

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING
AND MARITIME USES

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February 25, 2016
Start: 11:18 a.m.
Recess: 12:26 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.
16th Fl

B E F O R E: PETER A. KOO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Annabel Palma
Rosie Mendez
Stephen T. Levin
Inez D. Barron
Ben Kallos

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

Lisa Kersavage, Director
Strategic Planning and Special Projects
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Michael Owen, Community Outreach Program Manager
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Claudette Brady, Co-founder
Bedford-Stuyvesant Society for Historic Preservation

Daniel Thompson, Co-founder
Bedford-Stuyvesant Society for Historic Preservation

Simeon Bankoff, Executive Director
Historic Districts Council

Evelyn Collier, Chair
Landmark Committee
Community Board 3

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING
AND MARITIME USES

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[sound check, pause]

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CHAIRPERSON KOO: Good morning.

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SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: [off mic] Quiet,

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please.

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CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah. I'm Council

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Member Peter Koo, Chair of the Subcommittee of

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Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses. We are

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joined by the Council Members, Council Member Palma,

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Council Member Kallos, Council Member Barron and

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Council member Cornegy. We will be holding a public

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hearing and voting one item today, Land Use Item No.

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366 (sic), the Bedford Historic District. This item

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will establish and new and historic district to cover

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824 building in Council Member Cornegy's district.

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The Council Member has indicated his support for the

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dena--designation. I will now open the public

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hearing for Land Use Item No. 336, and before that,

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Council Member Cornegy would like to make a

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statement. Thank you, Chair Koo. I'm extremely

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pleased to offer my support for the designation of

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the proposed Bedford Historic District. Designation

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of the Bedford Historic District was driven by

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residents of the--of my proposed district supported

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by the dedicated volunteer members of Brooklyn

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2 Community Board 3, and initiated during the term of
3 my predecessor Albert Vann. Speaking in support of
4 this designation, before the LTC several years ago,
5 Council Member Vann noted the following: Appropriate
6 landmarking performed through a consult--consultative
7 process would broaden community support as a means of
8 protecting property values and preserving
9 neighborhood history. Yes, landmarking imposes some
10 obligation on property owners, but it gives more than
11 it gives away. Property owners get access to grants
12 and expert advice that are essential to keeping their
13 properties in good repair. Multiple owners in the
14 proposed Bedford Historic District have already been
15 able to take advantage of this assistance, which
16 comes from funds provided by the federal government,
17 not from city coffers. This influx of dollars
18 benefitted existing low-income property owners, and
19 is a bulwark against the forces of negative
20 gentrification, which often targets owners who cannot
21 afford to maintain their homes, and it will benefit
22 the community for years to come. The proposal before
23 us today is a fulfillment of many years of work,
24 including many community meetings, mailings and both
25 volunteer and professional services of the proposed

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2 district's architecture. I must commend the members
3 of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Society for Historic
4 Preservation for staying the course and maintaining
5 unified even in the face of confusion sold by
6 opponents of landmarking. I would also offer sincere
7 thanks to City Planning Commission whose staff's
8 research has added greatly to our understanding and
9 appreciation of the proposed district's social
10 history and architecture. It's my--it's great
11 pleasure--it is my great pleasure to see this effort
12 come to a close during my first term in office. It
13 has been--it--it is with my full support. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, Council
15 Member Cornegy. Now, we will have the first panel.
16 We have Michael Owen from the Landmarks Commission,
17 and Lisa--

18 LEGAL COUNSEL: [off mic] [interposing]
19 Kersavage.

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: -Kersavage from the
21 Landmark Commission. [pause, background comments]

22 LISA KERSAVAGE: Good afternoon.

23 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Please identify
24 yourselves to start with. Thank you.

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2 LISA KERSAVAGE: My name is Lisa
3 Kersavage. I'm the Director of Strategic Planning
4 and Special Projects at the Landmarks Preservation
5 Commission.

6 MICHAEL OWEN: And Michael Owen,
7 Community Outreach Program Manager at the Commission.
8 Good morning, Chair Koo. Thank you for the
9 opportunity to testify today on designation of the
10 Bedford Historic District consisting of 824 buildings
11 within the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of
12 Brooklyn. The district is unique for its remarkably
13 well preserved and concentrated collection of houses
14 by celebrated Brooklyn architects, and contain some
15 of the borough's most distinctive and well preserved
16 19th Century streetscapes. The new district is
17 culturally significant as a major residential
18 district for African-American and Caribbean families
19 since the 1920s. [coughs] On January 15th, 2013,
20 the Commission held a public hearing on the proposed
21 designation of Bedford Historic District. The
22 hearing was duly advertised in accordance with the
23 provisions of the law. Thirty people spoke in favor
24 of the district, including Council Member Vann,
25 Borough President Markowitz, representatives of

