

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL  
AFFAIRS  
LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL  
INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: James G. Van Bramer  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Elizabeth S. Crowley  
Julissa Ferreras  
Peter A. Koo  
Stephen T. Levin  
Andy L. King  
Costa G. Constantinides  
Laurie A. Cumbo  
Helen K. Rosenthal

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

Tom Finkelppearl  
Commissioner of NYC Department of Cultural  
Affairs

Caron Atlas  
Arts and Democracy and Naturally Occurring  
Cultural Districts

Sarah Marinello  
Cultural Institutions Group

Marta Moreno Vega  
Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora

Sheila Lewandowski  
The Chocolate Factory Theater

Tamara Greenfield  
Fourth Arts Block

Katy Rubin  
Theatre of the Oppressed

Ella Weiss  
Brooklyn Arts Council

Catherine Green  
Arts East New York

Guy Yedwab  
League of Independent Theater

Lane Harwell  
Dance New York

Naomi Hersson  
No Longer Empty

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

Anne Dennin  
Arts Management

Paul Parkhill  
Spaceworks

Heather Woodfield  
One Percent for Culture

Jessica Silverman  
Carnegie Hall

Laura Washington  
New York Historical Society

Jennifer Wright Cook  
The Field

Alec Duffy  
Jack

Johnathan Slaff

Sami Abu Shumay  
Flushing Town Hall

Marie-Louise Stegall  
Fractured Atlas

Robert Lee  
Asian-American Art Center

Diane Fhaher Thornton  
AMERINDA

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

Marilu Gavlin  
Centro Civico Cultural Dominicano Inc.

Michael White  
Citizens Defending Libraries

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Good morning  
3 everyone and welcome to today's very important  
4 hearing on a comprehensive cultural plan for the City  
5 of New York. My name is Jimmy Van Bramer. I'm proud  
6 to be Chair of this Committee on Cultural Affairs,  
7 Libraries and International Intergroup Relations, and  
8 thrilled to be here for this very important hearing.  
9 I'm thrilled that we're joined by Commissioner Tom  
10 Finkelpearl for the testimony this morning, and even  
11 more thrilled to be joined by my colleague Council  
12 Member Steve Levin, who is as you know, one of the  
13 prime authors of this legislation, someone for whom  
14 this is a very, very important issue, and Council  
15 Member Koo is with is, but in the anti-chamber taking  
16 a call. And I do want to say it's thrilling to be  
17 joined by so many of you. As we were coming up the  
18 steps, we were talking about what a good crowd this  
19 is, and then Commissioner Finkelpearl and I were  
20 talking as well. You are our constituency, all of  
21 you, and it is an honor and a privilege to work with  
22 you, to fight for you and to help this city be as  
23 great as it is, because we all know in this room that  
24 the City of New York simply isn't the City of New  
25 York without each and every one of you doing what you

2 do, and this legislation is about making this city a  
3 better place through expanding access and opportunity  
4 and focusing on equity in the arts and culture. So,  
5 it is so great to see such a large and vibrant turn  
6 out of the cultural community here for this hearing,  
7 and of course, there's so many who wish they could be  
8 here this morning, but are working and doing some  
9 other things. So thank you, all of you, for  
10 everything that you mean to all of us. I don't need  
11 to--I thank you for the lights there. That's a added  
12 addition. I want to start by saying what everybody  
13 in this room already knows, which is that New York  
14 City is the cultural capital of the world and the  
15 arts and culture are woven into the fabric of this  
16 city. You are not outliers, you are in fact immersed  
17 in every aspect, in every single piece of this city,  
18 of New York. And the arts, artist culture drive  
19 everything in the City of New York. I like to say  
20 nothing big happens in the City of New York without  
21 art and culture being at the center of it. We  
22 learned that once again a couple of weeks ago when we  
23 announced that the cultural institutions group  
24 members would be offering free memberships, discounts  
25 to make the municipal ID plan work in the City of New

2 York. That's an amazing accomplishment on behalf of  
3 the City of New York that could not and will not  
4 succeed without culture leading the way. That's  
5 really important for everybody in this city to  
6 understand, and it's just very exciting to be a part  
7 of this and to understand the scope of cultural  
8 services and offerings in the city. But the plan,  
9 Intro 419 is aimed at seeing where there are voids in  
10 services, in opportunity, in access, where we can do  
11 more and understanding how to better target the  
12 approach to the offerings that we have. Measuring  
13 the economic impact of the arts and culture is a  
14 tricky thing. We try to do it sometimes, and it's  
15 important to know where resources are. That's easier  
16 to quantify than the value of the arts, I would  
17 argue, and probably all of you would agree that the  
18 value of an artist's work is immeasurable in so many  
19 ways and what you all do is priceless to the people  
20 who experience art and whose lives are forever  
21 changed by their experiences with art and culture.  
22 We want to, I think Council Member Levin and I,  
23 create and sustain an ongoing conversation about the  
24 importance of culture and art, and this time both in  
25 culture, but politically in the City of New York it's

2 all about access, equity and opportunity, and so it  
3 seems appropriate that we tackle those issues here in  
4 this committee with this piece of legislation. And  
5 we want very much for this to be fully engaging as  
6 grassroots and as democratic as a process can be,  
7 because that's really at the heart of art and  
8 culture, and we have an opportunity here to engage  
9 those who may be disenfranchised, those who may not  
10 be served as well and reaching into every single  
11 neighborhood, in every single borough with the power  
12 of art and culture. So, I'm excited to be a part of  
13 this, excited that over 30 Council Members have  
14 already signed onto this legislation before our first  
15 hearing on this piece, this hearing. So it's very  
16 exciting to have that kind of support. It's also  
17 important to know, and I know, and I'm thrilled that  
18 there are so many folks here who are going to testify  
19 about artists themselves, without whom none of this  
20 could happen and to talk about the high cost of  
21 living, the high cost of housing, studio space, and  
22 how important it is to retain and actually encourage  
23 more artists to come to New York and stay in New  
24 York. That's got to be a part of this conversation  
25 as well. So, I look forward to the conversation.

2 Commissioner Finkelpearl and I have already had a  
3 number of conversations about this privately, and  
4 we'll have another one publicly in about two minutes,  
5 and I look forward to hearing from all of you in the  
6 audience as well, and move forward as we are joined b  
7 Council Member Laurie Cumbo of the committee and it  
8 is a very exciting day. And I know Commissioner  
9 Finkelpearl will be here to hear some of the  
10 testimony after he testifies, which is a welcome  
11 addition to our proceedings in this new  
12 Administration. So, with that, I want to ask Council  
13 Member Levin, the prime sponsor of this legislation,  
14 a good friend to myself, and a really good friend to  
15 the cultural community. So with that, Council Member  
16 Levin?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
18 much, Chair Van Bramer. Good morning everybody and  
19 welcome to today's hearing. My name is Stephen  
20 Levin. I am the sponsor along with Chair Van Bramer  
21 of the legislation before us today. I want to start  
22 by thanking Chair Van Bramer for his dedication and  
23 strong advocacy for culture in New York City and for  
24 holding this hearing today and for co-sponsoring this  
25 legislation. Thank you. I also want to thank my

2 fellow Council Members on this committee, Peter Koo  
3 and Laurie Cumbo who are here, as well as the 30 co-  
4 sponsors of this bill. Thank you very much,  
5 Commissioner Tom Finkelppearl and the Department of  
6 Cultural Affairs for testifying today, and thank you  
7 to the many cultural groups and individuals who are  
8 also with us this morning and who will be providing  
9 testimony. Arts and culture do not affect just those  
10 who work in the field. They affect all of us. They  
11 inspire us. They challenge us, and they make us the  
12 dynamic people that we are and the dynamic city that  
13 we are. Arts and culture bring people together and  
14 they impact us in more ways than I think we are aware  
15 of. No city parallels the incredible creative output  
16 of New York City, and yet, many major cities in the  
17 United States, among them Chicago, Denver, Austin,  
18 Atlanta and others have a comprehensive cultural  
19 plan, while New York does not. We don't have any  
20 measure of the cultural resources we have in our  
21 city. We have no measure of how they're being  
22 directed. I believe we can do more to guide our city  
23 to a future where cultural thrives unlike it has ever  
24 before. And honestly, last night, you know, looking  
25 around at other city's cultural plans, what struck me

2 is that every city has this great sense of pride over  
3 their culture that is part of their city's fabric,  
4 and so the artist that make up their city and the  
5 institutions that make up their city, and so it was  
6 inspiring to look around the country to see all these  
7 other cities that take this great amount of pride in  
8 the process of making a cultural plan, but also in  
9 the resources, the cultural resources that they have  
10 in their cities, and I believe that we could do that  
11 here. With this bill, we have an opportunity to  
12 ensure that we are doing everything we possibly can  
13 for culture in New York City. A cultural plan would  
14 put forward a targeted and comprehensive approach to  
15 increase cultural activity city-wide, increase the  
16 economic impact of the arts and culture and provide  
17 support to the artists who make this city the vibrant  
18 one of a kind place that it is. Today's hearing is  
19 important because it will allow us to hear your input  
20 and suggestions and to ensure that the bill that we  
21 end up passing is the most effective and  
22 comprehensive bill possible. This is going to be an  
23 ongoing dialogue and we will take to heart the  
24 testimony and suggestions discussed today. It is  
25 crucial that this bill represent the interest of New

2 Yorkers from each borough and that it addresses any  
3 outstanding questions and concerns. And so I look  
4 forward to continuing this important conversation  
5 with each of you. And so again, thank you, Chair Van  
6 Bramer and Commissioner Finkelpearl, and I look  
7 forward to hearing today's testimony. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
9 much, Council Member Levin for your efforts. I do  
10 want to thank the staff, Amita Kilowan [sp?] to my  
11 right, as some of you are meeting her for the first  
12 time. She is our new counsel to the Cultural Affairs  
13 Committee. She has at least one hearing under her  
14 belt, but this is her big coming out for all of you,  
15 so please welcome her. And of course, Tanya Cyrus  
16 [sp?] who has worked with the committee for a number  
17 of years and Cody Rider [sp?], my Legislative  
18 Director who is to the left, as Beyonce likes to say.  
19 Thank you very much. So with that, I would like  
20 swear in the Commissioner, which is now what we're  
21 doing here at the City Council, ask him to raise his  
22 right hand. And do you affirm to tell the truth, the  
23 whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your  
24 testimony before this committee and to respond  
25 honestly to Council Member's questions?

2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: I do.

3 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
4 much. With that, we ask Commissioner Finkelparl to  
5 begin his testimony.

6 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Thank you.  
7 Good morning, Chair Van Bramer and distinguished  
8 members of the committee. I am Tom Finkelparl,  
9 Commissioner of the New York City Department of  
10 Cultural Affairs, and I'm here to present testimony  
11 regarding proposed legislation that would amend the  
12 city charter to require a comprehensive cultural plan  
13 for New York City. With me today are members of my  
14 staff from the Department of Cultural Affairs.  
15 First, thank you for the opportunity to engage in  
16 dialogue around strategies for effectively employing  
17 the city's resources to foster more equitable and  
18 expansive access to the arts. It's my sense that  
19 there's a great lot of agreement in this room today  
20 about the potential role of culture in the city. We  
21 want widely available opportunities for cultural  
22 engagement. We want a city that is affordable and  
23 hospitable to artists. We want public spaces  
24 enriched with public--with artistic offerings. We  
25 want a cultural policy that touches all communities,

2 reinforcing and building on the creativity that's  
3 already there. We want to build access to resources  
4 across all five boroughs. The question at hand is  
5 how to get this done, how to enrich the support and  
6 support the robust cultural life of New York City. I  
7 look forward to working with you and your colleagues  
8 in the City Council, public and private partners and  
9 residents throughout the city to determine where we  
10 should focus our efforts in this regard. Over the  
11 past decades, a handful of cities across the United  
12 States have undertaken their own planning processes,  
13 Council Member Levin said, are related to arts and  
14 culture including Austin, Denver and Chicago. In  
15 preparation for this testimony, I have reviewed some  
16 of these plans. I spoke to Chicago's Commissioner of  
17 Cultural Affairs, Michelle Boone, and Tigel Lorde  
18 [sp?] whose firm prepared Chicago's plan, which is  
19 considered to be state of the art by many people.  
20 After this preliminary research I was left with the  
21 feeling that their broad based planning exercises  
22 were beneficial in those cities. There's much to  
23 admire in the recommendations of each plan, and many  
24 of them achieved an impressive degree of public  
25 engagement. In some cases, like Austin, Texas and

2 Portsmouth, New Hampshire, a primary recommendation  
3 was to establish a Department of Cultural Affairs.  
4 Boston just hired its first head of Cultural Affairs  
5 in a generation. She will launch a cultural master  
6 plan, but will have a budget to oversee of only 1.3  
7 million dollars. In Chicago, the number one  
8 recommendation was to reinvigorate the Arts Education  
9 in the public schools, but many of these plans  
10 outline strategies to achieve robust levels of  
11 financial and civic support for culture, which is  
12 already the hallmark of New York City and this  
13 Administration's approach. As you know, arts  
14 education in the public schools is high on our  
15 agenda, and DCLA is America's second largest public  
16 funder for the arts and culture, second only to the  
17 federal government. Before getting into more detail,  
18 it's important to note that the word culture is often  
19 confused with art. The proposed legislation talks a  
20 lot about artists, arts education, art in the  
21 community and so on, but our agency oversees funds  
22 for zoos and gardens as well as museums that focus on  
23 history and science. So it's important to recognize  
24 the full range of what we consider to be cultural  
25 activity. This means understanding and assessing the

2 value of exposure to nature, the roll of experiential  
3 education and science and how access to these  
4 experiences is distributed in our city. Also, should  
5 we confine our inquiries to the nonprofit sector  
6 where we focus most of our attention, or should we  
7 include the for profit arts from Broadway Theater to  
8 the motion picture industry to the music clubs? What  
9 about the dance groups associated with Mexicano  
10 Sonidos [sic] de Queens and other small informal  
11 groups that contribute to the creative vitality to  
12 neighborhoods all over the city? New York's cultural  
13 sector is enormous, especially when defined broadly.  
14 Let me be clear, many of the idea proposed in the  
15 legislation are closely aligned with our priorities  
16 at DCLA. For example, the Statement of Legislative  
17 Intent recognizes the importance of understanding of  
18 the scope of cultural services throughout the city.  
19 Yes, it is important to know where services are  
20 robust, where they are thin and how the gaps can be  
21 filled. While we are always listening to our  
22 constituents, we need to undertake an in depth, data  
23 driven assessment of these offerings in their  
24 entirety. We want an arts policy that serves the  
25 entire city if we want an arts policy that serves the

2 entire city. First, we need to understand where we  
3 are falling short. We have been in discussion about  
4 how this might be implemented. This has been a theme  
5 in other plans. Denver's plan, for example, has a lot  
6 to say about the distribution of cultural resources.  
7 And we're open to the recommendations contained in  
8 the legislation and other suggestions such as  
9 simplifying the process for presenting art in public  
10 spaces, a stakeholder dialogue in collaboration with  
11 city agencies, public art organizations and artists  
12 that examines the potentials for art in the city's  
13 public spaces could open the doors to a richer  
14 intersection of art and urban space. The legislation  
15 proposed that we find ways to help artists thrive in  
16 New York City in our current real estate environment.  
17 Two years ago, Cultural Affairs helped launch  
18 Spaceworks, whose Executive Director will testify  
19 later today. Spaceworks is dedicated to expanding  
20 the supply of affordable workspace for artists in New  
21 York, a response to exactly your point about the  
22 retention of creative talent. I'm a big fan of this  
23 initiative, but a comprehensive analysis of the real  
24 estate environment in relation to artists needs--in  
25 relationship to artist's needs may be beyond the

2 current scope of their agencies resources or  
3 functions. Also, it's important to understand that  
4 New York's real estate environment presents issues  
5 for low and middle income individuals across the  
6 board, not just artists. The opening of PS1, PS109  
7 in East Harlem next year will be a great moment for  
8 the discussion of the complexities of artist housing  
9 and its relationship to affordable housing as a  
10 whole. We also wholly support the legislation's  
11 encouragement of interagency collaboration. This has  
12 been a part of Cultural Affairs' DNA for some time,  
13 often with a lens of equity and access. Our Spark  
14 Program in partnership with the Department of Aging  
15 and local arts councils fund artist's residencies in  
16 our senior centers. Materials for the Arts, which we  
17 run in collaboration with the Department of  
18 Sanitation and the Department of Education, recycles  
19 and distributes materials to schools and arts  
20 organizations across the city. We will continue to  
21 work with the Department of Education to improve arts  
22 education in and out of school time, including  
23 expansion of the CASA program in partnership with  
24 you, the City Council. And finally, as Chair Van  
25 Bramer mentioned, it was a great day a couple of

2 weeks ago at the Bronx Zoo when the cultural benefits  
3 package for the municipal ID holders was announced by  
4 Mayor de Blasio, a collaboration with the Office of  
5 Immigrant Affairs, the Council, and our partners at  
6 the Cultural Institutions Group. The cultural  
7 benefits package initiative have the potential to  
8 open up our cultural institutions to whole new  
9 audiences. Since starting as Commissioner, I've been  
10 meeting with other agency heads to examine additional  
11 opportunities for collaboration. This is an ongoing  
12 project that is one of my highest priorities. That  
13 having been said, mandating all agencies to analyze  
14 how they can incorporate arts to enhance their  
15 mission as a legislation does is in many cases  
16 outside of their expertise, resources and the legal  
17 functions of the city agencies. Doing so could  
18 divert resources critical for their core functions.  
19 It is also unclear how the oversight groups  
20 established by this bill would complement or detract  
21 from the role of the Cultural Affairs Advisory  
22 Commission established by the City Charter. Parts of  
23 the proposed bill appear to be duplicative of many of  
24 the activities and purposes of the Commission. The  
25 powers of these groups may also conflict with the

