

Pending Committee Approval
Law, Rules and Ethics Committee
September 29, 2026
Emergency Meeting
6:30 pm
Community Board Office
[Meeting Recording](#)

1. Attendance:
 - a. Present (6): Martin Wolpoff, Chair, Steve Froot, Vice-Chair, Steve Matthews, Vice-Chair, Sylvia Alexander (ADA on Zoom), Charles Moerdler, Arlene Feldheimer (arrived late, did not vote., but supported committee decisions).
 - b. Absent (3): Joy Campbell, Jyll Townes, Sergio Villaverde
2. Meeting called to order at 6:35 pm
3. Approval of minutes – Tabled
4. Committee Discussion – What are the restrictions on Community Boards with respect to passing resolutions concerning questions on the Nov 3, 2026 ballot?
 - a. Chair reviewed correspondence from the Law Department and COIB on the subject. He also alluded to an amNY article noting that the Committee on Government Efficiency (COGE), the name taken by the Charter Revision Commission, had advertised for, and let, a contract for \$1.6 million taxpayer dollars to advertise the ballot questions. Although the blurbs accompanying the questions show them in a favorable light, COGE insists that there is no attempt to advise voters how to vote.
 - b. The sources from the City Charter are:
 1. [§ 1-02. Definitions.](#)
New York City, NY The Rules of the City of New York
...*Electioneering*. The term "*electioneering*" means any words, communications, actions, or general course of conduct that seeks to further the success or failure of a particular candidate, party, ticket, or ballot question or **intended to persuade or induce a voter to vote or refrain from voting for any particular candidate, party, ticket, or ballot question.**
 2. [§ 14-01 Definitions.](#)
New York City, NY The Rules of the City of New York
...Contributions do not include membership dues paid by an individual or revenue from goods and services. "**Covered communication " means an express advocacy communication or electioneering communication. "** Covered election " means a covered election as defined in Section 1052 (a)(15)(a)(iii) of the Charter. "**Covered expenditure " means an expenditure directly related to the design, production, or distribution of a covered communication.**
 3. [Section 1136.1. Prohibitions on the use of government funds and resources.](#)
New York City, NY The New York City Charter
...(c) "Electioneering message" means a statement designed to urge the public to elect or defeat a certain candidate for elective office, **or support or oppose a particular political party, or support or oppose a particular referendum question.** (d) "Elective office" means any elective office, including federal, state, and local offices
- c. Chair asked the attorneys on the committee for their opinions on what latitude they thought the Community Board had. The sense of the committee, including members who are lawyers, is that the text of the City Charter stating the proscription on a city agency like a community board taking a position one way or another would permit us to pass a resolution pointing out issues to consider without advising a vote Yes or No. It is also noted that in Chris Hammer's (COIB) latest communication was consistent with that

conclusion, but that he declaimed being able to offer a definitive opinion and pointed us to the specific Charter provision (see above). Committee members all agreed with the above interpretation.

d. Discussion on two draft resolutions.

- i. The committee agreed on the following resolution and information page:

Resolution on Charter Revision Proposals

WHEREAS, for the second consecutive year a mayor of New York City has established a New York City Charter Revision Commission (this year called the Commission on Governmental Efficiency – COGE); and

WHEREAS, COGE has proposed five amendments to the New York City Charter that will appear on the ballot for the general election on November 3, 2026; and

WHEREAS, Bronx Community Board 8 believes that it is important for those who live and work in our community district to be properly informed about the proposed Charter amendments, which have the potential to affect the quality of life in the various neighborhoods in our district, before casting their vote; and

WHEREAS, the first four proposals, Proposals 1-4, pertain to land use and City contracts, with the fifth proposal pertaining to the City budget process; and

WHEREAS, members of Bronx Community Board 8 have reviewed the first four proposals and prepared the **attached** information sheet to assist members of the community in evaluating the proposals; and

WHEREAS, the information made available to the public by COGE characterizes the proposed Charter amendments as resulting in a simplification of approval processes and greater efficiency in the areas of land use and City contracts; and

WHEREAS, Bronx Community Board 8 makes the following observations:

Proposals 1, 2 and 3, if approved by the voters, would reduce information flow to and curtail review and approval power by local elected officials and community boards, which is a worrisome continuation of the centralization of control by mayors over land use issues in recent years by disenfranchising local communities and their elected officials from meaningful review and participation in the land use approval process.

Proposal 1 would streamline the process for approving uses of public space such as ramps, planters, and sidewalk cafes, by (i) eliminating mandatory public hearings, (ii) removing community boards, borough presidents, and the City Council from the review process; and (iii) taking away the City Council's ability to vote to disapprove the establishment of sidewalk cafes and curbside dining areas.

Proposal 2 would, for certain City contracts over \$5 million, authorize the City's Procurement Policy Board to simplify the contractor questionnaire and would eliminate review by the Mayor's Office of Contracts (which has specialized expertise in contracts) and the City Comptroller (who is independent of the Mayor) -- including for direct services like shelters, job training programs, and youth services, instead allowing individual agency procurement officers to review and approve such contracts. Proposal 2 would also permit elimination of public comment periods for some contracts.

