

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

**January 9, 2020**

**Members Present**

Glinda Andrews  
Desmond Atkins  
Princess Benn-James  
Gail Branch-Muhammad  
Nora Daniel  
Dian Duke  
James Ellis  
Fred Frazier  
Drew Gabriel  
Nizjoni Granville  
Marva Henry  
Xeerxeema Jordan  
Regina Kinsey  
Sarah Lazur  
Kwasi Mensah  
Katharine Perko  
Robert Puca  
Yahya Raji  
Adam Sachs  
Brian Saunders  
Meredith Staton  
Mark Thurton  
Greg Todd  
Ethel Tyus  
Gib Veconi  
Irsa Weatherspoon  
Sharon Wedderburn  
Robert Witherwax  
Deborah Young  
Vilma Zuniga

**Members Absent/Excused**

Wayne Bailey  
Julia Boyd  
Hanjy Charles  
Helen Coley  
Phu Duong  
Andrea Ferris  
Tamika Gibbs  
Eunice Ko  
Elaine Mahoney  
Robert Matthews  
Audrey Taitt-Hall  
Sheryl Vassell  
Yves Vilus

**Elected Officials Present**

Council Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo, 35<sup>th</sup> CD  
Assemblywoman Diana Richardson, 43<sup>rd</sup> AD

**Elected Official Representatives**

Khalid Jemmot, Assemblywoman Diana Richardson  
Orlando Ross, Congresswoman Yvette Clarke  
Karen Chambers, District Attorney Eric Gonzalez  
Gabriel Torres, Assemblyman Walter Mosley  
Jamal Pollard, Borough President Eric Adams  
Godfre Bayalama, Senator Zellnor Myrie  
Kim Robinson, Councilwoman Alika Ampry-Samuel  
Jonathan Marable, Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo

**CB8 Staff**

Michelle George, District Manager  
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

---

The regular meeting of Community Board 8 was called to order at 7:15 by Ms. Ethel Tyus, Chairperson. She welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the New Year and a new decade, reading a personal statement that implored residents to participate in the grassroots government of the community board, as residents are the eyes and ears of the community for municipal service agencies and the Community Board. She completed her

statement by saying that the Board is only as strong as the participants on it. She then asked Mr. Ellis, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Chair, to go over basic housekeeping rules.

**Acceptance of Minutes** – The minutes of the December meeting were accepted with the following corrections: Dr. Katharine Perko requested that the “Dr.” in front of her name on the attendance be removed.

**Correspondence** – CB 8 newsletter and other information was distributed.

Ms. Tyus invited Ms. Pat Crupi from Hospice New York to say a few words about the organization.

**Hospice New York** – Ms. Pat Crupi

Ms. Pat Crupi of Hospice New York informed that Board that Hospice New York (HNY) is a special healthcare program centered around hospice care. The agency was founded in 1997 and is a small company focused solely on hospice care, compared to other hospice service agencies, all of whom invariably focus on many more services. HNY offers palliative care for individuals with life threatening illnesses and a prognosis of transition within 6 months or less. This does not mean that everyone expires within 6 months, however; therefore, services can be renewed. HNY is a whole team approach, with doctors, nurses, medical, spiritual care, and the like. All of an end-life patient’s needs are met in one place.

Ms. Crupi eliminated a common misperception of hospice care, stating that hospice is not a place, and is instead, a type of care. HNY’s goal is to keep people at home and bring the services they need to them. HNY serves all of New York City with the exception of Staten Island. The agency also serves Nassau County. HNY’s clients are not compiled from medical or home care services. Hospice New York also provides care to 3% of what are called charity cases. She urged everyone to learn as much about hospice care as possible because the tendency is to wait until it’s too late to receive hospice care, which prolongs unnecessary suffering.

Ms. Wedderburn asked how many patients HNY treats yearly. She was informed that their caseload is usually around 300.

Dr. Lazur asked if HNY has any physical hospice centers, and she was informed that they do have a few inpatient units that are for acute patients with symptoms that need to be managed. After symptoms are managed, patients go home.

Ms. Tyus thanked Ms. Crupi for the information and invited Assemblywoman Diana Richardson to say a few words.

