

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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January 29, 2009

Start: 10:52am

Recess: 11:58am

HELD AT: 250 Broadway
14th Floor

B E F O R E: THOMAS WHITE, JR.
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Diana Reyna
David I. Weprin
Letitia James
James S. Oddo
Vincent Ignizio

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

Venetia Lannon
Senior Vice President, Maritime Division
NYC Economic Development Corporation

Daniel Zarrilli
Senior Vice President, Asset Management Division
NYC Economic Development Corporation

Captain James DeSimone
Chief Operating Officer, Staten Island Ferry
NYC Department of Transportation

John Luisi
Concerned Resident

Linda Baran
Staten Island Chamber of Commerce

Henry Kennedy
Concerned Citizen

Vincent Montalbano
Concerned Citizen

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2 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Before I start,
3 let me apologize for the delay. I know
4 everybody's time is important, but I ran into some
5 difficulties in getting down here. With that
6 being said, the Committee on Economic Development
7 will begin. The oversight of the retail
8 development at the Staten Island Ferry Terminals
9 II. Good morning, I am Councilman Thomas White,
10 Jr., Chairman of the Committee on Economic
11 Development. Today's hearing will focus on the
12 retail development at the Staten Island Ferry
13 Terminals. The Committee held a hearing on the
14 topic on November the 16th, '07. The Staten
15 Island Ferry operates 24-hours a day, 365 days a
16 year and carries 19 million passengers annually on
17 a 5.2 mile route between the St. George Terminal
18 in Staten Island and the Whitehall Terminal in
19 Manhattan, the ferry makes 110 trips carrying
20 approximately 65,000 passengers per day. On
21 February 8th, 2005, the renovated 200,000 square
22 foot space at the Whitehall Terminal was reopened.
23 The renovation included a 19,000 square foot
24 waiting room, 6,000 square foot of concession
25 space, 10,000 square feet of office space and

10,000 square feet of ancillary support and ferry operations. On May 20th, '05, the renovated St. George Terminal was opened. The 130 million renovation of the 55-year old terminal featured floor to ceiling glass for panoramic view of the harbor and incoming ferries. The administration is testifying before the committee on November 16th, '08, described a new retail strategy for the Whitehall and St. George ferry terminals, would ensure high quality restaurants, retail tenants. The St. George terminal will have a Taste of Staten Island theme, and will feature the best of local Staten Island restaurants, businesses, rather than catering to national fast food chains, while the Whitehall terminal retail will reflect a mix of unique Manhattan retail, which will attract office space for workers in the area, and create a new local meeting spot. In November of '08, the administration projected that the tenants will need several months to fill out their space before opening due to the necessary infrastructure work, with the first new stores expected to open in the summer of '08. Today we look forward to hearing the progress of the retail development of New York

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2 City's Staten Island Ferry Terminals. I would
3 like to thank the administration, the ferry
4 riders, Committee, residents, elected officials
5 and advocates for testifying today, and I look
6 forward to a productive hearing on this important
7 issue. And I would like to defer to my colleagues
8 for their statements, Minority Leader James Oddo
9 and Colleague Councilman Ignizio.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chairman; I would just like to make a brief
12 statement. We, as Staten Islanders, aren't known
13 to be a patient lot. But we've learned to endure.
14 We had to endure 50 years of Fresh Kills Landfill,
15 we had to endure the fact that City agencies and
16 state agencies and authorities seem to forget that
17 there's value in places like the Teleport on
18 Staten Island or the NASCAR property. And one of
19 the most popular laments that you hear from
20 myself, Council Member Ignizio, former Council
21 Members McMahon and Lanza, is that if this
22 particular piece of property were located in any
23 other borough or if it was fully affiliated with
24 any other borough, we wouldn't have to wait. And
25 I think we've shown much more patience than

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2 probably we should have so far with reference to
3 the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. And let me be
4 clear in saying that I know the good folks at EDC
5 had a bad of junk, let's say, dropped into their
6 lap. And this was, frankly, mistakes made by a
7 different agency, and EDC has had to play catch-up
8 on this project, and I fully understand that. And
9 I have much more confidence in the folks at EDC
10 getting this right than I ever did, frankly, at
11 the folks at the Department of Transportation.
12 Having said that, in 2007, we had a lot of
13 optimism when EDC came on board, and we had
14 several meetings with some of the good folks in
15 the community who actually use the Ferry every
16 day. And there was reason for hope and optimism.
17 It's now 2009 and you know, we don't see the
18 progress frankly that we all wanted. And in this
19 economic climate it seems peculiar that the City
20 wouldn't be bending over backwards to recoup some
21 of this revenue that can be made from turning
22 these two ferry terminals into, you know, a place
23 that is more welcoming for commuters, a place were
24 commuters can spend some money, a place where
25 tourists can spend some money. So my hope is

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2 today that the folks from EDC are going to testify
3 and demonstrate that there is a sense of urgency.
4 Certainly there's a sense of urgency on the part
5 of commuters. Certainly there's a sense of
6 urgency on the part of all the elected officials
7 on Staten Island, and we just hope that our
8 friends in EDC can fully overcome, you know, the
9 terrible start and what they inherited from their
10 sister agency at the Department of Transportation.
11 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Thank you
13 very much, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to make my
14 statement that hope has given way to frustration,
15 which really started out with its roots in
16 mismanagement in the Department of Transportation
17 and their failure to secure tenants, especially at
18 a time when the city was booming; and now we have
19 to pay the price here in 2009. I just think that
20 overall what occurred here and what's continuing
21 to occur here is the lack of priority placed on
22 this project because of where it's located and the
23 people that it represents. And quite frankly, I
24 don't think that's acceptable. But similar to
25 what my comment, Minority Leader Oddo said, if

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2 this was located in any other borough, we would be
3 screaming about how can you leave money on the
4 table. And that's frankly what I believe that the
5 EDC, DOT is doing. And my hope today is that we
6 advance the dialogue, Mr. Chairman, and we advance
7 the project with an actual plan with set times of
8 where we're going to see people go in, because if
9 there are retail establishments their, people are
10 going to utilize them. And we've seen that time
11 and again; when you add up the money the City can
12 recoup, it's better and it keeps the taxes lower
13 for all of us. So I look forward to the testimony
14 and appreciate the time you've given me to make an
15 opening statement.

16 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you. I
17 would like to call from EDC, Venetia Lannon,
18 Daniel Zarrilli and Captain James DeSimone, from
19 DOT.

