

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON LAND USE

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April 2, 2009
Start: 12:12 pm
Recess: 12:22 pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E: MELINDA R. KATZ
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Council Member Maria del Carmen Arroyo
- Council Member Tony Avella
- Council Member Maria Baez
- Council Member Charles Barron
- Council Member Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
- Council Member Elizabeth Crowley
- Council Member Inez E. Dickens
- Council Member Simcha Felder
- Council Member Daniel R. Garodnick
- Council Member Eric N. Gioia
- Council Member Vincent Ignizio
- Council Member Robert Jackson
- Council Member John C. Liu
- Council Member Miguel Martinez
- Council Member Rosie Mendez
- Council Member Annabel Palma
- Council Member Joel Rivera
- Council Member Helen Sears

A P P E A R A N C E S

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Council Member Albert Vann

A P P E A R A N C E S [CONTINUED]

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2 [START TAPE 1004]

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[Off mic question]

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CHAIRPERSON KATZ: No, no, zoning was deferred. Zoning did not meet.

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[Gavel banging]

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CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Good afternoon everyone. The Committee on Zoning and Franchises has been deferred. There is nothing in that Committee today so it has been deferred. And we will start the full Committee on Land Use right now. There is only one item that was laid over from the other day. It is a school siting in Council Member Crowley's District for an 1,100 seat high school on 57th Avenue and 74th Street in Maspeth.

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Upon the recommendation of the Subcommittee, I do a motion to approve. Any discussion?

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[Pause]

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COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you Chairman Katz, Chairwoman. I just want to briefly say once again, I said this in the Subcommittee, I want a high school in Maspeth, it's just that I don't believe this plan works for the community

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2 that I represent. I feel the school should be
3 zoned for the kids that live locally. I don't
4 think that they should be told they only have a 1
5 in 20 chance of attending this school. Thank you.

6 [Pause]

7 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Thank you
8 Councilman Crowley. And let's--any other
9 discussion. Let's call the... Council Member
10 Sears?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: I just made
12 it early and I'd like to do it at the moment that
13 to put a school where it is now is a bad idea. I
14 have three in my District. You don't put schools
15 in a vibrant commercial area. This darkens it.
16 And I just say that because we need to really look
17 seriously when sites are located for commercial
18 areas but I vote yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: We're still
20 going to call the roll so--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS:
22 [Interposing] Oh okay, sorry about that. I
23 forgot.

24 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: --let's call the
25 roll.

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2 MR. WILLIAM MARTIN: William
3 Martin, Committee Clerk, a roll call on the
4 Committee on Land Use. Council Member Katz.

5 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Aye on all.

6 MR. MARTIN: Rivera.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I vote aye
8 on all.

9 MR. MARTIN: Avella.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: Madam Chair
11 may I have a moment to explain my vote?

12 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: I'm voting
14 no in concert with Council Member Crowley--

15 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: [Interposing]
16 Um-hum.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: You know, I
18 think it's extremely arrogant of the Department of
19 Education to think that the site that they pick is
20 always the perfect site. And as in this case, as
21 in others, there is always very little discussion
22 with the local elected officials and the
23 community. And I think as long as we keep saying
24 yes whenever they come up with a school site, they
25 are going to continue to ignore the concerns of

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2 the community and local elected officials. At
3 some point we have to put our foot down and say no
4 this is not the way to do it. So I vote no.

5 MR. MARTIN: Baez.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BAEZ: Aye.

7 MR. MARTIN: Comrie.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Aye.

9 MR. MARTIN: Gioia.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GIOIA: I'd like a
11 second to explain my vote.

12 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GIOIA: I would urge
14 the Department of Education to continue to work
15 with Council Member Crowley to ensure that the
16 students in her District have more than a seat at
17 the table but a seat in the classroom in this new
18 high school. It's critically important to the
19 neighborhood. And I know with Council Member
20 Crowley's continued advocacy this is something
21 that will work out for the neighborhood. But I do
22 urge the Department of Education to truly listen
23 and act on her insightful counsel. With that I
24 vote yes.

25 MR. MARTIN: Jackson.

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COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Madam

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Chair may I be excused to explain my vote?

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CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Yes.

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COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Thank you.

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I sat through the Subcommittee hearing on this

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particular matter and listened to our colleague,

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Council Member Crowley along with residents and my

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colleagues. And I say that the issues and

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concerns that were raised by community residents

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concerning the congestion in that neighborhood

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clearly spells out that this may not be the ideal

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location to build a high school considering the

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other schools in the area.

