

Laura and Giovanni Battistini  
595 Main Street, apt. 204  
New York, NY 10044

October 10, 2021

Mr. Shelton Haynes  
President and CEO of RIOC  
Cc: Mr. Kevin Brown – PSD Chief  
Mr. Anthony Amoroso – PSD Deputy Director  
Ms. Rossana Ceruzzi – RIRA President

Dear President Haynes:

On Thursday, October 7, two days after our little dog Luigi was smashed by a car driving illegally on the West pedestrian promenade, Public Safety Deputy Director Anthony Amoroso came with another PSD officer to our apartment in Westview.

They wanted to follow up on our Public Safety report that we had submitted a few hours earlier on that day.

We were asked what we recalled about the driver, the car, the license plate. We were not very helpful because the tragic event was so traumatizing that at that moment our focus was only to helping Luigi and rushing him to the animal medical center across the river. However, we did indicate to them the approximate time of the accident and asked them to review the video surveillance camera footage. The camera is located under the River Cross breezeway where that individual had parked after running over our dog.

We then tried to steer the conversation from the merciless act of one driver to the biggest issue that affects all of us here on Roosevelt Island. Now, we want Luigi's painful death to become the opportunity to address obvious flaws in the management of the safety on RI. We do not want this to ever happen again, to either another beloved pet, or – worse – to a child, a resident, or a visitor.

We therefore used the opportunity of PSD's visit and asked:

- Why are cars permitted to park in the proximity of any building near any of the pedestrian side of the island, and therefore drive on the promenade;
- Why are there so many motorized vehicles (e-bikes, e-scooters) speeding up and down the promenade at all hours of the day and night, endangering the safety of residents, visitors and pets;
- Why is this illegal activity allowed by RIOC?
- Why aren't PSD officers ticketing traffic violations in the pedestrian areas? Since it is illegal for electric vehicles to be on the promenade, why are they never stopped and summoned?

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Following these questions, this is what Public Safety told us:

1. Public Safety cannot do anything about permits because buildings are the ones to give them away. Each building has an unknown number of permits that they can give to whomever they want and that's their right. And even if they asked, Public Safety could not keep up with those permits because they change at all the time.
2. It is absolutely illegal for any electric vehicle to use the West promenade, but RIOC is not enforcing this rule with signs or any type of barrier at the entrance of the promenade because the setup would cost too much to RIOC, it would go against the rules of the Fire Department, and it may make some residents upset.
3. It is impossible for PSD officers to enforce those rules on the West promenade because the riders of those electric vehicles run away from them when they try to stop them; PSD officers cannot possibly run after them.
4. PSD is understaffed and therefore cannot patrol the promenade effectively.

The officers then left reassuring us that they would look into this incident but did not give us any follow-up dates or any deadlines.

We were so stunned and felt so helpless learning that buildings on RI could actually use the promenade to allow vehicles to reach their properties (breezeways or sideways), that we decided to take a step further and investigate for ourselves. We decided to talk to the superintendent of Rivercross where the accident happened. To our even greater surprise we learned from him that his building does not give any permits to any vehicles and that this practice never existed in the past. Furthermore, he added that none of the WIRE buildings are entitled to give any permits whatsoever to access RIOC property, with the only exception of one maintenance vehicle and, only for a few hours at a time, to contractors. Finally, he confirmed that the driver of the vehicle that killed our dog did not have a permit.

This is the reason why we are writing to you today.

- We understand that Public Safety does not have the correct information about safety rules and regulations of the island. So how can they help to enforce them? It took us a simple chat of a few minutes to find out the truth. It wasn't that difficult. Yet why does someone whose job description is in fact to know rules and regulations and enforce them, not bother to do so?
- The residents of Roosevelt Island deserve better, and we demand that you step in and finally take an inventory of all dangers on hazards that we face daily on our promenade and, most importantly, come up with a concrete plan to address and resolve it. This needs to be done with utmost urgency. For a long time residents have reported accidents on the West promenade in numbers and asked for concrete actions.

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As a minimum we suggest:

- A motorized barrier should be put in place to stop random vehicles entering the promenade as they can do now. With today's technology, all the RIOC and Fire Department emergency vehicles can have a system that will open the barrier automatically and quickly when they need to pass.
- We also strongly feel that there should be visible signs on each access to the promenades alerting electric vehicle riders that it is not allowed to drive on the promenade. A clear speed limit sign for bikes and for emergency vehicles should also be placed at all the entrances.
- We also strongly believe that officers should be trained properly and not only to give summons to illegally parked cars on Main Street, but also to patrol the promenade in a professional and conscientious way. If they cannot stop electric vehicles because they run away, how about making use of their bicycles to go after them? Or making use of videos and surveillance cameras? Or alerting their colleagues on the other side of the loop? Or any of the many tactics that officers use when they work. Of course, these are only ideas to consider, but we understand that Deputy Director Amoroso has a strong professional background in investigative law enforcement and can certainly figure all this out. Ultimately, it is unacceptable to hear from PSD that they cannot enforce the rules and keep us safe. What is then the reason of their presence on the Island if they cannot to their job?

Please let us know soon what plan you will put in place about the safety of the West promenade. We kindly request that you do that with urgency and specificity.

We will follow up with you in a week.

Sincerely,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The signature on the left is 'Giovanni Battistini' and the signature on the right is 'Laura Battistini'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Giovanni and Laura Battistini