

Brooklyn Community Board 4  
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, June 21, 2023 6pm

Hope Gardens Community Center  
195 Linden Street  
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) Turquoise Baker, Intergovernmental Analyst, New York City Campaign Finance Board** - educating attendees about Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in the context of the upcoming City Council primaries.

Turquoise Baker introduced herself and her role at the Campaign Finance Board (CFB). The CFB is an independent city agency with two primary responsibilities: educating the public about NYC elections and administering the city's campaign finance program. "New York City Votes" is an initiative of CFB that produces voter guides and educational materials, and Ms. Baker came to the board on behalf of the program.

Ms. Baker's agenda was as follows: (1) an overview of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) and its usage in New York City; (2) details related to New York City's RCV elections; (3) benefits of Ranked Choice Voting and the voting, vote tallying processes; (4) frequently asked questions about RCV; (5) resources, including an interactive website for practicing ranking candidates.

- (1) Understanding Ranked Choice Voting (RCV):* RCV allows voters to rank up to five candidates in order of preference. Candidates with the most votes in the final round win the election. Only the City Council race will use RCV in the June primary; other races will follow the traditional voting method. RCV has been adopted in several jurisdictions across the country, including San Francisco, Minneapolis, and Santa Fe.
- (2) Ranked Choice Voting in NYC:* New York City approved the use of RCV in 2019 through a ballot measure with 73.5% support. RCV was used in the 2021 primary and special elections. Approximately 88.3% of primary voters ranked more than one unique candidate, illustrating strong enthusiasm for RCV in NYC.

- (3) Ms. Baker then presented an instructional video on RCV, explaining the process of ranking candidates on the ballot. The video is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Bengali on the “New York City Votes” page.

*Steps for Marking the Ballot:* Voters must rank candidates by filling in ovals next to their names in the designated columns. Voters can rank up to five candidates but are not required to rank a total of five. Mistakes like ranking the same candidate multiple times or not ranking enough candidates may invalidate the ballot.

*Vote Tallying in RCV Elections:* In RCV elections, if a candidate receives more than 50% of first-choice votes, they win immediately. If no candidate receives a majority, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and their votes transfer to the voters' next preferred choices. The process continues in rounds until only two candidates remain, and the candidate with the most votes wins.

*Benefits of Ranked Choice Voting:* RCV empowers voters to have more say in electing representatives. It encourages candidates to focus on positive campaigning rather than attacking opponents. RCV leads to more diverse and representative elected officials.

- (4) *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):* Ms. Baker then answered several commonly asked questions, listed below. Extended answers to these questions are available on the NYC Votes website.

- (a) *Can I still vote for just one candidate?*
- (b) *Do I have to rank a total of five candidates?*
- (c) *Does ranking five candidates mean I have five votes?*
- (d) *How do I vote for a write-in candidate with Ranked Choice Voting?*
- (e) *Where can I find the official election results?*
- (f) *Will the voting machine notify me if I make a mistake on my ballot?*
- (g) *How can I access language assistance for voting?*

- (5) *Election Deadlines and Resources:* The presentation highlighted important election deadlines for registration, absentee ballots, early voting, and Election Day. Various resources were mentioned, such as language assistance, accessible absentee ballots, and ballot marking devices.

In conclusion, Ms. Baker encouraged the board and community members in attendance to engage with NYC Votes' resources, follow them on social media, and consider volunteering. Attendees were also encouraged to take the pledge for deadline reminders and real-time election updates. Celeste then thanked Ms. Baker for presenting.

## **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, Christian C. Tate, Elvena Davis, Cecilia Fabian, Freddy Fowler, Zachary Hendrickson, Barbara Jackson, Virgie Jones, Tara Jones-Thomas, Edward Kopp, Kristine Malden, Zulma Novoa, Raul Rubio, Eliseo Ruiz, Milagros Sandoval, Dustin Sonneborn, Annette Spellin, James Steward II, Jessica Tiburcio, Ben Tocker, Jerry Valentin, Tashawna Wade

**Excused:** Joshua Brown, Andrew Choi, Joanna Fuentes, Christopher Graham, Kyeshia Johnson, Nicolas Kaplan, Cassandra Leveille, Desmonde Monroe, Levi Orenstein-Wolf, Katelin Penner, Acire Polight, Maria Soler

**Absent:** Makeba Brown, Jasmin De Santiago Diaz, Anne Guiney (notified the DO) Tanesha Honeygan, Luisa Jose (notified the DO), Raman Mama (notified the DO), Mary McClellan, Vernedeaner Shell

**Resigned:** Imini Mitchell

### **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**

The district manager kindly asked for the previous for the board to table the previous meeting minutes given the district office is still short-staffed. Melissa Carrera-Solano made a motion to table the previous meeting minutes. It was seconded by Elvena Davis.

