

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON LAND USE

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December 19, 2013
Start: 9:45 a.m.
Recess: 10:05 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room
City Hall

B E F O R E: Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Maria Carmen del Arroyo
Charles Barron
Inez Dickens
Daniel R. Garodnick
Sara M. Gonzales
Robert R. Jackson
Jessica S. Lappin
Rosie Mendez
Annabel Palma
Diana Reyna
Joel Rivera
Albert Vann
Peter Koo
Brad S. Lander
Stephen T. Levin
Mark S. Weprin

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

Council Members:

Jumaane Williams

Vincent M. Ignizio

Ruben Wills

CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Good afternoon.

We are convening the final Land Use Committee for the class of 2009, December 10th, 2013. I am Leroy Comrie. I have been honored to serve as the Land Use Chair for the past four years of the Committee. I want to thank, first, the Land Use staff. They deserve a round of applause. There's not a lot of people in the room, but--[applause]. Gale Benjamin [phonetic], Amy Levitan [phonetic], Anne Mccoy [phonetic], Alonzo Carr [phonetic], Peter Janisick [phonetic], Danielle Deserbo [phonetic], Rob Moralier [phonetic], and the special hitter always on deck, Ramon Martinez, dealing with the Land Use issues. I want to thank the Land Use staff over on the 16th floor, Maria Margaret, Giovanna [phonetic], Alex, and Nora [phonetic] for everything that they've done. I want to thank the Subcommittee Chairs, Steve Levin and Brad Lander for their service and especially Mark Weprin as his--in his services of Zoning Subcommittee. The three of the subcommittee chairs put in long hours as has been said already, serving and holding up

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2 issues even when no one else was present in the
3 room other than the committee staff and the
4 effected communities during often four to five
5 hour hearings on a norm on technical issues,
6 and--I didn't get the quorum yet. I was making
7 a speech. Okay. I will just sum up and say
8 that I've been honored to work with all of you
9 as we try to make this city a better place and
10 make sure that the Land Use Committee was a
11 place of opportunity for anyone that had a
12 issue, that they felt comfortable with coming
13 here to get their issues aired and to have a
14 full discussion on anything that related to
15 Land Use, and to all of the committee members
16 and to all of the Council Members that had Land
17 Use issues, I hope that we made the committee a
18 place that you wanted to come to in order to be
19 effective. I want to thank HPD and City
20 Planning and the Department of our School
21 Construction for their input also as they came
22 to testify at hearings and to bring us the
23 knowledge and information about the information
24 that came through the committee. And finally, I
25 want to thank the public for your indulgence

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2 and for your activism because your input at the
3 Land Use Committee meetings shaped the projects
4 as well. And I realize today's a long day, and
5 a lot of people have other things on their
6 mind, but I just wanted to say that for the
7 record. So I'm going to announce that we have
8 a quorum. We are joined by Council Members
9 Annabel Palma from the Bronx, Maria Del Carmen
10 Arroyo from the Bronx, Steve Levin from
11 Brooklyn, Joel Rivera from the Bronx, Inez
12 Dickens from Manhattan, Sara Gonzales from
13 Brooklyn, Diana Reyna from Manhattan, Peter Koo
14 from Queens, the quiet Charles Barron from
15 Brooklyn, Jessica Lappin from Manhattan, Dan
16 Garodnick from Manhattan, and Mark Weprin. We
17 have a--oh, and Robert Jackson hiding in the
18 background, and the great Al Vann is taking
19 care of business. We only have a couple of
20 items on the agenda. One is in Council Member
21 Levin's district known as 77 Commercial Street.
22 It's Land Use 961 through 963, which are
23 related in Brooklyn Community Board One, item
24 number C140047ZSK and 140046ZRK and 140048ZAK,
25 and they are to grant a special permit pursuing

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2 to sections 62-836 of the Zoning Resolution, to
3 grant an amendment of the Zoning Resolution for
4 special bulk regulations and to grant a
5 authorization pursuant to section 62822A of the
6 Zoning Resolution to modify the requirements
7 for visual corridors and waterfront public
8 access areas. And then we have in Council
9 Member Tish James district Land Use 989, known
10 as Long Island University within Brooklyn
11 Community Board Two, Item number C1300400MMK.
12 It's an amendment to the zoning map to deal
13 with some elimination of streets and easements
14 in order for LIU to do the things necessary to
15 grow as a campus. We've been joined by Council
16 Member Brad Lander and Council Member Jumaane
17 Williams both from Brooklyn. Again, I want to
18 thank the staff and especially for Anne McCoy,
19 who even though I fuss at her it's because
20 she's trying to make sure that we're doing
21 everything technically correct, and since I'm
22 the least technical person in the room
23 sometimes we're always fighting, but Anne, I
24 want to say I appreciate everything that you've
25 done to try to make sure that things are done

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2 and articulated properly, because they have to
3 be since this is the Land Use Committee.
4 Things have to be articulated in the proper way
5 and said in the proper way, and Anne has made
6 sure that I've always gotten back to doing it
7 the proper way. So thank you Anne. Thank you
8 all. This is my last committee meeting as
9 Chair of the Committee. Thank you all.
10 [applause] And with that, I recommend a no vote
11 on the--no, I'm just kidding. With that, I
12 recommend an aye vote on everything on today's
13 agenda. William Martin, for the last time, sir,
14 for me, please call the roll.

