

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

**April 11, 2019**

**Members Present**

Sasha Ahuja  
Glinda Andrews  
Desmond Atkins  
Princess Benn-James  
Gail Branch-Muhammad  
Helen Coley  
James Ellis  
Fred Frazier  
Drew Gabriel  
Xeexxema Jordan  
Lisa Lashley  
Elaine Mahoney  
Atim Oton  
Dr. Katharine Perko  
Yahya Raji  
Brian Saunders  
Meredith Staton  
Audrey Taitt-Hall  
Mark Thurton  
Greg Todd  
Ethel Tyus  
Sheryl Vassell  
Gib Veconi  
Sharon Wedderburn  
Robert Witherwax  
Deborah Young  
Vilma Zuniga

**CB 8 Staff**

Michelle George, District Manager  
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

**Members Excused**

Deshauna Appleton  
Wayne Bailey  
Julia Boyd  
Faith Corbett  
Dian Duke  
Phu Duong  
Andrea Ferris  
Elijah Gray  
Nizjoni Granville  
Robert Matthews  
Kwasi Mensah  
Robert Puca  
Adam Sachs  
Yves Vilus  
Irsa Weatherspoon

**Members Absent**

Tamika Gibbs

**Elected Officials**

Assemblywoman Diana Richardson, 43<sup>rd</sup> AD

**Elected Official Representatives**

Gabriel Torres, Assm. Walter Mosley, 57<sup>th</sup> AD  
Maceo Kariem, Assm. Tremaine Wright, 56<sup>th</sup> AD  
Angelina Benli, Councilman Robert Cornegy, 36<sup>th</sup> CD  
Crystal Hudson, Councilwoman Laurie Cumbo, 35<sup>th</sup> CD  
Judith Destin, District Attorney Eric Gonzalez  
Shakti Robertson, Senator Velmanette Montgomery, 25<sup>th</sup> SD  
Kim Robinson, Councilwoman Alicka Ampry-Samuel, 41<sup>st</sup> CD  
Godfrey Bayalama, Senator Zellnor Myrie, 21<sup>st</sup> SD

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In the absence of the Chair, Nizjoni Granville, Mr. Robert Witherwax, Second Vice Chair, called the regular meeting of Community Board 8 to order at 7:10 PM. Mr. Witherwax opened the floor for announcements from elected official representatives.

## **Public comments**

**Ms. Angelina Benli** from Councilman Cornegy's office, announced that she is a new Policy Fellow at the Councilman's office. Councilman Cornegy is now offering Immigration services every other Wednesday and Thursday in the office, discussions on the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB) every Friday, and daily legal services. Also, this coming Saturday, April 13<sup>th</sup>, is the monthly Advisory Board meeting, which will focus on housing. For more information, contact the Councilman's office at 718-919-0740.

**Mr. Gabriel Torres** from Assemblyman Walter Mosley's office announced that the Assemblyman recently had a Facebook Live Town Hall to explain why he voted "No" on all 10 portions of the budget, mainly due to the lack of education funds. In the video, Assemblyman Mosley discusses different things that were not included in the NY State budget, which was passed on April 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Torres stated that the Assemblyman was indeed in support of several very good provisions including expanding the funding sources allowable for people to use as a form of income to pay rent. Mr. Torres explained that the Assemblyman voted no on principle strictly because of the lack of education funding. To view the video, please search "Assemblyman Walter Mosley" on Facebook. For more information, contact the Assemblyman's office at (718) 596-0100.

**Ms. Deb Young** from the Crown Heights North Association (CHNA) announced two upcoming events. CHNA will host its Annual Town Hall Meeting on Wednesday, April 17, 2019 at 6:45 PM at the Brooklyn Children's Museum located at 145 Brooklyn Avenue (corner of St. Marks Avenue). Invited speakers include Simeon Bankoff of the Historic District Council, Yolande Nicholson, Esq., President of the NYS Foreclosure Defense Bar, and Sarah Lazur of the Crown Heights Tenants Union. Also, CHNA will be hosting a Free Shredding Event on Saturday, April 27, 2019 from 10 AM to 2 PM at St. Gregory's RC Church located at 991 St. John's Place, corner of Brooklyn Avenue. All residents can attend to shred papers, documents, books, etc. For more information, call 718-774-3834.

**Ms. Crystal Hudson** from Council Majority Leader Cumbo's office announced that the Majority Leader, in conjunction with Assemblyman Walter Mosley, Congressman Hakeem Jeffries, and Senator Velmanette Montgomery are hosting the 3rd Annual Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 13, 2019 from 11 AM to 2 PM at Fort Greene Park (meet at the Prison Ship Martyrs Monument) located at Washington Avenue and Willoughby Avenue. There will be music, dancing, storytelling, arts and crafts, games, face painting, and photos with the Easter Bunny. In the event of rain, the event will be held on Saturday, April 20th. For more information, call 718-260-9191.

