

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION

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February 18, 2011

Start: 1:10pm

Recess: 2:45pm

HELD AT: Committee Room
250 Broadway - 16th Fl.

B E F O R E: MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Elizabeth Crowley
Vincent J. Gentile
Daniel Dromm
Karen Koslowitz
G. Oliver Koppell

A P P E A R A N C E S

Joshua Rivera
Director of Government Relations
New York Botanical Garden

Bob Tierney
Chairman
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission

Lilliam Barrios-Paoli
Commissioner
NYC Department of Aging

Claire Shulman
Concerned Citizen

Esther Fuchs
Professor
Columbia University

Ken Knuckles
President
Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone

Guy Long
Concerned Citizen

Walter McCaffrey
Concerned Citizen

Herb Berman
Concerned Citizen

Richard Lieberman
Director
LaGuardia and Wagner Archives

Gordon Davis
Concerned Citizen

Diana Chapin
Member
Landmarks Preservation Commission

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

Barbara Gunn
Concerned Citizen

Jeffrey Kroessler
Associate Professor
City University of New York

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Ready?

Alright, we're going to get the hearing started.

Good afternoon, everybody. I'd like to welcome

all of you to today's City Council Parks and

Recreation Committee hearing. I'm Council Member

Melissa Mark-Viverito, chair of this Committee.

And so far we have here Council Members Oliver

Koppell and Council Members Dromm. Today's

hearing we're discussing two bills which relate to

the city map changes—something that is within this

Committee's purview. The first of these bills,

which is Intro 417, will rename the Dr. Theodore

Kazimiroff Boulevard in the Bronx to Southern

Boulevard. The street will retain Dr. Theodore

Kazimiroff Boulevard as a co-name, which is how we

more typically honor important figures in our

city. This will restore a greater sense of

continuum to Southern Boulevard as currently it is

briefly interrupted by Dr. Kazimiroff Boulevard,

before switching back to Southern Boulevard, and I

hope I'm pronouncing the name correctly.

The second of these bills before

the Committee today is Intro 446, which was

introduced by Speaker Quinn at the request of the

1
2 Mayor and will rename the Queensboro Bridge to Ed
3 Koch Queensboro Bridge. Ed Koch's mayoralty was
4 highlighted by the infrastructure improvements his
5 administration made to the city, including those
6 to the Queensboro Bridge. Through the creation of
7 the Bridge Rehabilitation Project followed by the
8 bi-annual inspections to monitor the deterioration
9 of bridge components, it was determined that the
10 Queensboro Bridge was in need of comprehensive
11 renovation to ensure the safety of motorists and
12 the physical integrity of the structure. Initial
13 rehabilitation work, which included the
14 reconstruction of two approach viaducts in Queens,
15 the reconstruction of the south upper roadway, the
16 replacement of the movable maintenance platforms
17 under the main bridge, the installation of
18 variable message signs at the entrance to approach
19 ramps in Queens, the rehabilitation of the main
20 bridge lower trust [phonetic] cords, the
21 renovation of the main bridge pier tops, and the
22 replacement of two outer roadway floor beams and
23 deck at the Manhattan Anchor Pier were completed
24 during the remaining years of the Koch
25 Administration from 1981 to 1989.

1
2 In fact, work on rehabilitating and
3 maintaining the Queensboro Bridge is still an on-
4 going project, so I want to thank everyone for
5 being here. We have more panels for the renaming
6 of the bridge than we do for the Southern
7 Boulevard, so I would like to just take care of
8 the Southern Boulevard first. And since we have
9 Council member who has that intro here, I'd like
10 to allow my colleague, Council Member Koppell to
11 say a few words.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Thank you,
13 you pronounced the Kazimiroff's name perfectly.
14 We do not mean any disrespect for Dr. Kazimiroff
15 in making this change. Unfortunately, because
16 that name is not well known to emergency response
17 personnel and others including the post office
18 department, it's caused a great deal of confusion.
19 And by going back to Southern Boulevard as the
20 main name without taking away Dr. Kazimiroff's
21 name from the street, we hope to avoid problems
22 that have existed with emergency response, with
23 mail especially to the senior citizen residence,
24 which is located there. And I appreciate the
25 Committee's consideration of this and the-it's

1 supported by the local community boards. It's
2 supported by the nearby institutions, including
3 Fordham University and the botanical garden and
4 the zoo, and I hope the Committee will endorse the
5 change.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
8 you, Council Member Koppell. I see briefly we
9 have—although I don't think she's a member of the
10 Committee, but Koslowitz, Council Member
11 Koslowitz, has joined us. I only have Joshua
12 Rivera that has signed up for this panel. If
13 there is anyone else here to speak on the
14 renaming, if you could sign in with the Sergeant-
15 at-Arms, if not, this will all go more quickly.
16 So we have Joshua Rivera from the New York
17 Botanical Garden. And whenever you're ready, you
18 can begin.

19 JOSHUA RIVERA: Good afternoon. My
20 name is Joshua Rivera, Director of Government
21 Relations at the New York Botanical Garden. I'd
22 first like to thank Chairwoman Viverito, as well
23 as the other distinguished Committee members for
24 providing the garden with the opportunity to
25 testify today. And of course, we'd especially

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2 like to thank Council Member Koppell, who
3 sponsored this legislation for us and will help to
4 rectify the situation.

5 Our reasons for supporting the
6 secondary street naming are varied. In the
7 forefront, it's our concern for the safety of the
8 visitors, vendors, employees and neighbors. The
9 U.S. Postal Service, the 911 dispatchers, mapping
10 tools and global positioning systems (GPS) do not
11 uniformly recognize Southern Boulevard or as the
12 physical signs designate an overlapping section of
13 road as Dr. Theodore Kazimiroff Boulevard. This
14 current duplicity has resulted in difficulty for
15 emergency responders, such as police and
16 firefighters to promptly locate buildings where
17 assistance is needed. Prolonged response times
18 present a serious concern for us and our
19 neighbors, such as the Rose Hill Apartments a 119
20 unit, nine story building for low-income senior
21 citizens and younger disabled persons, located
22 across from the garden and just south of Bedford
23 Park Boulevard—in fact, I've included testimony
24 from Rose Hill Apartments for you to view today.
25 Additionally, as the use online mapping systems

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2 increases, delivery of goods, mail and the ability
3 for visitors to locate our institution is
4 hindered. For example, when potential visitors
5 conduct a search with the aid of Google Maps, they
6 find many different addresses for the garden.
7 They include 2694 Southern Boulevard, 200th Street
8 and Kazimiroff Boulevard, Bronx River Parkway and
9 Fordham Road, and 2900 Southern Boulevard. For
10 those systems that do not recognize Kazimiroff
11 Boulevard at all, you'll have to type in Dr.
12 Theodore Kazimiroff Boulevard. It's often the
13 case that the street name you are familiar with or
14 found online is not the exact same address
15 recognized by the particular GPS system. The
16 garden's main operator receives phone calls on a
17 daily basis from frustrated potential patrons,
18 many who never ever find the garden or then
19 patronize Arthur Avenue or other local businesses
20 in the area.

21 The New York Botanical Garden
22 recognizes the valuable contributions that Dr.
23 Kazimiroff has made to the Bronx and the city of
24 New York. It is, and always has been our
25 intention to honor his legacy and pay homage to

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2 his valuable work, resolving any directional
3 challenges that are currently being experienced.
4 Therefore, we fully support returning the street
5 to Southern Boulevard and making Dr. Theodore
6 Kazimiroff the secondary honorary street name, as
7 this will maintain the public honor originally
8 intended and will eliminate the safety, post
9 office delivery and transportation issues that are
10 currently a problem for us and our neighbors,
11 including Fordham University and Rose Hill
12 Apartments. Thank you again for this opportunity
13 to testify and I'd be happy to take any questions.

14 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
15 you, Mr. Rivera and thank you for the testimony
16 from Rose Hill Housing Management and nobody would
17 have thought that something that seems so simple
18 as a street naming has so many implications and
19 understanding, but also we have the Commissioner
20 of Department for the Aging, so it's appropriate
21 that it's a senior building, I guess. But with
22 that, I don't know if any of my colleagues have
23 any questions. If not, thank you for your
24 testimony.

