

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS

AND DISPOSITIONS

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC
SITINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

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March 11, 2025
Start: 12:00 p.m.
Recess: 12:38 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - COMMITTEE ROOM, 16TH
FLOOR

B E F O R E: Kamillah M. Hanks, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Justin L. Brannan
Amanda Farías
Oswald Feliz
Christopher Marte
Sandy Nurse

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS
AND DISPOSITIONS

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A P P E A R A N C E S

Andrea Bender, Vice President of External Affairs
at the New York City School Construction
Authority

Nicole Monteiro, Real Estate Department at the
New York City School Construction Authority

Regina Lovitt, Project Manager for New York City
Housing Preservation and Development's Affordable
Neighborhood Cooperative Program

Daniel Notice, Executive Director of West Harlem
Assistance Group

Arielle Rawlings, Director of New York City
Housing Preservation and Development's Affordable
Neighborhood Cooperative Program

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2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Testing, testing. This
3 is a sound check for the Subcommittee on Landmarks,
4 Public Sitings and Dispositions recorded by Sergeant
5 Ben Levy on March 11, 2025, in the 16th Floor
6 Committee Room.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning, good
8 morning. Welcome to the Subcommittee on Landmarks,
9 Public Sitings and Dispositions.

10 At this time, please silence all
11 electronics and do not approach the dais. I repeat,
12 please do not approach the dais.

13 If you're testifying, please fill out a
14 slip at the back of the room with the Sergeant-at-
15 Arms.

16 At this time, please, like I said, please
17 silence all electronics.

18 Thank you for your cooperation.

19 Chair, you may begin.

20 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: [GAVEL] Good morning,
21 everyone. Welcome to the meeting of the Subcommittee
22 on Landmarks, Public Sitings, and Dispositions. I am
23 Kamillah Hanks, and I am the Chair of the
24 Subcommittee. I am joined today by my Council
25 Members, Majority Leader Amanda Farías, Council

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2 Member Feliz is online, Council Member Marte, and
3 Council Member Nurse.

4 Before we begin with today's agenda, I
5 will remind everyone that this meeting is being held
6 in a hybrid format, and for members of the public who
7 wish to testify remotely, we ask that you first
8 register online, and you may do so now by visiting
9 www.council.nyc.gov/landuse to sign up, and then sign
10 into the Zoom and remain signed in until you have
11 testified.

12 For anyone with us today who is in person
13 wishing to testify, if you have not already done so,
14 please see one of our Sergeants to fill out a
15 speaker's card. We will call your name at the
16 appropriate time.

17 For anyone wishing to submit written
18 testimony on the items being heard today, we ask that
19 you please send it via email to
20 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Include the land
21 use number and/or the project name in the subject
22 line, and video and audio testimony will not be
23 accepted.

24 I will remind members of the public that
25 this is a government proceeding and decorum shall be

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2 observed at all times. As such, members of the public
3 shall remain silent unless and until called to
4 testify.

5 The witness table is reserved for people
6 who wish to testify. No video recording or
7 photography is allowed from the witness table.

8 Further, members of the public may not present audio
9 or video recordings as testimony but may submit
10 transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant for
11 including in the hearing record.

12 So, on today's agenda, we have 547-seat
13 primary school facility, a school siting application
14 by the School Construction Authority for a project in
15 Majority Leader Fariás' District in the Bronx.

16 We also have West 128th Street-129th, a
17 project in Council Member Salaam's District in
18 Manhattan, as well as several votes.

19 Please note that LU-238 and LU-234
20 through 236 on today's agenda are laid over.

21 So first, we will hold several votes. The
22 first vote is to approve LU-225 through 228 for The
23 Beacon in an application submitted by the New York
24 City Department of Housing Preservation and
25 Development for an approval of an Urban Development

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2 Action Area Project and disposition of real property,
3 a zoning map amendment, a zoning text amendment, and
4 a City map change for the property in East Harlem in
5 Council Member Ayala's District.

