

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

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September 3, 2013

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HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
MARK S. WEPRIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
Vincent M. Ignizio
Daniel R. Garodnick
Jessica S. Lappin
Robert Jackson
Julissa Ferreras
Maria Del Carmen Arroyo
Jumaane D. Williams

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

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David Schwartz
Member of Willets Point United

Irene Presti
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Gerald "Jerry" Antonacci
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Leonard Scarola
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Paul Fernandes
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Maryann Rosa
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Farzana Moshood [phonetic]
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Jamie Sabeti
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Yuki Endo

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Joel Ponder
Community Organizer & House Specialist
Queens Committee House

Janet Kelly
Treasurer
Jackson Heights Beautification Group

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

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CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, good morning everyone. We have a very busy agenda ahead of us today; my name is Mark Weprin, I'm Chair of the Zoning and Franchises Subcommittee, I am joined by the following members of the Subcommittee, Council Member Leroy Comrie, the Chair of the Land Use Committee, Council Member Vincent Ignizio, Council Member Dan Garodnick, Council Member Jessica Lappin, Council Member Robert Jackson; those are the members of the Subcommittee; we're also delighted to be joined by Council Member Julissa Ferreras and Council Member Maria Arroyo, who are here for items that are in their district.

Great. So... so we have a number of items that we're gonna get to before the one that is sort of the main event of the day, Willets Point; we have to get those items out of the way first. So we're gonna ask everyone to please be patient; we're probably in for a long... a long morning, after... and early afternoon, so with that in mind we're gonna move to the agenda.

'Kay. Well, we're gonna start out with right now first Land Use Number 0883, just for the record, Crown Heights West Rezoning is laid over till

2 our next meeting; that's Land Use Number 0883 and
3 0882. And also, Land Use Number 0885 in Council
4 Member Lappin's district is also laid over to our
5 next meeting, the CUNY item. And... Okay, great.

6 Okay, we're gonna start with Land Use
7 Number 0891, New Hope Transitional Housing, Richard
8 Lobel from Sheldon, Lobel P.C. is here to make this
9 presentation on behalf of the applicant; the item is
10 in Council Member Arroyo's district and she's here
11 with us today. We're gonna let Mr. Lobel get ready.
12 I remind people, when you speak from the table to
13 please state your name before you speak; that way the
14 record is clear as to who is actually speaking. And
15 we'll try to get through these first items as quickly
16 as possible. Mr. Lobel, when you're ready.

17 RICHARD LOBEL: Good morning, Richard
18 Lobel from the Law Firm of Sheldon Lobel, P.C.; I
19 thank the Subcommittee for hearing us today.

20 We're here for the application for New
21 Hope Transitional Housing, the address of the
22 property is 731 Southern Boulevard, the Longwood
23 section of the Bronx. The application before the
24 Subcommittee today is for a special permit

1 application pursuant to 74902 of the Zoning
2 Resolution.
3

4 What the special permit permits is it
5 permits non-profits with sleeping accommodations,
6 which includes this type of facility, to receive a
7 floor area ratio, an F.A.R. of greater than what
8 would be permitted as of right. So basically in this
9 area, in an R7-1 District, the facility here would be
10 able to be built to a square footage of 19,000 square
11 feet. With the special permit the facility would be
12 able to be built upwards of 26,000 square feet. The
13 facility right now is existing; the applicant filed
14 plans with the Department of Building in 2007, those
15 plans were filed and reviewed and they were approved;
16 however that approval was issued in error. The
17 square footage was basically increased to the level
18 that would be permitted with the special permit and
19 even slightly more; this facility is at an F.A.R. of
20 4.9. So the applicant came to City Planning, made
21 the application for the increased floor area ratio.

22 Since the facility has been built in
23 2009, DHS has indeed installed through New Hope
24 homeless families into this facility, which consist
25 primarily of single mothers with children; there are

1 approximately 57 units in the facility. In the event
2 that the special permit is granted the facility would
3 continue to house these homeless families; the square
4 footage would need to be reduced so there will be a
5 portion of the 7th-story which would be reduced by
6 745 square feet; the number of units would go from 57
7 units to 55 units. In front of the City Planning
8 Commission we did present this application and
9 presented on the required findings, which the City
10 Planning Commission found that we met and Chair, I'd
11 be happy to answer any specific questions.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Great, thank you
14 very much. Just one question; so I... I see that City
15 Planning approved this, but it was disapproved by the
16 Borough President and the Committee Board; was... what
17 was the issue there... can you describe what the issues
18 were with the Committee Board?

19 RICHARD LOBEL: Sure. Quite frankly, the
20 Community Board felt that they had not had
21 significant participation in the process prior to the
22 insta... in the institution being built. There was an
23 old application for a building at this site which was
24 later amended to provide for this transitional
25 housing facility.

1 So the Community Board had issues with
2 the condition of the building and the... and the
3 tenancy of the... of the transitional housing tenants.
4 What we basically tried to show at the Community
5 Board as well as at the Bronx Borough President's
6 office, was that the facility here, despite the fact
7 that from a square footage standpoint that it had
8 been overbuilt, was operating pursuant to DOB
9 inspection and that DHS regularly reviewed the
10 facility and found it to be acceptable. In fact the
11 facility has received grades in excess of 75, which
12 is deemed to be very good by DHS. So DHS has
13 consistently inspected the facility at least twice
14 annually and has found it to be... to be operating at a
15 standard above what would be "very good." Department
16 of Buildings also inspected the facility numerous
17 times; at the Bronx Borough President's office the
18 DOB Borough Commission was there for the Bronx and
19 did state that the facility here did not present any
20 life safety concerns; that while they understood that
21 the square footage was greater than permitted, that
22 they had inspected the facility and that there were
23 no concerns over tenant safety and in addition, after
24 the City Planning initial hearing, Department of
25

2 Buildings came in again, identified some other areas
3 of concern, which the applicant has addressed and
4 which they've submitted evidence that they were
5 addressing to City Planning and City Planning did
6 approve this application.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Alright, I'd like to
8 call on Council Member Arroyo, whose district this
9 project is in.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Good morning.
11 Thank you Mr. Chair. I didn't catch your name, Mr...

12 RICHARD LOBEL: Richard Lobel.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: I'm sorry?

14 RICHARD LOBEL: Lobel, L o b e l.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: This property in
16 Community Board 2 has raised a great deal of
17 concerns, first and foremost the sentiment that this
18 building over the permitted zoning was intentional,
19 the original application submitted to the Department
20 of Buildings was to build residential housing; you
21 then modified your plan without discussion with
22 anyone and turned it into a homeless shelter, because
23 you can make more money from it.

24

25

2 ROBERT LOBEL: Well, I... I'm not gonna
3 speak to making more money; I'll speak to the 2007
4 application that was before DO... [interpose]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Where is your
6 client?

7 ROBERT LOBEL: My client is not here
8 right now.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Should be at the
10 table, he's... [crosstalk]

11 ROBERT LOBEL: Oh, I'm sorry... [crosstalk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: the one whose
13 gonna answer these questions.

14 ROBERT LOBEL: I'm sorry, Mr. Aron Ausch
15 is available and I... [interpose]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: You didn't know
17 he was in the audience?

18 ROBERT LOBEL: Uh he... he came in after I
19 had come in; I did not... did not see him sitting in
20 the front. Would like me to answer the questions,
21 Council Member? Okay, the... [crosstalk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Bring him to the
23 table.

24 ROBERT LOBEL: 2007 application for this...
25 for this... for this building, which is on file at the

1 Department of Buildings, which is publicly available
2 online, basically states that the application, the
3 amendment was intended to increase the square footage
4 of this building to 26,000 plus square feet and for
5 the installation of transitional housing tenants. So
6 it was a... it was publicly made available... [interpose]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: The original
9 application was for permanent residential housing,
10 yes? [crosstalk]

11 RICHARD LOBEL: That's correct, but the
12 application was amended... [interpose]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: When we hear from
14 the Borough President's office and the Community
15 Board we're gonna hear a different story.

16 RICHARD LOBEL: I... I just am commenting
17 on the publicly available information and the fact
18 that the applicant was reviewed at DOB; this was not
19 a professionally certified application.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: It is our
21 opinion, mine, and that of the Community Board and
22 the Borough President that this over-build was
23 intentional, that the transitional housing was always
24 the plan for the New Hope non-profit; the additional
25 space allows more families to be sited there. We're

2 not gonna talk about the DHS policies and the
3 deplorable conditions that they allow homeless
4 families to be sheltered in at this hearing; that's
5 not the subject. So I think in college and in high
6 school a 75 is a C, right, roughly, roughly...

7 [crosstalk]

8 RICHARD LOBEL: It depends...

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: and you sit here
10 and you say that the inspections have been done and
11 that you average a 75 and you can say that with a
12 straight face?

13 RICHARD LOBEL: 77.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: se... oh, 77...

15 RICHARD LOBEL: Correct.

16 COMMUNITY MEMBER ARROYO: Okay. You can
17 say that with a straight face, that families are
18 housed in this... in this property... [crosstalk]

19 RICHARD LOBEL: I'm assuming that they...
20 I'm assuming that they use a different, a different
21 guide than... I'm assuming... [crosstalk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Let me finish,
23 let me finish.

24 RICHARD LOBEL: Please.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: that families are
3 housed in this facility that has been found by
4 everyone that has inspected it to be lacking,
5 severely lacking, posing some very serious threats
6 and when you speak to the families that are there,
7 their... their sense of disrespect and the... the thought
8 that no one really cares because the City allows them
9 to be placed there, so it must be okay. It is not
10 okay. I wanna give room, Mr. Chair, to hear from the
11 Borough President's office and the Community Board,
12 so that we can hear the other side of this story.

13 RICHARD LOBEL: Chair, I'd be happy to
14 respond now or to defer my comments till after other
15 participation. Would you... should I respond to the...
16 to the comments just made by the Council Member?

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well, I mean, Maria;
18 do you want the uh, the handler to come up...?
19 [crosstalk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: I... I... I don't
21 wanna debate him on... on this. He seems to have a
22 different take on this than we do and we're
23 disagreeing on this, so I... I wanna hear from the
24 Borough President's office.

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Alright, you
3 don't have to answer it then. Does anybody el...
4 Robert, you have a question for this gentleman?
5 Council Member Jackson.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Thank you. So
7 my question is, in listening to your presentation, I
8 think you indicated your name is Mr. Rabel
9 [phonetic]...

10 RICHARD LOBEL: Lobel, yes.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Lobel and you're
12 a partner of this law firm representing the non-
13 profit organization?

14 RICHARD LOBEL: I am. Well no, actually
15 I'm representing the owner of the building.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: The owner of the
17 building?

18 RICHARD LOBEL: Correct.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Is the building
20 being... the... with the residents that live there,
21 that's bein' run by a non-profit organization?

22 RICHARD LOBEL: It is.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Okay. So my
24 question to you, if you know the answer, if this is
25 not approved, what would have to happen; would for

2 example, the number of units have to be torn down to
3 meet the requirements of the application?

4 RICHARD LOBEL: That's correct. They
5 would have... [crosstalk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: You have...

7 RICHARD LOBEL: to be reduced... there are
8 currently 57 studio units in the building; pursuant
9 to the special permit, if it was approved, it would
10 be reduced two units to 55 because of a reduction in
11 the 7th story. If the special permit was not
12 approved in its entirety, the 57 units would be
13 reduced to 39 units.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: So in essence
15 they may have to take off a floor; is that correct...?
16 [crosstalk]

17 RICHARD LOBEL: Two... about... about two...
18 over two floors.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Two floors. And
20 I... as a member of the City Council I know that there
21 was a situation, I believe on the East Side, where
22 someone had exceeded the authority and they had to
23 tear down a couple of stories... [interpose]

24 RICHARD LOBEL: Sure.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: of a high-rise
3 building there... [crosstalk]

4 RICHARD LOBEL: That's the... that's uh...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: this was before
6 people had moved in, my understanding; is that
7 correct...? [crosstalk]

8 RICHARD LOBEL: Correct. Yeah. It's...
9 it's a famous case in the Land Use Committee; it's
10 Parkview Associates, which was on Park Avenue; it was
11 a 31-story building that had to remove 12 stories.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Yeah. Yeah.

13 RICHARD LOBEL: In that case it was a...
14 there was a, an error on behalf of the building
15 owner, which led to a... a fel... falsely issued permit,
16 a permit that was issued in error. Here we have a
17 situation where the Commission has found that the
18 applicant meets the special permit findings.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Okay. And you
20 had indicated in response to Council Member Maria Del
21 Carmen Arroyo that in the original application that
22 was... that was amended, it amended for this type of
23 situation; is that correct?

24 RICHARD LOBEL: That's correct.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: They amended...
3 [crosstalk]

4 RICHARD LOBEL: That's correct.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: aspect of the
6 original one?

7 RICHARD LOBEL: Correct.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: And so my
9 question is; it... it appears as though that the
10 Community Board... and this is not my district, so what
11 I'm knowing about it is what I'm hearing just now,
12 with no further background; just let me be quite
13 frank.

14 RICHARD LOBEL: Sure.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: But what I'm
16 hearing is that the Community Board and the Borough
17 President's office and the appearance that my
18 colleague, Maria Del Carmen Arroyo, who represents
19 the area, are basically opposed to its continuation
20 based on your request for a special permit on behalf
21 of your client, the owners of the building, so was...
22 at the beginning was it clearly communicated, not
23 necessarily in the application itself; out front to
24 everyone what the special permit amendment was at
25 that time?

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2 RICHARD LOBEL: I think that the
3 application, when it was brought to the Department of
4 Buildings and was approved, did not involve the
5 special permit at the time; it basically involved an
6 application which the applicant and the Department of
7 Buildings thought was available as of right. There
8 is a 4.8 F.A.R. that's permitted for certain
9 community facilities in this area; this is not one of
10 them where you can go in and get that approved as of
11 right. Our... our application overlooked that, the
12 Department of Buildings overlooked that; we're now
13 here for the special permit application and basically
14 with regards to the special permit itself and with
15 regards to the specific findings, while the Community
16 Board, the Bronx Borough President's office; Council
17 Member Arroyo disagree with regards to the facility
18 itself, with... solely with regards to the findings,
19 which involve access to light and air, the fact that
20 this won't unduly tax social services, the fact that
21 there won't be an undue amount of traffic in the
22 area; with regards to those findings, we feel that
23 this a strong application, that we meet those
24 findings and City Planning agreed with that
25 assessment.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Uhm-hm. Uhm, uh
3 I'm asking the question only because at this point in
4 time the... the building or the units are currently
5 occupied, correct...? [crosstalk]

6 RICHARD LOBEL: They are. They are.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: But I'm just... I
8 agree that I wanna... I wanna hear from the Community
9 Board and Borough President's office on why they're
10 opposing it at this point in time knowing that
11 residents live in there; is it because, for example,
12 they were lied to or someone did not put forward all
13 of the information and if that's the case, then it is
14 wrong that... that... that... that all of the information
15 was not brought forward and quite frankly, you know
16 when someone is lied to or... and I'm not saying that
17 that happened; if, and if all of the information was
18 not given and... you know, then the consequences of
19 possibly tearing down units may have to happen. And
20 I'm just saying, you know what... what we expect and
21 what people expect is honesty and integrity and
22 transparency and as an attorney at law, you know
23 you're representing your client and I truly
24 understand that, but the honesty, integrity and
25 transparency must be there.

2 RICHARD LOBEL: We understand and we'd be
3 happy to have the Community Board and the Bronx
4 Borough President's office testify and answer any
5 specific questions.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: 'Kay. Thank
7 you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you Mr.
9 Jackson. Ms. Arroyo, do you have anymore questions
10 for this gentleman?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: No questions.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay Mr. Lobel, we
13 uh... we're gonna move on to the Borough's President's
14 office... [interpose]

15 RICHARD LOBEL: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We thank you for
17 coming... [interpose]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Mis... Mr. Chair,
19 Mr. Chair, there's a possibility that they may have
20 to come back to respond to questions; is that...
21 additional question?

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Are you gonna be
23 here for a little while?

24 RICHARD LOBEL: We'd be happy to... to stay
25 and... and listen to any testimony.

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Fine. [interpose]

3 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Okay, thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We may be able to
5 solve some of these questions after the meeting too...
6 [interpose]

7 RICHARD LOBEL: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: at another time, but
9 thank you, thank you very much. Alright, I'm gonna
10 call up now from the Borough President's office on
11 this item Wilhelm Ronda... Ronda. Here he comes. So...
12 Mr. Ronda, please state your name for the record;
13 what... just for... also, I don't know if you're aware;
14 because we have a very long hearing today we're gonna
15 limit testimony in opposition or in favor of items
16 after the present... presenters to try to limit to two
17 minutes if you can; I don't know how long your
18 statement is that you're reading, but if you could
19 give an amended version; there will be questions, so
20 some of your points could be brought out in some of
21 those questions, okay? Thank you, sir. Alright,
22 whenever you're ready.

23 WILHELM RONDA: Good morning Chairperson
24 and Council Members. Thank you for allowing us to
25 testify in the matter of 731 Southern Boulevard.

2 This building has had a long controversial history.
3 On August 19, 2003 my office originally issued a
4 house number for a 32-unit apartment building, which
5 is classified under Use Group 2 of the Zoning
6 Resolution... [interpose]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Sir... Mr. Chair...
8 I'm sorry; can you pull the mic closer so we can...
9 [crosstalk]

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Just a little close...
11 we'll give you a few extra seconds... [crosstalk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: and I didn't... I
13 didn't hear his name, Mr. Chair, please, if you don't
14 mind.

15 WILHELM RONDA: Wilhelm Ronda; I'm here
16 representing Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr.
17 Okay. Thank you for having us here today.

18 This building has a long controversial
19 history. On August 19, 2003 the Office of the Bronx
20 Borough President originally issued a house number
21 for a 32-unit apartment building, which is classified
22 under Use Group 2 of the Zoning Resolution. In
23 August 2007 the owner filed with the Department of
24 Buildings to change the building to a 57-unit project
25 with sleeping accommodations for the homeless, but

1 neglected to make the change from Use Group 2 to Use
2 Group 3.
3

4 In 2009 a temporary Certificate of
5 Occupancy was mistakenly issued for the building
6 under Use Group 2 and it began to operate as a
7 homeless shelter. Later in 2009, following a series
8 of complaints from the community it was discovered
9 that not only was the TCO issued in error for the
10 wrong use group, but that the building had been
11 severely overbuilt. The Borough Commissioner of
12 Department of Buildings decided to pursue carefully
13 resolution of the egregious error, as the building
14 now housed a number of homeless single mothers with
15 children which has subsequently been changed, just
16 general homeless population. The culmination of
17 these series of missteps could be simply categorized
18 as lack of oversight and ineptitude, but DOB
19 discovered almost the same exact situation occurring
20 at 1073 Hall Place by the owner, where the building
21 was filed under Use Group 2 and the owner proceeded
22 to operate it as a shelter under the auspices of New
23 Hope. In this case DOB caught the error and is
24 working toward a resolution. This building has not
25 had a TCO since 2008.

1
2 It is clear to our office that the owner
3 and possibly the operator was fully aware of the
4 actions taking place and gambled that they would be
5 able to overbuild, profit from switching to a shelter
6 and then rectify the situation if the ruse was made
7 public. This ULURP represented an attempt by the
8 applicant to rectify the situation. When asked why
9 they did not go to the Board of Standards and Appeals
10 for a variance the owner's attorney explained that
11 while ULURP was not the favored route, they
12 recognized the hardship was self-inflicted and a
13 variance was unlikely.

14 Approving this application would not only
15 encourage the owner and other developers to engage in
16 bad practices that violate the Zoning Resolution; it
17 would mean he won a gamble by paying his pittance to
18 removed only 745 square feet, while he profited all
19 these years. Can I have... [crosstalk]

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I... I have to cut you
21 off there; I know there's some questions, so I'm sure
22 you'll get to make some other points as we go.
23 Council Member Arroyo.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Sorry... I'm sorry
25 Mr. Chair. I'm sorry; I know that we have Willets

2 Point, which is very, very important; this is an
3 important issue and the Borough President's
4 representative is not... [interpose]

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I'm sorry...
6 Mr. Jackson, we're gonna get into questions here...
7 [crosstalk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: But... sure, but I
9 haven't heard... I don't ha... [crosstalk]

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: when we have the
11 questions.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Mis... Mr. Chair...

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Jackson, I have...
14 I have to keep to the 2-minute rule.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: No, but
16 Mr. Chair, he... he is not a member of the public, he's
17 representing... [interpose]

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: the Borough
20 president; I don't have his statement in front of me...
21 [crosstalk]

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: I don't even
24 have his statement so I can read it myself...
25 [interpose]

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Can we get a copy of
3 the statement for Council Member Jackson...?

4 [crosstalk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Come on.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Miss... [crosstalk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: I mean, come
8 one.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Miss Arroyo, why
10 don't you ask the questions... [crosstalk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Mr. Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: and we'll see if it
13 is...

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: I haven't even
15 heard... let him finish what he has to say in order to
16 ask questions regarding what he has to say.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Let... Council Member
18 Jackson, let Council Member Arroyo ask the questions
19 and there'll be plenty of time for him to answer and
20 state anything he feels needs to be added...

21 [interpose]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Okay. Then let...
23 let me ask you a question, if you don't mind,
24 Mr. Chair of you. So are we voting on this today or
25 we're not?

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We are not.

COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Okay. Okay.

Alright. Very good. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,

Mr. Jackson. Ms... [interpose]

COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Thank you both.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Ms. Arroyo.

COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Okay. What is your concern if this application is approved?

WILHELM RONDA: Our concern is that this is a... a mechanism that might be used by other developers throughout the Borough to circumvent the Department of Buildings process as well as the community facility process, for people to come under... under the radar under the ruse of a permanent housing application and develop a, a community facility without consulting with the Community Board or the community. In addition to that, we have concerns about oversaturation in the immediate area; we... we put together a map showing that within a quarter-mile there's seven special need facilities and we find it hard to understand how this could not have a burden on the community when you have a total of seven transitional facilities and 229 transitional units

2 within a quarter-mile of 737 Southern Boulevard. But
3 most importantly was our concern about the
4 misrepresentation of what this project was going to
5 be dating back to 2003, 10 years ago; this project
6 has been on the table for 10 years and we're deeply
7 concerned about people manipulating the system,
8 playing the system to try to... to misrepresent what
9 they're attempting to do on a site.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: The... the quality
11 of the housing; can you speak about what your
12 experience has been after hearing from the Community
13 Board and/or visiting the facility:

14 WILHELM RONDA: The Community Board
15 played an important role in that; they actually
16 visited the building and residents shared with them
17 that they had quality... major quality of life issues
18 in the building, including the issue of rats in the
19 building, cracks have been noticed in the... on the
20 outside walls as well as reported by the Community
21 Board; Community Board would've been here;
22 unfortunately the District Manager is on honeymoon
23 and couldn't... could not make here... make it here today
24 to testify.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: He got married?
3 Wow, congratulations. You referenced another
4 property this landlord has in also Community Board 2...

5 WILHELM RONDA: That's right.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: What is the...
7 give... give me details about what's happening with
8 that and how is it different than what's happening
9 with this application?

10 WILHELM RONDA: The exact same scenario
11 happened there, except that in the case of 1073 Hall
12 Place the Department of Buildings didn't make a
13 mistake and issue a temporary Certificate of
14 Occupancy. In that case they cited the owner and...
15 and recognized that his app... he... he was trying to
16 adjust his application and they... they cut that off
17 before he could, you know, effectively do that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: So the same
19 approach... [interpose]

20 WILHELM RONDA: The same exact scenario.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: the same action
22 was taken with the Hall Place address that was with
23 this application?

24 WILHELM RONDA: Right, there appears to
25 be a pattern here, at least in this District.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: The number of
3 units difference there wou... is what?

4 WILHELM RONDA: There were approximately
5 the same number of units. I don't have the exact
6 number with... [interpose]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: So the... the
8 original application is for almost 10 units less than
9 what ultimately is built?

10 WILHELM RONDA: Oh yes.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: And the
12 difference in the number of families that are being
13 housed, if... if... [crosstalk]

14 WILHELM RONDA: Would correspond to that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: the original
16 application had remained, how many families would've
17 lived in the building? [interpose]

18 WILHELM RONDA: This... this originally
19 would've been a 32-unit family... family apartment
20 house, if... if it had been... this TCO had been
21 requested, as it was a... filed for originally and
22 they're proposing 57 units, so we're talking about an
23 increase of like 15, 16 additional units.

24

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Do you know what
3 the Department of Homeless Services pays a non-profit
4 to shelter families a month?

5 WILHELM RONDA: About... close to... between
6 \$90 and \$95 a day, I understand.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: I'm not good with
8 the math.

9 WILHELM RONDA: So that comes out to
10 several thousand dollars a month to house a family.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Compared to
12 market rate for... [interpose]

13 WILHELM RONDA: Apart... in that... in that
14 particular area, market rates will probably be closer
15 to about a \$1,000.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: The difference is
17 significant.

18 WILHELM RONDA: About \$2,000... and the
19 number of... of units, I made a mistake on the math;
20 it's uh... comes out to about... a difference of about 25
21 units.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Is it your
23 opinion that this was done intentionally?

24 WILHELM RONDA: I believe that it was
25 done intentionally, given the... the multiple parties

1 that they had to approach and found issues with their
2 application, as well as the... the... the variance
3 between what they originally submitted for 10 years
4 ago. So this is not something... the... the way we see
5 this is it's not something where they violated the
6 sky exposure plane by a few feet because they put a
7 bulkhead too close to a side of the building. Okay,
8 this is about a building that's about a third
9 overbuilt.
10

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: And your
12 recommendation on this application is what?

13 WILHELM RONDA: Our... our recommendation
14 is that this building should be held to the same
15 level that other developers are held to in the City
16 of New York and that the... these... this... this
17 additional square footage should be restored to its
18 legal size. They could theoretically continue to
19 operate a homeless shelter pursuant to that size, but
20 that they should be held to the same legal standard
21 that we have in the City.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: And what do you
23 say to the individuals that have raised concern about
24 the families that are living there or... or temporarily
25 assigned?

1
2 WILHELM RONDA: Well these... this District
3 has an incredible amount of... as I pointed out, just
4 within the immediate area they have a significant
5 number of... of homeless shelters and these folks,
6 although it's very difficult to move from place to
7 place, this is a transitional facility and the... the
8 worst thing I think we could do to folks is to house
9 them in conditions where they have major quality of
10 life issues; the homeless are entitled to the same
11 respect that anyone would be in... in housing and they
12 should... standards shouldn't be less because this is a
13 homeless facility or because this building has...
14 someone is applying for a special permit to rectify a
15 mistake that dates back 10 years.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: So what is the
17 Borough President asking this Committee to do about
18 this application? [interpose]

19 WILHELM RONDA: We're asking... we're
20 asking the Committee not to approve the special
21 permit.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Thank you
23 Mr. Chair.

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Any
25 other questions? Alright; see none. We thank you

2 all very much; we're actually gonna close this
3 hearing; we're not gonna be voting on this today, so
4 we'll have a chance to try to sort out these issues
5 over the next few days. So thank you all very much;
6 we're gonna close this hearing and move on to our
7 next item, which is gonna be Land Use Number 0884,
8 which is the River Plaza rezoning; like to call up
9 Paul Trams from Kings Bri... Travis... Travis, sorry.
10 You... you could be a doctor with that handwriting.
11 'Kay. Mr. Travis...

12 PAUL TRAVIS: I'll give this to you when
13 I'm done, like after this.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Whenever you're
15 ready please... [interpose]

16 PAUL TRAVIS: Okay.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: put the mic very
18 close to your mouth; the sound system seems...
19 [interpose'

20 PAUL TRAVIS: Okay.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: to be weak today.
22 Thank you.

23 PAUL TRAVIS: My name is Paul Travis from
24 Kingsbridge Associates, the developer and owner of
25 the River Plaza shopping center.

1
2 We have applied for a Zoning Map change
3 for the shopping center, which is located on the
4 block bounded by Broadway to the west, West 225th
5 Street to the north, the Major Deegan Expressway to
6 the east and the Hudson Line to the Metro-North
7 Railroad to the south.

8 This application proposes to amend the
9 Zoning Map so that the entire shopping center will be
10 located in a C8-3 zoning district. We are proposing
11 to expand the existing shopping center by
12 approximately 25,000 square feet of retail space on
13 the roof of the building and approximately 10,000
14 square feet of storage space at grade. This will
15 increase the zoning floor area of the center by
16 approximately 37 percent from its existing
17 approximately 100,000 square feet.

18 Currently the shopping center is located
19 in two zoning districts; in M1-1 District that
20 encompasses most of the center and in R6 District
21 with a C1-3 overlay on Broadway. While the effect of
22 the zoning amendment increases the floor area of the
23 site, there is significant unused floor area
24 available today. The only way possible to use a
25 substantial amount of the floor area that would be

1 allowed in the C8-3 District would be to demolish the
2 existing center and develop new commercial use on the
3 site. The M1-1 and R6 Districts have high parking
4 requirements at 1 to 300 square feet and 1 to 400
5 square feet respectively. The parking lots however
6 are 41 percent utilized during the peak hour,
7 according to the Traffic Study. The critical aspect
8 of this rezoning is to reduce the required number of
9 parking spots to allow the modest expansion of the
10 building footprints.
11

12 I believe the existing shopping center
13 has been a well-utilized asset to the community in
14 the last 10 years and will continue to be so with the
15 modest expansion proposed. I hope you will recommend
16 in favor of this application.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very much.
18 I know we've had conversations with Council Member
19 Cabrera's office and Council Member Rodriguez' office
20 who encompasses this site and they are both okay with
21 this plan. Are there any questions from the panel?
22 See none. Thank you very much; don't go anywhere. I
23 think we're... you're doin' the next one as well,
24 Mr. Travis or no? Or no? Okay, you guys are gonna
25

2 decide that? Okay. Thank you very much. We're
3 gonna close that hearing.

4 Okay, we're now gonna do Land Use Number
5 0892 and 0893... okay, alright. So we have Mr. Travis
6 for that as well, but why don't you come... that's the
7 Brooklyn College campus; Mr. Jumaane Williams is
8 here, look at that; it's in his District. You all
9 know Jumaane Williams; the most recognizable member
10 of the New York City Council. [laugh] Whenever
11 you're ready; I don't have your name for the record,
12 so you'll state it when... when we start. You may have
13 given us a thing; I think it might've gotten
14 misplaced. But whenever you're ready please start
15 and just make sure to say your name. [interpose]

16 STEVEN SCHECHTER: Okay. Good morning,
17 my name is Steve Schechter, I'm Executive Director of
18 Government Affairs at Brooklyn College; we're pleased
19 to be here today to testify in support of Calendar
20 Items 0892 and 0893... good morning Council Member
21 Williams.

22 This... this change would allow for a
23 demapping of a portion of Campus Road and Avenue H
24 and also amend the Zoning Map to allow for the
25 construction of a new home for the College's School

1
2 of Business, ground floor retail space and for the
3 construction of a residential dormitory.

4 In 2010 the College completed a Master
5 Plan that showed academic space on campus was
6 constrained and that the School of Business in
7 particular, one of five academic schools on the
8 campus, was the most under-resourced, based on
9 enrollment and dedicated classroom space.

10 Several years ago the College identified
11 an adjacent property contiguous to the campus located
12 on the southwest corner of Nostrand Avenue and the
13 Long Island Railroad right-of-way as the best
14 opportunity to create additional academic and
15 residential space while not infringing on any of the
16 campus' open green spaces.

17 In 2011, through the generosity of a
18 donor, the College Foundation was able to acquire
19 this site from its private owner and subsequently
20 transferred control to the Dormitory Authority of the
21 State of New York. This lot, when combined with an
22 adjacent parking lot that's already part of the
23 campus and a street that we seek to demap, which also
24 actually inside the campus gate but is still
25

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 42
2 technically a mapped street, comprises the site that
3 we seek to rezone.

4 I'll just give a little background on the
5 School of Business so that you understand the great
6 need here for this facility.

7 Students within the School of Business
8 comprise about 25 percent of the undergraduate
9 population at Brooklyn College which totals about
10 17,000 and about 10 percent of its graduate
11 population, yet the School of Business has less than
12 10 percent of the College's classroom space dedicated
13 for its use.

14 In 2010, when Brooklyn College
15 established the School of Business we also decided to
16 seek accreditation from the Association to Advance
17 Collegiate Schools of Business. We will be the only
18 accredited business school in Brooklyn and only the
19 second within CUNY, along with Baruch.

20 To gain accreditation we need to meet the
21 high standards set by the AACSB in many areas and the
22 size and quality of teaching and faculty facilities
23 is a key challenge we face. The opportunity for the
24 College Foundation to obtain the Nostrand property
25 was especially fortunate, as it allows us to

1 construct a dedicated space for the School of
2 Business. It will provide an academic hub with
3 appropriate support, technology and conferencing
4 facilities, the opportunity to look at small business
5 center and student-focused retail, like a bookstore,
6 if they still exist, and it will allow us to create a
7 softer, more welcoming edge to what is now an
8 uninviting corner of the campus.
9

10 In order for us to continue to enhance
11 our academic reputation and attract the highest
12 caliber of students, we need the ability to provide a
13 residential facility to allow more students from
14 other boroughs as well as the rest of the state,
15 country and internationally to attend our programs
16 and live nearby. We've met with both the Community
17 Board and Borough President and based on our
18 conversations with them we are committed to
19 continuing our consultation with the City Council,
20 other elected officials and the Community Board and
21 the Borough President as planning for this project
22 progresses. The Committee was extremely concerned
23 about traffic issues and we have agreed to continue
24 to work with the Department of Transportation to
25 mitigate any impacts the project may have. And

2 finally, the Borough President raised concerns that
3 we construct an attractive facility and that it's
4 well landscaped and that it has appropriate
5 streetscape amenities.

