

**Community Board 8
General Meeting
Via Webex Videoconference**

June 11, 2020

Members Present

Kiermoni Allison
Glinda Andrews
Desmond Atkins
Lisa Atkinson
Wayne Bailey
Princess Benn-James
Julia Boyd
Gail Branch-Muhammad
John Buckholz
Robert Callahan
Hanjy Charles
Nora Daniel
James Ellis
Kevin Farley
Andrea Ferris
Drew Gabriel
Tamika Gibbs
Nizjoni Granville
Igenie Harris-Blenman
Marva Henry
Regina Kinsey
Sarah Lazur
Kalvis Mikelsteins
Yahya Raji
Adam Sachs
Brian Saunders
Mark Thurton
Greg Todd
Ethel Tyus
Gib Veconi
Kimberly Watson
Irsa Weatherspoon
Sharon Wedderburn
Robert Witherwax
Deborah Young

Members Absent/Excused

Helen Coley
Fred Frazier
Xeerxeema Jordan
Eunice Ko
Mireille Lemaine
Elaine Mahoney
Katharine Perko
Robert Puca
Janola Soko
Meredith Staton
Karmisha Superville
Audrey Taitt-Hall
Yves Vilus
Vilma Zuniga

Elected Officials Present

57th District Leader Ola Alabi

Elected Official Representatives

Kim Robinson, Councilwoman Alika Ampry-Samuel
Arna Lipkind, Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo

CB 8 Staff

Michelle George, District Manager
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

The regular meeting of Community Board 8 was called to order at 6:35 PM by Ms. Ethel Tyus, Esq., Chairperson. Ms. Tyus welcomed everyone to the first general meeting of CB 8 during the

COVID-19 pandemic, and stated that she hopes everyone is staying safe and as healthy as possible. She encouraged everyone to try to remain as positive as possible during the New York State Pause, remain as active as possible, and remain vigilant about their health.

Ms. Tyus asked Ms. Robinson if she had any updates from Councilwoman Ampry-Samuel.

Ms. Kim Robinson sent greetings on behalf of Councilwoman Ampry-Samuel, stating that the councilwoman and many of her colleagues are doing everything in their power to make sure that not only are all New Yorkers as safe as possible, but also to ensure that necessary reforms are being fought for and passed. Ms. Robinson stated that many of the issues arising due to the COVID-19 pandemic that have been brewing for decades now. However, COVID-19 has made it impossible to continue ignoring them.

Ms. Tyus thanked Ms. Robinson for the update and introduced the new CB 8 members. She gave each one an opportunity to say a few words about their interest.

Mr. Kiermoni Allison stated that he is new to the community, and is excited to participate on the Board. He stated that he currently does not know which committees he would like to sit on, but that he is excited to be a participant.

Ms. Lisa Atkinson stated that she has lived in CB 8 for the last 12 years and serves as the PTA President and Chairperson of the school leadership team of her daughter's school. She has worked with the NYPD and Dept. of Social Services for the last decade and a half. She also stated that she would like to take some time before committing to a committee.

Mr. John Buckholz stated that he is a transportation planner for a consulting firm for the city, and works with the NYC Dept. of Transportation and the MTA. He currently lives in Central Crown Heights in the North Crown Heights Historic District. He stated that due to his work, he is interested in the Transportation, or rather, the EST Committee.

Mr. Robert Callahan stated that he is a resident of the eastern portion of Crown Heights, and is the chicken coop keeper at Imani Garden on Schenectady Avenue at Pacific Street. He stated that his work with the garden has allowed him to become acquaintances with a number of board members. He currently works for the Independent Budget Office and is interested in Land Use and Public Safety.

Ms. Igenie Harris-Blenman stated that she has lived in the community for over 50 years near current long-term members Mark Thurton and Nizjoni Granville. She stated that she has met other board members by participating in different groups and organizations in the community.

Mr. Kalvis Mikelsteins stated the he moved to Crown Heights about 3 years ago and is honored to be on the board. He works as an Urban Planner, specifically as a community and economic developer.

Ms. Kimberly Watson stated that she is a licensed social worker and was born and raised in Crown Heights. She informed that Board that in recent years, she has had a number of health issues, but prior to them, she attended the Youth Committee regularly. She informed Ms. Wedderburn that she is still interested in joining the committee, and also stated that she is interested in joining the SLA and Sidewalk Café Review Committee.

Ms. Tyus welcomed all members and stated that she is excited to work with them to make CB 8 a better community. She then asked Mr. Witherwax to call the roll, then went into Action items.

