

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS &  
CONCESSIONS

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November 13, 2012  
Start: 10:08 a.m.  
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HELD AT: Committee Room  
City Hall

B E F O R E: STEPHEN T. LEVIN  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Charles Barron  
Margaret S. Chin  
Inez E. Dickens  
Sara M. Gonzalez  
Peter A. Koo

## A P P E A R A N C E S

Joey Koch  
Acting Chief Asset Management Officer  
NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services

Tawan Davis  
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Deborah Glick  
Assembly Member District 66  
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Catherine McVay Hughes  
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Director of Land Use & Planning  
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Eric Greenleaf  
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Tricia Joyce  
Chairperson Youth & Education Committee  
Manhattan Community Board #1

Raymond Vasquez  
Member  
SEIU Local 32BJ

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good morning,  
3 welcome to the Subcommittee on Planning,  
4 Dispositions and Concessions, my name is Stephen  
5 Levin, Council Member and Chair of this  
6 Subcommittee, and I am joined this morning by my  
7 colleagues on the Subcommittee, Council Member  
8 Peter Koo of Queens, Council Member Charles Barron  
9 of Brooklyn, Council Member James Vacca of the  
10 Bronx, who has joined us. Today we will be  
11 hearing just one item, that's Land Use #721, Civic  
12 Center Plan C-120267 PPM in Manhattan Community  
13 District #1. We have a number of people that are  
14 here to testify on the item. First, on behalf of  
15 the administration we have Joey Koch from DCAS and  
16 Tawan Davis of EDC, if I could ask you to please  
17 come to the table. And you can go ahead and  
18 proceed with your testimony and please identify  
19 yourself for the record. Thank you.

20 MS. KOCH: Good morning, my name is  
21 Joey Koch, I am the Acting Chief Asset Management  
22 Officer of the Department of Citywide  
23 Administrative Services, and I'm here today to  
24 discuss the Civic Center plan, which involves the  
25 consolidation of city office space from

1  
2 inefficient under-utilized buildings by disposing  
3 of these assets and relocating employees to modern  
4 office environments that better serve the  
5 operational needs of city government. Over the  
6 past few years we have conducted a thorough review  
7 of DCAS-managed office buildings by analyzing  
8 building conditions, configurations and space  
9 utilizations. We have reviewed engineering and  
10 other reports, consulted with building staff and  
11 occupants and conducted analysis of civilian head  
12 count of city agencies, which remained largely  
13 constant over the last 20 years. And I believe  
14 all of you have a copy of the Power Point guide  
15 I'm actually starting to go over. So on page one  
16 of the Power Point, or page two, we have learned  
17 from our investigation that the city has more  
18 office space than it needs. Much of the owned  
19 space is under-utilized and in very poor  
20 condition. The Civic Center plan is part of  
21 DCAS's major initiative to reduce the city's real  
22 estate costs and increase efficiency. In addition  
23 to Civic Center, DCAS is renovating other city-  
24 owned space to allow for reduction in leased  
25 facilities such as agencies relocating from 40

1 Rector Street to owned space on 100 Gold Street  
2 and One Center. This plan will achieve two  
3 mayoral commitments. Since 2010 DCAS has reduced  
4 office space by 441,000 square feet by executing  
5 50 transactions entailing nine agency moves and  
6 will complete over 30 more transactions in over 20  
7 additional moves to achieve the goal of total  
8 reduction of 1.2 million square feet, and a  
9 savings of \$36 million per year. This is all to  
10 be done by 2015. Additionally, the plan will help  
11 achieve the PlaNYC goal to increase energy  
12 efficiency by disposing of three inefficient  
13 buildings whose annual energy costs alone are \$2.3  
14 million. The three buildings that are part of the  
15 Civic Center plan in their existing state are not  
16 suitable for the city's current office use.  
17 Specifically, portions of the buildings are  
18 currently unoccupied or used for storage and are  
19 in need of major renovations and rehabilitation,  
20 and those repairs and those needs will continue to  
21 grow the longer that these buildings stay in city  
22 ownership. We turn to the plan summary page on  
23 page four. Specifically, we are requesting your  
24 approval of a ULURP application, C120267 PPM, for  
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1  
2 the disposition of two of the three city-owned  
3 buildings in the plan, 22 Reade Street, which is  
4 on the top left, and 49-51 which is in the middle.  
5 346 Broadway, which is on the right, is also part  
6 of the plan, but was previously approved for  
7 disposition in 1998. Through the Civic Center  
8 plan DCAS seeks to dispose of 750,000 square feet  
9 of inefficient, under-utilized office space  
10 through an RFP process in collaboration with EDC  
11 and relocate 17 groups from within these three  
12 buildings to improved work environment. Eleven of  
13 those groups will be relocated to renovated space  
14 in three existing owned buildings, and six groups  
15 will move to leased space. Additional moves, such  
16 as DCAS, Sanitation and the Department of Health  
17 relocations and restaffing are currently taking  
18 place to consolidate existing space and create the  
19 vacancies that are needed. We will renovate  
20 270,000 square feet of city-owned buildings and  
21 lease up to 225,000 square feet. We turn to page  
22 five. I'd like to briefly explain why these  
23 buildings are not suitable for the city's modern  
24 office needs. These buildings were selected not  
25 just because of their condition, but also because

1  
2 of the floor plates and the configurations. 22  
3 Reade Street has very small 11,000 square foot  
4 floor plates and is actually comprised of three  
5 buildings with odd ramps and stairs that connect  
6 them. 49-51 has 15,000 square foot, oddly-  
7 configured, H-shaped floor plates that are  
8 antiquated and inefficient for modern office  
9 space. 346 Broadway has larger floor plates, but  
10 their long, narrow, rectangular shape is not ideal  
11 for modern office use. Agencies will be relocated  
12 to green, efficient, modern office space from  
13 existing buildings that have frequent mechanical  
14 issues such as elevator breakdowns and have  
15 significant deferred maintenance costs. Certain  
16 renovations such as City Planning's future space  
17 at One Center Street and space at 253 Broadway are  
18 projected to achieve at least a LEEDS silver  
19 rating for interiors. If you turn to page six, I  
20 just want to give you some historical perspective  
21 on these buildings. All three of these buildings  
22 were purchased by the city in the late 1960's to  
23 demolish them and build a second municipal  
24 building and expand the Civic Center, and there is  
25 actually some depictions of what the new second

1  
2 municipal building was going to look like on the  
3 left. They were never intended for long-term city  
4 use and long-term city assets in their current  
5 form, but have always been treated as such. The  
6 plan in addition to facilitating private  
7 investment and creating construction and permanent  
8 jobs, will restore these buildings to their  
9 historic grandeur. We have made significant  
10 progress to date on many aspects of this plan.  
11 RFP responses were received on July 31<sup>st</sup> and review  
12 is under way. We have held building tours for  
13 potential bidders during the RFP process period,  
14 and recently concluded respondent interviews.  
15 Negotiations continue with a select group of  
16 developers. We have received broad support  
17 through the ULURP process for the plan to  
18 consolidate city government and operations and  
19 improve working conditions and efficiency. Since  
20 the Mayor announced the Civic Center plan at the  
21 State of the City in January, we have been working  
22 with stakeholders, including the community board,  
23 Council Member Chin, borough President Scott  
24 Stringer, to find ways that the city can achieve  
25 its targeted savings while exploring ways to



