

Brooklyn Community Board 9  
890 Nostrand Avenue Brooklyn, New York 1125  
Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes  
November 8, 2023

Meeting ID: 824 4280 6395

Attendance (Board Members): Ethan Norville, Committee Chair; Felice Robertson; Benny Rosenberger

Attendance (Community Resident Members): Paco Abraham; Calista Dejesus; Stanley Greenberg; Valerie Fleming; Jeffrey Grannum

Absent (Board Members):Lorianne Wolseley

Absent (Community Resident Members): none

Guests: Timothy Brown; Vertina Brown; PO Fiandola; Julie Fissinger; Rod Herbert; Eva Jackson Andrew Magnus, Theresa Westerdahl; Zach Youngren

CB9 Staff: Mia N. Hilton, Assistant District Manager

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1. Welcome/Greetings
  - a. Committee Chair, Ethan Norville called the meeting to order at 7:08pm
  - b. Chair Norville mentioned that recurring guest Andrew Magnus has requested to formally join the Transportation Committee as a Community Resident Member and that he is now in the pipeline to be added to the group at a future date. Andrew introduced himself to all as a resident of the neighborhood for the last 5 years and said he is an architect and planner currently working for the MTA in planning and development, and if applicable, he'd recuse himself from any work-related votes that might come before the board.
  - c. Chair Norville mentioned there was also supposed to be a Dollar Ride Presentation but because of a scheduling issue, the issue is tabled to a future meeting.
2. Review of previous meeting and decisions made
  - a. a. Motion passed to outline Carshare guidelines for DOT in CD9 & Chair Norville mentioned it also passed at the full board meeting in October.
3. Unfinished Business
  - a. Street Co-Naming Request for Empire Boulevard and Washington Avenue to Tiarah Poyau Way
    - i. Vertina Brown reminded our group about the request to honor the memory of her daughter, Tiarah Poyau who was slain in the neighborhood during a J'ouvert festival in 2016. Ms. Brown has worked on gun violence prevention in the city and at the state level. She now asks to keep Tiarah's name alive via a street Co-Naming firstly, and secondly a dedication at the newly created plaza adjacent to Western Beef.

- ii. Theresa Westerdahl asked if the district office had gotten any more details about the process and ownership of the plaza area thru NYC DOT or NYC Parks.
- iii. Chair Norville replied that there was new clarification via Councilmember Rita Joseph's office. This is in DOT's court, not Parks.
- iv. Assistant District Manager Mia Hinton added that there has been a lack of communication between CB9 and its DOT liaison and so the board is now speaking directly to the Commissioner's Chief of Staff Ryan Lynch about the issue. Additionally, she said Councilmember Rita Joseph's noted they'd be in support of the plaza if it had the Board's backing, but it all will come down to logistics and timing from DOT. The committee can move forward and vote but the next steps will all be through DOT.
- v. Paco Abraham asked what best path is forward for the Committee and suggested perhaps voting on the Street Co-Naming and Plaza dedication as two different votes because each might be controlled by DOT but could move on two very different timelines. Chair Norville agreed we could do that.
- vi. Valerie Flemming agreed we should move this item along and have two separate votes.
- vii. Felice Roberston asked if there was already a naming there. Mia Hinton said there was for the Greenstreet, but not for the plaza as the plaza itself is new and didn't exist before so the board should move ahead with a vote.
- viii. Chair Norville motion to erect a memorial plaza as it would likely get more attention than a street co-naming.
- ix. Paco Abraham supports the idea but also asks for clarification of what the preferential order of items would be by Vertina Brown. Vertina Brown clarifies a street co-naming is most preferred, though she'd appreciate both.
- x. Theresa Westerdahl notes her strong support.
- xi. Paco Abraham motions for CB9 to support the Street Co-Naming Request for Empire Boulevard and Washington Avenue to Tiarah Poyau Way.
  - 1. Motion is seconded by Stanley Greenberg.
  - 2. Motion passes by unanimous consent
- xii. Valerie makes motions for CB9 to further pursue efforts to make a memorial plaza at the new plaza by Empire Boulevard and Washington Avenue in honor of Tiarah Poyau.
  - 1. Motion is seconded by Felice Robertson
  - 2. Motion passes by unanimous consent
- xiii. Chair Norville says he and the district office will draft the language of the formal resolutions to take the board.

