

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

—————X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS AND CONCESSIONS

—————X

January 11, 2011

Start: 1:20pm

Recess: 2:05pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:

STEPHEN T. LEVIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Council Member Inez E. Dickens

Council Member Sara M. Gonzalez

Council Member Peter A. Koo

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

Carol Clark
Assistant Commissioner
Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Sal D'Avola
Executive Director
Restored Homes

Eunice Suh
Project Manager
Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Del Teague
Chairperson
People's Firehouse, Inc.

Evan Thies
Founding Board Member
Northside Town Hall Community and Cultural Center

Susan Albrecht
Board Member
Neighbors Allied for Good Growth

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good afternoon.
3 Welcome to the Subcommittee on Planning,
4 Dispositions and Concessions. I'm Council Member
5 Stephen Levin, Chair of this Subcommittee. I am
6 joined this afternoon by Council Member Inez
7 Dickens from Manhattan, Council Member Sara
8 Gonzalez from Brooklyn, Council Member Peter Koo
9 from Queens.

10 We have two items on the agenda
11 today. We have Land Use preconsidered, non - -
12 No. 20115310 HAX. This is an asset control area
13 at 2069 Bathgate Avenue in the Bronx. This is in
14 Community District 6 in the Bronx, Council
15 District 15—that's the Council District
16 represented by Joel Rivera. We are going to get
17 to this one first before we get to the Northside
18 Town Hall, which is in the 33rd Council District,
19 but first we'll do the 2069 Bathgate Avenue ACA.
20 Testifying on this item we have Sal D'Avola,
21 Executive Director of Restored Homes and Carol
22 Clark, Assistant Commissioner at HPD. I imagine
23 Ms. Clark is going to be testifying on this item.
24 Is that correct?

25 CAROL CLARK: Yes. That's correct.

2 Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the
3 committee.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, and
5 Happy New Year.

6 CAROL CLARK: Happy New Year
7 everyone. It's so nice to see you. We're here to
8 discuss—Sal D'Avola, the Executive Director of
9 Restored Homes is with me, and we're here to
10 testify on the one-family home, a vacant building
11 located at 2069 Bathgate Avenue, to be developed
12 under the Asset Control Area Program.

13 HPD and the Federal Department of
14 Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are
15 undertaking this initiative, which is known as the
16 ACA Program, as you all are well aware, to
17 revitalize neighborhoods by bringing vacant homes
18 back into use, while creating affordable home-
19 ownership opportunities for low and moderate
20 income families. Homes acquired by HUD as a
21 result of mortgage foreclosures are sold to a not-
22 for-profit sponsor, Restored Homes HDFC, for
23 rehabilitation and subsequent sale to qualified
24 purchasers. In collaboration with HPD, Restored
25 Homes oversees the rehab and conducts the

2 marketing process to identify eligible purchasers.

3 Today HPD seeks the Council's
4 approval of a tax exemption to enhance the
5 affordability of the project for the eligible
6 purchaser. Council Member, Joel Rivera, has
7 reviewed the project and indicated his support.
8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Ms.
10 Clark—do you want to add anything, Mr. D'Avola?

11 SAL D'AVOLA: No, I'm just here to
12 answer any questions that the Council staff may
13 have or Councilpersons.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. So
15 the tax exemption is for how long?

16 CAROL CLARK: It's a period of ten
17 years—it's the five year full and then five year,
18 pro-rated, decreasing UDAAP [phonetic] tax
19 exemption.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, and then
21 what type of affordability are we looking at here?

22 SAL D'AVOLA: The sales price is in
23 a range between 235,000 to 275,000, which means
24 it's affordable to families, earning between
25 \$55,000 and \$64,000, and the range in sales price

2 is due to the fact that we have additional
3 subsidies from the Affordable Housing Corporation
4 at the state level, which depending on the income
5 of the buyers, allows us to put in a certain
6 amount of subsidy, which could reduce the price
7 down.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And that is—
9 that subsidy is forthcoming or it has already been
10 awarded?

11 SAL D'AVOLA: It's been awarded to
12 us and we've allocated it to the property.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Have you
14 marketed the home yet?

15 SAL D'AVOLA: Yes. It's actively
16 being marketed right now.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Do you have any
18 interested buyers?