2 City's Charter in some cases. In the proposed  
3 legislation, there's a suggestion that we undertake a  
4 study to quantify the economic impact of the arts in  
5 New York. Such studies have been conducted in the  
6 past. I believe that we all understand culture's  
7 economic value and you will continue to hear me talk  
8 about it in the hearings in the future. But it is an  
9 argument that works best for larger scale  
10 institutions that can drive tourism and does not  
11 really get at the value of more locally based groups.  
12 This April we began discussion with Professor Mark  
13 Stern, the head of the Social Impact of the Arts  
14 Project, SIAP, at the University of Pennsylvania.  
15 The SIAP seeks to measure and document the  
16 relationship between the arts and social wellbeing in  
17 urban neighborhoods and track the potential benefits  
18 from investment in cultural vitality. Professor  
19 Stern has agreed to perform a study focusing on New  
20 York's cultural vitality and has already started an  
21 analysis of demographic data from the US Census Bureau  
22 and other sources. With preliminary results expected  
23 late in the spring, this study would be an excellent  
24 way to focus our cultural planning and activities and  
25 provide a solid foundation for deep evidence-based

2 analysis of New York's cultural assets. Reviewing  
3 some of the testimony presented last November at the  
4 hearing on the initial cultural plan legislation, one  
5 motif was that some people were worried about the  
6 diverting substantial resources from the Department  
7 of Cultural Affairs. Our engagement with the Social  
8 Impact of the Arts Project is I will assure you being  
9 funded privately. I do not want to suggest that we  
10 are opposed to planning. Let me re-emphasize that.  
11 We're not opposed to planning. Quite the contrary,  
12 many of the programs and initiatives I have been  
13 talking about are the result of planning analysis and  
14 community input from a variety of stakeholders,  
15 including our partners at the City Council. But from  
16 an administrative perspective, we are a relatively  
17 small agency. We deliver around 150 million dollars  
18 every year in operational funding and around the same  
19 in capital support for cultural institutions,  
20 something no other city in America does, by the way,  
21 that's the capital investment. We spend less than  
22 four percent of our budget on staffing. Planning is  
23 absolutely necessary. The question is how to plan  
24 effectively. My hesitation relates to the breadth of  
25 the plan as is currently written. There are many

2 suggestions in this legislation that would benefit  
3 from targeted study that would allow us to dive  
4 deeply into the issues and come up with substantial  
5 initiatives. Again, I appreciate the spirit within  
6 which the plan is presented and I think we have a lot  
7 of the same goals. My question is how we can most  
8 effectively achieve them. Broadly based cultural  
9 plans typically take a minimum of one year and  
10 sometimes up to two years to compete, diverting human  
11 resources from the cultural agency during that  
12 period. There are suggestions in the plan we could  
13 dive into right away. As I said at the top, I am open  
14 to this dialogue. I have been listening carefully  
15 since my appointment and I'd like to continue now by  
16 listening to some of the groups presenting testimony  
17 after me, and I'd like to say also to the groups that  
18 my two Deputy Commissioners, my Chief of Staff and  
19 some other staff members are going to stay and listen  
20 to what you guys have to say, saying that to you and  
21 of course to the council, I'm happy to get into  
22 dialogue and answer questions.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
24 much, Commissioner Finkelparl. We've been joined by  
25 Council Member Helen Rosenthal. And I want to say

2 thank you for your testimony which is starkly  
3 different than the testimony from DCLA at the last  
4 hearing on the cultural plan. I think it was much  
5 more open to a discussion and dialogue, and I  
6 appreciate that willingness to talk and find  
7 solutions, because I don't think anybody here would  
8 say that the Department of Cultural Affairs doesn't  
9 do great work, that the funding that is allocated and  
10 I want to say a lot of that coming from a New York  
11 City Council that believes in expansion of these  
12 programs. No one would say that that work isn't good.  
13 The question here is can we do better, can we do  
14 more? Can we go further in increasing access and  
15 equity and so I appreciate all of the great work that  
16 you outline here, but I think we all here are not  
17 talking about resting on our laurels [sic]. They're  
18 saying this is great, this is perfect, we don't need  
19 to do any better. This is about increasing what's  
20 already good and making it even greater. So I want  
21 you to know--

22 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]

23 Yes, no, can I--

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: that's where  
25 we're coming from, and I think we agree on that.

2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes. So my--  
3 the question, and by the way, absolutely we can  
4 improve, no question about it. And I think my  
5 question is what problem are we trying to solve.  
6 That's my underlying question about this, and then if  
7 we have a real clarity on that question, then I think  
8 let's dig into that question. So I think--one of the  
9 things that's suggested in the plan, which I think is  
10 absolutely imperative that we do, is a baseline  
11 analysis of where Cultural Affairs' money is going,  
12 what communities have access to cultural funding,  
13 where things are missing, and sort of that's an in  
14 depth study that needs to be done that I embrace, and  
15 that could also be a then a starting point for  
16 further discussion of how we can improve. But that's  
17 my basic question. What is the problem we're trying  
18 to solve?

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I think you  
20 already answered your own question with what you just  
21 said, right? If we believe that we should engage in  
22 a discussion about where funding is going, whether or  
23 not all communities are being reached, and if we  
24 think there's even the slightest chance that not  
25 every community is being reached, that we have a

2 fundamental obligation to reach them and to do more  
3 to get there, and I think that's the fundamental  
4 question behind this legislation. So, although, I  
5 appreciate the give and take. I don't know how many  
6 people testifying often ask the Chair the question,  
7 but that's good. So, and speaking of which, though,  
8 I did want to say you praised the Denver approach,  
9 right, and the Denver plan. So, and you said that  
10 most of them if not all of them achieved their goals  
11 and achieved positive outcomes. So what is it about  
12 the Denver plan that you thought was so good that  
13 could be replicated here?

14 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: You know, I--  
15 just it had a sort of more original kind of tone to  
16 it. It was really based on inquiry. It seemed to be  
17 digging deeply into some of the problems that they  
18 have in Denver related to sort of access and even,  
19 you know, racial issues, etcetera, in a very honest  
20 and open way. I don't know who wrote that plan. By  
21 the way, I know this is on the record, Lord Cultural  
22 Resources who wrote the Chicago plan is excellent. I  
23 mean, I don't want to--I really--I'm not criticizing  
24 the other plans, I just felt like that was reading a  
25 bunch of different plans in the last week or so. It

2 had a tone to it and a way of speaking about culture  
3 that seemed opened, inquisitive and productive, and  
4 a lot of it was about sharing and it was access  
5 points. It was really about access and equity.  
6 That's what the plan as I read it emphasized, the  
7 first, you know, major suggestions, one after the  
8 next was about that.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And you talked  
10 about the Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission and  
11 some concern about that as it currently operates or  
12 that our plan could eclipse that. So I guess I just  
13 wanted to ask whether or not you thought the Cultural  
14 Affairs Advisory Commission is working in the way  
15 that it should, and if you think the cultural  
16 community would agree with that assessment?

17 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: I think it'd  
18 be hard to argue that it is, in the sense that we  
19 haven't had a meeting yet since I've been  
20 Commissioner, but we are working on that with  
21 appointments. We're hoping to appoint somebody soon.  
22 I wanted to have a very active role. So I'm highly  
23 optimistic it could have a very active role. I was a  
24 member of that Commission when I was Chairman of the  
25 CIG before, and I think it had an important advisory

2 role to the Commissioner of Cultural Affairs. I  
3 think it can work. Can I read what the legal  
4 department has to say about that?

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Sure.

6 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Okay. It is  
7 also unclear how the bill's purpose and the groups  
8 established by it complement or detract from the role  
9 of the Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission  
10 established by the Charter. That Commission's role  
11 is to advise the Department and the Mayor on cultural  
12 activities, policies, goals, including fostering,  
13 coordinating among various agencies, organizations  
14 and institution, compiling data and reports on  
15 submitting findings to the Department of the Mayor.  
16 The proposed bill appears to be duplicative in many  
17 of the activities. So that's what the Commission's  
18 supposed to do. And the bill, and that those  
19 committees may also intrude on the powers of  
20 appointed city officials because it establishes  
21 groups whose members are not all appointed by the  
22 Mayor and whose activities are not purely advisory.  
23 So that's a--we can talk about that. That's an advi-  
24 - that --I have fulfilled my duty to read the legal  
25 department's--

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Well, we thank  
3 the legal staff who wrote that, but I think, and you  
4 know, look, I think my respect and admiration for you  
5 is well known. Having said that, I think that this  
6 piece of the plan actually points to a problem or  
7 points to something that could be done much better,  
8 and I think far more important to me than who gets to  
9 control the appointments, is who are the appointees,  
10 and what is the level of access and influence and  
11 activity, and I think that's where we're trying to  
12 go, because if the Commission isn't meeting and there  
13 are vacant appointments, then what it's supposed to  
14 be doing it isn't doing, and who is on those  
15 Commissions is vitally important, right, because a  
16 lot of folks here should be on those Commissions and  
17 on those committees.

18 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yeah, I agree  
19 with you, and I am hoping that we can appoint  
20 somebody soon. I haven't been--I've been  
21 Commissioner for four and a half months and there  
22 were other things higher on the agenda, but I agree  
23 with you. No, we got to get to that. And it has to  
24 be, and it has to do those things that were just  
25 outlined in what I read.

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. And  
3 I think it's been a very active four and half months.  
4 The other agency's piece, right, now I know this is  
5 something you care about a great deal, and I think in  
6 our first official meeting after you became the  
7 Commissioner we talked about this, and it's part of  
8 the plan. You sort of talk about it being outside of  
9 the scope, perhaps in terms of mandate and resources,  
10 so we can't force--

11 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]

12 Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: all of the  
14 agencies to do this. I'm not sure I agree with all  
15 of that, but the question to you then is because I  
16 know that you believe so much in this, how do we get  
17 them all to do this and embrace this part of their  
18 mission, if you will, if we don't mandate it, right,  
19 if we just ask them to do it nicely or we try to  
20 implore upon them the value of this. Some agencies,  
21 as you know, have already embraced that in a more  
22 deep way, and you sort of talk about some of those  
23 programs, whether it be Spark or other programs, but  
24 I guess if that is so, then how are you as  
25 Commission, who I know believes in this, going to

2 convince your 40 or 50 other colleagues who are  
3 Commissioners, to bring art and culture into their  
4 agency?

5 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Well, I mean,  
6 I think-- So, first of all I've had a lot of openness  
7 from other Commissioners and agency heads to meet and  
8 talk about it. I think that, you know, part of it is  
9 an education process to say, you know, by the way our  
10 exemplary agency is Sanitation. They have the best  
11 artists and residency program of any agency I think  
12 in America. You know, the Materials for the Arts is  
13 an incredible model. If you simply ask agencies, you  
14 know, the Commissioner of the Police Department was  
15 not hired because he had an expertise in arts  
16 programming, right? He had other expertise. You  
17 have to--it has to be a kind of collaborative project  
18 in which we sit down with Commissioner after  
19 Commissioner and sort of educate on what the  
20 possibilities of an artist or you know, arts  
21 partnership would be. If we simply go to the police  
22 department and say, Mr. Bratton [sp?], you are  
23 required to write a report, that is outside. I agree  
24 with the legal department, that's outside of his  
25 expertise. So, I mean, I think that I am requiring

2 myself to do a wide ranging, you know, discussion  
3 tour with all the other agency heads to understand  
4 what the opportunities are, but part of that is a  
5 discussion back and forth where you say, look, you,  
6 you know, maybe an artists and residents like what it  
7 is Sanitation would make sense in another agency, but  
8 it's not just to require them off the, you know,  
9 without that interactive partici--dialogical project  
10 process. It just doesn't make sense, and the legal  
11 department is worried that, you know, requiring these  
12 reports from each agency is not the best way to do  
13 it.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I'm not sure we  
15 can't do both and that they're mutually exclusive  
16 ideals, and I trust you. You're a good enough and  
17 persuasive enough and believe enough in this to work  
18 with your other colleagues. Clearly, Commissioner,  
19 the Police Chief Bratton is not perhaps an expert in  
20 art, but you can--

21 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]  
22 No, you are--

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [interposing]  
24 talk with him and with his senior staff and then we  
25 can also pass this bill.

2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: And  
3 Commissioner Agarwal is also not an expert in art,  
4 but she immediately saw the opportunities inherent in  
5 a collaborative project around the municipal ID card.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Right. So, I  
7 think you get my point, which is that a lot of these  
8 things that we're coming to with the legislation,  
9 then you're coming to with concerns of your own, and  
10 then thankfully you've involved the lawyers at the  
11 legal department and they have lots of concerns, but  
12 they're not necessarily insurmountable obstacles, as  
13 I think what we're--

14 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]  
15 No, I've said publicly many times I'd love to get  
16 other agencies involved, and I think that's what  
17 you're saying. The question has to do, I think, with  
18 the requirement.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Right.

20 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So, we, again,  
21 to be discussed.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Right. Well, I  
23 appreciate that. I know a number of my colleagues  
24 have questions. I do have a few more, and again, I  
25 want to thank you for sort of the broad and frank and

2 open dialogue, which is not surprising but very  
3 welcome. You mentioned the, you know, reaching sort  
4 of deep in, right? And you sight Mexicano Sonidos de  
5 Queens, for example as one group, and there are lots  
6 of groups out there, very small groups as you know,  
7 and they don't yet have access to funding from the  
8 Department of Cultural Affairs. They have not  
9 completed their cultural data project profile and  
10 have not found themselves through the panel process  
11 to receive CDF funding. So you mentioned Mexicano  
12 Sonidos de Queens, and you know, my example is always  
13 Aaya Zamana [sp?], and we both want the same things  
14 again, and I know you want that, to make sure all of  
15 these groups, particularly groups from immigrant  
16 communities, emerging communities, people of color  
17 communities to get into this wonderful, wonderful  
18 land of Cultural Affairs funding, but there are many  
19 who are not eligible or not yet there who lack the  
20 expertise. Part of this plan and the emphasis behind  
21 it and desire is to reach out. You want the same  
22 thing. So, doesn't this help us get there, and if  
23 not, then what is the way to reach those groups?  
24 Because when I met Aaya Zamana and Esau [sic] came to  
25 a town hall that I had and introduced himself to me

2 and invited me to his Ecuadorian dance performance  
3 and I went, and then when I said to him, "This is  
4 great, you know, how do you fund this?" Which is  
5 question that lots of you have heard asked or you've  
6 all been confronted with, and "Do you get government  
7 funding?" And he was like, "No, we don't even know  
8 what that is." Right? "We just kind of raise the  
9 money." Right? "And we do it as a community." And I  
10 said, "No, you should get government funding for  
11 this. This is a really good program. It's doing  
12 really good work." So how do we do that, right?  
13 That's the next question.

14 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So that, you  
15 know, so that question, which is as you say something  
16 that I think a lot about, you know, I think language  
17 access and language, you know, abilities within our  
18 staff is something we're definitely interested in  
19 building further, but one of the--you know, some of  
20 the problems are that a lot of these very small  
21 groups aren't even registered as nonprofits. So then  
22 the questions is, what kind of--we do have a  
23 professional development program for low budget  
24 organizations, but you know, there's acces through  
25 the local arts councils. So the way that, for

2 example, the Sri Lankan Dance Company in Staten  
3 Island that I visited recently got funding from  
4 Cultural Affairs was through the Staten Island Arts  
5 Council as an individual artist grant to the  
6 director. That's--then there was a discussion when I  
7 sat down and talked to them about whether or not they  
8 should incorporate as a nonprofit. I mean, we can't--  
9 --there are rules about government funding. We can't  
10 give a grant to an organization that's not registered  
11 as a nonprofit. So, I think that a targeted plan  
12 about access, a targeted plan that talked about  
13 language, or you know, organizational capacity or you  
14 know, the small--that that's a--which didn't only  
15 point to the problem, but actually gave us some  
16 really good researched based ideas about access  
17 points and what works in terms of getting small  
18 nonprofits into the system, either becoming a  
19 nonprofit or getting those individual artist grants.  
20 That's the kind of thing that I'd love to get  
21 involved in, and the idea that, you know, you can  
22 have a really in depth look at that issue, at that  
23 access issue. You know, a broad culture plan,  
24 sometimes the problem, and this is not always the  
25 problem and it depends on how it's done, is

2 everything, it's all things to all people and it  
3 doesn't allow you to dig deeply enough into problems  
4 to look at solutions. So, if you know, the problem  
5 we're trying to solve, this is my question before, if  
6 the problem we're trying to solve is access points  
7 for small nonprofits, that's something that deserves  
8 a very in depth look that is quite different from the  
9 very broad question of what do we want to do in  
10 general in culture in the next ten years. Often  
11 these plans are, you know, 10 year planes, right?  
12 That's what we--in fact, the legislation says the  
13 plan will be revisited in 10 years. So again, I'm  
14 not against looking at that issue. I'm dedicated to  
15 it. I spent the last 12 years in Corona thinking  
16 about these issues, but I'm just not sure that the  
17 broad based cultural plan as it's written here is  
18 necessarily the best avenue to answering the  
19 question, which I think is a huge question for us.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Well, I think  
21 there are a number of questions. They're not simply  
22 that one question, and I think talking to too many  
23 people is better than talking to too few in my  
24 estimation, and sort of increasing democracy is  
25 better than the status quo.

2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: If I could  
3 just respond to that point.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: yes.

5 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Not that that  
6 was a question. So, in these plans, there are a lot  
7 of different ways to "talk to people" and some of  
8 them are based on these community meetings, like  
9 Chicago had a series of 22 community meetings all  
10 around the city. The problem with that approach, is  
11 that sometimes that favors the people that have time  
12 to come to meetings, right? You mentioned today, a  
13 lot of people are at work. So another way to do it--

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [interposing]

15 Well, a lot of these folks are working, to be fair.

16 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: But there are  
17 organizations that have the capacity to allow them to  
18 come here today. One of the--another way to do it is  
19 focus groups. In other words, to do some demographic  
20 studies, they were going to be very targeted in the  
21 way that we find who we're talking to and go have  
22 focus groups. So they're--I'm absolutely for talking  
23 to people, but there are a lot of different ways to  
24 do that in these different plans. I believe you can  
25 do both as well.

