

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

February 8, 2024

Members Present

Akua Aidoo
Sharon Alexis-Pierre
Princess Benn-James
Robert Callahan
Edward Delman
Dian Duke
Benny Faygen
Andrea Ferris
Drew Gabriel
Tamika Gibbs
Nizjoni Granville
Xeerxeema Jordan
Frances Langley
Robert Lapoint
Dr. Sarah Lazur
Lisa Maldonado
Kwasi Mensah
Mimi Mitchell
Gail Muhammad
Fior Ortiz-Joyner
Taraya Pettway
Robert Puca
Dr. Cadesa Ramharrack
Yahya Raji
Anika Roach
Meredith Staton
Mark Thurton
Braná Uwa
Irsa Weatherspoon
Sharon Wedderburn
Robert Witherwax
Deborah Young

Members Absent/Excused

Lisa Atkinson
Julia Boyd
Jacques Brunvil
David Mantell
Conor Ross
Brian Saunders
Nicole Tetreault
Bria Thomas
Ethel Tyus
Gib Veconi
Kimberly Watson

Elected Officials Present

Borough President Antonio Reynoso
Assemblymember Stefani Zinnerman, 56th Assembly
District

Elected Official /Agency Representatives

Raul Rothblatt, Assemblyman Cunningham's office
Karen Chambers, Brooklyn District Attorney's office
Janay Pierre, Councilman Hudson's office
Arlean Gillin, Councilman Chi Osse's office
Ayanna Williams, Councilman Mealy's office
Ethan Nash, Brooklyn Borough Presidents office
Adam Dobraynski, NYC Department of Sanitation

CB8 Staff Present

Michelle George, District Manager
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

Chairperson Weatherspoon called the regular meeting of Community Board 8 to order at 6:35 PM, welcomed everyone to the Weeksville Heritage Center.

First, Chairperson Weatherspoon invited Adam from the Department of Sanitation Community Affairs for an update.

Department of Sanitation of New York – Adam Dobruynski, Community Affairs

The representative from DSNY came to remind the assembly that all commercial businesses are now required to bin up all their trash, including organics. These efforts are part of the city's ongoing effort reduce the rat population. Adam encourages the public to reach out to his office with other questions about abandoned vehicles, or other sanitation related concerns, at 212-291-1220 or to call 311.

Next, Chair invited Dr. Raymond Codrington of the Weeksville Heritage Center to give remarks.

Weeksville Heritage Center - Dr. Raymond Codrington, President

Dr. Codrington 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.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked Dr. Codrington and asked for reports from committees.

Environment, Sanitation, & Transportation Committee – Robert Witherwax, Chair

The Environment, Sanitation and Transportation Committee met on Tuesday, January 23, 2024 at Crown Heights Nursing Home, 810 St. Marks Ave 6:30 PM. In addition to the Chair, Robert Witherwax, present were: Mark Thurton, Vice Chair, Edward Delman, Alan Gerber, Phyllis Grannum, Karen Gray, Saskia Haegens, Delores Hutchinson, Jennifer Jordan, Xeerxeema Jordan, Peter Krashes, Frances Langley, Bobby LaPointe, Lisa Maldonado, William Meehan, Alex Morano, Fior Ortiz-Joyner, Conor Ross, Celeste Stern, Ethel Tyus, and Deborah Young.

Mr. Witherwax invited members and the public to join upcoming committee meetings to discuss three substantial policy areas that are relevant to the EST committee at this time: Residential Parking, Parking Permits, and Congestion Pricing. The EST Committee meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month, next on February 27th at Crown Heights Nursing Home, 810 St. Marks Ave 6:30 PM.

Health & Human Services Committee – Tamika Gibbs, Chair

The Health & Human Services Committee meets on the third Thursday of the month, next on February 15th at Crown Heights Apartments, 1055 St. Johns Place at 6:30 PM.

Public Safety Committee – Mark Thurton, Chair.

The Public Safety Committee met on Monday, January 22, 2024 at the 77th Precinct, 127 Utica Avenue. In addition the Chair, Mark Thurton, present were: Deputy Inspector Omar Birchwood, Officer Wallen, Officer Vidal, Nicole Tetreault, Jennifer Jordan, Xerxean Jordan, Janet Collins, Peter Anekwe, Boyd III, Scott Weinstein, Lisa Atkinson, Raul Rothblatt, Baffle Josiah, Martin Ortiz, Princess Ben-James & Ayeronde Davis (Bedford Stuyvesant Volunteer Ambulance Corps).

