

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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July 23, 2012
Start: 11:30 a.m.
Recess: 11:51 a.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)

Jenny Fernandez
Director of Intergovernmental and Community Relations
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Peter Bray
Chair of the Historic Districts Committee
Park Slope Civic Council

Corinne Mulsby
Member
Park Slope Civic Council

John Kasem
Member
Park Slope Civic Council

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Good morning.

I am Council Member Brad Lander, and I'm pleased to call this meeting of the City Council Land Use Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and

Maritime Uses to order. Thanks for joining our July meeting. We are joined this morning by

Council Members Dan Halloran of Queens, Rosie Mendez of Manhattan and James Sanders of Queens.

Let me announce at the outset that we are laying over five of the items on the calendar for today--

Land Uses No. 622, 623, 624, and 625, the 32, 34 and 36 Dominick Street houses and Dennison and

Lydia Wood House. Those will in all likelihood be heard tomorrow morning at a 9:30 meeting of the

Landmarks Subcommittee in advance of the 10

o'clock Land Use Committee, and we are also laying over Land Use No. 648, a proposed HHC siting,

Metro East 99th Street. That was actually being laid over until next month, August 20th, our next

meeting. So that leaves us with two items on the calendar today--one especially excellent item, but

two items, Land Uses No. 636, the Park Slope

Historic District extension and Land Use No. 649,

the Barbizon Hotel for Women, both Landmarks

1 designation items. So let me invite Jenny
2 Fernandez from the Landmarks Preservation
3 Commission to come and present them to us. We
4 will start with the Park Slope Historic District
5 designation, Land Use 636, which I am personally
6 very excited about and appreciate all of the
7 really hard work done both by the LPC, by the Park
8 Slope Civic Council and other advocates, so I'm
9 excited that it is coming to us. Take it away,
10 Jenny.
11

12 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Chair
13 Lander, members of the Subcommittee. My name is
14 Jenny Fernandez, director of Intergovernmental and
15 Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation
16 Commission. I am here today to testify on the
17 Commission's designation of the Park Slope
18 Historic District extension in Brooklyn.

19 On October 26th, 2010, the Landmarks
20 Preservation Commission held a public hearing on
21 the proposed designation of the Park Slope
22 Historic District extension. 23 people spoke in
23 favor of designation, including Council Members
24 Brad Lander and Steve Levin, Brooklyn Borough
25 President Marty Markowitz, a representative of

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2 Assembly Member Joan Millman, a representative of
3 Community Board 6, representatives of the Park
4 Slope Civic Council, the Historic Districts
5 Council, the Landmarks Conservancy, and the Park
6 Slope Chamber of Commerce, and several residents
7 of the proposed district. One person spoke in
8 opposition to designation. In addition written
9 testimony in opposition to designation as
10 submitted after the hearing by the owners of 414
11 and 414A 7th Avenue, 412 13th Street, 500 7th Street
12 and 412 13th Street. In a written request to be
13 removed from the district was submitted by the
14 owners of 496 14th Street. The Commission has
15 reviewed these requests and determined all of
16 those buildings merited inclusion in the district.
17 On April 17th, 2012, the Commission voted to
18 designate the Park Slope Historic District
19 extension.

20 The Park Slope Historic District
21 extension includes approximately 600 buildings
22 located immediately to the west and south of the
23 Park Slope Historic District, which was designated
24 by the Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1973
25 and the three buildings on Prospect Park West

1 between 9th and 10th Street that were omitted from
2 the original historic district - - designation.

3 Park Slope is located west of Prospect Park and is
4 bounded by Flatbush Avenue to the north, 15th
5 Street to the south, 4th Avenue to the west and
6 Prospect Park West to the east. The earliest
7 houses in the Park Slope Historic District
8 extension were built in the Italianate style of
9 architecture, popular from about 1840 to 1870.

