

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING DISPOSITIONS AND CONCESSIONS

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September 19, 2012
Start: 1:49 p.m.
Recess: 4:50 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
STEPHEN LEVIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
James S. Oddo
Margaret Chin
Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
Sara M. Gonzalez

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

Christopher Gonzalez
Assistant Commissioner of Government Affairs
HPD

Frederick Jones

Derrick Robison
President
Tenant Association

Jeff Mandel
Senior Policy Advisor
Deputy Mayor Robert Steel

Alyssa Konon
Executive Vice President
New York City Economic Development Corporation

Gabriella Amabile
Director of Large Scale Planning
Department of Housing Preservation and Development

David Quart
Senior Vice President, Development
NYC EDC

Jerilyn Perine
Executive Director
Citizens Housing and Planning Council

Ricky Leung
Member
Community Board 3

Bob Zuckerman
Executive Director
Lower East Side Business Improvement District

Michael Forrest
Vice President
Lower East Side Business Improvement District

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

Yolanda Donata
Coalition for the Protection of Chinatown and the
Lower East Side

Aurelinda Checo

Rosa Castro

Gigi Li
Chair
Community Board 3

Dominic Berg
Community Board 3

David McWater
Chairperson, Land Use Committee
Community Board 3

David Garza
Executive Director
Henry Street Settlement

Wendy Chung

Josephine Lee
Coalition to Protect Chinatown and the Lower East Side

Sky Wong
Chinese Staff & Workers' Association

Gwen Simpson
NMASS

Vaylateena Jones

Herman Hewitt
Chairperson
Lower East Side People's Mutual Housing

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

Teresa Pedroza
Member
GOLES

Adrienne Chevrestt

Wah Lee
Staff member
Chinese Staff and Workers Association

Jeanette Toomer
GOLES

Mei Rong Song
Chinatown Small Business Alliance

Louise Velez
People First Campaign
NMASS

Rev. Neil Connolly
Pastor
St. Mary's Church

Magdalena Galvan

Maritza Silva-Farrell
Alliance for a Greater New York

Fran Marino

Autatist Senn
Maurice Allen
Local 32BJ

Jonathan Landsman
Wal-Mart Free NYC Coalition

Carmen Negrón
GOLES

Tito Delgado

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

Lisa Davis
Member
GOLES

Gilbert Alicea
Member
GOLES

Yee So Leong

Lucille Carrasquero
Member
Cooper Square Committee

Harriet Cohen
Chair
Seward Park Area Redevelopment Coalition

Rev. Afiya Diane Dawson

Maxine Fee
Chairperson
Cooper Square Mutual Housing Association

Joyce Ravitz
Chairperson
Cooper Square Committee

Anthony Feliciano
District Leader
74th Assembly District

Fred Seiden

Valerio Orselli
Executive Director
Cooper Square Mutual Housing Association

Steve Herrick
Executive Director
Cooper Square Committee

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

Jose Gonzalez
Member
GOLES

Jasmine Garcia

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Good
3 afternoon, welcome to Subcommittee on Planning,
4 Dispositions, and Concessions, I'm Council Member
5 Stephen Levin, Chair of the Subcommittee. I am
6 joined this afternoon by my colleagues James Oddo
7 of Staten Island; Margaret Chin of Manhattan;
8 Chair of Land Use, Leroy Comrie of Queens.

9 We will be hearing several items
10 today, Land Use number 680, Jamaica Project in
11 Queens Community Board 12; Land Use number 681,
12 Hunters Point South Phase 1 in Queens Community
13 Board 2; and Land Use number 688 through 699,
14 related to the Seward Park project in Manhattan
15 Community Board 3. I imagine that that's what
16 most of the folks that have come down today are
17 here for.

18 We are going to hear Land Use
19 number 680, Jamaica Project, first, it should be
20 brief. And on that item, I'm going to ask Chris
21 Gonzalez, Assistant Commissioner at HPD, to
22 testify on behalf [pause] that's 201 through 5,
23 029 HAQ, Land Use number 680, Jamaica Project.
24 Mr. Gonzalez?

25 [Pause]

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CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: All right.

Good afternoon, how you doing?

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good afternoon.

CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: Good

afternoon, Chair Levin, members of the Subcommittee, I am Christopher Gonzalez, Assistant Commissioner of Government Affairs at HPD, and I am joined by Kimberly Darga, HPD's Director of Multifamily Preservation Loan programs and Neighborhood Redevelopment program.

Land Use item 680 consists of a previously approved UDAAP for city-owned property located at 89-06 138th Street, 107-05 Sutphin Boulevard, and 107-08 150th Street, also known as the Jamaica Project. On March 1st, 2006, the Council approved the disposition of two multiple dwellings and one vacant lot to Allen Affordable HDFC through HPD's Neighborhood Redevelopment Program.

Subsequently, on December 21st, 2009, the project was amended when HPD sought the approval of a tax exemption in order to provide added affordability. However, the previously approved tax exemption was never implemented due

2 to a technical error in the resolution.

3 HPD is now before the Council
4 seeking an amended tax exemption in order for the
5 project to move forward. CMS Gennaro--Council
6 Members Gennaro and Wills have reviewed the
7 project and have indicated their support. And
8 we're happy to take any questions you have.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. I do not
10 have any questions on this item, do any of my
11 colleague--

12 [Pause]

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Seeing none, I
14 thank you very much, Commissioner Gonzalez, and I
15 will be asking--calling up a couple of individuals
16 who are here to testify in opposition to the
17 project. Thank you very much for your testimony.

18 CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Like to call up
20 Frederick Jones and Derrick Robinson.

21 [Pause]

22 FREDERICK JONES: Yes, okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Please identify
24 yourself for the record.

25 FREDERICK JONES: Yes, good

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2 afternoon, Council, I'm Frederick Jones, I am a
 3 resident at 107-05 Sutphin Boulevard. Currently,
 4 I have been displaced due to a vacate order at
 5 that premise there and I am currently living in a
 6 homeless shelter at that premise there. And I
 7 request that the Council take a strong look at
 8 this project, a hard look because there is a lot
 9 of procedural defects, there is a lot of adverse
 10 impact on the residents and the community, such as
 11 evictions, displacement, failure to maintain
 12 services, failure to give us counseling services,
 13 legal services in this project. And I request
 14 that the Council look at this hard. I oppose the
 15 project. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
 17 much, Mr. Jones, and we'll be looking--

18 [Pause]

19 FREDERICK JONES: Okay.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --the material
 21 that you provided to the committee and--

22 [Pause]

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --contact
 24 information here--

25 [Pause]

2 | CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --Council
3 | Member Wills and Council Member Gennaro and we'll
4 | be--

5 | [Pause]

6 | FREDERICK JONES: Thank you,
7 | Council--

8 | CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,
9 | thank you.

10 | DERRICK ROBISON: Hello, my name is
11 | Derrick Robison--

12 | SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: [Interposing]
13 | Press the red button, sir.

14 | DERRICK ROBISON: My name is
15 | Derrick Robison--

16 | CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [Interposing]
17 | You have to push the button, make sure the light's
18 | on.

19 | DERRICK ROBISON: I pressed it. My
20 | name is Derrick Robison, I'm the president of the
21 | tenant association of the building. I oppose the
22 | project because we have not even had the
23 | opportunity to be able to review any changes on if
24 | they're trying to change regulatory agreements,
25 | amend things. We were litigation several times,

2 | which we prevailed due to various contractual
3 | instruments that the Council has provided which
4 | has protected the public. And I'm concerned that
5 | whoever comes into this project and takeover this
6 | project, that they consider including the
7 | residents in the design, the development, and the
8 | management of the project.

9 | There was a death in my particular
10 | building due to a failure to manage the buildings
11 | properly. There has not even been an
12 | investigation by HPD on this drowning, which was
13 | caused by whoever was in control of the building,
14 | all parties, including--I blame HPD as well as the
15 | present administrators of the project. We
16 | requested an investigation on this in exactly what
17 | is going on because it could have been me. I'm
18 | presently on dialysis, okay, that person also was
19 | a disabled person.

20 | But my main thing is that if anyone
21 | is to come into control of the premises, that
22 | there is a process where they listen to the
23 | residents and they maintain the coop--relationship
24 | and that they comply with all laws, including
25 | court orders.

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2 And that you really need to take a
3 hard look at this and put protections on the
4 public.

5 Also, the last hearing that I
6 remember, which I testified in front of, they
7 requested tax abatements which you're ineligible
8 if a project is defaulted on the regulatory
9 agreement, and you need to investigate why HPD
10 requested tax abatements when the project was
11 defaulted.

12 And that's pretty much my position.
13 I oppose it because we have not had proper input
14 on the project I'm not saying that whoever make
15 be coming into the posit may not have the capacity
16 to move it forward, but since we don't have any
17 input I'm concerned about what kind of culture is
18 that. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
20 much. Again, we'll be looking at this, we will
21 not be voting on this item today, so I'd be happy
22 to be in contact with--

23 [Pause]

24 DERRICK ROBISON: Okay.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very

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much for your testimony, gentlemen.

DERRICK ROBISON: Thank you,
Council.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We're going to
close the hearing on Jamaica Project, Land Use
number 680, not be voting today.

We have been joined by Council
Member and Committee member Sara Gonzalez of
Brooklyn.

We'll be laying Land Use number
681, Hunters Point South Phase One, by to a future
hearing. [Pause] Close the hearing on both
Hunters Point South and [pause] Project at this
point and open the hearing on Land Use numbers 688
through 699, all Land Use items related to the
Seward Park Project.

I would like to call up on behalf
of [pause] pardon me, David Quart from New York
City Economic Development Corporation, Gabriella
Amabile of HPD, Jeff Mandel from Deputy Mayor
Robert Steel's office, and Alyssa Konon of New
York City ED [pause] provide testimony on Seward
Park.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Anybody else has

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copies--

[Off mic]

ALYSSA KONON: They're all together.

[Off mic]

ALYSSA KONON: Yes, thank you.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: When the light is on, the mic is on. Who is speaking first?

[Off mic]

JEFF MANDEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Actually, before we start your testimony, I would actually like to ask Council Member Margaret Chin, whose district the project is in, to deliver some opening remarks. Council Member Chin

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, thank you, Chair Levin. I am Council Member Chin, representative for District 1, Lower Manhattan. I would like to thank my colleague, Council Member Steve Levin, and the Member of the Subcommittee for calling this meeting today. I would also like to thank the Council's Land Use division especially Gail Benjamin, Christian Hylton, and Ann McCoy for their guidance throughout this ULURP

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2 process.

3 Today, we will hear from the Lower
4 East Side community members, advocates, former
5 site tenants, and the City about plan to renew,
6 revitalize, and rebuild the Seward Park Urban
7 Renewal site. These parcel of land located mainly
8 below Delancey Street are part of the few
9 remaining development opportunity on the Lower
10 East Side.

11 For 43 years these parcel of land
12 sat vacant, used as parking lots, at best, all the
13 while, just north of SPURA a neighborhood now
14 famous for its nightlife and restaurant scene was
15 growing. Today, the value of this publicly owned
16 land is now high and developers in the city are
17 anxious to develop it.

18 I'm here today to say that the
19 value of the Seward Park Urban Renewal site cannot
20 be measured in dollars. The value can only be
21 measured in how much affordable housing it can
22 provide a community that has some of the worst
23 overcrowding in the city. The value can only be
24 measured in how many homes for senior it can
25 provide for a community that's rapidly aging in

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2 place. And the value can only be measured by how
3 much affordable incubator space it can provide for
4 start up businesses, techs, and a generation of
5 creative minds. The value of the Seward Park
6 Urban Renewal site can only be measured in how
7 well we use this piece of public land to serve the
8 community in which it resides. This is a once-in-
9 a-lifetime opportunity for the City to seriously
10 look at the issue that threaten the Lower East
11 Side and Chinatown communities and to find the
12 solution in the Seward Park site.

13 The City is already made a
14 commitment to provide for 50% affordable housing
15 on the site. This was a product of community
16 consensus. The community agreed to 50% market and
17 50% affordable. I believe this is fair and
18 necessary balance to make sure that the Seward
19 Park site move forward and get built. In May of
20 this year, I was proud to announce a commitment
21 from the City Hall to permanently affordability on
22 the SPURA site. This mean that affordable housing
23 unit will not age out after 30 years or 60 years.
24 It means that the affordable housing will remain
25 affordable in perpetuity. This was a huge victory

1 that set the stage for the unanimous--

2 [Applause]

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: --approval of
4 the SPURA site by Community Board 3.

5 Throughout this process, I have
6 remained committed to maximizing the number of
7 affordable housing unit on the site. As this
8 process continues, I will find ways to increase
9 the number of affordable units and to make smarter
10 use of our space on the SPURA site, including
11 let's look at some more smaller affordable units,
12 especially for seniors; requiring developers to
13 apply the subsidy they receive to market rate
14 units versus unit that already been designated as
15 affordable units; prioritize developers who want
16 to build more affordable housing, in other words,
17 those who exceeds the standards set by the RFP;
18 and prioritize developers who is committed to
19 building affordable housing first, because we need
20 affordable housing now, not later.

21 I know a lot has been said about
22 the allocation of the affordable unit on the SPURA
23 site. Of the 450 affordable units, 30% are
24 reserved for low-income individuals making less
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2 than \$40,000 a year and 10% of these units are set
3 aside for seniors; the rest of the 20% are
4 currently allocated for middle and moderate income
5 households. This unit could be affordable to
6 families. For example, of a teacher making an
7 annual salary of 60,000 and the firefighter make
8 an annual salary of 50,000 with their two
9 children.

10 It is imperative that SPURA provide
11 housing for middle income, moderate income, and
12 working families because a lot of the middle
13 income and moderate income family with children
14 cannot afford to rent two or three bedroom
15 apartments on the Lower East Side right now.
16 These units are renting for over \$5,000 or \$7,000
17 in our community and we need an array of
18 affordable housing options for diverse groups of
19 New Yorkers and working families.

20 Today I also want to publicly state
21 my opposition to the inclusion of a hotel on site
22 two. There is no need for another hotel on the
23 Lower East Side. Our hotel market--

24 [Applause]

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Ladies and

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gentlemen--

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: --is already-

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CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --please keep your applause down, thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Our hotel market is already oversaturated and hotels are sitting half built, for example, on Ludlow Street and Archer Street. What we need on site two, I think more appropriately, is commercial office space, we need an anchor that brings people to the Lower East Side, not just for the nightlife, but during the daytime as well. So I urge the City to think about building commercial office build that can house start up business incubators for tech, fashions, arts industries on the Lower East Side.

This is where creative minds want to be. There is a natural connection between Williamsburg and DUMBO, a neighborhood shared by Chair Levin, and my colleague, Council Member Levin, Cornell University is going to be on Governors Island--I mean, Roosevelt Island, and the SPURA site could be a site that can connect all of them.

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2 Today, will we hear from members of
3 Community Board 3, the Lower East Side BID, and
4 the Lower East Side Employment Network, who will
5 address specific concern, including the need for a
6 public school, the concern about the big box
7 store, local hiring and jobs, local developers as
8 related to the Seward Park Urban Renewal ULURP.

9 This rehearing is an opportunity
10 for all of you to make your voices heard. As this
11 process continues, we will be guided by what we
12 hear today and what is submitted into the records.
13 If for any reason you cannot stay for the duration
14 of the hearing please talk to the committee staff
15 about submitting written testimony for the record.
16 I want you to know that this process continues and
17 this will continue opportunity for community input
18 during the RFP process.

19 I especially want to recognize the
20 member of Community Board 3, both public members
21 and appointed members and their district manager,
22 Susan Stetzer, and the former and current chair,
23 David McWater, Dominic Pisciotta, and Gigi Li,
24 because for all your hard work, for your countless
25 meetings, and your sweat and tears you have shed

2 | for this project. Without the planning guideline
3 | carefully crafted by Community Board 3, we
4 | wouldn't be here today. So I wanted to thank all
5 | of you for coming here and your presence is a
6 | testament to your commitment to the love for the
7 | Lower East Side. I know this has been very
8 | personal to many of you and this long struggle for
9 | many years, and I wanted you to thank you for
10 | being here today. Thank you, Chair Levin.

11 | [Applause]

12 | CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
13 | much, Council Member Chin. And I'll allow the
14 | applause for Council Member Chin but from here on
15 | out, I'm going to ask everyone in the audience if
16 | you approve of something that is said, if you
17 | could do this, the Occupy Wall Street sign of
18 | approval; and if you disapprove, you could do
19 | that, but we want to keep the disturbances to a
20 | minimum.

21 | And I do want to thank everyone
22 | that has come out. I, just as a disclaimer, this
23 | is going to be a long hearing and I know that a
24 | lot of people in this room have waited a long time
25 | to have the opportunity to testify before the City

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2 Council on this particular project, some waiting
3 over 40 years. So I do appreciate your patience,
4 and if--the fewer disturbances, the quicker we'll
5 be able to get through the hearing. But,
6 obviously, with a full house like we have today,
7 it's going to take some time.

8 So with that, I would like to turn
9 it over to representatives from New York City
10 Economic Development Corporation and Housing
11 Preservation and Development to testify on this
12 item. Thank you.

13 JEFF MANDEL: Okay. Good
14 afternoon, I'm Jeff Mandel, Senior Policy Advisor
15 to Deputy Mayor for Economic Development Robert
16 Steel, and I'm here today to speak in support of
17 this project on behalf of the Bloomberg
18 Administration.

19 First of all, thank you, Chair
20 Levin, Chair Comrie, and the Committee, for the
21 opportunity to present. And thank you, Council
22 Member Chin, and your staff for all that you have
23 done to advance this project, as well as to the
24 staff of the Speaker's office. And, of course, we
25 are grateful to the leadership of Community Board

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2 3, who are here today and it's land use committee,
3 who have labored literally for years in order to
4 pave the way forward for the, long overdue,
5 redevelopment of the historic Seward Park
6 extension sites.

7 Seward Park mixed use development
8 project is all of our opportunity to help ensure
9 that the much-needed housing, retail, and
10 development that has eluded this area for nearly
11 45 years can come to fruition, and we are pleased
12 to submit the project for your consideration. It
13 contemplates as much as 1.65 million square feet
14 of mixed use, mixed income development at the foot
15 of the Williamsburg Bridge in Manhattan,
16 transforming sites cleared pursuant to an urban
17 renewal designation from 1965, but which sites
18 have languished since then, most recently serving
19 as surface parking lots. And as many of you know,
20 there have been several prior unconsummated
21 efforts to redevelop this area.

22 But the reason that we have been
23 able to make progress over the last few years is
24 because of the leadership of the local Community
25 Board. They have made the difference on this go

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2 around, they have demonstrated unfailing
3 dedication to ensure that these lots do not
4 continue to sit vacant; they've convened a broad
5 set of stakeholders; they have worked tirelessly
6 for years transcending long-standing disagreements
7 in order to deliver a set of actionable ambitions.
8 And building on that success, they were able to
9 unanimously pass a resolution approving this ULURP
10 application, with conditions, followed by support
11 from the Manhattan Borough President and the City
12 Planning Commission.

13 We are respectfully hopeful that
14 your Committee and then the Council at large will
15 provide the final series of approvals that this
16 project needs in order to take the leap from half-
17 century ambition to reality. My colleagues from
18 the New York City Economic Development Corporation
19 and HPD will go into further details on the
20 project. Thank you again.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Mr.
22 Mandel.

