

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC  
SITINGS AND MARITIME USES

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B E F O R E:  
PETER A. KOO  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Ben Kallos  
Stephen Levin  
Inez Barron  
Darlene Mealy

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

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2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Good morning, everyone.  
3 This is Council Member Peter Koo. I'm the chairman  
4 of the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and  
5 Maritime Uses and I want to welcome all of you to  
6 this public hearing and today we have Council Member  
7 Kallos, Council Member Levin and Council Member  
8 Barron in our committee here. So this committee's  
9 here.

10 The first item for the Land Use Item  
11 Number 132, Application Number 20155018 HKK,  
12 Ridgewood Lodge Number 710, Free and Accepted Masons  
13 and today we have Jennifer Fernandez from CBC.. no,  
14 from not CBC, Landmarks Commission; from Landmarks  
15 Commission here to testify. Thank you.

16 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Chair Koo  
17 and members of the Subcommittee. My name is Jenny  
18 Fernandez, Director of Intergovernmental and  
19 Community Relations for the Land.. [off mic] oh, yes,  
20 I gave it to them. Director of Intergovernmental and  
21 Community Relations for the Landmarks Preservation  
22 Commission. I am here today to testify on the  
23 Commission's designation of the Ridgewood Lodge  
24 Number 71, Free and Accepted Masons Building in  
25 Brooklyn.

On June 18th, 2013, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation of the Ridgewood Lodge. The representative of the owner testified against the proposed designation. The hearing was continued on October 29th, 2013, at which a representative of the owner offered additional testimony imposing the proposed designation. The Commission received letters of support for the designation from former Council Member Diana Reyna and current Council Member Antonio Reynoso. The owner also submitted a letter rescinding the organization's earlier request to designate the building. On July 22nd, 2014, the Commission voted to designate the building a New York City individual landmark.

The Ridgewood Lodge Number 710, Free and Accepted Mason, also called the Ridgewood Masonic Temple, was constructed in 1919-1920 and designed by the architectural firm of Koch and Wagner. The Free and Accepted Masons, one of the oldest fraternal and benevolent organizations in the world, was founded during the Middle Ages. Free Masonry grew in the United States beginning in the mid-19th Century and by the early 20th Century almost every city and town

2 in the nation and many neighborhoods in New York City  
3 had at least one Masonic Lodge. The classically  
4 inspired Ridgewood Masonic Temple is a freestanding  
5 brick building with an ornate main façade featuring a  
6 rusticated stone base and terra cotta details,  
7 including Masonic symbols. This remarkably intact  
8 fraternal building is an excellent example of early  
9 20th Century neighborhood club architecture, as well  
10 as one of Bushwick's most prominent civic buildings.  
11 The Commission urges you to affirm this designation.

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, Miss

13 Fernandez. Any questions from our members?

14 [background voice] Council Member?

15 [Pause]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr.

17 Chairman. Thank you for your testimony. My question  
18 is did the owner originally request designation and  
19 then subsequently withdraw the request?

20 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Yes, many years ago,  
21 one of the members of the Board of the owners, the  
22 organization that owns the building, had submitted a  
23 request for evaluation to the Commission, which is  
24 basically a request to have a building designated,  
25 and the Commission had not calendared or designated



2 at that time when it was submitted. Subsequently,  
3 years later, when we went back and reviewed the  
4 project for designation, they then rescinded. They  
5 sent a letter to put on the record for us rescinding  
6 their...

7 [crosstalk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So did they say...

9 [crosstalk]

10 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Original...

11 [crosstalk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Why they  
13 rescinded the request for designation?

14 JENNY FERNANDEZ: They were trying to  
15 sell the building to... which... whomever the potential  
16 new owner was going to be doing extensions and  
17 additions to the building and so they apparently...  
18 designation would not have been...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]

20 Okay, thank you.

21 [crosstalk]

22 JENNY FERNANDEZ: You know, something  
23 that...

24 [Pause]

25

2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Council Member Stephen  
3 Levin.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you, Miss  
5 Fernandez. Just wanted to ask has the building been...  
6 it's kept in a landmark state all this time, so in  
7 other words, nothing's been replaced of note or is it  
8 currently in the same configuration that it was and  
9 in the same condition that it was when it was first  
10 constructed?

11 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Yes, it remains  
12 basically intact from its original form and  
13 construction and the Commission calendared and had  
14 heard it and designated all within the last couple of  
15 years, so it wasn't a building that had been  
16 calendared or under the Commission's purview prior to  
17 that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But previous  
19 owners have kept it in a state..

20 [crosstalk]

21 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Yes.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: That would've been  
23 up to LPC standards all along?

24 JENNY FERNANDEZ: At least of terms of  
25 intactness and historic material, yes. The building

2 is not currently occupied, so there's no sort of use  
3 that's associated with the building at this present  
4 time.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON KOO: I have a couple  
7 questions. So who is the owner of this lodge?

8 JENNY FERNANDEZ: The current owner is a  
9 group called the Masons, the Free Masons, but they're  
10 not actually a Masonic group, but that's the name of  
11 the organization that owns the building at this time.

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Is this a charitable  
13 organization?

14 JENNY FERNANDEZ: I'm sorry?

15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Is this a charitable  
16 organization?

17 [crosstalk]

18 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Charitable  
19 organization?

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yes.

21 JENNY FERNANDEZ: I don't think they're a  
22 charitable organization.

23 CHAIRPERSON KOO: No?

24 JENNY FERNANDEZ: But I can check on  
25 that..

2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [interposing] Oh.

3 JENNY FERNANDEZ: For you, Council

4 Member.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So right now there's no

6 tenant.

7 JENNY FERNANDEZ: No, they were in the

8 process of selling the building and the Commission

9 has been in contact over the last couple of years; a

10 lot of back and forth in meetings with the owners..

11 [crosstalk]

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Mm-hm.

13 [crosstalk]

14 JENNY FERNANDEZ: To try to see what they

15 wanted to do you know through this new sale. It

16 could be something that the Commission could approve

17 and which is usually how the process works when we

18 start doing owner outreach, but what they were

19 planning for the building would have.. would be

20 unsympathetic and we wouldn't have been able to you

21 know, approve those sorts of changes to the building.

22 It had to have been landmarked, so up until this

23 time, that's what their purpose was, to sell the

24 building for development and so that's why we moved

25 forward with designation and working with Council

2 Member Reynoso as well, who supported the  
3 designation, and we were able to move it forward.

4 CHAIRPERSON KOO: 'Kay, so what is the  
5 zoning for this building you know, I mean in this  
6 area? If some new buyers want to buy this, can they  
7 do construction over?

8 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Yes, the zoning would  
9 allow for an addition on the building. I don't know  
10 the exact FAR on this particular building, but it  
11 would allow for additional floor area..

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [interposing] Mm-hm.

13 JENNY FERNANDEZ: To be added to the  
14 building.

15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: "Kay, thank you very  
16 much. Mm-hm. Any questions...

17 [crosstalk]

18 JENNY FERNANDEZ: And Council Member... can  
19 I just add..

20 [crosstalk]

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Sure.

22 [crosstalk]

23 JENNY FERNANDEZ: If, after designation,  
24 which we do all the time as well, if the new owners  
25 do want to expand the building or do a rooftop

2 addition or a rear yard addition, those are the sorts  
3 of applications the Commission reviews all the time  
4 and can almost always find approvable for the  
5 building.

6 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay, thanks.

7 JENNY FERNANDEZ: Mm-hm.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: [off mic] Any other  
9 questions?

10 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Anymore questions from  
11 our members? No. Thank you. Anyone from the public  
12 to testify on this item? Seeing none, I am going to  
13 close this public hearing on this item. So we'll go  
14 to... we'll go to LU 137, Application Number 20155175  
15 CCK, the Green-Wood Cemetery.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We have Ken Fisher.

17 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Ken Fisher is the first  
18 one to testify.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Richard Moylan.

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: And Richard Moylan, the  
21 second one. Mr. Fisher, you can identify yourself  
22 and start, yeah.

23 KEN FISHER: [off mic] Thank you very  
24 much, Chairman Koo, members of the.. make sure that's  
25 on. Chairman Koo, members of the Committee, my name

1 is Ken Fisher. I'm a member of the Law Firm of Cozen  
2 O'Connor and I'm pleased to be here today on behalf  
3 of Green-Wood Cemetery. I think I have a unique  
4 perspective on the good work that this subcommittee  
5 does. You'll be hearing in a moment from Richard  
6 Moylan, the President of the cemetery, and I also  
7 wanted to introduce my colleague, Dwayne Andrews.  
8 from Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies as well.

10           The application before you would permit  
11 Green-Wood Cemetery to purchase a property at 242  
12 25th Street between 4th and 5th Avenue in the borough  
13 of Brooklyn. Many of you know... all of you should,  
14 that Green-Wood is one of the most important  
15 historic, architecturally important and culturally  
16 important sites in the country. In fact, it's  
17 designated as a National Landmark, but perhaps more  
18 than anything else, we should never lose sight of the  
19 fact that Green-Wood Cemetery is the final resting  
20 place for over 560,000 New Yorkers, including  
21 veterans of every war from the Revolutionary War to  
22 Afghanistan and Iraq.

23           Green-Wood is virtually out of capacity  
24 and land in the vicinity is limited. It identified a  
25 small property across the street from its main

1 entrance, which had been a monument company, a stone  
2 cutting company, where the owners are quite elderly;  
3 they have no employees; they are in their eighties  
4 and ill health and have decided to retire, close the  
5 business and sell the property. Green-Wood was  
6 fortunate to be able to enter into a contract with  
7 them for that.  
8

9           The intention is to relocate the  
10 Executive offices from inside the cemetery to this  
11 new property, which will be completely renovated, and  
12 that will free up the space now being used by the  
13 staff for additional crypts and niches, basically  
14 increasing the capacity of the cemetery. In order to  
15 do that, we need.. we're asking for Council approval,  
16 not pursuant to ULURP, but pursuant to a section of  
17 the Not-For-Profit Corporations Law that governs  
18 cemetery use and requires Council approval for the  
19 acquisition of property for cemetery use. We did  
20 present at the Community Board, even though it was  
21 not formally referred, and because it's not a ULURP  
22 action, they didn't take a vote, but there was no  
23 testimony in opposition.

24           One of the additional benefits of this  
25 application from the community's point of view is



1 that just under half of the property is going to be  
2 conveyed by Green-Wood to a bakery called "Baked In  
3 Brooklyn" that's adjacent to it. Right now, "Baked  
4 In Brooklyn" has to have their hand trucks go from  
5 one of their locations down the sidewalk to their  
6 other location. This'll allow them to make their  
7 properties connected and we anticipate that there'll  
8 be a small expansion with the number of jobs  
9 associated with this increase in their operation.  
10 Green-Wood anticipates that it'll be increasing its  
11 staff in the new Executive offices once they're able  
12 to move into them.  
13

14 So from the point of view of the  
15 cemetery, the families that depend on it, as well as  
16 the local community, this seems to be a good use of  
17 the property that would otherwise be developed for  
18 some commercial or residential venture. Therefore, I  
19 would respectfully ask that the Council and this  
20 committee approve the application and with your  
21 permission, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Moylan will introduce  
22 himself and tell you a little bit about the cemetery.  
23 We know you have a long agenda, so we'll be brief.

24 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Go ahead, yeah. Thank  
25 you.

1  
2 RICHARD MOYLAN: Thank you. [background  
3 noise] My name is Richard Moylan and I'm the  
4 President of Green-Wood Cemetery. I've been with  
5 Green-Wood for over 42 years now and its President  
6 for 28. We've been a pillar of the community for 175  
7 years in one capacity and we're hoping to continue to  
8 serve Brooklyn and New York City for hopefully  
9 another 175. We are running low on burial spaces, so  
10 we are becoming more of a cultural institution for  
11 New York City and this is adding to that mission  
12 where we have exhibit space; part of the greenhouse...  
13 the restoration of the greenhouse that was approved  
14 by you about two years ago. We are more active in  
15 the community and we will continue to become more  
16 active and we are restoring that property and we will  
17 build something that the community will be proud of  
18 and by allowing us to move our offices across the  
19 street, we will be able to provide additional burial  
20 space within the cemetery so there are several  
21 worthwhile purposes for us here. Thank you, Mr.  
22 Chairman.

23 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay, thank you. So  
24 are there any questions from our members? Yeah,  
25 Council Member Barron?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr.  
3 Chair. Just a question in terms of the space that  
4 will be freed up. Will that space be used for above  
5 ground burial or below or both or a combination and..  
6 'cause I know that the cemetery is almost full. Is  
7 that correct?

