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

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Bill Angelos, Michele Birnbaum, Monica McKane*, and Marco Tamayo.

*Public Member

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 32

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM.

Item 1: Informational session and description of the duties of the newly appointed Executive Director of the Office of Street Vendor Services - Tania Martinez, Deputy Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Special Projects

The Manhattan Community Board 8 Vendor Task Force held a joint meeting with the Small Business Committee (Bill Angelos, Co-chair was present) on October 29th to discuss street vending issues and the new Office of Street Vendor Services within Small Business Services (SBS).

Michele Birnbaum and Marco Tamayo co-chaired the meeting, presenting a comprehensive slide presentation documenting ongoing violations including illegal vending in restricted areas, unlicensed operations, health code violations, and environmental impacts.

Tania Martinez, Deputy Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Special Projects represented Small Business Services and Carina Kaufman-Gutierrez, Director of the Vendor Department of SBS.

David Coreas of SBS was also in attendance and spoke of his interest in Veteran and disabled Veteran vendors and joined Birnbaum in her concern for the small percentage of veteran vendor licenses that are issued compared to other kinds of licenses. He offered to send information to the board office with direct contact information for follow-up meetings about veteran-owned businesses.

Michele Birnbaum will follow up with David Coreas to arrange a meeting with the Small Business Committee and Veterans Committee to discuss services for veteran-owned businesses.

Coreas highlighted its mission to support street vendors through education, outreach, and coordination with various city agencies. Kaufman-Gutierrez was introduced as someone with extensive experience in supporting small businesses and street vendors. The meeting aimed to address concerns raised by the Small Business Committee, including coordination with agencies, resolving conflicts, and ensuring consistent enforcement of rules.

Angelos was given the opportunity to make a statement on behalf of the Small Business Committee before the discussion. His statement expressed support for street vendors while emphasizing the need for fairness to brick-and-mortar businesses. He outlined several considerations including vendor fines, competition with storefronts, and sidewalk access. Birnbaum then detailed specific regulations governing street vending, including restrictions on street locations, metered parking, and health requirements for food vendors. She shared a concerning case involving a vendor who failed to list allergens, leading to a child's hospitalization, and expressed frustration over the Department's response to serious violations.

Birnbaum and Tamayo presented a series of photographs showing various violations of street vending regulations, including illegal parking, unpermitted vendors, and health code violations. Birnbaum expressed concerns about the unfair treatment of small businesses compared to bricks-and-mortar stores regarding health inspections and regulations. Tamayo followed with historical photographs comparing current street vending conditions to those from 1900, arguing that neither extreme should be the vision for New York City. Both speakers emphasized the need for consistent enforcement, proper regulation, and transparent communication with affected communities to balance commercial activity with pedestrian mobility and public safety.

Coreas announced two upcoming events supporting veteran-owned businesses: a BE NYC Breaking Barriers Breakfast in the Bronx on November 5th and a veteran-owned business showcasing summit on November 19th at the agency. He also described the expansion of the Business Express Service team, which now includes dedicated small business advocates for street vending to help navigate regulations and provide education and training. Birnbaum requested that Coreas send information to the board office to arrange future meetings with the Small Business Committee and Veterans Committee to discuss these initiatives further.

Item 2: Discussion of Enforcement of Vendor Laws - Pauline Ferrante, Manhattan Liaison, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

The presentation highlighted community board resolutions dating back to 2006 calling for dedicated enforcement squads, standardized street furniture, and better coordination between agencies. Agency representatives, Constantinos Mitsotakis, from NYC Parks Enforcement, and Pauline Ferrante from the Department of Health provided updates on enforcement activities, with Mitsotakis reporting over 2,500 summonses issued in CB8 this year and Ferrante sharing information about recent joint enforcement operations.

Public participants, including residents from buildings with persistent vendor problems, expressed significant frustration about lack of enforcement, illegal food trucks operating 24/7, health violations, and the perceived prioritization of vendors over residents. The discussion revealed ongoing concerns about veteran vendor representation, illegal leasing of permits, and the need for better coordination between compliance agencies.

