

**Community Board 8
Brooklyn Children's Museum
145 Brooklyn Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11213
December 11, 2025**

Members Present

Akua Aidoo
Sharon Alexis-Pierre
Peter Anekwe
Princess Benn
Gail Branch-Muhammad
Barbara Cofield
Dian Duke
Benny Faygen
Drew Gabriel
Mohammad Hassan
Jennifer Jordan
Frances Langley
Dr. Sarah Lazur
Lisa Maldonado
Mimi Mitchell
Fior Ortiz-Joyner
Robert Puca
Conor Ross
Robin Smith
Meredith Staton
Lesley Steele
Mark Thurton
Gib Veconi
Irsa Weatherspoon
Regina Wilson
Robert Witherwax
Deborah Young

Members Absent/Excused

Isaac Andino
Tamika Gibbs
Nizjoni Granville
Jamell Henderson
Tafari John-King
Robert Lapointe
William Meehan
Kwasi Mensah
Taraya Pettway
Yahya Raji
Anika Roach
Ezra Roth
Brian Saunders
Dina Tate
Katie Taylor
Dana Thompson
Ryan Tucker
Briana Uwa
Kimberly Watson
Sharon Wedderburn

Agency Representatives

Alicia Pritchard, Brower Park Library
Detective R. Marte, 77th Precinct
Detective K. Wallen, 77th Precinct

Elected Official Representatives

Tamesha Thompson – Office of Councilwoman Mealy
Aaomi Sailing – Office of Assemblyman Cunningham
Krista Reilly – Office of Senator Myrie
Jacob Baron – Office of Assemblyman Cunningham

CB8 Staff Present

Michelle George, District Manager
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

The regular meeting of Community Board 8 was called to order at 6:07PM by Ms. Irsa Weatherspoon, Chairperson.

Acceptance of Minutes –

Dr. Lazur made a motion to accept the minutes of the previous meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Staton and carried unanimously.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked for a report from the following committees:

Environment, Sanitation & Transportation (EST) — **Robert Witherwax, Chair**

The committee met on the fourth Tuesday of November, just before Thanksgiving, via Webex, and voted to join the Stop the Chop coalition, an advocacy effort focused on reducing helicopter traffic between Manhattan and JFK/Long Island. Witherwax noted that follow-up work will continue in the new year. There will be no December meeting due to the holiday week; the committee will resume in person at 801 Dean Street on the fourth Tuesday of January.

Economic Development — **Lisa Maldonado, Vice Chair**

The committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month, with the next meeting on January 13 at the Brower Park Library. Ms. Maldonado reported active collaboration with Crown Heights North Association to support the Nostrand Avenue corridor and described preparations for a Winter Lights competition, including a registration form, promotional flyer, a volunteer judging panel, and a venue for the awards party. The president of the Nostrand Avenue North Merchants Association attended to outline merchant needs and potential supports. Looking ahead, the agenda includes a session with Sephida Artis, who will present on “Cannabis Fast Track: Breaking into the Cannabis Industry.” In Q&A, Deborah Young asked about installing overhead lights across the street as part of corridor activation.

Public Safety — **Mark Thurton, Chair**

The committee met on November 24 at 151 Rochester Avenue and will rotate to the 77th Precinct for upcoming meetings. Although attendance was small, an inspector from the 77th reviewed crime trends in the 77th and 78th precincts, noting that overall crime is down. The group discussed shots fired near Stroud Park and NYPD’s plan to increase foot patrols from daytime to sunset. Members reiterated a request for a Brower Park camera, which is pending Council funding. There is no December meeting; the committee will reconvene in January at the 77th Precinct.

Veterans — **Robin Smith, Chair**

The committee did not meet in November, but members participated in three events and three parades, including a Veterans Appreciation Day in partnership with Community Boards 3 and 16. Committee members also received a citation from Congressman Hakeem Jeffries for their efforts and work with the Veterans community.