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

Mr. Camacho provided an overview of meetings and events he attended in the past month. See the [EXE Board Report](#)

#### Thursday, 5/18:

- Attended a rally at 301 Grove Street
- Attended a block party at 485 Nickelback Avenue.

#### Friday, 5/19:

- Tabling at a Health Resource fair at Audrey Johnson DCC.
- Senior Center roundtable

#### Saturday, 5/20:

- Attended a Health event at 1160 Decatur District 32.
- Attended a Community Resource Fair at 66-57 Forest Avenue.

Sunday, 5/21:

- Participated in a cleanup at 195 Himrod Street.

Monday, 5/22:

- Attended a Borough Hall meeting.

Tuesday, 5/23:

- Follow-up meeting on the summit at 85 Palmetto.

Wednesday, 5/24:

- Met with New York City Parks and Congresswoman Gutierrez's office.

Thursday, 5/25:

- Attended a luncheon at 11th District 32.
- Attended the Jacob Bushwick event meeting.
- Attended the A3 Precinct Community Council's appreciation event.

Thursday, 5/29:

- Block party on Manhattan between Wilson and Knickerbocker at 3 P.M.

Tuesday, 5/30:

- Attended the housing land news committee.

Wednesday, 5/31:

- Met with the Brooklyn North quarter-year life meeting.

Tuesday, 6/1:

- Attended a shape of event at 3 P.M.
- Met with the 83rd Precinct Community Affairs for the block party events.

Friday, 6/2:

- Attended the Hope Garden Bushwick Grand meeting.
- Attended the ribbon cutting at 419 Eldert Street.

Saturday, 6/3:

- Attended the health fair at Bushwick Avenue.
- Wished a happy birthday to Barbara Jackson at the age of 75.

Tuesday, 6/6:

- Attended Lord's revision meeting at 6 P.M.
- Attended the Brooklyn Bernal Community contact Forum.

Sunday, 6/11:

- Participated in the Puerto Rican Day Parade.

Monday, 6/12:

- Attended the public charter hearing at the school.

Tuesday, 6/13:

- Attended the Economic Development license and Zone parks meeting.

Thursday, 6/15:

- Attended the health fair at PS 116.

Tuesday, 6/20:

- Attended the clergies meeting.

Raul Rubio, second vice-chairperson, proposed several amendments to the bylaws to allow for hybrid meeting attendance, merge certain executive positions, and provide

remote attendance for board members with extraordinary circumstances. The effective date and other details of the amendments were not specified during the report.

### [Bylaw Revision Report](#)

#### Elected Officials and Representatives:

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

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

#### City Agencies and Community-Based organizations:

Alicia Torres, Program Director, RiseBoro Community Partnership  
646-794-0078

Noel Allain, Co-Founder / Artistic Director, Bushwick Starr Theater  
917-620-8546, noel@thebushwickstarr.org

Sinthia Pena Ortiz, Program Director, Bushwick Community Partnership  
718-497-6090 ext. 766, bushwickcpi@gmail.com

Denise Watkins, Supervisor/Coordinator, SCO Flushing Family Residence  
347-785-5909

Pastor Princess Welker, New York Communities for Change  
347-403-1934

Julia Foster, Community Outreach for District 79, Adult Education  
929-305-3767

#### 83rd Precinct Report:

Lisa Prezzano, Deputy Inspector of the 83rd Precinct's Crime Prevention Unit

Officer Prezzano's report highlighted recent crime trends and prevention strategies. She highlighted two main concerns: the increase in Grand Larcenies of Autos and the rise in burglaries through open windows, particularly on ground floors and fire escapes. Officer Prezzano emphasized community cooperation and rapid response. She also answered several questions from community members.