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Again, I  
3 appreciate the give and take. Hopefully, y'all are  
4 enjoying it back home, and I do want to say if there  
5 was one thing that could be in the plan, assuming it  
6 goes forward, and maybe even more than one, what  
7 would you add? What could be added to this to make  
8 it better? I mean, some of your concerns, obviously,  
9 you've well outlined, but--

10 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing] I  
11 mean, you know, it's sort of surprising, because when  
12 we actually dug into the plan, we realized that you  
13 guys were thinking about a lot of the same things we  
14 were thinking about. So we had just been talking  
15 about the whole question of regulation of public  
16 space and permitting and that kind of stuff. I would  
17 say if you just say ask one thing, when you talk  
18 about affordability for artists, you have to also  
19 talk about student debt. There's a crisis in New  
20 York City that artists are coming here or artists are  
21 coming out of school and they have 100,000 dollars of  
22 debt, and they're moving into a community where they  
23 have to pay 3,000 dollars in rent. You guys all know  
24 the story, right? So, there's that combination.  
25 It's a confluence of debt and expense. So it's not--

2 and then the other thing is how can you create that  
3 bridge between artists and other folks with low  
4 income potential? So it's not just artists who have  
5 student debt, it's a whole range of people, and we,  
6 by the way, met with Consumer Affairs about this in  
7 terms of sort of the abusive lending practices of the  
8 non-governmental side of debt at the for profit  
9 colleges. It's all part of a continuum. So I would  
10 add that, if I just had one thing.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
12 much, and before I go to Council Member Levin, thank  
13 you for recognizing the council's work on these  
14 issues. I'm very proud of that two million dollar  
15 increase in CASA and the 1.5 million in cultural  
16 immigrant initiative, and we are doing a lot to try  
17 and expand access, work that I'm very proud of as  
18 Chair of the Cultural Affairs Committee and working  
19 with you to distribute those funds. I just want to  
20 say, again, grants to individual artists is something  
21 we should continue to talk about and pursue, as you  
22 mentioned in the case on Staten Island. And then just  
23 to say we all agree that these discussions should  
24 happen, right? That artists, both individual, small,  
25 cultural should have access to you, to me, to the

2 Mayor, but if we don't mandate that those  
3 conversations take place, there is no guarantee that  
4 they will, as we have learned, and I believe that you  
5 believe this and I know that you will do this. But  
6 neither of us will be in these positions forever, and  
7 we do not know if the same people will have the same  
8 commitment going forward. So I think that's why it's  
9 important to codify what we believe to be best  
10 practices in terms of expanding access. And I also  
11 just want to say before I go to Steve, there is so  
12 much going on that is good, both with our large  
13 cultural organizations who are doing a lot of  
14 outreach working with public housing residents and  
15 their education programs, all of that is great. The  
16 work that our smaller groups and artists are doing is  
17 great. This is additive. This is about building an  
18 even stronger cultural community, and I believe this  
19 bill is a good one and can help us get there. So,  
20 thank you, Commissioner, and with that, I want to ask  
21 Council Member Levin.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very  
23 much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Commissioner for  
24 being here today and for your testimony and for being  
25 with us to answer these questions. First, I just want

2 to take a small exception. I assume that  
3 Commissioner Bratton does have a good appreciation  
4 for--he strikes me as like a guy that--

5 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]  
6 Could be. Point well taken.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Lanes, right? You  
8 know, he's--

9 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]  
10 But that's not why we hired him.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Sorry?

12 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: That's not why  
13 he was--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]  
15 That's not why we hired. But honestly, in thinking  
16 about other agency heads and individuals in the  
17 Administration, I can think of somebody, Vincent  
18 Sheraldi [sp?] for example, who used to be the  
19 Probations Commissioner in the previous  
20 Administration. Somebody like that I can--I know  
21 would have a lot of great ideas about how to  
22 incorporate the arts into the criminal justice  
23 system, the probation system, corrections system,  
24 ATI, and stuff like that. I think that there's a  
25 real opportunity there. I mean, I could just think of

2 great ideas that we can see at HPD or HRA or having  
3 people--we're having a hearing in our committee at  
4 General Welfare on Wednesday about the city's new  
5 jobs program and how that's going to be incorporated  
6 into the public assistance framework and whether or  
7 not there's opportunities for cultural institutions  
8 to participate in that. So, I do think that as Chair  
9 Van Bramer said, agencies, you know, since it's not  
10 their primary focus, they're not going to necessarily  
11 be coming up with these ideas, you know, on their own  
12 volition, but it's, you know, honestly I believe, you  
13 know, within each agency there's some low hanging  
14 fruit there that, you know, with just a little bit of  
15 stern encouragement they could probably find. So,  
16 one other thing actually, and just a little bit more  
17 seriously, when you said what problem are we trying  
18 to solve, I really look at it as what problems,  
19 plural, that we're trying to solve. And I think that  
20 that's actually kind of the point of looking to  
21 introduce this piece of legislation is that there are  
22 multiple points of, you know, room for improvement or  
23 multiple points where we can really capitalize on our  
24 arts and cultural, that breadth of capital that we  
25 have in New York City. We are truly unlike any city

2 in the world in that regard, and that we have, you  
3 know, more cultural capital, not just arts and  
4 artists, but as you said, our institutions are truly  
5 world class. And I think that from our perspective,  
6 the concern is that we have not seen over the last  
7 generation or couple of generations really, you know,  
8 a full accounting of that and a full leveraging of  
9 that, and I think to our detriment. So, that's, I  
10 think, why we want to move forward with this is that  
11 there are so many--there--we could focus on these, on  
12 very narrow topics and you know, do more on a  
13 particular issue, but I think if we're not looking  
14 broadly, if we're not seeing you know, taking a full  
15 accounting of what the plural problems are, then I  
16 think we're missing an opportunity that is, you know,  
17 might not come around, you know, in the next few  
18 years.

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So if I could  
20 just--so, one of the underlying, you know, themes has  
21 to do with this question of, you know, understanding  
22 what it is we do, what we're doing, what we're not  
23 doing, what we're doing well. I think that can be  
24 accomplished with some kind of, you know, really in  
25 depth sort of you know, cultural assets survey. In

2 other words, that takes a snapshot of who's using  
3 culture, how they're using it, how it's being  
4 supported, how it's not being supported, and that you  
5 know, we have kind of anecdotal idea of what it is,  
6 and I think you're correct in saying we haven't  
7 stepped back and taken the big look, but that seems  
8 to me the prerequisite to planning, not part of the  
9 plan, right? That that would give a sense of where  
10 we're at, a sense of what's happening and what's not  
11 happening. And you know, my boss Tony Shores [sic]  
12 and I have talked about this a number of times, what  
13 about, you know, the one day looking at the field  
14 over here, the one day, you know, zip code survey.  
15 You know, boom, this is exactly what communities  
16 everybody's going to just in terms of participation.  
17 That's an easy thing to do. There are things like  
18 that that could be done that could show  
19 participation. You could match that up with  
20 different communities, where communities are coming  
21 from. You know, there's this question of community  
22 participation that transcends borders, etcetera. So,  
23 I feel like, you know, I want to do that. That's  
24 something I think we need to do. I think it gives us  
25 the breath of vision of what's happening in the city.

2 It would be a prerequisite or sort of before planning  
3 if we're to plan. And you know, again, and I'm not  
4 against planning. I really want to keep saying that.  
5 The question is how to best plan, and I've seen so  
6 many strategic plans at institutions that sat on the  
7 shelf. I've seen some where it's like you have to be  
8 ready for therapy, right? If you're ready for  
9 therapy you can solve the problem, but if you're not  
10 ready-- so, but then there are the individual  
11 problems, like how are we going to make sure that  
12 access points are understood, multi-lingually, multi-  
13 culturally, across boroughs of this city. That in  
14 and of itself is a major undertaking, a major survey.  
15 So again.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right. But if you  
17 look at, you know, the examples that we've talked  
18 about a little bit and I think Denver has seven main  
19 recommendations, right, and each one I think gets a  
20 fairly in depth analysis and you know, strategic  
21 vision for how to pursue it. And I mean, it's not  
22 like, you know we necessarily need to come out and  
23 say here are, you know, our 65 main points, but I  
24 think that there are things that we're seeing

2 elsewhere that are common to our issues here in New  
3 York.

4 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: But these  
5 other cities have very, very small cultural sector  
6 compared to ours, but they're trying to, a lot of  
7 them are trying to get to the point of really having  
8 a cultural affairs office.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

10 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: You know, I  
11 can't remember the exact statistic, but the--you  
12 know, New York City spends about 18 dollars per  
13 person on culture right now. The only other city in  
14 America that spends more per person is San Francisco  
15 at 25, but this is, you know, these other cities are  
16 often--they have a very clear problem, which is that  
17 they haven't gotten the Council and the Mayor to  
18 believe in the arts to begin with.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right, right. But  
20 it seems that they're--I mean, at least from the  
21 public pronouncements each of those--you know,  
22 Houston is now I think pursuing one as well, and  
23 it's--I mean, the public pronouncements are look, we  
24 get it. We believe it. We need to plan to affection  
25 it. You're right in that New York City has a much

2 kind of larger but also very different set of issues,  
3 but that doesn't necessarily mean that we don't need  
4 a strategic plan. I think it comes down to what is,  
5 you know--it's hard. It would be hard for me, and I  
6 think maybe hard for a lot of people in this room, to  
7 articulate what the strategic vision of DCA has been  
8 over the previous generation. I think that that's--  
9 and I think that that is where we're coming from now,  
10 is that it's hard, it would really be hard to  
11 pinpoint what are our seven guiding principles at DCA  
12 over the previous generation. I think that that and  
13 the--those, you know, it doesn't then come from  
14 necessarily just to change of Administration, which I  
15 think has been very beneficial and has really--I  
16 think this Administration, you have breathed a breath  
17 of fresh air and some inspiration into the agency,  
18 but it does not come just from the change of  
19 Administration or the change of leadership, what that  
20 kind of strategic plan is or what a set of guiding  
21 principles can be established to do. But I feel like  
22 at this point--

23 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]

24 So, by the way--

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]  
3 they're not there. Am I wrong?

4 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: On that point,  
5 you know, so Rahm Emanuel's running for re-election  
6 in Chicago, and there was just an article in the New  
7 York Times, I think, saying that he's seen as an art  
8 friendly Mayor, this is good for his campaign. So I  
9 mean, but one of the problems has to do with the  
10 transition of Administrations that if it's the  
11 broadly based plan that represents the, whatever the  
12 values of a particular Administration, would we, for  
13 example, be executing at happily the 20 year plan  
14 created under Skylar Chapin [sic], under the Giuliani  
15 Administration when I was last at the Cultural  
16 Affairs. It was a different vision, maybe, for what  
17 Cultural Affairs does, but I mean, I think that there  
18 has been a set of idea of what we do at the agency,  
19 that you know, where, you know, there has been this  
20 economic argument that there's been a very good  
21 relationship with New York City and company. There's  
22 been all the statistics about tourism, the  
23 investment, and I think that that is a great argument  
24 that's only quite partial and we're trying to create  
25 other arguments. But you know, the cultural policy of

2 New York City starting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is not a  
3 big mystery, right? There's been this idea, and it  
4 changed, it's been changing, but this idea of  
5 investing in a, you know, cultural infrastructure of  
6 New York City, creating the cultural institutions  
7 group, not diversifying out to give both capital and  
8 expense money to a much wider range of creative  
9 forces within the city or creative organizations.  
10 But I mean, I think that the way cultural policy is  
11 played out in the history of New York has been  
12 remarkably consistent, that quite different from a  
13 lot of other cities. Now, that left a lot of parts  
14 of the city out. There was an expansion of the  
15 cultural institutions group under Henry Geltsal [sic]  
16 that brought all the organizations in Queens into  
17 the--in the 70's and a lot of other places around the  
18 city. So it's not that it's stood pat [sic], but  
19 there's been some consistency. I would counter that.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right, but culture  
21 has continued to democratize over the years and over  
22 the generations in small de-democratize [sic], and  
23 there's a--and I think that it, honestly, is a much  
24 broader issue than, you know, the cultural  
25 institution.

2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Of course,  
3 yes, yes.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And that's what  
5 I'm, you know, that's kind of what I'm referring to.  
6 You know, in just in a couple of issues that  
7 specifically that have come to mind that, you know,  
8 something like arts in education. That has been an  
9 area that we have not--we've seen in terms of actual  
10 dollars being spent for arts education in our  
11 schools. That has fallen off of a cliff in the last  
12 12 years, and we seen a decrease in funding for arts  
13 in our schools by, you know, tremendous amount.

14 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: And I think, I  
15 mean, that was in the Mayor's platform, to do  
16 something about that. I think that's agreed to.  
17 We're already doing something, 24 million dollars of  
18 new money base lined. That was the main take away  
19 from cultural plan of Chicago. That was the number  
20 one thing. They had the press conference at the  
21 schools. It's like, yeah, we agree. We're already  
22 doing something about it.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But it's more than  
24 just money. It's about how do we--it's not just, you  
25 know, we're going to allocate 24 million dollars to

2 it. It's how do we create the system where that's  
3 sustainable, where principals are able to spend the  
4 money on arts teachers, you know, creating the  
5 structure that can go into place that can create a  
6 kind of long term sustainable thing.

7 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Right. And so  
8 I, well, I'm all for it. I think you have to ask  
9 some of these questions to my colleague Carmen  
10 Farina.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right, right. And  
12 that's, again, that kind of speaks to the interagency  
13 question as well. And actually, going back just a  
14 second to a point that you had raised before, just  
15 about, you know, that administrations can in fact,  
16 you know, are going to change, and you're not going  
17 to be here forever and I'm not going to be here  
18 forever, and that coming out with a 10 or 20 year  
19 plan may be a fool's errand because-- or it may not  
20 be the wisest thing because it may not yield a  
21 consistent vision across administrations. Another  
22 way to look at it is to say that this is an  
23 opportunity for this Administration to advance its  
24 vision. As the Mayor has said, I mean, he was  
25 overwhelmingly voted in to office with a strong

2 mandate, and I think that this, you know, I think  
3 that New Yorkers at large would be very open to  
4 accepting that, a vision articulated by this  
5 Administration.

6 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: No, and I  
7 think this is what Chairman Van Bramer was saying  
8 earlier, we're not always going to be in these seats.  
9 But if you were to, for example, do a plan that  
10 related to easing the regulations on art in public  
11 spaces that was very focused, very clear about that,  
12 or you did a--I don't think that would be a  
13 controversial idea with the next Administration. If  
14 you did a plan that had to do with retention of  
15 creative talent in New York City that was sort of  
16 multifaceted, that related to, you know, production  
17 space and living space and affordably and student  
18 loan and all that kind of stuff, I don't think that  
19 would be controversial with the next. I think, you  
20 know, I do think that it'll be interesting to see  
21 what happens to all these plans in other cities with  
22 changes of administration. I'm just saying it's a  
23 possibility that it could backfire. And I don't know.  
24 We'll see. What if Rahm Emanuel doesn't get re-  
25 elected, let's see what happens to Chicago's cultural

2 plan. By the way, what he did was in his 500,000  
3 dollars into the public schools system for arts, with  
4 another 500,000 of private money for one year. And  
5 that was the big initiative. And again, I'm all for  
6 it. It's fantastic. It was a jump starting of  
7 their--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]

9 Right, and that's--

10 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: It's nowhere

11 near to what this--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]

13 That's nothing, but I mean, you know, we have a  
14 Department of Education budget that is 24 billion.

15 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: I know, much  
16 bigger than Chicago. That's for the whole city,  
17 right? What's Chicago budget, entire budget? Much  
18 lower than our Department of Education is.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Yes, yes. But  
20 yeah, I mean, obviously I mean if it's--you know, 1.1  
21 million school kids, 24 million bucks, that 24 bucks  
22 a kid for the year. Two other quick points. Just in  
23 terms of the wisdom of a comprehensive plan, this  
24 Administration has embraced comprehensive, as so far  
25 embraced a couple of comprehensive plans. One that

2 comes to mind obviously is, I mean, you know, aside  
3 from the environmental one, which I think is--

4 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]  
5 Yep.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: you know, builds on  
7 the previous Administration, but the housing plan,  
8 and that's something that the Administration  
9 embraced, you know, whole heartedly and made a top  
10 priority. Also, is the kind of thing that, you know,  
11 a new Administration might not like, but it didn't  
12 stop us from saying, you know, this is where we would  
13 like to go. This is setting a strategic vision. This  
14 is setting a path that we can move forward on even if  
15 a new administration wants to come in and say we're  
16 going to undo the plan. That's on them, but that's  
17 what they would have to do to undo it. I mean,  
18 that's-- we're looking at the same type of idea.

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yeah, so  
20 again, I'm not against planning, and I'm happy to  
21 talk. My sense from reading bill is that there were  
22 parts of it that I loved and parts of it that I  
23 didn't love and parts that the legal department  
24 didn't love, but again, the worry that I have is that  
25 this takes between a year and two years, you know,

2 looking at these different plans. Some of them take  
3 two years. I think Denver took two years, I believe.  
4 That's a lot of time in which if we know that we want  
5 to do something about public space, that really  
6 doesn't stop us from doing something while we're  
7 planning. But if the energy of the agency is going  
8 into a comprehensive plan, I mean, I think that we  
9 have points of agreement right away that we can get  
10 started on where we can plan around public space, we  
11 could plan around keeping retention of talent in New  
12 York City. There were three or four things in it  
13 that I mentioned in the testimony that I think we  
14 could dive into that I think a lot of people in this  
15 room would agree with, dive into a--that we could  
16 even call it the plan. I just, I want to dive deeply  
17 into stuff and get stuff done. I'm a pragmatist.  
18 It's about moving forward and doing things that  
19 actually have an effect on the people of New York  
20 City. That's why we're all here, right? So it's not  
21 an argument even about values or about ideas in the  
22 plan. It's most--how can we do it most effective,  
23 that's my question.

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And one last  
3 thing, Commissioner, is in looking at Denver's plan,  
4 they had 5,000 people participate in the plan.

5 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Bilingually,  
6 by the way.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Sorry?

