

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

-----X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

-----X

October 27, 2010
Start: 10:55 am
Recess: 11:20 am

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
JOEL RIVERA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Council Member Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
Council Member Elizabeth S. Crowley
Council Member Inez E. Dickens
Council Member Erik Martin Dilan
Council Member Lewis A. Fidler
Council Member Robert Jackson
Council Member Karen Koslowitz
Council Member James S. Oddo
Council Member Christine C. Quinn
Council Member James Vacca
Council Member Albert Vann

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

Michael Goldblum
Architect
The Building Studio

Roberta Washington
Architect
architects pc

Mark Gjonaj
Realtor
MP Realty Group

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Joel Rivera, I'm the Chair of the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections. Before we begin, I would like to introduce the members who are here with us today, who are present. We have Council Member Al Vann, Council Member Leroy Comrie, to my right we have Council Member Lew Fidler, Council Member Karen Koslowitz, Council Member Jimmy Vacca, Council Member Inez Dickens and myself. Today before, before us we have three candidates for review, two candidates for appointment the Landmarks Preservation Commission and one candidate for the appointment to the Taxi and Limousine Commission. They are Michael Goldblum, a Bronx resident, is being considered for appointment, by the Mayor to the LPC. If the Council gives its advice and consent he will replace Steven Burns and serve for the remainder of a three year term that expires on June 28, 2011. Mr. Goldblum is a registered architect. Roberta Washington, a Manhattan resident, is being considered for reappointment by the Mayor to the LPC. If the Council gives its advice and consent, she is eligible to serve for

1
2 the remainder of a three year term that expires on
3 June 28, 2012. Ms. Washington is a registered
4 architect, as well. And Mark Gjonaj--

5 MARK GJONAJ: Gjonaj.

6 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Gjonaj--there
7 we go, we have the pronunciation there, sorry
8 about that--a Bronx resident was recommended by
9 the Council's Bronx delegation for appointment to
10 the Taxi and Limousine Commission. If the Council
11 gives its advice and consent, Mr. Gjonaj will fill
12 a vacancy and be eligible to serve for the
13 remainder of a seven year term that expires on
14 January 31st of 2015. First I'll briefly explain
15 the functions of the Landmarks Preservation
16 Commission. The New York City Landmarks
17 Preservation Commission which consists of eleven
18 members is responsible for establishing and
19 regulating landmarks, portions of landmarks,
20 landmark sites, interior landmarks, scenic
21 landmarks, and historic districts, and also
22 regulates alterations to designated buildings.
23 The Charter requires that the Commission's
24 membership include at least three architects, one
25 historian, qualified in the field, one city

1 planner or landscape architect, and one realtor.
2
3 No professional qualifications for the remaining
4 members are delineated in the Charter. By a
5 statute, the Commission's membership must have at
6 least one resident from each of the five boroughs.
7 The Mayor appoints members of the Commission for
8 staggered three year terms, each member continues
9 to serve as a Commissioner until his or her
10 successor is appointed and qualified. The Mayor
11 designates one of the members to serve as Chair of
12 the Commission, and another to serve as Vice
13 Chair. Both of these appointees serve until a
14 successor is designated. Members other than the
15 Chair serve without compensation, but are
16 reimbursed for expenses necessarily incurred in
17 the performance of their duties. The Chair's
18 salary is currently \$192,198. The Commission
19 appoints a full time Executive Director and may
20 employ technical experts and such other employees
21 as may be required to perform its duties. The
22 Commission is required to provide opportunities
23 for comment in advance of any hearing on a
24 proposed designation. In addition, the Commission
25 may at any time make recommendations to the City's

1
2 Planning Commission regarding amendments to the
3 zoning resolution provisions that apply to
4 improvements in a historic district. The
5 Commission's duties also include determining
6 whether a proposed alteration or demolition
7 affecting a landmark is consistent with the
8 Landmark's Law. In instances where the Commission
9 determines that the proposed change complies with
10 the law, it grants a Certificate of
11 Appropriateness; otherwise the Commission may deny
12 the applicant's request. Welcome Mr. Goldblum and
13 Ms. Washington, will you please raise your right
14 hand and be sworn in.

15 MALE VOICE: Do you swear or affirm
16 that your statements will be truthful to the best
17 of your knowledge?

18 PANEL: [off mic] Yes.

19 MALE VOICE: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: We will begin
21 with Mr. Goldblum. Do you wish to make an opening
22 statement?

23 MICHAEL GOLDBLUM: [off mic] Yes,
24 please.

25 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Perfect, just

1
2 pull the microphone closer to you. Make sure the
3 microphone is on, just state your name for the
4 record and you may proceed with your testimony.

5 MICHAEL GOLDBLUM: [off mic] Thank
6 you. My name is - -

7 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Press it
8 again.