4. New Business:

a. a. Traffic Safety and Bike Lane Coverage

- i. Chair Norville introduces the topic and notes that CB9 is rather weak when it comes to bike lane network coverage and that there is a growing cohort of people in and around the district who use bikes.

- ii. He then mentions there was also a lot of talk and request for enforcement against mopeds, so he shifts discussion to the next agenda item to hear from PO Fiandola.
- b. Moped and E-bike Traffic Enforcement
  - i. PO Fiandola gives an overview of complaints, noting that there has been citywide crackdowns on mopeds and more tickets issued for sidewalk riding. The local crime prevention officer has been in touch with businesses along the district's commercial corridors (Flatbush, Utica, Kingston) to ensure their delivery workers are aware of the rules.
  - ii. She mentioned meeting with DOT in particular about issues with Flatbush and Maple which has proven to be a dangerous spot.
  - iii. Chair Norville asked what enforcement looks like. Theresa Westerdahl had read the 71st gives the most tickets of any precinct for biking issues. PO Fiandola acknowledges there have been crackdowns citywide, and it is directives from higher ups. Officer usually pull someone over for violations like riding on the sidewalk , going thru lights but admits it is difficult to pull them over because they sometimes squeeze thru cars. They have been confiscating the bikes when they're not registered and if the owner can't prove registration, they get impounded and destroyed.
  - iv. Benny Rosenberger asked about NYPD having mopeds and motorbikes to catch more people. He's seen a big increase in sidewalk riding. PO Fiandola says NYPD mopeds are part of highway patrol and not precincts and the problem is the perpetrators don't stop and NYPD is not allowed to pursue them because of the dangers posed by a chase.
  - v. Theresa Westerdahl said Empire Blvd. and Bedford has a lot of sidewalk riding, especially because of the street closure because of a recent sewer collapse near Ebbets Field. Long discussion about the street safety dangers posed by the emergency construction there.
  - vi. Stanley Greenberg agreed moped riders in the area are worrisome but said car drivers are more terrifying and we have not paid attention to the dangers they pose. He expressed frustration that concerns of his sent to DOT and CB9 have not yielded changes and often gone unanswered.
  - vii. Valerie Fleming suggested we revisit past lists of traffic safety issues. She also suggested an urgency near the construction site on Bedford, north of Empire Blvd.
  - viii. Julie Fissinger underscored her concerns about speeding and lack of street safety on Lefferts, between Washington and Bedford. She's not getting responses from DOT or CM Joseph's office. She asked PO Fiandola if they could look at it some more and give more details about the speed cameras on Lefferts. She also asked for any other traffic calming measures too.
  - ix. Paco Abraham seconded Julie's concern on Lefferts and said there are no markings because of recent milling, repaving so it is especially dangerous right now and worth precinct taking a look at. Paco then asked for more details about the Emmanuel Patterson cyclist fatality last month.

