

Brooklyn Community Board #4 Regular Monthly Meeting - 1  
Wednesday April 15, 2020  
WebEx – Via Virtual Meeting  
6:00PM

Chairperson: Mr. Robert Camacho; District Manager: Ms. Celestina Leon

**Chairperson Report:**

CB 4 Chairperson, Mr. Robert Camacho: The people that lost their lives because of COVID-19 may God bless them.

Meetings the Chairperson has attended:

Thursday, February 20: Tenant Association at Hope Garden, 6pm.

Monday, February 24: EPT Committee Meeting, 6pm.

Tuesday, February 25: HLU Committee Meeting, 6pm.

Also attended a meeting at 179 Wilson, NCO meeting.

Tuesday, March 3: Borough Board Meeting – 2020 Census was discussed; a presentation of the hybrid kitchen; woman organizations in Brooklyn; and information on how you can donate your organs, how to have your request on your driver's license.

Wednesday, March 4: Shape Up Bushwick meeting and attended the Executive Board meeting.

Thursday, March 5: Attended a RAD meeting regarding 85 Palmetto Street, Grand Opening.

Friday, March 6: Celeste and I met with a resident who had a personal issue regarding their property. The person received a \$175.00 fine. 1pm - 2pm.

Thursday, March 12: EPT Committee Meeting, 6pm

Wednesday, April 1: WebEx, Executive Board Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 8: DSC Meeting, attended by City agencies. We do not know if the block parties are going to be allowed this summer. That information is forthcoming.

I received a letter from someone that's interested in opening a patient's substance abuse disorder treatment facility. We must make sure that we know who's doing it and what will be happening there.

I received a report that citywide, there will no longer have brown recycle bins. The program has been canceled, because it cost too much money.

Summer Youth Program cut. That mean 85,000 youths will not have summer jobs to buy their clothes or schools supplies. Maybe we can find a way to help the with a grant or something.

The staff is working from home. I gave them assignments that I want them to work on. I'm going to have a staff meeting with Willie and Sharon. I'm still doing my job and it is getting harder.

Please call the board's office if you have any complaints. 718-628-8400

At our DSC meeting we had 11 agencies attended. The only one that did not attend was the 83<sup>rd</sup> Precinct. We will reach out to them to find out what happen and to have them give us an update report.

You need to wear a mask if you are riding on public transportation.

**Introduction to Elected Officials and/or their Representatives:**

- 1) Marcus Harris, representing Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams: Working from home. 917-324-2680
- 2) Karen Cherry, representing Assemblyman Erik Dilan: My personal cell number, 347-262-2448; office number is 718-386-4576; Email: [CherryK@assembly.gov](mailto:CherryK@assembly.gov)
- 3) Darma Diaz: Thank you for putting this call together. It shows your dedication to the community. I have been able to get a good number of masks. I have been able to work with NYCHA and the seniors. If you come across families that are in need, whether it is for the medicine, or food source, please feel free to reach out to me. You can reach me at 646-303-9934.
- 4) Fatima, representing Councilmember Antonio Reynoso: 718-963-3141  
Email: [FElmansy@council.gov](mailto:FElmansy@council.gov)
- 5) Evelyn Cruz, Representing Congresswoman Nydia Velasquez, Office #718-599-3658; cell # 347-314-2045. They are working on casework, unemployment, immigration, postal issues and other concerns. On behalf of the congresswoman, I want to applaud everyone that's on the phone. I know that Bushwick has a lot of love and a lot of support from this community board. We can still hear the passion in Camacho's voice. Celeste, thank you for what you are doing.
- 6) Jonathan Pomboza Representing the District Attorney office: I just wanted to wish everyone the best and remind everyone to stay safe.  
And I'm really happy that this meeting is happening. Our action center is open. We are all working. If you have any issues that you need to contact the office, you can reach out to 718-250-2340. Cell # 347-986-6146. Again, we have victim services unit that's still working. If anyone you know, involved in a domestic violence situation they can always reach out to the office. Do not hesitate to call us.
- 7) Taeka Haraguthi, Representing Comptroller Scott Stringer's office: 917-594-2129  
[THaragu@comptroller.nyc.gov](mailto:THaragu@comptroller.nyc.gov)

**Representatives from Community Based Organizations:**

- 1) [Sinthia Pena Ortiz](#) from the Bushwick Community Partnership.
- 2) [Maria Riviera](#) from RiseBoro: 917-518-3524, some of our offices are closed, however, some are working from home and others are in the field.
- 3) Mr. Barnes, Cooper Street Community Association

**District Manager's Report**

I won't go back to last month, but I will just talk a little bit about April meetings. I want to make sure our community has what it needs. Thank you, volunteers, and people who are taking the time out of their schedules with all the uncertainty going on. We owe a profound amount of gratitude to all of our health professionals. And the focus has been on the front lines, all of our essential workers.

