

**Community Board 8  
General Community Board Meeting & Public Hearing  
Via Webex Virtual Platform**

**April 14, 2022**

**Members Present**

Glinda Andrews  
Desmond Atkins  
Princess Benn-James  
Gail Branch-Muhammad  
Nora Daniel  
Andrea Ferris  
Drew Gabriel  
Tamika Gibbs  
Nizjoni Granville  
Igenie Harris-Blenman  
Marva Henry  
Xeexema Jordan  
Frances Langley  
Sarah Lazur  
Mireille Lemaine  
Elaine Mahoney  
Alicia Nosenzo  
Fior Ortiz-Joyner  
Robert Puca  
Yahya Raji  
Celene Rosado  
Brian Saunders  
Mark Thurton  
Greg Todd  
Ethel Tyus  
Gib Veconi  
Yves Vilus  
Kimberly Watson  
Irsa Weatherspoon  
Sharon Wedderburn  
Robert Witherwax  
Deborah Young

**CB 8 Staff**

Michelle George, District Manager  
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

**Members Absent/Excused**

Kiermoni Allison  
Lisa Atkinson  
Julia Boyd  
Gerri Buchanan  
John Buckholz  
Robert Callahan  
Aisha Dotson  
Dian Duke  
Kevin Farley  
Fred Frazier  
Regina Kinsey  
Kwasi Mensah  
Kalvis Mikelsteins  
Adam Sachs  
Meredith Staton  
Audrey Taitt-Hall  
Vilma Zuniga

**Elected Officials Present**

Assemblymember Brian Cunningham, 43<sup>rd</sup> District  
District Leader Sarana Purcell, 43<sup>rd</sup> Assem. District  
District Leader Edu Hermelyn, 43<sup>rd</sup> Assem. District

**Agency & Elected Officials Representatives**

Karen Chambers, Bklyn District Attorney's Office  
Stephanie Grandpierre-Safe Horizon  
Jonathan Marable, Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce  
Damaris Falero, Dept. of Buildings  
Tony Herbert, Mayor's Office-CAU  
Kevin Lawrence, Assemblymember Soufrant-Forrest

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Ms. Irsa Weatherspoon, Chairperson welcomed everyone to the April general meeting of Community Board 8 and called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

While awaiting a quorum of members, Chairperson Weatherspoon opened the floor to elected officials, elected official representatives, agency liaisons and public comments.

**District Leader Edu Hermelyn** offered greeting to community board 8 and the community at large. He announced that he is one of the invited guests that will be taking part in the Crown Heights North Associations 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Town Hall meeting on Wednesday, April 20, 2022.

**District Leader Sarana Purcell** also announced that she too, is thrilled to be an invited guest at the CHNA 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Town Hall.

**Ms. Karen Chambers** from Kings County District Attorney announced that residents can reach out to the Action Center for assistance at 718-250-2340. She wished everyone a good holiday.

**Mr. Kevin Lawrence** from Assemblywoman Phara Souffrant-Forrest's office, introduced himself as the new District Organizer for the Assemblywoman. He stated that anyone in need of assistance or resources should contact the district office at 718-596-0100.

**Mr. Tony Herbert**, Brooklyn Borough Director from the Mayor's Office Community Affairs Unit, stated that he looks forward to serving the community on behalf of Mayor Adams. He informed the community that despite the Mayor recently testing positive for Covid-19, he is still hard at work for the city. Recently, Mayor Adams proclaimed June 19<sup>th</sup> or Juneteenth, as an official holiday in the city, and this year will be the first that city offices will be closed in honor of the holiday. Because June 19<sup>th</sup> falls on a Sunday, the holiday and paid day off will be honored on June 20<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Herbert provided a brief history of Juneteenth, informing the constituency that Juneteenth is the day that the last remaining enslaved black people were freed in Texas in 1865, more than 18 months after the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Mr. Herbert announced that after the subway shooting incident in Sunset Park, Mayor Adams dispersed many of his staff to the ground to liaise with the community and provide access to resources to the victims. In the aftermath, for the foreseeable future, staff will be aggressively hitting the streets to ensure that the Mayor's gun violence plan is aggressively pushed. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact him at 347-977-2300.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked the elected official representatives for their updates and invited Assemblyman Brian Cunningham to say a few words.

**Assemblyman Brian Cunningham** - 43<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District

Assemblyman Cunningham introduced himself as the recently elected 43<sup>rd</sup> assembly district member, replacing Diana Richardson who is the now the Deputy Borough President at the Brooklyn Borough President's office. Assemblyman Cunningham accounted that his office is temporarily located at 330 Empire Boulevard and will remain in the space until July 1<sup>st</sup>. The telephone number remains 718-771-3105, and there are four staffers available to assist the community. The state budget was recently passed, albeit about a week and a half late. The Assembly is currently on a brief hiatus before returning to Albany in May.

Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked Assemblyman Cunningham for the update and stated that she looks forward to working with him in his new role in the Assembly.

Following elected officials and announcements, Chairperson Weatherspoon then asked Ms. Deborah Kirshner from the Prospect Heights Alliance for an update on the Vale Project.

**Prospect Park Alliance** – Ms. Deborah Kirshner

Ms. Kirshner announced that the Prospect Park Alliance is currently in the community outreach and feedback stage of a \$40 million renovation project for the 27-acre area of Prospect Park that runs from Grand Army Plaza along Flatbush Avenue to north of the zoo and just east of the East Drive. Ms. Kirshner showed a detailed presentation of initial designs of key aspects of the project from opening, to over the years, to current day. She compared these designs to suggestions curated from two years of intensive community outreach. The goal is to align the vision for the area with the needs of the broader community that will be utilizing the space that has not been restored or renovated in over 50 years.