20 VENETIA LANNON: Good morning,
21 Chairman White and members of the Economic
22 Development Committee. My name is Venetia Lannon,
23 and I am Senior Vice President of the Maritime
24 Division at the New York City Economic Development
25 Corporation. With me here today is Captain James

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2 DeSimone, the DOT Chief Operating Officer for the
3 Staten Island Ferry, and Dan Zarrilli, Senior Vice
4 President from EDC's Asset Management Division.

5 As discussed in our testimony to this Committee in
6 November of 2007, EDC agreed to work with DOT to
7 implement the retail strategy we had helped
8 develop for the terminals the year before. While
9 EDC had not directly developed a retail project
10 similar to this before, it was clear that DOT's
11 master tenant at the time was not successfully
12 leasing the terminals, so we agreed to help. In
13 my testimony this morning I will review the
14 details of the retail project and focus on the
15 significant amount of work we have conducted since
16 we last testified before this committee. I'm
17 going to skip the next paragraph of the testimony,
18 as much of this background information was in
19 Chairman White's comments. So I'm skipping to,
20 the retail strategy EDC developed for the spaces
21 in both of these terminals, as we discussed last
22 time, is designed to ensure high quality tenants,
23 providing services that ferry riders demand. In
24 addition to high quality restaurants and retail,
25 the strategy calls for developing displays and

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2 signage that will encourage the many tourists who
3 ride the Staten Island Ferry to get off of the
4 boat and explore Staten Island. The retail
5 concept for the St. George Terminal includes a,
6 quote, Taste of Staten Island theme, which will
7 focus on local Staten Island restaurants and
8 businesses. The retail concept for the Whitehall
9 terminal includes Manhattan retailers that will
10 attract office workers in the area and create a
11 new local meeting spot. So that was the vision.
12 Where are we on implementation? Since we were
13 last here, we have undertaken the following steps
14 towards developing the terminal retail spaces. We
15 have developed and executed a new master lease
16 between DOT and EDC that spells out various
17 responsibilities and will ensure smooth management
18 of the terminals' retail space for the next 20
19 years. We have procured an engineer who has
20 completed the design of the remaining utility work
21 that needs to be done in each of the retail
22 spaces. We have procured an architect who has
23 developed a unified storefront design, including
24 specifications for new signage and lighting that
25 will further enliven the terminals, as depicted in

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2 the rendering on the screens. I'm going to flip
3 through some of the images and just take a break
4 from the testimony here just to point out some of
5 the components. This is in St. George looking
6 down the hallway. Again, we're looking for a
7 unified theme with signs that are brightly lit,
8 given that those corridors can be a little bit
9 dark, and that are differentiated from the signs
10 that are the way-finding signs in blue that the
11 Ferry Terminal has up. Again, trying to brighten
12 and enliven the spaces. And you'll notice in the
13 last scene we have people, you know, retailers
14 sort of spilling out into the space to again, try
15 to sort of enliven some of those larger corridors
16 where it won't impact with passenger flow. Is
17 there another one? This one doesn't come up so
18 well on this screen, but again, this is in the
19 waiting room. We are working to design having
20 takeout windows face the interior of the waiting
21 room so that you could get a cup of coffee or get
22 something to eat while you're in the waiting room
23 after you've come through and are waiting for the
24 boat. So the spaces would be accessible from both
25 sides to purchase something. So you won't be able

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2 to walk through the space for security reasons,
3 but there would be a takeout window on the inside.
4 So we've also worked with this architect to
5 complete design guidelines that each tenant will
6 have to adhere to so that the appearance is
7 uniform and aesthetically pleasing. The architect
8 has also developed lease-offering drawings;
9 detailed plans which show perspective tenants what
10 utilities and built-out features are in each
11 space. Working with our retail consultant based
12 on the work she did at Grand Central Terminal, we
13 have developed a standard retail sub-lease. We
14 have put out an RFP and selected a new advertising
15 contractor for Whitehall. St. George and the
16 ferryboats will remain with the current
17 contractor. We successfully took more advertising
18 space. The outdoor area at St. George and the
19 space at Whitehall currently occupied by the MTA
20 through ULUP, so we could develop more area for
21 retail. We have received a certificate to proceed
22 from OMB for 3.58 million to perform the non-
23 tenant specific work for all of the spaces
24 including the utility work and the storefront
25 work. We are selecting a contractor next week to

1 perform this work, which we anticipate will begin
2 in St. George next month. Our retail consultant
3 has met with dozens of small businesses on Staten
4 Island and in Manhattan and has toured almost 20
5 businesses through the terminals to solicit
6 interest. We are finalizing with DOT the tenant
7 handbook for the terminals. With all of the
8 design work and funding finally in place, we are
9 commencing our first lease negotiation next week,
10 February 10th, 2009 and anticipate more will
11 follow in the next few months. The first tenants
12 will be completing their own fit-out later this
13 spring, opening their stores to the public this
14 summer. This is a year behind the schedule we
15 presented to you when we were last here. We do
16 not seek to evade this fact or to make excuses for
17 it. The schedule we presented may have been
18 ambitious. As I mentioned, this is the first time
19 EDC has undertaken a retail development, and the
20 learning curve has been steep for all agencies
21 involved. In closing, we thank you and the ferry
22 riding public for your patience. We assure you,
23 as we have assured the Staten Island Borough
24 President on our many trips to his office to
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2 update him, this project is a priority for EDC and
3 DOT, and we continue to put significant time and
4 resources towards its successful completion.

5 We'll be happy to answer any questions you may
6 have. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very
8 much. Yes, I do recall the last hearing that we
9 had, and many commitments were made. And so far
10 we, as one of my colleagues said, we've run--
11 we're this far from running out of hope, just this
12 far. But the question I'd like to ask, before I
13 turn it over to my colleagues is, how much retail
14 commercial space remains empty at the St. George
15 and the Whitehall terminals respectively?

16 VENETIA LANNON: It's the same as
17 it was the last time we testified to the
18 Committee. I don't have those square footages off
19 the top of my head, but we could certainly get
20 them to you. But it's the same as it was before.

21 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: So there's no
22 new tenants?

23 VENETIA LANNON: No.

24 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Okay.

