

Brooklyn Community Board 4
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 12, 2024, 6pm

Hope Gardens Older Adult 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) Andrew Inglesby, Assistant Director, Government and Community Relations, New York City Transit** – providing an update on the J/M/Z rehabilitation projects.

M line

- There were a couple of delays with the contractor.
- The project started with an inhouse contract.
- There is now a separate project and contractor.

Andy acknowledged that the projects are a longtime coming and that there has been a lot of news regarding congestion pricing and capital funding. The M line project is fully funded, and those changes won't impact it. He provided updates to the community board throughout, although doesn't have the exact streets or time. The MTA will be posting signs in advance with the diversions and impact of the project. There will be a hotline, as well.

The work is done within a containment system with the most stringent requirements. They are finishing up in Queens. That's what he wanted to open with and will take questions. Andy added that they are abrasive blasting before the application of the new coating system. It's not the typical overcoat. It's similar to the J line. He was by Broadway-Junction recently and it was like night and day, a huge difference.

Felix Ceballos: what streets will close? The area is very active.

Andy: they won't close streets. Parking will be temporarily affected by equipment and agency vehicles.

Batista: once the deck is up everything happens on the deck on a temporary basis. Once they get started, they will see how many locations.

Barbara Jackson: noticed they are working in increments. There was no parking on Eastern Parkway to Broadway. Before you start on the M line are you going to complete the J/Z portions? They just got up to Chauncey Street. There's traffic congestion and sometimes you smell fumes, paint. You're saying late July.

Andy: they will be working on the projects simultaneously. They started at Eastern Parkway and going to begin at Broadway Junction an ADA project later this year. They needed to paint first.

Stephanie Anderson: are there any plans to address the Gates Avenue station? Paint on the columns and nails are dropping from the train.

Andy: Gates Avenue will be part of the J line project. Repairs, as well. They are moving west.

Stephanie: will the other entrance be opened?

Andy: he/the MTA has heard from elected officials and the community board regarding this. They were closed years ago due to safety concerns. Reopening them might trigger accessibility issues and the need for vertical enhancements. They are looking at it.

Salvatore (Sal) Polizzi, Tony's Pizza: presented facts from the past few years. In 2019 the project began in Queens. In 2020 he emailed elected officials about the chipped paint, corrosion, lead-based paint, potential asbestos. Three independent lab results had come back hazardous, including Myrtle-Wyckoff and Myrtle-Broadway, from Schneider Laboratory Global. The findings were relayed to MTA officials. In 2021 there were delays in answering. I drafted a letter to MTA CEO Janno Lieber. CB4 sent a letter to the MTA. Elected officials contacted the MTA. In 2022, there was a commitment to commence work in spring or summer 2022. There was no action or work. May 2023, there was a lead paint rally. 2024, installation of decking on the J/Z line commences.

There has been no work started or completed in the areas identified. For years the community has gone about their daily lives exposed to hazardous conditions according to the EPA. The risk of hazardous levels of lead includes high blood pressure, kidney cancer, complications for pregnant individuals, impaired nervous system function.

Why isn't the MTA addressing a very real hazard in this community? For four years has the community not been worth it? I'm trying to understand the lack of interest, expediency. Is it economics? Demographics? Why has it taken this long? Shame on you if your response does not include an apology. This is a health crisis that you put the community in.

Andy: Sal, it's good to see you, first. What I can tell you is that we tried to do it inhouse. There were some delays. They are happy to start this season. No slight was intended. We're moving along.

Annette Spellman: What time/hours of work? Will this affect commuters? Will there be alternate bus routes? When will we know? We don't need the information last minute.
Andy: 7am to 7pm roughly. No buses. The stations will be open and won't be affected Monday to Friday. There might be some weekend work bypassing the station.

Felix Ceballos: noted he was a CB4 member. He wanted to bring attention to what [Sal] said. It's a very serious situation. The MTA has to take it seriously.
Andy: They are using the safest paint possible. They hired an environmental consultation that will be onsite to ensure adherence at all times.

Sal: the paint will be blasted off if he understands correctly.
Batista: yes.

Andy: have you seen the J line? There is a different contractor with a similar containment process. He is not aware of hazardous lead along the J line.

Sal: are precautions being taken on the sites with hazardous lead?
Andy: the procedures will be safe as far as the lead paint. You won't see them (the MTA) for another 35 years. The system is state of the art.

District Manager Leon: mentioned workers will be wearing suits inside containment and outside.
Andy: confirmed and noted that they are moving from column to column, three at a time, to minimize blowout.

