

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS & CONCESSIONS

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April 30, 2009

Start: 1:48pm

Recess: 2:07pm

HELD AT: Hearing Room
 250 Broadway, 14th Floor

B E F O R E: DANIEL R. GARODNICK
 Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
 Sara M. Gonzalez
 Vincent Ignizio
 Inez E. Dickens

A P P E A R A N C E S

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Domenic M. Recchia, Jr.

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

Carol Clark
Assistant Commissioner
HPD

Wendall Walters
Assistant Commissioner for Housing Production
HPD

Anthony Williamson
Co-Chair
Coney Island Community Labor Empowerment Alliance for
Redevelopment

Christopher Han
Coney Island Community Labor Empowerment Alliance for
Redevelopment

2 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Good
3 afternoon, everybody. Welcome to the Subcommittee
4 on Planning, Dispositions & Concessions. It's a
5 Subcommittee of Land Use of the New York City
6 Council. My name is Dan Garodnick. And, I have
7 the privilege of Chairing the Subcommittee. And,
8 I'm joined today by my colleagues, Council Member
9 Sara Gonzalez, Council Member Vinnie Ignizio,
10 Council Member Inez Dickens, all of this
11 Committee. And, we're also joined, in a special
12 guest appearance, by Council Member Domenic M.
13 Recchia, Jr. of Brooklyn.

14 We have one item on today's agenda
15 that we will be hearing. And, it is the related
16 items of Land Use 1066 and 1067, Coney Island
17 Commons, Brooklyn Community Board 13, C090250ZMK
18 and C090251HAK. We have representatives from the
19 City's Department of Housing, Preservation and
20 Development. And, we're delighted they're here.
21 And, we'll ask them to introduce these items
22 jointly. Thank you.

23 CAROL CLARK: Good afternoon,
24 Chairman Garodnick and members of the Committee
25 and Council Member Recchia. My name is Carol

1 Clark. I'm Assistant Commissioner at HPD. I'm
 2 joined by Wendall Walter, who is the Assistant
 3 Commissioner for Housing Production at HPD. And,
 4 he will give the testimony on LU 1067, also known
 5 as the Coney Island Commons project.
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7 WENDALL WALTERS: Yes, good
 8 afternoon. Wendall Walters introducing-- after
 9 all this time-- introducing Land Use Number 1067,
 10 also known as Coney Island Commons, consists of
 11 the proposed disposition of 36 vacant City-owned
 12 lots located at West 29th and West 30th Streets
 13 between Mermaid and Surf Avenues in Coney Island,
 14 Brooklyn.

15 The proposed development team of
 16 ELH and the Kretchmer [phonetic] Companies will
 17 construct two residential buildings, providing 187
 18 residential units, plus one super's unit. In
 19 addition, the project will include an
 20 approximately 41,200 square foot YMCA, with 28,888
 21 square feet of open space and 106 parking spaces.

22 The project was the subject of an
 23 RFP issued jointly by HPD and EDC. And, the
 24 targeted affordability for this rental project
 25 will be up to 100% of AMI, which we anticipate

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2 targeting 80% at the 60% AMI and another 20% up to
3 90% of AMI. Council Member Recchia has reviewed
4 the project and indicated his support. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay.

6 Thanks. That was a lot very quickly. Let's just
7 make sure we got it straight over here. These
8 lots that are identified in today's calendar under
9 Land Use 1067, these are all vacant City-owned
10 lots. Is that correct?

11 WENDALL WALTERS: That's correct.

12 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: You put it
13 up for a competitive process between HPD and EDC
14 as an RFP. Is that correct?

15 WENDALL WALTERS: That's correct.

16 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay. And,
17 in response, you selected ELH and, in conjunction
18 with another name that came very quickly, so just
19 give that to us again.

20 WENDALL WALTERS: Sorry, going for
21 so fast. The Kretchmer Companies.

22 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Kretchmer.

23 WENDALL WALTERS: Yep.

24 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay. And,
25 they will be developing on those vacant lots,

which are at a variety of locations on 29th and 30th Streets in Brooklyn; 187 residential units.

WENDALL WALTERS: Plus one super's unit.

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: With one super unit. Eighty percent of those will be up to 60% of AMI and 20% will be up to 90% of AMI.

WENDALL WALTERS: That's our target income restrictions for what is now a rental project. The project was conceived originally as a home ownership project. And, we've come to this Committee recently, in the last few months, to change a number of projects from home ownership to rental. And, this is one that we're moving forward now with the rental scenario. So, we're targeting those kind of income ranges for this project.

