

The City of New York

Brooklyn Community Board 15



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Monthly Board Meeting – Minutes

GENERAL BOARD MEETING

Tuesday February 24, 2026, 6:00pm

WEBEX:

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm, by Chairperson Theresa Scavo. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Chair Scavo asked that everyone remain silent for a moment for World Peace.

PUBLIC HEARING / PUBLIC SESSION:

NYC Department of Consumer Affairs and Worker Protection (DCWP) Free Tax Program Presentation.

Chair Scavo called upon the first presenter of the evening Ali Boivab, Community Affairs Associate for NYC Department of Consumer Affairs and Worker Protection (DCWP), who gave a brief presentation on their Free Tax Program, which assists low and moderate-income New Yorkers in accessing tax benefits and avoiding predatory preparers.

Ali Boivab explained DCWP's Mission Statement which protects and enhances the daily economic lives of New Yorkers to create thriving communities. DCWP serves all New Yorkers regardless of immigration status. He added DCWP just sued the Radiant Solar firm to address a scheme that drove up utility costs for consumers and is seeking millions in restitution.

In regard to the Free Tax Prep DCWP is offering, you must be income eligible to qualify, for families with dependents and/or qualifying children an income of \$97,000 or less and for single filers an income of \$68,000 or less. You would need to gather all your pertinent information, photo id, tax id, proof of income, childcare expenses, bank account and routing numbers and visit one of over 130 prep sites in the five boroughs. To find a site you can call 311 and ask for "Tax Preparation" or visit nyc.gov/taxprep.

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It was asked where in Community Board 15, there is a prep site and it was answered that the Sheepshead Bay Library located at 2636 East 14th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11235.

Mariya Markh, Deputy Chief of Staff for Assemblyman Kalman Yeger stated that the Assemblyman is offering Free Tax Prep, for those who meet the eligibility criteria at his office located at 3520 Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11229 on 3/10 & 3/24/2026 from 11:00am-5:00pm, appointments are required. Please call (347)-682-5606.

FDNY – Fire Safety Education Unit: Briefing on Fire Safety postponed until March 24, 2026, Board Meeting.

Chair Scavo called upon the next Presenters:

Proposal by Care Counseling for their intent to open a licensed evidence-based Outpatient Addiction Treatment Center at 3041 Avenue U, Brooklyn, NY 11229.

Representing Care Counseling were James Malewicz, Clinical Director and Faruk Khwaja, CEO.

They are seeking to expand Care Counseling's addiction treatment program where they have identified a need in Southern Brooklyn. They stated 20% of their clients commute from Southern Brooklyn. They are presently located in Harlem and have recently opened a facility in Queens and the commute for their clients in Brooklyn is a hardship. They are proposing to open a location in Community Board 15, at 3041 Avenue U, Brooklyn, NY 11229. Faruk Khwaja stated Care Counseling was established in 2015 and is licensed by New York State Office of Department of Health and there's a special subdivision OASAS, which is New York State Office of Addiction Services and Supports. They have a special license there, which is difficult to obtain. He stated he faced an eighteen-month character and competency review and must have a pristine record with the State to be approved. They have successfully run their Harlem location for over a decade and are looking to expand their services. James Maelwicz stated Care Counseling will only serve local residents and has a mostly senior population. He added they are not a methadone clinic, they dispense no medication, nor store medication or needles. Faruk Khwaja stated they have no overnight services and do not service a criminal justice population. They specialize in long-term care and have treatment retention above New York State averages. Appointments are scheduled; no walk-ins and seniors are escorted by ambulette. Public Transportation is convenient to this location and there appears to be ample

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street parking, The hours are Tuesday -Friday and Sundays 7:00am – 3:00pm. They will be closed on Saturdays and Mondays. They closed by stating they are a responsible neighbor and have an excellent track record with no community disturbances and are responsive to community concerns.

Questions from the floor voiced concerns over this location's proximity to a Special Needs School for Children and several Daycare Centers. James Maelwicz stated that there is a school down the road from them at the Harlem location and there have been no incidents. He stated he felt the residents have a misconception of what clinics and clients look like. He said you would never know if any of their clients abuse substances because they are highly functioning members of society. A Board Member stated that these clients made some "bad choices" and being in proximity of small children, especially those with special needs is a concern.