25 JOSHUA RIVERA: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: And
3 that will close this section of the hearing and I
4 know we have also testimony from Fordham
5 University for the record, testimony from Rose
6 Hill Housing Management in support of the
7 renaming. So we will now move on to the renaming
8 of the bridge, and we have about four panels, so
9 we will begin. I have here Commissioner Lilliam
10 Barrios-Paoli and we have Bob Tierney.

11 [background conversation]

12 [pause]

13 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
14 you. Good afternoon. Feel free to start.

15 BOB TIERNEY: Okay. Thank you very
16 much, Chairman-Chairperson Mark-Viverito, members
17 of the Parks and Recreation Committee. My name is
18 Bob Tierney. I'm Chairman of the New York City
19 Landmarks Preservation Commission, but I'm on my
20 lunch break today for that. That is my...

21 [laughter]

22 BOB TIERNEY: And although it's
23 related. This is a great landmark bridge, so it's
24 appropriate that I'm here also on other
25 capacities, I have the great honor and privilege

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2 of being counsel to Mayor Ed Koch from-for the
3 first 6 of his 12 years in office. And I have an
4 ongoing professional and personal relationship
5 with him that has-it's amazing on going 86 years
6 old. It's remarking, his resilience and his
7 spirit is undiminished and his abilities are
8 undiminished, so that is why I'm here as a matter
9 of mission, if you will, and I wanted to thank you
10 for the opportunity to also provide you with the
11 Bloomberg administration's position and comments
12 on Intro 446.

13 It would, as you Chair have said,
14 mend the city map to re-designate the Queensboro
15 Bridge as the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge and as
16 Mayor Bloomberg has noted, the Queensboro Bridge
17 like Ed Koch is a resilient, hard-working New York
18 City icon that's been bringing people together for
19 a long time and will probably outlast us all. The
20 bridge lies as you all know within the boundaries
21 of the congressional districts represented by
22 Mayor Koch when he served in the U.S. House of
23 Representatives from 1969 to 1977, representing
24 New York's then 17th and later 18th Congressional
25 Districts, starting out as a the so-called silk

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stocking district.

When Mayor Koch assumed office as Mayor, the Queensboro Bridge had reached near critical condition physically, as the Chair has alluded to already. And it was in the throes of the fiscal crisis that had affected the city, not just in the immediate years before his becoming mayor, but over the years because of deferred maintenance and capital program issues and so on, so when—again it had reached near critical condition. Corrosion throughout the bridge—the outer roadways were closed. There was safety issues and much of the bridge hadn't been inspected even in nearly a decade and there was a funding crisis.

People don't remember that perhaps as well and as the lesson learned in the '70s, but it was an acute time. And that's another reason that Mayor Koch served the city so well in such a dramatic way, by helping continue that survival of the city—the saving of the city, if you will. And with the bridge—this Queensboro Bridge, now to be the, we hope, if the bill is favorably acted upon the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge is sort of a symbol

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2 of that resurgence and that re-stability that he
3 helped bring and helped lead the city to. So I
4 find this, for that reason, totally appropriate
5 that this renaming would take place. And all the
6 East River bridges at that time, including
7 Queensboro, have been turned over to New York
8 State actually for stewardship and there was
9 really no real stewardship unfortunately, and the
10 City was no longer able to maintain it and the
11 State didn't do much. So under Ed Koch, the City
12 regained control of the bridges, began restoring
13 and repairing them. And many of those
14 restorations—I looked in the files - - landmarks
15 condition were proved through the Commission
16 during those—they either—all the items you had
17 mentioned were—permits were issued, hearings were
18 held, and there's a real nexus—and a very
19 important bridge, I mean critically important, one
20 of the six or seven bridges in the city that are
21 in fact New York City designated landmarks, so
22 this became the beginning of a program to restore
23 and repair the bridges of this city. Huge
24 progress was made and the City today has reduced
25 the number of bridges in poor condition from 1974

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2 and from 74, excuse me, in 1986 to 0 today due to
3 the work of the Bridges Bureau that had been
4 initiated under Koch. And quickly on the
5 Queensboro Bridge, its own prior history of
6 naming, the Blackwells originally named the
7 Blackwell's Island Bridge, it carries more than
8 775,000 motorists every day, connects 59th Street
9 Bridge in Manhattan and Long Island City as we all
10 know in Queens, offers dramatic views of Manhattan
11 and dramatic views of Queens and Roosevelt Island,
12 formally known as Blackwell's Island. That's
13 another story.

14 Open to traffic on March 30, 1909,
15 the bridge's construction had begun in 1901 as a
16 collaboration between a bridge engineer named
17 Gustav Lindenthal and architect Henry Hornbostel
18 with 75,000 tons of steel going into the original
19 bridge and its approach as the original cost, we
20 long for these old days, was 18 million dollars,
21 including 4.6 million for land purchases. At the
22 time of completion, it was the longest cantilever
23 bridge in the United States. It was designated a
24 New York City landmark on April 16th, 1974. It's
25 the longest of the four East River Bridges and the

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2 only one of them that is not a suspension bridge.

3 Finally, again I hinted at and I
4 really don't think I have to—it's almost judicial
5 notice taken of the life and career of Ed Koch and
6 his record as mayor and the restoration of the
7 fiscal stability to the City, the work in Congress
8 on the loan guarantees that his experience in
9 Congress had given him such credibility there with
10 Tip O'Niell, who told him after the bill was
11 passed in the House that it was really because of
12 him. Truly there were members that were on that
13 vote—it was not an easy vote for members from
14 around the country, but to help stabilize and
15 rescue new York City, but Ed Koch had the
16 credibility at that time as a member of Congress
17 to be able to work that—what was then a very
18 uphill battle. And we know all the rest of his
19 record. I think it speaks for itself. He was a
20 larger than life figure and I think it honors the
21 bridge. It will honor the bridge and as well as
22 honoring Ed to have this name changed. Thank you
23 very much for allowing me to be here today.

24 LILLIAM BARRIOS-PAOLI: [off mic]

25 Good morning Chair Mark-Viverito and members of

1
2 the Committee on Parks and Recreation. My name is
3 Lilliam Barrios-Paoli, Commissioner of the
4 Department for Aging. I'm pleased to be here
5 today to support Intro 446, legislation to honor
6 former Mayor Ed Koch by adding his name to the
7 Queensboro Bridge. I have both personal and
8 professional reasons for supporting this
9 legislation. My strong personal admiration for
10 Mayor Koch stems from the many years that I served
11 in his administration. I worked as deputy
12 commissioner for the Human Resources
13 Administration, Special Services for Children, was
14 a head of personnel and labor relations, both for
15 HRA and the Health and Hospitals Corporation and
16 was Commissioner of the Department of Employment
17 under Mayor Koch.

18 Throughout our long association, I
19 have always felt that I was serving a mayor who
20 was truly committed to the people of New York
21 City. I always could look to Mayor Koch for
22 mentoring, guidance and support in carrying out my
23 duties. Quite simply, he was an inspiration
24 providing a vision for his commissioners that
25 enabled us to do our best. I would be thrilled to

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2 see the Queensboro Bridge as a lasting testament
3 to this great mayor.

4 I'd like to speak now as the
5 current Commissioner of the Department for the
6 Aging about the wonderful improvements that Mayor
7 Koch brought to the department, reflecting his
8 commitment to older New Yorkers. The department
9 was not started under Mayor Koch, but the Koch
10 Administration build a foundation from which the
11 department has been able to thrive. Janet Sainer,
12 who was the Commissioner of Aging throughout the
13 12 years of the Koch Administration, is probably
14 one of the most revered figures in the world of
15 aging still. She passed away about almost three
16 years ago. Although there were tremendous
17 developments that fostered new programs for aging
18 through the '70s and '80s, cutbacks in federal
19 funds brought this growth to a standstill. Had
20 the City not stepped in to ensure that support for
21 aging services would be sustained, there would
22 have been a critical reduction in services. In
23 fact, programs were not only maintained, but many
24 were expanded. To give you an idea, in 1978 only
25 3 percent of the department's budget of 30 million

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2 dollars came from City funds. By 1988, the City
3 provided 35% of the department's 77 million dollar
4 budget. One out of every three dollars came to
5 the department from City tax levy funds. In
6 addition to the commitment of additional City
7 funds for aging services under Mayor Koch, New
8 York City also saw increasing supporting dollars
9 and services from the private sector—a direction
10 Mayor Koch actively encouraged. The Mayor had the
11 foresight to understand how this new kind of
12 public/private collaboration could be a major
13 force in moving forward an aging agenda to address
14 emerging needs.

