

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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May 13, 2013  
Start: 1:30 p.m.  
Recess: 1:49 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

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

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

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

Christopher Gonzalez  
Assistant Commissioner  
New York City Department of Housing, Preservation and  
Development

Jacqueline Alexander  
Assistant Commissioner  
New York City Department of Housing, Preservation and  
Development

Lenny Sife  
Director of Small Homes and Large Scale Projects  
New York City Department of Housing, Preservation and  
Development

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: This meeting  
3 will come to order. Good afternoon everybody.  
4 Welcome to the Subcommittee on Planning,  
5 Dispositions and Concessions. I am Council Member  
6 Stephen Levin, chair of this subcommittee. I am  
7 joined this afternoon by the full committee. We  
8 have Council Member Inez Dickens of Manhattan,  
9 Council Member Sara Gonzalez of Brooklyn, Council  
10 Member Peter Koo of Queens and Council Member  
11 Charles Barron of Brooklyn. We have a number of  
12 items on the agenda today, so we are going to try  
13 to move quickly here. We have five items that we  
14 are hearing, three we are laying over, and one  
15 that we are going to file a motion to withdraw.  
16 So we will be starting with Land Use numbers 810  
17 and 812. We have from the New York City  
18 Department of Housing, Preservation and  
19 Development, Christopher Gonzalez, assistant  
20 commissioner and Jacqueline Alexander. You may  
21 proceed.

22 CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: Good  
23 afternoon, Chair Levin, Subcommittee. I am  
24 Christopher Gonzalez, assistant commissioner of  
25 HPD's Office of Government Affairs. I am joined

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2 by Jacqueline Alexander, assistant commissioner  
3 for Property Disposition and Finance. Land Use  
4 item 810 and Land Use item 812 consists of  
5 proposed dispositions of two city owned properties  
6 located at 847 Fox Street and 748 Beck Street.  
7 Under HPD's affordable neighborhood cooperative  
8 program, also known as ANCP, occupied city owned  
9 buildings are conveyed to a non for profit  
10 organization restoring communities HDFC that will  
11 oversee the rehabilitation and cooperative  
12 conversion. Once rehabilitated 847 Fox Street  
13 will provide eight units of and 748 Beck Street  
14 will provide ten units of housing at up to 120  
15 percent of Area Median Income. Council Member  
16 Arroyo has indicated her support. I will take any  
17 questions you have.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 120 percent of  
19 AMI, so all the units, it is just a single band,  
20 or are there multiple bands that there are some  
21 that are lower AMI or...

22 CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: So the  
23 program itself is capped at 120 percent of AMI,  
24 but these two are at--oh, they're at 120? These  
25 are at 120 as well.

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2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Do any  
3 of my colleagues have any questions on this item?  
4 Council Member Barron?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [off mic]

6 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Seeing  
7 none, I will close the hearing on these two items  
8 and move on to Land Use numbers 814. That is 244-  
9 246 Elizabeth Street, 20135529 HAM, Manhattan  
10 Community Board 2, Council District number 1,  
11 Council District represented by Margaret Chin.  
12 Testifying on this item, Christopher Gonzalez and  
13 Jacqueline Alexander of HPD.

14 CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: Good  
15 afternoon, Chair Levin, members of the  
16 Subcommittee. Again, I am Christopher Gonzalez  
17 from HPD along with Jacqueline Alexander. Land  
18 Use item 814 also consists of a proposed  
19 disposition of a city owned building located at  
20 244-246 Elizabeth Street under the ANCP program.  
21 Once rehabilitated 244-246 Elizabeth Street will  
22 provide 19 units of housing and one commercial  
23 unit. Council Member Chin has indicated her  
24 support. Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: The AMIs on

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these units are the same as the previous?

CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: Yes.

JACQUELINE ALEXANDER: Yes, they  
are.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: 120 percent  
AMI. Okay. Any questions on this item? Council  
Member Barron?

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: What is 120  
percent of the AMI in actual salary, income  
requirement?

JACQUELINE ALEXANDER: So for a  
family of four it is \$103,080.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: 103,080.

JACQUELINE ALEXANDER: For a family  
of four.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: The AMI is  
around 83,000?

JACQUELINE ALEXANDER: That is  
correct. 100 percent of AMI is about \$83,000.  
Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you,  
Council Member Barron. Any other questions on  
this item? Seeing none, we will move on to Land

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2 Use numbers 815 and 816--815 first. Excuse me.  
3 815 and 817, but we are going to be moving on to  
4 817 afterwards. 815, 201355532 HAR. This is 176  
5 Dewey Avenue in Staten Island, Community District  
6 number 3 in Staten Island, and that is the Council  
7 District represented by Council Member Vincent  
8 Ignizio. - - Jackie, could you identify yourself?

