



Delores Rubin
Chair
Jesse R. Bodine
District Manager

CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

330 West 42nd Street, 26th floor New York, NY 10036
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512
www.nyc.gov/mcb4

October 18, 2017

Corey Johnson
Council Member
224 W. 30th Street, Ste. 1206
New York, NY 10001

Re: Honorary Supplemental Street Naming for Frances Perkins on West 46th Street

Dear Councilmember Johnson:

On September 18, 2017, the Transportation Planning Committee of Manhattan Community Board 4 (MCB4) heard a request to honor Frances Perkins with an honorary supplemental street naming—Frances Perkins Place—on the portion of West 46th Street between Ninth and Tenth Avenues.

This Honorary Supplemental Street Naming has broad support in the community: The West 46th Street Block Association, Hartley House, which continues to serve the youth and seniors of Hell's Kitchen, The McManus Democratic Club, and the National Democratic Club. The Board has also heard from family members of Ms. Perkins, who feel the proposal is a suitable honor. Also supporting the proposal is the Frances Perkins Center in Newcastle, Maine.

Frances Perkins was a lifelong advocate for social justice, economic security, and the rights of working people. She lived for a time in Hell's Kitchen and initiated her career in service to the public good at Hartley House at 413 West 46th Street.

Frances Perkins holds an important place in New York City history; on March 25, 1911, while working as Executive Director of the New York office of the National Consumers League, she witnessed the deadly Triangle Shirtwaist Fire on Washington Place in Greenwich Village. This experience galvanized her resolve to improve safety and conditions for workers. She chaired the Committee on Safety that formed in the aftermath and was dedicated to determining the causes and preventing a recurrence.

When Frances Perkins married, she opted to keep her birth name, defending her right to do so in court. She served important roles in New York State government, as Industrial

Commissioner under Governor Alfred Smith, and later as inaugural Commissioner of the State Department of Labor under Governor Franklin Roosevelt.

After her long career in New York, Frances Perkins was appointed Secretary of Labor by President Franklin Roosevelt, the first woman to hold a cabinet position. She served all four terms of Roosevelt's administration and is considered by many historians to be the woman with the greatest impact on American governance in the 20th century. She was the principal architect of the New Deal, including the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Public Works Administration and its successor, the Federal Works Agency, and the labor portion of the National Industrial Recovery Act. With the Social Security Act she established unemployment benefits, pensions for the many uncovered elderly Americans, and welfare for the poorest Americans. She pushed to reduce workplace accidents and helped craft laws against child labor. Through the Fair Labor Standards Act, she established the first minimum wage and overtime laws for American workers, and defined the standard forty-hour work week. She formed governmental policy working with labor unions and helped to alleviate strikes by way of the United States Conciliation Service. Perkins dealt with urgent labor issues during World War II, when women assumed skilled positions in the munitions and aircraft industries.

The Board generally discourages honorary supplemental street signs. In this case, however, it feels strongly that Ms. Perkins meets the criteria in its guidelines for honorary street naming. The Committee's unanimous recommendation to endorse the renaming was approved by MCB4 on October 4th, 2017 with 32 in favor, 0 opposed and 1 abstain to vote. Ms. Perkins had an established community association; an unparalleled record of public service to community, city, state, and country; there is broad and unopposed local support. This honorary naming will serve as a history lesson highlighting Ms. Perkin's lesser-known ties to Hell's Kitchen and her extraordinary contributions in promoting the general welfare of the American people, and will serve to inspire the youth of our community, today and tomorrow.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin
Chair



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee



Yoni Bokser
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee

cc: Hon. Bill Di Blasio, Mayor
Hon. Richard Gottfried, New York State Assembly
Hon. Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Colleen Chattergoon, DOT