

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS

AND DISPOSITIONS 1

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC
SITINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

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March 5, 2024
Start: 10:50 a.m.
Recess: 11:04 a.m.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Amanda Farías, Acting Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Justin L. Brannan
Oswald Feliz
Christopher Marte
Sandy Nurse
Yusef Salaam

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS 2

A P P E A R A N C E S

Andrea Bender, Vice President of External Affairs
at the School Construction Authority

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS AND
DISPOSITIONS

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2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone
3 check for the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public
4 Sitings and Dispositions recorded in the Committee
5 Room by Layla Lynch on March 5, 2024.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Welcome to the
7 Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and
8 Dispositions.

9 At this time, can everybody please
10 silence your cell phones?

11 If you wish to testify, please come up to
12 the Sergeant-at-Arms' desk to fill out a testimony
13 slip.

14 At this time and going forward, no one is
15 to approach today. I repeat, no one is to approach
16 today.

17 Chair, we are ready to begin.

18 ACTING CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: [GAVEL] Good
19 morning. Welcome to a meeting of the Subcommittee on
20 Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions. I am
21 Majority Leader Amanda Farías, and I will be today's
22 Acting Chair of the Subcommittee. I'm joined today by
23 my Colleagues, Council Members Brannan, Feliz, Marte,
24 and Salaam.

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2 Before we begin with today's agenda, I
3 will remind everyone that this meeting is being held
4 in a hybrid format.

5 For members of the public who wish to
6 testify remotely, we ask that you first register
7 online and you may do so by visiting
8 council.nyc.gov/landuse to sign up and then sign into
9 the Zoom and remain signed in until you have
10 testified.

11 For anyone here with us today in person
12 and wishing to testify, if you have not already done
13 so, please see one of our Sergeants to fill out a
14 speaker's card, and we will call on your name at the
15 appropriate time.

16 For anyone wishing to submit written
17 testimony on the items being heard today, we ask that
18 you please send it via email to landusetestimony, all
19 one word, @council.nyc.gov and please indicate the LU
20 number and/or project name in the subject line of
21 your email.

22 On today's agenda, we will hold one
23 hearing followed by several votes. The public hearing
24 will be regarding a 547-seat primary school facility
25 in Council Member Dinowitz's District in the Bronx.

I'd also like to recognize Council Member Nurse that we've just been joined by.

I now open a public hearing for a site selection approval request from the school construction authority.

We will be hearing a Preconsidered LU item under application number G 240044 SCX regarding site selection for a new 547-seat primary school facility located in the Bronx in Council Member Dinowitz's District. Appearing today for the SCA on this proposal is Andrea Bender.

I'll remind anyone wishing to testify remotely, if you have not already done so, you must register online and you must do that now by visiting the Council's website at council.nyc.gov/landuse.

Counsel, would you please administer the affirmation?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelist, would you please raise your right hand and state your name for the record?

VICE PRESIDENT BENDER: Andrea Bender.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth

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2 in your testimony before the Subcommittee and in
3 answer to all Council Member questions?

4 VICE PRESIDENT BENDER: Yes.

5 ACTING CHAIRPERSON FARIAS: Thank you.

6 Applicant panelists, please begin and please just let
7 us know when you are ready to share your presentation
8 that we already have up and our Staff will display it
9 on the screen. You can begin your presentation.

10 VICE PRESIDENT BENDER: Thank you so much,
11 Majority Leader Farias. I apologize for being late
12 this morning, and we thought we were at 11 o'clock
13 across the street. Here we are now.

14 Thank you so much to the Members of the
15 Committee. Good morning. My name is Andrea Bender. I
16 am the Vice President of External Affairs at the
17 School Construction Authority. We are so pleased to
18 be here to present the proposed site for a new
19 approximately 547-seat primary school at 6389-6393
20 Broadway in the Riverdale neighborhood of the Bronx.

