

**Community Board 8
Crown Heights Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation
810 Saint Marks Avenue
Brooklyn, NY, 11213**

October 12, 2023

Members Present

Akua Aidoo
Sharon Alexis-Pierre
Princess Benn-James
Marva Brown-Henry
Robert Callahan
Edward Delman
Dian Duke
Drew Gabriel
Nizjoni Granville
Xeerxeema Jordan
Frances Langley
Robert Lapoint
Lisa Maldonado
David Mantell
Kwasi Mensah
Gail Muhammad
Fior Ortiz-Joyner
TaRaya Pettway
Yahya Raji
Conor Ross
Brian Saunders
Meredith Staton
Nicole Tetreault
Bria Thomas
Mark Thurton
Gib Veconi
Kimberly Watson
Irsa Weatherspoon
Robert Witherwax

Members Absent/Excused

Lisa Atkinson
Julia Boyd
Jacques Brunvil
Benny Faygen
Andrea Ferris
Tamika Gibbs
Colin Jakubczyk
Christopher Johnson
Dr. Sarah Lazur
Mimi Mitchell
Briana Peppers
Robert Puca
Dr. Cadesa Ramharrack
Anika Roach
Samori Toure
Ethel Tyus
Sharon Wedderburn
Deborah Young

Elected Officials Present

Sarana Purcell, Female District Leader District 43

Elected Official Representatives

Karen Chambers, District Attorney Eric Gonzalez
Raul Rothblatt, Assemblyman Brian Cunningham
Purcha Edwards, Senator Zellnor Myrie
Bianca Stephenson, Borough President Antonio Reynoso
Janay Pierre, Council Member Crystal Hudson
Tendai Watkins, Assemblymember Stephanie Zinnerman
Connie Little, Councilmember Darlene Mealy

CB8 Staff Present

Michelle George, District Manager
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

The regular meeting of Community Board 8 was called to order at 6:35 by Chairperson Irsa Weatherspoon.

Chairperson Weatherspoon invited elected officials and their representatives to provide updates on their respective offices upcoming community events.

- Karen Chambers from the Office of District Attorney of Eric Gonzales offered a brief greeting and gave her contact information should community members require it.
- Raul Rothblatt of Assembly Member Brian Cunningham's office provided the following information:
 - Acknowledged the death on the street of one year old girl, Ella Vitales at 718 St. Marks, an example of children falling through the cracks of NYC's child welfare system.
 - The member's Halloween Party at Awesome Brooklyn is coming up
 - 2 Bills introduced in the Assembly:
 - For the NY Caribbean Steel Pan Association to teach steel pan in schools.
 - Scrambled crosswalks, aka all-way stop lights or barnes dances, at school intersections to enhance safety
 - Text D43 to 66866 to be put on the Assemblyman's mailing list
- Paurcha Edwards, District Director for Sen. Zellnor Myrie's office presented the following information:
 - The Senator and staff are completing a 24 hour tour of district.
 - 28th partnership with Greater Direction, Halloween Event at Jackie Robinson Playground
 - Harvest Fest on November 17th at Myrie's Office on Nostrand b/t Lefferts and Lincoln inclusive of healthy food demonstration and minor turkey giveaway
 - CUFF from 11-5 for Housing Connect applications. 718-284-4700
- Bianca Stephenson from BP Reynoso's Office
 - Getting ready for Community Board applications
 - If your term expires in 2024, you must apply. The application period opens in November and runs through February
 - Food giveaways, community partners should get in touch at 718-802-3700
 - Question from audience: Are schools included? Answer: Not sure, but will find out and get back to CB8 office.
 - Ms. Muhammad: saw on News 12 that changes are coming to the way the BP's office hosts and sponsors celebratory events and asked for more information on the changes. Answer: The BP has decided that money that had previously been allocated to events will be allocated to different types of community aid given the unprecedented struggles of NYers presently.
 - Gib Veconi: the Comprehensive Plan has been released, will it be presented to Community Board? Answer: can have someone from policy reach out to the board.

