

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF
PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT FUND GOVERNING GROUP, INC.**
October 18, 2021

The Meeting of the Members and Directors of the East Midtown Public Realm Improvement Fund Governing Group was held at 1:01 p.m. on October 18, 2021 via video teleconference.

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

The meeting was chaired by Council Member Powers, Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Group, on behalf of Deputy Mayor Been, Chairperson of the Governing Group.

The following Members were present:

- Hon. Keith Powers, Council Member for District 4
- Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
- Dan Garodnick, Designee of Speaker of the Council
- Sandy McKee, Member and Designee of Manhattan Community Board Six
- Susan Chin, Representative of a citywide civic organization

The following Members acted by proxy:

- 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
- Gabrielle Fialkoff, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
- Jamie Torres-Springer, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Design & Construction
- Vikki Barbero, Member and Designee of Manhattan Community Board Five

The following Directors and Alternate Directors were present:

- Keith Powers, Council Member for District 4
- Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
- Dan Garodnick, Designee of the Speaker of the Council
- Sandy McKee, Member and Alternate Director of Manhattan Community Board Six
- Susan Chin, Representative of a citywide civic organization
- 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.

Member	Alternate Director
Gabrielle Fialkoff	Nick Molinari

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 September 23, 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 Audited Financial Statements and Treasurer’s Annual Report:** It was announced that approval of the Audited Financial Statements and Annual Report was in order. Director D’Ascoli noted that the auditor’s opinion was a ‘clean opinion with no reservation’, which is an opinion of no findings. Director D’Ascoli noted that the amount of resources are \$42,305,000, which represents an increase from the previous year of approximately \$100,000. He recommended that the full board approve the audited financial statements and annual report. Upon a motion made and unanimously carried, the Audited Financial Statements and Annual Report were adopted.
3. **Adoption of Modification to By Laws:** It was announced that adoption of modifications to the Governing Groups by-laws were in order. Director Mahdavi noted that there were two administrative changes proposed. The first was to Section 3.12(a) to correct a typo. The second was to Section 5.09 to make two changes to the administrative process for writing checks. The first change would make the treasurer instead of the chair the prime signatory and the second change would be to amend the dollar-amount threshold that requires two signatures from \$5,000 to \$20,000. He noted that the \$5,000 threshold was initially used in accordance with the micro-purchases standards of the Procurement Policy Board at that time, and further noted that this amount had been increased to \$20,000 as well, which was the impetus for updating it in the PRIF Governing Group by laws. Therefore, the purpose of increasing the threshold would be for consistency and to streamline the process of paying for

small expenditures. Director Mahdavi and D'Ascoli clarified that all expenditures are approved by the Governing Group in the budget, but that below a certain threshold, the treasurer would be authorized to execute a check without returning to the Governing Group for approval. Director Tuttle flagged that some routine administrative expenditures, such as paying for a transcription service, may not appear as an individual line item in the budget. Upon a motion made and unanimously carried, the amendment to the by-laws were adopted.

4. **Project Updates:** It was announced that DOT would present an update on the Park Avenue medians.

Park Avenue Medians

Ms. Sta. Ines provided an overview of the project scope, which would include the concept development, preliminary landscape design, and preliminary cost estimates. She noted some up-front considerations regarding the design services and highlighted that the geographic area would extend from 46th Street to 57th Street. She stated that mall reconstruction would closely follow the underground trainshed rehabilitation, so it would require coordination with MNR on construction, phasing, staging, and above and below grade infrastructure. She noted that sector one would include the median between 47th and 48th streets, and that the design for an interim treatment was moving through the PDC process. She further noted that the East Midtown EIS studied expanded geometries for the medians and that this would be taken into consideration in the scope of work. Ms. Sta. Ines elaborated that the scope would include continued stakeholder outreach and input, a site survey, and identifying the location and feasibility of specific design elements. She noted that the preliminary design would cover conceptual material, lighting and planting designs, and conceptual design of alternative security features. In addition, she noted that rendered plans of the key design elements would be presented to the public.

Hon. Director Brewer asked about the results of the stakeholder engagement. Director Pincar noted that the survey received a tremendous amount of response, and that DOT had been hearing constructive feedback about the need for pedestrian upgrades and expanded medians. Additionally, he relayed that there were a number of respondents asking about the possibility of including bike paths. He noted that, in terms of amenities, seating, art, and passive recreation amenities seemed to be popular. He noted that DOT would continue to develop those ideas as they proceed with the scope of work. He emphasized that, so far, the public's feedback had been overwhelmingly positive.

Mr. Cerullo took the opportunity to thank the Governing Group for its support in getting the proposal to this point. He asked whether the scoping process would include public engagement, and how a landscape architect would be onboarded. Director Pincar thanked Mr. Cerullo for his efforts on behalf of the GCP. He noted that he wanted there to be a thorough public engagement process and that there would be consistent engagement with the Governing Group, but that DOT was still figuring out the details. Director Mahdavi clarified that there would be an open RFP process to find a landscape architect.

Regarding the RFP and scope, Director Chin inquired as to whether the projected maintenance and stewardship costs would be studied, noting that GCP would likely be asked to take on some of the responsibility. She suggested that if it were not currently included in the scope, that it should be. Mr. Cerullo concurred, noting that it would be extremely helpful given the extent of the corridor and inconsistent streams for funding and maintenance.

Director Chin asked DOT if they would consider concessions as part of the median activation. Mr. Cerullo flagged that he sensed that concessions would be viewed as commercialization of the malls and would receive pushback. He cited that in some of GCP's discussions with the Community Board, they had to clarify that activation of the medians didn't mean outright commercialization or privatization of space, and that there was a sensitivity to this issue. He emphasized that GCP's main concern was that there was a consistent funding stream that would enable them, or another maintenance partner, to keep the new, iconic spaces in first class condition.

Hon. Director Brewer inquired about the engagement and outreach process with the residential buildings along Park Avenue, flagging that these constituents may not answer a survey, and that someone should be speaking to the co-op boards directly. Director Pincar noted that the pandemic had delayed DOT's ability to hold in-person public workshops, which would have allowed for direct feedback from residents along Park Ave. He noted that DOT plans to pursue a thorough engagement process with elected officials, local stakeholders, and residents of the immediate area. Hon. Director Brewer noted that the constituents she was referring to are not typically involved in these types of outreach efforts and are often not in contact with community boards or local elected officials, and would require additional effort and a different approach to engage. Director Chin suggested that there could be a community affairs liaison within the landscape architecture team, which may assist with outreach. Mr. Cerullo and Director Chin volunteered their assistance in the outreach process.

Director Law-Gisiko inquired about the working relationship between DOT, MNR, and MTA, and whether MTA and MNR shared the desire to onboard a landscape architect. She also asked when Manhattan Community Board 5 could expect outreach. Director Pincar highlighted that DOT has a terrific working relationship with MTA and MNR on this project and that there's been close collaboration for a number of years. He confirmed that the agencies are aware of the effort underway to secure a landscape architect to help with the broader vision for the above-grade spaces. He noted that DOT will be coming to the community boards to present the project, but that the next step is to present to the Governing Group at the December annual meeting. Director Mahdavi confirmed this approach.

Director Law-Gisiko asked if DOT could come to Manhattan Community Board 5 during Q1 of 2022, and Director Pincar replied that they'd have a more accurate sense of timeline following the Governing Group's December meeting. Director Law-Gisiko noted that the sooner DOT presented to the Community Board, the less likely there would be a knee-jerk reaction to the proposal.

5. **Adjournment:** There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting of the Board of Directors was adjourned at 2:04 p.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
EIS | environmental impact statement
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