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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Transportation Committee
Wednesday February 3, 2021, 6:30 PM
Conducted Remotely on Zoom

Please note: The resolutions contained in the committee minutes are recommendations submitted by the committee chair to the Community Board. At the monthly full board meeting, the resolutions are discussed and voted upon by all members of Community Board 8 Manhattan.

Minutes

Present: Lowell Barton, Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, Rebecca Dangoor, Felice Farber, Billy Freeland, Craig Lader, Rebecca Lamorte, Valerie Mason, Sharon Pope-Marshall, Rita Popper, Barry Schneider, Tricia Shimamura, Cos Spagnoletti, Marco Tamayo, Charles Warren, Jack Zimmerman, Peter Borock (public member), Jordan Wouk (public member)

Absent (Excused): None

Resolutions for Approval:

Item 1 – Parking Placards (Unanimous)

Item 3 – Fairway Market Loading Zone Parking Hours (Unanimous)

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 PM.

Item 1: Parking Placards - Continuing Discussion

In January 2021, the CB8M Transportation Committee revisited the issue of fraudulent and illegal placards and illegal parking by vehicles with agency-issued placards (the discussion did not address legitimate placards provided to persons with disabilities, which are viewed as sacrosanct). At the January meeting, a series of [briefing materials](#) that was provided included a synopsis of the laws and policies implemented in 2019 that were intended to comprehensively address endemic placard abuse, and a series of recent articles highlighted how implementation has been ineffective and not yielded the intended results. The reasons for the lack of success include budget cuts that resulted in a special enforcement unit being disbanded that employed over 100 enforcement agents, and delays in the conversion to a digital pay-by-plate system. The result is few new digital placards being issued, few tickets being issued, few illegal placards being revoked and delays in conducting surveys measuring illegal placard usage.

It was generally agreed upon by meeting participants that the 2019 actions were appropriate and needed, but clearly ineffective. After having a month to reflect on the recent history, the discussion focused on potential actions that could address the lack of progress that has occurred. There was widespread agreement that lack of enforcement is a critical issue, and sufficient funding is needed to ensure that there are enough agents to conduct the necessary levels of enforcement and to ensure that favoritism does not impact enforcement. The importance of implementing the digital placard program was also seen as

crucial. In addition, other ideas introduced by meeting participants as part of a brainstorming discussion included:

- Potential privatization of enforcement;
- Asking the City Council to host a hearing and issuing a report assessing the impact of the 2019 laws;
- Creating dedicated placard parking zones;
- Restricting placards only to vehicles with New York State license plates;
- Creating a uniform digital placard used by all issuing agencies and having each agency determine who should be issued digital placards;
- Requiring all current placard holders to reapply for the new digital placards;
- Requiring placard holders to log their usage to identify the official purposes and expected hours of use;
- Supporting newly proposed City Council legislation that would permit the general public to report illegal placard use and receive monetary rewards for doing so;
- Total elimination of all agency-issued placards and prohibition of all agency-placard parking in Manhattan;
- Delegating one City agency as the centralized issuing agency for all agency-issued placards;
- Shifting traffic enforcement to DOT from NYPD;
- Reevaluating how and where traffic enforcement is deployed;
- Pressuring elected officials and agencies and the City to report on the status of the implementation of the 2019 legislation and to move more quickly;
- Exploring the idea of charging a fee for obtaining a permit;
- Improved reporting of the progress of transitioning to the digital placard system

Following extensive discussion and debate, the following resolution was put forward by CB8:

WHEREAS, illegal and fraudulent parking placards and abuse of legal placards have been ongoing problems across Community District 8 and New York City for many years, and have had detrimental impacts to safety and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, New York City enacted a package of parking placard reform laws and policies in 2019 to increase enforcement, stiffen penalties, modernize the system through conversion to a digital pay-by-plate system, and improve reporting of statistics related to placards; and

WHEREAS, budget cuts have resulted in reduced enforcement due to the disbanding of a special enforcement unit with over 100 agents; and

WHEREAS, the transition to a digital pay-by-plate placard system has been delayed, and;

WHEREAS, societal changes have reduced the need for as many placards to be in circulation; and

WHEREAS, New York City agencies should encourage their staff to prioritize use of New York City's extensive public transit network that provides widespread coverage to nearly all corners of New York City rather than promoting or incentivizing driving, and

WHEREAS, advances in technology have greatly improved the ability to track placard issuance and usage and identification of fraudulent placards; and

WHEREAS, the Traffic Enforcement division of the New York Police Department should be empowered with the necessary funding and support to aggressively perform enforcement;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan calls for the New York City Council and Mayor's Office to enact laws and provide funding to perform the following:

1. Assign Traffic Enforcement, as a special division of the NYPD, as the sole parking placard enforcing agency;
2. Restore the \$5.4 million annual budget for the dedicated parking placard enforcement unit that was cut in 2020;
3. Immediately initiate the process of retiring all agency-issued placards and require all holders to reapply for a digital placard with a digital identifier that can be verified by enforcement agents using handheld devices;
4. Assess the number of agency permits and specific reasons for them being issued, and reduce the number of placards that are issued to city agencies, doctors, clergy and the media.