1  
2 reinvest in Lower Manhattan. We will continue to  
3 have these conversations throughout the process,  
4 and find ways to insure all our goals are met with  
5 this application. And it should be noted that  
6 Deputy Mayor Cas Holloway signed a letter  
7 discussing some of the ideas, and I'll read that  
8 into the record as well. Just to go over quickly  
9 some of the agency relocations that have already  
10 taken place, DCAS has relocated over 600 employees  
11 within One Center to make room for incoming  
12 agencies, and we have been able to save on initial  
13 leased space projections in two ways. One,  
14 agencies have taken it upon themselves to  
15 consolidate into their existing space, and we've  
16 also identified current leases that were being  
17 vacated and we are taking over those leases prior  
18 to termination and taking advantage of those  
19 leases, as opposed to looking for brand-new space.  
20 All affected agencies have been briefed, and we  
21 are actively ... and are working with us and our  
22 partner DDC on space programming and design of  
23 their new green modern office space. On page nine  
24 there's a breakdown of the agencies and the other  
25 entities that are being relocated and their

1  
2 proposed plans. On page 10 there is a ... the move  
3 scenarios are laid out and the map depicts the  
4 complexity of all the moves in a somewhat  
5 simplified fashion. It shows the three buildings  
6 for sale in the red and the owned buildings that  
7 will be renovated and agencies are moving into in  
8 blue. On page 11 is our overall timeline, it's  
9 showing all the different moving parts, including  
10 the land use and the RFP process, construction and  
11 relocations, and the building closings, which we  
12 are projecting to take place during the spring and  
13 summer of 2013. To recap, on page 12, these are  
14 inefficient, aged buildings with largely unfunded  
15 capital obligations. Their disposition provides  
16 the opportunity to improve working conditions for  
17 city employees and consolidate government  
18 operations while generating revenue for the city,  
19 creating jobs, and stimulating economic  
20 development. Therefore, DCAS urges your approval  
21 of the ULURP application C120267 PPM. Thank you  
22 very much for your time and your consideration,  
23 and I am happy to answer questions. Additionally,  
24 I have Tawan Davis with me, the Vice President of  
25 Real Estate Transactions at EDC, who is also

1  
2 available to answer questions regarding the RFP.  
3 Before I do get to the questions though, I would  
4 like to read into the record the letter that  
5 Deputy Mayor Holloway signed this morning.

6 "Dear Council Member Chin and  
7 Borough President Stringer, this letter serves to  
8 summarize our conversations regarding the 21<sup>st</sup>  
9 century Civic Center ULURP disposition  
10 application, which is to be considered by the City  
11 Council on November 13<sup>th</sup>. As you are aware, the  
12 city is taking ULURP application C120267 PPM for  
13 the disposition of two of the three city-owned  
14 buildings in the plan: 22 Reade Street and 49-51  
15 Chambers Street. The Civic Center plan is part of  
16 an initiative to reduce the city's real estate  
17 costs and increase efficiency. The plan involves  
18 disposing of three buildings that require  
19 substantial capital investment and are not  
20 suitable for the city's modern office space. This  
21 plan will improve working conditions for city  
22 employees, consolidate government operations,  
23 generate revenue for the city, create jobs, and  
24 stimulate economic development. Throughout the  
25 public review process, we have worked with you to

1  
2 address the local community's concerns, while  
3 still achieving the city's cost-saving needs. To  
4 this end, we have agreed to dedicate at least  
5 10,000 square feet of usable space within one or  
6 more of these buildings for the purpose of  
7 community facility use. The city may potentially  
8 increase the amount of reserved space, depending  
9 on the revenues generated from the sale of these  
10 buildings and the costs associated with the  
11 consolidation of government offices. In addition,  
12 the administration will engage with a community  
13 task force to advise and recommend potential uses  
14 of this space. In addition to yourselves, the  
15 task force will include other elected officials,  
16 Manhattan Community Board #1 members and other  
17 stakeholders. We ask that the task force submit a  
18 list of recommended uses for consideration by  
19 December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The respondents selected by  
20 the city for the redevelopment of the Civic Center  
21 buildings will incorporate into the project a  
22 community use recommended by the task force. We  
23 look forward to working with you and the task  
24 force on the important initiative. Please do not  
25 hesitate to contact me directly. Sincerely,

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Caswell F. Holloway."

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very much, Ms. Koch. I want to acknowledge that Council Member Margaret Chin, whose district the project is in, and I will turn it over to my colleagues if there are any questions for the panel from the administration. Council Member Barron? Sorry, and I want to acknowledge Council Member Jumaane Williams of Brooklyn as well, who has joined us.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: You know, Mr. Chairman, I'm requesting a little time on this one.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: You've got it.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Rather than it being a short presentation, I want to stretch on this one, because it's that important to me and to our people, particularly people of African ancestry. What was not mentioned, and disrespectfully I might add, what was not mentioned at all, is the historic struggle for Reade Street, from 14 to 26 Reade Street, those buildings were engaged in a historical struggle to

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2 turn that into a national museum for the African  
3 burial ground. Not the little museum that they  
4 have now on Broadway, we were totally against that  
5 meager appreciation of the work that 20,000  
6 African people lost their lives building New York  
7 City. The very area that we are sitting in right  
8 now, under these buildings down here, over 20,000  
9 people of African ancestry that built New York  
10 City lost their lives. And that African burial  
11 ground on Reade Street and Duane, when we fought  
12 to stop them from building another building, we  
13 only saved the 420 some odd remains in the  
14 struggle, for you to sit here and make a  
15 presentation on these buildings that were  
16 connected historically for our community wanting  
17 those buildings to be an education institution as  
18 well as a museum, from 14 to 26 Reade Street, and  
19 you're not even mentioning it, is disrespectful.  
20 That's number one. Number two, there have been  
21 Congressional hearings on it, there have been  
22 Congressional letters sent, and I'm going to read  
23 them in their entirety for the record, that were  
24 sent by the Senators, that were sent by a whole  
25 host of leaders in this community to preserve

1  
2 those buildings and not for the little recognition  
3 that Ms. Chin said we got our little recognition,  
4 it's on the corner of Reade Street. That is not  
5 what we were fighting for for all of these years.  
6 Those buildings, my brother, those buildings were  
7 used, were going to be used for a serious national  
8 monument for the destruction of lives, and most of  
9 those people that died were children, they were  
10 young, they gave up their lives, they were stolen  
11 from Africa, they were enslaved to build New York  
12 City, when New York City, the Dutch came in 1625  
13 to build New York City, they stole the land from  
14 the indigenous people and then stole us from  
15 Africa to build it. And that history is not going  
16 to be forgotten because you want an RFP to some  
17 developers to turn it into something else. This  
18 is a very serious, serious item, and I don't  
19 think, my colleagues, don't let them talk you into  
20 thinking we already got something, that little  
21 museum that they have along Broadway, it's not  
22 adequate, it's not sufficient, it's not what we  
23 were struggling for, it's not what people lost  
24 their lives for. We wanted respect, and those  
25 buildings were items in Congressional bills that

1  
2 are still pending, the Congress claimed that  
3 property for a national museum for people of  
4 African ancestry to pay homage and respect for  
5 those who lost their lives building New York City,  
6 and in general building America, and we're not  
7 going to let you forget that, and we're not going  
8 to just come by and see that as some property  
9 unattached to that history. I don't see how you  
10 can sit here and present something like that, and  
11 even if you don't support it, and even if you're  
12 thinking what you're doing is better, which it  
13 isn't, at least acknowledge it. It doesn't hurt  
14 to acknowledge that this was a controversy, that  
15 this was some battle with those who were fighting  
16 for it to be a museum. Just say it, you don't  
17 have to agree with it, you can go forth with your  
18 project, we'll fight it the way we know how to  
19 fight. But for you to not even mention it, not to  
20 even acknowledge it, is ridiculous. So I want to  
21 read a couple of items, Mr. Chairman, a letter,  
22 it's a two-three page letter, but I want to read  
23 it into the record, for the record.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yes sir.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: This letter