Seniors — Gail Branch-Muhammad, Chair

The committee meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 1055 St. Johns Place and will meet on January 7th. Programming will include chair yoga throughout January to support balance and mobility for older adults.

Parks, Youth & Education (PYE) — Akua Aidoo, Vice Chair

NYPD Community Affairs briefed the committee on park concerns, and Save Our Streets Crown Heights joined with other anti-violence organizations to discuss youth-safety coordination. The next PYE meeting will be held in February.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked the committees for their reports and updates and opened the Public Hearing portion of the meeting.

Public Hearing Action Items

Housing and Land Use Committee – Sharon Wedderburn, Chair

In the absence of the committee chair at the general meeting, Mr. Ross read the committee's action item.

The Housing and Land Use Committee met on Thursday, December 4, 2025. The committee discussed the following applications before the Landmarks Preservation Commission:

1. 628 Carlton Avenue - Application for Certificate of Appropriateness in the Prospect Heights Historic District

This building located in the Prospect Heights Historic District is seeking a certificate of appropriateness for the following items:

- New one-story roof addition measuring 21'-0" wide by 30'-0" deep with roof terrace; addition to be set back from front and rear facade walls
- New two-story bay window addition measuring 9'-4" wide by 2'-4" deep to side façade over existing garage
- LPC Staff is reviewing additional scope including front and rear facade window replacement, new window and door openings at side and rear facades, installation of non-visible mechanical equipment on roof and at garage, new garage door, new trim at garage to replicate historic fascia, and new guard rail at garage roof to replace existing wood fencing.
- Mechanical, plumbing, and electrical work throughout existing townhouse and new additions

Questions included the following: the addition of the two-story bay window. Does the addition of the two story bay window have to be historical in nature, given that it is not a restoration? Will there be a deck on top of the restored garage? Will that set a precedent? What is the projected timeline for construction?

Answers were as follows: It is dependent upon the scope of the work of the feedback from LPC.

The project will be proceeding until after the LPC requirements are heard. The rooftop addition was the focus of the conversation especially about setting a precedent for that section of the Prospect Heights historic district.

The committee recommends withholding support for the application as presented. Members stated they would support other components of the application contingent upon the removal of the rooftop addition. Additionally, the neighbors shall be given proper notification, engineering reporting, an easement and instrumental vibration monitoring for the adjoining building. The committee hopes the full Board will support its recommendation.

A motion to conditionally support the application contingent upon the removal of the rooftop addition was made by Mr. Veconi, seconded by Mr. Staton.

Vote Results: 22 Y / 0 N / 1 A, motion passes

2. 187 Sterling Place, LPC application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for 187 Sterling Place (Prospect Heights Historic District)

Application is for the following:

- 2-story vertical enlargement above the existing 3rd floor
- The new 4th floor will begin above the existing cornice and will have a slate mansard roof, matching the roof of the adjacent 377 Flatbush Avenue.
- The new 5th floor will be set back 12'-9" and will have a light gray/tan stucco finish, matching the existing rear and party walls of the adjacent brick apartment building at 189 Sterling Place.
- There will also be a stair bulkhead atop the 5th floor, with a sloping front and further setback 8'-6" from the front facade of the 5th floor.
- All mechanicals (HVAC condensers) will be located towards the rear of the roof, behind the stair bulkhead.

Michael Scaduto of Michael Scaduto Architects presented on behalf of the owners of 187 Sterling Place. 187 Sterling Place is part of a set of five buildings anchored by 377 Flatbush Avenue at the corner of Flatbush Avenue and Sterling Place. The center of this grouping is 377 Flatbush Avenue which is designed as a Neo Grec and French Empire style commercial and residential buildings constructed in the 1880s.

187 Sterling Place is a three story with a basement and subcellar townhouse and one of five total buildings in the grouping, two of which are located on Sterling Place. The applicants are proposing a two-story vertical addition. The lower level of the addition will reference the mansard roof at 377 Flatbush Avenue. The upper section will be set back 12 feet with a standing seam metal cladding on the front with a cladding of grey stucco.

