

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

-----X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND
MARITIME USES

-----X

January 29, 2013
Start: 12:16 p.m.
Recess: 1:48 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)

Jenny Fernandez
Director of Intergovernmental and Community Relations
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Enrique Lopez
New York State Senator Brad Hoylman

Andrea Goldman
Landmarks Conservancy

Simeon Bankoff
Historic Districts Council

Anna Cisowski
Representative of Father Tadeusz Lizinczyk
Saint Stanislaus Church

Krystyna Piorkowska
Property Owner

Jean Standish
Member
Lower East Side Preservation Initiative

Marie Byrne
Concerned Citizen

Carolyn Ratcliffe
Vice President
Lower East Side Preservation Initiative

Amanda Davis
Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation

Richard Moses
President of the Lower East Side Preservation
Initiative

Clayton Smith
Concerned Citizen

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

Marcia Ikonomopoulos
Museum Director
Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum

Philip Van Aver
Board Member
Lower East Side Preservation Initiative

Linda Eskenas
Vice President
Four Borough Neighborhood Preservation Alliance

Sara Romanoski
Managing Director
East Village Community Coalition

Mitchell Grubler
Member
The Bowery Alliance of Neighbors

Michelle Campo
Representative of Catherine Feldman

Yolanda Fernandez
Concerned Citizen

Patricia Melvin
Concerned Citizen

Tom Birchard
Owner
Veselka Restaurant

Robert Watlington
Concerned Citizen

Stella Dong
Concerned Citizen

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Good morning.

I am New York City Council Member Brad Lander. I am pleased to call this meeting of the City Council's Land Use Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses to order. Pleased to be joined today by Maria del Carmen Arroyo from the Bronx, Dan Halloran from Queens and Rosie Mendez from the East Village and Lower East Side in Manhattan—today especially. And when Council Member Annabel Palma comes, we will recognize her again. She was here. I apologize for my tardiness. I thought that we had arranged for enough people to have quorum so that my absence wouldn't keep all of you waiting, but anyway, I apologize that you have all been here, and I'm grateful for your patience. The Mayor was also briefing the Council on the budget. So let's begin. We just have the one matter. - - . One big matter. Alright. So we are laying over Land Use No. 759, the Seaview Hospital Rehabilitation Center and Home in Staten Island, and today is the public hearing on just one item. Land Use No. 752, the East Village and Lower East Side Historic District. I believe by text, it may be the

1
2 longest designation that I have seen in my time as
3 appears in the Land Use action as is fitting for
4 the East Village. I am pleased to call Jenny
5 Fernandez from Landmarks Preservation Commission
6 forward along with Mary Beth Betts form LPC as
7 well to present the designation to us.

8 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Chair
9 Lander, members of the Subcommittee and Council
10 Member Mendez. Mary Beth, she is here to answer
11 any questions in case there is any follow up. My
12 name is Jenny Fernandez, director of
13 intergovernmental and community relations for the
14 Landmarks Preservation Commission. I am here
15 today to testify on the Commission's designation
16 of the East Village and Lower East Side Historic
17 District in Manhattan. On June 26th, 2012, the
18 Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public
19 hearing on the proposed designation of the East
20 Village/Lower East Side Historic District. 37
21 people spoke in support of designation, including
22 representatives of City Council Member Rosie
23 Mendez, Manhattan Borough President Scott
24 Stringer, Manhattan Community Board 3, State
25 Senator Thomas Duane, State Senator Daniel

1
2 Squadron, State Assembly Member, Brian Cavanaugh,
3 and State Assembly Member Deborah Glick. Several
4 residents and property owners also spoke in
5 support of designation as did representatives of
6 the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors, City Lore,
7 Cooper's Square Community Development Committee
8 and Businessmen Association, East Village
9 Community Coalition, the Greenwich Village Society
10 for Historic Preservation, the Historic Districts
11 Council, the Lower East Side Preservation
12 Initiative, Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian
13 Society of America, the New York Landmarks
14 Conservancy, the Society for the Architecture of
15 the City. 16 people spoke in opposition to
16 designation or in opposition to including their
17 property within the historic district, including
18 several property owners as well as representatives
19 of the Cathedral of the Holy Virgin Protection
20 four representatives, Catholic Worker Movement,
21 Real Estate Board of New York, Saint Stanislaus
22 Bishop and Martyr Roman Catholic Church two
23 representatives and Saint Mary's American Orthodox
24 Greek Catholic Church. Two speakers took no
25 position on designation. In addition, the

1 Commission has received hundreds of letters,
2 petitions and e-mails regarding this designation
3 both in support and in opposition to designation.
4 On October 9th, 2012, the Commission voted to
5 designate the East Village/Lower East Side
6 Historic District. The East Village/Lower East
7 Side Historic District consists of approximately
8 325 buildings located along 2nd Avenue and adjacent
9 side streets between East 2nd and East 7th Streets.
10 Development in this area began in earnest during
11 the 1830s when unprecedented growth pushed the
12 limits of the city northward and for at least a
13 brief period made the blocks comprising the
14 historic district one of New York's most
15 prestigious residential neighborhoods. Scores of
16 elegant single family row houses, most designed in
17 the Greek revival style, were erected in the area.
18 Second Avenue in particular become a favored
19 location for fashionable residential construction.
20 By the 1850s larger numbers of immigrants began to
21 settle in the area as wealthier residents moved
22 further uptown. Many of the existing row houses
23 were converted for multiple family dwellings and
24 boarding houses and eventually new - - tenements
25

1
2 began to replace the older building stock. These
3 buildings known as pre-law tenements because they
4 pre-dated the tenement housing act of 1879 were
5 designed in a simplified version of the Italianate
6 style that had become the dominant mode of
7 architecture in New York City. Later structures
8 from the early 1870s show the growing influence of
9 the neo-Grec style in the neighborhood. The
10 majority of immigrants who settled in the historic
11 district during the mid-19th century were of German
12 heritage. Amongst the first institutions erected
13 to serve this community was the evangelical
14 Lutheran church of Saint Mark, which was completed
15 in 1848. As immigration increased during the
16 1840s and 1850s, the eastern ward of Manhattan
17 developed into a cohesive large scale ethnic
18 community known by the names such as
19 Kleindeutschland or little Germany. By the 1890s
20 many of the areas German residents and
21 institutions began to move to other neighborhoods
22 in New York City. At the same time new immigrant
23 groups were starting to settle in the vicinity of
24 the historic district and the area evolved into a
25 polyglot enclave representing a complex array of

1 national, regional, ethnic, linguistic and
2 religious identities as the term Kleindeutschland
3 ceased to accurately describe the neighborhood,
4 people began to refer to it as the Lowest East
5 Side, which was in regular use by the mid-1890s.
6 The cosmopolitan condition of the neighborhood can
7 be seen in the range of institutions established
8 within the historic district during the late 19th
9 and early 20th centuries. Yiddish speaking Jews
10 from Eastern Europe were the largest identifiable
11 group of recent arrivals. Perhaps the most
12 conspicuous monument to their community within the
13 historic district is the stately synagogue built
14 for congregation - - on East 6th Street in 1910. A
15 vibrant and well-established Polish Roman Catholic
16 community centered on Saint Stanislaus Bishop and
17 Martyr Roman Catholic church, which build a new
18 sanctuary on 107 70th Street in 1899-1901.
19 Protestant Hungarians established their own house
20 of worship down the block where the first
21 Hungarian reform church occupied a converted row
22 house just after the turn of the century.
23 Institutions founded by native born New Yorkers to
24 serve the immigrant community included the New
25

1
2 York City Mission and - - societies - - memorial
3 church on East 2nd Street, the Middle Collegiate
4 Church on 2nd Avenue and the Society of the Music
5 School settlement on East 3rd Street. In early
6 1910, 2nd Avenue became the most important
7 entertainment district for the city's Jewish
8 immigrant community, leading many to call the area
9 the Yiddish Rialto. Vestiges of that area can be
10 seen in the facades of the public theater one of
11 the larger venues built for Yiddish stage
12 productions and the Lowe's Commodore, the grandest
13 movie place ever built on the Lower East Side.
14 The intense building activity of the early 20th
15 century was brought to a halt in the 1930s by the
16 Great Depression and most of the structures within
17 the historic district have changed little from
18 that period. The demographics of the neighborhood
19 however have undergone several dramatic
20 transformations in subsequent decades. Latin
21 American immigrants especially those from Puerto
22 Rico established a large community in the East
23 Village during the mid-20th Century during the same
24 period the area was discovered by artists and
25 bohemians moving eastward from Greenwich Village,

1 leaving realtors to call the neighborhood the
2 Village East and eventually the East Village. The
3 neighborhood has a rich history of social activism
4 tied to its historic building stock. The streets
5 of the historic district have survived urban
6 renewal plans in the 1950s and '60s as well as the
7 economic crisis of the '70s to become the center
8 of the 1980's downtown art and music scene. The
9 East Village/Lower East Side remains one of New
10 York City's and the country's most storied
11 neighborhoods. It is synonymous with the American
12 immigrant experience and has served as a
13 nationally recognized cultural center for more
14 than a century and a half. The blocks within the
15 East Village/Lower East Side Historic District
16 have traditionally contained the area's most
17 substantial structures and its finest architecture
18 and as well as many of its most important
19 institutions. It contains an incredibly dense
20 layering of historic and cultural significance
21 from its early history as a fashionable
22 residential neighborhood to subsequent identities
23 as a tenement districts of Kleindeutschland and
24 Lower East Side through its heyday as the
25

1
2 entertainment center of the Yiddish Rialto and
3 during its more recent evolution into the East
4 Village of bohemians and punks, off Broadway
5 theaters and community activist groups and the
6 buildings within the historic district tell the
7 complete story of this vibrant neighborhood. The
8 Commission urges you to affirm this designation—
9 and I'm sorry I was so long, but it's such a rich
10 and important collection of information that we
11 needed to include it all in this testimony.

