

**Community Board 8
Brooklyn Children’s Museum
145 Brooklyn Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11216**

December 14, 2023

Members Present

Akua Aidoo
Sharon Alexis-Pierre
Lisa Atkinson
Princess Benn-James
Marva Brown-Henry
Dian Duke
Benny Faygen
Tamika Gibbs
Xeerxeema Jordan
Frances Langley
Dr. Sarah Lazur
Lisa Maldonado
David Mantell
Kwasi Mensah
Mimi Mitchell
Gail Muhammad
Fior Ortiz-Joyner
Robert Puca
Dr. Cadesa Ramharrack
Yahya Raji
Anika Roach
Meredith Staton
Nicole Tetreault
Bria Thomas
Briana Peppers-Uwa
Gib Veconi
Kimberly Watson
Irsa Weatherspoon
Sharon Wedderburn
Robert Witherwax
Deborah Young

Members Absent/Excused

Julia Boyd
Jacques Brunvil
Robert Callahan
Edward Delman
Andrea Ferris
Drew Gabriel
Nizjoni Granville
Robert Lapoint
Taraya Pettway
Conor Ross
Brian Saunders
Mark Thurton
Ethel Tyus

Elected Officials Present

Sarana Purcell 43rd District Leader

Elected Officials Reps/Liations Present

Connie Little, Councilwoman Mealy 41st District
Arlean Gillin, Councilman Osse 36th District
Tendai Watkins, Assemblywoman Zinerman 56th Dis
Ethan Nash, Bklyn Boro President’s Office
T. Williams, Congressman Goldman
Karen Chambers, Bklyn District Attorney’s Office
Det. Marte, 77th Precinct
P.O. Wallen, 77th Precinct
Michael Colacurto, Dept. of Sanitation
Alicia Pritchard

CB8 Staff Present

Michelle George, District Manager
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

The regular meeting of Community Board 8 was called to order at 6:45 PM by Ms. Irsa Weatherspoon, Chairperson. She welcomed everyone to the last meeting for the calendar year

2023 and invited Mr. Atiba Edwards, the new President and CEO of the Brooklyn Children's Museum, to say a few words.

Brooklyn Children's Museum - Mr. Atiba Edwards, President and CEO

Mr. Edwards stated that he is proud to be the first black male to lead the historic institution, and stated that the weight of the historic hiring is not lost on him. In his role, he expects to continue the excellence in programming and children's education that his predecessors began before him, and that will continue after him. Mr. Edwards gave a brief overview of some of the new exhibits currently on display at the museum and that will be coming in future installations.

Mr. Staton inquired about the planetarium and when it would be coming back. He was informed by Mr. Edwards that the current configuration of the museum spaces make it impossible to bring the planetarium back.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked Mr. Edwards and congratulated him on his hire. She stated that she, like many on the Board and in the community, looks forward to working with him. Chairperson Weatherspoon then asked Ms. Tamika Gibbs, Sergeant at Arms, to go over housekeeping rules.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked for an update on sanitation services from the NYC Dept. of Sanitation.

Dept. of Sanitation Community Affairs Customer Service Bureau – Mr. Mike Colacurto

Mr. Colacurto informed the Board that several changes would be coming to DSNY in terms of how household trash is disposed. He stated that so far, despite mid-year budget cuts, there have been no changes to curbside composting in the borough. However, starting in January, if additional cuts are made, community compost programs will be ceased.

Mr. Colacurto reminded everyone that since October, it has become mandatory to separate leaf and yard waste from standard household trash. Only clear bags or the designated compost bin can be used to dispose of leaf and yard waste, or twigs can be bundled with twine or other biodegradable cord. Organics collection is optional at this time, but will become mandatory once all 5 boroughs have curbside compost collection. Non recycling bulk items go out on your non-recycling day. In fact, all large trash items now go out on non-recycling date as the recycling day is also organics collection day.

Regarding trash set-out times, the set-out time is 6 pm if trash is placed in a covered bin, or 8 pm when using bags. Businesses are required to use containers and should place trash out either after 8 pm or 1 hour prior to closing. Starting spring 2024, buildings with 9 or fewer units must be containerized.

Mr. Staton inquired about air conditioner, refrigerator, and other electronics disposal. He was informed that those appliances (ACs and fridges) require CFC or chlorofluorocarbon removal and an appointment for pickup. The process has not changed. Regarding other electronics, the department is still only accepting them at drop-off sites. When questioned how he, a senior with mobility issues and no vehicle, could get to a drop-off site, Mr. Staton was informed that the

department would be notified of the situation and would have to identify a solution as no e-waste or electronics are accepted on sanitation trucks.

Mr. Witherwax asked for additional information on containerization and was informed that once implemented, a secure hinge lid bin up to 55gallons must be used. No bags outside of clear or paper bags with leaf and yard waste, or bags filled with recycling, can be on the sidewalk.