Care Counseling was asked if they are aware of a recent bait and switch residential development that is being built down the road, which was supposed to be affordable housing but now will be a homeless shelter. It was asked if that is why they chose this location to have a guaranteed client base from the homeless shelter. They claim they were unaware of the proposed shelter and are just focusing on their existing clients, not looking to overwhelm their rosters, which would be illegal, they can only have a finite number of patients for each counselor.

It was asked what median age their clients were and what kind of substances they were abusing. It was answered they are predominantly 55 -80 in age and it was sleeping pills, alcohol and prescribed medications mostly that they were abusing. They have family stresses and being from other countries, issues in adapting into the culture.

There was an inquiry about the use of ambulettes and pick-up and drop-off parking needs, and they stated that many of their clients will be escorted to and from the facility by ambulette. Concerns for introducing more ambulettes to an already congested commercial corridor with commuting buses and other schools utilizing buses nearby was mentioned.

A local daycare owner expressed their concern for the children in their care. They also wanted written guarantees that the owners of Care Counseling would be responsible for any negative financial impact on the daycare should their clientele create such as having Police called and having to lock down their facility. They wanted it put in writing they will never dispense medicine, which Care Counseling offered to do. Finally, they wanted contact information so that Care Counseling can be reached outside of operating

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hours in case of emergencies. They added they have collected a hundred signatures of residents opposed to this location and will be working with Council Member Narcisse's office to fight to stop this program from opening next door to them. They understand the need for these programs but not near young children.

It was asked what makes Care Counseling Services different from South Brooklyn Health, which offers the same services in a local Hospital. They felt clients get more specialized attention in their program which has counselors on staff who speak a multitude of languages.

When asked what Hospital, Care Counseling is affiliated with, they have not secured one yet and will do so when they have a guaranteed location.

Care Counseling was asked if they could produce their analysis that there is a need for these services for local residents in Southern Brooklyn, aside from a map of commuting clients they produced. They would like factual statistical data.

Lastly, someone read the list of services from their website, which stated Domestic Violence, Anger Management, Vocational Rehabilitation and DWI/DUI Screenings and Assessment emphasizing that these treatment services offered by Care Counseling should not be located near daycares and special needs schools. Concluding this is not a suitable location for this request.

A motion was made to approve the applicant's request by Ronald Tawil and seconded by Morris Dweck.

The Board went into Executive Session, and a Full Board Vote was taken, The vote was 0 yes, 43 no. It was unanimous. The motion was not approved.

Chair Scavo opened the floor and invited Elected Officials, their Representatives, Agency Representatives and Community Members to speak:

Irina Khlevner, Director of Constituent Services for Councilmember Mercedes Narcisse, introduced the Councilmember's new Legislative Fellow Kourtney Li and welcomed her to the team. She added they are having a Property Value Workshop coming up on March 10 in their office. For property owners this workshop will help explain your property market value assessment, any exemptions you are entitled to and understanding of your estimated tax. Please call to RSVP 718 241-9330. They are still offering legal assistance for those who want to speak with an attorney regarding any legal

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issues you may have. There are representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs every second Tuesday of every month from 10:00am to 4:00pm at the office. The office continues to host food giveaways, OMNY MetroCard services and healthcare screenings. For additional information and to reach out for any help please call the office at 718-241-9330

Mariya Markh, Deputy Chief of Staff for Assemblyman Kalman Yeger said 1st and foremost, thank you for having this very important meeting. I know it's not just a monthly meeting but also just to get all of these very important issues to the public. She added that the Assembly Member supports the Community Board in this vote and anything that you will need from our office we will be more than happy to support. We are also very, very grateful to the Board because we know that there have been some issues with the Plum Lounge, and we are going to be reaching out to SLA as well regarding the issues that they've had regarding late night noise. She reiterated that the office is having free tax prep on March 10 and March 24 and they do have some times available on both days. It does require an appointment. The criteria are \$97000 for anybody that has dependents or less or for a single person, \$68000, those are the folks that can get this service. In addition to that, we've got our monthly half-fare OMNY program. The OMNY van will be outside our office on March 3, from 10:00am to Noon. They can do everything from transfer people's Metro Cards to the OMNY cards, add money and assist people who are becoming 65 years older, in getting their half fare cards for the 1st time can do that. She announced starting on Monday March 2, 2026, their office will become an E-Waste drop off site. Constituents can bring in any of their E-Waste things so that's computers, laptops, TVs, things like that to the office, and that is from Monday through Thursday, 10:00am-4:00pm.

