

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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B E F O R E: RITCHIE J. TORRES  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ROSIE MENDEZ  
JAMES G. VAN BRAMER  
DONOVAN J. RICHARDS  
VANESSA L. GIBSON  
LAURIE A. CUMBO  
RAFAEL SALAMANCA, JR.

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

Lilly Lozano  
President of the Parkside Houses Tenant  
Association

Charlene Nimmons  
Former Resident Association President for 12  
Years

Lisa Kenner  
Resident of Van Dyke Houses, Resident Association  
President for 13 Years

Daniel Barber  
President of the Andrew Jackson Houses Resident  
Association

Sideya Sherman  
Executive Vice President for Community Engagement  
And Partnerships at the New York City Housing  
Authority

Jenelle Hudson  
Director for Resident Engagement at the New York  
City Housing Authority

Felicia Gordon  
Resident Association President for Rafael  
Hernandez located in District One

Princella Jameson  
President of the Tenant Association of Mill Brook

Maria Trinidad  
President of Resident Association at 344 East  
28<sup>th</sup> Street

Maria Forbes  
Tenant Association President for 30 Years at Clay  
Avenue Tenants Association

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

Barbara Holmes  
Tenant Association President at Morris Houses  
Tenant Association

Aixa Torres  
Tenant Association President at Smith Houses  
Tenant Association

Heidi Hightower  
Resident President at the Glenwood Housing

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Good morning

everyone, I'm City Council Member Ritchie Torres, I am the Chair of the Committee on Public Housing. In the interest of time I'm going to dispense with an opening statement but the subject of today's hearing is tenant participation activity funds. I know Council Member Salamanca, I don't know if you had a few words to share or... yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Awesome. Good morning everyone. First, I would like to thank Chair Ritchie Torres for calling this hearing today on what I believe has been a very cumulated and burdensome process surrounding the tenant participation activity fund for our NYCHA developments. I'm incredibly frustrated surrounding the rollout of recently proposed changes regarding our TPA funds and if I'm frustrated I can only imagine how frustrated or in some instances afraid our NYCHA tenants and tenant's association leaders are thinking that they may be losing much needed and much deserved TPA funds. And I'm frustrated for a number of reasons. First it was totally shocked... it was totally shocked to get calls from not just one tenant association leader but many

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2 regarding the new agreement that they were being  
3 asked to sign without fully understanding what it  
4 was, that led to great confusion, fear and worry. The  
5 signing meant developments would no longer have their  
6 own control over TPA funds and that is unacceptable.  
7 Secondly, on top of this council members were not  
8 briefed either on proposed changes to the TPA  
9 funding's which of course is problematic for a number  
10 of reasons. And third when we did finally receive a  
11 briefing on these changes after requesting a meeting  
12 we learned that when TPA funds come down from the  
13 federal government, 40 percent of the gross funding  
14 that is able to be utilized by NYCHA for  
15 administrative cause is in fact taken but is spent on  
16 just two or three employees despite the funding set  
17 aside being in the millions. So, while those are just  
18 three of the overreaching big concerns I have today I  
19 look forward to getting more in the weeds on the  
20 hearing process. Before I turn it back to the Chair I  
21 do want to take a minute to say thank you to all the  
22 NYCHA residents and particularly the tenant  
23 association leaders that are here today notably from  
24 the Bronx and District 17. And as you know Mr. Chair  
25 much of the work that we try to do to serve our NYCHA

1  
2 residents cannot be done without the support of our  
3 tenant associations and I'm thankful to have strong  
4 tenant associations and tenant association leaders  
5 who share love for the Bronx and as people and want  
6 to help move the community forward, thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Great, thank you  
8 Council Member Salamanca and thank you for being the  
9 inspiration behind the hearing and hearing the outcry  
10 of the tenant leaders. In keeping with the tradition  
11 of the Public Housing Committee we're going to start  
12 with four tenant leaders and then proceed with the  
13 New York City Housing Authority. So, I would like to  
14 call the first panel; Miss Lilly Lozano from Bronx  
15 District Council; Miss Charlene Nimmons; Daniel  
16 Barber, and Lisa Kenner. Okay. Yep, if you have a  
17 copy of your testimony or... yes. Okay. Can we have a  
18 two-minute timer? Okay, Miss Lozano let me know when  
19 you're ready to begin.

20 LILLY LOZANO: Good morning, I'm elated  
21 over having the opportunity to discuss the issues at  
22 hand. I've been a resident leader since 1998, became  
23 the CCOP Treasurer for the Citywide Council of  
24 Presidents. I've asked NYCHA for the last three  
25 years, this is my second term, that I wanted to get

1  
2 an allocated... I wanted to get a list of allocations  
3 for all the developments throughout the city of  
4 expenditures. I was informed that they didn't have  
5 records from 2001 to 2013, I find that disconcerting  
6 so what you have before you are what I've got access  
7 to. Let me just tell you that many years ago in 1993,  
8 January 12<sup>th</sup> we had a memorandum of understanding  
9 under the Citywide Council of Presidents which it  
10 expired through three... I mean three, three  
11 organizations in the Citywide Council of Presidents,  
12 what happened they ignored it, we needed to have a  
13 contractual agreement with NYCHA. So, then this way  
14 we would be decision makers and policy makers when it  
15 came to the decisions, when it came to HUD. Well to  
16 our dismay what you have, what I have in close is  
17 that CCOP did have an account that you have in, in  
18 your possession. I also have the bank account  
19 statements with interest that we discussed with NYCHA  
20 through our closed-door dialogue which wasn't many of  
21 them, they claimed that they gave us several... they  
22 made several attempts to discuss with us what the  
23 changes were going to be but that never happened,  
24 they just did surveys attributably in our districts  
25 and we were the after... when we decided to ask them to

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2 give us surveys of what was entailed in getting this  
3 TPA reform they once said that they couldn't give it  
4 to us so what I'm handing you to... now is a  
5 confidential address of the monies, I have the  
6 allocations throughout the city of New York from 2003  
7 to 2011 of the allocations for every district around  
8 the city, why do I have access to it and NYCHA  
9 doesn't. the other thing is an original memorandum  
10 of... agreement that we need to renegotiate with NYCHA  
11 where in the mist of redoing it this Thursday, to  
12 sign one and we want NYCHA to meet with us because we  
13 cannot sit in the helm of the realm and be ignored  
14 and be called that we're dysfunctional and this is  
15 why they're not addressing us. So... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Can you please  
17 conclude?

18 LILLY LOZANO: Yes, so what I conclude  
19 is, is that one, after seeking, seeking legal counsel  
20 we found out that the interpretation of the TPA is  
21 vague, it's problematic according to the attorneys  
22 and what we are requesting is that they need to  
23 terminate that and to say that somebody signs under  
24 protest and nil and void them for getting monies for  
25 their developments is deplorable and its prejudicial



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2 and discriminatory. So, with all that being said the  
3 material that I've provided you should speak on its  
4 own recognizance, thank you so much.

5 CHARLENE NIMMONS: Hi, my name is  
6 Charlene Nimmons, a resident at White Glove Gardens  
7 but I'm formally the Resident Association President  
8 for over 12 years. When I was the president in the  
9 last two years of my time that I was there I was told  
10 that I did not have any more funding under TPA and we  
11 wanted to do some additional training and then when a  
12 new president came in, they found money. So, how is  
13 that... and I'm okay, I'm glad they found money, they  
14 found our money however that means you were not  
15 keeping an accurate record, if you didn't know that  
16 we still had funding. So, people got... could not get  
17 trained because NYCHA did not have their budget  
18 together. That 40 percent of those dollars is  
19 outrageous when now you, you, you used to be able to  
20 get technical assistance, right or that was what  
21 NYCHA is supposed to be technical advisors. They get  
22 this money and now we're told we have to do our own  
23 TPA proposals, we have to do... if we want admins we  
24 have to hire admins, it... at one time the TPA  
25 proposals was done in, in conjunction with the

1  
2 association and NYCHA then they shifted everything,  
3 all responsibility onto the resident association. I'm  
4 going to go forward into where I got involved and I  
5 was asked to review the TPA agreement. You have a  
6 list of the issues that a number of resident leaders  
7 looked over to see what, what those concerns were.  
8 The one that really stands out is the funding that if  
9 you don't use the funding before the year ends it  
10 rolls over into NYCHA and then NYCHA gets to decide  
11 where that money goes and how its spent. When those  
12 dollars the resident association need those funding  
13 allocations because that's most of the time the only  
14 funding that they have to operate their organization.  
15 So, to say that you're going to roll it over and then  
16 it's going to go into NYCHA's budget is unfair to the  
17 residents of that particular house. So, I just ask  
18 that this all be reconsidered, come back to the  
19 drawing board under the HUD regulations there is  
20 supposed to be conversations with the leaders and not  
21 decisions made without them. the HUD regulations say  
22 that they're supposed to be a part of policy making  
23 and so forth and I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Miss Kenner.  
25

1  
2 LISA KENNER: Good morning. My name is  
3 Lisa Kenner. See I'm so... I'm not used to wearing  
4 glasses and when you get a certain age you got to  
5 start wearing glasses, I got to adjust my... [cross-  
6 talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: What age is that...  
8 okay.

9 LISA KENNER: You're not there yet so  
10 don't worry about it...

11 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I just wanted to  
12 make sure.

13 LISA KENNER: Right, you're not there.  
14 But I wanted to say good morning, my name is Lisa  
15 Kenner, I'm a resident of Van Dyke Houses for 58  
16 years and a Resident Association President for 13, so  
17 I've told my age. I sit before you because of the TPA  
18 MOU agreement that NYCHA wants us to sign and I am  
19 not a lawyer so some of the language I do not  
20 understand. However, I do understand signing this  
21 agreement may come back to haunt me down the road.  
22 You see I asked... I asked for the budget for Brooklyn  
23 East Council President and was denied by NYCHA and  
24 the Brooklyn East Chairperson. Now if I can't get a,  
25 a budget count for the Brooklyn East how can I get a

1  
2 count for mine, like I told them I don't have time to  
3 be going to Bedford Hills, I'm not sitting in Bedford  
4 Hills for anyone but one thing about the TPA that I  
5 want to say is 20 percent was going to Brooklyn East  
6 and you couldn't even get a budget, you couldn't get  
7 a count of how much money was being spent. I've been  
8 going over this for years and years, like I said I've  
9 been the president for 2003 so I came in near the  
10 early part when they were let... allocating but they  
11 wouldn't let you spend it but you have to write a  
12 proposal so anything that you spent you had to submit  
13 a proposal and your receipts. So... however we wanted  
14 to use the money for the uplift of the residents  
15 that's what I do and I know that's what every other  
16 president does because that's what the money is  
17 allocated for but it's so hard to get it if... it takes  
18 90 days and they... this days and that days and you're  
19 trying to do a, a workshop that enhances everybody's  
20 life not just the, the executive board but the  
21 residents as a whole that live in your development.  
22 Now I want to say this, I know I can do a manager  
23 job, I probably could do the chair job but they think  
24 that we all incompetent and well a lot of people here  
25 got more common sense than you will ever know, you

1  
2 know you don't have to have a degree, you know you  
3 just got to have common sense, I know I can run my  
4 development, you know but you know that's why some of  
5 them is scared because they know we can run our  
6 development, we went to New Orleans I seen people run  
7 their development, that place was immaculate, can you  
8 imagine if we can run our development and we know  
9 every resident in there you think dog feces would be  
10 on the ground, do you think garbage would be on the  
11 ground, you know this is what the thing to me about  
12 the TPA fund is to educate our people so they can run  
13 their own development instead of selling it.

14 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Mr. Barber. So, I  
15 guess we'll expect your application for the  
16 Chairmanship of the Housing Authority, is that...

17 DANIEL BARBER: Wow...

18 CHARLENE NIMMONS: Just know those  
19 positions, senior positions are available under  
20 section three.

21 LISA KENNER: But excuse me...

22 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I, I just want to...

23 [cross-talk]  
24  
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2 LISA KENNER: With respect to the Chair,  
3 I give her respect she's a good woman, she knows her  
4 stuff but I just know that we can run it.

5 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Mr. Barber.

6 DANIEL BARBER: Yes, good morning  
7 everyone. My name is Daniel Barber and I am the  
8 President of the Andrew Jackson Houses Resident  
9 Association. First and foremost, I want to thank Mr.  
10 Torres and my Council Member, Rafael Salamanca Junior  
11 for reaching out to the Chair to hold this, this  
12 hearing that we're presently at today. I appreciate  
13 the compassion and consideration you took to move  
14 forward and the hardships to get to this date. So, I  
15 want you to know they, they all go noted and I thank  
16 you so much. Okay, I wrote a testimony but I'm going  
17 defer from that because these guys here touched the  
18 majority of it so you guys can look at it later but  
19 just basically we're here because there's no  
20 accountability. We've been begging for training and  
21 things to lead the training, we have resident  
22 leadership that come into the positions and a lot of  
23 the people don't understand, they don't know. We're  
24 forcing seniors to sign an agreement that an, an  
25 attorney that I took the agreement to he had problems

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2 digesting the agreement, from the Bronx Defenders, he  
3 had problems digesting the agreement when he looked  
4 at it so if an attorney who goes to school to study  
5 contracts and negotiations can't understand the  
6 beginning parameters of this agreement how can we  
7 expect the 72-year-old seniors who does this to keep  
8 her or him alive because they have nothing else to  
9 do. We have to start being mindful to all of the  
10 residents. Under 24CFR HUD964 regulations, it states  
11 that we're supposed to have an agreement in order to  
12 receive monies, I'm not going to lie to you guys and  
13 tell you anything different, I'll be finished in one  
14 second but what it does state is on the local council  
15 level, we can do an agreement on the local level and  
16 I know that it would cause a, a chaos to NYCHA to go  
17 into 300 separate local agreements but if that's what  
18 the regulations state then that's what the  
19 regulations state. NYCHA takes the regs, turns the  
20 regs to be interpreted for what their interpretation  
21 is but we get no training, we get no notifications  
22 when things are going to change, we find out when we  
23 submit paperwork and its rejected. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Thank you I just  
25 want to acknowledge that we've been joined by the

1  
2 Majority Leader, Jimmy Van Bramer and I don't know if  
3 my colleagues have any questions.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So, just, just  
5 for some clarity here, when they presented this... when  
6 NYCHA presented this TPA agreement was there training  
7 provided to you?

8 DANIEL BARBER: NYCHA held... NYCHA did it  
9 first, NYCHA did a training in Brooklyn. There was a  
10 lot of complaint from myself and Mr. Chaney Overton,  
11 Morrisania Air Rights about why do people have to go  
12 outside of their borough if you're going to do one  
13 training you might as well do it in every borough.  
14 Miss Jenelle Hudson sent us an email and told us that  
15 there were going to be two training in the Bronx; one  
16 at Soho and the other one would be at the Classic  
17 Center. We went in and the training although what  
18 NYCHA called a training it was more of a lecture  
19 because when questions were asked we were told that  
20 we're not going to go to the past, we can't go back  
21 to the past and we won't go to the past but in order  
22 to get to the present you have to talk about the  
23 past.

24 LISA KENNER: Well let me just touch on  
25 that because he's from the Bronx and I'm from



1  
2 Brooklyn. Mr. Cave, Bryan Cave came and trained us at  
3 Van Dyke Center and, and then... now during each month  
4 it's a cluster meeting and we... that's where  
5 Jacqueline Howard and stuff... and you learned it but  
6 my thing was you teaching us but there's no lawyer in  
7 the house that you can ask because the first three  
8 lines I said oh no I don't know this, I'm not signing  
9 my... I'm not signing my name, you know they didn't  
10 have a lawyer for us, for the, the, the residents,  
11 they had a lawyer for themselves but they didn't have  
12 one for ourselves and you don't know all that  
13 language and that terminology and all this old stuff,  
14 you know so it wasn't fair.

15 LILLY LOZANO: The other thing was that  
16 what was so disturbing is that I unanimously received  
17 an email stating that because I signed that agreement  
18 and I placed under protest that my proposal was nil  
19 and void, I would of not known had I not put in a  
20 proposal to plan something for my executive board, I  
21 mean that's, that's uncalled for, I mean and these  
22 cluster meetings they're not really assisting in any  
23 type of capacity and I tell you that because they  
24 pretty much have left the districts pretty much  
25 bankrupt, we have to go before our resident leaders,

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2 some of them don't have training, we have provided..  
3 and on my district I've provided training to my  
4 leadership and I've lost big developments behind it  
5 because they are perturbed over giving, giving the  
6 district 20 percent but then NYCHA is having  
7 everybody else do the work for 40 percent. The math  
8 doesn't add up, why, why, why do that if we, we so..  
9 that's why that memorandum of understanding, we need  
10 to revisit that because as the citywide council of  
11 presidents we have a responsibility to be this... the,  
12 the, the... you know the people to speak on behalf of  
13 every resident throughout the city and we're being  
14 disregarded and they go through the trouble of having  
15 cluster meetings and say that works, it does not work  
16 Chair at all, it doesn't work and you know what for  
17 someone to face prejudice and I have to get an  
18 unanimous email telling me that if I don't take under  
19 protest I'm not going to be able to get funding for  
20 my development, that's, that's really disheartening.  
21 To say that they have a partnership with us, I don't  
22 think so at all and that's all I have to say.

23 LISA KENNER: Let me just say some... and  
24 let me just say because I have to say this before..  
25 now they say they don't have any money if they start

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2 renting the community centers back and a lot of  
3 people don't have no place to go to have... whether  
4 they be a baby shower... [cross-talk]

5 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yeah, with respect  
6 that's off topic so... [cross-talk]

7 LISA KENNER: Okay, I'm sorry... [cross-  
8 talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...so let's just for  
10 the... [cross-talk]

11 LISA KENNER: ...but there's a point...  
12 [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...and I just want to...  
14 I... the Majority Leader has a question or comment, go  
15 ahead.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you  
17 very much Chair. First of all, I just want to say  
18 thank you to the Chair for having this important  
19 hearing. I have the great honor and privilege of  
20 representing the Queens Bridges Houses, the  
21 Ravenswood Houses, and the Woodside Houses in Queens  
22 and I just want to recognize in the audience Miss  
23 Annie Cotton Morris who is the head of our Woodside  
24 Houses Tenant Association but also the Queens's  
25 Council, she's a great leader in, in our community

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2 and our city and I, I know I'll be listening to Miss  
3 Cotton Morris on this topic but I'm really alarmed by  
4 the testimony and, and by the issues that are raised  
5 and, and I can assure you that Miss Cotton Morris and  
6 Miss April Simpson Taylor and Miss Carol Wilkins will  
7 be working on this together to protect certainly my  
8 TA's and RA's and all of them. So, I just want to  
9 thank the Chair again for the opportunity.

10 CHARLENE NIMMONS: Can I just respond to  
11 the question as far as the training?

12 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Sure.

13 CHARLENE NIMMONS: So, when you talk  
14 about training I actually was brought in by one of  
15 the resident associations as their admin so I came to  
16 the meeting that was done in Manhattan and again it's  
17 a lecturer, they lecture you, the problem is when you  
18 talk about training how can you train someone that  
19 most times have more information than you do. So, a  
20 lot of times the New York City Housing Authority  
21 staff is shifted around from location to location, no  
22 offense I, I love a lot of them, right because I got  
23 the opportunity to work with them but most of the  
24 time they have no clue on what those HUD regulations  
25 mean and how they apply to the associations. When I

1  
2 can come into a room and spot errors on documents and  
3 then I inform you of it then you kind of like push it  
4 to the side, oh we're just working through it, it is  
5 the beginning of a process. You all city council  
6 allocated funding for, for leadership training, you  
7 can't tell the Housing Authority to train us when  
8 we're training them and we're not being invited to  
9 the table... I had a conversation I'm told that I'm  
10 going to be talking further but they're going to hire  
11 someone to train us that's not associated with the  
12 Resident Associations. I'm not going to call out who  
13 asked me to come to the table before the funding was  
14 even allocated but we were told now I cannot be there  
15 as a training provider because I'm not a NYCHA  
16 Resident Association President anymore.

17 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, I want to  
18 understand the, the takeaway for me is I've heard  
19 three objections; one is there's no sufficient  
20 accounting of the TPA funding's for each development,  
21 is that... second, the agreement in your opinion even  
22 those who can see that there should be an agreement  
23 pursuant to regulations is too legalistic, too  
24 complicated, most resident leaders have no legal  
25 representation or attorney and then the third was

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2 engagement. Do you even though you disagree with  
3 NYCHA's reforms do you agree that the process does  
4 require reform or do you think it functions well as  
5 is?

6 CHARLENE NIMMONS: Sometimes reform just  
7 means just break it and start over because you can't  
8 reform something that's not re-formable, couldn't  
9 think of another... [cross-talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Do you believe...  
11 [cross-talk]

12 CHARLENE NIMMONS: ...word... [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Well do you believe  
14 the process is broken and needs to be fixed or do you  
15 think its fine as is?

