

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

-----X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

-----X

July 15, 2010
Start: 10:13am
Recess: 03:36pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
MARK S. WEPRIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Margaret Chin
Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
Daniel R. Garodnick
Daniel J. Halloran III
Vincent Ignizio
Robert Jackson
Peter Koo
Diana Reyna
Larry B. Seabrook
James Vacca
Albert Vann

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

Michael Meyer
President
TDC Development Group

Rev. Richard McEachern
Pastor
Macedonia AME Church

Shampa Chanda
Asst. Comm. Planning
NYC Housing Preservation and Development

Robert Goldrich
Representative
NYC Deputy Mayor for Economic Development

Seth Pinsky
President
Economic Development Corp.

Chi Chan
Representative
AKRF

Steven Aiello
Representative
Standard Parking

Helen Marshall
Borough President
Queens

Richard Lipsky
Representative
Flushing Coalition for Responsible Development

James Gerson
Owner
Gerson Properties

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

Ikhwan Rim
Representative
Union Street Small Business Assn.

Paul Graziano
Spokesperson
Coalition to Reconsider & Evaluate Dev. Opportunities

Steve Barrison
Executive Vice President
Small Business Congress

Brian Ketcham
Traffic Engineer
Community Consulting

Craig Bergman
Representative
Mitchell-Linden Civic Assn.

Jack Friedman
Executive Director
Queens Chamber of Commerce

Myra Herce
President
Flushing Chamber of Commerce

Terence Park
Representative
Our Flushing Political Coalition

Charles Apelian
Vice Chairman
Community Board 7

Eugene Kelty
Chairman
Community Board 7

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

Mike McGuire
Representative
Mason Tenders District Council

James Conway
Representative
Local 14 Union of Operating Engineers

Paul Custer
SVP & Chief Admin Officer
YMCA New York

Roland Wade
Resident
Flushing, NY

Sunny Han
Local Merchant
Flushing, NY

Lucy Kung
Local Merchant
Flushing, NY

Wang Chung Min
Local Merchant
Flushing, NY

Mrs. Chay
Local Merchant
Flushing, NY

Daniel Kung
Representative
Union Street Small Business Assn.

Brian Paul
Representative
Hunter College Ctr for Community Planning & Dev.

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

Linda Adalija
Flushing Resident

Pearline Halyard
Member
Macedonia AME Church

Annette Jordan
Member
Macedonia AME Church

Alex Thomason
Member
Macedonia AME Church

Mildred Scott
Member
Macedonia AME Church

Wung Ja Li
Local businessperson
Flushing, NY

Sun Ji Ya
Resident
Flushing, NY

Andrew Choy
Resident
Flushing, NY

Yin Zun Na
Intern
Korean American Voters Council

Brian Lee
Intern
Korean American Voters Council

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

Michelle Kim
Intern
Korean American Voters Council

Unknown Female
Employee
Local Flushing Bakery

Richard Lee
Public Policy & Legislative Advocate
Asian-Americans for Equality

Mrs. Ram
Business owner
Flushing, NY

Michael Lim
President
Korean American Construction Assn. of New York

Mary Mutu
Member
Macedonia AME Church

Carolyn Scavelo
Member
Macedonia AME Church

Don Capalbi
President
Queensborough Hill Civic Association

William Nelson
Executive Director
Flushing YMCA

John Henry Bias
Member
Macedonia AME Church

1
2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Can I have
3 some quiet, please? That's my line. That was
4 your line, actually. I'm sorry, cutting in.
5 Okay, can we get started? Are we good to go?
6 Good morning, everyone, my name is Mark Weprin,
7 I'm the Chair of the Zoning and Franchise
8 Committee of the City Council, I'm the Council
9 Member from the 23rd District in Eastern Queens,
10 and I'm delighted to be joined today by some of my
11 colleagues on the panel here, fittingly the
12 Republicans to my far right, Peter Koo and Dan
13 Halloran. Yes, you would be in the overflow room.
14 Next to him is Larry Seabrook, Council Member Al
15 Vann, Carol Shine our counsel is here, Leroy
16 Comrie, the Chair of the Land Use Committee, Jimmy
17 Vacca from the Bronx and Robert Jackson to my far
18 left, very good for working that out. And that's
19 it for now, that's great. I'm going to switch
20 mics because this one keeps cutting out on me a
21 little bit. That will be better, yeah. So today
22 we're here for the Flushing Commons land use
23 meeting, and we're joined by Dan Garodnick, a
24 member of the subcommittee. This is Land Use
25 numbers 136 through 145, all on Flushing Commons.

1
2 I do want to let the Committee know that following
3 this hearing, at whatever hour that is, there will
4 be a joint hearing with the Technology Committee
5 on cable customers and the public being caught in
6 the middle, and that is a separate hearing, and in
7 order to be marked present at that hearing, you'll
8 have to be here for that hearing. So just so you
9 know.

10 Ladies and gentlemen, so today we
11 have a big crowd. I apologize for the space.
12 Obviously, you may know that City Hall is under
13 construction, they're redoing the City Council
14 side of City Hall, so we were unable to use the
15 Council chamber, which we would have used for this
16 hearing. So we are now in this room and an
17 overflow room behind us on the 16th floor, as well
18 as another room on the 14th floor where people are
19 sitting who cannot hear us. So my request to you
20 is, when we get to the speakers, as you speak,
21 after you speak, if you could please leave this
22 room, so other people who are going to be speaking
23 can come into this room and be right nearby when
24 we call their name. Otherwise we'd have people
25 getting on the elevator after their name is

1 called, and it would take forever. We will be
2 limiting speakers, once the presentation is over,
3 to two minutes each, because we do have a lot of
4 speakers. I apologize for that. So if in your
5 mind now you can start concising your remarks to
6 two minutes, that would be helpful. All right.
7 We do have a lot of names here. As we move
8 forward, we will call each name that has been
9 given to us. There is a chance that as the day
10 moves on, people have other places to go, believe
11 it or not, and cannot stay to give their
12 testimony. We will read each name and whether
13 they are in favor or opposition of the project.
14 So you can choose that option and say, you know
15 what, I'm not going to actually say anything, my
16 points were already made, but I want my name read
17 for the record to say, yes, I will do that.
18 That's me encouraging you to do that if you want,
19 because later on we may still be here a while.
20 And without further ado, I'm going to move, we're
21 going to have the presentation by the applicants.
22 They are going to make a full Powerpoint
23 presentation. We are going to allow them to do
24 that uninterrupted before the panel asks
25

1 questions. I just want to warn you, this is going
2 to take a little bit of time, they're first.

3 We're going to try to alternate support and
4 opposition as long as we have to, as long as there
5 is support and opposition still to speak. And
6 that will be after this presentation. So this is
7 going to take a little while, I want to warn you
8 ahead of time, and it is a little warm in here.

9 But we'll try to move as quickly as possible. So,
10 without further ado, I'm going to read the names
11 of the applicants. I will ask you, once you get
12 to the microphone, just restate your name and your
13 affiliation. We have Michael Meyer, the Reverend
14 Richard McEachern ... the Reverend is here. Shampa
15 Chanda, Robert Goldrich, Seth Pinsky, President of
16 EDC, Michael Polo, Hardy A. Dasco and Susan
17 Goldfinger. In addition, not testifying, but here
18 for any questions they may have, are Meredith
19 Marshall, John Neal, Atma Sukram, Chi Chan, Steven
20 Aiello, Nancy Dune, Maria Torrez, Carol Lee Fink,
21 we already have you, and that's it. So without
22 further ado, you can start. Again, please state
23 your name again, and if anyone else comes in to
24 ask a question or answer a question that is not
25

1
2 testifying, please say your name when you get onto
3 the microphone for the record, because eventually
4 this will be a printed record, and we have to
5 distinguish who is speaking. And as questions are
6 asked, if it's not obvious who we are asking, if
7 you can say, it's me answering that question.
8 Okay? Thank you, and let's get started.

9 MR. GOLDRICH: My name is Robert
10 Goldrich, and I'm here today on behalf of the
11 Deputy Mayor for Economic Development. Thank you,
12 Chair Weprin, Chair Comrie, Committee members,
13 Councilman Koo, Councilman Halloran, for the
14 opportunity to present Flushing Commons and
15 Macedonia Plaza today. We look forward to
16 presenting these very important projects for
17 downtown Flushing, and we look forward to
18 answering your questions. Today's presenters will
19 include Seth Pinsky, President of the New York
20 City Economic Development Corporation, Michael
21 Meyer, one of the developers for Flushing Commons,
22 the Reverend Richard McEachern, from the Flushing
23 AME Church, and Shampa Chanda from HPD. We also
24 have on hand various representatives from the
25 agencies, the YMCA, and developer's consultants

1
2 that, such as Chair Weprin had mentioned, who are
3 also here to answer questions you have. Again, we
4 appreciate your time, and we look forward to
5 showing the projects to you, and all the important
6 amenities as well. So we're going to kick it off
7 with Seth.

8 MR. PINSKY: Thank you, Rob. Thank
9 you, Chairman Weprin and Chairman Comrie and
10 members of the subcommittee, including Council
11 Member's Koo and Halloran, for inviting me here
12 today. I'm Seth Pinsky, President of the New York
13 City Economic Development Corporation. On behalf
14 of the Economic Development Corporation, I am
15 pleased to outline the plan for redeveloping
16 Flushing Commons. Following my testimony,
17 representatives from the private development team
18 of Rockefeller Development Corporation and TDC
19 Development Group will discuss the project's
20 specifics in greater detail. After that I'll be
21 happy to answer any questions that you might have.

22 The Flushing Commons project seeks
23 to transform what is now a municipal parking lot,
24 a portion of which is currently used by the City,
25 into a new mixed-use development in downtown

1
2 Flushing, with 500 more parking spaces than now
3 exist, and 200 additional parking spaces offsite.
4 The project has the potential to alter the
5 landscape of this great neighborhood dramatically,
6 create thousands of new jobs for the community,
7 and attract hundreds of millions of dollars of
8 investment from the private sector. The plan
9 stems directly from a multi-year community-based
10 planning effort called the Downtown Flushing
11 Framework, which was started in 2002. A task
12 force comprised of officials from the local
13 Community Board, local elected officials, and
14 Flushing developers and business owners, hosted
15 literally dozens of meetings, including a two-day
16 workshop at Flushing town hall, attended by more
17 than 700 community members, to identify
18 opportunities in the neighborhood and articulate a
19 vision for future development. Among these
20 opportunities, municipal lot #1 was identified as
21 one of the most significant. In order to insure
22 that any development occurring on this site would
23 result in a project that met the needs of the
24 community to the maximum extent possible, as
25 called for in the framework, when the RFP for the

1 site was issued by EDC in February of 2004, it
2 required that several important goals for downtown
3 Flushing be met, including 1. Creating a town
4 square-style open space to be a center of
5 community activity, 2. Enhancing the pedestrian
6 environment with street-level retail to attract
7 shoppers east of Main Street, 3. Addressing
8 housing demands and helping to stabilize the
9 retail market by establishing a new residential
10 community downtown, 4. Maintaining, competitively-
11 priced parking onsite, and 5. Raising the standard
12 for private investment in downtown Flushing by
13 developing a project of high quality, sustainable
14 design and construction. In July of 2005, after
15 reviewing all the responses to our RFP, EDC
16 selected the team of Rockefeller Development
17 Corporation and TDC Development Group to manage
18 the development of the municipal lot site. Among
19 the reasons for selecting the team was its
20 submission of a plan that met, and in many cases
21 exceeded, the requirements outlined in our RFP.
22 The plan today calls for the creation of a 1.5
23 acre town square of open space, hundreds of
24 thousands of square feet of new community and
25

1 retail space, up to 620 new residential units,
2 1,600 parking spaces, as mentioned, 500 more than
3 are currently onsite, plus another 200 new spaces
4 offsite, and a state-of-the-art 62,000 square foot
5 YMCA. The more than \$800 million in investment by
6 the private development team is expected to result
7 in 2,600 new construction jobs, 1,900 permanent
8 jobs, and approximately \$700 million in direct and
9 indirect economic activity annually.

10 Additionally, we estimate that the incremental
11 returns to the City from this project will equal
12 more than \$175 million on a net present value
13 basis over the next 30 years, results that are
14 important in any environment, but particularly
15 critical during a challenging economic time, such
16 as the one in which we now find ourselves.

17
18 In addition to the foregoing
19 elements of the Flushing Commons project, it
20 should also be noted that the development is
21 occurring in coordination with an adjacent 140
22 unit affordable housing project that will be built
23 by Macedonian Community Development Corporation.
24 The corporation's leader will be on hand to
25 discuss the aspects of this plan following this

1 presentation.

2
3 Of course, with respect to Flushing
4 Commons, as with all of our development projects
5 in the City, we are firmly committed to
6 encouraging local hiring. We are therefore
7 working with the developer to produce a local
8 hiring strategy that will be implemented during
9 and after construction. We look forward to
10 providing more details on this in the coming
11 weeks. Furthermore, in consultation with Council
12 Member Peter Koo and a number of nearby
13 businesses, the City is also developing a plan to
14 minimize the impact of construction on surrounding
15 businesses. The central element of this plan
16 includes a set aside by the City of \$2 million
17 which will be used both for outreach and other
18 forms of mitigation. We plan to release more
19 information on our construction mitigation efforts
20 in the next several weeks, after which we intend
21 to issue an RFP to contract for the agreed-upon
22 services from a qualified third party provider.
23 All the benefits I've outlined for you have
24 already been recognized by the community boards,
25 borough president and the City Planning

Commission, all of which have approved the plan.

As with these groups, I believe the Flushing Commons project represents a significant economic opportunity designed by the community for the community. This project, which means new jobs, new retail, and new open space, as well as significant new private investment in downtown Flushing, has the capacity to truly transform this neighborhood for the residents of Queens and beyond. Thank you.

MR. MEYER: Good morning and thank you Chairman and Committee members. My name is Michael Meyer, I'm the president of TDC Development and Construction, and I want to begin. As Mr. Pinsky said, I was driving this morning, I realized that it was five years ago this week actually, that Mayor Bloomberg came to Flushing to announce the designation of our development team, Rockefeller Development Group and TDC, and it's been a remarkable journey for us. And so we're very excited to be here before you today. So I know we have a lot to go through, I'm going to try to get through it at a fast clip, as much as possible. So, first of all, we are TDC, we are

1
2 located right in the heart of Flushing. If you
3 look up there on the side is Queen's Crossing, our
4 latest project, which actually overlooks the
5 municipal parking lot. Below is Prince Center,
6 right next to the Sheraton in Flushing, which is a
7 mixed use project we completed about ten years
8 ago. Excuse me. And our partners, Rockefeller
9 Development Group, really need no introduction or
10 explanation, you all are familiar with Rockefeller
11 Center, of course, and more recently their project
12 on 7th Avenue, 745 7th, which is in the bottom left.

13 So, from the beginning, as Mr.
14 Pinsky says, the RFP was released in February of
15 2004, amazingly six and a half years ago. And we
16 assembled really what we think was the best and
17 the brightest in this industry, names familiar to
18 most of you here in the City, Perkins Eastman, the
19 largest architects here, Thomas Balsley, an
20 internationally-acclaimed landscape architect,
21 AKRF, Acomp, Standard Parking, the largest parking
22 operator in the United States, and really
23 ubiquitous in the City, and then of course Tishman
24 Construction, also in no need of explanation.

25 So, just to orient you, those of

1
2 you who aren't familiar with Flushing, this is the
3 full lot, that's municipal lot #1. Everything
4 within the dotted lines is our project, the
5 Flushing Commons project. The Reverend will be
6 following me, and be talking about the affordable
7 housing project that they're building over here.
8 But again, to orient you, this is Union Street to
9 the west, and to the east right over here is Main
10 Street. Our headquarter building, Queens
11 Crossing, is this one, and overlooks, as I said,
12 the parking lot.

13 So, quickly, Mr. Pinsky mentioned
14 some of the project details. But above ground we
15 have 1.2 square feet, it's a mixed-use project.
16 About 60% of the project is residential with
17 upscale condos, a little bit more than 250,000
18 square feet of retail. It is not big-box retail,
19 it's smaller scale, it's meant to be woven into
20 the fabric of the community, with national,
21 regional and local retail shops. The retail dots
22 the circumference of the property as well as
23 inside, to really enliven it and make it a
24 destination. Up in the corner here is really the
25 commercial building that we have, that's on 39th

1
2 and Union. That will either be office space or a
3 hotel, or some combination thereof. As was
4 mentioned, what's really sort of extraordinary
5 about this project, close to 10% of the entire use
6 is community space, two thirds of which is going
7 to be a state-of-the-art YMCA that I'm going to be
8 discussing in a moment. The open spaces of the
9 five acre site that we have, approximately 1.5
10 acres is open and public space. And then parking
11 will exist on three levels below, and there's 500
12 more than exists now.

13 Just a couple of quick
14 perspectives. This is looking across the open
15 space to this is a residential tower, over here
16 will be retail and community space. This, if
17 you're familiar, the police station is on Union.
18 This is like we're in a helicopter looking down,
19 it's cattycorner from Queen's Crossing over here.
20 This is the affordable project. Over here is the
21 YMCA, and to get a sense of the scale of the Y,
22 this building, this large rectangular building,
23 actually goes under this building to the street.
24 And that's how it accounts for the 62,000 square
25 feet. And this is the commercial tower.

1
2 Another perspective, looking east
3 to Main Street from Union, here's the Y, the kids
4 enter the cantilever and you see the church over
5 across from the gardens here. The Flushing
6 Commons, the green, the open space that we're
7 talking about, I believe is the crown jewel of the
8 project. You see that during the community ... I've
9 been working in the community for seven years, and
10 I'm fond of telling the story that there's no
11 place in downtown Flushing to even go and sit on a
12 park bench. There's nothing. And what this will
13 allow is, this is going to be open to the public
14 from 6:00 to midnight. It's designed by an award-
15 winning landscape architect, it's going to have a
16 water feature, it's stepped. I ... it's ... and
17 outdoor during the warm weather there'll be
18 outdoor events and performances on a stage. It
19 will be ringed with retail over here, and this
20 will give you a sense, Flushing has not seen
21 anything like it, and when we talk about
22 transforming Flushing, I believe this is one of
23 the major factors in the transformation.

24 The chairman of TDC is a man by the
25 name of Michael Lee. His vision always was from

1
2 the start to create what he said, the Rockefeller
3 Center of Queens. And that's one of the reasons
4 why actually we teamed up with Rockefeller Group.
5 And when we started our community event, community
6 outreach, we wanted to see if it was boastful to
7 say it was really the Rockefeller of Queens. So
8 we asked our partners to do a takeoff and measure.
9 And here's Rockefeller ... here's Fifth Avenue,
10 here's where the skating rink is, here's the
11 channel gardens, and we measured it, and it's
12 about 62,000 square feet. So then we superimposed
13 our outdoor space and measured it, and it isn't a
14 boast, as it turns out, we're about 10% larger.
15 So it really does give you a sense of the scale of
16 what we're going to be accomplishing. From
17 nothing to something really massive.

18 The other enormous community
19 amenity here is the YMCA, and Paul Custer, an
20 executive of YMCA, is here to talk later and
21 answer questions about the Y, but as we've been
22 saying, it will be their finest facility in New
23 York City, and possibly the country. It will have
24 two family pools, a competition pool and a family
25 pool, a basketball court, a track, a youth center

1
2 and a daycare center. Many of the programs will
3 be offered free of charge to kids, discounts to
4 senior citizens. We will be building the core and
5 shell for them, they will be owning it as a condo
6 for free.

7 Of course, when you have any
8 project of this scale, construction is always a
9 concern in terms of disruption. But we are
10 fortunate to have two major factors that will
11 allow us to really mitigate the construction
12 impact. We're estimating ... Tishman is estimating
13 the construction time will be approximately 36
14 months. They'll be managing the whole process,
15 they've helped us with the planning. But we're
16 fortunate that, like the Ground Zero, we're going
17 to be building a bathtub to house those
18 underground parking spaces. That will permit us
19 to locate the cranes inside the site, rather than
20 on the street. So we anticipate no street
21 closings, no blasting. The other factor, which
22 I'm going to touch upon at greater length, is the
23 interim parking. There are 1,100 spaces now, we
24 are going to replace all of that and then some, an
25 extra 43 spaces at nearby parking now, spaces that

1 we own and also in municipal lot #2, a block away.
2 We'll be talking about that. And of course, as
3 soon as we finish our early ... as some of the early
4 buildings come on line, we will seek a TCO to
5 reinstate parking as soon as possible. So that's
6 a good segue, because parking in any ... well, I
7 have had some experience doing large, mixed-use
8 projects in other cities, and parking is always
9 the subject of a lot of emotion. And in this case
10 in Flushing, there is a lot of history. And as we
11 found out after designation, it's also the subject
12 of a lot of myth. But before getting into that, I
13 think it's important to give a little backdrop to
14 Flushing, because Flushing today is not the
15 Flushing of 1954. I'm fond of joking about it,
16 that both the parking and I were conceived at the
17 same date, and I don't look like I did back then,
18 nor does Flushing. Look, Flushing used to be more
19 suburban, less urban, today's it's more urban and
20 less suburban. It's as simple as that. It boasts
21 that it's the third busiest pedestrian spot in the
22 entire city. It sits across one of the biggest
23 transit hubs in the entire city. There are more
24 people, but there's also more transit. And where
25

1
2 we are today, as Mr. Pinsky mentioned, it's we
3 have 1,100 spaces, we're building 1,600, that's
4 500 more than currently, it's 900 more than would
5 be required if it was as of right and we were
6 fulfilling the zone requirement. It's 75 spaces
7 more than what was required in the RFP, and it
8 will no longer be a commuter lot when we're done.
9 It will no longer be a municipal lot, but it will
10 be, all spaces will be available to the public.

11 So how large should the garage be?
12 That's always, you know, this has dogged this
13 project from the very beginning, the size of the
14 garage. And there are four different ways of
15 looking at how to really size the garage. I
16 mentioned that zoning is about 700 spaces is all
17 that's required. And the PRFP only required
18 1,525. When we did our environmental impact
19 study, according to their methodology it came in
20 at a hair under the 1,600 that we're planning. We
21 also, though, turned to our parking operator,
22 Standard Parking, which their specialty is to run
23 parking garages in major retail mixed-use centers
24 around the country, particularly in New York and
25 Queens, by the way. They operate Queens Center,

1
2 over in Rego Park and Forest Hills. They're
3 doing, actually, Skyview Park for us a couple of
4 blocks from us, and they do in Manhattan the
5 Museum of Natural History. And their analysis
6 showed that it should be about 1,530 spaces. But
7 when we were designated, we started to ... we hired,
8 our art consultants jumped in, and we invested a
9 great deal of time and money and effort to
10 understand really the behavior of shoppers and
11 drivers and parkers in Flushing, and we found some
12 surprising things. But before that, to give you a
13 sense of how comprehensive and intensive it was,
14 we ... they sent people several days of the week on
15 all different days, weekdays as well as a
16 Saturday. They tracked cars by license plate,
17 they did surveys in Chinese, Korean and English.
18 They spoke to over 400 people in a given day. And
19 actually, after we moved into Queens Crossing two
20 and a half years ago, we put a camera, a video
21 camera, on our roof overlooking the parking lot.
22 So we understand usage patterns 24/7 for the last
23 year and a half. And what we found was that there
24 are indeed some myths. This just one little graph
25 shows you the capacity of the current lot, that

1 solid line is 1,100 spaces, and you'll see that
2 during the weekday, we actually never get full.
3 Not surprisingly, you get close to it around
4 lunchtime, when people are on their lunch break,
5 they come into town to either eat or shop. So
6 around 12:00 and 1:00 we get close to max. But I
7 want to point out, because I'm going to be talking
8 about this in a few moments. Take a look at 9:00
9 a.m. 9:00 a.m., you have about 500 parkers
10 already in the slot, in the space. And that's
11 because those are the dark gray, those are long-
12 term parkers. One of the things we started to
13 understand when we studied the parking lot is that
14 all parking spaces in the municipal lot are not
15 created equal. Some are what's called short-term
16 parkers that park for a dollar an hour, and others
17 are long-term parkers that park for twelve hours
18 for only four dollars, less than the cost of a
19 round trip subway ride. So in my office, when I'm
20 there at 8:00 in the morning, and I look out my
21 window, and at 8:30 there is a free-for-all, a mad
22 rush for everybody to grab this heavily
23 subsidized, almost free, long-term parking. And
24 one of the dynamics in play in Flushing that
25

1
2 people - it's just counterintuitive - is that
3 actually adds to the congestion. These are not ...
4 the short-term spaces are business-friendly
5 spaces. Those are the people that come in, and we
6 found that a large proportion of people come in
7 for only ten or twenty minutes. But they're
8 crowded out by the people that hog half of the
9 parking garage, and prevent them from coming the
10 middle of the day. So those shoppers either go on
11 the street and hunt for parking on the street and
12 add to the congestion, or they shop ... or they take
13 their business elsewhere. (Next)

14 What isn't a myth is that on
15 Saturday, that's the critical time. Again, during
16 lunch for three hours at the current lot it's
17 excess demand for capacity. And that's when
18 things get really rough, understandably. But
19 notice, again, long-term parkers, they're there at
20 9:00 in the morning, or 10:00 in the morning this
21 time, filling up those spaces and not turning over
22 during the course of the day. (Next)

23 So we did this analysis, when we ...
24 I think we did a pretty good job of talking to
25 community groups, to make them understand this

1
2 dynamic, that the short-term parking is really
3 helpful to the local business, and the long-term
4 parking is really not helpful. And that's really
5 the wisdom of how this was conceived originally in
6 the RFP by the city. The city recognizes that to
7 have a commuter lot, it was no longer the days of
8 having people from Long Island commute to downtown
9 Flushing, and taking the #7 on the Long Island
10 Railroad into the city, that why not, now that
11 it's a bustling urban district, to move those
12 long-term parkers into the municipal lot next to
13 Citi Field, so they can hop on the #7 on the Long
14 Island Railroad there, and free up the capacity
15 for the shoppers. And this slide just shows that
16 there's less than half of muni lot available to
17 those presently, to those short-term parkers.

18 (Next)

19 But what's going to happen when we
20 complete Flushing Commons is that through the
21 expansion in muni lot #2, and the portion of the
22 1,600 parking spaces that will be available on a
23 short-term basis, we're actually doubling the
24 amount of short-term parking, and that's going to
25 be a boon to the local merchants. (Next)

1
2 So at the end of the day, the
3 garage is going to have excess capacity all the
4 time during the weekdays, it's going to be ... it's
5 going to get tight, but it doesn't reach the
6 capacity on Saturdays. Fortunately, we have
7 Standard Parking that can handle weekday and
8 holiday ... weekend and holiday surges, like they do
9 down at the Museum of Natural History. So we feel
10 very confident that we will be adequately covered.

11 (Next)

12 A big concern also is not only in
13 the number of spaces, but how expensive parking
14 will be. We will have a parking rate cap for five
15 years, three years during construction and two
16 years after the opening of Flushing Commons. But
17 nevertheless there's fear amongst some that once
18 the cap burns off in five years, that parking will
19 be prohibitive. And we've tried to make people
20 understand that we're not in the business of
21 making money out of parking, that if we charge too
22 much for parking, we're going to scare them away,
23 and we're going to go broke. We're in the
24 business of supporting our tenants and our
25 restaurants and so forth. So we're ... I call it

1
2 the Goldilocks strategy. It can't be too
3 expensive, it can't be too cheap. If it's too
4 cheap, we're going to replicate the dynamic at the
5 current municipal lot and have people hogging it,
6 and people aren't going to be able to come in and
7 shop. And, as we've pointed out, again in many of
8 our hearings, because we're competitive with the
9 likes of Queens Village and over at Skyview Park,
10 we will have to be below market. (Next)

11 Another concern that's come up over
12 the last couple of months is the fear that ... or
13 confusion about, how the parking lot will ...
14 whether it will facilitate or impair some of the
15 local business nearby. And we've reassured
16 publicly the community that we will be
17 implementing a parking validation program, which
18 is quite typical around the country. It's been
19 used in Jamaica Queens, and it's been used
20 successfully by Standard Parking in many of their
21 similar projects, where they would work with local
22 retailers so the retailers can offer free or
23 discounted parking to their customers. (Next)

24 I mentioned about the interim
25 parking. Those of you who are familiar, here is a

1
2 different view. Here's the municipal lot now,
3 here's Main Street, here's Union, this is the
4 river, College Point Blvd. is here. Right over
5 here is the Sheraton in Flushing, here's municipal
6 lot #2, which we'll be expanding by 188 spaces.
7 Over here is our Fulton Max property that will
8 have 647 spaces, and then by the river 309. And
9 that's how we get to 43 more than currently exists
10 in the municipal lot. There's a lot been talked
11 about, about how far away these parking lots will
12 be. I actually walked it a few weeks ago, from
13 here all the way over to here, and it took me
14 about seven minutes. Over here is less than five
15 minutes. (Next)

16 Before moving on, I just want to
17 point out that, to give a sense again of
18 historical perspective and the fear about adequate
19 parking spaces, three years ago we had hoped in
20 2007 to be appearing before you and presenting
21 this project, and that's before the world turned
22 dramatically. But had we done so, it's showing
23 that in our vicinity, in the heart of downtown,
24 the large parking building spaces were the two
25 municipal lots, at just under 1,200 spaces. And

1
2 even before we build, what's happened in the last
3 three years is that our own Queens Crossing and
4 Skyview Park has added double that amount, 2,400
5 spaces. And then after we're done, we expect to
6 have about 3,100 spaces. So there's, I submit,
7 that the amount of parking in Flushing is not the
8 problem. (Next)

9 So just in conclusion, I've made
10 these points, we've sized it, we've spent a lot of
11 time to make sure we're sizing it right. We're
12 going to have to price it right to attract our
13 customers. It's going to be safe and secure,
14 which it isn't now, I should say. The parking
15 rates are going to be capped for five years.
16 We're going to be working with local merchants,
17 with Standard Parking on a validation program, and
18 we will have 3,100 more parking spaces compared to
19 three years ago. (Next)

20 So in starting to wrap up, I just
21 want to point out that these days one of buzz
22 words used by urban planners is for enlightened
23 development, transit-oriented development. And
24 what that is is you try to create large-scale
25 projects that have a mix of uses that are

1 synergistic, so you can live at work at the same
2 place. It's sited by major transportation hubs so
3 you don't increase traffic congestions. You
4 utilize green strategies, you have open space, and
5 it's all balanced in that way. And Flushing
6 Commons is the poster project for such transit-
7 oriented development, and it's in line with the
8 city policy. (Next)

10 So just to wrap up, I won't repeat
11 it, but this project is huge, immense, it's an
12 immense amount of community amenity. We estimate
13 the value of the community amenity that was sort
14 of baked into this project at over \$100 million.
15 And that just ticks off all the items that I've ...
16 I won't go through them in detail. What I will
17 do, instead, is I went back, it's interesting, I
18 went back to the press release from 2005, of July
19 the 12th, and I found some of the comments made by
20 elected officials, and one really struck me as
21 really saying it all, and it's true today. It
22 says, "This effort is not just about municipal lot
23 #1, it's about transforming downtown Flushing into
24 a destination of choice in our region. This
25 project will set the tone and direction for

1
2 Flushing for years to come. The community will
3 benefit from the many new public amenities
4 created, and from the positive effects of this
5 project rippling throughout the entire area." And
6 that's true, and again, as Mr. Pinsky mentioned,
7 we have had a huge change in the economic climate
8 since that time. And now when we're struggling
9 with unemployment and the city struggles with ... in
10 the construction industry, it is important to note
11 the number of jobs that are being created, not
12 just for shorter term construction jobs, but
13 longer term permanent jobs. And of all these
14 econometric data that we point out here, I'm fond
15 of pointing out that \$22 million additionally will
16 be spent in the region, in the downtown area, by
17 Flushing Commons residents and workers, and that's
18 a boon to the local economy, not just to Flushing
19 Commons businesses. (Next)

20 So again I just will add, I won't ...
21 I know we're short of time, I just want to point
22 out that, as Mr. Pinsky mentioned, this is a
23 public-private partnership, it began with the
24 community. Elected officials worked with
25 community groups. Our company, as with other

1
2 leaders, worked from Flushing. What resulted was
3 a downtown framework which designated the
4 municipal lot as the first major initiative. It
5 set goals, and the RFP set requirements, and if
6 you go through every single one of them, from open
7 space, pedestrian experience, housing, parking,
8 high ... the quality, green building and community
9 space, we meet or exceed every single one of those
10 goals. So with that, I want to thank you for your
11 interest, and I will turn it over to the Reverend.