Jacki Esposito raised concerns about a persistent food vendor at 139 East 63rd Street that continues to operate in violation of health and safety regulations despite previous closures and complaints. Ferrante provided an overview of enforcement activities in CB8, reporting 117 inspections, 128 summonses issued, and three carts closed for unsanitary conditions year-to-date. Birnbaum expressed concerns about the effectiveness of enforcement, noting that while violations are being addressed, the numbers are

meaningless without knowing the total number of infractions. Birnbaum criticized the city's approach to unlicensed vendors, citing testimony from vendors who had been operating without licenses for 20 years. Robin Ostrow raised concerns about a food truck that has been operating improperly for 10 years without proper enforcement.

Robin expressed frustration about lack of enforcement of food vendor regulations, noting that vendors are not required to go to commissaries as specified in the vendor booklet.

Birnbaum acknowledged the residents' concerns about enforcement gaps and explained that funding limitations prevent adequate staffing for vendor regulation. Madeleine shared specific issues with a halal food truck parked 24/7 on her residential street, causing noise, bright lights, and contributing to rat problems. The conversation ended with Birnbaum discussing new tracking systems with computer chips for vendors and commissary requirements, though she noted that proper monitoring of these systems is not currently being implemented.

The meeting focused on street vendor regulations and enforcement issues in the community. Tania explained her office's role in educating street vendors about rules and regulations, while Birnbaum highlighted the lack of enforcement due to insufficient funding and philosophical reasons. A constituent, Karen Lapidus, expressed frustration about illegal parking by food trucks and lack of enforcement, leading to a discussion about the challenges in implementing vendor regulations. Barbara Morris, a disabled veteran vendor, shared concerns about illegal leasing practices and lack of support for legitimate veteran vendors, while Ferrante agreed to investigate issues around permit substitution and leasing.

The group discussed the appointment of the new director of Vendor Affairs at SBS as being from the Street Vendor Project, with some expressing concerns about potential conflicts of interest.

The meeting focused on addressing issues with unlicensed street vendors in the community. Susan Gottridge reported several unauthorized vendors, including ones selling from coolers on 86th Street near subway stations from 7-10 AM. Ferrante confirmed that she works with DSNY on enforcement and agreed to investigate the reported vendors.

Birnbaum proposed a standardized street furniture solution with a standard color table covering to make it easy to identify licensed vendors, though acknowledged this would require legislation. Barbara clarified that disabled veterans' vendors operate fee-free and noted that many illegal vendors now accept credit card payments, making tracking more complex.

The narrative continues using the slide presentation as a jumping off point which highlighted the concerns that the community has.

Birnbaum explained that she encourages the community to send her their vendor violation concerns and a 311 number which she then forwards to the appropriate agency representative but was disappointed to report that her two contacts at DOH and DOS had recently stopped responding to her messages. She hopes to remedy this.

Item 3: Discussion of Enforcement of Vendor Laws in Parks

They then presented a comprehensive overview of unauthorized vending issues in Central Park, showing numerous unlicensed vendors selling cut fruit and other merchandise throughout the park, despite it being unlawful to do so. They highlighted that, while legislation has increased street vending licenses over the years, enforcement resources have not kept pace, leading to continued non-compliance. Birnbaum reviewed community board resolutions dating back to 2006 that called for dedicated enforcement squads, standardized vendor equipment, and better regulation of street vending locations, noting that many proposed solutions have not been implemented.

Birnbaum expressed ongoing concerns about vendor issues in the neighborhood, noting that problems have persisted since 2006 without adequate resolution. Constantinos Mitsotakis, from New York City Parks Enforcement agency explained their enforcement efforts, including issuing over 2,500 summonses related to vending in Central Park this year, while acknowledging the challenges of limited manpower. The discussion highlighted the need for better representation and support for veteran vendors, with Tania confirming that the Department of Small Business Services works closely with the Department of Veterans Services to address these needs.

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 8:40 PM.

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