19 SAL D'AVOLA: I think we have
20 received some applications, but we have no one in
21 contract.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Do any
23 of my colleagues have any questions on this item?
24 Council Member Koo?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: When you said

2 tax exempt is this almost the same as tax
3 abatement for other apartment buildings? When we
4 buy new apartments they are tax abatement for ten
5 years...

6 CAROL CLARK: A tax exemption and a
7 tax abatement are technically two different
8 things.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: With the same
10 result, right?

11 CAROL CLARK: It's an analogous
12 result I would say, yes, Council Member.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: And do the
14 people when they apply for mortgage, do they have
15 a problem? Because most people have a lot of
16 problems when they apply for a mortgage from the
17 bank...

18 SAL D'AVOLA: Well, I think in the
19 past few years with the circumstances that we've
20 seen, there has been difficulty in finding buyers
21 for these homes. It's a more challenging time,
22 but we have been able to actually qualify buyers
23 and sell homes through this program.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Do any of my
25 other colleagues have any questions on this? All

2 set? I do have one other question real quick, Mr.
3 D'Avola. This is just something that I just want
4 to make sure--there's a commitment from your
5 organization to--as the tax exemption or abatement
6 begins to wind down after that five year mark,
7 there's a commitment that you will stay with the
8 homeowner so that they're prepared for that moment
9 which after ten years they're going to be paying a
10 full tax on that.

11 SAL D'AVOLA: Yes, I think it's a
12 combination of our organization and also, we work
13 with local community partners who are the local
14 non-profits in the communities where these houses
15 are, which is in many ways the source of how we
16 identify our buyers. So yes, we are in constant
17 contact with them.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is there an
19 organization that you are working with in
20 particular on this particular item?

21 SAL D'AVOLA: This particular
22 house, no. There is no local community
23 organization in this part of the Bronx that
24 specializes in homeownership.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Well

2 seeing no other questions, the hearing on this
3 particular item is hereby closed. Thank you very
4 much, and we're going to move on to Land Use 267.

5 This is N110065 HAK, the Northside
6 Town Hall Project in Brooklyn Community Board
7 District 1. This is in Council District 33, which
8 I represent and this is a project that I'm very
9 excited that this is coming through the Council at
10 this point, and I will ask Eunice-

11 EUNICE SUH: [Interposing] Suh.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: -Suh-I'm sorry,
13 Eunice-and Carol Clark from HPD to present on this
14 particular item. My apologies, Eunice.

15 CAROL CLARK: Thank you, Mr.
16 Chairman and Members of the Committee, and as you
17 noted, Eunice Suh who is a project manager in
18 Brooklyn Planning at HPD, is joining me in giving
19 this testimony. LU 267 is known as the Northside
20 Town Hall Community and Cultural Center, and it
21 consists of the proposed rehabilitation and
22 conversion of a former firehouse, located at 134
23 Wythe Avenue. Under the proposed project, the
24 not-for-profit sponsors People's Firehouse, Inc.
25 and Neighbors Allied for Good Growth, known as

2 NAG, will rehabilitate the existing three-story
3 building.

4 Upon completion, the building will
5 serve as a community facility for the sponsors,
6 where they will continue to provide services to
7 the Williamsburg and Greenpoint neighborhoods.
8 These services include housing and tenant
9 services, anti-arson and weatherization programs
10 and computer training. In addition, the building
11 will provide affordable exhibition and performance
12 space for organizations and artists based in north
13 Brooklyn and adjacent communities facing
14 displacement and/or lack affordable or appropriate
15 space. Lastly, the building will also display an
16 exhibit commemorating the Fire Department Company
17 212 and other local history. Council Member Levin
18 as he noted has reviewed the project and indicated
19 his enthusiastic support for it. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Ms. Suh, do you
21 have anything to add?

22 EUNICE SUH: No, I'm just available
23 for questions, if you have any.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So Commissioner
25 Clark, can you tell us a little bit about HPD's

2 involvement with the property when HPD took title
3 to the land or how it came about that it's—we're
4 going from a—once a firehouse to now a community
5 center?

