

Traffic and Transportation Committee Meeting

June 1st, 2015

Committee Members Present - Chair, Yahaira Alonzo, Asst. Chair, Wanda Garcia, Mary Anderson, Anita Barberis, James Berlin, Elizabeth Lorris-Ritter, Terriell Peters, and Martin Restituyo.

Excused - Rabbi Yosef Kalinsky

CB12 Board Members Present: Chair George Fernandez, and Richard Allman.

Public – Residents of Fort George Hill area, Nina Haiman (DOT), Josh Orzeck (DOT), Preston Johnson (DOT), David Tom (presenting 219th & 220th Streets), Diane Jackson from Greater File Chapel Baptist Church

Traffic and transportation

1. Postponement of Sylvan Terrace on the agenda.

2. Fort George Hill: Preston Johnson of the DOT presented.

Fort George Hill project includes the implementation of bike lanes, angle parking and narrower traffic lanes in order to comply with Version Zero and to address pedestrian injuries.

History: DOT was asked to improve bike safety and CB12 provided a list where bike routes were requested in 2012. The width of FGH street really allowed people to speed; 550 vehicles in an hour. The narrowing of the street reduces speeds, and calms traffic.

The changes have reduced traffic speeds and improved bike ridership. According to the DOT, as of May 26th there were 3 pedestrian crashes in January and 2 crashes in May with no injuries.

On May 26th DOT hosted a walk-through of Fort George Hill. Present were CB12 Traffic and Transportation members and residents of Fort George Hill. Concerns that were addressed were:

- entering and leaving angled parking;
- difficulties exiting the parking garages;
- emergency, delivery, and ambulance vehicles blocking traffic;
- traffic speeds;
- street cleaning protocol;
- and Dept. of Sanitation issues.

Possible solutions:

- wherever there's angle parking - new buffers that will direct vehicles away from the angled parking will be installed. This will ease the exiting and entering parking spaces;
- also, the DOT will look into whether the site qualifies for speed bumps, which could further slow speeding;
- recently installed loading zone could be moved more towards the entrance to 11 FGH. The relocation will maximize its usefulness;
- hidden driveway sign could be added to alert parking exit;

- DOT will explore convex mirrors to increase visibility of other vehicles, and to assist vehicles exiting from angled parking;
- the DOT is in discussion with Dept. of Sanitation to ensure sweeping of both parking area and bike path;
- and DOT will continue to make adjustments to improve function.

Public comments:

- bottom of the bike path is dangerous;
- routing of emergency vehicles can be fatal;
- couple of residents are for bike paths- they are bike users; George Washington High School bicycling club- happy about bike lanes; however, most community members at the public meeting were against it.
- Concerns about parking, emergency vehicles and speeding are still the major issues of concern for the residents.

Board questions:

- Would narrowing the angle of the angled parking ease the strain? Possibly, but may lead of loss of parking. DOT will get back to the Board as to exactly how many (if any) spaces would be lost if the angle were changed to make it a little narrower to ease maneuverability.
- Is resident parking an option? DOT didn't have an answer;
- Could convex mirrors help with the parking situation? DOT will look into it and investigate further. Board assured community that they will make sure that the issue will go to further investigation.

3. Conversion of 219th & 220th Streets between Broadway and 9th Avenue to a one way street; Presentation by David Tom.

Currently 219th and 220th streets are two-way streets and lack traffic lights. Although the area is a manufacturing district, there are 3 public schools on these streets: 2 elementary schools and 1 junior high school. Mr. Tom's presentation called for a proposal to make 219th Street and 220th Street between Broadway and 9th Ave. into one way streets because of the traffic congestion during drop off and pick up times of the schools PS/IS 278 and PS 18;

- Weekday mornings and afternoons are crazy in terms of traffic. Traffic is heavily congested due to private cars dropping students off at school and multiple school buses.
- 220th Street has parking all day long on both sides, so there is really only 1 lane for moving vehicles.
- 219th Street has all day parking on south side.
- There are plenty of vehicle infractions being committed on a regular basis – illegal U-turns, driving on the opposite direction lane, cutting vehicles off from the left – in order to get to the school or leave the area.
- Very unsafe for the children who are either entering or exiting school buses or vehicles.
- Lots of noise from the traffic.

Possible solutions:

- Convert 219th & 220th Street to one-direction streets. One heading east-bound; the other west-bound.

- Install a traffic light at 219th Street;
- Maybe speed bumps at 219 street and 220 Street;

Resolution asking DOT to conduct a study of the area; need input from other businesses.

Vote- 8; 0; 0 Public: 6:0:0

4. Co-naming the Northwest corner of 155th Street and Amsterdam after Rev. Jasper Simmons; Presentation by Diane Jackson. Rev. Jasper Simmons passed away February 2015. He was the longest serving Pastor in the Tri-State area. In 1953, he was ordained and became Reverend of File Chapel Baptist Church. The Church moved to its current location in 1974. During Rev. Jasper Simmons leadership, he ordained 3 reverends, licensed 4 ministers, and ordained 20 beacons. He opened head start programs and a senior center, started giving Thanksgiving dinners in 1991, started a soup kitchen and a prison ministry; he also received an honorary doctorate from the divinity school.

Resolution to name the Northwest corner of 155th Street and Amsterdam after Rev. Jasper Simmons.

Vote: 7:0:1; Public: 9:0

5. Proposed partial closure of W.187th Street Between Wadsworth and Broadway during the hours of 6pm to 8am; Presentation by Monzer Khafagy of HAP INVESTMENT.

The construction project will last about 6 weeks. They are requesting partial closure at night because the modules will be parked on the street. The modules will be on top of trucks which are long and wide. The trucks will take up 3 lanes. The trucks are 14 feet wide. The trucks will arrive at night so as to not create traffic during the day. This will reduce traffic during the day.

There will be no parking on this block throughout the duration of the project. And HAP are seeking to keep just one lane open for traffic at night.

HAP representative stated that HAP is willing to pay for a parking garage for residents who live within a 2 block radius and will be inconvenienced by the lack of parking. He stated that HAP is open to renting a couple of spaces at the garage on Broadway.

DOT clarified that they have not granted permission for anything. DOT is in discussion with HAP because they have submitted an application.

Resolution – for no objection to keep one lane open at night.

Vote- Committee – 8:0:0; Community 2:0