The committee heard from the Bed Stuy Volunteer Ambulance Corps; the group recently extended their service area to include Crown Heights, and they gave a presentation on their plans for the district and also stated that they offer CPR classes to the community.

Officer Vidal stated that there has been an increase in burglary in sector A, commercial premises, NYPD has a security service that offers free checks on windows doors, and safety walkthroughs. He also advised everyone to report package theft so that the cops are aware of the volume and location. He also advised all present to report abandon cars. Mr. Thurton directed everyone's attention to the board newsletter, which had statistics on crime. The Public Safety Committee meets on the fourth Monday of the month, next on February 26th at the 78th Precinct, 69 6th Avenue at 6:30 PM.

Housing Committee – Nizjoni Granville, Chair

The Housing Committee did not meet this month. Ms. Granville invites anyone with issues they are interested in discussing to call the board office, who will relay the message to the chair. The Housing Committee meets on the second Tuesday of the month, next on March 13th at Stuypark House, 77 New York Avenue at 6:30 PM.

Seniors Committee – Gail Muhammad, Chair.

The Seniors Committee met on Wednesday, February 7, 2024. In addition to the Chair, Gail Muhammad, present were: Frances Langley, Bryina Starks, Clara Odom, Gwendolyn Williams, Glinda Williams, Robert Banon, William Rodgers, Gloria Freeman, Jennifer Inniss, Lorna Matthews, Bridgette Duncan, Patricia Washington, Helen Selby, Yvonne Bailey, Patsy Johnson, H. Huggins, Alizandra Gaare, Audia Williams, Ida Golson, Sharon Joseph, Carmel Taylor-Flowers, Mildred Smith, Brenda Green, Mary Williams, Joycelyn Baldwin, Xeerxeerma Jordan, Jennifer Jordan, Essie Spivey, Mary Bohman, Faye Jones, Iva Webster, Linda Rogers, Estelle Rogers, Willa Robinson, Victoria Bittle, Gilbert Perryman, Sharon Alexis-Pierre, Esther Hertzell, Silma Thorpe, and Andrea Ferns.

At the February Meeting, the committee celebrated Black History Month and Mardi Gras and was well attended. Additionally, representatives from the MTA came and gave a presentation on Access a Ride, an issue of major concern to seniors in the district. The Seniors Committee meets on the first Monday of the month, next on March 6th at 1055 St. Johns at 6:30 PM.

Veterans Committee - Nizjoni Granville, Chair.

The Veterans Committee has been working hard to connect veterans of the district that are known to all the services and benefits they are entitled to. Princess Benn-James, Vice Chair, notes that the Brooklyn Veteran's hospital will soon close down, and encourages any veterans to change their care to the Manhattan hospital. The Veterans Committee meets on the third Tuesday of the month, next on March 19th at Stuypark House, 77 New York Avenue at 6:30 PM.

Having finished committee reports, Chair Weatherspoon entertained a motion to accept the minutes of the previous month's meeting, which was offered by Dr. Lazur, second by Mr. Staton.

With the minutes accepted, the Chair commenced the Public Hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING ACTION ITEMS

SLA and Sidewalk Café Review Committee – Robert Witherwax, Vice Chair

The SLAC Committee met on Monday, February 5, 2024 at Crown Heights Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 810 St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn. The committee discussed the following liquor license applications:

1. New Full License Application – 554 Vanderbilt Avenue Hospitality LLC, 554 Vanderbilt Ave (Dean and Bergen Streets)

Details include:

- i. Establishment is the former Cataldos, and will operate as “Wayward Fare”*
- ii. Proprietor currently operates Alta Calidad, also on Vanderbilt Avenue*
- iii. Maximum capacity is 60 with hours of operation of 11AM to 2AM daily*
- iv. Outdoor seating area to operate from 11AM to 10PM Sunday through Thursday and 11AM to 11PM Friday and Saturday*

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

The proprietor was present at the board meeting, but there were no questions from the members.

Ms. Gibbs made a motion to support the committee’s recommendation, seconded by Mr. Staton
Motion

The motion passed with 26 in favor, one opposed and one abstention.

