

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

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August 17, 2011
Start: 11:00 am
Recess: 11:40 am

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
JOEL RIVERA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
Elizabeth S. Crowley
Inez E. Dickens
Lewis A. Fidler
Vincent J. Gentile
Robert Jackson
James Vacca
Albert Vann
Karen Koslowitz
James S. Oddo
Christine C. Quinn

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

Dr. Vincent Calamia
Candidate for Appointment
Health and Hospitals Corporation

Orlando Marin
Candidate for Appointment
City Planning Commission

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Joe Rivera and I chair the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections. Before we begin, I'd like to introduce the members who are here with us today. To my left, we have Council Member Robert Jackson, council Member Debbie Rose, Council Member Jimmy Vacca, Council Member Leroy Comrie, Council Member Karen Koslowitz, and to my right we have Council Member and Minority Leader Jimmy Oddo, Council Member Lew Fidler, Council Member Vinny Ignizio, and we're joined by Council Member Inez Dickens and we have Council Member Al Vann with us also, and we have the Committee staff, Charles Davis, Lamon Bland and Jasmine Vega [phonetic].

Today we have before us two candidates for our review. They are Dr. Vincent Calamia, a resident of Staten Island, as a candidate for designation by the Council and subsequent appointment by the mayor to the Health and Hospitals Corporation Board of Directors. If designated and appointed, Dr. Calamia will fill a vacancy and serve the remainder of a five year term that expires on March 20th, 2016. We are also

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2 joined by Orlando Marin, a resident of the Bronx,
3 as a candidate for appointment by the Bronx
4 borough president to the City Planning Commission.
5 If the Council gives its advice and consent, Mr.
6 Marin will succeed Kenneth Knuckles [phonetic] and
7 serve the remainder of a five year term that
8 expires on June 30th, 2015. We've also been joined
9 by Council Member Vincent Gentile.

10 We will begin with the Health and
11 Hospitals Corporation (HHC). HHC is a public
12 benefit corporation charged with the duty of
13 providing high quality, dignified and
14 comprehensive healthcare and treatment to the
15 public, especially to those who cannot afford such
16 services. HHC's Board of Directors consists of 16
17 members who administer HHC; included within the
18 Board's membership in addition to 5 ex officio
19 members are ten appointees of the mayor, 5 of whom
20 are designated by the Council for consideration by
21 the mayor. The term of office for directors is
22 five years, with a vacancy filled under the terms
23 of the original appointment. Directors are not
24 compensated, but are reimbursed for actual
25 expenses. Welcome, Dr. Calamia. Will you please

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raise your right hand to be sworn in?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Dr. Calamia, do you swear or affirm your statements will be truthful to the best of your knowledge?

DR. VINCENT CALAMIA: I do.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: If you have a statement, you can read it now, but I will say the Committee members enjoy short CliffsNotes versions of statements.

DR. VINCENT CALAMIA: I'm going to take my very, very brief statement and make it very much briefer. Thank you for that. I'll make it basically just an introduction of myself.

I'm a practicing physician on Staten Island and a little bit in Brooklyn as well. I do practice internal medicine and endocrinology. I have a background as well in administration. I have a Master's in healthcare management and planning and have actually been a CEO at one of the hospitals in Brooklyn, which was Victory Memorial. I've also been academically involved in geriatric medicine. I was chief of geriatrics of Staten Island Hospital, and I did

1 found the fellowship there.

2 I think it is important—although
3 all of you probably are well aware of it and again
4 part of making my brief statement briefer, but I
5 think it's important to just read quickly the
6 mission statement of HHC, which is very brief, and
7 I'll do that, and then explain again why I feel
8 very confident and comfortable that I could adhere
9 to this.