6 And another issue; the Community Board
7 was concerned that this be a facility only for
8 students and we're only considering a residential
9 dorm for students; this is not going to be an
10 apartment tower or any other kind of facility,
11 strictly a residential dorm for Brooklyn College.

12 Thank you... [crosstalk]

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,
14 Mr. Schechter. I'd like to call on Council Member
15 Williams now who has comments or questions.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you very
17 much. Good to see you.

18 STEVEN SCHECHTER: Good morning.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So I'm... I'm
20 excited about the project; I do have a couple of
21 questions, one of which... the second one I have
22 mentioned previously, so I'm surprised it wasn't
23 discussed in some of your concerns. But the first
24 one, I just wanted to make sure, the left turn; I
25 haven't heard about issues; have we figured out

2 what's gonna happen on Avenue... on Ocean Avenue, I
3 believe; will be on I guess Campus Road or
4 Kenilworth; I can't remember which one; how are we
5 handlin' the left turn?

6 STEVEN SCHECHTER: Right. The Community
7 Board and your office have expressed concerns about a
8 left turn that would be from a new exit road from the
9 campus to Nostrand Avenue; that left turn would be
10 northbound on Nostrand Avenue. Our traffic engineers
11 believe that a traffic signal might be warranted at
12 that location and we will certainly defer to DOT and
13 the Community Board and your office about a traffic
14 signal there; we... we... we think one is probably
15 warranted, given the distance from Avenue I to the
16 next signalized intersection at Nostrand and Campus
17 Road and Avenue H, excuse me. So we believe a
18 traffic signal would probably address that concern.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. And the
20 second one had to do with... with the meat market
21 that's now closed; was probably one of the few areas
22 where the Orthodox Jewish constituents I have and the
23 Caribbean constituents I have actually mingled, which
24 is a great social thing; my concern is having some
25 place like that still there and so I have brought up

2 concerns about one of the retail spaces being
3 somethin' like that that can attract both
4 constituencies, so I haven't heard any movement on
5 that.

6 STEVEN SCHECHTER: Right. We've talked
7 about that issue and we... just to give a little
8 background; there was a meat market at that site
9 which had been there for many years; its lease
10 expired on August 31st, just recently, and they
11 actually chose to move out a little earlier, a little
12 before the lease expired. We have worked with them,
13 we put them in touch... the owners of the meat market
14 with the Flatbush Nostrand Business Improvement
15 District to try to help them to seek alternative
16 space in the junction, especially at the south end of
17 the junction, where they are interested in staying;
18 in addition, we have made no decisions about ground
19 floor retail space; we want a community facility and
20 we also want a facility that can serve the student
21 population; you know, if... when we raise the funds to
22 construct this facility and are ready to move
23 forward, I think, you know a... a food market, a fresh
24 fruit and vegetable market, a meat market is
25 absolutely something we would consider and we know

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your office is working with, I think Sustainable Flatbush...

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Uhm-hm.

STEVEN SCHECHTER: another community-based organization that brings fresh food and farmer's markets to the community and that's absolutely something the College would be anxious... a group the College would be anxious to work with to make sure that we continue to have you know as many fresh fruit and vegetable choices and meat choices in the community.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Lastly, is there gonna be any community space, community rooms?

STEVEN SCHECHTER: We will ab... we... there will be space facing the street that will be open to the public and available; I don't think the design has progressed to a space where we've talked about shared community space or... or public space, but as we design... the project is not yet designed, we only have conceptual drawings and conceptual schematics, but the actual design has not commenced, so when we get to that point we would... we would absolutely wanna talk about community space as well.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, I'm... I'm
3 excited about the project, but I do wanna speak some
4 more about those issues.

5 STEVEN SCHECHTER: Absolutely. And
6 we're... we're anxious to continue the discussion.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Once again, we are
9 not voting on this item today, so there'll be chance
10 to discuss those issues further. Anyone else on the
11 panel have any questions? Okay. Well thank you,
12 Mr. Schechter, we appreciate... [interpose]

13 STEVEN SCHECHTER: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: your time; we're
15 gonna now close this hearing. Okay, good. Uhm...
16 Okay. So now we're gonna move on to the Willets
17 Point Project, which is I know why most people are
18 here today. Let me just lay how this is gonna work
19 for everybody. So we're gonna have... we're gonna
20 bring up both EDC and the applicant's together on
21 this front panel here; they're each gonna testify as
22 to this project. Now they're the ones who have the
23 answers to our questions and we have a lot of issues
24 to discuss, so it's very important we hear from them
25 and get to ask the questions and a lot of the

1 concerns we've heard from community groups and other
2 places, so that'll be our opportunity. Following the
3 completion of the questions of these... is it all
4 gentlemen? I think it is all gentlemen... all
5 gentlemen... after questioning these gentlemen we are
6 gonna go to panels both in favor and against; we're
7 gonna start with a panel in opposition to this
8 project and follow it with panels in favor; we are
9 gonna hear from everyone today; anyone who's here to
10 testify will get to be heard and we will get on the
11 record.
12

13 I mentioned earlier, this is where we are
14 gonna have to limit people to two minutes after the
15 first panels go. First panel, like I mentioned, is a
16 lot of questions, a lot of information we need;
17 following that it's gonna be limiting the... the people
18 to two minutes each, so if you're a number of people
19 together you may wanna coordinate your remarks so you
20 can cover a couple of topics. There may be some
21 questions for you, in which case, you know that's not
22 part of your two minutes; however, just try to
23 coordinate in your head, right now and take your
24 remarks and try to sum 'em up into two minutes so we
25 can get the gist of your argument and you'll be

2 repeating some other arguments too, so maybe you can
3 limit it that way as well. With that in mind... so
4 with that in mind we're gonna get to the first panel;
5 I'll call in a second, Council Member Comrie, the
6 Chair of the Land Use Committee did wanna bring up a
7 public service announcement.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I just wanted to
9 note for the record that the last two presenters,
10 even though their projects were not being voted today
11 did not respect the Committee enough to hand out
12 handouts of their projects of what they were doing;
13 the... the two items will be voted by the Committee,
14 but it's an insult to all of the Committee members; I
15 hope that the two developers or the... the project
16 people didn't leave or someone could get a message to
17 them that the Committee members should get a copy of
18 their presentation and I would hope that... that... well
19 I see your presentation here, so you didn't make that
20 same mistake Jessie, but to... to make sure that the uh
21 Committee members get copies of their presentation,
22 especially since Council Member Arroyo and Council
23 Member Williams had serious concerns about both
24 projects and I would hope that in the future that

2 when you're coming before the Committee that you give
3 the Committee a handout. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you Council
5 Member Comrie; duly noted. Before we get to the
6 panel and I'm gonna have you each introduce
7 yourselves, not call your name; we're gonna let the
8 Council Member who represents this area to... to give
9 an opening statement, Council Member Julissa Ferreras
10 and she has a statement she wants to make. Council
11 Member Ferreras.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Thank you,
13 Chair Weprin.

14 Good morning, I'm Council Member Julissa
15 Ferreras and I represent the 21st Council District
16 which includes Willets Point. I'd like to start off
17 by saying thank you to the Subcommittee Chair, Mark
18 Weprin, the Land Use Chair, Leroy Comrie and other...
19 and my other colleagues for holding this hearing
20 today.

21 As a representative of Willets Point I
22 wanna ensure the proposed development is fair and
23 balanced, with consideration to existing tenants.
24 There are a number of concerns that have been
25 expressed to me by my constituents which I hope have...

1 can be clarified today. For those who are not aware,
2 this site in consideration is arguable one of the
3 most historic sites in Queens. While the use of this
4 land has varied over the years, it now hosts a wealth
5 of auto repair shops and has gone without many of the
6 essential amenities other areas of our city
7 experience, such as routine trash pickups and
8 property sewage systems. The owners of these shops
9 are predominantly low-income immigrants who have come
10 to our great city in search of the American dream.
11 As lawmakers it is our duty to ensure they have
12 access to the same resources that any other New
13 Yorker and small business has.

14
15
16 Additionally, I'd like to point out that
17 the proposal calls for construction of a housing
18 development. In 2008 it was made clear that 35
19 percent of the units being constructed will be
20 affordable. Through this hearing I would like to
21 have clarified that this commitment will be
22 solidified. My District is continuing to grow and
23 yet there is no affordable housing available, nor is
24 there enough green space when we factor in our
25 overcrowded population. The commitment to affordable

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 53
2 housing and other community needs would have a
3 tremendous impact for hundreds of low-income
4 residents in my community.

5 Although there are many positive points
6 within the proposal, such as a plan to improve
7 traffic and pedestrian safety, I still retain many
8 reservations that will hopefully be clarified by both
9 the developers and the City agencies involved.

10 Before making any decisions we must know
11 all the facts and the community needs to feel
12 reassured that this is the best decision. As we move
13 forward with this proposal I look forward to
14 continuing to engage our local community, the
15 developers and my colleagues to decide upon a plan
16 with an achievable, sustainable vision and goal.
17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you Council
19 Member. Alright gentlemen, so you guys... you have
20 coordinated who's doing what. If you could each
21 introduce yourselves first and then as you start
22 speaking, then re... re-state your names, since I
23 didn't call you up, so I don't know, Mr. McKnight,
24 you wanna just start, say your name and we'll go
25 across and then... however you wanna push it. Just so

2 you know we know who you are and then you can make
3 your presentation.

4 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Thomas McKnight,
5 Economic Development Corporation.

6 KYLE KIMBALL: Kyle Kimball, President of
7 the Economic Development Corporation.

8 ROB GOLDRICH: Rob Goldrich, from the
9 Mayor's office.

10 RICHARD BROWN: Richard Brown, Sterling
11 Equities.

12 JESSE MASYR: Jesse Masyr, Fox Rothschild
13 Land Use counsel.

14 GLEN GOLDSTEIN: Glenn Goldstein, Related
15 Companies.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Great, thank you
17 gentlemen. And now, just make sure when you do
18 speak, as you're making your presentation that you
19 state your name again for the record when you speak.
20 Whenever you're ready.

21 ROB GOLDRICH: Okay, I think the.. the
22 City side is gonna speak first and then the joint
23 venture will speak second.

24 So I'm Rob Goldrich, again, Senior Policy
25 Advisor in the Mayor's office and I'm here on behalf

1 of Mayor Bloomberg and Deputy Mayor Robert Steel to
2 speak in favor of the Willets Point Project. I'm
3 joined at the panel today with Kyle Kimball,
4 President of New York City Economic Development
5 Corporation and Tom McKnight, who's an Executive Vice
6 President at NYCEDC. The Administration is excited
7 to have a real way forward to feasibly realize the
8 vision that the City, with the Council's support,
9 approved back in 2008.

11 As you know, the Willets Point
12 Development Plan is an historic redevelopment effort
13 that will finally transform and revitalize a polluted
14 and neglected neighborhood, a goal that has eluded
15 the City for generations. The Plan will clean up
16 decades of toxic pollution and help improve the
17 quality of nearby waterways. It will provide the
18 Willets Point District, located in one of the most
19 vibrant parts of Queens, the basic infrastructure
20 that it now lacks. In addition, it will establish a
21 major new mixed-income neighborhood and commercial
22 destination while creating thousands of jobs and
23 infusing billions of private investment into the
24 local economy.

1 The City's agreement with the joint
2
3 venture development team will result in construction
4 as originally envisioned in the Special Willets Point
5 District and Urban Renewal Plan with economic
6 remediation on even more acreage than was originally
7 anticipated in the 2011 RFP. The Plan will activate
8 significant acreage on both sides of Citi Field to
9 create a true center of economic growth for Queens.

10 The first phase of the project, which
11 encompasses 23 of the 62 acres which make up the
12 District will result in \$3 billion in private
13 investment, create 7,100 permanent jobs and 12,000
14 direct construction jobs with MWBE and local hiring
15 goals of 25 percent. During construction the project
16 will generate over \$310 million in new tax revenue
17 for the City and once operational will account for
18 over \$150 million in new annual tax revenue.

19 You will hear from the applicants, which
20 are the New York City Economic Development
21 Corporation and the joint venture, to my left, made
22 up of Related and Sterling Equities; we're here today
23 to present and address questions and concerns that
24 you already have. Kyle Kimball will speak next.

1
2 KYLE KIMBALL: Good morning Chairman
3 Weprin; thank you for having me and members of the
4 Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. My name is
5 Kyle Kimball, I'm President of the New York City
6 Economic Development Corporation, NYCEDC. I also
7 have with me today Tom McKnight, David Quart and
8 Miriam Harris behind me, also from EDC; all of whom
9 have spent nearly every day for many years getting
10 this project to where we are today, so it's important
11 to me that you hear their voices today during the
12 question and answer period.

13 We're also pleased to join Rob from the
14 Mayor's office, who just testified, in support of an
15 approval of special permits for interim parking and
16 active recreational uses on four adjacent lots in the
17 Willets Point District. These permits are necessary
18 in order to realize the original vision for Willets
19 Point approved by the City Council in 2008 and will
20 lay the foundation for the transformation of the area
21 from what it is today into a thriving and mixed-use
22 neighborhood.

23 I wanna take a moment to distinguish
24 between the decision before you today and the
25 decision that was made 5 years ago. Today we are not

1
2 revisiting the original land use proposal that was
3 approved in 2008; rather, the proposal under
4 consideration is a modification, a use modification
5 that will make the original approved Plan achievable
6 and that has received approval of Community Board 7
7 and Queens Borough President and last month, the City
8 Planning Commission. My brief remarks will explain
9 the history of this project and why this modification
10 is necessary and after my presentation I will be
11 happy to take questions.

12 The Willets Point Development Plan
13 approved by the City Council in 2008 is one of the
14 most ambitious physical transformation projects
15 undertaken in New York City's history. As you know,
16 Willets Point has long tarnished an otherwise vibrant
17 section of Queens. Surrounded by flourishing
18 communities like Corona, Elmhurst, Jackson Heights,
19 and Flushing, Willets Point has been contaminated
20 after decades of serving as a coal ash dump. This
21 toxic, neglected 62 acres has been polluted by open
22 petroleum spills, illegal dumping and lacks even the
23 most basic infrastructure, as the Councilwoman
24 mentioned, including road, sidewalk and utilities.

1 As you know, many plans for this site
2
3 have been proposed over the previous 5 decades, but
4 really none have secured sufficient support or
5 approval. Despite these challenges, giving its
6 location adjacent to growing neighborhoods and
7 proximity to highways and mass transit, both this
8 administration and the Council have seen an
9 opportunity not only to clean the area and the
10 surrounding waterways, but also to reclaim this
11 underutilized site by creating a dynamic new
12 neighborhood. Together, we as a city led a years-
13 long effort, a collaborative, community-driven
14 effort, working closely with community members, our
15 agency, other city agencies and local elected
16 officials in which many of you participated that
17 ultimately resulted in a redevelopment plan that won
18 overwhelming City Council approval in 2008.

19 This overall Plan called for the cleanup
20 of the 62-acre district, construction of 5,500
21 housing units, 35 percent of which will be
22 affordable, the addition of community facilities,
23 including a school, a creation of 8 acres of new open
24 space, 2 million square feet of retail and office
25 space, hotels and a convention center.

1 Following the City Council's approval the
2 City issued a Request for Qualifications, an RFQ, in
3 2009; this was followed by a Request for Proposals
4 for the first phase of development in 2011. In the
5 meantime, work began in 2011 on a \$50 million of
6 critical offsite infrastructure improvements,
7 including construction of a sanitary sewer main and
8 reconstruction of a storm sewer and outfall which are
9 necessary to support any future development in the
10 area regardless of who does it. This construction
11 has itself created 350 construction jobs or
12 construction related jobs and will begin to wrap up
13 by the end of this year.

14 In June 2012 we announced the historic
15 agreement to move forward the first phase of
16 development. This first phase encompasses about 35
17 percent of the area of the entire District. Queens
18 Development Group, which is a joint venture here
19 today, joint venture of Sterling Equities and
20 Related, was selected for this Plan to unlock more
21 than 5 million square feet of new development in this
22 first phase, representing a private direct investment
23 of \$3 billion and creating more than 7,000 permanent
24 jobs and 12,000 construction jobs.
25

1 During this phase 23 acres of the
2
3 polluted site will be remediated and portions of the
4 site will be lifted out of the flood plain,
5 increasing its resiliency to future flooding. In
6 addition, all development under the proposal will be
7 sustainable, achieving lead certification at various
8 levels.

9 The City has already acquired or is in
10 contract to purchase approximately 95 percent of the
11 property required for the first phase and overall the
12 plan for this first phase will result in the creation
13 of 2,500 housing units, 35 percent of which will be
14 affordable, a new school, 500 hotel rooms, 1-million-
15 square-foot retail and entertainment destination,
16 also known as Willets West, 500,000 square feet of
17 office space and more than 5 acres of public open
18 space.

19 Our partners at Queens Development Group,
20 represented in joint venture, will testify later this
21 morning and provide additional detail about these
22 plans which will transform this contaminated area
23 into a mixed-use neighborhood, a destination for
24 visitors and a tremendous generator of economic
25 growth, not only for Queens, but for the City for

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 62
2 decades to come, fulfilling the objectives of the
3 original Plan and more.

4 While moving this plan forward, at the
5 same time, we have been working to train workers in
6 the District so they are equipped to secure high-
7 quality jobs. The City's comprehensive 3 million
8 Willets Point Worker Assistance Program, operated by
9 LaGuardia Community College, has provided educational
10 programs, English as a second language courses,
11 computer and vocational training and job placement
12 services to Willets Point workers since launching in
13 2008. All workers in the District are eligible to
14 participate; so far more than 600 individuals have
15 registered in the program and almost 500 have
16 utilized these resources. This program is preparing
17 current Willets Point workers for good jobs in
18 various sectors across the City.

19 In addition, working with relocation
20 experts at Cornerstone, the City continues to provide
21 affected tenants with relocation assistance. This
22 service is available to all interested tenant
23 businesses on city-owned property in Phase 1. Over
24 the past year Cornerstone has been in contact with
25 every business that is a tenant of the City in Phase

1 at least 5 times and with many of the businesses
2 between 10 and 15 times. Through in-person meetings,
3 site visits, phone calls and other forms of outreach
4 Cornerstone helps tenants understand their space
5 needs, identify relocation spaces free of charge; in
6 addition in partnership with Council Member Ferreras,
7 the City co-hosted an information meeting last month
8 in Corona for Willets Point businesses and workers,
9 which approximately 120 people attended. This
10 meeting provided tenants and workers with resources
11 to navigate the relocation process and help them
12 understand and access the variety of City services
13 and benefits available to them.

15 As you can see, we are working to achieve
16 nothing less than a complete transformation of this
17 District in a thriving mixed-income community and
18 center of economic growth. This is an extremely
19 complex project and like any complexity in life, you
20 learn along the way as you work your way through the
21 complexities. This is very true in the case of
22 Willets Point, especially given the extensive
23 environmental remediation required as the first step
24 of the Plan as well as the current lack of
25 development in the area.

1 We learned through the Request for
2
3 Proposals process and negotiations with the
4 developers that such wholesale transformation cannot
5 happen overnight. In fact it may be risky and unwise
6 to attempt to achieve everything outlined in the 2008
7 Plan in one fell swoop, because first, resources are
8 limited and second, more importantly, timing is
9 everything. Bringing in new housing before the area
10 has had a chance to establish itself as a destination
11 where people want to work, shop and live is not a
12 sound development plan.

13 For this reason the Queens Development
14 Group proposed an incremental approach that will in
15 the long run best allow for the realization of the
16 original 2008 Plan. Under this approach the creation
17 of retail and entertainment spaces first will spur a
18 critical chance perception of the Willets Point
19 District, establishing a sense of place and making
20 this a place where people want to live, because they
21 will live in a neighborhood. We learned that a phase
22 approach is the only realistic and sound way to
23 realize the original vision for Willets Point and the
24 best way to ensure its success. The Special Permits
25 under consideration do not reflect a change in the

1 approved Plan for Willets Point; that has not been
2 altered. Rather, these permits are necessary for the
3 phase approach that will ensure the successful
4 execution of the exiting plan.
5

6 Specifically, once the infrastructure and
7 environmental remediation phases are complete, Queens
8 Development Group would activate the 126 feet
9 corridor to the east of Citi Field, constructing a
10 200-room hotel and 30,000 square feet of retail and
11 restaurants. A new retail and entertainment
12 attraction to the west of Citi Field, Willets West,
13 will convert what is current a stadium parking lot
14 into a 1-million-square-foot retail and entertainment
15 center with stores, movie theaters, restaurants,
16 entertainment venues and public space.

17 Willets West and the activation of 126th
18 Street together represent a private investment of \$1
19 billion and they're expected in and of itself to
20 create 4,200 construction jobs and 2,700 permanent
21 jobs. The development team, who is with us today,
22 will describe these projects in more detail.

23 These changes do mean that it will take
24 more time than originally anticipated to achieve the
25 transformation of Willets, but I do think it's worth

1
2 considering another recent transformation by way of
3 comparison and that is the renewal of 42nd Street in
4 Manhattan. The transformation of 42nd Street from a
5 decaying district into a world class cultural center
6 and business district has in turn raised the profile
7 of the entire West Side and even created so much
8 unmet demand that the City is now looking to extend
9 the success of Times Square revival all the way to
10 the Hudson River. Though that original project also
11 had a clear vision, it involved multiple properties
12 and required complex land use changes and faced
13 economic downturns and other challenges over several
14 decades.

15 As a result, the project took longer to
16 complete than originally anticipated and required
17 interim project phases. Attracting economic activity
18 to the area was the first step required for this
19 rebirth and helped to establish the District as a
20 destination, paving the way for additional
21 development. In the long term, this incremental
22 approach contributed to the great success of the
23 transformation and we anticipate this will also be
24 the case for Willets Point.

1 Don't get me wrong though, when we do
2
3 this correctly Willets Point will be a very different
4 neighborhood than 42nd Street is today. But the
5 lesson of being patient to allow for the right type
6 of development to happen is a consistent one.

7 So at the end of the day the goals and
8 the vision that we all share of Willets Point have not
9 changed between 2008 and today. Though the timing of
10 this project may have changed, we believe that this
11 phase approach, if I have not said it enough already,
12 is the best way to move forward. The Special Permits
13 under consideration today allow for uses that will
14 plant the seed of economic activity in Willets Point,
15 establishing the area as a vibrant commercial and
16 entertainment destination, setting the stage for the
17 creation of a residential neighborhood and helping to
18 ensure the future success of the broader Willets Point
19 Plan.

20 The use modification requested under
21 these permits is necessary to accomplish the
22 objectives we all share for the District. And the
23 ambitious plan to renew Willets Point will remedy
24 decades of pollution and create a vibrant new transit-
25 oriented community and with your continued support and

2 partnership I am confident that we will achieve this
3 vision. And if there is one message I would ask you
4 to remember from my testimony today, is that the
5 Council said to us when it approved the 2008 Plan,
6 let's do this. We are before you today in absolute
7 agreement with the direction you gave us in 2008 and
8 adding to the chorus, let's do this and let's do it
9 right. Now I'm happy to answer your questions.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Mr.
11 McKnight, you're not speaking at the moment?

12 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: No.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. So what I'm
14 gonna do now; I'd like to hear... we'd to hear from the
15 Related, Sterling Equities people right away and then
16 afterwards we'll get to questions for all of you,
17 'cause some questions may be answered by either one.
18 Okay? Whenever you're ready. Please state your name,
19 remember, when you speak.

20 RICHARD BROWN: Good morning. My name is
21 Richard Brown; I'm a partner at Sterling Equities and
22 QDG, our joint venture with Related; I am joined by
23 Jesse Masyr, Fox Rothschild, our land use counsel, and
24 Glenn Goldstein, our partner from Related Companies.

1
2 As you know, the Willets Point initiative
3 is near and dear to all of us, we all go back many,
4 many years in this District, you know for our part,
5 our affiliated company, Sterling Mets has been
6 directly across the street for over 30 years, since
7 1980.

8 Rather than be repetitive on all the
9 economic benefit and analysis that the transformation
10 of this area brings, I think you've heard it and we've
11 got testimony and details to provide if you need more
12 backup on that, I thought I'd take a minute to address
13 some of the threshold questions that we have been
14 answering for the last year or so, mainly, why are we
15 doing this in phases; why are we building something in
16 Citi Field's parking lot; where is the housing, and
17 can we really clean up Willets Point? So let me take
18 a couple of minutes and try to address those four
19 things and I'm sure there'll be some follow-up
20 questions that you ask. Uhm... [interpose]

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Those were all on
22 our list, so good start.

23 RICHARD BROWN: Okay, yeah; had a
24 feeling. Anyway, why... why are we doing this in
25 phases? Well, for one thing, and please understand,

1 when we responded to the RFP and the RFQ prior to
2 that, we certainly have had and have every intention
3 of maintaining the vision that EDC put forth, that
4 this office... your... your Council approved in 2008. The
5 obstacles in doing that right now are; number one,
6 this is not a 62-acre development today, it will
7 ultimately be one and while we do not have any
8 ownership rights beyond the 23-acres that you see to
9 the right of Citi Field on that screen, certainly the
10 transformation of the entire area is the goal and the
11 vision of everybody involved. But for our part, the
12 23 acres that we are purchasing is a wonderful start;
13 needs to get cleaned up, needs to get to a position
14 where we can start looking at revitalization of the
15 entire area and even branching into downtown Flushing.
16 In order to do that however, one of the... the main
17 reason I believe that we were chosen by EDC in
18 partnership with Related is that because our affiliate
19 company controls the land in Citi Field; we have
20 another 75 acres across the street, we're able to look
21 at this area holistically. And in so doing we look at
22 the logistical difficulty in developing Willets Point,
23 its original vision right away in sections is a
24 difficult, if not impossible thing to do, which is why
25

1 this project is sitting the way it is right now. To
2 try to do meaningful retail development in that 23
3 acres, to try to do meaningful housing at this
4 particular point, market rate housing, it's just not
5 economically viable and I... and I believe that our
6 competition that made proposals for Willets Point,
7 along with us, would've been willing to do much more,
8 but the subsidy coming from the City would be
9 astronomical and not viable at this point. So we
10 asked ourselves, what can we do here to maintain the
11 vision and try to create an economic engine by which
12 we can still, over time, develop this entire area?
13 And we looked at everything.

15 One of our proposals actually included
16 trying to build a convention center early on; that, in
17 the end, would've... we concluded, as did the City,
18 would've required a much larger subsidy. So we
19 reached out to Related and with their retail
20 background; also their affordable housing background,
21 they are among the largest affordable housing
22 developers in the country; have developed all over the
23 City as well and have a wonderful track record; we've
24 known them for 30, 35 years, so between their
25 resources, our ability to avail the land west of Citi

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 72
2 Field, we embarked on this notion of creating a retail
3 destination to spur economic development in the area.
4 And while we're only technically requesting the
5 ability to park on an interim basis in Willets Point
6 so that we can... some of the Citi Field's parking
7 spaces, so that we can free up the acreage at Willets
8 West; again, why are we picking retail at this
9 particular point; why are we leading with retail?

10 You know, many of us who work and live in
11 Queens are saying, isn't there enough retail already;
12 aren't there enough shopping malls out there, et
13 cetera, et cetera and we've looked at in detail and
14 we've had... related it as well, studied this very, very
15 carefully. In basic terms, the number that I take
16 away is \$5 billion a year, \$5 billion a year of
17 shopping gets done outside the Borough of Queens from
18 Queens residents. So to me that's a very, and to us,
19 it is a very telling statistic that while there's a
20 lot of shopping and lot of different types of shopping
21 and retail experience in the Borough of Queens, our
22 residents are still going elsewhere in a very large
23 scale basis to be spending \$5 billion a year on Long
24 Island, up in Woodbury, in Manhattan, et cetera, et
25 cetera and we have a great deal of belief that if we

2 can tap into giving our residents more of what they
3 want or perhaps some things that they don't have that
4 they're going elsewhere for, that this can be a very,
5 very viable retail destination. The access is
6 certainly terrific; much better, as you can tell west
7 of Citi Field than in... than in... the... the first section
8 of Willets Point, the access is... is quite difficult
9 and again, we... we believe in it.

10 Next question is; what are you gonna do
11 in Willets Point now? First thing we're gonna do is
12 we're gonna... we are going to clean that site, we're
13 gonna clean our 23 acres; we have enrolled this
14 project into the New York State Brownfield Cleanup
15 Program, in conjunction with City Environmental
16 Commission, as well as the State Department of
17 Environmental Conservation; we will clean this to a
18 residential standard so that when, not if, but when
19 housing comes to Willets Point this land will already
20 be cleaned to that standard to allow for residential
21 use and schools, et cetera and park or... and... and... and
22 open spaces for parking.

23 We are working with our environmental
24 consultants to come up with a way that once we clean
25 the land... and if there are follow-up questions on how

1
2 are you planning on doing this exactly, we can provide
3 that information, what we know so far... we will be able
4 to do it in a fashion that while the rest of Willets
5 Point is still there, we will be able to maintain this
6 23 acres in a clean and healthy fashion.

7 Our goals for housing are unchanged, this
8 joint venture is fully committed to providing housing
9 units, 35 percent will be affordable and again, we are
10 going to maintain the vision and objectives of this
11 Plan from the outset.

12 You know, in summary, I can just tell you
13 that it's a large undertaking, it's something that
14 between our two firms, the synergy between us is
15 outstanding; we have a wonderful working relationship
16 with related the depth of their organization is second
17 to none in this City, as is their integrity and we're
18 happy to have them as our partner in the development
19 of this area.

20 With that I'll turn over to Jesse Masyr
21 and be here to answer any follow-up questions that you
22 have.

23 JESSE MASYR: Jesse Masyr, Fox Rothschild
24 land use counsel to the joint venture. In the spirit
25 of time I will try to be brief, Mr. Chairman and

2 members and try to just focus my brief remarks on the
3 technical aspects of what's before you and some of the
4 elements of the project in some detail that has not
5 yet been given.

6 As has been said by Richard and by EDC,
7 why we're here today is not a change in the underlying
8 zoning of the 2008 project that was approved, but
9 rather a modification, a Special Permit if you will,
10 only to allow for the parking to occur on Willets
11 Point's 23 acres and the reason we're here for that is
12 that when the 2008 approvals were done, it was not
13 contemplated that you could have unenclosed parking on
14 the Willets Special District. So technically, the
15 matter before you is to authorize unenclosed parking,
16 which is intended to be an interim step before the
17 completion of the Willets Point Special District's
18 goals. There is a text change that goes along with
19 that that authorizes this particular Special Permit;
20 those are the actions that are before you today.

21 Let me take you... mention... there's been...
22 some mention today about phasing; let me take you
23 quickly through the phasing of the project. As
24 Richard said, the very first thing that happens before
25 anything can happen is we clean the 23 acres; no

1 development will occur on Willets until that cleanup
2 is done satisfactory to both the City and State
3 agencies. Once that cleanup is done we will... we'll
4 start our first phase of development, which will
5 include a hotel and approximately 30,000 square feet
6 of retail to be built along 126th Street; we're trying
7 very much on our first phase to begin to change the
8 characterization of this neighborhood.

10 Second we'll... and immediately following
11 that will be the development on the Willets parking
12 lot, the Citi Field parking lot for the retail and
13 entertainment center; we will have cleaned up the
14 site, be able to relocate the parking substantially
15 that's there over to the Willets Point and allow us to
16 construct the million-square-foot retail and
17 entertainment center.

18 Then the next phase... there'll be 5 of
19 these all in; the next phase of this project
20 anticipates that the City of New York will construct
21 two ramps onto the Van Wyck Expressway, as was
22 contemplated in the 2008 approvals, unlocking the
23 ability to develop the remainder of the square footage
24 that was contemplated.

1 And then we would be able to then enter
2
3 into our last and fifth phase, which is development of
4 4.5 million square feet on Willets Point property.
5 That will include 2,500 units of housing of which 875
6 will be affordable; we will be building a school to
7 accommodate nearly a 1,000 students, 6 plus acres of
8 open space, additional hotel, office space and
9 additional local retail to support the new community
10 that's being built here.

11 In 2008 a number of commitments were
12 made; we are here to fulfill those commitments; there
13 will be a traffic mitigation fund funded by the joint
14 venture of nearly \$2 million, as per the 2008
15 agreement; we will commit nearly a \$1 million to
16 ensure that the MWBE Capacity Building Fund will allow
17 MWBE to be a real goal that is met in this project.
18 We will, of course, be building to lead standards
19 throughout our development. And the 1,000-seat school
20 that I referenced is significantly larger than was
21 anticipated in year 2008, but changes in formulas have
22 required that.

23 Going in above the 2008 commitments, we
24 have struggled with traffic in this project 'cause we
25 knew it's an important issue to the community. We

2 have developed a nearly 4,000-page Environmental
3 Impact Statement; we are joined today by individuals
4 from both AKRF and VHB, our technical experts, to
5 answer any questions. But importantly, we have taken
6 2008 results and we have bettered them and made less
7 than 2... we approved more than two-thirds of the
8 intersections in impacts that were identified in 2008
9 and have mitigated those. We have committed ourselves
10 to a major capital program funded by ourselves to do
11 substantial traffic mitigation to create those
12 improvements. And I mean as one example,
13 Mr. Chairman, in local intersection impact, we reduced
14 that by 74 percent from where it had been approved in
15 2008.

16 Finally, we'd like to say that we are
17 proud that we will be building out project, as we are
18 always committed, to building with union labor and we
19 will be creating 12,000 construction jobs, 7,000
20 permanent jobs of which more than 5... nearly 5,000 or
21 more will be at living wage or better.

22 If we have questions, we have our experts
23 here to answer them and we look forward to this
24 discussion.

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Great. Okay. Well
3 than you very much; we have a lot of questions; I'm
4 sure from the panel. I... I'm gonna get it started a
5 little bit. I wanna... let me... let me talk about this...
6 the great synergy between Related and Sterling. When
7 did you first discuss this type of proposal together?

