direct them to affordable housing, and confirmed a standard URL is available in addition to a QR code.

Meredith Staton: He reported that the St. Johns post office is relocating and asked for an update on the new site.

Assembly Member Robert Carroll's Office: A representative referenced upcoming sessions listed in the newsletter and noted a 9/11 memorial observance.

Betty Davis: She asked about a partnership between the Public Safety and Parks, Youth & Education committees and recommended that all committees expand programming within local schools.

Nizjoni Granville: She raised concerns about the ballot measure on term limits for Community Board members, arguing that terms should not be shortened because it takes time to learn the role.

Adrienne Williams (Office of Assembly Member Latrice Walker): She shared that the newsletter is available, congratulated new Board members, and provided office details (400 Rockaway Avenue; williamsa@nyassembly.gov)

Don Gray Benson: He described an education and leadership development program that places high-performing, low-income public and charter school students in private schools, and announced that applications will go live next week.

Pierre Gedeon (Mayor's Office): He reported a QOL walkthrough along Nostrand Avenue from Eastern Parkway to Atlantic for assessment and cleanup, noting business issues and graffiti; he also highlighted DOE Chromebook distributions, the year's largest NYPD recruit class (1,093), approval to test autonomous vehicles, and an expanded training program for formerly incarcerated New Yorkers.

Dr. Raymond Codrington (CEO of Weeksville Heritage Center) welcomed the public, both first time and returning to the community space at the Weeksville Heritage Center. Dr. Codrington gave a brief history of the Weeksville Community, the first free black community which was founded only 11 years after the abolition of slavery in New York State. He encouraged anyone who has not had the privilege of attending the museum to come during visiting hours to experience the tremendous expertise of the museum's tour guides. With no further business, Chair Weatherspoon thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Guests Present

Xeerxeema Jordan
Lynn Cave
Nadja Byrd
Shirley Mondesir
Andrew Wilks
Matthew Pavoni
Roslind Hairston
Mercedes Armillas
Cheryl Walcott
Rylie Davis
Adrienne Grande
Sharon Smith
Sephida Artis
Vladimir Charles
Herb Smith
N. Davis
Lula Staton
P. Grannum
Michelle Tege
Asar John
Christopher Jones
M. Jones
Betty Davis
Mary Beech
Han Cia
Sarah W
Roger Myers
Don Benson
Matt Parker
Kim Robinson
David McKeller
Priscilla Mensah
Dr. Raymond Codrington
Terrance Ratliff
Arna Lipkind
Celeste Farmer
Michael Williams
Christopher Jordan
Rodney Seymore