

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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October 7, 2008

Start: 9:45am

Recess: N/A

HELD AT: Committee Room
City Hall

B E F O R E:
DANIEL R. GARODNICK
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Vincent Ignizio
Inez E. Dickens
Maria Baez
Melissa Mark-Viverito
Melinda R. Katz

2 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Good

3 morning everybody. Welcome to the Subcommittee on
4 Planning, Dispositions and Concessions. This is a
5 Subcommittee of Land Use of the New York City
6 Council. Today's date is Tuesday, October 7th.

7 My name is Dan Garodnick, and I have the privilege
8 of chairing this subcommittee. We're joined by a
9 number of colleagues today. I'm going to

10 introduce the members of the Subcommittee, because
11 this is the Subcommittee meeting at this moment in
12 time. We have Council Member Inez Dickens,

13 Council Member Maria Baez and of course the Chair
14 of the Land Use Committee, Melinda Katz, and the
15 entire membership of the Land Use Committee will

16 be introduced when we adjourn. I want to-- this
17 is a recessed meeting, sorry, deferred meeting.

18 And we are here to vote on Land Use number 870 to
19 873 related items. They all involve the East
20 125th Street Development, Manhattan Community

21 Board 11, C080331HAM, C080332HUM, C080333ZMM and
22 N090083HGM. We have already had the hearing on

23 this item, so today's-- the purpose of this

24 meeting is really just to vote. But I do want to

25 give Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito an

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 2 opportunity to say a few words and put some
 3 finality on this issue. And Council Member, we're
 4 pleased you're here and congratulations on all of
 5 your hard work here. So, Council Member?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:

7 Thank you, Mr. Chair. And I want to first really
 8 thank you, thank Council Member Melinda Katz and
 9 thank all the Land Use staff, Amy, Carol and Gil
 10 Benjamin, for your indulgence. I know that this
 11 vote has been deferred several times and we've
 12 rescheduled these meetings as the community and
 13 the administration has continued to negotiate with
 14 regards to this project. East 125th Street
 15 development, and I know that we're very
 16 preoccupied with other matters right now in the
 17 City Council and discussions that the press is
 18 formulating, but this project is potentially the
 19 largest economic development project in the
 20 current and potentially near future of East
 21 Harlem. And it has been a discussion that has
 22 been very controversial. And I want to thank the
 23 community members that are hear today, who may not
 24 necessarily and are not in agreement with this
 25 project, but I do thank them for taking the time

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2 to be here and expressing their views in the
3 public forums that we've had. This has been a
4 community based planning process that has taken
5 about two, two and a half years, where the
6 community has been engaged with the City of New
7 York in redesigning the request for proposals for
8 this site, helping define the elements that we
9 wanted to see in the project. So, like, reviewing
10 and deciding which proposals we wanted to be the
11 finalists, and continue to engage in a dialogue to
12 ensure that this development project truly
13 reflected a vision and community input. And I
14 think we've arrived at a place which we can say
15 that this project is going to truly benefit East
16 Harlem by having the voice of the community heard.
17 And we have commitments. The designated team has
18 been chosen. The Deputy Mayor has written us a
19 letter. We have come to points of agreement on
20 jobs, on affordable housing, on open space, on
21 sustainable design, on a lot of different
22 elements, local hiring, a lot of different
23 elements that are very, very important to us-- and
24 the jobs, obviously the most important. So we
25 have a commitment that all those points of

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2 agreement will be incorporated in the contract of
3 sale between the City of New York and the
4 designated developer and that is something that is
5 not commonplace in the way that the City deals.
6 And that commitment is one that I'm very proud of
7 and I really want to thank the administration for
8 engaging in it. And we will ensure that the
9 agreements that have been reached will be
10 enforceable because they will be in the contract
11 between the designated development team and the
12 City of New York. And lastly, one of the other
13 elements that we're very proud of in this
14 development team is that we have locally based
15 organizations that are equity partners in this
16 project. They're not just going to be a part of
17 the project, they're equity partners in the
18 project, and they are really going to be our eyes
19 and ears as this project moves forward. As a
20 community we will also have an ongoing dialogue
21 and ability to influence this project as it moves
22 forward, as we will have an ongoing conversation
23 with the development team, and we look forward to
24 that. So our work is not done. Our work is just
25 beginning. But I really, again, do want to thank

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2 the administration and also recognize again that
3 this has been a contentious process and
4 controversial process and this project will not
5 suit everybody and not everybody will be pleased,
6 but I believe that we've come to a good place. So
7 with that, I want to thank you all, my colleagues
8 in the Subcommittee meeting for your indulgence
9 and for helping us in this process, and I would
10 ask that you vote Aye on this.

11 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Chair Katz.

12 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Thank you, Mr.
13 Chairman. And I'll make my comments now as
14 opposed to the Land Use Committee, because I know
15 that there are folks that are interested in this
16 project that are here watching the proceedings. I
17 just want to congratulate, I think, everyone
18 that's been involved in this project, from the
19 administration to Council Member Mark-Viverito. I
20 myself went up to East Harlem and actually was in
21 attendance for one of the town hall meetings that
22 the Council Member held, which just, you know, so
23 everybody understands, was not a necessary part of
24 the proceedings. This project went through the
25 City Planning, you know, went through the

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2 Community Board, went through Borough Hall, and
3 then the Council Member on her own decided to have
4 two town hall meetings to hear from the community.
5 I have rarely seen a project that went through
6 with such community input. Now, not everyone is
7 going to be happy, because that's just the
8 definition, sometimes, of the projects that we do.
9 But overall I think that the Council Member and
10 the administration tried to come to an overall
11 agreement that on the whole will best serve her
12 district. And I'm proud that the Council was able
13 to negotiate that and I think that she did a great
14 job in actually trying to listen to the community
15 and move forward and take the best interests at
16 heart. So I urge a yes vote as well.

17 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you.

18 And with that I will add my words of
19 congratulations also to Council Member Mark-
20 Viverito and will also recommend an Aye vote on
21 Land Use number 870 to 873. These are the only
22 items that we're going to be voting on today. We
23 are going to lay over all of the remaining items
24 on today's calendar at the request of the members
25 in whose districts these items sit. And again,

2 this is a vote on 870 to 873, Chair recommending
3 an Aye vote. And I will ask the Council to call
4 the roll.

5 CLERK: Chair Garodnick.

6 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: I vote aye.

7 CLERK: Council Member Baez?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BAEZ: Aye.

9 CLERK: Council Member Dickens?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Aye.

11 CLERK: Council Member Ignizio?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Aye.

13 CLERK: The vote stands at four in
14 the affirmative, none in the negative and no
15 abstentions, and is referred to the full committee
16 on Land Use.

17 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you.

18 And with that, we're going to hold the vote open
19 for a short period of time until the next
20 Committee convenes here and after that time we
21 will be adjourned. Thank you everybody.

22 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: If you could
23 ring the bell for land use so that we could gather
24 all the members here. I think we probably have a
25 quorum in the building. We'll get the meeting

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done. Thanks.

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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 October 14, 2008 _____