8 RICHARD BROWN: I'm hazy on which month,
9 but it was... it was during the... during the RFP process.
10 We actually... we sent in... we had sent in an RFP with
11 Related; we had also sent another one in that had a
12 convention use with another developer and when it
13 became clear that our... our original plans were not...
14 not really applicable and viable from a financial
15 perspective, we started discussions with EDC on
16 perhaps a different way to look at it, 'cause the...
17 [interpose]

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: When would that have
19 happened, the discussions with EDC? Are we talking
20 after the RFP's were already out there; I mean this
21 was after the RFP's, I assume?

22 RICHARD BROWN: It was during the
23 process; they hadn't... they hadn't awarded anybody,
24 they hadn't dismissed any... they wanted to understand
25 more detail and... and... [interpose]

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: But the RFP's had a
3 deadline, so at one point they had to be in; you had
4 one in; Sterling Equities had their own stand-alone..

5 RICHARD BROWN: No, we had... [interpose]

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: 'Kay.

7 RICHARD BROWN: we had one in with
8 Related; we... we had... [interpose]

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: A se... two... you had
10 in or you just had the one? [crosstalk]

11 RICHARD BROWN: we had two in; we had one
12 in... [interpose]

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yeah.

14 RICHARD BROWN: with Related and we had
15 another in with TDC Development, Mike Meyer...
16 [interpose]

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right.

18 RICHARD BROWN: which had a convention...
19 [crosstalk]

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right. Right, in
21 Flush... [interpose]

22 RICHARD BROWN: So...

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: The one with... with
24 uh... [interpose]

25 RICHARD BROWN: it had a...

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: with Related; did
3 that include building on the... [interpose]

4 RICHARD BROWN: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Citi Field parking
6 lot? That was... [interpose]

7 RICHARD BROWN: Yeah, that was it.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: that was the deal,
9 something... [interpose]

10 RICHARD BROWN: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: including this, but
12 not exactly this?

13 RICHARD BROWN: Exactly. Yeah... yes,
14 including this, but not exactly this, but it had... it
15 contemplated building on our... on... on the Citi Field
16 parking lot. Yes...

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Alright.

18 RICHARD BROWN: this is part of the RFP.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: The... so the... the
20 RFP's that were... were put in, your RFP's; you were
21 the only one obviously who had this ability to build
22 on... on Citi Field parking lot, so you... as far as you
23 know, you're the only RFP that would obviously have
24 considered that; everyone else just focused on the...
25 the Willets Point part?

2 RICHARD BROWN: That... that... yeah, no one
3 else would have the right to... to build on Citi
4 Field's parking lot, that's correct. [interpose]

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right. But one of
6 your original RFP's is... the original RFP you had,
7 before you end up doing this deal, included building
8 on Citi Field parking lot, the original... [interpose]

9 RICHARD BROWN: Ac...

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: with Related?

11 RICHARD BROWN: Actually, yes; the one
12 with Related and the one with TDC both had...
13 [interpose]

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right.

15 RICHARD BROWN: both had development
16 contemplated on Citi Field's parking lot. [interpose]

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And different types
18 of development; I know there was some... [crosstalk]

19 RICHARD BROWN: Different types.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: there were newspaper
21 reports about a casino and other things... [interpose]

22 RICHARD BROWN: Correct. Correct.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Is that actually one
24 of the ideas that were out there?

2 RICHARD BROWN: That was one of the ideas
3 out there, along with a retail component and along
4 with a convention component, all on... all on Citi
5 Field property. Correct.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: The cleanup of the
7 acres in question...

8 RICHARD BROWN: Yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I don't know what
10 shape to call it anymore, you know; we used to call
11 it... [interpose]

12 RICHARD BROWN: In a rectangle.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: a triangle; I have
14 no idea with you call that shape that's left, but uh...

15 RICHARD BROWN: Funny lookin' rectangle.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. But... there
17 you go... what the heck shape is that? I don't know.
18 Anyway, how much is the cleanup of those 23 acres?
19 What is that... what do we estimate that's gonna cost?

20 RICHARD BROWN: We're estimating
21 somewhere between \$30 and \$40 million.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And who will paying
23 for that?

24 RICHARD BROWN: The... it will... the... the
25 contracting and funding will be from the joint

2 venture, but there is a funding agreement between EDC
3 and the joint venture whereby we'll be receiving just
4 under a \$100 million for certain eligible costs,
5 among which remediation is included for this
6 District. Money... this is a funding agreement... and
7 you can explain more, but that... that... the money must
8 be spent in the District on eligible costs. If there
9 is any money left over it would be used only for
10 municipal parking lot... parking garage, which would be
11 in the south field lot where Citi Field is, against...
12 for some of the displaced parking.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yeah. Make uh sure
14 to... [interpose]

15 GLENN GOLDSTEIN: We would also like... we...
16 sorry.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: say your name when
18 you speak.

19 GLENN GOLDSTEIN: Yeah, I'm sorry. Glenn
20 Goldstein from Related.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: 'Kay.

22 GLENN GOLDSTEIN: We would also just like
23 to add; there's very limited testing results
24 available for the District and we're taking all the
25 risk as to what those costs might be. So what Dick

1 referenced are... are, you know, very preliminary kind
2 of back of the envelope type estimates that are... that
3 we have because we don't have any detailed test
4 results, other than the fact that we know there is a
5 significant amount of pollution that's there.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Got it. So I'm... I'm
8 gonna let... I'm gonna let Council Member Ferreras ask
9 some questions.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: I'm gonna
11 actually... 'cause my questions are several pages...

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: 'Kay.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So I'm gonna
14 have our... our Chair Comrie ask his and then we'll go
15 into...

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, we'll do that
17 then; anything you say. I didn't know if you were in
18 a rush or not, you know, you nev... we never know.
19 Alright, Council Member Comrie, you can start off
20 with different questions.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Thank you. Good
22 morning panel. I'm gonna talk about the... can you go
23 into detail... will parking be free at the end of the
24 day; let me just ask that, 'cause you did uh preface
25 that to say that you talked about the idea of our

1
2 Queens residents spending millions of dollars
3 elsewhere and what will be done to... to try to
4 encourage them to spend more money within the
5 borough; clearly that's always a desired goal, but
6 one of the main reason that Queens residents shop
7 elsewhere is because of accessibility and
8 transportation and infrastructure. You referenced
9 42nd Street as a project, but the primary goals to...
10 that has ensured 42nd Street to be a... such a
11 destination is the infrastructure, ease of
12 transportation, the improvements in the triangle and
13 to make it more pedestrian friendly, less car
14 friendly, but that hopefully will be corrected in the
15 next administration, so to make sure that... that there
16 are more Queens residents that can actually get an
17 opportunity to move through that area. But you know,
18 infrastruct... the infrastructure and transportation I
19 think are gonna be key to whatever happens there at
20 Willets Point and can you detail for us today what
21 those transportation and infrastructure pieces will
22 be specifically vis a vis around the ramps that have
23 to be brought into the project?

24 JESSE MASYR: Jesse Masyr. I... I... I can
25 respond I think to some of those questions and I

1 think the EDC may wanna respond to the ramp question
2 directly Mr. Chair... uh Mr. Chairman.

3
4 Your first question was regarding parking
5 and whether or not there will be a fee for parking.
6 Obviously there currently is a fee for parking going
7 to a Met game and so the parking uh... [interpose]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Which a lot of
9 people are not happy about; just wanna put that on
10 the record too.

11 JESSE MASYR: I'm not aware of many
12 sporting events that don't have parking, but the
13 comment is noted, sir. That... that parking would
14 remain, we assume, at the same fee base as it is now.
15 Parking for the retail center will have a nominal fee
16 attached to it and one of the major reasons, and
17 we've had some experience with this in developing a
18 large retail center near another baseball stadium in
19 another borough, is that we... we wanna make sure that
20 the parking for the retail is for the retailers and
21 not as a means to park for the Citi Field event. And
22 so what we've done is we have a mini... you know, a
23 small fee for parking at the retail that escalates
24 significantly if it's clear that you're really just a
25

2 Citi Field parker the time you're there; it would
3 graduate geometrically. Uh... [interpose]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Well I would make
5 the suggestion that as they are doing it... a building
6 less than a quarter-mile away, where they do three
7 hours free parking for retail; that would ensure that
8 the people that are going there would just be
9 visiting the retail center. So I would... I would
10 strongly make that suggestion; that's been very
11 successful. In fact, they have the uh... four or five
12 retail, large retailers in that location. I'm sorry
13 to cut you off.

14 JESSE MASYR: We'll take your
15 consideration, uh your comments. I could have, if
16 you wish, members of the VHB staff, our traffic
17 engineer staff, to give you greater detail as to the
18 physical changes and to the infrastructure, but I can
19 talk about them briefly and if greater detail is
20 wanted.

21 What we have seen is a number of exits
22 currently... well particularly the Grand Central
23 Parkway, as it surrounds Citi Field, that are
24 substandard and need physical changes, not greater
25 takings of property, but just need to expand their

1 ramps and have a coherent traffic management plan; we
2 currently have one example we could show you in
3 greater detail; we have five different entry points
4 into an intersection that has way too much confusion
5 and not enough organization. We will undertake those
6 capital improvements to make those intersections
7 viable, working and reduce the amount of wait time
8 for Queens residents coming through there.
9

10 Additionally, we anticipate there will be
11 extended bus service coming to the retail center; we
12 believe like you do, Mr. Chairman, that New Yorkers
13 are not as car-bound in retail as sometimes the
14 Zoning Resolution thinks they are and we have found
15 in many experiences throughout the Borough in many
16 developments, if you're aware of, that there are
17 alternative ways of getting to locations rather... that
18 New Yorkers use rather than the conventional one
19 person in a car method. So we anticipate a lot of
20 alternative transportation; having said that however,
21 the process does require us, as you well know, to
22 provide for the reasonable worst case of traffic
23 coming here and that is why we have built an
24 additional 2,500 spaces to support the retail center,
25

2 to make sure it has no impact on the viability of
3 Mets customers coming to enjoy a Citi Field event.

4 As I said, if you want greater detail as
5 to the physical changes, we can have the experts come
6 up from VHB to testify.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I think for the
8 sake of the public that should happen, just to give
9 the sense of the idea of how you're going to increase
10 traffic density when there's already a high level of
11 traffic density coming into that area now, especially
12 this week when you have the USTA and other events and
13 how are you gonna show on high density days when you
14 have baseball games and other events at the park, how
15 that's gonna show that... better traffic flow and more
16 accessible traffic flow for people to even wanna shop
17 there, especially if there's going to be a... an
18 attraction for retail to try to get Queens residents
19 to want to shop there; there's... they they're going to
20 need to have a sense that they're gonna be able to
21 make it accessible. And if residents don't feel that
22 the area's accessible now, you know, what's gonna be
23 done... and this is to... to the City too, which is why
24 I'm focusing on the ramps; what is gonna be done to

1
2 make sure that that is a destination that people will
3 not have a predisposition not to visit?

4 JESSE MASYSR: Mr. Chairman, we couldn't
5 share your concern more, if possible. We don't wanna
6 build a retail center that people are not gonna enjoy
7 coming to. That is why we spent all the time we did
8 on analyzing the traffic, re-analyzing what had been
9 assumed in 2008; that is why our Environmental Impact
10 Statement is nearly 4,000 pages. That is also why we
11 are committed to making the mitigation changes that
12 we have identified prior to the opening of our retail
13 center.

14 The game day traffic you elude to is
15 handled on a one-time basis; the police come in and
16 for the 81 games that the Mets are home, not counting
17 post-season games, the New York Police Department
18 manage that; we have to worry about the remainder of
19 the year and that is why our traffic report went to
20 the extent that it did, to reduce the impacts that
21 were identified in 2008 by over two-thirds, reduce
22 the local intersection impact by nearly 75 percent
23 and more particularly, why we have committed
24 ourselves contractually to spend the dollars out of
25

2 our funds to make those mitigation physical changes
3 prior to the opening of the retail center.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. As a Met
5 fan, thank you for not laughing when he said post-
6 season games. Uhm, uh... [interpose]

7 JESSE MASYR: He's sitting right next to
8 me, you know.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Gotcha. Soon, soon,
10 soon. Uh the ulnar nerve notwithstanding. I... I had
11 one quick question before I get to Julissa Ferreras
12 about the housing... [interpose]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I didn't know I
14 was on a time... [interpose]

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Oh I'm sorry; I
16 thought you were done. I'm sorry, Leroy; I
17 apologize... [interpose]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I... I don't think
19 I got the answer that the community wanted to hear; I
20 asked for a detailed presentation; if you're just
21 gonna tell me that you believe it's 65 percent
22 reduction, that's fine; I just wanna put it out there
23 that, you know, unless you convince the community,
24 you're gonna have a white elephant there, because no
25 matter what retail put there, if you don't convince

2 the people through some way that they're actually
3 gonna access the location, no matter what's built
4 there, people are gonna have a predisposition not to
5 come. So... [interpose]

6 JESSE MASYSR: Mr. Chairman, I...

7 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: you know I... I... I
8 don't understand why I'm bein' cut off on time here
9 without bein' notified; maybe the Chairman has
10 another meeting at noon and he didn't tell me, but I...
11 you know, I think that for the sake of the public and
12 for all the other people here, we... you know I
13 understand what you're saying and I've been
14 personally briefed about it, but I think for the
15 public at large to understand what we're doin' about
16 the ramps and what we're doin' about making sure that
17 there's access, the public needs to get a more
18 detailed presentation. But if I'm being overruled,
19 that's fine.

20 JESSE MASYSR: Mr. Chairman, I apologize
21 if I sounded like I was trying to avoid your
22 question. I said that the experts are here and if
23 the... and if the... if the Committee would like a
24 presentation from our traffic experts in greater

2 detail, we are more than prepared to do that today,
3 now or at any other time if you wish.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And I'm... I'm sorry.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Well, it's
6 obviously your fault... [interpose]

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I mean I think it
9 should be done, but.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We... we will not be
11 voting today and we do have a little bit of time on
12 this item, so we'll be having lots of discussions;
13 that may be something we wanna bring in during the
14 discuss... [interpose]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: This is the only
16 public... are we havin' another public hearing on it?

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Well, we don't have
18 another public hearing scheduled, nor do I think we
19 have time to have one within the timeframe, but this
20 is obviously a major concern you're raising that
21 we're gonna be pursuing.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: And I wanted to
23 make the overall point that we need to get those
24 ramps in faster than the original timeframe and I'm
25 tryin' to lead to that point, but if we don't have a

1 chance to make their presentation, I think that for
2 the public, which we're having this hearing for, I
3 thought, would wanna know what those specific issues
4 are, unless we're gonna get testimony from other
5 public entities to reach to that point. I'm
6 concerned that whatever happens there, Queens
7 residents will want to visit and want to make sure
8 that it is a destination and, you know, most people
9 don't consciously know when Mets games days are and..
10 and while they will track the season, we wanna make
11 sure that whatever happens there will be attractive
12 for consumers to go visit and I'm wanting to get a
13 detail on that; I don't... I think that's fair to ask
14 the panel to do the presentation.

16 KYLE KIMBALL: Just one uh... [interpose]

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: State your name.

18 KYLE KIMBALL: Sorry. Kyle Kimball here
19 from EDC. We... we are happy to sit down and talk and
20 get into more detail about both the traffic
21 mitigation, as well as the ramps; other
22 infrastructure improvements; we have had two meetings
23 with the Community Board in May that went through a
24 lot of the detail; I think we're happy to do that and
25 uh... [interpose]

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Yeah, I
3 understand that, but when I've had... just to go
4 deeper, when I've had meetings with the... the
5 different entities to ask about left turns and to ask
6 about the timing and the ramps, I think that the
7 public needs to know what the City is doing to try to
8 make that happen. You know, even if you wanna go
9 deeper, you know, I think there needs to be more
10 mitigation to allow for left turns coming from the
11 west in Queens into the site; there needs to be more
12 done along Roosevelt Avenue to either widen the
13 street or deepen the street; you know, the question
14 of whether or not we do another exit from the J
15 Train; I mean those are the things that the public
16 have been asking me independently; I think the public
17 wants to hear what the City's point of view and what
18 the developer's point of view is and if we don't do
19 it today, then this... this gets... this doesn't get
20 aired out publicly and... and you know, that... that...
21 that's what I thought we were here for; if not, I can
22 leave and go back to Queens, 'cause I have other
23 things to do as well over time, uh 'cause we were
24 supposed to have a public hearing, unless somebody...
25 uh I didn't get the memo.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Do you wanna
3 elaborate on what you're doing as far as this goes?

4 KYLE KIMBALL: Sure. So I can... well I
5 can talk about the ramps. So we are... part of the
6 timeline that we've put forward on the ramps is that
7 we have gotten Federal... an important Federal approval
8 on the ramps, but similar to my refrain that I said
9 that you need... we need to do this in the right way;
10 we are putting forth to a timeline on the ramps;
11 nothing is prohibiting Queens Development Group from
12 building the ramps earlier with the City capital, I
13 think to the extent that it's... it's proven to be
14 necessary, but the idea that the ramps have to be
15 done in the right way; even though we do have one
16 Federal approval, there is a number of different
17 approvals that have to happen; the ramps still need
18 to be designed, so in many ways, Council Member
19 Comrie, some of the details I think you're looking
20 for in terms of the... at least on the ramps and the
21 traffic flows, will be part of the design process,
22 which is sort of the next phase, so we have committed
23 to the concept of ramps and that the City will build
24 the ramps, but the finer points of how they will be
25 designed, how they will be constructed; how roadways

2 will be impacted is still be determined; it's sort
3 of... it's sort of premature to have those kind of
4 details, 'cause we just don't have them yet
5 specifically on the ramps. So I hope that answers
6 your question.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Do you get a
8 estimate on the funding for the ramps when the City
9 puts capital money aside for the ramps, like they've
10 done with other major projects that they've wanted
11 and if so, how much?

12 KYLE KIMBALL: Sure. Turn it to Robert.

13 ROB GOLDRICH: Hi, Rob Goldrich from the
14 Mayor's office. Right now we have a couple million
15 dollars in the budget for preliminary design of the
16 ramps; we are in discussions, we being City Hall, EDC
17 and OMB, discussions about how to fund the ramps in
18 the budget; I think everyone here would like to see
19 some funds shown there.

20 Also, one point I wanna make about the
21 ramps in terms of their importance, you know the full
22 development of Willets Point, the whole 62 acres,
23 will not happen unless the ramps are built and
24 whatever the outcome is of what we're able to show on
25 the budge or not, any administration would wanna see

2 the ramps built in order to realize the tax revenues
3 and the tax benefits; the job creation that would
4 result from the Willets Point development. So we're
5 in discussions about how we're gonna show the money
6 in the budget right now, but it is the commitment of
7 the City to get these ramps done and it's the incent...
8 the City has a great incentive to see that the ramps
9 will be built.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Well... and... and...
11 you know, we put \$25 million set aside for Culture
12 Shed, we put millions of dollars set aside for the
13 Cornell, Roosevelt Field, Island location; I think
14 there should be some major capital commitment towards
15 this project as well. And I'm airing this out
16 because I don't think everything should be just on
17 Council Member Ferreras, especially in her delicate
18 condition right now; she may... you know, her... the
19 child may decide to come out tomorrow and then she...
20 how is all the... when are all these negotiations gonna
21 happen? And it's really unfair to put this burden
22 singly on her; this is why we're havin' a public
23 hearing, so I'm tryin' to help my colleague, you
24 know, to do as much negotiation as possible to make
25 sure that these discussions are aired publicly so

2 that she doesn't have to worry about this and
3 increase her stress level, 'cause we want the young
4 man to come out stress-free, you know and... and to
5 have a wonderful life, so you know I'm... [interpose]

6 ROB GOLDRICH: This is Rob Goldrich from
7 the Mayor's office. We also wanna see that baby born
8 stress-free... [crosstalk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Uhm-hm, so...

10 ROB GOLDRICH: but I just wanna say that
11 it's important that we... that we've heard your
12 comments today and that we will take what we've heard
13 from you and from other Council Members into our
14 discussions and try to wrap this up as quickly as
15 possible.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Well, I would
17 hope that it is done and that there is some major
18 money set aside for the ramps or committed to set
19 aside for the ramps, 'cause again, with... you know, as
20 this administration has been forward thinking and
21 getting things done that are important, then Willets
22 Point is a... one of your singular points of light that
23 you wanna point to, you know, 10, 15 years from now;
24 I think it's important that that money is set aside.
25 Just to move onto another topic then if we're gonna

2 talk about... or since we're not obviously having a
3 detailed presentation for the public on it, will that
4 be... then let me ask, will there be a online slide
5 presentation for people to look at or will you go
6 back to the Community Board, 'cause my understanding
7 the timeline for this is that... that by the 13th we
8 have to vote this out? So... so when is it? Oh okay.
9 Well then good, so then will you be able to go back
10 to the Community Boards and give them an information
11 on the... the mitigation plan that you've come up with
12 now, within this month...? [crosstalk]

13 JESSE MASYSR: Mr. Chair... Mr. Chairman, we
14 spend over four hours at Community Board 7 giving a
15 detailed transportation presentation and they...
16 [interpose]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: And will that
18 presentation then can be put online so that anybody
19 could look at and comment...? [crosstalk]

20 JESSE MASYSR: We... We... yes and... and... and
21 plus all of those details are already online in the
22 Environmental Impact Statement.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay.

24 JESSE MASYSR: This has all been vetted
25 through Department of Transportation of the City of

1
2 New York, it has been shown to the Community Board
3 and we are also committed to quarterly report back to
4 Community Board 7 with regard to transportation
5 issues; we have also committed ourselves to... in our
6 post-opening studies, to share those studies,
7 methodologies before we even go into field and do
8 them with the Community Board to get comment to make
9 sure we're doing it right, don't miss anything; this
10 has been a matter of great time and detail and one
11 that we are not avoiding and I again apologize if you
12 interpreted my statements to mean that. Uh, uh...
13 [interpose]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: No, no; I didn't
15 interpret it that way.

16 JESSE MASYSR: We... we spent all of May...
17 [interpose]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Uhm-hm.

19 JESSE MASYSR: if you will, on a weekly
20 basis doing traffic presentations to Community Board
21 7; we don't shy from it, it's not the most exciting
22 show, but it's one that's thorough.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Right. Well I
24 didn't interpret that you haven't been trying to do
25 outreach, I just wanna make sure that the general

2 public gets the chance to see it and where can they
3 look at if they wanted to see the website; is it
4 just... is there... what's the website that people can
5 actually... [interpose]

6 JESSE MASYSR: I would assume you... you
7 could... you... you can see these images and the
8 presentation on the EDC website, as well as the
9 Environmental Impact Statement is available
10 similarly, I believe on the EDC website, as well as
11 the Mayor's Office of Environmental Information...
12 [crosstalk]

13 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: That's correct.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay. Alright,
15 great.

16 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: And I... I... could I just
17 add one more point to add to... [interpose]

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Who... and who are
19 you?

20 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Tom McKnight, EDC. In
21 addition to having gone through all of the
22 mitigations with the Community Board, as we sat at a
23 couple meetings, something that stemmed from the 2008
24 approval at the Community Board level was wanting to
25 make sure that we were being responsible in the long-

1 term, acknowledging that this a project that will
2 take some years to implement and the Community Board
3 felt it was important to establish a fund to allow us
4 to make investments in the future that we might not
5 be able to foresee today and that's the traffic and
6 infrastructure fund that the JV referenced earlier,
7 so there's about \$1.8 million set aside for future
8 analysis and improvements, should they be warranted.

9
10 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay. Well is...
11 just to try to sum up quickly, would the... would any
12 of those improvements be a second ramp from the 7
13 train to even access either the... closer to the East
14 End area where you're plannin' to put the hotel and
15 housing or the West End area where you're going to
16 put the mall; is there additional exits from the 7
17 train plan, in the long-term plan?

18 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: The... I think that we
19 speak more specifically on the EIS, but more broadly,
20 in terms of what sort of investments could be made
21 from that fund, I think we remain flexible, as the JV
22 does in terms of how that investment is made; the
23 intention is really to see how the plan develops and
24 if there are issues that arise in the future the fund
25 is there to answer that.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: \$1.9 million is
3 not enough to do that; is there a way to establish a
4 predicate to make that happen or is there an idea or
5 plan to allow for that to happen if the need develops
6 itself for exits from either one?

7 RICHARD BROWN: This is Richard Brown
8 from Sterling. We have had discussions with the MTA
9 regarding the Willets Point Station on and off since
10 1980, but certainly more recently when we completed
11 Citi Field they were... and... and we've had some
12 preliminary discussions with them on Willets Point;
13 they, over the years have been very responsible to
14 meeting certain needs that we have; during
15 construction of Citi Field, where we lost a couple
16 thousand spaces for two full seasons while we were
17 simultaneously building Citi Field and playing
18 baseball, pretty good baseball in Shea Stadium as I
19 recall, they responded very well, providing more
20 frequent trains, longer trains, et cetera and with
21 some marketing, et cetera we ended up at the peak
22 having about 65 percent of our fans come to the game
23 using mass transit, LA... Long Island Railroad is also
24 very responsive.

1 We have talked to them about this
2
3 project; obviously the Willets Point Station needs a
4 lot of love, it needs... it needs a lot more than just
5 a paint job and things. The reality with the MTA, as
6 you know, is they've got a lot of fish to fry and the
7 Willets Point Station, unfortunately, except for
8 certain periods of the year, this being one of them,
9 it's a relatively low-volume station for them and
10 with all the infrastructure issues that they have,
11 they are not inclined to come along and make this the
12 station that we certainly want it to be. Then enter
13 Willets Point, yes, they are certainly receptive;
14 they would love nothing more than to encourage
15 ridership, both to the retail destination and
16 ultimately east of Citi Field, into Willets Point.
17 We've had very good discussions and meaningful ones
18 with them, but what you do need to understand is,
19 they prioritize things and we think they'll be there
20 for us; you know we have no reason not to believe
21 that, but with the first construction of any
22 meaningful real estate here being three, four years
23 away after we close on the land, clean up... clean up
24 the environmental hazards, then start construction of
25 the hotel and retail from of as many... [interpose]

2 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: So in other
3 words, you're confident that whatever happens there...
4 [crosstalk]

5 RICHARD BROWN: I think...

6 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: you can continue
7 to work with the MTA as you show increase...
8 [interpose]

9 RICHARD BROWN: I do. I do, but I can't
10 say I have a concrete commitment, 'cause it's... it's
11 years off and they've got budgets to balance.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay. Alright,
13 thank you. Just in the sake of time I'll ask two
14 questions. Where is the... has the school been sited,
15 that you propose, a 1,000-person school?

16 JESSE MASYSR: Yes, in the two... in the... in
17 Phase 1b or the buildout at Willets, yes we have... we
18 can... I don't think we have a slide for that right; we
19 can give it to you though, but it has been
20 identified. [interpose]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay. And it's
22 in the... is it in the front part of the lot or the
23 back part of the lot or? Okay.

24 JESSE MASYSR: Away from the street.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Great. Thank
3 you. And then, just the... my... my final question, the...
4 the winter space, the temporary parking space and
5 the... I guess... what did you call it, temporary
6 recreation space; is there a plan to be done to allow
7 that space to be transferable to other locations
8 within the Council Member's District after that space
9 is completed as its usage? In other words...
10 [interpose]

11 JESSE MASYSR: We have not contemplated
12 that, Mr. Chairman.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Well, can I make
14 a suggested that... that whatever's built there can be
15 transferable to maybe create play streets within the
16 Council Member's District, because if that's the
17 focus of the city, to try to give people recreational
18 space, it would be terrible if it was only temporary.
19 So if there's a possible to make some place...
20 [crosstalk]

21 JESSE MASYSR: We... we can certainly look
22 into the idea of reusing any of the physical aspects
23 of the interim space.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Right. 'Cause if
25 you're talking about creating volleyball courts, that

2 could be transferable, even tennis courts or... you
3 know, I'm not sure; I don't even remember what else
4 was planned for that area, but you know if the idea
5 was to give people more recreational opportunities,
6 to make it temporary and take it away would be I
7 think something that we could work on, especially
8 with the ability to construct durable materials or
9 transferable materials, so I would strongly suggest
10 that.

11 JESSE MASYSR: We hear your suggestion.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: And again, in the
13 interest of time I won't ask anymore questions now,
14 but I just wanna... to try to support the Council
15 Member because she has a lot of decisions to make and
16 I want her life to be as stress-free as possible; I'm
17 willing to, as she knows, do whatever I can to assist
18 her in making sure that this project happens; I wanna
19 see a project that everyone can feel comfortable with
20 at the end of the day; I'm not gonna bring up the
21 affordable housing piece; I'll wait to hear from the
22 community on that.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Do you know Lamaze?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I do not.

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Alright.
3 Just tryin' to keep the list properly; way you do.
4 I... I... I'm gonna... [crosstalk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Anything...
6 anything other than directly birthing.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I'm gonna call on
8 Council Member Ferreras, 'cause she does have a long
9 list and I know they're important questions and then
10 I may jump in along the way on points if there's
11 something I wanna just follow up on. Okay, great,
12 Council Member Ferreras.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Thank you,
14 Chair... Chairs. So clearly we have a lot of issues
15 over at Willets Point or different topics that we're
16 gonna address today and I'm tryin' to divide all the
17 questions by topics, not that one is more important
18 than the other, but just kind of to be able to
19 address this.

20 And I know we talked about green space
21 and the importance of that and while we consider
22 other things that we can do and I appreciate Council
23 Member Comrie bringing up the play streets; tennis
24 courts we don't need; I just wanna put that on the
25 record; we should be using the ones we have at the

2 USTA, if anybody remembers that battle a couple of
3 weeks ago.

4 But I wanted to talk specifically about
5 the lease rent and revenue pace of this project. I
6 know that we had discussed at some time the \$400
7 million direct contribu... investment that the City had
8 in purchasing the land; where are we with that;
9 what's the status; how much have we spent; what's
10 left? Do we... are we looking... are you looking for
11 more and how much of the... of this project do... does
12 the City currently own?

13 KYLE KIMBALL: Sure. Of the \$396... \$397
14 million, about 173 of that has been used or will be
15 used on property acquisition; we own about 95 percent
16 of the site, there are a handful of property owners
17 that we are in still in negotiations with, so I don't
18 wanna necessarily indicate to them how much we have
19 left, but that's essentially our budget to... to do
20 that. [interpose]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So your handful
22 is not my handful, so what number is that?

23 KYLE KIMBALL: A handful; less than a
24 handful.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: I'm sorry?

2 KYLE KIMBALL: Less than a handful.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Less than a... I
4 don't... what's a handful is what I'm trying; to get
5 at?

6 KYLE KIMBALL: Uh less... less than...
7 [crosstalk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: We have
9 different hands.

10 KYLE KIMBALL: we both have five fingers;
11 less... and less than the number you can count on our...
12 [interpose]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Less than five?

14 KYLE KIMBALL: respective hands. Yes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Less than five
16 property owners?

17 KYLE KIMBALL: Correct.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. Thank
19 you.

20 KYLE KIMBALL: And then the rest of that
21 is for off... the rest of the \$396 is off-site
22 infrastructure and we've committed about \$235 million
23 of that 396 and then we will of course... we're doing
24 the relocation package, which is about \$12 million of
25 that.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So in 2008...
3 actually on October 17th of 2008 the goal stated by
4 Lieber was to get the City taxpayer money back
5 through the sale of the properties; is that still a
6 formula that's being used; can you clarify that
7 point?

8 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: I think what we've
9 learned through the RFP process is uh... [interpose]

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: That's Tom McKnight.

11 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Sorry, Tom McKnight,
12 EDC; I apologize Chair. What we learned through the
13 RFP process is that the development here will be
14 costly and will require a long-term sustained
15 commitment and will require investment from the City.
16 So the way the capital funds are allocated today is
17 that a portion of it is for acquisition, a portion of
18 it's for infrastructure and a portion of it is for...
19 to support the JV's development. We don't anticipate
20 reimbursement of the purchase price, although there
21 is some participation in the lease with the JV for
22 the Citi Field portion.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay, so just
24 for clarity, there's... out of the \$400 million... I
25 think you corrected the numbers... [interpose]

2 KYLE KIMBALL: \$397 million.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: 3...

4 KYLE KIMBALL: \$397 million.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: \$397 million;

6 they were broken down for purchase, which is \$173

7 million? Correct?

8 KYLE KIMBALL: That's right.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Then is this
10 where... and can you break it down further for me?

11 KYLE KIMBALL: Sure. So \$173 million for
12 property acquisition, \$26 million for off-site
13 infrastructure, \$4 million for what we're calling...
14 what we call technical services and then another
15 \$12.5 for relocation assistance and then, I guess the
16 rest goes to... to the JV for the... for the... for
17 mediation, a portion of that.

18 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: I'll just... just clarify
19 that. What that represents is expenditures to date
20 from the \$397 million.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. So is
22 there any additional monies that you're expecting
23 that this project will cost moving forward? Or... or
24 what are the variables of things that you don't know?

25

2 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: In terms of cost, I
3 think the... the... the cost of the ramps, as the
4 Councilman said, would be addition to the 397 and
5 just for clarity, the 3.5 that we allocated for the
6 supplemental relocation benefits is in addition to
7 the 397; that's not within it.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So the 3.5 is
9 not in the 12.5 relocation?

10 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Oh it is; it... it's...
11 we're conflating \$9 million, which is the base
12 relocation amount that is a portion of the \$397
13 million, the 3.5 that we recently allocated is in
14 addition to the 397. In terms of future... is that...
15 isn't that clear?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: No, uh you...
17 you... [interpose]

18 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Sorry.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Rewind.
20 There's \$3 million that was originally part of the
21 2008 deal for 60 acres or whatever the total acres
22 were; we were in conversations, some loud; we brought
23 it down to... for those \$3 million to be for the 22
24 acres, so we got that focus. [interpose]

25 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Yes.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: We found
3 additional monies, \$3.5 million; that adds up, to me,
4 as \$6.5 million. So can you help me get clarity,
5 'cause you're saying 12.5?

