

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING & MARITIME USES

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September 9, 2009  
Start: XX:XXam/pm  
Recess: XX:XXam/pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E: LEROY G. COMRIE, JR.  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Letitia James  
Annabel Palma  
Maria del Carmen Arroyo  
Rosie Mendez  
Elizabeth Crowley

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

Jenny Fernandez  
Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Community  
Relations  
Landmark Preservation Commission

Bob Biegen  
Coordinator  
Prospect Heights Association

Gib Veconi  
Secretary  
Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council

Tara Kelly  
Melissa Baldock  
Historic Preservation and Public Policy  
Municipal Art Society

2 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Good day, I am  
3 Leroy Comrie, I'm Acting Chair of the Landmarks,  
4 Public Siting and Maritime Use Committee. Today  
5 September 9th, 2009, we are here looking at three  
6 items today. Manhattan item Community Board  
7 number 5, the John Pierce Residence, landmark  
8 item--do I have to read the number?

9 FEMALE VOICE: No.

10 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Thank you.  
11 Also, that's in Speaker Quinn's district. Also in  
12 Manhattan Community Board 10 in Council Member  
13 Dickens district the Mount Olive Fire Baptized  
14 Holiness Church. And that is on 308 West 122nd  
15 Street.

16 The first one was the John Pierce  
17 Residence located at 11 East 51st Street.

18 We're laying over the item for 94  
19 Greenwich Street house, and we're also dealing  
20 with the Prospect Heights Historic District in  
21 Brooklyn Community Board 8, which is why we are  
22 joined by the esteemed Councilwoman Tish James.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: The only  
24 reason why we're all--

25 [Pause]

2 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: The only  
3 reason why we are all still here because Tish  
4 would remind us every day.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Every day.

6 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: We are going  
7 to hear first from Jenny Fernandez, who is the  
8 representative for the New York City Landmarks  
9 Preservation Commission.

10 We are joined by Council Member  
11 Annabel Palma, Council Member Maria--

12 [Off mic]

13 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: --del Arroyo,  
14 I'm sorry, I've been out of this place for a  
15 minute.

16 [Off mic]

17 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: I know. And  
18 Council Member Rosie Mendez and Council Member Liz  
19 Crowley.

20 FEMALE VOICE: Ask her to testify  
21 on these.

22 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Ms. Fernandez,  
23 can you do the testimony on both the John Pierce  
24 Residence and the Mount Oliver Church?

25 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Yes. Good

2 afternoon, Council Members. My name is Jenny  
3 Fernandez, Director of Intergovernmental and  
4 Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation  
5 Commission. I am here today to testify on the  
6 commission's designation of the former John Pierce  
7 Residence at 11 East 51st Street in Manhattan.

8 On January 13th, 2009, the  
9 Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public  
10 hearing on the proposed designation. Five people  
11 spoke in favor of designation, including a  
12 representative of Assembly member Richard  
13 Gottfried, a representative of the property owner,  
14 and representatives of the Municipal Art Society  
15 of New York, the Metropolitan Chapter of the  
16 Victorian Society in America, and the Historic  
17 Districts Council; no one spoke in opposition to  
18 designation. The commission has also received  
19 several letters and other statements in support of  
20 designation.

21 On June 23rd, 2009, the commission  
22 voted to designate the building a New York City  
23 landmark.

24 The residence at 11 East 51st  
25 Street was erected in 1904 through 1906 for stone

2 and building contractor John Pierce and was  
3 designed by noted architect John H. Duncan. At  
4 the time of the building's construction, Fifth  
5 Avenue just south of Central Park was the most  
6 prestigious residential area in the city and was  
7 known as Vanderbilt Row because of that family's  
8 involvement in maintaining the elite character of  
9 the neighborhood.

10 Pierce was born in Frankfort,  
11 Maine, where his father operated a granite quarry.  
12 Pierce succeeded to the family business in 1873  
13 and soon came to control much of the granite  
14 industry in Maine. In the early 1880s he moved to  
15 New York City to oversee the operations of his New  
16 York and Maine Granite Paving Block Company and to  
17 expand the market for his firm's products. Pierce  
18 soon became one of the largest stone contractors  
19 in the country earning the title of Granite King.  
20 By the 1890s Pierce had expanded the scope of his  
21 business to include general building contracting  
22 and he later became involved in a number of large-  
23 scale civic infrastructure projects, including the  
24 construction of New York City's first subway  
25 system. Many of the city's most iconic structures

2 are erected with the assistance of Pierce's firm.

