

Brooklyn Community Board 4  
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, November 20, 2024 6pm

Hope Gardens Older Adult Center  
195 Linden Street  
Zoom

Chairperson: Robert Camacho  
District Manager: Celestina León

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Meeting Start: 6:02pm

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

**Public Hearing:**

**1) NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Diabetes Management Workshop Series Presentation** – Estella Quinto, Special Assistant at the Bureau of Brooklyn Neighborhood Health, and Tanisha Harris-Pierce, Manager of the Diabetes Health Initiative, presenting on the Brooklyn Diabetes Health Equity Initiative.

- Overview of the Bureau of Brooklyn Neighborhood Health: The bureau, part of the NYC Department of Health, serves Central and North Brooklyn (Brownsville, Bushwick, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and East New York), as well as the 33 hardest-hit neighborhoods citywide by the COVID-19 pandemic. Focus areas include maternal health, chronic disease prevention, COVID-19, and behavioral health. The bureau has offices at 335 Central Avenue, 485 Throop Avenue, and 259 Bristol Street.
- Healthy NYC goals: Raise life expectancy to 83 years by 2030, addressing leading causes of death and racial disparities.
- Diabetes in Bushwick: Highlighted the elevated rates of diabetes and related hospitalizations in Bushwick.
- Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) and Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP): Free, evidence-based classes offered by registered dietitians (DSMES) and community health workers (DSMP). Topics include understanding diabetes, medication management, physical activity, healthy eating, and risk reduction. Incentives include Fitbits and Health Bucks.
- Bedford-Stuyvesant Pilot Program Success: 1,349 individuals contacted, 20 classes offered, 254 participants, average class size of 11.
- Bushwick Initiative Goals: Decrease preventable diabetes-related hospitalizations by 5% by 2030 through a network of accessible classes.

- Community Engagement: Surveys conducted at six locations in Bushwick, revealing a significant need for diabetes education and support.
- Partnerships: Collaboration with community organizations (Riseboro, Woodhull, Make the Road, Brooklyn Public Library, IMPACCT Brooklyn, Grand Street Settlement).
- Shop Talk Program: Outreach to local businesses to distribute flyers and raise awareness.
- Upcoming Classes: December 6th at Riseboro (518 Bushwick Avenue), January 7th at DeKalb Library, January 15th at Bedford Health Center.

Q&A with the Board and Public:

- Question regarding access to diabetes medication due to recent trends in its use for weight loss.
- Question about the longevity of the program.
- Question about the effectiveness of diet and exercise in managing diabetes.
- Question about class times and availability of recordings.

[View the presentation](#)

**2) Brooklyn Public Library (BPL), presenting on the Washington Irving Library Branch (360 Irving Avenue) renovation project** – Mike Fannings (Community Engagement), Vita James (Branch Manager), and Philip Chen (Capital Projects) presenting on the \$9.5 million renovation project, funded by city capital and proceeds from the Brooklyn Heights Library redevelopment.

- **Project Goals:** Replace roof, HVAC system, fire/safety systems (including new security system), update lighting, ADA upgrades to lower level bathrooms, rebuild front stairs/railings, restore masonry/stonework, adjust exterior fences, upgrade signage.
- **Design Presentation (Ashwini, Architect):** Presented site plans, elevations, and renderings showcasing the unified entrance, accessible ramp, lower fence, and illuminated guardrails.
- **Schedule:** Design completion by Summer 2025, construction start Summer 2026, project duration 2.5 years.
- **Library Services During Construction:** Bookmobile, outreach, potential collaborations, online resources.

Q&A with the Board and Public:

- Clarification on Proposal 2 and its implications for DSNY enforcement.
- Discussion on the mayor's power and control over DSNY enforcement.
- Concerns about the proposals being a power grab by the mayor.
- Confirmation that voting will be a simple yes or no for each proposal.

