

# The Grapevine Newsletter

I heard it through the Grapevine...

## Notes from the December 13, 2022, Meeting of the Board of Directors of Berkowners, Inc.

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

1. Meeting called to order on Zoom by Walter Chadwick at 6:34 pm
2. Minutes of the November meeting were reviewed & adopted with two minor corrections.
3. Superintendent's Report:
  - The remediation company removed most of the mold in A41(77) and air quality was tested. Traces of mold remain, and more work will need to be done.
  - Two proposals for wood floor repairs have been submitted for review for A41(77) and A41(35). Mr. Doren will visit to examine the damage to the floors before we respond.
  - Passeggio Plumbing was called back to examine return lines leaking underneath the concrete slab near the office of the 78 Building.
  - The structural beams in A49(78) were replaced and a lead pan was installed.
  - NY Contracting is currently working on window jambs in B31(78). The shareholder is concerned about possible moisture in the wall. Doug Lister will examine on Thursday.
  - Mr. Lister was called in to examine a possible façade leak in the living room wall A41(35).
  - DOB will require an inspection under Local Law 11 regarding a violation from several years ago on the 78<sup>th</sup> Street building. Mr. Doren said he would check for any record of a violation on the DOB website.
  - When shareholders install gas ranges (78<sup>th</sup> Street), work must be done by someone with a master plumber's license, not the delivery people for the appliance vendor. Mr. Doren suggested we require all gas appliance installations be done by Passeggio, but first we need to make certain Passeggio charges a fair price.
  - Façade inspections for all three buildings required by Local Law 11 will commence shortly.

Mr. Rivera left the meeting at 7:35

4. There still has been no progress on getting the Windows project approved by Landmarks.
  - Ms. Chin will follow up with Diana Chapin, a commissioner on the LPC.
  - Mr. Doren has a working relationship with someone with experience in dealing with the LPC and will contact them.

5. Mr. Doren's Report:
  - Local Law 97 is a sweeping regulation addressing energy consumption, and buildings will need to be compliant or else face stiff fines for excess emissions beginning in 2024. Metro has submitted a proposal for an initial evaluation which the board will vote on at the January meeting.
  - Ms. Chin stated that NYSERDA has a program that will pay 50% of the cost if done by a listed firm.
  - Shareholders are required to provide proof of insurance by 2/15/23 or face fines.
  - Metro is still developing the 2023 budget and should have it shortly. The board will vote on it at the January meeting.
  - Metro Management signed a 12-month contract with Approved Energy for fixed rate billing for gas and electric.
6. Ms. Chin reported on the brokerage account established with Raymond James.
  - Ms. Chin, Mr. Chadwick, and Mr. Leahy are the three authorized contacts
  - Approvals for transactions will be via e-mail and a telephone callback.
  - RJ account is linked to the board-controlled Chase checking account for transfers.
  - The board approved depositing with RJ the funds of \$727K from the sale of Treasury Unit B61(77).
  - The Habib American Bank CD of \$1.3 million has matured and will be closed. The manager of HAB requested we keep the funds at the bank through year end, and Ms. Chin negotiated a rate of 4% for a money market account that will be valid for three months. Mr. Leahy moved that we accept the offer. Ms. Durbin seconded. Unanimously approved.
  - The board discussed how much money to leave readily available in the Chase checking account. Ms. Chin suggested we keep \$500,000 available. Mr. Chadwick expressed concern over having more than the federally insured limit of \$250,000. Mr. Leahy moved that we keep \$250,000 in the Chase account and \$250,000 in the TD checking account that was opened in October 2022 with our matured CD funds that we elected not to roll over. Ms. Durbin seconded. Unanimously approved.
  - Raymond James has an investment policy statement that will be e-mailed to the board for approval.
7. Mr. Chadwick reported on debt collection. Metro is implementing a charge for late payment of maintenance fees, as several shareholders have not paid since Metro became property manager.
8. Ms. Durbin reported on Communications. Notices posted by the mailboxes are sometimes difficult to read and are easily disturbed. Mr. Doren suggested placing plastic sleeves on the wall next to the elevators on every floor for notices.
9. Ms. Durbin reported on the Children's Room/Board Room project. Existing files that are currently stored in the Board room will be reviewed for relevance and either discarded or moved to another room for storage.
10. E4P will be making new drawings for Laundry Rooms which will be e-mailed to board members.