21 Pursuant to Section 1731 of the New York
22 State Public Authorities Law, the New York City
23 School Construction Authority has undertaken the site
24 selection process for a new approximately 547-seat.
25 seat primary school facility located at 6389-6393

1 Broadway, block 5841, lots 1968, 1978, and 1988 in
2 the Borough of the Bronx. The site is approximately
3 32,675 square feet, about three quarters of an acre.
4 The site is located within the Bronx Community Board
5 number 8 and Community Education Council District
6 number 10. The purpose of the proposed site plan is
7 for a new primary school to provide additional
8 permanent primary school capacity identified in the
9 DOE's Five-Year Capital Plan for Fiscal Years 2020 to
10 2024. The notice of filing of the site plan was
11 published in amNewYork and the City Record on October
12 3, 2023, at which time Community Education Council
13 number 10, Bronx Community Board number 8, and the
14 City Planning Commission were notified of the
15 proposed site plan. The Community Education Council
16 held a public hearing on November 28, 2023, Community
17 Board 8 held a public hearing on October 24, 2023.
18 All public comments received on the site were
19 considered as part of the site selection process.

21 The SCA affirms the site plan pursuant to
22 Section 1731 of the New York Public Authorities Law.
23 In accordance with Section 1732 of the Public
24 Authorities Law, the SCA submitted the proposed site
25 plan to the Mayor and City Council by letter dated

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2 March 4, 2024. Should SCA receive approval to acquire
3 the property, a new primary school will be
4 constructed and anticipated to open in 2028. The
5 school will include 23 classrooms for grades pre-
6 kindergarten to 5, 2 special education rooms, 10
7 District 75 classrooms, 2 resource rooms, music room,
8 art room, kitchen, cafeteria, library, gymnasium,
9 guidance and medical suites as well as general
10 administration and support spaces. It also includes
11 the creation of an approximately 11,800 square-foot
12 at-grade play area on the project site. We look
13 forward to the Subcommittee's favorable consideration
14 of the proposed site plan and would be pleased to
15 answer questions from the Committee.

16 I'd also like to quickly thank, although
17 he's not here, Council Member Dinowitz for his strong
18 advocacy on behalf of the project and his support. We
19 appreciate that very much.

20 I'd also like to ask if my Colleague,
21 Kelly Murphy, could be sworn in to take us through
22 the presentation.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Would you like to
24 raise your right hand and state your name for the
25 record?

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DIRECTOR MURPHY: Kelly Murphy.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell
the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth
in the testimony before this Subcommittee and in
answer to all Council Member questions.

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DIRECTOR MURPHY: I do.

8

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

9

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DIRECTOR MURPHY: My apologies for being
tardy. Thank you for giving me an opportunity. Let me
just quickly go through the presentation. This is a
kind of zoomed-out version of the site. You see the
bullseye to actual site gives you the context where
the proposed site plan is in northern Bronx. Next
slide, please.

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This is just for the record to show you
the tax block and lots that are affiliated with the
site that I believe Andrea already read into the
record. Next slide.

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This is more of a zoomed in on the site.
You can see the existing two buildings and accessory
parking lot that were a former hotel that is now
vacant, and you could see across the street from Van
Cortland Park and on the left side is a nearby
residential neighborhood. Next slide.

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1 You can skip this one. We've already done
2
3 that into the record.

4 These are just some close-up photos of
5 the site. You can see the two buildings that are the
6 former hotel. That will be demolished to facilitate
7 the construction of the school. Next slide.

8 Then this is some more of the surrounding
9 area. This is one of the buildings where the check-in
10 is and then that's Van Cortlandt Park on the right,
11 literally across the street. Next slide.

12 This is just some of the surrounding
13 areas, Post Road and the neighborhood nearby. It's
14 low density, residential, but very close proximity to
15 the proposed school site. Next slide.

16 You read that already, right? That's all
17 the amenities of (INAUDIBLE) the classrooms and the
18 size of the play yard and all those kinds of things.
19 That was it. I'm happy to answer any questions as
20 well.

21 ACTING CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Great. I have
22 a quick question. Can you tell us about the
23 utilization rates at comparable facilities and the
24 immediate surroundings of the proposed school
25 location?

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2 DIRECTOR MURPHY: Sure. There are about
3 two schools within a mile of the proposed site plan
4 site, XPS 24, which has 100 percent utilization rate,
5 and X81, which has 122 percent utilization rate, and
6 the overall utilization rate of the District is over
7 100 percent as well.