1  
2 was sent by John Arbogast to the Friends of the  
3 African Burial Ground and was sent to the Speaker,  
4 and I want to read it for the record. "It was the  
5 future of the African burial ground and the urgent  
6 need to stop the city's proposed sale of 22 Reade  
7 Street to private developers. Once you and your  
8 Council colleagues are able to resume normal  
9 business, post-Sandy, your attention is urgently  
10 drawn to an unfortunate development that if not  
11 corrected will permanently adversely affect the  
12 future of the African burial grounds, including  
13 the world-class African burial ground  
14 international memorial museum and education center  
15 envisioned for the site, as called for in  
16 legislation pending before both the U.S. Senate  
17 and the House. That development is a request for  
18 proposal issued by the city's Department of  
19 Administrative Services, DCAS and Economic  
20 Development Corporation, EDC, with respect to  
21 three city-owned Lower Manhattan properties,  
22 including the run-down and greatly-underutilized  
23 building at 22 Reade Street, for hotel,  
24 residential or office use. This letter concerns  
25 only the Reade property, not the others at 346

1  
2 Broadway and 49-51 Chambers Street. As we  
3 understand, there is a City Council hearing  
4 scheduled for yesterday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, perhaps in  
5 the Land Use Committee, as the next step in the  
6 RFP process. Please be advised that DCAS, EDC and  
7 RFP for 22 Reade Street was something that the  
8 African burial ground supporters, including the  
9 Congressional officers below, learned about only  
10 way after the fact. No notice by the city was  
11 given in this regard to concerned parties, which  
12 is just plain wrong and totally unacceptable, or a  
13 case of one hand not knowing what the other hand  
14 was doing. Given the history of 22 Reade Street  
15 vis-à-vis the African burial ground, including the  
16 previous and standing Congressional claim on the  
17 property for the purposes of the museum and the  
18 consultations concerning it that had occurred with  
19 the city with then-Deputy Mayor Walcott in the  
20 lead for the city, among other things proceeding  
21 full-speed ahead with such, and alternate use of  
22 the subject property at this point and under these  
23 circumstances would be a grave injustice to the  
24 African burial ground and all it represents as  
25 well as a very short-sighted waste of an enormous

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2 asset. At minimum, further steps in the approval  
3 process with respect to 22 Reade Street should be  
4 put on hold pending a thorough review of this  
5 matter. 22 Reade Street is the building directly  
6 abutting the African burial grounds sacred green  
7 space memorial that was previously identified by  
8 Senators Schumer and Clinton and currently  
9 Gillibrand, and Congressmen Nadler, Rangel and  
10 Meeks as the ideal location together with an  
11 associated parking lot for the planned African  
12 burial ground memorial museum and education center  
13 complex, as called for in identical bills that  
14 have been introduced in the Senate and the House  
15 for the past several years (see the attached  
16 letter to Mayor Bloomberg)." And the letter was  
17 sent to Mayor Bloomberg in 2007. "The most recent  
18 Senate bill, S2203, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012, sponsored by  
19 Senators Schumer and Gillibrand, and is also  
20 attached for your information. In addition to the  
21 letter see the findings section of the legislation  
22 for a summary of the monumental significance of  
23 the African burial ground and the rationale for  
24 such a magnificent facility of international scope  
25 and scale at this site. The envisioned museum

1 facility would fold in the current small memorial  
2 at the site, which was always viewed as a first  
3 step in the development of the African burial  
4 ground, what is there now sadly, but as predicted  
5 attracts few visitors and is more consistent with  
6 treating the African burial ground as a local New  
7 York City story, rather than one of unparalleled  
8 national and international significance from a  
9 historical, scientific and symbolic standpoint as  
10 attested by the secretary of the Smithsonian  
11 Institution, amongst others." I'm almost  
12 finished. This is not just a New York City issue,  
13 these findings were archeological findings that  
14 were internationally, the whole world was shocked  
15 by these findings, and we're not going to let it  
16 be treated the way you're treating it today. "The  
17 Congressional letter proposed that the city and  
18 state enter into a partnership with the Federal  
19 government to make the grand museum facility a  
20 reality, just as was done with the establishment  
21 of the National Museum of the American Indian  
22 facility at Battery Park." The letter noted in  
23 this regard that a demonstration of the city's  
24 commitment to the project would help immeasurably  
25

1  
2 in gaining the support of the Congressional  
3 colleagues and successfully passing the African  
4 burial ground museum legislation. Finally, the  
5 letter outlines the enormous benefits, economic  
6 and otherwise, that would accrue to the city as  
7 well as the nation as a result of this project.

8 "Two meetings were held with Deputy Mayor Walcott  
9 in connection with the Congressional letter. He  
10 was very supportive of the project, including the  
11 use of the Reade Street property, and the  
12 partnership concept in those meetings, which was  
13 attended on our side by a range of people,  
14 including Congressional representatives, Governor  
15 Paterson staffers, Councilman Jackson, and members  
16 from the Malcolm X Betty Shabazz Center. We heard  
17 that others in the city's interagencies were  
18 supportive as well, but no results, including  
19 answers to the Congressional letter, were  
20 forthcoming from the city. We understand that was  
21 largely due to the hard economic times and  
22 rapidly-shifting priorities that came to pass, and  
23 decided not to press, as long as the African  
24 burial ground's claim be respected for the  
25 property and preserved until better times. Make

1  
2 no mistake, any such alternate use of 22 Reade  
3 Street property would obviously kill forever the  
4 prospect for the sublime museum facility  
5 envisioned for the African burial ground, for  
6 which an illustrative design was prepared at  
7 Congressional suggestion, and with it, the golden  
8 opportunity for New York City to have a new  
9 national treasure and international tourist  
10 destination that would attract millions and be  
11 transformative for a moribund part of a downtown  
12 area otherwise. To reiterate, such an alternative  
13 use would also be viewed by many as a grave  
14 injustice to the African burial ground and all  
15 that it represents. We would very much appreciate  
16 it if the Council would step in at this point and  
17 take appropriate action, such as outlined above,  
18 to save the African burial ground. Such action  
19 would prevent such an injustice from occurring,  
20 while at the same time preserve a vision that will  
21 ultimately produce incalculable benefits for the  
22 City of New York far beyond those provided by yet  
23 another property devoted to the standard office,  
24 residential or retail purposes. Let the city  
25 proceed with its plans for the other two

1  
2 properties, but please no, not this one." I want  
3 to thank you for allowing me to read that, this is  
4 very, very important to us. This is not just  
5 another ULURP process here, we should not be  
6 disrespected like this, and we should not ... we  
7 have not settled for it, regardless of what  
8 anybody says, with the little museum that they put  
9 on Broadway as an answer to an international  
10 museum and educational institution. People don't  
11 understand what happened to our people in this  
12 city, New York City was one of the largest slave  
13 states in the union, but they think of slavery as  
14 a southern thing. New York City didn't abolish  
15 slavery until 1827, and it really didn't stop  
16 until around 1840, so you're talking about a city  
17 that had this whole was built by African people,  
18 and you come along and not even mention it and  
19 just talk about a request for a proposal to make  
20 some money, profits. So I want to request that my  
21 colleagues, and I know all the times I speak out  
22 and stuff, and then I'm the one no vote, and you  
23 all go ahead and say, we let you talk, and have a  
24 nice conversation and the vote is 50,000 to one,  
25 or 49 to one or eight to one. You shouldn't do it

1  
2 this time, this one is a little deeper than some  
3 of the other times I've come before you, knowing  
4 that you weren't going to vote for us. Mr.  
5 Chairman, I think it should start with you, I  
6 think you should reconsider this, at best postpone  
7 it to do more research, and get more into it, but  
8 I know we may be under pressure from the Speaker  
9 and the Mayor, but this one we're going to fight  
10 tooth and nail about, even if it passes this city  
11 is going to have the battle of their lives on this  
12 one. It's not going to be another process where  
13 you just hear me run off at the mouth and then you  
14 do what you want to do anyway, that's not going to  
15 happen this time, and I'm appealing to you, at  
16 least out of respect, because you weren't even  
17 informed of all of this stuff as much as you could  
18 have been, and neither were my colleagues informed  
19 as much as all the history. At least give us some  
20 time, at least give us some time, to investigate  
21 this further, because it means that much to us as  
22 a people. The new majority in this town are  
23 black, Latinos and Asians, and we should have  
24 respect. This is disrespectful for us to continue  
25 this process. Thank you.