8 RICHARD MOYLAN: There's not a lot of in-  
9 ground burial space. That's an excellent question  
10 actually. Above ground casket and cremated bodies we  
11 will be.. it's a built environment already, so we will  
12 just be converting it from office space to burial  
13 space in the term in above ground sense.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So it will be the  
15 same space, but the insides or the interior will be  
16 removed or gutted and that space will then be used  
17 for the crypts that you'll use the..

18 RICHARD MOYLAN: Correct.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Council Member Levin?  
21 Oh, no? Oh, I have a question, just maybe not  
22 related to this application though. I'm just curious  
23 now. Now, you said your cemetery's almost full,  
24 right? So what happens if it's full? Then you will  
25 find another part to expand or..

1                   RICHARD MOYLAN: That's another excellent  
2 question. We have... several years ago, we actually  
3 were involved in the Canarsie Cemetery project. We  
4 decided not to pursue that because of the some of the  
5 conditions of the agreement. We are always on the  
6 lookout for additional burial space, but we're going  
7 on the assumption that that will not happen. We'd be  
8 ready to move if there were available land, but as  
9 you can imagine, that area of Brooklyn is not  
10 particularly conducive to adding burial space right  
11 now with the housing initiative and everything else  
12 going on. We are... unlike many cemeteries throughout  
13 the state, we want to make sure that Green-Wood will  
14 never become a ward of the state, so continuing the  
15 initiatives that we started to keep the public coming  
16 in, we work very closely with many schools in the  
17 area and we're going to continue to expand that,  
18 making the cemetery a forum for the community youths  
19 for all sorts of educational purposes. The new high  
20 school across the street on 4th Avenue, we've already  
21 established a great relationship with them and we  
22 have hundreds of schools coming in for tours every  
23 year and the exhibit space that we will be building  
24 will be... there'll be little classroom room space in  
25

2 there. It's... we really want to be more of a  
3 community resource than we have ever been.

4 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Another one of the  
5 questions I have is... it's not related to this, but  
6 I'm sure the public is interested to know too, what's  
7 the average price to buy a plot in the cemetery?

8 RICHARD MOYLAN: Like many things, it's  
9 supply and demand, so with the limited space that we  
10 have left, we might be higher priced than others, but  
11 also if you come to Green-Wood and compare it to  
12 other cemeteries, you may see a difference. A spot  
13 for a cremated body might be as low as about \$1,500  
14 and for casketed burials could be anywhere from  
15 \$12,000 to \$18,000 for three burials.

16 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Mm-hm.

17 RICHARD MOYLAN: And then the crypts in  
18 the mausoleum can be higher than that depending on  
19 location, location, location.

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So even after death,  
21 it's the same. [laughter] Thank you very much, yeah.  
22 Anyone from the public want to testify on this item?

23 [background voices] No. Seeing none, I'm going to  
24 close this public hearing on this item. Thank you.  
25 Thank you very much, yeah.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We're going to do a  
3 quick vote on these two.

4 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So we're going to vote.  
5 I'm going to call a vote to approve these two items,  
6 LU 132, Ridgewood Lodge and LU 137, Green-Wood  
7 Cemetery.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Koo.

9 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Aye.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Levin.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I vote aye.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member  
13 Barron.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Aye.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member  
16 Kallos.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Aye.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: By a vote of 4 in the  
19 affirmative, no abstentions and no negatives, Land  
20 Use Items 132 and 137 are approved and referred to  
21 the full Land Use Committee.

22 [Pause]

23 CHAIRPERSON KOO: We are happy to  
24 announce we are joined by Council Member Mealy.

25 [Pause]

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: [off mic] We're going  
3 to do this one next.

4 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Now we're going to go  
5 to Land Use Item 136, C 140388 PCX, DPR 5-Boro Shops  
6 and relocation site.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Liam Kavanaugh.

8 CHAIRPERSON KOO: We have Liam Kavanaugh.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Colleen Alderson.

10 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Colleen Anderson.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Artie Rollins.

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: And Artie Rollins from  
13 the Parks Department, right?

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mm-hm.

15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah, yeah, they're  
16 going to testify.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: 'Kay, thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah, please identify  
19 yourself and start, yeah.

20 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER KAVANAUGH:

21 Good morning, Chair Koo and members of the  
22 Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime  
23 Uses. I am Liam Kavanaugh, First Deputy Commissioner  
24 of the New York City Department of Parks and  
25 Recreation. Joining me on this panel is our

Assistant Commissioner of Citywide Services, Artie Rollins and the Director of Parklands, Colleen Alderson.

I am here to discuss ULURP Number C 140388 PCX for the acquisition and site selection approvals necessary for a site located at 850 East 138th Street, Block 2589, Lot 31 in the Bronx for the relocation of the agency's 5-Boro Shops facility. The project site is located on the south side of East 138th Street between Willow Avenue and Walnut Avenue within Community Board 1 in the Port Morris section of the Bronx. Immediately adjacent on the west side of the site is the Amtrak Railroad right-of-way. The site is located within an M3-1 zoning district and the Port Morris Business Industrial Zone, one of 16 Industrial Zones designated by the city to facilitate industrial and manufacturing activity. To that end, it is surrounded almost entirely by large one to six-story unadorned and utilitarian manufacturing and industrial buildings and parking lots. The building was previously occupied by a commercial laundry operation that serviced the networks of hospitals across the city.



1                   The Parks Department's former 5-Boro  
2  
3 Shops was located on Randall's Island and was forced  
4 to move in June 2010 due to the necessary work on the  
5 Robert F. Kennedy Bridge, which is being performed by  
6 Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority. Parks, along  
7 with the Department of Citywide Administrative  
8 Services, worked together arduously to identify an  
9 appropriate site that meets the needs of our division  
10 and is located near public transportation. We chose  
11 a site that is large enough to reconsolidate and  
12 storehouses that are currently spread across various  
13 locations throughout the city.

14                   The 5-Boro facility is a critical  
15 division of the Parks Department. It is made up of  
16 carpenters, electricians, plumbers, blacksmiths,  
17 painters, sheet metal workers, machinists and work  
18 crews who play a critical role in the repair and  
19 maintenance of park facilities citywide. Their work  
20 helps us ensure that our parks are safe, attractive  
21 and useful for the public. 5-Boro Shops does  
22 everything from build the picnic tables that are  
23 enjoyed by thousands of park patrons to operating the  
24 outdoor pools enjoyed by millions of children in all  
25 five boroughs each summer. The site will also be

1 used for the storage of parks equipment, seasonal  
2 park supplies, as well as plumbing, electrical and  
3 woodworking materials for the shops.  
4

5           Approximately 135 employees are expected  
6 to be assigned to the 5-Boro Shops facility during  
7 normal operations. Although the EAS determined that  
8 the new facility will have no significant impact on  
9 traffic in the community, Parks recognized that  
10 Community Board 1 was still concerned about the  
11 influx of traffic that 135 employees could bring to  
12 the community. To alleviate those concerns, we have  
13 agreed to institute a shuttle plan that will bring  
14 many employees of the 5-Boro Shops in 16 passenger  
15 vans from where they currently park on Randall's  
16 Island.

17           Further, there are approximately 90  
18 official vehicles associated with the proposed  
19 facility, lower than forecasted in the original EAS.  
20 The majority of the vehicles stored at the facility  
21 and used by field staff would be vans and pick-up  
22 trucks. Heavier equipment, such as welding trucks or  
23 rack trucks will be stored off site and be used on a  
24 less frequent basis.  
25

1                   In April 2014, the city executed a month-  
2                   to-month license agreement with the owners at 850  
3                   East 138th Street on behalf of Parks. Since April,  
4                   Parks has been fitting the site with computer and  
5                   telephone lines, thoroughly cleaning it and painting  
6                   all the interior spaces. Upon approval of the  
7                   application, the city will exercise its option to  
8                   purchase the site based on the terms set forth in the  
9                   purchase agreement signed in March 2014 with the  
10                  owner.  
11

12                  Parks has been fully committed to working  
13                  with community through the process of moving our 5-  
14                  Boro Shop. In fact, we have met with Community Board  
15                  1 on four occasions to discuss the use of this  
16                  location by the 5-Boro Shop operations. Following  
17                  these discussions, Community Board 1 voted to approve  
18                  this application on June 26th, 2014. The full Board  
19                  voted overwhelmingly to approve our application, in  
20                  part due to our diligence in addressing all of the  
21                  concerns they raised during our initial  
22                  conversations.

23                  The Parks Department has also worked  
24                  closely with Community Board 1 and Council Member  
25                  Arroyo to understand and address any concerns with

1 this application and we remain committed to a close  
2 partnership with the local community to ensure that  
3 our 5-Boro Shops operations are a valuable addition  
4 to Council District 17. Thank you for allowing me to  
5 testify before you today and I'll be happy to answer  
6 any questions you may have.  
7

8 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you,  
9 Commissioner. So can you let us know what are some  
10 of the concerns that the Community Board have and  
11 also Council Member Arroyo have?

12 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER KAVANAUGH: The  
13 community expressed some concerns about the impact  
14 that a commercial industrial operation like the 5-  
15 Boro Shops might have on the community. As I  
16 mentioned in my testimony, it is a community that is  
17 zoned for those types of uses, so our use is  
18 consistent and while the number of vehicles and the  
19 projected daily number of trips is below the  
20 threshold established by the CCRB guidelines, we do  
21 know that it will have some impact, so we did commit  
22 to creating a shuttle operation so that we're not  
23 bringing additional private vehicles into the  
24 community during our normal work hours and we also  
25 believe that the proximity to the Number 6 Line,

1 which was sort of a key in our decision making  
2 process, will allow many of our staff to use public  
3 transportation, which was not such a great option  
4 when we were housed on Randall's Island. The  
5 Community Board and the council member also expressed  
6 some interest in having park improvements to parks  
7 within Community Board 1, where the new building will  
8 be located, and throughout Council District 16 and we  
9 have outlined a number of projects that are funded  
10 and scheduled to get underway very soon within both  
11 Community Board 1 and Council District 17, which we  
12 think addresses the concerns raised by both parties.

14 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Council Member Barron?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Mr.  
16 Chair. Are you presently at this location? You're  
17 presently already located at this site?

18 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER KAVANAUGH: We  
19 have a license agreement that allows us to begin the  
20 preparation of the site for eventual moving in.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Do you... okay, so  
22 it says here that you have a purchase agreement  
23 signed in March 2014. What does that mean?

24 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER KAVANAUGH: It  
25 means we have an agreement with the current owner to

2 buy the facility should all of the approvals be  
3 granted.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, so it's  
5 not... you don't presently own it. You have...

6 [crosstalk]

7 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER KAVANAUGH: We...

8 [crosstalk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: A license  
10 agreement, you're presently there and you have a  
11 purchase agreement should you move forward. So you  
12 want to... it says reconsolidate? Were they ever at  
13 one time consolidated in one area or is this  
14 something that you're doing for the first time?

15 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER KAVANAUGH: No,  
16 the 5-Boro Shops were located in a building that was  
17 beneath the...

18 [crosstalk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

20 [crosstalk]

21 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER KAVANAUGH:  
22 Robert F. Kennedy Bridge since the 1930s, in fact.  
23 They operated out of there. They serviced all five  
24 boroughs. Their primary responsibilities are the  
25 outdoor... all of the swimming pools, indoor and

2 outdoor swimming pools, because there is a level of  
3 expertise involved in that maintenance that made to  
4 consolidate the expertise in one area; the outdoor  
5 skating rinks and indoor skating rinks and indoor  
6 skating rinks, as well as special projects, so they  
7 were housed in that facility for well over 50 years  
8 and unfortunately had to be dispersed in order to  
9 allow the reconstruction...

10 [crosstalk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Mm-hm.

12 [crosstalk]

13 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER KAVANAUGH: In  
14 order to allow the reconstruction of the RFK Bridge.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, thank you.

16 FIRST DEPUTY COMMISSIONER KAVANAUGH:  
17 You're welcome.

18 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you very much.  
19 Okay, yeah. Any members from the public that want to  
20 address this item? No? Okay, thank you. Seeing  
21 none, I am going to close this public hearing on this  
22 item. Thank you. Good job, thank you. [background  
23 voices]

24 [Pause]

25

2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: The next item will be  
3 LU Number 135, C 140360 PSK, Brownsville Community  
4 Justice Center. [background voice]

5 [Pause]

6 CHAIRPERSON KOO: We have... What is it?

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lenora Davidson.

8 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Lenora Davidson from  
9 the Mayor's Office and Uling?

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Elan...

11 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Elan...

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Parra.

13 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Parra from the Mayor's  
14 Office to testify. Please identify yourself and  
15 start, yeah.