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay. Somewhere in the midst there will be a 41,000 square foot YMCA. Is that right?

WENDALL WALTERS: Yes. This is a prominent 41,000 is a lot of building space there. It's a prominent part of the project. It was part of the RFP process altogether.

2 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Okay. And,
3 how many parking spaces did you say?

4 WENDALL WALTERS: A hundred and
5 six.

6 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: And, the
7 open space, how many acres?

8 WENDALL WALTERS: Twenty-eight
9 thousand square feet.

10 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Twenty-
11 eight thousand square feet. And, that will be
12 open to the public or open to the residents of
13 those new units?

14 WENDALL WALTERS: It's my
15 understanding it's open to the public.

16 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Open to the
17 public. Okay. Thank you. We have questions from
18 Council Member Ignizio.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Yes.
20 Thank you very much. Brief question about the
21 YMCA. That is part of the full development
22 scheme? I mean, is it-- scheme is the ugly word--
23 I mean, the whole development plan that there will
24 be a YMCA in here. Has YMCA agreed to go in
25 there? And, who is building out the site for the

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YMCA?

WENDALL WALTERS: Those are good questions. The Y was conceived as being incorporated into the whole project. We've had extensive review on the design of such, including the City Planning Department chiming in on what that look should be. The developers, themselves, will be responsible for developing and building that YMCA on behalf of the Y.

COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Will it be rented to them? Or, it's going to be fee, you know, is it fee simple? Are they selling it to them? Or, is it just a gratis as an accoutrement to the community?

WENDALL WALTERS: There will, I think still to be negotiated ground lease that'll be executed between the development team and the YMCA.

COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: So, this is not perhaps like a community benefit plan like we've seen in other projects. This is an actual leasing it to the YMCA?

WENDALL WALTERS: It was always part of the plan to have a Y as part of this

1 project. There is additional City subsidy that
 2 was associated with the project from the very
 3 inception to help defray the costs of the Y.
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5 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Oh, okay.
 6 So, okay, fair enough. Thank you very much.

7 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you,
 8 Council Member Ignizio. And, I am certain that
 9 Council Member Recchia has something to say on the
 10 subject. We know he's been working very hard on
 11 the future of Coney Island. And, this is no
 12 exception. Council Member Recchia.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Thank you,
 14 Mr. Chairman. Thank you for giving me the
 15 opportunity just to speak and say a few words.
 16 First of all, I'd like to thank HPD in working
 17 with me and seeing this dream for Coney Island
 18 come true. And, unfortunately, we would have
 19 loved to have seen all these apartments be co-ops,
 20 like we originally intended, but, unfortunately,
 21 due to the economic crisis that this country's in,
 22 we have no choice but to switch to rentals in
 23 order that this project may move forward. And, I
 24 just want to just say the ground lease to the Y,
 25 do you know how long that lease is going to be?

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Or, are you still working that out?

WENDALL WALTERS: I think those are terms that are still being negotiated between the developer and the YMCA.

COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Okay. Because the reason that's of great concern to me is because the Y made a commitment to the community that, and I just want to put this on the record, I don't know if the Y is planning to testify today or say a few words, but, it was understanding to this community that the fees for the Y would be based on family's income, that children would get a child's card to be let in free of charge and that, you know, rates wouldn't be exorbitant, to be very affordable for the Coney Island community. And, I just want to make sure that things don't change with this ground lease and that the Y says well, we have to charge. You know what I mean, you know, increase the funding, you know, increase their fees. So, that is the only thing that's concern to me.

CAROL CLARK: I think the Y is here and they could testify. But, they have just told us right before the meeting that their position is

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2 consistent with what you've described, that kids
3 card will be made available. And, they do operate
4 on a sliding scale and intend to do so in this
5 facility. So, I'm sure nothing has changed from
6 what your understanding is of the commitment that
7 was made to your community with regard to the YMCA
8 at the Coney Island Commons.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Yeah,
10 'cause I've spoken to the Y and they're willing to
11 work something out in writing with us. So, I just
12 want to put that on the record.

13 WENDALL WALTERS: And, I'm sure, we
14 appreciate that comment, and I'm sure of the
15 outcome of those discussions will dictate the
16 terms of the ground lease.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: All right.