1  
2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,  
3 Council Member Barron. Council Member Williams I  
4 think has a statement or questions as well?

5 Cx50 Thank you, Mr. Chair. I want  
6 to thank my colleague, Council Member Barron, for  
7 his words. I went through this and looked at the  
8 historical perspective, none of this was mentioned  
9 in your historical perspective. How dare you act  
10 like my history doesn't matter? How dare you  
11 present this and act as if none of this happened?  
12 I got to tell you, I'm tired, whether it's in  
13 public school, whether it's in government, people  
14 pretending that the history of African people  
15 simply doesn't matter. My first question is, why  
16 did you not even mention the struggles in your  
17 historical perspective in your presentation?

18 MS. KOCH: I think I mean it should  
19 be noted that the city and the RFP and the  
20 respondents, we were aware of the historical  
21 significance of the area and of the landmark, and  
22 anyone who purchases the building is also aware of  
23 that, and knows that any approvals would have to  
24 go under the scrutiny of the Landmarks  
25 Preservation Commission with, because of the

1  
2 historical significance. So we are aware of that.  
3 In terms of the specific building conditions, and  
4 that's what the historical significance was, in  
5 terms of the buildings themselves and why they  
6 have gone to the condition that they're in, is  
7 partly because they were originally purchased to  
8 be torn down and a massive structure to be built.

9 Cx50 Sorry, my question was, why  
10 did you not even mention the historical struggles  
11 in your presentation today?

12 MS. KOCH: I apologize for not  
13 mentioning that, it is a historic district, a  
14 historical landmark district, African burial  
15 ground historic district.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I think what  
17 Council Member Williams is referring to is there  
18 wasn't a reference in your presentation, not to  
19 the historic district, but to the significance,  
20 the historical significance, of the African burial  
21 ground and this property's proximity to it, that's  
22 what I think he's referring to.

23 Cx50 Yes. Not only do I have to  
24 learn a lot of junk in public school, not only do  
25 I have to represent an area where the street names

1  
2 are slave owners who owned people who look like  
3 me. I have to sit here and you discuss a huge  
4 proposal and pretend like the historical  
5 significance of the African burial ground is of no  
6 significance or consequence at all. So I think I  
7 deserve an answer, as oppose to "I apologize".  
8 What was the reasoning for not including it?

9 MS. KOCH: The historical  
10 perspective, again, is really about the building  
11 structures themselves, it's not about the  
12 district, and that's what that slide was meant to  
13 illustrate.

14 Cx50 I've got to say, I've been  
15 here for three years, this is one of the most  
16 disrespectful slaps, I feel like I just don't  
17 matter and you can see through me, and that my  
18 history has no significance here at all. I even  
19 have a bill to try to put some markers, like down  
20 on Wall Street, of the open slave trade market  
21 that was going on there. People don't know the  
22 history that was happening here. Now I have great  
23 respect for my Council Member and my colleague,  
24 but I can't vote for this, I won't vote for this.  
25 I'm going to encourage, and I'm going the further

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2 step, encourage my colleagues to please not vote  
3 for this. I think to vote for this, including  
4 this building right now, is a disrespect, not only  
5 to the Black, Latino, Asian majority of this city,  
6 to this city and this nation in its entirety, in  
7 how this nation was formed. It is a complete  
8 disrespect, I don't even have the right words, to  
9 sit here and pretend like that doesn't matter, to  
10 go ahead and move forward with this sale, as if  
11 the African burial ground doesn't matter. I  
12 remember when they found those bones, and they had  
13 to be forced to stop digging and stop trying to  
14 build over it, because then they said it didn't  
15 really matter. And the amounts of pressure that  
16 had to be put on them to just pretend like the  
17 20,000 Africans that were buried there and the  
18 history there meant something. And you're doing  
19 it all over again. So I'm also going to suggest  
20 that we please either postpone this, or take this  
21 building out of it, out of respect for people who  
22 look like me and are still suffering, and for some  
23 reason can never talk about our story while  
24 everyone else talks about their story and what  
25 they go through. Please show some measure of

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respect, at least, you could have at least put it in here.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Yes, Council Member Barron.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I'd like to make a motion that we postpone this vote until we can do further research, because the other thing that was inaccurate that the presenter said, is that this was about the buildings and their history, but their history was tied to the African burial ground, because from 14 to all of the buildings on Reade Street were named in a Congressional bill. So it was ... even if you are just looking at the buildings themselves and not the surrounding area, which is ridiculous, but I'll even take you by just looking at the buildings. Those buildings were a part of a Congressional hearing, they were a part of Congressional legislation, so they were very much attached, even if you're just looking at the buildings. And so I want to make a motion that we postpone this vote until further research is done by this Committee and by the City Council on the

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effect of this on our people and our community and our history.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Council Member Barron, we ... today is the last day for the ULURP to actually be taken. This hearing was originally scheduled for before the storm, and so I think that--

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON:  
(Interposing) Well, I would like to make a motion that we don't vote. And I don't want to just ... I want to make a motion that this be postponed, even if it's the last day, and the ULURP has to start all over again, or never happen again. I want to make that motion.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, if we don't vote, it will be approved by default, so we would have to actually no in order to--

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON:  
(Interposing) Oh, so if we don't vote--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: (Interposing)  
No action would be an approval, essentially.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: If I make a motion that we don't consider it, then it would be approved?

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CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Well then I'll just encourage my colleagues to vote no.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Council Member Williams.

Cx50 Can this building be taken out of the proposal, 22 Reade Street?

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I believe that that would be a major modification, that would ... We're going to look into that question, because it's not entirely clear at the moment, but I think we're going to continue with the testimony. There are other individuals, starting with Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, who want to testify on the item, and we'll be looking into that.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Well, Mr. Chairman, let me just follow up on his question. So if that is taken out, and everything else goes forward, would they be able to approve of that, even though it was taken out?

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We're--

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON:  
(Interposing) If one building is taken out?

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I think we're

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looking into it right now with Land Use.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Say it again?

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We're looking into that right now, the answer to that question, with Land Use staff.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, so we're not going to move forward on anything until we find out that answer?

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: We won't vote until we find out that answer.

Cx50 Thank you, and just again, I'm going to request that everyone don't ... vote against this, this is just a complete disrespect to the African burial ground people who look like me and New York City and the nation as a whole.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I would ... I know that you've gotten the message from my colleagues, but I think that it deserves repeating, that what is the aspect ... there are several aspects that my colleagues obviously find disrespectful in terms of not only the presentation, but in terms of the proposal as a whole, starting with no acknowledgement whatsoever



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2 of the historical significance of this, but then  
3 also, this is a real opportunity that would  
4 potentially be lost if this project proceeds, and  
5 that this is something for a long time, and as  
6 Council Member Barron referenced to, the subject  
7 of Congressional action. This is a piece of  
8 property that is unique, but it is publicly-owned  
9 right now, and is directly adjacent to the African  
10 burial ground, so I would like to ask what  
11 consideration has the administration given to this  
12 question? During this, this has been a long  
13 process, this ... it's gone in front of the  
14 community board and the borough president, but  
15 it's been something that this administration has  
16 looked toward, it's coordinated efforts from a  
17 number of city agencies and not just DCAS, but  
18 also all the affected agencies that have to  
19 relocate. What consideration has the  
20 administration given to the African burial ground  
21 and its relationship to the property at 22 Reade  
22 Street? Can you answer that?

23 MS. KOCH: Again, we do understand  
24 the historical significance of the property.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: What I mean to

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say is, in terms of the process that you've gone through thus far--

MS. KOCH: (Interposing) We have spoken--

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: (Interposing) What conversations have happened, and what's been the result of those conversations?