- x. PO Fiandola said there was outreach done at the intersection afterwards and highway safety officers did an investigation. The driver stayed on scene and was likely issued a failure to yield citation. Paco asked if NYPD has sway in requesting design changes from DOT. Officer said they do and noted sometimes that is how neckdowns are added to corners.
  - xi. Rod Herbert agreed there is a challenge to getting dangerous e-bikes off the road. HE suggested banning the sale of them in the city.
  - xii. Calista DeJesus asked about pedestrian hit and runs in the neighborhood. Officer said she'd look into it and follow up. Calista then commented that ebikes are an issue and need charging stations for safety but until that happens, many have switched to mopeds which are much more dangerous and now becoming more prevalent.
  - xiii. Andrew Magnus asked for clarity on who does street enforcement between 71st precinct, Shomrim, & Transit PD. He also asked to have more of a focus on not just moving violations but also parked violations (out of state plates, fake plates, etc.). Officer encouraged using 311 as they cannot be everywhere but that gives the precinct data for it and can track it. She also mentioned the website to show moving violations by precinct & offered her email address for committee to send her issues directly.
    - 1. Viktoria.Fiandola@nypd.org
  - xiv. Felice Robertson also said traffic agents can take a look at ghost licenses on the streets. Also asked about insurance for cyclists, Officer acknowledged NCOs can do crackdowns for towing operations as well when needed
  - xv. Benny Rosenberger asked about NYPD having kill switches to use on reckless bikes. Officer agreed we need ways to stop reckless driving.
  - xvi. Rod Hebert asked about commercial vehicles parked illegally overnight. He's submitted 112 different 311 violations and only a portion of them get tickets.
  - xvii. Theresa Westerdahl voiced concern about 311 calls being ignored and asked for crossing guards by the construction near Ebberts Field. Mia Hinton said the issue is already being worked on quickly and it wouldn't be useful for the committee to make motions for that. Felice Robertson said she'd do inquiries and would look at getting a traffic agent there quickly.
  - xviii. Zach Youngren asked about the policies regarding Alternate Side Parking and how it often has vehicles blocking the bike lanes. He encouraged the committee to not ignore the dangers that poses and suggested there are other kinds of protected bike lanes where safety wouldn't be compromised. The officer stated it is ticketable to block the lane and so cars sometimes double park adjacent to the lane and create a tunnel, but even that double parking during ASP is not legal and just a citywide courtesy.
- c. Return to discussion on Traffic Safety and Bike Lane Coverage
- i. Chair Norville brought the conversation back to the bike lane network and framed the topic. He pointed out that many bike lanes simply end at our

district's border rather than continue through it (such as Brooklyn Ave and Kingston) and that we only have one north-south route on Bedford. He opens the discussion and said there was already a discussion he and Andrew Magnus had about continuing the neighboring bike lanes into our district.

- ii. Paco Abraham pointed out 2009 was the last bike lane added in CB9, on Empire Blvd. He also pointed out that the design standards in 2009 are not what are used today, and data shows protected bike lanes are far superior in creating safer streets for all users.
- iii. Andrew Magnus point out how lack of infrastructure for cycling really limits people's freedom in their personal mobility choices. There are nearly 50 linear miles of roadways for cars in CB9 and barely 2 miles for bikes.
- iv. Felice Robertson questioned why not place bike lanes in places that are already safer. Asked to look at whole frame of things. Said people should share the road but also be need to plan wisely. Also asked for there to be more bicycle safety education and referenced a desire for cyclists to have insurance.
- v. Valerie Fleming said her concern is the citywide plan for all the things that keep being introduced on the streets - scooters, mopeds, etc. and it raises the chances for crashes. Strongly encouraged a more holistic city plan.
- vi. Chair Norville pointed out we have the fewest number of bike lanes of comparably sized districts that have our level of bicycle ridership and that the lack of infrastructure is keeping our neighbors in an unsafe situation seemingly for no good reason.
- vii. Calista DeJesus pointed out that adding bike lanes also helps calm streets for all road users (peds, drivers, and bicyclists alike). She mentioned Brooklyn Ave is a good candidate, as well as Kingston. She thought it'd be a good idea to invite the DOT here to discuss.
- viii. Chair Norville points out that our committee's duty is to make suggestions to DOT and let them know we have a desire for some changes. He pointed to a map noting Brooklyn and Kingston Avenues as usual North/ South routes.
- ix. Zach Youngren voiced support for more bike infrastructure and encouraged bike infrastructure on busy corridors because that is often where bikers want to go. He also reminded us that the city has changed transportation modes many times from horses to trolleys to cars etc. so it can be adjusted now for bikes now as well.
- x. Theresa Westerdahl voiced support for sharing the road and more bike infrastructure, especially on Empire Blvd because it does not extend over to Prospect Park. She also points out there is a lack of safe bike parking.
- xi. Benny Rosenberger suggests there are more cars than bikes so we shouldn't impose on cars. He agreed Kingston might be a place to expand a bike lane, but he had concerns about Brooklyn Avenue, fearing it'd make it more difficult for traffic to flow north & south.