3 At the turn of the 20th century,  
4 Pierce commissioned architect John H. Duncan to  
5 design a residence. The most striking feature of  
6 the house is the full rustication of the lower  
7 three floors. The upper floors are faced with  
8 smooth ashlar stone, with projecting cornices  
9 above the third and fifth stories. While  
10 generally austere in demeanor, a number of  
11 sculptural elements, including the projecting  
12 balcony at the second floor and the ornamental  
13 stone keystones and wreaths, are in a more lavish  
14 Beaux-Arts style.

15 When completed, the Pierce  
16 Residence stood in the middle of a distinguished  
17 row of houses overlooking St. Patrick's Cathedral.  
18 Within a few years, however, the fortunes of both  
19 John Pierce and the neighborhood changed  
20 dramatically. Pierce's company went into  
21 receivership in 1909 and failed altogether in  
22 1915. He lost his residence to foreclosure in  
23 1914, at a time when many wealthy families were  
24 abandoning the neighborhood to commercial and  
25 apartment house development. The building at 11

2 East 51st Street was subsequently occupied by the  
3 Gardner School for Girls and later by a series of  
4 businesses. In spite of the changes of use and in  
5 the character of the surrounding neighborhood, the  
6 Pierce Residence remains nearly perfectly intact  
7 and is a significant reminder of the area's  
8 history as a prestigious residential district.

9 The Commission urges you to affirm  
10 the designation.

11 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Are there any  
12 questions on this item? Or any speakers to this  
13 item? Therefore, I would consider this item  
14 closed on the John Pierce Residence, and then  
15 we'll move to the Mount Olive Fire Baptized  
16 Holiness Church.

17 MS. FERNANDEZ: For the record, my  
18 name is Jenny Fernandez, Director of  
19 Intergovernmental Community Relations for the  
20 Landmarks Preservation Commission. I'm here today  
21 to testify on the Commission's designation of  
22 Mount Olive Fire Baptized Holiness Church in  
23 Manhattan.

24 On March 24th, 2009, the Landmarks  
25 Preservation Commission held a public hearing on

2 the proposed designation. Four witnesses spoke in  
3 favor of the proposed designation, including a  
4 representative of the church, as well as  
5 representatives of the Municipal Arts Society, the  
6 Historic Districts Council, and the Society for  
7 the Architecture of the City. There were no  
8 speakers in opposition to the proposed  
9 designation.

10 On June 23rd, 2009, the Commission  
11 voted to designate the building a New York City  
12 landmark.

13 The Mount Olive Fire Baptized  
14 Holiness Church, with its distinctive façade  
15 combining elements of the Gothic Revival and  
16 Romanesque Revival styles, was constructed in 1897  
17 for the Second Reformed Presbyterian Church of  
18 North America.

19 The Reformed Presbyterian Church of  
20 North America was founded in the late 18th century  
21 by Irish and Scottish worshippers who were fleeing  
22 persecution at home for their refusal to take  
23 oaths of loyalty to the British government. As  
24 church membership in New York City grew, so did  
25 the need for a second geographical division that

2 would serve congregants living in Manhattan north  
3 of Chambers Street. On June 11th, 1830, the  
4 Second Reformed Presbyterian Church of North  
5 America was organized, occupying a structure at  
6 166 Waverly Place. In 1897, the Second Reformed  
7 Presbyterian Church constructed this house of  
8 worship at 304 through 308 West 122nd Street. The  
9 selection of the Harlem site for the building is  
10 reflective of the increasing popularity of the  
11 neighborhood as a residential community, largely a  
12 result of the opening of elevated rail lines  
13 through the northern Manhattan in the late 1870s  
14 and a proposed subway route in the late 1890s.

15 In 1943, the Mount Olive Fire  
16 Baptized Holiness Church of God of the Americas  
17 purchased the church and continues to worship  
18 there today, 45 years later. The Fire Baptized  
19 Holiness Church of God of the Americas was founded  
20 in 1898 in Mountville, South Carolina, by a  
21 Methodist preacher, William Edward Fuller, Sr.,  
22 after he received the "Baptism of the Holy Ghost  
23 and Fire" while praying alone in a corn field near  
24 his home.

