

Community Board 8
Virtual via WebEx
January 9, 2025

Members Present

Akua Aidoo
Sharon Alexis-Pierre
Peter Anekwe
Princess Benn-James
Gail Branch-Muhammad
Dian Duke
Tamika Gibbs
Jamell Henderson
Malik Jabati
Tafari John-King
Frances Langley
Dr. Sarah Lazur
Lisa Maldonado
William Meehan
Kwasi Mensah
Mimi Mitchell
Courtney Morgan
Fior Ortiz-Joyner
Taraya Pettway
Robert Puca
Yahya Raji
Dr. Cadesa Ramharrack
Anika Roach
Conor Ross
Ezra Roth
Brian Saunders
Katie Taylor
Dana Thompson
Mark Thurton
Briana Uwa
Kimberly Watson
Irsa Weatherspoon
Sharon Wedderburn
Robert Witherwax
Deborah Young

Members Absent/Excused

Robert Callahan
Edward Delman
Ammar Elahi
Benny Faygen
Nizjoni Granville
Mohammad Hassan
Robert Lapointe
David Mantell
Robin Smith
Meredith Staton
Esmond Turnbull
Gib Veconi

Elected Officials Present

Stefani Zinerman, Assemblymember for the 56th District
Robert Carroll, Assemblymember for 44th District
Chi Osse, Councilmember for the 36th District
Anthony Beckford, District Leader 43rd District

Elected Official Representatives

Arlean Gillin, Office of Councilmember Chi Osse
Janay Pierre, Office of Councilmember Crystal Hudson
Ethan Nash, Office of Brooklyn Borough President
Karen Narefsky, Office of Assemblymember Phara
Souffrant-Forrest
Tamisha Thompson, Office of Councilmember Darlene
Mealy
Krista Reilly, Office of Senator Zellnor Myrie
Tendai Watkins, Office of Assemblymember Stephani
Zinerman

CB8 Staff Present

Michelle George, District Manager
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

Chair Weatherspoon welcomed the community and called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM. She wished everyone a Happy New Year, and announced that we could hold the meeting virtually as a rare opportunity as it is informational only with no voting items. Chairperson Weatherspoon said it is great to be back with the Board after needing to be away for a few months as she navigated some medical challenges that required strict guidelines. She thanked everyone that reached out to her with well-wishes and concern as it meant a lot to her and announced that she is doing well now. She also thanked First Vice Chair, Gail Branch-Muhammad, for chairing the last two meetings in her absence.

Chairperson Weatherspoon opened the floor for committee reports.

Economic Development – Mr. Brian Saunders, Chair

Ms. Maldonado reported that the Economic committee has been busy the last couple of meetings, working hard to weigh in on the AAMUP proposal while maintaining its focus of identifying how the Board can assist businesses. She thanked everyone that supported the committee and volunteered.

The next meeting will be on January 14, 2025 at Brower Park Library located at 155 Brooklyn Avenue. The focus will be on planning things the committee would like to do to support job development in the community and local businesses. All are invited to attend.

Environment, Sanitation, and Transportation (EST) – Mr. Robert Witherwax, Chair; Mr. Mark Thurton, Vice Chair

Mr. Witherwax informed the Board that there was no meeting in December due to the holidays, but thanked the members for the hard work completed on AAMUP in November. He encouraged everyone to send any possible agenda items for upcoming EST meetings to the CB8 district office.

The next meeting will be held at Crown Heights Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 810 St. Marks Avenue. All are invited to attend.

Health and Human Services – Ms. Tamika Gibbs, Chair; Ms. Kim Watson, Vice Chair

Ms. Gibbs announced that Health did not meet in December. However, at the upcoming January meeting, the committee will feature a Narcan demonstration, so she looks forward to seeing everyone come out for the training.

The next meeting will be held on January 16, 2025 at 6:30 PM at Stuy Park Houses located at 77 New York Avenue. All are invited to attend.

Housing & Land Use – Ms. Sharon Wedderburn, Chair; Ms. Princess Benn-James, Vice Chair

Ms. Wedderburn stated that there was no January meeting as a necessary break from all the meetings the committee had in the lead up to AAMUP. She thanked committee members for their hard work and cooperation. AAMUP is currently under review by the Borough President in the next phase of its ULURP process. Next step for the committee is to start identifying the metrics that speak specifically to our community and pinpoint things with housing and land use to tackle over the next few years.