Yes (16+1): Barton, Birnbaum, Bores, Farber, Freeland, Lader, Lamorte, Mason, Pope-Marshall, Popper, Schneider, Shimamura, Spagnoletti, Tamayo, Warren, Zimmerman, Wouk (public member)

No (0): None

Item 2: 72nd Street East of York Ave. - Parking and Safety Issues

CB8's District Office and the East 72nd Street Neighborhood Association have both received a series of ongoing complaints about parking and safety issues on East 72nd Street east of York Ave. The street is bi-directional, and has a cul-de-sac where vehicles traversing the block turn around. The block features weekday commercial loading zones on the north and south side of the street from York Ave. until the mid-block crosswalk; the area around the cul-de-sac has no standing signage. There is a Citi Bike docking station on the block near York Ave.

According to the complaints received and those who spoke at the meeting, the block is often inundated with cars and trucks that are illegally parked, standing, or double-parked, which creates a variety of safety issues. This is especially an issue at the cul-de-sac, where the presence of illegally parked vehicles has inhibited the ability for emergency vehicles to be able to turn around. Pedestrians and cyclists have also reported feeling unsafe when they negotiate their way around moving traffic and parked vehicles. The congestion on the block results in back-ups further west along 72nd Street and along York Ave. The challenges are exacerbated by displaying parking placards that are parking in both the commercial loading zones and no standing zones. These issues diminish greatly on weekends, when vehicular activity is much lower and double parking is generally not a problem.

With multiple hospitals nearby and a medical imaging facility located on the block, there is significant activity generated by taxis/Uber/Lyft on the block. Parking placard use is also seen as a prime factor; a constituent reported Hospital for Special Surgery parking placards on vehicles parked blocks away on Cherokee Place. There is the perception that vehicles connected to Sotheby's and the Hospital for Special Surgery may be contributing to the volume of vehicles on the street. Representatives from the Hospital for Special Surgery were invited to the meeting and provided valuable feedback, acknowledging that placards, increased delivery activity and the presence of the many nearby hospitals that generate constant flows of incoming and outgoing patients/staff/visitors, are all prime contributors to the issue. It has been further exacerbated during the pandemic when patients are restricted from guests accompanying them to their medical visits. They also emphasized that most of the placard parking on the block was not necessarily HSS related and appeared to be largely caused by illegal placards and vehicles illegally parked in the No Standing zones, combined with a lack of enforcement of these infractions. HSS executives noted that the presence of commercial parking is also a factor, and suggested that Sotheby's provide input on whether they believe the commercial zone as currently constituted is working for them. HSS committed to urging staff to avoid parking on 72nd Street with HSS parking placards, and reiterate to their visitors 72nd Street should not be used as a waiting area for on-street parking.

In addition to the need for more enforcement, it was suggested that HSS work collectively with Sotheby's and other businesses and residential buildings on the block to discuss the parking and congestion issues, which HSS was willing to organize; NYCDOT indicated they would be willing to participate in such an effort. One member proposed that this group consider hiring a traffic engineer to assess the situation and

determine whether there are any changes necessary to the street, parking regulations or nearby traffic signals. The issue will be revisited by the Transportation Committee in either March or April, where the stakeholders will have an opportunity to provide updates on their fact-finding efforts and potential solutions.

Item 3: Fairway Market 86th Street - Complaints regarding curbside and sidewalk activities

In 2010, CB8M passed a resolution granting Fairway Market at 240 East 86th Street a commercial loading zone, which was ultimately granted by NYCDOT to cover the hours between 5AM and 10PM seven days a week and exceeds the typical hours granted to loading zones within the Community District. Executives from the then family-owned business (which has since been sold and is now owned by Village Super Market Inc.) stated that this special dispensation was necessary to allow delivery trucks to stagger their schedules and prevent congestion and double parking in front of the store. At the time, there was concern expressed that congestion would be a problem and unloading activities would inundate both the curbside and sidewalk in front of the store.

In the years since the store opened in the summer of 2011, there have been frequent complaints that Fairway Market has not kept their commitments to control the situation in front of their store. These complaints were also voiced by numerous speakers who described frequent double and even triple parking by multiple trucks at a time unloading goods, and a sidewalk that is often overtaken by crates, forklifts, and boxes awaiting transfer into the store. This has resulted in congestion, noise pollution, and accumulating of trash creating an uninviting experience for pedestrians and neighboring businesses and residents.