8 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Bilingually.  
9 It was on the few plans I noticed that they really  
10 did a lot of listening in Spanish.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And that's  
12 impressive, and that I think in a lot--I mean, I--one  
13 outcome that I could imagine is that there's a lot of  
14 public buy-in on the plan, that the public feels a  
15 certain sense of ownership on that plan, and that it  
16 was produced in a grassroots fashion. It came from  
17 the communities that feel very strongly about it, and  
18 I think that is an immeasurable benefit that could  
19 come out of a large scale strategic plan in New York  
20 City, is that we want the people of New York City to  
21 feel, be closer to culture and to feel closer to  
22 culture and to feel that it is theirs. It is the  
23 result of their ideas. It is the result of their  
24 input, and you know, if there are 500,000 people that  
25

2 live in Denver, and you know, I mean you could--you  
3 know, talking about eight--that percentage--

4 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]  
5 84,000 would be the--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [interposing]  
7 That's what--

8 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]  
9 One percent, yes.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: 84,000 people,  
11 that would be an amazing amount of people that have  
12 input on it, a logistical challenge.

13 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: No, no, and  
14 one of the things that one plan after the next said  
15 was the planning process was helpful, right?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Yeah.

17 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: The planning  
18 process itself had value.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

20 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Let alone the  
21 product. So again, I'm not against planning. It's  
22 the question of effectiveness, a question of agency  
23 resources. I mean, half my agency's sitting right  
24 over there. This is not the Department of Education.

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you,  
3 Commissioner, Council Member Levin.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you staff.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you so  
6 much, and two things, I just want to say that I would  
7 hate for us to say that we're too big not to do  
8 something. The city's too big and too rich not to  
9 act. I prefer to approach from that, and we're too  
10 big to fail. And with respect to Chicago, you  
11 clarified that you didn't want to be critical of the  
12 Department of Cultural Affairs in Chicago, hinting at  
13 a possible loss in the re-election campaign of Rahm  
14 Emanuel. You just got Chicago's attention in a much  
15 bigger way. I believe he's doing very well in  
16 Chicago.

17 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So I just wanted  
19 to say it on the record, Commissioner Finkelpearl.  
20 Next time you're in Chicago--

21 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]  
22 I thank you for that.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So with that,  
24 Council Member Cumbo.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you very  
3 much. I want to thank our Chair, Jimmy Van Bramer as  
4 well as our Council Member Steve Levin for co-priming  
5 this and carrying it through from Administration to  
6 the other, and I'm so very happy that you are here  
7 today. I want to be as quick as possible because I  
8 understand that we have a number of people that are  
9 going to testify. So I apologize that I'll be asking  
10 you questions in rapid-fire, and I hope that you can  
11 keep them as concise as possible in the interest of  
12 time.

13 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: I'll try.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I wanted to have  
15 an understanding. The plans that you studied across  
16 the country, have you noticed or had an understanding  
17 of what their implementation has been since those  
18 particular plans were done? So you have these great  
19 plans, and are they actually being implemented, and  
20 is there any way to see if as a result of that  
21 implementation that it has had some sort of economic  
22 or educational or public safety impact?

23 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So, I mean,  
24 that's an excellent question. Chicago has a very new  
25 plan from 2012. I don't know the answer to that

2 question. I think that's one of the things we have to  
3 dive into, and I think that would be extremely  
4 important as we proceed in this discussion to analyze  
5 that and to not just talk to people, but you know, do  
6 a literature research and see if they've actually  
7 quantified the results, but I haven't-- I did, you  
8 know, I did a google search and such. I didn't see a  
9 lot of articles that were clearly analyzing those  
10 outcomes.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Do you have an  
12 understanding of the cost of simply putting together  
13 the plan?

14 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Has there been a  
16 cost associated with it? I noticed in the testimony  
17 in Chicago that they brought in a consultant to do  
18 it. I believe it's Lord Cultural Resources.

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Is that part of  
21 what the plan is here in New York City, that we're  
22 thinking we're going to bring in an outside  
23 consultant, or do we have an understanding of what  
24 the costs are going to be just to create the plan?  
25

2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yeah, so the  
3 plan in Chicago costs 250,000 dollars. New York is at  
4 least about twice the size, so I'd expect it to be  
5 half a million dollars. You know, again, I actually  
6 don't think that's the issue, because I think there's  
7 a big budget in New York City. There's private  
8 funders who might fund it. It would have to be done  
9 by a professional firm that does this. Yes, we'd  
10 have to hire somebody at that nature. Lord is great,  
11 I worked with them before. There are other firms.  
12 There's one that did the plan in Denver was called  
13 Corona Associates, I think, not Corona Queens  
14 unfortunately. But yeah, there are firms that do  
15 this that are professionals that understand how to  
16 mobilize public interaction, etcetera.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay.

18 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: And I expect  
19 that my estimate be a half a million in price.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay. Has the  
21 Administration stated whether they are going to put  
22 resources behind either the implement--the  
23 development of the plan and/or its implementation  
24 afterwards?

25 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: No.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: They have not given  
3 you that, or you have not asked for that?

4 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Well, the  
5 thing is that we're still of the position that we  
6 want to--this is an interactive process to get to the  
7 point of thinking that there should be this  
8 comprehensive plan, so we haven't yet got to that  
9 point, again. That has not been part of the  
10 discussion.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Has there been  
12 talk or communication in regards to there being  
13 public and private partnerships that will be  
14 galvanized? It's a trend that I'm starting to see  
15 here in the council in terms of galvanizing public  
16 and private partnerships. Is there some thought that  
17 public and private partnerships will be utilized  
18 either to support and/or implement the plan?

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So, how do I  
20 say this? We haven't gotten to that point because we  
21 haven't gotten to the point of 100 percent embracing  
22 the idea of doing this plan. Now again, doing a plan  
23 or doing some planning, absolutely. We want to do  
24 that. We have some ideas of how to do that. But so,  
25 the sort of implementation question I think has to be

2 proceeded by our all coming together and agreeing on  
3 what the plan is, and then understanding what the--  
4 but I absolutely there are certain organizations in  
5 New York City who are experts in planning and  
6 assessments, etcetera, who should be part of it.  
7 There are foundations that are extremely interested  
8 in the future of cultural policy in New York City who  
9 should be part of it, etcetera.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: And just wanted  
11 to--in intro 419, I wanted to know where you were  
12 with this date. It says "Pursuant to subdivision of  
13 sub section 2506, the legislation would establish  
14 that on or before July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015, the Commissioner of  
15 Cultural Affairs shall produce and post on its  
16 website a comprehensive cultural plan of New York  
17 City." What is that date now of July 1<sup>st</sup> mean to  
18 you?

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Okay, so my  
20 estimate is that these plans, the shortest is a year  
21 once we start, and the longest is--I think Denver  
22 took two years. So it's a year or two. So whatever,  
23 assuming that you guys prevail upon us and convince  
24 us and we do the plan and everything and we're going  
25 forward. From the time we get started, it'll be one

2 year. I would certainly ask for that as a minimum.

3 Gayle [sic] Lord of Lord Cultural Resources who did

4 the Chicago plan said she felt that the one year time

5 frame was rather rushed in Chicago, again, a much

6 smaller city.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay. I think

8 that's going to be a very important point to

9 understand how long it's going to take to do this in

10 a way that's thorough and comprehensive as possible.

11 Now, to me, the most important thing about this plan

12 is ultimately who's at the table. So it also states

13 here that a working group and citizen's advisory

14 committee assist DCLA in the development of the

15 cultural plan and assists with gathering community

16 input for the plan. In accordance with the

17 legislation, the Commissioner of Cultural Affairs,

18 that being you, would determine the respective size

19 of the group and the committee. However, the Mayor

20 would appoint half of the members and the Speaker of

21 the Council would appoint half the members of both

22 groups, and the committee and vacancies would be

23 filled in the same way. So, what are your thoughts in

24 terms of how to bring together the right sized group,

25 and what are you thinking, ball park what you're

2 thinking something like that would be, and how do we  
3 ensure that the larger institutions, the smaller  
4 institutions, the arts organizations across borough,  
5 across nationality, how do we determine that we're  
6 creating the ability to have the right people at the  
7 table in order to make sure that this plan is as  
8 comprehensive as possible?

9 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So, again,  
10 there are different ways of including community  
11 input, and there's the difference between the sort of  
12 the big community meeting model and the focus group  
13 model.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Right.

15 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So if we were  
16 to go forward with something like this, my sense is  
17 that if we could first do that overall survey of New  
18 York City cultural resources and you know, where, who  
19 the audiences are for what organizations, etcetera.  
20 So where are the resources? Where are they lacking?  
21 Where are they robust, etcetera? That then to key  
22 that may be working with folks in planning like  
23 demographers, etcetera, to then do a focus group  
24 oriented. So, say, which would then guarantee sort  
25 of the demographic correctness of the folks that get

2 to participate in the focus groups, and that is often  
3 complemented then with big communities as well.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I just have one  
5 more question and then a comment. The question will  
6 be, what role have you anticipated or are you  
7 thinking that our local Brooklyn Arts Councils will  
8 participate in the development of this plan? What  
9 role do you anticipate they will have?

10 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Again, just in  
11 reading through these plans, I think that because New  
12 York City is so big we would have to count on local  
13 expertise, and so one of the things that we do in  
14 terms of distribution of grants is that we give some  
15 money to our local partners in the boroughs. And  
16 that could be a good model for this as well, to have  
17 some part of it broken into boroughs specific  
18 leaderships, again, if we get to that point.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I think just  
20 wanting to add in conclusion that it would be very  
21 important to me that our local Brooklyn arts councils  
22 have a voice at this planning of this very important  
23 plan. And the other thing that would also be very  
24 important to me is similar to how the, just as an  
25 example, our Mayor had highlighted 15 communities

2 within our NYCHA developments that were responsible  
3 for I believe almost 20 percent of the crime in the  
4 city, and or that crime was coming from those  
5 particular developments. So things such as increased  
6 lighting, increased public safety, more police  
7 officers on the ground, all of these different sorts  
8 of things keeping the community centers open. We  
9 just want to add that in this plan and then moving  
10 forward with DCLA that you're consistently inserting  
11 your voice there, because like you said, there are  
12 things that we can do in the planning stages, and I  
13 would really like to have an understanding in this as  
14 it pertains to public safety. How is that when you  
15 do these types of initiatives and you also include  
16 art into that mix, how do you then change the  
17 outcomes of those communities? And it would be very  
18 interesting to see that moving forward.

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: And I think  
20 that's sort of the social impact questions, which  
21 you're getting at sort of crime rates, etcetera,  
22 that's what Mark Stern and the Social Impact of the  
23 Arts Project Studies, and I think if we can get that  
24 robust report from the social impact of the arts  
25 project, that gives us more ammunition to go to the

2 Chairman of NYCHA or Chairwoman to talk to her about,  
3 look, this is New York City. This is the social  
4 value. You can have good social service outcomes  
5 related to health, related to safety, because of the  
6 arts. We've never had a really good mechanism to  
7 make that argument. The really only very concrete  
8 database analysis based argument we could ever make  
9 was the economic value of the arts. And by the way,  
10 and I want to say this, and the Mayor often says  
11 this, and I think Jimmy mentioned it before. There's  
12 also the unmeasurable sort of it's good for your sold  
13 argument that I 100 percent believe in the arts. It's  
14 not measurable, but I believe in it. I believe in art  
15 is valuable in the social and the community level on  
16 a social basis, and I believe it's valuable for this  
17 city on a regional basis, arts and culture again,  
18 widely defined.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I just want to  
20 thank you very much for answering those questions,  
21 and I really appreciate you understanding the  
22 importance of this from a soul perspective, from a  
23 public safety perspective, and when we look at  
24 projects like the gates that you know, brought in  
25 over 250 million dollars, I think this plan should

2 very concretely show that the city is underinvesting  
3 in a particular industry, but is over-receiving in  
4 its outcomes on the economic, cultural, social and  
5 safety elements of our city. So I hope that those  
6 elements will be seriously incorporated into the  
7 plan, and I look forward to working with you and it's  
8 so great to see so many of my friends here, and thank  
9 you again.

10 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
12 much, Council Member Cumbo, and Commissioner  
13 Finkelpearl, I want to thank you for this very lively  
14 discussion this morning, the give and take, and I  
15 really want to seriously thank you for your openness  
16 to this concept. Obviously, 30 plus Council Members  
17 can't be wrong. So we are going to work together.  
18 It's not so much about prevailing upon you, but  
19 working together in collaboration and making sure  
20 that the DCLA continues to do great work and that we  
21 do even more together. So thank you for your time,  
22 and now I hope you'll be able to still stay as long  
23 as you can to hear some of the activists who are  
24 going to start testifying right now. Thank you  
25 Commissioner Finkelpearl. So first we're going to

2 call up Caron Atlas from Arts and Democracy and  
3 Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts, Sarah  
4 Marinello from the Wildlife Conservation Society  
5 representing Cultural Institutions Group, and Marta  
6 Moreno Vega representing the Caribbean Cultural  
7 Center African Diaspora. And while we are beginning,  
8 I will let everyone know we are under time crunch, so  
9 we're going to go to a clock. Please be as succinct  
10 as possible. We'll try and do the same, and I want  
11 to recognize Council Member Costa Constantinides from  
12 Queens who has joined us as well. And with that, why  
13 don't we go in the order from left to right, Marta,  
14 Caron and--feel free to proceed. We need your mic to  
15 be on.

16 MARTA MORENO VEGA: Thank you for this  
17 opportunity. I'm Doctor Marta Moreno Vega from the  
18 Caribbean Cultural Center, and I'd like to thank  
19 going in Council Member Van Bramer and Council Member  
20 Laurie Cumbo for having followed up the call of the  
21 Cultural Equity Group and equity roundtables in  
22 collaboration with New York University's Art and  
23 Public Policy Department for a comprehensive cultural  
24 arts policy. My understanding is that when we called  
25 for this cultural policy, it was grounded in the

2 issue of equity, the issue of the equitable  
3 distribution of resources. So I'd like to also thank  
4 Councilman Levin for continuing this process and  
5 bringing it forward. As members of this committee  
6 are aware that distribution of public funds through  
7 the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs  
8 reflects a historical and equitable distribution of  
9 funds that divides the arts field of New York City in  
10 two, those that have and those that don't. Presently,  
11 about 34 organizations designated to Cultural Equity  
12 Group receive about 85 percent of the Department of  
13 Cultural Affairs money, and approximately 15 percent  
14 is divided among approximately 1,200 organizations.  
15 The vast majority of racial and cultural diversity of  
16 the city, the cultural institutions that reflect this  
17 diversity of Native American, African Americans,  
18 Latino, Latinas, Asians and other marginalized  
19 communities are within the 15 percent. Now, let's be  
20 clear, because everybody uses the word community to  
21 define people of color. We all are members of  
22 community and we all reflect our communities and we  
23 reflect the values and perspectives of those  
24 communities. And historically, the Department of  
25 Cultural Affairs has reflected the dominant, right,

2 cultural arts perspective of high art, excluding the  
3 diversity of arts expressions that define the  
4 diversity that is New York City. This is meant that  
5 western European values are honored and carry  
6 economic value, while the diversity of the racial  
7 groups and ethnic groups that have developed  
8 intuitions from the Civil Rights Movement that  
9 reflect an art for change, and art for social  
10 justice, an art for equitable representation of the  
11 various communities in New York City are seen as  
12 marginal. It is the intent, I would hope, that this  
13 cultural policy puts at its center the issue of  
14 cultural equity, the issue of racial and ethnic  
15 equity, because that's what New York City is. When  
16 these policies were developed for the CIG groups and  
17 the distribution of funds and the value of what makes  
18 art, and we can't divorce art from economics, right?  
19 The reality is that the city has changed. The city  
20 is no longer what it was a 100 years ago, and  
21 therefore this is an opportunity with the new  
22 Administration, with the new Commissioner, and a new  
23 Deputy Commissioner and mix, right, of the cultural  
24 groups that reflect this city, to develop a different  
25 paradigm, a paradigm and a matrix that reflects

2 equity. So that even the conversation is dated,  
3 because it's dated in acknowledging the past and  
4 protecting it going forward. So that if we're going  
5 to change the system, if we're going to change the  
6 process of inequity, we're talking about everyone  
7 being at the table with equal voice. And we're also  
8 talking about an aesthetic and an art that reflects  
9 the diversity of excellence that is New York City  
10 that is this nation. So that if Native Americans are  
11 not at the table, if Asians are not at the table with  
12 all their diversity, then what are we talking about?  
13 No, it's not a difficult process. It's a difficult  
14 process if we want to close the doors to diversity  
15 and equity, but if we want to be inclusive, which is  
16 what many of us have been talking about over time,  
17 there is that process that could make it happen if  
18 the gateway is open and the perspective is open. If  
19 we're talking about the educational school system and  
20 I started my career as a public school teacher, we're  
21 also talking about a curriculum that speaks to the  
22 diversity of this city so the children could see  
23 themselves reflected in that curriculum.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Marta, I just,  
25 I--your testimony is so powerful and so compelling

2 and I want to hear every word of it, but we also have  
3 a lot of folks who want to testify. So if you can  
4 start to conclude your thoughts just so we can move  
5 on, but I thought you would bring it, and you're  
6 totally bringing it. So, but thank you.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Moments like  
8 these, I'm glad I'm not the Chair of this Committee.

9 MARTA MORENO VEGA: I think that some of  
10 the recommendations in terms of how the law is  
11 looking at this point is point six. After reading it  
12 it was very interesting to find out that it states  
13 that if feasible, conclusions and recommendations to  
14 the cultural plan will be incorporated into the  
15 budget and programming of DCA. Now what's the point  
16 of doing the study if it's not going to be reflected  
17 in the diversity and equitable distribution of funds?  
18 So point six is problematic. Problematic is also the  
19 appointment of this group, whatever it is, I would  
20 suggest that it be representatives of the City  
21 Council Members that carry weight. An advisory  
22 groups is an advisory group. Whatever they advise  
23 can be erased. So that you need to develop a  
24 structure that carries weight, and presently those  
25

2 two points defeat the purpose of what a cultural plan  
3 should be.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So let me just  
5 say, I don't have a copy of your testimony, Marta.

6 MARTA MORENO VEGA: You will have it  
7 because I want to include some of the comments, and  
8 address some of the comments that the Commissioner  
9 has made.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay.

