

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND
ELECTIONS

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April 1, 2025
Start: 10:19 a.m.
Recess: 11:53 a.m.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Keith Powers, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Justin L. Brannan
Gale A. Brewer
Selvena N. Brooks-Powers
Amanda Farías
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.

A P P E A R A N C E S

Lauren Stossel, appointee to the New York City
Board of Corrections

Patricia Marthone, appointee to the New York City
Health and Hospitals Corporation

Leah Goodridge, reappointment as a member of the
City Planning Commission

Sharon Brown, Rose of Sharon Enterprises

1 COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS 3

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Check, check. This is a
3 microphone check for the Committee on Rules,
4 Privileges and Elections in the Committee Room
5 recorded on April 1, 2025. Check, check.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning, good
7 morning. Welcome to the New York City Council hearing
8 on the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections.

9 At this time, please silence all
10 electronics and do not approach the dais.

11 If you need any assistance, please
12 contact the Sergeant, and we will kindly assist you.

13 Thank you for your cooperation.

14 Chair, you may begin.

15 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: [GAVEL] Good morning,
16 and welcome to the meeting of the Committee on Rules,
17 Privileges and Elections. I'm City Council Member
18 Keith Powers, Chair of the Committee. Before we
19 begin, I'd like to introduce the other members of
20 this Committee who are present. We're joined by
21 Council Member Justin Brannan from Brooklyn. I
22 believe we're joined by Council Member Diana Ayala
23 online and Council Member Brooks-Powers online as
24 well, and we'll announce others as they join us.

25

2 I want to acknowledge the Committee
3 Counsel, Jeff Campagna, and the Committee Staff that
4 worked on the appointments that we'll hear today,
5 Chief Ethics Counsel Pearl Moore; Director of
6 Investigations Francesca Dellavecchia; and Deputy
7 Director of Investigations Alycia Vassell. Thank you
8 always to all of them for their great work.

9 Today, we'll be holding a public hearing
10 on three nominations for appointment and designation.
11 We'll be considering the nomination of Lauren Stossel
12 for appointment by the Council to serve as member of
13 the New York City Board of Corrections, the proposed
14 designation by the Council of Patricia Marthone for
15 appointment by the Mayor's Director of the New York
16 City Health and Hospitals Corporation, and the Public
17 Advocate's request for Council's advice and consent
18 in connection with his nomination of Leah Goodridge
19 for reappointment as a member of the City Planning
20 Commission. Each candidate will be invited to make an
21 opening statement before we move on to Member
22 questions. After all candidates have appeared, we
23 will hear public testimony.

24 Our first public hearing will be on the
25 nomination of Lauren Stossel for appointment by the

2 Council as a member of the New York City Board of
3 Corrections. You may join us here at the dais.

4 And I wanted to just congratulate all
5 three on their appointments and nomination to
6 reappointment.

7 The Board of Corrections established by
8 Section 626 of the New York City Charter is
9 responsible for the inspection and visitation at any
10 time of all institutions and facilities under the
11 jurisdiction of the Department of Correction as well
12 as the evaluation of DOC performance. BOC must
13 establish minimum standards for the care, custody,
14 correction, treatment, supervision, discipline of all
15 persons held or confined under the jurisdiction of
16 the Department, and it shall promulgate such minimum
17 standards and rules and regulations after giving the
18 Mayor and Commissioner an opportunity to review and
19 comment on the proposed standards, amendments, or
20 additions to such standards. The BOC consists of nine
21 members, three appointed by the Mayor, three by the
22 Council, and three by the Mayor on nomination jointly
23 by the presiding Justices of the Appellate Division
24 of the Supreme Court for the first and second
25 judicial departments. Appointments are made by three

2 respective appointing authorities on a rotating basis
3 to fill any vacancy. The Chairman of the Board is
4 designated by the Mayor from its members.

5 We're joined by Council Member Farías as
6 well. Welcome.

7 These members are appointed for six-year
8 terms. A vacancy is filled for the remainder of the
9 unexpired term. The BOC may appoint an Executive
10 Director to serve at its pleasure with such duties
11 and responsibilities as the Board may assign, and
12 other professional clerical and support personnel
13 within appropriations for such purpose. The BOC is
14 required to establish procedures for the hearings of
15 grievances, complaints, or requests for assistance by
16 or on a behalf of any person held or confined under
17 the jurisdiction of the Department or by any employee
18 of the Department. BOC also issues a report at least
19 every three years on issues related to the
20 Department's grievance process. Such reports must
21 incorporate direct feedback from incarcerated
22 individuals and proposed recommendations for relevant
23 improvements and include a section of recommendations
24 on how to improve the grievance process for
25 vulnerable populations, including incarcerated

2 individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual,
3 transgender, intersex, and gender non-conforming.
4 Such report must be submitted to the Council and
5 posted on the Board's website.

6 If appointed by the Council, Lauren
7 Stossel will be eligible to serve the remainder of a
8 six-year term ending on February 1, 2029. Welcome and
9 congratulations.

10 Please raise your right hand to be sworn
11 in.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL KINGSLEY: Do you affirm
13 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
14 the truth in your testimony before this Committee and
15 in answer to all Council Member questions.

16 LAUREN STOSSEL: I do.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CAMPAGNA: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Is your microphone
19 on?

20 LAUREN STOSSEL: Is that working?

21 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: You got it. Thanks
22 much. You may offer testimony. We'll ask questions
23 afterwards, but you may give an opening statement.

24 LAUREN STOSSEL: Good morning, Council
25 Members. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with

2 you today. My name is Lauren Stossel. I'm a forensic
3 and clinical psychiatrist. I am honored to be
4 considered for appointment to the New York City Board
5 of Correction.

6 I spent much of the last decade caring
7 for mentally ill individuals working their way
8 through New York City's complex legal system. In
9 2015, I was the first psychiatric resident to
10 complete an elective rotation with Correctional
11 Health Services, the agency that provides healthcare
12 to detainees in the New York City jail system. I
13 spent much of my final year of residency providing
14 medication management and psychotherapy to
15 individuals with serious mental illness on one of
16 Rikers Island's first specialty mental health units.
17 I went on to complete a forensic psychiatry
18 fellowship at NYU, where I learned about the core
19 issues at the interface between mental health
20 treatment and the criminal legal system in New York
21 City. After completing my fellowship, I joined CHS as
22 a supervising psychiatrist on CAPS, a specialized
23 housing unit for individuals with serious mental
24 illness who commit violent infractions in the jail
25 setting. For the next six years, I worked for CHS in

2 a variety of capacities, including as a senior
3 psychiatrist in general population clinics and
4 specialty therapeutic housing units, providing
5 psychiatric care and supervising other providers, as
6 director of psychiatric education, developing a
7 training program for psychiatric prescribers from a
8 variety of disciplines, as medical director for
9 mental health, overseeing the prescriber service, and
10 most recently as chief of mental health, overseeing
11 the provision of mental healthcare throughout the
12 jail system and working with CHS and DOC leadership
13 and oversight stakeholders to advance care standards.
14 I worked at Rikers through some of the most turbulent
15 years in its recent history, during which we managed
16 the COVID pandemic, a sharp rise in in-custody
17 deaths, including suicides and overdoses, and
18 critical staffing shortages in custody and health
19 services. In my clinical work, I provided direct
20 psychiatric care to patients managing complex trauma,
21 severe mental illness, and the psychological effects
22 of confinement, all while navigating an incredibly
23 complex maze of legal variables between arrest and
24 adjudication. As an administrator, I worked to
25 implement structural changes aimed at improving

2 access to care, strengthening suicide prevention
3 protocols, and promoting interagency coordination. I
4 have witnessed firsthand the violence and despair
5 that catalyzed the Close Rikers movement. I have also
6 witnessed the ways that effective, strong, and
7 competent leadership and thoughtful data-driven
8 policy and practice can improve health outcomes and
9 promote dignity in an extremely difficult place. I
10 have seen the enormous impact changes in policy have
11 for those who live and work on Rikers Island. As
12 such, I cannot imagine a more serious responsibility
13 than that of the Board of Correction. Their
14 independent, comprehensive oversight and ability to
15 ensure thorough transparency and accountability are
16 essential in safeguarding the human rights of
17 individuals in custody. As a member of the Board, my
18 clinical experience and awareness of the realities on
19 the ground would afford me a rare degree of insight
20 in interpreting data, reviewing conditions, and
21 making recommendations for change. I am deeply
22 committed to accountability and reform in the New
23 York City jail system and to the health, safety, and
24 dignity of my former patients and colleagues.

2 I am honored and grateful for the trust
3 you have placed in me in considering me for this
4 position, and I look forward to taking your
5 questions.

6 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you, and thank
7 you for your service as well, and a tough challenge,
8 of course.

9 Could you just talk to us why you want to
10 serve on the Board of Corrections?

11 LAUREN STOSSEL: Yeah. I think
12 transparency, accountability, and humane treatment in
13 our jail system is just one of the most important
14 things to me. In my work with CHS, I was working in
15 direct service and policy development, and I think
16 being able to serve on the Board would really allow
17 me to work towards promoting solutions that
18 prioritize safety and autonomy and stability and just
19 have crucial oversight to be able to advocate for
20 meaningful improvements in jail conditions in the
21 city.

22 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thanks. And in your
23 experience working inside our city jails, can you
24 talk to us what, especially on the mental health
25 needs, what you see today are the biggest challenges

2 inside of our city jails, and potentially how you
3 might on the Board use your power to help resolve
4 those?

