



Public Hearing & Regular Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2025, 6pm

Hope Gardens Older Adult Center, 195 Linden Street, and Zoom

Chairperson: Robert Camacho District Manager: Celestina León

Meeting Start: 6:04pm

Public Hearing

- 1) **Vali Gache, President & CEO, Wyckoff Heights Medical Center** – introducing herself, the hospital's executive team, and providing a brief update on the hospital's operations.

CEO/President Self-Introduction

Background:

- Has been CEO/President since January 2025, with 12 years at Wyckoff, serving previously 7 years as Chief Financial Officer.
- 25 years in hospital and healthcare finance, started career in Romania (economics background), immigrated to the United States on her 30th birthday.
- Emphasizes immigrant story and commitment to offering opportunity for her children.

Executive Team Introductions

- Dr. Gustavo Del Toro: Chief Medical Officer, over a decade at Wyckoff.
- Dr. Cathy Simon: Chief Nursing Officer, also over a decade at Wyckoff.
- Christine Scaminaci: Chief Operating Officer, newer to the team (role created January 2025).
- Kiyana Allen: Executive Assistant.
- Kevin Smyley: Legal Counsel, Chief Compliance Officer, head of public patient affairs.

State of Wyckoff & Community Role

- Wyckoff is classified as a "safety net" hospital, serving over 90% patients with government insurance (Medicaid/Medicare).
- More than 80,000 unique patients, 330,000 outpatient visits annually, 12,000 admissions/year.
- Over 2,000 employees, mostly from the local community, plus robust academic/residency programs (over 200 residents/nursing students annually).
- Wide diversity in patient demographics and languages spoken; emphasizes focus on social/economic health disparities.
- Community assessment shows high poverty and child poverty, many rent-burdened households, and significant food and housing insecurity.

Programs & Initiatives

- 20 active grant-funded programs focused on care coordination, benefits navigation, social determinants of health, community awareness, and behavioral health.

- Efforts to address the primary health issues in the community: diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, cancer, pulmonary illnesses.
- New programs to screen patients for nonmedical needs (food, housing, safety) via the state's 1115 waiver/Head program, helping secure \$46 million annually for targeted care and services.
- Major capital improvements: Pediatric Emergency Department (recently opened), future Adult ED renovation, plans for a Diabetes Center, urgent care, and maternity/NICU upgrades.

Q&A/Discussion

Q1: Future of Wyckoff as Independent Hospital or Merging with a Large System

Question from James Steward, CB4 member:

Is Wyckoff planning to continue as a small community hospital or considering joining a larger healthcare system like Mount Sinai, considering current trends in healthcare?

Response from Vali, CEO/President:

The Board of Trustees prefers Wyckoff to remain an independent, small community hospital. There are clinical affiliations (e.g., with Northwell Health), but there are no current discussions or plans for a merger. The belief is that the hospital serves the community better as an independent entity.

Q2: Defibrillator and CPR Training for Community

Question from Stephanie Anderson, CB4 member:

Is there still a program that provides defibrillator (AED) training and classes for building/homeowners? Do you still give out defibrillators to those who take the class, as done in the past?

Response from Vali, CEO/President, defers to Dr. Kathy Simon, Chief Nursing Officer:

Dr. Kathy Simon: Several years ago, nurse educators ran such a program, giving classes (including ACLS, BCLS and CPR) and going out to community centers and schools. Provision of AED training was part of those sessions. While the formal program ended, the educators are able and willing to provide the service and training again, with Spanish-speaking capacity. Interested groups can contact the hospital to arrange such sessions.

Q3: Hospital Response to Immigration Enforcement (ICE) Situations

Question from Felix Ceballos, CB4 member:

How does Wyckoff hospital handle situations when Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is present, particularly regarding patients under treatment at the hospital?

Response from Vali, CEO/President:

The hospital follows a strict protocol designed with guidance from the Greater New York Hospital Association. ICE is not permitted to remove patients from the hospital while they are under treatment (inpatient or outpatient, including dialysis). Once treatment is complete, the hospital has no control over federal agencies' actions but will always uphold its duty-of-care and protection for patients during medical care. Offered Dr. Del Toro (CMO) an opportunity to elaborate, but the CEO summarized the answer.

Q4: Status of the Children's Health Clinic/Center on Palmetto and Irving

Question from Jason Gers, CB4 member:

There was once a sign for a new children's center or health clinic at Palmetto & Irving. Is that plan still ongoing?

Response from Vali, CEO/President:

The sign was due to a grant awarded for developing the site. However, after state review, the site did not meet the criteria needed, and the Certificate of Occupancy was not approved. The plan for a children’s health clinic has been put on hold. The grant funding was not lost but redirected—now used to advance the Diabetes Center project. The hospital is still exploring options for the originally intended facility but has no active healthcare development there at present.

Q5: Community Advisory Board, Stakeholder Participation & Trust-building

Question/Statement from Robert Camacho, CB4 Chair & others:

Strongly questioned the hospital about establishing a true Community Advisory Board, ensuring real local stakeholder participation (not just hospital-appointed board members), addressing stigma and historical mistrust, and working on more direct accountability and communication.

Response from Vali, CEO/President:

Acknowledged the history of mistrust and stigma and stated that trust must be earned. The hospital recognizes the need for more transparent and meaningful engagement, including advisory boards with community representation. The hospital conducted a community health needs assessment (172 surveys; to be shared by year’s end). Commitment to improve and publicize advisory board meetings and community involvement was made.

Dr. Cathy Simon, CNO: Confirmed there is a "patient and family advisory committee," currently a small group mostly formed via local senior centers that welcomes broader community participation. Meetings are monthly, open invitation for new chairs/co-chairs and participants to join. Hospital values real feedback from former patients and is responsive to those concerns. Meeting info is available and will be more widely shared.