- Claudi Titus, Director of Recreation spoke on behalf of the staff of the Nursing and Rehabilitation center, welcomed the Community Board & community and detailed changes, invited those present to get to know the facility and its resources.
 - Lockdown unit for patients with Alzheimer's to enhance their safety
 - Subacute unit
- Janay Pierre from CM Crystal Hudson's Office.
 - BQE Cleanup between Navy & Ryerson
 - Turkey Giveaway on Thurs, Nove 18th.
 - 718-260-9191 District35@council.nyc.gov
 - Legal help from 2:30 to 5PM
 - Participatory Budgeting will start soon. Reach Policy Director Andrew Wright at anwright@council.nyc.gov with questions.
- Tendai Watkins from AM Zinnerman's Office
 - 1360 Fulton Street, Office Location
 - Discussion on Repairing the Racial Wealth Gap at 2PM this Saturday at Restoration; inclusive of *The Shame of Chicago* screening
 - Brownstoners tour
 - For more information call 718-399-3630
- Sarana Purcell – Female District Leader for 43rd Assembly District
 - Nov 7th General Election
 - Absentee ballot deadline is October 23rd and voter registration deadline is October 28th
 - County committee members meeting with all judicial candidates on the ballot on the 23rd at Crown Gardens Community Center, 1185 Carroll Street
 - The contact number for polling is 973-709-8062
- The Chair asked for Roll call – Secretary Callahan stated that 27 members present.
- The Chair asked for the acceptance of the September minutes. The minutes had some corrections, will be ratified at a later date.

Next, Chairperson Weatherspoon invited members of the public and community an opportunity to present to the board.

- Gail Muhammad Crown Heights North Association (CHNA)
 - CHNA general meeting October 18th, 1055 St. Johns Place; meet Judges on our Courts from Civil to Surrogate.
 - Oct 21st Free Shredding event at St Gregory's Church + live band
 - Oct 28th, Doggie Halloween Parade at Brower Park. Prizes for dogs, human & dog treats
- Gib Veconi, Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council.
 - Tues Evening 6:30 free yoga in Underhill Plaza
 - Thurs at 6, free skateboarding, followed by chess club and HONK NYC.
 - Sat 21st, NYBC blood drive from 12-5. Evening – Salsa Salsa Dance Studio at 5pm, dancing until 8.
 - Sun 22nd, Bindlestiff family circus.
- Alicia Pritchard, Branch Manager from the Brooklyn Public Library, Brower Park branch.

- The new branch opened to the public July 20th.
- Saturday with Friends of Brower Park book sale. Story time & kids leaf craft. Drop new & gently used books off on Friday.

Chairperson Weatherspoon called the **Public Hearing on board Action Items** to order:

Vice Chair of SLAC Robert Witherwax presented an omnibus of actions taken by the SLAC and Land Use committees while the full board was on summer hiatus.

Ratification of Actions at the July SLAC and August Land Use meetings

Community Board 8's By-Laws permit the Land Use and SLA and Sidewalk Café Review Committees executive authority to meet and speak on behalf of the full Board during the summer hiatus. The following items were voted on at the July 24, 2023 SLAC meeting and the August 3, 2023 Land Use meeting:

1. New Liquor License application for Ai Ueyo Inc., 847 Sterling Place (Nostrand/Rogers) – Beer/wine/cider license (recorded music, sidewalk café, open restaurant seating) – restaurant. The committee voted to support the application as presented.
2. Renewal liquor license application for Kinanm, 856 Atlantic Avenue (Vanderbilt/Underhill) – Full license (DJ, patio/deck) – Bar/Tavern. The committee voted to support the renewal application.
3. LPC Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for 1235 Dean Street. Details of the application include a vertical extension with setback to reduce visibility from street; an addition of a stair bulkhead; and front and back roof decks. The application was supported as presented because of the fact that additions are not visible from Dean Street and also because the potential for more exceptions like the one presented in this application are not that great.

Chairperson Weatherspoon asked for any questions or comments from the community. Mr. Staton asked if the board had to vote on each item individually. Ms. George reminded the members that the Board's bylaws permit these committees to continue operation through the summer months due to the time sensitive nature of the applications considered, and that it is customary for all such items to be considered as one slate.

Ms. Brown-Henry made a motion to support the committees' recommendations, Meredith Staton seconded. The item passed with 27 in favor, none against and no abstentions.

Chairperson Weatherspoon called next on Committee Chairs to provide reports on their proceedings in the prior month's meetings.

