

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION AND WATERFRONTS

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June 14, 2012
Start: 1:10 p.m.
Recess: 3:35 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway
Committee Room, 16th Floor

B E F O R E:

MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO
MICHAEL C. NELSON
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Diana Reyna
Gale A. Brewer
Brad Lander
Daniel Dromm
Stephen Levin
Peter F. Vallone, Jr.
Eric Ulrich
Julissa Ferreras
Vincent J. Gentile
Elizabeth Crowley
James Vacca
James G. Van Bramer

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

Carolee Fink
Senior Policy advisor
Mayor's Office

Joshua Laird
Assistant Commissioner for Planning and Parkland
Department of Parks and Recreation

Emily Mijatovic
Assemblyman Joseph Lentol
50th Assembly District, Brooklyn

Laura Treciokas
Co-chair, Board Member
Friends of Bushwick Inlet Park
Greenpoint Waterfront Association for Parks and
Planning

Christine Holowacz
Vice-Chair, Board of Directors
Newtown Creek Alliance

Roland Lewis
President
Metropolitan Waterfront Alliance

Dewey Thompson
Co-chair
Greenpoint Waterfront Association for Parks and
Planning
North Brooklyn Boat Club

Anne Rotella

Leah Archibald
Executive Director
East Williamsburg Valley Industrial Development
Corporation

Alan Hill
Regional Commissioner
Greenpoint Williamsburg Youth Soccer League

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

Pete Bertine

Will Elkins

Laura Hofmann

Liz Broswell

Carl Ellman

Ryan Kuonen

Organizer

Neighbors Allied for Good Growth

Barbara Vetell

President

Greenpoint West Street Block Association

Janice Lauletta-Weinmann

President

Greenpoint Monitor Museum

Alba Maya

Rob Solano

Executive Director

Churches United for Fair Housing

Ramon Peguero

Executive Director

Southside United

Spencer Lamm

George Weinmann

Greenpoint Monitor Museum

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

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2 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: All
3 right, good afternoon everybody, we're going to
4 get started. I'm Council Member Melissa Mark-
5 Viverito, I'm Chair of the Committee on Parks and
6 Recreation. I want to thank my fellow co-chair
7 Mike Nelson of the Committee on Waterfronts for
8 agreeing to hold this joint hearing with my
9 committee.

10 Today's hearing will focus on the
11 status of the Greenpoint Williamsburg Waterfront
12 Open Space Master Plan which was issued during the
13 2005 rezoning of those Brooklyn neighborhoods.
14 The administration, through the master plan, had
15 made numerous commitments guaranteeing the
16 development of parkland and other publicly
17 accessible open space facilities along the
18 waterfront. For instance, the plan includes over
19 30 acres of planned public parks and one mile of
20 waterfront esplanade to be designed, developed,
21 and maintained solely by the Department of Parks
22 and Recreation, as well as 15 acres of open space
23 designed and built by private developers. Since
24 2005, however, numerous hurdles have prevented and
25 continue to prevent the plan from coming to

1
2 fruition as originally planned and promised. For
3 example, in Bushwick Inlet Park, the centerpiece
4 of the Greenpoint Williamsburg waterfront, nearly
5 \$240 million has been spent by the City to acquire
6 three of six parcels, but it has developed only
7 one of them thus far, including a soccer field and
8 a section of the esplanade. The park faces
9 numerous hurdles going forward, including the need
10 to acquire additional lots and engage in
11 environment remediation so the land can be safely
12 developed into open space.

13 Another major part of the plan
14 includes a development of Box Street Park on 65
15 Commercial Street, which is currently an MTA
16 garage and vehicle depot. Though this is a City-
17 owned site, progress is currently stalled and
18 development is not funded due in part to the
19 difficulty in relocating the MTA depot. In 2005,
20 the City included \$14 million in a 2007 expense
21 budget for construction of Box Street Park, but
22 funds were later trimmed to \$1 million in
23 subsequent budget cuts.

24 While this hearing will also
25 examine other parts of the waterfront plan,

1 including the development status of Transmitter
2 Park, the Newton Barge Terminal Playground, and
3 the Greenpoint playground, it is worth noting that
4 the bigger picture as it relates to the City
5 keeping the promises and commitments it makes to
6 our communities must also be examined. All too
7 often, the City has made promises that many argue
8 are non-binding on anyone, including future
9 administrations, in the hopes of securing the
10 support necessary to redevelop certain parts of
11 our city only to see such promises unrealized.
12 This is a dangerous precedent and one that will
13 make it more difficult in the future to vote
14 secure in new redevelopments and create new parks
15 and open space.

17 I hope this hearing is a step
18 towards spurring the City to keep the guarantees
19 it made to the Greenpoint Williamsburg
20 neighborhoods and in a more general sense, to
21 engage in redevelopment projects only when it has
22 the resources and the will to complete them as
23 originally planned and promised.

24 I look forward to examining this
25 issue in greater depth today. I want to welcome

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2 the administration and my co-chair, but I just do
3 want to say personally to all those that are here,
4 'cause I know this is an issue of concern, that
5 Council Member Levin has been a very strong
6 advocate on this issue, continuing to raise the
7 concerns about the City keeping its promises, he's
8 raised it in multiple budget hearings that we've
9 had, so I do want to recognize his efforts and
10 asking us to consider having this hearing here
11 today. And with that, I'll turn it over to my co-
12 chair, Mike Nelson, of the Waterfronts Committee.

13 CHAIRPERSON NELSON: Thank you, Co-
14 chair Mark-Viverito.

15 Good afternoon and welcome to
16 today's joint hearing with our Committees,
17 Waterfronts and Parks and Recreation. My name is
18 Mike Nelson, I have the honor to chair the
19 Committee on Waterfronts. The subject of today's
20 hearing, of course, is the status of development
21 of the Greenpoint Williamsburg Waterfront Open
22 Space Master Plan. Much of the North Brooklyn
23 waterfront has remained dormant after decades of
24 declining maritime activity. The comprehensive
25 rezoning of Greenpoint Williamsburg sought to

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2 reclaim two miles of long-neglected East River
3 waterfront to create over 50 acres of open space,
4 including a continuous public esplanade and a new
5 28-acre park surrounding the Bushwick Inlet.

6 The Department of Parks and
7 Recreation developed a Waterfront Master Plan to
8 coordinate and refine the recreation and open
9 space opportunities created by the Greenpoint
10 Williamsburg rezoning. The plan includes over 30
11 acres of planned public parks and one mile of
12 waterfront esplanade to be designed, developed,
13 and maintained solely by Parks. The City has spent
14 nearly \$240 million to acquire half of the parcels
15 of Bushwick Inlet Park and has constructed only 6
16 of the promised of the 28 acres since 2005.

17 Barge Park and 65 Commercial Street
18 have seen little to no movement in recent years.
19 Current conditions along the water's edge consist
20 of both active industrial and deteriorating
21 industrial landscapes, most of which are
22 inaccessible to the public.

23 The Committees hope to examine the
24 progress the City has made on the Greenpoint
25 Williamsburg Waterfront Open Space Master Plan and

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2 what the City plans to accomplish before the end
3 of this Administration's term.

4 I want to thank Council Member
5 Levin for constantly being on top of this and
6 pushing for this hearing for quite a while. And
7 David Seitzer, law clerk to the Committee, and
8 Crystal Gold Pond, our policy analyst. And
9 recognize that Waterfronts Committee member Gale
10 Brewer has joined us and if you want to announce
11 your committee--oh, and Brad Lander, Waterfronts,
12 thank you, Brad.

13 I'll turn this back to Melissa
14 Mark-Viverito.

15 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
16 you, Chair. And also want to recognize that we
17 are joined by Council Member Diana Reyna, and I
18 think those--Council Members?

19 MALE VOICE: Danny--

20 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Oh,
21 Danny Dromm is here as well, he stepped out for a
22 second. And so with that, I will turn it over to
23 Council Member Steve Levin for some opening
24 remarks.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Well thank

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2 you very much, Chair Mark-Viverito and Chair
3 Nelson, for holding this hearing today. I think
4 the Greenpoint and Williamsburg communities are
5 very thankful. I want to thank Ms. Fink and Mr.
6 Laird for agreeing to testify today.

7 The issue at hand and that we will
8 be discussing today at this hearing is the status
9 of the open space commitments that were made by
10 the Bloomberg administration through the points of
11 agreement made by the administration, by public
12 commitments made by this administration,
13 agreements made upon the passage of the 2005
14 rezoning with the City Council, and through
15 numerous references and referrals made by the City
16 Planning Commission in its report from 2005 which
17 approved this rezoning, and from the EIS on which
18 this rezoning was based.

19 In short, the reality that the
20 Greenpoint Williamsburg community is living with
21 in terms of open space, affordable housing, and
22 community facilities today in 2012, seven years
23 after the rezoning, falls well short of the
24 promises made by this administration in 2005 and
25 in the intervening years. If we are to judge this

1 rezoning based solely on what we see on the ground
2 today, we would have to say that this rezoning has
3 been a failure. And as we will discuss throughout
4 the course of this hearing, the Bloomberg
5 administration made a commitment to construct
6 3,500 units of affordable housing, to date, 800,
7 or roughly 23%, of those units have been built.

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9 For open space, the results are no
10 better. The administration committed repeatedly
11 and in fact premised the open space commitments of
12 the rezoning on a 28-acre park to extend from
13 North Ninth Street to the Bushwick Inlet north of
14 North 14th Street. This was Build Scenario A in
15 the 2005 EIS. To date, according to a Wall Street
16 Journal article from this morning, the
17 administration has acquired only about half of
18 that park, has completed only a soccer field at
19 the southern tip of the proposed park, and has no
20 plan for acquiring the rest of the site.

21 To the north, the administration
22 committed in 2005 to building a park on the site
23 of 65 Commercial Street, which at the time housed
24 a fleet of MTA vehicles leased on City-owned land.
25 The administration agreed at the time to relocate

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2 the MTA vehicles and build parkland for the
3 residents of northern Greenpoint directly
4 adversely affected by the rezoning. In this case,
5 the City did not face the obstacle of acquiring
6 any land, the land was already City-owned.
7 However, today, in 2012, seven years after the
8 rezoning, the to be parkland at 65 Commercial
9 Street still houses two fleets of MTA vehicles.
10 No discernible progress has been made. There is
11 no plan in place to date put forth by this
12 administration to move the MTA vehicles as they
13 committed in 2005 and to build the park in its
14 entirety.

15 To make matters worse, of the \$14
16 million initially committed to this park, \$13
17 million was scrapped from the city capital budget
18 in 2009. The situation we find ourselves in today
19 is unacceptable. It is unacceptable to the
20 community that I represent, it is unacceptable to
21 me, and it is unacceptable to this Council, which
22 passed this rezoning in 2005. What we want is a
23 plan. What is the administration's plan to get
24 from where we are today to completing the
25 administration's open space commitments in their

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entirety?

We as a community are fed up. We don't want to hear any excuses, we don't want to hear any spin. We want a concrete plan with a timeline, benchmarks, and the capital funding to complete the parks. No excuses, no spin.

And what this hearing is also about is about credibility. The Bloomberg administration's credibility and the Bloomberg administration's legacy. The administration has completed hundreds of rezonings since 2002, more than any other administration. They have made many commitments through these rezonings, but their word is of little value in the future and the commitments of this administration and future administrations are of little value if they fail to live up to their commitments.

So I understand, Ms. Fink, that you've only been with the administration for several months, but I do intend to ask some very difficult questions today, questions that demand answers, and it is my expectation that we will leave here today with answers to those questions and not simply more questions.

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2 Mr. and Madam Chair, I thank you
3 very much for conducting this oversight hearing
4 today. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
6 you, Council Member Levin. And with that, I think
7 we will allow the administration reps here--and
8 actually I know Carolee Fink for many years, she
9 has actually been with the administration prior to
10 being at Deputy Mayor Steel's office. With EDC,
11 she was my liaison, so I appreciate all the work
12 she's done, so I think she has many years of
13 experience, and I'm hoping she can answer a lot of
14 the questions that we posed here today.

15 So Carolee Fink from the Mayor's
16 Office and Assistant Commissioner Josh Laird from
17 the Department of Parks and Recreation, thank you,
18 welcome to the hearing, and you may begin.

19 CAROLEE FINK: Thank you. Good
20 morning Chairs--or I guess good afternoon, Chairs
21 Mark-Viverito and Nelson and members of the
22 Committee. My name is Carolee Fink and I am a
23 Senior Policy advisor to Deputy Mayor Robert Steel
24 in the Mayor's Office. I am joined by my
25 colleague, Joshua Laird, Assistant Commissioner

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2 for Planning and Parkland at the Department of
3 Parks and Recreation. I'm pleased to be here to
4 give a status update on the Greenpoint
5 Williamsburg Waterfront rezoning, including its
6 Open Space Master Plan. I will briefly describe
7 the project's history, goals, and status, as well
8 as answer any questions you may have.

9 On May 11, 2005, the City Council
10 approved the Department of City Planning's
11 rezoning proposal for nearly 200 blocks in the
12 Greenpoint and Williamsburg neighborhoods of
13 Brooklyn. The comprehensive rezoning set the
14 stage for the continuing revitalization of these
15 vibrant neighborhoods by creating new
16 opportunities for much needed affordable housing,
17 facilitating local commercial development,
18 promoting light industrial activity in appropriate
19 areas, and establishing a plan for a continuous
20 publicly accessible esplanade and new public open
21 spaces along the waterfront.

22 Since the rezoning, the combination
23 of zoning incentives, housing programs, and the
24 commitment of public land has resulted in the
25 construction of 860 units of affordable housing,

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2 nearly 200 additional affordable units are
3 expected to break ground in fiscal year 2013, and
4 nearly 670 units are in the planning process.
5 That's more than 1,700 affordable units completed
6 or in the planning process despite the 2007 market
7 crash that caused more stalled housing
8 developments in the Williamsburg area than
9 anywhere else in the city. This new housing has
10 helped to facilitate commercial development--new
11 cafes, restaurants, galleries, boutiques, and
12 hotels have opened, and dozens of tech start-ups
13 that have been drawn to the neighborhood's
14 amenities are now based in the area.

15 For years before the rezoning, the
16 Greenpoint and Williamsburg communities sought
17 public access to the largely abandoned and
18 neglected waterfront, as well as new public open
19 spaces. The rezoning set the stage for renewal
20 and established a blueprint for a revitalized,
21 publicly accessible East River waterfront,
22 including a continuous public esplanade, a 28-acre
23 park, new open space on publicly controlled land
24 at Dupont and Commercial Street, and investments
25 in existing public open spaces like McCarren Park.

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2 Since the rezoning, The Bloomberg
3 Administration has committed more than \$315
4 million for the creation, improvement, and
5 expansion of open spaces in Greenpoint and
6 Williamsburg. This commitment represents the
7 largest capital investment in any community
8 district and 25% of the Department of Parks and
9 Recreations' capital budget for FY '02 to '22 for
10 the borough of Brooklyn. To date, the City has
11 used this historic investment for the acquisition
12 of the first two phases of Bushwick Inlet Park, as
13 well as for the design and construction of
14 multiple sites, including WNYC Transmitter Park,
15 Greenpoint Playground Comfort Station, Sternberg
16 Park Dogrun, the first phases of construction at
17 Bushwick Inlet Park, and various projects at
18 McCarren Park, including the restoration of the
19 McCarren Park Pool. In addition, the City,
20 through its waterfront zoning regulations, has
21 leveraged more than 50 million in private
22 investment for new public open space along the
23 waterfront at Northside Piers, The Edge, 184 Kent,
24 and 155 West Street developments. The rezoning
25 also included incentives for new pier development,

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2 which created a new transportation option for
3 Greenpoint and Williamsburg. In less than a year
4 330,000 of 880,000 East River Ferry rides have
5 originated from piers at India Street, Schaefer
6 Landing, and North 6th Street.

