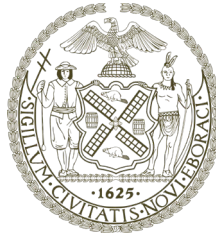


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**The City of New York  
Community Board 8 Manhattan  
Vendors Task Force  
Wednesday, April 29, 2026 – 6:30pm  
This meeting was conducted via Zoom**

**MINUTES**

**Board Members Present:** Bill Angelos, Michele Birnbaum, Miles Fink, Marco Tamayo, Matthew Bauer\*, and Monica McKane\*.

\*Public Member

**Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 30**

Our meeting began at 6:32 PM and addressed the agenda, as follows:

After introductory remarks by Co-chair Michele Birnbaum, the meeting began with Agenda Item 1, which was a joint item with the Small Business Committee and its Co-Chair, Bill Angelos. Michele Birnbaum introduced representatives Emmanuel Martinez, the Senior Program Manager of the Outreach team, and Karen Watanabe, the Government Affairs Liaison of the Mayor’s Office of Small Business Services.

**Item 1: Informational session and description of the duties of the soon-to-be-appointed executive director of the Office of Street Vendor Services, Carina Kaufman-Gutierrez**

**A slide of the job description was shared on the screen and read aloud, as follows:**

*The Department of Small Business Services (SBS) helps unlock economic potential and create economic security for all New Yorkers by connecting New Yorkers to good jobs, creating stronger businesses, and building a fairer economy in neighborhoods across the five boroughs.*

*The Office of Street Vendor Services (SVS) will be at the forefront of the City’s efforts to support New York City’s street vending entrepreneurs through proactive outreach. SVS will serve as a central hub within SBS, focused on street vendor assistance and helping street vendors navigate permitting, licensing, and compliance requirements. They will work closely with interagency partners, community-based organizations, and local stakeholders to advance a vibrant and equitable street vending ecosystem in all five boroughs.*

*The Executive Director of the Office of Street Vendor Services will lead New York City’s first-ever dedicated team supporting street vendors. This role is responsible for building and operating a new office within SBS that delivers education, outreach, programs, and leads intra-and-interagency coordination for food vendors and general vendors citywide.*

*The Executive Director will oversee strategy, staffing, partnerships, data reporting, vendor management, and a variety of programs designed to ensure street vendors have access to the tools, resources, and technical assistance needed to start, operate, and grow in New York City.*

*The Executive Director will:*

*- Lead and set the agenda for the Office of Street Vendor Services, including managing day-to-day operations, supervising staff, overseeing contracts, and ensuring alignment across agency efforts.*

*- Serve as a clearinghouse for services and resources available to street vendors and ensure information is publicly accessible through SBS platforms.*

*- Assisting street vendors, in collaboration with SBS's NYC Business Express Service Team (SBS BEST), the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection (DCWP), and the Office of Street Vendor Enforcement at the Department of Sanitation (DSNY), Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and the Department of Veteran Services (DVS), in navigating the street vending regulatory environment, including permitting, licensing, renewals, and inspections.*

*- Develop, inform, and deliver multilingual education, outreach, and technical assistance programs with targeted efforts in areas of high vendor density and areas with elevated levels of community complaints.*

*- Advise agency leadership on policymaking related to street vending, ensuring deliberation on public health, safety, and sanitation concerns, and to also consider incorporating economic justice.*

*- Identify operational gaps and recommend policy, legislative, or rulemaking changes to improve vendor compliance, reduce unnecessary penalties, and strengthen economic justice and opportunities. Work closely with SBS major programmatic divisions and teams focused on industry partnerships.*

*- Build and maintain strong relationships with street vendors, vendor associations, business improvement districts, community boards, and merchant groups.*

*- Oversee the production and publication of the annual SVS report required by law, including tracking the number of vendors served and types of assistance provided, disaggregated by percentage, and any other relevant reporting as requested.*

*- Lead regular communications with the street vendor community and partners through newsletters, digital content, public briefings, webpage, and other outreach materials.*