11 MARTA MORENO VEGA: Because I have a  
12 problem with the CIG group being the only ones  
13 promoting the car, which is a good thing, but it's  
14 migrants and immigrants represent the 15 percent, not  
15 the 85 percent.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I hear you, and  
17 I just want to say I appreciate your point of view,  
18 and also the points you make about the bill. So I  
19 want to see all that. So as soon as you can update  
20 your testimony in real time--

21 MARTA MORENO VEGA: You'll have it in  
22 your office this afternoon.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you,  
24 Marta. And thank you for that and I apologize to  
25 everyone. We're going to try and just move this along

2 because we have a hearing coming in after us, but  
3 thank you Marta for your points. And Caron, if you  
4 would follow up.

5 CARON ATLAS: Hi, I'm Caron Atlas. I  
6 direct Arts and Democracy and co-direct Naturally  
7 Occurring Cultural Districts New York. We support  
8 the idea of an action based plan and we appreciate  
9 the opportunity to be part of it. We think that New  
10 York needs a transparent plan so we can be explicit  
11 about its cultural policy and how it furthers a  
12 progressive agenda. An implicit policy doesn't allow  
13 us a chance to respond or react to it or have a  
14 conversation about how the city actually values arts  
15 and culture. We think the plan should reflect and  
16 support a broad and dynamic definition of arts and  
17 culture is integral part of strong communities, and  
18 we have ideas for you, Tom, about how to be more  
19 inclusive with small cultural organizations. The  
20 people most impacted by policy making need to play a  
21 key role in determining that policy, and that  
22 includes community members, artists and diverse  
23 cultural organizations. The plan should draw on  
24 existing resources and field knowledge. And that  
25 includes NOCD's Innovative Cultural Uses of Space

2 Profiles, asset--cultural asset mapping done by our  
3 community based members, as well as generating data  
4 on inequality and supporting research such as that of  
5 the Social Impact of the Arts Project who we think  
6 very highly of. We want to create a plan that  
7 recognizes that culture is connected to issues. In  
8 the city, the really hard issues we're dealing with  
9 like segregation, immigration, education and housing  
10 and addresses the city's changing demographics,  
11 gentrifying communities and income inequality. We  
12 want a plan that will further cultural equity, and I  
13 just reinforced what Marta was saying, through its  
14 grant making, its capital allocations, its  
15 definitions of excellence, its accreditation, its  
16 aesthetics. And I'll finish up. And it's choice of  
17 where to site cultural resources recognizing the  
18 historic undercapitalization in communities of color  
19 and low income communities. We want a policy that  
20 systemically integrates arts and culture into the  
21 full range of policy making, and we support the idea  
22 of cultural liaisons and agencies and for city  
23 Council Members, and we want a policy that invests in  
24 artists as labor. We want a policy that supports  
25 community based public art cross-sector partnerships

2 and furthers the access to public spaces. Planning  
3 tied to community organizing can be inclusive, and  
4 I've learned that by participating in participatory  
5 budgeting. It can be inclusive, transparent and  
6 equitable, and it can shift power by including those  
7 who have been historically disenfranchised in  
8 leadership, and it can also engage the head and the  
9 heart using cultural methodologies. We urge the city  
10 to take the time to make this happen and to avoid  
11 cookie cutter planning approaches, to engage public  
12 private partnerships that bring multiple perspectives  
13 and new dollars to the table. The process, this  
14 process, and we agree that the process itself can  
15 demonstrate what arts and culture as part of a just,  
16 equitable, and creative city can look like, and we  
17 offer our network to help make it happen. Thanks.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you,  
19 Caron. Sarah?

20 SARAH MARINELLO: Good morning Chairman  
21 Van Bramer, Council Members Levin and Cumbo and  
22 members of the committee. I am Sarah Marinello,  
23 Executive Director of Government Community Affairs  
24 for the Wildlife Conservation Society. We represent  
25 the Bronx Zoo and New York Aquarium, and I'm here

2 today to represent the Cultural Intuitions Group, a  
3 diverse group of 33 nonprofit institutions, zoos,  
4 botanical gardens, museums and performing art spaces  
5 located on city property throughout the five boroughs  
6 that together touch the lives of millions of New  
7 Yorkers all across the city. Thank you for the  
8 opportunity to testify regarding Intro 419, a  
9 proposal to establish a comprehensive cultural plan  
10 for the city. We once again applaud your vision and  
11 leadership in working to ensure all New Yorkers have  
12 access to a variety of cultural offerings. An  
13 inspiration we share is we work with the City Council  
14 and the Administration to expand admission and  
15 education opportunities through programs like Urban  
16 Advantage, CASA and the new municipal ID membership  
17 program, as well as through our institution's variety  
18 of individual programs that we currently offer. As  
19 much as the CIG supports the concept of a  
20 comprehensive cultural plan, many of our questions  
21 and concerns expressed at the committee's hearing  
22 last fall regarding scope, funding for, and timing of  
23 the plan remain. The administrative burden and cost  
24 of developing such a plan should not be placed solely  
25 on the Department of Cultural Affairs. Costs could

2 easily exceed 500,000 as a comprehensive city-wide  
3 effort, funding over and above the adapted FY 15  
4 culture budget must be identified to create a plan,  
5 otherwise the process would hurt the very sector is  
6 indeed intended to help.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Can I just  
8 interject? If we were able to find that funding,  
9 would you be in favor of the plan at that point?

10 SARAH MARINELLO: There are other  
11 questions that remain.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay. But I  
13 just need to raise that because through a combination  
14 of public/private partnership, I believe we can fund  
15 it, and the Commissioner actually said that he didn't  
16 think cost was an issue, so I just want to raise that  
17 because the CIG's raised the issue.

18 SARAH MARINELLO: For this plan to be  
19 truly comprehensive, the scope of research  
20 information gathering, public discourse outlined in  
21 Intro 419 must not only assure the responsibility of  
22 active participation by all relevant city agencies,  
23 but it should also shine a light on the resource  
24 needs of the city's existing rich cultural resources,  
25 many of which touch every community in the city. As

2 the Commissioner mentioned, doing a baseline cultural  
3 assets survey is a good idea to see what's already  
4 out there and what's scalable as well, and you know,  
5 not necessarily always have to recreate the wheel,  
6 but of course we want new programs too. It is also  
7 important for the plan to be fully inclusive of all  
8 forms of culture and go beyond the arts to other  
9 parts of the culture sector including science based  
10 cultural institutions. There are several instances  
11 in the bill where the word art should be changed to  
12 culture. In addition, the working group and Citizens  
13 Advisory Committee should include diverse  
14 representation from the cultural community, including  
15 at least one CIG, please, as well as representation  
16 from all five boroughs, including one appointment by  
17 each borough president. Lastly, for the plan to be  
18 truly meaningful and impactful, the deadline must be  
19 extended well beyond July 2015 to ensure robust and  
20 transparent planning process. Again, I just want to  
21 emphasize that it's essential that long term thinking  
22 and planning be made at a citywide level to ensure  
23 the future of culture and the arts in New York City  
24 is one that is strong, vibrant and inclusive. As a  
25 major stakeholder in the cultural agenda of the city,

2 the CIG looks forward to working with the committee  
3 in strengthening Intro 419 in order to create a  
4 viable and living cultural plan. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
6 much. All three of you are incredibly important to  
7 us and to the city and the work that you do, the  
8 people you represent, is incredibly important. So,  
9 Marta, I just want to stress that we don't want to do  
10 anything that isn't meaningful and impactful. So I  
11 take your points very seriously, and I look forward  
12 to receiving your updated and annotated testimony a  
13 little bit later. Caron, thank you very much for  
14 being the soul of a movement in so many ways and  
15 thank you so much, Sarah, for representing the zoo,  
16 and I think you also kind of have an affiliation with  
17 the Queens zoo, no? Which is very--

18 SARAH MARINELLO: [interposing] Oh, yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: close to my  
20 heart.

21 SARAH MARINELLO: And Prospect Park.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yes.

23 SARAH MARINELLO: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: The aquarium's  
25 great. The Bronx zoo is great, but the Queens Zoo is

2 where it's at. So, I just have to say that. And we  
3 look forward to working with you on the issue of cost  
4 and the other points that you raised. So with that,  
5 thank you all three for being here today. We're  
6 going to call the next panel, and we're going to move  
7 as quickly as we can. Sheila Lewandowski from the  
8 Chocolate Factory, Tamara Greenfield from Fourth Arts  
9 Block, and Katy Rubin from Theatre of the Oppressed.  
10 And we'll start from the left again, Katie, Tamara  
11 and Sheila.

12 KATY RUBIN: Thank you. Good morning,  
13 Chair Jimmy Van Bramer and Council Member Levin and  
14 Council Member Cumbo. I am Katy Rubin, Executive  
15 Director of Theatre of the Oppressed NYC, cultural  
16 nonprofit organization creating theater for social  
17 change in partnership with communities facing  
18 discrimination throughout the five boroughs. Some of  
19 our partners include Housing Works, the Ali Forney  
20 Center, and the Center for Court [sic] Innovation,  
21 and this morning I'm also here with many of the  
22 artists we work with in those communities in mind.  
23 Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in  
24 regards to Intro 419. We fully support including a  
25 comprehensive cultural plan in the city's charter.

2 Currently, the cultural needs of all citizens of New  
3 York City are not always met, and we agree that there  
4 should be standards set to ensure access and impact,  
5 and we have several additional points and concerns.

6 The Citizens Advisory Committee should include those  
7 not often served by the city's cultural offerings, as  
8 we've heard already today, including for example the  
9 homeless New Yorkers, public housing residents, court  
10 involved youth, immigrants, etcetera, and both  
11 advising bodies should include members from all five  
12 boroughs. I believe that the working group can help  
13 access these points of view as well as long as  
14 there's a priority to include community engaged arts  
15 organizations in the group as well as representatives  
16 from the city's fine arts institutions, and the  
17 borough arts councils and New York City's cultural  
18 advocacy organizations know who these community  
19 engaged players are in the cultural sector and should  
20 be involved in the selection process of the working  
21 group. I was also thinking, you know, there are  
22 commissioners like Vince Sheraldi [sic] who are  
23 really committed to arts, and they might be able to  
24 appoint some of their, you know, probation clients  
25 directly and that would ensure some serious

2 diversity. I also had a question about the timeline,  
3 but that's already been said, so I'll skip it. We  
4 support that the plan addresses the space needs of  
5 artists and arts organizations and in addition to  
6 studio and rehearsal space and affordable housing, we  
7 are also thinking the plan could address affordable  
8 office space in the effort to allow small arts  
9 organizations to succeed and be sustainable. And  
10 hoping to emphasize sustainability for the long term  
11 vitality of the sector and for economic health of all  
12 New Yorkers including artists and arts  
13 administrators. We hope that in investigating  
14 patterns of funding to cultural organizations the  
15 plan will not only assess which organizations are  
16 being funded at what level, but also how they are  
17 being funded, i.e. program support versus capacity  
18 building and identify funding solutions that could  
19 create a sustainable funding model for cultural.  
20 I'll skip the question about the budget because that  
21 doesn't seem to be a question or funding the plan  
22 particularly. Lastly, if I have another? Yeah?

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Sure. You got  
24 extra time at the front end, but we'll give you a  
25 little bit.

2 KATY RUBIN: Oh, okay. I just wanted to  
3 say that particularly we support the initiative to  
4 examine how the arts can be incorporated into  
5 community and economic development planning processes  
6 and policies, perhaps working with the NYC EDC, and  
7 also we believe that arts can be a medium of  
8 participation in the policy making process and hope  
9 that the plan will consider that potential strength  
10 of the cultural sector as well. And thank you very  
11 much for your proposing this and--

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

13 TAMARA GREENFIELD: Thank you. Thank you  
14 for this opportunity to testify about developing a  
15 comprehensive cultural plan for New York City. I'm  
16 Tamara Greenfield, Executive Director of Fourth Arts  
17 Block or FAB, a neighborhood-wide coalition of 28  
18 arts and community organizations in the East Village  
19 and Lower East Side. I'm also co-director of NOCDNY,  
20 a city-wide coalition of community based cultural  
21 leaders working to revitalize New York City from the  
22 neighborhood up. I believe that the development of a  
23 cultural plan for New York City offers unparalleled  
24 opportunities to bring artists, residents, cultural  
25 and community leaders together to develop an

2 inclusive vision for how the arts could be part of  
3 the cultural vitality of every community in New York  
4 City. I recommend that we take the time needed to  
5 engage a wide range of perspectives in this important  
6 planning process done thoughtfully and with extensive  
7 public participation, a comprehensive cultural plan  
8 for New York City can open up opportunity to diverse  
9 artists, increase equitable participation and extend  
10 and deepen access to more communities. In many past  
11 hearings, I've shared testimony on recommendations  
12 from our network of community based arts and cultural  
13 partners. I believe that the cultural plan can help  
14 us to accomplish many of these recommendations,  
15 including recognizing and supporting strong diverse  
16 arts ecology in New York City. I'm going to just  
17 skip through them. Develop cross-sector partnerships  
18 in arts friendly public policies for each city  
19 agency, make information on cultural policy, creative  
20 opportunities and public spaces more transparent and  
21 accessible to more parts of our city, invest in  
22 neighborhood infrastructure and support civic  
23 engagement and cultural equity in all communities,  
24 explore creative policy approaches to support  
25 neighborhood based culture. In essence, I think we

2 should use all of the tools at our disposal in city  
3 government to be supporting culture across the city  
4 and look beyond just the funding picture, because I  
5 think there's a lot of ways that we can be  
6 integrating support for arts and culture across every  
7 agency and every community. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

9 Sheila?

10 SHEILA LEWANDOWSKI: You have my written  
11 testimony, so I'll skip to a couple of points.

12 Sheila Lewandowski, Chocolate Factory Theater, Long  
13 Island City, Queens. Chairman Van Bramer is our  
14 Council Member. Thank you. Thank you for co-writing  
15 this. Quickly, when Obama was running for office he  
16 put forth one of the first cultural statements or  
17 platforms and that made a big deal. I wanted to make  
18 that point because I want to say bravo for having  
19 done this. The statement itself, the culture, is  
20 important in the city is a big one, and it's part of  
21 why we're all together here and part of why we're  
22 having these conversations and possibly pushing  
23 policy forward. The timeline, I agree, is too short.  
24 I'd be curious to know--I would support the  
25 Commissioner's idea. We talking 18 months, two

2 years, because you have a gathering period. You have  
3 a structural creation period. So, I think to do it  
4 well would have to be longer. Access and equity are  
5 important, but it is also important to think about  
6 how our resources are used. I think about this in  
7 terms of labor. When we distribute our public  
8 dollars, how are the people who serve, are serving  
9 these services being compensated, because very often,  
10 artists are left out of compensation, and that  
11 furthers the problem of them having a difficult time  
12 living here. Affordable housing, we were talking  
13 about participation in city agencies. I'm going to  
14 drive this one home until I turn blue. It would be  
15 nice for HPD to recognize non-traditional income and  
16 figure out ways for people who are 1099's to be able  
17 to access affordable housing. That doesn't exist,  
18 and that would help everybody, freelancers as well.  
19 Agree arts and culture terminology. Artists should  
20 be--okay. Alright, I'm good. Community based arts  
21 groups, I had that on my notes as well. They should  
22 be part of the working committees. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you,  
24 Sheila. I know Council Member Levin has a question  
25 for this panel.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thanks, Mr.

3 Chairman. I actually just had one follow up point on  
4 a point that Katy brought up, which is that you know,  
5 we don't--one thing that we haven't been able to do,  
6 I think, successfully is adhere to percent for art  
7 program for public space, for public projects. And  
8 following up on your point, around economic  
9 development and incorporating arts in the economic  
10 development, I mean, that's one thing that you know,  
11 we don't even adhere to our own standards on that.  
12 So that's one area that I just wanted to make sure  
13 was on the record for in terms of economic  
14 development and large scale projects. Thanks.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
16 much, Council Member Levin. Thank you all three for  
17 the great work that you do. Enjoy your perspectives  
18 and working with us on this. The next panel will be  
19 Ella Weiss from the Brooklyn Arts Council, Catherine  
20 Green from Arts East New York, and Guy Yedwab, I hope  
21 I'm getting that right from the le--what's that?  
22 Slam dunk he says. From the League of Independent  
23 Theater. Thank you so much all three of you, and  
24 we'll start with Ella who took the left leaning seat.  
25 We love that.

2                   ELLA WEISS: Call my name first. I  
3 followed directions. Thank you all, Council Member  
4 Van Bramer, Councilman Cumbo and Levin. I'm Ella  
5 Weiss, President of the Brooklyn Arts Council. I'm  
6 here today to speak in support of creating a  
7 comprehensive cultural plan for New York City,  
8 realizing that so much can be done while the plan is  
9 being addressed and formed. And I take to heart the  
10 Commissioner's comments on those points, that we can  
11 be doing things at the same time as we are looking at  
12 things and planning. Doing this will elevate the  
13 standing of arts and culture within the city's  
14 governing philosophy, and encourage all city agencies  
15 to consider how they can support arts and culture.  
16 Although arts and culture are deeply interwoven into  
17 the fabric of our city, making it a destination for  
18 travelers from around the world and forming a  
19 substantial economic anchor, the sector is very  
20 fragile. We need the support of all city agencies to  
21 help maintain and grow the sector, working in  
22 coordination through well researched comprehensive  
23 plan. As part of Brooklyn Borough President Eric  
24 Adam's transition team, BAC coordinated a set of  
25 focus groups to explore the current set of the

2 culture community in Brooklyn and discuss its  
3 greatest needs. The feedback we received highlights  
4 how artists and culture groups face challenges in  
5 areas from transportation to housing that can only be  
6 addressed through a coordinated effort amongst city  
7 agencies. Presenting organizations and leaders of  
8 open studio events explained how unexpected  
9 transportation outages and challenges and changes  
10 hamper the accessibility and success of these events.  
11 Coordination, obviously, would have been of a great,  
12 great assistance. The need for affordable living and  
13 workspace was a constant refrain as was the need for  
14 greater funding. We always agree about that. These  
15 complex challenges are acutely felt in Brooklyn and  
16 also in many neighborhoods citywide and they require  
17 complex solutions. A cultural plan will help the  
18 city marshal the resources and coordination needed to  
19 address them. Without this investment, New York City  
20 faces very real threats of losing its primacy as an  
21 arts destination and as a place where the arts and  
22 culture elevate quality of life across all five  
23 boroughs. I believe it is important that funds are  
24 provided for the development of the plan without  
25 reducing existing arts and cultural funding.