[View the presentation](#)

- 3) **Fund for the City of New York** – Althea Gonzalez (Fund for the City of New York) and Georgia Booth (Children's Aid Society), presenting the 2024 Sloan Public Service Award Presentation for Celestina Leon

Althea Gonzalez (Fund for the City of New York) and Georgia Booth (Children's Aid Society) presented Celestina Leon with the 2024 Sloan Public Service Award. Dr. Lisette Nieves, President of the Fund for the City of New York, spoke about the Fund's mission and the importance of celebrating public servants. Ms. Booth highlighted Ms. Leon's deep roots in Bushwick, her collaborative leadership style, her advocacy for affordable housing and historic preservation, her role in the Bushwick Community Plan, her commitment to community engagement (especially during the pandemic), her co-chairmanship of the Future of Community Boards task force, and her contributions to securing funding for Broadway Junction. Mr. Camacho spoke about his initial skepticism towards Ms. Leon, which quickly transformed into respect and admiration for her dedication and understanding of the community. Dr. Julie Dent, former CB4 Chairperson, provided written remarks praising Ms. Leon's long-standing commitment to Bushwick. A video tribute was presented (available at [www.fcny.org](http://www.fcny.org)).

Ms. Leon's remarks emphasized that the award was a reflection of the entire community and the board's empowerment of her work. She expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve Bushwick, acknowledging the lessons learned from longtime board members and community leaders. She reflected on Bushwick's history of resilience and community organizing, highlighting the importance of collective action in addressing challenges and improving quality of life. She expressed gratitude for the community's support and emphasized the significance of the award for both Bushwick and all community boards. The Fund also presented Ms. Leon with a commemorative brochure listing all award recipients and a portrait to display in her office.

### **Regular Meeting:**

#### **1) First Roll Call**

**Members Present:** Isa Abney, Stephanie Anderson, Jo-Ena Bennett, Makeba S. Brown-Alleyne, Robert Camacho, Felix Ceballos, Kerina Dodd, Cecilia Fabian, Freddy Fowler, Joana Fuentes-Singh, Jason Gers, Christopher Graham, Anne Guiney, Zachary Hendrickson, Barbara Jackson, Kyeshia Johnson, Luisa Jose, Alex M6reno, Romicka Nichols-Barnes, Raul Rubio, Eliseo Ruiz, Milagros Sandoval, Annette Spellin, James Steward, Christian C. Tate, Ben Tocker

**Members present with a remote waiver:** Andrew Choi, Deborah Hicks, Tanesha Honeygan, Virgie Jones, Zulma Novoa, Jerry Valentin

**Excused:** Melissa Carrera-Solano, Elvena Davis

**Absent:** Jacqueline Becerra, Kristine Malden, Freddie Mattison, Mary McClellan, Carlos Ortiz, Vernedeaneer Shell, Barbara Smith, Linda Whitfield

**Resigned:** Desmonde Monroe, Katelin Penner

**2) Acceptance of the Agenda**

Motion by Zachary Hendrickson, seconded by Freddy Fowler. All were in favor, so moved.

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

Motion by Zachary Hendrickson, seconded by Raul Rubio. All were in favor, so moved.

[October 2024 Minutes](#)

**4) Chairperson's Report**

Mr. Camacho summarized his recent activities, including attending meetings for School District 32's Community Education Council, meeting with elected officials and Riseboro regarding Casa Pasiva and other issues, attending a public hearing with DOT on outdoor dining, attending the Economic Development, Housing and Land Use, and Environmental Protection, Transportation, and Sanitation committees, attending a meeting at Borough Hall regarding the proposed changes to the City Charter regarding term limits for district managers, participating in a graffiti removal event with the 83rd Precinct and NCO programs, attending the Hope Gardens Advisory Board and NCO Partners meetings, attending the Permits and Licenses committee, attending the District Service Cabinet meeting with various city agencies and elected officials, attending a Hope Gardens Tenant Association meeting and a meeting with Casa Pasiva and Riseboro, and attending the 83 Police Precinct Community Council and clergy meetings. He also discussed issues at Hope Gardens, the need for residential parking permits, and upcoming events.

[View the District Office Report](#)

**Council Member Sandy Nurse's Remarks:** Council Member Nurse addressed the board and the public after Mr. Camacho's report. She congratulated Ms. Leon on her award, highlighting their collaborative working relationship and Ms. Leon's contributions to Bushwick. She provided an update on the upcoming City of Yes vote in the City Council, emphasizing ongoing negotiations and the inclusion of the City for All supplemental funding requests for affordability, agency staffing, and infrastructure upgrades. She addressed community concerns about potential deportations following the presidential election, advising residents with mixed-status families to ensure their documentation is in order. She thanked the board for approving the Irving Square Park dog run, highlighting the accompanying \$4 million playground renovation. She mentioned other community projects, including fixing the gate at Bushwick High School

and a tree lighting at Knickerbocker Plaza with Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez. Finally, she announced the launch of a youth fellowship program, inspired by Ms. Leon's 311 walks, which will have youth conducting 311 walks in the community.