15 A variety of programs either were
16 initiated or expanded during the Koch
17 Administration through partnerships with the
18 public and private sectors. They include City
19 Meal On Wheels, the New York City Alzheimer's and
20 Caregivers' Resource Center, the Department's
21 Health - - Services Unit, the Intergenerational
22 Work Study Program in collaboration with the
23 Department of Education and a private donor and
24 the Partnership for Elder Care—one of the first in
25 the nation to channel corporate resources to

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2 programs for caregivers. DFTA Senior Employment
3 Services opened several new training centers with
4 private support and the agency's Foster a
5 Grandparent program started several new
6 initiatives. New York City's reputation for
7 groundbreaking studies of emerging needs among the
8 elderly, also flowered and received direct support
9 from Mayor Koch during the '80s. Most
10 importantly, DFTA's legendary commissioner, Janet
11 Sainer, served the entire administration of Ed
12 Koch. In closing, I would like to say that
13 there's a direct bridge between New York City's
14 initiatives in aging during the Koch
15 Administration and the many initiatives currently
16 under way to make this city's preeminent among the
17 age-friendly cities of the world. What better way
18 to honor Mayor Koch than to affirm his strong
19 legacy as a leader of this great city than to add
20 Ed's name to the Queensboro Bridge? Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: And I
22 want to thank both of you for your personal
23 testimonies and you know, I know that we were kind
24 of rushing to start the hearing, but there's so
25 many illustrious people here in the room today

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2 that have contributed to New York City's history
3 and that are here to testify on behalf of this
4 naming and so I really want to thank you all for
5 being here and taking the time to share that with
6 us as well, as we move on in the panel, so
7 Commissioner and Mr. Tierney, thank you very much.
8 I don't know if my colleague has anything to say
9 and we've been joined also—we were joined I think
10 she just stepped out—by Council Member Crowley

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Just to say
12 I think it's very significant Mr. Chairman that
13 you're here, especially in light of your position
14 on the Landmarks Commissioner, and your position
15 then is that there is no impact in terms of the
16 historicalization [phonetic] of that bridge to
17 then rename this after Ed Koch?

18 BOB TIERNEY: Absolutely not. Only
19 positive impact in the renaming because the
20 renaming retains the Queensboro, Ed Koch
21 Queensboro Bridge, and for all the reasons I have
22 stated. That's correct.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Okay, and I
24 think that's pretty significant. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank

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2 you, Council Member Dromm. Thank you again for
3 your testimony.

4 BOB TIERNEY: Thank you so much.

5 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Oh, we
6 also have received many letters of support, which
7 I believe will be read into the record. We're
8 going to probably just read one after each panel,
9 so I think we will go ahead and read them into the
10 record. At least one.

11 [pause]

12 CLERK: The first letter has been
13 written by Stanley Grayson of M.R. Beal and
14 Company. Dear Speaker Quinn and Council Member
15 Mark-Viverito. I am writing to express my support
16 for legislation pending in the City Council that
17 would change the name of the Queensboro Bridge to
18 the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge.

19 I've had the honor of knowing Ed
20 Koch since 1984, when I joined his administration
21 as executive director of the New York City
22 Industrial Development Agency. Having served in
23 the Koch Administration as commissioner of
24 financial services, commissioner of finance and
25 deputy mayor for finance and economic development,

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2 I have had the pleasure of working closely with
3 Mayor Koch on many issues affecting our city and
4 its residents. The Mayor's trademark energy,
5 enthusiasm and affection for New York is
6 legendary, not unlike the Queensboro Bridge
7 itself.

8 During his tenure as mayor, Ed Koch
9 did so much to reach residents and businesses of
10 all five boroughs of the city and to ensure that
11 all New Yorkers felt as though they were a vital
12 part of the city. In this respect, there could be
13 no more fitting acknowledgement of and tribute to
14 his contribution to New York by naming after him
15 one of the city's vital links between Manhattan
16 and the rest of the city. Likewise, like the
17 Queensboro Bridge, Mayor Koch is seen and
18 referenced by many around the world as one of the
19 great symbols of New York. Few New Yorkers have
20 done more for the city's bridges, especially the
21 Queensboro Bridge, than Mayor Koch. From
22 obtaining funds for the rehabilitation of the
23 bridge while serving as congressman to reviving
24 the Department of Transportation's capital program
25 and ensuring a state of good repair for all of our

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2 city's infrastructure as mayor.

3 Ed has been a true hero of the city
4 of New York and he deserves our thanks. I cannot
5 imagine a more fitting tribute than renaming in
6 Mayor Koch's honor the bridge he helped save. And
7 I hope that you and your colleagues in the City
8 Council will act to quickly approve this measure.
9 Thank you for your time and consideration.
10 Sincerely, Stanley Grayson.

11 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
12 you. The next panel that we will call Claire
13 Shulman, Ken Knuckles—nice to see you, Ken. Yes?
14 Come. Yes, you have three at a time that can sit
15 at the table. And Mr. Guy Long? And Esther Fuchs.

16 [pause]

17 [background conversation]

18 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: So once
19 everyone is settled in, anyone can feel free to
20 kick it off and introduce yourself for the record
21 and provide your testimony.

22 [pause]

23 CLAIRE SHULMAN: Hello, are we on?
24 Okay. Good afternoon, Chair Mark-Viverito and
25 Committee members. My name is Claire Shulman. I

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2 am a Queens resident and I have been borough
3 president of the borough of Queens. Thank you for
4 the opportunity to testify at today's hearing and
5 to express my support for Intro 446A, which would
6 change the name of the Queensboro Bridge to the Ed
7 Koch Queensboro Bridge.

8 Mayor Koch represents our city even
9 today. He is bold, he is tough, he is effective,
10 he's charming and he stands firm each and every
11 day for the benefit of our neighbors and our city.
12 The same can be said for the Queensboro Bridge.
13 Just like the New Yorkers who watch him battle for
14 good government causes and 175,000 motorists who
15 daily travel the Queensboro Bridge know that the
16 bridge will not let them down. These parallels
17 are not a coincidence. As you may know, both as
18 congressman and as mayor, Ed provided invaluable
19 support to this bridge by injecting much needed
20 funds into the Queensboro renovation project and
21 by reclaiming the East River bridges and
22 revitalizing the Department of Transportation
23 capital fund. For a moment, let's go back to the
24 late '70s when the city was in the doldrums,
25 depressed, both emotionally and financially, the

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2 future of this great city was in question. People
3 began to leave. And in comes this tall, gangly
4 guy with arms outstretched, yelling, "How am I
5 doing?" Almost instantly he raised the spirits of
6 the city. He made the people believe that our
7 future was again on an upward spiral. Confidence
8 was restored. I therefore ask that you approve
9 this Intro 446A and rename the gateway to and from
10 Queensboro in honor of Ed Koch. It sure beats
11 calling it the 59th Street Bridge.

12 [laughter]

13 CLAIRE SHULMAN: Thank you for the
14 opportunity to testify.

15 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
16 you very much. Whoever wants to proceed?

17 ESTHER FUCHS: Chair Mark-Viverito
18 and members of the City Council. I'm Esther Fuchs
19 and I thank you for the opportunity to speak
20 before you in support of renaming the Queensboro
21 Bridge in honor of Mayor Ed Koch. I come before
22 you today as a professor who has spent a lifetime
23 writing and thinking about cities, mostly New York
24 City. I've been accused of being very parochial
25 because of doing that, but I beg to differ. As a

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2 policy practitioner who has spent time in city
3 government and as a citizen who grew up in
4 Bayside, Queens, attended Bayside High School and
5 Queens College of the great City University of New
6 York when its tuition was almost free, I remember
7 in 1978 in the aftermath of one of the bleakest
8 periods in New York's history when Ed Koch was
9 elected the 105th mayor of our city. I leave to
10 others who have already spoken to really tell us
11 about Ed Koch's career in Congress and what it was
12 like to work in his administration. We heard from
13 several commissioners, but I want to focus briefly
14 on what Ed Koch did for the city of New York as
15 mayor and what he continues to do today as Citizen
16 Koch.