As part of the presentation, Ms. Kirshner provided history on the area of the park to be restored and its movement to the state of disrepair it is presently in. She stated that the community feedback, consisting of over 2000 respondents, illustrated a strong desire to preserve the area and focus on nature with ways to bring the community together in the realm of nature. The majority of respondents requested more comforts like water fountains and restrooms. The Alliance envisions within the 27 acres three separate “rooms” with a children play area, a sitting area, and a covered recreation area that can be utilized for family gatherings with a permit.

Within the space to be renovated is a children’s pool area that is under the guidance and control of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission. The pool will be preserved and restored in a manner that would be bird-friendly as the birds love the remaining non-functioning fountain currently. The children’s area will contain a natural play area with natural elements such as tree logs for climbing and balance activities for play. Another space will be able to host small community performances and gatherings.

Ms. Weatherspoon thanked Ms. Kirshner for the information and asked for questions from the community.

Mr. Jack Robinson asked if the renovation would include any areas for monarch butterflies and if the Alliance would be planting any milk weed among the many areas of new plantings. He was informed that there will indeed be a pollinator meadow, but Ms. Kirshner stated that she was not sure if any of the plantings would cater specifically to the monarch. However, the pollinator meadow would align with needs for multiple pollinators as are all other pollinator meadows in the park.

Mr. Desmond Atkins inquired about the size of the small event space that requires a \$25 registration fee and licensing. He was informed that the space does not possess a lot of room for a built structure and would likely be able to accommodate about 30 people.

Mr. Greg Todd inquired about the children’s garden pool/pond and water issues, stating that per his recollection, in the 70s and 80s, water in city ponds tended to get stagnant, leading to algae blooms. He asked what measures would be taken to increase water movement to remove excess nitrogen and algae. He was informed that while the current iteration of the children’s pool does indeed have water in it, the

pool/fountain itself has not been restored in 50 years and as such, does not possess a circulation tool and is non-functioning. The water that is in it collects from rainwater. During design, the pool will be improved to have a functioning water circulation feature as well as possibly a way to recycle water in the park to use. The restoration itself will create a functional water aspect with circulation to avoid stagnation.

Ms. Elaine Mahoney announced that she is excited to learn about the restoration of the children's pond but stated that she has questions about some of the design choices for changing the pool. She explained that currently, the rest of the park is designed with active uses in mind, and that the Vale seems to be the only space historically designed for passive recreation. As such, she stated that she is curious about some of the design choices to bring the space in line with some of the other uses of the park and so far away from the historic passive use.

Ms. Kirshner stated that the Alliance is re-interpreting the space from a natural mindset. The area will still feel really wooded and very lush. In the design, she assured Ms. Mahoney and the community that they will be vigilant to ensure that the meadow and the space will be more "Zen" and reserved for quiet and inner peace. The children's play area will be buffeted to help avoid interrupting the solitude of others.

Dr. Sarah Lazur stated that she appreciates that there will be restrooms and asked if they would be free of charge to the public and what the operating hours would be as the pandemic informed us just how many people seek recreation outside of normal hours and gave the example of off-hour runners. Ms. Kirshner stated that the bathrooms would be free and that they would be operated the same as every other Parks rest room with an attendant and have the same hours as well. Additionally, there is the possibility that the alliance will have more leeway in the operations of the rest rooms as they have additional funding resources.

Ms. Glinda Andrews asked for clarity on what it meant that the playground would not be traditional. Ms. Kirshner informed her that the playground would not consist of traditional play equipment with swings and seesaws, etc. Instead, it would be made of carved out logs to hide in, stepping stones, things to balance on, and water pump features to name a few. She stated that kids love the features based on the first area of the same concept that was created with downed trees after Superstorm Sandy.

Additionally, Ms. Andrews suggested that the Alliance put in information boards about the different birds and wildlife in the park. She was informed that the plan does indeed include nature education programs.

Again, Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked Ms. Kirshner for the presentation and stated that she looks forward to the community working with the Prospect Park Alliance on bringing some of the design ideas to fruition.

Ms. Weatherspoon asked for a motion to accept the March minutes. Ms. Gibbs moved that the full board accept the March minutes with the necessary corrections. The motion was seconded by Ms. Young and accepted unanimously.

Chairperson Weatherspoon then asked for a roll call. After establishing that a quorum was present. She then opened the Public Hearing for the evening.

## **Public Hearing on Committee Action Items**

### **SLA and Sidewalk Café Review Committee (SLAC)** – Irsa Weatherspoon, Chair

Mr. Witherwax reported that the SLAC Committee met virtually on Monday, April 4, 2022 via Webex at 6:15 p.m. In addition to the Chair, Irsa Weatherspoon, present were: Robert Witherwax, Vice Chair, Dian Duke, Brian Saunders, Celene Rosado, Fior Ortiz-Joyner, Tamika Gibbs, Gail Muhammad, Sharon Wedderburn, Mark Thurton, Deborah Young, Alicia Nosenzo, Xeerxeema Jordan, Jennifer Jordan, Roger Myers, PO Vidal, L. Kim Robinson, Keith Ward, Roberto Aita, Pierre Albert, Frank Palillo, Hideki Kato, Kawana Jefferson, Karen Gray, Sara Dima, Tina Don and 4 callers.