25 The one-story, beige brick building

2 was designed in the Gothic and Romanesque Revival  
3 styles by architect James W. Cole. Distinguishing  
4 features of the building include its symmetrical  
5 facade featuring pointed-arched window openings,  
6 terra-cotta ornament, stained-glass windows,  
7 crenellated brick corbelling at the prominently  
8 gabled roofline, and decorative pinnacles.

9 The Commission urges you to affirm  
10 this designation.

11 [Off mic]

12 [Pause]

13 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Yeah, who's  
14 the--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: I met him at  
16 the landmarking--

17 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: --who's the--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: --but he's  
19 not here--

20 [Crosstalk]

21 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: --who's the  
22 pastor? Who's the pastor of the church now?

23 MS. FERNANDEZ: That's a good  
24 question. I will have to look that up and I will  
25 let your staff know.

2 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: And you said  
3 there were no speakers in opposition and the  
4 church is in favor of the landmarking.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: And so Pastor  
7 E.G. Scott and Deacon Robert Stewart--

8 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: --are the  
10 leaders of the church. Excellent. Any other  
11 questions on this item? Seeing none in--

12 [Off mic]

13 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Okay, the  
14 hearing is closed, the hearing is closed on the  
15 Mount Olive Fire Baptized Holiness Church.

16 Now we'll open the hearing on the  
17 main item for today, which is the Prospect Heights  
18 Historic District and we are joined by Council  
19 Member Tish James, who I'm sure has nothing to say  
20 on the--no, I'm just--who I'm sure has a few words  
21 that she'd like to share with us, yeah, after she  
22 kept us here on this item.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: First let me  
24 thank all of my colleagues for scheduling this  
25 hearing on this day, I know that you all have very

2 busy schedules, particularly given the status of  
3 things, but I really appreciate this. This is  
4 really critically important, this is the largest  
5 landmarking application in the city of New York.

6 The Prospect Heights Historic  
7 District includes approximately 850 buildings,  
8 predominantly single-family row houses and  
9 apartment buildings constructed for the most part  
10 between the middle of the 19th century and the  
11 early 20th century. The Prospect Heights  
12 neighborhood is located immediately north of  
13 Prospect Heights Prospect Park and is bounded by  
14 Atlantic Avenue to the north, Eastern Parkway to  
15 the south, Flatbush Avenue to the west, and  
16 Washington Avenue to the east.

17 The Prospect Heights Historic  
18 District has some important institutional  
19 buildings, including the former Brooklyn School 9  
20 Annex, Duryea Presbyterian Church, the former  
21 Mount Prospect Laboratory, and the district was  
22 substantially built prior to 1910. It does have  
23 some fine examples of styles popular in the early  
24 20th century.

25 The Prospect Heights Historic

2 District remains strong and it is one of  
3 Brooklyn's most architecturally distinguished  
4 areas, retaining some of the borough's most  
5 beautiful and well-preserved residential streets  
6 and featuring a broad array of outstanding  
7 residential architecture and popular styles of the  
8 late 19th and early 20th centuries. The area  
9 continues to retain its cohesion due to its tree-  
10 lined streets, it's scale, predominant residential  
11 character, and its architectural integrity.

12 It is because of all of those  
13 reasons that I support this application and,  
14 because of all of the development pressures that  
15 we are facing in Prospect Heights, it's critically  
16 important that we preserve the character of this  
17 wonderful neighborhood and that is why I urge all  
18 of my colleagues to vote in support of this  
19 application. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: And now we'll  
21 hear from Ms.--

22 [Off mic]

23 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Yeah, right?  
24 Do you have anything you want to add to that, Ms.  
25 Fernandez?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Say ditto.

3 MS. FERNANDEZ: I agree. I guess  
4 for record's sake, I'll read through our  
5 testimony, but Council Member James was very  
6 concise and specific and basically included the  
7 most important aspects of the testimony, but I  
8 will go ahead and repeat some of those. And thank  
9 you, she was extremely supportive and helpful in  
10 the designation process.

11 So for the record again, my name is  
12 Jenny Fernandez, Director of Intergovernmental and  
13 Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation  
14 Commission. I'm here today to testify on the  
15 commission's designation of Prospect Heights  
16 Historic District in Brooklyn.