16 CHARLENE NIMMONS: There's a lot of  
17 problems that need to be fixed, I think that one of  
18 the... one... we need to be looking at the HUD  
19 regulations, it says that a resident association is  
20 supposed to be a part of the dialogue from inception,  
21 it's not... it, it, it's about... from the time you have  
22 a sort you should be calling the resident association  
23 to the table not when you have your blue print and  
24 all the dialogue and everything together, your  
25 presentations, your PowerPoints, you, you need to

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2 have a conversation with the leadership to talk about  
3 what this should look like and what it should be not  
4 dictating, it's a dictatorship.

5 LILLY LOZANO: And, and for them to  
6 disengage with the citywide council of presidents  
7 when we, we collected by, by our, our leadership to...  
8 [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Can you speak to... on  
10 the mic?

11 LILLY LOZANO: ...to, to, to... I mean to, to  
12 be disregarded as a citywide that's why its crucial  
13 Chair and I'm, I'm, I'm passionately saying this, I  
14 can't... I can't get any more passionate. They... NYCHA  
15 needs to sit down with CCOP and, and take notice that  
16 we are going to have a memorandum of agreements and  
17 it shouldn't go to fit the bureaucracy of the law  
18 department because they want to prolong the  
19 inevitable, they need to sit... we, we are part of the  
20 964 and we, we continue to be ignored and disregarded  
21 and even though they say they have dialogue, its  
22 minimal dialogue and it is, I agree with my  
23 colleagues, it is a dictatorship. If it's not broke  
24 don't fix it. Its broke...

25 LISA KENNER: Let's... [cross-talk]

LILLY LOZANO: Its broke... [cross-talk]

LISA KENNER: But let me just... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Just a final comment...

LISA KENNER: I, I understand she say to sit with CCOP but then CCOP wasn't making sure that all the districts were getting the budget, okay because I'm talking about Brooklyn East, we haven't seen a budget in gods know how long from... I won't say his name but everybody knows but we didn't see it so you talk about CCOP, CCOP supposed to have been making sure that the districts were doing the right thing, okay.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Thank you for your testimony, thank you. So, the next panel will consist of the New York City Housing Authority. We have Sideya Sherman, the Executive Vice President and Jenelle Hudson. Can you raise your right hand? Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee and to respond honestly to council member's questions? You may proceed



1  
2           SIDEYA SHERMAN: Okay. Okay, can everyone  
3 hear me? Chair Ritchie Torres, members of the  
4 Committee on Public Housing and other distinguished  
5 members of the city council, good morning. I am  
6 Sideya Sherman, NYCHA's Executive Vice President for  
7 Community Engagement and Partnerships. Joining me  
8 today is Jenelle Hudson, Director of Resident  
9 Engagement Department. Thank you for this opportunity  
10 to discuss our work to empower residents and to  
11 strengthen communities by improving the tenant  
12 participation activity process. Through next  
13 generation NYCHA, our long... our long term strategic  
14 plan the authority is becoming a more efficient and  
15 effective landlord. One of the core pillars driving  
16 NYCHA's transformation is our work to engage  
17 residents in new and better ways and to connect them  
18 to best in class services. Under Chair Olatoye's  
19 leadership, the departments under my purview have  
20 tirelessly... have worked tirelessly to reset NYCHA's  
21 relationships with resident's transition from direct  
22 service to... from direct service delivery to a  
23 partnership based model and connect residents to  
24 quality economic opportunity. With a number of new  
25 reforms and new initiatives that empower residents

1  
2 and resident associations including a revamp of the  
3 outdated and cumbersome TPA funding process NYCHA is  
4 becoming a smarter 21<sup>st</sup> century landlord. In addition  
5 to empowering residents and resident leadership we  
6 are strengthening NYCHA's relationship with them. for  
7 instance, as part of Next Generation NYCHA we  
8 establish monthly cluster meetings last year to  
9 provide resident association members with updates on  
10 important and relevant topics. We've begun offering  
11 leadership training and development as part of our  
12 cluster meetings so resident association members can  
13 become more effective and at... effective advocates for  
14 their community. To give youth a voice and a role in  
15 tackling the community's most pressing issues we  
16 launched ten youth leadership councils in partnership  
17 with NYC Service and Capital One. Our latest youth  
18 summit was just two weeks ago, more than 130 young  
19 people attended and it highlighted the good work the  
20 councils are already doing leading their  
21 neighborhoods in clean up days, addressing community  
22 safety, and attracting new resources for these  
23 projects. As part of our work to transform the way  
24 NYCHA does business we committed to reforming the TPA  
25 process with the goal of strengthening resident

1  
2 associations by fostering their leadership and  
3 independence. I'll discuss details about the new  
4 process later in my testimony. We are also updating  
5 the resident association election process to make it  
6 more consistent and transparent and to encourage more  
7 development to participate. Thanks to the support of  
8 the city council we will launch a resident leadership  
9 training academy in partnership with CUNY continuing  
10 our work to build stronger, more independent resident  
11 association. For the first time in NYCHA's history  
12 we'll offer coursework that enables residents to earn  
13 college credits while gaining valuable leadership  
14 skills. The TPA funding process was broken, it was  
15 disheartening... it was disheartening and it involved  
16 layers of bureaucracy. To fix it we gathered input  
17 from residents on what we want... what they wanted in a  
18 new process, made improvements per this feedback, and  
19 launched the new process initially as a pilot which  
20 involved training for all stakeholders. Our  
21 engagement process started early and we took the time  
22 necessary to involve all stakeholders. It kicked off  
23 in November 2015 with a meeting between Chair Olatoye  
24 and the Citywide Council of Presidents. After a  
25 series of district meetings, more than 100 resident

1  
2 associations including the CCOP and District Board  
3 Members provided feedback across 11 focus groups  
4 which, which we presented back in a series of five  
5 meetings. We then coordinated with HUD, NYCHA's  
6 procurement and law departments and many others to  
7 put in place the changes residents wanted... residents  
8 wanted. Our outreach on the new process involved  
9 briefing with CCOP as well as the council's members  
10 of the Bronx Delegation including Chair Torres,  
11 Council Member Helen Rosenthal, and Representatives  
12 from the offices of Comptroller Scott Stringer,  
13 Congressman Hakeem Jeffries, and Speaker Mark, Mark-  
14 Viverito. We also conducted two webinars on the topic  
15 with a total of 70 elected official representatives  
16 and advocates and we briefed the legal aid society  
17 and the communities of service society. We received  
18 positive feedback at many of these meetings. We  
19 formally introduced the new process to resident  
20 leadership through multiple workshops with HUD, our  
21 partner and regulator and provided RA's the option to  
22 opt in to a TPA pilot that is the basis for the new  
23 program. In 17 citywide and borough level trainings  
24 as well as one on one coaching sessions residents  
25 learned more about the new process including the

1  
2 related funding agreement, form, and spending plans  
3 and received the new guide book. In total, we held  
4 more than 40 meetings, workshops, focus groups, and  
5 training centers... training sessions to improve the  
6 TPA process. Resident feedback is the foundation for  
7 our reform of the TPA process, residents told us they  
8 wanted more visibility of the funds, the choice to  
9 fund district councils, more local control over  
10 spending, and faster processing and purchasing  
11 ability. Change is hard which is why we work so hard  
12 to engage stakeholders on this new process and we  
13 realize that there's a small but vocal group which is  
14 dissatisfied with some of the changes but we believe  
15 the improvements are in line with industry standards  
16 and are equitable and sustainable. NYCHA staff is  
17 assisting with the transition to the process. Let me  
18 give you some background on TPA funds; they come from  
19 our federal operating funds, HUD requires public  
20 housing authorities to allocate 25 dollars per  
21 dwelling unit of which 15 or 60 percent is for the  
22 resident association and ten or 40 percent is for the  
23 housing authority to fund a range of resident  
24 association and resident engagement matters including  
25 tenant participation activities. TPA funds are

1  
2 reduced when our operating funding is reduced through  
3 proration. Last year for instance they were only able  
4 to allocate about 11 dollars per unit instead of 15.  
5 NYCHA has not been fully funded in over a decade  
6 including for its TPA funding. It should be noted  
7 that the funding NYCHA receives does not fully cover  
8 the cost of all work related to engaging residents,  
9 procurement, and supporting resident, resident  
10 leadership including a resident association election.  
11 Before TPA funds were complicated to access and  
12 difficult to use, the process was unwieldy and  
13 disorganized with NYCHA even acting as a travel agent  
14 in some cases. By decentralizing control of the funds  
15 and instituting a commercial credit card to access  
16 them the new process is smart, efficient,  
17 transparent, and promotes accountability.  
18 Transparency. Previously TPA funds were allocated by  
19 a district and individual RA's did not have full  
20 visibility on spending. Now the funds are allocated  
21 and tracked at the development level and NYCHA will  
22 inform each RA a funding availability annually.  
23 Residents said they wanted a choice on whether to  
24 fund their districts and now they have... now they can  
25 decide to do so if they want. Efficiency, before

1 residents had to rely on NYCHA for all procurements.  
2 Residents wanted more flexibility and now they can  
3 use the commercial card to make approved purchases up  
4 to 5,000 dollars so resident association can get  
5 office supplies at the nearest Staples without having  
6 to order them through NYCHA's procurement department  
7 which is set up to handle the needs of a three-  
8 billion-dollar organization meaning that it could  
9 take 30 days to get these simple supplies. Currently  
10 33 resident associations are piloting the use of the  
11 commercial card and our goal is to have 80 percent of  
12 the RA's using it by next year. To speed the process,  
13 we have also instituted faster turnarounds, five  
14 business days for reviewing funding proposals. While  
15 unspent funds could be rolled over in the past we  
16 believe that these funds which benefit residents and  
17 communities are more important than ever and should  
18 be spent within the year like council funding.  
19 Accountability, previously this was a paper driven  
20 process as part of the Next Gen transformation to  
21 digital we moved it online and are using IT systems  
22 to track spending proposals and reconciliations. In  
23 addition, we establish clear guidelines for both  
24 NYCHA staff and the RA's for administering and  
25

1  
2 accessing funds, issued a new guide book, updated  
3 relevant forms, and trained RA's as well as NYCHA  
4 staff on the new process. Accountability is  
5 important. Our new agreement on the use of TPA funds  
6 protects residents as much as it protects the funds  
7 outlining the responsibilities of both NYCHA and the  
8 RA. For instance, the RA agrees to have timely  
9 elections and engage in activities that improve  
10 resident's quality of life while NYCHA agrees to  
11 officially recognize the RA and administer the  
12 funding accordingly. Many of the challenges RA's  
13 experienced in the old process were due to lack of  
14 written clarity between NYCHA and the RA. The funding  
15 agreement which is accompanied by a plain language  
16 guide book outlines when and how funding becomes  
17 available, what forms are required of the RA, how  
18 payment is issued to vendors and the terms for  
19 recording and resolving disputes. The RA also agrees  
20 to comply with HUD and NYCHA guidelines including  
21 conflicts of interest rules. Not only is a written  
22 agreement required by HUD for every public housing  
23 authority but it's typical for any financial  
24 transaction from renting an apartment to buying a  
25 cell phone as well as any disbursement of funds from



1  
2 a government... from a government body. The previous  
3 agreement was between the CCOP and NYCHA, it is now  
4 between the RA's and NYCHA. In preparing our  
5 agreement we learned from other public housing  
6 authorities, looking at sample contracts and guide  
7 books from Boston and Chicago. RA's had approximately  
8 90 days to review the agreement and also had an  
9 opportunity to seek independent legal advice if they  
10 desired. During this process RA's still had access to  
11 the funds. One hundred and thirteen RA's have signed  
12 the agreement nonetheless we're responding to  
13 feedback from residents and valuable input recently  
14 received from the Legal Aid Society and Brooklyn  
15 Legal Services to simplify the agreement's language.  
16 We're providing revised drafts to legal aid this  
17 week. RA's sign an agreement with NYCHA submitting a  
18 spending plan and... submitting a spending plan and  
19 keep proper financial records all in accordance with  
20 HUD guidelines. HUD states that only a duly elected  
21 resident council can receive TPA funds. HUD also  
22 defines the eligible participants beneficiaries and  
23 activities and stipulates that RA's complete training  
24 similar to the 17 sessions we held earlier this year  
25 with resident leadership. We focus on reforming RA's

1  
2 elections as part of Next Gen so that more  
3 developments can become eligible to receive these  
4 vital funds. Some examples of eligible tenant  
5 participation activities include RA membership  
6 building, information dissemination, health fairs,  
7 develop clean up days, and educational classes and  
8 workshops. RA's must still submit annual spending  
9 plans and follow procurement rules. What's different  
10 now is that they submit their proposals for these  
11 funds quarterly instead of prior to every activity  
12 which speeds up the access to the funds. As I  
13 mentioned RA's can use their commercial credit card  
14 for approved purchases under 5,000 and then reconcile  
15 their spending via our online system, this will also  
16 streamline the process. Purchases over 5,000 dollars  
17 will still go through NYCHA's procurement process  
18 which is what residents requested due to their  
19 concerns over making larger payments, this also  
20 ensures compliance with HUD procurement guidelines.  
21 The commercial card can also be used for approved  
22 travel which involves the same checks and balances in  
23 place where a NYCHA employee traveling for official  
24 business. As with smaller purchases use of the  
25 commercial card makes arrangements easier and faster.

1  
2 NYCHA's success depends in part on our collaboration  
3 with residents, TPA funds are a crucial way to engage  
4 residents, keep them informed, and include them in  
5 the conversation on how to address the authority's  
6 challenges. As they become more effective leaders  
7 through tenant participation activities residents  
8 will help improve the quality of life at their  
9 developments in their community at large. In our work  
10 to engage more than 250 resident associations  
11 citywide we have seen the positive impact of this  
12 partnership. As our Next Gen NYCHA vision continues  
13 to be brought to life we will endeavor to get more  
14 residents involved in making a difference in their  
15 communities through easier access and use of TPA  
16 funds. With residents by our side we will continue to  
17 create the safe, clean, and connected communities  
18 that all New Yorkers deserve. Thank you, we are happy  
19 to answer any questions you may have.

20 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Thank you for your  
21 testimony. We're going to start with Council Member  
22 Salamanca.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you Mr.  
24 Chair. How about a few questions regarding your, your  
25

1  
2 administrative staff, how many staff members do you  
3 have that deal with the TPA funds?

4 JENELLE HUDSON: Sure, currently the TPA  
5 unit consists of ten staff and that's really staff  
6 that has been managing the process all along. Through  
7 this reform we have added additional support in the  
8 resident engagement lead coordinators and they're  
9 managing the new... the, the tenant associations who  
10 are using the new process.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Alright, so...  
12 you know we had a meeting with Bryan not too long ago  
13 to get an update to find out exactly what's happening  
14 and he mentioned and, and... if I'm not mistaken Mr  
15 Chair that you had three staff members... [cross-talk]

16 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: ...that were  
18 dealing with TPA funds.

19 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, to Jenelle's point  
20 there are... there are ten staff within our resident  
21 engagement department, there's also additional staff  
22 signed within our budget department. Our costs  
23 related to administering TPA exceed what is available  
24 through TPA funding. I would also add that the TPA  
25 funds if you read the regulations they not only apply

1  
2 to administering TPA they also apply to a lot of the  
3 requirements that PHA's have under 964 so  
4 administering elections, resolving election disputes,  
5 etcetera those are charges that NYCHA right now  
6 absorbs. So, the core team is ten within resident  
7 engagements... [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay... [cross-  
9 talk]

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...and then there are part  
11 time, full time equivalent staff within our budget  
12 department.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So, your  
14 administrative... so the, the administrative fees that  
15 you take from the TPA funds are used to cover your,  
16 your, your overhead costs for the residential  
17 engagement department?

18 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So... partially, right, so  
19 they cover... they don't fully cover the cost of, of  
20 the staff time that we commit to tenant participation  
21 activities, we've also used our administrative fee to  
22 cover costs related with NYCHA's resident advisory  
23 board so this is a board of resident association  
24 presidents. NYCHA for many years as a matter of  
25 practice has used those funds to provide stipends and

1  
2 meals and transportation for our resident advisory  
3 board process and sort of taking that out of our  
4 administrative fees.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: In 2016 what  
6 was your administrative fee in total that you... that  
7 NYCHA took out of the TPA funding?

8 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so it's 40  
9 percent, in 2015 there was approximately 1.5 million  
10 available in administrative dollars, our staff time  
11 was 1.8.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay, is there  
13 a way that we can get a, a... for this committee  
14 meeting get a detailed excel sheet in terms of the  
15 last couple of years, what was the administrative fee  
16 that NYCHA took out of the TPA funds?

17 SIDEAY: It's a standard 40 percent of  
18 the allocations so we... [cross-talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: But they vary,  
20 right because you said that it depends on what HUD...  
21 [cross-talk]

22 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Exactly... [cross-talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: ...allocates so  
24 in the... [cross-talk]

25 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure... [cross-talk]

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: ...discerning  
3 years it could be higher than others?

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, when we... so, when we  
5 adopted our budget which is available online it, it  
6 does include all of NYCHA's operating funds and what  
7 that... and the proration rate and so it would be the  
8 percentage of that. So, we would... it's what's  
9 available through our adopted budget so we can  
10 certainly share that.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay, in terms  
12 of the, the agreements when they were given, so I  
13 represent the Bronx, you know I have the third high...  
14 highest NYCHA portfolio in the city of New York and,  
15 and the concerns that I got from my tenant leaders or  
16 the tenant presidents the fact that they did not  
17 understand these agreements and I know that that  
18 message... that they, they... that, that message was  
19 clear to you because I was part of the emails and  
20 you're... and, and you were also part of the emails  
21 what is NYCHA doing to, to come back and sit down  
22 with the tenant leaders or at least by borough to  
23 explain to them how these agreements actually work  
24 and to really dissect these agreements with them?  
25

1  
2           SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so we... as, as we  
3 discussed we had a number of workshops and training  
4 that also included an explanation of the agreement  
5 and we spent some time going back and forth and  
6 giving more information to residents. Particularly in  
7 your district we provided written responses to every  
8 question that, that your district members had but we  
9 also realize that resident associations needed  
10 independent legal advice which is fair and so we're  
11 pleased that we had some feedback from Legal Aid  
12 Society from the... from the residents who reached out  
13 to them which includes I'm sure some residents in  
14 your district, we also had feedback from Brooklyn  
15 Legal Services. We have taken that feedback and  
16 updated the agreement so that it reflects what we're  
17 hearing from residents. So, in terms of substance  
18 much of the substance is the same so the agreement  
19 still sets the terms between NYCHA and the housing  
20 authority. In terms of style and language we've  
21 simplified the, the language so that it's easier for  
22 people to understand and to execute and we've made  
23 sure that its more streamlined and so we hope to...  
24 we're sending an updated version of that agreement to  
25 legal aid this week and then we would hope to have



1  
2 something to share again with the resident leaders  
3 that meets their satisfaction.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So, you have...  
5 so you're working on a new agreement now?

6 SIDEYA SHERMAN: We're updating... [cross-  
7 talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: You're  
9 updating your agreement... [cross-talk]

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Correct... [cross-talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So, what  
12 happens to the agreements that were signed are they  
13 null and void?

14 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, we want one set of  
15 agreements with everyone so we would go back to the  
16 TA presidents who've signed... as I mentioned in terms  
17 of substance it's still the same requirements but  
18 we're making sure that everyone has the same  
19 agreement so we should be able to circulate something  
20 soon that has a simplified... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: When was the  
22 deadline... [cross-talk]

23 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...which... [cross-talk]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: ...to sign the  
25 agreements, do you remember?

1

2

SIDEYA SHERMAN: May 1<sup>st</sup>.

3

4

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: May 1<sup>st</sup>, so my understanding is that after May 1<sup>st</sup> they did not have access to their funds unless that agreement was signed?

6

7

8

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, after May 1<sup>st</sup> we were no longer approving... [cross-talk]

9

10

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay... [cross-talk]

11

SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...proposals... [cross-talk]

12

13

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: ...so, now you're updating the agreement so do they have access to their funds since you're, you're updating your agreement and you have not submitted a new agreement?

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so as we, we will get a new agreement out immediately and so as I mentioned we're sending one out next week. We've already started to receive proposals from resident associations that do not have agreements and we would be prepared to move forward and approve those once we have the agreement. You should note that many of the resident associations that have had access to their funds during this transition process, we've... between January and May, they had access to their funds to

1  
2 submit proposals, many submitted proposals for things  
3 that were planned months ahead with the anticipation  
4 of having a pause in May and so as soon as we get  
5 that agreement back out to them we would move forward  
6 and release those... any, any additional funds for  
7 proposals thereafter. If they proposed something  
8 before May that is planned for the out month they've  
9 already received those.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: What about  
11 those residents, the TA presidents that are using  
12 these, these funds to, to, to pay for costs that  
13 they're inquiring in their... in their offices, their,  
14 their local offices such as internet, fax machine,  
15 cable, what happens there?