6 The next vote will be to approve Land Use
7 237, 1093-1095 Jerome Avenue, submitted by HPD, for
8 an approval of an Urban Development Action Area and
9 an Urban Development Action Area Project and the
10 related disposition of City-owned property to
11 facilitate development of an 11-story mixed use
12 building in the Bronx in Council Member Stevens'
13 District.

14 The next vote is to approve LU-247
15 through 248, 2201 Davidson Avenue Project, submitted
16 by HPD, for the approval of the Urban Development
17 Action Area Project and a real property tax exemption
18 for property located in the Bronx in Council Member
19 Sanchez's District.

20 I'd like to recognize any of the Council
21 Members who are here today who would like to speak on
22 these projects. Any Members of the Subcommittee who
23 have questions, let me know.

24 I will now call for a vote to approve LU-
25 225 through 228 for The Beacon, to approve LU-237 for

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS AND
DISPOSITIONS

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2 1093-1095 Jerome Avenue, a UDAAP, to approve Land Use
3 247 and 248 for 2201 Davidson Avenue.

4 Counsel, please call the roll.

5 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Hanks.

6 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: I vote aye on all.

7 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
8 Feliz online. I'll return to you. Council Member
9 Marte.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: I vote aye.

11 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Majority Leader
12 Farías.

13 MAJORITY LEADER FARIÁS: I vote aye.

14 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
15 Nurse.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: I vote aye.

17 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Again, call on Council
18 Member Feliz online.

19 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
20 Feliz, can you hear me online?

21 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you, Counsel. We
22 will leave the vote open for any other Subcommittee
23 Members who may wish to join us later.

24 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: But so far by a
25 vote of four in the affirmative, zero in the

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2 negative, and zero abstentions, the items are adopted
3 and referred to the full Land Use Committee.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Apologies. I vote
5 aye on all. Sorry.

6 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. Thank you. By
7 a vote of five in the affirmative, the items are
8 adopted and referred to the Land Use Committee, but
9 we will continue to leave it open.

10 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: I will now open a
11 public hearing for a pre-considered land use item for
12 a 547-seat primary school facility, an application by
13 the New York City Construction Authority for the site
14 selection for a new approximately 547-seat primary
15 school facility in Majority Leader Farías' District
16 in the Bronx. Madam Majority Leader, would you like
17 to make a statement?

18 MAJORITY LEADER FARÍAS: Yes. Thank you,
19 Chair. I'm here today to speak in strong support of
20 this proposed new primary school in District 18, a
21 project that is not just important but absolutely
22 necessary to meet the needs of our students and
23 ensure our City complies with State law. This is
24 about more than just adding seats. It's about
25 creating real educational opportunities and giving

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2 our children the modern, high-quality learning
3 environment they need to thrive. Overcrowding is a
4 serious issue in School District 11, which serves
5 nearly all of the Northeast Bronx, directly borders
6 my Districts, and includes a portion of District 18.
7 Right now, students in this area are in overcrowded
8 classrooms that limit their ability to receive the
9 attention, resources, and support they deserve. The
10 State-mandated class size reductions require the City
11 to meet specific class size limits by 2028, so
12 without this new school, we likely will not be in
13 compliance with that. And with the recent Metro-North
14 plans, where I secured many community benefits and
15 negotiations, this was a piece of the puzzle we were
16 working on, a new school for the area, and I'm happy
17 to see us get to a place where the community is
18 receiving one.

19 This project will create 547 much-needed
20 seats for students in grades of K-5, alleviating
21 overcrowding and ensuring students have access to
22 smaller class sizes that improve learning outcomes.
23 As you'll see in the proposal, the proposed T-shaped
24 site is bounded by nine residential properties to the
25 south and west, Zerega to the north, and St. Raymond

1 Avenue to the east, with Parker Street to the south
2 and Westchester Square. The school will feature
3 approximately 22 classrooms for pre-K through 5th
4 grade, two special education classrooms, eight
5 District 75 classrooms, and key resource spaces
6 including a speech and reading resource room, a music
7 room and art room, a cafeteria and kitchen, a
8 library, a gymnasium, and both guidance and medical
9 suites. The site plan also includes an approximately
10 14,000 square foot at-grade play area to ensure
11 students have access to safe and outdoor recreation.

