



## **BROOKLYN BOROUGH BOARD MEETING**

**Thursday November 6, 2025 @ 6 p.m.**

Brooklyn Borough Hall

209 Joralemon Street, Brooklyn, NY 11201

[Meeting Recording](#)

### **Welcome & Roll Call**

Present: Gina Barros (CB 1), Taya Mueller (CB 2), Anthony Buissereth (CB 3), Daniel Kaminsky (CB 7), Irsa Weatherspoon (CB 8) Fred Baptiste (CB 9), Sandy Vallas (CB 10), Jeanny Hernandez, Christian Molieri (CB 13), Karl- Henry Cesar (CB 14), Jacob Aronson (CB 15), Margaret Brewer (CB 16) Trisha Louison (CB 17)

Council Members: Molly Haley (Restler-33), Victoria Peters (Gutierrez-34), Samouri Toure (Nurse-37), Christina Bottego (Aviles- 38), Tamesha Johnson (Mealy-41), Kyle Graham (Banks-42), Fedir Usmanov (Zhuang-43), Frank Shea (Narcisse- 46), Zunera Ahmed (Brannan-47), Sasha Revels (Vernikov-48).

Borough President's Office: Carol- Ann Church, Spencer Williams

Quorum : 22

**Approval of agenda** - amend to remove EDC item. By consent, Baptiste / Vallas

**Approval of minutes** of 10.07.25. By consent, Camacho. Abstention Vallas and /Hernandez.

### **Communications and Reports**

CM 41 – Monthly advisory meeting Saturday 11/15 11am- 12:30pm at 400 Rockway Avenue. Free and open to the public. Relevant Topics: Safety, Transportation, Renters Issues, Parks and Sanitation.

11/19 – Free OATH Resource event

- 11am – 12:30pm Saratoga Branch - 9 Thomas Boyland Street, Brooklyn, 11223
- 1 -3pm at Stone Ave Branch – 581 Mother Gaston Blvd, Brooklyn, 11212

CB 9 – Veteran's Parade appreciation. Specifically congratulating CB 3, 8, & 16 on their event.

CB 4 –Concerned about:

- Board member independence and value after, allegedly, community board members in Manhattan were not reappointed due to voting against the borough president's views on housing.
- Low investment for newer board members who may not stay around for very long or end up having low attendance.
- The impact of the Charter revision changes on CB voice on land use items.
- Term limits are a concern
- Training for new members

## **PRESENTATION**

### ***“Energy Storage: Supporting the City’s Energy Needs”***

Julia Casagrande – Deputy Director of Clean Energy, Mayors Office of Climate and Environmental Justice. FDNY - Thomas Currao, Chief of Fire Prevention and Fabricio Caro, Executive Director of Public Engagement, FDNY. Department of Buildings- Allen Price, PE, Director, Office of Technical Certification and Research, Department of Buildings.

Presentation to talk about the importance of energy storage and the installation infrastructure.

#### ***Battery Energy Storage System (BESS):***

- Stores energy from renewable resources or from the grid, for use when electricity is expensive, in high demand or during a brownout or blackout.
- Takes electricity from when there is not high demand and dispatches it when there is high demand. Makes the grid more reliable, by providing energy where needed.
- Serves as a back-up source of power, helps to reduce outages and provides power during extreme weather events.
- In New York, predominately mid-size systems are being developed.
- Battery Management System (BMS) is a computerized system that assesses the health of individual battery cells and measures the performance of the system. It can shut down the entire system if necessary.
- Increases affordability during periods of high demand.
- Improves local air quality by reducing use of old power plants, as these systems allow these plants to be replaced. Reduces depending on fossil fuel power plants, including “peaker plants.”
- Integrates renewable energy sources.
- Can provide neighborhood level electric demand relief. Showed a map from Con-Ed that displays areas most prone to black outs and brown outs. Said BESS can help with this in the future.

#### *Government work and initiatives related to BESS:*

- The City and State both have goals of increasing the amount of battery storage.
- City has multiple initiatives to promote awareness about BESS, including a city agency working group. Working to enhance agency coordination and to facilitate permitting process improvements.
- City Property Tax Abatement of 30% for BESS is in place until 2035.
- Piloting new technologies through EDC.
- Deploying BESS through DCAS and putting facilities on city owned property.