After a few more questions and answers, Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked Mr. Colacurto for the updates and invited the Dept. of City Planning to present on City of Yes: Economic Opportunity.

Dept. of City Planning – Mr. Jordan Fraade, Mr. Jonah Rogoff, and Mr. Matthew Waskiewicz

Mr. Fraade informed the Board that Economic Opportunity is the second of three initiatives in the City of Yes portfolio. Like Carbon Neutrality before it, Economic Opportunity seeks to achieve a few key goals. The goals are as follows:

1. Make it easier for businesses to find space and grow by lifting barriers so businesses can be closer to their customers.
2. Boost growing industries by reducing obstacles for new types of businesses.
3. Enable more business-friendly streetscapes by delivering active, safe, and walkable streets.
4. Create new opportunities for businesses to open by establishing new zoning tools to boost job growth and business expansion.

To accomplish these goals, the department has identified 18 different zoning text amendments, which are as follows (detailed descriptions of each zoning text change can be found in the deck posted to the CB8 website):

Proposal 1: Lift time limits to reactivating vacant storefronts

Proposal 2: Simplify rules for business types allowed on commercial streets

Proposal 3: Expand opportunities for small-scale clean production

Proposal 4: Modernize loading dock rules so buildings can adapt over time

Proposal 5: Enable commercial activity on upper floors

Proposal 6: Simplify and modernize the way businesses are classified in zoning

Proposal 7: Clarify rules to permit indoor urban agriculture

Proposal 8: Give life sciences companies the certainty to grow

Proposal 9: Support nightlife with common-sense dancing and live entertainment rules

Proposal 10: Create more opportunities for amusements to locate

Proposal 11: Enable entrepreneurship with modern rules for home-based businesses

Proposal 12: Introduce design rules that ensure buildings contribute to surroundings

Proposal 13: Reduce conflicts between auto repair shops and pedestrians

Proposal 14: Encourage safe and sustainable deliveries with micro-distribution

Proposal 15: Facilitate local commercial space on residential campuses

Proposal 16: Create process for allowing new corner stores in residential areas

Proposal 17: Rationalize waiver process for business adaptation and growth

Proposal 18: Create new kinds of zoning districts for future job hubs

Summarizing the extrapolated details from the above proposals, the changes would generate opportunities for more business types to be in any and every community. For the proposals of concern, it was stated that numerous types of commercial spaces are clean spaces that can be larger scale and that do not pose much of a threat or hazard to health or residential units, but these types are limited to manufacturing zones that are shrinking in lieu of residential placements. DCP's goal is to expand their ability to be in more commercial spaces.

One of the proposals would permit commercial and residential uses on the same floor in C1 and C2 district. In some instances, depending on the type of business, there would be a requirement to separate the residential and commercial spaces via a 15-foot buffer. However, this is only for noisy businesses. Additionally, the proposals seek to clarify definitions of many things, including the definition of laboratory and life sciences. One of the biggest changes to the zoning would be to allow and increase more home business use. Auto uses would be classified as either light or heavy and light auto uses would be allowable in C1 to C7 districts, thus moving them out of manufacturing zones. Micro distribution facility is a new creation under the proposals to capitalize on growing industries.

The Board was informed that DCP will be accepting recommendations within the standard 60 day comment period, but that all recommendations would be accepted until January 31st. The City Planning Commission will vote on the plan in early February.

Chairperson Weatherspoon opened the floor for public comments and questions.

Kwasi Mensah: noticed making a point about truck parking. Parking is an issue in this community but city bike is allowed to be placed in the street. If the bike racks can be placed on the sidewalk to increase vehicle parking, please add it to proposal.

Fior Ortiz-Joyner: question re NYCHA: if you are going to promote commercial space in NYCHA where there is usually ground floor housing, is the DCP going to sacrifice housing? Ms. Ortiz-Joyner also made several notes about how zoning changes impacts black and brown communities.

DCP representatives clarified for Ms. Ortiz-Joyner that the agency will prioritize locations that need to be repurposed. It will be a department goal to ask NYCHA to ensure that they are not going to sacrifice housing but rather create it. Regarding vacant storefronts, there is a need to relax commercial zoning laws as many spaces are vacant because they cannot accommodate the types of businesses that are seeking locations.

Alicia Boyd presented a lengthy critique of several of the initiatives that she urged members to critically think about, especially in terms of long-term complications on residential quality of life. Of the many proposals she spoke on, she focused on residential home businesses, amusements and their relationship to casinos, and clean manufacturing, especially related to the question of who or whom identifies these businesses as clean and what clean actually means. She informed those present that these zoning changes will make these components as of right, and thus would eliminate community response. Additionally, allowing all blocks to have corner commercial spaces is unacceptable.