I want to give a shout out to all of them and to let them know that we're still in this community and that we're all here together, although we all play very different roles. Thank you again for all those joining us this evening. We hope to make this setting better and we hope to have fewer technical difficulties going forward. I will just summarize some of the meetings that I've been a part of.

Towards the end of March, there were several community-based calls that revolved around the COVID-19 response.

One of these community-based calls, was put together by the North Brooklyn Wellness coalition and also, hosted primarily & organized in partnership with Sammy Nemir Olivares, who is one of the board members.

I was also part of the virtual Bushwick Community Partnership governance meeting at the end of March. The governance meeting continues to be a space for some of the leaders that volunteered to help guide their process and how they're reshaping the community partnership.

There were also several phone calls regarding 195 Linden Street. For those that don't know 195 Linden Street is undergoing renovations as well as 422 Central Avenue, Hope Garden Community Center. This is a part of the RAD project. We're making sure that we keep in touch with the team to know exactly what things are happening and get a sense of the timeline so we can be prepared. Hopefully, at some point, we will be allowed to reconvene.

I also spoke with one of the representatives from OMB regarding budget consultations. They are changing how we essentially manage budget consultations in the past. There's been a platform, a web-based platform that we use essentially to create agendas that we essentially follow to speak to all of the city agencies. September or October of this year, they're changing that platform. So, all of the district managers will be using something new. We will be providing feedback. I will reach out to see if I could provide some feedback on the board. Feedback, just to make sure that it will be something that would be useful.

April 3<sup>rd</sup>: I was speaking to Salesforce. They've been doing some work with different agencies regarding the COVID response. They mentioned that there was a tool that, other agencies are asking about. I participated in a demonstration and it is something that I would love to talk further with all board members about. As of right now, it's just something they were sharing. They may be providing a trial version to some of the boards, depending on interest.

There was also an elected official representative check in call. Thank you to everyone who's provided updates.

Then recently, as of this week, I've been speaking to the Civic Engagement Commission.

Tuesday, April 14: A Borough Service Cabinet check in. I joined the other District Managers to have a conversation about meetings on WebEx and Zoom. How we're planning to organize. I will also follow up.

I had another a separate call with another representative from the Civic Engagement Commission, specifically regarding translation assistance. I do remember the board members asking specifically for Spanish translation last fall. It's something we've been working on. So, I hope we're still able to do that despite the fact that we're now on a digital platform.

### **Committee Reports:**

There are no committee reports. We don't have anything formally on the agenda. There weren't meeting, but this is an opportunity for the chairperson of those committees to provide brief updates to the board.

#### **Economic Development Committee (EDC) - Mr. Desmonde Monroe:**

I think the only thing we've been talking about between myself and the, businesses are the ones that are coming out, stimulus money and the community development block grant mitigation, that's where the funds are going. I know we talked about getting an impact of Bushwick businesses particular. Certainly, we can lobby for funding. More funding, for the Bushwick Community.

I've just been working with you guys to try to make sure that, we have all those funding sources in place.

I'm happy to work with you offline, to see if we could put together a sort of resources for people in the community who are trying to get through to apply for loans. We would like to find out where they can get financing from. I know we were told to go to our community banks. They will be able to help people get better loans and expedite money faster.

**Evelyn Cruz:** The Congress Member is the ranking chair; she is the chair of small business. She's listened to what many small business owners are sharing with her. It is a big job because there are hundreds of thousands of small businesses seeking support.

We heard the Bank of America, Citibank and other banks, creating their own framework with how they're going to view lending. This is an issue that we've already expressed to many of them. They have expanded their lending base to non-bank clients as well.

SBA is hiring customer service representatives, because the amount of applications is just insurmountable.

They're working on an emergency fund, that would hopefully allocate 250 billion dollars of assistant to small businesses with a \$125 billion going to community based financial institutions.

Bushwick Impact has teamed up with pro bono lawyers to help small businesses with the legal parameters and some of the accounting stuff. I will send that list to Celeste later after this call and then she can forward it out to everyone else. The lawyers are doing this kind of work to help small businesses.

