

Brooklyn Community Board 4
Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 16, 2025, 6pm

Hope Gardens Older Adult Center
195 Linden Street
Zoom

Chairperson: Robert Camacho
District Manager: Celestina León

Meeting Start: 6:05pm

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

Public Hearing:

1) Zev Reisman/CB4 Community Planning Fellow Final 311 Project Presentation

Zev discussed the analysis of 311 data, revealing 600,000 rows, primarily concentrated in northern and southeastern districts, correlating with lower median household incomes. Key findings included a significant delay in case resolution, particularly in 2024, and the need for consistent data procedures. The top three agencies, NYPD, HPD, and DSNY, handled 75% of cases. Recommendations included community walks, revised surveys, flyers, and a WhatsApp group for updates. The discussion also highlighted the importance of community engagement and the role of community boards in facilitating accurate data and improving quality of life issues.

Q&A/Discussion

Felix (CB4 Member)

Question: Why does it take longer now for agencies to respond to 311 complaints (e.g., parking violations) compared to before?

Response (Zev Reisman): The project can't resolve all issues but highlighted that delays may be due to city agencies lacking resources. Emphasized the importance of accountability, oversight, and community engagement to ensure issues are followed up, including contacting elected officials.

Kristine Malden (CB4)

Question: Sometimes community members say they've made 311 complaints, but there's no record in open data. Is this a triage issue? Also, would a threaded issue feature (to track ongoing complaints) be helpful?

Response (Zev Reisman): The specific issue hadn't come up in research, but it highlights that data doesn't capture everything. The community board could play a role in surfacing underreported issues. Agreed that a threaded issue feature would be helpful and welcomed further discussion for a report to city agencies.

Zach Hendrickson (CB4)

Question: Did you analyze changes in complaint types over time in the mapping? Noted that gentrifying communities see spikes in 311/911 calls, especially from newer, whiter residents. Did you see shifts in complaint types in hotspot areas over time?

Response (Zev Reisman): Did not analyze or visualize changes over time in mapping but agreed it would be an interesting next step and possible with available data.

Annette Spellman (CB4)

Question: How can we convince more people to call 311? Many don't trust it or believe their information is anonymous.

Response (Zev Reisman): Acknowledged trust and awareness issues. Recommended outreach events, community walks, and creating spaces for residents to engage with officials and agencies. Noted that trust is built over time and through engagement.

Jason Gers (CB4)

Question: What do you recommend for board members interested in analyzing 311 data themselves? Is it all available on open data, and any tips?

Response (Zev Reisman): All information used is publicly available on open data. Plans to create a short guide on how to analyze the data.

Deborah Hicks (CB4)

Question: Could there be visual signs (like "noise free zone" signs) to deter noise, similar to hospitals, with fines attached? 311 noise complaints often don't get timely responses.

Response (Zev Reisman): Points are well taken but somewhat outside the research scope. Will consider following up with more research.

Stephanie Anderson (CB4)

Question: Do you have flyers to help inform the community about 311?

Response (Zev Reisman): Draft flyers exist but are not finalized. Open to feedback and collaboration before distributing.

Robert Camacho (Board Chair)

Question: Is there data on complaints made directly to NCOs (Neighborhood Coordination Officers) or precincts, which may not be reflected in 311 data?

Response (Zev Reisman): The project only analyzed 311 data; information outside of 311 was not included.

Follow-up: What does “Implementation Guide, 311, we quit between months” mean?

Response (Zev Reisman): It refers to comparing 311 calls by issue type between months (e.g., February vs. March) to track changes.

Follow-up: How did you analyze in Google Sheets?

Response (Zev Reisman): Downloaded data, imported into Google Sheets, and analyzed changes in complaint numbers.

Follow-up: Is the implementation to send a report to city agencies?

Response (Zev Reisman): Yes, the idea is for the community board to document and follow up with agencies to ensure due diligence.

Jo-Ena Bennett (CB4)

Question: How can the community board get the feedback necessary from city agencies to do its job, given agencies often don't respond to recommendations?

Response (Zev Reisman): 311 is a tool for both reporting and understanding issues. Greater engagement and understanding of the process are needed for more effective advocacy.

