

Brooklyn Community Board 17
4112 Farragut Road, Brooklyn NY 11210
Parks and Beautification Committee Meeting
ONLINE
April 7th, 2026

ROLL CALL | PRESENT

Berlotte Antoine, Chair
Jody Walch
7187****52
Nicole Julius
Adele Bennett
Brie D.
Jorge

Dorothy Gordon
Cheryl Saunders
Vonetta
Audrey Henderson
Kwame Afreh
7189****53
Ann H

PRESENTER:
Eduardo Torres

Call to Order: Parks & Beautification Committee Meeting was called to order by Berlotte Antoine at 7:31 p.m.

- Chair Berlotte Antoine opened the meeting and introduced co-chair Nicole Julius and member Dorothy Gordon to assist with presentation session.
- Community Associate Ayanna Sinclair introduced herself as the new hire with Community Board 17.
- Members including Jody Walch, Adele Bennett, Jorge, and Brie D. introduced themselves.
- Chair Antoine acknowledged previous meeting contributions by members Dorothy Gordon and Brie DeCosta.

Chairperson's Report:

Chair Antoine provided a brief report highlighting preparations for the upcoming Big Reuse kickoff event and acknowledged members who led the previous meeting. She also mentioned the absence of member Jackie Williams and planned to update her post-meeting.

- Chair Antoine reported on planning for the Big Reuse kickoff event, hoping for favorable weather.
- She acknowledged members Dorothy Gordon and Brie DaCosta for their leadership in the last meeting.
- Member Jackie Williams was excused due to absence, with plans to brief her after the meeting.

Approval of meeting minutes

- February & March meeting minutes approved

Presentation(s)

- Eduardo Torres – New York City Poison Control Center

Introduction of Presenter Eduardo Torres

Co-chair Nicole Julius introduced Eduardo Torres, a health educator from the New York City Poison Control Center, who was invited to present on plant poisoning and prevention. She provided background on the Poison Center's services and contact information.

- Nicole Julius introduced Eduardo Torres as the presenter from the NYC Poison Control Center.
- She explained the Poison Center is staffed by certified pharmacists and nurses providing 24/7 poison information and treatment advice.
- The Poison Center's hotline number (1-800-222-1222) was shared for community use.

Presentation on Plant Poisoning and Prevention

Eduardo Torres delivered an extensive presentation covering indoor and outdoor plant poisoning risks, common toxic plants, symptoms of exposure, and prevention strategies. He emphasized the Poison Center's role and availability for assistance.

Additional Safety Topics and Resources

Torres expanded on food poisoning prevention, cross-contamination, and the Poison Center's broader services beyond plants. He shared upcoming community events and reiterated the importance of the Poison Center hotline.

- Torres discussed food safety tips to prevent poisoning, such as proper storage and avoiding cross-contamination.
- He mentioned the Poison Center also handles medication questions, animal bites, and chemical exposures.

- Torres announced an upcoming event at Grand Army Plaza on April 22 for community education.
- He reassured attendees that Poison Center staff are local medical professionals available 24/7.

Q&A Session on Plant Poisoning

Members asked questions about specific plants, symptoms, and safety precautions. Eduardo Torres provided clarifications on contact versus ingestion toxicity, allergic reactions, and recommended calling the Poison Center for guidance.

- Member Jorge inquired about toxicity of snake plants and elephant ears; Torres confirmed both contact and ingestion can cause reactions.
- Brie D. asked about pokeweed handling; Torres described symptoms and advised caution when pulling plants.
- Dorothy Gordon asked about what constitutes a 'large amount' ingestion; Torres explained it varies individually and recommended keeping plants away from children and pets.
- Torres encouraged calling the Poison Center for any poisoning concerns, emphasizing confidentiality and professionalism.

Park Advocacy and Maintenance Updates

Chair Antoine and members discussed ongoing advocacy efforts related to park maintenance, signage, and dog policies. Updates were shared on dog bag dispensers, signage, and petitions for park improvements.

- Chair Antoine reported on a petition campaign related to Tilden Park and encouraged members to support it at their discretion.
- Members confirmed the presence of dog bag dispensers and signage at Children and Paerdegat Parks, with plans to verify their locations.
- Dorothy Gordon raised concerns about inconsistent 'no dogs allowed' signage at the park, prompting a commitment from Chair Antoine to investigate.
- Vonetta Sylvester clarified that service dogs are allowed under the ADA, while emotional support dogs are not, and noted that park signage may be outdated.
- Members agreed to follow up on signage and enforcement issues to ensure clarity for park users.
- Chair Antoine mentioned ongoing renovation projects at Railroad Park and promised to provide updates when available.

Community Support

Co-chair Nicole Julius informed members about a collective video project to support Chair Daley, who is currently hospitalized. Members were encouraged to submit short video messages of encouragement by a specified deadline.

- Nicole Julius announced a plan to create a collective video of encouragement for Chair Daley during his hospitalization.
- She requested members to record and send short video messages via WhatsApp by Friday for compilation.
- Nicole offered assistance to members who may struggle with technology to participate in the video project.
- Chair Antoine encouraged member participation.

Committee Announcements and Event Coordination

Chair Antoine shared updates on the Big Reuse event scheduled for Saturday, April 11, and solicited input on park locations for future events. She also addressed t-shirt distribution and volunteer participation.

- The Big Reuse street tree care event is scheduled for Saturday, April 11, with 12 volunteers confirmed.
- Chair Antoine requested feedback on whether to hold the annual fair at Paerdegat Park or consider other parks.
- She asked members to indicate if they need t-shirts and provide sizes for ordering.
- Member Kwame Afreh announced next General Board meeting featuring a presentation on IBX development and encouraged attendance.
- Members discussed scheduling conflicts for the May 7 meeting and coordinated accordingly.
- Chair Antoine clarified that new t-shirts will be provided to members regardless of prior receipt if the old ones are not presentable.
- Members discussed logistical challenges of t-shirt distribution at the event site and the need to order additional sizes.
- Dorothy Gordon emphasized the convenience of holding annual event at Paerdegat park due to proximity to the office for supplies.

Meeting Closing and Participant Acknowledgments

The meeting concluded with expressions of appreciation for the presentation and participation. Chair Antoine committed to distributing presentation materials and maintaining communication with members.

- Chair Antoine thanked Eduardo Torres for his informative presentation and interaction.
- Members expressed appreciation for the valuable safety information shared.
- Torres committed to sending presentation materials and fridge magnets to the board for distribution.
- Chair Antoine acknowledged late arrivals and invited brief introductions.
- The meeting ended with reminders about upcoming events and follow-up actions.
- Members were reminded of the next meeting schedule and encouraged to participate in upcoming events.

Adjournment:

Jorge Tait: Motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Vonetta Sylvester: seconded the meeting for adjournment.

Meeting Adjourned.