

Brooklyn Community Board 4  
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, November 16, 2022 6pm

Zoom

Chairperson: Robert Camacho  
District Manager: Celestina Leon

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Meeting Start: 6:05pm

Celeste called the meeting to order and announced the first public hearing item.

**Public Hearing:**

1) **Renee McClure, National Grid** – providing an informational update regarding (i) where New York State is in the process of deciding how we will collectively reach the clean energy targets outlined in the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) and (ii) what National Grid is doing to ensure a fossil free future.

**Our vision for a fossil-free future**

National Grid's vision is to fully eliminate fossil fuels from our US gas and electric systems, enabling the customers and communities we serve to meet their heating needs without using fossil fuels by 2050, if not sooner.

**Mobilizing to help our customers to reach net zero**

Reducing emissions from the buildings sector is one of the most important and challenging problems that must be solved to achieve net zero. Heat is essential to life and keeping it affordable and reliable is critical for economic development and wellbeing.

Our vision proposes a hybrid approach that enables customers to have more affordable and practical choices to become fossil-free.

**Our plan for a fossil-free future rests on four pillars:**

- Energy efficiency in buildings
- 100% fossil-free gas network
- Hybrid electric-gas heating systems
- Targeted electrification and networked geothermal

Renee shared that National Grid is attending community board meetings to have conversations about their goals and the CLCPA. For National Grid, it's about how they get involved in

removing fossil fuels from that space. This year they're taking comments on how to move forward.

Statistics show that heat is the largest of New York's economy. The annual heat consumption is double the total of electricity in the state. There are 11 nuclear plants offshore as a reference. Fossil fuels in New York State are 92% of heat energy.

The transition will be implemented in a reliable, safe, and equitable way.

- Maintain energy in an affordable manner
- Reliable and resilient
- Equitable for all New Yorkers

The National Grid Fossil Free Plan proposes eliminating fossil fuels no later than 2050. They are looking at RNG and hydrogen as well as partnership with a wind company—a mixed portfolio to meet their goals.

#### **Q & A/Discussion:**

Cassandra Leveille: If National Grid is purporting to invest in clean energy why invest in the North Brooklyn Pipeline, which has faced a lot of community opposition and banned vaporizers? Renee - Former Mayor de Blasio asked National Grid to stop the project.

Cassandra - We're getting mixed messages.

Renee: In regards to the Metropolitan Natural Gas Reliability Project (MRI) it is temporarily stopped. Its purpose is redundancy, like a loop system—not to increase supply. The vaporizer's purpose, what do we do when it's the coldest day? We have to move gas to temperature controlled customers more efficiently and have reliability and supply. For the infrastructure, they still have requirements and regulators. They still have to build infrastructure while building out the renewable system and how to maintain those systems.

Cassandra: point of clarification, what is RNG?

Renee: Renewable Natural Gas

Stephanie Anderson: You mentioned geothermal and green hydrogen.

Renee: Geothermal is not new. It's a new project—heat as a heat source. I'm not an engineer and not able to provide all the technicalities. We're trying to identify projects to pilot for geothermal. Ex. Newtown Creek—they are taking composite and reusing the methane. They've done some testing and are trying to get past the last piece.

Anne Guiney: Clarification—geothermal is a few feet below the ground and not that hot.

Renee: It's a few feet and way cheaper to heat. It's easier to heat and cool. The Earth does some of the work.

Jo-Ena Bennett: I know people converting from oil to gas. Are they wasting their money? What is the cheapest and most efficient? It costs thousands of dollars and we're now being told it's not the future. What does this do to the infrastructure of our homes?

Renee: It's too soon to say. In 2024, we're looking at not being able to provide gas in that space. What does it mean to retrofit? There's going to be a cost. What does it look like? It's still being worked out. It's impacting utility businesses and the community.

Jo-Ena: When will we get the figures? People have to make decisions about their homes.

Renee: It's not coming from National Grid. They have to be figured out by the CLCPA.

Celeste Leon (District Manager): What is the rest of National Grid's outreach plan? How is best to communicate concerns?

Renee: All community boards and elected officials were contacted, ads on social media, 5 documents—one page. The documents with links will share the process. The comment period has closed.

Stephanie: I'm doing some work on my mother's house. Oil is high this year, between \$6-\$8 per gallon. One more option is to take the existing furnace and put something on the top. Converting oil to gas is more economical.

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### **83rd Precinct Report - Captain Shawn Claxton, 83 Precinct Executive Officer**

Captain Claxton was joined by Officer Oscar Lopez from the Community Affairs Unit.

