

The Grapevine Newsletter

I heard it through the Grapevine...

Notes from the November 8, 2022, Meeting of the Board of Directors of Berkowners, Inc.

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), Joe Doren of Metro Management, and Hilary Kuster and Michael DeSilvio of Raymond James (Investment Brokers).

1. Meeting called to order on Zoom by Walter Chadwick at 6:32 pm
2. Minutes were reviewed and adopted with a few minor corrections.
3. Mr. Lister's Report:
 - Windows project – all details have been reviewed and submitted to Landmarks. Expect to gain approval from 1st level staff, after which our application will be reviewed by the entire LPC staff, after which it will need to be reviewed by the Community Board. The Board reviewed the reasons it needs Community Board review. Ms. Chin asked if it was possible to get on the calendar for the CB's December meeting. Mr. Lister doubted it. Mr. Leahy mentioned that Councilperson Krishnan's staff had offered to provide a letter of support, and Mr. Lister responded that once the hearing at the CB has been scheduled, that would be the best time to have them submit it.
 - Mr. Doren raised the issue of Local Law 11, which requires an inspection of all building facades every 5 years, and that Berkowners should have already filed, as the deadline is 2/21/23. The DOB requires an inspection every 60 feet, including alcoves, a total of 20 drops per building. Three methods are acceptable" Scaffold Drop, Cherry Picker, or Rope Drop. Mr. Lister stated the Rope Drop is best, and he will be there for the inspections.
 - The work on the 78th Street Marquee counts as repair to an existing section and therefore need not be submitted to Landmarks.
- Mr. Lister left the meeting at 7:10.

4. Superintendent's Report:

- A41/77 mold problem discovered by the buyer's inspector has been assessed by Enviro Test, Inc. Mold was seen in several places in the apartment, including some airborne. Buyer's attorney and Seth Sahr are discussing the level of remediation needed. Mr. Chadwick stated we will either reduce the selling price or pay for the remediation work.

- Ms. Julie Nymann took measurements and submitted drawings on the board/children's room project. She may suggest removing a wall separating the file room.
- Passeggio Plumbing replaced the lead bend for A41/77 and a wax gasket in A61/77.
- The breaching smoke pipe in 78th Street was installed.
- A49/78 lead pan is pending due to floor joist in the shower stall. NY Contracting was engaged to make the repairs to the floor joist.
- NY Contracting removed 2 sections of a closet wall and waterproofed the interior brick wall in A41/77.
- Painting in the Community Room in 77 Street will be completed by the end of this week.
- B63/35 – Shareholder reported a package stolen and was told she had to report it to the police directly. She asked to see the video. Mr. Rivera informed her he could not allow that, but that the police would review it once she reported the theft.
- Ms. Hollander asked how the composting project was going. Mr. Rivera replied that pickups were being made at the same time as the regular garbage and that both were going into the same truck. Mr. Doren said he would double-check the schedule for composting pickup.
- Mr. Rivera left the meeting at 7:30

5. Mr. DeSilvio and Ms. Kuster joined the meeting at 7:30.

- Mr. DeSilvio described how Raymond James could manage our invested reserves in a “ladder” of CDs, none of which would exceed the \$250,000 limit on FDIC insurance by reaching banks all over the country. They could also invest in Treasuries. He assured the board this would not be a CD-ARS account, nor would it be through a money market or mutual fund. Treasuries would be purchased mostly through the “after” market for better pricing and a better yield. CDs could also be bought and sold. If Berkowners needed to cash out a CD before its maturity date, we could sell it instead of terminating it, preserving most of the interest earned.
- Mr. Rosenblatt asked how fees are charged. Mr. DeSilvio said that fees could be either on a fee-for-service or per-transaction basis.
- Mr. Chadwick asked if there was a minimum amount to invest, as we have \$4 million in reserve in three banks, but we also have the cost of the window replacement project coming up. Mr. DeSilvio assured us they have clients with smaller amounts to invest and can work with us. Also, the ability to sell CDs rather than terminate them when funds are needed means that we can invest much more of the reserve for a better return.
- Mr. DeSilvio said if we decide to go forward with Raymond James, they will need a point person and at least one backup, better if there are two.
- Mr. DeSilvio and Ms. Kuster left the meeting at 8:00.

6. Mr. Doren reported on fixed electric and gas billing.

- Our fixed rate lock expired October 31. A rate lock provides a fixed kilowatt-hour rate for budgeting purposes.
- Metro has a broker who studies the market for best pricing, but we have a short window to lock in the price. Since we currently have no utility lock, this is a good time to get one.
- Ms. Chin said she would contact Carmine Nuzzi at Metropolitan Refunds, who works with a large number of properties managed by Metro.

7. Mr. Chadwick gave an update on the sales of the Treasury owned units.

- B61 is in contract but no action has been taken yet by the Admissions Committee. Phil Washburne is serving as temporary chair and will schedule an interview shortly.
- A41 is going to contract with buyers who lost out on B61. Currently dealing with the mold issue.
- B23 is now in contract.

8. Ms. Chin gave the financial report. Reserves are invested as follows:

- Chase: \$1.4 million
- TD Bank: \$1.033 million
- Hab Bank: \$281,000 in a 6-month CD
- Hab Bank: \$1.255 million maturing on 12/2/22. We can renew for 3 months.

