

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON LAND USE

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July, 17, 2012
Start: 1:05 p.m.
Recess: 1:18 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
LEROY G. COMRIE, JR.
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Maria del Carmen Arroyo
Charles Barron
Inez E. Dickens
Daniel R. Garodnick
Sara M. Gonzalez
Robert Jackson
Jessica S. Lappin
Rosie Mendez
Annabel Palma
Diana Reyna
Joel Rivera
James Sanders, Jr.
Larry B. Seabrook

A P P E A R A N C E S

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

James Vacca
Albert Vann
Brad S. Lander
Stephen T. Levin
Mark S. Weprin
Jumaane D. Williams
Daniel J. Halloran III
Vincent M. Ignizio
Peter A. Koo

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2 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Can we call
3 the members of Land Use Committee back into the
4 room? Okay, we're going to officially start the
5 Land Use Committee for July 17th, 2012. I'm Leroy
6 Comrie, City Council Member. We've been joined by
7 Council Members and still joined by Council
8 Members Dan Halloran, Al Vann, Maria del Carmen
9 Arroyo, Jumaane Williams, Robert Jackson, Steve
10 Levin, Jessica Lappin, Annabel Palma, Inez
11 Dickens, Brad Lander, Charles Barron, Margaret
12 Chin, Joel Rivera, Rosie Mendez, Diana Reyna,
13 Vinny Ignizio is in the room, and James Sanders.
14 We ready to move forward with the formal vote the
15 adoption of Land Use Items No. 632, 633, 634, and
16 635, which are all related to the NYU University
17 Corps located within Manhattan Community Board 12,
18 Council Member Margaret Chin's district, Land Use
19 Items No. C120077MMM, Item No. C120122ZMM and
20 M120123ZRM and C120124ZSM.

21 We've all heard in the subcommittee
22 all of the details regarding the expansion of the
23 NYU Corps and the program, the core plan overview.
24 We won't repeat it again for the full committee,
25 since everyone was here. The members that wanted

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2 to ask questions had an opportunity to ask them
3 during the subcommittee. Council Member Chin made
4 an opening statement during the subcommittee. I
5 would ask in deference of time that she would not
6 have to repeat that again. It was very extensive
7 and very thorough and very detailed. So unless
8 there is some technical issue that I'm not
9 covering, I think I've covered everything. We can
10 move ahead to a vote on this issue. I would
11 recommend an aye vote on the issue with the one -
12 - that there are some promises that were made to
13 myself, Council Member Dickens, regarding the - -
14 LBE plan [phonetic] to be finalized by the 25th,
15 and we will get that done. With that, I would
16 recommend a yes vote to the four items, which are
17 coupled. Again, those are item numbers 632
18 through 635, which are related. That's the only
19 thing on today's agenda as we voted everything
20 else. The next subcommittee meetings will be held
21 on July 23rd. On July 23rd, the next subcommittee
22 meetings will be held. His seven looked like a
23 nine to me, and the full Land Use Committee will
24 be held on September—see again, on July 24th.
25 Wishful thinking, right? July 23rd is the subs.

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2 July 24th will be the full Committee meeting. With
3 that, I would recommend an aye vote unless Council
4 Member Chin wanted to make another statement? I
5 just wanted to make sure you weren't trying to
6 convince her to make another statement. Alright.
7 With that, we will have the clerk call the roll.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
9 committee clerk. Roll call vote Committee on Land
10 Use. Council Member Comrie?

11 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Aye.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Rivera?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I vote aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Reyna?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Barron?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I want to
18 encourage my colleagues to vote no and send this
19 project back to the people and let the people
20 decide what they want in their neighborhood. With
21 that, I vote no.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Jackson?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: All things
24 considered, thank you, Margaret, and I'm glad
25 you've reached a compromise agreement even though

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2 everything was not had on either side, all things
3 considered, I've been through this process before.
4 I vote aye. Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK: Sanders?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: With
7 certain qualms, I vote aye.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: Vann?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: - - explain
10 my vote.

11 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: So ordered.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: - - Explain
13 my vote. I find it difficult to vote against the
14 expression that so many people who live in this
15 district have. I'm very sensitive to that, but
16 I'm also very aware of Council Member Chin's
17 commitment to her community and integrity and
18 intelligence that she brings to this body - -
19 negotiations. I tend to be supportive of members'
20 positions in their particular district. I wish it
21 was one and the same, but I know that you have
22 negotiated on behalf of your community and what
23 you believe is in the best interest. There may be
24 factors that you are aware of that may not be
25 known throughout. In any event, it's difficult,

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2 but I vote aye in support of you and in support of
3 the good will of this body. I vote aye.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: Garodnick?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Aye.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK: Palma?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Aye.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: Arroyo?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Aye.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Dickens?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS:

12 Recognizing the hard work that Council Member Chin
13 has done, knowing that this ULEP [phonetic]
14 process is very difficult and with the commitment
15 of Chair Comrie that changes will be done to the
16 MWLBE, I vote aye.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Lappin?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LAPPIN: Aye.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: Mendez?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Permission
21 to explain my vote?

22 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: So ordered.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you.

