

**New York Landmark Preservation Commission  
Chair Nominee – Meenakshi Srinivasan**

**Opening Remarks  
Before the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections  
May 24, 2014**

Thank you Speaker Mark-Viverito, Chair Lander, Landmarks Chair Koo and members of the Committee, for this opportunity to speak before you this morning and answer any questions. I am extremely honored and excited to be Mayor Bill De Blasio's nominee for Chair of the Landmark Preservation Commission, and I ask you for your support. If appointed, I am committed to ensure that New York City's architectural, historical and cultural legacies are protected and preserved.

The preservation of New York City's architecturally, historically, and culturally significant buildings and sites that reflect the stories of our past, continue to be told in the future. The preservation of these buildings and neighborhoods is also an essential part of what defines New York City to the world, and establishes its identity. I am very enthusiastic by the opportunity to be the steward of this rich legacy.

I am an Urban Planner, urban designer and architect by training, and I have dedicated close to 25 years of my professional career to land use planning in New York City – 13 years with the Department of City Planning, and the past 10 years as Chair of the Board of Standards and Appeals. My experience has given me a wealth of knowledge in land use and zoning, preservation of neighborhoods, real estate finance, property rights, administrative law, and governance. I have also visited the many diverse neighborhoods and districts throughout all five boroughs. I have a deep appreciation for the character and scale of these places – and an understanding of the forces that have shaped their identities.

As Chair of the Board of Standards and Appeals, I have had the opportunity to lead an agency which receives several hundred land use applications a year. During my tenure, I have strived to ensure a fair and open public review process. In guiding the commission and conducting public hearings, I have worked to build consensus, resolve conflicts, and mediate outcomes. I believe that under my leadership, the Board has established professionalism and integrity, efficiency, transparency and fairness in its procedures and process. If I am appointed, I look forward to bring this experience and expertise to the Landmark Preservation Commission.

Finally, as a planner, I understand that New York is confronted with complex challenges relating to housing and economic development, and that they need to evolve and grow to meet those challenges. I commend the Mayor on his ambitious affordable housing plan which will secure the well-being of all its residents now and in the future. I am committed to ensuring that landmark preservation goals will be integrated and achieved within the larger planning goals for the city. If appointed as Landmarks Chair, I will welcome working closely with the administration, the city council, communities and other stakeholders in striking the right balance between the need to preserve the City's and neighborhoods beloved buildings and sites, and the

need to allow the City to grow and evolve. Both are necessary in making New York a world class city.

My long-standing career in New York City government has been dedicated to making New York a better place to live, work and visit, and I look forward to continuing that dedication as the Chair of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Thank you.

**THE NEW YORK  
LANDMARKS  
CONSERVANCY**

May 23, 2014

**STATEMENT OF THE NEW YORK LANDMARKS CONSERVANCY BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS REGARDING CONFIRMATION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF MEENAKSHI SRINIVASAN AS CHAIR OF THE NEW YORK CITY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

Good morning Chair Lander, Councilmembers, and Chair Srinivasan. I am Andrea Goldwyn, speaking on behalf of The New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy is a private, not-for-profit organization, founded in 1973. Our mission is to preserve and protect historic resources throughout New York via advocacy, and technical and financial assistance.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission has thrived under all of its Chairs, including Robert Tierney and others who did not come from the preservation world, but have demonstrated their commitment to New York's architectural heritage and its important role in the City's economy and livability.

From what we understand of Chair Srinivasan's tenure at the Board of Standards and Appeals, she listens to all sides, makes informed, intelligent decisions, and has created an open process, all of which can only serve her and the LPC well as she takes the helm.

The Commission and the very concept of landmarking have faced a steady barrage of criticism from some quarters, especially in the last several years. Landmarking has proven to be an indispensable factor in the City's growth and development. While any agency can be improved, the new Chair is definitely not inheriting a broken process. This is a small agency with a substantial mission. We call for an increase in budget and staff to better enable it to perform its job. We hope that the Chair will stand against misguided attempts to weaken the law and subordinate preservation.