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2 Community Board 3, the Victorian Society, the Society
3 for the Architecture of the City, the Historic
4 Districts Council, the New York Landmarks Conservancy
5 and 17 residents. Three people questioned the
6 process as to whether there was enough community
7 notification, including a representative of the
8 NWAACP, and one resident of the district and an
9 individual. Three people testified against
10 designation including one resident. The Commission
11 also received 220 form letters stating the sender
12 wanted more information about the process. Thirty-
13 seven of those were from residents within the
14 district. The Commission also received 356 form
15 letters and emails in support of the district, and
16 143 of those were from residents within the district.
17 Recently, City Council Member Cornegy also expressed
18 support for the district. Located in Brooklyn,
19 Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuy neighborhood the district
20 extends from Monroe Street on the north to Macon
21 Street and Verona Place on the south, and from just
22 east of Bedford Avenue eastward to Thompkins Avenue.
23 The district is a remarkably well preserved section
24 of Bed-Stuy representing a wealth of architectural
25 styles that flourished in Brooklyn during the 19th

1
2 Century. Constructed almost entirely between 1870
3 and 1900, the district illustrates the rapid
4 development of row house design in Central Brooklyn
5 during this period. Many of the district's buildings
6 were designed by prominent architects including
7 Prophet (sp?) Brothers, George Chappell, Rudolph
8 Dawes, Heins & LaFarge. The district is unique for
9 its exceptionally intact and concentrated collection
10 of houses by Montrose Morris considered one of
11 Brooklyn's greatest architects of that area. The
12 architectural development of the district was largely
13 complete by early 20th Century, but significant
14 cultural changes continued to occur there. Most
15 notably, its development is part of the larger Bed-
16 Stuy neighborhood and, too, the major residential
17 district for African-Americans and Caribbean-American
18 families. African-American churches follow Black
19 residents to Bedford including the Siloam
20 Presbyterian Church in 1944. Silaom's Pastor
21 Reverend Milton Galmis--Galamison continue the
22 church's tradition of social and civil rights
23 activism. Becoming a prominent figure in an effort
24 to integrate the city's schools. Bedford residents
25 have worked to preserve the neighborhood's historic

1 houses and streetscapes by participating in the
2 Brownstoning Movement and through the work of block
3 associations, which were active in Bedford by the
4 1940s. The Commission has been working closely with
5 community advocates, elected officials, and this
6 designation follows with the designation of three
7 previous historic districts in Bed-Stuy, Alice and
8 Agate Courts designated in 2009; the Bed-Stuy
9 Expanded Stuyvesant Heights Historic District,
10 designated in 2013; and the original Stuyvesant
11 Heights Historic District, which was designated in
12 1971. The Commission held three community meetings
13 about Bedford-Stuy in 2011 and 2012 including one
14 specifically about this district, and we heard the
15 district in 2013. To sum up, on December 8, 2015,
16 the Landmarks Preservation Commission unanimously
17 approved the designation of the Bedford Historic
18 District. Accordingly, the LPC urges you to affirm
19 this designation. Thank you.
20

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, Mr. Owen.

22 Can I ask you just a couple questions?

23 MICHAEL OWEN: Uh-huh.

24 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Can you like let the
25 Council because we don't know about like

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2 homeownership in this area, are they mostly owned or
3 who--I mean, you know, owners lives in the buildings--
4 -

5 MICHAEL OWEN: [interposing] Uh-huh.

6 CHAIRPERSON KOO: --or they rent the
7 buildings?

8 MICHAEL OWEN: Well, it's a predominantly
9 residential area. I think that there--I don't have
10 any specific stats, and Lisa, feel free to jump in,
11 but I think a good amount of homes are owner
12 occupied.

13 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Oh, owner occupied.

14 MICHAEL OWEN: Certainly a lot of the--I-
15 -I sort of work with outreach. So a lot of the
16 owners--I'm the first person they call, and
17 frequently it's owners who own their house and
18 received our letter, and just want to talk about the--

19 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [interposing] Yeah.

20 MICHAEL OWEN: --the process.

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So you don't know the--
22 like the percentage of renters now. How many people
23 actually rent?