Key points from the presentation:

- **Auto Thefts:** Officer Prezzano noted an increase in Grand Larcenies of Autos due to unlocked cars and keys left inside. Stressed the need for caution even during shortstops.
- **Burglaries:** Highlighted the rise in burglaries involving open windows. Advised securing ground-level windows and fire escapes to prevent easy access.
- **Free Security Assessments:** Offered free security assessment walkthroughs for homes and businesses, focusing on locks, windows, lighting, and camera placement. Emphasized the value of security camera footage in investigations, urged residents to ensure good camera placement.
- **Upcoming Events:** Informed attendees about upcoming sector meetings, a summer block party, and a kids' summer camp program.
- **Graffiti Cleanup:** Discussed graffiti cleanup initiatives in collaboration with community members and auxiliaries. Encouraged reporting graffiti for removal.
- **"Vision Zero" Programs:** Briefly touched on "Vision Zero" programs for traffic safety.

## 5) District Manager's Report

See the District Office Update from the Executive Board report linked above.

The District Manager offered updates on neighborhood events, including celebrations like Father's Day, Juneteenth, Caribbean Heritage Month, and Pride Month. Her report included staffing updates about the vacant position left by Sharon Fludd. Celeste also expressed gratitude for support from board members and non-board committee members.

## 6) Committee Reports

\*Digital and/or hard copies are available upon request

[Economic Development + Permits and Licenses Report](#)

[Environmental Protection/Transportation/Sanitation + Parks and Recreation Report](#)

[Housing and Land Use Report](#)

[Shape-Up Bushwick Planning Report](#)

## 7) Recommendations

Bylaw Revision Process:

**Recommendation for changes to the bylaws to take effect after next year's elections.**

Motion: Melissa Carrera-Solano

Second: Robert Camacho  
All in favor, so moved.

Permits and Licenses:

**Recommendation for a blanket vote in reference to Holly Grove LLC (238 Wyckoff Avenue), Legal Taqueria Corp (614 Wilson Avenue), Cherry Soul Food and International Deli Inc (913 Broadway), and 15.95 Pizza and Wings Corp (1595 Broadway).**

Motion: Annette Spellman

Second: Felix Ceballos

All in favor, so moved.

**Committee Recommendation for the above establishments: approval of the stipulations and hours as outlined (see committee report).**

Motion: Robert Camacho

Second: Joshua Brown

Abstentions: Raul Rubio, Elvena Davis, Barbara Smith, Jo-Ena Bennett

Motion carried.

**Amended Recommendation for Holly Grove LLC (238 Wyckoff Avenue): recommendation to table until the next meeting in August due to missing information. The applicant may choose to submit their information for consideration.**

Motion: Barbara Jackson

Second: Robert Camacho

Opposed: Christian Celeste Tate

Motion carried.

Environmental Protection/Transportation/Sanitation:

**Committee Recommendation for the Halsey Street One-Way Proposal study: Send a letter to Council Member Sandy Nurse indicating the area for the study by D.O.T. regarding a one-way proposal, with the stipulation that any and all projects remain optional.**

Motion: Jo-Ena Bennett

Second: Elvena Davis

Abstentions: Annette Spellman

Motion carried.

Housing and Land Use:

**Committee Recommendation for the City's Carbon Neutrality Text Amendment: Approval with the stipulation that any and all projects remain optional. Please review the committee report for specific details.**

Motion: Elvena Davis

Second: Melissa Carrera-Solano

All in favor, so moved.

## 8) Old Business

Edward Kopp asked about the members' responsibilities outlined in the City Charter. Celeste replied that she had not received this information yet from the Borough President's office but would follow up and forward the info upon receipt.

## 9) New Business

During the meeting, Raul Rubio suggested the idea of organizing a social event to allow board members to better acquaint themselves with newer members. He emphasized the importance of breaking bread and fostering better relationships, and that such events have been held in the past. He mentioned that the office could work on this in the upcoming two months while the board is out of session. It was also noted that the last board member team-building event occurred in June of the previous year. Raul volunteered to coordinate the event, and several other board members, including Melissa Carrera and Zachary Hendrickson, expressed their willingness to help as well.

## 10) Announcements

Jonathan Betancourt, Office of Congresswoman Nydia Velasquez:

- **E-bike Fires and Safety:** Addressed concerns about e-bike battery fires and fatalities due to recent incidents.
- **Meeting with FDNY:** Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez and Councilwoman Jennifer Gutierrez met with the FDNY fire commissioner to discuss solutions and outreach efforts to prevent e-bike fires.
- **Green Rooftop Program Act:** Introduced the "Public School Green Rooftop Program Act," aimed at allocating federal funds for implementing green roofs in public schools.
- **Wolf Alport Super Fund Site:** Informed about the city taking ownership of the Wolf Alport contamination site, along with the EPA's enforcement actions.

