

**Brookly Community Board 8  
Concern Rochester  
151 Rochester Avenue  
Brooklyn, NY 11213**

**November 13, 2025**

**Members Present**

Sharon Alexis-Pierre  
Peter Anekwe  
Princess Benn  
Barbara Cofield  
Benny Faygen  
Tamika Gibbs  
Nizjoni Granville  
Mohammad Hassan  
Jamell Henderson  
Tafari John-King  
Jennifer Jordan  
Frances Langley  
Dr. Sarah Lazur  
Lisa Maldonado  
William Meehan  
Kwasi Mensah  
Mimi Mitchell  
Fior Ortiz-Joyner  
Robert Puca  
Yahya Raji  
Anika Roach  
Ezra Roth  
Brian Saunders  
Mealy  
Meredith Staton  
Dina Tate  
Katie Taylor  
Gib Veconi  
Irsa Weatherspoon  
Robert Witherwax

**Members Absent/Excused**

Akua Aidoo  
Isaac Andino  
Gail Branch-Muhammad  
Dian Duke  
Drew Gabriel  
Robert Lapointe  
Taraya Pettway  
Conor Ross  
Robin Smith  
Lesley Steele  
Dana Thompson  
Mark Thurton  
Ryan Tucker  
Briana Uwa  
Kimberly Watson  
Sharon Wedderburn  
Regina Wilson  
Deborah Young

**Elected Official Representatives**

Karen Chambers, District Attorney Eric Gonzalez  
Tamesha Thompson, Councilmember Darlene

**CB8 Staff Present**

Michelle George, District Manager  
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

The regular meeting of Community Board 8 was called to order at 6:05PM by Chairperson Irsa Weatherspoon. She asked Sergeant-at-Arms Gibbs to provide the housekeeping rules for the evening. Ms. Gibbs asked everyone to silence their phones and have conversations outside and to also be reminded that the press may be in the room.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked Mr. Mariano to say a few words of welcome.

Mr. Osman Mariano, Program Director at Concern Rochester welcomed everyone to Concern for Independent Living and stated that he is delighted to host the community board. Concern Housing is a non-profit agency committed to helping individuals and families to live in the community with dignity and enhanced opportunities through the provision of housing and support services. They are one of the largest housing agencies of this kind in New York State, currently serving over 1,500 individuals and families in over 250 locations. Concern offers a variety of housing options with individual support services designed to support personal growth and independence.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked Mr. Mariano for allowing the board to use their space and also thanked him for providing refreshments for the meeting.

She then opened the floor to public comments and announcements.

Tamesha Thompson from Councilmember Mealy's office announced that the VFW will be in their office on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month from 9-3pm to assist veterans with getting the benefits they deserve. There will also be an OATH Resource fair on November 19<sup>th</sup> from 1-3pm at the Stone Avenue Branch located at 581 Mother Gaston Boulevard. Staff will be available to answer questions about DOS, DOH, FDNY, NYPD and more, please call to schedule an appointment at 718-953-3097.

CUNY Students announced Intro 1303-2025, this NYC Council bill would require the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) to conduct a public education and outreach campaign on fertility treatment, the New York State Insurance Law's requirements for insurance coverage of fertility treatment, and Medicaid coverage of fertility treatment in New York.

Ms. Nadja Byrd announced that she participated in a walkthrough with the NYC Dept. of Transportation (DOT) and the Riders Alliance, for the B41 bus on Flatbush from Livingston Street to Grand Army Plaza (GAP). She stated that there will be another meeting next Tuesday at 8:30AM at the MTA office Downtown Brooklyn. This meeting is open to the public.

Discussed at the walkthrough with DOT were the changes to be made to Flatbush Avenue as well as changes to bus stops along the corridor. She and several in attendance heard suggestions such as turning 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Avenues to one-way streets, placing turning embargoes and implementing bus route changes. All of these changes are amidst construction zones, which will likely make it become a congestion stop and route. DOT was present mainly to discuss how they would change the street, how the changes would impact sidewalks, ADA accessibility, the subway system like how platforms are set up, etc. The main takeaway is that the 4-lane roadway for traffic on Flatbush Avenue will be whittled down to two lanes, with one travel lane in each direction for cars and the same for buses.

