

Brooklyn Community Board 4
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 18, 2023, 6pm

Hope Gardens Multi-Service Senior Center
195 Linden Street
&
Zoom

Chairperson: Robert Camacho
District Manager: Celestina León

Meeting Start: 6:05pm

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

Public Hearing:

- 1) Edward Cen, NYC Department of Consumer and Worker Protection - presenting on the NYC Free Tax Prep program and Financial Empowerment Centers

Overview: NYC Free Tax Prep and NYC Financial Empowerment Centers

DCWP Mission Statement: To protect and enhance the daily economic lives of New Yorkers to create thriving communities.

NYC Free Tax Prep

Use NYC Free Tax Prep to file for free and keep your whole refund.

- **For families:** Income of \$80,000 or less.
- **For single filers:** Income of \$56,000 or less.

Work with a knowledgeable IRS certified VITA/TCE volunteer preparer to complete an accurate tax return.

There are 4 ways to file and more than 130 sites in all 5 boroughs. **Choose how you want to file.**

1. **In-Person Tax Prep†** Sit down with a volunteer preparer.
2. **Drop-off Service†** Drop off your documents and pick up your completed return later.
3. **Virtual Tax Prep*** It's In-Person Tax Prep but online!
4. **Assisted Self-Preparation*** Do your own taxes online using free filing software but phone or email a volunteer for help.

† Due to COVID-19, in-person services may change.

*Online services are safe and reliable.

Choose your language.

- English
- Español (Spanish)
- العربية (Arabic)
- বাংলা (Bengali)
- 中文 (Chinese)
- Français (French)
- kreyòl ayisyen (Haitian
- Creole)
- עברית (Hebrew)
- 한국어 (Korean)
- Język Polski (Polish)
- Русский (Russian)
- اردو (Urdu)
- יידיש (Yiddish)

Get your documents ready.

- Photo ID (includes IDNYC)
- Tax ID for you, your spouse, and your dependents (Social Security Number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number)
- Proof of income (includes Forms W-2, 1098, 1099, or income and expense records if you are self-employed)
- Childcare expenses (if applicable), including provider information and Tax ID number.
- Account and routing numbers for direct deposit of your refund
- Signatures of both spouses if you file a joint return.

For a list of additional documents, visit nyc.gov/TaxPrep.

NEW! Year-Round Service for the Self-Employed

NYC Financial Empowerment Center

Free Financial Counseling

- Work with your counselor to:
- Create a budget.
- Open a safe and affordable bank account.
- Contact lenders about debt, including student loans.
- Access emergency government resources
- And much more

NEW! Expansion of Centers

NYC Financial Empowerment Center services will be integrated into the NYC Department of Small Business Services (SBS) Workforce1 Career Centers. If you just started your job search or a new job, money may be a concern. We're here to **help**.

Contact DCWP

- 311
- nyc.gov/dcwp

- @helloDCWP

Q&A/Discussion:

Question from the chat about financial empowerment. A: Ed shared the webpage link in the chat - <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dca/partners/financial-empowerment.page>.

Question from the chat: Is there an equivalent or similar program for small businesses? A: He's happy to share his email to answer specific questions. This year they are looking to expand, although he doesn't know the eligibility criteria. His email is ECen@dcwp.nyc.gov.

Carlotta Williams asked if there was a phone number. A: He's happy to share his number with the board, although he asks that the general public send an email.

Regular Meeting:

1) First Roll Call

Board members in attendance: Isa Abney, Stephanie Anderson, Jo-Ena Bennett, Joshua Brown, Rawle Brown, Robert Camacho, Melissa Carrera-Solano, Felix Ceballos, Andrew Choi, Elvena Davis, James Fitzgerald, Christopher Graham, Anne Guiney, Jose Guzman, Tanesha Honeygan, Barbara Jackson, Virgie Jones (tech issue--no sound), Luisa Jose-Olea, Nicolas Kaplan, Cassandra Leveille, Imini Mitchell, Acire Polight, Gladys Puglla, Raul Rubio, Eliseo Ruiz, Milagros Sandoval, Barbara Smith, Maria Soler, Annette Spellin, James Steward, Benjamin Tocker, Tashawna Wade

Excused: Grace Aytes, Cheryl Jones, Nicolas Kaplan, Vernedeaner Shell, Carlotta Williams

Absent: Freddy Fowler, Joanna Fuentes, Hadiyah Harrison, Desmonde Monroe, Samy Nemir, Zulma Novoa, Kyle O'Rourke, Dustin Sonneborn, Leo Tineo, Jerry Valentin

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 Tashawna Wade. All were in favor, so moved.