Kevin Smyley, Counsel: Further reinforced the CEO’s pledge: the Community Advisory Board will be properly established, and there will be a meaningful commitment to community-involved decision-making.

Q6: Details on Social Needs Programs, “1115 Waiver” Use, and Capital Projects

Question from Mr. Camacho

Sought clarification about the “1115 waiver” social needs program, funding use, and how the program benefits/protects the community.

Response from Vali, CEO/President:

The “1115 Waiver” is a federal-state program providing Wyckoff up to \$46 million/year, to be invested specifically in services identified as most needed by the community (ambulatory care, language access, care coordination, data, social needs, etc.) based on direct assessments. The program runs through 2027, after which reimbursement will switch to a global budgeting model. Wyckoff is prioritizing social determinants of health and underlying economic/social factors to improve patient outcomes and address non-medical barriers to health.

2) Addison Calle, Community Coordinator and Gabriella Corrales, Civic Engagement Coordinator, El Puente – providing an update on Cycle 4 of the People’s Money, the citywide participatory budget process.

“Gabby”/Gabriela:

Civic Engagement Coordinator at El Puente, a human rights organization located in Williamsburg and serving Bushwick.

- Sole presenter for the evening’s segment (“I am a one man show today”).
- El Puente is facilitating on behalf of the NYC Civic Engagement Commission (CEC).

Overview of El Puente and the People’s Money Process

Gabriela:

- Explains El Puente’s local work (human rights, youth/community empowerment, based in Williamsburg serving both Williamsburg and Bushwick).
- Present for a scheduled workshop on behalf of the NYC Civic Engagement Commission.
- Provides background: the CEC was established through a 2018 ballot initiative to build civic trust and promote community input in government.

Purpose and Structure of the Workshop

Gabriela:

- Described participatory budgeting (PB) as a process where community members help decide how to spend a portion of the city’s expense budget (for programs/services, not capital projects).
- Clarified difference between expense budget (programs/services) vs. capital budget (construction, repairs).
- Session was focused on generating ideas for local programs or services that could benefit Bushwick, not for physical capital improvements.
- Referenced previous requests that fell outside the scope of the expense budget (e.g., park water fountain repairs) for context.

Workshop structure:

- Attendees are asked to work together at their tables.
- Each table should discuss and select a topic/program area for potential funding.
- Participants will write why their chosen topic deserves more funding.
- Attendees complete a worksheet—front for topic/justification/program idea, back for borough/zip code/target population.
- Gabriela explained later steps in the PB process: after idea generation, ideas are evaluated in borough assemblies (selection phase), then go to a public vote, and finally, winning projects are implemented by an organization selected via an RFP.

Key Points Discussed

Gabriela:

- Noted that arts and culture receive a small fraction of the NYC expense budget compared to other domains (e.g., Department of Education).
- The “People’s Money” cycle allocates \$4 million for PB projects citywide.
- Last year’s winning project: youth jobs and opportunities outreach, implemented by Bridge Street Development Corp., with high interest in youth construction skills/job opportunities.
- This CB4 session is the last day of the current “idea generation” phase.
- Emphasis on community-generated ideas for Bushwick and the importance of group participation.

Interactive Component and Engagement

Gabriela:

- Provided a QR code for those interested in joining the upcoming borough assembly.
- Encouraged Bushwick community members to participate in the assembly for better local representation in the selection/voting process.
- Offered thanks and invites everyone to participate and share their input.

Mr. Camacho (Board Chair):

- Shared a personal experience as a member of a past borough assembly, describes the competitive and collaborative nature of the borough assemblies (selling ideas; supporting communities even if another idea wins).
- Encouraged board and community members to participate actively and underscores the importance of strong proposals for funding.

Transition/Wrap-Up

Mr. Camacho:

- Announced a five-minute work period for groups to fill out worksheets and generate their community ideas.
- Further confirmed the participatory, community-building nature of the hearing item.
- Segment concludes with collection of forms and transition to further CB4 agenda items.

Q&A/Discussion

No detailed programmatic concerns or challenges were raised. Participants' substantive ideas for funding were gathered in the group activity that followed the presentation.

Regular Meeting

1) First Roll Call

Present: Stephanie Anderson, Jo-Ena Bennett, Robert Camacho, Felix Ceballos, Elvena Davis, Jason Gers, Christopher Graham, Anne Guiney, Elaine Hamilton, Barbara Jackson, Virgie Jones, Tara Jones-Thomas, Luisa Jose, Nancy Keith, Cindy Lebron, Kristine Malden, Freddie Mattison, Cirilo Nuñez, Shray Richardson, Raul Rubio, Eliseo Ruiz, Milagros Sandoval, Juan Serra, Annette Spellen, James Steward II, Christian C. Tate, Ben Tocker, Linda Whitfield

Present via a remote waiver: Andrew Choi, Tanesha Honeygan, Jerry Valentin

Excused: Isa Abney, Freddy Fowler, Joanna Fuentes-Singh, Courtney Henley, Giovannies Justiniano, Pablo Rivera, Josue Salazar, Bee Spiderman

Absent: Tiany Belliard, Tevin Campbell, Alan Gamboa, Zachary Hendrickson, Alex Móreno, Romicka Nichols-Barnes, Savannah Thais

A quorum was established with 26 members present.

2) Acceptance of the Agenda

Motion: James Steward made a motion to amend the agenda to move the introduction of elected officials and other representatives after the 83rd Precinct Report.

Second: Raul Rubio

All in favor, motion carried.

3) Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion: Christian C. Tate made a motion to accept the previous meeting minutes.

Second: Raul Rubio

All in favor, motion carried.