*- Represent and participate in the agency on the NYC Street Vendor Advisory Board and participate in public meetings, industry events, advisory bodies, interagency and interagency working groups, and hearings before the New York City Council as needed.*

Mr. Martinez made some introductory comments about being happy that the community is interested in this topic, as did Ms. Watanabe, who thanked the Task Force for organizing this discussion topic. The presenters were happy to listen, take notes tonight, and look forward to attending the Fall meeting along with the new Executive Director, Carina Kaufman Gutierrez. Michele Birnbaum will email questions to

them so that they can be prepared for the Fall meeting. The Questions were submitted by the Co-chairs of the Small Business Committee, Alida Camp and Bill Angelos.

The following questions that were posed at the meeting and then emailed to the agency representatives in the following form:

**QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED BY SMALL BUSINESS SERVICES/STREET VENDOR DIVISION**

- How would conflicts between vendors and small businesses be addressed?
- What action does the city take, if any, if small businesses complain about street vendor non-compliance?
- Is there a mechanism to enhance compliance other than enforcement?
- Where do the business trash bins go if there are vendors in front of the establishments?
- Who is responsible for cleaning and repairing sidewalks if businesses renting space are required to maintain sidewalks, but vendors are on their sidewalks?
- How do you see the Office balancing vendor access and opportunity and the operational needs of brick-and-mortar businesses?
- Will the office play a role in developing location-based guidelines such as spacing, density or proximity to storefronts to reduce conflicts on commercial corridors?
- How will the office coordinate with agencies such as the Department of Health, Department of Sanitation and the NYPD to ensure a consistent and predictable approach on the ground?
- What does success look like from your perspective: fewer violations, increased compliance, or fewer conflicts between vendors and businesses?
- What feedback is SBS receiving from small businesses regarding street vending, and are there particular corridors where the impact is more pronounced?
- How can the City address the perception among small businesses that rules are unevenly applied?
- Are there opportunities to better integrate vendors into the broader small business ecosystem, i.e., through training, compliance support, or designated commercial zones?
- Are you seeing repeat violations in the same locations, and if so, does that suggest enforcement is not changing behavior?
- How do you ensure consistency in enforcement across different neighborhoods?
- Are there specific corridors where enforcement complaints from businesses are concentrated?
- Are you seeing displacement from street vending into parks due to weaker enforcement in park areas or stronger enforcement in certain areas?
- Are we measuring success by reducing the number of vendors or by reducing conflicts between vendors and businesses?
- Are we seeing increased non-compliance with the increase in the number of street vendors with no increase in the number of enforcers?
- If the same issue persists year after year, does that suggest a need to rethink the structure rather than just increase enforcement?
- From a small business perspective, the concern isn't just the presence of vendors, its how vending is managed at the street level.

Christine, President of the Board of the Barbizon, expressed concern about recent legislation that addresses clearance between a vendor's placement and the pedestrian way. There are contradictions

between the New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) requirement of 8 ft clearance and vendors having to be 2 feet from the curb. Though vendors seem to consistently be operating on streets that are narrower than 10 feet.

A constituent by the name of Orah raised the issue that in the job description, there was no note of how this new office would respond to the community directly. The description of the job only speaks of vendor education and advocacy.

Michele Birnbaum raised the issue that there is often conflict between the brick-and-mortar businesses and the street vendors. Michele sent a video for staff to play for the group, in which a retailer expresses fear that he may have to go out of business because of the non-compliance of a vendor in front of his shop. She explained the differences between health regulations for fruit being sold on the street and fruit sold in stores.

Monica McKane had a question about the job description for the new Small Business position, saying that she would like to have more time to consider it, and so we have included it in the minutes.

Miles Fink added that when a member of the public or anyone has an issue with vending, they can come to a Street Life meeting, but Michele Birnbaum explained that small businesses come with applications, but street vendors do not, and so a Street Life meeting would not be the appropriate forum for such discussion. That is why the Vendors Task Force was formed, to help address matters specifically related to vendors.