10 Basically the statement is as
11 follows: To extend equally to all New Yorkers,
12 regardless of their ability to pay, comprehensive
13 health service of the highest quality and - -
14 humane, care, dignity and respect to promote and
15 protect as both innovator and advocate the health,
16 welfare and safety of the people of the city of
17 New York, and I think this is a very important
18 piece to join with other health workers and with
19 communities in partnership, which will enable each
20 of our institutions to promote and protect health
21 in the fullest sense the total physical, mental
22 and social wellbeing of the people, and that's a
23 statement that I believe in very firmly. I think
24 at the moment, it is extraordinarily relevant to
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2 the current situation going on. I will say that I
3 do understand the board position is a true
4 fiduciary position for all the people of New York
5 City, but being from Staten Island—and wonderful
6 to see the whole Staten Island delegation here—I
7 particularly am interested naturally in Staten
8 Island not having a Health and Hospitals - - care
9 facility--being able to work with HHC to try to
10 improve some of the services to that community,
11 again recognizing the importance of those
12 servicing all the communities, so with that I
13 again appreciate your time and obviously would
14 much appreciate your nominating me. I appreciate
15 it again. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very
17 much, Doctor. Before we go into the questions,
18 I'm just going to take care of some housekeeping
19 matters. Upon appointment, is it your intention
20 to abide by the prohibitions set forth in the
21 Conflicts of Interest Board Waiver No. 2011-453?
22 Also pursuant to the Charter Section 1115, is it
23 your intention to resign as a member of Community
24 board 3 in Staten Island?

25 DR. VINCENT CALAMIA: Yes, it is.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Okay.

Perfect. Before we go into questions from the Committee, we will go on to the next individual as well. Next we will go to Mr. Marin for the City Planning Commission.

The City Planning Commission has 13 members, 7 appointed by the mayor, 1 by the public advocate and 1 by each of the borough presidents. The Planning Commission is responsible for the long range planning to ensure orderly growth and development, assisting developing the ten year capital plan, prepares and modifies the zoning resolution among a number of other critical functions. Commission members serve five year terms. There is no limitation on a number of terms that a CPC member may serve. CPC members are prohibited from holding any other city office while they serve under Planning Commission. The chair receives an annual salary of \$205,180. The member who is designated as vice chair receives an annual salary of \$64,271. The other members receive an annual salary of \$54,150. Welcome, Mr. Marin. Will you please raise your right hand to be sworn in?

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Mr. Marin, do
3 you swear or affirm that your statements will be
4 truthful to the best of your knowledge?

5 ORLANDO MARIN: Yes.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you, sir.

7 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very
8 much. If you have an opening statement, you may
9 state it now. Just make sure it's the Cliffs
10 Notes version of your statement.

11 ORLANDO MARIN: Good morning,
12 Chairman Rivera and members of the Committee on
13 rules, Privileges and Elections. My name as you
14 know is Orlando Marin. Thank you for the
15 opportunity to address the Committee regarding my
16 nomination by Bronx Borough President, Ruben Diaz,
17 to become a member of the City Planning
18 Commission.

19 In the summer of 1977, I along with
20 7 million other New Yorkers experienced the
21 largest blackout in the history of the city of New
22 York—an event that later resulted in the
23 destruction of various city neighborhoods,
24 including Morris - - , where I lived. Night after
25 night, I would look north from the 12th floor of

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2 the Gouverneur Morris Houses, where I lived, at
3 the tenements that were between my building on the
4 Cross Bronx Expressway and wondered which would be
5 next to go up in flames. Eventually my
6 neighborhood and the community would be destroyed
7 by the fires, by the looting of the mom and pop
8 commercial establishments that were at the base of
9 many tenements and the very heart of the community
10 and subsequently by the abandonment by the lending
11 institutions that resulted from this catastrophic
12 event. The final result was that buildings began
13 to be razed, block by block and neighborhoods were
14 picked apart and decimated. As a result of these
15 events, I knew at a very young age that I had to
16 find some way to effectuate change.

