

Brooklyn Community Board 4
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 17, 2024, 6pm

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

Chairperson: Robert Camacho
District Manager: Celestina León

Meeting Start: 6:09pm

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

Public Hearing:

- 1) **Public Comment (2 minutes per person or group)** – the public is invited to speak on neighborhood concerns and other matters affecting Bushwick. The Board Chairperson and District Manager will facilitate this item.
 - Fran Sanhueza from Council Member Sandy Nurse's Office provided updates that the participatory budgeting voting week just concluded with a good turnout for the district, higher than the first year. The first movie night of the season will be this Friday at sundown in Irving Square Park showing the movie Elemental, with another movie night on April 26th. She reminded everyone about the upcoming farmers market coming to Irving Square Park on Sundays this summer.
 - Lacy Tauber from the Brooklyn Borough President's Office announced applications are open for the Borough President's pre-K through 2nd grade graduation awards. Schools can nominate one graduating student per category by May 17th. Their office is also establishing a new youth advisory council to increase civic engagement and is seeking a CBO to serve as the technical assistance provider by April 22nd.
 - Jonathan Pomboza from the Brooklyn DA's Office announced an essay contest for high school students on the topic of enhancing public safety as Brooklyn DA, with a deadline of April 24th. They are also partnering with DEA and NYPD for a prescription drug take-back event on April 24th from 10am-4pm at the Hope Gardens Multi-Service Senior Center.
 - Juan Mayancela from Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez's Office thanked everyone who participated in the recently wrapped up participatory budgeting vote week. They are holding mobile office hours on April 26th from 11am-3pm at 85 Bross St and another housing workshop on April 25th at 6pm focused on

repairs and harassment issues with Community Resist. They are still assisting senior citizens with tax preparation for those receiving Social Security or SSI.

- Maria Valdez from State Senator Julia Salazar's Office announced an event on April 18th from 10am-12pm at 218 Wyckoff Ave focused on licensing and regulation, with FDNY, DOT, NYPD providing information. On May 1st from 10am-3pm they will have the Department of Buildings for general zoning and permitting questions (appointment required).
- Evette Lopez from Assemblymember Maritza Davila's Office shared details on the 6th annual Puerto Rican Day Parade on Sunday June 9th at 3pm, kicking off on Manhattan St and Knickerbocker Ave and ending on Jefferson St. Applications are open for contingents and volunteers.
- Representatives from the 83rd Precinct, DSNY, Wyckoff Hospital, Bushwick Community Partnership, Oye Group theater, and Friends of Irving Park provided comments and updates.
- Community members announced a tenant rights training on April 24th by Bushwick Housing Independence Project, a documentary project on the 1977 Bushwick blackout looking for community stories, the "Invest in Libraries" campaign against proposed budget cuts, updates on the archiving project taking submissions, and introduced the new Hope Gardens Tenant Association.
- Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez provided updates on her recently introduced "Back Homes" package of legislation aimed at assisting fire victims, including mandating a fire victims guide, creating an interagency portal for communication, and helping tenants return to rent-stabilized units quickly. She also discussed her universal childcare initiative for ages 0-5 regardless of income/documentation status.

Regular Meeting:

1) First Roll Call

Board Members in attendance: Stephanie Anderson, Jo-Ena Bennett, Makeba S. Brown-Alleyne, Robert Camacho, Felix Ceballos, Christian C. Tate, Andrew Choi, Elvena Davis, Cecilia Fabian (did not sign-in), Freddy Fowler, Joanna Fuentes, Christopher Graham, Anne Guiney, Zachary Hendrickson, Barbara Jackson, Kyeshia Johnson, Luisa Jose, Nicolas Kaplan, Edward Kopp, Zulma Novoa, Eliseo Ruiz, Milagros Sandoval, Vernedeaneer Shell, Dustin Sonneborn, Annette Spellen, James Steward, Jessica Tiburcio, Ben Tocker

Board Members in attendance via a remote waiver: Tanesha Honeygan, Jerry Valentin

Excused: Andrew Choi, Virgie Jones, Kristine Malden

Absent: Isa Abney, Joshua Brown (Zoom – no waiver), Rawle Brown, Melissa Carrera-Solano, Tara Jones-Thomas, Raman Mama, Mary McClellan, Desmonde Monroe, Katelin Penner, Raul Rubio, Barbara Smith, Maria Soler, Tashawna Wade

29 board members present constitute a quorum.

2) Acceptance of the Agenda

James Steward made a motion to accept the agenda. It was seconded by Elvena Davis. All were in favor, so moved.

3) Acceptance of the Previous Meeting Minutes

Anne Guiney made a motion to table the previous meeting minutes. It was seconded by Freddie Fowler. All were in favor, so moved.

