

(PENDING COMMITTEE APPROVAL)
Minutes of the Traffic & Transportation Committee Meeting
October 5, 2021

Attendance

Committee

Present: Debra Travis (Chair), Kelli Buford, Christopher Calhoun, Margaret Donato, David Gellman, Edward Green, Mary Ellen Gibbs (CCM), Georgia Santiago

Absent: Osvaly Jimenez

Other CB8: Lorenzo Manzano (CM Dinowitz's Office), Randi Martos (AM Dinowitz's Office), Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz

NYCDOT: Keith Kalb, Deputy Borough Commissioner Bronx DOT; Mathew Arancio (Bronx Borough DOT)

Community Board 8: Rosemary Ginty, Dan Padernacht

Community: Michael Amabile

Agenda

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm

Approval of Minutes of Meeting of September 13, 2021

Minutes of Meeting of September 13, 2021 were approved.

In favor: D Travis, C. Calhoun, G. Santiago, M. Gibbs, M. Donato

Opposed: none

Abstain: D. Gellman, K Buford, E Green

Chair's Report

- Welcome to new committee members Kelli Buford, Christopher Calhoun and Osvaly Jimenez
- DOT Public Hearing on Moped Share Rules to establish a permitting system – Thursday, October 28th at 2pm. Contact the Board office for details
- DOT Public Hearing on Permanent Carshare Rules – Monday, November 8th at 2pm. Contact the board office for details.
- To follow-up on our earlier resolution for a Study for Pedestrian Safety Improvements at the intersection of Orloff Avenue and Cannon Place and reconstruction of the curb – the study is currently due at the end of December 2021.

- Con Ed is doing work on Thursday at HHP East Service Road and Manhattan College Parkway. Please do not park in the designated areas so that they can complete repairs to the main relay
- **Paving (night work) This Month**
 - HH Parkway Eastbound from Kappock Street to West 239th
 - Dickinson Avenue from VCPS to Sedgwick Avenue
 - Van Cortlandt Park South from Bailey to Broadway

Pedestrian Safety Improvements at the Intersection of Kappock Street and Johnson Avenue

Riverdale resident, Ruth Mullen was killed September 7th as she crossed the street at Kappock Street and Johnson Avenue. Our elected officials, City Council Member Eric Dinowitz, Assembly Member Jeffrey Dinowitz and State Senator Alexandra Biaggi, have since been working closely with DOT to address the street conditions that led to the accident. Last week, DOT provided an update on their current plan.

Council Member Dinowitz discussed the work his office has been doing to advocate for the traffic improvements at this corner and at other intersections in the district to make sure we are safe. 75 people came out to the rally he organized with the Assembly Member Dinowitz.

Keith Kalb stated that DOT have completed or are working on the following:

- DOT will install left turning calm measures for the intersection (completed) and study any other potential safety improvements that are responsive to the crash history.
- Refurbishment of crosswalk markings. (Completed)
- DOT street lighting inspected the intersection earlier and will relocate the street light pole that is behind the planted traffic triangle and move it closer to the intersection and add a second luminaire to the pole. (TBD)
- Traffic signal study and researching the crash data at this location.
- Upgrade of pedestrian ramps at the northwest intersection. (TBD)
- DOT is reaching out to MTA to discuss the findings from their investigation and ensure proper driver training for this intersection. (ongoing)

One resident requested signage that would make it clearer that the primary trunk of the road turns. It would show the relationship of the main road and the lateral road.

A pedestrian activated crosswalk was requested by a resident and discussed. An example of this in the Bronx is in front of the Noble Playground, Cross Bronx Expressway onto Bronx River Parkway. DOT said this was not a standard treatment in the city.

Many people roll through the stop light at this intersection and that the community should be proactive about pedestrian safety even if that means inconvenience for motorists. The issue of

the enforcement of the sign was raised and the committee recommended speaking to Commander Girven directly. There has been no time frame yet for the investigation.

In terms of process, DOT stated that a signal is placed based on crash data and traffic volume and that the number of community requests does not impact that decision.

Tom Proctor and Sandra Voss, spoke as members of Families for Safe Streets, a group comprised of people who have lost a family member or suffered a serious injury due to a traffic accident. Tom lost his brother, Charlie, last year to a car crash at a similar intersection. They want to thank DOT for their work at this intersection and asked what other work is being done proactively in our community board since going back to 2011 there have been 18 pedestrian deaths in Community Board 8, approximately 1 per year.