12 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Ms. Fernandez,
13 you were an eloquent speaker to the landmark-
14 worthiness of the East Village and the Lower East
15 Side, but there is no more eloquent speaker on the
16 landmark-worthiness of the East Village and the
17 Lower East Side than Council Member Rosie Mendez,
18 so let me ask her to either make a statement or
19 ask some questions.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you.
21 I usually speak off the top of my head, but this
22 to me is very important, so I did write something
23 down. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for granting me this
24 opportunity. It is a source of personal and
25 community pride that Council District 2 includes

1
2 the entirety of the East Village/Lower East Side
3 Historic District, a substantial collection of 325
4 buildings extending over a 15 block radius that
5 tell a remarkable story reaching back over two
6 centuries. This hearing today is the result of
7 over six years of research, advocacy,
8 consultation, meetings, consideration and
9 ultimately action to preserve the singular history
10 and character of an area that has welcomed so many
11 New Yorkers from every walk of life to a place
12 that we all call home. What makes the East
13 Village/Lower East Side Historic District so
14 significant is the rich tapestry story that the
15 buildings tell, - - and immigrant centric, labor
16 and social activism perspective. From the
17 construction of row houses 180 years ago that were
18 subsequently converted into tenements to the rise
19 of community sustaining religious and convivial
20 enclaves to the evolving of the Lower East Side,
21 the development of vibrant and transcending
22 cultural venues to the convening of the Cooper
23 Square Committee—today I wear their t-shirt—who
24 fought Robert Moses and the proposed East Side
25 Highway Expressway and saved many of the buildings

1
2 in the 1950s that we seek to preserve in
3 perpetuity today. We see the distinctive city
4 within a city, a fact that characterizes and
5 epitomizes the social and political fabric of the
6 Lower East Side. The architecture, institutions
7 and cultural realms that remain and will be
8 preserved under this plan reflect the shared
9 histories, substantial contributions and religious
10 faiths of successive waves of German, Irish,
11 Jewish, Italian, Polish, Ukrainian, Chinese and
12 Latino residents. Five of those languages are on
13 this t-shirt today. Additionally, this action is
14 especially ripe and appropriate as a complement to
15 the January 2012 designation of the East 10th
16 Street Historic District—the first East Village
17 historic district established since the 1969
18 designation of the Saint Mark's Historic District.
19 All three districts have fundamental preservation
20 components in common and will work in alliance to
21 preserve the proud legacy of generations of
22 immigrant families and the neighborhood enclaves
23 that built and nourished while promoting
24 reasonable in character additions and new
25 development for generations to come. I want to

1
2 thank all the groups, institutions, building
3 owners and advocates who have been part of this
4 important six year journey, those in favor and
5 those not, including the Landmarks Preservation
6 Commission. Through various forms and meetings we
7 worked together to ensure that all voices and
8 perspectives were heard. We will continue to do
9 so in the future. I am confident that we have a
10 finished product in front of us today that is the
11 result of compromise and a shared commitment to
12 our communities. As such I am pleased to be here
13 to strongly support the East Village/Lower East
14 Side Historic District in full and I ask my
15 colleagues to join me in moving for swift approval
16 today. Thank you.

17 [applause]

18 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
19 much. I stand by what I said before—the leading
20 eloquent voice, but we will hear some other voices
21 in support of this designation as well, and we
22 look forward to that. We have been joined as well
23 by Council Member Palma, who I mentioned before
24 and want to thank her again her presence for
25 having been here earlier and Council Member

1
2 Williams. Council Member Halloran has questions,
3 and I don't know if any of my other colleagues do.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Thank
5 you, Mr. Chair. I'm in receipt of several letters
6 in opposition, and I just want to ask the
7 Commission about some of the allegations that are
8 made in the letters. One of them is from Saint
9 Stanislaus Church, which indicates that it took
10 them to get a foil request to your office before
11 you turned over documents to them regarding the
12 nature of this redistricting, and since they are a
13 target of the redistricting, I would wonder why
14 you wouldn't just share that without requiring
15 them to do a foil since their properties would be
16 subject to this proceeding. I have no opposition
17 to the theory and of course, I will defer to the
18 Council Member whose district it's in as to
19 supporting landmarking it; however, from an open
20 government point of view, why would a church that
21 is subject to being designated need to foils
22 something form a city agency that wants to
23 designate them a landmark?

24 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Council Member,
25 I'm not exactly sure what documentation was

1 requested through a foil request from the agency.
2
3 It might have been that some information that was
4 being prepared for the designation that is not
5 normally released to the public may have been
6 requested.

7 [background conversation]

8 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Excuse me. We
9 need to—if you want to sign up to testify, you
10 will have your opportunity, but we don't shout out
11 during the hearings.

12 JENNY FERNANDEZ: So I can't speak
13 directly to what the foil request contained, but
14 we do provide as much information as possible
15 about the designation and the Commission does
16 prepare an individual building description with
17 all of the factual information about each of the
18 buildings contained in the proposed district for
19 the owner's review prior to a designation vote, so
20 most of the information should be included on
21 there.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: According
23 to Saint Stanislaus--and I'll read the appropriate
24 section so that maybe it will refresh your
25 recollection—the LPC over a period of two months

1 refused to give us access to view documents they
2 used in the preparation of their historical
3 preservation study. At first they denied our foil
4 request application to view these materials.
5

6 Ultimately a few pages of materials were then
7 presented to us, none of which contained anything
8 pertinent to the landmarking of the premises,
9 meaning their church. They go on to say that
10 according to the records they were given, there
11 was no study done of Saint Stanislaus' parish, no
12 study of East 7th Street between 1st Avenue and
13 Avenue A, nor any building on that street, yet
14 this is to be included in the landmarked area. A,
15 is that true? Is that factual? B, are those
16 areas included and were they not studied by the
17 commission? And C, is it your testimony as you
18 sit here today having come before this body to
19 give testimony regarding its landmarking and
20 knowing that there were a significant number of
21 oppositions to it, that you are not aware of your
22 office ever denying a foil request to the parish
23 at any point to the best of your knowledge—you're
24 sitting here in front of this body to testify in
25 front of this body about the landmarking of this

1
2 particular location?

3 JENNY FERNANDEZ: As I said
4 earlier, our staff works every closely with
5 building owners where we offer meetings and
6 consultation and answer any questions and provide
7 any information a building owner may need prior to
8 designation and throughout the designation
9 process. I personally don't know about a denied
10 foil request. Like I said, we do provide any
11 information that a building owner wants or feels
12 they need in order to learn more about what the
13 designation process entailed. On the flipside of
14 that, our research department does conduct very
15 thorough research on each of the individual
16 landmarks that are within a historic district and
17 all the buildings that are included, so I am again
18 not clear exactly what information was requested
19 that they were not able to receive, especially
20 when the research revolves around the history of
21 the structure itself, just information that is
22 even publically available through regular research
23 Building Department information, et cetera, and
24 that information we would not have denied an owner
25 receiving that, so I am still not clear exactly

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

what information was requested - - .

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Would you be able to provide this body a copy of any foil request that was made to you, the date in which you responded to it, and the results of those responses so that I can verify what you are telling me to be accurate?

JENNY FERNANDEZ: I can check with our counsel-

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: [interposing] If you have a foil that is - - governments operation, and this is an oversight body of your agency, so it would be subject to our review-is that not correct?

JENNY FERNANDEZ: If you say so, Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: You are the designated representative of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, right?

JENNY FERNANDEZ: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Okay, and you are here testifying in front of this oversight body for the Landmarks Committee. Is that correct?

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

JENNY FERNANDEZ: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Okay, and I am asking you questions that pertain to a landmarking that you are presenting to this body, and I ask very specific questions. Are you telling me you are not capable of giving me that information?

JENNY FERNANDEZ: That is not what I am telling you.

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Okay.

JENNY FERNANDEZ: I said that I will check with our counsel to see what foil requests we may have received in connection with this designation and once I have received that information I am happy to share that with you.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Council Member, let me just offer that we will ask that the Committee write a letter to the LPC so that this request for—

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN:
[interposing] Is specifically followed up—

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: --comes from the Committee, and not just from you, and that we will look for a response to you, but also to—

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN:

[interposing] I appreciate that, Mr. Chairman.
Now in addition in your testimony you indicated
very vaguely two speakers took no position on
designation. In addition, the Commission has
received hundreds of letters, petitions and e-
mails regarding this designation both in support
and in opposition. Do you know how many in
support and how many in opposition the Commission
received?

JENNY FERNANDEZ: I don't have the
number in front of me.

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Do you
think that might have been something that you
should have brought to a hearing in which this
body was going to evaluate the landmarking to see
what the public's response had been to your agency
over the landmarking of this particular area?
Again, with all deference to the Council Member
who I will of course be supporting in her
endeavor, but just for the purposes of the open
and transparent government that we are supposed to
have, you think maybe that would be information
that would pertinent to bring before this body

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

when you testified?

JENNY FERNANDEZ: I am happy to provide that information to you—

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN:

[interposing] Mr. Chair, I'd ask that the Committee include that request in its letter to the Commission and I think this is not the first time that our Commission has repeatedly asked the LPC to bring that type of pertinent information to us when they are testifying. I think it's interesting they are able to articulate all of the specific other numbers of people who testified for and opposition at the hearing and indicate that they received hundreds of letters, petitions and e-mails, but not be able to tell us what the breakdown of those—what if there are 800 for and 20 against or the opposite way? I think that would have bearing on what we are doing here as to what the community felt 'cause obviously they all can't be here on a Tuesday at noon when they have work and school and other things to be at in their lives. It would be nice to know what the community's input had been prior to coming to this body for that information. Finally, I have one

1
2 more question, the REBNY, which of course I
3 understand has its own interests at heart in this,
4 has indicated that there are dozens of buildings,
5 which do not fit the architectural requirements
6 because of alterations that have been made in this
7 area. Can you estimate for this body the
8 percentage of buildings that are not conforming to
9 what you would consider to be the requirements for
10 the historic district as a percentage or in a raw
11 number so that we can evaluate the overall context
12 of this application request?