23 ALYSSA KONON: Good afternoon, my
24 name is Alyssa Konon, I'm an executive vice
25 president at the New York City Economic

1
2 Development Corporation.

3 The Seward Park sites lie in the
4 intersection of Essex and Delancey Street and
5 total about six acres. For orientation, Sites 1
6 through 6 are south of Delancey Street, and Sites
7 8, 9, and 10 are north of Delancey.

8 The remarkable aspect of Community
9 Board 3's consensus guidelines was the definition
10 of a program. This program articulated that 60%
11 of the project should be residential and 40%
12 should be commercial and other community uses.
13 And of those residential uses, 50% of the units
14 would be affordable.

15 The City has taken this historic
16 agreement as the underpinning to our application,
17 layering on Community Board 3's urban design
18 guidelines, also unanimously passed, and created a
19 framework in anticipation of future developers for
20 what we aspire will become a vibrant community,
21 wholly part of the cloth of the Lower East Side,
22 and in doing so, the project will create 900 units
23 of housing, retail activity where now there is
24 none, the opportunity for office space and
25 community facilities, and a new neighborhood park,

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2 resulting in approximately 1,000 construction jobs
3 and upwards towards 5,000 permanent jobs.

4 At the crossroads of Essex and
5 Delancey Street, Site 2 is in a prominent
6 location. We conceive of the site as one that can
7 accommodate more density and is having the
8 greatest opportunity for an all-commercial
9 building, should the market exist for that.

10 Delancey Street, a major thoroughfare--250 feet at
11 its widest--the gateway to the Williamsburg Bridge
12 is conceived of as a street that is appropriate
13 for more intense use, including a strong
14 commercial presence on the ground floor.

15 Street life on Delancey will be
16 shaped by three noteworthy elements. There will
17 be a requirement for at least two storefronts per
18 block face, there are transparency requirements,
19 and the New York City Department of Transportation
20 will be--is in the midst of implementing a series
21 of improvements to improve safety for pedestrians,
22 including shortening crossing distances, sidewalk
23 extensions, plantings, and signal timing changes.

24 And lastly on Site 2, this
25 crossroads of Essex and Delancey, we are proposing

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2 that the Essex Street Market be expanded and
3 located on the ground floor. The Essex Street
4 Market is currently on Site 9, where it's very
5 space constrained and with very little visibility
6 from the street. A new expanded and relocated
7 Essex Street Market on Site 2 provides the
8 opportunity to make it a more visible market
9 that's better integrated into the public realm,
10 promising new capital investment and the vendors
11 modern, energy efficient space. The market would
12 be 50% larger, creating new business opportunities
13 for existing vendors and new entrepreneurial
14 opportunities, as well as a vibrant entranceway to
15 the project. The market would remain publicly
16 owned and operated, as it is today.

17 Broome Street, just south and
18 parallel to Delancey Street, would be developed at
19 a lower scale with a more of a neighborhood feel,
20 extending the smaller scale retail environment
21 from the west and also echoing the historic use of
22 this corridor. To do this, we're requiring at
23 least three stores per block along Broome Street,
24 parking and loading entrances will be located on
25 the side streets off of Broome Street, and a new

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2 10,000 square foot open space will be built on
3 Broome Street, creating a neighborhood draw and
4 amenity at the heart of the project. There'll be
5 a public design process after the RFP that will
6 allow the community to articulate its desires for
7 exactly how the space is designed. And parking
8 will be underground, accommodating the Community
9 Board's request that the project include
10 approximately the same number of public parking
11 spaces that currently exist.

12 And now my colleague from HPD will
13 discuss the housing program in more detail. Thank
14 you.

15 GABRIELLA AMABILE: Good afternoon,
16 Council Members, my name is Gabriella Amabile and
17 I'm the Director of Large Scale Planning at the
18 Department of Housing Preservation and
19 Development, and I'm pleased to be before you
20 today to testify about the Seward Park development
21 project.

22 HPD is excited by the progress
23 we've made so far in this project and we believe
24 that this is a momentous occasion for our agency,
25 the City team, and the neighborhood. We worked

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2 very closely with the Community Board as they
 3 developed their housing proposal for Seward Park,
 4 and, as a result of their tremendous effort, this
 5 housing program directly reflects their
 6 guidelines. We will be continuing our partnership
 7 into the future phases of this project, including
 8 our ongoing work with the Community Board and
 9 Council Member Chin's office regarding outreach to
 10 help identify and work with former site tenants.

11 A key component of this
 12 redevelopment plan is affordable housing, and the
 13 proposed project contains 900 units of housing,
 14 half of which will be affordable to individuals
 15 and families at a range of incomes from low to
 16 middle. Importantly, because of the avid support
 17 and advocacy of Council Members Chin and Mendez,
 18 the affordable housing will be permanently
 19 affordable.

20 Fully consistent with the CB 3
 21 guidelines, the program requires 20% low-income
 22 units, 10% senior units, 10% moderate income
 23 units, and 10% middle income units. The current
 24 approximate incomes for these ranges are up to
 25 49,000 for a family of four, or 34,000 for an

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2 individual, for the low income range; up to
3 107,000 for a family of four, or 75,000 for an
4 individual, for the moderate income range; and up
5 to 136,000 for a family of four, or 95,000 for an
6 individual, for the middle income range. And
7 these numbers are based on the New York City area
8 median income provided by HUD.

9 This affordable housing also
10 complements the goals of the New Housing
11 Marketplace Plan, Mayor Bloomberg's plan to create
12 or preserve 165,000 units of affordable housing,
13 and we are looking forward to implementing it with
14 the support of the City Council and the local
15 community.

16 And I'll turn it over to my
17 colleague David Quart from NYC EDC.

18 DAVID QUART: Thank you. My name
19 is David Quart, I'm a senior vice president in the
20 Development department at EDC.

21 Under today's existing zoning, it
22 is likely a developer would build tower-in-the-
23 park type buildings, potentially resulting in what
24 is shown in this illustrative drawing. To address
25 the issue of urban design, the City engaged the

1
2 firm of Beyer, Blinder, Belle, who facilitated a
3 public process engaging hundreds of community
4 members in an interactive series of design
5 workshops and a large open house event using site
6 models to explore different design ideas. From
7 this effort, a design vision emerged and the CB
8 adopted urban design guidelines.

9 These guidelines, and the City's
10 subsequent ULURP application, proposed a set of
11 design principles and building forms which
12 combined the best aspects of the surrounding
13 neighborhoods. They extend the walkable street
14 grid, human-scaled street walls, and active street
15 fronts, which currently exist north of Delancey
16 and west of Essex, they also draw on the character
17 of the towers-in-the-park south of Delancey and
18 Grant Streets to provide light, air, views, and a
19 separation between towers.

20 This is an illustration of the
21 desired urban form with heights capped at about 14
22 stories on most sites, with the exception of Sites
23 2 and 4, which are capped at approximately 24
24 stories.

25 The ULURP actions being requested

1
2 would accomplish the programmatic and urban design
3 goals of the project as we've just discussed. The
4 bulk of the application consists of the large-
5 scale development special permits, which is the
6 zoning mechanism that will allow the project to be
7 built in accordance with the Community Board's
8 urban design principles.

9 Other major actions include a
10 commercial overlay to ensure the vibrant active
11 ground floor use as described, site disposition,
12 special permits to allow for underground parking,
13 and a mapping application to ensure that the
14 streets as they exist today are accurately
15 reflected on the official City map.

16 So just to briefly recap where
17 we've been, years of groundwork by the Community
18 Board and their land use committee which led to
19 passing two sets of guidelines last year. This
20 allowed for the City to officially proceed with
21 the environmental review process and the ULURP
22 application. If the ULURP is approved, the City
23 will begin an RFP process to solicit proposals for
24 developments under the approvals and select one or
25 more developers to implement the proposed vision.

1
2 As part of the RFP process, the
3 City is committed to working with the Community
4 Board forum task force that will have substantive
5 input on the RFP. The City will be incorporating
6 community priorities into the RFP selection in a
7 robust way. The responsiveness to the preferences
8 identified by the community task force will be one
9 of the competitive selection criteria. These and
10 other interactions with the community are vital to
11 the success of this development plan and the City
12 looks forward to our continued partnership with
13 the local community. Thank you very much.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Is
15 that all in the testimony to present? Okay. So
16 we'll start with some questions, and I will turn
17 it over to Council Member Chin in a second. My
18 first question, though--and I think that this
19 would be helpful in providing a context for this
20 proposal. If you could give us, and give for the
21 record to give to the public, a brief synopsis of
22 what has happened over the last 43 years here.
23 Because, obviously, we all know what the physical
24 configuration is today, and so I realize that
25 there's been controversies, you know, over the

1
2 past, you know, couple of generations at this
3 point, but just I think it would be helpful for
4 the public to understand, kind of, prior to 2008,
5 kind of, give us a little bit of a synopsis of the
6 urban renewal area process and how that grew to
7 be--

8 [Pause]

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --and if you--

10 [Pause]

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --necessarily
12 give an entire tome on it, but if just a synopsis.

13 ALYSSA KONON: I do think that some
14 of the speakers who will be speaking today
15 actually have more of the history than we do. I
16 think all of us sitting here have been working on
17 it over the last four years and not the last 40
18 years. What we do understand is that, as Jeff
19 articulated, there was an urban renewal plan
20 passed in 1965, was actually at the time of the
21 lower express--Lower Manhattan Expressway was
22 proposed and so there was both housing and the
23 expressway proposed for this area. It was
24 subsequently cleared for urban renewal purposes,
25 and since then, as I understand it, there has been

1
2 controversy over what should be developed here,
3 how much housing, for whom, and issues like that.
4 I don't know if any of my colleagues want to add
5 anything.

6 JEFF MANDEL: I would just note
7 that it's my understanding, at least, that the
8 amount of affordable housing that's going to be
9 created as part of this--that would be with, your
10 and your colleagues' approval, created through
11 this process would be more than, I believe, any of
12 the other historic proposals that have been
13 surfaced over the years.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And I think one
15 area of concern that I have and that has come to
16 my attention has been those families that were
17 displaced through the urban renewal process way
18 back when, that they and that their families,
19 their descendents, if the individuals have
20 deceased since then, you know, have the ability to
21 partake in the benefits of this renaissance.

22 GABRIELLA AMABILE: This is
23 something that we've been working on closely with-

24 -

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [Interposing]

1
2 Sorry, if you could identify your name for the
3 record, I'm sorry--

4 [Crosstalk]

5 GABRIELLA AMABILE: Oh, Gabriella
6 Amabile with HPD. This is something we've been
7 working closely with community members and the
8 Council Member's office on, it's an issue that's
9 really clearly of paramount importance to the
10 community. And we've been working on coming up
11 with methodologies for outreach and getting the
12 word out and really doing tremendous efforts
13 towards identifying former site tenants and
14 getting information to them. And I had some good
15 news from my counterpart at the community level,
16 Harriet Cohen, today about some additional site
17 tenants that have been identified. As you can
18 imagine, since so many years have passed, this is
19 really a big effort to try and, you know, get as
20 many people identified and the word out about
21 housing opportunities that will arise here, should
22 this plan be approved.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. I'm
24 going to turn it over to Council Member Chin for a
25 series of questions.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you,
3 Chair. I just wanted to continue the question
4 about site tenants. Has HPD started to, kind of,
5 put together the criterias? Because, I mean, the
6 site tenants, they still would have to meet the
7 income level, I--

8 GABRIELLA AMABILE: [Interposing]
9 Yeah--sorry.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So I think
11 also in terms of how all the units of housing be
12 available to former site tenant, not just the
13 affordable units, but also the non-affordable
14 units, or if the people are making good income and
15 they want to come back. I mean, so that have you
16 kind of looked at other examples to set forth some
17 criterias and guideline to how to, not just reach
18 out to former site tenants, but once you get them,
19 what's the process, and how do we make sure that
20 they will have the opportunity, but at the same
21 time that we also have opportunity for people who
22 are still in the neighborhood right now.

23 GABRIELLA AMABILE: So you raise a
24 very good points--identify myself again, is that
25 every time? This is--

1

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [Interposing]
3 Unfortunately, yeah.

4 GABRIELLA AMABILE: Okay. Sorry,
5 just get the--Gabriella Amabile from HPD. So,
6 Council Member, you raise a very good point about
7 income qualification for the affordable unit. So
8 some people that used to live here may not income
9 qualify, and that would be something that we would
10 have to consider. Obviously, the affordable units
11 have to be for people making the appropriate
12 incomes. So that's one thing that will have to
13 remain in place.

14 And, as you say, there may be
15 market rate units that people may be interested in
16 and we would definitely do our best to connect
17 market rate units to former site tenants, should
18 there be an interest in that housing opportunity
19 as well.

20 What was the second part of your
21 question?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: What are some
23 of the, sort, of criterias for--

24 GABRIELLA AMABILE: [Interposing]
25 Right. So this is something, again, we want to

1
2 continue to work with your office and the
3 Community Board on just being as broad as possible
4 so that people can use documentation to identify
5 their status as former site tenants. We need to
6 be really doing a lot of--and it's great that
7 we're starting now, years before this housing will
8 actually be built because it takes some time for
9 these things to be developed, but giving people an
10 opportunity to begin preparing to give themselves
11 their proper identification, to help determine the
12 fact that they are former site tenants. And we'll
13 be working very transparently with your office and
14 with the Community Board to make sure these
15 criteria are met.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I mean, the
17 thing is, I think some of the community's concerns
18 are because there's so many former site tenants
19 that if they all come back, there will be
20 absolutely no opportunity for other tenants, I
21 mean, who are living in the community now. So I
22 think that's--HPD really have to kind of work with
23 the community to develop the criteria, but also to
24 see how you, sort of, accommodate former site
25 tenants, but at the same time also create some

1
2 opportunity for tenants who are living in
3 overcrowded conditions, in terms of setting
4 certain priorities. I know Community Board 3, the
5 catchment area has 50% priority of the units. So
6 I think those discussions we need to call to
7 continue so that we make sure that everyone has an
8 opportunity on the site.

9 The other question that I wanted to
10 raise is the whole area median income because what
11 HPD is using, you're talking about is the HUD
12 criteria, which is much higher than the household
13 area median income of Community Board 3, right? I
14 mean, from what we know, is like, for example, in
15 2011 data that we're able to get, the area median
16 income for the greater city area is over \$76,000,
17 but in Community Board 3 area, it's only 43,000.
18 So when we're looking at providing the affordable
19 housing, especially on the lower income level,
20 than we really need to look at the household
21 income, the area median income, of the Community
22 Board 3 area to make sure that those households
23 will have the opportunity for the low-income
24 units. So how much flexibility you have in terms
25 of the area median income?

1
2 GABRIELLA AMABILE: So this is an
3 issue we encounter with our developments citywide,
4 it's a common question that I get wherever I am
5 speaking about developments in New York City.
6 Unfortunately, this is the number that we are
7 required to work with if we're going to use a
8 federal source of financing. So, for example, the
9 low income housing tax credit is pegged to the AMI
10 that's provided by HUD. That being said, it
11 doesn't preclude us from having housing units
12 within those bands at a range of incomes and then
13 we try and serve as many people from the local
14 community as possible, but the actual AMI is set
15 by the federal government and we have to use that
16 in order to tap into those really valuable funding
17 sources.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: But in the
19 RFP process, you can sort of give priorities to
20 developer who can do affordable at a lower AMI,
21 right?

22 GABRIELLA AMABILE: Yes, this is
23 Gabriella Amabile. So yes, absolutely, as you
24 say, we can definitely have--and that I imagine
25 will be part of the Community Board's input during

1
2 the RFP drafting process, looking, that within
3 these bands, how much can we do to provide housing
4 units for deeper levels of affordability within
5 the bands.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And when you
7 talk about earlier about you had some good news
8 about former site tenants, I mean, how many former
9 site tenants have you identified so far?

10 GABRIELLA AMABILE: This is
11 Gabriella Amabile. I don't have--

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [Interposing]
13 You don't have to do it every time.

14 GABRIELLA AMABILE: Okay. Thank
15 you, Council Member. I don't have a specific
16 number right now, but it's an ongoing effort.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I thought you
18 said you had some good news, I thought you had
19 some--

20 GABRIELLA AMABILE: [Interposing]
21 Well I mean, I would leave it to Harriet to share
22 her good news, but--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [Interposing]
24 Oh, okay, all right. So maybe in her testimony.
25 I mean, you heard that what I talked about earlier

1
2 about Site 2, and I think that it would be good to
3 have it on record 'cause I didn't hear the
4 testimony from EDC about ensuring the relocations
5 of the vendors who are at the Essex Street Market
6 right now in terms of helping to move them to the
7 new site and providing the same affordable rent
8 and the same criterias that they have right now.

9 ALYSSA KONON: This is Alyssa Konon
10 from EDC. The Essex Street Market vendors who are
11 currently on Site 9 and how that would work in
12 terms of a move to Site 2, for clarification, the
13 move wouldn't happen until a building is built at
14 Site 2. All of the vendors that are currently at
15 Site 9 now will be offered a space at Site 2 at
16 commensurate rents to what they're paying now.

17 I think you asked about the moving
18 costs and how that would happen as well. Right
19 now, what we're doing, we're doing two things
20 right now, this summer we put out a survey to all
21 of the vendors to survey them on the costs of
22 moving and what that would entail. We've gotten a
23 lot of the responses back. It needs to be put
24 together with what the design in the new Site 2
25 building will be as well, and so on parallel what

1
2 we've done is we've also hired a consultant who is
3 working with the Essex Street Market vendors and
4 with the City to start to put together the design
5 criteria so that when we go out with an RFP in
6 January, that we can articulate exactly what we
7 want the space to look like. And so they're going
8 to have input on what the design looks like, but
9 also it gives us more information about if they're
10 moving, what kinds of equipment needs to be moved
11 and what things don't need to be moved. And so
12 we're working right now to finalize that number so
13 we have an idea of what it is.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: While I have
15 you here, I think the other concern that you're
16 going to hear later is that we want more retail
17 diversity in this area and also more opportunity
18 for small businesses so there is a concern about
19 the big box stores coming in. So how can we
20 ensure that there will be opportunities for small
21 businesses at rent that is affordable that they
22 can expand and continue in the Lower East Side
23 community on this site?

24 ALYSSA KONON: A good segue there,
25 and Essex Street Market, as you know, will be 50%

1
2 larger so it will be opportunities for new
3 vendors. Affordable rentals prices, just for the
4 record, the Essex Street Market is a breakeven
5 enterprise, it's not something that we make money
6 on so the rents there are quite affordable and
7 provides a new opportunity for new vendors. And
8 as a point of information, the current vendors at
9 the Essex Street Market, almost all of them
10 started there and this remains one of their
11 primary points of business.

12 In terms of retail diversity and
13 trying to grow that, I mean, I think that one of
14 the--it's something that we've continued to hear,
15 both from yourself as well as the Community Board,
16 it's something that we think is the kind of thing
17 that we can incorporate in the drafting of the RFP
18 as a way to articulate some of those goals. We
19 also think that on the ground floor, as I spoke to
20 earlier, that we have a number of requirements
21 that start to speak to the kind of diversity that
22 people would like to see, including the
23 storefront--the number of storefronts that are
24 required, we have two required, at least two on
25 Delancey and three on Broome, as well as the Essex

1

2 Street Market obviously creating the sort of
3 ground floor character on Delancey and Essex.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And one last
5 question is on the RFP, looking at site 8, 9, and
6 10, they are the smallest site, are they going to
7 be also included in the invitation to the RFP?