Fran Sanhueza – CM Nurse's office: asked about the timeline.
Andy: they will reach Myrtle-Broadway by mid-July, working north.

J project timeline: started Broadway Junction working through winter 2024 heading west, currently at De Sales Place and Chauncey Streets. The work started in late 2023.

Jessica Tiburcio: expressed concerns about the traffic. What is the impact and prep?
Andy: it depends on where they are and how it will affect materials.
Batista: once cables go up it they will take some parking for equipment, machinery, and bathrooms. Someone will be on the street moving traffic.

Mr. Camacho: Andy, I know you're a good man and mean well. Thank you for working with us. It's here, but it's been a long time. The people that are hurt most are people like us, Puerto Ricans and Blacks. It's not like Astoria. You just have to wonder and make sure it is. Thank you for engaging and showing us how everything is closed off.

Deborah Hicks: are you using graffiti free paint?
Andy: It's not. If it pops up, we try to remove it as soon as possible, especially if it's hate graffiti.

Regular Meeting:

1) First Roll Call

Present: Isa Abney, Stephanie Anderson, Makeba S. Brown-Alleyne, Robert Camacho, Felix Ceballos, Christian C. Tate, Elvena Davis, Freddy Fowler, Jason Gers, Christopher Graham, Anne Guiney, Barbara Jackson, Virgie Jones, Tara Jones-Thomas, Nicolas Kaplan, Kristine Malden (did not sign in), Freddie Mattison, Desmonde Monroe, Alex Moreno, Katelin Penner, Raul Rubio, Dustin Sonneborn, Annette Spellen, James Steward, Jessica Tiburcio, Ben Tocker

Remote Waiver: Deborah Hicks, Tanesha Honeygan

Excused: Romicka Nichols-Barnes, Eliseo Ruiz, Milagros Sandoval

Absent: Jacqueline Becerra, Jo-Ena Bennett, Melissa Carrera-Solano (Zoom – no waiver), Andrew Choi, Kerina Dodd, Cecilia Fabian (informed the board's district office), Joanna Fuentes, Zachary Hendrickson, Kyeshia Johnson, Edward Kopp, Mary McClellan, Zulma Novoa, Carlos Ortiz, Vernedeaner Shell, Barbara Smith, Jerry Valentin, Linda Whitfield

Resigned: Melissa Belardo

26 members present constitutes quorum.

2) Acceptance of the Agenda

Katelin Penner 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

Raul Rubio made a motion to table the previous meeting minutes. It was seconded by Desmonde Monroe. All were in favor, so moved.

4) Chairperson's Report

Chair Robert Camacho delivered his report. Mr. Camacho's report primarily focused on a timeline of meetings and events he attended throughout May and early June, highlighting his active involvement in various community issues.

- Bushwick Playground Safety Walkthrough
- Borough Board Meeting
 - o City of Yes Zoning for Housing Opportunity Public Hearing – at least 10 community boards were concerned. There was no quorum or vote.

Elected Officials and Representatives:

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

Community-based organization representatives:

Nalisha Samlall, Neighborhood 360 Manager, Riseboro

Amy Collado, Bushwick Housing Independence Project

83rd Precinct Report — Captain David Poggioli:

Captain Poggioli's spoke about Bushwick Playground. They stepped away from the Bushwick Collective block party to meet Mr. Camacho and Council Member Nurse. They plan to close the park. There was a follow up meeting with the Parks department and Chief Henderson. They are responding daily. Officers facilitate the closure. It seems the pattern has transitioned. The park naturally empties when the officers show up. It's alleviating some of the issues with the noise and other activities at late hours. We came up with a plan that's in place and Parks did their part.

Smoke shops brought up last meeting, we added additional resources and are working with the Sheriff's office. There is now a borough-based taskforce. It was initially citywide. Last time, there were no smoke shops chained. That's changed. You can see 330 Central Avenue was shuttered under the Sheriff's authority. There are conditions that make a location eligible for immediate padlocking: 1,000 ft school or house of worship or a previous violation for underage sales of marijuana.

Myrtle and Irving came up again. In the last six weeks, 30 vehicles were removed, unlicensed vehicles for sale.

Everything I read from this is public through nyc.gov, the CompStat numbers. We're making tremendous program. Only an increase of 2 crimes. 815 v. 817. This is a partnership. It's not just the work of the officers assigned to the 83 Precinct. We really experiencing some significant decreases in crime. 48% decrease week to date. There are seven index crimes. Homicides, rapes, robberies, felonious assaults, burglaries, grand larcenies. They are calculated by the week, month, and year to date. Over a 20% decrease. Down over the past 30 days.