25 VENETIA LANNON: We're beginning

1 negotiation with our first tenant, as I said, next
2 week. And so, you know, as you say, you have this
3 much hope left, but hopefully there's this much
4 time left before you'll start to see action in St.
5 George, both in terms of the work our contractor
6 is going to begin and then hopefully the first
7 tenant is going to start shortly thereafter.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: What cost to
10 the City has the delay in renting the retail space
11 at the terminals had?

12 VENETIA LANNON: That would be-- I
13 mean I can't calculate that off the top of my
14 head. We can certainly get back to you with that.
15 I mean that's the kind of question we would need
16 some time to develop an answer.

17 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Okay. I just
18 want to ask one more question. In your testimony
19 you said that you had been in contact with some
20 businesses who have been touring in Manhattan and
21 Staten Island, have been touring?

22 VENETIA LANNON: Absolutely, yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: And you expect
24 to come to some sort of conclusion in terms of the
25 types of vendors in those commercial spaces?

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2 VENETIA LANNON: That's right.

3 We've set up a retail leasing office in St.
4 George, so we have someone there, a sort of a
5 continuous presence there. And that individual
6 has been touring many businesses. I think,
7 unfortunately I mean it's a-- we have been
8 focusing, as we've said in our testimony, on
9 trying to get small businesses from Staten Island
10 into the terminals, rather than the larger chains.
11 As you might imagine, you know, over the past
12 couple of months, it's not an easy time for a
13 small business to consider expanding to get the
14 capital that they require. So we're in this sort
15 of position now where we are looking, we're
16 probably going to need to go back to some of those
17 national retailers, because we believe, although,
18 you know, I think this is a good chance for a
19 discussion, we believe that it's more important to
20 get those spaces filled at this point, rather than
21 hold out for the local businesses that may not be
22 able to expand. So that's part of what we're
23 trying to way right now.

24 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Well do you
25 have a point person right there who is doing this?

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2 VENETIA LANNON: Yes. We have a
3 consultant and then she has someone who's on site
4 in St. George in a dedicated office.

5 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Do you have a
6 list of the businesses that they've visited?

7 VENETIA LANNON: Absolutely.

8 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Could you
9 supply us with a list?

10 VENETIA LANNON: Absolutely.

11 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: I'd like to
12 share that list with my colleagues in Staten
13 Island. Because--

14 VENETIA LANNON: [Interposing]
15 Sure.

16 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: From your last
17 statement it sounds like you might be moving off
18 the course of having Staten Island merchants and
19 just having merchants. And I think they would be--
20 -

21 VENETIA LANNON: [Interposing]
22 Yeah, a mix.

23 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: It would be a
24 mix. And I think that the Minority Leader should
25 be involved in whether or not that mix meets the

1
2 goals and objectives of Staten Islanders on the
3 Staten Island side.

4 VENETIA LANNON: Sure. We're happy
5 to have that conversation. I mean as I say I
6 think that we understand that people want
7 services, they want to be able to buy a cup of
8 coffee. They want to be able to get something
9 decent to eat in the terminals. It would be ideal
10 if that was a local business, but if that's not
11 possible then it's better to have something rather
12 than nothing. But we'd be happy to share the list
13 with you to, so you can see that we have really
14 made every effort to talk to almost, I feel like
15 every, small food business on Staten Island at
16 this point.

17 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Okay.
18 Councilman Ignizio?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Yes.
20 Thank you very much, and thank you for allowing me
21 to speak first. I'm in a transportation hearing
22 upstairs and need to do that as well. The
23 question that I have is basically related to what
24 we were just talking about, the Staten Island
25 businesses. Is there an incentive based program

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2 to make sure that Staten Island business are able
3 to afford the rents there? Or is it just this is
4 going to be the rent regardless if you're a
5 national tenant or a local tenant and that's that?

6 VENETIA LANNON: No, I think that
7 we were willing to be flexible on the rent
8 understanding that a local business might not pay
9 as much as a chain, as long as we could sort of
10 have a balance and sort of achieve an average rent
11 that was, you know, acceptable to the City. But
12 it really wasn't even a matter of rent, I don't
13 think. It was just a matter of getting people--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO:

15 [Interposing] Interest in expansion, overall
16 interest in expansion?

17 VENETIA LANNON: Overall interest
18 in expansion and sort of taking that leap and risk
19 at this particular moment.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Wow,
21 that's a sign of the times, I guess. I appreciate
22 the candor of your testimony and the delays
23 therein. Do you feel or does your agency feel
24 that the interest overall in the market will bring
25 us to next year having a fully occupied ferry

1 terminal at both sides? Or do you believe it will
2 be a slow but steady tenants coming in throughout
3 the next two to three years? Do you believe it
4 will be-- the Ferry Terminal, you know, almost
5 another grand reopening or the merchants in the
6 Ferry Terminal with a fully occupied terminals on
7 both sides? Or will this be a gradual undertaking
8 over the course of months and years?
9

10 VENETIA LANNON: Not-- somewhere in
11 between, I would say. I don't think no, that we
12 are going to sort of-- there are ten spaces at St.
13 George. We're not going to fill them all at once.
14 I think, you know, we'll see incrementally one and
15 then two more and then a few more. I think it
16 will be more like that. And we have staggered our
17 work. There is significant-- well, I shouldn't
18 say significant. There is capital work that needs
19 to be done on the Whitehall side. We have focused
20 our effort on St. George. So I think that you'll
21 see St. George move more quickly than Whitehall.
22 But again, sort of more in stages rather than one
23 grand opening, but not sort of trickling in. You
24 know what I'm saying? It's somewhere in between,
25 where we'll probably come in groups.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: And in
3 your experience, is mostly venues like this give
4 way to food outlets, or is it mostly, you know,
5 grab a cup of coffee, grab a bagel, pizza on the
6 way back, or is it people actually-- actual shops?