16 LENORA DAVIDSON: Yes, they're being  
17 passed out now. Good afternoon, Chairman Koo and  
18 members of the committee. My name is Lenora  
19 [phonetic] Davidson and I am the Chief of Staff to  
20 Elizabeth Glazer, the Director for the Mayor's Office  
21 of Criminal Justice. I am joined here today by my  
22 colleague, Elan Parra and James Brodick from the  
23 Center for Court Innovation.

24 The Brownsville Community Justice Center  
25 seeks to reduce crime and the use of incarceration in



1     Brownsville, Brooklyn, while restoring public trust  
2     and confidence in the justice system. The Justice  
3     Center will provide meaningful alternatives to  
4     incarceration for residents who come into contact  
5     with the criminal justice system and invest in crime  
6     prevention projects to keep Brownsville safe. Once  
7     fully operational, the Justice Center will house a  
8     variety of education, job training and health  
9     services that will be available to Brownsville  
10    residents free of charge on a walk-in basis.

12             This office believes that the Center is  
13    an important part of a broader plan to continue to  
14    drive down crime by strengthening communities and  
15    reserving criminal justice resources for true public  
16    safety threats. Because of this fact, the Center has  
17    become a central component of Mayor Bill de Blasio's  
18    criminal justice platform. The Brownsville Community  
19    Justice Center has been strategically designed to  
20    improve the quality of criminal justice services  
21    delivered to the community, while restoring the  
22    community's faith in the criminal justice system.

23             Planning for the Brownsville Community  
24    Justice Center began in 2010 with interviews, focus  
25    groups and a community survey. 800 local residents

1 and workers indicated that violent and youth crime  
2 are significant problems. This survey also showed  
3 that there was overwhelming approval to create a  
4 Justice Center in order to address these issues.  
5 Because of how dire the need is for some of these  
6 services, the Center for Court Innovation is already  
7 providing leadership training, after-school  
8 activities and community service projects for  
9 hundreds of local young people. There is a Youth  
10 Court that trains 40 youth leaders each year to hear  
11 minor cases involving their peers; a violence  
12 prevention program that focuses on mobilizing the  
13 neighborhood to reduce gun and gang violence; several  
14 large-scale community mural projects; community  
15 service projects that have helped clean up areas  
16 blighted by disrepair, such as Belmont Avenue and  
17 Betsy Head Park; a range of Alternative to  
18 Incarceration and diversion programming for  
19 Brownsville youth and a workforce development program  
20 for 60 justice involved young people referred by the  
21 Department of Probation, many of whom have gone on to  
22 full-time employment or college.  
23

24 The Justice Center is also in the final  
25 stages of helping to launch a cutting edge early

1 diversion program that will allow young people from  
2 Brownsville to have their cases dismissed without  
3 risk of criminal conviction or incarceration. More  
4 than 60 percent of the Justice Center staff lives in  
5 Brownsville or the surrounding neighborhoods of East  
6 New York and Crown Heights. The Brownsville  
7 Community Justice Center seeks to build upon this  
8 work. New York State will provide resources for  
9 permanent staff to support the community court, a  
10 dedicated full-time judge will hear family and  
11 criminal court arising from Brooklyn's 73<sup>rd</sup> Precinct,  
12 which includes Brownsville and Ocean Hill. According  
13 to the 2010 Census, the area includes 90,000  
14 residents, with 18 different housing developments.  
15 It has the highest concentration of public housing in  
16 North America.

17  
18           The focus of the court within the Justice  
19 Center will be on early intervention by responding to  
20 minor crime before it becomes serious crime. The  
21 court will hear misdemeanors, low-level felonies and  
22 summonses and a selection of juvenile delinquency  
23 cases. Wherever possible, cases will be resolved  
24 with participation in community-based programming,  
25 including community restitution such as painting or

1 graffiti and cleaning local parks and social  
2 services. The Center will operate its own on site  
3 social services clinic and also make referrals to a  
4 network of local providers. All services mentioned  
5 will be available to those involved in the criminal  
6 justice system and the community at large.

8           Due to the failing condition of the  
9 building, 444 Thomas Boyland Avenue is currently only  
10 30 percent occupied. Should this project be  
11 approved, renovation can begin in early 2015,  
12 providing existing tenants with upgraded facilities  
13 and providing a new home to additional local non-  
14 profit organizations. The city has committed to  
15 implementing a local construction training program  
16 during renovation that will create jobs for the local  
17 community. Renovation will also result in LEED  
18 Silver certification. Financial support for  
19 construction comes from New York City Council, the  
20 City of New York and the Brooklyn Borough President's  
21 Office.

22           The Brownsville Community Justice Center  
23 is based on more than 20 years of proven success at  
24 community courts around the city. An independent  
25 evaluation of the Red Hook Community Justice Center,

1 for example, found that the Justice Center reduced  
2 reoffending by 10 percent, compared with offenders'  
3 process in a traditional courthouse and juvenile  
4 defendants were 20 percent less likely to reoffend.  
5 The Justice Center reduced the number of defendants  
6 receiving jail sentences by 35 percent. In fact,  
7 only one percent of defendants were sentenced to jail  
8 at arraignment. And finally, the evaluators  
9 estimated that the Red Hook Community Justice Center  
10 created annual net cost savings of nearly \$7 million  
11 because of diversion programs.  
12

13           The Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice is  
14 strongly committed to this effort and firmly believes  
15 that it will have a positive impact on the quality of  
16 life for residents of Brownsville. The project is  
17 supported by the New York State Chief Judge, Jonathan  
18 Lippman; the Brooklyn District Attorney, Kenneth  
19 Thompson; Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams;  
20 Community Board 16; the Pitkin Avenue BID and  
21 hundreds of community advocates and residents, some  
22 of whom are here today and will testify later. Thank  
23 you for your time and now my colleague, Elan Parra,  
24 will walk us through the floor plans and design for  
25 the renovation.

2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, Miss  
3 Davidson, thank you. [background noise]

4 ELAN PARRA: Good afternoon, Chairman and  
5 committee members. My name again is Elan Parra from  
6 the Office of Criminal Justice.

7 I'd like to just start out with the  
8 background in terms of how we identified this  
9 location as the appropriate location for a future  
10 Community Justice Center and back in in 2010, there  
11 were several locations that the Center for Court  
12 Innovation and at the time the Criminal Justice  
13 Coordinator's Office looked at for a potential site.  
14 Among the various factors that were considered that  
15 were necessary for a Community Justice Center was the  
16 size of the square footage available for use, the  
17 fact that there had to be accessibility for both the  
18 Police Department and on-site parking and also that...  
19 and this is one of the most important things is that  
20 it's a neutral and safe place in order so that the  
21 residents of Brownsville would feel comfortable  
22 accessing the services.

23 At the same time in 2010, the Department  
24 for Citywide Administrative Services assisted in  
25 assessment with respect to the ongoing need for

1 improvements in that building and the funding that  
2 would be required in order to upgrade the  
3 infrastructure in the building to bring it up to  
4 speed. It's now currently run as a Human Resources  
5 Administration Multi-Service Center and the building  
6 in a state of disrepair, due in part because the  
7 Human Resources Administration had not provided  
8 permanent staff to upkeep the building. What's  
9 thought for this project is that the Department for  
10 Citywide Administrative Services would hire permanent  
11 staff after a Justice Center was created in order so  
12 that the building could be properly maintained after  
13 putting all of this investment into revitalizing the  
14 building and permanently improving all of the  
15 infrastructure.

17 As part of the outreach for this project,  
18 our office, the Office of the Criminal Justice  
19 Coordinator at the time, the Center for Court  
20 Innovation and the Office of Court Administration  
21 started communicating with the local tenants in the  
22 building and had conversations with them last year  
23 about the process and the progress that this project  
24 would take. As part of the outreach, there were  
25 efforts with all of the local tenants to be able to

1 provide adequate swing space for them to relocate  
2 during the restoration project and an invitation for  
3 them to return back to the new Justice Center with  
4 comparable leases to what they currently have with  
5 HRA; however, DCAS would be managing those leases.

6  
7 In terms of the actual layout and  
8 operationally what the Justice Center will look like  
9 the new Justice Center... the goal is to make it  
10 inviting. As you can see in this rendering, all of  
11 the front is all glass in order to induce the most  
12 natural light to enter into the space. Right now,  
13 the entire curtain wall is completely blacked out and  
14 it's in a state of kind of closure. There's no  
15 natural light that goes into the building. As a  
16 person would approach the building, this is the  
17 public entrance and the only public entrance to the  
18 building. Here's a layout and I've provided the  
19 members with a floor plan.

20 The way the building is created it's such  
21 that it's almost a barbell kind of set up where the  
22 entrance is in the middle of the building. As  
23 someone would enter the building, the goal would be  
24 to enter an entirely public lobby. There would be no  
25 need to enter through magnetometers or any type of



1 queuing in order to access the building. If a person  
2 were to access the public areas of the building, they  
3 would simply walk right through the front door and  
4 access all of the blue areas that are indicated,  
5 which are actually all public spaces that are  
6 available to anyone who decides to enter into the  
7 building.  
8

9           The central lobby area is going to be a  
10 place of congregation in order so that the public can  
11 access and wait, meet people or you know, wait for  
12 their programming, any of the programs that are going  
13 to be on the public area of the agency side of the  
14 building. If there were a court involved resident  
15 that were to access the building, they would go to  
16 the left into the secured area, which is highlighted  
17 on the bottom portion of the screen. The secured  
18 area would require access through magnetometers and  
19 it comprises magnetometers the way it would be for  
20 any other court space.

21           What's unique about this building is that  
22 because of the way it's designed, if you were to take  
23 a line and draw a line right through the middle of  
24 the building, you'd be able to differentiate both  
25 portions of the building, and this is one of the

1 unique things about this building in that we wanted  
2 to make sure that the building would remain  
3 accessible to the public and that they would be able  
4 to continue to access the services that it currently  
5 provides. The lower portion on the screen indicates  
6 the secured of the court space of the building and  
7 then upper portion indicates the public and the  
8 agency's portion of the building. While the building  
9 is approximately 35,000 square feet in total, the  
10 renovation that we're proposing incorporates two  
11 floors and 27,000 square feet of space. That's the  
12 first and the second floor.

14 Now, let's concentrate on the secured  
15 area of the building. In the secured area of the  
16 building, once accessing the space through  
17 magnetometers, it's comprised really of three main  
18 sections on the first floor. There's the police  
19 operating section, which is the holding area; there  
20 are four holding cells there. Access for any  
21 custodial cases will be through a separate entrance,  
22 as you can see, and will access directly to the  
23 police secured space. The courtroom area is in the  
24 middle of the first floor on the bottom portion and  
25 it's also going to feature a large window in the rear

1 of the courtroom in order to promote having natural  
2 light come into the building. And then the clerk's  
3 office and the support area space will remain on the  
4 first floor. As you can see, the goal is to  
5 revitalize the building to provide a courtroom that's  
6 new and updated for Brownsville.

8 Concentrating on the public agency side  
9 of the building, which was the blue area, that  
10 location will provide space for the legal defense  
11 organizations, which are both Brooklyn Defender  
12 Services and the Legal Aid Society; space for the  
13 probation NeON program, which currently operates at  
14 the Multi-Service Center, and will return to the new  
15 Justice Center and the Community Board, which also  
16 currently resides within the HRA building in the  
17 Multi-Service Center.

18 With respect to the second floor, again,  
19 the goal was really to separate the public space in  
20 the building and the secured area in the building and  
21 again, you see as demonstrated in the red and the  
22 blue, that a significant portion of the second floor  
23 remains public agency space for programming and that  
24 the secured area, which will comprise the DA's office  
25

1 and offices that will support the court operation  
2 will remain on the bottom portion of the screen.  
3

4           The third floor is entirely public space.  
5 It's not within scope of the project, but it will be  
6 devoted to promoting additional private.. additional  
7 non-profits to support the social services that will  
8 be in the building.

9           All in all, after renovations were to be  
10 completed, the total public space in the building  
11 would be approximately two-thirds and the secured  
12 court area and space in the building would be  
13 approximately one-third of the building, taking up  
14 12,450 square feet, whereas the public spaces that  
15 can be accessed without having to go through  
16 magnetometers would be 19,000 square feet.

17           What is unique about this is that the way  
18 that the building was designed is such that the goal  
19 is to keep the building portions that are available  
20 for social services and programming open beyond  
21 regular court times. What's unique about this  
22 project is that in the Midtown Community Court and  
23 the Red Hood Community Court, while we've modeled  
24 this, in part, on those two Community Courts, we've  
25 tried to enhance the design in order to make sure

1 that the residents and the youth in Brownsville can  
2 access this building beyond 5:00 p.m. Through a lot  
3 of conversations with the Office of Court  
4 Administration and the Office of Criminal Justice,  
5 we've been able to create a situation where the court  
6 portion of the building because of the design will  
7 close at regular court operating times and that the  
8 remainder of the building, the 19,000 square feet,  
9 would be available for residents and social service  
10 programs well beyond the period that the court  
11 operates.  
12

13 That concludes my brief overview of the  
14 operations of the building. We now welcome any  
15 questions that the committee might have.