15 CLERK MARTIN: William Martin,
16 Committee Clerk. Roll call vote Committee on
17 Land Use. Council Member Comrie?

18 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Aye.

19 CLERK MARTIN: Rivera?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Aye.

21 CLERK MARTIN: Reyna?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Aye, and
23 thank you to our Chair.

24 CLERK MARTIN: Barron?
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: May I be
3 excused to explain my vote?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Say no.

5 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: It doesn't
6 matter.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Well, let me
8 just say this. I will be explaining my vote. I
9 want to say to the Chair, this is the most
10 difficult committee to chair, one of the most
11 difficult committees. A lot of land is given
12 away to people who don't deserve it, but you
13 did the best you could to keep it as affordable
14 for our community. So I don't want to
15 disappoint any of you and stop and vote aye on
16 all. So that will not be happening today. I
17 want to vote no on the Greenpoint project, but
18 I want to let you know that I think before I
19 vote and I research before I vote. There's 720
20 units, 520 of those units will be 100 percent
21 and above the AMI and for the new Council
22 Members that are here, always look out for the
23 Area Median Income, because that's how they
24 gentrify on neighborhoods. The AMI for New York
25 City as you know is about 84,000 for a family

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2 of four. So if you do 125 and 100 percent of
3 the AMI, you're talking about an income
4 requirement for those units that probably are
5 above 100,000 dollars, and there's no way that
6 over 50, 60 percent of the people in that area
7 make over 100,000 dollars. They may be some who
8 might make that, but very few. The area,
9 neighborhood and AMI for that area is, I've
10 heard two numbers, anywhere from 34,000 dollars
11 for a family four. The highest number I heard
12 was 60, depending upon how you carve out the
13 neighborhood, but nothing near the AMI's that's
14 in this project. For that reason, I'm voting no
15 on the Greenpoint project and aye on the rest.
16 Have a happy holiday.

17 CLERK MARTIN: Jackson?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: May I be
19 excused to explain my vote? Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: So ordered.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: So I wanted
22 to say to you, Leroy, thank you for your tenure
23 as Chair of the Land Use Committee. It's been
24 my honor and pleasure to work with you as my
25 colleague. You've been my colleague in City

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2 Council for the past 12 years, and we've always
3 had a good working relationship. But also, as
4 Charles indicated, the Land Use Committee which
5 has three subcommittees is not an easy
6 committee to chair. So you've done an honorable
7 job on behalf of all of New York City
8 residents, understanding the complexities of
9 our great city and land use. With that, I wish
10 you all the best in your new role as the Deputy
11 Borough President of Queens. I know that you'll
12 do well. I wish you good health you and your
13 family and all things that God can provide for
14 you. So with that, I vote aye on all. I
15 disagree with my colleague Charles Barron. He's
16 always full of fun, but he votes his
17 conscience, but I do say that Steve Levin and
18 Diana Reyna, the job that you're doing in that
19 part of Brooklyn and trying to get affordable
20 housing, you are to be applauded knowing how
21 difficult it is when you're on the--trying to
22 get from developers as much affordable housing
23 as you can get. So with that, I vote aye.

24 CLERK MARTIN: Vann?
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Explaining my
3 vote, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to
4 observe the stylish shirt and tie you have on
5 there. It's very attractive. I like that.
6 Beyond that, I'm going to commend you for your
7 leadership on the Committee. You know, your
8 temperament and your desire to try and
9 accommodate the interest of the members is
10 extraordinary and has been noted. I, again, I
11 just wanted to make that comment. I want you to
12 know how I and I think others feel about that
13 leadership that you brought here. Having said
14 that, I vote aye on all.

15 CLERK MARTIN: Gonzales?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALES: I just
17 want to say thank you, Chair, for the
18 incredible years of history that was made in
19 this committee, because I know many people will
20 be impacted forever, but I also want to say
21 thank you for your friendship and the
22 leadership that you've exhibited to me, and
23 good luck. Aye.

24 CLERK MARTIN: Palma?
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Aye. I love
3 you.

4 CLERK MARTIN: Arroyo?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: I love you.
6 I vote aye.

7 CLERK MARTIN: Dickens?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: I want to
9 join my colleagues to express to Chair Comrie.
10 The leadership that you've taken in this
11 Committee which has been said is real
12 difficult. I want to say that your loyalty to
13 the people, to the residents of this great City
14 were dedication, your hard work showed in
15 everything you did through legislation,
16 resolutions, and through your leadership in
17 this committee. It is difficult. You've got a
18 difficult task ahead of you. I congratulate you
19 on the next step in your life. I thank you for
20 the direction and the education that you
21 provided me as I came into this body as a
22 freshman to understand that this is the
23 people's house, for the people and by the
24 people. And so I thank you Chair Comrie and I
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1 salute you. And I too love you much more.
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3 Congratulations and thank you, and I vote aye.

