

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION

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January 20, 2015  
Start: 01:13 p.m.  
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HELD AT: 250 Broadway- Committee Rm, 16<sup>th</sup> Fl.

B E F O R E:

MARK LEVINE  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ALAN N. MAISEL  
ANDREW COHEN  
DARLENE MEALY  
FERNANDO CABRERA  
JAMES G. VAN BRAMER  
MARK TREYGER

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Good afternoon

everybody. We're going to call our meeting to order. I'm Mark Levine Chair of the City Council's Parks Committee. Today will be taking up street renaming, street co-namings around the New York City. This is an important function that helps us commemorate our heroes, remind ourselves who we are and where we are as a city and make sure that lives lost are not forgotten. And two of the most prominent individuals we'll be commemorating this way are the two officers who unfortunately were killed in the line of duty on December 20<sup>th</sup> which is Officer Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu. And I'd like to say a couple words about them in particular before addressing the broader package of streets that we'll be renaming? Officer, now detective, Wenjian Liu came to New York from Guangzhou, China in 1994 to seek the American dream. Officer Liu was proud of his public service aspiring to be a police officer since high school. He dedicated his life to helping others beginning with his service on the 74<sup>th</sup> precinct auxiliary unit and then for seven years as a police officer. He was also recently married this past September and was clearly beloved

1 at both in his community and by his fellow  
2 officers. We also know that Rafael Ramos despite  
3 being 40 years old came to the police department  
4 three years ago as a shift in his career. He loved  
5 his job and was, and was to become an honorary NYPD  
6 chaplain. He was said to always carry a smile and  
7 was known as a great family man often playing  
8 basketball with his two sons in the park. He was  
9 also active in his church and served as an usher  
10 there. It's only been a few weeks since we lost  
11 these two heroes. Already we're hearing their names  
12 less in the headlines. That's how it happens. And  
13 so we have to do everything we can to keep their  
14 memories alive so that not just present day New  
15 Yorkers, but New Yorkers for many years and many  
16 generations to come will understand that there were  
17 two heroes who walked the streets to protect us and  
18 lost their live in the line of duty. And making  
19 sure that these two neighborhoods in their home  
20 communities of Brooklyn have streets in their honor  
21 is one small but important way we can keep their  
22 memories alive. We'll also be naming street or co-  
23 naming streets today for many other impressive New  
24 Yorkers. A few of the highlights include Basil  
25

1  
2 Patterson Boulevard which will commemorate the late  
3 Harlem luminary, deputy mayor, and the father of  
4 former Governor David Patterson. Included in this  
5 bill is also Oscar de la Renta Boulevard named  
6 after the famous fashion designer and activist.  
7 This bill will also create Cooper Stock Way. Cooper  
8 was nine years old when he was struck and killed by  
9 a taxi cab driver who failed to yield to a  
10 pedestrian on 97<sup>th</sup> Street. His death has led to an  
11 investigation and a call for legislation to revoke  
12 a TLC license when a driver kills or maims a  
13 pedestrian in an accident. Finally Jacob Birimbowam  
14 [sp?] Way will recognize the creator of a  
15 grassroots movement in the 1960s that eventually  
16 led to liberalization of Moscow's immigration  
17 policies and the freeing of soviet Jews, all  
18 important New Yorkers that deserve to be  
19 remembered. And there's many more we will be  
20 commemorating today. And I want to now open up to  
21 my colleagues for their comments.

22 [background comments]

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay we have one  
24 member of the public which will testify but again  
25

2 I'm happy to let any of my colleagues speak now. Go  
3 ahead Council Member Mealy from Brooklyn.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: ...for putting these  
5 co-names. And I want to congratulate the Patterson  
6 family just as well. And one of mine is Doctor  
7 Jerry V Burns. He was our pastor in my church that  
8 fed over least I can say 500 people a day in my  
9 community. And by his passing it has changed the  
10 neighborhood and we looking forward for more people  
11 that need help that this church, the open door  
12 church in Bedford-Stuyvesant that we will have  
13 someone else take up that banner and keep that  
14 torch burning for our community. And this is so  
15 befitting for us to do a name, street naming from  
16 our two officers who have put their lives on the  
17 line. And we all know that the community want to go  
18 home and the police officers wants to go home just  
19 as well. And I'm looking forward that our city work  
20 together as one. Because we do need each other. And  
21 I want to thank this body and I'm glad that we are  
22 doing this... day. And I vote aye... not yet though.  
23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: You'll get a chance  
25 to say those important words again in a few