16 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Council Member Mealy?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Thank you, Peter  
18 Koo. Thank you to the court system, but I'm just  
19 letting my colleagues know I'm in opposition to this,  
20 not in regards to the services, just in regards to  
21 the location; where it is. Brownsville is not a one-  
22 stop shop. The precinct is on the corner, the  
23 Juvenile Detention Center right around the corner,  
24 then you go to your court system and then you go to  
25 your Probation Center in a square radius. I believe

1     Brownsville deserves better and when this  
2  
3     administration comes back with something much better  
4     that this, then I will... I'm looking forward to  
5     working with them and I'm not in opposition of the  
6     resources there 'cause that is great resources. We  
7     always need resources. I got my first job at 444  
8     Thomas Boyland. So I'm just concerned how everyone  
9     thinks the juvenile justice and everything with  
10    criminal has to be right in one square radius block  
11    of Brownsville. So other than that, I'm just making  
12    my statement I'm in opposition to it. Thank you.

13                   CHAIRPERSON KOO: Council Member Barron?

14                   COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [off mic] Yes,  
15    thank you. Thank you. In your testimony, you say  
16    that you're very concerned about improving conditions  
17    so that we can reduce the rate of crime. That was  
18    similar to the offering that was given when the  
19    Juvenile Jail was built. We want to make it more  
20    convenient. Oh, Brownsville and East New York has  
21    the highest concentration of children who are going  
22    into the criminal justice system, so rather than have  
23    people have to go through the expense and the  
24    inconvenience of traveling a far distance to see  
25    their children, who are obviously going to end up in

1 the system, let's make it convenient. It's  
2 insulting. It was insulting then and to say that  
3 this is expanding that without during the time that a  
4 jail was build bringing in programs, bringing in a  
5 Youth Center, bringing in all of these things that  
6 we're now talking about bringing in; that hasn't  
7 happened in the 20 years and I know the community  
8 because I taught there. I know where all of these  
9 services are. So I understand that the services are  
10 great, but heretofore they haven't come and now they  
11 want to come under the umbrella of another criminal  
12 institution and we're talking now, as I read your  
13 testimony, you're talking about low-level offenses  
14 that are not just misdemeanors. Is that correct?

15  
16 ELAN PARRA: Mm-hm. Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So there are  
18 felonies that are also going be cases that are going  
19 to be brought into this system.

20 ELAN PARRA: The goal...

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] Is  
22 that correct?

23 ELAN PARRA: Yes, the goal is to follow  
24 the Red Hook model and...

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]

3 Does the Red Hook model include felonies?

4 ELAN PARRA: It does. They're D and E  
5 felonies.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And what would  
7 those be? What are D and E felonies? I'm not a  
8 lawyer. I'm not familiar with what they are. Can  
9 you...

10 [crosstalk]

11 ELAN PARRA: Uh...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Give me some  
13 examples?

14 ELAN PARRA: For example, an E felony  
15 could be like someone steals a cell phone from  
16 someone's hands.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

18 ELAN PARRA: That's the type of... but  
19 we're concentrating on non-violent type offenses.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I would love to  
21 see the administration offer all of these programs to  
22 our community in an institution that does that. All  
23 of the resources that they say they're going to now  
24 bring in; all of the support that they're going to  
25 give, which has not heretofore happened in our



1 communities. We have an oversaturation of.. not that  
2 it's this topic that we're talking about;  
3 oversaturation of shelters in East New York and in  
4 Brownsville and now we're looking to be the center  
5 for the criminal justice system under the guise or  
6 the statement that well, this is a concentration of  
7 an area that has a lot of crime going on.

9 JAMES BRODICK: I think with.. I'm James  
10 Brodick. I'm the Project Director of the  
11 Brownsville..

12 [crosstalk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes.

14 [crosstalk]

15 JAMES BRODICK: Community Justice Center  
16 and I formerly ran the Red Hook Community Justice  
17 Center. With due respect, I think the idea around a  
18 Community Justice Center is that unfortunately, many  
19 of the young people and people in Brownsville touch  
20 the criminal justice system and one of the reasons we  
21 were invited to Brownsville to explore this project  
22 was to think about how can we do a better job when  
23 cases wind up there. A couple of things; lessons  
24 from Red Hook that I think will translate nicely to  
25 Brownsville is first of all, having a single judge.

1 The idea that these cases not only do they know the  
2 person, but they know the community that's been  
3 harmed and really understanding how to get people's  
4 lives back on track. Secondly, is we're going to  
5 have a set group of prosecutors and defense  
6 attorneys. You know, as you guys know, downtown when  
7 you go to have a case, there's a lot of collateral  
8 consequences to getting out of jail you know, at that  
9 moment. A lot of times a defense attorney will say,  
10 "Well, if you agree to this, you can get out today."  
11 Unfortunately, that incident not only becomes  
12 something that was a moment in time, but becomes a  
13 defining moment for many young people 'cause now they  
14 have a criminal record. We're going to really try to  
15 reduce the collateral consequences of these cases.  
16 The other thing that I found that worked really well  
17 in Red Hook is this idea is that when people are  
18 wrapped up in multiple systems like you discussed, by  
19 virtue of being in child welfare and also the  
20 criminal justice system, many times you're held in  
21 jail just because of that; because a guardian won't  
22 come to sign you out at the precinct level. So we're  
23 trying to think about ways to really reduce the  
24 amount of incarceration, to offer programs and  
25

1 services and frankly, my job is to hold city agencies  
2 accountable for all the work they haven't done in  
3 Brownsville for a long, long time and adding to that,  
4 I think we're adding job developers, social service  
5 providers, GED classes, as well as a lot of  
6 programming. So I mean our goal is very similar to  
7 the Council's goal. It is how do we reduce crime?  
8 How do we engage young people in problem solving?  
9 And that's really what the goal of Red Hook was and  
10 what the goal of Brownsville will be.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I think that we  
13 will reduce crime when we get an educational system  
14 that does not criminalize our children and put them  
15 in a trap based on their scores on an achievement  
16 test, a standardized achievement test and when we  
17 bring jobs in our community because when people have  
18 a way of earning an honest dollar, it elevates their  
19 self-concept, it gives them responsibility and it  
20 makes them more effective and involved in the  
21 community.

22 JAMES BRODICK: I think you're going to  
23 hear a lot from our young people here today...

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]  
25 That's right and I look forward to hearing...

2 [crosstalk]

3 JAMES BRODICK: Who are...

4 [crosstalk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: From them.

6 JAMES BRODICK: Who are actually in  
7 programming with us, who've actually you know,  
8 unfortunately touched the system and in Brownsville  
9 touching the system is not so hard and we really want  
10 to reduce that and getting them connected to job  
11 training programs. It...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]

13 That's fine and again, if we can have... why can't we  
14 have all of this and use an establishment that's  
15 someplace other than concentrated in Brownsville,  
16 which is my neighbor, and it's a part of the Board  
17 for which I have some responsibility as well. Thank  
18 you.

19 LENORA DAVIDSON: I just want to  
20 reiterate that some of this programming is happening  
21 right now.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [off mic] I know  
23 you have the... Is that a part of the GRIP program and  
24 that other institute...

25 [crosstalk]

2 LENORA DAVIDSON: No, so...

3 [crosstalk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: That you have?

5 [crosstalk]

6 LENORA DAVIDSON: For the past four  
7 years... do you want to talk about that, James...

8 [crosstalk]

9 JAMES BRODICK: Sure.

10 [crosstalk]

11 LENORA DAVIDSON: What's been happening  
12 for the past four years?

13 JAMES BRODICK: Sure, so for the last  
14 four years we've done everything from the Justice  
15 Community Program, which is a YMI initiative that we  
16 have 60 young people a year who will go who do a lot  
17 of great community benefit projects, as well as job  
18 training, internships and hopefully leading to jobs.  
19 What we talked about earlier was our Teen Courts,  
20 which is really trying to have young people seeing  
21 the criminal justice through the other lens; you  
22 know, again...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]

24 Okay and where is that housed?

25 JAMES BRODICK: Currently it's at 444...

2 [crosstalk]

3 LENORA DAVIDSON: 444.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, so it's  
5 already there and it's already working.

6 JAMES BRODICK: Yeah.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

8 LENORA DAVIDSON: However, the building  
9 is only at 30 percent capacity, so our goal is to do  
10 this renovation so that we can bring more resources  
11 in addition to the court.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right. I  
13 understand that. I hear all of that, but I don't  
14 know that you're hearing my point, you know. So we  
15 want to make East New York and Brownsville where  
16 people can come to visit; where people who are coming  
17 from other nations will come to see something  
18 positive; see something reflective of our culture and  
19 our heritage and our history and this is not it.  
20 This is not that.

21 JAMES BRODICK: My other response to that  
22 is is the Red Hook Community Justice Center has been  
23 duplicated not only around the country, but around  
24 the world. You know, former Attorney General Eric  
25 Holder is a big proponent of this kind of community

1 justice and hopefully our new Attorney General, who  
2 was a big supporter who came out to talk about our  
3 anti-violence project is a big supporter of these  
4 alternatives to incarceration. What I would say is  
5 that part of the Center for Court Innovation's  
6 mission is that we are in lock step that the system  
7 has failed many of people.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes.

10 JAMES BRODICK: And if we have a system  
11 that's going to hold not the people who commit crimes  
12 accountable, but can be people who are supposed to be  
13 serving the community accountable, I think what  
14 you're going to see as a result is better policing,  
15 better prosecuting, better defense attorneys and  
16 frankly, good social services.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I don't know that  
18 holding the people who are supposed to implement the  
19 justice system in terms of the Police Department is  
20 going to be achieved by this, and the reason that I  
21 say that is because when police officers violate  
22 their oath of office; when they put people in choke  
23 holds; when they stop them; stop-and-frisk illegally,  
24 they don't suffer the consequences of the severity of  
25 their actions. They get a slap on the wrist and

2 they're removed, so I don't know how this program  
3 would address that issue.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I have a question.

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah, go ahead.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: And you say you're  
7 only going to use three stories. Isn't it zoned for  
8 six to seven stories?

9 ELAN PARRA: The zoning I believe is a  
10 C3-4 zoning. I don't...

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] It  
12 could go up to six, to seven stories.

13 ELAN PARRA: I don't know exactly...

14 [crosstalk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I do.

16 [crosstalk]

17 ELAN PARRA: What the FAR is.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] And  
19 if... 'cause before when the last administration, DA  
20 Hynes, I was against it then and I told him the same  
21 thing. I took him to a court system right on Hercma  
22 [phonetic] Street; no renovations; had a judge seat,  
23 jury box already done and that went up to six... four  
24 stories and I don't know why you couldn't use that.  
25 That was a city-owned building. It was a school.



1 That would have been fine. All the other resources,  
2 the juvenile... how can I say... the Probation Center  
3 could've been in there; the Detention Center right  
4 around the corner. Only one we are making it easy  
5 for is the 73rd Precinct to bring out young people  
6 straight over across the street to 444 Thomas Boyland  
7 to hold them and you have four holding cells and the  
8 legal defense service. If we're going to do  
9 something like that, bring something back to the  
10 community. Why not Ready, Willing and Able? We  
11 could put them on the next four... three stories to let  
12 them bring the resources to the community that our  
13 young men can get a job 'cause once you're in that,  
14 you have to get a job. They teach you life skills;  
15 they get you reconnected back with your family, but  
16 no one want to sit down and talk about that.

17  
18 Everyone want to just put things in that's helping  
19 the criminal system, but we're about the community.

20 We deserve better and I am going to demand better for  
21 Brownsville and I feel if you even look... reach out to  
22 Ready, Willing and Able, that may be a good solution  
23 for all of us. If you're going to put this in, we  
24 have young people who need housing. They have to get  
25 off their mother and aunts' and cousins' sofas. Put

1 housing, two or one unit housing upstairs, three.  
2 Since you want to do formerly incarcerated, let's  
3 give them affordable housing there, since it's all in  
4 one area. This administration have to give our young  
5 people something back, more than what you're giving  
6 them. We already have the resources in the  
7 community. We have Brownsville Back on Track. Isn't  
8 that the same thing? So it's doing GED programs  
9 'cause I sent a lot of people there, so I know what  
10 they are doing. It is GED programs all in the  
11 community, so I feel let's give them more. Thank  
12 you.  
13

14 ELAN PARRA: Just a quick response. Come  
15 January 2015, that building is going to be 70 percent  
16 vacant because existing programs are leaving. We  
17 want to make sure that there's the opportunity..

