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COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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December 22, 2014

Ms. Faith Rose
Executive Director
NYC Public Design Commission
City Hall, 3rd. Floor
New York, New York 10007

Dear Ms. Rose:

At its Full Board meeting on December 18, 2014, CB#2, Manhattan (CB#2-Man.), adopted the following resolution:

Incorporation of “Mosaic Trail” Poles into Astor Place/Cooper Square Renovation

WHEREAS, a proposal for integrating a series of mosaics into the Astor Place/Cooper Square Renovation Project, currently under construction and expected to be completed in late 2015, was reviewed at a special meeting of the Astor Place Task Force on December 9, 2014. In 2005, this Joint Task Force of Community Boards 2 and 3, Manhattan (CB 2 and CB 3) was formed to review an initial proposal for a renovation of Astor Place/Cooper Square by the NYC Dept. of Transportation (DOT) and the NYC Dept. of Parks and Recreation (DPR), and has been called upon from time to time since then to review and comment upon various elements and revisions of the project plan as it has progressed in response to community input, as well as to conditions and needs. In July 2008, CB 2 and CB 3 approved a conceptual design concerning street geometry with modifications addressing concerns that had been raised at a series of Task Force meetings, and that design was approved by the Arts Commission. In January 2011, CB 2 and CB 3 approved proposed design elements, such as trees and other plantings, seating, paving and lighting, that had been presented to the Task Force; and

WHEREAS, In 1985, Jim Power, a public artist known as the “Mosaic Man,” began creating a Mosaic Trail of hand-crafted mosaic artwork on the poles of the lampposts along East 8th Street and St. Mark’s Place from Broadway east to Avenue A and along the perimeter of Tompkins Square Park. About 80 mosaic poles have been created over the past 30 years, with 12 mosaic poles within or very near the border of the project area for the Astor Place/Cooper Square renovation. The mosaic poles pay tribute to the history of the neighborhood, city and nation, commemorating cultural institutions and events. For example, one mosaic pole within the Astor Place/Cooper Square Renovation project area celebrates The Cooper Union Speech, delivered by Abraham Lincoln on February 27, 1860. Another mosaic pole is a tribute to firefighters who lost their lives on 9/11, emblazoned with the letters “FDNY” and “RIP,” as

well as a listing of nearby firehouses, surrounded by a sea of broken tiles; and

WHEREAS, In 2013, the Village Alliance BID, the City's maintenance partner for the public plaza where ten of the mosaic poles are located, held public outreach meetings to seek input on programming in the public plaza. Many members of the public expressed their desire that the well-loved mosaics should be preserved on public display in Astor Place. DOT responded to public concerns by preserving the mosaic poles in storage, while design options were developed to incorporate them into the new Astor Place/Cooper Square renovation project; and

WHEREAS, In December 2014, at a public meeting of the Joint CB 2 and CB 3 Astor Place Task Force, DOT presented two options for locating the mosaic poles. Option one would closely maintain the existing Mosaic Trail locations along East 8th Street and St. Mark's Place. Option two would relocate the mosaic poles into a more formal arrangement along the east side of Fourth Ave near the Cooper Union Foundation Building; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that CB 2/CB 3 supports the design amendment presented as option one, which would maintain the approximate historic position of the mosaic poles on this segment of the Mosaic Trail.

Vote: Unanimous, with 41 Board Members in favor.

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to these resolutions.

Sincerely,



Tobi Bergman, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan

TB/EM

c: Hon. Carolyn Maloney, Congresswoman
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, Assembly Member
Hon. Gale Brewer, Man. Borough President
Hon. Rosie Mendez, Council Member