Progress continues as we become more familiar with vendors and other concerns. He opened to questions.

The district manager reminded everyone to wait for the microphone and to introduce themselves and their affiliation. If they are a resident, they can just say resident.

Rob Trujillo, resident: asked about the scooters. They are out of control. He was almost hit by one today.

Captain: You're right. The volume of traffic and the enforcement response. They have removed 300 from the street. It's about two a day. They can do more. When they see populated areas, they take them. If you have details, you can speak to Community Affairs on the side. He's there.

Unknown: you said crime is down in Bushwick. People are going around her home and she had to call the city.

Captain: I wouldn't want that either, someone damaging property. You can file a report. The department has a citywide vandalism taskforce. It will help building investigative techniques. If you have a report, you can have Community Affairs look at that. If there's a pattern, specific day and time, surveillance, you can share that, and we can make an apprehension.

The district manager announced that everyone else in attendance could help themselves to the food provided.

Nyla Rosario: first thanked Officer Lopez for answering her call quickly. There are different types of calls. Some are not as urgent. We are having an issue with porch parties. Most people on the block are homeowners. We work all day. There's not much that can be done. We have cameras and see what's going on and are frustrated. We want to help. I have video footage of something on Sunday. Someone just walked up the block and took everyone's packages. I'm here to see if we can form a block association and help address this.

Captain: first, there's no less significant crime. Your concerns are very real. If there's a pattern here, you have to let us know. It helps our deployment. I can back and speak to our Neighborhood Coordination Officers and depending on the location, the specialty units. Things are brought to my attention and that's why I make a list here. I don't believe in standing here and saying yes to everyone. Were there reports for this?

Nyla: I'd have to check. I did call Officer Lopez.

Captain: it starts with that. The initial filing of the report is how we respond to an incident. We add it to a map. I can look at it and see what's going on.

Felix Ceballos, CB4: Beside all the issues, what I hear, the electric motorcycles and bikes are on the sidewalks. The community has changed a lot. Thank you for your assistance on Knickerbocker.

Captain: you're welcome. Again, everything is a partnership. It's an acknowledgment myself and my officers.

Stephanie Anderson, CB4: her husband and herself got tree guards and it has become a dumping ground. What can they do?

Captain: They took the tree guards?

Stephanie: No, just dumping.

Captain: We'll take a look.

The district manager noted to be mindful of what's referred to the NYPD and encouraged sanitation complaints to be referred to DSNY. She's happy to assist.

Christopher Graham, CB4: shared concerns about graffiti. I witnessed it. It was not what your typical graffiti artist would look like. They were men in suits. I work at home and witness packages stolen. Is there a possibility you can do an operation with Amazon or UPS?

Captain: previously operations would occur however there ended up being so much litigation. Those ops no longer occur. Please bring it to their attention. I previously spoke about bring back the bins for residential associations. Only the residents have access. It will help prevent some of these issues.

Mr. Camacho thanked the Captain. There are a lot of people here that call. You can't have people complain and then they do their job, and then you run to the elected officials, and they get beat up for doing their job. You can't have it both ways. For the packages, you have to file the report. You might have to go to court. People don't follow up. We caught someone on my block and called the cops. They showed up and let him go. The person said the insurance would cover it.

Annette Spellen: thank you, referenced the hostage situation that was resolved without incident and commended the Captain/precinct's handling of the situation.

Captain: you're very welcome. I will have 19 years with the NYPD next month. There's a lot that comes over the radio and this was confirmed. The precinct's response time was under 60 seconds. Stabilized, established dialogue. All parties walked away from that incident without injuries. It's a testament to the great work of this agency.

5) District Manager's Report

Ms. León's report covered a wide range of activities and responsibilities within the Community Board 4 office, highlighting community engagement efforts, ongoing projects, and internal office management.

Key highlights:

- **Welcome and Acknowledgements:** Ms. León began by acknowledging various heritage months and celebrations, including Caribbean American Heritage Month, Pride Month, and National PTSD Awareness Month.
- **Board Activities:** She emphasized the busy season for the board as it prepares for the fiscal year end and processes numerous street event and block party applications.

6) Committee Reports

*Digital and/or hard copies available upon request

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

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

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

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

7) Recommendations

Economic Development + Housing and Land Use

Katelin Penner made a motion to blanket vote on the following committee recommendations:

- No objection to the 81 Beaver Street ramp
- Support for the Homes Now Campaign, including the Neighborhood Pillars and Open Doors programs

Second: Felix Ceballos

All were in favor, so moved.