17 If there was ever a time in New
18 York City that needed Mayor Ed Koch, it was 1978.
19 While the City's fiscal crisis was formally
20 resolved, New York City was a city on a downward
21 spiral, losing population, losing businesses and
22 ordinary citizens losing faith that their city
23 could provide them a job, a home and a safe
24 neighborhood to raise their families. New York
25 was being bashed by Washington, mocked in the

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2 national media and left for dead by many of its
3 own leaders, who frankly moved out. Now picture
4 Ed Koch—defiant and strong at his first inaugural.
5 He roared. New York has been and I quote "shaken
6 by troubles that would have destroyed any other
7 city," but we are not any other city. We are the
8 city of New York and New York in adversity towers
9 above any other city in the world. At that
10 moment, New Yorkers understood that Ed Koch was
11 going to fight for the city of New York and defy
12 the pessimists and return hope to everyone who
13 would stay and reclaim the city with him.

14 Now I don't want to ignore Ed
15 Koch's important policy achievements during his
16 three terms as mayor. I'll just mention a few
17 highlights. First and foremost, he restored
18 fiscal stability to New York City. This city was
19 able to reenter the bond market and raise capital
20 funds. He restored the City's credit, which
21 reduced the cost of borrowing. He is responsible
22 for placing the city on gap that is generally
23 accepted accounting principles, balanced budget
24 basis and balanced the city budget by the end of
25 his first term. This was an extraordinary

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2 achievement and without Ed Koch's fiscal
3 stewardship, the city would not have been able to
4 reclaim its position as America's economic engine
5 and cultural capital. We would not be the place
6 frankly where the brightest college graduates want
7 to live and where immigrants want to come and find
8 the American dream. During Ed Koch's
9 administration, over 150,000 units of new and
10 rehabilitated affordable housing and 100,000
11 renovated affordable housing units were built. He
12 also restarted the program, which has been
13 suspended during the 1975 fiscal crisis, to begin
14 capital projects again. Mayor Koch's commitment
15 to good government and civil rights was reflected
16 in creating a judicial selection process based on
17 merit, creating the Campaign Finance Board, which
18 has elected some of our brightest and best members
19 of the City Council, a system of funding city
20 elections with public funds that is emulated
21 across the nation and finally, by supporting and
22 signing legislation prohibiting discrimination
23 based on sexual orientation. That's just a little
24 mini refreshed course.

25 I won't say anything more, but

1
2 there's plenty of books, many of them written by
3 Ed Koch himself, which can tell you more. Ed
4 Koch's greatest achievement as many have already
5 said was restoring hope in our city at a critical
6 time in its history. People in New York saw
7 themselves in Ed Koch. He was hardworking, not
8 always appropriate and imperfect in his
9 relationships. He made us want to stay and work
10 hard with him. Ed Koch has really been one of New
11 York City's iconic mayors. It is only fitting
12 that one of our iconic bridges be named for him.
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
15 you very much.

16 KEN KNUCKLES: Thank you. Chairman
17 Mark-Viverito, Councilperson Crowley. Thank you
18 for this opportunity to speak in support of Intro
19 No. 446-A, which would rename the Queensboro
20 Bridge the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge. My name is
21 Ken Knuckles. I am president of the Upper
22 Manhattan Empowerment Zone, a local development
23 corporation which is dedicated to economic
24 development in upper Manhattan. I am here today
25 however as a citizen of New York and someone who

1
2 coincidentally started to work for the City of New
3 York on the first of November of 1977 about one
4 week before Ed Koch was elected mayor. For the
5 next ten years, I served in a number of different
6 positions in the Koch Administration. I started
7 out as an attorney. I was thereafter counsel and
8 secretary to the New York City Civil Service
9 Commission and finally, I was an assistant
10 commissioner at HPD, under the late Tony Gliedman.
11 And from there I became Bronx deputy borough
12 president. During those years, I had what I
13 believed to be a ringside seat at the—and
14 viewpoint at the leadership of Ed Koch.

15 As others have stated, the '70s
16 fiscal crisis and calamity left many not only in
17 the city, but around the world questioning New
18 York's viability as a world-class city. So Mayor
19 Koch not only restored fiscal stability as was
20 mentioned by Dr. Fuchs as well as the other
21 administrative and governmental achievements, but
22 most importantly, I think he came to embody the
23 resilient spirit of the city and he embodied all
24 of the city's personalities, toughness, humor,
25 abrasiveness and compassion. I also want to

1
2 revisit however what I think is the Mayor's
3 arguably most significant contribution and I
4 believe a key component of his legacy, and that is
5 the provision of over 150,000 units of new and
6 rehabilitated affordable housing and 100,000 units
7 of renovated affordable housing. Most of those
8 units were in the south Bronx and upper Manhattan.

9 When I became deputy borough
10 president with Fernando Ferrer in May of 1987,
11 Bronx County had about 40 percent of the city's
12 vacant building housing stock. At that time, it
13 was around 30,000 units. What Ed Koch did for the
14 first time, and I think Claire you can correct me
15 if I'm wrong, he took capital money, which
16 heretofore had not been used for private housing
17 stock. And he committed initially 4.4 billion
18 dollars to build 100,000 units of housing.
19 Several weeks thereafter this was in 1985, he more
20 than doubled that goal with a ten-year plan to
21 build 252,000 units. And in 1989, he revisited it
22 and dedicated 5.1 billion dollars in the City's
23 capital money to restore this housing. That was a
24 turning point in the fortunes of the south Bronx,
25 as well as upper Manhattan. So today when you

1
2 travel across the cross-Bronx Expressway and you
3 see these houses and apartment buildings that had
4 placards in the late '70s with fake window shades
5 and flower pots and cats and dogs and were the
6 subject of ridicule, well, it was Ed Koch's
7 commitment and his willingness to put significant
8 capital dollars. Today a billion dollars isn't
9 considered much, but in 1986 and '87 and '88, 5
10 billion dollars was a lot of money. So not only
11 in the south Bronx, but in Bradhurst, northern
12 Harlem, Brooklyn, southern Queens, all of the city
13 of New York was restored by his singular and
14 visionary commitment to the restoration of what
15 had been private housing stock abandoned by
16 landlords and then restored by the City of New
17 York.

18 With regard to the renaming of this
19 bridge, I think other speakers have spoken to his
20 specific governmental decisions that restored this
21 bridge. I would just say symbolically the bridges
22 loom large in the city's life. They are large,
23 imposing figured. I would say that Ed Koch as a
24 political and governmental figure is a large and
25 imposing figure, whose contributions to this city

1
2 will last— hopefully, like our bridges will
3 forever. And I wholeheartedly support Intro 446-
4 A. Thank you.

5 GUY LONG: Hello. My name is Guy
6 Long. I appreciate the opportunity to be here
7 today. I worked in the Koch Administration in the
8 early days '78, '79 and through '84. I served in
9 the Office of the Mayor in '78 and '79 and I was
10 assistant commissioner for management in the New
11 York City Department of General Services, now DCAS
12 from '81 through '84. I've recently relocated
13 back to New York City after being away for a
14 number of years. When I first moved to New York
15 City from North Carolina in 1975, it was a very
16 different place. The list of places we loved to
17 visit now—Times Square, Union Square Park, Bryant
18 Park, the Lower East Side, were really places that
19 many people tried to avoid.

20 In 1977, I became involved in Ed
21 Koch's campaign for mayor. He was an underdog,
22 but the citizens of New York soon began to see
23 that Ed was a leader that the city really needed.
24 After Ed Koch became mayor in January 1978, the
25 city began to change. With his leadership, we

1
2 began to feel the reemergence of the can do spirit
3 we had lost, both as a nation and as a city. Many
4 of the changes in New York began in the first
5 years of the Koch Administration—the clean up of
6 Times Square, the eradication of pervasive
7 graffiti, the restoration of an infrastructure
8 maintenance schedule, more frequent paving of our
9 streets, the fund of our capital budget and a
10 general hope for the future—the feeling that New
11 York City was beginning to get better, not worse.
12 Improvements made under later mayors, such as
13 Mayor Giuliani's crime reduction and Mayor
14 Bloomberg's streamlining of government would
15 likely have been less successful had not Ed Koch
16 laid the groundwork by making the hard choices he
17 made in the late 1970s and early '80s. New York
18 City is a better place because Ed Koch was its
19 mayor at a crucial point in our city's history.

