

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FANCHISES

----- X

November 12, 2014
Start: 02:39 p.m.
Recess: 02:51 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E:

MARK S. WEPRIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ANTONIO REYNOSO
DANIEL R. GARODNICK
DONOVAN J. RICHARDS
JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
RITCHIE J. TORRES
RUBEN WILLS
VINCENT IGNIZIO
VINCENT J. GENTILE

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

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Good

afternoon. [speaking foreign language] Good to see everybody here today. I apologize for the delay. I want to start out, one piece of housekeeping; we are laying over Land Use numbers 134 and 143. Those were two sidewalk cafes on this, on our calendar and they are going to be on, taken up at the November 18th subcommittee. And now for the moment at hand. Today we're voting on a series of applications to be tied to the Astoria Cove project in Queens. I want to acknowledge the following members of the subcommittee who are here today; Council Member Dan Garodnick, Council Member Jumaane Williams, Council Member Donovan Richards, Council Member Antonio Reynoso, and Council Member Ritchie Torres. These six applications are submitted by 2030 Astoria Developers LLC for the grant of special permits, zoning text amendments, zoning map amendments, waterfront authorizations, and the city map changes in connection with a new residential development with approximately 1700 units retail and a school in Council Member Costa Constantinides District. Before I turn it over to

2 the Council Member for his comments I want to make
3 clear to the committee that we're voting to approve
4 this application with modifications to the zoning
5 text and restrictive declaration and minor
6 modifications to the plan. The modifications taken
7 in tandem will strengthen the mayor's mandate that
8 the construction of affordable housing must be part
9 of any residential development. As part of this
10 project the developer has committed to ensuring
11 that 27 percent of the residential floor area will
12 be affordable. We're also proposing modifications
13 to the restrictive declaration to require a
14 construction working group given all of the
15 expected construction in this area. In addition we
16 has, we have also received a commitment to help
17 fund a ferry service as well as I want to
18 acknowledge the tenacious work of the council
19 member that I mentioned before. And I'd like to
20 call on him now to... Costa Constantinides Council
21 Member I want to congratulate you for your hard
22 work and calling you now to describe in detail a
23 little more of what we've come to today.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Good
25 afternoon. Thank you Chairman Weprin and, and

2 Chairman Greenfield. I want to thank, begin by
3 thanking both of you. This was a, a tough
4 negotiation and I appreciate your efforts on behalf
5 of my community and the city at large. So thank you
6 for your great and strong work at 11:00 at night
7 and, and 6:00 in the morning phone calls. Good
8 afternoon. I definitely appreciate the opportunity
9 to speak here today. I want to thank all the staff
10 that was involved; Raju Man [sp?], Ann McCony
11 [sp?], Amy Levitan [sp?], everyone here at the
12 council who worked so hard, those arduous hours to
13 get this done. I'm happy to report that we have an
14 agreement here at Astoria Cove that truly
15 integrates this development into our community. The
16 developer, 2030 Developers were willing to sit down
17 with us, willing to negotiate and uh, and we
18 definitely appreciate your candor and partnership
19 and what we believe to be a exciting opportunity
20 for our community as well as the mayor's office as
21 we move forward on this mandatory inclusionary
22 zoning and lots of other things for our
23 neighborhood. The mayor's office and his leadership
24 at the top has been stellar and, and much
25 appreciated. I want to reiterate how historic this

2 deal is. When negotiations started the city was
3 still operating under an old system of voluntary
4 affordability. Under the new mandatory inclusionary
5 zoning we're going to have real affordability in
6 this project. We, we've been able to do away with
7 the possibility of apartments being deemed
8 affordable at 27 hundred dollars a month and have
9 you know moved to a place where we have 27 percent
10 of the floor area of this development at real
11 affordable rates for real Astorians and that's
12 important. We need to... we have a... meaningful chance
13 to achieve the dream of living this development for
14 decades to come in our neighborhood. This is not a
15 castle on the moat, this opens up our neighborhood.
16 When it comes to transportation we, we... a community
17 that's growing and changing. The infrastructure of
18 our city cannot, not improve... the same... of our
19 growth. I'm happy today to announce that we have a
20 plan to completely fund the construction of a ferry
21 dock at the Astoria Cove site. Not only will this
22 ferry dock open the opportunity for residents of
23 the new developments to have a quick efficient
24 route into Manhattan but this ferry dock will allow
25 Astoria to be connected to the booming waterfront

1 communities in Brooklyn, Midtown, and Wall Street.
2 It is my hope that one day Roosevelt Island, the
3 airports, other areas of the city will be
4 interconnected... waterfront, our largest untapped
5 resources. And the Halletts Point Peninsula where
6 this project is taking place has been historically
7 a, a, a isolated pocket of poverty. There hasn't
8 been a, a supermarket or a school or a doctor's
9 office or a dentist office on this peninsula for
10 decades. This is going to change through this
11 development in Astoria Cove. We're going to have a,
12 a new supermarket there. We're going to have a
13 school there. We're going to have new open space
14 there. We're going to have opportunities for
15 improvements at our senior center. We're going to
16 have opportunities to improve our local library and
17 parks as well. These are all things and... You know
18 also integrate the NYCHA community into this
19 development with real opportunities to be part of
20 the cooperatives, be part of the lottery of, of
21 affordable housing and, and have a meaningful
22 impact on their lives. All these are successes as
23 part of this agreement. And lastly we're going to
24 have safe and good jobs at this development all the
25

2 way through. And that's something that we were
3 committed to. So this deal is historic. We've
4 changed the way development happens. And I am again
5 very grateful to the chair, our Speaker Melissa
6 Mark-Viverito and all, every, all the staff for
7 their hard work and as well as my staff Nick
8 Rolleston [sp?], and Nick Wazowski [sp?]. Thank
9 you.

