CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME USES

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November 16, 2011 Start: 11:34 a.m. Recess: 12:00 p.m.

HELD AT:

Council Chambers

City Hall

B E F O R E:

BRAD S. LANDER Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Maria del Carmen Arroyo Rosie Mendez Annabel Palma

James Sanders, Jr.
Jumaane D. Williams
Daniel J. Halloran III

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Gregory Shaw Principal Attorney for Real Estate New York City School Construction Authority

Kenrick Oh Director of Real Estate New York City School Construction Authority

Jeremy Laufer District Manager Brooklyn Community Board 7

Cindy Mulqueen Concerned Citizen

James Elberfeld Managing Architect New York City School Construction Authority

2 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Good morning.

Oh wait. Jumaane, stand inside the door for one more second. Thank you. This session is called to order. I am pleased to recognize my colleagues who are here; Council Member Jumaane Williams from Brooklyn, Council Member Rosie Mendez from Manhattan, and special thank you to Council Member Maria del Carmen Arroyo from the Bronx for being here on time and early and when she said she would as she so often is. I'm City Council Member Brad Lander, chair of the Land Use Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses, and we're very happy to have this hearing today.

We have just one item on the calendar, Land Use No. 522, Application No. 20115470, a proposed 750 seat public school siting and I'm pleased to say that it's in my district in the Kensington neighborhood and I'm pleased to be considering it and talking about it today. It meets a very significant new need. So we have the School Construction Authority here to present it to us and then a couple members of the community signed up to testify and hopefully, we'll be able to do those things both quickly and get folks out

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of here. So let me first call up to present the project to us, Greg Shaw [phonetic], Kenrick Oh [phonetic] and James Elberfeld [phonetic] from the School Construction Authority. Thank you guys for being here.

GREGORY SHAW: Good morning, Chairman Lander and Council Members. Thanks very much. My name is Gregory Shaw. I'm principal attorney for real estate for the New York City School Construction Authority. Thanks for having us here today. the New York City School Construction Authority has undertaken the site selection process for the proposed 750 seat primary and intermediate school in Tax Block 5321, Lots 44, 64 and 73, located on a block bounded by Katan [phonetic] Avenue, East 7th Street, East 8th Street and Kermitt [phonetic] Place and Prospect Park south section of Brooklyn, also called Kensington. The proposed site is also located in Brooklyn Community School District No. 15 and Brooklyn Community Board No. 7. The project site contains approximately 37,065 sq. ft. of vacant land. Under the proposed plan, the SCA would acquire the privately owned parcels and construct

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the proposed new school. A Phase 1 environmental
site assessment and a Phase 2 environmental site
investigation were conducted at the property to
ensure that the property is suitable for
construction of a public school facility. Proper
removal and disposal of any potential harmful
contaminants will be completed in accordance with
all federal, state and city regulations. Moreover
a vapor barrier and sub slab depressuration
[phonetic] system will be installed as part of the
design for the new school. The notice of filing
for the site plan was published in the New York
Post and City Record on January 21st, 2011.
Brooklyn Community Board No. 7 was notified of the
site plan on that date and was asked to hold a
public hearing. Community Board No. 7 held a
public hearing on February 9th, 2011 and submitted
written comments in favor of the site plan. The
City Planning Commission was also notified of the
site plan on that date and it also recommended in
favor of the site. The SCA has considered all
comments received on the proposed plan and affirms
it pursuant to Section 1731 of the Public
Authority's Law. In accordance with Section 1731

much.

of the Public Authority's Law, the SCA submitted the proposed site plan to mayor and Council on November 10th, 2011. We look forward to your Subcommittee's favorable consideration of the proposed site plan. We are prepared to answer any questions that you might have. Thank you very

much. Thank you for being here this morning and for the work to find the site and bring this forward. We've had dialogue about a number of issues that came out and I'm pleased with where we are on all of them-just so they're on the record. I want to ask a few questions. Let me ask you to start with a couple of things that are in the document itself as there are parking impacts and some noise impacts, which both have mitigation proposed in the siting and I wonder if you could just briefly outline those.