17 On October 28th, 2008, the  
18 Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public  
19 hearing on the proposed designation; 28 people  
20 spoke in favor of designation, including Council  
21 Member Letitia James, Brooklyn Borough President  
22 Marty Markowitz, representatives of Congresswoman  
23 Yvette Clark, Historic Districts Council,  
24 Municipal Art Society, Four Borough Neighborhood  
25 Preservation Alliance, Prospect Place Block

2 Association, 119 Prospect Place Owners  
3 Corporation, Community Board 8, Crown Heights  
4 North Association, Prospect Heights Neighborhood  
5 Development Council, Crow Hill Community  
6 Association, Prospect Heights Association,  
7 Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society of  
8 America, Noticing New York, New York Landmarks  
9 Conservancy, and Society for the Architecture of  
10 the City of New York, and numerous citizens and  
11 local residents. One person spoke in opposition  
12 to the proposed designation, two owners of  
13 commercial properties on Flatbush Avenue testified  
14 against, including those properties in the  
15 district, and two people did not state whether  
16 they supported or opposed the proposed  
17 designation. In addition, the commission also  
18 received many letters and e-mails regarding this  
19 designation. The majority have been in favor of  
20 designation.

21 On June 23rd, 2009, the Commission  
22 voted to designate Prospect Heights a New York  
23 City Historic District. The Prospect Heights  
24 Historic District includes approximately 850  
25 buildings, predominantly single-family row houses

2 and apartment buildings constructed for the most  
3 part between the middle of the 19th century and  
4 the early 20th century. The Prospect Heights  
5 neighborhood is located immediately north of  
6 Prospect Park and is bounded by Atlantic Avenue to  
7 the north, Eastern Parkway to the south, Flatbush  
8 Avenue to the west, and Washington Avenue to the  
9 east.

10 The area was occupied by the Lenape  
11 Indians at the time of European contact. During  
12 the 18th century the land came into possession of  
13 a number of different owners, several of whom were  
14 slave owners. It was still predominately farm and  
15 wood lands until the middle of the 19th century.

16 The two most important factors in  
17 the growth of Prospect Heights were transportation  
18 improvements and the development of Prospect Park.  
19 These transportation improvements included new  
20 links between Prospect Heights and the ferries  
21 along Brooklyn's waterfront.

22 Construction began on Prospect Park  
23 in 1866 and the park opened to the public in 1871,  
24 although it was not yet complete. The land in the  
25 southeast part of the district was taken for the

2 park but was not included in the final design and,  
3 after years of litigation, was sold and developed  
4 starting in the 1890s.

5 The earliest houses were built in  
6 the Italianate style of architecture, popular from  
7 about 1840 to 1870. Row houses began to be  
8 designed in two variations of the Italianate  
9 style: the Anglo-Italianate, popular from about  
10 1865 to 1870, and the Italianate style with Second  
11 Empire elements, popular from 1870 to 1885.

12 Prospect Heights has houses dating from the second  
13 half of the 1870s and the 1880s designed in the  
14 neo-Grec style by prominent Brooklyn architects  
15 such as the Parfitt Brothers, John H. Doherty,  
16 Nelson Whipple, Jeremiah Gilligan, Eastman & Daus,  
17 and Marshall J. Morrill.

18 The earliest multiple dwellings in  
19 the district appear on Vanderbilt Avenue in the  
20 early 1870s. Vanderbilt Avenue and Flatbush  
21 Avenue, two of the major thoroughfares in  
22 Brooklyn, are characterized by multi-family  
23 residential buildings with ground floor commercial  
24 spaces in Prospect Heights.

25 The Prospect Heights Historic

2 District has some important institutional  
3 buildings, including the former Public School 9  
4 Annex, the Duryea Presbyterian Church, and the  
5 former Mount Prospect Laboratory.

6 The Prospect Heights Historic  
7 District remains among Brooklyn's most  
8 architecturally distinguished areas, retaining  
9 some of the borough's most beautiful and well-  
10 preserved residential streets, and featuring a  
11 broad array of outstanding residential  
12 architecture in popular styles of the late 19th  
13 and early 20th century. The area continues to  
14 retain its cohesion due to its tree-lined streets,  
15 scale, predominant residential character, and its  
16 architectural integrity.

