

**Community Board 8
Chelsea Piers Field House
601 Dean Street
Brooklyn, NY, 11238**

April 11, 2024

Members Present

Akua Aidoo
Sharon Alexis-Pierre
Lisa Atkinson
Princess Benn-James
Robert Callahan
Edward Delman
Benny Faygen
Andrea Ferris
Drew Gabriel
Tamika Gibbs
Nizjoni Granville
Xeerxeema Jordan
Frances Langley
Robert Lapointe
Dr. Sarah Lazur
Kwasi Mensah
Gail Muhammad
Fior Ortiz-Joyner
Dr. Cadesa Ramharrack
Anika Roach
Conor Ross
Brian Saunders
Meredith Staton
Nicole Tetreault
Mark Thurton
Briana Uwa
Gib Veconi
Irsa Weatherspoon
Robert Witherwax
Deborah Young

Members Absent/Excused

Jacques Brunvil
Dian Duke
Lisa Maldonado
David Mantell
Mimi Mitchell
Taraya Pettway
Robert Puca
Yahya Raji
Bria Thomas
Ethel Tyus
Kimberly Watson
Sharon Wedderburn

Elected Officials Present

Councilmember Chi Osse, 36th District
Assemblymember Stefani Zinnerman, 56th District

Elected Official Representatives

Mary Kay Seery, Assemblymember Robert Carroll
Karen Chambers, Bklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez
Paurcha Edwards, Senator Zellnor Myrie
Arlene Gillin, Councilmember Chi Osse
Michael Nedrick, Assemblymember Brian Cunningham
Janay Pierre, Councilmember Crystal Hudson
Orlando Ross, Congresswoman Yvette Clarke
Raul Rothblatt, Assemblymember Brian Cunningham
Tevon Williams, Office of Congressman Dan Goldman
Ethan Nash, Bklyn Boro President's Office

CB8 Staff Present

Michelle George, District Manager
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

Chairperson Weatherspoon welcomed the membership and public, called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM.

First, she welcomed Erica White, general manager of Chelsea Piers Field House, who thanked the board for integrating the new Field House into the community, looks forward to hosting more meetings in the future.

Next Chairperson Weatherspoon invited elected officials and their representatives to address the meeting.

Elected Official Announcements

Chi Osse, Councilmember: The councilmember greeted the board and public and gave information about community resources and updates. His office hosts housing assistance for Housing Connect, the lottery, and other matters every Tuesday at the district office – 1360 Fulton Street, 5th Floor. Every Thursday the office hosts an attorney for legal assistance, and Wellness Wednesdays for free food distribution. Interested people are welcome to volunteer.

The Council is waiting for the state to pass a budget. As a member of the Progressive Caucus, the Councilmember is excited for the Homes Now, Homes for Generations campaign to expand capital funding to expand affordable housing.

His office is accepting prom dresses for a drive ahead of prom season. They currently have about 25, would love to double or triple that number. May 19th will be bike day in the district. Contact the office for info about this bike tour around Crown Heights & Bed Stuy.

Mr. Staton asked about the 1% for Parks campaign. CM Osse replies that currently there is a surplus in the budget. Mayor is predicting more cuts, but the Council is hoping for an increase for things like Parks. Everyone is waiting for the State's budget to know the final numbers for the budget. The Mayor's Executive budget is coming out in May, and the Council budget passes in June.

A member of the public asks about education funding. CM Osse wants more funding for public schools; the mayor has a different view. Mayor Adams is arguing that enrollment is too low to justify continued additional funding for schools.

Another attendee is interested in holding the agencies accountable for repeated summonses for rats; Mr. Osse connects her to his staff.

Raul Rothblatt, District Office Director for Assemblymember Brian Cunningham: Mr. Rothblatt introduces Michael Nedrick, new Media Manager for the office enhancing the office's social media presence. On legislative updates – EBT fraud has been a major issue for constituents. A9269 just passed recently, which should offer some relief. Mr. Cunningham advises people that if they experience EBT fraud, record the transactions and then change your PIN as soon as possible.

The member is supporting Melanie's Law for orders of protection and is part of the coalition that will not vote for any budget that doesn't protect SUNY Downstate.

Events – Jazz on Brower is coming up. The Persuasions will be on the bill. On the 16th: Beyond Birth, holistic report for mothers & families. Thursdays: Free legal services teaming up with CHLDC, CHNA & NYLAG at 1055 St. Johns. Weekly on Mondays: Housing services at the district office.

Dr. Lazur states that elected officials are signing on to a pledge to fight for Good Cause and not undo the 2019 Tenant Protection Act, asks if Assemblymember Cunningham will join them. Mr. Rothblatt says that in a survey of district members, housing is the #1 issue. In general, they are co-sponsors of the legislation and they support the bills.