11. eBikes. Mr. Chadwick and Mr. Doren checked the basements of all three buildings for suitable eBike rooms. Will check with the FDNY for suggestions on what would constitute a safe place. Mr. Doren will draft a letter to shareholders setting 2/15/23 as the date on which we will begin imposing fines.

12. The Meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm

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## *Berkeley Artist Profile*

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Ted Feliciello is an author, former actor, and our neighbor in the 77th Street building, where he and his wife Katherine Howard (a dancer and choreographer) have lived for almost 15 years, having moved to Jackson Heights from Los Angeles more than four decades ago. Ted has written in a variety of formats – including plays, screenplays, articles, stories, novels, and novellas. His audiences have ranged from servicemembers and their families (he was a photojournalist in the U.S. Navy) to avid fiction readers. Ted’s first published novella, *3 American Cranks* (three eccentric voices sounding off on life and love in an America gone haywire) is available on Amazon, as is his 2022 novella, [\*Florentia and the Pazzi Boy\*](#). *Florentina* uses the 1478 Pazzi conspiracy against the Medici family as a jumping-off place for a Renaissance-era fable (“incantatory”....“Fellini-esque”) about three orphans coming of age on a remote Tuscan island who must choose between the lure of Florence and the promise of a New World across the sea.

The novella draws on Ted’s interest in Renaissance history and painting, and is colored by two years teaching English in Rome. Ted trained as both a social worker (he received a master’s degree in the field) and a screenwriter (he holds an MFA from UCLA). *Florentia* started as a novel Ted worked on while pursuing a parallel career in psychiatric social work at Queens Hospital. He urges anyone thinking of starting out as a writer to pursue writing in whatever way feels right to them (which does not have to feature a degree in the craft or the formal structure of a writing group) and to find satisfaction in the process itself.

Ted is also an avid tennis player and helped ensure that the renovated Travers Park included improved tennis courts. He appreciates living at the Berkeley, which fosters the spirit of community while respecting privacy. The Berkeley Garden, which Katherine and others started to cultivate years ago, brings people together across differences in background, politics, and professions. He also appreciates all that Jackson Heights has to offer, including excellent restaurants, a good library and good music, and proximity to the rest of NYC, all without need for a car. His only lament is that our neighborhood lacks a public arts center, which could help develop interest and involvement in theater, dance, and other arts among people of all ages and backgrounds.

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

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

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## **JANUARY CHILDREN'S CIRCLE**

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**Saturday January 28th - 11 AM - 77th Street Community Room**

(entrance on South end will be open)

Stories, songs and song play, musical instruments, Fall craft, and treats.

Bring your favorite book to share

All Berkeley families are invited.

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## **CURBSIDE COMPOSTING UPDATE**

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New York City Department of Sanitation has paused the very successful borough wide composting program in Queens until the end of March, 2023.

<https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/site/services/food-scrap-and-yard-waste-page/queens-composting>

The brown bins have been removed and will return once composting pick-up has been restarted. Composting is still available at The Jackson Heights Green Market located on 79th St between 34th Ave & Northern Blvd on Sundays from 8AM-2PM. If you are interested in joining the Berkeley Compost Tumbler email Liz Hollander at [lizholl@gmail.com](mailto:lizholl@gmail.com)

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## **SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS**

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The next Board Meeting is scheduled for **February 14th, 2023**. Board Meetings in 2023 are scheduled for **March 14th and April 11th**. 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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