

# The Grapevine Newsletter

I heard it through the Grapevine...

**Notes from the January 10, 2022, Meeting of the Board of Directors of Berkowners, Inc.**

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**Directors attending: Walter Chadwick, Wanda Chin, Cecilia Durbin, Liz Hollander, Ed Leahy, Zach Rosenblatt, and Peggy Russell. Also attending: Carlos Rivera (Superintendent), Doug Lister (Architect), and Joe Doren and Tomisla Budija of Metro Management.**

1. Meeting called to order on Zoom by Walter Chadwick at 6:32 pm.
2. Minutes of the December 13, 2022 Board meeting were reviewed and adopted with corrections.
3. **2023 Budget**
  - Mr. Budija presented the proposed budget for 2023, recommending an increase to maintenance fees of 8.02%. This reflects the effect of inflation in the national economy and is driven by expenses that are beyond our control, such as taxes and utilities, in which we've seen huge increases over the past year.
  - Mr. Chadwick suggested we could look for other areas for savings, even though they might be relatively small.
  - The Board discussed the anticipated timing of the sale of vacant Treasury units, which would affect budgeted income. Mr. Budija said he would review the numbers based on the revised timing of these closings, which will likely reduce the percentage of the maintenance increase.
  - Ms. Hollander moved to adopt the proposed budget, subject to Mr. Budija's revisions. Mr. Leahy seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.
  - Mr. Leahy moved to enact the maintenance increase, subject to Mr. Budija's revisions, effective March 1. Ms. Russell seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Budija left the meeting at 7:00 pm.

#### 4. **Windows and Waterproofing**

- Mr. Lister reported that he would be meeting with Edith Bellinghueser of LPC staff by the end of the week. She is expected to approve the drawings. He will submit to the Landmarks Committee of Community Board 3.
- There will be two meetings, one with the Landmarks Committee and one with the full Community Board. Mr. Lister wasn't sure when they would be.
- Ms. Chin advised that CB3 committee meetings are usually the first week of the month, and the full board meets in the middle of the month.

- Mr. Rivera reported that there are 10 apartments requiring waterproofing-related repairs, some of which can be handled by Berkeley staff, and some to which contractors could not gain entry. There have been no reported leaks in apartments where damage was repaired.

Mr. Lister left the meeting at 7:30 pm.

## 5. Superintendent's Report

- Duffy Floors made repairs to the hallway floor of A41(77) and Berkeley staff is working on the kitchen and bathroom walls and ceilings. Work should be completed shortly.
- On June 27, 2022 a resident slipped and fell on the sidewalk on 77<sup>th</sup> Street. The resident is suing the coop and the city. Mr. Doren assured the Board that the insurance company would settle.
- Passeggio Plumbing will be here on 1/17/23 to repair a steam pipe that sits under the basement floor near the superintendent's office in the 78<sup>th</sup> Street building, chopping the concrete making repairs. The cost will be \$5,000.
- Inspections for Local Law 11 compliance have been completed.
- Several smoke alarms in the 78<sup>th</sup> Street building were replaced. The new units should last for 10 years.
- A locksmith replaced the door check at the main entrance to the 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue building, and the door now closes securely.
- Mr. Doren noted new rules for garbage collection will go into effect in April. Garbage must be placed at the curb either at 8:00 PM or between 6:00 and 7:00 AM. We'll need to change at least one porter's work schedule to accommodate the new policy, but it should not result in anyone's hours being increased. Mr. Doren and Mr. Rivera will work out the new schedule, possibly rotating the affected porters.

Mr. Rivera left the meeting at 8:10 pm.

## 6. Mr. Doren's Report

- Local Law 11 inspections have been completed. 78<sup>th</sup> Street will be filed, which will stop the fines from accumulating. There is no way to abate the penalties already accumulated. Wavecrest could have avoided penalties with a filing in 2020 but never did.
- We are awaiting a third proposal for a LL97 evaluation. The city will begin imposing fines in 2024, with a major step-up by 2030. All affected buildings are beginning the evaluation process.
- NYSERDA, which was discussed at the December meeting as a possible source of aid, is only for "affordable housing".

## 7. Homeowners Insurance

- Some insurers don't want to provide an endorsement for additional insureds.
- Mr. Chadwick asked why the managing agent needs to be listed as an additional insured. Mr. Doren replied that whenever a co-op is sued, the management company is also sued.