1  
2 moments. Are there any colleagues... okay Council  
3 Member Treyger from Brooklyn.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you Chair.  
5 The tragic and shocking deaths of detectives Liu  
6 and Ramos meant the loss of two heroes for our  
7 entire city. For the neighborhoods of **Gravesend**  
8 which I represent as well as Cyprus Hills it is  
9 also, also meant the loss of two selfless neighbors  
10 who exemplified everything great about the New York  
11 City Police Department. I have the honor of  
12 representing **Gravesend** which is home to caring  
13 hardworking residents and families like the Liu's  
14 who embody what it means to be a New Yorker. By all  
15 accounts Detective Liu was a kind and generous  
16 neighbor who put his family and others first in  
17 addition to being a terrific officer that  
18 represented the NYPD with class and distinction. As  
19 Dennis Hammel wrote in the daily news Detective Liu  
20 was a regular neighborhood guy since buying a house  
21 on West 7<sup>th</sup> street, West 6<sup>th</sup> Street some years ago.  
22 He frequented local places like Vick's Pizza always  
23 smiling and friendly. Dedicating these streets in  
24 their honor is a small step we could take as a city  
25 to continue the healing process and to ensure that

1  
2 we never forget the sacrifice these detective and  
3 their families have made on behalf of every New  
4 Yorker. As once again Dennis Hammel noted two men  
5 of color two men of peace from two different  
6 religions who wound up in identical blue uniforms  
7 in the same squad car working to protect us all.  
8 Their rise as officers, their dedication to family  
9 and the lives they cared.. they cared for in graves  
10 and in Cyprus Hills truly are what makes the city  
11 so great. Detectives Liu and Ramos were taken from  
12 their families and from all of us way too soon. It  
13 is now our responsibility as a city to never forget  
14 these two heroes and to work towards a better city  
15 in their honor. And I'd like to thank the chair for  
16 working very swiftly to get these street renamings  
17 through as well as the speaker. I'd also like to  
18 note two other noteworthy folks that are in my  
19 district, Barbara Ditillo [sp?] residents of  
20 Gravesend who was active many many years in Our  
21 Lady of Grace Church working with, with the teen  
22 groups. She dedicated countless, countless hours  
23 and time, years towards the service of our youth  
24 and our community and she'll be forever missed. And  
25 also Pastor Jackson Filippo [sic], known as Brother

1  
2 Jack in Coney Island who worked with the youth in  
3 Coney Island at Coney Island Gospel Assembly he'll  
4 forever be missed. And just one last word about  
5 Detective Liu who lived in, in my district Chair.  
6 I, I visited the house after, after the tragedy and  
7 just listening to his father hearing the story that  
8 each day he would get home he would call home to  
9 make sure, to let them know that he was okay. He  
10 would actually sometimes visit his father at the  
11 clothing factory to help his father come home soon  
12 to, to prepare him food and meal and... So this was a  
13 person of service not just in the uniform but a  
14 person of service out of the uniform, always caring  
15 for his neighbors and friends. And both detective  
16 Liu and Ramos who I also heard grew up in Coney  
17 Island they'll, they'll be forever be missed. And I  
18 thank you very much for having this hearing very  
19 swiftly and we're here, we're here for them. Thank  
20 you Chair.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you Council  
22 Member Treyger. And in addition to yourself and  
23 Council Member Mealy want to acknowledge that also  
24 in attendance are committee members Council Member  
25 Cabrera, Mazel, Cohen, and Van Bramer. And also