16 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, if you have an  
17 ongoing service and did not sign an agreement there's  
18 been 30 days potentially where that, that... a payment  
19 hasn't been made. I think in no instance we've had  
20 an... there have been to my knowledge no instances  
21 where services have been shut off as a result of not  
22 having an agreement.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay. Also at  
24 least in my council districts I've allocated  
25 discretionary funding for my TA... my TA presidents for

1  
2 their family days, about 5,000 dollars each, I want  
3 to make... I want to make sure that that has nothing to  
4 do with... that's not going to effect in terms of if  
5 they have not signed these agreements they will have  
6 access to that, that money that I... that I allocated  
7 to my TA presidents?

8 SIDEYA SHERMAN: It's a completely  
9 separate process.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay. Alright,  
11 thank you Mr. Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yeah, I apologize  
13 Council Members are in and out because we have  
14 conflicting votes and hearings so we might have to  
15 step out at some point. Okay, so, so do you... do you  
16 regard the package of reforms that you've put forward  
17 as, as comprehensive like how would you...

18 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, yes. So, I think  
19 this is a pretty comprehensive set of reforms, you  
20 know in terms of... so, a lot of what we've heard as  
21 major concerns were lack of visibility on their  
22 development level budgets and we agree, you know this  
23 was something that was tracked at the district level,  
24 it's now tracked at the development level. We heard  
25 concerns about the ease of spending and so using

1  
2 NYCHA's procurement channels for everyday purchases  
3 we've changed that with the commercial card and then  
4 in terms of capacity building and technical  
5 assistance I think that this is pretty comprehensive.  
6 This is the first time that we've ever rolled out a,  
7 a process with this amount of training where we've  
8 assigned people with one on one coaching. I think we  
9 are resident associations as we move through the  
10 process but this has certainly been the most  
11 comprehensive reform that NYCHA has taken with  
12 respect to TPA.

13 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And, and I share  
14 NYCHA's goal of promoting greater transparency around  
15 TPA funds but it strikes me that your comprehensive  
16 package has a few glaring omissions and one of them  
17 is there seems to be no plan for reducing the  
18 administrative overhead of 40 percent, I'm not aware  
19 of a government program that has a 40 percent  
20 overhead, I think the notion of a 40 percent overhead  
21 would suggest an inefficiently run program so why is  
22 there no plan for curbing administrative overhead? I  
23 think the second observation I would make is there  
24 seems to be no strategy for building resident  
25 councils and without a resident council there's no

1  
2 means of accessing TPA funds and as you know I  
3 believe as many as a third of NYCHA developments are  
4 without resident councils and I think the third is  
5 related to the second which is this huge pot of  
6 unspent TPA funds, what's the strategy for actually  
7 spending what, ten to 15 million dollars of unspent  
8 TPA funds. So, those are the three glaring omissions  
9 that I identify in this comprehensive package.

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so I can speak to  
11 each one.

12 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yeah...

13 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, with respect,  
14 respect to the overhead, the, the 40 percent is set  
15 by HUD and as I mentioned it does not cover all of  
16 NYCHA's costs so in terms of... [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I'm sorry, are you  
18 required to spend 40 percent or is that a matter of  
19 discretion, you can go as high as 40 percent?

20 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, we can go as high  
21 as... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay, so that's... I  
23 think that's an important distinction.  
24  
25

1  
2           SIDEYA SHERMAN: But, but I would also  
3 just add, right so, what's important to note is with  
4 this reform... [cross-talk]

5           CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Does that strike  
6 you... do you think 40 percent is high?

7           SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, I, I think it's  
8 actually far reasonable for... [cross-talk]

9           CHAIRPERSON TORRES: You think 40 percent  
10 overhead for a program is... [cross-talk]

11          SIDEYA SHERMAN: So... [cross-talk]

12          CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...reasonable?

13          SIDEYA SHERMAN: But it's not 40 percent  
14 for a program its 40 percent for NYCHA to fill its  
15 obligations with respect to resident association and  
16 that extends beyond TPA... [cross-talk]

17          CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay... [cross-talk]

18          SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, that's, that's the  
19 point that I, you know... [cross-talk]

20          CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Is, is that  
21 consistent with the norm in city government or in  
22 government in general, a 40 percent overhead for  
23 programs or... [cross-talk]

24          SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, there's... [cross-  
25 talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...operations... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...work that HUD requires NYCHA to do that is not funded to do obviously our core business of being a landlord. The way that, that HUD has set up TPA funding is essentially to provide the housing authority with work that's, that's on... to meet its resident obligations with respect to 964 and so the funding is not only for administering TPA fund, it is for certifying over 200 plus resident associations, it's for the work required to create new associations, it's for the work required to engage residents, it is a very broad set of activities which can be charged to TPA funding most of which right now NYCHA is funding the... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: See I see administrative overheads as a necessary evil because more dollars spent on admin are fewer dollars spent on actual programming and engagement of the residents so it, it would... what... that, that... I, I appreciate the applause but this is a city council committee hearing and... and, and, and so it would seem... it would seem to me that the goal should be to limit overhead as much as possible, how do we... would, would you be



1  
2 willing to transfer if you had HUD's approval the  
3 administration of TP... TPA funds that could do it with  
4 much less administrative overhead than NYCHA can?

5           SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, can I speak... let me  
6 explain to you what our long-term plan is with  
7 respect to TPA. So, as I mentioned we have ten people  
8 right now who are within resident engagement who, who  
9 oversee TPA as we transition to the commercial card  
10 those people will actually be the folks who are  
11 working in the zones who are redeployed as resident  
12 engagement coordinators and so the work of the  
13 resident engagement coordinators is not only  
14 administering TPA they are the ones to one point with  
15 the resident association, they handle elections, they  
16 handle a number of other responsibilities that are  
17 frontline and are more programmatic in nature and so  
18 there are a number of efficiencies we've created with  
19 this reform, a lot of what we're doing in our central  
20 unit is very... you know processing invoices and  
21 procurements and purchase orders and the goal of  
22 transitioning to the commercial card was to be... and  
23 to move those activities to more frontline roles  
24 through our resident engagement team. I think  
25 similarly we obviously have a big task ahead of us

1  
2 with creating new resident associations at  
3 developments where RA's don't exist and again that's  
4 the work that would require NYCHA to commit staff  
5 resources and staff time to make that happen and so  
6 those are the ways that we would use the, the funding  
7 to make sure that we have the resources... [cross-talk]

8 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, I take it...  
9 [cross-talk]

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...that are necessary...  
11 [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...that reducing  
13 administrative overhead so that we can free up more  
14 dollars for programming that's not a bill of NYCHA's?

15 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, this is a way that  
16 we use our funding to cover the cost associated...  
17 [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Well I understand  
19 that's the... [cross-talk]

20 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...of the programmatic  
21 work that... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...way you... I, I...  
23 [cross-talk]

24 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...we're doing... [cross-  
25 talk]

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...I'm... and I get  
3 there's a... there's a fiscal reality you have to  
4 grapple with, I understand that, right but I'm asking  
5 about goals like are you going to strive toward a  
6 world where you can limit administrative overhead so  
7 that we have more dollars available to residents  
8 whether you achieve that goal is a separate question  
9 but I want to know what your goal is in relation to  
10 administrative overhead?

11 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, our goal is to make  
12 sure that these funds are used for their purpose and  
13 the funds that go to residents are used for that  
14 purpose and... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay... [cross-talk]

16 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...we, we know that that  
17 does require work on NYCHA's end to make that happen.  
18 Our work is, is resident basing, it's, it's frontline  
19 work and there would always be a need for that to  
20 happen, what you're describing as administrative  
21 overhead is really the work of frontline resident  
22 engagement coordinators who are out working with  
23 tenant associations every day.

24 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, I'm assuming...  
25 I'm, I'm assuming no is the answer to my question? I

1  
2 don't... I don't want to dwell on this. How many  
3 employees in NYCHA are exclusively responsible for  
4 the administration of TPA funds?

5 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, there are the ten  
6 employees within the resident engagement department...  
7 [cross-talk]

8 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, so those ten  
9 employees exclusively handle TPA funds, that's the...

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Those... they're  
11 exclusively responsible.

12 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay and, and what's  
13 the overall budget that you have for those employees?

14 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, the cost of those  
15 employees is the... about 1.8 million that, that  
16 includes some of our budget... the full-time equivalent  
17 of some budget staff and then the, the TPA funds are  
18 about 1.5.

19 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Now I imagine one of  
20 the goals of your reforms is to more efficiently... and  
21 we're going... I'm going to ask questions about  
22 procurement later on but is to more efficiently  
23 procure goods and services, right?

24 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh.  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And I would think as  
3 you achieve greater efficiency, as you more  
4 efficiently procure goods and services there would be  
5 fewer employees required to do that so I'm not clear  
6 why the efficiencies in, in procurement will not lead  
7 to less administrative overhead and therefore more  
8 funding's for services for residents.

9 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, I can... I will  
10 explain again what, what this... what we're doing with  
11 this process. So, we have the ten staff who are  
12 managing what is essentially the old TPA process,  
13 they are managing the proposal by proposal  
14 submissions as we transition staff... as we transition  
15 resident associations into the commercial card. As  
16 Miss Hudson mention we have 15 resident engagement  
17 coordinators who are specifically working with  
18 resident associations who have the commercial card,  
19 TPA is a portion of their time because they're doing  
20 more programmatic engaging residents, our goal as we  
21 transition all of our resident associations or at  
22 least 80 percent into the commercial card is to  
23 decentralize that team... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, it sounds like  
25 these... those employees in your unit are not

1  
2 exclusively responsible for the administration of TPA  
3 funds but are taking on what could be noble  
4 engagement work that has no direct connection to TPA  
5 funding, that's what it sounds to me, is that a, a  
6 fair characterization or...

7           SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, what I described to  
8 you were ten who are exclusively responsible, 15  
9 staff who have other responsibilities who are only  
10 working on... with residents who are in the pilot and  
11 so the roles that once we are able to bring at least  
12 80 percent of our resident associations into the  
13 commercial card process that decentralized... that  
14 centralized exclusive TPA team would be redeployed to  
15 frontline positions within our department that are  
16 more programmatic in nature. So, you would have a  
17 very small administrative team that's only handling  
18 large procurements.

19           CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Now you're... so,  
20 you're investing dollars in this frontline staff,  
21 right, have you ever asked NYCHA residents whether is  
22 it... is it better to have dollars spent on that  
23 frontline staff or more dollars for programming and  
24 goods and services relating to resident engagement  
25

1  
2 like is, is that a question that you ever posed to  
3 the resident leaders or...

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Programming of, of what  
5 sort?

6 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: The, the dollars in  
7 which the... how you use the dollars, how you... the  
8 services on which you might spend these dollars, the  
9 programs, you know whatever the various uses of TPA  
10 funds are?

11 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh. So, I mean to  
12 the extent that NYCHA still requires staff and we  
13 will with... require staff to be able to meet our  
14 responsibilities with respect to 964, we would always  
15 anticipate that there's a need to use the  
16 administrative dollars for that purpose that doesn't  
17 mean that we don't engage residents around ways to  
18 build programming much of the work that we do that's  
19 programmatic however we get through external  
20 resources and so we regularly seek external resources  
21 to be able to implement programs.

22 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Now there were a  
23 number of resident leaders who testified that when  
24 they asked NYCHA for an accounting of their TPA  
25

1  
2 dollars that NYCHA could not provide them with that  
3 information.

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, the... [cross-talk]

5 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And, and I found  
6 that striking because as I understand there's one  
7 formula of 25 dollars per unit which applies  
8 uniformly across every development so given that  
9 formula like what explains NYCHA's inability to  
10 provide residents when an accounting of the TPA  
11 funding's at each development would receive?

12 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh. So, every  
13 development when we rolled out this new process  
14 received what their current allocation is and what  
15 their back-fund amount is, that's the first time that  
16 that information has been made available and so that  
17 was the key piece of the reform making sure that  
18 people have clear accounting moving forward.

19 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I, I, I just... and I  
20 under... that's a great thing that that information...  
21 why was that information not available... [cross-talk]

22 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, what I... [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...in the last three  
24 years?  
25



1  
2           SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so what I can say...  
3 I mean I can... I certainly can't speak in detail to  
4 the past but I can give you some overview of what has  
5 occurred. For many years as you heard from the  
6 resident associations who testified before us this  
7 was something that was allocated and tracked at the  
8 district level so the districts adopted budgets that  
9 were made up of the allocation of their developments  
10 and then they expended against those budgets. Certain  
11 resident associations also expended against their  
12 budgets. So, while we can certainly let a resident  
13 association know what their allocation was their  
14 expenditures are a part of the district expenditures  
15 and that has been the fundamental challenge.

16           CHAIRPERSON TORRES: No, the resident  
17 leaders are claiming that they did not know what  
18 their allocations were.

19           SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, the allocation is  
20 something that we can provide, it's based on the  
21 formula so that... [cross-talk]

22           CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And, and so that's  
23 information that you, you've had the ability to  
24 provide to every resident leader from the very  
25 beginning or...

1  
2           SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, we've never not been  
3 able... we can provide the allocation amount but we  
4 can't provide is the actual expenditures because  
5 their expenditures were also part of what was in the  
6 district.

7           CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And, and... okay, I  
8 will say that a number of years ago I asked for the  
9 allocations for each development and I could not  
10 obtain that information from NYCHA so... I find your  
11 answer to be quite strange and its inconsistent with  
12 the testimony that we've heard. So, the dollars would  
13 flow to... through the district council was, was there...  
14 was there a portion of those dollars to which the  
15 local resident leaders were entitled?

16           JENELLE HUDSON: Yeah, sure. So, we have...  
17 each, each district adopted a budget annually so as  
18 an example Bronx North for their 2015 budget their  
19 total allocation for the collective developments  
20 within Bronx North was 200,000... 288,402 dollars that  
21 was the total for all developments. The district  
22 adopted a budget that year of 221,940 dollars which  
23 left 66,462 dollars left over to be dispersed among...  
24 amongst the developments within the district.  
25

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, why not if, if there were resident leaders who were wondering about their allocations why not since you have the same formula for every development why not put it online and say, you know here's how... here are the number of units in your development and here is the dollar amount to which you're entitled and it, it will not vary from... what varies is the proration.

JENELLE HUDSON: Uh-huh...

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: But the underlying proportion remains the same from year to year so why not put that information online?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Absolutely, so that's exactly... so we provided the resident associations with their information this year, our goal January 1<sup>st</sup> is to make this information available publicly online... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Why not tomorrow?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, one of the things... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Like I could do 25 times 178,000 units or I can take your development and... like I understand... it seems simple arithmetic...

1  
2 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, so we, we can  
3 absolutely do that, I think what we heard in the  
4 feedback from resident associations was that they  
5 wanted to be able to weigh in on how that information  
6 was presented so that residents also had a sense of  
7 how they were using the funding and their activities.  
8 We can certainly make that available.

9 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Not January 1<sup>st</sup> but  
10 as immediately?

11 SIDEYA SHERMAN: That information is... we  
12 can certainly make it publicly available.

13 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay, let us know  
14 the allocation... [cross-talk]

15 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Absolutely... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...to which each  
17 development is entitled, okay. And, and now under  
18 your new reforms the dollars would no longer flow  
19 through the district councils but instead... [cross-  
20 talk]

21 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Directly... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...the local councils?

23 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh.

24 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, it's in an  
25 effort to promote local control, do you... do you have

1  
2 a sense of what impact that will have on the district  
3 councils or...

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, what that means is  
5 that the resident associations have to... have a choice  
6 in funding the district councils, they have to  
7 affirmatively opt in to do that and that's exactly  
8 what we heard from the resident associations when we  
9 had the focus groups and that's what we've provided.

10 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And do you  
11 anticipate that most leaders will opt in or opt out?

12 SIDEYA SHERMAN: I think it's a mix and I  
13 think that it depends on the district and so there  
14 certainly are variations across the city and certain...  
15 you know different dynamics within the district and  
16 so our role is to really administer the funds the way  
17 that they're supposed to be allocated and you know  
18 the district leaders and their executive boards would  
19 work to encourage their membership to participate...  
20 [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Why... imagine if I'm  
22 a resident leader, I'm a rational actor and I have a  
23 choice between directly controlling my dollars or  
24 ceding control of those dollars to the district which  
25 choice am I more likely to make?

1  
2 JANELLE: So, it's not ceding control of  
3 the dollars its funding the district at a portion of  
4 your, your allocations so they retain control but  
5 they're allocating a portion of their budget to the  
6 district... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Well and who would  
8 spend that... [cross-talk]

9 JANELLE: ...to support the district...  
10 [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...who would spend  
12 that portion it's not... [cross-talk]

13 JENELLE HUDSON: The district determines...  
14 [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: The district...  
16 [cross-talk]

17 JENELLE HUDSON: ...what... how they're  
18 spending... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...okay, I understand...  
20 [cross-talk]

21 JENELLE HUDSON: ...it or the portion  
22 that's allocated to the district... [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, that's what I  
24 mean by ceding control.  
25

1  
2           SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh, so I'm... I think  
3 that there's a mix so what we heard from resident  
4 associations were if you're a small development for  
5 instance you may find benefit in aggregating your  
6 resources and participating in the district, if you  
7 are as large as Queensbridge for instance you may,  
8 you know the district budget is almost a lot... is a  
9 lot of your budget and so I think that there's a mix  
10 in terms of how, how resident associations want to  
11 work in the district, I think what's most important  
12 is that the district outlines its plans for the year...  
13 for the year and how it plans to use the funding  
14 that's the... that's the key piece in determining  
15 whether the resident association would participate.

16           CHAIRPERSON TORRES: What, what is the,  
17 the standard for determining... because I'm, I'm... I  
18 lack just, just like there's confusion about the  
19 dollar amount to which each development is entitled  
20 there's confusion about what are the proper uses of  
21 TPA funds so what's, what's the standard for  
22 determining an activity's eligibility for TPA funds?

23           SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, the guidelines are  
24 set by HUD they are to improve quality of life, HUD  
25 provided more guidance on this in more recent years

1  
2 and so activities such as a training program or a  
3 literacy services or clean up days or, or services...

4 [cross-talk]

5 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: What's... [cross-talk]

6 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...that would... [cross-  
7 talk]

8 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...the broad standard  
9 plan, I mean... [cross-talk]

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...the broader... [cross-  
11 talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...is there a phrase  
13 that you use... [cross-talk]

14 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...education to improve  
15 resident quality of life, promote... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...because... [cross-  
17 talk]

18 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...sufficiency... [cross-  
19 talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...improving resident  
21 quality of life can mean picking up dog poop.

22 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Exactly... [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Like that, that... and  
24 I don't... [cross-talk]

25 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...and so... [cross-talk]



1  
2 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...think that's the  
3 intended use of TPA funds.

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Exactly and so one of  
5 the things that we provided in the guide, guidebook  
6 is a list of what's permissible, a list of what's not  
7 permissible so for instance an amusement park ride at  
8 a family day would not be a permissible activity but  
9 you know an educational... or, or health fair activity  
10 would be and so because the, the guidance is very  
11 specific we've provided actual examples of what's  
12 permissible and what's not permissible.

13 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, it sounds like  
14 based on those two examples is the location of the  
15 programming is what's relevant that if they... if  
16 they're... if the programming is provided on NYCHA  
17 grounds and... [cross-talk]

18 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, it, it's based on  
19 the intended purpose so if its promoting an  
20 educational activity or a building membership for the  
21 resident association for instance it would be a  
22 permissible activity, if it is strictly entertainment  
23 or amusement it would not be a permissible activity.

24 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: What if a tenant  
25 leader were looking to allocate a share of his or her

1  
2 budget to a local community center or senior center  
3 would that be a permissible use?

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Any activity...

5 JENELLE HUDSON: For the activity but if  
6 any equipment or supplies they would not be able to.

7 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And why not?

8 JENELLE HUDSON: It's an ineligible  
9 activity according to HUD.

10 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, HUD specifically  
11 says that?

12 JENELLE HUDSON: So, the, the guidelines  
13 are... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, even if it's  
15 equipment that enables you to do the activity its  
16 ineligible for TPA funds?

17 JENELLE HUDSON: If it's for the resident  
18 associations use, continued use but if they're  
19 dedicating let's say furniture to supply... you know to  
20 equip the community center, no its not.

21 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Understood. Do you  
22 have a list of best practices because I, I, I mean I  
23 think the more guidance you can provide residents on  
24 the best use of TPA funds the better, do you have a  
25

1  
2 list of best practices in the use of TPA funds that  
3 you provide residents?

