



Public Hearing & Regular Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2026, 6pm

Hope Gardens Older Adult Center (195 Linden Street) and Zoom

Chairperson: Robert Camacho | District Manager: Celestina León

Meeting Start: 6:10pm

Public Hearing

- 1) **Jamar Hooks, Deputy Commissioner and Yuri Sanchez, Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Intergovernmental/Legislative Affairs, NYC Social Services and Alfredo Matthews, Senior Vice-President, ACACIA Network Housing** – presenting on Rennie’s House, a new men’s shelter in the district.

Operator & Agencies

- Run by Acacia Network Housing under NYC Department of Social Services / DHS.
- Presenters: Jessica McGee (VP), Alfredo “Freddie” Matthews (SVP), DSS team (Jamar Hooks, Yuri Sanchez, others).

Location & Facility

Site: 629 Chauncey Street, Bushwick (clarified after initial “Bed-Stuy” error).

- 142-bed standalone single adult transitional shelter (men), with some TGNC-friendly beds but not a dedicated TGNC facility [0:12:01–0:13:30, 0:41:41–0:43:56].
- About 40+ dorms in mixed configurations (singles, doubles, triples, quads) with shared bathrooms/showers [0:50:35–0:51:46].
- 24/7 access: residents can remain in the building during the day; old “must leave during the day” rule no longer applies [0:50:35–0:51:25].

Population & Rationale

Designed for single adult men from the general population; some may be transgender/gender non-conforming.

- Building formerly operated as a single adult shelter; configuration (no in-unit kitchens/baths) dictates use for singles, not families [0:28:06–0:30:37].
- DSS notes a high and growing need among single adult men experiencing homelessness, including those from Bushwick [0:28:06–0:30:37, 0:37:39–0:39:37].

Services & Program Model

Transitional housing focused on rapid move to permanent housing, not a day-drop shelter [0:41:41–0:43:56].

Core services:

- Individualized case management and service planning.
- Housing placement and voucher support (e.g., CityFHEPS) [0:39:37–0:39:37].
- Benefits enrollment.
- Medical & behavioral health referrals; some services onsite.
- Employment readiness, workforce development, and life-skills training [0:13:30–0:14:35].
- Crisis intervention, safety planning, daily wellness checks, recreation programming.
- Acacia highlighted its broader network: health care, substance use treatment, supportive housing, older adult programs, food assistance, and experience with TGNC clients.

Security & Property Management

24-hour security by contracted vendor [0:16:09–0:16:54].

- Controlled access, continuous camera surveillance, routine patrols, hourly rounds, regular wellness checks.
- Staff receive crisis prevention, trauma-informed training.
- Property management plan includes:
- Daily maintenance rounds and unit inspections.
- Monthly extermination and regular systems inspections [0:16:54–0:17:27].

Behavior & “Good Neighbor” Policy

All residents must sign a Good Neighbor Policy; violations can lead to transfer/removal from the site [0:24:04–0:25:49, 0:25:49–0:26:52].

Acacia and DSS emphasized:

- Efforts to keep residents engaged indoors with activities.
- Strong response to serious behavior issues; pattern of violations escalated to DHS.
- Intention to distinguish their residents’ behavior from other neighborhood issues via direct reporting and documentation (photos, emails).

Q&A/Discussion

Presenters not physically in the room

Mr. Camacho (Chair, CB4):

Question/Comment: Said it was disrespectful that Acacia leadership was not present in person, that “people would like to see the persons that are going to run an establishment” [0:04:42–0:05:18].

Alfredo Matthews (Acacia) response:

They were told it was a virtual meeting, so joined by Zoom; stressed they are eager to partner and will attend in person for future conversations [0:05:18–0:05:30, 0:05:51–0:06:02].

Celeste (District Manager, CB4):

Clarification: Board policy requires at least one presenter on Zoom because staff can’t both facilitate in-person and run Zoom; others could have been in person [0:05:30–0:05:51].

Exact location, notification, and City Charter compliance

Celeste (CB4):

Question: Have neighbors been notified? Who do they contact? Concern that this is first time a shelter notice came without an address; confusion about “near a cemetery” description [0:18:55–0:19:40].

Mr. Camacho (Chair, CB4):

Raised City Charter requirement for public input, suggested DSS was not complying [0:19:40–0:19:57].

Yuri Sanchez (DSS) response:

Address is 629 Chauncey Street in Bushwick [0:20:02–0:21:14].

- Social Services Law prevents putting the address in writing, but they can state it verbally.
- Elected officials and CB4 were notified in October, meeting tonight is the start of community engagement.
- No neighbor outreach yet; that will follow, including forming a Community Advisory Board (CAB).
- DSS believes they have complied with legal notification requirements and City Charter.

Why a men’s shelter and not a family shelter?

Annette Spellen (CB4):

Question: What % of clients will be current/former Bushwick residents, and why a men’s shelter and not a family shelter when families also need housing? [0:27:42–0:28:06].

Alfredo Matthews (Acacia) response (1st part):

Program not open yet, so no client data; can’t give Bushwick percentage [0:28:06–0:28:25].

Jamar Hooks (DSS) response (2nd part):

Providers respond to an RFP for adult services and bring DSS buildings that are already configured.

- Family shelters require units with kitchens and bathrooms; this building is set up as congregate single adult space [0:28:25–0:30:37].
- Homelessness among single adult men is especially high now; DSS has obligation to serve them.
- Some residents will likely be from Bushwick, but exact percentage not yet known [0:37:39–0:39:37].

Why is CB4 hearing about this “so late” if work is done?

Pablo (CB4 member):

Question: Why come to the community when the shelter is already built/refurbished? Why this specific site, especially so close to the CB4 office and existing community services? Which electeds were notified? [0:30:37–0:32:49].

Yuri Sanchez (DSS) response:

- Repeated that elected officials were notified in October by letter and phone.
- Shelters do not go through ULURP, so no vote is required.
- Legal requirements: notify, present at public hearing, then continue engagement (CAB, neighbors, etc.) [0:34:31–0:34:57].

Alfredo Matthews (Acacia) added:

Providers cannot do community outreach before this public hearing; DSS leads initial notifications [0:21:14–0:22:20].

Now that the hearing is held, Acacia will:

- Walk surrounding blocks, distribute business cards.
- Create a site-specific email for community complaints.
- Begin meeting immediate neighbors, stores, schools starting next week [0:21:14–0:22:20].