Gib Veconi stated that with respect to vacant storefronts, the reason so many are vacant are because current tax laws incentivize property owners to leave storefronts vacant. While it is great

that COY:EO allows maker/users greater access to their home spaces, but is there anything that will incentivize them to rent vacant spaces? They are creators that usually cannot afford the cost of some commercial spaces as they are able to pay less rent. Finally, he asked how COY:EO would impact rezoning proposals already in progress as well as the AAMUP rezoning, which will pass soon. He was informed the COY:EO would be passed before AAMUP.

Dr. Sarah Lazur stated that she is concerned about commercial uses in residential spaces and on the same floors. Specifically, she said that landlords of rent stabilized units have been looking for ways to deregulate units at a high rate, and that she worries that some will use commercial opportunities to deregulate apartments or force out rent stabilized tenants. Rent stabilized apartments are the most affordable options for economically challenged/less wealthy residents that cannot afford even the income based “affordable housing” units coming on the market. Finally, commercial leases are atrocious in terms of evicting tenants and making all rent due at once, and she asked if DCP would write any tenant protections into the zoning text.

DCP representatives stated that is not the intent of DCP to convert existing residential spaces for commercial uses. He stated that the agency’s goal is to take fully commercial buildings to create residential spaces in unused portions, which several in the audience noticed was in opposition to what the presented text had stated.

A resident that did not state their name said that at least 100 pages of the proposal spoke about residential uses, including some that state rear yards will actually be smaller than the minimum 30 feet, eliminating sliver laws that restricts small lot building, eliminating window lot line protections, and several other concerning proposals. DCP stated that those proposals are coming in COY: Housing Opportunity, not in Economic Opportunity. Those proposals are currently not in community discussion yet.

Lisa Atkinson asked DCP who they spoke to at NYCHA and if they spoke to any resident organization. She stated that as a resident of NYCHA, she would want to see maybe a medical office or even a supermarket, but definitely not things that residents cannot use/would not be of value on green and open space. She also stated that she believes this proposal, when coupled with some of the more damaging components of the upcoming Housing Opportunity, would have damaging effects on resident life. We NYCHA residents definitely do not want luxury houses on our spaces when we can’t even get our own things fixed. DCP officials informed her that most NYCHA projects will go through a public process.

A resident that did not give their name stated that this is their first time coming to a CB8 meeting, and what stuck out to them during the presentation was the alleged conflict between auto shops and pedestrians. They stated that from the presentation they gathered that it appears auto shops will be rezoned to outskirts of the borough. They asked if there really is as significant an issue as presented by DCP, and what exactly would the city look like if they are removed? DCP stated that they are not being moved to the outskirts and rather, the department is making a distinction between industrial and auto.

Robert Puca stated that the main problem he has identified is that this is the typical example of top down planning. He mentioned that DCP knowingly said this would be passed before AAMUP, which is a telling comment that this proposal will go through as presented without changes via the input the department is stating they want. Additionally, he criticized the

department for relying on BSA variances, as BSA is filled with unelected bureaucrats that just looks at rules and regulations and not people and impact.

Peter Krashes stated that he and a few residents are in attendance at the meeting to address noise concerns from a business that moved into a space previously occupied by a non-conforming residential space in the M1 zone and the noise produced by the commercial tenant is untenable for the other non-conforming residential tenants. He was informed that DCP certainly does not want to rely on a complaint driven system. As such, the agency referenced that built into the zoning proposals are mandates that noise dampening requirements are built in before establishments can open. Agency representatives also mentioned the MEND program and encouraged Mr. Krashes and his neighbors to contact the program.

Another resident that did not give their name, stated that this was her first meeting with CB8, but the Dept. of City Planning is representing a city filled with tech experts and as such, it is unacceptable that the department, which is the agency spearheading the city's movement in terms of development, does not have instruments on their website for community feedback.

There were a few more comments and statements that were redundant to the ones above. Chairperson Weatherspoon stated that DCP that inclusivity is an important process and that the truth matters. She hopes the agency takes this into account and creates a system where people are able to comment in various ways as people will push back and rebel when they are not included.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked City Planning officials and all commenters, and opened the public hearing on committee action items:

Parks – Marva Brown-Henry, Acting Chair

Ms. Brown-Henry reported that the Parks Committee met on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at the Brower Park library located at 155 Brooklyn Avenue. The committee discussed a presentation provided by New Yorkers for Parks on their 1% for Parks campaign advocating for Mayor Eric Adams to adhere to his campaign promise of devoting 1% of New York City's overall budget to the Parks Department. New Yorkers for Parks submitted a sample resolution in support of their campaign which is attached to this document for review.

Currently, NYC Parks Department budget is less than half a percent of the city's overall budget compared to 10% for the construction of new jails. Financial conditions within the Parks Department are becoming more dire each day. As such, the committee voted unanimously to support the campaign for 1%, pass the resolution, and to send it to our local elected officials and the Mayor. The committee hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked if there were any questions or comments from the community. After a brief question and answer period. Mr. Witherwax made a motion to support the committee's recommendation, the motion was seconded by Dr. Lazur and carried with 31 in favor, none against, and no abstentions.

