

(Draft Minutes Pending Approval)
Traffic and Transportation Committee
Bronx Community Board 8
May 20th, 2021

Meeting Conducted Via Zoom Video / Audio Conference

Committee Members Present:

Dan Padernacht (Chair)
Sylvia Alexander
David Gellman
Mary Ellen Gibbs (CCM)
Ed Green (Vice Chair)
Deb Travis (Vice Chair)

Committee Members Absent:

Margaret Donato
Joyce Campbell Priveterre
Georgia Santiago

Guests:

Nivardo Lopez (BXDOTC), Jeff McDuffie (BXDOT), Darisa (BXDOT), Laura Spalter (BXC8), Sabrina Campbell (CM E. Dinowitz), Eric Dinowitz (CM) Fredrick Klein (AM Dinowitz), Aurora DeArmeni, Melanie Wacker, Jim Wacker, Gary Axelbank, Jeff Solomon, Nat Solomon, Eric Kolin, Cesar Medina.

Committee Chair Dan Padernacht called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

Announcement of Committee Members and Guests

Chair Padernacht took a roll-call of Committee members and introduced guests.

DOT proposal for an enhanced crosswalk at Greystone Ave & West 242nd St.

Jeff McDuffie (BXDOT) gave presentation:

- Poor visibility and pedestrians crossing at unmarked crosswalks at W 242nd St.
- Intersection does not meet warrants to add all-way stop or traffic signal controls.
- Add an enhanced crosswalk in the South leg.
- Add daylighting to the top of the intersection to improve visibility of crossing pedestrians.
- Net loss of 1 parking spot to improve visibility and safety.

Chair Padernacht asked if DOT has mapped out the area to see if there would only be 1 parking space lost, as suggested in the presentation. Jeff McDuffie stated only one spot will be lost.

Chair Padernacht asked if DOT did any studies on pedestrian traffic to see if the traffic in question was school traffic or community traffic?

Jeff McDuffie stated DOT has enhanced crossing data, but he didn't have it available tonight.

Chair Padernacht stated the Committee would like to see the data.

Jeff McDuffie stated the school nearby was in full support of the crossing.

Chair Padernacht asked what triggered DOT to look at this location if it wasn't a resident request?

Jeff McDuffie stated DOT wants to make sure pedestrians can cross the street safely.

Guest Aurora DeArmendi asked what is motivating this proposal at this time if the school did not request it, and this area has not had any such changes since 1968.

Jeff McDuffie stated DOT would like to have a crosswalk and signage to offer visibility.

Committee Vice Chair Deb Travis stated she is not aware of any historical evidence of crashes or pedestrians being struck at this location.

Committee Vice Chair Ed Green asked if this proposal was brought to DOT by an outside group or are the proposed changes an internal decision by DOT.

BXDOTC Lopez stated DOT made the decision because they see this as an accessibility issue and they have a responsibility to make the area safe, based on data from their studies.

Guest Melanie Wacker stated she has lived in the area for years and she's always felt safe crossing the street there and there has never been any pedestrian issues at that crossing.

Guest Aurora DeArmendi stated this is a highly populated area and people need their parking spaces.

BXDOTC Lopez stated in the last 7 years under the Bloomberg and DeBlasio administrations the DOT has been laser focused on making things safer for pedestrians throughout the Bronx, and the DOT has been looking carefully at issues like this for the last 15 years.

Guest Aurora DeArmendi stated The Save Brust Park Group has filed an Article 78 suit and is disputing the existence of the street on the map, and she believes this proposal should not be implemented until that legal matter comes to a resolution.

Fredrick Klein (AM Dinowitz) asked who installed the ramp where the crosswalk is proposed and when was it installed?

Jeff McDuffie stated the ramp was installed by the Parks Department and he would research the matter and find out when it was installed and let the committee know.

Chair Padernacht asked if there was a timeline on when this enhanced crosswalk was to be completed.

BXDOTC Lopez stated the DOT was hoping to install it by June or July. Jeff McDuffie stated it wasn't on the calendar yet, but the idea was to complete the work sometime during the summer.

BXDOTC Lopez stated DOT is not looking to make a decision at this moment, so if the Committee wants to table this issue and see additional data he will be more than happy to provide it.

Ed Green stated that BXC8 has voted against DOT proposals before, only to have DOT implement them anyway, so who specifically is responsible for making these decisions, so the community can hold someone accountable?

BXDOTC Lopez stated he can be held accountable and he does not take decisions to overrule the Community Board lightly, but in many instances the DOT has been given a charter mandate to bring down crashes, injuries and other incidents with programs like Vision Zero. He stated he gets his "marching orders" from DOT Commissioner Gutman and the Commissioner gets his "marching orders" from the Mayor. He stated the Committee is always welcome to go over his head and reach out to the Commissioner and see if they can get a different opinion on his decisions.

Chair Padernacht made a motion to lay the item over until next month's agenda.

The Committee voted unanimously to lay the item over until next month's meeting.