12 REV. McEARCHERN: Thank you, Mike.

13 My name is Reverend Richard McEachern, I'm the
14 pastor of Macedonia AME Church. I'm also the
15 president of Macedonia Community Development
16 Corporation, and it's my pleasure to present to
17 the subcommittee the exciting project called
18 Macedonia Plaza. Macedonia Plaza will be
19 developed by Macedonia Community Development
20 Corporation and BRP Development. BRP has done
21 both market rate and affordable housing, they're
22 an HPD developer. They, not only do they develop,
23 they also build and they manage the property after
24 the construction. Just to give you a brief
25 history about who we are, Macedonia is the third-

1
2 oldest house of worship in Queens, established in
3 1811. Next year we'll be celebrating 200 years,
4 and we're very proud of that. In 1930 we
5 renovated the church sanctuary and exterior. In
6 1952 we constructed the community center that
7 houses a gym in the basement level, which is used
8 by many of the community residents, the youth, the
9 police department and other civic groups. We have
10 been in this community for a long time, we hope ...
11 we prepare and distribute food for over 400
12 community residents each week. We also do a ... we
13 serve meals on Sundays to about 100 people on
14 Sundays. So we remain a vital and vibrant part of
15 the Flushing community. (Next)

16 Here we are in regards to the
17 municipal lot #1, the church resides on about
18 11,000 square feet of area. What we want to
19 develop is about 30,000 square feet of area.
20 (Next)

21 The project is 140 affordable
22 rental units, it's a mix of studio, one, two and
23 three bedrooms. There's retail, about 7,200
24 square feet of retail on the lower, on the ground
25 level, and 5,800 square feet of community space.

1
2 I'm going to show you two site plans. You've seen
3 this one, Michael Meyer talked about the Flushing
4 Commons piece, the open space. Looking at their
5 site plan, what we wanted to do in our design is,
6 this is the affordable housing that sits right on
7 the corner of the 37th Avenue and Union. The
8 building sits back a bit so that it's not
9 encroaching the sidewalk. We also wanted to
10 create our own green space and our own open space
11 for, not only for the residents, but also for our
12 church members. (Next)

13 This gives you another site plan of
14 just the Macedonia Plaza, you'll be able to come
15 in on this side of Union. There's seating areas,
16 there's landscaping. The housing, the affordable
17 housing units, also it's able to come out in this
18 area. There's a community space is designated for
19 daycare, so there they can come out and the
20 children can play in this area. The residents can
21 also come in from the open spaces as well as
22 entering from Union Street. And most of the ... and
23 at this corner is where you have the retail.
24 That's pretty much what I'm going to talk about
25 for Macedonia Plaza. Shampa Chanda will now come

1
2 and talk, get into the details about the
3 affordability of the apartments.

4 MS. CHANDA: Good morning. Again,
5 as you know, this is a disposition application for
6 the development of affordable housing. This is
7 100% affordable housing, which would be affordable
8 to households earning up to 60% of area median
9 income, and that roughly equates to about \$47,520
10 for a household of four. The rents for a typical
11 two bedroom apartment will be approximately \$942 a
12 month. As many of you know, we have ... there's a
13 lottery process by which these households are made
14 eligible for residence. Primarily 50% of the
15 units are set aside for Community Board #7
16 members. It would be that the preference, that
17 would be set asides, and then there's the 7%
18 preference for eligible disabled households and
19 then there's a 5% set aside for municipal
20 employees. The process is done through a lottery
21 which is monitored by HPD and HDC, it's ... and it
22 is advertised in local newspapers. It is done six
23 months prior to the completion of the project, and
24 HPD and HDC will monitor the lottery process
25 closely with the developers, Macedonia and BRP.

1
2 That kind of wraps up the Macedonia Housing
3 Project at our end.

4 REV. McEARCHERN: Then we turn it
5 over to- -

6 MS. CHANDA: (Interposing) We're
7 open to questions.

8 REV. McEARCHERN: We'll turn it
9 back over to the Council.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right,
11 great, thank you very much. There are a lot of
12 questions to be asked by the panel. I do want to
13 mention we were joined early on from Kings and
14 Queens county, Diana Reyna, and from Richmond
15 county, Vincent Ignizio. We are going to start
16 out by letting the Council Member who represents
17 the project, Peter Koo, who is a member of Land
18 Use Committee, to make a statement to begin. Mr.
19 Koo.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you. My
21 name is Peter Koo, I'm the Council Member for the
22 proposed projects. I want to thank the Committee
23 Chairman and my colleagues for this opportunity to
24 speak here today. The Flushing Commons/Macedonia
25 Development projects proposed for downtown

1
2 Flushing is extremely important for the future
3 growth, financial health and job creation in our
4 city. This project already has the support of
5 local officials, the principal person, Helen
6 Marshall, the City Planning Commission, Community
7 Board #7 and local residents. As my fellow
8 colleagues on the City Council, I know you
9 understand that during these difficult economic
10 times, our top priorities should be putting people
11 to work, and stimulating our struggling economy.
12 Therefore, after thoroughly reviewing all the
13 details of the project, and listening to the
14 public discourse, I have based my decision on what
15 I believe is in the best interests of the Flushing
16 community. It is my opinion that the Flushing
17 Commons project and Macedonia project has much to
18 offer in terms of community benefits, long-term
19 economic growth, and betterment of downtown
20 Flushing. This \$850 million project, privately
21 financed community renewal project will create a
22 truly new and exciting urban center in downtown
23 Flushing. It will feature a 1.5 acre public
24 outdoor open space, large enough to support
25 community-sponsored cultural events and

1
2 performances, a new state-of-the-art YMCA for our
3 community's families and an additional 3,600
4 square feet for community use, residential
5 housing, affordable housing, and local and
6 national retail space. Flushing Commons will
7 become a destination and attraction in Flushing,
8 that will be considered the crown jewel of not
9 only the downtown area, but the entire borough of
10 Queens. Furthermore, during these fiscally-
11 challenging times, when so many city residents are
12 out of work and struggling to make ends meet, this
13 project will create 1,900 permanent jobs and 2,600
14 construction jobs. Most importantly, many of
15 these jobs will be available to local residents.
16 A comprehensive strategy will be created to
17 identify local businesses and residents to work in
18 the project during and after construction.
19 Additionally, it is extremely important to have a
20 local developer who understands the community and
21 engage in the project, who will focus on hiring
22 local workers. I recognize that a project of this
23 magnitude will have shortcomings during ... along
24 with the benefits, and those issues will continue
25 to be addressed. For example, residents have

1
2 expressed traffic as a major concern, and I agree.
3 I recently invited Commissioner McCarthy of Queens
4 Department of Transportation to Flushing and asked
5 her to present the DOT's long term solution to our
6 traffic problems. I have made it clear there's no
7 more time for studies. We need and deserve real
8 inventive solutions for our traffic problems. The
9 Department of Transportation has put forth a plan
10 that will be implemented on a trial basis in July,
11 and I eagerly await the results of the instituted
12 traffic plan. In partnership with the Queens
13 borough president, Helen Marshall, we have created
14 the downtown Flushing traffic task force to
15 address issues quickly. Commissioner McCarthy has
16 committed to my office and the community that if
17 problems in the plan are discovered or suggestions
18 for improvement are presented, the plan can be
19 modified to address traffic issues. Additionally,
20 the city has set aside \$2 million and promised to
21 provide assistance to small businesses that will
22 be impacted by the construction of the Flushing
23 Commons project. My office is working with the
24 Economic Development Corporation, small business
25 services, and local businesses to develop an

1 effective business assistance plan for merchants
2 during construction. Once again, in partnership
3 with the Queens borough president, Helen Marshall,
4 we will create a construction committee to provide
5 a forum to discuss problems when they arise during
6 construction, and provide quick solutions. As
7 elected officials, you know that the true
8 leadership often means making important decisions
9 for the good of all people you were chosen to
10 represent. As Council Member, I am charged with
11 the responsibility to make sure that the best
12 interests of Flushing are met, and I balance my
13 district's long-term needs against my potential ...
14 against any potential short-term pains. My staff
15 and I attended dozens of meetings on critically
16 important issues raised by the community, and
17 during the construction phase of the project, I
18 will continue to fight for adequate parking,
19 traffic remediation, and the list of local
20 merchants for desperately needed capital
21 improvements in Flushing. In closing, I would
22 like to say that, given the community benefits
23 package, the strong economic stimulation to our
24 local economy, potential of our local businesses,

1
2 and the creation of jobs during the most difficult
3 time since the Great Depression, I must support
4 this project for the betterment of our community.
5 Therefore I ask all my colleagues on the City
6 Council to join borough president Helen Marshall,
7 the City Planning Commission, Community Board #7,
8 members of our community and myself in supporting
9 the Flushing Commons/Macedonia Project. Thank you
10 very much. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very
12 much, Council Member Koo. And if we could just
13 please ... I was going to say hold back on applause,
14 when it was actually a staff member clapping.
15 That raise will be coming soon. Thank you, James.
16 I do want to acknowledge the aforementioned
17 borough president of Queens, Helen Marshall is in
18 the audience. Now, Madam Borough President, if
19 you could just hold on, we're going to get
20 through, so I know a lot of members have
21 questions. But then we're going to let you
22 testify, as soon as they're done. Let me ask a
23 couple of questions myself first, and I know a
24 number of my colleagues have questions. I guess,
25 Mr. Meyer, how are you? Parking obviously is the

1
2 major issue here. I'm curious, you mentioned the
3 long term parking and how many of those spots are
4 used up in long term parking. Have you surveyed
5 who those people are? Like, where do they work?

6 MR. MEYER: We have surveyed where
7 they are, and we have actually some of our
8 consultants here could maybe recall better than I.
9 But a large ... I don't know where they, maybe they
10 could remember where they work, but I recall a
11 large number of them are commuters.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: To Manhattan.
13 Would you say that? Or to?

14 MR. MEYER: I don't know where they
15 commute. I ... a portion of them are commuters from
16 outside Flushing, and I would imagine a portion of
17 them are local. But I ... maybe later on one of my
18 consultants can come in and access that.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: What struck me
20 about your chart on the times that the lot filled
21 up, you said around nine o'clock, ten o'clock is
22 when it fills up. I don't know ... you know, I
23 would assume most people who work in Manhattan
24 wouldn't be getting there that late, unless you're
25 a member of the Zoning and Franchises Committee.

1
2 I mean, my point is, it seems to me that if
3 they're getting there that late, probably a lot of
4 them - I'm in trouble - a lot of them are going to
5 be ... a lot of them are going to be people working
6 locally who are going to have to park anyway
7 locally. And to put them into Shea Stadium,
8 that's a long walk.

9 MR. MEYER: Well, first of all, the
10 weekday, Councilman, is earlier. It shows it at
11 nine o'clock, but what actually happens is, around
12 8:30 they start, as I told you, there's a scramble
13 to get the spaces. So it's an hour earlier on the
14 weekday than ... so they start doing it at 8:30. So
15 some of those commuters, I don't know where
16 they're commuting to, but ... and then those that
17 are long term commuters, I would submit, they
18 don't have to walk, they could take one stop on
19 the #7 line, and that's what, three minutes? So
20 to move commuters out of this downtown, you know,
21 business district and free up more business-
22 friendly spaces is really the point I was trying
23 to make.

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Let me ask you
25 another one. Queens Crossing, where your office

1
2 is, which is beautiful, you mentioned all the
3 spots you have in that building. Have you
4 surveyed those parkers, where they're coming from
5 and how many of them are short-term parkers?

6 MR. MEYER: That's a good question.
7 We have 400 spaces, we're typically below 200 on a
8 given day. We do have a lot of events there, so
9 it will fill up when we have huge events. I don't
10 think we've ever surveyed a large ... as I think you
11 know, there are a lot of medical ... it's comprised
12 mostly of a lot of doctors, so, and usually ethnic
13 doctors. So I'm assuming they're local, but I
14 don't we've ever surveyed that.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: The reason I
16 ask is that just based on my own experience, as
17 well as some people I've asked since I last saw
18 you, people go to use retail businesses, I find I
19 have always been reluctant to go into underground
20 parking when I'm going just for half an hour or
21 so. You try to find on-street parking to make it
22 easier to get in and out. I'm afraid that, with
23 all this retail space coming in, with the
24 merchants in the area worried about parking, that
25 so much of the underground parking in your

1
2 building currently, but also in the new
3 development, will be a hindrance to people wanting
4 to go there for short-term parking.

5 MR. MEYER: Well, I direct you
6 later, when our head of Standard Parking, who will
7 probably answer that question better, but I would
8 think that at Queens Village ... is he allowed to
9 answer now?

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes.

11 MR. MEYER: Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Go ahead.

13 MR. MEYER: Okay.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Where is he?
15 Come up to the microphone and state your name.
16 And you can give us a little education on parking.
17 I don't claim to be an expert, just play one on
18 TV.

19 MR. AIELLO: Good morning, Steven
20 Aiello, Standard Parking. To answer the question
21 with regards to retail-related parking in
22 structures, it is true for very, very short
23 parkers that they would prefer surface, on-street,
24 but I think the purpose of this ... right, but I
25 think the ... okay, but with regards to what I think

1
2 the habits of these retail parkers who will come
3 and do multiple trips, not only at Flushing
4 Commons but those other merchants in the area, we
5 estimate an average of one to two hours stay.
6 That's what we see in larger downtown urban areas
7 with retail-intense areas, so we don't expect the
8 people who are currently coming in, parking for
9 ten, fifteen minutes, and running somewhere and
10 running out. I think those people will continue
11 to look for street parking. But those who truly
12 are going to shop at a merchant shop in more than
13 one merchant, and do the multiple trips, which is
14 very common, which I think this will facilitate,
15 will find the facility parking like any others,
16 such as Queens Center Mall, Regal Park Mall, Kings
17 Plaza, Skyview Park.

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right,
19 thank you. You can give Mr. Pinsky his seat back.
20 All right, let me ask Mr. Pinsky a couple of
21 questions, if you don't mind.

22 MR. PINSKY: Sure.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: President
24 Pinsky, how does the plan that was ended up being
25 proposed differ from the original RFP that was put

1
2 out?

3 MR. PINSKY: It significantly
4 conforms to the original RFP, and in fact in
5 several ways, it actually exceeds the requests
6 that were put out in the RFP. For example, the
7 size of the community facility is larger than had
8 been anticipated. And we also have more amenities
9 in the YMCA than had been anticipated. So this is
10 a proposal that I would say conformed to the RFP
11 request.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Those are the
13 only differences, that the community facilities
14 are larger, you know the Y is larger, you're
15 referring to, I assume?

16 MR. PINSKY: Yeah.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: As well as
18 other things, there's nothing else that is much
19 different than that?

20 MR. PINSKY: Not from the RFP, no.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, all
22 right. Let me ask one other question about the
23 stimulus package, the \$2 million. I don't know,
24 you called it a stimulus package. What is that
25 money going to be used for, do you anticipate?

1
2 MR. PINSKY: Well, we're working
3 right now with the Council Member, with local
4 businesses, and with local advocacy groups, to
5 determine what the most effective use is. I
6 imagine some of it will be used for outreach, some
7 of it would be used for other forms of parking
8 mitigation. And we want to make sure that what we
9 do with this money is we address the needs of
10 those that we're looking to serve with the money.
11 And so we think it's very important, rather than
12 our coming in and saying, "Here's \$2 million, and
13 here's what we think should be done with it", to
14 have the community tell us what they think should
15 be done with it. As the Councilman mentioned,
16 we've had very good meetings with him. I think
17 that along with the borough president, we're
18 coming very close to an agreement, and we hope to
19 be able to talk in more detail about that shortly.
20 It should just be noted that on top of those
21 funds, we're also going to be ... the developer is
22 going to have an ombudsman that will be part of
23 the construction team that will be available 24
24 hours a day, seven days a week, to address
25 specific needs that the community might have as a

1
2 result of the construction, and to try to address
3 those in real time too.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Obviously, the
5 big concern of a lot of merchants in the area are
6 the type of businesses that are brought in in
7 retail, what competition they're going to cause,
8 as well as parking and just construction concerns
9 over the life of the construction, the years that
10 it's going to take to build the complex. So I
11 assume that's a big part of the discussions that
12 are going on, especially the merchants on Union
13 Street, which we've heard a lot from.

14 MR. PINSKY: Absolutely. We're
15 very concerned about addressing their needs. The
16 reason why we've put in this significant sum of
17 money as well as required the developer to have
18 the ombudsman on staff, and why we're continuing
19 to work with the community as well as with the
20 elected officials.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. I may
22 have more questions later, but I want to get to
23 some of my colleagues. Mr. Vann, I know, had a
24 question.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Yes, thank

1
2 you, Mr. Chairman. I was just wondering if you'd
3 tell us the extent of the investment in this
4 magnificent project, transforming project, of city
5 money or tax revenues, or governmental subsidies
6 of any kind, what would be the total amount that
7 you anticipate would be our investment in this
8 great project?

9 MR. PINSKY: It's currently
10 anticipated that the only benefit that will be
11 received by the project will be as of right
12 benefits. So there will be no discretionary
13 benefits provided.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: So there's no
15 taxpayer dollars invested in this, it's all
16 private, totally private?

17 MR. PINSKY: Correct, except as I
18 mentioned for as of right programs, for example
19 the ICAP real estate tax program, but that's
20 available to any developer that is building in
21 this area.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: So the
23 property itself, the parking lot, is that now
24 city-owned?

25 MR. PINSKY: Yes, and it's being

1
2 sold to the developer and the price will be
3 determined by an appraisal at the time of the
4 closing.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Okay. One
6 other ... a couple of other questions. Is there any
7 WNB involvement in this project, other than the
8 Macedonia set-aside, so to speak?

9 MR. PINSKY: Yeah, again, we're
10 working with the developer, I know that this has
11 been a priority for a number of elected officials,
12 including most importantly the borough president.
13 We've been working with the borough president's
14 office to develop both an MWBE plan and as well as
15 a local hiring plan. And again, we anticipate to
16 reach agreement on a substantial plan that will be
17 implemented in conjunction with the Department of
18 Small Business Services shortly.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Of this, the
20 mention of the stimulus money, is that \$2 million?

21 MR. PINSKY: No, there's no federal
22 stimulus money, the \$2 million is money that's
23 being set aside from the purchase price to help
24 local businesses.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Okay. Very

1
2 good, thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,
4 Council Member Vann. Council Member Seabrook I
5 think had a question, yes?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: Thank you
7 very much, Mr. Chairman. And just looking at the
8 project, it is certainly a real boon for the
9 economy and the business and everything else, and
10 certainly for jobs for the construction industry.
11 But there's a couple of things that perhaps I
12 don't know if you can probably answer it now, or
13 you'll probably get back to us in reference to
14 that. The development of the 620 upscale
15 condominiums, is there any city funding, any
16 governmental funding that's going to be used, any
17 abatements, anything to do this housing?

18 MR. PINSKY: Again, only tax breaks
19 that are available as a break to any project,
20 nothing discretionary.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: So if
22 we're looking at it, so there's no affordable
23 component that deals with any of this as it
24 relates to these condominiums that are going to be
25 built in this development, that there's no units

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

that would be affordable.

MR. PINSKY: That's correct. There will be up to 620 units in the Flushing Commons development, and then in the neighboring Macedonia- -

COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK:
(Interposing) I'm familiar with that one.

MR. PINSKY: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: But I'm talking about this one.

MR. PINSKY: That's correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: That there's none whatsoever.

MR. PINSKY: That's correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: That would be here. Okay, that's my concern. The ... are there any big box stores that are going to be a part of this development?

MR. PINSKY: Well, the specific tenanting, and I'll let Mike answer this in greater detail, but the specific of the space will have to wait until we're closer to construction and actual completion. But the way that the site has been laid out, it is not anticipated that

1
2 there will be any stores that have greater than
3 40,000 square feet, which is well below what
4 typically would be described as a big box
5 retailer.

6 MR. MEYER: And just to expand on
7 that, actually in the RFP it was prohibited to
8 present big box retail. So three or four blocks
9 away is the Muss project Skyview Park, which has,
10 you know, many big box retailers, if you're
11 familiar with that.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: Right.

13 MR. MEYER: But ours are going to
14 be smaller, as Mr. Pinsky said.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: Okay.
16 And then there's the issue as it relates to the
17 parking. There was an agreement that John Liu had
18 with the city as it relates to the parking, and it
19 was kind of stated what would be and what the cap
20 would be, and the parking issue, because I have a
21 real concern with the development that was
22 developed in the Bronx, in the South Bronx, just
23 below Yankee Stadium, and the cost for parking for
24 lowest, in fact the poorest congressional district
25 in America, and they have to pay to park to shop.

1
2 And so here there was an agreement as it relates
3 to it, and the amount of money that was supposed
4 to be for parking. And it was agreed upon with
5 the city and with the Councilman at that
6 particular time, and they talked about a cap, and
7 they talked about the rate and the amount of money
8 in that for this period, five dollars, six dollars
9 for four hours and it would last for X number of
10 years. What happened to that agreement?

11 MR. PINSKY: There was a letter of
12 agreement that was signed in 2005 by then Deputy
13 Mayor Doctoroff and then Council Member Liu, and
14 it made a series of representations that the city
15 would endeavor to secure agreements in connection
16 with the development. In each of the cases, the
17 city was able not only to deliver on the promise,
18 but in several cases, in consultation with the
19 community, to exceed the agreements that had been
20 reached. In one case, the agreement with respect
21 to capping the parking rate, the bottom line is
22 that the economy changed dramatically with the
23 addition that we were able to secure from the
24 developer and the cost of those additions, given
25 the current economic environment, the conclusion

1
2 was that this project simply couldn't sustain
3 additional benefits in respect of caps on parking.
4 And so what we've done is we have honored the
5 agreement as best that we can, given the very
6 different economic environment that we're in
7 today. We've secured an agreement from the
8 developer to cap rates for five years, and we also
9 believe that given some of the things that the
10 developer has described in their presentation,
11 that there's a strong incentive for them to keep
12 the rates at an affordable level, because not only
13 do they need to do that in order to attract
14 residents, but they also need that to attract
15 shoppers to the retail space as well.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: Now here
17 in this letter it stated a time, an amount, and a
18 period of the cap. You haven't stated that at
19 all. You said 'affordable', what does that mean?
20 What, as it relates to what was agreed upon. And
21 now what is going to be the reality? That has not
22 been put in writing, and it's so vague. And I
23 understand that ... the circumstances that people
24 have in the economy, but the same people that are
25 going to park are suffering from the same economic

1
2 circumstances as well. So there has to be
3 something here other than the vagueness of saying
4 that we're going to be affordable. What does that
5 mean?

6 MR. PINSKY: Yeah, as I mentioned,
7 the agreement that we had is to cap the rates at
8 exactly the level that they were described in the
9 letter for the first five years. Beyond that,
10 there's not a hard and fast agreement with the
11 developer. As I said, in an ideal world we would
12 have secured that.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: Right.

14 MR. PINSKY: Because of the
15 situation that we're in now, we weren't able to.
16 And so I can't represent to you that we have
17 anything more than the, not just the assurances
18 but also an understanding of the economic
19 development that it's likely that they will
20 continue to keep the parking rates at an
21 affordable level throughout the life of this
22 project. And let me just turn it over to Mike to
23 talk a little bit more about that as well.

24 MR. MEYER: Yes, the only thing I
25 would add is to just elaborate on what I mentioned

1
2 in my presentation, which is that we have to
3 compete and it will be below market. And maybe,
4 if you wanted to explore it a little bit more, I
5 could ask Mr. Aiello to come back, because he
6 operates in Queens, in Flushing, in New York, and
7 maybe he could elaborate a little bit more to give
8 more assurance.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: Yeah,
10 that was the concern that I would have. I'm just
11 opposed to anyplace charging people to park to go
12 shop. That's just how I feel about it, people
13 going to spend their money and do it, it has to be
14 done. You ride around all over other parts of New
15 York, they don't charge you- -

16 MR. MEYER: (Interposing) Well, I
17 totally agree. I'm the same way. I always try to
18 dodge parking charges.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: Yes.

20 MR. MEYER: But in this particular
21 case, the cost of building, you know, to take from
22 a surface level and three, you know, three levels
23 down is in the scores of millions of dollars.
24 It's just not possible in an inner city area like
25 that to build, to do that. But ideally you're

1
2 right, and I would prefer it the same way.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: No, I ...
4 that was just a concern there. And just a last
5 question, I promise you, last question. What is
6 the ... you have a lot of the small businesses that
7 are already in existence there. What is the
8 impact going to be on those businesses? Are there
9 going to be some sense of competition as relates
10 to the existing businesses that have been there
11 sustaining as it relates to people coming there to
12 shop with some sense of familiarity and some sense
13 of their historical involvement with the shopping
14 that they do. What's- -

15 MR. MEYER: (Interposing) That's a
16 good question, and I've had reporters ask me this
17 before, and one way I've answered this is to say
18 that when our colleagues built Rockefeller Center,
19 that was obviously a concern by local, by nearby
20 merchants, and look what's happened. Nobody would
21 argue that Rockefeller Center hurts those
22 merchants. What's going to happen here, I think,
23 is going to be analogous, it's going to help make
24 Flushing a destination. You're going to start to
25 bring people more from the outside area, so it's

1
2 going to be a net/net, it's going to be
3 incremental. It will be a win/win. So I think
4 this really in the long term will be a boon to
5 local businesses. I've pointed out that \$22
6 million more in spending is projected, and that's
7 going to go in the immediate area. Of course
8 there will be some initial disruption, but even
9 that, because we won't be closing down streets,
10 there'll be more people walking along the
11 sidewalks than walk presently, so there'll be more
12 foot traffic in some areas. Construction workers
13 shop as well, so ... but in the long term, certainly
14 it's going to be boon to the area.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: Thank you
16 very much, Mr. Chairman.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Mr.
18 Seabrook. Council Member Halloran.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Good
20 morning. I find myself in a very unusual place.
21 I'm a Republican who is very supportive of this
22 project in principal, but I have some serious
23 concerns, and I'm going to ask you some very
24 serious questions. As somebody who's a five-
25 generation member of Flushing, I exactly know what

1
2 you say when you say that, Mr. Meyer, that things
3 have changed, and Flushing of 1954 is not Flushing
4 of 2010. But let's start with Mr. Pinsky, if I
5 can. One of your first comments were there are
6 500 more spots now, including 200 offsite, than
7 there are with the current municipal lot. But of
8 course, that doesn't take into account the over
9 600 people additionally who will be living there,
10 and therefore 40% of them will have cars at that
11 location. So when we talk about there being 500
12 more spots now, it's disingenuous to not couple
13 that with the population increase, a business
14 increase, and as you were so able to point out,
15 the peak usage times involve our business owners
16 in that location rushing to get long-term spots so
17 their employees can park. And now you're going to
18 introduce somewhere between 1,500 and 3,000
19 additional employees in this area. So we talk
20 about parking spots, let's at least be genuine and
21 honest with people and, going back to Council
22 Member Seabrook's point, say that John Liu had a
23 plan for I think an additional 400 or 500 spots
24 that was originally supposed to be agreed to, and
25 that's what Community Board #7 voted as one of its

1
2 conditions for approving this project, that
3 parking lots increase, the parking spots increase.
4 Isn't that accurate, Mr. Pinsky?

5 MR. PINSKY: No. But thank you for
6 the opportunity to address that issue. The letter
7 between John Liu and Deputy Mayor Doctoroff stated
8 specifically under the paragraph two, parking,
9 "Subject to environmental review, all the public
10 parking spaces currently located on site will be
11 replaced within the proposed development, and
12 additional parking as required under C44 zoning
13 will be provided", and that in fact is what's
14 being provided. We're replacing all of the spaces
15 that had existed on the site. The amount ... number
16 of spaces that are required by zoning is 700, and
17 that takes into account the new development, the
18 new housing, the new retail. And on top of that
19 then, there will be another 900 spaces on site,
20 and another 200 new spaces in municipal lot #2, so
21 that you will replace all 1,100 spaces that had
22 previously existed on municipal lot #1 site, and
23 you will have accounted for all of the new
24 residents and all of the new shopping on site
25 under zoning, as required in the letter.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Mr. President, maybe my math doesn't work. You indicated in your testimony that there are 500 more spots being created now than there ... in this project than there are now. Is that yes or no?

MR. PINSKY: It- -

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN:
(Interposing) 500 spots more now, yes or no?

MR. PINSKY: No, what I said, just to clarify, what I said was that there were 500 more sites, spots on site, and 200 new spots off site.

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Off site, okay.

MR. PINSKY: So 700 new spaces.

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Okay, so but on site, it's 500 more spaces, and the total number of people you're moving into this location, in terms of residents, is how many?

MR. PINSKY: It will be up to 620 units, so, you know, it depends on how many people live in each unit.

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Okay.

MR. PINSKY: But several hundred

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

people.

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: And in addition to those people, you're moving in X number of retail spaces, is that correct?

MR. PINSKY: Yes, there will be several hundred thousand square feet of new retail as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Okay. So again, and I guess this is just something that's going to have to be continued to be hashed out, it would seem to me, if you put in 600 additional units of people living there, and you put in several hundred new employees of businesses you're putting in there, that saying there are 500 more spots gets quickly eaten up by the ratio of people moving in and businesses moving in. But again, we can fight about that later, let's talk about some other issues. I- -

MR. PINSKY: (Interposing) By the way, Councilman, I'm happy to continue this conversation- -

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN:
(Interposing) I appreciate that. There's a little place called the 109th Precinct, which sits on

1 Union and 39th, and I got to walk a beat there, I
2 think twenty years ago? Oh gee, it's twenty years
3 ago. Not quite twenty, but almost twenty.
4

5 Getting out of Main Street is a nightmare, to say
6 the least. I had an opportunity to sit down with
7 Commissioner McCarthy and we talked about some of
8 the plans. But two of the things the city intends
9 to do is restrict street parking, because we're
10 widening the pedestrian malls on Main Street and
11 Union Street. In your calculus have you included
12 all the spaces that will be lost to the increase
13 from pedestrian malls and the traffic re-patterns
14 that will go on? One, and number two, does that
15 change affect the location of these parking
16 facilities that are not on site but off site?

17 MR. PINSKY: It's an excellent
18 question and it's something that was considered as
19 part of our environmental impact statement, and
20 what I'd like to do is just ask our consultants
21 from AKRF to come up and answer that question.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And could you
23 please state your name when you get up to the
24 microphone?

25 MR. CHAN: Hi, my name is Chi Chan

1
2 from AKRF. With regards to the street parking,
3 the current proposal by DOT does incorporate some
4 sidewalk widening along Main Street. There will
5 be a limited amount of on-street spaces lost, but
6 there's also a plan to install muni meter parking,
7 which could, I believe, increase the number of
8 parking spaces by about 20%.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Well,
10 except that we know that historically the muni
11 meters have not done that, and in fact in my
12 district in particular, which by the way is
13 adjacent to this and will suffer the traffic
14 consequences of this project. Which I'm happy to
15 do, because I think economically it's necessary.
16 But I really don't think you guys have really
17 looked at this carefully. We put muni meters on
18 Bell Blvd. and we've actually lost about 20% of
19 the parking spots, because they're non-designated
20 now. Continuing on my list of questions that put
21 me in awkward positions, when we talk about
22 traffic and DOT's plan, Northern Blvd. between
23 Utopia Parkway and the Flushing bridge is, to say
24 the least, a mess from 7:00 in the morning until
25 10:00 and then roughly from 3:30, 4:00 until 6:00,

1
2 and we're going to be creating alternate traffic
3 patterns here. Has the city, in conjunction with
4 DOT, looked at the impact to my district that that
5 will have, and to my residents as we're going
6 forward, so that we insure that there are no
7 issues collateral to that in my district?

8 MR. CHAN: As you know, the IS has
9 studied a two-way, one-way pair conversion for
10 quite a while, and recently DOT has come up with a
11 new proposal that they would do a pilot program on
12 it, and which we also added to our study, and has
13 shown that with this proposal it's likely that
14 conditions will be improved upon over the
15 previously conceived one-way pair conversions.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Again,
17 I'm aware of the study, but the study ends at Main
18 Street and Northern Blvd. It actually does not
19 track Northern Blvd. traffic north ... or actually
20 east, which is the source, the genesis of the
21 problem. I understand that there are some
22 provisions to not be able to make left turns
23 headed westbound and not be able to make right
24 turns headed eastbound, and I understand that, and
25 that's fine. But those are things that we need to

1
2 be addressing in advance.

3 MR. CHAN: If I may, along Northern
4 Blvd. a number of sections were covered in the
5 study extending all the way to College Point
6 Blvd., covering Main Street, Prince- -

7 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN:

8 (Interposing) All of that is to the west though,
9 not east, which is taking it into my district.
10 The 109th Precinct also has an issue of response
11 times. Two of the areas that are served by the
12 109th are geographically far displaced. One is Bay
13 Terrace and the other is College Point. And as
14 you know, the police academy will also be
15 undergoing construction in this same time frame,
16 and Willetts Point will be undergoing,
17 theoretically, construction in this time frame.
18 Have you guys studied the impact of those two
19 construction projects, which are immediately
20 adjacent to this project, in terms of these
21 traffic patterns that you're promulgating to us
22 and talking about, as if you know what's going to
23 happen

24 MR. CHAN: Well, in terms of their
25 future traffic, the future traffic that will be

1
2 generated, they are included in our background
3 study. During construction, as you know,
4 construction workers or deliveries typically
5 travel early in the morning and outside of peak
6 hours, like our own construction impact analysis
7 shows us that it will be very limited and not that
8 impactful.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: With
10 regards to Mr. Meyer, you made a statement that
11 essentially the municipal lot conversion itself
12 and the price fix that you guys are creating would
13 be the three years of the construction period plus
14 two years after. So really the community is not
15 getting a five year cap, the community is getting
16 a mid-construction sort of benefit for three
17 years, which is, I assume, the anticipated time of
18 the project, and then really only getting a two
19 year cap on parking, once these facilities are
20 constructed. Would that be accurate to say?