9 JACQUELINE ALEXANDER: Sure. My  
10 name is Jacqueline Alexander. I am an assistant  
11 commissioner with the Department of Housing,  
12 Preservation and Development.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
14 much, Commissioner. Testifying on this item, 815,  
15 we have Christopher Gonzalez, assistant  
16 commissioner at HPD and Charles Marcus of HPD.

17 CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: Good  
18 afternoon, Chair Levin, members of the  
19 Subcommittee. I am Christopher Gonzalez,  
20 assistant commissioner at HPD. I am joined by  
21 Charles Marcus, director of operations at HPD's  
22 division of planning, marketing and  
23 sustainability. Land Use item number 815 consists  
24 of proposed disposition of a city-owned one family  
25 property located at block 4603, lot 1 also known

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2 as 176 Dewey Avenue. HPD is proposing to convey  
3 the property to the current residents under HPD's  
4 tenant ownership program, TOP. Under TOP  
5 purchasers are required to own or occupy the  
6 premises for three years and to conserve their  
7 residential use of the property for 20 years.  
8 Council Member Ignizio has indicated his support.

9 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: So that is just  
10 a single unit?

11 CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Do any  
13 of my colleagues have any questions on this item?  
14 Seeing none, thank you very much. I appreciate  
15 your time, and we will move on to Land Use number  
16 817, 20135526 HAK. That is 201, 203, 205 Mother  
17 Gaston Boulevard and 2396 Dean Street in the  
18 borough of Brooklyn, Community District number 16,  
19 Council District 37 represented by Council Member  
20 Erik Dilan. It's a new foundations program. On  
21 this item, we will be hearing from Christopher  
22 Gonzalez, assistant commissioner of HPD and Lenny  
23 Sife of HPD.

24 CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: Good  
25 afternoon, Chair Levin, members of the



1  
2 Subcommittee. I am Christopher Gonzalez,  
3 assistant commissioner at HPD. I am joined by  
4 Lenny Sife, HPD's director of small homes and  
5 large scale projects. Land Use item 817 consists  
6 of the proposed disposition of four vacant lots  
7 located at 201, 203, 205 Mother Gaston Boulevard  
8 and 2396 Dean Street, also known as Mother Gaston  
9 Boulevard/Dean Street. Under HPD's new  
10 foundations program, the sponsor is proposing to  
11 construct up to 15 condominium units for low  
12 income purchasers. Council Member Dilan has been  
13 briefed and supports the project. We will take  
14 any questions.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: - - Council  
16 Member Barron?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: The AMI  
18 is...?

19 CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: 80 percent.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Which is how  
21 much for a family of four?

22 CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: 68,700 for a  
23 family of four.

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Council Member  
25 Barron?

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: How many units is that?

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CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: 15.

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LENNY SIFE: 15. That is correct.

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MALE VOICE: Identify yourself.

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LENNY SIFE: This is Lenny Sife.

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15 units.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: At 80

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percent AMI?

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LENNY SIFE: That is the upper cap.

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The project reaches down to 50 percent AMI,

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adjusted for family size--deeply, deeply

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affordable.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: 50 percent

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is good, but you know the area median income of

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that particular area?

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LENNY SIFE: For that area?

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CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: It's 48,000

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for that area.

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COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: 48,000, so

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when you go down to 50, you will hit the area

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median income, but at 80, you are a bit above.

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Going down to 50 is up to you. It is not

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something you have to do. Correct?

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2 LENNY SIFE: It's a result of the  
3 marking, and the applicants that surface..

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I  
5 understand all of that, but the bottom line is the  
6 final decision is yours as to whether you want to  
7 do 80 or 50. It is not something--the 50 is not  
8 something you have to 50. Correct?

9 CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: Well, I  
10 think it is dictated by the financing of the  
11 project as well.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: It's  
13 dictated by authority. If whoever has authority--  
14 when I speak of power and authority, it has  
15 nothing to do with financing. If we say a project  
16 is 40 to 60 percent of the AMI, it doesn't matter  
17 what the finance is; that is what you have to do.

18 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: HPD has the  
19 discretion--

20 CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: Yes, we have  
21 the discretion.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Let's keep  
23 it clear. - - I am not deep like when it comes to  
24 deep analysis of the market and all of that. I am  
25 not that deep. I am very, very simple who has the

1 authority to do what, so I would just like to  
2 encourage you to get as many in at the 50 percent  
3 as you can because of the area income at 48 - - .  
4 That is pretty high. Are you sure it is 48,000,  
5 the area median income. Are you saying 50 percent  
6 is 48,000 or the area median income is--

8 CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: No, the  
9 neighborhood AMI is 48,000, 50 percent is, I can  
10 get that number for you.