How will this shelter be different from “awful” existing shelters?

Courtney (CB4/Resident):

Question: How will this shelter differ from other shelters that are “violent, crazy,” like some family shelters? [0:22:53–0:23:42].

Alfredo Matthews (Acacia) response:

Emphasized:

- Strong “Good Neighbor Policy” with clear community-behavior expectations.
- Robust indoor activities and recreation to keep people engaged inside.
- Serious violations → DHS treats them severely; can result in client transfer/removal [0:24:04–0:25:49].
- Unique email for neighbors to send photos/info so they can distinguish their clients’ behavior from other neighborhood activity.

Jamar Hooks (DSS) added:

- All shelter clients sign the Good Neighbor Policy “contract.”
- If residents are misbehaving in community, people should report to CB4 and DSS contacts (Yuri, Ray Carrero); DHS can intervene and, if needed, move clients or take action with providers [0:25:49–0:26:52].

Who can access shelter? Are undocumented people allowed?

Felix (CB4 member):

Question: What are the qualifications to be in the shelter, especially for people who “don’t have document[s]”? [0:34:31–0:35:16].

Alfredo Matthews (Acacia) response:

- No documentation requirement for shelter; “everybody is welcome,” including undocumented individuals [0:35:16–0:37:01].
- Acacia has long experience with street-homeless populations; many unsheltered people avoid shelters because they feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- Their goal is to make shelters trauma-informed, safer, and more comfortable so people choose to come in.

Rosie Gellin (DHS Assistant Commissioner, Single Adults) added:

- Lack of documents is not a barrier.
- Once people enter shelter, staff help secure necessary identification and documents [0:37:01–0:37:39].

Population mix – men vs women vs TGNC; is this rapid rehousing?

Zachary Hendrickson (CB4 member, nearby resident):

Questions (three parts) [0:39:37–0:41:41]:

- Slide 11 appears to say single women and TGNC – what exactly is the population?
- Is this a transitional program focused on rapid move to permanent housing, or a less-structured day shelter?
- Was proximity to other services (including the CB4 office and programs in the same building) considered a positive when choosing the site?

Alfredo Matthews (Acacia) response:

- If slide mentioned women, it was an error; the site is currently designated for single men, with some TGNC beds integrated—not a dedicated TGNC-only site [0:41:41–0:43:56].
- Population designation (men vs women) is decided by DHS at opening, based on system-wide need; building is flexible enough to flip in future if needed [0:43:56–0:43:56].
- Acacia purposely seeks locations within active communities with services, not in isolated areas; they want access to local service providers and community partners [0:41:41–0:43:56].

Jamar Hooks (DSS) earlier clarification:

Shelter is not a day-only site; people can stay 24/7, with structured daytime programming [0:50:35–0:51:25].

Intoxication, drugs, safety in and around the facility

Pablo (CB4):

Concern: summer is coming; worries about single men “hanging out,” drugs, drunk people near the site and near CB4’s office and services [0:30:37–0:32:49].

Yuri Sanchez (DSS) response:

- If someone arrives drunk, it is treated as a medical emergency; EMS can be called, and the person is not admitted to regular dorms in that condition [0:34:31–0:34:57, 0:44:35–0:45:39].
- No one can “enter the facility drunk”; they must be stabilized first.
- Security and shelter staff will monitor the perimeter and enforce rules; Good Neighbor Policy applies.

Speaker 5 – Alfredo Matthews (Acacia) added:

- Site will include a monitoring room on the first floor for residents who need observation before going upstairs [0:45:39–0:47:03].
- Staff are trained; Acacia also operates substance use programs and can link residents directly to treatment.
- They maintain their own vehicle to escort residents to needed services to reduce burden on local EMS [0:45:39–0:47:03].

Direct outreach to block residents & CAB membership

Community member:

Question/Comment: Asked directly if they had notified people who live on the block; urged them to find and include the block president—“most important person at that party is the people who live there” [0:47:56–0:49:15, 0:49:15–0:49:49].

Jamar Hooks (DSS) response:

- Confirmed no direct neighbor engagement yet; that begins after this meeting.
- DSS will seek out the block president and add them to the Community Advisory Board [0:48:01–0:49:15].
- Invited the community to share the block president’s name/contact with Rey Carrero (DSS borough director present in the room).

Local jobs, Section 3, advisory board composition

Mr. Camacho (Chair, CB4):

Questions:

- Are there Section 3 / local jobs (especially security) for neighborhood youth? [0:51:46–0:52:41].
- How will the advisory board be set up to reflect the community (block associations, local residents)? [0:52:41–0:53:59].

Alfredo Matthews (Acacia) response:

- Acacia will hold a job fair in the neighborhood next month and is committed to hiring local residents for shelter jobs across the network [0:59:25–1:00:29].
- Will share all job fair flyers with CB4 to post in its job portal and welcomes community members to apply [1:00:29–1:01:19].
- CAB membership will be developed in partnership with DSS, CB4, electeds, and local stakeholders; they are open to including block leaders and residents [0:48:29–0:49:15, 0:59:25–1:01:19].

Ownership, lease terms, and landlord

Celeste (CB4):

Question: Property was formerly owned by a community-based organization (Bushwick Economic Development Corp.) and sold to an LLC.

- How much is landlord receiving?
- What are the lease terms and options to renew? [1:01:19–1:01:49].

Yuri Sanchez (DSS) response:

Shelter is on a five-year lease with renewal option [1:01:49–1:02:11].

Details on rent figures were not fully finalized at the time; they will follow up if they can share publicly [1:01:49–1:02:22].

Alfredo Matthews (Acacia) added:

Confirmed landlord is an LLC, rent numbers are finalized on their side, and they will coordinate with DSS/IGA on what can be shared [1:02:11–1:02:22, 1:15:03–1:15:30].

- 2) **CB4 Leadership** – review of the agency responses to the board’s preliminary budget register.

Purpose of the Item

Annual review of the Preliminary Budget Register, which shows agency responses to CB4’s capital and expense budget requests submitted in the fall.

- Emphasis: this is where the board sees how its requests are treated in the Mayor’s preliminary budget.