2) CB4 Revised Responsible Development Policy

Anne Guiney and Christian Celeste Tate provided an overview of the board's policy and the committee's recommended changes.

[See the draft policy](#)

Q&A/Discussion

Zachary Hendrickson

Question: Noted the policy uses "neighborhood median income" for affordability. Asked for clarification, since Bushwick's median income may be higher than the city's area median income (AMI), and suggested the policy should clearly define which metric is used to avoid confusion or unintended consequences.

Response (Anne Guiney): Believes Bushwick's median income is actually lower than the citywide AMI but will double-check. Emphasized the intent is to keep housing affordable for the local community.

Response (Christian Tate): The principle is that housing should be affordable to the local community, regardless of whether the neighborhood median is above or below the citywide average. Agreed that clearer definitions would be helpful.

Follow-up (Zach): Suggested specifying a percentage of neighborhood median income, as is done with AMI, and recommended that at least 50% of units should be two or more bedrooms to support families.

Response (Anne Guiney): Agreed, noting that the board always pushes for larger units and family housing.

Stephanie Anderson

Comment: Praised the document's organization and the inclusion of a rent-to-buy aspect, noting its importance given the prevalence of hedge funds buying up properties.
Response: Acknowledged and thanked for the support.

Alan Gamboa (Public Member)

Question: Asked for clarification on what developers actually request from the community board and what the board can give or deny, given the policy is not enforceable.

Response (Anne Guiney): Explained that developers often come for land use changes (e.g., rezoning), and the board uses the policy to negotiate for more affordable housing or other community benefits. While the board's recommendations are advisory, they can influence outcomes, especially early in the process.

Fran Sanhueza (Council Member Sandy Nurse's Office)

Question: Asked if, in existing spaces with zoning, the policy is legally enforceable.

Response (Anne Guiney): If a project is "as of right" (fits existing zoning), developers do not have to come to the board. The board's influence is strongest during land use changes (ULURP), but the City Council has the final say and can choose to ignore the board's recommendations.

Robert Camacho (Chair)

Comment: Emphasized the need for rezoning in Bushwick to secure more affordable housing, as has happened in other neighborhoods. Stressed the importance of holding developers accountable and keeping long-term residents in the community.

Response: Acknowledged and agreed with the need for continued advocacy and accountability.

Regular Meeting:

1) First Roll Call:

Present: Isa Abney, Stephanie Anderson, Jo-Ena Bennett, Robert Camacho, Felix Ceballos, Christopher Graham, Freddy Fowler, Joanna Fuentes-Singh, Jason Gers, Christopher Graham, Anne Guiney, Zachary Hendrickson, Barbara Jackson, Virgie Jones, Luisa Jose, Kristine Malden, Romicka Nichols-Barnes, Raul Rubio, Eliseo Ruiz, Milagros Sandoval, Annette Spellen, James Steward, Christian C. Tate, Ben Tocker, Linda Whitfield

Present via a remote waiver: Andrew Choi, Elvena Davis, Deborah Hicks, Zulma Novoa, Jerry Valentin

Excused: Tanesha Honeygan, Freddie Mattison

Absent: Makeba S. Brown-Alleyne, Cecilia Fabian, Tara Jones-Thomas, Alex Móreno

Did Not Renew: Kyeshia Johnson

24 members were present, which constitutes a quorum.

2) Acceptance of the Agenda

Raul Rubio made a motion to accept the agenda. It was seconded by Felix Ceballos. All were in favor, motion carried.

3) Acceptance of the Previous Meeting Minutes

Raul Rubio made a motion to accept the previous meeting minutes. It was seconded by Freddy Fowler. All were in favor, motion carried.

4) Chairperson's Report

Community Meetings and Events:

- Attended various tenant association meetings, CEC meetings, coalition events, and block party permit meetings.
- Participated in workshops and borough board meetings, including events focused on addressing community concerns and improving communication.

Block Party Permits and Public Safety:

- Outlined rules and responsibilities for block party organizers, emphasizing safety, emergency access, and compliance with permit conditions.
- Noted the importance of clear communication with NYPD and community affairs regarding event logistics.

Community Issues and Advocacy:

- Addressed ongoing challenges such as school and daycare closures, church closures, and the impact on local families and services.
- Expressed concern about the loss of essential community institutions, including food pantries and churches, and the need for collective action.