5 LAUREN STOSSEL: I think jail is one of
6 the worst places to be if you're mentally ill. I
7 think really people who have serious mental illness
8 who commit crimes ideally should be in other settings
9 where treatment is prioritized, so you know that that
10 was something that was really outside the scope of
11 what I was doing when I was at CHS, but would be
12 something that I would want to continue to advocate
13 for. I think there is a lot more that we could be
14 doing within the jail system now to make sure that
15 people with serious mental illness are getting more
16 treatment and are housed in areas where their access
17 to treatment is improved. And I think there are
18 there's also a lot that we can do to make jail in
19 general an environment that is less likely to create
20 de novo mental illness in people who are not coming
21 in with serious mental illness, just to make it a
22 place that is less violent and more respectful and
23 encourages people to act in ways that are sort of in
24 keeping with their best selves rather than reacting
25 to daily trauma.

2 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: When you talk about
3 some ways that we can make sure that people have
4 easier access to mental healthcare and improve on it,
5 can you give more specifics?

6 LAUREN STOSSEL: Yeah, so I think the PACE
7 program works really well at Rikers. That's Program
8 for Accelerated Clinical Effectiveness, and it
9 cohorts our sickest individuals in environments that
10 are meant to more closely approximate a hospital
11 level of care, so wide open spaces, places where
12 people can go to be by themselves when they want to,
13 but generally sort of reducing lock-in time, presence
14 of supportive individuals who can help with sort of
15 daily crises that arise, more flexible medication
16 management schedules so that medications, if they're
17 not taken at the time that they're generally offered,
18 can be held and offered again later. And ideally,
19 although this wasn't happening when I was there
20 toward the end, steady officers who know the
21 individuals well and really at its best can help so
22 much with those de-escalations and really partner
23 with mental health staff to create an environment
24 that feels therapeutic and respectful, and I think
25 being able to expand that program and also expand the

2 mental health housing footprint generally for
3 individuals who may not have serious mental illness
4 but who do have sort of unique mental health needs
5 and targeting, you know, cohorting individuals and
6 targeting programming and housing units towards those
7 needs has demonstrated itself to be really effective,
8 and I think we could be doing more of that.

9 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Well, you say that
10 there was, but there's not steady staffing around
11 officers right now. One, you're talking about having
12 like the consistent same people who are there, who
13 understand the challenges in there, and why is that
14 not happening today?

15 LAUREN STOSSEL: When I left CHS in 2023,
16 there were not enough officers on those units, so,
17 you know, we had sort of an escalation program where
18 if there were two officers or fewer, there's supposed
19 to be three at least, if there were two officers or
20 fewer on any of those units, we would try to escalate
21 and DOC would do their best to, you know, scramble
22 and get officers for those units, but the staffing
23 shortage made it really challenging, and, you know, I
24 do think in many ways those posts are covetable
25 because those units tend to be safer and there's a

2 real sort of camaraderie and those groups work really
3 well together. My understanding is that it was a
4 staffing issue, but I think certainly something that
5 DOC wanted to work towards.

6 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Got it. If you had to
7 make one change inside of our city jails right now
8 around mental health, what would it be?

9 LAUREN STOSSEL: Sorry. One change?

10 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: If you had to make
11 one change from the Board of Corrections, if you
12 joined the Board of Corrections around mental health,
13 what would it be?

14 LAUREN STOSSEL: I think probably
15 something that CHS was working towards when I left.
16 We had ideas for two units. One was called GATE,
17 which was designed to be a substance use unit, and
18 one was called STEP, which was designed to be a
19 therapeutic housing unit between general population
20 and mental observation. I think those units would
21 have gone a very, very long way towards cohorting
22 groups of individuals who were going to live and work
23 well together and would have increased access to care
24 because mental health treatment providers would have
25 been able to provide care safely on those units.

2 Those are people who tend to bounce back and forth
3 between general population and mental observation
4 units. They take an enormous amount of resources from
5 Department of Corrections and Correctional Health
6 Services, and having an opportunity to cohort those
7 individuals together and provide care directly on
8 those housing units, I think would have gone a really
9 long way towards creating stability in the mental
10 health population in the jails overall.

11 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Got it. And just a
12 final question here, and then I'll pass over to any
13 Colleagues who have questions.

14 Obviously, the City is undertaking an
15 effort here to open up the borough-based jail
16 facilities and, you know, newly designed facilities
17 that I would suppose have an opportunity to provide
18 different access to clinical services and mental
19 health services inside the jail facility. Can you
20 talk a little bit about, and I may be wrong about
21 that, by the way, but just curious to see your
22 thoughts on that and where there might be
23 opportunities or what your recommendations would be
24 inside of new facilities about how they might treat
25

2 mental health differently or how they might provide
3 better care.

4 LAUREN STOSSEL: Yeah. I think it's a huge
5 opportunity. I hope it's an opportunity that we're
6 not going to squander as a City. I toured the
7 outposted units that are being developed at Bellevue.
8 They were under construction. They're beautiful. You
9 know, they look like the Norwegian prisons.
10 Everything is wood. There's a lot of natural light. I
11 think that environment makes a really big difference,
12 you know, therapeutically for people who are
13 struggling with mental health crises. I think, you
14 know, there's a lot that we can do in terms of
15 physical plant. The physical infrastructure at Rikers
16 is crumbling. It's just incredibly difficult. One of
17 the questions that you asked in the pre-hearing
18 questions was about getting people to take more
19 advantage of programming. I think I didn't include
20 this in my response, but one issue with programming
21 was that there was nowhere to do it. You know, there
22 just are no big open spacious rooms where people feel
23 like they can sit around and actually be educated
24 about something or engage in sort of a group therapy.
25 So, I think there are a lot of opportunities, you

2 know, physically. I think also having the borough-
3 based jails in, you know, in the city itself already
4 makes a big difference in terms of visits, in terms
5 of legal access, and I think we do have an
6 opportunity by shrinking, you know, the footprint of
7 each place to really have cultural change, and I
8 think what I would like most to see would be more
9 positive reinforcement. Positive reinforcement, you
10 know, incentives really are not part of DOC's
11 programming. It's really very, you know, punishment-
12 based. You break a rule, you get punished, and I
13 think that really creates a culture of learned
14 helplessness among incarcerated individuals. I really
15 believe that if people had more opportunities to rise
16 to the occasion, to demonstrate that they are able to
17 stay in behavioral control, that they are able to
18 help others, that they are able to sort of
19 participate meaningfully in a community, that they
20 would, you know, if they felt that they were able to
21 earn privileges by doing that, and I think because
22 the borough-based jails are at least an opportunity
23 to sort of start from scratch in some ways, that's
24 something that I would really love to see.

2 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. And we're
3 joined by Council Member Salamanca here as well.

4 I actually have one more question. We've
5 heard stories and we've seen high-profile incidents
6 over the last couple years, certainly in this past
7 year, one of those in my District, where individuals
8 leaving custody are, you know, essentially sent with,
9 I believe is today, I don't, you would know, probably
10 have more clarity here, but if I, my recollection is
11 folks leaving with like a need for continued care,
12 very few places are getting it, they're sort of
13 released without any sort of plan for care. Some are
14 getting, I think, a 14-day prescription and no
15 continued plan to go beyond that. It seems like
16 there's just like a major gap between in-care and
17 custody. We talk about the PACE units, you talk about
18 other units, they're getting higher staff ratios,
19 they're getting adherence to prescriptions or other
20 treatment that they need. It's an environment where
21 there is a sort of structure and support even as,
22 even inside the sort of environment we're talking
23 about, and then they are released and released
24 without any of that or very little of that, and sent
25 in some cases to the next address, which might be the

2 Bellevue Men Shelter on 30th Street or another
3 facility where no prescriptions, no treatment, no
4 continued care, no, really nothing, it feels like
5 nothing. And maybe predictably, we've seen some high-
6 profile acts where individuals have caused a serious,
7 inflicted serious pain and violence on people, have
8 caused major incidents without intensity, but even
9 beyond those incidents, there's individuals who are
10 suffering and aren't getting care, and streets,
11 subways, shelters become the de facto place for them
12 to go. Feels like that gap is a major challenge for
13 us facing the City, but not being discussed enough.
14 What recommendations do you have to help close that
15 gap?

16 LAUREN STOSSEL: Yeah. So, I mean, I think
17 the housing insecurity piece is really huge, and I
18 think, you know, in terms of the re-entry services
19 available at Rikers currently, my understanding is
20 that people who have serious mental illness are given
21 a 14-day medication supply and an appointment. So, my
22 understanding is that they do actually leave with an
23 appointment within those two weeks where they can get
24 engaged into community care. Many of them also have
25 case management services with CRAN, which is a really

2 excellent organization that helps with formerly
3 incarcerated individuals and helps sort of connect
4 them to services. And then, you know, people who do
5 not have serious mental illness, I think, get more
6 like a referral and a seven-day supply of medication.
7 There's always a refill at a pharmacy, so technically
8 it's a full month of medication. And, you know, I
9 think recently we also started giving people cell
10 phones to help make sure that they can get connected
11 with those case managers. So, I think there have been
12 sort of incremental improvements to try to make sure
13 that people have the support that they need. But I
14 think what's missing is more robust community mental
15 health services where the support can really be
16 wraparound, where, you know, people don't get, you
17 know, a SPOA application that recommends them for
18 supportive housing, and then they get on a waitlist
19 where it could be two years, you know, while they're
20 waiting for a place to live. It's really challenging
21 to do strong, you know, care navigation from a
22 shelter. And I think, you know, expanding supportive
23 housing, expanding not only mental healthcare, but
24 also programming. There are so few day treatment
25 programs where people with serious mental illness

2 have a place that they can go. You know, Fountain
3 House is the one that is really popular, and I do
4 clinical care at Kings County now. Everybody gets
5 referred to Fountain House, but it's the only place.
6 You know, I think people need not just a place to
7 live and medication, but they need a way to fill
8 their time and a sense that they're connected to
9 people who care about what happens to them so that
10 they can care about what happens to them also. And I
11 think that's, you know, really important for people
12 who don't have strong family connections. So, I
13 think, you know, there's been a real sort of pruning
14 away of the inpatient beds. Inpatient stays are very
15 short, and the drop-off, you know, similarly from
16 PACE unit in a jail setting to, you know, referral to
17 a psychiatrist or a therapist in the community is
18 huge. Similarly, after a two-week stay where you're
19 being treated for an acute exacerbation of
20 schizophrenia in a hospital, and then you leave and
21 you're going to a community mental health clinic
22 where you get to see a therapist once every three
23 weeks and a psychiatrist once every two months, it's
24 not enough. And so, you know, I think creating more
25 robust community mental health services, residential

2 treatment, things like that, in the city would be,
3 you know, the right sort of direction to go, if that
4 makes sense.