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

Assemblywoman Richardson informed the Board that she rushed to the meeting from Albany after the legislative session ended on the day. The Legislative Session is currently underway and will continue until June. She stated that she is happy because for the first time in over three years of her service in the Assembly because things are finally being accomplished. She urged everyone to bring forth their ideas for things to be accomplished via legislation as it is a very productive time in the Assembly and Senate, and a lot of progress is being made. The community are the eyes and ears of the legislature, and it is the community and regular individuals that brings forth issues for remedy.

Assemblywoman Richardson also urged everyone to participate in her monthly Civic Minded meetings. She touted the success of participation for the Vital Brooklyn Initiative, which created a truly 100% affordable housing development project in her district.

Finally, the Assemblywoman called for increased love and tolerance in the diverse community that is Crown Heights, decrying the increase in hate crimes in the community.

Ms. Tyus thanked Assemblywoman Richardson and invited Majority Leader Cumbo to say a few words.

**NYC Council Majority Leader** – Honorable Laurie Cumbo

Majority Leader Cumbo wished everyone a Happy New Year, stating that 2020 is off to a great start. The 2019 legislative session was productive, with the Council agreeing to set aside 15% of units created in new constructions for housing individuals from homeless shelters. Additionally, Weeksville Heritage Center has been added to the list of cultural institutions that have secured yearly funding for their viability. The museum does not have to fear closure due to this. Finally, Majority Leader Cumbo announced that they have broken ground on the Bedford Union Armory development project. The site will be home to 29 cultural organizations with 250 units of affordable housing at 60% AMI or less, an Olympic-sized pool, permanent housing for those transitioning from shelters, and a world class medical center.

ML Cumbo also informed the Board that the Council is accepting applications from non-profit organizations seeing funding until February 18<sup>th</sup>. There will be three information sessions in the month of January from 6-8 PM at various locations. Please call her office at 718-260-9191 for more information.

Finally, ML Cumbo thanked CB 8's leadership for the MCROWN proposal and the effect the Community Benefits Agreement will have on new applications for projects in the District. The proposal is a model for the entire city.

Ms. Tyus thanked Majority Leader Cumbo for the information and expressed gratitude to Gib Veconi for leading the effort on MCROWN. She then asked for a report from the following committees:

**Land Use** – Ms. Ethel Tyus, Chair, Katharine Perko, Secretary

The Land Use Committee met on Thursday, January 2, 2020 at Downtown Brooklyn Rehabilitation Center located at 727 Classon Avenue. Present were Janet Collins, Nora Daniel, James Ellis, Fred Frazier, Nizjoni Granville, Peter Krashes, Katharine Perko, Robert Puca, Carl Riddle, Meredith Staton, Ethel Tyus, Gib Veconi, Deborah Young, Eladia Caessil-Rodriguez, Amit Sharma, Anastasiia Koptsova, Laziza Tolkunova, Cathy Iselin, Lore Croghan, Jonathan Latimer, Daphne Eviatar, Patti Hagan, Louis Galdieri, Mary M. Shuford, Samy Brahimi, Jonathan Marable, Emily Liu, Joan Thompson, Tasha Young, Ben Verde, and Renford Cole. The committee discussed the following applications:

**1. LPC application for 1511 Pacific Street (Crown Heights North Historic District)**

Project designer Anastasiia Koptsova and Laziza Tolkunova, of Citiscape Architectural Consulting, presented plans for the construction of a building on the currently vacant lot at 1511 Pacific Ave., with a height of 38 ft. and 2 in., equivalent to the height of the neighboring building at 1509 Pacific Ave., and whose front would align with the neighboring building at 1513 Pacific Ave. The proposal shows that the bulkhead would not be visible from the street. The building's façade would be made of brownstone on the ground floor and brick veneer from the second floor to the top, elements which visually match those of surrounding buildings. The

presenters shared this proposal with and received the support of the Crown Heights North Association. This project does not yet have a scheduled LPC hearing.

A motion to support the application as presented was made by Gib Veconi and seconded by Meredith Staton, and it passed with a vote of 12 in favor and 1 against. The committee hopes the full Board will support its recommendation.