Key Example – Brooklyn Public Library (DeKalb Branch)

Request: Create/renovate/upgrade the DeKalb Library, including:

- Interior renovation
- Heating/cooling and infrastructure/safety improvements
- Site drainage/sustainability work

Agency (BPL) response: “Supports and can be accommodated” – some improvements already funded, additional capital would further support the work.

- Characterized as a clear, strong response.

Key Example – HPD (Affordable Housing)

Request: “Provide more housing for extremely low and low-income households.”

HPD response: “Supports and can be accommodated,” with a broad, citywide explanation of tools (tax exemptions, subsidy, LIHTC, HUD AMI, etc.).

- Executive Board concern: response was too general and did not specify what HPD is doing within CB4 specifically.

Board’s Focus in the Discussion

Evaluating:

- Which agencies give actionable, concrete responses vs. vague ones.
- How well responses reflect district-level impact (not just citywide policy).

Encouraging members and the public to:

- Review the full register (on OMB’s and CB4’s websites).
- Submit written testimony/comments to bk04@cb.nyc.gov (through the end of that week) on the agency responses.

Outcome

The discussion will inform:

- CB4’s feedback to OMB and agencies, and
- Future budget request strategy (e.g., asking for clearer, district-specific commitments).

Q&A/Discussion

No additional public feedback was provided.

Regular Meeting

- 1) **First Roll Call**

Present: Stephanie Anderson, Jo-Ena Bennett, Robert Camacho, Felix Ceballos, Alan Gamboa, Christopher Graham, Anne Guiney, Zachary Hendrickson, Courtney Henley, Barbara Jackson, Virgie Jones, Luisa Jose, Giovannies Justiniano, Nancy Keith, Cindy Lebron, Kristine Malden, Cirilo Nuñez, Pablo Rivera, Raul Rubio, Eliseo Ruiz, Josue Salazar, Milagros Sandoval, Annette Spellen, Bee Spiderman, James Steward II, Christian C. Tate, Ben Tocker, Linda Whitfield

Present via a remote waiver: Tanesha Honeygan, Zulma Novoa, Jerry Valentin

Excused: Juan Serra, Savannah Thais

Absent: Isa Abney (informed the district office), Andrew Choi, Freddy Fowler, Jason Gers (informed the district office), Elaine Hamilton, Deborah Hicks, Tara Jones-Thomas, Romicka Nichols-Barnes, Shray Richardson (informed the district office)

Resigned: Joanna Fuentes-Singh

26 board members were in attendance, which did constituted quorum.

2) Acceptance of the Agenda

Motion: Annette Spellen made a motion to accept the agenda.

Second: Christian C. Tate

All in favor, motion carried.

3) Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes

Motion: Raul Rubio made a motion to accept the previous meeting minutes.

Second: Felix Ceballos

All in favor, motion carried.

4) Parliamentarian's Note – Jo-Ena Bennett

Role & Procedure

- Reminded everyone she is the Parliamentarian for CB4 and focuses on meeting procedure.
- Stressed that anyone wishing to speak must be recognized by the Chair; speaking out of turn is out of order.

Disruptive behavior

- Referenced a gentleman at the last meeting who repeatedly interrupted.
- Said the approach is to encourage participation, but also to:
 - Pull individuals aside,
 - Remind them of procedures,
 - Maintain order.
- Noted CB4 does not have a Sergeant-at-Arms; otherwise, a persistently disruptive person could be ejected.

Democratic participation

Emphasized that community board meetings are an exercise in democracy.

Urged:

- Greater community participation,
- Members to invite neighbors to attend meetings,
- All speakers to go through the Chair (Mr. Camacho).

5) **83rd Precinct Report — Deputy Inspector Thomas Maffei, Commanding Officer**

Call Volume & Ranking

Since the last meeting, the 83rd responded to:

- ~8,300 911 calls (up about 200 year-over-year),
- ~1,800 311 calls.

This places the 83rd 2nd out of 10 Brooklyn North precincts for calls for service.

Crime Focus Areas

Robberies:

Two main patterns:

- Youth/school-related robberies.
- Nightlife-related robberies.

Arrests made in both:

- Juveniles identified (none living in the 83rd; all first arrests → now linked with services).
- Two nightlife robbery suspects arrested with a combined 55 prior arrests.

Burglaries:

Concentrated in residential common areas (hallways, storage rooms, basements).

- Identified four chronic offenders responsible for many incidents.
- All four arrested; together they have 186 prior arrests and are currently held on bail.

Serious Incident

Construction accident on Feb 26 at 174 Jefferson Street:

- Building under construction.
- Two workers injured; one died.

Case under investigation by Department of Buildings (permitting and potential negligence).

Quality of Life / Enforcement

Wyckoff–Myrtle corridor:

Ran three operations:

- Illegal cannabis truck: seized ~300 products and the truck.
- Food vendors: 2 operations, 6 summonses, 1 truck closed, and food seized:
- ~2,000 lbs of food for donation.
- ~1,300 lbs of food for compost.

Conducted with DOHMH and DSNY.

Traffic & Parking:

- Overall traffic accidents are down compared with last year.
- Narrow local streets + illegal parking were contributing to crashes.
- Since the last meeting, officers issued about 400 parking summonses, which the precinct believes is helping reduce collisions.

Follow-up on Community Questions

Snow/ice on sidewalks by precinct parking lots (DeKalb):

Deputy Inspector clarified those lots belong to Brooklyn North Borough HQ, not the 83rd.

- Offered to provide a contact at the borough command so concerns can be addressed.

Youth programming:

Youth officers connect with non-NYPD youth programs (sports, music, podcasting, AV, etc.).

- They share information with school principals, so youth have positive, structured options outside of police-run activities.
- Public bathroom access at the precinct:
- Chair raised a 311 complaint from a teacher who said she was denied access to the public vestibule bathroom.
- Deputy Inspector hadn't seen the complaint but said that bathroom should be available unless out of service or being cleaned and will look into it if CB4 provides details.