12
13 The work we do today will have a lasting
14 impact on future generations of our Bronx students,
15 and so we must prioritize education and make sure
16 every child has access to a safe, supportive, and
17 effective learning environment. To me, this is a
18 common-sense investment, one that ensures compliance
19 with State law, alleviating overcrowding, and most
20 importantly, giving our kids the best possible start
21 in life so I urge my Colleagues to support this
22 project so we can continue building stronger schools,
23 stronger communities, and a stronger future for the
24 Bronx. Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you, Madam
3 Majority Leader.

4 Appearing today on this proposal is
5 Andrea Bender and Nicole Monteiro.

6 Those wishing to testify remotely must
7 register online by visiting the Council's website at
8 council.nyc.gov/land use.

9 Panelists, ensure that your microphone is
10 on.

11 Counsel, will you please administer the
12 affirmation?

13 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would
14 you please raise your right hand and state your name
15 for the record?

16 ANDREA BENDER: Andrea Bender.

17 NICOLE MONTEIRO: Nicole Monteiro.

18 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: And do you affirm
19 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
20 the truth in your testimony before this Subcommittee,
21 and in answer to all Council Member questions?

22 ANDREA BENDER: Yes.

23 NICOLE MONTEIRO: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you, applicant
25 panelists. For the viewing public, if you need an

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2 accessible version of this presentation, please send
3 us an email request to
4 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. The applicant team
5 may now begin.

6 ANDREA BENDER: Good morning, Chair Hanks,
7 Majority Leader Fariás, and Members of the Committee.
8 My name is Andrea Bender, and I am the Vice President
9 of External Affairs at the New York City School
10 Construction Authority. I am joined by my colleague,
11 Nicole Monteiro, in our Real Estate Department. I
12 want to say thank you so much for having us this
13 morning, and thank you for your support, Council
14 Member. We appreciate it very much.

15 We are so pleased to be here to present a
16 proposed new approximately 547-seat primary school at
17 1631-1659 Zerega Avenue in the Westchester Square
18 neighborhood of the Bronx. Pursuant to Section 1731
19 of the New York State Public Authority's law, the New
20 York City School Construction Authority has
21 undertaken the site selection process for a new
22 approximately 547-seat primary school facility
23 located at 1631-1659 Zerega Avenue, Block 3991, Lots
24 87, 78, 75, and 6 in the Borough of the Bronx. The
25 site is approximately 35,212 square feet, about

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2 eight-tenths of an acre. The site is located within
3 Bronx Community Board 10 and Community Education
4 Council District 11. The purpose of the proposed
5 project is to provide additional long-term capacity
6 to relieve overcrowding in School District 11. The
7 SCA's five-year capital plan for Fiscal Years 2025 to
8 2029 allocates capital funding to address existing
9 overcrowding and forecasted changes in student
10 enrollments and to support New York City Public
11 Schools' implementation of class size reduction
12 mandates. During the 2023-2024 school year, Community
13 Education Council Number 11's elementary schools
14 collectively operated at 103.86 percent of their
15 target capacity. Next slide, please.

16 This is an overview of the project
17 situated on Zerega Avenue within the Westchester
18 Square neighborhood. The red bullseye is our proposed
19 site. Next slide, please.

20 And here is our tax map showing the
21 specific block and lot of the proposed school site.
22 Again, that's Block 3991, Lots 87, 78, 75, and 6.
23 Next slide, please.

24 Here we have a little closer aerial view
25 of the site. Next slide, please.

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2 This notice of filing of our site plan
3 was published in AM New York and the City Record on
4 October 31, 2024, at which time Community Education
5 Council 11, Bronx Community Board 10, and the City
6 Planning Commission were notified of the proposed
7 site plan. The Community Education Council held a
8 public hearing on November 22, 2024, and Bronx
9 Community Board 10 held a public hearing on November
10 12, 2024. All public comments received on the site
11 were considered as part of our site selection
12 process. The SCA affirms the site plan pursuant to
13 Section 1731 of the New York Public Authorities Law.
14 In accordance with Section 1732 of the Public
15 Authorities Law, the SCA submitted the proposed site
16 plan to the Mayor and City Council by letter dated
17 March 7, 2025. Next slide, please.

