

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
OF  
PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT FUND GOVERNING GROUP, INC.**  
*September 23, 2021*

The Meeting of the Members and Directors of the East Midtown Public Realm Improvement Fund Governing Group was held at 10:11 a.m. on September 23, 2021 via video teleconference.

Public notice of this meeting was given in accordance with the Open Meetings Law.

The meeting was chaired by Director Mahdavi, on behalf of Deputy Mayor Been, Chairperson of the Governing Group.

The following Members were present:

- Dan Garodnick, Designee of Speaker of the Council
- Sandy McKee, Member and Designee of Manhattan Community Board Six
- Susan Chin, Representative of the Design Trust for Public Space

The following Members acted by proxy:

- Hon. Keith Powers, Council Member for District 4
- Vicki Been, Deputy Mayor of Housing and Economic Development
- Anita Laremont, Director of the NYC Department of City Planning
- Rachel Loeb, President of the NYC Economic Development Corporation
- Jacques Jiha, Director of the NYC Office of Management and Budget
- Henry B. Gutman, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Transportation
- Margaret Nelson, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
- Jamie Torres-Springer, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Design & Construction

The following Members were not present:

- Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
- Vikki Barbero, Member and Designee of Manhattan Community Board Five

The following Directors and Alternate Directors were present:

- Kate Theobald, Council Member for District 4
- Dan Garodnick, Designee of the Speaker of the Council
- Sandy McKee, Member and Alternate Director of Manhattan Community Board Six
- Susan Chin, Representative of the Design Trust for Public Space
- Pedram Mahdavi, Alternate Director for Deputy Mayor of Housing and Economic Development
- Bob Tuttle, Alternate Director for the Director of the Department of City Planning

- Fred D'Ascoli, Alternate Director of the President of the Economic Development Corporation
- Sallina Yung, Alternate Director for the Director of the Office of Management and Budget
- Ed Pincar, Alternate Director for the Department of Transportation
- Nicholas Molinari, Alternate Director for the Commissioner of the Department of Parks and Recreation
- Jessica Mathew, Alternate Director for the Commissioner of the NYC Department of Design & Construction

The Meeting of Members commenced, a quorum being present.

1. **Directors and Alternate Directors:** It was announced that elections were in order to elect alternate directors of the Corporation. There were no questions or comments. Upon a motion made and unanimously carried, a resolution was adopted for the membership sections at issue to elect the following alternate directors.

<b>Member</b>	<b>Alternate Director</b>
Margaret Nelson	Nick Molinari
Anita Laremont	Bob Tuttle

The Meeting of Directors commenced, a quorum being present.

1. **Adoption of Meeting Minutes:** It was announced that adoption of the meeting minutes from the Meeting of Members and Directors, held on April 29, 2021, was in order. There were no questions or comments. Upon a motion made and unanimously carried, the meeting minutes were adopted.
2. **Approval of the Auditor:** It was announced that approval of an independent auditor's contract was in order. There were no questions or comments. Upon a motion made and unanimously carried, the meeting minutes were adopted.
3. **Adoption of Mission Statement:** It was announced that the re-adoption of the Governing Group's mission statement was in order. There were no questions or comments. Upon a motion made and unanimously carried, the mission statement was re-adopted.

The mission of the Corporation is to bolster and enhance East Midtown's status as a premier central business district with a high-quality public realm, by allocating funds from the Public Realm Improvement Fund to implement public realm improvement projects, in accordance with the Public Realm Improvement Concept Plan and the New York City Zoning Resolution.

4. **Adoption of Corporate Policies**  
 Re-adoption of Corporate Policies: It was announced that re-adoption of the Governing Group's corporate policies was in order. These included investment guidelines, policy

regarding the procurement of goods and services, policy regarding the acquisition and disposition of real property, and policy regarding the disposition of personal property.

Director Chin asked if the Governing Group would dispose of property. Director Mahdavi replied that the Governing Group has not disposed of property and that having a policy regarding the acquisition and disposition of real property is a requirement pursuant to PAAA.

There were no further questions. Upon a motion made and unanimously carried, the corporate policies were re-adopted.

5. **Project Updates:** It was announced that DDC and DOT would present an update on several projects within East Midtown. Director Mathew and Director Pincar provided an update on four items: (1) Pershing Square East pedestrian plaza, (2) Lexington Avenue thoroughfare improvements, (3) 43rd Street shared street, and (4) Park Avenue medians.

Pershing Square East pedestrian plaza

- Capital budget | \$15M
- Project schedule | Construction start in October 2021
- Current phase | In procurement
- Amenities | Seating, trees and plantings, wayfinding, bikeshare, lighting
- Additional components | pedestrian security measures, emergency vehicle access

Director Mathew stated that DOT and DDC were using their experience with Pershing Square West to minimize complications related to constructability, primarily through the use of uniform design features. She noted that DDC is working with DOT and GCP to relocate the Citi-bike docking station and is coordinating a ground breaking event.

