

The Grapevine Newsletter

I heard it through the Grapevine...

Notes from the August 8, 2023 Berkowners, Inc. Board Meeting

Directors attending: Walter Chadwick, Cecilia Durbin, Liz Hollander, Ed Leahy, Peggy Russell, and William Walter. Absent: Wanda Chin. Also attending, Joe Doren (Metro Management).

1. Meeting called to order via Zoom at 6:34 PM
2. The minutes of the July 11 Board meeting were approved, as amended.
3. **Manager's Report (Mr. Doren):**
 - We are currently scheduled for a hearing at the September 12 meeting of the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission regarding the Windows project for the 77th Street and 78th Street buildings, depending on Mr. Lister complying with August deadlines for submission of additional material. Mr. Doren has called and e-mailed Mr. Lister to stress the importance of submitting the material on time.
 - Mr. Doren had asked Seth Sahr to write a demand letter to Wavecrest to recover the fines paid for failure to comply with LL11 in 2018.
 - We have received the application for the combined A21 and A22 (77th Street) apartment. Sale price is \$1.1 million. Will forward as soon as the review is complete.
 - Aces Laundry has not yet replied with a bid for the job. We need to have more contractors to choose from.
4. **Financial Report (submitted by Ms. Chin 7/30/23):**
 - Chase Bank checking and savings total \$100,091 as of 6/30/23.
 - HAB Bank MMA balance as of 6/30/23 was \$150,785.46.
 - RJFS Account as of 7/30/23 was \$5,480,135.23, comprised of:

- o \$384,156.06 in Cash
- o \$2,750,000 in CDs spread over 11 banks
- o \$2,375,000 in 6 US Treasury Bills and Notes (full maturity value shown)
- o Four bank CDs matured in June. \$1,000,000 was reinvested in four new bank CDs purchased on July 27. Three of these have settled as of 7/30/23, and the fourth expected to settle July 31 or August 1. When the fourth CD settles, the cash held by RJFS will drop by \$250,000.
- o From August 28 to September 15, 2023, \$1,300,000 will mature. We will determine ongoing investments and maturities as the windows project progresses.
- Total reserves managed by Metro Management as of 6/30/23: \$171,664.69 in the Windows Assessment Account and \$45,563.78 in the Beautification fund.

5. **Communications (Ms. Durbin):**

- New samples installed by LEDNext are still too bright. We will get samples for dimmer lights with emergency batteries in them. Mr. Doren stated the emergency batteries would last up to 12 hours. They also draw less wattage. Instead of replacing the hallway sconces, we are swapping to LED bulbs. These are lower wattage than what we have and keep our current look. We are getting occupancy sensors for all appropriate rooms in the basement for lights to turn off if no one is present. We are exploring putting occupancy sensors in the hallways that would lower the level in the hallways when no one is present, but not turn off completely. Mr. Doren is checking on the building code for lighting in circulation spaces.
- We have collected data on laundry room schedules for all 3 buildings. We may try one day per week on a first come, first served basis. We can also offer an option for people to share a time slot. Will tweak sample sheet for next meeting.
- Have drafted a letter to shareholders on front door etiquette, balancing security concerns with civil discourse. Still needs editing. Mr Doren volunteered to draft a version of the letter.

6. **Building Link:** Mr. W. Walter tried a sample. There are benefits in communication and scheduling. It can track incidents as they occur and show how quickly they are resolved. But the system is only as good as the data input. Will need to discuss more with Carlos to see how useful it would be to staff.

7. **Google Workspace** accounts for board members providing centralized document sharing. Members would lose accounts when leaving the board as new board members are given access. Would be redundant if we get Building Link.

- a. One workspace account with 7 e-mail addresses.
- b. Can replace Zoom with Google Meet.
- c. Could also track e-mails to and from the superintendent's e-mail address.
- d. \$6-12 per user per month
- e. Board voted to use Google Workspace.