Mary Kay Seery, office of Assemblymember Robert Carroll: The office is hosting a Spring Clean & Green on April 21st from 10am-2pm at Park Circle in Prospect Park, an e-cycling event. Also in attendance are Wearable Collections, GrowNYC, Sanitation, NYPD Bike Etching, and a rain barrel giveaway.

Karen Chambers, office of District Attorney Eric Gonzalez: 3 initiatives. The office has a high school essay contest, “District Attorney for the Day” with an April 24th deadline.

Operation Prescription Drug Take Back, Friday April 26th from 10:00 to 4:00 at several locations throughout the borough; check the web for details.

There will be two opportunities for Men’s Suits Dropoff – April 24th-26th from 9-4. 350 Jay Street. Supreme Court: May 8th -10th.

Janay Pierre, office of Councilmember Crystal Hudson: The Councilmember holds Housing Help sessions from 10 AM to 5 PM at 55 Hanson Place on Wednesdays, and legal help on Thursdays, as well as a bike riding class Thursday, April 18th. Summer Youth series starting up soon (check the website for details).

Participatory Budgeting is underway. You can vote virtually for many important funding opportunities, like PS 11’s sink & faucet replacement, Bedford Avenue repaving. Voting in person 12-3PM at Brooklyn Museum ends Sunday April 14th.

Ms. Muhammad says that she saw CM Hudson on NY1 and was pleased to hear her comments on housing, wish she had said more about recent violent incidents. She also asked if the member is in favor of the skate park at Mt. Prospect. Ms. Muhammad also wants to give specific appreciation to Demi from the member’s office; she reached out about her aunt’s EBT fraud and she got back to her expediently when others were slow to respond.

Mr. Juwan wants to put in an emphasis for the participatory budgeting proposal to plant more trees.

Mr. Mensah would like to plant shrubs instead of trees.

Isabelle hopes the councilmember will reconsider her support for the skate park.

Ms. Davis hopes the councilmember will support the struggle against the privatization of parks in the area. Another real estate developer is going after the park in Grand Army Plaza.

Mr. Witherwax states that everything on the skate park has been vague so far. Are there plans that can be reviewed? Ms. Pierre encourages the public to reach out. Arlene Gillin from Councilman Osse's office stated that Brower Park is also being renovated by Tony Hawk's organization. The plans will be released before construction begins. That project is a bit different because Brower Park is just a renovation. The Mount Prospect Park project is still in the planning stages. Ms. George assured the public that there is going to be a public meeting in early May regarding both skate parks.

Tevin Williams, office of Congressman Dan Goldman: – Any high school students interested in Congressional Art competition should prepare their submissions; applications are open through May 3rd.

The Congressman introduced a bill with Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez called the Green New Deal for Public Housing. \$243 billion for infrastructure for public housing nationwide. He is also cosponsoring the Abortion Care Access act with Jasmine Crockett.

Dr. Lazur is glad that Green New Deal for Public Housing is happening, asks if it will overcome the Faircloth Amendment? Is it to build new public housing? Response: It can be. HUD gets the money, can do as they please.

Ms. Davis expresses concern about warehousing of NYCHA properties in need of repairs.

Paurcha Edwards, District Director for Senator Myrie: Budget updates: the Senator's main priorities are SUNY Downstate, universal afterschool.

The office hosted an Eid Iftar event yesterday with Masjid at Tafik Brooklyn at the Major Owens center.

Monday through Friday 10AM to 6PM are the district's office hours; all times for office are by appointment, even same day. The office is holding an Earth Day challenge for students to submit "why Earth Day should be every day." If you are homeschooling you can go to the Senate website for more information, but all schools received information.

2 events in May: Immigration Resource fair on May 18th and a Jobs fair. Join the mailing list for weekly updates. The office is located at 1077 Nostrand Avenue, (718) 284-4700.

A member of the public asked about SUNY Downstate: What is the update? Ms. Edwards says she doesn't believe there are plans to close it. There are plans to possibly put money into a fund to support the hospital.

With no additional updates, Chairperson Weatherspoon asked to call the roll.

Next she asked for a motion to accept the minutes, which was answered by Dr. Lazur, seconded by Mr. Gabriel and accepted unanimously.

Chairperson Weatherspoon reminded all members to pick up their attendance report cards with details on committee and general meeting attendance as well as voting record.

The Chair then asked for committee chairs to give their monthly reports.

Committee Reports

Economic Development Committee – Brian Saunders, Chair

The committee last met on Tuesday at the Brower Park library, where they talked about community outreach to Nostrand Avenue businesses. The committee also hosted a presentation by the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce.

The Economic Development Committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month, next on May 14th at 155 Brooklyn Avenue at 6 PM. The City of Yes will be the topic of discussion.

