

Valerie S. Mason
Chair

Will Brightbill
District Manager



505 Park Avenue, Suite 620
New York, N.Y. 10022-1106
(212) 758-4340
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)
www.cb8m.com – Website
info@cb8m.com – E-Mail

The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Voting Reform and Charter Revision Task Force
Tuesday, May 13, 2025 - 6:30 PM
Conducted remotely on Zoom

Please note: The resolutions contained in the committee minutes are recommendations submitted by the committee co-chairs to the Community Board. At the monthly full board meeting, the resolutions are discussed and voted upon by all members of Community Board 8 Manhattan.

Resolutions for Approval:

Item 2A: NYC Elections Should Continue to be Held on Odd Numbered Years

Item 2B: The ULURP Community Board 60 Day Review Clock and any Other Review Clock Should not Start in July and August but should Pause or not Start until September.

Item 2C: Even if ULURP is revised, the Community Board's role in the ULURP Process Should not be Diminished

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Michele Birnbaum, Alida Camp, Sahar Husain, John McClement, Judy Schneider, TJ Stein, Shari Weiner (Co-chair)

Board Members Excused: Ed Hartzog (Co-chair)

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 16

The meeting was called to order at 6:30.

Co-chair Shari Weiner explained that the meeting would be in two parts. The first part is a presentation on rank choice voting by Susan Lerner of Common Cause. The second part of the meeting will be to review the draft report of the City Charter Change Commission and to propose amendments based on that report.

1. Presentation on Ranked Choice Voting by Susan Lerner from Common Cause

We were very lucky to have Susan Lerner, who is the Executive Director of Common Cause - New York, once again to give us a slide presentation and explain the rules of Rank Choice Voting in New York City.

Susan explained that Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is used in New York City for primary elections for the Mayor, Controller, Borough President, Public Advocate, and members of the City Council. This will be the third election in which (RCV) is being used.

Some of the advantages of RCV is that it ensures the winner has majority backing by distributing votes based on preferences until someone has 50%. Voters can rank their true favorite without fear of wasting their vote. If their top choice is eliminated, their vote still counts towards their next preference. Furthermore, candidates are motivated to appeal to a wider audience, including supporters of other candidates, to gain second and third choice rankings; this can lead to more positive issue-focused campaigns. It also opens the field to new voices because voters can express multiple preferences; third-party and minority candidates are less likely to be seen as spoilers, encouraging more diverse candidates. RCV, saves time and money. In an election with a plurality, it may require separate runoff elections; RCV can produce a majority winner in a single round, avoiding the cost and low turnout of a second election.

Susan concluded by encouraging everyone to vote by Primary Day on June 24. Early voting in NYC is Saturday June 14, 2025 - Sunday June 22, 2025.

Shari thanks Susan Lerner for an excellent presentation and said we would see her back in 2 years before the next Ranked Choice Voting Election.

2. Discussion of the preliminary report of the Charter Revision Commission (Mayor's Commission), available [here](#).

As we are aware, there was a Charter Revision Commission authorized by the City Council and a Commission authorized by the mayor. Shari explained that because there is a Mayor's Commission, none of the recommendations of the City Council Commission will appear on this November's ballot. Therefore, she recommended that we focus on the recommendation contained in the Mayor's Commission's Preliminary Report. The final amendments to appear on the November ballot have to be sent to the Board of Elections by August 5, 2025.

The following 3 topics were approved by unanimous vote of the Task Force to be made into resolutions. Shari indicated she would prepare drafts of 3 separate resolutions and send them to task members for their revisions:

1. Elections should continue to be held on odd numbered years.
2. The ULURP Community Board 60 day review or other review clocks should not start in July and August but should pause or not start until September.
3. Even if ULURP is revised, the Community Board role in the ULURP process should not be diminished!

These 3 resolutions will be sent for the Full Board's approval on May 21, 2025.

Resolution #1 NYC Elections Should Continue to be Held on Odd Numbered Years

WHEREAS with NYC elections being held on odd numbered years, they are not overshadowed by state wide or national races, which gives local candidates and issues more visibility, allowing voters to better focus on city-specific concerns like housing, policing, schools, and transit; and

WHEREAS even numbered years already have crowded ballots with Federal and State contests so adding NYC elections could lead to voter fatigue where overwhelmed voters might skip local races or make less informed choices; and

WHEREAS with fewer elections happening simultaneously, candidates for city office may have more opportunities to engage with voters, participate in debates, and be covered by local media; and

WHEREAS all candidates for multiple positions on multiple ballot lines will be vying for advertising time in all media, that advertising will become more expensive, thereby inhibiting most campaigns financially and resulting in less information about each candidate reaching the voters;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that CB8M recommends that the City Charter Revision Commission NOT recommend that New York City elections be moved to even numbered years.

Board Members in Favor: 7-0-0-0 (Birnbaum, Camp, Husain, McClement, Schneider, Stein, Weiner)

Resolution #2 The ULURP Community Board 60 Day Review and other Review Clocks Should Not Start In July and August But Should Pause or Not Start Until September

WHEREAS as Community Boards do not meet in July and August, if the review period starts in July or August it undermines public participation because boards are inactive and many community members are away; and

WHEREAS initiating a review during July and August would be equivalent to sidelining the boards entirely from the process; and

WHEREAS ULURP is designed to ensure transparency and public input. Starting the review clock when the public and boards are not active defeats its purpose, and it creates an impression that the process is being rushed or can be conducted in bad faith; and

WHEREAS developers or city agencies could potentially exploit the summer break to minimize scrutiny by timing submissions for July or August. Furthermore, this creates an inequity, especially in communities with fewer resources to monitor or challenge projects during the off-season; and

WHEREAS the City Planning Commission and other bodies have historically recognized holidays and summer recesses as valid reasons for pausing clocks, or extending deadlines;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that CB8M recommends that the City Charter Revision Commission recommend that the ULURP 60 Community Board review and any other review clock should not start in July or August but pause or not start until September.

Board Members in Favor: 7-0-0-0 (Birnbaum, Camp, Husain, McClement, Schneider, Stein, Weiner)

Resolution #3 Even if ULURP is revised, the Community Board's role in the ULURP process should not be diminished

WHEREAS Community Boards are the only city entity composed entirely of local volunteers who live and work in the neighborhood and thus are the front line of local democracy, bringing in deep local knowledge of neighborhood conditions, history, and needs that a centralized agency may overlook; and

WHEREAS Community Boards host public hearings where residents can voice support, concerns, or opposition to land use proposals. Weakening the role of Community Boards would cut out a major avenue for community voices, especially for lower income or marginalized groups; and

WHEREAS Community Boards understand how proposals might affect traffic, school capacity, housing affordability, open space, small businesses, and neighborhood character. Their recommendations help share projects to reduce harm and increase community benefit; and

WHEREAS Even if the votes of Community Boards are advisory, Community Boards often succeed in negotiating changes to development plans, such as more affordable housing or stronger tenant protection. Diminishing their role could lead to less responsive or balanced projects;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED That CB8M recommends to the City Charter Revision Commission that even if the ULURP process is revised, Community Board's role in the ULURP process should not be diminished.

Board Members in Favor: 7-0-0-0 (Birnbaum, Camp, Husain, McClement, Schneider, Stein, Weiner)

3. Discussion of the preliminary report of the Commission to Strengthen Local Democracy (City Council Commission), available [here](#).

See above.

4. Old Business

No items of Old Business were discussed.

5. New Business

No items of New Business were discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Sharon Weiner and Ed Hartzog, Co-Chairs