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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Transportation Committee
Wednesday, October 9, 2024 6:30 PM
Conducted Remotely on Zoom

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

Resolutions for Approval:

Item 1: Parking Change Request - 1601-1619 and 1623-1641 3rd Avenue

Item 2: Proposed E-Bike Registration Legislation

Minutes

Present: Michele Birnbaum, Lori Bores, Alida Camp, Sebastian Hallum Clarke, Ed Hartzog, Paul Krikler, Craig Lader, John McClement, Rita Popper, Judy Schneider, Charles Warren, Stephanie Reckler (public member)

Absent (excused): Valerie Mason

Absent (Unexcused): Juno Chowla-Song, Rebecca Lamorte, John Philips

Number of Attendees from the Public: Approximately 40

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM.

Item 1: Public Hearing: Parking Change Request - 1601-1619 and 1623-1641 Third Avenue (6:35PM)

Joel Burris, President of Rupert/Yorkville Towers Condominium, presented a request to change the current parking regulations in front of the main building entrances of 1601-1619 Third Avenue (located on the north side East 90th Street) and 1623-1641 3rd Avenue (located on the south side of East 92nd Street) from “no parking” to “no standing”.

In front of each of these building entrances, there are existing cutouts where “no parking” regulations are in place; the 90th Street cutout is about 6 car lengths, while the 92nd street cutout is about 2 car lengths. These cutouts were installed to facilitate vehicles engaged in pick-up and drop-off activities, as these 2 residential buildings are among the largest in Community District 8 and generate a large amount of traffic that would otherwise block through traffic if they were forced to double park. As “no parking” signage allows vehicles with placards and those bearing accessible parking permits to park there, Mr. Burris described these cutouts to be frequently inhabited by parked vehicles, which prevents cars from being able to conduct expeditious pick-ups and drop-offs, forcing them to stop in the moving lane or the bike lane. Mr. Burris described how this is particularly impactful to the many seniors and persons with disabilities who live in these towers, and opposed “no standing” regulations that don’t allow for any parking beyond expeditious pick-up and drop-off activity.

There were numerous speakers providing their personal experiences; some speakers concurred with Mr. Burris's description of cutouts not serving their purpose because they were frequently occupied by parked vehicles that rarely vacated the spaces; others suggested that restricting parking would not solve the issue and be unfair to those who legally use the space and possess accessible parking permits or license plates, and wanted to see more enforcement of current regulations. There was further discussion about the availability of parking for those with accessible permits, and how there is significant inventory of metered spaces and no parking spaces in relatively close proximity to the Yorkville and Rupert Towers.

The following resolution was then put forward by Community Board 8:

WHEREAS; a request was made for parking regulations to be changed from "No Parking" to "No Standing" in front of 1601-1619 Third Avenue and 1623-1641 Third Avenue; and

WHEREAS; the requested change to parking regulations is only for the spaces located in existing cutouts in front of the building entrances located on East 90th Street and East 92nd Street; and

WHEREAS; the cutouts in front of each building were constructed to accommodate the ability for passengers to be dropped off at the curbside of Yorkville and Rupert Towers, which are among the largest residential buildings in Community District 8; and

WHEREAS; Yorkville and Rupert Towers have a large population of seniors and persons with disabilities who are impacted most when the entranceways are blocked by parked vehicles; and

WHEREAS; the existing "No Parking" regulations are not succeeding in providing uninterrupted curbside access to the building entrances, as the spaces are often occupied by vehicles with parking placards and accessible parking permits that are legally able to park in "No Parking" zones; and

WHEREAS; vehicles unable to enter the cutouts create congestion in the moving lanes and block the East 90th Street bike lane; and

WHEREAS; the existing cutouts in front of these buildings are a relatively unique condition within Community District 8, and thus aren't setting a precedent by creating a "no standing" zone; and

WHEREAS; "No Standing" regulations would make placard and permit parking illegal in front of these building entrances;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 approved this requested parking change.