8. **Short vs. Long Alterations Form Agreement:**

- a. Short form required for (but not limited to) plastering, painting, wood flooring refinish, regrouting tile, bathtub reglazing, custom bookshelves and closets.
- b. Long form required for (but not limited to) Kitchen renovation, bathroom renovation, replacement of flooring, electrical wiring updating, changing of interior doors including frames, removal or moving of any walls, any work requiring a NYC Buildings Department permit.
- c. If in doubt, shareholders should contact Mr. Doren or Mr. Rivera.

9. The annual Garden Party will be on Saturday, September 9th, at 3:00 pm. Rain date will be Sunday, September 10th. Budget for the party is less than \$1,000.

10. House Rule on Subletting is Sec. 2(H). Amended to add, "Short term rentals are prohibited" (approved unanimously).

11. The next meeting of the board, originally scheduled for September 12th, is rescheduled for September 5th due to the conflict with the LPC meeting.

12. A12 (77th Street) just went to contract.

13. Meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.

WINDOWS UPDATE

We are so pleased and relieved to share the stellar news. On Tuesday, 9/12, **the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission voted to approve our application to replace the windows in 35-25 77th St. and 35-24 78th St. with double-hung windows with some minor revisions.**

77-12 35th Ave. is moving towards approval at the staff level - it does not require a vote by the commissioners because it was originally built with double-hung windows.

The commission wants some small details added to our architect's plan submitted to the city, which should be addressed in the next week or so. Then the city will award us a Certificate of Appropriateness. We will keep you updated as we continue to move forward.

Thank you to Doug Lister for his presentation and all his work so far and his final work to get us over the approval line, which now only needs to be completed at the staff level.

Thank you to Wanda Chin and Joe Doren for attending in person and Wanda particularly for your excellent presentation. Thank you to Walter Chadwick, Cecilia Durbin, and Phil Lukeman for our speaking in advocacy of the windows at the meeting over zoom.

For anyone who wants to watch the proceedings themselves, there is [a live youtube stream](#) of the meeting. We were the 3rd and 4th issues heard at the meeting starting around 1:02 (that's 1 hour and 2 minutes).

SEPTEMBER CHILDREN'S CIRCLE

Saturday 23, 2023

11 am

Central Garden

All Berkeley families are welcome.

Hope to see you there.

SEPTEMBER GARDEN PARTY - Rescheduled

As we say in New Orleans - "Lazzier Bon Temps Roulet!"

The September Garden Party and Barbecue was rescheduled due to rain.

The new date is

September 30th

3pm - 7pm

Hope to see you there!

The party is a great opportunity to connect with old friends and meet new ones. The board will provide grilled hamburgers, veggie burgers and hotdogs with the "fixin's", wine, beer and non-alcoholic beverages.

The party has become a varied potluck and, although not required, residents are encouraged to share a dish with their neighbors.

It takes a village, and we depend on volunteers in the following areas to make the party successful.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR:

Pre-prep - Making hamburger patties, slicing tomatoes, preparing lettuce, slicing cheese. Food will be available on the Friday before the party.

Set-up - Setting tables, icing down drinks, preparing grills, setting up trash and recycle bins

Grilling - The more volunteers we have to grill the better to give everyone time to socialize and enjoy the party. (We're always looking for more grillers!)

Clean-up

If you can volunteer, please contact Peggy at tpeg60@yahoo.com or 225-247-0491 by text or call and let me know where you would like to help.

NEW LAUNDRY SIGN UP SHEETS COMING SOON!

Due to resident requests, the board is experimenting with two modifications to the broadly popular laundry sign up system. **This is an experiment!** People with many different lifestyles and needs live in our co-op. Please bear with us as we calibrate to meet the needs of more residents.

- We are trying out **Thursdays as FIRST COME FIRST SERVE**. Aka no sign ups.
- We're offering the option to **SHARE YOUR SLOT**. The original objective of the sign up sheets was to minimize sharing space and germs during the height of the pandemic. While having the laundry room to yourself is now less of a priority, many residents now value the ability to plan ahead and know the laundry room will be available. However, few households use all of the washers at a time. This system aims to allow those who wish to reserve time but are happy to share the laundry room, to communicate that to their neighbors!