Committee Participation and Quorum:

- Stressed the importance of board and committee members attending meetings in person to ensure quorum and effective decision-making.
- Shared disappointment when meetings could not proceed due to lack of quorum, affecting community initiatives.

Permits and Licenses:

- Discussed the process for reviewing and approving permits, emphasizing fairness, transparency, and avoiding conflicts of interest.

- Highlighted the need for board members to adhere to established guidelines and avoid preferential treatment.

Personal Reflections and Community Support:

- Shared personal stories about supporting seniors and families in the community.
- Reflected on the loss of a local police officer and the importance of mental health and community support.
- Emphasized the need for compassion, accountability, and collective responsibility among board members and the wider community.

Advocacy for Social Services:

- Advocated for the protection of Social Security and support for seniors.
- Highlighted the importance of direct services and accessibility for vulnerable populations.

Closing Remarks:

- Thanked community partners, NYPD, and board members for their ongoing work.
- Encouraged continued advocacy, accountability, and support for all community members, regardless of their circumstances.

CB4 Election of Executive Officers for 2025 to 2026 (added to wrong part of the agenda in error)

Chairperson

Mr. Camacho's reelection was uncontested.

Mr. Ceballos cast the vote.

1st Vice Chairperson

Raul Rubio and Christian Celeste Tate accepted the nomination.

Both provided brief remarks on why they chose to accept.

Christian – 15 | Raul – 9

Christian was elected.

2nd Vice Chairperson

Milagros Sandoval and Felix Ceballos accepted the nomination.

Both provided brief remarks on why they chose to accept.

Recording Secretary

Andrew Choi declined the nomination, although he has been helping prepare the minutes.

Jerry Valentin accepted the nomination and was uncontested.

Mr. Ceballos cast the vote.

Treasurer

James Steward and Felix Ceballos accepted the nomination.

Both provided brief remarks on why they chose to accept.

Parliamentarian

Jo-Ena Bennett accepted the nomination and was uncontested.

Mr. Ceballos cast the vote.

Elected Officials and Representatives:

Johnathan Betancourt – Office of Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez

Phone: 718-599-3658

Fran Sanhueza – Council Member Jennifer Nurse's Office

Phone: 718-642-2866

Kimberly Vega – Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez's Office

Phone: 718-963-3141

Narvain – Can Aware

Phone: 917-437-7260

Erin Wright – Brooklyn Borough President's Office

Phone: 718-802-3700

Maria Valdez – Office of Senator Julia Salazar

Phone: 718-573-1726

83rd Precinct Commanding Officer's Report – Deputy Inspector David Poggioli

Deputy Inspector Poggioli thanked the board and community for their engagement.

- He reiterated the importance of Build the Block meetings (Next: Sector Adam, March 27th, 6 PM, 1288 Hancock St) as a forum for direct communication with NCOs.
- He noted high attendance at recent Community Council (52 people) and Clergy Council (40+ people) meetings, linking community dialogue to crime reduction.
- Bushwick's year-to-date crime decrease is 33%, significantly better than the citywide decrease of 13%.
- Eight Field Training Unit officers returned to the precinct (from Transit Bureau assignment) and were deployed on foot patrol (Wyckoff, Knickerbocker, Myrtle Aves), Thursday-Monday, 5:30 PM - 2:00 AM. He encouraged community interaction with the new officers.

- Update on Hydrant Parking: Increased summons enforcement and conducted a targeted towing operation with tow trucks accompanying officers. Highlighted this response to community concerns raised last month.
- Update on Wyckoff Ave Food Trucks: Coordinated effort with Dept. of Sanitation and Dept. of Health on March 6th resulted in summonses, removal of 4-5 conveyances, and closure orders for others, leading to a noticeable improvement. He thanked partner agencies and noted the new foot patrol will help maintain the progress.

