

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND  
ELECTIONS

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July 7, 2022  
Start: 11:32 a.m.  
Recess: 2:17 p.m.

HELD AT: HYBRID HEARING - COUNCIL CHAMBERS -  
CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Keith Powers, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Adrienne E. Adams, SPEAKER  
Joseph C. Borelli  
Justin L. Brannan  
Gale Brewer  
Selvena Brooks-Powers  
Crystal Hudson  
Rafael Salamanca  
Pierina Ana Sanchez

A P P E A R A N C E S

Ngozi Okaro  
Nicole Yearwood  
Christine Yoon  
David Gold  
Rasmia Kirmani-Frye  
Juan Camilo Osorio

2 NAZLY PAYTUVI: This is a mic  
3 check for Committee on Rules, Privileges and  
4 Elections. Today's date is July 7, 2022. Location  
5 Chambers. Recorded by Nazly Paytuvi.

6 SERGEANT PEREZ: Good morning, ladies and  
7 gentlemen, and welcome to this hybrid meeting of the  
8 Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections.

9 Please silence all electronic devices.

10 Anybody that would like to testify, again  
11 you can sign up at the Sergeant's desk. For those  
12 people that would like to email testimony, you can  
13 email it to us at [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Again,  
14 that is [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov).

15 Chair, we are ready to begin.

16 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: [GAVEL] Good morning.  
17 Thank you, everyone, for being patient as we get  
18 ourselves acquainted to this world of Zoom. Welcome  
19 to the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections.  
20 My name is Keith Powers. I'm the Chair of this  
21 Committee.

22 Before we get moving, I'd like to  
23 introduce the Council Members of the Committee who  
24 have joined us here today. We're joined by our  
25 Speaker Adrienne Adams, Minority Leader Joe Borelli

2 was here and I think will be back, Council Member  
3 Justin Brannan, Council Member Gale Brewer, Council  
4 Member Crystal Hudson, Council Member Selvena Brooks-  
5 Powers, I believe Council Member Sanchez is joining  
6 us via Zoom shortly, and we will be joined by others  
7 as well.

8 I'd also like to acknowledge the  
9 Council's General Counsel sitting next to me, Jason  
10 Otano, serving as the Committee Counsel and the staff  
11 members of the Council's Investigative Unit Francesca  
12 Della Vecchia, Director of Compliance and  
13 Investigations Unit and Investigators Alycia Vassell  
14 and Ramses Boutin as well.

15 Welcome to all of the folks that are here  
16 today being nominated. Today, we're going to consider  
17 a number of nominations for a number of vital public  
18 bodies here in New York City.

19 The first 2 candidates under  
20 consideration for direct appointments by the City  
21 Council to the Equal Employment Practices Commission.  
22 Nicole Yearwood has been nominated to serve out the  
23 remainder of a 4-year term that expires June 30,  
24 2024, and Ngozi Okaro, you're going to have to  
25 correct me if I was wrong on that pronunciation, has

2 been nominated to serve the remainder of a 4-year  
3 term that expires June 30, 2023.

4 The next candidate, Christine Yoon, has  
5 been nominated by the Mayor for an appointment as a  
6 member to the Board of Standards and Appeals serving  
7 the remainder of a 6-year term that expires on  
8 September 1, 2027.

9 Finally, we will consider 3 nominations  
10 to the New York City Planning Commission. Juan Camilo  
11 Osorio has been nominated by the Brooklyn Borough  
12 President and, if appointed, will serve the remainder  
13 of a 5-year term that expires on June 30, 2027. The  
14 Mayor has nominated 2 appointees to the New York City  
15 Planning Commission who are both here with us today,  
16 David Gold and Rasmia Kirmani-Frye. Should Mr. Gold  
17 receive the advice and consent of the City Council,  
18 he will serve the remainder of a 5-year term that  
19 expires on June 30, 2026. I hope you're paying  
20 attention to all these dates here. Should Miss  
21 Kirmani-Frye receive the advice and consent of the  
22 City Council, she will serve the remainder of a 5-  
23 year term that expires on June 30, 2024.

24 We are going to begin today with the  
25 candidates for the New York City Equal Employment

2 Practices Commission. Under the City Charter, the  
3 EEPC is charged with the duties of reviewing,  
4 evaluating, and monitoring the employment practices,  
5 procedures, and programs of city agencies and the  
6 Department of Citywide Administrative Services. The  
7 goal is to continue an effective affirmative  
8 employment program of equal employment opportunity  
9 for minority group members and women employed by or  
10 seeking employment with city agencies. Some specific  
11 powers are monitoring employment practices of all  
12 local agencies, reviewing the implementation of  
13 agency's affirmative employment programs, and  
14 auditing agency's efforts to ensure fair and  
15 effective equal employment opportunities for minority  
16 group members and women. The EEPC consists of 5  
17 members, 2 appointed by the Mayor and 2 appointed by  
18 the City Council, the Mayor and Speaker jointly  
19 appoint the Chair. Compensation is on a per diem  
20 basis, 250 dollars for a member and 275 dollars for  
21 the Chair.

22 Today, we'd like to welcome Miss Yearwood  
23 and Miss Okaro to the Chamber. Can you please both  
24 raise your right hand to be sworn in?

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL OTANO: Do you swear to  
3 tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the  
4 truth?

5 NOMINEES: (INAUDIBLE)

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL OTANO: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. We would  
8 like to welcome both nominees to make an opening  
9 statement.

10 NICOLE YEARWOOD: Good morning, Speaker  
11 Adams, Chairperson Powers, and Members of the  
12 Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections.

13 I am honored to be considered for an  
14 appointment to the Equal Employment Practices  
15 Commission by this Council, the most diverse Council  
16 in the city's history. I'm excited about the  
17 opportunity to serve my city in this capacity. Since  
18 my time as an undergraduate, I have worked on issues  
19 of representation of historically underrepresented  
20 voices. As an adult, I have witnessed the positive  
21 impact of having all voices present in the rooms  
22 where decisions are made. Having everyone at the  
23 table is critically important when the goal is to  
24 make decisions for and to serve a city as diverse as  
25 ours, which is the role of our city agencies. People

2 of diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences are  
3 what make New York City New York City. With the city  
4 being its largest employer, its workforce should  
5 naturally reflect the people who are here.

6 Unfortunately, we know that is not always the  
7 reality. As a nation, we are striving for fairness  
8 and inclusion in all areas of public life. We are  
9 working to correct and overcome historical  
10 disparities in education which, by extension, have  
11 caused disparities in access to employment  
12 opportunities for generations of women and  
13 minorities. We have begun to recognize the  
14 intersectionality of race and gender and its combined  
15 impact on a person's experience in the workforce. Our  
16 city's workforce is not immune. Watching past  
17 meetings and reviewing staffing data, I can see how  
18 gender roles and stereotypes have factored into the  
19 employment composition of our agencies. This  
20 Commission in its role can assure fairness and equity  
21 in the agency's hiring and promotion of employees,  
22 and it can create new opportunities for individuals  
23 and future generations.

24 We often speak of the importance of  
25 representation for the next generation. Even in a

2 city as diverse as ours, there are historically  
3 underrepresented communities in many of our city  
4 agencies. This is especially true for young girls and  
5 other marginalized people. We must also look at the  
6 financial benefit for the groups the Commission is  
7 mandated to assist, especially during the pandemic.  
8 Data has shown that women, especially women from  
9 minority groups, have suffered the most when it comes  
10 to job loss. Women's advancement in the workforce has  
11 seen major setbacks due to the pandemic. Job loss  
12 means loss of benefits, possible pension, and all  
13 benefits that come with city employment. Eliminating  
14 systemic inequities that lead to the undue burden of  
15 job loss on a particular group for generations is  
16 something we can resolve. These are just a few  
17 priorities I would like to bring to the Commission.  
18 The Commission has begun the work. I intend to bring  
19 my expertise, passion, and commitment to help bring  
20 about change in the city's hiring practices and build  
21 a talent pipeline that positively impacts  
22 communities. Together, we can help our city break  
23 down barriers to unfair hiring practices and be a  
24 model for others to follow.

2 I would just like to conclude my remarks  
3 also by thanking the City Council's Investigation  
4 Committee for all their help through this process.

5 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. We'll come  
6 to questions afterward.

7 NGOZI OKARO: Good morning, Speaker Adams,  
8 Chair Powers, Committee Members, officials, staff,  
9 and New Yorkers. My name is Ngozi Okaro, and I  
10 appreciate the opportunity to talk about my  
11 background and suitability as an appointee to the  
12 Equal Employment Practices Commission.

13 A bit about me. I am a black person, a  
14 woman, born in the United States, but the child of an  
15 immigrant. I am gender-conforming, have some  
16 disability. I am a Christian and a native English  
17 speaker. None of the above should provide advantage  
18 or disadvantage, but many of these data points do  
19 provide advantage and disadvantage. Some of the most  
20 important things about me are that I believe in  
21 fairness for all. I'm a systems thinker, a  
22 researcher, an entrepreneur, a lawyer, a lifelong  
23 learner, and one of New York City's biggest fans. I  
24 did not grow up in New York but consider myself a  
25

2 naturalized New Yorker since I've lived here for more  
3 than 20 years and have lived in 3 boroughs.

4 I moved to New York because it  
5 represented to me a place where people can be who  
6 they are and contribute to a thriving community. It  
7 takes the best of all us to keep New York City great,  
8 and I believe that people must feel confident that  
9 they will be treated fairly in order to give their  
10 best in community and especially at their workplaces.

11 I work as Executive Director of Custom  
12 Collaborative, a nonprofit social enterprise that  
13 supports no- and low-income women who are creating  
14 careers in sustainable fashion. I started Custom  
15 Collaborative to provide opportunity to women who  
16 have been marginalized and to guide the fashion  
17 industry to become more equitable and inclusive. My  
18 organization works with women who come from 25  
19 different countries, and equity and inclusion are  
20 part of our organizational core values. I instituted  
21 trainings and policies and standardized ways of  
22 working with people so they will not feel like they  
23 are subject to favor or to whim. The staff and  
24 participants at Custom Collaborative regularly go  
25

2 through trainings, and we have had our materials and  
3 practices audited and evaluated by others.

4 I have experienced someone reviewing my  
5 work so I understand what it is like to hear that  
6 what we designed could be better, even though I've  
7 put forth my best efforts, but, because the goal is  
8 to provide equal opportunity, I understand that the  
9 impact and not the intent is what matters.

10 I sit before you honored to be entrusted  
11 with auditing, reviewing, and monitoring the  
12 employment practices of the City of New York to help  
13 sustain a fair workplace for all including women,  
14 minorities, the disabled, and all people. I  
15 personally have worked with many organizations in New  
16 York including FHEPS neighborhoods and Brooklyn  
17 Hospital Center, law firms like Goodkind, Labaton,  
18 and others. I'm also a Coro Leadership New York  
19 graduate.

20 I bring to the table and to this work the  
21 person who decided at age 6 to be a lawyer to  
22 advocate for justice. I also bring before you the  
23 person who decided at age 30 that practicing  
24 corporate law in a large law firm was not going to  
25 measurably advance justice. I commit to bringing all

2 of the skills and lessons that I've learned to the  
3 EEPCC to serve the city, its entities, and its  
4 citizens. Thank you for your time.

5 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. We're  
6 going to now turn to Speaker Adrienne Adams for a few  
7 questions and then I'll ask a few questions to  
8 follow. Thanks.

9 SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you so much, Mr.  
10 Chair. Good morning to our illustrious candidates and  
11 congratulations to all of you on your nominations.  
12 Happy to have you here in the people's house.

13 I'm going to first start with you, Miss  
14 Yearwood. Welcome once again and congratulations. In  
15 your pre-hearing questions, you stated specific  
16 concerns about the city's ability to attract people  
17 and how that may be affected because of the mandated  
18 back-to-work requirement. How would you balance this  
19 with concerns about perceived public opinions that  
20 the city's workforce should be at the workplace?

21 NICOLE YEARWOOD: Thank you so much for  
22 the question, Speaker Adams. I think that what I've  
23 observed from some people who I know who are employed  
24 by city entities, agencies, some elected officials'  
25 offices is that there is flexibility based on the

2 current pandemic numbers and rates so I think that  
3 having some flexibility around that based on what is  
4 going on currently with our healthcare system and  
5 with the COVID numbers I think would go a long way to  
6 helping to facilitate some sort of balance.

7 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay. Thank you for that.  
8 Are you at all concerned with equity issues that may  
9 arise with parts of the city's workforce having the  
10 benefit of a hybrid work model when other employees  
11 such as our essential workers don't have that same  
12 opportunity?

13 NICOLE YEARWOOD: Thank you once again. I  
14 think that we definitely should consider various  
15 roles and people's positions. I believe that if  
16 someone is an essential worker that there should be  
17 something for them to mitigate that as well. I'm not  
18 exactly sure what that should be as yet, but I think  
19 that everyone, considering all that happened and what  
20 I've seen, I've been fortunate, I actually was  
21 working from home prior to the pandemic, and there  
22 are benefits to coming in office at times, but you  
23 also like and enjoy that flexibility. It was, of  
24 course, beneficial during the pandemic to be able to  
25 transition, and I do understand that some people

2 couldn't transition because of the nature of their  
3 work so it is difficult for some who are essential  
4 but I think that there's definitely room, whether  
5 that's giving time off, spacing that out so some  
6 people would have to come in, maybe they have time  
7 off, then another group comes in. That was one of the  
8 things that worked, even when I worked from home,  
9 there were some people who had to go in so they  
10 staggered hours so there was a schedule, week A some  
11 people came in, week B others came in.

12 SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you. I think that's  
13 fair in taking a look at the big picture and  
14 realizing that there are ways to work with "hybrid"  
15 perspectives and completely in-person perspectives so  
16 I think that's totally fair. Thank you for your  
17 response to that.

18 Miss Okaro, welcome to you as well. We  
19 have something in common. As I was reading and  
20 listening to you speak in hearing that you had a bit  
21 of a break with your corporate life as I did with  
22 mine. At a certain point in your corporate life, you  
23 decided to break from it because, I guess perhaps  
24 like myself, there was something on the inside that  
25 just wasn't working there, realizing that there was a

2 bigger picture and something larger to fulfil because  
3 of intestinal fortitude so I recognize that.

4 In your pre-hearing questions, you state  
5 that your entire career has focused on ensuring safe  
6 and just spaces for people to work. Could you please  
7 expand on that for us?

8 NGOZI OKARO: Absolutely. Just to give a  
9 little bit more background, when I was 6 and I  
10 decided that I wanted to be a lawyer, it was because  
11 somebody said, little girl, you talk a lot, you  
12 should be a lawyer. My mother is a librarian and so  
13 everything I wanted to know I had to look up and so  
14 when I looked what lawyers did and found out who they  
15 were I realized that Ralph Nader was a lawyer who  
16 fought against Ford which was particularly important  
17 because we had a Pinto and, one day, when my mother  
18 was driving me to school our car caught on fire and  
19 so I was like okay, so there are types of people who  
20 can help to bring justice and fairness and equity and  
21 that's the type of person that I wanted to be. I  
22 always thought that I would work on women's and  
23 children's issues, and, in fact, when I was in law  
24 school I worked in a domestic violence clinic that  
25 helped people who were trying to get orders of

2 protection. Basically, as I said, that has always  
3 been my goal. I have a few core values and among them  
4 include justice so even when I have not been  
5 practicing law, although I've never worked in HR,  
6 I've always advocated for just treatment for myself  
7 but also mostly for others.

8 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay. Thank you very much.  
9 I'll just ask one more question. In your pre-hearing  
10 question, similar to the question that I asked Miss  
11 Yearwood, you state that an employment practice that  
12 might affect the work of EEPCC is "work-from-home  
13 policies." In light of any experiences that you may  
14 have had over the last 2 years or so, do you have any  
15 insight as to work-from-home policies and which  
16 policies work best?