5 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Got it. Appreciate
6 it. Thanks for answering those questions.

7 Do we have Colleagues with questions?
8 Yeah. Council Member Salamanca.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Good morning.
10 How are you?

11 LAUREN STOSSEL: Good morning.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So, welcome and
13 congratulations on the nomination. So, I represent
14 the South Bronx. There is a borough-based jail that
15 is coming to my, well, it's not my District, it's the
16 border of my District. It's in Council Member Ayala's
17 District. What role do you see yourself playing in
18 this borough-based jail, given the fact that I don't
19 see it being completed in 2027 or 2028?

20 LAUREN STOSSEL: I think it would be great
21 to be able to be involved in the planning, to be able
22 to do walkthroughs of the footprint, to be able to
23 speak with DOC leadership about what the plans are
24 for both the physical plant and then also the
25 programming that's going to be offered there, to meet

2 with individuals from DOC leadership who are going to
3 be in charge of that facility. And I would also be
4 interested in speaking with, you know, community
5 stakeholders in the area about what kinds of things
6 they're concerned about a jail, you know, coming to
7 their neighborhood.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: All right.
9 Well, it's challenging because the community doesn't
10 want it. That's for sure. But it was something that
11 they're getting against their will. And it's
12 unfortunate because directly across the street from
13 that borough-based jail, the Administration put in a
14 2,200 men migrant shelter there. So it's a very hot
15 topic in that immediate area.

16 Does your position have oversight over
17 the juvenile detention centers as well?

18 LAUREN STOSSEL: I don't know the answer
19 to that.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Chair, do we
21 know?

22 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Does the DOC have?
23 Yes.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: They do.

2 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: The two juvenile
3 facilities? Yes.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: All right. So,
5 I have a juvenile detention center in my District
6 called Horizons Detention Center. Once, I'm pretty
7 sure you're going to be okay. You will get appointed.
8 I would love to have a conversation or even may have
9 a walkthrough with you because we are having issues
10 at the Horizons Detention Center in the South Bronx,
11 and it's a concern. And it's all in the same
12 community board, Community Board 1. So they have
13 reasons why they're upset with all these services
14 coming in with the opioid issue that they have. And
15 on top of that, they are one of the community boards
16 with the most homeless shelters in the entire City of
17 New York.

18 Finally, I'll leave you with this. There
19 was a floating jail in my Council District called the
20 Bars, the Vernon C. Baines Center, and I'm happy that
21 the Administration decommissioned it and we're going
22 to give that land back to the community. But
23 ultimately, I think that, you know, what the concerns
24 that we have here is, you know, closing down Rikers
25 is a priority for us. What we're going to do with

2 that land, it's something that, you know, I guess is
3 a land use matter issue and we have to move forward
4 with that, but I think that as a Commissioner, it's
5 important that the Commission constantly have
6 communications after the jail is built I would say
7 the first five to ten years to settle the community
8 because there's an anger, there's a fear that crime
9 is going to increase. I don't think crime is going to
10 increase. I think crime is going to decrease having
11 that facility there. But the reality is that that
12 community for years has been dumped on and having
13 this facility being brought into that community and
14 yet not real infrastructure being brought in is a
15 major issue. And it's just something that I think you
16 should have in mind as you assume this position.

17 LAUREN STOSSEL: Yeah. I appreciate you
18 explaining that. And I think, you know, feeling
19 dumped on, I think, is certainly a something that
20 folks at Rikers talk about a lot also. And that's a
21 terrible feeling, you know, to feel that you don't
22 have agency and the ability to sort of control your
23 environment, and so I certainly can empathize with
24 that. And I think speaking with communities about,
25 you know, what is it about having this facility here

2 that makes you feel scared or makes you feel
3 concerned about increasing crime rates. I think
4 certainly the goal for everyone is to make the city
5 safer so I'd be happy to speak with you more about
6 it.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: Thank you, Chair.

8 I just have a quick question on how you perceive your
9 role being, like at least coming from the mental
10 health perspective into this Board, how you hope to
11 facilitate larger conversations and dialogue around
12 where we hope to see some of the policies
13 implemented, if you've already kind of seen from
14 outside looking in how the Board functions and how
15 members or member priorities are able to be motivated
16 or utilized, and then what you see in either a
17 passive or proactive, reactive way from your specific
18 perspective. I was super appreciative of a lot of
19 your responses to your questionnaire. I thought they
20 were really intentional and deliberate and also a
21 future forward with where I think this Body
22 particularly would like to see the Department of
23 Corrections go so I'd love to hear just your
24 perspective on that.

2 LAUREN STOSSEL: I hope I can answer this
3 question adequately. I mean, I think my insight into
4 sort of the inner workings of the Board of
5 Corrections is pretty limited. As an outsider, I
6 think we were really appreciative of the efforts that
7 they made to try to be proactive about COVID, you
8 know, asking for a plan, trying to sort of get
9 accountability, that steps of the plan were being
10 followed. I like that model of sort of saying, we'd
11 like your leadership to get together and bring us a
12 plan. I'd like to see that done with things like
13 violence reduction and something related to a culture
14 change for the borough-based jails, a plan to make
15 sure that we're not repeating some of the same
16 mistakes that have been sort of ongoing at Rikers. I
17 certainly think it's important to listen before you
18 start to talk. So, you know, I have my own ideas
19 about what I'd like to see, but I'd like to get more
20 of an understanding of what the Board is prioritizing
21 right now and, you know, what they're thinking of as
22 being sort of major issues, what the culture is sort
23 of among the Board Members, and where there are
24 tensions. I think certainly there have been sort of
25 tense relationships between the board and DOC at

2 points over the last several years, and I think
3 nothing gets done without a collaborative working
4 relationship so I'd like to try to sort of do a
5 little bit of a needs assessment before, you know,
6 jumping in.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIÁS: That makes sense.
8 Thank you. Okay.

9 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. Thanks so
10 much. Appreciate it.

11 Our next public hearing for today will be
12 on the designation by the Council of Patricia
13 Marthone for reappointment by the Mayor to Health and
14 Hospitals Corporation. You may join us up here on the
15 dais. Is Marthone the right pronunciation?

16 PATRICIA MARTHONE: Yes, Marthone, yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Well, first of all,
18 welcome. Congratulations.

19 PATRICIA MARTHONE: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Ms. Marthone, is that
21 right? Yeah.

22 PATRICIA MARTHONE: It's actually Dr.
23 Marthone.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Oh, doctor. I'm
3 sorry, doctor. Apologies. Dr. Marthone.
4 Congratulations.

5 PATRICIA MARTHONE: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Dr. Marthone was
7 first designated by the Council in 2021 to serve the
8 remainder of a five-year term that expired on March
9 20, 2023. She has been serving in holdover capacity
10 since then. If designated by the Council and
11 reappointed by the Mayor, she will serve the
12 remainder of a five-year term to expire on March 20,
13 2028. The New York City Health and Hospitals
14 Corporation, commonly known as HHC or H and H, was
15 constituted pursuant to Chapter 1016 of the laws of
16 1969 as a public benefit corporation whose purposes
17 are to provide and deliver high-quality dignified and
18 comprehensive care and treatment for the ill and
19 infirm, both physical and mental, particularly to
20 those who can least afford such services, extend
21 equally to all served comprehensive health services
22 of the highest quality in an atmosphere of human care
23 and respect, promote and protect as both innovator
24 and advocate the health, welfare, and safety of the
25 people of the State of New York and the City of New

2 York, and join with other health workers and
3 communities in a partnership to promote and protect
4 health in its full sense, the total physical, mental,
5 and social well-being of the people. As provided by
6 law, a Board of Directors consisting of 16 members
7 administers HHC. The law establishing HHC provides
8 that of the 16 members of following officials or
9 their successors shall be ex officio members, the
10 Administrator of the Health Services Administration,
11 the Commissioner of Health, the Commissioner of
12 Mental Health, the Administrator of the Human
13 Resource Administration, the Deputy Mayor, and City
14 Administrator. Ten additional Directors are appointed
15 by the Mayor, five of whom are designated by the City
16 Council. The President of HHC serves as the 16th
17 Director. Term of Director, other than those serving
18 ex officio or at the pleasure of the Board, is for
19 five years. Mayors shall fill any vacancy which may
20 occur by the reason of death, resignation, or
21 otherwise in a manner consistent with the original
22 appointment. Directors do not receive compensation
23 for their services but are reimbursed for actual
24 necessary expenses occurred by them in their
25 performance of their official duties.

2 I want to welcome Dr. Marthone, and when
3 you're ready you may raise your right hand to be
4 sworn in.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CAMPAGNA: Do you affirm
6 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
7 the truth in your testimony before this Committee and
8 an answer to all Council Member questions?

9 PATRICIA MARTHONE: I do.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CAMPAGNA: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you.

12 Congratulations on your nomination and you may give
13 an opening statement.

14 PATRICIA MARTHONE: Good morning, Chair
15 Keith Powers, Honorable Diana Ayala, Honorable Amanda
16 Fariás, Honorable Selvena Brooks-Powers, and
17 Honorable Justin Brannan.