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Ya'll gave them  
19 the resources to leave, right?

20 ELAN PARRA: No, we did not.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Who gave them the  
22 resources that they're going to leave and come back?

23 ELAN PARRA: Common Ground..

24 [crosstalk]

25 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: With those funds?

2 ELAN PARRA: Common Grounds and SCO  
3 Family Services purchased the building and  
4 independent from this project...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] They  
6 purchased 4405...

7 ELAN PARRA: They purchased a building at  
8 5...

9 [crosstalk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: 19...

11 [crosstalk]

12 ELAN PARRA: 19 Rockaway Avenue.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Was that a city-  
14 owned building?

15 ELAN PARRA: No, it was not and apart  
16 from this project, they fully intended on leaving  
17 this building and setting up their programming at a  
18 different location. Come January 15th, irrespective  
19 of whether this project moves forward or not, that  
20 building is going to be 70 percent vacant and that's  
21 not much for the community. I think that restoring  
22 this building and making it someplace that will  
23 incentivize programming... and I welcome the suggestion  
24 that Ready, Willing and Able would come to the  
25 building.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] Mm-  
3 hm.

4 ELAN PARRA: Because we should have a  
5 conversation with them. We should have a  
6 conversation to see if they want to come and take  
7 space up on the third floor.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I already...

9 [crosstalk]

10 ELAN PARRA: And that's...

11 [crosstalk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Reached out.  
13 Thanks.

14 ELAN PARRA: Great. And that's something  
15 that we invite because we think that it's something  
16 that will help support bringing the services back to  
17 the building and making it something that people are  
18 going want to invest time and effort into.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Have HPD talked to  
20 you about the housing on top 'cause the last  
21 administration we was building all that for  
22 affordable housing.

23 ELAN PARRA: Oh, HPD said that they will  
24 evaluate whether or not housing can go adjacent to  
25 the existing footprint for the building and they're

2 going to evaluate it. You know, there are a lot of  
3 dimensional and zoning issues that are a concern with  
4 doing that evaluation, but they will evaluate and  
5 they're committing to doing that.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Thank you, Chair.  
7 Since we're not voting on this today.

8 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Any questions?

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, there's no other  
10 questions.

11 CHAIRPERSON KOO: No, okay.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: So excuse that panel.

13 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So we want to thank all  
14 of you...

15 ALL PANELISTS: [interposing] Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON KOO: For giving your  
17 testimony.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: [off mic] Do you want  
19 to do the names for this or... do you want to do it or  
20 do you want me to do it?

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: No, you do it, yeah.  
22 So we're opening to the public... from the public to  
23 testify. [background voices]

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And we're going to  
25 call up panels of four. You'll each have two minutes

2 to speak. The first panel is Leroy Frazer; Erica  
3 Kebo... sorry, Mateo; Dan Murphy; Rasmia Kirmani-Frye.  
4 Do we have four?

5 [Pause]

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You can decide on the  
7 order in which you're going and identify yourself  
8 when you begin to speak. Thank you. [background  
9 voices] Just push the red button. Make sure the red  
10 light is on. [background voices]

11 LEROY FRAZER: Good afternoon if you can  
12 hear me. Council Member Koo, respectfully, Council  
13 Member Mealy and Barron, I am very happy to be here  
14 to speak to you this morning. My name is Leroy  
15 Frazer. I'm Chief of Staff to Brooklyn District  
16 Attorney, Kenneth Thompson.

17 I am here because on last week, we  
18 learned of this subcommittee meeting today and the DA  
19 asked me to come and to express to you that he fully  
20 and enthusiastically supports the Brownsville  
21 Community Justice Center. I have heard all of your  
22 concerns. I certainly know that Council Mealy, you  
23 guys were scheduled to speak this morning and were  
24 unable to do so. I know that you... [background voice]  
25 So I understand that you will be able to speak. I

1 know that they were reaching out to you this morning,  
2 but I'm sure that we'll be able to have a  
3 conversation.  
4

5 District Attorney Thompson realizes and  
6 believes that laws are meant to protect the  
7 community. He feels, however, that too often the  
8 criminal justice process, whether it's how laws are  
9 enforced by police or how offenders are prosecuted by  
10 the DA's office or adjudicated by the courts  
11 sometimes alienates the community and leaves the  
12 members feeling victimized. By contrast, we believe  
13 that a Community Justice Center empowers the  
14 community. A center with all of its social service  
15 resources and its dedicated informed staff breaks  
16 down the walls that insulate the criminal justice  
17 system from the rest of community life.

18 We, by realizing and believing that the  
19 Brownsville Community Justice Center would be modeled  
20 after Red Hook Community Justice Center, we believe  
21 that Red Hook has been a huge success. The criminal  
22 court portion of the Red Hook Justice opened for  
23 business [chime] in 2000 and with... [background voice]  
24 and within two years, the Family Court and the  
25 Housing Court started operating there. We've found

1 and the statistics show that the Red Hook, which  
2 accepts the Precincts 72, 76 and 78, has had a  
3 significant positive impact on reducing crimes in  
4 those neighborhoods and also a positive impact on how  
5 the community views the fairness of the Criminal  
6 Justice Center. It is because of that that we would  
7 like to see that duplicated in Brownsville.  
8

9 I won't go through all of the stats that  
10 took place in Red Hook. The speakers before me did  
11 that. I would just want to reiterate that our goal  
12 is to utilize successful crime prevention strategies  
13 in order to seek to reduce crime in Brownsville and  
14 not just prosecute crimes in Brownsville. That would  
15 include programming that we do do in the office now,  
16 such as Back on Track and Project Redirect and  
17 working with organizations like the Doe Fund and our  
18 bottom line is that of course, we are willing to  
19 continue to have a conversation with you. District  
20 Attorney Thompson believes that utilizing effective  
21 crime prevention strategies with the Brownsville  
22 Community Justice Center would replicate the work  
23 that was done in Red Hook and lower crime within the  
24 Brownsville community. [background noise]



1                   ERICA MATEO:  Is this on?  My name is  
2  
3 Erica Mateo.  I'm currently the Director of Community  
4 Initiatives at the Brownsville Community Justice  
5 Center, as well as a lifelong resident of the  
6 Brownsville neighborhood.  It's where I grew up.  
7 It's where my brothers and sisters grew up.  It's  
8 where my mother still lives, as well as my cousins.

9                   I'm here to speak... I heard the concerns  
10 earlier about resources, resources that are needed to  
11 make our young people's lives better in the  
12 community, such as education and so forth.  What I  
13 want to point out is that the Brownsville Community  
14 Justice Center isn't a replacement for those  
15 services, but it looks to respond to a broken  
16 criminal justice system.  I guess my question to  
17 just... to put out there is are we happy with the way  
18 that the criminal justice system is treating our  
19 young people, and if not, then we need to seek  
20 alternatives.

21                   I'm a little shook up right now, only  
22 because we have... we had five young people here today.  
23 We have four now.  One had to leave.  He wanted to be  
24 here to tell his story about how the Brownsville  
25 Community Justice Center has affected his life, but

1 he had to leave and the reason he had to leave is  
2 because his brother was shot. These are the young  
3 people's lives who we are touching and trying to  
4 change. The stories that you're going to hear  
5 earlier... later from our young people are about young  
6 people who made bad choices, but are taking the  
7 opportunity to make good choices; to turn their lives  
8 around. That is the response that we want to... that  
9 is the response we want to give when a young person  
10 is picked up by the police in Brownsville. That's  
11 all.  
12

13 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Please  
14 identify yourself and talk.

15 DANIEL MURPHY: Thanks. My name is  
16 Daniel Murphy. I've testified before the Council  
17 Committees before. They take a two minute rule very  
18 seriously, so I don't know if I'll have enough time  
19 to speak about everything that's occurred since I  
20 took over as the Director of the Pitkin Avenue  
21 Business Improvement District four years ago. I will  
22 read part of a letter I sent to Council Member Mealy  
23 on Friday.

24 I understand that you may be concerned  
25 that the Center could negatively affect Pitkin

1 Avenue, our retail district. Although we are  
2 extremely grateful for your concern, I am writing and  
3 I am testifying now to assure you that the Pitkin  
4 Avenue BID believes that nothing could be further  
5 from the truth. We have already been working for  
6 several years with the Brownsville Community Justice  
7 Center on multiple projects and programs. We enjoy a  
8 synergistic relationship with their staff and  
9 volunteers, the results of which can be witnessed in  
10 the freshly mulched tree beds throughout our  
11 district, the Jane's Walks, which along Pitkin Avenue  
12 that are guided by Justice Corps volunteers, the BIDS  
13 growing inventory of some of New York City's most  
14 ambitious and inspirational wall murals.. check them  
15 out anytime.. and the several special events the BID  
16 programs throughout the year.

18           The Brownsville Justice Center has been  
19 involved with us on all of these projects and that  
20 relationship makes each one of us stronger. Every  
21 time the BID closes Pitkin Avenue for traffic for  
22 Weekend Walks in June or lights the holiday tree at  
23 Zion Triangle in December, our attendance has grown  
24 over the last four years. I sincerely believe that  
25 this is because the faith of the people in

1     Brownsville and the safety and livability of Pitkin  
2     Avenue and Brownsville as a whole is growing as well.  
3     We have been able to accomplish this through a  
4     partnership with the Justice Center and also our  
5     friends at the Brownsville partnership.  
6

7             It was through the partnership where I  
8     first met Greg Jackson. I'll never forget the day I  
9     met him, right at the desk at 444 Boyland. [chime]  
10    if I... can I go on just a few more? Greg was a man  
11    whose love and belief in the long underserved  
12    neighborhood of Brownsville sparked my own and  
13    continues to reinforce it to this day. I hope that  
14    Jocko would be proud of the work that the BID has  
15    carried out with the help of the Justice Center and  
16    other community partners in the time since his  
17    passing. His spirit still inspires so many of us to  
18    do the work that we do every day. When the newly  
19    built Brownsville Justice Center opens its doors, I  
20    believe that we will be a giant step closer to  
21    fulfilling Greg Jackson's mission to rebuild  
22    Brownsville by utilizing the strengths from within  
23    it. Thank you.

24             RASMIA KIRMANI-FRYE: Good afternoon. My  
25    name is Rasmia Kirmani-Frye. I'm the Director of the

1     Brownsville Partnership with Community Solutions and  
2     Greg Jackson was our founding Executive Director at  
3     the Brownsville Partnership and I am here speaking in  
4     favor of the Brownsville Community Justice Center and  
5     the Center for Court Innovation.  
6

7             James and I first met in 2010 and the  
8     work that the Brownsville Community Justice Center  
9     has done in partnership with the community, in  
10    partnership with the other organizations that are  
11    working in the community and young people and  
12    residents is unparalleled. The level of engagement  
13    with youth in Brownsville through, as you heard in  
14    the testimony, 60 percent of the staff at the  
15    Brownsville Community Justice Center who is from  
16    Brownsville is also unparalleled.

17            The Brownsville Partnership is a network  
18    of 30 organizations and residents working together in  
19    Brownsville, and to address your issue about Ready,  
20    Willing and Able, which I think is a really important  
21    one, these networks of organizations with the  
22    Brownsville Partnership is getting set to launch the  
23    5,000 Jobs Campaign, which is a campaign to put 5,000  
24    Brownsville residents into jobs by the end of 2017.  
25    That campaign is in partnership with the Brownsville

1 Community Justice Center, in partnership with the  
2 Pitkin Avenue Business Improvement District, in  
3 partnership with the Department of Small Business  
4 Services, in partnership with the Mayor's Office and  
5 the Brownsville Community Justice Center will act as  
6 a beacon in the Brownsville community and is  
7 supported by its residents, which I think is the most  
8 important point here. Thank you.

9  
10 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [off mic] Any  
11 questions?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRRON: [off mic] Just a  
13 comment. I just want to say that I, too, want to  
14 acknowledge the great work and the legacy of Greg  
15 Jackson in our community. Anyone who knew him; who  
16 met him knew that he had a love for our people and he  
17 demonstrated it and had a tremendous impact on many  
18 young people's lives and I also, while we're giving  
19 kudos, want to acknowledge the great work that was  
20 done by Tom Boyland, for whom that avenue is named.  
21 He was a stellar statesman in Albany and I just  
22 wanted to put his accolades on the record as well.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So true with both  
24 and same with... what is it? Community Solution, they  
25 brought 519, in which Jocko Jackson... I believe his

2 name... his legacy should go on centuries, but just to  
3 put his name on a building and not letting a  
4 community... I sat down with them and asked them where  
5 do the community come in at, and the only thing they  
6 could tell me was the kiosk system. Our communities  
7 deserve much, much more and one thing I appreciate  
8 all that they do, but I hear just now, Mr. Dan  
9 Murphy, you were writing me saying you need cameras  
10 and now I just hear the Mayor just gave you cameras  
11 for Pitkin Avenue also, right?