Additionally, Ms. Hudson announced that voting for Participatory Budgeting has concluded and they are still counting votes. She referenced the shooting incident in Stroud playground and stated that the Majority Leader has been consistently meeting with city agencies. Furthermore, the Dept. of Education did a walk through of the school and playground to assess the angles of the cameras on the school and in the playground. If they find that the cameras are not covering enough area, they will install additional cameras. The Parks Department is putting signage in and around the playground regarding hours and will rope it off when school is in session to prevent non students from having access. The 77<sup>th</sup> Precinct is currently patrolling the playground 24 hours a day and will continue to do so. The Majority Leader is also working with Parks to get permanent staffers in the playground all day; PEP officers, or Parks Enforcement Personnel, are currently patrolling the playground 2 to 3 times per day, but not hourly. Finally, the comfort station is supposed to be completed by the end of May.

**Ms. Judith Destin** from Kings County District Attorney Eric Gonzalez's office brought greetings on behalf of the DA. She stated that she will be going on maternity leave in May and constituents with programming events can contact Melinda Alexis Hayes at 718-250-2001 if they would like a representative from the DA's office present. Ms. Destin also distributed resource information on the different bureaus in the DA's office.

**Mr. Maceo Karriem** from Assemblywoman Tremaine Wright's office announced that tomorrow, April 12<sup>th</sup> is the Assemblywoman's Women in Distinction Award ceremony honoring the women of Bed Stuy and Crown Heights. The Assemblywoman also has a legal clinic on foreclosure available at the office. He urged people not to wait until the last minute when being foreclosed. For more information on any event or for assistance, please call the office at 718-399-7630.

**Mr. Godfrey Bayalama** from Senator Zellnor Myrie's office stated that Senator Myrie has fought hard to bring resources back to the community, and was able to get Governor Cuomo to agree to release the \$400 million for NYCHA for capital repairs. Senator Myrie is doing a Town Hall meeting on May 4<sup>th</sup> from 3-5 PM at St. Francis deSales School for the Deaf. Please attend to discuss what you believe are the main issues in the community. Also, on May 9<sup>th</sup>, from 7-9 PM, also at St. Francis deSales, the Senator is hosting his monthly Housing Forum. Finally, on April 12<sup>th</sup> from 4-6 PM, there will be a low-income tax clinic at the Crown Heights branch of the Brooklyn Public Library. For more information on any of these events, please call the Senator's office at 718-771-3105, which is also the number for Assemblywoman Diana Richardson, as they are currently sharing an office until Senator Myrie gets his own space.

**Ms. Shakti Robinson** from Senator Velmantette Montgomery's office thanked everyone that attended the homeowners forum held last month. A plethora of feedback was received that will be issued in a report in the coming months. Ms. Robinson announced that the Senator was able to secure \$20 million in the budget for foreclosure prevention services. Additionally, Deed Theft legislation passed the senate and merely needs to be signed by the Governor in the law. This is important because the bill addresses some of the abusive behavior of scammers and lending institutions, and also lessens the burden and bureaucracy you must go through in order to get your home back. For more information, contact the Senator's office at (718) 643-6140.

Mr. Witherwax thanked all elected official representatives for their announcements and welcomed the new Executive Officer of the 77<sup>th</sup> Precinct, Captain Myron Malcolm. Captain Malcolm announced that he has been at the precinct about 2 months, and has been performing community drive-throughs to ensure that officers are performing their duties and also engaging residents.

Mr. Witherwax thanked Captain Malcolm for the information and stated that he looks forward to working with him with the Board. He then asked for Roll Call.

**Acceptance of Minutes** – Ms. Tyus made a motion to accept the minutes of the March meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Wedderburn and carried unanimously.

**Correspondence** – CB8 newsletter and other information was distributed to the community.

Mr. Witherwax asked Ms. Erutania Jorge of LSA Recovery to say a few words on LSA's desire to expand into District 8.

**LSA Recovery** – Ms. Ertuania Jorge, Director

Ms. Jorge announced that LSA Recovery is an outpatient recovery substance abuse clinic with two locations currently and a desire to open an additional facility at 1117 Eastern Parkway on the second floor (corner of Utica Avenue). With this new location, LSA would extend the services that are provided in Midwood and Coney Island to Crown Heights and the surrounding central Brooklyn communities. LSA is composed of a team of licensed CSAC and social workers, therapists and counselors, with a psychiatrist on site. They work with patients, their significant others, and extended family as well. Clinic staff assess patients and coordinate services; for instance, if a patient needs detox or rehab, they will be placed in a facility that specializes in these services. Recovery requires multiple assessments: does the patient have outstanding mental health issues that are not being addressed? Is the patient depressed? What is driving the patient to substance abuse problems? How can we assist the patient in staying clean and making sure they do not go back to using? These are some of the categories discussed in an assessment session, which takes about 45 minutes to complete. Ms. Jorge stated that LSA is not looking to get a methadone license; instead, she stated, the focus is on the driving causes for abuse and treating the underlying issues to ensure that patients do not feel compelled to go back to abusing. The program is very much centered around full treatment.

Ms. Tyus asked how many patients are usually seen each month. Ms. Jorge said that the Midwood clinic has a patient count of about 150 monthly. She stated that because of the negative stigma around mental health and substance abuse and receiving treatment, the program is very confidential. However, there are a number of patients that are legally mandated to receive services as part of their release from prison or anger management, or other legal mandates.