4) Annual Election of Executive Officers (2024-2025 Meeting Year)

Dustin Sonneborn conducted the annual election of executive officers. He commenced with nominations for 1st Vice Chair position. Joshua Brown did not submit a renewal application. Jo-Ena Bennett and Felix Ceballos declined nominations. James Steward nominated Anne Guiney, who declined. Desmonde Monroe accepted and was uncontested. Felix Ceballos, the recording secretary, cast one vote for Desmonde.

Second Vice Chairperson:

Felix Ceballos – declined

Elvena Davis – declined

Anne Guiney – declined

Barbara Jackson – declined

Raul Rubio – accepted, although was ineligible as he was not present.

Milagros Sandoval accepted and was uncontested. Felix Ceballos, the recording secretary, cast one vote for Milagros.

Recording Secretary:

Stephanie Anderson – declined

Felix Ceballos – accepted

Christopher Graham – declined

Eliseo Ruiz – declined

Milagros Sandoval – ineligible due to being elected Second Vice Chairperson

Felix Ceballos accepted and was uncontested. Elvena Davis, the correspondence secretary, cast one vote for Felix.

Treasurer:

Desmonde Monroe – declined

Eliseo Ruiz – declined

Milagros Sandoval – declined

Jerry Valentin – accepted

Jerry Valentin accepted and was uncontested. Felix Ceballos, the recording secretary, cast one vote for Jerry.

Parliamentarian:

Jo-Ena Bennett – accepted

Raul Rubio – not eligible due to absence.

Barbara Smith - declined

Jo-Ena Bennett accepted and was uncontested. Felix Ceballos, the recording secretary, cast one vote for Jo-Ena.

2024 to 2025 Executive Officers

Chairperson – Robert Camacho

1st Vice Chairperson – Desmonde Monroe

2nd Vice Chairperson – Milagros Sandoval

Recording Secretary – Felix Ceballos

Treasurer – Jerry Valentin

Parliamentarian – Jo-Ena Bennett

Elected Officials and Representatives:

Council Member Sandy Nurse

56 Pennsylvania Ave, (718) 642-8664

Juan Mayancela, Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez

244 Union Ave, (718) 963-3141

Lacey Tauber, Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso

209 Joralemon Street, (718) 802-3700

Johnathan Betancourt, Congresswoman Nydia Velasquez

266 Broadway, Suite 201, (718) 599-3658

Maria Valdez, State Senator Julia Salazar

212 Evergreen Avenue, (718) 573-1726

Evette Lopez, Assemblymember Maritza Davila

249 Wilson Ave, (718) 443-1275

Community-based Organization Representatives:

Sinthia Pena Ortiz, Program Director, Bushwick Community Partnership

718-497-6090 ext. 766, bushwickcpi@gmail.com

Modesto Flako Jimenez, Artistic Director, Oye Group

83rd Precinct Report – Captain David Poggioli

Captain Poggioli welcomed everyone and introduced himself as the newly assigned commander of the 83rd Precinct as of April 1st. He has been making the rounds, meeting with clergy, community councils, and stakeholders to reintroduce himself.

Poggioli reviewed some recent crime trends, noting a spike in vehicle break-ins of parked cars overnight on residential streets. He urged collective action like spreading awareness to remove valuables and double check that cars are locked.

On robberies, he cited over 350 robberies in 2023, which is a high number for the area equating to about one per day on average. He aims to stem this issue through strategic deployment and addressing recidivism in certain areas. Overall, Poggioli noted that

violence is lower compared to perceptions and credited the community. He opened the door for questions and feedback, emphasizing transparency and responsiveness as his top priorities in partnership with residents.

5) Chairperson's Report

In late March and early April, Mr. Camacho met with various groups and attended numerous meetings covering topics such as open space programming, the Irving Square Park dog run, a community board information session, and the groundbreaking ceremony at 1601 DeKalb Avenue.

Regarding the 1601 DeKalb project, Mr. Camacho expressed strong concerns that it is no longer going to be 100% deeply affordable housing as was originally agreed upon when the board first voted to approve the project nearly a decade ago. He and District Manager Celeste León attended the groundbreaking but made their disappointment clear to the developers.

Mr. Camacho also raised the issue of people inappropriately using the baseball field at Green Central Knoll Park, letting their dogs run off-leash and damaging the fences to gain entry. He passionately argued that the baseball fields need to be protected for the youth and that finding a dog run is the responsibility of the dog owners, not the board or elected officials.

Looking ahead, Mr. Camacho shared that the Mayor may be coming to Bushwick on May 22 for a community conversation. He emphasized the need to have the right people attend to productively express the community's needs, such as truly affordable housing, a youth center, and revitalizing businesses on Broadway, rather than inviting "rebel rousers."

Mr. Camacho also informed the board of an incident where a board member accidentally shared all board member emails with a private entity, stressing the need to be careful and not make side deals. Updates were also provided on the situation with the post office potentially relocating and that Magnifico Youth, Mr. Camacho's organization, will no longer be running the Puerto Rican Day Parade.