24 LISA KERSAVAGE: Yeah, unfortunately we
25 don't have those numbers with us right now. I mean

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2 I--I do agree with Mike's perception that it does
3 seem a largely owner-occupied district, but we could
4 certainly provide those numbers to you after this.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Because a lot of people
6 worry about that once you declare a historic
7 district, the value will go up, and the renters now
8 cannot afford to live there. So just one worry, you
9 know, and then--and then you might like cause the
10 ownership costs, you know, in terms of maintenance
11 and other stuff. But the--the owners agree. I mean,
12 do you--

13 LISA KERSAVAGE: [interposing] Well, I--I
14 can tell you that we have done extensive owner
15 outreach as part of this designation from when--from
16 prior to--from when we countered to when we heard to
17 the, you know, more recently in the last year, and
18 what we heard was really overwhelming support from
19 the property owners. We didn't have property owners
20 as far as I know raising concerns about the--any
21 risings costs. They had a lot of questions about
22 regulatory, what the regulations mean, but we--we--
23 I'm not sure that we even have anything on the record
24 that raises concerns about, you know, losing renters
25 or things like that.

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CHAIRPERSON KOO: Do--do you know what
typical--typical costs of a building now, individual
buildings in the district how much it will cost to
buy one?

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MICHAEL OWEN: The average I'm not sure.
I mean I think that real estate throughout the city
is going up so that--

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CHAIRPERSON KOO: [interposing] Yeah.

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MICHAEL OWEN: --even that number I think
is--is hard to gauge.

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CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah.

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MICHAEL OWEN: I--you know, I'm not--

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CHAIRPERSON KOO: [interposing] You know,
do we have a recent sale like this year, the last
couple of years? How much is it now?

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MICHAEL OWEN: Right, right. These are
all, you know, good questions. I think ultimately
because the Commission doesn't regulate use or
ownership. For instance, when an owner wants to sell
their building, they don't have to notify us. So
because they don't notify us and ultimately our
commissioners don't really use that in their
decisions making, we don't really publish those sort

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2 of matrices or that sort of information, but, you
3 know--

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CHAIRPERSON KOO: I would imagine the
5 increase around it.

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MICHAEL OWEN: I mean I would imagine
7 yeah. I mean it's--

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CHAIRPERSON KOO: [interposing] Okay.

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MICHAEL OWEN: --Brooklyn is pretty
10 popular right now.

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CHAIRPERSON KOO: All right. So I have
12 no more questions. So any members? All right.
13 Council Cornegy.

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MICHAEL OWEN:

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COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Yes, so I
16 wondered if you could describe the programs that are
17 available through grants for home repairs, if you
18 have any awareness of those programs, if you could
19 detail them today?

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MICHAEL OWEN: Sure. I'm going to start
21 to answer this, and then, Lisa, why don't you jump
22 in.

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LISA KERSAVAGE: [off mic] Okay.

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MICHAEL OWEN: Because I just want to
25 start off by saying that even in our letters we

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2 include financial incentives for homeowners, and this
3 is before the vote. So owners, you know, are very
4 well informed in a lot of the conversations I have
5 with owners. We have a grant program. There are a
6 lot of federal incentives, tax credits. There are
7 low-interest loans, and actually, one of the biggest
8 benefits to homeowners is the intangible of the free
9 technical advice, which allows usually homeowners who
10 have been there for quite some time it's just free
11 technical advice to really help them take care of
12 their building, which in the long run saves them a
13 lot of money. Which is sometimes a hard financial
14 number to capture like the amount that they save by
15 the technical advice. It's hard to quantify that.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: And--and before
17 you answer, though, I also would like as a second
18 follow-up question is I understand that there are
19 some programs in place especially for seniors who may
20 need to retrofit their homes with ramps and things
21 like that. Can you tell us what--are their car
22 routes? How does that work? Because obviously it
23 changes the--the outside--

24 MICHAEL OWEN: [interposing] Uh-huh.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: --of the home,
3 but I understand that there are some exceptions for
4 seniors when retrofitting is necessary for them to
5 stay and maintain their homes.

6 MICHAEL OWEN: Uh-huh.

7 LISA KERSAVAGE: The--yeah, the--the
8 staff is very much commissioned very regularly. It
9 creates accessible entries. That's something that is
10 done--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: [off mic] Are
12 they ever disapproved? (sic)

13 LISA KERSAVAGE: They--they very often
14 approve and often at the staff level as well. You
15 know, it's very important for us to, you know, make
16 sure that people can have accessibility to the
17 buildings, and actually it's--it's required. So, we
18 always find a way to get to yes for accessibility
19 issues with historic buildings. And our staff is
20 very experienced with dealing with the--with those
21 kinds of issues. They often go and make site visits
22 to try and help figure out what is the best design
23 for the historic buildings. So it's--it's kind of a
24 bread and butter issue with the Preservation staff,
25 and I am certain that any--any needs for