DOT said they are always looking for locations to enhance pedestrian safety. If there are people who are concerned about an unsafe intersection they said a good first point of contact is the community board since DOT requires consensus in the community. Pedestrian safety often impacts parking because of neckdowns and daylighting, so community consensus is important for the success of the project. Community members can also contact DOT directly via 311 or through their website.

The following resolution was approved:

Kappock / Johnson Resolution

WHEREAS, on September 7th, at 8:30pm, local resident Ruth Mullen was tragically struck and killed by an MTA Express bus enroute down Kappock Street and making the left turn onto Johnson Avenue

WHEREAS, Johnson Avenue and Kappock Street is a three-way stop controlled intersection with visibility limitations due to multiple slopes

WHEREAS, this route is a heavily used bus route, serving the BXM1, BXM2, BXM18, the BX10, the BX20 and the Hudson RaiLink

WHEREAS, we have heard from community members stating that vehicles routinely fail to stop at the stop signs and that a traffic signal at this intersection would be more effective

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Traffic and Transportation Committee of Community Board 8 supports the DOT proposal to study the need for a traffic signal and improved lighting at this intersection.

Approve: D Travis, C. Calhoun, G Santiago, M Gibbs, M. Donato, E. Green, K. Buford, D. Gellman

Oppose:

Old Business

2727 Palisade Flooding & Request for Removal of Pedestrian Curb Extension

The committee discussed the best way to support the community members and the 2727 Palisade coop board. The main point of contention was whether the committee should request the removal of the pedestrian curb extension as members of the former working group strongly requested or to focus the letter/resolution on requesting DOT address the storm water flooding without specifying a specific solution.

Assembly Member Dinowitz said that he, Council Member Dinowitz, CB 8 Members Rosemary Ginty and Dan Padernach and 2727 Palisade residents Mary Perri, Lew Wunderlich and others met with the NYC Deputy DOT Commissioner Forgione and Bronx Borough Commissioner Lopez and were presented a plan of what DOT intends to do. He said that he felt the plan did not go far enough, that preserving pedestrian safety and addressing the flooding were not mutually exclusive and that DOT should remove the curbing completely and protect pedestrians through delineators and/or truffle painted areas.

CM Dinowitz said that the curb directly in front of 2727 Palisade needs to be repaired and that DOT stated there was no environmental review done when the pedestrian extension was initially installed. DOT also currently does not seem to be working with DEP.

Lew Wunderlich stated his concern that the meeting had not been noticed correctly because "2727 Palisade Flooding" was added as a specific line item under Old Business on an Amended Agenda and that the original agenda misstated the day of the week as Thursday. This error was also corrected on the Amended Agenda. Mr. Wunderlich requested that public discussion of the 2727 Palisade be allowed at this meeting and be added to the November meeting as well so that more residents could voice their support. Chair stated that over an hour of public testimony was heard at the September meeting and that she believed the meeting to be correctly noticed. The focus of the October meeting was to finalize language for a letter or resolution to the DOT. Since there was no indication that further public discussion would change the terms of the letter, continuing to add this item to future agendas was not necessary and would interfere with conducting other committee business. Any concerns about an Open Meetings Law violation could be reviewed prior to a letter going out or Board approval of a resolution.

After committee discussion it was decided to send a resolution instead of a letter. The following resolution was approved:

WHEREAS, in October, 2019 a pedestrian curb extension was installed by DOT at the intersection of Palisade Avenue and Kappock Street,

WHEREAS, the extended curbing inadequately directs water runoff to existing catch basins and no new catch basins were installed as part of this project,

WHEREAS, the committee has heard testimony from the community calling for the removal of the curb extension, the restoration of the previous street design and the integration of green infrastructure to protect from climate change,

WHEREAS, during Tropical Storm Elsa on July 8th and during Tropical Depression Ida on September 1, 2021, 2727 Palisade Avenue experienced severe flooding for the first time since its construction due to inadequate storm water management in the design of this intersection,

WHEREAS, the flawed design fails to adequately address storm water,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Traffic and Transportation Committee strongly urges DOT to remove the curb extension and restore the street to its previous design, while maintaining pedestrian safety, reducing impervious surface, integrating green infrastructure, rebuilding the curb on the west side of Palisade Avenue and incorporating new storm water catch basins as needed and to bring a plan to do this back to the committee.

Approve: D Travis, C. Calhoun, M Gibbs, M. Donato, E. Green

Oppose: K Buford, D Gellman

Absent: G Santiago

After the approval of the resolution, Mary Perri, a member of the former Kappock/Palisade working group stated that Deputy Commissioner Forgione said at their meeting that the curbing needs to be cut back and that storm water is not going to existing catch basins. They are waiting a response from the Deputy Commissioner.