12 DANIEL MURPHY: I'm pretty... well, I don't  
13 want to count...

14 [crosstalk]

15 COUNCIL MEALY: I just saw the email.

16 [crosstalk]

17 DANIEL MURPHY: Any chickens before they  
18 hatch, when I see them up there.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Well, I just saw  
20 the email...

21 [crosstalk]

22 DANIEL MURPHY: 'Cause...

23 [crosstalk]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: From the Mayor's  
25 Office, so...

2 [crosstalk]

3 DANIEL MURPHY: Oh, that's...

4 [crosstalk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Congratulations, I  
6 did a good job...

7 [crosstalk]

8 DANIEL MURPHY: Thank you very much,  
9 yeah.

10 [crosstalk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Asking them to  
12 make sure...

13 [crosstalk]

14 DANIEL MURPHY: Again.

15 [crosstalk]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: That we'd be  
17 secure on Pitkin Avenue just as well.

18 DANIEL MURPHY: I appreciate that.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So thank you for  
20 your testimony.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel of  
22 four and everyone we have signed up is in favor, so I  
23 don't have anyone in opposition to alternate. Dwayne  
24 Kennon, Alonzo Jones, Anthony Newerls and this  
25 writing's too small... Uthrate Q u a m... is that you?



[background voice] Oh, that's very tiny writing.

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON KOO: You may start, yeah, after you identify yourself.

QUAMING BOATWRIGHT: Okay, I'm Quaming Boatwright and I'm from the Brownsville Justice Community system. I work for the CCR program. We are an anti-violence project and what I would like to say is that it's been a big impact on my life so far. I could go on about what happened in my life and everything you know, and I've almost probably seen the point of no return or whatever, but at the same time as I moved up here 'cause I'm not originally from New York, but as I came here I came to the Brownsville Justice Community Center and my mom said it was probably an act of God you know, because we knew nothing about it and at the same time, I didn't really have much at the time. I didn't really know what I was going to do with my life and as they presented the whole program to me you know, it really changed my life. Like as you're talked about education you know, they have GED services there, but at the same time, they found Medgar Evers College for me you know, and it's like I currently couldn't

1 graduate from high school because of my situation and  
2 everything, but right now I'm in the GED program and  
3 I just took my practice test. I passed you know all  
4 the grades and everything, [applause] so... thank you.  
5 So now I'm one step closer to also going to college  
6 you know, and I'm currently ready to... I'm ready for  
7 it you know, 'cause like they provided me with so  
8 much education also about business planning and how  
9 to keep my life straight and we talk about the cops;  
10 what we should do when they're assaulting our rights,  
11 you know? We have Know Your Rights and like they  
12 teach what we should do, you know like it's just a  
13 lot that they've also provided and one thing I also  
14 wanted to say is about the bonds that they also  
15 provide with us, you know? We go in there and they  
16 actually speak to us; they talk to us. Having a good  
17 bond with your community also helps you get that one  
18 step further to having a better community, you know?  
19 So it was like I don't really know how ya'll are  
20 really going to feel after this, but at the same  
21 time, I think that you all should really considering  
22 to letting this thing continue because [chime] if  
23 you're not really like... it's about how you treat your  
24 people also. You know, I feel like if you take this  
25

1 away, that's just pushing us one step back, you know.  
2 It's like I think that is something that really needs  
3 to keep going because I've been to a couple meetings  
4 with people from... I forgot exactly where they was  
5 from. Viv Cause [phonetic] will tell you about this,  
6 but like as we've spoke to them about what we do in  
7 this program, they actually liked what was going on.  
8 They're considering about this on own over there.  
9 Well, I mean that's all I got to say for right now,  
10 but...

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [off mic] Thank you.

13 Next?

14 ALONZO JONES: How you doing? My name is  
15 Alonzo Jones. I'm a 20-year old resident in  
16 Brownsville. I want to say before I actually stepped  
17 foot in the Justice Center, I was one of those kids  
18 that you hear about on the media, out there, gang-  
19 related, drug-related, doing horrible things. When I  
20 stepped into the Justice Center, I first encountered  
21 Dara Johnson [phonetic] and Erica Mateo. They took  
22 me in and they embraced me under their wing. The  
23 relationships that you come in when you get into that  
24 building, they take you in and it's not only as they  
25 see you as a participant or a statistic out on the

1 streets. They take you in and they look at you as  
2 family. They brought me in, they showed me the roles  
3 to the programs and being in this program and working  
4 with them for about two years, I done elevated my  
5 life to a whole different level. I've leaded my  
6 first Jane's Walk. I have got plenty of referrals to  
7 jobs, which led me to working at my first opportunity  
8 to work for the Pitkin Avenue Improvement District.  
9 I just helped.. I just sat on a panel with Miss Dionne  
10 the MAS Summit for 2014 and I'm also enrolled in..  
11 getting enrolled into Medgar Evers College. The  
12 Community Justice Center helped me get into school.  
13 Also that it's right now a pre-college school,  
14 they'll help me with applying to Albany, Buffalo,  
15 Binghamton, New Platt [phonetic], schools like that  
16 to get me off the streets and being in this system  
17 and in this building.. I don't want to call it a  
18 system. I want to call it like a second home for me  
19 because this is a safe haven. 444 Thomas Boyland is  
20 a safe haven for Brownsville because the youth of  
21 some of us, we can't go to certain places out there  
22 where we don't feel safe, but coming up to 444 Thomas  
23 Boyland, no matter that it's across the street from  
24 73rd Precinct or the Juvenile Detention Center's

1 around the corner. For us coming in, that's a safe  
2 haven for us. We can come in there; we can talk to  
3 people; we can feel comfortable and safe to move  
4 around and get help and resources that we need for  
5 ourselves.  
6

7           So the educational fact, it's like they  
8 educate us on many different things. We have Know  
9 Your Rights, the Youth Court, the other different  
10 programs, anti-violence. We sat down for probably  
11 six weeks and learned how to write out a business  
12 plan for some of us that want to be entrepreneurs.  
13 So for saying that the educationally is more of a  
14 resource that we need, I would say that they actually  
15 do that more [chime] often than anything. [applause]

16           ANTHONY NEWERLS: Good afternoon,  
17 Councilwoman Barron, Mealy, Mr. Koo. I'm Anthony  
18 Newerls, President of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Precinct Community  
19 Council and I am here in favor of the Brownsville  
20 Community Justice Center because on many occasions we  
21 have partnered with them and they have gave me more  
22 of a reason to trust and love my community. When  
23 they're doing the graffiti cleanup; when they're  
24 doing the murals in Brownsville that has not been  
25

1 touched; that has not been vandalized that is showing  
2 the leadership of that Center.  
3

4 I'm kind of sad in that when these young  
5 people look at the leadership of the Community  
6 Justice Center and we today tell them that we're not  
7 in approval of that program, what do we tell them?  
8 What do we tell them? You know, so I am absolutely  
9 proud, as Council President, to partner with them  
10 because I have a daunting task of trying to make the  
11 Police Department look good and that's very tough  
12 these days, [laughter] so I have to partner with an  
13 organization that can help me bridge that gap and the  
14 Justice Center is that. But the one thing that I  
15 want to remind everyone of is the Justice Center is  
16 also a resource for the Council because A. I'm an  
17 advocate for my young people in the community and I'm  
18 also Executive Director of the Brooklyn Blizzards  
19 Youth Organization and when our children have no way  
20 of traveling, I cannot call the Police Department  
21 because they don't want to get in the police van. So  
22 I have to share this story of our kids of Brownsville  
23 playing in the Crown Heights basketball game and we  
24 had no way of traveling to that game. Why? Because  
25 the kids from my development can't walk to the train

1 station, believe it or not. They cannot walk to the  
2 train station because you are walking through two  
3 other developments that you are not allowed to be in.  
4 So I had to call the Community Justice Center and  
5 they gave me a van... thank you, Viviana, and we loaded  
6 up the van with 16 kids [chime] from Brownsville to  
7 go to Crown Heights and because Brownsville do have  
8 the most talented players, as [laughter] Coach Mealy,  
9 who knows, we did win that championship, but we would  
10 never have gotten there if it wasn't for the  
11 Brownsville Community Justice Center transporting us.

12           So with that, I want to ask how many  
13 people here are going to visit family for Christmas?  
14 By a show of hands, how many people are going to  
15 visit family? What if I told you you couldn't visit  
16 your family because you wasn't wanted in that  
17 development and you couldn't go see your family? You  
18 couldn't see your sister, your brother or your mother  
19 because the other people in that development are  
20 going to kill you or beat you up or stab you or cut  
21 you. So why would we want to take away a safe haven  
22 that's at 444 Thomas Boyland now without providing  
23 them another safe haven? So if we're going to take  
24 away a safe haven, please, somebody provide another  
25

1 one because I can tell you right now, the precinct is  
2 not a safe haven. So with that being said, thank you  
3 very much and I'm in fully support of this program.

4 [applause]

5  
6 DWAYNE KENNON: Well, good afternoon,  
7 Committee. My name is Dwayne Kennon and I'm  
8 President of the Kennon Group, which is a consulting  
9 firm that helps non-profit organizations increase  
10 their capacity. I'm here in support of the  
11 Brownsville Community Justice Center as a long-term  
12 resident of the Brownsville community; born and  
13 raised in Van Dyke projects; you know, was an  
14 athlete, was a businessman; was President of the Boys  
15 and Girls Clubs in Syracuse, New York, where this  
16 program actually initiated. And we had a great  
17 partnership there where we were able to provide the  
18 same proactive services that you're hearing today for  
19 a much larger number of youth in the community where  
20 we serviced about 10,000 youth.

21 In a meeting with James Brodick and his  
22 wonderful staff, we're putting a plan together  
23 proactively to do something that's similar or even  
24 better for the Brownsville community because, as a  
25 lot of you have mentioned, we need more. Our



1 community's been overlooked for too many years and  
2 when we come to meetings at 444 in Brownsville, I  
3 mean it's really.. it's an unpleasant, unwelcoming  
4 environment and the building itself needs an upgrade  
5 and this program needs to be expanded.

7           And also to touch on the educational and  
8 recreational pieces and workforce development, I've  
9 personally seen you know, when you have a great  
10 program and you're getting young people jobs, you can  
11 see proactively how they're able to make a decision  
12 between doing something bad and doing something good  
13 and that's what this initiative is really all about:  
14 giving young people more opportunities to make that  
15 right decision to be successful in this world. And  
16 today you have so many partners, as you see today, so  
17 many wonderful professionals who are in the community  
18 and back in the community who have committed fully to  
19 helping groups like this be successful in their work  
20 because our kids ultimately need it the most. So I  
21 thank you for letting me speak today and I hope.. I'm  
22 in full support of this program and I hope that you  
23 will consider approving this as well. [chime]

24           CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Council  
25 Member Barron?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, I want to  
3 thank the panel. I do have another committee meeting  
4 that I have to run off to, but I just want to say I  
5 think... I'm not... I want to be clear. If we wanted to  
6 take 444 and amplify and magnify all that we have and  
7 take over the whole building, that would be great, so  
8 let's be clear, that's what I'm saying. Thank you.  
9 That's what I'm saying. Take what you've got and put  
10 it... you say the building's only 70 percent occupied  
11 or 30. Take the whole program that you've got and  
12 expand it to occupy the whole building as it exists  
13 now. That's a suggestion.

14 [Pause]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: And for some  
16 reason... could I ask... do ya'll think that the... if  
17 they... if this does not go through, you feel that  
18 program is going to leave the neighborhood? I would  
19 love to have that... [background voice] Yeah,  
20 nevermind, I'll write it to the administration 'cause  
21 I... the programs are no problem. It's the location  
22 that what kind of message are we bringing to  
23 Brownsville as our young people? How many of your  
24 people on your basketball team... are they formerly  
25 incarcerated? No, we have a whole lot of young

2 people who are doing excellent in Brownsville. We  
3 could bring other resources just as well, not stating  
4 that those resources is not already in our community,  
5 like your program, any other program and I commend  
6 the young men, but we do need jobs and not just  
7 painting and when those 50 jobs or 500 jobs come, I  
8 would love to see. Thank you, Chair.

9 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. So next  
10 panel.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next panel we have  
12 Dionne Grayman, Stephanie Lovett, Jacqueline Soto,  
13 Bettie Wallace. Do I have four?