20 When I first heard that the
21 Queensboro Bridge was being named after Ed Koch, I
22 thought it was a perfect tribute to him. After
23 living away from New York for some time, I have
24 returned to the city and now live on Roosevelt
25 Island. The centerpiece of the view from my

1
2 living room is the 59th Street Bridge. When I take
3 the tram to work, I travel a few feet away from
4 this magnificent structure and see how it connects
5 the rest of the city with Manhattan. It is a
6 functional bridge, representative of Ed Koch's
7 gifts to the city of New York. He helped make the
8 city functional again and gave us hope that it
9 would continue to function and improve. I believe
10 that naming the Queensboro Bridge the Ed Koch
11 Queensboro Bridge is an ideal and fitting tribute
12 to a person who did so much for all of New York
13 City. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
15 you all very much. It's great to sit and hear
16 these testimonies. It's a great history lesson
17 obviously, but also the personal experiences. One
18 pattern I'm noticing and even from the testimony
19 that we read in the letter is that the people have
20 worked for Mayor Koch have also had not only
21 longevity, but also many different positions. It
22 seems like everybody has had many different hats,
23 many different experiences. That all leads to
24 personal growth, so that's great, but thank you
25 very much for taking the time to come and testify

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2 here today. It's very much appreciated. Yes,
3 we'll read another letter—right, one more letter
4 for the record that we will read.

5 CLERK: Next letter is from Alair
6 Townsend of Crain's New York Business. Dear
7 Speaker Quinn and Council Member Mark-Viverito. I
8 am writing in support of Intro 446A, a bill to
9 rename the Queensboro Bridge as the Ed Koch
10 Queensboro Bridge. Mayor Koch guided New York
11 through some of its most perilous times and he did
12 so with resolve, courage and spirit. At a time
13 when the expense budget was under extreme
14 pressure, he focused on achieving a genuinely
15 balanced budget and did so one year ahead of the
16 schedule required by law. That enabled the City
17 to begin to access public credit markets on its
18 own and to garner the necessary funds to rebuild
19 and rehabilitate the city's infrastructure.
20 Capital funds were scarce, but he focused spending
21 on projects to ensure the city's future and long-
22 term growth, including the safety and stability of
23 our bridges. Today the Queensboro Bridge is one
24 of the city's iconic structures and it seems
25 fitting that it be renamed to reflect an iconic

1
2 New Yorker, who did so much to ensure its
3 continued viability. I was privileged to serve in
4 his administration as director of the Office of
5 Management and Budget and deputy mayor for Finance
6 and Economic Development. I saw firsthand his
7 passionate commitment to our city, is
8 indefatigable work on its behalf and the results
9 he achieved. I can think of no more fitting
10 tribute to his legacy than renaming this bridge in
11 his honor. Sincerely, Alair Townsend.

12 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
13 you very much. Two more panels. Four more
14 colleagues. Walter McCaffrey, Herb Berman, and
15 Rich Lieberman are the next panel.

16 [pause]

17 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Once
18 you settle, you just-anybody can start and just
19 introduce themselves for the record.

20 WALTER MCCAFFREY: Madam Chair, I am
21 delighted to be here today. Council Member
22 Crowley. I am Walter McCaffrey. I had the
23 distinction of representing the Queensboro Bridge
24 longer than any of the other elected officials in
25 town in those days. For those 16 years, I had a

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2 concern that this be an iconic symbol of the
3 borough in which I grew up and lived in and had
4 great pride in representing. For five years
5 before that, I served as the chair of the
6 community board. I had the opportunity to see the
7 work of Ed Koch as it applied to this bridge.
8 Having been on the Transportation Committee in the
9 Council and indeed on the Parks Committee, I have
10 to say that he was one who was sort of impatient
11 with the bureaucracy. And I'm going to give you a
12 case and point specifically as it applies to this
13 bridge.

14 There was a 50 foot gap that
15 spanned the Amtrak railways right of Thompson
16 Avenue that prevented for years the opening of the
17 upper level of the Queensboro Bridge. When Ed
18 Koch came in, he ended up bringing everybody
19 together and was less than shy in expressing his
20 displeasure for the bureaucracy's failure to act
21 quickly and as a result, it was taken care of. We
22 come from a borough of sort of hyphens, our
23 tradition has had that—we were founded by Dutch-
24 Americans, African-Americans, Irish-Americans,
25 German-Americans. We went through the years in

1
2 which Asian-Americans and Mexican-Americans—that
3 hyphen type of situation was one of our great
4 strengths, and this sort of hyphenated bridge type
5 of situation of Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge would
6 indeed be a great tribute sort of to our own
7 tradition. Ed Koch, I have to say, was someone
8 who as a mayor was always interested in getting
9 things done and you've heard many of the wonderful
10 examples today on a city-wide level, but let me
11 offer you two from the neighborhood directly
12 involved in the Queensboro Bridge.

13 When I came into office in 1986,
14 there were more massage parlors at the foot of the
15 Queensboro Bridge than there were in Times Square.
16 Not a great distinction. And I went to Mayor Koch
17 and I said, "You know you have this thing called
18 the Office of Midtown Enforcement. Why can't they
19 end up being involved on the other side and come
20 to Queens?" He said, "Fine." So I said, "Okay,
21 let's see how long it takes to get this done," and
22 in a matter of days, they were now out working and
23 one by one, they closed them all down. One of the
24 distinctions I had when I first came into the City
25 Council is I sued Ed Koch and the Board of

1 Estimate to stop a homeless shelter that was being
2 opened up in a factory building, a former
3 pocketbook factory, was going to be a shelter for
4 homeless women. And in those days our homeless
5 policy was quite frankly less than civilized and
6 we were successful. The Mayor could have taken
7 the attitude "Hey. Go away. I don't want to talk
8 to you. You know you embarrassed me with this."
9 But rather he sat down with a group of Vietnam
10 veterans who I brought in and we ended up
11 eventually fashioning a facility for homeless
12 veterans, the first in the United States of
13 America. Now Mayor Koch was not just intent on
14 getting this done; he was intent on seeing how it
15 was done. And so he would come out and spend
16 hours sitting there, talking to the vets, talking
17 to the staff, saying to me, "What is it that you
18 need additionally to make this work?" And he would
19 get it done. One warm night, one of the vets came
20 up to him and said, "You know, we have nothing to
21 do here at night." And he said, "Well, what would
22 you like?" They said, "Well, how about some
23 basketball courts?" And he said, "Well, where
24 would you put them?" The guy said, "Outside." He

1
2 got up from the table. We all walked outside.
3 And within days, there were basketball courts put
4 in place. So it was that type of understanding
5 both of the city-wide, the tremendous universal
6 problems of the City of New York and the problems
7 of our neighborhoods. You know, Ed Koch would
8 come to town hall meetings, and I don't know how
9 he did it. He'd be standing there for hours,
10 being attacked and berated, but he would listen to
11 people, listen to their passions and their
12 concerns and I think ultimately that was one of
13 the things that was a great distinction.

14 Now I have had some folks who have
15 said to me in the community, "Why should we be
16 doing this type of naming? Why should we not just
17 keep it Queensboro? Aren't we going to be diluting
18 the importance of this bridge and the significance
19 of our borough?" And I have to tell you, I don't
20 agree with that attitude at all. I was one of
21 those nut Council members, who would get on the
22 phone and call new traffic reporters when they
23 came to do the news in New York City in the
24 morning, and they would have they audacity to call
25 it the 59th Street Bridge. You have to understand

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2 as the borough president of Queens will tell you,
3 if you use the term 59th Street Bridge, you are
4 persona non grata. Many is the time we would
5 throw applicants out for projects once they'd made
6 this mistake because they didn't understand the
7 difference. So I cherish the bridge. I cherish
8 what it meant to be able to open up, to be able to
9 provide opportunities to people, and that is what
10 Ed Koch has done over the years. And so I think
11 in that sense it's important despite the best
12 efforts of two of our own expatriate sons to try
13 to sell us out with some song out there—I forget
14 what it's called, and I won't even mention their
15 name...

16 [laughter]

17 WALTER MCCAFFREY: Even though they
18 somehow escaped Forest Hills without a full
19 appreciation of the borough of Queens.