4 JENELLE HUDSON: So, we have a few  
5 examples of what other resident associations have  
6 utilized the funds for. One example one of the  
7 developments had... the TA supported their youth  
8 leadership council most recently with their efforts  
9 to clean the development and host a green day so TPA  
10 funds were set aside for that. At Lincoln Houses we  
11 have computer training program to help seniors become  
12 comfortable with technology and... which also leads to  
13 the online certification that we have. Queensbridge  
14 is a wonderful example of a senior music therapy  
15 program that is being used to reduce social isolation  
16 among seniors. At Red Hook and this is one example  
17 that I really, you know appreciate and love is... and  
18 she's here now one of our CCOP members had an ESL  
19 program for the increased Asian population in her  
20 development recognizing a need to service and meet  
21 the needs of all of the residents versus... there  
22 versus Mott Haven who could not really establish a  
23 quorum for about five years and of eight to ten,  
24 consisting of eight to ten residents couldn't  
25 establish a quorum for five years yet that president

1  
2 accessed TPA funds to attend multiple session three  
3 conferences across the country and that... those  
4 funding... that funding was not really using to serve  
5 the residents of Mott Haven that was at the district  
6 level. So, the other examples that I gave are really  
7 great examples... [cross-talk]

8 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, I take it that  
9 you object to the... [cross-talk]

10 JENELLE HUDSON: ...of utilizing... [cross-  
11 talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...section... the use  
13 of... [cross-talk]

14 JENELLE HUDSON: No, absolutely not.  
15 Absolutely not, its, it's... this effort is to bring  
16 the funding and the use of the funding directly to  
17 the residents of the development which is something  
18 that we've heard that was needed so those examples  
19 that I gave were great examples of... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Those are great  
21 examples... [cross-talk]

22 JENELLE HUDSON: ...actually serving...  
23 [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...but, but I, I  
25 don't... [cross-talk]

1  
2 JENELLE HUDSON: ...the residents at the  
3 development... [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...know if I heard you  
5 correctly that it seems like you objected to the use  
6 of TPA funds for section three conferences... [cross-  
7 talk]

8 JENELLE HUDSON: I do not... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay... [cross-talk]

10 JENELLE HUDSON: No.

11 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: What did you say in  
12 relation to section three conferences?

13 JENELLE HUDSON: I gave a, a comparison  
14 of the tenant association using the district funds to  
15 obtain training for himself versus the funds going..  
16 [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, it sounds like..  
18 [cross-talk]

19 JENELLE HUDSON: ...the development..  
20 [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...that's unfavorable  
22 comparison you're making a point about section three,  
23 I mean I'm not saying I agree or disagree... [cross-  
24 talk]

25 JENELLE HUDSON: I, I, I... [cross-talk]

1

2

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...I just want to...

3

[cross-talk]

4

5

JENELLE HUDSON: ...I think the funding,  
the examples where the funding was put to use for  
residents of the development was more favorable.

6

7

8

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay, that's... I  
wanted you... as long you're honest about it, right  
that, that... [cross-talk]

9

10

JENELLE HUDSON: I'm... absolutely... [cross-  
talk]

11

12

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, it seems like  
your argument is that we are decentralizing budgeting  
to the local council so that the dollars are spent in  
the... [cross-talk]

15

16

JENELLE HUDSON: So that the local...  
[cross-talk]

17

18

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...local development...  
[cross-talk]

19

20

JENELLE HUDSON: ...council... [cross-talk]

21

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...is that your  
position... [cross-talk]

22

23

JENELLE HUDSON: ...utilize the dollars...  
[cross-talk]

24

25

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...or... okay, I just want to... [cross-talk]

JENELLE HUDSON: ...directly for their residents.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Now the resident council's the only vehicle for accessing TPA funds?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: It is so HUD does allow where a resident council has not organized, a PAJ can use those funds... that, that funding to the benefit of the beneficiaries at the development also to encourage the formation of a... of a new resident council and so for many years because this was part of the district budget NYCHA did not use the... those allocations for that purpose.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So... okay, that's a shocking... I... that's a surprising answer. So, you, you do have some mechanism by which you... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, we could... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...could spend... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...move forward... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...these dollars so how do you... how many... how, how large is the pot of unspent TPA funds?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, so the spot of... the pot of unspent TPA funds so funds awarded before 2016 was around 13.5 million and that was reallocated to act to all of our resident associations for the developments that do not have active TA's those funding's were also reallocated and part of the work that we're currently doing around election reform would be used to encourage resident associations to form so since we've launched Next Gen we've built over 30 new resident associations at this point and we're doing the work to start more... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: How many associations?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: 30 and since... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: 30... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...since we've launched Next Gen.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, you had 13 million dollars if I understood correctly of unspent



1  
2 TPA dollars at one point and... but you've since  
3 allocated it, is that... [cross-talk]

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: It's been reallocated to  
5 the developments and everyone... all the resident  
6 associations received their balance in December.

7 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And what about... what  
8 about the developments that have no resident  
9 association?

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, the developments  
11 that do not have resident associations they would  
12 have their reserve funds so that portion of the 13.5  
13 million and their current allocation could be used  
14 for the encouragement of a new board so we could for  
15 instance use that funding specifically to support...  
16 [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, let's be...  
18 [cross-talk]

19 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...an election... [cross-  
20 talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...honest what about  
22 if there's a development that is unlikely to ever  
23 have a resident council, I mean that's a painful  
24 thing to say, right... [cross-talk]

25 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yeah... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Like how... it's, it's

not in anyone's interest to have those dollars

languished... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh...

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, why not put

those dollars to productive use for programming for

the residents... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Absolutely... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...at that local

development?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Absolutely, so that's

part of the reason that we've decentralized this, I

think... you know the, the thinking in the past was

that because it was part of the district it was to

their benefit... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I don't think you're

answering my question so I'm... yes, I understand

you're decentralizing and I'm referring to those

developments that have no resident councils... [cross-

talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yes... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...so there's nowhere

to decentralize it so what do we do with the dollars

that are languishing in those developments?

1  
2           SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, we can do two  
3 things, we can use them to support the formation of a  
4 board, we can also use it for eligible activities for  
5 residents at those developments. So, NYCHA could use  
6 those funding... that funding for a digital van, it  
7 could use it for a language program, a training  
8 program, we could put those funds to good use for the  
9 benefit... [cross-talk]

10           CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, how do you put  
11 those dollars to good use?

12           SIDEYA SHERMAN: To this point, no, this  
13 is the first time that NYCHA's actually been able to  
14 access... [cross-talk]

15           CHAIRPERSON TORRES: That sounds almost...  
16 [cross-talk]

17           SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...separate, separate...  
18 [cross-talk]

19           CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...scandalous to me,  
20 like you have a pot of millions of dollars and public  
21 housing residents are the most poorly served in our  
22 society, there are young people who have nothing to  
23 do in their local communities, how could we justify  
24 not spending those dollars on programming for our  
25 seniors and for our youth?

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2 SIDEYA SHERMAN: This is exactly why we  
3 changed the process and we fixed it moving for  
4 forward, it is... we certainly want to see those funds  
5 being used for that purpose, the process that we had  
6 in the... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: It's just  
8 frustrating... [cross-talk]

9 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...past did not work...  
10 [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...that it took three...  
12 NYCHA three years, I'm talking to the new  
13 administration and now we're entering the fourth year  
14 to figure out, you know maybe we should spend these  
15 dollars.

16 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, we started this  
17 process in 2015 for that reason, it was one of the  
18 first goals set in Next Gen to reform TPA and we, you  
19 know brought it to the finish line and so that's  
20 exactly how we would use those funds where the  
21 representation does not exist.

22 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay, do you have  
23 some sense of how you're going to spend those dollars  
24 in developments that have no resident councils or...  
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2           SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, our first goal is to  
3 try to encourage the resident council so we started  
4 with educational materials in a campaign to lead to a  
5 central election, we would certainly engage the  
6 residents to understand the needs of that  
7 neighborhood and we would make it specific to the  
8 communities so it could be filling the gap, buying  
9 program slots for residents in certain programs that  
10 could be leadership development training, we could  
11 use it further towards the resident leadership  
12 training academy, there are many ways that we can  
13 utilize it, we can also use it to expand existing  
14 programs and target it to those neighborhoods.

15           CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And how long are you  
16 willing to wait for a resident association to emerge  
17 before you decide that we have to decide.. [cross-  
18 talk]

19           SIDEYA SHERMAN: Our election reform plan  
20 leads us to a central election date in the fall and  
21 so we would know within the fall how many new  
22 associations are in place and at that point we would  
23 be able to roll over the allocation into a central  
24 TPA fund and start using it to benefit those  
25 residents.

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And so by fall

you'll have a strategy for how to spend the unspent dollars on the residents... in developments that have no resident association?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay.

SIDEYA SHERMAN: We'd be happy to, to share that with you.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay and what kind of programming would you have in mind for?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, as I mentioned it would be... every neighborhood is unique, we would make it specific to the community, you know there's certainly proven programs that we have right now that we could expand and direct to those neighborhoods, there are needs for seniors, youth we would base it on the population and what we're hearing from residents as we're engaging them.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: What, what percentage of public housing developments are under resident councils?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, we have about 76 developments that are not represented at this time.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And, and those that  
3 do have resident councils, are all of them eligible  
4 to use TPA funds?

5 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay. And what are...  
7 what are they... you have to have a board of five  
8 elected members is that the criteria?

9 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh.

10 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay. I noticed that  
11 one of the eligible uses of TPA funds lies in  
12 consulting...

13 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh...

14 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Right, is that... is  
15 that correct?

16 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And when, when I see  
18 consulting in politics, right I... you know I, I always  
19 have concerns, right so have you ever had concerns  
20 about... have you predatory consulting services or...  
21 predatory consulting firms or...

22 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh. So, so... yes, we...  
23 resident associations can choose their own  
24 consultants, we're not able to direct them on how to...  
25 how to contract if they satisfy the procurement

1  
2 requirements we would... we essentially move... they  
3 would move forward, right so there are some  
4 limitations to how NYCHA can direct resident  
5 associations when it comes to consulting what we can  
6 do and part of the reason why we've introduced these,  
7 you know staff who are providing coaching etcetera is  
8 to offer some guidance on what quality services are  
9 so if you are contracting for a training program, you  
10 know these are some of the best in class providers,  
11 these are the ways that you should look at that.  
12 Additionally where we know that there are funds being  
13 expended repeatedly on training we've also have found  
14 ways to bring those trainings to residents for free  
15 so section three is a great example where we have a  
16 number of resident associations who've gone to  
17 section three consulting trainings, we worked with  
18 HUD to come to New York and give that training for  
19 free and so when we're able to do that it gives us  
20 the ability to make sure that the, the need is being  
21 met and we... you know and resident associations may  
22 not need to procure that service.

23 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Look and I, I, I do  
24 not mean to suggest that all consulting is predatory  
25 but there are certainly predatory forms of consulting



1  
2 and you're telling me that if you have reason to  
3 believe or suspect of have concerns that a particular  
4 firm or a particular consultant could be predatory  
5 you're powerless to address that?

6 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, what I'm saying is  
7 that if there are... if there are reasonable concerns  
8 we would follow the appropriate channels if, you know  
9 that were the case. If there are... if there's a need...  
10 if there are services available for free however that  
11 are being procured through the consultant that's... so  
12 you know just to clarify my, my point our concerns  
13 are more around if there are services available for  
14 free that are quality... that we want to make sure that  
15 we're directing people towards those services or  
16 we're helping them get to those services so that they  
17 can use their funds in other ways.

18 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Have there been any  
19 particular consultant or particular consulting firms  
20 of concern to you or...

21 SIDEYA SHERMAN: To, to the organization...

22 [off-mic dialogue]

23 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I'm sorry... I'm  
24 sorry.

25 [off-mic dialogue]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Alright, can we... do we have enough space for... hold, hold on... hold on for one... hold on, its...

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Excuse me, do we have enough... how many people are out there? Okay, we... we're going to recess for five minutes if you can... thank you.

[recess]

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay, we're going to resume the hearing, I want to apologize for the momentary chaos, I want to thank the resident leaders for holding us accountable even in real time. So, NYCHA's not the only target of the tenant's wrath, I just want to... so I do want to explore the... like have there been particular consultants or consulting firms that have been of concern to you or...

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so there have been consulting firms that have been concerns for NYCHA those are reported to the Department of Investigation accordingly and they've investigated and if... some are ongoing outside of that if there are just concerns in terms of quality of services or making sure that

1  
2 people are getting something that may be free then we  
3 would connect... [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And so like one  
5 possible red flag is the dollar amount that a  
6 consultant might receive, right?

7 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yeah, so they're using  
8 our procurement channels so if there... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Right... [cross-talk]

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...are some triggers  
11 around the dollar amounts, you know ongoing use of  
12 the service we would flag that and you know forward  
13 to the Department of Investigation to... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: What's the highest  
15 dollar amount that you've seen a single consultant or  
16 firm receive in TPA funds?

17 SIDEYA SHERMAN: I don't know. We'd have  
18 to follow up... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Do you have any... do,  
20 do you know... I mean like I can... I'll, I'll ask that...  
21 you might not have a specific do you think it's in  
22 the tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands?  
23 Millions?

24 SIDEYA SHERMAN: I don't think its...  
25

1  
2 JENELLE HUDSON: I don't think it's in  
3 the millions.

4 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: But it sounds like  
5 it could be in the hundred thousand.

6 JENELLE HUDSON: So, I'm not sure.

7 SIDEYA SHERMAN: We would have to get  
8 back to you, I don't think that we... I don't think  
9 that there have been consulting contracts that large,  
10 some of these proceeds us but we certainly can follow  
11 up.

12 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And how, how do you...  
13 so, beyond... beyond... I guess I have questions about  
14 the engagement and also the agreement, let, let  
15 NYCHA... I, I understand that you're legally required  
16 to have the tenants enter into an agreement, right  
17 that's a HUD rule, is that...

18 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh...

19 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...that NYCHA has not  
20 been following... [cross-talk]

21 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, NYCHA had an  
22 agreement with the CCOP.

23 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay, so instead  
24 you're going to have... so is it... are you required to  
25

1  
2 have an agreement with the individual resident  
3 councils or you can have an agreement... [cross-talk]

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: With the resident...  
5 [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...with any entity...  
7 [cross-talk]

8 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...council... we, we had it...  
9 yes, we're required to have it with the resident  
10 councils... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay... [cross-talk]

12 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...we had it with the CCOP  
13 as a jurisdictional body because that's how we  
14 administered the funding.

15 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And does HUD  
16 prescribe the manner in which you have to craft that  
17 agreement or...

18 SIDEYA SHERMAN: It, it needs to be an  
19 agreement and it needs to have the components... it  
20 needs to be able to have the components that are  
21 additionally included so we need to include content  
22 around making sure that it's a recognized council,  
23 that we're meeting the requirements of the program.

24

25

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Now look there are resident leaders who, who can quote HUD regulations chapter and verse...

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh...

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And it, it sounds like Chinese... you know it sounds like a foreign language to me...

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh...

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...but, but most resident leaders have no legal training... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh...

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...have no knowledge of obscure legal text and so like what would possess NYCHA to have tenant leaders sign monecious agreement without the benefit of legal training or legal representation like that just seems like a bizarre decision to make to me?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so we circulated the agreement and you know as I noted we had over 100 resident associations who did move forward signing, some who got council, resident associations had access to their funding this entire time, legal services would be at eligible at cost but most use

1  
2 free legal services and so there's two things..

3 [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay, hold up  
5 please, please there's no...

6 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, there's two things  
7 to note. We, we certainly have heard the, the  
8 concerns and so that's exactly why we were pleased to  
9 get feedback from legal aid to work with them, we're  
10 using those comments, we're simplifying the language.  
11 I would say that, you know resident associations  
12 regularly, you know they have bylaws, they... you know  
13 many have protests with respect to their elections,  
14 we often see resident associations who use legal  
15 services for day to day matters when engaging with  
16 NYCHA but we know not all do and so that's precisely  
17 why we're, we're... we got the feedback from legal...  
18 Brooklyn Legal Services and from legal aid and we've  
19 amended it.

20 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And, and are you  
21 allowing the resident leaders who have signed the  
22 agreement to sign the... [cross-talk]

23 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Absolutely... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...new agreement?

25 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Absolutely.

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, that agreement is no longer applicable is that... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, we will circulate that new agreement so that everybody has one agreement.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: But I just... because there are lawyers who have read the agreement who, who find some of it confusing so... and I understand I, I appreciate... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...that NYCHA did act on the feedback of Brooklyn Legal Services and legal aid but why would you... I, I'm just... it's just baffling to me that you would provide residents with a legal contract...

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh...

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...with no guarantee of legal representation like that, that seems to be... there's something wrong with that because you, you have a wealth of information...

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh...

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...you have legal resources at your disposal...

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh...



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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...whereas NYCHA

residents it could be a one person show.

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so as I... this is precisely why we have gone back and we simplified the agreement, you know I should note however that residents... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: But... and, and I understand that you've gotten feedback... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yeah... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...right but like in the beginning of the process... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...did, did it ever occur to you independently of the feedback that maybe this is too complicated or convoluted an agreement to expect residents who have no legal training and legal representation to sign?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, resident associations have... they regularly... they have bylaws, they issue protests... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: No but the... but the resident... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...you cannot... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...excuse me, I'm  
sorry no commentary please...

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...no commentary...

SIDEYA SHERMAN: We understand that our  
resident associations... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yeah but bylaws as a  
resident... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...has arranged... [cross-  
talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...leader I have a  
role in crafting the bylaws... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...right so its... you  
know it's going to be framed in a language that I can  
understand, the residents had no role in crafting  
this agreement. So, like maybe it did not occur to  
you that this would be an issue but did it ever occur  
to NYCHA that this would be an issue?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, we didn't expect  
that NYCHA would bring in the legal services on  
behalf of the resident associations that the resident  
associations would independently seek that and so...  
[cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, you... wait... I

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just... so you crafted an agreement based on the

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assumption that the residents would have the benefit

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of legal representation?

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, we crafted an

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agreement based on the... to provide to our resident

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associations some got independent legal advice, not

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all did and so we got the legal advice on their

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behalf so that we could move forward with an

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agreement after they went out and got legal aid

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society and other groups to come to NYCHA and then we

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were able to come to an agreement.

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And did you know

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that the resident leaders were guaranteed to have

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that legal guidance before signing the agreement?

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, they had the

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availability of their funding as well as legal

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services to, to be able to bring in independent legal

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advice if they needed to.

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay. The, the

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engagement so the residents have... are claiming that

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NYCHA has, has failed to properly engage them in the

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process before... of formulating these reforms, alright

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how do you respond to that criticism?

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2 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, this engagement  
3 started in 2015 as I mentioned, it started with our  
4 citywide council of presidents, we've had meetings,  
5 we've had focus groups, we had feedback throughout.  
6 Much of what we have proposed and much of what these  
7 reforms reflect is consistent with what we heard from  
8 residents. I think that we have certainly not  
9 received throughout this process substantive feedback  
10 from our citywide council of presidents and we've  
11 made multiple attempts at engagement but I think that  
12 the overwhelming majority of resident associations  
13 who were part of this process who engaged with us  
14 many of whom have come here today to speak positively  
15 about this process are pleased with these changes and  
16 this reflects that. We had over 40 workshops... [cross-  
17 talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay, I'm sorry...  
19 [cross-talk]

20 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...and meetings... [cross-  
21 talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...can, can we...  
23 [cross-talk]

24 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...and focus groups...  
25 [cross-talk]

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2 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...I'm sorry this is  
3 not meant for anyone's comedic enjoyment or this is  
4 not... I... we're just here to respectfully watch and,  
5 and you'll have an opportunity to testify after  
6 NYCHA's done.

7 SIDEYA SHERMAN: And we had over 40  
8 workshops, meetings, focus groups, our team has been  
9 deployed all across the city to work with resident  
10 associations throughout this process and so there  
11 certainly has been engagement and its ongoing, you  
12 know this is a pilot for a reason so as we have the  
13 commercial card there's a one on one... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And, and I'm not...  
15 [cross-talk]

16 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...relationship... [cross-  
17 talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...questioning...  
19 [cross-talk]

20 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...to feedback... [cross-  
21 talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...NYCHA's motives,  
23 right but I, I can understand if you're... you're a  
24 resident, you're up against this goliath bureaucracy  
25 of 11,000 employees, right NYCHA has all the power

1  
2 and you often feel like when you go to these meetings  
3 you're not actually being engaged, you feel like  
4 you're being informed about reforms that were decided  
5 well before like do you understand why residents  
6 might have that feeling or...

7           SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, which is why we  
8 had focus groups at the beginning, I mean if, if you  
9 can speak to... yeah...

10           JENELLE HUDSON: Yeah, so in the very  
11 beginning after we recognized the hierarchy of the  
12 jurisdictional wide body and met with CCOP and  
13 requested meetings with districts and we actually met  
14 with three district boards to talk about the road to  
15 reforming, we need to reform the process we then went  
16 to the resident associations and extended invitations  
17 to participate in focus groups, we held 11 focus  
18 groups in each of the boroughs, a.m. and p.m.  
19 sessions to make sure that they were accessible...  
20 [cross-talk]

21           CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay... [cross-talk]

22           JENELLE HUDSON: ...to everyone who wanted  
23 to participate and we received participation from 111  
24 resident associations in these focus groups. The  
25 focus groups we didn't have a process at that time,

1  
2 we opened up a dialogue in the context of Next Gen  
3 NYCHA and needed to reform this process including the  
4 election process and we received feedback on what  
5 resident associations wanted to see in a reformed  
6 process and I'm... I facilitated all the focus groups  
7 and I'm very pleased with the exception of one and  
8 I'm very pleased that we were able to build a process  
9 that... [cross-talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: How many... [cross-  
11 talk]

12 JENELLE HUDSON: ...took into account...  
13 [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...how many focus  
15 groups did you conduct?