10 The Park Slope Historic District extension remains
11 one of Brooklyn's most architecturally
12 distinguished areas retaining some of the
13 borough's most beautiful and well-preserved
14 residential streets and features a broad array of
15 outstanding residential, institutional and
16 industrial architecture and popular late 19th and
17 early 20th Century styles, including the
18 Italianate, neo-Grec [phonetic], Queen Anne,
19 Romanesque revival, Renaissance revival, and
20 Colonial revival. The area continues to retain
21 its cohesion due to its tree-lined street scale,
22 predominant residential character and its
23 architectural integrity. The Commission urges you
24 to affirm this designation.
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2 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
3 much, and again, thank you to you and to the Chair
4 and the commissioners and the staff who worked on
5 this. It's a wonderful district and I appreciate
6 the work that your team did in prioritizing it,
7 looking at the boundaries, considering some
8 requests and really sort of a real model of
9 dialogue and partnership with the community, so
10 are thrilled to have gotten it to this point. We
11 do have two people signed up to testify—three
12 people signed up to testify. So let me just ask
13 them to come up as a panel, Peter Bray for the
14 Park Slope Civic Council, John Kasem [phonetic]
15 from the Park Slope Civic Council and Corinne
16 Mulsby [phonetic] from the Park Slope Civic
17 Council. So if the three of you can just come up
18 and we appreciate the time you're taking to be
19 here.

20 [background conversation]

21 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: And begin by
22 stating your name for the record.

23 PETER BRAY: Okay. My name is
24 Peter Bray. I'm pleased to come before the City
25 Council members here today. I'm the chair of the

1 Park Slope Civic Council's Historic Districts
2 Committee. I'm a 32-year resident of Park Slope
3 and a homeowner within the current historic
4 district. This month is the 39th anniversary of
5 the designation of the original Park Slope
6 Historic District, but many Park Slope residents
7 assume that the entire neighborhood was landmarked
8 in 1973, but in fact, less than 25% of the
9 neighborhood is currently protected and those
10 blocks that are are primarily along Prospect Park.
11 Their confusion is understandable since there is
12 little difference between those homes that are
13 within the current historic district and hundreds
14 of homes that are outside of the district. Very
15 many of these unprotected blocks are the same
16 iconic value and have equivalent architectural and
17 historic significance to already landmarked
18 blocks, a fact that the Landmarks Preservation
19 Commission recognized when it designated the 600
20 buildings within the south slope as part of an
21 ongoing expansion of the Park Slope Historic
22 District. Indeed, Frederick Bland, one of the
23 Landmark Commission's commissioners, remarked at
24 the meeting in April when the south slope
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1 extension was designated that he couldn't
2 understand why the south slope wasn't already
3 included when the historic district was created in
4 1973. I suppose at that time, the Commission—it
5 was a very different time and context—recognized
6 those areas where the least disinvestment had
7 occurred in Park Slope, but Park Slope has as many
8 New York City neighborhoods have greatly changed
9 since the early '70s. Families are now clamoring
10 to live in Park slope because of many of the
11 features that Jenny mentioned—its scale, its
12 architecture, its history, its schools and the
13 quality of life—but back when the original
14 historic district was created, families were
15 fleeing for the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s.
16 But there is one thing that hasn't changed and
17 that is is that landmarking is extremely popular
18 in Park Slope. Its residents want to see it
19 preserved and they want to see it protected from
20 the kind of flimsy development that is degrading
21 too many Brooklyn blocks and neighborhoods. Since
22 2007, the Historic District Committee of the Park
23 Slope Civic Council has actively and extensively
24 informed Park Slope residents of our expansion
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1 objectives when a means for them to be in the
2 historic district. We've answered their questions
3 and we've solicited their support. We've sent a
4 veritable army of volunteers ringing the doorbells
5 of every home in the south slope to directly
6 engage with their owners and the response has been
7 overwhelmingly positive. We submitted petitions
8 with hundreds of signatures to the Landmarks
9 Commission prior to the public hearing. At the
10 public hearing in addition to those speakers that
11 were mentioned, we also submitted letters from
12 dozens of these homeowners. As was mentioned,
13 only one person spoke in opposition. This broad
14 support is neighborhood-wide. We have marshaled
15 the same effort within the north slope that is now
16 being considered by the Landmarks Commission and
17 over and over again, we hear the same refrain,
18 which is, "Why isn't our block already in the
19 historic district?" Why, indeed? You have the
20 opportunity today to redress this omission. I
21 urge you to send this matter on to the Committee
22 on Land Use and the entire City Council with your
23 full endorsement. Thank you for your time.