21 MR. MEYER: Well, a year is a year.
22 Five years, it's starts from construction and it
23 goes from construction through operation, so- -

24 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN:
25 (Interposing) Okay, and you do anticipate a three

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

year construction period?

MR. MEYER: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Okay, so when we talk about a five year cap on parking, we're talking about really a two year cap once you're operational.

MR. MEYER: I don't agree ... well, once we're operational, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Okay.

And, you know, when we talk about the number of spots as of right ... I understand that, but this isn't an as-of right project, the City of New York is selling you land, land that is currently a municipal lot. And so everything that we do in doing this, and again I reiterate, I think this is a good project, I think overall it solves many, many problems. But the devil is always in the details. And this community is going to have to live with three years of construction in downtown Flushing, and so what we want at the end of the rainbow is to make sure that it's a pot of gold and not a pot of trouble. And I know you've bent over backwards, and, Mr. Meyer, I say this, you know, that having met with you many, many times, I

1 know you're trying to do everything you can. But
2 there are some places where, I think, the
3 community's concerns just have to go a little
4 further, and I understand it may impose additional
5 costs, I will never agree with anyone who tells me
6 there are sufficient parking spaces in municipal
7 lot #1. I know that you can do some studies, and
8 at times you will find those ebbs and flows. I
9 mean, you even concede on Saturdays that the lot's
10 capacity is exceeded. You know there are races
11 for the long-term parking spots, which will have
12 to increase because people who live there are
13 going to want dedicated parking spots, because
14 they're buying something, they're buying a place
15 to live. They're going to want to know that
16 there's a spot available for them. I know you're
17 providing it, but you're not even confirming that
18 you're going to make designated fixed spots for
19 that. I know that was another concern that I've
20 raised with you in the past. Can you assure me,
21 as you go forward, as you did Community Board #7,
22 that some of these issues are going to continue to
23 be discussed as we're going forward, so that
24 Councilman Koo is taking the lead here in making
25

1
2 sure that ... and he brought it up in his testimony,
3 this parking issue is not over?

4 MR. MEYER: Yes, well a couple of
5 things. Certainly I can assure you, we are
6 constantly looking at parking, we will always do,
7 to maximize efficiency. You know, as I mentioned,
8 we, ever since we were designated, we've invested
9 enormous sums of money and effort to really study
10 this, and to get the balance right between the
11 size and the cost of construction. And some of
12 the congestion that overproduction would create in
13 terms of traffic, it's really striking a very
14 tough balance. But to your point, because it is a
15 large city project, we aren't building 700 spaces,
16 which is what it would be, we're building 1,600
17 spaces. And then with the city chipping in, as Mr.
18 Pinsky mentioned, it's really new 1,800 spaces
19 nearby. To your point about the dedicated space,
20 it's a really important point, because it is
21 counterintuitive, you're bringing up issues that
22 have been brought up many times in the last six
23 months in community hearings and such. But the
24 reason why - and I'm not the person to speak with
25 you in detail, if you want to probe it some more,

1
2 I can bring back AKRF or Atma at ACOM. But the
3 way we balance it and get the sizing right is to
4 look at the various usage and look at their usage
5 patterns. And, for example, there isn't a
6 dedicated space per condo unit. Those people
7 typically, if they have a car, and many of the
8 condo units will not have cars, but they'll go off
9 to work during the day and that space is available
10 for shoppers. So you're balancing your ... it's
11 like a Rubik's cube, and that's how you're sort of
12 trying to, with usage patterns at different times
13 of the day, take advantage of that. And that's
14 how in the IS it came out to just under 1,600
15 spaces.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: If I
17 could just go back to Mr. Pinsky, I have two more
18 lines of question that I would just like to ask
19 you. The YMCA, and again I gave them
20 discretionary funding, so I am not bashing the
21 YMCA, but I have a real question. We're giving
22 the YMCA this space through the courtesy of TDC
23 and they're spending an enormous amount of money,
24 and the YMCA will be moving itself in there, and
25 to my knowledge then selling their building at a

1
2 windfall profit. Is there a reason that the city
3 is in effect allowing them to get something for
4 nothing and then not take their facility ... I mean,
5 normally when EDC does swaps and things, we go
6 back and it's sort of like a 1031 exchange of
7 sorts. And that YMCA is located in what to my
8 knowledge as a former real estate attorney, would
9 be an absolutely invaluable piece of property.
10 And doing something with it, like for example
11 building more parking?

12 MR. PINSKY: That's an excellent
13 question. The YMCA is something that was
14 requested, a facility like the YMCA.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Yes.

16 MR. PINSKY: It was requested by
17 the community and local elected officials, and so
18 we worked very hard with our developer partner to
19 try to accommodate them. The building that
20 they're putting up really is state-of-the-art, and
21 will be their flagship likely for the entire city.
22 The issue is that the cost of that facility is
23 extremely high, and so even with the developer
24 contribution to the YMCA project which will be
25 substantially millions of dollars, it's likely

1
2 that the cost will far exceed that contribution,
3 and the plan is for the YMCA to take the proceeds
4 from the sale and to invest it into the building
5 onsite, so it's not likely that there's going to
6 be a windfall. They're simply taking the proceeds
7 of that sale and putting it into the new building.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: So then
9 EDC would have no problem making as a condition
10 for the YMCA's tenancy some formulaic cap to
11 insure that the city is getting a fair trade here
12 for the facility use it's acquiring through the
13 generous offices of TDC, and what is ... and again,
14 you know, real estate on Northern Blvd. is still a
15 prime piece of real estate, and I would imagine
16 after all this is done, it will be even more
17 valuable. So the EDC wouldn't have a problem then
18 making some sort of agreement in the course of
19 this to insure that exactly what you said doesn't
20 happen, doesn't happen?

21 MR. PINSKY: It was very difficult,
22 our three-way negotiations, both to get our
23 developers partners to make the contribution that
24 they are now making to the YMCA project, and
25 frankly, to get the YMCA to agree to build this

1
2 facility along with the developer partners, given
3 the costs. And so I don't think that it would be
4 possible to get the YMCA to agree under those
5 terms. We've looked very closely at land values,
6 I'd be happy to share our analysis with you, and
7 we feel confident that there is no windfall, that
8 this is a very expensive project, and that the
9 YMCA is going to need all the money from that sale
10 to do this project.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Well,
12 I'll be happy, I'm probably here for four years,
13 so I'll be happy to revisit this and I hope you're
14 wrong, but my instincts as someone who's lived in
15 that community his whole life, who's conducted
16 business as an attorney in that community his
17 whole life, who's bought a home in that area, I
18 don't think you're right. But that is what it is.
19 And finally, just with regards to one other issue,
20 Mr. Pinsky, you said that there were different,
21 there were very few differences from the RFP and
22 the final project, which you charted for us. But
23 there are many differences between that letter
24 agreement between Doctoroff and Liu, which was the
25 basic formation of understanding that set this

1 project in motion. Are any of the other issues
2 with regards to the businesses, just the
3 businesses, because we've basically covered
4 everything else, the businesses that are going to
5 have issues, being addressed inter-agency now? I
6 mean, for example, I know you talked about the \$2
7 million fund, but have we explored tax incentives,
8 tax rebates, rental rebates, rental tax breaks,
9 that will pass through to our operators of the
10 businesses down there, sales tax breaks that we
11 asked for home rule, called up Albany and said,
12 hey listen, this is a place where we maybe need
13 some sort of Empire zone temporarily, going
14 forward to keep these businesses afloat, maybe an
15 abrogation of the commuter/payroll taxes, just
16 something that will assist these small businesses
17 in getting through this three year construction
18 cycle, which will be so disruptive to them?

19
20 MR. PINSKY: Well, the \$2 million
21 fund that we described is actually the exact
22 number that was contained in the Doctoroff-Liu
23 letter, so we've honored that agreement. As far
24 as additional assistance, as I mentioned we're
25 going above and beyond what's in here with a

1
2 construction ombudsman. We're engaged in ongoing
3 discussions with both the businesses and the
4 Council Member. Many of the things that you
5 mentioned are assistance programs that would be
6 outside of our control that would involve state
7 action. We're more than happy to continue our
8 discussions with the local businesses, and as we
9 would with any businesses anywhere in the city
10 that need assistance that we can provide, we'd be
11 more than happy to provide additional assistance.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Thank you
13 very much, and let me just commend Council Member
14 Koo for the countless hours he has spent working
15 with you guys, and you know, I know at times I
16 come off abrasive, I know that's no shock to
17 anyone in the City Council?

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You do?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: But I
20 think these are critical questions that needed to
21 be asked, needed to be aired, and I appreciate
22 your candor, and I look forward to three years
23 from now having a discussion and see where we are
24 when this project is finished.

25 MR. PINSKY: Thank you.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you
3 Council Member Halloran. Council Member Reyna.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Thank you.
5 Good afternoon, I just wanted to take a moment and
6 just go over what was perhaps already mentioned,
7 but I just needed to highlight further. What is
8 the plan in reference to minimum negative impact
9 on small businesses that have been accommodated,
10 or will be implemented as part of the
11 construction, to be able to give benefits to the
12 small businesses so that they don't go out of
13 business, or displaced because of the
14 construction?

15 MR. PINSKY: There are a number of
16 things. First of all, the developers have come up
17 with a plan that is going to minimize the actual
18 impact of construction on the neighboring areas.
19 As was mentioned during the formal presentation,
20 there are going to be, I think, few, perhaps no,
21 street closures as a result of construction.
22 There's not going to be any blasting. They're
23 going to be able to house the cranes onsite so
24 that they're not interfering with surrounding
25 businesses. We also have ... will work with the

1
2 developers to insure that the construction happens
3 as quickly as possible, ideally at one time.

4 Further, we have reached an agreement with Council
5 Member Koo to take \$2 million and set that aside
6 for an assistance program for the local businesses
7 who are working with the Councilman as well as the
8 borough president's office and local businesses,
9 to insure that the use of that \$2 million is most
10 effective for those businesses, and then on top of
11 that, the developer- -

12 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA:

13 (Interposing) I'm sorry, President Pinsky.

14 MR. PINSKY: Sure.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Can you just
16 express to me the goals of the \$2 million?

17 MR. PINSKY: It's basically to
18 mitigate to the greatest extent possible the
19 impact of construction on those businesses while
20 the construction is ongoing. The specifics are
21 something that we're still working out with the
22 businesses that I had mentioned earlier, when
23 perhaps you weren't here, that we could have done
24 this two ways. We could have agreed on a \$2
25 million price tag and just said, here's your

1
2 program. But instead what we've chosen to do is
3 sit down with the businesses, sit down with the
4 Council member, and ask what do you think the best
5 use of this money is. And we've had some very
6 constructive conversations over the last couple of
7 weeks, and we think we're pretty close to having a
8 package. And so hopefully in the next couple of
9 weeks we'll be able to go into much more detail
10 about what specifics the money will be used for.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And the \$2
12 million will be managed by EDC?

13 MR. PINSKY: It will be managed by
14 EDC, but we'll issue an RFP for a provider of the
15 services, whatever the services are that we agree
16 to.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And the \$2
18 million are being provided by EDC?

19 MR. PINSKY: They'll come out of
20 the purchase price building.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: The purchase
22 price, we still don't know what that figure is.

23 MR. PINSKY: Correct, the purchase
24 price will be determined at the time of sale,
25 based on an appraisal, and based on the approved

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

project.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Continue, you were mentioning other items.

MR. PINSKY: Yes, and then, I'm sorry, the last item is a fairly unique item to this project, but the construction managers are going to have onsite at all times an ombudsman, who will be available to answer questions and work with local business people if they have specific issues that arise that we're not anticipating, to try to figure out how to make it work in the least disruptive way. And then one other item I'm just reminded of is that we also have an interim parking plan that will insure that there will be an equal number of parking spaces in the area available during construction.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: How will that be made possible?

MR. PINSKY: Which, I'm sorry?

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: As far as the parking spaces made available during construction to assist the businesses. And will that be a complimentary, you know, space to customers to encourage business locally?

1
2 MR. MEYER: Yes, if you ... this is
3 the slide I used to show the proximity of the
4 interim parking spaces. I'll use my pointer here.
5 This is the municipal lot #2, a block and a half
6 away, where the city is expanding the capacity by
7 188 spaces. And then just another half a block
8 from there is where the bulk of the interim spaces
9 will be on our property, 647, and then our other
10 property a block from there will have about 309.
11 And the parking validation plan that we are going
12 to be implementing with Standard Parking would be
13 available during construction at that time. And
14 the, as the- -

15 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA:

16 (Interposing) I'm sorry, I just want to make sure
17 that I have a clear understanding. The parking
18 validation, as in a free validation parking space,
19 or will it ... will the customer have a voucher that
20 is validated upon having conducted business with
21 the small business owner, or?

22 MR. MEYER: That's typically how it
23 works, and I can have Standard Parking answer in
24 greater detail for you, but as Council Member
25 Halloran was inquiring before, about the cap

1
2 rates, so the cap rates will be in effect during
3 construction. So the rates will be protected,
4 except for inflation.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Right. So
6 as far as the minimum impact and greatest extent
7 possible of accommodating the small businesses so
8 that their businesses don't suffer and their
9 customers continue to visit with the businesses
10 that they've been dealing with, so that the
11 validation of parking, will it be free or no space
12 will be free, upon validation?

13 MR. MEYER: No, it's- -

14 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA:

15 (Interposing) It's a very specific- -

16 MR. MEYER: (Interposing) Yeah,
17 it's not free, it's ... and I'll let, maybe I can
18 have Steve Aiello come up. During the interim,
19 during the construction period there won't be a
20 validation program, the protection is in the form
21 of capped rates.

22 MR. PINSKY: Yeah, if I can maybe
23 just make this a little simpler. During
24 construction we're going to make sure that there
25 are an equal of spaces, the spaces that will be

1
2 eliminated while construction is ongoing will be
3 in the locations that you see up here, and the
4 rates will be the same rates as they are
5 currently, subject only to inflation.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Which is?
7 Which is?

8 MR. PINSKY: I ... it's the numbers
9 that are in the blue letter that ... the
10 Liu/Doctoroff letter. And I can get you that
11 information in greater detail.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Was that
13 your final explanation, or?

14 MR. PINSKY: Yes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Okay. I
16 just want to make sure that I had a full
17 understanding, because parking validation can be a
18 free service or a temporary measure to increase
19 business.

20 MR. PINSKY: And during the interim
21 period, I don't want to misrepresent what will
22 happen. During the interim period, it will be as
23 I described it. After the interim period, when
24 permanent building and parking open, then Standard
25 and the developer will be putting into place a

1
2 number of new programs, including a parking
3 validation program.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: But again,
5 it's not- -

6 MR. PINSKY: (Interposing) After
7 construction.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: ... a free
9 validation process, it's a capped?

10 MR. PINSKY: Well that ... why don't
11 we have Standard describe what the parking
12 validation will be after construction.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Aiello,
14 come back and please again mention your name.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And my
16 purpose of just mentioning all of this is because,
17 you know, there has to be a marriage here, a good
18 neighbor aspect of the small mom and pop stores
19 being able to have a business growth ability, as
20 opposed to running them into the ground because
21 now they have less customers coming to them. And
22 over time, less visibility, due to, you know, the
23 spur of this type of magnificent planning, but
24 perhaps won't be taking into account the rest of
25 the businesses that have perhaps been there for

1
2 quite some time.

3 MR. AIELLO: Steven Aiello,
4 Standard Parking. As was mentioned, all of the
5 spaces on these lots for the interim parking plan
6 will have the discounted capped rates. So no
7 matter where a customer goes for any of these
8 available spaces, which will be coordinated
9 through signage and so forth, they'll get the
10 discounted capped rate that was outlined in the
11 original ... in the letter that was stated, and
12 those are below market rates. As far as how our
13 validation program works, it's actually very
14 flexible. We sell at these discounted capped
15 rates to any merchant, and usually they're
16 discounted beyond those capped rates, packages of
17 hourly parking that they can either give or sell
18 at some reduced price to their customers. So they
19 can promote free parking or discounted parking to
20 their customers. So they're in one-hour
21 increments so they can give just enough for that
22 customer to shop in their store, so they can buy,
23 for example, \$1.50 per hour from us, and give that
24 coupon so that customer will not pay for parking
25 at all.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Uh huh.

3 MR. AIELLO: Or they can give it to
4 them and the customer can go elsewhere and spend
5 three or four hours, they'll get the first hour
6 free, and then they'll pay the cash rate for those
7 remaining hours. We can sell two and three hour
8 stays. So, depending on what the merchant needs,
9 they can buy those discounted coupons, so that
10 they can give away free parking to their
11 customers, and advertise that way, that we can
12 give you free or discounted parking. Yeah, we ... I
13 mean, it's used in almost every retail center we
14 manage, and similar community or downtown centers,
15 such as Jamaica Queens. We have validation
16 programs that are used by a lot of the local
17 retail merchants. They buy it at a discount,
18 there the rates are actually higher than the
19 capped rates here, but they do offer a way for
20 merchants to give free or discounted parking to
21 their customers and make sure that parking is
22 never an issue with regards to them coming in and
23 shopping in their stores.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And I just
25 wanted to ask, separate and aside from parking,

1
2 the RFP that was published and responded to, were
3 there any provisions that included MWBE prime
4 contracting and subcontracting opportunities?

5 MR. PINSKY: No, I don't believe
6 so, but we're in the process now of working out
7 with the developer, as well as with the Queens
8 borough president's office, with borough President
9 Marshall's office, an MWBE program as well as a
10 local hiring program. And so we're confident that
11 there will actually be significant goals that we
12 will be able to hold the developer to.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And will
14 that be ready before the full Council vote?

15 MR. PINSKY: Likely not.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: So why was
17 the decision not to include MWBE prime contracting
18 and subcontracting goals not a part of the scope?

19 MR. PINSKY: Honestly I can't
20 answer that. The RFP was issued in 2004 and I
21 wasn't involved with the project at the time. I
22 can tell you that it is a priority for us, and
23 that we're working very hard with the borough
24 president's office, and I can assure you that we
25 will develop something that will not only be

1
2 acceptable to us, but more importantly, to the
3 borough president and other elected officials as
4 well.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: You know, I
6 hate to ask for guarantees, President Pinsky, but
7 obviously, you know, this Council has worked very
8 diligently on MWBE contracting opportunities and
9 we seem to always be confronted with the "I don't
10 know" and in front of a process that has had much
11 time to give thought to this, so that I hope that
12 you can guarantee very specific goals that can be
13 met, and that, you know, in collaboration with the
14 local Council member that I trust you will be able
15 to delineate and have before us, and if oversight
16 hearings are necessary, that we will be able to
17 conduct them as well.

18 MR. PINSKY: Absolutely, and I hear
19 and appreciate very much the importance of that
20 issue to you and to other members of the Council.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And my last
22 question, I just wanted to understand, the
23 affordable housing, is it going to be in
24 perpetuity?

25 MS. CHANDA: As of now our programs

1
2 for 30 years, but as you know, we are looking at
3 our term sheets to extend it, and that has not
4 been determined, but if that becomes a final part
5 of the term sheet discussions, this will be
6 incorporated into it.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And as far
8 as the market rate, the significant market rate
9 residential component that was required in the
10 RFP, there was no affordable housing required, or
11 was it required and it's being met with the
12 affordable on the church, beside the church?

13 MR. PINSKY: No, it was not
14 required. The RFP was developed in conjunction
15 with the local community and it reflected the
16 priorities of the local community S4. The good
17 thing about this project is that in addition to
18 the onsite market-rate housing, there is a
19 significant affordable component that comes with
20 the neighboring site. And so the two projects
21 together result in both market rate housing on
22 one site and the affordable housing on the other
23 site.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: So why would
25 the affordable not be in perpetuity if there is a

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

co-existing symbiotic relationship?

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Ms. Chanda,
just make sure to say your name again for the
record.

MS. CHANDA: Shampa Chanda from
HPD. The affordable housing component, in terms
of the ... there isn't like a zoning floor or a
bonus or anything that is resulting from the
development of the affordable housing that has
been applied on the Flushing Commons. Each of the
developments has been built pursuant to its
underlying zoning that would be allowed on each
individual zoning lots. So the intent is to have
a development that has an overall development that
allows for market-rate housing and for affordable
housing. But the affordable housing is a stand-
alone, which is going to be built through the HPD-
HDC low-income housing and tax credit programs.
And whatever funding sources would be totally from
those.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: I see, so
there's two separate projects, none of which has
anything to do with the other.

MS. CHANDA: It has to do with it,

1
2 in terms of the overall design and the site
3 planning- -

4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA:

5 (Interposing) And the zoning itself.

6 MS. CHANDA: And the zoning and the
7 planning concept of it, the urban design elements
8 of it, the building, the location, the placement,
9 all of them were very carefully conceived to
10 insure that both of these developments are
11 compatible and make the highest and best use of
12 the site without impacting any of the other
13 developments around them.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: So, just for
15 clarification, is the land where the affordable
16 housing being proposed to be built part of the
17 municipal lot purchased?

18 MS. CHANDA: Yes. It's- -

19 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA:

20 (Interposing) He's shaking his head no, and you're
21 shaking your head yes.

22 MS. CHANDA: I'm sorry.

23 MR. PINSKY: No, it's part of the
24 municipal lot, it's a different purchaser, though.
25 So in one case it's TDC and Rockefeller

1
2 purchasing, and in the other case it's Macedonia
3 Development.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: So there's a
5 square footage set aside for affordable housing.

6 MR. MEYER: Everything within the-

7 -

8 MR. PINSKY: (Interposing) Ms.
9 Reyna, look at the slide he's going to show you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Right.

11 MR. MEYER: Within the dotted line
12 is the Flushing Commons.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Correct.

14 MR. MEYER: And outside is the AME
15 part.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: On the
17 municipal lot itself.

18 MR. MEYER: Yes.

19 MS. CHANDA: The municipal lot ...
20 right, the municipal lot ... I'm sorry. So the
21 municipal lot is right now located in this, this
22 is the footprint of the municipal lot here.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: So there's a
24 spot zoning with the church. Like, not spot- -

25 MS. CHANDA: (Interposing) No- -

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA:

(Interposing) ... zoning, it's a standalone structure in the middle of a- -

MS. CHANDA: (Interposing) That's right.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: ... municipal lot.

MS. CHANDA: That's right.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And there's a portion adjacent to the church that will now be sold to this particular development for the purposes of affordable housing.

MS. CHANDA: That's right.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Ms. Reyna. Mr. Comrie now is ... I apologize, I know there's a lot of people waiting throughout the building, we're going to try to get through this really quickly now, but it's just this is the people we have to ask the questions of. So this is going to be the long part, and I apologize, it still goes on. Chairman of the Land Use Committee, Leroy Comrie.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Thank you.

I want to thank the Chair for running such a great meeting, and all of my colleagues for asking some questions. I believe in the viability of this project, but there are questions that have to be on the record, and I'm actually kind of perturbed because when we did Willets Point, we were able to have all of these unresolved issues that are being talked about resolved. When we did Citi Field, which I was actively involved with, all of the unresolved issues about MWB and subcontracting and community development were resolved. And I'm just ... I don't understand why there's a tone of desire not to resolve these issues. I'll wait for quiet. I don't understand why there's a tone to unresolved these issues before the vote of the City Council, and why the City Council is not playing more of an active role in getting to resolution. We were able to resolve in the land use process every other major development process that has been done through EDC, including the baseball field, if you're including every major project that has been done in the last eight years. So I don't understand why there's just all

1 of these undetailed issues that were not resolved.
2 I would want to insist that these issues are
3 resolved, prior to the vote of the Council. And
4 people have been meeting, the discussions have
5 been had, and we need to make a hard decision and
6 to get these things resolved. And it needs to be
7 aired as publicly as possible what those issues
8 are. But not to have these issues resolved is an
9 insult to a lot of people that have been working
10 hard to make this plan happen. So, and to leave
11 things open to a process that may or may not
12 happen within a period of time is unsettling to
13 me, and actually just unacceptable. So I would
14 say that we need to move these three issues now,
15 the issues of settling even on the parking. And
16 just to be blunt about it, I think the city should
17 subsidize parking for the businesses, especially
18 the adjacent businesses to the property that may
19 or may not be impacted in different ways, because
20 I'm pressed for time, but there's a big dispute
21 about the amount of businesses that are going to
22 be affected. Later on we'll hear testimony from
23 people claiming that there are over 2,000
24 businesses in the area, where the city says there
25

1
2 are 900 businesses. There's a dispute about the
3 number of businesses. There's a dispute about the
4 people that are parking and where they're actually
5 going in the morning, that hasn't been resolved.
6 There's ... I want to say, based on what happened in
7 Jamaica, the one-way pairing, trafficking, doesn't
8 work. And especially with all of the municipal
9 traffic and bus traffic that goes through
10 Flushing, when we tried to do the one-way pair on
11 Jamaica Avenue in the 70's, it didn't work, and it
12 just was unsustainable. And I would ... I know
13 Maura McCarthy has been around long enough to
14 remember that. I would hope that some of the new
15 people that just got their degrees and are getting
16 involved in this project would go back to history
17 and remember that as well. It doesn't work. I
18 would just ... I would request that there's some
19 double parking done, and additional parking
20 opportunities along Union Street and 37th Avenue,
21 since there's going to be no street access needed
22 during construction, to allow for parking, and
23 public parking, even during the project, and
24 consider to allow for public parking, even after
25 the project, to allow for more on-street parking,

1
2 to allow those businesses to happen. I would also
3 want to talk about the issues with the parking,
4 the benefits should be in perpetuity for the city.
5 I'm shocked to hear that the affordable housing
6 plan is not in perpetuity, because it ... my
7 understanding is that there is a change in the
8 zoning from a C44 to a C32, or I'm not ... I don't
9 think I said that right. But there is a C43
10 zoning now, being changed to a C44. So there is a
11 zoning change happening. And maybe I should break
12 this down into individual pieces, but since it is
13 after twelve o'clock and we have other people that
14 want to testify to these specifics, but I have
15 some great reservations about us voting on a
16 project with all of these unresolved issues. You
17 know, I did promise my mother, who's coming
18 tomorrow and who's 90 years old, that I would take
19 some time off while she's here, but I think I'm
20 going to have to break my promise, to make sure
21 that these issues are resolved. It's ridiculous
22 that ... I know, I hear you. But over the ... I'm
23 sure they can ramp this up and get this done. And
24 actually, I don't think it takes a lot of time to
25 resolve these issues that have been undetailed,

1
2 and it's an embarrassment that so many smart
3 people can sit here and say that we're going to
4 unresolve issues and leave it to one entity to
5 resolve after the site is developed. I think it's
6 unfair to Macedonia, I think it's unfair to
7 Rockefeller/TDC, and it's especially unfair to the
8 businesses and to the city, because we have an
9 opportunity to significantly change the face of
10 downtown Flushing, make a significant improvement
11 in public space, a significant opportunity for the
12 YMCA, yet we have unresolved issues on such a
13 major project. I don't think that's acceptable.
14 The issue of making sure that there is a parking
15 validation plan, the issue of making sure that
16 there's a precinct, which I think is a major
17 problem, and access with the precinct that I
18 believe is right at the intersection of Union
19 Street and 39th Avenue, and dealing with their
20 public access, and the need for the police to deal
21 with whether or not their parking was legitimate
22 or not, because we have the same problem in
23 downtown Jamaica, where police are taking spots,
24 parking all day, that they don't need, claiming
25 that it's an emergency. Now, we have too many

1
2 police vehicles that are parked along Union Street
3 and along 39th Avenue all day for no reason, where
4 they could go right around the corner ... pardon me?
5 Where we get it ... where. We could get ... yeah, we
6 could get ... I think if your ombudsman just stayed
7 there and monitored police cars should or should
8 not be there, you could free up at least twenty
9 spots for the local businesses to utilize. So I'm
10 not happy that we're having all these undetailed
11 issues and I'm saying that I'm proud of the
12 questions that my members have asked so far,
13 illuminating all of these undetailed issues. But
14 I'm not prepared to encourage the full body to
15 vote on something that's so needed, because we
16 have unnecessary unresolved issues, that are
17 normally resolved prior to the vote of this
18 Committee. So I would not, as Chair, sit here and
19 want to say that we're changing the dynamic of
20 what has normally been done over the last eight
21 years. I'm not prepared to sit here and say that.
22 What I ... the one question that I will bring up,
23 now that I'm not happy, is that ... and actually I
24 promised to bring it up to the community anyway,
25 is the issue of excavation and what happens to

1
2 protect anything that may be uncovered during the
3 excavation. As I heard on the Daily News, or on
4 New York One Today, during the World Trade Center
5 excavation, they found a boat. Clearly it was put
6 there during the landfill period, but there is an
7 unresolved question on the 38th-39th Avenue side
8 where a Methodist church was, that was documented
9 in the Daily News about the possibility of graves
10 in the area. And no one has said to date what was
11 going to be done and what has to be done to make
12 sure that that ... when the excavation is done, that
13 it is done with the ... in the gentlest way
14 possible, in case anything is uncovered. And I
15 would appreciate illumination today, before the
16 Committee ... before the general audience on what's
17 going to be done about that.

18 MR. PINSKY: Sure, and first of
19 all, Council Member Comrie, as always, we very
20 much appreciate your input on the project. Before
21 getting to your specific question, you raised a
22 number of different issues on parking and traffic.
23 I believe that we put together a very balanced
24 plan, which we're happy to discuss with you at
25 greater length, and are happy to share, obviously,

1
2 with other Council members at greater length as
3 well. The affordable housing as well, where we
4 have 100% affordable project on a portion of the
5 municipal lot. With respect to the specific
6 issues about which I think you were most unhappy,
7 business mitigation issues, the MWBE program,
8 local hiring, we have certainly heard the concern
9 among the Council members, it's always been our
10 intention to try to wrap up those discussions as
11 quickly as possible and I'm optimistic that before
12 the vote is taken, we'll be able to come back to
13 you with greater detail.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I'm more
15 than optimistic, I'm determined.

16 MR. PINSKY: Good.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: That is the
18 norm and the standard that is kept.

19 MR. PINSKY: Okay. That's good.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I just want
21 to be clear on that.

22 MR. PINSKY: We're in agreement on
23 that. I appreciate that. And then on the last
24 item, as you know, in the 1950's the city actually
25 came into title of the land on which the municipal

1
2 lot currently stands through eminent domain. And
3 at the time, the corporation counsel investigated
4 whether or not there was in fact a cemetery, or
5 the remains of a cemetery, on the site. At that
6 time, after extensive investigation, there was no
7 evidence found. Subsequent to that, the parking
8 lot itself was built, there was a fair amount of
9 excavation that took place in connection with the
10 completion of the parking lot, and during that
11 construction there was no remains or any other
12 evidence of a cemetery found as well.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Do you know
14 how many feet they went down during the
15 construction of the project?

16 MR. PINSKY: No. I don't have that
17 exact figure, but in addition to that, as part of
18 this project, through the EIS process, we did
19 extensive analysis as well to determine whether or
20 not the information that we had received
21 previously about there perhaps having been a
22 cemetery could be substantiated. We didn't find
23 any evidence. We also went through a series of
24 public hearings and public comment, nobody raised
25 the issue during that process. Recently there

1
2 has been a story in the Daily News, as you
3 mentioned, alleging that this is perhaps an issue.
4 Again, we've not received any evidence, other than
5 the story in the Daily News, we're more than happy
6 to look at specific evidence, if people have it.
7 And obviously, if it's something that needs to be
8 researched further, we would research it further.
9 But we remain confident that there are not in fact
10 any remains in this site any more. In the event,
11 though, which we consider to be highly unlikely,
12 but in the event that during the construction
13 process we do encounter something that indicates
14 that there are in fact remains on the site, there
15 are protocols that the Landmark Commission has
16 that we will of course adhere to, and we would
17 insure, and the developers I'm sure agree with
18 this, we would insure that the site is treated
19 with the proper respect.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: So you're
21 committing to follow those protocols? Because my
22 understanding is that since we don't know how far
23 they went down in construction for the muni lot,
24 and there's some question about how extensive ... I
25 don't know if you have anyone from your EIS

1
2 division here that could answer, you know, what
3 the EIS process to determine, and since we're
4 pressed for time, I'm just going to ask you for
5 your assurances that the landmark process or the
6 preservation process is followed to the highest
7 extent possible during construction, and that's, I
8 think, an obligation of the city more than an
9 obligation of the developer.

10 MR. PINSKY: Yeah, no, that is a
11 commitment that you have from me, and as I
12 mentioned, we've done extensive research, and we
13 do not believe that we're going to run into an
14 issue there.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay, well,
16 again, we don't have time to debate all of the
17 fine issues and to be respectful of the people who
18 want to testify, I'm not going ... they'll bring up
19 some of those fine issues. I think we could
20 discuss them afterwards, because my understanding
21 is there are questions of how that process was
22 determined, and whether or not hand digging to
23 determine ... and not knowing how far the city did
24 the excavation to build the lot just makes
25 everything a question. But if the city is going

1
2 to follow the process of making sure that every
3 precaution is taken, then that will uncover
4 whatever is down there. With that, I know we're
5 pressed for time. I think I tried to cover
6 everything that I wanted to cover in one big rant.
7 But I think you got the message, we're not
8 prepared to vote and change the process of this
9 committee to make sure that every stone is
10 covered, and that also the Council has a
11 significant ongoing part in the process, not just,
12 with all due respect to the borough president, who
13 I love, and have worked with on many matters, I
14 think it was disrespectful to the Council and to
15 the local communities that we are not actively
16 involved in whatever the after-process is as well.
17 So I want to make sure that since that's been the
18 tradition, that that stays the norm. Thank you.

