

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

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November 3, 2011
Start: 11:18 a.m.
Recess: 11:35 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E: JOEL RIVERA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
Elizabeth S. Crowley
Inez E. Dickens
Erik Martin Dilan
Lewis A. Fidler
Vincent J. Gentile
Robert Jackson
James Vacca
Albert Vann
Karen Koslowitz
James S. Oddo
Christine C. Quinn

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

Kenneth J. Knuckles
Candidate for Appointment
New York City Planning Commission

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2 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Okay, we're
3 getting ready to begin. We're ready to begin the
4 Rules Committee. Good morning, ladies and
5 gentlemen. My name is Joe Rivera and I chair the
6 Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections.
7 Before we begin, let me introduce the members who
8 are here with us today. We have in the audience
9 we have the Minority Leader, Jimmy Oddo. We also
10 have with us Council Member Robert Jackson,
11 Council Member Al Vann, Council Member Leroy
12 Comrie, Council Member Karen Koslowitz and Council
13 Member Jimmy Vacca as well and Council Member Inez
14 Dickens and we are accompanied by Council Member
15 Helen Foster, who's busy signing Finance. Did I
16 miss anybody? I see none.

17 Today before us we have one
18 candidate for our review. He is no stranger to
19 us. Kenneth J. Knuckles, a Bronx resident, is
20 being considered for appointment by the mayor to
21 the Planning Commission to succeed Nathan
22 Levinthal [phonetic] and serve the remainder of a
23 five-year term that expires on June 30th of 2015.
24 Mr. Knuckles is not new to the Planning
25 Commission. From 2000 to 2011, he served on the

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2 Planning Commission as the Bronx Borough
3 President's appointment.

4 Let me briefly explain the
5 functions of the Planning Commission. The City
6 Planning Commission has 13 members; seven
7 appointed by the mayor, one by the public advocate
8 and one by each of the borough presidents. The
9 Planning Commission is responsible for the long
10 range planning to ensure orderly growth and
11 development, assist in developing the ten-year
12 capital plan, prepares and modifies the zoning
13 resolution among a number of other critical
14 functions. Members are prohibited from holding
15 any other city office while they serve on the
16 Planning Commission. The chair receives an annual
17 salary of \$205,180. The member who is designated
18 as vice chair receives an annual salary of
19 \$62,271. The other members receive an annual
20 salary of \$54,150.

21 Welcome, Mr. Knuckles. Will you
22 please raise your right hand to be sworn in?

23 FEMALE VOICE: Do you swear to tell
24 the truth the whole truth and nothing but the
25 truth so help you God?

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KENNETH KNUCKLES: I do.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Perfect. Just make sure your microphone is on.

KENNETH KNUCKLES: I do.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Perfect. Thank you very much. Do you have an opening statement?

KENNETH KNUCKLES: Briefly, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, honorable Council Members. Good morning. As you so graciously indicated, I have had the privilege of serving on the City Planning Commission for 11 years from September of 2000 through this past August. I believe that my contributions to the Commission have been beneficial and positive. I have certainly learned a lot about the city of New York and the aspirations of its citizens. I also believe that the mayor's proposal to reappoint me affirms the fact that I've made a contribution and I am looking forward to serving again for the remainder of the term that you indicated. I am honored to serve the city of New York. Public service has been an important part of my career and I am glad once again to have the opportunity. Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very
3 much. Do we have any questions from members of
4 the Committee? We have Council Member Inez
5 Dickens followed by Council Member Jimmy Vacca.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER INEX DICKENS: Thank
7 you, Mr. Chair. Thank you so much. I am
8 delighted to support the reappointment of Ken
9 Knuckles to the City Planning Commission. I have
10 worked very closely with Ken to help with the
11 MWBEs [phonetic] and small businesses in not only
12 my community, but in northern Manhattan.
13 Furthermore, he has expert knowledge of business
14 districts in neighborhoods and is critically aware
15 of the fact that small businesses are the economic
16 engines upon which communities depend on for their
17 growth and sustained vitality. In his capacity,
18 he has also learned a lot about Land Use, which is
19 very, very, very, very important to this
20 Commission and important to this City Council that
21 we have members of the Commission that are
22 knowledgeable and know what questions to ask and
23 when to vote. Ken is up to the task. His wealth
24 of experience is without question. He is strong
25 and has the courage of conviction. His road is

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2 not always easy, but his profound commitment to
3 communities and particular underserved communities
4 and to this great city makes him an excellent
5 choice for the City Planning Commission. I ask my
6 colleagues for a positive vote for Ken Knuckles.
7 Thank you.