6 ROB GOLDRICH: Okay. I uh... I'm Rob
7 Goldrich from the Mayor's office; I think I can
8 answer this. The \$3 million that was discussed back
9 in 2008 was for the entire 62 acres.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Right.

11 ROB GOLDRICH: Before we had discussions
12 with you about any incremental money we allocated
13 well more than that, which is \$9 million for the 23
14 acres, the... the... the... the... [interpose]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: The new...

16 ROB GOLDRICH: the... the current Phase
17 1A/1B of... of Willets Point... [interpose]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay.

19 ROB GOLDRICH: So that \$9 million... that
20 \$1 million... \$3 million was gonna be for the whole 62
21 acres turned into \$9 million for the 23 acres.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Right.

23 ROB GOLDRICH: That is all part of the
24 \$397 million that President Kimball just described.
25 We recently worked with you and your office to find

2 additional funds, \$3.5 million, which would also go
3 to eligible businesses in the 23 acres; that \$3.5
4 million is on top of the \$397 million... [interpose]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay.

6 ROB GOLDRICH: So actually, that's new
7 funds; that's over and above the \$397 million budget
8 which we've been talking about for the last few
9 years.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So this is
11 technically now a \$400.5 million... [interpose]

12 ROB GOLDRICH: Correct.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: if we look at
14 this whole project? Okay.

15 ROB GOLDRICH: Right.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: That's where I
17 was getting my math confused. Thank you. And we're
18 still in negotiations, because we're still having
19 conversations about what, you know the... the moving
20 costs and then I have some other conversations about
21 relocation. But since we had mentioned the ramps in
22 earlier conversations, I wanted to focus in on this.
23 Where are we currently with the capital allocation
24 for the ramps?

2 ROB GOLDRICH: Okay, I'm not sure of the
3 exact number; I think it's somewhere between \$1 and
4 \$2 million that is reflected in the budget; I'm not
5 sure which year it's reflected in; we can get the
6 details, maybe EDC has that, but that's for
7 preliminary design of the ramps.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Right. I mean
9 with all due respect, that's to buy paper and pens,
10 right?

11 ROB GOLDRICH: So... so that's the... those
12 are the funds that are currently in.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Right.

14 ROB GOLDRICH: As a result of what we've
15 learned from you, your office and Council Member
16 Comrie and other... other speakers' office as well, we
17 are in dis... we believe the... the full design budget is
18 probably somewhere between \$8 and 10 million for the
19 ramps. So we have somewhere between \$1 and \$2
20 million... Oh sorry, there's \$3.6 million reflected
21 already, I apologize, \$3.6 million reflected already
22 in the budget, not somewhere between \$1 and \$2
23 million. So \$3.6 million instead of somewhere
24 between the \$1 and \$2 million. We've learned that
25 the full design for the budget... full design for the

2 ramps would cost somewhere \$8 and 10 million, so
3 that's \$3.6 million of a total that would be needed
4 of \$8 to 10 million.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So in your
6 experience, if we had \$10 million right now to design
7 the ramps, would that bring the ramp, actual building
8 of the ramps to a closer date than 2025?

9 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: I... I think the short
10 answer is, not exactly. We've actually done... working
11 with out capi... [interpose]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Well give me
13 the long answer McKnight.

14 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Uh yeah. Uh yeah. I
15 think... we've actually begun to look at a design and
16 permitting and approval process for the ramps with
17 our capital division, whose done an enormous amount
18 of infrastructure work around the City and they
19 believe given the complexity; given the multiple
20 jurisdiction, both at the State and the Federal
21 level; the approvals that we'll still need to get in
22 terms of permitting for the ramp, that it will take a
23 number of years and it may seem like a long time, but
24 for a project of this scale it wouldn't be... it

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 120
2 wouldn't be unusual for it to take the 8 years we
3 projected.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Well I would
5 think that with all the experience that EDC has
6 developing throughout our city, and we've been
7 talking about this project since 2008, that talking
8 about a design of the ramps in 2013, why wouldn't we
9 be discussing this sooner? If there was an approval
10 in 2008, why wasn't the design of the ramps rolled
11 out in 2008?

12 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Well we... we actually
13 have been spending that time getting the initial
14 approval of the ramp, which is AMR, the Access
15 Modification Report and Environmental Review
16 associated with the ramps; it has been a multi-year
17 endeavor; we completed that process, that initial
18 step in 2012; it was a highly complex regional
19 traffic analysis that we had to complete and we did
20 successfully, but I think it's emblematic of the
21 level of work that's required for a piece of
22 infrastructure like this.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So even if we
24 allocated more funding for the ramps; even if we move
25 forward and expedite design, there... you can... there is

1 nothing that as... from the administration's
2 perspective, as EDC, the stewards to our tax dollars,
3 to be able to make these ramps happen, because I know
4 you wanna build affordable housing; I know that's
5 your top priority and I know you wanna get people to
6 the mall so that they can shop; there is absolutely
7 nothing that we can do to get those ramps on line?

9 KYLE KIMBALL: I don't think there... we're
10 saying that there's absolutely nothing we can do; I
11 think part of it is we're here representing what we
12 believe to be realistic, so I think what we're trying
13 to do here is be conservative in how long these
14 things take and to make sure that we are not over-
15 promising and under delivering. And second of all, I
16 think this an effort in place-making and so, like I
17 said in the beginning, we wanna make sure it's done
18 right and we're not promising to you that something...
19 having said that, when this mall is built and when
20 the... when the site is remediated and the mall is
21 built, there'll be a tremendous amount of pressure on
22 the City and the developers to, I think get these
23 ramps done, because it will be a successful place
24 that we have created and so what we're saying today
25 may be very different than what we might say in the

2 future in that right now we're doing it in a vacuum,
3 they're not designed; there's only a 10-year capital
4 plan; this would be in the very last year of the
5 capital plan, so I think right now we're trying to be
6 conservative and... and... and... and to gender some trust
7 with the Council that we are being realistic in
8 trying to get this proposal forward.

9 So we're not saying there's absolutely
10 nothing we can do, but I think we would be foolish to
11 promise something that's incredibly aggressive when
12 we know that these things take a long time.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: And I
14 appreciate that; I'm just saying that I don't think
15 that we have to wait for a mall to be on line for you
16 to feel the pressure for the ramps; that's what I'm
17 saying.

18 KYLE KIMBALL: Sure.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: I'm saying
20 that, you know this should look like pressure to you
21 and that's where we have a problem.

22 KYLE KIMBALL: Sorry; I didn't mean to
23 say that there's not pressure now, but because we
24 have... we have just a... we... we just understand how long
25 these things take in terms of the design, giving what

2 we just went through with the AMR's and so I didn't
3 mean to say that there's not pressure now.

4 [crosstalk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Well Citi Field
6 was rebuilt in a season, right? So we... we have
7 things that can happen very quickly and I understand
8 that we need permitting and I understand that we need
9 things; just seems to me that we really need to, in
10 these next couple'a days, really look at all the
11 options that we have, because I have a belief that
12 we're able to at least make a plan that makes more
13 sense than just saying 2025 we're gonna do the ramps,
14 we don't really know how much they're gonna cost and
15 we don't know when they're gonna come on line. I
16 don't think that is satisfactory to me, to my
17 colleagues; to the community and that is the issue.
18 And you've put the linchpin on this, you've done it.
19 You said we can't do housing until we get the ramps.
20 So you know you can't now say well, we don't know, we
21 don't... you know, we're kind of analyzing it; I don't
22 think it's fair to any of us at this point.

23 KYLE KIMBALL: Sure; just to be clear,
24 I'm not saying that we're... that we're... we don't know.
25 What I'm saying is that we know... what we... based on

2 what we do know, right now, based on our experience
3 doing projects, based on the idea that this would be...
4 we're not gonna close the Van Wyck, we're not gonna
5 close the Grand Central, so this is gonna be done on
6 active roadways and then there's... and... and also,
7 knowing how long the process that we just undertook,
8 how long that took and how complex that was... so I'm
9 not saying we're... none of us are saying we don't
10 know; what we're saying is actually, we do know it is
11 this date and we'd be... we are not... what we don't know
12 is how to accelerate it in a way that's realistic;
13 that's all that I'm saying.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So with this
15 first approval you got, wouldn't that help expedite
16 some things? 'Cause I know the first approval is
17 difficult because you have to prove that this makes
18 sense, but if you got one approval I would think that
19 that helps the next approval.

20 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: It certainly does and I
21 guess just to be clear that, you know, we shouldn't
22 convey that we're at the beginning of a process...
23 [interpose]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Right.

2 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: we certainly don't mean
3 to convey that; we've been... the ramps have been a
4 fundamental part of the Plan since it was originally
5 envisioned; it has always been a critical part of the
6 project because we recognize that it's necessary for
7 affordable housing, but to fulfill the full project.
8 So I certainly don't wanna con... to convey that, so we
9 crossed a major milestone; it's just with a project
10 of this sort where there's Federal and State review,
11 we are in a very active highway; there's many steps
12 and it takes time.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: And if I could
14 just hear from the developer's perspective; once
15 these ramps are on line, would you have any
16 challenges to building the affordable housing; are
17 you ready to build the affordable housing?

18 JESSE MASYR: We're... we're... we're fully
19 committed to building mixed-use housing development
20 project that includes both market rate and
21 affordable, yes. Uh... [interpose]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So how long
23 after the ramps come on line do you... are you able to
24 bring... [interpose]

1
2 JESSE MASYSR: We believe we will commence
3 construction within a year of the ramps' completion
4 and that we will build out our entire 4.5 million
5 square feet in the Willets Point District in a period
6 of 4 years.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. We're
8 gonna circle back to the traffic plan and this came
9 up in the conversations that I had with the
10 developer, so it shouldn't be a surprise, but I know
11 that in the... in the traffic mitigation study there's
12 one part of the District that's left out and it just
13 kinda got... I guess 'cause of the circle that you put
14 on the... on... you know, around... I guess it's measured
15 by miles, but there's a huge expansion at LaGuardia
16 Airport, huge; they're gonna redo the whole airport
17 and it's less... a little bit over a quarter-of-a-mile
18 away from this project, then we have the expansion of
19 the USTA. There's a lot of construction and major
20 roadways that affect my community and I know that
21 this wasn't necessarily taken into consideration,
22 perhaps because of the study, but is there any way
23 that you can help mitigate the impact that LaGuardia
24 Airport and the USTA have on... with the layering on of
25

1
2 Willets Point? And you're from Queens; you should
3 know.

4 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: I am indeed. I guess
5 to... I guess I... I wouldn't necessarily agree with
6 framing it as the layering on of Willets Point; they...
7 I think the collective projects do... you know, will
8 result in significant development in the area. We've
9 gotten some briefings on the Port Authority's plan
10 for LaGuardia and I think the premise behind their
11 planning is to improve the way people get to and
12 depart from the airport; that the... the improvements,
13 which are very significant are really aimed at
14 enhancing local and highway access to the project, as
15 is the work that we're doing here. [interpose]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Right and I get
17 that; I think at the end of the road things may be
18 better, but in the interim people live here, so in
19 the first 10 years or however long... I don't remember;
20 I... I saw the Port Authority presentation; I don't
21 know how long their construction's gonna be, but I
22 know they're moving parking lots, bringing up
23 terminals...

24 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Uhm-hm.
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: bringing them
3 closer to the Grand Central, the very Grand Central
4 that gives an exit to Willets Point, the very Grand
5 Central that gets people to the game, the very Grand
6 Central that gets... same exit, actually, that gets
7 people to the tennis match.

8 ROB GOLDRICH: This is Rob Goldrich from
9 the Mayor's office, I think I hear what you're saying
10 is just the... the con... the construction process for
11 LaGuardia expansion, for the USTA, for Willets Point
12 and Willets West. The... we've already had meetings
13 about the coordination of the construction between
14 the USTA and Willets Point and with the joint
15 venture; there's a... there's a... there's a format
16 already that's been set up, which takes place during
17 the USTA, right before the USTA that... where the
18 Police and Parks have led a coordination effort
19 between what goes on at Citi Field and what goes on
20 at the USTA; it was very active during the
21 construction of Citi Field and had to coordinate the
22 construction of Citi Field with what was going on at
23 the USTA; that committee is gonna grow and that
24 format's gonna grow to... to... to work with this future
25 development, the USTA's development, so they had that

1 coordination; what I've heard from you today is we..
2
3 we didn't talk about the LaGuardia expansion, but
4 we'll reach out to the Port Authority and we'll work
5 to incorporate them into this committee so that all
6 projects have coordination in terms of their
7 construction. And as part of the coordination as
8 well; it's about communication, so it's about
9 communication among all the entities so they all know
10 what each is doing so they're as coordinated as
11 possible, but the other part is communication, so
12 communication back to the community as to what's
13 going on with the construction efforts. That's what
14 we discussed about... in terms of the USTA and Willets
15 Point; we'll work with the Port Authority to bring
16 them into that discussion so that we have one effort.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Yeah. And I
18 think that, you know Communities Boards 3 and 4 and 7
19 need to be added to this, 'cause I know that this is
20 predominantly Community Board 7's jurisdiction; 3 and
21 4 bear a lot of the brunt of the impact, so in these
22 conversation, especially when it comes to traffic
23 mitigation, preconstruction, during construction and
24 hopefully in post-construction, we won't see the... you
25 know, the recommendations you have made have

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 130
2 magically worked; I don't think that necessarily
3 always happens; with all due respect to the
4 developers, I'm sure you have very great
5 professionals looking at the mitigation, but the
6 reality is that we have professionals at DOT too and
7 we still have issues in the District.

8 Just for the record, I think there are
9 corners specifically in my District that need to be
10 looked at, which Northern Boulevard and 114th Street,
11 Astoria Boulevard and 114th Street and 111th Street,
12 Roosevelt Avenue and 114th Street and other
13 intersections that might not be a problem now that
14 may be a problem in the future so I know that the 1.9
15 million that was mentioned to Chair Comrie will help
16 mitigate that. I think we're gonna find down the
17 road that that just might not be enough, so we need
18 to talk about that.

19 Where would you be sighting your
20 construction, the actual staging of construction?

21 RICHARD BROWN: The uh... in both cases,
22 both in the... the District side as well as Willets
23 West we would not need to utilize any... any area other
24 than our own acreage in order to meet the needs of
25 this project from a logistics point of view.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So you'll be in
3 with... within your...

4 RICHARD BROWN: Within our leased
5 premises or within the... the... the... within the 23
6 acres, if we're talking about Willets... the Willets
7 Point District, yes.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. In 2008
9 Lieber had testified that he would be working with
10 Parks and DOT to create bike lane and pedestrian
11 connections to the surrounding neighborhood; where
12 are your conversations with Parks currently? I know
13 that although I have thousands of bikes in my
14 neighborhood, we have no bike lanes, yet in Brooklyn
15 they're everywhere. So how do we connect... and I...
16 and... and I relate this to traffic because we're
17 trying to find every way other than people driving to
18 get to this new space, but it seems that this has not
19 been part of... and this is actually a conversation
20 that I had with a lot of my... my green people.

21 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: So in... for '08 we
22 developed a plan for pedestrian and bike access from
23 Corona and from Flushing; the two projects that DOT's
24 advancing is Northern Boulevard bike access to
25 Northern Boulevard on the Peninsula, as well as the

1 reconstruction of the Roosevelt Avenue Bridge, which
2 incorporates bike and ped access.
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. I know
5 that you've been discussing getting more use out of
6 the 7 train; I current... you know, I think I've made
7 it very public in a lot of our conversations; I lived
8 on Ro... up until about two months ago I lived on
9 Roosevelt Avenue, so I almost know the schedule of
10 the 7 train; it is probably the train that moves the
11 fastest; it's 3.5 minutes there's a train going by in
12 one direction or another. You go to 74th Street
13 right now and try to get a train at 5:00, people are
14 almost falling in the tracks because it's so packed
15 and this is like a real... a reality to my constituents
16 on how they get to and from work. So say that we're
17 gonna add more trains and... I don't think that helps
18 mitigate the issue. What I would like to see, if
19 we're able to get into some discussions, is working
20 with the Long Island Railroad; I don't think you can
21 add more trains and as a matter of fact, you know, I
22 know Sterling is here; when there was a small fire on
23 the tracks during All-Star weekend, was a little bit
24 of a nightmare tryin' to move 50,000 people, all of
25 which were in the District, and I hope they shopped

2 and bought food and supported the local economy, but
3 other than that, I can only imagine what it would be
4 like to get another shutdown of this train. I think
5 we have to look at the options and the options that
6 we have is the Long Island Railroad and I believe
7 it's the... I think... we had a conversation; it's the
8 Port Washington line. So how could we make that Port
9 Washington line a competitive line or in a more
10 affordable line so that people have that as an
11 option? Because even if you work in the neighborhood
12 you say, let me take the Long Island Railroad and not
13 have to deal with the 7 and... or vice versa. And I
14 would like to engage... and I know... and you know, I
15 know that Mr. Brown testified to the relationship
16 that he has with the MTA, but I would hope that we
17 can all come to the table before this vote and have a
18 real plan on how we can get the LIR to be a little
19 bit more affordable and not just stop on big game
20 days, 'cause I don't even think it stops on every
21 game day.

22 RICHARD BROWN: This is Richard Brown.
23 Long Island Railroad, it's also; you're... you're
24 absolutely correct, very vital to having a meaningful
25 impact and improvement to mass transit to the area.

2 One of the biggest issues we have with them is
3 currently they only have one track for both... and one
4 platform for eastbound and westbound customers, so
5 one of the many reasons why people who do take that
6 train, they wait a very long time if a game ends and
7 everybody leaves at the same time; it's a close game
8 up to the end; they very much need to be part of this
9 discussion and certainly with the expansion of the
10 USTA, Citi Field, of course and Willets Point, if... if
11 we can have that sort of joint discussion it could
12 only help.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Yeah, I... I
14 think... I would appreciate it before, you know, I give
15 birth, no pressure; I'd like that conversation. And...
16 and it's about making it sustainable, getting it to
17 be able to roll out, but also making it affordable,
18 right, so there has to be some type of program that
19 we establish that is as competitive with the 7 line.

20 I'm sorry to the community and I know
21 you're here to testify, but I really need to get
22 these questions out.

23 How do you plan to address traffic impact
24 as the project is developed; how will the community
25 be notified of these traffic changes due to

2 construction; signage, mailing, flyers; how do you...
3 how do you let the community know that all this is
4 gonna be happening?

5 JESSE MASYR: We are committed and have
6 committed ourselves in writing with penalties, in
7 fact, to have a quarterly briefing session with
8 Community Board 7, which will bring them up-to-date
9 on all of these issues of what we're doing, what
10 we're planning to do. As I said earlier in my
11 testimony, in terms of any future studies, before we
12 do them we have agreed to share the scope of those
13 studies with Community Board and to solicit their
14 comments. So we see this as a very transparent
15 system going forward and up until the completion of
16 all the construction phase of this project.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. Can we
18 also include Community Boards 3 and 4 please?

19 JESSE MASYR: Absolutely.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: 'Cause I think
21 they... they... [interpose]

22 JESSE MASYR: Not a problem.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: it's like a
24 half of the community is just left in the dark and
25 it's... [interpose]

2 JESSE MASYSR: Uhm-hm.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: important that
4 they are also included.

5 JESSE MASYSR: There's no problem giving
6 those presentations.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: I know that was
8 really polite; actually you... you must include 3 and
9 4.

10 JESSE MASYSR: I... I was... I was assuming it
11 was that way and... and... and I... [interpose]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Yeah, I'm
13 sorry; I'm having moments.

14 JESSE MASYSR: and I responded what...
15 [interpose]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Yes. So let's
17 switch into housing. Where is the... I know that
18 there's a mandate for 35 percent housing; where is
19 exactly that per... the 35 percent memorialized; is it
20 in your contract, is it... where... where?

21 KYLE KIMBALL: Kyle Kimball from EDC.
22 It's in our contract.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. And I
24 know the breakdown of AMI in 2008; does that remain
25 the same?

2 KYLE KIMBALL: It does.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Can we just go
4 over it for the record? [interpose]

5 KYLE KIMBALL: Sure. Sure. So what we...
6 what we asked for in the RFP is that 6 percent of the
7 affordable units for households earning up to 60
8 percent of AMI and then within that 60 percent of the
9 units, 70 percent of the units to be affordable to
10 households earning up to 50 percent of AMI and then
11 the remaining 40 percent of the affordable units must
12 be affordable for households earning up to 130
13 percent of AMI and I don't know off the top of my
14 head what those correspond to actual dollars and
15 cents; I can actually get back to you unless... unless
16 someone here knows... somewhere here knows, but I don't
17 know what uh... okay, so AMI is about 80 percent... 80...
18 80,000.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So can we have
20 the breakdown of the numbers; can we get that for... to
21 me... [interpose]

22 KYLE KIMBALL: Sure.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: what that looks
24 like in dollars?

25 KYLE KIMBALL: Yes.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. So when
3 we followed up with the housing plan... I know we're
4 having a lot of discussions and... and they're part of
5 negotiations, so we won't elaborate at this point,
6 but you know I can't reiterate how important this
7 housing piece is and... and the... the need for housing
8 in our area and the need for housing kind of helps me
9 transition into the very important part of the
10 school. I've been working with the City trying to
11 find sites for a school; we've had to do eminent
12 domain of a factory, we've done... you name it, we're
13 building schools in places where you would normally
14 not build schools and we're getting six new schools;
15 we'll still be short about 800 seats, so what is the
16 size of the proposed school at the new District?

17 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: The proposed school in
18 the Phase 1 area is about a 1,000 seats, K through 8.
19 There's additional demand associated with Phase 2;
20 that could either result in a larger school or it
21 could result in a second school.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. And the
23 second school is potentially already sited at the JV
24 side?

2 JESSE MASYSR: No, that would be in Phase
3 2; it's not been specifically sited.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay.

5 JESSE MASYSR: What?

6 JESSE MASYSR: Right, but it's Phase...

7 [interpose]

8 GLENN GOLDSTEIN: It's the balance of the
9 40-acre... the balance of the 60 acres.

10 JESSE MASYSR: We're... we're... let's make it
11 easier; we're not the designated developer for Phase
12 2, so as to exactly where it'd be located...

13 [interpose]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Oh I have a
15 funny feeling.

16 JESSE MASYSR: That could be something
17 totally different... [crosstalk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Right. Okay,
19 fair enough. I know that we had been in
20 conversations also and speaking with the Queens
21 Library, they're constantly looking for space in my
22 District to build a new library; Queens Library, in
23 particular my library in Corona generates the highest
24 number of children book circulations in the Borough
25 of Queens; it is the smallest library that they have;

1 I mean it's almost a... it's probably a little bit
2 bigger than a trailer, so you know, we're thinking of
3 some creative ways in doing a... I was gonna say a
4 joint venture, but that was a little... but doing
5 something together so that we can have the library
6 built within the school, so I'd like to get all that
7 hashed out and see how we're able to work together to
8 do a community-accessible library and a school, and I
9 know that I...

11 JESSE MASYSR: Do we... yes; I mean... my only
12 co... Jesse Masysr... my only comment Councilwoman, is I
13 don't know how easy it is to coordinate a library in
14 a school, 'cause they're different jurisdictions,
15 different operating times... [interpose]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Well that's
17 where the City helps us.

18 JESSE MASYSR: but I would point out that
19 in our proposed development we have anticipated
20 building, in addition to the school, there will be
21 other community facility kinds of spaces that we
22 could certainly explore whether or not they'd be
23 appropriate for a tenant, a public library.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So my staff, in
25 doing research and reading through the RFP... actually

2 my Chief of Staff found mention of a daycare facility
3 that was mentioned in 2008; is that... does that remain
4 still in the conversation in the RFP; it included a
5 section about daycare, which I don't see in the
6 current proposal; how would Related and Sterling
7 mitigate the potential impact of that?

8 JESSE MASYSR: Councilwoman, Jesse Masyr
9 again... [interpose]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Yes.

11 JESSE MASYSR: That... I just... just part of
12 the reference I just made is that we anticipate there
13 will be space, which I've called community facility
14 in response to your question about the library, but
15 also we anticipate that within that community
16 facility space and we can give you the greater
17 details, there will be facilities available for child
18 care, for daycare. [interpose]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So what is the...
20 the... the square footage for the community space?
21 [interpose]

22 JESSE MASYSR: I'll have to... that... that...
23 I'll have to get back to you ON.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Do you have
25 that EDC?

2 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: The... I believe the
3 projected community facility space in Phase 1 is
4 about 25,000 feet.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: 25,000 square
6 feet?

7 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: That's correct. Tom
8 McKnight, by the way.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: And this is not
10 for the school, this is separate community space?

11 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: No; this is separate
12 from the school space.

13 JESSE MASYSR: Yeah, it's part of... Jesse
14 Masyr... it's part of our mitigation obligations to
15 provide for that use, so there's no impact and we are
16 obligated to then, in consultation with the City and
17 appropriate agencies to determine the appropriate
18 amount of daycare space that will be available. It's
19 part of the EIS commitments that are found in the
20 Environmental Impact... [interpose]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So where do we
22 engage... before I move on to the next topic of
23 relocation, where do we engage the City agencies,
24 'cause they can built it; how do we know the school
25 is ready to go into the space; are we partnering with

2 ACS for daycare to be located at this space? You
3 know, where do we have all these other plans
4 happening so by the time they've already... 'cause I'm...
5 I'm thinking you're gonna build the skeleton; is that
6 correct?

7 JESSE MASYSR: Yes, that's essentially
8 correct.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So what about
10 the... the things that go inside, like where... where
11 does the City... or where is the City currently
12 engaging with City agencies to be able to support
13 these facilities?

14 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: We... we... it was... it was...
15 got accomplished at a high level within the EIS
16 where, as part of the analysis you determine what
17 impacts there are, but on an ongoing basis, I think
18 as Jesse said, that community facility space, the
19 reason it exists is for partly those types of uses
20 and on an ongoing basis and through out coordination
21 with the development team, we're going to do that
22 agency outreach to determine what needs there are
23 from agencies to ultimately determine what the mix
24 should be within that community specifically.

25 [crosstalk]

2 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So... so if uh...
3 let's say we get a YMCA that wants to move in or, I
4 don't know, a private day... whatever, one uh... some
5 entity, then they would be paying rent to the
6 venture...

7 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: That's correct.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: for the space?

9 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Correct.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: As would a
11 library, as would anybody that's moving in the space
12 would be paying rent?

13 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: I think at this point
14 that's what we would assume; I think, you know, it
15 would depend on what use emerged, but I think that at
16 this point the assumption would be that they would
17 pay rent.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. Now,
19 from our conversations since 2009 we talked about the
20 group that's currently... today, the Sunrise Co-op and
21 I think for the... for the... as we move forward in this
22 conversation we should speak about Sunrise, but also
23 the other businesses, small businesses that are at
24 Willets Point. From the beginning we discussed the
25 possibilities and the reasoning behind why they

1 needed to move together and I know President, this is
2 the first time we're having this conversation, but
3 Seth and I went back and forth a lot on this one
4 piece and the importance of this and I think that
5 this is... this is something that has needed clarity
6 and if we can just talk about the history of... from
7 purchasing, to the tenants remaining, to where we
8 were and we're still kind of negotiating and going
9 back and forth on the relocation packages offered to
10 the tenants. So can we just talk about where we were
11 in 2008 and what that plan looked like in relocating
12 the tenants at Willets Point?
13

14 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Tom Knight, EDC. So
15 going back to 2008, building off of Rob's earlier
16 comment, there was a commitment to provide \$3 million
17 in relocation assistance; over time that has resulted
18 in, in fact a \$9 million allocation towards
19 relocation.

20 Over time since the approval there has
21 been consistent and regular outreach to businesses in
22 the Willets Point District, keeping them informed of
23 the status of the Plan. Most recently that formal
24 process began over a year ago, in August of 2012
25 where as previously committed to, the City sent out

1 notice to the businesses in Phase 1 saying that the
2 relocation process would be beginning in six months
3 and that notice was provided to give businesses time
4 to prepare.
5

6 About five months or so later HPD sent
7 out notice to all the businesses in the Phase 1 area
8 informing them of their rights to relocation
9 assistance for moving and ancillary costs.

10 Meanwhile, Cornerstone completed outreach and began
11 working with businesses on specific needs, location
12 and space and that is ongoing and continues to be
13 ongoing.

14 The next step was in the springtime; we
15 sent out a notice to tenants saying that in the
16 coming months we would be beginning the vacating
17 process to make way for the development; we sent out
18 that notice in July and a couple weeks after that,
19 most recently, we sent out notice to those same
20 businesses, letting them know that they may be
21 eligible for the supplemental relocation benefit,
22 which is the \$3.5 million that we've referenced here.

23 The most recent event, which we referred
24 to in our testimony, was the open house, which
25 completed with assistance from you Councilwoman and

1 we felt it was an effective meeting; we felt... I think
2 the businesses appreciated that there was questions
3 answered, confusion addressed and there was a whole
4 range of services and personnel available to answer
5 questions.
6

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So can you... in
8 your best case scenario, can you walk me through a
9 tenant right now that's at Willets Point and comes to
10 you and says I' ready to relocate; what happens to
11 that person, to that business?

12 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Well there's... there's a
13 couple different levels, so I think at a... at the
14 level of Cornerstone, if they've... let's say...
15 [interpose]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So is that the
17 first person they should reach out to, Cornerstone?

18 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: For Cornerstone... this
19 is why we did the open house, to make sure that they
20 had all those spaces, but Cornerstone's role is to
21 identify spaces and work as a go-between for
22 perspective landlords. At latest count they've
23 identified about a 140 potential relocation sites.

24 So let's say in your example a business,
25 one of those sites Cornerstone has come to them and

1 said based on, you know what you've told me about
2 your needs I found these handful sites, the business
3 says great, this one looks really viable to me;
4 Cornerstone assists them in working out a lease with
5 that landlord; let's say that that lease is
6 successful; in the meantime the tenant would be
7 working with HPD to determine their... the sum they
8 would receive in connection for their base benefits,
9 the moving and ancillary costs. And then on the
10 third level they would then submit what is a very
11 straight-forward form to EDC for the supplemental
12 benefit.
13

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So if we
15 currently have a business that's moving to a new
16 space, they currently pay on average between a \$1,000
17 and \$2,200, I think that's what we had seen, they're
18 moving to a new space that's \$3,500 to \$4,000;
19 whenever anyone moves, you know, we know that you
20 have to give one month's rent, one month's deposit
21 and I don't... and I would venture to say there's
22 probably other negotiations in moving a business as
23 opposed to renting... as renting an apartment, so they
24 don't... when does the access for them to... What I'm
25 trying to figure out is; how is this not cost-

1 prohibitive to the small businesses trying to move
2 and survive to a new location, besides the fact that
3 they're moving to a space that's higher in rent, but
4 they also have to enter into a lease agreement that
5 I'm sure they have to provide additional monies to be
6 able to actually have a lease signed. So what is the
7 support mechanism for someone who has been at Willets
8 Point for 20 years and now they have to engage in
9 these type of negotiations with very little in cash
10 flow.
11

12 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: I guess I would say
13 that, yes, in certain instances rent could be higher;
14 in other locations not universally so, but yes, we
15 take your point; that was part of the reason in
16 wanting to provide a supplemental benefit to address,
17 you know, whatever transitional needs that a business
18 has; it's flexible funds and they can use it in
19 whatever purpose really helps them to the greatest
20 extent possible.

21 In terms of negotiating an agreement with
22 a landlord; I would think that they would be
23 accustomed to a process like that; it's not an
24 unusual process and that the funds, once they... once
25 they've demonstrated that they've vacated the site,

2 the supplemental funds would go towards, if they
3 deemed it necessary, to that down payment.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So when do they
5 receive the supplemental funds? 'Cause if I'm in
6 negotiations with Cornerstone and I have to put down
7 a down payment for me to move but you're not giving
8 me the supplement fund until I move, then how does
9 that...

10 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: And... and I understand;
11 it's a question of sequence. The way we've
12 envisioned it is that businesses would expend their
13 own funds and then once they're vacated they would
14 get this cash award.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Well I'm
16 telling you that the businesses don't have the fund
17 to spend, so with... [interpose]

18 ROB GOLDRICH: It's Rob Goldrich from the
19 Mayor's office. I think the answer is uh, for the
20 supplemental funds, if the businesses vacate within a
21 certain date and who are eligible, they will get a
22 check upon applying to EDC within two weeks, which
23 can be used to... they can use to apply for a deposit
24 or for whatever kind of use that they want to use it
25 for; it's their choice to use it. If they're gonna

2 vacate, they can apply to EDC and they will get a
3 specific number of funds for eligible businesses.
4 Right now EDC is in conversations with four
5 businesses who have applied for those funds and
6 they'll be getting a check very soon. The other
7 funds that the businesses are eligible for are
8 relocation funds from HPD; those also, the businesses
9 apply when they're ready to relocate and those funds
10 I think are reimbursed or are put up front, which
11 includes moving costs and such, so that would help
12 lessen the pain of moving.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Uh...

14 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Sorry... [interpose]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: It's o...

16 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Tom McKnight again.

17 The other thing I would make note of is; there has
18 been already processing of some supplemental funding
19 requests and the other thing I would note is that,
20 actually coming out of the open house that specific
21 concern was raised and what we're doing in response
22 to that is preparing a letter that will confirm
23 eligibility and we think that that... if there is a
24 cash flow issue for a business, having that assurance

2 that yes indeed, I'm eligible for this; that's gonna
3 be helpful in their landlord discussions.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Can you share
5 with my office... and I guess with the Committee also,
6 who are the businesses that are eligible and who are...
7 who are not eligible, 'cause I know that we're
8 talking about this eligibility description and I
9 think that there needs to be more clarity on our end
10 also what triggers the eligibility and... [interpose]

11 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: and also if we
13 can have a running status on how many businesses are
14 relocating, currently how many businesses are at
15 Willets Point for relocation purposes. I know this;
16 I just need to get it on the testimony.