17 I was 13 years old and just
18 entering high school, I had the honor to attend
19 the high school of music and art, which was a
20 specialized public school. At the 11th grade, we
21 were required to choose an elective. Knowing
22 beforehand the choices of electives, I made the
23 decision and it was very easy for me—I chose
24 architecture. My desire to craft a career as an
25 architect continued through college and eventually

1 became my profession of choice. I worked for the
2 prestigious firm of Perkins and Will, where I
3 developed and executed design for a prototypical
4 school that could be built on any urban parcel.
5 This was the beginning of what would become for me
6 a life in the public sector. I began to develop a
7 deep and abiding commitment to serving the city
8 and its development efforts. As a result, I
9 applied for and was appointed to Bronx Community
10 Board 3. I was subsequently appointed to serve as
11 chairman to the Housing and Land Use Committee.
12 It was 1986 by this point and city leaders found a
13 way and the process of rebuilding had just begun.
14 The development of my career continued. In 1990,
15 I became a fellow in the National Urban Fellows
16 program, where I eventually obtained a Master's
17 Degree in public administration. My concentration
18 was affordable housing development and planning.
19 My fellowship took me to the city of Phoenix,
20 where I worked as an architect and planner for the
21 city engineer. In 1992, I began working as a
22 director of design and construction for the New
23 York City Housing Partnership, where I developed
24 design guidelines and construction standards that
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2 every developer in the program was required to
3 follow. My dual role as vice president for the
4 Residential Integrated Solutions Corporation, or
5 RISCO as it is more commonly known, assured
6 homeowners that warranty items would be addressed.

7 Today as senior project manager
8 with one of the most prestigious affordable
9 housing developers, I secure the funding for and
10 develop affordable housing. I am currently the
11 chairman of Bronx Community Board 2. My
12 involvement with Community Board 2 began upon my
13 arrival back to New York in 1992 after obtaining
14 my M.P.A. I have chaired both the Housing and
15 Land Use and Economic Development Committees. My
16 participation on the board has afforded me further
17 the opportunity to interact daily and directly
18 with a cadre of professionals that have allowed
19 for the continued planning and development of the
20 Hunts Point and Longwood neighborhoods. It is for
21 these reasons that I wish to become a member of
22 the commission. The experiences that I have
23 gained and the professional acumen that I have
24 developed combined with the skillsets and
25 development expertise that I have honed throughout

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2 the years have grounded me and are the basis for
3 my continued desire to serve the city, and which I
4 believe will complement that of those currently
5 serving on the commission. I am proud to have
6 been nominated to serve on the City Planning
7 Commission and look forward to working with the
8 currently appointed members. Thank you for your
9 consideration.

10 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very
11 much. Before we move forward, let me just take
12 care of housekeeping matters on this issue also.
13 Upon appointment is it your intention to abide by
14 the prohibitions set forth in the Conflict of
15 Interest Board Waiver No. 2011-396. Also
16 pursuant to the Charter Section 1115, is it your
17 intention to resign as a member of Community Board
18 2 in the Bronx?

19 ORLANDO MARIN: To both questions,
20 yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Perfect.
22 Thank you very much. I will open up to questions
23 on behalf of the Committee members. First we have
24 the minority leader, Jimmy Oddo, followed by
25 Council Member Vincent Ignizio.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Mr. Chair,
3 more of a statement than a question. I'm sure it
4 won't take much to jog your recollection back when
5 you were the Health Committee Chair to that
6 afternoon at City Hall when you had to recess the
7 Committee because it got a little heated between
8 myself and the HHC president. I'm not the first
9 Staten Island elected official to butt heads with
10 the HHC. There have been many before me. All of
11 my colleagues in government today have, and I fear
12 that those who succeed us in office will probably
13 have the same fight. Everything HHC has done for
14 Staten Island has come with them kicking and
15 screaming. It has come after the elected
16 officials, the Staten Island Advance community
17 groups have fought tooth and nail to try to be
18 treated fairly. We are not there yet. That is
19 why I am so appreciative that someone with the
20 credentials of Dr. Calamia—someone with a crazy
21 hectic schedule like he has—would be willing to
22 take on what is a formidable task. He will now
23 have to go headlong into a status quo that treats
24 our borough terribly. It is a long history. It
25 is not going to change any time soon, but I am

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2 confident and I am happy, and I speak on behalf of
3 Debbie and Vinny that we have such a powerful
4 person to kind of be our ally in this fight, so
5 Dr. Calamia, on behalf of the delegation, thank
6 you for taking on this task.

