

Brooklyn Community Board 4
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 20, 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) Bianca Sosa, Associate Developer, Pennrose** – presenting the project proposal for Hope and Bushwick Gardens to receive HUD Community Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding.

Bianca Sosa introduced herself as a developer at Pennrose, who on behalf of Hope and Bushwick Gardens is seeking HUD Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding that was allocated to New York City for Hurricane Ida recovery. The funding application was submitted by the developer Pennrose to NYCHA in November 2022, and then submitted by NYC to HUD for approval.

The project aims to replace mechanical and electrical equipment in 52 buildings at Hope Gardens that were damaged by flooding during Hurricane Ida. This includes:

- Installing 22 new above-grade boiler pods to avoid future flood risk. The pods will be 8 x 20 ft and located near parking lots and open grass areas.
- Moving electrical equipment from basements to higher levels
- Installing new utility trenching to connect buildings to the pods
- Adding backwater valves, security cameras, and lighting

The project timeline is:

- Environmental review to be completed November 2023
- Design to be finalized November 2023
- Construction to begin December 2023
- Completion goal by March 2025

For employment opportunities, the contractor Preceded Construction will provide OSHA training and prioritize hiring local residents for 8 construction positions.

Bianca noted they will continue to coordinate with NYCHA, OMB, the community board, and residents on the project. Questions and concerns were raised around ensuring quality work, bonds/insurance, and accountability. The recommendation was to provide a letter of support but specify the need for oversight and community inclusion.

In summary, the project aims to make critical resiliency upgrades at Hope Gardens to prevent future flood damage. The board recommended supporting the proposal while emphasizing the importance of bonds, insurance, hiring local residents, and community oversight to ensure successful and timely completion.

2) Addison Calle, Community Coordinator, and Alyssa Velez, Civic Engagement Coordinator, El Puente Bushwick – providing an informational presentation on the People's Money, the first citywide participatory budget process, and the results for Brooklyn and Bushwick.

El Puente presented on the People's Money, New York City's first citywide participatory budgeting (PB) process using mayoral expense funding. Addison and Alyssa from El Puente first gave an overview of the history of participatory budgeting, which started in Brazil as a way to give community members direct input on spending priorities.

For the People's Money, Bushwick was selected as a priority neighborhood and given \$50,000 to allocate. El Puente was the outreach partner and collected over 4,000 votes from Bushwick residents on project ideas. A coalition narrowed ideas down to 5 proposals for the ballot:

- Cultural cooking classes
- Women's health education
- Mental/physical health resources
- Youth job prep and financial literacy
- Civic engagement for youth

The winning Bushwick project was mental and physical health resources, which will be funded through June 2023. It will raise awareness, reduce stigma, and connect residents to mental health services.

El Puente will lead the next PB cycle starting in October 2023. They encouraged residents to share ideas during the upcoming idea generation phase.

Regular Meeting:

1) **First Roll Call**

Board members in attendance: Stephanie Anderson, Jo-Ena Bennett, Makeba S. Brown-Alleyne, Rawle Brown, Robert Camacho, Felix Ceballos, Christian C. Tate, Andrew Choi, Elvena Davis, Christopher Graham, Anne Guiney, Zachary Hendrickson, Barbara Jackson, Virgie Jones, Tara Jones-Thomas, Nicolas Kaplan, Edward Kopp, Kristine Malden, Raman Mama, Katelin Penner, Acire Polight, Eliseo Ruiz, Milagros Sandoval, Maria Soler, Dustin Sonneborn, James Steward II, Ben Tocker

Board members in attendance via a remote waiver: Isa Abney, Melissa Carrera-Solano, Tanesha Honeygan, Zulma Novoa, Barbara Smith, Jerry Valentin

Excused: Joanna Fuentes, Cassandra Leveille, Annette Spellen, Jessica Tiburcio

Absent: Joshua Brown, Jasmin De Santiago Diaz, Cecilia Fabian, Freddy Fowler, Kyeshia Johnson, Luisa Jose, Mary McClellan, Desmond Monroe, Levi Orenstein-Wolf, Raul Rubio, Vernedeaner Shell, Tashawna Wade

27 board members present constitutes a quorum.

2) **Acceptance of the Agenda**

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

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

Zachary Hendrickson made a motion to accept the previous meeting minutes. It was seconded by Elvena Davis. All were in favor, so moved.