18 Thank you for having me here today. As
19 Health and Hospital Corporation, H and H, means a lot
20 to me. Representing the Borough of Brooklyn on the
21 Board of Directors has given me the privilege to
22 extend my hand to care for our families, our friends,
23 our neighbors, and even strangers with dignity and
24 love. When I came to you in 2021, I spoke on my
25 father being a paranoid schizophrenic and how my

2 subconscious envisions him being reflected in every
3 unhoused person that may appear to be suffering from
4 mental health issues that crossed my path. My
5 concerns for our city's unhoused and mentally ill
6 transected with possible services H and H has had to
7 offer and was one of my focuses. I promised to be a
8 Board Member that would be present in every way and
9 to bring my personal experiences and intentionality
10 for positive growth in the execution of the mission
11 and purpose on the H and H Board.

12 In my tenure on the board, I personally
13 visited our mobile programs providing care to
14 unhoused New Yorkers, our housing programs and
15 services, our hospitals, our clinics, our nursing
16 homes, and attended public forums to hear concerns
17 brought to our H and H Board directly from the
18 public, all to ensure the understanding of what we
19 are doing well or not and demanding re-evaluation,
20 revision, accountability, and follow-up reporting. I
21 want you to know the tireless efforts and work of
22 those assigned to the reception of new arrivals were
23 doubly true to our mission and delivered medical
24 care, housing, and comfort with grace and kindness.

2 My fellow Board Members and I are
3 constantly searching to produce better outcomes in
4 maternal health and mental health. For example,
5 through the lens of a special committee, we examined
6 maternal health issues to ensure all the (INAUDIBLE)
7 care and affected outcomes were being addressed and
8 decisions identifying challenges with geolocation and
9 access to quick interventions for physical and mental
10 crises led to immediate action to understand and
11 remove barriers in real time to create a plan for a
12 permanent solution.

13 I am honored and humbled for the
14 continued opportunity to serve our City in this
15 capacity. As in my time on the H and H board, the
16 dedication and sincerity for improving outcomes in
17 physical and mental health in New York City's
18 population are best reflected upon the words of John
19 Green. He openly shares his struggles with severe
20 anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorder and wrote
21 in his novel, *Looking for Alaska*, we need never be
22 hopeless because we can never be irreparably broken.
23 I might add, when we have H and H.

24 Thank you for your time and
25 consideration.

2 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. Thanks for
3 being here. I just want to do a few questions to go
4 ahead. I just wanted to check, I know you're an
5 Executive Vice President of 1199, representing
6 employees within H and H. Have you asked for guidance
7 from the Conflicts of Interest Board just about how
8 you might do your job alongside doing H and H?

9 PATRICIA MARTHONE: Thank you for that
10 question and absolutely. Initially, when I was
11 appointed last time, I was on the verge of changing
12 titles and that was brought up to them that I was
13 switching this to this title, and what I represent
14 are community-based organizations and pharmacies like
15 Rite-Aid and Walgreens, which do not intersect with
16 this at all. And if ever I am in the room or I know
17 something's on the calendar to be discussed that
18 might just potentially somehow even minutely, you
19 know, intersect with 1199, I would remove myself from
20 that conversation completely.

21 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Got it. I appreciate
22 that. Just in your experience here so far and as
23 looking ahead, you know, and many of us who cherish
24 our public health institutions, I'm proud to
25 represent Bellevue Hospital in my District. My mom

2 was a nurse there growing up. I know how important it
3 is to providing care to our whole city and in
4 addition to my community. Can you just talk about
5 what you see right now as the largest challenges
6 facing our public healthcare system here in the city?

7 PATRICIA MARTHONE: I would say mental
8 health. One, it's very difficult to retain public
9 health, you know, psychiatrists or psychologists who
10 are going to help in the treatment of care and,
11 because of that, it is hard to schedule. Even those
12 that would appear for their appointments have
13 trouble, you know, getting an appointment that would
14 be done in a timely manner. So, therefore, people
15 that are receiving treatment are receiving it over
16 time more distantly than normally would. Two, those
17 that are unhoused and homeless have challenges
18 accessing that care as well. You know, we do have
19 some show vans that do provide care in the community
20 but, you know, it needs to be close to where they are
21 and we do not have necessarily all of the resources
22 possible to have show vans in every area of New York
23 City but increasing those would be helpful so that
24 those individuals that do receive those 14-day
25 prescriptions when they do go to the emergency room

2 for care have a place closer to them to go and get
3 those refilled and can be sent directly to the
4 pharmacy but they have to know where the van is. The
5 van can go looking for them but it's, you know,
6 obviously it's not easy so it would be great to have
7 more of those so that they can quickly access that.
8 The third thing with the challenge is, and I'm very
9 sympathetic to this issue, is having sometimes to,
10 against one's will, have you, you know, brought into
11 the hospital for care. Sometimes it's for the safety
12 of the individual and the public and, to me, it just
13 must be done with compassion, and I think we can do
14 more and do better to make sure everyone involved in
15 that interaction with that individual knows how to
16 de-escalate to the utmost of their ability and handle
17 them with care and compassion till we can get them
18 back on track.

19 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thanks for that. And
20 obviously that issue is top of mind for a lot of
21 folks right now, and I know our State Legislature and
22 others discussing exactly whether there should be a
23 change or recalibration around some of those policies
24 and laws. What changes do you see within the care
25 system and also within the commitment laws that would

2 be necessary or helpful to make sure individuals get
3 the care they deserve?

4 PATRICIA MARTHONE: I mean, I will be very
5 frank with you. I do understand why the City pivoted
6 the way we did to try to make sure that individuals
7 that were going through crises that would not
8 cooperate in their own care would directly be brought
9 in for a path to care, and I don't believe that's the
10 best of all ways to do business with individuals in
11 mental health crises. But having had a father that
12 suffered from paranoid schizophrenia, I fully and
13 completely understand why that happens and why it
14 must be done. I believe that, again, and I'm going to
15 go back to my previous statement, trying to increase
16 the training, and I know we've done different things
17 in New York with training police officers and
18 everybody trying to really increase the training of
19 all individuals involved in that, that would be very
20 helpful. The other thing is some of the panic that
21 happens in these emergency situations come from the
22 families and the friends that find the person in
23 crises, and I believe us doing better in terms of
24 public health announcements around mental health and
25 how people can activate help before it's too late or

2 before it gets too far is very important and
3 something we should truly consider embarking on.

4 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thanks. Obviously,
5 there's a lot of anxiety and nervousness right now
6 about the state of federal funding on many of our
7 healthcare institutions, whether they're private or
8 public institutions here. Can you share with us any
9 insight so far or any thoughts on how federal changes
10 are going to or might impact the ability to provide
11 care at H and H?

12 PATRICIA MARTHONE: Sure, I think it's
13 going to affect CMS greatly, which will affect us in
14 New York. You know, it's unfortunate that as is the
15 reimbursement for Medicaid is not high enough that
16 we're getting 70 percent on the dollar and we would
17 be looking to increase that versus decreasing that,
18 but it will decrease and I think H and H has done a
19 good job in trying to, despite what happens with the
20 federal government, despite what happens to
21 contributions that they can get from any source, try
22 to provide equal care for all as much as possible.
23 And I've seen them in my tenure levy what they have
24 to try to treat as many people as we can and as well
25 as we can. Am I concerned that that's not going to

2 happen, you know, when the money starts to dwindle? I
3 think we've been in crises before and we know how to
4 handle ourselves independent of the federal
5 government.

6 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Yep. Thanks. And in
7 your experience, what are changes that you would like
8 to see happen within our public healthcare system
9 right now, how we deliver, provide care to
10 individuals? Obviously, H and H is the backbone of so
11 many of our healthcare institutions here and
12 healthcare in the city, providing care to, you know,
13 whether it's our emergency workers here who might get
14 hurt or injured on the job or worse to, you know,
15 ordinary New Yorkers who need that safety net. It's
16 critical... I'm joined by Council Member Brewer here as
17 well. So, any thoughts on ways to improve services
18 and care and things you'd like to see happen during
19 your tenure on the Board?

20 PATRICIA MARTHONE: I'm going to go back
21 to mental health. I think mental health with H and H,
22 being able to improve on our services and access to
23 the daily therapy and psychiatrists would be of
24 benefit to all of New York City. I think some of the
25 challenges people face with even their teens and not

2 being able to resolve those issues fast enough
3 because they don't have access to having those
4 evaluations done and then treatment plans is
5 problematic for us in New York, let alone the adult
6 that has had mental illness their whole life and did
7 not or has not understood or felt good in a very long
8 time to be able to maintain their own health and that
9 status. To not have that continuous access to mental
10 health providers is a great problem in the field, and
11 it's not necessarily anyone's fault because I believe
12 this is a problem straight across the United States
13 right now, but whatever we can do to encourage people
14 to come and be part of our solution, I would highly
15 suggest we do that. I mean, I don't know if you are
16 aware or not that we do use every mode and method
17 that we can to engage individuals. They do online
18 treatment, they do everything they possibly can, but
19 it's still not enough and that's unfortunate so we do
20 need to move that needle as far as we can to also
21 help people stay unhoused and off the street that
22 have mental illness as well.

23 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Great. Well, thank
24 you. Congratulations on your nomination.

25 Questions? Council Member Brewer?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I've been
3 listening online. I teach at Hunter College this
4 morning and actually mental health comes up from the
5 students about all the challenges they face.

6 My question is just, and I don't think it
7 got asked if it did tell me, Correctional Health at
8 Rikers, 50 beds at Bellevue, some at Woodhull, some
9 in the Bronx. Does that come up? Is it happening? Do
10 you have any discussion about that on the Board,
11 about these beds because they're very slow in coming
12 online.

13 PATRICIA MARTHONE: Forgive me if I don't
14 say something that I think maybe I'm not allowed to
15 say that I know is public, but I do believe that,
16 one, these are services that are increasing because
17 there are spaces being built out for them. But other
18 than that, I do not know if I can speak to any other
19 interaction. I do know they exist and I do know that
20 we have that. Please forgive me for that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
22 much.