9 MICHAEL GOLDBLUM: Hello?

10 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Yes, now it's
11 on.

12 MICHAEL GOLDBLUM: My name is
13 Michael Goldblum, I have lived in New York City
14 since 1977, and have been a Bronx resident since
15 1997. I have been a licensed architect since
16 1988. In 1992, I was a founder, founding partner
17 in a small architectural firm, The Building
18 Studio. Our work has offered us the opportunity
19 to work with the Landmarks Preservation
20 Commission, primarily in residential designs for
21 homeowners in the Fieldston and Riverdale Historic
22 Districts in The Bronx, as well as at various
23 locations in Manhattan and Brooklyn. Throughout
24 my career I have tried to balance my private work
25 with community service. For nine years, starting

1
2 in 1990, I volunteered with the Municipal Art
3 Society, leading an urban planning and tenant
4 empowerment program at Claremont Village, a
5 collection of three public housing developments in
6 the Morisania Neighborhood of The Bronx. More
7 recently, in 2008 and 2009, I participated in
8 former Bronx Borough President Adolfo Carrión's
9 Historic Preservation Taskforce. I have also
10 taught architecture at SUNY Stony Brook and am a
11 board member at Bronx Legal Services. I hope that
12 these experiences will enable me to contribute to
13 the important work of the Landmarks Preservation
14 Commission, a firm commitment to the aesthetic and
15 cultural heritage of our City, coupled with a real
16 world understanding of the challenges facing
17 property owners in seeking to maintain and expand
18 historic structures, will enable me to help
19 continue the valuable role played by the Landmarks
20 Preservation Commission in protecting and
21 enriching our City. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very
23 much. Ms. Washington?

24 ROBERTA WASHINGTON: I am honored
25 to appear before you today as a candidate for

1
2 reappointment to the Landmarks Preservation
3 Commission. As a person who is awed by
4 fascinating and remarkable histories of places in
5 New York City, I believe strongly in the
6 preservation of historic buildings and places as a
7 way to tell the City's stories. As a grad--

8 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I apologize,
9 can you just state your name for the record, we
10 just--Sergeant-of-Arms just--

11 ROBERTA WASHINGTON: Oh, I'm sorry,
12 Roberta Washington.

13 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Yes, thank
14 you.

15 ROBERTA WASHINGTON: Roberta
16 Washington. Okay. As a graduate of Howard
17 University's School of Architecture, I came first
18 to New York to pursue a master's degree in
19 architecture at Columbia University, and was
20 licensed in 1975. I started my architectural firm
21 in 1983. The firm's work includes, and involved,
22 evolved into doing projects which were restoration
23 and rehabilitation of existing buildings,
24 including landmarked buildings and buildings in
25 historic districts, as well as new construction.

1
2 Over the past 25 years, I've lived in and
3 maintained my office in Harlem. In 1991, I was
4 appointed to Community Board Ten in Central
5 Harlem, where I served for eight years as the
6 Housing Chair and co-chair of Land use, of the
7 Land Use Committee. Participation on my local
8 community board also informed my understanding and
9 insights into the importance of landmark
10 preservation issues to community residents. For
11 ten years, I was a member of the New York State
12 Board of Architecture, and as chairperson in 2005
13 where I continue to serve as an extended member.
14 I was the 2009 President of the Center for
15 Architecture Foundation, originally started by the
16 New York Chapter of the American Institute of
17 Architects. I am also past President of the
18 National Organization of Minority Architects. I
19 want to continue to serve on the Landmarks
20 Preservation Commission because I believe that the
21 work of designating and regulating changes to
22 landmark buildings and buildings in historic
23 districts is important and vital to preserving and
24 strengthening the city's communities. I believe
25 that my own history and background have prepared

2 me to judge the technical while understanding the
3 social aspects of landmarks preservation in New
4 York City, and I welcome the opportunity to
5 continue to serve.

6 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very
7 much. Do any of my colleagues have any questions
8 for the--Council Member Inez Dickens. And we've
9 joined by Council Member Erik Dilan.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you,
11 thank you, Mr. Chair. Good morning. And thank
12 you for your appearance and I am very glad to see
13 that Ms. Washington's reappointment is up before
14 us. I've known her for some time. She's a
15 resident in my Council District, and she has done
16 some phenomenal work concerning landmarks. And
17 Mr. Goldblum, I'm not as familiar with you, but I
18 see that although you do some business with
19 landmarks, that you will recuses yourself, is that
20 correct?

