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Borough President
[Richmond]

1913

The City of New York.



GEORGE CROMWELL,
PRESIDENT.

Item for Meeting of
January 23-1913.

Office of
The President
of the
Borough of Richmond,
New Brighton, N.Y.

January 20, 1913.

190

Board of Estimate and Apportionment,

No. 277 Broadway, New York.

Gentlemen:-

On January 9th 1913, the Board considered its Chief Engineer's report of December 31st 1912 upon a proposed modification of street plans in a portion of the Borough of Queens. While commenting specifically upon the question at issue, the report considered the broader proposition of the Board's policy as to street widths in general.

For a number of years, the general policy was in force of considering sixty (60) feet as the minimum width for street mapping and opening, except under unusual circumstances. This, however, was based very largely upon the proposition that encroachments to the extent of five (5) feet on each side of the street, which existed in many places and which were being added to somewhat, were not only permissible but legal. Since then, however, the Court has determined that it is not within the province of either local or state authority to grant encroachments upon a street dedicated to public use; and in pursuance of decision and specific advice from Corporation Counsel many existing encroachments have been removed and probably no new ones have since been authorized. Therefore, the street of some years ago, of sixty (60) feet in width, was worth no more than is a fifty (50) foot street at the present time, excepting for light and air above the level of encroachments.

We are quite in harmony, however, with the principle of making sixty (60) feet the usual minimum for new street layouts, but are opposed to a policy of generally widening existing streets, except as local circumstance, traffic and business require; but not for the sake of making the "City way" uniform.

The unfortunate condition at present is in the lack of legal power to prevent encroachments upon mapped lines, even after such lines have been adopted by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, unless definite opening pro-

seedings are started. If, with the adoption of lines for widening existing thoroughfares, there could be legalised a restriction as to later use of the property within such lines, with proceedings to follow automatically within a given period of years, or else an abandonment of the widened lines through formal majority protest, there might be some value in the policy. There would, of course, be no prohibition against instituting usual proceedings to cause such streets to conform to the new lines before the lapse of a statutory time.

With the enforcement of proper traffic regulations which require vehicles to proceed to the end of a block before turning, one of the great needs of the past for a wide space between curbs on non-railroad track streets has ceased.

The wider the pavement between the curbs the greater the expense for maintenance (a general city charge).

For a normal existing residence street, it would seem, therefore, as if fifty (50) feet between property lines was sufficient; and for a residence street having a double line of car tracks, sixty (60) feet would ordinarily be abundant.

With the enhancement in value of lands, the increasing demand for greater convenience and luxury in living, - all tending to increase very largely the cost of living, the City should consider very seriously decreasing rather than adding to the burden of general expense, so far as possible, consistent with convenience and comfort.

If in place of a general scheme for wide streets, except where special conditions require them, an equivalent area or even less than the greater widths contemplated be devoted to more frequent small parks, the City would not only present a more attractive appearance, but would cost much less to maintain and give greater real benefit to the public generally.

We would suggest, therefore, an abandonment of the attempt to force widening of existing streets (unless as emphasized before local conditions require it) when physical improvements are being considered, but also the establishment of sixty (60) feet as a minimum width for new streets and layouts when such width can be secured without too great interference with neighboring layouts and consequent sacrifice of property.

Yours very truly,

GEORGE CROMWELL

President of the Borough.

The City of New York.
Office of the
President of the Borough of Richmond.

GEORGE CROMWELL, President of the Borough.

BOROUGH HALL, NEW BRIGHTON, NEW YORK CITY.

April 18th 1913.

Hon. William J. Gaynor,
Mayor,
City Hall, New York.

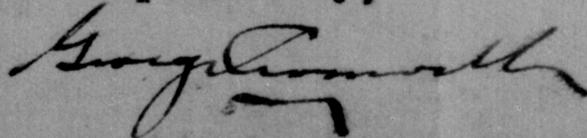
S i r : -

I should be very glad to co-operate, so far as possible, with other departments of the city in seeking to cure the present annoyance of uncleanness caused by the blowing of sand and dust in the public streets, as referred to in your letter of April 11th. We believe that building materials can be better safeguarded than at present. One cause of annoyance, however, is almost insurmountable, that is, dust coming from the sand sprinkled upon pavements in wet weather to reduce slipperiness, and also placed upon the different forms of block and macadam pavements for joint filling to prevent what is known as raveling.

In this borough we try as far as possible to remove the excess just as soon as the result desired has been secured. Some relief might be given in connection with the long piles of dirt alongside trenches for water and gas mains through water sprinkling.

I shall be very glad indeed to confer with you on this subject as requested.

Yours respectfully,



President of the Borough

The City of New York.