We haven't sent this information out yet, but on Friday, April 17, 1pm if the congresswoman is feeling much better, she's going to be hosting a telecom call on the Cares Act. We're going to have different agencies with us on the call.

I will also share that with Celeste so that we could invite yourself and other members of the board to participate. Save the date!

What's happening! Talking to our local hospitals throughout our district.

We all know what's happening, Woodhull and Wyckoff Hospital and other hospitals throughout the City in our district.

We also are hearing a lot of what's happening with the nursing homes, which is very dear to all of us. You know they are the most vulnerable.

We know that in a time when there was no COVID that many of the nursing homes were already understaffed. Now COVID worsens the situation.

So, just today the Congresswoman along with three other members of Congress from the Brooklyn delegation, urged to inquire to get the HHS to talk to us about the funding. There was 30 billion dollars allocated for nursing homes and we want to see where is that money being allocated and how is it being managed?

Everyday we're hearing of nursing homes throughout our communities, especially in our district of patients dying. We have had one facility in our district having 35 deaths, another one that had 28 eight deaths, this is within two weeks. This is not acceptable. Other patients have passed away because they were sitting in a room with no ventilation. This is just indecent for anyone to have a loved one, pass away and not get the proper attention and care that they need. This is matter that is very dear to us and I'll share the letter with you today so that, you know what's going on with that.

The other thing is that we've also requested a hundred billion dollars for hospitals and community health centers, like those cab centers in our districts so that they can get the needed resources, coming in the next few months.

That's one of the key things in the emergency relief bill that we're fighting for. We think it's going to pass. They're going to probably be call back to vote this coming week.

HHC is hiring! They are looking for workers, anyone who wants to work in maintenance and in the kitchen. They want to 300-500 people. The pay is \$20 an hour and a high school diploma is not required. You can go to their website to apply.

Robert Camacho: Evelyn make sure we get the information maybe some of our 14, 17, 18-year-old kids can get the job. Maybe we can try to get them jobs. They need this for their school supplies and to take care of themselves.

Martha Bayona: Serving public schools in District 32. [CEC32@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CEC32@schools.nyc.gov) my cell # 347-731-6179

Everything for summer school is pending and we are extremely worried that they will not be able to have that extra money to help their families.

So, I'm looking forward to the information that Evelyn is going to tell us, and let's work together for us and our community.

Robert Camacho: Don't worry we got and will make sure that we fight for our kids. I am also part of the D. Y. C. D. and we want to make sure those of us on the advisory board, that, that money goes back to our kids. My kids really need it, especially now more than ever.

Sinthia Pena Ortiz, Bushwick Community Partnerships: I want to give some information about what the Bushwick Community Partnership is doing.

We have a helpline where people can call Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm, at 1-718-497-6090 ext. 766 or 793.

We're trying to provide information and connect the people of Bushwick to resources such as food. We have been assisting families obtain food during this time period.

In addition to, we're trying to collect as much information as possible so that we could bring it back to the Administration for Children's Services, so that they know what the community needs in terms of distributing, whether it's reimbursements for rent or rental assistance.

Also, the, Coalition for Hispanic family services is providing telehealth where you could speak to someone to provide you mental health services during this time period which is very necessary.

Housing and Land Use Committee (HLU) - Joshua Brown: Just the general information for homeowners as a result of COVID if you have difficulty paying your mortgage, please feel free

call your lender, because they are offering forbearance during this difficult time. Same thing for National Grid as well others. If you have any financial issues, they will work with any homeowners who are having problems.

Mr. Monroe: What is the situation with rent? Is there a rent freeze?

Evelyn Cruz: The dilemma is two-fold. Some tenants are retired and get SSI or some type of retirement check. Landlords are asking if these people can still continue to pay their rent. However, for those who have lost their jobs and will not have any income at all except for the unemployment check that they will be getting. Their rent will be put on hold, but they will still have to pay it at a later date.

Property owners that have 1-3 family apartment building and their tenants cannot pay their rent, now the property owner is considered a business owner. So now you will have to apply for assistant as a small business. They will have the opportunity to do that. If you are receiving section 8 and you cannot pay your part of the rent, we are looking for the federal government to subsidize that portion of the rent to the property manager. During this process, we are hoping to get this through in this next relief bill.