3) Acceptance of the Previous Meeting Minutes

Jo-Ena Bennett made a motion to accept the previous meeting minutes. It was seconded by James Steward. All were in favor, so moved.

4) Chairperson's Report

Mr. Camacho provided an overview of meetings and events he attended during the past month. He covered a wide range of meetings and activities, including concerns from

board members that were removed from the board in regard to attendance. Some didn't hear. The information was emailed, emphasized by borough hall, and in the minutes.

He also asked about the public comment section from the December public hearing. Is there any feedback? Please let the office know. For the bylaw revision process, only one person has volunteered. Is there anyone else? If not, the Executive Board will review the information. He also received a letter from a business owner on Knickerbocker Avenue. He is not going to comment as a courtesy. The Deputy Inspector will address the concerns. We are not going to tolerate anyone disrespecting any of our seniors/leaders. If there are differences, we address them.

See the [EXE report](#) for additional details.

Council Member Sandy Nurse:

Spoke in support of Barbara Smith and the Precinct Community Council process. She greeted and thanked everyone for their support at the walkthrough with the DEP commissioner. Progress + next steps: Installed an experimental storm water basin and continue to follow up on how that's working.

There was also a DOT walkthrough on Broadway. She is pushing forward. She also extended an invitation to a town hall for the State of the District. She was happy to answer questions and emphasized the importance of working together as a united force—all the help to support the Board.

Assemblymember Maritza Davila:

Thanked everyone for the opportunity to rep the district. Happy New Year! She just had open heart surgery and is feeling much better. She has not stopped doing the job.

Albany updates:

- She is no longer the PR Task Force Chair. She held the role for four years during the pandemic, the earthquakes.
- She's now the Social Services Chair.
- The community has come a long way since the 60s to the present. We care about people.
- CB4 is a board to be reckoned with—all of you. An attack on us is an attack on all of us. It's unnecessary and unwarranted and I have a problem with it. Barbara Smith has been a friend for decades. And Anita Haines—we grew up together. It's really insulting and disrespectful. Someone that's vulnerable—to attack them asking them to resign. The people that elected her have the right.
- We have the first female CO in 83 Precinct.
- Avenue of Puerto Rico on Graham Avenue – DOT messed up. Local elected officials were on it. Do not disrespect the culture. Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez is taking care of the matter.

Elected Officials and Representatives:

Lacey Tauber, Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso
209 Joralemon Street, (718) 802-3700

Evette Lopez, Assemblymember Maritza Davila
249 Wilson Ave, (718) 443-1275

Jonathan Pomboza, Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez
350 Jay Street, (347) 986-6146

Juan Mayancela, Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez
244 Union Avenue, (718) 963-3141

Fran Sanhueza, Council Member Sandy Nurse
56 Pennsylvania Avenue, (718) 642-8664

Isabel Anreus and Maria Valdez, State Senator Julia Salazar
212 Evergreen Avenue, (718) 573-1726

Tony Herbert, Brooklyn Borough Director, Mayor's Community Affairs Unit
Put his info in the chat in the interest of time.

City Agencies and Community-Based organizations:

Boniface Wewe, Brooklyn Public Library Washington Irving Branch
360 Irving Avenue, (718) 628-8378

Antwon Nimblett, Volunteers of America shelter
1675 Broadway, (718) 574-2701

83rd Precinct Report

Captain Sean Claxon, Executive Officer, greeted everyone and extended greetings from Deputy Inspector Alexandra Sarubbi. He acknowledged the Chairperson, Mr. Camacho, who is also a community partner. His steadfast dedication to the board and the partnership does not go unnoticed.

The end of December marks the fifth consecutive decrease in crime citywide. 7th consecutive week for a decrease in citywide shooting incidents. Down 17.5% citywide. Many of you have heard about transit crime, NYPD has an increased presence. It's down 17.8% over the last twenty-eight days.

In reference to the 83 Precinct, for 2022.