14 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Please identify  
15 yourself and start, yeah. [background voices]

16 DIONNE GRAYMAN: I'm Dionne Grayman. I  
17 am a Brownsville reside, lifelong. I am the second  
18 generation Grayman to grow up in Brownsville. I am  
19 an educator. I do not work for Brownsville Community  
20 Justice. I do not work for Brownsville Partnership.  
21 I am a teacher. I began my teaching career on Rikers  
22 Island teaching young men 16 to 18 years old and that  
23 was the best teaching job that I had. I then became  
24 an English teacher at Brooklyn Technical High School.  
25 I work with the Brownsville Community Justice Center

1 in capacity as a consultant for the NAACP Legal  
2 Defense Fund, and so when you hear Alonzo talk about  
3 Miss Dionne and you hear Quaming talking about Know  
4 Your Rights Academy, we are in Brownsville now  
5 conducting a Know Your Rights Academy for NYCHA  
6 residents.  
7

8           As a teacher, what I do know is that  
9 Brownsville Community Justice creates a safe space  
10 for these young people to make better decisions and  
11 not be the sum of the mistake that they made and that  
12 is what we need. And so, more than a GED attainment,  
13 right, and more than menial service jobs, we need to  
14 create safe spaces for our young people to tap into  
15 their best selves and utilizing all of the skills  
16 that we can give them. [chime]

17           Last night, I picked a young man up from  
18 the airport who lives in Seth Low Housing after he  
19 had completed a college tour at Wilberforce College  
20 [announcement] Ooh, what are we doing? Did I shut  
21 the building down? So I feel like the Giants. I  
22 need time added back to the clock. Thank you.  
23 [laughter] So last night at 11:51, I was at JFK  
24 picking up Jerome Hinton, who is a Brownsville  
25 resident and who was a former student of mine, who

1 just went to a college tour in Wilberforce, Ohio at  
2 Central State University. That is what I do, and I  
3 agree that our children do deserve more. Ideally,  
4 the Brownsville Community Justice Center would not  
5 exist if our children were healthy, housed, safe and  
6 educated from infancy through adulthood, but that  
7 doesn't occur. That's not what's happening. The  
8 reality is is that our children are being negatively  
9 impacted by flawed policies, including Stop and Frisk  
10 and our children are being made to pay the price for  
11 it and so this is an opportunity for us [chime] to  
12 make it right for them. I am in full support of the  
13 Brownsville Community Justice Center. Thank you.

14  
15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Next, please.

16 BETTIE KOLLOCK-WALLACE: Hi, I'm Bettie  
17 Kollock-Wallace and I'm the chairperson of Community  
18 Board 16. I appear before you today to express  
19 Community Board 16's support for the Brownsville  
20 Community Justice Center to be located at 444 Thomas  
21 Boyland Street. Even though existing tenants in the  
22 building, including the Community Board office, will  
23 need to relocate, we consider this a minor  
24 inconvenience as we look at the bigger picture, which  
25 is to rehabilitate 444 Thomas Boyland and provide

1 more services for the residents of the Brownsville  
2 community. The Brownsville community has one of the  
3 highest crime rates, as has been stated. We feel  
4 that a resource such as the Brownsville Community  
5 Justice Center will help reduce crime rates in the  
6 community by providing much needed educational,  
7 occupational, social and health services to our  
8 residents.  
9

10 Last year, myself and other members of  
11 the Community Board toured the Red Hook Community  
12 Justice Center and observed how the court worked with  
13 defendants to get them back on track to become  
14 productive citizens by linking them to resources.  
15 According to the recent research findings on the Red  
16 Hook Community Justice Center, adult defendants were  
17 10 percent less likely to commit new crimes than  
18 offenders who were processed in a traditional  
19 courthouse.

20 Having seen how a Community Justice  
21 Center turned around the Red Hook community, we  
22 believe that Brownsville Community Justice Center  
23 will lead to a reduction of crimes in the community,  
24 which will, in turn, produce greater economic [chime]  
25 opportunities for residents by instilling a greater

1 sense of security to prospective merchants who may  
2 consider opening or expanding businesses in the  
3 community. We believe the Center will be able to  
4 untie the community by promoting accountability,  
5 promoting pride in the community, assisting the  
6 community in resolving underlying issues and engaging  
7 them in building strong links. We are in support of  
8 you. [applause]

10 JACQUELINE SOTO: My name is Jacqueline  
11 Soto, Associate Director of Court Operations of the  
12 Red Hook Community Justice Center. I remember  
13 walking into the Justice Center for my first time in  
14 2001 trying to figure out what am I doing here; why  
15 do I want to be a part of it? 13 years, 14 years  
16 later, a lot of what you already heard is what I'm  
17 going to say.

18 We don't treat people who go through the  
19 criminal court as criminals. We try to connect them  
20 with the proper services. We try to link them up  
21 with what they need. We don't make them feel any  
22 less, like the Police Department may do or other  
23 people they may have interactions with. We connect  
24 them with services. We form relationships. Many  
25 times people don't have people to listen to them; to

1 hear what's going on with them. We listen to them;  
2 we connect them with services.

3  
4 I heard something before about the high  
5 profile cases. I can tell you that in the Justice  
6 Center we've had a few of some of the recent high  
7 profile cases and recently, one of them, he had to  
8 come back and his mother was like, "I want you to  
9 come back because I know that they will help you. I  
10 know this is a place where you can get the help that  
11 you need." Only because her son previously worked  
12 with the Justice Center and was killed and no longer  
13 is here, but we were able to help that family and she  
14 had enough faith in us to tell her son, "Go back.  
15 Get the help you need. Get what you need so that we  
16 can move on with our lives from here."

17 I was born in Red Hook projects; born and  
18 raised. My family... I still have a lot of family who  
19 lives out there. I still have a child who attends  
20 school out there and you know, Brownsville and Red  
21 Hook, although it's not the same neighborhood, these  
22 are neighborhoods that you know, need resources; need  
23 people who care; people who really want to help them  
24 and take away the stereotypes and what people think  
25 of these communities.



2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Next,  
3 please. [applause]

4 STEPHANIE LOVETT: Good afternoon. My  
5 name is Stephanie Lovett. I'm a lifelong resident of  
6 the Red Hook Houses. I also am employed at the Red  
7 Hook Community Justice Center... I'm sorry. I also am  
8 employed at the Red Hook Community Center as a case  
9 manager.

10 Growing up in Red Hook was one of the  
11 hardest thing. It was crime, drugs, violence  
12 surrounded. I had my own family. When I started out  
13 in... like when I started out at the Red Hook Community  
14 Justice Center, I started out as a numerical [sic]  
15 member. Starting out as a numerical member it gave  
16 me the opportunity with here we have services that  
17 allow me to be a part of my community and know where  
18 I came from and what I needed to do to make the  
19 community better for the family that I was raising.  
20 Being there also gave... it gave me... just like other  
21 people, it gave me the chance to utilize resources  
22 such as a mediation for a child to... I had that is a  
23 special needs child. I was able to meet with the  
24 Department of Education to work on things that she  
25 needed and put them in place. While being there and

1 working in a... excuse me, I'm sorry. While being  
2 there and working as numerical member, I also had the  
3 opportunity of obtaining my GED. From there, I was  
4 able to go on and be who I am today at the Red Hook  
5 Community Justice Center and service and help the  
6 people in the community in which I live. Every day I  
7 see the same people and the same people know that I  
8 am the face of the Justice Center and that I can be  
9 of service to them. If I cannot give them the  
10 information that they need, I know just who I can  
11 link them up with, so that way I can refer them to  
12 the Red Hook Community Justice Center and whichever  
13 department that is.

14  
15           So with that being said, although they  
16 are two different communities, these are two  
17 different communities that have the same needs.  
18 There are resources and there are people who if...  
19 there are people who work inside the Justice Center  
20 who can help them and connect them to what they need.  
21 Thank you. [applause]

22           CHAIRPERSON KOO: Council Member Mealy?

23 Yes.

24           COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Yes, Chair, what  
25 did the justice system come to the community boards

2 [chime] stating that they would get jobs; bring jobs  
3 to the community?

4 BETTIE KOLLOCK-WALLACE: Yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Or housing or what  
6 other amenities?

7 BETTIE KOLLOCK-WALLACE: Yes, yes, all of  
8 those.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: How many jobs?

10 BETTIE KOLLOCK-WALLACE: Well, as many as  
11 they can possibly give us. We are looking for it. I  
12 have no number. I have no number, but looking at it  
13 from the Red Hook point of view, we can assess..

14 [crosstalk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Red Hook is for  
16 juveniles. This is not Juvenile Court. So I was  
17 just asking how many jobs did they say they are  
18 coming with?

19 BETTIE KOLLOCK-WALLACE: I don't have the  
20 number. I don't know the number that they say they  
21 are coming with. Only I know it's jobs.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So did they ask  
23 for housing also?

24 BETTIE KOLLOCK-WALLACE: The Justice  
25 Center asked..

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[crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Yeah.

[crosstalk]

BETTIE KOLLOCK-WALLACE: For housing?

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: What did they say that they would bring to 444 Thomas Boyland?

BETTIE KOLLOCK-WALLACE: The Justice Center.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: That's it.

BETTIE KOLLOCK-WALLACE: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: What about the resources?

BETTIE KOLLOCK-WALLACE: The resources was as it's...

[crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: How many jobs would be coming for the community?

BETTIE KOLLOCK-WALLACE: Oh, I don't know the number of jobs, but jobs was promised.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Was promised.

BETTIE KOLLOCK-WALLACE: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Okay, thank you.

BETTIE KOLLOCK-WALLACE: Yes. I don't know the number.

2 [crosstalk]

3 STEPHANIE LOVETT: Can I just say that  
4 Red Hook is not for juveniles. Red Hook is a  
5 Criminal Court, Family Court...

6 [crosstalk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: It started off...

8 [crosstalk]

9 STEPHANIE LOVETT: And Housing Court.

10 [crosstalk]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: As juveniles,  
12 right?

13 STEPHANIE LOVETT: No, we've always had  
14 Criminal Court.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I was on the  
16 Juvenile justice system when it first opened. I've  
17 toured it. I went numerous things there, so I  
18 understand now it's not. It's for felonies also. I  
19 understand that.

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Alright.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I have three  
22 more names. Next panel Kayin Latson, sorry; Sally  
23 Ann Gresham. Okay, Alan Permenter [phonetic] and is  
24 Kayin Latton [phonetic]... I'm sorry, am I saying that  
25 wrong? [background voice] Kayin Latson, okay. Is

1 there anyone who wants to testify whose name has not  
2 been called? [background voice] You're... okay, you  
3 can take... [background voices] Okay, is there anyone  
4 else whose name has not been called that wants to  
5 testify on this panel? Those are the last names I  
6 have. Okay, we're going to... okay, so if you can  
7 choose the order in which you're going to speak.  
8 Identify yourselves when you start and Sergeant-at  
9 Arms will get two slips for the two gentlemen in the  
10 middle.  
11

12 ALAN PIMENTA: Good morning. My name is  
13 Alan Pimenta. I've been living in Brownsville for my  
14 whole life, 20 years. Basically before I started at  
15 the Brownsville Justice Community Center, I was in  
16 the streets you know, being young; doing dumb stuff;  
17 robberies. I was selling drugs at one point. At the  
18 age of 18, one day I was walking down the block with  
19 my nephew and a group of boys ran down on me and  
20 pulled out a gun, asked me about a certain gang and  
21 left me afterwards. I walked and they loaded off  
22 three shots as me and my nephew just left from them,  
23 so that also made me want to think about was the  
24 streets for me or not.  
25

1                   One day, I was walking out my building  
2  
3                   and I seen a flyer from Brownville Justice Community  
4                   Center, a big opportunity. I looked at it; I decided  
5                   to go check it out. Ever since then, I've been  
6                   hanging out with them; Erica Mateo, Erica McSwain,  
7                   Aaron Johnson [phonetic] and you know, they've been  
8                   there for me ever since I've been there. You know,  
9                   for me, I've been having family problems ever since..  
10                  and I mean I'll go talk to them about it. They help  
11                  me out; they'll look out. They also help.. Aaron  
12                  Johnson, which is my case manager, is also helping me  
13                  by putting me in school, Medgar Evers College. I'm  
14                  taking my pre-college classes and my GED at the same  
15                  time. So if.. I don't know. Without them.. without  
16                  them it would be I guess nothing. Like this is  
17                  basically my second side of my family that I have.  
18                  They're the only person I can really go talk to; the  
19                  person that really help me out and that's all I got  
20                  to say for right now.

