

**Community Board 8
Special General Meeting
Calvary Community Church
1575 St. John's Place
Brooklyn, NY 11233**

August 14, 2025

Members Present

Akua Aidoo
Sharon Alexis-Pierre
Isaac Andino
Gail Branch-Muhammad
Barbara Cofield
Tamika Gibbs
Mohammad Hassan
Tafari John-King
Jennifer Jordan
Frances Langley
Robert Lapointe
Dr. Sarah Lazur
Lisa Maldonado
Mimi Mitchell
Fior Ortiz-Joyner
Taraya Pettway
Yahya Raji
Anika Roach
Ezra Roth
Declan Taintor
Mark Thurton
Ryan Tucker
Briana Uwa
Gib Veconi
Irsa Weatherspoon
Sharon Wedderburn
Regina Wilson
Robert Witherwax
Deborah Young

Members Absent/Excused

Peter Anekwe
Princess Benn
Dian Duke
Benny Faygen
Drew Gabriel
Nizjoni Granville
Jamell Henderson
William Meehan
Kwasi Mensah
Robert Puca
Conor Ross
Brian Saunders
Robin Smith
Meredith Staton
Lesley Steele
Dina Tate
Katie Taylor
Dana Thompson
Esmond Turnbull
Kimberly Watson

Elected Official and Agency Representatives

Elika Ruintan, Councilmember Crystal Hudson
Alex Somer, Dept. of City Planning
Jonah Rogoff, Dept. of City Planning
Jesse Hirakawa, Dept. of City Planning
Perris Straughter, City Council Land Use Division

CB8 Staff

Michelle George, District Manager
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

The special meeting of Community Board 8 was called to order at 6:25 PM by Chairperson Irsa Weatherspoon. She thanked everyone for taking time out of their summer holiday to attend a very important meeting outside of the normal meeting season.

Chairperson Weatherspoon opened the floor to public comments and reports from elected officials and representatives.

Public comments: none registered.

Elected officials and reps:

Ms. Ellie Kahn from Councilmember Crystal Hudson’s office announced the following:

- Housing connect workshops every Wednesday including CAMBA coming in to help folk get vouchers.
- Free legal advice every Thursday, but attorney is currently out on vacation.
- Friday, August 22, from 11 am-3 pm for our 3rd Annual Back to School Fair & Field Day at Jackie Robinson Playground in Crown Heights. Giving away free backpacks, school supplies, and raffle prizes to our youngest constituents while also providing entertainment like roller skating and bouncy castles, and providing lunch as you explore our community resource fair. It’s everything students and families need to kick off the school year strong—and to enjoy one last fun summer day before heading back to class. All giveaways and lunch are available while supplies last.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked Ms. Kahn for her announcements and asked for roll call. After confirming that a quorum was present, she opened the public hearing portion of the meeting.

Cannabis Committee

The Cannabis Committee met on Tuesday, August 12, 2025 to discuss an Adult-Use Retail Dispensary Application for Sean of All Trades LLC located at 765 Washington Avenue (between Sterling and St. John’s Places).

Details of the application include the following:

- Previously approved site by the Office of Cannabis Management for a potential licensee in November 2023
- Applicant team has a year’s worth of experiencing operating a NYS licensed Cannabis Dispensary called Hold Up Roll Up located at 196 Washington Avenue in Albany, NY.
- Will follow the same blueprint for success with the Albany location, which has been cited as an “upscale cannabis experience.” Some of the key distinguishing features of the Albany location is that they provide their employees with health insurance as well as hiring those with felony convictions.
- Will seek to hire locally and offer training and upward mobility options to enhance the legacy of the business.
- Will have three components for cannabis sales: adult-use recreational enjoyment, wellness (focusing on non-THC containing products to avoid the psychedelic component and also to reach a wider range of customers), and pet care.