SLA& Sidewalk Review- Irsa Weatherspoon, Chair

The SLAC committee met on Monday, December 4, 2023 at Crown Heights Nursing Home located at 810 St. Marks Avenue at 6:30 p.m. In addition to the Chair, Irsa Weatherspoon, present

were: Vice Chair, Robert Witherwax, Tamika Gibbs, Gib Veconi, Jennifer Jordan, Xeerxeema Jordan, Robert Puca, Nicole Tetrault, Brian Saunders, Sharon Wedderburn, and Deborah Young.

The committee discussed the following liquor license applications:

a. New liquor license for Bird Peppers LLC, 259 Flatbush (Bergen/6th/St. Marks), Full license

Details include:

- i. Location is the location of the now closed Piquant
- ii. Max Capacity: 150
- iii. Hours of operation 11AM-12AM daily with outdoor space hours of 11 AM to 11 PM daily

The committee voted 10 in favor to support the application as presented and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked if there were any questions or comments from the community. After a brief question and answer period, Ms. Mitchell made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Staton and carried with 30 in favor, 1 abstention and none against.

b. New application for Cordelia Wine Bar, 924 Bergen street (corner of Franklin), beer/wine/cider license

- i. Applicants is part owner of two establishments in District 8 already (St Ends, Little Zelda)
- ii. Max Capacity: 50
- iii. Hours of operation 5PM-2AM daily

The committee voted 10 in favor to support the application as presented and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked if there were any questions or comments from the community. After a brief question and answer period, Mr. Veconi made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Staton and carried with 29 in favor, none against with one abstention.

c. New application for Joy Hospitality, 626 Vanderbilt (Prospect and Park), Full license

- i. Location is the former Petite Patate
- ii. Max Capacity: 74
- iii. Hours of operation: 4PM-11PM M-F, 11-11 Saturday and Sunday
- iv. Outdoor Hours of operation 4PM-10PM M-F, 11-10 Saturday and Sunday

The committee voted 11 in favor to support the application with hours amended to reflect weekend brunch and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked if there were any questions or comments from the community. A community resident expressed his concerns about the previous operator's total disregard for the community and stated that liquor licenses should be contingent upon stringent enforcement of pedestrian spaces. After several other comments, Mr. Veconi made a motion to support the committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Dr. Lazar and carried with a vote of 16 in favor, 13 against with 2 abstentions.

d. New application for Babel Spirits LLC, 646 Dean Street (Carlton and Vanderbilt), Full license

- i. Applicant is the owner of the recently closed Ode to Babel on Dean Street between Underhill and Washington
- ii. Max Capacity for the private members only venue is 80
- iii. Hours of operation being sought is 10 AM to 4 AM with intended service hours of 10 AM to midnight Sunday and Monday; 10 AM to 1AM Tuesday thru Thursday, and 10 AM to 2AM Friday and Saturday

Several community members that live on the block shared concerns about noise and vibrations. The applicant stated that she would increase soundproofing as the venue began generating revenue, stating that she anticipates soundproofing the windows and skylights in the coming months. The location is in the M1 zone.

The committee voted 12 in favor, 1 opposed, with 1 abstention to support the application and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked if there were any questions or comments from the community.

A community resident asked if there were any outdoor space and they were informed that there is no outdoor space.

Ms. Gibbs and Mr. Witherwax stated that the committee had a condition to reduce the bass at 1 AM and that the establishment close at 2 AM as presented all days except the midnight on Sunday. They asked that the support letter reflect the committee's conditions.

Oliver Herring stated that he is one of the residents that lives a few doors down, referencing that despite the applicant mentioning that they had sound proofed some aspects of the establishment, residents have to live with a noise level several times each week that prevents sleep. His mother is 86 years old and lives with him and his partner and is inordinately impacted by this sound intrusion.

Peter Krashes stated that space hasn't changed much from non-conforming residential use to this private club. The noise is coming through building's party wall on both sides despite the establishment being on the top floor of a four-story building and the surrounding buildings being only 3 stories.

A representative for Babel Loft, Ms. C. Robinson, stated that she and her partners, the Babel sisters, take the sound complaints very seriously. They have only been open for about 6 weeks and do not have music parties every day. Further, they apologized for not having better sound proofing in place currently for the space in the M1 zone. However, they did submit their timeline

for soundproofing and reminded everyone that had been present at their SLAC hearing that the initial complaint/demand that the windows be soundproofed, will be completed by January. She clarified that the soundproofing to come later will be the intensive sound proofing in the walls. Before they can invest in that however, they need to truly get an understanding of the real noise impact as the complaints about the sound are varied across a wide spectrum of complainants and do not provide a lot of tangible evidence of what they [the proprietors] need to do.