Ms. Karen Chambers from the Kings County District Attorney's office announced that there will be a Gun Buyback event held on Saturday, December 6, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at St. Paul's Community Baptist Church, located at 859 Hendrix Street in East New York, Brooklyn. The office will give a \$500 gift card for each operable gun or assault rifle turned in (maximum three per person); \$200 gift card for ghost guns or 3D printed guns (a maximum of two per person). Participants will also receive a \$75 gift card for each rifle or shotgun and a \$25 gift card for each air gun, imitation pistol or a non-operable firearm. The first 100 people will also receive free AirPods, donated by the Oyate Group, a nonprofit dedicated to alleviating poverty. If you have any issues or questions, please call the community assistance unit at the DA's office at 718-250-4877.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked all for their announcements and updates and asked for roll call. After ascertaining a quorum, she opened the public hearing.

**ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES** – Mr. Meehan made a motion to accept the October 2025 minutes with any necessary corrections. The motion was seconded by Mr. Veconi.

## **PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS**

### **Housing and Land Use**—Ms. Sharon Wedderburn, Chair

The Housing and Land Use Committee met on Thursday, November 6, 2025 at Stuy Park Houses located at 77 New York Avenue. Members discussed an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness filed by the owner of 183 Prospect Place, a three-story house with a roof dormer. Architect Shaya Gansburg presented plans for an enlargement of the existing roof dormer, and a new two-story rear yard extension.

The committee voted unanimously to withhold support for the application unless the following points are accommodated:

1. The proposed enlarged rooftop dormer is set back further from the front façade so as not to be visible from the street;
2. That the proposed two-story rear yard extension not exceed the depth of the extension of the adjoining building at 181 Prospect Place; and
3. That the rear façade of the rear yard extension be faced with brick instead of stucco.

The committee hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked if there were any questions from the community. Ms. Mitchell asked for clarity in relation to the proposed 2 story rear not exceeding the depth of the other building, specifically if the shorter one was the one that is 8 feet. Mr. Veconi, reading the action item in the absence of the committee chair, stated that yes, 181 is the shorter of the shorter of the two extensions.

The neighboring property owner stated that several of the other houses on the block have the extensions already that set the dangerous precedent. She elaborated that what struck her about this particular proposal is that none of the other buildings have a 3<sup>rd</sup> floor extension, which would create an entirely new precedent.

Mr. Veconi informed her that the applicant presented a two-story addition and further clarified that the applicant stated they considered a third story as well but an LPC preservationist encouraged them not to move forward with it.

Another neighboring property owner asked what the next steps would be if the applicant does not accept the conditions set forth. Ms. Mitchell and Mr. Veconi both stated that the Board will send a letter based on what transpired at the meeting and LPC will have a hearing. The Board's message will be taken into consideration, and the hope is that LPC will follow the Board's thinking and vote in accordance with our letter.

With no further questions, Dr. Lazur made a motion to support committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gibbs and carried unanimously with 25 in favor.

Mr. Veconi announced that the next Atlantic Yards Development meeting will be held next Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup> from 6-8PM at Brooklyn Basketball Training Center located at 140 Flatbush Avenue to discuss the next phase of the project. AYP has got a new developer and the Empire State Development Corporation will be hosting several information workshops. He stated that it is very important to make a big showing at this meeting as the city has zero oversight into the project. It is our responsibility to make our electeds know where we need their advocacy to be. The project's affordable units never materialized in proportion to what they promised, which was always a very ambitious plan. It is important for the community to know that the promised units are what will help prevent displacement in the district and should be prioritized, especially as a large percentage of units in the low to moderate affordable ranges for those in the community most impacted by displacement.

Several in attendance questioned what leverage the Board has other than showing up to this meeting. He informed them that the leverage is quite limited. Brooklyn Speaks, another organization he is part of, has been advocating for 20 years. According to the statute, no electeds have participated or can vote on it, but it is very important that our electeds are given a voice because they are the ones that represent us and know the needs such as amenities, local development, open space—all important features that need to be addressed in our community. Local meetings are over in February so it's important that the people that represent us have a seat at the table.

