

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

-----X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND  
MARITIME USES

-----X

July 23, 2012  
Start: 11:30 a.m.  
Recess: 11:51 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E:  
BRAD S. LANDER  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Maria del Carmen Arroyo  
Rosie Mendez  
Annabel Palma  
James Sanders, Jr.  
Jumaane D. Williams  
Daniel J. Halloran III

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

Jenny Fernandez  
Director of Intergovernmental and Community Relations  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Peter Bray  
Chair of the Historic Districts Committee  
Park Slope Civic Council

Corinne Mulsby  
Member  
Park Slope Civic Council

John Kasem  
Member  
Park Slope Civic Council

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Good morning.

I am Council Member Brad Lander, and I'm pleased to call this meeting of the City Council Land Use Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses to order. Thanks for joining our July meeting. We are joined this morning by Council Members Dan Halloran of Queens, Rosie Mendez of Manhattan and James Sanders of Queens. Let me announce at the outset that we are laying over five of the items on the calendar for today-- Land Uses No. 622, 623, 624, and 625, the 32, 34 and 36 Dominick Street houses and Dennison and Lydia Wood House. Those will in all likelihood be heard tomorrow morning at a 9:30 meeting of the Landmarks Subcommittee in advance of the 10 o'clock Land Use Committee, and we are also laying over Land Use No. 648, a proposed HHC siting, Metro East 99<sup>th</sup> Street. That was actually being laid over until next month, August 20<sup>th</sup>, our next meeting. So that leaves us with two items on the calendar today--one especially excellent item, but two items, Land Uses No. 636, the Park Slope Historic District extension and Land Use No. 649, the Barbizon Hotel for Women, both Landmarks

1 designation items. So let me invite Jenny  
2 Fernandez from the Landmarks Preservation  
3 Commission to come and present them to us. We  
4 will start with the Park Slope Historic District  
5 designation, Land Use 636, which I am personally  
6 very excited about and appreciate all of the  
7 really hard work done both by the LPC, by the Park  
8 Slope Civic Council and other advocates, so I'm  
9 excited that it is coming to us. Take it away,  
10 Jenny.  
11

12 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Chair  
13 Lander, members of the Subcommittee. My name is  
14 Jenny Fernandez, director of Intergovernmental and  
15 Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation  
16 Commission. I am here today to testify on the  
17 Commission's designation of the Park Slope  
18 Historic District extension in Brooklyn.

19 On October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010, the Landmarks  
20 Preservation Commission held a public hearing on  
21 the proposed designation of the Park Slope  
22 Historic District extension. 23 people spoke in  
23 favor of designation, including Council Members  
24 Brad Lander and Steve Levin, Brooklyn Borough  
25 President Marty Markowitz, a representative of

1  
2 Assembly Member Joan Millman, a representative of  
3 Community Board 6, representatives of the Park  
4 Slope Civic Council, the Historic Districts  
5 Council, the Landmarks Conservancy, and the Park  
6 Slope Chamber of Commerce, and several residents  
7 of the proposed district. One person spoke in  
8 opposition to designation. In addition written  
9 testimony in opposition to designation as  
10 submitted after the hearing by the owners of 414  
11 and 414A 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 412 13<sup>th</sup> Street, 500 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
12 and 412 13<sup>th</sup> Street. In a written request to be  
13 removed from the district was submitted by the  
14 owners of 496 14<sup>th</sup> Street. The Commission has  
15 reviewed these requests and determined all of  
16 those buildings merited inclusion in the district.  
17 On April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the Commission voted to  
18 designate the Park Slope Historic District  
19 extension.

20 The Park Slope Historic District  
21 extension includes approximately 600 buildings  
22 located immediately to the west and south of the  
23 Park Slope Historic District, which was designated  
24 by the Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1973  
25 and the three buildings on Prospect Park West



2 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very  
3 much, and again, thank you to you and to the Chair  
4 and the commissioners and the staff who worked on  
5 this. It's a wonderful district and I appreciate  
6 the work that your team did in prioritizing it,  
7 looking at the boundaries, considering some  
8 requests and really sort of a real model of  
9 dialogue and partnership with the community, so  
10 are thrilled to have gotten it to this point. We  
11 do have two people signed up to testify—three  
12 people signed up to testify. So let me just ask  
13 them to come up as a panel, Peter Bray for the  
14 Park Slope Civic Council, John Kasem [phonetic]  
15 from the Park Slope Civic Council and Corinne  
16 Mulsby [phonetic] from the Park Slope Civic  
17 Council. So if the three of you can just come up  
18 and we appreciate the time you're taking to be  
19 here.