Elected Officials and Representatives:

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

Jackie Reyes, Assemblymember Erik Dilan  
366 Cornelia Street, (718) 386-4576

Lacey Tauber, Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso  
209 Joralemon Street, (718) 802-3894

Angelica Colon and Kim Vega, Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez  
244 Union Avenue, (718) 963-3141

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

Community-Based Organizations:

Joe Tonelli, Friends of Irving Square Park  
irvingsquarepark@gmail.com

Amy Collado, Bushwick Housing Independence Project  
929-324-7358, bhiporganize@gmail.com

Anton Nimblett, Volunteers of America Bushwick Family Residence  
1675 Broadway

Eddy Perez, The Bushwick Starr  
419 Eldert Street, 929-429-8406, eddy@thebushwickstarr.org

83rd Precinct Report - Captain David Poggioli, Commanding Officer

Acknowledged Barbara Smith and asked everyone to keep her in their thoughts. Thanked Ms. Leon and Council Member Nurse for their partnership, announced a turkey giveaway (November 24th at 1pm in front of the precinct), reported a 30% decrease in overall crime, a 55% decrease in robberies, and a 56% decrease in burglaries over the past month, and discussed the importance of community collaboration in crime prevention. Year-to-date crime is down 11% (196 fewer crimes). Discussed gun violence, noting a 50% decrease.

Q&A with the Board and Public:

- Report of open-air auto repair market on Wyckoff Avenue and Madison Street.
- Report of mail theft and check fraud from mailbox at Warfield and Wilson.
- Questions about contributing factors to the crime decrease.
- Questions and comments about community-police relations.
- Question about a motorhome accumulating tickets on Himrod Street.
- Question about increased police presence in the streets.

## 5) District Manager's Report

Ms. León highlighted the CB4 website news section, including notices about drought conditions, outdoor dining removal deadlines, congestion pricing, the Strengthening Communities Program application, and Con Edison scam alerts. She also mentioned the Bushwick Jobs Board. She summarized meetings she attended, including a Civic Engagement Commission parliamentary workshop, the Center for Urban Pedagogy annual benefit, a nightlife meeting with the 83rd Precinct, a CB4 team-building event, an Independent Budget Office Symposium, and an Evergreen briefing on the NYC Industrial Plan. She also mentioned the new Fund for the City of New York fellow working on the 311 project.

## 6) Committee Reports

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

[Economic Development + Housing and Land Use](#) – Anne Guiney

Presented updates on a new affordable home ownership project by Riseboro and Amaya Homes at five sites in Bushwick (1277 DeKalb Avenue, 1143 Hancock Street, 676 Central Avenue, 1262-64 Bushwick Avenue, and 641 Chauncey Street) and the ongoing review of the Responsible Development Policy.

[Environmental Protection/Transportation/Sanitation + Parks and Recreation](#) – Christian Celeste Tate and Ben Tocker

Provided an informational update on the Wyckoff Avenue reconstruction project (from Flushing to Madison), discussed three Dining Out applications (Seawolf at 19 Wyckoff, Nook at 45 Irving, Variety Coffee at 146 Wyckoff), recommended empowering the district office to handle dining out applications to meet deadlines, and discussed the issue of daylighting. Mr. Tocker provided an update on the Bushwick Playground basketball court renovation project (Knickerbocker and Putnam sides).

[Permits and Licenses](#) – Kristine Malden on behalf of Melissa Carrera

Reviewed new liquor license applications for The Book Club Bar (380 Troutman Street), Singularity Supper (10 Cooper Street), Brohaus (786 Knickerbocker Avenue), and Snake

Hospitality (1540 DeKalb Avenue), and a class change for Cats on the Prow (785 Hart Street). Noted one applicant who did not appear before the committee.

Youth and Education – Christopher Graham on behalf of Virgie Jones

Summarized the Washington Irving Library renovation project and a presentation by MESA Charter High School on their youth workforce development program.

## 7) Recommendations

Youth and Education

**Recommendation to support renovation of the Washington Irving Library with stipulations to increase the fence height, MWBE hiring, on-site custodial staff, security response, and signage.**

Motion: Zachary Hendrickson

Second: Joanna Fuentes Singh

All in favor, so moved.