The next meeting will be on February 6, 2025 at 6:30PM at Crown Heights Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 810 St. Marks Avenue. All are invited to attend.

Parks, Youth & Education (PYE) – Ms. Kim Watson, Chair

Ms. Watson announced that due to exigent circumstances, the PYE committee met virtually as a subcommittee in January. Ms. Watson stated the subcommittee divided its focus between its two catchment areas before coming back to integrate ideas. In terms of youth and education issues, members discussed distributing a letter to schools introducing the Board and the committee to the principal and PTA president to open dialogue and build relationships. Via this discussion, the committee learned that the City Council gave \$100K to the Brooklyn Children's Museum for more free activities and free days and would love this to expand to other cultural institutions in the borough and community. This specific item was a goal identified by committee member Anika Roach in September.

Additionally, in terms of parks issues, a community member put together a comprehensive document that would help the committee discuss and consider things when Parks' comes before the Board for support. It is a document that will allow everyone to hone in on their thinking regarding the project and provide a frame of reference for easy vetting of details similar to standards and guidelines used by other committees of the Board.

Finally, the committee began working on a way of celebrating Earth Day and finding a way to include the youth in the district to merge opportunities for both portions of the committee and solidify an understanding of how they are connected.

The next meeting will be held on February 4, 2025 at 6PM at Brower Park Library located at 155 Brooklyn Avenue. The committee will review the redesign of the Brower Park Skatepark.

Public Safety – Mr. Mark Thurton, Chair

Mr. Thurton announced that Public Safety did not meet in the month of December due to the holidays. The next meeting will be held on January 27, 2025 at Legal Hand located at 252 Kingston Avenue. All are invited to attend.

Seniors – Ms. Gail Branch-Muhammad, Chair

The next meeting of the Seniors committee will be held on February 5, 2025 at 6PM at Crown Heights Apartments located at 1055 St. John's Place. The committee will have a Black History Month themed paint and sip session sponsored by LCD of Crown Heights. All are invited to attend.

SLA and Sidewalk Café Review Committee (SLAC) – Ms. Irsa Weatherspoon, Chair; Mr. Robert Witherwax, Vice Chair/Secretary

Chairperson Weatherspoon announced that the SLAC committee did not meet in the month of January. The next meeting will be held on February 3, 2025 at 6:30PM at Crown Heights Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 810 St. Marks Avenue. All are invited to attend.

Veterans – Ms. Nizjoni Granville, Chair; Ms. Princess Benn-James, Vice Chair

Ms. Benn-James informed the Board that the Veterans Committee did not meet in the month of December. The committee will complete the meeting season meeting every other month, with the next meeting being held on February 18, 2025 at 6:30PM at Stuy Park Houses located at 77 New York Avenue. The committee is working on bringing resources to the community's veterans. All are invited to attend.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked all CB8 members and community participants on the many committees tasked with reviewing and reporting on AAMUP. She informed everyone that they did an amazing job and put together a detailed and comprehensive document, which should make them proud. She then asked Mr. Witherwax for roll call.

Acceptance of Minutes – Ms. Mitchell made a motion to accept the minutes of the December meeting with any necessary changes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mensah and carried unanimously.

Chairperson Weatherspoon opened the floor for comments and updates by elected officials.

Councilmember Chi Osse, 36th Council District

Councilmember Osse thanked the Board for giving him the opportunity to speak. He stated that he represents the 36th CD which covers Bed Stuy and Crown Heights. He provided a quick overview of what a council member's office does, stating the council are the middle person between the people and the city agencies that are supposed to serve the people in New York City, very similar to the community board's role. Feel free to reach out to his office for support and being a liaison between you and municipal service agencies as his office can escalate when the community board is unable to resolve the matter on their end.