18 The next few slides are photos of the
19 site's existing condition. This first slide shows you
20 the south view looking onto Zerega Avenue. Here you
21 will see the two-story house and the back end of a
22 three-story house with a three-story school addition
23 at 1651 Zerega Avenue. Next slide, please.

24 Some more views of the site. Next slide,
25 please.

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2 And this is a view of the parking lot and
3 garage on the site. Next slide, please.

4 Should SCA receive approval to acquire
5 the property, a new primary school will be
6 constructed, anticipated to open in 2029. The school
7 will include 22 classrooms for pre-kindergarten to
8 fifth grade, two special education classrooms, eight
9 District 75 classrooms, a speech resource room, a
10 reading resource room, a music room, an art room, a
11 kitchen cafeteria, library, gymnasium, guidance and
12 medical suites as well as general administrative and
13 support spaces. It is also anticipated to include the
14 creation of an approximately 14,000 square foot add-
15 grade play yard.

16 We look forward to the Subcommittee's
17 favorable consideration of this proposed site plan
18 and would be pleased to answer any questions from the
19 Committee. Thank you so much.

20 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much.
21 We'd now like to recognize any of my Colleagues if
22 they have questions.

23 Seeing none, thank you. This applicant
24 panel is now excused.

25 ANDREA BENDER: Thank you so much.

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NICOLE MONTEIRO: Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Counsel, are there any
members of the public who wish to testify on this
item?

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SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: We don't have any
signed up.

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CHAIRPERSON HANKS: If there are any
remote public participants who wish to testify and
have not already done so, please press the raise hand
button now and, if there are any you in person,
please see the Sergeant-at-Arms to fill out a speaker
card.

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With there being no other members of the
public who wish to testify regarding a pre-considered
Land Use item for a 540-seat primary school facility,
the public hearing is now closed and the item is laid
over.

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I will now open the public hearing for
the two related pre-considered Land Use items for
West 128th and 129th Street Cluster Project, an
application by NYC HPD for an approval of an Urban
Development Action Area project and an approval of an
Article XI tax exemption to facilitate the
preservation of four buildings in Council Member

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2 Salaam's District in Manhattan. Appearing today on
3 this proposal is Regina Lovitt from HPD and Donald
4 Notice, Executive Director of West Harlem Group
5 Assistance, Inc. Those wishing to testify remotely,
6 please register online by visiting the Council's
7 website at council.nyc.gov/landuse.

8 Panelists, please ensure that your
9 microphone is on. Red means go.

10 Counsel, will you please administer the
11 affirmation?

12 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would
13 you please raise your right hand and state your name
14 for the record?

15 REGINA LOVITT: Regina Lovitt.

16 DONALD NOTICE: Donald Notice.

17 ARIELLE RAWLINGS: Arielle Rawlings. I'm
18 also with HPD.

19 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Do you
20 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
21 nothing but the truth in your testimony before this
22 Subcommittee and in answer to all Council Member
23 questions?

24 REGINA LOVITT: Yes.

25 DONALD NOTICE: Yes.

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ARIELLE RAWLINGS: Yes.

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CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you. Applicant
panelists, please begin.

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For the viewing public, if you need an
accessible version of this presentation, please send
an email request to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

8

This applicant panel team may begin.

9

10

REGINA LOVITT: Hi, all. My name is Regina
Lovitt, and I'm a Project Manager for HPD's
Affordable Neighborhood Cooperative Program, or ANCP.

11

12

First, I would like to thank the Subcommittee on

13

Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions for your

14

time today.

15

16

This afternoon, I'll be speaking on the
West 128th-129th Street Cluster, which is a proposal

17

to rehabilitate four buildings in Harlem under HPD's

18

Affordable Neighborhood Cooperative Program. Next

19

slide, please.