- All budtenders will be extensively trained in order to provide guidance for those unable to obtain a medicinal cannabis card. They will be able to suggest products for certain needs identified by clientele, such as sleep, anxiety, relaxation, focus, etc. Medicinal and recreational products are very similar, and the base ingredient is the same; however, actual medical advice is prohibited, hence the focus on wellness.
- Anticipated opening and buildout would likely be around January or February 2026. Prior to opening, they have to make sure they have the products, trained staff, security, proper point of sale (POS) systems to adhere to OCM seed to sale tracking, and final OCM walkthrough and sign-off.
- Security will be extensive, and will rely not only on cameras, but would also likely include a concealed carry armed guard to maintain the welcoming and inviting nature of the space. Applicant will most likely secure Doyle Security, a national security company, will have panic buttons and security monitors in the manager's office.
- Flexible hours of closing at midnight Sunday thru Thursday and 2AM Friday and Saturday so they can really serve customers and meet their needs. These hours can and will likely change dependent upon customer trends. (OCM holds applicants to stated hours to local municipalities, and as such, they expressed the desire for flexibility to truly ascertain what the community's needs are and respond accordingly. They do not anticipate they will need all of the applied hours, and will adjust hours depending on need and what is going on in the community and the need based on events in the area, i.e., events at the Brooklyn Museum, Vanderbilt and Franklin Open Streets, and other large events and parades in the area at key times during the year.)
- Will have delivery options and will likely utilize a two to three-mile radius. Delivery is truly customer based, and they will need time to identify what hours delivery will be available and will likely have set blocks of hours with a scheduled delivery time instead of delivery persons on standby.

Members felt the applicant team was well prepared, demonstrated knowledge and understanding of OCM's rules and regulations, and appreciated the NYS licensing and operations experience. Responding to questions regarding compliance with OCM's 500 foot proximity to schools and the recent discovery by the agency that nearly 150 licenses—no fewer than 80% of which are in New York City—no longer meet the criteria for proximity, the applicant team stated they are awaiting final determination from OCM to determine that the location remains within an adequate distance from Stroud School/ PS 316 on Classon Avenue and Sterling Place. Currently, they stated there is confusion at OCM over where the official school property line begins versus the NYC Parks Department land for Stroud Playground. It was suggested that the school property line does not begin until the actual multi-story school begins on Sterling Place due to the Stroud Comfort Station. The applicant team stated they would bring this information to their

attorney who will present it to OCM. If the information is correct, they will have more than sufficient distance from the school to adhere to proximity protections.

The committee voted unanimously with 14 in favor to support the application as presented and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Questions and comments:

- From the last paragraph of the committee's report/action item, it seems there is confusion about the dispensary location to proximity of the school and whether or not the site meets distance requirements. Did the committee not make a recommendation based on that question being resolved and therefore just recommended approval as is? Response: **Yes. OCM is not sure right now of their own requirements and it has been ascertained that they keep changing their own recommendations and guidance.**
- What is the applicant prepared to do in the event that they do not meet the proximity requirements? Response: **As a reminder, the site was previously approved by OCM for a previous applicant, and such site operators are organizing for a class action lawsuit. It is not the responsibility of the Board to wonder about that and instead to focus on the application merits before us.**
- How exactly will you go about recruiting to be able to hire locally? Response from applicant: **We've been in the cannabis industry for about 7 years. Want to bring the same blueprint from Albany to Brooklyn. They will post on Indeed and have applicants apply to the different listings. They will always try to find and hire from within the community not only because it is difficult to bring other people into the community, but also because locals understand the needs and tone of the community better than outsiders.**

To previously asked questions, they did have a NYS surveyor come in yesterday and the proximity is greater than 500 feet per the newly understood requirements.

Mr. Veconi made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Dr. Lazur and carried unanimously with 25 members present.

Atlantic Avenue Mixed Use Plan Follow-up Corrective Actions

Mr. Jonah Rogoff from the Dept. of City Planning presented the follow-up corrective actions (FUCAs) to the Atlantic Avenue Mixed Use Plan (AAMUP). He stated that the follow-up action resulted from a response based on a high priority by both CB8 and Councilmember Hudson to set aside a portion of space for arts and light industrial uses.

AAMUP is the plan to support housing and job growth, affordable housing, transportation and other infrastructure improvements, open space, etc. In all, about 2800 jobs, about 4500 units of new housing, new bike lanes, etc. are to be created. Furthermore, the agency secured \$230M in total capital investments from city coffers.

