

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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June 18, 2024
Start: 12:50 p.m.
Recess: 1:00 p.m.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Shekar Krishnan, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

David M. Carr
Robert F. Holden
Linda Lee
Julie Menin
Mercedes Narcisse
Sandra Ung

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Gale A. Brewer

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone
3 check for the Committee on Parks and Recreation,
4 recorded by Layla Lynch in the Committee Room on June
5 18, 2024.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good evening, and
7 welcome to the New York City hybrid vote on the
8 Committee on Parks and Recreation.

9 Please silence all electronic devices.
10 Chair, we are ready to begin.

11 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: [GAVEL] Thank you
12 so much, Sergeant.

13 Good afternoon. I am Shekar Krishnan,
14 Chair of the Committee on Parks and Recreation, and
15 I'd like to welcome all of you to this hearing to
16 vote on Intro. 642, sponsored by my Colleague,
17 Council Member Riley. This bill would formally rename
18 Williams Bridge Square, a park located in his
19 District in the Bronx, to Marcus Garvey Square, and
20 I'll read a statement from him in a bit.

21 The Committee will also vote on a Pre-
22 Considered Bill that would ceremonially co-name 100
23 thoroughfares and public places throughout the city.
24 Of the many honorees proposed by this piece of

2 legislation, I'd like to call attention to a few of
3 the co-namings that I'm proud to have sponsored.

4 My first nomination is to co-name an area
5 in my District as Calle Peru. This co-naming not only
6 pays homage to the rich history and vibrant culture
7 of the Peruvian community in my District, but also
8 acknowledges the significant contributions of the
9 Peruvian community to the fabric of our city.

10 My other nomination is for Shri Guru
11 Ravidass Marg. I'm honored to celebrate Guru Ravidass
12 Ji with a street co-naming in my District, next to a
13 temple also named in his honor in Woodside. Ravidass
14 was a spiritual leader who dedicated his life to
15 fighting against caste and gender discrimination, who
16 taught that all human beings share an inner divinity.
17 Ravidass was a social justice and civil rights
18 champion centuries before we had words for his work.
19 This co-naming is a recognition of his belief that we
20 are all one shared humanity. Jai Bhim, Waheguru Ji Ka
21 Khalsa Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh (phonetic). And it's a
22 great honor to be able to work with the Ravidass
23 Temple in Woodside, which does great work in Shri
24 Guru Ravidass' honor.

2 Lastly, Maureen Allen was a lifelong
3 resident of Jackson Heights, East Elmhurst. She began
4 her remarkable journey in public service as an intern
5 for State Assembly Member Ivan Lafayette, while still
6 a college student. Her exceptional dedication and
7 competence propelled her to the position of Chief-of-
8 Staff, where she served for an impressive 43 years,
9 earning reputation for her professionalism and high
10 standards in constituent service. Her political
11 influence extended further as she became a District
12 leader, State Committee Member, and served leadership
13 roles within the Queens County Democratic Committee
14 and as President of the JFK Democratic Club. She was
15 an active member of many boards and organizations,
16 including NYPD community organizations and the NYC
17 Board of Education, among others. She was the
18 youngest Board President of the Northridge Co-op and
19 actively participated in numerous advisory boards,
20 which included the NORC Program in Jackson Heights,
21 the Beacon Program at PS-149 Advisory Board, the
22 Jackson Heights Elmhurst Kehilla Tikvah Jewish
23 Community Council Advisory Board, the former Jackson
24 Heights Neighborhood Association, the 115th Precinct
25 Community Council, and much more. For decades, she

2 played a role in her community and city as a whole.
3 She was a great community activist, neighbor, and
4 friend. Maureen's many accolades, certificates of
5 merits, and citations from various organizations,
6 from her work with Ivan Lafayette to Assembly Member
7 Michael DenDekker as his Chief-of-Staff. We are here
8 today to celebrate her commitment to the community.

9 I'd like to welcome all who have come to
10 participate in this hearing, and I urge all of my
11 Colleagues to vote in favor of the legislation before
12 us.

13 I will also read a quick statement from
14 Council Member Riley for his street naming.

15 Good morning and thank you to Chair
16 Krishnan and to my fellow Colleagues present today. I
17 am excited this Committee is hearing Intro. 642-2024,
18 which will rename Williamsburg Bridge Square in my
19 District to Marcus Garvey Park. Passionate community
20 members of the Jamaican Progressive League have been
21 advocating for this piece of legislation for decades,
22 and I celebrate them also for their deeply committed
23 work to empower our community with health, education,
24 and resources. According to Council findings, the
25 original naming of the street known as Williamsbridge