The committee discussed the following liquor license applications:

**Renewal application for Muse** located at 689 Washington Avenue (corner of Prospect Place) – Full License inclusive of sidewalk café, recorded music

Details include:

- 11 tables with 22 seats with max patron capacity of 74
- Hours of operation 12:30PM to 9:30 PM Sunday; 1 PM to 9:30 PM Monday, Wednesday, Thursday; 12:30 PM to 10:30 PM Friday and Saturday (closed Tuesday)
- Sidewalk café with 6 tables and 24 seats operating same hours as interior space

**Renewal application for Sweet Brooklyn Bar**, 608 Nostrand Avenue (between Atlantic and Pacific) – Full License (sidewalk café, jazz band live music, DJ, security personnel)

Details include:

- 2 tables with 7 seats; one service bar with 20 seats; max patron capacity 74
- Hours of operation 11 AM to 2 AM Sunday; 3 PM to 2 AM Monday thru Thursday; 3 PM to 4 AM Friday; 11 AM to 4 AM Saturday
- Patio space with 8 tables and 16 seats with hours of operation until 10 PM daily
- Sidewalk café with 4 tables and 8 seats operating until 10 PM daily

**Renewal application for Aita Trattoria**, 798A Franklin Avenue (between Lincoln and Eastern Pkwy) – Full License (sidewalk café, recorded music, freestanding covered structure)

Details include:

- 11 tables with 32 seats with max patron capacity of 50
  - 8’x20’ freestanding covered structure with 3 tables and a max seating of 12
  - Hours of operation 11 AM to 11 PM Saturday and Sunday, 5 PM to 11 PM Monday thru Friday.
- Outdoor seating closes at 10 PM daily

**Renewal application for Superpower**, 722 Nostrand Avenue (between Prospect and Park Places) – Full license (rear yard, recorded music)

Details include:

- 8 tables with 22 seats; one service bar with 13 seats
- Hours of operation 2 PM to 4AM daily
- rear yard with 13 tables and 26 seats, closing at 10 PM Monday thru Thursday and midnight Friday and Saturday
- 6.5’x20’ curbside dining area with 5 tables and 10 seats, closing at 10 PM Sunday thru Thursday and midnight Friday and Saturday

**Renewal application for Silver Rice**, 638 Park Place (near corner of Franklin Avenue) – Beer/wine/cider(background music, outside lot line patio in front)

Details include:

- No interior seating, but a maximum patron capacity of 10
- Hours of operation Noon to 10:30 PM daily
- 12'x 18' property line sidewalk café with 3 tables and 8 seats closing before 10:30 PM daily

**New application for Carbon**, 262 Kingston Avenue (between St. John's and Lincoln Places) –Full license (recorded music, backyard)

Details include:

- Hours of operation 11 AM to 2 AM daily
- 5 tables with 20 seats; one service bar
- Outdoor patio or deck with 6 tables and 36 seats, closing at 10 PM daily

**New application for R&D Foods**, 602 Vanderbilt Avenue (corner of St. Marks Avenue) – Wine/beer/cider license (backyard, recorded music)

Details include:

- Hours of operation 8 AM to 10 PM Monday thru Saturday, 9 AM to 9 PM Sunday
- 1 counter with 6 seats
- Outdoor patio with 10 tables and 40 seats, operating with same hours as interior
- 10'x15' sidewalk café with 3 tables and 12 seats, closing at 6 PM Sunday, and 7 PM Monday thru Saturday

The committee voted in favor of all of the above applications, in hopes that the full Board supports its recommendation.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked if there were any comments or questions from the community. Mr. Jacob Plasse, a community resident near R&D Foods, stated that he is concerned with the potential noise that could come from the outdoor seating at R&D Foods. He explicitly stated that the idea of 42 people eating and drinking in the backyard seating area was distressing and disturbing, especially as he and his wife have been working from home since the start of the pandemic. The Chair suggested that he wait to see if there is a problem with noise. At that time, he should make a formal complaint to the board. She then asked for any comments or questions from the community board members. Mr. Veconi stated that although this is a new liquor license application for beer and wine, this business has been around on Vanderbilt Avenue for about 7 or 8 years or longer. The reason there are so many seats is because they have expanded their business into the space next door. They have been community oriented and if there is an issue with noise there is a very good chance that they will work with the community to resolve these issues. Mr. Puca stated that if there are any issues, please call 311 to report it. He also stated that the NYPD attends the SLAC committee meetings and provides us with updates on businesses. Mr. Atkins has a concern about sidewalk cafes and outdoor spaces and the safety of people passing by. Ms. Weatherspoon stated that the community boards do not have a say in the issuance of licensing outdoor spaces or sidewalk cafes. Those licenses are approved by the Department of Transportation under the Open Restaurant program.

Ms. Rosado recused herself because she is part owner of Sweet Brooklyn Bar. Hearing no other comments, Ms. Weatherspoon asked for a motion. Ms. Gibbs made a motion that the full board support the committee's recommendation as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Witherwax and carried with a vote of 28 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions, with one recusal.

The next meeting of the SLAC Committee will be held on Monday, May 2, 2022 via WebEx.

Ms. Weatherspoon stated that this concludes the Public Hearing on committee action items. She asked for the following committee reports.

**Economic Development** – Brian Saunders, Chair

Mr. Saunders reported that the Economic Development Committee met virtually on Tuesday, April 12, 2022 via WebEx at 6:15 p.m. In addition to the Chair, Brian Saunders, present were: Celene Rosado, Lisa Atkinson, L. Kim Robinson, Frances Langley, Karen Gray, Mark Thurton, Yahya Raji, Princess Benn-James, H. Raymond and two callers.