17 NGOZI OKARO: Yes. I have a different type  
18 of leadership style than maybe what would work with  
19 the city with such a large workforce and unions, but  
20 I try to engage my team in collaborative thinking  
21 about what our return to office process is, how many  
22 people we'll have in the office, even though the  
23 state and the city have recommended however many  
24 people per square foot, do we feel comfortable about  
25 that. For me, it's very important to find out what it

2 is that people want, what works for everyone, and  
3 then to involve them in the process. Some of our work  
4 requires us to be in-person and so, for me, it seemed  
5 to be only fair that even those of us who don't have  
6 to work in-person all the time that we would still  
7 work in-person so people would not feel like there  
8 was a like a segregated or essential and non-  
9 essential because all of us are essential in terms of  
10 making the work go forward. For me, it has been about  
11 being very in tune to what people want and need,  
12 especially as we think about some people who are  
13 parents and their children might get sick or school  
14 might close and also balancing that with what is fair  
15 and reasonable and will keep the organization going  
16 as smoothly as possible.

17 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay. Thank you very much  
18 for your answers. Thank you both of you. I'm going to  
19 turn it back over to the hands of the Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you, Madam  
21 Speaker. Just a few questions myself and then I'm  
22 going to hand it over to Members to ask questions as  
23 well.

24 To Miss Okaro, in your prehearing  
25 questions, you mentioned the need for popular

2 confidence as essential to effective equal employment  
3 opportunity programs. Can you expand in terms of what  
4 you mean on that and how do you think you,  
5 personally, can help the EEPC to improve this popular  
6 confidence?

7           NGOZI OKARO: Sure. I think that popular  
8 confidence is a phrase that I just kind of made up,  
9 but it means to me that people trust that those who  
10 are to regulate us and determine our workspaces and  
11 that we're all working under the same rules, that  
12 people have confidence in that. I think that we can  
13 see, even looking, I would say especially looking at  
14 our federal government, there is a crisis of  
15 confidence. Some people believe elections work; some  
16 people don't believe that elections work. So in order  
17 to actually do effective work, people have to have  
18 confidence that there are rules, that the rules are  
19 applicable to everyone, that the rules are  
20 understandable and why the rules exist in the first  
21 place. I think that all of those things are important  
22 if we want people to, again, come to work and do  
23 their best and not just do what they need to do and  
24 be grumpy. We really want people, I think, to be  
25 confident and comfortable in their workplaces and

2 know that in the event that something does happen  
3 there's a process, that everyone goes through the  
4 same process and that is as objective as possible.

5 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Got it. Maybe just  
6 the second part of the question. Can you talk how you  
7 specifically, if appointed to the EEPC, would improve  
8 on this public confidence or instill that into the  
9 agency and the work they do.

10 NGOZI OKARO: Yeah. That's a great  
11 question. I think that part of the answer is  
12 understanding if and what the issues are, like why  
13 people don't feel confident if that is in fact the  
14 case. As I said, I'm a researcher, and part of  
15 solving any problem is actually finding out how it  
16 manifests itself, what is the symptom, and then  
17 figuring out what is the root so I can't say today  
18 what I would do but it would be a robust and  
19 thoughtful process along with the other  
20 Commissioners.

21 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Okay. Going to move  
22 to Miss Yearwood for a second. I know that you had  
23 also in your questions had a pre-hearing  
24 questionnaire and mentioned that you have a plan to  
25 increase awareness about the EEPC. Can you give us

2 some examples of how you think that can be improved  
3 and what you might do to help improve that?

4 NICOLE YEARWOOD: Sure. My background is  
5 government relations community outreach as well. I  
6 would probably implore some of the tactics I used as  
7 a partnership specialist for the census. I could even  
8 go back to my days as a community liaison. I think  
9 one of the important things is having people  
10 understand the civil service exam and application  
11 process and how that works so I would begin to tap  
12 into local organizations, traditional ones, for  
13 example our local Community Boards maybe with  
14 expanded staffing and 2 additional Commissioners  
15 maybe going out and really talking to people, working  
16 with DCAS to educate them about the process and how  
17 to apply. We could start with local Community Boards.  
18 We could start with community-based organizations.  
19 I'm a member of several. I'm a member of a sorority.  
20 A member of the NAACP. Developed connections with  
21 several faith-based organizations during my work with  
22 the census so I would tap into a lot of the partners  
23 that I've developed over the last 4 to 5 years  
24 specifically to talk to them about how to gain city  
25 employment, and I would work with my fellow

2 Commissioners on that work as well as the Commission  
3 staff.

4 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Okay. Thank you. I'm  
5 just going to take a minute to move over a moment to  
6 move over to Colleagues here to ask some questions.  
7 We have first Council Member Brewer followed by  
8 Council Member Hudson.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very  
10 much. The first thing I'm going to say is Aldrin  
11 Bonilla, who will be your Chair, is the best Chair in  
12 the United States. He was my Deputy as Borough  
13 President, and there's nobody better so  
14 congratulations to be working with him. That's number  
15 one.

16 The second issue is picking up on what  
17 the Speaker stated, all the agencies have no staff  
18 and so her comments, I know the Law Department is  
19 down 150 and the list goes on, I give the Mayor  
20 credit because he wants others to come back in the  
21 city and so the city, he thinks, should be 5 days a  
22 week. I think it's a great idea, but nobody's going  
23 to work here for 5 days a week and they're telling me  
24 and they're telling the world. So picking up on what  
25 the Speaker stated, because of COVID and all the

2 effects, specifically what would you think to do to  
3 attract folks to come, not only for the civil service  
4 talent, which is part of what we need, but also just  
5 in general. Would you urge the Mayor to do part-time  
6 or maybe keep it full-time? How would you address  
7 this massive lack of people applying for these jobs?  
8 That's number one.

9 The second, of course, is I think there's  
10 probably still a pink ghetto at the civil service. We  
11 love the union. We respect them. I worked in a union  
12 shop. I was the head of a union shop, but I do think  
13 often there is a pink ghetto as I call it and so I  
14 want to know how you would address those 2 issues.  
15 Thank you.

16 NICOLE YEARWOOD: I never heard of that  
17 phrase so you might need to explain that one.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Pink ghetto means  
19 women at the bottom.

20 NICOLE YEARWOOD: Okay. Thank you. That's  
21 a new term. I think that in terms of the first part  
22 of your question, I would probably encourage some  
23 flexibility. That is why I did raise that as a  
24 concern because now there are so many other  
25 opportunities for people that are offering that

2 flexibility of this hybrid work-from-home so I would  
3 encourage the Mayor. Again, we would also have to  
4 look at the data. Who actually needs to physically be  
5 in the workplace to accomplish their jobs because  
6 sometimes there are situations where people need to  
7 physically be there and then how do we offer them  
8 flexibility as well as be open because it's really  
9 about us. We want to attract, of course, the best and  
10 the brightest to these roles, and when they have so  
11 many other businesses that are offering this  
12 flexibility they have choices and so they're going  
13 with those other options as you've already stated  
14 that people don't want to come back. We have to  
15 somehow evolve with the times while making sure the  
16 city runs efficiently. I also understand that part of  
17 it as well is probably driven by economics. We have  
18 businesses that thrive based on people coming into  
19 the workplace, local restaurants, specific  
20 communities. I know I used to work down here in Lower  
21 Manhattan when I was at One Center Street working for  
22 the Borough President's office. There were businesses  
23 that were only open on the weekdays because they  
24 dealt with traffic from people who worked at those  
25 buildings and then they would close on the weekends

2 because we weren't there. It's negotiating a lot of  
3 things and it's a complex issue. I'm not going to  
4 pretend I can answer it in this hearing, but I think  
5 that we need to examine all of those things so that  
6 we can attract more people to come in and apply for  
7 these roles.

8 In terms of addressing the pink ghetto so  
9 to speak, I think that's not a unique issue.  
10 Unfortunately in terms of just historically it's  
11 always, we find that women are the backbone of a lot  
12 of organizations so I think as a member of the  
13 Commission when we're examining the data and seeing  
14 how we're to reflect it in our city's workforce, I  
15 think that's one of the things we can address during  
16 the audit period and recommend corrective actions  
17 that are taken, and we can probably work to suggest  
18 ways that agencies can mitigate that so if we see  
19 that that's reflected in the data of an agency, okay,  
20 what ways can you work to ensure that women are  
21 moving up the ranks.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Thank you. I  
23 love Custom Collaborative as you know and visiting  
24 was fabulous. Go ahead. Same issue. Same question.

2 NGOZI OKARO: Thank you so much. I am new  
3 to this pink ghetto phrase. I think that there are 2  
4 different things that we have to consider. One is  
5 what are the formal ways that promotion and  
6 retention, how do they operate, and then the other  
7 question is what are the informal ways, who is  
8 encouraged to apply for positions, are we reviewing  
9 applications on a blind basis like not knowing the  
10 people's names so I think that there are lots of ways  
11 to modernize systems. I also think that as great as  
12 New York is it's always important to look to others  
13 to see what they're doing so are other  
14 municipalities, whether here or internationally, do  
15 they have better rates of women being promoted in  
16 higher level positions, and, if so, what has worked  
17 and what can we adopt. Sometimes I think it takes a  
18 step back and reframing of the issue and the, of  
19 course, creating some new processes and training and  
20 making people accountable to the outcomes through key  
21 performance indicators or whatever else, and I think  
22 that is one of the most important things, making  
23 someone accountable for it, like whose job  
24 performance takes into account where women are within

2 the city agencies. I'm sorry. You had another  
3 question.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: The other question  
5 is how are you going to handle, picking up on the  
6 excellent question by the Speaker, we've got nobody  
7 applying for jobs in the City of New York and it's  
8 because the outside has a different schedule and it's  
9 all COVID-related so how would you address that. The  
10 Law Department is down 150.

11 NGOZI OKARO: Yes, I think it is also a  
12 question of realism and I think everything that  
13 Nicole said is absolutely right. I also think that my  
14 personal experience as an employer would also inform  
15 some of how I would address it and how I think about  
16 it. For example, our staff, except for the people who  
17 have to be in-person every day because they're  
18 working with participants, we have one day a week  
19 that people have to go to work, but I recently lost a  
20 very good employee because he went somewhere where  
21 they could work from home every day so 80 percent  
22 time at home is not enough for some people so I think  
23 it's about being realistic. For me, that made me  
24 think what are the other things that we can do to  
25 attract and retain the people who we really want to

2 be with us, and that has shown up in a few ways in my  
3 organization including self-care, bonuses, extended  
4 time. Again, I recognize that the city workforce is  
5 different and there are some things that can and  
6 cannot be done and there's different regulations and  
7 unions, but I feel like we could all think a little  
8 bit more creatively, understanding how important it  
9 is to have a fully staffed city and fully staffed  
10 agencies.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very  
12 much.

13 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. We're also  
14 going to welcome Council Member Salamanca here and  
15 Council Member Sanchez. We're just going to very  
16 quickly test Council Member Sanchez's audio on Zoom.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you so  
18 much. Good afternoon.

19 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: All right. We hear  
20 you. Welcome.

21 We're now going to call on Council Member  
22 Hudson followed by Council Member Brooks-Powers.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you, Chair  
24 Powers, and hello, congratulations for your  
25 nominations. Miss Okaro, you just sort of addressed

2 one of the questions that I had or the question that  
3 I had so, Miss Yearwood, I would love to hear from  
4 you is coming from the private sector and being at an  
5 organization like Lime, are there any current values  
6 or practices that you would bring to the EEPC or  
7 things that you think the city could be doing or  
8 learning from what you're seeing in the private  
9 sector?

10 NICOLE YEARWOOD: I would definitely say  
11 of course, and I haven't been private sector long,  
12 just 6 months. Most of my career has been in the  
13 public sector and in government. I would say that one  
14 of the key pieces of our mission is we say that we  
15 want to create transportation that is shareable and  
16 affordable as well as carbon-free. In that mission,  
17 we strive, our team, and we're global, to make sure  
18 that our services are accessible to everyone, and I  
19 think that I can bring that specifically to serve in  
20 this Commission where that is our goal, is to make  
21 sure that everyone is involved and engaged and has  
22 equal access.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you. I'll  
24 just end with just a statement. I've read through  
25 both of your resumes and responses to the questions.

2 I think you're both very qualified to be on the  
3 Commission. Again, I congratulate you. My partner was  
4 actually formerly the Chair of the EEPCC and so I  
5 would encourage you to make sure that you continue to  
6 push these institutions that are historically  
7 discriminatory, and I think both of you, as black  
8 women can probably identify more so than maybe some  
9 other folks how these systems work against people  
10 like us and so I just encourage that, no matter what,  
11 you're being appointed by institutions and I just  
12 encourage you to push those institutions to be the  
13 best that they absolutely can be. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Council Member

15 Brooks-Powers had to step out so we're going keep  
16 moving. Thank you both for your testimony.

17 We're now going to move on to the Board  
18 of Standards and Appeals. Moving on to BSA, just a  
19 little bit of background for folks, the BSA consists  
20 of 5 Commissioners, each appointed by the Mayor for a  
21 term of 6 years. The City Charter provides that one  
22 of the BSA members shall be a planner with  
23 professional qualifications and at least 10 years of  
24 experience as a planner, one of the members should be  
25 a registered architect and should have at least 10

2 years of experience as an architect, and one of the  
3 members should be a licensed professional engineer  
4 and should have at least 10 years of experience as an  
5 engineer. The particular qualifications of the 2  
6 remaining members are not delineated in the Charter.  
7 The Mayor designates one of the members with the  
8 required experience of an architect, planner, or  
9 engineer to serve as Chair and designates another  
10 member to serve as Vice-Chair. No more than 2 members  
11 may reside in any one borough. Each member of the  
12 board receives a salary and may not engage in any  
13 other occupation, profession, or employment. The  
14 Chair earns an annual salary of 227,786 dollars, the  
15 Vice-Chair receives 187,479 annually, while the  
16 remaining members earn annual salaries of 174,827  
17 dollars. The BSA has the power to determine and vary  
18 the applications of the zoning resolutions and to  
19 issue special permits as authorized by the zoning  
20 resolution. The BSA may also consider appeals to vary  
21 or modify any rule or regulation of the provisions of  
22 any law relating to the construction, use, structural  
23 changes, equipment, alteration, or removal of  
24 buildings or structures or vaults in the sidewalks  
25 where there are practical difficulties or unnecessary

2 hardships in carrying out the strict letter of the  
3 law so that the spirit of the law shall be observed,  
4 public safety secured, and substantial justice done.

5 We have a candidate here today. We want  
6 to welcome Christine Yoon. If you want to raise your  
7 right hand to be sworn in.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL OTANO: Do you swear to  
9 tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the  
10 truth?

11 CHRISTINE YOON: I do.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL OTANO: Thank you. You  
13 may continue.

14 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: You can go ahead and  
15 give an opening statement. Thanks.

16 CHRISTINE YOON: Is it okay if I remove my  
17 mask?

18 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Sure.

19 CHRISTINE YOON: Good afternoon, Chair  
20 Powers, Speaker Adams, and Council Members of the  
21 Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections.

22 I'm honored to be here this afternoon to  
23 testify before you regarding my nomination as  
24 Commissioner of New York City's Board of Standards  
25 and Appeals. Both of my parents immigrated to the

2 United States from South Korea in the '70s, starting  
3 their American lives as many immigrants do here in  
4 New York City. After meeting each other and marrying,  
5 they eventually relocated down to Houston, Texas  
6 where I was born and raised. Coincidentally, my first  
7 apartment when I moved here was in Sunnyside Queens,  
8 just a couple of blocks from my mother's first  
9 apartment in 1972.

10 My life has always been tethered to this  
11 city, and, since moving here in 2008, I continue to  
12 be fascinated and amazed at its rich hospitals and  
13 constantly evolving present. I humbly ask for your  
14 consideration of my nomination to participate in  
15 shaping its exciting future.