13 JENNY FERNANDEZ: I can't express
14 it in percentage at this time, but I will say as
15 is the practice and we have expressed in previous
16 hearings when we are reviewing—when your body is
17 reviewing designations, our historic district, our
18 boundaries are very carefully drawn out and it is
19 obviously inevitable that within the historic
20 boundaries there are going to be certain number of
21 buildings that may not necessarily be considered
22 contributing, but that is because they are one
23 building within a long streetscape of contributing
24 buildings and that are part of the designation and
25 so invariably there are going to be a handful of

1
2 those in any district, but I don't have a specific
3 percentage to share with you at this time.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Mr.
5 Chairman, I would just suggest that when we are
6 doing something as broad stroke as districting-
7 creating a historic district, it would be useful
8 for this body to know the percentage of deviation
9 that is going on in a district because it at least
10 gives us a roadmap to look at places, and they
11 should be designated on a map submitted to us by
12 the LPC so we could look at them, so we could
13 potentially tailor as is our right, back anything
14 that may not be conforming, but could be cut out.
15 Obviously we just have a blanket picture here, and
16 I will at this point yield back to you, but again,
17 I think this goes back to the fundamental issues
18 we have been fighting with over the last three
19 years of information and we are never getting a
20 sufficient amount of it at these hearings, and we
21 are always told we can get back to you, and I
22 don't ever really see that happening.

23 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: So let me say
24 a couple of things, and then I know Council Member
25 Mendez would like to respond, and then Council

1
2 Member Arroyo has a question. First, I do want to
3 let my colleagues know we have—usually we don't
4 have too many people signed up to testify—we have
5 23 people signed up to testify today, which not to
6 say we shouldn't spend the time that we need to
7 ask questions, but we do want to make sure members
8 of the public have their say. So I appreciate
9 your points, and I will just say on the one hand I
10 am a strong supporter of this application of the
11 Council Member of the East Village and Lower East
12 Side, but I share your concerns and your growing
13 concerns that the body has sought to get
14 responsive information to evaluate what the LPC
15 brings to us and has frequently not been able to
16 get a lot of the information that we have
17 requested about what decisions are made and why,
18 but certainly getting the public record of who
19 supported and who didn't support that getting the
20 foil are all things that should be provided to us,
21 and I continue to be disappointed that they are
22 not—

23 JENNY FERNANDEZ: [interposing] We
24 have not received a request—

25 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: --I don't want

1
2 to litigate this today. We can either do it in
3 the budget hearing or we can have another
4 oversight hearing. I'd like to confine the
5 discussion today to the Lower East Side and the
6 East Village, but I am just putting a placeholder
7 in because I share growing concerns reflected by
8 Council Member Halloran, and I think we need to
9 attend to them, but today is about the East
10 Village and the Lower East Side, and I hope we can
11 focus there because I believe it's clear the
12 community is strongly-

13 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN:

14 [interposing] And I apologize to Council Member
15 Mendez. I didn't mean for her application to be
16 the victim of my angst and she should know that
17 she has my full support.

18 JENNY FERNANDEZ: And - - .

19 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: I'm going to
20 call on Council Member Mendez now. Thank you. I
21 am going to call Council Member Mendez.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you,
23 Mr. Chair and just for my colleagues and Council
24 Member Halloran, I know that you always ask the
25 questions that you need to ask - - respective if

1
2 you are for and against, you always just want to
3 get your answers, so I certainly respect that. I
4 just want to add because the Commission didn't say
5 this—Ms. Fernandez speaking on behalf of the
6 Commission—in terms of the process for this, and
7 what I feel was the due diligence of the
8 Commission, there was many hearings, many
9 community meetings, attended two community board
10 meetings as well, walk-throughs with me to address
11 my concerns, meetings that I had with people who
12 were for and against and groups that were for and
13 against and then meetings that I asked the
14 Commission to have with those individuals that I
15 know happened. There were groups that wanted
16 things added to the district and some small things
17 were, and a lot of what they wanted added was not,
18 and there was groups and individuals that wanted
19 buildings and areas subtracted from the district.
20 Small things were and a lot of things were not.
21 So I think that went to the due diligence, and for
22 all of those individuals, you know, I tried to
23 also have follow up particularly with the
24 religious institutions that were very vociferous
25 raising some real legitimate concerns, which I am

1
2 trying to look at broader policy of how we deal
3 with some of the issues that particularly the less
4 affluent congregations are dealing with, but I
5 believe that the Commission has gone to every
6 length to meet with everyone and I once got a
7 meeting called at my office from a building owner
8 saying that they were in the district and they had
9 been in the proposed district for a while, that
10 they were against it, and I asked, have you spoken
11 to someone from the Commission? And they said
12 that they did not, and I said please go meet with
13 them, call them, and if you still have any
14 concerns and do not get a response from them for
15 meeting please call me back, and in fact he called
16 me back and said he had a very good meeting, and
17 they were looking into his concerns. So I just
18 wanted to say that on the record, Mr. Chair.

19 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: That is great.
20 Thank you, and I think it is wonderful that in
21 this case they spent a lot of time both with you
22 and your constituents. I think there are a set of
23 questions not for today about how it is decided
24 where and with whom and when that is - - and what
25 kind of relationship is had with council members

1
2 on the Committee, but I am really glad to hear
3 that. Council Member Arroyo?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Thank you,
5 Mr. Chair. I don't want to sound like I'm
6 following suit with Council Member Halloran, but
7 it's going to sound like I am. In this Committee
8 we have always heard property owners make a case
9 for their properties to be carved out of a
10 district. We have always been told that is not
11 something the Commission does and you have given
12 us reason, but I'm looking at a sketch that
13 clearly carves out a section, so do we carve out
14 or don't we? And this goes to the larger question
15 of how the Commission reaches conclusion on what
16 is included, what is not and how in some cases it
17 makes a case for not carving properties out, but
18 presents a case here where there is something
19 obviously carved out of the district. So it
20 really—the frustration grows. Every time we get
21 an application from the Commission where we are
22 not presented with enough information and the
23 frustration that we experience when we are
24 presented with these documents at a hearing where
25 we are asked to make a decision. In this case we

1
2 are going to hear from the public and hopefully it
3 will not lead us to the same place that we were at
4 when we considered the cemetery in Brooklyn—was
5 it—Queens, where it delays the process another
6 couple of weeks because we are trying to figure
7 out what is the real deal, so this issue of
8 carving out properties is one that I will now
9 force the question, how do you come to that
10 conclusion and why is in this application a carve
11 out and in others when they have been requested
12 you have denied them?

13 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Okay. If a
14 property is located in a historic district, and
15 it's not on the boundaries of the historic
16 district, we cannot carve it out. We can't create
17 a hole in the historic district just to take out a
18 property, and specifically if the owner is opposed
19 just because they are against designation, that is
20 one reason to request that, but certainly if it's
21 a meritorious building—

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: So I don't
23 want to hold up this hearing, but what I am
24 looking at is clearly a carve out, so—and you are
25 going to have to explain to me—

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ:

[interposing] Can I explain this?

COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: No because this is not about this application. This is about the practices of the Commission coming here, continually telling us one thing and then present an application where in my opinion has a carve out. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: So let me— thank you, and again, I do just in the interest of time I really hear the general issues being raised, and really want to figure out how we can do better to address them. We obviously have one hearing in which some of them got raised, but we may need to have another oversight hearing on some of these matters, but I also do want to try to keep us focused for the duration today on this application, so let me recognize Council Member Mendez, Council Member Williams and then ask that we try to - -

[crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: So I'll just make this quick because I think when we do this sometimes you have to look at this district

1
2 by district. This is a Catholic church and a
3 school, which I asked to be added into the
4 district, and when we - - they said it was
5 actually a more modern building; it had no
6 architectural style that contributed to the
7 district, and it isn't in character with the other
8 buildings there, so I asked for it to be added.
9 They kept it out, and those buildings there of
10 which the school building was leased and they put
11 some hot pink colored stuff for this new
12 international school that's there, so it really
13 doesn't fit in with all the other things that are
14 surrounding it, so I don't know if that refreshes
15 your recollection—I can't remember—nativity
16 something is the name of the church.

17 JENNY FERNANDEZ: In a case like
18 this, this may look like a - - but it's at the
19 boundaries of the historic district, and we were
20 able to cut it out, and if it's not a contributing
21 building—

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ:
23 [interposing] We are going to debate that, and I
24 don't want to do that here today.

25 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: So let me ask

1
2 that we then end this conversation for now, and we
3 will have another conversation about what
4 constitutes a carve out at a time, and again, if
5 we need to have another oversight hearing or some
6 time that is outside of a specific designation
7 then we will schedule that as soon as we can.

8 Council Member Williams on this rezoning? - - .

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Sorry.

10 I'll be brief, but I want to echo everything that
11 my colleague said previously, but I do want to ask
12 one question. I apologize too. I have concerns
13 that we don't kind of respect people that don't
14 want to be landmarked, but you keep saying if it's
15 not part of the boundaries—who sets the boundaries
16 and is it by law when you say—if it's part of the
17 boundaries, you can't carve it out. Is that
18 illegal?

19 JENNY FERNANDEZ: For example, if a
20 building here—let's say in this corner—wants to be
21 taken out, we can't take it out because the entire
22 area surrounding this is part of the proposed
23 district within the boundaries.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Is that
25 illegal, proposed boundaries?

1
2 JENNY FERNANDEZ: I'm not sure what
3 the question—

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS:
5 [interposing] What is stopping you from taking
6 out—you say we can't take it out—like who stops—

7 JENNY FERNANDEZ: [interposing]
8 It's a contiguous—and we wouldn't take it out just
9 because the owner is opposed. If it is a
10 contributing building within a historic district,
11 we would include it of course within the historic
12 district, and a point that I wanted to clarify
13 earlier based on the REBNY question is that if a
14 building is non-contributing, if it's a no style
15 building, it is called out as such in our
16 designation report, and such a building can
17 actually be torn down. They can actually apply to
18 the Commission to tear that building down and
19 build a new structure, and it would be reviewed—
20 basically a design review at the Commission just
21 for its context within the historic district, but
22 someone can actually tear down their building if
23 it's of a no style building that doesn't really
24 conform to the rest of the district and build
25 something newer.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay.