7 VENETIA LANNON: No, it's mostly
8 food. That's mostly, you know, again and at our
9 last hearing we spoke about the surveys that we
10 did of ferry riders when we were doing our initial
11 retail strategy report for DOT, and most people
12 want food. People want a drink, you want to be
13 able to take out a drink, you know, on the way
14 back a bar was something that was popular on the
15 Whitehall side. But largely it's coffee, takeout,
16 prepared foods, with a-- a florist was something
17 that we heard. That's something that we're
18 focusing on, a place that you could pick up a last
19 minute gift; those are the types of things, but
20 primarily centered around food. People were not
21 interested in a clothing store or retail or a dry
22 cleaner even. It was really more, I want to
23 basically grab something to eat before I get on
24 the boat, and I would like a place-- also to get
25 together, you know, in a social setting on both

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2 sides.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Got you.
4 And I think it's important to mention, my
5 colleague, Jimmy Oddo, that in three weeks we'll
6 have a new colleague. And whomever that may be I
7 think would need to be brought into the
8 conversation with Council Member Oddo and myself,
9 all of which constituents use the ferry daily, and
10 quite frankly we're leaps and bounds over where we
11 were with the temporary facility, which was
12 temporary for over 20 years. So I'm just-- we're
13 just hopeful at the end of the day there's going
14 to be a vibrant ferry terminal on both sides that
15 our constituents can use, and it sounds like we're
16 going in that direction, and I guess we shouldn't
17 be looking back, but looking forward I think, from
18 what I understand from your testimony is within a
19 year there's going to be a brand new discussion on
20 the ferry terminals with some tenants already in
21 there and some on the way.

22 VENETIA LANNON: Yeah, I think
23 that's-- I mean we look forward to working with
24 your new colleague, and I think it might be a good
25 time to get back together with the group that was

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2 convened that Council Member Oddo was referring
3 to, with the various community groups, as we sort
4 of face the realities of the current economic
5 climate and we move to a mix that inevitably will
6 have more national chains, to revisit our retail
7 strategy. It would probably a good time to get
8 back together as we're starting to move towards
9 signing our first leases.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Thank you
11 very much. And Linda Baran is here from the
12 Chamber, I'm sure she'll be testifying. But the
13 message we want to send to Staten Island
14 businesses, if they're watching on New York 1 or
15 listening in the advances, you know, if you're
16 interested, please reach out. Reach out to us.
17 Reach out to Jim. Because the preference for all
18 of us is to see Staten Island businesses utilize,
19 patronizing Staten Island-- you know, servicing
20 Staten Island riders with Staten Island
21 businesses, as it is in every end of the City.
22 And I'm on Zoning and Franchises and Land Use
23 Committee, and all the time what we hear is, about
24 trying to keep local businesses and have them
25 expand and allow for the City to assist in that

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2 endeavor to keep local businesses there. So
3 that's certainly our goal, and we appreciate that
4 a discussion may have to be had about national
5 tenants. But, you know, let's send out a clarion
6 call yet again to Staten Island businesses who may
7 be interested, that we want to do business with
8 them. Thanks.

9 VENETIA LANNON: Absolutely.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chairman. I just want to follow up on that
12 line of questioning from Council Member Ignizio,
13 because I had a conversation with the owner of a
14 restaurant on Staten Island that was rumored to be
15 looking at the terminal, dare I say one of the
16 most popular restaurants on Staten Island. And
17 his interest was genuine. And his challenge was
18 not so much the credit line or-- it was in fact
19 the lease prices. You know he told me that he
20 crunched the numbers 14 different ways, and it
21 just didn't work. And that's just one anecdotal.
22 That's just one individual that I had a
23 conversation with. So I guess my question is, in
24 this climate, in this economic climate, how do we
25 establish a market for what's fair market for a

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2 lease at this location? And specifically, I
3 guess, could we revisit those conversations?
4 Because I think it would be a coup for everyone to
5 bring that restaurant or extension of that
6 restaurant to the terminal.

7 VENETIA LANNON: Yeah that's a
8 very-- it's a difficult question. I mean we're
9 sort of caught between many rocks and many hard
10 places in that, you know, this is a difficult time
11 for the City and for OMB. And there are, you
12 know, revenue expectations that the City has. But
13 while trying to balance getting local businesses
14 in, it's a difficult question to ask. There's
15 sort of-- we came up with a figure that we felt
16 was reasonable and quite frankly we're willing to
17 go below market on Staten Island. But there's
18 below market and then there's just way below
19 market. But again, I agree with you those are
20 subjective measures, potentially. I mean there's
21 obviously, you know, what the market is bearing is
22 well known, but in terms of how far you're willing
23 to go below market is a bit of a subjective
24 conversation. I think I know the particular
25 restaurant that you're talking about and it was

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2 just, it was a no-go for us. It was a no-go for
3 them. But I--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: [Interposing]
5 I mean, listen at this point--

6 VENETIA LANNON: [Interposing] It's
7 a tough call.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: At this
9 point, I want the place filled.

10 VENETIA LANNON: Right.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: And I'll
12 take, frankly, who we can get. But, the notion of
13 like, you know, the flavor and the theme of Staten
14 Island, I think that was something that we all
15 embraced, and we saw that as a win-win-win--

16 VENETIA LANNON: [Interposing]
17 Absolutely.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Across the
19 board. And I hate to just sort of chuck that out
20 the window and say, we're so desperate at this
21 point we'll take, you know, every run of the mill
22 chain, you know, entity.

23 VENETIA LANNON: Can I-- I just
24 want to assure you we are not throwing it out the
25 window at all. I think, you know, for some of the

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2 non-sit down restaurant spaces, sort of the more
3 fast-food oriented spaces, meaning takeout, we're
4 looking to sign five-year leases. So, you know,
5 hopefully maybe in that time the climate will have
6 changed. It's not a forever kind of a contract.
7 And quite frankly, maybe if we can get a couple of
8 national retailers that can pay higher rents, than
9 maybe we have more of an argument with OMB to say,
10 let us extend below, below market to somebody
11 really great like I think the restaurant that
12 you're referring to.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Okay. The CP
14 for the \$3.5 million, exactly what is the nature
15 of the work that has to be done? And I know you
16 testimony says utility work and storefront work.
17 But exactly what does that entail?

18 VENETIA LANNON: I'm going to turn
19 that over to my colleague, Dan. Hang on.

20 DANIEL ZARRILLI: Good morning. My
21 name is Dan Zarrilli. The nature of the work that
22 we're undertaking with the \$3.5 million is
23 finishing the utility needs into the spaces.
24 There is-- the way the spaces are now, there's no
25 power. There's no drain lines. There are some

1
2 utility needs that any tenant would require their
3 landlord to provide. And that's the basic work
4 we're putting in.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Why was that
6 not done previously? Why isn't-- when this
7 facility was originally built, why wasn't it built
8 out so that you can just have folks move in?