23 PATRICIA MARTHONE: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. Any
25 questions?

2 Okay, thank you. Thanks for being with
3 us.

4 Our next public hearing will be on a
5 nomination for the City Planning Commission. Pursuant
6 to sections 31 and 192 of the New York City Charter
7 in a letter dated May 18, 2025, Public Advocate
8 Jumaane Williams requested the City's Council's
9 advice and consent for the proposed reappointment of
10 Leah Goodridge, a resident of Brooklyn, to serve a
11 five-year term as member of the City Planning
12 Commission.

13 Before I introduce the candidate, I'll
14 review the functions and membership qualifications of
15 the CPC. If reappointed, Ms. Goodridge will serve a
16 five-year term beginning on July 1st, 2025, expiring
17 on June 30th, 2030. The City Planning Commission is
18 responsible for the conduct of planning relating to
19 the orderly growth, improvement, and future
20 development of the City, including adequate and
21 appropriate resources for the housing, business
22 industry, transportation, distribution, recreation,
23 culture, comfort, convenience, health, and welfare of
24 its population. The CPC is also responsible for the
25 review of and has veto power over all proposals to

2 change the zoning map, the city map, and the text of
3 the zoning resolution, site selections for City
4 capital projects, all major concessions, proposed
5 franchises and revocable consents the Department of
6 City Planning determines would have land use impacts,
7 proposed housing and urban renewal plans pursuant to
8 state and federal law, sales acquisitions, leases, or
9 other dispositions of real property by the City, and
10 the granting of special permits pursuant to the
11 zoning resolution. CPC oversees the implementation of
12 laws that require all environmental reviews of
13 actions taken by the City, in particular City
14 Environmental Quality Review, State Environmental
15 Quality Review Act, and the National Environmental
16 Policy Act. The CPC assists the Mayor and other
17 officials in developing the 10-year capital strategy,
18 the 4-year capital program, as well as the annual
19 statement of needs, and is also responsible for
20 various rules including establishing the minimum
21 standards for certification of applications subject
22 to the Uniform Land Use Review Process, commonly
23 known as ULURP, establish the minimum standards and
24 procedure requirements for community boards, borough
25 presidents, borough boards, and Commission itself in

2 the exercise of their duties and responsibilities in
3 ULURP, establishing specific time periods for pre-
4 certification review of applications subject to
5 ULURP, establishing procedures for environmental
6 reviews required by law, and the preparation of
7 environmental assessment statements and environmental
8 impacts statements, establishing the minimum
9 standards for the form and content of 197-A plans,
10 enlisting major concessions or establishing a
11 procedure for determining whether a concession is
12 defined as a major concession. Also has the power to
13 modify any amendments proposed by the Mayor to change
14 rules governing site selection and a fair
15 distribution of City facilities, and CPC has
16 exclusive power to propose additional categories of
17 land-use actions to be reviewed pursuant to ULURP,
18 subject to enactment by the Council.

19 City Planning Commission consists of 13
20 members, with the Chair and six other appointments
21 made by the Mayor, one by the Public Advocate, and
22 one by each Borough President. Members are to be
23 chosen for their independence, integrity, and civic
24 commitment. Appointments of all members except the
25 Chair are subject to the advice and consent of the

2 City Council. CPC members, except for the Chair, who
3 serves at the pleasure of the Mayor, serve for five
4 years of staggered five-year terms, which begin the
5 day after expiration of the previous term. For
6 purposes of Chapter 68 of the Charter, CPC members
7 other than the Chair should not be considered regular
8 employees of the City, and are prohibited from
9 holding any other City office while they serve on the
10 CPC. There's no limitation on the number of terms a
11 member may serve. The member who has served as Vice-
12 Chair receives an annual salary of 73,855 dollars.
13 The other members receive an annual salary of 64,224
14 dollars. Leah Goodridge has been a member of the City
15 Planning Commission since first appointed by the
16 Public Advocate in 2021.

17 Welcome and congratulations on your
18 reappointment. Please raise your right hand to be
19 sworn in.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL CAMPAGNA: Do you affirm
21 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
22 the truth in your testimony before this Committee,
23 and in response to all Council Member questions.

24 LEAH GOODRIDGE: Yes, I do.

2 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. You can
3 offer an opening statement.

4 LEAH GOODRIDGE: Well, thank you so much.
5 Good morning, Chair Powers and Members of the City
6 Council. I am honored to be nominated for
7 reappointment to the City Planning Commission, which
8 I've been on for about the last four years.

9 Before joining the City Planning
10 Commission, I spent at least a decade as a Tenants'
11 Rights Attorney, and I listened to the stories of New
12 Yorkers who were facing eviction, why they were
13 facing eviction and being pushed out of the City. And
14 by the time that I joined the City Planning
15 Commission, where most of the work surrounds housing,
16 most of the proposals are housing proposals by
17 private developers, that really informed a lot of my
18 information on voting on these proposals. So, my
19 focus has been housing affordability. When these
20 proposals come before us, sometimes they are for
21 3,000-dollar low-income studios, and the first thing
22 I think about are the clients that I represented and
23 whether they can afford them, and almost none of them
24 can. I can't afford a 3,000-dollar studio. So, for my
25 focus for the last four years, and if reappointed for

2 the next five, would be on housing affordability and
3 amplifying what happens in the very complex
4 procedures of City Planning. So I am honored again to
5 be here and also to talk a bit more about City
6 Planning, and I hope to be reappointed.

7 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. Thanks for
8 being with us today, and congratulations on the
9 renomination.

10 On the topic of, so look, I think we all
11 appreciate the advocacy around affordability, and we
12 know that for many New Yorkers, that studio at 3,000
13 dollars is unattainable, even for some dual-income
14 homes, two-income homes, still a value-in-space
15 proposition that doesn't make a lot of sense. Can you
16 talk more about, but you know, and recognizing each
17 project is specific, it has its own specifics and its
18 unique, you know, unique details, whether it's like
19 literally the financing of the project to get there,
20 or the location of the project, or what makes sense.
21 When we talk about affordability and when it comes to
22 the City Planning Commission for approval or
23 rejection, what is the goal around affordability?
24 What is the goal of affordability when it comes to
25 talking about, we know what the specifics that we

2 know may not be attainable for folks, like the
3 example you mentioned, but some examples that might
4 make sense when it comes to trying to approve a
5 project based on achieving affordability levels.

6 LEAH GOODRIDGE: Well, I think, you know,
7 I'd like to point to some of the factors that don't
8 work, so that we can look to what we should do moving
9 forward. One of them is that the income requirements
10 for affordable housing at this point need really to
11 be reviewed. They're based on the MIH formula, which
12 also follows HUD, and so, for example, if you are
13 making six figures, 130,000 dollars, you can qualify
14 for one person for yourself for affordable housing in
15 New York City. I think we need to review that.

16 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: You think it's too
17 high or too low?

18 LEAH GOODRIDGE: I think it's too high,
19 and I think that some people will say, well, we need,
20 that's middle income, technically, in New York City,
21 we need that, but from where I sit, we also have a
22 very huge homelessness crisis that we've been
23 battling for many decades, do not have a handle on
24 it, and a big part of that is because of lack of
25 affordable housing. Only 16 percent of the low-income

2 or affordable apartments under the Adams
3 Administration have been for extremely low income, so
4 there's a real problem of having affordable
5 apartments that actually are not affordable. So,
6 there's the income requirements, and then the income
7 requirements also inform the actual rent, so we have
8 these, people think I'm joking when I say that there
9 literally are 3,000-dollar studios. We just had one
10 in Brooklyn. There was a huge fight in Brooklyn where
11 residents were challenging a developer's proposal to
12 build a taller building, and that building, because
13 of its height of 14 stories, would have impacted
14 sunlight for the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, and so this
15 is a treasured and beloved garden that has been there
16 for many years, and so residents fought it, and my
17 question, of course, you know, a lot of the proposals
18 there was, well, let's look at the housing, we need
19 more housing, so if it may impact the garden, let's
20 look at the fact that it would still bring in
21 housing. So, I immediately asked, how much is the
22 housing? A little studio for 3,030 dollars. So this
23 is a real problem that we have to fix in the city. I
24 think, for me, the actual rent under these studios,
25 the fact that 30 percent is based off of gross

2 income, so by the time you take out taxes, we're
3 still talking about someone paying 2,000 dollars for
4 a studio, and their actual take-home pay may not be
5 80,000, it may be more like 60,000. So, it just
6 doesn't work, and I think that we really need to
7 address it. Even when we have projects, to sum up,
8 that they're 25 percent of the units are affordable,
9 this is a big part of why we have these fights,
10 because when you look at those actual 25 percent of
11 affordable units, most of them are for moderate
12 income, most of them are studios and one-bedrooms.
13 One Gothamist article said 70 percent of the Adams
14 Administration's affordable apartments have been
15 studios and one-bedrooms. This is a real problem, and
16 this is why we have these very controversial
17 projects.

18 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Is there a part of
19 that equation that you think is a higher priority? Is
20 it the income requirements, the rents, or the size of
21 the apartments? Because all three, I agree, I think
22 we are doing a lot of studios, we are doing a lot,
23 that seems the way the market is right now, and I
24 think we all can look at all the above, but I think
25 also sometimes recognize the challenges in these

2 projects, trying to figure out the right calibration
3 of it. Is there a specific part of that, would you
4 note those three things that you feel is the one that
5 really sticks out the most?