Fran Sanhueza, Office of Council Member Sandy Nurse:

- **Community Engagement:** Announced upcoming pop-up offices at various locations for community interaction during the summer.
- **Bike Helmet Giveaway:** Notified about plans to collaborate with the Department of Transportation for a bike helmet giveaway.
- **Town Hall Events:** Mentioned town hall meetings addressing storm preparedness and the newly passed Zero Waste Act.
- **Rescheduled Movie Night:** The previously postponed movie night will take place in July at Irving Square Park.

Noel Elaine, Bushwick Starr Theater:



- **Seniors' Creative Work:** Highlighted seniors' creative writing and poetry work at the Round Table Senior Center and the RiseBoro Center.
- **Performance Event:** Invited attendance to a seniors' performance event at Round Table Center, showcasing their creative work.

Lacey Tauber, Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso's Office:

- **Event Success:** Noted the success of the recent Pride event and announced the upcoming Caribbean American Heritage Month event on July 24th at Borough Hall.
- **Community Education Councils:** Encouraged participation in the Borough President's appointments to the Community Education Councils (CEC) and provided information about the application process.
- **New Website:** Introduced the new official website of the Brooklyn Borough President's office, [brooklynbp.nyc.gov](http://brooklynbp.nyc.gov).

Alicia Torres, RiseBoro Community Partnership:

- **Neighborhood Improvements:** Updated on recent physical improvements on Wyckoff Avenue, including tree planting and graffiti removal.
- **Community Event:** Informed about an upcoming event at Wyckoff Plaza on Saturday, featuring children's theater performances, talent shows, dance classes, and more.

Barbara Smith, CB4 Board Member and 83rd Precinct Community Council:

- **National Night Out:** Announced the upcoming National Night Out event on August 1st on Mary Ham Street, where community members and police officers come together.
- **2023 83rd Community Council Honorees:** Acknowledged the dedication of Celestina Leon, the Brooklyn Community Board 4 District Manager, and Lisa Prezzano from the 83rd Precinct.

Julia Foster, District 79 Adult Education:

- **Graduation and ESL:** Shared the success of over 50 graduates in the GED program and the significant number of ESL students due to the asylum seeker situation.
- **Adult Education Programs:** Announced the continuation of GED and ESL programs at Bushwick High School during July 5th to August 11th.
- **OSHA 30 Class:** Notified about an upcoming OSHA 30 class for daytime registration at 271 Melrose Street.

Maria Valdez, State Senator Julia Salazar's Office:

- **Upcoming Events:** Listed several upcoming events, including a mammogram bus on July 9th, a non-profit meet and greet on July 21st, and a rain barrel giveaway for migrant families on August 5th.

## 11) Second Roll Call

**Board Members in attendance:** Tashawna Wade, Jerry Valentin, Ben Tocker, Jessica Tiburcio, James Steward II, Annette Spellin, Dustin Sonneborn, Barbara Smith, Milagros Sandoval, Eliseo Ruiz, Raul Rubio, Zulma Novoa, Kristine Malden, Edward Kopp, Tara Jones-Thomas, Virgie Jones, Barbara Jackson, Zachary Hendrickson, Freddy Fowler, Cecilia Fabian, Elvena Davis, Christan C. Tate, Felix Ceballos, Melissa Carrera-Solano, Robert Camacho, Rawle Brown, Jo-Ena Bennett, Stephanie Anderson, Isa Abney

**Excused:** Maria Soler, Acire Polight, Katelin Penner, Levi Orenstein-Wolf, Desmonde Monroe, Cassandra Leveille, Nicolas Kaplan, Kyeshia Johnson, Christopher Graham, Joanna Fuentes, Andrew Choi, Joshua Brown

**Absent:** Vernedeaner Shell (remote – no waiver), Mary McClellan, Raman Mama (notified the DO), Luisa Jose (notified the DO), Tanesha Honeygan, Anne Guiney (notified the DO), Jasmine De Santiago Diaz, Makeba Brown

## 12) Adjournment

Barbara Jackson made a motion to adjourn. Raul Rubio seconded the motion. All were in favor, so moved.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:26pm