25 CORINNE MULSBY: My name is Corinne

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2 Mulsby. I'm a member of the Park Slope Civic
3 Council and have been a Park Slope resident for
4 just over a year. While I'm fortunate to live
5 within the historic district and am assured that
6 the qualities which make Park Slope a great place
7 to live will not be radically altered or destroyed
8 within my immediate area, that assurance is not
9 something many of my neighbors have, who live on
10 the dozens of other blocks that are not within the
11 boundaries of the historic district. I'm here
12 today because I believe it is crucial that the
13 Subcommittee vote in favor of extending the Park
14 Slope Historic District to include to 600
15 buildings in the south slope. We believe that
16 this area should have been part of the historic
17 district when it was created in 1973. It tells a
18 different, but equally valuable story about the
19 history of Park Slope and of the city of New York.
20 It was a story that was not sufficiently valued in
21 the '70s, but is now more fully appreciated. The
22 buildings tell the story of the city's industrial
23 past and the people who worked in those
24 industries. It tells a story of a neighborhood,
25 whose - - Ansonia Clockworks Complex between 11th

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2 and 12th Street and in the homes that lined 13th and
3 14th Streets, which house those who worked at the
4 factory. This is a story that deserves to be told
5 and preserved as much as those of the merchants
6 and well to do families that populated blocks
7 adjacent to Prospect Park; however, the south
8 slope extension has many of those brownstones as
9 well, which are situated along blocks south of the
10 factory--an example of the diversity that makes
11 Brooklyn and the city of New York so exceptional.
12 The approval of the south slope extension is
13 critical because many of the blocks within the
14 south slope have had their integrity altered and
15 in many cases destroyed by the type of development
16 that is all too common throughout Brooklyn. These
17 are the five and six story co-ops and luxury
18 rental buildings that have been thrown together
19 without any consideration of their contribution to
20 the character of the neighborhood. The housing
21 stock we are asking you to protect in the south
22 slope was built for many generations to enjoy and
23 be proud of; however, these new buildings have
24 been erected with only short term financial
25 considerations in mind. I ask you to recommend

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2 the approval of the south slope extension to Land
3 Use and Landmarks Committee and to the full City
4 Council because of the historical importance of
5 this area, the integrity of its streetscape and
6 because it deserves the protection afforded by
7 historic district designation. Thank you for your
8 time.

9 JOHN KASEM: My name is John Kasem.
10 I've been a resident of Park Slope 47 years. I
11 was one of the people—my wife and I, one of the
12 families that moved into Park Slope in the initial
13 era when Park Slope turned around from being a
14 neighborhood in decline because of our ethics and
15 we've seen Park Slope change dramatically over the
16 years. We'd like to see further improvements in
17 Park Slope and one of these improvements would be
18 preventing real estate developers from coming in
19 and building buildings that are absolutely
20 inappropriate to the appearance of the
21 neighborhood. There's a great fear that Atlantic
22 Yards, which has already had negative impacts on
23 Park Slope will lead to more negative impacts
24 because it will draw attention to the area to real
25 estate developers who seek commercial

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2 opportunities on our avenues. Park Slope is a
3 beautiful community, which is what attracted lots
4 of people—in fact, most people who live there—to
5 the neighborhood. It's also been a community of
6 famous firsts, which we had the Brooklyn Dodgers
7 first play baseball and we've had some illustrious
8 residents including Barack Obama and Al Capone and
9 we'd like to keep Park Slope a destination it has
10 now become for foreign tourists. It's amazing the
11 number of foreign tourists you see on our avenues
12 and why do they come here? They come here because
13 it's a very attractive neighborhood, and we hope
14 that you will approve this application. Thank
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thanks so much
17 to all three of you for coming, John and Corinne
18 for coming today and for all of your work in the
19 past and Peter, I just want to in particular
20 praise your work on this. I mean the work that
21 you've been doing for years and years now to build
22 a constituency of support, not just assuming it
23 would be there, although I think it was reasonable
24 in many ways to assume, but really the tireless
25 work of going block by block building up a group

1 of ambassadors and making it easy for the
2 Landmarks Preservation Commission and for us to
3 see not only that the neighborhood was meritorious
4 architecturally, but that there was really
5 overwhelming and strong neighborhood support, so
6 praise to the Civic Council generally and to you
7 individually for all of the leadership that you've
8 put in. Thank you so much for doing that.

9 Questions from my colleagues of any of them or of
10 Ms. Fernandez on this item? Thank you very much
11 for your time coming out to testify and we will
12 call Ms. Fernandez back. There is no one else
13 signed up to testify on this item, so we will
14 close the public hearing on this one. Thank you
15 very much for attending and we will move to the
16 other item on the calendar today, which is Land
17 Use 649, the Barbizon Hotel for Women in Council
18 Member Garodnick's district.

