

**COMMUNITY BOARD 9  
890 NOSTRAND AVENUE  
BROOKLYN, NY 11225**

**MINUTES OF THE  
COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING  
HELD ON MAY 26, 2009  
MIDDLE SCHOOL 61 AUDITORIUM  
400 EMPIRE BOULEVARD, BROOKLYN, NY 11225**

**Board Members Present**

Stuart Balberg  
Gwen Carter  
Michael Cetera, AIA  
Aldith Clarke  
Geraldine Dease  
Shelia Foster-Golding  
Joan Gill  
Rabbi Jacob Z. Goldstein  
Theopia Green  
Rabbi Nochum Gross  
Tessa I. Hackett Vieira  
Sylveta Hamilton-Gonzales  
Aaron Hershkop  
Ruby Hodge  
Brenda Hutto  
Maurice Jean-Baptiste

**Board Members Present**

Jannie Johnson  
Denise Mann  
Samuel Marmulzsteyn  
Gary Marshall  
Allan Martin, Jr  
Dr. Marco Mason  
Carl B. Morgan  
Dwayne Nicholson  
Rosemarie Perry  
Myrtle Roberson  
Eleanor Rollins  
Roosevelt Rose  
Brenda Scott  
Rabbi Joseph Speilman  
Yvonne Straker  
Jacqueline Welch

**Board Members Absent**

Dion Ashman  
Rev. Phyllis Brown - Sick  
Chaz Crowder  
Alice Mitchell - Sick  
Frank Nicholas - Sick  
Romania Roachford - Sick  
Karlene Robinson - Sick  
Denise Thomas

**Elected Officials/Agency Representatives Present**

Hon. Marty Markowitz – Ann Marie Adamson  
Hon. Hakeem Jeffries – Wayne Keith Williams  
Hon. Eric Adams – Reuven Lipkind  
Denise Peterson – Kings County Hospital Center

Hon. Mathieu Eugene – David Morrisset  
Hon. Letitia James  
Hon. Darlene Mealy – Isiah R. Hall

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**PUBLIC SESSION**

**Representatives from the Department of Transportation will present plans for the implementation of traffic calming measures for Empire Boulevard from Flatbush Avenue to Utica Avenue.**

**Keith Bray & Hillary Poole – Department of Transportation, Division of Traffic Planning**

Hillary Poole informed that the project came out of their office. The plan has been changed from Flatbush to Bedford Avenue. The project came out of many different things due to a lot of community concerns expressed regarding safety along the corridor. In 2007 when they received the list of pedestrian crossing areas Empire and Troy was on the list. This area was tied for second place with 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue and 42<sup>nd</sup> Street in Manhattan. Their concerns are for pedestrian safety to slow down traffic. Ms. Poole gave the following background data on crashes in the area.

In 2007 there were 7 crashes at Empire Boulevard and Troy Avenue. Between 1997 – 2007 there were 6 fatalities with 33 severe injuries. The major causes of these accidents are speeding. One of the reasons that speeding is so prevalent on Empire Boulevard is because it is very wide. There are only about six hundred vehicles during peak hours in each direction. There are two lanes making the distance more open so that cars feel that they can move faster. The boulevard is approximated 60 feet wide. It takes the adult pedestrian 12 seconds to cross, where it takes senior's approximately 20 to make it across. There is no protection for people if they do not make it across before the signal stops. That is why they want to make refuge islands. The pedestrian traffic is usually in the morning and during school time.

What is proposed is a road diet. Some of the measures that would be implemented would be:

1. To reduce Empire Boulevard into one moving lane in each direction.
2. To install a bike lane in each direction. The narrow roadway would reduce the speeding of vehicles and also slow down vehicles that are turning onto Empire Boulevard. That would be good for pedestrian safety.
3. To install some left turn bays so that there is one lane turning left and they are not blocking traffic.
4. Install four pedestrian islands, plant trees and landscape, making it a nicer street without taking away any parking space.

There would be a 9ft parking lane, a 5ft bike lane, one 11ft moving lane, a center median 10ft wide and the left turn bay. There will be nine left turn bays along a marked stretch. There will be 3 locations with right turn lanes and four locations where there will be pedestrian refuge islands. Pedestrian refuge islands will be located where there are schools, bus stops, crosswalks and where there are higher pedestrian volumes. Ms. Poole made references to the Williamsburg location; the one on Vanderbilt Avenue and the traffic calming that was done on Clarendon Road in July 2008. Where there is a 20% decrease in speeding and a 50% decrease in accidents due to speeders and a 25% decrease in pedestrian crashes.