20

21

The purpose of this project is to gut-

22

renovate the Tenant Interim Lease, or TIL, buildings

23

and to enable existing residents, of which there are

24

38 in this cluster, to become homeowners. The

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structure of this project will be a collaboration

between the sponsor, West Harlem Group Assistance,

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2 Incorporated, of whom we have Donald Notice with us
3 today, partnering with HPD. The sponsor will manage
4 the building during construction and throughout the
5 conversion process. During construction, the non-
6 profit, Restoring Communities HDFC, will own the
7 building to prevent any potential conflicts of
8 interest with the sponsor. Upon conversion, the
9 building will be owned and managed by the residents
10 of the buildings, all of which include the existing
11 residents and new purchasers of the currently vacant
12 units. The requirements for the buildings to convert
13 to cooperative are to have 80 percent of existing
14 residents attend at least eight co-op success
15 trainings, which will be provided during the
16 construction period. Eighty percent of the existing
17 residents must also remain current on their rent
18 payments, and lastly, 80 percent of the existing
19 tenants must choose to purchase their units at co-op
20 conversion. Next slide, please.

21 To speak on the affordability of the
22 units, existing residents will pay 250 dollars if
23 they are earning up to 80 percent of the area median
24 income. Residents that earn more than 80 percent of
25 the area median income will pay 2,500 dollars to

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2 purchase their converted unit. Existing residents
3 will not obtain personal mortgages for the purchase
4 of their units, and we anticipate that the vast
5 majority, if not all of the existing residents of the
6 projects, will qualify for the lower 250-dollars
7 sales price. For new purchasers of the currently
8 vacant units, of which there are 58, purchase prices
9 will be set affordable to 80 percent of area median
10 income. Those prices are set so that purchasers'
11 personal mortgages plus monthly maintenance and
12 utilities will not exceed roughly one-third of their
13 income to remain affordable per federal definitions
14 of housing cost burden. The area median income for a
15 family of three in 2024 is shown below on the slides.
16 Next slide, please.

17 The TIL rents that the residents are
18 currently paying do not produce enough income to
19 maintain the buildings. The monthly cost through ANCP
20 will change through a rent restructuring process at
21 the point of conversion to ensure that all the
22 buildings remain financially and physically healthy
23 after they convert to co-op. The expenses required to
24 maintain a building include insurance, heat and hot
25 water, electric and public areas, maintenance staff

1 salaries, water and sewer, account and legal
2 expenses, extermination, and minor repairs, just to
3 name a few. The shareholders will collectively decide
4 how much they would like to increase maintenance by
5 annually based on future building expenses and income
6 needs, but there is a required 2 percent increase
7 every year per the AMCP term sheet. For the co-op to
8 have enough money to cover the prior mentioned
9 expenses, initial monthly maintenance after the
10 buildings convert to cooperative have been set to 110
11 percent of projected expenses. In other words, the
12 initial residential income will cover anticipated
13 expenses plus a 10 percent cushion. Any households
14 for whom the monthly maintenance payment is
15 unaffordable will receive a Section 8 voucher that
16 ensures they do not pay more than 30 percent of their
17 total income on housing costs. The voucher will
18 subsidize the difference between the share that the
19 resident can afford and the total monthly maintenance
20 amount. The voucher can expand in the future to cover
21 an increased gap if, for example, maintenance
22 increases become necessary for the building but the
23 household income does not. Please note that the total
24 monthly expense estimate below is a current estimate
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of what monthly maintenance may look like at conversion, but due to the fact that the building costs may change over the period of construction and conversion, the exact cost will be set closer to actual conversion date to ensure that the initial maintenance is set with the most updated information in mind. All in all, due to the availability of Section 8 vouchers and the way that the income restrictions are structured, no one will pay more than 30 percent of their income towards housing costs. Next slide, please.

 This here is an example of what the total monthly payments would be for a household in ANCP with an income of 20,000 dollars per year. The total maintenance for a one-bedroom is roughly 1,200 dollars based on the income needed to support the building on a per-unit basis. A shareholder earning 15 percent of the area median income will only pay 500 dollars, which is 30 percent of their monthly income. The voucher will subsidize the rest of the maintenance, which in this example case is 700 dollars. Next slide, please.

