

**Community Board 8
Chelsea Piers Prospect Heights
601 Dean Street
Brooklyn, NY 11213
January 8th, 2026**

Members Present

Isaac Andino
Peter Anekwe
Gail Branch-Muhammad
Drew Gabriel
Tamika Gibbs
Nizjoni Granville
Mohammad Hassan
Jamell Henderson
Tafari John-King
Frances Langley
Robert Lapointe
Dr. Sarah Lazur
Lisa Maldonado
William Meehan
Kwasi Mensah
Mimi Mitchell
Fior Ortiz-Joyner
Taraya Pettway
Robert Puca
Yahya Raji
Anika Roach
Conor Ross
Ezra Roth
Brian Saunders
Robin Smith
Meredith Staton
Lesley Steele
Mark Thurton
Briana Uwa
Gib Veconi
Kimberly Watson
Sharon Wedderburn
Robert Witherwax

Members Absent/Excused

Akua Aidoo
Sharon Alexis-Pierre
Princess Benn
Barbara Cofield
Dian Duke
Benny Faygen
Jennifer Jordan
Dina Tate
Katie Taylor
Dana Thompson
Ryan Tucker
Irsa Weatherspoon
Regina Wilson
Deborah Young

Elected Officials Present

State Senator Brian Cunningham
Council Member Darlene Mealy
Council Member Crystal Hudson

Elected Official Representatives

Aaomi Saling – Office of Assemblyman Cunningham
Adrienne Williams – Office of Assemblywoman Walker
Sean Gurl– Office of Assembly Member Carroll
Krista Reilly—Office of Senator Myrie
Janay Pierre – Office of Councilmember Hudson
Tendai Watkins – Office of Assemblywoman Zinerman
David Lopez – Office of Senator Brisport
Tamesha Thompson – Office of Councilwoman Mealy
Karen Chambers – Office of District Attorney Gonzalez

CB8 Staff Present

Michelle George, District Manager
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

In the absence of the Chairperson Irsa Weatherspoon, the regular meeting of Community Board 8 was called to order at 6:07PM by Ms. Gail Muhammad, First Vice Chairperson.

Acceptance of Minutes

A motion was made by Fior Ortiz-Joyner to accept the December minutes with any necessary corrections, seconded by Tamika Gibbs. It passed by unanimously.

Committee Updates

Economic Development — Lisa Maldonado, Vice Chair

The committee meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month and is coordinating with Crown Heights North Association and the Nostrand Avenue North Merchants Association on corridor support. The team promoted a United Empowerment Party workshop on “Breaking into the Cannabis Industry.” The next meeting will be January 13, 2026 at 6:15 PM (Brower Park Library, 155 Brooklyn Avenue), and Sephida Artis, owner of the yet to open Flatbush Pot Shop at 972 Dean Street, will make a presentation on Cannabis Fastrac, a program with Cannabis NYC.

Health and Human Services — Tamika Gibbs, Chair

The committee did not meet in **December** and will not meet in January. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 19, 2026 at a location to be determined.

Housing and Land Use — Sharon Wedderburn, Chair

The committee did not meet in January; the next meeting is February 5, 2026 at 77 New York Avenue. The committee chair updated on the Board on the committee’s completion of an AAMUP post-mortem at the December meeting and announced that the committee has been assigned a Fellow from the NYC Community Planning Fellowship Program at the Fund for the City of New York. Our fellow will analyze affordability and demographic outcomes including whether the plan is meeting its stated goals and flagging a potential workforce-opportunity gap in AAMUP’s programming. The committee also noted that ACS is moving into 1000 Dean Street, which led to a longer discussion at the committee meeting regarding city use of housing space.

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

The committee will meet on February 3rd jointly with the Health and Human Services Committee at 6PM at the Brower Park Library. They will hear a presentation on the deaf community and have a demonstration of basic ASL.

Public Safety – Mark Thurton, Chair

The committee will meet on Monday, January 26, 2026 at 6:30PM at the 77th Precinct located at 127 Utica Avenue. All are welcomed to attend.

Seniors — Gail Muhammad, Chair

The committee met on January 7, 2026 and piloted chair yoga, which received strong interest with requests to make it monthly; the next meeting is February 4th at 6PM at 1055 St. John’s Place. There will be Black History Month programming including Black History Bingo. All are welcomed to attend.

SLA and Sidewalk Café Review (SLAC) – Irsa Weatherspoon, Chair

The SLAC Committee will meet on Monday, February 2, 2026 at 6PM at 77th New York Avenue.

Veterans -- Robin Smith, Chair

The committee did not meet in December and will meet on January 25, 2026 at a location to be determined.

First Vice Chair Muhammad thanked the committee chairs for their reports and updates and asked for a presentation from Bridge Street Development Corp on Franklin Avenue Open Streets 2026.

Bridge Street Development Corporation – Ms. Tiara Robertson

Bridge Street distributed made a presentation describing its application to extend Open Streets on Franklin Avenue; the application has not yet been filed but will be submitted in the coming days. The 2026 program will operate from June 6-October 24th from 12-6pm excluding time for setup and breakdown. The program is framed around business support and foot-traffic growth, retaining the every-other-week cadence from last year, but expanding the closure from six blocks to ten and extending the footprint north–south from Atlantic Avenue to Eastern Parkway (rather than starting at Dean Street) to prevent traffic backups. Organizers plan to mitigate random vending by establishing a curated vendor market with clear participation rules. Last season’s Halloween closure “went well,” and the team hopes to repeat it; the program received DOT funding last year. A program website will launch one month prior to the start of Open Streets with volunteer opportunities, and Franklin Avenue Merchants Association contacts are included in the deck; ideas can be sent to Tiara. Because signage cannot be permanently changed for an every-other-week program, Bridge Street will manually post temporary signs and asks residents to move cars promptly.

In Q&A: Peter Anekwe requested advance detour notices for drivers at both Atlantic Avenue and Eastern Parkway; Tamika Gibbs suggested timing signs for Wednesdays because many Franklin residents relocate cars mid-week; Jamell Henderson asked for business-impact reporting, and organizers shared that an end-of-season survey indicated most businesses saw positive impact either the day of or during the following week; Sharon Wedderburn asked about bus reroutes, and Bridge Street said DOT handled bus-stop changes last year and will clarify plans after submission; Gail Muhammad invited Gwen from Crabby Shack to share experience (they missed prior street coverage but expect to participate this year and want more family activations); another business owner from HAD Associates raised many concerns generated from Open streets from nuisance complaints, noise, crowd control to authority after 8 p.m. (organizers noted enforcement switches to 311 and NYPD after the end); and Mark Thurton praised last season’s family-friendly atmosphere and diversity of businesses, expressing hope for repeat customers in 2026.

Ms. Muhammad thanked Ms. Robertson for the information and invited NYC Office of Emergency Management to give an update on staying safe in cold weather.

OEM Presentation – Weatherization and Preparedness

Representatives from NYC Emergency Management (OEM) urged everyone to Sign Up for Free Emergency Alerts! Text **NOTIFYNYC to 692-692** to get citywide emergency updates in English. Reply with one or more ZIP codes to receive more localized alerts. They also encouraged everyone to pack a “Go Bag”, and to call 311 for utility issues and storm response questions. The presentation covered snow-removal responsibilities, safe use of indoor heaters, and regular checks of smoke alarms and batteries; OEM also shared social handles and its website for ongoing updates.

Ms. Muhammad thanked the two young women from OEM for their information and opened the public hearing on the Action Items.

Public Hearing

Environment, Sanitation, Transportation Committee (EST)

The EST Committee met on Tuesday, November 25, 2025 at 801 Dean Street. The committee heard a presentation by the Dept. of Transportation for the Albany, Troy, and Park Place Safety Plan around Albany Houses, a NYC Housing Authority development.

Details of the proposal include:

- a. Protected bike lane on Albany Ave between Bergen Street and Park Place, where the block is currently 50 feet wide. The proposal calls for 2 parking lanes, a protected bike, and one vehicular travel lane.
- b. Standard bike lane on Albany Avenue between Atlantic Avenue to Bergen Street; Park Place to Eastern Parkway
- c. Standard bike lane on Troy Avenue between Atlantic Avenue to Eastern Parkway
- d. The bike lanes will be CB8 connectors only, not extending north into CB3 or south into CB9.
- e. Expanded sidewalk on Troy Avenue between Park and Bergen, where there are currently two travel lanes. The proposal will maintain two travel lanes at a narrower width with an expanded 14-foot pedestrian space on the impacted blocks.
- f. Newly created mid-block crosswalk on Park between Albany and Troy to facilitate safe crossing between Albany Houses and schools. This will result in a net loss of four parking spaces.
- g. New bulb outs and curb extensions at key intersections along Albany and Troy Avenues with daylighting to reduce pedestrian crossing distances.
- h. Turning calming treatments around each intersection of the development to tighten turns.
- i. Relocation of school loading zone from Troy Avenue to Park Place.
- j. The b48 bus, which currently runs southbound on Brooklyn Avenue, will be re-routed to run southbound on Albany Avenue in alignment with the Brooklyn Bus Network Redesign Draft proposal, which was opposed by the Board.

The committee voted 20 in favor with 2 opposed to support the plan as presented with the proviso that the agency meet with the Albany Houses Residents’ Association and inform them of the plan. The Association discussed the plan at their December 19, 2025 meeting and have no objection or modifications. The committee hopes the full Board will support its recommendation.