4) **Parliamentarian's Note – Jo-Ena Bennett**

Recognition of Good Rule-Following

Jo-Ena Bennett begins by congratulating board members and attendees for “following the rules so far this evening”—particularly for introducing themselves when speaking (“announcing your name and where you’re from”). She encourages everyone to “please continue to do so.”

Procedural Guidance for Board Discussions

Reminded everyone that to be recognized to speak, they must wait to be called upon by the Chair (Mr. Camacho).

- All questions and concerns during meetings should be addressed through the Chair, rather than directed at one another, to avoid direct arguments between members.

Use of Abbreviations

Recapped a previous request: when making announcements or reading reports, members should minimize use of abbreviations for agencies and committees.

- At least the first time an agency or committee is named, the full name should be stated (e.g., “Department of Transportation,” not just “DOT”).
- Purpose: To make meetings clearer and more accessible, improving communication for all participants and observers.

Final Thanks

Jo-Ena Bennett thanked board members for their attention and reiterates her appreciation for their efforts to improve communication and adherence to board procedure.

Summary:

The Parliamentarian's note focused on positive reinforcement of meeting protocols—speaking order, addressing the chair, clarity when using abbreviations—and encouraged continued attention to communication and decorum, all aimed at making CB4 proceedings more orderly and accessible.

5) **83rd Precinct Report — Captain Yael Magori, Executive Officer**

Introduction and Precinct Leadership

- Speaker: Captain Yael Magori, Executive Officer of the 83rd Precinct (Bushwick), serving for 17 months.
- Captain Magori greets attendees and encourages broader participation in precinct meetings, noting Bushwick's cultural diversity and the need for representation from all neighborhoods and age groups.

Crime Statistics and Trends

- The precinct has experienced a steady level of crime, with no significant increase in violent crimes.
- The most significant concern over the past month is "grand larceny," which involves theft of property (unattended bags, items left in cars, stolen credit cards, etc.) valued over \$1,000.

- Captain Magori stresses the need for personal vigilance, especially during the shopping season: keep belongings secure, watch your surroundings, avoid leaving valuables visible, and be mindful of potential theft in crowded areas.

Community Safety Advice

Specific tips are given for residents who may be out with children, bags, or strollers, as these are especially at risk for theft on busy commercial corridors.

Recent High-Profile Police Incident

- Addresses a recent incident in which an officer was shot in the face; the officer was released after a few hours with non-life-threatening injuries.
- Emphasizes the community's positive response, support, and collaboration with law enforcement.
- Notes that one dangerous perpetrator was removed from the streets as a result.

Personnel Updates and Officer Assignments

- Announces the addition of 17 new officers to the 83rd Precinct, the largest new group in recent years.
- Officers are deployed mainly on Knickerbocker and Myrtle Avenue corridors, which are major shopping and pedestrian areas.
- The new "rookies" work in separate teams during daytime and evening shifts; there is a 45-day rotation for new officer training and adjustment.
- Residents are encouraged to greet these officers, share community tips, and help them learn the neighborhood.

Q&A/Community Discussion

Large Drug Bust/Illegal Cannabis Operation

Question from Jo-Ena Bennett, CB4 Board Member:

Asks about the recent widely publicized drug bust in Bushwick and whether the 83rd Precinct was involved.

Response from Captain Magori:

The 83rd was not directly involved; it was a joint operation coordinated by another local precinct, NYPD, and external law enforcement units. Since the case is pending, further details can't be shared.

Crime Prevention Survey/Camera Installation

Announcement from Captain Magori:

Residents, organizations, churches, and community centers can request a crime prevention survey from the precinct. If vulnerabilities are found, NYPD can assist with subsidized security camera installation, subject to eligibility and a lengthy application process.

Contact: Officer Lopez (Community Affairs) and Officer Lisa Prezzano (Crime Prevention).

Security Cameras — Eligibility

Question from James Steward, CB4 Member:

Asked if camera funding is for street or private property.

Response from Captain Magori and Officer Lopez:

Funding is available primarily for institutional/community locations—such as churches and community centers—not private residences.

Deployment of New Officers

Clarification from Robert Camacho, CB4 Chair:

Explained that while 17 new officers have joined, they are only part of the rotation at any given time due to training schedules (7am–3pm, then 4pm–11pm, with two teams alternating 45-day shifts).

Purpose: To manage community expectations regarding visible police presence.

Final Notes from the Captain

- Captain Magori expressed gratitude for community support, reiterates her commitment to partnership, and encourages open communication.
- Urged residents to share any safety concerns or suggestions directly with precinct officers, especially the new recruits.

6) Committee Reports

District Office – Mr. Robert Camacho

Mr. Camacho confirmed he would like Celeste, the district manager, to provide an overview of the report.

Role of the District Office Committee

The District Office Committee primarily reviews:

- Board member attendance (both at full board and committee meetings)
- Compliance with CB4 bylaws and city charter obligations
- Internal operations and process updates for facility and staff management

Board Member Attendance and Absence Policy

The committee reviews who is present or absent at meetings; several members were specifically flagged for frequent absences (list of names read).

- All board member attendance details are now public—members are sent email and certified letter notices about their attendance, along with CB4's expectations and the process should removal be necessary under the board's bylaws.
- The committee takes into consideration legitimate reasons for absence and provides opportunities for board members to respond/clarify intentions before any potential action is taken.
- Explained that board attendance data must be submitted to the Borough President's Office, who ultimately controls appointment/renewal—compliance is audited for transparency and city charter requirements.

Board Compliance with Hire/Removal Protocols

- Cited a recent citywide meeting with the Law Department and other boards to review the legal process for board member removal.
- Recognized the board for transparent and compliant protocols—members are always allowed the opportunity to clarify or respond to any committee decisions regarding attendance or participation.