7 DEP is also making a significant
8 investment that will facilitate two acres of new
9 open space on the waterfront. As part of the
10 rezoning, the administration reaffirmed its
11 commitment to demolishing and relocating a sludge
12 tank and its operations. This \$158 million
13 process is underway and expected to be completed
14 by 2014.

15 Prior to the 2005 rezoning,
16 practically the entire North Williamsburg and
17 Greenpoint waterfront--two miles of shoreline from
18 North 3rd Street to Manhattan Avenue--was
19 privately owned and inaccessible. Since then, we
20 have made remarkable strides toward the
21 implementation of the City's Open Space Master
22 Plan, overcoming a daunting set of challenges,
23 including opening up street ends, the acquisition
24 of private property for parkland, the negotiation
25 high--excuse me--high quality public access plans

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2 for many privately held waterfront development
3 sites, and the transfer of privately developed
4 waterfront open space to public ownership with
5 ongoing funding for maintenance and operation.
6 The City led a seven-year court battle against the
7 TransGas Company's plan to develop a 1,100
8 megawatt power plant on an 11.9-acre site at
9 Bushwick Inlet. Together with the community, we
10 defeated the TransGas proposal and overcame
11 numerous challenges. Over the last few years, we
12 completed the purchase two of the six parcels
13 comprising Bushwick Inlet Park and successfully
14 negotiated an option to purchase a third parcel.
15 We also continue to work toward identifying
16 suitable replacement sites for two MTA operations.
17 All of this has occurred in the face of
18 extraordinary environmental remediation concerns,
19 deep budget cuts, and the worst recession since
20 the Great Depression.

21 Despite these challenges, the
22 Administration's efforts have been
23 transformational and to date have resulted in more
24 than a half a billion dollars in open space
25 investments. By any measure, the residents of

1
2 North Williamsburg and Greenpoint have
3 unprecedented access to their waterfront and
4 better parks than at any other time in the area's
5 history. We remain committed and will continue to
6 work with the community, elected officials,
7 private property owners, New York State, the MTA,
8 and others to achieve the original vision--a
9 continuous publicly accessible esplanade and new
10 public open spaces along the waterfront, forging
11 long-sought links between the water's edge and the
12 established Greenpoint and Williamsburg
13 communities, adding yet another publicly
14 accessible jewel to New York City's waterfront.

15 And we thought we'd just show you a
16 couple pictures before and after showing some of
17 the investments in this area. This was McCarren
18 pool and [pause] summer this new pool will be open
19 for the community.

20 This was before North Side Piers
21 was built. This is the new North Side Piers.

22 Transmitter Park, before park's
23 construction. NYC Park will be, again, opening
24 this summer.

25 This was a property near the edge,

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and this is what it looks like today.

This was a view from East River State Park, and this is what it looks like today. So those are a couple of the investments that have occurred since the rezoning.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank you for that. Mr. Laird, do you have testimony?

JOSHUA LAIRD: No, I'll answer--

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:
[Interposing] You'll be answering questions. Okay. So I want to thank you for that.

We've been joined by Council Member Vallone.

And just, I know I'm going to pass it off to Council Member Levin and then after that we're going to the list of questions that we have here from Council Members. But of those slides that you just showed, which of those properties, let's say, were part of the master plan?

CAROLEE FINK: All of them, except for the McCarren Park Pool was not--I guess is not--

[Crosstalk]

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CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:

[Interposing] Right, McCarren was not, but my understanding--

CAROLEE FINK: Right--

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: --was that McCarren was not, but the others were?

CAROLEE FINK: Mm-hmm.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay.

Just wanted to clarify. I'm going to, obviously, allow Council Member Levin to start his line of questioning, I know you probably have many, Council Member, but then we can just rotate and keep coming back, but thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

So, Ms. Fink, I want to first thank you for coming down. I guess the first question I would ask, you know, you did just show the East River State Park, that's a state park, was that part of the rezoning at all? Was East River State Park, a commitment made by the city administration, by the Bloomberg administration as part of the 2005 rezoning?

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2 JOSHUA LAIRD: No, it certainly
3 wasn't a commitment made by the Bloomberg
4 administration--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

6 JOSHUA LAIRD: --but it was a part
7 of the waterfront master plan that continued the--
8 called for continuous access along the Greenpoint
9 and North Williamsburg waterfront.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right, but
11 you're not claiming credit today at this hearing
12 for--

13 JOSHUA LAIRD: No, it's--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: -- building
15 the East River State Park, is what I'm--

16 JOSHUA LAIRD: [Interposing] No,
17 we're acknowledging it as one of the many open
18 space improvements--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

20 JOSHUA LAIRD: --the Greenpoint
21 residents have enjoyed.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right. So
23 I'm going to try to focus my questions mostly on
24 the commitments that the Bloomberg administration
25 made that have yet to be fulfilled. Now the

1 waterfront access plan with regard to the
2 esplanade, requiring developers, I mean, we showed
3 The Edge and Northside Piers, those were built by
4 the developers that built those developments,
5 those are capital commitments that the City
6 required them to make and they made. So while
7 that's public access to the waterfront, again,
8 that's not a capital commitment made by the
9 Bloomberg administration in 2005. So, I mean, I
10 appreciate that, I think we should focus on the
11 issues at hand here. So okay--

13 CAROLEE FINK: [Interposing] Well
14 I'd like to acknowledge, though, that those
15 investments were made because of the incentives in
16 the rezoning.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

18 CAROLEE FINK: So I think that's
19 important to acknowledge that we leveraged--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:
21 [Interposing] Right, but they also built like
22 many, many hundreds of units of luxury housing.

23 CAROLEE FINK: Sure.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So let's
25 see, we should start, I guess, with the Bushwick

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2 Inlet Park. I'm going to read a quote from Amanda
3 Burden, Commissioner Amanda Burden, from 2009 when
4 ground broke on the first site, the soccer field.
5 So today's groundbreaking is a great step forward
6 in fulfilling one of the key commitments of the
7 historic Greenpoint Williamsburg rezoning by
8 providing waterfront open space that has been a
9 priority for the community and the legacy of the
10 Bloomberg administration. The City is reclaiming
11 this once derelict waterfront for housing and a 2-
12 mile long network of waterfront open spaces, of
13 which Bushwick Inlet Park will be the heart, will
14 be the heart. The 28 acre--this is still
15 Commissioner Amanda Burden three years ago--the
16 28-acre Bushwick Inlet Park with its spectacular
17 views and opportunities for active recreation will
18 be a centerpiece for the neighborhood, a place to
19 enjoy Brooklyn's wonderful shoreline, and a
20 testament to the partnership between the people of
21 this community and the City.

22 That's as clear as it gets, it's
23 not a it may be one day or we really wish that it
24 will be, we wish that it could be; that's a
25 commitment, it will be. I'd like to know can you

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2 tell me a little bit about the process by which
3 the City found that they were essentially over
4 their heads in terms of capital commitments. If
5 the City could have acquired the property for
6 less, would the City have acquired all of this
7 property by this point?

8 JOSHUA LAIRD: Yeah, I think that's
9 fair to say, if we could have purchased all the
10 parcels with the money that was available, we
11 certainly would have gone ahead and done that.
12 You have to remember that in 2005 when the
13 rezoning was approved, it had only been a couple
14 of years earlier that parcels along the waterfront
15 were selling for just a couple of million dollars
16 each. New York State Parks bought its two blocks
17 of open space for \$8.3 million in 2001. So, you
18 know, there were estimates made at the time
19 concerning what the city thought it could get the
20 remaining parcels for and they, unfortunately,
21 turned out to be, not just a little inaccurate,
22 but those--

23 [Crosstalk]

24 JOSHUA LAIRD: --the value created
25 by the City's own rezoning, as well as the fact

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2 that, in an unanticipated way, we were not allowed
3 to value the properties as industrial properties,
4 sent the prices through the roof.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Now the
6 City, this went to court, this was an issue of
7 eminent domain, it went to Brooklyn Supreme Court-
8 -

9 JOSHUA LAIRD: [Interposing] There
10 were hearings in, there were hearings in front of
11 the condemnation judge.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And the City
13 agreed, they settled on \$93.4 million, is that
14 correct? They originally--just according to our
15 briefing paper, had originally assessed that
16 portion of land for \$13.6 million--

17 CAROLEE FINK: [Interposing] Well I
18 think it's--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --and the
20 City paid, I'm just wondering, this is something
21 that, since I found out about this, I've been
22 asking this question: How did this happen? Who
23 made that decision, who made that assessment? Who
24 in the administration made that mistake to say
25 that this was going to--that we were going to be

1
2 able to acquire this land at essentially one-ninth
3 of what it ended up costing us? Because that is a
4 pretty serious miscalculation. Because the
5 commitment, again, the commitment is still there,
6 2009, this is after, I think, or this is while
7 this was going on, the City Planning Commissioner
8 says this will happen, this is still a commitment,
9 it's an unfunded commitment, but it's still a
10 commitment. So I want you to take me through the
11 process so that we can get a real public hearing
12 on this. How was that decision reached that we
13 were going to assume that we were going to be able
14 to acquire this land at such a reduced price?

15 JOSHUA LAIRD: The City has a real
16 estate agency, it has a legal agency, and
17 appraisals, when it comes to any acquisition, are
18 made based on a variety of factors, including
19 comparable prices from recent transactions. Those
20 methodologies were employed to come up with the
21 estimates that they did. And once we got in front
22 of the condemnation judge and the property owners
23 made their arguments, it was clear that a decision
24 could be made by a judge that was very different
25 than what the City expected or that the City

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agreed with. I mean, the City--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:

[Interposing] Well if you--it was a settlement so if the City didn't agree to, they could have appealed it, right?

CAROLEE FINK: Well one important thing to acknowledge here is that the court had stayed the City's ability to acquire the parcel because of the TransGas lawsuit. So we weren't able to acquire that parcel for, you know, the seven years that we were fighting the power plant from being developed on the waterfront.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Seven years?

CAROLEE FINK: Seven years. It started in 2000--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:

[Interposing] Oh, you're talking about Bayside.

CAROLEE FINK: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: No, no, I'm still talking about the soccer field.

CAROLEE FINK: Well I think but that's important to acknowledge because as we were--

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:

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2 [Interposing] Well 'cause there's still another
3 elephant in the room, which is City Storage, which
4 is--

5 CAROLEE FINK: Sure.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --another
7 site.

8 CAROLEE FINK: Sure, which is still
9 private land.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:

11 [Interposing] So I don't think anybody is faulting
12 you if--I don't think--I've never heard the
13 argument that the acquisition at Bayside being
14 delayed by a lawsuit with TransGas was on the
15 City. I think that that's acceptable. What I'm
16 saying is that there's still about half of the
17 property that is yet to be acquired. And I guess
18 what my question is is, what is the plan to
19 acquire the rest of the site? Again, I'm going to
20 go to--I could go back to statements made by
21 Commissioner Benepe during the 2005 rezoning
22 hearing where he says we are going to immediately--
23 -he says, he actually used the word immediately--
24 start on acquisition. So what is the plan to
25 finish out the acquisition of Bushwick Inlet?

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2 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Can I
3 just ask a point of clarification on one thing?
4 When the rezoning happened--and I'd like the City
5 to testify to this--what was the original timeline
6 that was presented in terms of fulfilling
7 everything that was laid out in terms of the
8 commitments made?

9 CAROLEE FINK: I don't think--

10 [Crosstalk]

11 JOSHUA LAIRD: [Interposing] There
12 was no absolute commitment for the timeline for
13 acquiring those parcels.

14 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: There
15 was not even a sense of a timeline that was
16 provided? So you're not saying, okay, within five
17 years, within two years, there was no commitment--

18 JOSHUA LAIRD: [Interposing] I
19 think if you look back in the EIS, there perhaps
20 was some assumptions made about a timeframe for
21 the overall development, not just to the
22 acquisition of Bushwick Inlet Park, but the
23 development of all of the private properties along
24 the waterfront, none of that has--because of the
25 economy, none of those timeline assumptions have

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been met.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay.

So well so then just going back then to what Council Member Levin is saying about moving forward in terms of acquisition and what is the current timeline with all the other parcels, if you could answer that question.

CAROLEE FINK: Well it takes, you know, it takes two parties to come to an agreement. I mean, I think we should acknowledge that the City has made efforts and reached out to all of the private property owners on several occasions to see if we can work out some deal, because we do remain committed to all of--to everything that we've said--we remain committed to building the park, we remain committed to everything in our MOU and the EIS. I would say that our last conversation with the City Storage owners was not promising, they're asking, you know, \$175 million for their property plus fixtures, which could be tens of millions of dollars. We don't have a blank checkbook. You know, we're not going to pay anybody what they want for their property, it has to be, you know,

1 grounded in today's markets conditions, the
2 taxpayers are paying for this property, we have to
3 make sure it's a responsible transaction. We
4 remain committed to trying to work something out
5 with them.
6

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And so in
8 July, I [off mic] in July 2000--this is according
9 to a Daily News article in July of 2011, a letter
10 from the Parks department to City Storage surfaced
11 stating that the City does not have the funding or
12 timeline for purchasing this land. So that's the
13 last--so you're not in negotiations.

14 CAROLEE FINK: Our last
15 conversation with them, they made a--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:
17 [Interposing] So they made a pitch to you in terms
18 of dollar amount and you said that we don't want
19 to pay \$170 million and that was it, and then it's
20 dropped? There's no further--

21 CAROLEE FINK: [Interposing] Well
22 we said, and I wasn't in the room on this so I
23 can't tell you what was said verbatim, I can tell
24 you that we're happy to have conversations with
25 any private property owners and if--

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COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:

[Interposing] Well has the City done an assessment on that piece of property--

CAROLEE FINK: [Interposing] We haven't done it.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --based on-- their own assessment based on the settlement that the City paid \$93 million for the other piece of property? 'Cause I'm sure that they're comparable and--

CAROLEE FINK: [Interposing] We don't have a recent appraisal.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And why not?

CAROLEE FINK: Well because we--

JOSHUA LAIRD: [Interposing] We don't have a, I mean, appraisals go stale very quickly--

CAROLEE FINK: [Interposing] Exactly.

JOSHUA LAIRD: --we don't have an allocation, we don't have money to be--

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER:

[Interposing] You don't have an intention. Do you have an intention--

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2 JOSHUA LAIRD: [Interposing] No, we
3 do have intention--

4 CAROLEE FINK: [Interposing] No,
5 that's not right.

6 [crosstalk]

7 JOSHUA LAIRD: --but you can't
8 negotiate without funding.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: You can't
10 negotiate without an appraisal.

11 JOSHUA LAIRD: Right.

12 CAROLEE FINK: Yes, you can
13 negotiate without an appraisal.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. So
15 what is the plan then between now and the end of
16 the Bloomberg administration, what is the plan to--
17 --there's got to be a plan, you can't just hope
18 that the owner of City Storage is going to all of
19 a sudden just feel like very generous and give the
20 City this land for--I don't even know, has the
21 City put forward a number? Has the City said, no,
22 we're not going to pay you \$170 million but we're
23 going to pay you \$75 million? I mean, has there
24 been a negotiation? That's a negotiation, has
25 there been a negotiation?