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20 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Thanks. Thank
21 you, Chair Lander, members of the Subcommittee.
22 My name is Jenny Fernandez, director of
23 Intergovernmental and Community Relations for the
24 Landmarks Preservation Commission. I'm here today
25 to testify on the Commission's designation of the

1 Barbizon Hotel for Women in Manhattan. On July
2 26th, 2011, the Landmarks Preservation Commission
3 held a public hearing on the proposed designation
4 as landmark of the Barbizon Hotel for Women. A
5 total of two witnesses represented the Friends of
6 the Upper East Side and Historic Districts Council
7 spoke in favor of the designation. On July 20th,
8 2011, the full board of Manhattan Community Board
9 8 adopted a resolution in support of the
10 designation. In August 2011, Council Member
11 Daniel Garodnick wrote to the Commission
12 indicating his support for designation. The
13 Commission received three additional letters and
14 two e-mails of support, including an e-mail
15 message on behalf of Place Matters [phonetic].
16 There were no speakers or letters in opposition to
17 designation. Commission staff met with the
18 representative of the owner on February 8th, 2011.
19 At that meeting, a May calendaring and June public
20 hearing were agreed upon. Commission staff
21 remained in communication with the owner regarding
22 work being done to the building. The owner has
23 not stated opposition to designation and chose not
24 to attend the public hearing. On April 17th, 2012,
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1 the Commission voted to designate the building a
2 New York City individual landmark. The Barbizon
3 Hotel for Women was built in 1927, '28 as a
4 residential hotel and clubhouse for single women,
5 who at the time were moving to New York City in
6 record numbers to take advantage of new
7 professional opportunities. The demands for
8 inexpensive housing for single women led to the
9 construction of several large residential hotels
10 in Manhattan. Of these, the Barbizon, which was
11 equipped with special studio, rehearsal and
12 concert spaces to attract young women pursuing
13 careers in the arts became the most renowned. Its
14 residents included many women who later became
15 prominent actresses, writers, designers and
16 professional women, including authors Sylvia
17 Plath, who wrote about her residence at the
18 Barbizon Hotel in the Bell Jar. The Barbizon also
19 promoted women's organizations and arts
20 organizations, providing meeting space to groups
21 such as the National Junior League, Arts Council
22 of New York and women's college clubs. Designed
23 by the prominent hotel specialists, Murgatroyd and
24 Ogden, the 23-story Barbizon Hotel is an excellent
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1
2 representative of the 1920s apartment hotel
3 building and is notable for the high quality of
4 its design. The Barbizon, which underwent
5 alterations in the 1980s and '90s was recently
6 converted into condominiums. It still retains its
7 significant architectural features and historic
8 associations. The Commission urges you to affirm
9 this designation.

10 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
11 much. As you heard, Council Member Garodnick
12 testified in favor of this at the LBC hearing in
13 support of designation. Any questions on this
14 item from members of the Committee? No? Seeing
15 none, thank you. There's no members of the public
16 signed up to testify. If anyone is here to
17 testify on this item, please signify so. Seeing
18 none, we will close the public hearing on this
19 item as well and proceed to a vote on the two
20 items that we're voting on today's calendar, Land
21 Use 636 and 649 and ask our counsel, Christian
22 Hilton, to call the roll. The Chair recommends a
23 vote of aye on both.

24 COUNSEL: Chair Lander?

25 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Aye.

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COUNSEL: Council Member Sanders?

COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Aye.

COUNSEL: Council Member Mendez?

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Aye.

COUNSEL: Council Member Halloran?

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Aye.

COUNSEL: By a vote of four in the affirmative, none in the negative and no abstentions, L.U. 636 and L.U. 649 are approved and referred to the full Land Use Committee.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very much. As noted earlier, we will meet at 9:30 tomorrow on the Dominick Street buildings, so please attend that, and then the full Land Use Committee will meet at 10:00 on the items that were on today's calendar as well as those four. We will hold the vote open for 15 minutes. Jumaane just...

[break in audio]

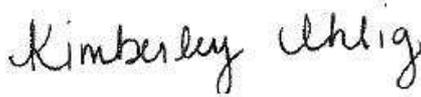
CHAIRPERSON LANDER: - - we are recessing this Committee until 9:30 tomorrow, and with that, this Committee stands in recess.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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.

Signature

Handwritten signature of Kimberley Uhlig in cursive script, written over a horizontal line.Date 8/5/12