8 ALYSSA KONON: Absolutely.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay. Chair
10 Levin, I think I'm going to stop the questioning
11 now so that we can hear more testimony from the
12 public, but I do urge all of you to stay so that
13 if we have questions in the middle we can call you
14 back.

15 And I just wanted to also thank the
16 project manager in the land use division, Amy
17 Levitan for her help on this process. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Actually,
19 before you go, I just have a couple things I want
20 to follow up on. Chair Comrie, do you have any
21 questions?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I have a
23 couple--

24 [Pause]

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So just

1
2 something that is a concern for me, and we had
3 spoken about this previously, is senior housing
4 and if you can explain to the Committee and to the
5 public how--what the plan of attack is with regard
6 to senior housing. It's a very difficult
7 situation throughout New York City and throughout
8 the country because, as you know, the senior
9 housing is usually financed, or at least for many
10 years has been financed through the federal HUD
11 202 program, which relies upon Section 8 subsidy
12 and for ongoing rental assistance, and has become
13 increasingly difficult to finance for the senior
14 population. And at this point in time, as a city,
15 we're meeting about, I think it's 1/1000th of the
16 need as the baby boomer generation--

17 [Pause]

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --to age into
19 senior citizenship, the need is greater and the
20 resources are less. So if you could maybe talk a
21 little bit about how we plan to attack the senior
22 housing issue, because I think that could be
23 helpful for other developments across New York
24 City.

25 GABRIELLA AMABILE: This is

1
2 Gabriella Amabile from HPD. So as you say, the
3 need for senior housing is really great and very
4 large in this area as well, so we think it's a
5 very important component of this plan that we're
6 having it as a requirement of the housing. Two-
7 oh-two funding, as you know, is from HUD and we
8 hope to see a good outcome in this election this
9 fall for a president that will continue to support
10 the needs of affordable housing, especially
11 affordable housing for seniors, so we are
12 optimistic that that'll be a resource that we'll
13 be able to tap into. The state has also, at
14 times, provided financing for senior housing and
15 it's a commitment that HPD is making to this
16 project to make this component work.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And that's
18 something that you're comfortable will be honored
19 by future administrations, if it's--

20 GABRIELLA AMABILE: [Interposing]
21 Yes, it's part of the application so it will be
22 part of the project, should it be approved.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
24 much, Ms. Amabile. I wanted to ask just a little
25 bit about traffic and congestion on Delancey

1

2 Street.

3 [Pause]

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --I represent a
5 district right across the Williamsburg Bridge and
6 I drive a car and sometimes I drive a car over the
7 Williamsburg Bridge and sometimes it's--the
8 traffic starts in Brooklyn to get over to Delancey
9 Street. And so with the redevelopment of this
10 scale, I'm assuming there are going to be impacts,
11 construction impacts and the like. And I want to
12 talk a little bit about how DOT has played a role
13 at this point and how we can look to mitigate
14 those impacts because they will affect--you know,
15 they'll have a ripple effect and affect, kind of,
16 commuters throughout the city that do use the
17 Williamsburg Bridge to get into--

18 [Pause]

19 DAVID QUART: David Quart from EDC.
20 Yes, of course, you're correct, the traffic on
21 Delancey is intense, it is an approach and an exit
22 to Williamsburg Bridge, as many of the bridges
23 across the city, sort of, let out onto streets
24 with traffic lights as opposed to highways. We
25 have been coordinating with City DOT, certainly

1
2 our EIS took a very extensive and robust look at
3 all of the intersections in the area. There are a
4 number of impacts, several of the impacts are able
5 to be mitigated with standard mitigation measures,
6 such as signal timing, striping, of the like.

7 There are other impacts which were unable to be
8 mitigated. I think it's important to keep in mind
9 that, because of the existing congestion on
10 Delancey Street, even the addition of, you know,
11 four or five cars, in some instances, tips the
12 scale towards an impact, so it is a congested
13 area.

14 At the same time, there has been a
15 lot of concern from the community and others about
16 pedestrian safety in this area. As my colleague
17 Alyssa stated in her testimony, Delancey Street is
18 250 feet at its widest, extremely wide street with
19 all of the traffic, and so something that we've
20 been discussing with DOT. And DOT did in response
21 to community concerns was to implement this
22 pedestrian safety plan to minimize crossing
23 distances and make sure that folks can be walking
24 and crossing Delancey Street in the safest way
25 possible. That's certainly been a community

1
2 priority. So I think, you know, there's a
3 balancing act here, it's a congested area, but
4 also ensuring that the pedestrian safety is
5 something that's critical to the population in the
6 Lower East Side.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And I'm
8 assuming that that also goes for cyclists as well
9 in terms of measures to provide safety to
10 pedestrians, that the entrance onto the bridge
11 there for cyclists is something that's being taken
12 into account as well.

13 DAVID QUART: Yeah, City DOT has
14 been looking at that as well and looking at ways
15 they can make that safe and ensure that pedestrian
16 cyclists conflicts are minimized.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.
18 Chair Comrie.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay. Good
20 afternoon. I just wanted to get an idea on what
21 the actual numbers were for the breakdown on
22 income for the area median income and what that
23 would mean at 20%, 10%. What kind of dollars,
24 would that mean for the senior housing? And I
25 mean, not just for the senior housing, but for the

1
2 50% affordable, what is that breakdown and what do
3 those dollars really mean?

4 GABRIELLA AMABILE: So the income
5 bands are in compliance with Community Board 3's
6 guidelines and the low-income range is up to
7 49,000 for a family of four, or 34,000 for an
8 individual; moderate income is up to 107,000 for a
9 family of four, or 75,000 for an individual; and
10 middle income is up to 136,000 for a family of
11 four, or 95,000 for an individual. And the senior
12 housing would be compliant with any funding
13 sources. So, for example, the 202 funding source
14 would be a low-income senior fall in to that band
15 as well.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: And those
17 are the guidelines that you have to have to follow
18 the federal income guidelines or the--

19 GABRIELLA AMABILE: Right.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: --the
21 guidelines to do the... Is it a possibility to
22 lower those numbers and under what scheme could--
23 under what proposal could those numbers be
24 lowered? 'Cause those numbers sound higher than
25 the income of the affected population.

1
2 GABRIELLA AMABILE: So those income
3 levels would be the outer reaches of the bands as
4 prescribed by the guidelines that we're following
5 in our program, and within those bands respondents
6 to the RFP could propose multiple tiers of
7 affordability, so that would be a way of
8 diversifying the incomes of the families and
9 individuals reached by the housing that we're
10 proposing to build here.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: So there is
12 an opportunity for the developers to make it
13 lower, depending on how much they are--have an
14 ability to write the proposal to meet those
15 federal or loan guidelines.

16 GABRIELLA AMABILE: Right, I mean,
17 they would have to comply, again, with any funding
18 sources, be they the low income housing tax credit
19 or federal 202 funds, for example, but we often
20 see in responses to RFPs, like, multiple bands
21 within the range so that for marketing purposes
22 and for just reaching as many community members as
23 possible, they have a range of housing
24 affordability product available.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: And you

1
2 talked about the Essence Market or someone talked
3 about moving the market over there, someone
4 working with those vendors now to make sure that
5 they are prepared for that type of thing or that
6 they are continuing to be able to maintain their
7 existence and that they will have the support,
8 training, or technical advice necessary to make
9 the move intact?

10 ALYSSA KONON: Right, so since
11 January of last year, every several months we've
12 been out with the Essex Street Market vendors,
13 both in writing as well as holding office hours
14 for them to come and speak to us, and, yes,
15 absolutely, in addition to what I mentioned before
16 in terms of that we will be offering them space
17 that's commensurate in rent to wherever they move,
18 as well as we're working with them currently right
19 now around the design for the new Essex Street
20 Market so that there are spaces and stalls that
21 they can actually utilize.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay. And
23 the Council Member talked about the need for a
24 school to be sited within the property, I would
25 just want to echo that, you know, that the Council

1
2 as a whole will support Council Member Chin as she
3 is actively working with that and we will be
4 working with her, as we've had before. She's a
5 great fighter and a great advocate for her
6 community, she's done an excellent job in a short
7 period of time. So I hope that the school is
8 sited, I won't even ask you where right now, but
9 that to make sure that that is sited as part of
10 this project, and that any opportunity that that
11 can be done as quickly as possible to make that a
12 reality is important to her so it's important to
13 us.

14 I would just want to also--I had
15 another question, I lost it. The issue of the
16 commercial use and the types of commercial use
17 that you would have at Essex and Delancey, has
18 that been decided or what types of restrictions on
19 commercial use there would be or wouldn't be?

20 ALYSSA KONON: Sure, so on the
21 actual intersection of Essex and Delancey, which
22 is Site 2, that's where we're proposing to have
23 the Essex Street Market. The Essex Street Market
24 would take up the entire ground floor of that
25 building, aside from any entrances, to build the

1

2 building space above it.

3 And then along Delancey Street we
4 have a store size requirement, meaning that we
5 have to have at least two stores per block on
6 Delancey.

7 And then on Broome Street, there
8 has to be at least three stores per block along
9 Broome, sorry, Broome--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay.

11 ALYSSA KONON: --for the second
12 piece.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: All right,
14 and just final question, this is a lot of sites,
15 will you be breaking it up so that this wouldn't
16 be just bid by one developer but individual
17 developers that may want to do one building or can
18 have an equal and fair opportunity to be able to
19 bid on a site so that it's not just done by mega
20 builders, but could be possibly done by local
21 community builders?

22 ALYSSA KONON: That's right, we're
23 going to issue one RFP for all of the sites and it
24 will be articulated in the RFP that respondents
25 can respond to one site, several sites, or all of

1
2 the sites to give opportunities for local
3 developers as well.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: But if you
5 wind up picking one developer, will you allow them
6 to sub about to smaller local developers or what's
7 the possibility of local development to be able to
8 manage a site, or develop a site?

9 JEFF MANDEL: Yes, that will be
10 possible, subject to the developer choosing to do
11 so. The City would certainly be supportive of
12 their--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: And--

14 JEFF MANDEL: --right to do so.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: --that
16 could be written in the language for the RFP?

17 FEMALE VOICE: It could be, yeah.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay. Well
19 I'll work with Council Member Chin to make sure
20 that that's part of what she wants, but I would
21 think that some of the local community may want to
22 have an opportunity to develop their own area,
23 especially after 40 years, none of you guys look
24 40, so I'm sure that, you know, after 40 years
25 they--don't look at me, I see you look, you got

1
2 gray hair, you're the only other person near here
3 with gray hair other than myself so--to make sure
4 that their--some people that may want to have the
5 opportunity to develop locally.

6 But that's all the questions I have
7 right now, other than to reiterate the fact that
8 we are going to support Council Member Chin in
9 anything that she needs to do to bring this
10 project as close to her complete vision and a
11 vision for the community as possible. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,
13 Chair Comrie. Thank you all very much for your
14 testimony, I appreciate your openness to working
15 with the community and keeping to that vision and
16 working through all the tough problems. I do
17 congratulate you on what has been a lengthy
18 process, but has really garnered consensus and
19 provided a good blueprint for how to make projects
20 like this work throughout the city in the future.
21 Thank you.

22 [Long pause]

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: All right, so,
24 ladies and gentlemen, what--

25 [Crosstalk]

1

2 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE:

2

3 [Interposing] --if they want to leave left behind-

3

4

4 -

5

5 [Pause]

6

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I would

7

7 encourage someone from EDC and someone from HPD to

8

8 continue to stay so that they can continue to hear

9

9 the public testimony.

10

10 [Pause]

11

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Very

12

12 good. So, ladies and gentlemen, I'll just give

13

13 you a brief breakdown of how we're going to

14

14 proceed from here because there are a lot of folks

15

15 that want to testify. We are going to--everyone

16

16 that would like to testify, please make sure that

17

17 you sign in with the Sergeant-at-Arms, please

18

18 continue to adhere to the policy of no booing and

19

19 heckling and no outright applause, that way we can

20

20 keep it cordial here. And what we're going to do

21

21 is we're going to call up panels, and we're going

22

22 to call up panels in favor and against, and in

23

23 favor and against, we're going to go back and

24

24 forth in that way.

25

25 So, again, this is going to be

2 lengthy, I will ask everybody to please keep your
3 testimony succinct so that we're able to get
4 through all of the testimony in a reasonable time
5 frame this afternoon.

6 First, we are going to have a panel
7 in support. I would like to call up Jerilyn
8 Perine from CHPC, Gigi Li, Dominic Pisciotta, and
9 David McWater from Community Board number--or I'm
10 sorry, you know what, that's as a whole panel, we
11 should probably--

12 [Pause]

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So we're going
14 to leave--sorry, we're going to leave the
15 Community Board to the next panel in support
16 because I realize these are all--you guys are a
17 single panel. Ricky Leung, Bob Zuckerman from the
18 Lower East Side BID--

19 FEMALE VOICE: And Michael Forrest.

20 [Pause]

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And Michael
22 Forrest.

23 FEMALE VOICE: And that's it--

24 [Pause]

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So we'll

1

2 leave that as the first panel.

3 FEMALE VOICE: Support, yeah.

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Panel in
5 support.

6 FEMALE VOICE: That's taken care
7 of.

8 [Pause]

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. And I'd
10 like to ask Commissioner Perine to begin.

11 JERILYN PERINE: It's former, it's
12 not like being an ambassador or something. But my
13 name is Jerilyn Perine, I'm the Executive Director
14 of the Citizens Housing and Planning Council. In
15 the world of full disclosure, I spent 28 years in
16 City government: 18 years at HPD, four years as
17 Commissioner. I also in 1980 and '81 was the
18 property manager for the Essex Street Market for
19 the old Department of Ports and Terminals.

20 Our organization supports the
21 proposed development of this renewal area and we
22 really appreciate in particular the efforts of the
23 agencies and the area's elected officials to
24 engage with the community, communicate effectively
25 with stakeholders, and incorporate the concerns

1
2 and needs of the many overlapping, conflicting
3 interests. It's truly commendable, and in my four
4 years as a commissioner, I completely failed in
5 any effort to redevelop the Seward Park or renewal
6 extension, so I really do know how hard it was.

7 We're really pleased that these
8 sites will accommodate a higher density of
9 residential and commercial uses to fill the
10 overwhelming need for housing and services, and
11 we're glad to see the maintenance and remapping of
12 the existing street grid. These updates to the
13 land use plan reflect the future growth and
14 potential of this area, rather than the lost
15 opportunity of the past decades.

16 We do want to state, however, that
17 we believe this site could have even accommodated
18 greater density of residential development that is
19 proposed, and not necessarily by building taller
20 buildings. Our zoning committee looks at
21 development proposals through the lens of
22 predicted growth in population. And with that in
23 mind, we'd like to suggest to consider an increase
24 in density here.

25 This site is served by two major

1
2 subway stops that connect three boroughs and it
3 appears to us to be an ideal location for a higher
4 density residential development. So we'd like to
5 offer a few things to think about. Changing the
6 percentage of restricting residential development
7 to 60% of the site. In this neighborhood, the
8 lack of adequate housing to meet the demand has
9 been gone on for many decades and we believe that
10 there is a need for--a higher need for development
11 of housing at both affordable and market rates.

12 We also believe that by limiting
13 the number of residential units, you lose an
14 opportunity to create some innovative housing
15 models like what HPD is trying to do now with the
16 development of many studios for a growing singles
17 population and for one and two people households.

18 Despite these concerns, we really
19 support this proposal and we look forward to its
20 completion.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
22 much. Once a commissioner, always a commissioner,
23 so thank you very much, Commissioner. I'd like to
24 call on Ricky Leung.

25 RICKY LEUNG: Good afternoon, Chair

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and Council Members. My name is Ricky Leung, a resident of Lower East Side for 35 years, which is all my life, a current member of Community Board 3, and a member of the land use zoning public and private housing committee.

The Seward Park mixed use development will attract new families into the Lower East Side to coincide with current families living in the community; therefore, a grade school shared by School District 1 and District 2 needs to be built as part of this project. The Seward Park mixed use development project straddles the current boundary of community School District 1 and 2. Data from the Department of Education 2007-'08, and 2008 and '09 bluebook shows that public school enrollment is growing faster in District 1 than in any other district in the entire city--4.1% per year. Kindergarten enrollment from 2009 to 2011 has seen a double-digit percentage increase of over 12%, and of May 22, 2012, there were 2,400 children on waiting lists for their zoned kindergarten of this year and last. Class sizes from grades four to eight has also increased: 2009-2010, there was 20.1

1

2 students per class, last year it rose to 23
 3 students.

4 District 2 suffers from
 5 overcrowding, new schools are being built, but it
 6 does not accommodate population increase based on
 7 housing stock projects--projections for District
 8 2, supported by data from the U.S. Census and the
 9 Manhattan Borough President's office.

10 The current growth of enrollment in
 11 our neighborhood grade school shows no signs of
 12 slowing down. Our current enrollment has
 13 surpassed Department Education's 2009 5-year
 14 enrollment projection. Our children are thriving
 15 in school, with data showing especially those in
 16 District ,1 due to full-day pre-kindergarten and
 17 small classes. Full day pre-K will be lost and
 18 class overcrowding will take place in a school
 19 that is not planned for our community.

20 Responsible planning needs to be
 21 used as recommended by the Department of City
 22 Planning for new residential development. There
 23 needs to be a dual District 1 and District 2's
 24 grade school serving the Community Board 3
 25 children with 50/50 mix of District 1 and District

1
2 2 children as the first priority for acceptance at
3 the Seward Park mixed use development.

4 Our children are the future, all
5 children are the future. Thank you. [Foreign
6 language]

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
8 much, Mr. Leung. Mr. Zuckerman.

9 BOB ZUCKERMAN: Yes. Can you hear
10 me? Yes. Thank you, Chairman Levin, Council
11 Member Chin, I thank you for the opportunity to
12 testify today. My name is Bob Zuckerman, I'm the
13 Executive Director of the Lower East Side Business
14 Improvement District and I'm here today to urge
15 you and your colleagues to support this ULURP
16 application for Seward Park Urban Renewal Area.

17 We are a major stakeholder in this
18 borough project as we operate public parking lots
19 on both Sites 3 and 54 and have operated these
20 lights for many years, providing a very crucial
21 amenity. And it's been, personally, a great
22 privilege and honor for me to participate as a
23 public member of CB 3's land use committee--
24 you'll be hearing from them soon, I know--as we
25 forged our guidelines on what should be built on

1
2 these sites that would benefit all of the
3 stakeholders in the community--businesses,
4 residents, former site tenants, and, of course,
5 visitors who come down to the Lower East Side.
6 And after 45 years of inaction, we finally came up
7 with a compromise plan that brought the large
8 majority of our community together and strikes a
9 critical balance for all of these stakeholders.

10 The ULURP includes a project
11 program that will create new retail space,
12 supporting residents of approximately 900 units of
13 new housing which will one day be living here.
14 The new retail space will be supported by the
15 thousands of residents that also reside in our
16 community, as well as the new residents. And
17 we're very happy that the ULURP includes language
18 for a new large commercial structure to be built,
19 most likely on Site 2--you'll hear little bit more
20 on that from our Vice President, Michael, in a
21 second--but it's our strong belief that the new
22 commercial space should be developed as office
23 space for the creative class of workers that would
24 love to take advantage of the culturally diverse
25 and mixed use nature of the Lower East Side.