17 The Commission urges you to affirm  
18 the designation.

19 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Any questions  
20 for Ms. Fernandez? Seeing none, thank you, Ms.  
21 Fernandez.

22 We have Mr. Peter Gordon Stein  
23 [phonetic] that has stayed, are you still here,  
24 Mr. Gordon Stein?

25 MALE VOICE: He had to leave.

2 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: He had to  
3 leave? And somebody took the...

4 [Off mic]

5 [Pause]

6 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Bob Biegen?

7 FEMALE VOICE: Yep.

8 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: You can come  
9 forward, and Gib Veconi, you can come forward, and  
10 Melissa Baldock? Okay, you can identify yourself  
11 'cause you--

12 [Off mic]

13 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: You have to  
14 turn on the mic, sir, I'm sorry.

15 BOB BIEGEN: Councilman Comrie,  
16 Councilperson James, and all the Committee  
17 Members, my name is Bob Biegen, I'm the  
18 Coordinator of the Prospect Heights Association.  
19 It was founded in 1997 to promote the Prospect  
20 Heights Neighborhood and raise community pride by  
21 drawing attention to Prospect Heights late 19th  
22 century architecture, great restaurants, religious  
23 institutions, and its numerous cultural amenities.

24 Prospect Heights benefits from the  
25 cultural and economic diversity of its residents

2 in a wide variety of housing types. Many New York  
3 City residents and visitors have been unaware of  
4 the extraordinary treasures of Prospect Heights  
5 and it was our mission to change that perception  
6 through our biennial house tour. Money raised  
7 from the house tours have been used for graffiti  
8 removal, protected tree guards, community gardens,  
9 after school programs, children's books, a youth  
10 soccer team, children's holiday parties, and most  
11 recently, the campaign to inform every  
12 neighborhood resident of the landmarking process  
13 and it's practical implications.

14 Our informational efforts were  
15 successful, not a single resident who attended the  
16 Landmarks Commission hearing on creating Prospect  
17 Heights Landmark District opposed the initiative.  
18 City Council approval is all that is needed for  
19 our community to pass down intact our blessed and  
20 historic neighborhood to the generations who come  
21 after us. Thank you.

22 [Pause]

23 GIB VECONI: Thank you, Mr.  
24 Chairman. My name is Gib Veconi, and I'm  
25 Secretary of the Prospect Heights Neighborhood

2 Development Council. PHNDC's members are civic  
3 and merchant associations in Prospect Heights  
4 community who PHNDC represents on issues relating  
5 to housing, economic development, physical  
6 environment, safety and security and social  
7 services.

8 On behalf of our members, I'd like  
9 to thank the Subcommittee for considering the  
10 designation of a historic district in the Prospect  
11 Heights neighborhood and for the opportunity for  
12 our organization to speak today in support of the  
13 creation of such a district.

14 Prospect Heights has a large set of  
15 contiguous blocks of mid to late 19th century  
16 residential structures. The existence of such a  
17 large number of buildings from the same period of  
18 architectural styles ranging from neo-Grec to  
19 Italianate to Romanesque revival makes Prospect  
20 Heights unique even in a borough of historic  
21 neighborhoods and gives it a special sense of  
22 place.

23 Further, the transition from blocks  
24 of lower three-story brick houses on Bergen Street  
25 on the north side of the district to four to five-

2 story brownstone and limestone houses on Prospect  
3 Park and Sterling Places on the southern end of  
4 the district is a lasting reminder of the  
5 socioeconomic diversity that has thrived in our  
6 neighborhood from its development in the late 19th  
7 century until today.

8 Finally, Vanderbilt Avenue  
9 represents one of the very few commercial  
10 thoroughfares of historic Brooklyn whose buildings  
11 have seen relatively little change.

12 The character and scale of Prospect  
13 Heights is threatened today by development seeking  
14 to maximize the amount of floor area available to  
15 be built under the district's zoning. Although  
16 the current R-6B zoning on most Prospect Heights  
17 side streets is contextual for the neighborhood,  
18 the deep lots on those streets mean that many lots  
19 in the neighborhood of more than 25% under-built  
20 relative to allowable density, and some are up to  
21 75% under-built. On Vanderbilt Avenue, the  
22 current R-7A zoning would enable the existing  
23 three and four-story buildings to be extended up  
24 to seven stories.