Environmental Protection, Transportation, Sanitation + Parks and Recreation

**Recommendation to motion for a blanket vote.**

**Motion: James Steward**

**Second: Felix Ceballos**

**All in favor, so moved.**

**Recommendation to approve all dining out applications with stipulations: no outdoor dining after 10pm, no amplified music outdoors, use local jobs board), for the following:**

- Seawolf (19 Wyckoff Ave): Approval.
- Nook (45 Irving)
- Variety Coffee (146 Wyckoff Ave)

Motion: Barbara Jackson

Seconded: Freddy Fowler

Abstained: Annette Spellman

Motion carried.

**Recommendation to empower the CB4 District Office to handle dining out applications.**

Motion: Christian Celeste Tate

Second: Raul Rubio

All in favor, so moved.

Permits and Licenses

**Recommendation to motion for a blanket vote.**

Motion: Zachary Hendrickson  
Second: Barbara Jackson  
All in favor, so moved.

**Recommendation: Approval, tabling, or denial of all applications, the following stipulations and recommendations outlined in the committee report, including:**

- BCB BK LLC d/b/a Book Club Bar, 380 Troutman Street: Approval with pending 500-foot statement.
- Singularity Cupboard 1 LLC d/b/a Singularity, 10 Cooper Street: Tabled pending additional information.
- Brosha House LLC, 786 Knickerbocker Avenue: Approval.
- Snake Snake Hospitality LLC, 1540 Dekalb Avenue: Approval.
- Cats on the Prowl LLC d/b/a Umbra, 785 Hart Street: Approval.
- LVAC28 Inc., 894 Wyckoff Avenue: Not approved (did not appear).

Motion: Zachary Hendrickson  
Second: Christian Celeste Tate  
Abstained: Raul Rubio  
Motion carried.

District Office

**Recommendation to remove Carlos Ortiz (did not attend any meetings since appointed) , Mary McClellan (health reasons), and Vernedeaner Shell (absences).**

Motion: Barbara Jackson  
Second: Luisa Jose  
Opposed: Milagros Sandoval  
Abstained: Raul Rubio  
Motion carried.

Certain board members were also flagged for attendance (see committee report).

**8) Old Business**

None

**9) New Business**

Jo-Ena Bennett recommended a letter of thanks be sent to Desmond Monroe for his service. Ms. Leon noted she had already responded to his email, but offered to draft a more formal letter in collaboration with Ms. Bennett and Mr. Camacho.

**10) Announcements**

Announcements were made regarding upcoming events, programs, and community initiatives. These included: a community cleanup and tree lighting ceremony in Irving Square Park; a post-election debrief meeting hosted by NYC DSA; an MTA open house at Borough Hall; a DO event for property owners; legal clinics for domestic violence and



housing; tenant rights meetings hosted by BHIP; HEAP program assistance; holiday gifts at Chila for Fun; tree lightings in the district; immigration resources and a turkey giveaway from Council Member Nurse's office; adult education classes; and the CB4 holiday potluck on December 18th.

## **11) Second Roll Call**

**Members Present:** Ben Tocker, Christian C. Tate, James Steward, Annette Spellin, Milagros Sandoval, Raul Rubio, Romicka Nichols-Barnes, Alex Móreno, Kristine Malden, Luisa Jose, Kyeshia Johnson, Barbara Jackson, Zachary Hendrickson, Anne Guiney, Christopher Graham, Jason Gers, Joanna Fuentes-Singh, Freddy Fowler, Cecilia Fabian, Kerina Dodd, Felix Ceballos, Robert Camacho, Makeba S. Brown-Alleyne, Jo-Ena Bennett, Isa Abney

**Members present with a remote waiver:** Jerry Valentin, Zulma Novoa, Virgie Jones, Tanesha Honeygan, Deborah Hicks

**Excused:** Eliseo Ruiz, Elvena Davis, Melissa Carrera-Solano

**Absent:** Linda Whitfield, Barbara Smith, Vernedeaner Shell, Carlos Ortiz, Mary McClellan, Freddie Mattison, Andrew Choi, Jacqueline Becerra, Stephanie Anderson

## **12) Adjournment**

Raul Rubio made a motion to adjourn. Joanna Fuentes Singh seconded the motion. All in favor, so moved.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:25pm