No report was submitted; however, Mr. Saunders mentioned that the committee would like to do some beautification projects along the commercial strips in the district this spring. He also mentioned that he has created an Instagram page for the board to try to increase the committee's presence and to make the community aware of the local businesses located in CB8. He stated that next week the committee will be meeting with Bridge Street to discuss some projects in district 8.

The next meeting of the Economic Development Committee will be held on Tuesday, May 10, 2022. Mr. Saunders invited everyone to attend and bring one person with you.

**Education & Youth** – Nora Daniel, Chair

Ms. Marva Brown-Henry, Vice Chair reported that the Youth and Education Committee did not meet during the month of March. However, the committee reviewed all submissions to the young artists Black History Month Art Contest. Below are the winners:

1st-3rd grade:

1st place: Nova Starcevic (2nd grade); 2nd place: Avery London Andrews (1st grade); 3rd place: Christiana (no last name- 1st grade)

4th and 5th grade:

1st place: Nicholas Popo (4th grade)

2nd place: Malachi Hernandez (4th grade)

3rd place Isabella Baez (5th grade) and Giselle Livers (4th grade)

5th grade up: 1st place Charlotte Rothblatt, 8th grade

The committee appreciates the support from the community and hopes to expand the contest to more schools next year. The next meeting of the Youth and Education Committee will be held on Tuesday, April 5, 2022. All are invited to attend.

**Environment, Sanitation and Transportation** – Robert Witherwax, Chair

The Environment, Sanitation & Transportation (EST) committee did not meet for the month of March. However, Mr. Witherwax invited everyone to attend the next meeting which will be held on April 26, 2022 at 6:15 p.m. via WebEx. The committee will hear two presentations from the Department of Transportation on the Citibike expansion and the safety plan for the intersection of Buffalo Avenue and Eastern Parkway as well as regular committee business. All are welcomed to attend and encouraged to bring a friend.

### **Health and Human Services** – Tamika Gibbs, Chair

The Health and Human Services Committee met on Thursday, March 17, 2022 via WebEx at 6:15 p.m. In addition to the Chair, Tamika Gibbs, present were, Kim Watson, Vice Chair, Frances Langley, Audrey Taitt-Hall, Kwasi Mensah, Xeerxeema Jordan, Jennifer Jordan, Princess Benn-James, L. Kim Robinson, Aqsa Shahbaz, Daniel Cox, Mariam Quraishi, and Moya Dewar.

No report was submitted, however, Ms. Gibbs mentioned that the committee heard a presentation on sickle cell disease as March was sickle cell awareness month.

The next meeting of the Health and Human Services Committee will be held on Thursday, April 21, 2022. The committee will hear a presentation from the Brooklyn Family Violence Coalition. All are welcomed to attend.

### **Housing (Advocacy)** – Nizjoni Granville, Acting Chair

Ms. Granville reported that the Housing Advocacy Committee met virtually on Wednesday, April 13, 2022 via Webex at 6:15 p.m. In addition to the Acting Chair, Nizjoni Granville, present were: Xeerxeema Jordan, Mimi Mitchell, Jennifer Jordan, Sarah Lazur, Dian Duke, Frances Langley, Mariam Quraishi, MarieElena Harrison, Karen Gray, and Greg Todd.

No committee report was submitted, however, Ms. Granville reported that 1034 and 870 Atlantic Avenue were approved on Tuesday by the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises and the Council's Land Use Committee. Councilwoman Hudson was in favor of these projects, and she has stated that there will be a community rezoning plan. The details are being worked out. One of the things she thinks the community should be happy about is that 35% of the 200 or so apartments in each building will be set aside as affordable. Nearly all the affordable housing will go to those making between 40 and 60%.

Ms. Granville also mentioned that the eviction moratorium has ended which means that the nearly 200,000 city eviction cases against New Yorkers currently pending in Housing Court will begin to move forward once again. The law states that everyone is entitled to the right to counsel, unfortunately, with so many cases going to court this has created a shortage of legal representation. The Legal Aid Society can no longer take on new cases. Some judges are insisting that cases be heard anyway. She is hoping that something can be done to help renters on the state level.

The next meeting of the Housing Advocacy Committee will be held on Wednesday, May 11, 2022. All are welcomed to attend.

### **Land Use** – Sharon Wedderburn, Chair

The Land Use Committee met on Thursday, April 7, 2022 via WebEx at 6:15p.m. In addition to the Chair, Sharon Wedderburn, present were: Cathy Iselin, Secretary, Deborah Young, Nizjoni Granville, Nora Daniel, Desmond Atkins, Greg Todd, Frances Langley, Sarah Lazur, Curtis Harris, Gib Veconi, Albert Appleton, Andrew Wright, Norman Oder, Advocate Mimi, Councilmember Crystal Hudson, Elaine Weinstein, H. Raymond, Estebon Giron, Fior Ortiz-Joyner, Peter Krashes, Xeerxeema Jordan, Jennifer Jordan, Jack Robinson, Jonathan Berman, Kaja Kuehl, L. Kim Robinson, Nix Laemmle, Karen Gray, Robert Callahan, Princess Benn-James and 1 caller.



The committee submitted the following report:

There were no Action Items requiring voting by the Committee. The meeting was devoted to the following conversations: Review of the March 31, 2022 MCROWN Subcommittee meeting, Review of Tom Angotti's presentation on March 23, 2022 and Old Business/New Business

The committee heard comments from Council Member Crystal Hudson:

Council Member Hudson said there were no significant developments to report on the call for a Comprehensive Plan for Atlantic Avenue and the surrounding community. It is her goal to ensure that the community's voice is centered in whatever is done regarding this area and that the needs of the community because of all the development, beginning with Atlantic Yards, are addressed. The Council Member's office has sent a letter to Department of City Planning ("DCP"), Department of Transportation and HPD requesting those agencies to take on the MCROWN rezoning, use it as a starting point and expand it, using MCROWN. The letter had several signatories, including CB8. To date, there has been no response to the letter. The Council Member hopes to hear from DCP on Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup>.