16 JENELLE HUDSON: I conducted ten of the  
17 11 focus groups.

18 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Out of... over what  
19 period of time?

20 JENELLE HUDSON: We started in February  
21 and they concluded in March.

22 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And I have no way of  
23 knowing the quality of those focus groups I was not  
24 there so I cannot judge but could you provide  
25 specific examples of... like specific pieces of input

1  
2 and feedback that specific leaders gave you that  
3 might have inspired some of these reforms?

4 JENELLE HUDSON: So, we had focus groups  
5 in Manhattan, a.m. and p.m. session and what we heard  
6 was with regards to TPA that stipends should be on a  
7 development meeting's agenda, there's an MOU that's  
8 required, budgets for development and quarterly  
9 district audits, resident driven meetings, involve  
10 the board entire... association for training, clear  
11 communication, district accountability, copies of the  
12 budget, transparency to really understand, a reset to  
13 know what they're working with in terms of the  
14 reserve, reserved funds because everyone understood  
15 that there was a pot of money that was not spent over  
16 a number of years, to reduce the, the procurement...  
17 the time that it took to actually procure services,  
18 that all associations need to be in good standing and  
19 that's just from Manhattan. So, I, I mean I can go on  
20 for every borough, I don't know... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, how, how, how  
22 widely does it vary from borough to borough the input  
23 that you received?

24

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2 JENELLE HUDSON: It, it's... 83 percent of  
3 the resident associations wanted to control their  
4 access to... [cross-talk]

5 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay... [cross-talk]

6 JENELLE HUDSON: ...their funds at the  
7 local level.

8 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, local control  
9 was the common theme that you... [cross-talk]

10 JENELLE HUDSON: Local control was the  
11 common theme.

12 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Were there any  
13 suggestions that you heard from tenant leaders that  
14 were widely shared but that NYCHA nevertheless  
15 rejected?

16 JENELLE HUDSON: No, actually one, one  
17 concern that was widely shared was fear of accessing  
18 and managing a large amount of funds so if, if we  
19 were to give them... let's say their allocation was  
20 10,000 dollars concerned about being able to manage  
21 those funds so what we did was implement the  
22 commercial credit card so that we're not directly  
23 issuing a check to a resident association for 10,000  
24 dollars each year for them to manage and I'm just  
25

1 using 10,000 as a number so that was one of the..

2 [cross-talk]

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4 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, so I know the  
5 card has been something of a controversy what, what  
6 is controversial about the commercial card, can you..

7 JENELLE HUDSON: I can't really say I  
8 think it's more of a concern about using a commercial  
9 card and the technology around it, I'm not really  
10 sure... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, what's the  
12 point... [cross-talk]

13 JENELLE HUDSON: ...those that we have in  
14 the... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...of the commercial  
16 card?

17 JENELLE HUDSON: The commercial card is  
18 to allow them to make purchases under the micro  
19 threshold of 5,000 dollars so they can utilize the  
20 card for approved proposals and make purchases  
21 locally... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yeah, but legally I...  
23 if I'm a tenant leader I can legally make micro  
24 purchases without a commercial card, right my  
25 understanding... [cross-talk]

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JENELLE HUDSON: Actually... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...my understanding is  
that micro purchases requires no procurement process,  
no... [cross-talk]

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JENELLE HUDSON: Right, so they utilize  
the card to make the purchases directly and  
previously NYCHA... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: No, but let's...  
[cross-talk]

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JENELLE HUDSON: ...made the purchases...  
[cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...assume I'm a...  
[cross-talk]

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JENELLE HUDSON: ...on their behalf...  
[cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...let's say I'm... I  
don't mean to... [cross-talk]

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JENELLE HUDSON: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

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21

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...if I... and if I'm...  
and if I'm offending I apologize let's say I'm an  
elderly person who has an aversion to commercial  
cards... [cross-talk]

22

23

24

JENELLE HUDSON: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...but why can I not  
3 have the ability to make micro purchases without  
4 going through an onerous procurement process?

5 JENELLE HUDSON: Then we would have to  
6 make the purchases with a purchase order on their  
7 behalf.

8 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And so how onerous  
9 is that process?

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, I mean in some of  
11 the examples that we have illustrated for instance if  
12 you, you know want to order basic office supplies and  
13 NYCHA's procuring those office supplies these are  
14 going through the same supply channels that we're  
15 using for the entire agency so it could be up to 30  
16 days. With the reformed process, you can go right to  
17 your local Staples and make that purchase. This is a  
18 pilot... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, what is that  
20 process look like?

21 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, that process is  
22 getting a proposal, approving the proposal, making  
23 sure that its correct, entering a purchase order,  
24 going into our internal sort of supply system where  
25 we would select the goods, getting those approved,

1  
2 there are a number of approvals because the... you know  
3 that's the, the, the... [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Even for micro  
5 purchases?

6 JENELLE HUDSON: Uh-huh.

7 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, even NYCHA  
8 departments use commercial credit cards for some of  
9 these small purchases because they, they are onerous  
10 if we're using our... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, so you're...  
12 [cross-talk]

13 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...budget... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...telling me without  
15 a commercial credit card then the only alternative is  
16 this onerous procurement process?

17 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So... [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...for micro  
19 purchases, that's... [cross-talk]

20 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, the alternative  
21 would be that the... that NYCHA makes the purchase. The  
22 reason why we also use the commercial credit card is  
23 because, the, the requirements also are  
24 reconciliation not just by NYCHA but by HUD so one of  
25 the, the benefits of the commercial card is that it

1  
2 makes reconciliation easier for the resident  
3 association, we put in a system called smart data  
4 that essentially uploads the receipts, is able to  
5 confirm that they're correct and sort of takes some  
6 of the administrative burden from the resident  
7 association as well. We have our first three... 33  
8 resident associations that are using the commercial  
9 card, we launched this as a pilot for a reason so we  
10 know that we'll be bringing resident association in  
11 within waves, you know as part of the training there  
12 was a full day training session for resident  
13 associations that were part of the commercial card  
14 followed by a second day which is actually in a  
15 computer lab where we sat down with everybody and  
16 went through the system to make sure that they are  
17 comfortable using it.

18 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And you say it takes  
19 30 days for NYCHA to procure... [cross-talk]

20 SIDEYA SHERMAN: That's an... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...a basic good or  
22 service?

23 SIDEYA SHERMAN: It, it could be... that's  
24 just an example. We give a time limit of at least 30  
25 days for most procurements... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Could, could we create an expedited avenue for resident leaders?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: It's the commercial card, that's the expedited avenue so... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: It's, it's not just NYCHA's, you know secure... procuring it's also the ability to use local vendors versus using NYCHA's large vendors which are serving the entire agency. So, when we procure these goods they're coming from our large vendors, they're not necessarily coming from a local store.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay, do you... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, if you need meeting refreshments you can get that... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Do you have a, a list of free qualified vendors or...

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, we... I mean... for NYCHA, yes, we have a... we certainly have vendors across the city for the commercial card though they're able to indicate the vendors that they want to use when they have their quarterly submissions so if there's an Office Max or a vendor that's in their

1  
2 neighborhood as long as it's part of their, their  
3 quarterly submission they would be able to go and use  
4 that.

5 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And, and what's the  
6 concern about an expedited process for micro  
7 purchases without a commercial card, are you  
8 concerned that the wrong vendors might receive these  
9 dollars like what's...

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Not necessarily I  
11 think that, you know to the extent that, that we have  
12 a procurement process in place for the agency, we  
13 need... we're using those resources for that purpose..  
14 [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Right, the process  
16 exists to prevent a misuse of funds so what kind of  
17 misuse concerns you in relation to TPA funds and...

18 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, with, with TPA funds  
19 the association is responsible for, you know using  
20 them within the guidelines when they're using the  
21 commercial card there's... we have real time access to  
22 that information so there's less of a concern from  
23 the resident association and NYCHA around how those  
24 funds are being used. We heard from resident  
25 associations repeatedly that they didn't want NYCHA



1  
2 to give them a lump sum check of, you know 20,000  
3 dollars for instance for their full allocation and so  
4 this gives them that flexibility... [cross-talk]

5 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Isn't there a middle  
6 ground like... so... let's assume I have no desire to use  
7 a commercial card, by the way I'm in favor of using a  
8 card it makes sense to me but... [cross-talk]

9 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yeah... [cross-talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...but everyone has  
11 their idiosyncrasies and so assume that I had no  
12 desire to use a card but nor do I want a 20,000-  
13 dollar check... [cross-talk]

14 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yeah... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Right, isn't there a  
16 middle ground there like a 500-dollar check or...  
17 [cross-talk]

18 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, we... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And then... [cross-  
20 talk]

21 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, our goal is to bring  
22 at least 80 percent of resident associations into the  
23 commercial card process by next year, I think, you  
24 know at that point we can certainly determine where  
25 there's a real barrier to using the card if there are

1  
2 some alternatives, I think that as we have started to  
3 work TA's on using the cards and this is, you know a  
4 range of resident associations people are more  
5 comfortable with it, they're using it, we're almost  
6 done with our first quarter of, of use, it's easier,  
7 the reconciliation is easier, I think what we're  
8 hearing from our resident associations who use the  
9 card is that they're incredibly satisfied and they  
10 had a range of comfort with using credit cards and  
11 using computers before coming into this process and  
12 so I'm confident that we'll be able to, to bring our  
13 resident associations along and... which is why we're  
14 phasing folks in.

15 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay and I know...  
16 Council Member Mendez do you have questions or... we've  
17 been joined by Council Member Gibson as well.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you very  
19 much Mr. Chair and I apologize, I was in another  
20 hearing so I hope none of these questions are  
21 repetitive. My, my first question which is of  
22 intrigue to me is on page three, the third paragraph  
23 on the page, in your testimony you talk about the  
24 outreach and individuals, elected officials and  
25 others that you've met with so you had a briefing

1  
2 with CCOP, the council's Bronx delegation which  
3 includes our Chair, Torres as part of that  
4 delegation, Council Member Helen Rosenthal from  
5 Manhattan, I don't know why you met with her alone,  
6 Comptroller Scott Stringer, Congressmen Jeffries and  
7 Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito which makes sense so I  
8 don't know why the Bronx delegation got a briefing  
9 but the other borough delegations did not. In  
10 Manhattan myself, Margaret Chin and the Speaker are  
11 in the top ten of most developments within Manhattan  
12 so maybe Manhattan delegation should have gotten a  
13 briefing. Just to note, Jimmie Van Bramer has the  
14 most developments in Queens, I don't see that you've  
15 met with him, Darlene Mealy has the most developments  
16 in Brooklyn and, and quite frankly yes you make a  
17 reference to a webinar, my.. one of my staff was on..  
18 you've been having a lot of webinars so it was  
19 unclear to me that this webinar that my staff sat  
20 through was going to result in policy changes that I  
21 would have to go back to my 17 tenant associations  
22 and deal with the leadership and answer their  
23 questions and try to help them navigate this process.  
24 So, why did you choose to meet with these individuals  
25

1  
2 and not others, why was this committee or the members  
3 of this committee not briefed, start with there?

4           SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so when we rolled  
5 out the process as mentioned we did have a webinar  
6 briefing with... that was available to electives  
7 generally but we briefed elected officials who had  
8 expressed particular interest in TPA who had concerns  
9 over the years that they had expressed toward NYCHA  
10 and who had constituents who were proactively  
11 expressing concerns about the process so we'd be  
12 happy to sit down with you and, and give a more  
13 detailed briefing as well as the rest of the  
14 delegation.

15           COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you, that's  
16 a little bit too late however I don't know how people  
17 express interest, I've expressed interest, I used to  
18 Chair this committee, this is an issue that's come  
19 back and forth so I just don't know why I and other  
20 members of this committee who currently sit on this  
21 committee were left out, you would think by virtue of  
22 the fact that we sit on this committee we would have  
23 an interest in it. So, that was my, my, my first  
24 question. How many developments are there in the  
25 authority right now?

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: 326.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: 326, of those 326 developments how many RA's or TA's whatever we want to call them are authorized, how many are merged and how many are unauthorized?

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, we have 250 associations and we have around 70 plus... 76 developments where we would work to encourage associations to form.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: That number doesn't jive because I know there are merged associations so that adds up to 326 so that doesn't take into consideration which associations are merged or are you still trying to encourage even after merger that those TA's try to start their own association?

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so I think in a few instances we have some consolidated but most are representing individual developments so we can get the exact number of unrepresented developments to the extent that some of 76 are part of a merged association.

24

25

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay, I know some of the 76 are part of the merge... [cross-talk]

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: Okay... [cross-talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: ...and I would like  
that... [cross-talk]

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...we can get that...  
[cross-talk]

7

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: ...number... [cross-  
talk]

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...sure... [cross-talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: ...and I'm sure my  
chair would like that number also. So, on page three,  
the second to last paragraph you say you formally  
introduced a new process to resident leadership  
through multiple workshops with HUD so I was  
wondering when were those workshops held and since  
those workshops how many of those TA's have changed  
board membership pursuant to an election?

18

19

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh. So, we rolled  
out the new process... well so the, the engagement  
process started in 2015, there were focus groups,  
there were... [cross-talk]

22

23

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: November of...  
[cross-talk]

24

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...November of... [cross-  
talk]

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: ...2015... [cross-  
3 talk]

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...2015 and went on for  
5 over a year where there... where there were focus  
6 groups, engagement, meetings, etcetera. When we  
7 rolled out the new process that was in December of  
8 last year, we had a series of workshops that included  
9 HUD that, you know both my... Jenelle and myself  
10 presented at and then we went into the new year, I  
11 think between January and May we haven't had  
12 significant board turnover or changes but if we did  
13 there would only be a few. We've made sure that as  
14 resident associations move into the new process that  
15 they have vacancies within their board filled, if, if  
16 they exist.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay, so you do  
18 not know how many but you think it's not very much,  
19 the associations that have elections since January of  
20 2017, is that correct?

21 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, we can give you the  
22 number of elections that have occurred in that, that...  
23 those five months as well as the number of, of  
24 elections that may be underway... [cross-talk]  
25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Five and a half,  
3 we're in the middle of June... [cross-talk]

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...about five and a half  
5 months so we can let you know how many elections have  
6 occurred and you know particularly the ones that are  
7 within your district and then, you know moving  
8 forward elections are ongoing and so as new officers  
9 come in they would take responsibility for the... for  
10 the funds if there are vacancies and they're filled  
11 they would take responsibilities, we have had  
12 associations that have become inactive over the past  
13 five months.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Could you also  
15 tell me how many associations had leadership changes  
16 through an election between November 2015 and  
17 December 2016 because it would be important to know  
18 what was happening throughout that year, I know lots  
19 of my resident associations are not meeting on a  
20 monthly basis and I know there's been change in some  
21 of that leadership so that some of this information  
22 would not have been given to the new leadership as  
23 they were transitioning the board members so I'd like  
24 to know that. So, on page six you refer to your  
25 administrative fee which is 40 percent, is that the



1  
2 typical administrative fee for public housing  
3 authorities throughout the United States?

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yes, so that is the fee  
5 that's set by HUD, its standard across all housing  
6 authorities.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: And how long have  
8 you been... there was a time where you did not take an  
9 administrative fee even though you could have and  
10 then that changed with your fiscal issues throughout  
11 the years, when was the first time that you started  
12 taking the administrative fee?

13 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, that certainly  
14 proceeds me, I would have to follow up and get that  
15 information. My understanding is that the  
16 administrative... the, the cost has always been part of  
17 what NYCHA has absorbed so just for background these  
18 are operating funds, they come in with our general  
19 operating funds, we have a portion, 15 dollars per  
20 unit that goes to the resident association... [cross-  
21 talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I'm, I'm... [cross-  
23 talk]

24 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...the remainder stays  
25 with... [cross-talk]

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I'm well aware  
3 of... [cross-talk]

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...NYCHA... [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I'm well aware of  
6 that... [cross-talk]

7 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...but we would certainly...  
8 [cross-talk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: ...I know that the  
10 federal government always does unfunded mandates, I  
11 thought it was very admirable that the housing  
12 authority did not take the administrative fee even  
13 though they could have at some point they changed  
14 that policy, I was the chair of the committee at the  
15 time and the administrative fee was applied, applied  
16 retroactively, how long have you been working at the  
17 authority?

18 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, I've been at the  
19 authority for almost six years but in this capacity  
20 for less than a year.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay, so you deal  
22 with all the TPA funds and you do not know when the  
23 authority started charging and taking an  
24 administrative fee?  
25

1  
2 SIDEYA SHERMAN: I can get that  
3 information to you, I've known that since I've been  
4 in this capacity NYCHA's had an administrative fee.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay, so you  
6 don't know how long, thank you. Okay, I, I'd like to  
7 know how much for which years if you can break that  
8 down... [cross-talk]

9 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure... [cross-talk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: ...what was the  
11 administrative fee going back to whenever it was and  
12 how much the authority took. On page five in your  
13 second paragraph of your testimony just because it  
14 confuses me the last sentence of that paragraph says  
15 currently 33 resident associations are piloting the  
16 use of the commercial card and our goal is to have 80  
17 percent of the RA's using it by next year, so can we  
18 just keep it apples and apples or oranges and  
19 oranges, 33 resident associations is what percentage  
20 or if we're going to have an exact number then what  
21 would 80 percent of the current resident associations  
22 be?

23 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, it'd be 80 percent  
24 of 250, I mean we can do, do the math but it would be  
25 80 percent of the 250 that we have today.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: So, thank you Mr.  
3 Chair this... that's all of my questioning. I, I just  
4 need to say that when I was in the other hearing  
5 reading your testimony, you know you go to great  
6 lengths to try to detail what is a transparent  
7 process but to me it is not transparent because there  
8 are simple things that the authority could be doing  
9 along the way to get the information to the  
10 residents. I know the RAB and the CCOP don't always  
11 have all of the members attending those meetings and  
12 even when they do that information doesn't trickle  
13 down to the rest of the leadership and or to the rest  
14 of the resident association and that's something that  
15 NYCHA is very much well aware of why Council Members  
16 who have a lot of developments within their council  
17 districts were not advised or the members of this  
18 committee is disconcerting to me because my resident  
19 leaders contact me on a daily basis, they have my  
20 cell phone and when these changes came about there  
21 was pandemonium because my resident leaders could not  
22 understand for... the entire process, they never talked  
23 to me about the commercial card, they... what they did  
24 talk to me about was and I don't see this anywhere in  
25 your testimony was that they needed to become a 501C3

1  
2 which to me is I think kind of orgulous if that is  
3 not in fact true you can let me know otherwise, I  
4 also thought that if it was true that would be very  
5 complicated being that you needed to change... the  
6 board would change every time there's an election and  
7 that that would cause the board of that not for  
8 profit to change. So, that is in fact not true?

9 SIDEYA SHERMAN: That's not true. So, our  
10 relationship is with the resident association that is  
11 recognized and certified by NYCHA, there are many  
12 resident associations that choose to incorporate  
13 themselves as 501C3's that's their... that's the 501C3  
14 our funding relationship is between NYCHA and the  
15 recognized resident association, they do... absolutely  
16 do not need to become a 501C3.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay and just  
18 lastly, I caught the tail end of Chair Torres's  
19 questioning regarding legal representation and I just  
20 find it reprehensible that tenant leaders are being  
21 given legal documents without any legal  
22 representation or being told where they can get it or  
23 being referred to any of their elected officials who  
24 can try to arrange for a lawyer to legally review  
25 wherever they would have to sign particularly in a

1  
2 case dealing with federal funds. That's all I have to  
3 say, thank you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very  
5 much Council Member Mendez and good afternoon, I'm  
6 just taking over while Chair Torres steps out  
7 momentarily. I'm Council Member Vanessa Gibson, I  
8 represent district 16 in the Bronx, I represent a lot  
9 of residents of public housing from Clairmont  
10 Consolidated to Butler, Webster, Morris, Guvinoff,  
11 Franklin, Highbridge Gardens, McKinley, Cedric  
12 Houses, a lot of residents that really need a lot of  
13 support and leadership and I, I want to ask a  
14 question very quickly. In your testimony you talked  
15 about kicking this initiative off in November of 2015  
16 so I'd like to know from November 2015 to today, in  
17 your testimony you alluded to some of the briefings  
18 that you had with elected officials so unlike Council  
19 Member Mendez I was a part of the briefing with the  
20 Bronx delegation but the delegation meeting you  
21 referenced happened a month ago, since November of  
22 2015 there has not been sufficient engagement with  
23 elected officials so what I'd like you to do if you  
24 can you referenced that you started with a meeting  
25 with Chair Olatoye and the CCOP but where did the

1  
2 conversations with the elected officials begin from  
3 November 2015 until today?

