



*Donovan Richards*  
*Queens Borough President*

## Community Board No. 2

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*Anatole Ashraf*  
*Chairperson*

*Debra Markell Kleinert*  
*District Manager*

February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Arts & Cultural Affairs Committee

***This meeting was teleconferenced using Zoom***

**Attendees:**

Eric Narburgh, Vice Chair  
Lisa Charles  
Kenny Greenberg

**Absentees:**

Karesia Batan, Chair (Excused)  
Ann Marie Baronowski (Excused)  
Anatole Ashraf  
Stephen Cooper  
Akello Thomas  
Ryan Smith

**Public Member:**

Edjo Wheeler – Culture Lab LIC

**Community Board 2 Staff:**

**Guests:**

Andre Irving – Cucala Dance Company  
Dirk McCall de Paloma - Executive Director of Sunnyside Shines Business Improvement District  
Dawa Yangi Sherpa – Spokesperson for the United Sherpa Association

- Eric Narburgh welcomed everyone to the Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee meeting.
- He acknowledged that the meeting was happening in parallel to a Black History Month event at MOMA PS1, co-sponsored by the Queens Borough President's office and the Long Island City Partnership and provided details for those who can attend once the meeting concluded:  
<https://events.humanitix.com/licblackhistorymonth2025?c=newsletter>.
- Dirk McCall provided updates on behalf of Sunnyside Shines.
  - SunnyPride will occur on Friday, June 13, 2025 from 6-9 pm. Planning for the event will begin later this month, and there will be about six planning meetings.

*“Serving the Communities of Long Island City, Sunnyside, Woodside, and Maspeth”*

- On March 1, 2025, there will be a Lunar New Year event, with a march beginning at Lowery Plaza and ending at Bliss and the 46th Street Arch. Sunnyside Shines, the Chinese American Planning Council, Asian Americans for Equality, and two lions from Columbia University's Lions Club partnered for the event.
- Edjo Wheeler, from Culture Lab, provided updates for Culture Lab's events, including:
  - A pole dancing party on February 14, 2025.
  - Lunar New Year festivities on February 15, 2025, from 3:00 PM to 10:00 PM; there will be vendors and the opportunity to make a lantern.
  - A free concert in the front art gallery called Sounds from The Gallery every Saturday night between now and May.
  - A solo show by Hina Oikawa called Short Songs, which will run through March 2025.
  - Culture Lab will provide space for MAS (Municipal Art Society), an organization that will lead a neighborhood discussion on the rezoning, and he requested that City Planners attend the event. Eric Narburgh posted a link with details about the event: <https://www.mas.org/events/the-future-of-long-island-city-a-conversation/>.
- Edjo Wheeler added that Culture Lab is active in the community; they provided space for a children's event for Local PTA 384 to have a bake sale and for a local church to host services when their space was inaccessible due to snow.
- Andre Irving from Cucala Dance Company provided updates. On February 14, 2025, there will be an annual Valentine's Day workshop, and the theme is to meet someone or bring someone. It will be a salsa dance workshop with a dance battle mixed in, and some open dancing afterward.
- Kenny Greenberg gave an update on his sculptures on Vernon Boulevard, which now display various colors, including red and gold. He has received requests for neon workshops and may host one in the next few weeks.
- Dirk McCall stated that he hopes Sunnyside Shines will present to the CB2 Arts and Culture and Transportation Committees for the Sunny Shines Greenpoint Avenue lighting project. He is seeking approvals for the lighting design so that lights can be installed on Greenpoint Avenue.
- Dawa Yangi Sherpa, a guest at the committee meeting, introduced themselves. Dawa Yangi, is from the sherpa community, they have a community center and community temple in Jackson Heights, Queens. Dawa Yangi Sherpa provided a link to the association's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/share/15s2AtoWvH/?mibextid=wwXlfr>
- In response to a question about the lack of community and board member participation in the Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee, Eric Narburgh discussed efforts to raise awareness and increase engagement so that artists and residents can learn and share about the artistic and cultural events in the community.
- He noted that he and Committee Chair Karesia Batan have been discussing convening the leaders of other Arts and Cultural Affairs Committees in Queens together to share

ideas, build connections, and find ways where they can collaborate throughout the borough.