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2 CAROLEE FINK: I think that the
3 last conversations were, it didn't leave the City
4 incredibly optimistic on, you know, the
5 expectations of the private property owner. If
6 that property owner would like to reengage, then
7 we are certainly willing to do that.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: It's the
9 commitment was made by the City to acquire the
10 land. So it's actually the owner of that property
11 did not rezone the Williamsburg Greenpoint
12 waterfront, the City of New York did, so it's on
13 the City, the City made the obligation, the City's
14 obligation then is to acquire the land so--

15 CAROLEE FINK: [Interposing] The
16 City also has an obligation to the taxpayer and
17 also has an obligation to negotiate a fair and
18 reasonable deal, which we are willing to do.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So are you
20 negotiating that fair and reasonable deal?

21 CAROLEE FINK: Like I said, the
22 last conversation did not leave us in a very
23 optimistic state of mind, but we remain committed
24 to negotiating with the property owner.

25 JOSHUA LAIRD: I mean, I think what

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2 Carolee said before, we don't have a bottomless
3 pit of money to throw at this. When we get to a
4 point, which we hope we will, where we can put a
5 serious offer on the table, then we will do it.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: It sounds
7 kind of like you wrote a check that, you know, you
8 couldn't cash. But I'm going to turn it over back
9 to the chair to let others ask questions.

10 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: No,
11 thank you, and we definitely will come back. Just
12 wanted to allow an--'cause I know some Council
13 Members had questions, but obviously, I mean, the
14 question in this issue in particular and the
15 situation with this rezoning in particular brings
16 up questions in general. I mean, and we're seeing
17 a similar situation with Willets Point where the
18 original intent was promised is now being
19 completely restructured and not what was
20 originally discussed. So the question of the
21 credibility, right, of this administration--what
22 level of engagement or what is the thinking on the
23 part of you all to hold any future administration
24 responsible for the promises that have been made
25 to this community or any community when it comes

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2 to any rezoning and promises made, what kind of
3 thinking is going into that since we only have a
4 year and a half left?

5 CAROLEE FINK: I think just state
6 very clearly, when we enter into MOUs with the
7 Council for these projects, we take them very
8 seriously. We enter into these agreements because
9 we intend to fulfill our obligations. We honor
10 MOUs from previous administrations. There is no
11 legal framework to bind a future administration.

12 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: All
13 right, with that, I'm going to pass it on to
14 Council Member Diana Reyna, and after her will be
15 Council Member Lander.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Thank you,
17 Madam Chair, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to take
18 this opportunity to take a moment to just
19 understand, I found out about the hearing
20 yesterday, Steve Levin had reached out and said,
21 you know, there is this happening so I wanted to
22 just lend my support to the issues of what are
23 stalled sites, the issue of what is open space
24 commitments in the master plan for Community Board
25 1 when we say Greenpoint Williamsburg, I'm

1
2 assuming that it's including the whole Community
3 Board, which is why we have a structure that's
4 built for public-private partnerships, such as
5 Open Space Alliance--and I know that Stephanie
6 Thayer is here present in the room and her great
7 work in trying to lead forward with positioning
8 the Community Board to be able to build out what
9 are increases in acreage of open space, whether
10 that's on the waterfront or upland. Is that
11 accurate?

12 CAROLEE FINK: I'm sorry, what's
13 the question or...?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Do you agree
15 with my statement?

16 CAROLEE FINK: Sure.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Okay. You
18 know, the Open Space Alliance is supposed to be
19 the vehicle to assist, right, as a public-private
20 partnership on behalf of Community Board 1, and I
21 don't know what the, to date, what is the amount
22 of money that has been raised to help leverage
23 what would be the site acquisitions of a lot of
24 these individual pieces of land. Is there any
25 accountability as far as the finances is concerned

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2 to assist with what would be movement on any of
3 these pieces of land?

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JOSHUA LAIRD: I don't have any
5 figures for you. I mean, the Open Space Alliance
6 has been and continues to be a great advocate for
7 the parks in Greenpoint and Williamsburg
8 throughout Community Board 1, they've been a
9 fantastic partner. Ms. Thayer is simultaneously
10 the executive director of the Alliance and our
11 Parks department administrator for North Brooklyn
12 parks. They do not have an agreement with us that
13 obligates them to raise a particular sum of money
14 to support operations, but time and again when
15 there have been ways that we needed help, they
16 have tried to come through and, for the most part,
17 have.

18

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: I certainly
19 agree with that. So let me just use as far as
20 examples throughout the City that I know I've
21 witnessed in my tenure. Having been a Council
22 Member representing this Community Board, not
23 necessarily the parks that have been mentioned in
24 this presentation, but, nevertheless, representing
25 what would be Community Board 1 where I was born

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2 and raised to see, you know, a pool that's now
3 going to be returned to its glory to be able to
4 have access to it in my day, right, is an
5 accomplishment unto itself. So I want to thank
6 you on that. The issue of the lack of
7 recreational space that we have, and we have East
8 River State Park where now we have a soccer field
9 and a great lawn that we're able to have film, but
10 that's also State-run not City. So there's a lot
11 of, you know--

12 JOSHUA LAIRD: [Interposing] Well
13 the soccer field is City, it's City.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: The soccer
15 field is City and the rest of the park is State,
16 and so that's another partnership. And it's not
17 meeting the demand, obviously, because we have
18 more density due to a lot of the development that
19 has occurred moreso upland than on the actual
20 waterfront. So I wanted to just make sure that we
21 understand where the real density is happening as
22 far as residential development is concerned.

23 And when you look at Brooklyn
24 Bridge Park, how was that particular partnership
25 struck? And what amount of money has gone into as

1
2 far as public dollars, taxpayer dollars, into that
3 structure?

4 JOSHUA LAIRD: Which partnership
5 are you talking--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA:
7 [Interposing] Brooklyn Bridge Park--

8 JOSHUA LAIRD: Park, which--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: --is
10 massive, right?

11 JOSHUA LAIRD: Right.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: I look to
13 that as the ideal example of what Greenpoint
14 Williamsburg was envisioned as.

15 JOSHUA LAIRD: Right, I don't have
16 the dollar figures at my fingertip. The City has
17 made a substantial commitment to Brooklyn Bridge
18 Park, as well as to the parks of Greenpoint and
19 Williamsburg. I would say that they are
20 comparable, the money that's gone into Greenpoint
21 and North Williamsburg is comparable, perhaps more
22 than the total City commitment at this point, to
23 Brooklyn Bridge Park.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: But what was
25 the amount of Brooklyn Bridge Park as far as the

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public dollars versus the private dollars?

JOSHUA LAIRD: Well there's no private dollars that have gone into Brooklyn Bridge Park.

CAROLEE FINK: Well for operating.

JOSHUA LAIRD: Well for operating, the park will be self-sufficient, but in terms of the development of the park, it's all been public monies, majority from the City, some from the State through the Port Authority.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And, Josh, just to make sure that I'm understanding the timeline there, what was the structure as far as the starting point for that development at that particular park?

JOSHUA LAIRD: Well the majority of that park comprises what had been the Port Authority piers just south of the Brooklyn Bridge and the Port itself had been looking to redevelop those piers for many years, they're no longer needed for maritime commerce. In the eighties, the Port put forward a high-rise luxury housing plan that the community fought against and that--

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA:

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[Interposing] In what year?

JOSHUA LAIRD: Oh, in the eighties,
I don't recall the 19--

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA:

[Interposing] But the actual rezoning happened
when?

JOSHUA LAIRD: There was no
rezoning for Brooklyn Bridge Park.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Okay. So no
rezoning has taken place--

JOSHUA LAIRD: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: --the park
is being built--

JOSHUA LAIRD: Park is being built.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: --all
developed by 100% taxpayer dollars.

JOSHUA LAIRD: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And the
amount?

JOSHUA LAIRD: I don't have that
figure at my fingertips--

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA:

[Interposing] Can anybody in the staff right now
just find out?

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JOSHUA LAIRD: We can certainly get
back to you--

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COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: That would
be--

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JOSHUA LAIRD: --with that.

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COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Eric Ulrich
is--

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JOSHUA LAIRD: Yeah.

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COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: --going to
Google it in the meantime as well--

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JOSHUA LAIRD: Sure, okay.

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COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: --Gale's
doing it right now. I just wanted to just
understand exactly what type of timeline went into
the Brooklyn Bridge Park because Brooklyn Bridge
Park, I'm sure had certain timelines to reach what
would be 100% of public dollars going into it.

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JOSHUA LAIRD: Well as I said, the
advocacy for Brooklyn Bridge Park dates back to
the eighties, the agreement between the governor
and mayor that really set the wheels in motion to
get the park developed was signed in 2002.

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COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And as far
as the State dedicating any dollars, is there any

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State dollars coming into this?

JOSHUA LAIRD: Yes, there was an allocation by the State.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: A one-time--

JOSHUA LAIRD: [Interposing] A one-time.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: --

allocation, and that was for how much?

JOSHUA LAIRD: When the park was-- when that MOU was--at the time the MOU was signed in 2002, the State pledged \$85 million and the City pledged \$65 million. Since that time, the City has put in more money and now surpasses that State contribution, I don't have it at my fingertips what the total comes to.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And so you know--

JOSHUA LAIRD: [Interposing] It's north of 300 million.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Correct, right.

JOSHUA LAIRD: Yeah, yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: So we're averaging what would be above the 300 million to

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build out Brooklyn Bridge Park.

JOSHUA LAIRD: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: In the meantime, the 2005 rezoning takes place, the commitments for open space, but none of the land as far as 100% of development rights and funding being allocated really takes place, it's just a black and white piece of paper.

JOSHUA LAIRD: I'm not quite sure I'm following the--

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: So the points of agreement--

JOSHUA LAIRD: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: --Brad, I know you have the points of agreement there, thank you so much. This particular piece of paper is, you know, typed up--

JOSHUA LAIRD: Right, right.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: --by section, it mentions, you know, the issue of the \$350,000 allocated to a 100 square foot by 25 square feet of land along the BQE for the south side of Williamsburg, of which, that was the only piece of land that was offered as far as City-

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2 owned sites to the Latino community. Then we go
3 into what would be the McCarren pool, and you just
4 testified that this particular pool was not really
5 necessarily part of the points of agreement, but
6 it was added because it was part of what would be
7 open space. And as far as open space was
8 concerned, there was the Bushwick Inlet, there was
9 the state park, there was the--and I'm just trying
10 to stay to the reason why we're here as far as
11 open space is concerned, there was no real
12 commitment with timeline with restrictive
13 covenants, correct me if I'm wrong?

14 CAROLEE FINK: Restrictive
15 covenants in what regard?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: On the open
17 space parameters.

18 CAROLEE FINK: Restrictive--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA:
20 [Interposing] So that beyond this administration,
21 the hopes as far as the timeline was concerned for
22 as far as myself and then David Yassky sitting
23 across from what was then-Deputy Mayor Dan
24 Doctoroff was the promising of the open space to
25 this community and claiming that the actual open

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2 space would be built out with the hopes of making
3 sure that it would all start and continue for what
4 would be an approximately ten-year span, but
5 certainly starting before the turn of this
6 particular administration, which since then, has
7 had a third term. So I just wanted to just make
8 sure that we understand exactly what timeline we
9 were talking about, you know--

10 JOSHUA LAIRD: [Interposing] I
11 don't believe either Brooklyn Bridge Park or
12 Greenpoint were subject to any absolute deadlines
13 for getting work done. I mean, the big
14 difference--or one of the big differences between
15 Brooklyn Bridge Park and the Greenpoint open space
16 plan is that all of the land comprising Brooklyn
17 Bridge Park was publicly owned.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Okay. So
19 that was the one factor that--

20 JOSHUA LAIRD: [Interposing] And
21 none of the land comprising the Greenpoint master
22 plan was publicly--it was all privately owned, the
23 Greenpoint rezoning was all about leveraging the
24 development of privately owned real estate and
25 claiming a portion of its as public open space.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Real estate
3 in the 2005 rezoning.

4 JOSHUA LAIRD: Yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Because we
6 were concentrating on what would be the City of
7 New York was developing what would be a master
8 plan on residential, not necessarily what would
9 have been open space.

10 JOSHUA LAIRD: Right.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Is that
12 accurate?

13 JOSHUA LAIRD: Yes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Okay.

15 JOSHUA LAIRD: I mean, yeah, what?
16 Yeah, I mean, 2005 rezoning was all about using
17 the City's zoning tool kit to leverage the both
18 development--the economic development of
19 Greenpoint and North Williamsburg and leveraging
20 the creation of this open space.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: I just want
22 to--

23 JOSHUA LAIRD: But it's always
24 been--that has always been sort of subject to--

25 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Right.

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2 JOSHUA LAIRD: --to market forces,
3 right, this is all private real estate, the zoning
4 incentivizes the private market to get going and
5 that's had--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA:
7 [Interposing] Or at least that was the
8 speculation.

9 JOSHUA LAIRD: Right, right. The--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Today,
11 that's not what has--

12 JOSHUA LAIRD: --well that has
13 largely played out. Not--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Correct.
15 And I just want to--

16 [Crosstalk]

17 JOSHUA LAIRD: --the time--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: --just
19 express to the chairs, you know, as far as a
20 master plan is concerned for communities of
21 Greenpoint Williamsburg, the parks that have been
22 laid out are only in the Greenpoint area as far as
23 Williamsburg is considered, which is something
24 that I have been vocal on in trying to secure what
25 would be more open space in the southern end, has

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2 not been met. And whether it's part of a points
3 of agreement or not, the issue still remains a
4 fact and the whole Community Board fighting
5 together to increase the open space is what is at
6 stake here. We haven't seen the delivery for one
7 challenging portion or another on the open space,
8 but the housing is also caught up, as mentioned in
9 the testimony by Ms. Fink, this whole Greenpoint
10 Williamsburg rezoning has not turned out to be
11 what was the intent and speculation on behalf of
12 the City in delivering what the community has
13 asked for. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
15 you, Council Member. And with that, Council
16 Member Lander. We've been joined by Council
17 Member Julissa Ferreras, Vincent Gentile, and
18 Elizabeth Crowley. Council Member Lander.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you,
20 Madam Chair and Chair Nelson. Ms. Fink, Mr.
21 Laird, it's good to see you.

22 So as Council Members Levin and
23 Reyna spoke of, many of the items that we're
24 talking about today are covered in the points of
25 agreement document, right, which was sent by

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2 letter from Deputy Mayor Doctoroff to then-Speaker
3 Miller May 1st, 2005, right?

4 CAROLEE FINK: Mm-hmm.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So I'm
6 fortunate to have a copy of it in my hand, could
7 you tell members of the public where they could
8 find it?

9 CAROLEE FINK: That's a good
10 question, I don't know if it's posted anywhere,
11 but--

12 JOSHUA LAIRD: I don't know if it's
13 currently posted, it's certainly been--

14 CAROLEE FINK: [Interposing] It's
15 FOILable.

16 JOSHUA LAIRD: --widely, certainly
17 wide--

18 CAROLEE FINK: Right.

19 JOSHUA LAIRD: --been widely
20 circulated over time.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: That's a
22 good answer for where public documents should be
23 is that you could Google it and you could find it
24 because it's been widely circulated over time?

25 CAROLEE FINK: It's not a document

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we're ever trying to hide.

JOSHUA LAIRD: Anybody who--

CAROLEE FINK: Anybody who--

[Crosstalk]

JOSHUA LAIRD: --wants a copy of the document is free to contact the agencies that have been involved.