## **Item 2: Discussion of Enforcement of Vendor Laws with the Department of Health and Department of Sanitation**

Matt Bauer, Executive Director of the Madison Avenue BID, spoke about the many kinds of vendors on Madison Avenue, and he is looking forward to the new Small Business Office in the hope that it could address some of the conflicts arising between brick-and-mortar businesses and street vendors.

Michele Birnbaum explained that with the issuing of new licenses, it is now the rule that the new cart receives a chip, but we understand that no new programming has been designed for that chip, which currently only notes if a food vendor has reported for his/her food rating. Using that chip for tracking could be very helpful to law enforcement. Michele Birnbaum raised the issue of the food truck on East 69th Street, which could be tracked if it had a chip so that the DSNY and DOHMH would know if the truck went back to its commissary each 24-hour period, as required. Mr. Okotieuro introduced Antonio Wittaker, who is also with the DSNY and can be involved in inspection and enforcement.

Mr. Okotieuro talked about the Commissaries and the requirement that they inspect food carts and trucks once every 24 hours.

Michele Birnbaum asked how many calls to 311 or how many infractions it requires for a license to be revoked. There was no definitive answer regarding such a statement. In addition, there are hours of permitted vending operations, specifically for streets that permit vending, but none of the locations permit 24-hour vending. (To note: Michele Birnbaum is happy to report that the food truck vendor in non-compliance for many infractions was removed the next day.)

Mr. Okotieuro reported on an infraction survey in our area. Michele Birnbaum pointed out that if we don't know the number of infractions committed, reporting on the number of summonses issued does not allow us to sufficiently evaluate how adequate the enforcement is. There are only 40 inspectors for the entire city, which is wholly inadequate to address such vending concerns presented at the meeting.

The new Director of the Vendor Division at SBS came from the Street Vendors' Project, which did not advocate for Veteran Vendors, nor did it work with the community. Michele Birnbaum showed a picture of veteran vendors in front of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET) and the crowding that exists in the area.

Michele Birnbaum explained some of the rules and regulations, based on Resolutions proposed by this Vendors Task Force and passed by the Full Board, that could be implemented and actually serve as solutions for those non-compliance issues that are repeatedly brought to us.

The constituent, Jackie Esposito, spoke about the food truck on East 63rd Street and Lexington Avenue. There were about 10 people on the call who expressed concern about this issue. This truck has neon lights, a generator, is parked at a meter, and remains in the same spot 24/7, so it is not cleaned consistently. East 63rd Street truck received 3 tickets from the DOHMH in one month, yet they were not removed. Jackie expressed that the law must be enforced, is asking for help, and that all their concerns have been documented and recorded. The constituent wants to know at what point licenses are taken away because people in the community are negatively impacted, and someone should be held accountable. Mr. Okotieuro says every action he takes is guided by the law and also by the rules within the agency. DOHMH is still in charge and can enforce, even though DSNY is the lead enforcement agency for vendor complaints.

Pauline Ferrante of the DOHMH said they can enforce the issue of the lack of return to the commissary. It is recommended that all people who have concerns call 311. Health issues go to the DOHMH, but other infractions will go directly to DSNY.

Ms. Ferrante said the tracking chips can't be used for anything other than when they are up for their letter Grade.

Michele Birnbaum asked about intra-agency rules, which are different from laws passed by the City Council, with an eye towards expanding the use of chips, if that is not precluded by law. Time, place, and location are not in the purview of the DOHMH. Michele explained that the Task Force wants its meetings to be problem-solving, not just complaint sessions.

Another constituent by the name of Michael said that most cars have a global positioning system (GPS) so that we are all being tracked. He complained heavily about the vendor on East 63rd Street – people lining up for food, sitting on plant beds, leaving their garbage. He said it's unthinkable that City Council keeps increasing the number of vendor licenses with no additional enforcement, despite the complaints from the public. The taco truck on East 69th and Second Avenue has been in non-compliance for 10 years.