Action Items

Executive Committee

1. Resolution to confirm authority of State Liquor Authority & Sidewalk Café Review (SLAC) & Land Use Committees to act for the full Board

In recognition of the suspension of the in-person meeting requirement of Article 7 of the Public Officers Law included in Governor's Executive Order 202.1 issued March 12, 2020 the Committee discussed confirming authority of the SLAC and Land Use Committees to act for the Board. On motion made by Mr. Witherwax and seconded by Mr. Ellis, the Committee approved the concept of the following resolution, now presented in writing, for notice to and eventual validation by the full Board:

Whereas, the current State of Emergency and the restrictions on in-person meetings implemented by E.O 202.1 to prevent the spread of the deadly COVID19 virus have made regular full Board meetings impossible; and

Whereas, two committees with regular adjudicatory responsibilities, the SLA and Sidewalk Café Review and Land Use Committees, continue to hold virtual meetings to give the Board the opportunity to respond to applications that have been submitted, having met in March, April and May, with June meetings scheduled; and

Whereas, all committees with adjudicatory responsibilities either currently or arising require the affirmation of the full Board for the authority exercised thus far during 2020, as well as authorization to continue to act for the full Board under exigent circumstances when the full Board is either unable to meet due to government restrictions; or to achieve a quorum due to technological impediments; or when the full Board is not scheduled for a meeting;

Be it therefore resolved that the full membership body of Community Board 8 grants executive authority to any committee with adjudicatory responsibilities during a State of Emergency notwithstanding any associated technological impediments that prevent a quorum; and whenever the full Board is not scheduled to meet.

On motion made and seconded, the Executive Committee approved the above-recited Resolution *in concept* with a vote of seven in favor and one against. The Resolution is intended for notice and presentation to the full Board at a June 11, 2020 virtual meeting. It was recommended that this Resolution be included in the meeting invitation as notice in advance of the Board meeting.

Mr. Callahan asked if the resolution has an expiration date, or if it stand until the board repeals it. He was informed that the resolution will remain open as needed.

Mr. Ellis made a motion to support the resolution. The motion as seconded by Mr. Saunders and carried with a tally of 27 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

2. The Executive Committee recommends the removal of Ms. Eunice Ko as a member of Community Board 8, as per the By-Laws of Community Board 8.

In terms of a member's removal, the By-Laws state specifically:

§5.5: (c) An appointed member may be removed from the Board for cause by a majority vote of the Board, only after:

- (i) a two-thirds majority of the members of the Executive Committee present and entitled to vote recommends a removal hearing,
- (ii) service of written charges and specifications to the appointed member, at least 30 days prior to a scheduled hearing,
- (iii) a scheduled hearing before the Board, at a general or special meeting, at which the appointed member shall have the right to respond to the charges and specifications, the right to counsel, and the right to produce witnesses or evidence on his or her behalf. The notice of the meeting shall include the hearing on its agenda.

§5.5: (d) Circumstances which may constitute cause for removal shall include, but shall not be limited to:

- (i) Non-attendance at four of the previous six consecutive general or special Board meetings
- (ii) substantial non-attendance or non-participation in two (2) committees of the Board
- (iii) substantial record of missed roll call votes at the Board meeting
- (iv) conduct detrimental to the Board

Charges against Ms. Ko are as follows:

- **Non-attendance and participation in general meetings:** Ms. Ko has not attended any meetings since her appointment in September 2019.
- **Non-participation in at least two standing or ad-hoc committees:** Ms. Ko has not attended any committee meetings since her appointment in September 2019.
- Ms. Ko was sent a letter about her attendance as per the By-Laws, and to date, she has not responded.

As such, the Executive Committee recommends the removal of Ms. Ko on the aforementioned grounds, and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation. If you would like to come to the defense of Ms. Ko, you may do so.

Mr. Allison inquired as to what methods the District office used in reaching out to Ms. Ko. Ms. George stated that Ms. Ko was emailed, sent conventional mail, and also phone calls were made with messages left. She did not respond to any mode of contact.

Mr. Witherwax informed new members that the board does not take removal lightly. However, removal is necessary as we must monitor quorum numbers and ensure that all members are willing to work.

Ms. Tyus read a personally prepared statement and informed new members that membership requirements are available for consideration prior to signing up for membership. She added that Ms. Ko could have attended meetings even if there was a typographical error in either the email or mailing address as the information is public and well publicized. She continued stating that appointed members that take the time to complete a membership application should also be willing to take the time to find out participation requirements.

Mr. Veconi made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Benn-James and carried with a final tally of 29 in favor, 0 opposed, with 0 abstentions.