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2 accessibility in the district can absolutely be in
3 that. (sic)

4 MICHAEL OWEN: We also have actually a
5 dedicated LPC staff member that deals with ADA access
6 specifically. So she's sort of the know-all on that
7 subject also.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: And just my
9 colleague asked a few questions I think that I could
10 weigh in on the average median household is probably
11 a million dollars--

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [interposing] No.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: --in--in that
14 area? And so, that was one of the concerns that we
15 heard very quickly is that we have a--a larger aging
16 population that are affected by the--these landmarks,
17 and what would happen to them. They're--they're on
18 fixed income. The maintenance is difficult. So I
19 wanted you to detail those programs, and I also
20 wanted you to detail the accessibility issue, which
21 his a serious issue. As we did our round of hearings
22 in the community and town halls around the
23 landmarking, those things came up quite often.
24 Because of the demographics in the area being mostly
25 seniors--

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MICHAEL OWEN: [interposing] Uh-huh.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: --if you could just continue with detailing the programs that are available.

LISA KERSAVAGE: Right, so--as--as Mike said, the-the Commission itself has a grant program, and properties within that area would be eligible for that program. There are federal--let me say, there's--there's State Historic Preservation Tax Credits that I'm fairly certain properties in this area would be able to take advantage of. And just to amplify what Mike said, I do think there is a great benefit to our very well trained preservation staff being able to work with property owners to actually find potentially cheaper ways to do things, to figure out the ways that will, you know, increase the resiliency of the buildings. So it could be, you know, things like changing a mortar that will be better for this historic building that don't impact costs at all. So I think that, you know, this--the regulatory overlay actually offers a great deal of--of insistence to prop--homeowners, and they're very customer oriented, and always there to answer questions. So I think that is a bit of an

1
2 intangible, but I think an important benefit to a
3 neighborhood like this that has a high level of--of
4 homeownership and, you know, owner-occupied
5 buildings.

6 MICHAEL OWEN: And the only thing I'd
7 like to add to what Lisa said is just when it--you
8 know, you asked about older residents, and sort of
9 working with them. We don't require architects or
10 require residencies, one contract over another, or
11 one expeditor. So, especially with in this sort of
12 informal way with older residents who need a little
13 bit more hand-holding with our application process,
14 we're certainly eyeing other staff members really
15 trying to work with them. Like even helping them get
16 together the application so it's complete so they can
17 sort of, you know, get the process moving as quickly
18 as possible.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: And--and is
20 there--is there a website or is there--what is--what
21 does someone do who finds themselves in the need of--
22 especially a senior who now finds the necessity for
23 repair of an external--something external to their
24 building? What do they do step-by-step?

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LISA KERSAVAGE: They call Mike.

[laughter] We've--we've sent every homeowner--
property owner information about those grant
programs, and then also outlining the regulatory
issues, and they've got Mike's name and number. And
honestly, that's the first best step, and people do
it all the time. That's--that's what, you know, he
feels comes from all historic districts, but a lot
from Bedford, too. So I really think that is the
best step, and everybody in the district should have
that information. You know, we've--we've mailed it
several times, and I know I answered in a bit of a
cheeky way, but it really is true, and we really want
to work with property owners to always help, you
know, accommodate their needs.

MICHAEL OWEN: And just to follow up with
what Lisa said, also online we have available our
Permit Application Guide, which is a step-by-step
guide with pictures and photographs of every single
type of application we normally have and a checklist
with what you need to have. And even that when
dealing with seniors I've actually printed it out and
mailed it to them if they're savvy with the Internet.
So some--you know, it's not--we sort of--we find a

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2 way for them to get together, you know, get the
3 information and put together an application when they
4 need to. Another thing is the Landmarks Commission
5 doesn't require work. So older residents if they
6 don't--if they have, you know, the money or desire
7 right now to work on the building, they don't have.
8 You know, it's--it's when they're ready to do work
9 they call us, and we work with them on how best to
10 accomplish their needs.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: We want to acknowledge
13 the arrival of Council Member Levin. Council Member
14 Levin, do you have questions?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Well, thank you
16 very much, Mr. Chairman. Congratulations, Council
17 Member Cornegy and to--to everybody from--from Bed-
18 Study who's fought for this for a long time. I
19 represent a small portion of Bedford-Stuyvesant north
20 of here, but I want to express my support, and really
21 acknowledge everybody that's organized around this
22 principle of historic preservation in the Bed-Stuy
23 community. I see Claudette Brady here, and I want to
24 acknowledge her hard work, and--and--and acknowledge
25 those people particularly seniors who have--who have