6) Introduction of Elected Officials and Other Representatives

Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez

Representative: Kim Vega

Phone: 718-963-3141

Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso

Representative: Madeline Enlow

Office address: 209 Joralemon Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201

Phone: 718-802-3700

Madeline's extension: 3834

Council Member Sandy Nurse

Representative: Samantha Ortiz

Office address: 56 Pennsylvania Avenue

Phone: 718-642-8664

DeKalb Library – Brooklyn Public Library

Representative: Louisa Loebwohl

Address: 790 Bushwick Avenue

Phone: 718-455-3898

State Senator Julia Salazar

Representative: Maria Valdez

Office address: 212 Evergreen Avenue

Phone: 718-573-1726

Assembly Member Maritza Dávila

Representative: Deborah (Debbie) Villanueva

Office address: 673 Hart Street

Phone: 718-443-1205

Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez
Representative: Jonathan Pomboza
Office address: 350 Jay Street
Phone: 718-250-2340

Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez
Representative: Johnathan Betancourt
Office address: 266 Broadway, Suite 201 (above Bank of America, near Marcy Ave stop)
Phone: 718-599-3658

7) **Committee Reports**

Civic/Public Safety/Religious + Health/Human Service/Senior Citizens/Veterans – Annette Spellen

Meeting Focus: Budget Responses & District Needs

Date: Thursday, March 13 (committee meeting)

The committee met primarily to review:

- FY budget responses from multiple agencies.
- The Statement of Community District Needs items within this committee's purview.

Agencies reviewed included (not exhaustive, but highlighted):

- FDNY (Fire & EMS)
- NYPD
- Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)
- Parks & Recreation
- Department of Homeless Services (DHS)
- Mayor's Office of Management & Budget (OMB)

General "statement of community needs" categories for:

Seniors, veterans, health, homelessness, and public safety.

Fire Department & EMS – Staffing and Response Times

Annette emphasized the committee's concern that:

- Bushwick has good FDNY fire response.
- Bushwick has good NYPD response.
- EMS response is significantly weaker due to short staffing.

FDNY/EMS budget requests:

The department is seeking additional hires and resources.

The committee strongly supported these requests, especially because:

- There have been multiple serious fires in Bushwick recently.
- Bushwick's history of widespread fires ("Bushwick burned many years ago") makes this a high-sensitivity issue.

Annette explicitly framed this as a top priority for the committee.

Four Recent Fires in Bushwick – Community Safety Message

Annette reported there were four fires in the district since the last meeting. She underscored:

- Residents must pay attention to their surroundings, especially:
- Battery-powered devices (e-bikes, scooters, etc.).
- Charging practices inside apartments.
- Flammable materials and clutter in common areas.
- Fires are increasingly linked to lithium-ion batteries and poor charging/storage.

Message to community:

- “Bushwick burned” before; the committee is determined to prevent a repeat.
- Residents should discuss fire safety with neighbors and report unsafe conditions.

NYPD & Public Safety: Oversight of District Needs

In reviewing NYPD budget responses, the committee discussed:

- Call volume and resource allocation.
- The importance of continuing support for neighborhood policing and youth-focused prevention (also linked to later DM and precinct discussions).

While the detailed line-by-line NYPD budget response discussion wasn’t fully read into the record, Celeste later highlighted:

The committee is looking at street outreach, homeless outreach, and public order issues through DHS and NYPD lenses together.

Department of Homeless Services (DHS) – Street Outreach & Oversight

During the budget review, one notable item:

The committee requested:

- A presentation from the Independent Budget Office (IBO) to explain street homeless outreach systemwide and, if possible, at a CB4 district level.

A DHS / Department of Social Services presentation to explain:

- Response protocols for street outreach.
- Data specific to CB4 (encampments, contacts, placements).

Goal:

To bring more clarity to how street homelessness is addressed in Bushwick.

To connect community complaints to data and actual follow-up processes.

Parks & Recreation – Requests & Follow-Up

The committee reviewed responses from the Parks Department related to:

- Maintenance and upgrades for local parks and playgrounds.
- Ensuring safe and healthy spaces for seniors, children, and families.

While details were not read line-by-line, Annette’s later remarks on Irving Square Park (under New Business) tie directly into this:

A commitment to kid-centered, community-informed design when renovations occur.

Common Justice / Borough-Wide Safety Forum

Celeste supplemented Annette’s report by flagging committee-relevant external work:

- Collaboration with the Brooklyn Borough President’s Office and Common Justice on a community-led safety forum at Brooklyn Borough Hall on March 24.

This is meant to:

- Center community voices on safety.
- Explore alternatives and complements to policing.

The forum aligns closely with this committee's scope (Civic/Public Safety/Health/Human Services).

Permits and Licenses – Kristine Malden

General Committee Context

Recent meeting: Monday, March 10.

Initial challenge: The committee lacked quorum at the start, so they rearranged the agenda slightly but ultimately took formal votes once quorum was reached.

Focus areas:

- Alcohol licenses (new, renewals, alterations).
- Cannabis proximity legislation update.
- Process improvements: pre-meeting research and community outreach requirements.

Office of Cannabis Management – Proximity Correction Legislation

Mail item from OCM: New proximity correction law signed by Governor Hochul.

Change: The distance between cannabis dispensaries and schools is now measured property line to property line (not door to door).

Committee use:

Noted as important context for future cannabis applications, especially in dense, mixed-use areas close to schools, daycare centers, and early childhood programs.

Avant Gardner → Pacha (CB1, but impacting CB4)

Old business follow-up:

A community member had previously flagged the Avant Gardner site (renamed Pacha) in Williamsburg (CB1), but its operations impact Bushwick.

Key committee understanding:

- Capacity estimated between 8,000–10,000.
- Openair, large-scale venue:
- Somewhat akin to K Bridge Park (open air) and Forest Hills Stadium (enclosed, residential context).
- Shuttles are planned from the venue on Stewart Avenue to the Jefferson L stop, which is in CB4.

Next steps:

- CB1 will hold a public hearing (mid-April) where CB4 is welcome.
- CB4 leadership has requested that Pacha also present directly to CB4 full board as a courtesy, because:
 - The noise, late-night crowds, and transit impacts will significantly affect Bushwick residents.

Celeste confirmed later:

CB4 plans to invite the applicant to present (likely April), though they are not required to under SLA jurisdiction.

New Liquor License Applications

A. Sura – 31 Wyckoff Avenue

- Type: New on-premises license (liquor/wine/beer/cider).
- Use: Korean-influenced restaurant (previously a restaurant without a license).

Location context:

Within the saturated area around Jefferson L (many existing licenses).