16 In my career to date, I've been fortunate  
17 to work as an architect, consultant, and real estate  
18 developer and have overseen many executed projects  
19 from concept through construction from these  
20 different roles. I believe that my perspectives from  
21 sitting on multiple sides of the table through a  
22 variety of projects equip me with the ability to  
23 review issues through a multifaceted and pragmatic  
24 lens. A majority of my professional experience has  
25 been focused on the design and development of new

2 construction of affordable housing in New York City  
3 which has introduced me to communities across  
4 multiple boroughs and solidifies my position that  
5 safe, welcoming, and well-designed affordable housing  
6 is not only possible but necessary, and, by investing  
7 in access to housing, we can integrate, stabilize,  
8 and uplift communities.

9 I've also worked on projects of various  
10 typologies in other cities and countries with  
11 entirely different regulatory parameters. This has  
12 allowed me to develop my skillset in understanding  
13 the intent of and interpretation of codes in new  
14 contexts. As a Commissioner, I will my diversity of  
15 experience to consistently provide rigorous analyses,  
16 fair assessments, and considered judgement that  
17 results in decisions that serve the local community,  
18 public interest, and the positive evolution of our  
19 city.

20 Thank you, again, for your time, and I  
21 welcome any questions that you may have for me in  
22 your consideration of my nomination.

23 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. First, I'm  
24 going to hand it over to the Speaker, Adrienne Adams,

2 and then I'll follow up with some questions myself.

3 Thanks.

4 SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you very much, Mr.  
5 Chair. Welcome, Miss Yoon. Good to see you. I just  
6 have a couple of question for you. Have you sought  
7 any advice from the Conflicts of Interest Board in  
8 connection to any potential conflicts that may arise  
9 between your private architectural practice and your  
10 service on the BSA?

11 CHRISTINE YOON: I have not as I am  
12 terminating my employment with my current office, of  
13 course, and will be full-time as a Commissioner.  
14 Should such a conflict arise, I will certainly  
15 consult them.

16 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay. Very good. Thank  
17 you. I noticed that in your pre-hearing questions you  
18 state that matters before the BSA should be  
19 "deliberated upon specific to that site and the facts  
20 presented." What weight should be given to the wishes  
21 of the community? I'm a former Chairperson of the  
22 second largest Community Board in Queens so this is  
23 of particular interest to me. What weight should be  
24 given to the wishes of the community, particularly  
25

2 any recommendations by the Community Board when  
3 considering applications on a case-by-case basis.

4 CHRISTINE YOON: It's hard to say as a  
5 blanket rule or statement how much the community  
6 voice will have an impact ultimately on the decision  
7 that the Board makes, but, of course, it's part of  
8 the application and in some cases can consist of a  
9 much larger portion of the weight than in others. I  
10 think given the nature of the application and all of  
11 the facts presented and the site's own potential, you  
12 have to weigh a number of things including the  
13 community's input in order to make a fair and  
14 objective decision.

15 SPEAKER ADAMS: I'm just curious. Have you  
16 attended your local Community Board meetings?

17 CHRISTINE YOON: I have not.

18 SPEAKER ADAMS: You have not? Okay. I'm  
19 going to turn it back over to the hands of the Chair.  
20 Thank you.

21 CHRISTINE YOON: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Great. Thank you. In  
23 some of the past Councils, there's been actually a  
24 focus a little bit on the BSA. Specifically, one of  
25 my Colleagues who was neighboring to me had focused a

2 lot on it and feeling there wasn't a lot of  
3 transparency. Obviously, I think not a lot of  
4 understanding from the public either about exactly  
5 what the function of the BSA is and a feeling that  
6 often the decisions were fairly a rubberstamp so can  
7 you talk to us a little bit about how you might  
8 address some of those issues but also expand  
9 transparency in the workings of the BSA?

10 CHRISTINE YOON: Certainly. As far as I  
11 understand the workings of the BSA, all deliberations  
12 that we have as Commissioners must happen in a public  
13 setting so the transparency that exists of any sort  
14 of thought process or concerns that I may have  
15 personally would be before the public in that  
16 setting. I'm sorry. There was an earlier part of the  
17 question.

18 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: I think the question  
19 is, and maybe I can just spin off the Speaker's  
20 question as well. There were communities, Community  
21 Boards, Council Members who had felt often the way  
22 that the BSA operated and the votes and the decisions  
23 of the BSA often reflected sort of an automatic  
24 approval from any of the applications that came  
25 before it and so had wished to see something that

2 reflected a balance between what are the concerns  
3 being raised versus the decisions that were coming  
4 out of the agency. I remember being at these hearings  
5 and this being a big point discussion and also as  
6 part of (INAUDIBLE) my neighbor and Council Member so  
7 this was things that my community was talking about  
8 as well so I guess how does one address as a  
9 Commissioner that feeling that sometimes the  
10 communities don't perhaps even a basis understanding  
11 of the BSA and its approval processes but also maybe  
12 don't feel like they are always able to communicate  
13 and have meaningful input into the outcomes of the  
14 Board?

15 CHRISTINE YOON: I believe that all  
16 deliberation that we do have in the public setting  
17 needs to clearly address what it is we have the  
18 authority to make a decision on and what is under our  
19 discretion versus what is statutory or part of code  
20 and regulation, and I think providing that  
21 transparency in the deliberation is helpful for  
22 concerned community members to understand what powers  
23 the Board actually does have. Of course, when an  
24 application comes before the Board, it's likely been  
25 clear to the applicant what discretion and powers the

2 Board does have but perhaps it's an effort for the  
3 Commissioners to be clear and transparent as they're  
4 deliberating it for the benefit of the larger public  
5 and the concerned community. Does that answer your  
6 question, Chair?

7 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: It does a bit. I  
8 obviously recognize that these are public meetings. I  
9 think that also there's a desire to have a better  
10 kind of clearer understanding, in fact maybe this  
11 means modernizing the agency's mission and its  
12 function and its statutory obligations and everything  
13 else which I think is perhaps also maybe part of the  
14 conversation. The BSA sort of sits in an interesting  
15 place when it comes to all the other city agencies.  
16 We have City Planning folks here who have I think  
17 more of a broadcasted function in terms of what their  
18 role is in the ULURP process. It seems like BSA sort  
19 of sits in an interesting place which I think also  
20 sometimes leaves communities, especially ones, I have  
21 a well-resourced community that can hire folks to go  
22 and help this process, but often leave others maybe  
23 without a clear understanding of that so I think  
24 rather than ask another question about it, I think  
25 what I implore folks to do is to maybe look at the

2 agency's overall functions and its role in the whole  
3 land use process and figure out a way that the public  
4 can better understand what it does and how it might  
5 (INAUDIBLE) update the statutory obligations of it.  
6 I'm asking a lot of you. You're just one  
7 Commissioner, but I just say this because I do recall  
8 this being part of the dialogue but it gets lost  
9 because we so rarely encounter BSA as part of our  
10 everyday lives or, no offense to City Planning folks,  
11 we see and talk about their functions a whole lot so  
12 I think it is always a good moment as we're talking  
13 to folks who are coming before us to also think about  
14 what the role of the BSA is and what its obligations  
15 or where the handoff between those two things might  
16 occur. With that being said, the Speaker has one more  
17 question.

18 SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I  
19 just have one more. Still looking at your pre-hearing  
20 questions. Have you looked at or considered or  
21 researched the staffing level at BSA right now?

22 CHRISTINE YOON: I have not.

23 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay. Around that same  
24 issue, as far as your current knowledge of BSA,

2 what's your comfort level with your current knowledge  
3 of BSA, its function, and its parameters.

4 CHRISTINE YOON: I have a familiarity, of  
5 course, with the Board's role in land use in New York  
6 City. I have not personally worked on a project that  
7 has appeared before the Board. I have had some  
8 conversations with some of the staff at the BSA, but  
9 I'm very eager to learn more as it's quite premature  
10 for me to make any kind of assessment on the staffing  
11 or resourcing that currently exists.

12 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. We're  
14 going to go to Council Member Brooks-Powers who I  
15 think also had previous questions for the last panel  
16 and then we're going to go Council Member Brewer and  
17 Council Member Salamanca.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you  
19 so much. First, I'd like to acknowledge Mrs. Nicole  
20 Yearwood, someone who I've known for quite some time  
21 who has done tremendous work in communities that are  
22 underrepresented and underserved so I'm pretty  
23 excited about this opportunity to bring those skills  
24 into a space that is needed, especially in light of  
25 when we see that women of color, especially black

2 women, continue to make far less than our white male  
3 counterparts in terms of diversity, equity, and  
4 inclusion. All 3 of those things are critically  
5 important in the workplace, especially in city  
6 government. I did want to start with both Nicole and  
7 Ngozi to just understand and also in the lens,  
8 Nicole, of what you were talking about in terms of  
9 women being critical in the role, and, as a mom and  
10 seeing women and individuals coming back to work  
11 right now as we reopen from COVID, I know certain  
12 types of work dynamics may be a bit more challenging,  
13 especially with exposure, you're in, you're out and  
14 that type of thing so have you both given any thought  
15 to retention of women of color in leadership, like in  
16 terms of strategies for that? Also, not just women of  
17 color but also specifically moms as well because  
18 oftentimes we find that women are cornerstones of our  
19 community, and, especially when you have children,  
20 it's just a different weight that is being carried in  
21 terms of the family structure.

22 NICOLE YEARWOOD: Thank you for the  
23 question, Council Member Brooks-Powers. That's kind  
24 of why I raised the issue of work from home being a  
25 challenge. One of the things that I've noticed in the

1 trends and as a member of a sorority of women's  
2 organizations and serving on a Commission that worked  
3 with the U.N., understanding that globally the  
4 pandemic impacted women more, especially mothers  
5 because once schools closed the caretaking of  
6 children fell on the mother and this happened during  
7 the pandemic so this is part of the reason why women  
8 were more impacted by the pandemic in the workplace,  
9 just for that reason, for being that person, being  
10 that caretaker having to care for their children when  
11 schools closed so that was the first thing. The  
12 second thing with that is why I would encourage,  
13 again, some sort of flexibility because I think that  
14 people kind of got used to the flexibility of working  
15 from home allows a little bit more space. As long as  
16 people are still being productive and getting the job  
17 done, getting the work done, I think that we can  
18 negotiate that so that the mother who has to care for  
19 her child who may have to stay home because the  
20 school closed, they can still perform, have access to  
21 that employment, and still be able to take care of  
22 their children. Again, not having examined the data  
23 yet, I definitely encourage flexibility and just  
24 understanding the complexity of those issues. I think  
25

1 that this is not the first time in history that women  
2 have been impacted by this type of thing, when  
3 anything happens because we have that caretaking  
4 role, it shifts to us and so I think it's just  
5 something that's important for the city to really  
6 consider to again attract women. Women need to be at  
7 the table. Women need to be in these spaces because  
8 all of our city agencies are tasked with serving  
9 everyone in this city. I just think about an example  
10 I saw recently, and this is again the importance of  
11 having that diversity and having people present. A  
12 nurse told a story, black woman, nurse, and she said  
13 that they had a patient, they were on rotation, and  
14 another nurse almost recommended a patient for a  
15 psych evaluation because this particular patient who  
16 was a black woman was patting her head like this.  
17 Now, as black women, we know why somebody might be  
18 doing this. It could be just because someone is  
19 wearing hair extensions, a weave, or a wig. That's  
20 all, but, because this person who was not from that  
21 culture, she did not realize that this woman was  
22 simply patting her head because of her hairstyle and  
23 she was literally about to put this person into a  
24 position where they would need a psych eval so these  
25

2 are the kinds of things that having women in the  
3 workplace, having women of color in the workplace,  
4 this is what we bring, those cultural understandings  
5 so I would, again, definitely go for having those  
6 conversations, we have to have some sort of  
7 flexibility because we need to be there. Also, even  
8 having a mother's perspective in the workplace is  
9 also helpful. There could be things and issues that  
10 come up, I personally don't have children, but I do  
11 have nieces and nephews and some godchildren, that I  
12 might understand or that a person who has a child may  
13 have a deeper understanding of that I may not be  
14 considering so it's all about having everyone present  
15 at the table, especially in the workforce, in the  
16 workplace.

17 NGOZI OKARO: Thank you so much. In terms  
18 of the question, as I said earlier, I think it's very  
19 important to have flexibility, but I also think it's  
20 important for employees to know that people see them  
21 so recognizing that sometimes women, especially women  
22 of color, especially black women, are stuck under a  
23 glass ceiling. I think it's important to ask people  
24 about their ambitions because in doing that you say  
25 that there is a future, there are things for you

2 here, and then also it gets people to think about  
3 what more they might be doing. Another thing that I  
4 would think of is to talk to people what do they  
5 think gets in the way of them achieving those  
6 ambitions because some of the things that we think  
7 might be getting in the way may not be the same as  
8 people perceive and so, understanding that that might  
9 not be possible on a one-by-one basis for the whole  
10 city workforce at the same time, I think there are  
11 ways that it can be possible. For example, on my team  
12 there are 10 of us working. I can't have that type of  
13 conversation with everyone regularly and still do the  
14 other things that I'm supposed to do so then I've  
15 mandated that each employee meet quarterly with our  
16 Chief-of-Staff and then that is someone who they can  
17 talk to about different things, get some ideas, say  
18 what their concerns are, talk about their goals, and  
19 then that can filter back to their supervisor or to  
20 me so I think that there are ways that we can be  
21 creative but it's really important to be in tune with  
22 what people want and to let them know that we see  
23 them and we think that there is more possibility for  
24 them and to help train them as necessary to get to

2 the next place because, again, that's about  
3 retention.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: I thank you  
5 both for that and the fact that you're thinking  
6 through that lens going into these roles because, in  
7 time, things change and so this is important to be  
8 able to retain and attract women of color because I  
9 know that there are women who have been considered  
10 for Commissioner roles and things like that, but,  
11 because of the lack of flexibility with the city, we  
12 have lost out on some great talent.

13 Lastly, I'd like to just pivot over to  
14 Miss Yoon. Similar to the Speaker, we share a  
15 neighboring district, and we see quite a bit of land  
16 use exercises happening in our districts so I would  
17 like to understand a little bit more granular in  
18 terms of how you see in your role working with the  
19 Council Members. I know the Speaker focused on the  
20 Community Board which is really important too and the  
21 members of the community, but I'm interested in also  
22 understanding how you would engage with the Council  
23 Members in your role. Then, I would like to know your  
24 thoughts on development as it relates to global  
25 warming, and why I ask that is because I represent

2 the 31st Council District, which a part of that  
3 district is a coastal community. We have significant  
4 up-zoning that has taken place there and development  
5 underway there right now, and I never really hear  
6 City Planning talking about evacuation routes. When  
7 you start to change the footprint of a community,  
8 especially a coastal community, what that entail does  
9 to the resiliency of the community, the ability to  
10 evacuate especially in light of Superstorm Sandy so  
11 I'd like to know your thoughts around that too. Thank  
12 you.

13 CHRISTINE YOON: Thank you for the  
14 questions. As far as how to I can engage with Council  
15 Members and the community, to be honest I'm not even  
16 clear how frequently that's meant to happen per  
17 application or per case, but I am looking very much  
18 forward to meeting Council Members and discussing the  
19 concerns of that community as applications come up.

20 As for my feelings about how we should  
21 build and think about impacts of global warming on  
22 new development and existing communities, of course I  
23 feel quite strongly that we need to make a number of  
24 changes and New York City, thankfully, has been quite  
25 aggressive in adopting new energy codes and policies

2 that help not just resiliency along the coast but  
3 also the other things that impact our floodwaters and  
4 our temporary and our carbon footprint. Thinking  
5 about it holistically, I believe that as we move  
6 towards electrification and renewable resources in  
7 addition to considerations of immediate resiliency  
8 and long-term planning, I believe that we need to put  
9 those all the very forefront of what we're doing,  
10 and, again, I feel very fortunate to be a part of New  
11 York City where some of those measures have already  
12 been codified in a way that's been much more  
13 progressive than some of our counterparts in other  
14 cities.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. Before we  
17 move forward, we have a tour from the School of the  
18 New York Times visiting us today so welcome,  
19 everyone. Thanks for being here today.