Up in total index crimes about 20% in every major crime category excluding murder, which has seen a decrease. Shooting incidents are down. Violence has gone down

tremendously. Arrests are up. He cannot praise the detective squad enough. They solve really tough crimes. They are the best. Gun arrests are up. Criminal summonses are up.

The prevailing condition is robbery in Sectors David and Boy. They have been working with the 104 Precinct. There's more work to do. The strategies are paying dividends.

Traffic safety – down in collisions, up in pedestrian collisions, up in DWI and suspended license requests. Up 99% in total hazardous movers. Update on complaints received in reference to trucks on Bushwick Avenue during overnight hours. They changed the highway safety routine three times for several off-route initiatives overnight hours. November 17th and December 14th adjusted schedules. November 14th another date they issued multiple moving violations for trucks.

Personnel – 22 new officers. They will alleviate the strain from being understaffed. The commander has made some changes. Sgt. Thomas Billock, the new DV sergeant, Sgt. Christopher Ascazubi will be the new NCO sergeant, and Sgt. Dawn Ganci will be the new public safety sergeant by the end of this week.

Barbara Jackson referenced 12/9/2022 she was coming home with a board member. There was a car parked in the middle of the road at Bushwick and Bleecker. They called the precinct before 11pm. The car was just sitting there, no one was in there. She called the precinct and the female officer never identified herself. They were told to call 311 since it was not an emergency, which they did. A patrol car happened to stop next to them at the light. They attempted to speak with them, and they did not respond. The number on the car was 3047 or 4047. Officers need to identify themselves. This was bad. It's dangerous.

Captain Claxon apologized for what happened, noting the importance of the quality of their service to the community. He thanked her for providing the info. He's going to look into and get back to the board.

Felix Ceballos congratulated Captain Claxon and the 83 Precinct. When we hear that shootings are going down, that means a lot for our community. Also, when we hear that more officers are coming to the precinct that's good news because that means more support for our community.

5) **District Manager's Report**

District Manager Celeste Leon provided updates on the numerous meetings and events she attended during the past month, with the following key highlights. See the full District Manager's Report.

Updates

- She reminded everyone that the office is short-staffed. Sharon is missed already. There will be days when she or Kim will be in the office alone at times. She

expressed appreciation for board members that provide or offered to provide support.

- An application was submitted to the Historic Districts Council on behalf of the
- Thank you to the board members that attended Sharon Fludd's surprise retirement celebration.
- Rawle Brown attended a Manhattan CB3 meeting with the Office of Cannabis Management.
- Naila Rosario from the Brooklyn Public Library is moving on to a new job.
- Special Procedures Hearing the BP's office – to clarify the BP's role in appointing members in addition to how they assist community boards and provide support.

Events:

- Brooklyn Bus Network redesign meeting tomorrow from 6:30pm to 8:30pm
- 1/26 Public Safety Town Hall with Senator Salazar, the 83 Precinct, and Das office 6pm at the Hope Gardens Community Center (422 Central Avenue)
- 1/26 Shape-Up Bushwick Planning Committee Meeting – contact the office for info.
- 2/23 ULURP workshop 6pm – more info to come.

Committee Reports

*Digital and/or hard copies are available upon request

[Environmental Protection/Transportation/Sanitation + Parks and Recreation](#) – Barbara Jackson

[Joint Civic/Public Safety/Religious and Youth and Education](#) – Annette Spellman and Virgie Jones

6) Recommendations

Permits and Licenses

Recommendation: Approval of the committee's recommendation for the Taxi and Limousine Commission License Renew Application for NATASHAS GRP CAR CORP. (B00932) located at 372 Wilson Ave, Brooklyn NY 11221.

Motion: Robert Camacho

Second: Jo-Ena Bennett

All in favor, so moved.

7) Old Business

Jo-Ena Bennett asked about the LinkNYC kiosks. Are they being used? The district manager noted it was something the committee would be able to discuss during the February Arts/Culture/Technology Committee meeting.

8) **New Business**

The district manager noted that the public space at the Rheingold redevelopment site is now open. Zulma Novoa, CB4 board member, expressed concerns about possible activity there in warmer weather.