6 LEAH GOODRIDGE: One reform that we can do
7 is to reform MIH. It is not based on the specific
8 area income, instead it is including income from the
9 suburbs, from parts outside of New York City, so that
10 raises the income requirements. So, for example, I
11 grew up in Brownsville, and it's a very low-income
12 area, but instead of the actual income, they call it
13 area median income of that area, it will be a little
14 bit higher than what is the income for that
15 particular community so we end up with an area median
16 income that's higher than most of the New York City
17 neighborhoods in of itself, so then we're, you know,
18 if we say the area median income is at 80 percent,
19 it's still higher than whatever that neighborhood is.
20 So, I think that that's one part that we can look at.

21 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Are you proposing
22 that we take the suburbs out of that formula, or that
23 we take...

24 LEAH GOODRIDGE: Yes.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Okay. Got it. I want
3 to talk about City of Yes. I think you voted against
4 City of Yes, or you just supported it?

5 LEAH GOODRIDGE: I voted against it.

6 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Can you talk a little
7 bit about your thoughts and reasoning on your vote
8 for that?

9 LEAH GOODRIDGE: There were lots of
10 reasons why I voted against it, but I will focus on
11 affordability. This is a housing plan, and as I
12 described before, the main... well, let me back up and
13 say that I'm a very public-facing Commissioner, so
14 I'm out in the community, I'm talking to people, and
15 the main thing that people say to me when they say,
16 oh, you're a Commissioner, what about Housing
17 Connect, those apartments on there, what's the City
18 doing about affordability. So now we have the City of
19 Yes in a housing plan, and most people are expecting,
20 as am I, for it to focus on affordability. But the
21 affordability piece was, I would say, probably the
22 smallest piece. The affordability piece was more of a
23 preference of if you're a developer and you want to
24 build additional units, that part has to be
25 affordable. I thought that the other parts of the

2 plan, you know, often we have this phrase in urban
3 planning, don't let the perfect be the enemy of the
4 good. I didn't think that the rest of the plan really
5 made up for that very small piece. It's not for me
6 really a housing plan. If we are going to have the
7 end result of building housing everywhere, then we do
8 need more safeguards for that housing to be
9 affordable. One of the things that I strongly reject
10 is the notion that affordability is simply addressed
11 by building more housing, that the City itself
12 doesn't need to do any more than that, just build
13 housing and that takes care of affordability. That is
14 a proposition that is based on the private market,
15 and I don't feel like it's acceptable for the
16 government to accept that. The many things,
17 especially that's going on in this city, where rent
18 stabilization is being attacked, where as I just
19 described, we're not building enough deeply
20 affordable units that the government can be proactive
21 about. So, I don't feel like the, I think that one of
22 the under, the undergird of City of Yes is build more
23 housing and that is the actual affordability piece,
24 and I just didn't feel like that was acceptable.

2 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thanks. We're joined
3 by Council Member Brooks-Power as well.

4 Isn't there a different way to look at
5 it, and isn't it that, at City Planning, you're
6 tending to like the zoning and the zoning tax and the
7 land use actions, HPD is doing the subsidies and the
8 part around attacking affordability, and you know,
9 HTC is over here, and you have like a multi-agency
10 set around, DHS has to do a part of affordability,
11 and the kind of core central of City Planning is a
12 question of like, what gets built, how big should it
13 be, and should we allow for more. And in that
14 context, if you are talking about 25 percent, 30
15 percent, whatever the other normal mandates are,
16 doing a little bit more means you also get a little
17 more of the affordable piece of that component too.
18 And then, you know, HPD, and this is what we fought
19 for in the Council, HPD has to deliver more, we have
20 to deliver money for HPD so they can get projects
21 done, and we have the available resources to make
22 them more subsidy. We go to Albany to make sure we
23 can strengthen our rent regulation laws, but kind of
24 core to City Planning is sort of what gets built and
25 what should be allowed to be built. In this case, in

2 places like Manhattan, we're talking about a little
3 bit more density to accommodate a few more people.
4 You can debate the logistics around whether that
5 drives the prices down, but it certainly would allow
6 a little more affordable housing to be built, and
7 certainly a little more just housing to be built in
8 the city, and that's kind of what the City Planning's
9 sort of piece of this equation is. How do you respond
10 to that?

11 LEAH GOODRIDGE: Okay. Let me accept that
12 proposition for the purpose of this hypothetical.
13 Let's just say that City Planning Commissioners are
14 there to rubber stamp development, and then the
15 fights, the fights that happen, the social
16 conversations about affordability that happens
17 elsewhere at the City Council. This is part of the
18 problem that people don't trust the City Planning
19 Commission and the government. This is something that
20 comes up very frequently when people testify at the
21 City Planning Commission. They flat out say, you guys
22 are just here to rubber stamp everything. You guys
23 don't ever say no. You guys don't hear us. People
24 come and testify. Half of the time, they're talking
25 about affordability. The other time, they're talking

2 about traffic and congestion, and this is what they
3 say. You guys are just appointed to just rubber stamp
4 stuff for the Mayor. There's no checks and balances.
5 No one's talking about the fact that we can't afford
6 any of this stuff.

7 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: But most of the
8 opponents of City of Yes were not debating about
9 affordability. They were debating...

10 LEAH GOODRIDGE: Yes, they were.

11 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: About parking and
12 ADUs and other issues, which I don't (INAUDIBLE)
13 areas. I think a lot of the main issues that were
14 being discussed, I know, in the Council and other
15 places were about...

16 LEAH GOODRIDGE: I just have to push back
17 on that. The opponents of City of Yes were pushing
18 back because of affordability. Specifically, most
19 people testified, and also outside of City of Yes,
20 the specific idea is this, and I'm going to put it in
21 quotes here because this is what's being said, that
22 this city is being bought by developers. That is
23 literally what the pushback is. That this city is
24 being taken over by developers and that the

2 government is allowing it to happen. That's what
3 people are saying. Especially in this climate.

4 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: But people can say
5 it. The question is whether it is true. The question
6 is whether people can say anything they want. We get
7 a lot of things said to us often. I guess the
8 question is what's true and what's not at the end of
9 the day.

10 LEAH GOODRIDGE: Well, if Commissioners
11 are rubber stamping things and don't raise
12 affordability and should just look at things as is
13 the building tall enough, then it is true.

14 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Well, I think the
15 term rubber stamp versus should we allow and
16 accommodate more where things are being built today,
17 I think it's a different story. I certainly think in
18 the question you raise around the Botanical Garden
19 and things like that, those raise issues around like
20 how the physical design impacts the rest of the
21 neighborhood and things like that. I don't take this
22 at all to mean that affordability should be part of
23 the conversation and certainly I think there is a
24 criticism often that... it comes to the Council before
25 it really gets to the sort of hard conversations

2 around affordability, and it's sort of on a tight
3 timeline to be able to really accommodate that
4 conversation so I take that to heart and I agree with
5 much of what's being said.

6 But I do want to ask a second question.
7 That example around the middle-income 130,000 studio
8 example, for that person who you take away, if the
9 adjustment here is to take away MIH and to not allow
10 them to be part of the MIH program and also we're not
11 allowing for new housing to be built in various
12 different places around the city, which was what City
13 of Yes was getting at, what do we do with that person
14 who is making 130k a year who is working a job, maybe
15 working for the City, and doesn't have a place here
16 because it feels like that is also a group of people
17 that are losing their path here in the city and you
18 can go higher than 130k I think to even get there.
19 I'm not saying it should be priority number one or
20 priority number two, but I certainly think that is... a
21 there's a (INAUDIBLE) people are saying that also
22 that like there's a deep feeling like that sort of
23 middle portion is really losing their path to
24 affording Manhattan, Brooklyn, many other parts of
25 the city right now, especially as they change over

2 rapidly. What do we do about those? It's an earnest
3 question. I just ask, what do we do about that if we
4 take away like MIH and other programs for them?

5 LEAH GOODRIDGE: I think one of the things
6 as a City that we should look at moving forward is
7 how do we build more affordable homeownership? I am a
8 product of growing up in a Mitchell-Lama in Brooklyn,
9 in Brownsville, and when I was growing up, you know,
10 people had options of get a Nehemiah house, other
11 types of affordable homeownership. I was having a
12 conversation recently with a fellow Commissioner
13 about the fact that these opportunities are just not
14 as ample as they were years ago because it's just is
15 not a priority. There was an op-ed in City and State
16 by three City Council Members specifically about this
17 issue and pushing for more homeownership, affordable
18 homeownership. We look at Parkchester, for example.
19 There are ways to collaborate with private developers
20 and not have the end result just be, like I
21 described, 3,000-dollar studios. We can have
22 affordable homeownership. So, we have communities
23 like Parkchester, Co-op City, many communities that
24 are co-ops and other types of homes for middle-income
25 New Yorkers because everyone, I mean, I'm a tenants'

2 rights advocate, I'm unapologetic about that. I'm a
3 tenant myself. I was on the Rent Guidelines Board for
4 four years so this is something that I'm extremely
5 passionate about. I also grew up in New York City,
6 not with a silver spoon in my mouth so this is
7 something that is not... it relates to me personally.
8 So, I think, you know, for people who want to move
9 out of tenancy and want to be able to buy a home,
10 that opportunity is few and far between today and
11 that's a direction that I think the City should move
12 towards. I was hoping that when we talked about a
13 housing plan that that would be part of it.

14 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Got it. Appreciate
15 that and thank you and a big fan of the Mitchell-Lama
16 program as well.

17 My last question and I want to hand over
18 to Colleagues here as well is, I have two questions.
19 One is, on the specifics of Rent Guideline Board,
20 something I testify every year in front of my
21 constituents and a maddening process every year,
22 what, if you had to make any changes to Rent
23 Guidelines Board process, what would it be?

24 And second is, that was just a thought I
25 had in my head, and the second one is what changes to

2 the land use process would you propose? Whave a
3 Charter Revision Commission before us, a lot of
4 discussion around that right now, sitting on the City
5 Planning Commission, curious to see if any thoughts
6 around how you would change the land use process if
7 given the ability to do so.