3. Ratifications of Land Use and SLAC Committees actions since March when the State of Emergency was issued. The following are the applications that were voted on with support letters issued to the requisite agencies by committees (note: the ratification requires only one vote):

SLA and Sidewalk Café Review Committee (SLAC)

The SLAC Committee met on March 2, 2020 at the Downtown Brooklyn Rehabilitation Center prior to the Pause caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The committee also met remotely via freeconferencecall.com on April 6, 2020 and via Webex on May 15, 2020. The committee approved the following applications:

1. Renewals

- Bergen Projects, 899 Bergen Street – Full
- Domo Taco, 733 Franklin Avenue – Full
- Nourish Thai, 637A Vanderbilt Avenue – Beer/wine/cider
- Good Luck, 689 Washington Avenue – Full
- Happiness Lounge, 1458 St. John's Place – Full
- Underhill Café and Grill, 760 Dean Street – beer/wine/cider
- Eat Morris, 145 Brooklyn Avenue – Beer/wine/cider
- Dutch Boy Burger, 618 St. Johns Place – Full
- Sloan's BBQ and Elbow Room, 267 Flatbush Avenue – Full
- Sweet Brooklyn Bar, 608 Nostrand Avenue – Full
- Silver Rice, 636 Park Place – Beer/wine/cider

The committee voted to support all renewals.

2. New Applications

A. Café Nyneve, 105 Kingston Avenue/755 Dean Street -- Full License with live music, no outdoor space

- Support was renewed from when the applicant last presented to the Board in December 2017, and the applicant states that details have not changed
- Initial support was the following:
 - a. Hours of Operation Sunday 8AM-2AM daily
 - b. 42 seats
 - c. All performances to end by 11 PM

d. Adequate soundproofing to be installed

B. Nostrand Social, 706 Nostrand Avenue -- Full License (small scale patron dancing, live music, DJ, stage shows, catering facility, restaurant, no outdoor space)

- Support was renewed from when the applicant last presented before the Board in October 2018, and the applicant states that details have not changed with the exception of the removal of the rooftop garden.
- Initial support was the following:
 - a. Live music and DJ
 - b. Outdoor rooftop with 52 person capacity
 - c. 3 levels for this restaurant/cabaret
 - d. 39 tables with 148 seats, 3 bars (one on each level) with 44 seats, max capacity 198 patrons
 - e. Approved hours of operation: Closing 2 AM Sunday thru Wednesday, closing 3 AM Thursday thru Saturday
 - f. 500-foot exception community benefit: Wed and Mon - Broadway caliber performers brought to community; senior centers love jazz, will host lunches/brunches during week; Wedding/Family gatherings; hiring young adults, training - entrepreneur sessions; working with Bed Stuy Restoration work force development from within community; handicap section (6 seats) lift to be built
 - g. No third (3rd) party promoters
 - h. No liquor bottle service in any capacity, on any floor, at any time (wine is ok)
 - i. No outdoor music

C. Cuatro Rios, 759 Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11216 – Beer/wine/cider

- Renew support for the beer/wine/cider application for the aforementioned establishment. Support was renewed from when the applicant last presented before the Board in April 2018, and the applicant states that details have not changed
- Initial details: existing business that closes that 9 PM

4. Alteration Application for Super Power, 722 Nostrand Avenue to extend hours of operation to 4 AM daily

5. Sidewalk café application for Bar Meridian, 406 Prospect Place, a cap at 18 seats (12 on Grand Avenue and 6 on Prospect Place) and hours ending at 10 PM Sunday thru Thursday and Midnight Friday and Saturday.

Land Use

The Land Use Committee met on March 5, 2020 at St. Gregory's RC Church prior to the Pause caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The committee also met remotely on April 2, 2020 and May 7, 2020 via freeconferencecall.com, and June 4, 2020 via Webex. It discussed the following applications:

- 1. Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for 1003 Sterling Place(Crown Heights North Historic District)**
 - **Exterior extension**
- 2. Replication of Grand-Pacific Rezoning Community Benefits Agreement for Non Applicant Controlled Sites**
- 3. Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for 1370 Dean St (Crown Heights North Historic District)**
 - **Modify the building entrance to complete the demolition and replacement of existing entrance stairs**
 - **Inclusion of a new inclined platform lift for handicap access**

Mr. Bailey made a motion to support the item. The motion was seconded by Mr. Saunders and carried with a final tally of 30 in favor, 0 opposed, with 0 abstentions.

Ms. Tyus clarified that the Hebron project would be carried over until the July Land Use meeting.

Ms. Tyus thanked the Executive Committee members for the many meetings held during the Pause that has allowed the Board to continue functioning virtually without fail. She then opened the floor for announcements.

