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The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8
Transportation Committee
Wednesday, Sept. 2, 2015, 6: 30 PM
MSK Rockefeller Research Lab. Building
430 East 67th Street, Auditorium

Minutes

Present: Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, Christina Davis, Daniel Dornbaum, A. Scott Falk, David Helpern, Andrew Kalloch, David Menegon, Sharon Pope, Rita Popper, M. Barry Schneider, Charles Warren, Hedi White; Devin Gould (Public Member, Transportation), Jordan Wouk (Public Member, Transportation), & Judith Schneider (Public Member, Parks)

Excused: Craig Lader

The Meeting was called to order at 6:34 PM with the introduction of the Committee's new Public Member, Devin Gould. The co-chairs also gave a brief update regarding the M86-SBS service and the start of bikeshare station installations on the Upper East Side, as well as noting that Councilmember Ben Kallos will be hosting a free monthly 90-minute bike safety class taught by Bike New York (next class to be held Thurs. 9/24 at 6:30 PM in CM Kallos's District Office at 244 E. 93rd St.).

1. Request for bus shelters and benches along Fifth Avenue from East 59th Street to East 96th Street (joint item with Landmarks & Parks Committees).

This item had been placed on the agenda at the request of Betty Cooper Wallerstein of the East 79th Street Neighborhood Association, who spoke about the lack of bus shelters on this avenue and said she feels that we need to look at amenities such as benches and shelters for all bus riders.

Lo Van der Valk of Carnegie Hill Neighbors expressed concern about lighting and advertising, which might detract from Fifth Avenue. Another resident called shelters "a terrible idea," saying there are no benches on Park, but too many on Fifth Avenue already.

The Parks Committee co-chairs were unavailable to attend this meeting, but had sent an email in advance of the meeting asking whether the Parks Department had been consulted about this item, and also expressing their shared personal opinion that any benches on Fifth Avenue should match the style of benches found inside Central Park, particularly the World's Fair bench.

Some members of the Committees debated whether it was appropriate to discuss this before hearing from the relevant agencies about the feasibility of this idea, and whether aesthetic concerns should outweigh amenities for transit riders. Co-chair Chuck Warren suggested that we lay this over while soliciting more input from the Parks Dept., Central Park Conservancy, and DOT, and perhaps to gather further information about which bus stops might already have benches located in close proximity to the stop.

2. Continued Discussion on the 81st Pedestrian Bridge (*joint item with Parks Committee*).

Representatives from the Dept. of Design & Construction (DDC) returned to update the Committees regarding the ongoing East 81st Street Pedestrian Bridge project. Chris Esposito-Bernard, the new DDC Community Construction Liaison for this project, reported that the contractor has removed the stairwell and done some work on the Esplanade side. They have some challenges ahead over the coming four weeks, primarily embargoes for Labor Day and for the U.N. general assembly, but they are currently preparing to begin constructing micropiles (which will provide firmer foundations for the piers that will hold up the new bridge and the new Esplanade ramp).

Co-Chair Chuck Warren laid out some of the history, and explained that there are certain ongoing design issues that the community is trying to work with the agencies to resolve, including lighting; fencing materials and viewing windows; and issues of the accessible ramp onto the East 81st cul de sac. According to the liaison, the lighting is being evaluated by the Parks Dept. as of the week during which the meeting was held.

Betty Cooper Wallerstein raised the issue of delays resulting from incorrect design drawings related to the sea wall. The project liaison explained that the incorrect drawings were not the new design drawings, but the archival “as-built” drawings that did not match the actual sea wall as discovered upon the start of construction.

Shah Jaromi, DDC’s Asst. Commissioner for Manhattan Construction, said that “certain design elements are being reviewed due to field conditions” and due to the as-built drawings deviating from what they found on site. What needed to be tweaked is the angle of the micropiles, for which the designs are being finalized. The fencing and viewing window concerns are being reviewed by the Parks Department, along with the lighting elements, which are being reviewed by the DOT.

Harvey Katz, who is a resident of a neighboring building and who has been a member of the working group regarding design and construction concerns, expressed great frustration regarding issues with the process for the design and construction of this bridge. At this point, DDC suggested that the community should “leave it to the experts,” which caused a bit of an eruption.

The committee co-chairs reminded DDC of the history of the project, and that the Public Design Commission (PDC) had instructed the agencies to consult the community about certain elements of the design. In addition, DDC was reminded that at some meetings over the summer, representatives from the agencies had failed to show up. The community is willing to sit down, but we have not been getting productive meetings.