17 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Our conservative
18 estimate of the total number of businesses in the
19 Phase 1 area is 165.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: 165. And of
21 those 165 you have relocated how many?

22 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: We've... there are
23 relocation plans that have been processed or are in
24 the works for 10 tenant businesses; previously there

2 were agreements around owner-occupant businesses that
3 date back to '08; that's where we are now.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So we have 10
5 businesses that have been engaging with Cornerstone
6 and how much monies have we paid Cornerstone?

7 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: I believe Cornerstone's
8 previous contract, which extended over what now is
9 probably a five-year period has been approximately
10 \$700,000.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: \$700,000?

12 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Correct.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: And there are...
14 their new contact... 'cause you said the previous
15 contract; are they in a new contract now or is it
16 the...

17 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Not yet; we would
18 anticipate that we would need to extend their
19 contract in the fall.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So we paid
21 \$700,000 to move 10 businesses?

22 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: No, they... [interpose]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay, explain
24 that to me, 'cause that's what I'm hearing.

2 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: They... I mean I will say
3 at the outset that their work is ongoing and that
4 they have been in the District speaking to businesses
5 and doing relocation site searches and engaging with
6 landlords on a daily basis; their work began several
7 years ago, where they were doing on-the-ground
8 outreach to businesses, keeping them informed...

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: 'Kay.

10 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: beginning to talk about
11 the process... [interpose]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Right.

13 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: We feel that given the
14 amount of time they've been engaged and the fact that
15 their work is ongoing that we've got good..
16 [interpose]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Tom, with all
18 due respect, Cornerstone has been a part of these
19 conversations since 2008; we are at \$700,000, which
20 maybe in the bigger picture seems like a small
21 amount; if I contracted with someone for all these
22 years and all we've gotten is to get 10 businesses to
23 relocate, I would be questioning how I engage with
24 them in the future. Because it was only... before this
25 it was two business, so we've got eight business

2 after we did a clearing of the... of the confusion,
3 because every City agency was speaking to these
4 businesses; there was HPD, EDC, my office,
5 Cornerstone; everybody was saying something different
6 and if Cornerstone is hired to bring peace of mind
7 and clarity to these businesses, they obviously
8 haven't done that in years. So I don't understand
9 how we're continuing to engage with Cornerstone after
10 all of this and saying we spent \$700,000; we're gonna
11 go into another contract with them now. I... I'm... I'm...
12 I'm perplexed as to this... [interpose]

13 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: So uh, uh...

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: why they remain
15 a partner here.

16 KYLE KIMBALL: No one has been harder on
17 Cornerstone that I have in terms of Seth Pinsky, my
18 predecessor. One thing I will say though is, they
19 certainly feel the pressure to get these done;
20 however, I am confident that they are identifying
21 sites, talking to people and helping the people, but
22 at the end of the day... [interpose]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Ten businesses
24 makes you confident, President?

1
2 KYLE KIMBALL: I'm confident they are
3 working... working... they... they are on the ground
4 finding sites, however, they cannot force... they are
5 not in the position where they can force someone to
6 go sign a lease, so the big problem that they face is
7 that they will take... they have taken a number of
8 businesses out to these 140 different sites, but if
9 they don't work or the person doesn't want to move or
10 is not ready to move, or for whatever reason they
11 don't actually engage in lease negotiations,
12 Cornerstone is not in a position, nor are we really
13 to force someone to take a lease. So they have done
14 their job in terms of finding sites and taking people
15 out, but I think at the end of the day they cannot;
16 they don't have the authority to... or the
17 authorization to force someone to take a lease and so
18 they... they feel like... that the 10... the... the... the 10
19 businesses we are excited about; would we like to see
20 more progress? Yes. And I think we also feel that
21 moving this project forward will help us take the
22 next step in making sure that companies see that we
23 are moving forward with this project.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Well I think
25 that you have an issue with your timeline, right?

2 You have a 165 businesses, you moved 10 and you've
3 told people that they need to move out by November,
4 right, or they're gonna get half? So then what
5 happens when that number goes to 12 and then what?

6 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: Can I just provide a
7 clarification? The 165 is what we think is a
8 conservative universe for the full Phase 1 area; it's
9 not... a subset of that 165 are the businesses that are
10 today on City-owned properties who are eligible for
11 relocation; that number's about 120.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay, so 120.
13 Thank you for the correction. But you're also hoping
14 to buy the 5 remaining percent of the space, so it
15 puts you at 165, right?

16 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: That's the total
17 universe; there... not all of those businesses are
18 relocation eligible for different reasons, but...
19 [interpose]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. Well I...
21 again, we're gonna look at the relocation
22 eligibility. Now, President, you weren't part of
23 these conversations, but in 2009 we had had
24 discussions about the support that these businesses
25 have had for many years and they support one another;

1 you go in with a flat tire and your front windshield
2 is cracked, you go and one guy recommends another
3 guy; he's around the corner, up the block, across the
4 street; that's just the culture of Willets Point. In
5 these conversations it was recommended, why don't
6 they just kinda come together? And if they come
7 together as a group they can be relocated as a group.
8 That conversation was had in my office in 2009,
9 shortly after I got elected. We are now here in 2013
10 and I'm being told that it's impossible, the economy
11 doesn't... all the reasons why it can't happen, yet
12 Cornerstone has also presented very limited spaces
13 for these businesses to move to. So, you know I know
14 one site was shown, then it was not shown, it was
15 taken away; we don't know where the representative
16 is; it's been a total, just kind of disregard to what
17 was originally committed to and agreed that these
18 guys... you know there's... they weren't all of them,
19 it's about 60 of them, needed to be supportive of one
20 another. So where are we with the opportunity,
21 because I think that they've proven that to sustain
22 themselves they had to support each other. So where
23 are we currently in those conversations and bringing
24 that to realization? 'Cause they understand; you
25

2 know, we were originally talking about... the original
3 conversation was that they could be owners of land;
4 we're not there yet; understood. They just wanna
5 rent together and if they're able to put their
6 subsidies together, which will have a... you know, I
7 know that we... we... 3.5... it was a lot of work for me to
8 get 3.5 from you guys; I'm hoping we can get more,
9 but those are conversations that we're still having.
10 But the reality is, you know, that is not a plan that
11 we can just scrape off the table now and I think
12 that... you know; I'd like to hear where you are in
13 your engagement with Cornerstone with giving these
14 men and women the opportunity to relocate together.

15 KYLE KIMBALL: Sure. I'm sorry; the... the
16 one that I heard in your sentence that troubled me
17 was the word disregarded and I... and I... I... and I'm
18 sorry that that is the perception; I think we and
19 Cornerstone feel that we have worked extensively with
20 the individuals at Sunrise Cooperative and are not
21 opposed and eager to explore relocation as a group,
22 so that should be sort of premise number 1. I think
23 secondly, there have been meetings, a number of
24 proposals; I think we've given feedback from our real
25 estate expertise about how this could work; I think a

1 number of sites have been explored; I don't know the
2 ins and outs of the specific sites, as you mentioned;
3 I think some have had more potential than others. I
4 think there are two challenge... there are a couple of...
5 three challenges really; one, the finances, including
6 the purchase price and rent and I think we perhaps
7 mitigated that by going to less of a purchase and
8 more of a rent structure and then you have
9 construction costs and remediation and this is again,
10 from the standpoint of advising Sunrise on how this
11 would work. I think two... and this is an important
12 one, the reluctance of site owners to work with a
13 cooperative of 50 plus businesses and having 50 plus
14 tenants is something I think a lot of site owners
15 have been reluctant to engage in. And third, you
16 know just the... how the businesses wanna work and
17 potentially... I'm not sure that it's fully flushed
18 out. We're absolutely open to other ideas, other
19 locations or working with any City Council Members
20 who have suggestions on viable sites in their
21 district; we are encouraging these businesses to find
22 a supplemental benefit, which is, as Tom said, the 12
23 months, to pull their resources and even potentially
24

2 exploring relocating into small clusters of 5 to 7
3 business could make more sense.

4 So we are... feel like we're engaged in
5 this; do not feel like we have disregarded it; have I
6 think put out best foot forward in terms of the
7 technical advice on how this could work and are
8 committed to continuing the conversation.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Yeah, I think
10 we clearly continue conversations and we're at this
11 point now, right; everything was... it seemed like the
12 date was down the road, down the road; now we're
13 here. But in having the conversations I think it
14 needs to be less about no, that plan doesn't work;
15 no, that doesn't make sense; no, they can't do that;
16 no, they can't do there; you really have to engage in
17 being a partner here and saying these are the options
18 that we have; how can we make this happen, because
19 this is very important to me. The relocating of
20 these workers, they really have just tremendous work
21 ethic when it comes to being able to be together,
22 they're having meetings that are... completely have
23 nothing to do with changing a muffler or putting in a
24 mirror; they're really engaging the small businesses
25 and put a plan together, a business plan together;

2 have non-profits that are working together and I
3 think that it really is just a great story for the
4 City to be able to turn around and say we got this
5 done. So just like you said in your testimony, that
6 we need to get this done... [interpose]

7 KYLE KIMBALL: The right way.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: we really need
9 to get this done.

10 KYLE KIMBALL: Sure. And I'm sorry that
11 the... the perception is no and you have my word that...
12 I can't say that we'll make it work, but I can say
13 that you will not sense that we are being uncreative.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. It is
15 now 1:00 and I'm actually... [interpose]

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You're asking great
17 questions, so I don't wanna discourage it...

18 [crosstalk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: I'm really
20 hungry.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: but do you have a
22 gauge on how many more, 'cause uh... [interpose]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: No...

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: No.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: we're gonna...
3 we're gonna be wrapping up shortly...

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Just a couple
6 more questions... [interpose]

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I really appreciate
8 everyone's cooperation; you really... [interpose]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: have been very
11 cooperative; I know people have jobs to go to and I
12 saw there's a young child here and there are very...
13 you know, people from... that we know from Queens
14 really well here; we do appreciate their cooperation;
15 we're just tryin' to get the answers out here.
16 Council Member Ferreras is asking questions that
17 we've heard a lot from the community and from the
18 businesses in the area, so we think it's very
19 important while they're sitting here to get these
20 questions out. So thank you all again for your
21 cooperation. Council Member Ferreras.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: If... if we could
23 talk about the... the use of eminent domain and the
24 potential use of eminent domain at Willets; what is
25 the status on that?

1
2 THOMAS MCKNIGHT: A commitment that we've
3 had throughout the process dating back to '08, which
4 we know is critical to the Council, was that the City
5 exhaust every means possible to reach negotiated
6 settlements with property owners in Willets Point and
7 we've very much lived to that commitment over the
8 years and have been successful. At this point, in
9 the Phase 1 area, we control about 95 percent of the
10 property and we are in ongoing dialogue with owners
11 and we are very much... we continue to be very much
12 committed to negotiated agreements.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: I'm gonna
14 switch over to park land and the potential of
15 building a mall on... you know, on the current lease.
16 The parking lot is part of Flushing Meadows Corona
17 Park, State law requires the alienation of park land
18 before it can be used for non-park use. Can you
19 explain to me... and just... you have, but for the
20 record, how we can build a mall, entertainment center
21 on the parking lot of the Mets and perhaps EDC can...
22 as my second part of this question, because I said,
23 well if we're building a mall, why can't we put the
24 housing on top of the mall? And I'm told that the
25 State law requires that... or, or states that you can't

2 build housing on park land, in Robert Moses' infinite
3 wisdom, but it seems that in other... in Brooklyn
4 Bridge Park, on John Street, there is residential
5 units that are included, about a 130 residential
6 units, as well as ground floor retail and up to 110
7 parking spaces; if that possible in that project, why
8 is it not possible in Queens?

9 ROB GOLDRICH: Let me answer the first
10 part... this is Rob Goldrich from the Mayor's office..
11 [interpose]

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You're gonna get the
13 gold star for that, by the way.

14 [laughter]

15 ROB GOLDRICH: Thank you very much. The
16 first question is... [interpose]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: I just need to
18 stand.

19 ROB GOLDRICH: No, no problem. The... why
20 are... 'cause the Ci... the City looked at the use of a
21 entertainment complex, a mall to be built at the
22 current parking lot of Citi Field, just to the west
23 of Citi Field, and it was determined by the Law
24 Department, who worked with EDC and City Hall and I'm
25 gonna cite the code section where they point to

1 administration... Administrative Code Section 18-118
2 which specifically allows the Department of Parks to
3 enter in agreements that have commercial uses on the
4 parking lot for any purposes to provide for or
5 promote the benefit, the people of New York for
6 recreation, entertainment, amusement or the
7 improvement of trade or commerce. So that is what's
8 written in the Administrative Code and it was
9 determined that the use that's being proposed here as
10 a result of what the JV has put forward to the City,
11 that this structure qualifies and is permitted as a
12 use to be built there.

14 KYLE KIMBALL: And just to... just to draw
15 the distinction... sorry Jesse... Brooklyn Bridge Park is
16 under a State General Project Plan that was approved
17 when it was a State asset that the City took over,
18 whereas the park land that we're talking about here
19 is very specific to the alienation that was done in
20 the 1960's for the creation of Shea Stadium. So they
21 are, if you blur your vision are very similar
22 projects, but in... but they're governed by very
23 different laws.

24 JESSE MASYSR: I just want to add to that,
25 is that, in terms of housing, Councilwoman, this

1 project has always anticipated housing was part of a
2 mixed-use development; that there would be market
3 rate housing and affordable housing and that's how it
4 would come to be. But also part and parcel of that
5 and essential to that is the creation of a community
6 that has services that are supportive of housing,
7 from schools, libraries, medical offices, so none of
8 those things exist today and they are part of the
9 vision that this Council wisely adopted in 2008, so
10 housing has to be part of a complete community and
11 not just an isolated event, otherwise it's
12 unsupported and really undefendable. And so that is
13 why, to our thinking, the affordable housing is a
14 critical component of the mixed-use development and
15 all part of one community that we will create.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: And I... I really
18 wanna hear from the community residents and those
19 that are here to testify, so I'm gonna... you know, I'm
20 sure you guys are devastated this is gonna be my last
21 question. This one is related to... wow, I didn't
22 think this was gonna happen the whole time; I just
23 draw a blank. Oh, of course. You know, everything
24 is about economic development, right, and I
25 understand the impacts and the future of our

1
2 community; my hopes is that as we relocate the
3 businesses at Willets Point that they're even more
4 successful to where they're going potentially. But
5 we also know that you are bringing in a revenue-
6 generating space and you know, we want you to also be
7 successful if we get all these other issues ironed
8 out. So how many jobs are coming in, construction
9 jobs, non-construction jobs; what is the MWB
10 commitments; I'd like to hear some of that.

11 JESSE MASYSR: The... I think this has been
12 testified before; I think it's good to consolidate it
13 all into a single answer. The project before you,
14 when it's com... at its completion will have created
15 12,000 construction jobs, it will have created over
16 7,000... will create over 7,000 permanent jobs of which
17 we believe the projections and the studies we can
18 share with the Committee, about 5,000 of those 7,000
19 are at living wage or higher employment
20 opportunities. Those are the... the jobs to be
21 created, both permanent and construction for the
22 dura... that's the entire project, the... that represents
23 \$3 billion of private investment and cleaning up a
24 100... over a 100 years of unbroken contamination in
25

2 one of the most densely populated areas of our... of
3 the City.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Uhm and the
5 MWBE... [crosstalk]

6 KYLE KIMBALL: I mean it's just one... and
7 the MWBE will... about... will be 25 percent in addition
8 to the Capacity Building Fund they are setting up.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: The Capacity
10 Building Fund... [interpose]

11 KYLE KIMBALL: The MWBE Capacity Building
12 Fund that they testified as to earlier... [interpose]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: And what is
14 that total?

15 JESSE MASYSR: What's the Fund total?
16 Well the funds are nearly a \$1 million to do...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: A million
18 dollars for the MWBE ca... uh Capacity Building Fund...
19 [interpose]

20 JESSE MASYSR: Capacity Building Fund,
21 yes.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: And you know,
23 this is economic development I think for our entire
24 city, right; a lot of this is gonna be moving people
25 from old parts of the City, but I have a very special

2 place in my heart called Queens and in particular the
3 immediate surrounding communities of Flushing,
4 Corona, Jackson Heights, and East Elmhurst, so I'd
5 like to continue our conversations to ensure that
6 we're hiring locally and that people aren't driving
7 to work because they live so close that they could
8 walk to work.

9 JESSE MASYSR: We share that goal.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. Very
11 good. Thank you very much and I'm gonna... I have all
12 these other questions, so I'm gonna get them to you...
13 [interpose]

14 JESSE MASYSR: Yeah, uh... [interpose]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: and I want you
16 to answer them.

17 JESSE MASYSR: this is the only
18 opportunity.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: No, this is not
20 the only opportunity.

21 [laughter]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: So thank you
23 very much. [interpose]

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Uh... Great. Thank
25 you Council Member Ferreras; gentlemen, thank you;

2 we're gonna start moving on. Again I apologize for
3 the delay, but I wanna remind you, we are staying
4 here, I'm here till the end, everyone who gets... wants
5 to testify will be testified; the only caveat,
6 Mr. Masyr, you can help me maybe on this; if... today
7 happens to be my 18th wedding anniversary, so if we
8 go too far into the evening I was wondering if we
9 have any matrimonial attorneys in your firm.

10 JESSE MASYSR: No.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Okay,
12 alright. Now uh, so we're... we're gonna move... now I
13 wanna remind you, we're gonna do panels of 5 people;
14 I know there are a lot of people in the audience who
15 wanna testify, so we're gonna bring up... we're gonna
16 alternate between those in fa... against the project
17 first, for the project after that. Five at a time is
18 all I can take; I know there's some people in this
19 audience who have been very active who I know, who
20 other people know, but we're just gonna take 'em one
21 after the other; we're gonna have a 2-minute time
22 limit on everybody, unfortunately; there may be some
23 questions after that. So we're gonna start with the
24 following panel opposed to this project, David
25 Schwartz, Irene Presti, Jerry Antonacci, Leonard

2 Scarola and Jeffrey Croft; that's our first panel in
3 opposition and then we will then take a panel in
4 favor. I know some people are gonna have to leave;
5 that's... unfortunately people have actually jobs to do
6 and lives to lead; we will read into the record every
7 name we have here; we will accept any written
8 testimony into the record and anyone who was here
9 already and had to leave, I will mention they were
10 here, what their position was, general position and
11 then get to them later on. If you wanna talk to the
12 Sergeant at Arms, I can't take questions from the
13 audience, but if you can talk to the Sergeant at Arms
14 we'll try to get to it. Okay.

15 Okay. Alright, I wanna remind you of our
16 rule that when you speak please state your name and
17 if it gets into cross discussion, that's when it even
18 gets more important that you state your name again.
19 So I'm gonna let you guys decide who goes first.

20 DAVID SCHWARTZ: Put this on?

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes.

22 DAVID SCHWARTZ: 'Kay.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And try to talk very
24 close to the microphone; the sound is not great.

2 DAVID SCHWARTZ: Thank you Mr. Chairman.
3 My name is David Schwartz, I represent Willets Point
4 United and as Councilman Jackson referred to before,
5 he mentioned three words, honesty, integrity and
6 transparency and what you've heard here today... what
7 we've just heard is a complete fiction; this is
8 actually... the question came up, you know you're not
9 looking to approve the whole project just this
10 parking lot, but what we heard was a project that was
11 not even approved in 2008. So I'm gonna do the
12 laundry list and everyone else is gonna get into the
13 nuts and bolts. I'm gonna do this as quickly as I
14 can.

15 But when you compare what you were told
16 in 2008 to the present intent, it's not even close,
17 it's not even close. In 2008 you were told that
18 Willets Point was New York City's next great
19 neighborhood, now in 2012 we found out the next great
20 neighborhood was a huge parking mall, prioritized on
21 park land.

22 In 2008 you were told that the project
23 would encompass 62 acres of Willets Point property;
24 in 2012 we learned the project expanded to 108.9

1 acres, nearly double in size, with the addition of
2 the Willets West mall on park land.

3 In 2008 you were told... there was no
4 mention of park lane beyond the bounds of Willets
5 Point; in 2012 Sterling Related prioritized the
6 development of an unnecessary \$1.4 million... 1.4-
7 million-square-foot mall on 30 acres of mapped park
8 land not connected to Willets Point.

9 In 2008 you were told the entire 62-acre
10 Willets Point site needed to be remediated all at
11 once by Robert Lieber; he stated, "You cannot say
12 we'll do this acre by acre or we won't do that acre,"
13 that's what Robert Lieber said. In 2011 you found
14 out that this would be a phased development; now
15 suddenly possible and preferred.

16 In 2008 you were told by the Willets
17 Point Advisory Committee, chaired by Queens Borough
18 President and composed of Queens officials that they
19 will participate and help guide the selection of a
20 developer of this project. That's significant
21 because it ceded all its authority to vet to develop...
22 you ceded all your authority to that project.

23 In 2008 you were told that there was this
24 alleged contamination... I'll let Irene Presti get more
25

2 into that, but in 2013 we learned, and they didn't
3 mention this in their report, that the result of a
4 lab report of a Willets Point automotive site that
5 they tested, there was no major pollution found.

6 Fifty-five hundred units you were told,
7 1,925... I'm gonna just go through it quickly, Coun...
8 Councilman, 1,925... [interpose]

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Uh...

10 DAVID SCHWARTZ: affordable, with a
11 linchpin of this... of the Willets Point that you
12 approved, now we know that that's not happening...
13 [interpose]

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Schwartz, when
15 we get some... we'll have questions for you, I'm sure,
16 so you could add the extra points, uh there's...
17 [crosstalk]

18 DAVID SCHWARTZ: Okay, great.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I just don't wanna
20 start right off the bat going too far over.
21 [crosstalk]

22 DAVID SCHWARTZ: I'm sorry; I just... I
23 tried to do it in... in... [crosstalk]

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: No problem. Let's
25 go through the panel.

2 IRENE PRESTI: [clearing throat] Excuse
3 me. I'm Irene Presti... [clearing throat] pardon me;
4 I'm having a problem with my throat.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: No problem.

6 IRENE PRESTI: I wasn't before all
7 morning; it's just coming on now. [clearing throat]

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We have that affect
9 on people.

10 IRENE PRESTI: I'm Irene Presti; I own
11 property at Willets Point. You may recall 5 years
12 ago Claire Shulman lobbied aggressively for approval
13 of the Willets Point development; her Local
14 Development Corporation was co-financed by the City
15 and its membership consisted not of grassroots
16 community groups, but of developers and businesses;
17 the Mets... and here you'll see in this litter poster...
18 the Mets among them, that stood to profit
19 tremendously if the development was approved.

20 We now know... what we now know [clearing
21 throat] is that all of the lobbying by Shulman's LDC
22 was illegal; the State Attorney General concluded a
23 three-year investigation and found that both EDC and
24 Shulman's LDC flouted the law to obtain approval of
25 their favorite projects. That's right, they flouted

1 the law. But it's the Willets Point property owners
2 [clearing throat] and business owners who are paying
3 the price.
4

5 The City aided their endeavor by
6 allocating \$450,000 in taxpayers' money to this
7 illegal scheme and then paid their unprecedented fine
8 of \$59,000. Miss Shulman personally obstructed the
9 City Council's oversight authority by giving false
10 testimony that low-balled the amount of the city
11 funds she received and never disclosed ongoing city
12 funding. This Council was prevented from questioning
13 why this was occurring during the ULURP process and
14 it didn't stop there.

15 When questioned by the IRS as a 501(c)(3)
16 applicant, Miss Shulman lied and said no to the
17 questions; one, will you be lobbying and two, will
18 you be involved in economic development? Filing a
19 false document is a crime. This LDC's entire
20 existence was for the purpose of lobbying and Miss
21 Shulman admitted such in a New York Times expose.
22 They deliberately broke the law to achieve their goal
23 of taking private property.

24 Can this get any worse? Yes it can.
25 When the City Council approved the original Willets

2 Point Plan, then Mayor Lieber... May... Deputy Mayor
3 Lieber was asked if members of the LDC would be
4 permitted from bidding on this; he did not answer.
5 The City later approved Sterling Equities, a prime
6 player in this illegal scheme. Who says crime
7 doesn't pay? And why does this Plan remain in effect
8 when it should be annulled; a City Councilman viewed
9 with the notion of basic fairness and the rule of law
10 would refuse to rubberstamp this proposal. Do you
11 understand why we do not accept this Plan and why you
12 shouldn't either? Please vote no to Willets West.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thanks Miss Presti
14 and I... you know, wanna let you... I wanna let you go
15 on, because I know how emotionally involved... and I
16 gotta say, the one thing Claire Shulman's really most
17 upset about is that her head is bigger than Mr. Mets..
18 [interpose}

19 IRENE PRESTI: Uh, yeah.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: she's not gonna like
21 that at all.

22 IRENE PRESTI: Well...

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes, sir; next.
24
25

1 GERALD ANTONACCI: Hello, my name is
2
3 Gerald Antonacchi of Crown Container and I'm a member
4 of Willets Point United.

5 I'm sorry say, but due to past
6 experiences I have little confidence in the Council
7 to do the right thing here and send this boondoggle
8 of a project back to the drawing board to get it
9 right.

10 You see in 2008 you fell over yourselves
11 to approve this project, giving up your powers and
12 getting no guaranties on what was to be done.
13 Everyone else then followed to proceed... followed to
14 proceed you, even though they were lied to their
15 faces on committing illegal acts as they went
16 forward. When the City went from remediating the
17 whole site to only one phase, did anyone care? When
18 the City tried eminent domain, did anyone care? When
19 the EDC and Claire Shulman were found guilty of
20 illegal lobbying, which was essentially the City
21 lobbying itself and putting the land and business
22 owners at a disadvantage; did anyone stand up and say
23 I care? No. When the EDC had to reorganize because
24 of the illegal lobbying for this project, did anyone
25 stand up and say enough? When three other developers

1 would build affordable housing at Willets Point now
2 and guarantee it was built, did anyone object to the
3 Sterling's plan that has as many ways to get out of
4 building housing as the amount of dollars the City
5 has given them in tax-free... taxpayer money? Did
6 anyone care? When the City agreed with the unions to
7 include living wage provision in the RFP but then
8 quietly omitted the living wage provision from the
9 RFP, did anyone object? No. When after 5 years the
10 tenants are still not relocated, does anyone care?
11 When the City told you in 2008 that it would recoup
12 the cost of Willets Point property through the sale
13 to the developer, then reneged on that and now
14 intends to give the property worth over \$200 million
15 to Sterling for just \$1, did anyone object? When
16 Sterling said they need to build a mall on park land,
17 which if it's not used for parking should be returned
18 to the people as park land, did anyone care? When
19 the EDC said under no circumstances are we obligated
20 to build a ramp so housing can be built, did anyone
21 care? When housing was delayed until 2025 or maybe
22 never, did anyone say, what is going on here, this is
23 wrong and that... this is not what we were told or
24 promised; did anyone care? When you saw a \$35

2 million out... that they could buy out of the housing,
3 did anyone get upset? When Mr. Bob Booda [phonetic],
4 traffic expert, came and changed his figures on a
5 daily basis, depending on who he was meeting with so
6 it looked like the traffic would not be that bad, did
7 anyone care? No. Did everyone mysteriously believe
8 him? Yes. When the community surrounding the
9 stadium and in Queens voted overwhelmingly that they
10 do not want this mall on park land, did anyone listen
11 to what the people want? No.

12 So what makes me believe that you will
13 care now? What makes me believe that you just won't
14 follow what your party leaders say to approve this
15 project?

16 Leaders care what their constituents say
17 and feel, followers just follow what the party heads
18 or the mayor wants. What are you, a leader or a
19 follower? Your vote will let us all know. Thank you
20 all.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yeah. Thank you. I
22 assume some of those were rhetorical questions.

23 LEONARD SCAROLA: My name is Leonard
24 Scarola, a member of Willets Point United; I feel
25 compelled to comment on an important item that was

1 discussed previously this morning. First, let me
2 thank you in advance if I need an extra 20 seconds,
3 since their presentation took so long.
4

5 On another application you seemed
6 completely frustrated and annoyed that a builder
7 applied for a permit to build something, which I
8 think was an apartment building; then once they
9 obtained their permit, since it was easy to gain
10 approval for a building, they switched the purpose of
11 the building and you guys were completely frustrated
12 and annoyed.

13 This is the same bait and switch here; I
14 hope you are equally resentful, annoyed... and annoyed
15 with this project as well. Our property rights as
16 American citizens now lay entirely in your hands.

17 I'm gonna read a statement by Brian
18 Ketcham, who's a Transportation and Environmental
19 Engineer...

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Make it quick, I
21 mean, try to cut it short.

22 LEONARD SCAROLA: Okay. Four years ago
23 the City Council approved an incredibly flawed
24 project, the Willets Point Development Plan; that is,
25 the approved FGEIS actually admitted to producing

1
2 extremely severe traffic and transit impacts that
3 could not be mitigated. Today you review a project
4 that would produce far worse impacts.

5 Four years ago Willets Point United asked
6 me to review the FGEIS for the project, then they
7 asked me to review the access modification report for
8 the Van Wyck ramps. What I found were two very
9 different reports; the FGEIS reporting severe
10 traffic, the AMR reporting minimal traffic.

11 The AMR was prepared for New York State
12 DOT and the Federal Highway Administration and was
13 clearly designed to secure the approval of the ramps
14 regardless of the truth. I presented this conclusion
15 to the Federal Highway Administration. The result;
16 the project was held up for three years. My analyses
17 were included in a 286-page report that was submitted
18 to New York State DOT, the Federal Highway
19 Administration and EDC. They ignored it entirely,
20 making no corrections for the thousands of errors
21 that lies... and the lies disclosed to them.

22 EDC and their consultants have carried on
23 a half-decade of half truths and lies about the
24 project and their behavior continues unabated. The
25 City Council is presented with another set of lies, a

1 project of about 13 million square feet that
2 drastically underestimates the project impacts that
3 will produce a minimum more than a 110,000 daily car
4 and truck trip and 50,000 additional daily subway
5 trips, which Julissa commented on. Yet EDC reports
6 no impacts worse than what was reported originally in
7 the 2008 FGEIS in spite of loading another 1.4
8 million square feet of entertainment and retail mall
9 development... uh... [interpose]

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I'm gonna have to
12 cut you off in a minute and... [interpose]

13 LEONARD SCAROLA: It's done.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: and give us a copy
15 of that; happy to take it... [interpose]

16 LEONARD SCAROLA: I have this prepared
17 for you; I will submit it, just two more sentences
18 and I'm... [interpose]

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Go ahead, two
20 sentences.

21 LEONARD SCAROLA: The City Council is
22 faced with a choice; approve a project that will not
23 only cause huge traffic impacts, the surrounding
24 expressways are already gridlocked and reported to be
25 among the 10 most congested in the United States, or

2 kill the project that includes a retail mall that
3 will likely fail financially, forcing New York City
4 taxpayers to again bail out the real estate barons.

5 Don't take my word for it, I suggest you
6 make your own independent technical analysis for a
7 third opinion; get somebody else who's not biased...
8 [interpose]

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Uh... Uh now you're
10 adding extra sentences.

11 LEONARD SCAROLA: I've attached a copy of
12 my most recent analysis of this project and I will be
13 happy to meet with Council Members to discuss any
14 findings.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Sorry; I
16 don't mean to be flippant, but I just gotta... I gotta
17 try to keep it moving; we've got a lot of people to
18 get to. Thank you.

19 GEOFFREY CROFT: Good afternoon, my name
20 is Geoffrey Croft; I'm President and Founder of New
21 York City Park Advocates.

22 It is truly a sad day when we are talking
23 about a plan that seizes 48 acres of public park land
24 in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park to allow one of the
25 country's largest developers to build the largest

1 mall in New York City. Sounds inconceivable, right?
2 Just when you thought this administration couldn't
3 get any lower, here we are today.

4
5 The 48 acres of public park land was
6 never part of the original plan in any way, in any
7 way, and it certainly was never approved by the City
8 Council. This is nothing but an end run around the
9 law and the City Council will be complicit when and
10 if you rubberstamp its approval. If the 48 acres of
11 public park land they are attempting to seize for the
12 project are no longer needed for parking, then it
13 should revert back to its original use; this is what
14 our elected officials should be pushing for instead
15 of allowing our public spaces to be given away to
16 politically-connected developers.

17 The City Council has a legal obligation
18 to protect public park land and that certainly
19 includes not giving it away to private developers.
20 There are a number of legal issues surrounding the
21 attempted disposition of this public land.

22 Last week we were signatures on a letter,
23 along with Willets Point United, which was sent to
24 City Council lawyers Elizabeth Fine and Gary Altman

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 187
2 requesting a legal opinion from the Council on these
3 very issues.

4 The City Council has a legal obligation
5 to do its due diligence on this important issue
6 before any decisions are made. It's telling that
7 less than three minutes of this hearing have been so
8 far been spent talking about public park land.

9 Let's be very clear. The 1961 statute
10 that the City and the applicants are so desperately
11 trying to rely on in order to justifying being
12 allowed to develop the public park land for non-park
13 purposes does not permit a shopping mall, much less a
14 1.4 million square foot mall.

15 Administrative Code 18-118 explicitly
16 states that any monies gained from a temporary lease
17 on the property must go back to the property. Back
18 into the property, not line the pockets of Related or
19 Sterling Equities.