Yes (10): Bores, Camp, Hallum Clarke, Hartzog, Krikler, Lader, McClement, Popper, Schneider, Warren

No (1+1): Birnbaum, Reckler (Public Member)

Abstain (1): None

Item 2: Discussion of Proposed E-Bike Registration Legislation (7:35PM)

In July 2023, the Transportation Committee and Full Board of CB8M passed a resolution that called for license plate, registration and insurance requirements for e-bikes and mopeds, and laws requiring that all e-bikes and mopeds be registered before they are allowed to leave stores at which they are sold. In the period since the passage of that July 2023 resolution, there have been legislative efforts at both the local and State level that seek to address the issue of registration for e-bikes and e-scooters, which various CB8 members and constituents asked be discussed specifically.

NYC Council Intro 0606-2024, and New York State Assembly bill A-9092, both propose that every bicycle with electric assist, electric scooter and other legal motorized vehicle be registered and provided a distinctive identification number and a license plate; Intro 0606-2024 would ensure that any vehicle not registered at the State level would be registered locally with NYCDOT. Intro 0606-2024 currently has 31 co-sponsors, which comprises a majority, but the bill has yet to be scheduled for debate. Members of the E-Vehicle Safety Alliance, including victims of injuries resulting from being hit by e-bikes, described their stories and urged that these bills be acted upon, and in the case of Intro 0606-2024, receive a hearing from the NYC Council.

The majority of speakers supported these proposed bills, as they agreed with the premise that e-bikes pose safety threats both in regards to unsafe usage and potential fire hazards related to the lithium-ion batteries, and registration of bikes would provide a mechanism to enforce regulations and track down those who are involved in crashes with pedestrians; they also expressed frustration that the NYC Council bill was not being given a public hearing or a vote. There were some speakers who opposed the proposed bills, based on the inclusion of pedal-assist e-bikes and concerns about the bills unfairly targeting minority and disadvantaged populations such as immigrant groups that are employed as food delivery workers.

The following resolution was then put forward by Community Board 8:

WHEREAS; there are no current state or local laws requiring any form of identification on e-bikes and e-scooters; and

WHEREAS; the use of e-bikes and e-scooters has significantly increased in recent years, especially with the growth of e-commerce and food delivery; and

WHEREAS; there have been crashes involving e-vehicles that have resulted in serious injuries and fatalities; and

WHEREAS; a significant percentage of crashes involving e-vehicles are hit and run incidents, where the operator is never identified or held liable for the injuries they cause; and

WHEREAS; registration of e-bikes and e-scooters would be a step towards holding owners and users accountable when they violate laws or cause physical harm or injuries; and

WHEREAS; lack of identification on e-bikes and e-scooters interfere with the ability for NYPD enforcement of cycling laws such as speeding or running red lights; and

WHEREAS; the New York City Charter includes language regarding support for the health and safety of residents; and

WHEREAS; many residents have expressed fears for their health and safety as pedestrians as a result of increased e-bike and e-scooter activity, and violations of traffic laws by e-vehicles;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan calls on the Speaker Adrienne Adams and the City Council to bring Intro 0606-2024 to a public hearing;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Community Board 8 Manhattan supports passage of New York State Assembly Bill A-9092, which requires bicycles with electric assist and electric scooters be registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles and have a license plate affixed.

Yes (8+1): Birnbaum, Bores, Camp, Hartzog, McClement, Popper, Schneider, Warren, Reckler (public member)

No (3): Hallum Clarke, Krikler, Lader

Abstain (0): None

Item 3: NYCDOT Updates

Jackie Lazaro from NYCDOT, reported that there were no updates specific to Community District 8.

Item 4: Old and New Business

A member noted that a restaurant at 89th Street and Second Avenue had removed its illegal enclosure but now appears to have rebuilt the structure, and asked that NYCDOT check into its legality.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30PM.

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