8 LEAH GOODRIDGE: Thinking about the first
9 question, the rent changes... (CROSS-TALK)

10 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: You can do the second
11 one if you want.

12 LEAH GOODRIDGE: Okay. The Charter Review
13 Commission, I have to be honest, the way I found out
14 about the Charter Review Commission was that a
15 journalist contacted me and asked me about it and I
16 contacted fellow Commissioners like, is there a
17 Charter Review Commission, and we all said, no, that
18 would be wild because no one has told us so I think
19 that that's important to note for transparency. One
20 thing that could change is the level of transparency.
21 There have been a few times where something's
22 happening like Green Fast Track or something else
23 going on with the Mayor's proposals that actual City
24 Planning Commissioners and other people just aren't
25 looped in and we're part of the process of city

2 planning so I think that that could change. One thing
3 I've been working on as a Commissioner to change that
4 in terms of transparency is I created a project in
5 collaboration with the Brooklyn Public Library where
6 I lead workshops and invite other Commissioners and
7 elected officials to come and talk about the process
8 of city planning. I find that people are coming to
9 the hearings to talk about specific proposals but
10 we're not having conversations in a larger context
11 about what's happening with city planning which can
12 be very opaque, it can be very complex, and so I
13 think it's important to have these conversations
14 where people describe, especially experts in the
15 field, describe what's happening in New York City and
16 get feedback. Not, you know, replacing a hearing but
17 just describing what's happening and opening it up. I
18 think this might be the first type of program, if I'm
19 not mistaken, that has done so. Also as a
20 Commissioner, I publish op-eds quite often to explain
21 a bit more about what's happening with urban
22 planning. A recent one was in the New York Times
23 about a City Council bill for free public restrooms.
24 That's an urban planning issue because the reason
25 why, you know, most people will say, yeah, we should

2 have public restrooms and then they pause and then,
3 the reason why they pause is they're getting to the
4 next big issue which is well, if they're open to...
5 what about homeless people and then that's why they
6 don't want public restrooms. So, that's where I come
7 in with my experience with housing and as a
8 Commissioner to explain and to amplify these issues
9 and to really get at the many nuances of the history
10 of urban planning. So, to answer your question, I
11 think transparency, one of the things that we can do
12 different with land use is more transparency all
13 around, not just transparency with Commissioners
14 sitting on the Commission but transparency with the
15 public and explaining the process and having you know
16 providing more access.

17 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you and
18 congratulations on your re-nomination.

19 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Questions? Council
21 Member Brewer and then Council Member Brooks-Powers.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very
23 much. I certainly agree with everything that you
24 said.

2 One question I would have about, as the
3 Chair said, about the ULURP plan would be years ago,
4 I've been around for a long time, and the 197-A plan
5 used to work. Community boards would do their own
6 planning. Community Board 4 did an excellent one.
7 They went to every single lot in Board 4 and
8 determined what should happen there. Again, getting
9 people, City Planning, and everyone else to listen to
10 that plan is a problem, but it would seem to me that
11 one suggestion we should go back to that and have the
12 community boards with enough staff be able to do some
13 planning on their own. Would that be something that
14 you would think would be helpful to you as a
15 Commissioner?

16 LEAH GOODRIDGE: It would be very helpful.
17 One of the things I can, just to provide some insight
18 as a Commissioner, we get so many proposals that
19 oftentimes the thing that red flags Commissioners to
20 say, oh this is a proposal that, you know, this is a
21 bit different, is when we see a community board has
22 voted no. So, you know we have the borough
23 president's recommendations but sometimes a community
24 board has voted no, the borough president has voted
25 yes, and so we say well what's going on here. Or

2 sometimes both have voted no. And so we take a look
3 and we say what's going on here. So the community
4 board informs a lot of Commissioners because
5 sometimes, you know, even as a native New Yorker we
6 might not have the opportunity to go into every
7 single neighborhood to see what's happening so
8 they're also describing oftentimes in their
9 assessment, you know, for example, I have been to Bay
10 Ridge quite a bit but I haven't been in a number of
11 years, and we have had proposals where community
12 boards will explain there is a real parking situation
13 and so, if we don't, if you have this big apartment
14 building, let me describe the fact that we already,
15 it can take an hour to move three blocks because it's
16 so congested. So, just having that visual as a
17 Commissioner for me and someone from the community,
18 from the community board, those can be helpful. So, I
19 can attest to the fact that I rely a lot on community
20 boards to inform specific neighborhoods and what's
21 happening in ways that maybe an individual
22 Commissioner might not have gone to the neighborhood
23 in a bit, and for many other Commissioners it is
24 incredibly helpful and insightful.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Just so you
3 know, there are two Charter Revision Commissions
4 right now, even more transparent, not. One the
5 Speaker, I didn't know about the Speaker's, I must
6 admit. Now, I testified there and then we're going to
7 be testifying at the Mayor's so it's very crazy for
8 the public even to understand this so you're not
9 alone in the transparency problem.

10 And the public restrooms, I wanted to say
11 years ago the problem is not only people worrying
12 about the homeless, nobody wants one in their
13 neighborhood. So, we had plans many years ago under
14 Bloomberg and they went bye-bye because he couldn't
15 find a place to put them so it's, thank goodness for
16 your op-ed, but it's endless.

17 The other thing is just the Mitchell-Lama
18 program was the best housing program ever conceived,
19 and so it was frustrating to me with City Planning
20 because it's supposed to be planning is that
21 obviously the State has to okay a Mitchell-Lama 2.0
22 or whatever it would be but, you know, City Planning,
23 like the Chair said HTC, HFA, HPD, everybody should
24 be talking about this. I always think we're operating
25 in silos and that's one of our problems. In other

2 words, you could do the planning but there's no
3 money, no support for the... my opinion also for the
4 lower AMIs and, you know, what are we doing. So does
5 that kind of non-silo discussion come up or is it
6 just we're going to plan the way, we don't need to
7 talk to anybody else.

8 LEAH GOODRIDGE: So, I'm gonna be brutally
9 honest. There are silos.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I know.

11 LEAH GOODRIDGE: There are silos which is
12 kind of why I had a very strong response. I hope, you
13 know, you felt it was respectful, but this is kind of
14 why I had a strong response because this is something
15 that, as a Commissioner, I would say that is my
16 biggest challenge and this is part of why I've become
17 like very public facing to just go out into the
18 community and have these conversations. You know, and
19 the question is like well what do you do as a
20 Commissioner, do you just go and say I'm just going
21 to vote and purely look at this is as like text
22 amendment and let me see if the building is tall
23 enough and let me just rubber stamp it and, if
24 there's a fight, then the City Council will take it

2 over from there. And I've just decided that that's
3 not the approach that I want to have.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Yeah. I mean we do
5 operate in silos and you're supposed to be the
6 planning agency so you think that the silos could, in
7 fact, be stopped to a certain extent or curtailed at
8 CPC. I'm not saying it happens. I'm just saying that
9 would be the wish.

10 LEAH GOODRIDGE: Well, I think, you know,
11 the agencies do work with one another, DCP and HPD
12 and DOT, the agencies do work with one another. When
13 I say silos, I just want to just clarify. Then
14 there's the Commission and then there's sort of the
15 expectation of like what do you do if you want to
16 address these sort of larger issues that are part of
17 city planning, like the AMI, then they're sort of..
18 there's a stuck part there of like what do you do
19 other than raising hell about it on the Commission.
20 What do you do? What can we do? We would have to
21 advocate for there to be some change apart from the
22 Commission. So, I think that's the part where I'm..
23 because the big part for me is affordability and a
24 host of other issues and then there's just sort of

2 like sentiment of well, you just vote on them and
3 that's it.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

5 LEAH GOODRIDGE: So, to address the silos,
6 I think it would be great if there would be an effort
7 between the Commissioners, DCP, a host of other
8 agencies to just have a comprehensive plan.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Right. I would
10 totally agree with that. I mean even just the buying
11 out of all of these Mitchell-Lamas, that was a
12 decision that was made understandably, you invest,
13 your time is up, your 6 percent is paid, you can get
14 out. That's like killing thousands of units of
15 affordable housing.

16 So, one last idea that I have it's not
17 moving but I want to bring it up which is Ward's
18 Island is right next to Randall's Island. It's got on
19 it a couple of shelters and the Fire Department, and
20 it's empty land, vacant land so it's only vacant land
21 left in Manhattan really owned by the City or the
22 State so it's something to think about why can't we
23 do another Roosevelt Island without buying out all
24 the Mitchell-Lamas, which is what happened at
25 Roosevelt Island so something to think about. You

2 know, we need some big plans, some big ideas in my
3 opinion. Again, homeownership Mitchell-Lama, rental
4 Mitchell-Lama, not buying out Mitchell-Lama, that
5 kind of thing. That's the kind of thing that I wish
6 the City Planning... I know the City of Yes, I voted
7 for it with some trepidations to be honest with you
8 but, you know, it's going to take forever and it's
9 also fraught with some of the issues that you brought
10 up. But plans and ideas like that, sometimes they do
11 come from the community, and that's what I'm looking
12 for. So, any ideas that you bring up around Ward's
13 Island would be great. Thank you.

14 LEAH GOODRIDGE: Thank you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

16 It's great to see you in person. I had the
17 opportunity to speak with you and the candidates from
18 earlier ahead of today's hearing.

19 And so I just had a few questions on the
20 record I wanted to ask. The first is focusing on
21 priorities and approach. If reappointed to the City
22 Planning Commission, what would your top priorities
23 be in making housing more affordable for New Yorkers?

