

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS AND CONCESSIONS

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February 8, 2012
Start: 1:14 p.m.
Recess: 1:23 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E: STEPHEN T. LEVIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Charles Barron
Inez E. Dickens
Sara M. Gonzalez
Peter A. Koo

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good afternoon.
3 Welcome to the Subcommittee on Planning,
4 Dispositions and Concessions. I am Council Member
5 Stephen Levin, chair of the Subcommittee. I'm
6 joined this afternoon by my colleagues Inez
7 Dickens from Manhattan, Charles Barron from
8 Brooklyn, Peter Koo from Queens. All democrats.

9 [laugh]

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Oh yes, sorry,
11 sorry, and the Freedom Party. We have one item
12 that we will be voting on today. It consists of
13 seven properties. It's Land Use No. 499, non ULEP
14 [phonetic] number 20125161 HAK, the neighborhood
15 stabilization program. These properties are in
16 the Council Districts of Council Member Darlene
17 Mealy and this Subcommittee's own Charles Barron
18 in Community Districts 3, 16, and 5. We will ask—
19 no testimony on this item, but we will be taking a
20 vote on it, and after extensive discussions on
21 this item, the Council Members who represent the
22 area have agreed that the vote should be in the
23 affirmative. I concur. I will encourage my
24 colleagues to vote yes on this item. Council
25 Member Barron, do you want to say a couple of

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words on it?

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, and this is a very important project to me 'cause it will maintain my status as the number one council member in building affordable housing in the city out of all 51, including the honorable Council Member sitting to my right, and we won't mention any names at the expense of not wanting to make anyone feel bad, but I am number one, so it continues that. But on a serious note, I want to commend Council Member Darlene Mealy and I also want people to understand why she took the time that she took in not approving this. In our communities, we're getting more and more rentals, so in a lot of the black and Latino communities in particular, it's rentals. We try to create some kind of balance between rentals and home ownership because rental is not getting you to wealth. Homeownership is the beginning of wealth, so if you come in black and Latino neighborhoods and every time you see some space, we have these rentals—you know two or three - - building up 'cause they can't go anywhere else 'cause the space is limited in the city. And even though the

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2 market is not—banks are not lending after they
3 took your money for being bailed out, now they
4 won't lend you any money for building affordable
5 homes and most of it is going into rentals. It
6 puts it in a very, very precarious situation, so I
7 understand my colleague. A lot of people are
8 very, very hard on her, and she was simply saying,
9 can we take one or two of the parcels out and do
10 home ownership and do the rentals with the other?
11 So we spoke at length and I told her, stay strong
12 on home ownership, but if it got to the point
13 where you couldn't go any further then do the
14 right thing for your community, so she did that.
15 I want to thank her for that and encourage this
16 committee to vote yes on this project.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,
18 Council Member Barron. I'd just like to add that
19 I also commend Council Member Darlene Mealy for
20 advocating strongly for her constituents and for
21 the prospects of home ownership in her district.
22 It is my commitment that I will work with her to
23 ensure that whatever availability there is in
24 terms of programs that will bring about home
25 ownership in her district, I will work with her in

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2 my role as this committee's chair, but also as a
3 colleague to—as our economy gets better and the
4 prospects get increased in terms of home ownership
5 in our communities that her community is not in
6 any way left behind and that it is at the
7 forefront. I do commend her for her patience and
8 her thoughtfulness and her willingness to hear all
9 sides of the issue and to be a responsible member
10 of the City Council. I do want to commend her for
11 that. With that, I will ask Christian Hilton,
12 counsel to the committee, to call the roll on Land
13 Use No. 499.

14 COUNSEL: Chair Levin?

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Aye.

16 COUNSEL: Council Member Barron?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Aye.

18 COUNSEL: Council Member Dickens?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS:

20 Permission, Mr. Chair, to explain my vote?

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: That I too
23 join with my colleague, Council Member Barron, in
24 congratulating Council Member Mealy on the
25 decision that she ultimately came and that

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2 although I have been a strong proponent of home
3 ownership, because not only will it bring wealth,
4 but it prevents your community from having the
5 changeover. It allows an indigenous population to
6 stay in their community and that's very, very
7 important, but also, I have to recognize as she
8 ultimately did is that not all people can own, and
9 we need affordable rentals as well. There needs
10 to be a mixture, and that although this isn't the
11 time, she ultimately came to the decision that she
12 would do the affordable rentals, but at some time
13 in the future, she could consider home ownership
14 for her community and maybe for some of those
15 parcels, so with that, I saw aye and thank you.

16 COUNSEL: Council Member Koo?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Permission to
18 say a few words before I vote?

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Well, I just
21 want to echo what the previous Council Member
22 said. Homeownership is important to stabilize a
23 neighborhood, so like Council Member Barron has
24 said that we should have some kind of ownership
25 for homeownership programs after renting a place

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2 for maybe a period of time. With that, I vote
3 yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,
5 Council Member Koo. Council Member Gonzalez is on
6 her way down, so we're going to leave the roll
7 open for her. I just want the record to show that
8 Council Member Barron did not want to allow
9 Council Member Dickens to - - , but-

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS:
11 [Interposing] Mr. Chair, I'd like for the record
12 to show also that although my esteemed colleague
13 from Brooklyn objected to my speaking, I want to
14 record to show that he gave erroneous information
15 when he said he was number one in affordability.
16 Harlem stands strong.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Number one.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Council Member
19 Barron, do you have anything to add to that?

20 COUNSEL: I just want to say the
21 approved vote for L.U. 499, four in the
22 affirmative, none in the negative, no abstentions.
23 Item goes to the full Land Use Committee.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We'll leave the
25 roll open as Council Member Gonzalez makes her way

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down.

[background conversation]

COUNSEL: Council Member Gonzalez?

COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Aye on

all.

COUNSEL: The vote now stands at
five in the affirmative, none in the negative and
no abstentions.

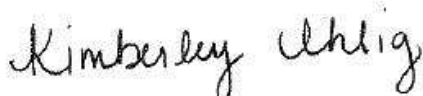
CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Meeting is
adjourned.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberley Uhlig 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 _____



Date _____

3/4/12