6 CAROL CLARK: Well, it was back in
7 the year 2003, when the City actually closed five
8 firehouses, and then in 2007, the Economic
9 Development Corporation issued a request for
10 proposals for development and acquisition of the
11 sites and what you're seeing here is the first of
12 those five firehouses coming back to the Council
13 for the disposition approval that will allow it to
14 go forward.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. I would
16 actually—I would love to, if possible call up our
17 additional folks that are testifying on the item
18 to give us a little bit further background, but I
19 thank you very much, Commissioner Clark. Again
20 I've—have been supportive. I'm sorry, before you
21 sit down, do any of my colleagues have any
22 questions for HPD on this particular item? [pause]
23 Okay, thank you very much, and I just want to for
24 the record state that as I have been supportive
25 over the past year, I've allocated or attempted to

2 allocate capital funding in the FY11 budget and
3 have made a commitment, which is reflected in the
4 FY11 budget towards an allocation from the Council
5 for capital in the FY12 budget as soon as some
6 hurdles with regard to OMB are overcome. I know
7 that Borough President Markowitz has done the same
8 thing. With that, I will call up Del Teague, Evan
9 Thies, and Susan Albrecht, who will be
10 representing the Northside Town Hall. [pause] You
11 guys have all the time you need. If you could
12 identify yourself for the record..

13 DEL TEAGUE: Hi. Thank you. My
14 name is Del Teague, and I just want to thank you
15 for giving us the opportunity to present our
16 position here on the Town Hall. I am the
17 Chairperson of the Board that has been formed to
18 take control of the firehouse, and I'm also the
19 chairperson of the People's Firehouse. Of course,
20 as you know the People's Firehouse and NAG are the
21 two sponsoring agencies that are putting together
22 this project. I'm also the Chairperson of the
23 Budget Committee at CB1 and I work currently as a
24 principal court attorney over at the Surrogate's
25 Court here on Chambers Street.

2 I think that it's not really a just
3 a matter of my imagination or my provincial pride
4 in Williamsburg to—that makes me think that this
5 is a very special community. Actually, several
6 books have been written about Williamsburg and
7 about how there has just been this spirit that's
8 been in this area, in throughout Williamsburg,
9 from the time it was first settled that somehow
10 kept people together, fighting thick and thin no
11 matter what to protect the neighborhood. It's an
12 odd thing, but people just get up and rally
13 together and they've done it for years and years
14 to protect and preserve, and so here we are,
15 through thick and thin, trying to continue that
16 spirit.

17 Now why do we want to do this in
18 this building and why we do we think it's
19 necessary? Because in keeping within the spirit of
20 allowing people to feel that they have a voice in
21 this wonderful, wonderful country. It's very
22 important that people have the ability to get
23 together and talk—to talk rationally, to talk to
24 each other, to discuss their desires, their
25 differences and to find out, at least in my

2 opinion, that most of the time they're actually
3 fighting for the same thing. They might be voting
4 opposite sides of the coin, but often you find
5 that it's because they just have a slight
6 difference in how it should be achieved, so you
7 get a neighborhood like Williamsburg, everybody is
8 there fighting to preserve the neighborhood. I
9 found myself in a position where I was with
10 another community board member; one of us was
11 voting that—to asking the City to go for a project
12 and the other against, and we sat next to each
13 other, and I just sort of reached over to him and
14 I said, "You do know that we're both fighting for
15 the same thing—that each of us is going to get up
16 there and testify that we are going, 'yes,' 'yea'
17 or 'nay' because we want more affordable housing."
18 You know, we both looked at each other and said,
19 "You're right," and then went on and we've
20 maintained our good relationship. This is what
21 you have to do, I think, in a community.

22 Now—so people need the space to get
23 together, and what better space than this
24 particular building, which has become known
25 globally as a symbol of activism, of effective

2 activism? You know, in the '70s the may-Mayor
3 Beame closed down the firehouse. The building was
4 overtaken by the community. People of all ages, I
5 mean all ages, took to the streets, took to that
6 building and occupied that building for over two
7 years, until finally, the mayor and the powers
8 within the City said you know this is the people's
9 firehouse. We just can't take it from them. So
10 it was not the people who termed it to the
11 People's Firehouse, it was actually the
12 administration. So this is just the perfect
13 building to give people a chance to continue their
14 fight to get together, to look to each other for
15 support and to preserve this community.