Building/Facility Operations and Staff Role Updates

- Discussed ongoing maintenance and pest control issues at the board’s physical office.
- Addressed long-term plans for the office site, including equipment and operations management.
- Noted recent staffing changes:
 - Example: Adelina, a previously flexible staff member, now works only set union hours (not attending evening committee meetings), which may impact committee support.

Office Operations: Equipment, Communications, and Documentation

Board office equipment management and staff scheduling remain under review and improvement.

- Continuing focus on organizing board documentation, streamlining the office, and improving website/social media updates.
- Special mention: Social media management is evolving to better reflect board and community activities.

Public Notices, Legislative, and Legal Updates

Recapped recent notices reviewed by the committee:

- Budget updates, Department of Probation materials, city testimony opportunities, and legal notices.
- Mentioned legal guidance received from the Law Department and Office of Management and Budget on board staff hiring practices—some boards use a hiring committee, some give discretion to the office.

Calls to Engagement

The District Office Committee—open to all board members—encourages participation from any member or resident interested in office functions and public transparency.

- Highlights the value of attending the committee to better understand board operations and compliance.

Summary:

The District Office Report underscored compliance and transparency in attendance, the public and accountable approach to board composition and committee service, responsible management of office and staffing logistics, and the importance of board function and engagement for governance, communication, and service to Bushwick.

Economic Development + Housing and Land Use – Anne Guiney

Committee Meetings and Participation

Chair: Anne Guiney (Speaker 21).

The committee meets on the last Tuesday of each month at 6pm; all board and community members are welcome.

The most recent meeting (October 28) was busy but had no formal votes; all items were informational/updates.

Major Projects Discussed:

a) 349 Suydam and 1250 Willoughby Project

Background: This long-running project (over 10 years of board involvement) was initially an industrial/manufacturing and affordable housing, mixed-use proposal.

Status: Now being developed exclusively as affordable housing due to zoning changes.

- Changes: Increased from 79 to 122 units, incorporates community feedback on unit mix and affordability.
- Affordability Structure:
 - 19 units for formerly homeless
 - 42 units at 47% AMI (Area Median Income)
 - 12 units at 77% AMI
 - 48 units at 60% AMI
- 15% at 40% AMI
- Unit Breakdown: Studios, one-, two-, and eight three-bedroom units; 31 studios, 48 one-beds, 34 two-beds, eight three-beds.
- Additional: Will include some community space on the first floor.
- Timeline: Lease-up projected in about three years, following remediation for previous environmental contamination (mercury due to past industrial use).

b) 640 Bushwick Avenue

Proposal to redevelop a current gas station (in a large triangle) into housing.

- Updates: Developer increased project height from 8 to 12 stories, but affordability mix worsened despite greater density.

Board/Committee Response:

- Emphasis on requiring “better affordability,” not just more units or increased building size.
- Noted the project requires rezoning (from commercial/manufacturing to residential).
- Unit mix and affordability concerns were raised.
- Developer’s next steps depend on committee feedback; no formal plans submitted until the comments are addressed.

c) 946–954 Flushing Avenue

Very large potential development, currently zoned for light manufacturing (M1-1).

- Two proposed versions: 18-story and 21-story buildings (both much taller than precedent in Bushwick).
- Plan includes some affordable housing (standard 80/20) with a proposal to “carve off” a portion for a not-for-profit developer via deed restriction (but with little clarity on process, recipient, or timeline).

Committee Concerns:

- Lack of clarity about not-for-profit partner, timeline, and genuine community benefit.
- Significant concern about precedent for building height—far above other structures in Bushwick.
- Calls for more information and a better deal for the community before proceeding.
- Reminder: Previous project versions were much shorter; developers attributed proposed increase to changing city policy and support for affordable housing, but committee insisted on protecting core community values.

Committee Methods and Education

Noted the complex, technical nature of zoning/land use issues and the need for ongoing committee/member education.

- Efforts are under way to schedule training sessions on zoning, affordable housing, and NY regulations, with these sessions open to the full board and public.

Future Meetings and Community Engagement

- Next meeting will discuss the city’s proposed Industrial Plan, which may not align with Bushwick’s tradition of supporting industrial land retention unless the community gets strong trade-offs (like deeply affordable housing).
- Encouragement for community members to attend, learn, and participate in these pivotal discussions as they influence Bushwick’s future.

Q&A/Discussion

Meeting Location and Participation

Question from Anthony Amiwellen, community member:

“Where is the meeting?”

Response from Anne Guiney, Committee Chair:

“It is at 1420 Bushwick Avenue. It is at 6pm next Tuesday, third floor district office.”

Access to Evergreen’s Industrial Policy Commentary

Question from Juan, Serra, CB4 Member:

Inquired about a letter or commentary from Evergreen regarding the city’s proposed industrial plan—wants to know where it can be accessed for review.

Response from Anne Guiney:

“That should be in our committee materials which you should be able to access through [the committee or board]. Also, I think it might even be easier than negotiating is just go to evergreen.com—they’re evergreen.org—and this is something they’re working really hard on. Evergreen was started in the 1980s to support industrial businesses in Bushwick and East Williamsburg, working to ensure M-zones (manufacturing zoning) continue to support local small business needs. Their materials are open to the community.”

Whether Developers Will Attend Housing Committee to Engage Publicly

Question from Ben Tocker, CB4 Member:

“I live across the street from the development at 640 Bushwick Avenue. I’m curious if the developers will be at the next housing land use meeting.”

Response from Anne Guiney:

No developers are scheduled yet for the next meeting.

Celeste (District Manager): the report will be shared with them, allowing developers to decide on the next steps. The project is still in its preliminary feedback-gathering phase.