Mr. Ellis made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Staton and carried with a final vote of 29 in favor, 0 opposed, with 0 abstentions.

## **2. LPC application for 93 St. Marks Avenue (Prospect Heights Historic District)**

Architectural consultant Amit Sharma presented plans to convert the currently vacant building from a 7-family SRO (single room occupancy) to a 2-family duplex, and build a 3-story rear extension, inclusive of a cellar extension, that would measure 12.75 ft. wide and 20.83 ft. high, and a bulkhead to be set back 5 feet from the rear facade. The rail around the roof would be painted black metal. Although some of the buildings on this block have extensions, those extensions are grandfathered as they predate designation of the historic district. Several neighbors expressed concerns about the building's deteriorated condition over the past decade, the owner's ability to follow through with completing proposed improvements, and the precedent that would be set for extensions on this block should this proposal be approved, particularly with regard to the volume of this proposed extension. This project has an LPC hearing scheduled for Tuesday, February 4, 2020.

A motion was made by Meredith Staton and seconded by Janet Collins to withhold support for the application without further elaboration. The motion failed, with a vote of 3 in favor, 10 against, and 0 abstentions. After some discussion, a new motion was made by Gib Veconi and seconded by Katharine Perko to withhold support for the application pending the reduction of the extension from 3 to 2 stories. The motion failed, with a vote of 6 in favor, 6 against, and 1 abstention.

After further discussion, a new motion was made by Katharine Perko and seconded by Robert Puca to withhold support for the application pending a reduction in height of the rear-yard extension to no more than 1 above-ground story and extending no further than the currently proposed 12 ft. and 9 in., and on the condition that such extension's façade be in accord with the historical character of the rest of the block. The motion passed unanimously, with 13 in favor and 0 abstentions. The committee hopes the full Board will support its recommendation.

Ms. Elaine Weinstein, a neighbor to the applicant, thanked the Land Use committee for supporting only a one-story extension and submitted into record the letters from four residents on the block.

Mr. Atkins made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Dr. Lazur. Prior to the vote, Mr. Veconi brought to the Board's attention the extended discussion in committee about the height of the extension, even calling into evidence the two votes that had failed, one of which included support for a two-story extension. He further stated that he would personally vote against the item because the guidance the motion calls for is unlike any previous guidance CB 8 has ever given to LPC. Furthermore, LPC is likely to support a two-story extension because they have done so numerous times in the past.

Mr. Puca stated that he understands the position of Mr. Veconi, but stated in this case, it imperative that the Board take a stand even if LPC goes against our recommendation of a one-story addition and the new direction of our guidance.

After a bit more discussion, the vote on the original motion to support a one-story addition was taken, and the item passed with a final vote of 27 in favor, 1 opposed, with 0 abstentions.

Additionally, the Land Use committee heard an update on MCROWN. Committee member Gib Veconi presented two updates related to the M-CROWN project. First, the ULURP process for the proposed rezoning associated with 527 Grand Ave./985 Pacific St. is ongoing, with the next step of a scheduled hearing with the City Planning Commission (CPC) at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 8 at 120 Broadway. In November, Community Board 8 voted to withhold support for the project pending a binding commitment to devote 25% of the building's ground floor commercial space to M-CROWN uses. Those who have been working on the language of this Community Benefits Agreement are almost ready to share the proposed document with the owner/developer of the property. Should this plan be successful, it could become a model for future proposed rezonings within the district.

Second, regarding the M-CROWN proposal, Mr. Veconi is also anticipating a meeting with the Dep't of City Planning (DCP) to schedule the public engagement portion of the M-CROWN proposal, specifically the public realm improvements, where other agencies and the public are invited to suggest infrastructural and other improvements that could be a part of this rezoning. Mr. Veconi hopes that this meeting will take place by the end of January and that he will be able to give a full report on the meeting at the February Land Use Committee meeting.

The next meeting of the Land Use Committee will be held on Thursday, February 6, 2020 at 6:30 PM at Downtown Brooklyn Rehabilitation Center. All are invited to attend.