2. Corporate Change Application for No. 7 Restaurant LLC, 627 Vanderbilt Avenue (St Marks Ave and Prospect Pl), Full license

Details include:

- i. Change of composition of licensees by adding Katherine Pangaro to the ownership group*
- ii. No changes to operations*

The committee voted 12 in favor to support the corporate change application and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

A board member asked if the proposal for the outdoor area modified. Staff responded that it was updated in the record.

Ms. Ortiz Joyner made a motion to support the committee’s recommendation seconded by Ms. Gibbs.

The motion passed with 27 in favor and one abstention.

The SLAC Committee meets the first Monday of the month, next on March 4th at 810 St. Marks at 6:30 PM.

Cannabis Committee

1. Plant Base LLC (Licensee: Prince Abidoye), 782 Nostrand Avenue (between Sterling and St. John's Places)

Mr. Abidoye and his business partner, Mr. Kevon McCarter presented their plans for an adult-use cannabis retail dispensary for 782 Nostrand Avenue. The location is currently a multi-use space with a cell phone and apparel store. The applicants presented a well-rounded application complete with organizational structure that includes four BIPOC individuals in their five-team structure, two of which have ten plus years' experience in the cannabis and other highly regulated industries (the COO and CFO). Due to the plant-based lifestyles they lead, they call their venture "Plant Base" as a reminder of the naturalness of cannabis as a plant, and as a starting point to bring education, community, and culture to the brand.

The gentlemen stated that the core of their business would be focused on cannabis education of alternative uses outside of merely smoking the flower. These methods are inclusive of tinctures, balms, edibles, and more importantly, tea blends that are lesser talked about and used in our community. This, they stated, is part of their effort to help change the negative impressions that many in the general community has on cannabis consumption and the stereotypes associated with it. Instead of focusing on merely the psychedelic component of the cannabis plant, Plant Base would instead focus on the holistic components that provides health and wellbeing.

Additional aspects of the establishment include:

- *Hours of operation 10AM to 8 PM Sunday, 10AM to 8:30PM Tuesday and Wednesday, 10 AM to 9 PM Thursday, 10AM to 10PM Friday, and Noon to 10PM Sunday*
- *Only empty displays of product packaging in the front with all inventory to be kept in the back*
- *Extensive security protocols inclusive of security guards (who will be retired corrections officers or moonlighting officers), cameras, locked cases*
- *Delivery will be provided in Plant Base LLC-owned vehicles furnished with lock boxes and cameras to ensure driver safety and even driver compliance with road rules and OCM delivery regulations. Delivery will be member/subscription based to ensure all purchasers are over the age of 21.*
- *With only 1% of the cannabis industry positions held by black and indigenous individuals, seeking to give back with education on not only the uses of cannabis, but how to get involved in the industry as well either as growers, processors, or dispensary owners*
- *Working with local nonprofits and lawyers for expungement clinics as part of extensive community givebacks recognizing the heinous impact of cannabis policing in the community.*

On motion made and seconded, the committee voted unanimously with 11 in favor to support the application as presented and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

The applicant is present to answer questions. On this application, Mr. Staton stated that there is cannabis shop across the street, and asked if the applicants present on the night are the same ones that had come in a previous month for a location a few doors down. Staff clarifies that there are no licensed stores in the district, and that any locations nearby are illegal shops. This application

grants the applicant the right to enter a lottery of limited licenses, and also clarified that Mr. Abidoye and his team are not affiliated with any other establishment teams.

Dr. Lazur comments that she appreciates that there will be expungement services offered by this shop, and asks if there will be cannabis products without THC for sale. The proprietor notes that it may not be legal to sell non-THC products because of the rules set by the state Office of Cannabis Management.

Ms. Gibbs made a motion to support the committee's recommendation, seconded by Ms. Muhammad.

The motion passed with 29 in favor and one opposed.

2. Budega NYC (Licensee: Alex Norman), 591 Franklin Avenue (corner of Pacific Street)

Mr. Norman and his business partner/brother-in-law, Mr. Louis Colon presented their plans for a cannabis adult-use dispensary at 591 Franklin Avenue. The gentlemen informed the committee that they are life-long Brooklynites, living in either Crown Heights or the neighboring Bedford Stuyvesant. In a well-rounded presentation, Mr. Norman stated that he is a CUARD applicant/social justice individual, and plans to run his dispensary as a family owned and operated venture. His focus with Budega will be on mental health and wellness, while applying restorative justice in the community.

