CIVITAS

WORKING FOR QUALITY IN URBAN LIFE

CIVITAS presents

Taming the Newsrack Monster

Short and Long Term Solutions

Summer 2011

Community Board 7 Transportation Committee
July 12, 2011

CIVITAS

About CIVITAS

Since 1981, CIVITAS has worked for the improvement of neighborhood life on the Upper East Side and in East Harlem through planning studies, zoning reform, and promotion of responsible development and a sustainable urban environment.

www.civitasnyc.org

Objectives

- Educate community about newsrack violations and what can be done
- Report newsrack violations to 311
- Write letters to Council Member James Vacca, members of the City Council Transportation Committee and elected officials to demand oversight hearing
- Resolution from Community Boards showing support for improved legislation

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Local Laws, NYC

2002 Local Law 23	2004 Local Law 36
• Required owners to maintain newsracks free of dirt, graffiti or stickers	• Amendment to local law 23 • Removed text requiring newsrack owners to regularly maintain newsrack conditions- only requiring a maintenance certification 3 times a year • Increased reliance on DOT to monitor violations

Principle Violations

- Within 15 feet of any fire hydrant
- Within 5 feet of a corner
- Within any bus stop
- Within 15 feet of the entrance or exit of a subway station, including the side
- On any cellar door, grating, utility maintenance cover or other similar locations
- Containing garbage
- Broken door

Placement Violation Example: within **15 feet** of any **fire hydrant**

Placement Violation Example: within **15 feet** of the **entrance or exit** of a **subway station**, or against the side

Placement Violation Example: in a **bus stop**

Placement Violation Example:

on any cellar door, **grating**, utility maintenance cover or other similar locations

Maintenance Violation Example: containing **garbage**

Maintenance Violation Example: **broken door**

Other Cities

Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Houston, LA, Miami and San Francisco have passed laws controlling placement and maintenance of newsrack boxes

Chicago multibox

Success in New York

Business Improvement Districts around NYC have successfully incorporated cleaner multiboxes into their neighborhood streetscape

Multiboxes on Madison Avenue (left) and on 34th Street in front of Macys (right)

Success in New York

NYC DOT responds to 311 reports of abandoned *A-1 News* boxes and removes from many neighborhoods

Next Steps…

- RECOGNIZE and REPORT to 311
- Send a letter or email to elected officials to support an oversight hearing
- Sign the petition
- Spread the word! Build awareness and action.

Next Steps…
Recognize and Report to 311 – **by phone**

- State the location, address, or intersection
- The complaint will go to the NYC Dept. of Transportation - DOT is responsible for street furniture.
- Describe the violation, i.e.:

  1) The boxes are in a bus stop, which is illegal.