Proposal 3 covers three different land use subjects: (1) It would allow the Department of Transportation to begin work on major transportation projects like bike lanes and road redesigns before notifying elected officials, community boards, the NYPD, and the FDNY; (2) it would entirely remove the sale or lease of certain City-owned properties from ULURP review; and (3) would remove community boards, borough presidents and the City Council from the reviewing the City's acquisition of office space for its employees.

Proposal 4 would transfer approval authority over all new construction projects to the Department of Buildings, which in the experience of this Board is an agency that has proved extremely negligent and unresponsive with respect to glaring violations of SNAD regulations have occurred in our community.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, Bronx Community Board 8 urges those who reside and work in our community district to make use of this resolution and the attached information sheet to carefully scrutinize Charter Revision Proposals 1-4 before casting either a vote “yes” or “no” on or before Election Day.

Information sheet

ii. Information on Proposed City Charter Revision Proposals 1, 2, 3 and 4 that Could Affect Neighborhoods in CB8

Proposal No. 1

Speed Up Process for Revocable Consent to Use Public Space

Currently, property and business owners who want to use public space must submit applications to the Department of Transportation (DOT) or the Office of Technology and Innovation (OTI), which must then hold a public hearing. Community Boards, Council members, and Borough Presidents must also be notified. For sidewalk cafes specifically, the City Council can vote to reject the permit even after DOT approves it.

A “yes” vote would simplify and speed up the process to use public space for uses such as ramps, planters, and outdoor cafes, by eliminating mandatory hearings, removing community boards, borough presidents, and the City Council from the review process and taking away the City Council’s ability to vote to disapprove the establishment of sidewalk cafes.

A “no” vote would preserve the ability of community boards, borough presidents and the City Council to conduct a thorough review of such applications, continue to require public hearings and leave in place the City Council’s ability to block the establishment of sidewalk cafes.

Proposal No. 2

Reduce paperwork for City's contractors

This proposal would change the City's contracting process, which governs how the City hires businesses and nonprofits to provide goods and services.

A “yes” vote would authorize the City’s Procurement Policy Board to simplify the contractor questionnaire and would remove review by the Mayor’s Office of Contracts and the City Comptroller for certain contracts over \$5 million, including for direct services like shelters,

job training programs, and youth services, instead allowing individual agency procurement officers to review and approve, and would allow elimination of public comment periods for some contracts.

A "no" vote leaves the current process unchanged, which would include the more detailed questionnaire describing a contractor's abilities and plans to meet contractual requirements, and continue to require public comment and review by an official, the Comptroller, who is independent of the Mayor, and the Office of Contracts, which has special expertise in these matters.

Proposal No. 3

Speed Up Street Safety Projects, Disposition of Unused City Property, Office Leasing

This proposal would simplify review of street safety projects to reduce construction timelines; fast track the disposition of unused City property with approval from City Planning Commission; and expedite leasing offices used for City workforce.

A "yes" vote would (1) allow DOT to start work before notifying elected officials, community boards, the NYPD, and the FDNY for major transportation projects like bike lanes and road redesigns; (2) would entirely remove the sale or lease of certain City-owned properties from ULURP review; and (3) would remove community boards, borough presidents and the City Council from the review process involving the City's acquisition of office space for its employees.

A "no" vote maintains inter-agency consultation for road projects and ensures that community boards and local elected officials are notified of DOT projects like installation of bike lanes and road redesigns; continue to subject the sale or lease of City-owned properties to ULURP review, in which community boards, borough presidents and the City Council have a voice; and would maintain the requirement of City Council approval for dispositions of City property and acquisition of office leases used for City employees.

Proposal No. 4

Simplify Building Permitting and Move Waterfront Permitting to Department of Buildings

This proposal would create a centralized construction permits hub to simplify permitting; move waterfront construction approvals from the Department of Small Business Services to Department of Buildings (DOB); and expand the authority of Department of Buildings officials to approve a variety of construction projects.

A "yes" vote would allow Department of Buildings to approve all projects by expanding the number of DOB officials with that authority, and would move responsibility to approve waterfront buildings from Small Business Services to DOB

A "no" vote leaves the current law, which requires approval by multiple city agencies to approve all projects, and retains the authority of the Department of Small Business Services to approve waterfront buildings; a "no" vote would leave approval authority over new construction projects and waterfront buildings with various agencies rather than transferring that authority to DOB, a troubled agency that time and again has shown itself to be negligent and unresponsive where glaring violations of SNAD regulations in our community have been brought to DOB's attention.

- e. The vote to approve the resolution was unanimous. All five committee members present voted in favor. Steven Mathew's was asked to review the resolution and make minor editorial changes.
- f. The committee could not agree on a resolution that included Proposal 5. There was agreement that setting up a rainy-day fund was a good idea, in a split, some thought that given the current imbalance in the city budget, there were potential abuses and serious additional debt to be handed down to future years.
- g. Meeting adjourned 7:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin Wolpoff, Chair
Law, Rules and Ethics Committee