#### **Questions and Answers:**

**Rabbi Jacob Goldstein** thanked the representatives for the project as presented for the traffic calming on Empire Boulevard.

Troy Avenue to Albany Avenue is a hill you don't see the traffic until it is too close, what are the possibilities of shaving down the hill when you work on the project? Answer: That might have to be a complete Capital Project. We found that a lot of the accidents happened when people were coming up the hill, trying to make the light. The speed through one light in order to make the other light. What we will do is change the signal timing to offset say two green lights in a row. That should help slow them down at that intersection when they are approaching.

**Rabbi Jacob Goldstein** – I have seen the difference on Troy Avenue already. If this is approved what is the time factor on this project? Answer: July.

**Dwayne Nicholson** – What will be the cost of the project? Answer: We will try to do the project in house. Could you synchronize the lights? Answer: it is very difficult to synchronize the lights on a two way street you can only synchronize in one direction.

**Myrtle Roberson** – Could these be a given speed hump? Answer: No because it is a two way street.

**Jannie Johnson** – Inaudible – Compare Empire Boulevard to Eastern Parkway

**Rabbi Jacob Goldstein** – In my opinion this is the best way as it is presented. Slow down traffic and people will behave accordingly and pedestrians will be safer. A lot of seniors use that roadway, it will be better for all of us.

**Denise Mann** – At Bedford Avenue there is a turning light... Answer: At Bedford Avenue there is a left turn in both directions from the east bound and west bound. You have left turn bays. Could you make a two way at Washington Avenue and Empire Boulevard? Answer: Because it is so congested at that location. That is why that area was not narrowed. We are coming up with a strategy. We are doing a survey to see if we can come up with a good parking strategy to reduce double parking and keep the roadway free. Why couldn't this be Vanderbuilt Avenue?

**Rabbi Jacob Goldstein** - I think what they are saying is that Empire Boulevard is different in that it has two and three lane traffic. What they are going to do is to make it into one lane so as to slow down the traffic.

**Karen McPherson** – Could you go to Flatbush Avenue and Empire Boulevard, narrow the road and make a pedestrian crossing? Answer: we looked at one at Empire Boulevard and Troy Avenue and we would try to do that. Between Flatbush and Bedford Avenues there are only so many double parking. If you double park you only have one moving lane of traffic. Double parking volume is very high there.

**Rabbi Joseph Speilman** – Empire Boulevard is the only parallel Boulevard to Eastern Parkway. If you are narrowing down Empire Boulevard, will it impact Eastern Parkway? Answer: we found that it will be able to handle it.

**Theopia Green** – I am concerned with the bus traffic in the area if you narrow Empire Boulevard. Answer: The bus traffic will remain the same as they are. The bus will pull over. The bus will have its own lane to pull off into.

**Samuel Marmulzsteyn** – Inaudible. Answer: Our data shows that the traffic is actually moving. If you are talking about double parking we are looking at new strategies on double parking for Empire Boulevard. It shouldn't be a problem because the traffic should be moving.

**Pearl Miles** – When we first reviewed the scope for this project it was the entire street from Utica to Flatbush to Ocean Avenue. Answer: When we first did this, we did extend it out that far. We collected more data and found out that it would back up traffic so we didn't want to do that.

When are you going to come back to that, doing it like this is like addressing one problem and neglecting another problem. We just can't abandon it. This is like the gateway to the district. There is the museum, the botanic gardens, subways, etc. Answer: The roadway is not the same. It is more residential. We can't do the same treatment because it will not work for that one segment. Areas where it is residential there will be less traffic. We need to look at pedestrian issues. We are looking at the commercial parking only.

**Pearl Miles** - You have on there striping. Are we getting islands all along the roadway? Answer: that will have to be a major capital project. We do the striping first and then we can always go back and look at it again. It takes time to put in the median throughout the roadway.

**Community Resident** – Could we get some signs at Brooklyn Avenue and Winthrop Street? **Rabbi Jacob Goldstein** – Call the district office. The District Manager will contact the Department of Transportation to get the signs up. Tell us the exact spot and we will have it done.

**Aaron Hershkop** – Inaudible. The signals are not going to change. You are going to have just as much time going north and south.