The architects had not received a response from the Landmarks Preservation Commission as of December 4, 2025. By the architect's admission, their proposal is a pretty large addition and would be visible because of its location on Flatbush Avenue all the way up to Grand Army Plaza. Due to the architect stating during the meeting that his purpose for being at the meeting was to gather feedback to bring back to his client, the committee did not take a vote on this matter at the meeting. However, given the fact that the Housing and Land Use Committee will not meet in January, 2026, if there is activity such as the inclusion of this building on the LPCs calendar, we

would like to reserve the opportunity to write a letter that details the concerns of the committee members, community members and the adjacent neighbor at 185 Sterling Place about the facade and height changes, that would change the manner in which the buildings would be experienced as a street scape and set an undesirable precedent.

The neighbor at 185 Sterling sent the District office a statement to be read into the record. The statement was made available as an addendum to the action items and is included at the end of the minutes.

Several members expressed concern that the rooftop massing near the front is out of character and clearly visible from the street, with Ms. Young adding that the applicant had acknowledged the structure is out of context. The Board discussed sending a letter stating the proposal is not in character with the neighborhood and that the mansard-style roof addition would destroy the corner rhythm; Mr. Staton seconded the letter motion. Neighbors raised foundation concerns; public commenters asked whether the objection was to the idea of an addition or the size/design. Mr. Witherwax clarified that the Board's letter would issue from the full Board. Several members expressed frustration that the committee was required to devote so much time to an application that was not in the final phase yet with LPC, and they were informed that the district office operates on the premise that all applicants that contact us have indeed received the go-ahead from the licensing agency. Furthermore, the way LPC operates, applicants merely need to notify the board of their plans and once notified, the Board has to engage fully in the process or lose its opportunity to weigh in on applications.

A motion to withhold support the application as presented was made by Ms. Young, seconded by Mr. Staton

Vote Results: 23 Y / 0 N / 1 A, motion passes

The committee also discussed a new City Council bill that could ease short-term rentals/Airbnbs; Veconi read bill text and urged outreach to electeds. Mark Thurton asked about deadlines, and Dr. Lazur noted a December 18 vote is anticipated. Members asked what would happen after the vote and how residents should act; Ms. Thompson (Mealy's office) encouraged calling Council offices, Ms. Wilson requested the motion be restated, Mr. Thurton sought a written brief, Ms. Maldonado asked that the draft letter be circulated to the Board for feedback, and Dr. Lazur suggested including a "find your Council Member" link.

A motion to support the application was made by Dr. Lazur, seconded by Ms. Mitchell

Vote Results: 24 Y / 0 N / 1 A, motion passes

SLA and Sidewalk Café Review Committee

SLAC met on Monday, December 1, 2025. The committee discussed the following liquor license applications:

1. **Chipotle #2879, 347 Flatbush Avenue** – Beer/wine/cider license (recorded music)

Details of the application include:

- Hours of operation 10:45Am to 11PM daily
- 13 tables with 40 total seats. 1 counter for seating. Maximum patron capacity 67
- No licensed outdoor space

The committee voted 10 in favor, 1 opposed, with 1 abstention to support the application as presented. It hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

A motion to support the committee's recommendation was made by Mr. Veconi, seconded by Mr. Ross.

Vote Results: 21 Y / 3 N / 1 A, motion passes

2. **Second Press LLC, 685 Franklin Avenue** –Beer/wine/cider license (recorded music)

Details of the application include:

- 9 tables with 32 seats; 1 bar with 8 seats. Maximum patron capacity 40
- Hours of operation 11AM to midnight Saturday and Sunday; 4PM to midnight Monday through Friday
- Licensed outdoor area measuring 20.6 feet by 6 feet for 123 square feet of space. There will be 1 table with 7 seats and will operate from 11AM to 10PM Sunday; 4PM to 10PM Monday through Thursday; 4PM to 11PM Friday; and 11 AM to 11PM

The committee voted unanimously with 13 in favor to support the application as presented. It hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Mr. Staton asked about the distance from the next bar, but because it's just beer/wine/cider, the 500 foot rule does not apply.