A few months ago, the City Council voted on a Zoning map amendment to change the zoning in the AAMUP zone, and the phase we are in now is the zoning text amendment to change the uses. The FUCA affects portions of Pacific Street to Bergen Street from Grand to Classon Avenues and Pacific to Dean Streets with a portion of Bergen Street from Classon to Franklin Avenues. The second portion is a bit complicated and cut out from a portion that will have a residential overlay. These areas will have a special zoning district, and in them DCP will be allowing a 1.1 FAR which will translate into about 2 stories of additional buildout to facilitate incentivization of specific uses in the commercial spaces to promote job growth. It was noted that the zone will not allow auto related uses.

This is a truncated ULURP process, meaning that the community board and borough president have a concurrent review window, both expiring on September 8th.

Mr. Veconi provided the Board with an M-CROWN comparison based on the 2018 framework to AAMUP. He did this to show the relationship to the corrective action in the form of the FUCAs. The use groups outlined are those that provide jobs to people without college education, which are the ones at most and highest risk of displacement. These jobs pay living wages. A lot was removed from the initial vision, but this plan was a decent foothold given the economic climate.

M-CROWN goals established 2015:

- Rezone the current M1-1 district to increase available density for commercial/manufacturing uses mixed with residential
- Use market rate residential development to cross subsidize affordable housing and manufacturing
- Set affordability levels based on median income for community district 8
- Tailor allowable manufacturing uses in the new zone to maximize potential for living wage jobs

He stated that the FUCA will allow for the creation about 273 jobs, a bit lower than the M-CROWN projection. Unfortunately, DCP elected to implement a minimum 10,000 sqft lot requirement to access the benefits of the incentive. June was the first time this was made public and the Land Use committee voted to support the FUCA with the modification that the 10,000 sqft requirement be removed as there are opportunities for light industrial uses in spaces smaller than those with 10,000 sqft. We should not be limiting the functionality of the FUCA by removing such a large swath of opportunities. Removal of this size minimum limitation will add an additional 67,000 in floor area and increase the job creation by 149 jobs. At the August Land Use committee meeting, members voted to reaffirm support for the FUCA with the removal of the 10,000 sqft lot size limitation.

Questions:

- Why did DCP change all of this (the framework), especially if the CB8 Land Use committee had already completed the work and analysis? Response: DCP Boro Commissioner, Alex Sommer: DCP tried to create a plan that was feasible. They came up with 10k limit not because they wanted less space available for these uses, but because they felt people wouldn't include commercial space at all and would build a purely residential building in smaller spaces. As planners, they thought about loading, egress, and entry on a building with 3 distinct uses, and they had significant reservations about requiring this on a small site.
- If this FUCA is being used to address something left out...the Board is adamant about pushing for deeper affordability. As passed, AAMUP does not create affordable housing. The Councilmembers came in May and asked us to approve option 1 in addition to option 3.

Unfortunately, the council vote was only for option 1 (medium affordability) and this was mapped everywhere, while option 3 for deep affordability, was not mapped at all despite City of Yes for Housing Opportunity allowing for the mapping of option 3 alone. Even if you can afford the medium today, you might need the deep affordability option five to 10 years from now when these buildings come online. Is it possible to add Option 3 to the FUCA to push for deeper affordability? Several board members have expressed their frustration at believing they were voting for both options 1 and 3, not 1 alone. *Response: a FUCA is only used with DCP realizes they made a mistake. A mistake was not made with the options and the agency used the option the councilmembers presented and voted on.*

- Is it necessary for mixed uses? Even with a minimum 10,000 sqft lot size, is it still optional for a developer to create commercial space with light industrial uses? *Response: If the developer chooses to avail themselves to the additional FAR, they will have to set aside 50% of the commercial space for these uses.*
- Does DCP have any evidence or stats that suggest that a developer would not use the additional FAR or incentive? *Response: DCP uses a study called "Can Industrial Mixed Use Buildings Work," where they examined possibilities with architects and developers. There are certain physical constraints in projects that cause difficulty. Space will be needed for HVAC units, egress, entry, etc., and a lot of these things need to be located on certain size lots that they have space requirements. The concern was that the developer would not be able to fit all of the uses on the lot and would forego it.*
- Is it necessary to have three different uses on the same lot and within the same building? Why is the agency inventing a problem and limitation that does not exist in reality? *Response: No, they do not have to have all 3 uses, but the agency would still prefer a larger lot size. Not because they want to limit job creation, but to make it easier for developers to use the incentive and create something the agency feels would be beneficial.*
- There are so many new mixed use buildings along Classon and Grand Avenues between Atlantic Avenue and Pacific Street but no industrial uses. Most of the spaces are vacant and there is no affordable housing. Are there limitations on the mixed use buildings? *Response: The developments in question were built under private ULURP applications based on a guide from the M-CROWN proposal without the industrial uses. The MIH option is option 1, meaning there are 10% of units at 40% AMI, and an average of 60% AMI.*
- Since DCP is present, how can the Board get Option 3 back? *Response: Need to have a discussion with the councilmember since this is a result of the discussions with the council.*