19 MR. PINSKY: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,
21 Council Member Comrie. Now Council Member
22 Margaret Chin who joined us, she's a Manhattan
23 Councilman who also in a previous life had a lot
24 of involvement in the area.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you,

1
2 though I'm not on the Committee I really thank you
3 for allowing me to ask a couple of questions. I
4 guess I apologize if it was answered already.

5 Regarding the small businesses, I'm very concerned
6 about the mitigation plan and also the number of
7 small businesses involved in the area, and also
8 the issue about having some structure set up that
9 small ... you know, for outreach to them and also
10 work with them during the whole construction
11 period, so they will know where to go and the kind
12 of help that they need to get, that you have some
13 organization or committee, or whatever, that
14 people know about to be able to go there and get
15 help. The other thing is that the concern I have
16 is in terms of the commercial retail that's going
17 to be coming in there, to make sure that it
18 doesn't really compete with the existing retail
19 that's in the area, and also the issue about local
20 hiring, that also you attract retail that provide
21 living-wage jobs, so that we get good-paying jobs
22 for the neighborhood, not just minimum wage jobs.
23 So I think that's a concern that I hope that you
24 would really take a look at. I know that there
25 will be a lot of union jobs and construction jobs,

1
2 but after the construction, versus the retail and
3 also the building management, all that, we want to
4 see some good-paying living-wage union wage to be
5 permanent there at the site. The other issue I
6 have is the affordable housing, the perpetuity
7 question is significant, and the issue about
8 incorporating some senior housing, where it's
9 critically needed in the neighborhood. And also
10 in the construction phase, to make sure that the
11 affordable housing component gets done first or
12 gets done as soon as possible. We don't want to
13 see, you know, all this construction going on and
14 then the affordable housing doesn't happen. So it
15 would be great if the affordable housing happened
16 first, and also have a timeline that we can know
17 about to see how this project, how many years it
18 will take to make it finally happen, and also the
19 open space, how soon can we have that so the
20 public can really be able to take advantage of.
21 So those are the issues that I- -

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)

23 Is that it?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yes. For
25 now.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: It was quick,
3 I got to say, but you did cover a lot of ground.
4 So if you want to just touch highlights on her
5 questions, we'd appreciate it.

6 MR. PINSKY: Sure. So, first of
7 all, on the local business issue, we've addressed
8 this a couple of times, I'm happy to go through it
9 again, if you'd like now, or talk to you later,
10 whichever. But we have a plan in place to try to
11 mitigate the impact of construction on the local
12 businesses. It includes a \$2 million fund, we're
13 working with Council Member Koo as well as a
14 number of local businesses, Asian Americans for
15 Quality, and others, to develop the proper use of
16 that \$2 million. And we're also working with the
17 developer designed a construction project that
18 will have very little impact off of the site,
19 actual direct construction impact off the site, as
20 well as securing an ombudsperson, who's going to
21 be able to take complaints and concerns from local
22 business people and residents and try to address
23 them during construction if there are issues that
24 we haven't anticipated. In terms of your question
25 about the mix of retail, the mix of retail that we

1
2 sought from this development is the mix of retail
3 that was developed in conjunction with the
4 community as part of the Flushing framework. What
5 the community was seeking was not big-box stores,
6 so we've expressly designed the project such that
7 it will not be big-box stores. They were looking
8 for a mix of local and national retailers, which
9 we anticipate will be the case here as well. And
10 we think that this project, by providing
11 additional residents and visitors, either in an
12 office building or a hotel, should not just help
13 the retailers onsite, but also help bring new
14 customers to the retailers surrounding the
15 development as well. On the question of local
16 hiring, as I mentioned earlier, we are finalizing
17 a deal with the Councilman that will, and the
18 borough president's office, that will provide a
19 very specific local hiring plan that will be
20 implemented by the developer along with the
21 Department of Small Business Services, we should
22 have information on that for you shortly. We're
23 just completing that now. And then I think if I'm
24 not missing anything, the remaining questions were
25 on housing, so I'm going to turn it ... oh, on the

1 wages. So this project will be constructed by
2 union labor. There are discussions about the
3 building employees being members of Local 32BJ,
4 the developer is having and is optimistic about,
5 there is not a requirement that there be any wage
6 floor for retail workers. As you know from
7 previous discussions, we do not believe that
8 that's viable for a retail development. That
9 being said, we believe that there will be a large
10 number of employees at this development that do
11 meet the wage floor that most people have been
12 discussing, a very high percentage, and in
13 addition to that, we've also launched a study at
14 EDC to address this very issue, because we know
15 it's an issue that there's been a lot of very
16 passionate discussion about, and I think honest
17 disagreement over. And what we are hoping to do
18 in the coming months is to get much better
19 information, both about what's being done across
20 the country on this issue, and also what the
21 economic impact of these kinds of wage floors
22 would be. And we hope, once we have the results
23 of that study, that we'll be able to engage in
24 further discussions with you on the subject. And
25

1
2 then I do think then the last question was on the
3 housing.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: State your
5 name.

6 MS. CHANDA: Shampa Chanda, HPD.
7 Council Member, you had questions about the
8 housing, one was the issue about the perpetuity.
9 As I've mentioned earlier, we are looking at term
10 sheets that would allow for long-term, longer than
11 30 years, of housing. However, that has not been
12 finalized. Until then, right now the program
13 stands for 30 years of affordability, and
14 typically, especially with low-income housing
15 programs, they roll into a rent stabilization
16 program. So we do feel that even if there is not
17 a permanent housing ... affordable housing
18 requirement, after 30 years, they roll into the
19 rent stabilization program, assures it to stay in
20 a longer time period as a low-income housing
21 program. You had another question about the
22 senior housing. It's very difficult to
23 incorporate a senior housing program with a low-
24 income housing program, they are different housing
25 income structures, I'm sorry, funding structures.

1
2 So we have not been able to, at all in any program
3 successfully match them. However, the senior
4 residents will be eligible to apply for housing in
5 this project site, the households are eligible up
6 to 60% of area median income and a typical senior
7 housing program for HUD tends to be 50% of area
8 median income. So definitely who would qualify
9 for HUD 202 would be eligible for housing programs
10 for this site. It is very difficult for us to
11 apply for a HUD 202 program, it's not a guarantee,
12 you know, that it's a compatible housing, and the
13 last round of awards was just granted, announced,
14 I think, a couple of weeks ... last week or so, and
15 the HUD 202 program is now going through a whole
16 re-evaluation, so to speak, for the next few
17 years. So we have no assurance of getting a
18 senior housing funding program through this HUD
19 202 program. And so short of that, we definitely
20 would feel that this housing program would provide
21 housing for senior housing because the development
22 will have a mix of studios, single bedrooms, one
23 bedrooms and two bedrooms and three bedrooms, so
24 it definitely would allow for seniors to be
25 eligible for housing.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I think on
3 that part I really strongly encourage you to
4 really look at different sources of funding to
5 make it happen, because even you bill up to 50%
6 median income, you're not ... a lot of the low-
7 income seniors are not going to qualify. So if
8 there's a way of structuring something in there,
9 where you can at least house those seniors who are
10 desperately needed, you know, maybe housing in
11 Flushing. So I think we ... I, my office, I am
12 willing to work with you on that, to really
13 explore the funding that will be available to
14 create a certain number of units affordable to
15 low-income seniors in that project.

16 MS. CHANDA: I ... we hear your
17 concern and we share your concern. And I will
18 definitely follow up with our funding finance
19 groups to see what can be done, but at this point
20 the larger issue of the senior housing also lies
21 on the Section 8 voucher availability of that, so
22 there are added complexities to it. But as I
23 mentioned earlier, this housing is going to be
24 eligible, I mean, seniors will be eligible to
25 apply for the lottery and there will be units set

1
2 aside ... I mean, not units, the units are laid out
3 in such a way that senior housing could be
4 facilitated in this (inaudible).

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, thank
6 you, Council Member Chin. All right, in an effort
7 of time here, I am going to withhold the questions
8 I had. I do want to just mention that I'm sure
9 we'll be talking again over the next few weeks, a
10 lot of the skepticism that you heard from Mr.
11 Halloran I share, as well as a lot of the concerns
12 about the issues that were raised on MWBE and
13 other things. So there's still, you know, some
14 things to talk about. We may have more questions
15 for you that we can get later on, but we do want
16 to try to get this thing moving, so we're going to
17 excuse you, and start moving on to the rest of our
18 program. Our first speaker, we're going to let
19 the borough president ... you guys can go. If you
20 want to leave somebody, you know, to watch the
21 proceedings that's good. But if you can make as
22 much room as possible in this room we'd appreciate
23 it. We've got to bring on the borough president
24 of Queens, we're delighted to have her here today,
25 Helen Marshall, and she will speak. And then once

1
2 she's completed, we will go into panels, where
3 each person will be limited to two minutes. If we
4 can get that screen down, once she's done. Okay,
5 good, because the clock behind is essential to get
6 people to move. Madam borough President, thank
7 you for being here. If you could please state
8 your name for the record, and start when you want.
9 Thanks.

10 BOROUGH PRESIDENT MARSHALL: My
11 name is Helen Marshall and I'm very fortunate to
12 be the borough president of this great borough of
13 Queens. I want to thank you, good morning, well
14 now, good afternoon. I want to thank you for this
15 opportunity on these to very important projects,
16 Flushing Commons and Macedonia Plaza. I would
17 like to thank the Mayor's office, the multiple
18 city agencies, Community Board #7 and all of the
19 community residents for their commitment,
20 dedication, hard work and perseverance through
21 many hours of meetings to get these projects to
22 this point today. By the way, we have always
23 worked, as we do with all projects, with the
24 Council people from the area whoever's district it
25 is. We try to work with them, we invite them to

1
2 everything that we do, whether it is a discussion
3 or a meeting about the project that's in their
4 district. The starting point of those many hours
5 of meetings was a community-based planning effort
6 with the participation of the local business
7 community, Community Board #7, area residents,
8 civic organizations and agencies, local elected
9 officials and other stakeholders to study how to
10 strengthen and keep downtown Flushing vital.

11 Among the recommendations, the Flushing framework,
12 the document issued at the conclusion of that two-
13 year study, was that Flushing municipal parking
14 lot #1 should be redeveloped with a mix of new
15 uses: housing, public open space and public
16 parking. Flushing Commons and Macedonia Plaza,
17 under consideration today, will transform the
18 approximately five acre municipal parking lot #1
19 into a mixed use development of over 600 units of
20 market rate and 140 units of affordable housing.
21 New commercial and rental space, over 90,000
22 square feet of community space, including a 62,000
23 state-of-the-art YMCA, 1,600 parking spaces and
24 more than 1.5 acres of contiguous open space that
25 will function as the town square. I want to let

1
2 you know that I went to the Mayor and I told him
3 we must set aside the property for the Macedonia
4 church to build their project, and they readily
5 agreed to it. I am here to reiterate my support
6 for these projects, because I believe they will
7 strengthen and keep downtown Flushing vitally
8 fulfilling the goals and objectives as expressed
9 in the Flushing framework. Through the ULURP
10 process we have heard much testimony and support
11 because these projects will bring to downtown
12 Flushing new goods and services, both affordable
13 and market rate housing, new open space, thousands
14 of much needed jobs during and after construction,
15 and millions of dollars in new revenue for Queens
16 and New York City. However, we have also heard
17 from many with concerns about potential impacts on
18 downtown Flushing, the existing businesses,
19 particularly those closest to the project site
20 that may arise during and after construction.

21 Whether we support these projects or have concerns
22 about them, what is undisputable is that we all
23 have the best interests of downtown Flushing and
24 New York City at heart. And my responsibility is
25 to improve every single, every piece of property

1
2 that we can, particularly great business districts
3 and commercial areas. I'm confident that working
4 together, we can overcome and minimize many
5 inconveniences that may arise as we go forward,
6 but we are very concerned about that, and nothing
7 is being ignored. The only way we could succeed
8 is to continue working on keeping everyone
9 informed on a timely and regular basis about
10 progress, the progress of these projects and
11 conditions as they change in downtown Flushing.
12 And actually we've been working on this project,
13 it was introduced to us in 19 ... let's see, it's
14 about maybe five years, 2004, it came to us, and
15 we have spent many hours on it. The only way we
16 will succeed is to continue working in keeping
17 everybody informed on a timely and regular basis,
18 about progress, the process of these projects, and
19 conditions as they change in downtown Flushing. A
20 number of the Council people have been asking
21 questions. Actually, they're new, and they have a
22 right to ask these questions, because these are
23 the questions that we asked when we first heard
24 about the project. And so we will keep you
25 informed and we will make sure that all of you who

1
2 are interested will get ... will be invited to a
3 meeting, certainly if you represent any portion of
4 this area, you'll definitely be invited. A number
5 of conditions that outline mechanisms or provide a
6 forum to address concerns and issues that were
7 raised were included in my recommendation to
8 approve these projects. The following is a
9 summary of these conditions. The Queens borough
10 president, together with Council member Koo, will
11 co-chair the downtown Flushing traffic task force
12 that will meet before, during and after
13 construction. The meetings will be a forum for
14 the relevant agencies to give updates on downtown
15 Flushing, especially the traffic-related issues;
16 to work out solutions on any traffic issue that
17 may arise, share construction updates and receive
18 input from the community on traffic conditions.
19 And I want to let you know that there is no one-
20 way pair going to be in this project. Okay. The
21 developer should make an ongoing outreach effort
22 to inform and promote opportunities available to
23 the community and local MWBE firms to provide
24 goods and services for the project during
25 construction and allow local MWBE firms to

1
2 participate in the commercial activities that will
3 occur after construction is completed. I do that
4 for every project, not just this project. I do it
5 for every project. Small businesses, particularly
6 those along the perimeter surrounding the proposed
7 project, on 37th and 39th Avenues, and 138th Street,
8 and along Union Street, between Roosevelt Avenue
9 on the north and Northern Blvd., will be mostly
10 directly impacted during construction, and by the
11 loss of public parking and removal of the Flushing
12 municipal parking lot #1. The Queens borough
13 president will work with Council member Peter Koo
14 and the New York Small Business Administration in
15 developing a business interruption plan, the most
16 effective use of the \$2 million business
17 assistance fund that was established to help small
18 businesses affected during construction of the
19 proposed project. The availability of affordable
20 parking spaces is of utmost importance to attract
21 consumers to small businesses in the area.

22 Therefore, parking rates for the Flushing Commons
23 should be maintained below market rates, close to
24 municipal rates, beyond the five year cap. Public
25 parking must be affordable to sustain and support

1 existing local small businesses who have invested
2 heavily in their trust of the future economic
3 health of downtown Flushing. They're there
4 because they know that Flushing is an excellent
5 place to do business. Downtown Flushing is the
6 most heavily used major intermodal transit hub in
7 New York City outside of Manhattan. I can tell
8 you that every street from ... on Main Street from
9 Northern Blvd. back to Roosevelt Avenue is lined
10 with bus stops, it's a major hub, because it's the
11 last stop on the #7 train. When we extend the #7
12 train or get additional transportation facilities,
13 we will be able to do something about that, but
14 right now, it's great. I myself have gotten ...
15 went to Main Street, got off at Main Street, did
16 my shopping and got on a bus and went home. So
17 the customers are to a certain extent, built-in.
18 They're waiting on line, why not run and get
19 whatever you're going to get, and then get on line
20 and then you don't have to shop anyplace. It's
21 sort of a built-in consumers. Public parking must
22 be affordable and support local small businesses
23 who have invested heavily in their trust of our
24 economic health in downtown Flushing. Downtown
25

1
2 Flushing is the most heavily used major intermodal
3 transit hub in New York City outside of Manhattan.
4 The Roosevelt Avenue and Main Street intersection
5 is the third busiest intersection with the
6 heaviest volume of pedestrian traffic, topped only
7 by Times Square and Herald Square in Manhattan.
8 Traffic enforcement agents should be posted year
9 round at the Roosevelt Avenue - Main Street
10 intersection during the peak rush hours, Monday
11 through Friday, during Saturday and Sunday peak
12 hours also. And you know what, I ... the only place
13 in this borough that I get ... I mean, I get traffic
14 people who direct the traffic, is at Long Island
15 City and Queensborough bridge. And we have to
16 fight to keep them. We deserve to have ... and when
17 we have the Christmas season around the mall, we
18 work with the mall itself, and they actually help,
19 hire some people to help with that. But the city
20 also at that time gives us people to direct
21 traffic. Okay. Environment, the impact ...
22 environmental impact statement to keep traffic
23 flowing in an orderly manner, the presence of
24 traffic enforcement agents at these locations
25 should be on a permanent basis, like the other two

1
2 busiest intersections in the city, not just for
3 the duration of DOT's pedestrian traffic
4 improvement pilot program. And as part of the
5 business interruption plan, the city should
6 explore various means to help downtown Flushing
7 small businesses and including aggressive
8 marketing strategies, tax relief programs and
9 closer alternative parking spaces, or perhaps a
10 jitney shuttle service to and from identified
11 interim parking areas to help them during the
12 construction period. Actually, I want to
13 elaborate a little bit on that. We were all very
14 anxious to get the Olympics here. We were very
15 anxious to get the Olympics here. And during that
16 time, we were able to find places where we could
17 have ... either have parking available, and there
18 would be little jitneys that would take the people
19 into the Olympics. So we know how to handle those
20 kind of projects, and we want to make sure that
21 that happens here too. And it's only ... in this
22 instance it's only for the construction period.
23 Recently questions have been raised about the
24 possibility of human remains from burial grounds.
25 They may be contained within the project area.

1
2 Before the project proceeds, there should be
3 reasonable measures taken to assure that there is
4 no human remains located in the project site.

5 This parking structure was built in 1954 to 1955
6 and they did a search then. They were not able to
7 find, but of course there is going to be an
8 environmental impact study and the environmental
9 impact study will have to confirm whether or not
10 there are bodies there. Okay. Downtown Flushing
11 ... and I'm very careful about that. That's

12 probably what makes America the greatest place
13 that we have. We treasure our people, both while
14 they're alive and also after they've passed away.

15 Downtown Flushing is a growing residential
16 community with thriving commercial and retail
17 activity. The retail and commercial mix that will
18 be brought into Flushing Commons should not be
19 duplicates of the services readily found in
20 downtown Flushing today. Instead, the new retail
21 and commercial uses, such as national book chains
22 that would complement the existing businesses in
23 downtown Flushing should be sought for Flushing
24 Commons. I am committed and look forward to
25 working with everyone to make sure that the

1
2 downtown Flushing continues to be successful, with
3 the conditions identified above. I am sure it
4 will succeed. I urge the Zoning and Franchises
5 Subcommittee to recommend approval of the Flushing
6 Commons and Macedonia Plaza projects. And just a
7 couple of other quick comments ... I think I've said
8 all those already, so I'm going to end and if you
9 have any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you
11 Madam borough President. Mr. Comrie has some
12 comments.

13 BOROUGH PRESIDENT MARSHALL: Okay.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And some
15 questions.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I just want
17 to, you know, reassure you that you've done a
18 great job with these other projects, but as Chair
19 of this committee, I have an obligation to protect
20 the committee and protect the Council's role in
21 this process. And when I hear that they're trying
22 to undermine our role and lessen our opportunities
23 to be impacted where this is the public venue and
24 the most democratic Council and opportunity for
25 the public, then it's necessary for me to make

1
2 sure that we maintain our historical position.
3 That's really what it's about. As I said, you
4 have been great in fighting for Willets Point and
5 Citi Field and all the other projects, Queens West
6 and everything as well, but we cannot allow the
7 city to quietly and subtly diminish the role of
8 the Land Use Committee.

9 BOROUGH PRESIDENT MARSHALL: I
10 don't quite understand when you're saying the city
11 to allow to diminish- -

12 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE:
13 (Interposing) When they come back and say that
14 they don't have things finished, when they don't
15 have major issues that are resolved prior to the
16 vote, when they've done it on other major
17 projects, it's not acceptable. And they can ...
18 there's nothing that can't be resolved, I think,
19 to make this happen within the allotted time
20 before our Council vote, and there's just ... I know
21 it's summertime and people would rather be at the
22 Hamptons or somewhere else, but the time clock is
23 a time clock, and the opportunities for
24 conversation must happen within that period
25 because it's been done with every other major

1
2 project that has come before this Council,
3 projects larger than this and projects smaller
4 than this.

5 BOROUGH PRESIDENT MARSHALL: Well,
6 I'm sorry to hear that. I sat in the seat where
7 you're sitting right now on the Council for ten
8 years, and I respect the Council. And right now
9 you have Karen Koslowitz on it and she and I
10 served also on the Council together. The Council
11 is very important, the Council is our hope that we
12 maintain a democracy, and that we continue to
13 perfect democracy. And so I would never do
14 anything to curtail that. And in fact I need your
15 help. And I'm telling you that. Okay, thank you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: And we need
17 you to continue to be the great borough president
18 and fighter for our borough as well.

19 BOROUGH PRESIDENT MARSHALL: Three
20 more years. Got to get this thing done.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Three and a
22 half. Thank you Madam borough President. Okay,
23 so we're going to start with our panel discussions
24 now. Now I'm going to call ... again, we're going
25 to try to do these alternating from for and

1
2 against. Since we heard from the project, we're
3 going to start with the opposition panel. So
4 would Richard Lipsky, James Gerson, Ikhwan Rim,
5 Paul Graziano, Steve, what's the last name,
6 Barian, Baritan? You probably know who you are.
7 Brian Ketcham. If you can hear my voice in the
8 next room, please come on in. In the meantime,
9 aha, in the meantime two people who wanted to
10 testify but are not here, were in opposition also,
11 Craig and Henry Bergman. Again, this is an option
12 you can choose, if you can't stick around, we will
13 make sure to keep any testimony you have for the
14 record, and add it to the record. In addition, we
15 will announce the names and what position they
16 have on the issue. So again, the six people we
17 called, Mr. Lipsky, do you happen to know the
18 whereabouts, are they all here still? Jim Gerson
19 is here? Paul ... Ms. Ikhwan Kim? Rim, oh, I'm
20 sorry. Uh huh, okay. Six, six, I know that's a
21 lot of chairs. Gail Benjamin, I don't know if I
22 said that. Okay, Rim, Ikhwan Rim and we'll start
23 and then by the time we get them. Mr. Lipsky, I
24 don't know if you heard, I don't know why I keep
25 singling you out, but it just seemed like the

1
2 logical thing to do. We're putting a two minute
3 time limit on everybody and I know that's
4 difficult, since you've invested so much time.
5 But if you can try to stick to that and I'm sure
6 there may be some questions for you, so you'll
7 have a chance to espouse on other topics as well.

8 MR. LIPSKY: The mic is on?

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: The mic is on,
10 please state your name for the record, and you may
11 start.

12 MR. LIPSKY: Yes, my name is
13 Richard Lipsky, I'm representing the Flushing
14 Coalition for Responsible Development, and we're
15 here as the defense attorneys. The prosecution
16 has rested and now it's time to hear from the
17 other side. And there are significant problems
18 with this project. The Council, almost everyone
19 here present included, has been very gracious at
20 making time for us to come in and lay those things
21 out. So I'm not going to try to belabor the
22 points that we've made in private, but I think
23 it's important to make certain points here. The
24 environmental review and the whole configuration
25 of this project is fatally flawed. It can be seen

1
2 very clearly in the fact that EDC was unable to
3 find the actual number of businesses in downtown
4 Flushing. There are 2,130 businesses, there were
5 only 970 that EDC found. But it goes beyond that,
6 it goes to the basic mobilization of bias that EDC
7 brings to the table. In every single project that
8 EDC has that has a retail component, which this
9 one does, they argue that it is designed to
10 capture the efflux of shoppers from inside the
11 city to outside. If that was their design, and
12 it's stated again in this EIS, then they should
13 never have come to downtown Flushing. Flushing,
14 with this twenty one hundred plus businesses, is
15 an economic magnet and probably the only one
16 outside of midtown, is an economic magnet for
17 shoppers from the entire tri-state region who come
18 into downtown Flushing to shop. The first thing
19 you should do if you're an economic development
20 agency that cares one whit about small business,
21 which leaves out the present company, then you
22 would look at understanding how much business is
23 being done here, what are the collateral damages
24 of creating an alternative project that is
25 directly competitive. I must be making an

1
2 effective presentation because the opposition is
3 disgruntled, so I appreciate that.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: That's all
5 right.

6 MR. LIPSKY: And- -

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
8 If you can ... don't turn this into a- -

9 MR. LIPSKY: (Interposing) Thank
10 you, Mr. Chairman.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And I'm sure
12 there will be some questions.

13 MR. LIPSKY: Okay, very good, thank
14 you.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: So you'll have
16 a chance to add some things. I don't know who
17 wants to go next, I'll leave that up to you guys
18 to decide. Jim? Okay. Again, state your name
19 for the record.

20 MR. GERSON: Sure. My name is Jim
21 Gerson, my family has been in business in Flushing
22 for over 52 years, I was born in Elmhurst. Until
23 a month ago I was the founding chairman of the
24 Flushing BID. I feel it is important for you to
25 understand the reasons why I resigned as chairman

1
2 of the BID after seven years of much success and
3 many accomplishments. Firstly, the BID, as a
4 result of the demand by the developer, declined to
5 perform an economic analysis of the impact of this
6 development on local businesses. Now we know why.
7 Our coalition engaged the Hunter College Center
8 for Community Planning and Development, who
9 hopefully will get a chance to talk today. They
10 found that there were more than twice as many
11 businesses in the affected area than the EIS
12 reported. That's 2,132 businesses versus 970
13 reported in the EIS, a major oversight. On a more
14 personal level, I felt a keen responsibility to
15 the community in Flushing who elected me to
16 represent them. The BID is not allowed to lobby,
17 so I joined the Flushing Coalition for Responsible
18 Development, and a small packet of our issues has
19 been presented to you. I urge you also to look at
20 our website, which contains a great deal of
21 information which may be helpful to you in your
22 decision. The reason I'm here today is to explain
23 to you why I feel the scale of this project as
24 presently proposed will devastate our community.
25 Please understand that we are not opposed to many

1
2 aspects of this development. The open space, the
3 Y, the affordable housing. We believe, and have
4 demonstrated, that this project will create
5 unmitigated gridlock, and in an area that already
6 suffers from really bad traffic. In addition,
7 many, many of our small businesses will not be
8 able to survive after this project is built. The
9 City of New York agreed with our councilman to
10 permanently cap parking rates at Flushing Commons.
11 This cap was also part of the stipulations by
12 Community Board #7 and borough president Helen
13 Marshall. This developer will control almost of
14 the off-street parking north of Roosevelt Avenue.
15 Our community will be at the mercy of this
16 developer. His parking study is deeply flawed, no
17 one who comes to Flushing has found the open
18 spaces he cites. In fact, the Downtown Flushing
19 Framework did a study, and it showed that the lot
20 is overcapacity, that's right, overcapacity more
21 than six hours a day. By the way, we conducted a
22 study of the daily parkers in the lot. We found
23 that 80% of the parkers worked in Flushing, and do
24 not commute to the city. Just as an aside, I
25 believe you should note that the developer said

1
2 that 200 parking spaces in his building are
3 occupied, and that is at more than twice the rates
4 of the municipal lot next door. The reason is
5 simple, the muni lot is already full. I have a
6 really short paragraph about what I feel could be
7 a solution. Okay. It has- -

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
9 All right, Paul.

10 MR. GRAZIANO: Okay. Hi, my name
11 is Paul Graziano, I'm an urban planner by
12 profession- -

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
14 Paul, give us one second, we have a clock issue.

15 MR. GRAZIANO: Yes, I noticed.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: So I want to
17 make sure we get that straight. I think that
18 we've solved the clock issue.

19 MR. GRAZIANO: Not yet.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Now we have a
21 day issue, to finish up today.

22 MR. GRAZIANO: Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right.

24 MR. GRAZIANO: My name is Paul
25 Graziano, I'm an urban planner by profession, but

1
2 I'm here today as an unpaid advisor and
3 spokesperson for REDO, which is the Coalition to
4 Reconsider and Evaluate Development Opportunities
5 at muni lot #1. It's a coalition of five
6 homeowners and civic associations, the Mitchell
7 Linden Cooperatives, several condominium buildings
8 and several business and civic groups, with a
9 total of close to 10,000 families in and around
10 downtown Flushing. I want to make it very clear
11 we do not oppose development on this site, but the
12 current development as proposed is, in the opinion
13 of the REDO coalition, and a mission paper has
14 been sent out to those Council members sitting
15 here, that it's too dense for what is being
16 proposed. There were promises made in the RFP
17 process, there were promises made again between
18 the infamous Liu/Doctoroff note, which I know has
19 been discussed quite a bit today. I would
20 disagree vehemently with Seth Pinsky about that
21 they have met all their obligations of that
22 letter. I think it's atrocious and I've been
23 listening to a lot of the other conversations.
24 Basically, you know, off the cuff, it's a project
25 that, you know, it's been 60 years since they

1
2 built the muni lot, there have been a lot of
3 proposals, the last one 20 years ago was half as
4 dense as the one that's being proposed today. And
5 that one was turned down by the community board at
6 that point. And while Flushing may have changed a
7 lot in the last 20 years, the issues haven't
8 changed, in fact they've been exacerbated. So
9 that's the position of REDO, again, not against
10 development on the site, against this particular
11 proposal, and there's a lot of things that will go
12 wrong if it gets developed. Thank you. Five
13 seconds to spare.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Duly noted.

15 Who's next?

16 MR. BARRISON: Are you ready on
17 your clock there?

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: That's going
19 to grow very annoying very quickly.

20 MR. BARRISON: Okay, I'll start.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: But what are
22 you going to do?

23 MR. BARRISON: I'm Steve Barrison,
24 I am the executive vice president and spokesperson
25 for the Small Business Congress, a small group of

1
2 a couple of hundred thousand mom and pop stores.
3 We employ about a million New Yorkers. I'm also
4 here from Mr. Sung Soo Kim, who you know as the
5 president and chairman of the Korean American
6 Small Business Service Center. He's not been
7 feeling well, so let me just get to some key
8 points. Listening first in places where you
9 couldn't hear, two floors down, and then here it's
10 kind of strange. I felt like I was in some kind
11 of holding cell. Let me summarize for you,
12 because you guys really need to have the facts.
13 I've been doing this for 27 years. I'm on a State
14 board called the New York Main Street Alliance,
15 and what do we do? We go to all 62 counties to
16 help small businesses on Main Street, deal with
17 prosperous Main Streets, how do we do it and how
18 do we give them parking? And the last two mayors,
19 our current mayor and Mayor Giuliani, they have
20 gotten into the habit of selling muni lots. So if
21 nothing else is accomplished from these hearings,
22 you should stop selling this lot and never sell a
23 muni lot again. These are prime locations that
24 can never go back. New York isn't in the luxury,
25 like a small town, where we have plenty of lots,

1
2 to realize we made a mistake 20, 30 and 50 years
3 from now. We've already made that mistake many
4 times over, and if you want, I will take you to
5 muni lots and show you where the small businesses
6 have been hurt, transit has been affected, and
7 nobody has benefited other than the developer. As
8 far as small business goes, 170,000 evictions
9 during the current Mayor, 162,000 bankruptcies or
10 businesses that just gave up and went out of
11 business. You add that together, an average of
12 five to seven jobs per business, just during this
13 Mayor and the prior Mayor, we have lost, quietly
14 without the news reporting it, over one million
15 small business jobs in New York City. We must be
16 honest with the people, we must be honest with the
17 study. The study is laughable, you don't have to
18 be an expert. Just read the study and go down,
19 you realize they forgot all the businesses in the
20 side streets and two, three stories up. I mean,
21 anybody who knows Flushing knows it's a joke. And
22 there isn't a person in the City of New York that
23 hasn't visited Flushing and seen the congestion
24 there, to know what's going to happen when we
25 close that lot, or we don't add another 1,000

1 spots. I know the time is almost up, I only have
2 three more sentences. As I said earlier, as a
3 city the muni lot is at transit hubs and shopping
4 strips. We must never sell these locations,
5 because we don't have any left. I heard you. In
6 ... let me just finish. That's obnoxious. In ...
7 it's kind of weird. Yeah, I feel like I should
8 talk to the beep. Anyway, I'll just finish by
9 saying, in every single instance that they have
10 sold muni lots, and I can take you to Kings
11 Highway in Brooklyn, if you know Kings Highway, or
12 other places, the small businesses who thought it
13 was going to help them, have hurt. I heard you
14 that it was time. I sat since nine o'clock
15 waiting.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Just finish
18 up. Yeah, I understand that. Just one more
19 minute.

20 MR. BARRISON: The most important
21 thing is jobs. I hear all the construction
22 hearing that, and if you are willing to sit down
23 and work with us, I'm a real estate attorney for
24 28 years, you can lease property, like other
25 cities, do the same kind of development, create

1
2 more jobs, more revenue and more parking, thus not
3 hurting the small businesses in the area. It can
4 be done, there are alternatives.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.
6 You missed my apology earlier this morning on the
7 location and on the 14th floor, so we do apologize
8 again for that.