CAROLEE FINK: Right. Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So fortunately, thanks to Council Member Brewer, in the future when you sign these kinds of agreements, you'll be obligated to put them on the City's website, but you can't find the 2005 points of agreement document on the City's website today, the rezoning still sits in the City's website where it is. Maybe Council Member Levin has posted it on his website, but--hang on, so--

MALE VOICE: Recopied many times 'cause--

CAROLEE FINK: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: But I guess I would challenge you--well let me ask a couple more questions here. Is there anyplace that I could get information about the administration's

1
2 follow up and implementation of these points of
3 agreement document on the City's website?

4 CAROLEE FINK: Not on the City's
5 website, but we meet with a community advisory
6 board every quarter and have since 2005. So we
7 update them on the progress of the points of
8 agreement on a quarterly basis.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So and do
10 you consider what you gave us today an update on
11 the points of agreement?

12 CAROLEE FINK: This was not
13 specific to the points of agreement, no.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay. Is
15 there someplace on the City's website where people
16 that are interested could find the points of
17 agreement documents for Hudson Yards, for Willets
18 Point, for Coney Island, for Manhattanville, for
19 the many rezonings which have had memorandums of
20 agreement or points of agreement documents
21 developed?

22 CAROLEE FINK: To my knowledge,
23 there isn't a centralized location for these
24 documents.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: So you said

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2 earlier that you take them seriously, but do you
3 see why members of the public might feel and why
4 members of the Council might feel like they
5 weren't taken all that seriously if they aren't
6 available as part of the land use documents that
7 appear on the City Planning website, if they
8 aren't available anywhere on the City's website,
9 and if no public information about the
10 implementation of those agreements is available to
11 the public?

12 CAROLEE FINK: I see your point,
13 it's certainly something that we can look into.
14 Again, it's not our intention to hide these
15 documents, keep them from anyone. If people
16 wanted a copy of them, we'd certainly send a copy.
17 There hasn't been a centralized location for them,
18 and this is actually the first time that I've been
19 asked if something like that exists, so I didn't
20 know that it was something that the Council was
21 interested in.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Well
23 Council Member Brewer actually passed legislation
24 compelling the administration to do it in the
25 future, so I don't think it's a secret that the

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2 public and the Council have an interest in these
3 documents and making sure that they're available.
4 But, I guess, my question was a little different
5 because I'm not actually alleging that there's a
6 desire to suppress or keep the documents secret,
7 what I'm saying is, it does not evidence a
8 commitment to work together to achieve the points
9 of agreement when the agreements aren't made
10 public and when work to implement them is not made
11 public.

12 JOSHUA LAIRD: I mean, I think the
13 fact that we've been meeting quarterly with the
14 community since the 2005 rezoning to update them
15 on a regular basis on our progress on all fronts,
16 both in the POA and outside the POA, is pretty
17 clear evidence of the City's commitment to an open
18 dialogue with the community and with its
19 representatives.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: There's a
21 big difference between a commitment to an open
22 dialogue and a commitment to treating the
23 agreements that are reached as agreements on which
24 there is responsibility to fulfill what was agreed
25 to. So you're very friendly, you meet with anyone

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2 who asks, and you've met with the community.
3 There aren't actually community advisory boards,
4 to my knowledge, on many of the other points of
5 agreement documents that were reached with the
6 Council so they don't even have the same framework
7 of dialogue, but my concern here is the broader
8 policy point. Because this document--I won't read
9 the letter--but these documents, they're not
10 casual, they are reached as an important part of
11 the negotiations with the Council surrounding the
12 rezonings and when they were reached, they were
13 taken as commitments. And I just would submit to
14 you it doesn't feel like they've been treated as
15 commitments, and that's not just the Greenpoint
16 Williamsburg document, that's each of the
17 documents pursuant to the rezonings. At the time
18 they were negotiated, they felt like commitments;
19 subsequent to that, they felt like discussion
20 documents, things to have a dialogue with the
21 community about.

22 And I guess just, you know, and
23 Council Member Ferreras was here earlier, but
24 we're about to embark on the dialogue around the
25 revision to the Willets Point rezoning. And I

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2 guess I would ask you, if you were in my seat, how
3 would you feel entering into that dialogue--
4 especially where in that case, the goals the
5 community has have been pushed back ten years,
6 while the goals of the administration and the
7 developers have are frontloaded--how could we
8 credibly say, sure, let's get to a points of
9 agreement document and then cross our fingers that
10 the agreements that are made will actually be
11 implemented?

12 JOSHUA LAIRD: I think like we
13 said, I think we respectfully disagree that we
14 have not been forthcoming about our commitments,
15 our quarterly meetings, Commissioner Benepe has
16 been out in the community. We have shared all the
17 news, even when it's been painful, about what
18 we've accomplished and what we've not been able to
19 accomplish, and we have said repeatedly that we
20 are committed to pursuing all of the agreements.
21 And we have taken our lumps and we've put
22 ourselves out there, we continue to put ourselves
23 out there, and that's, you know, I think that's a
24 hallmark of an administration that's committed.
25 And, you know, where we've not been able to come

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2 through with some of the things we hoped to in
3 2005, we've also come through with other things
4 that weren't anticipated in 2005--McCarren pool
5 was not anticipated in 2005, that was put off the
6 table; the Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway; the--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER:

8 [Interposing] To be fair though, Mr. Laird--

9 JOSHUA LAIRD: --schoolyards; the
10 playground--

11 [Crosstalk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: --this is
13 not about your goodwill or about how much you like
14 Greenpoint Williamsburg or want to achieve--

15 JOSHUA LAIRD: [Interposing] You're
16 asking us about our commitment--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: --open
18 space. Is there a report card, is there a
19 document that enables me to track going through
20 this public document between the administration
21 and the Council what's been achieved and what
22 hasn't been achieved? 'Cause that's what actually
23 would be transparent, is not we come out
24 quarterly, we give PowerPoint presentations,
25 there's some other good news. A document that

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2 followed the points of agreement and said here's
3 what's done, here's what's not done, and fair
4 enough, when we weren't able to do it, here is why
5 we weren't able to do it 'cause there are reasons.
6 That would be transparency between the
7 administration, the Council, and the community and
8 it would make me feel like this document had
9 actually been something that there was a
10 commitment to, not nice words to secure the votes
11 of Council Members that afterwards would be
12 treated as a friendly note and not something that
13 there was real commitment to.

14 CAROLEE FINK: Again, at every one
15 of our quarterly meetings we go through the
16 document and we state our progress, what we've
17 done, what's been completed--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER:
19 [Interposing] I haven't been able to--is there a
20 written document that takes the points of
21 agreement and documents where the progress has
22 been and the reasons why things haven't been moved
23 forward?

24 CAROLEE FINK: There is not a--

25 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER:

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[Interposing] Would you prepare one?

CAROLEE FINK: I would, I would be happy to prepare one.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: And I say in all--I think that that on this one, which is what we're here today to talk about as well, but on the others as well, would actually go a long way even where things haven't been accomplished in making us feel like there was a seriousness of purpose in the points of agreement and memorandums of understanding document. So I appreciate that commitment and I think it actually--even where the news isn't rosy--would help us a lot to feel like we were actually treating these as agreements.

So thank you very much. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank you, Council Member Lander. Council Member Brewer.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I really don't know anything about Brooklyn but my question, is in Manhattan where the Hudson River Park--to the credit of the Friends of Hudson River Park--and maybe this is not similar, when the

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2 Sanitation department wasn't able to move off of
3 one of the piers in a timely fashion, the Friends
4 sued and received a great deal of money for the
5 time period that was not met for the Sanitation
6 department not moving off. They have since moved
7 off and they built a building and the trucks and
8 salt are in a different location. But I'm just
9 wondering, would that be the only way to conform
10 to timelines? Now Hudson River Park, that had a
11 timeline, so what you're saying is that there's no
12 timeline, like if Hudson River Park by, whatever
13 it was, 2005--I'm making up a time--Pier X had to
14 be done and by, you know--they did every single
15 pier and every single timeframe more or less,
16 obviously, in Pier 40, there's a lot more
17 discussion.

18 But I guess my question is, there's
19 no piece of paper that says by such and such a
20 time, this aspect of the plan has to be done and
21 so on, nothing like was done at Hudson River Park.
22 And, Josh, you know better it than I, Hudson River
23 Park.

24 JOSHUA LAIRD: You're correct,
25 there is no document like that for Greenpoint

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Williamsburg.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you.

Next time, documents.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank you, Council Member. I want to just take a moment to just let people know we have 22 people that have signed up. I want to thank everybody that is here, obviously, it's really an issue that the community really takes to heart. I want to allow Council Member Levin to keep his line of questioning and, hopefully, we can get to all of you, just have patience, but I think it's important that we question the administration and see exactly where we stand with them and have that in public record. So with that, Council Member Levin.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Mr. Laird, I just had a couple of issues with a couple statements you had made, one with Council Member Reyna when you said that this is really all about the acquisition, you know, that this is privately owned land that you're acquiring to build out as parks. Is Commercial Street, 65 Commercial Street, is that

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privately owned land?

JOSHUA LAIRD: No, Commercial Street is City-owned land under lease to the MTA, as you know.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Is that a park right now?

JOSHUA LAIRD: No, it is not.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. So that response does not apply to 65 Commercial Street then, is that fair to say?

JOSHUA LAIRD: It doesn't apply to Transmitter Park either.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Was Transmitter Park part of the points of agreement or part of the negotiations surrounding the--I know that Commissioner Benepe mentions it as a project that's already underway in his testimony in 2005--

JOSHUA LAIRD: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --but it was not--because I do want to separate out--

JOSHUA LAIRD: [Interposing] It was not a part of the--it was subject to its own process and advocacy at the time and so it was--

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COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:

[Interposing] Right, right, 'cause I do want to separate out because, to be totally frank and with all due respect, I find that you guys in your testimony have conflated issues, you've conflated--you've brought in Transmitter Park, you've brought in the waterfront esplanade, you've brought in McCarren pool, these are amenities, these are things that the City has done, they're not really what we're here to talk about because we're here to talk about the commitments, the specific and express commitments that the administration made in 2005 as part of the rezoning. This is about credibility, this is about doing what you say you're going to do, that's what this is about.

And another point, because I do think that this is important in terms of communication and the administration's communication with the community, with the Council, when I found out personally about the settlement on the soccer field of \$93 million, I found that out from somebody who was actually--did have some private business on the waterfront, I

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2 never found that out from the administration,
3 certainly it never came out at the cab [phonetic]
4 meetings. That was not something that was
5 disclosed to the public; it was not disclosed to
6 myself or any number of the Council, and I found
7 out kind of through backdoor channels, and I
8 didn't believe it at first and I had to ask
9 around. So that was something that was bad news,
10 but--

11 JOSHUA LAIRD: [Interposing] We
12 didn't believe it at first either.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But you guys
14 didn't share it with us. Secondly, and I'm going
15 to switch gears a little bit to 65 Commercial
16 Street. So I'm going to read to you a letter from
17 Jay Walder dated April 6, 2011, to Deputy Mayor
18 Steel, this is in paragraph four. In 2008, the
19 City identified, and New York City Transit
20 accepted, a new site for Transit's Car Equipment
21 Emergency Response Unit. That site, Brooklyn B 1
22 and LT 2455/1 located under the Williamsburg
23 Bridge, meets the ERU's geographical needs.
24 Working with the City's Economic Development
25 Corporation and its contractor, STV, NYC Transit

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2 is currently engaged in assessing next steps
3 towards the relocation of this facility. Now I
4 found out a couple of months ago that, in fact,
5 the New York City Department of Transportation
6 objected to that site. I found out, not from the
7 administration, I found out from someplace else.
8 So that was bad news too. You guys didn't share
9 that with us, I had to ask around. And, in fact,
10 I asked somebody in the administration and their
11 response was, how did you hear that. How did you
12 find that out, which I did and I asked and it was
13 true.

14 So I would categorically say that
15 65 Commercial Street is a debacle. Seven years
16 down the line, it's a City-owned property, there's
17 no acquisition costs involved, what has been
18 required is for the City to find real replacement
19 space for the MTA. And I don't even know what to
20 ask. How can you defend the situation as it
21 currently stands today and what is your plan to do
22 something about it?

23 I mean, let me go back one step.
24 There was a feasibility report that was conducted,
25 it cost--how much does it cost? Sixty thousand

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dollars was spent on a feasibility report. Do we have that?

CAROLEE FINK: No, it's not finalized yet, it should be finalized on Friday. We've talked about the June 15th date.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And when was that commenced?

CAROLEE FINK: I don't know.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Is that going to be made--this is going to be released tomorrow.

CAROLEE FINK: It has to be finalized.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: It will be finalized tomorrow?

CAROLEE FINK: [Interposing] Before it's released.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: It's finalized tomorrow.

CAROLEE FINK: It should be finalized tomorrow.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And that will, upon finalization, it will be released to the public?

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2 CAROLEE FINK: I think we'll review
3 it in its final form and then--I mean, it'll be a
4 final report, there's no reason why it couldn't be
5 released.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. Can
7 you tell us when--at what point did DOT raise
8 objections to the emergency response vehicles
9 being located under the bridge? Who did they make
10 those objections to, and what was the process?
11 Because, again, I found out from other means.

12 CAROLEE FINK: I can't tell you the
13 exact time and how that transpired because I
14 wasn't there and I don't know what conversations
15 took place with whom and how that happened. You
16 know, since I came onto this position, I don't
17 think that--I think I might've told you or
18 confirmed when you called me and asked me, I
19 confirmed immediately that this was an issue.

20 My first cab meeting was the first
21 thing basically out of the gate, this is an issue.
22 And I can understand your frustration and the
23 community's frustration around this site. I can't
24 tell you why it's taken so long to find a suitable
25 relocation site, I was not involved, I can tell

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2 you that I am committed to trying to move this
3 along as expeditiously as possible. Think we're
4 looking at this in a little different way now
5 instead of, you know--I would say 2005, 2006,
6 2007, it was my understanding that the adjacent
7 property owners were not interested in purchasing
8 the air rights from 65 Commercial Street that
9 could potentially contribute toward the park.
10 I've heard from both of them, they are interested,
11 so we're releasing an RFP. I think there is merit
12 in trying to work with a private developer to see
13 if they can help us figure out this conundrum. I
14 think there's also merit in looking at this from a
15 phased approach. So can we expedite the para
16 transit operation, you know, off the site, for
17 example, so that the community gets faster access
18 to the waterfront and that's something that we're
19 looking at.

20 Finally, between the time that I
21 think the letter was sent by the MTA chairman and
22 now, the MTA's requirements and program functions
23 have changed for the better so I'm hoping that
24 this will help us with our search.

25 [Pause]

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. With
3 regard to the air rights, that was supposed to be
4 sold--when was that supposed to be sold?

5 CAROLEE FINK: Again, I don't think
6 that there was a definitive timeline, we can't
7 sell something that no one wants to buy. And we
8 had spoken to both the property--you know, they're
9 air rights so they can only be transferred to
10 adjacent property owners, and we had actually a
11 letter from the adjacent property owner that said
12 had no interest in purchasing the air rights.
13 Only recently has there been interest, and that's
14 why we'll release an RFP.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Originally,
16 it was estimated that would be \$12 million, the
17 sale of those air rights? Because the reason I
18 ask is that the proceeds were supposed to go
19 towards an affordable housing infrastructure fund,
20 and once that fund is established--assuming that
21 it makes 5% interest a year, \$12 million, 5%,
22 \$600,000, that's what it would be accruing every
23 year, we're losing out, not only on the fund
24 itself but on the interest every year. And I
25 would be interested to know, you know, at what

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2 point--and maybe I'll go ask them what point they
3 started to have interest. Because if they have
4 interest now and they didn't have interest when
5 they first sent you a letter about that, somewhere
6 they changed their mind, at what point was that
7 because you could--if that was in 2009, then
8 that's 18--that's \$1.8 million in interest that
9 we've lost out on because I don't know, I don't
10 know why. Can you explain--can you speak to any
11 of these issues I...?