Don't need all the washers?

**Draw a smiley face and
write the number of washers you'll use
when you write your Apt #**



**Shared Slots available for
sign up or on a first come/first served basis**

**If you don't start your shared slot at the top the hour,
check if the next slot is open or willing to share as well**

BERKELEY ARTIST PROFILE

In warmer months you'll often see our neighbor Andy Tepper working on his laptop out in the garden. What's he doing? Chances are he's either writing an author profile or review of a newly-published book for the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times or other publications, or working on curating book talks and book festivals spotlighting international authors. Andy moved into the Berkeley in 2009 (77th Street building), and lives with his wife Shona Chakravartty, son Kavi and cat Brooklyn, who briefly made headlines at the Berkeley in 2020 when she escaped their fourth floor apartment by jumping out the window; after an all-out search she was found six days later beneath a grate at the building next door.

Andy is co-chair of the International Committee of the Brooklyn Book Festival, curator of international literature at City of Asylum in Pittsburgh, and guest curator at PEN World Voices. Much of his work involves gathering world writers to discuss their work and important themes and current topics that affect or inspire it. An example is a recent PEN World Voices Festival event at Joe's Pub (the Public Theater) that featured the writers Samanta Schweblin, Kevin Chen, Joseph Han and Namwali Serpell discussing the theme "Spirited Away: Haunted Novels." The successful panel was accompanied by local guitarist Evan Harris.

Andy has been a world literature reviewer and curator for many years, including during his two decades working as an editorial production manager at Vanity Fair magazine, which he left in 2020 to dedicate himself full-time to this work. He traces early inspiration to classes taken at Columbia University with writer and activist Amiri Baraka, and to a childhood spent growing up in the Hudson valley and Hawaii. Curating book panels frequently involves pairing well-known authors with emerging writers, with the twin goals of engaging in important conversation and introducing audiences to vital new works. Andy invites us all to attend the upcoming **Brooklyn Book Festival**. The event kicks off with a Virtual Festival on **September 24**, and an in-person Children's Day on September 30 at Metro Tech. The main event is the in-person festival on October 1 on the Brooklyn Borough Hall Plaza, which will feature more than 167 authors from all over the world including Roxanne Gay, Colson Whitehead, Yu Miri, Leila Aboulela, and Walter Mosley engaging in book talks, panel discussions, and readings; it will also feature a small press vendor marketplace. This year, Andy will be moderating a virtual

panel with Norwegian author Karl Ove Knausgaard and Zimbabwean Novuyo Rosa Tshuma. Check <https://brooklynbookfestival.org/> for more information. And if you are in the Pittsburgh area, plan to check out City of Asylum's **International LitFest**, which commences on September 30 with a keynote address by Booker Prize-winning author Ben Okri and runs through October 15. See <https://cityofasylum.org/international-literary-festival/> for a rundown of LIVE AND STREAMING events.

Friends, relatives and fellow soccer players first introduced Andy to Jackson Heights many years ago, but our garden drew him and Shona to the Berkeley. They are thankful to the gardeners who keep it lovely and lush, as well as to our stellar building staff and wonderful neighbors throughout our complex. Having lived here for fourteen years, they are deeply enmeshed in the community. Son Kavi was born here, and attended local schools including PS 69; a budding filmmaker, he just started his freshman year at the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts in Astoria. Shona, who works as a senior program officer for a D.C. – based foundation, has been active as a board member for Chhaya, a local nonprofit focused on building power and economic wellbeing within New York's South Asian and Indo-Caribbean communities. And Andy recently worked with Open Borders Books, a pop-up bookseller dedicated to bringing new and different voices to Jackson Heights' diverse audiences (see <https://bookshop.org/shop/openbordersbooks>.) to host an event at Terraza7, a local bar featuring Latin jazz and other musical performances, sponsored by Granta magazine.