9. Ms. Hollander presented the Garden Committee report.

The committee has distributed vacant plots. They have also asked Carlos about the sprinkler system, as there are concerns about over-watering. There are also concerns about how Lanmarc is maintaining the lawns, particularly the South Lawn, where the trees need to be pruned to allow more sunlight. It might be a good idea to block off parts of the lawn to allow grass to grow thicker. Another possibility would be to use something other than grass for ground cover. No specific suggestion has been offered.

10. Ms. Durbin presented the Communications Committee report.

All references to Wavecrest have been deleted from the Berkeley website. The committee is looking for ways to improve the website. Belinda Conway is doing well with the Grapevine, which will now feature an item each month on a resident involved with the arts.

11. Ms. Durbin presented Julie Nymann's drawings for the Board/Children's Room.

Mr. Chadwick said more attention needs to be given to the file room. Mr. Leahy asked that more detail be provided on the size of the new boardroom compared to the old.

12. The board discussed options for the Holiday Party and explained the problem with using the Community Room to Mr. Doren. Mr. Chadwick suggested having the party in one of the lobbies. Ms. Hollander expressed concern that it might be disturbing to residents adjacent to the lobby. Mr. Chadwick suggested it could be from 4:00 to 6:00 on a Saturday afternoon. Ms. Russell added it could be with just wine and cheese, rather than the huge array of food we used to have. No final decision was made.

13. The board agreed to hold a special meeting on November 17, 2022 at 7:30 PM to discuss engaging Raymond James to invest the co-op's reserves.

14. The Meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.

Berkeley Artist Profile

Javier Arau is a well-known presence in New York City and international jazz circles . . . and he's our neighbor: he and his family have called the 77th street building home since 2005. Berkeley is the birthplace of the New York Jazz Academy, <https://www.nyjazzacademy.com/>, an institution Javier founded in 2009 which is headquartered in Manhattan. Javier, a New England Conservatory of Music-trained saxophonist, not only runs this vibrant school where musicians at any level (and any age) can take online or in-person classes in vocal, instrumental and ensemble work, he also formed and performs with a big band, the Javier Arau Jazz Orchestra, composes, works with high school bands and teaches at various colleges across the country, and is author of several written works on music theory and improvisation.

Javier has also scored films, including most recently the *Films BYKids* series on PBS. In addition, Javier was recently interviewed by [NPR's Ira Flatow for the December 2 segment of Science Friday](#), exploring synergies between science and swing. His music outreach program, *Jelly and Jam Session*, was licensed by the NYC Department of Education to be used in the public school music curriculum. And he has received numerous awards for performance, composing, arranging and pedagogy.

Javier and his wife Kelley are Sacramento, CA natives and were high school sweethearts. They relocated to New York City from Boston in 2001 and moved to Berkeley in 2005 after living at another Jackson Heights building for two years. Originally a musician as well, Kelley's interests have taken her in a new direction: early childhood education; she now works as Dept of Early Childhood Education (DECE) Education Administrator for the New York City Dept. of Education. Their daughters Maya (17) and Juliet (15) were participants in the Berkeley Children's Circle from the time it started. Both are available to work as babysitters! The family is deeply involved in the Jackson Heights neighborhood: Maya even had the enviable summer job of working as a counter person at Lety's Bakery. They are really happy to be part of the Berkeley, a family-friendly place where people of all ages and backgrounds live in harmony, thanks in no small part to the buildings' wonderful staff.

HELP PREVENT PACKAGE THEFT IN THE HOLIDAY SEASON AND YEAR ROUND!

If you see a package for someone on your hall by the mailboxes, carry it upstairs and leave it in front of their door! Why not? Fewer packages in a centralized location to attract theft and just a nice thing to do.

BERKELEY INVESTMENT UPDATE

At a board meeting on Nov 17, 2022, the Board approved opening an account with Raymond James Financial Services (RJFS) to invest the corporation's reserve funds. The financial advisor team was referred by the corporation's accountant, and is experienced with working with other cooperative corporations. They will manage a portfolio of bank-issued Certificates of Deposits, with varying maturities and a maximum of \$250,000 per bank to keep within FDIC insurance limits. The benefits of this one account are access to a broad choice of investments, professional management of a low risk portfolio, and more efficient use of the Board's time by not having to monitor multiple bank CDs that were not fully FDIC insured.

CHRISTMAS TREE DISPOSAL INFO

Beginning Friday, January 6, 2023 through Saturday, January 14, 2023 — weather permitting — DSNY will collect and compost clean Christmas trees.

Trees are chipped, mixed with leaves, and recycled into rich compost for NYC's parks, institutions, and community gardens.

Before your Christmas tree can be collected, you MUST:

- Remove ALL lights, ornaments, tinsel, and stands from the tree.
- Make sure the tree is not wrapped in ANY plastic or placed inside a plastic bag.
- Leave the tree at the curb between the designated dates (January 6 - 14).

The city has other resources for mulching your tree - and for disposal of artificial trees, at

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/dsny/site/services/food-scrap-and-yard-waste-page/christmas-trees>

SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS

The next Board Meeting is scheduled for **January 10, 2023**. Board Meetings in 2023 are scheduled for **February 14th and March 14th**. 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, 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.

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