10 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you Council
11 Member. We've also been joined by Council Member
12 Gentile. Earlier today our Borough President
13 Melinda Katz was here in the building.
14 Unfortunately she couldn't stay for the meeting. I
15 have a statement that she wanted me to read into
16 the record and being from Queens I'm going to do
17 that. I will now read it. I am proud to support the
18 Astoria Cove project in this negotiated form.
19 Queens is proud that there is a desire to build
20 housing and move our borough forward. That
21 development however must be done responsibly and
22 benefit the neighborhoods that host new
23 communities. The increase of affordable housing for
24 27 percent is a landmark accomplishment. Put that
25 together with the commitment to build responsibly

2 and to assure water transportation through a ferry
3 it becomes a project we can be proud of in the
4 borough of Queens. Thank you Council, to Council
5 Member Constantinides for his leadership in holding
6 strong on the issues that are crucial in, to the
7 district. I also congratulate the administration
8 for this precedent setting rezoning and to the very
9 handsome chair of the subcommittee..

10 [laughter]

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I, I added that
12 last part. With that in mind I will call this for a
13 vote to approve the Astoria Cove application Land
14 Use numbers 126 through 131 inclusive with the
15 modifications that have been described here today.
16 I would like to call on council to please call the
17 roll.

18 COUNCIL: Chair Weprin.

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I vote aye.

20 COUNCIL: Council Member Gentile.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I vote aye.

22 COUNCIL: Council Member Garodnick.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: With
24 congratulations to Council Member Constantinides I
25 vote aye.

2 COUNCIL: Council Member Williams.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Aye.

4 COUNCIL: Council Member Richards.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: First off I
6 want to congratulate Council Member Costa on such a
7 victory, a huge victory for his particular
8 community. I do want to say that I, I do have some
9 reservations but I'm going to vote yes. I think 27
10 percent on affordable is a worthy number but I
11 think that we certainly should be aiming to do
12 better in this city as we move forward. We should
13 not be moving backwards we should be moving
14 forward. But I vote aye in support of all your
15 efforts and, and thank the chairs for their hard
16 work. Thank you.

17 COUNCIL: Council Member Reynoso.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I vote aye.

19 COUNCIL: Council Member Torres.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I just want to
21 commend Council Member Constantinides for
22 negotiating an agreement that achieves higher
23 levels of affordability that's pro-labor. And as
24 the chairperson of the Committee on Public Housing,
25 an agreement that gives consideration to NYCHA

2 residents who often feel left out of the process.
3 You know Astoria houses face these challenges
4 around transit equity my understanding is that it
5 has upward of 100 million dollars in capital needs.
6 And to know that they were given consideration
7 under this agreement means a great deal to me. So
8 I'm proud to vote aye.

9 COUNCIL: Council Member Williams.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: ...my vote?

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Williams to
12 explain his vote.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you very
14 much. So I'm going to vote aye on the project. I
15 want to say congratulations to Costa who was
16 tireless in moving forward. But I too do have some
17 concerns. It is exciting this seems to be a better
18 deal than what was presented to us before. First
19 I'm obviously happy that it is a pro-labor project.
20 I do want to make sure that on top of the
21 priorities however is affordability. And I believe
22 that we could have gone deeper on some of the
23 affordabilities. I'm, I'm glad that based also on
24 income of your community this does allow them to
25 afford themselves of the opportunity as well but I'm

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

also going to call on the, the labor industry to work with us to go deeper into the affordability because we have to. And it's not going to work if we don't. In addition I do want to make sure that the jobs that come out of there also are people who have been historically left out of so many jobs, black and brown folks in New York City have not necessarily been the people who are building New York City and I want to make sure that that absolutely happens. But I, I do want to say congratulations I'm, I'm very... I was excited about what seems to be a new kind of thing with NYCHA not counting their credit and allowing them to use their rent history to avail themselves of what's happening here. So I think it's a lot of new things and exciting things that we're doing. I do believe we have to go deeper into the, in to the AMIs and expand the available income, the units on income. But I'm glad we're not doing the same... 80/20. We do have to little, do a little bit more. But I know you worked tirelessly on this and believe in all the things that I'm saying and I'm going to support you... I'm going to vote aye. Congratulations again.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

COUNCIL: By a vote of seven in the affirmative, no abstentions, and no negatives Land Use items 126 through and including Land Use item 131 are approved with modifications and referred to the full Land Use Committee.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Just want to remind everyone that the Land Use meeting will follow this subcommittee immediately so anyone who's not here should get here and everyone who's on the committee should stay here. And with that in mind the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises is now adjourned.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date November 14, 2014