Thank you. Also, there is a question I have been asking. I know I have asked it several times—was to find out how many owners have applied for assistance versus how many have actually gotten assistance, and every time I bring it up, they say you will come back, and I don't know if the Chair has gotten any response to that. I don't know if you have any response to that. It's at least the fifth time I have asked it, I'm sure.

JENNY FERNANDEZ: We did receive a written request from the Land Use, the Council's Committee, and we did respond in writing to that request.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, so did we get that? Thank you very much. I am hoping also—some of the other things that were brought up, we do need oversight. If I don't start getting some of the answers to these, I am going to have to start withholding my vote for some of these because it's quite frustrating. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you, Council Member Williams. Alright. So let me

1
2 pause before we move—thank you, Ms. Fernandez. We
3 are going to move to testimony now, and I do want
4 to kind of note there is many more people signed
5 up to testify in favor than opposed, though there
6 are three signed up opposed. We will go in panels
7 of three. I guess what I would say is that
8 council members on this panel love the Lower East
9 Side, and have enthusiasm I think for its history,
10 culture and people and I look forward to hearing
11 it, and also feel enthusiastic about Jenny
12 Fernandez I think as you can hear there is
13 substantial concern about the relationship between
14 the LPC at this moment and the information it
15 gives and the process and the way it shows respect
16 for the democratic process and the City Council
17 Subcommittee that is supposed to have oversight of
18 it, but we will so that—I am not trying to dismiss
19 that; it's just we need to look at the Lower East
20 Side here today, so let me leave that there and
21 say that we need to come back to it and call up
22 our first panel of supporters, and we will just go
23 in panels of three. I'm going to ask people if
24 you can to keep your testimony to two minutes
25 because we have a lot of people signed up, and I

1
2 think what you'll mostly be doing is—let's just
3 leave it at three. It's really fine—expressing
4 your enthusiasm and we want to hear it. So let me
5 ask first to come up we have a representative of
6 New York State Senator Brad Hoylman, Enrique
7 Lopez, Andrea Goldman from the Landmarks
8 Conservancy and Simeon Bankoff as the first panel.
9 The next panel, the one panel in opposition, just
10 so you know and are ready will be - - from REBNY,
11 Anna Cisowski from Saint Stanislaus Church and
12 Krystyna Piorkowska.

13 ENRIQUE LOPEZ: Hello. My name is
14 Enrique Lopez, and I'll be reading testimony on
15 behalf of New York State Senator Brad Hoylman.

16 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Let me just
17 say welcome. I think this is the first testimony
18 we are receiving from New York State Senator Brad
19 Hoylman, and we are enthusiastic to do so, so
20 welcome.

21 ENRIQUE LOPEZ: Thank you, Mr.
22 Chairman. My name is Brad Hoylman, and I
23 represent New York States 27th Senate District in
24 which almost all of the proposed East
25 Village/Lower East Side Historic District is

1 located. Thank you, Chair Lander and members of
2 the New York City Council Subcommittee on
3 Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses for
4 this opportunity to present testimony. I am a
5 strong supporter of the historic district
6 designation. As you know the defined area
7 contains approximately 330 properties, many of
8 which are tenements, row houses or institutional
9 buildings from the 19th Century and reflect the
10 immigrant experience during this unique era in New
11 York history. Included within its boundaries are
12 such architectural treasures as 62 East 4th Street
13 with its Italianate shapes and lines and its
14 distinctive enclosed cylindrical fire escape, the
15 neoclassical congregation Maastricht Synagogue and
16 Lower East Side and East Villages last operating
17 tenement synagogue and the group of five three-
18 story brick row houses at 30 to 38 East 3rd Street,
19 which comprised a quintessential mid-19th century
20 streetscape, and these are just a small sampling
21 of the historically and culturally significant
22 buildings within the proposed district. I wish to
23 express my appreciation to New York City Landmarks
24 Preservation Commission for initiating this
25

1
2 proposed historic district and for approving it
3 last year. I also commend New York City Council
4 Member Rosie Mendez for her tremendous advocacy
5 with other elected officials, Manhattan Community
6 Board 3, the Lower East Side Preservation
7 Initiative, Greenwich Village Society for
8 Historical Preservation and East Village Community
9 Coalition for the creation of this district and
10 the incorporation of additional buildings and
11 areas of architectural, cultural and historical
12 significance that weren't in LPC's original
13 proposal. As LPC noted in summary of its
14 designation report for this proposed district, the
15 East Village/Lower East Side is synonymous with
16 the American immigrant experience and has served
17 as a nationally recognized cultural center for
18 more than a century and a half. The buildings
19 within the East Village/Lower East Side Historic
20 District have traditionally contained the area's
21 most substantial structures and its finest
22 architecture as well as many of its most important
23 institutions. Given the overwhelming recognition
24 of this area's architectural unity and historical
25 significance, I urge this Committee to recommend

1
2 this richly diverse designation. Thank you for
3 the consideration of my comments and for your
4 dedication to preserving New York City's heritage.

5 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Perfect.

6 Thank you.

7 ANDREA GOLDMAN: Good day, Chair
8 Lander and Council Members. I am Andrea Goldman,
9 speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks
10 Conservancy. The Conservancy strongly supports
11 designation of the East Village/Lower East Side
12 Historic District. These blocks are a rich
13 collection of row houses and tenements from the
14 19th and 20th centuries, which maintain much of
15 their historic fabric. Italianate and neo-Grec
16 brownstones, apartment buildings in the Romanesque
17 revival, Renaissance revival and Queen Anne styles
18 line the streets next to handsome religious
19 properties and cultural venues. While there have
20 been some alterations to these structures, they
21 have in large part the same scale, height and
22 volume as when built. The unique character of
23 these buildings animates the neighborhood that
24 retains longtime residents and has been a powerful
25 lure to generations of newcomers. In addition to

1 architectural merit, the East Village derives a
2 special sense of place from the vast sweep of
3 history that has taken place on its streets from
4 early days as a base for merchants to decades of
5 welcoming immigrant communities, to serving as
6 home for social movements and artistic communities
7 so prominent lately the East Village tells the
8 story of New York. The East Village district does
9 contain several historic religious properties some
10 of which have spoken against designation. In 2011
11 Conservancy staff attended a meeting convened by
12 Council Member Mendez to discuss their particular
13 concerns. We'd like to remind building owners and
14 the Council that throughout the 27 years that the
15 Conservancy's sacred sites program has been
16 offering assistance to historic religious
17 properties, we have worked with congregations to
18 consider fundraising and restoration projects,
19 capacity building, shared space usage,
20 redevelopment plans, - - rights, or even
21 occasionally the sale of a building to a new
22 congregation. In working with hundreds of
23 properties across the city and state, we have seen
24 these approaches work. We have provided direct
25

1
2 assistance, and we have seen that beyond our
3 funds, landmark designation can trigger grants
4 from the city and the state. In many cases this
5 designation has supported funding for buildings,
6 congregations and communities. There is no doubt
7 that the East Village will continue to grow and
8 evolve as it has for over 200 years. With
9 landmark designation, new generations of
10 residents, business owners, artists and immigrants
11 will be able to rediscover and use this
12 community's rich architectural heritage. We'd
13 like to thank the Council, the Commission and
14 especially Council Member Mendez for supporting
15 the district. Thank you.

16 SIMEON BANKOFF: Good afternoon.
17 Simeon Bankoff speaking on behalf of the Historic
18 Districts Council. HDC has long been advocate for
19 preserving the East Village and Lower East Side
20 and we are unsurprisingly in strong support of the
21 proposed historic district. Kleindeutscheland,
22 the Yiddish Rialto, Lower East Side, whatever you
23 call it, this neighborhood is the epitome of a
24 classic Manhattan neighborhood. The buildings
25 were and still are homes to new immigrants and

1
2 longtime residents, hubs of social justice,
3 equality and identity movements and centers of
4 culture and entertainment. Given the cycle of
5 constant change, which this neighborhood has
6 undergone for almost two centuries, it is
7 remarkable that anything recognizable from history
8 still exists and yet it does. Preservationists
9 talk a lot of about the layering of history, of
10 how buildings from different eras coexist next to
11 each other creating a complex cityscape, which is
12 heterogeneous but intimately connected. Although
13 there is a vast diversity of architectural styles
14 in the East Village, there is a unity among the
15 structures seen in their complementary scale,
16 materials and articulated details, which much like
17 the diversity of its residents lends a vibrancy
18 and a character that is unique to this area.

19 Although this area has qualities in common with
20 other of New York City's historic districts it is
21 the concentrated layers of history, both
22 architectural and cultural that make this
23 neighborhood so distinctive and so worthy of being
24 protected. Here more than most other historic
25 districts the charge of landmark oversight will be

1
2 to guide the ceaseless change of the neighborhood
3 in ways that do not erase or falsify its history.
4 It's with great joy that the HDC testifies in
5 favor of this historic district. This
6 neighborhood is one of our chosen six to celebrate
7 for 2013, and we look forward to developing
8 programing and working even more closely with the
9 community and its leaders in the coming year to
10 ensure that this district has as exciting and
11 vibrant a future as it does a past. Finally, on a
12 personal note I have counted and I believe I have
13 walked up and down 2nd Avenue, which is the spine
14 of this historic district 7,500 times over the
15 last 11 years, and there definitely is something
16 there.

17 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thanks very
18 much to the three of you. As I mentioned we have
19 our next panel, which is our one panel in
20 opposition. Lilia McGeed [phonetic], Anna
21 Cisowski, and Krystyna Piorkowska, and after that,
22 we will invite Jean Standish, Marie Byrne
23 [phonetic], and Carolyn Ratcliffe to come up.
24 Alright, so we have—so there must be. Well, go
25 ahead and sit down and tell us your name first and

1
2 then go ahead and give your testimony, and when we
3 get the copies we will enter that into the—I think
4 push the button; it will light up.