Further, she clarified that Babel Loft is not a night club as referenced often, but rather a private members-only club for creatives and artists to have a safe space to convene and enjoy socializing with their counterparts. She reiterated that they are actively moving toward creating an active plan for community.

Ms. Young stated that the SLAC committee spent a long time on this application and the applicant was agreeable to many of the requests. It is not fair to the applicant or the Board to go through the issues again that had been compromised and resolved in committee.

Mr. Witherwax concurred and stated that he has a concern about one of the conditions the committee agreed upon as it is not enforceable. The condition in question is to turn the bass down by 25%, and he stated that this is an arbitrary and unenforceable requirement.

Chairperson Weatherspoon stated that the key is to keep the lines of communication open and the applicant has kept her word in that regard.

Mr. Veconi stated that if a motion is made to support the application, he will likely vote against it despite it being technically in the M1 zone, because this particular block has a lot of residential uses and became more like a mixed use zone over the years. Before the Board says yes to the liquor license, the applicant should have the appropriate sound proofing in place as he does not find “best efforts” acceptable.

Dr. Lazur asked if the hours could be clarified. She was informed that the first set of hours are the permitted hours for service and the second set are their actual proposed hours of operation. The committee voted to approve to 2 AM.

Ms. Muhammad made a motion to support the committee’s recommendation, and the motion was seconded by Ms. Brown-Henry. The motion carried with a vote of 26 in favor, 2 opposed, with 3 abstentions.

Youth and Education- Marva Brown-Henry, Chair

The Youth and Education Committee met on Tuesday, December 5, 2023 at Brower Park Library located at 155 Brooklyn Avenue at 6:30 p.m. The committee discussed the previous presentation by Mr. Alfred Kurland at the October meeting on the Vote 16 Initiative, sponsored by Senator Brad Hoylman-Sigal (SSB S660 and S2562) and Assemblyman Robert Carroll (SAB A 274 and A 330). The bills would amend NYS Election Law and the State Constitution, lowering the minimum voting age from 18 to 16, and allow 16 and 17 year olds to vote in local and state elections. There is a companion bill at the federal level co-sponsored by several Congressmembers and Senators that would lower federal voting age for Presidential, Congressional, and federal Senatorial candidates.

Several committee members believed that the passage of this bill would cause young people to become more active and civic minded. As such, the committee voted unanimously to support the initiative and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked if there were any questions or comments from the community. After a brief question and answer period. Ms. Benn-James made a motion to support the committee's recommendation, the motion was seconded by Ms. Wedderburn and carried with a vote of 23 in favor, 4 against with 4 abstentions.

Cannabis Ad-Hoc – Irsa Weatherspoon, Chair

The Cannabis Committee met on Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at Brower Park Library located at 155 Brooklyn Avenue. The committee discussed the following cannabis licenses:

1. Adult Use Retail Dispensary at 660 Franklin Avenue (between St. Marks Avenue and Prospect Place)

Ms. Elizabeth Janie McGrath presented plans for an adult-use retail dispensary at 660 Franklin Avenue. Ms. McGrath informed the committee that she has operated a successful growth farm and dispensary in Oregon, and another retail dispensary in New Mexico. Additionally, she informed the committee that the Oregon farm has since closed so that she can focus on her retail dispensaries, the latest proposed for New York City. The applicant does not reside in the state of New York, but her plans include the following:

- A focus on holistic health due to her understanding of the healing components of cannabis, especially CBD, due to her battle with breast cancer
- Extensive use of security cameras with a minimum 90-day recorded memory as well as NYS licensed security guard(s)
- Proposed hours of operation 8 AM to 10PM Sunday through Thursday and 8 AM to 11 PM Friday and Saturday
- Minimal flower displays with sales products held in locked refrigerators and in separate spaces, accessible by minimal staff per OCM guidelines
- Franklin Avenue was selected by her friends because it was deemed the “safest” location
- Is applying for a dispensary in NYS as part of a personal goal of being a successful entrepreneur with dispensaries in each state where cannabis is legal, and is proud to be applying in NYS to become a part of what she believes is the “the right way” to engage in cannabis businesses due to the state’s requirements for licensees.

Several committee members and a community resident questioned certain of Ms. McGraft’s presentation points and mentioned their concerns over the following:

- The high rate of business turnover in the specific location Ms. McGraft chose for her dispensary
- Security

- The proposed hours of operation of 8 AM to 10 PM, which are within OCM's operating hours guidelines. The hours were disputed due to the nature of Franklin Avenue and the belief that an 8 AM opening does not align with the avenue.
- The applicant's lack of knowledge and local ties to the community in general, Crown Heights, and/or local neighborhood organizations.

Ms. McGraft entered into the official record a statement of rebuttal, which is attached to the action items.

A motion to support the dispensary application was defeated. Ultimately, the committee voted 8 in favor, 1 abstention to withhold support for the application. It hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked if there were any questions or comments from the community. Mr. Witherwax stated that in committee, he was the motion maker of the defeated effort to support. He stated that he believes this is the type of applicant we should support because of her experience in the industry.

