

Park Place - Underhill Avenue Block Association

Approved Minutes

09/20/2023

Attendees:

Chloe Abercrombie	Marc Gordon	Weggon Small *
Phyllis Brody	Aaron Husock	Teddy Theoharis
Assemblymember Robert Carroll *	Robin Ketchum	Gib Veconi
Sharon Combs	Diana Regan	Patti Veconi
Jill Frasier	Ed Regan	Matt Weinstein
Adrian Gately	Heidi Rodewald	Stacey Weinstein
Den Gordon	Alexis Seeley	

* guest

The meeting was held in-person at the home of Stacey and Matt Weinstein and via Zoom. The meeting was called to order by Patti Veconi, President, at 7:35 PM.

Comments by State Assemblymember Robert Carroll

NY State Assemblymember Carroll attended as a guest and gave several updates on his recent activities:

- Approximately 40 rain barrels were distributed at an event his office sponsored on Park Place between Underhill and Washington Avenues on Sat, Sep 16th.
- Assemblymember Carroll's office holds mobile constituent hours on the second Tuesday of each month from 3:00pm – 6:00pm at the Central Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library. His office phone number is 718-788-7221.
- He will sponsor a town hall on Oct 18th from 6:00pm to 8:00pm at the Brooklyn Public Library Civics Common Room.
- Governor Hochul recently signed a bill that Assemblymember Carroll had sponsored, enabling voters to register and vote on the same day.

PPUABA Business Items and Announcements

- The **minutes** of the May and June meetings were unanimously approved.
- Patti Veconi announced that the **Fall Party** will be held on Wednesday, Oct 18th, from 5:30pm until 8:30pm, on Underhill Avenue between Park and Sterling Place. A permit has been obtained and it will allow us to close the street. Ed Regan and Alexis Seeley volunteered to help with setting up barrels to close the street. There will be a pot luck dinner, and a craft activity (decorating trick-or-treat bags) for kids. Volunteers are needed to bring and set up a few tables for the pot luck dinner. Marc Gordon will pursue asking DSNY to attend to distribute information and samples regarding curbside composting.
- Saturday, Oct 21st is the date for the **Fall Stoop Sales**.

Water & Sewer Project Update

Marc Gordon provided several updates about the status of the project:

- The remaining work to be done is 1) the replacement of the sewer main at the intersection of Park Place and Vanderbilt Avenue; 2) the replacement of the sewer main on Vanderbilt Avenue between Park Place and Sterling Place; and 3; restoration. While the official project schedule still calls for the work to be completed in the spring, there are indications that the work will be further delayed.
- The current issues contributing to delays are that:
 - Con Ed infrastructure (manholes and conduit) are in the path of the required excavation for the sewer replacement to cross Vanderbilt Avenue;
 - Negotiations between Con Ed and Perfetto Contracting have dragged on for weeks with little progress. The project's engineer, Hadi Elhashash, has escalated the issue within the Department of Design and Construction, and DDC's Commissioner is now personally involved in the negotiations.

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- Once the Con Ed infrastructure relocation is completed, replacement of the sewer main across Vanderbilt Avenue should take only a few weeks, but the DoT prohibits construction work on commercial streets between Thanksgiving and New Year's, so it is possible that piece of work will extend into January, which will absolutely cause a delay to the overall project schedule.
- Marc Gordon made 3 requests to Hadi this week, which Hadi stated should be resolved within a week:
 - Adjust the concrete barriers in front of 307 Park and 301 Park since they are installed adjacent to the curb and are preventing storm water from flowing down the street. Storm water has backed up onto the sidewalk in front of 307 and 309 Park during recent rainstorms.
 - Clear trash from the enclosed storage area on the northwest side of the Park Place block between Vanderbilt and Underhill Avenues.
 - Have Peretto remove the tree guards on the east side of Park Place where there are no adjacent equipment or materials storage areas.

