

Brooklyn Community Board 4
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 15, 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) **Kyra Cuevas-McCarthy, Senior Borough Planner, Brooklyn Borough Office, NYC Planning** – presenting on the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity Citywide Zoning Text Amendment.

A presentation by representatives from the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP) on the proposed "City of Yes for Housing Opportunity" citywide zoning text amendment. This amendment, part of the larger "City of Yes" plan, aims to address the housing shortage in NYC by modifying zoning regulations to encourage more housing development across the city.

Key takeaways from the presentation and subsequent discussion:

- **Focus on Medium and High Density:** While the amendment includes proposals for low-density areas, the most impactful changes for Community Board 4 (CB4) relate to medium and high-density residential districts (R6-R10), which constitute the majority of Bushwick.
- **Universal Affordability Preference (UAP):** This key proposal would allow buildings in applicable districts to be 20% larger if the additional space is dedicated to permanently affordable or supportive housing. Concerns were raised about the current affordability target of 60% Area Median Income (AMI), which is considered too high for many Bushwick residents.
- **Parking Mandates:** The proposal to eliminate mandatory parking minimums for new residential developments sparked significant debate. Proponents argued it would lower construction costs and promote sustainable transportation, while opponents expressed concerns about exacerbating existing parking shortages.
- **Other Proposals:** The presentation also covered proposals for:

- **Campus Infill:** Allowing more flexible development on large campuses like those owned by churches or NYCHA. Concerns were raised about the lack of mandatory affordability requirements and potential loss of green space.
- **Conversion of Non-Residential Buildings:** Making it easier to convert underutilized non-residential buildings (offices, schools, etc.) into housing. CB4 expressed strong support for preserving manufacturing (M) districts.
- **Small and Shared Housing:** Allowing smaller apartments and shared housing units. Concerns were raised about potential affordability issues and the history of SROs in Bushwick.
- **Community Concerns:** Recurring themes in the discussion included:
 - **Affordability:** The need for truly affordable housing options for lower-income residents, with many arguing that the proposed 60% AMI threshold is too high.
 - **Community Engagement:** Ensuring meaningful community engagement throughout the process, particularly for non-English speaking residents.
 - **Balancing Housing Needs with Other Priorities:** Addressing concerns about parking, preserving manufacturing jobs, and protecting green spaces while increasing housing supply.

Next Steps:

- CB4's Housing and Land Use Committee will continue discussions and formulate recommendations for the full board to vote on in June.
- Residents are encouraged to attend the Housing and Land Use Committee meeting the following Tuesday to voice their opinions and engage in further discussion.

The presentation and discussion highlighted the complexity of the proposed zoning changes and the diverse perspectives within the community. While there is general agreement on the need for more housing, particularly affordable options, concerns remain about the specific details of the proposals and their potential impact on Bushwick.

Regular Meeting:

1) First Roll Call

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

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

Absent: Jacqueline Becerra (Zoom – no waiver), Melissa Belardo, Deborah Hicks, Barbara Jackson (informed the board's district office (DO)), Mary McClellan, Alex Moreno (Zoom – no waiver), Romicka Nichols-Barnes (Zoom – no waiver), Carlos Ortiz, Katelin Penner (informed the board's DO), Linda Whitfield

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

2) Acceptance of the Agenda

Annette Spellen made a motion to accept the agenda. It was seconded by Anne Guiney. All were in favor, so moved.

3) Acceptance of the Previous Meeting Minutes

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

4) Chairperson's Report – Robert Camacho

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

- **Bushwick Playground (Boogie Down) Permit:** The board delayed issuing a permit for the baseball leagues using Bushwick Playground due to community concerns. After discussions with the police department and stakeholders, a compromise was reached, reducing the leagues' hours of operation. The board will vote on the revised permit.
- **Street Co-namings:** The Civic/Public Safety/Religious Committee approved two street co-naming proposals: one for Monsignor John Paul, former pastor of St. Barbara Church, and another for Oshman Long, a beloved community member.
- **Community Clean-up:** Mr. Camacho participated in a cleanup event in El Puente on Grove Street, thanking the 83rd Precinct officers, tenants, and El Puente for their contributions.
- **Cooper Church Anniversary:** Mr. Camacho attended the 70th anniversary celebration of Cooper Church, praising the pastor and the church's long-standing presence in the community.
- **311 Participatory Budgeting:** Mr. Camacho encouraged residents to participate in the 311 participatory budgeting process, highlighting available services and programs.
- **Meetings and Events:** Mr. Camacho detailed his participation in various meetings with city agencies (DOT, City Planning, HPD), community organizations

(Riseboro, Bushwick Historic Preservation Association), and events like the Shape Up Bushwick planning meeting and a roundtable discussion.