Dan Padernacht stated that he raised an accusation of an Open Meetings Law violation with the Board because he did not think it was appropriate for the chair to draft language for a letter and to share it with committee members to reach consensus between the September and October meeting. Additionally, he did not think it was appropriate to limit community discussion. Chair stated that these are both common practices and that the committee has been operating in a very transparent manner. The matter could be referred to the Law, Rules and Ethics Committee for full discussion and clarification.

Sedgwick Avenue Safety Improvements

During the June meeting, Sedgwick Avenue Safety Improvements were discussed by the committee. Over the summer, Commissioner Lopez did a site visit of the area of concern. Chair presented a list of issues to remind the board and bring the matter up to date. The following

proposed changes are being considered for the intersection of Van Cortlandt Avenue West and Sedgwick Avenue to improve pedestrian safety:

- Countdown timer
- Traffic Study of Dedicated Left Turn Bay
- Review of signal timing for traffic in all directions
- Review of signage and lane identification for southbound Sedgwick Avenue lane

The following proposed changes are being considered for Sedgwick Avenue between Van Cortlandt Avenue West and 238th Street to improve vehicle safety due to double-parking and speeding:

- Speed camera study
- Restoration of flashing yellow light on Sedgwick Ave between Stephenson and Stephenson
- Additional No Standing sign on east side of Sedgwick Avenue between Stephenson and Stephenson to clarify bus stop (no impact to parking)

The following proposed changes are being considered for Sedgwick Avenue between Van Cortlandt Avenue West and 238th Street to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety:

- Enhanced Crosswalk at Sedgwick and Stephenson
- Sharrows on Sedgwick from Stephenson to Fort Independence Street

Five Year Crash Data

2016 – 2021 (September – September)

Sedgwick Avenue between Van Cortlandt Avenue West and Giles Place

1 pedestrian fatality (intersection of VCAW and Sedgwick Avenue)

2 cyclist injuries (between Stephenson and Stephenson and between Stephenson and 238th)

6 pedestrian injuries (intersection of VCAW and Sedgwick and intersection of Sedgwick Avenue and Giles Place)

32 motorist injuries (10 at intersection of VCAW and Sedgwick, 5 midblock bet Stephenson and 238th Street, 4 at 238th Street and Sedgwick Avenue intersection, 6 at Giles and Sedgwick Avenue intersection)

70 crashes with no injuries

The committee thought this was well discussed at the June meeting and look forward to concluding this work at the November meeting.

Update on Independence Avenue April Resolution Requesting Flexible Delineators

During the summer, the Chair met with the Bronx DOT Commissioner's staff and the Commissioner for an update on outstanding resolutions. During this discussion, additional information was provided regarding the DOT process for street change requests which led the Chair to believe that the approved April resolution for Flexible Delineators on Independence Avenue may lead to undesirable and unexpected outcomes that merit further discussion. In

brief, DOT stated that they do not have a specific treatment for vehicles driving in circles in an intersection “donuts” and that narrowing of an intersection would have to be pursued as a pedestrian safety issue. However, if the Board raised pedestrian safety concerns at the stated intersections in order to receive neckdowns through flexible delineators, DOT would study the intersections and review all options and proceed with those they thought would be most effective. Since the committee has spent many hours in community discussion on specifics that did not align with this outcome, the committee agreed to hold public discussion at the November meeting on requesting the Board repeal the existing resolution. Michael Amabile, who was a member of the Independence Avenue working group, encouraged the committee to be proactive in identifying intersections where there are safety issues even if it moves forward with repealing this resolution. Members of the community stated that drag racing has started again on Independence Avenue between 237th to 246th street. The restoration of the speed bumps in early 2021 had been effective in reducing the drag racing previously. There is a speed bump in front of the temple and then no other speed bump. An additional speed bump may be necessary and will be discussed at the next meeting.

New Business

Elvis Machuca made a request for a stop sign at the intersection of Eames Place and Webb Avenue. He was told to contact the Board office for referral to a future meeting

Omar Suarez stated that the one line train yard near Manhattan College Parkway is making a lot of noise throughout the day. The MTA has released a report on actions they are taking to reduce noise at train yards and he would like to know what is being done. He was told to contact the Board office for follow-up.

The meeting adjourned at 9:52pm.

Respectfully Submitted by Debra Travis, Chair