 Typical project costs that are included in the rehabilitation work are including new building

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2 systems, which include low-carbon electrical and
3 heating systems, and new water and gas lines. Costs
4 also go into legalizing the unit layouts and bringing
5 the buildings up to code, introducing new and
6 improved accessibility features, including accessible
7 showers and wheelchair accessibility within the
8 units. Most residents in these buildings have seen
9 and signed off on their new unit layouts. Next slide,
10 please.

11 Importantly, investing in these major
12 upgrades now will reduce future maintenance, repair,
13 and operating costs while ensuring the building is
14 newly renovated and in good condition before
15 ownership is transferred. Residents are typically
16 relocated during the construction period, which is
17 about 24 to 30 months, which the project budget
18 covers the difference between the current amount they
19 pay, which is their TIL rents, and the relocation
20 unit rents and till conversion. The project budget
21 also covers other costs related, like moving, movers,
22 boxes, tape, and storage. In these buildings' case
23 specifically, some tenants are relocated early due to
24 concerns about current building safety. This project
25 also provides co-op success trainers to the residents

1
2 to help build their knowledge and ability to become
3 successful homeowners. Lastly, the budget provides a
4 substantial reserve fund to set up the buildings for
5 success from the start and help the building pay for
6 any unforeseen emergencies down the road. Next slide,
7 please.

8 The typical financing for co-op projects
9 is the majority is paid through a City capital loan,
10 which will be provided in the amount of approximately
11 560,000 dollars per unit. There will be zero-dollar
12 debt payments and zero-dollar interest payments for
13 40 years to match the term of the Article 11 property
14 tax exemption we are seeking. If the co-op chooses to
15 stay under a regulatory agreement, then there will be
16 a no loan payment due and zero-dollar debt payments
17 for the 40-year regulatory period although HPD
18 anticipates that the buildings will be able to renew
19 the regulatory period and indefinitely defer any
20 payments on the City loan at the end of the 40-year
21 term, generating permanently affordable homeownership
22 units for the City. HPD's loan does not impact the
23 maintenance fee amount because, as discussed in an
24 earlier slide, the maintenance fee amount has been
25 set to cover the building expenses and the HPD loan

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2 is not an expense due to its zero-dollar monthly
3 payment. The Article XI tax exemption that we're
4 applying for will reduce and eliminate the property
5 tax costs on a building for at least 40 years, if not
6 longer. Because the buildings are currently City-
7 owned, the subsidized acquisition cost of 1 dollar
8 per building also brings down the total development
9 cost significantly. And lastly, this project is
10 applying to receive funding through New York State
11 AHC in the amount of 75,000 dollars per dwelling
12 unit, which will not be repaid. The sales proceeds
13 from both the occupied units plus primarily from the
14 vacant units will help to provide funds to finance
15 the project. Next slide, please.

16 The shared equity model helps co-op
17 shareholders build wealth over time, maintaining
18 long-term affordability for the community. This chart
19 illustrates the estimated equity growth for a two-
20 bedroom unit post-conversion, assuming a 3 percent
21 annual price increase and 80 percent AMI income
22 restriction. You will see that the initial purchasers
23 of the units in the future co-ops are incentivized to
24 hold onto their units longer, which builds equity and
25 yields higher profits for themselves upon selling.

1 Residents will have the opportunity to review
2 specific details in the Attorney General accepted
3 offering plan before purchasing shares. Next slide,
4 please.
5

6 For a more granular development timeline
7 for this project, the sponsor designation process has
8 already occurred. As mentioned previously, West
9 Harlem Group Assistance has been designated. We are
10 currently in the pre-development phase. We have
11 continuous engagement with the existing residents of
12 the project. The scope of work has been determined,
13 and the budget and financing are currently in the
14 works and we have 94 percent tenant sign-off on
15 layouts and we plan to obtain 100 percent in the
16 coming weeks. We plan to have all tenants relocated
17 by the fall of 2025. We are anticipating that
18 construction will take between 24 and 30 months.
19 During that period, the deed of the buildings will be
20 transferred from the City to Restoring Communities,
21 the temporary owner of the buildings, then the
22 construction loan will close, and construction will
23 begin as soon as the tenants are relocated. Tenants
24 will attend previously mentioned co-op home ownership
25 trainings and then the sponsor will engage an

