



Bricks & Mortals

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

02.08.23

3:00pm - 5:00pm

<https://www.bricksandmortals.org/membership-area> (password protected: 8872)

1. Welcome by Jason Labate (10 mins - 3:05pm-3:15pm)

- Welcome - please put introductions in the chat!
- Annual Membership Contributions due
 - Fiscal year ends 6/30, new membership contributions due starting 7/1
 - Online: <https://givebutter.com/annualmembership>
 - By check: Bricks and Mortals, 101 West 23rd Street, #129, NY, NY 10011
- Approve November meeting minutes
- Member announcements:
 - Peter Cook, New York State Council Churches: Invitation to Ecumenical Interfaith Advocacy Day from 2/27-28 in Albany with a focus on housing and immigration.

2. B&M updates (Kate Toth - 5 mins - 3:15pm-3:20pm)

- Join Venuely
 - Invitation to join Venuely, a space-sharing website for houses of faith.
 - Need a critical mass to build a stock of users who can provide and lease space.
 - Could help with Trinity Grant that contributes to predevelopment.
- Venuely introduction events being planned.

3. Resources: DEP Amnesty Program (Jason Labate, Goldstein Hall), Tax Exemption Renewal (Robin Lee, Dept. of Finance), and City Council Discretionary Funding (10 mins - 3:20pm-3:30pm)

- *Tax Exemption Renewal (Robin Lee, Taxpayer Advocate, Dept. of Finance)*
 - Robin Lee presents on the not-for-profit property tax exemption renewal application deadline extension to April 1, 2023 (originally Jan 31, 2023).



- [Not-for-Profit Property Tax Exemption \(nyc.gov\)](https://www.nyc.gov/site/nfp/how-to-apply/renewing-your-benefit.page)
- New applications are admitted on a rolling basis.
- The deadline was January 5, 2023, but the good news is that we are still accepting renewal applications until **April 1, 2023**.
- If you have not yet filed your renewal, please [file your renewal here](#).
- If you have problems renewing, feel free to contact the Not-for-Profit Ombudsperson at nfp-ombuds@finance.nyc.gov.
- An FAQ page can also be found here:
 - <https://www.nyc.gov/site/nfp/how-to-apply/renewing-your-benefit.page>
- Q&A
 - Is the lien sale listing still available?
 - a. It does not currently exist because it was not renewed by the Council.
 - b. If it ever exists again, the Dept. of Finance will reach out to relevant networks.
 - Is the 2-year grace period still available?
 - a. Need to verify if there is a broad policy around it, but can advise on a case-by-case basis if contacted.
- *Department of Environment Protection (DEP) Amnesty Program (Jason Labate)*
 - Jason presents on DEP's Amnesty Program's tax exemption programs targeting those with outstanding bills to be made current. DEP is the department that manages water and sewage systems in NYC.
 - Application deadline is April 30th.
 - DEP just announced a limited time amnesty program that might be helpful to folks that have not resolved their water/sewer debt. Visit this website to find out more information:
 - <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dep/pay-my-bills/amnesty-program.page>
 - Interest and fees will be forgiven as long as payment of the underlying debt is made or a payment plan established.
 - DEP just announced a limited time amnesty program that might be helpful to congregations that have not resolved their water/sewer debt.



Interest and fees will be forgiven as long as payment of the underlying debt is made or a payment plan established.

- An FAQ page can also be found here:
 - <https://www.nyc.gov/site/dep/pay-my-bills/amnesty-program-faq.page>

- *City Council Discretionary Funding*

- Jason presents on the city council discretionary funding, funds that are available to the elected officials, of which operating funds can be used by eligible faith-based organizations.
- [Application \(link\)](#)
- Deadline is February 21.
- For any issues or questions regarding the FY 2024 application, please email discretionary@council.nyc.gov.
- See video from last year's membership meeting: ["Houses of Faith Applying for City Council Discretionary Funding, René Castellanos, Budget Director for Council Member Christopher Marte"](#) (minute 32:00).