Andy would advise anyone interested in getting involved in the world of book reviews and festivals to consider interning with The Brooklyn Book Festival, PEN America's World Voices or other festivals. There are plenty of opportunities to learn, discover your interests, and make them flourish. And on another note, he'd advise anyone adopting a cat to make sure your window screens don't have holes!

Best Practices for Living in a Steam Heat Building (A REPOST)

As we approach the heating season, a couple of tips on living in a building with steam heat ([lifted quite liberally from a property manager's website](#)):

1. One large system creates steam for the entire building which comes to your individual unit through the radiators around your apartment.
2. Each radiator has a valve on the bottom that you can “Open” and “Close” by turning it all the way left or right – respectively.
3. Only set your valves all the way “Open” or all the way “Closed”. Do not attempt to “control the heat” by leaving the valve partially open or closed. A partial open or closed valve, may cause a very loud knocking sound which results from air getting trapped in the pipes. This is very bad for the system as a whole and could result in rendering the entire system inoperable.
4. Do not attempt to close your valves while the radiator is hot. Wait for them to cool completely, and then close them down tight if you do not want them on.
5. The steam that provides the heat is generated in the basement of the building. Therefore, units towards the ground floors will receive heat first and the units on the top floors will receive heat last.
6. The main thermostat for the building is set at a fixed temperature that allows for the heat to kick on and remain on for a long enough duration to allow heat to travel from the basement level all the way to the top floor units.
7. Units on the bottom floor may experience higher than necessary heat. Simply “close” your valves on all radiators that are putting off too much heat, if you are experiencing this. With your patient feedback, we can adjust the main thermostat as we move through the cold season to allow a comfortable temperature for all.
8. If you are not sure you are able to close or open your valves entirely yourself, don’t hesitate to contact Carlos. The building staff will be happy to assist you.

Here are a couple more links you may find interesting if you want to learn more about Steam Heat:

- [Street Easy's Explainer on Steam Heat](#) that also talks about the sounds you SHOULD NOT hear from your radiator, why and what to do if you do

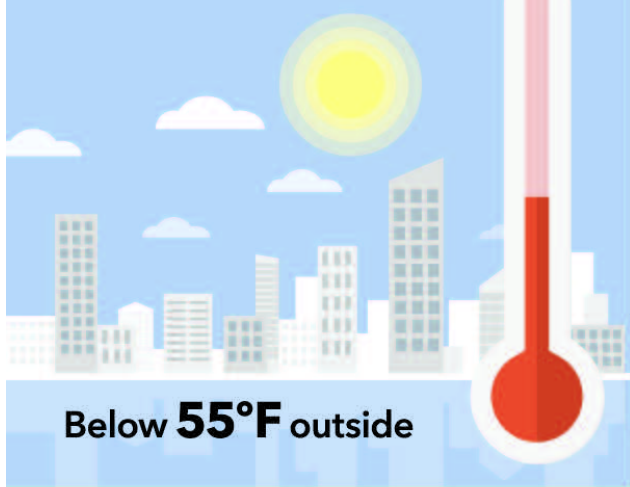

- [Your Old Radiator is a Pandemic Fighting Weapon](#) published in Bloomberg News Aug 5, 2020



Effective October 2017

COLD WEATHER HEAT REQUIREMENTS

October 1st-May 31st

<p>DAY 6 a.m. - 10 p.m. At least 68°F inside</p>  <p>Below 55°F outside</p>	<p>NIGHT 10 p.m. - 6 a.m. At least 62°F inside</p>  <p>No outside temperature requirement</p>
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Tenants without heat should file a complaint through the **NYC311 Mobile App**, calling **311** (TTY 212-504-4115), or online at **nyc.gov/311**

For more information, visit **nyc.gov/hpd**

SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for **October 10, 2023**. The remaining Board meetings of 2023 are November 14th and December 12th. 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 and Peggy Russell. If you'd like to contribute content to the Berkeley Grapevine, please email bconwayb34@gmail.com.

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