- **Economic Development** – No committee report was submitted; however, Chair Brian Saunders presented the following information:
 - Announced that the committee meets on the 2nd Tuesday of every month

- Committee needs greater community involvement and participation as it is a very important committee
- **Env/San/Trans** –Chair Robert Witherwax presented the following details for the EST meeting held on September 22nd and attended by Edward Delman, Karen Gray, Alan Gerber, Saskia Haegens, Delores Hutchinson, Jennifer Jordan, Xeerxeema Jordan, Peter Krashes, Frances Langley, Bobby LaPointe, Lisa Moldanado, William Meehan, Celeste Stern, Mark Thurton, Robert Witherwax, Deborah Young, and several community residents.
 - Discussed budget items & Community Goals
 - Next meeting is October 24th, considering a street co-naming in honor of Elsie Richardson
 - Announcement about properties with >10 units moving to containerized trash in 2026, and then properties <10 units moving towards autoloaders. Will be further discussed in committee as a few issues have been identified including:
 - DSNY has not designed the containers yet.
 - 90,000 cars are expected to be removed from the street.
 - Rat proof garbage cans sponsored by BIDs are appearing in Brooklyn Heights.
- **Health & Human Services** – Vice Chair Kimberly Watson presented the following for the meeting that was held on September 21st and attended by Sharon Alexis-Pierre, Chair Tamika Gibbs, Jennifer Jordan, Xeerxeema Jordan, Frances Langley, Kwasi Mensah, TaRaya Pettway, Dr. Cadesa Ramharrack, Audrey Taitt Hall, Gwendolyn Williams, and Denise Jarret:
 - Discussed agenda for the year
 - Interest in doing a breast cancer walk, which moved from Prospect Park to Coney Island Boardwalk
- **Housing** – No committee report was submitted; however, Chair Nizjoni Granville presented the following:
 - Reviewed the City of Yes document, disappointment in how little detail was included
 - Land Use also discussed the presentation.
- **Land Use** – No committee report was submitted; however, member Gib Veconi presented the committee report in absence of the committee chair:
 - Discussed City of Yes, several components which were of interest, including the following:
 - 20% additional floor area for housing under current zoning if the additional housing is affordable, but not clear how affordable the new housing would be required to be.
 - Proposal to eliminate parking minimums was of particular interest.
 - Extensive discussion of AMI and its impact on how deeply affordable the permanently affordable housing ends up being.
 - There will likely be a citywide ULURP that follows this proposal, with a modification to Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH)

- The committee also discussed the Atlantic Avenue Mixed Use Plan (AAMUP) upcoming scoping hearing for Environmental Review of the plan. Two components:
 - Zoning Framework – EIS hearing Tuesday the 17th of October, Zoom meeting. Written comments until the 27th.
 - Benefits provided to community, which are not contained within a zoning framework.
- **Parks** – Member Marva Brown-Henry presented the following information for the committee that met on October 3rd and was attended by TaRaya Pettway, Alex Morman, Karen Gray, Emma Brown, Akua Aidoo, Renata Martinez, Katrina Thomas Markland, Lennie Owes Sr., Lennie Owes Jr., Marva Brown-Henry.
 - Met last Tuesday, always 1st Tuesday of the month at BK Public Library Brower Park branch.
 - Lots of representation from individual parks represented, fewer from community.
 - Capital & Expense budget items.
 - Planning a tour of parks in the district. 10 – 12 maximum parks
- **Youth & Education** – Vice Chair Marva Brown-Henry presented the following information for the committee that met on October 3rd and was attended by TaRaya Pettway, Al Kurland of Vote 16 NYC, Xeerxeema Jordan, Jennifer Jordan, Akua Aidoo, Katrina Thomas-Markland, Mark Thurton, Audrey Taitt-Hall, Tawer DeCarey, Kimberly Watson, and Lennie Ramos
 - Vote 16 NYC presentation. Ratified in 2 Community Boards. Looking to have an action item in the future after continued discussion.
 - Resource Fair planning is upcoming. Tentative date in March.
- **Public Safety** – Chair Mark Thurton Presented the following information for the committee meeting that was held on September 25th and attended by Mark Thurton, Capt. Daniel Fennessey, PO Wallen, PO Vidal, Nicole Tetreault, Jennifer Jordan, Thomas Thuillier, Pauline Lesch, and Det. Felicia Richards from 1 Police Plaza.
 - Met at 77th Precinct, Capt. Birchwood is new commanding officer.
 - Spoke directly with commanding officer & community officers.
 - Seeking to collaborate with other committees in the future, specifically EST, Y&E, Seniors, Parks
 - Crime stats are in the CB8 Newsletter
 - New Commander coming for 78th precinct.
 - NYPD Build a Block to get NCO connected to block association.
- **Seniors** – Chair Gail Muhammad presented the following information for the committee that met on October 4th and was attended by Gail Muhammad, Mildred Smith, Mary Bonham, Jennie Armstrong, Willa Robinson, Estelle Rogers, Faye Jones, Mary E. Williams, Frances Langley, Bridget Duncan, Sharon Alexis-Pierre, Brenda White, Diane Gilliam, Vivienne Smith, Catherine Gibbs, Patricia Johnson, Clara Odom, Gwendolyn Williams, Lula Staton, William Rodgers, June Laguerre, Phil Newman, Silma Thorpe, Iva Webster, Brenda Green, Robert Banov, Loretta Fisher, Linda Ferrette, Yvonne Bailey, Essie Spivey,