21 MICHAEL GOLDBLUM: Yes.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: All right.
23 But I do have a question, mostly for Ms.
24 Washington, but I will pose it to you, also, Mr.
25 Goldblum. I have an area, a small area in my

2 district, Morningside, the Morningside Heights
3 area. And the residents in that community, as
4 well as the Assemblyperson and the Senator from
5 that area, has asked that a part of that area to
6 be landmarked. I have brought it up before the
7 Chairperson, we've had a lot of discussion about
8 it, we've got a lot of support from Congressman
9 Rangel, who represents the area. And I support
10 it, as well. And I was wondering if there was a
11 problem because no one has given, you know,
12 alerted me to the fact that there may be a problem
13 with it because it's something maybe that I can
14 address. Are you familiar at all with my--

15 MICHAEL GOLDBLUM: I'm not, I'm
16 familiar with the neighborhood--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I know--

18 MICHAEL GOLDBLUM: --but not with
19 the issue.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I know you
21 wouldn't, but Ms. Washington, because you're a
22 reappointment?

23 ROBERTA WASHINGTON: No, as far as
24 I know, I haven't heard of that project or any
25 problem with it. But I do know that there are

2 several projects that we are now bringing to the,
3 to the Committee, I mean to the Commission to be
4 heard, and that may be one of them. I think it's
5 something that could be investigated.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: All right,
7 all right, well I appreciate it, I just wanted to
8 put it on the record, because I--you know, it's
9 been up for some time.

10 ROBERTA WASHINGTON: Okay.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you
12 so much.

13 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very
14 much. Do we have any other questions from
15 Committee Members? Okay, perfect. Next I will
16 briefly explain the functions of the Taxi and
17 Limousine Commission. The TLC consists of nine
18 members appointed by the Mayor, all of with, all
19 with the advice and consent of the Council. Five
20 of the said members, one resident of each of the
21 five boroughs of the City, are recommended for
22 appointment by a majority vote of the Council
23 Members of the respective borough. Commission
24 Members are appointed for terms of seven years.
25 And can serve until the appointment and

1
2 qualification of a successor. Vacancies other
3 than those that occur at the expiration of a term
4 shall be filled for the unexpired term. The Mayor
5 may remove any such member for cause upon stated
6 charges. The Mayor designates one member of the
7 Commission to act as the Chairperson and Chief
8 Executive Officer. The Chairperson shall have
9 charge of the organization of his or her office,
10 and have authority to employ, assign and
11 superintend the duties of such offices and
12 employees as may be necessary to carry out the
13 provisions of the Charter, 65 of the New York City
14 Charter. The Charter provides that the
15 Chairperson's child devote his or her full time to
16 the petition, and as such receive compensation as
17 set by the Mayor. The Chair currently receives a
18 \$192,198 compensation annually. Other members of
19 the TLC are not entitled to compensation. The
20 Commissioner is responsible for the continuance,
21 for the continuance, further development and
22 improvement of the Taxi and Limousine Service in
23 the City of New York. It shall be the further
24 purpose of the Commission, consonant with the
25 promotion and protection of the public comfort and

2 convenience to adopt and establish an overall
3 public transportation policy governing taxi,
4 coach, limousine and wheelchair accessible van
5 services as it relates to the overall public
6 transportation network of the City. The
7 Commission is also responsible for establishing
8 certain rates, standards and criteria for the
9 licensing of vehicles, drivers and chauffeurs,
10 owners and operators engaged in such services.
11 And for providing authorization to persons to
12 operate commuter van services within the City.
13 Welcome, Mr. Gjonaj. Will you please raise your
14 right hand and be sworn in?

15 MALE VOICE: Mr. Gjonaj do you
16 swear or affirm that your statements will be
17 truthful to the best of your knowledge?

18 MARK GJONAJ: [off mic] I do.

19 MALE VOICE: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Just make sure
21 you have the microphone close to you, state your
22 name for the record, and if you have an opening
23 statement, you may proceed.

24 MARK GJONAJ: Mark Gjonaj. Good
25 morning. First of all I'd like to thank Mayor

1
2 Bloomberg and the City Council for my
3 consideration to the New York City Taxi and
4 Limousine Commission. I look forward to working
5 with the Honorable David Yassky and the other
6 Commissioners of the TLC. One of the greatest
7 privileges of my life was to be born, raised and
8 educated in this great City. While growing up in
9 The Bronx, I witnessed firsthand the hard work of
10 public servants and admired their dedication. And
11 have always felt a desire to give back to the
12 community that welcomed and embraced my family.
13 It gives me pride to be able to thank this City by
14 becoming a public servant. I am humbled to have
15 been considered for nomination to the TLC, not
16 only because it is the most active taxi and
17 limousine agency in the nation, but more
18 importantly, because this industry is a vital
19 means of transportation for the greatest city in
20 the world. I look forward to providing my fair
21 share of public service. Thank you for your, for
22 the honor, and God bless you.

