

**Community Board 8
Cavalry Community Church
1575 St. Johns Place
Brooklyn, NY, 11233**

October 10th, 2024

Members Present

Sharon Alexis-Pierre
Peter Anekwe
Princess Benn-James
Robert Callahan
Edward Delman
Dian Duke
Benny Faygen
Mohammad Hassan
Jamell Henderson
Tafari John-King
Frances Langley
Dr. Sarah Lazur
Lisa Maldonado
William Meehan
Kwasi Mensah
Mimi Mitchell
Fior Ortiz-Joyner
Robert Puca
Dr. Cadesa Ramharrack
Yahya Raji
Anika Roach
Conor Ross
Ezra Roth
Robin Smith
Katie Taylor
Dana Thompson
Mark Thurton
Gib Veconi
Kimberly Watson
Irsa Weatherspoon
Robert Witherwax
Deborah Young

Members Absent/Excused

Akua Aidoo
Gail Branch-Muhammad
Ammar Elahi
Tamika Gibbs
Nizjoni Granville
Malik Jabati
Robert Lapoint
David Mantell
Courtney Morgan
Taraya Pettway
Brian Saunders
Meredith Staton
Nicole Tetreault
Esmond Turnbull
Brana Uwa
Sharon Wedderburn

Elected Officials Present

Elected Official Representatives

Tamisha Thompson, Office of Councilmember Darlene Mealy
Hercules Reid, Office of Mayor Eric Adams

CB8 Staff Present

Michelle George, District Manager
Julia Neale, Community Coordinator

Chair Weatherspoon welcomed the community and called the meeting to order at 6:45 PM. She began the meeting by requesting that committee chairs give a report on their most recent meetings.

Committee Reports

Seniors Committee – Sharon Alexis Pierre, Committee Member

The Seniors Committee met last on October 2nd. Developers and representatives for the proposed affordable senior housing project at 542 Dean Street came to the meeting to answer questions about the project, which garnered a healthy response from the members and public attending. The representatives plan to return to the Seniors Committee approximately 6 months before the building opens applications, which they anticipate to happen in 2027. October is, of course, Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Community members should come to the Mammogram Van at 828 Green Avenue on October 15th for free health screenings courtesy of Golden Agers Breast Cancer Awareness.

There will be no meeting next month due to the upcoming election.

The Seniors Committee meets on the first Wednesday of the month, next on December 4th at 1055 St. Johns Place in the Activity Room at 6:00 PM.

Chair Weatherspoon introduced Cavalry Community Church Pastor Cecil Henry to give remarks, thanking him for hosting the Community Board. Rev. Henry gave a brief history of the church's 35 years in the community and gave a special mention to the church's upcoming program on Domestic Violence Awareness.

Economic Development Committee – Lisa Maldonado, Member

Last week, members of the committee held a walkabout on Vanderbilt Avenue, distributing a survey to understand the corridor's needs. At their regular committee meeting, the membership held a planning meeting. As part of their planning, the committee members aim to walk every commercial corridor in the district; their next target is Franklin Avenue. The committee is trying to work on connecting young people and unemployed people with jobs, a Hiring Hall, especially focused on construction jobs in the community. A chief concern among the community is holding developers accountable to local hire requirements.

There will be no meeting next month due to the upcoming election.

The Economic Development Committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month, next on November 12th at 155 Brooklyn Avenue at 6:00 PM.

Environment, Sanitation & Transportation Committee – Robert Witherwax, Chair

The committee last met on October 22nd and had a robust agenda. Composting is now citywide as of last week. Containerization deadlines are also on the horizon: 1-9 family buildings must put garage in bins with a lid beginning on November 12th. If you don't have a bin, the city is selling them for \$55 at <https://www.bins.nyc/>. The city's bins will be mandatory beginning next year. The committee also brought a message on catch basins: if you see a catch basin that isn't draining, call 311 and the board office.