20 [background conversation]

21 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: And begin by  
22 stating your name for the record.

23 PETER BRAY: Okay. My name is  
24 Peter Bray. I'm pleased to come before the City  
25 Council members here today. I'm the chair of the

1 Park Slope Civic Council's Historic Districts  
2 Committee. I'm a 32-year resident of Park Slope  
3 and a homeowner within the current historic  
4 district. This month is the 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary of  
5 the designation of the original Park Slope  
6 Historic District, but many Park Slope residents  
7 assume that the entire neighborhood was landmarked  
8 in 1973, but in fact, less than 25% of the  
9 neighborhood is currently protected and those  
10 blocks that are are primarily along Prospect Park.  
11 Their confusion is understandable since there is  
12 little difference between those homes that are  
13 within the current historic district and hundreds  
14 of homes that are outside of the district. Very  
15 many of these unprotected blocks are the same  
16 iconic value and have equivalent architectural and  
17 historic significance to already landmarked  
18 blocks, a fact that the Landmarks Preservation  
19 Commission recognized when it designated the 600  
20 buildings within the south slope as part of an  
21 ongoing expansion of the Park Slope Historic  
22 District. Indeed, Frederick Bland, one of the  
23 Landmark Commission's commissioners, remarked at  
24 the meeting in April when the south slope  
25

1 extension was designated that he couldn't  
2 understand why the south slope wasn't already  
3 included when the historic district was created in  
4 1973. I suppose at that time, the Commission—it  
5 was a very different time and context—recognized  
6 those areas where the least disinvestment had  
7 occurred in Park Slope, but Park Slope has as many  
8 New York City neighborhoods have greatly changed  
9 since the early '70s. Families are now clamoring  
10 to live in Park slope because of many of the  
11 features that Jenny mentioned—its scale, its  
12 architecture, its history, its schools and the  
13 quality of life—but back when the original  
14 historic district was created, families were  
15 fleeing for the suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s.  
16 But there is one thing that hasn't changed and  
17 that is is that landmarking is extremely popular  
18 in Park Slope. Its residents want to see it  
19 preserved and they want to see it protected from  
20 the kind of flimsy development that is degrading  
21 too many Brooklyn blocks and neighborhoods. Since  
22 2007, the Historic District Committee of the Park  
23 Slope Civic Council has actively and extensively  
24 informed Park Slope residents of our expansion  
25

1 objectives when a means for them to be in the  
2 historic district. We've answered their questions  
3 and we've solicited their support. We've sent a  
4 veritable army of volunteers ringing the doorbells  
5 of every home in the south slope to directly  
6 engage with their owners and the response has been  
7 overwhelmingly positive. We submitted petitions  
8 with hundreds of signatures to the Landmarks  
9 Commission prior to the public hearing. At the  
10 public hearing in addition to those speakers that  
11 were mentioned, we also submitted letters from  
12 dozens of these homeowners. As was mentioned,  
13 only one person spoke in opposition. This broad  
14 support is neighborhood-wide. We have marshaled  
15 the same effort within the north slope that is now  
16 being considered by the Landmarks Commission and  
17 over and over again, we hear the same refrain,  
18 which is, "Why isn't our block already in the  
19 historic district?" Why, indeed? You have the  
20 opportunity today to redress this omission. I  
21 urge you to send this matter on to the Committee  
22 on Land Use and the entire City Council with your  
23 full endorsement. Thank you for your time.  
24

25 CORINNE MULSBY: My name is Corinne

1  
2 Mulsby. I'm a member of the Park Slope Civic  
3 Council and have been a Park Slope resident for  
4 just over a year. While I'm fortunate to live  
5 within the historic district and am assured that  
6 the qualities which make Park Slope a great place  
7 to live will not be radically altered or destroyed  
8 within my immediate area, that assurance is not  
9 something many of my neighbors have, who live on  
10 the dozens of other blocks that are not within the  
11 boundaries of the historic district. I'm here  
12 today because I believe it is crucial that the  
13 Subcommittee vote in favor of extending the Park  
14 Slope Historic District to include to 600  
15 buildings in the south slope. We believe that  
16 this area should have been part of the historic  
17 district when it was created in 1973. It tells a  
18 different, but equally valuable story about the  
19 history of Park Slope and of the city of New York.  
20 It was a story that was not sufficiently valued in  
21 the '70s, but is now more fully appreciated. The  
22 buildings tell the story of the city's industrial  
23 past and the people who worked in those  
24 industries. It tells a story of a neighborhood,  
25 whose - - Ansonia Clockworks Complex between 11<sup>th</sup>