- xii. Paco Abraham seconded the idea of extending Empire Blvd to Prospect Park but also encouraged making Empire safer as it currently still too wide and feels dangerous. He also pointed out the irony that we talk about access to Prospect Park for bikes, yet the entry is Lincoln Road, where there is no actual bike lane between Flatbush Avenue and the park itself. When the committee has spoken about Lincoln Road redesigns before, maybe it should include bike infrastructure as well. Lastly, he countered Benny's point and suggested Brooklyn Ave is wide enough for a bike lane, maybe even a protected one, without impeding vehicle flow.
- xiii. Rod Hebert reminded us that there are specific DOT specifications and required sizes for lanes.
- xiv. Andrew Magnus suggested the maps he offered would indeed meet NYCDOT guidelines. He also added that a redesigned Lincoln Road by the park could better serve people than parked cars. He agreed with an earlier point of Felice Robertson's for cyclist education, but also encouraged us to make our educational space safer for cyclists. We need to protect the people we care about. Chair Norville noted the safety education given by Bike New York too.
- xv. Chair Norville suggests we extend the bike lanes on Kingston and Brooklyn Avenues. He suggests the need for Empire and Ocean Avenues may be less pressing as there is construction ongoing there but getting resolutions out now will help agencies work with us.
- xvi. Felice Robertson notes the need for including pedestrian safety as well and said she supports the route spoken of to make better entrances to Prospect Park.
- xvii. Theresa Westerdahl suggested it'd be a miss to not ask for the Empire extension to the Park as well because construction is largely done there.
- xviii. Calista DeJesus suggests a motion to proceed with moving the discussed network forward. Not just studying it but get our board's priorities clearly on the DOT radar and let them tell us what is and is not possible.
- xix. Felice Robertson asks to make a motion for traffic calming on Washington Avenue by Montgomery Street. She also asked to make a motion for the Empire extension, and the roads that bring access to the park.
- xx. Chair Norville asks to clarify that Felice's motion is to continue bike lanes through Empire and down Ocean Ave.
- xxi. Calista DeJesus suggest an Empire Blvd bike lane ought to be a protected bike lane because double parking is very hazardous for the current configuration. Felice Robertson wondered if that would be tough because of the buses along Empire.
- xxii. Chair Norville asks to amend the motion to include the previously discussed Kingston and Brooklyn Ave bike lane extensions.
- xxiii. Paco Abraham pointed out that someone asked about a bike lane continuing on Ocean and said there is a plan thru Parks, not DOT, to extend that bike lane. Maybe we should ask for an update on it? But also, for minutes he asked for clarification of the motion ideas made and read aloud the following "Felice introduced a motion for DOT to expand bike

lanes in the district including the north south corridor on Kingston & Brooklyn Avenues and improving access to Prospect Park within CB9 which could include extending Empire Blvd west toward Ocean Avenue and improving bike infrastructure on Lincoln Road.

xxiv. Paco Abraham also asked for clarification from Felice if the request for Washington Avenue was for a bike lane or just traffic calming. It was just for traffic calming to cross the street more easily.

1. Chair Norville reiterates the amended motion from Felice Robertson include bike lane extensions on Brooklyn Ave, Kingston Ave, as well as the Empire Blvd and Lincoln Road connections.

2. Motion passes by unanimous consent

xxv. Chair Norville notes the formal language will be written up afterward by himself and the district office.

xxvi. Paco Abraham motions for CB9 to request DOT urgently bring traffic calming to Washington Avenue at Montgomery which could include a stop light, a stop sign, a speed camera, speed displays or other measures to improve street safety.

1. Chair Norville seconds the motion

2. Motion passes by unanimous consent

5. Adjourn.

- a. Chair Norville motions to Adjourn.

- b. Motion passes by unanimous consent