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2 come out and--and testified in favor of this, and
3 those that have testified in opposition for honoring
4 the neighborhood. Honoring the history of this
5 neighborhood, the rich history of this neighborhood,
6 and--and for generations preserving the neighborhood
7 without landmark designation. One of the remarkable
8 things about this proposed district is that it for
9 generations even--even without the--the LPC's mandate
10 to--to preserve these buildings, the community has
11 preserved it. And the families have preserved their
12 homes in remarkable fashion, and--and that's in a lot
13 of ways LPC's proposition and our vote today is a
14 testament to--to the families honoring their
15 community and their homes--

16 MICHAEL OWEN: [interposing] Uh-huh.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER LEVIN: --for--for
18 previous generations. I'm just proud to support
19 this.

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Any more
21 questions from the members? Oh, so seeing none,
22 thank you very much, Mr. Owen--

23 MICHAEL OWEN: [interposing] Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON KOO: --and Ms. Kersavage.

[pause] The next panel will be Mr. Samuel Banchoff
and--

CLAUDETTE BRADY: [off mic]

[interposing] Claudette Brady.

CHAIRPERSON KOO: --Claudette Brady and
Daniel Thompson. [pause]

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Claudette, I
didn't see you behind the pillar over there.

CLAUDETTE BRADY: Really? How are you?

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Fine.

CHAIRPERSON KOO: What name is this?

[background comment]

CLAUDETTE BRADY: I'm moving. You have
to come to the new store.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: You going to
make me a hat?

CLAUDETTE BRADY: What?

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Are you going to
make me a hat?

CLAUDETTE BRADY: Yes, I am going to make
you a special hat.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON KOO: So each of you will

have like three minutes to speak, and please identify
yourself, and then you can start then.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: I'll make sure I
pay for that hat, though. [laughter]

CLAUDETTE BRADY: Good after--

MALE SPEAKER: There you go.

CLAUDETTE BRADY: Good afternoon,
Chairman Chu--Koo, Council Member Cornegy, other
Council Members, neighbors, friends. My name is
Claudette Brady. I am one of the co-founders of
along with Daniel Thompson and others of the Bedford-
Stuyvesant Society for Historic Preservation. Before
making a statement, I'd like to address a few
questions that were asked before regarding home
values in Bedford-Stuyvesant and the homeownership
rate in Bedford-Stuyvesant. Home--house values are
sell--homes are selling in Bedford-Stuyvesant from a
million dollars up to \$2.5 million. The change in
value in Bedford-Stuyvesant is not driven by
landmarking. The Stuyvesant Heights Historic
District was designated in the 1970s, and we did not
see a significant increase in market prices because
of that designation. The significant increase in

1 market prices over the last five years has been due
2 to the gentrification of the neighborhood or quite
3 simply the influx of white people into Bedford-
4 Stuyvesant. So that is where we're seeing the home
5 prices raising, and--and Brooklyn in general we--we
6 saw it first in--in Williamsburg. We saw it in
7 Bushwick. Now, we're seeing it in Bedford-Stuyvesant
8 and I'm sure after Bedford-Stuyvesant has reached its
9 pinnacle, the real estate developers and others who
10 are looking for some place to live will move onto
11 another area in Brooklyn. As far as homeownership
12 rates, when we started this process, we actually went
13 door to door, Daniel and myself and other members of
14 the Bedford-Stuyvesant Society for Historic
15 Preservation, and when we were to have a homeowners
16 petitions. Part of that process was that we marked
17 all the houses that were homeowner occupied. And
18 those that were not within the Bedford Historic
19 District and specifically along Hancock, Jefferson,
20 Halsey, Arlington Place, Verona Place we found the
21 homership--homeownership level as high as 90% on some
22 blocks. Bedford-Stuyvesant as a whole has a
23 homeowner rate that's comparable to Park Slope, a
24 similar brownstone neighborhood, while Bedford-

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2 Stuyvesant unlike Park Slope has a higher portion of
3 public housing. So there is a consistently high
4 homownership rate in Bedford-Stuyvesant, and has
5 always been there. So the African-Americans starting
6 moving there in the 1930s. For my statement the
7 Bedford-Stuyvesant Society, we started this move to
8 landmarking in 2007. Actually, it started as a
9 comment from one of--or an elder resident at a Block
10 Association meeting. In 2008, after speaking with
11 many of the surrounding blocks, and meeting with
12 Simeon from Historic District Council, we discovered
13 that the neighborhood had been surveyed by LPC in the
14 early 1970s, and that our block, Hancock between
15 Jeff--between Bedford--where am I? [laughs] Between
16 Nostrand and Marcy were part of a proposed Bedford
17 Historic District. With our initial public meeting
18 we wanted to be transparent. We had had some initial
19 conversations in the--in the original blocks, and we
20 pulled all the names of the homeowners from New York
21 City tax rolls, and we--we--we sent a mailing to all
22 the homeowners requesting to have a conversation
23 about historic designation. The outpouring--our
24 first meeting we had over 150 people in attendance.
25 Most were in favor. Throughout 2007 and 2010, we had