8 ACTING CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: Great. Thank
9 you for that. I'd now like to recognize any of my
10 Colleagues if they have any questions.

11 Seeing none.

12 Thank you. The applicant panel is now
13 excused.

14 Counsel, are there any members of the
15 public who wish to testify on this item?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We have no members of
17 the public signed up to speak.

18 If there's anybody in person who is
19 interested in speaking, please sign a card in the
20 back.

21 For any of the remote public participants
22 who wish to testify and have not already done so,
23 please press the raise hand button now.

1
2 You can also send any written comments,
3 to the email provided beforehand,
4 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

5 Is anybody here interested in testifying?

6 No.

7 ACTING CHAIRPERSON FARIÁS: Great. Thank
8 you.

9 There being no members of the public who
10 wish to testify regarding the Preconsidered LU item
11 under application number G 240044 SCX for the primary
12 school in the Bronx, the public hearing is now
13 closed.

14 We will now have votes. The first vote
15 will be to approve Timbale Terrace LU numbers 13 and
16 14. This project is located in Council Member
17 Salaam's District in Manhattan and seeks to
18 facilitate the development of a 19-story building
19 including affordable residential as well as ground
20 floor community facility theater and community
21 programs, outdoor space, and parking. The first
22 proposed action involves designation of an urban
23 development action area and approval of an urban
24 development action area project and the disposition
25 of the development site. The second proposed action

1 involves acquisition of a portion of the development
2 site by the City and the ground floor and second
3 floor of the proposed development to provide space
4 for an NYPD replacement parking facility.
5

6 We will vote to approve the designation
7 of the following sites by the Landmark Preservation
8 Commission. LU Number 21, Joseph Rodman Drake Park
9 and Enslaved People's Burial Ground in Council Member
10 Salamanca's District in the Bronx; LU Number 22,
11 Barkin, Levin and Company Office Pavilion in Council
12 Member Won's District in Queens; LU Number 23,
13 Modulightor building in Council Member Powers'
14 District in Manhattan.

15 We will also vote to approve a
16 Preconsidered LU item under application number G
17 240044 SCX, a site plan submission by the school
18 construction authority for a new 547-seat primary
19 school facility in the Bronx in Council Member
20 Dinowitz's District.

21 I'd now like to read a statement provided
22 by Council Member Dinowitz on his application.

23 Application LU 2, which proposes the
24 construction of a 547-seat primary school facility in
25 the Old Van Cortland Motel located at 6389-6393

1 Broadway in the Bronx, is an application I support
2 and encourage the Committee to vote in favor of this
3 proposal. It is also supported by the local Community
4 Board. The construction of a school at this site
5 would alleviate overcrowding in the neighborhood and
6 replace a cheap hotel that brings no benefits to the
7 community with a school that can bring educational
8 opportunities to our children. As the process
9 continues, it is essential for the School
10 Construction Authority to collaborate closely with
11 myself and members of the community to ensure that
12 the design aligns with the needs and preferences of
13 our constituents. Features such as school gardens and
14 STEM labs must be considered as part of the design
15 plan, not an add-on a later date, to enhance the
16 overall educational experience of our students. I
17 encourage Committee Members to vote yes.

18
19 Just to reclarify, that was a statement
20 provided to me by Council Member Dinowitz.

21 If Members of the Subcommittee who have
22 questions or remarks about today's items, please let
23 me know at this moment.

24 Seeing none, I now call for a vote to
25 approve LU 13 and 14 and 21, 22, 23, and a

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2 Preconsidered LU item under application number G
3 240044 SCX.

4 Counsel, please call the roll.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Nurse.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: I vote aye.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Feliz.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Aye.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Marte.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Aye.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Branna.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Aye.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Salaam.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: I vote aye.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Fariás.

16 ACTING CHAIRPERSON FARÍAS: I vote aye.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: With a vote of six in
18 the affirmative, zero on the negative, and zero
19 abstentions, these items pass.

20 That concludes today's business.

21 I'd like to thank the members of the
22 public, my Colleagues, Subcommittee Counsel, Land Use
23 Staff, and the Sergeant-at-Arms for your
24 participation today.

25 This meeting is hereby adjourned. [GAVEL]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date March 13, 2024