Ms. Benn-James asked what types of services are offered to former patients. Ms. Jorge stated that LSA also treats people that have been clean for an extended period, and these patients receive counseling and therapy to prevent relapses as well as getting the necessary tools to utilize for their recovery. Ms. Jorge reminded everyone that recovery is a lifetime process because relapses are a part of recovery. Consequently, this is why LSA is so focused on the mental aspect of recovery and has the therapists on site.

Mr. Witherwax thanked Ms. Jorge for the information and reminded the Board that were LSA Recovery to open a space in District 8, it would be as of right and the Board does not have to vote on it. He then asked Mr. Hakeem Elliot to say a few words on the 2020 Census.

**Center for Law and Social Justice (CLSJ)** – Mr. Hakeem Elliot

Mr. Elliot, Census Project Coordinator, stated that the CLSJ is performing Census 2020 outreach across the five boroughs, micro-focusing on communities of African descent. The census is done every 10 years and is designed to count people regardless of citizen status. Unfortunately, Census 2020 is projected to be the most undercounted census in history, thus creating a crisis in terms of funding, congressional seats, etc. The results of the Census dictate funding for schools, hospitals, infrastructure repair, and a host of other funding needs. However, because of the anti-immigrant and anti-people of color atmosphere in the United States currently, Census 2020 representatives and outside groups are predicting that communities of color will be less willing to complete the census form this time compared to previous decades. Mr. Elliot did state, however, that historically, communities of color, and especially communities of African descent have always been undercounted, but reiterated that this year is unlike previous ones because of the political climate.

CLSJ and other advocacy organizations are working to get Census 2020 information published in as many languages as possible. Additionally, there is a battle to prevent questions of citizenship from appearing on the form as this question will deter people from completing it out of fear of deportation or other issues. If citizenship questions are not on the form, people might be more inclined to complete it if they understand what the purpose of the Census is. All elected officials should be focused on spreading the word about the Census because it impacts their jobs as well as hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding to communities.

Mr. Thurton asked if any of the questions on the form were changed from Census 2010. Mr. Elliot stated that for the most part, the questions are almost the same as the 2010 form, but one new element is that you can now select your ethnicity as well as your race, and the Secretary of Commerce is attempting to add a citizenship question on the form, which will be reviewed by the Supreme Court. The questionnaire will go out in February 2020 and must be submitted by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Just as in years past, if you fill out the form incorrectly or do not complete it at all, there will be home visits to follow-up. This is a costly initiative and it creates trust issues, which is why it is imperative to spread information on the Census and have people complete the form of their own accord so that follow-up will not be required.

Mr. Thurton also stated that he received something similar to a census form in the mail recently. He asked if it was related to Census 2020 and if his completion now would impact the official form. He was informed that every few years, there is a small sample count completed to identify population trends so that data can be more current than every 10 years. The NYC Dept. of City Planning uses this data for demographic information as well. It is legitimate and the count is done by an organization that is independent of the Federal Government. The difference between the sample count and the Census is that the Census attempts to count every human in the United States and the sample does maybe about 10% of the population just to identify trends.

Mr. Witherwax thanked Mr. Elliot for the information and asked for a report from the Nominating Committee.

**Nominating Committee** – Ms. Princess Benn-James, Chair

Ms. Benn-James announced that the Nominating Committee met on Tuesday, March 26, 2019 to discuss the upcoming elections for new Community Board 8 officers. In addition to Princess Benn-James, present at the meeting were Audrey Taitt-Hall, Adam Sachs, Mark Thurton and Michelle George, District Manager. The committee reviewed and discussed the By-Laws, attendance records of all members at general meetings and committee meetings in an effort to come up with the best slate of potential candidates for the 7 seats.

After a lengthy discussion, the committee voted in favor of the following slate:

**Chair**

1. Sharon Wedderburn
2. Ethel Tyus

**1st Vice Chair**

1. Mr. Robert Witherwax

**2nd Vice Chair**

Mr. James Ellis

### **3rd Vice Chair**

1. Irsa Weatherspoon
2. Gail Muhammad

### **Treasurer**

Yahya Raji

### **Secretary**

Sheryl Vassell

### **Sergeant at Arms**

Mr. Wayne Bailey

All candidates in run-off scenarios will have the opportunity to campaign to their fellow members. The District office will provide the candidates with the necessary information. The elections will be held at the May 9, 2019 general meeting. All voting must be in person by signed paper ballot.

Mr. Witherwax pointed out that there are two positions for which the committee has nominated multiple candidates, and stated that tonight's purpose was to announce the slate and to get additional nominations from the floor. He stated to all Board members that they had until the close of the meeting to make nominations from the floor for any of the Executive positions.

Ms. Zuniga nominated Robert Witherwax for Chairperson and the nomination was seconded by Ms. Lashley. Ms. George informed Mr. Witherwax that were he to accept the nomination, he must first forfeit the nomination for First Vice Chair. After a short deliberation period, Mr. Witherwax accepted the nomination for Chair and forfeited the nomination for First Vice.