7 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you.

8 Next Council Member Vincent Ignizio.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Yes, I
10 want to lend my voice to my constituent and my
11 friend, Dr. Calamia. I believe Staten Island will
12 be served very well—as we had with your
13 predecessor, Dr. Mays [phonetic], having a great
14 administrator and a medical doctor and someone who
15 knows that in order to fight for Staten Island.
16 Put on your armor, particularly against HHC, and
17 go in there because anything we get out of them is
18 through kicking and screaming, and the Staten
19 Island delegation will be your greatest allies and
20 provide you with as much armament as we possibly
21 can. Make no mistake about it; the mission ahead
22 of you is one that is difficult and one that is
23 going to require significant fight to get Staten
24 Island have its fair share because we do not have
25 a city hospital here on the island. So good luck,

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2 and I encourage the Committee members to vote yes.
3 This is a good man. This is a great
4 administrator. This is a good friend. Should
5 anybody need someone to evaluate medical issues or
6 administrative of that in their district, this is
7 a man that is willing to take your call and happy
8 to help. Thank you very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you. We
10 next have Council Member Vincent Gentile.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you,
12 Mr. Chairman. I have a long history with Dr.
13 Calamia, both on Staten Island and as the State
14 Senator from Staten Island and then later as the
15 City Councilman in Brooklyn. His administration
16 at Victory Memorial Hospital in Bay Ridge was
17 outstanding. It's unfortunate that he served at
18 the time when elected officials seemed just to let
19 the Berger [phonetic] Commission run wild and pick
20 and choose the hospitals that they recommended for
21 closing, and while most of the city just let it
22 happen, Vinny Calamia was trying and did a
23 yeoman's job in trying to keep Victory Memorial
24 off that list and then when they were on that
25 closure list, did a tremendous job in trying to

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2 convince the governor and the powers that be in
3 the state health department to give us a waiver
4 and a pass because of the lack of hospital
5 coverage in the south Brooklyn area with the
6 closure of Victory Memorial Hospital. We've seen
7 the results of that. Vinny, we didn't win that
8 fight. Victory closed, but that does not diminish
9 the type of management, leadership and effort that
10 you put in. I am pleased with that. It's now the
11 rest of the city—once the Manhattan hospitals
12 started closing, now the rest of the city has all
13 of a sudden gotten all worried about hospitals
14 closing, but we were in the first round. While we
15 made the noise, no one really listened, but you
16 did a great job, and I look forward to voting yes
17 on your nomination and looking forward to your
18 service on HHC Board.

19 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you. Do
20 we have any other questions? Council Member Lew
21 Fidler? No? Okay. Council Member Leroy Comrie?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Mr. Marin,
23 I see that you work for the Bluestone [phonetic]
24 Organization, which is a real estate development
25 company that does a lot of affordable housing in

1 and around Queens and throughout the city.

2 They're actually doing a project just adjacent to
3 my district in Jamaica--in downtown Jamaica. I
4 just wanted to know how are you going to be able
5 to separate your position with Bluestone with your
6 position on City Planning, and how would you
7 detail that for us please?
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9 ORLANDO MARIN: Well, unfortunately
10 I'm not working on the Jamaica project, but in an
11 instance like - - Place in Brooklyn, which is a
12 project that I am working on, which has been
13 stalled by the Superfund designation, I would have
14 to recuse myself and not work--I'm not working on
15 that project at all as a matter of fact as a
16 result of this nomination to the commission. I
17 would have to be very careful and follow the
18 instructions in the conflict of interest letter
19 that I make sure that I either not work on
20 projects or projects that come before the board, I
21 would have to recuse myself from.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: And you
23 would also recuse yourself from doing any work
24 with notifying the Bluestone or any other related
25 Bluestone company or relationship that they have

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2 about the issues that are coming out of City
3 Planning regarding affordable housing?

4 ORLANDO MARIN: Absolutely.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Alright,
6 well, looking at the rest of your resume you look
7 more than qualified to serve in that position. I
8 just wanted to make that clear-

9 ORLANDO MARIN: Thank you, sir.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Council Member
12 Jimmy Vacca?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I'd like to
14 welcome both of you and wish you success and luck.
15 Mr. Marin, I especially welcome you as the Bronx
16 person who is going to be representing us on the
17 City Planning Commission.