The constituent, David Goldsmith, offered that he is an 86-year-old retired physician with very limited mobility, and he can't pass on the street because of the East 63rd Street food truck and the customers, who block the street when they are in line and in a stationary position when they are eating. He notes

that there is a lot of evidence of non-compliance that supports revoking its license and removing the truck.

Christine, agrees with others about the East 63rd Street truck. She is concerned about all the things that happen with vendor non-compliance, i.e. propane on the street, noise, visual blight, health and crowding violations.

Mr. Okotieuro reported that we have 40 enforcing agents in the whole city for food and general merchandise vendors. He said he would go to the site tomorrow during lunchtime. Jackie further explained that this vendor can't vend in the parking spot, and that would be evidence alone to remove him. (The next day, enforcement went to the truck, issued three health summonses, and closed it down.)

Demetrious Orfanoudis asks why the vendors aren't getting tickets from the police department when he's parked illegally at a 3-hour meter.

Lucas said the truck used to be parked in front of the subway station on the other side of Lexington Avenue and stated that he was so relieved when he left the previous location.

Christine had a similar situation on East 58th and 9th Avenue, reporting grease, smoke, vendors operation 24/7, and her Community Board sent a letter to elected officials listing all the violations, and they now have enforcing agencies coming more regularly to the location. Also, the community went to the NYPD Council meetings to express these concerns.

Monica McKane suggested that the community go to the 19th Precinct Council, which meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM.

Miles Fink wanted to know if we could send a letter to our local city officials. He added that he was happy with this meeting because the correct agency representatives were there. Michele Birnbaum explained that in between meetings, she forwards complaints to the appropriate representatives.

### **Item 3: Discussion with a Parks Enforcement Officer on Vendor Laws in Parks**

We had hoped to have a PEP (Parks Enforcement Patrol) officer at the meeting, but did not hear back from any, despite numerous attempts to make contact over the month prior to the meeting.

Michele Birnbaum explained that no one is permitted to vend in the parks except those with special licenses and who have paid very costly fees. We have now noticed that the local parks have been infiltrated by all kinds of general merchandise and food vendors. We discussed this extensively at our last meeting, which was attended by a PEP supervisor. At that time, Mr. Okotieuro was to ask the PEP division if they could join them in enforcement. He reported that no decision was made on this request, as of yet.

Marco Tamayo showed pictures of his walk between East 79th Street and East 96th Street, which showed bagel vendors, fruit vendors, and clusters of vendors. At Central Park South, there were many vendors without licenses with vendors accumulating near the park entrances. Whether or not a vendor has a license is irrelevant, because they cannot be vending in the park, even if they do have a permit.

Michele Birnbaum hopes that the new head of the department in Small Business Services (SBS) will address this, but there is no indication that they will.

Mr. Okotieuro said that there are still conversations going on about permitting DSNY and others to enforce near or in the park, but no decision has been made yet. DSNY only helps if the PEP officers specifically request their presence. They also need the correct ticket form, which they do not have at this time. Michele Birnbaum asked if the Central Park Precinct could participate in enforcement. They don't have the ticket book, either, but NYPD can enter the park if necessary. PEP has to ask for their help.

Miles Fink shared that he worked for a group that had dedicated vendor services, and there was a dispute between the legally licensed vendors that paid for their right to be part of the group and the illegal vendors. Miles suggested the possibility of a dedicated Central Park Vending system. Marco Tamayo thanked every representative for attending the meeting and explained that Community District 8 is one of the densest communities in the city, and our sidewalks must be accessible to all.

Bill concluded that street vending and other small businesses must be well managed in a coordinated effort.

At this point, the meeting concluded, with the next meeting scheduled for some time in October 2026.

**Item 4: Old Business**

No items of Old Business were discussed.

**Item 5: New Business**

No items of New Business were discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

**Michele Birnbaum and Marco Tamayo  
Co-Chairs, Vendors Task Force**