9 DANIEL ZARRILLI: I really don't
10 have the history. It predates all of us here at
11 the table, so I can't fully answer it. But part
12 of the answer is that the needs for each tenant
13 are specific, so you wouldn't want to make a guess
14 that every tenant needs 1,000 amps of power into
15 their space if you're going to subdivide it up and
16 they need a lot less. And there's an opportunity
17 for waste if you make those guesses.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Okay. You
19 were very frank about the one-year delay and that
20 this is sort of uncharted territory. And this is
21 a little bit of loaded question and it puts you in
22 a little bit of an uncomfortable position, but
23 somebody has to answer the question. When you
24 guys looked at this, you got it kind of dropped in
25 your lap. When you inherited this from DOT and

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2 you said, okay, and you told us and you told the
3 Committee and you told the public, we think we can
4 meet this timeline; is it that you, once you
5 started getting into it kind of up to your elbows
6 you realized it was a bigger mess than you
7 originally had thought? I mean were there any
8 surprises that you, as you got into it, you said
9 my God, why did they do it this way instead of
10 some other way?

11 VENETIA LANNON: It's been that
12 kind of week for me, I feel like, the
13 uncomfortable position. I think the one thing,
14 yes, to answer your question the answer is yes. I
15 think the one thing that we didn't anticipate was
16 I think that there was a real desire, and again as
17 Dan said, this predates anyone at this table's
18 involvement with the project, but my understanding
19 is when the terminals were being constructed there
20 were construction delays and there was a real
21 desire to get the terminals open. And I think
22 that what that resulted in for the retail spaces
23 was that there were not, I would say,
24 comprehensive records, you know, as built plans of
25 what utilities were in the spaces, what was in the

1 spaces themselves. Like we assumed that we would
2 be inheriting spaces that came with plans that
3 would show what was there and what was not there.
4 I mean is that fair, Dan? And I think that-- what
5 we had to go back and build from scratch really,
6 an understanding, you know, working with utility
7 experts to go and kind of reconstruct and come up
8 with new plans and drawings of what was actually
9 in the spaces. So that was a large chunk of time
10 that we just did not anticipate.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: This is the
13 gift that keeps on giving, and I use the word gift
14 with sarcasm dripping off of it. I mean this is
15 what happens when you start out, you know, with a
16 mess and you try to clean up-- instead of starting
17 with a blank slate you have a mess. And you know,
18 I don't want to look backwards, but it's hard not
19 to because I think the City, frankly, is paying a
20 price in all the lost revenue. And I know
21 certainly the people of Staten Island and the
22 commuters continue to pay a price for other
23 people's mistakes from years ago. And it's
24 disheartening. Just one-- bear with me one
25 second. There was one other specific comment. I

1
2 think Council Member Ignizio touched on it, the
3 notion, you can't tell us, obviously, when we'll
4 have full capacity or when you anticipate-- but
5 you're confident that the first stores will be up
6 and running in the summer of '09?

7 VENETIA LANNON: Yes.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: And that's
9 because you are fully-- you have people on board
10 or this close to being on board?

11 VENETIA LANNON: Yes. That's
12 because we have now, as I said in my testimony, we
13 have all of the design work done for the
14 utilities. We are going to enter into a contract
15 next week with a person who is going to be doing
16 that non-tenant specific work.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Could you
18 tell us publicly who those stores are? Or is
19 that...?

20 VENETIA LANNON: Not yet. No.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Okay.

22 VENETIA LANNON: You'll be seeing
23 them hopefully soon.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: I'm going to
25 stop there, Mr. Chairman, because I know there are

1
2 some folks who actually have lived this issue for
3 a long time and they want to testify. I know you
4 guys don't do politics, so this is a little bit
5 unfair, but if you could do me a favor and take a
6 message back, as of right now this is a promise
7 that has yet to be met. This is a commitment that
8 has yet to be fulfilled. And again, I know you
9 guys didn't cause this problem, but this is under
10 the same umbrella of the administration and, you
11 know, there's an event on the schedule on
12 November, the first week in November, and folks
13 have to keep that in mind, that there are
14 thousands of, tens of thousands of Staten
15 Islanders every day that have a daily reminder of
16 a promise yet to be fulfilled. And for their own
17 political interests, you know, people need to do
18 what's necessary to get this thing done. Thank
19 you.

20 VENETIA LANNON: Absolutely. I'll
21 take that message back. And I just want to convey
22 from my president, Seth Pinsky, and from
23 Commissioner Sadik-Khan, this is a priority. I
24 mean we have a fire lit under us on a regular
25 basis as to why this isn't getting done and why

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these delays are happening.

COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Send the
Commissioner Vinny's regards.

VENETIA LANNON: Okay.

[Laughter]

CHAIRPERSON WHITE: I would just
like to acknowledge that Council Member Reyna was
here, and she has to go to Transportation, and the
same thing with Council Member Ignizio, will be
bouncing back and forth. So I just want to make
that as a matter of record. I would like to thank
you for coming today, and we'll be getting back to
you. And hopefully it will be fruitful and the
people on Staten Island will be happy at seeing
some forward movement on that terminal.

VENETIA LANNON: Thank you for
having us.

CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Okay. Thank
you very much. I would like to ask Linda Baran
from the Staten Island Chamber, Hal Kennedy,
Vincent Montalbano and John Luisi. I hope I
didn't mess your name up.

JOHN LUISI: Close enough. I've
been called worse.

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[Laughter]

[Pause]

LINDA BARAN: Okay?

CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Yes. I'd like to just announce that Council Member James was-- she's going to join us. She's going to transportation, and she shall be back. Okay. I'd like to call upon Linda Baran, Staten Island Chamber of Commerce.

