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COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 2, MANHATTAN

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Market

May 2, 2022

Hon. Christopher Marte
NYC Councilmember
101 Lafayette St., 9th Floor
New York, NY 10013

Edward Pincar Jr.
Manhattan Borough Commissioner
NYC Department of Transportation
59 Maiden Lane
New York, NY 10038

Dear Councilmember Marte and Commissioner Pincar:

At its Full Board meeting April 26, 2022, Community Board #2, adopted the following resolution:

Resolution in support of co-naming the n.w. corner of 5th Ave. and Washington Sq. N. Edie Windsor and Thea Spyer Way.

Whereas a request was presented to co-name the n.w. corner of 5th Ave. and Washington Sq. N. Edie Windsor and Thea Spyer Way in recognition of their role in establishing a long-denied civil right of the LGBTQ+ community, a group that has had a large, significant and enduring presence in Greenwich Village for over 100 years and that has played a vital role in helping shape the Village's unique, innovative and artistic character and its open-minded, progressive, humanistic values; and

Whereas Edie Windsor and Thea Spyer were married in Canada in 2007, and although their same-sex marriage was legally recognized by New York State in 2008, it wasn't recognized in federal law. The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) Section 3 held that the term "spouse" applied only to marriage between a man and woman. A lawsuit brought by Edie Windsor claiming spouses' rights in relation to hers and Thea Spyer's marriage led to the recognition of the legality of same-sex marriages throughout the United States; and

Whereas in 2013, in the landmark case of *United States v Windsor*, in response to Edie Windsor's lawsuit, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Section 3 of DOMA as unconstitutional and "a deprivation of the liberty of the person protected by the Fifth Amendment" and its guarantee that no person shall be "deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law." This gave same-sex married couples rights to federal benefits that only heterosexual married couples were allowed previously; and

Whereas Edie Windsor and Thea Spyer lived together in Greenwich Village for over 43 years, and during that time were actively engaged in championing and pursuing LGBTQ+ rights and civil liberties within the community and serving people's special needs:

- They were founding members of the LGBT Center at 208 W. 13th St., as well as of SAGE, New York's oldest advocacy group for LGBTQ+ elders (originally located in the 208 W. 13th St. building too), and the Callen-Lourde Health Center (originally located nextdoor to 208 W. 13th), which provides medical services to members of the local community, including at risk youth.
- They volunteered their services at these and other community institutions on a steady basis. Edie Windsor, who was a Senior Systems Programmer at IBM (the organization's highest rank) brought in and set up all the technology for the LGBT Center, SAGE and Callen-Lourde and aided in the learning of how to run these systems. Thea Spyer, a dedicated clinical psychologist in private practice, voluntarily counseled patients at Callen-Lorde and treated AIDS patients at St. Vincent's Hospital when no one else would.
- They supported and were involved in the activities of Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, New York City's LGBTQ+ synagogue, at the time located at 56 Bethune St. in the West Village.
- They devoted their entire lives to advocating for LGBTQ+ rights, by volunteering, organizing, contributing support, and participating in numerous initiatives, marches, demonstrations and other events throughout Greenwich Village, such as the Gay Pride Parade and Stonewall commemoration.; and

Whereas a petition supporting the co-naming of the n.w. corner of 5th Ave. and Washington Sq. N. Edie Windsor and Thea Spyer Way was submitted with almost 200 signatures, including signatures from NY State Senator Brad Hoylman and NY State Assembly Member Deborah Glick, both of who live in and represent Greenwich Village and include Community Board # 2, Manhattan in their districts, with close to 100 of the signatures from the building located at that proposed 5th Ave. and Washington Sq. N. corner; and

Whereas letters of support for the co-naming were received from the LGBT Center, Callen-Lorde Health Center and Judson Memorial Church; and

Whereas co-naming the corner of 5th Ave. and Washington Sq. N. after Windsor and Spyer is fitting both because they lived there (at 2 5th Ave.), directly across from Washington Sq. Park, and because the Park itself has been the site of so many happenings in the LGBTQ+ rights movement, among them a rally that began there to protest the police's actions at Stonewall, gatherings after the Pride Parade, the wrap up of the Dyke March, and celebration of the Trans Day of Action;

Therefore be it resolved that CB2 fully supports co-naming the n.w. corner of 5th Ave. and Washington Sq. N. Edie Windsor and Thea Spyer Way.

Vote: Unanimous, with 39 Board Members in favor.

Please advise us of any decision or action taken in response to this resolution.

Sincerely,



Jeannine Kiely, Chair
Community Board #2, Manhattan



Shirley Secunda, Chair
Traffic & Transportation Committee
Community Board #2, Manhattan

JK/EM

- c: Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, Congressman
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NYS Senator
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NYS Assembly Member
Hon. Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Erik Bottcher, Council Member