18 WENDALL WALTERS: And, it'll be
19 something that'll be imposed on the project as we
20 do its disposition to have a deed restriction on
21 that portion of the land that will ensure that
22 that parcel is maintained as a community facility.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: All right.
24 And, we have the developers here today. I just
25 want to recognize Larry Kretchneff [phonetic] for

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2 doing an outstanding job and everything that you,
3 you know, working with us. And, for the future, I
4 just have one recommendation to HPD is that when
5 you do projects like this, I really think that
6 when you put out the RFP, you should put out the
7 RFP to build with the building trade unions,
8 'cause that's a big issue in our community about
9 building union. And, it's a big issue. I think
10 you should address that, you know, in the future
11 in the RFPs and see what we could do to work with
12 the building trades, 'cause it's very important to
13 us.

14 CAROL CLARK: We'll take that back,
15 Council Member Recchia.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you,
18 Council Member Recchia. And, I might suggest to
19 you, and also to the Y, since we're not going to
20 be voting on this item today and we'll be holding
21 it until May 12th, that there is ample time for
22 whatever you need in writing from them to satisfy
23 the needs of the community and the desires that
24 you have expressed here.

25 We have a couple of people who have

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 2 signed up to testify on this item today. We have
 3 Anthony Williams. Mr. Williams, are you here?
 4 Mr. Williams, come on up to the witness table.
 5 And, also, Christopher Han [phonetic]. Mr. Han?
 6 Welcome. Just have a seat at the table. And,
 7 Mr. Williams, when you are ready, please go ahead
 8 and get started.

9 ANTHONY WILLIAMSON: First of all,
 10 good afternoon. My name is Anthony Williamson.
 11 And, I'm actually the co-Chair of Coney Island
 12 CLEAR, which is Community Labor Empowerment
 13 Alliance for Redevelopment. And, first of all, I
 14 must thank the developer for coming into Coney
 15 Island and, you know, having the courage to come
 16 and develop and, you know, make a change in Coney
 17 Island. And, I want to thank the Councilman
 18 Recchia and his team for really working hard to
 19 make sure project be a success.

20 But, as a member of organized
 21 labor, our concern is always how the work is done
 22 and ensuring that people get, you know, decent
 23 wages that they can take care of their families in
 24 this grave economic times. And, I will more or
 25 less echo the same sentiments of the Councilman

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2 and we hope that in future redevelopment, that the
3 construction trades and the building trades are
4 part of this whole process. It's very, very
5 important in this grave economic time.

6 So, I would like to, more or less,
7 ask that from here moving forward that there is
8 some commitment and I guess people are working,
9 but, there should be on the record that there's
10 some commitment that organized labor and union
11 trades will be part of this significant project in
12 Coney Island, because there are many people there
13 who want this opportunity. Many people, kids
14 there who want the opportunity to be part of this
15 whole redevelopment. They want the kids to be
16 trained. We have apprenticeship training and all
17 the different opportunities that are available.

18 So, I want to thank everybody for
19 giving me the opportunity to speak. But, just
20 reminding developers and all those concerned that
21 union labor and organized labor should not be
22 consider as a problem, but as part of the solution
23 of Coney Island. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you
25 very much, Mr. Williamson. And, Mr. Han, did you

2 have something to add, too?

3 CHRISTOPHER HAN: Coney Island

4 CLEAR, thank you for the time, as well, is a
5 organization that has been working in Coney Island
6 for the last two years, laying the groundwork
7 between community, labor unions and clergy. And,
8 as of today, we've been working as a coalition to
9 build a broad-based organization. And, we are
10 committed to make sure that the local community
11 has a voice in any project that will move forward.
12 And, as well, today, we have an event that we're
13 doing local hire recruitment for apprenticeships
14 in the building trades. So, we are going to be
15 laying the groundwork to make sure that we will
16 have local community members to work on any
17 project that will be built in Coney Island for the
18 future.

19 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Great.

20 Thank you very much.

21 CHRISTOPHER HAN: No problem.

22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thanks to

24 both of you for--

25 ANTHONY WILLIAMSON: [Interposing]

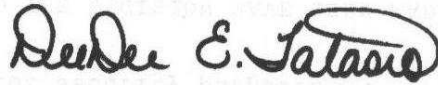
Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: -- being here today. And, welcome to the City Council and we're glad to have your testimony. With that, I see no other members of the public wishing to testify on this item today, so we will close the hearing on Land Use Number 1066 and 1067, the related items of the Coney Island Commons, C090250ZMK and C090251HAK. And, we expect to be voting on this at a later date. And, with that, this meeting of the Subcommittee of Planning, Dispositions and Concessions is adjourned. And, thank you.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, DeeDee E. Tataseo 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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "DeeDee E. Tataseo". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Date

July 23, 2009