1 and 12<sup>th</sup> Street and in the homes that lined 13<sup>th</sup> and  
2 14<sup>th</sup> Streets, which house those who worked at the  
3 factory. This is a story that deserves to be told  
4 and preserved as much as those of the merchants  
5 and well to do families that populated blocks  
6 adjacent to Prospect Park; however, the south  
7 slope extension has many of those brownstones as  
8 well, which are situated along blocks south of the  
9 factory--an example of the diversity that makes  
10 Brooklyn and the city of New York so exceptional.  
11 The approval of the south slope extension is  
12 critical because many of the blocks within the  
13 south slope have had their integrity altered and  
14 in many cases destroyed by the type of development  
15 that is all too common throughout Brooklyn. These  
16 are the five and six story co-ops and luxury  
17 rental buildings that have been thrown together  
18 without any consideration of their contribution to  
19 the character of the neighborhood. The housing  
20 stock we are asking you to protect in the south  
21 slope was built for many generations to enjoy and  
22 be proud of; however, these new buildings have  
23 been erected with only short term financial  
24 considerations in mind. I ask you to recommend  
25

1  
2 the approval of the south slope extension to Land  
3 Use and Landmarks Committee and to the full City  
4 Council because of the historical importance of  
5 this area, the integrity of its streetscape and  
6 because it deserves the protection afforded by  
7 historic district designation. Thank you for your  
8 time.

9 JOHN KASEM: My name is John Kasem.  
10 I've been a resident of Park Slope 47 years. I  
11 was one of the people—my wife and I, one of the  
12 families that moved into Park Slope in the initial  
13 era when Park Slope turned around from being a  
14 neighborhood in decline because of our ethics and  
15 we've seen Park Slope change dramatically over the  
16 years. We'd like to see further improvements in  
17 Park Slope and one of these improvements would be  
18 preventing real estate developers from coming in  
19 and building buildings that are absolutely  
20 inappropriate to the appearance of the  
21 neighborhood. There's a great fear that Atlantic  
22 Yards, which has already had negative impacts on  
23 Park Slope will lead to more negative impacts  
24 because it will draw attention to the area to real  
25 estate developers who seek commercial

1  
2 opportunities on our avenues. Park Slope is a  
3 beautiful community, which is what attracted lots  
4 of people—in fact, most people who live there—to  
5 the neighborhood. It's also been a community of  
6 famous firsts, which we had the Brooklyn Dodgers  
7 first play baseball and we've had some illustrious  
8 residents including Barack Obama and Al Capone and  
9 we'd like to keep Park Slope a destination it has  
10 now become for foreign tourists. It's amazing the  
11 number of foreign tourists you see on our avenues  
12 and why do they come here? They come here because  
13 it's a very attractive neighborhood, and we hope  
14 that you will approve this application. Thank  
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thanks so much  
17 to all three of you for coming, John and Corinne  
18 for coming today and for all of your work in the  
19 past and Peter, I just want to in particular  
20 praise your work on this. I mean the work that  
21 you've been doing for years and years now to build  
22 a constituency of support, not just assuming it  
23 would be there, although I think it was reasonable  
24 in many ways to assume, but really the tireless  
25 work of going block by block building up a group

1 of ambassadors and making it easy for the  
2 Landmarks Preservation Commission and for us to  
3 see not only that the neighborhood was meritorious  
4 architecturally, but that there was really  
5 overwhelming and strong neighborhood support, so  
6 praise to the Civic Council generally and to you  
7 individually for all of the leadership that you've  
8 put in. Thank you so much for doing that.

9 Questions from my colleagues of any of them or of  
10 Ms. Fernandez on this item? Thank you very much  
11 for your time coming out to testify and we will  
12 call Ms. Fernandez back. There is no one else  
13 signed up to testify on this item, so we will  
14 close the public hearing on this one. Thank you  
15 very much for attending and we will move to the  
16 other item on the calendar today, which is Land  
17 Use 649, the Barbizon Hotel for Women in Council  
18 Member Garodnick's district.