This is my first in-person meeting. I bring greetings from the Commanding Officer. She's unable to attend today. I was also at the Precinct Clergy Council Meeting this morning and will echo those points.

- The Commanding Officer Community Advisory Board (CAB) meeting includes advice on the needs of the community.
  - A member of the community board, community partners, and clergy joined.
  - Park conditions, off-route trucking were discussed.
  - We welcome further meetings. The Commander is open to having more individuals give their point-of-view for them to address.
- Traffic safety motto—public safety is traffic. We look at traffic conditions.
  - The Captain provided an overview of recent statistics.
  - They were trending down in a lot of categories.
  - The precinct is increasing enforcement efforts: red light summons, texting, speeding, failure to yield.
  - One category is presently up: individuals struck 13 v. 9, a 44% increase
  - Year-to-date: 91 v. 80, a 13% increase
  - Paying attention to pedestrians. Speed enforcement is high, as well. Everyone is involved in traffic safety.

- There are four Traffic Safety Officers. 178 Officers total. Patrol and Auxiliary officers assist.
- There were several arrests for DWI - suspended license. The precinct personnel made the arrests.
- They are not just going out and writing summonses. They use/analyze data and target locations with education; not just summons. There are several flyers. They leverage social media (Twitter, Facebook).
- They're aware of concerns about trucks rumbling and shaking at night.
  - There were no traffic personnel at night. They added enforcement and issued 17 summonses on Bushwick Avenue. The problem persists notably at night. They've scheduled initiatives at night.
- Crime - the major 7
  - Felonious assault is up, 43 v. 22
    - The Domestic Violence officers are working 7 days a week.
  - Burglary, 33% increase
    - Property-related crimes
  - Grand larceny, 72% increase
    - Vehicle break-ins during overnight hours. Opportunists are out there. The precinct knows most substance abusers. Other resources they share after arrest. They should get the help they need.
    - Also, help the victims. Help combat the condition.

Crime and arrests are up. 22% for all crimes. Year-to-date: 215 v. 175, 13.1 %  
The detective squad works tirelessly.

### **Q&A/Discussion:**

A public attendee asked about addressing the graffiti issue.

Captain Claxton: Some people don't report the crime unless someone is a victim—the owner of the property. The precinct doesn't self-initiate, although they investigate when they see it. They have a program where they paint over. Contact Community Affairs.

Public attendee: Most buildings are larger like Food Bazaar. Commercial building owners are not there—don't care.

Captain Claxton: NCOs are tasked with trying to find someone to report it in order to investigate. It's best to report up to a few days after.

Public attendee #2: Is something being done about scooters?

CC: E-bikes are illegal. The precinct has confiscated scooters in the last 56 days. There were some egregious arrests. They are addressing it to the best of their ability.

Leo Tineo: I'm a Lt. with the FDNY and there has been a rise in fires with batteries being stored inside. Major fires—over 300 throughout the city have caused a few deaths.

Council Member Nurse: in response to the e-bike battery, we're working on legislation to set up more disposable sites and prevent fires in homes or DSNY trucks.

CC: if there is an unregistered e-bike in a lobby or building, we will confiscate them.

Robert Camacho (Board Chairperson): Under 12 years old you aren't allowed to ride a scooter or anything. It's illegal to ride on the sidewalk.

Rodney Trujillo (public attendee #1): bike lanes aren't used. The street is narrow already.

CC: An education effort needs to be out there. Maybe we can coordinate with DOT.

Celeste: please share the locations, days, and times.

Ada Trujillo (public attendee #2): there was a huge presence of cops in the area. It felt good to see them and then they went away. How is that coordinated?

CC: New officers, the vast majority, are assigned to the borough. They deploy them as they deem fit. Also in training.

Stephanie: a trending robbery scheme where you're bumped by the one in the back and they steal your car.

CC: Not aware of that crime.

Cassandra: e-bikes—noticed a lot throughout the area, including Bed-Stuy and Ridgewood. Biker riders go against traffic. On Bushwick Avenue, mopeds and scooters go against traffic. It's potentially dangerous.

CC: We did a joint operation with DOT over the summer. In July we coordinated an effort on Wyckoff Avenue between Jefferson and Willoughby. Credit to the Community Board for making us aware of the issue.

Cassandra: There's a reason why it happens. Delivery app drivers have to meet time limits. It encourages them to break traffic laws. Businesses shouldn't penalize drivers for a certain time period.