- Lisa Charles stated that she supports music and cultural events in the community and is eager to support initiatives or events that advocate for them. She added that usually, the same groups get the same grants and funding because not many smaller grassroots organizations attend these meetings, so they cannot take advantage of the resources. Lisa Charles also noted that there is less music at Hunters Point, it's been declining and that its unfortunate there's less music such as Jazz in Long Island City.
- Edjo Wheeler said he would be happy to have more people join the committee meeting and Kenny Greenberg said that the office invite to the committee meeting is very official, which could discourage people from attending.
- Eric Narburgh provided updates on upcoming events and application deadlines:
  - The Flushing Town Hall Artist Professional Development Workshop is taking place on February 27, 2025.
  - The deadline to apply to become a community board member is February 14, 2025.
  - The application deadline for fiscal year 2025 City Council funding is February 20, 2025.
  - NYC DOT is seeking proposals from non-profits and artists to work on temporary art projects in their infrastructure and art spaces:  
<https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/nyc-dot-art-partners.pdf>. Rolling deadline.
  - There is an event hosted by a theater communications group about arts advocacy is an opportunity to learn about the advocacy field. The link to the event is below:  
[https://tcg.org/Web/Events/Event\\_Display.aspx?EventKey=OMBWEBPT2&WebsiteKey=d4c31fa4-467a-4959-b48b-cae3ea93e516](https://tcg.org/Web/Events/Event_Display.aspx?EventKey=OMBWEBPT2&WebsiteKey=d4c31fa4-467a-4959-b48b-cae3ea93e516).
- Eric Narburgh provided a link to the Public Sites Survey, which is part of the One LIC Planning Process. The survey provides information on the specific parcels of land owned by the city, and it's an opportunity to use those spaces for arts and arts adjacent purposes. He encouraged community members to advocate through that survey for those purposes: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XCX5W8G>.
- Sunnysides is still waiting to hear from the Historic Districts Council on its application to include Sunnyside as part of the Six to Celebrate cultural preservation program. If selected, the program would provide resources towards preservation goals, including hands-on support over the course of a year. Additionally, the program helps community activists learn to use tools such as documentation, research, zoning, landmarks, publicity, and public outreach to advance preservation campaigns.
- Eric Narburgh encouraged people who are interested in the future of the Bliss Theater and advocating for its use by the community performing arts space to attend the Arts and Cultural Affairs Committee meetings for updates and to stay involved and informed.

- Eric Narburgh discussed that it will be important to communicate with the developer who purchased the space Bliss Theater about their intentions.
- Dirk McCall said that ZD Jasper is the developer that purchased the building but the Jehovah's Witnesses will continue to occupy it for another year and a half. In the meantime, Dirk McCall will try to figure out if it would be possible to shift air rights.
- Dirk McCall discussed exploring shifting the air rights for future development to an adjacent lot, which appears unlikely; he considered encouraging ZD Jasper to buy the Wendy's next door and shift over the air rights to Queens Boulevard to save the theater but the people who own the Wendy's are not interested in selling. Additionally, the franchisee who owns the Wendy's has the right of 1st refusal.
- As a next step, Dirk McCall stated that he will reach out to ZD Jasper to discuss if there are any possibilities to preserve Bliss Theater and, if not, if it would be possible to have some space for entertainment and culture in the building the developer could potentially construct. Dirk McCall stated that he will try to find out if the developer intends to build rentals or co-ops, as the latter creates more flexibility to include other spaces.
- Dirk McCall said the Landmarks Commission denied a request to landmark the Bliss Theater and attempts to appeal the decision have not yet been successful. He added that Council Member Julie Won's office has been supportive of efforts to preserve the Bliss Theater.
- Dirk McCall stated he spoke with Ya-ting Liu, Chief Public Realm Offices for NYC in Sunnyside and that she will try to ask someone at the Landmarks Commission to reconsider the application.
- Dirk McCall acknowledged that there is an art history tour that happens in Sunnyside twice a year, where reservations reach capacity within 15 minutes. There is a great deal of artistic and culturally significant architecture in the neighborhood that attracts visitors and merits preservation.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Rafael Nava