12 CAROLEE FINK: You know, I think
13 it's difficult to speak in hypothetical. I don't
14 know how the air rights were valued. Certainly,
15 if people weren't interest in purchasing them,
16 there wasn't going to be any purchase price from
17 them.

18 The fund that these air rights were
19 supposed to go into, the City actually funded.
20 There was a housing obligation, there was also a
21 waterfront investment fund, I believe. The
22 housing obligation, Department of Housing and
23 Preservation funded and those monies have been
24 committed.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: How much was

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that for? 'Cause it's done.

CAROLEE FINK: [Interposing] It was a \$2 million commitment.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But this was \$12 million.

CAROLEE FINK: Well and the infrastructure fund, which was also, you know, part of the air rights. I think the idea for the infrastructure fund was that it would be used to assist developers in their waterfront development, so the public amenities that they would build, you know. And I think that what we've seen from the rezoning is that developers are willing to make significant investments in the waterfront without the help or the aid of a waterfront investment fund.

So I would be interested in talking with you and the community about potentially, instead of earmarking those funds for a investment fund, would those funds be better spent on the park at Commercial Street, for example.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. I want to ask now about the capital money that was committed to as part of the points of agreement.

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2 The administration will include approximately \$14
3 million in capital budget appropriations in FY
4 '07, executive budget for City Council approval
5 for the creation of this open space and relocation
6 of the current MTA facilities. What happened to
7 that \$14 million, and why did that happen and what
8 are we going to do about that?

9 CAROLEE FINK: Well I think that,
10 you know, we were very up front. There were
11 severe budget cuts and I think there was a 20%
12 reduction in the overall plan, correct?

13 JOSHUA LAIRD: No, successive
14 reductions.

15 CAROLEE FINK: Successive
16 reductions. And unfortunately, cuts needed to be
17 made and this was one of them. A million dollars
18 still remains today. And, you know, you keep
19 asking about what's the plan for Commercial
20 Street, what's the plan for Commercial Street,
21 rightly so. The plan is to find a relocation site
22 to figure out what it's going to cost to relocate
23 the MTA because it's not just moving vehicles,
24 it's moving vehicles and building a structure for
25 them potentially or outfitting a structure for

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2 their needs. And then figuring out, you know,
3 what costs are going to be incurred for the
4 construction of the park.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And then
6 putting that money back in?

7 CAROLEE FINK: And finding the
8 money to do it.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Is there a
10 commitment from the Bloomberg administration that
11 before the Bloomberg administration leaves office
12 that that money will be restored?

13 CAROLEE FINK: I can only speak to
14 my commitment toward, you know, the points of
15 agreement. We are committed to--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Well you--

17 CAROLEE FINK: --doing what we said
18 we were going to do.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: With all due
20 respect, I mean, you fulfilled your commitment,
21 the Bloomberg administration fulfilled their
22 commitment in the points of agreement, they put
23 the money in there in FY '07, they just took it
24 out in FY '10 or whatever. So, you know, you
25 actually did fulfill, in a cynical, you know, if

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2 you're a cynical view of it, it would be that you
3 fulfilled the agreement, you're no longer on the
4 hook because you put it in, you just took it right
5 back out. Is there a commitment on the part of
6 the administration that there will be capital
7 money to replace what was taken out before you
8 leave office? So you got two budgets to do it,
9 you got this one and you got the next one.

10 CAROLEE FINK: We have two budgets
11 to do it, right?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So there's
13 not a commitment.

14 CAROLEE FINK: There is a
15 commitment to relocate the vehicles, pay for the
16 MTA's improvements, figure out how much it's going
17 to cost to do a park, and then build the park.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: By the
19 Bloomberg administration? All those commitments
20 by the Bloomberg administration or...?

21 CAROLEE FINK: You know, I can only
22 commit to making my best effort to do that.

23 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: How
24 much money is allocated in this budget, projected
25 in this budget for this? Capital.

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2 JOSHUA LAIRD: Oh, we have 1
3 million remaining for the site--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:
5 [Interposing] Rolled over.

6 JOSHUA LAIRD: --from the original
7 14 million--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:
9 [Interposing] It's rolled over.

10 JOSHUA LAIRD: --that's rolled
11 over, right, from the original \$14 million
12 allocation.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And then how
14 much is in the capital budget for Bushwick Inlet
15 Park?

16 JOSHUA LAIRD: There is remaining--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: To build.
18 To build.

19 JOSHUA LAIRD: To build? Well we
20 are funded to complete the build out of the Levine
21 site, the soccer field's done, the park is done--
22 the soccer field's done, the park building is in
23 construction, and the waterfront portion of the
24 site are in construction so we will complete those
25 and I don't--we're pursuing testing, there's going

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2 to be a significant remediation necessary at the
3 50 Kent Street site. So right now we're going to
4 work with National Grid? National Grid, which is
5 responsible for cleaning up much of that
6 contamination, yeah. Well and--

7 [Crosstalk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:

9 [Interposing] One fifty Kent, 150 Kent. I'm
10 sorry, just to close out on 65 Commercial, are you
11 going to relocate the MTA vehicles by the time the
12 Bloomberg administration leaves office?

13 CAROLEE FINK: Going to make my
14 best effort to do that. Again, this is, you know,
15 the MTA needs to agree to sites as well, this is
16 not a--this is a bilateral--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:

18 [Interposing] Takes two to tango.

19 CAROLEE FINK: Takes two, yeah.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So we had a
21 meeting a couple of weeks ago, two or three weeks
22 ago, with the MTA, there was a discussion about
23 identifying additional sites. What's the status
24 of that?

25 CAROLEE FINK: So the status is

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2 that I've had additional meetings with DCAS,
3 they've given me additional sites and I'm meeting
4 with the MTA, I think, next week to discuss them.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Those are
6 sites that weren't on the original list?

7 CAROLEE FINK: As far as I know,
8 they were not on the original list.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. And
10 switching gears back to Bushwick Inlet because
11 they're both important, they're very different. I
12 went back through the city planning report, the
13 commission report, which is, you know, very
14 upfront in its recommendation that Bushwick Inlet
15 is to be the jewel of the rezoning, that it is the
16 main public amenity in terms of open space. So I
17 want to go back to this issue of acquisition. Why
18 doesn't the administration just condemn the City
19 Storage site? Why don't they take it by eminent
20 domain?

21 JOSHUA LAIRD: Condemnation is not
22 a free option, you have to pay with condemnation.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

24 JOSHUA LAIRD: So you still need
25 the money to buy the land.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: We always
3 knew that we had to buy this land, we never
4 thought we were going to get it for free.

5 JOSHUA LAIRD: Correct.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So why not
7 use the same--if the owner is not willing to
8 negotiate, the commitment on the part of the
9 administration obviously is still there, that's
10 what I'm hearing from you guys today, why not
11 then--if he's not willing to play ball, why not
12 move and say, well, you can--we'll see you in
13 court?

14 JOSHUA LAIRD: Again, condemnation
15 is not a free option, you still have to--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:
17 [Interposing] Never said it was free.

18 JOSHUA LAIRD: --pay for the land.
19 At this point, it's clear that the market has
20 increased tenfold over what the condition was
21 prior to the rezoning. We cannot make a move like
22 that, we the City cannot make a move like that
23 unless we have the funds to put on the table and,
24 as we've said now a couple times, is we just don't
25 have a bottomless pit of funding to put it, right-

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COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:

[Interposing] But this is--

JOSHUA LAIRD: --now, it's just not possible.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But capital commitments are bonded out, so if you want to look at the cost, right?

JOSHUA LAIRD: Mm-hmm.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So say the cost is 170 million, just say it is, right? For argument's sake, hypothetically. Not saying you're not agreeing to that being the cost by--

JOSHUA LAIRD: Understood.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --proceeding with this exercise, that you bond that out over ten years, right? And set it up so that the land can be acquired, you know, and there's some type of agreement--I happen to know Norm Brodsky [phonetic], he doesn't seem like a totally unreasonable guy--that seven, you know, what is that, \$17 million a year, that's not bottomless pit money. I mean, this is a city with a budget of \$70 billion, this is a commitment the

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administration made.

I mean, one thing that has become clear to me in my 2 1/2 years in office is that when something is a priority for this administration, it gets done. McCarren pool was part of PlaNYC, it had nothing to do with the Greenpoint Williamsburg rezoning as much as maybe-- maybe it was unilaterally, maybe the Bloomberg administration said that it did, but that wasn't part of the negotiations with this Council or with the community. And miraculously--

JOSHUA LAIRD: [Interposing] I would respectfully disagree with that.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: It's not part of the points of agreement.

JOSHUA LAIRD: It is not a part of the points of agreement, but it is very much in the community's and the Council Members' mind at the time, it was one we didn't feel we could come through with at the time. There are only a very few projects that were funded at the level of McCarren pool through PlaNYC, it should not be taken for granted that McCarren pool was going to happen, it happened because of the City's

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commitment to Greenpoint and Williamsburg.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:

[Interposing] It happened because it was a priority of the administration.

JOSHUA LAIRD: Greenpoint and Williamsburg is a priority of the administration, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: No, this project was a priority of the administration.

JOSHUA LAIRD: Because it was in Greenpoint and Williamsburg.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: It's opening this summer, okay?

JOSHUA LAIRD: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: How much did it cost?

JOSHUA LAIRD: Fifty-four million.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So the City had \$54 million to do that, but they don't have the money to do the rest of the acquisition. What I'm saying is that it's a question of priorities. That the administration has--we put a lot of money into subsidizing economic development projects, City Field, and, don't even get me started, Yankee

1 Stadium. I mean, I have colleagues that are
2 livid, absolutely livid, over the City subsidy and
3 resources and tax breaks that have gone into what
4 are discretionary actions, nothing to do--it's not
5 like these are DEP capital projects that are
6 forced upon the City by regulations by the state
7 or federal government, these are discretionary
8 actions, it's a question of priorities, it's a
9 question of priority of this City.
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11 And so all I can believe is that,
12 coming away from this, is that these parks--
13 Bushwick Inlet and 65 Commercial Street--are not
14 priorities.

15 JOSHUA LAIRD: I think, as Carolee
16 mentioned before, 25% of the City's capital
17 commitment to the borough of Brooklyn between 2002
18 and 2012 was put into Community Board 1 and to
19 this community. That's a pretty serious
20 commitment.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: You're
22 including everything that's not part of the
23 commitments that you made.

24 JOSHUA LAIRD: Nothing was an
25 obligation, nothing should be taken for granted.

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2 Decisions are made, communities are asking for
3 capital--

4 [Crosstalk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:

6 [Interposing] Mr. Laird, actually, these are
7 obligations. These are obligations, these were
8 commitments made.

9 JOSHUA LAIRD: I'm talking about
10 the other projects.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right, but
12 these are the obligations.

13 JOSHUA LAIRD: Well I think the
14 point we've tried to make is where we haven't been
15 able to come through where we hoped we could in
16 2005 when we made those commitments in good faith,
17 we have come through with other projects, very
18 significant projects.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Briefly, can
20 you just speak to the status on Motiva?

21 CAROLEE FINK: We understand that
22 the owner of the site is doing an appraisal. You
23 know, that, again, we're waiting for that to come.
24 The value to be determined.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. Madam

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2 Chair, I'm going to cede back my time, but I just-
3 -wrapping up, I do want to say that the question
4 remains that this is not only about the
5 credibility--no, this is about the credibility of
6 the Bloomberg administration, it really is, okay?
7 But it's also about the credibility of any
8 administration. If we have no mechanism, you have
9 no mechanism, or I haven't heard a plan--I mean, I
10 still haven't heard a plan, there's no plan here.
11 There is commitments to look at things, there's
12 we'll come and talk, we'll discuss, no hard
13 concrete plan, and the reality is that, when you
14 want to do something, you have a plan. But in 18
15 months, the Bloomberg administration is going to
16 be out of office, there's going to be a new
17 administration, who knows who that's going to be,
18 and they're going to be stuck with the commitments
19 and somehow it's up to the community, everyone
20 here who's still going to be here, who is still
21 going to be living with this, they're going to
22 have to be the ones that, in form, an incoming
23 administration, oh, by the way, your predecessors
24 left you with a big price tag. And I haven't
25 heard anything today that has told me how, other

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2 than a practice of one administration recognizing
3 the MOUs of a previous administration, I haven't
4 heard how you are going to lock in the commitments
5 that you have made that others are going to be on
6 the hook for, and that is a detriment that--that
7 compromises, not only the Bloomberg
8 administration's legacy and reputation, but it
9 compromises the ability of future administrations
10 to operate in good faith. And so that is a major
11 concern and that's why I think it's important that
12 we had this hearing today because that's what's on
13 the line.

14 So thank you very much, Madam
15 Chair, for the time, I really do appreciate you
16 conducting this hearing and allowing me to talk
17 for so long, thanks.

18 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
19 you, Council Member Levin. And we have been
20 joined by Council Member James Vacca. Obviously,
21 I think the conversation regarding this rezoning
22 is one that is also applicable to many other
23 rezonings in terms of commitments made, and I
24 think the points raised by Council Member Lander
25 about having some type of public progress report,

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2 so to speak, and making these documents more
3 public is critically important.

4 With that, I thank you both for
5 your time. As I indicated, we have about 21
6 people that are registered to speak, and I think
7 it's important that we hear from the community as
8 well.

9 And with that, I think we're going
10 to start calling on panels of three to four
11 people. We are going to limit--please ask since
12 there are many people here that you keep your
13 comments brief, and if your points that you were
14 going to make have been made, that you really
15 summarize. We are going to limit the comments to
16 three minutes each and really ask people to stick
17 to their time and be respectful of time so that
18 others can testify as well.

19 We do have a representative from
20 Assemblyman Joseph Lentol's office and we're going
21 to ask them to testify first. We have Emily
22 Mijatovic, I hope it pronounced it right, if she
23 can testify and then we'll begin with the panels.

24 [Pause]

25 EMILY MIJATOVIC: Press the button?

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2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: It's on right
3 now.

4 EMILY MIJATOVIC: Okay. Perfect.
5 Okay. Good afternoon, members of the Committees
6 of Waterfronts and Parks and Recreation. My name
7 is Emily Mijatovic and I am here on behalf of
8 Assemblyman Joseph Lentol, who represents the 50th
9 Assembly District in Brooklyn. He has asked me to
10 submit the following comments.

11 The City of New York pledged to
12 provide the residents of Greenpoint and
13 Williamsburg with three new open spaces in
14 exchange to allow condominiums to be built along
15 the Williamsburg waterfront. It has been many
16 years since that promise was made. The condos
17 have been built but the parks have not.

18 This pledge to my constituents has
19 been grossly unfulfilled. We are talking about
20 the credibility of the New York City government to
21 the Greenpoint and Williamsburg communities. The
22 City has to live up to their agreement. Before
23 any other projects are started, the City must
24 fulfill their promise. There must also be a
25 guarantee that the next administration will

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2 fulfill this promise of building three parks. It
3 is that simple and that important.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
6 you for that. It's good to have comments on the
7 record.