1
2 The BID also supports the
3 replacement of the car parking spaces that will be
4 lost once SPURA is built. We do hold regular Town
5 Hall meetings, and we survey our property owners
6 and merchants on a regular basis and they
7 constantly list parking at the top of their lists
8 for services that are needed in the neighborhood.
9 Now, while we do, of course, support mass transit
10 and alternative transit like bike lanes, the fact
11 that SPURA is located at the foot of the
12 Williamsburg Bridge, as Chairman Levin, you noted
13 earlier, the cars aren't going away so we need
14 places for the cars to park, and especially for
15 those residents and those who visit the area to
16 shop and visit our many cultural institutions.

17 And I just want to thank you for
18 the opportunity to testify, and I urge you to
19 support this application quickly so that we can
20 get started on this transformative new project.
21 So thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Mr.
23 Zuckerman. Mr. Forrest.

24 MICHAEL FORREST: Thank you,
25 Chairman Levin. Good afternoon, my name is

1
2 Michael Forrest and I'm the Vice President of the
3 Lower East Side Business Improvement District.

4 As a local property owner, I am
5 testifying today on the potential impacts of the
6 Seward Park Urban Renewal Area's redevelopment.
7 It is my strong belief that this project has the
8 potential to provide the daytime foot traffic our
9 community desperately needs through the inclusion
10 of commercial office space on Site 2. We enjoy a
11 robust dining and lounge scene during the evening,
12 however, we lack daytime workers who can support
13 local merchants and restaurateurs. This lack of
14 daytime foot traffic has, in our view, prohibited
15 a vibrant daytime economy that can support a
16 diverse mix of retail establishments. The
17 development of commercial office space, in
18 combination with the increased residential density
19 that this project will provide, has the potential
20 to drastically shift the current trajectory of our
21 community's growth.

22 Our local economy continues to
23 evolve and in recent years we have seen the growth
24 of art galleries and creative entrepreneurs
25 locating within our community. Unfortunately,

1
2 there is a lack of available space for these
3 businesses to expand, especially for those
4 desiring office space. We know the demand for
5 this space exists as in recent months two co-
6 working spaces have located in the Lower East Side
7 and both are at full occupancy. Cornell
8 University President David Skorton often refers to
9 the F-train tech corridor as an emerging hub of
10 technological and creative innovation. Site 2 is
11 directly located above the Delancey Essex F-train
12 station, making it ideally situated to take
13 advantage of this growth.

14 It is our strong belief that the
15 development of the Cornell's applied sciences
16 campus and the continued growth of the technology
17 industry in downtown Brooklyn make this location a
18 desirable midpoint in Manhattan for technology and
19 creative businesses to locate.

20 In addition, the project also calls
21 for the relocation of the Essex Street Market to
22 an improved space on Site 2. The inclusion of
23 office space above a new market will assist in
24 ensuring the growth of market retailers and,
25 combined with easy subway access, create an ideal

1

2 setting for a variety of businesses seeking Class
 3 A office space in a unique and emerging community.

4 I urge you to support this proposal
 5 and assist our community in continuing to build a
 6 he local economy based upon the documented
 7 industry growth of both technology and creative
 8 entrepreneurs. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
 10 much, Mr. Forrest. Thank you very much to the
 11 entire panel, I appreciate your testimony, I
 12 appreciate your patience, and I thank you.
 13 Thanks.

14 MICHAEL FORREST: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay? We're
 16 going to be calling up a panel to testify in
 17 opposition to the project. Aurelinda Checo from
 18 NMASS; David Nieves, sorry, NMASS; Rosa Castro
 19 from NMASS; and Yolanda Donato.

20 [Off mic]

21 FEMALE VOICE: Let me sit over
 22 here. I'm going to translate for him--

23 [background noise]

24 FEMALE VOICE: --David left.

25 [Off mic]

1

2

FEMALE VOICE: Okay.

3

[Off mic]

4

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Whoever

5

would like to start, go ahead.

6

[Foreign language]

7

YOLANDA DONATO: Okay. My name is

8

Yolanda Donato, I'm a representative of the

9

Coalition for the Protection of Chinatown and the

10

Lower East Side.

11

Our People First campaign brings

12

together people from the Lower East Side and

13

Chinatown community. Chinese, Latinos, Americans,

14

Afro-Americans, and many more. We are here

15

representing all those who signed petitions up to

16

today. Thousands and thousands of people who want

17

to say to the City vote against the City's plan

18

for SPURA. Vote no if they are going to build

19

mostly apartments for the rich and only 20% for

20

low-income people. Vote no if they're going to

21

build a hotel and big box stores. Vote no because

22

this planned as it is now is going to destroy our

23

community. I'm sorry. Vote no against this plan

24

unless you change it to include 100% low-income

25

housing, spaces for small businesses, and

1
2 community programs such as a public school,
3 daycare, health clinic, and senior centers, give
4 priority of jobs for people of our community, and
5 don't build hotels and big box stores like Wal-
6 Mart.

7 Many members of our community who
8 have collected thousands of signatures, which are
9 here on the table, demanding that these public
10 lots be for 100% low-income housing. For that
11 reason, we attach the interest of a developer, Ben
12 Juan [phonetic], who wants to construct 100% low-
13 income housing. We can make this reality. We are
14 going to continue organizing our community. We
15 invite everyone to support our People First
16 development planned.

17 Today we want to send a strong
18 message to our elected officials: 100% low-income
19 housing [off mic] is an urgent necessity for our
20 community and now we have a developer with whom we
21 can work together. This is very good for our
22 community. We can't be a great example for the
23 city, people first, not profit first. Thank you.
24 Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very

1

2 much. And--

3 [Applause]

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Do the Occupy
5 Wall Street thing. If you could provide a copy of
6 the petition to this Committee, that would be very
7 helpful, as well as your testimony.

8 YOLANDA DONATO: Okay.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And I thank you
10 very much for your testimony. Whoever would like
11 to testify next.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Okay. Thank
13 you.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And as it's
15 bilingual, we'll allow you more time.

16 [Foreign language]

17 AURELINDA CHECO: Okay. My name is
18 Aurelinda Checo, I lived in the Lower East Side
19 since 1978. I have a store for eight years, but I
20 had to close it because the rent was too high.

21 Vote no on the City's plans because
22 all the low-income people are going to be forced
23 to leave the community. More families separated
24 because there is not sufficient housing for low-
25 income people.

1

2 The young people need education,
 3 housing, jobs. Already now there are many
 4 disoriented young people. For this reason, we
 5 want low-income housing at SPURA, 100%. And also
 6 we want space for programs for the youth, a
 7 school, and other educative programs, and we want
 8 jobs for our community. Thank you.

9 ROSA CASTRO: Good afternoon, my
 10 name is Rosa Castro, I lived here on the Lower
 11 East Side all my life and I don't want them to
 12 take that which is ours. Vote no on the City
 13 plan. We want 100% low-income housing at SPURA.
 14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
 16 much for your testimony, I appreciate your
 17 patience and I appreciate your willingness to come
 18 down and participate this afternoon.

19 Next up I would like to call a
 20 panel in favor Gigi Li, from Community Board 3,
 21 Chair of Community Board 3; David McWater, Dominic
 22 Pisciotta, and David Garza from the Henry Street
 23 Settlement.

24 GIGI LI: Good afternoon, I am Gigi
 25 Li, Chair of Manhattan's Community Board 3 and I

1
2 am here today to testify in support of the Seward
3 Park mixed use development project. I want to
4 begin by thanking Chair Levin and the Subcommittee
5 for holding this hearing and for the opportunity
6 to testify.

7 About four months ago on May 22nd,
8 after 3 1/2 years of debate, discussions, and
9 public input, members of Community Board 3 voted
10 unanimously to support the Seward Park mixed use
11 project, with conditions. The board believes that
12 this plan before you represents the kind of
13 responsible and balanced development that the
14 communities surrounding the Seward Park sites
15 would like to see come to fruition.

16 We are all aware that there is a
17 lot more work ahead of us and our resolution
18 details the outstanding concerns that the board
19 would like to see addressed. These concerns
20 include adhering to the design guidelines as
21 approved by the Community Board; construction
22 related issues, such as layering stages of
23 development; utilizing multiple developers and
24 partnering with local developers; local hiring;
25 accommodations for former site tenants; the future

1
2 of the Essex Street Market; efforts to curb big
3 box stores; and the development of a new school on
4 the site. And other members of the panel will
5 discuss these in a little bit more detail.

6 However, after over 40 years of
7 vacant lots, this community has finally been able
8 to come to a consensus on the major components of
9 a development plan and Community Board 3 is fully
10 in support of this plan to move forward. To that
11 end, I would like to highlight a few points.

12 Point number one is that there has been a
13 diversity of stakeholders in this process.
14 Community Board 3's land use, housing, zoning,
15 public and private housing committee which
16 consists of 22 members represents a wide variety
17 of stakeholders, including residents of Chinatown,
18 the Lower East Side, and the East Village,
19 locally-based housing groups, social service
20 nonprofits, business owners, and former site
21 tenants. We were intentional in appointing
22 committee members who represent a diversity of
23 viewpoints that reflect the community.

24 Second, there has been a collective
25 effort with City agencies--because of time I'll

1

2 just be brief and you can read the testimony.

3 And just one last point is that
4 there is--well there's guaranteed continued
5 involvement from the Community Board. As
6 mentioned before, there is a task force that will
7 consist of a majority of Community Board members
8 as well as representatives from the local
9 electeds.

10 So I'd like to close by saying that
11 the development of the Seward Park site has been a
12 hurdle for this community for a long time and we
13 believe that this proposal represents a unified
14 vision for the future and we hope that you will
15 join the Community Board in supporting the plan.
16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
18 much, Ms. Li. Just state your name for the
19 record, please.

20 DOMINIC BERG: Dominic Berg,
21 formerly Dominic Pisciotta.

22 FEMALE VOICE: Sorry.

23 DOMINIC BERG: Thank you, Chair and
24 Committee members. My name is Dominic Berg, up
25 until June 30th, I had been the chairperson for

1
2 Community Board 3, Manhattan, since July 1st,
3 2008. It was during my leadership that the
4 application before you came to fruition.

5 We overcame an acrimonious debate
6 that had left the Lower East Side divided for over
7 40 years. It took a careful, methodical four-
8 phase process over three and a half years that led
9 to a strong unanimous vote to approve the Seward
10 Park mixed use project, with conditions, this past
11 May 22nd. Phase 1 started in October 2008 and
12 gained steam in January 2009. During this time,
13 the Community Board's land use committee grew to
14 include a large range of community stakeholders
15 that had historically been on opposite sides of
16 the table. However, there was hope of compromise
17 and a set of guiding principles was unanimously
18 adopted in June 2009.

19 Phase 2 is best characterized as
20 the guidelines and consensus phase. In the eight
21 months following the adoption of the June 2009
22 guiding principles, progress was slow and the
23 committee asked me to formally invite key city
24 agencies to become engaged partners in the
25 process. In April 2010, the EDC hired a respected

1
2 urban planner to facilitate seven monthly meetings
3 with a goal of establishing a community-driven
4 consensus. All except one of the meetings had
5 Mandarin and they all had Cantonese and Spanish
6 translators. No one from the public ever
7 expressed an inability to participate. The
8 committee chair and I also presented to tenant
9 groups who invite us to meetings to learn more
10 about the project. Most committee meetings had a
11 public session before each plenary session and
12 allowed the public to provide input during the
13 meeting. Meeting locations were held on the Lower
14 East Side and Chinatown in order to capture a
15 diverse constituency. All of the discussion input
16 led to draft guidelines being presented for
17 thorough review over the last three facilitated
18 meetings.

19 This was a uniquely transparent
20 channel for Community Board process. The public
21 was able to submit written comments via e-mail
22 before each meeting, which were then collated and
23 organized for consideration during the meeting.
24 Everyone could see any changes happen in real time
25 on dual projectors.

1
2 Finally, on January 24, 2011, after
3 43 years, a unanimous vote was taken to approve
4 formal guidelines.

5 And I'm definitely short on time
6 here, so I'm going to submit an expanded
7 testimony, as well as one that issue that is
8 important to me, which is putting a school on this
9 project. So...

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
11 much, appreciate it.

12 [Pause]

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Try again,
14 there you go.

15 DAVID MCWATER: Now it's on?
16 Hello, I'm David McWater, I'm the chairperson of
17 the CB 3 Land Use Committee and also the former
18 chair of the board before Dominic.

19 As they both spoke, the land use
20 committee is sort of a blue ribbon panel, we have
21 tons of public members and we try to not just have
22 diverse stakeholders, but stakeholders with large
23 constituencies, and we have never had a vote at
24 the Community Board full board on this issue that
25 was not unanimous, which if any of you have

1

2 Community Board pasts, is an amazing thing to say.

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [Off mic] yeah.

4 DAVID MCWATER: And I think what we
5 found here is a deal where everybody is a winner.
6 People were worried about jobs in the Lower East
7 Side, we've got a plan that's going to have
8 400,000 commercial square feet and \$25 million a
9 year worth of jobs. People were worried about
10 low-income housing, we're going to have 450 units
11 of low-income housing, which is more than five
12 times as much as the last plan that got this far,
13 which was over 30 years ago. People were worried
14 about contextual design, we've got a plan that
15 will mix what's south of Delancey and what north
16 of Delancey in a very fluid way.

17 So I think what we really have here
18 is a program that's made up almost entirely of
19 wins, and I think there's just a couple of small
20 places that could be improved so that we don't
21 have to have anybody who loses on this deal.

22 One is the previously mentioned
23 Essex Street Market, I think it's a must that
24 these vendors there be provided the money to move.
25 Wiping these people out would really tarnish this

1
2 win-win thing. Another potential loser are the
3 young and unborn children of the almost 1,000
4 families that are going to move here, let's plan
5 ahead for their schools. And finally, local
6 retail, if we bring in big boxes and wipe out
7 local retail and wipe out some of the people to
8 take the 400,000 square feet or put them on a
9 treadmill of new stores coming in every six
10 months, then there is a loser. I think if we can
11 avoid those three things, this is a win-win-win
12 for everybody. I thank you for your time.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you for
14 your testimony.

15 DAVID GARZA: Good afternoon, I
16 want to thank the Chairman and the Subcommittee
17 for the opportunity to testify. I also want to
18 thank Council Member Chin and Council Member
19 Mendez, as well as the Community Board for all
20 their hard work that has brought it to this place.
21 And also to EDC and HPD for dealing with the
22 enormously range of challenging variables they're
23 dealing with to bring this proposal forward.

24 My name is David Garza, I'm the
25 Executive Director of the Henry Street Settlement,

1
2 which has operated as a human service organization
3 since 1893 on the Lower East Side, and I'm here to
4 testify on the importance of including local
5 hiring in whatever proposal moves forward for the
6 SPURA project.

7 I believe that the fabric of our
8 communities and the very essence of New York City
9 is at stake if it does not include local hiring in
10 the plan for development, and that even affordable
11 housing is not affordable if someone doesn't have
12 a job to pay their rent.

13 Our workforce development center
14 guides a wide range of New Yorkers. We're located
15 on the corner of Essex and Delancey Street, and
16 providing them with the training to help access
17 living wage jobs across a range of industry
18 sectors. I'm proud to say that my colleagues and
19 I have invested five years in building an
20 effective vehicle for local hiring called the
21 Lower East Side Employment Network to take
22 advantage of this unprecedented opportunity
23 presented by the SPURA development.

24 Working in close partnership with
25 Community Board 3 and our local elected officials,

1
2 five prominent nonprofit organizations with long
3 histories of delivering social services in Lower
4 Manhattan have come together to form the network.
5 Those include Chinese-American Planning Council,
6 Chinatown Manpower Project, the Door, University
7 Settlement, Good Old Lower East Side, and Henry
8 Street Settlement. We have all united to engage
9 community residents and prepare them for
10 employment in growth market sectors. Local
11 developers and a range of public and private
12 stakeholders already recognize our potential and
13 we have extensive experience working effectively
14 with the city's existing workforce development
15 center, including the Workforce Career Centers,
16 the Business Solution Centers, and all city
17 agencies that resource workforce development
18 initiatives. It is notable that, although our
19 services target local residents, that we are
20 inclusive and serve job seekers and employers from
21 all five boroughs.

22 I have a much longer testimony that
23 I'll submit in writing, but there are really four
24 points that I want to summarize. First, that the
25 project involves access to living wage jobs that

1
2 are created by development; second, that all
3 stakeholders provide priority access to qualified
4 local residents; third, that the project formally
5 recognizes the Lower East Side Employment Network
6 as the vehicle to work in partnership with the
7 City; and finally, that the local hiring component
8 of the project creates and adheres to a
9 transparent system of measurable results with
10 defined goals and expectations as opposed to best
11 efforts. Thank you very much.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
13 much, all, for your testimony and for your
14 patience and for coming down this afternoon, and
15 especially for your dedication to this process,
16 you've--

17 [Pause]

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I think Council
19 Member Chin wants to add something.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, I just
21 want to take this opportunity to thank Community
22 Board 3. The leadership, for all your hard work
23 again, and also to let you know that your job is
24 not done yet 'cause you're going to have to
25 continue this process with the task force and the

1
2 RFP and making sure the City, sort of, live up to
3 their agreement in terms of community input.

4 On the Lower East Side Employment
5 Network, David, maybe you could talk about more
6 about how you're going to start preparing the
7 community and letting people know that the
8 opportunity' going to be there so that people who
9 are going to be seeking this job are prepared to
10 take advantage of these opportunities so they
11 don't just think that, oh, they could just wait on
12 a line and get a job, but the preparation part, I
13 think that's important to get that out into the
14 community beforehand so that people will be ready.

15 DAVID GARZA: Sure, although our
16 programs and all of the programs that are included
17 in the network, include outreach of marketing
18 mechanisms that reach out to the community on a
19 regular ongoing basis, and also one of the
20 defining characteristics of the programs that we
21 operate is the job readiness training component.
22 So whenever anyone engages with our programs we
23 provide a summary and a projection of what jobs
24 they might be able to access, and, of course, all
25 of the sectors represented by opportunities within

1
2 the SPURA project will be included in that
3 information that's provided to local jobseekers,
4 as well as those from outside of Lower East Side
5 who come to access our services.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, I think
7 just on that, because the EDC did talk about in
8 terms of a Site 2, that the market is going to
9 expand and it's going to increase size by 50%. So
10 are you guys thinking about in terms of
11 entrepreneurship, helping people in terms of start
12 up their own business and as one of the components
13 in terms of preparing for jobs and, I mean, that
14 might be an opportunity for people who to become
15 small business owners at that site.

16 DAVID GARZA: We certainly do, and
17 if there is a high demand sector that materializes
18 for entrepreneurship, we will certainly include
19 it. We have experience preparing people to, for
20 example, to become family daycare operators
21 because that is a high demand occupation, so we do
22 have experience identifying when there is an
23 opportunity as such and training people to meet
24 that.

25 Presently, we focus in sectors that

1
2 will, in an anticipated way, be reflected in the
3 development project, which are customer service,
4 retail, hospitality, just to name a few. But,
5 yes, we hope to be prepared to train people with
6 respect to entrepreneurship.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I think that
8 one of your--the organization in the network, I
9 mean, Chinatown, Manpower, CMP, they've done
10 entrepreneurship training, but I'm just saying
11 that the Essex Street Market, those are potential
12 sites available for small business owner, and
13 it'll be great to, sort of, like get people from
14 our community to be able to start their own
15 business and to utilize the site there.