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2 over 30 meetings with homeowners in the district. We
3 have several Block Association meetings where we've
4 had a turnout as high as 60 people when the average
5 Block Association meeting if you--if you get five
6 people at a meeting you're--you're lucky. In 2008,
7 late 2008, we--we submitted the RFE to the Landmarks
8 Preservation Commission for Halsey, Jefferson,
9 Hancock and Arlington place. [bell] Okay, and 2009,
10 with Community Board 3, the Landmarks Committee
11 submitted the RFE for the rest of the remaining
12 blocks within the proposed districts. In 2010, the
13 Bedford-Stuyvesant Society for Historic Preservation
14 included the--the blocks that the Community Board had
15 reached out to. In our outreach efforts, we make
16 sure that every person in that neighborhood received
17 literature regarding landmarking, were invited to
18 meetings either by mail or by flyer. One of the
19 things that we are actually working on now that
20 people are talking about what are the incentives, we
21 are currently working on drafting the State and
22 National registry preser--district submission for the
23 Bedford Historic District. We're specific--
24 specifically working on the tax credit portion of it.
25 Once we have done that, we will be having--we will be

1
2 having several meetings. We will continue to have
3 meetings with the residents about their--their--the
4 tax credits or grants or other things that are
5 available to them. And also working with the
6 Landmarks Committee, we also encourage the residents
7 to come to the Committee meeting. We have about five
8 architects on the committee who are all versed in
9 landmark requirements be---for advice when they need
10 to do any changes to their homes.

11 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [off mic] [background
12 comments]

13 DANIEL THOMPSON: Good morning, Council.
14 I'm Daniel Thompson. I've lived in the Bedford
15 District 16 years, and when I first joined the Block
16 Association, one of their long-term goals was
17 historic designation, already in place. But not
18 everyone is interested in how it happened. They
19 though you gained it simply by merit. So we've been
20 to the Community Board. We got--we talked to our
21 neighbors, and found out the process, and then we
22 started to hold informational forums and meetings.
23 We had them at the Restoration Plaza. We had them in
24 church basements. We had them at the Bedford
25 Library, and as you've heard, we had very good

1 attendance. There was a lot of interest in this, and
2 we considered it to be of value. Most of the
3 questions received were not prior landmarking, but
4 how and when. People were actually--felt that it was
5 due. Why are we being left behind? So we embarked
6 on the process of an RFE, and continued to have
7 informational forums and meetings for the
8 neighborhood. We have a really strong community in
9 this neighborhood. We do things together. We--we
10 help each other out. We have plantings engaged on
11 the block. People are proud of their houses. Even
12 the older residents in my block is very largely
13 owner-occupied multi-generational families.
14 Grandmother lives downstairs, and the felt rewarded
15 by this that they--they had been vindicated for
16 holding the neighborhood together for all these
17 years. It was like we finally got recognized. So,
18 we were--felt very happy about being able to do that
19 for the community. I think a nice metaphor is the--
20 the physical context. The row houses all stand
21 shoulder-to-shoulder each one supporting its
22 neighbor, and that's what we do in our community. I
23 would hate to lose the physical context for this kind
24 of community that we've built, and so with respect to
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2 my neighbors and my community, I would ask the
3 Council to ratify the designation for the Bedford
4 Historic District. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, Mr.
6 Thompson.

7 SIMEON BANKOFF: Council Members, I'm
8 Simeon Bankoff, Executive Director of the Historic
9 Districts Council. So nice to see you and on such a
10 great occasion. We've been working with Claudette
11 and with community members in Bedford-Stuyvesant for
12 easily eight years perhaps longer with regards to
13 expanding the Historic Districts within the Bedford-
14 Stuyvesant area. I think it's very important for the
15 Council to understand that this is actually the
16 fourth historic district in the area. We'd like to
17 think with this, we're about 50% done. We've got
18 another four in where--where we'd go after this, but
19 there has been a lot of experience within the
20 community with landmarks. Landmarks have very good--
21 LPC has been very good about reaching out, Claudette
22 and her team and the Community Board and, in fact,
23 Council Member Cornegy when he was just Mr. Cornegy
24 used to show up at many of these meetings. I myself
25 was--I and my staff were at something along the lines

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2 of two or three dozen meetings over the course of
3 three years. I do want to address one other thing,
4 which is there was a concentrated effort to defeat
5 this at the Landmarks Commission that was being
6 underwritten by some of my counter--counterparts in
7 the real estate--in the organized real estate
8 industry who brought in people and outside agitators
9 to cause a little bit of dissent. Fortunately, it's
10 such a strong community, and we would go to meetings,
11 and we'd express what the responsibilities and
12 benefits of landmarking were again, and we answered
13 all questions, and we feel at the end it was a very
14 good positive open process. So thank you, and we
15 hope that you support this.