Announcements and Public Comments

Mr. Ellis reminded everyone to complete and return their Census 2020 forms, as the Pause has illustrated exactly how important the Census is and the funds obtained are. Unfortunately, CB 8 has historically been underfunded due to undercounting, so it is even more urgent this year to make sure everyone is properly counted so we can compete for funding.

Ms. George reminded everyone to vote in the upcoming primary election on June 23rd. If you have not applied for an absentee ballot, please do so before the deadline, or plan to vote in person at the poll. Ms. Ferris inquired as to what reason she should use for the request for the absentee ballot as she did not want to use sickness since she was not sick. Ms. Wedderburn stated that although she is not sick, her reason for requesting an absentee ballot is COVID-19, and that everyone, regardless of their COVID status, will be able to use the need to socially distance as their validation or using an absentee ballot.

Mr. Witherwax announced that even though the Environment, Sanitation, and Transportation Committee (EST) is not meeting, we can all now see precisely how vital our streets and the streetscape/use is now.

Ms. Andrews announced that the St. John's Recreation Center remains closed for programming, but staff is working inside the facility.

Ms. Young spoke on behalf of the residents in attendance at the virtual Land Use Committee meeting, informing Ms. Tyus and the Board that many of them felt unwelcomed and unable to participate due to the challenges of the platform.

Mr. Thurton announced that Public Safety has not met in the last few months, but during the recent protests, the 77th and 78th precincts were fortunate not to have any reported property damage due to the protests. He also stated that March was relatively quiet in terms of gun violence, but April and May showed a dramatic pick-up in shootings and shots fired. Additionally, several officers of both precincts have tested positive for COVID, but all have either recovered entirely or are expected to make a full recovery. As such, staffing numbers are now back to normal at both precincts.

Mr. Todd stated that the police barricade to close the street for the Open Streets Initiative at Park Place and Kingston Avenue and Park Place and Brooklyn Avenues had been removed and the streets open when they are supposed to be closed. Additionally, there have been instances when the barricades have been vandalized by unruly drivers unwilling to share the streets. Also, Troy Avenue was supposed to have barricades and they were removed as well. He asked for additional oversight for the barricades to ensure that they are in place and kept there during the hours they are supposed to.

Mr. Veconi responded by informing Mr. Todd that on numerous occasions in Prospect Heights, there have been days when the barricades were not being placed on the streets at 8 am despite being present. PHNDC got permission from DOT to put the barricades in place when neither DOT nor NYPD was able to do so.

Ms. George stated that the correspondence issued to CB 8 regarding Open Streets was that any Open Street must be sponsored by a community group as the group is responsible for putting the barricades in place and removing them at the beginning and end of the day. She was informed that what she understood about Open Streets was the pilot, but additional streets were added in Phase 2 and DOT and NYPD are responsible for the barricades.

Mr. Buckholtz stated that his understanding of Open Streets from working with the Sidewalk Improvement Team at DOT is that residents are encouraged to restore the barriers when they can or need to do so. Officials at the agency are willing to allow the public to put the barricades up on sanctioned streets if there is need.

Ms. Wedderburn announced that the Dep't. of Education has a target date of September 10th for schools re-opening. She stated that education officials are putting an emphasis on enhanced health, blended learning, considering a rolling start, and numerous other options to keep students and teachers safe.

Ms. Young stated that for the last month and a half, she noticed that there are no directional markings on the ground to demarcate the areas for bikers and walkers on the north side of Eastern Parkway east of Classon Avenue. She stated that the markings exist on the south side of the mall, but not the north, and would be beneficial for them to exist eastbound. Ms. George stated that she would reach out to DOT regarding the markings.

Mr. Witherwax informed her that the bike lane on the median is technically only on the southern portion of the parkway east of Classon Avenue. Ms. Young was not satisfied with the response and stated that it behooved the EST committee and the Board to petition for markings on both sides of the parkway.

Mr. Marable asked if the Board has locations for early voting, and Ms. George mentioned that District Leader Ola Alabi had sent via her newsletter, which was forwarded by the Board to the mailing list, the list of early voting locations. District Leader Alabi informed everyone that early voting sites were assigned based on election district, and the poll site closest to you may not be the early voting site you must vote at. She urged everyone interested in early voting to go to the Board of Elections website to check where their early voting site is located. Ms. George urged everyone to please read the Community Board's newsletter titled "Across the Board." She stated that a lot of time, effort and research goes into creating this newsletter. She also encouraged everyone to pay close attention to the emails that we send out because that also contains important useful information.

Ms. Tyus wished a speedy recovery to board member Ms. Vilma Zuniga and adjourned the meeting at 8:10 PM.