24 LEAH GOODRIDGE: Oh, yeah. My top priority
25 would be affordability and to raise it at the

2 Commission. One of the things I would like to do
3 moving forward is have a conversation with the Public
4 Advocate just about what we can do about MIH, about
5 our current structure for affordability. I don't feel
6 like it's working, specifically because it's not
7 deeply affordable enough and because of the issues
8 that I raised prior in the hearing so that's one
9 thing.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: No. And I
11 appreciate that. And every time I hear you speak
12 about it, I think about the book also, How to Kill a
13 City, and when it talks about the incentives that are
14 often given to developers, which I personally feel
15 like should be flipped to allow people to be able to
16 cross the hurdles to access the housing which
17 sometimes is a matter of down payment or, you know,
18 what have you, and it was refreshing to see your
19 response to the question when you talk about City of
20 Yes in terms of the need for the deep affordability
21 and how it wasn't really fully in alignment with the
22 fact that you had to build more to get to access that
23 deep affordability. So, because, you know, I think
24 you have voted no on it, how did you see an
25 opportunity, that may have been a missed opportunity

2 to have created that deep affordability without
3 having to necessarily build more to get more in terms
4 of affordability?

5 LEAH GOODRIDGE: You know, I'm not against
6 building more. What I voted against was the fact that
7 the affordability piece itself it just was very thin.
8 So, if it had included something with deeper
9 affordability, for example, if we had a plan that
10 said, yeah, we're going to build more housing and
11 most of it, at least 50 percent, for example, is
12 going to be affordable deeply and real affordability,
13 not six-figure affordability, I likely would have
14 voted for that. That's a starting point, but there
15 were all these other, you know, building on, you
16 know, the NYCHA part, for example. There were a lot
17 of questions about that. Building on NYCHA campuses
18 and then there being questions about whether, first
19 of all, the building on it and then, second of all,
20 the questions of what that affordability would even
21 look like. Then the third, of course, was whether
22 NYCHA residents even were going to be able to vote on
23 this beforehand with all the issues going on with
24 privatization. I mean there were just a host of other
25 different issues with City of Yes, but what I'm

2 saying is I am not against building. What I'm against
3 is this idea that building in of itself, just the
4 building with no actual affordability mandates or no
5 real affordability that, you know, we can have
6 affordability mandates that can be six figures and
7 then that, in of itself, takes care of affordability.
8 That's what I'm against that notion for a city.
9 That's something for private developers to say.
10 That's a supply and demand argument. They're the ones
11 that are going to be building the housing so they
12 have a vested interest in making this argument, but
13 that is for me unacceptable for a city to sort of
14 take... I think it's just a very passive approach in
15 terms of addressing the housing crisis where, if you
16 walk five blocks anywhere in New York City, you will
17 see homelessness so I don't think that that was
18 enough.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: No. And I
20 agree, and thank you for the clarity on it because
21 that's some of what I was hearing in my District too
22 because we were often getting painted as being NIMBY,
23 and it was less about that and more about, one,
24 affordability came up, about is it truly affordable,
25 who is it affordable for. We know the AMI dynamic is

2 not really a good metrics for most communities in New
3 York City either, and it was being pushed or promoted
4 as the more you build, the deeper the affordability,
5 which it is not necessarily like, you know, it may or
6 may not generate.

7 But the next thing I have is in terms of
8 the challenges to homeownership in New York City. So
9 rising home prices, high property taxes, and limited
10 access to financing remain major barriers to
11 homeownership. What role do you believe City Planning
12 and land use policy can play in addressing these
13 challenges?

14 LEAH GOODRIDGE: So, I was describing that
15 I was very happy to see this op-ed in City and State,
16 I think it was by Council Member Williams, Feliz, and
17 I forgot the third one but...

18 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Riley.

19 LEAH GOODRIDGE: And Riley. Thank you. I
20 was very happy to see this because it essentially
21 argues that through zoning the City should have an
22 approach to building more affordable homeownerships,
23 and they specifically cite examples, but like I said,
24 you know, the Mitchell-Lama programs were very
25 successful in my opinion, and we have other.. you

2 know, we have HDFCs, we have other types of these
3 programs, but there should be more of an investment
4 into these opportunities. I think there's some State..
5 you know, the SONYMA program, there's State programs
6 for mortgages and so forth, there's also the HPD one
7 where I believe it's up to 100,000 dollars, I think
8 that's incredibly helpful for homeownership. One
9 thing I do hear from people is it's great, you know,
10 but if the home starts at 500K. There are a host of
11 other issues where, for example, you know people are
12 being bought out by cash buyers so the whole like get
13 a mortgage era. Their competitors are cash buyers
14 right now in the home market so that's just a whole
15 other problem.

16 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you for that.

17 Just in alignment in terms of the homeownership
18 piece, balance and density and homeownership, some
19 housing advocates argue that higher density
20 rezonings, again like the proposed City of Yes,
21 primarily encourage rental development rather than
22 homeownership. What alternative strategies would you
23 propose to ensure that rezoning efforts also create
24 opportunities for family-sized, owner-occupied
25 housing, and some of the what I read spoke to, you

2 know, the need to have more than studios and one
3 bedrooms and that was really good to hear because
4 oftentimes when developers are coming to me in my
5 District, they're talking about largely studios and
6 one bedrooms. Even when I talk to the seniors in my
7 community that look for senior housing want no less
8 than a one-bedroom to have their dignity when they
9 have people in there so we think about housing and
10 families and where they be in place you know that is
11 a concern that I continue to hear as well.

12 LEAH GOODRIDGE: It's a huge concern. As I
13 was saying earlier, there's 70 percent under the
14 Adams Administration have been studios and one
15 bedrooms so one of the things people say when they
16 come and testify is who is this for, is this for
17 students, you know, or who, you know, this is not for
18 people from the neighborhood, this is not for
19 families. Even if you're a family with one child,
20 that's at least a two-bedroom. So, we often have this
21 in New York City and so this goes back to this whole
22 theme of is the city being just like bought off by
23 developers because we are building a business class
24 and not a class for families. So, it goes back to
25 providing homeownership opportunities with actual two

2 bedrooms and so forth. You know, there's something
3 that an applicant said recently because I asked about
4 this. There was a very controversial development that
5 came back, and the developer mentioned, you know, the
6 community wanted three bedrooms and, when it came
7 back, the developer added the three bedrooms but then
8 said that this is not popular and I don't know that
9 that's... I don't know that that's particularly true
10 but at least there's this mindset I think amongst
11 developers I guess that it's not financially worth it
12 to build three bedrooms. I don't know that that's
13 really true. I think people are looking.. and that was
14 for rentals. I think people are looking for
15 homeownership opportunities with three bedrooms.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: No.
17 Absolutely. And then my last question in terms of
18 affordable homeownership programs. The City has
19 existing homeownership programs like HPD's Open Door
20 and Home First Down Payment Assistance, but they have
21 often limited funding. Do you believe these programs
22 should be expanded or reformed, and what improvements
23 would you recommend to make them more effective?

24 LEAH GOODRIDGE: I definitely think that
25 they should be expanded. This was the name of the.. I

2 forgot the name of the program that I was mentioning
3 earlier, but this is what people come up to me and
4 say oh, you know, you can get 100,000 dollars a down
5 payment so I definitely think that they should be
6 expanded. For improvements, I haven't heard anything
7 negative to recommend an improvement. Just that there
8 should be enough funding to continue it.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: No. Thank
10 you for that and, again, thank you for your service
11 and willing to serve on the CPC and hearing the
12 voices of the community. I also want to thank you on
13 behalf of my five NYCHA developments in my District.
14 The fact that you were willing to center their voices
15 in the process when the conversation came up about
16 building on open lots in NYCHA and saying that their
17 voices should be heard in that, I truly appreciated
18 hearing that and also just your thoughts around
19 affordability and also homeownership so thank you and
20 congrats in advance.

21 LEAH GOODRIDGE: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. Seeing no
23 other questions, you are... thank you.

24 LEAH GOODRIDGE: Thank you so much. Have a
25 great day.

2 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: We're now going to
3 take testimony from the public. I'll open the floor
4 to public testimony. We have one person signed up
5 right now to testify.

6 Members of the public will have two
7 minutes to speak. The first person here I have is
8 Sharon Brown.

9 Thank you. You have two minutes. You may
10 begin.

11 SHARON BROWN: Hello. My name is Sharon
12 Brown from Rose of Sharon Enterprises. Before I get
13 started, remember the hostages, release the hostages,
14 let Yahweh's people go, defend Israel.

15 So, someone was speaking about Rikers
16 Island, mental illness and jails and different things
17 like that. They didn't necessarily get into the
18 elections and things, but Rikers Island must close
19 immediately. The mental health system is failing.
20 It's failing miserably. They have had many years to
21 do what they've been doing, and it culminated in
22 Rikers, and I was instrumental in getting Rikers
23 closed down in 2027. It was actually supposed to
24 close earlier. Now, they're trying to delay it. So,
25 what is occurring is they've made Rikers Island a big

2 mental health facility. They're telling people that
3 they can't get better, they can't get well, so Rikers
4 Island is declining on that premise that your mental
5 health system is telling people they can't get well.
6 Well, in the church when we teach people, we teach
7 them you can get well. The Bible says God gave you a
8 sound mind, he gave you peace, love, and a sound mind
9 so pumping people with medications is not the
10 solution. It's not helping them. Can you show me
11 where it's helping? It's not. Rikers Island is a show
12 that the mental health system is a colossal failure.
13 We need something else. What we're doing is putting
14 the Bible back into schools, we're putting the Bible
15 back everywhere. We want the Bible in classrooms and
16 courthouses. We want people to be in homes, not in
17 mental institution. Homes for homeless people (TIMER
18 CHIME) If you say they're homeless, they don't need
19 medication, they need homes.

20 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. Thanks for
21 your testimony.

22 SHARON BROWN: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. Do we have
24 any other members of the public here to testify
25 today?

2 Okay. Thank you for all our nominees for
3 being here with us today.

4 Seeing no other people signed up to
5 testify, the public hearing on these appointments is
6 closed. Thanks so much. [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 April 30, 2025