20 We're going to now move over to Council  
21 Member Brewer and will be followed by Council Member  
22 Salamanca.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very  
24 much. Obviously, the BSA, for those of us in the  
25 community, is not a pleasant experience when we end

2 up there to be honest with because we are always  
3 feeling that the BSA is going to rule against the  
4 local community. That's why I think you're getting  
5 these kinds of questions so I'm not going to repeat  
6 them, but are there other ways, either through  
7 technology, which you mentioned in the questions, or  
8 in your path in working in the private sector where  
9 more creatively we could explain to the community  
10 what is going on or where you think there's more  
11 planning for land use in the City of New York which  
12 is what some of us would like to see, that we  
13 wouldn't end up with some of these really hard  
14 decisions. A more general, philosophical question.  
15 The BSA, when I go there and I've been there hundreds  
16 of times on behalf of the community and it's a  
17 horrible experience to be honest with you because you  
18 feel you're going to lose and you feel like it's a  
19 waste of time and you want to just go to Article 78  
20 immediately. I guess I'm asking, just thinking in  
21 2022, 2023, how can we think about some of these  
22 issues a little differently. Thank you.

23 CHRISTINE YOON: I appreciate the question  
24 and honesty about the experience, and I have heard  
25 some similar testimony about appearing before the

2 BSA. Philosophically or as a broader question, of  
3 course increasing access points and even just user-  
4 friendliness to what the BSA is how it makes its  
5 votes and what it deliberates over I think is very  
6 important to get a better understanding for the  
7 community and for the public. I cannot speak to any  
8 kind of broader strokes of how we would move forward.  
9 It's very premature for me to make such a judgement,  
10 but I do hear what you're saying and I am very  
11 excited to take all of that into consideration as we  
12 move forward.

13 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Okay. We will now go  
14 to Council Member Salamanca.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you, Mr.  
16 Chair. First, I want to congratulate all of the  
17 panelists on getting to this level so congratulations  
18 on your nominations.

19 My question is just a followup on the BSA  
20 questions. I'm a former District Manager before I  
21 became a Council Member. One of the things that I  
22 disliked the most was when I got mail from the BSA in  
23 my Community Board office because I knew that  
24 regardless of what recommendations my Community Board  
25 had they were going to be ignored because the BSA was

2 just going to approve the applications. I know that  
3 you've been asked these questions, but I'm going to  
4 ask again. As a Commissioner, what role are you going  
5 to play in ensuring that the communities have access  
6 to 1) the meetings that you're having and 2) that  
7 their voices are actually being heard when these  
8 various applications are before you?

9 CHRISTINE YOON: Of course, with the  
10 actual access to the hearings, right now, as I  
11 understand it, it is completely hybrid as we are  
12 doing here, and I believe that the hybridization due  
13 to the pandemic has actually had the positive benefit  
14 of increasing access for people to attend the  
15 hearings live. Also, there is access to all of the  
16 video footage on YouTube which increases that ability  
17 even if you're not able to attend in person or live  
18 via some remote call-in, you're able to access all of  
19 the deliberation that happens prior to the following  
20 day's judgements.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: As a BSA  
22 Commissioner, when you are going to determine or  
23 vote, how do we know that your vote is going to be in  
24 line with recommendations from the local electeds,  
25 Community Boards, and community members?

2 CHRISTINE YOON: It's impossible for me to  
3 commit to any alignment when I have to review a case  
4 on its specific basis, but, of course, the community  
5 recommendation has to be factored into the decision  
6 that is made and the discretion that's used by each  
7 of the Commissioners.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: The BSA has a  
9 reputation for being too lenient when applications  
10 come before them. I remember Council Member Brewer  
11 was Borough President a few years back, we had then  
12 Council Member Margaret Chin, and there was an  
13 application in front of the BSA, Two Bridges, and the  
14 applicant wanted to double the size of the  
15 development and the BSA said it was a minor  
16 modification. I don't know how doubling the size of  
17 a, I don't want to call it a skyscraper, but a huge  
18 development, that's considered a minor modification.  
19 How would you have voted?

20 CHRISTINE YOON: It's impossible for me to  
21 make an opinion that I am unfamiliar with.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Do you not  
23 think that doubling the size of a development is not  
24 a minor modification and it should've gone in front a  
25 Land Use or a ULURP application?

2 CHRISTINE YOON: The way you're describing  
3 it, it sounds egregious, but I have no facts, I have  
4 no context in which to make an opinion about that. I  
5 do believe the BSA has some ability to help shape the  
6 final outcome of the application, and, ideally, all  
7 of the components that go into the application  
8 including community recommendations are factored into  
9 how we help shape the ultimate approved application  
10 if it is approved.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Okay. Thank you  
12 very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for allowing me to  
13 ask my questions.

14 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. We have a  
15 question from Council Member Sanchez.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you, Chair.  
17 My first question will be Miss Yoon. Miss Yoon, how  
18 did you come to be appointed to the BSA?

19 CHRISTINE YOON: I haven't been appointed  
20 yet. I was nominated by the Vice Chair of the BSA,  
21 Commissioner Shampa Chanda.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you.  
23 Second, can you tell us a little bit about your  
24 philosophy? Of course, there's going to be standards  
25 and rules and laws and all of that that you're going

2 to be looking at as you consider the specific facts  
3 of an application before the BSA, but what is your  
4 philosophy, what are your priorities? Are there any  
5 projects that should be considered differently than  
6 others? Perhaps, Council Member Brooks-Powers asked  
7 about climate resilience. Do you have a background in  
8 affordable housing? Are there any specific  
9 philosophical priorities that you would have coming  
10 in as a Commissioner?

11 CHRISTINE YOON: As you mentioned, I've  
12 already described a couple of priorities that I have  
13 as a person. As an objective Commissioner who needs  
14 to remain unbiased in reviewing applications, I hope  
15 to keep that objectivity, of course, always keeping  
16 in mind the idea of the positive evolution of the  
17 city and the context around that certain application.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you. For  
19 the EEPC candidates, Miss Yearwood and Miss Okaro,  
20 you've gotten a number of questions from my  
21 Colleagues on this front. I feel this is..

22 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Council Member,  
23 they've actually left, the EEPC candidates have left.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Well, then, I  
25 will maybe share this at a different forum. Okay.

2 Never mind. Thank you. I can't tell who's there.

3 Thank you, Chair. I really appreciate it.

4 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you, Council  
5 Member. Without any other questions, we will now move  
6 on to the City Planning Commission. Thank you for  
7 your testimony and answering questions. You're  
8 excused if you would like to leave. Thank you.

9 Thank you. We're going to now move to  
10 City Planning Commission. Just a little bit of  
11 background on the City Planning Commission. Pursuant  
12 to the New York City Charter, the City Planning  
13 Commission must consist of 13 members with 7  
14 appointments which includes appointment of the Chair  
15 made by the Mayor, 1 appointment each made by the  
16 Public Advocate and each Borough President. All  
17 members except the Chair are subject to the advice  
18 and consent of the City Council. According to the  
19 Charter, the members should be chosen for their  
20 independence, integrity, and civic commitment. CPC  
21 members other than the Chair are not considered  
22 regular city employees, and there's no limitation on  
23 the number of terms that a member may serve. However,  
24 members are prohibited from holding any other city  
25 office while serving on the CPC. CPC has a number of

2 responsibilities including engaging in planning,  
3 focus on the city's orderly growth, improvement and  
4 future development, which involves considerations  
5 concerning appropriate resources for housing,  
6 business, industry, recreation, and culture,  
7 overseeing and coordinating environmental reviews  
8 mandated by the state's Environmental Conservation  
9 Law, preparing required reports. They also establish  
10 various rules consisting of establishing minimum  
11 standards for certifying ULURP applications and  
12 establishing criteria associated with the selection  
13 of sites for capital projects. The member designated  
14 as Vice Chair receives an annual salary of 73,855  
15 dollars. The other members receive an annual salary  
16 of 64,224 dollars.

17 We now have 3 candidates before us today.  
18 We have Rasmia Kirmani-Frye, Professor Osorio, and  
19 Mr. Gold. Would you all please raise your right hand  
20 to be sworn in?

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL OTANO: Do you all swear  
22 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but  
23 the truth?

24 DAVID GOLD: I do.

25 RASMIA KIRMANI-FRYE: I do.

2 JUAN CAMILO OSORIO: I do.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL OTANO: Thank you. You  
4 can proceed.

5 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. We'll  
6 allow all of you to make an opening statement. We can  
7 start over here and move down. Thanks.

8 DAVID GOLD: If it's okay with everyone,  
9 I'll take my mask off.

10 Good morning and thank you, Chair Powers,  
11 Speaker Adams, and Honorable Committee Members. I  
12 appreciate the opportunity to address you today. I'm  
13 happy to be considered for the City Planning  
14 Commission.

15 By way of background, I'm a lifelong New  
16 Yorker. I've lived in 3 of the 5 boroughs with my  
17 formative years spent on Staten Island and then in  
18 Brooklyn. I'm an attorney admitted to practice for 25  
19 years. I completed college and law school, a 7-year  
20 program in just over 4 years. I was extremely driven  
21 and motivated though by necessity. My family  
22 struggled after the death of my father when I was 11  
23 following a 7-year bout with a terminal, debilitating  
24 illness. The emotional toll on my mom and my family  
25 was huge. The medical bills also wiped us out

2 financially though and led to several housing  
3 challenges. In fact, I started working weekends and  
4 summers at the age of 11 doing odds and ends and  
5 helping on a construction site to help pay the bills  
6 so I know how it feels to make tough decisions with  
7 limited funds while facing foreclosure. Before my  
8 father became ill, both he and my mother were civil  
9 servants. They worked in the Richmond County Borough  
10 President's office and for Members of the City  
11 Council. I grew up going to work with my parents who  
12 were early proponents of affordable housing for both  
13 low- and moderate-income families, and these were  
14 ideals that I learned at a very early age.

15 In 1985, at a dedication for low-income  
16 housing development in fact, Mayor Koch said about my  
17 dad's involvement public service is the noblest of  
18 professions if it's done honestly and if it's done  
19 well, he does it honestly and he does it superbly.  
20 The reason I tell you all of this is because my  
21 experiences at a young age really helped shape my  
22 life and are responsible in a large part for my  
23 success.

24 Professionally, I spent nearly 20 years  
25 evaluating companies' strategic challenges, providing

2 problem-solving advice, and doing research for some  
3 of the sharpest economic minds. For the last 7 years,  
4 I've served on the board of a New York City based  
5 bank helping small businesses grow and helping to  
6 fund a variety of real estate projects, both  
7 residential and commercial so I understand what it  
8 takes to make a project work financially, but, at the  
9 same time, I have done pro bono work for military  
10 personnel and veterans, helping them prepare their  
11 affairs and stave off foreclosure. I will never  
12 forget the soldier who came to us for help when his  
13 home was illegally foreclosed while he was overseas  
14 fighting for our country. I also work closely with  
15 the dependents of first responders killed or injured  
16 in the line of duty, and, as you can imagine, housing  
17 becomes a primary concern of a household after losing  
18 their breadwinner.

19           While I've been able to help on a one-on-  
20 one basis, joining the City Planning Commission  
21 positions me to take a more systemic approach.  
22 Affordable housing is the number one challenge for  
23 New York City and where I can make a meaningful  
24 impact and better support vulnerable populations. My  
25 life experience combined with legal, financial, and

2 economic training give me a unique perspective that I  
3 can utilize to bolster the invaluable work of the  
4 City Planning Commission.

5 First, my pro bono work related to  
6 foreclosure prevention for veterans and others has  
7 given me a firsthand look at the housing challenges  
8 that persist across the city. Losing your home is  
9 extremely scary with significant long-term effects on  
10 the entire family.

11 Second, with over 2 decades of service on  
12 non-profit and for-profit boards, I've learned to  
13 look at challenges from multiple angles, balancing  
14 the needs of various constituencies while building  
15 consensus. As a result, my insight into the cost and  
16 impact of real estate development, residential and  
17 commercial, has grown exponentially.

18 Finally, I'm extremely interested in  
19 helping advance the growth of New York City by  
20 ensuring our infrastructure can support increasing  
21 access to affordable housing, transportation, and  
22 critical services.

23 I know we have some challenges ahead, but  
24 I also believe there's no other place with the energy  
25 or potential of New York City. We have significant

2 need for additional affordable housing, but we also  
3 have amazing opportunities with the Mayor's City of  
4 Yes Initiatives. I believe the partnership between  
5 the Mayor, the Council, and the City Planning  
6 Commission can bolster the leadership position of our  
7 city at a time when there are many who think New York  
8 has lost its edge, and I deeply want to help  
9 facilitate the balanced, equitable growth of our city  
10 and ensure its success.

11 Thank you for the time today, and I'm now  
12 available to answer any questions you may have.

13 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. We'll do  
14 testimony from all 3 and then ask questions. Thanks.

15 RASMIA KIRMANI-FRYE: Thank you, Chair  
16 Powers, Speaker Adams, and Honorable Council and  
17 Committee Members.

18 For context and background, I've lived in  
19 Brooklyn for 27 years, from Windsor Terrace to Sunset  
20 Park, Brownsville to Fort Greene and now in Bedford-  
21 Stuyvesant. I have an 11-year-old son, Kabir  
22 (phonetic), who's here with me today. Council Member  
23 Hudson, you recently spoke at his PS-11 graduation,  
24 and he wanted to see what you did in real life.

2 I was born and raised outside of Boston  
3 in a closeknit extended Pakistani family and  
4 community. In terms of family, it was amazing, but I  
5 always knew since about Kabir's age that I wanted to  
6 live in New York City, a city where I knew I would  
7 experience belong instead of mostly feeling like an  
8 outsider and that's been 100 percent true. The  
9 process of planning the city's infrastructure and  
10 strengthening neighborhoods has always fascinated me.  
11 My undergraduate thesis was about the transformation  
12 of Soho from an industrial sector to a community  
13 where art and land use became part of a social moment  
14 in the '60s so this feels like a very full circle  
15 moment for me.

16 I've spent almost 30 years deeply  
17 embedded in work that invests in New York City  
18 communities and the people who live in them. My first  
19 job, the summer between my junior and senior years in  
20 college, was running an SYEP program Sara D.  
21 Roosevelt Park with University Settlement. This was  
22 in '94, and the transformation of that park was just  
23 the beginning. Young people from the community built  
24 the Children's Garden that summer and helped to

2 organize the first ever Sarah D. Roosevelt Park  
3 Festival with their community.

4 After college, in '95, I worked at the  
5 then fledgling Time Square Building Improvement  
6 District, and I learned so much about changing the  
7 narrative of a place, the power of zoning and  
8 community engagement, the power of corporations, and  
9 kind of my first peak into what public/private  
10 partnerships can do.

11 My next job was as the first Brooklyn  
12 Outreach Coordinator for another startup organization  
13 called Partnerships for Parks, and I got to know the  
14 432, at the time parks and playgrounds in Brooklyn,  
15 the communities, residents, how the Parks Department  
16 works, the challenge with interagency projects, the  
17 vital role of the City Council. I learned about the  
18 importance of space and place to communities and that  
19 deep engagement that values communities and their  
20 expertise is so crucial to land use decisions.