LINDA BARAN: Good morning, Chairman White. Thank you for allowing me to testify this morning. I represent 900 small businesses on Staten Island, small and large. We have about 20,000 employees within our base of chamber members. And I'm here, I'm going to deviate from my testimony, we were here in November of 2007 testifying also. At that time we had talked about the difficulties that businesses were having in terms of the pricing of the leases. It was brought to EDC's attention and when they developed the RFP, I believe that that was taken into consideration during the RFP process. Apparently the RFPs went out last December to see what businesses were interested, December of 2007,

1 not last December. And since then we haven't
2 heard anything. We actually had gotten the word
3 out to our membership letting them know that these
4 RFPs were available, and I understand that Patrick
5 Hyland, in my office, had spoken with Venetia, but
6 she wasn't allowed to say, you know, who they were
7 working with, I guess as far as leaking out the
8 names of the potential tenants. But our concern
9 is, is that as was stated before, the Ferry
10 Terminal refurbished in 2005, we got three new
11 ferryboats in 2005, we have increased ridership,
12 there's 65,000 people a day traveling back and
13 forth on that ferry terminal. And not only is it
14 commuters and it's not just a cup of coffee, it's
15 not just something to eat. People are coming to
16 New York City to spend their Euro Dollars and
17 they're not spending them on Staten Island Ferry
18 Terminal. There's nothing there. And we really
19 need to get on this. I mean-- and I don't want to
20 knock EDC either, because I understand the debacle
21 of DOT/EDC, but there are private developers that
22 take on projects and they are done in six months.
23 I mean we have the Waterfront Commons that is all
24 the way at the other end of Staten Island and they
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2 have a marketing company, and they don't even have
3 their permits yet, but they've sold tenants there.
4 So we really need this to happen. I mean, and
5 there are a number of projects in the St. George
6 area, the National Lighthouse Museum, the Homeport
7 Project, if those projects ever get done that will
8 bring more people to the area. It's a destination
9 point for Staten Islanders; it's a destination
10 point for tourists. I heard-- they mentioned
11 there's a retail consultant in the St. George
12 area. I don't know of that consultant. We have
13 not been introduced to them. I would love to help
14 New York EDC market to our local businesses so
15 that they do get first shot. And I really
16 appreciate what Vinny said about providing some
17 kind of incentive. It says in what I read here
18 from Venetia that they are going to get first
19 crack at the terminal and then they'll go out to
20 nationwide retailers, etcetera. But if there is
21 some kind of incentive put in place, and I just
22 think the timing of this is so important. We've
23 been waiting a very long time. You know, you go
24 to all other areas in the United States, you take
25 Amtrak down to DC, you walk-- beautiful, there's

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2 plenty to do for everybody. And you know, there's
3 got to be something done. It's just been way,
4 way, way too long. That's all I have to say.

5 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Mr. Kennedy?

6 HENRY KENNEDY: Good morning. My
7 name is Henry Kennedy, and I'm here with Vincent
8 Montalbano, a friend and colleague, who like me
9 has been riding the Staten Island Ferry for over
10 40 years. We thank you, Mr. Chairman, for
11 reconvening this hearing. As you may recall at
12 the first hearing on November 16th, 2007, we
13 testified and I quote, it appears today that we
14 are no further along in the planning for and
15 attracting businesses to the terminals than we
16 were when the terminals were completed over three
17 years ago. That statement is as true today as it
18 was in 2007, with the exception of the timeframe.
19 The terminals were completed over four years ago.
20 In the interest of time, I'm going to skip over
21 some of the testimony or the statement that I have
22 submitted to you. I would like to say though that
23 I am somewhat disappointed that the earlier
24 witnesses that were here left. I would have liked
25 to have had them stay to at least listen to some

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2 of the frustrations that we have. I certainly
3 understand people's time and their commitment to
4 time, but I too have made a commitment to time to
5 be here, Mr. Chairman at your invitation, and I
6 wish they would have stayed. The bottom line here
7 is, is that in 2007 we were here and we listened
8 to the EDC tell us that by 2008 there would be
9 stores and other food concessions in both the
10 terminals. Right after 2007, that meeting, we,
11 Councilman Oddo and Councilman McMahon met again
12 with Ms. Lannon and her staff and we were again
13 told that there would be stores. That has not
14 happened. And what troubles me and I believe what
15 should trouble you as well is simply this, how is
16 it that she testifies in 2007 that we're going to
17 have all of these stores and then come 2008 she
18 realizes that EDC or whoever else needs to do X, Y
19 and Z before the stores open, and that won't
20 happen now for another year. This is a large,
21 important City agency, the EDC, entrusted with
22 developing one of the largest and most complicated
23 cities in the world. Don't they know what they
24 need to do to get things done? I've always
25 thought that that's why we have the EDC, to

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2 understand and deal effectively and efficiently
3 with the unknowns and to coordinate activities
4 among the City agencies. In addition to the most
5 obvious inconvenience that this is causing the
6 Staten Island commuter and i.e., being able to
7 pick up a piece of pizza or a hotdog, and also the
8 tourists being able to do the same thing, this is
9 a time when the City can really ill afford to lose
10 tax revenue, and it's losing it both in the notion
11 of tax revenue from payroll taxes, it's losing it
12 from rent income as well, and it's also losing it
13 in advertising revenue. And I would certainly
14 invite the members of this committee, if you have
15 a moment, to go down to the Whitehall Ferry
16 Terminal, and take a look at the signage that's
17 there, the advertising signage. There are 12
18 spots for backlit lighting the advertising sign.
19 Five of those are being used by what one could
20 consider commercial interests. Three of those,
21 however, the Gray Line Tour advertising a new tour
22 of Staten Island. I suggest or believe that they
23 were probably given those sign. But there are
24 really only two out of the 12 signs that are by
25 commercial interests. The others are public

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2 service announcements. There's nothing wrong with
3 public service announcements; I think they're
4 important. However here you have a major commuter
5 port, much like Grand Central or Penn Station, and
6 here you have nothing with signs up advertising
7 exams by the AHC or to get your flu shot. Fine to
8 do, but couldn't this be better used, and
9 shouldn't there be more revenue being generated
10 from those signs? But this is all the past, and
11 what Mr. Montalbano and I would like to suggest to
12 you now is, is that given the City and the state's
13 current economic condition, it's clear the EDC's
14 plan to turn the terminals into a destination
15 place needs to be put on hold for a moment. What
16 we need are the basic services in both terminals
17 and we need them quickly. The EDC should move to
18 attract a sit-down bar/restaurant and a fast food
19 establishment in the Whitehall terminal, and in
20 St. George the EDC should attract a convenience
21 store/deli, fast food restaurant and a dry
22 cleaner. And we also need, and I think this is
23 very important, Mr. Chairman, and something that
24 you should insist upon, is accountability and
25 disclosure by the EDC of the steps that its taking

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2 and the progress it's making with respect to the
3 terminals. This should be done through quarterly
4 reports to this committee and made available to
5 the public. We need to know if in fact this
6 project is the high priority that EDC claims that
7 it is. We are disappointed with the lack of
8 progress that the terminals, and the apparent lack
9 of interest exhibited by both the City and the
10 EDC. 14 years after the Whitehall terminal was
11 gutted by fire, it was reopened on February 8th,
12 with much fanfare. At the opening Mayor Bloomberg
13 proclaimed, today is a great day for Lower
14 Manhattan and Staten Island; I want to thank all
15 those who contributed to the opening of this
16 terminal and especially to the people of Staten
17 Island for their patience during this building
18 process. It's been four years since then and
19 essentially nothing has changed, Mr. Chairman.
20 Our patience is sorely being tested. Thank you
21 very much. I'd like to turn this over to Mr.
22 Montalbano.