Personal and Committee Perspectives on Project Height and Affordability

Comment from Ben Tocker, CB4 Member:

Referenced committee notes about community preferences (some residents would prefer a gas station over a new building with no affordability) and adds his own opinion: “I think ultimately, I’d rather see it be anything other than a gas station. And I’ll just add, I don’t care if it’s eight or 12 [stories] if it has the right mix of affordability. We’ve had a precedent of allowing that in the past and signing off on that in the past.”

Response from Anne Guiney:

Affirmed committee thinking: While some may rather retain the existing gas station over a poor proposal, the committee doesn’t have a one-size-fits-all answer. If the numbers and mix are right, the committee is open to discussion and negotiation. Explains the lease cycle for gas stations, how those sites turn over, and encourages continued preliminary, open conversation with developers.

Discussion on Committee Priorities and Community Engagement

Various committee members and participants:

Reinforced that the committee welcomes robust debate and input but will not approve projects simply for being “bigger.” Instead, priorities remain on significant affordable housing, deep/inclusive community benefit, and not setting detrimental precedents for height or use.

Permits and Licenses – Kristine Malden

Committee Overview and Meeting Scope

Presenter: Christine Malden (Speaker 24), Permits and Licenses Committee Chair.

Eight applications were reviewed at the last committee meeting.

Five applications were supported, three were opposed.

Supported Applications (with brief details):

1. Corner Crave (Evergreen & Palmetto): Wine, beer, and cider license.
 - a. Supported, but applicant required to submit updated plans, which had not yet been received at report time.
 2. Mai Mali (105 Wilson at Star): Ramen restaurant, wine and beer license.
 - a. Supported.
 3. Rico Chimi (1492 Myrtle, triangle with Irving and Linden): Restaurant; application supported.
 4. Cafe Ornithology (1037 Broadway): Vegan cafe seeking class change to full liquor license (from wine, beer, cider).
 - a. Supported. Community member later asked for clarification—this was for beverage expansion, not residential use.
 5. Mi Pequeña Cholula Deli & Grocery (1481 Myrtle & Manahan): Convenience/deli class change to serve liquor.
 - a. Supported.
- Note: For each supported application, standard considerations included hours of operation, lack of controversy, and completeness of documentation.

Opposed Applications (with reasons):

- Goodnight Pa (321 Star St at Cypress): Bar/restaurant.
 - Opposed due to heavy community opposition—three citizens testified in person, about 20 letters of opposition cited oversaturation (“enough is enough” in that area).
- Troutman Billiards (45 Irving at Troutman): Billiard hall/bar.
 - Opposed due to proposed alcohol sales hours (3–4 AM nightly) and unwillingness to compromise.
- Xanadu (321 Star St.): Roller rink seeking alteration; extended alcohol sales hours previously opposed, insufficient documentation about new space, unresolved complaint about unauthorized outdoor space.
 - Opposed due to outstanding legal and procedural concerns.

Committee Policies, Concerns, and Emerging Trends

The growing trend of grocery/convenience stores (with small seating sections) applying for liquor licenses was noted.

- Compared to “buy a sandwich and a beer,” these are very small footprints but could speak to changing nightlife competition.

- The committee is strongly advocating for all applicants to appear in person, emphasizing that community members' in-person attendance changes the hearing dynamic meaningfully—both for testimony in support and opposition.

Example given: Those opposing Goodnight Pa appeared in large numbers, amplifying their voice.

The committee discussed the possibility of requiring applicants to obtain signatures from their immediate residential neighbors (on both sides, across the street, and upstairs), learning from practices observed at community board 1 (CB1). The committee voted to formalize this documentation requirement.

Concerns were raised (by the Arts/Culture/Youth and Education Committee, noted by Kristine and Jo-Ena Bennett) around potential underage liquor sales in Bushwick, with reference to a recent CAMBA report. The committee will monitor youth safety and density of nightlife establishments as part of its ongoing remit.

Q&A/Discussion

Clarification on Cafe Ornithology's Application

Question from Stephanie Anderson, CB4 Member:

"Was anything mentioned about the jazz club, Ornithology? Was that for residential renting or residential lease?"

Response from Kristine Malden, Committee Chair:

"Yeah, I read them. We supported that application for 1037 Broadway. Did you have something to add?"

Added clarification: "No, it was just, I believe, to expand. They currently serve wine, beer, and cider, and this was to expand that to include hard alcohol, hard liquor. That's all."

Trend of Grocery/Convenience Stores Seeking Liquor Licenses

Comment/Question from Jo-Ena Bennett, Parliamentarian/CB4 Member:

Pointed out an emerging trend: grocery/convenience stores applying for liquor licenses. "We had a couple of applicants that were unusual because they said they have grocery stores right that now also want to have liquor licenses. This seems to be a trend that is happening in Bushwick, and people need to be aware of it."

Asks about applicant requirements and community impacts.

Response from Kristine Malden):

Acknowledged the trend: "It's a bit of a trend, and perhaps in order to compete with the influx of all the other nightlife, they're trying to offer these services as well...most have a small seating area, and it's sort of like you buy a sandwich and a beer, but with a small footprint. It's not the first time, but we're starting to see it more."

Emphasis on monitoring community impact, particularly underage access.

How "Convenience" Alcohol Sales Actually Work

Question from Anne Guiney, Economic Development/Housing Chair:

"How does that work? So you go and get toilet paper and cat litter and a margarita? How does this work, kind of?"

Response from Kristine Malden:

“Exactly. Those are the type of questions we ask. Most of them have two or three tables, very small operations. You typically buy food and can get a beer or more with your sandwich. It speaks to trying to compete in the evolving nightlife market.”

Committee Policy on Applicants’ Physical Presence

Response (embedded in committee report from Kristine):

Emphasized that all applicants should be physically present at hearings and that in-person community opposition or support makes a big difference (“...it’s really important for the applicants to see this as well, coming directly from the community...”).