9 MR. BARRISON: Yeah, I couldn't
10 hear in the silent room.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes, I
12 understand, I understand.

13 MR. BARRISON: Here you go, sir.

14 MR. KETCHAM: My name is Brian
15 Ketcham, I am a traffic engineer. I have been
16 examining this project on behalf of my client,
17 Flushing Coalition for Responsible Development. I
18 have taken the time to do what apparently no one
19 else has done, to unravel the numbers and test the
20 validity of the results for traffic and parking.
21 You have my report and my detailed statement, I'm
22 going to summarize that. But I have come to the
23 conclusion that it is irresponsible to add one
24 more large project to the area, a target for
25 intense development, without any supporting

1
2 infrastructure, not highways, not transit, not
3 buses and not parking. Flushing Commons is
4 occurring in a sea of development where more than
5 20,000,000 square feet has been approved. What
6 does that mean in terms of transportation and
7 quality of life? It means that disaster is on its
8 way. All of this development would double
9 ridership on a single line, the Flushing #7, one
10 of the most crowded in New York City, at a time
11 when the MTA is reducing services and has no plans
12 for expansion into Queens. Each city EIS is
13 prepared without fully accounting for other
14 developments, each assuming roughly half the trips
15 are by transit, as if capacity were available.
16 For example, Flushing Commons underreports Willets
17 Point traffic that will use local streets in
18 downtown Flushing because it uses an outdated
19 assumption that half of Willets Point traffic will
20 use the proposed Van Wyck Expressway ramps. EDC
21 has now reduced Willets Point use of the ramps to
22 just 16%, leaving 1,900 auto trips in the p.m.
23 peak hour unaccounted for by Flushing Commons,
24 with hundreds of cars an hour that would travel
25 through downtown Flushing, none accounted for,

1
2 again, in the EIS. The FEIS used contradictory
3 assumptions within itself. The primary demand for
4 parking comes from destination retail and
5 commercial space, for the traffic and parking
6 analysis, the FEIS assumes a tiny proportion of
7 retail space as destination retail, thereby under-
8 reporting traffic volumes. The bottom line is,
9 and there's a lot more in my statement, but in the
10 absence of answers to the many questions I raised
11 in this statement you have before you, the City
12 Council lacks the necessary information on which
13 to base any approval of the Flushing Commons
14 project, you must reject this application.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Mr.
16 Rim. Please state your name for the record.

17 MR. RIM: Yes, my name is Ikhwan
18 Rim from the Union Street Small Business
19 Association. First, I have so many things to say,
20 but first is that from muni #2, muni #3, from
21 Union Street, is 0.6 miles from Union Street.
22 Muni #2 is 0.5 miles from Union Street. That's,
23 the walking average for a person is 25 to 30 ... 2.5
24 to 3.0 miles an hour. I walked and there's seven
25 to nine stop signs you have to pass through.

1
2 That's 30 minutes back and forth. You know, I
3 mean, you're going to buy a coffee to walk 30
4 minutes and come back 30 minutes? It just doesn't
5 make sense. There's, you know, there's 2,000 ...
6 like, there's a lot of stores didn't make it
7 because it is our seventh time I had to close my
8 store to come here, and a lot of people are tired,
9 you know, because a lot of stores, you know, work
10 day by day. You know, if there's, like if this
11 starts, and if this development starts, you know,
12 we have to make sure ... we have to ... we need
13 parking spaces while during construction, we need
14 marketing money for Union Street merchants because
15 it's very unique for Korean merchants there, you
16 know. And we need to make sure, if we cannot make
17 it, we need a grant to go somewhere else. But we
18 ... the most important thing is, we need to get it
19 in writing, without that, you know, an empty
20 promise is an empty promise. And you know, we
21 need to make sure, you know, to save the small
22 businesses in downtown Flushing. Without that,
23 you know, create 2,000 jobs, because you're losing
24 2,00 businesses. That's right.

25 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

2 But let me throw a question out there first, just
3 to start. No, are you just with them, or are you
4 testifying?

5 MR. BERGMAN: I'm testifying.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You are? Oh,
7 I'm sorry. Could I see, did we call your name
8 out?

9 MR. BERGMAN: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Wait, wait,
11 what's your name?

12 MR. BERGMAN: Craig Bergman.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Oh, you are,
14 okay. Okay. Okay, all right, briefly, okay.
15 Sorry, I thought you weren't here.

16 MR. BERGMAN: That's all right.

17 Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Craig Bergman, on
18 behalf of the Mitchell-Linden Civic Association.
19 The Association has over 3,500 families in the
20 Mitchell-Linden community. They strongly oppose
21 the Flushing development in downtown Flushing.
22 The development will have a disastrous effect on
23 the entire Flushing area. Many of us have been
24 part of the community for over 50 years. We know
25 the community and hope that our concerns will be

1
2 seriously considered. Our community has been
3 inundated with the construction of luxury, multi-
4 use complexes that have stood empty for years, and
5 a new police academy is being built on 28th Avenue
6 and College Point Blvd. This is expected to draw
7 at least 2,000 members. The Caldor property at
8 Roosevelt Avenue and Main Street, the hub of
9 downtown Flushing, has been renovated by the owner
10 and will provide retail stores, a supermarket and
11 a restaurant, with only 350 parking spaces. This
12 property is just one block west of the proposed
13 Flushing Commons. The design for Flushing Commons
14 as originally proposed has been altered, and does
15 not provide the necessary services for its
16 residents, shoppers or employees. Adjacent to the
17 Flushing Commons, the Macedonia Church will be
18 constructing 140 affordable housing units with no
19 provision for parking. In addition, three high
20 rise luxury condos, known as the Skyview Park
21 Towers, just six blocks from the proposed site of
22 the construction, of an additional 600 units in
23 three additional buildings. A 140 unit housing
24 proposal is also planned for 35th Avenue and
25 College Point Blvd. The traffic gridlock that

1
2 presently exists has paralyzed the entire main
3 arteries throughout the area, and recommendations
4 to DOT to ease congestion have fallen on deaf
5 ears. Public transportation is poor and very
6 limited. There's nothing proposed to meet the
7 demand for thousands of additional riders,
8 excessive overcrowding, congestion, over-utilized
9 schools and lack of parking will deter prospective
10 buyers from seeking homes in our community,
11 diminishing the values of co-ops and our private
12 homes. Flushing Commons is a city unto itself and
13 does not belong in an already densely populated
14 area in Flushing. We invite you to join us in a
15 tour of our community before you cast your vote on
16 Flushing Commons. It is inconceivable that these
17 projects are being ... Please vote no on Flushing
18 Commons.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

20 Let me ask first, Mr. Lipsky, I don't know if you
21 were listening when I asked Mr. Pinsky about the
22 original RFP and the current project. He claimed
23 the only difference between the original RFP and
24 this is that it has more public space. I know you
25 had raised this as an issue at one point, you

1
2 thought there was a big difference between the
3 RFP, is that true?

4 MR. LIPSKY: It was our
5 understanding, and, that the original project was
6 a lot less dense, and it has been added onto, more
7 density has been added on since. That was our
8 information. I think if that information is true,
9 it would make a lot more sense, because what we're
10 asking for here is to reduce the density of the
11 project, particularly its retail component.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Where did you
13 get the information that it was more dense before?
14 Say your name again, Jim.

15 MR. GERSON: Jim Gerson. The
16 developer was selected based on a considerably
17 smaller project.

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, all
19 right. Let me ask another question quickly, about
20 parking. You talked about the long ... they claim
21 that the long-term parking, on the top level in
22 particular, of the current municipal lot, you
23 know, is ... everyone on the top is basically long-
24 term parking. You say that 80% of those people
25 probably work in Flushing, which I tried to raise

1
2 with him as well, with Mike, because it seemed
3 like they were getting there awfully late if
4 they're going to work in Manhattan. So they
5 probably ought to work ... a lot of them are
6 probably working locally. But let me ask this.
7 They claim they're going to ... a lot of those long-
8 term parkers are going to get moved to Shea
9 Stadium, or Citi Field. Is that a viable option
10 for those people? I mean, can't they just hop on
11 the #7 train and take it one stop?

12 MR. GERSON: Yes they could, but
13 what it ignores is that there is also a 500,000
14 square foot ... the 500,000 square feet of
15 development and 1,900, they claim, new jobs. So
16 those people are also ... excuse me, those people
17 are also going to need a place to park. They
18 can't hop on the #7. It's not attractive, but- -

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
20 But those people ... well, why can't they park there
21 as well? I mean, they're coming to work, if
22 they're working there.

23 MR. GERSON: It's about game days.

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right.

25 MR. GERSON: It's about bad

1
2 weather, it's about problems like that. People
3 just don't want to do that. So they have to deal
4 with it.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes, sure, you
6 can ... yes.

7 MR. KETCHAM: I just wanted to ...
8 Brian Ketcham. The EIS assumes they can move 600
9 parkers to Citi Field or municipal lot #2. The
10 report that I have distributed, I've given you
11 folks, I can demonstrate that they need 1,900
12 spaces at a minimum, and that if they find it
13 impossible to get cooperation from those 600 that
14 they claim they're going to move, they're going to
15 need 2,500 spaces.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And your issue
17 ... and that's not during construction only, you're
18 talking about after construction?

19 MR. KETCHAM: No, this is after the
20 completion of the project, and that's based on
21 correcting many, many flaws in their technical
22 analysis, they have set the limit of 1,600 spaces
23 based on, as I said, flawed temporal distributions
24 and flawed trip generation rates, which are the
25 basis for establishing precisely how much parking

1
2 they need. I have corrected for those errors in
3 the report that I've given you.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Good. You
5 guys can both answer, but do it very quickly. Go
6 ahead, one at a time.

7 MR. BARRISON: I just want to- -

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
9 And say your name.

10 MR. BARRISON: Steven Barrison,
11 Small Business Congress. Helen Marshall
12 testified, I did hear that, and she spoke about
13 jitneys in the Olympics and all that. I was
14 hysterically laughing because, going to see an
15 Olympic event for a few hours is a little
16 different than someone running into a neighborhood
17 store to pick something up for fifteen minutes.
18 They're not getting on a jitney, and we all know
19 in New York City, when you get out of Manhattan
20 that nobody is walking more than a few blocks. So
21 you've got to be realistic, you know, in what
22 you're proposing.

23 MR. GRAZIANO: Paul Graziano. I
24 just wanted to add that I think that, correct me
25 if I'm wrong, but I think that part of the parking

1
2 that's being proposed for Willets Point is
3 actually on a site that's proposed for development
4 at a future time by the owners of Citi Field. I'm
5 almost positive that portion of that parking, or
6 if not I'm just bringing it up that that parking
7 is the solution until that property gets
8 redeveloped with another building, which I believe
9 is an office and retail at Citi Field.

10 MR. LIPSKY: And the other point,
11 Mr. Chairman- -

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
13 Mr. Lipsky to close.

14 MR. LIPSKY: Richard Lipsky. And
15 the other point that Mr. Ketcham mentioned in his
16 report is that when you build double stacked
17 parking in muni lot #2, that's going to take
18 tremendous time in and out, and what's going to
19 happen again, the backup of people who are going
20 to look for parking, get their cars out, and other
21 people waiting to come in. All of that hasn't
22 been considered by the developer in the post-
23 construction phase.

24 MR. KETCHAM: Could I add one more
25 point?

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Sure.

3 MR. KETCHAM: The FEIS makes it
4 very clear that by 2013 without this project, that
5 on-street parking is going to be 7% over capacity.
6 7%, that means three or four hundred motorists an
7 hour are going to be looking for off-street
8 parking, complicating this whole problem
9 dramatically, and it's simply not addressed in the
10 FEIS.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Seabrook
12 had a question, or two.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: It will
14 just be two short questions. One is, Richard, in
15 reference to the issue of the small businesses
16 that are there, what effect would the changing of
17 the parking agreement that Council Member John Liu
18 had, what effect does that have now with the new
19 arrangement on the small businesses in existence?

20 MR. LIPSKY: Well, Mr. Rim, Ikhwan
21 Rim, has done the analysis, surveyed the retail
22 businesses on Union Street and beyond. 70% of
23 those, their customers drive to shop. So any
24 inconvenience that interrupts that ability will
25 then impact the viability of those stores to

1
2 continue to survive, and that's not even including
3 the three years of construction phase. We just
4 don't know, and what Steve Barrison is saying, Mr.
5 Seabrook, is that you don't have people walking
6 five or six blocks, parking, to go to the
7 neighborhood retail, and then just to add on, and
8 amplify to your question, if we look at this EIS,
9 in the Willets Point studies, they did two
10 separate traffic studies that contradicted
11 themselves. I won't go into that. In this EIS,
12 they contradict themselves in the same document.
13 In the socio-economic impact study, they increase
14 the number of national destination retail. Why do
15 they do that? They do that because it then shows
16 that there will be less direct competition, they
17 believe, with the local businesses. But then they
18 go to the traffic section and the number of
19 destination retail is reduced to 26,000 and the
20 rest is local retail. Why? Because local retail
21 generates less traffic. So you have a document
22 that speaks out of both sides of its mouth. When
23 you look at the impact study, and Brian Paul from
24 Hunter College will be here in the next opposing
25 panel, and you should question him thoroughly on

1
2 this, there will be 450 businesses who will be
3 directly in competition with the businesses that
4 are being placed in Flushing Commons, assuming we
5 can believe what the developer is saying, because
6 once you approve this project, they can do any
7 damn thing they please, with whoever they want to
8 put in there, up to ... within reason. But whatever
9 they say in the EIS is so often, just as in
10 Gateway Mall down in Brooklyn, now we're looking
11 at Walmart ... not to say Walmart is going to be
12 here, but it could be anything that the developer
13 can get a tenant to pay for.

14 MR. KETCHAM: Can I just add a
15 point to that? You just heard that 70% of the
16 folks who shop in downtown Flushing drive. The
17 assumption in the FEIS is that 20% will drive, the
18 rest will walk or take public transit, and that's
19 how they result in the under-reporting of the
20 amount of parking that's needed for this project.

21 MR. RIM: My name is Ikhwan Rim and
22 I did the study. What I did was, I went to every
23 store and told them to get the customer's zip
24 code, and they're from all over the city. Some
25 are from New Jersey, Connecticut. You cannot take

2 a train from Connecticut to here, and we asked,
3 that's how I got the numbers, 70%. 70% of the
4 people, customers, parked at muni lot #1. Without
5 the parking lot, these are the bread and butter
6 for these small businesses, for us, and I did
7 have, I forgot to mention, I have 15,000
8 signatures opposing the project. No, it's not a
9 copy, it's the original, so I need to make a copy
10 and ... no, I'm going to make a copy tomorrow.
11 Today and ... yes. Because- -

12 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE:

13 (Interposing) I saw it already.

14 MR. RIM: I should make a copy for
15 everybody.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Just for
17 the record, I saw it already and there were
18 people, just to elucidate his point, you know, the
19 community, the Asian community, whether you live
20 in Montauk, Long Island or Greenwich, Connecticut,
21 tends to use Flushing as a shopping destination,
22 and that's what he alluding to, so there were zip
23 codes, I was surprised at the zip codes, because
24 there are people that were as far out as Montauk,
25 as far out as Bridgeport, Connecticut and parts of

1
2 New Jersey, that are shopping in downtown
3 Flushing, because of the products and services
4 that are unique to the Asian community,
5 Asian/Korean, Asian community, I'll just leave it
6 at that.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Now, in
8 listening to the presentation, I thought, and
9 correct me if I'm wrong, I thought that there
10 would be no competition, that would allow that to
11 happen with the national development and
12 everything, and all of the other things that are
13 going to be placed in this development. So that's
14 the impression that I got, that that wasn't going
15 to happen. That the existing businesses- -

16 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE:
17 (Interposing) I think that ... just to interrupt, I
18 think that the issue of business location, my
19 understanding was that the average size within the
20 complex was going to tend towards larger
21 facilities. Clearly a complex of this size with
22 lend itself to whatever type of business is going
23 to move in there. But the issue of, I think, the
24 \$2 million for the program, which I think could be
25 increased, the issue of making sure that there is

1
2 parking, as I talked about earlier, on Union
3 Street and 39th Avenue, both during construction
4 and post-construction, to make sure ... and the
5 issue of maintaining the parking subsidy in
6 perpetuity, I think, all lends itself to the ... and
7 to businesses that exist now, having a competitive
8 edge. And I think that we could do both if we sit
9 down and get this done prior to the vote.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Yeah, that
11 was my concern, how best you deal with the issue
12 of the small businesses that are in existence
13 within the area, to allow that level of parking
14 for people who come from all over for a certain
15 product that would be allowed, I would hope that
16 that could be worked out before we deal with this
17 particular issue. And affordable, of course.

18 MR. RIM: Yeah, what happened is ...
19 I'm sorry, is that the parking rates, you know,
20 after they're built, is going to be three dollars,
21 two dollars, three dollars, around there. A lunch
22 special in Union Street is \$5.99, \$4.99. So if
23 you park \$4.00, \$5.00 ... \$4.00 for parking and you
24 pay for a lunch for \$5.00, it's not a competition,
25 this. You know, it means you're getting a lunch

1
2 for \$10.00. So I mean, are you're going to go to
3 shop in Flushing? I think that's not true. I
4 mean, Union Street? You know, unless your lunch
5 special is very, very special.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Well, Mr.
7 Rim, let me just say for the record that I've
8 always been opposed to any parking money going for
9 shopping. I find that, it's just to me, it ain't
10 real, but that's how I feel.

11 MR. BERGMAN: It's not just you,
12 there's a significant dropoff in Kings Plaza in
13 Brooklyn because they have a charge.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Yeah, I just
15 have a real problem with that, but I think that
16 there has to be some sense of how you deal with
17 people who are there, who ... small businesses who
18 sustain all of this and allow this to happen, so
19 I'm certain that with these minds that are here,
20 something can be worked out to deal with that
21 particular issue.

22 MR. LIPSKY: Well, to answer ... to
23 respond to your question and comment, Mr. Council
24 Member, one of the best ways to prevent the
25 problems for the small businesses is to reduce the

1
2 density of the retail component of the project.
3 There is so much retail being constructed in and
4 around Flushing, downtown and in its environs,
5 that ... and certainly the businesses in downtown
6 Flushing would be ecstatic if you increased the
7 amount of housing in the development, because,
8 very simply, there'd be more customers and less
9 competitors.

10 MR. RIM: You know, losing- -

11 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE:

12 (Interposing) Okay, just in the matter of time,
13 you guys, you can't jump in on every question. I
14 know my Chair is trying to filter through, so I'm
15 just defending the process.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I appreciate
18 that.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: And then,
20 you know, while I have the opportunity, you know,
21 we had this discussion, and I don't buy it. So,
22 you know, I think that the more retail
23 opportunities you have in the area creates an
24 opportunity for the whole area to be lifted. You
25 know, I have to tell you, I have an intern in my

1 office that is not Asian. She would love to see
2 H&M, you know, Kohl's, other large stores come
3 into the area that are not in competition. And my
4 understanding, talking to people from the Flushing
5 area, they would like to see stores that are
6 available to general merchandise attraction, and I
7 would believe that the developer would be going
8 for those stores to make sure that he is not in
9 competition with the local mix. If I were a
10 developer, I would be trying to make sure that the
11 stores you bring in, in a footprint as large as
12 that, would number one, be amenable to maximizing
13 their footprint, and also be in non-competition
14 with stores that we should do everything we can to
15 protect the indigenous stores that are there. So
16 I think that we can do both with this project, but
17 we need to communicate those needs and desires
18 now, prior to the vote. I don't think that, with
19 an opportunity to build a hundred, almost a
20 million feet of commercial retail space, that
21 there needs to be a clash of mix of stores that
22 are coming in there. I think that that would only
23 happen if we don't continue to keep a high level
24 of communication. So I don't necessarily agree
25

1
2 with the competitive stores issue, I understand
3 the five dollar lunch issue, and clearly the need
4 to be able to have a transportation that would
5 still allow somebody that wants a five dollar
6 lunch, for him to pay as minimum parking as
7 possible with the closest access possible to get
8 to that. But if I look at those stores down
9 there, there are not that many five dollar lunch
10 stores still left in that area. You know, they
11 aren't anywhere in that area. And I'll be ... and
12 as you know, I'd be more than happy to find every
13 five dollar lunch store in there, but that's,
14 yeah, that's a frank, right. But, you know, in
15 either case, I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, I just want to
16 say that there's a compatibility issue. When
17 you're building a million feet of square footage,
18 you're trying to get, I don't remember all the
19 shopping stores now, I'm not going to say what
20 stores I go to, but they clearly ... my daughter is
21 16, young children would like to have more large
22 stores to shop for clothes, to national retailers
23 like Strawberry or Victoria's Secret or Whole
24 Foods, there's not a real grocery ... there's a lot
25 of ... there's a lot of actually excellent grocery

2 stores in the area, with excellent produce stores
3 in the area, but there's no large major grocery
4 store in that area. So you know, I think that
5 there are plenty of opportunities to attract
6 national stores in a million square foot location.
7 So I understand the need, but we can do both,
8 maintain and retain the businesses that are there,
9 help those businesses actually do marketing in
10 this process, with this plan, and get the city to
11 commit to that as part of, before the vote.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,
13 Leroy. Can you try to refrain from mentioning
14 lunch, given the hour. And last, the last panel
15 that just wants to ask some questions is Mr.
16 Halloran, Council Member Halloran.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Thank
18 you, Chair. First I'd just like to address a
19 question to Mr. Lipsky. You know, I've sat
20 through and listened to your criticisms, and many
21 of them I agree with, and you know that. And I
22 have expressed my reservations about the parking
23 and the traffic situation in particular. I agree
24 with Chair Comrie when he says that competition ...
25 and I'm surprised to even hear that come out of

2 your mouth, that, you know, the competition would
3 be an issue for you, because I know, deep down
4 inside there is a competitive individual there who
5 takes all challenges and is more than willing to
6 throw his hat in there.

7 MR. LIPSKY: You misread me.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Okay, all
9 right. You would agree with us, though, that in
10 terms of the discussions that have been had in the
11 past, getting us to this point, that the critical
12 issues that you're addressing now really revolve
13 around the parking situation and then the density
14 of the retail stores that we're discussing as
15 being the two most egregious, I guess you'd call
16 it, problems in this plan, yes?

17 MR. LIPSKY: Yes.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Okay. So
19 if the developer were to tackle the parking
20 problem head on and find the additional parking
21 that we both agree needs to be found here, and
22 some modification to the retail program was
23 established, whether that means combining some
24 space to create a smaller number of vendors, or
25 utilizing some of that as additional maybe

2 community service space. I know that there are
3 elected officials who are in the building that is
4 adjacent to that, and that there are other
5 organizations that could potentially utilize that
6 space. If that were taken care of, those two
7 issues, would you be so vehement in your
8 opposition to what we find down here?

9 MR. LIPSKY: Well actually, as the
10 former chair of this committee, Walter McCaffrey,
11 once told me, the devil is in the details. But
12 clearly, going back to what Jim and Ikhwan said,
13 everything is interconnected, that if you are
14 advocating competition for national retailers, you
15 have to understand that they generate four times
16 as much traffic as local retail does.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN:
18 Absolutely.

19 MR. LIPSKY: So there is an
20 interconnection there, if you reduced the size and
21 scope and you leave the amount of parking as is,
22 you create a more amenable situation.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: I
24 understand.

25 MR. LIPSKY: And going back to what

1
2 the Chairman said, there is a huge amount of
3 opportunities in and around this area to get all
4 of those goods. This is a special, unique retail
5 area, and that's our concern that it is preserved
6 to as great extent as possible.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN:

8 Understood. But I mean, you would agree with me,
9 and I know you're intimately familiar, as I am,
10 with the area. We do have those big chains. In
11 fact we used to have a lot more of them, and they
12 disappeared, because business environments changed
13 in downtown Flushing. You know, there was a time
14 where you went down Roosevelt Avenue and the big
15 ones were there. You know, not ... we're not
16 talking, you know, local small businesses, we are
17 talking mega stores that were there. And they've
18 gone, by and large. You know, we don't have that
19 same corridor operating the same way as it did 30
20 years ago. So you would agree with me, though,
21 that 2,000 plus construction jobs is something
22 that we are desperately in need of, 2,000 union
23 construction jobs right now in downtown Flushing
24 is something that's critical, given the economic
25 environment we find ourselves in.

2 MR. LIPSKY: I think, Mr.
3 Councilman, that there's no one on this panel who
4 has said they shouldn't be building at Flushing
5 Commons.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Okay.
7 No, and I'm not putting words in your mouth, but-

8 -

9 MR. LIPSKY: (Interposing) No, but
10 I see your legal training is, I'm sure you would
11 agree, I guess I can't disagree when you say that.
12 But the business model has changed. Those big
13 stores are now being built in auto-dependent
14 malls, not on main streets.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Right.

16 MR. LIPSKY: And that's the
17 difference here, and if you know what Flushing is
18 like, you put those national destination retailers
19 in too dense and compact, you just make things a
20 lot worse for Flushing.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN:
22 Absolutely. And I'd just like to ask Mr. Graziano
23 a question. We're friends, and I know you're
24 working very hard on this. In the course of
25 dealing with Community Board #7, which vetted many

1
2 of these issues, I know that you've made several
3 proposals, the community board adopted several of
4 those proposals. If the community board's
5 proposals are adopted, are you in favor of the
6 project?

7 MR. GRAZIANO: That's going to help
8 the project a lot. It's, the issue is that there
9 are something like 17 stipulations. I know that
10 the Community Board chair and vice chair are here.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Yes.

12 MR. GRAZIANO: But, you know, it
13 goes back to actually something Richard was
14 talking about, which is that it's also the type of
15 business. The kind of business that the people in
16 the larger Flushing community would like to see,
17 for example, is the movie theater that was
18 promised.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Right.

20 MR. GRAZIANO: In the actual
21 proposal, which has now been stripped.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: And the
23 bookstore. And the bookstore.

24 MR. GRAZIANO: And the bookstore.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Yes.

1
2 MR. GRAZIANO: Which was also
3 stripped, and those are things that are
4 destination retail, that will actually bring in
5 more ... we have not had, we are, what, the third
6 largest retail area?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Yes.

8 MR. GRAZIANO: We have not had a
9 movie theater in downtown Flushing for 24 years.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Till
11 somebody took the RKO Keith.

12 MR. GRAZIANO: That's correct.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Stripped
14 it bare and destroyed a national landmark.

15 MR. GRAZIANO: There you go. There
16 you go.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: I still
18 remember that building company.

19 MR. GRAZIANO: Exactly. So the
20 point that I'm getting at is, again, I request
21 that the Council people read the REDO position,
22 because it will certainly mitigate ... and again, we
23 agree with a lot of the issues that the commercial
24 and the business folks are proposing, but I think
25 as a package, and where I'm coming at it from, the

1
2 residents' point of view, as is I think the
3 gentleman from Mitchell-Linden.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Yes.

5 MR. GRAZIANO: Which is, this is
6 more than just about business. This is about the
7 future of this community and the downtown area.
8 So I hope that answers your question.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: I
10 appreciate. Finally, Mr. Ketcham, just thank you
11 for all the work, I have read your research, I do
12 appreciate it. I am always nervous when the EDC
13 tells me something, because generally speaking
14 it's not usually the truth. And so I appreciate
15 your revisiting the data that they have supplied,
16 and I agree with you 100% that there are some
17 holes in their math, and I was able to do that
18 without an engineering degree. So thanks very
19 much for your time.

20 MR. KETCHAM: Thank you. Let me
21 just clarify one thing.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Thank
23 you, Mr. Graziano.

24 MR. KETCHAM: The way you get to
25 the- -

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
3 Quickly.

4 MR. KETCHAM: ... increased need for
5 parking is that a lot more trips are going to be
6 generated. Traffic is going to be twice as bad as
7 what they ... the number of trips they're going to
8 generate are going to be twice as bad, the
9 intensity of congestion is going to be worse and
10 more widespread.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, thank
12 you. This panel is going to be dismissed now.
13 I'm sure we'll have future- -

14 MR. LIPSKY: (Interposing) Thank
15 you, Mr. Chairman.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: ... discussions.
17 Thank you, you can lunch, yes. Go have lunch.
18 All right. So now I'm going to call a panel in
19 favor, again, limited to two minutes. Let me
20 start with Jack Friedman from the Queens Chamber
21 of Commerce, we may need an extra chair up there,
22 by the way. Myra Herce from the Flushing Chamber
23 of Commerce, Terence Park from Our Flushing
24 Political Coalition, Roland Wade from the Flushing
25 Chamber and whatever else it is, and Paul Custer,

1
2 from the YMCA. And then from Community Board #7,
3 Chuck Apelian and Gene Kelty. And, I know it's a
4 big panel, but we are lucky and very privileged to
5 be joined by some distinguished members of the
6 labor movement, and they've been gracious enough
7 to have one spokesman. They've been gracious
8 enough to let one person be their spokesperson,
9 but I will read off the names of these
10 distinguished people. James Conway from the
11 Operating Engineers, Jack Kittle from District
12 Council 9, the painters union, Michael Halpin,
13 from the Elevator Construction Local 100, Mark
14 Hansen from Local 3 IBW, John Early from the
15 Carpenters Union, Michael Rodin from the District
16 Council of Carpenters, and Elliot Hecht, also from
17 Local 3, as well as here from the Carpenters
18 Union, Patrick Elkin, William McCade and Marina
19 Vranich. Mike McGuire, I think has been elected
20 spokesperson on behalf of this group who's here.
21 Mike, right? From the Mason Tenders, and he will
22 speak on behalf of the entire labor slate, but
23 they are here in mass number, but they were nice
24 enough to try to help me get this thing moving
25 along. So, let's see, we've got a big party up

1
2 here. Mike, since you're representing so many
3 people, why don't we let you go first? How's
4 that, panel, is that all right? You've got to get
5 to a mic, though. Everybody, please say your name
6 for the record, we are going to try to put it to a
7 two minute time limit, so please try to abide by
8 that, I know it's difficult, considering you are
9 talking for ten people, but please try to do that,
10 Mike, and thank you.

11 MR. McGUIRE: Thank you, Mr.
12 Chairman. And I will be brief, I want to make a
13 few brief comments, and then I would like to
14 quickly turn it over to my colleague, Jim Conway,
15 who is actually a Flushing resident and so he can-
16 -

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
18 Oh now you're changing the rules, but okay, go
19 ahead.

20 MR. McGUIRE: Well.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Quickly, go
22 ahead. State your name again.

23 MR. McGUIRE: Mike McGuire, Mason
24 Tenders District Council, I represent the
25 laborers, I'm speaking on behalf of the Building

1
2 Construction Trades Council of Greater New York
3 here today. The Building Construction Trades
4 Council represents over 100,000 highly-skilled
5 workers in New York City. And I can say without a
6 doubt that the Trades Council 100% fully supports
7 this project. We've all submitted our testimony
8 in writing, so I'm going to go away from it, I
9 want to address a few little things. Council
10 members Vann and Reyna brought up the MBE issue,
11 and while we support MBE's and WBE's, it should
12 always be remembered that MBE's and WBE's do not
13 necessarily translate into good jobs for the
14 workers. The way for good jobs to workers come
15 from, is to make sure you have 100% unionized
16 workforce. And, you know, as far as the diversity
17 issue, the building trades unions are highly
18 diverse. My particular union is a majority
19 minority union. As a matter of fact, our
20 apprenticeship program, which is over a decade old
21 at this point, since its inception has been 85%
22 people of color or women. So Councilwoman Chin
23 also mentioned living wage, and again, the
24 Building Trades Council supports living wage for
25 workers, we are workers' advocates, it's something

1
2 we believe in. The reason I bring it up at this
3 point is because Mr. Lipsky pointed out there's
4 2,100 businesses in Flushing right now, I'd like
5 to know how many of them are paying a living wage
6 to their workers, or how many of them are using an
7 exploited workforce. With that said, with that
8 said, I'd like to turn it over to my colleague Jim
9 Conway to say a few brief statements.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Go ahead, Jim.
11 We'll let you run slightly over.

12 MR. CONWAY: Thank you, Councilman,
13 and I also want to thank you for supporting health
14 care for 9/11 workers. Many Flushing residents
15 ran down to 9/11 to work and do the recovery down
16 at Ground Zero. These Flushing residents are
17 suffering unemployment, they need jobs, they need
18 these construction jobs, they need the 900 jobs
19 that will be generated from this project. Also,
20 we have Flushing residents that are serving in
21 Iran (sic) and Iraq. They will come ... and
22 Afghanistan, and they will come back and work in
23 our Helmets to Hard Hats program and work at the
24 Flushing Commons. These Flushing residents need
25 jobs, let's get these jobs, let's bring it back to

1
2 these ... let's bring it back to the way Flushing
3 was, and get our people working. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,
5 James. Thank you all, thank you very much. Who
6 wants to go next? Mr. Friedman, find a seat, I
7 know you have some foot issues over there, I want
8 you to have that ... Jack, you want to ... you can go
9 first, or however you want to do it. You guys
10 want to fight it out, okay. And make sure, state
11 your name again.