Jessica Tiburcio made a motion in favor of the committee's recommendations for the blanket vote items.

Second: Anne Guiney

All were in favor, so moved.

Environmental Protection/Transportation/Sanitation + Parks and Recreation

Mr. Camacho made a motion in favor of the committee's recommendation to request a one-way study of Ridgewood Place that includes congestion and a site visit.

Second: Annette Spellman

All in favor, so moved.

Permits and Licenses

Jessica Tiburcio made a motion for a blanket vote on all committee recommendations.

Second: Desmond Monroe

All in favor, so moved.

Christan C. Tate made a motion in favor of the committee's recommendations for the blanket vote items.

Second: Elvena Davis
All in favor, so moved.

City of Yes Zoning for Housing Opportunity

Desmonde Monroe made a motion in favor of the committee's recommendations, excluding the 'Lift Costly Parking Mandates' and 'Small and Shared Housing' proposals.

Second: James Steward

In favor: 32, Against: 0, Recused: 1

Members Present: 33

Christian C. Tate made a motion for a roll call vote for the small and shared housing proposal in addition to the roll call vote for the parking proposal recommended by the committee.

Second: Ben Tocker

All in favor, so moved.

Lift Costly Parking Mandates – Do Not Support (In favor: 13, Against: 20, Recused: 1)

Small and Shared Housing – Do Not Support
(In favor: 8, Against: 24, Abstained: 1, Recused: 1)

8) Old Business

None

9) New Business

None

10) Announcements

Dustin Sonneborn

- is resigning from the board. There are no archive updates. He thanked everyone.

Juanita James Brooklyn Public Library

- 6/22 Immigrant Resource Fair with USCIS at the main library branch (Grand Army Plaza)

Barbara Jackson

- National Night Out is the 1st Tuesday of August

Lacey Tauber, Brooklyn Borough President's Office

- 6/24 Community Board Orientation for new and reappointed members
- Cosponsoring movie nights in Brooklyn

Juan Mayancela, Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez's office

- 6/15 Pride Event with RiseBoro
- ACE Graffiti Removal
- 6/29 E-waste collection event with El Puente at their Williamsburg headquarters
- Tabling/pop up office – open to suggestions/locations
- Thursdays – affordable housing clinics with Churches United for Fair Housing (CUFFH)

Fran Sanhueza, Council Member Sandy Nurse's office

- Save the date: 8/24 Immigration Resource Fair in East New York
 - They need interpreters and volunteers
- Movie Nights and WEPA! with El Puente in Irving Square and Highland Parks
- PSA Smoke Alarms – soundthealarm.org/ny
- Flyers are on the table

Johnathan Betancourt, Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez's office

- The Congresswoman attended Shape-Up Bushwick, the Knickerbocker Puerto Rican Day Parade.
- FAFSA work
- Remove medical debt for 16B people

Maria Valdez, State Senator Julia Salazar's office

- 1st Monday of every month in the district office - Communities Resist

Nalisha Samlall, Riseboro

- 6/15 12pm to 4pm, Wyckoff Pride
- 6/27 6pm to 8pm workshop

11) Second Roll Call

Present: Ben Tocker, Jessica Tiburcio, James Steward, Annette Spellin, Dustin Sonneborn, Milagros Sandoval, Raul Rubio, Desmonde Monroe, Freddie Mattison, Kristine Malden, Edward Kopp, Nicolas Kaplan, Tara Jones-Thomas, Virgie Jones, Kyeshia Johnson, Zachary Hendrickson, Anne Guiney, Christopher Graham, Jason Gers, Joanna Fuentes, Freddy Fowler, Cecilia Fabian, Kerina Dodd, Christian C. Tate, Felix Ceballos, Robert Camacho, Jo-Ena Bennett, Isa Abney

Remote Waiver: Jerry Valentin, Barbara Smith, Zulma Novoa, Tanesha Honeygan, Stephanie Anderson

Absent: Linda Whitfield, Katelin Penner, Carlos Ortiz, Romicka Nichols-Barnes (Zoom – no waiver), Alex Moreno (Zoom – no waiver), Mary McClellan, Barbara Jackson, Deborah Hicks, Melissa Belardo, Jacqueline Becerra (Zoom – no waiver)

Excused: Vernedeaner Shell, Eliseo Ruiz, Luisa Jose, Elvena Davis, Andrew Choi, Melissa Carrera-Solano, Makeba Brown-Alleyne

12) Adjournment

Raul Rubio made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Christian C. Tate. All were in favor, so moved.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:38pm