23 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very
24 much. Do we have any questions from Committee
25 Members? Council Member Jimmy Vacca.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Thank you,
3 and it's not a question, but I would urge my
4 colleagues to support this nomination. I've known
5 Mark for many, many years, and I think that his
6 willingness to contribute time to the Taxi and
7 Limousine Commission will be an asset to the City
8 of New York. Mark has not only been a very strong
9 force for good in my district but throughout The
10 Bronx. He's very active in the Albanian
11 Community, and he has emphasized health services
12 within that community, through the Illyria Clinic
13 located in Jacobi Hospital, through the Health and
14 Hospitals Corporation. And much of his work
15 really revolves around serving the poor, the
16 elderly, immigrants who do not have access to
17 health services and do not know how to access
18 what's existing. But in so many other ways, Mark
19 has been very, very involved in the lifeblood of
20 The Bronx. Just recently, when we dedicated a
21 street for Mother Teresa and we marked 100, the
22 100th birthday of Mother Teresa in Pelham Parkway,
23 Mark again was very, very important to that event,
24 and to the need to recognize people like Mother
25 Teresa on a citywide basis, as well. So it's

1
2 really without equivocation that I would urge my
3 fellow members to vote for Mark and I think, and I
4 know for a fact, that we will be glad he's on the
5 Taxi and Limousine Commission. We face many
6 issues there. Mark touched on some of them. But
7 in the days ahead, we're facing issues that deal
8 with the taxi of tomorrow, access for the
9 disabled. We are also dealing with mult--a
10 multifaceted taxi industry. Taxis are not just
11 the yellow taxis you and I think of; in fact,
12 those of us who live in the outer boroughs know
13 indeed that taxis are more than the yellow taxis
14 that Manhattan residents think of. We don't see
15 yellow taxis in the outer boroughs, so we deal
16 with a different taxi industry. So, I urge my
17 colleagues to vote yes, I think that--and I
18 support the other nominations, as well. So, I'm
19 glad that all three of you have offered your
20 service to the City of New York.

21 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very
22 much, Council Member. We've been joined by
23 Council Member Elizabeth Crowley, as well. Do any
24 other members have any questions? Seeing none,
25 I'll ask the Clerk to call the roll and the Chair

2 recommends an aye vote on all three candidates.

3 [pause]

4 CLERK: William Martin, Committee
5 Clerk, roll call on the Committee on Rules,
6 Privileges and Elections. Council Member Rivera.

7 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I vote aye.

8 CLERK: Comrie.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I want to
10 vote aye, permission to explain my vote. I'm
11 voting--

12 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: --aye on
14 all three candidates. I just want to congratulate
15 all of them for their public service. And I just
16 want to say, Ms. Washington, I think they have
17 your date of birth wrong on here, 'cause you look
18 like your 30.

19 ROBERTA WASHINGTON: Okay, thank
20 you. [laughter]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: But I think
22 Mr. Davis, Mr. Davis needs to check that, 'cause
23 there's no way that that could be right, so aye on
24 all.

25 CLERK: Dilan.

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

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS 20

COUNCIL MEMBER DILAN: Comrie must need something in his district. [laughter]

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Either that or some harassment training.

COUNCIL MEMBER DILAN: But she does look young, however. I vote aye on all. [laughs]

CLERK: Fidler.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Yes.

CLERK: Vann.

COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Yes on all.

CLERK: Dickens.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS:
Congratulations to all three candidates, and aye on all.

CLERK: Vacca.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA:
Congratulations, aye on all, congratulations.

CLERK: Crowley.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Aye on all.

CLERK: Koslowitz.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Aye on all and congratulations.

CLERK: By a vote of nine in the

2 affirmative, zero in the negative, and no
3 abstentions, all items are adopted. Members,
4 please sign the Committee reports.

5 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: We're going to
6 leave the vote open for a few moments, we have the
7 Speaker on her way down and we have other members
8 who need to vote as well. Congratulations to the
9 three appointees. I'm sure you'll a phenomenal
10 job.

11 [pause, background noise]

12 CLERK: Speaker Quinn.

13 SPEAKER QUINN: Aye.

14 [pause]

15 CLERK: Council Member Jackson.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: I vote aye
17 on all.

18 [pause]

19 CLERK: Council Member Oddo.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Yes.

21 [pause]

22 CLERK: Final vote on the Committee
23 on Rules is now twelve in the affirmative, zero in
24 the negative and no abstentions.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Council

1

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS 22

2

Member Jackson, the Rules Committee is hereby

3

adjourned.

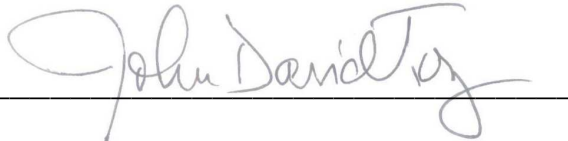
4

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, JOHN DAVID TONG 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 _____

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John David Tong", written over a horizontal line.Date October 10, 2010