12 MR. FRIEDMAN: My name is Jack
13 Friedman, I'm the Executive Director of the Queens
14 Chamber of Commerce. I'm here on behalf of our
15 1,200 member businesses throughout Queens county.
16 I'm here to express Queens Chamber of Commerce's
17 strong support for the Flushing Commons
18 development project, poised to transform downtown
19 Flushing. The visionary development will generate
20 thousands of new jobs for Queens residents,
21 provide critically important open space to a
22 neighborhood that desperately needs it, and offer
23 an incredible array of benefits to all the
24 surrounding community. I'm not going to go into
25 the details of how many jobs and what the costs

1
2 are, we've gone through that. I just want to
3 really say that, on behalf of Queens businesses
4 and merchants from Flushing and throughout the
5 borough, we strongly urge you to join the
6 Chamber's support of Flushing Commons, because we
7 simply cannot afford to let this type of major
8 private investment and the opportunities it brings
9 to Queens pass us by. Thank you for your
10 consideration, and just on two minor points, since
11 I have a little bit of time. On the parking
12 point, we agree that parking is still an issue, it
13 continues to be an issue. But I think the Chair
14 raised a great point, when you look at the parking
15 and you see how many employees and owners of
16 businesses are taking up spots that could be used
17 for shoppers, I will tell you from personal
18 anecdote, I've worked for many companies where the
19 employees are forced to park a little bit further
20 away. Those are the ones that can take the
21 jitney. No one is going to take a jitney for a
22 cup of coffee, but the employers can force their
23 own employees to stay a little bit further away,
24 and there's plenty of spots along College Point
25 Blvd. and the other two spots that were pointed

1
2 out by Mr. Meyer. I think that's a real good
3 point. I think there's also other things that
4 could be done with the \$2 million mediation money,
5 in terms of validation while the construction
6 project is going on that maybe we could talk
7 about, that will ease kind of the burden that's on
8 the existing businesses during the construction
9 period. So again, you have to support this
10 project, we have to continue to talk about, as has
11 been said, the details, but we have to support
12 this type of economic growth. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

14 Mr. Park, I guess. Say your name again anyway.

15 MR. PARK: Terence Park, President
16 of Our Flushing Political Coalition. Good
17 afternoon, ladies and gentlemen and Chairman
18 Weprin and Chairman Comrie, and honorable Council
19 members. Mr. Comrie, when your mother visits you
20 in town, please consider visiting our Flushing
21 community. I cannot promise you we have the best
22 steakhouse and Italian food, but I can assure you
23 we have the best Asian food, with all due respect
24 to Council Member Ms. Chin and Chinatown, we have
25 the best, the best Korean and Chinese restaurants,

1
2 but I cannot promise you that I'm able to take you
3 to a \$4.99 or a \$5.99 store, because there is no.
4 You know, I'm a long time resident in the Flushing
5 community, my father lives at 37th Avenue, right
6 across from the municipal parking lot, and he's 84
7 and my mother is 78. My two sons were born in
8 Flushing, at the hospital of Queens, and my
9 brother lives in downtown Flushing. And I have
10 great pride as an Asian-American that we are the
11 conducive citizens to revitalize the economic
12 situation in Flushing, back in 1970's, '80's and
13 '90 and I'm proud of that. But what we need in
14 downtown Flushing is the face of America. Now my
15 kid is seven years old and wants to buy some book,
16 I have to drive out of Flushing to go to Barnes
17 and Noble. Wake up in the morning and have a
18 decent breakfast with my dad, I have to drive out
19 of Flushing. We used to have six diners, and we
20 have none right now. And there's no open space.
21 And my father and my mother and seniors have no
22 place to go. With this YMCA, my kid and thousands
23 of kids in Flushing will take great advantages,
24 and seniors will take great advantages. I learn
25 in my life there's sunshine days and cloudy days,

2 if I could have more sunshine days and less cloudy
3 days, I'll take sunshine and then I'll be happy
4 about that. And this project is about many
5 sunshine days ahead of us in downtown Flushing for
6 our community. So I'm for it. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Mr.
8 Park. Actually, I'd like to call on the community
9 board members, if you two could switch out of
10 those seats and let them sit at that first mic,
11 because their names ... because the community board
12 is set to come up a lot and I know you guys are
13 important testimony. So Chuck, whoever wants to
14 go first, I don't know. Make sure to say your
15 name.

16 MR. KELTY: Thank you, thank you
17 very much. I'm Gene Kelty, I'm Chairman of
18 Community Board #7. You'll have to take your
19 pencils out and correct it, I put good morning, we
20 can put good afternoon on that.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: If you're not
22 careful, it will be good evening.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Yeah, if
24 it's not good evening, yeah.

25 MR. KELTY: Yeah, but I went from

1
2 good evening to good morning. Yes. I'm here to
3 talk about two projects that came before our board
4 for our review and recommendation. The first
5 project is Flushing Commons, as it used to be
6 known as municipal parking lot #1. This site is a
7 high quality mixed-use housing and commercial
8 development. The board had discussions on this
9 project for many years. To reinforce our concerns
10 regarding this site, the co-chair of the zoning
11 committee, Mr. Chuck Apelian on December 13th of
12 2003 proposed a resolution to send to the city
13 regarding the RFP's that went on the site and how
14 it would be a tremendous financial revenue to the
15 city, but some of the revenue must be reinvested
16 back to the downtown Flushing project for programs
17 and projects in that area. This project had many,
18 many committee meetings regarding the components,
19 housing issues, parking issues, traffic
20 circulation, which is a major concern to the
21 board. The investment of the purchase price and
22 how some of it would be reinvested back in the
23 area. The youth center, the YMCA, signage, police
24 coexisting with this project. Currently Community
25 Board #7 has one of the largest police stations,

1
2 or as it's known, a super-district precinct, and
3 it's located directly opposite this project. In
4 the past, part of the parking lot was used for
5 many of the vehicles used in crimes or for
6 evidence. These vehicles sat in the parking lot
7 anywhere from months or over a year. Furthermore,
8 they also had parking in the lot and on the
9 street. All of this had to be discussed as to
10 whether not to interrupt the operation of the
11 local precinct, but as well how it would fit into
12 the new site. And the last component of the
13 discussion was the development of Macedonia Plaza.
14 As you can see, they were not easy topics. Many
15 long hours of committee meetings as well as
16 accommodating people's schedules who were involved
17 in putting the board's recommendation together.
18 This project was certified on January 25th, 2010,
19 and from that point on the meetings started,
20 sometimes late into the night, meeting one evening
21 per week. Okay, I would ... the committee was even
22 at several meetings on the Macedonia Plaza. That
23 was broken up into housing, parking and traffic,
24 and interfacing with the Flushing Commons project.
25 The chair of the committee, Mr. Chuck Apelian, and

1
2 the committee members deserve many thanks and
3 appreciation for a very long and complicated
4 project. To keep it brief, I attach my testimony
5 and the letters and committee reports will be
6 forwarded to City Planning regarding the
7 recommendation, which we voted on March 5th. It
8 was 35 in favor, two opposed and one was
9 abstaining for conflict of interest. My biggest
10 concern, one that any board has, is our
11 recommendations. And I know with the great
12 working relationship we have with the borough
13 president, the Honorable Helen Marshall, and our
14 Councilperson, Peter Koo, and our other
15 Councilperson from our district Dan Halloran, and
16 our other elected officials, we find that ... yeah,
17 that's true, I'm sorry, Council member. I know
18 the other Weprin better, so. It slipped me, I'm
19 sorry.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: No comment.

21 MR. KELTY: But I did come up to
22 Albany to see you once. Our biggest concern is
23 our recommendation, and just to highlight that we
24 have four of them, the business interruption plan
25 must be watched carefully. The object is to

1
2 develop and encourage businesses, not to put other
3 locations out of business. The traffic plan as it
4 is now, a commitment was made that the current
5 plan of the Department of Transportation is using,
6 if it does not work by January 1st of 2011, we go
7 back to the one-way plan. The Doctoroff letter
8 for enforcing especially parking must be kept in
9 place. The city's reinvestment back into downtown
10 Flushing for projects and the concern for the
11 parking for the Macedonia Plaza, we had ... we
12 backed that project 100%, because we thought
13 affordable housing was necessary, we just felt
14 that the lack of ... no parking presented a problem
15 for the area. So our board was very happy with it
16 and we know that there are problems with it, and
17 that's the general mix of my testimony. I'll take
18 any questions or whatever.

19 MR. APELIAN: Sure, I'm Chuck
20 Apelian, I'm the vice-chair of the board and the
21 land use chair, and I've worked on this project
22 for about seven years, since we went through the
23 phasing process and conditional designation and
24 all the questions and answers, so I've lived it a
25 long time. And we've come a long way from the

1
2 Doctoroff/Liu letter and also the recent
3 Lieber/Koo letter, which was the agreement that
4 was set forth as far as some stipulations. But
5 this has a tremendous potential for being a great,
6 great, and amazing gentrification project and a
7 legacy project for downtown Flushing. This really
8 can transform Flushing into something spectacular.
9 We're very proud, we're very honored to be part of
10 this project. We're very excited about this
11 project. But the testimony that came earlier
12 today is what I want to address, because there are
13 holes, and the astuteness of the Committee, the
14 astuteness of the discussion really does pick up
15 on some of the issues. And the board did the same
16 thing. Gene alluded to some of those things, but
17 the police, I don't have to say, no matter whether
18 you're in Queens or any other borough, the police
19 department has their own culture, they park where
20 they want, they do what they want. And unless the
21 police department augments, and in writing puts in
22 a document, stating that from the military
23 standpoint, I mean, their organization, they back
24 up the Mayor's statements, it's not going to work.
25 Well, we asked for a backup of the Liu letter,

excuse me, the Koo letter, which- -

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)

Get those right.

MR. APELIAN: The Lieber/Koo letter, which stated that PD was going to tie into two things, and we'll get into that. The parking rate, the capped parking rate, which is part of the Doctoroff/Liu letter, we've addressed. We also talked about, and it's been tied into that, there's a great deal of permanent parking on a daily basis between the, not only the residents but the workers and the merchants, and the part about relocating them off-site because it's going to take the bulk of the pressure off the site. We were very, very supportive of the businesses originally from day one. When that first panel came on board, I think you'll know that we started talking with them, had them involved in every panel and every discussion. The board took the position that competition is American and it's something that should thrive and should stand on its own. But we also took the approach that ... and thank you for just a few more ... that you do not shut down. That's un-American. So the access to

1
2 these businesses during the construction process
3 is key. Keep these businesses the opportunity to
4 stay alive, give them the marketing tools, give
5 them the access tools, give people the opportunity
6 to come to their businesses, and let them make it
7 on their own. If they're good businesses, they'll
8 survive. If they're not, well, that's what
9 happens to any other business. The Macedonia
10 Plaza, we support the affordable housing complex.
11 There are a couple of things that we had some
12 questions on and were concerned about. The senior
13 affordable housing was brought up before I think
14 by Councilwoman Chin, and that was something we
15 brought into the picture. We also were very
16 concerned about the fact that 140 units were being
17 brought to this site with zero parking. We talk
18 about parking, parking, parking, this site can't
19 be exempt. 140 units, zero parking in Flushing.
20 And there's also a concern, and I brought it up
21 and we've discussed this with the congregation, is
22 that right now 200 spaces are there for them for ...
23 on Sunday worship, weddings, funerals, whatever.
24 They're gone. There's no parking for the 140
25 houses, there's no parking for the congregants of

1
2 the church, gone. And you're right across the
3 street from PD, which I just told you about, the
4 issues that we have with them. We're concerned
5 about the logjam that might be constructed on
6 Union Street because of the face of this. The Y,
7 the issue with the Y was brought up before when
8 you ... when Councilman Halloran asked Graziano
9 about the issues of the movie, the national
10 bookstore, the business-class hotel, capped
11 parking rates, all that were part of the
12 Doctoroff/Liu and not part of the Koo/Lieber
13 letter, and that came at a price. And the Y was a
14 big portion of that price. And the fact that the
15 Y now has the ability to take a hard site, real-
16 estate-wise, and not make it a soft site by
17 selling it, and we have no input, gave us grave
18 concern, because as Councilman Halloran said, on
19 Northern Blvd., prime real estate now all of a
20 sudden that becomes a soft site, it now could be a
21 real headache to us. I really would like to get
22 down to two last things and then I'm going to turn
23 it over. They say in real estate it's about
24 location, location, location. Well, in this
25 project it's about the traffic, the traffic, the

1
2 traffic. I am so concerned, I have said it to
3 everybody, if the traffic doesn't work on this
4 plan, nothing is going to work on this plan. I'm
5 greatly disappointed by NYCDOT, not Queens DOT.
6 We crafted out a parking plan ... excuse me, a
7 traffic plan, a one-way scenario. We went through
8 three iterations, we finally came on board, and
9 two weeks before certification is planned, it was
10 changed. It was changed to a plan that in my
11 opinion is going to fail miserably immediately.
12 We have to monitor this and we have to watch this
13 immediately. They just want to make two no-
14 lefthand turns, one on Northern Blvd. from Union,
15 and I don't understand this one. You can't make a
16 left turn on Union to Main ... excuse me, on
17 Northern to Main, but you go down to the next
18 block, which is Prince, which now backs up the
19 whole Flushing bridge. So I don't get it, but I
20 guess in their wisdom ... now I take task ... this is
21 Mayoral agency, this is a Mayoral-driven project,
22 and I think we really have to from the Council and
23 the community get together and make sure that the
24 Mayor and the DOT commissioner put really the
25 traffic is the issue here, because it's not just

1
2 for today, it's not just for this project, it's
3 important. The project ... the traffic doesn't work
4 now, and if it doesn't work now, put 1.2 million
5 in there and it's not going to work. Put
6 construction in and it's not going to work. I
7 support this project, but the traffic must be
8 fixed, and I really put the charge, I already
9 mentioned to Councilman Koo and to borough
10 President Marshall and I put the charge now to
11 this Council also to make sure, because it's
12 coming back to us as our delegation in the 384B4,
13 in the business terms, it's got to be in place or
14 the project won't work. The last part was the
15 reinvestment of the purchase price. \$90 million
16 was the conditional designation fee, I don't know
17 what the final price is, but it's a lot of
18 millions, a lot of zeros. And what we said was,
19 we wanted that money reinvested into the community
20 now. Why? Because we don't want to chase in the
21 capital budget later, we don't want to go into the
22 operating budget and find out it's been cut. We
23 wanted the movie theater being put back in, we
24 wanted the extension of the Flushing Main Street
25 subway mezzanine extending west to Prince Street.

1
2 We wanted a school, no one talked about the school
3 yet. I'm sure someone will. We need a school in
4 downtown Flushing. We're putting 600 units here,
5 Mus (phonetic) got 600, Keith (phonetic) got 200,
6 we need an elementary school. Put the money into
7 a school. We're not saying don't spend it, we're
8 not saying don't bring the money in. But put it
9 back now, before that money goes away. It's like
10 anything else, once the money is spent, you're
11 never going to get it back in again. And we
12 wanted the movie theater, the school, and we also
13 said, why doesn't the city purchase the YMCA
14 property and make that a parking lot? That would
15 be a good idea also.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I'll pass
17 on that.

18 MR. APELIAN: So I say in closing,
19 I'm supportive of the project, the two big issues
20 we're concerned about is the traffic and please,
21 reinvest these funds into programs today into
22 downtown Flushing, so that we really have a chance
23 to make this what it can be, a legacy, a real
24 gentrification of Flushing, like never before.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay, thank

2 you. I just defer the two-minute clock to the
3 Chair of the Land Use Committee and the Committee
4 Board Chair. Chuck and Gene are two men of great
5 integrity and knowledge, and I think it benefited
6 all of us to hear from them. So thank you, but we
7 want to go back on the clock now. And then ask
8 questions of the rest of the panel afterwards, so
9 next.

10 MS. HERCE: Okay. My name is Myra
11 Baird Herce, I'm the President of the Flushing
12 Chamber of Commerce. I have been involved in this
13 project and in this site, the site particularly,
14 for about 20 years- -

15 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE:

16 (Interposing) Sorry, Myra, I'm going to stop the
17 clock. If anybody is here for the one o'clock
18 hearing on cable, cable and the cable franchise
19 agreement, it's going, it started down at the 14th
20 floor, if you're here for that hearing. So I see
21 everybody is here for Flushing, so then we can
22 move forward. So that's why the Chair had to go
23 downstairs, and all of us will have to go down and
24 sign in, because it's a separate sign-in and
25 attendance required. I know, Robert, it's one of

1
2 those days. But this is important, so I'm sorry.
3 No, no, we'll be back, we'll be back, you're never
4 alone, you're never alone. All right, I'm sorry.

5 MS. HERCE: Okay. I have worked
6 with these two gentlemen for many years as past
7 chair of that particular community board. As a
8 matter of fact, we have been on the top of that
9 muni lot and looked at those spots that were
10 taken. They were taken by a lot of even some
11 persons who spoke here today. They have a vested
12 interest in long-term parking for \$4, but they
13 don't say that. But we who live in Flushing do
14 know that. We also know that the combination of
15 affordable housing by the Macedonian church and
16 the market-rate housing is a perfect marriage. It
17 is the most New York thing, and one of the most
18 American things there is, this combination. We
19 support that project also. What we feel very
20 strongly about is the type of stores coming in.
21 We want different types of stores. We feel very
22 strongly we should have that. We feel that there
23 is enough of all other stores out there currently.
24 We need some diversity in stores. We need
25 destination-type stores. Also, also what we feel

1
2 very strongly about is the food court. The food
3 court is an outstanding place for us as women and
4 shoppers to go and have a cappuccino, and have
5 something to eat, and have some diversified food:
6 Italian, Jewish, Russian, German, all of these
7 things, soul food, you name it. Have all of that,
8 that is the way that we see the project. We
9 support economic development and this project is
10 going to be a socko one for us. I'm so glad this
11 day has arrived, and we look forward very much to
12 the project moving forward. I'm under time.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Yes, thank
14 you for that also. The next person? Next?

15 MR. CUSTER: Hello, my name is Paul
16 Custer, I'm the Senior Vice President and Chief
17 Administrative Officer of the YMCA of New York,
18 and the YMCA has 22 Y's around the city. We serve
19 roughly 400,000 New Yorkers every year, and
20 approximately half of them are young people. I
21 won't go into all the programs, but basically they
22 revolve around kids' programs, health programs and
23 community programs. We believe Flushing Commons
24 is going to be an extraordinary opportunity for
25 the Y. Our existing building as built 85 years

1
2 ago, it was built in another time for another set
3 of purposes. And the opportunity to design and
4 build a new Y that's going to be focused and
5 designed around a specific set of programs is a
6 terrific opportunity for us. We have some
7 experience building new Y's, we've built seven of
8 them in the last ten years, and every one of them
9 we've built has had an explosion of kids using it
10 as well as families using it, and we expect that
11 in Flushing that you will have as many as 10,000
12 additional kids using that building every year.
13 The facilities, they've walked through the
14 facilities before, but we are going to have a
15 family pool, a full gymnasium that we can use two
16 separate activities at the same time, lots of all-
17 purpose spaces, child care center, and what we've
18 committed to and are excited about is a youth and
19 teen center that will be part of this. It will be
20 a prototype for our Y in the city. And we want to
21 be able to make sure that all the kids in Flushing
22 are going to be able to get access to that. We
23 designed a membership that, it will be free for
24 kids and we call it our Strong Kids Card. And
25 that will be available for kids in Flushing to be

2 able to make sure that they can participate in the
3 Y and those programs. I have my colleague here,
4 William Nelson, who is the executive of the
5 Flushing Y, so if there's any questions around
6 programs, I will defer to him.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Next
8 person?

9 MR. WADE: Okay. Mr. Chair, my
10 name is Roland Wade, I've been a Flushing resident
11 for over 45 years, working 20 years at Queens
12 Botanical Garden and 20 years at John Bowne High
13 School. Now for 25 years I served as parks chair
14 for Board 7. Flushing Commons is the answer to a
15 long-term dream to provide a diverse business, a
16 YMCA, market-rate and affordable housing, and a
17 meeting place for all cultures. The Macedonia AME
18 church has waited patiently for many years, as
19 well as our community. I waited for 30 years for
20 this dream to come true. And I am greatly in
21 favor of the development and its employment
22 opportunities. The Commons greenspace will honor
23 Flushing's great history, with the planting of
24 historic trees, shrubs and flowers. We count on
25 this space to be a place of varied restaurants,

1
2 people and activities. It will be a major
3 improvement to downtown Flushing. Now is the time
4 to do this, after such a long wait, and I just
5 want you to know that that common green will be a
6 place that will be a nucleus for the development
7 of Flushing and its beauty, because Flushing is
8 the birthplace of American horticulture. And so
9 we will have that, it will spread out from the
10 Flushing Commons throughout Flushing and we will
11 have a better community. Thank you.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay. I
13 think Jack spoke already, okay. Council Member
14 Seabrook and then Council Member Halloran. You
15 have questions?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: Yeah,
17 just a point of information and clarification, and
18 it's especially to the Macedonia church and to the
19 developer, because there was some information that
20 just wasn't correct. When McGuire made the
21 statement about minority and women-owned business,
22 it's not in competition with the unions. What we
23 need to understand, when the Chair and Reyna and
24 others, and Vann, brought up minority and women-
25 owned business, they are talking about

1
2 entrepreneurship and people who own business and
3 who actually are union shops, and it's hard for
4 me, many times, to explain to my union brothers
5 that we're not only laborers but we are owners of
6 businesses, and that we also are union shops, so
7 they get it confused and as if we're talking about
8 laborers' jobs. We're talking about minority and
9 women-owned business, these are entrepreneurs that
10 will be bidding for jobs to do various things and
11 hiring people and union people. So that confusion
12 creates that, and it creates false animosities,
13 because they don't understand what we're talking
14 about. So we're talking about, we are business
15 owners, and not all laborers, and so that needs to
16 be a point of clarification of what Chairman
17 Comrie and others were talking about. So I wanted
18 to clear that point up, so that people will
19 understand what we're talking about. Thank you
20 very much.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Thank
22 you, Mr. Chair. First, let me go out of the way
23 to commend Gene and Chuck and the work of
24 Community Board 7, who have spent countless hours
25 going through all this. It's amazing what a

1
2 community board can do when it actually sets its
3 mind to doing it, and does it in an organized
4 professional manner. Every meeting of CB7 where
5 this has been discussed, every subcommittee and
6 committee meeting, has been nothing but the utmost
7 of professionalism. And I appreciate even more so
8 the fact that you stand here today telling us you
9 support this project, but you also have questions,
10 and you want them addressed, because this is our
11 community and Peter and I are on your side 100% in
12 asking those questions. I know when the community
13 board voted and made its recommendations, it asked
14 for certain promises. I think, without belaboring
15 the point, one of the concerns raised by Mr.
16 Lipsky and the people who are right now opposed to
17 this project is their concern about an over-
18 abundance of retail stores. And if, as the
19 community board requested, a small, two-theater
20 movie house and a bookstore were provided, that
21 would clear up a lot of those issues for the space
22 requirements that were discussed by Mr. Lipsky.
23 And I know that's something the community board
24 has discussed. So, Mr. Chair, let me ask you
25 that. In regards to that, has TDC been in

1
2 discussions with you guys beyond the platitudes of
3 the discussions we've had in public forums?

4 MR. KELTY: No they haven't,
5 Councilman. As I said, we set our tone with them,
6 we explained to them, as a matter of fact, I had
7 quite a number of discussions with them regarding
8 the data. I told them as a fire chief I inspect
9 theaters in Manhattan, and some of them are small
10 and some of them are very large, and I couldn't
11 understand why we couldn't make an accommodation
12 in the Flushing site.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Okay.
14 And what you're basically looking for, I mean, and
15 if we boil this all down, there are three ... there
16 are two issues. One is the facilities, and that's
17 we're talking about a movie theater, a small
18 theater, and a bookstore, as being part of the
19 things the community had specifically requested.
20 And then the other side of it is the parking, both
21 the number of spaces and some further agreement on
22 the cap, in terms of the pricing, because
23 obviously the municipal lot would follow municipal
24 rates, and those only go up once a century, it
25 seems, at least in the city. And provided that

1
2 we're going to have numerous traffic agents
3 combing the area, and I'll be on the lookout for
4 them, it would be fair for us to say that, if
5 those two issues were resolved, most of the
6 negative perspective that we received, at least
7 the real negative perspective, the ones who have
8 legitimate concerns, would be alleviated. Would
9 you agree, Mr. Chair?

10 MR. KELTY: Yes I would, Councilman
11 Halloran.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: And the
13 other thing I just wanted to quickly just broach
14 is, I am very sensitive to religious burial
15 grounds, personally religion is a subject very
16 dear to my heart. And I know that there have been
17 at least four studies that say there's nothing
18 there. I know that they're going to take great
19 pains to make sure that if there's any issue it's
20 handled. But again, it seems like every time some
21 of these issues get addressed to resolve problems,
22 new ones become invented. Are you aware of any
23 other new issues that might pop up that we have
24 not been exposed to yet that are in the hopper, as
25 they say?

1
2 MR. KELTY: Well, I did hear that
3 before about the burial sites, and we didn't
4 mention it, but it was brought up directly to the
5 Macedonia Plaza people. I said, what happens if
6 we do find out, what are we going to do? And
7 their statement is they have a plan in place. And
8 I said, well I'm a little concerned, because I
9 don't want the hierarchy of the 200 year old
10 church, people coming screaming at me, telling me
11 that we had that. I said, a burial ground is very
12 sensitive, and I said I wanted to make sure that
13 they're all on line that we understand if you're
14 going to take the bodies out or not take the
15 bodies out. I understand a plan was in place, and
16 I spoke to the reverend about it, and he said that
17 there would be, there would be knowledge with what
18 was going on, and the bodies would be properly put
19 into another gravesite area. I then asked him,
20 does the same thing apply to the Flushing Commons,
21 do they get the same consideration, because what
22 makes it different than the church on one side and
23 the Flushing Commons on the other? (sound of
24 alarm in background)

25 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: All

1
2 right, you might appreciate this, Gene, it has
3 something to do with fire, I don't know.

4 MR. APELIAN: I'm staying with him.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: You are
6 welcome. Thank you, chief. I appreciate that. I
7 pictured a nightmare scenario there, I was like,
8 oh, you got to be kidding me.

9 MR. KELTY: That was my old
10 district. We did ask.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Okay.

12 MR. KELTY: Because we wanted to
13 make sure that if it was in place for one of the
14 projects, it should be in place for the other, and
15 that it shouldn't shut down one project and
16 somebody make an issue of it.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Right,
18 and as far as we're aware, there has been no ... the
19 current Macedonia church has no indications that
20 there would be any burial sites disturbed, because
21 their records don't reflect any recent situation.
22 The only potential possibility is a previous
23 church in the early 1800's or latter 1700's
24 possibly having been there, but we're not ... we
25 have no hard records to say that's the case.

2 MR. KELTY: That is correct. As a
3 matter of fact, it came up before, my former
4 chair, Victor Ross, brought it up.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Right.

6 MR. KELTY: Because he used to work
7 with DOT, and we wanted to make sure everybody
8 knew ahead of time when they're going in, to make
9 sure that we do take care of the ground, that
10 nothing gets desecrated or anything to that
11 effect.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Okay.

13 Thank you very much, Gene. I yield back to the
14 Chairs.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I have a
16 question for Gene and Chuck. The issues of, I
17 don't know if you heard when I spoke earlier,
18 about the issues of parking and the opportunity to
19 open up some spots by the police precinct, and to
20 create an opportunity for additional parking,
21 maybe vertical parking along Union Street and 39th
22 Street, to allow for the businesses. Have you
23 looked at those possibilities and scenarios,
24 knowing the fact that the police department is
25 taking up too much space, unnecessary space, in

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

that area?

MR. KELTY: Yes, we did speak to Commissioner Maura McCarthy on that, because at the time we were trying to get them to determine where they were going to put their new parking location. And it kept being brought up that if you take and you transfer it from one place to another, then you're taking parking away now from somebody else. They never really gave us an answer where it was going. We continued to bring it up, we know that they have to provide some type of parking for the police department, but we constantly reiterate to them that you can't impact the people that are working there, trying to get into the stores to shop, and take parking from them.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: But you think it's a possibility vertical- -

MR. KELTY: (Interposing) Well, we did talk about it, and I think they did do angle parking at one time.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Right.

MR. KELTY: On 37th.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: 37th.

2 MR. KELTY: Yeah.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: But they
4 could do angle parking now on 39th, between, on 38th
5 and Northern. And they could do angle parking now
6 on Union and create opportunities to triple the
7 amount of available spaces in the area.

8 MR. KELTY: We haven't given the
9 police department that opportunity yet, because
10 there are traffic- -

11 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE:
12 (Interposing) No, no, I'm sorry, not the police,
13 I'm talking about creating regular.

14 MR. KELTY: No, I'm just saying we
15 have- -

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN:
17 (Interposing) DOT ... Mr. Chair, just a point of
18 order, the DOT plan calls for widening the
19 sidewalks to create pedestrian malls. That would
20 only therefore accommodate angle parking on one
21 side of the street, because of the fact that, with
22 the widened pedestrian mall walk spaces, you would
23 no longer have sufficient through traffic space if
24 you did angle parking on both sides.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Yeah, I

1
2 disagree with that analysis. I think that in
3 order to help the existing businesses, I think we
4 need to look at angle parking and reduce street
5 frontage on those streets.

6 MR. APELIAN: Councilman, along
7 Union Street, as long as they stay with the two-
8 way plan.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Right.

10 MR. APELIAN: It takes that second
11 lane out on angle parking. We support it, but it
12 then provides no through lane to go, you'd have
13 just the one (inaudible) down on- -

14 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE:
15 (Interposing) I think we need to look at that, and
16 look at not widening the sidewalks, because that
17 way you could create more on-street parking.

18 MR. APELIAN: Absolutely.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: For the
20 businesses. (crosstalk) Reduce that parking from
21 the police department for the unnecessary spots
22 they have. And that way you would help with
23 business retention as well. So I'd be more than
24 willing to engage to make that fight a reality.

25 MR. KELTY: Also, we're very

1
2 concerned, that you heard what my first vice chair
3 said about the church on Sunday. There's not
4 going to be any parking then.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: That's a
6 bigger issue that we need to work on as well,
7 which is why I go back to doing angle parking on
8 Union.

9 MR. KELTY: Agreed.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: So to
11 create that opportunity, because then on Sunday
12 the church is going to sneak in all those spots
13 anyway. That's another issue, which creates a
14 need to really push the police department to
15 reduce their unnecessary parking. And I think we
16 need to work together, I'm more than willing to
17 work with you on that.

18 MR. KELTY: Thank you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I would
20 start something with the YMCA, but I'm going to,
21 in deference to time, just ask you to make sure
22 that all of the money that you raise from Northern
23 Blvd. is spent on that site, and not being given
24 to any other project, and to make sure that the
25 director stays there in perpetuity. But I ... since

1
2 he's an excellent director now, and someone that
3 I've known for a while. But I'll just assume that
4 that's what you're going to do and not ask you to
5 submit to that in person today. But hopefully
6 commit to that to the community down the line.
7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,
9 Leroy, and thank you for sitting in. Any other
10 questions here? No. Well, this panel is
11 dismissed, thank you very much. We will now have
12 a panel in opposition, it will start going a lot
13 quicker now, because my company seems to be
14 depleting, but also questions will be at more of a
15 minimum. So long, gentlemen. I know, actually I
16 think I lost my one street actually in the new
17 line, so it's good to see you. Thank you, I
18 apologize. In opposition, Sonny Han, star of the
19 New York Times. I have a Y Sonny Han, Y Sonny, is
20 that the- -

21 MS. HAN: (inaudible).

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Oh, because it
23 had different handwriting. It threw me off there.
24 Richard Lee, okay; Lucy Kung; Joseph Young, Joseph
25 Young? I'm going to go add some more names here.

1
2 I'm not sure ... I know a lot of people had to
3 leave, so I'll just keep reading them, if they're
4 here, please come up. Yung Jai Yung; David Kung ...
5 Daniel Kung, excuse me, Daniel Kung; Ramal Murphy,
6 from the Bodega Association; you want to go?
7 Okay, you want to ... oh, I did call you. Okay,
8 sir. Where were you again? Okay. All right,
9 we'll call you later, if you want. Okay. All
10 right, well, I'll keep going. What have I got so
11 far, just two, okay. Give me some (crosstalk)
12 Korean business. The Union Street Business
13 Association. I did, I didn't do these though.
14 Let me see if any of the merchants are here.
15 These are the Korean merchants? Oh, they're not
16 divided that way. Okay. Well, let's just do
17 these two gentlemen then. Brian Paul from Hunter
18 College, Arlene Fleischman from Mitchell-Linden
19 Housing, she's here? I got a feeling we lost some
20 people, I'm going to keep calling names, I'm
21 sorry. Ricardo Ruiz, I made that promise I would
22 do that. Yundia Sanchez, from Jamaica, New York.
23 Boy, it's hard to read some, with my eyes. The
24 last name is Yung, it looks like Fun Yung, 3810
25 Union Street? Do you want to help me with that?

1
2 M. Soon Choy? Jung Min Wang? Are they out there?
3 Okay, bring them in. If they're there, bring
4 them. I can't have everybody, but ... Okay. I
5 apologize for the delay, but when you're in three
6 different places here, you have to find people.
7 Just ... yeah, I don't know how many are down. Ah.
8 Did we call you as well? Come join us. I didn't
9 call these yet, I didn't call these yet. And
10 we're getting ... okay. These are all these then.
11 Mr. Rim, have we got everybody? For now, I mean,
12 the ones we called, we've got a lot more I know
13 later we'll get to them, but we've got enough for
14 a panel. Thank you.