16 DAVID GARZA: Yeah, absolutely, and
17 that's the benefit of a network of providers is
18 that all of the member organizations have an area
19 of expertise. And, as you mentioned, CMP does
20 have that entrepreneurship training component;
21 Henry Street has a specialization customer
22 service; CPC has a specialization in health care.
23 So throughout all the network providers, we tend
24 to be able to meet and identify and prepare people
25 for employment in a range of sectors.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,
3 Council Member Chin. Thank you all very much for
4 your testimony.

5 DAVID GARZA: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm going to
7 call up a panel in opposition. Wendy Cheng,
8 Josephine Lee, and Yolanda Donato, Jane--is it
9 Margola? And Gwen Simpson.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Anybody have
11 some copies of their statements they want to
12 submit? No?

13 [Off mic]

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Before you begin
15 to speak, make sure you identify yourself for the
16 record. Who's going to start?

17 [Pause]

18 WENDY CHUNG: Okay. My name is
19 Wendy Chung, I was born and raised in the Lower
20 East Side, I've lived here for over 20 years. I
21 grew up in public housing in the area, I'm very
22 familiar with this community, and many of us here
23 today are very concerned about this urgent issue
24 of displacement. This community is near and dear
25 to many of our hearts and I urge you today to vote

1
2 no to the SPURA plan that does not represent the
3 interests of the majority of this community.

4 Over the many years, I have seen a
5 lot of changes in our community, my family still
6 lives here in public housing. There's a lot more
7 developments in this area that are not affordable
8 to this community. And I want to emphasize that
9 when there's been a lot of talk about affordable,
10 but affordable to whom? Who is this community
11 that we talk about? I want to say that this
12 community is made up of people, and if we're not
13 addressing the people's concern in this area,
14 we're not addressing the community's needs.
15 There's more condos, hotels, chain stores popping
16 up all over Lower East Side and Chinatown.

17 I urge you to develop this site,
18 but I want to say that develop it for whom and
19 develop it accountably to this community.

20 I respect that people say that we
21 want--this City Council is having this hearing,
22 you want to hear what the community really wants.
23 But beyond just hearing, what are we actually
24 going to do to put in place concretely make sure
25 that people in this area is not getting displaced?

1
2 It's not just about talk, this is about real
3 lives, real jobs, real people, real services.

4 Many of the people could not come
5 to these meetings at this time, some people had to
6 leave, they have work, many people can't even
7 understand--this is about the Lower East Side and
8 Chinatown, where is Spanish and Chinese speaking
9 translators? How is this accessible to people
10 here?

11 I want to say I urge the City
12 Council to vote no to this plan and do what's
13 right for this community, do what's right to the
14 people who make up this community. Thanks.

15 JOSEPHINE LEE: Hey, my name is
16 Josephine Lee, I'm speaking on behalf of the
17 Coalition to Protect Chinatown and the Lower East
18 Side.

19 Forty years ago, thousands of low-
20 income families were displaced on the SPURA site.
21 The City Council now has the opportunity to right
22 that wrong or make worse the crisis that we face
23 in this community.

24 More than 60% of our community are
25 low-income families making less than 40,000 a

1
2 year, many are on waiting lists for public
3 housing, or they live three families in one
4 apartment in very overcrowded conditions or
5 negligent poor housing conditions just so that
6 they can afford to stay here in their community.
7 Many are facing unemployment or underemployment in
8 this economic crisis, and many send their kids to
9 overcrowded schools, while more are being torn
10 down in our community. And more are finding our
11 local stores being boarded up or closed down
12 because they cannot afford the rent.

13 So far, there have been more than
14 6,000 people who have signed petitions to call for
15 against this, the City's current plan on SPURA.
16 Many are unfamiliar faces who just stop by our
17 offices because they see the crisis that is
18 happening in our community and see all the changes
19 that are happening.

20 A developer has even responded to
21 all the communities petitioning and has met the
22 challenge with a proposal. He is willing to build
23 up to 100% low-income housing and to find ways
24 such as using the commercial development to offset
25 the residential development.

1
2 This City Council has the
3 opportunity to provide the housing and jobs and
4 the community service that we so desperately need
5 here, but the City's current proposal fails to do
6 that. We don't need even more luxury housing,
7 many which are sitting empty in our community
8 because people cannot afford it. We do not need
9 more hotels, the neighborhood is already
10 oversaturated with them. We do not need big box
11 stores, they suck the money out of our community
12 instead of investing in it. And if we truly want
13 a mixed income and diverse neighborhood then we
14 need to make sure that the development on SPURA be
15 for the actual community here and not for the few
16 minority rich.

17 We call for 100% low-income housing
18 on SPURA for jobs prioritized for the local
19 community, affordable spaces for small businesses,
20 and a public school, as well as a health clinic.

21 Today, the City Council has the
22 opportunity to make history and fulfill the
23 promise that was made more than 40 years ago:
24 That SPURA truly be for the people in our
25 community.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Excuse me,
3 did you--can I have your name? Did you fill out a
4 form?

5 [Crosstalk]

6 GWEN SIMPSON: Gwen Simpson.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Oh, Gwen
8 Simpson, I have that. Who's Jane Morales? Jane?

9 FEMALE VOICE: I don't think she's-
10 -

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: From GOLES?
12 Can you make sure that after you testify, you fill
13 out one of these? Did he fill out one of these
14 forms? Yeah. 'Cause his name's not here.

15 [Off mic]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Well just
17 make sure he fills out one before, okay? Thank
18 you.

19 MALE VOICE 1: Yeah.

20 [Foreign language]

21 MALE VOICE 1: Thank you.

22 FEMALE VOICE 3: Okay. I'll be
23 translating. He is speaking for Sky Wong, who had
24 to leave for work.

25 The translation is: I am Sky Wong,

1
2 I have worked as a waiter in Chinatown for ten
3 years. I demand the City Council not to pass the
4 SPURA plan because it does not meet the needs of
5 our Lower East Side Chinatown community.

6 Recently in the past four years I
7 have seen the Chinatown Lower East Side community,
8 the living conditions have not improved. More and
9 more residents are being displaced by landlords
10 and many of my friends are low-income families
11 because--and they cannot afford such high rent.
12 So several families have to squeeze into
13 overcrowded apartments, making it severely
14 uncomfortable.

15 In the past, workers' wages have
16 gone from \$5.25 to 7.25 an hour, but our apartment
17 rent has gone from \$600 a month to over \$1,000 a
18 month. How can an average working family afford
19 this? Our community urgently needs low-income
20 housing. Those who make \$100,000 a month have a
21 lot of other options. Our low-income families
22 need the government's concern now.

23 SPURA is public land and our low-
24 income communities' land, it should be developed
25 to meet the needs of our community. A hundred

1
2 percent low-income housing to have a school,
3 daycare center, and other community centers to
4 resolve the urgent issues of our community, as
5 well as affordable services and more jobs for this
6 community.

7 Today we have gotten the support of
8 a developer who supports the People's First
9 rezoning plan. This is good news, we urge the
10 City Council to do what the community needs most:
11 Vote no to the SPURA plan.

12 GWEN SIMPSON: Hi, my name is Gwen
13 Simpson, I'm a member of NMASS. I live very close
14 to SPURA. I'm worried about what will happen to
15 us, the people, if the City puts up luxury high-
16 rise across the street from where I live.

17 If you pass the City's plan, many
18 of us are going to be priced out of this
19 neighborhood. Many of us are going to be
20 homeless, living in overcrowded shelters,
21 especially those of us on fixed incomes with
22 nowhere to go. This is what happened when I lived
23 in Harlem, I saw the whole community destroyed
24 because most of us could no longer afford the high
25 rent.

1
2 Putting up luxury towers near low-
3 income housing is not fair to us. You can't
4 expect people to just lie down and just roll over
5 them. You can't take our community away from us.
6 Is it fair to those of us who built this community
7 to see there is no place for us in the City's plan
8 for SPURA? That none of us will be able to afford
9 a single apartment that the city constructs? That
10 there will be no businesses that we can afford to
11 shop at? That there will be no schools for our
12 kids or other programs for our community? No,
13 this is not fair.

14 That is why I'm excited to hear
15 that there is a developer who is willing to
16 develop 100% low-income housing on SPURA. And
17 that is why I ask that you vote no to the City's
18 plans for SPURA. And that you support 100% low-
19 income housing, spaces for small businesses and
20 community programs, and that our community have
21 priority jobs at SPURA.

22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
24 much, thank you all for your testimony.

25 Be calling up a panel in favor,

Herman Hewitt, Adrienne Chevrestt, Vaylateena Jones, Lisa Davis.

FEMALE VOICE: Lisa's not here right now but she's [off mic].

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. We'll set that one aside. I will call up Theresa Rodriguez.

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Well we'll set Theresa aside as well. Another Teresa, Teresa Pedrota? Pedroza. Okay. Whoever wants to start, feel free to begin.

VAYLATEENA JONES: Me? Thank you, my name is Vaylateena Jones, I'm a registered nurse and a resident of the Lower East Side for more than 50 years. I grew up in LaGuardia Houses and the Rutgers Houses.

The mixed use plan for Seward Park which provides for permanent affordable housing with a percentage that would be affordable for a variety of people, including first responders, such as firemen, police officers, paramedics, EMTs, as well as registered nurses and teachers is commendable. I urge you to consider health in

1
2 planning some of the commercial space.

3 Consider space for things such as
4 sub-emergency services, urgent care centers, and
5 stipulations that promote healthy living. The
6 impact of the affordable care house on the use of
7 emergency and primary care services should be
8 explored. There are various opinions about this.
9 The district needs statement for Manhattan
10 Community Board 3 states, with the recent closure
11 of St. Vincent's Hospital, nearby hospitals are
12 experiencing severe overcrowding. According to
13 New York City vital signs, a data report from the
14 New York City Health Department November 2010,
15 volume nine, number five, neighborhoods with the
16 highest proportion of ED visits that are related
17 to alcohol for both adults and underage drinkers
18 includes Lower Manhattan. Research can be done on
19 utilization of emergency services, urgent care
20 centers, et cetera. According to Community Board
21 3, the statement, with the exception of possible
22 supermarkets, no single retail tenant should
23 exceed 30,000 square feet. Consider including a
24 stipulation for any supermarket to provide healthy
25 cooking classes. Whole Foods on Greenwich Street

1
2 occasionally provides healthy cooking classes, and
3 people need to understand what they can cook in
4 terms of vegetables, low fat, low salt, low sugar
5 dishes, et cetera.

6 Consider restaurants that have full
7 menus, including appetizers, entrees with sides,
8 and possibly alcoholic beverages, and
9 stipulations. According to the Centers for
10 Disease Control, excessive alcohol use also cost
11 the United States about 185 billion each year.
12 And the Centers for Disease Control recommends
13 that on the basis of strong evidence, that the
14 following interventions would prevent excessive
15 alcohol use and related harm, such as regulations
16 of alcohol outlet density.

17 So basically, I just think that, in
18 terms of cutting edge, we want to try to be health
19 conscious and health-oriented. And I think that
20 this would be a really good model and a good time
21 to do something in that particular perspective.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
23 much for your testimony, thank you.

24 HERMAN HEWITT: Good afternoon, my
25 name is Herman Hewitt, I am the chairperson for a

1
2 community local development organization called
3 Lower East Side People's Mutual Housing. I'm also
4 a member of--actually, the First Vice Chair of
5 Community Board 3.

6 I'm here today to support the
7 development plan as worked out between the
8 community residents and various stakeholders. As
9 a long time resident of the Lower East Side, I
10 have seen the changes in the Lower East Side on a
11 daily basis. Some of these changes have enhanced
12 the quality of life for our residents, but not all
13 for the good. One of those negatives is the
14 ability of existing residents and their family to
15 maintain an affordability in where they reside or
16 for their children to return and secure affordable
17 housing in the area.

18 The plan as it sets out at this
19 time meets many of the intent of the community to
20 provide some affordable housing, which I think
21 could have been more, however, there are many
22 other also important things that I would like the
23 City Council to consider which should be included
24 in the final plan for the City of New York. There
25 are: Preference for former site tenants and

1
2 existing residents of Community Board 3 for a
3 minimum of 50%; provisions for preferences for
4 short and long term employment, and job training
5 for CB3 residents; language which will eliminate
6 or restrict the location of oversize stores in the
7 development; strong consideration for fair
8 treatment for the existing merchants in Essex
9 Street Market, including relocation cost, rent,
10 and set-up fees; all affordable development should
11 include community development partnerships to make
12 sure the affordable housing remain permanent;
13 family entertainment facilities for adults and
14 children which is lacking in the area; affordable
15 retail and office spaces for small businesses and
16 other entrepreneurs.

17 As a community developer of
18 affordable housing, I have come to see some of the
19 affordable housing in our community has become
20 unaffordable, either by natural forces or in a
21 manner caused by high real estate and water taxes,
22 or lack of proper oversight.

23 Thank you for giving me the
24 opportunity to express my support for this plan
25 and hope the Council will support the community

1

2 wishes.

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
4 much, Mr. Hewitt.

5 TERESA PEDROZA: Hello, hello.

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Please speak
7 into the microphone, make sure the red light is
8 on.

9 TERESA PEDROZA: Yes, it is.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. And--

11 TERESA PEDROZA: Hello--

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --state your
13 name for the record, please.

14 TERESA PEDROZA: Teresa Pedroza.
15 I'm not for it--

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [Interposing]
17 Thank you, speak directly into the microphone,
18 please.

19 TERESA PEDROZA: I'm not for the
20 plan or against the plan as is.

21 Hello, my name is Teresa Pedroza,
22 I'm a GOLES member. I also have lived in the
23 Lower East Side over 52 years. What happens in
24 SPURA directly affects my family, being that just
25 over eight months ago my 12-year old

1
2 granddaughter, Dashane Santana, was struck and
3 killed by a minivan on Delancey Street.

4 According to the EIS, the addition
5 of even four cars to the existing traffic, traffic
6 would be at a standstill. This plan calls for a
7 special permit to allow Use Group 10, which is a
8 big box store that generates considerable traffic.
9 Please do not put Use Group 10 in your plans, deny
10 the special permit.

11 We also would like to see more
12 senior housing in the plan, especially being that
13 the people displaced from SPURA are now senior
14 citizens by now, since they've been waiting over
15 45 years for the redevelopment of the area.

16 Also, in addition of so many
17 children would further overburden our existing
18 schools, so we would like to see a school put in
19 the plans.

20 Another concern is jobs. We need a
21 commitment of at least 50% hiring for local
22 residents.

23 Last, but not least, the Essex
24 Street Market vendors need to be compensated for
25 the loss of revenue and relocating and moving

1

2 costs and their rents to stay the same.

3

4 Also, you have your jargon of
 5 market rate apartments, really, you're talking
 6 luxury apartments. The people that were displaced
 7 were 90% low income. I mean, at least give them
 8 more low income and more senior citizen apartments
 9 so, like, you know, put the 50/50, make it 50--
 10 make it really 50/50.

10

Thank you so much for your time.

11

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you and--

12

[Crosstalk]

13

TERESA PEDROZA: [Interposing] And

14

also--

15

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --condolences.

16

TERESA PEDROZA: --I have a

17

petition for a crossway, a crosswalk, crosswalk in

18

honor of my daughter at the site where she was

19

killed because that's a very dangerous

20

intersection and we will like at least a crossing

21

guard, if not a crosswalk. You have the space now

22

and I would like it to be put in your plans. So I

23

will present--

24

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So very sorry,

25

and--

1

2 TERESA PEDROZA: --you with the
3 petition, okay?

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: You have the
5 condolences of everyone here at the City Council.

6 TERESA PEDROZA: Thank you. Thank
7 you so much.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

9 ADRIENNE CHEVRETT: Good afternoon
10 to Chairman Levin and Council Member Chin and the
11 other people sitting at the dais, as well as to
12 the Councilwoman who was sitting at the end, and
13 thank you to the Sergeant-at-Arms. I'm very
14 grateful today for the opportunity to come before
15 you and testify as I have been a long-time
16 community advocate, at least 30 years in my
17 neighborhood. I've lived in Masaryk Towers, which
18 is a state Mitchell-Lama subsidized cooperative
19 development east of the SPURA site, since 1979,
20 and I have--I'm a long-time member and leader at
21 the Church of St. Mary, as well as, you know,
22 working in the community on environmental issues
23 and also issues related to education. So there's
24 many different areas that I've been involved in.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [Interposing]

1

2 If you could just state your name for the record.

3 ADRIENNE CHEVRESTT: I'm sorry,
4 it's Adrienne Chevrestt.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

6 ADRIENNE CHEVRESTT: And although I
7 marked that I am in support of the proposal, I
8 would state--it's difficult for me to say full
9 support because I was not happy with our Community
10 Board 3's quote unanimous decision in this
11 proposal.

12 The site tenants were 100% people
13 of low income who were displaced with Robert
14 Moses' plan that was, you know, that razed that
15 entire community. It was a village, it was part
16 of our Lower East Side neighborhood. Before I
17 came to the neighborhood, yes, but it was,
18 nevertheless, a very thriving community of low-
19 income people who were wonderful working people,
20 businesses. There are many people still left in
21 the community doubled and tripled up with their
22 children and grandchildren.

23 So there was so much that was lost
24 culturally and there was so much that was lost in
25 terms of history and in terms of the fabric of the

1
2 community. Now we are a destination for all the
3 young kids to come and get drunk and hang out and
4 to, you know, get lost and to forget their
5 troubles for a few hours, but this is not what our
6 community is all about, and we are forgetting what
7 that's about. And those people that were there,
8 that owned businesses and live there, they deserve
9 to be there, they have deserved for many decades
10 to be there. And so I would say to you, you need
11 to be aware of the humanity, the human aspect of
12 this proposal because that gets lost in the
13 statistics from EDC and HPD and all the acronyms
14 of all the agencies and everybody else that has a
15 part in this.

16 But I would say that there are a
17 handful of people that we really should be
18 grateful to and who have stuck by this process
19 through thick and thin. And maybe I don't agree
20 with everything that they have done, but I do want
21 to thank Council Member Chin and I do want to
22 thank Council Member Rosie Mendez, who is my
23 Councilperson. I want to thank David McWater,
24 Demaris Reyes [phonetic], Harriet Cohen, Valerio
25 Orselli, and the late great Mary Spinks because

1
2 these are people who were really committed to what
3 was our community was really about. And they
4 fought very hard for some of the aspects of the
5 proposal that the City didn't want and still
6 doesn't want.

7 And so I would tell you, I would
8 counsel you that you must have language that is
9 unmistakable when it comes to talking about the
10 amount of affordability of housing because if
11 you're not going to give us 100% affordable
12 housing that we deserve, then it should be a lot
13 greater than 50/50, okay, because those apartments
14 are not affordable to anyone that we know in the
15 community.

16 And also we don't want big box
17 stores because they will price out all of our mom-
18 and-pop shops, which is already happening because
19 the rents are skyrocketing, and I know people who
20 are losing their businesses left and right.
21 There's plenty of empty retail space in the
22 neighborhood.

23 We absolutely need a school. I was
24 one of the first persons to advocate for a public
25 school on the side of SPURA because we are already

1
2 overcrowded, and when we get new families coming
3 into the development, we're going to desperately
4 need new schools.

5 We also want some type of a
6 cultural center where people can come and meet and
7 greet and be a part of the arts and, you know,
8 have something like BAM, like Brooklyn Academy of
9 Music, that kind of a situation going.