25 This situation has led to historic

2 buildings being demolished in favor of higher  
3 density new construction. Such buildings include  
4 the former burlap factory at 528 Bergen Street and  
5 a detached Victorian house at 330 Park Place, both  
6 demolished and replaced with larger apartment  
7 buildings. Over the last few years there've also  
8 been many uncharacteristic rooftop and rear yards  
9 extensions, including 299 Park Place, 417 Park  
10 Place, 162 St. Marks Avenue, 602 Bergen Street,  
11 and 554 Vanderbilt Avenue. Pictures of all of  
12 these buildings accompany my written testimony.

13 PHNDC is further concerned that the  
14 scale and density of the Atlantic Yards project  
15 will increase the incidence of out of context  
16 development in Prospect Heights. The National  
17 Trust for Historic Preservation has called the  
18 historic brownstone neighborhoods surrounding the  
19 Atlantic Yard's site a national treasure and  
20 preservation of their character a national  
21 concern.

22 [Off mic]

23 [Pause]

24 MR. VECONI: Unfortunately, unlike  
25 Park Slope, Boerum Hill, Fort Greene, Clinton

2 Hill, and now Crown Heights, Prospect Heights does  
3 not currently enjoy the protection of historic  
4 designation. That's why PHNDC has led a community  
5 initiative seeking designation of a Prospect  
6 Heights Historic District. Over 20 volunteers  
7 worked to collect photographs and data on more  
8 than 1,000 buildings in Prospect Heights in  
9 preparation of a request for evaluation that was  
10 submitted to LPC in the spring of 2007.

11 Since that time, PHNDC has held  
12 numerous block meetings, promoted two  
13 neighborhood-wide forums, and reached thousands of  
14 community residents by mail. We have presented  
15 LPC with more than 400 letters of support and over  
16 400 response cards from neighbors who are hoping  
17 the Council will act before another building is  
18 destroyed or altered forever.

19 The initiative to create a Prospect  
20 Heights Historic District has also received the  
21 support of Community Board 8, our Council Member,  
22 Letitia James, Assemblyman Hakeem Jeffries,  
23 Assemblywoman Joan Millman, State Senator Eric  
24 Adams, Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz,  
25 and Congresswoman Yvette Clark.

2 Thank you once again for the  
3 opportunity to speak in support of historic  
4 designation for Prospect Heights. Please act  
5 swiftly to preserve our historic neighborhood.

6 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Any questions?  
7 Oh I'm sorry, you didn't identify yourself, but I  
8 think you said you're not the person identified  
9 so....

10 TARA KELLY: Hello my name is Tara  
11 Kelly and I'll be speaking on behalf of Melissa  
12 Baldock, the Kress Fellow for Historic  
13 Preservation and Public Policy at the Municipal  
14 Arts Society in support of the Prospect Heights  
15 Historic District.

16 The Municipal Art Society is a  
17 private nonprofit membership organization that  
18 fights for intelligent urban planning, design, and  
19 preservation through education, dialogue, and  
20 advocacy. MAS enthusiastically supports the  
21 designation of the Prospect Heights Historic  
22 District and we would like to thank Council Member  
23 Letitia James for her support and leadership which  
24 have helped us get to this point today.

25 Prospect Heights is of great

2 importance to MAS. In the wake of the proposed  
3 Atlantic Yards development, the future of Prospect  
4 Heights' historic resources came into question.  
5 In response, MAS worked closely with the Prospect  
6 Heights Neighborhood Development Council to  
7 conduct a survey of the neighborhood.

8 The neighborhood's involvement and  
9 dedication were remarkable. Over 20 members of  
10 the Prospect Heights community were involved in  
11 the surveying and the preparation of a  
12 comprehensive proposal submitted to the LPC. In  
13 part due to that enthusiastic engagement, today  
14 there is widespread support in the community for  
15 this designation.

16 The Landmarks Preservation  
17 Commission voted to designate Prospect Heights in  
18 June because of its rich historic architecture.  
19 The neighborhood includes some of Brooklyn's  
20 finest historic residential architecture. It  
21 includes beautiful blocks of row houses  
22 articulated in the neo-Grec, Romanesque revival,  
23 Renaissance revival, and Second Empire styles.  
24 These row houses are interspersed with churches  
25 and small commercial and apartment buildings,

2 adding to the richness of the neighborhood's  
3 architecture.