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But considering the situation

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overall, as far as the need for additional

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schools, in Queens especially, since Queens is the

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most overcrowded Borough in the City of New York,

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and understanding that Ms. Crowley as the Council

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Member I feel that she's doing a great job on

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behalf of her constituents thus far as a new

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Council Member.

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I understand her needs and

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concerns. And I support her wholeheartedly in her

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request to have the schools... meet the needs of the

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2 community, number one, and number two, the wider
3 community as far as the District and Borough. I
4 understand that she's voting no on this particular
5 matter.

6 But on behalf of all of the
7 children of Queens and more specifically because
8 she fought so hard on behalf of her constituents I
9 would be voting yes, but I wanted to compliment
10 her for a job well done in representing the
11 constituents of her Councilmatic District. I vote
12 aye.

13 MR. MARTIN: Martinez.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTINEZ: I vote
15 aye.

16 MR. MARTIN: Seabrook.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: [No
18 response]

19 MR. MARTIN: Sears.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: Aye.

21 MR. MARTIN: Vann.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Aye.

23 MR. MARTIN: Palma.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Aye.

25 MR. MARTIN: Arroyo.

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COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Aye.

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MR. MARTIN: Dickens.

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COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Aye.

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MR. MARTIN: Mendez.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Permission

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to explain my vote.

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CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Yes.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I'm going

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to be voting aye on this matter but I want, one,

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to congratulate my new colleague Council Member

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Crowley on her advocacy and she got many

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concessions that makes this school and a much

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needed school a possibility for all of us to vote

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on, even though she could not ultimately bring

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herself to vote for this. So congratulations.

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And you've been a great advocate. And I'm proud

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to have you here in the City Council with me.

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Thank you.

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MR. MARTIN: Crowley.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: No.

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MR. MARTIN: Ignizio.

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COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: No.

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MR. MARTIN: Felder.

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COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Yes.

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2 MR. MARTIN: By a vote of 14 in the
3 affirmative, 3 in the negative and no abstentions
4 the item is adopted. Members please sign the
5 Committee Report. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Before we close
7 the meeting, I just want to make one final
8 comment. The Department of Education has heard
9 many times from my office and from me, the idea
10 that if you build a school in a community, at the
11 very minimum we should figure out how to share
12 that school with the whole District but also the
13 fact is that if you live across the street from a
14 school, they should figure out a way that the
15 folks that live right across the street or in the
16 exact surrounding area can also go to the school.

17 It is something that we have been
18 speaking about for year. And I find myself in
19 agreement with Tony--with Council Member Avella
20 when I say it is extremely arrogant to put a
21 school in an area without even discussing with the
22 Council Member the location. And we just once
23 again reach out to the Department of Education and
24 send a message that we would expect that that
25 happen in the future.

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2 So I thank everyone. I know that
3 this was a hard issue for us to all come to
4 agreement on. And I do also want to congratulate
5 Council Member Crowley who really just came into
6 this as soon as she got elected and it was a
7 whirlwind. So she did a great job. And I
8 congratulate her. Thank you.

9 Oversight Committee, Tuesday April
10 7th, with Consumer Affairs on the cable TV customer
11 service and technology. Consumer Affairs and
12 Technology on cable TV customer service, April 7th
13 at 10:00 A.M. The next Subcommittee meetings are
14 April--believe it or not, April 20th on Monday. So
15 thank you very much. We'll keep the meeting open
16 for about ten minutes. Oh Council Member Barron?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: May I - - ?

18 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Council Member
19 Barron, how do you vote?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Aye on all.

21 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Thank you.
22 Council Member Garodnick.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank
24 you. I vote aye.

25 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: I think we're

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just waiting for Council Member Liu. Is that it?

[Agreement off mic]

CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Okay we'll text message him. Thank you very much... he's on his way, all right. We'll keep the meeting open for ten minutes.

[Pause]

[END TAPE 1004]

[START TAPE 1005]

MR. MARTIN: Council Member Liu.

COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: Yes.

MR. MARTIN: Council Member Liu.

COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: I vote yes.

And the Land Use Committee is hereby adjourned.

[Gavel banging]

MR. MARTIN: Final vote on the Committee on Land Use is now 17 in the affirmative, 3 in the negative, no absten--

[Background noise]

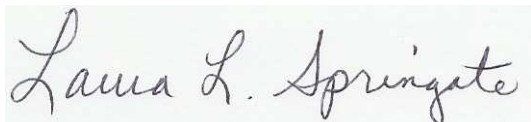
COUNCIL MEMBER LIU: Now the Land Use Committee is really adjourned.

[Gavel banging]

[END TAPE 1005]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Laura L. Springate 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 cursive script that reads "Laura L. Springate". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Signature Laura L. Springate

Date April 13, 2009