23 VINCENT MONTALBANO: Thank you, Mr.
24 Chairman. I'm just going to add, or actually
25 supplement a couple of points that my colleague

1
2 made. You know, when we met in Councilman
3 McMahon's office back in 2007, we were presented
4 the plan for the destination commercial entities,
5 we thought it was great. But we said to EDC even
6 then, let's just get some conveniences in there
7 now, along the lines of what my colleague, Hal, is
8 talking about; a couple of food concessions on one
9 side, food concessions and takeaway things like a
10 deli or a drycleaner, which did fabulously when
11 the old terminal was there, on the Staten Island
12 side. It hasn't been done, and really that needs
13 to be a priority right now. I don't care what's
14 being said about the build-out and the this and
15 that; there has got to be a way of setting aside a
16 few of the spaces on each side and getting
17 something in there now. And by now, maybe the
18 summer is now, but the summer has to be a hard
19 deadline, an absolute hard deadline for getting
20 some more conveniences in there along the lines of
21 what we're talking about. And on transparency, it
22 was interesting to hear that my friend, the Staten
23 Island Borough President, is being briefed; but
24 that information doesn't seem to be circulating
25 anywhere. So, whatever EDC is telling him, it's

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2 not necessarily being made public, and I think
3 that a lot of the frustration would ease if EDC
4 would, as we also asked them at this meeting
5 almost two years ago, to keep everybody informed
6 on a regular basis. There are a lot of active
7 members of the community who are also daily
8 commuters. We have ideas. We've presented them.
9 They're basic, they're simple, they're doable;
10 let's get it done now. Thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: If I may, one
12 statement, Mr. Chairman is that similar to what
13 you're saying, Mr. Kennedy, is that Staten Island
14 people tend to want to be nice. We don't want to
15 bash EDC. We don't want to bash DOT, because we
16 tend to want to be nice people. But quite
17 frankly, when you add it all up, the
18 administration, in particular EDC, has not done
19 its job vis-à-vis the people of Staten Island.
20 When you take the ferry terminal, you take the
21 Home Port, you take the Lighthouse Museum, you
22 take the St. George redevelopment, you take the
23 South Shore Ferry and you take the Charleston
24 Center, all those projects were at minimum half a
25 decade and still the clock is running. We're

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2 tired of the clock still running. So what we're
3 calling on the agency to do, and I know that
4 they're going to hear this and are hearing this,
5 what they're calling them to do is quite frankly
6 get the projects done. The reason why this was
7 created, for those of you who know their history
8 is, the City needed a quasi-governmental agency
9 that wasn't exactly government so it could get
10 things done faster and more efficiently. That's
11 why we created EDC. I don't know where that
12 mission went with regards to the people of Staten
13 Island, and quite frankly I think the people of
14 Staten Island ought to call them on the carpet.

15 JOHN LUISI: My name is John Luisi.
16 I'm a St. George resident, like Hal, also an
17 attorney. Although I regularly take the ferry, I
18 can't profess to taking it quite as long as Hal
19 and Vinny have been, regularly. But in any event,
20 as the speaker batting cleanup, I'm not going to
21 repeat the points that were well made by the prior
22 speakers and the Council Members. I'm going to
23 just fill in some points that I see here. The
24 testimony-- first of all is there anybody here
25 from EDC at this point? Okay, so it's not

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2 completely going into-- I was just curious,
3 because I took the trip over.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO:

5 [Interposing] That's Ignizio, I-G-N-I-Z-I-O.

6 [Laughter]

7 JOHN LUISI: All right, first of
8 all, as the comment was made, yeah, as Staten
9 Islanders we're used to being neglected, and it's
10 easy to just start bashing. But I think everybody
11 hear wants to take the most productive approach,
12 which is going forward. As I listened to the EDC
13 representatives talk about how they couldn't
14 attract tenants at the rents that they were
15 looking for, frankly I'm astounded. As an
16 attorney with experience in commercial leasing,
17 that they didn't look at the concept of percentage
18 leases, wherein the base rent is a very small
19 number, so their overhead that they're absolutely
20 obligated to pay is very small. And then, the
21 more sales that they make, whether it's blue
22 jeans, pizza or whatever, then the City
23 essentially would be able to get a piece of each
24 of those sales. So the rent goes up as their
25 sales go up, and if they're not successful, the

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2 rent stays low; if they need time to build a
3 business they have the opportunity to do so. It's
4 a no-brainer. They should look at that very
5 seriously and that's also something that could
6 help Staten Island businesses jump in with both
7 feet. The other concept is, as somebody who's
8 very tired of looking at empty storefronts,
9 something that EDC could do immediately is take
10 some of those empty storefronts and make them
11 available to people from Staten Island, especially
12 organizations such as artists, and they could form
13 a cooperative wherein they could have at least
14 decorated storefronts with local artists
15 presenting their works, either manned or unmanned
16 depending on how they want to set it up. Simply
17 having something more attractive will help to
18 generate other additional traffic. Along those
19 lines, the other thing that they should look at
20 that apparently they haven't because they're
21 looking at sole tenants for each of the individual
22 retail spaces, is a concept of a form of
23 cooperative amongst Staten Island businesses.
24 There are many people on Staten Island who have
25 established their own small businesses, whether

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2 they're working out of their homes or small
3 storefronts. You could very easily take any
4 number of these people who have products to sell,
5 such as recently I ran into a couple who has a
6 soap manufacturing business in Tottenville,
7 somebody else has-- they sell photographs. You
8 could take one of these storefronts and basically
9 make shelf space available to all of these various
10 vendors, from Staten Island, Staten Island
11 businesses, and make it so that they do not need
12 to commit to, number one, meeting a large number
13 for rent; or number two, to having somebody stand
14 there during many hours when the place would be
15 open. There could be a single person basically a
16 cashier who would be there to check out the
17 products that are being sold by the local
18 businesses. This is something, again, that could
19 be done at low or no cost to the City. It would
20 generate revenue, it would generate interest.