Committee Conditions & Outcome:

- Applicants initially requested hours slightly outside CB4's stipulations.
- They agreed to conform to CB4's standard hours.

Committee voted to support the application.

B. House of Nancy – 219 Central Avenue

- Type: New on-premises license.

Location context:

Not in a formally designated "saturated" zone, but:

- Very residential block.
- Nearby early childhood programs:
 - Early Learn
 - Head Start

Committee Concerns:

Proposed hours:

- Late closing, including a request to operate until 4 AM on Sunday night (i.e., into Monday).
- This is outside CB4's standard hours, especially in a residential, school-adjacent context.
- The applicant was not receptive to scaling back hours or aligning with community board norms.

Outcome:

Committee voted not in favor of supporting the application.

Alteration Application – Xanadu (Roller Rink) Smoking Area

Applicant: Xanadu (roller rink / event venue).

Alteration request: Approval of a smoking enclosure/structure outside the venue.

Issues at the meeting:

Applicant did not attend the committee meeting.

Community Testimony:

Six community members attended specifically to oppose the alteration.

Complaints included:

- Noise (late-night, patrons outside).
- Car honking, street congestion.
- Sanitation issues (litter, public urination).
- Concerns that a formalized smoking structure would encourage more lingering and intensify these conditions.
- One community member reported the structure already exists and is being used late at night, raising enforcement and process concerns.

Committee Position:

Typically, non-appearance alone can justify a non-support recommendation.

Given strong community opposition and pre-existing complaints, they decided:

- To vote not in favor of supporting the alteration.

Later, during announcements, Varun from Xanadu explicitly invited collaboration and community events; but the formal committee vote on the alteration remains not in favor.

No-Response / Late Applications

A. La Gualacena Dos-II – 251 Wyckoff Avenue

Issue:

- Did not submit required documents.

- Did not appear before the committee.

Outcome:

Committee voted not in favor of the application (standard practice for no-response, no-show cases).

B. Sajhoma Restaurant – 941 Broadway

Initially listed as a no-response.

On review:

It appeared they did submit documents but did not follow the precise email subject/format instructions, and their materials were missed amid high email volume.

Committee decision:

- Defer a final recommendation.
- Give them a chance to:
- Reappear at the next meeting.
- Ensure materials are properly labeled and complete.

Process Improvements – Outreach & Research

Kristine highlighted two ongoing improvements:

Pre-Meeting Research

She (and staff):

Pull 311 history, complaints, and prior enforcement data for each location.

Check for:

- Noise complaints.
- Sanitation issues.
- Overcrowding and illegal events.

This context helps the committee distinguish between:

- Applicants with clean histories.
- Applicants with long patterns of community complaints.

Community Signature Requirements for Cannabis / Licenses

There was a specific cannabis case where an applicant submitted a signature sheet, but:

Many signers did not live or work nearby.

The committee is revising its signature/outreach form to:

- Specify who should be canvassed (e.g., neighbors within a certain radius).
- Set clearer expectations so signatures actually reflect local support or concern.

Kristine noted this is in progress and will shape how they evaluate future cannabis and liquor applications.

8) Chairperson's Report

Meetings & Hearings Attended

- Wyckoff Heights Medical Center – Patient & Family Advisory Board; later a separate meeting with hospital staff to strengthen collaboration and advisory structures.
- Citywide Comprehensive Plan session at Borough Hall (via Zoom) on planning framework and CB roles.
- Brooklyn North Black History Month event at IS 250; CB4 member G. Jones and Anita Haynes honored.

- CB1 (Williamsburg/Greenpoint) Public Safety Committee re: Avant Gardner / Pacha venue; raised spillover impacts on Bushwick (capacity ~7,800+, late-night crowds, liquor-license saturation on Wyckoff).
- DSS/Acacia / 1420 Bushwick Ave. – Call with elected officials and Family Services Network on future of the site (where CB4 office is located) and potential housing options.
- DOT/MTA/NYPD Palmetto–Ridgewood–Myrtle walkthrough – To address:
 - Confusing/no longer present “No Right Turn” signage,
 - Congestion at Ridgewood & Palmetto,
 - Taxi/for-hire vehicle issues, bus operations at Myrtle–Wyckoff.
- Myrtle–Wyckoff Task Force (multiple agencies) – Ongoing coordination on station area safety, traffic, and vending.
- District Service Cabinet – Monthly coordination with city agencies on service delivery.
- Bushell Coalition / community coalitions – Neighborhood coordination (including substance-use and overdose response work with Wyckoff Heights and H+H).
- Office of Nightlife (Jeff Garcia) – Mentioned as a partner re: problematic venues and late-night operations.

Staffing & Budget Advocacy

Reported on Assistant District Manager hiring:

- One finalist no-showed an interview;
- Another internal candidate (Luis from El Puente) interviewed but process left open to ensure full consideration of all applicants.

Strongly criticized that community boards have no independent operating budget to match their mandated workload; testified/wanted to testify at City Council budget hearing on:

- Need for staff beyond the DM and a part-time aide,
- Boards being “the only city agency doing all this work and getting no money.”

Term Limits & Board Leadership

Spoke at Borough Hall community board leadership convening about:

- Concerns with term limits for community board members and especially long-serving chairs.
- Risk of losing institutional knowledge and undervaluing older/senior leaders.
- Plans to submit a written letter (with the District Manager) to the full board (and Borough President) detailing concerns and proposed changes to appointment/term-limit practices.

Public Safety / Quality of Life

Highlighted:

- Fire risk in Bushwick (4 recent fires) and historic memory of “Bushwick burned.”
- Need to watch lithium-ion batteries, in-home charging, and neighbor behaviors.

Recapped SAPO (Street Activity Permit Office) training:

- Clarified permit, insurance, and fee requirements for block events.
- Critiqued fees being burdensome for nonprofits and kid-focused events, while large commercial events can afford them.

Liquor Licenses & Saturation

Emphasized CB4's concerns over:

- Saturated Wyckoff corridor (90+ liquor licenses),
- Late-night operations and quality-of-life complaints (noise, urination, crowding).

Specifically flagged:

- House of Nancy (219 Central): residential block with EarlyLearn/Head Start nearby; applicant resisted CB4's closing-hour guidelines.
- A venue at 895 Broadway: over-capacity issues (CO for 45 vs ~200 people present), now seeking to "work with the community" after enforcement.