### **SLA and Sidewalk Café Review Committee (SLAC)**

The SLAC Committee met on Monday, January 6, 2020 at Downtown Brooklyn Rehabilitation Center located at 727 Classon Avenue. Present were Wayne Bailey, Gail Branch-Muhammad, Janet Collins, James Ellis, Fred Frazier, Oliver Hardt, Rob Puca, Brain Saunders, Meredith Staton, Gib Veconi, Irsa Weatherspoon, Deborah Young, Rogers Myers, and Dian Duke. The committee discussed the following applications:

#### **1. Alteration Application for Corner 660 LLC d/b/a The Barlow, 655 Grand Ave (at Washington/Park Place) to add sidewalk café and include alcohol service**

- Hours of interior operation previously approved by committee and full board
- Requesting sidewalk café on Grand Ave facing (7'1" x 28'6") 24 outdoor seats
- Operation: Sun-Thurs until 12a, Fri/Sat until 1am
- No amplified music

The committee voted to support the application with 10 in favor, 1 opposed, with 3 abstentions with the following stipulations:

- Reduce seating to 20
- Reduce operating hours to 11pm Sun-Thurs, midnight Fri/Sat
- All operable business windows closed by 10p daily

It hopes the full Board will support its recommendation.

Mr. Witherwax made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Saton and carried with a final vote of 28 in favor, 0 opposed, with 1 abstention.

**2. Sidewalk Café Renewal for Morgans Brooklyn Barbeque, 267 Flatbush Ave. (at St. Marks)**

- 10pm closure of outdoor space
- DCA approved space to include seating for 68
- No issues reported

On motion to support as presented, the committee voted unanimously to support the sidewalk café renewal application and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Mr. Witherwax made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Raji and carried with a final tally of 28 in favor, 0 opposed, with 1 abstention.

The next SLAC Committee meeting will be held on Monday, February 3, 2020 at 6:30 PM at Downtown Brooklyn Rehabilitation Center. All are invited to attend.

**Economic Development** – Mr. James Ellis, Interim Chair; Mr. Brian Saunders, Interim Vice Chair

Mr. Ellis announced that the Economic committee would meet on January 22, 2020 at 6:30 PM at the CB 8 district office located at 1291 St. Marks Avenue. The committee will discuss the funding received from Assemblywoman Diana Richardson and ways to execute spending it, and also on Workforce development programs. All are welcome to attend.

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

The Youth and Education Committee met on Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at the CB 8 District office located at 1291 St. Marks Avenue. Present were: Xeerxeema Jordan, Desmond Atkins, Sharon Wedderburn, Kwasi Mensah, Marva Henry, Amy Perry, and Nora Daniel.

Ms. Wedderburn announced that the committee is presently working on an initiative to hold the first annual spelling bee for children that attend traditional elementary schools in grades 2 through 5. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at 7 PM, also at the District office, and the committee will continue discussing details of the spelling bee. All are invited to attend.

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

Mr. Witherwax announced that EST is currently working on gathering input for budget items for the upcoming submission season. The committee voted on a survey for four areas of concern covered by the committee and will work on crafting four items to put into this year's budget document. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at 6:30 PM at a location to be determined. All are invited to attend.

**Health** – Mr. Kwasi Mensah, Chair

The Health committee met on Monday, January 6, 2020. The committee was scheduled to meet at the CB 8 district office, but the Chair of the committee moved the meeting to BNIA located at 465 Sterling Place. The next meeting will be held on March 2, 2020 at a location to be determined. All are invited to attend.

**Housing** – Ms. Nizjoni Granville, Chair

The Housing Committee met on Wednesday, January 8, 2020 at Albany Community Center located at 164 Troy Avenue. The committee began planning its Affordable Housing and Tenant Advocacy Workshop tentatively scheduled for April 25<sup>th</sup>. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 6:30 PM at Albany Community Center. All are invited to attend.

**Parks** – Ms. Glinda Andrews, Chair

The Parks Committee will meet on Tuesday, February 4, 2020 at 6:30 PM at St. John’s Recreation Center located at 1251 Prospect Place. The committee is seeking to enroll people to launch a “Friends of…” parks group. To obtain more information, please attend the meeting.

