



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4

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J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

August 1, 2006

Irina Fridman, Revocable Consents Unit
New York City Department of Transportation
40 Worth Street, Room 940
New York, NY 10013

Re: Revocable Consent Application

Applicant: General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church
Location: 175 Ninth Avenue
Type: New Application

Dear Ms. Fridman,

At its July 21, 2006 meeting, Manhattan Community Board No. 4's Transportation Planning Committee reviewed a new application by the General Theological Seminary of the Episcopal Church (hereafter GTS) to construct 18 subsurface geothermal wells around the perimeter of the campus. The Board is pleased to hear that the applicant plans to install a geothermal system to replace its aging boilers and air conditioners. We have encouraged increased use of green building management techniques and are glad GTS is moving in that direction. In addition to creating a more efficient air conditioning system than their existing window units, the system is estimated to save over \$500,000 per year in energy costs. GTS estimates the new system will create savings in excess of its costs after 9 years.

We are however concerned that GTS intends to begin the installation of the system but have not yet met with residents of the affected blocks about the anticipated disruptions and to discuss their ideas on sidewalk materials and amenities after construction.

According to project representatives, the installation is projected to begin in September 2006 and last for approximately 9 months. GTS will drill 18 800- to 1500-foot wells on the Streets and Avenues adjacent to GTS (the north side of West 20th Street, the south side of West 21st Street, the east side of Tenth Avenue and the west side of Ninth Avenue). Each well will be drilled and installed individually, one well at a time. Each installation will take approximately 2 weeks.

During installation, the applicant will use 120-foot by 17-foot construction area, surrounded by fencing. Since these areas will take up the entire sidewalk and, on West 20th and 21st Streets, a large part of the street, the applicant will also install a 5-foot wide temporary pedestrian walkway. On West 20th and 21st Streets, this will leave 11 feet of vehicular clearance. Parking will be eliminated on both sides of the street for the entire 120-foot length of the construction area, plus 15 feet on either end, for a total of 150 feet. Major equipment used and stored in the construction area will include a drill rig, an

air and water compressor, a support rig and a Bobcat. Upon completion of the work in one construction area, the applicant will move the construction fence and equipment to another location. In total, approximately eight different construction areas will be used on both 20th and 21st Streets (including near the corners). There will be two construction areas used on Ninth Avenue. GTS is currently doing studies and surveys of the buildings across the street to measure any potential damage related to vibrations and will work with those building owners to prevent or repair any such damage. The plans for staging, parking and traffic will require approval by the Department of Transportation.

Work hours are scheduled from 7:00am to 6:00pm, Monday through Friday. The applicant plans to save the bluestone flagstones that exist in scattered sections within the project area and reassemble them in one location (yet to be determined). The remaining sidewalk will be replaced with tinted cement. Landmarks Preservation Commission has approved the replacement materials. The only remnant of construction will be a 36-inch flush metal utility cover over each of the 18 wells.

While we encourage GTS to move ahead with this important project, we are concerned about the lack of community consultation regarding both construction-period impacts and the sidewalk replacement. We thus request that the following:

- Prior to commencement of construction activities, the applicant must commit to community outreach, including mailings and community meetings, to the owners and residents of West 20th and West 21st Streets between Ninth and Tenth Avenues. GTS should meet individually with owners of buildings that may be affected by drilling vibrations.
- The applicant must create a map that shows the installation area dimensions, street parking impacts and an accompanying construction timeline and distribute this information to local residents prior to beginning the work;
- The applicant or its contractor must employ a traffic guard who will be present during all hours of work to move traffic efficiently;
- The applicant must install clear signs on Ninth and Tenth Avenues rerouting truck traffic to alternate streets during the work period;
- The applicant must agree to perform no work on weekends and to delay use of the drill rig and air and water compressors until after 8:00am.

The Community Board requests that GTS report back to the Community Board, in writing, verifying that the above has been done in advance of beginning the installation.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton
Chair
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Jay Marcus
Chair
Transportation Planning Committee

cc: Applicant
Local elected officials