Finally, Mr. Veconi also announced that the City Council approved the AAMUP Follow-Up Corrective Actions (FUCAs), which closes the last piece of AAMUP. Ms. Mitchell and Dr. Lazur both questioned what is happening with the request of the Board to amend Option 1 only to add Option 3. He stated that he had no update on that, and Ms. Mitchell stated that the Board should not prematurely celebrate the end of the AAMUP project until we get Option 3 added back for the deep affordability the board has fought for. Chairperson Weatherspoon countered Ms. Mitchell, stating that the Board absolutely has a right to celebrate and should. This was a hard fought battle to get something that was left back put back in. Chairperson Weatherspoon stated that we as the Board should be concerned about are the ballot proposals that just passed that will cut us (the Board) and the council out, but we should totally celebrate this small win.

Dr. Henderson thanked Chairperson Weatherspoon for mentioning the ballot initiatives, stating that we as a Board need to encourage the Council to bring these issues back in the future and not settle for it. The unfortunate side effect will be to see more buildings like those undesirable developments in other areas in our community. We need to come together collectively with other community boards like CBs 3, 9, and 16 to prevent ridiculous development projects like a 60 story tower next to Van Dyke Houses in Brownsville.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked for a report from the following committees:

**Environment, Sanitation, Transportation (EST)** – Mr. Robert Witherwax, Chairperson

Mr. Witherwax announced that EST met October 28<sup>th</sup> and heard a safety presentation from NYC Dept. of Transportation for Albany and Troy Avenues from Atlantic Avenue to Eastern Parkway. Part of the plan includes bike lanes on both corridors with a protected bike lane for portions of Albany Avenue (from Bergen Street to Park Place along Albany Houses). The proposal also calls for widened sidewalks on Troy Avenue and a mid block crossing on Park Place. He boasted that Albany is wide enough for a protected bike lane in this section with no loss of parking or capacity for travel lanes.

Ms. Gibbs asked if the bike lane on Albany would extend beyond the Albany development. He informed her that yes, it would be from Atlantic Avenue to Eastern Parkway, but the blocks unrelated to Albany Houses would be a standard bike lane.

A community resident asked if the bike lanes would extend beyond CB8 and was informed by Mr. Meehan that at this time, there are no plans for the bike lanes to extend either north or south of CB8 to CBs 3 and 9, but instead to provide north/south access to east/west bike lanes in CB8.

Another community resident asked how the committee felt about the changes, especially considering that the bike lanes would not extend beyond CB8. Mr. Witherwax informed them that the committee was in support of the plan as presented with the proviso that the agency proved that they did outreach with Albany residents.

Ms. Roach stated that her recollection of the meeting was that the item was tabled until such time as we got evidence that the residents were informed of the plans. He stated that she was not incorrect but the recollection slightly off. It was approved but members did ask for the proof of contact and outreach.

Mr. Anekwe stated that traffic on Troy and Schenectady Avenues during rush hour and after school is atrocious. He asked if the agency had given any statistics on what they believe the road diet will do to these corridors due to the changes. He was informed that none were provided.

**Economic Development** – Mr. Brian Saunders, Chair

The Economic Committee will meet next Tuesday on a different day due to the Veterans Day holiday. The committee will meet via Webex.

**Health and Human Services** – Ms. Tamika Gibbs, Chair

Ms. Gibbs announced that the Health and Human Services Committee will meet on November 20<sup>th</sup> at Concern Rochester located at 151 Rochester Aenue. The committee will hear a presentation from Sephida Artis, owner of a cannabis dispensary to open soon at 972 Dean Street, on Cannabis as Medicine: Reducing the Stigma.

**SLA and Sidewalk Café Review Committee** – Ms. Irsa Weatherspoon, Chair

SLAC will meet on December 1<sup>st</sup> at a location to be determined. The agenda will be uploaded to the Board's website.