24 This is a very difficult decision for me. The
25 easy thing for me to do would be to vote no or

1 abstain and make a lot of my people very happy.
2 I'm not happy with this plan. I think it's a
3 better plan than what we started out with.
4 Ideally, I would like to see NYU not build
5 anything ever again, but I know that's not going
6 to happen. I have to say going a few years back
7 the process that I went through with NYU to save
8 the Met Food [phonetic] was a process where we had
9 to get to a point where not either Met Food or NYU
10 was happy, but some common ground and years later,
11 it has shown to be that that was the right thing
12 for NYU and for Met Food. I will be voting yes on
13 this as a vote of faith in my colleague and my
14 sister Council Member Chin and as this process
15 goes through, I hope years from now when we look
16 at this that although the community is not happy
17 and maybe NYU is not happy with what it has given
18 up, that years from now we are in a better place
19 than we are now. I vote yes. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: Koo?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: I vote yes.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: Lander?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Aye.

25 COMMITTEE CLERK: Levin?

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COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:

Congratulations to Council Member Chin for striking a delicate balance in what is a very difficult process with many competing interests, some reconcilable, some irreconcilable, but I think Margaret that you did a very good job in your due diligence, in representing your community, in representing the interests of your constituents and with that, I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Weprin?

COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Williams?

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: May I be excused to explain my vote?

CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: So ordered.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. I just want to echo some of the comments of Council Member Mendez that this is a difficult for me as well. I wish many of these universities would stop the building that they're doing, but also coming in with Council Member Chin whether I agree with her or not agree with her, I've always found her to be fair and really try to find the best balance humanly possible, and so it's out of

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2 that relationship I have with her and knowing the
3 energy and the research that went into here and
4 the amount of work that she did even though I'm
5 not the most happy with what we have, but I do
6 have respect for what she went through in trying
7 to balance both the university and the community's
8 needs here. I'm going to vote aye. While I have
9 NYU here, I would press upon them to please in
10 another category remain neutral in many of the
11 union problems that are going on there. Thank
12 you.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Ignizio?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Yes. I
15 just want to vote aye and want to point out to my
16 colleague, Margaret Chin, who engaged in a very
17 difficult battle here, but now the real work
18 begins for the community and for you, NYU. This
19 community clearly has an issue with you, and now
20 is your opportunity to begin a new day and wipe
21 the slate clean and say we are going to be
22 responsive to them because clearly we heard today
23 no matter what you got out this, whether you were
24 for it or against it, is that the community does
25 not believe that NYU has been a good neighbor and

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2 you start that rebuilding process today and under
3 the leadership of Council Member Chin, I hope you
4 take advantage of that and I hope the community
5 says we don't always win, but in the end of the
6 day, we are going to ensure that our community
7 remains a part of this pact that was created by
8 this body. I vote aye.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK: Halloran?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Mr.
11 Chair, may I be excused to explain my vote?

12 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: So ordered.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: I live in
14 a district that has always had concerns with
15 development and overdevelopment and it's clear
16 that the community here has some serious concerns;
17 however, it is the practice of this body to defer
18 to the Council Member in whose district such
19 projects lie to give leadership and no one can on
20 either side of this equation doubt that Margaret
21 has worked tirelessly to try to find solutions.
22 They are not perfect. They are not going to fix
23 the problems that exist. That's clear. NYU has
24 an obligation to the community as a whole as my
25 colleagues have pointed out, but this body is

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2 going to be dealing with these types of problems
3 more and more as our city grows, and we are
4 reaching a stage at which development itself is
5 going to become the watch word for the future. We
6 cannot stop building. We need people to be
7 working right now. Certainly these projects will
8 do that. There have to be safeguards. I think
9 that the way we have structured our body in terms
10 of putting restrictive covenants and declarations
11 is not sufficient. There do need to be actual
12 legal triggers that can be used. They are not
13 there now. I hope and trust in Margaret's good
14 stewardship of her community to make sure that
15 this deal does not go awry, but this body should
16 be concerning itself with these bigger issues,
17 which have not been dealt with and which we deal
18 with piecemeal every time these things come to the
19 floor, so I would encourage all of my colleagues
20 to support Margaret in this, but to also look to
21 the future because the city, its development, its
22 infrastructure is badly in need of a total look by
23 this body and we need to do that sooner rather
24 than later. In deference to the Council Member in
25 whose district this lies, I vote aye.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK: By vote of 19 in
3 the affirmative, one in the negative and no
4 abstentions, all items have been adopted.
5 Members, please sign the Committee Report.

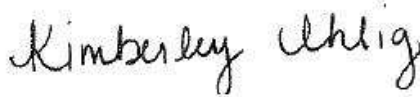
6 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: I want to take
7 a minute to thank the Land Use staff, Gail
8 Benjamin [phonetic] and—quiet please—thank the
9 Land Use staff Gal Benjamin et al for everything
10 that they did. They worked with all sides in this
11 party to come to this agreement today. I wanted
12 to remind everyone that you need to be quiet as
13 you're going out, and that the next subcommittee
14 meetings will be held on the 23rd and the full
15 committee on the 24th. With that, the meeting for
16 July 17th, 2012 Land Use Committee is hereby
17 adjourned.

18 [gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberley Uhlig certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature _____



Date _____

7/27/12