The gentlemen explained that accessory to the cannabis dispensary would be a separately functioning café that would sell coffee, tea, and other goods likely to be sourced from local businesses daily. These partnership opportunities would be integral to the business as community participation and involvement is crucial to the Budega brand and success. Education around cannabis' different uses (especially around the many medicinal components), as well as the skills involved with processing and growing are necessary in this community, and Budega seeks to provide these invaluable resources. Recognizing their proximity to the Atlantic Avenue Men's Assessment Shelter on Bedford Avenue, they stated that in addition to the running (jogging) clubs in the district they already sponsor and host, they would also host coat and warm clothing drives for the men at the shelter.

Other components of the application include:

- *Hours of operation 10AM to 8PM Sunday, and 10 AM to 10 PM Monday thru Saturday*
- *Different types of menus to help customers sift through cannabis strains to find the right one they need for their purposes (ex: a "skinny" menu for seniors with slimmed down and simplified options to show only those strains that focus on specific health and wellness conditions)*
- *Continued work with the Medgar Evers College Cannabis Program (spearheaded the applicant town hall in October 2023 to help social equity applicants navigate the application process) to create a cannabis co-op*
- *The cannabis co-op to be centered around "home-grow" regulations to teach people how to grow cannabis at home to cycle resources and knowledge in the community*
- *In the café, will seek to have conversations around mental health and wellness, while also being able to use the space to showcase local artists and brands*
- *Will seek to prioritize hiring social equity individuals and will collaborate with CB8 to find a local partner to help find suitable candidates*

- *No plans for on-site consumption in the café at any time*

On motion made and seconded, the committee voted unanimously with 11 in favor to support the application as presented and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

The applicant is present to answer questions. Mr. Mensah asks for more information about how the applicants are associating social justice and cannabis. The applicants would like to help others who have not had their offenses expunged, and will use the café to host events and offer pro bono legal services for these individuals. Separately they plan to assist with re-entry for individuals released from incarceration.

A community member asks if they have considered an alternative location. The applicant says that the zoning regulations restrict where cannabis can be located, and the immediacy of availability was attractive for this location. As a contributing factor, the applicant was arrested four blocks from the location and appreciates the symbolism of coming full circle so close to this moment in his past.

Ms. Benn James asks if the applicant can expound on their comments about the connection between cannabis use and mental health. The applicant notes that he and a therapist friend who works for the city Department of Education; together they conceived of a connection between mental health and cannabis use, and wanted to host a mental health workshop to provide people with the resources to determine if there is a healthy personal therapeutic use for cannabis. Ms. Benn James disputes the positive connection between mental health and cannabis based on her observations of people affected at Kings County Hospital.

Mr. Puca asks the Community Board to consider focusing attention on illegal shops, rather than applying elevated scrutiny to business owners working through legal channels.

Ms. Ortiz-Joyner makes a motion to support the committee's recommendation, seconded by Ms. Muhammad

The motion passed with 27 in favor, two opposed and two abstentions.

3. Corporate Gift Solutions

Mr. Yuda Meer presented on behalf of his wife, Abigaelle, who was at home recovering from giving birth in mid-January. He stated that while he has experience in the cannabis dispensary business having operated a dispensary in New Jersey, this location would be licensed under his wife and he is assisting with the application. Returning for the second time after the full Board was unable to come to a consensus at the January meeting, Mr. Meer presented to the committee the steps he took to accommodate the Board's request to contact the neighboring church of their intention to open a cannabis retail dispensary.