CB8M staff made repeated efforts to invite store management and corporate officials to join the discussion and work with the community to address the issues; ultimately a store manager was reached and declined the invite to participate. With no other recourse, the Committee decided that it had no choice but to take action and reduce the hours in which the loading zone would be in effect. The following resolution was put forward by CB8:

WHEREAS, Fairway Market has operated a retail supermarket at 240 East 86th Street since July 2011; and

WHEREAS, Community Board 8 Manhattan granted the original owners of Fairway Market an expanded loading zone in effect 7 days a week between 5AM and 10PM; and

WHEREAS, Fairway Market stated the additional hours were needed to allow staggered truck deliveries and prevent double parking that would block a moving lane on East 86th Street; and

WHEREAS, Community Board 8 Manhattan has been fielding complaints on a regular basis since the store opened regarding the unloading activities on the street and along the sidewalk; and

WHEREAS, the frequent sidewalk and curbside presence of pallets, crates, forklifts, boxes and merchandise awaiting transfer to inside the store create visual blight and interfere with pedestrian throughput at all hours of the day; and

WHEREAS, Fairway Market has not been a good neighbor, and has been unresponsive over the years to repeated complaints regarding their delivery and unloading activities; and

WHEREAS, Fairway Market's current ownership and staff have not displayed any interest or intent to address the ongoing issues; and

WHEREAS, reducing the hours of the loading zone would end at a time when it would accommodate resident overnight parking needs;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan requests that the New York City Department of Transportation change the hours of the loading zone in front of Fairway Market at 240 East 86th Street from 5AM to Midnight to 7:30AM to 9PM.

Yes (15+1): Barton, Birnbaum, Bores, Farber, Freeland, Lader, Lamorte, Mason, Popper, Schneider, Shimamura, Spagnoletti, Tamayo, Warren, Zimmerman, Wouk (public member)

No (0): None

Item 4: NYCDOT Updates

Colleen Chattergoon, NYCDOT Senior Planner and Liaison to CB8, provided the following updates:

- Mayor De Blasio officially announced that the south outer roadway of the Queensboro Bridge will be converted in the coming years to a dedicated pedestrian lane and converting the north outer roadway to a bike-only lane. NYCDOT will be providing updates to CB8 as the process moves forward.
- NYCDOT will return to CB8's Transportation Committee in March to further discuss bike lanes on East 61st and 62nd Streets; Ms. Chattergoon noted that NYCDOT has been working with the Dialysis center, and will provide that update as part of their presentation in March. In addition, CB8 requested that NYCDOT provide staff to discuss the Mayor's announcement to parking for over 20,000 bicycles across NYC.
- A member brought forward the issue of snow removal at crosswalks and in front of closed storefronts; Ms. Chattergoon emphasized that it is the responsibility of property owners to clear snow from sidewalks. At pedestrian crosswalks, it is the adjacent property owner; if the MTA owns a property by a subway entrance, they would be responsible for clearing snow. A constituent noted that snow removal between the sidewalk and pedestrian islands located along 1st and 2nd Avenues is being neglected. A member of the public asked for improved snow removal at bus stops and ensuring that passengers don't need to climb over snow piles to get from the bus to the sidewalk. Another member asked for this issue to be added to a future meeting agenda as a joint item with the Environment and Sanitation Committee, which will be scheduled.
- A member asked about snow clearance in bike lanes and noted that the district's Council Members have been pursuing a capital investment to procure a multihog, which is a piece of specialized equipment used by the Sanitation Department to clear narrow areas such as bike lanes; Ms. Chattergoon noted that the bike lanes on 1st and 2nd Avenues are wide enough to accommodate standard snow removal trucks. She also noted that there was a recent presentation at a district service cabinet meeting that would be beneficial if it were provided to CB8.
- A member asked for an update on outdoor dining structures. Ms. Chattergoon noted that NYCDOT does monitor activity but does not have the capability to inspect each and every restaurant; she urged anyone with concerns about specific locations to be reported to NYCDOT.
- A constituent requested an update on CB8's 2020 resolution requesting parking changes on 63rd Street between 3rd Avenue and Lexington Avenue, and questioned whether recent changes on 63rd Street between 2nd and 3rd Avenues were done in error; Ms. Chattergoon confirmed that the recent changes were correctly implemented.

Item 5: New Business

The District Manager stated that he received a complaint from Asphalt Green that Amazon has been using the no standing zone adjacent to the athletic field on York Ave. between 90th and 91st Street.

Item 6: Old Business

There was no old business.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted, Charles Warren & Craig Lader, Co-Chairs