Dr. Perko nominated Gail Branch-Muhammad for First Vice Chair. The nomination was seconded by Mr. Ellis and accepted by Ms. Branch-Muhammad, who then forfeited the nomination for Third Vice Chair.

Mr. Staton nominated Gib Veconi for Third Vice Chair, and the nomination was seconded by Mr. Raji. Mr. Veconi accepted the nomination.

Mr. Witherwax thanked everyone for nominations and stated that he would announce the final slate at the close of the meeting to give members additional time to nominate from the floor. He then asked for a report from the following committees:

### **Economic Development** – Ms. Atim Oton, Chair

The Economic Development committee met on Tuesday, April 2, 2019 at Brooklyn Neighborhood Improvement Association located (BNIA) at 465 Sterling Place, Brooklyn. Ms. Oton stated that the committee will meet jointly with the Education and Youth committee in May to plan the Job Fair that was postponed from May and rescheduled for the fall. The joint meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 1, 2019 at BNIA at 7 PM.

### **Environment, Sanitation, and Transportation (EST)** – Mr. Robert Witherwax, Chair; Ms. Irsa Weatherspoon, Vice Chair

The EST Committee met on Tuesday, March 26, 2019 at Downtown Brooklyn Rehabilitation Center located at 727 Classon Avenue. In addition to the Vice Chair, Irsa Weatherspoon, who chaired the meeting in absence of the Chair, present were: Desmond Atkins; Janet Collins; Ainslee Dublin-Scott; Phu Duong; Holly Fuchs; Alan Gerber; Xeerxeema Jordan; Francis Langley; Dr. Katharine Perko; Meredith Staton; Celeste Stern; Deborah Young, and Joy Cropil.

The committee discussed the agency Responses to the Preliminary Budget for fiscal year 2020, ongoing discussion regarding the cleanliness of our community, and the following questions/issues were raised:

- Is the increased population contributing to the problem
- Is outsourcing contributing to the problem
- If funding is related to problem can funds be requested via participatory budgeting process

The April EST meeting will be devoted to a discussion of FY 2021 Budget Items. The meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 23, 2019 at 6:30 PM at Downtown Brooklyn Rehabilitation Center. All are invited to attend.

**Health and Human Services** – Mr. Kwasi Mensah, Chair

The Health and Human Services committee met on Monday, April 1, 2019 at the Brooklyn Neighborhood Improvement Association (BNIA) located at 465 Sterling Place, Brooklyn. In the absence of the Chair, Kwasi Mensah, Drew Gabriel, committee member, gave the committee's report at the meeting. He stated that the Urban Agricultural Gathering is approaching swiftly and the committee needs assistance from someone that is an expert on canning. Additionally, the committee is finalizing plans for the Health Fair, which has been postponed to October 5, 2019 at PS 9 located at 80 Underhill Avenue, Brooklyn. The next Health Committee meeting will be held on Monday, May 6, 2019 at 6:30 PM at BNIA. All are invited to attend.

**Housing (Advocacy)** – Ms. Nizjoni Granville, Chair

The Housing (Advocacy) committee met on Wednesday, April 10, 2019 at Albany Community Center located at 164 Troy Avenue, Brooklyn. In the absence of the Chair, Nizjoni Granville, Greg Todd, committee member, gave the report. Mr. Todd stated that all NYCHA developments need major capital improvements. Years of neglect has left public housing in New York City in crisis mode. Furthermore, it was just discovered that National Grid is in the process of installing gas meters and new gas lines, which will mean that residents will be responsible for paying for their own gas. It is rumored that Con Edison will be doing the same as well in the near future. Mr. Todd stated that the biggest question is who authorized this switch, forcing already burdened individuals forced to pay even more money when they have so little in the first place. As such, the committee will send a letter to the manager of Albany Houses regarding the issue, and will also get a list of capital improvement projects for all Housing developments in District 8 to make recommendations in the CB 8 FY 2021 Capital and Expense budget for infrastructure improvements.

The next Housing (Advocacy) committee will be held on Wednesday, May 8, 2019 at 6:30 PM at Albany Community Center. All are invited to attend.

**Land Use** –Ms. Ethel Tyus, Chair

The Land Use committee met on Thursday, April 4, 2019 at Downtown Brooklyn Rehabilitation Center located at 727 Classon Avenue. In addition to the Chair, Ethel Tyus, also present were: Sasha Ahuja, Princess Benn-James, Janet Collins, Phu Duong, James Ellis, Fred Frazier, Nizjoni Granville, Xerxeema Jordan, Peter Krashes, Dr. Katharine Perko, Robert Puca, Meredith Staton, Gib Veconi, Deborah Young, Gabriel Lefferts, Alan Rae, Raul Rothblatt, Nubia Shabaka, and Danny Wu.