19  
20 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Thanks. Thank  
21 you, Chair Lander, members of the Subcommittee.  
22 My name is Jenny Fernandez, director of  
23 Intergovernmental and Community Relations for the  
24 Landmarks Preservation Commission. I'm here today  
25 to testify on the Commission's designation of the

1 Barbizon Hotel for Women in Manhattan. On July  
2 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Landmarks Preservation Commission  
3 held a public hearing on the proposed designation  
4 as landmark of the Barbizon Hotel for Women. A  
5 total of two witnesses represented the Friends of  
6 the Upper East Side and Historic Districts Council  
7 spoke in favor of the designation. On July 20<sup>th</sup>,  
8 2011, the full board of Manhattan Community Board  
9 8 adopted a resolution in support of the  
10 designation. In August 2011, Council Member  
11 Daniel Garodnick wrote to the Commission  
12 indicating his support for designation. The  
13 Commission received three additional letters and  
14 two e-mails of support, including an e-mail  
15 message on behalf of Place Matters [phonetic].  
16 There were no speakers or letters in opposition to  
17 designation. Commission staff met with the  
18 representative of the owner on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011.  
19 At that meeting, a May calendaring and June public  
20 hearing were agreed upon. Commission staff  
21 remained in communication with the owner regarding  
22 work being done to the building. The owner has  
23 not stated opposition to designation and chose not  
24 to attend the public hearing. On April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012,  
25

1 the Commission voted to designate the building a  
2 New York City individual landmark. The Barbizon  
3 Hotel for Women was built in 1927, '28 as a  
4 residential hotel and clubhouse for single women,  
5 who at the time were moving to New York City in  
6 record numbers to take advantage of new  
7 professional opportunities. The demands for  
8 inexpensive housing for single women led to the  
9 construction of several large residential hotels  
10 in Manhattan. Of these, the Barbizon, which was  
11 equipped with special studio, rehearsal and  
12 concert spaces to attract young women pursuing  
13 careers in the arts became the most renowned. Its  
14 residents included many women who later became  
15 prominent actresses, writers, designers and  
16 professional women, including authors Sylvia  
17 Plath, who wrote about her residence at the  
18 Barbizon Hotel in the Bell Jar. The Barbizon also  
19 promoted women's organizations and arts  
20 organizations, providing meeting space to groups  
21 such as the National Junior League, Arts Council  
22 of New York and women's college clubs. Designed  
23 by the prominent hotel specialists, Murgatroyd and  
24 Ogden, the 23-story Barbizon Hotel is an excellent  
25

1  
2 representative of the 1920s apartment hotel  
3 building and is notable for the high quality of  
4 its design. The Barbizon, which underwent  
5 alterations in the 1980s and '90s was recently  
6 converted into condominiums. It still retains its  
7 significant architectural features and historic  
8 associations. The Commission urges you to affirm  
9 this designation.

10 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very  
11 much. As you heard, Council Member Garodnick  
12 testified in favor of this at the LBC hearing in  
13 support of designation. Any questions on this  
14 item from members of the Committee? No? Seeing  
15 none, thank you. There's no members of the public  
16 signed up to testify. If anyone is here to  
17 testify on this item, please signify so. Seeing  
18 none, we will close the public hearing on this  
19 item as well and proceed to a vote on the two  
20 items that we're voting on today's calendar, Land  
21 Use 636 and 649 and ask our counsel, Christian  
22 Hilton, to call the roll. The Chair recommends a  
23 vote of aye on both.

24 COUNSEL: Chair Lander?

25 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Aye.

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24

COUNSEL: Council Member Sanders?

COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Aye.

COUNSEL: Council Member Mendez?

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Aye.

COUNSEL: Council Member Halloran?

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Aye.

COUNSEL: By a vote of four in the affirmative, none in the negative and no abstentions, L.U. 636 and L.U. 649 are approved and referred to the full Land Use Committee.

CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very much. As noted earlier, we will meet at 9:30 tomorrow on the Dominick Street buildings, so please attend that, and then the full Land Use Committee will meet at 10:00 on the items that were on today's calendar as well as those four. We will hold the vote open for 15 minutes. Jumaane just...

[break in audio]

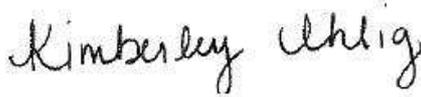
CHAIRPERSON LANDER: - - we are recessing this Committee until 9:30 tomorrow, and with that, this Committee stands in recess.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature

Handwritten signature of Kimberley Uhlig in cursive script, written over a horizontal line.Date 8/5/12