Ms. Muckle asked Mr. Witherwax about the condition of her street, which was ground up for a prolonged period of time. The board staff replied that DOT leaves the streets unpaved for two weeks and strongly encourages utilities and other entities to do necessary work while the street is in this condition

Another Community Member has noticed broken lights in Brower Park and other parks, which require more focused attention than simple maintenance. They are asked to call the community board office to follow up with the Parks Department.

Another Community Member asks about the Grand Army Plaza redesign, and is concerned that the design isn't any better than what currently exists. Mr. Witherwax says that there were a few events to roll out the design, plus a "meh" survey, but conveyed that the department assures the public that this plan is in the idea phase. They will likely return in early Spring with a new proposal for community feedback. The community member asks if they can still submit ideas. Mr. Witherwax thinks that the comment period has closed for the time being, but asks them to reach out to the board office.

The EST Committee meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month, next on October 26th at 810 St. Marks Ave at 6:30 PM.

Public Safety Committee – Mark Thurton, Chair

The committee met this month at the 77th Precinct, hearing from Community Violence Interrupter Save Our Streets. The next meeting will take place on October 28th; the committee is looking to move out of the precincts in order to bring in members who would prefer alternative locations. Next month's meeting will focus on Domestic Violence & Fire prevention, and hold a presentation on the use of electric heaters. In the future the Public Safety Committee is going to work with Youth & Education on a joint outreach effort to the Youth of Crown Heights.

The Public Safety Committee meets on the fourth Monday of the month, next on October 28th at the 77th Precinct, 127 Utica Avenue at 6:30 PM.

Veterans Committee – Princess Benn-James, Vice Chair

The committee continues its work planning a ceremony to honor veterans on November 13th. The details will be on the Community Board calendar.

The Veterans Committee meets on the third Tuesday of the month, next on October 15th at 77 New York Avenue at 6:30 PM.

Parks, Youth & Education Committee – Kimberly Watson, Chair

The committee is developing programs for 2024-25 Board session, reaching out to schools to introduce themselves. The members have identified an elementary, middle and high school that they will be sponsoring throughout the year more directly. In parks business, the committee members are hoping to work with Parks supervisors to shift hours to allow for more time directly after school, and are advocating for more cameras at Lincoln Terrace and Brower Park, details to come.

Ms. Muckle, identifying herself as the CEO of Broadway Youth Association offers her assistance.

Community Member Isabelle relays that Prospect Park Alliance gave a presentation about their operation, which proved insightful. She is hoping to replicate some of their initiatives in Brower Park.

Ms. Maldonado asks Chair Weatherspoon and board staff if the Economic Development meeting can take place electronically instead. The rules are clarified – if the committee considers any voting business, the meeting must be in person; only working meetings can take place online.

The Parks, Youth & Education Committee meets on the first Tuesday of the month, next on December 3rd at 155 Brooklyn Avenue at 6:00 PM.

Health & Human Services - Kimberly Watson, Committee Member

The Health & Human Services Committee now meets at 77 New York Avenue. The committee held a planning meeting for programs and initiatives for the session. They are arranging for the Italian American Cancer Association's mammogram bus to visit the district, and are seeking more health organizations to come talk to the community.

The Health & Human Services Committee meets on the third Thursday of the month, next on October 17th at 77 New York Avenue at 6:30 PM.

Having reached the conclusion of reports from committees with no action items to consider at this meeting, Chair Weatherspoon asked for any corrections to the minutes; hearing none the minutes were accepted.

The chair then called for consideration of voting items before the board.

Action Items

Housing & Land Use Committee – Princess Benn James, Vice Chair

The Housing & Land Use Committee met on Thursday, October 3, 2024 at Crown Heights Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 810 St. Marks Avenue.

The committee reviewed an application for a certificate of appropriateness at 304 Prospect Place in the Prospect Heights Historic District. John Hathaway, an architect, presented before the committee on behalf of his client. The project is for a 1st floor extension that replaces an existing deck that is 8 feet in length. The proposed will be 10 feet in length. The building's lot is 130 feet in length. The additional 2 feet triggered the community board review.

Gib Veconi on behalf of Prospect Heights Neighborhood Council (PHNDC) that after review, PHNDC will offer a letter of no objection to the Landmarks Preservation (LPC), Queries from board members, community members and the community at large included tenant access to the deck and rear yard, material choices and whether the extension would obstruct the windows of an adjacent property.