16 Now it also happens to have become
17 a haven for artists, and what we've come to
18 realize is the importance of art in activism. I
19 think that any-if you think about any great
20 movement, I bet you'd think about the artwork that
21 went out to symbolize that movement. It's vital.
22 So this is just a wonderful opportunity to get the
23 people in the community who have their thoughts
24 and they want to, you know, provide for the
25 community, provide for the services in the

2 community with the artists who can put their
3 skills to use to also help foster the things that
4 we're fighting for. So what better place than
5 this building and in this neighborhood to
6 accomplish this?

7 I do want to just close by saying
8 I'm just literally overwhelmed by the support that
9 we have gotten. I mean just truly, overwhelmed,
10 and I just want to thank all of the people at HPD
11 and EDC; they've just been phenomenal, and of
12 course, Councilman Levin and Councilwoman Reyna
13 who has been very supportive, and Borough
14 President Markowitz, and Assemblyman Lentol,
15 Senator Squadron, Councilwoman Velazquez. It's
16 just heartwarming to have felt this support, and I
17 just want to thank everybody. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Ms.
19 Teague. Mr. Thies, do you want to add something?

20 EVAN THIES: [off mic] lean forward
21 here. Thank you, Chairman Levin and thank you for
22 your strong support of the project; it's been
23 invaluable as we move forward. Thank you Council
24 Members Dickens, Gonzalez and Koo for coming to
25 the hearing today and listening to what we have to

2 say about the project.

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Please identify
4 yourself for the record.

5 EVAN THIES: Yes. My name is Evan
6 Thies. I'm a resident of Greenpoint Williamsburg,
7 former Community Board One member, chief of staff
8 to the previous council member, officer of several
9 community groups in north Brooklyn and a founding
10 board member of Northside Town Hall Community and
11 Cultural Center. For the past nine years, I have
12 been in some way working directly with the
13 residents of Greenpoint Williamsburg.

14 As you may know, it has been a
15 tumultuous decade for north Brooklyn; rapid change
16 had begun even before the re-zoning of the area in
17 2005, and has since brought both success and
18 stress to our neighborhood. Throughout this
19 period, long-time residents and new arrivals often
20 sparred, as Del was saying, over the direction,
21 character and management of north Brooklyn, but we
22 have made much progress together, despite the
23 differences and I can think of no better symbol
24 for that effort than the Northside Town Hall
25 Project.

2 The firehouse itself was a site of
3 numerous community-led protests, again as Del was
4 saying, in the years before it was closed. It has
5 come through to represent the proud activist
6 spirit and dedication to community that our
7 neighborhood is known for. Following suit, our
8 proposal to reuse the building has been a unifying
9 effort—perhaps unparalleled in the level of
10 universal support and volunteerism. It is drawn
11 from the community. Our pros will combine the
12 strengths of two of the most respected
13 organizations in our neighborhood—the People’s
14 Firehouse, which Del chairs and Neighbors Allied
15 for Good Growth, which I’m on the board of.
16 Although both organizations have been around for
17 some time, they each represent different sections
18 of the community. The People’s Firehouse is led
19 by a board of mainly long-time residents, some of
20 whom have local roots that go back generations.
21 NAG also has long-time residents on its board, but
22 its membership is decidedly newer to the area.
23 The combination gives us input from all corners of
24 the community, and has already led to lasting
25 accomplishments for the neighborhood.

2 For instance in May of last year,
3 we worked together to host the first ever Taste
4 Greenpoint Williamsburg fundraiser for the Town
5 Hall. The event exceeded even our most ambitious
6 expectations, brought hundreds of visitors to the
7 area and raised more than \$100,000. Excitement
8 around another Taste event this year is already
9 very high, and we're planning for that, and
10 hopefully, it will become an annual event—
11 something else that Chairman Levin has been
12 helpful with, but what was most impressive to me
13 was how that event brought some normally separate
14 parts of our community together. We had food and
15 drink from brand new restaurants and old
16 favorites. We had young hipster volunteers with
17 piercings and tattoos, working and joking
18 alongside fourth generation senior citizens—it was
19 a sight to see. This is a truly special project.