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

The Public Safety Committee will meet on Monday, January 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM at the 77<sup>th</sup> Precinct located at 127 Utica Avenue. Ms. George suggested that the committee hold a meeting at the 78<sup>th</sup> Precinct since they cover a portion of CB 8 as well. Mr. Atkins and Ms. Bembry-Guet stated that the community does not attend and support Public Safety meetings when they are held at the 78<sup>th</sup> precinct. Mr. Atkins continued by stating that there is a disconnect between the community and the 78<sup>th</sup> precinct. Mr. Thurton stated that he would work on fostering a more productive relationship with the 78<sup>th</sup> as he has done with the 77<sup>th</sup>. All are invited to attend.

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

The Seniors Committee will meet on Wednesday, February 5, 2020 at 6 PM at David Chavis Senior Apartments located at 230 Kingston Avenue. Ms. Branch-Muhammad recognized Ms. Regina Kinsey for bringing pantry supplies to the seniors as well as a plethora of literature to the meetings.

Ms. Tyus thanked the committee chairs for their reports and opened the floor to public comments.

**Public Comments**

**Ms. Deborah Young** of the Crown Heights North Association (CHNA) announced that she is circulating a petition to convince Hebron SDA to build a smaller development than the proposed as of right 8-story structure with 221 apartment at the corner of Park Place and New York Avenue in the CHNA historic district. She stated that CHNA is willing to work with Hebron to build something that is more in context with the historic community. She asked everyone to please sign the petition to prevent egregious development in the historic district.

**Ms. Kim Robinson** from Councilwoman Alike Ampry-Samuel’s office announced that the Councilwoman is having an Advisory Board meeting on January 18<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM to Noon at her office located at 400 Rockaway Avenue. Also, Census representatives are in the office every Friday for those seeking Census employment opportunities.

**Ms. Karen Chambers** from Kings County District Attorney Eric Gonzalez’s office informed everyone that the Community Action Center is designed to help the community in any aspect. Please call 718.250.4877 for assistance. Also, human trafficking is a very big issue in the community. To help raise awareness, there will be a trafficking awareness event at Boro Hall in the near future.

**Mr. Orlando Ross** from Congresswoman Yvette Clarke's office announced that the Congresswoman has recently proposed legislation to recalibrate the area median income, or AMI to make housing more affordable for our communities. The Affordable Housing and AMI Fairness Act will focus more on the actual communities rather than the surrounding counties. Mr. Ross continued, stating that hate crimes are saddening and appalling, and as such, the Congresswoman's office is working diligently with officials to make sure they stop. The Congresswoman is also appalled by the administration's determination to clear over 700k people from SNAP (food stamps) rolls with new requirements for eligibility. Finally, the Congresswoman initiated legislation to ban facial recognition in all NYCHA houses.

**Mr. Godfrey Bayalama** from Senator Zellnor Myrie's office announced that the Senator is still focused on the issue of housing, and is looking to create pathways for tenants to become homeowners this year as well as potential changes to property taxes to provide relief from housing taxes. Free tax filing and prep are available at the Senator's office. Finally, the State of the District will be held on February 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Central Library Branch.

**Mr. Gib Veconi** announced that the Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council (PHNDC) will be hosting a Know Your Rights forum on Monday, January 27, 2020 at 7PM at Brooklyn Public Library, 10 Grand Army Plaza. The meeting will be held in the Info Commons Lab. Representatives from The Legal Aid Society, IMPACCT Brooklyn and JustFix.nyc will explain how to protect oneself from predatory behavior by landlords, and how to use free cutting-edge technology to protect your rights. Judith Goldiner from the Legal Aid Society will also make a presentation about the new protections tenants have under the Housing Stability and Tenant Protection Act of 2019, the rent reform package passed in Albany in 2019.

**Ms. Nizjoni Granville** announced that Rev. Blakely, a Pearl Harbor Survivor, will celebrate his 100th Birthday on Saturday, January 11 at 938 Bergen Street, Brooklyn, from 4:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Rev. Blakely is a resident of our Board. he encouraged residents to attend to celebrate the historic life of a military veteran.

Ms. Tyus thanked everyone for their announcements and adjourned the meeting at 9 PM. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 13, 2020 at 7 PM at Weeksville Heritage Center located at 158 Buffalo Avenue. All are invited to attend.