

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

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December 5, 2016
Start: 9:51 a.m.
Recess: 10:14 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E:
DONOVAN RICHARDS
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Council Member Garodnick
Council Member Gentile
Council Member Reynoso
Council Member Williams
Council Member Wills
Council Member Torres
Council Member Corey Johnson

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

[Gavel]

CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Alrighty, good morning. I'm Donovan Richards, Chair of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises and this morning we are joined by Council Members Garodnick, Gentile, Reynoso, and I think Council Member Williams gets the gold star as they would say today, whoo, the first one here. We are also joined by Council Member Corey Johnson who, this application is in his district. We have one item for our consideration today. A vote on 550 Washington Street, Land Use Number is 5062511. This has been two years, at least two years in the making so today is a historic day. 550 Washington Street is an application with a series of actions including a one, zoning text amendment to establish the special Hudson River Park district, two, a zoning map amendment to map the special Hudson River Park district which will be comprised of Pier 40 in the development site and to rezone the development site, three, a special permit pursuant to proposed special Hudson River Park district to permit the transfer of 200,000 square feet of floor area from Pier 40 to the development site and allow for bulk waivers, four, there's also a restrictive

1 declaration in connection with the proposed project.

2 There's a lot of complexity here to help to ensure

3 that Hudson River Park has the resources it needs to

4 maintain and operate the park for many years to come.

5 What we're voting on today is to approve these

6 applications with a series of modifications which I

7 will describe as briefly as I can. One, on the zoning

8 text, the modifications include limiting future

9 transfer of development rights to within the same

10 Community Board as the granting site limiting the

11 amount of development rights to be transferred into

12 Community Board 2 to 200,000 square feet and ensuring

13 that the funding for the park is secured prior to a

14 building permit being issued for the new development.

15 Two, the modifications to the plan includes a series

16 of restrictions on the size of the retail open space

17 and also a requirement for a new 15,000 square foot

18 indoor recreation center. Three, on the parking

19 special permits, the Council modifications will

20 reduce the number of spaces from a maximum of 772

21 spaces to a maximum of 425. Four, even though the

22 primary public benefit is a contribution of a hundred

23 million dollars to Hudson River Park, Council Member

24 Johnson has also constructed a project which will

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2 have 25 percent of the housing as permanent
3 affordable housing with approximately 300 and...
4 330,000 square feet of affordable housing, including
5 a senior housing development. The incomes in the
6 affordable housing will vary from 60 AMI to 130 in a
7 neighborhood that has seen very limited affordable
8 housing production and the Council modifications will
9 ensure that we have the most units at 60 AMI and 80
10 AMI. I want to congratulate Hudson River Park Trust
11 and the applicant team here for working
12 collaboratively for over two years with the community
13 to create this framework and I want to acknowledge
14 the hard work of Council Member Johnson who helped to
15 ensure that Hudson River Park, which is really a
16 city-wide park has an infusion of capital funding to
17 help support its maintenance in that the resulting
18 development project integrates as thoughtfully as
19 possible into the neighborhood. I also want to
20 acknowledge that the developer has agreed to work
21 very hard to ensure that MWBE's are a part of his
22 project and that there are local hiring events within
23 the Chelsea area as well, in particular in NYCHA
24 Housing which Council Member Johnson has as well so
25 congratulations. I will now turn it over to Council

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2 Member Johnson now to deliver a few remarks on this
3 historic day. Thank you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Good morning,
5 Chair Richards and Subcommittee members. Thank you
6 for giving me an opportunity to address this
7 application which is of utmost importance to me and
8 to the people of my district. This has been a long
9 road, almost three years now. It actually started
10 before I was sworn in to the Council in November of
11 2013 and we have known from the beginning that this
12 project has a potential to benefit New Yorker's
13 extraordinarily, primarily through the creation of
14 affordable housing and a much-needed revenue
15 generator for Pier 40 which is a truly beloved
16 community resource in the West Village. Through this
17 public review process, we have also been able to
18 integrate other community benefits into this project
19 and there are a lot of people to thank so bear with
20 me while I go through and thank the long list of
21 people who helped make today happen. I want to thank
22 Manhattan Community Board 2, particularly the Chair,
23 former Chair, Tobi Bergman and David
24 Goober[phonetic], I want to thank Manhattan Borough
25 president, Gale Brewer and her staff, Congressman