20 In addition to diverse support
21 within the community, it also has vociferous
22 support from each of our local elected officials,
23 as well as unanimous support from our community
24 board, and I think Chairman Levin can attest that
25 is rare, indeed in our neighborhood. So today, we

2 as a community united ask for your approval of the
3 project and UDAAP designation to facilitate the
4 conversion of this firehouse to a community center
5 that will stand forever as a reminder of past
6 battles won, hardship endured and a future forged
7 together. Thanks.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Mr.
9 Thiess. Ms. Albrecht, do you want to add?

10 SUSAN ALBRECHT: This is on, right?
11 My name is Susan Albrecht. I've been a resident
12 of north Brooklyn for over 22 years, and for the
13 past eight years, I've served as a volunteer on
14 the board of directors for Neighbors Allied for
15 Good Growth, and I'm a founding member of-board
16 member of the Northside Town Hall Community and
17 Cultural Center. I serve on these boards because
18 I'm committed to their mission of providing a
19 voice for north Brooklyn and ensuring a balanced
20 community.

21 The transformation of the former
22 Engine 212 Firehouse into a community and cultural
23 center will work towards that mission in a number
24 of ways. First, the project will provide much
25 needed space for community education and cultural

2 uses, as Del noted as well, including exhibit
3 performance and community meeting space. It will
4 provide a place for new and old members of the
5 community to come together. Second, it will
6 provide a permanent home for both NAG and the
7 People's Firehouse, two long-standing
8 organizations that have directly shaped this
9 community for the better. And third, our plan
10 calls for the preservation of the character and
11 appearance of the site, acknowledging both its
12 historical and future value, while continuing its
13 use as an anchor for our community.

14 We have been honored to receive
15 significant financial support from Borough
16 President Markowitz and Councilman Levin, thank
17 you. Just as important, as Evan mentioned, has
18 been was the Taste event that raised over \$100,000
19 in a single day. We appreciate your support of
20 our application and look forward to the successful
21 completion of this important community project.
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,
24 Susan. Just a quick question regarding the two
25 organizations as they stand now—what type of space

2 are they in at the moment in terms of their
3 offices, and how would this project facilitate
4 their mission respectively moving forward?

5 DEL TEAGUE: The People's Firehouse
6 is currently in a building that is owned by the
7 City, so if we are able to transfer our operation
8 over to the Town Hall, then we have spoken already
9 to the City about the possibility of converting
10 the building we're in now into affordable housing,
11 so that's we'd like to do.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And People's
13 Firehouse has a history of developing affordable
14 housing?

15 DEL TEAGUE: Yes, Yeah, we did
16 Yorker [phonetic] Hall and we've developed others,
17 and we manage buildings. Right.

18 SUSAN ALBRECHT: And NAG is located
19 in a rental office, so this will help us to save
20 the money, and also give us a better, more central
21 location.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Right, I think
23 one thing I'd just like to add is—a reason why
24 this project has appealed to me is that—a number
25 of reasons. First off, the actual utility of it

2 or the utilitarian purpose of it in that it's
3 centrally located on the north side of
4 Williamsburg, in the midst of all this development
5 that has happened, it's really—it kind of is
6 situated kind of among these massive towers and
7 glass condo buildings, but it in itself has—is
8 kind of a testament to previous generations and
9 the struggles that Del has alluded to and that
10 Evan and Susan both did as well. And the fact
11 that there is no other place in the neighborhood
12 that serves that function that way. There's no
13 other community center that would be—that has that
14 as its kind of sole designated purpose. And I
15 think that it's something that the neighborhood
16 deserves and it's something that the neighborhood
17 has been asking for for a very long time.