Review of March 31, 2022 MCROWN Subcommittee meeting by Gib Veconi:

The major focus of the meeting was to review possible contingency strategies should an area wide rezoning not be approved for MCROWN district. What is possible for the district without a city led plan.

Kevin Williams spoke about what would be necessary for CB8 to move forward with a rezoning initiated by the Community Board rather than the Department of City Planning.

Consultants would be invited to discuss an RFE process describing what would be entailed in a rezoning and then winnowed down to a few consultants invited to submit RFP to develop the rezoning plan.

Asked to estimate the cost of this process, Mr. Williams suggested \$1.5mm. Consultants would likely agree to cap the cost. These funds would not be forthcoming from the City, but rather from private fundraising.

In addition, to Mr. Williams comments, Mr. Veconi shared an inventory of of public realm improvements the Community Board might like to see for the MCROWN district. Mr. Veconi invited participants to suggest additional improvements and discuss this process. Any rezoning would not include specific public realm improvements. Mr. Veconi will post the minutes from this meeting. (They are available here) The entire meeting can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P9uFami7QU>

Review of Tom Angotti's presentation on March 23, 2022 meeting by Nizjoni Granville:

Ms. Granville noted that Mr. Angotti presented a useful perspective on the Department of City Planning ("DCP"). Mr. Angotti stressed that DCP is not really a planning organization, but rather a rezoning organization.

He suggested that given this reality, zoning is really displacement, and we are all living with the results now. In addition, New York City has no comprehensive zoning plan.

Mr. Angotti mentioned it would be possible for CB8 members and other citizens to form a political organization to lobby/advocate for what the Community Board wants to achieve in the realm of land use. He said, the truth is likely that the career life of an elected official often takes precedence over

representing constituents. He strongly encouraged constituents to “stay on them”, and to let the Borough President what is desired. The entire meeting can be viewed here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-t\\_v8oeZrE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-t_v8oeZrE)

Old Business/New Business a committee-wide discussion:

Committee member Kaja Kuehl presented a deck outlining basic principles of possible city led, neighborhood-wide plan. She also referred to an online petition, currently with 780 signatures, supporting the call for a neighborhood wide plan. The slides and petition were distributed to Land Use Committee members two days before the meeting.

It was noted that Council Member Hudson had requested city agencies to start a neighborhood planning process.

The immediate issue on the table is to consider and compare the benefits of individual applications for development rezoning with the idea of a neighborhood wide planning process led by the city that includes all city agencies and engages more community members in this planning process.

The discussion was far reaching, comprehensive and included commentary from committee members and others from the community on the pros and cons of calling for a neighborhood-wide plan and the pros and cons of working with individual applicants to achieve various benefits for the community within the scope of each application. In addition, a very important discussion was begun about neighborhood displacement, particularly on the stark displacement of Brown and Black neighborhood residents.

One statistic cited by Council Member Hudson is that over the past ten years Council Districts 35 and 36 have experienced the greatest loss of Black residents City-wide.

Discussion focused on a possible goal of broadening the reach of the Committee to include more representatives of CB8 constituents. All agree this is an important goal.

In addition, there was vigorous back and forth between Committee members and other meeting participants about the tenor of Land Use Committee meetings. These are difficult conversations, and all participants are passionate and committed to the process.

This was a fulsome conversation. Reminder, the entire meeting can be viewed here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jk5\\_vNn5JA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6jk5_vNn5JA)

Several participants thanked Chair Wedderburn for using this meeting as a forum for discussion. Chair Wedderburn adjourned the meeting at 8:55 pm.

### **Parks** – Glinda Andrews, Chair

Ms. Andrews reported that the Parks Committee met virtually on Tuesday, April 5, 2022 via WebEx at 6:15 p.m. In addition to the Chair Glinda Andrews, present were: Greg Todd, Vice Chair, Frances Langley, Lynn Cave, Marva Brown-Henry, Princess Benn-James, Karen Gray and 3 callers.

No committee report was submitted for the month of April. However, Ms. Andrews stated that St. John’s Recreation Center is offering a Saturday midnight basketball program for ages 14-24. The program will operate from 4pm-midnight. It’s MY Park Day will be on April 16, 2022 at Brower Park. She also stated in celebration of Earth Day the Parks Committee and Friends of Brower Park will host an event Sunday,

April 24, 2022 from 12-4pm on the Brooklyn Children's Museum side of the park. All are invited to attend.

The next meeting of the Parks Committee will be held on Tuesday, May 3, 2022. All are welcomed to attend.

**Public Safety** – Mark Thurton, Chair

Mr. Thurton reported that the Public Safety Committee met virtually on Tuesday, March 28, 2022 via WebEx at 6:15 pm. In addition to the Chair, Mark Thurton, present were: Desmond Atkins, Vice Chair, Xeerxeema Jordan, Brian Saunders, Celene Rosado, Jennifer Jordan, Councilmember Chi Ossé, Councilmember Crystal Hudson, Christina Serrano, Dorothy Bembry-Guet, Drew Gabriel, Ethel Tyus, Fior Ortiz-Joyner, Igenie Harris-Blenman, Tamika Gibbs, Janet Collins, Julia Boyd, P.O. Kelvin Vidal, Regina Kinsey, Kristen Jeffries, Lisa Atkinson, Kim Robinson, Marva Brown-Henry, Kwasi Mensah, Gail Branch-Muhammad, Princess Benn-James, Nizjoni Granville, Karen Gray, Sharon Wedderburn, and 1 caller.