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

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

83rd Precinct Report — Captain David Poggioli

Captain Poggioli's report focused on addressing community concerns raised in previous meetings, recent crime trends, and new initiatives to combat illegal activities.

- **Remembering Chief Gerald Nelson:** Captain Poggioli began by acknowledging the passing of former Brooklyn North Patrol Borough Commander, Chief Gerald Nelson, and his contributions to the community.
- **Illegal Parking Update:** Responding to concerns about illegal parking on Myrtle Avenue, Wyckoff Avenue, and Irving Avenue, the precinct conducted a 48-hour enforcement operation in late April, successfully removing 16 vehicles.
- **Smoke Shop Enforcement:** Captain Poggioli provided an update on new legislation allowing for stricter enforcement against illegal smoke shops. Partnering with the Sheriff's Department, the NYPD can now conduct inspections and padlock establishments failing to meet criteria. He reported that 75 out of 96 smoke shops visited city wide since May 4th were immediately shut down.
- **Residential Burglaries:** Captain Poggioli addressed a recent spike in residential burglaries driven by package thefts from common areas. He encouraged building management to consider allocating secure package storage areas and emphasized the importance of residents reporting thefts to the police.

- **Increased Arrests:** The precinct achieved a 300% increase in arrests related to burglaries and package thefts in the past month, demonstrating their commitment to addressing these issues.
- **Community Engagement:** Captain Poggioli stressed the importance of community collaboration and communication in crime prevention, urging residents to share information and report suspicious activity.

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 Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Older Americans Month, and Mother's Day.
- **Board Activities:** She highlighted the busy season for the board, with numerous street event and block party applications, preparations for the fiscal year end, and the upcoming borough budget consultation process.
- **Community Engagement:** Ms. León emphasized the board's commitment to community engagement, referencing the Community District Needs process as a form of participatory budgeting. She also welcomed new board members and reminded members about attendance requirements and remote waiver options.
- **Green Central Knoll Field:** Ms. León addressed ongoing issues at Green Central Knoll Field, where pet owners continue to use the sports field as an unauthorized dog run, leading to conflicts with park staff. The board is exploring solutions in collaboration with the council member's office and the Parks Department.
- **Riseboro Property Management:** Ongoing monthly meetings with Riseboro property management demonstrate collaborative efforts to address tenant issues and promote transparency.
- **Intern Recognition:** Ms. León recognized the contributions of Jared Hicks, the board's intern, who worked on projects like District Needs analysis and community outreach materials.
- **Term Limits Panel Survey:** Ms. León thanked CB4 members for their participation in the Term Limits Panel survey, a citywide initiative. The panel event will take place on June 24th.
- **Bushwick Historic Preservation:** Ms. León mentioned the demolition of another single-family home on Bushwick Avenue, highlighting the vulnerability of unprotected areas to redevelopment. She stressed the importance of property owners having their affairs in order.

- **City of Yes Zoning:** Ms. León referenced ongoing discussions and engagement with various stakeholders, including ANHD and City Council land use, regarding the City of Yes Zoning for Housing Opportunity proposal.
- **District Service Cabinet:** The monthly District Service Cabinet meeting continues to provide a platform for meaningful agency participation.
- **Office Management:** Ms. León concluded by acknowledging the efforts of the board's small staff in managing office operations, technology, and meeting logistics.

6) Committee Reports

*Digital and/or hard copies available upon request

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

[District Office](#) - Robert Camacho

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

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

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

[Youth and Education](#) - Virgie Jones

7) Recommendations

Parks and Recreation

Recommendation: approve the hours assigned to the sport leagues who submitted field permit applications to Parks for Bushwick Playground and addressed safety issues after their application was reviewed by the committee.

Real Guadalupe
Sunday 9am to 5pm
Mon to Thurs 6pm to 8pm

Soccer Super Kids
Fri and Sat
6pm to 8pm
9pm to 5pm

Motion: Annette Spellan
Second: Felix Ceballos
All in favor, so moved.

Civic/Public Safety/Religious

Recommendation: support for the Monsignor John Powis and Oshaman Long street co-naming requests.

Motion for blanket vote: Zachary Hendrickson

Second: Desmonde Monroe

All in favor, so moved.

Motion in support of the recommendation: Christian Celeste Tate

Second: Freddy Fowler

All in favor, so moved.

The unanimous passage of the committee's recommendation was met with applause from the Long family. Many of his siblings and family members joined the meeting in person.

Permits and Licenses

Recommendations:

- Approve KOQ Holdings LLC d/b/a Little Mo – 1158 Myrtle Avenue – New WBC with hours Monday through Saturday from 12pm to 11pm, and Sunday from 12pm to 10pm. No outdoor space and all other stipulations.
- Do not approve the class change for Rico Chimi Myrtle Ave Corp. – 1492 Myrtle Avenue – New LWBC due to ongoing quality of life issues, including noise complaints, and operating outside of their current method of operation.
- Do not approve any applications (SLA and OCM) that fail to communicate with the board's office, provide the required documentation, respond to/attend the board's Permits and Licenses Committee meeting.

