

Community Board 9
890 Nostrand Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11225

Minutes of the
Transportation Committee Meeting
Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Attendance:

Timothy Thomas – Chairman	Rich Carmona – DOT
Grace Arens – Community resident	Louise Levi – DDC
Maria Centeno – DDC	Eric Swenson – RBA Group
Samantha Dure – DDC	Mini Thomas – DDC
David Meyer – Streetsblog	Andrea Nunez – DDC
Javed Alam – DOT	Ryan Kalleberg – RBA Group
Kol Gjelij – DOT	Felice Robertson – WABBA
Demetrius Lawrence – CB9 Chairman	Melinda Jones - Community resident
Karen Fleming – CB9 Transportation Comm. (resident)	Carmen Martinez – CB9
Stanley Greenberg – CB9 Transportation Comm. (resident)	Daniel Garwood – Community resident
Leo Terry – CB9 Transportation Comm. (resident)	Calista Dejesus – Community resident
Michael Cetera, AIA – PRO BONO Design	Ken Hiratsuka – Sculptor
Nichola Cox – Community resident	Diane Lewis – Architect
Daniel Kristjansson – CB9 Transportation Comm. (resident)	
Jeffery Grannum – CB9 Transportation Comm. (resident)	
Valerie Fleming – CB9 Transportation Comm. (resident)	
A gentleman who did not sign-in but spoke on the eastern portion of the Empire Project.	

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Chairman Tim Thomas.

1. Discuss status of the Empire Reconstruction Project and consider how to present the committee's support for the project to the full board.

Having previously seen and heard the presentation by DOT both at the October Committee meeting and at the full October CB9 board meeting, the committee and residents focused on issues and concerns from the community that were prompted by those two presentations. Once again, the presentations can be views at DOT's website under "Empire Boulevard." The project has received considerable attention from CB9 in the past, and has been available throughout for public review since 2013.

Below are comments from those present, and response from DOT and its consultants RBA where offered.

- Is this project necessary? DOT: For safety and for infrastructure improvements, this project is highly recommended at this time.
- Are the statistics cited for the two project areas accurate? (again available online at DOT.nyc.gov) DOT: They are accurate from accident reports. They include mostly car accidents, and many injuries to pedestrians and bicyclists making it among the top 10% of all Brooklyn intersections.
- Isn't this an overly aggressive project when less costly and less intrusive remedies might be employed? DOT: This is advised as a course of action due to the abnormal convergence of roads and the opportunity to do much needed improvements to water mains and sewers.
- Will Western Beef be affected? Have the owners of Western Beef been contacted? Member Karen Fleming produced a statement from their lawyers asking that they be consulted lest they run the risk of negative impact

to their business. The Chair suggested that Ms. Fleming ask Western Beef to attend a future committee meeting. No current entrance or exit will be affected, however.

- Could a test run of the new traffic patterns be done using cones and ballards?
- Chair Tim Thomas presented a petition in favor of the project signed by 260 Community Residents
- Three members of the committee voiced their support and three members of the community agreed, that this was an important step to achieve safety and rationalized traffic patterns.
- Felice Robertson of the Washington Avenue Block Association called attention to other pressing safety issues affecting Washington north of Empire Blvd. The chair asked that she bring them to future meetings and speak to a representative from DOT after the meeting.
- Mr. Jeffrey Grannum of Sterling Street was highly critical of the overreaction by DOT and unnecessary inconvenience and removal of parking on the slip road of Franklin (one block to become greenspace.)
- A member of the community's eastern end mounted a vigorous presentation to argue that the Utica/Empire/Schenectady/E. New York end of the project is a mistake, and that it will lead to more not less confusion to drivers and pedestrians. However, he did admit that the intersections as currently configured are difficult for pedestrians to navigate, and he used his own large family with many children as an example. His concerns were refuted by DOT and RBA, but folks in the room reminded DOT that they are sometimes wrong in their assessments, such as changes at Empire/Flatbush that were later restored after traffic backups.
- The chair reminded those attending that the Committee had voted unanimously for the proposed changes and to request a full vote accepting DOT's request for a letter of support.

The lively discussion was meant to better inform members of the community to the concerns of residents in anticipation of the Board's vote whether or not to provide a letter of support to DOT for the project to move forward. No votes or decisions were made, and the matter will be decided at December's meeting by a full Board vote in business session. No further presentations or public Q&A's have been scheduled, though residents are encouraged to use a public comment period speaking request on the topic if they feel the need to weigh in.

2. Discuss moving the Clove Road Project forward including resurfacing the road, clarifying road markings and street signs, and eliminating illegal activity. Discuss the possibility of a clean-up effort. Hear from representatives from PRO BONO Design.

Michael Cetera, former Parks Chair for CB9, gave some history to the ongoing Clove Road project for Clove and Malbone Streets. He reiterated the Board's previous support for some kind of commemoration in addition to a rethinking of how the street could be used and restored for multiple uses: historic preservation, a play street for children, parking, a stone monument to the roads' importance to Native Americans and early settlers. The sculptor who is creating a stone memorial was present and shared a smaller version of his idea with the group. Noted architect Diane Lewis led a presentation of a non-costly intervention on the space that would include resurfacing the road, keeping the cobblestones underneath and exposed in a small area, and a creative use of the road as a "European-style" piazza. Cars and pedestrians would be permitted to share the space. She will bring her plans to DOT's Claudette Workman to consider the feasibility of the pavement based solution. She is part of a group Pro Bono Design, along with Mike Cetera, that plans to suggest these improvements using its non-profit.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Timothy Thomas
Chairman
December 21, 2015