2 Park, located in the northeast Bronx, predates
3 several streets named in the New York City Charter.
4 According to research from Habitat for Humanity,
5 while the story behind the name Williamsbridge for
6 the section of the Bronx itself is disputed, the name
7 stuck, and immigrants from Holland, Sweden, and later
8 Ireland lived there to grow fruits and vegetables and
9 raise livestock for sale in the city. Migrants and
10 immigrants have always found a home in the Bronx and
11 in Williamsbridge. Over time, Williamsbridge became
12 majority Black and Caribbean in the middle of the
13 20th century. The tradition and the cultural ties to
14 Caribbean heritage make Marcus Garvey's impact
15 consistent with the messaging he pushed during his
16 lifetime, unity, and political advocacy. Marcus
17 Garvey was a Jamaican-born visionary publisher,
18 journalist, and political activist who united
19 continents in his lifetime. His legacy lives on
20 through organizations like Jamaica Progressive
21 League, dedicated to enriching the lives of the
22 Caribbean community members and young people. Marcus
23 Garvey Square will not only commemorate his life's
24 work but also serve as a symbol of unity and
25 expression of our continued progress for our diverse

2 and vibrant neighborhood. Just as Garvey aimed to
3 uplift and unite people of African descent, the
4 Jamaican diaspora in the Bronx embodies those
5 principles, enriching the borough's cultural fabric
6 and fostering a sense of togetherness and
7 understanding within the wider Bronx community. I
8 urge my Colleagues who have not already done so to
9 sign on to Intro. 642 and join me in celebrating this
10 history, and I urge all my Colleagues to vote for
11 today's street naming.

12 On that note, I will ask the Clerk to
13 take a roll call on the vote, beginning with Council
14 Member Holden.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO:
16 Matthew DiStefano, Committee Clerk. Committee on
17 Parks and Recreation, roll call vote on two items.
18 All items are coupled. Council Member Holden.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: I vote aye.

20 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: Council Member
21 Narcisse.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO:
23 Council Member Narcisse.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Permission to
25 explain my vote for one of my co-naming? Mr. Chair?

2 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: Yes.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER NARCISSE: Today, I ask for
4 your support in co-naming the street where Detective
5 Joe Calabrese lived in Marine Park. Detective
6 Calabrese was a dedicated member of our NYPD and an
7 active, beloved figure in our community. His service
8 and the positive impact he made deserve to be
9 remembered. Co-naming is not something I take
10 lightly. I'm here twice today to make sure that I
11 tell everyone that this man served a community. He
12 was dedicated, and he made sacrifices for that
13 community, not only our community in Marine Park, but
14 New York City at large. It will also highlight the
15 importance of mental health. That's the reason I'm
16 here today, to make sure that everyone knows mental
17 health is important, not only yesterday, today, but
18 every day so please join me in support of this
19 legislation to ensure that Detective Calabrese's
20 memory and contributions are honored in a way that
21 benefits his remarkable life. For that, I will say
22 aye to all, and I will ask everyone to support.
23 Thanks.

24 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO: Chair
25 Krishnan.

2 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: Aye on all.

3 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO: Lee.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Permission to explain
5 my vote?

6 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: Yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

8 It is an honor today to vote on a street co-naming
9 for Battalion Chief Christopher Scalone. Mr. Scalone
10 retired last year after a 43-year career with the
11 Fire Department. He spent 21 of those years as one of
12 the Department's longest-serving Battalion Chiefs.
13 One of his final assignments was in my Council
14 District with the 53rd Battalion where he was known
15 for safety and training and caring deeply for the
16 approximately 200 men under his command. Mr. Scalone
17 died not long after his retirement due to 9/11-
18 related esophageal cancer. He is survived by his
19 wife, Vicky, his mother, Dorothy, and sister, Deb.
20 May his life and service be an inspiration.

21 It is also an honor today to vote on a
22 street co-naming in memory of Police Officer Paul
23 Heidelberger. Officer Heidelberger was a resident of
24 my Council District who served six years with the New
25 York City Housing Authority Police Department. He was

2 killed off-duty at the age of 28 while breaking up a
3 fight. During his years of service, Officer
4 Heidelbergger was awarded three medals of excellent
5 police duty. He received one of those after he was
6 wounded in the leg while responding to a burglary.
7 The youngest of seven siblings, he was survived by
8 his mother, Gertrude, brothers George and Thomas, and
9 sisters Mary and Anne. May his life and service be an
10 inspiration.

11 With that, I vote aye and all.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO: Menin

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Aye on all.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO: Thank
15 you. Ung.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER UNG: Aye on all.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO: Thank
18 you. Carr.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Aye on all.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK MATTHEW DISTEFANO:
21 Paladino.

22 By a vote of seven in the affirmative,
23 zero in the negative, and no abstentions, the items
24 have been adopted.

1 COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION

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2 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: We good to go? All
3 right, great. Thank you so much. Thank you all for
4 your words today, too. Our vote is now adjourned.

5 [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date July 16, 2024