Mr. Puca stated that every other block has an unlicensed shop. We need to be supportive of the licensed businesses.

Ms. Brown-Henry stated that she takes umbrage with the applicant stating that she was unfairly treated at the meeting on Tuesday, believing that the statement is problematic as the committee acted in a professional matter. Furthermore, she stated that she was present at the committee meeting and two applicants were denied while four were approved. She felt the applicant came in unprepared and unprofessionally, mentioning licenses in other states without providing information on those ventures. Additionally, she shared a lot of information that was irrelevant to the application including beauty pageantry and engagement to a former baseball player.

Mr. Veconi stated that it doesn't seem that there is a standard guideline that is applied evenly in the committee.

Ms. McGraft stated that she has been a businesswoman her whole life but just started in the cannabis industry because of her experience with CBD while dealing with breast cancer. She further stated that she felt like Ms. Henry and Ms. Gibbs were mocking her because they were on their phones during her presentation. Both women responded separately stating that their phones are computers and that they were using their phones to review the material she had submitted to the district office, and Ms. Brown indicated her use of her phone to read her action items as well as to locate the official resolutions from her email.

Mr. Anekwe stated that he also attended the Cannabis meeting and despite the effects of cannabis for the applicant, the answers received were not in alignment with the community needs. He stated that he is not a committee member, so he didn't have access to the documents. What he saw at the meeting was someone that could not answer questions that were asked that other applicants had been able to answer.

Diana Foster stated that she had a mastectomy and is scheduled for reconstruction after Christmas. Being a former addict, did not take oxy and so she took CBD for pain. She asked the

applicant how CBD could assist her but not THC, and the applicant's manager, Ms. Meaghan McDevitt, explained in great detail how cannabinoids work in the human body.

A resident asked of the applicant what they could bring into the community as an outsider, and how could they take the necessary steps to be integrated into the community. This was the same question that had been asked in committee and the applicant was still unable to answer the question.

Ms. Muhammad stated that she has been on board for a long time, been in community her own life, but to say that the board was disrespectful, was an insult to her and all other volunteer members.

Ms. Wedderburn made a motion to accept committee's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gibbs.

Ms. Mitchell stated that the applicant needs an opportunity to address the community's concerns as there still did not seem to be an answer to the community integration question.

Ms. Ortiz-Joyner asked if the applicant has spoken to the Franklin Avenue Merchants Association? The applicant stated they would look into it.

On behalf of Ms. McGraft, Ms. McDevitt stated that she is open to amending the hours to later than the 8AM to accommodate the community despite OCM allowing hours between 8 AM and 2 AM. She also stated that they brought the landlord to the meeting to address turnover in space, and the landlord stated that they did have issues with several of the previous tenants, and they are excited to have a long-term tenant in the space. There are contingencies written into the lease to hold the lessee accountable for activity in the space.

The motion to withhold support was carried with 18 in favor, 5 against, and 6 abstentions.

2. **Adult Use Retail Dispensary for 662 Nostrand Avenue** (between Bergen Street and St. Marks Avenue)

Mr. Joseph Aghelian presented his plans for a retail dispensary at 662 Nostrand Avenue. He stated that he is part owner of the building and has a real estate background. Part of his presentation included a statement that he is a first-generation naturalized American and proud to try to become part of something special. The following details were presented:

- From his property portfolio, he elected to apply using the Nostrand Avenue location because the Nostrand Avenue corridor is a busy and transit accessible street, and a licensed dispensary could be a beneficial asset to the community.
- There are plans to hire quite a few individuals, especially locally.
- There are plans to have a high focus on education about different uses of cannabis, including pain management, health and healing, etc.
- NYS licensed security guards (one outside, one inside) will be employed

- The goal is to have an appointment-based system to avoid over-crowding, and for a greeter to sign in customers before they speak with a sales representative/budtender.
- Should it become necessary, there is the ability to expand to the second floor for additional space.

The committee had the following concerns:

- Mr. Aghelian has no experience in the cannabis business. He concurred that he has no entrepreneurial experience but he has experience as a consumer and as a potential cannabis business owner, he did his due diligence and has started forging connections to identify where he will obtain his products and that he has the capital to start his business if chosen in the lottery.
- No local ties to the community, to which he responded that he owns several properties in District 8 and that he is in the district daily despite residing in Long Island.
- No clearly defined methodology for “giving back,” to which he responded that the amount of employees predicted as necessary and opening a licensed shop “already gives back quite a lot.”

On motion made and seconded, the committee voted 10 in favor with 1 abstention to withhold support for the application due to the applicant’s lack of experience operating a brick and mortar business. The committee hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked if there were any questions or comments from the community.