2 Additionally, I encourage the council to ensure that  
3 the working group and Citizens Advisory Committee  
4 charged with creating the plan reflect the diversity  
5 of the city and ensure that each borough is well  
6 represented. Finally, I suggest the council review  
7 the proposed timeline, which other people have talked  
8 about so we make sure we have enough time to do this  
9 well and thoroughly. Thank you call for your ongoing  
10 commitment to the arts and culture in all of New York  
11 City, and we look forward to working with you to make  
12 it even better. Thank you so much.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you so  
14 much for your testimony. Next up, Catherine?

15 CATHERINE GREEN: I thank you. Good  
16 morning Chairman Van Bramer. Good morning committee  
17 members Cumbo and Levin. Thank you so much for  
18 inviting us today to testify on this important  
19 initiative. My name is Catherine Green. I am the  
20 Executive Director of Arts East New York. We at Arts  
21 East New York are building a cultural infrastructure  
22 and sustainable ecosystem for the arts, economic  
23 development, social justice that synchronically  
24 revitalize a community like ours faced with  
25 disproportionate needs. As you are aware, arts and

2 culture are the roots of our community across the  
3 globe. According to the Americans for the Arts  
4 Research Report, arts and economic prosperity for  
5 every day more than 100,000 nonprofit arts and  
6 cultural organizations act as economic drivers,  
7 creating an industry that supports jobs, generates  
8 government revenue, and is a cornerstone of the tour-  
9 -sorry--of the tourism industry. This study  
10 documents the key role that's played by the  
11 nonprofits and the arts industry in their audiences  
12 and strengthening the nation's economy. With this  
13 research, as well as the everyday experience we have  
14 working in the ground, on the ground in our  
15 community, it is our firm belief that at Arts East  
16 New York that supporting a comprehensive cultural  
17 plan for New York City will improve livability and  
18 develop outcomes that have the potential to radically  
19 change the future of the existing residents of  
20 neighborhoods much like New York's East New York  
21 Brooklyn. Enacting a cultural--enacting a  
22 comprehensive cultural plan for New York City is an  
23 essential process that would allow an equal and fair  
24 approach to providing resources to all communities  
25 that make up this great city, and mending the city's

2 charter through a comprehensive and participatory  
3 process is commendable and responsible approach to  
4 ensuring that New York City is indeed the cultural  
5 capital of this great nation. I do recommend--thank  
6 you. I do recommend that this qualitative approach  
7 for our communities is--listen, we at Arts East New  
8 York support this plan. I'm not one for reading too  
9 much. I speak from my heart. In a community like  
10 East New York, we have been left out of many plans,  
11 whether it be cultural, economic, HPD, whoever,  
12 whatever agency and it is time that the city now  
13 takes a responsible approach to include in  
14 communities like ours in every plan, every single  
15 plan that goes on in this city, because it's our tax  
16 dollars. It's our labor that makes the city great,  
17 and we would love a plan that's sustainable, and  
18 those things that can be worked on now, great. We, I  
19 solely believe in it. We were doing that work now,  
20 but we want to see sustainability. We're getting  
21 calls from schools, which is amazing. We're getting  
22 all of these dollars that are coming in. What's  
23 going to happen four years from now in the next  
24 Administration? And this is something that we want  
25 to see written, a written document that we can move

2 forward with. So thank you again for today's  
3 testimony. I appreciate it.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. And  
5 Council Member Cumbo and I were both raving about you  
6 before you went on. Every time we've met, every time  
7 you've testified, you know, I'm just wildly impressed  
8 with what you're doing. So I want to say thank you.  
9 And next is Guy.

10 GUY YEDWAB: Great. Thank you all for the  
11 opportunity to testify today and for this plan. We  
12 think it's very important. My name is Guy Yedwab.  
13 I'm Director of Operations for the League of  
14 Independent Theater. The League's a 501c6 political  
15 advocacy organization, and we're testifying today on  
16 behalf of the city's 50,000 independent theater  
17 artists, 86 percent of whom vote. Our membership  
18 includes both individual theater makers and  
19 performance venues from across all five boroughs,  
20 whose self-produced work outside of established  
21 institutions in venues 99 seats or less. Our  
22 membership includes the small informal groups that  
23 the Commissioner referenced in his testimony. Over  
24 the past year we've seen that there's a crisis  
25 growing for artists and independent arts

2 organizations who are losing their homes and their  
3 workspaces in their community. That's the problem  
4 that we're trying to solve and we'd like to see this  
5 plan tackle as well. Over the last year we engaged  
6 our membership to deliver--to develop solutions to  
7 keep these artists in their communities and keep them  
8 working. We crafted a concrete set of proposals  
9 including expanding live and work space and  
10 commissioning an impact study for the arts, and at a  
11 packed even last March we presented those proposals  
12 to elected officials and candidates for city office.  
13 The response from our membership was overwhelming.  
14 There is an expectation of artists in our communities  
15 that we take action. The independent artists and  
16 venues we represent want to see that action. So we  
17 thank the City Council Members who've co-sponsored  
18 this bill for recognizing that need. We're  
19 encouraged by this bill as it addresses critical  
20 areas, including affordable live and work space and  
21 the need to increase access to public spaces and city  
22 resources, which help all arts organizations, not  
23 just the chosen few. We're also encouraged to see  
24 that the plan addresses organizations of every budget  
25 throughout the city. We owe these working artists

2 and their communities a true cultural plan. To us, a  
3 true cultural plan is one that has input from  
4 independent theater artist groups from across all  
5 five boroughs. Independent artists whose work is  
6 most accessible to their communities are those most  
7 vulnerable in the city's ecosystem. They need a  
8 voice in the advisory group. To us, a cultural plan  
9 needs to be a constant active process, not just  
10 revisited once every ten years, but continues to  
11 improve on the plan and build on its successes. And  
12 most importantly, a cultural plan makes a firm  
13 commitment to implement the plan's findings not just  
14 to consider action if feasible. This will require  
15 assurance that the recommendations of the cultural  
16 plan will have the funding they need to be  
17 implemented. The needs of our community are pressing  
18 and we expect action, a true cultural plan is the  
19 first step in taking that action to keeping artists  
20 living and working in their communities and ensuring  
21 every New Yorker has access to affordable arts in  
22 their neighborhood. Thank you for your work drafting  
23 this bill. We're excited to work with City Council,  
24 with our cultural community that's come out in such  
25 strong numbers today, and we agree that there's other

2 action that can be taken in parallel with this plan.  
3 We plenty of ideas that we're happy to talk about at  
4 length. So thank you again.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you, Guy.

6 I see you've been trading notes with Marta and hit  
7 the same point, but thank you all and for your  
8 contributions and your comments. And I just have to  
9 say, every time a new panel comes up I think I have  
10 the greatest job in the world because we get ot work  
11 with the coolest group of advocates and artists and  
12 people in the city of New York and my job is to fight  
13 for this constituency every day. So thank you all  
14 for what you do for the city of New York. The next  
15 panel, is Lane Harwell still in the house? Lane  
16 Harwell, Anne Dennin from the--is Anne Dennin  
17 testifying? Yes, she is. And Naomi Hersson from No  
18 Longer Empty. Lane Harwell is representing Dance  
19 NYC, and if you didn't know it, dance is one of my  
20 favorite things in the whole world. There you go.  
21 Lane, we'll start with you right away.

22 LANE HARWELL: Sure. Thank you, Chairman  
23 Van Bramer, Council Members. Lane Harwell, Dance  
24 NYC. I speak with dance, but also recognize that all  
25 of us in arts and culture are stronger when we are

2 working together, and it is community, ever more  
3 inclusive community I want to highlight today as we  
4 consider cultural planning and as others have already  
5 done. In doing so, I echo the observations of many  
6 who are testifying, that to be successful planning  
7 must be feasible, focused and funded. Planning must  
8 also be flexible to allow for discovery and iteration  
9 over time, to address New York's evolving needs and  
10 opportunities. I offer these as criteria that may be  
11 helpful in moving forward productively. Now, in  
12 highlighting community I'm using Dance NYC learning  
13 to invite the attention of those who may take on the  
14 labor of cultural planning, both to the role of  
15 community in the potential planning process and to  
16 community as a vision achievable through planning.  
17 Community, is to start, the most frequently, the  
18 answer most frequently offered by participants in New  
19 Yorkers for dance. Dance NYC's new initiative  
20 featuring statements from residents of all 51 City  
21 Council districts in response to the question, why do  
22 dance and culture matter to your neighborhood. This  
23 learning supports the council's interest in community  
24 input and encourages bringing together multiple and  
25 alternative voices in the planning process from arts

2 and cultural workers to the general public why do  
3 they participate. By highlighting community I am  
4 also advocating an expansive view on the impacts of  
5 the creative sector, sometimes too neatly described  
6 in terms of economic development and of art for art's  
7 sake. At the same time, I am seeking tangible  
8 outcomes, which I believe are requisite. I am  
9 encouraged by the work of the social impact of the  
10 arts projects, specifically by its commitment to  
11 concepts that can be tested empirically. For  
12 example, influence of social connection as fostered  
13 by cultural engagement on security and personal  
14 health, and finally, as others have done, I advocate  
15 deepening the cultural's engagement with underserved  
16 communities as one planning outcome, working towards  
17 as I believe we must a framework for addressing  
18 inequality. Focused and fundable interagency  
19 strategy could be helpful and there are case studies  
20 that can be minded, Sparks and others have been  
21 highlighted today. Also, the Mayor's office for  
22 people with disabilities is providing invaluable  
23 support to Dance NYC and developing an initiative to  
24 increase inclusion and access for disabled people. I  
25 look forward to sharing in future testimony. Thank

2 you to the Administration and Council for engaging  
3 New Yorkers and setting its priorities.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you, Lane,  
5 and I also want to thank New Yorkers for Dance for  
6 bringing posters in the back there. Put them up. I  
7 am a New Yorker for dance and proud of that, and  
8 somehow I have to get some of those posters in my  
9 office. So just figure that out. As long as they're  
10 worth less than 50 bucks, which I'm sure they are.  
11 Naomi, whoever wants to go next over there?

12 NAOMI HERSSON: Yes, I'll make--thank you  
13 for inviting No Longer Empty, and I'll make my  
14 testimony very short and concise. We are here to  
15 support the cultural plan. I'm the Director of No  
16 Longer Empty a five year, our organization. We  
17 activate public engagement through community  
18 responsive exhibitions and educational programs in  
19 underutilized property. Our mission is really to  
20 widen and deepen the cultural participation in that  
21 neighborhood. In support of the cultural plan, I'd  
22 like to reiterate some of the things I've said  
23 previously in other hearings. This cultural plan  
24 should be comprehensive so that we can use it as a  
25 powerful, political, logistical instrument for to

2 gain a greater voice and role in how our city  
3 evolves. We should develop a common vision so that  
4 we can unite our community, its funders and its  
5 supporters to pave the way for greater inclusivity  
6 and civic engagement. It should also be transparent.  
7 So to allow us to access the data, the surveys and  
8 the maps so that we can inform ourselves and deliver  
9 better services to our constituents and have a  
10 coordinated invest--and fourth, to have a coordinated  
11 investment and process. So, to build  
12 interdisciplinary initiatives within the field and  
13 with other sectors and agencies that help grow  
14 support for the arts. Of these objectives, I also  
15 encourage the City Council to establish base lines so  
16 we can measure and evaluate our collective impact in  
17 how we are achieving our goals or reaching our goals  
18 on both a local and a citywide level, to reinforce  
19 the cultural infrastructure such as a local cultural  
20 councils and the Community Boards that already have  
21 deep networks and influence in the community. And  
22 third, adhere to developing a bottom up and  
23 reiterative process for understanding what people of  
24 New York City want. It is extremely helpful in terms  
25 of focusing funding, institution and cultural

2 producers on the same goals. In all, we must start  
3 this research and planning immediately, because we  
4 believe that this is achievable by July 2015.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you, very  
6 much, Naomi.

7 ANNE DENNIN: Yes, I'm Anne Dennin, Co-  
8 Chair of the New York City Council--do I even know  
9 what I'm co-chair of. We're happy to be here  
10 testifying today. I'm like Sheila, going to sort of  
11 skip because many advocates have been meeting and  
12 having conversations the last couples of weeks and  
13 many of the points that come up, particularly those  
14 raised by Council Member Cumbo. So I'll touch  
15 briefly. We consider the timeline much too short.  
16 It's a very comprehensive plan, and we certainly  
17 agree with the Commissioner that to be really  
18 effective, those things take 18 months to two years.  
19 We'll leave the funding up to you, but we do have a  
20 concern on the private public funding, which we feel  
21 right now is not at a sustainable level for the  
22 number of arts organizations in the city, and we'd  
23 hate to see private sector funding being taken away  
24 from all the organizations that have to go there  
25 themselves. On the committees, we concur that all

2 boroughs should be represented, artistic disciplines,  
3 organizational sizes, but also artists should be  
4 represented, working artists. And one point that I  
5 don't think has been addressed is we would encourage  
6 the council to further examine and define section  
7 3.C, stating that a community's decision making  
8 process to focus on neighborhoods to engage and  
9 encourage community input. My concern and I may be  
10 totally off base, is we strongly support the panel  
11 process. And we couldn't tell in reviewing this if  
12 it referred to community selecting arts groups in  
13 their communities or having input. So, that's  
14 something we would just like to define. Thank you  
15 very much for addressing this important issues.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you, Anne  
17 for those points, which we appreciate your input a  
18 great deal. Thank you Naomi and Lane as well, and I  
19 do want to point out and I'm sure at some point he  
20 has to go, but Commissioner Finkelppearl is still with  
21 us listening to everybody's testimony here and I want  
22 to thank him for doing that. And apparently half the  
23 Department of Cultural Affairs. So with that, thank  
24 you to this panel, and we will have Paul Parkhill  
25 from Spaceworks. Is Heather Woodfield still here?

2 Yes, she is. From One Percent for Culture. Jessica  
3 Silverman from Carnegie Hall. The three of you are  
4 the next panel. And then we have about 52 more  
5 panels. So stay tight. And Jessica, you're  
6 automatically taking the left seat, so you'll be  
7 first once you get there. So, thank you again  
8 everyone for being here and for waiting. It's very  
9 important and a great opportunity that we're all here  
10 with the Commissioner and Council Member Levin and--  
11 he was here. Go on Jessica.

12 JESSICA WOODFIELD: Sure. Hi, my name is  
13 Jessica Silverman. I work in Government Relations at  
14 Carnegie Hall. Thanks so much for the opportunity to  
15 say a few words today. I will be super short and  
16 summarize our testimony. The one thing we really  
17 wanted to highlight is there was a line in the bill  
18 that suggests that the plan outline nontraditional  
19 cultural programming, and I think using language such  
20 as this implies that there is the traditional place  
21 where New Yorkers should go to experience culture.  
22 Carnegie Hall has done an extraordinary amount of  
23 work in different community settings, in adult and  
24 juvenile correction facilities, probation centers,  
25 shelters, hospitals, senior centers, schools, and our

2 work in these settings have shown that arts have just  
3 as much value in these "nontraditional settings" as  
4 they do in the concert hall. The one thing I did  
5 want to take a moment and give a shout out to is our  
6 project Neon Arts, because several people have  
7 mentioned former Department of Probation Commissioner  
8 Vinny Sheraldi, and this is a really terrific example  
9 of how arts were integrated into justice  
10 intervention, and this program that we're  
11 administering with the Department of Probation  
12 integrates arts of all different disciplines through  
13 targeted grant making into all of these different  
14 community-based probation centers. I think that this  
15 is a terrific example of ways that agencies can think  
16 about using art, not just for their inherent value  
17 for participating in the arts program, but because it  
18 supports what the agency is trying to achieve in  
19 their goals. So we hope that in the creation of the  
20 plan, the arts--this is--the author [sic] raises an  
21 opportunity to see how the arts have a real role in  
22 making our communities more vibrant, our schools more  
23 dynamic and our lives richer, and that, the plan  
24 really looks at arts in cultural partners as partners  
25 in civic life as well.

2 HEATHER WOODFIELD: Thank you. I'm  
3 Heather Woodfield. I'm the Executive Director of One  
4 Percent for Culture. I'm also a practicing Long  
5 Island City based artist. On behalf of One Percent  
6 for Culture and our more than 550 coalition partners  
7 throughout the city, I'd like to thank Chairman Van  
8 Bramer, Council Member Levin and the Committee for  
9 the opportunity to testify today on Intro 419. We  
10 commend you for your vision and leadership in  
11 recognizing the value of the nonprofit cultural  
12 community including artists and working to grow and  
13 strengthen our city's vital cultural sector. We've  
14 had a lot of conversations this last week with our  
15 coalition partners and with cultural advocates, many  
16 of whom are here today about Intro 419, and there are  
17 some common concerns that we identified and I wanted  
18 to just highlight a few of those. The first, and this  
19 has come up before, is the funding for the plan. New  
20 funding must be provided for the planning process to  
21 ensure that the creation of a cultural plan does not  
22 have a negative impact on the cultural sector. Two,  
23 is the timeline, and I think that's been addressed.  
24 I think that 18 to 24 month number sounds good.  
25 Three is the representation in the process. We think

2 it's critical to ensure that both the working group  
3 and the advisory committee fully represent all of the  
4 stakeholders and include members from all five  
5 boroughs, therefore, we suggest that each of the  
6 Borough President as well as the Public Advocate  
7 appoint at least one member to each committee. We  
8 also suggest that nominations for the committee  
9 positions be taken from the cultural community,  
10 including the borough arts councils and New York  
11 City's cultural advocacy organization whose members  
12 include artists, cultural organizations and cultural  
13 institutions. The funding recommendations that could  
14 come out of this plan, it's likely that the cultural  
15 sector might not be able to fulfill the  
16 recommendation of the cultural plan without  
17 additional funding. So we would further recommend  
18 that one of the fundamental goals of the plan should  
19 be assess the funding needs of the sector and  
20 identify funding solutions that would create a  
21 sustainable funding model for culture that ensures  
22 the long term vitality of the sector. This is a  
23 sector that includes organizations of all sizes and  
24 individual artists. We want to stress that culture  
25 is not just the arts, and that in order for Intro 419

2 to build fully inclusive of the culture community  
3 there are several instances where the word art should  
4 be changed to culture or perhaps and arts and  
5 culture. We feel that culture includes the arts as  
6 well as our science based organizations. We want to  
7 thank you again for working to increase cultural  
8 activity city-wide and supporting the nonprofit  
9 cultural community and artists of every discipline.  
10 We look forward to engaging in an ongoing dialogue  
11 about the comprehensive cultural plan and working  
12 together to accomplish these goals. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
14 much Heather. I think all of those things can be  
15 accommodated and we can still pass a cultural plan in  
16 the City of New York. And Paul, you are last in this  
17 section.