20 [laughter]

21 WALTER MCCAFFREY: So it's indeed
22 an honor. It is an honor that we are affording to
23 a man who deserves this honor. As we named an
24 airport after LaGuardia, as we named a bridge
25 after Robert Kennedy, after we named another

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2 airport after John Kennedy, this is keeping it
3 consistent in that, and so this should have a
4 tradition maintained. It should continue to be
5 that same type of bridge. Of course, I'd hope it
6 to be congestion tax free, as a bridge also...

7 [laughter]

8 WALTER MCCAFFREY: I can't pass up
9 that opportunity to pass that. And lastly, I do
10 want to reveal one thing with my colleague sitting
11 here of many years, Herb Berman. The symbol of
12 the City Seal behind with the settler, the settler
13 was originally the figure opposed by Herb Berman-

14 [laughter]

15 WALTER MCCAFFREY: -who ended up
16 being that figure, and if you notice the likeness
17 now-

18 HERB BERMAN: [Interposing] I still
19 have the costume.

20 WALTER MCCAFFREY: I thank you very
21 much. This is a serious tradition that you
22 maintain. You maintain it very, very well and I
23 appreciate the honor to come speak to you today.

24 HERB BERMAN: Thank you very much,
25 Madam Chair, Council Member Crowley. I came to

1
2 New York City Council in January of 1975—I'm
3 sorry. March 13th, 1975. A little over two weeks
4 afterwards, the fiscal crisis hit the city—totally
5 unconnected with my arrival.

6 [laughter]

7 WALTER MCCAFFREY: That's what you
8 say.

9 HERB BERMAN: I have proof. In any
10 event, it was an incredible experience because—and
11 there are not many people—actually in this room,
12 there are probably a lot of people who do remember
13 that time, but there was a pervasive sense of doom
14 that overcame this city. People were talking
15 about bankruptcy. How does a city go bankrupt?
16 What do we do? How's it going to affect the
17 contracts? How's it going to affect pensions? And
18 even though we started the crawl out of—and I
19 literally say the term crawl out of the fiscal
20 crisis of that time, when Ed Koch became elected,
21 there was a world of change. If anybody can be
22 identified as one of the heroes of that time—and
23 that time certainly identified the generation of
24 city government—it's Ed Koch. I think that the
25 sense that he brought to the people of the city of

1
2 New York that there is a future, the great joy
3 when he was able to take the term emergency out of
4 Emergency Financial Control Board, the
5 acceleration of the balancing of the budget, all
6 of this brought together a sense in the city of
7 New York that we were on top of everything. And I
8 vividly recollect, and I'm sure that some of the
9 people here assembled also remember, that suddenly
10 jurisdictions from all over the country kept
11 coming to New York City to find out what in
12 heaven's name we did to get out of the fiscal
13 crisis, and we got out of it stronger than we were
14 ever before and perhaps, the strength that we now
15 show is a consequence of the work that he did.

16 Ed Koch was genuinely a hero of
17 that time and he is a person who is entitled to
18 the recognition that this legislation would grant
19 to him. Dr. Fuchs identified a number of the
20 legislations and issues that he is noted for. I
21 might add that Mayor Koch also successfully
22 resisted then Parks Commissioner Henry Stern's
23 attempt to paint each one of the East River
24 bridges a different pastel color.

25 [laughter]

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 2 HERB BERMAN: And I think perhaps
 3 more than anything else, that was probably
 4 something that he was entitled to get this
 5 recognition for. Anyhow, I don't want to repeat
 6 everything again other than to say that if ever a
 7 person was entitled to this designation, Ed Koch
 8 is and I would hope that you would pass it. Thank
 9 you so much.

10 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: I'm
 11 sorry. I'm assuming that that's an accurate
 12 story? I mean—

13 HERB BERMAN: [Interposing] Have I
 14 ever lied to you before?

15 [laughter]

16 HERB BERMAN: That's the truth.

17 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Wow.
 18 That's—

19 HERB BERMAN: [Interposing] He
 20 defini—

21 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Many of
 22 us in this room did not know that so—

23 HERB BERMAN: [Interposing] Henry
 24 Stern proposed that each separate East River
 25 bridge be painted a different pastel color. Why?

1
2 I can't begin to tell you... But Henry's around.
3 You'll find him on buses.

4 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Okay.

5 [laughter]

6 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Yes.
7 Exactly. Well, I'm glad he was successful in
8 that. Thank you very much.

9 RICHARD LIEBERMAN: He launched the
10 Rainbow Coalition.

11 [laughter]

12 RICHARD LIEBERMAN: Good afternoon,
13 Council Members Mark-Viverito and Crowley. Thank
14 you for allowing me to testify in this hearing,
15 but thank you more for bringing us together. I
16 haven't seen my friend Walter McCaffrey or Herb
17 Berman for a long time. Claire, it's such a
18 delight to see you here. So it's a thrill as I
19 headed down to the hearing, saying, "Oh I'm going
20 to be sitting around in a hearing," to be here
21 with people that I've known for so long who have
22 contributed so much to New York City and
23 particularly, to Queens. My name is Richard
24 Lieberman for those who don't know me. I'm the
25 director of the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives and

1 professor of history at LaGuardia Community
2 College. Our archives has the papers of Mayor
3 Edward I. Koch, as well as all the other mayors
4 of the city of New York, since Fiorello LaGuardia.
5 Yes, and ours. We are also the official
6 repository thanks to Council Member Berman,
7 Council Member Vallone and others and we are the
8 official repository for the City Council papers.
9 It's going to be a problem for us when these
10 papers come to us. Do they go in the Koch
11 collection? Do they go in the Council collection?
12 We are also have a significant Queens' local
13 history collection, and I've been teaching for the
14 last 40 years the history of New York City with a
15 focus on Queens. I'm also the author of a book,
16 *Steinway and Sons*, the well known piano company
17 that few people know is located in Queens. I had
18 the privilege to be the organizer of the 75th
19 anniversary of the opening of the Queensboro
20 Bridge, along with my colleague, Jeffrey
21 Kroessler, back in 1984.

23 I'm here to support the renaming of
24 the Queensboro Bridge to become the Ed Koch
25 Queensboro Bridge. I've looked through the

1 records at the archives. Everything that Claire
2 said is true. Everything that Esther said is
3 true. The records we have at the archives reveal
4 that Mayor Koch saved the Queensboro Bridge from
5 several decades of neglect, no doubt about it.
6 During his three terms, he lobbied for and won
7 hundreds of millions of dollars to repair the
8 bridge. This is in the 1980s. Between 1981 and
9 1988, the Koch Administration received 120 million
10 dollars from our state government to rebuild the
11 Queensboro Bridge. Those of you who know Ed Koch
12 will understand the next sentence. As soon as the
13 first phase of reconstruction was completed, Koch
14 pressed the federal government to spend another,
15 an additional 71 million to rebuild the inner
16 roadways. The total of both of these allocations
17 if you translate it into today's dollars, would be
18 350 million dollars that he brought for the
19 Queensboro Bridge. Mayor Koch knew that the
20 Queensboro Bridge was crucial for the economic
21 development of Queens. At the same time that he
22 was working to repair the bridge, he was
23 supporting the development of the Citicorp
24 Building planned to be the largest skyscraper
25

1
2 outside Manhattan to be built in Long Island City.
3 His foresight to restore the Queensboro Bridge and
4 support the construction of the Citicorp Building
5 laid the basis for the renaissance of western
6 Queens, which continues today. It can be seen in
7 Mayor Bloomberg's recent announcement of the first
8 phase of Hunter's Point South, the 5,000 unit
9 housing complex now under construction in that
10 neighborhood. It was all started with Ed Koch—the
11 Queensboro Bridge and anchoring that area with the
12 Citicorp Building. That was the beginning of
13 everything we're seeing today.

14 100 years ago the Queensboro Bridge
15 transformed the economy of Queens and New York
16 City. 30 years ago, Mayor Koch made sure that the
17 Queensboro Bridge would play that role again and
18 thus, brought about a new era of economic
19 prosperity in western Queens. Edward I. Koch
20 richly deserves the recognition of our city for
21 this accomplishment, which I would argue is part
22 of his larger contribution—it's been said here
23 many times—to the revitalization of our city.
24 Adding his name to the Queensboro Bridge is a
25 fitting tribute to a Mayor who did so much to

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rejuvenate our town. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank you all again for being here and everyone's coming together, enjoying, and obviously again, we're still learning things that some of us didn't know. And for the sake of just disclosure, I didn't come to New York City until 1987, when I was accepted to Columbia University, so it was towards that tail end, so it's really great to hear some of the stories of people that have been here. So thank you very much for that. Oh, I'm sorry. Council Member Vincent Gentile has joined us. Thank you for being with us. I think we have our last panel, which is Gordon Davis, Diana Chapin and Barbara Gunn.