Details of attempted communication included the following, with evidence provided when possible:

- *An email to the church using the email address on the church website that bounced back to him*
- *Calls to the telephone numbers listed on the church's website that were out of order and several calls to the cellphone listed with numerous messages left and no return call back*

- *Mr. Meer contacted the CB8 district office to inform of the slow progress and to ask for guidance. He was instructed to post the community notice on the front door of the church, which he did*
- *He was finally able to meet with the bishop of the church on Sunday, February 4th to inform of the plans and stated that it was a positive conversation. However, the bishop mentioned several concerns that committee members had stated such as the criminal activity on the block and in the area. The bishop, like many other church leaders in his position, did not write a letter of support.*

He provided details of the application, which remained the same as presented in January, inclusive of the following:

- *Hours of operation from 10AM to 7PM daily with 8 employees over two shifts and an additional security personnel officer on each shift*
- *The site was selected because it is immediately available due to a personal relationship with the building owner*
- *Security will be in the form of cameras, security glass, and security personnel*
- *Community benefits include potential collaborations with local businesses, sponsoring art or education, toy runs, charity, etc. Currently, Mrs. Meer provides meals to mothers that recently gave birth via proceeds from her home business, which she will be able to expand if the dispensary is licensed.*
- *Seeking to provide offerings and products based on community demographics and preferences (ex: for older individuals that might be seeking pain management, and recreational offerings for younger individuals that just want recreational uses)*
- *A manager will be on-site at all times and Mrs. Meer will pop in at times, but she will not be the face of the dispensary*

A motion to support the application failed with 5 in favor, 4 opposed, with 2 abstentions. A motion to withhold support for the application due to location concerns pertaining to the crime in the area also failed with 4 yes and 7 no votes.

Finally, a motion was made to withhold support for the application due to many of the pressing issues centered around the “manner” portion of how the business would be operated. Many of the minor issues present at the January hearing remained a month later, and the committee did not feel as though the applicant presented as well rounded of an application as the other two applicants on the night. The motion to withhold support based on issues surrounding the manner in which the business would be operated passed with a final tally of 9 in favor with 2 opposed. The committee hopes the full Board will support its recommendation.

The husband of the applicant, Mr. Meer is present to answer questions. Mr. Delman asked if approving this application would be to the detriment of the other applications approved, and if the members of the committee could more clearly elucidate their concerns were with this applicant.

Chairperson Weatherspoon stated that this application is not relevant to any of the other applicants, and stated that there were quite a few instances of discrepancies that became a source of confusion.

Mr. Puca asks if the business will be licensed, and if the establishment will vet customers prior to purchase, thus demonstrating that this application complies with the minimum legal guidelines set forth by the state OCM.

A board member asks how many licenses will be issued in this round of applications. Staff responds that there will be 1,000 licenses in this round, of which New York City is expected to receive about 700.

Ms. Mitchell rises to say that she was present at the January meeting where the board was unable to come to a consensus, as well as the committee meeting where a vote was made. At the committee meeting, it became apparent why the application was deficient. Ms. Mitchell notes that the Mr. Meer is often not transparent about questions asked by the committee, responding with incomplete information and only supplying information detrimental to the application after considerable questioning. This is in comparison to other applicants who were candid with both positive and negative aspects of their business proposal. The proprietor was also focused primarily on customers rather than the community at large, an emerging priority of the Cannabis Committee and the Board. Furthermore, a community advocate brought by the applicant claimed to be from the Crown Heights community, representing an organization called Lovely Health, which Ms. Mitchell was unable to locate evidence of its presence in Crown Heights. Ms. Mitchell characterized the application as “weak.”

Ms. Foster notes that she was the individual to ask if the applicant had reached out to the church or the police department, which eventually the proprietors did.

Mr. Lapoint was present at the committee meeting. One of the complications of this matter is that, while it is a weak application, it fully comports with the requirements of the Office of Cannabis Management. He notes that this raises conceptual questions about whether something that is fully compliant with the law at a minimum is sufficient.

A member of the community notes that the last two speakers made direct or indirect reference to the applicant’s Jewish heritage, and was offended by the negative connotation implied.

Mr. Puca asks if the community needs to have a legal reason to deny the application. Ms. George notes that the committee is charged with considering the time, location and manner of the application, of which the cannabis committee disputed the manner of the application.

Ms. Wedderburn states that as a long-time resident of Crown Heights who uses St. Johns regularly, and considers it a hard won vibrant commercial corridor that took 20 years of work to make safe, and that she believes this business would not contribute positively to its expansion.

Ms. Pettway states that she initially did not support the application, but eventually came to support the application due to the applicant’s effort to comply with the Community Board’s requests. Ms. Pettway encourages the applicant, should they be accepted, to extend an olive branch to the community that has lived in Crown Heights by employing locals.