Concern about Youth Safety and Underage Access

Comment/Question from Jo-Ena Bennett:

Based on community and committee concern, raises the issue of underage alcohol sales, noting a report (from CAMBA) that Bushwick is an area of concern for this issue. “Pay attention to what’s going on. You got a lot of people applying for liquor licenses that have never applied before, right?”

Response from Kristine Malden:

Agreed, notes that these relatively new types of operations (“grocery/deli with liquor”) may require heightened scrutiny.

Committee is open to imposing further requirements such as gathering signatures from immediate residential neighbors for future applicants.

Broader Quality-of-Life/Ethical Concerns about Licensing Density

Comment from Robert Camacho, CB4 Chairperson:

Voiced discomfort with the “dumping station” effect of concentrated alcohol and cannabis licensing in Bushwick, referencing density, lack of youth and senior resources, late-night problems, and lack of accountability.

“It’s all right for us to have liquor licenses, cannabis, drugs...but not enough for youth recreation, parks, and seniors. We have to hold our elected officials accountable, and fight with the liquor authority...when are we going to say enough?”

Gives examples where recommendations for hour restrictions are ignored and quality of life suffers from club activity into the early morning hours.

Response from Kristine Malden:

Supported Chair’s concern and describes attempts to limit license hours, encourage transparency, and strengthen requirements for both new applicants and renewals, referencing need for more direct communication with the State Liquor Authority.

In summary:

The Permits and Licenses report reviewed recent liquor licensing and alteration applications, articulated the committee’s consistent approach balancing business, community input, and local quality of life, and identified new procedural steps to increase transparency and accountability. Board members voiced serious concern about nightlife proliferation and pressed for more safeguards for families, youth, and neighborhood peace.

7) Chairperson’s Report – Robert Camacho

Community Meetings, Events, and Advocacy (October–November Highlights)

Attended multiple meetings, both informational and decision-making purposes, to advocate for Bushwick and ensure the community’s needs are represented:

- Budget Consultations: Attended meetings about NYCHA (public housing) and parks budgeting.
- HR Meeting at Borough Hall: Addressed community and board issues with borough officials.
- Community Partners/Services: Worked with Bushwick community partners (e.g., at 422 Central) and involved in appointments with the Civic Engagement Commission (CEC).
- 8th and 83rd Precinct Council meetings: Discussed policing, community safety, and leadership (including the selection of a new 83rd Precinct inspector).
- Workshops: Participated in OCM (Office of Cannabis Management) workshops to clarify rules for local cannabis establishments and discussed issues like the "500-foot rule" and local compliance.
- Ribbon-cutting events: Celebrated the opening of the pediatric youth unit at Wyckoff Hospital.
- Legislative Brunches: Attended with partners like 274 (school) and acknowledged support from elected officials.
- Town Hall Meetings: Zoned in on school, youth, and neighborhood safety issues.

Quality of Life, City Services, and Community Needs

Safety and Security: Discussed local efforts to protect immigrant families from ICE enforcement, including "Know Your Rights" trainings.

Cannabis and Alcohol Licensing:

- Advocated for responsible operation and community benefit from cannabis and alcohol businesses, highlighting positive examples of establishments that give back to Bushwick (e.g., toy drives, turkey giveaways, youth support initiatives).
- Emphasized importance of businesses following the rules, closing on time, maintaining security, and contributing to the community.
- Pointed out enforcement and oversight challenges—uses an example where a cannabis business, though near schools, is compliant and engaged positively.

Parks and Recreation:

- Advocated for parks to be accessible to youth up to age 17, expressing concern that current restrictions only serve younger children.
- Emphasized the lack of recreational facilities and the need to defend existing parks from competing interests (e.g., dog runs vs. youth play spaces).

Housing and Tenant Issues:

Updated the board about support efforts for tenants and regular meetings with housing partners.

Youth, Schools, and Educational Opportunities:

- Praised board and community engagement with youth and schools, including support for education, after-school, and job programs.
- Advocated for proper use of school facilities, e.g., making school pools more accessible to the community.

Community Board Operations and Structure

Committee Participation:

- Clarified the attendance policy—encourages members not to overcommit to multiple committees, explaining how CB4 groups meetings to reduce overburdening volunteers.

- Explained attendance is reported to the Borough President, who is responsible for appointments.
- Stressed compliance with the city charter and internal bylaws; insists on transparency and documentation.

Neighborhood Projects and Services

Rodent and Building Maintenance:

Discussed protocols and city responsibilities for building maintenance, pest control, and facility upgrades.

Public Events:

- Noted participation in local events with NYU students, parks advocates, and at the borough clergy meeting.
- Acknowledged the work done by local businesses and NYCHA to support the community.

Transportation:

Briefly referenced Department of Transportation meetings about local pedestrian plazas and upgrades to intersections for safety.

Calls to Action, Accountability, and Board Culture

Advocacy and Representation:

- Emphasized the need for persistent advocacy, pushing both the board and elected officials to deliver for Bushwick residents.
- Called for increased quality-of-life initiatives, especially regarding youth and family support.
- Urged holding the board, the city, and businesses accountable, not accepting status quo on issues like nightlife density, illegal parking, noise, and street cleanliness.
- Asserted personal commitment to Bushwick: "I am out 2027, by 2027, I come back in here. I'm flipping tables"—a spirited statement expressing impatience for change and determination to push the board/community into greater action.

Closing Reflections

Gratitude:

- Thanks to churches and faith leaders working with the board to address social and economic issues.
- Recognizes the role of local history and community organizing in achieving neighborhood wins (e.g., zoning fights, industrial preservation).
- Encouragement to Engage:
- Encourages all members ("spread the wealth," "the Brooklyn way") not to focus committee participation in one area and to remain active on issues impacting safety, quality of life, and community assets.