The committee voted in favor of the project with 22 in favor, 1 opposed and no abstentions.

The Land Use Committee meets on the first Thursday of the month, next on November 7th at 1055 St. Johns Place at 6:30 PM.

304 Prospect Place

Because there was a perceived lack of clarity from the architect's presentation on the nature of the extension on this property, and whether the extension would block natural light to a neighbor's side window, board member [REDACTED] asked a neighbor of the property she knows for access to the backyard to observe the condition of the two properties in person, and to take pictures. She reports that having seen the condition, she is convinced that the windows will be blocked by any additional extension, and that the windows do not appear to be set back in a light well as originally reported. She offers to show photos that she took to interested parties as evidence of her contention.

The architect responds by reaffirming his statement that none of the windows on the adjacent side of the house will be blocked. He also makes note that windows built on a lot line at construction are not protected by law, as they interfere with as-of-right construction by adjacent property owners.

Ms. Ortiz Joyner wants to know if there is evidence in writing that the property next door is unaffected.

Mr. Veconi offers his opinion that the windows in question are in an air shaft and are set back from the lot line, in line with architectural drawings produced at the Land Use meeting.

Mr. Witherwax asks that the board table this item until the conclusion of the action items to give people the option to review the new evidence that has been supplied and the presentation by the applicant.

There is some confusion about whether there is adequate time for members to review the evidence while the regular order of the meeting continues.

Ms. Benn James volunteers that she was the vote of opposition.

Dr. Lazur makes a motion to support the committee's recommendation, seconded by Mr. Callahan.

In discussion, it is clear that the board is not prepared to take a vote without additional time.

Dr. Lazur makes a second motion to table the discussion of 304 Prospect Place until the last action item, seconded by Mr. Witherwax. The motion passes with 25 in favor, 4 opposed and 1 abstention.

SLA & Sidewalk Café Committee – Robert Witherwax, Vice Chair

The SLAC Committee met on Thursday, September 19, 2024 at Crown Heights Apartments located at 1055 St. John's Place, Brooklyn. The committee met again on Monday, October 7, 2024 at Crown Heights Nursing Home located at 810 St. Marks Avenue, Brooklyn. The committee discussed the following applications:

1. New Full Liquor License for Aura, 417 Prospect Ave (near Grand Ave)

- *Hours of Operation: Applying for max hours of 7AM to Midnight daily with intended liquor service hours of 2PM to Midnight daily*
- *Recorded music to be played and there will be four employees*
- *Applicant intends to apply for a sidewalk café license in the future*

- *Because it is a 500-foot exception, the applicants community benefit is that the coffee shop by day, lounge in evening and afternoon, is a new concept for the Prospect Heights community. While there are several such locations in the central portion of the district and far eastern end, there are none west of Bedford Avenue in the district.*

The committee voted 12 in favor, 1 opposed to support the application with the condition that no alcohol is served outdoors until the applicant comes back for an alteration application for the sidewalk café. The committee hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Mr. Ross made a motion to support the committee's recommendation, seconded by Mr. Meehan. The motion passed with 29 in favor, 0 opposed and 2 abstentions.

2. *New Beer/wine/cider License for NYLA House, 1524 Bergen St. (near Schenectady Ave)*

- *Hours of Operation: Sunday 10AM-11PM, Monday through Thursday 8AM-11PM, Friday and Saturday 8AM-12AM*
- *DJ & Recorded music*
- *5 Tables 13 Seats / 1 Bar 6 Seats*

The committee voted 11 in favor with 1 abstention to support the application as presented, and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

The proprietor is present for any questions.

Mr. Meehan made a motion to support the committee's recommendation, seconded by Ms. Ortiz-Joyner. The motion passed with 29 in favor, 1 opposed and 0 abstentions.