18 PAUL PARKHILL: Thank you Council  
19 Members. My name is Paul Parkhill. I'm the Executive  
20 Director of Spaceworks, which is a nonprofit that  
21 builds affordable long term work space for visual and  
22 performing artists throughout New York City. We were  
23 created in 2011 in partnership with the Department of  
24 Cultural Affairs to help ensure that New York remains  
25 a place where artists can afford to produce work.

2 Spaceworks, itself represents a tangible illustration  
3 of DCLA has taken a proactive approach to addressing  
4 affordability issues within the cultural community  
5 and how it has made efforts to extend the benefits of  
6 cultural funding to artists themselves. It's clearly  
7 a huge need. We recently received 218 applications  
8 for three visual arts studios in Williamsburg. Based  
9 on income data we've collected at Lyon [sic] City  
10 site, 26 percent of our performing artists earn below  
11 16,000 dollars a year. Another 22 percent earn  
12 between 16 and 26,000 dollars a year. Another 18  
13 percent earn between 26 and 36,000 dollars per year.  
14 So this is clearly a very, very low income  
15 population. They're also in desperate need of stable  
16 affordable quality space. In focus groups we held  
17 with artists in Brooklyn and the Bronx, we heard  
18 stories of artists commuting from Sunset Park, to  
19 Sunset Park from the mid-Bronx for studio space. We  
20 heard about artists shifting from studio to studio  
21 every few months. We heard about dancers injuring  
22 themselves on concrete floors, theater rehearsals and  
23 unheated spaces, and a host of unventilated, unsafe,  
24 and otherwise untenable working environments. I want  
25 to focus my comments briefly on two portions of the

2 proposed cultural scope that relay most directly to  
3 our work, the analysis of artist needs and the  
4 context of an unaffordable real estate market and the  
5 examination of how arts can be incorporated into  
6 community and economic development plan. One of the  
7 critical challenges facing organizations serving  
8 artists directly is the lack of a coherent city-wide  
9 research on the resources, needs, and physical  
10 distribution of visual and performing artists. The  
11 CDP plays an important role in tabulating information  
12 about arts organizations, but too little is known  
13 about artists themselves. Several studies in recent  
14 years have looked into specific segments of the  
15 performing arts community, but more comprehensive  
16 studies of the economic and space needs of New York  
17 City artists remain elusive, particularly in relation  
18 to visual artists. I will try to wrap up quickly.  
19 Secondly, we believe that DCLA is exceptionally  
20 proactive about examining and cultivating the  
21 intersection of the arts with community and economic  
22 development, but more can be done to emphasize the  
23 importance of cultural development within a broad  
24 arrange of agencies. So there was some discussion  
25 about this before, so I'll leave it at that.

2 Development oriented agencies can encourage community  
3 based cultural development in a variety of ways.

4 They can prioritize cultural and arts uses in RFPs.

5 They can create new inclusionary provisions that

6 mandate creative uses and new developments and/or

7 provide incentives to integrate cultural

8 organizations that serve low income communities. And

9 they can work to prioritize community based cultural

10 organizations in the public land disposition process.

11 Although all of the goals articulated in the proposed

12 legislation are admirable, and I think this has been

13 echoed continuously throughout this hearing, the

14 magnitude of the mandate will require a large budget

15 and a longer timeline, particularly since the plan

16 must be created from scratch. Rather than tackling

17 all of these issues as once, perhaps starting with a

18 framework of cultural objectives and a survey of

19 existing resources would set the stage for a more

20 comprehensive series of studies, but can in the long

21 run create a substantive and grounded plan that can

22 give the city's cultural policy--that can guide the

23 city's cultural policy over the long term. Thank

24 you.

25

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. I  
3 appreciate it, but I disagree with you. I think we  
4 can handle tackling all of these things at once. So  
5 with that, thank you to this panel, and then we will  
6 hear from Jennifer Wright Cook. Is Jennifer Wright  
7 Cook still with us at The Field? She very much is.  
8 Is Laura Washington from the New York Historical  
9 Society still with us? Yes, she is. And is, I think  
10 it's Alec Duffy. Is it Alec Duffy from Jack Arts Inc?  
11 Alright. And we have three more panels after this,  
12 folks, so we are making progress and appreciate  
13 everyone, everyone's dedication. Thank you.  
14 Jennifer?

15 JENNIFER WRIGHT COOK: Thank you for the  
16 opportunity to testify on proposed cultural plan. My  
17 name is Jennifer Wright Cook. I'm the Executive  
18 Director of The Field. We're a 28 year old arts  
19 service organization dedicated to helping performing  
20 artists thrive. Many of the artists referenced in  
21 individual and emerging artists are our constituents,  
22 and we work with 1,200 artists a year, and there are  
23 13,000 collaborators. They do 9,000 shows a year for  
24 two million audiences worldwide. I'm thrilled that  
25 this local law is going to put forward, and I'm

2 deeply excited about how a cultural plan could shape  
3 New York City's vibrant cultural economy. I am  
4 particularly grateful to Chairperson Van Bramer,  
5 Council Member Levin and to the sponsors of the law.  
6 Without being too touchy feely, a cultural plan is an  
7 opportunity to dive deep into our citizen's beliefs,  
8 hopes and dreams. It is an opportunity to engage New  
9 Yorkers in the vibrant and robust dialogue in what's  
10 working, what's not, and how each of us play a direct  
11 and active role in the cultural economy. It's an  
12 opportunity to build a thriving, well-resourced,  
13 nimble, and resilient cultural sector that serves all  
14 New Yorkers. It is an opportunity to pull people in.  
15 with the local law as written, however, I believe  
16 that we are missing these potent opportunities, and  
17 that by missing these opportunities we will  
18 invariably concoct a cultural plan that is  
19 disconnected from its people and that has no real  
20 impact except to spend precious time, money and human  
21 resources. I applaud the Commissioner's pragmatism  
22 that we can do a big broad plan and still do  
23 actionable effort in a small time frame. I echo many  
24 of my colleagues concerns, praises, and  
25 recommendations. The following are mine. Praise, an

2 analysis of potential disparity. Praise, a strong  
3 inclusion of arts education. Praise, the recognition  
4 of individual and emerging artists, albeit, in a  
5 confusing manner. Praise, and analysis of the needs  
6 of artists and how they can remain in the city. My  
7 primary concerns have been said before. I will focus  
8 on the undefined and hazy language of individual and  
9 emerging artists. There's no common definition for  
10 the word emerging, and in order for, I think, a plan  
11 to be responsible and effective, it has to work to  
12 provide support for all artists, emerging mid-career  
13 established individual and institutional. I'll leave  
14 it there. Thank you very much.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. I  
16 love--

17 JENNIFER WRIGHT COOK: [interposing] Oh,  
18 I look forward to working with you on individual and  
19 emerging arts.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I'm totally  
21 loving the praise section. That's great.

22 JENNIFER WRIGHT COOK: I sing in a gospel  
23 choir in the East Village.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
3 much. I appreciate that, Jennifer, and next we have  
4 Laura, right, from the New York Historical Society.

5 LAURA WASHINGTON: That's right. Good  
6 afternoon. Thank you members of the New York City  
7 Council Committee on Cultural Affairs, and thank you  
8 for this opportunity to present to you today. My  
9 name is Laura Washington. I'm Vice President of  
10 communications at the New York Historical Society and  
11 I'm here today to highlight the Historical Society's  
12 successful efforts to increase inclusivity and  
13 visitorship from across all five boroughs,  
14 particularly New York City public school students.  
15 Our hope is that the Historical Society's experience  
16 can be used as a role model as you look citywide, as  
17 you consider a comprehensive cultural plan. First, a  
18 little background. As you know, the Historical  
19 Society is New York's oldest cultural institution. It  
20 was founded in 1804, and its holdings documenting the  
21 history of early America are considered among the  
22 most important in this country. Over the past  
23 decade, the institution has utilized its collections  
24 to shed its reputation as elitist and inaccessible,  
25 and we've done that we think successfully over the

2 last decade. And we accomplished that by producing  
3 exhibitions that make history matter, and by each  
4 year, engaging New York City public schools in all  
5 five boroughs and more than 280,000 public schools  
6 students and teachers, and we do this through  
7 interactive tours, curriculum development, teacher  
8 training and certification programs. Now, since  
9 2004, the New York Historical Society has consistent  
10 mounted major American history exhibitions that we  
11 think move us forward, and these include the 2005 and  
12 06 series on slavery in New York, the 2010  
13 exhibition, Nueva [sic] York, and this year's  
14 exhibition, Chinese American Exclusion/Inclusion  
15 which just opened last Friday. When we put together  
16 these exhibitions we form and nurture partnerships  
17 throughout the city and we think that these  
18 partnerships are particularly of interest, you know,  
19 as you look at a comprehensive cultural plan. Our  
20 partners include community leaders, academic  
21 institutions, city agencies, religious institutions  
22 and cultural institutions, including, and libraries,  
23 including Schaumberg [sp?], Sandy Ground from Staten  
24 Island, Brooklyn's Weeksville [sp?], Queen's Library,  
25 the Museum of Chinese in America. We've worked with

2 El Museo del Barrio [sp?] on Nueva York. We worked  
3 with the Haitian community on our exhibition  
4 revolution which focused on the Haitian Revolution.  
5 The Historical Society aligns all of its educational  
6 programming materials with local, state, and federal  
7 standards. This is an example of our educational  
8 material. Every teacher who brings a class, K-12 to  
9 visit, gets this education package. So this is  
10 helping teachers connect the exhibition, which is  
11 about immigration, with the school standards that  
12 they're working with. We offer professional  
13 development courses for teachers. Last year we  
14 hosted Justice Sotomayor during a free full day  
15 professional development program. We also support  
16 student's academic achievement and their acquisition  
17 of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills through unique out of school  
18 opportunities. For example, the students in our  
19 student historian high school internship program get  
20 vocational training, and every year, I don't know if  
21 you visited Governor's Island this summer, but for  
22 the past three summers, the students have put on an  
23 exhibition. So they're getting a wide range of  
24 training on what it's like to work in a museum and to  
25 actually have an exhibition. So, I want to thank you.

2 I hope this information is useful and we're here to  
3 help in any way that we can as you move forward.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
5 much. Great work, and I appreciate that a great  
6 deal. And Alec, Jack.

7 ALEC DUFFY: Great. Thank you for the  
8 opportunity to speak. I'm very nervous. I have to  
9 say.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Nervous?

11 ALEC DUFFY: Deep breath.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: You're with a  
13 room full of fiends, there's no reason to be nervous.

14 ALEC DUFFY: Great, great.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: The whole world  
16 is watching.

17 ALEC DUFFY: Thank you. My name is Alec  
18 Duffy, and I'm the artistic director of Jack, which  
19 is a new performance venue in Clinton Hill Brooklyn,  
20 which I started with a small group of co-founders two  
21 years ago with a mission of reflecting the diversity  
22 of the city and also engaging with local residents to  
23 create and present performance. In this moment  
24 dedicated to the cultural plan, I thought I'd borrough  
25 a page from the Academy Awards where they list those

2 movie stars that have recently passed. I'd like to  
3 take a moment to list the small venues under 100  
4 seats that have closed in the past two years in New  
5 York City, Incubator Arts Project, the Douglas Street  
6 Music Collective, Center State NYC, the Red Room, the  
7 Living Theater, The Living Room, Bowery Poetry Club,  
8 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Why [sic] Tribeca, the Collapsible Hole,  
9 Death by Audio, Dance New Amsterdam, EPM, Zebulon,  
10 Joy Soho, Brooklyn Rod and Gun, Exit Art, Location  
11 One, Magic Future Box, 285 Kent. No one in their  
12 right mind would start a venue now in New York City,  
13 or they'd either have to be crazy or they'd have to  
14 have access. They'd have to be privileged. The only  
15 reason my wife and I started Jack was that we had, we  
16 poured 75,000 dollars of our own money, our entire  
17 savings into Jack. That's what it took. It took--  
18 that money was gone in six months. Small venues of  
19 the lifeblood of the New York art scene. The  
20 performing artists that we now see on our biggest  
21 spaces likely developed their craft and gained their  
22 first audiences in small venues, and it's these small  
23 venues that help to connect art to local  
24 neighborhoods, but because of prohibitive rent and no  
25 city or state structures to step into help, it's

2 likely these closings will continue, leaving the city  
3 awash in new 10 million dollars for mid or large  
4 size organizations, but no smaller venues feeding  
5 artists into those buildings and developing local  
6 audiences for the arts. What we need is a marshal  
7 plan for small venue development. I proposed  
8 consideration of creating a standalone unit as part  
9 of this cultural plan for small venues and small arts  
10 organizations that provide grants of significance  
11 early on instead of demanding a venue get on its feet  
12 alone. As it stands, small venues can't expect to  
13 receive more than 10,000 dollars in city funds until  
14 after many years of existence. Other cities can  
15 provide examples of ways that this funding could be  
16 raised, including San Francisco, which has a hotel  
17 tax for the arts. Minneapolis has a development tax  
18 for the arts. The council can also offer a forceful  
19 connection to real estate interest in placing arts  
20 entrepreneurs in spaces, either in new developments  
21 or in used buildings. I know there are other  
22 organizations that are working on advocating for that  
23 kind of action. If the field is left as it is with  
24 real estate prices rising and no corrective action on  
25 part of the city to ensure small arts activity,

2 there's danger that this City Council committee will  
3 preside over the death of small arts venues in New  
4 York City. Let it instead be a part of a massive  
5 revival. Thank you for your time.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
7 much, and if that's your testimony when you're  
8 nervous, I'd like to see it when you're relaxed. That  
9 was pretty darn good. So thank you very much to this  
10 panel. Again, we have a couple more. We are almost  
11 at the end. So, is Johnathan Slaff [sp?]. Johnathan  
12 Slaff is here, very good. Amy Tetterof [sp?]. Okay,  
13 thank you very much for passing. Sami Abu Shumays  
14 from Flushing Town Hall and we will also have--oh  
15 wait, Fractured Atlas already went, right, so--no,  
16 no. So who is giving on behalf of Fractured Atlas?  
17 And Marie-Louise Stegall from Fractured Atlas, and  
18 that's representing the three folks from Fractured  
19 Atlas, correct? Got it. Thank you very much. And  
20 then we actually have only one more panel to go.  
21 Thank you Fractured Atlas for your cooperation, and  
22 why don't you go and lead us off.

23 JOHNATHAN SLAFF: Oh, I'm so glad that I  
24 could speak. Thank you so much for this opportunity.  
25 My name's Johnathan Slaff, I'm a theatrical press

2 agent, which means I'm kind of a publicist, and I'm  
3 only speaking as a member of the community because I  
4 noticed an omission in the proposed legislation,  
5 which I thought was significant to the health of the  
6 artistic community. It tends to leave out  
7 professional training. I'm talking about self  
8 employed acting and dance teachers, the master  
9 teachers like Wynn Hamlin [sic], Lee Strausberg  
10 [sic], Christine Newbert [sp?] of the Newbert Ballet,  
11 people who were able to exist and draw people to New  
12 York for professional arts training. One of the  
13 strengths of New York and one of the things that sets  
14 us apart from everybody else is we have really fine  
15 professional training here. I'm not talking about  
16 training in academic or scholastic setting, and I  
17 think this is a population that's been totally left  
18 out of everything up to now, and I wanted to bring it  
19 up just because it occurred to me that somebody  
20 should speak for it. So let's take this part of the  
21 arts landscape into account as we holistically plan  
22 for the cultural plan. Thank you very much.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Sami?

24 SAMI ABU SHUMAYS: Thank you Council  
25 Member van Bramer, Levin and members of the

1  
2 committee. Every two weeks a unique human language  
3 disappears, and linguist estimate that by the end of  
4 the century about half of the 7,000 languages  
5 currently spoken on earth will be gone, a crisis  
6 parallel to and related to the unprecedented loss of  
7 biodiversity on the planet. While linguists, NGO's  
8 and universities work to address this problem, very  
9 little has been done to address systematically the  
10 parallel loss of artistic and cultural traditions  
11 which like spoken language depend for their survival  
12 on an active community of practitioners, and which  
13 when they disappear also represent the loss of unique  
14 irreplaceable human knowledge. New York City  
15 presents a unique opportunity in this regard. As an  
16 artistic and cultural hotspot with residents bringing  
17 artistic and cultural traditions from all over the  
18 world, a focused effort on the part of the city to  
19 identify, support and celebrate immigrant artistic  
20 traditions could have a real impact on the future of  
21 world cultural forms. Just a few examples from among  
22 thousands, the Garifina [sp?] Music, Dance and  
23 Language recognized by UNESCO [sic] as a masterpiece  
24 of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity has  
25 many practitioners in the city, we presented them at

2 Flushing Town Hall, and the recognized World Masters  
3 of the Buharian [sp?] Jewish music tradition known as  
4 Shash Maccom [sp?] have more people in Queens than in  
5 Uzbekistan. In addition to this specific  
6 opportunity, as we seek to make culture more  
7 inclusive in New York City, it is important to  
8 support not only immigrant artists, but to support  
9 immigrant artistic traditions, because celebrating  
10 these offers validation to the many cultures and  
11 identities present in the city, a way to appreciate  
12 the positive side of each other's differences, and  
13 hence, a way to foster greater community integration  
14 and harmony, something cultural institutions in  
15 Queens understand very well. A citywide cultural  
16 plan, as I believe an excellent vehicle within which  
17 to address these and other significant cultural  
18 opportunities. The proposed legislation is a great  
19 start, although there is still some work to be done,  
20 and I've listed below in the written testimony some  
21 of the concerns we share with other cultural  
22 institution, many of which have been already said  
23 today. Flushing Town Hall, which has demonstrated a  
24 track record of presenting global arts for a global  
25 community looks forward to participating in the

2 planning process, and I wanted to note that our  
3 Executive Director has a good relationship with the  
4 Quebec Cultural Attaché and they have developed a  
5 cultural plan for Montreal. We're happy to share  
6 that information. Thanks for the opportunity to  
7 testify, and I just wanted to say on a personal note,  
8 that I think the housing issues, the affordability  
9 issue is really probably the most significant one as  
10 an artist myself.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
12 much, Sami. And Marie-Louise?