MS. KOCH: We have spoken to the borough president, and to the community board, and discussed potential community facilities. And certainly the task force that we are agreeing to, this can be addressed during the task force time, to figure out what that 10,000 square feet of space, what that would be dedicated towards. And again, that could be in any three buildings or in one building, and it can certainly be something that a community facility, if indeed the task force decides that that's what's needed, that this could be folded into the program, the plan, that way.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Is it definitely going to be one owner for all three buildings, or is it going to be three different owners? Because wouldn't that require the consent

1 ... I mean, there's just so ... at this point you  
2 haven't decided where the 10,000 square feet is  
3 going to go? It could be in any of the three  
4 buildings, but what if it's three different  
5 owners? How are they ... they're going to be,  
6 someone is going to give up 10,000 feet, the other  
7 person is not going to have to give up 10,000  
8 feet? How is that fair?

10 MS. KOCH: It's all part of the  
11 negotiation process, if you want to?

12 MR. DAVIS: Sure, the goal is to  
13 basically allow the task force to decide and  
14 delineate on what the 10,000 or more square feet  
15 ends up being, and from there make an arrangement  
16 with either single respondent or all three to  
17 appropriately site the facility.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I'm a little  
19 skeptical that that would work out that well. I  
20 mean, I'm sorry, but the answer that I got just  
21 now does not really meet the standard that I think  
22 we would expect in terms of thorough, you know,  
23 thorough investigation, but then also just a  
24 thorough acknowledgement of the historical  
25 significance. I think that what I'm hearing is

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2 that, well, we've, you know, in response to the  
3 community board, or in response to issues raised  
4 by Council Member Chin, that, you know, you've  
5 negotiated a portion to be community space. That  
6 happens in a lot of ULURP actions, that's not  
7 unique to this one, and that has, to be honest  
8 with you, nothing really to do with the African  
9 burial ground, that could be just a, I mean, what  
10 I mean to say is that this is a historical  
11 resource that is unique in the city. It's not  
12 just something that could be in any neighborhood.  
13 So what I'm trying to say is that there is an ...  
14 I'm just wondering what the city has done to  
15 really ... to acknowledge this.

16 MS. KOCH: So the RFP does stress  
17 that it is a historical district, and the  
18 sensitivity of that, and the importance of that.  
19 And we make it clear to developers that they need  
20 to be aware of that when it comes to any  
21 development that is proposed to those sites. And  
22 because of the nature of the ... it's not just that  
23 the buildings, 22 Reade Street in particular, it's  
24 not just that the building is landmarked, it's  
25 that what's underneath it is landmarked and so

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2 that there has to be sensitivity to that in  
3 anything that they want to do, and that it is  
4 incredibly important, and that the city would have  
5 to approve any structure that was done so not to  
6 disturb anything. So we are very sensitive to the  
7 fact that it is a historic area.

8 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, now so if  
9 there is a single owner to all of the ... is that a  
10 potential? Is that something that is ... I believe  
11 that responses have come into this RFP already.  
12 Has there been a proposal from a single owner to  
13 acquire all three buildings?

14 MR. DAVIS: Sure, there are several  
15 proposals that kind of talk about acquiring all  
16 three, and there are so many respondents that it's  
17 tough right now this early in the process to  
18 foresee which of the respondents will be  
19 successful, whether it will be a single owner or  
20 three different respondents.

21 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, because  
22 there is a potential that 10,000 square feet in 22  
23 Reade Street ... that all of the space for community  
24 facility could be located--

25 MR. DAVIS: (Interposing) That is a

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possibility.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. I think that there are a number of individuals that would like to testify on this item, so I don't want to hold up with any further questions from me, but do any of my colleagues have any further questions for the administration?

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: No, only that, Mr. Chairman, that we don't treat this as another ULURP with some community space that we can negotiate a few pieces of footage, you know, to put a little community thing in. This is larger than that, this is unique to this Committee, it's not something that we should reduce to that kind of negotiation. I think this should be stopped, at all costs we should stop it, and do what is necessary to respect our people, our history, and those who died building this city.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. We're going to continue with testimony, I know that Assemblywoman Glick has been patient and I want to thank you both very much for your testimony this morning. Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, if you want

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2 to come to the table and provide testimony.  
3 Assembly Member Glick will be speaking in  
4 opposition to the project. Thank you, Assembly  
5 Member Glick.

6 MS. GLICK: Thank you. Thank you  
7 very much. I'm going to depart from my statement,  
8 and I want to thank Council Member Barron in  
9 particular for a consciousness-raising exercise  
10 that is obviously much needed. I don't know all  
11 of the ins and outs of land use, etc., but I do  
12 believe that the ULURP clock could be stopped by  
13 DCAS withdrawing its application, and then there  
14 isn't the terrible issue for the Committee to say,  
15 well, the clock is at this 11<sup>th</sup> hour and we are at  
16 a cliff, and I'm actually a little bit surprised  
17 that there are numerous respondents to an RFP,  
18 when the City Council hasn't acted to approve the  
19 sale. So I'm just a little bit flummoxed. We  
20 came in with a plan to say that we thought that it  
21 was ... we didn't like the idea of city-owned  
22 property, which is taxpayer-owned, not the  
23 property of a particular administration, but city-  
24 owned property, this is an area that has  
25 experienced 70% or more growth in the last 10

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2 years. Every time we talk to the Department of  
3 Education about the need for school seats, we're  
4 short about 1,200 at this point, they say that  
5 they have no space and space in Manhattan is  
6 expensive, and here we have city-owned property  
7 that we're looking to sell, and yet we have the  
8 other arm of the city, the Department of  
9 Education, saying we have no idea where we could  
10 put your children. Waiting lists, shifting  
11 around, and now in the aftermath of the storm in  
12 particular, I think it's totally inappropriate  
13 when we have some businesses, especially small  
14 businesses, small offices, that are scrambling for  
15 space, to say that we're going to proceed as if  
16 nothing has happened. This is the most  
17 devastating storm, it's hit, you know, three  
18 states. Staten Island has areas that are  
19 devastated. Obviously there are parts in Queens  
20 and certainly Lower Manhattan has experienced  
21 extreme problems, and there are a lot of smaller  
22 businesses. I'm not worried about Goldman Sachs,  
23 they'll find space wherever the heck they want.  
24 I'm worried about smaller companies that are being  
25 told they have to find other space somewhere, and



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2 here we are sitting around talking about disposing  
3 of three city-owned properties when there are  
4 serious needs for an increasingly-residential  
5 community we need space for not-for-profits to  
6 have office space. Maybe it's not good for city  
7 employees, but I think there are lots of not-for-  
8 profits that would find this space actually  
9 appealing, and obviously there are developers that  
10 find this space appealing, so it can't be so  
11 terrible they're going to do a gut rehab and  
12 charge lots of money to people, and I guess the  
13 city, out of 750,000 square feet, finds 10,000 for  
14 local community use, it would be a good thing. I  
15 think it's a pretty bad deal for the taxpayers in  
16 this area, but I am particularly moved by the  
17 presentation, not because it's convenient because  
18 I'm opposed to this, but because we always do need  
19 to be reminded that New York has a very long  
20 history, and this city seems to roll over its  
21 history. We want everybody to travel to Europe to  
22 be able to see things that are hundreds of years  
23 old, maybe a couple of thousand years old, and  
24 here, if something is 50 years old, roll it over,  
25 move it out, and build something new. I think