Police & Community Relations

Met new rookie officers assigned to the 83rd; insisted they come to CB4 meeting to introduce themselves so residents recognize them and can engage them respectfully.

Encouraged community to:

- Say hello to new officers on patrol,
- Report issues but also see them as partners

9) District Manager's Report — Celeste León

Assistant District Manager Hiring

Received 6 direct applications plus 15 via NYC Jobs Portal (with overlap).

Process:

- Screening by District Office Committee.
- Identified finalists; one failed to appear, so DM will re-open outreach and interviews to ensure fairness and thoroughness.

Goal: Wrap up by end of week or early following week, then coordinate appointment with Borough President's office.

Term Limits & Citywide Coordination

Noted upcoming 2027 term limits for community board members and chairs; stressed:

- Need for strong succession planning and representation.
- Ensuring newer members and under-represented residents see themselves reflected in leadership.

In contact with:

- CUNY Graduate Center – planning a citywide community board forum and training for incoming members (fall, prior to 2027).
- Manhattan Borough President's office – sharing strategies on planning for term limits.

Community Board 4 Office & 1420 Bushwick Ave.

Ongoing conversations with Council Member Nurse, Family Services Network, and others about:

- The future of 1420 Bushwick Ave. (shared building with CB4 office).
- Potential affordable housing and service configurations at the site.

Will share more details as plans and proposals become available.

Mayor's Office – New Structure

Former Community Affairs Unit now Office of Mass Engagement:

- Some DMs and boards reported reduced responsiveness.
- Celeste raised this directly with Commissioner Tasha Van Auken.

- Resulted in a district managers' meeting (Mar 11) to clarify roles and improve communication; DM expects things to improve as the office stabilizes.

Wyckoff Heights Medical Center Partnership

Met with new community liaison (Elisa Viesta and colleague):

Discussed building a community advisory network.

Hospital looking to:

- Commission a mural for the pediatric center (connections made to local arts resources),
- Present to CB4 (targeting May) about services and community health initiatives.
- Collaborating with Wyckoff and NYC Health + Hospitals on overdose response and outreach in Bushwick.

Better Public Meetings Pilot (NYC Civic Engagement Commission)

CB4 is part of a city pilot to improve public meetings.

Plan:

- Provide attendees with a scorecard/QR code to rate their CB4 meeting experience (clarity, accessibility, etc.).
- CEC will compile and return feedback data to CB4 to guide meeting improvements.
- QR handout was delayed this month pending final language, expected to launch next meeting.

Budget Advocacy & Council Testimony

Attended City Council hearing on community boards and budget:

- Noted that community boards are not treated as agencies in the public hearing sequence; must wait until the "public" section to testify.

Spoke to the need for modest but real funding increases so each board can be fully staffed:

- Additional admin/program staff beyond the DM and part-time aide.
- Argued that this would likely save the city money by avoiding service gaps and inefficiencies.

Palmetto–Ridgewood–Myrtle Site Visit

Joint visit with DOT, MTA, NYPD and residents:

Confirmed a removed or missing "No Right Turn" sign (someone appears to have taken it down).

DOT looking at:

- Whether a traffic signal is warranted at Ridgewood & Palmetto,
- How to better manage bus operations and informal taxi standing.
- Committee (Traffic/Transportation) will discuss and shape CB4's formal recommendations, with community input.

Green Central Knoll – Dog Run & Community Process

Met with Friends of Green Central Knoll:

Group wants to propose a dog run without using the active sports field.

DM stressed:

- Need for broad community process, including park users and residents.
- Coordination with Council Member Gutierrez's office and NYC Parks.

- Council office has elevated Green Central Knoll issues with Parks; considering a community forum once there are concrete options to present.

General Acknowledgments

Thanked:

- Board members and the public who consistently attend and read committee reports.
- Residents who flagged missing YouTube videos, showing that people rely on CB4's online archive (videos will be updated once staffing increases).

Noted feeling both overwhelmed and joyful doing this work, and emphasized:

- The importance of respect and professionalism in enabling the office to function despite limited staff.

10) Recommendations

Permits & Licenses – Blanket Vote

This motion was to use a blanket vote procedure to act on the Permits & Licenses Committee's recommendations as a group.

Motion: Approve using a blanket vote for the committee's recommendations.

Made by: Gio Justiniano

Seconded by: Felix Ceballos

All in favor, motion carried.

Permits & Licenses – Adoption of Committee Recommendations

This motion formally adopted the Permits & Licenses Committee recommendations, which included:

Support for:

- Sura – 31 Wyckoff Ave. (on condition of complying with CB4 hours)

Not in favor of:

- House of Nancy – 219 Central Ave. (hours & location concerns)
- Xanadu – alteration for outdoor smoking structure (no show + community complaints)
- La Gualacena Dos II – 251 Wyckoff Ave. (no required documents/no appearance)

Defer / carry over:

- Sajhoma Restaurant – 941 Broadway (given another chance to appear; admin error on email tagging).

Motion: Accept the Permits & Licenses Committee's recommendations.

Made by: Annette Spellin

Seconded by: Stephanie Anderson

Abstention: Raul Rubio

Motion carried.

11) Old Business

Affordable Housing Finance Workshop

Speaker: Anne Guiney – Chair, Economic Development, Housing & Land Use Committee

Anne announced a workshop on how affordable housing gets financed, scheduled for next Thursday, March 26 (around the corner from the meeting location).

Purpose:

- To explain how affordable housing projects are actually funded: subsidies, tax credits, and how developers “make the numbers work.”
- To give board members and community members tools to analyze projects and ask better, more informed questions when developers present.

Framing:

- She noted that CB4 often tells developers to “do better” on affordability, deeper AMIs, and better terms, but that without understanding the financing puzzle, it’s hard to know what’s really possible.
- Designed for people who are interested but not experts.

Logistics:

- It’s a two-hour workshop.
- Funded out of CB4’s very small budget, they are strongly encouraging a good turnout from all committees and the public.

12)New Business

Speaker: Annette Spellen – Chair, Civic/Public Safety/Religious/Health Committee

Wyckoff Heights Medical Center Quit Smoking Program

- Annette reported that she and Chair Robert Camacho attended the Wyckoff Patient and Family Advisory Council.
- Wyckoff asked CB4 to help distribute flyers for their quit smoking program.
 - Annette placed program flyers on the table for attendees to take.