5 ANNA CISOWSKI: My name is Anna
6 Cisowski. I am representing Father Tadeusz
7 [phonetic], who is the pastor of Saint Stanislaus
8 Church in Manhattan. Good morning. As I said, I
9 am representing Father - - , and he is opposed to
10 the application before you that would establish a
11 historic district in a large area of the Lower
12 East Side. Following today's hearing, you will
13 vote on the landmark designation for a number of
14 blocks in our community, including one in which
15 our parish is represented—it's 141 years old.
16 This parish is the oldest parish in the city of
17 New York and continues to serve its constituent
18 members in some cases third and fourth generation
19 members. Regrettably, those are not the
20 intentions or understandings of the Landmark
21 Preservation Commission or the various non-profits
22 attempting to determine our fate. They neither
23 know nor participate in our masses or
24 celebrations, yet the Landmarks Preservation
25 Commission has not consulted with our parish

1
2 concerning our history in this community, which I
3 must advise you has been misrepresented, but in
4 their response they have refused to acknowledge
5 their error. This is a mark of disrespect to our
6 very community they claim to respect. In brief
7 among other errors, the LPC states that the Polish
8 community began its settling in this community in
9 the late 19th century, but by that time we had some
10 five Polish bookstores from Houston Street to East
11 7th Street area and the Polish community mustered
12 over 10,000 persons to march to City Hall and
13 return to Cooper Unit [phonetic] to hold a rally.
14 They also claim that we began to out migrate from
15 the community after World War II, which was a time
16 when many new immigrants, victims of both the
17 Soviet and Nazi aggressors of World War II began
18 to arrive in our area. You have already heard
19 about the refusal to give access to materials.
20 Most recently when we were sent what purported to
21 be a final description of the Saint Stanislaus
22 church property, it was full of errors, including
23 misidentifying the rectory as the house of
24 worship, et cetera. I am sure that you are aware
25 that for each and every house of worship, any

1
2 additional fees involved in the processing of
3 permits are an additional burden. You must bear
4 in mind that in the case of an aging building
5 where the repair maintenance costs are large, the
6 fees involved which are a percentage of the costs
7 of the project increase the financial burden on
8 the parish community, which must pay not only for
9 the architect and/or engineers, the materials and
10 the labor, but the Department of Building fees and
11 were you to approve this landmarking proposal, the
12 additional LPC fees. Were our parish in fact not
13 liable for any additional fees to the city of New
14 York would not obviate the fact that our
15 architects would have to complete additional, more
16 complex forms and that our contractors would have
17 to charge us additional fees due to LPC
18 requirements. I refer specifically although not
19 solely to the requirement that when the painting
20 the façade of a building, an owner must not only
21 select colors from the LPC palate, but then must
22 have their contractor paint a three by three foot
23 test patch for the inspection by the LPC. Such a
24 delay in work complicates the process and places
25 additional financial burdens on the property

1
2 owner, in this case the church. The history of
3 this community is important enough to present it
4 correctly and accurately and enough historical
5 documented research exists to do so. The
6 financial burden places on our house of worship
7 and others in being required to pay additional
8 fees is unwarranted and unconscionable. The costs
9 involved in having to provide rehabilitation work
10 such as window replacement at prices required by
11 the LPC would also create a huge fiscal burden on
12 our parish. I therefore urge that you reject the
13 application before you, Father Tadeusz Lizinczyk,
14 Pastor.

15 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you and
16 because you are the one panel in opposition I
17 grant a little leeway with the time, but Ms.
18 Piorkowska, I'll ask you to try to keep it to the
19 two minutes, and if you have things that are the
20 same, maybe you can omit these, but please go
21 ahead.

22 KRYSTYNA PIORKOWSKA: Good
23 afternoon. I am Krystyna Piorkowska, and I am
24 testifying as a property owner of over 30 years on
25 East 7th Street, and also a member of the parish of

1 Saint Stanislaus in opposition to this
2 landmarking. In their presentation today, the LPC
3 continued to document its lack of interest and/or
4 knowledge in the history and input of the Polish
5 community, which began settling in this area after
6 the 1838 and 1863 uprisings in Europe. Polish
7 émigrés in escaping from a Poland that had been
8 partitioned by Germany and Austria and Russia were
9 regrettably and continue to be identified as
10 Germans or Russians, so so much for
11 Kleindeutscheland. This lack of historical
12 knowledge documents the lack of analysis and
13 respect for our history as Father Lizinczyk's
14 testimony documents, our parish was founded in the
15 1870s, well before the end of the 19th century;
16 however, I also want to emphasize that in the case
17 of descriptive information about our properties,
18 my property consists of two buildings—one of which
19 is taller than the other. The shorter building
20 was described as being taller than the other.
21 There was discussion of the east façade and the
22 west façade, which do not exist because they are
23 below the surface of the budding buildings. A
24 fence in which I replaced something like 30
25

1
2 percent of the fence has now been described as
3 being a historical fence despite the fact that
4 elements of it are absolutely not even made to
5 look historical, but it's now going to be
6 landmarked, and it's just something that I do not—
7 I wish you would accept the statement that they do
8 not do their research accurately, and I describe
9 that in part there. The business harm that is
10 going to be done to property owners who have to
11 file additional forms, who have to pay their
12 architects additional fees, will necessarily end
13 up being passed on to the tenants, so for anybody
14 who has an illusion that this is going to protect
15 tenants or be good for this—this is not going to
16 work well, and I ask that you vote against this
17 and in support of my statement that the LPC
18 refused to respond to my request for information,
19 and that I then had to do a foil and was given
20 that material that was not complete, I have e-
21 mails documenting every step of the process, and
22 if this committee wishes, I will gladly submit
23 that to them.

24 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
25 much. Are there any questions for this panel?

1
2 Thank you very much for taking the time to come
3 down. We appreciate your testimony. We will now
4 hear from—

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ:

6 [interposing] Mr. Chair?

7 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Yes?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Just for
9 the record, if there are any inaccuracies about
10 the history of my community, I do want that
11 corrected because the Polish community is still a
12 vibrant part of my district, and I want the record
13 to reflect that accurately.

14 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Ms. Fernandez?

15 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Council Member
16 Mendez, we did receive and as we always do when we
17 do receive requests from the community or an
18 institution or even just a property owner
19 contesting any information in our designation
20 reports or in our draft designation reports, the
21 staff does take that seriously and goes back and
22 checks again any facts based on the research that
23 they have conducted. We will do further research
24 to either confirm or dispute whatever has been
25 brought up, but certainly any new information, and

1
2 I am confident because I knew about this when it
3 was brought up—this information was presented to
4 our research staff and they did look into the
5 questions and some of the statements that the
6 owners had asked about, and I don't know if
7 anything was actually changed, but some stuff was
8 actually changed and other things remained in the
9 report as we had reported it, so we do take these
10 seriously.

11 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you.

12 Alright. So I had called before a representative
13 of REBNY. They have presented written testimony,
14 but they are not here in person. Now we will hear
15 all of the panels—the remaining panels—and all of
16 the people signed up to testify are in favor. We
17 will just take them in groups of three. Jean
18 Standish, Marie Byrne, and Carolyn Ratcliffe. The
19 next panel will be Richard Moses, Amanda Davis and
20 Clayton Smith.

21 JEAN STANDISH: My name is Jean
22 Standish, and I'm a member of the Bowery Alliance
23 of Neighbors and the Lower East Side Preservation
24 Initiative. When the East Village and Lower East
25 Side were contextually rezoned one of the

1
2 unfortunate results of this rezoning plan was that
3 smaller buildings such as row houses became soft
4 sides and are vulnerable to demolition or
5 inappropriate alteration. As a result, this
6 community has already lost a number of
7 historically significant buildings. The circa
8 1839 Greek revival row houses at 326 and 328 East
9 Forest Street, the circa 1825 federal style house
10 at 35 Cooper Square and the 1835 row house at 316
11 East 3rd Street and finally, on East 6th Street
12 where I live, the 1852 townhouse at 331 East 6th
13 Street was recently demolished. Also a number of
14 tenements on my street have lost their lintels and
15 cornices. The East Village and Lower East Side
16 are an area of great local citywide and national
17 importance for its central role in our culture's
18 immigration, political, music, art and theater
19 history. It's historic streets include a
20 wonderfully rich variety of 19th and early 20th
21 century architecture. By landmarking this
22 district, the city is ensuring that we and future
23 generations can appreciate the physical evidence
24 of its fascinating influential history and
25 architecture. The East Village and Lower East

1
2 Side are rapidly losing their rich culture and
3 history due to demolition, inappropriate
4 development and defacing of buildings. It is for
5 these reasons that I as a resident in the East
6 Village/Lower East Side Historic District hope
7 that the City Council Subcommittee on Landmarks,
8 Public Siting, and Maritime Uses will approve this
9 designation, and I also want to read a short
10 statement for the East 7th Street Block
11 Association. The East 7th Street Block Association
12 between 2nd and 3rd Avenues strongly supports the
13 creation of the East Village/Lower East Side
14 Historic District. Such a designation will help
15 to preserve the residential and architecture,
16 artistic character of our neighborhood.
17 Sincerely, Carol Joyce, president, East 7th Street
18 Block Association.

19 MARIE BYRNE: Honorable council
20 members, my name is Marie Byrne, a native of
21 Manhattan, as was my mother whose ancestors
22 immigrated from Ireland as did my father. New
23 York's city ethnic enclaves are a major
24 destination for first and second generation
25 Americans nationwide. Tourism is a multi-billion

1
2 dollar industry in New York City, with tens of
3 millions coming to our city annually to absorb our
4 cultural, social, architectural history as well as
5 some making the pilgrimage to visit their roots
6 where their ancestors landed in New York City,
7 some of who eventually found their way into the
8 four corners of the United States. Visitors
9 search the Internet for their ancestor's biography
10 before they come so they can visit the old
11 neighborhood whether it be Fordham, Flatbush,
12 Flushing, Saint George or the Lower East Side.
13 They soak up the environment where their
14 grandparents or other relatives first embraced the
15 new world with their iPads or Androids recording
16 memories of this visit, they and their children's
17 children will return again and again to experience
18 the joy of having walked in the steps of their
19 ancestors. For our city's fiscal future, and
20 those of you who just came from the budget meeting
21 will appreciate this, and for our nation's
22 heritage, let us be the stewards of these beloved
23 historic places. I respectfully urge the
24 Landmarks Subcommittee to vote to ratify landmark
25 designation for the East Village/Lower East Side

Historic District.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you.