8 KENNETH KNUCKLES: Thank you,
9 Council Member.

10 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Council Member
11 Vacca?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I very much
13 want to support you, Ken. Ken Knuckles and I go
14 back--it has to be more than 20 years. Seeing him
15 back on the Commission makes me feel a little
16 better. I want you to know that Ken is not only a
17 smart, brilliant person; he is someone who cares.
18 He is someone who takes his responsibility very
19 seriously. I can't begin to tell you how many
20 times I've picked up the phone over the years, and
21 asked Ken for advice, asked him for his opinion.
22 He was always responsive. He was always there.
23 He cares about all parts of this city. I'm very
24 proud that he's here today. We often appoint
25 knowledgeable people. We appoint people who bring

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2 a specific set of skills to the job, but Ken, you
3 do all that. In addition to that, you're a good
4 person. You're a person who cares. You're a
5 person who I'm very proud to say we're going to
6 vote for unanimously I hope today and I look
7 forward to your continued service to our city.
8 Thank you for being who you are.

9 KENNETH KNUCKLES: Thank you, Jim.

10 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you,
11 Council Member. Do we have any other members...?
12 Council Member Leroy Comrie?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I just want
14 to say ditto to everything else that Council
15 Member Dickens and Council Member Jimmy Vacca
16 said. I've personally had the opportunity to work
17 with Mr. Knuckles. He is truly a prince of the
18 city. I just want to thank you for your continued
19 commitment to want to serve because I know there's
20 so many people that would to utilize your
21 expertise and tap your knowledge and the fact that
22 you still want to stay a member of the City
23 Planning Commission. I want to just congratulate
24 the Mayor's Office for getting one right this
25 time.

[laughter]

CHAIRPERSON RIFVERA: I concur with that statement. Do we have any other questions on behalf of the... Council Member Al Vann? And we've been joined by Council Member Lew Fidler.

COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Actually Leroy stole my thunder. I was going to say ditto, but - - everything has been said and more. Congratulations.

KENNETH KNUCKLES: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Any other questions or statements by members of the Committee? Seeing none, I'll just say ditto to the ditto to the ditto. You have a wealth of experience. The city of New York is honored to have you as a representative of the City Planning Commission and we look forward to many years of more service. The Chair recommends an aye vote. Can the clerk please call the roll?

COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin, committee clerk. Roll call vote in the Committee on Rules. Council Member Rivera?

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Comrie?

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COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Fidler?

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Jackson?

COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON:

Congratulations, Ken. I vote aye.

KENNETH KNUCKLES: Thank you.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Vann?

COUNCIL MEMBER VANN:

Congratulations. Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Gentile?

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I vote

aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Dickens?

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS:

Congratulations, Ken, and I vote aye.

KENNETH KNUCKLES: Thank you.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Vacca?

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA:

Congratulations. I vote aye of course.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Koslowitz?

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ:

Congratulations. I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Oddo?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Yes.

3 COMMITTEE CLERK: By vote of ten in
4 the affirmative, zero in the negative and no
5 abstentions item is adopted. Members, please sign
6 the Committee Report.

7 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: We're going to
8 leave the vote open for a few more moments. The
9 Speaker is on her way down, and I of course, want
10 to thank Lauren, Jasmine and Chuck for all the
11 hard work they do for the Committee.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Speaker Quinn?

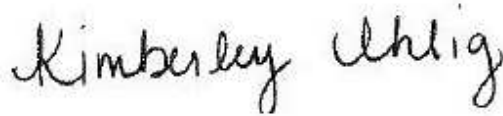
13 SPEAKER QUINN: First, I just want
14 to say for the record, look how cute Karen
15 Koslowitz looks - - . We are very lucky to have
16 Ken Knuckles want to take on this position, so
17 thank you, and I vote aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: The vote now
19 stands at 11 in the affirmative, zero in the
20 negative and no abstentions.

21 MALE VOICE: I hereby close this
22 meeting of the Rules Committee.

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 _____11/16/11_____