10 And we also want local job hiring,
11 at least 50%. And a living wage, which is
12 something that the City has been fighting against
13 for a long time, especially Mayor Bloomberg. And
14 the Council Speaker Quinn is hemming and hawing,
15 but she supported in other locations. We need a
16 living wage on SPURA site. And it's absolutely
17 essential to bring jobs that are, not just, you
18 know, part-time without benefits or come and go
19 jobs, but jobs that allow the people that are
20 working there to afford to live on the site.

21 So in closing I would like to say
22 there are two aspects that I don't think you're
23 going to hear from anyone else that testifies
24 today and those two things are: That we had
25 talked about in all these meetings since 2008 to

1
2 have an overpass over Delancey to connect north
3 and south since this development is going to be in
4 the process because it will alleviate a lot of the
5 traffic congestion problems and pedestrian deaths
6 that have been happening--her granddaughter being
7 one recent that we all knew about.

8 And the other thing is that we need
9 to access federal dollars to make the train
10 stations handicapped accessible--hello, shout out
11 for people like me, I'm, you know, deaf with
12 hearing aids and mobility impaired--but we don't
13 have accessibility to our train station. And
14 since the MTA dismantled the Bronx 39 bus that
15 goes across the Williamsburg Bridge with the
16 service cuts, all those people who were
17 handicapped and needed accessibility that were
18 traveling by public transportation bus don't have
19 any other way now since that bus has disappeared.
20 So if there is some funds or monies that are, you
21 know, can be allotted to make the stations
22 accessible we will have a greater, more open, more
23 inclusive development if we go ahead with this
24 proposal.

25 Thank you so much, I appreciate

2 your attention and for the opportunity.

3 [Applause]

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

5 Thank you very much to all of the panelists and
6 thank you, Ms. Chevrestt. You so far have the
7 award for best penmanship, by the way.

8 I'm going to call up a panel of
9 testimony in opposition: Wah Lee [phonetic] from
10 CSWA, Rosa Castro--did we already have Rosa
11 Castro? Jeanette Toomer. Did we already have
12 Aurelina Checo? I think we already--

13 [Off mic]

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Mei Rong Song,
15 Chinese Small Business Alliance, and Mildred
16 Martinez. And Louis Velez--Louise Velez, excuse
17 me. If you heard your name called, please come to
18 the front table.

19 [Off mic]

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Who
21 would ever like to start first, please go ahead.

22 [Foreign language]

23 WAH LEE: My name is Wah Lee, I am
24 a staff member of Chinese Staff and Workers
25 Association. Since the SPURA process has started,

1
2 I have attended many public meetings from
3 Community Board 3 meetings, Department of City
4 Planning, to today's public hearing.

5 We continue to demand that this
6 public land be 100% low income for low-income
7 communities, 100% low-income housing for--include
8 daycare center, youth center, small businesses,
9 and have affordable services for this community as
10 these are the demands that the community most
11 urgently needs.

12 I do not agree with the current
13 SPURA plan, it neglects the needs of our low-
14 income families.

15 Our community, including residents
16 and workers, have signed thousands of petitions to
17 support the People's First rezoning plan. We
18 demand that the City Council hear what the people
19 in this community really need and want. The
20 People's First rezoning plan calls for 100% low-
21 income housing, community services, affordable
22 services, and jobs for this community.

23 I want you to observe and consider
24 the quote that's literally above our heads on the
25 ceiling by Lincoln, where it says a government of

1
2 the people, by the people, for the people, and to
3 consider this when you're making this vote and to
4 say no to the SPURA plan.

5 WAH LEE: Thank you.

6 JEANETTE TOOMER: Hello. So first
7 off I'd like to say that I'm here with GOLES and
8 that we are not--

9 [Crosstalk]

10 JEANETTE TOOMER: Oh, my name is
11 Jeanette Toomer, I was going to get to that. I'm
12 here with GOLES and we are not for or against the
13 plan, we're just here to let you know what we want
14 and what we need for our community.

15 I spent the first 17 years of my
16 life living in the Lower East Side and I'm a
17 member of GOLES, I'm also a staff member. I live
18 in Brooklyn now where I had to move after I
19 graduated from college because I was priced out of
20 my home neighborhood. I did everything right, you
21 know, I went to school, I graduated, I got a job,
22 and, even working full time, I still can't afford
23 to live in the neighborhood where I grew up. My
24 family is here, my roots are here, but,
25 unfortunately, I can't afford to live in my

1

2 neighborhood.

3 You know, real, affordable housing
4 in the Lower East Side should be mandatory,
5 especially on SPURA. Out of respect for the
6 people who were displaced for over 40 years, the
7 whole development should be affordable. At the
8 very least, the plan needs more low-income housing
9 and not this ambiguous talk of affordable.

10 There is nothing but so-called
11 luxury apartments popping up. And it hurts that I
12 have to walk past these beautiful apartments in my
13 own neighborhood and I can't even live in them. I
14 know that I'm worth living wherever I want to live
15 and it's unfair that developers can put a price on
16 that and create a culture where it's okay to have,
17 you know, expensive housing everywhere. It's also
18 unfair that the community's voice isn't valued.
19 Housing is a human right but it doesn't seem like
20 that's a reality now in the Lower East Side.

21 I get compliments everywhere I go
22 on my style--maybe not today, but, you know--and
23 my point of view, and that's because I grew up in
24 this culturally diverse area. So I have to give a
25 lot of credit to my neighborhood for that, but the

1
2 LES has lost a lot of its flavor because only a
3 certain demographic are now being awarded the
4 opportunity to live there, and, you know, cool
5 people come in all shapes and sizes and have all
6 different kind of incomes.

7 You know, I have little cousins and
8 I have friends who have children who deserve to go
9 to school in their neighborhood, they should be
10 able to walk to school and often they have to
11 travel an hour to go to school. And if they do go
12 to school in the neighborhood, it's overcrowded.
13 There needs to be a school at SPURA.

14 You know, I came here to stand in
15 solidarity with the 20,000 people who were
16 displaced from SPURA and to stand in solidarity
17 with my community members who are just like me.
18 You know, real affordable housing is a need in the
19 community. We don't need any big box stores, we
20 don't need any more traffic congesting Delancey
21 Street.

22 I have, you know, testimony that
23 I'll submit to you. Thank you.

24 MEI RONG SONG: Okay.

25 [Foreign language]

1

2 MEI RONG SONG: I am the
 3 representative of the Chinatown Small Business
 4 Alliance, my name is Mei Rong Song.

5 I am against the City SPURA
 6 development plan because it does not meet the
 7 needs of the community. We small businesses are
 8 facing very difficult conditions. Our rents are
 9 sky-high, the City impose all kinds of fines that
 10 are affecting our businesses. The City has
 11 ignored our situation and our difficulties. The
 12 People First campaign, including further
 13 development on SPURA, small businesses especially
 14 need affordable spaces and better services for the
 15 community.

16 In our People First campaign, small
 17 businesses are working together with the
 18 community, and our petitioning campaign and to
 19 demand that the City Council listen to the people.
 20 We demand 100% low-income housing on SPURA, a
 21 school, health clinic, and daycare, and affordable
 22 spaces for small businesses, and to prioritize
 23 jobs for the working and local community.

24 We demand our elected officials
 25 vote on behalf of the community and vote down the

1

2 current plan. Thanks.

3 LOUISE VELEZ: Hi, my name is
4 Louise Velez. I'm here representing People First
5 Campaign and NMASS, National Mobilization Against
6 Sweat Shops.

7 I'm also representing the Lower
8 East Side because I've lived here all my life. My
9 parents came here in 1945--they're not here today
10 because they're already deceased--but it would be
11 a shame and they would probably cry to see how
12 this neighborhood has changed, not for the better
13 but for the worse, in the sense that we're getting
14 displaced.

15 This part of SPURA that they're
16 building today is kind of displacing us because
17 you're bringing in luxury buildings, high-class
18 stores, and displacing our grocery stores, our
19 restaurants, which I see diminishing in the Lower
20 East Side. But you're bringing up a lot of bars
21 and restaurants and, wow, what a good example for
22 our children. Everybody claims about drugs and
23 everything but you're putting people out there to
24 drink in front of our children, what a good
25 example.

1

2 But the fact that we're being
3 displaced today and that SPURA is going to bring a
4 lot of displacements for us, I think it's
5 discouraging for the lower low income people. We
6 need low-income housing, and if we have a
7 developer that's willing to help and give 100% low
8 income, I think the City should take this into
9 consideration, look into it instead of getting
10 developers who just want to profit from the Lower
11 East Side.

12 When you displaced these people 46
13 years ago, promising them to bring them back to
14 the Delancey lot or Seward Park and today they're
15 not here, but you're not even giving them the
16 consideration of giving them the same amount of
17 money they paid years ago presently today. Thank
18 you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you for
20 testifying. We're going to call up the next panel
21 in support. Lisa Davis, Theresa Rodriguez,
22 Macdal--

23 MALE VOICE: Magadalena.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: --oh,
25 Magdalena Galvin, Reverend Neil Connolly, Maritza

1

2 Silva-Farrell, Fran Marino. No? Oh, Fran?

3 FRAN MARINO: Yes.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay, Fran.

5 [Off mic]

6 MAGDALENA GALVAN: You want to go
7 first?

8 REV. NEIL CONNOLLY: You want to go
9 first.

10 MAGDALENA GALVAN: If you--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Oh, Father
12 Connolly, you want to start?

13 REV. NEIL CONNOLLY: Thank you. My
14 name is Neil Connolly and I'm a pastor at St.
15 Mary's on Grant Street in historic church, it's
16 been there for 186 years, and I've been there 27
17 of those years.

18 And pretty much support the
19 Community Board plan. I'm very thankful to them
20 for getting us out of doing nothing for so many
21 years. When I first came to the Lower East Side,
22 one of the first persons I met was Daniel
23 Kronenfeld [phonetic] of Henry Street Settlement
24 House and I asked him what about the property and
25 he said 45 years, somewhere around that number of

1
2 years, it has just sat there. And so I appreciate
3 the fact that some action is taking place.

4 I support the 50% affordable
5 housing, but I'd like to see a change in it. What
6 I'd like to be able to see is 55 to 60%, because
7 when Councilwoman Chin mentioned about all of
8 those, that density that's been with the lower
9 50%, when you have senior citizens, you have
10 people, perhaps tenants coming back who used to
11 live there, you have senior citizens, you have
12 moderate income, and middle income, that's a lot
13 of people to fit into that 50%.

14 For the relocation costs and same
15 rental levels for the Essex Street merchants, 50%
16 community jobs commitments. And I like the idea
17 of the living wage that somebody mentioned. No
18 big box stores. And a school, and I agree very
19 much with the perception of traffic in the
20 neighborhood. We already have a lot of difficult
21 problems, and it's going to add more, and so I
22 think knowing that I'm sure that the City Council
23 members will be able to address that situation
24 very seriously.

25 I work a lot in hospitals and one

1

2 of the things that I am very happy about the
3 hospital emergency ward is that they have a system
4 called triage, and so the worst wounded, beaten-
5 down people, the people who are in real
6 emergencies get taken care of first. It seems to
7 me that our country, our own neighborhood, the
8 decency of people is that those who are hurting
9 most get the most attention. People of low income
10 do not have the liberty to be able to move around
11 the city and they can't select the places they
12 would love to go because they don't have the
13 ability to do that. And so I ask the members of
14 the City Council to consider those needs and see
15 if this can be pushed up, the lower 50%, the
16 proposal, I would ask that it be to 55 or 60%.
17 And I thank Councilwoman Chin very much for being
18 accessible to us and also for, I think, hearing
19 our plea. Thank you.

20 MAGDALENA GALVAN: Good afternoon,
21 my name is Magdalena Galvan. I live in the Lower
22 East Side for 42 years, I grow four children in
23 the neighborhood, but now they all over the place--
24 -Albany, Long Island, Queens, Upper Manhattan--
25 because they can't afford to pay the rent. I

1
2 would like, not only for my children, I want all
3 the children come back to the area because that's
4 our neighborhood.

5 And if we're growing in one place,
6 we like at least in that place, but if cannot have
7 it 100% affordable housing, we can have it, like
8 Father Neil say, at least 55 or 60%. And then we
9 don't want no mark on the [off mic] in our
10 neighbor. We want it housing for the low income
11 of people. We want it the people and the
12 community to stick together, no separated family,
13 please.

14 Thank you, Margaret Chin, and thank
15 you for everything you do for our community.

16 MARITZA SILVA-FARRELL: Good
17 afternoon, my name is Maritza Silva-Farrell, I
18 work for ALIGN, the Alliance for a Greater New
19 York.

20 Thank you for giving me the
21 opportunity to testify today. We are here today
22 because we'd like to urge this Committee to modify
23 the current proposal for SPURA. Without the
24 modifications for which the Lower East Side and
25 the community, actually, has put together and

1
2 advocate for, we'll see that this project, it will
3 be tarnished.

4 So some of the modifications and
5 recommendations that we will like to make sure are
6 included are the 30,000 square foot size limit on
7 all retail development; wage standards for all
8 workers; 50% local hiring, a target for all
9 commercial businesses; protect the Essex Street
10 Market vendors; and, obviously, we support the
11 idea of bringing more affordable housing to the
12 community that it very much need.

13 So the modifications we recommend
14 are similar to the guidelines for the development
15 that were put together by the Community Board 3.
16 And we see that if these guidelines are
17 disregarded by the Subcommittee, it will actually
18 alienate the community from this development.

19 So we urge this Committee, once
20 again, to make sure these recommendations are
21 included, but in the ULURP zoning amendments;
22 however, if the Subcommittee is unable to include
23 such recommendations in ULURP, we recommend that
24 they be included in either a restrictive
25 declaration or in the RFP. As a final

1
2 alternative, a community benefits agreement or MOU
3 could incorporate these request.

4 With no specific requirements for
5 livable wages, benefits, local hiring, and a store
6 size limitations considered in the ULURP, a
7 developer may try to bring a Wal-Mart as a tenant,
8 similar to what almost happened in East New York.
9 Community members had to fight after the
10 development was approved by this body to make sure
11 that the high road retail will be part of the
12 Gateway II development, as there were few specific
13 community benefits requirements in this--within
14 the ULURP process. We should prevent that from
15 happening again.

16 SPURA can do a great deal to
17 improve the quality of life for Lower East Side
18 residents, but only if it's done right.

19 Thank you.

20 FRAN MARINO: Good afternoon, my
21 name is Fran Marino, I'm a long time resident of
22 the Lower East Side, a parishioner of St. Mary's.
23 St. Mary's is a proud member of Seward Park
24 Redevelopment Coalition, which is SPARC.

25 I am happy to see the ULURP process

1
2 moving forward after this long-delayed plan for
3 Seward Park. All around us high-rise condos and
4 luxury hotels are rising up without any
5 consideration for the needs of our community. We
6 need affordable housing, small retail stores that
7 will provide goods, services, and jobs.

8 I support the compromise agreement
9 that was reached by many stakeholders in the Land
10 Use Committee of Community Board 3 and unanimously
11 approved in January 2011 and again May of 2012.

12 I wish that more affordable housing
13 could be built on the SPURA sites, still, I
14 support the 50/50 compromise, with 50% affordable
15 and 50% market rate. I understand the financial
16 and the political realities. Nevertheless, I urge
17 the City Council to build on the work of Community
18 Board 3 by adding language in the ULURP resolution
19 calling for additional affordable housing on the
20 SPURA site or elsewhere in the Community Board 3
21 area. And we definitely could use more senior
22 citizen housing since every eight minutes a baby
23 boomer turns 65. We want housing that is
24 affordable to many income groups within the
25 categories of low, moderate, and middle--not just

1
2 high end category.

3 I am concerned about how those low-
4 -those resale restrictions are going to be
5 monitored and enforced. We need a Lower East Side
6 community land trust that would retain ownership
7 of the SPURA land and then lease it to the
8 developers, and then the CLT can then monitor the
9 restrictions designed to protect the affordability
10 of the housing.

11 The City must keep its promises:
12 50% of all jobs permanent and construction-related
13 should go to residents of the community; develop
14 small retail stores, not big box stores that will
15 drive our small merchants out of business and pay
16 very low wages; the workers must be paid a living
17 wage, enough to be able to live in New York City;
18 the Essex Street merchants were promised
19 relocation expenses, the City must keep its
20 promise; and, yes, we definitely need a school.

21 For 45 years we've waited for the
22 City to keep its promises, now it's time for the
23 City to deliver on its promises.

24 Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very

1

2 much. Thank you all for your testimony. I would
3 ask everyone who's to testify, 'cause we still
4 have a lot of folks that have signed up, that when
5 you hear the buzzer marking the two-minute mark,
6 that you condense the remainder of your testimony
7 and try to wrap it up within about 15 seconds or
8 so.

9 Next up, we are now just hearing
10 panels in favor of the project. Richard Grande,
11 Jonathan Landsman, Maurice Allen, and Tito
12 Delgado.

13 [Off mic]

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you.

15 Anybody have copies of their statements?

16 [Off mic]

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'll read those
18 again: Tito Delgado, Maurice Allen, Jonathan
19 Landsman, and Richard Grande.

20 [Off mic]

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm going to
22 call up Vito Pitta, Vito here? Okay. William
23 Arroyo.

24 MALE VOICE: He's gone [off mic]

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Carmen Negrón?

2 [Off mic]

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Whoever
4 wants to begin first, go ahead.

5 AUTATIST SENN: Hello, my name is
6 Autatist Senn [phonetic] and I'm a staff member of
7 SEIU Local 32BJ, thank you for allowing me to
8 testify today. I will be reading a testimony on
9 behalf of Maurice Allen, a member of Local 32BJ
10 who had to leave to go to work today.

11 Hello, my name is Maurice Allen, I
12 am a proud member of the labor union SEIU 32BJ.
13 Some of our members have spoken at other hearings
14 which you may remember, but I want to repeat our
15 concerns about job standards here.

16 We all know that living in the city
17 is expensive and gets more expensive each year.
18 Being a member of Local 32BJ with a good salary
19 and benefits, I have been able to raise my family
20 and afford living in this city. All New Yorkers
21 deserve the same. Regarding the Seward Park
22 project, I am worried about whether the jobs
23 created from the development of these sites will
24 be jobs that pay wages and benefits that people
25 can support their families with.

1

2 Too often developers benefit from
 3 city-sponsored projects and rezonings paid for by
 4 taxpayers and then turn around and don't even
 5 provide good paying jobs. If developers are going
 6 to benefit from our tax dollars and public land,
 7 then they should make sure that they create the
 8 kind of jobs that can support families along with
 9 enough permanent affordable housing that middle-
 10 class people like me can afford.

11 So I ask that the Council recommend
 12 that there be standards attached to this project
 13 that will provide for good jobs and keep out low-
 14 road employers.

15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Go
 17 ahead.

18 JONATHAN LANDSMAN: Hi, my name is
 19 Jonathan Landsman from the Wal-Mart Free NYC
 20 Coalition.

21 Wal-Mart-Free NYC believes that the
 22 SPURA development has the potential to bring
 23 significant opportunity to the surrounding
 24 neighborhood, however, to ensure that the
 25 development has a positive impact on the community

1
2 we suggest making modifications that would include
3 a 30,000 square foot size limit on all retail
4 development to preclude big box stores like Wal-
5 Mart from entering into the development with a
6 large format store. Additionally, we urge the
7 City Council to consider the inclusion of wage
8 standards for commercial businesses and local
9 hiring requirements.