Ms. Muhammad responds to earlier comments by Mr. Puca, clarifying that the community has been vocally opposed to the illegal shops.

Ms. Foster takes exception to the implication by a previous speaker that she is antisemitic. She lived in the community beginning at 2 months of age. At a prior meeting Mr. Meer identified himself as Jewish, and thus she had not made any undue assumptions.

Dr. Lazur notes that when the law was passed, the legislative intent was for the benefits of legal cannabis to be first and primarily oriented towards persons affected by the criminalization of cannabis, and that this application noticeably lacks any deference to that intent.

Mr. Delman asks Mr. Meer to clarify that he and his wife live in Brooklyn, which he confirms. He notes that the Crown Heights community is also home to a considerable Jewish community in addition to its Afro-Caribbean community. He also states that he understands the prior two applications go well above the minimum requirements.

A community member notes that the neighborhood is predominately black, and that if there are limited licenses, that she would prefer that preference be given to black applicants.

The applicant appreciates what community members have said with respect to the St. Johns corridor. Today, the applicant met with a representative of the police precinct. He stated that the officer he spoke with acknowledged that the block has gotten safer, and that the addition of new business (including a potential legal cannabis store) were welcome additions.

Mr. Delman makes a motion to support the application, seconded by Ms. Mitchell.

The motion failed with 10 in favor, 19 opposed and three abstentions.

Ms. Gibbs makes a motion to support the committee's recommendation to not support the application, seconded by Ms. Young.

The motion passed with 19 in favor, eight opposed and three abstentions.

In closing comments, a community member makes an analogy about applying for a job for which you are entirely qualified, but you arrive at the interview to discover that there are additional hurdles that you were not aware of. He asks the board to set consistent rules that are known at the time of application.

Chair Weatherspoon invites Borough President Reynoso to give remarks before the committee.

Borough President Antonio Reynoso

Borough President Reynoso greeted the members and public, stating that he had come to speak about Community Board term limits, and clarifying a letter his office sent to members that inspired considerable confusion. His office's concern is in avoiding a devastating turnover of the entire membership at once, which can result in a significant loss of institutional knowledge. He points to the City Council, which experienced a loss of 40 members in a single year when term limits were implemented, and damaged the body's ability to effectively function as a check to the Mayor. He encourages members of the board to consider stepping down early and suggesting replacements to promote an orderly turnover. He invited questions.

Ms. Ortiz-Joyner notes that as a motorist, she feels unseen and often vilified. BP Reynoso replies that there was a significant increase in the purchase of vehicles during the pandemic, which has been a contributing factor the feeling of a lack of parking spaces. He states that the progressive movement's transportation policy is a practical response to dense urbanization. From his perspective, the longer we wait to have a difficult conversation about cars, the harder it will be.

Mr. Witherwax, a member for 20 years, thanks the BP for a respectful tone of his message, and agrees that the Community Boards need a deep bench for a new generation of community board members.

Ms. Mitchell asks the Borough President to consider virtual meetings for committees considering the changing and expanding outreach that resulted from virtual meetings. BP Reynoso acknowledges that virtual meetings are much more convenient, but that the open meetings law is a real barrier. He also notes that there are many critical aspects of virtual meetings that must be addressed beyond local law and at the state level, which he hopes the community board will assist his office in working through.

Ms. Muhammad appreciates the clarity on the letter she received, because she was offended by the tone without the context he supplied.

Mr. Staton, the oldest member of the Community Board, has seen a great deal of change in the Community Board, and hopes that the Borough President will continue to emphasize the importance of institutional knowledge, and asks the BP to reconsider the elimination of parking in new construction. BP Reynoso clarified that he is advocating for elimination of parking minimums close to transit in order to discourage cars for new residents who have many alternatives to consider.

Ms. Young also received a letter, appreciates the clarity and asks the BP's office to consider rewriting the letter to make the succession planning clearer. She asks that BP Reynoso remember that public transit is not always an option, and that he remember many people are dependent on cars.

Definitively, the Borough President assures the Board that he will send the revised letter to the board for comment before transmitting it.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanks the Borough President for his remarks and for listening to her concerns regarding the Term Limit letters received by CB 8 and its adverse impact. She then resumed the public hearing on action items.