Lexington Avenue thoroughfare improvements, between 45th and 57th streets

- Capital budget | \$12.8M
- Current phase | In procurement, design-build to begin early 2022.
- Components | Pedestrian safety improvements

Director Mathew noted that this project will be delivered through a design-build model where a single team is responsible for design and construction. She noted that this results in a three-year duration start to finish, as opposed to more than four years, by eliminating one procurement cycle. She further noted that contract would be awarded based on best value, rather than strictly the lowest bidder, which is required with traditional design-bid-build contracts.

Director Mathew stated that as one of the City's first design-build contracts, the procurement process is taking slightly longer than normal. However, even with the delay, the project will commence in 2022 and be completed faster than would be possible through design-bid-build. She noted that DOT would be moving forward with interim treatments in the fall.

Director Pincar noted that DOT presented plans to create additional pedestrian space on the west side of Lexington Avenue to Community Boards 5 and 6. He thanked the BIDs for their partnership and for helping DOT deliver a better project.

43rd Street shared street, between Lexington and Third avenues

- Capital budget | \$17.7M
- Project schedule | Construction in summer 2023
- Current phase | Preliminary design

Director Pincar conveyed that the interim design is in place and that DOT made some adjustments based on stakeholder conversations. Regarding the programming at the corner of 43<sup>rd</sup> Street and Lexington Avenue, some of the movable seating would be replaced with bike corrals. He noted that on the north side of street there was a conflict with an existing Con Edison vault and as a result markings were shifted. He noted that DOT and GCP held a stakeholder meeting last spring to get a sense of the stakeholders' operational needs, which will guide the capital design.

Director Garodnick asked if summer 2023 was still the estimated timetable for the project. Director Pincar said that they were still working through initial design considerations posed by scaffolding placed by the Chrysler Building. He noted that the timing will depend on confirmation of the new design, and from that point, DDC would have a year of design work and six months of procurement. He re-iterated that this meant that construction would commence 18 months from confirmation of the new design, which could still mean summer of 2023. Director Mahdhavi clarified that the Chrysler Building's scaffolding was posing the current issue, and not the Con Edison vault.

Director McKee asked if it would be possible to have all of the pedestrian amenities on one side of street rather than dividing them between the north and south sides. Director Pincar noted that DOT would like the space to be attractive to passive use while accommodating loading and unloading for business on the block, as well as St. Agnes Church, and that the latest thinking would be to include sizable curbside sidewalk extensions at the eastern and western edges of the block (on both the northern and southern sides of the street). He clarified that the entire space would be at grade. He noted that concentrating this larger amount of pedestrian space at the eastern and western edges would allow for greater loading access towards the middle of the block, where active loading docks would continue to be located. He noted that DOT would continue to update the Governing Group as the design evolves.

Director McKee stated that there is often a line of traffic down the shared street. Director Pincar responded that once the capital build-out is complete, there will be a level, curbside roadbed, and that the location of planters and pedestrian amenities will make it easier for drivers to discern the shared nature of the street. He noted that the chicane design had not worked as well as DOT had envisioned and that they had heard excellent real-time feedback from GCP, and that their combined on-the-ground experience of the space will drive the capital design. He noted that it has been interesting to see the

differences in how the 43<sup>rd</sup> Street shared street functions compared to their Broadway shared street between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Streets. In the latter location, he noted, the curvature of the street helps show the shared condition and slows down drivers. DOT is thinking carefully about the visual cues that they can employ on 43<sup>rd</sup> Street to show all users that the space is shared. Director Chin suggested that DOT speak with Peter Murray in London regarding that city's experience with a successful shared street on several blocks of Exhibition Road in West London.

#### Park Avenue Medians

Director Pincar confirmed the ability of the Governing Group to onboard a landscape architect to assist in the medians' design. He noted that the City was working to sort out the details and would return to the Governing Group to discuss next steps.

Director Pincar stated that MNR is looking to expand the median between 47<sup>th</sup> and 48<sup>th</sup> Streets as part of the redevelopment of 270 Park Avenue and the MNR trainshed rehabilitation of the western side of the block. He noted that DOT had been working closely with MNR and the relevant stakeholders to consider how the medians would be expanded on that block and are now coordinating with PDC. In terms of schedule, he relayed that construction drawings should be ready by mid-2022 and trainshed rehabilitation would commence in 2023. Following the rehabilitation on that block, the deck will be restored and the median expansion with temporary elements will be installed in 2024. He noted that DOT would return to the Governing Group with more details, to which Director Garodnick inquired as to when the City would know more. Director Pincar confirmed that DOT could prepare the requisite package of information that would inform a vote in time for the December 2021 annual meeting of the Governing Group.