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2 that we are too disconnected from our past, and  
3 maybe some of our past which may be shameful or  
4 something we would like to forget, but people need  
5 to be reminded. So I would ... I understand the  
6 Committee's problem, I was going to opposed this  
7 because I think that we have needs here that we  
8 shouldn't be selling it off, so if we tell private  
9 landlords, in great anger, I might add, that  
10 because you have neglected your property, now you  
11 want to throw all your tenants out so you can ...  
12 you've deferred your maintenance so that it's  
13 unlivable, and all of us talk about how dreadful  
14 that is, and now the city is saying, well, you  
15 know, we've deferred maintenance and these are in  
16 terrible shabby condition, so now we want to  
17 divest ourselves of it. I think on that basis  
18 it's also a bad precedent. You have my testimony,  
19 which was focused more on some of these comments,  
20 but I do believe that your issue could be resolved  
21 most appropriately by DCAS withdrawing its request  
22 at this time, and I will look forward to talking  
23 to some of the city Land Use folks about what the  
24 process is when there's something in ULURP and  
25 there's also an RFP process following alongside of

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2 it. Somehow that seems like a rigged game, and so  
3 I would urge that you deny it outright, if that's  
4 your only option, not that you just have no  
5 opinion, but you vote no, and send a strong  
6 message to the administration that are processes,  
7 that these are public properties, not the ...  
8 totally the administration's to do with as a  
9 handful of people wish. And I thank you for your  
10 time and attention, and obviously my verbal  
11 comments are not necessarily fully reflected in my  
12 written statement, but I would urge the city, who  
13 has of course withdrawn itself, DCAS has left, but  
14 I would urge that they withdraw it, and barring  
15 that eventuality, that you vote no. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
17 much, Assembly Member Glick. We are going to ...  
18 Council Member Dickens has joined us as well, a  
19 member of the Subcommittee. We've also been  
20 joined by members of the Land Use Committee,  
21 Council Member Joel Rivera of the Bronx, and  
22 Council Member Robert Jackson of Manhattan. We  
23 have testimony of a panel that we're going to call  
24 up from Community Board #1 in Manhattan. I'm  
25 going to ask Catherine McVay Hughes to come up,

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2 Michael Levine, Eric Greenleaf, and Tricia Joyce  
3 to please come to the table. Please turn on the  
4 microphone and then identify yourself for the  
5 record.

6 MR. LEVINE: Thank you, Mr. Chair,  
7 and thank you for calling all four of us at one  
8 time. Thank you again, members of the Council  
9 Committee for the opportunity for Community Board  
10 #1 Manhattan to testify this morning on the Civic  
11 Center plan. There are four of us that will speak  
12 on different aspects of the plan. I'm Michael  
13 Levine, Director of Land Use and Planning, staff  
14 member for Manhattan Community Board #1. I will  
15 speak first, because of my familiarity with all  
16 three buildings under question. 346 Broadway, as  
17 you know, has already been approved in the  
18 disposition process. The ULURP application  
19 currently before you is for 22 Reade Street, which  
20 you've heard a lot about this morning in testimony  
21 and in comments from members of this Committee,  
22 and 49-51 Chambers Street. For the past three  
23 decades Community Board #1 has been located at 49-  
24 51 Chambers Street and is intimately involved in  
25 the disposition of that property, and as the

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2 Director of Administration for the Department of  
3 City Planning 25 years ago when the agency was  
4 moved to 22 Reade Street, I was intimately  
5 familiar with the many problems with the building.  
6 49-51 Chambers and 22 Reade Street were acquired  
7 by the City of New York in the 1960's to be  
8 demolished for a new Civic Center, a new municipal  
9 building. That never happened because of the  
10 fiscal crisis of the 1970's and city offices were  
11 relocated into two buildings never intended for  
12 modern office use. It is for that reason that  
13 Community Board #1 has adopted a resolution  
14 supporting the consolidation plan. We agree that  
15 employees of the City of New York should be moved  
16 out of 49-51 Chambers Street and 22 Reade Street,  
17 and moved to the municipal building to create more  
18 efficient use of space. We agree that it in fact  
19 will be a cost savings to the City of New York,  
20 and ultimately a benefit to the employees of the  
21 city agencies, most of the land use agencies would  
22 then be concentrated in one location at the  
23 municipal building, City Planning Commission would  
24 be there, Landmarks Commission is there, Board of  
25 Standards and Appeals would be there ultimately,

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2 and of course, Community Board #1 would be located  
3 in the same building. So we approve of disposing  
4 of the two properties. The issues that we have  
5 are the method of sale and the future use of the  
6 buildings on the two sites in question. Again,  
7 we're not discussing 346 Broadway, that has  
8 already been approved, we're talking about 22  
9 Reade Street and 49-51 Chambers Street. Speaking  
10 about the concerns we have and the reasons our  
11 resolution is not in full support will be three  
12 members of our ... two members of our Community  
13 Board and one member of the public who lives in  
14 Community Board #1. Catherine McVay Hughes, the  
15 Chairperson of Community Board #1 will speak  
16 first, to give you an idea of the issues we have  
17 with the method of sale and the future use of  
18 these buildings. She will be followed by Tricia  
19 Joyce, who is the Chair of our Youth and Education  
20 Committee, and finally Eric Greenleaf, who is a  
21 member of our community intimately familiar with  
22 youth and education issues. So we thank you once  
23 again for the opportunity to speak, if there are  
24 any questions, I can answer them now, or you can  
25 reserve them after we have all spoken. Thank you.

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Catherine McVay Hughes.

MS. HUGHES: Great. Good morning, Chairperson Levin, I know I've sat in front of you before on the Lower Manhattan Redevelopment Committee and climate change hearings and fracking hearings, it's nice to see you there. Community Board #1 appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed Civic Center plan submitted by the New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services, known as DCAS, for the disposition of 22 Reade and 49-51 Chambers Street. We understand that once the disposition is approved, that DCAS intends to transfer these properties and 346, which was disposed of in 1998, to the New York City Economic Development Corporation. While we favor the disposition and consolidation components of the plan, we have problems with the manner in which EDC intends to sell the three properties, with a total of 750,000 square feet of space, to private buyers as selected through an unrestricted request for proposals process. We strongly believe that selection criteria and a properly-formulated RFP should have included a review process of how the

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2 proposals would impact the community, with a  
3 particular emphasis of the extent to which the  
4 proposals could assist in solving community  
5 infrastructure needs, such as school seats and  
6 affordable housing. We actually have additional  
7 community needs after Hurricane Sandy, we also  
8 have a lot of non-profit institutions down here,  
9 including museums that have not been able to  
10 reopen, such as even the Battery Conservancy,  
11 their entire office was destroyed and flooded out.  
12 You're going to hear now briefly on the numbers of  
13 problems with the population growth from Dr. Eric  
14 Greenleaf.

15 MR. GREENLEAF: Hi, thank you very  
16 much, I'm Eric Greenleaf and I'm a downtown  
17 resident and also a professor at the Stern School  
18 of New York University. And I just wanted to talk  
19 a little bit about the need for new schools in  
20 Lower Manhattan, and why we need to consider where  
21 funds from any buildings that are sold are going  
22 to go, and why there's a need for them to be used  
23 to support two new schools in downtown Manhattan.  
24 Lower Manhattan, Community District 1, is by far  
25 the fastest-growing community district in



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2 Manhattan. Between 2000 and 2010, it grew by 77%,  
3 and that's more than four times as fast as the  
4 next fastest growing community districts. The  
5 demographics are also changing, in fact the number  
6 of children under five increased by 147%, and this  
7 huge growth in children has put a tremendous  
8 strain on public schools, so that this year the  
9 public schools downtown had a capacity of taking  
10 400 kindergarteners, but they had to take in 472,  
11 and the result is that more schools, new schools  
12 are needed. I just wanted to refer you to the  
13 sheet in Chairperson Hughes' testimony with this  
14 graph on it. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of  
15 children born in Community District 1 increased by  
16 more than 100%. In 2007, 834 kids were born, and  
17 that resulted in 472 kids going to kindergarten.  
18 Now, there's a new school that's being built at  
19 Peck Slip, but even when that new school is built,  
20 the maximum number of kids that ... the maximum  
21 number of kindergarteners that could attend  
22 downtown schools will be 475, okay, but downtown  
23 is now growing because in 2010 births were up 32%  
24 compared to what they were in 2007, which means  
25 you expect that there will be 32% more kids