The member provided information on the following services available via his office:

- Every Wednesday at Restoration Plaza at 1365 Fulton street we host a wellness Wednesday which is a free resources and food program within the district. From 11am to 1pm every single Wednesday.
- On January 23rd we have a free civil legal attorney in the office. Come to the office to get free advice from the attorney from 10am to 5pm. Calling to make an appointment is encouraged but walk ins are welcome.
- On January 22nd there will be a free legal immigration attorney in the office. They can help with applying to immigration and any other questions.
- Every Tuesday in the office there is housing assistance to help navigate housing lottery from 12pm to 5pm.
- Free homeowners counseling on January 16th and January 30th from 10am to 5pm. Assisting homeowners on issues like foreclosure and deed theft. Also assisting people looking to own a home and need help navigating how to do so in this very expensive city.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked Councilmember Osse for the information and invited Assemblywoman Zinnerman to say a few words.

Assemblywoman Stefani Zinnerman, 56th Assembly District

Assemblywoman Zinnerman thanked members for their stellar service. She announced that yesterday was the first day back in session of the New York State Assembly, and thanked everyone that showed their support by re-electing her. She informed the Board that she was recently sworn in as the new Deputy Majority Whip, and opened an invitation for the board and community groups to work together on more legislation. She stated that several new laws were recently passed, all of which are explained in her newsletter. She encouraged everyone to read it to know about how new laws will impact you.

The Assemblywoman briefly explained some of the more exciting new changes coming this month. For instance, she stated that there will be continued coverage of the Medicaid assistance and Child Health Plus recipients for eligible children up to the age of 6. Insulin is now \$0 copay. People pregnant at any time of the year do not need to wait to change the status of insurance as they can now enroll at any time.

Assemblywoman Zinerman announced that she has a sponsored bill pertaining to e-bikes and the dangers their batteries cause has passed. With more knowledge and education, e-bike battery deaths have been cut in half. Furthermore, her office is still collecting information for the expansion of the cease and desist zone. If you are still receiving unsolicited advertisements, please call the office at 718-399-7630 drop the form with security or her office at 1368 Fulton Street, 3rd Floor.

Budget season is open. If you are a community based organization in need of funding, you can apply for funding opportunities with the Assembly. The application period closes January 30th.

Assemblywoman Zinerman announced that her office is partnering with NYPD on a public safety forum that will include violence interrupters, the peace institute, Bridge Street Development Corporation, and others. She extended an invitation to the CB8 Public Safety Committee as well as the one with CB3 to participate and other stake holders to identify issues block by block and seek ways to ameliorate the issues. The forum will be held on Thursday, January 23rd from 6-8pm at Restoration.

She announced that community action meetings have resumed with a 6 month training institute for young people to learn everything they ever wanted to know about passing legislation, how to organize, how to activate, and includes free trips to Albany to not only get a tour but to meet officials and actually work on issues that are important to young people.

Reiterating Councilmember Osse, Assemblywoman Zinerman reminded everyone that CB8 is your friend and that if you have an issue related to service delivery, call 311 to report it and then call the CB8 district office. Use the power of your community board to resolve issues, and if the board cannot resolve it, at every level of government is an opportunity for escalation. City issues by the council, state issues by her in the Assembly and the Senate, and at the federal level, congressmembers. Report and document everything so that action can be taken.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked Assemblywoman Zinerman for her report and invited Assemblyman Carroll to say a few words.

Assemblyman Rober Carroll, 44th Assembly District

Assemblyman Robert Carroll informed the board that is now Chair of the Libraries Committee, and stated that he is hoping to do a lot this year for the Brooklyn Public Library system. Just a few months ago he was able to secure \$70,000 for the adult literacy programs at the Brooklyn public library to help bring new resource and new curriculum there so that all learners are getting the best education they can.

He announced that his sponsored legislation, the Dyslexia Diagnosis Act, was signed into law, and it requires private insurance to cover neuropsychological exams for the diagnosis of dyslexia and dysgraphia. The cost of these tests prior to the passage of this law would cost between 6 and 8 thousand dollars which is out of reach for most New Yorkers. Now, if you have insurance through your job or open market or Obamacare the exams will be covered. He is continuing to work on making sure that these exams are covered by Medicaid and Medicare as well.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked Assemblyman Carroll for the information and invited District Leader Anthony Beckford to say a few words.

District Leader Anthony Beckford, 43rd AD

District Leader Beckford announced that he is sponsoring a clothing drive for the victims of the LA wildfires through the 20th of January. All donations can be dropped off to 1151 Nostrand Avenue (corner of Rutland Road).

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked District Leader Beckford for the information and opened the floor for public comments and announcements.