8 So I'm going to start calling
9 panels of three and if you can come up as your
10 name is called. We're going to have Roland Lewis,
11 Christine Holowacz, I hope I pronounced--Holowacz,
12 sorry, Laura--you guys are going to challenge me
13 with these names today, I'm sorry--Laura
14 Treciokas.

15 MALE VOICE: Treciokas, she's--

16 LEAH ARCHIBALD: [Interposing]
17 She's in the next room.

18 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay.

19 FEMALE VOICE: Get here?

20 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: If she
21 would like to testify, definitely, we can have--

22 [Off mic]

23 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Yes,
24 you can hear her, so if her name is called or she
25 can come over.

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[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Here she is, okay.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Again, as I indicated, we are limiting comments to three minutes and if you feel that the points have been made, you could just affirm what's been said before, but try to summarize. If you do have public testimony, please provide it to us 'cause it does go in for the record. And with that, whoever wants to start, feel free, you may begin.

[Pause]

And I don't know the, Sergeant-at-Arms, when we get to the point where the timer-- oh, you have that, okay.

[Pause]

LAURA TRECIOKAS: Good afternoon, my name is Laura--

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: [Interposing]
Press the button. Thank you.

LAURA TRECIOKAS: Good afternoon, my name is Laura Treciokas, I am the co-chair of the Friends of Bushwick Inlet Park and a board

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2 member for GWAPP, the Greenpoint Waterfront
3 Association for Parks and Planning.

4 My husband and I bought a home in
5 Greenpoint in 2007 to raise a family, in part
6 based on the promise of open waterfront space. We
7 were particularly excited about the vision of a
8 28-acre gem--Bushwick Inlet Park--just blocks from
9 our home. We understood at the time that the park
10 would take time to realize. We didn't imagine
11 that five years later there would be almost no
12 progress altogether.

13 The 2005 rezoning deal--a series of
14 parks and open spaces along the waterfront in
15 exchange for allowing significantly higher
16 development along our waterfront--seemed like a
17 devil's bargain. Being realists, we thought it
18 was a necessary evil, but it seems now that we've
19 been cheated entirely.

20 Our community becomes more crowded
21 each day with new housing units allowed by the
22 rezoning and yet we continue to have one of the
23 lowest ratios of open space per person, less than
24 one-third the citywide average. We're tired of
25 the excuses. Times are tough, yes, but a promise

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2 is a promise, and budgets are about priorities.
3 So we say where there is a will, there is a way.

4 For the sake of my son and the
5 thousands of other kids in North Brooklyn, please
6 secure the future of our waterfront parks so we no
7 longer have to say where's our park.

8 Thank you.

9 [Pause]

10 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Hold on
11 one second while we reset the timer. [Pause] May
12 begin.

13 CHRISTINE HOLOWACZ: My name is
14 Christine Holowacz and I want to thank for the
15 opportunity to testify today. I want to
16 especially thank all of the members and Council
17 Member Levin for doing a great job in questioning
18 the City.

19 I think everything that we feel in
20 our community had been said through the questions
21 of our Councilman, but one thing that we really
22 have to look in is in the future for the City to
23 make sure that commitments which are by the City
24 are being honored.

25 When we were talking about the

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2 rezoning, we said that the developers should first
3 do the promenade and then build, or they should
4 first build the affordable housing and then they
5 can build the housing. In this case, we should
6 have asked, build our parks first, then we allow
7 you to build everything else because promises are
8 just promises. It seems like no one cares and at
9 the end of the day, this community, and
10 particularly Greenpoint, is going to end up
11 without anything, nothing, except a lot of people
12 that are additional to this community.

13 The MTA lot, it's a lot that's
14 owned by the City and yet for all of these years,
15 we cannot make it a park. It's an absurd. It's
16 just not possible. I have no words for this.
17 This administration has to make a commitment to
18 these for these parks and we need to do it now.

19 [Pause]

20 ROLAND LEWIS: Thank you. Hi, I am
21 Roland Lewis, President of the Metropolitan
22 Waterfront Alliance, an alliance of 646
23 businesses, civic organizations dedicated to a
24 open, healthy, and accessible waterfront. I'll
25 not repeat what's been said before, but we do

1
2 firmly and strongly lend our voice in favor of the
3 completion of the agreement, the building of these
4 parks.

5 If I could have a nickel for every
6 conversation, hearing, Community Board meeting
7 I've had about this issue throughout the five
8 boroughs and in New Jersey about the necessary
9 capital dollars to create public resources on the
10 waterfront and to maintain them once they're
11 built, that's the other part of this equation we
12 haven't even gotten to yet. But it's critical
13 that the City not only make this commitment to
14 make holistic whole communities in the park along
15 the waterfront, which includes new housing where
16 maritime use is no longer useful and also parks
17 and public recreation.

18 Two other points I'd like to make
19 very briefly. We're not just talking about the
20 park itself, we're talking about extending the
21 park into the water--access to the water, breaking
22 that fourth wall that we--so we can enjoy this
23 resource. I'm paddled through Bushwick Inlet up
24 and down, this is a recreation opportunity that
25 will be very important once these parks are built

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as they must be built.

And the second, I know it's not exactly part of this hearing, but the idea of recreation, I mean, of transportation, waterborne transportation to and from this area for commutation, but also so folks can visit the area from other parts of the city must be continued. So the issue of ferry service which serves this area right now must be continued as we're working with Council Member Vacca and Levin and others to do so. That's part of the equation too, transportation, recreation, parks, housing all go together. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Great, thank you. And I know you did submit written testimony so we appreciate that. Thank you to this panel for sharing your testimony.

The next panel is Corey Canton, Leah Archibald, Dewey Thompson.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Madam Chair, do you mind if I just--I wanted to--

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Sure.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --read a statement by Christine Holowacz that was quoted

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2 back in 2005 and I just want this to be on the
3 record.

4 Christine Holowacz, a Greenpoint
5 resident who has worked on various waterfront
6 proposals for nearly 15 years, said that the first
7 time she saw the final proposal at a meeting in
8 City Hall in early June, all she could think of
9 were the long nights that she and the other
10 volunteers had worked. Quote, when I saw the
11 plan, I thought to myself, it's all been worth it,
12 Christine, the waterfront is really going to be
13 something that you've always imagined. So let us
14 keep that as our guiding principle, thanks.

15 [Pause] Thank you, Madam Chair.

16 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: You're
17 welcome. There is the third name that did not
18 show so, Corey, I know you're probably, Corey,
19 right? Where's Corey? You're Dewey.

20 LEAH ARCHIBALD: I'm Leah.

21 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Leah,
22 so, okay, Corey is not here, so we'll go to Anne
23 Rotella.

24 [Off mic]

25 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: No,

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2 this is Anne. She's up there, okay. So anyone
3 can feel free to begin, and, again, three minutes.
4 Thanks.

5 [Pause]

6 DEWEY THOMPSON: Hi, my name is
7 Dewey Thompson, I'm the Co-chair of the Greenpoint
8 Waterfront Association for Parks and Planning, and
9 I also represent the North Brooklyn Boat Club. So
10 there is obviously a lot of activity going on in
11 Greenpoint and Williamsburg that comes from the
12 incredible increase in population, without any
13 accompanying investment in infrastructure.

14 What we heard from the City today
15 suggests, you know, makes clear that they made a
16 very naïve set of decisions about the way this
17 agreement was going to be followed through on.
18 They didn't purchase the property when it was
19 purchasable and with no plan to make that
20 purchase, and the property values actually
21 increasing with every day that more development
22 happens, it's also clear that there is not going
23 to be acquisition of these properties. So with no
24 acquisition of the properties, that's supposed to
25 be remediated by the opening of open space for

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families for the increase in population.

I think the other part of this is also clear: That we have to stop the further development of this area until we get the open space that can actually handle the increase in population. There has to be an accompanying infrastructure to the increase in population.

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: And make sure you state your name as you...

ANNE ROTELLA: Hi, my name is Anne Rotella, I own a home in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, a three-family house, and I was born and raised there.

I was a little upset about some aspect of the administration's representatives here today as if what they've done thus far is a pretty good deal. I grew up in Greenpoint and we had access to the waterfront until the City allowed it to just fall into disrepair. I swam in the Greenpoint pool, in the McCarren pool. And so what they've offered us thus far to someone who grew up there is no big deal. All they've done is rezone the area and send in thousands and

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2 thousands of new residents, and we have no
3 additional park space.

4 We have totally been ripped off and
5 I'm really furious at the Bloomberg
6 administration. And I think they need to make it
7 a top priority. And, as with anyone who has to do
8 a budget, you look at what, you know, what funding
9 you have, what projects you have. They've had
10 plenty of money for bicycle paths and pedestrian
11 plazas, why don't they have money for Greenpoint?
12 How many administrations have to let us down
13 before they do the right thing?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you.

15 ANNE ROTELLA: Thank you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you.

17 LEAH ARCHIBALD: Hi, my name's Leah
18 Archibald, and I am the Executive Director of
19 EWVIDCO, the East Williamsburg Valley Industrial
20 Development Corporation, and I'm here to speak a
21 little less about parks, a little more about
22 waterfront and rezoning and what the impact of
23 that is on our ability to keep working class jobs
24 in our community.

25 Currently my organization works

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2 with the nearly thousand industrial businesses in
3 North Brooklyn to help them grow and keep their
4 nearly 12,000 employees in good high-quality,
5 well-paying jobs. About 40% of North Brooklyn's
6 residents still work in industrial jobs.

7 As you can imagine, the 2005
8 rezoning has had a monumental impact on our
9 ability to keep these jobs in our community. To
10 that end, you know, the administration made a
11 number of different promises about, you know,
12 industrial retention, including creating a \$20
13 million fund for nonprofit development of
14 industrial real estate, creating a Greenpoint
15 Williamsburg industrial business zone, and
16 creating a relocation fund for manufacturers that
17 were displaced.

18 And so I guess, you know, what I'd
19 like to urge today is to, you know, urge the City
20 to continue to fund these programs because, I
21 mean, what we've learned today is society's
22 priorities are written in its budget and, you
23 know, if there's, you know, we can say we have a
24 Greenpoint Williamsburg industrial business zone,
25 but if there is no funding to maintain that, it's

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just an orange sign in the neighborhood.

And I think that the whole experience has been really informative of any future large-scale rezonings. That I think it's not enough just to get a commitment but there really needs to be a funding scheme to ensure that these commitments are fully followed through on.

So, you know, in closing, I urge the City to, you know, really focus in future neighborhood on, you know, getting some sort of financing mechanism in place for these commitments.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Want to thank you all, I mean, for your testimony and also everybody's been very respectful of the time limits, I appreciate that. You know, clearly, it was also raised by the panel before and we've had, obviously, our budget hearings with regards to the Department of Parks, there's less and less money being allocated to our parks, unfortunately. So with that commitment of creating more open space is the commitment by this administration and any administration moving forward to maintain our open spaces as well. So that's something that we

1
2 really have to fight for. And I want to thank
3 everyone for making those points.

4 So the next panel will be Alan
5 Hill, we have Pete Bertine, and Will Elkins.

6 [Pause]

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Copies of
8 statements, I'll take them now; if not, identify
9 yourself for the record.

10 [Pause]

11 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Anybody
12 can feel free to start and, again, state your
13 name.

14 ALAN HILL: My name is Alan Hill,
15 I'm the Regional Commissioner of the Greenpoint
16 Williamsburg Youth Soccer League, we're probably
17 the largest youth group in Community Board 1. We
18 have over 500 families, we have 600 kids, we've
19 gone from about 350 to over 600 kids playing in
20 the fall, we've added a spring season, and we also
21 run a summer camp at McCarren.

22 We've heard a lot today about how
23 Parks--how we need more parks and I just wanted to
24 give you a specific example. This last fall I had
25 to turn away 50 families from our AYSO league

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2 because we have a constrained amount of permits
3 that are available for city parks, we have to
4 fight with other youth groups for part-time to get
5 field permits, we don't even get permit time for
6 practices as it is. And you know, we were told
7 that there is really no more time available
8 forthcoming because there's other demands and
9 Parks department is trying to be fair in this
10 matter. But, you know, I'm in the position now
11 where I'm turning away families who want to join
12 our soccer league because there is not enough park
13 space, and it's a horrible thing.

14 [Pause]

15 PETE BERTINE: Hi, my name is Pete
16 Bertine and I live in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, on
17 Metropolitan Avenue between Berry Street and Wythe
18 Avenue. I'm here representing my son.

19 My son Alexander is starting pre-K
20 in the fall at P.S. 84 and I am here to demand in
21 his name that more park space be created along the
22 waterfront for him and for his friends to play in.

23 We love the East River State Park,
24 and Alexander and all of his friends want to see a
25 green and beautiful park extend all the way north

1
2 into Greenpoint and all the way south as far as it
3 can go.

4 Now about Alexander. He loves
5 where he lives, he doesn't ever plan to move, and
6 he wants to grow up and be a lobbyist. So watch
7 out for this generation of children who have been
8 deprived of places to play as they grew up. These
9 children will hold you all accountable.

10 WILL ELKINS: Hi, my name is Will
11 Elkins. I moved to Greenpoint in 2007, so a
12 relative newcomer to a lot of the other people in
13 the room and kind of humbled by that. But since
14 2007 I've been working in Williamsburg and living
15 in Greenpoint, which is really a place I love to
16 call home.

17 But my experience working in
18 Williamsburg has basically been construction
19 nonstop. My office building has been on literally
20 three sides for, since 2007, construction and it's
21 just crazy how much development is going on in the
22 neighborhood and to the point now where it's
23 nearly impossible to go to a park and find any
24 sort of open personal space on a weekend.

25 So to what, you know, people have

1
2 said earlier, there is just such an influx of
3 people and a lack of resources for open public
4 space, and I do feel the development needs to sort
5 of to halt at this point.

6 The other point I want to add is,
7 you know, living in Greenpoint, and part of my
8 interest in living there is the waterfront, you
9 know, there's so much of it that we're surrounded
10 by, yet it's so accessible. And when I first
11 moved there, you know, I was sort of a little
12 dumbfounded by how hard it was to get access to
13 most of the waterfront. So, in fact, I did a lot
14 of research on the rules and regulations of
15 boating 'cause I figured that would actually be a
16 better way to get to the waterfront, and it was
17 and so I bought a kayak. And, I mean, that's how
18 ridiculous it is, that someone has to buy a kayak
19 and take it on their bicycle and find a place to
20 put it in the water to actually get to the
21 waterfronts in the neighborhood. I mean, such a
22 lack of access.

23 So I'd like to just, you know,
24 thank the Council and Steve Levin especially for
25 really pushing the City on these issues and

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waterfront access.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Yeah,
thank you all, thanks very much.

ALAN HILL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: The
next panel will be Liz Broswell, Laura Hoyman?

LAURA HOFFMAN: Hofmann.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO:
Hofmann, I'm sorry. And Carl Ellman.

[Pause]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: And identify
yourself for the record, okay?

LIZ BROSWELL: You speak first.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay.
Anyone can feel free to start.

LAURA HOFMANN: I was elected.
Yeah, hi, my name is Laura Hofmann, I'm a lifelong
community resident of Greenpoint and I'm involved
with multiple organizations. During the
Greenpoint Williamsburg rezoning, I chaired the
Parks and Open Space Committee for the Community
Board Rezoning Task Force.