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh. So, we started  
5 the, the process with our resident associations and  
6 as we got into the fall that's where we began to  
7 engage some of our elected officials particularly  
8 those who had expressed specific concerns about TPA  
9 funding in the past, obviously this has also been of  
10 topic at NYCHA's general budget hearings and so NYCHA  
11 has addressed the fact that it would take a look into  
12 TPA and we committed to doing that as part of the  
13 Next Gen plan. We are certainly happy to spend the  
14 time... more time specifically with you and the rest of  
15 the Bronx delegation to discuss it further. Our  
16 process of reform was more focused on the resident  
17 associations and getting their feedback as well as  
18 getting feedback from HUD and some of our, our other  
19 stakeholders but we certainly, you know take that  
20 feedback and we would be happy to make sure that we  
21 fully engage you moving forward.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, so I  
23 recognize the work that's been done since that time,  
24 our meeting specifically was May 24<sup>th</sup>, May 24<sup>th</sup> of  
25 2017 so the reason why I bring that up is because I

1  
2 know that HUD and our council presidents and resident  
3 associations and NYCHA all have a, a major invested  
4 interest in this but so do the elected officials,  
5 when NYCHA is not responsive to the multitude of  
6 emails that I get from all of my resident leaders  
7 they come to us so the challenge for us is that we  
8 are almost two years after this launch, after this  
9 initiative started and a lot of work has been done  
10 and the elected officials have not been engaged, I  
11 appreciate the elected officials that do reach out to  
12 NYCHA and say we would like to get a briefing but I  
13 also think it's really incumbent upon the housing  
14 authority to do its own due diligence and reach out  
15 to us as well. NYCHA is never afraid to reach out to  
16 this council and this committee when you need  
17 something so every single month I myself meet with  
18 NYCHA, I meet with the capital division on all of the  
19 money that I give NYCHA every budget year, this year  
20 two million dollars out my allotment I'm giving to  
21 NYCHA, I talk about roofs, I talk about scaffolding,  
22 we talk about the brickwork, we talk about every  
23 single thing not only is it... it's a two way street so  
24 they reach out just as I reach out. When RAD was  
25 started, when Next Gen came to my district they



1 reached out and I reached out so where I'm troubled  
2 is this didn't happen with TPA and of all the work  
3 that has been done with our resident leaders which it  
4 should be there really wasn't any engagement with the  
5 elected officials. So, here we are trying to figure  
6 out how we can be involved and really try to fix this  
7 process because although the housing authority has  
8 done an incredible amount of work and I give you  
9 credit for that, the process was very flawed and the  
10 elected officials should have been included. When you  
11 need us for something you always reach out and this  
12 is something where either you did not need us or you  
13 did not want us to be included so I don't know the  
14 answer to that question but I'm included now, now  
15 that I know that this is going on and now that I know  
16 that my resident leaders have questions that they're  
17 coming to me about that I don't have the answers for  
18 now we're getting involved. So, what I'd like to know  
19 now, June of 2017 how many RA, resident leaders have  
20 signed off on this agreement, how many are remaining  
21 and what is the, the current work that NYCHA is  
22 doing, I know legal aid is very much involved even  
23 legal aid reached out to us and we met with legal aid  
24 about their concerns to, to address this issue so I'd  
25

1  
2 like to know where are we at now, what can we do  
3 because my biggest concern is the tenant associations  
4 who have not signed off on this TPA agreement, their  
5 funds are being withheld and we have events, we have  
6 family days and I give too much to NYCHA I'm not  
7 giving another penny this year to do the work that  
8 you guys should be doing. So, I'd like to understand  
9 where we are with the agreements that have been  
10 signed, those that remain outstanding, what are we  
11 doing to extend on the deadline, I believe the  
12 deadline was like two months ago, where are we with  
13 that and how can we make this process better?

14 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so, so the  
15 deadline was May 1<sup>st</sup>, resident associations had about  
16 90 days to, to review and turn in the agreement, over  
17 100... about 113 signed off on the agreement, since  
18 then we had discussions after, after May 1<sup>st</sup> with  
19 resident associations, with legal aid, we held... also  
20 received comments from Brooklyn Legal Services, we  
21 took those comments and also participated in a  
22 workshop that legal aid invited us to June 5<sup>th</sup>, we  
23 received comments from both Brooklyn Legal Services  
24 and legal aid, we responded to those quickly, we have  
25 a draft agreement that's updated that will go out to

1  
2 them this week and then we hope to turn that around  
3 quickly to our resident associations. In terms of  
4 substance the agreement covers much of what was in  
5 the original agreement, it's still all the, the  
6 requirements by TPA but we've simplified the language  
7 so that its easier for folks to understand and that  
8 our resident associations feel more comfortable  
9 signing on.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, so how many  
11 tenant associations are remaining that need to still  
12 sign this?

13 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so we have about  
14 137 pending, of those pending we have 12 who, who  
15 have expressed strong opposition, we have about 16 or  
16 so who have not been active in this process we've  
17 been trying to engage who've, who've been somewhat  
18 dormant throughout the process that we've been trying  
19 to engage... sure, so we have about 137 that are  
20 pending, of those pending we have 12 who have  
21 expressed strong opposition meaning opposition to  
22 signing an agreement in any form, we have about 16  
23 resident associations who have just... we've had  
24 challenging... challenges engaging them in this process  
25 completely, they've been for lack of a better term,

1  
2 dormant and then we have about 100 or so resident  
3 associations who are willing to sign onto an  
4 agreement but certainly need something that's more  
5 simplified and are looking for that updated draft and  
6 so that's exactly what we're circulating this week  
7 and then we would get that, that back to the resident  
8 associations.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, it's about 109.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: 109, okay. So,  
12 essentially there are 137 pending in the different  
13 categories you just described, the opposed, the  
14 inactive and then those that are still reviewing and  
15 so far, 113 have signed?

16 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: So, you have more  
18 organizations that have not agreed with this than you  
19 have those that have agreed?

20 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh...

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Correct, 137  
22 versus 113.

23 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yes... [cross-talk]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Is that correct...  
25 [cross-talk]

1  
2           SIDEYA SHERMAN: But I would say that of  
3 the, the... of those who have not signed there are a  
4 mix of people who have... are essentially pending who  
5 are looking for an updated agreement but in principle  
6 believe with the... are in line with the new process.

7           COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay and in... and  
8 when I spoke to the housing authority when this first  
9 was brought to my attention I share the concerns of  
10 Council Member Mendez because, you know I'm not a  
11 lawyer so when I see legal terms and legal documents  
12 I get concerned because I don't want to agree to  
13 anything that I don't know what I'm agreeing to and I  
14 think for many of our resident associations not  
15 everyone is able to adapt to change in the same way  
16 so there's has to be a, a journey, right from 2015  
17 even though we weren't a part of that journey but  
18 there has to be some sort of a process. So, I was  
19 concerned when my leaders came to me expressing their  
20 displeasure with signing a document when they had no  
21 legal services, legal aid, I mean it's just very  
22 concerning and I get it but I said to NYCHA even your  
23 own legal division sees the problems that we have  
24 with this type of agreement so do you think the  
25 feedback you received from legal aid is sufficient at

1  
2 this point to move forward with the remaining  
3 outstanding TA's?

4           SIDEYA SHERMAN: Absolutely, think it, it  
5 captures what we've heard just offline in our  
6 discussions with TA's as well as what we got from  
7 the... from the workshop and it was provided, you know  
8 by attorneys from legal aid and so I think that we're  
9 in a good place to move forward.

10           COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay and  
11 specifically some of the TA's that I've spoken to in  
12 the past several weeks because they have failed to  
13 sign their agreement they are in limbo of facing a  
14 disruption of some of their services in their office  
15 like the cable and other necessities that are in the  
16 office that need to be maintained and because we are  
17 still in a conversation and we're beyond May 1<sup>st</sup> I am  
18 asking the housing authority to delay the disruption  
19 of any services at any of these developments that  
20 have an outstanding agreement to sign. I think it's  
21 really disingenuous, I think it's an insult to the  
22 tenants if we allow services to be disrupted, we're  
23 withholding money that they rightfully deserve and I  
24 get it and you know the challenge for all of you is  
25 that this has been a HUD policy for many, many years

1  
2 you've just never enforced it and so now in 2017  
3 obviously, you know we're thinking that there's a  
4 reason behind all of what we're doing and whether we  
5 know the reason or not we have to do our jobs and I  
6 get it but I'm very concerned about allowing services  
7 to be disrupted because a TA leader says I don't feel  
8 comfortable signing that agreement and I have my TA  
9 leaders that are in that position and I've spoken to  
10 NYCHA, I will talk to the chairwoman directly because  
11 I don't think their services should be disrupted,  
12 we're still looking at this, we're still looking at  
13 language and I think in all fairness we should give  
14 an extension and make sure that those payments can be  
15 approved while we are negotiating the final terms of  
16 this agreement.

17 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so what I'll say  
18 is that with respect to these ongoing services  
19 particularly internet, telephone, etcetera... [cross-  
20 talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Correct... [cross-  
22 talk]

23 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...to my understanding  
24 there are no services that have been impacted by not  
25

1  
2 signing this agreement at this point, I know... [cross-  
3 talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: They're coming..  
5 [cross-talk]

6 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...that there's a specific  
7 situation in your district and based on my  
8 understanding that's not necessarily related to the  
9 agreement so I'd be happy to, to discuss that..  
10 [cross-talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Oh okay... [cross-  
12 talk]

13 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...that further... [cross-  
14 talk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay... [cross-  
16 talk]

17 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...but there are... there  
18 are other reasons why certain services may not be  
19 active and it, it, it goes beyond having the  
20 agreement so outside of that specific situation in,  
21 in your district from our understanding and when  
22 we've gone with... have, have had these discussion with  
23 TA's who have pending agreements there is no one at  
24 this risk... at risk at this point of having their  
25 services disrupted and our goal is to not see folks



1  
2 internet and phone go down during this process which  
3 is why we're expediting getting the agreement back  
4 out to them.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, I agree and  
6 that's my goal too and I assure you that I'm going to  
7 do everything in my power to make sure that doesn't  
8 happen in the district I represent, if I... if I do  
9 nothing I have to represent their interest and the  
10 fact that I have not been engaged is a different  
11 conversation that I'll have at a different day but  
12 the fact that I'm involved now and we want to... we  
13 want to help, this is a city council that stands with  
14 NYCHA, I've stood with Shola so many times in my  
15 district. When we have the, the RAD program, the, the  
16 15 developments, I represent Butler, I've been  
17 working with her on so many issues so I don't think  
18 this council is asking for anything unreasonable, I  
19 think when we talk with you we not only demonstrate  
20 our support with our mouths but with money, we have  
21 given NYCHA a lot of money every single year after  
22 year and I will continue to do that because I know  
23 you need the support but all I ask as a member of  
24 this council is to respect our position and respect  
25 the fact that we are a stakeholder, do not just call

1  
2 when you need something but call us when you want to  
3 engage in every single thing that you do. I think  
4 it's only fair, I think it's reasonable and I think  
5 its practical, we want to help you, we don't want to  
6 criticize on the sidelines but I, I want to be a part  
7 of the work that you're doing because these are all  
8 of our tenants whether it's an election year or not  
9 my tenants know I speak like this every time not just  
10 an election year but all the time because I care  
11 about their well-being, I care about their safety and  
12 I care about the quality of life that they have and  
13 despite who sits in the Whitehouse we have work to do  
14 in this council, we have work to do in the housing  
15 authority so moving forward I do not want to have  
16 another situation where we have a new initiative and  
17 a year and a half later NYCHA is coming to us saying  
18 well we can now engage you, that is unacceptable,  
19 unacceptable, I may not be a resident leader but we  
20 are elected leaders and it's our job to work with you  
21 as partners. So, even after today I will continue to  
22 work with all of you and have conversations and do my  
23 part to work with my resident leaders but I want to  
24 make sure I'm... be very clear that, you know services  
25 are not going to be interrupted, we're getting ready

1  
2 for family days which our leaders need their funds so  
3 we want to move this process forward expeditiously  
4 but we want to make sure that its efficient as well  
5 and I don't want any leader to feel like they're  
6 being forced to sign something just so they can get  
7 their money, I don't want that to happen so I ask  
8 both of you and your staffs to work with us so we can  
9 make this process better for TPA as well as every  
10 other initiative that you guys are, are working on  
11 under your leadership, I ask for your commitment to  
12 work with this council, thank you very much.

13 SIDEYA SHERMAN: And thank you for your  
14 support and you know to your points we would  
15 certainly make sure to continue engaging you moving  
16 forward... [cross-talk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Absolutely not...  
18 [cross-talk]

19 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...and we will certainly...  
20 [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...two years later...  
22 [cross-talk]

23 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...follow up on those... on  
24 those specific requests.  
25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you, thank  
3 you Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Thank you. So, do,  
5 do you... do you acknowledge that you've made mistakes  
6 in... on, on the question of engagement or...

7 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, I think that this  
8 has certainly been a challenge with respect to  
9 rolling it out, I think we have... we... you know have  
10 lesson learned we would want to... you know if we were  
11 to roll this out again we would certainly love to  
12 bring our partners at legal aid and Brooklyn Legal  
13 Services in earlier and certainly engage the council  
14 earlier, you know we certainly made attempts at that  
15 as we rolled out this process but we, we hear your  
16 feedback and we would certainly engage you in our  
17 work moving forward. This is something that was laid  
18 on the Next Gen plan as one of many transformation  
19 processes with respect to resident engagement,  
20 election reform is, is certainly around the corner  
21 and so we would love to sit down and brief the  
22 council on that as well so that you're partners with  
23 us as we roll these out.

24 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yeah and it's not  
25 only a question of engaging us earlier but it seems

1  
2 to be you did not engage enough stakeholders, right  
3 and that's a standard that NYCHA set for itself,  
4 right NYCHA has said that what distinguishes us from  
5 previous administrations is that we are uniquely  
6 committed to resident engagement and stakeholder  
7 engagement and I do find it troubling that it never  
8 occurred to NYCHA to engage every single member of  
9 the public housing committee as Council Member Mendez  
10 pointed out or to engage Council Members or elected  
11 officials who represent heavy concentrations of  
12 public housing and who might have a stake in the  
13 administration of the TPA program. So, I think do you  
14 realize... I think you acknowledged that that was a  
15 mistake.

16 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure and as I mentioned  
17 as we have these... we have more reform processes  
18 underway and so we would certainly make sure to do  
19 that moving forward.

20 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yeah, but before...  
21 but the reforms that are... have been put in place are  
22 a done deal.

23 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So... these reforms are...  
24 they're active now, yeah.  
25

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: What were... what were the number of resident... what were the number of developments that have no resident councils again, do you... was it 79 you shared?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: About 76.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: 76... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...76 I believe.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And so your goal is to create resident councils in those developments over the next few months, is that...

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so our goal is to encourage the formation of resident associations, this will require on the ground outreach, resident meetings, nomination process.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I, I find organizing to be hard work...

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh...

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay, it's one of the most... if you're an organizer, if you're not a build association god bless you, I think it's one of the greatest talents and it's not within NYCHA's core competency to organize tenant associations, right like is that something that NYCHA should be doing

1  
2 directly, shouldn't you be either rely on  
3 organizations that know how to do this or...

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so we would seek  
5 to work with partners the way that we do with most of  
6 our services... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Right... [cross-talk]

8 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...in terms of contracting  
9 for services that's not necessarily something that  
10 NYCHA has done, we certainly have formed over 250  
11 associations, 30 of which formed after Next Gen but  
12 we would seek to partner with organizations that can,  
13 you know assist NYCHA with organizing on the ground  
14 that's the way that we... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: How many  
16 associations... [cross-talk]

17 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...do most of our work...  
18 [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...have you formed?

20 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, there are over 250  
21 associations and these formed through NYCHA's efforts  
22 working with... [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Do you... [cross-talk]

24 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...residents... [cross-talk]  
25

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Do you believe these  
3 are... were associations that would have never formed  
4 independently of NYCHA, is that...

5 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, I think residents  
6 right... even when NYCHA has formed an association it  
7 requires residents who are interested in the process  
8 and so our role is facilitating that access so it's  
9 the outreach, its making sure residents know what is  
10 involved in organizing a resident council, its  
11 identifying the leaders who want to be part of that  
12 resident council.

13 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, it, it would  
14 seem to me because I worry that if we... if NYCHA... if,  
15 if you do the same thing over and over again and  
16 expect a different result that's the definition of  
17 insanity, right and so either give those dollars to  
18 an organization that, that has the capacity to  
19 organize, right that does... that that's their core  
20 competency it's not one function among many or  
21 develop a strategy for spending those dollars in  
22 actual programming... [cross-talk]

23 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So... [cross-talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...in the absence of a  
25 resident council.



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SIDEYA SHERMAN: Exactly so... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Those, those seem to be the, the two clear options for me.

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: I, I don't disagree and so, you know as I mentioned there are... there's funding available in the... at the developments who have not had active associations, the PAJ can use that for a council or for programs and services. I think our approach towards direct service has been to transition to partners and so we certainly could use that funding to work with partners to organize resident council, there's still a role that the PHA has to have in terms of recognizing the council but we can certainly outsource some of that role... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Could, could you use... could you use TPA funds for political organizing?

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: We could not so... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay, so, so... or civic meaning that if there... if there... if there are policies... no, if there... I mean there are policy decisions that are being made in Washington D.C...

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh...

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...that could have catastrophic consequences for public housing and the livelihood of public housing residents, we could not use TPA funds to mobilize tenant... public housing residents to protest?

8

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, resident... so, absolutely... so, residents can use funds, they, they use them to go to Albany, they can use them to go to D.C., they meet with their elected, I think that... but those requests come from the residents they would have to come from... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Well I'm referring to the dollars that are languishing.

16

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

17

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Like, like why not use those dollars... I'm, I'm partisan as part of the Trump resistance in some sort... [cross-talk]

20

SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure... [cross-talk]

21

22

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...like that's... that, that... it might sound amusing but we're about to have a wedding planner as a Regional Administrator of HUD and the, the cuts that have been put forward are, are catastrophic, right, the New York City Housing

25

1  
2 Authority cannot survive the budget that Donald Trump  
3 has proposed so it's actually not a joke...

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh...

5 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...and you have  
6 invested interest in politically organizing  
7 empowering your residents why not use the dollars for  
8 that purpose?

9 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, I don't disagree, I  
10 think that we would have to make sure that its  
11 permissible use those requests come specifically from  
12 the resident associations. The way that the housing  
13 authority can use the funds are, are, are a little  
14 bit... are more prescribed and so we could use it to  
15 cultivate or identify the leaders who would do that  
16 organizing and so I... there's urgency around this...  
17 [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I think so, yeah.

19 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Absolutely and so the  
20 time is now which is why we've been focused on having  
21 an election reform process that is targeted to these  
22 developments that are not represented but there are  
23 obviously TPA funds available at developments that  
24 are represented and we would seek to encourage those  
25 resident associations to organize in that way.

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And now you receive 25 dollars per unit but does HUD require you to distribute those dollars proportionately or can you distribute, distribute it as you see fit?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: It has to be distributed by dwelling unit.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: By dwelling unit, okay. Council Member Mendez I... my understanding is you had more questions?

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you. Just two follow up questions. One is in reference to Council Member Gibson's question... statement that you met with the Bronx delegation May 24<sup>th</sup> less than a month ago, can you tell us now or can you get us the information of when you met with Helen Rosenthal, Comptroller Stringer, Congressman Jeffries and Speaker, Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: We can get those dates to you.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay. The other question is regarding the unauthorized TA's, what happens to their TPA funds?

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2 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Unauthorized meaning  
3 that the association is no longer recognized by...  
4 [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Yes... [cross-talk]

6 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...HM... Sure, so if an  
7 association is... [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I mean that is  
9 your definition, right?

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yes, so if there's an  
11 association where NYCHA has withdrawn the, the  
12 recognition of the... of the tenant association the  
13 funds would essentially stay in that development and  
14 NYCHA would encourage a new election. To my knowledge  
15 we haven't withdrawn any recognition during this  
16 engagement process. There are a number of resident  
17 associations who have been delayed in their elections  
18 and so they've been offered a time line to comply  
19 with their elections but as of... between this  
20 transition process we haven't had developments where  
21 we've withdrawn recognition.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Prior to this  
23 transition and changes in TPA what happened to the  
24 TPA funds for unauthorized resident associations and,  
25 and I ask you that because I had a tenant's

1  
2 association, the tenant president got ill, stepped  
3 down, we could not get an election, I with the other  
4 elected officials, my state senator, Daniel Squadron  
5 and Assemblyman Brian Kavanaugh assigned staff to help  
6 organize a tenant association, I got organizers MSW's  
7 to help organize, we couldn't get an election, we  
8 couldn't get enough people interested, people just...  
9 they knew what that president went through and no one  
10 was willing to take that on, years and years went by,  
11 I don't know what happened to their TPA funds,  
12 eventually they were merged with another existing  
13 association in my district. So, what happens to all  
14 that money during that time?