## 8. Financials

- Ms. Chin reported that \$3,784,000 has been transferred to the Raymond James brokerage account. The following amounts comprise the remaining reserve funds still in local bank accounts, some of which will be used for the LL11 fines:
  - \$265,000 in the Habib Bank Money Market account

- \$250,000 in the TD Bank checking account
  - \$119,000 in the Chase checking account
  - \$281,000 in the Habib Bank CD
  - Raymond James has provided a listing showing CDs and Treasuries, with an average yield of 4.4%. Mr. Rosenblatt raised a question as to the financial condition of the banks listed. Ms. Chin replied that they are all well-rated, that she had checked their asset size and that most were A-rated, with some that were BBB+. Mr. Rosenblatt asked if there was a minimum required rating. Ms. Chin replied that the Board can set that. Raymond James proposed a laddered portfolio that has been more focused on our liquidity needs, and no CD is greater than \$250,000. Mr. Leahy moved that the Board ratify the transactions, Ms. Hollander seconded, and the motion carried by a unanimous vote.
  - Ms. Chin presented a draft investment policy for Raymond James, with permitted investments of bank CDs each with a maximum of \$250,000 and also US Treasuries. After the board reviewed it, Ms. Hollander moved to approve the policy, Mr. Leahy seconded, and the motion carried by a unanimous vote.
- 9. Mr. Chadwick reported on the sale of Treasury units**
- B61 (77) – funds were deposited at Chase
  - B23 (77) – Admissions Committee approved buyers following an interview
  - A41 (77) – Mold removal has been completed, the wood floor in the hallway repaired. The buyers want a lead inspection at their own cost, and need to buy kitchen appliances.
  - A53 (35) – we have lowered our asking price by \$10K to \$435K.
- 10. Ms. Durbin reported on Communications.**
- Grapevine is doing well with the new editor.
  - The sublet form should be up on the website in the next few days.
  - The Committee is meeting with two volunteer residents—one who is a professional web developer-- on redesigning the web site.
  - Lucite holders for notices – we don't need four for each elevator, one will do. Approved by unanimous vote.
- 11. Garden Committee.** Ms. Hollander reported that she had asked the committee for recommendations for cover for the South Lawn, which is now mostly dirt.
- 12. Board/Children's Room.** Ms. Durbin reported that Julie Nyman would like to get proposals for asbestos testing and for expediting DOB approval. Mr. Doren stated he had someone who could do the asbestos testing and could recommend someone for the DOB process.
- 13. eBike Room.** Mr. Chadwick and Mr. Doren reported that the FDNY advised keeping all eBikes in a single room would constitute a fire hazard, and the board agreed that the ban on eBikes in the Berkeley would stand. Fines will be imposed as of March 1.
- 14. Sublets.** Mr. Doren noted that the application requires references, which is unnecessary for sublet renewals. He suggested the need for restructuring and simplifying the renewal application.
- 15.** The Meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm

**!SAVE THE DATE!**

## **BERKELEY ANNUAL SHAREHOLDERS MEETING**

Convening In Person

**Monday, May 15th at 6:30pm**

The Jewish Center of Jackson Heights

37-06 77th St.

A more formal announcement will come by mail soon.

Please put this date in your calendar.

If you will not be able to attend, please **decide to whom you will give your proxy vote!**

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## **CALL FOR BERKELEY BOARD CANDIDATES**

As we did not reach quorum at last year's Annual Shareholders Meeting

## **ALL 7 BOARD SEATS ARE UP FOR ELECTION**

Shareholders who wish to run for the Board may submit their resumes and/or letters of intent, 1 page maximum, either by email to [berkboard@gmail.com](mailto:berkboard@gmail.com), or by post to the Board Secretary, Ed Leahy (77-12 35th Avenue Apt. B67, Jackson Heights, NY 11372).

The deadline to get on the ballot is

**Friday, March 24, 2023**

# 2023 CHILDREN'S CIRCLE CALENDAR

*(dates subject to change)*

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<b>March 18</b>	<b>August 19</b>
<b>April 8</b>	<b>September 9</b>
<b>May 13</b>	<b>October 21</b>
<b>June 17</b>	<b>November 11</b>
<b>December 16</b>	<b>July 15</b>

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## **Next Children's Circle**

**Saturday March 18th - 11 AM - 77th Street Community Room**

(entrance on South end will be open)

Join your Berkeley friends for stories, music, crafts and fun.

We will be painting so wear old clothes!

All Berkeley families are invited.

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## **Save the Date - Berkeley Happy Hour - March 22nd**

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Hello Berkeley! My name is Ken, my partner Anton and I live in the 78th building, Apt A35. We've been here about 1.5 years and wanted to create a social opportunity to connect with other neighbors in the co-op. After getting approval from the board, we decided on hosting an informal happy hour in the community room next month. Whether you've lived in The Berkeley for years or recently moved in, this will be a great opportunity to meet in person and say hi!

More info/flyers to come soon!