Miranda Garcia representing Senator Jessica Scarcella-Spanton's Office stated that Senator Scarcella-Spanton recently hosted a press conference to speak out against the proposed New York City property tax increases. The Senator believes that property taxes shouldn't continue to be raised on the backs of hard-working constituents and they shouldn't have to bear the responsibility for the current budget gap. The Senator believes the property tax system is fundamentally broken and needs to work to fix disparities in the tax code and will work to make sure that some neighborhoods aren't benefiting over others. Homeowners in Southern Brooklyn and Staten Island shoulder a lot of the burden of high property taxes and she would like to work to fix that. She added that a significant state investment in Air Quality was signed by the Governor. The Governor has announced that there is \$365 Million that was awarded statewide. She added \$2 Million of funding was allocated towards reducing flood risk and to protect drinking water to the

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New York City Department of Environmental Protection for a green infrastructure project in Brooklyn. This is to install buyer retention systems along Neptune Avenue and Bayview Avenue. They're also investing \$8 million in Sheepshead Bay. That money is allocated to the Sheepshead/Nostrand Houses for a green infrastructure project that's involves water adaptations to prevent storm water run-off. The Senator is hosting a Black History Month event all are welcome. The idea is to honor Black excellence and education, so the Senator will be honoring local educators and students on February 27, 2026, which is this Friday at 6:00pm at the Coney Island YMCA. Also, just a reminder, the deadline to file for a lot of tax exemptions is March 16, so feel free to reach out to our office.

Nancy Lulu representing Brooklyn DA, Eric Gonzalez, extended greetings from the Brooklyn DA. She hoped everyone was staying warm. She invited everyone to please visit the Brooklyn DA's Website at BrooklynDA.org to review the services and resources they provide. She added if you would like to address something with the DA's office please call the Action Center 718-250-2340.

Noam Abrahams representing Senator Sam Sutton's Office hoped everyone was staying warm. He said speaking of warm, heating and electric bills are getting extremely high and even though the Senator is seeking Legislative methods of trying to get the prices down, there are also services and programs available that can help constituents afford to pay their bills. He added you may be eligible for a one-time grant through the emergency HEAP program or the Neighborhood Heating Fund. If you are interested in finding out your eligibility and having trouble paying your bill, please reach out to their office at (718) 253-2015. As the weather improves Senator Sutton will be hosting more events and we will keep you all in the loop as things develop.

Hunter Rabinowitz representing Borough President Antonio Reynoso sent greetings from the Brooklyn Borough President. He hoped everyone was staying warm. In lieu of having fliers since we are virtual, he encouraged everyone to visit the Brooklyn Borough President's website and social media for resources and events that the office has upcoming. He stated he wanted to mention there will be a Teen Summit which is a workshop for our Youth Advisory Council. Educators, Mentors and Community Leaders all are invited to submit their workshop proposals, deadline is Friday February 27th. He added also this Friday at 6:00pm is their Lunar New Year Celebration at Brooklyn Borough Hall. He invited everyone to join in the celebration of culture, community and tradition for the "Year of the Horse."

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He also announced there is a Department for the Aging, Connect Hiring Hall that they are partnering with the New York City Department for the Aging to connect older adults with employers, access to job search tools and have on-hand career support resources. This is their 2nd annual talent Connect Hiring Hall between our office and the Department for the Aging. This is going to be held at the Brooklyn Public Library Central Branch, so the Grand Army Plaza Branch on Wednesday, March 11, 2026 from 12:00p.m. to 03:00p.m. He reiterated that you could network with organizations that value experience and mature talent. He also shared that Brooklyn Borough Hall has an ongoing free tax prep until April 8, 2026. Eligible New Yorkers can access free tax filing services provided by IRS certified volunteers. Appointments are available Mondays and Wednesdays between 10:00am 04:00pm. He cautioned that you do need an appointment, so please to take advantage of the free service. And then finally, for anyone that is interested, you can go on our website and see all of the ULURP hearings that we have. They are always held on the 2nd Wednesday of the month and they are open to the public. So, if anything interests you, please, feel free to attend. That's all I have. I will see you next month.