[background conversation]

CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Anybody can feel free to begin.

GORDON DAVIS: [off mic] I'm not Henry Stern. Actually, nobody ever thought I was, but that's another... And it's really quite wonderful to appear before your Committee. There are people here I haven't seen in a long time. You know, Diana Chapin, Herb Berman, Claire and

1
2 Walter McCaffrey are New York City heroes. These
3 aren't just people speaking on behalf of what Ed
4 Koch did; they were part of what he did and he was
5 part of what they did. It's quite an honor to be
6 here with them. I am here in support of naming
7 the bridge Ed or Eddie or Edward I. Koch or
8 whatever the final name turns out to be—Edward I.
9 Koch Queensboro Bridge. I was parks commissioner
10 from January 23rd, 1978 until April 1st, 1983. I
11 was Ed Koch's first parks commissioner and I'm
12 from Manhattan. The day I took office, I met with
13 the Mayor, and he said some things to me and I
14 want to come back and tell you what they were, but
15 first I want to tell you another story.

16 Shortly after I got to the Parks
17 Department, *The New York Times* ran a series called
18 *New York City Parks: A Tattered Remnant of the*
19 *Past*. If anything was a casualty of the fiscal
20 crisis, nothing more so than our public parks and
21 playgrounds. And I got to my office and there
22 were a series of invitations to attend various
23 events in various communities to discuss parks,
24 and one of them was from Peter Vallone, Sr. on
25 behalf of a group called the Friends of Astoria

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2 Park. And of all the invitations, I decided
3 that's the one I'd take first. And so I went out
4 to a meeting and it was in a banquet facility
5 right off of the Triborough Bridge. Is that
6 Queens Manor? I don't remember. I'm not sure, but
7 it was packed with people. Astoria Manor. Thank
8 you. That's exactly where it was Astoria Manor
9 and it was packed. And I was a brand new parks
10 commissioner and every park in the city—almost
11 every park was mess. And Peter Vallone introduced
12 me with most warm and generous and kind words, and
13 the two or three hundred people there greeted me
14 in the same manner, thanked me for coming, and I
15 was a little taken aback by this generosity of
16 spirit and afterwards, I said, "Peter, why are
17 they thanking me?" He said, "They're thanking you
18 for what they hope you will do."

19 And in that spirit, the next day I
20 went to Astoria Park with Peter and we toured the
21 park, and the beer cans, and the graffiti, and the
22 remnants of the events that were regular features
23 of Astoria Park the night before and most of the
24 benches were burned or broken or whatever. And
25 Peter said to me, "If you don't do anything else,

1
2 maybe you could come up with a vandal-proof
3 bench," and I said to myself, "Who does he think I
4 am? A messiah? A vandal-proof bench in New York
5 parks." He said, "But if you can't do that, would
6 you please go and look at parks in Queens?" And so
7 over the next year, I went to every park in
8 Queens. I mean, literally, every park in Queens
9 and that's how I learned to be a parks
10 commissioner. And two years later, we had an
11 event in Astoria Park with Peter Vallone, in which
12 we unveiled a vandal-proof bench and it was a
13 thrilling moment for me. And to this day, I go
14 back to Astoria Park regularly to see if they're
15 still there. [laughter] And it may not be exactly
16 the same bench, but it's pretty much the same
17 bench.

18 When I met with Ed Koch the day I
19 took office, he said to me, "I am the mayor of all
20 the people of New York City and I am the mayor of
21 all the boroughs of New York City and that's what
22 my parks commissioner has to be." He said, "You
23 live in Manhattan, but you are not the parks
24 commissioner of Central Park. You are the parks
25 commissioner of all of New York City and that

1
2 means every borough, and every neighborhood, and
3 every park. No park is more valuable than any
4 other park. No park is more important. They are
5 all important." So when I got back to my office
6 and I saw these various invitations, that's why I
7 decided the one I would accept first was the one
8 from Peter Vallone, and that's why I went to every
9 park in Queens and every park in Brooklyn and
10 every park in the Bronx. The two people that
11 taught me how to be parks commissioner were Ed
12 Koch and Peter Vallone.

13 And I would say before I came down
14 here, I tried literally to find the newspaper
15 clipping of the press conference about the vandal-
16 proof benches. I couldn't find it, but what I
17 found were picture after picture after picture of
18 Ed Koch and me in parks all over Queens, more than
19 any other borough, more than any other place--
20 Baisley Pond Park cutting for - - , Cunningham
21 Park at a concert, Forest Hill Park at the band
22 show, Flushing Meadow Park at soccer games--they
23 were illegal, but lots of fun, at the opening of
24 the U.S. Open, at Astoria Park with vandal-proof
25 benches and the list just went on--I mean one

1
2 picture after another. So all this is to say that
3 I can't imagine a more fitting and appropriate
4 tribute for Ed Koch or for the people of Queens or
5 for Peter Vallone, Sr. than to name this bridge
6 the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge.

7 Now to my left is the person who is
8 part of the legacy I just talked about because one
9 of the things I learned and all of us at the Parks
10 Department learn and one of the things we learn
11 from the mayor was that the best way to run a City
12 park was not to run it from 5th Avenue and 64th
13 Street, but to figure out a way to have it run on
14 a local level out of a more immediate office than
15 some central headquarters, so we began to
16 experiment with the centralizing the structure of
17 the Parks Department. And the first piece in that
18 experimentation was the creation of a borough
19 commissioner for Queens. And we worked with the
20 borough president's office. We worked with
21 members of the City Council to figure out how to
22 do that. And the first Queens borough president,
23 who is sitting to my left, Diana Chapin, was
24 assistant commissioner at the time, and I asked
25 her if she'd be willing to be the first Queens

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2 borough parks commissioner. She was from Queens.
3 She knew everybody in Queens. Everybody in Queens
4 knew her. She knew management. She knew
5 politics. And she said, "Yeah. I'd like to do
6 that," and she said, "What do I get paid? Where's
7 my office?" I said, "I have no idea. Go figure it
8 out." And off she went, so her legacy is far
9 greater than mine, but she is a mirror of the Ed
10 Koch that I just talked about, and so, Diana
11 Chapin.

12 DIANA CHAPIN: Thank you for the—

13 GORDON DAVIS: [Interposing] I have
14 a lot of nice things to say about Barbara Gunn,
15 but they're a different forum.

16 DIANA CHAPIN: Definitely. As you
17 can tell, actually we all know each other well
18 from our history in the Parks Department and other
19 places. My name is Diana Chapin, and I currently
20 live and work in Queens and also serve on the
21 Landmarks Commission, but I'm here in my capacity
22 as an ordinary citizen. I met Ed Koch back in the
23 1970s. I want to thank the members of the Council
24 and Chairperson Mark-Viverito for the opportunity
25 to speak here today, and thank you, Commissioner,

1
2 for your very kind words. I want to tell a story
3 myself about—to some extent the Parks Department,
4 and I'll include some of the things that
5 Commissioner Davis brought in, which he did
6 mention.