Crime Stats/Trends:

- Robberies are down almost 70% YTD (28 total since Jan 1st). A small cluster of 4-5 incidents was noted on Linden St (Irving to St. Nicholas) during overnight hours. He advised situational awareness (e.g., putting phones away).
- Highlighted an increase in apartment rental scams where victims send deposits (via Zelle, etc.) for apartments they haven't seen in person, only to find the apartment occupied or non-existent. He urged caution and in-person verification before sending money.
- Cop of the Month: Honored Officer Jerez (Field Intelligence Unit) for work leading to a search warrant near Stanhope & Wilson, recovering meth, heroin, cocaine, and two loaded firearms (38 revolver, 9mm). This stemmed from an investigation into street-level narcotics sales reported by the community.

Board Member/Public Questions & Comments:

- Felix Ceballos thanked the Inspector for the visible difference in the neighborhood and acknowledged the ongoing nature of issues like hydrant parking.
- Annette Spellman requested a flyer for the Sector Adam Build the Block meeting. The Inspector confirmed they have flyers including photos of the NCOs and a map.
- Cecilia Fabian appreciated the neighborhood improvements and shared her daughter's experience being scammed out of \$2,500 in an apartment rental scheme.
- James Steward thanked the Inspector for an officer proactively calling his church regarding safety planning for Holy Week.

5) District Manager's Report - Ms. Celeste León

Ms. León noted she would forgo her report due to the meeting running late. She added that she would address the closure of Bushwick United Methodist Church under new business.

6) Committee Reports (digital and/or hard copies are available upon request)

[Civic/Public Safety/Religious](#) – Annette Spellman

[Economic Development + Housing and Land Use](#) - Kristine Malden and Anne Guiney

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

- The Parks and Recreation Committee recommends approving various park permits, contingent on PD and Parks Department approval.
- The committee discusses the need for clear criteria for park hours and the importance of community input.
- The committee also addresses the issue of outdoor dining facilities and their impact on community spaces.
- The recommendations are approved by the board, with some members expressing concerns about extended hours.

[Permits and Licenses](#) – Vacant (Kristine assisted)

- The Permits and Licensing Committee recommends supporting various permit applications, with some changes based on community feedback.
- The committee discusses the importance of proper documentation and adherence to stipulated hours.
- The committee also addresses the issue of outdoor dining facilities and their impact on community spaces.
- The recommendations are approved by the board, with some members expressing concerns about enforcement and community impact.

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

7) Recommendations

Housing and Land Use – Responsible Development Policy

Motion: To approve the responsible development policy as articulated.

Made by: Jo-Ena Bennett

Second: Barbara Jackson

Vote: All in favor.

Result: Motion carried.

Parks and Recreation – Parks Permits

Motion: To approve the park permits contingent on NYPD and Parks Department approval for extra hours at Hope Ball Field.

Made by: Eliseo Ruiz

Second: James Steward

Vote: All in favor except for one opposed.

Opposed: Stephanie Anderson

Result: Motion carried.

Permits and Licenses – Blanket Vote for Recommendations

Motion: To approve a blanket vote for the committee's recommendations.

Made by: James Steward

Seconded by: Felix Ceballos

Vote: All in favor except for one opposed.

Opposed: Jo-Ena Bennett

Result: Motion carried.

Permits and Licenses – Committee Recommendations (Specific Applications)

Motion: To support the committee's recommendations (as modified).

Made by: Anne Guiney

Seconded by: Eliseo Ruiz

Vote: Several opposed and abstained:

Opposed: Jo-Ena Bennett, Robert Camacho, Elvena Davis, Zuma Novoa, Joanna Fuentes-Singh

Abstained: Raul Rubio, Annette Spellen

Result: Motion still carried.

8) Old Business

None

9) New Business

Celeste provided an update on the Bushwick United Methodist Church (corner of Madison and Bushwick Avenue):

- Attended a meeting at the church, initially expecting to discuss financial difficulties and possible city support.
- Discovered the situation was more complex, with church leadership making decisions without informing the congregation.
- Has been in contact with the Congresswoman's office, District Attorney's office, Mayor's office, and Pastor Monroe (mayor's faith-based initiative leader) to connect stakeholders and provide support.
- Noted the need to involve the Attorney General's office if there are attempts to sell the church without proper notification.
- Stated that the situation is ongoing and the board is doing its best to support the church and community stakeholders.

10) Announcements (1.5 minutes each)

Recommendation to change announcements to 1 minute each due to the length of the meeting.