GEORGE CROMWELL,
PRESIDENT.

Office of

*copy for Mayor Gaynor
original went to
Secy of Board*

The President
of the
Borough of Richmond.

New Brighton, N.Y., Apr 28 1903

Board of Estimate and Apportionment,
Mr. Joseph Haag, Secretary,
No. 277 Broadway, New York.

Gentlemen:-

On April 3rd 1913, the Board referred back to the President of the Borough of Richmond the map submitted for adoption, showing Garfield Avenue, Fourth Ward, Borough of Richmond.

This street has been under consideration for many months past and has once before been referred back for further consideration. The greater portion of the street has been opened and in public use for upwards of twenty years. It is located on practically a side hill in such position that it would be almost impossible to make of it a main thoroughfare. Its present use as a highway is almost negligible, but the property owners desire and must have sewerage relief. The property owner at the eastern end of the street is willing to dedicate to public use a strip fifty (50) feet in width which will furnish, free of cost, a right of way through which a sewer can be constructed, when authorized. In all probability, it will be years before any further physical improvement of said street is required. The lay of the land is such and the cutting up into lots so firmly fixed that the property owner in question will not give a sixty (60) foot strip; in fact, the delays have been so great in this matter that we are not fully assured that the owner will still hold the offer open.

The Board has laid down a very reasonable general principle; that for new layouts of streets in excess of fifteen hundred (1500) feet in length, the width shall be not less than sixty (60) feet. The Chief Engineer of the Board argues that because in the present instance there would be little damage done to existing buildings by a widening to sixty (60) feet, therefore, the Board's policy should be upheld, apparently without regard to the wishes of the property owners who have all of the bills to pay.

It is of almost universal experience throughout the City that properties taken by condemnation cost the property owners many times the real value of the lands taken. In some cases, there is no other course open than through condemnation. In the Garfield Avenue case, we consider, however, that it would be a gross wrong perpetrated upon the property owners at interest to force a widening of their street from fifty (50) to sixty (60) feet at the cost of proceedings, when they can have everything needed for comfort, convenience and access from a fifty (50) foot street and can secure the

necessary sewer without costs other than for its construction.

We would also remind the Board that but a few years ago the only reasons given for asking that streets be made sixty (6) feet in width as against fifty (50) feet for other than main thoroughfares was because encroachments were permitted of five feet on each side of the street, thus making them only available for fifty (50) feet which at that time was considered sufficient. Encroachments were at that time known to be illegal but were tolerated. Today, they are not permitted; consequently, a fifty (50) foot street of today is just as available as a sixty (60) foot street of a few years ago and a sixty (60) foot street of today has the same standing as a seventy (70) foot street of a few years ago.

It is all well to have a general policy, but a policy that must be carried out with reason. It is just as much the duty of the Board and its advisers to consider the financial interests of the property owners affected by each individual improvement as it is to consider the general appearance of a city map and the living up to a policy which can be changed by majority vote at any meeting of the present or any future Board.

I ask that the Garfield Avenue plan be adopted as returned herewith with the minor amendments as suggested by the Chief Engineer of the Board.

Yours very truly,

President of the Borough.

The City of New York.

Office of the
President of the Borough of Richmond.

GEORGE CROMWELL, President of the Borough.

TELEPHONE: 1000 TOMPKINSVILLE.

BOROUGH HALL, NEW BRIGHTON, NEW YORK CITY,
May 2nd 1913.

Hon. William J. Gaynor,
Mayor,
City Hall, New York.

My dear Mr. Mayor:-

We were advised that you were to give a public hearing yesterday afternoon upon Mr. Cotillo's assembly bill Int. No. 2014, Pr. 2355, concerning refund of pavement deposits in cities of the first class.

Mr. Tribus was present during the whole session to speak in opposition to the measure, but learned at the close of the hearing that the bill had either been ^{with}redrawn or hearing postponed.

We are quite opposed to the measure, believing it would be very much against the interests of the City.

Present laws permit of the refund of deposits made in excess of requirements for pavement opening and restoration and inspection of backfill, etc.

There are two classes of receipts for this general purpose; one, considered as "deposits" which are subject of refund for excess charges and collection for deficient charges; the other, in the shape of fees for specific purpose of which nonrefund is made or further collection possible.

There is considerable litigation pending in which various claimants have attempted to secure from the City repayment of old time fees on the score that they should have been considered as deposits. The City ought not to be subjected to further opportunity to add to this class of litigation, as just claims can at present be satisfactorily settled.

Yours respectfully,


President of the Borough.

The City of New York.
Office of the
President of the Borough of Richmond.

GEORGE CROMWELL, President of the Borough.