Mr. Puca asked the applicant how he got involved in the cannabis industry. He was informed by the applicant that his attorney has a cannabis business but he personally did not want to be a partner, so he paid the attorney to help him apply for his own license.

Ms. Ortiz-Joyner stated that just hiring locally is not enough of an investment in the community, and asked if he was familiar with the North Nostrand Avenue Merchants Association (NNAMA)? The applicant responded that he has not contacted them yet, but that he believes that hiring from the community and investing in the community is really important. This venture is an extensive financial investment, and so he wants to hire and have sales be commission-based as it will motivate employees and encourage sales. Furthermore, he believes a licensed location is very necessary to drive down these illicit shops and to create a safe cannabis environment.

Dr. Lazur asked if he was the owner of 1401 Dean Street. The applicant responded that he is. She stated that she sees that there are several hundred open HPD complaints, which would, in her opinion, be indicative of someone that did not support safe environments. The applicant disputed the statements about the open HPD violations.

Ms. Roach has lived on Nostrand Avenue since birth. She has witnessed the business turn over throughout the years. That area is saturated with smoke shops and it is maddening. She asked what he would do differently from these other shops. She was informed by the applicant that smoking will not be allowed at his site should it be chosen in the lottery.

Ms. Mitchell asked how long have you been an owner in Brooklyn and was informed that he has owned property in the borough since 2013 or 2014. She expressed that the applicant has little or no plan to give back to the community.

Mr. Anekwe stated that the applicant was unable to validate his ties to the community. He further stated that sadly, so many cannabis applicants are folks trying to capitalize on money to be made in black and brown marginalized communities by cannabis. These people want to be capitalists in our community and exploit us. He echoed Ms. Mitchell's statement that in 10 years, the applicant should have a history of activism in the community already.

Mr. Puca reminded everyone that criticized the applicants' plans to give back stating that we don't have any illicit shops coming to our meetings or giving back to the community in any way, and as such, we should not be withholding support due to unclear plans to give back. In his frustration, he stated that having a legal shop is giving back via tax money.

Ms. Tendai Watkins from Assemblywoman Zinerman's office reminded everyone that the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) is a new state agency. They are young and developing their processes and staffing. The next component for them is enforcement. The illicit shops are a citywide pestilence, and the electeds are advocating for the community about getting rid of them. While it seems that illegal weed shops are winning, their days are numbered.

Mr. Mensah made a motion to support the committee's recommendation to withhold support for that the application. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gibbs and carried with a final vote of 25 in favor, with 1 against and 2 abstentions.

3. Retail Dispensary application for 860 Atlantic Avenue (between Vanderbilt and Underhill Avenues)

Mr. Joseph Lutzberg and Ms. Jennifer Rodriguez presented on behalf of Unite NY, a proposed adult-use retail dispensary. Both individuals started their presentation stating that they were born and raised in the state, and Ms. Rodriguez, who will be the site manager, was raised in Brooklyn and resides nearby in Bed-Stuy. They currently operate Upwise Capital, which is a full-service debt management and loan marketplace for cannabis operations and other small businesses. They have currently loaned \$200 million to cannabis operators nationwide and are well-versed in the needs and responsibilities for dispensary operators.

Additional details of their application include:

- Proposed hours of operation 9 AM to 10PM daily
- Space designed to look like an old-school diner with a focus on education (specifically for the elderly to understand the medicinal benefits of cannabis)
- Seeking to have no less than 50% of staff from social equity programs, inclusive of recently released felons and have partnered with a program that has access to social equity individuals that will help them with their hiring goals.

- Their goal is to have 3 licensed dispensaries across the state as safe, tested products are their most important goals.

The committee had no concerns with the application. On motion made and seconded, members voted unanimously with 11 in favor to support the application in hopes that the full Board supports its recommendation.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked if there were any questions or comments from the community.

Mr. Puca asked the applicant how they got the license and was informed that they don't have one yet but submitted for the lottery. He is actually a CAURD licensee but was held up with the lawsuit and the injunction.

Ms. Wedderburn made a motion to support the committee's recommendation, the motion was seconded by Mr. Staton. The motion carried with a vote of 26 in favor, 0 against with 1 abstention.

4. Retail dispensary application for 607A Vanderbilt Avenue (between Bergen Street and St. Marks Avenue)

Mr. Steve Ettiene and Mr. Cedric Watkins presented their plans for an adult-use retail dispensary for 607A Vanderbilt Avenue. They stated that they have each served in the cannabis business for the last 7 years now mainly in an advisory role and have operated CBD wellness programs in Brooklyn since 2018. Details of their application include:

- Proposed hours of operation 10 AM to 8 PM Monday through Thursday and 10 AM to 10 PM Friday, Saturday, Sunday
- Doctor consultation for all customers to provide pathways to enhance lives through cannabis use and ensure that customers receive the right product for their needs.

There were no concerns raised by the committee. On motion made and seconded, the committee voted unanimously with 11 in favor to support the application in hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked if there were any questions or comments from the community.