A motion to support the committee's recommendation was made by Ms. Smith, seconded by Mr. Anekwe.

Vote Results: 23 Y / 2 N / 0 A, motion passes

3. **RBBB Enterprises LLC, d/b/a Richie's Crown Heights, 1433 Bedford Avenue** – Full license (DJ, juke box, recorded music, karaoke, live music, patron dancing, video/arcade games)

Details of the application include:

- Hours of operation Noon to midnight Sunday; 3PM to midnight Monday through Thursday; Noon to 2AM Friday and Saturday
- 11 tables with 68 seats; 1 service bar with 11 seats
- Licensed backyard space measuring 23 feet by 19 feet for 437 square feet. 10 tables with 23 seats, operating until 10PM daily

The committee supported the application with 13 in favor with the following stipulations:

- Licensed backyard to close at 9PM Sunday thru Thursday and 10PM Friday and Saturday
- No amplified sound in rear yard and on nights when a DJ or live music is present, windows to backyard will be kept closed

The committee also had these additional conditions:

- The windows to the backyard are to close by 9PM Sunday through Thursday, regardless of whether or not a DJ is present, and by 10PM Friday and Saturday.
- Neighbors are to be informed of a sound test and provided the results.
- Neighbors are to be provided a contact number for the owner/manager to convey concerns or complaints.

The applicant agreed to the stipulations and signed a sheet stating that. They also agreed to the above conditions and made several agreements in advance of the meeting with the neighbors and interim block association president. As such, the committee hopes the full Board will support its recommendation.

The committee hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

There has been a history of sound complaints at this location, so Mr. Anekwe asked about sound proofing inside the location. This was confirmed to be included in the application.

A motion to support the committee's recommendation was made by Ms. Mitchell, seconded by Ms. Muhammad

Vote Results: 23 Y / 1 N / 1 A, motion passes

4. **Diaspora Bar and Culture Center, 802 Franklin Avenue** – Full license (DJ, live jazz, recorded music)

Details of the application are as follows:

- Split level establishment with a restaurant at ground floor and a speakeasy in the basement
- Live jazz with a big brass concept as well as acoustic
- Ground floor restaurant to operate from 9AM to midnight daily
- Ground floor seating with 8 tables and 24 seats, no service bar
- Basement speakeasy to have 17 tables and 34 seats with 1 service bar with 6 seats
- Basement speakeasy to operate from 4PM to 4AM daily
- Total patron capacity is 74 (unsure if both spaces or for each individually)
- Licensed side yard measuring 35.9 feet by 27.8 feet for 989 square feet. Will have 10 tables and 54 seats and operate 9AM to 10PM daily.

The committee voted 10 in favor, 0 opposed, with 3 abstentions to support the application with the following stipulations:

Stipulations:

- Licensed outdoor patron capacity to be capped at 40 people
- Hours of operation for indoor space until 2AM daily
- Hours of licensed outdoor space to 10PM daily
- No amplified sound in outdoor space

Also please note that there was a report of tenant harassment complaints at the meeting, which the owners stated were from one "mentally unstable woman." The district office received corresponding evidence of such harassment from several tenants via email which included copies of police reports after the SLAC meeting.

The committee hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Members probed life-safety and operations: Ms. Walcott asked about FDNY approvals and urged a written fire egress plan; Ms. Wilson raised the issue of courtyard-egress control along with Ms. Steele requesting an agreement to open any fence during emergencies; Ms. Smith sought confirmation that tenants do not share the applicant's egress and that all 15 households were notified about plans and received mixed feedback to her inquiries. Mr. Witherwax asked for clarification on the relationship between applicant and property owner to which the applicant again replied that there is no relationship. She later stated that her partner is the owner's son, in direct contrast to her previous statements. Several people further elucidated quite a few other less than truthful or accurate statements, including that tenants' egress does not overlap with secondary egress from the basement speakeasy or even the side yard café.