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BOROUGH HALL, NEW BRIGHTON, NEW YORK CITY.

August 22nd, 1913.

Hon. William J. Gaynor,
Mayor of the City of New York,
City Hall, New York City.

Dear Sir:

Referring to my conversation with your Mr. Crowell a few days ago and my talk with his representative again this morning, I write to say that the matter to which I wish to call your particular attention is communication No. 4347 (calendar No. 23), published in the City Record on Thursday, July 17th, 1913, in the second column of page 6992, providing for an issue of corporate stock in the amount of \$900.

This amount of \$900. is necessary to provide sufficient funds to enable us to build the engineer's house in connection with the refuse destructor at Clifton in this Borough. Advertisement for the contract was duly made recently with very fair competition, nine bids being received, the lowest of which, however, was \$895.36 above the appropriation. We felt that there would be no gain by a re-letting and accordingly asked for this additional sum of \$900.00 to enable us to award the contract to the lowest bidder. This appropriation has passed both the Board of Estimate and Apportionment and the Board of Aldermen and now awaits your signature. May I ask that you give it as early attention as possible, in order that we may at least get the roof on the building before the winter's snows come and stop the work. If we can get the roof on by that time the

Hon. William J. Gaynor.

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contract work can proceed during the winter season on the interior.

Thanking you for early attention to this matter, I remain,

Respectfully yours,



President of the Borough.

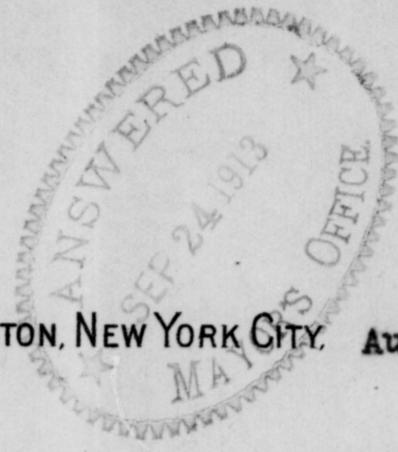
MEMORANDUM FOR THE MAYOR:

From Borough President Cromwell of Richmond, asking your approval for leave of absence for a laborer named G. Firnine who had his hand crushed while in the performance of his duties.

The City of New York.
Office of the
President of the Borough of Richmond.

GEORGE CROMWELL, President of the Borough.

BOROUGH HALL, NEW BRIGHTON, NEW YORK CITY. August 18, 1913.



Hon. William J. Gaynor,
 Mayor,
 City Hall, New York City.

S i r :

On May 3rd one of the laborer's in my Bureau of Highways, G. Firmino had his hand crushed while in the performance of his duties.

This man being a first class worker, I granted him under authority of Chapter 353 of the Laws of 1912 amending Section 1568 of the Greater New York Charter, a leave of absence of thirty days from May 3, 1913 (the date of his injury) with pay.

Under date of May 23 my office was furnished with the following certificate:

"St. Vincent's Hospital
 Borough of Richmond
 New York City

May 21, 1913.

To whom it may concern:

This is to certify that Genaro Firmino has been under my care for the past month and he is unable to work for at least sixty days more on account of laceration of three fingers on right hand.

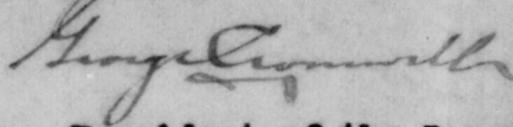
Respectfully,
 Chas. V. Niemeyer, M. D."

Firmino's recovery was more rapid than the physician anticipated and he returned to work on June 25th.

I am desirous of having his wages paid for the portion of his disabled

period in excess of the thirty days which I granted him and would therefore ask your approval as required by the law above quoted of my proposal to certify a leave of absence with pay for this man from June 3rd to June 24th, inclusive.

Yours very truly,

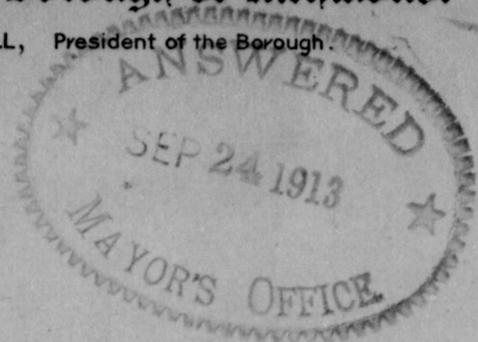


President of the Borough of Richmond.

The City of New York.
Office of the
President of the Borough of Richmond.

GEORGE CROMWELL, President of the Borough.

O-F



BOROUGH HALL, NEW BRIGHTON, NEW YORK CITY.