Ben Tocker: It's encouraging to say traffic safety is public safety. Ben cited additional crash report data and asked the Captain if he was aware of the info as he didn't see violations.

CC: We will look into it.

## **Regular Meeting:**

### **1) First Roll Call**

**Board members in attendance:** Isa Abney, Stephanie Anderson, Jo-Ena Bennett, Rawle Brown, Robert Camacho, Melissa Carrera-Solano, Felix Ceballos, James Fitzgerald, Joanna Fuentes, Christopher Graham, Anne Guiney, Tanesha Honeygan, Barbara Jackson, Cheryl Jones, Virgie Jones, Luisa Jose-Olea, Nicolas Kaplan, Cassandra Leveille, Imini Mitchell, Zulma Novoa, Acire Polight, Raul Rubio, Eliseo Ruiz, Vernedeaner Shell, Barbara Smith, Dustin

Sonneborn, Annette Spellman, James Steward, Benjamin Tocker, Jerry Valentin, Tashawna Wade, Carlotta Williams

**Excused:** None

**Absent:** Grace Aytes, Elvena Davis, Freddy Fowler, Hadiyah Harrison, Kweighbaye Kotee, Mary McClellan, Desmonde Monroe, Samy Nemir, Kyle O'Rourke, Maria Soler

35 board members present. That constitutes a quorum. Thank you, everyone.

## 2) **Acceptance of the Agenda**

Barbara Jackson made a motion to accept the agenda. It was seconded by Raul Rubio. All were in favor, so moved.

## 3) **Acceptance of the Previous Meeting Minutes**

Robert Camacho made a motion to accept the previous meeting minutes. It was seconded by Melissa Carrera. All were in favor, so moved.

## 4) **Chairperson's Report**

Mr. Camacho provided an overview of meetings and events he attended in the past month.

### **Council Member Nurse:**

Spoke about a town hall with NYC Emergency Management. They offered to bring in an insurance expert that is something her office wants to host. Backfill valves cost \$12 however the installation fee is expensive. The DEP will come and do an assessment for free. The Member referenced the presentation during the September meeting on the Rainfall Ready program.

Public attendee: thank you - how can they support?

CM Nurse: we're reviewing an internal timeline to schedule a walkthrough with the Commissioner. We sent a joint letter, which is also on social media. Maybe there will be a press conference. Every storm jeopardizes the streets.

### Social media handles

CM Nurse: @cmsandynurse

CM Gutierrez: @cmjennifergutierreznyc

Barbara Smith: Why isn't CM Nurse beautifying Irving Square Park?

CM Nurse: we actually spoke with Parks about trees. We pulled that from the district needs survey. We've asked since June 30th for Parks to put resources for:

- Maintenance
- A playground associate
- 3 movie screenings

They need support to move faster. She allocated \$50,000 for trees at \$3,500 per tree.

Annette Spellen: I used to be the Parks Committee Chair and there was an issue with redirected funding.

Barbara Jackson: What about the Winter Celebration in Irving Square Park?

CM Nurse: the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce was allocated \$40G for preinstall work and there was extra money to get a tree. We can consider Irving Square Park next year.

Eliseo Ruiz: We need a tree.

Mr. Camacho: We'll talk after the meeting.

CM Nurse: We're planning a joint holiday tree lighting on December 5th. One in Knickerbocker Plaza and then a parranda on the way to the other in Maria Hernandez Park. We kept the lights that former CM Diaz funded.

CM Gutierrez: CM Nurse funded the lights again this year.

### **Council Member Gutierrez:**

I have some legislative updates. We passed two bills.

- Support for a pilot program in 13 of the most vulnerable communities for them to access a midwife and doula.
  - There is a report that summarizes the benefits
  - She delivered her baby with a midwife and doula at Woodhull
- Marshal Plan for new moms
  - How to support caregivers
  - More intergenerational folks stepping in
  - \$1/2M salary affecting women
  - Study what we can do to support that and excited that it was successful passed

### **Mobile Office Hours**

For Bushwick they are still at Oak Street Health and will be on hold for the holidays.

### **Participatory Budgeting**

Still in the process. All of Bushwick participating--programs will benefit Bushwick.

To uplift Broadway before other parts on Morgan. Weirfield and in Ridgewood immigrant men working. The streets are not as safe. Broadway is a priority corridor under Vision Zero. It was not realized--didn't see upgrades in North Brooklyn.

