



March 24th, 2020

Memo, re. Phone Call with Mr. Kazimir Vilenchik, Borough Commissioner
Department of Buildings, Brooklyn

The Borough Commissioner reached out this afternoon to let our members know about ongoing adjustments to procedures related to minimizing any personal contact and protecting DOB staff and those who have to interact with the Brooklyn office during this COVID-19 crisis. These adjustments are made to improve processing and make our work and lives easier. He requests that you know the following:

Items that previously were dropped off that the commissioner's office for review may now be submitted using the Appointments email: BrooklynPER11appointments@buildings.nyc.gov. These include:

- AI-1 requests
- After Hours Variances
- L2 requests
- Letters of No Objection
- Reinstatements
- Supersede Requests
- Temporary Certificates of Occupancy
- Temporary Use Permits
- Withdrawal Requests

If you wish to request an appointment in conjunction with any of the above, you should submit a PER11 form. Otherwise, you do NOT have to submit the PER11 or anything more than you would have previously.

Plan Examinations are still to be scheduled as they have been previously, at https://a810-dobnow.nyc.gov/Publish/Appointments/index.html#. There you will find the following notice: **Appointments will now be done over the phone. In the 'Meeting Intent' field, enter the phone number that the Plan Examiner will call at the time of the appointment. See the [COVID-19 Response: Appointments for Standard Plan Review BIS Job Filings Service Notice](#) for more information**

Meetings, when necessary, will be conducted virtually. Appointments will be scheduled via email for phone calls and virtual meetings through GoToMeeting or other similar platforms. Email is the preferred means of resolution.

The DOB is minimally staffed at this point and many of its employees are working remotely at this time. The Brooklyn office will be staffed with two teams handling their various ongoing duties at this time, but they are not available to the public.

In addition, Mr. Vilenchik graciously permitted a meeting to discuss evolving operations after the March Industry Meeting on March 12th was canceled due to the virus outbreak in NYC. I had the



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opportunity to ask a number of questions about plans to adjust DOB operations in light of the outbreak. Much of what we discussed was followed up quickly with Service Notices and other policy changes issued by the DOB. I stressed to the Borough Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner Shehata that AIA Brooklyn stands ready to assist their efforts to keep the DOB operational and that we hope they will look to us for consultation on how to alter their operations given our routine interaction with the department and, particularly, this borough office.

There were a few important points they made in response to my questions that still stand.

- The Mayor is committed to keeping the DOB operational; methods of service will change and some delays in response are to be expected and their operations evolve.
- Inspectors will continue to visit jobsites.
- New applications should be filed and reviewed through the HUB and DOB NOW.
- Online Fee payments will be implemented as soon as possible.
- Maintaining the security of their network and files was a major hurdle to having examiners work remotely.

In response to some suggestions, they noted that: rather than converting BIS jobs to HUB review, the plan examiners will work remotely; it is not possible to bring GC and FO work types into DOB NOW in the very near future; and, the time to train new examiners is too long to hope that any would be ready to step in if current examiners get sick.

Finally, the Borough Commissioner said he would gratefully accept suggestions from our members and others on how to improve any aspect of their services. If you may have suggestions, I urge you to speak up and we will collect your ideas for presentation to him. Please contact [Ida Galea](#) or our chapter administrator, [Susana Honig](#).

Submitted respectfully,

John H. Hatheway, Jr. AIA
President, AIA Brooklyn