In response, Chris Esposito-Bernard says the work on the East 81st cul de sac ramp is being done on site, rather than pre-fabricated elsewhere and delivered intact, and that the revised design for that ramp is delayed until they gather the community’s input.

Charles Whitman of the East 79th Street Neighborhood Association complained that the residents submit their input and their questions in writing as requested but never hear back from the agencies. He said the viewing window is third in priority of the issues that PDC had directed the agencies to discuss, while the other two items (lighting and the ADA ramp) are more important in their impact on the residents’ lives.

In response to a Committee member’s comments about the aesthetics of the fencing materials, DDC reported that the fencing materials contract is not yet finalized. Committee co-chair Chuck Warren stated that the agencies need to come together soon for a design meeting with the community; the city may be close to some resolution on the viewing window and the lighting, but are not necessarily there yet regarding the ADA ramp to the cul de sac.

After extended discussion, it was necessary to move the agenda.

3. Proposed stops for Hampton Jitney UES Bus Stops and congestion relief:

- a. ICBPS 20150821/83 (1082 Lexington Ave.-Lexington Ave bet 77th & 76th Sts.**
- b. ICBPS 20150821/84 (1224 Lexington Ave.-Lexington Ave bet. 83rd & 82nd Sts.**

At the Committee's June 3 meeting, Patrick Condren had appeared on behalf of Hampton Jitney regarding the impact that a new left-turn ban at 86th Street & Lexington Avenue has had on their operations. According to Mr. Condren, this turn ban caused substantial delays and detours for the Hampton Jitney bus, whose route originated at Third Avenue & East 86th Street. A temporary detour had these buses continuing west to Fifth Avenue, proceeding south to 72nd Street, and then east on 72nd Street until Lexington Avenue, where the buses resumed their former route.

Hampton Jitney had initially requested a permanent relocation of their first stop to the existing NYCT bus stop on Lexington Avenue north of 85th Street, in front of 1272 Lexington Ave.; in addition, until the change in bus stop could be implemented, they requested a temporary change in the signage at 86th & Lexington to say "No Left Turn, *Except Buses*." The Committee had approved the new stop at 1272 Lexington Avenue, but at the June CB8 full board meeting, the Board instead took no position on the new stop; the Committee had disapproved the request to temporarily allow left turns for buses, and the full board concurred.

Hampton Jitney then applied to stop at a different location, an existing NYC Transit local stop in front of 1326 Lexington Avenue, between 88th & 89th Streets, but in July the Committee (and subsequently the full board) passed a resolution disapproving this new application. The Committee had said that we would try to work with the applicant and DOT to seek additional possibilities for a new bus stop before the next application is filed.

Meanwhile, DOT gave Hampton Jitney a temporary permit (expiring in late September) to use the bus stop in front of 1272 Lexington, which Community Board 8 had neither approved nor disapproved back in June. There have been many complaints about extreme overcrowding at this location, and Hampton Jitney continues to seek a better long-term solution.

Hampton Jitney has applied for a new origination stop north of CB8, near the the northwest corner of East 96th Street & Third Avenue (within Community District 11). They have also applied for two new stops within CB8's boundaries, at existing local MTA bus stops:

- a. 1082 Lexington Ave.-Lexington Ave bet 77th & 76th Sts.
- b. 1224 Lexington Ave.-Lexington Ave bet. 83rd & 82nd Sts.

Patrick Condren was unable to attend this meeting, but he had informed the Committee co-chairs that Hampton Jitney intended to use the new stops to spread out the passenger loading so that no one spot would have as much volume, reducing congestion at any individual stop.

There was extensive discussion concerning various complaints about Hampton Jitney's bus operations, including illegal turns, vehicles running red lights, extended idling, idling and/or parking in locations other than their designated layover areas, and failure to pull over to the curb for loading (instead blocking a lane of moving traffic and using the curbside lane for loading luggage and passengers). Some residents and Committee members raised concerns about the new proposed locations, including whether the proposed location in front of 1082 Lexington is inappropriate due to its proximity to Lenox Hill Hospital & the 77th Street 6 train station (although others said these made this a more appropriate stop to use).