18 Just a quick word about the history
19 of it and what kind of it means to the community,
20 the story with Engine 212, as Ms. Teague alluded
21 to, where in the '70s it was closed down as part
22 of a massive firehouse closure and a planned
23 shrinkage program in southern Greenpoint and the
24 north side of Williamsburg, as kind of a policy of
25 the City. And the long-time residents of the

2 neighborhood decided that they were having none of
3 it and they did a peaceful sit-in in the firehouse
4 that lasted over two years, and this is people of
5 many generations and they all came together and
6 you know, would obviously let the fire engines
7 leave to attend to the fires, but they themselves
8 camped out, so that they could not—the City could
9 not close the firehouse 'cause they said it was I
10 think the fifth firehouse to close in the area in
11 the span of about 15 years. And so they said
12 enough is enough, and they were able to keep that
13 firehouse open for another 18 years or so until
14 the early part of this decade, when the current
15 administration decided that it was time to close
16 the firehouse and there was some protests over it;
17 not quite to the scale as back in the '70s, but it
18 is a reminder of what civic activism means in
19 north Brooklyn and to the character of that
20 community. And it is for that reason that I am
21 very enthusiastically in support of the project.

22 I want to thank Ms. Teague, Mr.
23 Thies, Ms. Albrecht and everyone—the boards of
24 People's Firehouse, of NAG, of the Northside Town
25 Hall for this really extraordinary collective

2 effort, as you made mention, Mr. Thies, this is
3 something that everybody agrees on in a community
4 district where we often see controversial issues
5 and lack of agreement on methods on which we want
6 to achieve our mutual goals. This is something
7 that everyone agrees on and so I am very, very
8 enthusiastically supportive. I don't know if Mr.
9 Freedman-Schnapp wants to testify as well or he's
10 just here to be part of the hearing, but... Oh
11 sorry, Commissioner Clark wants to add just one
12 more word.

13 CAROL CLARK: I just wanted to
14 clarify one point that HPD is before the Council
15 today to propose the-to designate the site as an
16 Urban Development Action Area and to request UDAAP
17 project approval in order to facilitate this
18 project, and contrary to what I indicated in
19 response to a question earlier, and I apologize,
20 disposition of the subject property was previously
21 approved the disposition from DCAS to HPD by the
22 Council in May of 2007. Thank you for letting me
23 make that clarification.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Sure. Sorry,
25 one other question for Ms. Clark. The timeline in

2 terms of the completion of the project do you or
3 does somebody else want to address that particular
4 issue or do we have a sense at this point?

5 SUSAN ALBRECHT: Well, we're in the
6 process of pulling together the funding, doing the
7 fundraising and grant writing and once we have
8 gotten that all together then it will be about a
9 12 month construction period.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Do we have a
11 sense of the overall estimated cost as it is now?

12 SUSAN ALBRECHT: 1.8 million, yeah.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Do any of my
14 colleagues have any questions on this particular
15 item?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: On this 1.8
17 million dollars, how much you get from the City?
18 In terms of grants...

19 SUSAN ALBRECHT: I think one
20 million is what we're looking at right now. Yeah.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Okay. So the
22 other part you have to do private fundraising?

23 SUSAN ALBRECHT: Yes and
24 foundation proposals.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I have promised

2 to allocate 350,000 of capital funding that I've
3 directed and Borough President Markowitz, I
4 believe, has committed to 700,000-720 from the
5 Borough President capital allocation.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Who is going
7 to pay for the maintenance of it?

8 SUSAN ALBRECHT: Both of the
9 organizations will be housed there and will be
10 running programs through that, so that will be
11 part of our budget, our annual budget, operating
12 budget.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Do you get
14 income from renting some of the spaces?

15 SUSAN ALBRECHT: No, we won't be,
16 not from renting the spaces. It will be program
17 costs and basic maintenance costs. I don't have
18 the budget in front of me.

19 EVAN THIES: Just to add one thing.
20 We have also put together a board and an
21 initiative to raise quite a bit of private money.
22 As Susan said, there is also going to be grant
23 applications and we're going to subsidize it that
24 way, but I think we believe as a board that
25 operation costs can be covered by that fundraising

2 process, as we've said, it's become really a
3 central goal of the major players in that
4 neighborhood to develop this project and the
5 initial fundraising event, which is a brand new
6 experience in Greenpoint Williamsburg. It's
7 basically all the restaurants getting together to
8 give food for free so that we can sell tickets to
9 a Taste event. Did six figures in the first round
10 and got major coverage and so we believe that that
11 will be something that we can rely on in the
12 future for income for operations costs. We're not
13 relying solely on that, but we've demonstrated
14 that we have a really great base for fundraising
15 privately, I think.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Assembly Member
17 Joe Lentol has allocated 50,000, I believe... 50,000
18 for operations as well. Council Member Gonzalez?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Yeah,
20 well, I just want to congratulate you because it
21 sounds like you really rallied everyone and it's
22 been worth it. This is an excellent project and I
23 want to congratulate my colleague as well, and I
24 want to say to HPD that I'm looking forward to
25 doing this some more in my district, and as you

2 were speaking, I was thinking about firehouse, and
3 so, I may reach out to you guys. Thank you.

