

Park Place - Underhill Avenue Block Association

Approved Minutes

3/19/2025

Attendees:

Dion Michael Ashman*	Sharon Combs	Teddy Theoharis
Diana Regan	Randy Jackson	Bruce McInnes
Ed Regan	Richard Roth	Mary Dale
Phyllis Brody	Adrian Gately	Stacey Weinstein
Robin Ketchum	Den Gordon	Adrian Gately
Marc Gordon	Gib Veconi	

*Guest speaker

The meeting was held in-person at the home of Marc and Den Gordon, 302 Park Place and via Zoom. The meeting was called to order by Teddy Theoharis, President, at 7:40 PM.

Dion Ashman, Candidate for District 35 City Council Seat

PPUABA is inviting the candidates for the upcoming City Council District 35 primary election to speak at our meetings. The primary election is scheduled for June 24th, and the winner of the Democratic Party primary is likely to win the general election in November. PPUABA does not endorse candidates, but we encourage neighbors to get involved in the political process and act on the issues in the neighborhood. Tonight's candidate speaker, Dion Ashman, spoke about his campaign and priorities for the district. Dion spoke about being a lifelong resident of the district. He attended local schools, earned a degree from Pace University and has worked as a community organizer, focusing on youth.

- He feels we do not see enough representation for the tax dollars that we pay. As an example, community benefit agreements are overseen by the developers who may not fulfill the terms of what they owe the community. Also, projects that the Community Board votes against as not being appropriate for the neighborhood are built anyway. He would like to change this.
- He favors a housing linkage program whereby a developer, even if building as of right, must contribute to a fund which supports housing for low and moderate income families. The Linkage Fee Housing Trust Fund will be able to accomplish this goal.
- In response to a question regarding the long timeline and cost overruns of the Water and Sewer Project he promised to advocate for his constituency when issues like this arise.
- He recommends a program to address crime which identifies bad actors and provides support services such as mentoring and mental health services for them. This has been successful in other neighborhoods of NYC.
- He wants to bring back training in skilled trades to provide jobs for young people.

The candidate took questions from the attendees. Teddy thanked Dion Ashman for attending our meeting. He is one of 4 people currently certified to run in the District 35 contest. The tentative schedule of candidates to attend upcoming PPUABA meetings is:

Hector Robinson – April

Crystal Hudson (incumbent) – May

Sharon Wedderburn – June

Report of the 2025 Grant Committee members

Phyllis Brody, Ed Regan and Teddy Theoharis served on the committee.

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They received and reviewed three grant proposal and propose the following allocations of the allotted \$2500:

- Nourishing Our Community (NOC): \$1425
- Daffodil Project: \$75
- PS 15 Help for Immigrant Families in Red Hook: \$1000

There was discussion about whether grants should be restricted to the Prospect Heights neighborhood, but the grants policy doesn't have explicit language about where the grantees are located. Teddy stated that the officers will review the language of the Grants Policy document at their next meeting.

After more discussion, the motion to accept the recommendations of the committee was made by Bruce McInnes and seconded by Gib Veconi. It passed unanimously.

Formation of the 2025 Nominating Committee

Teddy asked for volunteers for the Nominating Committee. Bruce McInnes, Robin Ketchum and Randy Jackson volunteered to form the committee. The slate will be presented at the May meeting.

Water and Sewer Project

Marc reported on the recent Water and Sewer Project meeting with the City Department of Design and Construction. It had the most representation from the city we've ever had. Five people from the City attended including Hadi Elhashash, Shernell Pemberton, Mary Rose Robbins (outreach coordinator for Brooklyn and Staten Island) and her boss.

At the previous meeting Mary Rose Robbins heard the extreme frustration from residents on our block and the lower block of Park Place regarding communications with the City. At that meeting, Hadi was absent, and Shernell wasn't able to answer questions. We believes Mary Rose took that back to her superiors and said "we have a real problem here", and they showed up in force and made sure that Hadi attended as well.

The principal takeaway from the meeting is that construction on both Vanderbilt and Park Place is to be completed by the end of April. There's only small amount of work remaining to be done at the intersection of Park and Vanderbilt. However, because of all the crossing utility services, this work will take a long time. Restoration will begin in May with repaving. Perfetto is committed to restoring damage caused during the project. Marc and Brunhilde Vergouwen (president of the block association on the lower block of Park Place) will walk the impacted blocks and look at all items on the list of damage, including a review of items rejected by Perfetto. They will then examine the preconstruction photos for evidence that Profetto did cause the damage.

Damaged items on the list include the large number of trees on the impacted blocks that were taken down before the project or were damaged during the project. PPUAPA has asked to have those trees prioritized for replacement. We have been told tree replacement is done by the Parks department. We have asked for prioritization in light of this project and its negative impact on the blocks. We have some indication, not yet a commitment, that maybe these trees will be on a schedule for replanting this fall.

Block Party

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Stacey Weinstein reported on the Block Party planning, the event is scheduled for Saturday, May 10th. Bert, the face painter, will start at 3:30 and paint faces until the end of the block party. A magician has been hired for \$260 who will perform magic for an hour and then make balloon animals for the kids for half an hour. There will be bubbles and sidewalk chalk and Stacey asked for a volunteer to organize games for the kids. Robin Ketchum will contact the Fire Department about sending a fire truck to the block. Mary Dale will order tables, but mentioned there is currently no place available to store them overnight before and after the party. Various possible solutions were discussed. Mary will contact the company that rents tables to verify they can supply us for this event. Stacey will shop for food and paper goods. A second grill is needed. Volunteers to work on the tables are needed. Den is responsible for purchasing plants and will recruit staff for the plant tables. Stacey is hopeful that Jill will run the book table. Only the baked goods table and the information table is not staffed currently. People are also needed to put up No Parking signs.

March 2025 Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

New Business

Lisa Marcus of 291 Park Place is looking for a new apartment for herself and her baby.

Gib Veconi announced that he is hosting a forum with State Senator Zellinore Myrie, who is running for Mayor. The event is on March 30th from 1 to 3 PM. People who are interested in hearing State Senator Myrie talk about his plans for City Hall should ask Gib for an invitation.

Block Association members are urged to participate in the neighborhood cleanup on Saturday, April 26th on our block. Also, they are welcome to help at the cleanup PHNDK is sponsoring at Underhill Plaza on that day.

A motion to conclude the meeting was made, seconded and passed unanimously, at 9:20 PM.