**Aaron Hershkop** – Take for instance New York Avenue, it is two lanes. **Rabbi Jacob Goldstein** – I would like to make a comment. We think some of the streets are two lanes, in reality New York Avenue is a one way street. It is very difficult. It is a narrow street and a major carrier of traffic. A really bad street in the morning is Rogers Avenue.

**Ruby Hodge** – Ms. Miles, could you explain in summary the discussion you had regarding Empire Boulevard between Bedford and Ocean Avenues? **Pearl Miles** – Hillary said she could not do that section. My question to Hillary was are you going to say it can't be done and leave it at that? She is saying the same treatment wouldn't work. I want to know what treatment can work. They just can't stop half way into the project and leave us guessing for the rest of the project. We are concerned for the people who want to go to the Museum, the Zoo, and the Gardens. They are afraid to cross the streets. So don't say we can't do that because it is too congested. There is a problem that exists and we need it corrected.

**Councilmember Letitia James** informed that she was responsible for initiating the Empire Boulevard project because of the numerous accidents on Empire Boulevard. We need to listen to the District Manager and do the entire length of Empire Boulevard from Utica to Flatbush Avenue. We cannot do only part of the district. Hopefully the tree planting will be done as well as the beautification of Empire Boulevard. The councilmember thanked the Department of Transportation for the job they are undertaking.

Rabbi Jacob Goldstein thanked the representatives from the Department of Transportation for their hard work. He is sure they will come back to report on the project again.

**DOT Representative** – The project should be on DOT's website by tomorrow morning. You will be able to access it.

**Application submitted by Caribbean Spotlight, Inc to the Department of Consumer Affairs for a Cabaret License for the premises located at 103 Empire Boulevard, Brooklyn – Caribbean City.**

**Mr. Wallace Descartes, President** informed that they have been in business for thirteen years as a night club. They have been working on the building to improve the layout to make it more attractive. In the process of renovation, the license expired. Now the construction is completed, they would like to apply for the cabaret license.

**Rosemarie Perry – Chairperson, Public Safety**

Ms. Perry informed that the committee met May 14, 2009 at 7:00 P.M. The Committee was asked to vote on the renewal of the cabaret license for Caribbean City. The 71 Precinct was asked for any information they had on the night club, concerning the acquisition of their license renewal. We were told by the precinct that their record was very good and that there was no reason why Caribbean City's license should not be renewed. Based on the police report, the committee voted to renew the cabaret license.

At tonight's meeting, board members were given a breakdown of incidents on Empire Boulevard from Franklin to Bedford Avenues in the vicinity of Caribbean City. In summary there were 18 arrests at 103 Empire Boulevard (Caribbean City) and 93 arrests on Empire Boulevard from Franklin to Bedford Avenues.

**Rabbi Jacob Goldstein** asked Ms. Perry how many people were in attendance at the meeting. Ms. Perry presented the attendance sheet.

**Rabbi Jacob Goldstein to Board Members** – You have the police report in front of you showing the offences either in front or inside of the night club from 2004 to 2008. 2004 – 0 Arrests, 2005 – 2 Arrests, 2006 – 1 Arrest, 2007 – 8 Arrests, 2008 – 7 Arrests

## **Questions and Answers**

**Denise Mann** – What are your hours of operation? And what is the age group allowed? Answer: we operate from 10:00 P.M. to 4:00 A.M. How much security do you have? Answer: Sunday night is the busiest night. We have 10 – 12 security guards, Friday night we have 8 security guards and Saturday night we have 6 security guards.

**Community Resident** – What is your capacity? Answer: The capacity is 299 people. The report doesn't state what type of arrests were made and where they were made whether inside or outside the club. Answer: Basically there were two arrests made in 2008. The two arrests were due to a confrontation.

**Rabbi Jacob Goldstein** – If you look at the report you will see that most of the crimes were committed in 2007 – 2008. To me they are serious crimes.

**Jacqueline Welch** – What day of the week do you have the most arrests? Answer: It depends on the area. It could be someone out there. For example, someone breaks into someone's car. I have asked the security guard to patrol the area. In cases where we find people with weapons we call the police. Sometimes these people retaliate against us. People coming into the club are patted down, searched as well as a metal detector is used. Sometimes they resist, they do not want to be touched by the guards.

How long would the license be in effect if granted? Answer: it is for two years. We had it all along until we closed for repairs, at that time the license expired. After the renovation we reapplied to the State Liquor Authority, at the time we were told that we had to apply for the cabaret license.