Matt Weinstein asked if the tree guards on the west side of Underhill Avenue between Park Place and Sterling Place could also be removed. Sharon Combs asked if the orange netting and black muslin tarp could be removed from the rain garden in front of 331 Park Place.

Updates on PPUABA Initiatives

- **Growing Our Community** – Den Gordon gave several updates:
 - Spotted lanternflies are present in abundance and should be killed on sight. Educational materials about them will be available at the resource table during the Oct 15th fall cleanup.
 - Den is meeting with a representative from DEP about becoming stewards of the 7 rain gardens on PPUABA blocks. We have a \$450 grant from PPUABA for purchase of plants to be planted in the rain gardens.
 - Curbside composting begins with the Tuesday Oct 3rd pickup on PPUABA blocks. Other composting options include the Prospect Heights Community Farm; a collection at the GAP Farmers Market; a collection point near the B/Q Seventh Avenue subway station; and the orange Smart Composting bins, which will remain in operation for the foreseeable future.
 - Den attempted to clean trash from the Vanderbilt Avenue median but did not feel safe doing so with traffic passing by. Patti Veconi volunteered to help Den clean it on a Saturday or Sunday when Open Streets is in effect and traffic will not be passing the median at speed.
 - Den is working with Andrew Wright from Councilmember Crystal Hudson's office to get street trees planted in 8 tree beds on Park Place between Vanderbilt Avenue from which trees were removed during the water & sewer project construction.
 - The fall clean-up will be Saturday Oct 15th from 10:00am – Noon. There will be a resource table at 302 Park for information, lending of tools, and distribution of daffodil bulbs. An email will follow with logistics. Patti Veconi and Matt Weinstein volunteered to post flyers and make phone calls to residents of Park Place between Underhill and Washington to encourage participation.
- **Nourishing Our Community** – Jill Frasier and Marc Gordon described the program and gave several updates:
 - Nourishing Our Community is PPUABA's initiative to combat food insecurity in our community by supporting a local soup kitchen (CHIPS) and food pantry (Chance For Children) with donations of fresh produce purchased with funds donated by NOC participants and delivered several times each month by NOC volunteers.
 - There are currently 14 households participating with monthly pledge contributions, but two are expected to discontinue as they will move off the block by the end of this year. The program could use additional financial support. We have had 2 new volunteer drivers this month, but can always use additional drivers and helpers for pickups and deliveries.
 - Since starting the initiative in Oct 2020, we have made 166 deliveries.
 - We will soon plan for our winter warm clothing drive, in which we separately raise money to purchase new warm winter clothing for soup kitchen clients at CHIPS.
- **Events and Outings**

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- Patti Veconi announced that she will again lead us in holiday caroling on Wed, Dec 20th, in place of our monthly December PPUABA meeting.

New Business

- To enable safe Halloween trick or treating, Underhill Avenue between Prospect Place and Sterling Place will be closed during trick-or-treating hours on Tuesday Oct 31 (“trick or streets”).
- Matt Weinstein recommends watching a video on YouTube by Brooklyn resident Steve Buscemi, “Saturday in the Park”.
- Matt Weinstein reported a break-in and burglary of contractors’ tools at 130 Underhill Avenue, which is under renovation. The fact that the sole street light on Underhill Avenue has been out for 6 months and the block is very dark may have been a contributing factor.
- In response to a question about large planters on the sidewalk on Underhill Avenue, Gib Veconi reported that DoT’s implementation of the Underhill Avenue “bike boulevard” has been paused at the request of the mayor’s office in response to objections by Prospect Heights residents. PHNDC will soon circulate a petition seeking support for the program.
- Marc Gordon reported that John Bellinger, the USPS mail carrier who has delivered mail on Park Place from Vanderbilt to Washington for many years, will soon be re-assigned to a delivery route on Long Island closer to his home. Marc will include John’s contact information in a forthcoming email for those who want to send him a card.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10pm.