KENRICK OH: Right, so as part of the environmental impact review that was completed for this site, there was a potential traffic impact identified at Katan Avenue and Coney Island Avenue, which is a signalized intersection. The

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proposed mitigation would involve signal timing adjustments, obviously as this project is nearer to completion there will have to be coordination with DOT to verify that the forecast conditions are in fact occurring and that those measures will be adequate. Similarly with respect to the parking, this is an area where I think we have heard and the evidence bears out, there is a very limited amount of curbside parking and among the options to help ameliorate the impacts would be possible changes to street cleaning regulations in order to increase availability, but that again would have to be coordinated with DOT and probably the Department of Sanitation as well.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you and similarly, on noise, there is--

KENRICK OH: [Interposing] Yes.

Given the current planning of the site, there

would be playgrounds that could create playground

noise to adjoining residence. As part of this

project if it is approved, we would—this is not

an uncommon measure—offer the affected residences

new windows and alternative ventilation in order

to help mitigate the noise of those playgrounds

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2 upon their homes.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you on both of those. Those are both identified in the environmental review - - . I just want to ask one or two questions and ask you to--I'll point to this letter from Deputy Chancellor's Sternberg from the DOE--we're going to hear from Community Board 7, District Manager Jeremy Laufer [phonetic] is here and also from some parent leaders at P.S. 130, which is just a block or two away. Everyone is enthusiastic about additional school seats. We need them in the southern tier District 15, and we're enthusiastic to have them. The community board voted in favor. There is strong desire as you'll hear for middle school seats in this tier because neither Kensington nor Sunset Park really the southern half of District 15 is not where the middle schools in District 15 are located and so there's both from a programming point of view because their diverse immigrant neighborhoods--a little different from some of the neighborhoods in the northern half of the district both geographic and programmatic reasons why there's a real strong desire for middle school seats, and P.S. 130

2 being just a block or two away, there's

3 understandable anxiety from some of the parents

4 and staff--are you going to cut our school zone in

5 half? What's that going to mean for our school?

6 This is the district boundary as well, so yes, we

7 | need more school seats around here. So both of

8 | those were issues that were raised with the DOE

9 and I'm pleased that we have this letter from

10 Deputy Chancellor Sternberg recognizing them, but

I wonder if you can... Are you supposed to say

12 something about it? Am I supposed to say

13 something about it? Can you guys describe what

14 this?

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SENRICK OH: We can certainly submit the letter for the record, and I certainly wouldn't want to speak for the Deputy Chancellor, but at a high level [phonetic], I think the Deputy Chancellor and the Department of Education hear the concerns that have been raised and have also acknowledged that over the coming months, the DOE would begin this process of looking at potential uses for this new school building, based on both the great need of elementary school seats as well as this interest in middle school seats. Just in

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terms of timeline, the forecast opening of this school building would be in 2015, so there are several years left where there would be I think ongoing review of the data while this discussion is moving forward, but the DOE has indicated that they are aware of the concerns from the P.S. 130 community exactly as you had mentioned and that they are committed to the use of this new building being developed in a way that addresses the needs of the district, but also compliments P.S. 130-to be sensitive to the unusual circumstances that exist here.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Great. Thank you. And on the middle school side, it's being built in a way which would enable it to house both an elementary school program and a middle school program?

KENRICK OH: That is correct. This building is being designed with the infrastructure to provide instruction for pre-kindergarten up through grade 8.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very much for your work with us throughout the process on this. Do my colleagues have any questions or

Thank you

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Okay. Well, thank you very much. comments?

you would stick around for a couple of minutes to

hear from the District Manager and the parent

leaders from the school that would be great, so

let me call you guys up together: Jeremy Laufer is

the district manager of Community Board 7 and

Cindy Mulqueen [phonetic] representing the parents

at the Parkside School, P.S. 130. Go ahead and

JEREMY LAUFER: Sure.