If anyone, God forbid, cannot pay their rent, even though they are getting a subsidy and they only pay thirty percent of their income, if they can't, for whatever reason can afford to pay, then we are saying, let's waiver that rent payment, and we will give the property managers rental assistance. But again, we're just waiting. We're waiting on that, bill to pass on the federal level.

Everyone is calling for rental event moratorium, but we're hearing also that small homeowners are saying is that this going to hurt them because they are a small owner.

If you have any comments on this, please feel free to drop us an email. If you're a homeowner, how do you feel about this? Let us know.

And if you're a small homeowner, and your tenants can't afford to pay because of the crisis, then maybe you will qualify for a small business grant, or a small low interest business loan.

Felix Ceballos: I know you mentioned that we can apply for a homeowner small loan.

Evelyn Cruz: Maybe, maybe you can apply.

Mr. Caballos: What can the bank do right now to help small business owners?

Evelyn Cruz: I will send Celeste that information. My understanding is that this isn't actually a rent or a mortgage freeze. It's a forbearance. Do people understand that really all this means is that when we get back to normal that they're actually going to have to pay them back.

Permits and Licensing Committee (PLC) - Melissa Carrera: I hope everyone's staying safe practicing social distancing.

The NY State Liquor Authority ruled that all businesses should submit their 30-day notice via email until it's safe to return to standard operations. The committee will be holding or try to hold the next meeting at the end of this month.

I have checked in on our local restaurants and bars, and some of them have been experiencing very hard times, especially with having to lay off a lot of staff.

Some folks have shared their go fund me. There's also a lot of opportunities for folks to apply for funds for small businesses, and also for restaurant workers. I will be sharing some of that information with you via email.

District Manager, Celestina Leon: I don't believe at the time when we did the roll call that we had a quorum. I think, if it is okay with the board that we refrain from recommendations this evening in light of this being the first digital meeting. Is that agreeable with the board?

(We heard voices of a few board members agreeing)

Chairperson, Robert Camacho: I would like to recommend that we hold off on the election until September. I will bring this up at the May's Executive Committee. May is going to be hectic. We don't know if we are still going to be going through this in June. I have stuff on the agenda and I'm going to make a recommendation to the Executive Board. I don't think I have to go to the full board for that, because I can do it. The City Charter says I can.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** None

**Announcements:**

Those who have announcements, I would suggest that you send a message to me.

Marcus Harris: The Borough President has been partnering with restaurants to feed the Brooklyn hospitals and precincts. PO Lopez at the 83<sup>rd</sup> Precinct organized it for his precinct. They received their food from Nick's Lobster House. We've been actually making sure that all the hospitals and the precinct received food. Nick's Lobsters House has been amazing. Woodhull, Wyckoff and the 83<sup>rd</sup> Precinct received their food last week.

Taeka Haraguthie from the Comptroller's Office: There's been a lot of discussion about the impact on small businesses. The Comptroller's Office is actually putting together a solution via zoom on a range of topics, including finance and the resources from the Federal, State, City, Government as well as the private sector.

I will send Celeste the link so that anyone can sign up. It will be held every Tuesday and Thursday, starting this Thursday, April 16 to May 14. Interpretation will be available in twelve different languages, including, American Sign language, Arabic, Cantonese, French, Korean, Mandarin, Polish, Russian, Spanish. The interpretation services must be requested at least two days before each session. I will make sure to send that to you. I actually sat through the dry run of the presentation and it was very useful. Hopefully folks can find what is available to them.

Renisha Westbrooks: The Borough President is seeking information from parents that may be experiencing hardships in remote learning. Please contact Ms. McCray 718-802-3987. In regard to the summer youth employment program, we did receive some information of some of the cuts that New York City public schools will be experiencing.

Celestina Leon: We continue to work on different projects during this time, but unfortunately, of course, we've had to cancel Shape Up Bushwick Parade for this year as well as the Community Earth Day event. Let me rephrase that we have not canceled Shape Up Bushwick, we have postponed it. I think that we will have to readjust those events, given the guidance that we receive in the coming months. So, right now we're looking to have a Shape Up Event, hopefully, sometime in October. Everything at the moment is to be determined of course, just depending on what happens next.

Sandy: I have a point of clarification on information, we want everyone to be aware of the grab go meals that is available for adults as well as children. There's a lot of people suffering with hunger. If you can spread the word that this program is not only for children, but also, from adults, anyone can go and pick them up from 11am to 1pm, Monday to Friday.

**Second Roll Call:**

Raul Rubio made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Anne Guiney second, all in favor.