

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON Zoning and Franchises

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October 30, 2013  
Start: 03:23 p.m.  
Recess: 03:33 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm,  
14th Fl.

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

LEROY G. COMRIE, JR.  
DANIEL R. GARODNICK  
VINCENT M. IGNIZIO  
ROBERT JACKSON  
JESSICA S. LAPPIN  
DIANA REYNA  
JOEL RIVERA  
ALBERT VANN  
RUBEN WILLS



[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, good morning, good afternoon everyone. Can I have some quiet please? Thank you very much. My name is Mark Weprin, I'm Chair of the Zoning and Franchises subcommittee of the Land Use Committee and we are here today on two items. Land use number 922 which is the Waterfront Revitalization Program which we had the hearing on before and then the land use numbers 923 through 928 inclusive off of the St. John's, St. George Waterfront Development, otherwise known as the Staten Island Wheel and the Outlet Deal. There you go.

With the, on the St. John's waterfront development project I'd like to call... St. George. You know as I represent St. John's, you represent St. George. We have, oh we do have a quorum here I should say. We have Councilmember Rivera, Councilmember Comrie, Councilmember Vann, Councilmember Garodnick, Councilmember Lappin, Councilmember Wills, and Councilmember Ignizio. We're also joined by Councilmember Rose whose district the St. George Waterfront Development is

1  
2 in and I would like her to explain some of the  
3 aspects of this plan. Councilmember Rose.

4 COUNCILMEMBER ROSE: Thank you so much  
5 Chair Weprin. Staten Island will no longer be the  
6 forgotten borough. I want to thank Speaker  
7 Christine Quinn, Ramon Martinez from the speaker's  
8 office, Gale Benjamin, Ann McCoy, and Amy Levin  
9 from the Land Use division. I'd like to thank my  
10 Staten Island delegation colleges Jimmy Oddo and  
11 Vinny Ignizio, and land use chair Leroy Comrie, and  
12 Zoning and Franchise Subcommittee Chair Mark  
13 Weprin, and my staff, who I will name at the full  
14 stated meeting, and EDC, I didn't think I would say  
15 that but EDC, and the mayor's office, for all of  
16 their support and assistance during this unique and  
17 exhausting experience. This has been the biggest  
18 thing to ever happen to the north shore of Staten  
19 Island. In fact it is the biggest observation wheel  
20 in the world. I started this process wanting these  
21 projects to be a win-win benefitting Staten Island  
22 and there was doubt expressed that these goals  
23 could be reached. I'm proud to stand here today and  
24 say the elusive win-win has been achieved. This  
25 vote that will be taken today, I'm sure it will be

1 in the affirmative, is going to be a tremendous  
2 victory for the residents of the north shore for  
3 Staten Island and for New York City because this by  
4 far will be a transformative project and a boom to  
5 the economic development of Staten Island. This  
6 project is worth over 580 million dollars in  
7 private investment and with an additional 51  
8 million in commitments from the city of New York  
9 and the developers. With the approval of this  
10 project the north shore of Staten Island will have  
11 the world's tallest observation wheel on its  
12 waterfront at 625 feet tall. We will also have the  
13 first high end outlet mall located in New York city  
14 with up to 125 retailers, eating and drinking  
15 establishments, and a 200 room hotel with catering  
16 facilities. The project will generate over 1,150  
17 construction jobs and 1,350 permanent jobs. It will  
18 also generate over 101 million dollars in return to  
19 the city. As much promise as these projects hold my  
20 concerns were first and foremost for my district in  
21 Staten Island. I have consistently said in the past  
22 year that I wanted to ensure that Staten Island  
23 gets the best deal possible with this project. And  
24 in order to ensure this we needed at least three  
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1 areas to be addressed among many others; traffic  
2 congestion, ferry commuter concerns, good jobs for  
3 Staten Islanders pre, during, and post  
4 construction, and economic development provisions.  
5 And I am happy to announce that we have indeed  
6 gotten many benefits for Staten Islanders with this  
7 project and they include; one million dollars for a  
8 traffic mitigation fund, 700 thousand for planning  
9 study for the replacement of Cromwell Recreation  
10 Center, commuter parking levels that will be  
11 maintained throughout the construction of the  
12 project, parking rates will be capped, 100 percent  
13 union hiring for the wheel and the outlet mall,  
14 over 1,150 construction jobs, and 1,350 permanent  
15 jobs generated mostly for Staten Islanders, 500  
16 thousand for a capacity building for MWBE  
17 contractors, New York city support for the  
18 activation of the north shore right-a-way north  
19 shore railroad, support to ensure that public  
20 access to Bay Street Landing is ensured, two  
21 million for repairs to the Richmond Terrace  
22 Esplanade and aesthetic upgrades, plans for a  
23 private ferry service adjacent to the development  
24 area, 35 million in city capital funds for new  
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1 ferries, plans for a ferry service to Snug Harbor,  
2 a comprehensive signage plan and implement signage  
3 for the Staten Island ferry and it's ferry  
4 terminals up to 200 thousand dollars, improve  
5 signage plans for the Kiss-N-Ride, and for those of  
6 you who are not Staten Islanders, that's sort of  
7 our drop off and pick up area, it's nothing risqué,  
8 and improve NYPD enforcement of the area. A welcome  
9 center and kiosk in the ferry terminals, Wi-Fi  
10 service in ferry terminals and on the ferry,  
11 complimentary ridership for Staten Island school  
12 children on the wheel as well as all New York city  
13 school children in the first year, first free use  
14 of space for the wheel terminal building to  
15 community groups for meetings, the formation of a  
16 community association advisory board, 75 thousand  
17 dollars for the creation of a Jersey street local  
18 development cooperation, rezoning of the New  
19 Brighton community from manufacturing, new  
20 pedestrian crossings with countdown clocks in St.  
21 George, the siding of an eco-deck near, eco-dock  
22 near the homeport, and aesthetic improvements for  
23 St. George and Jersey street corridors. Included in  
24 the commitments from the city for the recently  
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1 passed, were the recently passed ferry bill which  
2 will bring 24 hour ferry service with waits no  
3 longer than 30 minutes. These commitments from the  
4 developers, the city, and EDC, are over 51 million  
5 dollars for improvements for Staten Island in  
6 addition to the 580 million dollars in private  
7 investments for this project. So for years Staten  
8 Island's businesses and cultural institutions have  
9 been asking our elected officials for a way to get  
10 millions of visitors who ride the Staten Island  
11 ferry out of the terminal and onto Staten Island.  
12 This project will meet that long awaited goal and  
13 Staten Island will no longer be the forgotten  
14 borough. And I encourage all of my, not only the  
15 land use members, but all of the council members to  
16 vote in the affirmative for this project. Thank  
17 you.