1 want to offer one point of information, to tell you  
2 specifically which streets will be renamed, co-  
3 named on behalf of, of these brave police officers  
4 we have Detective Rafael Ramos Way will be  
5 Ridgewood Avenue between Shepherd Avenue and  
6 Highland Place in Brooklyn. And in honor of  
7 Detective Wenjian Lin [sic] we'll be co-naming West  
8 6<sup>th</sup> Street between Avenue S and Avenue T. These  
9 streets were selected by the families of the fallen  
10 officers because of their strong personal  
11 connection. And Now I want to invite Council Member  
12 Cabrera to offer a few remarks followed by Council  
13 Member Van Bramer.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you Mr.  
15 Chair. You know the other day I was talking to a, a  
16 young man and it came to mind as I was speaking to  
17 him he was having a confusion between recognizing  
18 the difference between a celebrity and a hero.  
19 Today we're celebrating celebrities. There are  
20 celebrities that are mentioned here and they have  
21 made a lot accomplishment. But to me a hero is  
22 someone who has made a great sacrifice for others.  
23 And so I commend you Mr. chair for allowing the  
24 recognition to take place and for our community to  
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1  
2 never forget uh the heroic act of these two  
3 officers. Thank you so much.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you Council  
5 Member Cabrera. Council Member Van Bramer.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Thank you  
7 very much Mr. Chair and I want to congratulate you  
8 and, and all the members responsible for all the  
9 namings, in particular Officers Liu and Ramos. It  
10 is so correct and so right that we honor their  
11 service in this manner. It is also a reminder that  
12 all of us should always do more to recognize the  
13 bravery and sacrifice of our officers as they are  
14 doing their jobs and when they are alive. And it is  
15 tragic that we are naming a street for them so  
16 early too, too early in terms of the amount of time  
17 that they had on this earth. But wholly  
18 appropriately doing this today and this week but it  
19 should have been a long, much longer time before uh  
20 they had streets named after them but uh they were  
21 taken so tragically early from us. But  
22 congratulations to my colleagues who are sponsoring  
23 those particular renamings. And then while  
24 obviously all of these are important and it is so  
25 timely for Officers Liu and Ramos to have these

1 streets renamed after them I would be remiss if I  
2 didn't mention two co-namings in my district that  
3 are particularly important to the Sunnyside and  
4 Woodside communities, Alice Cardona is a wonderful  
5 wonderful brave Puerto Rican woman who was among  
6 the first Latina women to have incredibly important  
7 positions in government including the Assistant  
8 Director of the New York State Division for Women  
9 under Governor Mario Cuomo [sp?] and Alice was a, a  
10 liberal fire brand and a real passionate Puerto  
11 Rican woman who led the charge for many many years  
12 before others took up the mantel. And she lived in  
13 Woodside, was a good friend and uh we will be  
14 renaming a street for her. And then Luke Adams who  
15 was affectionately known as the Mayor of Sunnyside  
16 and a, a terrific man who led our Sunnyside Chamber  
17 of Commerce and did so much. In fact helped build  
18 the Sunnyside Arch though maybe not everyone thinks  
19 it's famous. We think of it as pretty famous in  
20 Sunnyside. And I think it's a great great landmark  
21 in our neighborhood and Luke passed away just a  
22 couple of months ago. One week after I last saw him  
23 at a Sunnyside Chamber of Commerce Event. So both  
24 of those legends really in Queens and New York City  
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1  
2 will miss them both. So I want to just recognize  
3 that we're also going to be co-naming streets for  
4 those two Queens legends. So with that thank you  
5 very much Mr. Chair.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: This is actually the  
7 first time we have had all seven members of the  
8 committee here present at one moment and that's a  
9 reflection of just how...

10 [clapping]

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you Jacob for  
12 that rockous [sic] round of applause. I think it  
13 just reflects everyone's passion about not only  
14 every street being renamed but particularly the  
15 streets being renamed on behalf of our fallen  
16 officers. We're now going to move to public  
17 testimony. At first up will be the inimitable Jacob  
18 Morris. And there's still time if any of you would  
19 like to speak out on another street, any street  
20 that we're considering today you can submit your  
21 information to the Sergeant at Arms and we'd be  
22 happy to hear from you. Go ahead Jacob.

23 JACOB MORRIS: Oh it's working. Oh good,  
24 okay. Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I'm  
25 really gratified to be here today and speak with

1  
2 you guys. First I'm really happy to be responsible  
3 for one of the honorings that's included in the  
4 street co-naming package which is for Jack Maple.  
5 Jack Maple and it seems to be timely was  
6 responsible for CompStat and Broken Windows. That's  
7 right under the Transit Police as a Lieutenant  
8 under Bratton. Incredibly innovative has now spread  
9 actually worldwide. So we got the street where he  
10 was, where he grew up named after him. And I always  
11 felt he deserved it. I don't think Commissioner  
12 Bratton knows that it's included in the package. I  
13 hope he does, I know that he will after the vote.  
14 And we're looking forward to having a fantastic  
15 ceremony for Jack Maple. And I'm proud, I'm proud  
16 to you know be part of, of getting him honored. And  
17 you know given these circumstances of today's  
18 hearing and this bill proposal I feel it's really  
19 timely. I believe in Broken Windows. I believe  
20 Broken Windows needs to be implemented with  
21 sensitivity by our, by our police force and our  
22 enforcement and judicial apparatus. And I believe  
23 that Jack Maple felt the same way. But it was  
24 really amazing, I remember what people were saying,  
25 wow look they're catching fare beaters and they