11 [crosstalk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Just break  
13 it in half. That is all.

14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: There is a  
15 commitment from HPD that the marketing is going to  
16 be spanning--that HPD will be marketing to  
17 families that span the band from 50 percent to 80  
18 percent, so it is not going to say 50 percent  
19 families need not apply. You are going to be  
20 making sure that that is...

21 MULTIPLE VOICES: Yes.

22 LENNY SIFE: - - have to be  
23 mortgageable [phonetic]. - - would have to be  
24 able to afford the subsidized unit at the given  
25 sales price.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: The only  
3 concern is that if 15 units if 15 people come in  
4 with an income of 80 percent and another 5 come in  
5 at 50 percent, I don't see you saying, we will  
6 take the 50 percent and put a few of them in there  
7 even though we have the 80 percent. Something  
8 like that.

9 CHRISTOPHER GONZALEZ: Well, they  
10 would still have to go through our housing lottery  
11 therefore the applicants would be selected  
12 randomly, and they would have to income qualify.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right.  
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
16 much, Council Member Barron. We will close the  
17 hearing on 817 and we will be moving on to Land  
18 Use numbers 811, 813 and 816, which we will be  
19 laying over to a future date, and for Land Use  
20 number 818, application number 20135521 HAX, I am  
21 making a motion to file this application as an  
22 administrative correction. This application for  
23 this property to receive a section 577 private  
24 housing finance law tax exemption as introduced,  
25 heard and approved by the Committee on Finance

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2 under Land Use number 824 and accompanying Council  
3 resolution 1753, and therefore, a motion to file  
4 is necessary to remove this duplicate item, Land  
5 Use number 818, from the calendar. With that, we  
6 are going to couple Land Use numbers 810, 812,  
7 814, 815, and 817 as well as the motion to file on  
8 Land Use number 818. We are going to couple those  
9 items together, and I recommend an aye vote on all  
10 items. I will ask counsel to the Committee, Ann  
11 McCoy [phonetic], to call the roll.

12 COUNSEL: Chair Levin?

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Aye on all.

14 COUNSEL: Council Member Barron?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I vote no  
16 on those AMIs that are at 120 percent of the AMI.  
17 I think in New York City if we are going to really  
18 have more diversified communities, New York City  
19 is one of the most segregated towns in the nation,  
20 and the reason it is is because of housing  
21 policies, and when you price out those who cannot  
22 afford the market rate, then you have segregated  
23 communities, and usually the income of whites is  
24 much higher than the incomes of blacks and Latinos  
25 and Asians. We need to look at how do we have

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2 even a portion of those new developments even if  
3 they want to bring in at 120 percent have some at  
4 40, 50, 60 percent where it can pay a mortgage or  
5 whatever it needs to be so that we can have more  
6 diversified areas. Even in our area when we try  
7 to keep it as low income as possible--40, 50  
8 percent of the AMI--we still have a few 80s and  
9 90s to bring in a diversified population. For  
10 that I vote no on L.U. 810 and no on L.U. 812 and  
11 no on L.U. number 814 and aye on all the rest. I  
12 voted aye on yours. I just wanted to let you  
13 know. You don't have to look at me strange.  
14 Don't get me outside. I voted aye on all the  
15 rest.

16 COUNSEL: Council Member Gonzalez?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Aye on  
18 all.

19 COUNSEL: Council Member Dickens?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Aye.

21 COUNSEL: Council Member Koo?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Aye on all.

23 COUNSEL: By a vote of five in the  
24 affirmative, zero abstentions and zero negatives  
25 L.U.s 810, 812, 814, 815, and 816--I am sorry. I

1  
2 have to do that again. Hold on. Land Use items  
3 810, 812, 814, 815 and 817 are approved by a vote  
4 of five in the affirmative, zero abstentions, zero  
5 negatives except L.U.s 810, 812, and 814, which  
6 was approved by four in the affirmative, one  
7 negative and zero abstentions and the motion to  
8 file L.U. 818 is approved by a vote of five in the  
9 affirmative, zero abstentions, zero negatives, and  
10 all items are referred to the full Land Use  
11 Committee.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very  
13 much, everybody. This meeting is adjourned.

14 [gavel]



C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberley Campbell 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

Kimberley Campbell

Date

6/11/13