The Conservancy has always worked well with the LPC, and we anticipate continuing this strong relationship. There is much to look forward to next year in the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Landmarks Law, and we hope that the new Chair will help lead that celebration.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the Conservancy's views.

**Four Borough Neighborhood Preservation  
Alliance**

**Preservation League of Staten Island  
West Brighton Restoration Society  
The North Shore Waterfront Greenway**

1674 Richmond Terrace

Staten Island, NY 10310

917 545 3060

City Council Hearing May 22, 20014 Landmarks Commission

**Historic Preservation is preserving New York and all its people. It is where the past, the present and the future meet. It teaches us to respect our heritage, those who came before us, and ultimately each other, so that we can have a great future.**

**We are looking forward to working together with our new Commissioner to achieve this future for us and for future generations.**

**It is most important that our American heritage in all of NYC and its boroughs be restored as this is the greatest culmination of peoples hopes and dreams the world has ever known.**

**On the North Shore of Staten Island on Richmond Terrace where the Indians once stood on the high ground overlooking the Kill Van Kull, past the SI Ferry & Snug Harbor & Broadway are the, Sacred Sites of West Brighton, one of the most historic places in New York.....Where the Lenape Indians once lived, an American Revolutionary War site, an Abolitionist and literary enclave, where Anna Leonowens (The King & I) wrote her memoirs, Trinity Church 1801, historic cemeteries , an early village, The John De Groot House (NYC Landmark) and much more. Richmond Terrace tells the story of our country. There s a new park here, on this historic shore. The restoration of this place will bring an economic and cultural rebirth and a magnificent future.**

*Linda Estenas*  
estenas2@gmail.com  
9175453060

# FRIENDS

of the UPPER EAST SIDE  
HISTORIC DISTRICTS

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May 23, 2014

The Council of the City of New York  
City Hall  
New York, NY 10007

Re: Ms. Meenakshi Srinivasan, Appointment as a member of the New York City  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Members of the Council of the City of New York:

Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, founded in 1982, is an independent, not-for-profit membership organization dedicated to preserving the architectural legacy, livability, and sense of place of the Upper East Side.

Our neighborhood lays claim to institutions of global- renown, spanning decades of cultural investment from the Met to the Guggenheim on Museum Mile. The most-visited scenic landmark in the world, Central Park, is right in our back yard. We are also proud of our livable, lovable streetscapes like Lexington Avenue, which boasts its own institutions -- the generations-old "mom and pop" shops. From white brick to brownstone, we cherish the Upper East Side's distinctive sense of place. It is what makes this neighborhood, and this city great.

While we protect over 2,000 historic buildings, the Upper East Side is by no means "frozen in amber" as claimed by some opponents to preservation. Our districts include new buildings such as the synagogue on East 63rd Street and a residential building at 91st and Madison Avenue in Carnegie Hill. We have honored new construction with our *Excellence in New Design Award*, recently bestowed upon 135 East 79th Street this year. As demonstrated by our 2001 exhibit, we welcome *Landmarks of the Future*.

Some would have you think that preservation is at odds with our Mayor's aim to preserve and increase affordable housing. The City & Suburban First Avenue Estate, designated not only for its architectural merit, but its significance in the history of affordable housing, is a great example of how the goals of these two interests are happily met. We applaud the Landmarks Preservation Commission's recent vote to deny the owner's hardship application to demolish these century-old model tenements and we hope that the administration will defend that crucial decision in any future litigation. While we fight strenuously to save these two landmark buildings, rent-regulated tenants fight to save their homes. We are in this together.

Our concerns are not limited by the boundaries of the Upper East Side. We need a comprehensive land use plan for the entire city, neighborhood by neighborhood -- one

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Patricia F. Sullivan  
Margot Wellington

Tara Kelly  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

that incorporates zoning, transportation, infrastructure, affordable housing, AND historic preservation in equal measure. While you will hear a variety of recommendations of ways to improve the Landmarks Preservation Commission, the most important is that the Commission have the freedom and means to carry out its mission, as set forth in the Landmarks Law, "to stabilize and improve property values; foster civic pride; protect and enhance the City's attractions to tourists; strengthen the economy of the City; and promote the use of historic districts, landmarks, interior landmarks, and scenic landmarks for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people of the City."