begin when you're ready. Just please begin by

stating your name for the record.

for this opportunity to testify. My name is Jeremy Laufer and I'm the district manager for Community District 7, and I'm here to present testimony on behalf of Community Board 7 in Brooklyn. In February of this year, Community Board 7 voted 32-1 in favor of site acquisition and construction of a new 750 seat primary and intermediate school at 701 Katan Avenue within School District 15. Our board was very pleased that this site was chosen for the new school as it was out site selection committee that first suggested it to the Department of Education and School Construction Authority. The many community

members who attended a public hearing on a cold 2 February night expressed happiness that the issue 3 of this empty site rumored for 15 years to host an 4 5 out of context development would finally be settled in a facility that would serve the 6 community and be in context with surrounding properties would be developed instead. Along with 9 out great satisfaction that a third new school would be built within our community in the next 10 11 few years, is a word of caution and experience. 12 Promises made by the Department of Education must Our well-publicized 40 year fight for a 13 be kept. 14 high school culminated in the opening of Sunset 15 Park High School in 2009. Despite a promise from 16 the Department of Education that a charter school 17 would move from the building after 2 years, DOE 18 tried to renege on this promise this year and the 19 building would have been at 109% capacity before 20 the high school even had a senior class had the 21 community not come together with our elected 22 officials to find a solution. Councilman, I make 23 not that even though that was not your district, 24 you were one of the elected officials who fought 25 for that satisfactory conclusion. P.S. 971

opened in our community in 2010. Although DOE 2 presented the plan for this school as a pre-K 3 through 3rd grade early childhood center, we 4 5 learned weeks before the building opened that DOE had decided to change the school to K through 5. 6 Additionally this school also houses a significant number of students from an overcrowded school 9 outside of its zone, reducing the capacity for children within the zone. Empty space will be 10 11 filled and if we follow recent DOE policy to age 12 into the school grade by grade, this P.S. I.S. 13 would take nearly a decade to fill. It would take more than half a decade for students to reach the 14 15 intermediate school grades. This is why we 16 advocate for concurrent admissions to grades in 17 both parts of the school when it opens, serving 18 younger and older children from the beginning. 19 The single dissenting vote against this site came 20 from a board member who is worried that we would 21 face a building of charter schools without the 22 full capacity of the promised building--something that has not been discussed with the community, 23 24 and we certainly understand the board member's 25 concerns and believe her apprehension is valid

given our recent history with new schools. We

believe charter schools should be an addition to

what DOE promises, not a substitute. Therefore,

while we enthusiastically endorse the site

acquisition and construction of P.S. I.S. 437 at

701 Katan Avenue--and I can't express our approval

enough--we also urge you to help us keep DOE at

their word on capacity and to endorse opening

their word on capacity and to endorse opening admissions to multiple grades when the school opens. Once again, I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Community

13 Board 7.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very much and thanks for the leadership of the community in finding and identifying this site and working so hard to call it to the attention of the SCA as well.

CINDY MULQUEEN: Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to be heard regarding the Application No. 20115470 SCK, more specifically the plan to build a 750 seat primary/intermediate school in Council District 39. My name is Cindy Mulqueen and I am the parent of a third grader at P.S. 130, the Parkside

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School. I am also a PTA and SLT member. Over the past two decades, the demographics of our city has changed and young families who would normally move to the suburbs have decided to raise their children in the city. Though this trend has had many benefits, it has placed a heavy burden on our public school system. I am sure that primary and middle schools throughout the city are overcrowded, but I'd like to take this opportunity to speak about the situation at P.S. 130. In the four years since my son has attended P.S. enrollment has increased by over 125 students. This year the school was required to create a 5th grade kindergarten class, an abridged class combining some fourth grades. An upper class was collapsed to make room for the new kindergarten class. As these children move up through the grades, they simply will have nowhere to go. Next year, it appears we will lose our music room and the art room is currently a sectioned off area of the cafeteria. P.S. 130 has no gym, therefore, on cold and rainy days, the children get no exercise. Having another school facility constructed in our district would greatly benefit

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2 our growing primary and middle school population.