20 The quote the law directly, the revenue
21 must aid "in the financing of the construction and
22 operation of stadium, grounds, parking areas and
23 facility, and any additions, alterations or
24 improvements thereto or equipment thereof."
25

1
2 Clearly this is not the case. The law
3 simply does not authorize a Willets Point project.
4 It does not enable use of a parking lot or authorize
5 retail stores and certainly something that is
6 primarily a shopping mall.

7 The proposed give-away of public park is
8 being done simply to sweeten the deal for Related so
9 they have a guaranteed revenue stream up front in
10 order to help them offset their investments in
11 building the rest of Willets Point. This is
12 disgraceful. This Plan is about greed, pure and
13 simple. It is a nightmare for the residents of
14 Queens in so many ways and for the City's taxpayers
15 at large who are greatly subsidizing this project.
16 The corporate welfare must stop.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you Mr. Croft.
18 These two boxes are yours, by the way, right?

19 GEOFFREY CROFT: They're not, but they're
20 wonderful boxes. [laugh] I think they're uh... are they
21 yours, David? Are they? Okay. I think they are.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Alright, just makin'
23 sure. Just one quick question, Mr. Schwartz; is
24 there anything you didn't say before that you really
25 feel you have to get on the record?

2 DAVID SCHWARTZ: Oh, Community Board 3
3 voted against this project 30-1.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Duly noted. We lost
5 Julissa, but we wanna thank you very much and we're
6 gonna keep moving; there's gonna be some discussions;
7 this isn't happening for a while yet, we have... do
8 have a little bit of time here to discuss this and
9 we're listening; I know you guys, you know, have been
10 beamed down into cynicism, but you know this hearing
11 is for us to hear exactly what the community concerns
12 are, to hear what the concerns are of the businesses
13 and everyone else and try to come to an agreement
14 that either makes sense or to vote up or down on a
15 project that would or would not make sense..

16 [interpose]

17 GEOFFREY CROFT: But the developer..

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I'll let you answer
19 that, even though I sort of wasn't answering at it to
20 you, but go ahead Mr. Croft, quick. [interpose]

21 GEOFFREY CROFT: No, I mean it's not just
22 about listening, it's also about following the law
23 and the letter of the law, that 1961 document clearly
24 does not allow this... these purposes and it was... not
25 on... the law; allow any project to make permanent

2 claim on the park land or its facilities, because the
3 revenue was supposed to fund their property. It
4 clearly states in that. So when you guys ask that of
5 the applicants, you know the City Council; again,
6 that's one of the reasons that letter was sent to the
7 Council; you guys legally have to make a
8 determination before this, so it's not just, you
9 know, the community rising up who are opposed, it's
10 not just the business owners; it's also a matter of
11 law and we very strongly implore you to make a legal...
12 [interpose]

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Alright.

14 GEOFFREY CROFT: decision on this.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Thank
16 you very much. [interpose]

17 DAVID SCHWARTZ: DAVID SCHWARTZ: Can I
18 just make one more quick comment? One... two seconds...
19 just read... [crosstalk]

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I am so sinental
21 [phonetic] about this, but go ahead.

22 DAVID SCHWARTZ: read... no, read the
23 contract. 'Cause I know they refer... [interpose]

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

2 DAVID SCHWARTZ: to the contract a lot;
3 there's a \$35 million out, there are several outs
4 here... [interpose]

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right.

6 DAVID SCHWARTZ: where the housing will
7 never be built.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. No, uh
9 we... okay. Thank you. [interpose]

10 GEOFFREY CROFT: Please check the park
11 land. Thanks.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: More... [crosstalk]

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We'll discuss that.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Sorry. I'm
15 sorry; panel?

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Do you have a
17 question? Hold on. Who do you have?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Uhm... [interpose]

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: One... one second.

20 Mr. Comrie does have his own question. [interpose]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Just to... I'm

22 sorry; you said that we have to make the legal
23 determination about what specifically; you didn't say
24 what specifically? [crosstalk]

2 GEOFFREY CROFT: Absolutely. Well we
3 sent... there... there's a copy of the letter that we... we
4 sent... several Council Members asked New York City
5 Park Advocates and Willets Point United to put that
6 in writing. There is a legal, a very legal, very
7 legal reasons why the '61 document that the
8 applicants are so desperately relying on; it... they're
9 not allowed to build here and the City Law Department
10 is saying one thing; the City Council has a legal
11 obligation to do their own due diligence. And when
12 we clearly... when we read that... the law, the land that
13 was never alienated, which by law you have to; the
14 City Law Department, we certainly disagree with their
15 assessment, their legal assessment on whether they
16 can agree or not. We've... as I mentioned, we've had
17 several City Council Members saying, well, the City
18 Council should do its own legal investigation on it.
19 And again, we sent a letter last week with Willets
20 Point United to Miss Fine and Gary Altman...
21 [interpose]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay.

23 GEOFFREY CROFT: saying that. And you
24 guys have a copy of the letter there...

25 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: 'Kay.

2 GEOFFREY CROFT: along with our
3 statement. And again, the Urban Justice Center has
4 also weighed in on this. So there are a number of
5 legal issues involving the taking of mapped park
6 land. This is 48 acres; this is even much greater
7 than the Yankee stadium debacle. And you know, this
8 is not the only project you know that's being
9 considered in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I understand. So
11 you're asking us to make... you're asking our Law
12 Department to make a legal interpretation of the '61...
13 [interpose]

14 GEOFFREY CROFT: Absolutely. Absolutely.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay. Alright.

16 GEOFFREY CROFT: Before any decision is
17 made... [crosstalk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: And... and do you
19 have a copy? Do we have a copy of... [crosstalk]

20 GEOFFREY CROFT: Yes. Uhm-hm.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: all your
22 testimonies from everyone on the panel [interpose]

23 GEOFFREY CROFT: Yes. Oh yeah, we... yeah,
24 not... not... [crosstalk]

25 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yeah, we have the...

2 GEOFFREY CROFT: Yeah, the legal... the
3 letter that we sent last week dated August 30th and
4 also as well as our testimony... [interpose]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Okay.

6 GEOFFREY CROFT: And no, we definitely
7 appreciate the work that you've done on this, but you
8 know, this is a very serious thing and it saddens me
9 greatly that we've spent less than three minutes
10 while... while the applicants were here talking about
11 the actual park land.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

14 [interpose]

15 GEOFFREY CROFT: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very much.

17 Thank you panel. Alright, I'd like to now call up a
18 panel in favor of this, Paul Fernandes, from the
19 Building and Construction Trades Council, Pat Dolan
20 from the Steamfitters, Mike McGuire from the Mason
21 Tenders, Pat Purcell from UFCW Local 1500 and James
22 Conway from IUOE Local 14. Are they all here, five
23 of you, one, two, three, four... did I lose somebody?
24 Oh no, here he is. Okay. Gentlemen, thank you.
25 Again, thank you for your patience and the audience,

2 thank you and we're gonna limit you to two minutes
3 each, so please try it in your head to work out the
4 two minutes; I... you know, I try not to be obnoxious
5 about it, but if I keep letting people go over it
6 causes me problems later on. So who wants to go
7 first, Paul? I don't know. Okay.

8 PAUL FERNANDES: Good morning Mr.
9 Chairman and members of the Subcommittee; my name is
10 Paul Fernandes, I'm the Chief of Staff of the
11 Buildings and Construction Trades Council Greater New
12 York, and organization consisting of local affiliates
13 of 15 national and international unions representing
14 100,000 members in New York City. We're pleased to
15 testify today in support of the actions necessary to
16 advance the Willets Point Development Plan put
17 together by the Queens Development Group, a joint
18 venture of the Related Companies and Sterling
19 Equities.

20 Several years ago we testified in support
21 of the Willets Point Development Plan and not a lot
22 has changed in terms of the reasons why we remain
23 supportive. What has changed however is that we now
24 have a development team in place with a real history
25 of completing great projects in Queens and throughout

1 New York City. The Willets Point Development will
2 generate \$3 billion of private investment and the
3 creation of 12,000 union construction jobs and 7,100
4 permanent jobs. The commercial retail and hotel
5 space will be complimented with 2,500 housing units,
6 including 875 affordable units, important
7 transportation improvements and environmental
8 remediation.
9

10 The RFP that followed the previous ULURP
11 included strong prevailing wage and a partnership of
12 participation requirements for the construction
13 involved in the Willets Point Development Plan.
14 We're pleased that the Queens Development Group has
15 agreed to abide by these requirements. We're also
16 pleased that in addition to having made this
17 commitment it is backed in confidence that comes from
18 lengthy experience working with Sterling Equities and
19 Related at Citi Field, Hudson Yards, Time Warner
20 Center, Hunters Point South and many other projects
21 built with union labor of Building and Construction
22 Trades and these developers.

23 The council administration, private
24 developers, labor and members of the local community
25 have worked for years to get us to the point we are

2 now, which is that now we have a real opportunity to
3 take the Willets Point Development Plan from the
4 drawing board to putting shovels in the ground and
5 people to work. We therefore again urge the
6 Subcommittee and the Council to approve the actions
7 necessary to allow the Willets Point Development Plan
8 to advance. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you Mr.
10 Fernandes.

11 PATRICK DOLAN: Good afternoon Council,
12 my name is Patrick Dolan; I am President of the
13 Steamfitters Local 638 and a lifelong Queens
14 resident.

15 Steamfitters Local 638..

16 [chime]

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Sorry, you're done.

18 [laughter]

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We... just gotta reset
20 the clock.

21 PATRICK DOLAN: Steamfitters Local 638's
22 part of the New York State Pipe Trades and United
23 Association, representing unionized plumbers,
24 pipefitters, steamfitters, sprinkler fitters and
25 service technicians in the United States and Canada.

1
2 I am here to day to speak in support of the Queens
3 Development Group's continued efforts to develop
4 Willets Point.

5 When completed, their proposed project
6 will create 5 million square feet of retail,
7 entertainment, community space, a school and
8 affordable housing. This proposed project will give
9 Queens a vibrant community which will be a new
10 destination for all New Yorkers. This project, if
11 approved, will created 12,000 union construction jobs
12 to workers of all five boroughs. After completion
13 there will be 7,000 new permanent jobs at Willets
14 Point. This project will not only create a new
15 economic engine, but it will also help the
16 environment.

17 Before construction starts, 20 acres of
18 contaminated lands that are currently leaching
19 pollutants into the bay will be remediated. The
20 project will not only clean up the land; it will add
21 6 acres of open space for the people of New York.

22 I want to emphasize the importance of the
23 Queens Development Group's commitment to using
24 Building Trades labor to build this new neighborhood.
25 With that commitment, using union labor, the

1 developer will ensure that workers on this project
2 will receive good wages, are well-trained and work in
3 a safe and efficient manner. This commitment will
4 mean that my members, who also live in the area of
5 Willets Point, will be able to provide to their
6 families and support their communities. By using
7 union labor the Queens Development Group helps to
8 ensure that we create the next generation of union
9 craftsmen and women for the people of New York City.

11 This project is truly a win-win for all
12 New Yorkers. If this project is approved, Queens
13 will have a new exciting neighborhood with affordable
14 housing, more green space; an economic engine that
15 will create over 7,000 new jobs. It also will help
16 clean the environment. Most importantly, 12,000 of
17 my brothers and sisters will make this vision a
18 reality. Today in Washington and Albany and City
19 Hall, policymakers debate how do we create and
20 support the middle class. I can state,
21 unequivocally, that responsible development using
22 union labor is the answer; that is why I'm here to
23 ask your support on behalf of my hard-working members
24 of Local 638 and their families. Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you Mr. Dolan.
2
3 Mr. McGuire.

4 MIKE MCGUIRE: Good afternoon, Mike
5 McGuire, Mason Tenders District Council Laborers
6 Union. I've chopped out a bunch of my written
7 testimony because Julissa's questions pretty much
8 brought all that to the forefront.

9 I just wanna talk about how economic
10 development of this type that we're here to discuss
11 today serves as an economic engine, just the type
12 that we need to sustain the uptake and growth we've
13 seen in the legitimate construction industry lately.
14 These type of projects return between \$1.60 and
15 \$5.20, depending on the type of development and the
16 study you read, for every \$1 invested.

17 Willetts Point is a blighted area ripe for
18 redevelopment; re-envisioning this District is good
19 for the area and good for the City as a whole. Of
20 course, as a worker advocate I am concerned for the
21 existing people working in Willetts Point; fortunately
22 this is being addressed.

23 The commitment to use union labor to
24 build this project is also a boom to the City. In my
25 union roughly 80 percent of the members are New York

1 City residents, further, roughly 85 percent of our
2 apprentices are women and/or people of color.
3 Apprenticeship recruitment is done on an as-needed
4 basis. In other words, we do not recruit new
5 apprentices if there are no employment opportunities
6 for them. That's something members of the City
7 Council should remember every time they pass a
8 non-union project through ULURP, that they are
9 denying opportunities for the youth of their
10 community.
11

12 As for us... for the current workers, as I
13 stated, an effort is underway to create employment
14 opportunities for the workers currently employed at
15 Willets Point; it was laid out item for item by EDC,
16 what they're doing there; more than 600 people have
17 already registered for the program from my part and
18 I'm sure many of the other building trades up here at
19 the table would agree with me; I will be happy to
20 provide the EDC with information on apprenticeship
21 recruitment in order to transition some of these
22 displaced workers into the unionized construction
23 industry.

24 This type of economic development is
25 exactly what New York City needs to grow our economy

2 to provide greater and better employment
3 opportunities, to clean up a blighted and
4 environmentally unsound area and to maintain our
5 position as the premier world class city on the
6 planet. Do not be swayed by nimbius [phonetic] and
7 those with narrow self-interest driven agenda; do
8 what's best for our city, approve this project with
9 all due haste. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, sir. Not
11 bad.

12 JAMES CONWAY: Good afternoon Honorable
13 Council Members, Honorable Chair. My name is James
14 Conway, I'm with the International Union of Operating
15 Engineers Local 14-14B; I'm here to speak in favor of
16 this application. Also, I am a lifelong Queens
17 resident; I was almost born at the World's Fair, so I
18 know Willets Point very well. Also what I find... what
19 I... what I'm recognizing about growing up in Queens
20 and living in Queens now is that our young people are
21 working hard, they're goin' to school, they... they... no
22 anti-social behavior in Queens and next week a lot of
23 the residents... a lot of young people from Corona,
24 Jackson Heights and Flushing will be goin' to Syria
25 to fight for our country. We need to create

1
2 opportunities for the young people of Queens so they
3 can have jobs and sustainable jobs. This is like a
4 mini GI Bill. If we create... Willets Point Project
5 will be able to create jobs for our young people, a
6 future for our young people and welcome the young
7 people that are servin' our country with education,
8 training and jobs. So please approve this project
9 for the young people of Queens. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, sir and
11 we're delighted to have people who are from Queens,
12 we... we even welcome people from New Jersey, so with
13 that in mind, Pat Purcell.

14 [laughter]

15 PAT PURCELL: I'll tell ya, you know... I
16 didn't know we were doin' shtick today. Thank you
17 Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee. Thank you
18 for the opportunity to testify today; my name is Pat
19 Purcell; as you are all now aware, I'm from New
20 Jersey and I represent the 23,000 members of United
21 Food and Commercial Workers Local 1500; we represent
22 grocery workers.

23 Our union strongly urges the City Council
24 to approve the Queens Development Group's plan to
25 clean up 23 acres of contaminated land at Willets

1 Point and to transform it into a vibrant community
2 that includes new retail, a school and affordable
3 housing. The Plan will bring thousands of
4 construction jobs that pay outstanding wages and
5 thousands of post-construction jobs that will provide
6 living wages, affordable health care and many other
7 economic benefits. The benefits of these jobs will
8 extend to the local Queens community and beyond.

9
10 The Willets Point Redevelopment will also
11 include a supermarket, a critical component of the
12 project, as the City has been facing a crisis of
13 supermarket closings. The City loses approximately
14 \$1 billion in grocery sales to the suburbs annually.
15 The Willets Point Development will help capture some
16 of that lost revenue and provide even more benefits
17 and jobs to members of my union and I can assure you
18 that grocery workers' jobs, when we expand them, we
19 expand the middle class of this city.

20 These jobs, combined with new affordable
21 housing make this project a necessity, not just the
22 for members of my union, but for the entire community
23 as well.

24 Failure to approve this project will only
25 hurt the thousands of workers who will miss out on

2 critical job opportunities. At a time when we are
3 still recovering from one of the most severe
4 recessions in recent history, this project must go
5 forward. I thank you for your time.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you Mr.
7 Purcell. I'd like to call on Council Member Ferreras
8 for a quick question.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Thank you very
10 much for your testimony. Is there any way that you
11 know ahead of time like what... how many jobs each
12 union will be represented in the project? I know
13 that we talked about 12,000 in total, but can you say
14 my union will have 700 or 500 or a 1,000 or?

15 PATRICK DOLAN: Councilwoman, before
16 that... usually before a project starts the
17 construction manager or the general contractor,
18 whoever's picked, will have an outline of all the
19 trades and how many they expect to be onto that job
20 site. It's broken either mechanically, which the
21 steamfitters do, electrically and also the plumbing
22 and then the cement workers and all. But it's broken
23 down per trade.

24 MIKE MCGUIRE: If I may. Generally, on
25 any given construction site the bulk of the workers

2 are probably laborers and carpenters and then the
3 mechanical trades; it's more complex work, but it
4 takes fewer workers to do.

5 PAT PURCELL: I would say a supermarket
6 in a development of this type, you're looking at a
7 minimum of 300 jobs.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Those are more
9 permanent?

10 PAT PURCELL: Those are permanent jobs.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Right.

12 PAT PURCELL: Yeah.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. Thank
14 you. [interpose]

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Can I... I have a
16 question actually; I don't know if it's for you Mr.
17 Purcell or not, but so... and one of the last things we
18 heard and we didn't really bring it up with the
19 regional panel, but the idea... there is a \$65 million
20 buyout in this thing where if they decide not to
21 build the housing they actually... I mean they'd be
22 investing \$65 million in a project; they possibly
23 could get out of the housing; how does that affect
24 the supermarket?

25 PAT PURCELL: Well I think...

1
2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And I mean; it may
3 not be a likely scenario only because you'd owe about
4 \$65 million, but what would happen?

5 PAT PURCELL: My theory with supermarkets
6 is, as they say, if you build it they will come,
7 because this city is so drastically under-served when
8 it comes to grocery stores. Even communities where
9 it appears that there's enough, there are... there is
10 not enough. So in regards to housing and what goes
11 forward with the housing, I still think that you're
12 going to see a... any smart operator is going to wanna
13 go into a destination like this and very often we
14 have supermarkets that are in what we would call
15 destination, less so than housing areas and are
16 extremely, extremely successful; Fairway being one of
17 them and many others as well. So regardless of that,
18 I think you're gonna see... you're gonna see sales,
19 you're gonna see supermarkets wanting to go in there
20 and you're still gonna see 300 post-construction
21 jobs.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: 'Kay. Thank you
23 gentlemen. Anybody else? Mr. Comrie? Thank you all
24 very much, thank you for your patience once again.
25 Alright. Now... [interpose]

2 PAT PURCELL: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I'm gonna call up
4 the following panel in opposition to the project.
5 Right, 'kay. I don't know if they're all here, but
6 let's try Carol LaGrasse, the famous Ben Haber, Joe
7 Ardizzone, Phil Konigsberg... is Phil still here? I
8 don't know... Henry Euler and Harbachan Singh; let's
9 see how many of you are here and we get everybody up
10 here. Uhm... uhm... alright. I'll put him on the next
11 one then. Okay. Mr. Konigsberg had to go out just
12 for a little while, so when he comes back we'll put
13 him on the next panel, I guess, unless he walks in.

14 Okay lady and gentlemen, I don't know how
15 do you decide who goes first. Alright, go ahead;
16 ladies first. I'm makin' the decision. Just make
17 sure the mic's on and it's near your face. Press the
18 button. Is it on?

19 CAROL LAGRASSE: Greetings Subcommittee
20 members... [interpose]

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: There you go.

22 CAROL LAGRASSE: my name is... my name is...
23 [clearing throat] my name is Carol LaGrasse and I'm
24 the President of the Property Rights Foundation of
25 America, a nationwide non-profit organization based

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 209
2 in Stony Creek, New York. I took 8 hours to get her
3 to speak.

4 We submitted a friend-of-the-court brief
5 on behalf of Willets Point, appellant plaintiffs in
6 the City of New York's eminent domain case.

7 I'm a civil engineer; I grew up in
8 College Point; graduated from Flushing High. In
9 fact, my brother remembers his treks with my father
10 when he went to Willets Point to buy auto parts and
11 my... before my father died in 1970, 43 years ago, he
12 said the streets of Willets Point were so bad that it
13 was shocking. So the City's hostility against the
14 cadre of parts places and other worthwhile commercial
15 services in Willets Point is unbroken.

16 Instead, the City Council should view
17 Willets Point as a priceless gathering of essential
18 industry and be pursuing every avenue in support for
19 this concentration of mutually supportive
20 enterprises, auto repair shops, parts houses,
21 refinishers, expert automobile upholstery, valued
22 specialized recyclers and heavy construction. One
23 hundred flourishing businesses remain in the 23-acre
24 Phase 1 area alone and 200 businesses remain in the
25 entire 62 acres; in spite of the City's threats from

2 illegal to lease raids in a mass fashion and phony
3 building code violations.

4 Minorities find business opportunities
5 and jobs here; the jobs afford not only wages, but
6 practical training and an immigrant's route into
7 mainstream America. There is a communality and
8 friendship in Willets Point that is palpable and I
9 hear how essential the unmatched automotive services
10 in Willets Point are to people. An elderly woman in
11 Whitestone said to me recently, "How will I get my
12 car repaired if Willets Point is gone?" A black man
13 in Bedford Stuyvesant told me, "Willets Point, of
14 course I know Willets Point, everybody goes there."

15 So that is your opportunity as a
16 Subcommittee of the legislation for the City of New
17 York, Willets Point should be a national cultural
18 heritage area; the City Council can turn away from
19 the long campaign of socioeconomic eminent domain
20 directed against Willets Point's business people,
21 employees and their families; today you have the
22 opportunity to inaugurate new policies to build up
23 the well-being of traditional essential businesses in
24 Willets Point. This is also the opportunity to
25 reject the administration's deception of the city

2 citizens, the fiasco of a plan to build housing at
3 Willetts Point, but now turned into a proposed mall on
4 City park land on the other side of the stadium..
5 [interpose]

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I'm gonna have to
7 cut... I'm gonna have to cut you off unless you can
8 finish in one sentence.

9 CAROL LAGRASSE: Just about done... with 23
10 acres of Willetts Point degraded to become the mall's
11 parking while the housing is put off into the distant
12 future. Your vote against the use of park land for a
13 mall will mean the taxpayers' savings of a shocking
14 \$200 million gift of Willetts Point property for a
15 parking lot and the additional gift of close to \$1
16 million for environmental remediation that may even
17 be unneeded. I respectfully urge you to reject the
18 proposal to sacrifice mapped park land within Corona
19 Meadows... within Flushing Meadows-Corona Park to build
20 a mall. And also like to mention that I haven't
21 checked the accuracy of this, but I understand
22 there's a fast going on now, because the group so
23 much wants to be moved in common rather than to be
24 broken up where they lose the whole... [interpose]

25 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

2 CAROL LAGRASSE: virtue of what they have
3 achieved. Thank you. [crosstalk]

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, thank you.
5 Mr. Haber, I apologize for calling you the famous
6 Mr. Haber, but I don't know if we've ever formally
7 met, but I've known you for many, many years as a
8 strong advocate for so many causes and I always read
9 your letters to the editor, so that's why I cha...
10 [crosstalk]

11 BEN HARBER: Thank you. My...

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: that's why I
13 characterize as such.

14 BEN HARBER: My name is Ben Haber; in the
15 85 years I have been a resident of this city, all in
16 Queens, I have not witnessed a more flagrant display
17 of a lack of governmental transparency fraught with
18 deviousness and deception; it remains to be seen how
19 many of you will not allow this to happen and send
20 the word out that your constituencies are not
21 billionaires and real estate moguls, but the little
22 people; the poor, the middle class and small
23 business, which is the backbone of a urban society.

24 Now Miss Ferreras, I have been to dozens
25 of meetings; make no mistake about it, the top

1 priority is a 1.4 million shopping mall; housing, if
2 it ever gets built, is at the bottom of the heap.
3 And Mr. Comrie, you hit the nail right on the head
4 when you talked about the ramps. The Van Wyck
5 Expressway is choked to capacity; there is no way, no
6 way it could ever be increased, a ramp to that is
7 akin to the infamous bridge to nowhere; it's not
8 gonna be built, nor will there be housing built; we
9 will have a 1.4 million square shopping mall.

11 The 2008 Willets Point Plan was clear and
12 unambiguous; it made no mention of a 1.4 million
13 square foot shopping mall at Citi Field. The
14 applicants now seek by virtue of the pending
15 application what they describe as a minor change to
16 that Plan, a change sought to construct on a 23-acre
17 Willets Point site, a parking area, which under
18 normal circumstances would be a minor change; in a
19 monumental lack of transparency, the minor change is
20 like the elephant in the back room; a major change.

21 The reason for the parking lots is to
22 enable the Mets to move their Citi Field parking lots
23 to Willets Point and on the vacated Citi Field lots
24 construct a 1.4 million square foot shopping mall.
25 And you Mr. Weprin hit the nail on the head; when did

2 that come about? This billionaire developer accepted
3 the 2008 Plan that you all agreed to; it had nothing
4 to do with a mall; it was... this was concocted
5 afterwards. Why can't they just do the mall; that's
6 what they accepted; I mean why da... ju... just the... the...
7 the... the Plan?

8 [chime]

9 Now, let's also... [interpose]

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Wrap up quickly.

11 BEN HARBER: let's... I mean you... yeah... you
12 didn't get an answer from them, you did not, because
13 this was cooked up with... with the Mayor, who decided
14 since they have the... the... the lease, they're gonna
15 get this project. Furthermore, the fact that they
16 have a lease does not exclude them from the
17 requirements of ULURP. My house was built in 1937,
18 before there was ULURP; if I want a land change I
19 have to go through ULURP; they have to go through
20 ULURP and the Mayor says no, because he doesn't give
21 a damn about the law. So you have every right to
22 stop this; you should stop this; this is a flagrant
23 abuse of democratic principles. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,
25 Mr. Haber. Next gentleman, Joe... [interpose]

1 JOSEPH ARDIZZONE: My name... My name is
2
3 Joseph Ardizzone; I live at Willets Point Boulevard;
4 I'm 81 years of age; I've lived there all my life;
5 that's number one. Number two, I think anyone that
6 takes park land from children is neither... if he's a
7 man, if... if he's... if... if he's a male he's not a man
8 and if it's a woman, she's not a mother. I think
9 it's disgraceful that they're able to do that to the
10 people of Willets Point. Number two, as far as the
11 taxes in New York City, they're kinda high; any
12 developer that wants to develop that land up and for
13 the... for the gentlemen that were here at the table
14 before you, the taxes are too high in New York City;
15 they can't get a low bid; they're gonna give this to
16 a low bidder. In fact, they're gonna turn around and
17 just give to the union representatives that were up
18 here; they're just gonna give them a donation towards
19 the pension fund; the pension fund is gonna be sold
20 off. At the end, when the person has to retire he's
21 gonna go with a pension fund; he's gonna say, where's
22 my pension? They're gonna point to the guy that
23 bought the fund. He's gonna turn around and tell 'em
24 sorry fellas, no more pension. Why? Uh, we made bad
25 investments; we have no money for you, period.

1 And that's one of my biggest fears of
2
3 all; they're not gonna get anymore from New York
4 City. They put a sewer line in that area right now
5 on 126th street; it went to a Jersey firm; they were
6 the lowest bidder. So there you go. There's not
7 gonna be no work for New York City, you could forget
8 about that. [interpose]

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Alright, that's...

10 JOSEPH ARDIZZONE: And as far as the
11 workers go, they're gonna have their own things when
12 they build this stuff and it's all gonna be they
13 themselves to make money.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

15 JOSEPH ARDIZZONE: And as far as anything
16 else goes, I think this is a total horror for them to
17 put all these people out of work that can't support
18 their families; we right now have people in a one-
19 family house; they've got three families in that one-
20 family home; I think that's a shame. I think the
21 peoples worry... better worry about the people of
22 Willets Point; whether they work or not... [chime]...
23 [crosstalk]

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, sir.

25 JOSEPH ARDIZZONE: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

3 HENRY EULER: My name is Henry Euler; I'm
4 First Vice President of the Auburndale Improvement
5 Association; my organization represents almost 600
6 families in the Auburndale section of Flushing and in
7 western Bayside.

8 We support our friends in the Save
9 Flushing Meadows-Corona Park coalition and also
10 Willets Point United, also New York Parks Advocates;
11 we do not want to see park land alienated from the
12 people.

13 Park land is very special, it belongs to
14 the people and we oppose the Willets West project, as
15 well as the projects of the extension of the tennis
16 stadium and the proposed soccer stadium. They all
17 involve taking away park land from the people. You
18 would never, never see this done at Central Park in
19 Manhattan, nor in Prospect Park in Brooklyn and it
20 should not be done to our flagship park in Queens.

21 We also believe that Flushing Meadows-
22 Corona Park should be landmarked, just as Central
23 Park is landmarked and Prospect Park is landmarked.
24 It should be protected for the use of the people.

1 We also object to the... these projects
2
3 because of the impact on the small businesses in the
4 area, as well as the traffic problems that it will
5 present to the neighborhoods in the area.

6 So for that reason we oppose the projects
7 that will take away the park land and we do not want
8 to see that happen, we wanna see park land continue
9 to be maintained and to be properly funded by the
10 City. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

12 Mr. Singh.

13 HARBACHAN SINGH: Thank you. My name is
14 Harbachan Singh and I am the Executive Vice President
15 of the Queens City Congress.

16 In the absence of our president I'd like
17 to provide our testimony as per the attached
18 document, which as just been submitted.

19 In brief, we are totally against the
20 granting of approval of the project and we have
21 stated our reasons very clearly. This land grab is
22 an unconscionable alienation of public park land
23 which cannot reasonably be expected to be restored,
24 even in the future, due to the permanent nature of
25 the structures proposed thereon.

1 The Queens City Congress has in the past
2 consistently opposed commercial development in the
3 park. The parking lots surrounding the stadium
4 presently sit on park land and any change in use
5 should be subject to alienation requirements. The
6 mall will destroy, through competition, hundreds of
7 nearby mom and pop shops.

8 QCC, the Queens City Congress therefore
9 requests that the Committed take into consideration
10 all the various reasons given by us and the other
11 objectors and reject the application to build at
12 Willets Point.

13 The Queens City Congress has been active
14 with the Flushing Meadows-Corona Park Conservancy;
15 the Fairness Coalition of Queens, Save Flushing
16 Meadows-Corona Park and the New York City Parks
17 Advocates over the past several months to help ensure
18 that the park remains available to the numerous
19 communities in nearby Queens. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,
21 Mr. Singh. Mr. Comrie; you have any questions?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Just wanna thank
23 the panel for coming and testifying and also to
24 acknowledge Mr. Haber, who's been a prolific advocate
25

2 for many issues in Queens; I've enjoyed reading your
3 articles also. Thank you. Thank you, panel.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Thank
5 you all very much.

6 Now a panel in favor; first from the
7 Queens Chamber of Commerce, Jack Friedman. Now, is
8 there a Jack Friedman from the League of Conservation
9 Voters as well? Come on up Jack Friedman. Jack
10 Friedman, meet Jack Friedman. Aditi Sen [phonetic]
11 from 32BJ, Maryann Rosa, from New York Central Labor
12 Council, James Buva [phonetic] from Local 3. Bua...
13 right, Bua. Sorry.

14 How many have I got out of those?
15 Mr. Haber, nice to meet you.

16 And then, do we have five? I have it
17 here if we need more; hold on. How many are you?
18 Four or five? 'Kay. Alright; I'm gonna have to
19 bring up the next... one of the last three or four...
20 Alright, I'll bring the last ones later, next panel;
21 I apologize.

22 Had you met before?

23 JACK FRIEDMAN: We just met.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thought it was a
3 mistake; I wasn't sure. Okay, who wants to start?
4 Anyone not named Friedman; I don't know.

5 JIMMY BUA: Okay, I'll start.

6 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Go ahead Local 3.
7 Yeah, uh...

8 JIMMY BUA: Okay; how's that?

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yeah.

10 JIMMY BUA: Jimmy Bua; I'm a business rep
11 for Local 3, that's the electricians in New York
12 City; my task is the Borough of Queens.

13 I don't wanna repeat what the Building
14 and Trades man before me had said about the union
15 jobs that's gonna be created; the permanent jobs that
16 are gonna be created; I mean that's all fact and
17 that's all in the testimony already. If you just
18 drive through Queens now and you see the underground
19 economy that is goin' on with all the construction
20 that's happening in Queens, it's a shame and to
21 finally have a reputable developer come in and
22 promise union jobs, good paying union jobs, you know,
23 I think that alone will trickle down like the..
24 trickle down into the economy and it's a no-brainer;
25 I mean the more money that comes into the people

2 livin' there and workin' there the more money they
3 spend; more taxes get made, or get paid, I should say
4 and it's uh... you know, it... it's a no-brainer and I'm
5 hopin' that the Council votes for this and we get
6 this done as fast as we can.

7 For the last 8 years many of my members
8 have been unemployed for long stretches of time; some
9 of them over a year and other members have been
10 furloughed for 3 or 4 months at a time and as
11 Mr. Weprin knows, we have a lot of other members that
12 live just in that area; we have our Electchester
13 complex there and I'm assured that if this project
14 goes many of those people that live in that complex
15 will be workin' on this project and I hope we have
16 your vote with this. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, sir.

18 ADITI SEN: Good afternoon, my name is
19 Aditi Sen and I'm here from SEIU Local 32BJ. Thank
20 you for giving me the opportunity to testify today.