The City of New York

# Manhattan Community Board 1

Catherine McVay Hughes CHAIRPERSON | Noah Pfefferblit DISTRICT MANAGER

New York City Council  
Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections

250 Broadway, 16th floor

Friday, May 23, 2014

10:30AM

Testimony of Bruce Ehrmann

Co-Chair Manhattan Community Board 1 Landmarks Committee

Manhattan Community Board One is delighted that Mayor DeBlasio has appointed Meenakshi Srinivasan, a skilled architect and city planner with many years of City service, to be the new chairwoman of New York City's Landmarks Preservation Commission. This appointment naturally is of great interest to developers, preservationists and the local communities throughout the City.

As Chair of the Board of Standards and Appeals since 2002, Ms. Srinivasan has made the application and review processes transparent and has invited community participation at public hearings in a professional and fair manner. Her experience with communities dates to her service a decade earlier at the Department of City Planning.

Because the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates historic districts and gives landmark status to individual buildings, and has the authority to approve new development in historic districts and significant alterations to landmark buildings and buildings in historic districts, its decisions are a primary concern of Manhattan Community Board One.

Large portions of our board area are designated Historic Districts, specifically the Tribeca area with five separate districts and the South Street Seaport area. We also have many outstanding individually designated buildings. Because of this wealth of historic buildings in our district, we are concerned when any individual building is threatened by lack of designation.

We are particularly concerned with the failure of the Commission to add 67 Vestry Street to the North Tribeca Historic District and the New Market Building to the South Street Seaport Historic District, despite numerous requests by our community board. Both buildings are integral parts of unique historic areas and are threatened with imminent demolition. We urge the incoming Chair to give serious and immediate consideration to these requests.

We welcome the opportunity to meet with the new chair to discuss the wealth of historic fabric in our area and the problems we face in preserving it. Our concerns include zoning provisions that allow giant high-rise buildings adjacent to our historic districts. Also, we would like to see requirements for the provision of sufficient City infrastructure to support new and appropriate development be part of the landmark application process. And finally, what opportunities are there for affordable housing to be built into the approval process.

49 Chambers Street, Suite 715, New York, NY 10007-1209

Tel. (212) 442-5050 Fax (212) 442-5055

man01@cb.nyc.gov

[www.nyc.gov/html/mancb1](http://www.nyc.gov/html/mancb1)

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

[ ]

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
 in favor  in opposition

Date: 5/23/14

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Amanda Davis

Address: 232 E. 11<sup>th</sup> St

I represent: Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation

Address: same

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Name: MIRA KELLY

Address: 966 LEXINGTON AVE NY NY

I represent: FRIENDS OF THE UPPER EAST SIDE

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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 in favor  in opposition

Date: 5/23

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Name: BRUCE EHRMANN

Address: 13 WORTH ST., NYC

I represent: COMMUNITY BOARD #1, MANHATTAN

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



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in favor  in opposition

Date: 5/23/14

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Name: PETE DAVIES  
Address: 548 BROADWAY #5A 10012  
I represent: BROADWAY RESIDENTS COALITION  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Sinda Spenan  
Address: 1674 Richmond Avenue St. Hill  
I represent: Four Boroughs Preservation League St. Hill  
Address: The North Shore Historic Front Grounds  
(see map as above) Wirt Brighton Restoration Society

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Name: Andrea Goldwyn  
Address: 1 Writchell St - NYC  
I represent: NY Landmarks Conservancy  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

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Name: NADEZHDA WILLIAMS

Address: 232 E 11<sup>th</sup> ST

I represent: HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL

Address: 232 E 11<sup>th</sup> ST

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(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Claudette Brady

Address: 167 Hancock Street

I represent: Belford Struyvesant Society for Historic Preservation

Address: 167 Hancock St. Bklyn 11216

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in favor  in opposition

Date: 5/23/2014

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Name: Charles Morgan

Address: 15 W 79<sup>th</sup> St NY

I represent: PUBLIC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_