3 There is currently no decent middle school in the

4 area. I would urge you to approve this plan and

5 insist that the facility remain a part of School

6 District 15. A two-building K through 8 campus

7 would provide our community and P.S. 130 with a

8 solution to the overcrowding and middle school

9 issue. Failing to do so will destroy the P.S.

130 community and diminish the lives of an already

11 underserved population. Thank you.

much for coming out and you know, those concerns were raised loud and clear at the hearing that we had and my conversations and meetings with the P.S. 130 PTA and the staff and the principal as well, and I think there's as you heard, while the programming doesn't take place more precisely until we get closer to the 2015 opening, there's an awareness on the part of the DOE to think about these things together. I've talked with the Deputy Chancellor about the idea of a two-building K to 8 campus or other ways to make sure these buildings complement each other--maybe the kids could get to use the gym from time to time, so

it's great that there's strong advocacy and I 2 think District Manager Laufer's point that we will 3 need to follow up, not just to kind of put this 4 5 letter in the file, but keep working with them as 6 the opening gets closer to make sure that thoughtful planning takes place and it will be important. I look forward to working with you 9 guys on it. I would like actually--I meant to 10 ask--and in response to what Jeremy said for just 11 a reminder from the SCA on where we are on other 12 District 15 capital planning, so we get that 13 assurance that while we're doing this and it's 14 great and while there's a proposed charter siting 15 in another piece of District 15 that will be the 16 subject for another day that there still is 17 capacity that they're looking to site and that is 18 funded and anticipated in the capital plan, so 19 maybe let me invite him back up to do that, unless 20 there are questions from either of my colleagues. 21 Okay, so thank you very much for your taking the 22 time to come and testify and if the SCA wouldn't 23 mind just really quickly coming back up and 24 reminding us where we are in achieving the capital 25 plan and additional seat capacity in the remainder

of District 15, that would be great.

KENRICK OH: Hi. Again, I'm 3 Kenrick Oh, director of real estate for the New 4 5 York City School Construction Authority. Earlier this month, the Department of Education released 6 the latest proposed amendment to the five year capital plan, which basically preserves the number 9 of additional seats proposed across the city. For District 15 overall which is a very large 10 11 district, there were a total of about 2200 seats 12 at the P.S. and middle school levels that were 13 identified as needed. About 700 of those were 14 allocated for the Park Slope area, which I think 15 probably is more Board 6, but then there was also 16 the balance and the bulk of the seats were 17 allocated for the southern part of District 15, which includes Sunset Park as well as Kensington. 18 19 In terms of where we are with the siting, overall 20 we've sited approximately 1300 of the 2300 seats 21 between this proposed location, between a lease of 22 a former parochial school in Sunset Park and also 23 with our efforts to successfully negotiate a lease 24 extension of a leased parochial school building in Park Slope. That leaves a balance of about as I 25

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2 said 900 seats that remain to be sited, about 500 3 in Park Slope area, about 400 in the Sunset Park

4 area. I do want to be clear though that the

5 numbers that I just mentioned are specific to the

Department of Education's Fiscal Year 2010 through

7 2014 Capital Plan. There are additional seats

8 | that are in construction now for District 15 at

9 P.S. 133 or the new P.S. 133 that were actually

10 funded from the previous capital plan. Those

11 seats I believe are scheduled to become available

12 and online in 2013.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Okay. Thank

you. - - you a little more. I mean I know Sunset

Park has just been a siting challenge and I noted

that in the alternative sites' analysis for this

school siting I think all three of the

alternatives were Sunset Park sites and I know the

real estate market is hot there; the sites are

scarce there and so I know that you're continuing

to look, but I wonder if you could just talk about

what you're doing to try to site the remaining

Sunset Park seats.

