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February 7, 2023

Susan M. Donoghue
Commissioner
New York City Department of Parks and Recreation
The Arsenal
830 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10065

Dear Commissioner Donoghue:

I am contacting you regarding the proposed “Deliverista” hub for food delivery workers that is being considered for the vacant newsstand located on the south side of the 72nd Street and Broadway subway station. I notified the 72nd Street Block Association about the proposal and together we contacted other groups such as the nearby Columbus Avenue BID, Landmark West!, and Friends of Verdi Square. Community Board 7 scheduled a joint hearing of their Transportation, Parks, and Environment Committees for February 14. More than likely, most will testify against the hub. I am supportive of the workers having a safe and clean environment to recharge and rest but I also join community members in wanting more information about the specific proposal.

Friends of Verdi Square is an exemplary organization that for years has maintained the space in a manner that the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) never did. Volunteers maintain the greenery, prune and weed. They removed invasive species and replaced them with native plants, which reduced rat population dramatically. They added tables and chairs which are used by residents and visitors all year long. The Parks Department empties the trash baskets, yet with thousands of people entering and leaving the subway station and utilizing the park, trash and garbage quickly accumulate. This is one of many issues that will need to be addressed in order for the Deliverista hub to be successful in this location.

The block between 70th and 71st Streets on Broadway, right above Cafe Luxembourg, in front of McDonald’s is a bit of a cautionary tale for what a hub might look like if this plan is implemented without thinking through all of the particulars. I am working on improving this block but it is a mess now.

The following questions have been brought to my attention by community members. It is necessary for the Administration to provide answers before the February 14 Community Board hearing.

- Is the project approved and finalized for this specific vacant newsstand and the surrounding area? Constituents have proposed additional nearby Parks properties including the parking lot adjacent to Tavern on the Green. I know the restaurant has requested the lot for patron parking, but DPR has not agreed to vehicle parking.
- Are there plans, drawings, or renderings of the proposed structure that can be made public ahead of the hearing?
- What is the proposed footprint of the structure?
- Are there specific hours during which this hub will be open?
- Is there an estimate for the number of users for this proposed hub?
- How many toilets will be installed, and what is the cleaning and maintenance schedule?
- Will Wi-Fi be available with suitable bandwidth for all?
- Where would delivery bikes be parked? (both while charging and not charging)
- What is planned for monitoring and enforcement to prevent bikes or other items being locked up at this hub for long periods of time?
- What will prevent homeless from using the hub as a living space?
- How will DPR address possible blockage of the considerable pedestrian traffic through the park and to/from the subway station?
- What measures will be used to prevent e-bike and pedestrian collisions?
- What is planned for lighting, security cameras, and police presence?
- How much additional garbage pickup is planned, and when/how frequently?
- What is the plan for containing the rat population?
- It is our understanding that the “management” company for this shed is based in Boston with no office in New York City. Who is responsible for how the hub and the surrounding park area is managed, maintained and kept clean?
- Will the hub be staffed during operating hours? It is my understanding that Los Deliveristas Unidos/Workers Justice Project will staff it; if so, what is the MOU/contract or other documentation?
- How will the community be able to contact any staff?

Finally, it is essential that a representative from the Administration present at the February 14 meeting, as well as representatives from the management company and Los Deliveristas Unidos/Workers Justice Project. If the Administration is serious about making this location a successful place for the hub, I urge you to meet with community members who know the area before the meeting and on an ongoing basis.

Thank you for your attention to this issue. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Gale A. Brewer