16 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [off mic] Thank you.
17 [background comments] Council Member Kallos.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: How long have you
19 been working on getting this historic district?

20 CLAUDETTE BRADY: We've been working on
21 this since 2007, and sort of 2006 we're talking about
22 it.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So about nine
24 years.

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CLAUDETTE BRADY: Yeah, my kid would be in the third--third grade.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And now long has this been with the LPC?

CLAUDETTE BRADY: We--the first RFE was submitted in 2008, September.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Okay, so eight--eight years--

CLAUDETTE BRADY: [interposing] Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: --just about?

CLAUDETTE BRADY: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Do you believe that if this Council were to institute a time limit that you would be sitting here today if you only had five years to do this?

CLAUDETTE BRADY: Okay, so I--oh, you did--[laughter] if a period. Mr. Greenfield and I had quite a little discussion about this at the hearing on it. So the time limit makes sense. However, what happens with the time limit that five-year moratorium that we put on that time limit, if--if LPC doesn't act, and Mr. Chin will probably--Council Member Chin will probably, but you can follow it up with a question on me. My position is that

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2 when that time limit if this legislation should pass
3 that time limit becomes detrimental for people like
4 me and people in lower income communities or people
5 in--who do not have organized groups. Let's say
6 Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation
7 or Landmarks West where we're a complete volunteer--
8 orga--organization. for us keeping moment going for
9 nine years has been difficult. I mean Daniel can
10 tell you seeing me--I was in my hosp--in a hospital
11 bed in Collier ICU planning meetings because we don't
12 have staff, and--and--and--the--the--the amount of
13 human energy that went into this for volunteers, a
14 five-year moratorium would sink us if put that
15 legislation in place.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So--so I--I guess
17 on one hand what we'd love to see is an LPC that
18 acted sooner, and then also making sure that we don't
19 punish community groups or volunteers if you need
20 more time, or punish communities or just give a green
21 light to developers that hey you have to have five
22 years to develop this place before it becomes a--it
23 gets landmarked--

24 CLAUDETTE BRADY: [interposing] Exactly

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COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: --get eligible.

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Okay.

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DANIEL THOMPSON: Precisely and--and just

one other point, which is that this would have

happened sooner except there was a change in

administration and, of course, you know, outgoing

Chair Tierney felt that he didn't want to overburden

the incoming chair and the income administration with

any promises, and let them sort of find their way.

so you have to insert a good 18 months there when

people were learning their new jobs, and then this

Commission has seen to this as fast as it humanly

could.

COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you. I

rest my case.

CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you very much.

So, we have another panel. It's Evelyn Collier.

(sic) [off mic] What's that. [background comments,

pause]

EVELYN COLLIER: It's not the right

color.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Blue is.

EVELYN COLLIER: Yeah, oh, I sent the

letter ahead.

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2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah, please identify
3 yourself start there.

4 EVELYN COLLIER: My name is Evelyn
5 Collier. I'm the Chair of the Landmark Committee for
6 Community Board 3, and so I'm here to read a letter
7 from Community Board 3, and it's addressed to the New
8 York City Council Subcommittee on Landmarks.

9 Chairperson, first of all, good morning. Chairperson
10 Koo, Chairperson Greenfield and the Subcommittee
11 members on the Landmarks and Maritime Uses. This is
12 message of such designation of Bedford Historic.
13 Preser--preservation in Bedford-Stuyvesant was
14 notably brought to the forefront in 1968 by some
15 dedicated and relentless efforts to preserve a piece
16 of American history by Joe Mana (sic) and others who
17 helped to establish the Society of Preservation of
18 Weeksville and Bedford-Stuyvesant. That preservation
19 effort may help to lay the ground for Bedford-
20 Stuyvesant's first historic district in 1961. 19--
21 correction--1971, the Stuyvesant Heights Historic
22 District. The designation of the Stuyvesant Heights
23 Historic District made us proud. We gained so much
24 knowledge of and appreciation for the architect and
25 history of our community in the process. It was the