Ms. Brown made a motion to support the application with the modification of hours to reflect 10 AM opening across the board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Staton.

Ms. Muhammad reminded the Board and guests present that OCM is granting cannabis licenses via a lottery system. There is no guarantee that any of these shops will be opened.

Dr. Ramharrack asked the applicants what doctor positions would be available in the dispensary. She was informed that they hold the wellness component in high regard, and as such, would offer personalized consultation with herbalists and naturopaths, not necessarily medical doctors.

The motion passed 26 in favor, 2 opposed, with 0 abstentions.

5. Microbusiness application for 772 Nostrand Avenue (between Sterling and St. Johns Places)

Mr. Arvel McIntosh presented his plans for a microbusiness at 772 Nostrand Avenue. (A microbusiness is licensed to grow, process, sell, and consume on premises. OCM guidance to community boards regarding microbusiness applications is to focus on the retail dispensary portion only.) Mr. McIntosh stated that he is seeking to build his business from the ground up, especially as he recognizes the insidious ways that cannabis has been vilified. Details include the following:

- Plans to hire at least one senior citizen to supplement their monthly income
- Proposed hours of operation 11 AM to 9 PM daily
- Boutique style shop with several operating details still unknown at this point

The committee had some concerns about the lack of clear direction on operations and also the fact that the board heard an application for a dispensary at the same location last month. Mr. McIntosh stated that the property owner is seeking a cannabis shop in the location and will offer as many options as possible to ensure that the location has a licensed shop. He has been given a lease agreement as well for this property.

On motion made and seconded, the committee voted 9 in favor with 1 abstention and 1 recusal to support the microbusiness application and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked for any questions or comments on the application.

Mr. Ortiz-Joyner asked what would happen if OCM calls all of the applications for this location. Ms. George informed her that OCM would call one at a time, and if the first called can produce the necessary documents required and the license issued, no others in the queue will be considered.

Ms. Mitchell made a motion to withhold support for the application because the applicant is not present at the meeting, and nor could he demonstrate clear direction on how to run the business. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mensah and carried with a final vote of 15 in favor, 5 opposed, with 7 abstentions.

6. Microbusiness application for 1632 Atlantic Avenue (between Albany and Troy Avenues)

Mr. Pedro Martinez presented his plans for a microbusiness at 1632 Atlantic Avenue. Mr. Martinez acknowledged to the committee that he was quite nervous and not accustomed to public speaking but said that smoking cannabis helps him with his high levels of anxiety. He informed the committee that he is seeking to start a microbusiness because it is the best way to give back to the community in several ways. Details include the following:

- The growth portion will include solar panels and be environmentally sustainable. There will be training and classes created and made available to the community, especially those that are school drop-outs and/or have gotten into legal trouble. Growing cannabis is tedious and difficult, so the classes will be beneficial to train new corps of growers.

- STEM related educational classes on extracting THC to produce edibles and tinctures as part of the processing component.
- Will seek to hire as many local employees as possible with a preference for social equity candidates. He stated that he would speak to the other applicants that mentioned their contacts to gather more information.
- Owned and operated a barber shop on Fulton Street at Eastern Parkway for several years until recently getting injured after an accident.

The committee had some concerns about Mr. Martinez’s struggle to articulate his goals and plans, but recognized that his anxiety was impacting his presentation. However, district office staff stated that he had called the office several times and had been able to convey quite a bit more information than was presented at the meeting. On motion made and seconded, the committee voted unanimously with 11 in favor to support the microbusiness application and hopes the full Board will support its recommendation.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked for questions and comments on the item.

Hearing none, Ms. Brown made a motion to support the committee’s recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Staton and carried with a final vote of 24 in favor, 3 opposed, with 1 abstention.

Due to time constraints and the fact that the Board needed to vacate the museum, Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked everyone for attending and for their input. She wished everyone a happy and healthy holiday season and new year, and adjourned the meeting at 10:15PM. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 11, 2024 at 6:30 PM at Chelsea Piers Prospect Heights, 601 Dean Street. All are invited to attend.

Guests Present

Jennifer Jordan	Delores Owens
Paul Blanchette	Karen Beckles
Joseph Aghelian	Oliver Herring
Peter Krashes	Meaghan McDevitt
Jayne	David Thomas
V. Ramsey	Shirley Mondesir
Seth Sullivan	Deni DeYonkde
Karen Gray	Dwayne Powell
Diana Bond	Kim Robinson
Lula Staton	Roger Myers
Peter Anekwe	Bridget D.
Valerie Nero-Reid	Diana Foster
Jennifer Rodriguez	Julia Bryant
Nick S.	Courtney Torres
Andy Holloway	Kattarina Mennich
Audrey Taitt-Hall	Julius Buseche
John DeWind	Marva Babel
Arna Lipkind	Gwendolyn Burke
Chan Shava	C. Ro