

The Grapevine Newsletter

I heard it through the Grapevine...

Notes from the April 11, 2023 Meeting of the Board of Directors of Berkowners, Inc.

Directors attending: Walter Chadwick, Wanda Chin, Cecilia Durbin, Peggy Russell, Zach Rosenblatt, Absent: Liz Hollander, Ed Leahy. Also attending: Doug Lister (Architect), Joe Doren (Metro Management).

1. Meeting called to order on Zoom by Walter Chadwick at 6:35 pm.
2. Minutes were reviewed and adopted with corrections.

3. Window Replacement

- Mr. Lister reported that the Landmarks Committee of Community Board 3 approved the window replacements for the 77th and 78th. The proposal will now be presented to the Landmarks Commission public hearing for approval. Mr. Chadwick will reach out to attendees of the original presentation to determine who will attend.
- Mr. Lister presented a spreadsheet comparing Tindel's original bid with their revised price :

-Material costs:

o Original: \$ 3,686,085 Revised: \$4,142,860 Increase: \$456,775

o Custom panning (framing) (Landmarks) : \$185,375

o Wood Ornament Restoration (Landmarks) : \$ 45,000

- Project Totals:

o Original: \$4,209,540 Revised: \$4,895,790 Increase: \$ 686,250

- Mr. Lister offered the consideration that \$251,305 for hallway window replacement be deleted from the current Tindel contract for the time being despite the replacement being in the master plan presented to Landmarks. Landmarks approval does not require immediate implementation, meaning we would not need to go through another Landmarks approval to replace the hallway windows at a later date.

4. Mr. Doren's Report

- Mr. Doren reported that the cost of a walkie - talkie system for staff to reduce the expense of individual cell phones would be \$405 per radio. It is proposed that the superintendent and the assistant superintendent retain cell phones and five staff cell phones be replaced with radios. It is estimated that the cost of the radios will be recouped in slightly over one year. The radios have been tested and work successfully inside and outside the buildings. Ms. Chin moved to replace reliance on five cell phones with the use of walkie - talkies, Mr. Chadwick seconded. Unanimously approved.
- LL11 Filing update:
 - The LL11 filing report for 78th Street was accepted
 - The LL11 report for 35th Street was rejected and will be refiled with technical changes.
 - The LL11 report for 77th Street is being review by the plan examiner
 - There is no fine for rejections and no extra expense for the technical classifications that were noted.
- Con Ed, through a financing partner, is offering 2 year, 0% percent financing loans for replacing lighting for more energy efficient fixtures which could be applied to the replacement/refitting of fixtures and lighting in the halls, common areas and back of house spaces. Mr. Doren pointed out that the financing incentives will dwindle in the next four to six weeks. The next step is to get a bid on the work which can be done once it is decided exactly what we want. Additionally, he pointed out the need for emergency lighting in 77th St and 78th St hallways.
- Annual Meeting - Because only seven candidates will be running for directors positions on the board, there will not be a candidates' night. Notices of the May 15 meeting will be sent to shareholders the week of April 10 and will include proxy forms with instructions on how to return. Meeting is scheduled to begin at 6:30pm. Shareholder sign-in will begin at 6:00 pm and continue until 7:00pm and will be managed by shareholder volunteers. If a quorum is not obtained by 6:30 pm, sign-in will continue until 7pm. If a quorum is not achieved, Committee member will provide their reports
- Insurance :
 - o 2/3's of shareholders have forwarded their homeowners insurance information. Second notices have been sent with a deadline of 4/28/2023.
 - o Ms. Chin proposed changes to the House Rules authorizing Berkowners, Inc. and the Managing Agent can be listed as "Additional

Interested Party" if the insurer will not underwrite an additional insured and that sub lessees of the shareholders be required to maintain renter's insurance with the same coverages. Ms. Russell moved that the proposed changes be adopted. Mr. Chadwick seconded. Vote was unanimous.

5. Treasurer's Report

- Ms. Chin reported the corporation's total reserve fund as of March 31, 2023
 - o \$4,333,699 in the Raymond James brokerage account(RJFS) (9 bank CDs, 6 US Treasuries, plus \$45,370 in cash
 - o \$653,251 in the Chase checking and savings accounts
 - o \$1,964 in the Habib Bank Money Market account
 - o \$282,581 in the Habib Bank CD
 - o \$250,090 in the TD Bank checking account
- Ms. Chin reported that during the month of March the corporation –
 - o Invested in RJFS in a #300,000 UST due September 7, 2023
 - o Deposited \$517,268 into Chase – the first of two checks received from sales proceeds from Treasury unit A41; and
 - o On April 10, deposited the second check of \$129,829 from the sale proceeds of A41 bringing the Chase balance to \$783,090
 - o As of April 10, 2023, the total reserve funds are \$5,651,414 – an increase of \$657,000 from the month of March.
- The upcoming maturing investments are:
 - o First National Bank of Pennsylvania CD - \$250,000 -April 17
 - o Bank United CD - \$250,000 –April 19
 - o HAB Bank CD - \$283,000 May 5
 - o UST Note - \$500,000 – May 15
 - o Fidelity Bank CD - \$250,000 – June 20
 - o First B&T Texas CD – \$250,000 – June 20
- On the recommendation of Ms. Chin, the board agreed unanimously to maintain \$100,000 in the Chase account, and \$150,000 in Habib, close out the TD Bank checking account, and to move excess funds to the Raymond James account.
- Ms. Chin reported that due to a change in the corporation's management company, FYE December 31, 2022 audited financial statements are taking longer to prepare by Marin & Montanye.