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2 committed murder or felonies and crime went down in  
3 the subways. It was like a shock. So that was Jack  
4 Maple and that was Commissioner Bratton allowing  
5 Jack Maple to start this program. And... so this  
6 means a lot to me and I think it means a lot to the  
7 whole city. And we need balance when we evaluate  
8 you know how these policies uh come about, how  
9 they're implemented and what they mean to all of  
10 us. And I think we're all happy in this city that  
11 we have a huge, huge reduction in crime from what  
12 we had in the late 80s and the early 90s when Jack  
13 Maple came up with the strategy. I have a problem.  
14 Community Board 5 in the Bronx unanimously passed a  
15 resolution calling for Sedgwick Avenue which is on  
16 the state registry of historic places, 1520  
17 Sedgwick as the location where... [beeping] where  
18 hip-hop... [beeping]

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Okay make your  
20 point, just... [cross-talk]

21 JACOB MORRIS: Thank you, thank you Mr.  
22 Chairman. ...where hip-hop music crystalized in the  
23 Bronx and not for nothing but the Bronx is in New  
24 York City so the name Hip-Hop Boulevard not only  
25 honors that neighborhood, it honors the Bronx and

1  
2 it honors all of New York City. And for some reason  
3 it wasn't included in this street naming package.  
4 It was rejected I believe robotically. And with all  
5 due respect for central staff because I have the  
6 guidelines in front of me from, from 2008.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: If you can just  
8 quickly make the point because we do need to vote  
9 soon.

10 JACOB MORRIS: Right. I believe I want to  
11 support the essence of the guidelines. I want the  
12 guidelines, I would like your Committee Mr.  
13 Chairman to address revising the guidelines. Seven  
14 percent of the co-namings in this city, in the past  
15 15 years, have been named after historic or  
16 cultural sites. Hip-hop boulevard is a perfect  
17 example of a historic and cultural site that is  
18 independently vetted like I said it's on the state  
19 registry for historic places. I personally am  
20 responsible for Abolitionist Place in Brooklyn  
21 which... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you.

23 JACOB MORRIS: ...which was approved  
24 subsequent to the revision of the guidelines in  
25 2008.

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CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you Jacob.

JACOB MORRIS: If Abolitionist Place was approved by this committee, and it was, to great allocates then Hip-Hop Boulevard should be included in the next package.

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: Thank you... [cross-talk]

JACOB MORRIS: Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you committee.

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: It's, it's a pleasure. Thank you for your input. Very much appreciate it. I would now like to ask the Legislative Clerk Billy Martin to call the roll call for the vote please.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Committee on Parks and Recreation Pre... Introduction. Chair Levine.

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Mealy.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: May I explain my vote? I want to just say to Detective Ramos Way is excellent, Detective Liu Way and Basil Paterson Boulevard, kudos and Oscar de la Rena closed, you know I have to say kudos for that. And just have



1  
2 to tell you about Jerry V Burns was the pastor and  
3 founder of the Open Door Church of God and Christ  
4 for 36 years. He opened up a full pantry and a soup  
5 kitchen serving approximately 3,000 people  
6 basically every week. The church also provided  
7 biblical studies, counselling sessions, clothing,  
8 food, and donations, donated items to the  
9 community. He received a communitarian award from  
10 the administration for food. And he partnered with,  
11 for the homeless for outstanding services, was  
12 nominated for the, from the mayor a volunteering  
13 services award, and received religious awards from  
14 the community ministry. He also received numerous  
15 awards from Mayor Julianne at that time and our  
16 borough, former Borough President Howard Golding,  
17 myself, and others. And I know this street naming  
18 is worthy of... of our pastor and doctor Jerry V.  
19 Burns. And I vote aye on all. Thank you Chair and  
20 thank you for this hearing quickly. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Cabrera.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I vote with  
23 honors yes.

24 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Van Bramer.

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COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: With  
gratitude to everyone and in particularly the two  
tragically murdered officers I proudly vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Cohen.

COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Maisel.

COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: Yes.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Treyger.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: With great pride  
and honor I vote aye on all.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: By a vote of  
seven in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and  
no abstentions item has been adopted.

CHAIRPERSON LEVINE: This adjourns our  
committee hearing. Thank you all very much.

[gavel]

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



Date January 22, 2015