15 MS. HAN: Yes, I was scheduled to
16 speak the first, but however he's in a rush, so
17 that he wanted to go first, if you don't mind.

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: If it's okay
19 with you, it's okay with me. Okay.

20 MR. PAUL: I'm going to read my
21 statement and run.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

23 MR. PAUL: Okay. My name is Brian
24 Paul, and I represent the Hunter College Center
25 for Community Planning and Development. Last

1
2 month we were contacted by the Flushing Coalition
3 for Responsible Development to analyze the
4 potential impact of Flushing Commons on small
5 local business. Our field survey found over 2,100
6 businesses within a half mile of the project site,
7 more than twice the number counted by AKRF for the
8 EIS. Flushing's remarkable growth over the past
9 two decades has been powered by small business.
10 Only 1.9% of downtown Flushing businesses are
11 currently chain stores or restaurants.

12 Unfortunately the EDC seems to have no real
13 knowledge or appreciation for the value of
14 Flushing's small business community. The EIS
15 presents no evidence to support the argument that
16 chain retail at Flushing Commons will only compete
17 with other existing chain retail centers. Our
18 survey found over 450 shops within a half mile of
19 the site that will directly compete with the
20 proposed 265,000 feet of shopper's goods and
21 community good's retail. These shops employ over
22 1,800 people and if further measures are not taken
23 to protect them, the loss of local retail jobs may
24 equal or exceed the gain offered by Flushing
25 Commons. If we step back from the immediate

1 context of downtown Flushing and examine citywide
2 conditions, it is clear that New York's small
3 retail businesses have been under tremendous
4 pressure from the expansion of chain stores in
5 recent years. While small businesses are closing
6 at a record rate, chain stores have continued to
7 expand their presence. Locally-owned business is
8 crucial to the vitality of our economy, because
9 they keep a higher percentage of their revenues in
10 the local economy by procuring their goods and
11 services from the local area. The synergistic
12 benefits of the small business economy are clearly
13 seen in districts like downtown Flushing, where
14 small businesses serve as the engine of
15 neighborhood growth and have led to the emergence
16 of a uniquely vibrant and diverse urban center
17 that attracts residents and visitors from
18 throughout the city and region. I urge the
19 Council to recognize the social and economic value
20 of Flushing's small business community and take
21 additional measures to protect small business from
22 the impact of this project. Such measures might
23 include downsizing the retail component, acquiring
24 a certain percentage - just one more sentence - of
25

1
2 the retail to be set aside for locally-owned
3 business, and substantially increasing the size of
4 the construction mitigation fund, which will
5 currently amount to only \$26 per month for each
6 affected business over the three year period.
7 Thank you for your time.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Go
9 get to work or wherever it is you were going, you
10 can run.

11 MR. PAUL: Okay.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right,
13 thank you. Hun Yung (inaudible) everybody, who
14 wants to go first?

15 MS. HAN: Yes, I would go first.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

17 MS. HAN: I guess the chairman left
18 his seat. Okay, thank you for the opportunity, my
19 name is Yung Yi Sunny Han. I have been working as
20 a public servant of the Flushing community for 20
21 years, and right now I'm living diagonally across
22 from the municipal parking lot #1. This municipal
23 parking lot #1 is the biggest public amenity in
24 Flushing, the one and only left in downtown
25 Flushing. And to turn this into ... giving this

1
2 away to a private individual without any serious
3 anything returned to the community is pretty ... I
4 mean, very bad. The only thing we are getting,
5 receiving, is that tiny little space in front of
6 the developer's headquarters. It is really the
7 front yard for the developer's headquarters, it is
8 only a symbolic open space, it really wouldn't
9 benefit the community at all. Please just think
10 about it, this is not an open space for the
11 community, that little open courtyard for the
12 developer's headquarters, for their customers.
13 But this is not an open space for the community,
14 this is wrong, that they can think that they are
15 talking about YMCA. We already have a YMCA, it's
16 a special YMCA, it's not as critical as other
17 amenities such as a movie theater, the bookstore
18 and whole food store and some of those things that
19 we desperately need in this community. So we get
20 nothing, in fact, in exchange, while we are losing
21 this most serious public amenity. So that's the
22 most important thing. Secondly, the developers,
23 we are giving this public land to the hands of a
24 developer who has a very bad track record. This
25 TDC, the price is development is Flushing Mall,

1
2 fifteen years ago this was such a failure and bad
3 development, they tried everything they can to
4 promote Flushing Mall, they finally gave up. This
5 is a failed project, you cannot revive this in any
6 way possible. Therefore they decided to destroy
7 it, demolish and redevelop. So that's one
8 example. I represent 30 groups today, so please I
9 should get one more minute.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Briefly,
11 please.

12 MS. HAN: So, yes ... so the
13 developer's track record that's current, their
14 most prized building, Queens Crossing, the
15 developer's headquarters, that is one of the
16 ugliest building that I have ever seen built in
17 the last ten or fifteen years in the city. This,
18 you call this a prize building? And you go in,
19 please go into the building and you get lost. You
20 cannot find places, the lobby is so long, once
21 every day at working hours you go into the lobby,
22 people are ... there are only three elevators with
23 so many small offices there, packed literally, the
24 lobby is packed with people, you cannot even get
25 into the elevator. Ikhwan, two days ago had a

1
2 meeting in the building, he had to walk ten floors
3 up through the steps, stairway, because he
4 couldn't wait for the elevator. This is a
5 disaster waiting to happen, this developer has
6 such a bad track record, please, and you have
7 somebody else to reevaluate this whole project- -

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)

9 All right, Sunny, if you could just wrap up.

10 MS. HAN: Okay. So the last point
11 is that a majority of the residents and everyone
12 around the project are opposing the project, and
13 the only people who are supporting the project are
14 political appointees and construction workers.
15 And what happens if you destroy the town just to
16 create jobs, this is not good, this is really
17 pathetic. Then America would become a
18 laughingstock by the nations of this world. So
19 please, and I guess- -

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)

21 Thank you, all right.

22 MS. HAN: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Ladies. Are
24 they going to speak as well? You're being the
25 most patient of all, the best prop.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

MS. KUNG: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I call her a prop, but a very well-behaved one at that.

MS. KUNG: My name is Lucy Kung.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: How do you do that? Go ahead, I'm sorry.

MS. KUNG: My name is Lucy Kung, I'm the vice president of Shamron Volcondo Plaza (phonetic), which is directly across the street from this proposed project, and I wanted to mention a couple of things. Everyone has talked about traffic and we certainly had enough coverage of that up to now. But I wanted to mention one thing, which is, even as it is, people are still having problems finding parking spaces, and I haven't heard many people bringing up this point. I mean, nowadays when they say that we will meet in Flushing, and usually they would put in the condition that, if I can find a parking place. And actually that happens quite frequently. And the second thing I wanted to mention is about the sanitation condition, which no one has mentioned. I mean, at least today. Flushing is a wonderful place to live, and is a very convenient place to

1
2 be. However, everyone will make the comment that,
3 oh, if only this place could be cleaner. And it
4 is definitely true that, I mean we can really
5 improve the sanitary conditions- -

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
7 Shh, please have it quiet in the back. Please.

8 MS. KUNG: ... and we can probably do
9 a lot more in this aspect, and my concern is also
10 that this huge new project, you know, that when it
11 is materialized, I mean, whether this is going to,
12 I mean, to add to the problems, and also, many
13 buildings in Flushing periodically are having
14 flooding problems because of the sewage system in
15 the city. And so the point is, whether the city's
16 infrastructure in some aspect is already
17 antiquated. And then my second point, very
18 quickly to mention, is that we love religion, and
19 I mean, certainly I love all the churches, but I
20 would want to add one thing, which is while we
21 have this affordable housing, I wanted to see real
22 social equality, meaning that it doesn't mean that
23 the person gets admitted to stay will stay there
24 for life, and that's my comment.

25 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

2 MS. KUNG: Because there's no check
3 and balance, I mean, check system, once when the
4 person moves in, and this is what I heard from the
5 hearings. I mean, no matter how rich they become
6 later on. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I understand
8 what you're saying. Who's next?

9 MS. HAN: This one member, and then
10 I have to translate for the rest of the- -

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
12 No problem. Who's going first?

13 MS. MIN: (through a translator)
14 Hello, my name is Wang Chung Min. I am a third-
15 generation jeweler, and I'm running a jewelry shop
16 on Union Street for the last 16 years. When I
17 look at the parking situation in downtown
18 Flushing, whether on Union Street or any other
19 street, it's always out of parking. That all my
20 customers, when they get to her store, they always
21 go around the block, I mean, the parking lot, or
22 downtown Flushing many, many times before they
23 find a parking spot to come to her store. If this
24 project goes through, then not only all the
25 customers of her jewelry store, but customers of

1
2 all the small businesses, they will lose their
3 customers, because of parking. Her jewelry store
4 is a family business, so her entire family is
5 running the store together, so the family is not
6 being paranoid (sic) right now. So I would really
7 like to know if the developer is taking any
8 consideration for the people like her and her
9 family who are really in paranoid at this time.
10 Please do not cut off our livelihood.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: How do you say
12 'your son is adorable', in Korean?

13 MS. HAN: Yeah, this is going to be
14 the fourth generation jeweler.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You're taking
16 credit for the son now? Your son is adorable, and
17 well-behaved, I'm amazed.

18 MS. MIN: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.
20 Thank you.

21 MS. CHAY: (through a translator)
22 Hello, my name is Mrs. Chay. I'm running a small
23 spa on Union Street. To me the municipal parking
24 lot is very important, because 80% or 90% of my
25 customers stay in my store from a minimum of three

1
2 to four hours. Therefore, without a parking lot
3 it would be impossible to run my business.
4 Therefore I really oppose this development.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.
6 You want to testify as well? Okay. Make sure to
7 say your name or if you have ...

8 MR. KUNG: Okay, I mean, let me
9 use the time left over, and I continue.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

11 MR. KUNG: My name is Daniel Kung,
12 I'm from the Flushing Small Business, Union Street
13 Small Business Association, I'm the co-chairperson
14 with Ikhwan Rim. Basically the hearing is all
15 about in favor or against, and everybody has a
16 reason for that. And I just want to speak to you
17 based on the merchants around the parking space.
18 We talked about we didn't have (inaudible) for
19 eight years, directly from the parking space, the
20 muni one. They've been looking at the parking for
21 24/7, 365 days for the last maybe how long, 20
22 years, 25 years. Every day they come to work and
23 they're looking at the parking lot, where to put
24 the customers to serve, and you know, also the
25 (inaudible) they pay taxes and help their

1 families. Just like many Americans who have their
2 dream to living well. And also some of them
3 mentioned that this country is built based on
4 Protestant and Christian as well too, and they all
5 go to church. Let me just briefly about the last
6 few years. We went through the financial
7 meltdown, we went through the direct impact,
8 actually is on Sunday where the Bloomberg
9 administration, they changed the law on the Sunday
10 free parking and all that. Basically they've been
11 working actually right now six days out of the
12 seven days when they were working. It's basically
13 Sunday there's no parking spaces. Somehow they
14 all get directly impacted by the parking
15 situation. I just want to say at the beginning of
16 this talk, is that I don't understand about this
17 project to begin with, okay. There's a problem
18 with the traffic already existing, and there's a
19 problem with parking. Many of them heard that
20 many times, if I say parking, parking, parking,
21 okay. And you're trying to define what's the
22 problem, but you know, the city and the contractor
23 who is proposing this project, they don't really
24 care about the whole situation, ignoring that, and
25

1
2 they propose an even bigger project to begin with.
3 Okay, such as when John Liu was in the seat as a
4 Council person, you know, they were proposing
5 condominiums to build 432 units and now they
6 increased it to 652 units, and we're looking about
7 40%, almost 40% more units to be, and then the
8 condominiums they're trying to build, the going
9 price let us say, easy calculation, a million
10 dollars, so we're looking at about almost a \$300
11 million received that is going into the project
12 right here. But my question is, all this money,
13 and they're trying to change the zoning to make a
14 smaller, there's a smaller parking space and where
15 does all the money go? Are they staying in
16 Flushing, are they going to the merchants?

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

18 MR. KUNG: I mean- -

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
20 Thank you. We lost the clock, and I know you
21 picked up the end of the other thing, so if I- -

22 MR. KUNG: (Interposing) I still
23 had about one minute- -

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
25 Right, but we've got like a minute over, so to end

1
2 it, we honored the minute. But let me ask you a
3 question.

4 MR. KUNG: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Because you
6 seem to have lost focus anyway. Well, first of
7 all, let me say, I mean, a lot of the issues that
8 were raised by the panel, I agree with. I am very
9 concerned about the traffic situation and the
10 gridlock that goes in Flushing, and the parking
11 problems that have been going on there. When I
12 first heard about this project, I mean, it was the
13 biggest concern I had. I'm also very concerned
14 about the small merchants, especially on Union
15 Street, who are worried about a lot of the issues,
16 and I know we're going to push the city very hard
17 to try to address this as we move forward in
18 discussions on whether things can be caught up.
19 But Ms. Han, I have so much respect for you, and I
20 think you're terrific. But some of your
21 statements I think were just a little over the
22 top, because, I mean, there is benefit there for
23 the community, whether you like it, whether you
24 love it. I mean, there is a 1.5 acre of a park
25 that doesn't exist now, and it was pointed out,

1
2 there's not a lot of green space in Flushing at
3 all now. This is one and a half acres, that's a
4 good amount of- -

5 MS. HAN: (Interposing) Well,
6 that's not nothing, better than nothing, true, I
7 agree.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And the Y,
9 you're right we have a Y already, but it's not ...
10 this is, according to what they say, a state-of-
11 the-art, the largest Y that you've ever seen,
12 probably.

13 MS. HAN: I'm a member of the Y,
14 and Koreans are extremely athletic, we are all
15 members of some kind of ... we play sports, or
16 something, so therefore the YMCA is very popular
17 in Flushing- -

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
19 So I would assume people are very happy about a
20 new expanded Y.

21 MS. HAN: Yes, however, you forget
22 about the parking lot and personal stuff that you
23 cannot really exchange that with those two little
24 benefits. Besides those benefits, one benefit is
25 for the developer's customers and the other, only

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

for people who are members of the YMCA.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: That's not what you said. I mean, you made a statement ... I do think, but you've got to assume the people who go to the Y now, the one on Northern Blvd., are going to be very happy with the new Y.

MS. HAN: Yes, but that's
(crosstalk)

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I just assume that's what it's going to look like. I haven't seen it, but based on what we've seen and been told. So, I mean, and it does create some open space. Now Queens Crossing, you can argue esthetics of how, what the building looks like, but they did put some very high-end retail in there and some really nice-looking stores. I mean, I've been in there myself, I've been to events over on the side that has that has a reception ... I mean, there are some nice aspects of that. Wouldn't you agree?

MS. HAN: Which one?

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Queens Crossing, I mean, there are some nice stores in there on the front floor there, on the second

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

level.

MS. HAN: That building reminds me of a '60's building in China and Korea.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Esthetics alone, though, but- -

MS. HAN: (Interposing) But it doesn't match the standard of a 1990's, even '80's of America, absolutely not. They don't even build a building like that in Seoul or China, I am sure about it.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right, we can disagree on that. I mean, I do think there are some nice stores in there that are really in good condition and high end, and some that are, you know, they have a tea room and other things that, I mean, are nice touches, I have to say, compared to some of the, you know, the older businesses there that needed a little bit of a facelift. And I think, in my opinion, and we can disagree on that. But I just wanted to correct you, and I just think you ... some of your statements might have been a little too broad. You know, I don't think the whole world will be noticing what goes on here necessarily. Right?

1
2 Mr. Comrie came late, but did you want to add
3 something? You know Sunny Han and other members
4 of the Korean- -

5 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE:

6 (Interposing) No, I had the opportunity to speak
7 to the two young ladies before, we had a
8 discussion, you know, as I said, at that meeting I
9 will be working on to try to protect the existing
10 businesses that are there as much as possible. I
11 think that putting more parking on Union Street
12 and on 39th, so that you could have an opportunity
13 for people to do the quick turnaround shopping if
14 necessary, you know, and we will work with you to
15 make sure that those concerns are addressed. I
16 think that that will go a long way to making sure
17 that those businesses that are there now will have
18 more than an equal chance to stay.

19 MS. HAN: Yes, Chairman, just two
20 points which are part of the stipulation passed by
21 Community Board 7, which will save small business
22 on Main Street ... I mean, Union Street, two things
23 basically. Have the Flushing Commons built as
24 phase one, and keep the Macedonia Plaza as a phase
25 two, so they use that lot exclusively for the

1 parking for customers of Union Street merchants.
2 Then that's one, during the construction, of
3 course. And then after construction, that the
4 city has to use that money to purchase the YMCA
5 parking lot which is the same size as the
6 municipal parking #2, on the west side of Main
7 Street. This is about a block and a half from
8 Main Street to the west. This is the one located
9 about the same distance from east of Main Street.
10 Let's think about there. If there is a main lot
11 too on the west side of Main Street, there's one
12 the same size as on the east side of Main Street,
13 where all the historic places are located,
14 therefore even with ... forget the Union Street
15 merchants, but even historical places, all are on
16 the east side of Main Street, there's no parking,
17 this is a total shame. Therefore the city has to
18 purchase the YMCA parking lot, turn that into a
19 municipal parking lot #1. So that has to be done
20 and must, and if that is done, many ... then some of
21 us could survive after construction also.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,
24 Sunny. I just have one question. The merchants,
25 I'm not sure you could speak on behalf of all of

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

them, but on Union Street.

MS. HAN: I'm their advisor,
therefore, okay.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. What ...
do a lot of their customers come from the
neighborhood?

MS. HAN: No- -

MR. KUNG: (Interposing) Flushing
itself is like an emerging market. Like they're
coming from all over the place.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Oh yes.

MR. KUNG: From Montauk, from
Virginia, from Connecticut.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: But most of
your customers don't come from Virginia or
Montauk, most of your customers probably come
from- -

MS. HAN: (Interposing) Ikhwan has-
-

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
... and closer.

MS. HAN: ... a survey which he gave
you, presented to you earlier, how much of a
percentage come in from- -

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)

3 You're going to cause us problems if you speak, so
4 do you want to go up there and say something?

5 I'll let you quickly if you want to say it
6 quickly. And then this gentleman who came late, I
7 can't have him speak, but if you want to mention
8 who he is, and why he's here. I don't know, how
9 are you, sir? Good to see you. So quickly say
10 your name again.

11 MR. RIM: My name is Ikhwan Rim.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Actually she's
13 going to kill me, she's got a look in her eye,
14 like what the heck did you just do. Okay, go
15 ahead.

16 MR. RIM: Okay, yes. My name is
17 Ikhwan Rim from Union Street Merchants Small
18 Business Association.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes, just
20 clarify that one point.

21 MR. RIM: Yes, a lot of customers
22 come from Bayside, Little Neck, Pittsfield, why?
23 Because people are driven away from downtown
24 Flushing, and a lot of Korean customers there, and
25 if you know, the population have moved off to

Bayside.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right, a lot of second generation people, especially, I know, have been moving to areas like mine, but there must be a lot of customers who walk to the businesses as well, no?

MR. RIM: Yes, of course, but like, what we did was that we did- -

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
Okay.

MR. RIM: ... when a customer came in, I get the zip code.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

MR. RIM: Tell them to write a zip code where they're coming from, and 70% drove, and plus, and then, did you drive or did you use transportation.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, that answers my question. Do you want to just tell me, on the record, say who this gentleman is? I can't let him speak, though, because we didn't call him up. So if you could just acknowledge who he is, and what his position is, that's fine. Okay, did we call the name already?

2 MR. KUNG: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Oh, we did?

4 MR. KUNG: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Can you
6 very quickly.

7 MALE VOICE: Two minutes?

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, just
9 quickly, one minute.

10 MALE VOICE: I know this dispute
11 between the merchants and the city, and I think
12 this can be solved by one thing. The thing is a
13 parking place. 70% came from some other place by
14 car.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right.

16 MALE VOICE: So when you start
17 building, before that you build a parking place on
18 the street, by steel. I mean, 37th Street and
19 Union Street and over there you construct three,
20 four, floor parking structure. You know, it would
21 solve the parking problem.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right,
23 we're going to have to discuss the parking problem
24 as a whole. I don't think it's not going with
25 suggestions on how to change it, since I'm not an

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

engineer and it's going to fall on- -

MALE VOICE: (Interposing) And
anyway, that dispute can be solved.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well, thank
you for coming. Thank you for coming. I think
we'll dismiss this panel and move on to a
different panel, but thank you very much, okay?
If you're still speaking to me, Carol, let me
know, a favor. Okay, let me call ... Okay, you're
not on this list? You are? Okay. Is Mark Hakin
still here? I don't know if he's there? No, he
left? Yeah, I apologize, I lot of people, I know,
had to leave. All right, Esther Curenton from the
Macedonia Church. I'll just keep reading names,
if you're here, come on up. Linda Adalejo, okay,
I'm sorry, Adalaja, she's here. Pearly Halyer,
thank you, I'll just say the first name so you
guys can guess. Annette Jordan and Michael Scott,
Arlene Anderson, Mildred ... all right, damn, I'm
getting beat up here. Mildred, yes. Sorry, my ...
between my ... and Leroy. Arlene Anderson. Okay
now, I want to ... I have a whole big pile here.
Now, I'm going to read each of these names
eventually. And so if you don't obligated to

1
2 speak, you don't have to. I will read your names
3 and let them know you were here, especially if
4 you're not going to add anything that's really
5 dramatic and new, the fact that you're here is
6 important, obviously, and you've spent so much
7 time here. But if you're going to keep repeating
8 the same thing, it just will not help us on time,
9 whatever, and if you can help me out on that one,
10 that would be great. One more you want? Okay, is
11 Mattie Simmons here?

12 MS. SIMMONS: Yes, yes sir.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: How did I do
14 on that name? She doesn't want to speak? Okay.
15 Melanie Jackson? No? Okay, now you guys are with
16 the program, I like it. Alex Thomason? You want
17 to speak? Okay, good, great. All right, we've
18 got five, and the other people are going to have
19 to wait until the next panel of ... I guess, well
20 actually we don't have any more? Oh, we do?
21 Okay, all right. So, okay, good. Okay, let's get
22 back to the clock. So we're going to limit people
23 to two minutes. Please try to stay within the two
24 minutes. When you hear the annoying bell, if you
25 can just wrap up immediately, that would be great.

1
2 Okay? Ladies, if you want to start, that's great.
3 Please say your name for the record.

4 MS. JORDAN: My name is Annette
5 Jordan, and I'm a member of the Macedonia AME
6 Church and upper Flushing, New York, and I support
7 the project, so I hope everyone here would support
8 it too. We need this project very badly, so
9 please support it. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very
11 much, and well said, look at that, how brief.

12 MS. ADALIJA: Hi.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Hi.

14 MS. ADALIJA: I'm Linda Adalija,
15 I'm a long-time resident of Flushing. I also shop
16 in Flushing. However, some of the merchants that
17 spoke earlier, they're not quite as friendly to
18 let me in to see if I want to shop there. So I
19 just want to make that point. I have two
20 daughters, young people coming back from college.
21 One daughter is already back, this summer she took
22 a test for her CPA and passed it. But
23 unfortunately, she doesn't make enough money yet
24 to be able to purchase anything in Flushing, so
25 the affordable housing would at least give her an

1
2 opportunity to be able to have her first
3 apartment. My second daughter is starting her
4 senior year at college, and hopefully will be
5 coming back to the community also. Again,
6 affordable housing will allow her to be able to
7 have her first apartment. I support the Flushing
8 Commons, I'm for diversity in shopping, which I
9 think would be wonderful. Also, I just want to
10 say that we're happy for this opportunity and we
11 thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very
13 much.

14 MS. HALYARD: My name is Pearline
15 Halyard, I've been a member of Macedonia for over
16 45 years, and I would like to say I am in favor of
17 the project, and I hope that you will consider it
18 favorably. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very
20 much. Continue down the line.

21 MR. THOMASON: Good afternoon, my
22 name is Alex Thomason, I'm a member of Macedonia
23 Church and I'm also a resident of Queens. I'm in
24 favor of the project as well. Recently I had a
25 situation that I was looking for affordable

1
2 housing, and I couldn't find one in Queens, but I
3 did find one in the Bronx. I'm very much in favor
4 for this project to go forward as well, because
5 it's very much needed. There's not enough out
6 there.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We need you in
8 Queens, so come back. Yes.

9 MS. SCOTT: Good afternoon, my name
10 is Mildred Scott, I too am a member of Macedonia,
11 and I represent, I believe, according to what the
12 pastor asked me, the rest of its members.

13 Reverend McEachern is our pastor, which we are
14 very proud of, all right. I have been a member
15 for over twenty something years, but we're not
16 here to talk about membership, we're here to talk
17 about the Flushing Commons and the Macedonia
18 Plaza. Macedonia as a church supports these two
19 projects. We are highly in favor of them. We
20 look forward to the new development in the
21 Flushing community. We are anticipating with
22 excitement the jobs that would be generated, the
23 new hires, short-term, long-term. We look
24 excitedly for new retail business, and we hope
25 that across the board retail will be represented.

1
2 There was a redheaded woman that spoke a little
3 while ago about the diversity in food, certainly
4 we need ... we need to have diversity in food in
5 Flushing. There are so many positive aspects
6 about both projects, especially the affordable
7 housing for families and individuals. The pastor
8 mentioned earlier on in his presentation that we
9 will be celebrating 200 years in 2011. I want to
10 tell you that the theme we have chosen for that is
11 for 200 years we have come this far by faith. I'm
12 believing on my faith and on my confidence in many
13 of you that we will be saying in a few years for
14 the Flushing Commons and the Macedonia Plaza we
15 have come this far by faith.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very
17 much. Mr. Comrie wants to ask a question, or make
18 a statement.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Do you own
20 a car?

21 MS. SCOTT: No I don't.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Do you own
23 a car?

24 MS. ADALIJA: Yes sir.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Do you own

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

a car?

MS. JORDAN: Yes I do.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Do you own
a car?

MS. HALYARD: Yes I do.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay, thank
you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, well
Flushing as you know was built on many different
faiths, many different religions, it was what our
forefathers envisioned, so we all try to get
along. It's not always that easy, but we do try,
and we do it better than anyone else I've ever
seen, so hopefully Flushing will continue to
flourish and grow and work together. But thank
you very much.

MS. SCOTT: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you all
for coming. And we're going to move on now to a
panel ... hold on a second. All right, I'm going to
now do a panel in opposition. I do still have a
big stack in front of me. I'm going to read the
names and see who's here. If you are here and
don't want to speak, we are always happy to accept

1
2 those and we'll read the names anyway. And I know
3 a lot of people did have to leave, so they may not
4 be here, but if they are, please come on up. Moon
5 Jay Li, Diane Dunlin, Sooja Jang, Soon Ok Ko ...
6 Sunny, you're back. Oh, you're translating? All
7 right. Jang Wang Lee, if you know. Magdalena
8 Mendoza, oh boy. Sarah Garces, it looks like
9 Narcissa, one word, like Madonna, you know, one
10 name. I don't know if they're here. Daniel Koof,
11 Roof, Wan Sum Rim, is that Mr. Rim? Or is that ...
12 Andrew Choy, I'm just going to keep reading.
13 Gloria Young ... these people are all in opposition,
14 by the way. Oh, do you want to speak? Come up
15 and join the party. All right, we'll stop at
16 that. Let me see, Michelle Kim, oh she is here,
17 okay. Come on, Michelle, not that I'm not happy
18 to see you. How about Yung Sun Na? Are you here
19 too? I'm going to read these last two names, the
20 last two names that I have and if they're here,
21 Richard Lee, and Brian Lee. Thank you for putting
22 the Brian in there, Brian. I'm going to bring you
23 all up just because that's going to be it for that
24 pile, and so if we could all keep it brief. The
25 last panel was very good at not using their whole

1
2 two minutes, that is acceptable and very
3 encouraged if you can. Sunny, do you want to help
4 try to sort out who goes when?

5 MS. HAN: Okay, so why don't we go
6 from right to left?

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right.

8 MS. HAN: That will be easier and
9 then I will translate for some of them.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, now
11 Sunny, and Sunny, I've just got to remind you,
12 you're here just to translate, okay. You can't
13 give any more opinions or questions.

14 MS. HAN: No.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Otherwise
16 Carol will never speak to me again. Okay.

17 MS. HAN: Okay, we'll start right
18 here, okay.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And make sure
20 they ... use the microphone, use the microphone, and
21 please say your name to start.

22 MS. HAN: Then whoever is- -

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
24 Okay, do the ones you have to translate with
25 first, if you want.

1
2 MS. LI: (through a translator) My
3 name is Wung Ja Li, I've been running a small
4 business in Flushing for the last ten years. I
5 ran a small business in Argentina for 26 years,
6 and I came to America and I've been running a
7 small business in Flushing for the last ten years.
8 Since I came to America, I was always thinking
9 about what can I do to help this country, but I
10 was very surprised to see that people seem to be
11 wanting to take from this country rather than try
12 to give to this country. For the last ten years
13 I've been doing community service without skipping
14 a single day. We've been trying to keep our
15 streets clean without any city help. You can see
16 the streets on Union Street, you can see that
17 we're trying very hard to keep our streets clean.
18 So many people are wandering around the parking
19 lot and looking for parking all the time.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Sunny, if you
21 could just ask her to wrap up, if she can. If you
22 could just finish up.

23 MS. LI: I don't know, we suffered
24 five years ago when you tried to develop this
25 parking space, and we're suffering again this

1
2 time, and I don't like ... I'd like to know the
3 reason why.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

5 MS. HAN: One more?

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Sure.

7 MS. LI: I hope you remember that
8 the little ant, but if together, a lot of ants
9 together will bring down a building, so please
10 remember that insight.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, all
12 right, thank you. I'm not sure how to interpret
13 that last line, but okay. I'm not sure who the
14 ants are in that metaphor, but okay. But thank
15 you. Go next. Brian, you speak Korean? How's
16 she doing in translating? Is she translating
17 okay? Okay. I just want to be sure. Yes, ma'am.
18 Please state your name.

19 MS. YA: (through a translator) My
20 name is Sun Ji Ya, I live in Flushing. I am
21 speaking as a citizen of this country, and for
22 many reasons I would like to oppose this project.
23 First, all the pollution created by the
24 construction will really hurt residents around the
25 project. It will take away all the small

1
2 businesses and its jobs. They work very hard and
3 they pay their taxes and they live happily.
4 Please don't take away their livelihood and their
5 jobs. We too have a right for liberty and justice
6 and equality. And this country is based on
7 equality. This country is putting independence
8 since it has been independent. So the late
9 president Abraham Lincoln declared this country of
10 the people, by the people and for the people, and
11 we have to uphold that. So don't forget the
12 principles that this country is built on, and
13 please don't take away, don't take away the jobs
14 and livelihood that we worked so hard to build.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes, I'm
16 sorry.

17 MS. HAN: One more sentence?

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, okay. I
19 have to build the translation into the time, so
20 it's a little unfair, they ... with the translation,
21 so go ahead.

22 MS. YA: This is not the place for
23 condominiums.

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, that's
25 all there was.

2 MS. YA: A municipal parking lot is
3 not the place for condominiums.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, thank
5 you. Who's next?

6 MR. CHOY: I guess I'll be next.
7 My name is- -

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
9 Ssh, okay, quiet please. Go ahead, yes, start.

10 MR. CHOY: My name is Andrew Choy,
11 and I'm actually a constituent of your district.
12 And I'm just here to say that I am ... although I am
13 opposed to this, it's not that we're opposed to
14 any of the housing or not, we're all in this
15 community together. But right now, it seems that
16 this is being pushed very quickly, and you're not
17 taking into account the long-term effects.

18 Although there's going to be a large influx of
19 jobs coming in, many of them will be temporary
20 jobs at the cost of the livelihoods of a lot of
21 small businesses. And right now a lot of these
22 business owners, they are afraid, because it's
23 their lifeline that is being directly threatened
24 by this project. And that's why there seems to be
25 a lot of tension. I hope you guys don't

1
2 misunderstand that they're against all this
3 production and forward motion of our community.
4 Everybody wants this community to grow and
5 flourish. It's not that, it's that in the process
6 we can't trample over people who are there and who
7 are continuing to live in the community. So if we
8 can somehow find a way, even if it does take a
9 little bit more time, to find a way to make sure
10 these people are protected, as a community. Not
11 just in this constituency as, oh, the Korean
12 community, the Chinese community. You know, it
13 should be altogether. We all live together, we
14 work together, we worship together. But we also
15 have to work together to bring this to ... you know,
16 we can't leave anybody behind.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I couldn't
18 agree more. Who wants to go next? And we'll see
19 if we have any questions. Well said. Okay.