21 I'm here to express Service Employees
22 International Union Local 32BJ's support for the
23 proposal Willets Point Project. SEIU Local 32BJ
24 represents 70,000 janitors, doormen and security
25 officers who live and work in New York City.

1 The Queens Development Group, comprised
2
3 of Related Companies and Sterling Equities will
4 develop a modern mixed-use neighborhood that will
5 conclude new commercial amenities, mixed-income
6 housing, increased open space and entertainment
7 facility.

8 We know that the cost of living is
9 continuing to rise in New York City and unemployment
10 remains at a stubborn 8.3 percent, which is well
11 above the national average. With so many working
12 people struggling just to get by we need to do
13 everything we can to create the good jobs and
14 affordable housing that allows New Yorkers to live,
15 raise families and thrive in our city.

16 This proposed project will bring
17 environmental cleanup, a hotel and 1.4 million square
18 foot retail and entertainment center to the area. On
19 top of that it is projected to create 2,500 new
20 housing units, 35 percent of them affordable. If the
21 project is successfully completed it will create over
22 7,000 permanent jobs; this includes many building
23 service jobs, ranging from window cleaners,
24 superintendents to maintenance workers and porters
25 that all pay good wages and health and retirement

1 benefits. Jobs with good wages and benefits help
2
3 workers rise out of poverty and provide a much needed
4 boost to the local economy; however, several
5 developers in the City no longer commit to that, so
6 it's really a pleasure to have Related and Sterling
7 Equities commit to that for this project.

8 So for these reasons we support the
9 redevelopment of Willets Point. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, right on
11 time.

12 MARYANN ROSA: Good afternoon, my name is
13 Maryann Rosa and I'm here on behalf of the New York
14 City Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO. Thank you for
15 allowing me to speak today in support of the
16 redevelopment of Willets Point.

17 The New York City Central Labor Council
18 represents over 300 unions, including 1.3 million
19 workers. We firmly believe in responsible economic
20 development and we look forward to working with
21 developers to create good jobs and opportunities for
22 those in or aspiring to join the middle class. And
23 while the Queens Development Group is committed to
24 creating good jobs, the project also provides much
25 more for the Queens community.

1 It is not only creating thousands of
2 union construction jobs and permanent living wage
3 jobs; it also creating a mixed-use community that
4 will require other types of jobs in order to be
5 viable. Housing, retail, a school; a supermarket are
6 all key elements of what will eventually become the
7 new Willets Point.
8

9 Our members, who include teachers,
10 bakers, truck drivers, grocery workers and so many
11 other professions, will be benefit from the
12 opportunities this new neighborhood will create.
13 This is the kind of project this area has needed for
14 so long; one that will help solve the environmental
15 blight that has stood in the way of a real
16 neighborhood cropping up and create the kinds of jobs
17 that remain badly needed 5 years after the great
18 recession.

19 The project will create thousands of
20 construction jobs that pay outstanding wages and
21 thousands of post-construction jobs that will provide
22 living wages and other benefits.

23 In short, this is a development that will
24 make a difference and positively alter the lives of
25 New York's working men and women; it's going to

2 create an economic engine that enhances Queens. We
3 strongly support the proposed plan to redevelop
4 Willets Point. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very much.
6 Mr. Friedman, the younger.

7 JACK FRIEDMAN: Good afternoon Mr. Chair
8 and other members of the Subcommittee. My name is
9 Jack Friedman; I'm here to represent the New York
10 League of Conservation Voters, a statewide
11 environmental organization. We have over 15,000
12 members in New York City, including many in the
13 Borough of Queens.

14 Expanding waterfront access, improving
15 recreational opportunities and rehabilitation
16 brownfields are among the League's top priorities,
17 not only in New York City, but across our State. The
18 redevelopment of Willets Point is in line with all
19 three of these environmental priorities.

20 First is the issue of waterfront access.
21 For far too long Flushing Bay and Flushing River have
22 been highly polluted and are all but inaccessible to
23 the public. Many of our members kayak and recreate
24 in the waters of Queens and this project will help to

1 transform these neglected waterways and finally allow
2 the public to enjoy them.

3
4 Closely related to waterfront access is
5 the issue of open space. Despite its proximity to
6 downtown Flushing and Corona, Willets Point is
7 currently a no-go zone for the local community. The
8 public parks in Corona and Flushing are highly
9 utilized and far too few in number, as anyone in this
10 room could attest. The addition of open space in
11 this congested area certainly won't attract a benefit
12 of the redevelopment plan.

13 Finally, Willets Point is a large
14 brownfield site that frankly should have been cleaned
15 up years ago; widespread petroleum contamination,
16 with additional potential contamination from paints,
17 cleaning solvents and automotive fluids have been
18 well-documented. The simple fact of the matter is
19 that every day that contamination is allowed to sit
20 in the soil and that ground water is another day... and
21 that ground water another day at Flushing Creek and
22 Flushing Bay are made worse. Redevelopment projects
23 like this are absolutely essential to address the
24 pollution that threatens our environment, as well as
25 the health of local residents.

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Thank you very much for your time today
and for affording us this opportunity to speak.
Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. It's
like to tell the truth, right; will the real Jack
Friedman please... [interpose]

JACK FRIEDMAN: Besides the age
difference, there's a font size difference as well.
Happy Anniversary.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify
today; my name is Jack Friedman, too, and I am the
Executive Director of the Queens Chamber of Commerce.

As the City Council considers the Willets
Point redevelopment, it's important that council
members understand just how significant this
particular project is for the entire Queens economy.
By redeveloping 23 acres of contaminated land through
a \$3 billion private investment, the Queens
Development Group will transform Willets Point into a
vibrant mixed-use neighborhood that will bring a
flood of jobs and economic activity to the community,
a community which is not seeing economic development
now.

1 The positive impact of the project will
2 extend from Flushing and Corona to all neighborhoods
3 of the Borough, 7,100 permanent new jobs; over 12,000
4 construction jobs will be created. Hotel workers
5 will be unionized; be paid a living wage, building
6 workers, security guards will be paid the City's
7 prevailing wage and many of these workers will shop
8 at local Queens businesses, further stimulating
9 activity in the area.
10

11 The new retail at Willets Point will also
12 help Queens retain some of the billions of dollars in
13 spending the City now loses to the suburbs, including
14 approximately \$1 million in grocery sales alone.

15 The hotel entertainment aspects of the
16 project will attract visitors who will spend money at
17 local businesses and patronize the Borough's cultural
18 attractions. And as you know, tourism and
19 hospitality is a major focus of the Queens Chamber of
20 Commerce, and please download our new app,
21 thisisqueens.com.

22 And the creation of affordable, market
23 rate housing will add additional diversity and
24 economic activity to the neighborhood.
25

1 We cannot afford to squander this
2
3 opportunity to revitalize Willets Point; I wanna make
4 sure the Councilwoman is happy; I'm hoping you will
5 join me in supporting this redevelopment plan. Thank
6 you very much.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. What was
8 that site for getting the Queens app again?

9 JACK FRIEDMAN: Thisisqueens.com.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thisisqueens.com.
11 Okay, I wanted to make sure you got your commercial
12 in.

13 JACK FRIEDMAN: There you go.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Friedman, let me
15 ask you a question, 'cause you were very vocal during
16 the time of developing Willets Point, during the RFP
17 process of putting... you had a lot of big ideas, I
18 remember you talked about a convention center, you
19 even talked about hockey teams; a lot of different
20 ideas for there, hotels and housing and... this was not
21 one of the things I ever heard you talk about, about
22 putting a mall or a shopping center on... on the
23 parking lot at Citi Field; you know, how do you... how
24 do you feel about this... this project and how does it

1 compare to other things that you had envisioned when
2 the 2008 rezoning went in?

3
4 JACK FRIEDMAN: So originally we were
5 discussing the 62 acres at Willets Point and we had
6 advocated strongly for a convention center; we still
7 have 40 acres at Willets Point to play with and we're
8 hoping at some point in the future, should the State
9 have table gaming, we could look at other things, we
10 can look at convention centers, we can look at other
11 types of economic activity...

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Uhm-hm.

13 JACK FRIEDMAN: but for now this is
14 what's on the table. So for us to oppose any project
15 which creates good, well-paying jobs, which is gonna
16 stimulate the economy, which is gonna create
17 opportunities for other businesses, would be foolish
18 on our behalves. So while we didn't get everything
19 that we wanted, nobody ever does, we're very
20 satisfied what's on the table now.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And the members of
22 the Chambers are happy with this Plan, they think
23 it's gonna be a good economic engine for the County?

24 JACK FRIEDMAN: Yeah, certain members of
25 the Chambers... [interpose]

1 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: City.

2 JACK FRIEDMAN: still want that
3 convention center first and foremost...

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right.

5 JACK FRIEDMAN: it's just not in the
6 cards for right now. Stand-alone convention centers
7 really don't do well; we need to have some sort of
8 anchor that goes along with it. But I will tell you
9 that hospitality and tourism, Queens is desperate for
10 that destination area, so whether the destination area
11 is to improve tennis center, new Citi Field or this
12 entertainment center at Willets Point, I think all of
13 these add to what Queens is tryin' to do, which is to
14 keep those tourists who come in through Kennedy and
15 LaGuardia Airports...

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Uhm-hm.

17 JACK FRIEDMAN: as the Council woman
18 noted, LaGuardia's a quarter-mile away; we need to
19 get those people here and shopping here in Queens,
20 spending their money in Queens and that way we'll be
21 employing people in Queens.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. A power-
23 hitting outfielder would help get us a few more
24

25

2 people also, but that's another story. I'd like to
3 call on... [crosstalk]

4 JACK FRIEDMAN: A mutual thought.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Council Member
6 Ferreras, who has some questions.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Thank you to
8 the panel. Jack, can you speak a little bit to the
9 small business corridor along Roosevelt Avenue,
10 'cause we've also, you know, had very... various
11 conversations with the developer in which my priority
12 is also to ensure that we not weaken the existing
13 fabric of Roosevelt Avenue, understanding that there
14 is a need for greater organization of the small
15 businesses along the corridor. And as a chamber, I
16 know we've been in many talks, but are there other
17 opportunities that you see down the road where we can
18 continue to support the small businesses along the
19 corridor?

20 JACK FRIEDMAN: So as you're well aware,
21 we have been very, very active in the expansion of
22 the bid, the 82nd Street bid all along the corridor
23 of Roosevelt Avenue, from 82nd Street all the way to
24 114th Street and the Chamber has invested hundreds of

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 234
2 hours of our personnel time going into these
3 businesses and explaining to them...

4 [background noise]

5 JACK FRIEDMAN: excuse me... just how
6 impor... [crosstalk]

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Not me; I have no
8 idea what it was.

9 JACK FRIEDMAN: just how important it is
10 to organize, especially at this time. We are very,
11 very concerned about current businesses along that
12 corridor, the businesses in Corona, in Elmhurst, in
13 Jackson Heights; in East Elmhurst and we wanna make
14 sure that whatever happens with the mall is not going
15 to have a negative impact on those small local
16 businesses.

17 We think in many ways that by having the
18 mall it will actually attract new shoppers to the
19 area. Just like the U.S. Open, we've spent a great
20 deal of time and a great deal of money and effort
21 making sure the people who come to the U.S. Open
22 spend their money in Queens restaurants, in Corona or
23 in Jackson Heights and Elmhurst, exploring the
24 diverse culture of Queens and really enjoying the
25 food from around the world that Queens has to offer.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 235
2 We think this is another opportunity for small
3 businesses. Yes, competition can be healthy and as
4 long as they're all on the same playing field; a lot
5 of these small businesses like are niche businesses,
6 a lot of them are ethnic businesses, a lot of them
7 are restaurants and most of the types of businesses
8 we see along the corridor of Roosevelt Avenue are not
9 gonna be replicated within a mall environment. So we
10 think that both areas will benefit from each other
11 and will feed off each other and we're gonna continue
12 to work with your office, with Seth Taylor's 82nd
13 Street bid, to make sure that this bid expansion,
14 from 82nd to 114th Street does become a reality.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Comrie.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: 'Kay. The other
17 malls in Queens; do they have... what are their vacancy
18 rates or turnover rates; do you have an idea of it
19 and how do you think that this mall can position
20 itself so that it can be a destination location?

21 JACK FRIEDMAN: Sure. So the biggest
22 mall and the closest mall is the Queens Center Mall,
23 which per capita, per square foot capita is actually
24 the busiest mall in the entire country. There's more
25 money spent on a per capita per square foot basis in

1
2 Queens Center Mall than anywhere else. And we spoke
3 to Macerich before we took a position on this mall to
4 see how they felt it was going to affect them. They
5 have no concerns about this. And you know, my
6 immediate thing was, that doesn't make a lot of
7 sense, they're so close, but they absolutely believe
8 and we've spoken to people very high up in the
9 organization; that this is something that will not
10 have a detrimental affect and will actually attract
11 new customers to the Queens environment.

12 So our bigger competitors are really not
13 so much other Queens malls, it's the Roosevelt Fields
14 and the malls from other parts of the area that are
15 not within the boundaries of New York City. In
16 Queens we really have no other mall that competes
17 like a Queens Center, which can compete on this
18 scale. So as long as Macerich is happy and the
19 people there, we have no reason to believe
20 differently.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Do you think
22 there's enough transportation access? The difference
23 between Queens Center Mall and this mall is that
24 there are two subway lines that stop right within the
25 Queens Center Mall footprint... [interpose]

1 JACK FRIEDMAN: Ye...

2 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: or you can walk
3 from the center... walk from the subway, you know, and
4 right into the mall.
5

6 JACK FRIEDMAN: Yeah, Queen Center has
7 great transportation; there's no doubt, there's bus
8 service and there's subway service, but Willets
9 Point, as we advocated, when were talkin' about a
10 convention center, has great access as well because
11 we have the railroad, we have the subway and we have
12 the bus service. So will other improvements have to
13 be made? Well we're talking about things like, the
14 opening of the Prince Street Station in Flushing and
15 talk of possibly opening up a Long Island Railroad
16 Station in Elmhurst. I think there are other
17 conversations that are going along simultaneously
18 that we need to improve intra-Queens transit as a
19 general rule anyway. If you would tell me that the
20 mall was gonna open tomorrow; are we ready today, and
21 actually the answer is yes, I do believe that we have
22 the infrastructure set aside; I know when we talk
23 about the Long Island Railroad having only two tracks
24 available along this area at night, I notice there is
25 a third unused track; I was curious whether that

2 could be activated. So I think that we have to
3 discuss other ways of people getting there, but you
4 do have great access from the 7, it does connect at
5 74th Street to the E and the F and the R and I think
6 that the Long Island Railroad and possible talks with
7 the MTA to reduce the fair, because I was so angry on
8 Sunday night when I found out to go to Flushing to
9 Willets Point is the same price as going from
10 Flushing to Penn Station. Something has to be done
11 with the zones to make it a little bit more equitable
12 to intra-Queens transit on the Long Island Railroad.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: And have you seen
14 a... have... have you... you've looked... excuse me. Have
15 you looked at the need for the ramps and have you
16 opined an opinion on the timing to put the ramps in?

17 JACK FRIEDMAN: We really have not looked
18 at it that closely; we understand it's a long
19 process; we understand it's a very necessary part of
20 the project, but I don't know enough about it to
21 speak about it.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Uhm-hm. And you
23 talked earlier about more people from the USTA going
24 to Queens restaurants; have you been able to track
25 that as yet?

1 JACK FRIEDMAN: We will be able to track
2
3 it this year because of our new app, thisisqueens.dot
4 com, but what we've gotten this year from the USTA
5 was the ability to have a kiosk; we gave out over
6 10,000 brochures with over 50 restaurants along the
7 Roosevelt Avenue corridor, from Jackson Heights to
8 Flushing; we were able to use our phone app and
9 advertise our phone app, which advertises every
10 single restaurant in Queens by type of food, you know
11 the type of food you want. So I think that this
12 year, for the first time that's been just an
13 anecdotal kinda figure; we'll have some more hard
14 figures after this U.S. Open is over.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: And don't you
16 think some of those restaurants wouldn't mind having
17 an opportunity to open either as kiosk at the mall or
18 as a mall restaurant as well and is there a project
19 that is helping them to make that happen?

20 JACK FRIEDMAN: So... so I... I don't know
21 the particulars yet; I think that there's probably an
22 option open for some restaurants, restaurants like
23 Pio Pio which have multiple locations, which are
24 large. But my guess says that most of the small
25 restaurants are not really mall candidates; that's

2 not the type of restaurants you see in Roosevelt
3 Field or in Queens Center. Whether it be done on a
4 kiosk basis, possibly for bakeries and things like
5 that; I'm not exactly sure what's gonna happen. But
6 I'm also confident that just by being close enough to
7 the mall that people, when they come to Queens and
8 they want to explore the diversity of our ethnic
9 cultures and the diversity of our food choices will
10 go a few blocks away or a quarter-mile away to taste
11 great food from Colombia, from Mexico, from the
12 Dominican Republic, from Ethiopia; from Egypt all
13 within just a few, you know, one subway stop.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Thank you. Thank
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I'd like to call on
17 Council Member Ferreras again.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: I just... I just
19 wanted to share also with Chair Comrie that we're in
20 discussions with the developers on all the
21 opportunities where we could have small businesses
22 represented within the mall and the food court is
23 one, since we're known for our diversity in culinary
24 opportunities and even food trucks and... and different
25 innovative ways that a lot of the immigrant families

2 have developed organically in the neighborhood; how
3 do we translate them. But the reality is, we also
4 want them to be sustainable, so that's another
5 opportunity for how... kind of thinking about business
6 plans and I don't wanna bring a business into the
7 mall it not be able to survive, so we're in those
8 conversations.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Alright, well
10 thank you all very much, even those named Friedman.

11 Alright, I'd like to call up this
12 following panel in opposition, Phil Konigsberg, back
13 from wherever you were, James Kola [phonetic], Len
14 Maniace, however I pronounce that, Marco Neira and
15 Sergio Aguirre. Okay. What'd you say?

16 Okay. Okay, we need more water.

17 MALE VOICE: More water.

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. [speaking
19 Spanish]. Alright, whenever you're ready. No, not
20 for me so much; just them. Okay. I'm good.

21 MALE VOICE: [speaking Spanish]

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I'm sorry? Whenever
23 you're ready; go ahead... [crosstalk]

24 JAMES KOLA: Sure, no problem, we'll
25 start down this end. My name is James Kola; I am a

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 242
2 resident of Queens, a life-long democrat and I
3 represent a Aurelio Arcabascio, who is running for
4 Queens Borough president in this year's election.

5 When we were made aware of the
6 affirmation of award to Sterling Properties and
7 Related Companies by the current Mayor and the
8 current Queens Borough president, we were left
9 questioning why; why was our park land yet again
10 being endangered for the benefit of the private
11 sector? How is that the small businesses that have
12 been at Willets Point still feel they are not being
13 fully heard as to their questions and concerns.

14 We believe that this project has had many
15 deceptions and many stated processes that have not
16 been adhered to and moreover, circumvented. It is
17 our request that you vote no and at least wait for a
18 new mayor and new Queens Borough president to better
19 serve the people and the County of Queens. It will
20 also hold the next mayor and the next Queens Borough
21 president accountable for any decisions and actions
22 taken rather than empty administrations that will no
23 longer be in office.

24 Small business owners and residents of
25 Queens include our Hispanic brothers and sisters that

1 own and/or earn a living at many of the Willets Point
2 businesses. Many democrat and non-democrat residents
3 are opposing the Queens County democratic political
4 machine that is trying to install their next Queens
5 Borough president who frequently brags that her
6 mentor, colleague and role model was Claire Shulman,
7 who had been put up on that easel earlier before.

8 Well if Miss Katz has Claire Shulman as a
9 role model, Miss Shulman was someone who was hit
10 with, if memory serves, what was the largest lobbying
11 fine in City history concerning Willets Point.

12 With all of these things considered, it
13 is hard not to be fearful, again as a resident,
14 someone who lives in Queens, that the public will get
15 taken advantage of here in this situation. Thank
16 you.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Didn't
18 wanna rule you out'a order; I didn't know uh, what my
19 role was on that one. But okay, thank you. Alright,
20 Mr. Konigsberg.

21 PHIL KONIGSBERG: Thank you. First I'd
22 just like to say that it's great to be back for
23 having public hearings in the main chambers here and
24

2 not across the street; I've been comin' here for 25
3 years and it's great to be back.

4 I'd like to just preface one thing; I've
5 been... I'm a member of Community Board 7, as well as
6 some other organizations and I was on Board 7 five
7 years ago; when the Board approved it I was very
8 adamantly against it five years go; similarly I was...
9 I voted against the approval of this process at the
10 Community Board 7 level.

11 I would like to state though that
12 Councilman Comrie had mentioned something about the
13 previous developers that were here earlier today; I'd
14 just like to say that the joint venture, I consider
15 them very reputable, almost like a family that are
16 here, but I'm against the motion and clearly the CDC
17 continues to have the eminent domain on the table; I
18 was against that five years ago; I'm against it now.
19 I... I don't believe that any way should we have a mall
20 on public park land; if the area next... where Shea
21 Stadium use to stand, if that is not gonna be used in
22 a capacity now, it should be returned back to public
23 park land and green areas as well.

24 And I would just like to say that we... I
25 believe we had before me... I had to step out... we have

2 people that are living here, Joe is the ori... you
3 know, [chime] grew up his whole life in Willets Point
4 and to basically tell him he's gotta leave when his
5 whole life has been there, I think it's just... dead...
6 dead against that. Thank you. [interpose]

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Thank
8 you, Phil. Okay, next; pass the mic down and...

9 PHIL KONIGSBERG: Yeah. Here you go.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: They have their own
11 mic on the other side.

12 PHIL KONIGSBERG: Okay.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: State your name for
14 the record please.

15 LEN MANIACE: Yes, Len Maniace; I'm a
16 life-long Queens resident and Vice President of the
17 Jackson Heights Beautification Group, a group that
18 has been around for 25 years doing great things in
19 Jackson Heights.

20 JHBG asks the City Council to deny this
21 application. The Plan before us today bares little
22 resemblance to the Willets Point proposal approved in
23 2008. The main priority of that plan was housing;
24 this is not that proposal.

1 Unlike the Willets Point Plan, this one
2
3 calls for building a 1.4 million square foot shopping
4 mall; this is not some minor cosmetic change to the
5 original plan.

6 That shopping mall would be built atop 30
7 acres of New York City park land, land long protected
8 by public policy and usually subject to acre for acre
9 replacement. Interestingly, no such replacement is
10 being talked about here.

11 The original plan called for affordable
12 housing to make up 35 percent of the approximately
13 5,500 new housing units, but under this plan housing
14 is relegated to Phase 2 and the affordable housing is
15 not scheduled for completion until the distant date
16 of 2030 or later. What's more, the housing is
17 contingent on the hugely expansive construction of
18 new Van Wyck Expressway ramps, something that neither
19 the City nor the developers are obligated to build.

20 There are other reasons for the City
21 Council to vote no. The people of Queens do not want
22 this. Community Board voted 30-1 against it.
23 Community Board 7 initially voted against it, but in
24 a do-over vote approved the plan by 20-18, even
25 allowing for the do-over... [chime] I'm almost

2 finished... the combined vote was 48 opposed, 23 in
3 favor, clear community opposition. What's more, the
4 Queens Civic Congress, which represents 100 plus
5 civic associations, opposes the plan, calling it an
6 unjustified, unnecessary and inexcusable abuse of the
7 City's land use powers.

8 I'm just gonna skip down here. The 1961
9 legislation that the mega mall application is
10 predicated upon is wishful thinking. A letter by the
11 Urban Justice Center notes the mall is not authorized
12 by that amendment. Willets Point West will create a
13 traffic nightmare, bringing an additional 108,000
14 vehicle trips, well beyond the capacities of highways
15 and side streets. And it's interesting to note that
16 of all the solutions to... [interpose]

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Alright, I... I gotta
18 cut you off, because uh I... you're... you're a little
19 over the time, so if you wanna give me one more
20 sentence, that's okay.

21 LEN MANIACE: Okay.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: But interesting to
23 note; we can't go to... [interpose]

24 LEN MANIACE: that... that... of all the
25 solutions that we've heard to deal with traffic,

2 whether it's Willets Point, Willets Point West or
3 LaGuardia Airport, all of these solutions are auto-
4 related; no transit-related. So in effect, this
5 development and the mitigating facts... the mitigation
6 that's being proposed puts us back in the 1960's, the
7 auto-orient of 1960's and not the environmental
8 sustainable 2010's. Please do the right thing and
9 deny this application.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

11 Gentlemen.

12 MARCO ONEIDA: [speaking Spanish]. My
13 name is Marco Neira; I'm the presi... [interpose]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Can you guys
15 give me one second?

16 MARCO NEIRA: Sure.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: You can testify
18 in English [speaking Spanish]?

19 MARCO NEIRA: I can, [speaking Spanish].

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: [speaking
21 Spanish]... [interpose]

22 MARCO NEIRA: [speaking Spanish]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: [speaking
24 Spanish]... [interpose]

25 MARCO NEIRA: Okay.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: [speaking
3 Spanish]

4 MARCO NEIRA: Okay.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: [speaking
6 Spanish] [interpose]

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yeah, barely.

8 MARCO NEIRA: Okay, so... uh... uh...

9 [crosstalk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay, whatever...
11 [interpose]

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I... I prefer English;
13 I'm just sayin'... [crosstalk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: and for those
15 of you that are challenged...

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: 'cause I don't know,
17 uh...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: those of... those
19 of you that are linguistically challenged, I'm
20 giving... I'm asking them to testify in whatever
21 language they're comfortable; it would be translated
22 in the transcript and we actually all speak Spanish,
23 so... [interpose]

24 MARCO NEIRA: Okay.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: we're gonna be
3 right with you... [interpose]

4 MARCO NEIRA: [speaking Spanish]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: [speaking
6 Spanish]

7 MARCO NEIRA: [speaking Spanish]

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [speaking Spanish]

9 SERGIO AGUIRRE: [speaking Spanish]...
10 [interpose]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: [speaking
12 Spanish]

13 SERGIO AGUIRRE: [speaking Spanish]

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [speaking Spanish]

15 [applause]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: [speaking
17 Spanish], so we're gonna have to hold our applause.

18 But I just wanted to... for those of you that are here
19 that won't be able to hear the translation, the first
20 testimony was specifically about the relocation and
21 the fact that they have in good faith had constant
22 conversations with the City and that to not have a
23 plan at this stage is just not feasible and how can
24 they survive in this environment; I... you know and I

2 understand and we've been working together with the
3 co-op since 2009, which is what he testified to.

4 Also, this is the group that has put out,
5 since Friday, have been part of the hunger strike at
6 Willets Point, so to have them here testify today is
7 very important. They were part of many, many, uh
8 what they call marching or raids by various City
9 agencies that would come and shut down their
10 businesses and we helped getting people out of jail
11 from the office, but also getting businesses to open
12 up their doors again. So he specifically asked that
13 we engage in these conversations and assure that they
14 can open their doors and survive elsewhere, because
15 it is really not affordable to be able to move from
16 Willets Point and go into a different space, which is
17 what was brought up in earlier testimony with EDC.

18 So I just wanna thank you for your
19 testimony. [speaking Spanish]

20 I'm just asking them to please go back to
21 eating and I understand that you're making a very
22 strong statement by your hunger strike; one of the
23 questions that you asked was that the scheduled vote
24 be moved; we have done so and we're gonna be moving
25 it into a later date in October so that we can

2 continue these conversation. And I think that that
3 in itself is a victory for our conversations and
4 negotiations, so I would hope that you return to
5 eating; I need strong people in this fight and you
6 are all very strong in this challenge and I need you
7 to be healthy. So I say that with my present stage,
8 so we've gotta do this together and I don't want you
9 to be hunger anymore. Okay.

10 MARCO NEIRA: [speaking Spanish]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Everybody.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. [speaking
13 Spanish]. Thank you all. Thank you, Julissa.

14 Alright, I'm now gonna call up a panel in
15 favor. Of the group, Thomas Gornoff [phonetic] from
16 the Carpenters Union, Miranda Nelson from the Hotel
17 Trades Council, Patrick... Patrick, I can't read your
18 last name, from 164th Street, don't even know if
19 you're here, Alison Baia [phonetic] from New Yorkers
20 for Parks, and Jessica Walker, Partnership for New
21 York City.

22 Is Patrick here, name I couldn't
23 pronounce, with a D. He might've left. Again uhm...
24 think it's Donaghy, maybe, Patrick Donaghy, yeah; he
25 was in here in favor; it doesn't say his affiliation,

2 but it has his address on 164th Street, so he was in
3 here favor; he might have left. Let me just call two
4 other people, as long as I have a list here. Miranda
5 Nelson from the Hotel Trades Council. You are here,
6 okay. Call you twice? Oh. Pat Dolan we already
7 called. Did we call Maryann Rosa from Hotel... from
8 Central Labor already? Brian Wangerman, from the
9 Steamfitters; he's still here, Brian? Brendon Sexton
10 was here, but he had to leave. Tommy already called.
11 Pat Purcell we already called. A lot of these are
12 repeats; that means we pulled these out like 10
13 times. These are all called already.

14 Okay. Alright; I guess it's the three of
15 you. And I understand people had to leave, so
16 believe me, it's a long day, very long day. So
17 whenever you're ready, the three of you. Look a
18 little happier, you know; you don't look so happy.
19 The last people, you know made it so serious and you
20 know, so you've gotta, you know, be upbeat.

21 [interpose]

22 JESSICA WALKER: I'll do my best. I'm
23 Jessica Walker, Vice President for Government Affairs
24 at The Partnership for New York City.

1 The Partnership represents the City's
2 business leadership and its largest private sector
3 employers. After careful review of the Queens
4 Development Group's plan to clean up and redevelop
5 Willets Point, The Partnership is confident that the
6 project will contribute immensely to the economic
7 growth of Queens and the entire city.

8 For decades Willets Point has sat as a
9 contaminated wasteland in the Queens community,
10 stifling economic opportunity. But today we have the
11 opportunity to take advantage of an unprecedented
12 plan to transform this long-neglected area into a
13 vital borough asset.

14 The \$3 billion private investment for the
15 project is the largest Queens has ever seen and it
16 will result in a windfall of tax revenue, jobs and
17 commercial activity for the community. More than
18 \$310 million in new tax revenue will be realized
19 during construction and another \$150 million in new
20 tax revenue will be generated annually during
21 operation.

22 Indeed the project will generate 12,000
23 construction jobs and over 7,000 permanent jobs for
24 local residents. Higher employment rates throughout
25

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 255
2 the borough will contribute to the strengthening of
3 the local economy. This project will also benefit
4 the adjoining communities, including significant
5 environmental and community benefits associated with
6 the revitalization of the Roosevelt Avenue corridor.

7 The developers, Related Companies and
8 Sterling Equities are respected throughout the City
9 as industry leaders and have a track record of
10 success in helping strengthen New York. The
11 Partnership strongly encourages the City Council to
12 support this plan to help transform one of the City's
13 biggest eyesores into a hub of sustainable economic
14 growth. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Sorry.

16 MIRANDA NELSON: Yeah.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay.

18 MIRANDA NELSON: My name is Miranda
19 Nelson and I'm a Research and Policy Analyst at the
20 New York Hotel and Motel Trades Council; we are the
21 union representing over 30,000 hotel workers in the
22 New York area. Thank you for the opportunity to
23 speak today about why the Hotel Trades Council
24 enthusiastically supports the Plan to transform
25 Willets Point.

1 Over 1,000 of our members live in
2
3 Flushing and Corona, the neighborhoods that will be
4 most affected by the redevelopment, so we have a
5 particular stake in that.

6 The vision being outlined today will
7 fundamentally change Willets Point for the better;
8 will not only clean up an area that has suffered from
9 decades of contamination, but will create the kind of
10 housing and retail opportunities that will result in
11 a new neighborhood for middle class New Yorkers. It
12 will also create thousands of good jobs, many of
13 which will be in the hospitality industry.

14 As part of the Plan, the Queens
15 Development Group is going to build a 200-room hotel
16 along 126th Street, along with 30,000 square feet of
17 retail. We expect the hotel jobs to be quality and
18 middle class jobs.

19 Hotel workers in New York City have
20 fought over the years to change what tends to be low-
21 wage, exploitative work into one of the best career
22 options for working class people in New York City.
23 Being a hotel worker has become the kind of stable,
24 middle class occupation that is rare these days, with
25 good wages, quality health care and retirement

1 security. But throughout New York these jobs are
2 being threatened with the opening of hundreds of
3 non-union hotels where workers have to struggle to
4 make ends meet. Queens Development Group is bucking
5 that trend and we appreciate their stance for quality
6 jobs.
7

8 Beyond the hotel, the developers are
9 paying for a long overdue environmental cleanup that
10 will reverse decades of pollution and improve area
11 waterways. This will pave the way for a modern
12 mixed-use neighborhood with over 6 acres of new open
13 space, along with commercial retail and housing, new
14 school and recreational spaces.

15 The Willets Point project is a win for
16 the area; it's going to create good union jobs, it's
17 going to create a new neighborhood and it's gonna
18 result in increased tax revenue for the City. Thank
19 you.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Thank
21 you.

22 MIRANDA NELSON: You're welcome.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes, sir.

24 THOMAS GORNOFF: Good afternoon; my name
25 is Tom Gornoff, I'm here on behalf of the New York

2 City District Council of Carpenters out of Local 45,
3 which is based in Queens. We're here today because...
4 [crosstalk]

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right... right nearby,
6 actually; we're...

7 THOMAS GORNOFF: Huh?

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Right in Queens
9 Village, right?