CAROLYN RATCLIFFE: Hello. My name is Carolyn Ratcliffe. I am a Lower East Side resident, one of Council Member Mendez's constituents. I am the chairperson for my block association and I belong to the Lower East Side Preservation Initiative. I'm the vice president. I am the chairperson of the landmarks subcommittee of Community Board 3. I have been active in community preservation for many years in my neighborhood. I was actively involved in saving La Plaza Cultural and Saint Brigid [phonetic], which was just recently dedicated Sunday night after having been nearly demolished and turned into a pile of rubble.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: [interposing] Congratulations to you and Council Member Mendez and many other people in the room on that. - - victory.

[applause]

CAROLYN RATCLIFFE: Thank you. That was one of the stellar things in our neighborhood. Saint Brigid had overlooked

1
2 Tompkins Square Park almost since its inception.
3 The park was I think dedicated in 1835. Saint
4 Brigid was built in 1848. It has been like a
5 beacon of faith to our neighborhood. At one point
6 in time in the 1930s there was a photograph of
7 Avenue B from Trinity Lutheran down to Saint
8 Brigid, and it was Trinity Lutheran Church, the
9 American Communist Party, the Yeshiva on the
10 corner and Saint Brigid's Church. We represent
11 everybody down here, and that is one of the things
12 that I wanted to talk about. I am writing to ask
13 that your committee support the proposed East
14 Village Historic District approved by the
15 Landmarks Commission. I have been a preservation
16 advocate in my neighborhood for many years. I
17 think it is important to retain recognizable
18 historic structures and streetscapes for the
19 future so that people can better understand the
20 past from which we have evolved. The Lower East
21 Side/East Village has been one of the most vitally
22 important cultural incubators for our country,
23 housing millions of immigrants who came to this
24 country to seek a better life, fleeing - - ,
25 droughts, political upheavals, wars and

1
2 starvation. The proposed historic district gives
3 a glimpse of the past as the area includes
4 architectural styles ranging from federal row
5 houses, ornately decorated tenements and art deco
6 buildings to name a few. Many well-known writers,
7 musicians and political activists have lived in
8 these buildings and have enriched the culture not
9 only of his neighborhood, but of our city and
10 country. It is worth preserving. Protecting
11 these buildings by recognizing the need for
12 historic district designation is vital with the
13 rampant development that is ongoing in the city if
14 left unprotected these significant vestiges of our
15 past will vanish in short order. Thank you for
16 your support of the historic district. I would
17 also like to comment as an attachment to this I
18 have a copy of the resolution that was passed by
19 Community Board 3. At the Committee hearing,
20 which was held at - - audience of 55 people
21 represented a cross section of neighborhood
22 residents with 24 signing up to speak in favor of
23 historic districts, 9 opposed and 2 undecided.
24 Thank you very much.

25 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very

1
2 much and to all of you for your leadership in this
3 effort. Next up are Richard Moses, Amanda Davis
4 and Clayton Smith, and after that Marcia
5 Ikonomopoulos, Philip Van Aver and Linda Eskenas.
6 Thanks to all of you who waited so patiently for
7 your time to speak about your love of your
8 neighborhood.

9 AMANDA DAVIS: I submitted a longer
10 testimony, but I'll read a brief one here. My
11 name is Amanda Davis, and on behalf of the
12 Greenwich Village Society for Historic
13 Preservation, I would like to express our
14 unequivocal support for upholding the designation
15 of the East Village/Lower East Side Historic
16 District. We'd also like to thank Council Member
17 Rosie Mendez for her continued support in
18 preserving the great character of this vibrant
19 neighborhood and the Landmarks Commission for
20 their thorough research of the history of this
21 district. The East Village is one of the most
22 historically significant areas of New York City -
23 - structures date to the late 18th century and the
24 area is rich in evidence of New York's mercantile
25 history in the early 19th century, it's dramatic

1
2 transformation of waves of immigration starting in
3 the mid-19th century, which actually also includes
4 on a personal note my German, Russian and Austrian
5 relatives, and its rebirth as a mecca for artists,
6 painters, writers and musicians in the 20th
7 century. The East Village/Lower East Side
8 Historic District captures an incredibly important
9 part of this history. We hope that the City
10 Council will uphold the designation of the East
11 Village/Lower East Side Historic District in order
12 to preserve a vital part of New York City well
13 into the future. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
15 much.

16 [applause]

17 RICHARD MOSES: Good afternoon,
18 Council Members. My name is Richard Moses. I am
19 president of the Lower East Side Preservation
20 Initiative, also known as LESPI, and I'm also a
21 resident of Council Member Mendez's district.
22 LESPI is a not-for-profit, grass roots, all
23 volunteer organization dedicated to the
24 preservation of the historic streetscapes of the
25 East Village/ Lower East Side. I won't repeat

1 what has been said about the area's immensely
2 important cultural and architectural history and
3 significance and its very rich urban environment.
4 As you know development pressures in the East
5 Village are intense and getting stronger all the
6 time. Although the 2008 rezoning of the area
7 established certain height limitations, the brute
8 force of gentrification has resulted in ornate
9 historic buildings and facades being demolished
10 and replaced with generic glass and stucco boxes.
11 Without landmark designation, the historic East
12 Village will be lost building by building and
13 street by street. There have been concerns raised
14 about the religious properties in the district.
15 When my great-grandmother first arrived in the
16 Lower East Side from Russia 120 years ago, having
17 been sent alone by her family as a teenager to
18 escape the programs [phonetic], she was
19 disappointed that the streets were not literally
20 paved in gold, but the countless religious
21 buildings in the neighborhood did provide this
22 aura. Although many of our community's religious
23 buildings have been lost over the years, those
24 remaining continue as beacons, providing residents
25

1
2 a sense of spiritual peace and reassurance as
3 society becomes increasingly commercialized.
4 Losing these magnificent structures would be a
5 tragic loss for us all. Based on our extensive
6 outreach, we believe that the vast majority of the
7 neighborhood's residents want landmarking. We
8 have gathered over 1,000 signatures in support of
9 historic district designation in just a few
10 petitioning sessions. Community Board 3 has voted
11 in support of the district. Historic district
12 designation is the only way to effectively ensure
13 that what we cherish about our neighborhoods will
14 survive in the years to come. Please vote to
15 ratify landmark designation for the East Village/
16 Lower East Side Historic District with its current
17 boundaries intact. Thank you very much.

18 CLAYTON SMITH: I'm Clayton Smith.
19 I have been a resident of the East Village and
20 Lower East Side for 14 years, and frequent cast
21 member in the theaters on East 4th Street, and
22 audience member for that matter. I wrote a whole
23 thing, but I think I'll just say that I used to
24 live—my first apartment was a corner, which used
25 to be a lovely French bistro, which is soon to be

1
2 a 7-11, and I think it says all there needs to say
3 that right now in your heads you are probably
4 thinking, which one? I really appreciate the
5 Commission's report, a certain phrase they used
6 that said that the district has an incredibly
7 dense layering of historic and cultural
8 significance, and as Council Member Mendez said,
9 we call this home, and sometimes walking around
10 the neighborhood it feels difficult sometimes to
11 feel like your home has been remodeling by people
12 who you don't know. I think that this is an
13 extremely gratifying and reassuring landmarking--
14 that all too rare moment in a city where we know
15 that development has to happen and rapid change is
16 always happening, but it means a lot to see that
17 we can value the historical and cultural character
18 of our neighborhoods that define the character of
19 the district and that are the reason that people
20 want to live here and come here to begin with, so
21 I applaud you all for your work and thank you for
22 helping to work together to celebrate our
23 district.

24 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
25 much. Alright. On the next panel we have Marcia

1
2 Ikonomopoulos, Philip Van Aver and Linda Eskenas
3 and following them Sara Romanoski, Mitchell
4 Grubler and Michelle Campo.

5 MARCIA IKONOMOPOULOS: Do I push
6 this?

7 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Yeah, when the
8 light comes on. Other way I think actually.
9 Sorry. Push it one more time. There you go.

10 MARCIA IKONOMOPOULOS: My name is
11 Marcia Haddad Ikonomopoulos, and I am the museum
12 director of Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and
13 Museum at 280 Broome Street. I am here to speak
14 about soul since I come from a religious
15 institution. Actually the soul I am going to
16 speak about is the precious soul of this city.
17 Every city has a soul. New York has a very
18 special soul. It's diversity; it's multi-
19 ethnicity. The different groups that have come
20 here to call it home give it a special flavor and
21 there is probably very few districts in the city
22 of New York that exemplify this better than the
23 East Village and the Lower East Side. Talking
24 about historical districting, we are a historical
25 landmark in the city of New York. What this has

1
2 done for us is not only preserve us, enabled us
3 through loans and grants from sacred sites and
4 other institutions to restore our synagogue. It
5 hasn't cost us any more to restore. In fact that
6 money would not have been available if we were not
7 a landmark. We were all on board the same thing—
8 our board when it went for landmarking, and I
9 remember so much the words of Ruth Abram, who used
10 to be head of the tenement museum. When she spoke
11 about the fact that we create landmarks to
12 exemplify what this country was about in beautiful
13 gentrified mansions that were owned by famous
14 people and yet most of our people live in the city
15 centers, in the urban environments, in the
16 tenements. We have a saying on the Lower East
17 Side, and if I may paraphrase from Marcy Raven
18 [phonetic], who I respect her work so much, we all
19 walk in somebody else's shoes; make your
20 footprints deep, so somebody else can walk in
21 yours. I'm asking you to make this a historical
22 district to respect the soul of our city. Thank
23 you.

24 [applause]

25 CHAIRPERSON LANDER:

PHILIP VAN AVER: Good afternoon.