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2 wanting to attend kindergarten. The result is  
3 that you get tremendous shortages in school  
4 capacity, and if you take a look at the graph. At  
5 the bottom, we see that by 2014 it's expected that  
6 there will be a shortage in just that one year  
7 alone of 182 kindergarten seats, which is more  
8 than seven kindergarten classes. Those shortages  
9 compound year after year, which means that once we  
10 add in the seats needed for pre-K, we're expecting  
11 a shortage of 200 seats per year. You take 200  
12 seats-per-year shortage and multiply that by the  
13 six years in elementary school, there's a shortage  
14 of 1,200 seats downtown. That means in the near  
15 future there are 1,200 children for whom there are  
16 no schools downtown who are already born. And the  
17 only way to take care of this is to build 1,200  
18 more seats, which is two good-sized elementary  
19 schools. If anything, these projections are  
20 conservative, because there are over 3,000 units  
21 currently under construction downtown, apartment  
22 units, and more than 3,000 units are being planned  
23 in the near future. So these seats are  
24 desperately needed for downtown children, and  
25 funds from the sale of any buildings that are

1  
2 disposed of need to be used for new schools  
3 downtown. And now I'd like to introduce Tricia  
4 Joyce.

5 MS. JOYCE: Hi, Tricia Joyce, Chair  
6 of Community Board #1 Youth and Education, hello.  
7 Thank you, Council Member Barron, for your reality  
8 check, it was very much the theme of my testimony,  
9 which is unprepared, and I want to just take a  
10 minute to look at what has happened in this  
11 community district since 2001. As a parent of  
12 eight-year-olds born in 2003, I have watched as  
13 year after year we have subsidized a building boom  
14 the size of Levittown, without providing any  
15 infrastructure for our children, recreation space,  
16 historical, community-oriented support for all of  
17 these people. I have watched as our elected  
18 officials have helped us over the summer create  
19 band-aids and safety nets. In 2005 we lost our  
20 pre-K at PS 234. In 2008 we lost our science and  
21 art rooms, and over the summer, through the help  
22 of our elected officials, we were able to get  
23 leased rooms under an emergency at the PS 234  
24 annex, in the following year at the community  
25 center. Without it, 175 children would have had

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2 nowhere to go to school, this is not the way we  
3 should be planning this neighborhood. To see that  
4 this RFP is up, and we are again faced with adding  
5 more luxury housing, which is the absolute last  
6 thing this neighborhood needs, without providing  
7 accompanying infrastructure, is a bad idea. We  
8 need to listen to what is first things first for  
9 this neighborhood once and for all. And we need  
10 school seats, and we need infrastructure for this  
11 community, before people get up and leave. Thanks  
12 so much.

13 MS. HUGHES: Thank you, Eric and  
14 Tricia. As you heard earlier before, our dire  
15 education needs, CB1 continues to have a shortage  
16 of recreation space, affordable housing, other  
17 residential community infrastructure. We regret  
18 that no meaningful analysis has been performed by  
19 the city regarding the extent to which the city  
20 properties would be suitable to assist in meeting  
21 the community's infrastructure needs, nor how  
22 disposition options might further exasperate the  
23 community's already-existing infrastructure  
24 shortages. Furthermore, it is the position of CB1  
25 that the city should not approach this sale as

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2 unrestricted, with its pure dollars-and-cents  
3 approach, but that the city should engage in a  
4 more holistic economic analysis that takes into  
5 account existing community needs as well as needs  
6 that may be created by the disposition of the  
7 city's property. The city should evaluate whether  
8 it would be more cost-effective to use a portion,  
9 or all, of its existing city properties to attempt  
10 to meet the community's needs, rather than sell  
11 these properties and then acquire new assets to  
12 meet these needs. Moreover, an unrestricted  
13 disposition of the subject city properties would  
14 likely lead to residential conversion of a portion  
15 or all of these properties, further compounding  
16 the community's residential infrastructure  
17 shortages, and would require a school-seat-impact  
18 analysis. We strongly believe that the proposals  
19 involving residential development without  
20 provision of school seats, affordable housing  
21 units and other community amenities should be  
22 viewed less favorably than a development proposal  
23 that does include school seats, affordable housing  
24 units and other community amenities. Therefore,  
25 Community Board #1 urges disapproval of the Civic

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2 Center plan unless the following conditions and  
3 modifications are satisfied. 1. 1,200 school  
4 seats for two K through 5 elementary schools; 2.  
5 EDC reissues or renegotiates the RFP as restricted  
6 sale RFP for the Civic Center plan properties; 3.  
7 The reissued RFP includes as part of its selection  
8 criteria the impact of proposed uses on the CBl  
9 community, including mitigation of adverse  
10 impacts; 4. The reissued RFP clarifies the status  
11 of the parking lot adjacent to 49-51 Chambers  
12 Street. In conclusion, CBl supports the Civic  
13 plan consolidation plan as an efficient use of  
14 office space, a benefit to city agency personnel  
15 and a cost savings for the city over time, if such  
16 consolidation plan can be implemented in a manner  
17 in which the above conditions and modifications  
18 are satisfied. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
20 much, Madam Chairwoman. Do any of my colleagues  
21 have ... I think Council Member Barron had asked  
22 first, Council Member Vacca. Council Member  
23 Barron, question for the panel or a statement?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: No, the  
25 panel. You know, when sometimes through this

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process we get information the last minute.

MS. HUGHES: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And I think it's very disrespectful for them to already have an RFP out, and we haven't even approved anything yet. It shows that they're so certain that they're going to get a stamp of approval and go forward and do what they want to do.

MS. HUGHES: That's also in our testimony.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right. I often come to these kinds of hearings and have ... this property has nothing to do with the African burial ground, and I heard you saying what you were saying, 99% of the times I change my thinking and say, now that I got new information, I process that and oftentimes I support the community, even though it's going to pass anyway. I didn't get that from you. You know, you got new information, either you never heard about the African burial ground or you heard about it and didn't want to deal with it, ma'am, I appreciate you acknowledging just that there was a reality check. But for you to come forth and not even mention it,

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2 and not even say ... because there may be a way  
3 where with three properties that all of our  
4 interests can be met. But to not, the chairperson  
5 makes a presentation, doesn't even, and act like  
6 you didn't say anything.

7 MS. HUGHES: Right, it's  
8 definitely--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON:  
10 (Interposing) Well, let me finish. It's almost as  
11 though we didn't say anything, that you didn't  
12 hear anything. When Assembly Member Glick came  
13 forward, she had her testimony, she probably heard  
14 our information for the first time. I just got  
15 information from this a couple of days. She said,  
16 let me put my testimony aside, and take into  
17 consideration what was said, and while I still  
18 want it to be used for the things that you spoke  
19 of, that I do think that there should be some  
20 consideration to what was said. So you can't have  
21 four presenters--

22 MS. HUGHES: (Interposing) Yeah, we  
23 agree with you.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I'm going  
25 to let you speak in a minute. You can't have four



1  
2 presenters come up here from your community board  
3 and nobody mentioned anything that we just said,  
4 as though we didn't say anything. You don't have  
5 to agree with it, you can continue to think that  
6 maybe it should be for schools and space and the  
7 things that you want in your community, but don't  
8 act like nothing was said. When you get new  
9 information, you should process it and have some  
10 new ideas, new thoughts, and perhaps a new  
11 position, to acknowledge that our people died.  
12 Just in case you didn't hear it, our people died  
13 building this city, 427 bones were discovered and  
14 we stopped them from building on that spot right  
15 next to Reade Street. This was a slave state,  
16 they stole this land from the indigenous people,  
17 and you can't forget that history and think it has  
18 nothing to do with these new properties. So I'm  
19 appealing to you, when you get new information, if  
20 you didn't have it already, to process that too  
21 and say something: I don't agree with it, I think  
22 that it should be all for the schools and what you  
23 have in mind, I think it should be shared, I think  
24 it should be taken off the listing or should be  
25 voted down, with this new information, and do

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2 something for the African burial ground. But I'm  
3 not going to let you sit here and just ignore it,  
4 and proceed as though we didn't say anything.