15 JENELLE HUDSON: So, prior to December of  
16 2016 the funds were maintained by district so the pot  
17 of money that we had going into December 2016 was 3.5  
18 million approximately and at that time the funds were  
19 equitably distributed across the developments so this  
20 is the first time in December that each development  
21 has their own TPA allocation budget. So, the dollar  
22 amount that you're referencing I'm not sure the time  
23 line that you're, you're speaking about, the money  
24 wasn't separated at that time for that development so  
25 every development now has their allocation so

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2 depending on... I can give you the information specific  
3 to the development you're talking about and let you  
4 know what the funds are that are... [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I'm, I'm having...  
6 [cross-talk]

7 JENELLE HUDSON: ...available... [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: ...a trouble  
9 wrapping my head around your answer one is because I  
10 don't know what you mean by districts maybe that  
11 might help.

12 JENELLE HUDSON: Uh-huh, so... [cross-talk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: What do you mean  
14 its allocated by district?

15 JENELLE HUDSON: No, the funding was  
16 maintained so we had budgets based on the districts,  
17 the CCOP districts.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: CCOP districts...

19 JENELLE HUDSON: Uh-huh. We haven't  
20 withdrawn recognition from any resident association  
21 since December so the long... to answer your question  
22 is the money is still there for that development.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: So, prior to  
24 December, I took office in 2006 somewhere in between  
25 there one specific TA that I know of in my district

1  
2 was not authorized... actually there were a couple, one  
3 eventually had an election but the one that could not  
4 get an election under the bylaws that existed all  
5 those years and then a few years ago they were merged  
6 so all the money all that... all those years for those  
7 units for that development was being held and then  
8 when they merged it was then given to the other TA  
9 that its now merging to, is that what you're telling  
10 me?

11 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, I'll just jump in  
12 here so if there funds awarded before 2016 those were  
13 the funds that NYCHA reallocated across all the  
14 dwelling units so whether there was a tenant  
15 association with one certain development that merged  
16 with another development the, the funding that is  
17 available to that merge association is based on the  
18 aggregate number of their dwelling units and those  
19 funds that were awarded in years prior essentially  
20 have rolled over across the years and have been  
21 redistributed, their new funding would be allocated  
22 based on their aggregate number of dwelling units for  
23 that association. So, in this particular example and  
24 I'm... you know as Jenelle mentioned we're happy to,  
25



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2 to, to... you know for that specific example because  
3 that's, that's somewhat unique... [cross-talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Yeah... [cross-  
5 talk]

6 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...but it would be on the  
7 aggregate sides of the dwelling unit... [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: ...I don't think  
9 that unique but yes.

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Okay... [cross-talk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay, happens  
12 less frequently. So, my understanding then for the 76  
13 that you're saying is unauthorized and that could be  
14 a little bit more or a little bit less, right, their  
15 funds have been put in the district of CCOP and its  
16 being held there and now it's being separated by  
17 development and when... if and when they get authorized  
18 they will be able to access that money how, how many  
19 years back they did not utilize it, is that correct?

20 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so for, for the  
21 funds that were awarded between... before 2006 that  
22 have redistributed there's an amount available for  
23 these developments that do not have representation.  
24 They are still accumulating new allocations and so...  
25 you know I think its... and for many years NYCHA did

1  
2 not necessarily use these new allocations because  
3 they were being used at the district level. Moving  
4 forward the way that we would use those allocations  
5 is specifically how they're prescribed to help the  
6 formation of a new board or for tenant participation  
7 activities benefiting those developments. The, the  
8 goal is that we quickly form a new association so  
9 that they can utilize those funds that have... were  
10 awarded prior to 2016.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you and,  
12 and thank you Mr. Chair for allowing me to ask  
13 additional questions.

14 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Council Member  
15 Gibson do you have any further questions or comments?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Just a quick  
17 question and I don't know if you got to this before I  
18 arrived, the, the guidelines that HUD's put forth on  
19 how you can use those particular funds, so can you  
20 just explain to us what the regulations are for using  
21 TPA funds, what are they used for and is anything  
22 prohibited?

23 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so we can also  
24 provide to the council, we have a one pager that  
25 explains what's, what's prohibited and what's not but

1  
2 in general they are supposed to be used for self-  
3 sufficiency activities, educational activities, they  
4 are supposed to be used to support the resident  
5 association leadership to build membership, they  
6 could also be used for capacity building. Some of the  
7 things that are not permissible would be activities  
8 that are purely entertainment, amusement park rides,  
9 purchases of equipment and supplies for, for a group  
10 other than the resident association. So, there's a  
11 pretty exhaustive list that HUD provides and we have  
12 used that list verbatim to make sure that resident  
13 associations have good guidance around this. HUD was  
14 also part of our training and spent some time  
15 discussing what's permissible and what's not and so  
16 residents access their funds through a proposal  
17 process, we would... we review the proposals based on  
18 those criteria and if there is, you know a grey area  
19 we would certainly work with the resident association  
20 to make sure their proposals in line with guidelines.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, so prior to  
22 December of 2016 you still had this process where you  
23 were helping resident associations with putting  
24 together you... as you talked about a proposal so what  
25 I'm trying to understand is every TA operates at a

1  
2 different level and capacity so when you say the  
3 money is used for capacity building and self-  
4 sufficiency like I don't know what that means, does  
5 that mean like voter education drives, know your...  
6 [cross-talk]

7 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So... [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...rights forums...  
9 [cross-talk]

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yes, so an example... some  
11 of the examples that we cited earlier were a TA  
12 president, one of... a district, district leader for  
13 example who used the funding to provide an ESL class  
14 at her development where there was a large... [cross-  
15 talk]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay... [cross-  
17 talk]

18 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...population that did not  
19 speak English. That would-be a, a perfect example of  
20 how these funds can be used, you know a resident  
21 association may, you know offer an... a GED class,  
22 we've had examples of resident associations who've  
23 used their funds in those ways. So, that would be an  
24 example.  
25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, that also  
3 includes like OSHA classes since we want to build up  
4 our residents so they can be in the job market and  
5 the work force to get better employment and build  
6 skills, I, I, I will qualify that as self-  
7 sufficiency, does that also include like OSHA  
8 classes... [cross-talk]

9 SIDEYA SHERMAN: That's a permissible  
10 use, absolutely.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, okay and I,  
12 I don't want to change the subject but you know with  
13 many of these resident associations they're also  
14 recipients of funds through the city council... [cross-  
15 talk]

16 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...which brings a  
18 different level of guidelines so is... are those funds  
19 also under your jurisdiction as well or does that go  
20 separate?

21 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, those funds come  
22 through our department but we... it's a completely  
23 separate process so we administer those funds but we  
24 are not necessarily administering them with the...  
25 within the TPA process so... [cross-talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, so is the money that I'm giving my TA's going to be held up with the TPA funds too?

SIDEYA SHERMAN: No, it's a completely... we don't comingle those funds, it's a separate process.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, okay, thank you very much. Thanks Chair.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Thank you, I have... can you let me know when there's quorum, is there... is there quorum for... okay. I know... you indicated earlier that there was a lack of clarity about, about the expenses of the district councils or... that you said you could tell the resident leaders the allocation per development but you could not share the expenses, is that... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I did not understand your point earlier so...

SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, so let me... let me clarify. So, I think in some of what you heard even in the testimony earlier was that the district councils would adopt a budget... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yeah... [cross-talk]

1  
2 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...and there was not  
3 necessarily clarity for the resident associations of  
4 what the full expenditures were once, once they  
5 agreed to adopt that budget. So, we can certainly... we  
6 can provide detail of what the districts... [cross-  
7 talk]

8 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: But that seems like  
9 a... [cross-talk]

10 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...have... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...solvable problem,  
12 right... [cross-talk]

13 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yeah, so... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...under the old  
15 system why not just share the resident leader's  
16 information about the expenditures of the district  
17 council?

18 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, that's something  
19 that we can provide I think what the, the question  
20 that we've received from resident associations were  
21 like accounting for their specific development over a  
22 number of years without necessarily accounting for  
23 their participation in the... in the district budget as  
24 well so we're... what we can do is to disaggregate the  
25

1  
2 district budget by development, we can give what the  
3 district budget was and what the expenditures were.

4 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And why can't you  
5 just aggregate the district council...

6 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, there may be certain  
7 expenses in the district budget that we can  
8 proportionately break it out across developments  
9 equally but we could not for instance say you know in  
10 2005 you participated in this specific training so  
11 we... the, the way that we would break out the  
12 districts expenditures would be to just disaggregate  
13 it proportionately based on the members and that's  
14 something that we... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I think that's...  
16 [cross-talk]

17 SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...can make available...  
18 [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...that's, that's how  
20 people would expect you to do so... [cross-talk]

21 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, so I mean that's...  
22 [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...I... so, get... [cross-  
24 talk]



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SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...that's something that...

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[cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...so that seems like a straightforward... [cross-talk]

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yeah, that's, that's straightforward.

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, why couldn't you share that information with the resident leaders over the last three years, I don't...

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SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, that's something that... I mean I think... I believe that that's different than what has been requested but we certainly can share that... what the district spent their, their funding on and the formula would essentially be the dwelling units in that district. I think, you know Jenelle gave an example of what a district adopted as a budget and what the proportion of the development funds went into that budget, that's something that we can share. The district... the district members also sign off on that budget so it's something that they would be aware of... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And so the dollars would flow through the district and what portion of the... of those dollars would go to the local council?

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JENELLE HUDSON: Each district varied.

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Each district

4

varied?

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JENELLE HUDSON: Uh-huh.

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, what, what is

7

the variation?

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JENELLE HUDSON: So, so in 2015 Bronx

9

North percentage of their budget represented.. I'm

10

sorry... 76.96 percent for the district budget, for

11

Bronx South... [cross-talk]

12

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: What does that mean

13

that, that if I'm... [cross-talk]

14

JENELLE HUDSON: So... [cross-talk]

15

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...if, if I'm the TA

16

leader of Throggs Neck 76 percent of my budget went

17

to the district?

18

JENELLE HUDSON: To the district, yes.

19

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Seventy-six?

20

JENELLE HUDSON: Seventy-six for Bronx

21

North, in 2015 for Bronx South 58.86 percent went to

22

the district, for Manhattan North in 2015... [cross-

23

talk]

24

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Who sets these

25

percentages?

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JENELLE HUDSON: The district.

3

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: With, with no input...

4

[cross-talk]

5

JENELLE HUDSON: They set their budget...

6

yeah, so they would meet with the membership and

7

develop a district budget and sign off on it and

8

submit it to, to NYCHA and that's what we use to fund

9

the district's budget. Manhattan North was 26.8

10

percent.

11

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So... but... and, and

12

in... I... in our... it would seem to me in a rational

13

universe, right, the dollar amount that you receive

14

in TPA funding should depend on the need, on the size

15

of your development, it seems to me that there could

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have been developments that were receiving less

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funding than they should have been receiving and

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developments that were receiving more funding. That's

19

a crazy system... [cross-talk]

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JENELLE HUDSON: So, this is why we

21

needed to reform the process.

22

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, so now what's

23

the... now you can opt into the district?

24

JENELLE HUDSON: Yes.

25

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And what's going to be the percentage?

JENELLE HUDSON: twenty percent.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And that's going to be a uniform...

JENELLE HUDSON: Yes...

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...percentage. Okay, I have one, one final set of questions regarding the administrative overhead, I know we've pressed you on this but... so the ten staffers are exclusively responsible for the administration of TPA funds... TPA funds, can you... can you describe to me in detail what is their role, what do they do actually because it seems to me like the administration of TPA funds seems like a straightforward process maybe I'm... maybe I don't appreciate the complexity of it but what exactly are they doing?

JENELLE HUDSON: So, they're receiving the proposals from the resident associations... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay... [cross-talk]

JENELLE HUDSON: ...and working through the eligibility of the proposals eligible for TPA funds and each proposal has the number of components so

1  
2 they may be processing invoices or purchase orders,  
3 each proposal may have 20 different components to it  
4 up to four proposals.

5 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: But now with the  
6 commercial cards they won't have to do that work?

7 JENELLE HUDSON: Well with the commercial  
8 cards... so, with the commercial cards there are still  
9 proposals but we will receive them... we're receiving  
10 them on a quarterly basis... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, rather than on  
12 a... [cross-talk]

13 JENELLE HUDSON: Rather than proposal by  
14 proposal... [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, that... [cross-  
16 talk]

17 JENELLE HUDSON: ...and we're still  
18 approving them... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...so, that's a lot  
20 less work.

21 JENELLE HUDSON: It's not because...  
22 [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: No...

24 JENELLE HUDSON: ...we're... no, it's not,  
25 we're still approving them for eligibility, the part

1  
2 that doesn't go associated with the commercial card  
3 is we're not making the small purchases, they're  
4 actually making the purchases directly but there's  
5 still an approval process, there's still a  
6 reconciliation... [cross-talk]

7 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: No, I understand...  
8 [cross-talk]

9 JENELLE HUDSON: ...process... [cross-talk]

10 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...there's, there is  
11 some process, we agree, right... [cross-talk]

12 JENELLE HUDSON: Yes... [cross-talk]

13 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...the question is  
14 what is the rigor of that process and under the old  
15 process you would micro manage every purchase?

16 JENELLE HUDSON: Uh-huh, right.

17 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Under the new, new  
18 process you're reviewing purchases on a quarterly  
19 basis, that's a big difference and one requires fewer  
20 employees than the other...

21 JENELLE HUDSON: The purchases are still  
22 reconciled on a daily basis so if a resident  
23 association is approved to make purchases and they go  
24 out and purchase today they have a certain amount of  
25 time to upload their receipts, we're looking at that,

1  
2 we see when purchases are made against each card and  
3 we're monitoring it, checks and balances.

4 SIDEYA SHERMAN: So, I would just also  
5 add that you know we're in the midst of reform  
6 process, right so we had a centralized TPA unit of  
7 ten individuals who manage a proposal submission  
8 process, we have also started a commercial card pilot  
9 which right now has only 33 resident associations in  
10 the commercial card so the commercial card process  
11 will significantly reduce the amount of back office  
12 administrative work and make it more resident basing  
13 and so right now we're managing two processes, we  
14 would... our goal is to bring resident associations  
15 into the commercial card process and what that would  
16 do is essentially allow us to... we would essentially  
17 reduce the number of folks who are in our central TPA  
18 unit and they would be redeployed to these frontline  
19 roles and we would actually fall better within what  
20 is the admin fee, right now we are spending over what  
21 is the admin fee.

22 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yeah, I would just...  
23 I, I think we're going to have a disagreement but I  
24 have to recess the hearing in a few minutes but I, I  
25 wish there were a strategy for how do we... how do we

1  
2 minimize administrative overhead so that we're  
3 freeing up dollars for actual programming and  
4 services that promote resident engagement and I hope  
5 that we develop a strategy for those unspent TPA  
6 funds, I mean to see those dollars languished  
7 indefinitely is scandalous in my opinion given the  
8 lack of resources in public housing and then I heard  
9 earlier I think you did commit to immediately making  
10 available online the allocation per, per development,  
11 is that a commitment that NYCHA's going to honor?

12 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, we can make that  
13 available.

14 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay.

15 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Yeah.

16 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: What, what...  
17 immediately online is that something that can be  
18 done?

19 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Sure, it's... [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay.

21 SIDEYA SHERMAN: Absolutely, we can make  
22 that online, I think that its, it's not only to the  
23 benefit of resident associations but also residents  
24 to know what the allocation is and how it's being  
25



used at their development so we'll... we can make...

[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Great, with... [cross-talk]

SIDEYA SHERMAN: ...that available... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...that said we need to take a 15-minute recess because the Environmental Protection Committee needs this committee room for a vote, right is that... so, we are in recess thank you.

[recess]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: We are resuming the hearing on TPA funding, we'll proceed with the next panel of residents. We have Princella Jameson from Mill Brook, Felicia Gordon from Hernandez Houses, Henry Cokes from 1970 Amsterdam Avenue, and Maria Trinidad from 28<sup>th</sup> Street. Maria Forbes you can be the... okay. No, okay... okay, let's begin the clock and... ma'am if you want to... do you want to... whoever wants to start so...

FELICIA GORDON: Hello. Good afternoon everyone, my name is Felicia Gordon, I'm the RA President for Rafael Hernandez located in district 1. I want to approach some of the things that were

1  
2 discussed here that I find alarming. A lot of NYCHA's  
3 testimony I found to be untruthful. I'm also  
4 concerned about NYCHA's relationships with some of  
5 our elected officials with... you know there's, there's  
6 a lot of incestual relationships happening within  
7 NYCHA which renders NYCHA very powerful and with that  
8 attitude its why they sort of disperse some of the  
9 things that they do, you know they have this goliath  
10 belief. I say to the resident... residents as well as  
11 the resident leaders that I think its incumbent upon  
12 us to take our own control and sort of exercise our  
13 own rights and depend on ourselves as opposed to a  
14 lot of other people. The way that this agreement was  
15 addressed was criminal, it was outright criminal to  
16 present us with a legal agreement that basically if,  
17 if anyone that read that agreement they are shifting  
18 the legal liability, a lot of the legal liability of  
19 this fiscal spending onto us. It literally says in  
20 that language that they cannot be held accountable  
21 for things that they may or may not do. Now anyone  
22 that knows NYCHA knows that they don't pay their  
23 bills so a lot of... like you... like you were discussing  
24 the Con Edison or blah, blah, blah this has been  
25 going on for a long period of time so if you... if... I

1  
2 think there needs to be more outreach to... with... I  
3 can't... I'm so frustrated I don't know what to say  
4 but... and my time is running out but I think that it,  
5 it... there needs to be like a, a... an internal  
6 investigation, there needs to be an audit of how that  
7 money has been spent, millions upon millions of  
8 dollars is missing, if you happen to reach out to a  
9 lot of the resident associations you will see that 70  
10 percent of the funding has been gone. There are  
11 people who have had quarter of a million dollars in  
12 their funds and now they only have 70,000 dollars.  
13 So, for that amount of money to be missing and then  
14 they come up with this so-called agreement that they  
15 want us to be responsible for. There needs to be an  
16 investigation, you know and I would applaud you as  
17 well as the other elected officials to look into a  
18 number of criminal activities within NYCHA. I think  
19 that this is great that we're here but I think that  
20 as resident leaders or... and as residents that we need  
21 to take some of the control back and potentially take  
22 this to a federal court and allow a judge who's an  
23 unbiased party decide on how we should move forward  
24 next because I've been disallowed the opportunity to  
25 spend my TPA funds to facilitate my residents because

1  
2 I refused to be coerced into signing a document that  
3 I had no insight in so... that's my concern, some of  
4 them.

5 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay, I, I just want  
6 to... and I don't want to go back and forth but I just  
7 want to state that we share your concerns, we're  
8 going to closely scrutinize NYCHA and the TPA  
9 process, I thought the questions here were tough but  
10 I'm not aware of any member of the city council who  
11 has what can be described as an incestuous  
12 relationship with the housing authority so... [cross-  
13 talk]

14 FELICIA GORDON: I mean I guess that's a  
15 matter of opinion, I mean... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So... okay, well I...  
17 [cross-talk]

18 FELICIA GORDON: Yeah... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...I'm, I'm expressing  
20 mine so...

21 FELICIA GORDON: And I expressed mine.

22 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And fair enough and...  
23 [cross-talk]

24 FELICIA GORDON: Uh-huh.  
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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And, and I'm not aware of any criminal behavior on the part of the housing authority but again we're going to continue to scrutinize the use of TPA funds so...

FELICIA GORDON: To coerce someone into signing a legal document could be interpreted as criminal behavior... conduct, I mean that's improper behavior for any professional.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay...

FELICIA GORDON: Entity to...

PRINCELLA JAMESON: I think I broke it...

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: You're liable for that.

PRINCELLA JAMESON: I know...

FELICIA GORDON: No, no just turn the... speak into it.

PRINCELLA JAMESON: Hello, my name is Princella Jameson, I'm from Mill Brook Houses. Thank you for having this hearing today. I wanted to state that there was a lot said here today about the TPA process, one of the things that I wanted to clarify the housing authority was stating that because... if they hit a budget crunch that it, it, it has... it would decrease what we get for TPA. According to HUD

1  
2 24CFR a 964 funding isn't supposed to be decreased  
3 due to any budget crunch of the housing authority.  
4 Housing also stated that they are reforming the  
5 election process, they should not be reforming our  
6 election process, we have a process that has been in  
7 existence and for them to reform it I find that to be  
8 a problem. They state that the TPA funding process is  
9 broken but I have to say what is broken is the way  
10 that the housing authority engaged the resident  
11 leaders, that's what totally broken. They should not  
12 be allowed to make any changes without the resident  
13 leaders being there to hear what changes are being  
14 made and for us to have our input put into any  
15 procedure or policy making so that's just what I have  
16 to say. There's another thing they was stating about  
17 the use of the commercial cards, one of the things  
18 that they did not state is that the housing authority  
19 just informed us that we are not allowed to use the  
20 tax-exempt papers so what happens to those resident  
21 leaders that are using the commercial cards that  
22 accrue taxes using those cards, where do those tax  
23 dollars come from, their pocket. If we're not allowed  
24 to use the tax paper of the housing authority that  
25 means therefore we would have to put those taxes back

1  
2 out of our pocket. That's just my statement, thank  
3 you.