4 CLERK MARTIN: Garodnick?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Aye.

6 CLERK MARTIN: Lappin?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LAPPIN: I vote aye,
8 and I also want to say what a pleasure it has
9 been. It seems like an awfully long time ago
10 that I was knocking on doors in your district
11 when you ran the first time, and it has been my
12 pleasure to work with you both as staff and as
13 a colleague, and I hope that we will stay in
14 touch, and I wish you the best of luck.

15 CLERK MARTIN: Koo?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: I vote aye. I
17 also wanted to say thank you to our chair,
18 Council Member Leroy Comrie for his dedication
19 and for his public service. He's one of the
20 best public servants we have in Queens. And I
21 also wanted to say I enjoy working with my
22 colleagues on this committee, and I look
23 forward to work with you again in next year. So
24 happy holidays everyone. Thank you.

25 CLERK MARTIN: How do you vote?

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: I vote yes on
3 all.

4 CLERK MARTIN: Lander?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I just want
6 to add my voice, maybe not in love, but at
7 least in deep thanks and respect. It's been an
8 honor really serving as a subcommittee chair
9 under your leadership in this committee. There
10 have been a lot of situations that required
11 sensitivity and partnership and dialogue with
12 people on both sides of an issues, and you've
13 always been there to help figure out how to
14 listen to all sides and navigate a fair and
15 honest way forward, and I really appreciate
16 serving under you. As it's the end of the
17 term, I just want to say thank you to the
18 staff. We have had a really great experience
19 here. So thank you very much. I vote aye on
20 all.

21 CLERK MARTIN: Levin?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Permission to
23 explain my vote? I just want to acknowledge
24 Chair Comrie as well for his guidance and
25 making sure that I was always well informed and

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2 had really kind of a big brother as the Land
3 Use Chair, as the Chair of the Subcommittee,
4 and I want to thank you Chair Comrie for
5 everything that you've done for me throughout
6 this process. [off mic] And, before I didn't--I
7 was remiss in not acknowledging Ramon Martinez
8 who has been with me every step of the way on
9 every Land Use project that's come through my
10 district which have been numerous and big and
11 agitating and Ramon has been there as a
12 stalwart and so I just want to publicly
13 acknowledge all of the dedication and hard work
14 that he's done. Thank you. And I'll vote aye on
15 all.

16 CLERK MARTIN: Weprin?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Aye on all,
18 and thank you Chair Comrie.

19 CLERK MARTIN: Williams?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Excuse my
21 vote. May I be excused is my vote. Nice
22 haircut, Mr. Chair. And I also want to say I
23 wish you the best in your future endeavors and
24 I want to thank you also for the nuggets of
25 wisdom that you've given me. You were, I

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2 believe, the first person to support me when I
3 ran for Vice Co-Chair of the BLAC. You may not
4 remember, you were one of the first people who
5 helped me out when we had some issues with
6 DoITT, and some people of no color over there.
7 So I'm grateful--gratefully appreciative of
8 that and I wish you the best of luck, and it
9 was an honor serving on your committee. I vote
10 aye on all. I do have some concerns with the
11 Greenpoint, and hopefully as we move forward we
12 will really be able to fix a lot of these
13 problems in these deals. I'm looking forward to
14 do that. I'm also looking forward to hopefully
15 get some of the problems before the other vote
16 so I can really think it through and be fair to
17 my colleagues if I have objections. But I have
18 some concern of it, but I'm going to vote aye.
19 Congratulations again.

20 CLERK MARTIN: Ignizio?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Thank you
22 to my colleagues, and you know, this is kind of
23 like a eulogy you get to hear. Isn't that
24 interesting? For all your great work, but I
25 also wanted to let--well, I'm just saying he

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2 got to hear great things. I want to lend my
3 voice as well to the steady hand at the wheel
4 that you gave to this committee. This is a
5 committee where emotions run wild a lot because
6 people really desperately care about their
7 district and the projects they're in, and they
8 care about affordable housing, and they care
9 about what's going to happen to their part, and
10 Leroy Comrie, steady hand at the wheel in
11 guiding this committee and ensuring fairness
12 and equity and that everybody has heard. You
13 know, I think the public sometimes takes that
14 for granted, that that's what happens
15 everywhere in government and it's not. And
16 that's a tribute to you as chair. It's a
17 tribute to you as a person, and the City of New
18 York is better for having you as its Chair of
19 Land Use, and I vote aye.

20 CLERK MARTIN: Land Use items 961,
21 962, and 963 have been adopted by a vote 17 in
22 the affirmative, one in the negative, and no
23 abstentions, and Land Use item 989 has been
24 adopted by a vote of 18 in the affirmative,
25 zero in the negative and no abstentions.

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COMMITTEE ON LAND USE

CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: With that we will be closing the Committee. I want to thank you all again for your support and I am going to bring the close of the Land Use Committee for December 19th, 2013.

[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 there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is no interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date 01/07/2014