5 MS. HUGHES: We agree it should be  
6 shared.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So that's  
8 it, okay.

9 MS. HUGHES: And--

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: (Interposing) I  
11 think Ms. Joyce did actually make, did  
12 acknowledge.

13 MS. HUGHES: Right.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I  
15 appreciate what she said. You know what I'm  
16 trying to do? I'm trying to see if you feel what  
17 we're saying.

18 MS. HUGHES: I actually really do.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: When people  
20 say, oh, you're right, I apologize. But when  
21 people say, okay, we should be shared, you know,  
22 we expected something a little more, like, wow, is  
23 that what went down, is that what was going on?  
24 Well, we stand strongly, Community Board #1, we  
25 will not allow this thing to go down,

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disrespecting the Black community like that, we stand in solidarity with them, we're going to work with them to make this happen, and it shouldn't be just for our projects, but also for what we're reflecting. Not, you know ... anyway, I'm finished.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, thank you.

MS. HUGHES: Would you like 22 Reade Street carved out of the disposition plan?

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I would like, take it, we should vote it down, and then let's go back to the drawing board and see how all of our interests can be met, that's what I'm saying.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I want to thank you all for your testimony, and I just want to say that obviously you've done a thorough process and prepared testimony and are addressing the issues that you have, that your members of your board have brought up and brought to ... and voted on in an official capacity. So I just want to acknowledge that your testimony reflects the actions that your board has taken in its official capacity through the ULURP process, so.

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MS. HUGHES: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you.

Thank you very much for your testimony. We have one more individual to testify, Ray Vasquez, from SEIU Local 32BJ, testifying in support.

MR. VASQUEZ: Hello. My name is Raymond Vasquez, and I have been a member of SEIU Local 32BJ for 11 years as a porter. I am here today to testify regarding the potential sale of city buildings not far from here. I'm here because of some companies that have been interested in these sites like TF Cornerstone have not always been the kind of responsible developers the city should support. Any developer who is chosen for this project will benefit greatly from the sale of these valuable public resources. Because of this, I think that if the sale proceeds, they guarantee that the developer is a responsible one, someone who can insure that the jobs created through the project are the good jobs with decent wages and the benefits that New Yorkers need to support their families. Being a member of 32BJ, I have been able to count on steady wages and benefits, like affordable health

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2 care and access to training classes that allow me  
3 to advance. If this sale goes through, it should  
4 be with good jobs and with the support of the  
5 community. If a sale goes through, we need to  
6 make sure that this project goes to a developer  
7 with a responsible record and not someone like  
8 Cornerstone that has made a habit of undercutting  
9 industry standards. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
11 much, Mr. Vasquez.

12 MR. VASQUEZ: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I appreciate  
14 your testimony today, and I thank you very much  
15 for coming down, I thank you very much for your  
16 patience.

17 MR. VASQUEZ: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Are there any  
19 other individuals, members of the public that  
20 would like to testify on this item? We've been  
21 joined by Council Member Daniel Garodnick and  
22 Council Member Sara Gonzalez, a member of the  
23 Subcommittee, and for a moment we had Chair of the  
24 Land Use Committee, Leroy Comrie, Council Member  
25 Diana Reyna is in the room as well. At this time

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2 we are going to recess the hearing for several  
3 minutes, so I ask you all for your forbearance,  
4 thank you very much. (pause) Okay, we are back  
5 from recess. First we're going to close the  
6 public ... does any member of the public that wishes  
7 to testify further on this item? Seeing none,  
8 we're going to close the public hearing on Land  
9 Use #721, I will ask Council Member Margaret Chin  
10 to make a statement at this time.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you,  
12 Chair Levin. I know today we had a really long  
13 hearing and it was interesting that we were able  
14 to get some really important information that  
15 Council Member Barron raised, and I thank him for  
16 that. So in light of one of the buildings, 22  
17 Reade Street, in light of the history of the  
18 African burial ground, and that building is on the  
19 site, and all the work that was done in Congress  
20 to push for a museum for the African-American  
21 burial ground, that I would propose that we  
22 bifurcate this item into A and B, with A being a  
23 vote on 49-51 Chambers Street, and B being a vote  
24 on 22 Reade Street. I would recommend that an aye  
25 vote on the A resolution to approve the sale of

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2 49-51 Chambers Street and an aye vote on the B  
3 resolution to disapprove the sale of 22 Reade  
4 Street. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, thank you  
6 very much, Council Member Chin. So based on that  
7 recommendation, we will be putting forward to the  
8 Subcommittee the proposal to bifurcate this item  
9 into two different land use items, or two  
10 different land use votes, one to ... excuse me, a  
11 single vote, part A to approve, excuse me, part A  
12 to approve a resolution to approve the sale of 49-  
13 51 Chambers Street, and a B resolution to  
14 disapprove the sale of 22 Reade Street. I  
15 recommend an aye vote on both resolutions, and by  
16 an aye vote on the item, we'll ask the counsel of  
17 the Committee to call the roll.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Levin.

19 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I vote aye.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member  
21 Barron.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: First I  
23 want to thank the Chairperson for taking our  
24 concerns into serious consideration, and I want to  
25 thank Council Member Margaret Chin for her

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2 support, and even though information was brought  
3 late and people didn't have all of the information  
4 in time, for your cooperation and consideration.  
5 I just want to thank you for that support, and  
6 with that I vote aye on both, with the  
7 understanding that the aye is a rejection of the  
8 second one. I just want to make sure. Thank you,  
9 aye on all.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member  
11 Gonzalez.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Aye on  
13 all.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member  
15 Dickens.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Permission  
17 to explain my vote? I too want to join in with  
18 thanking the Chair for agreeing to listen, and to  
19 support this effort, Council Member Chin for  
20 bringing forth a proposal that is something that  
21 we can all live with, and to Council Member  
22 Barron, surprisingly, I thank him for ... I thank  
23 him for bringing this to my attention, because I  
24 wasn't aware. And had this been brought up before  
25 in a timely frame, like it should have been, then



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2 maybe we wouldn't have gotten to this point, and  
3 we could have had a conversation with the Speaker,  
4 and we could have seen successfully what could  
5 have been done in order to support the needs of  
6 the local community. So I agree that, you know,  
7 we will not ... we will disapprove the sale of 22  
8 Reade Street, which houses the African burial  
9 ground museum, which is something that is  
10 necessary for the remaining of America, not just  
11 New York, but throughout the country and the  
12 world, for them to know and understand that in one  
13 place we house the proof of the work, the lives  
14 that were lost from the Africans, from Blacks,  
15 that helped to build this great country. Thank  
16 you.

17 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,  
18 Council Member Dickens.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I support  
20 the sale of 49-51 Chambers and I disapprove the  
21 sale of 22 Reade Street.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I'll mark that  
23 as an aye. Council Member Koo.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: I vote aye on  
25 both.

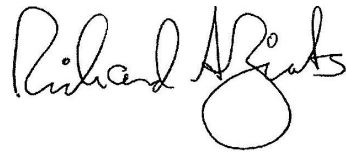
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COMMITTEE COUNSEL: By a vote of five in the affirmative, none in the negative, Land Use Item 721 A and B is approved as discussed and referred to the full Land Use Committee.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you. This meeting of the Subcommittee on Planning, Dispositions and Concessions is hereby closed.

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ November 19, 2012 \_\_\_\_\_