4) **Chairperson's Report**

Mr. Camacho provided an overview of meetings and events he attended during the summer recess. He covered a wide range of meetings and activities, including discussions about the installation of wireless towers in the community, concerns about potential health effects, and the need for more information and community input.

Mr. Camacho also summarized his attendance at various events this summer. See the [EXE report](#) for complete details.

Elected Officials and Representatives:

Johnathan Betancourt, Congresswoman Nydia Velasquez
266 Broadway, Suite 201, (718) 599-3658

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

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

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

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

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

Pablo Rivera, Assemblymember Erik Dilan
366 Cornelia Street, (347) 739-4818

City Agencies and Community-Based organizations:
Adam Dobrzynski, Community Affairs, DSNY
212-291-1220

Jazmín Torres, Director, El Puente Bushwick
718-452-0404

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

83rd Precinct Report
Alexandra Sarubbi, Commanding Officer of the 83rd Precinct

Officer Sarubbi provided an overview of recent crime statistics and trends. Key points from the presentation:

- Year-to-date major crime is up 1.8% compared to last year (1436 vs 1410 incidents). Crime has increased over the past 28 days and week as well.
- Biggest increases are in robberies, felony assaults, and grand larcenies. Many robberies and assaults occur at night against perceived "easy targets".
- Grand larcenies often occur on transit, with pickpocketing or theft of unattended bags. Also includes thefts from stores over \$1000.
- Proactive police work involves identifying and monitoring past perpetrators. Information and video evidence are shared across precincts to find suspects.
- 311 complaints have lower priority than 911 calls. Officers often responding to emergencies first before 311 issues.
- Encouraged reporting issues to officers' cell phones or her direct line for fastest response. Can monitor 911 and 311 apps on phones.

- Discussed issues around illegal dirt bikes/ATVs and enforcement efforts. Also bike registrations.
- Covered importance of Neighborhood Coordination Officers (NCOs) for community relations. NCO contact info was updated on precinct website.
- Noted increase in Civilian Complaint Review Board complaints in the 83rd precinct. A committee member will request more data.
- Addressed questions about lack of visible officer patrols. Stressed importance of community conversations for receiving tips.
- Offered her direct contact information and encouraged reaching out with any issues or concerns.

5) **District Manager's Report**

State Senator Julia Salazar presented District Manager Celeste León with the Louis Niñé Award from the NY State Association of Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislators. Senator Salazar highlighted Celeste's leadership, commitment to community empowerment, and support for fellow district managers across New York City.

District Manager Celeste León summarized the various meetings and events she attended over the past month. Key highlights from her update:

- Ongoing staffing shortages in the office. Currently trying to onboard a new part-time staff member. Thanked board members who have helped fill gaps.
- Team building event over the summer with board members was impactful. Appreciates members' openness and dedication.
- Several meetings related to housing concerns, including with RiseBoro about tenant complaints and HPD about resources for small homeowners.
- Transportation safety meeting with DOT about investing in streets. Encouraged DOT to engage in dialogue with the board.
- A meeting on asylum seekers highlighted the need for more accessible information and volunteer opportunities to assist new migrants.
- Meetings with elected officials and the NY State Liquor Authority about addressing issues with liquor licenses establishments. Complaints must now be submitted through SLA's website.
- Concerns about safety and illegal activity in parks over the summer. Working with elected officials and NYPD on solutions.
- Interviewed candidates for a board staff position. Hiring has been delayed due to bureaucracy.
- Thanked board members for attending community events like El Puente's back to school night. Their participation helps fill gaps.
- Upcoming events include the District Needs Town Hall and budget meeting. Encouraged participation.

6) **Committee Reports**

*Digital and/or hard copies are available upon request

[Civic/Public Safety/Religious](#) - Annette Spellens

[Permits and Licenses](#) - Melissa Carrera-Solano

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

7) **Recommendations**

Hope Gardens CDBG-DR Recovery Project

Recommendation: Approval with stipulations around oversight, local hiring, and accountability measures.

Motion: Robert Camacho

Second: Felix Ceballos

All in favor, so moved.

Civic, Public Safety, and Religious

Recommendation: Approval of a street co-naming at Himrod St and Wilson Ave for Salvatore "Sam" Mendolia.