6. Communications Committee Report

- Ms. Durbin reported on a zoom meeting among a resident who is also a NY firefighter, the chair of the safety of the Safety Committee, eBike owners and board members

concerning the banning of eBikes inside the buildings. The eBike supporters will prepare a proposal to change the policy by developing methods of storage and charging of the vehicles which will ensure safety in the Berkeley.

7. **Garden Committee Report**

- Reseeding of the garden will begin depending on temperature and will necessitate closure of seeded areas for two weeks.
- A committee has been formed to look into additional planting and beautification of the outside gardens.

8. **Children's Room**

The asbestos and lead reports indicated no lead and minimal asbestos which would not require abatement. Using the plans from the architect for the project, Mr. Doren will move forward with expediting.

9. Mr. Rosenblatt presented **revisions to the garden rules** which would make them less negative and more inviting to all members of the community, including children as well as addressing potential of discrimination as well as questionable imposition of fines as brought up by counsel. Changes include:

- Children 10 years of age or older may be unaccompanied by an adult in the garden.
- All garden furniture must be restored to its original location after use.
- Prohibits cutting, picking, removing, adding to or removing, watering, walking on, or otherwise disturbing any of the plantings without consent of the garden plot's volunteer caregiver.
- Changes requirement that pets be accompanied by an adult in the garden to being accompanied by a building resident.
- Based on advice from counsel that there is no authority in the Proprietary Lease to impose fines, response to violations of the rules will be categorized as "administrative fees".
- The administrative fee for the first violation of a pet rule is lowered from \$300 to \$100. Subsequent violations will lead to prohibition of the pet from the garden. The administrative fee for a prohibited pet entering the garden will be lowered from \$1000 per event to \$200 per event.
- Proposed revised rules will be sent to counsel for review.

10. The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 pm.

ANNUAL SHAREHOLDERS MEETING UPDATE

We achieved a quorum! The threshold for a quorum was 55,729 shares (50% +1 share), which we passed comfortably. The turnout Monday night was roughly 56.3% of all shares.

Total number of shares that attended the meeting (both in-person & Proxy): 62,740. Total In-Person shares were 45,010 (112 voters), and total Proxy shares were 17,730 (46 voters). In other words, without our proxy voters, we wouldn't have reached quorum, so thank you, thank you. (All numbers provided by Marin & Montanye, our accounting firm)

Number of shares for each board member, from most to least:

Ed Leahy – 43,340 (2 year term)

Peggy Russell – 43,270 (2 year term)

Wanda Chin – 42,605 (2 year term)

Walter Chadwick – 42,240 (2 year term)

Cecilia Durbin – 42,015 (1 year term)

Liz Hollander – 39,520 (1 year term)

William Walter – 35,480 (1 year term)

Board Officers:

Walter Chadwick - President

Peggy Russell & Cecilia Durbin - Vice Presidents

Ed Leahy - Secretary

Wanda Chin - Treasurer

Liz Hollander, William Walter - Board Members

CHILDREN'S CIRCLE

June Children's Circle

The Bug Hunt !!

is scheduled for Saturday, June 17 at 11 am in the 77th St. meeting room.

Story reading about bugs

Bug puppets

Songs and Music

Craft - making bug boxes

AND - The Bug Hunt in the garden.

All Berkeley families are welcome.

The Berkeley Children's Garden

The Berkeley Children's Garden is located in the northeast corner of the garden, just below the ramp into the 78th Street building. We would like to extend an invitation to all the children in our community to create a container for the Children's Garden with their own plants and fairy garden—or dinosaur garden, elf garden, or another imaginative creation of their choosing. **Pro tip:** low light plants will do best in our space. Please message coordinator Lara Pellegrinelli (lpellegr@mac.com, 347-323-9734) if you intend to contribute to the garden and to join our WhatsApp group.

In addition, here are some considerations for using the Children's Garden space:

1. Please check the space upon arrival and make sure that everything is put away

when you depart. The black storage box must be closed to prevent it from filling with rain.