4. Resource and Case Studies: Action Plan from the Mayor's Working Group on Faith-Based Affordable Housing and Community Development (Jason Labate, Goldstein Hall, Brian Cook, Capalino, and Taylor Aikin, MBB Architects - 80 mins - 3:30pm-4:50pm)

- *The Mayor's Working Group on Faith-based Affordable Housing and Community Development created an Action Plan developing recommendations for how the City and FBOs can collaborate to address homelessness. Around 40 participants from the faith and real estate communities were involved. Details of recommendations presented by Jason, Brian, and Taylor.*
- Set of recommendations in the Action Plan were sent to the Mayor/agencies for review, comments, and to determine how to prioritize/operationalize them.
- Report sent via email to B&M membership: Recommendation document is not published publicly.
- Follow-up meeting with the mayor to follow near the end of February.
- The Program Committee will hold 3 public events, each focusing on the subcommittee themes (affordable housing, air rights, landmarks).



- Suggest that each B&M member be well-equipped to advocate for each topic at any public meetings due to high stakes.
- *Affordable Housing, Jason Labate (15 mins)*
 - Urgent need for more housing by 2030 to address homelessness and affordable housing
 - Focus on constraints and policy solutions (see report for greater details):
 - Financial sacrifice is now required from FBO to develop affordable housing - to combat this, the Action Plan suggests:
 - a. More opportunities for ground leases
 - b. Sharing value in upzoning
 - c. Allowance for more market rate units
 - d. Purchase money mortgage
 - e. Zoning bonuses
 - f. Maintenance of pre-existing non-conforming structures
 - g. Dedicated program from small affordable housing projects on FBO property
 - h. As-of-right tax exemption for affordable housing owned and operated by not-for-profit corporations
 - i. Allow legacy community facilities to turn into affordable housing
 - To address bureaucratic challenges to develop affordable housing:
 - a. Better coordination across offices
 - b. Dedicated staff in each office with required skills to work with FBOs
 - c. Approvals need to be faster
 - d. Creative strategies to finance projects not exceeding 18 months
 - e. Need more staff at Attorney General level on affordable housing
 - f. Charge filing fees
 - Provide a timeline in developing affordable housing
 - Pre-development funding:



- a. Provide additional funding in early stage for pre-development
 - b. Make available smaller loans
 - Missional alignment of FBO with funding programs:
 - a. Social housing should be investigated and developed where possible
 - b. Homeownership opportunity should be created on FBO properties
- *Air Rights, Brian Cook (15 mins)*
 - The Working Group considered different ways to use air rights that can lead to equitable valuation, and put forward the following:
 - Proposal 1: Tie air rights to place that are suitable to the nature of FBO as places of worship, charity/social service
 - Proposal 2: Create a flexible funding mechanism, such as inclusionary housing bonus, that meet the criteria of FBO
 - Proposal 3: Model a specific waiver/permit similar to the BSF
 - Proposal 4: Model specific permits for small buildings to get enhanced
- *Landmarks, Taylor Aikin (15 mins)*
 - Purpose of landmarks law is increase property values, increase tourism, bolster economy.
 - Landmarks policy asks are difficult because of the public good issue - FBO facing public good tradeoff.
 - Action Plan's solutions center on emphasizing that criteria for other property types do not apply to FBO.
 - Constraints:
 - Do not see potential gain for higher rents
 - FBO do not fit in common transaction methods
 - FBO do not fit within typical state/federal funding schemes
 - FBO are disproportionately targeted for landmarking
 - Solutions:
 - Require net public benefit analysis



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- Commission a study on the economic benefit of lanmarking across different property types
- Require cost analysis of organizations before landmarking
- Request additional funding for public landmark preservation i.e. through tax on surrounding commercial owners, historic districts
- Require notification before calendaring
- Lower threshold for 74-79 Zoning Resolution
- *Discussion and Q&A (35 mins)*
 - Has the city provided a clear timeline and process?
 - They provided an approximate timeline. Pastor Monroe will present with comments to the Mayor and possibly meet with the task force around February-March.
 - Does protection of religious rights allow FBO to hold ground on some state agenda?
 - Policy asks around landmarking can touch on this any funding for studies on landmarking past could help provide evidence.
 - Re-emphasis on Mayors' commitment to partnering with FBOs and their real estate assets to improve housing problems in NYC.
 - Encourage members to spread information about big asks and getting people to join the 3 public events coming up.

5. Closing (Jason Labate)