



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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CHRISTINE BERTHET
Chair

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September 4, 2015

Melissa Mark-Viverito, Speaker
Peter Koo, Chair, Landmarks Subcommittee
David Greenfield, Land Use Committee
Corey Johnson, District 3 Representative

Re: Intro 775 – Establishing deadlines for the Landmarks Preservation Commission consideration of calendared items

Dear Ms. Mark-Viverito, Mr. Koo, Mr. Greenfield and Mr. Johnson:

Manhattan CB4 (MCB4) is strongly opposed to Intro 775 which would create a timeline for the designation of individual landmarks and districts. This proposed bill would have unintended consequences that would hinder the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) from safeguarding important historic sites. It would require LPC to hold a public hearing within 180 days of calendaring a proposed individual landmark site, and to take final action within 180 days of the public hearing. The time period for proposed historic districts would be two one year periods. LPC would be required to make a determination for items that are currently on the calendar within 18 months of the effective date of the Intro 775. If LPC does not approve designation of a site or district, the property would not be eligible for reconsideration for five years.

MCB4 supports the goal of creating a more predictable landmark designation process with appropriate timeframes but believes that Intro 775 is not the solution and would unnecessarily prevent landmark designations of worthy historic properties. If Intro 775 had been in effect, some of the city's most valued landmarks would never have been saved.

Often extensive research is required to fully analyze a proposed landmark site. The draft bill does not include a recommendation that LPC staff resources be increased. The risk of Intro 775 is that it would force LPC staff to make decisions based on inadequate research.

MCB4 recommends disapproval of Intro 775 and urges the City Council to allocate additional funds to the LPC for more staff to conduct essential in-depth research in a timely fashion.

Sincerely,

Christine Berthet
Chair