The Chair reported that Mayor Adams rolled out the new Neighborhood Safety Teams, a safety initiative to get guns and gang members off the streets with 168 officers serving in a specialized unit and with hundreds more set to join once they finish training. The committee hopes to hear more about this program next month.

The committee invited the following committees to the meeting Economic Development, Health, Housing, Parks and Youth and Education as well as the new City Council members.

The Public Safety Committee submitted that following report:

The committee heard remarks from the Councilmembers regarding public safety, economic growth and education. Councilmember Osse also expressed the need for larger catchment areas for cure-violence groups .

Councilmember Hudson mentioned the importance of Community safety councils – 1 launched in southern portion of Crown Heights to address gun violence in Ebbets Field driven by the borough president's office. They are looking for speaker funding – proposal for basic income in zip codes that has high gun violence. She stated that the Gun buyback programs needs to be expanded, participants have stated that the \$250 and an Ipad are not enough because they need housing and jobs. She introduced her new Director of Constituent Services Kristen Jeffries.

Economic Development – Chair Brian Saunders discussed support for small businesses. CM Osse: Supporting small businesses and making sure that our commercial corridors are successful. Create a BID for Nostrand Avenue shared between the 2 Districts, there is a need based on conversations with small businesses. CM Osse also discussed, lighting, sanitation, more seating for bus stops.

Housing Committee – Chair, Nizjoni Granville stated that Kingsborough Houses needs more police visibility; need a place for youth to go from age 12-13 and up. CM Osse – Weeksville Heritage Center has space and is looking to start a program for the youth. Lisa Atkins stated that Weeksville does not promote themselves to the people who live there; need to step up with programming for the kids, no walking tours, no relationship with the schools in the surrounding areas.

CM Hudson – discretionary funding is for allocations to provide supplemental programs.

Sharon Wedderburn stated that we have rec centers and not all kids are athletes; what about the old Fire Station on Bergen = future use: cultural space, performance space, lecture space – once young people see investment in their communities and they're acceptance within the community, they won't destroy it.

Janet Collins stated that we must get the parents involved – make them aware of the resources, parent engagement piece – Brooklyn Museum.

Sharon Wedderburn – children and adults talk together is Junior League of Brooklyn. Mentoring teenage girls in foster care, parenting classes, and nutrition; CEC also has family leadership teams.

Vice Chair of Senior Committee Regina Kinsey – more parental involvement, engagement, accountability QUESTION: How do you propose to keep the senior population safe?

PO Kelvin Vidal – No in person meetings so have not been able to speak to the seniors; Advised seniors to be aware of the Con Ed phone scams; don't go out alone, communicate with others to let them know when they are going out.

Karen Gray: Nighttime PSAs on tv to educate seniors; night-time patrols to protect people like the Shomrin; counsels 2 boys and mom does not let them come out many are scared of the park; childhood vaccinations – education.

Janet Collins: seniors stopping in middle of sidewalks to look at their phones; need to be safe in the streets.

Kristen Jeffries stated at CM Hudson chairs the committee on Aging – partner with Precincts to make sure older adults are safe. Contact the office with specific cases that you might be concerned about, please email, [kjeffries@council.nyc.gov](mailto:kjeffries@council.nyc.gov)

Gail stated that Darryl White from Attorney General Tish James office has also spoken about things that come up regarding seniors.

Dorothy asked does Amazon have locked garage home service in NYC? PO Vidal advised everyone to use lockers, get packages delivered on same day; Can we get an AMAZON representative at a future meeting?

Ethel stated that package theft is a big problem, she bought a NEST camera for her front door; or consider a Ring Camera – battery operated preferred.

The Chair stated that homelessness on Nostrand Avenue is a concern– women are concerned when they come home after dark. PO Vidal: being homeless is NOT a crime, we do offer services and shelters for homeless new Yorkers. The Bedford/Atlantic Men's Shelter is located at 1322 Bedford Avenue, however, there are rules that must be followed.

The Chair stated that there are no footposts on Nostrand, but cars and NCOs – Melendez and Perez

Ethel: if nearby buildings/businesses have cameras we should be able to identify them, and get them services.

Celene Rosado: Homelessness is a nuisance at Nostrand and Pacific; Incident of intoxicated person – have jobs but have nowhere to live. Have jobs but spend their checks to get super duper wasted. Don't look homeless, but they are a nuisance once intoxicated. Public intoxication tickets can be issued against the individual, not the establishment.

Nizjoni: 2500 empty supportive housing units; apartments are also being warehoused in NYCHA; Kingsborough has empty units says Lisa.

Princess: Speeding is a problem on Rogers Avenue between Park and Prospect, near P.S. 138 where kids are crossing between Park and Rogers Ave. PO Vidal: Sector B has a new Highway Safety Sgt Rodriguez, 2 speed cameras on Rogers Ave, maybe further north. Video played: Neighborhood Safety Teams. Mr. Mensah asked if the video is available? Yes, on social media pages

Fior asked if the safety teams are the same as stop and frisk? PO Vidal says that is where the sharing of information comes in, intelligence officers targeting small group of people. A lot of young kids dressed the same whether gang bangers or college students – how do you distinguish? Based on intelligence information.