4 Located just north of Prospect  
5 Park, the neighborhood has seen few changes since  
6 it was first developed in the mid to late 19th  
7 century and is one of brownstone Brooklyn's most  
8 intact neighborhoods. Containing over 850  
9 buildings, Prospect Heights is the largest  
10 district designated by the LPC in decades.

11 It is important to note that the  
12 agency's ability to undertake larger districts  
13 like Prospect Heights in recent years has been  
14 due, in large part, to the increased funding it  
15 received from the Council. When there are large-  
16 scale development plans and rezonings that effect  
17 New York City's historic resources, it is critical  
18 that the LPC step in to ensure that these  
19 resources are protected. MAS applauds the LPC for  
20 doing just that in this instance and urges the  
21 City Council to join Council Member James in  
22 supporting this district.

23 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Any questions?  
24 Council Member James?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Not a

2 question, but a comment, I just want to first  
3 apologize for the delay, and thank you for the  
4 fact that you stayed around. It, to me,  
5 represents and reflects your commitment to the  
6 community and your commitment to this preservation  
7 application, which is something that I strongly  
8 support given all of the development pressures in  
9 and around Prospect Heights. And given the  
10 possibility of that big project, it's really  
11 critically important that we preserve the  
12 wonderful character and integrity and dignity of  
13 this wonderful and this architecturally-sound  
14 community.

15 So, again, I thank you for your  
16 work, I know we need to focus on the rezoning, the  
17 down-zoning, which is something that I am  
18 committed to moving and working with you and with  
19 the Community Board to make that a reality, and  
20 hopefully we can begin this year and hopefully  
21 achieve it next year.

22 I also want to say, I just received  
23 an e-mail from Jasper Goldman, who did the video,  
24 who just indicated that he's relocating to Cuba.  
25 And he invited me to his farewell party, and I

2 hope that you can join him as well. Again, thank  
3 you for your hard work.

4 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Why is he  
5 relocating to Cuba? 'Cause he's getting more  
6 money for his house is that--

7 [Crosstalk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES:  
9 [Interposing] No, apparently, according to the e-  
10 mail, Cuba has preservation issues and he's  
11 dedicating his life to preservation issues--

12 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Okay.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: --and he's  
14 going to take up the challenge and he's relocating  
15 to Cuba.

16 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Okay. God  
17 bless him.

18 [Off mic]

19 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Any other  
20 members have any other questions? Seeing none,  
21 then I would declare this hearing closed. And  
22 then I would ask the legislative counsel to do the  
23 roll call, coupling all items on today's agenda.

24 Thank you all for coming and  
25 staying, sorry for the delays. And I look forward

2 to an affirmative vote on these issues.

3 CHRISTIAN HYLTON: Christian  
4 Hylton, Counsel to Committee. Chair Comrie?

5 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Aye on all.

6 MR. HYLTON: Council Member Palma?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Aye.

8 MR. HYLTON: Council Member Arroyo?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Yes.

10 MR. HYLTON: Council Member Mendez?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I vote yes  
12 and I want to thank my colleagues for their  
13 patience and congratulate my good friend and  
14 sister Tish James on this designation.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you.

16 MR. HYLTON: Council Member  
17 Crowley.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I vote  
19 aye.

20 MR. HYLTON: By a vote of five in  
21 the affirmative, none in the negative, no  
22 abstentions, items are approved and referred to  
23 the full Land Use Committee.

24 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE:  
25 Congratulations to all, congratulation to Council

2 Member James.

3 By request of one Council Member,  
4 we will hold the meeting open for him to try to  
5 get here by--

6 FEMALE VOICE: No, he's not going  
7 to come now.

8 [Pause]

9 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Update, the  
10 hearing will be closed immediately because no one  
11 else will be making it to the hearing today.

12 Land Use Committee meeting is  
13 tomorrow at 10 a.m. Please be on time or please  
14 inform the committee of your exact time so that we  
15 can do what we need to do quickly. Thank you very  
16 much.

17 I declare the hearing closed. Have  
18 a good day.

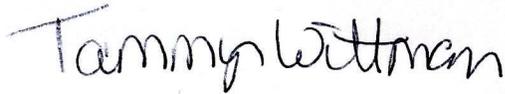
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tammy Wittman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T'.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date October 2, 2009