September 2nd 1913.

Hon. William J. Gaynor,
Mayor of the City of New York,
City Hall, New York City.

S i r :

On July 29th, 1913, William C. Egbert, Stationary Engineer, in the Bureau of Street Cleaning, of this office, was injured while in the performance of his duties, which injury necessitated his remaining at home under the care of a physician.

Under authority of Chapter 353, of the Laws of 1912, amending Section 1568 of the Greater New York Charter, I granted Egbert a leave of absence with pay from July 31st to August 16th, 1913. Subsequently the Superintendent of Street Cleaning reported that Egbert would be unable to report for work on the 16th, as he was still confined to his bed, and I thereupon extended his leave of absence from August 16th to the 29th.

Under date of August 29th, the Superintendent of Street Cleaning reports that it is expected Egbert will be discharged from the hospital on the 30th, but that it is not likely he will be able to perform any work, and asks that Egbert's leave be extended to include September 6th, which is beyond the thirty day limit.

I therefore respectfully ask your approval of this further extension to September 6th, as required by the law above quoted.

Very truly yours,

George Cromwell
President of the Borough.

The City of New York.
Office of the
President of the Borough of Richmond.

GEORGE CROMWELL, President of the Borough.

O-F

BOROUGH HALL, NEW BRIGHTON, NEW YORK CITY.

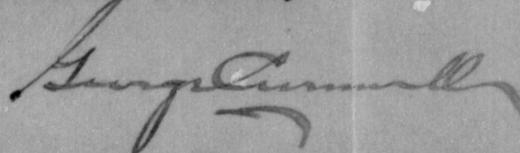
September 4th 1913.

Mr. Robert Adamson,
Secretary to the Mayor,
City Hall, New York City.

Dear Sir:

Your communication of the 30th ultimo was received yesterday transmitting a letter from Mr. Albert F. Richards, of 401 Annadale Road, Staten Island, with reference to the oiling and tarring of that road. I will have this matter looked into at once.

Very truly yours,



President of the Borough.

The City of New York.
Office of the
President of the Borough of Richmond.

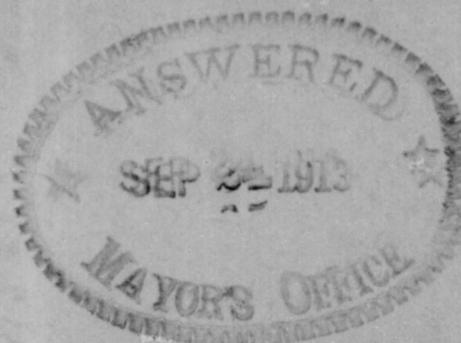
GEORGE CROMWELL, President of the Borough.

BOROUGH HALL, NEW BRIGHTON, NEW YORK CITY.

O-M

September 10th, 1913/

Hon. William J. Gaynor,
Mayor of the City of New York,
City Hall, New York City.



S i r :

Referring to my letter to you of the 2nd instant, requesting your approval of an extension of leave of absence to September 6th, 1913, for William C. Egbert, Stationary Engineer, in the Bureau of Street Cleaning of this office, who was injured while in the performance of his duties, I beg to advise you that Mr. Egbert continues to be incapacitated for work, and the Superintendent of Street Cleaning now recommends that the leave be further extended to September 27, 1913, inclusive. I, therefore, respectfully ask your approval of this further extension.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'George Cromwell'.

President of the Borough.

The City of New York.
Office of the
President of the Borough of Richmond.

GEORGE CROMWELL, President of the Borough.

BOROUGH HALL, NEW BRIGHTON, NEW YORK CITY.

O-M

September 15th, 1913.

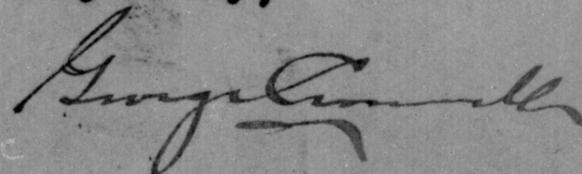
Robert Adamson, Esq.,
Secretary to the Mayor,
City Hall, New York City.

S i r :

I have your letter of the 10th instant, and am glad to say that my Consulting Engineer, Mr. Louis L. Tribus, will be glad to accept the designation as one of the delegates to the Third American Road Congress, to be held in Detroit September 29th to October 4th, 1913, in place of the City Engineer, Mr. Nelson P. Lewis, who you write me is unable to go. I thank you for the opportunity of making this suggestion, and am glad to say that the designation of Mr. Tribus will be very agreeable to me.

Thanking you for your kindness in writing me, I remain

Yours very truly,



President of the Borough.