21 I was a founding member of the  
22 Brownsville Partnership team in 2008 with the  
23 unofficial/official mayor of Brownsville, Greg  
24 "Jacko" Jackson, who has since passed and is the  
25 greatest mentor, teacher, and friend that I've ever

2 had. The Brownsville Partnership evolved into a  
3 network of over 2 dozen organizations working  
4 together with residents to build on the assets of  
5 Brownsville. What I learned in Brownsville, what I  
6 have learned everywhere I have worked was to listen  
7 and then to bring together residents, government,  
8 organizations, and other stakeholders to lean all the  
9 way in, moving past discomfort to imagine and help  
10 realize a neighborhood shaped by the people who live  
11 there.

12 I think it came as a surprise to many  
13 people that I left Brownsville in 2015 to join the  
14 Executive Team at the New York City Housing Authority  
15 as the Director of the Office of Public/Private  
16 Partnerships. Besides the connection to the Parks  
17 Department, I had never worked in government before,  
18 but it was a relatively simple decision actually.  
19 Brownsville has a high concentration of public  
20 housing, and, after seeing counsel and guidance from  
21 many Brownsville residents, I reached out and was  
22 offered this position. Public housing, as we all  
23 know, is the most affordable housing in New York  
24 City. Public housing residents work overwhelmingly in  
25 jobs that keep the city moving, but so often we don't

2 value public housing the way we value other types of  
3 affordable housing. After coming from a career in  
4 community organizing, nonprofit management, working  
5 at NYCHA was certainly different, and it's one of the  
6 best decisions I've ever made. Many of the same  
7 strategies that I used to build trust in communities,  
8 one-on-one, deep listening, and learning with  
9 residents, some ideation, and certainly credibility  
10 building with partners were great tools in breaking  
11 through, if you will, the intense bureaucracy and  
12 hierarchy at NYCHA. My role was to increase NYCHA's  
13 external relationships and partnerships. I created  
14 and led an independent non-profit organization to  
15 serve as NYCHA's innovation escape hatch. I was the  
16 founding President of the Fund for Public Housing, an  
17 independent 501(c)(3) organization that still exists,  
18 of course, and invests in public housing residents  
19 and communities to improve the way public housing  
20 works.

21 Then as an independent consultant, I have  
22 continued to work with incredible organizations,  
23 communities, government stakeholders, all committed  
24 to the equitable growth and development of New York  
25 City.

2 Today, New York City is at a crossroads  
3 of epic proportions as we all know. The COVID-19  
4 pandemic has laid bare the deep inequities that face  
5 our city demanding a reckoning and deep change. Mayor  
6 Adams has put forth a bold and inclusive vision for  
7 growth for our incredible city. The plan will require  
8 DCP and CPC to center neighborhoods through equitable  
9 and imaginative planning across our city, that we  
10 partner early and often with the City Council, that  
11 deep community engagement moves beyond public  
12 hearings. We must respond with a commitment to  
13 planning efforts that supports inclusive  
14 transformation such as last year's passage of the  
15 Racial Impact Study Legislation.

16 In terms of housing, supply absolutely  
17 matters. Empirical research shows that the supply and  
18 demand issue is very real and that adding supply is  
19 incredibly important as part of the solution to the  
20 problem. Every neighborhood needs to contribute in  
21 order to solve the housing crisis, and, while we need  
22 all types of housing including market rate housing,  
23 the city is in desperate need of deeply affordable  
24 housing. Marginalized communities and people are  
25 suffering the most right now, and every New Yorkers

2 deserves a safe and affordable place to live.  
3 Mandatory inclusionary housing, a tool the Council  
4 passed and is a national model for cities, is  
5 essential in holding developers accountable to  
6 creating affordable units, but it's not enough. It  
7 must be maximized in every community. The ULURP  
8 process and the rezonings that will emerge take  
9 years. It's critical that the Mayor, Council,  
10 Community Boards, communities, DPC, and CPC work  
11 together to speed up the process of creating deeply  
12 affordable housing. It will take all of us to  
13 creatively reshape policies and protocols, but we can  
14 do this together.

15 In closing, let me say this. I moved to  
16 Brooklyn 27 years ago and I have spent, as I said, my  
17 career working in or on behalf of New York City  
18 communities, the intersection of the physical  
19 environment, health, socioeconomic issues, housing,  
20 deep engagement, and more. I'm a connector, and I  
21 value and get immense joy from relationships above  
22 all else. I'm so looking forward to working with the  
23 City Council, with all of you. We are partners in the  
24 work, we can't do it alone, ensuring an inclusive and  
25 equitable growth strategy so that all New Yorkers can

2 thrive, and, at the end of the day, it is the people,  
3 the communities, neighborhoods who are the greatest  
4 asset in the City of New York. It's the residents of  
5 New York City that we are all accountable to. We are  
6 in this today and will benefit from a deep and  
7 committed relationship of trust and collaboration.  
8 I'm excited for what we'll do together to support  
9 equitable growth and it will really be my honor to  
10 serve on the CPC and serve the people of our great  
11 city.

12 Thank you so much, and I'm, of course,  
13 open to any questions.

14 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you.

15 JUAN CAMILO OSORIO: Good afternoon. I  
16 want to start by thanking the City Council's  
17 Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections as I'm  
18 grateful for the opportunity to discuss my nomination  
19 by the Brooklyn Borough President, Antonio Reynoso,  
20 to serve on the City Planning Commission.

21 Building on 16 years of professional  
22 planning work, I'm eager to activate my perspective  
23 as an architect and urban planner to help guarantee  
24 critical and objective planning and decision making.  
25 I bring my experience providing technical assistance

2 to community-based planners, conducting environmental  
3 justice research and advocacy, and advancing climate  
4 change mitigation and (INAUDIBLE) planning. I know  
5 firsthand how important the CPC is in guaranteeing  
6 the rigorous evaluation of proposals, and I've always  
7 seen it as a critical space in which to debate public  
8 concerns, respond to community needs and priorities,  
9 and inspire a dialogue that guides decisions toward  
10 achieving the greatest public good.

11 As an academic researcher, my work is  
12 focused on conducting scientific investigations to  
13 tackle the complexity of the issues affecting cities  
14 like New York and design innovative ways to respond  
15 with ethical and political commitment. I've learned  
16 to ensure that planning includes both comprehensive  
17 and strategic initiatives to address structural and  
18 procedural conflicts between local community  
19 priorities with citywide goals. This includes, for  
20 example, ensuring that planning proposals geared to  
21 accelerate climate action or build community  
22 resiliency also address environmental justice issues  
23 in communities that have historically experienced a  
24 disproportionate environmental burden from  
25 infrastructure, utilities, and (INAUDIBLE) land uses.

2 In nominating me, the Brooklyn Borough  
3 President and his staff have shown they trust my  
4 perspective on planning issues, granting me the  
5 autonomy I need to exercise sound independent  
6 judgement. I see myself representing the entire  
7 borough of Brooklyn which includes all the individual  
8 communities whose voices need to be amplified in the  
9 context of citywide planning priorities. Otherwise,  
10 efforts to address the overlapping crisis of housing  
11 availability and affordability, poverty, public  
12 health, and climate change can lead to further  
13 displacement and/or concentrate or reproduce  
14 inequality. The New York City Charter mandates that  
15 the CPC lead the evaluation of research to guarantee  
16 a comprehensive analysis of projects' impacts at all  
17 stages of the planning process. Per the City  
18 Council's recent legislative initiatives, the CPC is  
19 uniquely positioned to oversee detailed  
20 investigations on the impacts of rezonings on racial  
21 equity but also to apply lessons learned from the  
22 intended and unintended effects of previous Planning  
23 actions and making any needed corrections to ensure  
24 the effective and integrity of future decision-  
25 making.

2 In addition, the CPC can and should  
3 initiate its own plans. This is not limited to Land  
4 Use policy in and of itself or strictly confined  
5 within the build environment but rather to embrace  
6 the opportunities and implications of Land Use  
7 decisions on larger domains such as economic  
8 development, physical, social, and mental well-being,  
9 ecological sustainability and environmental justice  
10 to name a few. These are ambitious undertaking that  
11 no single body can accomplish alone.

12 If appointed, I would be honored to join  
13 Chair Garodnick and other Commissioners in partnering  
14 with the City Council to rebuild trust on the Land  
15 Use planning process and strengthen the leadership of  
16 the CPC.

17 Thank you for considering my nomination.  
18 I would be happy to address any questions from the  
19 Committee.

20 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. We'll now  
21 move into questions for the nominees. We'll start  
22 with our Speaker, Adrienne Adams.

23 SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you, Mr. Chair. My  
24 time here in this hearing is limited so I'm just  
25 going to ask one question for the 3 of you, and I

2 apologize in advance if I probably won't be able to  
3 hear all 3 answers.

4 While most of the recent attention in the  
5 Planning Community has focused on affordable housing,  
6 I know that we here in the Council have certainly  
7 focused and that is our utmost priority, at least one  
8 of them. There are still so many other areas in need  
9 that have to be addressed. One, of course, being the  
10 economy. Where do you see potential areas of growth  
11 or areas that can be developed in New York City's  
12 economy that can keep us competitive in the 21st  
13 century? We can start with Mr. Gold.

14 DAVID GOLD: Thank you, Madam Speaker.  
15 Economically speaking, generally of late Fintech,  
16 financial technology, has been particularly sought  
17 after and New York has the talent and the resources,  
18 and that, to me, is an area where I think we need to  
19 spend some more time. Many of the areas have started  
20 to build here in the city, and I think we have the  
21 talent and I think we have the ability so it's one of  
22 the areas that I think actually would be quite good.

23 RASMIA KIRMANI-FRYE: Thank you so much  
24 for the question. I think as you've heard that it's  
25 incredibly important that community engagement is at

2 the core of any decision-making and planning, whether  
3 it be housing or economic development, and every  
4 neighborhood is different. The assets can be viewed  
5 so differently by the people who live there where  
6 they're kind of creating the narrative where so often  
7 the external narrative of a place is created by  
8 external people so there are likely areas of growth  
9 in terms of economic development if we asked folks  
10 what they're interested in and also what the land can  
11 be used for or buildings or infrastructure that can  
12 feed into equitable economic development so I'm  
13 always going to say let's go and ask people and then  
14 see where those connections and inroads can be made  
15 based on what people want and what works for our  
16 city. Thank you.

17 JUAN CAMILO OSORIO: Thank you very much  
18 for your question. I'm very excited about it. I think  
19 that we are at a historic moment where we're about to  
20 have the opportunity attract hundreds of thousands of  
21 jobs to New York City that are going to be resulting  
22 from the implementation of state climate change  
23 legislation. The CLCPA is going to require that we  
24 activate New York City, all sectors of the economy,  
25 to be able to cater to the adaptation economy. All

2 the different services and goods that will be  
3 required to update the entire building stock, not to  
4 mention the improvement of public infrastructure,  
5 across the 5 boroughs. I'm specifically excited about  
6 the question because I served on the Land Use, I was  
7 appointed by the Governor to serve on the Land Use  
8 and Local Government Advisory Panel for the  
9 implementation of the CLCPA, and I currently serve in  
10 the advisory council convened by the city for  
11 offshore wind. In order to do that, we need to plan,  
12 and the CPC is uniquely positioned to guarantee that  
13 we align our different policies to make that happen,  
14 first and foremost that we protect land that is zoned  
15 for industrial uses because otherwise we're going to  
16 lose that opportunity to manufacture these goods and  
17 services forever. We have existing tools to do that,  
18 the Waterfront Revitalization Program to name one and  
19 a historic undertaking of the Department of City  
20 Planning provides the to ensure that projects and  
21 proposals are consistent with long-term planning  
22 policies to attract the type of infrastructure  
23 projects that will allow us to preserve  
24 manufacturing, particularly along the waterfront. In  
25 addition to that, all of our planning decisions

2 should be geared to creating a workforce, increasing  
3 access particularly from low-income and communities  
4 of color to be able to take advantage of these jobs  
5 so that the economic development that can derive from  
6 this can serve as a form of reparation in places  
7 where climate change has had a historic  
8 disproportionate impact in New York City.

9 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. I have a  
10 round of questions, but I know of a few Members who  
11 need to run so I'm going to first go to Council  
12 Member Brooks-Powers, Council Member Borelli, and  
13 Council Member Hudson, Council Member Brewer, and  
14 then I'll come back.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you  
16 for that. I know that the buzz statement is about  
17 affordable housing these days, and it's often, when  
18 we talk about affordable housing, that we talk about  
19 rental, and I'm interested in understanding the  
20 vision around helping families, especially low-income  
21 families and communities of color to be able to get a  
22 stake in the game and build generational wealth. I  
23 think that a part of housing dignity is giving people  
24 that opportunity to that American Dream and that is  
25 of home ownership. I also have found in my short time

2 in the Council, a little over a year, in the Land Use  
3 applications that have come before the Council and  
4 really directly in my District, there have been a  
5 number of unintended consequences is what I like to  
6 call it because I couldn't imagine that this was  
7 intentional but we saw zoning changes that led to a  
8 lot of hotels coming in areas that have no tourist  
9 attractions that were converted into shelters, also  
10 brick-and-mortar shelters so my District is one of  
11 the districts in Queens, I think it's the second, if  
12 not the first, most populated in terms of sheltering  
13 systems (INAUDIBLE) the zoning process has allowed  
14 organizations and entities to be able to build those  
15 as opposed to creating opportunities for  
16 homeownership so that's an ongoing concern. Then what  
17 I often find is that there's been a lack of vision  
18 with development in terms of looking at it more  
19 holistically so the infrastructure, the roads, the  
20 evacuation route, no one in the City Planning team  
21 has at all brought up evacuation routes as we look at  
22 zoning plans, health infrastructure. These are just  
23 to name a few areas that are critical but not really  
24 discussed so in your role I would love to have a  
25 commitment that you will be more intentional and

2 taking into account the community circumstances, and  
3 I was so happy to hear you say all communities are  
4 not the same because they truly are not, and, as you  
5 heard me say earlier to Miss Yoon, I represent a  
6 coastal community so we cannot be viewed in the same  
7 lens and, as much as my community wants to be a part  
8 of a citywide conversation to address the housing  
9 crisis, we can't shoulder the burden the same way on  
10 a peninsula, a geographically isolated piece of land,  
11 so I would really like to hear that commitment from  
12 each of you.

13 I would also like to understand what  
14 through your own individual experiences are you  
15 bringing to the table to be able to tackle some of  
16 the things I spoke to, particularly the need for more  
17 affordable homeownership, creating more opportunities  
18 for generational wealth, especially black  
19 generational wealth. I was happy when in the  
20 Presidential election it was starting to be  
21 discussed. Nothing really came out of it since then,  
22 but I would love to hear how you see leveraging these  
23 roles to creating that path and then also what you  
24 see as ways to mitigate unintentional consequences  
25 through City Planning and zoning plans for the city.

1                   DAVID GOLD: First, thank you for the  
2 question. Speaking on generational wealth and  
3 homeownership, to me, I've spent a lot of my life  
4 staving off foreclosure for folks who were in over  
5 their head, and that happens for a couple of reasons,  
6 but, coming back to the root of it, when I think  
7 about the project that I mentioned in my opening  
8 statement that my dad was a champion of many years  
9 ago, it was a project that was made for low- and  
10 moderate-income to be able to actually get  
11 homeownership. It was a federally funded program, it  
12 was in partnership with our federal government  
13 partners, and the concept was to basically make it so  
14 that instead of renting folks could get the keys and  
15 have their own home and that was really the start of  
16 it. Now, as I did a lot more research over certainly  
17 the past few years, at some point unfortunately the  
18 federal partners didn't come in as heavily as they  
19 should've and what ended up happening was it was  
20 shifted to essentially a community rental project,  
21 but the concept I think very much works. I do think  
22 we need help from our federal partners. We need,  
23 especially in this environment, an ability to provide  
24 low mortgage rates. Mortgage rates are a problem  
25

2 right now for everyone. They've really actually  
3 tripled as I understand it in the past few months,  
4 but let's go one step further. It's not just the  
5 mortgage. It's the ability to navigate, to be able to  
6 purchase that first home, and everyone has to start  
7 somewhere. My personal experience, as I say I've been  
8 involved with a bank, and we actually have a program  
9 that goes out and teaches in the schools. It teaches  
10 how to manage money and how to start to save up for  
11 that down payment but also what the resources are  
12 that are out there that basically can help you get  
13 there because, as I'm sure you know, it's not an easy  
14 process. It's not an easy process, both you need the  
15 capital but also the ability to get a mortgage. It's  
16 a difficult process, and it's just gotten a lot  
17 harder so I think there's a lot there. I think that  
18 we do need help from our partners, some of the  
19 agencies and also our federal partners to help there.