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2 energy we needed to continue preservation work even
3 during periods of uncertainty and stagnation due to
4 long delays on the Landmark Preservation Commission's
5 calendar. Nonetheless, Community Board 3 Landmark
6 Committee pushed forward, and under the leadership of
7 former chairs Ms. Bernice Brown, Jackie Bolan (sic),
8 our current Chair Evelyn Crier (sic) have worked
9 tirelessly to advocate for our community residents
10 who want to secure and codify the preservation in
11 Bedford-Stuyvesant. The work of preservation and
12 designation is detailed and painstakingly long.
13 CB3's Landmark Committee worked in tandem with former
14 and current community stakeholders who worked whose
15 work is marked to love for preservation of history as
16 well as an outpouring of community togetherness.
17 Together, Bedford-Stuyvesant secured a landmark
18 preservation designation for Alice and Agate Court in
19 2009, and a designation of expanded Stuyvesant
20 Heights Historic District in 2013. Our community is
21 dedicated to the celebration of history and
22 architectural design that are the essence of
23 landmarking and preservation. In addition to our
24 Community Board Landmark Committee Chairperson, there
25 are numerous advocates and supporters that want to

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2 publicly acknowledge for their work on the efforts to
3 designate the Bedford Historic District. Claudette
4 Brady and Morgan Montu (sp?), Nelson Stout, Linda
5 Fawn and our favorite historian Suzanne Stelling. We
6 would also like to mention that Historic District
7 Council, the New York Landmark Conservancy and the
8 many neighbors, history buffs and architects--
9 architecture enthusiasts who are too numerous to
10 name, but who took the challenge to designated the
11 Bedford Historic District very seriously. On
12 December the 8th, 2015, LPC voted unanimously to
13 designate picturesque section of Bedford-Stuyvesant
14 as the Bedford Historic District. At the designation
15 hearing, LPC described the district as a museum of
16 late 19th Century--19th Century architecture. [bell]
17 Can I finish?

18 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [off mic] Yes.

19 EVELYN COLLIER: Thank you. The Bedford
20 Historic District has 800 buildings such as Italian,
21 Neo-Grec, and Queen Anne architectural style built by
22 Amzi Hill and Montrose Morris during the late 19th
23 Century. The Bedford Historic District has been home
24 to various ethnic groups. However, since the 1920s
25 it's been the home for a large population of African-

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2 American and for raising their families. Bedford
3 Historic District represents historic--history of
4 Brooklyn, its people, its transformation and its
5 architecture. We want to thank Council Member Robert
6 Cornegy, Jr., former Councilman Albert Vann--Albert
7 Vann and former borough president Marty Markowitz for
8 their support when called upon to recognized that the
9 Bedford Historic District is a piece of history that
10 must be protected. Further, we thank the City
11 Council Subcommittee for Landmarks for having today's
12 hearing regarding the designation of Bedford Historic
13 District. We ask the City Council to vote to
14 designate the deserving historic district without
15 hesitation. Sincerely, Tremaine Wright, Chairman and
16 Community Board 3 President.

17 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Any member,
18 any questions from our members? No. Thank you.
19 [off mic] Are there any more members? [on mic] Are
20 there only--are there any more members of the public
21 who wish to testify? Seeing none, I will now close
22 the public hearing on this item. We will now move on
23 to a vote to approve Land Use Item 336, and counsel,
24 please call the roll.

25 LEGAL COUNSEL: Chair Koo.

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CHAIRPERSON KOO: I vote aye.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Council member--member
Palma.

COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: [off mic] I vote
aye.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Levin.

COUNCIL MEMBER: He stepped out for a
while.

LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Barron.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Permission to
explain my vote.

CHAIRPERSON KOO: [off mic] Yes, go
ahead.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I want to first
of all congratulate my colleague Council Member
Corney for pursuing the work that started so many
years ago. I want to commend all of those who fought
and maintained the battle and didn't give up, and I
do want to acknowledge the fact that as we often
times ask the city to make sure that they reference
significant people that you did make mention of
Milton Galamison who went on to become the chair of
the Board of Education. He was so significant in

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2 that battle for integration during that time, and I
3 vote aye.

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Kallos.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Aye.

6 LEGAL COUNSEL: The Resolution to
7 approved Land Use No. 336 is approved by a vote of 4
8 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative and 0
9 abstentions and referred to the full Land Use
10 Committee.

11 CHAIRPERSON KOO: We will keep the vote
12 open for another ten minutes. [background, comments]

13 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Levin.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I vote aye on all.

15 LEGAL COUNSEL: You can close the
16 hearing.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: This hearing is
18 adjourned. [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date March 5, 2016