13 MARIE-LOUISE STEGALL: Alright. Good  
14 afternoon. My name is Marie-Louise Stegall, and I'm  
15 here with my colleague Selena Junovogel [sp?] and  
16 Gene Ann Douglas [sp?], both of whom are also artists  
17 in addition to directing programs at Fractured Atlas,  
18 and we are here to represent the organization. Thank  
19 you to the committee for inviting Fractured Atlas to  
20 testify today. We are deeply grateful to the Council  
21 Members Levin and Van Bramer as well as all the  
22 members of the committee for their steadfast support  
23 of the arts and culture in our great city. While  
24 Fractured Atlas does have members in every  
25 congressional district throughout the United States,

2 New York City is our hometown. About one-third of  
3 our membership of 34,000 creative individuals live  
4 and work here in New York City. This is not a  
5 coincidence. This city continues to be the most  
6 vibrant and exciting place in the world to make and  
7 experience art. Our mission at Fractured Atlas is to  
8 remove any practical barriers to creative expression  
9 and to ensure that artists have the business tools  
10 they need to succeed. We help them raise money,  
11 ensure their work, sell tickets, track their patrons,  
12 and find space to rehearse, perform and exhibit their  
13 art. A comprehensive data driven, thoughtful and  
14 nuanced cultural plan would be a tremendous boon to  
15 the artists we serve in New York. Cultural policy  
16 can and should go well beyond funding strategy  
17 implemented by the Department of Cultural Affairs.  
18 DCLA's work is terrific and the extent to which New  
19 York City subsidizes its cultural institutions  
20 through DCLA is admirable, and kudos to the council  
21 for ensuring that the budget for the cultural  
22 development fund awards remains strong. Thank you.  
23 Thank you very much. Of course, this funding is  
24 vital, but it cannot reach the full spectrum of  
25 grassroots arts and cultural activities that are so

2 important to all our neighborhoods throughout the  
3 five boroughs. A well-executed and comprehensive  
4 cultural planning process could explore some  
5 important but challenging questions about how the  
6 cultural sector can thrive and benefit our city. May  
7 I continue?

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yes, why don't  
9 you hit those four points, and then--

10 MARIE-LOUISE STEGALL: [interposing]  
11 Alright. So our questions are, what are the  
12 underlying social and economic contexts in which art  
13 is made and consumed? What frameworks do we have for  
14 understanding the process of artists driven  
15 gentrification? And how does this kind of  
16 gentrification impact the character and economic  
17 sustainability of these neighborhoods? And most  
18 importantly, what kind of infrastructure do we need  
19 to ensure a robust, productive and sustainable  
20 creative economy? I will skip to the part two where  
21 we express our concern. The Fractured Atlas Board  
22 and Staff enthusiastically support the proposed  
23 legislation to create a cultural plan for New York  
24 City, however, we must point out that worse than  
25 having now cultural plan would be to have one that is

2 poorly researched, under-resourced and rushed to  
3 publication. It is absolutely vital that no dollars  
4 are siphoned off from the DCLA grant budget, and it  
5 is equally important that the budget and time  
6 allotted for creating this plan be sufficient to the  
7 enormity of the task, and I know that you understand  
8 this. Thank you so much for your time and attention,  
9 and thank you for everything you do to support the  
10 arts in New York City, which is the cultural capital  
11 of the world.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you so  
13 much for recognizing the council's role in keeping  
14 the Department of Cultural Affairs budget strong and  
15 even stronger this year as a result of our efforts  
16 and I'm proud to lead those efforts to increase  
17 funding for that man's agency right there. So with  
18 that, thank you to this panel. We have the last  
19 panel. Again, thank you to Commissioner Finkelpearl  
20 who is here. We're actually going to go in on time.  
21 I think there's a one o'clock hearing in this room  
22 right after us. So the last panel, we have Robert Lee  
23 from the Asian-American Arts Center. Is Robert--he  
24 is here. I see him getting up. It looks like Diane  
25 Fhaher Thornton, Diane Fhaher Thornton, did I get

2 that right? Good. Doctor Marilu Galvin. Is Doctor  
3 Marilu Galvin--yes, Centro Civico Cutural Dominicano,  
4 and Michael DD White, Citizens Defending Libraries.  
5 Why don't we put up a fourth chair there and we will--  
6 -that's alright, Commissioner, we got it. This is  
7 last panel for today. Again, thank you all so very  
8 much for being here and why don't we begin there on  
9 the left?

10 ROBERT LEE: Hello, my name is Robert  
11 Lee.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Speak into the  
13 microphone, please.

14 ROBERT LEE: Okay. Hello, my name is  
15 Robert Lee. I'm with the Asian-American Art Center.  
16 We were founded in 1974 and we've been providing  
17 cultural services in the China Town area ever since  
18 then, both in dance and mostly in recent years in the  
19 contemporary arts area. You have to forgive me, I'm  
20 winging it here, speaking off the top of my head,  
21 since we just heard about this panel late last night.  
22 And many of our members of a group that I am part of,  
23 which is the cultural equity group, could not make it  
24 because of our late notice. So, I wanted to of course  
25 thank Van Bramer and the whole panel, and I know

2 Laurie Cumbo could not be here, but she understands  
3 our situation very well. I think when I started the  
4 Asian-American Art Center with my wife Eleanor Yung  
5 [sp?] in '74 we were coming out of basement workshop,  
6 that first group, for activism in the China Town  
7 area. And I wanted because my background is in  
8 visual arts and contemporary art to focus on that,  
9 even though I knew it was less than two percent Asian  
10 population in the United States, but clearly it was  
11 clear to me for some reason, I don't know why, that  
12 the population would grow and that the Asian presence  
13 in the United States would become significant, and I  
14 knew my home was here in America where I'd been  
15 educated and not in China, and that's obviously the  
16 case. But to make that our home, we had to have a  
17 feeling for participating in the country and  
18 participating in the life of the city. So I went  
19 ahead and I decided to exhibit artists, many shows  
20 every year, and create an archive because the  
21 audience was quite small, and I knew that the archive  
22 in 20, 30, 40 years from now would be significant so  
23 people could see what was going on in these early  
24 days. And there were several artists, a lot of  
25 artists who are making art who were ignored then and

2 who are right now quite famous. I don't want to drop  
3 some names, but we, you can see on our website about  
4 a dozen people who are big now. I think that we  
5 still have this problem in the community, however,  
6 and a lot of people, new immigrants coming into China  
7 Town are still looking back to their traditions, but  
8 their traditions are in a new way becoming relevant  
9 in an odd way. I think it becomes clearer when you  
10 look at the example in California where the  
11 professional field in folk arts are seeing that so  
12 many indigenous groups in California are coming  
13 through with their traditions as rituals and other  
14 things and demanding that they been seen as  
15 contemporary. That's a new development. I think it's  
16 going to start here soon. We used to present folk  
17 arts in a different light as tradition, not as  
18 something that's active now. I was also a member of  
19 TAAC, The Association of American Cultures, looking  
20 at his kind of cultural policy, cultural equity on a  
21 national scale, and I--unfortunately my colleague at  
22 the Alliance of Asian-American Arts Alliance could  
23 not be here, so 'I'll just mention, you know, I was  
24 there in the beginning of the Alliance. I think that  
25 I should mention one thing that I heard just

2 recently. In terms of the promise called cultural  
3 equity for groups like myself who have sort of come  
4 out of the Civil Rights Movement, and when Bloomberg  
5 came in and the staff at DCA said that he was going  
6 to give a significant sum, which he did, to the arts  
7 out of his own pocket, and that these are cultural  
8 equity groups that were, you know, 30, 40, 50 years  
9 old would get a sum from there in order to cross over  
10 the difficult gap of passing on our work to the next  
11 generation so all the things that we did would not be  
12 lost. However, when that announcement was made, the  
13 number of community groups that were sharing, you  
14 know, 50 percent of the pie of DCA increased to 800.  
15 And--

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [interposing]  
17 Robert, I just want to--I have to ask you to please--

18 ROBERT LEE: [interposing] Let me try to  
19 just finish this thought.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Finish that  
21 thought.

22 ROBERT LEE: And soon after it's a  
23 thousand. I think today it's 1,200. So I think that  
24 it's--if you, if the goal, I think, from what I  
25 understand is to look at a plan that will create

2 cultural equity in New York City and perhaps even  
3 look to where we want to go, what is the future  
4 culture of this country which I hope would represent  
5 its great diversity in United States, that that goal  
6 would be so totally different than the state and the  
7 city always asking us for, you know, signing  
8 contracts that just fulfill that year and not care  
9 about what we as small organizations we're building  
10 towards, where we were trying to go. And so I hope  
11 that you can develop a plan that provides equity and  
12 provides vision, and I think I want to reiterate you  
13 need a lot of time.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

15 ROBERT LEE: And work to do that.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I appreciate  
17 that, Robert. We have to move onto Diane, your  
18 counterparts, because as you can see the next hearing  
19 is pushing into the chambers, so we do need to wrap  
20 up, but I value your commitment and you are yet  
21 another couple that has founded an arts organization.  
22 There are a number of them here today. So, Diane,  
23 why don't you go and we'll try and proceed as  
24 efficiently as possible.

2 DIANE FHAHER THORNTON: Yes, my name is  
3 Diane Fhaher Thornton, and I'm a member of the Osage  
4 and Cherokee Nation First Nations Person. I'm also  
5 the founder and director of AMERINDA, which is  
6 American Indian Artist Incorporated, and a film maker  
7 and early artists in the New York movement in  
8 contemporary native arts, which is the only  
9 documented contemporary native arts movement outside  
10 of Santa Fe. I might add that AMERINDA was founded  
11 in 1987. It is also the only organization of its  
12 kind for first nations artists in the United States,  
13 so providing services and programs to native people.  
14 I wish to say here today, I wish to ask that any  
15 first nations people who are represented in any  
16 planning going forth with the City of New York,  
17 people who are advisors, spokes persons in any way  
18 that represent the native community must be tribally  
19 enrolled Native Americans, and able to present proof  
20 of citizenship. These--we also request that these  
21 people be known to the urban native arts community  
22 and the broader native community that they claim to  
23 represent, and indeed, we feel that all  
24 representatives of community and color and ethnicity  
25 must be known by the people that they claim to

2 represent. In our case this bears just a simple an  
3 explanation. United States government requires that  
4 we, the legitimate native people, must provide proof  
5 of tribal enrollment in order to receive any  
6 benefits, entitlements or protection under the code  
7 of federal Indian law, and also for them to fulfill  
8 their treaty obligations to us, and we feel that if  
9 we must be tribally enrolled, anyone else who claims  
10 to be native in a serious matter that involves the  
11 law must also have to bear that burden as well. We  
12 also ask that the New York City Department of  
13 Cultural Affairs respect the federal Indian arts and  
14 crafts law which says that in order to market and  
15 sell native art, that you must be able to prove  
16 tribal citizenship as well, and that they not--if  
17 they fund organizations who claim to be native, that  
18 they have to bear that burden as well just as we do.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And you got to  
20 say that directly to the Commissioner, himself.

21 DIANE FHAHER THORNTON: Yes, certainly.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: We have to move  
23 on if that's okay.

24 DIANE FHAHER THORNTON: I just want to  
25 say one thing also that we as Bob just pointed out

2 that organizations that have struggled for decades  
3 now to serve their communities that they be given  
4 serious consideration for equality in funding and  
5 when we're talking about the 15 versus 85 percent  
6 imbalance.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
8 much. Doctor Galvin?

9 MARILU GALVIN: Thank you to the  
10 Committee on Cultural Affairs, Council Member Van  
11 Bramer, Chair, Levin and Council Member Cumbo that  
12 just left. My name is Doctor Marilu Galvin from  
13 Centro Civico Cultural Dominicano. I'm the oldest  
14 Dominica organization in the nation, 52 years. I  
15 think, first of all, I want to commend all  
16 institutions such as the New York Historical Society  
17 and the Carnegie [sic] and the rest for the great art  
18 recognition that we get from them in the whole nation  
19 and the world. I speak on behalf of the small  
20 organization, organization that depend on the income,  
21 the social security, and the pension that the members  
22 or the two benefactor can provide. I speak on behalf  
23 of those small organization that the Department of  
24 Cultural Affairs makes it so hard for them to be able  
25 to take or receive anything. On a grant of 5,000

2 dollars, they require so much paperwork to just hand  
3 in the grant. That is beyond comprehension. And just  
4 to give another report at the end, it costs more than  
5 5,000. I have been in the position to give it back  
6 because it just, the cost is too much when we don't  
7 have any money. I also speak on behalf of our  
8 organization that provides grassroots arts and  
9 culture, using it to empower the community to  
10 integrate into the system, to be part of the  
11 establishment by learning about not only the  
12 Dominican, the Latino and the United States, but  
13 about the whole gamut of culture in the city. We have  
14 collaboration with different artists from Haiti, from  
15 Romania, from France, you name it. We are doing this  
16 out of my husband's income, from his pension and my  
17 pension. I was an educator. I'm also an adjunct  
18 professor from John Jay College, Assistant Principal  
19 in different organization and he is a retired  
20 physician. We are using our pension and our social  
21 security. I speak on behalf of the artists. They  
22 need a place to live. We have fabulous artists and  
23 they don't have, they cannot afford because they  
24 don't gain a gainful income to be able to have a  
25 decent apartment. We have to look after them. So, I

2 speak directly to you. You have to pay attention to  
3 the small organization. You know, the Metropolitan  
4 Museum is my organization. I mean, Carnegie Hall, I  
5 go there, and the Historical Society, they are giant.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Sure.

7 MARILU GALVIN: How can they be the one  
8 to be controlling everything? That's fine. But you  
9 have to filter down to the organizations to the  
10 community--

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [interposing]

12 Doctor Galvin--

13 MARILU GALVIN: we are doing good work.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Doctor Galvin?

15 MARILU GALVIN: So, on behalf of them I  
16 want to thank you again.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

18 MARILU GALVIN: And thank you for the  
19 time.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you so  
21 much.

22 MARILU GALVIN: Don't forget us. We need  
23 you.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: We, how could we  
25 forget you? So after three hours of testimony and I

2 think 30 panelists, Commissioner Finkelppearl has made  
3 it. We are up to our last three hours of testimony.  
4 Michael, you will close out the hearing.

5           MICHAEL WHITE: Michael White, Citizens  
6 Defending Libraries. There's a provision in this  
7 bill about transparency, and I wonder if we have  
8 enough of it. I'm still working at the mystery of why  
9 exactly we need this bill. Is the bill innocuous, in  
10 that simply provides for what we could do without  
11 legislation or is there more to it? There, I look to  
12 see what are the technically operative provisions.  
13 There is the establishment of this advisory  
14 committee, which according to the Commissioner's  
15 legal counsel is not purely advisory I guess because  
16 its recommendations will be made a part of the budget  
17 if feasible, but that advisory committee has on it  
18 members of the real estate industry and business  
19 community. Now, I can expect that artists put alone  
20 in a room with members of the real estate industry  
21 might just be able to hold their own, but add into it  
22 the mix of government and the way that money plays in  
23 politics, and then I'm a little bit worried. This  
24 City Council, this committee doesn't necessarily have  
25 the best record when it comes to culture and mixing

2 the real estate industry. So we see what happened  
3 with libraries where the real estate industry got  
4 mixed in. What happens? The Brooklyn Public Library  
5 gets an advisor, says that their mission should  
6 include economic development, and there's mention in  
7 this bill about economic development. What happens  
8 then? Well, we shrink and sell off our cultural  
9 assets. The cultural assets, but cultural assets get  
10 short shrift. We get another mix. There's a lot of  
11 similar overlapping language with Spaceworks and  
12 Spaceworks is praised here today as an example of  
13 what we should be doing. Well, Spaceworks, what was  
14 one of the first things that Spaceworks does? Goes  
15 out to the Red Hook Community, and that is not a  
16 particularly advantaged community, takes what is  
17 notably a very small library of 7,500 square feet and  
18 makes it one of its first goals to shrink that  
19 library down to 5,500 square feet. This is the kind  
20 of thing that happens when you mix real estate into  
21 culture. Lastly, the idea of designing top down,  
22 Jane Jacobs [sic] didn't agree with it, and by the  
23 way, her last book which she never did write because  
24 she died before, was going to be about the problem of  
25 measuring things, and that we can't really measure

2 things. And I don't know about this idea that we  
3 should measure where culture doesn't sufficiently  
4 exist. Jane Jacobs said that when we go to measure  
5 things, probably the measurements we take tell us  
6 more about the people who are doing the measurements  
7 than what is measured.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you,  
9 Michael, and with that we are going to thank again  
10 our Cultural Affairs Commissioner, Tom Finkelparl  
11 for staying for all three hours of this hearing and  
12 listening to everybody speak, and my colleague,  
13 Council Member Levin, thank you so much for all your  
14 work, all of the staff. Thank you so much to the  
15 cultural community for being here in force. This was  
16 a great three hours to spend together. So much good  
17 came out of this. We look forward to passing a very  
18 important piece of legislation. Thank you all very  
19 much. And with that, this hearing is adjourned.

20 [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 October 2, 2014