Lisa: saw neighborhood safety officers during the day, but people want to be safe when they come home from work. Scared on trains and want to be safe while walking from trains after work. Karen Gray: We need to teach our children how to behave when stopped by the police and make sure that they have ID on them STOP and FRISK was unlawful, violent stops.

Nizjoni: young people are surrounding liquor stores? Dogs are out and dangerous. All breeds are allowed, leash laws, and only demonstrated violence could lead to the dog being taken away. Might also be a service dog.

Brian Saunders: communication between neighborhood safety teams and community members, no accountability when black people were being tossed without recourse, understanding the history of violence; oversight btwn ; let's not police ourselves, we live here; they get to go home. Gangs are about belonging – we need to get these kids involved in something good. Girl need help too

Sharon: where do people go on Friday and Saturdays? Unfair to ask children btwn the ages of 11-23 to be perfect. Maybe Divine 9 can help? Need Programming.

Christina: please forward specific areas where motorbikes are speeding on sidewalks to CM Osse's office.

Kwasi: What teach our sons, see The Little Black Book, by Carol Taylor – how to teach our sons to interact with the police = bring your sons to the precinct and let them meet the captain. At one time we had 2000 murders in this city. Now 600. Hoping it doesn't go up in again. There are bad people out there and they should be stopped. And they are more of a threat than a cop.

Regina: we need to stop the iron pipeline; we cannot lose focus on the guns only. These criminals need to be locked up. Is it fair to ask the community to raise your child? Police officer to be a social worker and a parent as well. A lot of responsibility from the community – but nothing about the household. The story starts in the household. We're acting like a police officer is the number one enemy and we are afraid to walk out the door. The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on April 25, 2022. All are invited to attend.

### **Seniors-** Gail Branch-Muhammad, Chair

Ms. Muhammad reported that the Seniors Committee met on Wednesday, April 2, 2022 at 6:10 pm via FreeConferenceCall.com. No report was submitted, however, Ms. Muhammad stated that our Seniors (Seenagers) as she like to call them are very important to our community.

Ms. Kinsey, Vice Chair along with other volunteers continues to distribute food every 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month to the seniors at the St. Louis Senior Center. Last month the committee also gave out home Covid testing kits to the seniors.

For the next meeting on May 4, 2022, she is hoping to hold the meeting in person at Crown Heights Apartments located at 1055 St. John's Place at 6:00 p.m. The last two years of isolation has been very hard on everyone especially our seniors, so we are hoping to get together in person for the month of May in celebration of Mother's Day.

The committee has been contacted by the 77<sup>th</sup> Precinct to recognize and give awards to our most senior committee members. The committee is also working with Ms. Marva Brown-Henry and Friends of Brower Park on an intergenerational project to find out more about living and growing up in Crown Heights and Prospect Heights.

She reminded the elected officials in attendance to not forget our seniors because they are very important to us and they are also the largest voting population in the city.

Lastly, she invited everyone to come out to the Seniors Committee on Wednesday, May 4, 2022.

### **Veterans** – Nizjoni Granville, Chair

Ms. Granville stated that the Veteran's Committee did not meet during the month of March. The next meeting of the Veteran's Committee will be held on Tuesday, April 19, 2022. She reminded everyone that you do not have to be a veteran to attend. If you know a vet, please invite them to attend. Everyone is welcome to attend to help find ways to assist the veterans in our community.

Ms. Weatherspoon thanked everyone for their committee reports. She reminded committee chairs to submit committee reports/minutes to the district office immediately after their meeting is held.

She asked if anyone had any questions, comments or announcements.

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Veconi clarified a couple of points regarding the Atlantic Avenue ULURP applications that were approved on Tuesday. These applications at 35% affordable with the affordability levels that were negotiated represent what he believes is the strongest affordable housing commitment of any private project that he knows of in Brooklyn and Councilmember Hudson deserves a lot of credit for that. Those affordability levels apply to those 2 buildings. The neighborhood rezoning itself is still open with respect to the level of affordable housing today if it happened the affordability levels would be set based on current Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) law. Councilmember Hudson's statement indicated that she is interested in perhaps improving upon that. He thinks that the process will be very important to many people who live in this community. After the many years the Community Board has been working on the MCrown project to see that it is now moving forward into a neighborhood rezoning is very

exciting. He is looking forward to seeing that being led by the Department of City Planning and the councilmembers office.

Ms. Langley thanked Ms. Muhammad and Grandma's Hands for providing food today to the seniors. They had enough for 45 people and were very grateful.

Ms. Helen King-Denman, president of the St. Marks Avenue Superblock Association, made a plea for assistance from the Board with regards to the St. Marks Playground. Specifically, Ms. King-Denman requested assistance from the Board to have the playground removed from the block and the block reopened to thru traffic. In summary, she stated that the park is disruptive to the block and breeds nefarious activities including drug use, gambling, and an inability for residents to receive municipal services.

In response to Ms. King-Denman, Mr. Mark Thurton, Chairperson of the Public Safety Committee, stated that there was a lot of effort to get the park in that location to service residents, and that he would hate to see it removed rather than working to ameliorate the issues, all of which he stated are well documented by the NYPD and the 77th Precinct. He asked Ms. King-Denman to participate with the Public Safety Committee and attend meetings to help bring about remedy.

Mr. Atkins corroborated Ms. King-Denman's displeasure of the playground and the issues it brings to the block, providing history of the playground and historic (mis)uses. In addition, he recounted a very specific issue where a resident of one of the buildings threw a bicycle out of a window and onto police officers on the street below that were responding to a criminal complaint. Furthermore, Mr. Atkins questioned how much input and oversight the NYC Parks Department has over that particular playground.