Chair Scavo asked if anyone else would like to speak? With no one coming forward she moved on to Executive Session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

A Roll Call Attendance was taken by Chair Scavo by, with a Quorum present, a motion to adopt January 27, 2026, minutes was made by Dr. Alan Ditchek and seconded by William Truscio.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT:

Chair Scavo stated, as usual, this time of the year we receive the budget responses for the request that we made on our Community District Needs Statement. She added one glaring response that stood out was that we requested more Buildings Inspectors. The response we got from the City of New York's Building Department was that they don't understand the request. How do you not understand the request? Please hire and give us more Buildings Inspectors so people don't have to wait years for an inspection. Their response was unacceptable. She added every request that we made, in regard to the Parks Department whether it was updating play equipment, installing restrooms, stated that the Parks Department fully support the request, but does not have the funding. In regard to our Brooklyn Public Library requests. They stated we support all of your requests, but we do not have the Funding. In regard to the Police Department, we requested more Police Officers, asking for funding to hire more Officers, to give Officers a better money allocation

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for uniforms and supplies. All answered by the New York City **Police** Department with No Funding. Chair Scavo made a motion to create a letter of comment rejecting every response we received across the board. The motion was seconded by Moses Massry.

Chair Scavo read the Liquor Licenses the Board received for February 2026

Renewal, Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider

The Draft Barn on X, Inc.
317 Avenue X
Brooklyn, NY 11223

Milinna's Homemade Food Inc
DBA – Milinna's Homemade Food
813 Avenue U Brooklyn, NY 11223

Liv Rick Rest Corp
3939 Emmons Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11235

James J Buckley Restaurant Corp
DBA – Buckley's
2926 Avenue S
Brooklyn, NY 11229

Tacos El Jaguar LLC
DBA – El Jaguar Restaurant and Bar
158 Avenue U
Brooklyn, NY 11223

Renewal, Wine, Beer & Cider

Hibachi Glatt Inc
DBA – Kasai
2524 Coney Island Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11223

New Application and Temporary Retail Permit, Liquor, Wine, Beer & Cider

Jes Fuji LLC
512 Avenue U
Brooklyn, NY 11223

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Dining Out -Sidewalk License:

Roll-N-Roaster, Corp.
DBA – Roll-N-Roaster
2901 Emmons Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11235

If you know of any illegal activity or want to share any concerns regarding a liquor license, please contact our office.

Health Committee Report:

Health Committee Chairperson, Dr. Alan Ditchek stated that the Health Committee, as well as Members of the Full Board, met for a presentation on Maimonides Hospital merging with New York City Health and Hospitals, more importantly South Brooklyn Health the former Coney Island Hospital that services our Community. They outlined some of the reasons for this merger, particularly better reimbursement from Medicare and Medicaid enjoyed by the New York City Health and Hospital System. Since 40 % of private insurance goes to Manhattan Hospitals. Maimonides sees a large share of the same Medicare and Medicaid patients. They would soon be able to optimize the reimbursement from these government plans since that is the majority of insurance payers that they see. Maimonides plans on maintaining all of their specialty services. Their goal is to improve quality of care and they will try and attract more patients with private insurance. Also, they plan on changing their electronic medical record system to a system called Epic. Epic will give the hospital more versatility. He added that even though this seemed to us like a courtesy meeting, he must commend all of the Members of the Health Committee for their appointed and insightful questions. It seemed like our questioning would lead to a referendum whether we thought this merger would take place, but obviously it's not up to us. Our Committee was concerned about Maimonides being able to maintain the fine reputation that they developed over the years and the concern that somehow affiliating with South Brooklyn Hospital would in some way diminish Maimonides good standing in the Community. Overall, it was an interesting meeting and there were many good questions asked about the about the merger.

A Board Member asked if it was just a particular Maimonides Facility that is merging or the entire Maimonides portfolio? It is the entire Maimonides

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Hospital. Someone asked when is this to take place? Chair Scavo answered that she believed the merger was to take place on, April 1, 2026. She added that South Brooklyn Health's Chief Operating Officer is now moving over to Maimonides.

Health Committee Chair Dr. Alan Ditchek closed with that historically Maimonides previous attempts to merger with other Hospitals with only certain departments had failed in the past for some reason. He added it's complicated but they are assuring excellent quality of care.

OLD BUSINESS: An inquiry on any updates to 2025-54-A BSA Appeal? Regarding the property, that is located at 2114 Coyle Street. It was answered it was being reviewed and there were no updates at this time.

NEW BUSINESS: 100% Attendance Awards postponed till March 24, 2026, Board Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Ronald Tawil and seconded by Al Smaldone. The meeting was adjourned at 7:31pm

*This is not a verbatim account of the meeting but a synopsis of the main points. *