21 Another positive suggestion is not far from here
22 in the base of the municipal building on Centre
23 Street is a storefront called City Books. City
24 Books sells a lot of New York City memorabilia,
25 whether it's fake subway signs or so on. And it

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2 also sells a lot of very helpful things, the old
3 green book, I don't know what color it is these
4 days. It's still green? Okay. Good. I remember
5 it green. And if they would open up, if they
6 would take one of those storefronts on either side
7 and open up a City Books there, the revenue to the
8 City in lieu of the rent that would be paid would
9 be tremendous. Because on my visit to the City
10 Books retail location in the Muni building, there
11 might be one or two other people. If you could
12 have something where people could buy a genuine
13 product from New York City, you know, whether it's
14 the tokens, the old tokens they sell, whatever,
15 something; not only would that be good for
16 tourists, but that also would be-- they could be
17 great gift ideas for people from Staten Island to
18 give to their friends, relatives or whatever. As
19 I guess I live in New York, proud of living in New
20 York and here is whatever it is you have. The
21 upside to that is absolutely tremendous. Right
22 now the only tourist memorabilia we see them
23 selling in the Manhattan side of the Staten Island
24 Ferry Terminal are those really silly foam Statue
25 of Liberty hats. A couple of other points I was

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2 making, again just to fill in, does everybody here
3 know who Ken Dashow is? Okay, for those who
4 don't, they've never missed a ferryboat really
5 late on the weekend, like after 7:30 and had to
6 wait an hour listening to him repeating his pitch
7 for Staten Island over and over and over again.
8 It's horrible to have to listen to. It's horrible
9 to miss a boat; it's horrible to have to listen to
10 that recording that they have on the Manhattan
11 side over and over again, pitching Staten Island.
12 It's something that they should at least put on a
13 cycle that stops and starts up again, or plays on
14 demand, because it's insulting after a while for
15 the people who regularly take the boat. And let
16 me see. Those are pretty much my basic points. I
17 have one plea to go with it in terms of appearing
18 professional or not, on my way down into the ferry
19 terminal on the Staten Island side, there are a
20 number of clocks that one passes, at the entrance
21 to each bus ramps. And each of those signs has
22 the bus route and the time. As I passed three of
23 those clocks this morning on my way in, they had
24 three different times. So, if EDC wants to appear
25 professional, they want to have these signs up

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2 where everything looks great and people know where
3 to go, the very least they could do is make it
4 look like a professional organization. I have a
5 clock that I bought from Target, I believe, that
6 actually resets the time automatically, even when
7 it goes forward and back each year. Thank you for
8 listening to me and I really do hope that these
9 suggestions get to EDC and that they give them a
10 good hard look.

11 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Minority
12 leader?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Thank you.
14 John, just to go back to your first point and I
15 absolutely hear what Hal is saying and I agree
16 that at this point give us sort of the bare
17 necessities and then we'll work on the dream. But
18 just getting back to your idea about the
19 percentage based lease. It strikes me as curious
20 that if you have restaurant X that is now one of
21 the most popular restaurants on Staten Island and
22 it's the place to be, when you go there it's
23 packed, and the owner of that restaurant is
24 intrigued by the idea, it strikes me as odd that
25 we can't work out an arrangement that's going to

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2 be beneficial to the City of New York and to this-
3 - he's going to sell his product. He sells his
4 products in the two locations he has now, and
5 whether it takes the form that you're saying or
6 something else, there's got to be a deal that can
7 be struck. So I want to get something, the
8 amenities that Hal referred to now, but I'm so
9 hesitant to sort of give up on the local flavor,
10 because it just makes no sense that you can't find
11 a deal that's beneficial to both parties. The
12 other thing I want to say is, getting back to your
13 comment about the clocks, because I think it's
14 very appropriate and we heard the word priorities.
15 This is not a broadside against anyone, but this
16 is a very Commissioner-based administration. We
17 had the Giuliani administration where Rudy was
18 known to be very much a micromanager. The Mayor,
19 currently is very proud of being a delegator; he
20 says you find good people and you let them do what
21 they need to do. And I think, and this is not
22 only true for the agencies that we're talking
23 about today, but I think Vinny would attest to the
24 fact that this is true throughout the
25 administration, that as the bullpen and various

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2 agencies had clocks ticking down to the end of
3 their term, that as you know has changed recently,
4 that the Commissioners believed that they had a
5 certain amount of time left, and they saw the
6 finish line and they were going to achieve their
7 priorities. And frankly, their priorities didn't
8 reflect our priorities, didn't reflect the
9 parents' priorities, didn't reflect certain
10 public-- segments of the public's priorities.

11 And, you know, they had blinders on and they were
12 going to do what they were going to do. And I've
13 never sensed the urgency on this project and some
14 of the other projects. And then now that gets
15 altered, frankly, by the term limits change. And
16 now there's an election and now there's four more
17 years, and now priorities have to reflect the
18 political realities of the day. So now we have
19 this leverage in November, and I think those
20 priorities are changing, and it's our job to make
21 sure that they reflect as much of our collective
22 priorities as possible, and that's where we're at
23 right now, I think.

24 JOHN LUISI: That's an excellent
25 point, Jimmy. One interesting twist to having the

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2 commissioner based agencies, is that one has to
3 look at experience in dealing with a particular
4 market in making certain judgments and decisions.
5 What I find appalling is with the operation of the
6 terminals and to a degree the operation of the
7 ferryboats themselves, there seems to be a lack of
8 representation by people who actually have
9 utilized the system. There are certain things
10 like we finally have the recycling, newspaper
11 recycling cans on the ferryboat. That was my
12 private crusade for years. It's a no-brainer.
13 And you know, Captain DeSimone got tired of--
14 every time he saw me he was like, John, I know, I
15 know; we're working on it. It's sad that we have
16 a situation where we have certain basic needs, and
17 we're easy to get along with on Staten Island.
18 Just give us the basic. We're used to being
19 abused, but give us the basic services and we're
20 happy. You know, we're content at the very least,
21 but we don't even get that and we're so used to
22 settling for so much less, and it's really not
23 fair. And I thank you, you know, both of you, for
24 being here and crusading on our behalf.

25 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Okay. They'll

1

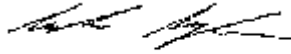
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be no further question? The meeting is adjourned.

3

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Erika Swyler 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 February 7, 2009