As it was clear that the conversation had moved away from the FUCA, Mr. Veconi made a motion to support the AAMUP FUCA with the modification that the minimum 10,000 sqft lot size requirement be removed. The motion was seconded by Dr. Lazur and carried unanimously with 29 in favor.

Chairperson Weatherspoon invited Mr. Perris Straughter, Director of the City Councils' Land Use Division to explain more about FUCAs and how the Board can get Option 3.

City Council Land Use Division – Mr. Perris Straughter, Director

Mr. Straughter explained that Follow-Up Corrective Actions, or FUCAs, are only done with the Dept. of City Planning leaves something out of a resolution. Tonight, the board is focusing on the action to add an incentive for light industrial uses. At this point, affordability cannot be addressed at this point. The reasoning for this is that if you don't start something before certification, you cannot easily change it.

In terms of option 3, the Member's understanding was that the board only wanted option 1, which is what was voted on at the May 2025 meeting. He stated that it was never reflected to her or to Member Osse that the Board was not in support of anything other than Option 3, so the Council voted on Option 1 only. Because there was no error on the part of the Council, a FUCA cannot be done to address the affordability. The reason the FUCA can be done on the use groups is because DCP acknowledged their error and conveyed to the Council that the FUCA would be forthcoming after the body voted on AAMUP. The Council does not acknowledge they made a mistake with the MIH options.

Responding to growing unrest and irritability, Mr. Straughter stated that just because the FUCA is not an option does not mean that the MIH Options cannot be amended. From a legal standpoint, the Board could ask for a separate text amendment to change the affordability. He noted that this has never been done before since MIH came into law in 2016, and it is a very convoluted process.

Questions:

- What would it take to do this? Response: *We need something in writing to codify the board's intentions and let us know it is what the board wants.*
- With the new text amendment, can we advocate for more than the standard minimum set aside since the city is paying for the change and saving developers millions in fees? Response: *To do that would require a citywide text amendment.*
- We understand this is unprecedented, but we live in unprecedented times. Is there a time limit or a sense of the timeline for when this could or would be done, especially considering there may be resistance, which might delay the initiative. Response: *Typically for a text amendment timeline, it is an abbreviated ULURP, similar to that for the FUCA.*
- The concerns regarding MIH 1 or 3 do not reflect the fact that the AMI incomes are not reflective of the incomes of people in this community. The affordability rates are not affordable at all in terms of the rent paid—not even for the people in the AMI income bands. Response: *AMI issues must be addressed at the federal level.*
- In December 2024 when CB8 voted on AAMUP, the resolution presented MIH 3.5. Why can't this be a special district text amendment to make AAMUP similar to the Fashion District? That would not require a citywide text amendment. Response: *Yes, there are special districts in the text. Putting an affordability requirement on developers is expensive and they might sue the city to avoid the affordability requirements.*

Mr. Witherwax made a motion that the Board seek a text amendment to add Option 3 to AAMUP, and include the minutes of the December 2024, May 2025, and June 2025 to illustrate that our sentiments around Option 3 over Option 1 have not wavered. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mitchell and carried unanimously with 25 in favor.

With no further business, Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked everyone for attending and participating and adjourned the meeting at 8:20.

Guests

Audrey Taitt-Hall
Traci Nottingham
Loreto Dumitrescu
Kim Robinson
Roger Myers
Betty Davis
Vanessa Davis
Debra Weeks
Emma MP
Matt Parker
Matt Pavoni
Jason Coleman
Cheryl Walcott
Xeerxeema Jordan
Kerrol Thompson
Marjori Tolsdorf
Ben Drukman
Nat Wethri