3. *New Beer/wine/cider license application or Canela, 800A Franklin Avenue (between Eastern Parkway and Lincoln Place)*

- *Establishment currently operates as a café (breakfast, coffee)*
- *Adding beer/wine for afternoon/evening service*
- *Hours of operation 8AM- 12AM daily*
- *20 seats at 10 tables*
- *Sidewalk Café As of Right (inside property line) with 12 seats at 6 tables to operate Sunday through Tuesday until 9PM and Wednesday through Saturday until 10PM*
- *Will have live music with small scale patron dancing (limited floor space)*

The committee voted 13 in favor to support the application as presented and hopes the full Board will support its recommendation.

Ms. Ortiz Joyner made a motion to support the committee's recommendation, seconded by Mr. Callahan. The motion passed with 28 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 abstention.

4. *The committee voted 14 in favor to withhold support for the following list of establishments due to lack of information. The Board should note that each applicant has been invited to no fewer than 4 committee meetings and staff contacted all representatives. It is the practice of the Board to issue "defacto" letters of non support for such establishments that do not make an attempt to meet with us to inform us their plans, so the committee hopes the full Board will support its recommendation.*

- *The Coal Pot, 1466 St John's Place –was applying for an alteration application to reduce the menu from full to small plates to support a more lounge-y environment; adding DJ, karaoke, live music, small scale patron dancing, security personnel*
- *Greyz Bistro, 1171 St. John's Place – Full license (recorded music, live music, patron dancing, security personnel, no outdoor space)*
- *Ya Soulvakia, 295 Flatbush Avenue – Beer/wine/cider license with temp retail permit (recorded music, no outdoor space)*
- *Mills & McDowall LLC d/b/a Velz, 1433 Bedford Avenue – Full license with temp retail permit (recorded music, live music, patron dancing, video/arcade games, licensed garden/outdoor space in rear)*

Dr. Lazur made a motion to support the committee's recommendation, seconded by Ms. Benn James. The motion passed with 30 in favor, one opposed and zero abstentions.

5. Dining Out Applications

- a. *Barboncino, 781 Franklin Avenue (between St. Johns and Lincoln Places)
No concerns were raised.*
- b. *The Barlow, 446 Park Place (corner of Grand Avenue) –previously held DCWP sidewalk café revocable permit
No concerns were raised.*
- c. *Bearded Lady, 686A Washington Avenue (corner of St. Marks Avenue)—
previously held DCWP sidewalk café revocable permit
Concerns included the cut out around the tree bed that would dip into the restaurants entrance as shown in section 1: site plan drawing on the St. Marks Ave side as well as the congestion at the corner of Washington and St. Marks Aves. Very busy corner is encumbered with sandwich board sign on the sidewalk, curb cuts and table and chairs.*

The committee voted 13 in favor to support all Dining Out applications as presented and hopes the full Board supports its recommendation.

Ms. Watson asks for more clarification about concerns over the physical condition of the sidewalk.

Mr. Veconi responds that the tree pit in front of the restaurant creates a dip down in the sidewalk that makes the area difficult to navigate; the applicant is going to build a radius around the tree pit.

Mr. Delman made a motion to support the committee's recommendation, seconded by Mr. Veconi. The motion passed with 30 in favor, 0 opposed and one abstention.

The SLA Committee meets on the First Monday of the month, next on December 2nd at 810 St. Marks Avenue.

Cannabis Committee

The Cannabis Committee met on Wednesday, October 9, 2024 at Crown Heights Nursing and Rehabilitation located at 810 St. Marks Avenue. The committee discussed an application for an adult use dispensary to be located at 769 Franklin Avenue at the corner of St. John's Place to operate at OC Dispensary.