Berkeley Happy Hour

Date: March 22, 2023

Time: 5:30PM-7:30PM

Location: Berkeley Community Room in 77th St Building

## *Berkeley Artist Profile*

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Matt Vander Ende is an accomplished musician and a busy man: not only is he the sitting drummer for the Broadway musical *Wicked*, he is a founding member of the thrash metal band Defiance, which is planning a tour this summer; he also plays in big bands and tours with theater groups. He has played all over the United States, Europe, and Asia. A Berkeley resident since 2008, Matt grew up in California and attended high school in Berkeley, so there was a certain draw to our buildings when he and his wife Siriporn were searching for a coop.

Matt's musical gifts were recognized in grade school. He studied privately with a member of the Oakland Symphony, with an initial focus on classical music, and went on to play not only with his high school's big band and orchestra, but also with the Oakland Youth Orchestra. And at his mom's urging he applied for and earned a place at the prestigious Interlochen Academy of the Arts, where he studied as a boarding student during high school. He credits her for supporting him through all the ups and downs of a rigorous musical education. Following Interlochen, he was a member of the San Francisco Youth Orchestra for five years.

Matt went on to the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he honed his skills as a classical drummer. But at the same time, he was developing a passion for the drum kit, and for thrash metal. He and musician friends formed Defiance, and when Defiance was signed to a record label, he took a break from schooling and toured the USA and Mexico with the band. Returning to graduate, he then worked freelance in fusion, big band, and rock music, moving away from classical drumming. A teacher who worked as music director for TheatreWorks in Palo Alto introduced Matt to musical theater. He joined the company, which tests shows at a regional level before they come to New York. Through connections he made there, Matt broke into New York and Broadway, subbing in *Fiddler on the Roof*. He then subbed in *Wicked*, and drummed in its first national tour in 2005 – he met Siriporn on the Dallas leg of the adventure. In 2006, he became a full-time member of the Broadway production.

The Berkeley (77<sup>th</sup> Street building) has been a wonderful home for Matt and Siriporn. When not working (Siriporn works for Delta Airlines), they enjoy the garden and appreciate how far neighbors have brought it since the garden committee took charge. They love their apartment, and the fact that our buildings are well maintained by a great cadre of friendly, helpful workers. And they consider themselves fortunate to be a part of the vibrant Jackson Heights community, which is home to any number of artists, musicians, actors and performers and has so much to offer.

*Have a neighbor who's involved in the arts who might like to be profiled for the Grapevine?*

*Please send Judy Whiting a line at [jbbwhiting@gmail.com](mailto:jbbwhiting@gmail.com). Thank you!*

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## 78th Street Facade Update

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The 78th Street Facade canopy repair was completed the week of February 13th by an outside contractor. They are currently working on getting the detailing replaced that was damaged when a truck ran into the canopy. A big THANK YOU to our staff who cleaned the marble.

Check out these before and after photos!



BEFORE



AFTER

## SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS

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The next Board Meeting is scheduled for **March 14th, 2023**. Board Meetings in 2023 are scheduled for **April 11th and May 9th**. If you have a topic you would like to discuss with the board, please email them at [berkboard@gmail.com](mailto:berkboard@gmail.com).

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Contributors to this newsletter were Walter Chadwick, Cecilia Durbin, Ed Leahy, Wanda Chin, Liz Hollander and Judy Whiting. If you'd like to contribute content to the Berkeley Grapevine, please email [bconwayb34@gmail.com](mailto:bconwayb34@gmail.com).

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## **BERKELEY — IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS**

**Carlos Rivera**, Superintendent

Ph: (718) 424-0040

Emergency Ph: (646) 403-2558

Email: [superberkeley@gmail.com](mailto:superberkeley@gmail.com)

**Milton Zavala**, Assistant Superintendent

Ph: (718) 424-0040

Emergency Ph: (646) 403-5093

Email: [superberkeley@gmail.com](mailto:superberkeley@gmail.com)

Board Email address:

[berkboard@gmail.com](mailto:berkboard@gmail.com)

Newsletter Email address:

[bconwayb34@gmail.com](mailto:bconwayb34@gmail.com)

Berkeley Google Group/Listserv:

[theberkownerscoop@googlegroups.com](mailto:theberkownerscoop@googlegroups.com)

Berkeley Website:

[www.theberkeleycoop.com](http://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](http://www.metromanagementdev.com)

**Joe Doren**, Senior Property Manager

[jdoren@metromanagementdev.com](mailto:jdoren@metromanagementdev.com)

Ph:(718) 593-8908

**Renee Colon**, Administrative Associate

[rcolon@metromanagementdev.com](mailto:rcolon@metromanagementdev.com)

Ph: (718) 593-8922