1 attorney to create an offering plan, which is what
2 allows us to convert the co-op at the end of
3 construction completion. After construction finishes,
4 we anticipate it will take 9 and 12 months to go
5 through the marketing and conversion process so that
6 the tenants will be moved back into the buildings as
7 soon as it's ready. Once construction is completed
8 and the existing residents are moved back to their
9 rehab units, marketing for the vacant units will
10 begin. The building will convert to co-op once those
11 units have signed purchasers, at which point the deed
12 will be transferred to the co-op and the construction
13 loan will be paid off at the co-op conversion point
14 by permanent financing. Next slide, please.

16 Here, I'll pass it off to Donald Notice
17 of West Harlem Group Assistance, Incorporated to
18 speak about their organization and some project
19 specifics on the following slides. Thank you.

20 DONALD NOTICE: Hello. Good afternoon. My
21 name is Donald Notice, Executive Director for West
22 Harlem Group Assistance, and I want to first thank
23 the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and
24 Dispositions for giving us this opportunity to
25 present this project.

1
2 West Harlem Group Assistance is a not-
3 for-profit community development corporation. We're
4 in our 54th year providing affordable housing and
5 social services to the Harlem community. We have
6 worked on several HPD projects for the last 40 years.
7 Some of our notable projects that we worked on was
8 we're working on two PACT deals right now with NYCHA,
9 one 693 units that's 95 percent completed, and we
10 just started another 1,200-unit project in December
11 that construction is just starting. We worked with
12 the Section 202 program. We have two senior citizen
13 housing of 166 units providing affordable housing for
14 senior citizens, and we have two homeless shelters,
15 one DHS shelter and one HPD shelter, and we have a
16 food pantry that's servicing about 25,000 people a
17 month on food disparities in the Harlem community. We
18 also worked on two ANCP projects, providing
19 affordable homeownership opportunities to the Harlem
20 community. One was 100 percent completed and sold to
21 existing residents and to first-time homebuyers, and
22 that one was 11 units, and we're working on where we
23 just finished up construction on a 50-unit project
24 which the construction is finished, and we're getting
25 ready to do the marketing on that project and

1
2 providing affordable homeownership opportunities. A
3 little bit about the cluster, West 128th, 129th
4 Street. Next slide, please.

5 West Harlem Group Assistance will act as
6 a sponsor. Our construction lender will be Webster
7 Bank. There's 96 units in the project that's going to
8 be a gut renovation, 38 of which are for the existing
9 residents, and 40 percent of the project, and 58
10 units will be first-time homebuyers. The sales prices
11 will be, for the existing families, will be 250
12 dollars, at or below 80 percent of AMI or 2,500
13 dollars. The sales prices for the new residents will
14 be affordable at 80 percent of AMI. Monthly
15 maintenance fees for all residents set to cover 100
16 percent of the project's building expenses, and this
17 project is scheduled to close in the summer of 2025.
18 The projected unit post-rehab is five studios, 22
19 one-bedrooms, 35 two-bedrooms, 33 bedrooms, and four
20 five-bedrooms.

21 And I want to, again, thank the Committee
22 for hearing our project, and we are hoping that we
23 have a positive vote from the Subcommittee. Thank
24 you.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much. Now
3 I'd like to recognize Council Member Brannan is here,
4 if you'd like to open the vote.

5 How would you like to vote on all three
6 of these matters?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you, Chair.
8 I vote aye.

9 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. By a
10 vote of six in the affirmative, zero abstentions, and
11 zero in the negative, the matters are adopted and
12 referred to the full Land Use Committee.

13 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you, Counsel.
14 So, is there any of my Members who have questions?

15 So, I have a few questions. Can you
16 briefly describe and detail how the current buildings
17 in the respective sites fell into disrepair, and what
18 is the process that has been working both with the
19 current tenants, both in relocation and providing an
20 opportunity for them to move back into the buildings,
21 if they so choose?