The licensee, Mr. Omar Nisimov, presented plans for his dispensary. Mr. Nisimov informed the committee that he was first approved as a CAURD licensee as a justice involved individual, and presented the following details about his application:

- *Hours of operation 8AM to 10PM Sunday through Wednesday and 8 AM to 11PM Thursday through Saturday*
- *Chose Franklin Avenue by working and traveling in the nearby community and noticing how busy and active the corridor is, believing it could lead to success of the dispensary.*
- *In taking over a former community grocer/bodega, will maintain the awning space for queuing, but will remove the exterior "greenhouse" doors to free up about 3 feet of space on the sidewalk.*
- *Will seek to hire as locally as possible to ensure that all employees create intimate connections with their workspace to help the dispensary integrate better in the community.*
- *Will have all required security measures proscribed by OCM, inclusive of security cameras, buzzer door, ID checks, and a security guard. The security guard will not likely be armed to ensure that the dispensary is an inviting space.*
- *Still working on delivery radius, but currently anticipates delivery to the five boroughs once it is fully determined what OCM's requirements are for delivery vehicle and insurance. Will likely use the Dutchie POS system or orchestrate delivery.*
- *Will sell branded merchandise in the space, and desires to accept cash payments, especially for the branded merchandise.*

The committee was largely impressed with the application as presented once the applicant was able to overcome his anxiety and grew comfortable with responding to the committee’s questions. There were a few questions and concerns, however, mainly around the desire to accept cash payments and the concern that this could lead to possible interruption of the seed to sale system that OCM tracks. The applicant stated that he would ensure that he operates within full legal scope in the space, and it was noted that district office staff would confirm with OCM whether cash payments could be made for merchandise. Upon confirming, OCM’s allowable and acceptable forms of payment are cash and debit cards. Credit cards cannot be used at this time because cannabis has not been approved on the federal level yet.

Furthermore, the applicant expressed his desire to be a community steward by organizing giveaways, musical events inclusive of lessons, and even serving as a sponsor for certain youth related activities like bookbag giveaways, camps, etc. Mr. Nisimov stated that cannabis brings communities together and his vision to bring the Crown Heights community together via different arts events.

Historically, the Board has shown an affinity toward justice involved applicants for prioritization in the community. The committee voted unanimously with 15 in favor to support the application with the recommendation that the applicant not accept cash payments for any merchandise in hopes that the full Board supports its recommendation.

Mr. Mensah asks for the applicant to elaborate on his statement that “Cannabis brings community together.” The applicant expresses some confusion, and is told that he is not required to respond.

The board notes that the point made in the committee’s motion on cash has since been mooted, as cannabis businesses are mandated to deal only in cash transactions.

Mr. Delman made a motion to support the committee’s recommendation amended to excise the reference to cash, seconded by Mr. Ross. The motion passed with 20 in favor, 6 opposed and 5 abstentions.

Capital and Expense Budget

After a reading of the list of Capital and Expense initiatives, Chair Weatherspoon asks for community board members and attending members of the public to list their five top priorities.

The following is a summary tally of all items mentioned at the meeting:

Item Number	Expense	Capital
1	2	3
2	3	

Item Number	Expense	Capital
18	1	1
20	1	

3	5	6
4		1
5	2	
6	3	5
7	2	2
8	1	1
10	2	
12	2	1
13	1	1
14		3
15	3	2

21		3
22	1	
23	1	
24	1	
25	2	
26	1	
27	2	
30	1	
31	2	1
33	2	
35	1	

Mr. Callahan makes a motion authorizing the board staff to synthesize the feedback and create a list of priorities for submission to the Office of Management and Budget, seconded by Mr. Meehan. The motion passes with 25 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions.

The board next continued its discussion pertaining to 304 Prospect Place.

304 Prospect Place Continuation

Mr. Callahan attempts to clarify some of the statements made earlier that caused confusion about the legality of the windows, making note that lot line windows are illegal for the purpose of providing light to bedrooms under New York City Housing Code, but that he also does not believe that the architect is misrepresenting the project when he states that the windows will not be obstructed by this extension.

Ms. Wolcott’s chief concern is that she feels like the information the committee had to consider was incomplete and that many members of the committee would have voted differently had this evidence been available.

Mr. Thurton responds that he is skeptical that the architect is fully forthcoming about the impact of his client’s project and the potential impact it will have on the next door neighbors.

Chair Weatherspoon reminds board members that doing research with adequate time for discussion is important, because while the evidence that has been introduced at this evening’s meeting is valuable, there isn’t enough time to vet and consider the consequences at a board meeting.