The committee discussed the following:

**LPC Application for 928 St Marks Ave. – Application to Legalize Work Done on Front Areaway (LPC-19-32231 Crown Heights North Historic District III)**

Mr. Jeffrey Charles-Pierre, R.A. explained that LPC has issued a violation on 928 St Marks Ave. for removing the retaining wall for the front areaway; and the application was to seek retroactive approval to legalize the work. He also explained that the owner, N. Shabaka, had approval for a curb cut at the time the Crown Heights North HD III was calendared [June 28, 2011]. He made a brief, uninformative presentation of pictures purporting to show the subject property’s areaway before and after the changes at issue. The photos were not dated or numbered and did not lend a timeframe to the applicant’s presentation. According to LPC’s Director of Community and Intergovernmental Affairs, “the violation for this property was issued in October 2017 and is in relation to the ‘Alteration to areaway including removing areaway wall, paving, and the installation of a fence without permit(s).’ The application is a response to this violation.”

Mr. Charles-Pierre appeared to have a digital set of plans but we were unable to access the laptop in the Atrium in order to show his presentation. (CNR should be asked to provide Wi-Fi access for the Atrium.) Due to the lack of supporting information, Ms. Young moved to table the item and Mr. Ellis seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to table the item to allow the applicant to marshal hard copies of the following information for presentation at the May meeting:

- A copy of LPC’s notice of violation;
- A copy of DoT’s approval of the curb cut & removal of the streetlight in front of the property;
- A timeline showing when the work in question was done compared to when the supporting applications were submitted and associated permits issued; and
- Documentation of items already approved by LPC.

Additionally, Mr. Veconi gave an update recounting the M-CROWN project status at the March subcommittee meeting. The M-CROWN committee is seeking a lower density than the proposed R7D for the area that would allow the two private projects at 1010 and 1050 Pacific Street to be R7A. Land Use Committee members are being asked to attend City Council hearings on these two applications to support CB 8’s demand for lower density and required uses in the MX zone.

The next Land Use committee meeting will be held on Thursday, May 2, 2019 at 6:30 PM at Downtown Brooklyn Rehabilitation Center. All are invited to attend.

**Parks** – Ms. Glinda Andrews, Chair

The Parks committee met on Tuesday, April 2, 2019 at David Chavis Senior Apartments located at 230 Kingston Avenue, Brooklyn. The committee is planning an Eco Fair for 2020. As part of the Eco Fair, there will be competitions with neighborhood schools on how to go green. St. John’s Recreation Center remains closed due to a safety issues with the front door and gate, thus leaving only one entrance and exit.



The facility should re-open on Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. The next Parks Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 7, 2019 at David Chavis Senior Apartments at 6:30 PM. All are invited to attend.

**Public Safety** – Mr. Mark Thurton, Chair; Mr. Desmond Atkins, Vice Chair

The Public Safety committee met on Monday, March 26, 2019 at the 77<sup>th</sup> Precinct located at 127 Utica Avenue, Brooklyn. The committee discussed the rising crime trend in District 8 within the confines of the 77<sup>th</sup> Precinct, especially related to major crimes. Mr. Thurton stated that it is very important to engage with the police to let them know what is going on in the community. He distributed the NCO sector meetings spreadsheet to the community and encouraged everyone to share it with their networks. Additionally, at the Public Safety committee meetings, officers from the 77<sup>th</sup> Precinct are always in attendance and available for the community to chat with in private if they do not desire to speak in a public forum.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, April 22, 2019 at the 77<sup>th</sup> Precinct. All are invited to attend.

**Seniors** – Ms. Gail Branch-Muhammad, Chair

The Seniors Committee met on Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at David Chavis Senior Apartments located at 230 Kingston Avenue. In addition to the Chair, Gail Branch-Muhammad, present were: Essie Spivey, Faye Jones, Leola Mills, Norma Glover, Yvonne Bailey, Dennis Brown, Doreen Turner, William Rodgers, Pearlie Mikel, Annabelle Boyd, Mary Hodnett, Joan Bedden, Shirley Mondesir, Lynn Cave, Gilbert Perryman, Regina Kinsey, Elijah Gray, Raul Rothblatt, Xeermeema Jordan, Vilma Zuniga, Linda Ferrette, Princess Benn-James, and Sheryl Vassell.

The meeting was used to celebrate the legacy of late great recording artist, Marvin Gaye. Members participated in “Name That Tune” and other Marvin Gaye trivia. Additionally, members discussed the differences between the current transport services available and their many accommodating factors, and all were encouraged to sign up with the Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island transport services if they have not done so already. Ms. Branch-Muhammad also discussed the importance of staying healthy and how remaining stress free could tremendously improve one’s overall health. Finally, the committee heard a brief announcement from Mr. Rothblatt, who is seeking to co-name Eastern Parkway in honor of Major Owens.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 1, 2019 at 6 PM at David Chavis Apartments. All are invited to attend.

**SLA and Sidewalk Café Review Committee (SLAC)** – Mr. James Ellis, Chair; Mr. Robert Witherwax, Vice Chair

The SLAC Committee met on Monday, April 8, 2019 at Downtown Brooklyn Rehabilitation Center located at 727 Classon Avenue. In addition to the Chair, James Ellis, and Vice Chair, Robert Witherwax, also present were: Wayne Bailey, Fred Frazier, Lisa Lashley, Robert Puca , Brian Saunders, Mark Thurton, Gib Veconi, Irsa Weatherspoon, and Deborah Young.