And I have to say, I'm like really

1
2 blown away by the presentation that I saw here
3 today and by some of the things that Mr. Laird
4 said, you know, back when we were working with DCP
5 and the Parks department and also on the master
6 planning, we didn't see things the way that we're
7 hearing it presented today. We were always under
8 the impression that we were going to get this
9 jewel--there's a lot of jewels missing from this
10 necklace that we always heard about. You know,
11 it's just devastating for the community.

12 You know, we still have all of the
13 same environmental problems in the neighborhood,
14 and a lot more people coming in, and there's not
15 enough parks and open space to even mitigate
16 what's going on environmentally.

17 Mr. Laird had presented the Park
18 House at Barge Park as part of, you know, all of
19 these little trinkets that the neighborhood was
20 getting. The fact is that that was an amenity for
21 all the stuff going on with the Newtown Creek
22 sewage treatment facility. So and it has nothing
23 to do with the rezoning at all. In fact, that was
24 DEP that paid for it. I know 'cause I'm part of
25 the Newtown Creek monitoring committee.

1
 2 A couple of points that I wanted to
 3 bring out was, first of all, the Monitor Museum,
 4 they actually own their land, they have the
 5 ability to move forward to open up that land to
 6 the public, and they have the tag of eminent
 7 domain hanging over them. And that really blows
 8 my mind too because here they, you know, they
 9 actually are doing things to, you know, develop
 10 the land, they have the ability to do it, the City
 11 can't, so why aren't they letting the museum move
 12 ahead with their plans?

13 As far as the MTA site goes, well
 14 it should obviously move forward.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: You could
 16 wrap up if you have another point or two.

17 LAURA HOFMANN: All of these spaces
 18 are very important for the community and, you
 19 know, we're basically here to demand what we were
 20 promised. And it speaks volumes to me that Amanda
 21 Burden isn't here to back up the promises too.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you,
 23 Ms. Hofmann.

24 CARL ELLMAN: Well go right ahead.

25 LIZ BROSWELL: Oh, I'm sorry.

1
2 LAURA HOFMANN: No, no, that's
3 fine.

4 [Pause]

5 LIZ BROSWELL: Hi, my name is Liz
6 Broswell, I'm--

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Can't hear you.

8 [Pause]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Turn it on,
10 yeah, there you go.

11 LIZ BROSWELL: Hi, my name is Liz
12 Broswell, I don't represent anyone, except for
13 myself and my two kids and my husband and my frog
14 and other things.

15 First of all, I'd like to thank the
16 Council, like everyone else. It kind of sounds
17 like we're preaching to the saved, you guys are
18 already on our side it sounds like. I wish the
19 two people from the Mayor's Office and the Parks
20 department were still here because what I would
21 like to say to them--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:

23 [Interposing] We do have representatives from the
24 Parks department still here.

25 LIZ BROSWELL: Oh, okay.

1 [Off mic]

2 LIZ BROSWELL: Okay. Is a couple
3 times, I believe it was the Mayor's Office, has
4 used the term that they didn't--whenever
5 confronted about the parks, they said they didn't
6 want to burden the taxpayers. I'm a taxpayer,
7 most of the people in this room are taxpayers in
8 Greenpoint Williamsburg. And most importantly,
9 someone threw around the number 50,000, I don't
10 know if that's correct, but the thousands and
11 thousands of new people who are moving into
12 Greenpoint Williamsburg are taxpayers, and these
13 are not starving artists or students most of the
14 time. The new influx of people into Williamsburg
15 and Greenpoint tend to be professionals and young
16 families who would normally at this point in their
17 life be going to Westchester or Jersey or
18 Connecticut. The demographics of Williamsburg and
19 Greenpoint are obviously changing and, you know,
20 it's gentrifying.

21 So, it upsets me when I hear people
22 say there is not enough--that the taxpayer is
23 going to be burdened when there is a whole new tax
24 basis in Greenpoint and Williamsburg. That's my
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first point.

My only other point is that the emotional side of things is obviously I have two kids, the parks are gross, I'm sorry, the current parks that we have. The pool is great, I'm very thankful we're getting the pool, but watching the pool get built from a playground where there is human waste and hypodermic needles on a daily basis, and then being told we're not going to get the open space that we were promised so that there's more room for the kids who are already here and the kids who are coming is just incredibly disappointing and the City should keep its promise.

CARL ELLMAN: Hello, my name is Carl Ellman, and I'm a resident of Rego Park. And I just heard about the meeting--the hearing last night and I have very ambivalent feeling.

On the one hand, I was very glad to hear that there is great efforts to build--no, to establish a park in Williamsburg Greenpoint on the water, but I was very dismayed about this threat of eminent domain hanging over the site for the Monitor Museum. And to me, that seems like

1 shooting oneself in the foot because this private
2 piece of property is just one-acre, and at the
3 same time, it appears to me to be the most
4 compatible--area most compatible with the
5 development of the park and would actually add an
6 enhance to the park experience. So it seems to me
7 that it's just good common sense to allow the
8 people who want to develop the museum to do so.

9
10 And I might be wrong about this,
11 but I think--I don't think the city would--
12 taxpayers would be paying for this, so it's good
13 common sense to not to have this eminent domain
14 hanging over the establishment of the museum. And
15 thank you very much.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [off mic]
17 Madam Chair. So I want to thank you for that
18 testimony both of you about Monitor Museum and I
19 apologize for not being able to get to the
20 question with the administration about this issue
21 of eminent domain. But to the Parks department
22 and administration officials that are in the room
23 right now, I think it's important that that
24 message get across that there is absolutely no
25 compelling reason for eminent domain at the

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2 Monitor Museum site, it is a public amenity, it is
3 a group that services the community, it services
4 the schools in the community, it also honors the
5 rich heritage of Greenpoint in the construction of
6 the Monitor, the USS Monitor and John Ericcson,
7 its builder. And this was a donation by Motiva to
8 the Greenpoint Monitor Museum, and certainly they
9 have and my support on the record, and I know that
10 Assemblyman Joe Lentol has been supportive of
11 their ability to hold onto that site free and
12 clear without any encumbrances or threats of
13 eminent domain. There's certainly the Monitor
14 Museum could be compatible with the greater
15 Bushwick Inlet Park. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
17 you, Council Member. I want to thank you all for
18 your testimony. Let me just say personally that,
19 as Chair of the Parks Committee, I am concerned
20 with open space and access regardless of
21 community. And maybe this is what intent was, but
22 in some of the language that I heard, when I hear
23 people say it's a new tax basis, it's a
24 gentrifying community, that somehow the impression
25 is that it merits more attention and more access

1
2 than other communities, I don't prescribe to that
3 sentiment. I think every community, regardless of
4 its makeup, regardless of its socioeconomic status
5 deserves the same treatment. And for that reason,
6 I will always fight for any community to have
7 equal access, but I don't believe any one
8 community deserves more of that than any other.

9 So with that, I thank you all for
10 your testimony, and I will call on the next panel.
11 Barbara Vetell, Susan Albrecht, and Ryan Kuonen?

12 RYAN KUONEN: Kuonen.

13 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Kuonen,
14 sorry.

15 [Pause]

16 RYAN KUONEN: Go ahead.

17 [Pause]

18 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: I'm
19 sorry, who is not here?

20 RYAN KUONEN: Susan.

21 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: So I
22 got Barbara, Susan, okay, so I guess Ryan's not
23 here.

24 RYAN KUONEN: No, Susan's not here.

25 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Susan's

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not here, sorry about that.

RYAN KUONEN: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay.

So Barbara, all right, so feel free anybody just to start and identify yourself, please.

RYAN KUONEN: Okay. My name is Ryan Kuonen. Thank you for the opportunity to speak this afternoon as part of this very important hearing on the 2005 waterfront rezoning of Greenpoint and Williamsburg. My name is Ryan Kuonen, and I am the lead organizer for Neighbors Allied for Good Growth, North Brooklyn's leading advocate for sensible planning, tenant rights, open space, and access to the waterfront. NAG was also a leader in the community's response to the 2005 rezoning.

The 2005 rezoning came with the promise of many new residents, but it also came with the promise of many benefits and improvements for residents--new and old. Seven years later, private development has proceeded at an exceptionally rapid pace, but the promised open space, affordable housing, transportation upgrades, and other improvements have been slower

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2 to come. Based on our analysis of census and
3 building records, Community Board 1 has added
4 13,000 new residents since 2000, and will probably
5 add another 20,000 over the coming decade or so.

6 While we are ecstatic to see the
7 completion of projects such as the McCarren Park
8 Pool and Transmitter Park, the City's records on
9 parks and open space has not made the grade. Of
10 the 39 acres of new open space that was promised
11 in 2005, less than ten acres, 25%, have actually
12 been acquired by the City, and of that, less than
13 seven acres, 18%, have been built.

14 And while the City talks of
15 affordable housing projects in the pipeline, our
16 analysis shows that only one-fifth, 736, of the
17 promised 3,500 new units of affordable housing
18 have actually been built. In fact, the City
19 promised hundreds of units of housing on public
20 sites and only 16 have been built to date.

21 The impact of the influx of new
22 residents and new development on our community is
23 creating increased pressures on an infrastructure
24 that was built for another era. Our subways are
25 among the most crowded in the city, and our

1
2 streets are nothing short of chaos. The 2005
3 rezoning should have been an opportunity to
4 develop a comprehensive transportation policy for
5 our neighborhood.

6 We urge the Council to take action
7 to hold the City to its promises seven years ago
8 and fund the acquisition and construction of much-
9 needed waterfront parks, expanded funding for
10 tenant services to serve those displaced by the
11 development boon, and fill one of the biggest
12 holes in the planning by funding a comprehensive
13 transportation study for CB 1.

14 The 2005 rezoning has brought many
15 changes to our community, many of them positive,
16 many of them not so much so. What is clear is
17 that the rezoning and the transformation of our
18 neighborhoods is far from complete. The process
19 by which private development is allowed to rush
20 forward while public commitments to the
21 improvements of the community are allowed to
22 languish is not just a problem for Greenpoint and
23 Williamsburg, it is a public policy issue that
24 affects all New Yorkers. The assumptions upon
25 which the rezoning was evaluated--assumptions

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2 about growth, the provision of open space and
3 affordable housing, and the protection of existing
4 manufacturers and residents from displacement--
5 have turned out to be flawed. The repercussions
6 for our community and the city as a whole are
7 something that we will all have to deal with well
8 beyond the tenure of this administration.

9 In 2005, the City Council stepped
10 forward and forced the City to make its rezoning
11 better. The City responded, but did not follow
12 through on its promises to the community and the
13 Council. We ask the Council to step up again and
14 hold the City to its word.

15 [Off mic]

16 RYAN KUONEN: Yeah.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: You must
18 have timed that.

19 BARBARA VETELL: Hi, I'm Barbara
20 Vetell, I'm the President of the Greenpoint West
21 Street Block Association--that's the block between
22 West Street and the East River--and I'm also the
23 chairperson for the park, the Transmitter Park,
24 Friends of Transmitter Park.

25 You know, I listened today, I

1
2 always listen very, very well, and I listened to
3 the questions, which I loved, you guys did a great
4 job. But the people that were here, we have
5 somebody who is here, the lady that was here for
6 seven months, so she's doing whatever she's doing
7 and I'm listening to her and I'm listening to her
8 and well I'm going to do it. No, she's not going
9 to do it, she's going to go back and she's going
10 to talk to somebody else and maybe they're going
11 to do whatever it is that she said she's going to
12 do.

13 What concerns me is these papers
14 that are on--oh, and the timeline, that we had to
15 have a timeline in there that nobody knew about
16 until Brooklyn Bridge Park. I'm not saying they
17 shouldn't have a park, but, man, you guys better
18 get on the ball when this comes up again with any
19 administration because it's horrendous.
20 Horrendous that this administration would do that.

21 You had people for 15 years
22 fighting TransGas, fighting Con Edison, fighting
23 all of these different people to try to keep this
24 together, and it infuriates me. I can feel myself
25 so infuriated about this because it's not right.

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It's absolutely not right.

You know, we have Noble Street--I'm going to bring that up--that needs to be sorted out. Noble Street is a street that goes right down to the--break it down to the river. Well now the City is saying, well, no, that's not ours. That's always been our street, all of a sudden, Gutnen [phonetic], who owns that property, there's like a big thing going on that we can find out about, and I need names about that.

We have Kent Street and Java. Between that, there's a piece of property that was the first place that was open in Greenpoint, Governor Pataki came, they did a whole big thing, this is it. Now we have two fences, you can't get on to that property. Why? I don't know. Somebody's got to give me some names and numbers and whenever and I'll get onto it, but I'm really angry.

We have Transmitter Park, they were supposed to build this beautiful, beautiful--we sat and we--oh, the first time I had ever seen anything that I thought, oh, my God, this is just beautiful, the pier is going to be beautiful and

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2 it's going to be pods and blah, blah, blah, and
3 all this. Well there's no pods, it's a straight
4 pier, somebody said, ooh, I'm just surprised that
5 it looks like that. It's so sad.

6 So the people have to really get on
7 the case again. We're very, very tired. And that
8 goes for the Parks departments. We're very, very
9 tired. We don't want to hear nonsense, we don't
10 want to hear nonsense, well, we didn't do this and
11 we didn't do that, until pull it out of them,
12 until Diana Reyna pulled it out of them, until
13 Steve Levin pulled it out of them, and until
14 Lander pulled it out of them. I can't even talk,
15 I'm so angry.

16 But thank you so much for this
17 hearing and I really appreciate it.

18 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
19 you very much.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you,
21 Barbara.

22 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Lincoln
23 Restler, is he here?

24 FEMALE VOICE: He left.

25 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: He

1
2 left. Okay. Alba Maya, Janice Lauletta, Rob
3 Solano.

4 [Pause]

5 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: In the
6 other room? Yeah, they can hear us, he'll come
7 over here. [Pause] Let me see if he shows up.
8 [Pause] Okay. [Pause] Yes, so anybody can feel
9 free to start, please identify yourselves before
10 you testify.

11 [Pause]

12 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Oh, I'm
13 sorry, we've been joined by Council Member Jimmy
14 Van Bramer.

15 [Pause]

16 JANICE LAULETTA-WEINMANN: My name
17 is Janice Lauletta-Weinmann, I am here today as
18 the President of the Greenpoint Monitor Museum.

19 I am wearing a Civil War uniform as
20 I was part of the color guard for PS 34's 63rd
21 Annual Flag Day Celebration held in Greenpoint
22 this morning honoring the American Flag. At 12
23 p.m. during today's rally on the steps of City
24 Hall, my husband George Weinmann marched in the
25 Flag Day Parade sponsored by the Sons of the

1
2 Revolution, of which he is a member. The parade
3 marched from City Hall to Fraunces Tavern where
4 George Washington made his farewell address.

5 I am holding here today another
6 flag that historically was part of the American
7 Revolution. It's message to England was don't
8 thread on me. All right, it's respectfully held
9 up because it's a Revolutionary War flag.

10 In April of 1996, the Greenpoint
11 Monitor Museum was granted a charter by the Board
12 of Regents on behalf of the Education Department,
13 State of New York. The museum was established
14 during Greenpoint's 197A process through the
15 community's vision of what they would like to see
16 developed on Greenpoint's waterfront. Since that
17 time, the museum has functioned as a traveling
18 museum and in 2001, the museum commenced its Road
19 Show which visits local schools.

20 In December of 2003, Motiva
21 Enterprises donated approximately one acre of its
22 waterfront property on the Bushwick Inlet and the
23 East River to the Greenpoint Monitor Museum for
24 the purpose of constructing a museum dedicated to
25 the USS Monitor and Greenpoint's history. This

1 land shares the launch site of the USS Monitor.