20 MS. NA: Good afternoon, my name is
21 Yin Zun Na, I am a running senior at (inaudible)
22 High School and a Korean American Voters Council
23 intern. First of all, I want to reinforce the
24 fact that as far as we the community and the
25 Flushing small business owners have been put in a

1
2 separate room with faulty sound, not allowing us
3 to participate in the hearing fully, and I ask
4 that such problems be not repeated in the future.
5 And the small businesses in Flushing, the Union
6 Street area, account for lifelines of countless
7 families. By beginning a major construction
8 without a thorough study and plan on how to
9 protect these small businesses would be putting
10 the future of many families and their children,
11 like me, and their American dreams at dire risk.
12 A more constructive plan on how to compensate for
13 loss of small businesses during three years of
14 construction is essential to the survival of
15 businesses and families. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Yin
17 Zun Na. Brian.

18 MR. BRIAN LEE: My name is Brian
19 Lee and I am currently attending Oyster Bay High
20 School as a running senior, and I am an intern
21 from the Korean American Voters Council as well.
22 I feel that this project will affect the Flushing
23 small businesses. Their customers will not be able
24 to park, the businesses will die out, and they'll
25 not be able to serve the Koreans in the future.

1
2 Many Koreans are relying on Flushing for Korean
3 businesses, because it provides food and other
4 necessities for Koreans to survive in the United
5 States of America. If the Flushing Commons is
6 going to take place, the grassroots of Koreans
7 will disappear.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,
9 Brian. This way.

10 MS. KIM: Hello, my name is
11 Michelle Kim, I'm also a rising senior at Madison
12 High School, and I am an intern at the Korean
13 American Voters Council and I am also a current
14 resident of Flushing, and I thank you for giving
15 me this opportunity to speak. I've been here
16 since 9:30 in the morning, waiting downstairs
17 along with the other, the 40 other merchants, and
18 it's my understanding that this is the second
19 hearing, and I hope that the other merchants get
20 an opportunity to have their opinions represented.
21 And, okay, I believe that although this project
22 will create many positive outcomes, there will
23 also be many negative effects for Flushing and
24 their residents. As a child, Union Street and
25 Flushing was the most common place to be in, and

1
2 even now it's a very popular location. Everyone
3 went there to shop or even spend their time there,
4 and there are bakeries, small shops and even nail
5 salons that created small businesses on Main
6 Street. And those businesses are still a part of
7 our community now. And Flushing is very neat to
8 shop, and it's where we have shopped all of our
9 lives, and to think that we're going to put new
10 shops, it's not a very good idea, and this part of
11 Flushing is like part of our memories, and we
12 cannot give it up, and without this part of
13 Flushing nothing will ever be the same. Our
14 acquaintances, memories and lives will be gone.
15 And I wish that you can provide our community with
16 compensation that will prevent our past memories
17 from disappearing. And with this compensation all
18 of the hard work that Korean Americans have done
19 these past years will have gone to waste.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We have one
21 more person? There's someone under there, right?

22 FEMALE VOICE: (through an
23 interpreter) I am an employee of a Korean bakery
24 on Union Street. I'm the one who parked for ten
25 hours in the municipal parking lot every day. If

1
2 we lose our municipal parking lot, I have to look
3 for parking. I spend a lot of time looking for
4 parking. Otherwise I have to give up my job. I
5 don't want to lose my job, and I oppose this
6 project.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

8 Mr. Lee, I think you're the last one, I was wrong
9 about that. So do you want to ... I'm sorry, you
10 have to go now, or hold your peace. Say your name
11 on the record and ... thank you.

12 MR. RICHARD LEE: My name is
13 Richard Lee, I'm the public policy and legislative
14 advocate for Asian-Americans for Equality, better
15 known as AAFE. AAFE is a 36 year old non-profit
16 organization that specializes in economic
17 development and community development throughout
18 the entire city, and I would like to thank the
19 City Council for giving me this opportunity to
20 speak today. I think I'm going to keep my
21 statement brief, because we've kind of exhausted
22 exactly what the issues are for this project. But
23 we've been working directly with the Union Street
24 merchants for the last couple of months helping
25 them navigate through the ULURP process and

1
2 helping them formulate some of their ideas and
3 some of their recommendations that they have for
4 the Flushing municipal project, because they are
5 particularly worried that during the period of the
6 construction period that these businesses won't be
7 able to survive the construction period because of
8 the impact of the construction and the loss of
9 parking. So we've been working with the
10 businesses in helping them formulate a
11 recommendation of what they feel would help them
12 mitigate some of the impact of the construction
13 during the construction period, and I just want to
14 reiterate that some of the things that they've
15 come up with and some of the things that you've
16 already heard throughout the day. The \$2 million
17 that was allocated by the city is not nearly
18 enough for impact remediation for the small
19 businesses on Union Street, so they ask that the
20 \$2 million be dedicated for advertising,
21 marketing, and for technical assistance for
22 businesses who are facing trouble during the
23 construction period. They've also asked that \$5
24 million in low-interest loans be made available
25 for the businesses so that when they are going

1 through the remediation process that they might
2 have some sort of safety net for them to go
3 through the construction period. They've also
4 asked for \$5 million that is designated as a small
5 business continuity grant for those businesses who
6 are the most severely impacted by the city. All
7 of this administered through a third party agent.
8 And fourth, I think has been talked about quite a
9 bit, which is alternative parking sites that are
10 more amenable for the businesses on Union Street.
11 We talked about alternative parking sites, but two
12 specific ones that they noticed was the YMCA
13 parking lot, which is a half a block up from Union
14 Street, and the YMCA is of course the main
15 beneficiary of the community benefits agreement in
16 this project, and creating a validated parking
17 system at Queens Commons. So those are two
18 options that the businesses have come up with.
19 And finally, they asked that a mandate be set
20 forth by this City Council in order to insure that
21 until the needs of the small businesses have been
22 assured, that we don't go ahead with this project.
23 Because we all know that once the project is
24 approved by City Council, it would be very ... it
25

1
2 would be a lot more difficult for the businesses
3 in order to gain what they would need in order to
4 go through this construction period. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Mr.
6 Lee, and we are very familiar with AAFE, this
7 panel, Mr. Comrie and I, and you're doing great
8 work.

9 MR. RICHARD LEE: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And we look
11 forward to continuing to work with you in that
12 capacity. Let me ask first, Ms. Na, I just want
13 to address your issue. We apologize for you being
14 on the 14th floor. I guarantee you it was not
15 intentional that it was you on the 14th floor. We
16 were trying to do it on a first-come, first-served
17 basis. As you may know, City Hall is being ...
18 we're doing construction work at City Hall, and we
19 normally would have a hearing like this in the
20 Council chamber, and we'd have a lot of room for
21 people. We're going to work on that, and I agree
22 with you, it's unfair. Some people are in the
23 room behind me, which had a TV that you could
24 watch, or you could hear, I don't even know, hear
25 at least. The 14th floor, we tried halfway through

1
2 to get a skype going, you know, something to get
3 you ... it was unfortunate, but believe me, there
4 was no intent on ... who was down there was sort of
5 first-come, first-served. So I apologize for
6 that. Let me just ask you one question, though,
7 about some of the other things that you said,
8 because you talked about the Flushing you remember
9 and all the things you remember. You're obviously
10 not referring to the parking lot, right? When you
11 mentioned about your memories and your history of
12 Flushing.

13 MS. NA: I believe that was
14 Michelle.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Oh, was it
16 Michelle that mentioned that? I apologize, okay.
17 So, Michelle, enlighten me, you're not referring
18 to the parking lot? I mean, Joni Mitchell would
19 have a heart attack.

20 MR. RICHARD LEE: I'm not referring
21 to the parking lot, I was referring to the small
22 businesses that are along the parking lot.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right.

24 MR. RICHARD LEE: And if this
25 project were to be- -

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)

3 Go ahead.

4 MR. RICHARD LEE: If the project
5 was to be continued, then all the shops, they
6 would lose business, just because of the shops
7 being around the parking lot.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right. Now
9 Andrew, where are you in school? Are you in
10 school?

11 MR. CHOY: I'm attending St. John's
12 University.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Oh you are.
14 Okay, great, terrific. And did you grow up in
15 Flushing?

16 MR. CHOY: I spend most of my time
17 there. It's kind of like a cultural alcove for a
18 lot of the things that, not just Korean, just a
19 lot of ethnic types of foods, and places to enjoy
20 yourself, and it's also the hub in which a lot of
21 people, including people who live in Little Neck.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right.

23 MR. CHOY: To go into the city.

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. No, I
25 just was curious. Obviously, there are issues of

1
2 parking, which are really scary. And I do think
3 that we've got to make sure that that's a problem.
4 But isn't there an argument to be made - and maybe
5 I'm wrong here - that, you know, you're going to
6 have a lot of new residents, of different
7 ethnicity, many of them may be Korean, may be
8 Chinese, may be African-American, may be anything,
9 a lot of new residents in the area, who will now
10 be patronizing some of these local businesses?
11 Isn't there an argument that could be made that it
12 could actually help some of these businesses? I
13 understand that parking, you know, I mean, the
14 other side claims, you know, there's going to be
15 more parking. I know a lot of us are very
16 skeptical of that. But couldn't it be a good
17 thing?

18 MR. RICHARD LEE: Indeed that's a
19 very valid argument, but I think what the
20 businesses are mainly concerned about is the
21 construction period, the three-year construction
22 period.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right.

24 MR. RICHARD LEE: There are
25 negative externalities that are involved with

1
2 construction, and compound that with the main
3 primary source of parking for these businesses.
4 You know, we're going to have a significant impact
5 for the businesses, not only on Union Street, but
6 because the Union Street business corridor is the
7 direct entry point into Northern Blvd., we might
8 even see a domino effect of small business
9 closures in the area. I mean, you know, Union
10 Street has played a very important role in making
11 sure that, you know, Flushing is now ... turning
12 Flushing into the economic hub that it is today,
13 so when we say, you know, that there will be new
14 patrons, yes, sure. But if they don't survive the
15 construction period, then there is no point to it.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Don't mention
17 domino around this group.

18 MR. RICHARD LEE: Yeah.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Anyway, no, I
20 absolutely agree with you. Now, you know, they
21 claim ... you're right, three years is a long time,
22 and you're right in that I could see how that
23 could be real damage. They claim about ... there
24 are other parking lots that they are going to be
25 using, many of which are a lot further from Union

1
2 Street, obviously, than the municipal lot. Do you
3 think that there are people who would use your
4 stores who would park in the other lots, the
5 expanded one across from the Sheraton, and then
6 this other one that's closer to College Point?
7 That does seem like a bit of a distance. Do you
8 think it really is devastating? I'm not going to
9 ask you, Sunny, because I know you make broad
10 statements, I'm asking Mr. Lee.

11 MR. RICHARD LEE: So I can't speak
12 directly for the businesses, but in terms of what
13 the perception is, you know, Flushing is pretty
14 much split down like the main artery of Main
15 Street, and everything on the west side of Main
16 Street you ... there's like a mental gap, when
17 you're trying to cross Main Street. If you're
18 going to shop in one part of Main Street, you're
19 going to go into the parking lots that are on the
20 side of College Point, but if you're going to shop
21 on the other side, you're going to go to the
22 municipal #1 parking lot. Now that all the
23 parking lots are being developed on the west side
24 of Flushing, you know, we have similar businesses
25 along the way. We have jewelry stores, the same

1 jewelry stores, similar jewelry stores on the
2 other side of Main Street. We have bakeries, we
3 have restaurants, the businesses are there, so
4 that in order for the businesses on Union Street
5 to insure their survivability through the process,
6 there has to be at least some allocation of
7 parking spots on the other side of Flushing,
8 because that is where most of the people are going
9 to park if they want to shop in that area.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right. And
12 just as an underlying thing there, so those
13 businesses on the other side of Main Street tend
14 to be more Chinese businesses, while the Union
15 Street ones are more Korean?

16 MR. RICHARD LEE: I think it's
17 mixed. But I would say the businesses that are
18 directly on the periphery of the parking lot,
19 excluding Queens Crossing, are more majority
20 Korean-owned businesses, there are a lot of Korean
21 restaurants, Korean banks and such.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Has AAFE been
23 involved in any of the discussions that have been
24 going on, on this project in particular, with the
25 Mayor's office and the city?

1
2 MR. RICHARD LEE: Well, we've been
3 working directly with the businesses in helping
4 them coordinate some meetings, because, you know,
5 it's really hard for the normal layperson to go
6 and navigate through the City Council, to go to
7 through the- -

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
9 But you're not a normal layperson, right?

10 MR. RICHARD LEE: No, we have been
11 helping the small businesses to meet some of the
12 legislators and helping them through the ULURP
13 process.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I know Council
15 Member Koo has been very adamant on trying to help
16 the Korean businesses. He definitely has been
17 upset about it. I know, you know, people make
18 statements and, you know, this one hasn't met with
19 me. But I've had conversations with Council
20 Member Koo, and he is fighting very hard to try to
21 figure out a way, a benefit, something that could
22 help these businesses, because he is very
23 concerned about this. And, you know, I know some
24 people, you know, are very worried, and he is
25 worried about this, because it is an effect. You

1
2 know, so I would encourage you to talk to him more
3 about specific things that you think the city
4 might be willing to do, what you think the city
5 should do, and what, as we move forward, in case
6 the project is approved.

7 MR. RICHARD LEE: We did give, I
8 just want to say one more time, the businesses
9 have come up with the recommendations specifically
10 that I mentioned before, and a lot of them are
11 actually very possible because they have been done
12 in the past. Business interruptions grants have
13 been provided, low-interest loans have been
14 provided for impacted businesses. So these are a
15 lot of things that are certainly possible. We're
16 strongly encouraging City Council to consider
17 their recommendation.

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I don't want
19 to go on too long, but I'm curious about some of
20 these things. I want to ask the young people in
21 particular. Do you ever go to the stores in
22 Queens Crossing? Have you been in there?

23 MR. CHOY: Yes, I frequent there
24 often.

25 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: So you like,

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

there's some nice stores there.

MR. CHOY: They have some stores there generally more expensive, more upper class in layman's terms, than the other stores. It's not accessible to everybody who's around there, and it, in my opinion, it has generated more areas for people to just hang out and loiter rather than just walk around.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right.

MR. CHOY: So it- -

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
Well, sometimes you need a place to hang out and loiter when there's no place to sit. You know, I mean, there's- -

MR. CHOY: (Interposing) But when it comes to children not going to school and cutting class.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Now you're going to get me to commit to something that I don't agree with, okay. No, I understand, that's a bigger issue than this. I ask only because, I mean, there's got to be some appeal to you, as young people who go in the Flushing area, to these new stores coming in, possibly to this big Y, I

1
2 don't know if any of you are members of that Y.
3 There's got to be something good about this,
4 right?

5 MR. CHOY: I mean, if it means that
6 we're going to cut the lifeline of 2,000 families
7 there, then I would rather keep the 2,000 families
8 then create X amount of jobs.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: But you do see
10 a benefit ... look, obviously we don't want to cut
11 the lifeline of 2,000 families, and that will not
12 ... you know, we will not allow that to happen. We
13 would never approve a plan, and you know, these
14 are issues we're talking about. I just don't know
15 ... I can't tell for sure, it just seems a bit of an
16 exaggeration, and I don't mean that
17 disrespectfully, but I mean, to say to cut the
18 lifeline of 2,000 families, you know, we've got to
19 look long-term here. Might it be a benefit? I
20 mentioned before, it could be a benefit for some
21 businesses after the construction is done. You've
22 got to get through those three years, how do we
23 make it as non-invasive as possible, to protect
24 those businesses, to help those businesses, to
25 encourage marketing of those businesses, beyond

1
2 the Korean community into other communities. I
3 mean, we heard people make mention of the fact,
4 you know, and this is true everywhere, so, you
5 know, that they don't ... you know, that we want to
6 cater to a lot of different people. You know, if
7 it was one or the other, I would agree with you,
8 but I think it is a little bit of an exaggeration
9 to say that this is just going to wipe out these
10 businesses. That isn't necessarily the case.

11 MR. RICHARD LEE: Well, to
12 reiterate, I just wanted to say that it's not that
13 we're against this resolution, not because of the
14 fact that it's going to promote like new
15 businesses and what not, it's because of the way
16 it was organized, very speedily. It's not taking
17 into account the long-term effects.

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: If you ask ... I
19 just got here myself on the Council, so I'm not
20 going to argue with you on speedily, but I know
21 it's something that the people who have been
22 involved in this project, you know, would say it's
23 anything but been speedily, but I see what you're
24 saying, and once the process, the ball, gets
25 moving, it tends to seem like it's moving very

1
2 quickly, and the problem is getting that ball
3 moving, it often takes a very long time.

4 MR. CHOY: Because I hope you don't
5 misunderstand, we're not against any particular
6 community, or anything.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: No.

8 MR. CHOY: We're not against
9 development, it's just we want to make sure that
10 the development doesn't steam roll over people who
11 are- -

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
13 Right, and we agree with you completely. And I
14 would even go farther to say, the developer
15 doesn't have ... isn't doing this against any
16 community either, obviously. They're doing it to
17 make money and to develop a new, you know,
18 projects, and a lot of people who support it,
19 support it because they think it's good for
20 Flushing as a whole. I'm seeing a lot of people
21 rolling their eyes, like, Mark, stop going on. So
22 I'm going to wrap up with them. Mr. Comrie, do
23 you have a question for this panel? We do
24 appreciate you coming down today. I heard the
25 sighs behind me. And, no, we really do appreciate

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

your taking the time.

MS. HAN: That lady didn't have a chance to speak.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Oh, I apologize. Is that true? Okay, I'm sorry. And, one more panelist, and then we'll wrap up this panel.

MRS. RAM: (through an interpreter) I'm running a garment alteration business on Union Street.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And your name is what?

MRS. RAM: Mrs. Ram.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

MRS. RAM: For my business, most of my customers are coming from out of the state, New Jersey ... no, I'm sorry, Connecticut. So if this project goes through, I believe I will have hardly any customers. And I'm so anxious every day these days, so I can't sleep. Even if you go through the project, I hope that you would provide the same parking amenities that we have right now. There are many people around me having the same thoughts.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very much. Thank you to this panel, and you know, I mean, we do care about your issues, we really do, and these are things we are talking about and considering. The parking issue is a very big one, and protecting the small businesses is really very important to us. Okay, thank you very much, all of you. I apologize for the amount of time and for the 14th floor. I'm now going to read a series of names of people who are not going to testify, who either have left or decided not to testify, who all in this pile are in favor, and I did make a commitment to read their names, if I can. Paul Tiniar (phonetic), Sal Antonucci, from Macedonia, Barbara James, Leron Pollard, Maureen Aguila, Paul Fallon, I think it's Paul Fallon from ... I'm sorry, that was from Teamsters Local 82, a couple of ... Hymie Reydas, I think. Jorge Chacon, very small writing, Lorberto Moracho, Vincente Taron, okay. Jaron Delgado, Domingo Cuerva, Dennis Lee, Frank Morasia, Valerie Singleton, okay. She had spaces between the letters, it's bad, I've got a lot of Korean names coming by me, and I was ready to make it into a Korean name. Singleton, one word.

1
2 Robert Crandall, something 839 147th Street, that's
3 that one. Ilana Novik, it looks like, Michael
4 Stinson, Kenneth Foster from Macedonia, Ronald
5 Bryan from Local 3, and Al Mackey. Those people
6 are all in favor who either couldn't stay or had
7 to leave. I'm now going to read ... thank you,
8 okay. The following people, we don't have anyone
9 left in opposition. I have a big list of people
10 now in favor, some of whom may have left, or may
11 be here and decided, you know, I don't need to
12 speak again. I'm hinting, but I'm going to read
13 off each of the names, and if you're here, please
14 come up, and we will be happy to hear from you, I
15 swear. It looks Michael Lim, Michael Lim, Mary
16 Mutu, Todd Wylie, Janice Loving, okay, Caroline
17 Scavela, John Bratten. Are you here, John? Okay.
18 Don Capalbi, these people all in favor. Oh, Don
19 is here. Okay, there you are, Don. I'll keep
20 going, a couple of more. Patricia Monroe, okay,
21 William Nelson. I appreciate the call-outs if you
22 know they left. Okay, I got them, yeah, I got Mr.
23 Nelson. All right, we'll stop right there. And
24 we don't have that many left, so there is an end
25 in sight. But really, we want to hear from

1
2 everyone if they want to speak. So I just want to
3 be clear about that. Everyone's view is very
4 important to us. Why don't you start, and please
5 state your name for the record, and try to limit
6 it to two minutes. Thanks.

7 MR. LIM: Thank you, Chairman
8 Weprin and the members of the Committee. My name
9 is Mike Lim, I'm the president of the Korean
10 American Construction Association of New York. I
11 am testifying on behalf of the men and women of
12 the Korean Construction Association of New York,
13 in support of the Flushing Commons development
14 project. We are here today to say yes to new jobs
15 and yes to economic development in downtown
16 Flushing. As you probably know, unemployment in
17 the construction industry in New York City is at
18 an all-time high. Hundreds of construction sites
19 across the five boroughs are now silent, and our
20 members, skilled tradesmen from New York's Korean
21 community are struggling to pay the bills and feed
22 their families. Flushing Commons is one of the
23 few bright spots, with the promise of 2,600
24 construction jobs and private investment of more
25 than \$850 million. We are confident that these

1
2 jobs and economic stimuli will benefit our members
3 and our community, because we already have a
4 commitment from our Councilman, Peter Koo, to work
5 with the union building trades to provide
6 opportunities for local construction workers on
7 this important project. In addition, the
8 developer has agreed to put our association in
9 touch with the officials from the construction
10 trades to insure that we have a chance to benefit
11 from this huge new construction initiative,
12 therefore the Korean Construction Association of
13 New York is proud to support Flushing Commons and
14 we ask the New York City Council to do the same.
15 Thank you very much.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Mr.
17 Lim. Do you want to go next? You guys decide who
18 wants to go next.

19 MS. MUTU: My name is Mary Mutu.
20 To the members of the Council that are left, I
21 would say to you today, first of all, thanks for
22 the opportunity, and also to say that we
23 understand that when a lot of people hear the word
24 'change', they are all bent out of shape. But we
25 believe that this change is for the good. We

1 support the Flushing Commons and the Macedonia
2 Plaza. I would only say, we heard many requests
3 for a movie theater. And we think that would not
4 be a good thing for this area, because there is a
5 theater on the corner of Linden Place and the
6 Whitestone Expressway. We have been in Flushing,
7 I've lived in Flushing, I've worked in Flushing, I
8 went to school in Flushing, I worship in Flushing.
9 I had to move out of Flushing because there was no
10 affordable housing, and I could not afford the
11 ones that were being built, and that are still
12 being built. We hope and pray that our
13 grandchildren and some of your families will be
14 able to utilize the affordable housing. We hope
15 when you go into your voting time, we hope and
16 pray that you will think about the big picture and
17 not the small one, and especially we are not
18 trying to put anyone out of business. If their
19 doors are open to all of us, we would support
20 them. But many times we go to the stores, you
21 have to knock on the door, ring the bell, and I
22 had it said to me, "We don't carry your size", not
23 knowing what size I wear. And I said to the lady,
24 "I have three daughters, so you don't know who I'm
25

1 shopping for". So we just hope and pray that you
2 will use your Godly judgment in making your
3 decision concerning this development. Thank you.

4 MS. SCAVELO: To the distinguished
5 Council persons and all assembled, my name is
6 Carolyn Scavelo, I am a lifelong member of the
7 historic Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal
8 Church. I was a child, let me add a young child,
9 when the thriving African-American community in
10 downtown Flushing was displaced through eminent
11 domain that the Flushing municipal parking lot #1
12 might be built. Through all of those years,
13 that's about 60 years, Macedonia AME Church has
14 remained a beacon of faith and hope and service to
15 the Flushing community. As the face of Flushing
16 changed, and changed, and changed yet again, we
17 have been there offering a stream of uninterrupted
18 social services to all those who might come. And
19 as my sister said, unfortunately in the Flushing
20 community, not all doors are open to everyone,
21 even when bearing money. We house a daycare
22 center at Macedonia that provides a safe base for
23 many pre-schoolers. We provide a food pantry
24 which distributes tons of foodstuffs to some
25

1
2 21,000 people yearly. We feed thousands through
3 our Sunday soup kitchen yearly. We distribute
4 clothing weekly and offer emergency services
5 daily. Approval of the Macedonia Plaza will bring
6 us full circle. The parking lot took away the
7 congregation and much of what was the African-
8 American community in that area. And now the city
9 has the power to give back, reward us, if you
10 will, for being a good neighbor to the Flushing
11 community. As Pastor McEachern said, we have been
12 in the Flushing community on the same site for
13 just six or seven months shy of 200 years. We are
14 planning a major celebration and let me pause here
15 to invite all of you to come and attend. We are-
16 -

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)

18 We just have to wrap up, as soon as you can.

19 MS. SCAVELO: Well, I'm unfortunate
20 ... you'll give me a few moments too, those prior
21 took quite a bit of time, and there was no clock.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well.

23 MS. SCAVELO: So I'm going to ask
24 if you would allow me- -

25 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)

1
2 With all due respect, they were working with an
3 interpreter who took half the time, so we gave
4 them that consideration. But if you could just
5 wrap up quickly.

6 MS. SCAVELO: I'll wrap up as
7 quickly as I can, thank you, sir. You can give us
8 a wonderful anniversary present, a yes vote for
9 the plaza. That yes vote will afford us the
10 opportunity to increase what we already do, and do
11 so well: continue to service the Flushing
12 community. We welcome Flushing Commons to the
13 community and believe they will be a good and
14 productive neighbor. They will bring back
15 diversity to Flushing. On behalf of Macedonia AME
16 Church, know the congregation urges you to vote
17 yes for Macedonia Plaza and for Flushing Commons.
18 If you will just allow me a couple of more
19 moments, I want to address a couple of things.
20 Number one, there was a great deal said about a
21 burial ground at the Macedonia Church. A very
22 brief look at Flushing library history, or any
23 history of that area, and the news had it wrong.
24 It says the first Methodist church, which was
25 located on Roosevelt Avenue, and not Union Street

1
2 and 37th or 38th Avenue. That is the area in
3 contention for burial grounds, not Macedonia AME
4 Church, which has been on that same site since
5 1811. So please have that issue put to bed and
6 put to rest.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, just
8 did. Okay, is that it?

9 MS. SCAVELO: No, it's not.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well, I need ...
11 I can only give you ten more seconds, so if you
12 could please wrap up.

13 MS. SCAVELO: Okay. As far as the
14 parking is concerned, Macedonia was there and we
15 have no special arrangements for parking. We come
16 on Sundays and those persons who live in the area,
17 because it is now free from ten o'clock on
18 Saturday until what, eight o'clock on Monday
19 morning, they take the parking spaces so we don't
20 have parking on Sundays. We too suffer from the
21 parking area.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

23 MS. SCAVELO: So we find spaces,
24 they can find spaces.

25 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

1
2 Don.

3 MR. CAPALBI: Good afternoon,
4 honorable Council members and Chair. My name is
5 Don Capalbi, I'm here today as president of the
6 Queensborough Hill Civic Association, and resident
7 of Flushing for over 30 years. I attended every
8 City Council ... every community board meeting,
9 every community board committee meeting, I think
10 every bid meeting regarding this issue. Flushing
11 will grow, it will grow in one of two directions.
12 It will be a neighborhood where immigrants come in
13 and their children move out, or it will be one
14 where those children will stay and raise their
15 children. There were many arguments today against
16 this development. Many of those arguments were
17 anti-development, which we must not pay attention
18 to. This project will benefit all the ethnically
19 diverse members of our community, residents and
20 merchants. I applaud your legitimate concerns,
21 the devil is indeed in the details. But let us
22 not lose sight of the macro issue. The analogy to
23 Rockefeller Center in Manhattan is appropriate.
24 To materially delay 2,500 construction jobs, 2,000
25 permanent jobs in today's economy is

1
2 inappropriate. Flushing's introduction into the
3 21st century must not be delayed. An inordinate
4 delay in crossing t's and dotting i's is
5 unconscionable. How would history judge your no
6 vote to this project? How would history judge
7 your rejection of Rockefeller Center if it were in
8 your purview today. I urge you to join the Mayor,
9 local Council Member Peter Koo, the borough
10 president, Community Board 7, Flushing and Queens
11 chambers of commerce, the City Planning Commission
12 in approving this project. Downtown Flushing will
13 become a mini Manhattan and a vibrant city center.
14 You can't stop that. Do you want to? Though
15 imperfect, what better centerpiece than this.
16 This project is a spectacular boon to Flushing, to
17 New York City economically and in quality of life.
18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. If
20 you could just grab that mic, that would be great.
21 Yeah, okay, thank you, thank you.

22 MR. NELSON: Good afternoon.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Good
24 afternoon.

25 MR. NELSON: William Nelson,

1 executive director of the Flushing YMCA, I
2 appreciate the opportunity to speak. I will be
3 brief. I really wanted to piggyback on what Paul
4 had talked about earlier and maybe expand a little
5 bit more on what the community benefit is of the
6 Flushing YMCA. Right now currently we serve
7 thousands of members. However, given the
8 opportunity to operate out of the new facility,
9 specifically with about 12,000 more square feet of
10 space, will enable us to serve about 10,000
11 additional young people. We're already working
12 currently with various community groups to open up
13 that space, 10,000 square foot space, so that
14 we'll be working in partnership with groups that
15 service young people. So we'll be an extension to
16 all these groups that need space in the community.
17 In addition to that, the YMCA currently has a
18 program called a Strong Kids Card, and the
19 Flushing YMCA happens to have one of the largest
20 allocations of that, and we will be able to
21 service kids for free at the site through 5,000
22 additional Strong Kid cards. Finally, the
23 facility, as Paul talked about earlier, was built
24 for another era, it's 86 years old. A lot of the
25

1
2 money now that we currently pump into the facility
3 is basically for upkeep, to deal with, you know,
4 the boiler, the facilities. This money now, if we
5 go into a new space, will ultimately be used for
6 programs, and that's what's exciting about it.
7 Our members are excited, our boys are excited, and
8 the community is excited. So that's all I wanted
9 to say, thank you for the opportunity.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very
11 much. We need you to get to a microphone. Yeah,
12 you're done, everyone is done? She spoke, okay,
13 good. Right, okay. Thank you. I do apologize,
14 you know, for getting testy on the time limit
15 there. We've been trying to keep everybody within
16 the two minutes. I know some people have gone a
17 little over. But for the most part today, people
18 have wrapped up their remarks within that two
19 minute time limit, give or take a few seconds.
20 And the people who did need the interpreter, in my
21 mind I thought it isn't completely fair that they
22 can't, you know, say everything because they had
23 someone to repeat everything they say. So I
24 apologize for that. I have a last stack, these
25 people are also in favor, we don't have any more

1 here in opposition. Correct, Ms. Shine? Okay,
 2 and I'm going to read off these names, if they are
 3 still here, if they could please come up. Zachary
 4 Stern, Constance Simmons, Lydia Mackey, Lauren
 5 Crapiello, I'm not sure of that name. Girard
 6 Paul, it is Paul, I don't know about the
 7 handwriting. John Henry Bias. Anybody. Oh yes,
 8 you get your own panel. How did you get last
 9 shot? You've been there smiling all day, and now
 10 you get called on last. They say the nice guys
 11 finish last. Sit, use the mic. Take your time,
 12 you waited this long.

14 MR. BIAS: Since this morning. I
 15 want to say- -

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
 17 Wait, John, just give me one second. Is there
 18 anyone else here I didn't call, who wants to
 19 speak? Who didn't get called on? Because this
 20 may be it. Okay, good. Go ahead.

21 MR. BIAS: I like to be by myself.
 22 I like that privilege. I just want to thank the
 23 Committee for this great opportunity getting to
 24 speak today. I spent a very lot of a hard life on
 25 Community Board 7 for this Committee, it means a

1
2 lot to me. I moved to Flushing in 1974 and I
3 joined the Macedonia Church in 1974, and I think
4 it's a great thing that we need in Flushing, to
5 have the affordable housing in downtown Flushing.
6 Many nights when we have our community board
7 meetings, I'm on my ten years on the community
8 board, and it's tough, like Gene and Apelian said,
9 we fight, we fight hard but we got what we wanted.
10 I want to thank you very much for giving me the
11 opportunity.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Mr. Bias,
13 before you leave, just have a seat so we can- -

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: (Interposing)
15 He wants you to work for this. Mr. Comrie.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I just
17 wanted to say I have personally known you for many
18 years, you're a man of integrity, you've worked on
19 in a volunteer capacity on many different
20 organizations in Flushing, and I'm impressed that
21 you stayed here from eight o'clock this morning
22 till now, but it just shows your dedication to the
23 Flushing area, and I wanted to thank you for your
24 service and dedication to Flushing, and not just
25 to one part of Flushing, but to all aspects of ...

1
2 all the new and emerging and existing communities
3 that comprise that area. Thank you.

4 MR. BIAS: Thank you for the
5 comment.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.
7 Thank you, Mr. Comrie, for those good words.
8 Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank all of you
9 for being patient with us. It's been a long day.
10 We will be having discussions over the next couple
11 of weeks and probably be meeting again in about
12 two weeks time or so. We are scheduled to meet on
13 the 27th of July, at 9:30 in this very room. So we
14 will probably have the meeting at that point, so I
15 am going to make a motion to close the hearing on
16 this issue, opposed by one member, close this
17 hearing, and we are going to adjourn this meeting,
18 and then we'll be meeting again on the 27th. The
19 meeting is now adjourned.
20

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Signature _____

Date July 29, 2010