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2 Jerry Nadler and his staff, Suee[phonetic]
3 Messrahi[phonetic], Robert Godheim [phonetic], Robert
4 Adderbury [phonetic] and Amy Rutkin [phonetic], State
5 Senators Brad Hoylman and Daniel Squadron, Assembly
6 Member Deborah Glick and her chief of staff, Sara
7 Sanchala. I really, really, really want to thank the
8 Department of City Planning, Carl Weisbrod, Carlena
9 [phonetic] Hall who, Carolina Hall who's here. I want
10 to thank Perma Kapour[phonetic], Edith Su Chen,
11 Daniel Deserbo [phonetic] and Anita Larmount
12 [phonetic]. I want to thank this Committee and the
13 Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, you Chair
14 Richards for sitting through a three and a half hour
15 Committee hearing on this and your incredible support
16 and help throughout this. I want to thank the
17 developer who's here for being an active partner and
18 maximizing the public benefits of this project. It's
19 been a long, difficult, arduous road and I'm glad
20 that we got to this point today. Thank you. Thank you
21 for your engagement and thank you for helping make
22 two to happen. I want to thank Madeline Wills and her
23 team at the Hudson River Park Trust. From the
24 administration, I want to thank Deputy Mayor Alicia
25 Glenn, her chief of staff, James Patchett, Michael

1 DeLoach who worked hard on this as well as John
2 Polupo [phonetic]. I want to thank the Pier 40
3 Champions who took an active and leading role in
4 seeing this project through and I want to thank
5 Andrew Berman, the executive director of the
6 Greenwich Society for Historic Preservation who is
7 here this morning. Lastly, I want to thank my staff,
8 Lewis Chilton Brown, who just walked out of the room,
9 who's worked on this. He's walking in now pretending
10 like he's not listening. For three years, he's been
11 with me the whole time I've been in the Council. I
12 want to thank Eric Botcher, my chief of staff as
13 well, who's in the back and I want to thank Pat
14 Cumerford [phonetic] from my office and lastly Chair
15 Richards thank you again. I really, really, really..
16 want to thank Raju Mann, Julie Ruben, Liz Lee and
17 Ramone Martinez. They have worked countless, endless
18 days, hours, weeks, months, thousands of phone calls,
19 thousands of emails. They have been on top of this.
20 This project would not happened without Raju, Julie,
21 Liz and Ramone's hard work so I'm very, very grateful
22 to them so among the public benefits that our city
23 and the West Village community will gain from this
24 project are nearly 500 units of senior housing and
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1 affordable housing, 30 percent of the units in the
2 project; a 15,000 square foot public recreational
3 center which is gonna be public open space, a
4 supermarket for the far west side community that
5 truly needs one, plans for a community sized retail
6 and not a big box store as per the community's
7 wishes, modified area median incomes for this project
8 that reflect the diversity of this community,
9 multiple bans that hit multiple income levels, a
10 reinvigorated process to designate a new historic
11 district in the south village, phase III, which the
12 community and GVSHP has worked for over a decade to
13 make happen, a \$14 million from the City, from this
14 administration, to ensure the long-term
15 sustainability of Pier 40, a prohibition on future
16 transfer air rights from the Hudson River Park into
17 Manhattan Community Board 2, reduced parking in the
18 neighborhood, a comprehensive traffic study that the
19 Department of Transportation will conduct to
20 determine how we can alleviate the chronic and
21 project specific transportation issues in this part
22 of Manhattan near a Holland tunnel and the Nevarics
23 [phonetic] Street corridor and finally a transfer of
24 \$100 million from the developer to Pier 40 which will
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1
2 literally save this Pier and the park from a
3 potentially catastrophic structural failure and deep
4 and long financial issues that have plagued the park.
5 There are an extraordinary array of benefits and I'm
6 proud of the participation from my local community,
7 from my colleagues in elected office and from the
8 developer to get us where we are now. At each step
9 along the way, this application got better and better
10 with more benefits for the community at each turn.
11 And I think we can now see a clear picture of how
12 this development will integrate with the community
13 and how it will be a real asset to the west side and
14 to the city as a whole. Because of the many benefits
15 that we've all worked hard to achieve, I urge the
16 Land Use Committee to approve this application and I,
17 I also want to thank, I think she's in here, oh she
18 is. I didn't see her in here. I want to thank Amy
19 Levitin from the Land Use Division as well for her
20 hard work on this project. The whole Land Use Team
21 has been truly, truly incredible. Literally this
22 wouldn't have happened without the hard work of our
23 Land Use Division. They, Raju was here the entire
24 weekend, Saturday and Sunday, working on this project
25 so I am truly grateful for this Committee's careful

