

Ben Minko

Testimony before the New York City Council Committee on Rules, Privileges, and Elections

Good morning, Chairman Powers, Speaker Adams, and members of the New York City Council Committee on Rules, Privileges, and Elections. My name is Ben Minko and I am here this morning seeking your confirmation and consent to serve as a commissioner on the NYC Tax Commission. Thank you in advance for your consideration and for the opportunity to tell you a little about myself and why I wish to serve on the Tax Commission.

Currently I am the sole owner/operator of Island Property Tax Services. The primary activity of this venture is to represent homeowners and larger property owners in their appeal for property tax relief before the Tax Commission. In addition, the business files requests for review with the Department of Finance and has on occasion worked with the tax map unit toward the creation and dissolution of tax lots and assisted some homeowners in obtaining personal exemptions.

Prior to starting up this business, I was employed by the NYC Department of Finance (DOF) for 35 years, directly involved in all facets of the real property tax process from a variety of positions.

As a district tax assessor, I was directly responsible for valuing all types of real property for the purpose of determining its property tax. In this capacity I spent time doing field work, compiling data, speaking with owners and managers about their homes and properties. Soon thereafter, as a supervisor, I led a team of assessors reviewing, approving, or disapproving submitted valuations.

As the Borough of Staten Island Assessor in Charge from the mid 1990's into the 2000's, I was responsible for all borough related activity including interpreting policy directives and implementing agency programs. I reduced backlogs by eliminating duplications and worked closely with DOF programmers to automate many processes. I directed a complete citywide redevelopment and design of tax map apportionments entry and billing procedures. As the assessor in charge, I was DOF's liaison with civic groups, professional organizations, and outreach programs in the borough.

In the mid 2000's I was named a Team Leader located in the Manhattan office. I led a team of assessors in discovering, identifying, valuing, and adding all new construction to the city's tax roll. This also extended to physical alteration changes of income producing properties and one to three family homes. During this period, I created a tracking system for all new building permits, alterations and tax lot apportionments, reducing the paper burden allowing for greater efficiency and increased production.

From 2011 until my retirement in 2018 I served as an Administrative Assessor working as a Deputy Director of Field Operations. In this capacity my citywide responsibilities meant overseeing each of the five borough managers and all of the field assessors, ensuring accurate data collection and valuation. During this period, I was often called upon to interface with

different community groups, professional organizations, and outreach programs throughout the city. I also created, implemented, and taught a training program for all new assistant assessor hires.

I was born and raised in Brooklyn, attended public institutions, graduated from Brooklyn Technical High School, spent a brief semester attending Brooklyn College and have been living in Staten Island for 40 years. After the birth of my two children, I went back to school, attending the College of Staten Island at night for several years before graduating with a business degree.

The majority of my working career has been devoted to serving NYC and working in the property tax system. There are always new challenges, experiences and opportunities that present themselves in this field. Having an opportunity to serve as a NYC Tax Commission Commissioner will allow me to continue working with property owners and collaborate with colleagues. As a candidate familiar with both the valuation and appeals process, my experience and background have prepared me to act as a fair and impartial arbiter in the role of a hearing officer and an asset to the city.

Thank you.