#### *Zoning Allowances & Storage Approval Process:*

##### **FDNY:**

- Zoning resolution allows BESS under 10,000 sq feet are as-of-right. No special approval process by CPC and BSA. Still subject to DOB and FDNY requirements.
- Interagency approval process – intentionally multi-layered, multi-faceted process.
- Must meet all levels of national and international standards, devices tested to high level
- Product and equipment must be approved by FDNY – sole discretion to approve technologies. Subject to high level testing. Battery systems are engineered to shut down if there is an issue.
- Must get a certificate of approval, that does not mean it can be installed in New York yet.
- The approval to install depends on the size of the facility, whether it is being installed indoors or outdoors. DOB deals with this part.
- FDNY is mostly concentrated on large outdoor installations, with over 250 kWh per hour. DOB focuses on all indoor facilities and all small and medium facilities.
- A mechanical plan must be approved; a fire alarm system must be approved and a sprinkler system. NY is unique with the requirement of sprinkler systems. Must abide by specific set of standards. Each part must be approved by different sections of the Bureau of Fire Prevention, FDNY. Issue a letter of acceptance for each part of system.
- Once installed the FDNY inspection unit will inspect the battery storage installation, the fire suppression system and the fire alarm system. Each one must be signed off on to begin operating the BESS.

##### **Department of Buildings:**

- DOB issues permit for work, always required for any sort of structure one is building, including housing. Issued to ensure plan for construction complies with the codes.
- An electrical permit is required to ensure the installation in compliance with the electrical code.
- Needs approval for the system, holistically. Looking at battery that stores energy, the management system, the fire suppression system and site layout to ensure that all those things are working in the safest manner.

- Both efficiency and safety of installations will be inspected.
- Final inspection is a certification inspection. The engineer will ensure system is installed in accordance with the plans that were approved.

#### **Emergency Response:**

- Beyond safety review that goes through FDNY Bureau of Fire Prevention, the Fire Operations unit, specifically the Special Operations through hazmat battalion command has instituted a protocol in the case of an ESS incident. Two tier response from local fire departments and hazmat units. If there is an incidence of fire or smoke, the initial units will take immediate action.
- The contact information for the holder of Certificate of Fitness (COF) will be posted at every site and will be alerted if the FDNY is called to the site. The holder must be familiar with the sites' specific emergency plan and have access to real time remote safety monitoring information.
- If confirmed fire at ESS site Hazmat unit will respond. FDNY trains consistently to do this work and train folks in other parts of the country.

#### **Questions:**

*- After the process is completed, will there be scheduled inspections after installation?*

- Frequent inspections from the manufacturer and regular maintenance
- FDNY does annual inspections.
- BMS shuts down itself in case of issue.
- BMS will signal remote monitoring company.
- Certificate of Fitness holder is required and trained to make notification to FDNY if there is a situation.

Statement on behalf of CM Sandy Nurse:

Supports battery storage systems because they are:

- Safe, well-regulated.
- Critical for building a more resilient and reliable clean energy grid.
- Use advanced fire suppression and monitoring technology
- Help reduce reliance on polluting "peaker plants."

The office is committed to ensuring that any system in the district is implemented with community engagement, transparency and clear safety protocols.

*How will this work with floods be dealt with? Are there response plans for this? Or are the systems able to handle a certain amount of water?*

- Part of the code of compliance at DOB is to ensure that the systems are installed in locations that comply with our flood hazard chapters of the code. You cannot install systems where there is an identified flood location.
- FEMA produces flood location maps. These systems cannot be installed in flood zones.

*What kind of reporting is done with community boards and the community understanding of what is going on in the neighborhood?*

- There is room for improvement on the data side. There could be more transparency on the benefits and how they are preventing blackouts and brownouts. Should be worked on in the future.
- The state level has a record of the ESS that exist is available on NYSERDA's website.
- Colleagues at FDNY tracking ESS in the city.

*Will the public be aware that these facilities will not be placed in flood zones.*

- There is no notification system for community boards. However, FEMA maps indicate the flood zones.

*-How does the systems get installed in the neighborhoods?*

- Through Con Edison. - it will be part of the electric grid.

*-What is the life span of the batteries*

- 15-20 years.

*-Will there be a fund in place for damages to the neighborhood?*

- Does not have information on that.

*- How often are the FEMA maps updated?*

- Unsure – will check with colleagues.
- DOB does not review FEMA maps for flood compliance. The maps are published in the DOB codes, each time the code is revised, the maps are updated.

*-Are requests ever denied? Does this mean you could fail an infinite number of times and always come back?*

- There are letters of denial and letters of defect.
- If it is a defect and not a critical failure, then the applicant will be sent a letter of defect and either address it or move on.

*- Given shelf life is 15-20 years, is there a deinstallation process?*

- Decommissioning process very detailed in fire code. National standard NFPA 855- adopted and modified for NYC.

- Different entities within the FDNY must be notified of decommissioning. It has to be done through a certain process and done safely. Must be done in line with environmental laws and DOT laws for moving those materials.
- Decommissioning is outlined in a national standard
- Also have registration process will keep us informed of all active systems and when a system is decommissioned it will be noted in the database.