22 ARIELLE RAWLINGS: So, the buildings, all
23 four of them are in City ownership and have been for
24 many decades. I would have to confirm the exact date,
25 but I'm happy to. On or around the early 2000s, they

1 signed a net lease through the Tenant Interim Lease
2 Program, which is part of HPD's asset management
3 team, and have been managed as City-owned rental
4 buildings since then. The rents on all of those units
5 have remained flat since that period and do not
6 produce enough income to support the buildings, which
7 Regina spoke to a bit, and so part of the
8 rehabilitation process is restructuring the rents to
9 maintenance amounts once the buildings convert to
10 cooperative, that ensure that the buildings are
11 producing enough income to maintain them. HPD also,
12 through the project budget, will provide the
13 buildings with substantial reserve contributions at
14 conversion to cooperative that help the building with
15 any unforeseen expenses that come up in the future.
16

17 And to speak to relocation, Mr. Notice
18 can provide more specific details, but ahead of the
19 buildings beginning construction, all of them need to
20 be 100 percent vacant due to the scope of work, which
21 is quite deep. They're all being gut rehabilitated,
22 and so all the residents will be relocated to
23 probably a combination of market rate units and
24 potentially some within WAGA's portfolio.
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DONALD NOTICE: Yes.

ARIELLE RAWLINGS: And it's being overseen by an organization that WAGA has partnered with to identify those market rate units if there are not suitable units within the portfolio.

CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Thank you so much. Just one more question. What is the proposed timeline regarding with the completion of this project?

ARIELLE RAWLINGS: So, our hope would be to dispose of the buildings in the summer and begin construction at that point, but the actual construction period is predicated on the buildings being vacated. So, relocation is now starting. We actually, WAGA and representatives from HPD, are meeting with the residents this evening to discuss, provide updates on the relocation process. So, over the next two to three months, residents will be relocated and the building will close on construction financing. Our team is working with OMB and has to submit the budget to get the HPD loan approved. And after all that comes together, hopefully in the summer of this year, the buildings would begin construction.

1
2 DONALD NOTICE: And we're working with
3 SAV, who is a consultant, who's going to do the
4 relocation.

5 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Yeah, I was going to
6 ask about that because, you know, is there the
7 communication of the relocation? It's extremely
8 traumatic for folks so we just want to make sure that
9 you are working with Council Member Salaam and we're
10 making sure that residents in this project, you know,
11 does it as planned.

12 DONALD NOTICE: Yes. We normally do the
13 relocation ourselves, but because of the 38 families
14 getting relocated, we hired a consultant to help us
15 along that process.

16 ARIELLE RAWLINGS: And as you may have
17 seen in the unit mix of the future rehab buildings,
18 there are many large units in this project, which is
19 quite exciting, but there are also many large
20 intergenerational families that need to be relocated,
21 so SAV Relocation Services is helping support
22 identify those larger relocation units, which are
23 hard to find in New York.

24

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Well, we look forward
3 to looking at seeing that process, making sure it
4 runs smoothly.

5 Thank you. This applicant panel is now
6 excused.

7 DONALD NOTICE: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Counsel, are there any
9 members of the public who wish to testify on this
10 item?

11 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: No.

12 CHAIRPERSON HANKS: Okay. Thank you. So,
13 if there are any remote public participants who wish
14 to testify and have not already done so, please press
15 the raise hand button now and, if you are here with
16 us in person, please see the Sergeant-at-Arms to fill
17 out a speaker card.

18 Okay. With there being no other members
19 of the public who wish to testify regarding these two
20 Pre-Considered Land Use items for the West 128th-
21 129th Street Cluster Project, the public hearing is
22 now closed, and the items are laid over.

23 That concludes today's business. I would
24 like to thank the members of the public, my
25 Colleagues, Subcommittee Counsel, Land Use Staff, and

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS AND
DISPOSITIONS

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Sergeant-at-Arms for your participation today. This
meeting is hereby adjourned. [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 March 29, 2025