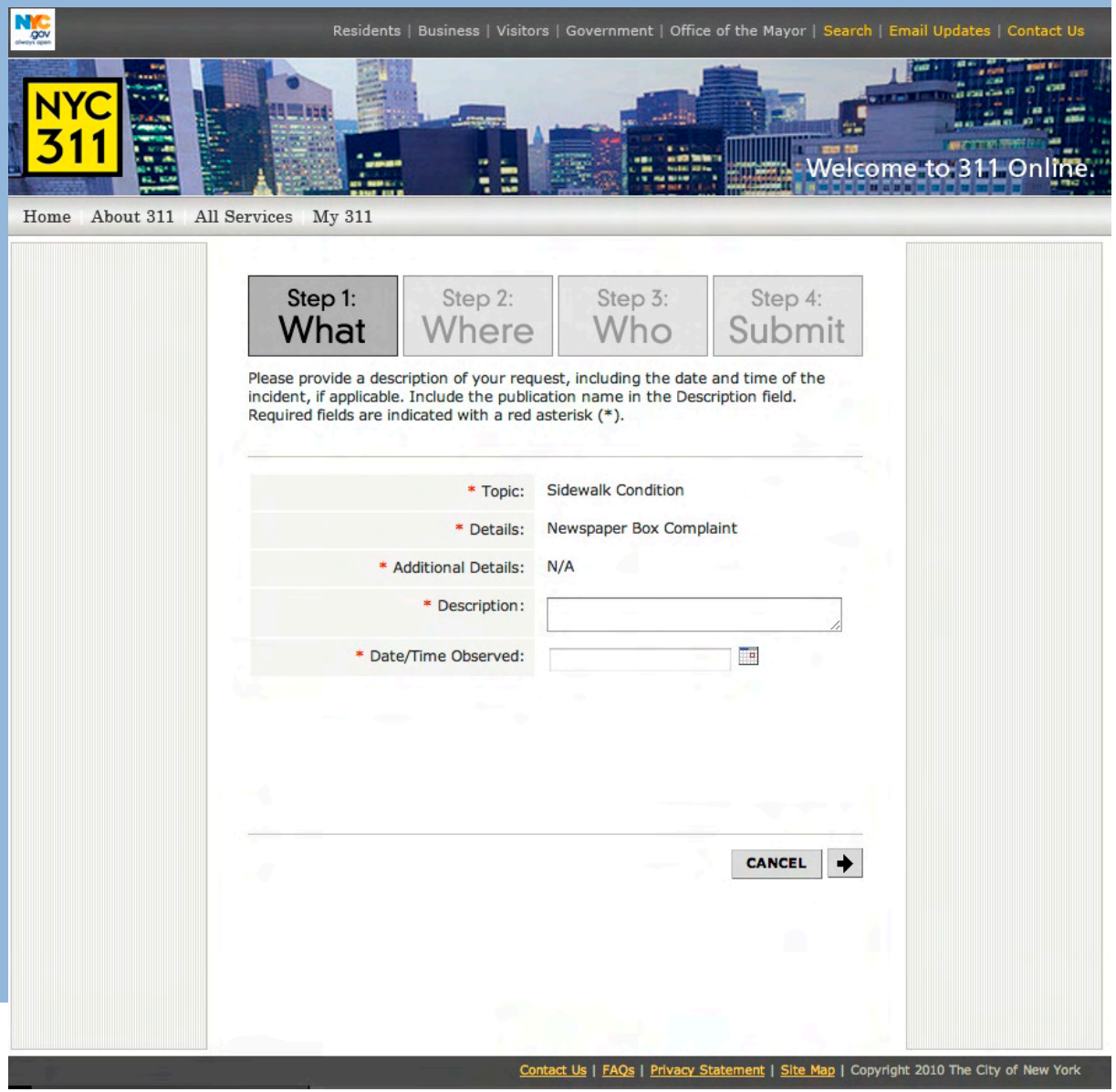
  2) The A-1 Box has been on the city streets for 1 year and has never been filled.
- Make note of the confirmation number so that you can follow up.

Next Steps…
Recognize and Report to 311 - **online**

http://nyc.gov/apps/311/

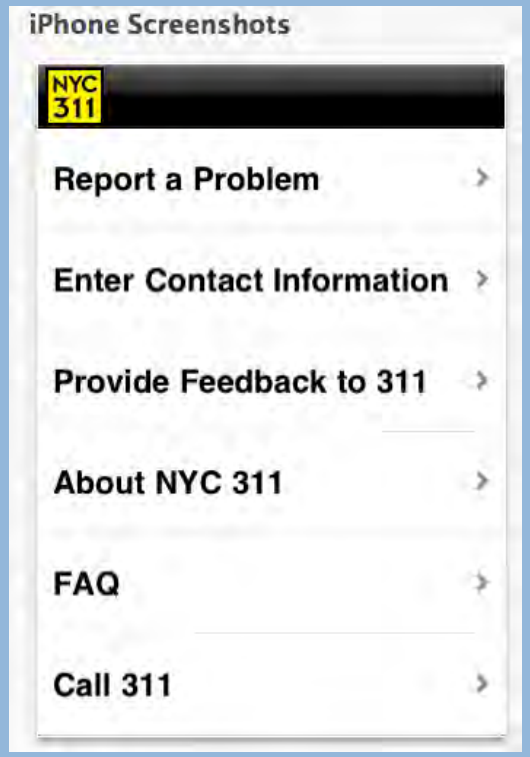
Click:

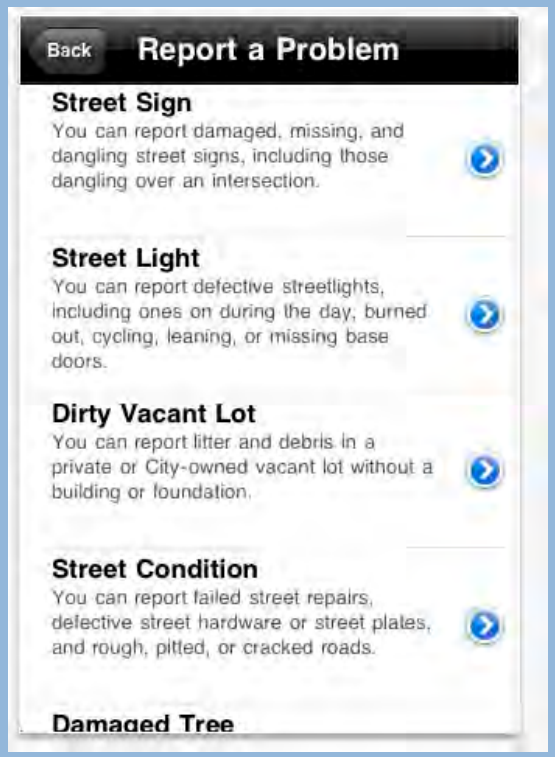
1. All Services
2. Transportation, Streets & Sidewalks
3. Sidewalks & Driveways Defects, Repairs & Construction
4. Newsrack Complaint
5. Report a Problem
6. Option to upload a photo
7. Record the confirmation number so you can track the status of the complaint



Next Steps…
Recognize and Report to 311 – **Phone App**

- Another way to report newsrack violations is through the 311 iPhone app.





Next Steps… Encourage **elected officials** to support an oversight hearing

(Insert Date)

Hon. James Vacca
NYC Council Member
NYC Transportation Committee, Chair
250 Broadway, Suite 1749
New York, NY 10007

Dear Council Member Vacca,

We write to express our concerns about the proliferation of ill-maintained and poorly located newsracks cluttering New York City sidewalks. From Queens to Manhattan to the Bronx, this quality of life nuisance is prevalent throughout our city. We support the oversight hearing on the newsracks law that Councilmember Daniel R. Garodnick has requested, and we ask that it be scheduled immediately by the New York City Council Transportation Committee so we can start working toward the solution. We look to you, as chair of the committee, to help work toward the solution.

The appearance of newsracks has further deteriorated largely due to the Newsrack Law amendment of 2004, which removed the requirement to maintain newsracks free of dirt, graffiti or stickers. Furthermore, the New York City Department of Transportation, which regulates street furniture, has not effectively enforced newsrack regulations because of deficiencies in the current law and lack of personnel.

There is strong support from across the city for improved policies to maintain newsracks and regulate their placement. We request that you make this a priority for the Transportation Committee.

Sincerely,
(Insert your signature)