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19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you

20 Councilmember Rose. I'd like to call on  
21 Councilmember Ignizio.

22 COUNCILMEMBER IGNIZIO: Thank you Mr.  
23 Chairman. As a member of this committee I wanted to  
24 pay tribute to those that were responsible for  
25 getting this here today and my college Debby Rose

1 who came under pressure as of late about the list.  
2 Well now everybody's seen the list and the answer  
3 is she got everything she wanted and  
4 congratulations to you. And I want to thank EDC,  
5 the developers, for everybody for coming to her  
6 table and recognizing that this is the renaissance  
7 of the north shore, of the gold coast of the north  
8 shore, and it will return, the return on the  
9 investment for the taxpayer will be huge. They are  
10 very nervous right now 61 miles north of New York  
11 at Woodberry Commons because they hear what we're  
12 about to build and they know that we will overtake  
13 the economic development that they have been  
14 counting on for years right here in the city of New  
15 York. And as a member of this committee I am  
16 grateful for everybody who were a part, from EDC,  
17 the unions, the developers, and the mayor's office,  
18 and the speaker's office for coming together and  
19 truly building a better mousetrap. And I promised I  
20 would say this on the record but we are wheely  
21 wheely excited about this.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Strike that please.

24 No. Thank you Councilmember Ignizio. At least say  
25 it was your daughter who said that, you know, that

1 would be okay. Anyway with that in mind... Did you  
2 want to add something? Councilmember Rose tell us  
3 to add something.  
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5 COUNCILMEMBER ROSE: This was very  
6 important to not only the community board but to  
7 most of the people on the north shore because  
8 waterfront access is really important. I need to  
9 add to the list that we were able to get 750  
10 thousand for the Green Way Trail that will traverse  
11 from the Verrazano Bridge to the Goethals Bridge.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you. Thank  
13 you very much colleagues. I am going to couple the  
14 following items; the Waterfront Revitalization Plan  
15 which was land use item 922 and then the items that  
16 make up the St. George Waterfront Development 923  
17 through 928. Right, those items they're coupled  
18 together and we'll call on one vote and I will call  
19 on Ann McCoy to please call the roll.

20 ANN MCCOY: Chair Weprin?

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Aye.

22 ANN MCCOY: Councilmember Rivera?

23 COUNCILMEMBER RIVERA: I vote aye.

24 ANN MCCOY: Chair Comrie?

25 CHAIR COMRIE: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

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ANN MCCOY: Councilmember Vann?

COUNCILMEMBER VANN: Aye.

ANN MCCOY: Councilmember Garodnick?

COUNCILMEMBER GARODNICK: Aye.

ANN MCCOY: Councilmember Lappin?

COUNCILMEMBER LAPPIN: Aye.

ANN MCCOY: Councilmember Wills?

COUNCILMEMBER WILLS: Aye.

ANN MCCOY: Councilmember Ignizio?

COUNCILMEMBER IGNIZIO: Aye.

ANN MCCOY: Councilmember Jackson?

COUNCILMEMBER JACKSON: Aye on all.

ANN MCCOY: By a vote of nine in the affirmative, zero extensions, and zero negatives land use items 922 and 923 through 928 inclusive are approved and referred to the full Land Use Committee.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you McCoy.

Ladies and Gentleman this is the end of this meeting but don't go anywhere because the Land Use Committee will meet as soon as we get a quorum for that meeting. So...

COUNCILMEMBER ROSE: Thank you everybody.

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COMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: For now the  
subcommittee is now adjourned.

[gavel]

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          November 6, 2013