20 The second question, I do believe that  
21 every community is different, and I do believe that  
22 every community should have their input and have to  
23 be looked at with a lens. I think the Commission's  
24 role as I see it is to put on that citywide lens so  
25 you're absolutely right that there needs to be some

2 protections from the Commission for different areas  
3 for sure but obviously taken in balance. I think  
4 about it as my 3 children. Each child has a different  
5 need, and you need to have the community engagement  
6 and understand from both the community and the  
7 Council what the issues are.

8 RASMIA KIRMANI-FRYE: Thank you for the  
9 questions. I'm going to start with a little bit of my  
10 personal history and be totally open and honest. I'm  
11 49 years old. I've forever rented. I'm a renter now,  
12 and in some periods of time that's been a really  
13 great thing. Other periods of time it's a really,  
14 really hard thing, but a huge barrier for me has been  
15 the down payment, and this I think is true for so  
16 many people and so many New Yorkers, particularly  
17 low-income New Yorkers, New Yorkers of color, also  
18 navigating that process, who gets loans, who doesn't.  
19 I don't come from a family that I can say can you  
20 help me out with a down payment. We were figuring out  
21 how are we going to pay off college loans. That took  
22 the priority. My mom bought a house in her 50s. My  
23 parents are divorced, but they're like BFFs. It's  
24 fantastic. My dad too in his 60s bought a home. It  
25 wasn't like they got married, bought a house, had a

2 kid, and followed that path of generational wealth  
3 building. When my mom, who has very severe  
4 Alzheimer's, her care became, of course, a priority  
5 and when I sold her house, what we decided as a  
6 family was that money would go to pay off education  
7 debt. That was the decision and the decision of  
8 certainly my mom prior to her illness so again I'm a  
9 great renter. I pay my rent. I would be a great  
10 homeowner and so would many, many New Yorkers. I will  
11 be completely honest with you. Sometimes it's like I  
12 don't know how I'm going to get there, and I'm  
13 somebody with a graduate school degree, have had  
14 consistent employment, and I'm constantly aware if  
15 that's my experience, what's the experience like for  
16 people who are low-income. I talk about this with  
17 people all the time. What are we doing to make that  
18 easier or to change the system. I just wanted to  
19 bring a little bit of my personal experience and the  
20 frustration. I go through periods of where I'm like,  
21 it's okay, I can be a renter for the rest of my life,  
22 like that's okay, and then I think about Kabir, I  
23 think about what am I doing so it's stressful and  
24 frustrating and, collectively, what can we do to  
25 shift that.

1                   In terms of the uniqueness of every  
2  
3 community, as much as each neighborhood is unique  
4 with a unique set of needs and infrastructure as  
5 you've said from housing to transit to coastal issues  
6 and resiliency to arts and culture and health and  
7 education, how are we taking a citywide perspective  
8 so that no single community is overburdened. I think  
9 that's a really important question to ask. I don't  
10 know that I have an answer, but it's incredibly  
11 important to me that every community and neighborhood  
12 is contributing to the growth and development of New  
13 York City but that we examine what communities are  
14 overburdened in what way and then that leads to your  
15 question about unintended consequences, and, again, I  
16 go back to what was the deep engagement, did it  
17 happen, were there those contact points with  
18 residents, with communities, and then how was that  
19 listened to and applied because unintended  
20 consequences, and I so appreciate you saying that,  
21 how do we make unintended consequences not intended  
22 consequences and I think we do that with deep, honest  
23 engagement and the communication and partnership  
24 between CPC, City Council, and communities. Thank you  
25 for the question.

2 JUAN CAMILO OSORIO: Thank you for your  
3 questions. I think that this is a really exciting  
4 opportunity to discuss the connection between some of  
5 the topics that you raised. Affordable housing  
6 experts have been advocating for decades for a  
7 combined approach to new housing development with  
8 preservation efforts through a comprehensive  
9 strategy. In other words, building new units is not  
10 enough. We really need to address homelessness,  
11 prevent displacement, encourage homeownership as  
12 you've mentioned, but also (INAUDIBLE) tenants'  
13 rights and rent regulation improve vulnerable living  
14 conditions to secure safety and address environmental  
15 justice and sustainability. In order to do that, we  
16 need a central planning muscle that is thinking in  
17 that direction. We also need a city that is investing  
18 in public infrastructure to achieve the public good.  
19 I think that we can also take advantage of the tools  
20 by the solidarity economy and economic democracy to  
21 not just aim to increase local employment but, as you  
22 said, increase local wealth, and I'm talking about  
23 community land trusts that can extend the ownership  
24 and the control of local communities over land, over  
25 infrastructure, over the economy as well as worker-

2 owned cooperatives that can engage New Yorkers,  
3 particularly from low-income and communities of color  
4 in developing the skills that will be required to  
5 take advantage of the hundreds of thousands of jobs  
6 that the CLCPA and other legislation is going to  
7 bring to New York. Otherwise, they're going to go  
8 somewhere else. This is all about planning, and I  
9 think that the CPC is uniquely positioned to do that,  
10 but, in order to do that, we need to combine the  
11 local capacity to plan with comprehensive planning.  
12 In order to do that, I think that long-term  
13 comprehensive planning and the local capacity to plan  
14 need to work in tandem to address imbalances between  
15 local priorities and citywide goals, but we can do  
16 that by enforcing legislative initiatives that have  
17 already been introduced and passed by this City  
18 Council. I'm going to focus on 2 concrete  
19 opportunities where I see the CPC taking a leading  
20 role in this. Number 1, in ensuring that the  
21 investigation of the intended and unintended impacts  
22 of planning actions in communities are actually  
23 achieving its goals and to what extent they're  
24 actually resulting in forced displacement. I think  
25 that doing that is the first step. The second step

2 should reflect the lessons learned in updating the  
3 tools that the City Planning Commission uses for  
4 their review of proposals to make sure that we  
5 improve the calculations and the projections made to  
6 make sure that we strengthen future decision-making,  
7 which is the second part.

8           The second point that I wanted to make  
9 has to do with taking advantage of some of the tools.  
10 I can think of at least 4 different tools that have  
11 been created following legislation from the City  
12 Council that are currently disconnected. Going back  
13 to the monitoring of the impacts of planning actions,  
14 I want to point out how important it would be to have  
15 a tool that can overlay the data that has recently  
16 been made available showing potential risks to  
17 displacement with the rezoning tracker that shows the  
18 actual rezoning, the areas that have been rezoned and  
19 the commitments that are in place to make sure that  
20 as we monitor the impacts of the rezonings on  
21 displacement we can ensure whether or not the  
22 commitments have been made. Right now, these are 2  
23 separate tools that do not allow the public to see  
24 them in context. I think that the other thing that I  
25 wanted to point out in terms of the other 2 tools

2 have to do with connecting the risks of displacement  
3 with rezoning and other planning interventions with  
4 climate change. Right now, the tools that have been  
5 provided to track coastal flooding vulnerability or  
6 heat vulnerability, which are 2 different,  
7 disconnected tools, should be interconnected to be  
8 able to see again the risk of displacement, current  
9 rezonings, and rezoning commitments with a  
10 vulnerability to climate change. I mentioned this  
11 because if we don't do that, we're not just facing  
12 potential threats of forced displacement in the form  
13 of gentrification but experience a new type of  
14 potential threats in the form of environmental and  
15 climate gentrification.

16 One last thing that I wanted to say in  
17 terms of the personal connection that you raised is  
18 that I am accountable to the communities that rely on  
19 solid, rigorous research at the CPC, and I believe  
20 that the CPC can be activated to do that, but, in  
21 addition, it could recognize local priorities that  
22 have been recognized by the City Charter through  
23 Section 197-A, the 197-A plans, 13 of them, which is  
24 a very little number, adopted over the last 3 decades  
25 by the CPC that should be used as policy to guide

2 decision-making and are currently being ignored. I  
3 think that the expertise of the CPC could be  
4 activated in partnership with the Department of City  
5 Planning, of course, to provide technical assistance  
6 to Community Boards in planning for their future, who  
7 should be engaged at all phases in the process, not  
8 just have an advisory role in making decisions to  
9 determine what type of growth, what type of housing  
10 should be developed in their communities, where and  
11 when. Thank you.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Can I just  
13 say I have a very deep appreciation for your response  
14 just now. I do want to say thank you for that in  
15 terms of proposing that the Commission look at it  
16 through a much more targeted and strategic lens, and  
17 I would love to see something like that implemented.

18 I also want to say that when we look at  
19 the citywide view, it's important when we look in  
20 communities to also do that birds-eye view because  
21 sometimes we may be focused on particular lots to up-  
22 zone but then we have to think about what's happening  
23 surrounding those properties. In terms of housing,  
24 one thing I didn't hear which I would love to see,  
25 I'm wrapping up now, that I would like to see is that

2 just like we are making housing available for rental,  
3 what I'm hearing from people who are also low-income  
4 is that they cannot find housing that's affordable  
5 enough to purchase and so the same way that we  
6 leveraged these different mechanisms in terms of  
7 funding streams we need to prioritize affordable  
8 homeownership opportunities so I will end with that.  
9 I thank you, Chair, for the opportunity.

10 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. We're now  
11 going to hear from Council Member Borelli followed by  
12 Council Member Hudson.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Thank you. Can  
14 you all just individually summarize your thoughts on  
15 single-family home zoning and whether you think  
16 there's an appropriate place for it in New York City?

17 RASMIA KIRMANI-FRYE: Thank you. Hi.  
18 Thanks for the question. I do think that there's a  
19 place for it, and I believe that we are in need of  
20 all types of housing in New York City and I go back  
21 to what I've said before about what do communities  
22 want, and it's incredibly important to engage  
23 communities and listen to what communities want and  
24 then figure out how to deliver on that. That's my  
25 perspective, that communities are really unique, have

2 unique needs, wants, desires. There's no uniform  
3 assumption I don't think that should be on the  
4 desires and needs and wants of communities, that deep  
5 engagement is really the answer and then how do we  
6 respond to that.

7           DAVID GOLD: Follow that by saying I do  
8 believe there's a place for single-family.  
9 Essentially, I think the characteristic of the  
10 community is super important. It's not only what does  
11 the community want but what does the community need  
12 based on the resources that are there and it's really  
13 the characteristics. It's what fits, what are the  
14 community members used to and what do they think is  
15 appropriate for the neighborhood, but I do believe  
16 there's a place.

17           JUAN CAMILO OSORIO: Thank you for the  
18 question. I think that I very much understand the  
19 importance of recognizing and acknowledging the  
20 importance of single-family zoning in neighborhoods  
21 that rely on it. I think that oftentimes we make  
22 assumptions about who lives in these communities and  
23 we tend to think that these are high-income  
24 communities and that there's privilege that is  
25 associated with it and in many cases we're actually

2 talking about working-class families that, as I said,  
3 require them and that the affordability that we're  
4 trying to protect can be deeply threatened as soon as  
5 there's a mapping initiative to begin identifying  
6 underutilized land or as soon as the Department of  
7 City Planning announces a rezoning study to  
8 understand the issues. This creates environments of  
9 speculation that can hurt them. I think that, as my  
10 Colleagues have mentioned before, every community has  
11 specific needs, and I think that we need to be very  
12 careful about making these decisions, particularly in  
13 the lack of a comprehensive planning framework, but,  
14 again, the CPC is uniquely positioned to partner with  
15 the City Council, again building on legislation that  
16 you've introduced to develop the data-driven  
17 methodologies to understand how do we actually make  
18 decisions to balance what the Council Member was  
19 talking about in terms of identifying conflicts and  
20 addressing potential imbalances between local  
21 priorities and citywide goals. I do feel that every  
22 community has to contribute to accommodating growth,  
23 but that growth needs to happen in places where the  
24 infrastructure has been built. I think that  
25 accommodating growth or rezoning shouldn't be used...

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Professor, you  
3 led into my next question which is in areas of low  
4 density where there's an effort to rezone for higher  
5 density, should the rezoning come first or should the  
6 infrastructure required to handle populations come  
7 first?

8 JUAN CAMILO OSORIO: Thank you. I can  
9 answer that question if that's okay with my  
10 colleagues. I believe that the infrastructure  
11 improvements need to be built first as a matter of  
12 principle because we have to take into account  
13 histories of disinvestment, segregation, and other  
14 forms of discriminatory planning practices that have  
15 left several communities in New York City behind,  
16 places where the infrastructure used to exist but has  
17 been lost, and, therefore, the need for the  
18 infrastructure shouldn't be used to justify the  
19 rezoning but the infrastructure should be built and  
20 growth should be considered afterward. I also just  
21 want to say that it shouldn't be the city deciding  
22 where growth should go, but, again, developing the  
23 local planning capacity so communities can decide  
24 what type of growth they want, where they want it,  
25 and when they want to build it.

2 RASMIA KIRMANI-FRYE: Thank you for the  
3 question. I tend to agree with my colleague about  
4 infrastructure and looking at the history of  
5 infrastructure investment, but we also know that  
6 rezonings historically have taken a really long time  
7 and so are there aspects of rezonings that can happen  
8 in tandem so it's not necessarily build the  
9 infrastructure then think about the rezoning because  
10 that could just extend the time really, really,  
11 really far, particularly for communities that don't  
12 have the infrastructure. I think also really  
13 important is to look creatively at what is in  
14 included in those rezonings and in development and  
15 how we're creatively using space and then again, and  
16 I know I sound like a broken record, but I really,  
17 really mean it, what do communities want. What is  
18 that deep engagement from communities who are the  
19 experts on what they need and what they want and how  
20 is that being incorporated? I think it's incredibly  
21 important that the infrastructure is there. I think  
22 it's less of a sequential, completely linear process,  
23 and that there can be overlap and should be overlap  
24 with an eye towards efficiency.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: I'm just  
3 concerned because we're building some mass transit  
4 infrastructure now for 30 years, and we've seen  
5 development around that so my cautionary urging is  
6 that we do in some ways are stricter towards ensuring  
7 the infrastructure happens in a timely manner before  
8 we just allow development. I'm sorry. Mr. Gold.

9 DAVID GOLD: Thank you. I guess I would  
10 preface my answer with the fact that I grew up on  
11 Staten Island waiting for that bus that you never  
12 knew when it was coming, this was before the  
13 internet, and also waiting for the one train that we  
14 had out there so I would agree I think it's an area-  
15 by-area decision but it really is a function of what  
16 the community is goaling for and really what are the  
17 needs. In some areas, there were a lot more drivers.  
18 Right now by nature, they have to be there but,  
19 candidly, the infrastructure does have to be looked  
20 at and be figured out before you can overburden the  
21 roads.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Thank you.

23 JUAN CAMILO OSORIO: Can I add something  
24 to my response?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Of course.

2 JUAN CAMILO OSORIO: I just wanted to say  
3 that I don't think that we should increase growth  
4 just because we can. I think that there are places  
5 where we shouldn't be increasing density, and I want  
6 to emphasize places that are extremely vulnerable to  
7 coastal flooding, where infrastructure improvements  
8 can be created to create that as long as the private  
9 sector can afford it, but I don't think that that's  
10 good planning.

11 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. We're  
12 going to go to Council Member Hudson followed by  
13 Council Member Brewer.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you. I just  
15 have 2 questions, one for Mr. Gold and then another  
16 for everyone.