7 Mayor Koch will I think be
8 remembered as one of New York's truly great
9 mayors. He shepherded our city out of one of the
10 worst financial crises we've ever seen. He
11 restored financial stability and helped rebuild
12 the city's infrastructure, including our bridges
13 and our parks. When I started in city government
14 in 1978 in the Parks Department, we have 7 million
15 dollars city-wide for our capital reconstruction
16 program. I remember talking to the Commissioner
17 about this—7 million dollars for the whole system
18 was the first budget we got. We were like
19 appalled because what could you do with that? And
20 full-time staffing was an incredibly low level,
21 but under the Koch Administration, government
22 rebounded, recovered and moved forward. As a
23 member of the Koch Administration during his
24 entire term, I saw enormous progress for our city.
25 I served in the Parks Department and as

1
2 Commissioner Davis said was the very first borough
3 commissioner. That was a wonderful opportunity,
4 which set the model for the current structure of
5 the Parks Department. And it was also the time of
6 the creation of the urban park rangers and the
7 Central Park Conservancy, the Prospect Park
8 Alliance and all of those initiatives, which
9 Commissioner Davis brought in, were supported and
10 encouraged by the Mayor. We also did an enormous
11 amount of acquisition during the Koch
12 Administration, great tracks of parkland, green
13 space and founded the Historic House Trust. These
14 are the kind of initiatives that the government
15 was doing throughout government, which was a real
16 renaissance for the city at that time. Every year
17 in a tradition which I heard was started under
18 actually Mayor LaGuardia, the Koch Alumni get
19 together—a group of those have gone on to serve in
20 other public and private capacity in different
21 areas, and Barbara Gunn is one of the people I'd
22 see at such place or Lilliam or Bob and I think
23 the breadth and depth of this group really just
24 demonstrates the kind of importance that this
25 Mayor gave to supporting excellence in government

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2 and a true commitment to public service. And I
3 want to say following Councilman McCaffrey that
4 even though we all love our hometown boys, Simon
5 and Garfunkel, and their 59th Street Bridge song
6 and Mayor Koch thought their concert in Central
7 Park was one of our finest hours, I believe. I'm
8 also glad to see people reminded today that the
9 bridge some people call the 59th Street Bridge is a
10 bridge to the borough of Queens, the most diverse
11 county in our nation of opportunity.

12 One of the things I appreciate and
13 respect most about Mayor Koch is that starting
14 even as a Congressman he was known as the most
15 reform-minded congressman in New York and as
16 mayor, he made sure that judges were selected
17 fairly and impartially. He created the campaign
18 finance board and established public funding for
19 City elections. And today as I think everyone
20 here knows, he is still actively campaigning for
21 real reform in legislation in Albany, which I'm
22 terrifically proud of. So for his love of this
23 great city and the contribution he has made to it,
24 I believe Mayor Koch is in every way a fitting
25 person to be honored with this great bridge, our

1
2 bridge, our Queens' bridge, as his namesake and
3 I'm proud to support it. Thank you.

4 BARBARA GUNN: I'm Barbara Gunn.
5 Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you
6 today. I also served in the Koch Administration
7 throughout much of the Administration. I was the
8 deputy parks commissioner, hired by Gordon Davis.
9 I was the first deputy transportation commissioner
10 and was the director of the Mayor's Office of
11 Operation. I worked almost everywhere in his
12 administration, slightly fewer places than
13 Lilliam, but almost. As everyone has already
14 said, Mayor Koch led New York City out of an
15 enormous fiscal crisis, and when he did so, he
16 developed one of the first and most unique systems
17 of performance measurement in the mayor's manager
18 report. It tied performance measurement to the
19 budget. It was a model at the time. We in the
20 mayor's report were constantly being visited by
21 cities from around the country and around the
22 world because there was no such system anywhere in
23 an urban setting. So it was a very important way
24 to understand the work that was going on in the
25 city with the citizens' dollars and with the

1
2 dollars of the City and in fact, we used to
3 measure the condition of bridges. And one of the
4 reasons the Mayor became so concerned about the
5 commitment of capital dollars to the
6 infrastructure of this city was because it was
7 very clear from those reports the conditions of
8 the parks and the conditions of the bridges were
9 server. And he is the person as you've heard
10 before who committed to raising -- for the City
11 again and invest it in the capital infrastructure--
12 in the bridges and in the parks. And it was
13 something that hadn't been done in decades--in
14 absolute decades, so he not only measured what
15 needed to be done, but he also raised the funds,
16 the capital funds, and used them appropriately for
17 capital infrastructure needs.

18 He worked 24-7. He worked
19 constantly. I think everyone knows his commitment
20 to this city. I personally know it. I had my
21 first and only child when I was 39, and I spent my
22 first Mother's Day in Gracie Mansion doing the
23 budget. So I've never forgotten that, and it's
24 just an indication we worked all the time for the
25 people of the city of New York. And it was

1 something I was more than willing to do with him.
2 And he was committed to careful and thoughtful and
3 precise understanding of how a city needed to run
4 to serve the diverse populations and the diverse
5 boroughs of this city was something we always
6 thought about and talked about. And perhaps, one
7 of my fondest memories of his tone and style and
8 approach as mayor was something he always did with
9 us at last budget meeting at the end of the fiscal
10 year when were just wrapping up the budget. We'd
11 be sitting in his office about five or six of us,
12 and he would say to us when we'd thought we closed
13 it, he'd go around the room and say to everyone in
14 the room, "Have we done the right thing for the
15 city of New York?" That was one of the most
16 important management approaches I think I've ever
17 seen, and he absolutely meant it and he expected
18 it of us as well. So I think someone of his
19 caliber and interest and commitment deserves to
20 have the Queensboro Bridge named the Edward I.
21 Koch Bridge. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
24 you all very much again. It's very telling and
25 thank you very much. I appreciate you coming here

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2 today and giving your testimony. You don't have
3 any questions, Council Member? Okay. So, we're
4 good. I appreciate it again. We only have one
5 more person I think that is going to testify and
6 that is Mr. Jeffrey Kroessler. Kroessler. Sorry
7 about that. Feel free to begin.

8 JEFFREY KROESSLER: Good afternoon.
9 My name is Jeffrey Kroessler. I am a historian.
10 I am a tenured faculty member at John Jay College
11 of Criminal Justice and I think that this is as
12 close as I'll ever come to knowing what it feels
13 like to wear a Yankee Cap at Fenway-

14 [laughter]

15 -because I am adamantly opposed to
16 renaming this bridge for anyone.

17 This is not about Mayor Koch. As a
18 historian of New York City, I admire Mayor Koch
19 greatly. As a faculty member at John Jay, I've
20 interviewed the Mayor about criminal justice
21 issues and my respect for him for restoring law
22 and order to the city of New York during the
23 really out of control years of the '60s and '70s
24 is magnificent. His returning the City to fiscal
25 health is terrific. We should use his example

1
2 today because what's going on today is not
3 restoring it to fiscal health. It's kind of
4 ironic that we're using Hugh Carey and the
5 Brooklyn Battery Bridge-Brooklyn Battery Tunnel
6 and Ed Koch, two men that really brought us out of
7 the fiscal crisis and we're doing something so
8 wasteful as having to rename two items with all
9 the street signs, all the highway signs, all the
10 maps, all the letterheads, everything.

11 And I hope you realize what
12 contempt the people of Queens and the citizens of
13 New York have for this kind of waste, and it is
14 not about Mayor Koch, as I've said, but it is
15 about the people of Queens and the history of this
16 bridge. *The Daily News* editorial yesterday said
17 it really doesn't have much history--the Queensboro
18 Bridge. And as much as I respect *The Daily News*,
19 especially since they published my op-ed in
20 December--sorry Mayor Koch--to me it will always be
21 the Queensboro.

22 It does have history because they
23 specifically renamed it the Queensboro Bridge to
24 bring the 20th century into Queens. And in the 20
25 years after that bridge opened, between 1910 and

1
2 1930, Queens went from 250,000 people to over a
3 million people. You try building for a million
4 people. You try putting transit together for a
5 new million people, who weren't there ten years
6 ago, and that's the achievement that the
7 Queensboro Bridge represents.

8 I do not believe that this is
9 popular among the general public. I do not
10 believe it's popular among the people of Queens,
11 but it will be popular with everyone in this room.
12 I don't think it's about this as an example of
13 good government, and I especially resent that
14 Mayor Bloomberg has given away something that was
15 not his to give. It belongs to the people of
16 Queens, and they deserve the respect of having a
17 Queensboro Bridge, pure and simple.

18 Thank you, Mayor Koch, for getting
19 the funding to restore this cantilever span, the
20 4th largest bridge in the world when it was
21 completed, but that was his job and we respect him
22 for his job. We don't need to name everything.
23 Should we rename Central Park for Betsey Barlow
24 Rogers for having done such a good job with the
25 Central Park Conservancy? No. I think the

1
2 citizens of New York want it plain and simple,
3 Queensboro Bridge. I think I'll take my Yankee
4 cap and go home. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
6 you very much, Mr. Kroessler, for your testimony.
7 Although you are the only one here to testify here
8 today with your position, it's still very valuable
9 to us, so I appreciate you taking the time to
10 share that with us. Thank you. With that, I
11 think we've heard all the testimony on both bills
12 and I thank everyone again for being here, and
13 with that, this hearing is adjourned.

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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

March 14, 2011