10 If we wait until the ULURP
11 application has been approved and merely include
12 our recommendation in an RFP, we forfeit the
13 ability to ensure a requirement that our hoped-for
14 standards be met, leaving it to the whim of what a
15 developer deems realistic or possible for our
16 community. If this project passes ULURP in its
17 current form, there must be some mechanism built
18 in to ensure that any developer awarded the
19 project would bring in tenants and employers that
20 are agreeable to the community, and time and time
21 again we have heard that no big box store is
22 welcome at SPURA, much less Wal-Mart.

23 With over 600,000 square feet of
24 retail, this development could be considered an
25 attractive destination for big box retailers;

1
2 however, choosing tenants with proven track
3 records of supporting worker's rights, good wages,
4 and affordable benefits, and choosing local stores
5 over national big box retailers, are essential to
6 neighborhood-friendly commerce.

7 We are concerned, however, that
8 with no specific requirements for livable wages
9 and benefits, local hiring or store size
10 limitations considered during the ULURP, that a
11 developer may try to bring in Wal-Mart as a
12 tenant--a move that would have serious
13 consequences for the community's residents,
14 workers, and small businesses. We urge the City
15 Council to not approve plans that do not at least
16 contain recommendations we have discussed.

17 And later through the RFP process,
18 we recommend that any developer awarded a portion
19 of the project containing a retail component enter
20 into an agreement stating that they will not
21 choose Wal-Mart as a tenant, recognizing the
22 community opposition.

23 As we have learned time and time
24 again during this important ULURP process, it is
25 important to receive assurances that these

1

2 recommendations will not just be considered but,
 3 be included as part of the ULURP requirements for
 4 this project by included modifications to the plan
 5 itself or through the use of a restrictive
 6 declaration.

7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. Go
 9 ahead.

10 CARMEN NEGRON: Good afternoon, my
 11 name is Carmen Negrón and I'm a member of--

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: [Interposing]
 13 Please push the button, make sure the light is on.

14 CARMEN NEGRON: Okay. Got it.
 15 Good afternoon, my name is Carmen Negrón, I am a
 16 member of GOLES and I am here not opposing or in
 17 favor of the plan, but just to express what I feel
 18 our community needs.

19 I have been a resident of the Lower
 20 East Side for 45 years, I have seen our
 21 neighborhood change and lose a lot of the mix of
 22 ethnicities in the last years. Every time a low-
 23 income family that has been a resident of the
 24 Lower East Side for a long time leaves, has to
 25 move, is forced out because they cannot afford the

1
2 rent anymore, they take with them a piece of our
3 history and the flavor of the neighborhood. We
4 need more affordable housing in SPURA, even if
5 subsidies are necessary. The affordable housing
6 should represent the incomes of the people of the
7 Lower East Side and not those of the people who
8 come from the outside when affordable is 80,000
9 income or over. We do not need that kind of money
10 here. I know that HUD has the median income, but
11 is the median income of the area and not the
12 median income of the community where the project
13 is going to come up.

14 There is a big gap on the income
15 limits that were published. The senior apartments
16 allowance should be increased as well as the low
17 income. There are plenty of apartments in the
18 Lower East Side right now that the people of the
19 Lower East Side cannot afford. The neighborhood
20 has become unrecognizable even for people like me
21 that have lived there for so long since the
22 sixties.

23 I would also, in closing, say that
24 it would be fair, with all the unemployment that
25 we have in our community, that the employment and

1

2 the jobs that are going to be created by this
 3 project, at least 50% of them could go to the
 4 people in our community. We have people in our
 5 community that are skilled and are well-trained
 6 and can benefit from this. Thank you so much.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

8 TITO DELGADO: Hello, my name is
 9 Tito Delgado. This has been a very long, long
 10 journey to get to this Council chamber. It has
 11 taken me 45 years to be in front of you now.

12 [Applause]

13 TITO DELGADO: I am a former site
 14 tenant.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'll make an
 16 exception, go ahead.

17 FEMALE VOICE: Former site tenant.

18 TITO DELGADO: I am a former site
 19 tenant.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yeah.

21 TITO DELGADO: Forty-five years
 22 ago, actually, the master planner, Roger Starr
 23 [phonetic], developed a master plan. His plan was
 24 to move poor people out of the city. He succeeded
 25 to a great extent.

1
2 Our Lower East Side community and
3 our SPURA site, many of those families are still
4 wondering where they're going to live, looking for
5 housing. Many of them I still in touch with,
6 they're doubled up and tripled up in public
7 housing with their grandparents 'cause they got
8 nowhere to go and they take their chance of their
9 grandmother being evicted because they're
10 illegally there.

11 I certainly support this plan. We
12 fought for many, many years to get this and it has
13 not been easy. The opposition we finally sat down
14 with and we came to an agreement, the compromise,
15 where everybody wins and not everybody is happy
16 with everything. I'm not happy with everything, I
17 would like to see 100%, but that's not a political
18 reality.

19 For those who--for those people in
20 Chinatown, not only in Chinatown, but those people
21 who say, well, we have a developer that's going to
22 come in and give us 100% lower income? I don't
23 believe it.

24 The private sector has never given
25 the working man anything, it has only been you,

1

2 the government, that has provided housing for
 3 people, healthcare, jobs, et cetera, never the
 4 private sector. We want you to support this plan-
 5 -

6 [Applause]

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Keep it down,
 8 please.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: If you have
 10 more, Mr. Delgado, you can finish it.

11 TITO DELGADO: Actually, I think
 12 I've said what I wanted to say. And we got--we
 13 still got a fight on our hands because we need to
 14 bring down some of those income requirements
 15 because, as a former site tenant, I know there is
 16 a lot of former site tenants, which I have 20 in
 17 my pocket already, and many of them I met here,
 18 that would not meet the entry level for low
 19 income--for the so-called affordable so we need to
 20 bring down those numbers. If we can really work
 21 on that, that would really be a great help for us.

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
 23 much, and--

24 TITO DELGADO: Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --

1

2 congratulations, I'm glad that you've been able to
3 get here and be able to speak today, it's--

4 TITO DELGADO: Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --and

6 congratulations.

7 TITO DELGADO: Thank you very much.

8 Thank you.

9 [Applause]

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. We'd

11 like to call up Lisa Davis, Lucille Carrasquero,
12 Gilbert Alicea, and Yee So Leong, Yee So Leong.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: If your name was
14 called, please come up.

15 [Off mic]

16 LISA DAVIS: Oh, can I sit here,
17 sorry.

18 MALE VOICE: Yes, good idea.

19 FEMALE VOICE 3: Thank you.

20 LISA DAVIS: You're welcome.

21 LUCILLE CARRASQUERO: Oh, should I
22 start?

23 [Off mic]

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Who wants to go
25 first?

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2 LISA DAVIS: I'll go first, it
3 doesn't matter. Okay. Hello, my name is Lisa
4 Davis, I'm a lifelong resident of the Lower East
5 Side, I'm also a member the GOLES organization of
6 the Lower East Side that has been working with
7 residents and their housing issues for 35 years.
8 As a resident of the Lower East Side, I am here to
9 share my concern about the proposal for the mixed
10 use plan for Seward Park SPURA area.

11 While many of us in the community
12 are pleased to hear that the SPURA proposal will
13 be permanently affordable, we would like to see
14 the market rate available where apartments that
15 include affordable rate apartments for low-income
16 division and the low-income senior division under
17 the affordable rate be increased which could come
18 from the middle-income division that has been
19 allocated, which could actually be joined under
20 the market rate division because it's acceptable
21 wages and income equals the market rate anyway.
22 It would be feasible that 50% low to moderate
23 income housing and 50% middle to market rate
24 housing and more would be a more reasonable plan
25 for the SPURA plan. As a member of the GOLES

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2 Healthy Aging program, I would hope that there
3 will be more senior housing included in the 50%
4 affordable housing.

5 And we need to keep affordability
6 for the low-income units beyond 60 years because
7 once families begin to lay roots, they shouldn't
8 expect that after 60 years the rent would become
9 unaffordable. They must move out--then they would
10 have to move out of their neighborhoods and the
11 familiarity.

12 And it is my last understanding
13 that 20% out of the 900 apartments that would be
14 considered low-income apartments would equal about
15 180 apartments. And that has been devoted to low-
16 income families. Along with 90 apartments devoted
17 to total low-income senior apartments. And I am
18 aware that only half of these apartments devoted
19 to low-income applicants are prioritized for Lower
20 East Side residents, resulting in only about 45
21 apartments for Lower East Side seniors.

22 These percentages are welcome, but
23 it's not going to be enough housing considering
24 the great need in this community for affordable
25 housing, which many people have waited decades for

2 its development. Again, this plan should include
3 more low-income housing and, at the very least,
4 the Community Board--well, sorry, the Council
5 should not support any plan where the affordable
6 housing is not permanent and not inclusive of
7 appropriately low-income housing.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you.
9 Next?

10 GILBERT ALICEA: I've been sitting
11 here for about three hours already and a profound
12 thought has come to me in the past three hours,
13 it's easier to talk than it is to listen. So with
14 that said, I--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: [Interposing]
16 Can you talk into the mic, please?

17 GILBERT ALICEA: --so with that
18 said, I--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And--

20 GILBERT ALICEA: --I've got a
21 newfound--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: --and say
23 your name? Yeah.

24 GILBERT ALICEA: Oh, newfound
25 respect for you folks up here. I be getting to

1

2 that, now it's my turn.

3 My name is Gilbert Alicea, I'm a
4 member of GOLES, Good Old Lower East Side. I live
5 on the--and I've resident of the Lower East Side
6 for the better half of 45 years. Affordable,
7 million dollar question, depends who you talk to
8 what that means. Real affordable housing for
9 people in this neighborhood is the low-income
10 housing. We want to see more low-income housing
11 in the SPURA plan and more housing for low-income
12 seniors. The senior citizens now are the baby
13 boom generation so there's going to be a lot of
14 senior citizens and they're going to need housing.
15 I might add that there are 1.2 million elderly in
16 New York City and 35% of them live alone.

17 In my opinion, with an income of a
18 cap of 136,000 yearly, the middle income housing
19 should go with the market rate housing. It could
20 be 50% low to moderate and 50% middle to market,
21 that way, there could be more low and moderate
22 income housing or more low-income senior housing.
23 It's just a suggestion, considering how many low-
24 income families were displaced from those
25 buildings. Increasing the low to moderate or low-

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2 income senior portions of the housing is a step
 3 towards justice, and it's what is right for the
 4 community, for this community.

5 Lastly, when this construction
 6 starts, I want to know what housing units will be
 7 built first and will there be a guarantee that the
 8 low-income housing will get built first or at
 9 least at the same time as the rest of the
 10 development?

11 Once again, I thank you your time
 12 and consideration.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you.

14 Next?

15 YEE SO LEONG: Good afternoon, my
 16 name is Yee So Leong--

17 FEMALE VOICE 5: Turn the mic on.

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Just press the
 19 button--

20 [background noise]

21 YEE SO LEONG: Hi, good afternoon,
 22 my name is Yee So Leong. I live in this Low East
 23 Side Manhattan more than 40 years, I also work in
 24 this neighborhood, and I am really concerned about
 25 the neighborhood change. And I love to live in

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2 this neighborhood and I love this neighborhood.

3 And today I'm here, I want to make
 4 sure the Council can hear from us. We need more
 5 senior housing, low-income housing, and this is
 6 what I'm here for, and I wanted to support the
 7 plan and this is a site that we waited more than
 8 40 years.

9 Thank you. Can I say in Chinese?

10 [Foreign language]

11 YEE SO LEONG: Thank you.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you for
 13 coming. Next?

14 LUCILLE CARRASQUERO: Good
 15 afternoon to all of the City Council officials and
 16 to the New Yorkers who are here today. My name is
 17 Lucille Carrasquero, I am a member of the Cooper
 18 Square Committee. I have been a Lower East Side
 19 resident for most of my 85 years. I am glad that
 20 the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area compromise plan
 21 was finally passed by our Community Board. This
 22 land has been left fallow for too many years. I'm
 23 very glad that housing will finally be built on
 24 this land.

25 I am happy that the affordable

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apartments will be affordable in perpetuity.

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I urge the City Council to approve this ULURP application.

4

5

In my heart of hearts, I hope that there could be more low-income housing built on or around this site. I hope that this mixed use community will create more jobs, with livable wages for our community, and that you will include the Community Board recommendation that there be no big box stores on this site.

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I think that the City should do all it can to find the former tenants so that they can move back into the community they were forced to leave over 45 years ago. I hope that these suggestions will make this plan even better than it is. Please pass the best ULURP for the people of the lower side and for all New Yorkers. Thank you.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, thank you, Lucille. Thank you for coming down.

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We'd like to call down the next panel. Joyce Ravitz, Harriet Cohen, Maxine Fee, and Reverend Dawson. Oh, okay, all here.

23

24

25

FEMALE VOICE 4: Jesus Christ.

1

2 Sorry.

3 [Off mic]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Who wants to
5 go first? Okay, Harriet.

6 MAXINE FEE: They pulled up an
7 extra seat, it's right here--

8 [Crosstalk]

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Anybody wants to
10 give copies of testimony?

11 HARRIET COHEN: Yes.

12 REV. AFIYA DAWSON: Too crowded.

13 FEMALE VOICE 5: How many more?

14 HARRIET COHEN: I got one. Let's
15 see, good afternoon I think it is, yes.

16 FEMALE VOICE: It's evening, good
17 evening.

18 HARRIET COHEN: My name is Harriet
19 Cohen, I'm a long time resident of the Lower East
20 Side, my father was born and raised on Ludlow
21 Street, and I am the chair of SPARC, the Seward
22 Park Area Redevelopment Coalition, which is a
23 volunteer organization of Lower East Side
24 residents, community-based and faith
25 organizations, tenant associations, and former

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2 site tenants. In various formations, we have been
3 active for the last 40 years since the first
4 bulldozers destroyed 2,000 family homes and
5 several hundred small businesses and livelihoods,
6 and we've been around to witness all the broken
7 promises and the decades of vacant land.

8 We've knocked on doors, held
9 rallies and vigils, circulated petitions, and sent
10 thousands of postcards, reached out to successive
11 mayors and administrations, always insisting that
12 affordable housing be built on the site and the
13 former site tenants restored to their homes. It's
14 been a long and contentious history.

15 Most recently we joined the
16 Community Board 3 Land Use and Housing Committee
17 and worked for three years to produce the
18 compromise plan that is before you between various
19 stakeholders in the community that had differing
20 priorities for the site. In the end, we voted for
21 the compromise and joined with everyone to support
22 a mixed use development plan that we've all been
23 discussing today. We didn't get all we wanted:
24 We fought for more than 50% affordable housing for
25 units for our most low income and vulnerable

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2 residents, not only because of the history of the
3 site, but because the rampant gentrification on
4 the Lower East Side is turning our once
5 economically integrated community into one that is
6 increasingly divided between the haves and the
7 have nots.

8 So we support at least 50%
9 permanent housing serving low, moderate, and
10 middle income, and seniors, we'd like to see more,
11 if not on SPURA, than a City commitment to build
12 it in other parts of the Lower East Side. And we
13 want the City's commitment to permanent
14 affordability to be written into the ULURP.

15 We support retail stores, no big
16 boxes, a fair deal for the Essex Street Market,
17 including relocation costs paid by the City and
18 comparable rents. A commitment for full-time--50%
19 of full-time jobs for local residents at living
20 wages, and , importantly, further consideration
21 for a new school, and, most importantly, honoring
22 the commitment to the former site tenants by
23 locating and finding them and letting them know
24 they have priority for any of the new housing.

25 And we have done a lot of outreach,

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2 not a lot of outreach, just some preliminary
 3 outreach and just with our preliminary outreach,
 4 we found we have about 75 names, so we hope with
 5 more concerted outreach we can find a lot more and
 6 we are working closely with HPD.

7 And I'll spare you the rest of
 8 mine, but I just want to say that the Lower East
 9 Side is a symbol around the world, home to
 10 successive waves of global immigrants, tolerant of
 11 difference, and with an openness that has allowed
 12 people from different walks of life, be it income,
 13 race, ethnicity, or disability, to live and work
 14 together here and feel they really belong. Let's
 15 make sure this strength of our community character
 16 is reinforced and shows up in all that is built in
 17 the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area.

18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
 20 much.

21 HARRIET COHEN: Maxine, do you want
 22 to go?

23 REV. AFIYA DIANE DAWSON: Good
 24 evening at this point, my name is Rev. Afiya Diane
 25 Dawson, I have lived on the Lower East Side for 62

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2 of my 64 years. I was raised in the Vladeck
3 Houses on Madison Street, and my 88-year old
4 mother still lives there. She refused to move
5 out, she loves our community and this is where she
6 would like to spend her remaining days. I still
7 live on the Lower East Side. I now live on in
8 what we call the co-ops on Grant Street, and I
9 raised my children here.

10 When the new housing is built, we
11 will obviously need more schools. I am a retired
12 guidance counselor, and I was a guidance counselor
13 in School District One right here on the Lower
14 East Side. I worked at PS 134 and PS 97. I saw
15 firsthand how our children, the children on the
16 Lower East Side, are discriminated against when it
17 comes to education. They are shut out of the
18 schools in their own communities. And I am
19 speaking of Board of Ed properties that were once
20 open to them and were made into specialized
21 schools. We guidance counselors were told that
22 the children in School District One would be given
23 first priority to these schools, but in fact,
24 instead they have been pretty much shut out. And
25 I am speaking specifically of Bard High School,

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2 formerly PS 97 of NEST, which is formerly junior
3 high school 22 and Shun Wen, formerly PS 134.

4 This cannot happen again. Our
5 children deserve a decent education just like
6 everyone else. Children are now bused in, driven
7 in in chauffeured limousines to go to schools in
8 our community and our very own children cannot
9 attend these schools. This has to stop, it cannot
10 continue, and it cannot happen again.

11 So, yes, we need more schools in
12 our community, but we need schools that are open
13 to our children, the children on the Lower East
14 Side. And not only some of them, but all of the
15 children. Not simply the children who live in the
16 co-ops and who are going to live in the--what is
17 it called? The affordable and the--what is it--
18 the median income and the market rate housing
19 which when I first moved into the co-op, it was
20 affordable and in order to keep out people of
21 color, I hate to say it, and lower income people,
22 our housing was changed into market rate value so
23 that people who pay \$2,000 for their apartments,
24 their apartments are now worth--what is it?

25 FEMALE VOICE: A hundred and two

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thousand.

REV. AFIYA DAWSON: Like 68,000--
\$800,000, the same amount of money you would spend
on a brownstone. Okay, this can't continue, this
has to stop, and so I'm asking the City Council
members, please support Margaret Chin, please make
this stop, let our people have affordable housing
and be able to go to decent schools. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

MAXINE FEE: Mr. Chair and members
of the Committee, my name is Maxine Fee, I am a
lifelong resident of the Lower East Side, and I'm
the chairperson of the Cooper Square Mutual
Housing Association.

We are a low-income cooperative
housing association in the Lower East Side which
is self-governed by its shareholders. Cooper
Square MHA is a member of the Seward Park
Redevelopment Coalition, SPARC.

I urge you to vote yes on the ULURP
items number 0688 through 0699 for the
redevelopment of the Seward Park Urban Renewal
site.