**Rabbi Jacob Goldstein** – I noticed after the parties the garbage is overflowing from the building to the curb. That is a problem. Answer: We clean up our garbage. There are people who distribute their flyers making garbage for us. We try to take care of it. Is your security certified? Answer: Yes.

**Community Resident** – I think Caribbean City is a good place for our youths to get them off the street. **Rabbi**

**Jacob Goldstein** – I am a father I would not allow my child to go to a place where liquor is served. It is not for youths. A youth is a 16 – 18 year old person.

**Jannie Johnson** – We know that you are applying for a cabaret license where liquor is served. Our youth in this community have no place to go for entertainment, is there one night that you can open for the youth or teenagers for example 5:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M.? Answer: We run a tight ship at Caribbean City. We don't take short cuts. We do entertain other entities in the community. For example, there are schools which have used

it for proms. We don't want to be blamed for these arrests made because they have nothing to do with Caribbean City as stated in the report.

**Rabbi Jacob Goldstein** – The cabaret license will be further discussed and voted on in the business session of the meeting.

**Application submitted to the Department of Transportation by Legacy Van Lines to operate a new commuter van authority (number of vans to be used is 3) in Brooklyn, service area to include portions of Community District 9.**

The Transportation Committee did not meet. The applicant was absent at tonight's meeting.

### **Announcements**

The chairman said that a matter before the State Assembly to continue or extend Mayoral control of public schools will be discussed and voted on in the business section.

**Councilmember Letitia James** – The councilmember informed that the City Council was meeting on the proposed budget cuts. The cuts that are proposed will have a major impact on the quality of life on the City of New York. Cuts will affect the Police Department, Fire Department, and Libraries. We are now looking at four days per week of library services, three hours per day. These are troubling times. We are urging all to join with us as we try to push back on the budget cuts, to unify and get more resources. The Mayor is proposing an increase in water rates again, increase in sales tax; income tax on those making \$150,000 or more. Other cuts include agencies such as HRA, Homeless Services, and ACS. The councilmember would like the community to join with her to stop the homeless people coming from Manhattan to Brooklyn. We do not need any more homeless people in Brooklyn. The mayor's plan is to dump them at the center on Atlantic and Bedford Avenues. The plan is to close the center on the upper eastside of Manhattan and bring over 600 men to Brooklyn. This community is already over saturated, this is not a fair share.

The councilwoman would like us to know that she and Councilwoman Darlene Mealy are on the job working hard to prevent cuts in childcare and in day care centers.

**Councilmember Darlene Mealy** – You have heard all that is happening at the City Council to stop the budget cuts. We alone cannot do it. You the people have to get involved. Sometimes the community has to come to these hearings and see what we are voting on. We get some of our legislation from you so you have to see what is going on; you have to help advocate for your community. You are the ears and eyes. Visit our offices and call us and let us know what is happening in the district. The office is open 6 days per week from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. Various committees are in session: ULURP, Education, Youth, Immigration, and Housing. On June 15 there will be a meeting on Housing Foreclosure from 6:00 to 8:00 pm at 1715 Union Street on top of Courad's Bakery.

### **BUSINESS SESSION**

The business session began at 8:21 pm with 31 members present.

### **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman acknowledged the following officials and representatives: Councilmember Letitia James, Councilmember Darlene Mealy, Ann Marie Adamson representing Brooklyn Borough President Marty

Markowitz, Wayne Keith Williams representing Assemblyman Hakeem Jeffries, Reuven Lipkind representing State Senator Eric Adams, David Morriset representing Councilmember Mathieu Eugene, Isiah Hall representing Councilwoman Darlene Mealy, and Denise Peterson representing Kings County Hospital Center.

Chairman Goldstein reported that the streets in the community were being milled. The Department of Transportation grinds up the asphalt and eventually they will come back and finish the streets. Seventy percent of the asphalt is captured and used to make new asphalt. It is being recycled, made green. Along with the District Manager, they have toured the streets. They have discovered that many of the streets are done. If your streets need to be resurfaced call the district office and we will pass it on to DOT.

**Resolution before the New York State Assembly Committee on Education, chaired by the Hon. Katherine Nolan.**

Chairman Goldstein would like to hear opinions so that the Community Board could submit a response to the Legislature. The situation is the city's public schools are under Mayoral control. Some people are happy while others are unhappy. You have a choice now to voice your opinions.