The floor was opened to public comments and questions: Several members discussed the Albany Houses street project and related B43 bus changes and bike-lane proposals. Comments came from William Meehan, Taraya Pettway (who noted the Albany Houses meeting drew only three residents and asked about stronger outreach), Jamell Henderson (who urged coordination with schools and community orgs), and Anika Roach (who raised safety concerns about narrow streets and bike lanes

A motion to support the application was made by Dr. Sarah Lazur, seconded by Mr. Veconi
Vote Results: 14 Y / 13 N / 4 A, motion fails

Mr. Veconi asked why members abstained, Gail replied there had not been sufficient community attendance. Mr. Veconi then moved for reconsideration with the modification that the bus is not moved; Dr. Lazur seconded. Peter Anekwe offered a friendly amendment to also reject the bike lanes, which Ms. Pettway seconded; Mr. Veconi did not accept the amendment, but a vote was made to determine whether we include it anyway. (The modified reconsideration proceeded without the bike-lane rejection. Vote Results: 7 Y / 21 N / 3 A, motion fails

From there, consideration moved back to Mr. Veconi's original amendment to support the plan with the request that the bus stop is not moved.

Vote Results: 19 Y / 8 N / 4 A, motion passes

There were no other voting items and Ms. Muhammad invited the elected officials present to say a few words.

Assemblyman Brian Cunningham, 43rd Assembly District

Assemblyman Cunningham reported that the Legislature is in session from January through June in Albany and that the Governor's State of the State will be delivered next week, with the Executive Budget to follow and public budget hearings in February. He previewed state efforts to launch the 3K program update, identified housing as a central priority—including property-tax reform, deed-theft protections, and correcting how AMI is calculated by bills that consider Westchester and Long Island—and highlighted a new law that frees some business taxes to the state for seven years. He noted that twelve of his bills were signed into law, shared office contact information (249 Empire Boulevard), and presented Board members Mark Thurton and Meredith Staton citations for exemplary community involvement before taking questions on ongoing affordability work and accountability for Atlantic Yards developer obligations.

Councilwoman Crystal Hudson, 35th Council District

Councilwoman Hudson announced child-care funding for the upcoming two fiscal years, reiterated twice-weekly office hours, and said a housing assistant is available every Wednesday; she outlined focus areas around aging, safe and affordable NYC, and noted that committee assignments are pending across the full city council.

Councilwoman Darlene Mealy, 41st Council District

Councilwoman Mealy shared that discretionary funding applications are open January 5–February 18, invited the Board to a January 30 district meeting at 400 Rockaway Avenue, and confirmed that COPA did not pass, offering clarifications on the nonprofit component.

Ms. Muhammad thanked all elected officials present for not only attending but updating the Board on the important work they are doing on our behalf. She then opened the floor for elected official representatives and public comments.

David Lopez from Senator Jabari Brisport’s office announced that discretionary funding remains open, reiterated support for “tax the rich” revenue proposals and endorsed local child-care initiatives.

Adrian Williams from Assemblywoman Latrice Walker’s office noted the start of the legislative session, invited constituents to raise concerns, announced a hybrid advisory-board meeting that will include human-trafficking discussion, promoted a Youth Resource Fair on January 24 at Eagle Academy (1137 Herkimer), and shared general office updates.

Sean Gurl from Assemblyman Robert Carroll’s office announced that the former MetroCard bus will visit the office on January 29 (10 a.m.–2 p.m.) to assist with transferring metrocard balances to OMNY cards and reduced-fare applications.

David Kupferberg advocated for true passenger reforms and called for rejecting the Brooklyn Bus Redesign pending broader feedback.

Chris Gonzalvo of Team Care Medical (a Medicaid/Medicare-funded nonprofit serving older adults) announced a new community primary-care center at 629 Park Place. Team Care Medical is a whole person approach, social day care, therapy, rehab center, and they are hoping to partner with specialists in the community to bring specialty care as one-stop-shopping for seniors and the broader community.

Ms. Mayan Zik from One Crown Heights, described neighborhood initiatives including tree clean-ups along Eastern Parkway and St. Johns, a food pantry, and a boys’ basketball program.

Gib Veconi announced that Empire State Development will hold a January 22 (6–8 p.m.) community-engagement event on Atlantic Yards focused on affordable housing.

Roger Meyers flagged a new discount store opening at Nostrand and Eastern Parkway.

Another representative from Team Care Medical reiterated their elder-care services and community outreach.

Ms. Muhammad thanked everyone for their announcements. With no additional business to discuss, she adjourned the meeting at 9PM. The next meeting of Community Board 8 will be Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 6PM at Calvary Community Church located at 1575 St. John’s Place. All are invited to attend.

Guests

Nadya Byrd
Shirley Mondesir
Xeerxeema Jordan
David Kupferberg
Chris Consalvo
John DeWind

Mike Hanf
Emily Edwards
Cheryl Walcott
Jacob Wasserman
Adrienne Grande
Wendell Sweet

Asar John
Irene Bunnell
Hana Sato-Thomas
Stephanie Thomas
Rasheed Stewart
Sam Horowitz
Matt Parker
Kailyn Castro
Anna Plumlee
Hardy Fischer
Francis Bogan
Alan Mooiman
Max Lesser

H. Davidson
Sharra Whitfield
Clarissa Romano
Sameeha Bakr
Krystal Devil
Iris Bowen
Valerie Nero-Reid
Sesame James
Roger Myers
Sandra Lynch
Melina Bernardine
Nathan Turner