

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND  
FRANCHISES

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December 19, 2013  
Start: 9:15 a.m.  
Recess: 9:24 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room  
City Hall

B E F O R E: Mark S. Weprin  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.  
Daniel R. Garodnick  
Robert Jackson  
Jessica S. Lappin  
Diana Reyna  
Joel Rivera  
Albert Vann  
Ruben Wills  
Vincent M. Ignizio

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

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Alright.

3 Attentos [phonetic]. Buenos tardes, everybody.

4 My name is Mark Weprin. I'm Chair of the Zoning

5 and Franchises Subcommittee of the Land Use

6 Committee, and we're here today on one item we

7 already heard the hearing on, had the hearing

8 on. I want to first say who's here to--from the

9 Subcommittee, Council Member Joel Rivera, Diana

10 Reyna, Robert Jackson, Al Vann, Dan Garodnick,

11 Jessica Lappin and Vincent Ignizio, and I'm

12 Mark Weprin. And we have three items all part

13 of 77 Commercial Street, Land Use numbers 961,

14 962, and 963 in Council Member Levin's

15 district, and as luck would have it Council

16 Member Levin is here to my left and is going to

17 speak on this item. The land use committee

18 feels--there are many members of the Land Use

19 Committee here, but I don't want to take that

20 job away from Leroy Comrie. So we're very happy

21 to have all you Land Use people here.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you

23 very much, Chair Weprin. My colleagues, first I

24 want to thank you for your forbearance and for

25 waiting for the process regarding this

1  
2 development to play out, not only in the last  
3 several hours, but really over the last week,  
4 and so I want to thank you all very much for  
5 you taking the time and the patience with me.  
6 What we are voting on today is a fulfillment of  
7 an obligation that the City agreed to in 2005  
8 to create meaningful affordable housing and  
9 open space in the Greenpoint Committee. What we  
10 are approving are technically a height and set-  
11 back waivers, but what is essentially as part  
12 of this package is the transfer of air rights  
13 from a parcel of land that has been a MTA  
14 parking lot for the last 50 years or more, so  
15 that that area can be cleared out, the MTA  
16 vehicles to be relocated and that space to  
17 become open space park for the Greenpoint  
18 Community. We are moving the air rights to an  
19 adjacent lot, so the building there will be  
20 taller, but there's no change in density in the  
21 neighborhood. So there's significant affordable  
22 housing. There are 10 units at 40 percent of  
23 AMI, 10 units at 50 percent of AMI, 80 units at  
24 60 percent of AMI, 26 units at 80 percent of  
25 AMI, 34 units at 100 percent of AMI, and 40

1 units at 120 percent of AMI, 125 percent of  
2 AMI, excuse me, and that is in line with for  
3 the most part the points of agreement that were  
4 reached between the administration and the  
5 community back in 2005 and this council was a  
6 part of. And so, this has been a long arduous  
7 process. I want thank the developer for their  
8 patience in working with us, and also I want to  
9 thank especially Carolee Fink [phonetic] from  
10 the Mayor's office, Deputy Mayor Steele's  
11 office, because Carolee put in, I think,  
12 potentially 100 or more hours into this  
13 negotiation. And so I want to acknowledge the  
14 hard work that she did and congratulate here on  
15 making this happen. So with that, Mr. Chairman,  
16 I'll turn it back over to you, and I recommend  
17 or I request that my colleagues vote aye on  
18 this item.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

21 Thank you, Mr. Levin. With that in mind, first  
22 let me just say this is my last meeting of the  
23 Zoning Subcommittee for this term, and I just  
24 want to thank the staff and the members for  
25 being so cooperative throughout the year and

1 always so promptly on time and everything else.  
2 And so I just want to thank the staff for all  
3 their help and onward and upward. I'd like to  
4 call for a vote. I'm going to call on Anne  
5 Mccoy to please call the roll.

6 COUNCIL CLERK: Chair Weprin?

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Aye.

8 COUNCIL CLERK: Council Member  
9 Rivera?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I vote aye.

11 COUNCIL CLERK: Council Member Reyna?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Permission to  
13 explain my vote?