**Stuart Balberg** – Inaudible.

**Denise Mann** – I am very upset with what is going on in the public school system today.

**Ruby Hodge** – I agree with Stuart Balberg.

**Rabbi Jacob Goldstein** – Before we had this authority, there were people I could talk to regarding meetings in this school. The office for this building is in Staten Island. So I will have to go to Staten Island to talk to someone.

**Mr. Rose** – We need to bring back centralization.

**Allan Martin** – I have seen the pros and cons. The pros – Children were not left back in the 80's and 90's, there was social promotion, now we do not have social promotion which is a good thing. It helps the students to get their high school diplomas. Before we had a high dropout rate, now teachers are forced to track students. Before the 80's and 90's teachers had less responsibilities to the students, now the principals are tough on the teachers.

**Jannie Johnson** – I agree with Mr. Martin, there are pros and cons. Pro is the Mayor did do something, but not enough. He doesn't get the parents involved. These are our children, we need to get involved with their education. Second there are parents who even at the last minute do not know what school their child/children will be attending in September because the procedures have changed. Thirdly, if you pay attention to what is going on in the schools it is life, something else will come up.

Let us remember these children will be going to college. We need to start them from daycare, primary school, middle school and high school. If they are not educated on these early levels by the time they get to high school they are going to drop out of school. Some of the programs started to help the student the mayor has stopped them. There are children who come into the system from other countries; it is not that they do not know but rather is that they do not understand.

Tomorrow I will be attending a meeting for the State Education Department. There are so many problems that they are having that the State Education Department do not agree with. There are homeless people,

homeless people have children; when they come to school they have to travel long distances to get to school. No provisions are made for them.

### **Voting Items**

**Ruby Hodge** made a motion that Mayoral control should be allowed to expire, Denise Mann seconded the motion. Voting: Yes – 27, Abs – 3, No – 1.

### **Reinstitution of Cabaret License – Caribbean City**

**Rosemarie Perry** made a motion that Caribbean City be granted renewal of their license and that their license be reinstated. Brenda Hutto seconded that motion.

**Rabbi Jacob Goldstein** – There was the initial report by the 71 Precinct that there were no violations. Tonight we received further information that there were violations. You can go with the original vote by the Public Safety Committee to renew the license or you can go with the report presented here tonight. You have a right to vote it down.

**Pearl Miles** – The report given out tonight is skewed. The report as alarming as it is looks, I don't think it should be accepted the way it is presented. For a whole year up until now there have been no problems at or in the vicinity of the location. As the District Manager I was involved with their application for a liquor license. In the beginning there were problems, they were spoken to regarding making changes if they wanted to continue their license. They listened and they implemented changes. Since that time there have not been any complaints to my knowledge regarding that place of business. I think in all fairness the original recommendation should stand. Voting: Yes – 27, No – 2, Abs – 1.

### **Presentation Traffic Calming on Empire Boulevard by the Department of Transportation**

Dr. Marco Mason moved a motion that the plans presented by the Department of Transportation be accepted. It was second by Eleanor Rollins.

### **Discussion on the Motion**

Samuel Marmulzsteyn has a problem with the commercial streets, double parking and the delivery of goods. There is the need for a loading zone.

**Pearl Miles** would like the motion to be amended to include that an immediate study be done for the rest of Empire Boulevard from Bedford Avenue to Ocean Avenue. Voting: Yes – 23, Abs – 2, No – 5.

### **Nominating Committee Report, Maurice Jean-Baptiste, Chairperson**

Mr. Jean-Baptiste informed that for two weeks the members of the Nominating Committee consisting of Frank Nicholas, Samuel Marmulzsteyn, Gwen Carter and Yvonne Straker canvassed board members on their desire to run for office on Community Board 9. The positions are Chairperson, First Vice Chairperson, Second Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Members at Large. The Nominating Committee will also accept nominations from the floor from tonight's meeting to fill any of the above positions. There were no nominations from the floor. The Committee presented the following slate:

Chairperson – Rabbi Jacob Z. Goldstein, First Vice Chairperson – Dr. Marco Mason, Second Vice Chairperson – Joan Gill, Secretary – Shelia Foster-Golding, Treasurer – Carl B. Morgan, Member at Large – Jannie Johnson, Member at Large – Eleanor Rollins

Chairman Goldstein thanked the committee for their efforts.

### **Adjournment**

Since there was no further business for discussion the meeting was adjourned on a motion by Jannie Johnson and seconded by Gwen Carter. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm

Respectfully submitted

Shelia Foster-Golding

June 16, 2009