18 ORLANDO MARIN: Thank you, sir. I
19 appreciate that.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I do want
21 you to know that I expect to see you in the
22 borough.

23 ORLANDO MARIN: And you will.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I don't
25 consider the Planning Commission solely an agency

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2 that deals with what should be an R3 and an R2—
3 that's kind of removed from the average person. I
4 do think you know that we have a borough that is
5 distressed. We lack economic development. We are
6 looking for people at every level of government to
7 help us, so I know that you'll be at the Planning
8 Commission meetings and I know you will be reading
9 all your briefing papers, but I want the community
10 boards and I want the groups to know that you are
11 the Planning Commission member from the Bronx and
12 that you are committed to change and your phone
13 will be ringing. So upfront, I vote with you
14 having that expectation.

15 ORLANDO MARIN: Thank you, sir. I
16 appreciate it.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Council Member
19 Debbie Rose?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you,
21 Chair. I would like to echo the accolades from my
22 colleagues regarding Dr. Vincent Calamia. I just
23 want to say that Dr. Calamia has established a
24 reputation as an adept administrator and an
25 excellent medical doctor. I think that this

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2 appointment is the most logical appointment for
3 Staten Island because of your experience as a
4 medical administrator and working with HHC. You
5 truly understand what our issues are on Staten
6 Island in terms of lack of an HHC facility. You
7 know of the fights that we've had to try to get
8 them to if not build a brick and mortar facility
9 there, to at least provide services at the same
10 level that they provide in other boroughs. Your
11 experience with all of this makes you more than
12 qualified for this position, and I want to
13 enthusiastically urge my colleagues to vote in the
14 affirmative for this appointment. Thank you, Dr.
15 Calamia.

16 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you.

17 Any other questions on behalf of committee
18 members? Seeing none, we've also been joined by
19 Council Member Liz Crowley, and at this point in
20 time, I'm going to ask for the clerk to please
21 call the roll, and the chair recommends an aye
22 vote. I just want to state for the record that
23 Mr. Marin is a highly respected individual within
24 the Bronx community—comes highly recommended from
25 a number of sources and of course from the borough

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2 president. It is a pleasure to have you as a
3 candidate for this position, so the chair
4 recommends an aye vote.

5 CLERK: William Martin, Committee
6 Clerk, roll call vote in the Committee on Rules.
7 Council Member Rivera?

8 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I vote aye.

9 CLERK: Comrie?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Aye.

11 CLERK: Fidler?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Aye.

13 CLERK: Vann?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: [off mic]

15 CLERK: Gentile?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:
17 Congratulations, [off mic].

18 CLERK: Dickens?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS:
20 Congratulations, [off mic].

21 CLERK: Vacca?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA:
23 Congratulations. I vote aye.

24 CLERK: Crowley?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I vote

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aye.

CLERK: Koslowitz?

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ:

Congratulations to both of you and I vote aye.

CLERK: By vote of nine in the affirmative, zero in the negative, no abstentions, both items are adopted. Members, please sign the Committee reports. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: And we're going to leave the roll open 'cause the Speaker is coming down. Congratulations to both candidates.

ORLANDO MARIN: Thank you, sir.

DR. VINCENT CALAMIA: Thank you again.

CLERK: Council Member Jackson?

COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON:

Congratulations to both candidates. I vote aye on all.

CLERK: The vote now currently stands at 10 in the affirmative. Council Member Oddo?

COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Yes.

CLERK: The vote now stands 11 in the affirmative.

CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: And we are
joined by the Speaker of the City Council,
Christine Quinn.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you. Aye on
all.

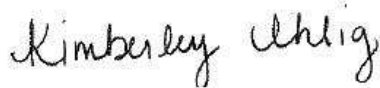
CLERK: The final vote in the
Committee on rules is 12 in the affirmative, zero
in the negative, no abstentions.

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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



Date

August 18, 2011