Director Chin asked for more information regarding the MNR schedule and whether the City's schedule would be in alignment. She noted that in past meetings the Governing Group discussed that MNR and DOT were holding monthly meetings regarding the tunnel rehabilitation. Director Pincar replied that, following the rehabilitation of the western half of the subject block's trainshed, the entire median would be expanded and given temporary treatments. This would be installed either in 2024 or 2025 and that could inform the final capital design. He explained that as MNR continues to rehabilitate the trainshed under the blocks north and south of the subject block—as well as the trainshed under the eastern half of the subject block—it will eventually demolish the above-grade temporary intervention. Therefore, the widening and temporary intervention may not ultimately reflect the final capital design for the medians that the landscape architect will help to develop. He noted that the experience with the temporary design would inform how the capital design would look and operate, noting that it would effectively function like a pilot project for the median redesigns. He noted that when DOT presented its ideas for the medians to the community, there was an overwhelming preference for a walkable boulevard that allowed north-south movement. He noted that this wouldn't be possible for the temporary design of the subject block because the medians north and south of it would not be widened for a number of years. For the first several years of the temporary intervention, DOT intends to make the medians a space for passive enjoyment with tables and chairs. He noted that the expanded footprint would help show the public what could

be possible with the space. Director Chin asked whether the temporary intervention would be ADA-accessible, and Director Pincar confirmed that it would.

There were no further questions and the update was concluded.

- 6. Business Improvement District Update:** Mr. Cerullo, of GCP, and Mr. Byrnes, of EMP, provided an update from the local BIDs. Mr. Byrnes noted that, since Labor Day, there had been a slight uptick in building occupancy. However, he noted that 30 to 35 percent building occupancy was on the higher end for their members. He noted that they were happy and ready to work with DOT on streetscape improvements. Mr. Cerullo seconded Mr. Byrnes's perspective, noting that their members' building occupancy was more in the range of 20 to 30 percent.

Mr. Cerullo discussed their monitoring of pedestrian activity at eight locations. He relayed that since January 2021, there had been a doubling of pedestrian counts, from two million to four million. He noted that over the summer, there was an increase in tourists visiting from within the US and overseas. He highlighted that GCP engaged the local community through a number of public events, including live music.

He expressed his excitement at the opportunity to put Governing Group funds towards the hiring of a landscape architect, underscoring that it will help to ensure that this iconic corridor receives an equally iconic vision for the malls. He thanked Director Garodnick, Hon. Director Powers, Hon. Director Brewer, DDC, and DOT for their dedication to this vision. He noted GCP's excitement regarding Pershing Square East, and stated that he was working with City agencies to field questions from his stakeholders regarding any potential impacts to their businesses.

He highlighted that the opening of Pershing Square West has changed the nature of the area. He conveyed that people are visiting the plaza to see its public art and weekly music programming. He described a scene from the previous night where 100 people were dancing in the plaza while people were having happy hour at the adjacent restaurant. He noted that this is something the area had not seen previously would not be happening without this critical public space and the Governing Group's hard work, and that GCP staff had a real sense of pride about the space. He also noted that GCP had improved the plantings in the plaza's garden. He also discussed the successes of Vanderbilt Plaza, which was open to the public and well-utilized and posed a question related to the shared street along Vanderbilt Avenue.

Director Pincar noted that the block of Vanderbilt between 44<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> Streets will be northbound, and that DOT is developing a new markings plan for the block that will add pedestrian space along the eastern curbline. He flagged that drawings would be sent to Community Board 5 and provided to the Governing Group. Director Chin commended GCP and EMP for their stewardship of Pershing West and their work in the neighborhood.

There were no further questions and the update was concluded.

7. **Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting of the Board of Directors was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

## COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

**ABO** | NYS Authorities Budget Office  
**BID** | business improvement district  
**CPC** | NYC City Planning Commission  
**DCP** | NYC Department of City Planning  
**DDC** | NYC Department of Design and Construction  
**DEP** | NYC Department of Environmental Protection  
**DOB** | NYC Department of Buildings  
**EMP** | East Midtown Partnership BID  
**FDNY** | Fire Department of the City of New York  
**GCP** | Grand Central Partnership BID  
**LIRR** | Long Island Rail Road  
**MNR** | Metro-North Railroad  
**MTA** | Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
**NYCEDC** | NYC Economic Development Corporation  
**NYCT** | New York City Transit  
**NYPD** | NYC Police Department  
**OMB** | NYC Office of Management and Budget  
**PAAA** | Public Authorities Accountability Act  
**PDC** | Public Design Commission  
**POPS** | Privately owned public space  
**PRIF** | Public Realm Improvement Fund  
**ULURP** | Uniform Land Use Review Procedure