The committee discussed the following applications:

- A) Renewals

**Sweet Chick**, 636 Carlton Avenue (corner Park Place/Flatbush Avenue) – Full (recorded music, sidewalk café)

Establishment type: Restaurant

**My Phu Inc**, 661 Washington Avenue (corner of St. Marks Avenue) – Beer/wine/cider (no method of operations (MOOs) listed on 30 day notice, no outdoor space)

Establishment type: Restaurant

The committee voted 11 in favor to support the two renewal applications in the hopes that the full Board support its recommendation.

Mr. Witherwax made a motion to support the committee’s recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Staton and carried with a final vote of 26 in favor, 0 opposed, with 0 abstentions.

B) New Applications:

a. **Izzy’s Fried Chicken, 262 Kingston Avenue (Lincoln/St. John’s Places)** – Wine/beer/cider (recorded music, outdoor space)

Establishment type: Restaurant

Details:

- i. Proposed hours of operation: Noon to 11 PM Sunday thru Wednesday; Noon to Midnight Thursday and Saturday; closed Friday
- ii. 40 seats total, 36 at 16 tables, 1 bar
- iii. Rear Yard with 26 seats at 10 tables, to operate same hours as interior space

The committee voted 11 in favor to support the application with the following stipulations:

- a. Rear yard service to end 10 PM Sunday thru Wednesday, 11 PM Thursday and Saturday
- b. No amplified sound in rear yard
- c. Proof of notice to 1025 Lincoln Place (lot line windows)

It hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

The proprietor presented the Board with pictures of proof of notification as per the committee’s request, which Mr. Witherwax confirmed were emailed to the District office at 6 PM the day of the meeting. Mr. Ellis, in response to queries of why the proof of notice was important, explained that the lot line windows of the building at 1025 Lincoln Place, while not necessarily legal, are there, and it is beholden on the committee to ensure that these residents be notified of the impact this business will have on their quality of life. When asked why the lateness of the evidence of proof was acceptable, Mr. Ellis stated that the proprietor is a serial entrepreneur that has invested multiple times in CB 8. The notification was not necessary due to the nature of the windows, but rather a cursory suggestion by the committee in its efforts to do due diligence in review of applications.

Mr. Veconi made a motion to support the committee’s recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Saunders and carried with a final tally of 18 in favor, 0 opposed, with 8 abstentions.

b. **Nostrand Station Bar and Lounge, 818-822 Nostrand Avenue (corner Lincoln**

**Place)** – Full (recorded music, security personnel, no outdoor space)  
Establishment type: Bar/Lounge

Details:

- i. Applicant was previously approved by the Board for this same space and is the same licensee as Endless Visions located at 739 Franklin Avenue
- ii. Proposed hours of operation: 11 AM – midnight Sunday, 3PM – midnight Monday, 3 PM to 1 AM Tuesday and Wednesday, 3 PM to 2 AM Thursday, 3 PM to 4 AM Friday, and 11 AM to 4 AM Saturday
- iii. 74 seats max capacity, with 18 seats at 9 tables, 7 seats at 1 bar

The committee voted 11 in favor to support the application as presented and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Ms. Janet Collins stated that a 4 AM closing is alarming for an establishment surrounded by mainly residential properties. Mr. Ellis informed her New York State allows for a 4 AM closing with liquor licenses and that they are not uncommon. Also, Nostrand Avenue is a busy commercial corridor, and unfortunately, there are no additional full liquor licenses in the vicinity to make it a 500-foot exception to allow the committee and the Board additional leverage to reduce the hours. Ms. Collins countered, stating that 4 AM is still too long and too late to be open when Nostrand is surrounded by private homes, unlike Manhattan.

Mr. Gabriel asked what the proprietor’s plans for security are. He was informed that there would be a security guard on weekends to check identification and that there would be 7 cameras outside and 3 inside

Ms. Benn-James asked the proprietor if she was willing to close earlier, and she was informed that as a bar owner of a previous establishments, she is aware that the request for 4 AM is a “just in case” scenario and that the establishment will close once business dies down, which is usually between 1 and 2 AM on weekends.

In support of the applicant, Ms. Branch-Muhammad stated that the applicant had no issues with their Franklin Avenue establishment that had been open for several years. She also reiterated that the applicant was already previously approved by the Board and that none of the method of operations had changed in between appearances. The applicant is only coming back for approval because they eclipsed the amount of time needed to apply and receive their liquor license.

Ms. Ahuja made a motion to support the committee’s recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Young and carried with a final vote of 23 in favor, 0 opposed, with 3 abstentions.