4 MARIA TRINIDAD: It's on, yeah. Good  
5 afternoon. My name is Maria Trinidad, I'm from... I've  
6 been a resident of 344 East 28<sup>th</sup> Street development  
7 for 46 years. I'm also the President of the... our  
8 Resident Association. I would just like to say that  
9 this is a... the easiest managing TPA funding has ever  
10 been. I, I signed the paper but I didn't sign it just  
11 to sign it, before I signed that paper I had a lawyer  
12 look at it. the lawyer told me it looked okay so I  
13 signed it. another thing is that I started my  
14 resident association in December first and I went to  
15 every meeting that they had for the TPA. I have no  
16 problems with my card, I, I put a proposal for the  
17 year and then I put a proposal for the... quarterly.  
18 The proposal quarterly I bought my chairs, I bought  
19 my tables and I used... and the office supplies, I use  
20 WB Mason. They put... I put the proposal, how much it  
21 was, they put it in the bank, I don't have to wait  
22 for somebody to decide when I'm going to get the  
23 things so I got my office supplies the next day from  
24 WB Mason, there was no shipping charges, there was...  
25 you know I got my tables, I got my chairs from

1  
2 another company, it's not... I don't... I just go to  
3 wholesale... I dialed up wholesale whatever, it comes  
4 up and that's how I get it, I put the card in, I have  
5 no problem, they tell me when the... Danisha Wilagram  
6 she, she was... she's the best for because she has  
7 helped me every time I need a question answered I  
8 just call her, she's there all the time, she's not... I  
9 never have to leave a message for her because she's  
10 always there and I always ask her what's this and  
11 what's this and can I get this, can I not get this  
12 and I have no problems. Every... my receipts are full,  
13 you know they're, they're up to date, I scan my  
14 receipt, I mail them... I send them to her and that's  
15 it. So, I'm doing good.

16 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Alright, well thank  
17 you for your testimony.

18 MARIA FORBES: Hello, hello... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, I, I take it  
20 you're supportive of the reforms?

21 MARIA TRINIDAD: Oh yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay.

23 MARIA TRINIDAD: I think so.

24 MARIA FORBES: Good afternoon, my name is  
25 Maria Forbes, I'm a TA President for 30 years at Clay



1  
2 Avenue Tenants Association. A lot of things Mr.  
3 Torres and thank you so much for calling this, this  
4 is overdue. Now we're going to have the 35 percent  
5 increase on our rent next week, okay?

6 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: You hear that NYCHA,  
7 it was... it was just... [cross-talk]

8 MARIA FORBES: 35 cent... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...notice... [cross-  
10 talk]

11 MARIA FORBES: ...increase of the rent, we  
12 got to have that. The freedom of information act  
13 worked very well, in 2014 I came back with a  
14 vengeance and I requested the spending of NYCHA's  
15 money so they only gave that document to whoever they  
16 wanted to give it to. I got it from the law  
17 department, I attended the executive board meeting, I  
18 screamed on Shola because she was getting ready to  
19 point her two executive board members to some  
20 auditing committee and I said look I sent you this  
21 freedom of information act over 30... over 60 days ago  
22 where's my paper, I got home and I had 94 sheets of  
23 what was going on in Bronx South District as to the  
24 spending of each development, did I have what each  
25 development was allocated, no but I had to what each

1  
2 development was spending other than that traveling  
3 allowance which was very... I'll tell you about that  
4 traveling allowance in a minute but that traveling  
5 allowance was really something. So, I want to say  
6 that it was not hard for me to obtain what was going  
7 on with Bronx South District Council of President's  
8 money. No, I never agreed so when they said they had  
9 the districts agreements into how much was being  
10 allocated of this 56... you see Bronx South was the  
11 largest percentage they gave in to agreement. The  
12 consolidations only have 190 maybe even 50 units per,  
13 per site. So, Clairmont Consolidation have 17 Tenant  
14 Association Presidents, the smallest site there may  
15 only have maybe 60 units so that TA President only  
16 gets probably 1,200 dollars but the district was  
17 taking all of that money and indicating that they  
18 were going to give us an allowance to spend which was  
19 not very true because the, the district chair he was  
20 taking a lot of trips like they said he didn't have  
21 no, no, no means of stuff, I'm going to get on with  
22 it... [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, so... yeah...

24 MARIA FORBES: ...I'm going to get with it  
25 Ritchie just one minute.

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CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay.

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MARIA FORBES: The Executive Boards are not educated enough to handle this money and if they're saying that they give training out of this TPA funding of 40 percent that's a lie, we have not gotten any training from NYCHA since the existence of the TPA funding. How many people you really want to know run that TPA out of the 40 percent only four to five NYCHA workers, what are they doing with the 40 percent of millions of dollars to run it... [cross-talk]

13

14

15

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, I want to conclude with a question just very quick, are, are you supportive of the... [cross-talk]

16

17

18

19

MARIA FORBES: No, I'm not... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...decision, wait let me... let me finish the question and then, it's... [cross-talk]

20

21

22

23

24

MARIA FORBES: ...Uh-huh...

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...it seems... it seems to me you're supportive of the decision to redistribute the funds from the district to the local council?

25

MARIA FORBES: The money needs...

1

2

3

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: It seems like you  
want the money to flow... [cross-talk]

4

MARIA FORBES: They need to... [cross-talk]

5

6

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...directly to you...  
[cross-talk]

7

8

MARIA FORBES: ...be educated... Ritchie let  
me tell you... let me say this, I've been a fiscal can  
do it over... [cross-talk]

9

10

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yeah... [cross-talk]

11

12

MARIA FORBES: ...for over 350,000 dollars,  
I know how to manage and operate money... [cross-talk]

13

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yeah... [cross-talk]

14

15

MARIA FORBES: ...I'm, I'm a 501C3 since  
'95, does my fellow TA Presidents need to be  
educated, yes, they need to be educated...

16

17

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yeah, I'm asking a  
different question though, I agree that... [cross-talk]

18

19

MARIA FORBES: Okay... [cross-talk]

20

21

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...do you want... do you  
feel like the dollars should flow to you locally or  
should it go through the district?

22

23

MARIA FORBES: Yes.

24

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yes to...

25

MARIA FORBES: To me.

1

2

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: To you, okay...

3

MARIA FORBES: To me.

4

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So you agree with...

5

[cross-talk]

6

MARIA FORBES: Do you know why because

7

the man was stealing the money, the District Chair

8

John Johnson was stealing the money, didn't you hear

9

them say... excuse me, one minute then I'll let you

10

speak you heard the lady say we asked... there was a

11

development that had an underlying quorum and

12

primarily took trips, did he distribute the money to

13

the residents... [cross-talk]

14

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay, so I... we're

15

not... [cross-talk]

16

MARIA FORBES: No... [cross-talk]

17

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...we're not... we're

18

not here to adjudicate accusations of that... [cross-

19

talk]

20

MARIA FORBES: Okay... [cross-talk]

21

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Right, this is not a

22

criminal court.

23

MARIA FORBES: Okay.

24

25

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: But, but it seems like you're supportive of NYCHA's decision... [cross-talk]

MARIA FORBES: If, if they... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...to distribute those dollars... [cross-talk]

MARIA FORBES: ...they are lying right here Ritchie they are lying, they said they took 40 percent of the money to give the NYCHA residents training, they didn't give us no training, they said that they got 10 people to staff, they don't have no staff, there's only four people operating the TPA funding from... since 1919, I'm telling you so am I... give me my money, yes give me my money because I didn't... I'm tired of people stealing my money, I'm tired of NYCHA stealing my money and I'm tired of the Bronx South Council President stealing my money, I'm tired of the new chair who is the Bronx South Council President stealing my money. Has RAB ever came back and shared this meeting from 2015 with us, nobody never called me and asked me about anything.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, careful... [cross-talk]

MARIA FORBES: So, go ahead Ritchie...

1

2

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Just for the record

3

I have not stolen any money from you so I... [cross-

4

talk]

5

MARIA FORBES: No.

6

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay... [cross-talk]

7

MARIA FORBES: No, you didn't... no you

8

didn't.

9

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, but your point

10

has been taken, thank you so much for your testimony

11

and... [cross-talk]

12

MARIA FORBES: Well I wasn't finished, I

13

wanted to add... [cross-talk]

14

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: No, we, we... [cross-

15

talk]

16

MARIA FORBES: ...on... Ritchie...

17

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: We, we, we have a

18

time limit I'm sorry.

19

MARIA FORBES: It was...

20

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I'm sorry Miss

21

Forbes, yeah, I have to... [cross-talk]

22

MARIA FORBES: Go ahead Ritchie.

23

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Sorry but you can...

24

you can call me anytime and... the next panel is Miss

25

Holmes.

MARIA FORBES: Oh my goodness. Somebody want to step down and give me some more time? No, okay.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Miss Torres, Tyrone Ball at... from St. Nicholas Houses, Patty Hightower... [cross-talk]

BARBARA HOLMES: I done forgot what I was... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...from Glenwood Development Housing... [cross-talk]

BARBARA HOLMES: I done forgot what I was even going to say.

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Look I... and I, I just for the record I, I support the right of resident leaders to say what you want, its... but I, I would be careful not to level accusations against particular individuals, it's just not an appropriate form because those individuals do not have the opportunity to defend themselves against those accusations... [cross-talk]

MARIA FORBES: You're right... you're right... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, that, this is the one ground rule I will set in governing what is



1  
2 said so... with that said Miss Torres or Miss Holmes  
3 let's start with you.

4 BARBARA HOLMES: Okay, it's... okay. I... all  
5 the questions that I've had... I'm Barbara Holmes from  
6 Morris Houses. All the questions that I had in mind  
7 was asked by your, yourself and Miss Gibson but there  
8 are... something I had told you on the side what  
9 happens is that NYCHA... I went along... I became  
10 president and the training is true, I didn't know  
11 anything about how to run a, an organization of this  
12 size of my development so I learned day by day and  
13 from other people, I called people and they informed  
14 me even I asked some questions and they informed me  
15 but there were a lot of us that didn't know that  
16 were, were elected that year didn't know anything  
17 about it so we went along with everything. As far as  
18 the budget and the money was concerned I found out  
19 how much it was, I found out some rules about  
20 spending it and then I found out just this year at a  
21 meeting that I was getting the wrong money I... but I  
22 went along with, with what, what NYCHA told me. So,  
23 when I looked at the budget of this year against  
24 someone else's development and how much they were  
25 getting and they had less buildings than I did and,

1  
2 and I, I asked a question, well where did that money  
3 go, you know and no one can explain it to me and, and  
4 it really... yesterday doesn't matter, I mean it  
5 matters but it's not something that I'm going to harp  
6 on, it's this year, it's this agreement and you're  
7 absolutely right, I read it... I didn't get it and I  
8 read it and I didn't understand a word of it not  
9 really and I'm an educated person, I have a college  
10 degree so I'm not stupid but I didn't understand it  
11 so I went over it and I asked miss Hudson, I called  
12 her and I wrote down... I wrote down some questions for  
13 her and she answered me back. The one question I  
14 wanted to say was the 20 percent that I give my  
15 district, I wanted to be able to give my district  
16 whatever it is that I decided because I understand  
17 between... before '06 it was... that's the way it went  
18 that the, the TA boards they decided how much to  
19 give... I mean give the district so then when they said  
20 it to me, when these meetings that we had and they  
21 said well most people agreed... the first meeting I  
22 never agreed because I didn't as far as the money was  
23 concerned and what they were going to do and then I  
24 thought that the money was going to be put into... all  
25 the money was going to put in and I didn't want to

1  
2 hold the responsibility so I said no but then when I  
3 found out that this card... and the, the cards... what do  
4 you call the card... the commercial cards were given I  
5 still didn't understand and I asked Miss Hudson I  
6 said listen for five... just one minute, for five... the  
7 point of it is that if something cost over the 5,000  
8 dollars I wanted to know where did they take this  
9 money from, how would I know personally where their...  
10 to... how much money they were taking out of my... out of  
11 the, the reserve because it would have to be in the  
12 reserve and they gave me some answer so I'm really  
13 concerned about that I was going to sign this today  
14 but after listening to everybody's complaint and your  
15 questions and Miss Gibson's questions I'm in the same  
16 problem that I had when I walked in the room. I have  
17 the same opinion so I don't know what to do about  
18 this.

19 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I apologize because  
20 you're right we should have asked why, why not leave  
21 the percentage to the discretion of the local  
22 resident council, why have a, a set 20 percent for  
23 everyone so... did you know the percentage of your  
24 budget that was going to the district council by  
25 chance, were you aware of that percentage?

1  
2 BARBARA HOLMES: Yes, sir. I was aware,  
3 they told us that everyone was giving up 20 percent  
4 even the smaller developments so 20 percent of  
5 whatever they... they're portion was and... [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, you had 20  
7 percent before the new policy?

8 BARBARA HOLMES: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Okay.

10 BARBARA HOLMES: Yes, yes and I  
11 questioned that to the district and some of the  
12 districts there I questioned that even before... I've  
13 been president... this is my third term so I questioned  
14 it from the beginning what was the 20 percent and  
15 what they were going to do to it... do with it and I  
16 didn't get that answer so now I don't want to give it  
17 to them. Okay.

18 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Miss Torres.

19 AIXA TORRES: Hi, good afternoon. I thank  
20 you for holding this hearing. I'm one of the 33 that  
21 signed the contract. When we got the contract the  
22 first thing I did was send it to my attorney. As you  
23 know I have no qualms about getting attorneys when it  
24 comes to NYCHA and I... after the attorney read it and  
25 told me whatever his opinion was I then went through

1  
2 the document and with my executive board we decided  
3 to go ahead. For me this card thing has been the best  
4 thing because I don't have the aggravation that I  
5 usually have with favoritism and all the kind of  
6 stuff that used to happen with the previous  
7 administration and so at the end of the day I had to  
8 buy air conditioners because we have so much  
9 construction going on in Smith I need the room to be  
10 a cooling room, I ended up saving like 500 dollars of  
11 my TPA funds because I was able to use the card and  
12 because we bought so many we got a credit and so... and  
13 it goes directly back into my... to the account so it's  
14 functioning. The training that was given and I've  
15 given my constructive criticism as somebody who  
16 professionally gave training to lay people at the  
17 Department of Education which is almost the same  
18 process, part of it has been that... because I went to  
19 the training, right, so it was okay for me but the..  
20 they needed to have examples of what they were  
21 requesting and how the process was going to be so  
22 that the people can do it and that's a conversation  
23 I've had with Miss Hudson and with Olatoye with both  
24 of them about the... how you move forward, right, I  
25 think for me and for our organization for Smith we

1  
2 are going to incorporate understanding all, all the  
3 legalities that go with it because I think ultimately  
4 we can become independent, ask for funding and really  
5 represent our residents at a totally different level  
6 if we're incorporated and have our own 501C3 and seek  
7 funding and not have to go through the NYCHA  
8 procedure of constantly depending only on them. So, I  
9 haven't had any problems with the process in terms  
10 of, you know using the card and, and the money not  
11 being there and being frustrated that has not been  
12 the case, you know. It's a learning process and I  
13 think we need to revisit what needs to get... some of  
14 the things that need to get corrected, I think that a  
15 lot of your questions and I thank you for them will  
16 probably steer them in the right direction, I think  
17 the agreement needs to be changed, some of the, the  
18 wording but basically I think that resident  
19 associations... this is something I said the other day  
20 to somebody... to another resident leader, this is...  
21 we're the ones who live in public housing, we're the  
22 ones who deal with it day to day and, and this is our  
23 fight so we have to step up a little bit and step up  
24 to the plate. NYCHA needs to redefine their training  
25 and maybe make it a little bit more what you call...

1  
2 what we would call friendly, right but if they do  
3 that I think it, it'll work, I think it's, it's... it's  
4 intimidating, I mean you know because I took the  
5 training and I thought... you know but that's needless  
6 to say but I think that we need to... that we need to  
7 sit at the table and I agree with what was said about  
8 we should have been part of it from the conception in  
9 terms of the questions that needed to be asked,  
10 that's my argument with NYCHA about other issues but  
11 I think that the reform with TPA funds is definitely...  
12 needs to be done. Let me thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: And your... and your  
14 testimony is the last so make it good.

15 HEIDI HIGHTOWER: Okay. Hi, my name is  
16 Heidi Hightower. I am the newly Resident President at  
17 the Glenwood Housing, I've lived in Glenwood Housing  
18 for seven years. Prior to becoming to becoming the RA  
19 President, January 2017, I was the Vice President for  
20 approximately four months. As I've learned about the...  
21 this new TA process I, I have some mixed feelings  
22 about it. There were some things that I didn't quite  
23 understand but for the part I did understand. I think  
24 this process is very... was a very good way to go but  
25 like all new processes there are a few kinks, kinks

1  
2 that need to be worked out and moving forward. I do  
3 like the fact that with the new process I can  
4 purchase supplies on my own with the credit card  
5 rather than waiting for months like the old way. I  
6 read the TA fund agreement and although I didn't  
7 understand a few of the legal terms I signed it  
8 because I did what I gather from it that there was a  
9 responsible that NYCHA has to uphold as well. When I  
10 attended TA training and the cluster meetings I began  
11 to get more of an understanding of the new process. I  
12 found out these meetings to be very informative, I  
13 also felt comfortable in knowing that I can reach out  
14 to my coordinator if I had any questions or concerns.  
15 Now that I am a part of the group using the  
16 commercial credit card I can now walk into stores  
17 like Staples and purchase office supplies and other  
18 essential things needed to run a productive resident  
19 association. Thank you for your opportunity to voice  
20 my thoughts.

21 BARBARA HOLMES: Do you care if I ask one  
22 other question?

23 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Sure.

24 BARBARA HOLMES: Did I understand that  
25 they... because I didn't sign the agreement right now



1  
2 that my family day they can't hold... and my... they  
3 can't hold the funds back for family day or the fact  
4 that my internet and phone services all... that, that's  
5 not correct, I thought I heard Miss Gibson say that?

6 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I... does, does anyone  
7 from NYCHA have an answer to that question or... oh  
8 okay, my, my, my understanding is that and I'll... and  
9 I'll confirm this so I understand is that until an...  
10 and unless and until you sign the agreement you'll  
11 have no means of accessing those funds.

12 BARBARA HOLMES: Yeah, not even... not even  
13 the family I thought she said that because that... no,  
14 not, not, not family day...

15 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yeah...

16 [off-mic dialogue]

17 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: No... yeah, I, I think  
18 Council Member was advocating what should be an  
19 exception but, but I think NYCHA's position is that  
20 unless you sign the agreement you'll have no ability  
21 to access those funds, that's my understanding.

22 BARBARA HOLMES: Okay.

23 [off-mic dialogue]

24 BARBARA HOLMES: Oh I... the city council  
25 funds...

1

2

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: I, I just want to...

3

[cross-talk]

4

BARBARA HOLMES: ...I could use... [cross-

5

talk]

6

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: ...I want to avoid

7

back and forth conversations...

8

BARBARA HOLMES: I'm sorry. The city

9

council funds Miss Gibson gives me for family day I

10

can use?

11

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: The two are... the two

12

are separate.

13

BARBARA HOLMES: They can't... they can't

14

hold it... [cross-talk]

15

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: So, TPA is federal

16

funds specifically for tenant participation activity

17

which is separate from council funding.

18

BARBARA HOLMES: Okay, thank you very

19

much.

20

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Yes.

21

HEIDI HIGHTOWER: Its, its just one more

22

thing, I, I... {cross-talk]

23

CHAIRPERSON TORRES: Sure... [cross-talk]

24

HEIDI HIGHTOWER: ...I, I think I need to

25

say one... since I'm here, with the TA fund with the

1  
2 card there's a few nicks and crannies that need to be  
3 worked out with the card, stuff... I had a problem with  
4 it, I didn't have enough money on the card at the  
5 particular time when I wanted to purchase something  
6 although I put the form in but I saw something that I  
7 said I was going to get but I didn't get it because I  
8 saw something else on sale when I tried to get it I  
9 had a problem that the card was denied because it  
10 said that I had a... they thought somebody had charged  
11 it twice or something so it's little crannies and  
12 things like that need to be ironed out, it need to be  
13 like we're allowed to spend 5,000 dollars within that  
14 quarter, I'm not saying put the whole 5,000 dollars  
15 but put enough money on it so if I want to buy  
16 something I can because you have the forms in front  
17 of you as to what I need, what I want to buy that's  
18 the only thing I say but other than that it was  
19 great.

20 CHAIRPERSON TORRES: That's great. Well  
21 I, I want to thank you for your testimony, I want to  
22 thank all the residents for coming, for inspiring  
23 this hearing and for informing us with your insights  
24 and I want to thank NYCHA for its testimony as well.  
25 I want to submit for the record testimony from my

1  
2 favorite Assemblywoman, Yuh-Line Niou and then do we  
3 have any other testimony to submit or... okay, with  
4 that said this hearing's adjourned.

5 [gavel]  
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date July 20, 2017