Environment, Sanitation & Transportation Committee – Robert Witherwax, Chair

Monday, April 15th, there will be a joint meeting with Community Boards 6, 8 and 9 at the Central Library, to discuss the next phase of visioning for the Grand Army Plaza, presented by the Department of Transportation.

April 22th is Earth Day!

At the upcoming meeting, there will be a working group dealing with dangerous intersections, and work to set budget priorities.

Mr. Witherwax noted that DOT has redone the Open Restaurants review process, a program called Dining Out NY. As a part of this process, in the future the Board will have the responsibility to review open restaurants.

Ms. Muhammad asked about Sanitation. There was information about having to purchase new bins that will cost about \$50 apiece. Also – compost bins? Mr. Witherwax stated that if you live in a large building, you will receive large bins. There will be some sort of containerization, but the specifics are currently unknown. If you live in a 1-3 family home, there is an idea that there will be specific bins that work with automatic loaders. There was a profile in the New Yorker about DSNY Commissioner Jessica Tisch talking about a “trash revolution,” which Mr. Witherwax encourages members to read.

Ms. Taitt-Hall asked about bill mandating electric grills, which there is some discussion about.

The EST Committee meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month, next on April 30th at 810 St. Marks Ave at 6:30 PM.

Health & Human Services - Tamika Gibbs, Chair

Ms. Gibbs reminds attendees that the city is still offering Rat Academies monthly (next on April 25th & 29th online), with details available on the city's website.

Additionally, on April 22nd at 10 am, the city will have an open comment hearing about permits for Open Streets. Interested parties should visit NYC.gov/nycrules to sign up.

Mr. Veconi made a comment that the SEPO open streets meeting is just about programming, not about DOT regulations.

Ms. Gillin emphasized that rats are not an individual problem, and that the purpose of the Rat Academies is to share the information with your block, which is the only way to alleviate the rat problem.

The Health & Human Services Committee meets on the third Thursday of the month, next on May 18th at 1055 St. Johns Place at 6:30 PM.

Housing Committee– Nizjoni Granville, Chair

The Committee met on Wednesday and discussed the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity. Members expressed concerns for the lack of adequate housing inspectors for new housing, more infrastructure. Ms. George noted that the boards monthly newsletter “Across The Board” has an advertisement for new housing inspectors positions that the city is looking to fill.

The Housing committee meets on the second Wednesday of the month, next on May 8th at 77 New York Avenue at 6:30 PM.

Land Use Committee

The Land Use Committee did not meet this month.

The Land Use Committee meets on the first Thursday of the month, next on May 2nd at 1055 St. Johns Place at 6:30 PM.

Public Safety Committee – Mark Thurton, Chair

The committee met last Monday at the 77th Precinct. At next month's meeting, the special crime unit at the 77th precinct will give a presentation. Additionally, National Night Out will take place on August 6th in Brower Park. Crime statistics are listed in the monthly newsletter; crime has come down in the district this month.

The Public Safety Committee meets on the fourth Monday of the month, next on April 22nd at the 77th Precinct, 127 Utica Avenue at 6:30 PM.

Seniors Committee – Gail Muhammad, Chair

The committee did not meet in April, because voting machines at 1055 St. Johns were not moved in time. Ms. Muhammad wants to commend committee members for attending both regular meetings and many community events. For instance, members assisted in welcoming the new Executive Director at the Brooklyn Childrens Museum.

Next meeting on May 1st: At the next meeting, the committee will hear from HRA on SNAP benefits and the Access HRA system. In June – CHNA and LDC CH are co-sponsoring a Sip & Paint.

Ms. Davis – Encourages people to research RadicalElders.org, a group that is fighting for a reversal of civil rights gains.

The Seniors Committee meets on the first Wednesday of the month, next on May 1st at 1055 St. Johns at 6:30 PM.

SLA & Sidewalk Café Committee – Irsa Weatherspoon, Chair.

The SLAC did not meet this month.

The SLA Committee meets on the First Monday of the month, next on May 6th at 810 St. Marks Avenue.

Veterans Committee – Nizjoni Granville, Chair

The committee did not meet this month. Ms. Granville is looking to recognize veterans in the area on Veterans Day. Asking for help identifying veterans in the district.

The Veterans Committee meets on the third Tuesday of the month, next on April 16th at 77 New York Avenue at 6:30 PM.

To conclude committee reports, Chairperson Weatherspoon reminded committee chairs to submit minutes and attendance records for each meeting to the district office, which are mandatory and essential.

The Chairperson invited additional elected officials and their representatives to address the meeting.

Orlando Ross, Office of Congresswoman Yvette Clark: Federal grants are available through the office; so far, approximately \$10.9 million brought to the 9th congressional district this cycle, focused on public safety, food insecurity and public housing.

The office is also promoting the Congressional art challenge for STEAM education. The prize is the winner's artwork is displayed in the Capitol for one year and a trip to DC to speak about it.