Land Use Committee – Sharon Wedderburn, Chair

The Land Use Committee met on Thursday, February 1, 2024 at Crown Heights Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 810 St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn. The committee discussed the following items:

1. Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for 189 Prospect Place in the Prospect Heights Historic District for a rooftop addition

The Land Use Committee reviewed an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for 189 Prospect Place located in the Prospect Heights Historical District. JiJig Tang, an architect and the applicant's representative made the presentation on behalf of her client. In the process of submitting details for rear facade work. At the time of the historical designation in 2009, there was a single dormer located on the roof. When the client purchased the building in 2021 there was a full dormer in place. The applicant's representative stated that there was no evidence that the dormer was approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) or by the Department of Buildings (DoB). The applicant's representative acknowledged that the dormer is visible from the street. The applicant seeks to have the full width dormer be legalized via a retroactive certificate of appropriateness.

Prior to the committee meeting, the applicant's representative met with the Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Committee (PHNDC) to review the application. Mary Shuford of

PHNDC opined in a letter written to Community Board #8 that the PHNDC cannot support the legalization of the dormer as it presently exists.

A motion was made by Gib Veconi and seconded by Sarah Lazur that the committee not support the legalization of the full width dormer. The committee voted 16 in Favor, 1 Abstention and 0 opposed.

Ms. Gibbs made a motion to support the committee's recommendation seconded by Ms. Mitchell.

Mr. Delman asks what the practical impact of this vote is. Chair Weatherspoon replies that it is not the Land Use's policy to legalize illegal work, and that this begins a dialogue with the Landmarks Preservation Committee.

Mr. Callahan notes that at the committee's vote is part of a typical procedure where the Community Board to move forward with a procedural vote.

The applicant's representative notes that, in an unusual step, the Landmarks Preservation Commission has already reached out to the applicant for next steps and begun to provide acceptable solutions for remediating the illegal work to make it acceptable.

The motion passed with 25 in favor, three opposed and one abstention.

2. Dept. of City Planning Gaming Text Amendment

The committee reviewed the City of Yes provision for expansion of gaming in manufacturing districts. In the committee's discussion of this proposal, the sentiment was a resounding NO to the expansion of gaming to manufacturing districts. One such example, is a proposal to bring a casino to Coney Island. As noted by committee member Robert Callahan, such proposals should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis because of possible negative impacts within to the surrounding community.

In order to emphasize the committee's full throated opposition to as of right locations of gaming enterprises, it voted 17 in Favor, 0 Abstentions and 0 opposed. to not support the proposed expansion of gaming to manufacturing districts.

Mr. Witherwax made a motion to support the committee's recommendation, seconded by Ms. Gibbs.

The motion passed with 29 in favor and zero opposed.

Chairperson Weatherspoon invited Representative Stefani Zinerman give remarks to the board.

Assemblymember Stefani Zinerman, 56th District

The Assemblymember wished the members a good evening, and invited all to attend her upcoming meeting with Lt. Governor Antonio Delgado, now leading the Office of Civic Engagement. She knows that this community is very engaged and that their voices would be greatly appreciated.

City of Yes: Economic Opportunity

City of Yes: Economic Opportunity is a series of 18 city-wide Zoning Text Amendments which will result in broad-brush changes across New York City, a complex city of five boroughs with neighborhoods of varied zoning, mass transit access, population size, etc. Changes to zoning and the zoning text allow things to occur “as of right,” meaning that unless the Dept. of City Planning states otherwise, there will be no need for community input or oversight. (For example, changing the zoning of an M1 area to R7 then allows anything that is developed in that area to be done so in accordance with the parameters of R7 zoning without any notification to the community board or neighborhood organizations.)

Community Board 8 is but one of the many unique communities that will be broadly impacted by many of the proposed zoning text changes. Several concerns have been raised by members over the months of discussions in committee meetings and even webinars hosted by the Dept. of City Planning. The following chart is a synopsis of the proposed zoning with explanation of the changes and actions to be taken by the agency as provided by their truncated presentation to CB8, and the “pros and cons” that members had submitted to the District office.

We are here today to vote either “yes” or “no” on each of the 18 zoning text amendments and changes to the citywide zoning regulations. Unfortunately, there is no option to abstain in these votes due to the way DCP has set up their community board recommendation form, so if you are unsure of your unwavering support for the zoning text change, we encourage you to vote your conscience.