Cc.:
Hon. Michael R. Bloomberg, New York City Mayor
Hon. Christine C. Quinn, New York City Council Speaker
Hon. Daniel R. Garodnick, New York City Council Member
Hon. Jessica S. Lappin, New York City Council Member
Hon. Melissa Mark-Viverito, New York City Council Member
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, Manhattan Borough President
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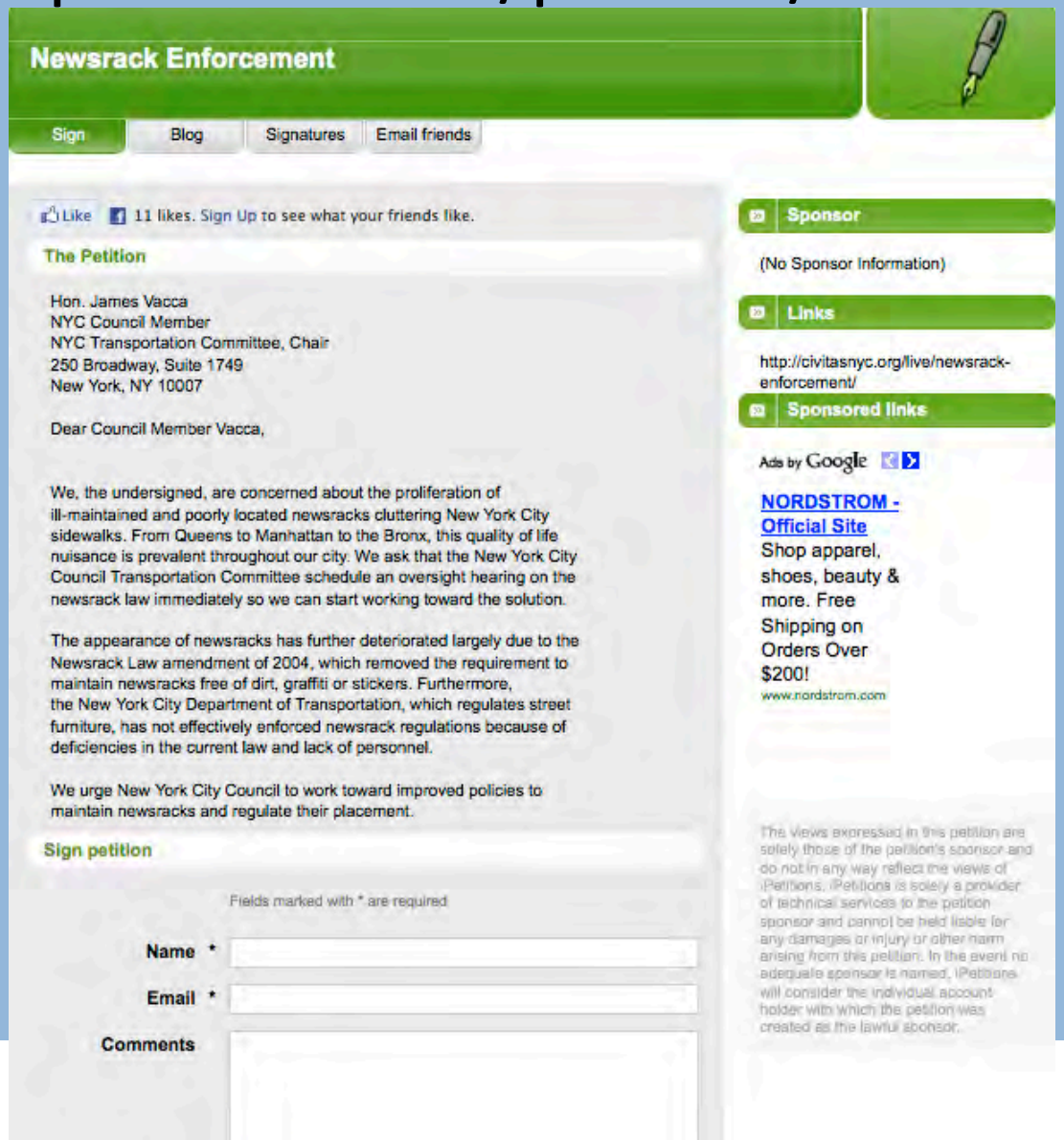
Sign the Petition

- An electronic petition can be found at: www.ipetitions.com/petition/newsracks/



Newsrack Enforcement

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The Petition

Hon. James Vacca
NYC Council Member
NYC Transportation Committee, Chair
250 Broadway, Suite 1749
New York, NY 10007

Dear Council Member Vacca,

We, the undersigned, are concerned about the proliferation of ill-maintained and poorly located newsracks cluttering New York City sidewalks. From Queens to Manhattan to the Bronx, this quality of life nuisance is prevalent throughout our city. We ask that the New York City Council Transportation Committee schedule an oversight hearing on the newsrack law immediately so we can start working toward the solution.

The appearance of newsracks has further deteriorated largely due to the Newsrack Law amendment of 2004, which removed the requirement to maintain newsracks free of dirt, graffiti or stickers. Furthermore, the New York City Department of Transportation, which regulates street furniture, has not effectively enforced newsrack regulations because of deficiencies in the current law and lack of personnel.

We urge New York City Council to work toward improved policies to maintain newsracks and regulate their placement.

Sign petition

Fields marked with * are required

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Next Steps…

Spread the word!

Build awareness and action.

Long Term Goals

- Employ people to hand out papers
- Multiboxes
- Greater indoor distribution such as businesses and event spaces: banks, coffee shops, salons, grocery stores, movies theaters, cafes etc.
- Collapsible metal newsrack stands are an alternative

Inside Citibank

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Find more information and updates at: www.civitasnyc.org/newsrack-enforcement

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