



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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DELORES RUBIN

Chair

Jesse Bodine

District Manager

August 8, 2016

Lorelei Salas
Commissioner
Department of Consumer Affairs
42 Broadway
New York, NY 10004

Re: Abandoned Newsstands

Dear Commissioner Salas:

Manhattan Community Board 4 (CB4) (Chelsea/Hell's Kitchen/Clinton) is concerned over the City's Newsstand policy and what it portends for the future. We would like to open a dialogue with you or your staff on this important issue. We are asking that permanently closed stands be removed.

It is important to understand that we support properly located and operated stands. They provide a convenience to our neighborhoods and an entry to the business world for many individuals who would otherwise be left out.

Recently, however, we have been faced with a particular problem in our Board area – the permanent closing of stands and their remaining on the sidewalk, blocking passage and doing little more than serving as an advertising venue. The details on the two closed stands follow:

Northwest corner of 8th Avenue and 25th Street

A stand has been on this corner for many years. Relatively recently the old, falling-apart stand was replaced by a new JCDecaux stand. It sold relatively little print matter, dealing primarily in candy and soda to students from FIT and Fashion High School. The stand has been closed for most of 2016.

Northeast Corner of 23rd Street and 9th Avenue

This was a new JCDecaux stand built earlier this year. It finally opened in the spring. At no time were newspapers or magazines displayed or sold. Customers were rarely seen. The only merchandise displayed was candy or soda. About two months ago the stand closed, apparently permanently.

Other stands in our Board area may also be heading for trouble and closing. The trend is not surprising given the alternatives that have come into play. These include delivery of papers to residences, replacement of printed media with digital versions and reliance on the Internet or cable TV for news. The typical newsstand routinely violates the DCA requirement that newsstands predominantly sell newspapers and magazines. They have little choice. The clouded future for newsstands clearly calls for the City to review its policy, rules and the provisions of its contract with JCDecaux. Among changes that should be considered is a restriction on the number of new stands permitted to open and reasonable provisions for removal of stands closed for more than three months. There may also need to be some consideration of stand financing.

The closed stands may not be troubling JCDecaux or the City; after all they both receive advertising revenue whether stands are open or closed. They are a problem, however, for the community. We want permanently closed stands removed. There is little or no chance that they can be successfully reopened. The problem is too endemic.

Please consider our problem and take appropriate action to have the offending stands removed. We would be glad to discuss the matter with DCA. We would also appreciate an opportunity to discuss the broader, future issue facing newsstands.

Sincerely,



Delores Rubin
Chair



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee



Ernest Modarelli
Co-Chair, Transportation
Planning Committee

CC Luis Sanchez, Acting Manhattan Commissioner, Department of Transportation
Michelle Craven, Senior Executive Director, Cityscapes and Franchises, Department of
Transportation