



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

June 6, 2007

Paul J. Cosgrave
Commissioner
Dept. of Information Technology and Telecommunications
75 Park Place, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10007

Adrian Benepe
Commissioner
Dept. of Parks and Recreation
The Arsenal, Central Park
830 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10021

Janette Sadik-Khan
Commissioner
Department of Transportation
40 Worth Street
New York, NY 10013

Re: Sidewalk Furniture and Tree placements

Dear Commissioners:

It has come to the attention of the Community Board 4 that the relocations of street furniture and street trees maybe driven by individual business interests to the detriment of the overall community benefit. In such cases there is no provision for the community board to get involved on a timely basis to prevent such actions.

Recently a café owner requested the relocation of a phone booth because it was limiting his sidewalk café capacity by one table. DOITT relocated the phone booth closer to the corner, which increases the risk of sight of line obstruction for turning cars, as was the case of the phone booth at 45th Street where a pedestrian was killed. **DOITT should consult Community Board 4 before relocating an installation.**

Another café owner requested the Parks Department to relocate a mature tree for the very same reason. Fortunately, the Community Board stopped a move the majority of the community opposed. PANYNJ cut fifteen mature trees on 40th Street, with the approval of the Parks

department but without any community input. Had we known of such event, the community, which is starved for parks and trees, would have suggested relocating the trees. **The Parks Department should consult Community Board 4 before approving the cutting or relocation of trees in the district.**

A large number of newspaper boxes have appeared at numerous overcrowded corners of Ninth Avenue. There was no consultation between DOT and the community on the number and location of these boxes, which sometimes interfere with pedestrian crossings and cafes. **DOT should consult with community Board on the location of all street furniture.**

Sidewalk space is a scarce resource and valuable real estate, for pedestrians, café owners and advertisers while being subject to competing public demands: traffic signals, newspaper boxes, garbage cans, traffic signs, tree pits and phone booths obstruct pedestrian flow and interfere with sidewalk cafes.

In order to balance the community interest versus the wish of a particular business owner, Community Board 4 requests to be consulted for all location or relocation of new or existing furniture or trees, especially when requests are motivated by individual benefit and are not of maintenance in nature.

At its meeting on June 6, 2007 the full Board approved this application.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton
Chair
Manhattan Community
Board No. 4



Jay Marcus
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee