

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS AND CONCESSIONS

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September 27, 2012  
Start: 12:00 p.m.  
Recess: 12:13 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E: STEPHEN T. LEVIN  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Inez E. Dickens  
Charles Barron  
Sara M. Gonzalez  
Peter A. Koo

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good afternoon,  
3 or good noon, I think actually. We are  
4 reconvening the Subcommittee of Dispositions,  
5 Concessions and Planning to vote this afternoon on  
6 Land Use numbers 688 through 699, Seward Park. I  
7 will turn it over to Council Member Margaret Chin  
8 who has worked very diligently on this issue along  
9 with Council Member Rosie Mendez on Seward Park,  
10 which has been a project many years in the making-  
11 decades. 43 years at least, 45. I would like to  
12 ask Council Member Chin to update us on some of  
13 the amendments.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you,  
15 Chair Levin, and I wanted to thank all the Council  
16 Members on this Committee who are here today, and  
17 especially to all the Land Use staff and Ramon  
18 Martinez [phonetic] for really pushing this  
19 process along. We had a wonderful hearing--I  
20 think it was just last week, right-that we heard  
21 from the community who has been working on this  
22 for many years, and yes, you know this project has  
23 been around waiting for 45 years, but I think the  
24 community, especially Community Board 3, has been  
25 tremendously hard at this with getting the

2 community and all of the stakeholders together,  
3 and in the past three years, come together with  
4 the city, with EDC, with HPD and the Mayor's  
5 Office to really put together guidelines and plans  
6 that can bring a bright future to the Lower East  
7 Side, so from the hearing that we had last week  
8 and then we also followed up with a lot of  
9 discussion to get some concrete commitment from  
10 the city. So in terms of some of the amendments  
11 added, first of all the good news is that we, the  
12 city, will increase the number of housing units.  
13 Originally, it was 900, so it's going to be moved  
14 up right now to 1,000, and out of that, we all  
15 know that 50% will be affordable and it will be  
16 permanently affordable. So we got some extra 50  
17 units of affordable housing on that. Also, the  
18 issue of convening a community taskforce that will  
19 involve Community Board 3 and the stakeholders and  
20 Council Member, myself, and Council Member Mendez,  
21 District 1 and 2, together working with the city  
22 to develop the RFP and it will also give us input  
23 into the RFP process in terms of selecting  
24 developers that's going to develop this site.  
25 That is memorialized in a letter from the

2 Commissioner of HPD and also Seth Pinsky, the  
3 president of EDC. Along with that is that the  
4 city is making a commitment to former site  
5 tenants, even though the urban renewal has ended,  
6 but I think because of the thousands of families  
7 that was moved from the site, the city is making a  
8 commitment to outreach to former site tenants to  
9 let them know about the opportunity of housing at  
10 the - - site, and they will have a process working  
11 with the Community Board and the Council Members'  
12 Office to reach out to former tenants through  
13 advertisement, through community outreach to get  
14 them to sign up. The other issue is on the Essex  
15 Street market that we have heard from many of the  
16 non-profit organizations and communities, so the  
17 city is making a commitment that if a new market  
18 is built that they will offer comparable rent and  
19 comparable square footage to the businesses that  
20 are already there, and at the same time provide  
21 reasonable relocation costs, so that these vendors  
22 and small businesses will be able to relocate to  
23 the new site. One of the things that we were also  
24 very happy about was encouraging local development  
25 partners and multiple respondents to RFP because

2 we want to give opportunity to local partners,  
3 whether it's social service agencies or community  
4 developers to be able to have an opportunity to  
5 develop on this site. The other issue is one the  
6 affordability, and we heard at the hearing that we  
7 want to create more opportunities for lower income  
8 individuals/lower income families, so we want to-  
9 and the city has stated that they will give  
10 preference to proposal that provides income band  
11 [phonetic] that are the lower income level on the  
12 multiple tiers, and there is also a commitment to  
13 MWBE participation and local hiring related with  
14 the city program Hire NYC, so these are the  
15 commitments that we got from HPD and EDC. At the  
16 same time, we also got a commitment from the city  
17 to set aside 15,000 square feet of land  
18 particularly on site five [phonetic] to designate  
19 it for a public school, so this will-and we heard  
20 that from a lot of the testimony that there is a  
21 need for a school in the site, especially when you  
22 have housing being built. And another commitment  
23 from the city that I'm very happy about is that  
24 all along even though in the Community Board  
25 guidelines and in the process we wanted to create

1 more affordable housing and on this site in  
2 particular, it was agreed upon in the guidelines  
3 of the 50/50 commitment, of the 50% affordable and  
4 50% market, but we urged the city to help us look  
5 for more affordable housing and the build more  
6 affordable housing, so the city has made a  
7 commitment to do an offsite project in our  
8 district, in the Community Board area, to do  
9 affordable housing off site. So that will also  
10 increase the number of affordable units, and the  
11 city will issue an RFP and that will also help us  
12 meet the needs of some of the low income families  
13 in our district. Gale, any additional...? Yeah, so  
14 the city also renewed their commitment in terms of  
15 diversity of retails and storefront-numbers of  
16 storefronts on the site, on the wide streets and  
17 on the side street to create more opportunity for  
18 small business in our community and because that  
19 is what Community Board 3 and the community has  
20 asked for in terms of more diversity in retail.  
21 So I think that's pretty much the list that we  
22 were able to ask the city to put in writing in  
23 terms of the commitment they are making to the  
24 community in this process. I mean all along there  
25

2 has been a lot of discussions, all this different  
3 item, but because of the ULAR [phonetic] process  
4 we are able to get it on record and get a firm  
5 commitment that this is what will be beneficial to  
6 the community, especially to the Lower East Side.  
7 Rosie, do you want to add anything?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you,  
9 Margaret, and thank you for all of your hard work  
10 and everyone on the staff. This has been a long  
11 time in coming, and you know, our community is  
12 very demanding. I think we have particularly  
13 Margaret has come a long way in trying to address  
14 a lot of the needs and the city has listened and  
15 has worked with us in addressing what Community  
16 Board 3 has put forward as priorities, so very  
17 proud of all the work everyone has done. Thank  
18 you so much.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,  
20 Council Member Mendez and Council Member Chin. Do  
21 any of my colleagues have anything else to say?  
22 Okay. Thank you. I just want to commend both of  
23 you for your diligence on this rezoning. This has  
24 been again a long time in coming, but requires a  
25 lot of patience on your part and a lot of

2 willingness to listen to all sides, but then at  
3 the same time strength to advocate for longtime  
4 residents for affordable housing, for community  
5 based planning and for the constituents that you  
6 represent, and both of you have done that very  
7 well, and I commend you and congratulate you.  
8 We're going to couple items Land Use numbers 688  
9 through 699 and I am going to recommend an  
10 approval of these items with modifications. I'm  
11 going to ask Christian Hilton, counsel to the  
12 Committee to call the roll.

13 COUNSEL: Chair Levin?

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I vote aye on  
15 all items.

16 COUNSEL: Council Member Gonzalez?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Before I  
18 vote I just want to say with permission from the  
19 Chair congratulations, Margaret. I think you have  
20 done a terrific job. Council Member Chin, I mean  
21 I've seen it ongoing, the perseverance and that's  
22 what it takes. This is almost a town [phonetic],  
23 I think. I congratulate you on that and also  
24 Council Member Mendez. It takes a lot of work to  
25 get this done. Congratulations. And I also



2 remember being at the hearing and understanding  
3 that folks were displaced at one point, and those  
4 folks will hopefully have senior housing as well,  
5 right? That's incredible. Congratulations and I  
6 vote aye. Thank you.

7 COUNSEL: Council Member Koo?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: [off mic]

9 COUNSEL: By a vote of three in the  
10 affirmative, none in the negative, no abstentions,  
11 L.U. 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696,  
12 697, 698, 699 are approved with modifications and  
13 referred to the Land Use Committee.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. The  
15 hearing on this item is hereby closed, and this  
16 meeting is closed.

17 [gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature Kimberley Uhlig

Date 10/01/12