Affordable Connectivity Program Act extension: the Congresswoman is advocating for a bipartisan bill to expand access to broadband. Affordable high speed internet for 23 million

Americans. Mr. Ross also reminded taxpayers about IRS direct file – free submission option directly to the IRS for free. Filers can use the IRS2Go App for monitoring refunds. The office encourages people to use direct deposit, as losing paper checks often happens.

Alex asked about ACP funding: what is the status? The bill has not passed yet, per Mr. Ross

Peter asked if the art contest is announced in schools? Yes, the office is communicating with CECs, principals, school groups.

Ms. Muhammad used the opportunity to speak about congressional scholarships, and wants to encourage the congressional leaders to promote opportunities to apply for military academies for a free, high quality education. Students must apply through a Congressional office.

Dr. Lazur asked if the Congresswoman signed onto the Green New Deal for Public Housing? Mr. Ross is not sure, as it is not in his portfolio.

Stefani Zinnerman, 56th Assembly District Representative: Wished everyone a happy Black Women’s History Month. The state is still in budget negotiations, 10 days past due. Likely the state will have a budget extender bill tomorrow. The assemblywoman is advocating for five bills:

- A Cannabis Education Bill with Sen. Cordell Clear (education plan for ages 18-21 to raise awareness of laws).
- Legislation regarding illicit smoke shops going after landlords, shops that sell liquor or lottery tickets in addition to cannabis.
- A bill to declare Kings County a Cease and Desist Zone regarding deed theft.
- The House New Yorkers First Act, which stipulates that there can be no foreign investment in housing properties unless the investor plans to live in the property.
- A bill establishing safety requirements for commercial bike operators: taking a safety course, ride with traffic, wear a numbered vest. The legislation will broaden the existing law to cover the entire state, and will not impact the Delivery person directly, only the employers. Unless the delivery person works for a third party app and “is the business.”

Every fourth Saturday the office hosts the Community Action Network; youth from this program are working on a series of videos that they will roll out soon.

Mr. Thurton is concerned about the absence of the Boy Scouts, which the assemblymember assured him she has information on Boy Scouts & other opportunities for youth.

Dr. Lazur asked if the member will sign onto a pledge for Good Cause Eviction? In response, the Assemblywoman said, “We have a problem, in that we lost 23% of residents since 2010. Until you carve out small landlords, I cannot sign onto the bill.” Dr. Lazur replied that the Good Cause doesn’t apply to landlords of buildings with 4 or fewer units who live in the building. The Assemblywoman noted that there are many landlords who do not have access to traditional loan programs, and have leveraged their buildings to purchase other buildings and cannot afford to

have non-paying tenants. These people would be harmed by this bill. Dr. Lazur replied that the tenants are currently experiencing harm without Good Cause.

Finally, Chairperson Weatherspoon opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comment

Rafael Schweitzer came before the board to promote the preservation of comic book shops. Anyone Comics near Brooklyn Museum, Galaxy Comics are both adjacent to the district. There will be a tour on Saturday May 4th of comic book shops, meeting in Union Square, going to Forbidden Planet. He noted that since creating their flyer, one of the comic book shops on their list has closed due to large increase in rent.

Kwame Ankar speaks about the city health department, hoping to advocate for free sickle cell trait testing, which is not offered by the city. June 19th is Sickle Cell Awareness Day.

Deborah Young announces CHNA's Keeping Safe in 2024 on April 17th at the Brooklyn Children's Museum. Mr. Michael Barbabos & Darryl White from Attorney General Letitia James's office will be present to speak about deed theft as well as the Commanding Officer from 77th Precinct. There will also be a free shredding event on April 20th from 9-12 at St. Gregory the Great church. Finally, on April 22nd Nostrand Ave Merchant's Association & Bridge Street will host a mixer and game night at Super Power from 5-8

Chairperson Weatherspoon informs attendees that Community Board 8 will co-sponsor a Youth Expo with Community Board 3 on April 27th from 11 AM to 2 PM at Weeksville Heritage Center and asked members to participate.

Additionally, we are planning a CB8 Day which will be held on June 22nd. All 11 committees will be in attendance, as well as city agencies and other resources. Information is forthcoming.

Having concluded the Board's business, the meeting was adjourned.

Guest Present

Jennifer Jordan
Raphael Schweizer
Isabelle Broyer
Lula Staton
Julius Buseche
Jonathan Molofsky
Betty Davis
Flora Champenois
Katrina Thomas-Markland
Barbara Cofield
Ezra Lafleur

Alex Maza
Audrey Taitt-Hall
Jeremy K.
Kwame Ankrah
Cheryl Walcott
Nathan Turner
Peter Anekwe
Kalin Russel
Conor Hasset
Loreto Dumitresw
Roger Myers
Gregory Anderson
John D.
Danae Oratowski