Motion: Zachary Hendrickson

Second: James Steward

All in favor, so moved.

Permits and Licenses

Recommendation: Approval of all recommendations from August and September with stipulations on hours of operation.

Motion: Ben Tocker

Second: Christian Celeste Tate

Abstentions: Elvena Davis, Jo-Ena Bennett, Edward Kopp, Barbara Smith, Isa Abney, and Stephanie Anderson

Opposed: Barbara Jackson

Motion carried.

Recommendation: Approval of the cannabis license application at 85 Hart St.

Motion: Edward Kopp

Second: Zachary Hendrickson

Abstentions: Elvena Davis, Jo-Ena Bennett, Acire Polight

Opposed: Barbara Jackson, Zulma Novoa, Barbara Smith

Motion carried.

Environmental Protection, Transportation, Sanitation, and Parks

Recommendation: Approval of Cooper Street Garden Improvements

Motion: Katelin Penner

Second: Elvena Davis

All in favor, so moved.

Recommendation: Approval of the NYC Parks fall 2023 field permit schedule.

Motion: Robert Camacho

Second: Katelin Penner

8) Old Business

None

9) New Business

None

10) Announcements

Johnathan Betancourt, Office of Congresswoman Nydia Velasquez:

- Reported on a meeting with the fraud administrator and railroad operators regarding the Great Railroad Network in North Brooklyn and Queens.
- Mentioned the congresswoman's trip to South America and her efforts on issues such as immigration and federal resources for NYC.
- Noted a flood protection workshop hosted by the Congresswoman.
- Provided updates on various community events and services, including mental health workshops, community cleanups, and upcoming events.
- Mentioned an E-Waste event, Narcan training, and food stamp scam awareness.

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

- Announced a Sustainable Building Resource Fair during Climate Week at Borough Hall.
- Mentioned a Latino Heritage event at Borough Hall.
- Encouraged community board members, especially new ones, to participate in training sessions.

Adam Dobrzynski, Department of Sanitation:

- Announced composting in Brooklyn starting on October 2nd.
- Encouraged residents to order compost bins by calling 301 or visiting the website.
- Mandatory separation of leaf and yard waste when composting begins.
- Provided information on how to handle twigs and branches.
- Offered information sessions and contact details for inquiries.

Jazmín Torres, El Puente Bushwick:

- Promoted free youth services for ages 13 to 21 at the El Puente Bushwick Leadership Center.
- Mentioned an upcoming volunteer orientation for interested individuals.

Melissa Carrera-Solano, Brooklyn Community Board 4 Member:

- Announced her maternity leave and introduced Tashawna Wade as her replacement during her absence.

Edward Kopp, Brooklyn Community Board 4 Member:

- Announced the Mayor's Breaking Bread and Building Bonds event at Bushwick United Parish.

11) **Second Roll Call**

Board members in attendance: Ben Tocker, James Steward II, Dustin Sonneborn, Maria Soler, Milagros Sandoval, Eliseo Ruiz, Acire Polight, Kristine Malden, Edward Kopp, Nicolas Kaplan, Virgie Jones, Barbara Jackson, Zachary Hendrickson, Anne Guiney, Christopher Graham, Elvena Davis, Andrew Choi, Christian C. Tate, Felix Ceballos, Robert Camacho, Rawle Brown, Makeba S. Brown-Alleyne, Stephanie Anderson

Cecilia Fabian did not sign the attendance sheet.

Board members in attendance via a remote waiver: Tashawna Wade, Jerry Valentin, Barbara Smith, Zulma Novoa, Tanesha Honeygan, Melissa Carrera-Solano, Isa Abney

Excused: Jessica Tiburcio, Annette Spellin, Katelin Penner, Cassandra Leveille, Joanna Fuentes

Absent: Vernedeaner Shell, Raul Rubio, Levi Orenstein-Wolf, Desmonde Monroe, Mary McClellan, Raman Mama, Luisa Jose, Tara Jones-Thomas, Kyeshia Johnson, Freddy Fowler, Jasmin De Santiago Diaz, Joshua Brown, Jo-Ena Bennett

12) **Adjournment**

Elvena Davis made a motion to adjourn. Ben Tocker seconded the motion. All present were in favor, so moved.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:08pm