21                  DEXTER CARTER: Good evening, everybody.  
22                  My.. again, good evening, everybody. My name is  
23                  Dexter Carter and I'm an individual that's involved  
24                  in the Brownsville Community Justice Center as we  
25                  speak and I would like to speak on my behalf for me,

1 now being an alumni in that program 'cause I feel  
2 that that program is a beautiful thing for me. I  
3 have no family. My mother passed, my father passed  
4 and I'm going through housing. This is as we speak,  
5 and I felt like before I found out about this program  
6 I was a tough cookie. I felt like nobody could crack  
7 me. So you'll be looking at me now and like I'll be  
8 having issues and I've been accomplished there. I've  
9 got my certificate and everything, so I go there. I  
10 can speak to Erica or I can speak to any one of these  
11 individuals that's got position of power in that  
12 program and they help me with it no matter what. I  
13 could be hungry; they give out egg rolls. They do  
14 all types of things to help people. [laughter] It's  
15 not funny 'cause this is my pain and that's why I'm  
16 trying to... if my little words do mean something, I'll  
17 ask that if we could do anything to keep this  
18 building here, 'cause it... like the other guy was  
19 saying it's a safe zone. People like me with the  
20 projects that I live in, it is not okay to walk to  
21 Howard. It's not okay for some folks to go Tilden,  
22 but I know in that building nobody going to swing on  
23 me and I ain't got to defend myself in there. So  
24 there is my family. Like I have no family, so when I  
25



1 got there I share deep secrets with them. Holiday  
2 times they do Christmas things, Halloween parties. I  
3 eat candy. See what I'm saying? So now, the other  
4 individual that left today was Stanley Crushing [sic]  
5 that's like my brother. We knew ourselves as kids  
6 and that just affected me that he just went through a  
7 issue with my other aunt's son and just got shot, so  
8 what I did I had to stay here and stand up for the  
9 program that stood for me when I couldn't stand up  
10 for myself while he go and handle that, so with this..  
11 this program made me a man. I didn't have a birth  
12 certificate; I didn't have my social security card.  
13 I was living with their mom. So they helped me get  
14 my social security card, helped me get birth  
15 certificate and helped me get my GED, helped me go to  
16 this court case and housing to try to make sure they  
17 provide food and a roof over my head and I'm no  
18 longer in this program and they're still [chime]  
19 providing for me. With that I'm clear. Thank you  
20 'cause I believe that's my time? [laughter,  
21 background voices]

23 CHRISTOPHER LEGREE: How you doing,  
24 Council Members, Chairperson. My name is Christopher  
25 Legree. I want to thank you for giving me an

1 opportunity to be here today. Council Member Mealy,  
2 how are you? I was just sitting here listening to  
3 the testimony and I was thinking it's the greatest  
4 country in the world we live in because we can sit  
5 here and maybe not agree on things, but we can be  
6 heard in a constructive way and sort out things and  
7 get to the right solutions.  
8

9 I've been raised and born in Brownsville  
10 my whole life. Okay, I was born in Brownsville Rec  
11 Center... not the center, but the Brownsville Houses  
12 and those days were different. There was a lot of  
13 programs and a lot of things to do. I run a program  
14 in Brownsville called the Mo Better Jaguars Little  
15 Scholars Football Program and I'm very proud of it  
16 because we have kids and colleges all over America.  
17 We have some guys in the NFL. One had a very big  
18 game yesterday for the Jets, my nephew, and I'm proud  
19 of that, but we've also had kids who have been in the  
20 program who have got incarcerated. We've had kids  
21 who have died suddenly. Their dreams went down.  
22 We've had kids who dropped out of school and they  
23 came back to me and said, "What should I do now?"  
24 We've also had parents who don't have jobs and in the  
25 system; can't get proper benefits. They need help.

1 I've learned... I've been coaching for over 30 years  
2 and when you coach a kid, you coach a family. The  
3 problems that are... and some of the families in  
4 Brownsville are very intricate and we have to  
5 approach it that way I think. I hear a lot of good  
6 things here. The resources that BCJ has offered...  
7 I've been involved with them now since I met James  
8 and Viviana. I brought parents there; I brought  
9 children there; I go there and they've been  
10 fantastic. What I'm hoping is once this program  
11 starts, that we can expand it. I hope you know, once  
12 the honeymoon period is over, I hope that we can grow  
13 it and that's the big thing. Somebody was talking  
14 about how to use the whole [chime] building. Let's  
15 grow this concept, not just you know, we can stone it  
16 or whatever we're going to do. Let's grow this  
17 concept because the services are needed, but last but  
18 least, the testimony these young men just shared,  
19 that's the bottom line. I think that's why we're all  
20 here and that's why I'm going to continue what I'm  
21 going to do in the community. Thank you for my  
22 testimony. I'm definitely in favor of having the  
23 Brownsville Community Justice Center in our  
24 community.  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Okay, thank you. Next?

3 KAYIN LATSON: Good afternoon. My name  
4 is Kayin Latson and I'm the Program Coordinator for  
5 Justice Community Plus at the Brownsville Community  
6 Justice Center. Good afternoon, Chairman and also  
7 Councilwoman Mealy.

8 I just want to say on today that you  
9 know, you've heard from so many different people from  
10 so many different walks of life. Me, myself, I'm  
11 actually a Brooklyn resident and I've grown up in the  
12 tough streets of Brooklyn and have been involved with  
13 a lot of different things; being a victim of crime to  
14 also a perpetrator of crime at a time, and so I was  
15 real susceptible about dealing with and having  
16 interaction with the judicial system and stayed away  
17 from it for a number of years, but had an opportunity  
18 through community work that I was doing to come in  
19 contact with James Brodick at a meeting at the DA's  
20 office a few years ago and like yourself, you know,  
21 challenged the things that were going on in Brooklyn  
22 and wanted to know if real work was being done and if  
23 there was a real result at the end of the day. And  
24 so James and I sat and spoke for hours back and forth  
25 and I was fortunate enough to actually be hired by

1 the Brownsville Community Justice Center back in  
2 2012, and I can say that over the last two years it's  
3 been a wonderful and just real gratifying situation  
4 to be able to come back to work with young people  
5 that I see myself in that are 16 to 24 to be able to  
6 you know, have 'Jocko' Greg Jackson come out to Red  
7 Hook and see the work that's going on out there and  
8 say you know what? We need something like this in  
9 Brownsville. We need you know, for Brownsville to  
10 change the norms and change the things that have been  
11 going on there you know, close to 100 years with the  
12 crime and murder rank and all the other things that  
13 have happened back in the '40s and '30s back in  
14 Brownsville. So you know, for them to do what  
15 they've done in Red Hook to be able to make a change  
16 to bring about employment and job opportunities; to  
17 you know, you not being able... wanting to live in Red  
18 Hook to now not being able to afford to live in Red  
19 Hook, to seeing Fairway and IKEA [chime] and people  
20 come from throughout the city to come to Brooklyn and  
21 come to Red Hook because people feel safe there. You  
22 wouldn't go shopping there. You wouldn't have your  
23 kids there if you didn't feel like that was a place  
24 that was safer and so you know, we look to have  
25

1 change coming to Brownsville and have things change  
2 you know, from the inside. And so being able to sit  
3 at the table with James, with Erica, with our staff  
4 and be able to help young people to make life  
5 altering decisions when some of the things they may  
6 have done in their past you know, is a wonderful  
7 thing and so I see a lot of these young men changing  
8 the story; changing the things that you see when you  
9 google Brownsville and seeing the work that we've  
10 done. Yeah, the murals and the paintings are a part  
11 of it, but the job readiness training, the households  
12 that we affect, the young people that are able to  
13 provide for their children are great things. We  
14 launched the Young Adult Entrepreneurship Program  
15 last year to have a number of young people learn  
16 about business. You know, you want to hustle, you  
17 want to be out in the street and you say you're a  
18 product of your environment. It doesn't have to be  
19 negative. You can still get up... you know, we taught  
20 them about business. We launched a product line to  
21 have them have t-shirts and products and merchandise  
22 that we have had them to go out and become their own  
23 business entrepreneurs.

I just thank you for your time on today.

I ask if nothing else, Councilwoman Mealy, being that this is your district, if you can just take some time out of your hectic and busy schedule maybe before the end of the year to just come by 444 to just walk on any given day. You know, you don't even have to come announced or make an appointment, but just to come to see that we're not prepping for you to come, but just come and see the work that we do to see the young people that we touch and the lives that we affect.

So we ask you on any day if you can find it in your time to come by, we thank you. I thank you for your time on today, Chairpeople and have a great day.

COUNCIL WOMAN MEALY: Thank you.

DEXTER CARTER: Excuse me, can I just add on? Basically if... this is just in general, if you have kids that are just around my age or younger, you ought to see the way like... alright, how I'm going to put this? Alright, I'm going to put it like this...

[background voices]

ALL PANELISTS: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I have one more name here. Alise Kenner? Lisa, I apologize, okay.

That's the last one I have. Is there anyone else who

2 wanted to testify whose name was not called? Okay.

3 [background voices]

4 LISA KENNER: Red light on. You can hear  
5 me? Good afternoon. My name is Lisa Kenner. I am  
6 the President of Van Dyke Resident Association. I've  
7 been a resident for 55 years, so I'm telling my age.

8 [background noise] I'm also... I also was... what  
9 happened? [background noise] I'm not used to this.

10 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [off mic] Okay, go  
11 ahead.

12 LISA KENNER: I was the former district  
13 female leader from 2004 to 2008, so when I met  
14 Brownsville Justice Center, I was walking through  
15 trying to find out what was in the community; what  
16 resources 'cause it wasn't none in there. So I had  
17 told some people and I'm glad to see this young man  
18 because I used to run him... he used to get in trouble.  
19 I used to run him, so I'm glad he's someplace you  
20 know, and somebody's watching him. I wasn't going to  
21 get up here and talk. I just came to observe, but  
22 when somebody's doing good work and everybody that  
23 come in the community's not for everybody and Council  
24 Member, you know what? I feel that everybody  
25 deserves the best. That's how I am and that's how



1 I'm going to always... I do not sell my soul for  
2 nobody. I've lived in Brownsville; I'm probably  
3 going to die in Brownsville. Everybody talked about  
4 Jocko. I knew Jocko ever since I was 13 years old  
5 you know, so I know what he was about; I know what  
6 I'm about. I'm not trying to make friends with  
7 anybody, but I want to make sure that young people  
8 have an opportunity, even older people so that's why  
9 I got up to hear a lot of your talk. It just made me  
10 say I'm going to fight 'cause this is the right thing  
11 to do because there's nothing really happening. I  
12 know, you know, we're going to do some things where  
13 kids can't go across the street here. I never heard  
14 nothing so ridiculous in my life. You know, if  
15 anything, everybody needs to get together and say why  
16 these kids can't go across the street. When I was  
17 growing up in Van Dyke, I went to Brownsville, I went  
18 to Tilden, I went everywhere, but I know at 444,  
19 that's like a central location and everybody can go.  
20 [chime] Like when they was trying to bring the parole  
21 office in 422 Blake Avenue where I live at. Oh, yes,  
22 I was going to fight for it. I didn't need no..  
23 anybody going out there. I didn't go out there  
24 myself, but here you're going to put a parole office  
25

1 in where people live, but you don't want to put  
2 someplace where everybody can go to. My reason for  
3 not having a parole office there is because everybody  
4 knows your business and you know everybody out  
5 there'll talk about you anyway, so they really talk  
6 about. You could be just going in there to go to the  
7 bathroom. "Oh, she's on parole." [laughter] So when  
8 you're going down Pitkin Avenue, nobody knows where  
9 you're going. They don't know if you're going to  
10 shopping or if you're going to the eyeglass or the  
11 bank. But we have to have something to catch a hold  
12 of young people because it's not out there, and I  
13 have to say this as a mother. I mean when my son got  
14 in trouble I didn't have this. I had to go looking  
15 and searching to try to help save his life and knock  
16 on wood, he's 38 years old and he's still living, but  
17 how about if I wasn't that type of parent that was  
18 out there trying to save my son or find something to  
19 do? This way... a lot of people got parents that's not  
20 out there. They're not here; they're deceased. But  
21 they have somebody where they can go to and I just  
22 think that we all need to get on one course because  
23 it ain't about us. It's about our next generation.  
24 Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you very much.  
3 [applause] I'm going to close this public hearing on  
4 this item. This meeting is going to be recessed 'til  
5 this Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. in the  
6 Committee Room, City Hall, where we will vote on LU  
7 Items 135, which is Brownsville Community Justice  
8 Center and Land Use Item 136, the 5-Boro Shops  
9 relocation. The meeting is adjourned.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, recessed. The  
11 meeting is recessed.

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Oh, the meeting is  
13 recessed. Thank you very much.

14 [gavel]

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chairman  
16 Koo.

17 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah, thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: See you Wednesday at  
19 10.

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Alright.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We'll send a notice  
22 out.

23

24

25

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 11/14/2014