Ms. Andrews, Chairperson of the Parks Committee, informed Ms. King-Denman that the Parks Department is currently in conversation with Councilmember Chi Ossé to acquire funds to renovate the playground. She informed her that Ms. George, District Manager, had spoken with Parks Brooklyn Borough Commissioner Marty Maher a few weeks ago, that informed her that the agency is well aware of the decrepit nature of the playground, and is working to make it more inviting to the community. She, too, encouraged Ms. King-Denman to participate in the Parks Committee meetings to focus on that side of the issue as well as the criminal complaints.

Mr. Puca made a comment regarding Councilmember Hudson's statement, he thinks that she did a great job getting 35% affordable. We got that in exchange for additional bulk which we did not want. We should do away with the term "Affordable Housing" and instead say "Income Based Housing" We as a community should ask for more moving forward.

Dr. Lazur mentioned the City Council vote on two DCP zoning applications the previous Tuesday. She stated that Councilmember Crystal Hudson had voted in favor of the applications for 870 and 1034 Atlantic Avenue and did so because she was able to secure the Dept. of City Planning agreeing to fund a community planning process. However, Dr. Lazur stated that the vision of a community planning process outlined by Councilmember Hudson is different from how CB8 had engaged community planning processes in the past. Dr. Lazur wondered what the planning process would ultimately be, and questioned if the Board and Land Use Committee would reach out to the Councilmember for a briefing of her idea of the planning process. In conclusion, Dr. Lazur stated that there is a need to get more involvement and community feedback than from those that attend the Land Use committee as it is much smaller participation than the extensive outreach that the Councilmember's office could conduct.

Ms. Wedderburn responded to Dr. Lazur, stating that the Board has not talked about the engagement processes is because it is indeterminate at this point. Additionally, the process will be dictated by DCP in collaboration with the Board and the Councilmember. She stated that it is not a matter of being opaque, but rather just a matter of not having the information. Ms. Wedderburn concluded her statement by acknowledging that she realizes Dr. Lazur was not a part of previous large planning processes as she was not on the Board at the time, but expressly stated that the Board does extensive outreach.

Mr. Johnathan Gibbs, a resident of Eastern Parkway between Schenectady and Utica Avenues, stated that he has lived on the block since 2015 and, as a newer resident, does not want to seem culturally insensitive to the culture of the community in relation of dollar vans. However, he stated that the dollar vans pose a tremendous danger to pedestrians as they block the intersections and make it impossible for pedestrians to remain on the sidewalk and cross walk area, instead having to traverse the busy roadway. He inquired if the Board has a way of intervening that does not necessarily entail involving law enforcement.

Ms. Watson, a CB8 member, responded to Mr. Gibbs stating that it is only a matter of time before the blockage of the intersection causes loss of life. To validate her point, she mentioned multiple instances where she witnessed pedestrian danger, and stated that dollar vans are not necessarily a cultural icon for the community as he stated. Additional buses are needed along Utica to dispel the need to rely on the dollar vans.

Mr. Herbert from the Mayor's Office Community Affairs Unit, stated that the Utica Avenue concerns are less the culture of the community than a lack of enforcement. The focus needs to remain on the safety components of the complaint rather than the desire to remain sensitive as we cannot afford to allow the behavior to continue willy nilly because there was a desire to preserve the culture.

Mr. Witherwax, Chairperson of the Environment, Sanitation, and Transportation Committee concurred, stating that the police have a role to play in enforcement and they do not do it very well. He stated that there are plenty of buses on Utica Avenue to serve the ridership, but the buses cannot move as fast as the ridership needs them to because there are a lot of other things in their way, like the reckless dollar vans. Furthermore, until Mayor Adams makes the decision that traffic enforcement should be in the hands of another agency rather than the NYPD, we must work with them to convey the issues and press the necessity of remedy.

Mr. Jack Robinson came to Sarah's defense in reference to a comment made about her longevity on the Land Use Committee and membership on CB8. He stated that she is one of the most dedicated people that he has worked with in terms of his own participation with CB8 on the Land Use and MCROWN Committees and suggested that maybe people "lay off of her" a little bit, especially as she takes the time to ask questions, learn, and grow her understanding of the issues within the parameters of information that is available. Additionally, Mr. Robinson questioned the way the Board operates its meetings, citing a lack of professionalism and noting the limitations of the Q&A replacing the chat function during the meetings. He offered his services in helping the Board run the meetings more professionally. He explicitly stated that the Q&A does not work as the Board seems to think it does, the presenter cannot give information they want to give you, and if you are not writing the information they say as they say it, you will not have the opportunity to get it.

Ms. Branch-Muhammad stated that she takes Mr. Robinson's comments to mean the Board is doing is a great job. He countered by saying that was not his intent or his belief.



Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked Mr. Robinson for his offer. She also thanked everyone for their comments and informed everyone that CB8 is now on Instagram and Twitter as well as Facebook and urged everyone to look at the useful information posted. She wished everyone a happy Good Friday, Passover, and Resurrection Sunday and adjourned the meeting at 8:15PM.

### **Guests Present**

Andrew Adeogun  
Keith Ward  
Alexis-McKenzie Paulin-Edwards  
Deborah Kirschner  
Curtis Harris  
Esteban Giron  
Jamaal Orr  
Johnathan Gibbs  
Hellen King-Denman  
L. Kim Robinson  
Sara Dima  
Jack Robinson  
Safiya Francis  
Nix Laemmle  
Silver Rice NY  
Tina don  
3472\*\*\*\*13  
3475\*\*\*\*56  
3477\*\*\*\*75  
5165\*\*\*\*44  
9178\*\*\*\*94