My name is Philip Van Aver. I have been a resident of the Tompkins Square Park area of the Lower East Side since 1969. I am also a board member of LESPI. There are several issues that came up through the hearing today. I cannot address all of them needless to say. When I spoke at the June 26 hearing last year on the historic district, I mentioned some of my favorite sites in the neighborhood that were designated; however, I left out unfortunately—since I only had three minutes—7th Street between A and 1st, which of course includes Saint Stanislaus Church. I never expected to have that block considered for designation. I thought it was an impossible dream. Now unfortunately Councilman Halloran is not here. I wish I could send him a photograph that I have from a calendar of churches on the Lower East Side that was taken in 1910. The last time I looked at that photograph which was about three or four months ago I would say that there had been virtually no alteration in that block in the last hundred years. That is very rare any place in New York. In addition I would just like

1
2 to very briefly point out that it is not necessary
3 for a site to be designated to have a complete
4 architectural history. Some years ago I attended
5 a lecture at the Historic District Council on I
6 think it was called bottoms up, which included
7 famous drinking spots in New York City that were
8 designated. Among them was the Oak Room of the
9 Plaza, which I'm sure all of us are familiar with.
10 Anyway, that building according to the
11 architectural expert there was no record of the
12 architect or even when it had been built. Thank
13 you very much.

14 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: You are
15 reminding me. We haven't had that many tours for
16 the Landmarks Subcommittee, and perhaps, we should
17 do the bottoms up historic tour.

18 [background conversation]

19 LINDA ESKENAS: Thank you. The
20 Lower East Side is one of the great neighborhoods
21 of New York City—

22 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: [interposing]
23 I'm sorry. Please identify yourself for the
24 record.

25 LINDA ESKENAS: Linda Eskenas, Four

1
2 Borough Neighborhood Preservation Alliance and the
3 - - Waterfront Greenway. The Lower East Side is
4 one of the great neighborhoods of New York City
5 known throughout the world. It is where millions
6 of immigrants came to make their dreams come true
7 and leave what they achieved to us where most of
8 us can trace our roots. These neighborhoods are
9 our heritage and the identity of New York City,
10 why people come from everywhere and want to be
11 here and live here, where Peter Stuyvesant rode
12 down the bowery of trees to the magnificent church
13 at Stuyvesant Place and 2nd Avenue where Spanish
14 Jews came escaping the inquisition and the great
15 Yiddish theater and vaudeville were born which
16 gave birth to Broadway, and later 20th century
17 icons of off Broadway, et cetera, et cetera, et
18 cetera. This is our heritage and must be
19 designated a New York City landmark. Some of our
20 earliest of course irreplaceable buildings, our
21 treasures have already been destroyed on the
22 bowery and throughout the Lower East Side. We
23 must landmark now. They were replaced with
24 refrigerator like buildings, which are as-well,
25 which are pretty foolish looking. We can't lose

1
2 any more. This is who we are. Landmarking not
3 only saves our heritage in New York City, but
4 brings economic thriving in a time of fiscal
5 crisis, and it also brings a sense of
6 responsibility to do what is best for everyone and
7 have a magnificent future. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
9 much. Good job providing a nice full picture for
10 us. So thank you. Let's see. Next we have Sara
11 Romanoski, Mitchell Grubler, and I think Michelle
12 Campo. Please correct me when you come up if I
13 get it wrong and after that Yolanda Fernandez,
14 Patricia Melvin and Tom Birchard.

15 SARA ROMANOSKI: Good afternoon.
16 My name is Sara Romanoski. I'm here on behalf of
17 the East Village Community Coalition, also located
18 on Tompkins Square Park. I would like to express
19 on behalf of the organization my support for the
20 historic district. Our organization emerged
21 around the successful P.S. 64 preservation
22 battle. We continue to advocate for the cultural
23 and built environment of the East Village. We are
24 proud of that building's individual designation by
25 the Commission in 2006 and more recent

1 designations including the one under consideration
2 today. While we celebrate the individual
3 victories, we recognize that much of our
4 remarkable past is embedded throughout the
5 neighborhood. More than 300 buildings included in
6 this district are the functioning remnants of
7 several iconic histories of immigrants, workers,
8 housing and many cultural, social, artistic and
9 labor movements. Our buildings and blocks are the
10 setting that nurtured these wildly influential
11 groups and their actions. New immigrants continue
12 to find their roots in our - - , their religious
13 and cultural institutions remain as defining
14 places. Even as populations relocate, the East
15 Village contains distinct architectural structures
16 and repetitions in housing type, scale and style.
17 Persistent development pressures as many have
18 reference has resulted in the defacement and
19 destruction of buildings and threatens to further
20 dismantle our architectural identity. The East
21 Village bears one of the most textured histories
22 of any neighborhood in the city, yet the
23 neighborhood has lacked comprehensive landmarks
24 protection. We celebrate the attention and
25

1
2 resources that our Council Member and the LPC and
3 advocates have dedicated to address that imbalance
4 through the creation of this district. Approval
5 of the district in full will help preserve and
6 protect the historic fabric of our neighborhood
7 and reward the commitment of a community to
8 ensuring our beloved neighborhood remains strong,
9 vibrant and unique. Thank you very much.

10 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you.

11 MITCHELL GRUBLER: Good afternoon.
12 I'm Mitchell Grubler. This testimony is on behalf
13 of the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors. We strongly
14 support and urge you to vote to uphold the
15 designation of the entire proposed East Village/
16 Lower East Side Historic District. While more
17 upscale districts with more grandiose buildings
18 have received designations, few areas of this city
19 have had as great an impact on American history
20 and culture. Immigrant history, labor history,
21 the history of tenements, and the history of
22 iconoclastic writers, artists and musicians are
23 writ large in this neighborhood. Considering the
24 ferocious pace of real estate speculation it
25 behooves the city to move quickly to preserve its

1
2 unique context and character, which are crucial
3 components of the area's economic vitality and
4 attraction. While we support and applaud the
5 creation of this much needed historic district, we
6 also hope to testify before you in the not too
7 distant future on other deserving landmark
8 designations on the historic Lower East Side. On
9 behalf of the Bowery Alliance of Neighbors we urge
10 you to move on the designation of the East
11 Village/ Lower East Side Historic District. Thank
12 you.

13 [applause]

14 MICHELLE CAMPO: My name is
15 Michelle Campo. I am here to read testimony of
16 Catherine Feldman [phonetic]. My name is
17 Catherine Feldman. I am testifying to urge the
18 City Council's Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public
19 Siting and Maritime Uses to approve the decision
20 of the Landmarks Preservation Commission to
21 designate the East Village/ Lower East Side
22 Historic District. I own a historic house 230
23 East 5th Street built in 1843 where I have lived
24 with my family for 40 years. My twin sons were
25 raised here, and now my grandchildren are being

1
2 raised there too. In these same 40 years, I and
3 my late husband, Floyd Feldman, founder of GOLES,
4 have been active in preserving--

5 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: - - .

6 MICHELLE CAMPO: --our
7 neighborhood's important and unique place in New
8 York City history. No other place has seen so
9 many phases of the development of Manhattan as we
10 have. To lose such a heritage is to lose the very
11 sense of who we are and where we came from. I
12 have been a professor of literature for many
13 years, and in all of them my mission has been to
14 pass on to my students the knowledge of what it is
15 meant and still means to be inheritors of the work
16 of others who have labored so hard and so long to
17 express what it means to be human, but such
18 knowledge is not only captured in books, but also
19 in stones, in the buildings around us in which
20 have seen the lives of all comers in the East
21 Village. Who would want to lose such a treasure,
22 especially when the LPC has now designated the
23 district? Surely not those on the City Council's
24 Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and
25 Maritime Uses, who serve to protect our interests.

1 Thank you for your attention, Catherine Feldman.

2 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
3 much. Surely not. So. Okay. Let's see. We are
4 getting close now. We have two more panels. The
5 next one is Yolanda Fernandez, Patricia Melvin and
6 Tom Birchard, and then the last two people I have
7 signed up to testify are Robert Watlington and
8 Stella Dong. Thank you.

9 YOLANDA FERNANDEZ: Hi. My name is
10 Yolanda Fernandez. I live on 2nd Avenue between
11 Saint Mark's and 7th Street for 40 years, and there
12 have been far more eloquent people than me, but I
13 was very interested by the woman with the
14 synagogue museum who said she got grants and since
15 economics is part of this whole thing, everybody
16 is balancing money, have some workshops. Figure
17 out how to get money to restore this. I am very
18 in favor of landmarking the neighborhood. I mean
19 who wants to walk by at night a block that is a
20 glass cylinder in the street? There is no people,
21 no living anything. I really hope you approve it.
22 Please do. Thanks very much. That is my piece.

23 [applause]

24 PATRICIA MELVIN: Good afternoon.

1
2 My name is Patricia Melvin. I have lived in my
3 current apartment just off the corner of Saint
4 Mark's Place and 2nd Avenue, which is within the
5 area, for 37 years. During that time, I have seen
6 many historic buildings in my neighborhood
7 demolished. I am omitting a couple of paragraphs
8 because they have already been—the sentiment has
9 already been expressed. On a personal note, I am
10 a cityscape painter, and I have been painting in
11 my neighborhood for the past 35 years. The East
12 Village streets and buildings are what I love to
13 paint. I love that I can see the sky above the
14 decorative cornices and above the fire escapes
15 that are so varied that they can be dated to
16 within a decade according to their particular
17 design. I love that I can see sunlight flooding
18 the sidewalks, the sidewalk cafes, the stoops with
19 their cast iron railings. I love the Orpheum
20 Theater marquis, which I see out my window, with
21 its comedy and tragedy masks in - - relief. I
22 also wanted to mention that every year on the
23 anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory
24 fire, someone writes in chalk the name of one of
25 the victims of the fire, Tessie Rosenstock

1 [phonetic], on the sidewalk in front of my
2 building where she lived. The realization that
3 she lived in one of the apartments, perhaps even
4 my own connects me to history in a profound way.
5 I urge you to vote to protect our living history
6 and vote for the East Village/Lower East Side
7 Historic District. Thank you very much.

8 [applause]

9 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you.