2
3 Within a few months of this
4 donation, the City of New York notified the museum
5 of its proposal to use eminent domain to acquire
6 this land as part of a 28-acre park to be called
7 the Bushwick Inlet Park. Since 2004, the museum
8 has attempted, without success, to free itself
9 from this threat of eminent domain. As the
10 American patriots carried this flag in their
11 efforts to gain freedom from England, this flag
12 today represents the museum's position toward
13 eminent domain: Don't tread on me. We're not
14 bargaining for a large millions of dollars, we
15 just want to keep our land.

16 Since 2004, the museum has made
17 improvements to the land, including the erection
18 of a flag pole, new fence, and sign. It purchased
19 a 40 foot storage container and picnic tables and,
20 most importantly, it has conducted geotechnical
21 and environmental testing on the land which proved
22 the land not to be a brownfield. All accomplished
23 through a \$50,000 grant obtained from Assemblyman
24 Joseph Lentol.

25 This year marks the 150th

1 anniversary of the launch of the USS Monitor.
2
3 Representatives from the National Oceanic and
4 Atmospheric Administration, USS Monitor National
5 Marine Sanctuary attended the commemorative events
6 sponsored by the museum, Oliver Tilden Camp No.
7 26, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, John
8 Ericsson Society, among others. At these events,
9 it was formally announced by NOAA that USS Monitor
10 artifacts will be provided to the museum for
11 display once its building has been constructed on
12 the land.

13 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Do you
14 want to wrap up?

15 JANICE LAULETTA-WEINMANN: Right.
16 The museum will also be part of the Monitor Trail.
17 This is a great honor for the museum and the City
18 of New York and it should be recognized and
19 respected.

20 Then I have, I'm including a letter
21 from the borough president, which, he at the time
22 in 2005, voted against eminent domain on the
23 museum's property. He said that there's no
24 benefit to the pursuit of mapping the property as
25 a park and such an action would pose a risk to the

1
2 future of the museum. Okay.

3 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
4 you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you,
6 Janice.

7 ALBA MAYA: Good afternoon, my name
8 is Alba Maya, I live in Brooklyn north side on
9 Bedford Avenue. Although I am very grateful with
10 the Mayor Bloomberg for many things because he
11 made possible that the gay marriage was become a
12 reality in New York, I have--and I love the
13 waterfronts and I love New York, I want to comment
14 about my situation in North 7 on Brooklyn.

15 I have lived there with my spouse
16 for 31 years, I live in the eye of the storm, as
17 the people at North 7 should know, but what
18 happened with this rezoning, although we have
19 beautiful new spaces, very few, not enough because
20 what happened is the rezoning situations have made
21 the landlords more greedy. The rents are
22 impossible, the new apartments, the new affordable
23 housing that they put [off mic] are not enough or
24 sometimes they are unaffordable. I had been
25 trying to go to the sites and I don't find

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anything that I can move on.

I had a fire in my building three months ago, I live in a shabby building, I haven't been able to move out, although my spouse has a problem in the heat and the building is [off mic] because I don't find where to move.

The other thing that our neighborhood has is that it has become a destination place for tourists, for bars, for restaurants, for crime, for noise. We cannot sleep, I [off mic] with a record every night because I have to muffle all the noise in the street--the drunkards that are coming. There we are a--well I call it really a film, we have become a film place because every week we have a new film going on.

We don't have parking space enough.

So life become very expensive there, the grocery is very expensive, everybody think we are rich. So the old building had to close.

And then I will love that the Mayor consider affordable places for the people that doesn't have enough money to live with this high

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standards.

And I appreciate very much to all of you doing this effort for all this our neighborhoods. Thank you very much.

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you.

[Pause]

ROB SOLANO: My name is Rob Solano, I'm the Executive Director for Churches United for Fair Housing--ooh, that was quick. Okay. Can we go again. Again, so my name is Rob Solano, I'm the Executive Director for Churches United for Fair Housing, we're a coalition of churches in North Brooklyn, with our mission is to create a sustainable living community with a focus on affordable housing.

I really wanted to come down today really to say that for many years there's been many disagreements between Council Members and elected officials and community leaders, and this is one issue that we don't see differently.

Our parks and open spaces is extremely important to our community. I'm not a statistician, but I think the south side in Williamsburg and Greenpoint are one of the worst

1
2 in asthma rates and obesity and many other issues
3 that we have to deal with.

4 It seems like Williamsburg and
5 Greenpoint has always been the place wherever you
6 want to dump something, a wayside, something, they
7 think of Williamsburg and Greenpoint. When I
8 think about open space and parks, it seems not to
9 be the priority.

10 I want to make very clear that, as
11 a lifelong resident, open space for me was an open
12 fire hydrant but I think we've moved on to have
13 open space in the waterfront. If it's available
14 for the millionaires of our community, it should
15 be available for anyone making any monies,
16 affordable or not.

17 I don't want to end by saying that
18 sometimes the Mayor and the administration feeds
19 off of disagreements and feeds off of people
20 opposing, I want to make it clear to the Parks
21 department and the administration that we stand
22 together on this and we will not remember--we will
23 make sure that we remember the commitments and the
24 points of agreements that we did this because of
25 those commitments and points, not because we

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2 thought it was some type of saying or something
3 that it was less. When in 2005, when I was just a
4 kid, and I'm just a kid now, we remember those
5 points of agreement that's something that of a
6 commitment and something that we're going to hold
7 to them.

8 So, again, the message is: We
9 stand united on parks and open space and we hope
10 to see it in this administration. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
12 you very much, all of you, for testifying and for
13 taking the time to be here today. And, again,
14 everyone has been really wonderful about keeping
15 to the time limit.

16 We have one more panel and that is
17 Ramon Peguero, George Weinmann, I'm sorry, I hope
18 I get it right, is it Spencer?

19 SPENCER LAMM: Yeah, that's right.

20 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Spencer
21 Lamm?

22 SPENCER LAMM: Yeah.

23 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay.

24 [Pause]

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Anybody has any

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copies of their statements.

GEORGE WEINMANN: No.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Make sure you identify yourself for the record first--

[Crosstalk]

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay. Anybody can feel free to start, and please identify yourselves.

RAMON PEGUERO: Good afternoon, my name is Ramon Peguero, Executive Director of Southside United, HDFC, better known as Los Sures.

And for the past 40 years, Los Sures has been in Williamsburg developing the infrastructure as it relates to affordable housing, senior center, food pantry, et cetera.

I would like to thank Council Member Diana Reyna for the invitation that she has afforded us to be here today, and I consider her a leader as it relates to the 34th district in the fight for open space and parks.

I think it is clear--and the Parks department stated this this afternoon--that the

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2 cost of acquiring property to ensure compliance
3 with the points of agreement has, according to
4 them, increased tenfold. I think it's time to
5 reopen the conversation and the points of
6 agreement and see it as a living document, to
7 create a comprehensive plan that accommodates our
8 neighbors in Greenpoint while at the same time
9 dealing with the dire needs of open space and
10 parks in Williamsburg.

11 Mr. Solano, I think made a point of
12 stating that we are one of the most needy
13 communities, both Williamsburg and Greenpoint, as
14 it relates to open space and parks. We talk about
15 asthma, we talk about obesity. And I believe now
16 that we are having so many people looking at our
17 communities and are being interested in our
18 communities. I think that they should perhaps
19 also contribute to the amount of money that is
20 necessary to expand, not only what's on the point
21 of agreements, but perhaps do more than just
22 what's on the point of agreements. That was very
23 limited and that was a plan with just the City,
24 now let's also bring in the developers and the
25 speculators and have them also add to the pot to

1
2 ensure that we have more than just the amount of
3 open space and parks that was promised in the
4 points of agreement. Thank you.

5 SPENCER LAMM: Sure. Name is
6 Spencer Lamm--is it on?

7 [Crosstalk]

8 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: There you
10 are.

11 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: There
12 you are.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Lights on.

14 RAMON PEGUERO: You're on, on.

15 SPENCER LAMM: Okay. Name is
16 Spencer Lamm, I've lived in the neighborhood for
17 about 20 years on North 6th Street near Wythe and,
18 like, right by the waterfront, so it's like I've
19 seen mass amounts of progress. I'm not with any
20 group, I'm just some...

21 In about 2009, I bought, basically,
22 I was a renter for most of the time. I mean, so
23 people have lived in the neighborhood a lot
24 longer, I have seen though dramatic, dramatic
25 changes living on North 6th Street for ten of

1
2 those years right above Top [phonetic]
3 Supermarket. So I mean, to the point where, like,
4 our door--it got horrible, we moved over to Berry
5 Street, I'm still just now two blocks, as an
6 owner, from the waterfront.

7 So I guess I heard about this
8 yesterday, felt I wanted to just come. I chose to
9 speak just basically feeling that I'm here, I
10 should say something. But this does matter to me,
11 whenever I try to--I try to hear what's going on
12 and even that has been kind of hard. As a renter,
13 I probably didn't pay quite as much attention, but
14 I was aware of it. Since I've become a homeowner
15 in 2009, I've been acutely trying to hear what,
16 you know, is happening and I've heard so little.

17 Like today was great because it
18 kind of brought a lot of outrage to the table,
19 which I think needed to happen. There was a lot
20 of--not apathy, everyone cared, everyone continued
21 to care, but it didn't seem like there was a forum
22 like this.

23 I guess my biggest fear is that
24 it's going to continue down the road of, like,
25 nothing really happening 'cause--yeah, I mean,

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that's my biggest fear.

And then there were so many outs for this to never happen. The land being the biggest issue of not acquiring it. If the land had been acquired, this would be kind of like a different discussion and it would probably be one way or another happening, even if it was going to happen in ten years. As it stands, it looks like it conceivably won't happen at all and that is-- and the land is only getting more expensive. I mean, as a landowner that bought in 2009 and is watching the value of my property go up, well why isn't the waterfront? The same thing is happening on the waterfront, and 2005 was what triggered a lot of that.

So it seems insane to me that the city that is so much a part of the rise in property costs would not have the foresight to realize that they had to buy it. You know, to me, that's like the fundamental thing that I'm taking away from most of this today.

So, yeah, I guess, the last thing I could say towards the whole thing is just I hope the outrage stays and more people are made aware,

1
 2 given voice, and are able to be outraged that live
 3 in the area because there are more people coming.
 4 I mean, 20 years I've watched, I couldn't--there
 5 was no ATMs 20 years ago, now there's an ATM every
 6 three feet, you know, and it's all towards--I hear
 7 one block away from the subway on a routine basis,
 8 where is the subway. Those are all people that
 9 don't live in the neighborhood, so those are
 10 people that the parks would help.

11 And anyway, thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
 13 you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you.

15 GEORGE WEINMANN: Okay. My name
 16 is--

17 [Crosstalk]

18 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: --Mr.
 19 Weinmann so--

20 GEORGE WEINMANN: Okay.

21 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: --give
 22 it a good push.

23 GEORGE WEINMANN: One for the road,
 24 right? Here we go.

25 Okay. My name is George Weinmann,

1
2 my family's been in Greenpoint since the 1840s, so
3 I'm a lifelong resident, it's a long time, a lot
4 of history.

5 I'm representing also the
6 Greenpoint Monitor Museum, as well as the Sons of
7 Union Veterans of the Civil War.

8 I'm the commander of Oliver Tilden
9 Camp No. 26 Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil
10 War, it's part of a national organization that was
11 chartered by Congress in 1881. We are the Union
12 descendants of the men who fought for the Union
13 side in 1861 to '65. Today is Flag Day and my
14 organization, as well as other patriotic and
15 historic organizations, honored the American flag
16 by participating in the parade--that's where I was
17 today. I'm a member of the Sons of the Revolution
18 and the parade went well, I'd like to say that.

19 The Oliver Tilden Camp has worked
20 together with the Greenpoint Monitor Museum since
21 1996 and have shared the history and development,
22 including both the progress and the setbacks.
23 Numerous awards have been awarded to the
24 organization for educating children and keeping
25 alive the memory of the men who fought in the

1
2 Civil War through the museum's Road Show, which we
3 visit in local schools.

4 A few months after thanking Motiva
5 Enterprises for their donation of historic land
6 which shares the launch site of the USS Monitor,
7 both organizations faced the setback resulting
8 from the City from sending a notification of the
9 museum having a proposal to use the eminent domain
10 to acquire its land as part of a 28-acre park to
11 be called the Bushwick Inlet Park. Since 2004, we
12 have attempted to assist the museum, without
13 success, to free it from this threat of eminent
14 domain.

15 This year marks the 150th
16 anniversary of the launch of the Monitor.
17 Representatives from NOAA, National Oceanic and
18 Atmospheric Administration, US Monitor National
19 Marine Sanctuary attended the commemoration events
20 sponsored by the museum, Oliver Tilden Camp, and
21 national organizations, and also the Department of
22 New York, John Ericsson Society, and many others.
23 At the events, it was announced that NOAA and the
24 U.S. will give the USS Monitor artifacts to the
25 museum and be part of the Monitor naval unit for

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2 Road Show, the museum will be part of that. And
3 also the museum is located at Hampton Roads
4 Maritime Museum, I should say, they also came, the
5 president spoke, the famous Battle of the Monitor
6 and Merrimack took place there down in Hampton
7 Roads. This is a great honor for the museum and
8 the City of New York and it should be recognized
9 and respected.

10 In conclusion, Oliver Tilden Camp
11 No. 26 respectfully requests the museum be freed
12 from this threat of eminent domain to enable it to
13 move forward with its goal to establishing a
14 museum on the historic land that shares the launch
15 site of the USS Monitor.

16 This is submitted by me, Commander
17 Oliver Tilden Camp Sons of Union Veterans of the
18 Civil War.

19 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Well
20 that was perfect timing and--

21 GEORGE WEINMANN: Okay.

22 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: --it
23 was actually a nice way to end it in terms of the
24 historical context and perspective, I thank you
25 for that. I don't know--thank you all for your

1
2 testimony--if, Council Member Levin, if you had
3 any parting words or--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN:

5 [Interposing] I just wanted to thank the staff
6 that worked very hard on this: David Seitzer,
7 Crystal Gold Pond, Kristoffer Sartori, and Patrick
8 Mulvihill. And, George--

9 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
10 you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --I hear you
12 loud and clear.

13 GEORGE WEINMANN: Okay.

14 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: So,
15 again, thank you all. Obviously, as I indicated
16 at the beginning, your representative, your
17 Council Member has been very strong on this point,
18 but I think this also really is important because
19 there are many promises that have been made across
20 many rezonings and we got to make sure that
21 communities get the respect that they were--you
22 know, the promises that were made to them, this is
23 something that we're going to keep, you know,
24 working hand-in-hand to make sure that we can get
25 some progress.

1
2 And I thank everybody that took the
3 time to be here today, I know it takes time out of
4 your day, you work, and so it's really appreciated
5 that you took the time to be here.

6 So thank you all. And with that--

7 [Crosstalk]

8 FEMALE VOICE: --an opportunity to
9 ask a question?

10 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: We can
11 probably--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: We can do
13 that afterwards.

14 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: --meet
15 with you afterwards, yeah, we can do that now.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And, Madam
17 Chair, I just want to thank you for conducting the
18 hearing this--the Greenpoint and Williamsburg
19 community is very, very thankful.

20 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: And I
21 thank you for that. And with that, this meeting--
22 or this hearing is adjourned.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Tammy Wittman, 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 *Tammy Wittman*

Date July 2, 2012