Motion – Barbara Jackson

Second – Zach Hendrickson

All in favor, motion carried.

Pablo Rivera (Bushwick Sports and Recreation):

- Announced the launch of Bushwick Sports and Recreation.

- Invested \$20,000 personally, with a payroll of 32 people.
- Emphasized the organization is not a "cheap summer league."
- Addressed concerns about late-night incidents in parks, stating that stabbings happen late at night and that board members/coaches are not responsible for such incidents.

Kimberly Vega (Council Member Gutierrez's Office)

- Announced a tax lien event on April 29 at their office (1–4 pm) for homeowners needing assistance with tax lien letters.
- Hosting a decarbonization workshop for homeowners on May 6 at 6 pm at 280 Star Street.
- Requested a cap on noise permits at Maria Hernandez Park due to complaints; awaiting response.
- Announced two events on April 26 at Maria Hernandez Park: a dog run cleanup (10 am–1 pm) and a street tree care event.
- Announced a "Breathe Easy" workshop on April 22 (Earth Day) at Bushwick Library about cleaner air and energy bills.

Johnathan Betancourt (Office of Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez)

- Reported on a press conference outside the Social Security office, standing up for Social Security recipients.
- Criticized federal cuts to Social Security Administration staff.
- Mentioned a letter sent by the Congresswoman regarding the closure of five regional Head Start offices, including one in New York.
- Provided office contact information.

Erin Wright (Brooklyn Borough President's Office)

- Announced the deadline (May 29) for nominating students for graduation awards.
- Promoted a "Protecting Your Property" estate planning workshop on April 22.
- Announced a climate resiliency panel event on April 28.
- Announced a sustainable building resource fair on April 29.

Zachary Hendrickson

- Announced May Day (May 1) and encouraged participation in labor actions and demonstrations.
- Mentioned the UAW's call for a general strike in 2028 and the importance of starting organizing now.

Cirilo Tony Nunez (Bushwick Sports and Recreation)

- Reminded about ongoing registration for Bush Sports and Recreation.
- Shared a recent incident where a child was bitten by a pit bull at Furman Park, highlighting safety concerns.

Nervain (Can Aware and Cannabis NYC)

- Announced a community uplift summit on May 17 at Restoration Plaza, focused on cannabis education and opportunities.
- Emphasized the event's goal to empower communities affected by cannabis prohibition.

Chris Graham (CB4, Growing 4ward College Tour)

- Shared that the annual college tour was canceled for the first time in 27 years due to parents losing jobs and funding cuts.
- Emphasized the real impact of economic challenges on youth opportunities.

Christian Tate

- Reminded about the upcoming tax lien sale on May 20.
- Urged homeowners and tenants to check the Department of Finance website to avoid being on the list, as it contributes to displacement.

Maria Valdez (Office of Senator Julia Salazar)

- Announced a joint letter from 48 state legislators to prevent 60,000 families from losing child care vouchers.
- Reminded about the upcoming REAL ID requirement starting May 7 for domestic flights.
- Offered assistance with DMV appointments and provided office contact information.

11) **Second Roll Call**

Present: Ben Tocker, Christian C. Tate, James Steward, Annette Spellman, Milagros Sandoval, Eliseo Ruiz, Raul Rubio, Romicka Nichols-Barnes, Kristine Malden, Luisa Jose, Virgie Jones, Barbara Jackson, Zachary Hendrickson, Anne Guiney, Christopher Graham, Jason Gers, Johanna Fuentes-Singh (attendance amended after meeting adjourned), Freddy Fowler, Christopher Graham, Freddy Fowler, Felix Ceballos, Robert Camacho, Jo-Ena Bennett, Stephanie Anderson, Isa Abney

Present via a remote waiver: Jerry Valentin, Zulma Novoa, Deborah Hicks, Elvena Davis, Andrew Choi

Excused: Freddie Mattison, Tanesha Honeygan

Absent: Linda Whitfield, Milagros Sandoval, Alex Moreno, Kristine Malden, Tara Jones-Thomas, Cecilia Fabian, Makeba S. Brown Alleyne

Did Not Renew: Kyeshia Johnson

12) **Adjournment**

Motion: Barbara Jackson
Second: Isa Abney
All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:29pm