After 45 long years of broken

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2 promises and vacant lots, and three years of hard
3 work by neighborhood shareholders, Community Board
4 3 voted unanimously on May 22nd of this year to
5 support a historic agreement for the mixed use--
6 housing, community facilities, and commercial--
7 redevelopment on this site. Since that historic
8 vote, both the Manhattan Borough President and the
9 New York City Planning Commission by a unanimous
10 vote added their voices in favor of this long-
11 delayed project.

12 As a low-income housing co-op, we
13 are particularly interested in the housing
14 component of the SPURA site. We support approval
15 of the proposed mixed use redevelopment plan,
16 which will include several major agreements, but
17 we urge the New York City Council to use its best
18 efforts to improve it. The plan calls for at
19 least 450 units of permanently affordable housing
20 for low, moderate, and middle income, and senior
21 residents, but we believe that the plan could be
22 made better by increasing the percentage and
23 number of affordable housing units by requiring
24 additional housing for senior citizens and other
25 supportive housing whether on the SPURA site or

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2 offsite within Community Board 3 area. Fifty
 3 percent of the units also must be set aside for
 4 Lower East Side, CB 3 residents.

5 I second all the other points that
 6 were made here today in terms of the improving the
 7 plan. Thank you very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

9 [Off mic]

10 JOYCE RAVITZ: Good afternoon, Mr.
 11 Chairman; good afternoon, Margaret, other people
 12 who have waited around for about three hours--

13 FEMALE VOICE: At least.

14 JOYCE RAVITZ: --at least and
 15 probably another at least half-hour, I really
 16 appreciate it, and I want to thank you all for
 17 being here.

18 My name is Joyce Ravitz, I'm the
 19 Chairperson of the Cooper Square Committee, I'm a
 20 Lower East Side resident for over 45 years, and
 21 I'm also on Community Board 3.

22 I'm here today to support this
 23 plan. I was delighted when the Seward Park Urban
 24 Renewal Area compromise plan was finally passed by
 25 the Community Board. I hope the City Council will

1
2 do the same. The best part of this plan by far is
3 the affordable housing will be affordable forever,
4 and I want to thank the City Council for promising
5 this, I hope it gets in to the reality when the
6 City Council passes this.

7 First, I think that this plan was
8 great, but I hope the City Council will make SPURA
9 even a better plan. First, I hope that you will
10 find a way to make more low-income housing in this
11 plan or close to the plan. My community is
12 desperate for more low-income housing.

13 I'm going to stop from what I wrote
14 to tell you a little story that on Monday I went
15 to my senior center and I got a list of about 30
16 people who wanted to come here today to be sure
17 that there was more low-income housing, more
18 senior housing in this plan. Twenty of them are
19 here and they're probably still here now and this
20 is just organized in two days. So this should
21 show the City Council how desperate the people on
22 the Lower East Side are for senior housing, for
23 low-income housing.

24 I'll just submit the rest of my
25 plan--what I was going to say, but thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
3 much. I want to thank you all very much for your
4 patience and for your testimony, I know that
5 you've waited a long time to do this, and I thank
6 you very much.

7 We have one more panel that we're
8 going to call up. If anybody would like to
9 testify that has not signed in or has not been
10 called up, please--okay, well we have one more, we
11 have, if you--after I read the last five names
12 here, if you have submitted a form and your name
13 hasn't been called up, please you can speak to
14 counsel to the committee. We don't have a
15 Sergeant-at Arms here. Fred Seiden, Anthony
16 Feliciano, Valerio Orselli, Steve Hernick, and
17 Deyanira Del Rio. And, again, if your name has
18 not been called or if you would like to testify
19 and you have not been called, please fill out the
20 form that's up at the Sergeant-at-Arms desk.
21 Thank you.

22 [Pause]

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Whoever would
24 like to begin, go ahead. And I'm sorry to have
25 you guys wait so long.

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2 [Pause]

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3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Go ahead.

3

4 ANTHONY FELICIANO: Actually, good
5 evening almost now. My name is Anthony Feliciano,
6 I am the District Leader for the 74th Assembly
7 District on the Lower East Side, but, more
8 importantly, I'm a active longtime GOLES member,
9 and a resident of the Lower East Side for over 30
10 years, and a proud father of a 20-month child, a
11 son, who I would like to actually let him know and
12 tell him when he sees this development happen that
13 two injustices have been looked and touched upon,
14 which is, one, the amount of people that were
15 displaced originally on this site; and, two, a
16 relief in terms of the shrinking low-income
17 housing that we have, not only in this community,
18 but also in the entire city.

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The one reasons why it's so
20 important to me in terms--and for our members and
21 our community in terms of Seward Park is that we
22 lack so much affordable housing in this community
23 and jobs and other things that are occurring in
24 schools, but the one thing is that even though
25 this plan was worked hard and a lot of struggles

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2 went through it for many years, I still believe
3 there is an opportunity, just like this being a
4 process, it's an opportunity to actually do more
5 and fix some of the errors that weren't done on
6 the Community Board level.

7 One of them is to--the plan should
8 include more housing for low and moderate income
9 people. Lower East Side has a history of
10 welcoming and fostering the betterment of our
11 communities and particularly low-income immigrant
12 communities of color.

13 Some may say in the city and city
14 agencies that the plan has already done more than
15 in other areas. I will contest that. I think
16 that we have an opportunity to do more in several
17 ways: One, GOLES where some of us have come up
18 with some ideas or options or solutions. One,
19 support more housing for low-income people that
20 should require developers to apply for subsidies
21 that they use them--when they apply for subsidies
22 to use them towards making the middle income or
23 market rate units more affordable.

24 Increasing the low and moderate or
25 low-income senior portions of the housing of this

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2 site is another step towards making things right.

3 The other area, plans should
4 include 50% of all local hiring for all jobs. At
5 least 50% of those short-term or permanent jobs
6 created at SPURA should go to residents of the
7 Lower East Side. Employers need to advertise all
8 job openings widely throughout the neighborhood,
9 and all jobs should pay a living wage. Even
10 though HireNYC sets good guidelines, they're
11 meaningless without the enforcement and the
12 monitoring of that. So enforceable local hiring
13 must be part of SPURA, including living wage.

14 The other areas, the plan should
15 not include big box stores. Many of us have
16 stated this. Delancey Street needs a lot of
17 revitalization and big box stores would take away
18 from that opportunity. The plan for SPURA plans
19 for more--plans for zoning text amendment, we're
20 not sure, but a special exception to allow big box
21 stores that are out of character with our
22 neighborhood should not be allowed. We're calling
23 on the City Council to deny any requests for
24 zoning text amendments that would allow big
25 destination retail stores.

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2 The other area it turns--I have my
3 background in public health and I do believe that
4 a big box store will bring a congestion of also
5 trucks coming in. And we should not just only
6 look at the Williamsburg Bridge, we have to look
7 at the Manhattan Bridge. Chinatown and the Lower
8 East Side have--contrary to what the Health
9 Department says, has huge rates of asthma and
10 other things occurring, and I think if we have a
11 big box store, these trucks will be coming in
12 through the Manhattan Bridge, particularly since
13 it's actually free to come through that way, and
14 that's one of the reasons why the trucks go
15 through Chinatown.

16 The other issue is the plan should
17 include a school for our children. Contrary to
18 what the DOE is stating, I think the algorithms
19 are wrong in terms of what they think is not
20 overcrowding. We need school-age children to
21 have--the population is going to grow, and I do
22 think we have to look at that. And there's been
23 claimings of news articles and stories saying that
24 in the Lower East Side in terms of the
25 overcrowding.

2 | The other piece is that the plan
3 | should include all provisions to make it fair for
4 | the Essex Street Market businesses. If they have
5 | to move, it could cost a vendor their livelihood,
6 | so we must cover the moving costs for those
7 | vendors. And also include when new vendors come
8 | into the site that low-income communities and
9 | immigrant communities could have access to that in
10 | terms of entrepreneurship and so on.

11 | So those are the major areas that I
12 | like to touch on. And one area that we caution
13 | that we put it into ULURP versus all the
14 | restrictive declaration versus waiting for the RFP
15 | process. Thank you.

16 | CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, Mr.
17 | Feliciano.

18 | FRED SEIDEN: Yeah, good afternoon,
19 | my name is Fred Seiden, I have a, perhaps, a
20 | unique perspective on the SPURA question because I
21 | moved to the Lower East Side from my family's home
22 | in Queens in October of 1967 and in just a matter
23 | of weeks after I arrived, all those buildings were
24 | torn down south of Delancey Street and all those
25 | 2,000 families were evicted. So I've lived with

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2 this thing almost daily for most of my adult life.
3 I go past that site every day.

4 I remember in the very beginning
5 going out there with guys like Orlando Perez
6 [phonetic] and Gino Garcia and putting up metal
7 signs on the fencing that was constructed around
8 the land, those metal signs were torn down by
9 guards within a matter of days after we put them
10 up. So I've lived with it day in and day out all
11 these years and I want it ended, enough is enough.
12 Forty-five years of this stuff? It has got to
13 come to an end.

14 It's really remarkable to me how
15 united we all were here in this hearing over all
16 this time since 1 o'clock this afternoon.
17 Supposedly, we have two groups--one demanding 100%
18 low rent housing and the other an accommodation to
19 that--but in fact, all of us in this SPARC group
20 like me all advocate for 100% low rent housing on
21 the site, it's only justice considering all those
22 poor families who were evicted so long ago. The
23 difference between the other group and us is that
24 we recognize the political realities is that
25 things have changed, a lot of people got a lot of

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2 money in their pocket and we just have to
3 accommodate to that and grit our teeth and put up
4 with it.

5 My last point is simply this: A
6 lot of people talking about this City's agreement
7 to keep this as low and moderate rent housing in
8 perpetuity and it's going to be written in to some
9 kind of paper or whatever. But my concern is,
10 'cause I've been involved with this question of
11 that area for so many years, look at Seward Park
12 co-op across the street and a little ways down the
13 other, what's called the Grant Street co-ops and
14 you discover that they were all built right from
15 the 1920s as affordable housing, and then a few
16 years ago, everybody got together and said, well
17 to hell with that, and that was all thrown out and
18 now they sell them 6 and \$700,000. So the new
19 people living in the SPURA, rich and poor alike,
20 are all going to be staring at this high income
21 stuff all around them and there will be a lot of
22 pressure on them among themselves to try and
23 figure out a way to speculate. And something has
24 got to be done to build into this thing so that
25 can never happen and it remains forever as

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2 affordable housing.

3 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I appreciate
4 that, thank you very much for that testimony. The
5 issue that gets raised often with Mitchell-Lama so
6 it's certainly a pressure that's there and I think
7 that I hear you loud and clear and I think Council
8 Member Chin--

9 [Pause]

10 VALERIO ORSELLI: Mr. Chair,
11 Members of the Committee, my name is Valerio
12 Orselli, I'm the Executive Director at Cooper
13 Square Mutual Housing Association, and I'm a
14 member of SPARC.

15 I am speaking today in full support
16 of the ULURP regarding the proposed redevelopment
17 plan for the Seward Park Urban Renewal site. The
18 plan is a result of some three years of difficult
19 negotiations involving neighborhood stakeholders
20 of various viewpoints that were brought together
21 by Community Board 3, resulting in a compromise
22 agreement unanimously approved by CB 3 on May 22nd
23 of this year.

24 [Off mic] total of 900 units of new
25 housing will be developed, half will be

1
2 permanently affordable housing for low and
3 moderate income families and senior citizens, 450
4 units will be market rate to help finance this
5 housing. Regrettably is sites taken over for the
6 express purpose of providing affordable housing
7 only be halfway dedicated to that purpose. The
8 City should be able to do better than that.

9 The City must honor its [off mic]
10 this commitment to locate qualifying former site
11 tenants, notify them of their rights to return,
12 apply for and receive first priority for the new
13 housing.

14 We oppose big box stores which
15 endanger existing small businesses and do not pay
16 living wages.

17 We support the new Essex Street
18 Market on the southeast corner of Essex and
19 Delancey. The City promised and then backed away
20 from providing relocation benefits. The original
21 commitment, along with comparable rents, must be
22 met.

23 We need a strong local jobs
24 commitment, not merely an outreach effort. Fifty
25 percent of all full-time jobs for residents of CB

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2 3 offering prevailing wages for construction and
3 living wages for others.

4 Nine hundred to a thousand units of
5 housing will result on a major surge in our
6 school-age population. Sufficient land and
7 funding must be provided for public, primary, or
8 secondary school. The City has stated that a
9 school is not needed and the funds are not
10 available--that is just not credible.

11 Some people today were advocating
12 for 100% low-income housing. As a developer of
13 affordable housing, I am deeply skeptical of any
14 developer being able to build 100% low-income
15 housing--that is purchase the land, build 900
16 apartments, and then cover the operating costs in
17 perpetuity. That is neither financially feasible,
18 nor reflective of low, moderate, and income
19 population of the Lower East Side. Of course,
20 neither is the 50% market rate housing.

21 Still, 50% of something is better
22 than 100% of nothing. We support the SPURA plan
23 before this committee and urge that the
24 recommendations made by Council Member Chin and by
25 various SPARC members be incorporated into the

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ULURP City Council resolution. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much, Mr. Orsell.

VALERIO ORSELLI: Thank you.

STEVE HERRICK: Good afternoon, I'm Steve Herrick, I'm Executive Director of the Cooper Square Committee, we're an affordable housing preservation organization on the Lower East Side.

We're gratified that a compromise plan for SPURA was adopted unanimously by the Community Board, and that we've moved past the 45 year long political impasse. All sides made concessions, and it was not easy, but we now have a plan that is politically and economically viable.

We support the ULURP application for Seward Park because it will result in over 900 mixed income housing units, of which 30% will be low-income housing, including 10% low-income senior housing, and another 20% will be moderate and middle income units. The plan will also result in roughly 600,000 square feet of much needed commercial development, creating hundreds

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2 of construction jobs and thousands of permanent
3 jobs. It will also result in a quarter acre park
4 in a neighborhood that is under-served by open
5 space.

6 We urge the City Council to approve
7 the ULURP application, which includes a zoning map
8 amendment, a zoning text amendment and several
9 special permits. Many of these ULURP actions will
10 result in a better site plan and reflect the
11 design guidelines envisioned by Community Board 3.

12 While we strongly recommend the
13 Council approve this ULURP, we believe the Council
14 should require the applicant agencies to do the
15 following things to improve on it: Continue to
16 work with the community to increase the amount of
17 housing constructed, and explore ways to increase
18 the percentage of affordable housing units; and
19 also target people at the lower income tiers, as
20 was mentioned. We have a huge number of people in
21 the community earning under \$20,000 a year and
22 they're simply not going to be in able to afford
23 even the lowest income housing. So unless we're
24 hitting the 30 and 40% of median income, it's
25 going to be hard for those people to qualify. I

1
2 was encouraged to hear Council Member Margaret
3 Chin talk about ways, creative ways, to create
4 more affordable housing.

5 We also want the City to continue
6 to work with community groups, the Community
7 Board, elected officials, and city agencies to
8 identify former site tenants and notify them of
9 their right to return and to apply for below
10 market housing.

11 We want to see a public school
12 included, ideally on Site 5, or reserve space in
13 the final development phase for public school.

14 Prohibit big box retailers from
15 locating in Seward Park. According to the City
16 Planning department, 94% of the more than 700
17 retailers within a quarter mile radius of Seward
18 Park have less than 5,000 square feet. Preserving
19 the small business character of our community and
20 promoting retail diversity is essential. A large
21 retailer would destroy the character of our
22 community.

23 Require EDC to create enforcement
24 mechanisms that require employers to work with
25 local employment training agencies to ensure local

1
 2 residents benefit from the new jobs, and require
 3 that these jobs pay a living wage.

4 Finally, ensure that the Essex
 5 Street Market vendors are fairly compensated for
 6 the costs they incur in relocating to the new and
 7 improved, larger public market on the south side
 8 of Delancey Street.

9 Thank you for your time.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

11 JOSE GONZALEZ: My name is Jose
 12 Gonzalez and I work on the Lower East Side. I
 13 came from Puerto Rico in 1952. I'm a member of
 14 GOLES and I have a lot of experience from my
 15 community. I'm trying to get more housing for my
 16 community, which is the low-income, moderate
 17 income housing. That's the real affordable
 18 housing for my community.

19 I like to work together with my
 20 community for the betterment of our housing, jobs,
 21 education, and schools, better accommodation for
 22 seniors. SPURA should have more low, moderate
 23 income housing, jobs for the Lower East Side
 24 community.

25 I direct to Ms. Margaret Chin and

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2 the Council of the city to do more efforts, you
3 know, for us, you know, for the community to be in
4 good standing. Thank you very much.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you, sir.
6 I believe we have one more piece of testimony,
7 Jasmine Garcia.

8 [Off mic]

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is there
10 anybody else, anybody else? Going once, going
11 twice?

12 [Off mic]

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We could speak
14 after the hearing. Okay, Ms. Garcia.

15 JASMINE GARCIA: Yes, good
16 afternoon.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good afternoon.

18 JASMINE GARCIA: Thank you for the
19 opportunity at the--

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yes.

21 JASMINE GARCIA: --last minute. My
22 name is Jasmine Garcia and I live at the Q
23 Building on Second Avenue, it's a homeless project
24 that was built in 1988 with a lot of struggle.

25 I am formerly a homeless person, I

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2 had a small child at the time and she's now a
3 woman that I raised here 25 years ago. When I got
4 my apartment, I made a promise to this community
5 to be a part of this mission to fight for
6 affordable housing because I know how it is
7 needed.

8 The reason why I wanted to say
9 something because all the key points, all the key
10 points that I believe and not have been said. The
11 only thing that I wanted to add was that a few
12 years ago there was a mass eviction at 47 East 3rd
13 Street in my community, a few blocks away. The
14 people that were able to afford housing elsewhere
15 did, but the people that did not and were not able
16 to afford to move anywhere were housed by the
17 organization, the MHA, where I am a staff person,
18 and we housed some people that were not able to
19 afford to go anywhere. That is amazing how we're-
20 -it is vital that we've get more affordable
21 housing. There was no place for us. We have to
22 split people up, we just don't have for everybody.
23 We need more affordable housing.

24 And I just urge you to please,
25 please let's do this. And thank you so much for

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2 letting me say that.

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CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

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FEMALE VOICE 6: Councilperson, we
5 have a person here who used to organize everybody
6 on the Lower East Side who was a former organizer
7 of GOLES and we really want him to speak. Is it
8 possible, would you let him speak? He's--

9

[Off mic]

10

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I think we can
11 maybe speak after, if he wants to submit--

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[Crosstalk]

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CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --for the
14 record or...

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MALE VOICE: I'll send some
16 testimony later.

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CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: If you can
18 submit some testimony for the record, it will be
19 as part of the record.

20

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Excuse me,
21 ladies and gentlemen, please take a seat. Please
22 take a seat.

23

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. So,
24 unfortunately--

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SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: [Interposing]

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2 Take a seat--

3 [Crosstalk]

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --we can only
5 have--

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: --quiet, please.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: --I'm sorry, we
8 can only--we can maybe talk after the hearing, but
9 being that you've testified, we'll have to talk.

10 FEMALE VOICE 6: Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: But seeing that
12 there are no others, individuals, that are seeking
13 to testify, we are going to close the public
14 hearing section of this meeting regarding Seward
15 Park and we will be holding this meeting on the
16 Subcommittee of Planning, Dispositions, and
17 Concessions in recess. Thank you.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Tammy Wittman, 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 *Tammy Wittman*

Date October 7, 2012