### **Advocacy with DEP**

We remember Hurricane Ida and Knickerbocker. We're advocating to ensure any green infrastructure money is coming to Bushwick. The catch basins are 100 years old. We're sounding the alarm and scheduling a tour with the DEP Commissioner. We have their back on equity and green infrastructure.

Public Attendee: Right now they subsidize the cost of the backflow valve. CM Nurse's town hall, the valve is the piece. Bushwick is not considered a priority area. Other more water-bounded communities are prioritized.

**Elected Officials Representatives in attendance:**

- Lacey Tauber, Borough President Antonio Reynoso's office
- Carlos Calzadilla, New York State Senator Julia Salazar
- Julio Salazar, Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez
- Fran Sanhueza, Council Member Sandy Nurse

**CBO + Agency Reps in attendance:**

- Sinthia Pena Ortiz, Bushwick Community Partnership
- Iris Cruz, RAD Hope Gardens Property Manager
- Priscilla Romero, Families Together
- Anton Nimblett, Volunteers of America Bushwick Residence

**5) District Manager's Report**

[Read the full report](#)

**6) Committee Reports**

Arts/Culture Technology

[Read the full report](#)

Health/Human Service/Senior Citizens/Veterans

[Read the full report](#)

Economic Development + Permits and Licenses

[Read the full report](#)

Environmental Protection/Transportation/Sanitation + Parks and Recreation

[Read the full report](#)

Housing and Land Use

[Read the full report](#)

**7) Recommendations**

Economic Development + Permits and Licenses

**Motion for a blanket vote:**

Jose Guzman made a motion for a blanket vote. It was seconded by Raul Rubio. Raul Rubio, Zulma Novoa, Carlotta Williams, and Jo-Ena Bennett abstained. The motion carried.



**Motion for the committee's recommendations:**

Jose Guzman made a motion in favor of the committee's recommendations. Raul Rubio seconded the motion. Carlotta Williams, Zulma Novoa, and Jo-Ena Bennett abstained. The motion carried.

**8) Old Business**

None

**9) New Business**

None

**10) Announcements**

Annette Spellen (CPSR Chair) announced the public safety town hall on November 30th and a reminder about Local Law 152. Properties need to be inspected by a licensed plumber.

Carlos Calzadilla (NYS Senator Julia Salazar): announced the Public Safety town hall in collaboration with CB4 on 11/30. They also have a survey. Please fill it out as it will guide the town hall. The link to the survey was added to the chat.

Lacey Tauber (Borough President Antonio Reynoso): two quick things, today, this morning the maternal health campaign launched. It's a multicultural, multimedia campaign at bus stops, social media. It's guided by the maternal health task force and part of the larger effort.

Community Board members, the application opened yesterday. Appointees should have received an email.

Julio Salazar (Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez): He's back in the office and watching the Board's older meetings to catch up. He spoke with the Chair and district manager. Their office is able to assist with Broadway.

Fran Sanhueza (Council Member Nurse): There are upcoming utility and asylum seeker resource events.

Josh Brown (CB4 1st Vice Chair): reminded everyone that deed fraud is still an issue in Bushwick. The board previously hosted an educational event. You can view it on the CB4 YouTube Channel.

Mr. Camacho: If board members are calling in to the meeting, please let the office know before the meeting. If we don't have your number, Kim cannot unmute you.

**11) Second Roll Call**

**Board members in attendance:** Carlotta Williams, Tashawna Wade, Jerry Valentin, Benjamin Tocker, James Steward, Annette Spellin, Dustin Sonneborn, Barbara Smith, Vernedeane Shell, Milagros Sandoval, Eliseo Ruiz, Raul Rubio, Acire Polight, Gladys Puglla, Zulma Novoa, Imini Mitchell, Cassandra Leveille, Kweighbaye Kotee, Nicolas Kaplan, Luisa Jose Olea, Virgie Jones, Cheryl Jones, Barbara Jackson, Tanesha Honeygan, Jose Guzman, Anne Guiney, Christopher Graham, Joanna Fuentes, James Fitzgerald, Elvena Davis, Andrew Choi, Felix Ceballos, Melissa Carrera, Robert Camacho, Rawle Brown, Joshua Brown, Jo-Ena Bennett, Stephanie Anderson, Isa Abney

**Absent:** Leo Tineo, Maria Soler, Kyle O'Rourke, Samy Nemir, Desmonde Monroe, Mary McClellan, Hadiyah Harrison, Freddy Fowler, Grace Aytes

**12) Adjournment**

Raul Rubio made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Melissa Carrera. All were in favor, so moved.

Meeting adjourned: 9:05pm