Open Invitation:

Invites questions or participation from board members at any time.

Summary:

Chairperson Robert Camacho's report offered a thorough and passionate overview of his extensive recent advocacy, community engagement meetings, support for local youth and families, insistence on business accountability, and ongoing efforts on quality-of-life, housing,

and public safety issues. He encouraged full compliance with board processes and urged everyone to actively fight for meaningful improvements in Bushwick.

8) District Manager's Report — Celeste León

Opening Remarks and Community Reflection

Welcomed and greeted the board and community.

- Noted observances:
 - Belated Veterans Day wishes.
 - November highlights: Lung Cancer Awareness Month, National Diabetes Month, National Native American Heritage Month.
- Emphasized the importance of community support, resilience, and board members participating in meetings/events.
- Discussed the value of “middle members”—board members able to understand and negotiate both sides of an issue, which is a strength of CB4.
- Warned against falling into “majority politics” and praised CB4’s historically inclusive and respectful approach to decision-making.

Department/Committee and Community Updates

Rodent Mitigation Zone:

The Department of Health has designated Bushwick as a “rodent mitigation zone.”

- Updates and more information will be shared with the Health Committee.
- Residents who have concerns about rodents are encouraged to report them—the District Manager can offer referrals and follow-up with city agencies.
- Property owners are responsible for addressing rodent complaints; noncompliance can result in violations.

Wyckoff Heights Medical Center Community Service Plan:

CB4 provided input on the 2025 community service plan for Wyckoff Heights Medical Center (“Wyckoff”).

- Feedback from board members is being directly forwarded to the hospital.

Healthcare Roundtable:

Mentioned a recent roundtable organized by the Congresswoman, focused on upcoming healthcare changes in the city and beyond, and encouraged the board/community to stay informed.

- Offered to connect those interested to the Congresswoman’s office for updates.

Legislation and Board Appointment Process:

- Regular communications with city council representatives regarding a bill about who has appointment power for community board members (proposal would add Councilmembers as official appointers, not just the Borough President).
- According to Council staff, this bill is unlikely to proceed soon, but board members are encouraged to stay updated and engaged.

Environmental Assessment for Local Developments:

Reports the board is monitoring a project at 132 Melrose Street (Environmental Assessment Statement), with council staff asked to investigate and provide details.

Community Services and Facility Updates

NYC Health and Hospitals – Gotham:

Announced the opening of a radiology department at Gotham Health, 815 Broadway in Bushwick. Board members and the public are encouraged to use this new, local health resource.

Support for Immigrant and Food-Insecure Community Members:

Community stakeholders are organizing mutual aid due to continued ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) presence and also in response to changing SNAP (food stamp) benefits.

Social Media and Communications:

Work continues on the CB4 social media plan, including enhanced use of Instagram and X (formerly Twitter). Visible changes in communication style are underway, and further updates are expected.

Recent and Upcoming Events of Note

Emergent City Documentary Screening:

Attended a screening/discussion on local zoning and community resistance (“Emergent City”). Emphasizes how even when neighborhoods block unwanted rezonings, outside forces (e.g., gentrification) still cause change, stressing the need for ongoing education and conversation. Suggests the film/discussion could be used again as an educational tool for the board.

Common Justice Civic Engagement:

Announced the “Communities for Safety Collective” (Common Justice), a four-month cohort for community engagement/violence reduction.

Invites interested board members or residents to apply (deadline: Nov 21; stipend: \$400).

Transportation - MetroCard Phaseout:

Announced the transition from MetroCard to OMNY “tap and ride”; this may especially affect youth and seniors—notes will be shared with the Transportation Committee.

NYU Furman Center Policy Breakfast:

Attended a session on NYC’s rent-stabilized housing, briefed board on current debate over rent freezes and housing management challenges.

Calls to Action and Appreciation

- Encouraged residents to reach out with questions about:
 - Rodent complaints (and property owner responsibilities),
 - Legislative changes,
 - Local health services,
 - Board and committee activities.
- Thanked board members for participation, energy, and leadership.
- Reiterates the importance of thoughtful, collaborative leadership for the community’s benefit.

9) Recommendations

Blanket Motion for Permits and Licenses Committee Recommendations

Motion: To accept all committee recommendations as a blanket motion.

Made by: James Steward
Second: Christian C. Tate
Opposed: Millie Sandoval
The motion carried.

Motion in Support of the Permits and Licenses Committee Recommendations

Motion: To support the blanketed committee recommendations.

Made by: Annette Spellen
Second: Stephanie Anderson
Opposed: Millie Sandoval
Abstained: Elvena Davis
The motion carried.

Motion on Specifying Hours of Operation in Liquor License Recommendations

Motion: Robert Camacho moved that the board's specifications (stip sheet) regarding hours of operation for liquor license applicants be added to all recommendations, especially when applicants do not agree to board-preferred hours, and that the State Liquor Authority be explicitly advised of the hours the community supports.

Made by: Robert Camacho
Second: Eliseo Ruiz
Unanimously in favor by those present.
The motion carried.

10) Old Business

None

11) New Business

Mail Drop Box Thefts and Lost Checks

Annette Spellen, CB4 member/committee chair:

- Brings to the board's attention the ongoing issue of mail drop-off boxes being broken into with a key.
- Reports that residents—including herself—have missed bills, and some residents may not have received expected checks from the governor.
- Advises community members to check with the governor's office if they are missing checks.
- Informs that the senator's office is aware and working on the issue.
- Reports that, according to NY news, the FBI arrested two people in New Jersey tied to these thefts.
- Suggests reporting mailbox incidents to the congresswoman's office.