Resident request to convert West 238th Street between Sedgwick Avenue and Van Cortlandt Avenue West

BXDOTC Lopez stated this resident request will basically be up to the Community Board to decide, as opposed to the Board's typical advisory role. The item was brought to DOT by a resident and did not go through the usual process of giving the community sufficient notice, as is DOT's general policy.

Ed Green inquired why this resident request was taken up by the DOT without following their standard protocols for resident requests.

BXDOTC Lopez stated it was an oversight on the part of DOT and it was not the proper way to handle this, that is why DOT will abide by any decision BXC8 makes on this resident request.

Nancy (Guest) stated she lives in the building on the corner of Cannon and 238th St., there are cars constantly double-parked and the one-way-street needs to have traffic directionally go eastbound, not westbound.

BXDOTC Lopez stated DOT made the determination that the one-way-street should be westbound because of the higher traffic volume going westbound.

Guest Gary Axelbank stated this proposal is an incredibly bad idea and there should be traffic signs but not a one-way-street. He stated many people trying to get home in the area will be inconvenienced and traffic will become congested.

Chair Padernacht stated he has lived in the area his entire life and he doesn't see a consensus of neighborhood residents that want to turn this block into a one-way-street. He stated he believes making the street one way will create traffic congestion, will potentially create a lot of unintended consequences and he believes the proposal is a bad idea.

For clarity purposes, Chair Padernacht asked the committee members to vote "Yes" if they would like to change the street to a one-way street and "No" if they would like to leave the street as a two-way street.

Yes:

No: D. Gelman, M. Gibbs, E. Green, D. Padernacht

Abstain: S. Alexander, D. Travis

Resident request for No Standing Zone on south side of Stephenson Place along retaining wall to Fort Independence playground

Guest Gary Axelbank stated there are always cars with placards parked on this street and if a no standing sign would prevent them from parking there it would be good.

Deb Travis stated cars frequently park on this street late at night.

Jeff Solomon stated there are few spaces for people to park in the area and those complaining about cars being parked on this street have parking spaces for their cars in their buildings. He stated if people are abusing the parking in this area they should be ticketed.

Chair Padernacht stated because the resident that made the request is not at the meeting, it's his inclination to lay this issue over until the next meeting to get their perspective on why they feel this request is necessary.

Resident request for traffic safety measures in Van Cortlandt Village

- 1) Modification of traffic island at Sedgwick Avenue and Van Cortlandt Avenue West.
- 2) Reinstall yellow caution light at bend between Stephenson Place & Van Cortlandt Ave West.
- 3) Traffic study for crosswalk at Stephenson Place & Sedgwick Ave at 3850 Sedgwick Ave.

- 4) Adjust the timing of the traffic light eastbound at Van Cortlandt Park South and Dickerson Ave to relieve back-up of vehicles.
- 5) Speed camera on Sedgwick Avenue between Giles Place and Stephenson Place.
- 6) Request for No Honking signs in area.

Resident Nat Solomon presented his proposal.

Deb Travis stated the intersection at Van Cortlandt Ave and Sedgwick is difficult for vehicles to navigate.

Ed Green voiced concerns about any potential unintended consequences as a result of these changes and residents of Amalgamated Housing and other area residents should be heavily represented to discuss this issue before any changes are recommended.

David Gellman stated No Honking signs are meaningless and no one is going to pay any attention to them.

Deb Travis stated people often double park cars around curvy bends in this area, and vehicles often honk their horns to alert motorists of their presence and ensure safety.

Chair Padernacht stated the Board would give notice to Amalgamated Housing and other area residents and will have this item put on the agenda of next month's committee meeting for further discussion.

Approval of Minutes

There were no previous minutes available to approve.

Outstanding Business/New Business

Eric Kolin stated there is an extreme amount of double parking on Johnson Ave and Riverdale Ave South.

Ed Green suggested Mr. Kolin send an email to the Board and he would relay the request to Captain Melendez and address the matter at the next Public Safety Committee meeting.

Jimmy asked why 236th St between Broadway and Kingsbridge Ave is closed to the public.

Chair Padernacht stated he should forward his question to the Board and it would be addressed at the next Public Safety Committee meeting.

Committee Member Mary Ellen Gibbs stated that 232nd Street and Netherlands Avenue is a complete mess and needs road paving.

Cesar Medina stated on Riverdale Ave South by 231st & 232nd St by the school there is a non-working camera and a lot of vehicles speeding there. He would like to request a speed camera

and a "no idling" sign in this area because cars and busses are idling there for long periods of time.

Ed Green suggested Mr. Medina send an email request to the Board and that request would be relayed to the Commanding Officer of the 50th Precinct at the next Public Safety Committee Meeting for review.

Deb Travis suggested Mr. Medina call 311 and register his complaints with them.

David Gellman suggested when Mr. Medina makes 311 calls he should contact the BXC8 District Manager so she can follow up with agencies handling these matters.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:13pm.

Daniel Padernacht
Chair
Traffic & Transportation Committee

Minutes submitted by Committee Vice Chair Ed Green, pending approval