10 THOMAS GORNOFF: Yeah, right in Queens
11 Village, right on Hillside Avenue, right down the
12 block.

13 We're here today because of obviously the
14 Willets Point redevelopment and creatin' jobs for all
15 members. As a lot of my fellow tradesmen were here
16 and stated, you know this is a big project and we've
17 got a good guy behind it, so we're really hopin' that
18 it goes.

19 Projects like Willets Point are what made
20 New York City what it is today; it's a city of
21 neighborhoods. I'm proud to say that carpenters
22 played a vital role in those neighborhoods and
23 helpin' them flourish into communities.

24 Willets Point will create 12,000
25 construction jobs and pay good wages to well-trained

1 professionals. By using union labor the developer is
2 ensuring the construction site will operate at the
3 highest level of safety and efficiency. But more
4 importantly, the union labor force will enable the
5 transformation of Willets Point into one of New
6 York's newest communities. It will create affordable
7 housin', schools, markets, retail centers, malls and
8 the elements that make up a good neighborhood.
9

10 A neighborhood built by the hands of
11 union workers and trades, like the New York City of
12 Carpenters, by backing this project you will help
13 this project another step closer to becomin' a
14 reality. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. There's
16 no te... Leroy; you okay? Alright, well thank you very
17 much; appreciate your testimony.

18 I'm now gonna call on the next panel in
19 opposition. Tirso; is it Mier, from Sunrise. Okay,
20 good. Javier Tomala... Tomagla [phonetic], Dina
21 Gutierrez, I think it says, Ramon Leon, is it? Am I
22 close? Gustavo Peralta, Ivan Contreras, Philip
23 Littman [phonetic]... how many does that give us, one,
24 two, three, four? Oh no, okay. Alright. Come on
25 up; we'll... we'll... okay. Alright. Alright, well

2 squeeze up a chair... pull up a white... did I... did I go
3 over? What? I... I did at the end, yeah. So a total...
4 sit on that white chair; uh we'll... we'll... we'll
5 squeeze you into this panel; I... I was tryin' to get
6 overly... I am glad you guys stuck around. So... who
7 wants to start? Somewhere... let's just pick a start
8 and then make sure to state your name and we'll give
9 you testimony. Okay? Up front, sir. [interpose]

10 MALE VOICE: In Spanish.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, [speaking
12 Spanish]. Hold on one second.

13 TIRSO MIER: Speaking Spanish, please.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: 'Kay. Alright. No...
15 no problem; go ahead. Okay.

16 TIRSO MIER: [speaking Spanish]
17 [interpose]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: [speaking
19 Spanish]

20 TIRSO MIER: [speaking Spanish]

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [speaking Spanish].
22 Hold on... [speaking Spanish]. Julissa; do you just
23 wanna say, just quickly... give a quick overview?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Sure. In his
25 testimony... again, these will all be translated in the

2 transcript into English, but there is not a
3 significant relocation plan; they're urging the
4 Council and myself to vote no. This pan seems racist
5 and fairly much a joke for them to be able to
6 relocate with the plan that's currently established
7 and they'd like to all be relocated together.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [speaking Spanish].

9 RAMON LEON: [speaking Spanish]
10 [interpose]

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: 'Kay. [speaking
12 Spanish]

13 RAMON LEON: [speaking Spanish]
14 [interpose]

15 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: 'Kay.

16 RAMON LEON: [speaking Spanish]

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [speaking Spanish].
18 Julissa; you wanna just quickly.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Yeah. So
20 basically he's saying that at the end of the day what
21 the Sunrise Cooperative members are asking for is
22 respect, as they sit here and watch pictures of the
23 future plan there's no pictures of where they're
24 going to be relocated to; this is the fourth day of
25 the hunger strike and he finds more peace at his

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

GUSTAVO TUALUMBO: [speaking Spanish]

COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. So

Mr. Gustavo, Columbo [phonetic]?

GUSTAVO TUALUMBO: Tualumbo.

COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Tualumbo,

stated that he's been at Willets Point; many of the workers have been there for 20 plus years, their children are getting older; their families are depending on their... how they sustain... or have always sustained their families; many promises have been made by this administration and nothing has come to fruition. The workers are not the plague and they should be valued more; they should value the work that's done at Willets Point. And if we talk about the highly contaminated land at Willets Point, they've had to endure the lack of sewage and the lack or proper pickup and the lack of street paving. So this about being able to be valued and relocated to a safe and decent place.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Beautiful. 'Kay.

Proceed.

TAWNA: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Oh yes.

2 TAWNA: Hi... good morning; I'm Tawna; I'm
3 talkin' on behalf of all the families in Willets
4 Point and I've been protesting ever since I was a
5 little girl and I'm 16.

6 My parents have an auto body shop in
7 Willets Point; the City has been trying to vacate all
8 of Willets Point to make a more than a \$1 million
9 project. My question is; why did the City not
10 investigate and study Willets Point really well?
11 There are more than 2,000 workers whom have families
12 to maintain and I know this has been said so many
13 times, but I just wanna put that out there again.

14 The City didn't think about what will
15 happen to the families; the City thinks that Willets
16 Point doesn't look good next to Citi Field and next
17 to the tennis court or you know, it just looks like,
18 I guess everyone thinks, a dump, but.

19 Then; why didn't the City at least put in
20 some money at Willets Point to fix the roads. Two
21 weeks ago a customer came to my dad's shop and he
22 told me, "Why doesn't the City fix these roads?" He
23 said, "Even the roads in India are better than the
24 roads here." You know what I told him? I told him,
25 "You know what; the City doesn't give a damn about

1 Willets Point," and you know what; in the Ecuador,
2 where my parents are from, the roads are even better
3 and it's really true; it's embarrassing; it should be
4 an embarrassment to New York and the City for not
5 putting a dime to fix those roads.
6

7 So you know, like we're in America and
8 how embarrassing, this doesn't even happen in
9 Ecuador. The City should be embarrassed and my
10 message is; if you're going to vacate us, vacate us
11 as a group, because we're not going anywhere. And
12 Julissa, help us; you told us in 2009 that you were
13 going to, you know, relocate us as a group and you
14 were going to fight until the end to relocate us, so
15 thank you.

16 MARTHA JUALATUNA: [speaking Spanish]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: For many..
18 Martha is testifying on behalf of living.. having
19 worked for many years at Willets Point and the
20 interest and the importance of compensation; she has
21 three children; her daughter has been a part of this
22 advocacy work for many years, since she was very
23 young and it's really more about the compensation
24 part of it; how can they be relocated and not have
25 the accurate amount of dollars to be able to

1
2 relocated. She really testified that it's a very
3 passionate issue for her; she doesn't feel that she
4 will have to relocate from Willets Point until there
5 is a sustainable true plan. She's been to many
6 meetings and she's heard many versions of what would
7 be a relocation; nothing concrete and in reality she
8 just wants to hear a final plan, a plan that makes
9 sense that can move her and her colleagues to a
10 specific place that's out of Willets, but also is
11 affordable and sustainable for the work... all the
12 workers at Willets Point. [speaking Spanish],
13 Martha.

14 IVAN CONTRERAS: Thank you. Good
15 afternoon, my name is Ivan Contreras. First of all I
16 would like to thank you all for giving me the
17 opportunity to express myself on behalf of my
18 coalition. I'm the Queens Housing Coalition
19 coordinator; we... our mission statement is to protect
20 and actually advocate for the creation of more
21 affordable housing, not just in Queens, but in every
22 part of New York.

23 You know, when I see the presentation
24 that the developers of the joint venture always make...
25 I always get elated by the way that they present it;

1 it seems... they make it seem like it's really a
2 project that is gonna work for everyone, but they
3 forgot to mention something; it's like when you're
4 gonna buy a car and you don't read the small letters
5 right there. For example, they forgot to mention
6 that they were educated with the 23 acres of land for
7 just like \$1; they just paid \$1 for that. For
8 example, they forget to mention that it's not any
9 critical or any realistic plan or option for the
10 small businesses that are having establishments for
11 more than 20 years at Willets Point. For example,
12 they don't mention the idea that they're gonna build
13 the biggest mall in New York without any regulation
14 in park land. For example, to what my... it's my
15 concern they don't mention that there is not any
16 legal guarantee that affordable housing that actually
17 happen in this project.

19 You know, with... the people in favor,
20 you'll say that affordable housing... the... the... when
21 the people in favor of this project just mentioned
22 that affordable housing's gonna happen right here,
23 make no mistake; we don't know that this is gonna
24 happen. I have been readed the 160-something pages
25 of the contract between the City and the developers

1 and I don't see any bullet... any point that mentions
2 that affordable housing is gonna be built in this
3 area. But the contrary, a gentleman already said it,
4 I read that not even the City or the developers are
5 responsible to build the ramps, which are like
6 needed... or... or are... actually their... their excuse to
7 build the affordable housing; uhm when later on
8 Council Member Julissa Ferreras was asking the City
9 about like if they got these written in the contract
10 and actually the President of the EDC stated that it
11 is in the contract; I didn't see it. I don't know if
12 something happened with the copy that I have; I don't
13 know if I missed the page, but I didn't... I have been
14 read the whole contract and I haven't seen anything
15 regarding the affordable housing or the legal
16 commitment for affordable housing right here.
17 Everything that we have is just verbal promises that
18 it's nothing. I mean imagine if you guys don't go to
19 work in the promise that your boss have a commitment
20 to pay you, right; you guys go, 'cause you've got the
21 legal guarantee on contract they're gonna pay you
22 every two weeks.

24 The other thing that I would like to
25 mention is that when... when I... I have been like

2 monitor... [chime] I'm sorry; I'm just gonna finish
3 right now... I have been like, you know monitoring
4 these projects since the beginning and I have been
5 in, you know resid... the meetings with the CB... CB7,
6 Queens Borough President, and I always have seen that
7 most of the people or the majority of the people that
8 comes to the public hearings are against this
9 project. You can see right here at this desk, this
10 is not gonna be the section; it's gonna be people
11 that are gonna talking like against this project more
12 than in favor. And when I see the words that are
13 above you, that a government of the people; a
14 government is of the people by the people and for the
15 people and the people don't want this project to
16 happen; what will you think? Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Thank
18 you uhm... let's see; anyone else testifying?
19 [interpose]

20 IVAN CONTRERAS: Uh... I'm sorry; can I say
21 the last word... I got right here; I almost forgot to
22 mention that... 600 petition signatures from people in
23 the community that have the origin of affordable
24 housing right now; not in 2026; right now.
25 [interpose]

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Sergeant of Arms
3 will take that. Sorry; I almost forgot about you;
4 sorry 'bout that, uh... [interpose]

5 PHILIP LITTMAN: Oh that... that's alright.
6 My name's Philip; I'm from Flushing; I'm a customer,
7 actually; I have nothing to do with any of this, so I
8 figured as an outside bystander I can say, looking
9 in, it... it's disgraceful, looking at... at the project.
10 I think that we're forgetting about the people who
11 are working there. I mean for me, as a customer and
12 the thousands of other people in Queens, we really do
13 get great deals and thank you so much; I'm one of a
14 few people in the world who can say I've got 10
15 friend mechanics, so I could go any place and get
16 things done for a tenth the price of what it normally
17 is with Willets Point; this is actually a national
18 gem; it's gonna... if it disappears it would be a
19 national disgrace; it really is, it's terrible.

20 I don't... to repeat things that have been
21 said, because it's been... I've been here since 9:00;
22 it's now 3:15, so what is that, 9, 10, 11, 12... 6
23 hours and 15 minutes... I'm sorry Miss Ferreras, uhm
24 because you... you know you're pregnant... [laughter] uhm
25 but... so obviously I'm gonna repeat things, but these

2 are very important to me. Eminent domain; that's the
3 reason why it's a disgrace; we know eminent domain is
4 to take land from others for public use; this is not
5 for public use, this is... it's the opposite of eminent
6 domain; it's taking land from one business and giving
7 it to a more powerful business. I don't know if you
8 people are quite aware of that, but that's a very
9 disgraceful thing; that's to me the most disgraceful
10 thing there is.

11 The other thing that's disgraceful is
12 that we're not taking care of the workers. The
13 people... these people are gonna lose their jobs, the
14 just will. You're not giving 'em an alternative. I
15 looked online to see what land is available, you're
16 all talking about land; I saw 24,000 square feet;
17 there's not 63 acres. I mean at the very least you
18 could take the 23, cut it in half, put 'em on a
19 second floor, you know make it go up instead of out,
20 but they have to be together. And I suggest, highly
21 suggest that you cut this... this plan; it's just... it's
22 immoral.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Your...
24 your name's Littman?

25 PHILIP LITTMAN: Philip Littman, yeah.

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Philip Littman,
3 right. Okay. Thank you. Alright. Is there anyone
4 else here to testify in favor of the project; did I
5 miss anybody? Thought we called everybody. Okay,
6 good. So now I have... I'm sorry; I just have the pile
7 here; I'm gonna call off names. You're excused.
8 Thank you all very much. Sorry. [speaking Spanish].
9 Thank you for your testimony. And thank you
10 Ms. Ferreras for helping us translate, 'cause... I
11 know, I know; sorry about that. Alright, some of
12 these might have already been called 'cause we had
13 some doubles, but Thelma Fellows, Dina Gutierrez,
14 Shaylin [phonetic]... is it Keepan [phonetic]? She's
15 not here? And what about Jason? Okay, and Jason,
16 both were here in opposition, Richard Polgar, Richard
17 Polgar, Selvin Moran... I don't know... Selvin... oh that's
18 right, Sylvia. Okay. Sylvia's my mother's name, uh
19 from Sunrise Cooperative. No. Farzana Moshood. No.
20 Alright, hold on; I'll tell ya... just keep... keep goin'
21 here, okay? Alright, Ted De Barbieri, Sherif Sadek.
22 Okay, good; we're gettin' close. Jamie Sabeti.
23 Okay, Jamie's here. Okay. Elena Conte. Elena's
24 still here. Yuki Endo. Was that a yes on that one?
25 Yuki? Okay. Excellent. There's a seat there if you

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 273
2 want or they can sit in their chair; doesn't... either
3 way it works.

4 Alright. Why don't we leave it at these
5 six and just... whoever wants to go first, I don't
6 know; I... I'm gonna let you guys shoot it out. 'Kay.

7 TED DE BARBIERI: Alright. My name's Ted
8 De Barbieri; I'm a Senior Staff Attorney at the
9 Community Development Project of Urban Justice
10 Center. Urban Justice Center has been representing
11 the Sunrise Co-op in the relocation efforts with the
12 City. Thank you so much, Chair Weprin and Council
13 Member Ferreras, and especially for all your work in
14 the relocation and thanks so much for your questions
15 earlier today in the hearing. I won't go back
16 through that, I'll just say; the relocation plan as
17 it is right now is totally insufficient and it's been
18 wholly a failure; we heard earlier today that eight
19 businesses have been relocated; as of one month ago
20 it was only one and that was over five years.

21 I hear the criticisms that businesses
22 have to engage, but I'm working with 50 businesses
23 that have been engaging actively over three years and
24 unfortunately we're not at a point where we can
25 actually relocate anyone, which is I think a huge

2 flaw in the Plan and we're in opposition to the Plan
3 for that particular reason.

4 I'll just also say in addition to Urban
5 Justice Center, Pratt Center had someone here earlier
6 today whose also submitting testimony in opposition,
7 so thanks so much for your time.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

9 FARZANA MOSHOOD: My name is... my name is
10 ... [interpose]

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Get close to the
12 microphone, 'cause the sound is terrible in here. Go
13 ahead.

14 FARZANA MOSHOOD: My name is Farzana
15 Moshood; I'm from Queens Community House and a member
16 of Queens Housing Coalition.

17 First I would like to thank you for
18 giving me this opportunity, as a community organizer
19 who specializes in housing and tenant assistance; I'm
20 here today to raise for you the City's concerns that
21 both I and the hundreds of local community residents
22 I have met with have about the proposed Willets
23 Points redevelopment.

24 As a resident of Queens I want to see
25 development in Willets Point, but if a plan is

1 developed for mainly commercial benefit, then I would
2 have to reconsider. Willets Point current
3 development plan is centered on the profitability for
4 commercial businesses, as a mall is being proposed
5 for public land without thinking of the local
6 community people.
7

8 I think this plan should give priority to
9 the long-term development of the local communities
10 and to pollution-free environment.

11 Developers are talking about the current
12 economic downturn and that the mall and parking lot
13 will create jobs; the problem is that people are
14 losing their land, their environment and getting a
15 little back, but maybe minimum wage without any
16 benefits.

17 I moved to a residence in Queens; for my
18 daily life I use the 7 train every day. The train is
19 overcrowded at the rush hour now, so it is my concern
20 that development will be the cause of huge traffic
21 and even more overcrowded train.

22 Finally, the broader development plan
23 agreed to with the EDC lays out a plan for much
24 needed housing development, but 2025; this is way too
25 far off in the future and the disposal of the

2 contract between the City and the developer clearly
3 allow for ways that the developer could stop at only
4 a parking lot and a mall, leaving local residents
5 with little that actually meets their own needs and
6 priorities. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Sir.
8 Yeah.

9 JAMIE SABETI: Good afternoon Mr.
10 Chairman... [interpose]

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You need the mic...
12 yeah, make sure it's on please.

13 JAMIE SABETI: Thank you. Good afternoon
14 Mr. Chairman, my name Jamie Sabeti and I'm a business
15 owner... [interpose]

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Little louder. You
17 have to go right to the mic and be loud.

18 JAMIE SABETI: Yes. My name Jamie
19 Sabeti, I'm representing some other business; we have
20 legitimate business in this location. It just...
21 everyone hearing the news about EDC and HBD, how they
22 helping use, which is not true and we are not getting
23 correct treatment, because all they did, HBD and EDC,
24 they hired an agency like Cornerstone and every other
25 day Cornerstone comes to our shop and bring us a

1 piece of paper like this and it's showing us that
2 there is a business somewhere in middle of nowhere in
3 residential area that... that business is available; go
4 talk to the owner and get the lease and pay the rent
5 get settled. And that's the service we're getting
6 from ED... I'm sorry, from Cornerstone. Which another
7 thing they are doing is, they are offering couple of
8 thousand dollars for us to move out of here and they
9 give us a deadline that we have to sign the paper in
10 order to get that couple of thousand dollars. But we
11 are not agree with this kinda... and because another
12 thing is; what I wanna mention here is, the
13 Counselor, Miss Julissa Ferreras, she... back in 2009;
14 this is her sentence that she said, which I have it
15 here, is... she said, "I think it is the City's
16 responsibility to find these space and I'm someone
17 who's going to advocate for that and I fight for it
18 to ever end, because it's something that they
19 deserve." And same thing that she said just like
20 they did in Fulton Fish Market, they relocate them
21 and another sentence that she has, "You know in my
22 heart believe that we need Willets Point as the
23 entity to be relocated and it makes sense for our
24 community. So I think that they need to be
25

1 relocated." And I hope she will stand to the end and
2 she will fight to the end. And what we're asking
3 here, relocation as a group and we don't want
4 individually to move because as Counselor she
5 explained how important is we move as a group, so
6 that's what we're asking and we do not want any loan,
7 because they are offering to give... can we give you a
8 loan and we don't wanna have a loan and all we asking
9 just another location and we can, you know, provide
10 service. And also, we really wanna ask everyone help
11 us in this matter because we have no voice and no one
12 really cares about us. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very much.
15 Next please.

16 THELMA FELLOWS: Hello. My name is
17 Thelma Fellows and I'm from Flushing, Queens and I'm
18 here to testify on behalf of the New York City Sierra
19 Club.

20 The New York City Sierra Club opposing
21 the sighting of a new shopping center in the Flushing
22 Meadows-Corona Park. The land in question, a space
23 being used by the Mets for parking is classified as
24 public park space and the Mayor is trying to
25 circumvent the requirement to alienate park land

1 through the State legislature by offering long-term
2 leases to commercial interests. This treatment of
3 public park space is not right. The same thing has
4 happened at Damrosch Park by Lincoln Center, where
5 trees were chopped down and the signs of park
6 removed; however, when the park signs went back up,
7 when a suit was filed.

9 The New York Sierra Club believes that
10 the intrusiveness of a permanent structure on the
11 acreage intended for public recreation in Flushing
12 Meadows-Corona Park should disqualify this proposed
13 shopping mall from further consideration; this
14 facility could be located elsewhere. The area has
15 been used by the Mets for parking and was never
16 intended for commercial use, other than to assist the
17 Shea Stadium and its operation.

18 According to a journalist, Patrick Arden,
19 as recently as 2001, New York's highest court ruled
20 park land cannot be taken, even for temporary use
21 without an explicit act of alienation passed by the
22 State legislature and approved by the Governor.

23 And on behalf of the New York City Sierra
24 Club I thank you for accepting the testimony and
25 thank you for your time.

2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very much.
3 Sir, whenever you're ready. You just gotta get the
4 mic near you.

5 SHERIF SADEK: Thank you. Thank you for
6 ask... well, let's start with my name. My name is
7 Sherif Sadek, I live in Jackson Heights, Queens; I'm
8 a director of a film called "From Queens to Cairo."
9 I wanted to thank you for asking the tough questions
10 today.

11 From what I've heard today, it sounds
12 like this project is a total nightmare. With that
13 being said, I would like you to consider destroying
14 Central Park instead of Flushing Meadows. Think
15 about the headache you will save people; they won't
16 have to make that very long and already congested
17 trek to eastern Queens when they can never have to
18 leave the island. As we've heard, there seems to be
19 congestion problems with this proposal.

20 If you think my proposal is silly, then
21 the feeling is mutual, since that's what I think of
22 the developer's proposal to destroy my park land.
23 Please keep in mind that two community boards that
24 are adjacent to the proposed sites, nearly twice as
25 many board members have rejected this farce.

2 I urge you to listen to the locals'
3 concerns rather than the developer's concerns and to
4 answer the question that was raised earlier about
5 whether there is enough shopping in Queens. The
6 answer is yes, but you'd only really know that if you
7 actually live and work in Queens.

8 I've never heard of a mall being a
9 destination, maybe in Minnesota, but not in New York
10 City. No mall, no way. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you and thank
12 you for being brief; I appreciate that.

13 SHERIF SADEK: That was for you.

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [laugh] Thank you.
15 Just make sure you sit up. Okay, great.

16 YUKI ENDO: My name is Yuki Endo and I
17 oppose... proposal uh to build a shopping mall next to
18 Citi Field, expansion of the Aussie Nit tennis
19 Stadium and the soccer stadium plan. Flushing
20 Meadows Park is our important lifeline for every
21 visiting anonymous inspect in the borough; it is
22 important for our community where all ethnic cultures
23 come together for a single day... New York and Hong
24 Kong driven festival. This a shopping mall in
25 Stadium point, Hunts point proceed, because if you

1
2 mix with a shopping mall, U.S. Open, New York Knicks
3 traffic there will be major headache. Like in Missle
4 Field no I think the shopping season when lots of us
5 in buses get stuck in heavy shopping traffic. There
6 are no needs for shopping mall because we already
7 have Great North such as Rego Park shopping center
8 and shopping malls in Queens and Long Island. For
9 example, if the City try to expand Shakespeare Center
10 in Center Park, I can assure Center Park notice you
11 go and put this into strike against expensive for the
12 purpose. The New York City not only our public
13 apartment such as Flushing Meadow Park [chime] our
14 public libraries, hospitals, Five Points building
15 because we only can support borough. But to tell what
16 I don't want Krispy Kream in New York. A public
17 apartments in apartment building is a national
18 treasure for everyone, Flushing Meadows is an
19 important a place where people could relax and enjoy
20 outside activity and also where people has access to
21 computer, books and can research information on
22 Flushing Meadow Park. I never have found an invite
23 into an organization such as Flushing Meadow Park for
24 the nature and unique organization. Please do not

2 build anything near Citi Field or inside Flushing
3 Meadows Park. I thank you for your coverage.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you Yuki.
5 Thank you very much. Julissa; any questions? Yeah,
6 Julissa has a question.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Actually one...
8 not a question, but a statement. I know that
9 Mr. Sabeti had made a statement quoting me from what
10 I said in 2009; I just want you to know that I also
11 said it about six hours ago. Exactly what I said in
12 2009 I reiterated six hours ago. So I just wanna be
13 clear that, you know I have not vacillated in my
14 stands... on where I stand with the workers and the
15 workers have engaged with everyone of my staff
16 members, with myself; this has been a challenge and
17 something that we've been fighting for together and
18 it will continue in that way. So I just wanted to
19 make it clear that when you speak about quoting me,
20 the quote hasn't changed. Thank you. [interpose]

21 JAMIE SABETI: Thank you, ma'am. One
22 thing I wanna mention that... I'm sorry...

23 THELMA FELLOWS: Oh, sure.

24 JAMIE SABETI: about this relocation
25 package they call that, which is Cornerstone, which

1 they do nothing; a 10 years old kid can go to the
2 computer and print business or commercial for rent
3 and they bring the piece of paper, Cornerstone, every
4 other day in our shop saying, "Here's the business I
5 found for you; go over there, talk to the owner and
6 get the business." And that's why they spent
7 \$700,000 for Cornerstone doing this kinda job. And
8 the other thing is just few thousand dollar; lately
9 they are saying, "If you wanna take this few thousand
10 dollars now, you have to sign the paper, because
11 first come first serves is... is... and if you don't have
12 enough budget..." they're pushin' us; here's the carrot
13 and here's the bat; take it now, otherwise you're
14 gonna lose that few thousand dollars." So as you
15 know, we need to move as a group; if you don't move
16 as a group and they spearin' us an individual, we
17 take at least 7, 8 years to establish this business;
18 if I go as an individual some new location, that's
19 gonna take me 4 or 5 years to establish. Is this
20 Cornerstone the place they found and I go talk to the
21 tenant; I ask them, "Why you wanna move this
22 location, if you have a good business, if you're
23 making money, so why you wanna move out?" They tell
24 to my hear, I'm not making money and I'm movin' of
25

2 this location; that's why this shop is for rent;
3 that's why Cornerstone finds it and they say, only
4 \$2,500, go get that shop; that's all the service they
5 are giving us. And one more service they are giving
6 HPD; they are telling us, okay, I'm gonna give you
7 relocation service. What does that mean? If you
8 wanna move, I give you \$1,200 to \$1,500 move your
9 equipment; that's the relocation service we getting;
10 that's the whole package. Cornerstone and \$1,200
11 move your equipment; that's... that's all it is, they
12 keep talking here all day about relocation, a
13 relocation package, but as you mentioned that from
14 the beginning, you argue for relocation as a group to
15 go another location, not just Cornerstone showing us
16 a piece of paper or somebody else say, I'll give a
17 couple of thousand dollars and sign it now; if you
18 don't sign it you're gonna lose that couple of
19 thousand dollars.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: I have a quick
21 question to your statement. This... this site that
22 they showed you; is that a recent showing?

23 JAMIE SABETI: There is no site; that's
24 all they come, they come to my shop, they bring a
25

2 piece of paper from internet; they print it; they say
3 here is the shop, here's the price... [crosstalk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. Is that
5 a body shop currently? Is that a... [interpose]

6 JAMIE SABETI: I'm sorry?

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Is that a mechanic
8 shop now?

9 JAMIE SABETI: Mechanic shop, repair
10 shop; some of 'em in... in Connecticut, some of 'em in
11 the Long Island, some of 'em in... the near one that I
12 found one time they brought is in Brooklyn; most of
13 'em is Staten Island, in the Long Island, so it just...
14 and I talked to the tenant; I said, "Why you wanna
15 move out of here?" He says, "To be honest, I'm not
16 makin' any money in this location." [interpose]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Okay. Thank
18 you.

19 JAMIE SABETI: And that's the only
20 service we're getting.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Thank you.
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, thank you all
24 very much. I'm now gonna call the next panel in
25 opposition, maybe the last panel; let me see... Janet

2 Kelly; she still here? Yes she is. Sasudo
3 [phonetic] Rios, Jo... Jose... I... I can't read it,
4 Cristomeron [phonetic] maybe, Jose Tepan, Jose Tepan,
5 Ramon Keegon (phonetic), Javier Tomgala [phonetic],
6 if you already heard... is that... who else is here to
7 testify again; is anybody waiting to get to; how is
8 that? If we miss anyone who's here to testify in
9 opposition to this project to come forward now...
10 [interpose]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: I... [speaking
12 Spanish]

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [speaking Spanish].
14 Thank you; should've thought of that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: [speaking
16 Spanish]. Okay.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. And that's
18 it, right, [speaking Spanish]? [speaking Spanish]?
19 Okay. Alright, great. Sorry and again, I apologize
20 for you being last; it's been a long day and you've
21 been very patient, so thank you very much; I don't
22 know who wants to start. You do? Okay.

23 SEGUNDO RIOS: [speaking Spanish]...

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Just right to your
25 mouth, [speaking Spanish].

1
2 SEGUNDO RIOS: [speaking Spanish]

3 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [speaking Spanish].

4 I actually understood that one. Nice and slow.

5 [interpose]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: [speaking

7 Spanish]. This is... I am Segundo Rios; the

8 compensation is clearly not enough; Cornerstone has

9 only offered us properties recently that are valued

10 in 4 to... 4 to 8K a month, so this compensation would

11 not cover the... the need... the... what the cost would be

12 for a year and if we move independently it would be

13 an issue and that's why we're asking to be moved

14 together, because people don't... won't even know where

15 we are and how will we survive once we get into these

16 leases. All we're gonna be doing is losing our

17 businesses and losing our equipment.

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: 'Kay.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

21 JOEL PONDER: Good afternoon, my name is

22 Joel Ponder; I'm representing the members of Queens.

23 I'm from Queens Community House; I'm a community

24 organizer and house specialist. So as a house

25 specialist we have seen a big outage of people who

2 are coming to us with a big problem of rent, you
3 know, which is in Queens. While we haven't seen this
4 proposal, or we have seen the proposal that we're
5 gonna build affordable housing and it's moved to
6 2025. You know, it's a pretty long time and the
7 people who are paying rent right now are paying a
8 really high rent they cannot afford. They actually
9 have to move and go into private housing and still
10 cannot afford it. This is just in a housing point of
11 view.

12 Transportation; everybody knows how it
13 gets. I went this weekend to the park and that was
14 crazy. It was... I was actually waiting one hour in
15 order to take a train to go Flushing Meadow Park,
16 'cause it was so busy and people cannot get into the
17 trains. And to build, to think, just to build a mall
18 there, increasing people to go and you know and don't
19 think what the... what the community really needs; I
20 don't think is a good plan for our communities; we
21 should start thinking more about our community; what
22 we need, what is our issues in order to do that kind
23 of development. Thank you very much.

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. What was
25 your name?

2 JOEL PONDER: Joel.

3 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Joel...

4 JOEL PONDER: Ponder.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: How do you spell
6 that?

7 JOEL PONDER: P o r... P o n d e r.

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Ponder. Oh, very
9 nice. Okay.

10 JOEL PONDER: Yes, I don't have a
11 stepson. Yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: 'Kay. [chime] If
13 you could do that. Great and we'll start you a new
14 clock, I promise. 'Kay.

15 JANET KELLY: Okay. My name is Janet
16 Kelly; I've lived most of my life in Queens, except
17 for 22 years in exile on Long Island; I cur...
18 [interpose]

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Uh, we'll forgive
20 you for that, I think, uh...

21 JANET KELLY: Well... I currently live in
22 Jackson Heights and I'm Treasurer of the Jackson
23 Heights Beautification Group and I would like to
24 finish the well-reasoned statement, which we wrote.

25

1 Whether you call this proposal corporate
2 welfare or commi-capitalism, one thing is clear, just
3 as in the stock market collapse of 2008, the
4 taxpayers would get stuck with the bill for a plan
5 that makes a few people wealthy. How so? In 2008
6 the City said that the developer would pay the cost
7 of cleaning up Willets Point, but as proposed, the
8 taxpayers would pay the cost of remediation in the
9 form of a \$99 million grant to Sterling and Related.
10 Similarly, in 2008 the City said it would recover its
11 cost of acquiring Willets Point through the eventual
12 sale of that land to the developer. But now the City
13 intends to give 23 acres of Willets Point's Phase 1,
14 acquired by the City at a cost of more than \$200
15 million to Sterling and Related for the price of \$1.
16 How is any of this in the taxpayers' interest?

17 Please do the right thing and deny this application.

18 And personally, as a retired New York
19 City school teacher and as a inactive CPA, I would
20 like to say something about the permanent jobs that
21 have been mentioned over and over. Hotel jobs and
22 retail jobs, they are not good jobs, they are usually
23 minimum wage jobs and they are not good jobs and
24 they're not the kind of economic development that
25

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 292
2 Queens needs. Again, please do the right thing and
3 deny this application. [chime] Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you very much.
5 Is there anyone else here who wanted to testify
6 today? I don't see anyone, so thank you all very
7 much; we are gonna close this hearing and we are
8 gonna recess this meeting to a future date, which
9 will be decided later; we have a lot of issues that
10 we heard about today; we do appreciate everybody
11 coming down; I wanna thank Julissa Ferreras for not
12 only being, you know, a great member of the
13 Committee, but for also helping us translate. I uhm..
14 you know, we will be talking about these issues; a
15 lot of you in the room will be part of those
16 discussions and we're gonna try to come to what's
17 best for the New York City residents and for the City
18 of New York and for everyone involved. So thank you
19 very much. Alright. The Committee actually is on..
20 is recessing until 9:45 on September 12th; that is
21 not for the Willets Point project though. The other
22 items that we heard here today need to be voted on on
23 a quicker calendar than Willets Point, so for the
24 record; 9:45 September 12th we'll be meeting across
25 the street in 250 Broadway, I assume. Oh, is it a

2 sada (sp?) day? Alright, may be in this room. Check
3 your calendars on that one. But we won't be doing
4 Willetts Point that day, so don't be worried about
5 that issue; the other items that we heard earlier
6 today will have to be voted on on that day, September
7 12th. Thank you all very much, so the meeting is now
8 recessed. Thank you.

9 [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date 09/17/2013