Jennifer Jordan, Xeerxeema Jordan, Helen Selby, Carzei O’Neill, Gloria Freeman, Ida Golson, Sarah A. Scott, Meredith Staton.

- 40 seniors participating at last meeting, centered around Breast Cancer Awareness.
- Local Development Corp of Crown Heights hosts meeting & provides refreshments.
- EBT card theft is a major problem, 77th precinct came out to present details of the new scam
- Soul Brooklyn Restaurant on Nostrand provided food for meeting.
- Next meeting is November 1st.
- **Veterans** – No committee report was submitted; however, Chair Nizjoni Granville presented the following:
 - November 4th is the Brooklyn Veterans Parade that is a collaboration of CBs 3, 8, & 16.
 - Route starts at Park Place from Ralph & Howard Avenues, heads northbound to Fulton Street, then westbound to Restoration Plaza.
 - Also a resource fair with tables of vendors & service providers for veterans and families with refreshments
 - Trying to get an accurate count of veterans in Crown Heights
 - Meets 3rd Tuesday of the month.

The next item on the agenda was a public hearing on budget items. A list of items that were submitted the previous fiscal year was circulated. Chairperson Weatherspoon invited the members and the community an opportunity to review and submit new items.

- Gib Veconi – Increase Tenant Protections” is too vague and asked the Board to amend the explanation of the request to include better enforcement for landlords who violate existing regulations as well as information for tenants to know precisely what their rights are
- Gail Muhammad – Food Deserts, lack of healthy options is a severe problem in the district and should be prioritized highly along with better transportation options for seniors
 - Services for people returning from jails & prisons.
 - Library has a “welcome home” provisions
 - Comprehensive plan – health disparities. 8 years life expectancy difference b/t East New York & western part of borough.
- Robert Witherwax – Food Deserts: if there are non-budgetary items (legislation), we shouldn’t limit ourselves
 - Bus shelters & countdown clocks
 - Sidewalk extensions, bulbouts and raised crosswalks
 - Traffic cameras
- Marva Brown-Henry – Parks. Lighting in Brower Park, especially around basketball court
- Brower Park Skate Park lighting.
- Protected Bike Lanes & bulbouts further emphasized by a community member
- Drew Gabriel – Services and Programs for Homeless New Yorkers, outreach teams.

- Community member Peter. Lighting – if it is installed on the school, it will not point towards houses & will be blocked by trees.
- Increase funds for youth crime prevention.
- Funding for ACT teams –

After discussion, the assembled members agreed on the following items as the consensus most pressing issues – Health & Mental Health, Transportation, Public Safety, Housing & Displacement. Chairperson Weatherspoon made a motion to give staff authority to prioritize budget items based on discussion, which was seconded by Ms. Muhammad. The item passed with 24 in favor, none against and no abstentions.

With no further business, Chairperson Weatherspoon thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 8:34 pm.

Submitted by Robert Callahan, Recording Secretary.

Guests

Shirley Mondesir
Karen Gray
Lula Staton
Atinuke Odunbaku
Kim Knott
Ella Weider
Chelsea Chen
Audrey Taitt-Hall
Armaan Jhunjunwala
Valerie Nero-Reid
Alicia Pritchard
Gail Doran
John DeWind
Katrina Thomas-Markland
Peter Anekwe
Gwen Long
Princess Alleyne
Bridget Duncan
Claire Bird-Scott
Nathan Turner