KENRICK OH: We continue to work and I think we've been successful in Sunset Park

available.

in part because of the opportunities we've have heard both from the P.S. 971 project that District Manager Laufer mentioned, which recently opened. That was actually another suggestion from the community board. This site is a suggestion from the community board. We have tried to work the Diocese of Brooklyn as they have been reviewing the parochial schools that may be consolidated or otherwise become available, and we also do have our brokers out there monitoring the marketplace for properties that may become

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Okay. Thank you. I will urge the community board to go back and do another round of looking. They've been successful a couple of times. I know that there's an ongoing dialogue.

KENRICK OH: [Interposing] I do have to apologize. For this particular site, a lot of credit needs to go to--and we want to acknowledge the efforts of the community board members. They have come up with very good suggestions and they have scoured the community and in a way that I think is really unparalleled

among the community boards that we've had the opportunity to work with to really help us address the need.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: That's great, and I know it's been a good partnership where they have focused on this and they've felt like you guys have listened and obviously responded, so I'm glad to hear it. Alright, thank you very much. I have one question.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Yeah, I don't know who is the appropriate person to answer this, Mr. Chair, but in the testimony of the gentleman from CB7, he mentions something about—that there was discussion about an out of context development, so what is this going to look like in terms of height? Do we know?

Our managing architect to - - briefly and he provide a quick overview of the building height - - at a high level. This area of Kensington is characterized both by apartment buildings and also by lower rise homes, and I think that massing [phonetic] of this building has been developed to try and transition between the two. If Jay

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Elberfeld could share just one of the boards that 2 we have.

[background conversation]

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: You got to - a mic. While they're doing that, I'll just let you know so ten years ago this was bought by a non-profit religious institution that had talked about planning to put up an 80 foot high building that was--and it led to an effort to rezone the whole area, and so that deal sort of fell apart for financial reasons that Community 6 succeeded in getting a rezoning around this area to kind of bring it much more into context and while this doesn't actually 100% perfectly comply with the new zoning that's in place, it's awfully close and it's within the spirit and the height and there's general community support for the design that was...

JAMES ELBERFELD: My name is James Elberfeld, managing architect, School Construction Authority. In terms of the massing of the building, the highest portion of the building would be about five stories and that's along the East 7th Street--the wing you see along East 7th

Τ	SUBCOMM ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING, MARITIME 23			
2	Street is the five story portion.			
3	COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: If I could			
4	just stop you and ask you five stories equals how			
5	many feet because school buildings have larger			
6	stories per you know, each story has more feet			
7	than a residential building.			
8	JAMES ELBERFELD: Hold on one			
9	second. I have that exact height.			
10	COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: and if I			
11	could just ask that the community has seen these			
12	renderings? No? Well, can we make sure that the			
13	community sees these renderings even if it's not			
14	100% accurate, that they can			
15	JAMES ELBERFELD: It's			
16	approximately 72 feet.			
17	COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: 72 feet on			
18	the five stories?			
19	JAMES ELBERFELD: Right. East 7th			
20	Street.			
21	COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay.			
22	CHAIRPERSON LANDER: And I will say			
23	that there wasI askedthere was a willingness			
24	on the part of the SCA to come out. You know,			
25	they did their required public hearing way back in			

January, February. They expressed a willingness
to come back again and present these drawings and
we couldn't find a time on the calendar that
worked to show them again that worked for my
office and the board and the SCA, so I know
they've expressed a willingness to come back and
show these drawings

MALE VOICE: That's absolutely correct.

JAMES ELBERFELD: I'd just add the smaller volume you see along Katan Avenue, that's only a three story volume, so as I said, the highest one is along East 7th.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: And just what was proposed was 8 story, 80 foot, all this kind of flat street wall all along this block and so that's what folks in the neighborhood had in their mind that they were trying to avoid, so thank you for those questions. Okay. Thank you very much for this and we'll follow up on Council Member Mendez's suggestion that we make sure people get a chance to take a look at these. Alright. Let's

[gavel]

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I, Kimberley Uhlig certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

	Kimberley	Uhlig
Signature	O	U
Date	11/28/11_	