- c. **Corner 660 LLC, 446 Park Place (intersection of Grand/Washington Avenues)**  
– Full (will apply for sidewalk café in the future (café will be added to liquor license so no alteration is required because it was listed on the 30-day notice and the applicant’s information sheet), no other MOOs listed)  
Establishment type: Tavern

Details:

- i. Proposed hours of operation: 3 PM to 4 AM Monday thru Friday, Noon to 4 AM

- Saturday and Sunday
- ii. 37 seats, 26 at 12 tables, 11 at 1 bar

The committee voted 11 in favor to support the application with the stipulation that the establishment end service at 3AM, Friday and Saturday and 2 AM Sunday thru Thursday. The committee hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Mr. Ellis commented that the committee only voted on what was presented to it. Ms. Neale, Community Coordinator, alerted members that the sidewalk café is listed on the 30 day notice, and therefore, it would be applied to the license without need for an alteration application, and consequently, operating hours would be defined by NYC Code, which is a closure of midnight Sunday through Thursday and 1 AM Friday and Saturday. She stated that if the committee, and subsequently the Board, was only in favor of the approving the interior license without inclusion of the sidewalk café, the motion must include verbiage that the vote is specifically only for the interior space and that the Board will require the applicant to return for an alteration application.

Mr. Veconi made a motion to support the committee's recommendation with the stipulations indicated, and an additional stipulation that the license not be granted with the sidewalk café at this time. The motion was seconded by Ms. Tyus.

Mr. Atkins asked if it would be possible to stipulate that the Board is not in favor of a sidewalk café in perpetuity. Mr. Witherwax stated that as an advisory body, he does not think the Board can say bindingly in perpetuity that an applicant cannot get something they want. Mr. Veconi's motion to support the committee's recommendation with the stipulation that the license be confined to the interior space only and not be inclusive of a sidewalk café carried with a final vote of 22 in favor, 2 opposed, with 3 abstentions. The applicant remains able to apply for an alteration application to add a sidewalk café in the future.

- d. **Savannah Café, 75 Utica Avenue (corner Pacific Street)** – Wine/beer/cider (DJ, recorded music, patio/deck)  
Establishment type: Tavern

Details:

- i. Proposed hours of operation: 11 AM – 2 AM Sunday, 3 PM – 2 AM Monday thru Thursday, 3 PM to 4 AM Friday, and 11 AM to 4 AM Saturday
- ii. 74 max capacity, 28 seats at 14 tables, 6 seats at 1 bar
- iii. Rear yard with 28 seats at 7 tables to operate from 1 PM to 10 PM Sunday, 3 PM to 10 PM Monday thru Thursday, 3 PM to 11 PM Friday, and 1 PM to 11 PM Saturday

The committee voted to support the application as presented and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Ms. Collins again questioned the 4 AM closing time. Ms. Coley stated that she lives on Pacific Street around the corner and is worried about bar patrons blocking the driveways of the homeowners. Mr. Todd informed members that there is a mosque on the block as the establishment and asked if the application would fall under the 200 foot exception. Mr. Ellis stated that the mosque was not deemed as a full time operation, and stated that since this is a beer and wine license and not a full license, the 200 foot exception does not apply.

Mr. Witherwax made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Staton and carried with a final tally of 19 in favor, 2 opposed, with 6 abstentions.

Finally, at the December 2018 meeting, the SLAC committee supported a resolution to refer hospitality businesses within community district 8 to Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation for assistance in recruiting employees. The committee will provide such referrals on a monthly basis from among applicants reviewed by the SLA Committee. In return, Bed-Stuy Restoration has agreed to provide a report to the Board at the beginning of January, April, July and October information on the following:

- businesses referred who have contacted your office;
- the number of applicants interviewed by each business; and
- the number of applicants hired by each business.

Mr. Veconi provided additional background on the local hiring question that is often asked and stated that the Board has no way of tracking if businesses were hiring locally. Bed-Stuy Restoration places about 40% of their applicants to hospitality industries. As such, the committee would like to partner with them to refer hospitality applicants to them and get a quarterly report on the businesses referred, the number of job applicants, and the number of applicants hired from the district. The Board will send a letter of agreement that must be signed. Mr. Ellis read the contents of the letter and Ms. Tyus suggested changing the language of the letter to present tense rather than past tense.

Mr. Veconi made a motion to support the agreement letter. The motion was seconded by Mr. Staton and carried with a final vote of 27 in favor, 0 opposed, with 1 abstentions.

The next SLAC meeting will be held on Monday, May 6, 2019 at 6:30 PM at Downtown Brooklyn Rehabilitation Center. All are invited to attend.

**Youth and Education** – Ms. Sharon Wedderburn, Chair; Mr. Kwasi Mensah, Vice Chair

The Youth and Education committee met on Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at Brooklyn Neighborhood Improvement Association located at 465 Sterling Place, Brooklyn. Ms. Wedderburn announced that the Job Fair scheduling is stunted because of difficulty finding a solid location that could be conducive to a useful and beneficial event. Also, the committees need input on the trainings and jobs people need, especially young people.

Ms. Wedderburn also made an announcement about a new Dept. of Education protocol as it pertains to student information and Charter Schools. The next meeting will be held jointly with the Economic Development Committee on Wednesday, May 1, 2019 at 7 PM at BNIA. All are invited to attend.