Throughout the report, Mr. Camacho expressed deep frustration with the lack of involvement from board members. He was particularly disappointed with participation in the nominations committee, where only 3 out of 45 members took part.

The chairperson's report covered a wide range of Mr. Camacho's activities and interactions over the past month, as well as highlighting several key issues currently facing the community board and Bushwick as a whole. While expressing disappointment and frustration with certain situations and lack of engagement, he also made a point to strongly commend specific individuals for their valuable contributions.

6) District Manager's Report

District Manager Celeste Leon offered her monthly report for the board:

- Shared a personal story about how the library played an important role in her father's life growing up, providing a safe space for learning and self-improvement. Emphasized the need to fight to restore funding for libraries given the huge positive impact they can have.

- Attended a community planning fellowship alumni event in March which provided networking opportunities. The board currently has a fellow working with the Arts, Culture & Technology committee on a cultural archive project. Any committee can request to work with a fellow.
- Took part in a City of Yes for Housing Opportunity info session. Urged board members to attend these sessions as the proposals are complex with limited time to review in committee.
- Met with City Planning who wanted to know how to present the City of Yes information to get the board's approval. Celeste pushed back, saying real community engagement is needed, not just expecting the board to rubber stamp it.
- Shared exciting news that the board's work on preparing for term limits, via a working group and \$5,000 project allocation, was matched by additional funding from other boards and the Civic Engagement Commission. A survey and panel are forthcoming to gather input.
- Will let Anne Guiney discuss more details later about an important meeting they attended with HPD Commissioner and Council Members about the status of affordable housing projects in Bushwick.

7) Committee Reports

*Digital and/or hard copies available upon request

[Economic Development & Housing/Land Use](#) - Desmond Monroe and Anne Guiney

[Health/Human Service/Senior Citizens/Veterans](#) - Luisa Jose

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

[Shape-Up Bushwick Planning](#) - Rev. James E. Steward II

8) Recommendations

Permits and Licenses:

Recommendation: Motion to blanket vote for the SLA establishments:

Bushwick Bay Inc. – 242 Himrod Street – New LWBC, 300 W Bar Corp. – 300 Wyckoff Avenue – New LWBC with amended sale of alcohol hours of Sunday through Thursday until 12am, and Friday through Saturday until 2am, A Touch of Lagos Inc. – 911 Broadway – LWBC, Dromedary Doughnuts Corp. – 1329 Willoughby Avenue – LWBC with amended outdoor space hours of operation to close by 10pm all days, and Selva LLC – 1329 Willoughby Avenue, Suite 121 – New LWBC with recognition of stipulations in place.

Motion: Felix Ceballos

Second: Christian Celeste Tate

All in favor, motion carried.

Recommendation: Motion to vote in approval of the establishments and amendments listed in the blanket vote above.

Motion: Jessica Tiburcio

Second: Jo-Ena Bennett

Abstentions: Elvena Davis, Jo-Ena Bennett, Zuma Novoa
Motion carried.

9) Old Business

None

10) New Business

None

11) Announcements

- An attendee thanked Chairperson Camacho and board member Annette Spellin for their assistance in getting repairs done at their residence.
- A representative announced that the Growing Forward College Tour is leaving this Sunday for students to visit 9 universities from New York to Atlanta. Contact 718-757-2601 or growingforwardtours.org.
- A reminder about a "Tools for Tenants" forum hosted by CAIR and city agencies on tenant rights at Medgar Evers College on April 18th at 6pm.

12) Second Roll Call

Board members in attendance: Ben Tocker, Jessica Tiburcio, James Steward, Annette Spellin, Dustin Sonneborn, Vernedeaner Shell, Milagros Sandoval, Eliseo Ruiz, Zulma Novoa, Desmonde Monroe, Edward Kopp, Nicolas Kaplan, Luisa Jose, Kyeshia Johnson, Barbara Jackson, Zachary Hendrickson, Anne Guiney, Christopher Graham, Joanna Fuentes, Freddy Fowler, Cecilia Fabian (did not sign-in), Elvena Davis, Andrew Choi, Christian C. Tate, Felix Ceballos, Robert Camacho, Makeba S. Brown-Alleyne, Jo-Ena Bennett, Stephanie Anderson

Board Members in attendance via a remote waiver: Jerry Valentin, Barbara Smith

Excused: Kristine Malden, Virgie Jones

Absent: Tashawna Wade, Maria Soler, Raul Rubio, Katelin Penner, Mary McClellan, Raman Mama, Tara Jones-Thomas, Tanesha Honeygan, Melissa Carrera-Solano, Rawle Brown, Joshua Brown, Isa Abney

13) Adjournment

Elvena Davis made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Zulma Novoa. All were in favor, so moved.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:48pm