Ms. Tamesha Thompson from Councilmember Mealy office brought greetings from Councilwoman Darlene Mealy and wished everyone a Happy New Year. The district office is located at 400 Rockway Avenue and is open for walk-ins Monday through Thursday from 9AM to 5 PM and by appointment only on Fridays. The member will host the monthly advisory board meeting at the office from 11AM to 12:30PM on Saturday, January 25th. Ms. Thompson reminded the Board that Councilwoman Mealy's district crosses five community boards, five precincts, and two PSAs, so throughout the year, the member seeks to host meetings in different locations to cover all of the communities of Brownsville, East Flatbush, Crown Heights, Bed Stuy, and Ocean Hill.

Ms. Krista Reilly from Senator Myrie Office reminded everyone that the office is located at 1077 Nostrand Avenue and is open for any constituent needs or support you might need from any state agency.

Ms. Karen Narefsky from Assemblywoman Forrest office announced that this year, the Assemblywoman will be focusing her legislation on treatment rather than Jail to ensure that people with mental health challenges get the proper support they need instead of being shuttled into our prison system. She stated that this is an effective way to address both issues of mental health and public safety.

Additionally, Ms. Narefsky announced that Assemblywoman Forrest will be continuing in her role as Chair of the Assembly Task Force on New Americans. She will be using this role to support the state's immigrant communities and advocate for legal protections as well as resources to integrate immigrant communities into our state.

The member hosts a monthly housing legal clinic on the third Wednesday of every month with Mobilization for Justice. Tenants, homeowners, shareholders, anyone experiencing housing issues can receive a free consultation with a housing attorney. The next session will be held on Wednesday, January 15th. Please call the office at (718) 596-0100 to schedule an appointment. The member is partnering with New York Cares to collect and distribute coats and need help to reach their goal to reach 85,000 coats. If you have any old coats in good condition, please consider donating. For more information visit newyorkcares.org/coats.

Finally, Ms. Narefsky announced that the member is working on legislation pertaining to maintaining the affordability of the CUNY and SUNY education to ensure their accessibility to students.

Ms. Karen Chambers from Kings County District Attorney's office announced that the office is open for any comments or concerns and interested in partnering on youth initiatives. The DA's Lunar New Year event will be held on January 22nd at 6:30pm at New York Tech.

Ms. Janay Pierre from Councilwoman Crystal Hudson Office announced the following services available in the member's office:

- Housing help every Wednesday from 11:30 to 4pm in partnership with Churches United for fair Housing.
- Free tax prep appointments at the end of January and appointments with live on. Can call the office directly to make an appointment at (718) 260-9191
- Legal assistance on Thursdays that you can call to make appointments for as well.

Mr. Kris Sunderick stated that he witnessed a fire on his block in an abandoned building at 1140 Pacific Street where firefighters had difficulty accessing the hydrant because of vehicles parking in it and block it. Luckily no one was hurt, but he asked the board to assist with increasing enforcement to prevent parking in hydrants.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked everyone for their comments and announcements. With no additional business to be conducted, she adjourned the meeting at 7:40PM. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 13, 2025 at 6:30PM at Weeksville Heritage Center located at 158 Buffalo Avenue, Brooklyn. All are invited to attend.

Guests Present

Arna Lipkind
Asar John
Audrey Taitt-Hall
Betty Davis
Bee
Charmaine Derrell
Camoy Briscoe
Captain Josue Garcia
Cheryl Walcott
Cody Israel
Darlene L.
Delaney Spangler
Deni DeYonker
Dion Ashman
Dorothy Bembry
Eartha Petersen
Eli Cohen

Evan
Felice Robertson
Gia Blackwell
Hector Robertson
Ilya Rubnich
Jaime-Jin Lewis
Jennifer Jordan
Xeexema Jordan
Kim Robinson
Korin Eparrella
Jonathan Molofsky
Kris Sunderic
Loreto Dalt
Luke Sherman
Lynda Balsama
Michele Mitchell
Mireille Lemaine

Oisin Heneghan
Paula Young
Robyn Davies
Ruby Edlin
Ryan Christman
Scott Weinstein
Sydney Williams
Sylvia
Tiara McLaughlin
Tiffany Forte
Traci Nottingham
Mari
2405****73
3476****81
3477****29
3479****41
5127****39

7186****31

7187****96

9544****95