The applicant confirmed acceptance of committee stipulations and clarified key facts and concerns from the board: the building contains 15 apartments; the applicant stated they have no relationship with the landlord; the space's maximum combined occupancy is 74, which does not require a Place of Assembly permit; and there is a second means of egress.

Several members pulled up both the application and google images of the property in relation to obtaining clarity on the operational questions. Visual images indicate that the fire escape ladder lands directly at the top of the entry steps into the basement, and that the tenants' exit from their units are via the side yard gate or via an alley way between buildings. This was in contrast to the business owner's statements of no interference.

Discussion then turned to tenant-harassment allegations tied to the building. Detectives Marté and Wallen from the 77th Precinct confirmed multiple complaints (at least four apartments), a problematic front door, apartment repairs not completed, and incidents including early-morning door-kicking and verbal harassment; he recommended tenants pursue housing-court action, while noting he had not personally inspected interiors. Members debated whether landlord-tenant issues should influence a liquor-license recommendation, and several questioned a screenshot allegedly from "Donovan" showing disrespect toward a tenant and the owner's awareness of building conditions; a community business owner spoke in support of the landlord's stewardship. Mr. Witherwax explicitly asked the proprietor if she had any relationship with the property owner, to which she replied there was none.

Mr. Witherwax clarified for members that the Board does indeed have a responsibility to look into whether or not the applicant can become an unwitting participant in tenant harassment. Mr. Ross read a snippet of an email Ms. George sent to the SLAC committee in response to a member's reluctance to consider anything other than the merits of the application. The snippet read as follows:

"Please be reminded that the board's responsibility is to consider the time, place, and manner of SLA applications. Understanding how an applicant intends to operate a business is essential. Given all the information available, it is important that the committee thoroughly review all pertinent details about applicants, especially first-time operators.

"The manner in which a landlord manages their residential building(s) may reasonably raise concerns and should be taken into consideration when reviewing a business plan, especially as it pertains to a liquor license. If an owner neglects or disregards the needs of residential tenants,

there is a legitimate concern that they may similarly overlook complaints arising from the business such as noise or other disturbances. Furthermore, considering some of the allegations against the landlord are harassment and menacing, it bears to believe that we as a board must also consider whether or not the landlord would allow the business to perform other forms of harassment and menacing, like using the live music, lack of soundproofing, and other things to drive out residents as well.”

Furthermore, Chairperson Weatherspoon informed the Board that the issue(s) raised should not be taken lightly as there are five different entities that are involved in the situation including the Attorney General’s office, NYS Dept. of Homes and Community Renewal, Assemblywoman Phara Souffrant’s office, Brooklyn Housing and Family Services, and the NYPD. This is a concern in terms of time, location, and manner. Various complaints from the tenants have been reported to the various entities, and the Board bringing this to the applicant’s attention is for her protection and the protection of her investment to not be a future victim of an unscrupulous landlord. In response, the applicant stated that she has 100% faith in “Don,” who is the building owner and the father of her partner. This last statement sparked controversy as it was a direct contradiction to her answer to Mr. Witherwax’s question a few minutes earlier about any relationship with the building owner. She maintained her faith and trust in Don, and stated that she had no reason to believe the tenants or that her business would cause any deleterious impact.

The board took several votes that failed—including motions to support, to withhold support only on fire-safety grounds, and to withhold support citing harassment, landlord-applicant relationship, and fire issues—before Mr. Veconi moved for reconsideration. On reconsideration, the committee voted to withhold support based on the relationship between the tenant/applicant and the landlord, the history of tenant complaints, and the need for a fire-safety plan (motion Veconi; second Anekwe; passed).

The results of all votes are below:

#1

A motion to support the committee’s recommendation was made by Mr. Puca, seconded by Mr. Witherwax

Vote Results: 7 Y / 10 N / 9 A, motion failed

#2

A new motion to not support the application because of tenant complaints and the relationship between the landlord/applicant was made by Mr. Veconi, seconded by Ms. Smith. A friendly amendment was made by Ms. Mitchell to also request a fire safety plan, but Mr. Veconi did not accept the amendment.