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Ms. Reyna, to  
15 explain her vote.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Thank you so  
17 much, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to take a moment  
18 to congratulate Steve Levin on the work of this  
19 particular Land Use Application. This is 200  
20 meaningful units of affordable housing to the  
21 north Brooklyn community, long awaited and very  
22 much needed. And so I wanted to just make sure  
23 that we are able to complete what would be  
24 actions related to 2005 Greenpoint Williamsburg  
25

1 rezoning, and looking forward to the  
2 development that rightly so has been much  
3 awaited by our residents. With that, I wanted  
4 to just also thank you for your leadership of  
5 the subcommittee and congratulate you on four  
6 magnificent years serving with you. Having come  
7 from the Assembly and seeing you serve there.  
8 We just wanted to make sure that we wished  
9 everyone a wonderful Christmas and blessed new  
10 year and thank all the staff. You know, Gale,  
11 who's a treasure to the Council, to the  
12 institution, to the City of New York, we thank  
13 her for her leadership, her wisdom above all,  
14 and the staff that she has had to make us  
15 always look good and make sure that we're  
16 credible individuals, that the integrity of our  
17 institution continues to reign and so that we  
18 have a responsible development across the five  
19 boroughs, and with that I vote aye.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

22 COUNCIL CLERK: Council Member  
23 Jackson?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: May I be  
25 excused to explain my vote?

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Jackson, to  
3 explain his vote.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Thank you.  
5 First, let me thank you, Mr. Chair, for  
6 chairing this Subcommittee on Zoning and  
7 Franchise for this entire term. It's been my  
8 honor and pleasure to work with you. You've  
9 done a great job considering the fact that you  
10 came in new as a member of the City Council,  
11 but with prior legislative experience up in  
12 Albany. So it's been a pleasure and honor to  
13 work with you. And to the staff Anne and Gayle,  
14 and Amy and everyone else, I say to all of you,  
15 you're fantastic. The type of knowledge and  
16 experience you have is unmatched in any other  
17 organization that I know, and I just hope and  
18 pray that whoever the next Speaker is, that  
19 you, all of you will continue because clearly,  
20 my experience in 12 years on this City Council,  
21 you're going to be sorely needed in this body  
22 to guide the new members coming in. So with  
23 that, I vote aye.

24 COUNCIL CLERK: Chair Comrie?  
25



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2 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Can I give a  
3 speech, Mr. Chair?

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes. Mr. Comrie  
5 to give a speech.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I vote aye  
7 on this, and I'll make my speech during the  
8 full Land Use Committee meeting.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Dually noted.

10 COUNCIL CLERK: Council Member Vann?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: May I explain  
12 my vote?

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Vann to  
14 explain his vote.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Alright.  
16 Briefly, I would like to commend you, Chairman  
17 Weprin. I think you ran a good meeting with  
18 enlightenment and humor and made complex issues  
19 seem fairly simple. I think you did an  
20 excellent job really. Let me end with a trivia  
21 question. What member served with three  
22 Weprin's in two legislative bodies?

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You are the only  
24 one, I think.

25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: I vote aye,  
3 aye on all.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

5 COUNCIL CLERK: Council Member  
6 Garodnick?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Aye.

8 COUNCIL CLERK: Council Member  
9 Lappin?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: I would  
11 like to vote aye and thank Chair Weprin for his  
12 work. Having been a Land Use Subcommittee  
13 Chair myself, I know that it's lots of long  
14 hours sitting in hearings where you're often  
15 the only person there representing us, and so  
16 thank you for the countless hours that you put  
17 in doing really great work helping to rezone  
18 the city. So thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You guys are  
20 going to make me cry. Look at this. It's very  
21 sad. Is that it?

22 COUNCIL CLERK: Council Member  
23 Ignizio?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Aye.  
25

COUNCIL CLERK: By a vote of a nine in the affirmative, zero abstentions, and zero negatives, Land Use Items 961, 962, and 963 are approved and referred to the Full Land Use Committee.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very much, and with that I thank you all once again, and the 2013 Zoning Committee is now complete. The meeting is now adjourned.

[gavel]

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Staff, are we ready to move straight to Land Use?

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 there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is no interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date 01/07/2014