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2 deliberation and for giving me this opportunity to
3 testify in support of this application. It's been
4 three years, a long road, many, many people involved
5 and I urge all of you to vote in favor of this
6 application. Thank you very much Chair Richards.

7 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Thank you Council
8 Member Johnson and I just want him to hold this
9 crutch up. That's how hard Council Member Johnson
10 worked on this that this man can't even walk.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: That's the
12 applicant.

13 [Laughter]

14 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: I just want to
15 send a message to anyone who comes before this
16 Committee and Council to bargain with us, that's the
17 way you will leave if you do not comply with all of
18 our wishes. With that being said, Danielle you've
19 taken that to City Planning? Okay, I will now couple
20 Land Use Items number 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511
21 for approval of the modification that I've described.
22 Thank you Council Member Johnson once again and with
23 that, Counsel please call the roll.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Richards.
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2 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: I vote aye,
3 congratulations once again.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
5 Gentile.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you. The
7 maxim that hard work pays off is evident here and so
8 congratulations Councilman Johnson for really hard
9 work that's paid off big time here. I proudly vote
10 aye.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
12 Garodnick.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: With
14 congratulations to Council Member Johnson, I vote
15 aye. Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
17 Williams.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: No.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Wills.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLS: Congratulations, I
21 vote aye.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
23 Reynoso.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I vote aye.
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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
3 Williams.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Explain my
5 vote?

6 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Yes sir, you may
7 explain your vote.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you, so I
9 won't be able to vote aye on this project and I
10 wanted to explain why. As the Housing Chair, I've
11 been pushing very much in trying to assure that we
12 have low AMI's in the project. I think it's even more
13 now because of the administration change. I was,
14 learned today that Ben Carson is now the HUD Chairman
15 of the, HUD. I think it's going to be more
16 devastating for this City. This, my opposition now is
17 not as opposed, in opposition to the great and hard
18 work that Corey Johnson has done but it's to try and
19 encourage this body to really do what it says it's
20 going to do which is provide affordable housing. We
21 pushed the homelessness crisis but yet this
22 administration and this body as a whole, including
23 me, pass forward project that don't go deep enough.
24 The 30% and 40% AMI and what happens in one community
25 does affect us all because areas like Salamanca and

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2 Barron take the burden of having 30 and 40 percent
3 AMI. I do think there was a lot of hard work done. I
4 was impressed that the Land Use happened. It was a
5 very shrewd move and I know there's a lot of other
6 public benefits but I think without our projects
7 going lower, it's gonna be problematic to really deal
8 with the housing problems that we have so with that,
9 I'm gonna have to vote no but I appreciate all the
10 hard work that was done.

11 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Thank you. With
12 that being said, oh, I'm gonna [phonetic] turn it
13 back to Julie Reuben.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: So Land Use items 506
15 through 511 are approved with modifications by a vote
16 of 5 in the affirmative, 1 negative, and 0
17 abstentions.

18 CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: All right, I'm
19 gonna keep the vote open for another 15 to 20
20 minutes. With that being said, congratulations,
21 Council Member Johnson.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
24 Torres.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I vote aye.

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COMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 15

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You can close out.

CHAIRPERSON RICHARDS: Close out. The meeting is adjourned?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The vote to approve Land Use items 506-511 is approved by a vote of 6 in the affirmative, 1 negative, and 0 abstentions.

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 December 27, 2016