17 You shared a lot about your personal  
18 upbringing and then obviously your professional path  
19 so I'm wondering, and I saw in your CV that you've  
20 refereed state foreclosure proceedings so I'm  
21 wondering is your orientation to preventing  
22 foreclosures and keeping people in their homes or is  
23 to the opposite?

24 DAVID GOLD: Thank you for the question. I  
25 got involved refereeing foreclosures at the ask of a

2 judge on Staten Island to basically make sure the  
3 process was fair, and the referee's role on a  
4 foreclosure is making sure, maybe (INAUDIBLE) can  
5 speak a little bit more about it, but basically  
6 making sure that everything is done properly, that  
7 the I's are dotted, and, in many cases, as you may  
8 imagine, the paperwork gets sent back and it becomes  
9 a process where they do have to do the right thing.  
10 They basically have to have hearings and conferences  
11 with the homeowners so actually, as I said, what  
12 brought me into the process was the request and part  
13 of that was my life experience, both working with  
14 folks and actually, personally, my family being  
15 foreclosed when I was a young child. It's something,  
16 as you can imagine, it's been a thread through my  
17 life.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Yeah. I guess I  
19 was just trying to reconcile what you've shared as  
20 your personal experience with then your professional  
21 path.

22 DAVID GOLD: Sure. Professionally, let me  
23 rewind for a second. I graduated law school and went  
24 on to do 2 things professionally. I ended up taking a  
25 job at a small business, small bank, and I worked

2 there for many years up until a few years ago, but at  
3 the same time I spent at varying times between 20 and  
4 50 percent of my time doing non-profit work and  
5 basically volunteering and helping, as I said, much  
6 of the time with the military veterans who were  
7 coming back overseas and had issues. Before they  
8 left, we helped them to put banks on notice so that  
9 they couldn't touch their house and should stop the  
10 payments, and, when they came back in the cases where  
11 the banks had not followed the law and hadn't  
12 listened and foreclosed someone who is overseas, who  
13 couldn't have been noticed, we stepped up to act to  
14 try to get those back and work on that.

15           Second, with the families of first  
16 responders, generally who were killed in the line of  
17 duty, some who were injured in the line of duty, but,  
18 as you might imagine, often that's the breadwinner in  
19 the house, and the first challenge is we're a family,  
20 we need to figure this out and so some of that is  
21 actually asking whether it's the landlord, whether  
22 it's the bank who holds the mortgage to hold off,  
23 give us a little bit of time to figure this out  
24 because this family really needs the help and they're

2 not of the mindset just yet that they can deal with  
3 this and figure it out.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you. That's  
5 helpful. I would say then based on that your  
6 orientation is to keeping families in their homes.

7 DAVID GOLD: My personal orientation is to  
8 keeping people...

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: I'm just trying to  
10 get to your personal orientation.

11 DAVID GOLD: Yes, yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: All right. Thank  
13 you.

14 DAVID GOLD: Very much so.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: The question for  
16 all you. Mr. Osorio, you sort of referenced this in  
17 your testimony, but I just want to ask the 3 of you  
18 for the record and particularly the 2 of you who are  
19 being appointed by the Mayor, do you feel and have  
20 you been empowered to act independently and to vote  
21 based on how you believe you should be voting and not  
22 necessarily the way somebody else might want you to  
23 vote?

24 JUAN CAMILO OSORIO: I can start by saying  
25 yes, absolutely. In appointing me, the Brooklyn

2 Borough President has recognized the autonomy that I  
3 require to make sound and independent judgement.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you.

5 RASMIA KIRMANI-FRYE: Thanks for the  
6 question. Yes, I'm very aware that I'm a Mayoral  
7 designee, but I think part of the reason that I was  
8 nominated is because of me as an independent person,  
9 and I think as you've heard and we've discussed I  
10 really do feel empowered to make those independent  
11 decisions. At the end of the day, for me, what is  
12 most important is working together in partnership  
13 that equitable growth and development really means  
14 equitable growth and development across the city,  
15 that every neighborhood is contributing, every  
16 neighborhood is benefiting, that we are creating  
17 alignment, and that I weigh any recommendation in the  
18 context of what is best for the people of the City of  
19 New York and for communities so I feel very empowered  
20 to make that statement and to carry that through in  
21 voting.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you.

23 DAVID GOLD: I would say I definitely feel  
24 empowered to be independent. A couple of things. One,  
25 when this position first came up I went to read the

2 Charter, and the word that stood out in my mind was  
3 integrity. It's basically a key characteristic of the  
4 Charter. Second to that, in my life, as I've said,  
5 I've been on a number of boards, some non-profit, one  
6 for-profit, and often, in many cases, I'm not the  
7 Chairman, I'm a voice in the room fielding and  
8 bridging consensus if you will and taking in the  
9 views of the different stakeholders, and, candidly,  
10 the Chairman often has a big stick if you might  
11 imagine. I have always shown my independence, and I  
12 think that's one of the reasons that I've been put  
13 forward.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you so much.

15 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. We'll hear  
16 from Council Member Brewer followed by Council Member  
17 Sanchez and I will do a round of questions next.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you very  
19 much. As Borough President, I think I did 200 ULURPs  
20 so I have a sense, more than the rest of the boroughs  
21 combined, and one of the questions that keeps coming  
22 up is preplanning before you end up with a situation  
23 at the Community Board or even at the City Planning,  
24 etc., planning so I'm wondering what your positions,  
25 obviously it may not be for a single but for everyone

2 of these rezonings. Some of them, obviously the one  
3 that Dan Garodnick and I did on East Midtown it was a  
4 commercial so it was easier, but preplanning produced  
5 positive result so my question is what's your  
6 position? We tried to get into the Charter, and it  
7 was denied, into the Charter Revision Proposal by  
8 then Mayor De Blasio.

9           Number two is do you think there are some  
10 aspects of the ULURP process that could be improved  
11 because you will be very much involved as I have been  
12 for 8 years and 12 years before. Those are my 2  
13 questions.

14           JUAN CAMILO OSORIO: I can start. Thank  
15 you so much for your questions. I also just wanted to  
16 say that, Council Member Brewer, when I came to New  
17 York to start working as an urban planner in 2006, I  
18 was greatly inspired by your leadership in fighting  
19 for democratizing data. I think that a lot of what I  
20 said today and I've written in the documents that  
21 I've submitted are inspired by the opportunity to  
22 take control over the research and secure that these  
23 debates happen at the CPC.

24           I think that one of the big opportunities  
25 that we have in front of us which is not new, in fact

2 the effort that you co-facilitated with then Council  
3 Member Reynosa as part of Inclusive City pointed this  
4 out, the CPC can be activated to, per the Charter  
5 mandate in terms of providing guidelines for  
6 planning, take a stronger role in formalizing  
7 discussions that take place precertification process  
8 so that the public can know about them beyond the 30-  
9 day window that is now allowed and formalize  
10 otherwise private agreements that are impossible to  
11 implement and to enforce so that's one.

12 Two, the CPC should oversee the analysis  
13 and research that the Department of City Planning  
14 does throughout the planning process, not just after  
15 proposals have been certified, which includes making  
16 sure that draft environmental impact statements are  
17 accurate and support the Department of City Planning  
18 in engaging with the developer in conversations to  
19 make sure that the quality and the accident these  
20 studies is complete before ULURP starts, another  
21 recommendation that Inclusive City has made.

22 Perhaps the most important one, I think,  
23 has to do with really elevating the importance of the  
24 197-A plans because these are documents, as you know,  
25 that reflect decades of work in some cases that are

2 being completely ignored and could actually be used  
3 as policy to inform and guide decision-making  
4 throughout the ULURP process and where the CPC can  
5 actually take an important role in that. In terms of  
6 changes to the ULURP process that I think could  
7 happen, of course I would aim to change the City  
8 Charter so that Community Boards can have a binding  
9 vote in the ULURP process. That is a much larger  
10 transformation, again something that has been  
11 proposed for decades, but something very easy that we  
12 could do from the City Planning Commission is really  
13 acknowledge that these plans exist, use them, and  
14 elevate their contribution to Land Use Review.

15 RASMIA KIRMANI-FRYE: Thank you so much  
16 for the question. I want take time echoing so much of  
17 what my Colleague said that I agree with. What I will  
18 say is that I think that my answer is similar to both  
19 questions on preplanning and improvement on ULURP,  
20 which is they're both incredibly important and I  
21 think that not enough residents and communities have  
22 access or know about what are the processes and what  
23 is involved and how can they be involved in either of  
24 those lanes so ULURP, there's lot of people that I've  
25 talked to where have heard but like what is it so how

2 can we improve the CPC specifically, the initial  
3 communication on just what is it, what does the CPC  
4 do, what does the DCP, and then, again for both  
5 questions, what is that deep engagement. As a member  
6 of the CPC, whether it's customary to do or not, that  
7 really deep hanging out and being available in  
8 partnership with the City Council, I think, is  
9 incredibly important to constantly have an open door  
10 and how are we partnering so that folks are involved  
11 in both of those processes. That creates better  
12 planning. That creates better policies, protocols,  
13 and better democratization not just in data but of  
14 processes.

15           DAVID GOLD: I would say a couple of  
16 things. One, earlier community involvement can only  
17 be a benefit, and, candidly, as one looks at the  
18 ULURP process, yes there are hearings at the  
19 Community Board level but to someone's earlier  
20 question and answer, many folks either don't know  
21 about it or don't go to the Community Board hearings  
22 so having more deeper community engagement I think is  
23 important at an early process because I do think that  
24 many people feel that at the time they find out about  
25 it or see it or learn about it the decisions have

2 already been made. It's just way too late. I think  
3 that would be a spot where there is room there.

4           Second, more broadly, it does feel to me,  
5 and maybe this is early and you've looked at, as you  
6 said, about 200 of them, that the ULURP preprocess is  
7 taking quite a while and we do need the housing so I  
8 think it's a balance. I think it's a balance. I think  
9 we need to have more engagement, earlier engagement,  
10 and that could actually potentially accelerate the  
11 process because now the community has buy-in and  
12 interest and working with the Council Members and  
13 working with the community you get to a finished  
14 product that is perhaps much more both acceptable and  
15 fitting to the community.

16           COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: The problem with  
17 Manhattan is a different animal from the other  
18 boroughs, just completely different because we're  
19 very built up, we deal with air rights, we don't know  
20 that they're being transferred. That's another  
21 discussion that we could have. Same thing with the  
22 lot mergers. Same thing with some of the mechanicals.  
23 We've done all 197-A. I don't know if there's  
24 anything left to do on 197-A. We could do them again,  
25 but they're not binding. We know that. I put a lot of

2 time into improving the Community Boards, not every  
3 Borough President has done that, I'll be honest with  
4 you, so you need to, in giving them more power which  
5 I am for, they have to be better appointed so there's  
6 a lot moving parts to all of this, but there's only  
7 one issue in New York City, real estate, real estate,  
8 and real estate so, if appointed and nominated and  
9 accepted, you have a really important job in front of  
10 you. Anna Levin was my appointment for 8 years, and I  
11 have to say she's the best, and there's some good  
12 people on it now, but I congratulate you to getting  
13 to this point and I have to say of all the  
14 appointments yours is the most important today. thank  
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. We're now  
17 going to go to Council Member Sanchez who I think is  
18 joining us on Zoom.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Hello. Thank you  
20 so much, Chair, and congratulations to all 3 of you  
21 on your appointment. I just want to do a quick  
22 editorial note because I know 2 of you, and I want to  
23 speak to that real quick. Rasmia, I had the  
24 opportunity to work with Rasmia while she was at  
25 NYCHA and was just always impressed with how much she

2 centered resident voices and how much she really  
3 wanted to accomplish in that role while she was  
4 there. I just want to appreciate, and I know some of  
5 your previous work and where your intentions come  
6 from so congratulations on being here today,  
7 recommend you to my Colleagues.

8           Professor Osorio, it's so great to see  
9 you. To my Colleagues, I would say that Juan Camilo  
10 is one of the most brilliant minds we have right now  
11 in New York City planning in our generation. He's one  
12 of the most thoughtful planners that I've met. I'm  
13 really glad that the Borough President has appointed  
14 you to be on here and that you're before us today.

15           I just wanted to start with those points  
16 and encourage my Colleagues that you both are really  
17 wonderful.

18           Mr. Gold, I haven't had the honor and the  
19 pleasure of meeting you just yet but appreciate your  
20 responses today and looking forward to getting to  
21 know you.

22           I just have one question. It's a sort of  
23 scenario-based question. The Land Use projects that  
24 come before you at the CPC are difficult. They're  
25 difficult choices. There's never a clear answer. It's

2 always contextual so would you share with us here  
3 what would drive your own decision-making, which you  
4 have said that you feel could be independent no  
5 problem, but what would drive your decision-making  
6 process in cases where serious priorities, big  
7 priorities, conflict. For example, there isn't enough  
8 affordability on a project for what the neighborhood  
9 is asking for, but there would be good jobs created  
10 that pay well and are union and whatever and the  
11 project itself, the development itself, is a  
12 beautiful contextual project. On the flip side,  
13 there's a different project where it does reach deep  
14 affordability levels, but the community is asking for  
15 good jobs with benefits and that's not a part of it,  
16 etc. There's a million ways that this all can go. Can  
17 you just talk to us about how you would weigh  
18 opposing priorities in these situations and how we  
19 can expect you to navigate?

20 DAVID GOLD: First, thank you for the  
21 question, and, unfortunately, we haven't had the  
22 pleasure to meet just yet but I look forward to that  
23 opportunity.

24 As I think about it, community engagement  
25 and involvement is step one so there are, to your

2 point, if you had competing priorities, first it's  
3 what is the community saying, what is the community  
4 putting forward, what do they need, what are their  
5 needs. Second, as I think about that, there's  
6 involvement of our partners on the ground, which to  
7 me is City Council, the City Council person for the  
8 community also generally has a really good ear and a  
9 good eye and good knowledge so if there are competing  
10 interests, I think about it as the community first  
11 and should have the loudest voice but, with that, the  
12 Council Member that they put forward also has really  
13 that on the ground important knowledge to help bring  
14 it home.

15 From a broader perspective, of course  
16 everything has to be looked at with a citywide lens,  
17 that's the job of the CPC, but the neighborhood, to  
18 me, speaks first and the community involvement is  
19 just so important to the process. I would put a lot  
20 of written testimony there.

21 RASMIA KIRMANI-FRYE: Thank you for the  
22 question, and it's wonderful to see you and  
23 congratulations in everything that is going on in  
24 your life.

2           There are going to be competing  
3 priorities. Planning, and you know this, is such a  
4 complex issue even within communities, what the  
5 priority is, and you've heard me say this before. My  
6 whole career has been about listening to communities  
7 and respecting that people who live and work in  
8 communities are the experts on what is important to  
9 them. They are planners. Bringing together sometimes  
10 unlikely stakeholders, sometimes folks who don't like  
11 each other, it's incredibly that we do that to really  
12 get to what the priorities are for communities. For  
13 me, community voice, community engagement, that's the  
14 most important thing.

15           Then, I think if there are competing  
16 priorities, it's also about how do we take a goal and  
17 have that be the center rather than ego, rather than  
18 politics, how do we get everyone to work towards a  
19 goal, and there may be priorities that are sequential  
20 so I think it's less about saying this is the single  
21 priority and none of these other things matter but  
22 what's the sequence in which other priorities can be  
23 woven into the process and being explicit and open  
24 about that. Is it about what resources can be  
25 leveraged first? Is it about incremental steps that

2 can be made? Be explicit about it. Here are the  
3 goals, here are the deliverables, here's how we're  
4 going to meet them, but, for me, absolutely community  
5 voice is the most important thing. Thanks for the  
6 question.