- *Are the companies required to have insurance in case of damage to the surrounding community?*

- Will get back to us on this.

- *Do the facilities make noise? What is being done to make sure it does not disturb local residents?*

- Information on noise in appendix on presentation.
- There is some noise associated with them. Have to stay below the noise code from EPA regulation.
- Noise Code sections: 24-227, 24-218, and 24-232

- *Any plans to put in CB 13? All of CB 13 is in a flood zone. Still have not recovered from Sandy.*

- The location decisions are made by private developers, dependent on incentives available, the permitting requirements and zoning.
- City is installing some on city owned land. Not sure if there are any within CB 13 district. If they are they will have to comply with flood zone requirements. Can check if there is anything on the docket.
- All plans are reviewed for code compliance and that includes the flood zone. If the location is in flood zone that installation will not be permitted.
- Can you identify neighborhoods on Queens/Brooklyn border shown on map that show areas prone to brown outs/ black outs in the past?
  - Williamsburg, Greenpoint, Ridgewood.
  - Map was intended to show if there was a correlation between low-income areas and energy access.
  - Access to high energy dependent systems, like AC may impact what is showing up on map. Some maps in comprehensive plan may be helpful to inform and influence this map.

NYSERDA + ESRG

Paul Rogers, Co-founder of Energy Safety Response Group- Retired Lieutenant of FDNY, and Bill Oberkehr, Program Manager of New York State Energy Research and Development Authority.

- Paul Rogers helped to write NYC fire code for BESS. Five years of research and development preceded writing the code. NYC fire and building codes have been copied by other cities.

- Number 1 thing was safety, but the grid in dire need of ESS; tested how ESS could fail and how they react to failure. Ensured that the fire could stay contained inside the actual container as that was key to stopping the propagation and spread.
- Part of the requirement for approval is large-scale fire testing where batteries have to be put on fire to see what happens.
- Certificate of Fitness holders are representatives for ESS, they liaise with fire department to make sure alarms are checked on regular basis, make sure sites are clean and proper repairs are done. They work with both the fire department and the owner of system.
- Recently did work on state code, started to look at what was done in NYC. I know how good the NYC code is between FDNY and DOB there hasn't been one incident since 2018 when ESS facilities began being developed as a result of oversight.
- Every year there is an operational review.

#### NYSERDA:

- State has learned a lot from the city. In the summer of 2023, 3 ESS fires took place in New York state.
- ESRG was chosen through a competitive solicitation as the consultant to battery storage facilities.
- Governor Hochul assembled an interagency fire safety working group to tighten gaps. Part of this work included reinspecting every project in NYS over a certain size.
- ESRG trained state workers in their expertise and figured out how to develop safe regulations, helped to formulate the updated NYS code for ESS
- New code was passed at the state level this past summer.
- NYSERDA is working with scientists at global consultant DNV to support FDNY and DOB in evaluating products, equipment and plans.
- NYSERDA can offer support on the community side. Is available to discuss concerns with any council member or community board representative.
- Working with MOCEJ team to scale up community-based efforts.
- Working on the state side to secure extra funding support for community support. Received some of this funding recently.

#### Other Business

##### *Expiration of Open Meetings Law (OML) Hybrid Provision*

- Expiration hybrid provision of open meetings law presents an opportunity for the Borough Board to reconsider its stance. The current iteration will expire next June.

##### *Does OML supersede the city charter?*

- Subcommittee could make a recommendation to state to update OML
- *Read statement on behalf of Chair Terea Scavo: Brooklyn Community Board 15 has its general board meetings exclusively in person, hybrid meetings would not work for CB 15 if there is less incentive to attend in person and risking not having quorum present because of*

*that. However, under extenuating circumstances such as harsh weather or building shut down where meeting would take place, CB 15 would like to have the option of virtual meetings. CB 15 proposes state amends city charter to allow for virtual meetings under extenuating circumstances. Otherwise prefer to keep in person not hybrid.*

- Chair Scavo has provided a scenario under which hybrid meetings are valuable. CBs will make their own decisions, the outcome here will be only for the Borough Board

Decision to form a subcommittee to review the OML and create a strategy for advocacy. The committee work must be completed before the state budget is due. Representatives from: CB 8, CB 9, CB13, CB 14, CB 15, CB 16, CB 17 & CM 41 volunteered to serve.

***Other Business - Misc***

- *What is the impact of the ballot measure passed voted on in election earlier this week?*
  - Can invite charter revision commission to future meeting. Specifically, to discuss How CBs can continue to have strong voice in ULURP process.
- *Community Board chairpersons and the Borough President to schedule a workshop in December.*

**Adjournment.** Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.