Irving Square Park – Children’s Playground Meeting

- She met with the Parks Department about the children’s playground at Irving Square Park.
- Highlight: Three children attended and:
 - Spoke directly to Parks staff.
 - Explained what they wanted in the playground and what colors they preferred.
- Annette emphasized how proud she was of the kids and framed them as “experts” for that discussion.

13)Announcements

Council Member Gutierrez’s Office

Speaker: Kim Vega – Office of Council Member Jennifer Gutiérrez

Participatory Budgeting Voting

- Voting period: April 11–19.
- They are seeking volunteers for PB sites and to help boost turnout.
- Flyers were left on the table.

Hiring – Constituent Advocate

- The office is hiring a Constituent Advocate.
- Application details are on their Instagram, or you can speak to Kim directly.

Mobile Office Hours in Ridgewood

- Location: Qechua Baptist Church, 1809 Cornelia Street, Ridgewood.
- Date: Tuesday, March 31 (time not explicitly stated; referred to as “on March 31 on Tuesday”).

- Community Resist will also be present to provide housing legal services.

Roller Rink / Community Center – Xanadu

Speaker: Varun Kataria – Xanadu Roller Rink

- Emphasized that Xanadu is a community center, not just a rink.
- Invited community partners to propose community initiatives they can host or support.
- Highlighted an upcoming “Cops and Kids Juneteenth” event on June 19.

Offered:

- His email for collaboration: Varun@xanadu.nyc.
- An invitation for CB4 attendees to visit the rink as guests.

Noted that Community Night was happening that same evening, open until midnight.

Community-Led Safety – Common Justice Town Hall

Speaker: Cade (K) Torada – Community Organizer, Common Justice

- Announced a town hall: “Every Road to Healing”
- Date: Tuesday, March 24
- Time: 6:00–8:00 PM
- Location: Brooklyn Borough Hall.
- Focus: Community-led solutions to safety (alternatives and complements to policing).

Format:

- Larger borough-wide conversation first.
- Followed by more local listening sessions, including in CB4/Bushwick.
- Provided flyers and offered to help people RSVP (QR code issues, etc.).

DeKalb Library / Brooklyn Public Library

Speaker: Louisa Lebwohl – DeKalb Library

Key programs and updates:

Tax Help Clinic

- Free tax help funded by Senator Salazar’s office and CB4.
- At DeKalb Library (790 Bushwick Ave.).
- Example: A clinic “tomorrow at 5 PM” was mentioned.

OSHA Class for Young Adults (18–24)

- Starts in April.
- Bilingual.
- OSHA certification: participants receive \$300 upon passing.
- Kickoff with El Puente on Friday at 4 PM.
- Funded through participatory budgeting.

Teen Takeover Night

- Next Wednesday: Library closed to public but open only to teens.
- Theme: Art-themed activities with food and programming.

Free Financial Counseling

- Every Thursday, free financial counseling at the branch.

Board Game Lending

- Library now lends board games; over 1,000 available with a library card.

Garden Reopening

- Garden reopens first week of April with programs for all ages.

Zine Collection

- DeKalb is one of two BPL branches with a zine collection.
- Open for browsing and learning about DIY publishing.

Book Club

- A book club returns on April 7 for neighbors to read and discuss together.

Brooklyn Borough President's Office

Speaker: Madeline Enlow – Office of Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso

Concern: New SNAP Work Requirements

- Borough President is deeply alarmed by new SNAP work requirements taking effect this month.
- The office can't handle individual SNAP cases, but:
- Constituent Affairs can connect people to resources.
- A full summary of the changes is on the Borough President's website.
- Flyers on the table explaining changes and listing the constituent services number.

Free Tax Prep at Borough Hall

- Dates: February 2 – April 8.
- Eligible New Yorkers can get free tax filing with IRS-certified volunteers.
- Location: Brooklyn Borough Hall.
- Schedule: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10 AM–4 PM.
- No walk-ins; appointments only (flyers provided).

2026 ULURP Public Hearings

- Hearings will be held every second Wednesday of the month in 2026.
- Public may participate in person at Borough Hall or online via WebEx.
- A flyer lists all 2026 dates.

Good Good Collective

Speaker: Rizzo Torres – Founder, The Good Good Collective

Mission: A Latino-centered, educational arts space for kids and teens, focused on culture, music, dance, theater.

- Location: 26 Scott Ave, operating within Sprout Society's space.
- Highlights:
- One of only three Latina-centered educational spaces in NYC operating full time.
- Prioritizes Latina, Black, and Indigenous youth and keeps all programming free or low-cost.

Classes include:

- "Beneath the Ball" dance class (moves from the Super Bowl halftime show).
- Wepa, cumbia, salsa dance classes.
- Organization is artist-led; she is an active musician/actor; colleagues are working artists and teachers.

Ask:

- Wants to know community members by first name and build direct relationships.
- Invited people to share contact info with her; provided phone number: 347-294-5466.

Senator Julia Salazar's Office

Speaker: Maria Valdez – Office of State Senator Julia Salazar

Free Tax Clinic

- At DeKalb Library at 5 PM (referenced as "tomorrow" relative to meeting date).

- Everyone is welcome.
- Hope & Healing Family Center – Event
- Multi-day event: April 13, 15, 16 at Hope Gardens Community Center, 11 AM–1 PM.
 - They will be tabling there.
 - Flyers available.
- Tenant Support Unit
- At Senator’s office the first Tuesday of every month, 10 AM–12 PM.
- CUFFH / Housing Connect Support
- CUFF staff present every Tuesday, 11 AM–5 PM, at Senator’s office.
 - Help with Housing Connect account creation and application support.
 - No appointment needed, details on flyers in the back.

Swerve Church – Bushwick Easter Event & School Garden

Speaker: Danny – Pastor, Swerve Church
 Bushwick Easter Event (Egg Hunt Festival)

- Date: Saturday, March 28.
- Time: 12 PM.
- Location: PS 299 schoolyard (88 Woodbine St.).

Activities:

- Candy (no literal “egg hunt” with eggs, but festival-style celebration).
- Food, music, games, community gathering.

PS 376 Urban Garden Event

- Location: PS 376, 194 Harman St.
- Date: April 14.
- Time: 8:30 AM.