### **Seniors** – Ms. Gail Muhammad, Chair

The Seniors committee report was given by Ms. Frances Langley. She thanked Ms. Muhammad for fantastic programming for meetings and always taking care of the seniors. She stated that the Crown Heights North Association was at the October meeting to discuss the ballot proposals and thanked Ms. Muhammad for setting that up. The next meeting will be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday in December.

### **Public Safety** – Mr. Mark Thurton, Chair

Ms. Roach gave the report for the Public Safety committee. She informed everyone that at the last meeting, they received safety information from FDNY about fire extinguishers. There are different types of extinguishers for different types of fires, filled with different substances. The contents can vary depending on the type of fire whether it is grease, electrical, wood/structural, etc. Fire extinguishers can be used for different things. Not every extinguisher is for all fires.

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

**Ms. Tamika Gibbs** stated that food insecurity concerns have grown over the last few months. She thanked the district office for adding the food pantry list to the newsletter.

**John DeWind** reminded the Board that the broken Brower Park Fountain has not been forgotten. He announced that there would be a meeting with the Parks Department and Friends of Brower Park organized by Councilmember Chi Osse. The member seemed sympathetic to the situation and has become an ally in the quest to put pressure on Parks to fix the fountain.

**Ms. Adrian Williams** from Assemblywoman Latrice Walker's office announced that there are quite a few upcoming events with the Assemblywoman's office including a turkey giveaway on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> at the office located at 400 Rockaway Avenue. There will be a senior luncheon on Thanksgiving Day at Van Dyke Senior Center. This coming Saturday is the hybrid advisory board meeting, featuring a discussion of "What is affordable housing." She stated that member does not believe that housing that does not benefit people that cannot afford it should be considered affordable housing. They will also have presentation on long covid symptoms.

**Mr. Boris Yugadayev**, owner of Blackrock Pharmacy at 145 Utica Avenue, announced a turkey giveaway on Sunday, November 23<sup>rd</sup> from 9AM to 10PM or until supplies last. He partnered with the CB8 district office to provide turkeys to two of the family shelters in the district and will be giving out tickets in the back for anyone else that might need a turkey.

**Ms. Arna Lipkind** from IDCC Mental Health Clinic announced that the organization focuses on jobs and food insecurity. They are doing a thanksgiving hot lunch giveaway on the 25<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Lipkind distributed a flyer of locations that have pantries and food giveaways.

**Mr. Peter Anekwe** announced the movement on social media to boycott spending money on Black Friday. Either stay home with your money or shop black and shop local.

**Ms. Taleaha Straker**, a parent of students at PS 316, the Stroud School, announced a situation with the schoolyard. She discussed the details of the issue with several committees already, and stated that the nature of the issues revolve around guns and gang violence in and around the

playground/park. During a recent shooting incident, several students were locked out because of a shooting, and a few parents were locked out as well and kept in harms way. She and many other parents are trying to bring attention to the situation and generate community support for what parents can do and how they can collaborate with neighboring schools. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> shooting in the last 18 months, one of which sent students scrambling as they were outside. It's not just about more police presence, it is about amending DOE protocols and amending the behavior of residents in the surrounding area.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked everyone for participating in the meeting, wished everyone a happy and healthy holiday season, and adjourned the meeting at 8:20PM.

**Guest Present**

Mercedes Armillas  
Asar John  
Shirley M.  
Adrienne Grande  
Xeerxeema Jordan  
Lula Staton  
John Dewind  
Gregory Lowe  
Jacob Wasserman  
Nadja Byrd  
Colleen S.  
Solomon M.  
Sapphire Hilton  
Sharon Smith  
Ross Guberman  
Cheryl Walcott  
Wendell Sweet  
Julia Morrill  
Taleaha Straker  
Patricia Straker  
Diana Bond  
Roger Myers  
Saima Khanom  
Taysha Frazer  
Will C.  
Jay Crockett  
Kim Robinson  
Terrance Ratliff  
Puarani Brown  
Nathaniel Anschuetz  
Ian Haynes  
Priscilla Mensah  
Leo Descartes