Vote Results: 12 Y / 5 N / 7 A, motion failed

#3

A new motion to not support the application because of tenant complaints, the relationship between the landlord/applicant, and the lack of fire plan was made by Dr. Lazur, seconded by Mr. Veconi.

Vote Results: 11 Y / 5 N / 7 A, motion failed

#4

A new motion to not support the application because of the lack of a fire plan was made by Mr. Witherwax, seconded by Mr. Veconi. A friendly amendment was made by Ms. Mitchell to also include the landlord relationship as a reason, but Mr. Witherwax did not accept the amendment
Vote Results: 4 Y / 15 N / 5 A, motion failed.

#5

A new motion to reconsider the first motion was made by Mr. Veconi, seconded by Mr. Anekwe.
Vote Results: 15 Y / 5 N / 3 A, motion passed

Office of Congresswoman Mealy

Council Member Darlene Mealy's Chief of Staff, Tamesha Thompson, reported that the office continues its line-dancing series and recently hosted a pajama campfire movie night with s'mores and snacks. She noted that a veterans' representative is now available in the district office on the first Wednesday of each month (appointments and walk-ins), that the office is distributing leaf bags, and that it is collecting names for countertop compost-bin pick-ups. She added that the office provides a monthly Narcan training at the CAB meeting and that Council Member Mealy is working to oppose the Community Opportunity to Purchase Act (COPA); a flyer outlines the office's concerns, Deborah Young will forward additional details to the HLU committee and the Board, and Dr. Sarah Lazur clarified that under the bill an owner of a four-family building who wishes to sell would be required to entertain offers from tenants or a qualified nonprofit, whereas the requirement would not apply to buildings with fewer than four units.

Office of Assemblyman Brian Cunningham

Aaomi Sailing highlighted the office's complaint/concern submission channel, reviewed the district-office services available to constituents, and invited the community to a holiday event on Sunday, December 14, from 2:00–6:00 p.m.

Public Comments

Local community member — Steven urged the Board to support increasing public library funding to 0.5% of the city budget (up from 0.45%), explaining that a fixed target would reduce year-to-year funding battles and allow librarians to plan budgets more reliably. He noted that Mayor-elect Mamdani has publicly committed to the 0.5% goal, said four City Council Members have already expressed support, and asked Community Board members to add their voices; he will email proposed language for the Board to review.

Deborah Young announced Crown Heights North Association's "Mingle & Jingle" holiday event on December 17 at 6:00 p.m. at 1055 St. Johns Place, featuring holiday drinks and live entertainment.

Michelle George reminded attendees that leaf bags are still available at the district office and invited the everyone to a community holiday party on December 29 at 706 Nostrand Avenue from 5:30PM to 8:30PM. Bring your families and come out to celebrate with CB8.

With no further business to discuss, Chairperson Weatherspoon adjourned the meeting at 9:05PM.

Guests Present

Xeerxeema Jordan

Heather Oku

Yaydey Rivera

Nora Reilly

Andrew Brennan

Hardy Fischer

Nadja Byrd

John DeWind

Mark Dean

Steven Pei

Cheryl Walcott

Roger Myers

Bill Wilkins

Jacob Wasserman

Adrienne Grande

Rodney Seymour

Skanela Mehan

Geisselle Munoz

Sharon Smith

Kendra Ross

Constance Lesold

Traci Nottingham

Deidra McGill

Fritz Celestin

Andrea Ferns

Shaheed Shabazz

Melina Bernardine

Ibrahim Ayu

Terrance Ratliff

Sesame James

Chris Lin

Tara Glick

T. Junor

M. Bruice

Gwen Burke

Shirley Mondesir

Lula Staton

Michael Hant

Rich McCullah

C.R. Martin

E. Ihara

M. Ihara