4 SUSAN ALBRECHT: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Council Member
6 Dickens?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you,
8 Mr. Chair. Congratulations. The programs that
9 you existingly have, are they free to the public?
10 Are any of them free? Or is there a cost
11 attributed to each of your programs, and if so,
12 how much?

13 DEL TEAGUE: Well, any of the
14 activism, that's always free. People's Firehouse,
15 for instance, has a weatherization program which
16 helps landlords to weatherize their buildings at a
17 much reduced cost and we do a lot of anti-arson
18 work, which is free. Often we're giving out free-

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS:

20 [Interposing] Are any of the educational seminars...

21 DEL TEAGUE: We do have some
22 educational things—we work with the Department of
23 Education and that's free also for English as a
24 second language with Polish speaking residents,
25 Spanish speaking residents. So, yes, there are a

2 lot of things that we do that we have funding or
3 we have somehow hooked up with people like the
4 Board of Education we are an outlet-outreach
5 center for the District Attorney, so those people
6 come to our offices a couple of times a week and
7 they're there for the people in the community who
8 have questions and who need help from the District
9 Attorney. So there are substantial things that we
10 do that either are for free or they're being done
11 to help people, like for instance the
12 weatherization and help the landlords who are not
13 getting luxury kinds of rent to weatherize their
14 buildings and make the buildings better for their
15 tenants.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: The
17 firehouse, what type of organization is it?

18 DEL TEAGUE: You know, it gets a
19 little confusing 'cause we call-the Engine 212 was
20 always called the people's firehouse, but and what
21 happened is, during the initial takeover of that
22 firehouse, the organization People's Firehouse,
23 Inc. developed out of that, and that's the
24 organization that's one of the two sponsors, and
25 I'm the chairperson of. The People's Firehouse,

2 Inc., just to be clear, we are an organization
3 that does building management. We help also
4 tenants to gain more control—or gain control of
5 their own buildings with HDFCs. We've built
6 buildings; we built Yorker Hall, which is a senior
7 citizen facility that also has the ability to
8 provide homes for disabled people who aren't
9 necessarily seniors. We've managed other
10 buildings. We do anti-arson work. We have—we do
11 tenant outreach, and well, I think I said the
12 weatherization... That's kind of it in a nutshell
13 what we do.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you.

15 I wanted to have an understanding because I have a
16 firehouse in my district, but ours is cultural.
17 Thank you and congratulations.

18 DEL TEAGUE: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
20 much. I do appreciate the testimony, all of your
21 efforts. I look forward to working with both
22 organizations as we move ahead, and it's onward
23 and upward, and this is something that I think
24 Williamsburg deserves as a resource for the
25 community, and I congratulate you all, and I'm

2 going to close the hearing on this matter, and I'm
3 going to ask for the Counsel to the Committee,
4 Carol Shine, to call the vote. I recommend and I
5 vote on both items, an enthusiastic I vote.

6 COUNSEL: Chair Levin.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Aye.

8 COUNSEL: Council Member Gonzalez.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Aye.

10 COUNSEL: Council Member Dickens.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Aye.

12 COUNSEL: Council Member Koo.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Aye.

14 COUNSEL: By vote of four in the
15 affirmative, none in the negative and no
16 abstentions, the aforementioned items are approved
17 and referred to the full Committee.

18 [pause]

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Just for the
20 record, the Land Use Committee meeting for
21 tomorrow has been cancelled and will be
22 rescheduled for Monday morning--

23 COUNSEL: [Interposing] Tuesday
24 morning.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --Tuesday

2 morning at 10am, excuse me, Tuesday morning at

3 10am. This meeting is adjourned.

4 [gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberley Uhlig certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature

Kimberley Uhlig

Date January 28, 2011