10 TOM BIRCHARD: My name is Tom
11 Birchard. I am the owner of Veselka Restaurant on
12 2nd Avenue. I'd like to thank you for giving me
13 the opportunity to say a few words. I'd like to
14 thank two other people in particular. I was very
15 impressed with Ms. Fernandez's description of my
16 neighborhood. I thought it was great, and I'd
17 actually like to have a copy of that sometime
18 because when I have guests come I try to describe
19 what the neighborhood is, and she did it very
20 eloquently and also Councilwoman Mendez, who I
21 know has been instrumental in pushing this
22 initiative forward. I just want to very briefly
23 tell you my personal story. I think it's
24 indicative of what our neighborhood has to offer.
25

1
2 I came to Veselka in 1966 when I was a sophomore
3 in college. I didn't know where my life would
4 take me. I was kind of directionless. I was
5 lucky enough to meet the boss' daughter. She
6 brought me to Veselka. He was a Ukrainian
7 immigrant, who had started the business in 1954.
8 That is one of the things about our neighborhood—
9 it has been kind of a cauldron, a place where
10 budding entrepreneurs, designers, artists, young
11 chefs can come rent a cheap space and start their
12 business. I found my home at Veselka. I started
13 a love affair with the Lower East Side—this was
14 before it was the East Village. I discovered
15 eventually that food was my passion. Luckily
16 Veselka has been a great success. I owe a great,
17 great deal to this neighborhood. It has given me
18 my life. It has helped me find my direction. My
19 second wife, Sally, is a veterinarian. With my
20 urging, she opened up Saint Mark's Veterinary
21 Hospital, which is right down the street. She and
22 I love the neighborhood. We have raised five kids
23 there. I can't imagine living anywhere else.
24 Everybody here has described in one way or another
25 what makes our neighborhood great. All of the

1
2 things that have been spoken in favor I thoroughly
3 agree with, and I urge you to please as best we
4 can protect this wonderful place where I have
5 lived my life.

6 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thanks so much
7 to all of you, and I appreciate everyone's
8 contribution, but I do want to say especially
9 thank you as a big fan of Veselka personally, but
10 also first in general, we really appreciate when
11 property owners and stewards step up—whether they
12 are religious institutions or whether they are
13 homeowners, but obviously for many of us the small
14 businesses that are a deep part of the history of
15 our neighborhoods and give it its quality of life
16 are harder to preserve with the tools of historic
17 designation they take the tools of sort of sweat
18 and entrepreneurship and we really appreciate
19 everybody being here today, but we really
20 appreciate your efforts. Council Member Mendez,
21 do you have—

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ:

23 [interposing] Yes, I have eaten many meals at
24 Veselka, and now I hear that we can have events at
25 your 2nd Street place, but maybe this is something

1
2 for the dinner caucus to take up of the City
3 Council. One of our colleagues started a dinner
4 caucus and we go into different neighborhoods so
5 we can help businesses, but we could also see each
6 other's communities, so maybe you will see us
7 there soon. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
9 much. Our last two, but definitely last but not
10 least, we just did it in order of people signing
11 up, so we really appreciate everybody's patience.
12 We still have so many people here all the way to
13 the end are Stella Dong and Robert Watlington.

14 ROBERT WATLINGTON: Yes. My name
15 is Robert Watlington. I have been affiliated or
16 resided on the Lower East Side or East Village,
17 whatever you choose to call it, since '66. By the
18 way, Veselka was a place when I didn't want to go
19 home to Harlem, I'd sleep in the phone booth in
20 the back. The old phone booths used to have seats
21 in them so we could hide in there. Everyone has
22 pretty much acknowledged the immigrant experience,
23 et cetera, et cetera, but what the Lower East Side
24 means to me is that that area, and it was multi-
25 cultural, multi-racial during the '60s and '50s

1
2 and '40s, whether it be jazz or whether it be rock
3 and roll, so let's be real. The kids today when
4 they hear the East Village, the first thing they
5 think of is creativity. Unfortunately today they
6 can no longer come here and get those \$50 a month
7 apartments or Con Ed three months for \$15. It's
8 sad. It's really sad. My main appreciation of
9 the East Village was Saint Mark's Place, and I cry
10 and I live on top of the old Fillmore—right next
11 to the old Fillmore. I cry when I walk down Saint
12 Mark's and see what it looks like. I don't care
13 how much multi-culturalism you want today or
14 whatever. It's not about multi-culturalism on
15 Saint Mark's; it's pure greed. The fact is that
16 the electric circus—I was there when Andy Warhol
17 owned it. Fillmore East we had to beg to get a
18 little plaque that represents it. I'm going in my
19 building and I see people from all over the world
20 standing outside the bank looking at it. It's a
21 shame that those who have made and developed their
22 personalities and characters by being associated
23 with the - - have now joined the corporate types
24 and they want to destroy and devastate it. One
25 last thing I must say is that I am totally

1
2 ashamed—the Lower East Side introduced me to
3 Jewish culture in a way that no textbook or no
4 synagogue or anything could have. I got to see
5 the good and the bad. I hate to sit here today
6 and say that I am seeing it dissolve before my
7 eyes. When the old days when a little guy would
8 get out of a limousine and stop in front of the 2nd
9 Avenue deli and there is a word, I call it - - the
10 guy would stand outside, and he - - from the
11 Bowery boys—about five feet high, and he would
12 just look at—the food was horrible. It was
13 grease, but the fact is that when I would get up—
14 'cause back in those days we had to get up and get
15 the Times the night before—you would walk by there
16 and say wow. That is what it is about. All I
17 want to say is remember that not only the past,
18 but the contemporary period plays a role in
19 forming the very foundation of culture today in
20 America. Thank you.

21 [applause]

22 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
23 much. Very eloquently stated.

24 STELLA DONG: My name is Stella
25 Dong. I am a writer. I have lived on Saint

1
2 Mark's Place near 2nd Avenue since 1978. As a
3 writer, I spend most my time in the East Village,
4 but I write about China and Asia, so I go to China
5 a lot. My best known book is a book about the
6 history of Shanghai. I cannot go back. I cannot
7 go to Shanghai anymore because it breaks my heart
8 when I see all the architectural heritage of that
9 once great city that has been destroyed. It is
10 now steel and glass towers in every neighborhood.
11 We are lucky. This kind of meeting could never
12 happen anywhere in China. Organizations are not
13 involved. People are not allowed to give their
14 feedback on what is happening in their
15 neighborhoods. I know many, many Chinese who have
16 been forcibly evicted from their homes, seen their
17 homes demolished in front of them in Shanghai in
18 Beijing. Communities have completely disappeared,
19 generations of people have not unlike we New
20 Yorkers and Americans, they don't have a voice in
21 what happens to their neighborhood. Their
22 opinions are not solicited. Developers in cahoots
23 with officials say we want to build in your
24 neighborhood and you are out. So I just want to
25 tell everyone how fortunate you are to live in a

1
2 society where individuals can tell community
3 leaders, politicians what is important to them and
4 where their wishes are heard and responded to, so
5 value that. And second, I want to say that we do
6 not want New York to go the way of Shanghai or
7 Beijing. We don't want to lose our history. I
8 know so many Chinese, so many Shanghainese, who
9 say there was a time we could have saved it. We
10 didn't. Now we regret it. We can never get it
11 back. Never. That is my say.

12 [applause]

13 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you so
14 much. It has been wonderful sitting here, an
15 honor really to listen to all of you - - about the
16 Lower East Side, and yes, I do want to reflect
17 also what we are doing here today is preserving
18 buildings. That is what we do with designation,
19 but I know that the fight that Council Member
20 Mendez leads and that so many of you are involved
21 in to help preserve people, to address the
22 challenges of gentrification, to help preserve
23 small business and the cultural heritage of the
24 neighborhood, which is not a designation action is
25 also something that you guys have taken a lot of

1 leadership on and take very seriously, so it is
 2 nice when those things go together and when people
 3 are really working hard as shared stewards of both
 4 the buildings, but also the cultural and community
 5 resources of the district. That closes the public
 6 hearing. We will now move to a vote on the item.
 7 Again, it's Land Use number 752, the landmark
 8 designation of the East Village and Lower East
 9 Side Historic District. The Chair recommends a
 10 vote of aye.

12 FEMALE VOICE: Chair Lander?

13 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: I vote aye.

14 FEMALE VOICE: Council Member

15 Palma?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Aye.

17 FEMALE VOICE: Council Member

18 Arroyo?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Explain my

20 vote?

21 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Of course.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: I vote aye,

23 and respect the fact that there is such strong
 24 sentiments and I want to caution the public not to
 25 walk out of here with an impression that we are

1
2 not in support of preserving the history of our
3 great city, we just disagree about how we go about
4 it sometimes with the Commission. So aye.

5 FEMALE VOICE: Council Member
6 Mendez?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I need to
8 think about this.

9 [laughter]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I proudly
11 vote aye.

12 FEMALE VOICE: Council Member
13 Williams?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: May I
15 explain my vote? Thank you. I am going to vote
16 aye, and I have full faith in my colleague,
17 Council Member Mendez, that she went through the
18 proper processes and took everyone into
19 consideration. I do have some concerns that I
20 outlined earlier, and I do think we need to find a
21 better way to get these concerns heard in a
22 fashion that makes people feel like they have been
23 respected and find a way to work through some
24 people who just don't want to be landmarked.
25 There has to be a way to do that. I definitely

1
2 want to get some more information on the carve
3 outs and the boundaries and all of that good
4 stuff. I think there are huge problems here, but
5 I am sure that due diligence was done, and I vote
6 aye.

7 [applause]

8 FEMALE VOICE: By a vote of five in
9 the affirmative, zero in the negative and no
10 abstentions, Land Use item 752 is approved and
11 referred to the full Land Use Committee.

12 [applause]

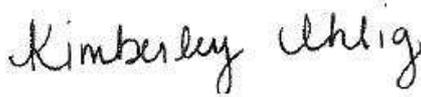
13 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very
14 much. Congratulations. We will hold the vote
15 open for ten minutes for Council Member Halloran.
16 This meeting of the Subcommittee is adjourned.

17 [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

02/17/13