**By-Laws Committee**

Mr. Witherwax reminded the Board that the By-Laws will be voted on at the next meeting. There are four main areas of concentration. Membership obligations (excused absences, removal notices, define substantial), Officers/elections (re-writing nominating processes, giving expanded duties to Vice Chairs), changes to committees (striking list of committees from the By-Laws, requiring non-adjudicative committees to meet quarterly rather than monthly), and basic grammatical and formatting changes. All of these need to be ratified by the Board.

Mr. Witherax thanked the committee chairs for their reports and invited Assemblywoman Diana Richardson to say a few words.

### **43<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District** – Assemblywoman Diana Richardson

Assemblywoman Richardson announced that it has been a very exciting and vigorous legislative session. Many issues have been addressed and legislative changes were made on voting reform, criminal justice, reproductive rights, and many more. The state is approaching a critical time on community and legislature, and is currently tackling rent regulations. She explained that the 43<sup>rd</sup> AD had the second highest level of displacement in the county. Unfortunately, there are several laws that landlords are using to displace tenants by legal means. As such, she invited everyone to attend the upcoming Civic Minded meetings, as the next two will be dedicated to discussing housing issues. The Assemblywoman also thanked the District office for publishing the services her office provides in the monthly CB 8 newsletter.

Finally, Assemblywoman Richardson stated that a walk-through for Nostrand Avenue has been scheduled with the Commissioner for Small Business Services. She thanked Atim Oton, Chair of the Economic Development committee and Michelle George, District Manager, for making the walk through possible.

Mr. Witherwax thanked the Assemblywoman and opened the floor for public comments.

### **Public comments**

**Mr. Raul Rothblatt**, Co-President of the PS9 PTA announced that there will be a fundraiser for refugees in Somalia, Yemen, and Pakistan. New murals have been painted around the school, which has been re-named from Tuneis Bergen to Sarah Smith-Garnett, the first African American woman principal and the founder of the first black suffrage club. He stated that this is our history and it must be told. Additionally, Mr. Rothblatt stated that he is working with family of former Congressman Major Owens to get him the recognition in the community he deserves. He gave a brief history of Mayor Owens' biography, highlighting a few successes, such as being appointed to a commissionership at 32 years old and an elected public official with a strong background for decades. He stated that he and the family have an ambitious goal of renaming Eastern Parkway which connects his legacy as a librarian at Grand Army Plaza Library and the Brownsville community. For those that were unaware, Mr. Rothblatt stated that Major Owens succeeded Shirley Chisholm as Congressman.

**Ms. Sarah Jones**, candidate for Surrogates Court (deals with wills and trusts, guardianships, and adoption), stated that she is a long-time resident of Brooklyn, primarily in the Brownsville section. She gave information on her personal schooling background, and announced that she has extensive law experience. This experience includes being a Court Appointed Referee, which advises a judge on how to solve issues that arise in the courtroom. She stated that she believe Surrogates Court has fallen short in some ways. When people pass away without relatives and without an estate, the matter is handled by Surrogates Court. There were some issues with the way the office was run, and consequently, there was a security breach that led to a substantial amount of money stolen. However, Ms. Jones stated that if elected, she would make sure that the office of Surrogates Court is well managed and maintained. She admonished that local elections are very important because local elections put in place the people that directly affect you as a resident.

**Ms. Maria Marin** of Breaking Ground, announced that her organization works with the chronic street homeless population. If you see anyone that needs help, please call 311, and Breaking Ground will send

an outreach team to the location. Or, you can call Breaking Ground directly for information about the services they provide at 718-360-8024.

A young community resident announced that she was an advocate for voting rights in New York, and that in conjunction with Brooklyn Law School there would be a panel discussion on felony disenfranchisement. She stated that she and many others are advocating for parolees to get their vote back and never have them stripped away in the first place, especially as the existing legislation is steeped in discrimination.

Mr. Witherwax thanked everyone for their announcements and asked one final time for additional nominations from the floor. Hearing none, he announced the slate as follows:

**Chair:** Robert Witherwax OR Sharon Wedderburn OR Ethel Tyus

**First Vice Chair:** Gail Branch-Muhammad

**Second Vice Chair:** James Ellis

**Third Vice Chair:** Gib Veconi OR Irsa Weatherspoon

**Recording Secretary:** Sheryl Vassell

**Treasurer:** Yahya Raji

**Sergeant at Arms:** Wayne Bailey

With no additional information to be discussed, Mr. Witherwax adjourned the meeting at 9: 20 PM. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 9, 2019 at 7 PM at St. Teresa of Avila RC Church located at 563 Sterling Place. All are invited to attend.

### GUESTS

Dorothy Bembry-Guet  
Justin Lawless  
Janet Collins  
Stephanie Grand-Pierre  
John DeWind  
Jess Wachtler  
Lauren Kelly  
Donnley Edward  
Sammi Wood, Jr.  
X. Turnbull  
Shirley Mondesir  
Lynn Cave  
Israel Eldelman

Kevin Flynn  
Jacqueline Castanch  
Ertuania Jorge  
Bernadette Mercedes  
Amanda Blair  
Diana Foster  
Valerie Bolling  
Maria Marin  
Raul Rothblatt  
Ariana DeRoche  
Patricia Sarim  
Pablo Blanco