2. The Children's Garden has a path and planting areas delineated by rock borders. Do your best to leave these undisturbed. The brick patio is intended for play.
3. Digging is only permitted in containers (like your fairy gardens). In general, the Berkeley garden has issues with broken glass and other debris that continue to emerge from the soil and can be attractive to toddlers. Please use care and observe children closely. (Also, adult gardeners have been bitten by spiders while pruning the ivy. Best to keep hands out of dense plants).
4. Items for the storage box should be appropriate for quiet outdoor play. Please check with Lara before leaving anything in the box. Abandoned toys will be discarded.
5. We have large containers for water and sand stored in the passageway in the 78th. We could use one or two volunteers to help organize this area to make these items accessible and maintain them.
6. We have a wooden planting bench with seeds stored inside. Everyone is welcome to use it and whatever they find. Please make sure it is securely closed to keep out rain.

Thank You!

BERKELEY ARTIST PROFILE

Costanza Musumeci, an accomplished painter and illustrator, is known to many of us as an inspired teacher who creates artwork with and for children at Jackson Heights' Art for a Start (<https://www.artforastartny.com/>) program and at arts camps held at the Allora Creative Cultural Center in Park Slope (<https://www.allorabk.com/>). A member of the Berkeley Children's Room Committee, she has designed and plans to paint a mural on one wall of the Children's Room - and could use some resident volunteers to help! A Berkeley resident since 2016, Costanza lives with her husband Makram and children Marco Elie, six years old and Aline, two-and-a-half years old, in the 77th Street building.

Costanza started drawing and painting at an early age in her hometown of Palermo in Sicily, where she lived with her parents and brother. Wanting to broaden her horizons and explore another culture, she came to Richmond, VA as an exchange student and

was fortunate to be placed with a creative, kind host family with whom she is still close. They enrolled her at Richmond Community High School, a selective, alternative college-prep school where she was taught by a wonderful art teacher, Melinda Mottley, who encouraged her to explore her gifts in various media. At Melinda's suggestion, Costanza entered her artwork in a national competition, which not only led to her winning a prize but also to being granted a scholarship to attend the prestigious Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD).

After graduating with a BFA in painting, Costanza came to New York where she continued with her own artwork and worked at a number of arts-related jobs before earning a Master's Degree in Arts Administration from Columbia University. She then worked with some of New York's most successful artists and photographers (including Peter Halley and David LaChapelle) in marketing their work, staging photo shoots, and engaging in brand activation for major companies and fashion houses. While this work was fascinating (and not without drama!), it kept her away from her passions. Gradually, she was able to reduce her footprint in the arts management world and move toward doing her own creative work, including illustration and painting for the W Hotels group and Auberge Resorts, and works for children sold through the Ladybug Studio [<https://costanzamusumeci.com/about>].

Costanza has always been inspired by children: they are without judgment and without constraints, and their creativity is boundless. She loves creating artwork for them, and is very excited to be engaged in teaching them to use art as a way to understand the world around them. Marco Elie and Aline are active participants in the Berkeley Children's Circle, and the family participates in other family-related events with neighbors and friends. Jackson Heights is an amazing place to live – so vibrant, so tolerant and so international! It's the most alive place in New York City. The only drawback: Jackson Heights is far from Costanza's family in Italy and her husband's family in Lebanon. They see family as often as they can (and will travel to Italy this summer), but it's difficult to have so many miles between them. A consolation: the Berkeley has the best garden around! It is beautiful and a true testament to the hard work of Berkeley resident gardeners. Her tribute to the Garden is attached!



JACKSON HEIGHTS GARDEN TOUR

For the fifth year, The Garden Committee will be welcoming visitors to our garden as part of the 2023 Celebrate Historic Jackson Heights walking tour sponsored by The Jackson Heights Beautification Group. (www.jhbg.org). Please check the flyer posted by the elevators for details should you want to take the tour this year.

The tour is scheduled for **June 10th** with a rain date of June 17th.

SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for **June 13th, 2023**. If you have a topic you would like to discuss with the board, please email them at berkboard@gmail.com.

Contributors to this newsletter were Walter Chadwick, Cecilia Durbin, Judy Whiting, Peggy Russell, Katherine Howard and Lara Pellegrinelli. If you'd like to contribute content to the Berkeley Grapevine, please email bconwayb34@gmail.com.

BERKELEY — IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

Carlos Rivera, Superintendent

Ph: (718) 424-0040 Emergency Ph: (646) 403-2558

Email: superberkeley@gmail.com

Milton Zavala, Assistant

Superintendent

Ph: (718) 424-0040

Emergency Ph: (646) 403-5093

Email: superberkeley@gmail.com

Board Email address:

berkboard@gmail.com

Newsletter Email address:

bconwayb34@gmail.com

Berkeley Google Group/Listserv:

theberkownerscoop@googlegroups.com

Berkeley Website:

www.theberkeleycoop.com

Management Company:

Metro Management Development, Inc.

1981 Marcus Avenue, Suite C-131

Lake Success, New York 11042

Tel: (718) 706-7755 | Fax: (718) 706-7760

www.metromanagementdev.com

Joe Doren, Senior Property Manager

jdoren@metromanagementdev.com

Ph: (718) 593-8908

Renee Colon, Administrative Associate

rcolon@metromanagementdev.com

Ph: (718) 593-8922