9) **Announcements**

Jonathan Pomboza, District Attorney Eric Gonzalez's office, announced a Long Island man was sentenced for stealing a Brooklyn house from an 89 homeowner. The home was returned to the family. She unfortunately passed away in 2015. He encouraged everyone to review tips for homeowners to protect themselves at www.brooklynnda.org/deedfraud.

Lacey Tauber, Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso's office, announced the following:

- The State of the Borough – thank you for attending!
- Comprehensive Planning – they released an existing conditions report. Take a look and provide feedback. Comments are open until 1/31/23.
- Community Board applications are due 2/14/23. Many members need to fill out the application. There is a push to add more youth.
- A fun Children's Winter Village event is on 1/26/23 from 4pm to 6pm.

Juan Mayancela, Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez's office, announced that any businesses with graffiti issues can call their office at (718) 963-3141 for assistance and the Member's Bushwick town hall is on Monday 6pm to 8pm at Central Baptist Church (260 Knickerbocker Avenue). The topics are the environment, public safety, and sanitation.

Isabel Anreus announced a Public Safety Town Hall in partnership with the 83 Precinct, CB4, and the DA's office at the Hope Gardens Community Center (422 Central Avenue). It's an opportunity to discuss public safety concerns.

Chris Lepre from the Bushwick Food Coop they've been around for a while, although they are still recovering from the 2019 fire and pandemic. He offered deep condolences to Ramon Pebenito's family. Ramon was on the board as well. His loss was sudden and heartbreaking. He was an advocate for food insecurity, which is why he joined the board. He believed that cooperatives are a powerful community-driven solution to food insecurity, especially with inflation. Contact info: board@bushwickcoop.org They have a weekly grocery share pickup every Monday at Mayday Space from 5pm to 8pm with tiered pricing \$11 per person and week. The deadline to sign up for the current season is 1/23/23. www.bushwickfoodcoop.org

Fran Sanhueza, Council Member Sandy Nurse's office, announced discretionary funding is available for nonprofits—apply! There is a link on their social media as well as a workshop flyer. Free tax prep info is also on their social media. This year they are going

to partner with Urban Upbound for pop-up sites in East New York. Their virtual town hall is on January 30th from 6pm to 8pm. You can register by scanning the QR code.

Barbara Jackson, CB4 board member, shared that there's a waste site on Kingsland. You can take your latex paint, electronics. It's at the end of Kingsland and you make that left turn.

Evette Lopez, Assemblymember Maritza Davila's office, also offered condolences to the family of Ramon. She noted he was ambitious and giving in nature. Additionally, if any assistance is needed with housing connect and/or harassment they work with CoRe (Communities Resist) once a week on the third Tuesday. They also provide tax prep services.

Celeste, the district manager, noted the new orange compost bins. Hopefully DSNY will provide more information in the future.

Lauren Soares, a development associate at Oye Group, announced programming for teens and adults' poetry, reading, and building (engineering and arts and crafts). The info was dropped in the chat.

Mr. Boniface Wewe from the Washington Irving library thanked the people of Brooklyn and announced his retirement on March 15th. He's going to stop by after his retirement to share a glass of champagne with everyone.

10) **Second Roll Call**

Board Members in attendance: Tashawna Wade, Jerry Valentin, Ben Tocker, James Steward II, Annette Spellin, Milagros Sandoval, Eliseo Ruiz, Acire Polight, Zulma Novoa, Imini Mitchell, Mary McClellan, Cassandra Leveille, Nicolas Kaplan, Luisa Jose, Virgie Jones, Barbara Jackson, Tanesha Honeygan, Anne Guiney, Christopher Graham, Freddy Fowler, Elvena Davis, Andrew Choi, Felix Ceballos, Melissa Carrera-Solano, Robert Camacho, Jo-Ena Bennett, Isa Abney

Excused: Maria Soler, Raul Rubio, Desmonde Monroe, Grace Aytes

Absent: Dustin Sonneborn, Barbara Smith, Vernedeaner Shell, Kyle O'Rourke, Kweighbaye Kotee, Hadiyah Harrison, Joanna Fuentes, James Fitzgerald, Rawle Brown, Joshua Brown, Stephanie Anderson

11) **Adjournment**

Barbara Jackson made a motion to adjourn. Ben Tocker seconded the motion. All in favor, so moved.

Meeting Adjourned: 7:56pm