Ms. Ortiz Joyner initially supported the committee’s recommendation because Mr. Veconi announced at the Land Use meeting that the Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council, the responsible neighborhood association was in support of the application.

Mr. Witherwax asks the architect if the light is going to be diminished, which he agrees that it will.

Ms. Wolcott asks if members of the board reviewed the photos since the item was tabled. Consensus among the members is that there was not time to do so.

Ms. Taylo asks the adjoining apartment building residents are aware of the proposed extension? The board staff confirms that the applicant complied with the requirements by posting a notice explaining the project on the property's front door and a public lamppost.

Mr. Meehan asks to confirm if the impacted window is a lotline window? The architect responds that the window is offset.

Ms. Taylor drilled down, asking whether the people in the ground floor apartment were specifically notified? The sponsor can only affirm that the notice was posted on the front door, which board staff stress is the extent of what is required. Ms. Taylor is concerned that the front door is a common entrance, and that the affected tenants may not have seen or understood what had been posted.

Dr. Lazur withdraws her prior motion in support of the committee's recommendation.

Mr. Meehan made a motion to support the committee's recommendation, seconded by Ms. Duke. The motion failed with 7 in favor, 11 opposed and 6 abstentions.

The Architect contends that he did not misrepresent any physical condition and takes issue with the fact that the board did not allow him to present his side of the issue as the discussion unfolded.

Mr. Witherwax makes a motion to support the recommendation provided that the architect makes an effort to directly contact that the affected residents to ensure that they are aware of the project. It doesn't receive a second.

Ms. Young makes a motion to support the recommendation of the committee, seconded by Mr. Meehan and emphasizes that it is essential that committee members do research ahead of contentious votes.

Mr. Witherwax proposes an amendment for the architect to give notice of the LPC hearing and attempt to converse with the residents of the apartment. The architect is amenable to doing so and providing documentation of having done so to the board office. The amendment is accepted by the sponsor. The motion passes with 21 in favor, 2 opposed and 0 abstentions.

Elected Officials

Tamisha Thompson, Office of Councilmember Darlene Mealy—The office's regularly scheduled assistance on Immigration Services is changing from Thursdays to Mondays. The district's Community Advisory Committee will meet next on the evening of October 26th at PS 268. Ms. Thompson also reminds voters to flip their ballot to review ballot proposals 2-6. On October 22nd, there will be an OATH resource fair at the Library at 9612 Flatbush. Also on this Thursday 392 Blake Avenue, the member will give a State of the District. In attendance will be representatives from the 82nd and 73rd Precincts, the Department for the Aging, and DSNY.

Hercules Reed, Office of Mayor Eric Adams: Mr. Reid gave an update on BHEARD, the city's ongoing initiative to connect people in crisis with trained mental health professionals when calling 911; BHEARD professionals responded to 73% of recent mental health-related calls. On Ghost cars, the city has a new task force to go after cars with fake plates. In order to address high unemployment rates in communities like East New York and Brownsville, the city has been hosting Job Sprints. In 5 months of targeting these communities, 8,000+ people signed up for resources.

During Mayor Adams' administration, 24 new school buildings have opened.

Mr. Reid also reiterates the upcoming bin mandate.

Ms. Taylor asks if there is any data on hiring of people who were engaged with resources; Mr. Reid says that there should be data for each Hiring Hall, and he can provide the details to the board office.

Public Comment

Ms. Young: The Crown Heights North Association will hold its general membership on October 16th to review the 6 proposals on the November ballot at 1055 St. Johns at 6:45. On October 19th at 999 St. Johns Place there will be free shredding from 9-11:45. Lastly, CHNA's Doggie Parade will take place on October 26th from 11-2pm.

Mr. Mensah: This upcoming Saturday is Panamanian Day Parade. Emergency Preparedness information will be distributed.

Ms. Muckle announces that the Albany Youth Association will host its 40th Annual Halloween Party. The theme this year is Safe Halloween, taking place at Eastern Parkway & Albany. The Fire Safety Department will come to provide education.

Having concluded the board's business, Char Weatherspoon adjourned the meeting at 9:49PM and thanked the community and members for their attendance.