Additional clarification: Annette, with a law enforcement background, suspects it may be an inside job since a key is being used. She's been told that on Wilson Avenue the locks will be changed, but it is unclear when.

Celeste: facilitates discussion, ensures proper protocol (asks speakers to state their names). Clarifies references "relay boxes" as part of the mail drop box issue.

Barbara Jackson: asks if the relay boxes are also being targeted.

State Legislation: Suicide Prevention Reporting

Christian Vera Gara, Bushwick community member:

- Brings attention to NY State Bill 1162, aimed at suicide prevention.
- Explains the bill would require the Health Commissioner to release annual suicide statistics (by borough, ethnicity, gender, race).
- Current reporting is not mandatory or detailed.
- States this data is important for targeting prevention programs, mentioning that in Bushwick, suicides among the Latino community have increased 9% from 2013 to 2022.
- Advocates for the board to support the bill for better prevention efforts.

State Legislation: Fertility Education and Insurance

Olivia, public health student, CUNY SPH:

Highlights NY State Bill 1303-2025, which focuses on expanding access to fertility information and education citywide.

The bill would:

- Require the Department of Health to run a multilingual public education/outreach campaign about fertility treatment and insurance coverage.
- Address the costliness of fertility treatments and its impact on marginalized communities.
- Emphasizes the importance in Bushwick.
- Requests board support and community awareness.

12) Announcements

Fran (Council Member Sandy Nurse's Office)

- Announced: Participatory budget ends November 28. Flyers distributed for community input on spending \$1 million in Bushwick.
- Mentioned: Three upcoming tree lightings: December 6, December 8, December 12.

Juanita James (Brooklyn Public Library, Washington Irving Branch)

- Announced: Event calendar available, card in the back.
- Mentioned: Friends group meeting December 4, creative aging/jewelry program for all ages starts Monday at 2 pm.

Juan (Office of Council Member Jennifer Gutierrez)

- Announced: Narcan training December 13, 10am–12pm; Christmas tree lighting December 8 at Knickerbocker Plaza and parade to Maria Hernandez Park.
- Noted: Collecting ideas for participatory budgeting ("PB"); Bushwick has had the most PB votes for three years—working to repeat.
- Announced: Virtual Rat Academy December 15 at 5:30pm (Zoom); tips on 311 complaints for graffiti/trash/rats.
- Shared: Office available for food stamp/government benefit concerns.

Rizzo Torres (The Good Good Collective nonprofit)

- Announced: Organization provides tuition-free arts education and afterschool programs for Bushwick youth.

- Mentioned: Adult classes, Thanksgiving day camps, location at 449 Troutman with Sprout Society.

Ben Tocker (Chair, Environmental Protection, Transportation, Sanitation, Parks & Recreation Committee)

Announced: Google survey for board members about criminal summonses for e-bikes; encourages attendance at next EPTS meeting, November 24, 6pm at Board Office.

Lacey Tauber (Brooklyn Borough President's Office)

- Announced: Community board applications are open through February 6. Anyone interested is encouraged to apply.
- Mentioned: Brooklyn drives (hurricane relief for Jamaica); flyers in the back, drop-off at Borough Hall and other locations.

Virgie Jones (Chair, Youth & Education Committee)

- Announced: Thanks to Senator Salazar and Councilmember Nurse's offices for addressing street tree issues.
- Promoted: Annual Black History Month essay contest via Association for Black Educators of New York (open grades 2–HS, info sent to schools); celebration February 1; scholarships in June.

Elaine Hamilton (CB4 Member, Force For Kids Foundation)

- Announced: Annual toy drive underway, toys to be delivered to Children's Day Society in Manhattan.
- Shared: Personal updates on international outreach and plans to bring AI/women's empowerment programs to the Education Committee.

Maria Valdez (Office of Senator Julia Salazar)

Announced:

- Tenant Support Unit at their office, first Tuesday monthly, 10am–12pm.
- "Albany 101" town hall on December 2, 6pm–8pm, 280 Starr Street; legislative process and public participation info available.

Jackie Reyes (Deputy Chief of Staff, Assembly Member Eric Dilan)

- Announced: Office at 366 Cornelia, offers services Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm, in English, Spanish, and ASL (including immigration/citizenship).
- Reiterated: All are welcome; services provided for free.

Zoom Participant – Zulma (Department of Health)

Attempts announcement; audio issues prevent full delivery. Suggests she will submit information via chat.

Celeste (District Manager)

Shared: Department of Transportation revocable consent application at 49 Wyckoff will be on upcoming committee meeting agenda.

13) **Second Roll Call**

Present: Linda Whitfield, Ben Tocker, Christian C. Tate, James Steward II, Annette Spellan, Juan Serra, Milagros Sandoval, Eliseo Ruiz, Raul Rubio, Shray Richardson, Cirilo Nuñez,

Freddie Mattison, Kristine Malden, Cindy Lebron, Nancy Keith, Luisa Jose, Tara Jones-Thomas, Virgie Jones, Barbara Jackson, Elaine Hamilton, Anne Guiney, Christopher Graham, Jason Gers, Elvena Davis, Felix Ceballos, Robert Camacho, Jo-Ena Bennett, Stephanie Anderson

Present via a remote waiver: Jerry Valentin, Zulma Novoa, Tanesha Honeygan, Deborah Hicks, Andrew Choi

Excused: Bee Spiderman, Josue Salazar, Pablo Rivera, Giovannies Justiniano, Courtney Henley, Joanna Fuentes-Singh, Freddy Fowler, Isa Abney

Absent: Savannah Thais, Romicka Nichols-Barnes, Alex Moreno, Zachary Hendrickson, Alan Gamboa, Tevin Campbell, Tiany Belliard

14) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Barbara Jackson

Second: Stephanie Anderson

All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:47pm