Proposal 1: Lift time limits to reactivating vacant storefronts

The board rejects the proposal, with 8 in favor and 21 opposed.

Proposal 2: Simplify rules for business types allowed on commercial streets

The board rejects the proposal, with 5 in favor and 23 opposed.

Proposal 3: Expand opportunities for small-scale clean production

The board approves of the proposal, with 18 in favor and 10 opposed.

Proposal 4: Modernize loading dock rules so buildings can adapt over time

The board rejects the proposal, with 4 in favor and 24 opposed.

Proposal 5: Enable commercial activity on upper floors

The board rejects the proposal, with 0 in favor and 28 opposed.

Proposal 6: Simplify and modernize the way businesses are classified in zoning

The board rejects the proposal, with 4 in favor and 23 opposed.

Proposal 7: Clarify rules to permit indoor urban agriculture

The board rejects the proposal, with 11 in favor and 16 opposed.

Proposal 8: Give life sciences companies the certainty to grow

The board rejects the proposal, with 1 in favor and 26 opposed.

Proposal 9: Support nightlife with common-sense dancing and live entertainment rules

The board rejects the proposal, with 8 in favor and 19 opposed.

Proposal 10: Create more opportunities for amusements to locate

The board rejects the proposal, with 0 in favor and 27 opposed.

Proposal 11: Enable entrepreneurship with modern rules for home-based businesses

The board rejects the proposal, with 2 in favor and 25 opposed.

Proposal 12: Introduce design rules that ensure buildings contribute to surroundings

The board approves of the proposal, with 23 in favor and 4 opposed.

Proposal 13: Reduce conflicts between auto repair shops and pedestrians

The board approves of the proposal, with 17 in favor and 10 opposed.

Proposal 14: Encourage safe and sustainable deliveries with micro-distribution

The board rejects the proposal, with 4 in favor and 23 opposed.

Proposal 15: Facilitate local commercial space on residential campuses

The board rejects the proposal, with 0 in favor and 27 opposed.

Proposal 16: Create process for allowing new corner stores in residential areas

The board rejects the proposal, with 0 in favor and 27 opposed.

Proposal 17: Rationalize waiver process for business adaptation and growth

The board rejects the proposal, with 2 in favor and 25 opposed.

Proposal 18: Create new kinds of zoning districts for future job hubs

The board rejects the proposal, with 3 in favor and 24 opposed.

To conclude the business of the meeting, Chair Weatherspoon combines Public Comment, Old and New Business.

Paul Blanchett, formerly of the Brooklyn Children's Museum Board, a resident of New York Avenue. He is concerned that black students lag significantly behind on standardized tests for math and English. He asks the public to review the Harlem Children's Zone, which is supported by former President Obama. Black children in this zone outperformed students in other demographics, and he would like to replicate it throughout the city.

Next a Community Member who lives in Prospect Heights informs the board that Mount Prospect Park is proposed to host a new large skate park, and he states that the board will need to approve the change. Staff acknowledges that the park straddles Community Districts 8 and 9.

Ms. Young notes that the Crown Heights North Association will meet at 1055 St John's Place on Feb 28th at 6:45, with a guest presentation by board member Dr. Lazur on tenant's rights.

Chairperson Weatherspoon entertained a motion to adjourn at 9:57 PM and wished everyone a good night.

Guests Present

Jennifer Jordan
Kevon Carter
Antoinette Buckley
Lula Staton
Lawrence Buckley
Cheryl Walcott
Prince Abidoeye
Alan Mass
Hellen Denman
Shirley Mondesir
Lynn Cave
Yaniv G.
Karen Gray
Ayana Gordon
Amanda Blair
Diana Bond
Roger Myers
Yuda Meer
Audrey Taitt-Hall
Katharina Mennrich
Julius Busecke
Kris Sunderre

Delovop Owens
Anna Lipkind
Hayley Gorenberg
Shatia Burks
Alicia Pritchard
Valerie NeroReid
Peter Arelleve
Diana Foster
Nathan Turner
Jijing Tang
Edwing Tang
Johnny Redd
Charlie M.
Paul Blanchette
Sherry Ramdhanie
Rodney Seymour
Ken Gayle
Jolee Cobb
Michelle Mathison
Kim Robinson
Afif Khon
Gail Doran