7 JUAN CAMILO OSORIO: Thank you so much,  
8 Council Member, for your words. They mean a huge deal  
9 to me. Thank you so much for your question as well.  
10 It gives me the opportunity to emphasize one more  
11 time the importance of being able to create a  
12 comprehensive planning framework, to be able to do  
13 exactly what you just said. Balance the conflicts,  
14 balance the imbalances between locally established  
15 priorities and citywide goals. If we had that, a  
16 data-drive methodology to be able to assess this and  
17 make the most out of the tools that we have because  
18 they're not perfect. We make decisions based on  
19 calculations and projections, but we don't know the  
20 outcome. It is only now, thanks to recent  
21 legislation, that we'll be able to actually observe  
22 and measure and monitor the impacts of planning  
23 actions, but if the CPC, for example, doesn't take  
24 advantage of the current opportunity to use these  
25 reports and updates the (INAUDIBLE) manual, update

2 the tools that we have to make these projections then  
3 we would be missing the opportunity. I think that  
4 this is another way of saying that we require local  
5 planning to be strengthened which requires, as an  
6 urgent priority, because if we have the comprehensive  
7 planning framework but we don't have strong local  
8 planning capacity then we're only halfway there. In  
9 strengthening the local capacity to plan, to  
10 articulate local visions and priorities, we need to  
11 provide technical assistance so that those plans are  
12 in place, and I'm not just talking about the  
13 Community Boards but also acknowledging other types  
14 of community-based planners across all sectors of the  
15 city. I have most worked with the environmental  
16 justice movement, but these plans are everywhere.  
17 However, they're rarely consulted and oftentimes  
18 ignored so having both in place is critical but,  
19 because the decisions shouldn't just be reacting to  
20 proposals that come from outside, should actually be  
21 inspired and guided by the local priorities that have  
22 already been articulated.

23 In that, I want to say a few things about  
24 what the space that you allude to currently looks  
25 like. Right now, as Colleagues mentioned, these

2 hearings are just spaces where people come and  
3 respond to proposals that are out there, but the CPC  
4 has the mandate to create a space for dialogue and  
5 really engage with public concerns and local  
6 priorities that are shared in these spaces to respond  
7 to them so engaging local communities in the process  
8 to evaluate the proposals and agreeing on the  
9 mechanisms that will be in place to secure that these  
10 projects or proposals are implemented and build  
11 equity, build justice to achieving citywide goals is  
12 another potential activity of the CPC that, for  
13 example, should take advantage of the tools as I  
14 mentioned earlier but also should actively engage in  
15 making sure that as projects are implemented that the  
16 evaluation of their impacts reflect back to, as I  
17 mentioned earlier, improve and continue to adjust the  
18 mechanisms that are used to make these decisions.  
19 Otherwise, I think that we're reviewing proposals one  
20 at a time and really losing track of the  
21 contributions that these actions are making to  
22 achieving citywide goals in the context of local  
23 priorities.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER SANCHEZ: Thank you so  
25 much. I know this hearing has been going on for a

2 while, but just to comment that I want to appreciate  
3 how much you all are giving weight to community voice  
4 but also we know that there are going to be times  
5 where community voices, one that's being an  
6 exclusionary community, one that is rejecting  
7 affordable housing, one that is rejecting  
8 opportunities for others and so there's always going  
9 to be that balance. Those are things that will come  
10 up in your deliberations. The City Planning  
11 Commissioners have leverage so when these conflicts  
12 do come up, I completely appreciate all your  
13 responses but you will have the opportunity to push  
14 those applicants to make changes so it's helpful to  
15 hear how you're going to be thinking about that.  
16 Thank you, Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. Thank you,  
18 Council Member Sanchez. I'm going to now have a few  
19 questions, some followups from earlier. Thank you all  
20 for taking the time. I want to just go through some  
21 testimony and other questions that came up and just  
22 ask some followups.

23 I'm just going to start with Miss  
24 Kirmani-Frye. In your testimony, you had mentioned  
25 it's critical the Mayor, Council, communities, DCP,

2 and CPC work together toe speed up the process of  
3 creating deeply affordable housing. Can you give me  
4 some specific examples you might recommend to do  
5 that?

6 RASMIA KIRMANI-FRYE: Thank you for the  
7 question and for being here. I think, and this has  
8 come up in some of my other responses, that rezoning  
9 takes a long time. The ULURP process can take a long  
10 time. I don't have specific solutions, but I think  
11 that how we can shorten that time should be a  
12 priority for both the DCP and CPC to really talk  
13 about, evaluate, and put recommendations forward so  
14 that's my short answer.

15 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Just to follow up on  
16 that. For instance, would you be supportive of  
17 speeding up the ULURP process in projects where  
18 there's a certain percentage of affordable housing  
19 that is included in the project?

20 RASMIA KIRMANI-FRYE: I don't want to  
21 commit to agreeing to something specifically, but as  
22 a concept and philosophically, yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Okay. Thank you. Mr.  
24 Osorio, when you were talking to Council Member  
25 Borelli, his question about infrastructure, which

2 should come first, infrastructure versus development,  
3 you had noted that you think the infrastructure  
4 should come first, is the way I heard it. I think  
5 that the Colleagues sitting next to you had sort of  
6 made a note that that could potentially leave  
7 projects decades, when we're talking about  
8 infrastructure we're using a vague concept, but  
9 certainly it might include mass transportation, it  
10 might include sewer systems, it might include many  
11 other things that folks would consider infrastructure  
12 yet leave many neighborhoods potentially undeveloped  
13 or underdeveloped or not meeting their affordable  
14 housing goals under the guise of waiting for  
15 infrastructure to come first which I think was  
16 probably the point of Council Member Borelli's  
17 question so I just want to revisit that for a second.  
18 How do you respond to that, that there would be  
19 potentially, as I said the candidates sitting next to  
20 you had noted the tension that takes place on those 2  
21 items so how do we do infrastructure first if that  
22 potentially leaves us with swaths of the city that  
23 would be under- or undeveloped?

24 JUAN CAMILO OSORIO: Thank you for your  
25 question. I appreciate the opportunity to clarify and

2 reiterate that I'm referring to the lack of  
3 investment and the histories of a lack of  
4 infrastructure, access to open space amenities, mass  
5 transit, etc. as a matter of environmental justice,  
6 social justice, and therefore I wanted to elevate the  
7 need as a top priority separate from the need to  
8 accommodate for growth and specifically clarify that  
9 those needs should be met with or without  
10 accommodating new growth. However, I also want to  
11 acknowledge that we can't do that alone and we have  
12 to find ways to activate all of our resources  
13 including activating the private sector and  
14 expediting the process and subsidizing or financing  
15 in some cases the construction of this infrastructure  
16 but I just wanted to go back to the idea that growth  
17 is sometimes a given and, in many cases, used to  
18 justify the need for rezonings in cases where that  
19 may not be the only solution or the only alternative  
20 to it. I think that what we do need is comprehensive  
21 planning that is constantly finding ways, creative  
22 opportunities to build this infrastructure so that  
23 these communities can thrive.

24 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Just a followup on  
25 that. From all the candidates, we've heard a lot of

2 talk about community input and the need for  
3 incorporating the community's feedback, but I think  
4 often we find communities at odds with the  
5 developmental world when it comes to things like  
6 affordable housing, when it comes to projects that  
7 include infrastructure upgrades so that growth in  
8 areas where there might be transient housing,  
9 schools, things like that. This is a question for all  
10 3 of you I suppose. How do you approach that when the  
11 community, when there's a project that is meeting the  
12 citywide goals or meeting the regional goals when it  
13 comes to housing, maybe providing other amenities and  
14 upgrades as well versus what the community is saying.  
15 I think for Mr. Osorio, particularly being a BP's  
16 recommendation, he also will have a part of the  
17 process in the projects that come from Brooklyn so  
18 how do you also handle and account for his feedback  
19 which comes before you in the process when evaluating  
20 and analyzing and ultimately voting (INAUDIBLE)  
21 support or oppose a project? I guess we can start  
22 with you and then go down to your colleagues.

23 JUAN CAMILO OSORIO: Thank you for the  
24 question. I appreciate that. It gives me an  
25 opportunity to say that oftentimes we make

2 assumptions about how communities are going to  
3 respond to proposals, and I would say interpreting  
4 skepticism about proposals and reactions against  
5 potential development projects as necessarily  
6 opposition to growth or development where I think  
7 that in a lot of cases what we're hearing is  
8 frustration of communities against the planning  
9 process, particularly in neighborhoods where  
10 communities have spent a lot of time putting their  
11 plans together as we've been discussing throughout  
12 the hearing learn about these proposals at the last  
13 minute and then are asked to respond when in many  
14 cases some of these projects are actually already  
15 sort of ready to be implemented so I think that we  
16 should be careful in terms of distinguishing between  
17 frustration and the assumption that communities will  
18 be against, or some communities may be necessarily  
19 against, accommodating..

20 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Can I just follow up  
21 with that? Then I'll come to the other guys. Don't  
22 both exist though? Isn't there a trend of opposition  
23 against new development in communities throughout the  
24 city, whether you go into Midtown Manhattan which I  
25 represent to Staten Island to other areas of the

2 city. There is a frustration of process undoubtedly,  
3 but I do think you solve for some of those  
4 frustrations, you make the ULURP process longer or  
5 you have a pre-ULURP process, you do comprehensive  
6 planning, stuff like that. To me, that will not  
7 necessarily unlock support entirely from communities.  
8 I do think it will relieve pressure from them and  
9 potentially open up opportunities for more input in  
10 identifying sites for things. To be fair, I don't  
11 want to let you off the hook for that answer. I think  
12 that there is a tension that still exists where there  
13 is an opposition to growth and we have to unlock  
14 that. Go ahead.

15 JUAN CAMILO OSORIO: Thank you. I just  
16 want to respond to what you said because I said with  
17 what you said. This exists, this is real, and this is  
18 part of the planning process, but I think that's what  
19 the CPC is there for too. We all have very specific  
20 roles in ULURP, but the CPC is there to produce and  
21 oversee the type of research required to make sure  
22 that all of these perspectives are heard and at the  
23 end of the day that we have a system to be able to  
24 balance them. I also just wanted to say just as you  
25 point out that there are places that may necessarily

2 have very fixed positions on this that there are  
3 other places where communities are not just against  
4 development, but they have their own version of what  
5 development could look like and that's important too.  
6 The CPC is uniquely positioned to be able to  
7 facilitate that process.

8 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: I appreciate that.  
9 Thank you.

10 RASMIA KIRMANI-FRYE: Thanks for the  
11 question, and that last point was actually my first  
12 point in my head so I totally agree with my colleague  
13 and I 100 percent agree with you that that is the  
14 reality too. Whether it's Midtown or Coney Island or  
15 wherever that there is that tension even within  
16 communities of folks in communities who are defining  
17 growth one way, other folks who are defining it  
18 another way, and then there's a whole tension about  
19 no we don't want growth, and I think like so many  
20 terms, and this may sound too academic but I don't  
21 think that it is, how are communities defining  
22 growth. I think people hear it and assume that it  
23 also means, just like we may rush to the assumption  
24 of skepticism, communities hear growth and what do  
25 they think that means. Do they think that it means

2 immediately gentrification, being priced out, or can  
3 it mean that there is an openness to have  
4 conversations about what growth means in communities?  
5 I do think that there are processes that could kind  
6 of speed up that discussion, and we're always going  
7 to be burdened, I think appropriately, within many  
8 communities a healthy mistrust of planning processes,  
9 I mean pick your government agency, a mistrust of  
10 that particular workflow or system and how do we  
11 begin to build back the trust. It happens every day.  
12 You take one step forward, one step back, you keep  
13 showing up, you keep having the conversations, but I  
14 think so often if we can move closer to co-governance  
15 and co-creation and having these honest conversations  
16 we can get through that frustrating point, but it's  
17 always going to be there.

18 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thanks.

19 DAVID GOLD: I think that answer sort of  
20 starts and ends with the word compromise because at  
21 the end of the day I think the community, as I've  
22 said, is very important, but, to your point, there  
23 may be some communities that don't want to do their  
24 part. Every community really has to do their part,  
25 and in a perfect world everyone accepts that and

2 understands it. I think at the end of the day the  
3 role of the process really is to balance that. It's  
4 to balance the concept that there are some who don't  
5 want to do enough on the one hand and on the other  
6 hand there are needs for the city, affordable housing  
7 and otherwise, so as I think about the process I  
8 think the process has a number of opportunities,  
9 community input is super important, I think we've all  
10 said that and I think we can all agree on that, but  
11 there's also the Borough President's lens, there's  
12 also the Council Member's lens, there's also the CPC,  
13 and there's also the Council, and it seems to me that  
14 many of the ULURPs, basically at the end if they  
15 don't get to the right answer they do get modified by  
16 the Council and they do come back so there is room in  
17 there and I think much of the process has to  
18 basically think about it from the standpoint of a  
19 good compromise is better than a loss on both sides.

20 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Just to follow up on  
21 that, I don't disagree with the idea that compromise  
22 in a process sort of can create tension to create a  
23 compromise although it feels like that's not the case  
24 these days. It seems like there is a change in terms

2 of how few folks view compromise and whether that is  
3 the goal so how does one address that?

4 DAVID GOLD: Say that again.

5 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: How do you adjust for  
6 the fact that whether in the process or in the  
7 process that exist or in the policymaking about how  
8 to, if compromise would be the goal, that it seems  
9 like that perhaps is not.

10 DAVID GOLD: I think it's a couple of  
11 things. I think one, the role of Commissioner is  
12 working with the Department of City Planning to be  
13 sure that there's the proper mindset, if you will.  
14 Second, thinking about the Commission as a whole with  
15 12 or 13 members there's always that balance of  
16 compromise and making sure that there's enough  
17 different viewpoints in the room so one wants to have  
18 that discussion, one wants to invite the discussion,  
19 and certainly wants to know what the viewpoints are,  
20 but, at the same time, just like the different  
21 development folks versus the antidevelopment folks  
22 even in the room on the Commission, I believe you  
23 have enough different viewpoints where you do work to  
24 get to a healthy compromise, and I think folks have

2 to want to do it. I think I can raise my hand and say  
3 I want to do that.

4 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. I'll leave  
5 it at that since we have such a captive audience here  
6 of people still paying attention.

7 JUAN CAMILO OSORIO: Can I add something  
8 to that question? Thanks, again, for the question. I  
9 just wanted to emphasize that the CPC should be a  
10 space for debate where these different opinions  
11 should actually sort of enter dialogue. That's  
12 actually one of the main problems that I see right  
13 now with the process which is that in hearings rarely  
14 there's a conversation between the community, the  
15 applicant, and the Commission in engaging in the  
16 complexity of understanding where those compromises  
17 actually lie and to what extent they can be enforced.  
18 I wanted to just say that creating a transparent  
19 process where everybody can relate to the  
20 methodologies and see how we're making decisions in a  
21 way that those compromises are clear in terms of  
22 who's winning and who's not and then how do we  
23 compensate for that actually is what builds that  
24 trust. In many cases, when we increase the capacity  
25 for development, we're creating a lot of wealth out

2 thin air, and I think at the end of the process, this  
3 is about how do we make decisions, how do we direct  
4 investments which should be based on need, and to  
5 what extent a lot of this value can be recaptured so  
6 that everybody can win in this way.

7 CHAIRPERSON POWERS: Thank you. Thank you,  
8 guys, for answering, especially thank you for your  
9 patience (INAUDIBLE) and congratulations to you on  
10 your nomination. This is, without question, one of  
11 the most important city agencies that we have and  
12 just your appointments hopefully will further that,  
13 but I think you all are very qualified and your  
14 answers have given a lot more confidence to all of us  
15 that you have thought about these questions and have  
16 taken this job seriously so I want to congratulate  
17 you all on your nominations and thank you for  
18 spending your morning/afternoon with us as well.

19 Thanks.

20 With that, we are adjourned. Thank you,  
21 guys. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date August 22, 2022