Second graders will:

- Present their urban garden.
- Speak about the importance of gardening with the community.
- Community members are invited to attend.

NYC Department of Health Workshops (CEU Credits)

Speaker: Raul Rubio – Department of Health (also CB4 member)

Offering free professional workshops for licensed social workers (LMSW, LCSW):

- Virtual Training – Thursday
- Topic: Community Mental Wellness and Resiliency (general mental health understanding).
- Credits: 4 CEUs.

In-Person Training – Friday

- Topic: GUIDE training (youth mental health & diversion work).
- Location: DOHMH borough office, 485 Throop Ave.
- Credits: 3 CEUs.

Total of 7 CEUs available free, which is significant compared to typical paid courses.

- Part of the Partnership for Early Diversion of Youth (PEERD) initiative in neighborhoods including Bushwick.
- He had a QR code for registration and encouraged people to share widely.

Council Member Sandy Nurse’s Office

Speaker: Samantha Ortiz – Office of Council Member Sandy Nurse

Sanitation & Transportation Town Hall

- Date: Tuesday, March 31.
- Time: 6–7:30 PM.
- Location: RiseBoro Youth Center, on Gates Ave.
- Agencies present: DSNY, DOT, etc.
- Focused on all things sanitation and transportation (complaints, ideas, questions).

Compost Container Giveaway

- Date: Thursday, March 26.
- Time: 3–5 PM.
- Location: Council office, 56 Pennsylvania Ave.
- In partnership with BIG Reuse.
- Giving out small kitchen compost bins.

Free Tax Prep at District Office

- Every Friday through April 10, 10 AM–4 PM.
- By appointment: free tax preparation services.

Year-Round Legal Clinics

Flyers left for:

- Immigration legal services.
- Housing legal services.
- Offered at their district office on a recurring basis.

Meta Crisis Salon – Volunteer Skill Support

Speaker: Ewan French

Introduced a local volunteer group called the Meta Crisis Salon.

Makeup:

Diverse group (varied ages, backgrounds) with skills in tech, social work, architecture, etc.

Goal:

To provide tangible support to local people and groups in Bushwick—especially amid multiple overlapping crises (cost of living, climate, etc.).

Examples of support:

- Building or improving a website.
- Providing extra hands for community projects or events.
- Other practical help that aligns with their skill sets.

Invitation:

Asked community members with specific needs to speak to him after the meeting.

Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez's Office

Speaker: Johnathan Betancourt – Office of Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez

Women's History Month

Acknowledged Women's History Month and thanked the women of CB4 and Bushwick.

GAME Act – Arts & Music Education

- Congresswoman introduced the G.A.M.E. Act: Guaranteed Access to Arts and Music Education.
- Would provide federal funding to expand music and arts for low-income and disadvantaged students nationwide.

Community Project Funding

- For FY 2026, she secured over \$15 million in community project funds.

- Includes \$1.8 million for DOT:
- Full reconstruction of Broadway (Flushing Ave to Eastern Parkway) from concrete to modern blacktop.

War Powers and Iran

- He criticized the (Trump) administration's war in Iran launched without proper congressional approval.
- Cost so far: about \$22 billion, which he argued could have gone to housing, schools, and lowering the cost of living.
- Congresswoman voted YES on a War Powers Resolution to end the illegal war in Iran; it did not pass.
- Emphasized the need to restore Congress's constitutional authority over war.

Constituent Services

- Office can help with federal agencies: USPS, Social Security, immigration/visas, etc.
- Phone: 718-599-3658.

Motherhood Collective – Story Time & Free Book Fair

Speaker: Nancy – CB4 member, Motherhood Collective

- Event: Story Time & Free Book Fair
- Date: Sunday, April 19.
- Time: 3:30–5:00 PM.
- Location: Secret Riso Club, 122 Central Ave.

Partner:

Brooklyn Book Bodega – supplying free books for any kids who attend.

Activities:

- Story time (parents and community members read).
- Each child can take home free books.

Ask:

- Looking for volunteer readers.
- Flyers placed at the back.

Arts, Culture & Technology Committee – Chair Stepping Down

Speaker: Stephanie Anderson – Chair, Arts, Culture & Technology Committee

Announced she is stepping down as:

- A board member.
- Chair of the Arts, Culture & Technology committee.

Reason:

Positive but time-intensive professional and personal developments.

Tone:

- Expressed that she will miss everyone terribly.
- Asked to take a group picture with colleagues and board members before leaving.

Bushwick Sports & Recreation – Winter Training & Baseball Clinics

Speaker: Pablo Rivera – Bushwick Sports & Recreation, CB4 member

Winter Training

- Reported that winter indoor training has been a success.
- Training is wrapping up in the coming week:
- Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays from 6–9 PM.

- Saturdays from 12–4 PM.
- Free Baseball Clinics
- Next phase: Free baseball clinics at Hope Ball Field and behind Bushwick High School (Bushwick Playground).
 - Different age groups will use different sites.
 - For exact dates and age schedules, call:
 - 718-628-5486
 - 347-388-8271

14) **Second Roll Call**

Present: Linda Whitfield, Ben Tocker, Christian C. Tate, James Steward II, Annette Spellan, Milagros Sandoval, Josue Salazar, Eliseo Ruiz, Raul Rubio, Pablo Rivera, Cirilo Nuñez, Kristine Malden, Cindy Lebron, Nancy Keith, Giovannies Justiniano, Luisa Jose, Barbara Jackson, Courtney Henley, Zachary Hendrickson, Anne Guiney, Christopher Graham, Alan Gamboa, Felix Ceballos, Robert Camacho, Jo-Ena Bennett, Stephanie Anderson

Present via a remote waiver: Jerry Valentin, Zulma Novoa, Romicka Nichols-Barnes, Virgie Jones, Barbara Jackson, Tanesha Honeygan, Deborah Hicks

Excused: Savannah Thais, Juan Serra, Virgie Jones

Absent: Shray Richardson (informed the district office), Tara Jones-Thomas, Elaine Hamilton, Jason Gers (informed the district office), Freddy Fowler, Andrew Choi, Isa Abney (informed the district office)

Resigned: Joanna Fuentes-Singh

15) **Adjournment**

James Steward motioned to adjourn. It was seconded by Zachary Hendrickson. All in favor, motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:09pm