Motion to blanket vote: Anne Guiney

Second: Isa Abney

All in favor, so moved.

Motion to approve the committee recommendation: Edward Kopp

Second: Desmonde Monroe

Abstained: Jo-Ena Bennett

Youth and Education

Recommendation: send a letter to the Department of Youth and Community Development in response to the loss of funding and request for restoration of the RiseBoro Community Partnership adult education programs.

Motion: Felix Ceballos

Second: Desmonde Monroe

Abstained: Milagros Sandoval

8) Old Business

No Old Business

9) New Business

No New Business

10) Announcements:

Juan Mayancela (Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez's office):

- Warning about food stamp scams and encouragement to report any incidents to the office.
- Graffiti removal services available; residents should report locations needing attention.
- Update on trash and sanitation efforts, including the removal of a problematic dumpster on Starr Street and Wyckoff Avenue.
- Thanks to attendees of the Nightlife Summit Town Hall and announcement of upcoming Bushwick town halls.

Juanita James (Brooklyn Public Library - Washington Irving Branch):

- Alert about proposed \$60 million cuts to the city library budget, including \$16 million for Brooklyn Public Library, potentially impacting operating hours, materials, and programs. Urged residents to visit investinlibraries.org to show support.
- Announcement of expanded ESL classes for new immigrants, with details available at bklynlibrary.org.
- Promotion of Older Americans Month celebration fair at Central Library on May 17th.
- Information about year-round library services for older adults, including art classes, lectures, and performances, with details at bklynlibrary.org/older-adults.

Lacey Tauber (Brooklyn Borough President's Office):

- Welcomed new board members.
- Reminder about the mandatory swearing-in ceremony and orientation for new board members on June 24th at 6:30 pm at Brooklyn Borough Hall (in-person or remote attendance options available).

Amy Collado (Bushwick Housing Independence Project - BHIP):

- Promotion of monthly community meetings, with the next one on May 29th at El Puente, focusing on the Rent Guidelines Board and tenant testimony preparation.

Friends of Irving Square Park:

- Invitation to the monthly park cleanup on Sunday, welcoming volunteers and offering community service hours for students.
- Announcement of a new farmers market coming to Irving Square Park starting July 21st, organized by Riseboro.

Zachary Hendrickson (Board Member, NYC DSA):

- Highlighted proposed city budget cuts impacting education, CUNY, libraries, and social services.
- Promoted The People's Plan Coalition, advocating for investments in essential services and urging residents to sign postcards demanding "care not cuts."

Jeff Oliver (Filmmaker):

- Seeking community members with stories about the 1977 blackout for a documentary project in collaboration with UnionDocs.

Maria Valdez (State Senator Julia Salazar's Office):

- Announcement of upcoming tenant support services provided by CORE Community Resist at the senator's office on June 3rd and mobile constituent hours at Queens Public Library on June 8th.

Jonathan Betancourt (Congress Member Nydia Velázquez's Office):

- Highlighted the opening of a new MTA bus depot in the district, funded by the bipartisan infrastructure bill, and the delivery of 60 new electric buses.
- Shared the congress member's letter of support for co-naming Bleecker Street in honor of Father Powers.
- Announced a virtual workshop on June 1st to inform students about recent changes to FAFSA and federal student aid.
- Mentioned a congressional letter advocating for increased Pell Grant maximum amounts to benefit low and middle-income students pursuing higher education.

Dustin Sonneborn (Board Member, Arts/Culture/Technology Committee Chair):

- Call for final submissions for the committee's archive project.
- Announcement of the next committee meeting on May 29th.

Christopher Graham (Board Member):

- Shared the success of the recent HBCU College Tour, with 30 student participants, 5 on-the-spot college acceptances, and several more applications pending.

Robert Camacho (Chairperson):

- Reminded attendees about the upcoming Health and Wellness Fair on May 18th, starting with a run at 8:00 am and culminating in Maria Hernandez Park.
- Encouraged blood donations at the blood drive on Friday, May 31st.
- Promoted the Shape Up Bushwick event.

11) Second Roll Call

Present: Ben Tocker, Jessica Tiburcio, James Steward, Annette Spellman, 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: Vernedeaneer Shell, Eliseo Ruiz, Luisa Jose, Elvena Davis, Andrew Choi, Melissa Carrera-Solano, Makeba Brown-Alleyne

12) Adjournment

Jo-Ena Bennett made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Joanna Fuentes. All were in favor, so moved.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:20pm