After extended debate, and a discussion of calling Hampton Jitney in for a review of their operations at an upcoming Committee meeting, the Committee passed the following two separate resolutions approving the two new proposed stops, conditional upon there being a new origination stop north of 86th Street:

WHEREAS in April 2015, the NYC Dept. of Transportation implemented a new “No Left Turn” restriction that prohibits westbound traffic on East 86th Street from turning southbound onto Lexington Avenue; and

WHEREAS the Hampton Jitney buses previously turned left at that intersection as part of their standard route, but now detour west to Fifth Avenue, south to 72nd Street, and east to Lexington Avenue; and

WHEREAS Hampton Jitney has requested to instead originate their bus route at an existing bus stop north of Community Board 8’s boundaries, and to then stop at two additional existing local bus stops within CB8, namely in front of 1082 Lexington Ave. (between 77th & 76th Sts.) and in front of 1224 Lexington Avenue (between 82nd & 83rd Sts.); and

WHEREAS the multiple new bus stops proposed are intended to reduce congestion at any single location;

RESOLUTION 3-A:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan **APPROVES** Hampton Jitney’s application to share the existing New York City Transit bus stop in front of 1082 Lexington Avenue (between 77th & 76th Streets), provided that the Hampton Jitney bus route originates at another stop north of 86th Street.

Approved: 10 yes, 1 no, 0 abstention, plus 1 Public Member Yes & 1 Public Member No.

Yes: Bores, Dornbaum, Falk, Kalloch, Menegon, Pope, Popper, B. Schneider, Warren, White; Wouk (Public Member)

No: Birnbaum; Gould (Public Member)

RESOLUTION 3-B:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan **APPROVES** Hampton Jitney’s application to share the existing New York City Transit bus stop in front of 1224 Lexington Avenue (between 82nd & 83rd Streets), provided that the Hampton Jitney bus route originates at another stop north of 86th Street.

Approved: 10 yes, 1 no, 0 abstention, plus 1 Public Member Yes & 1 Public Member No.

Yes: Bores, Dornbaum, Falk, Kalloch, Menegon, Pope, Popper, B. Schneider, Warren, White; Wouk (Public Member)

No: Birnbaum; Gould (Public Member)

The Committee plans to invite Hampton Jitney management to appear at an upcoming meeting for a review of the service and operations.

4. A new Revocable Consent for a new chilled water manhole within the NYCDOT right-of-way along York Ave., at 1283 York Avenue between 68th & 69th Streets (requested by NYC Department of Transportation, division of Franchises, Concessions and Consents).

Robert Benedetto of AKRF appeared on behalf of New York Presbyterian Hospital to present a requested revocable consent to construct, maintain, and use a new water-chilled manhole in the sidewalk abutting

the hospital's new building at 1283 York Avenue. Mr. Benedetto explained that the manhole will be used in the event of an extreme emergency in order for a truck to pump cold water into the building.

The Committee then passed the following resolution by a unanimous vote:

WHEREAS New York Presbyterian has petitioned for a revocable consent to construct, maintain, and use a new water-chilled manhole in the west sidewalk of York Avenue between 68th & 69th Streets, abutting its new building at 1283 York Avenue; and

WHEREAS this manhole will be used in the event of an extreme emergency in order for a truck to pump cold water into the hospital building;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Community Board 8 Manhattan approves the petition for a revocable consent for to construct, maintain, and use a new water-chilled manhole in the west sidewalk of York Avenue between 68th & 69th Streets, abutting 1283 York Avenue

Approved: 11 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain, 0 not voting for cause, plus 2 Public Members voting Yes.

Yes: Birnbaum, Bores, Dornbaum, Falk, Kalloch, Lader, Menegon, Pope, Popper, Warren, White; Gould, Wouk (Public Member)

5. Old Business.

Residents of 177 East 77th Street brought to the Committee their concerns about a planned bike share station location that is scheduled to be installed in front of their building entrance. They noted some specific and unusual problems with siting a Citi Bike station at this location:

- This location was not listed as a potential station location on the preliminary siting maps prior to the release of the draft station locations map in spring 2015.
- The location blocks the entire entrance to the residential building.
- There is one blind resident and two wheelchair users who need access to taxis and/or Access-a-ride.

Representatives of the building have been corresponding with DOT Manhattan Commissioner Margaret Forgione, who has indicated that DOT will review this station location. The Committee co-chairs said they would ask DOT to look closely at this location, and see if the concerns could be addressed.

6. New Business.

Committee Member Sharon Pope asked if we could discuss a network of protected bike lanes on crosstown streets on the Upper East Side at an upcoming meeting, in order to get ahead of the anticipated increase in ridership resulting from the expansion of bike share. The co-chairs said that the potential need for crosstown bike routes would be added to the agenda of a meeting this fall.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A. Scott Falk and Charles Warren, Co-Chairs