

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

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March 9, 2015
Start: 10:11 a.m.
Recess: 10:17 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm,
16th Fl.

B E F O R E:
MARK S. WEPRIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Daniel R. Garodnick
Jumaane D. Williams
Donovan J. Richards
Antonio Reynoso
Ritchie J. Torres
Vincent M. Ignizio
Vincent J. Gentile
Ruben Wills
Margaret S. Chin
David G. Greenfield

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2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Alright, good
3 morning everyone... [gavel] I'll rap the gavel
4 [background comments] everything is official. I'd
5 like to call to order the meeting of the Zoning and
6 Franchises Subcommittee of the Land Use Committee; I
7 am Council Member Mark Weprin and I am joined by the
8 following members of the Committee -- Council Member
9 Vincent Gentile, Council Member Dan Garodnick,
10 Council Member Donovan Richards, who gets the gold
11 start today, and Council Member Antonio Reynoso. We
12 are also delighted to be joined by Council Member
13 Margaret Chin, whose district the item on the agenda
14 is today. The only thing on our agenda this morning
15 is a vote and a discussion on the item that we had a
16 hearing on on February 24th; it is Land Use No. 0174,
17 498 Broome Street and I would like to call on Council
18 Member Chin to give a statement to update us on the
19 status of the negotiations.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair
21 Weprin. Good morning. I am Margaret Chin, Council
22 Member for 1st District of Lower Manhattan.

23 The special permit application for 498
24 Broome Street, which is before the Subcommittee this
25 morning for a vote, had its public hearing on

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2 February 24th. My office has worked with the
3 applicant and listened to the concern of the
4 community regarding the proposed conversion of this
5 building to luxury residential units. In my district
6 we have a manufacturing district, which historically
7 became a haven for artists looking for large
8 affordable space to live and work; it was these
9 artists who built the SoHo community as it exists
10 today, and which endowers SoHo with the trendiness
11 that makes it so desirable now for retail and other
12 use. Now with increasing real estate pressure, we
13 have seen a trend of developers seeking permission to
14 change those joint life-work spaces for artists into
15 luxury rental units, which are not allowed as-of-
16 right by the underlying zoning. These developers,
17 like the current applicant before us, are seeking
18 special permit under Section 74-711 of the Zoning
19 Resolution in order to make these conversions. I am
20 troubled by the use of 74-711 for what has
21 essentially become a widespread tool to change SoHo
22 into a prime residential community. I understand the
23 expense of restoring and maintaining buildings in the
24 historic district, as this developer has already
25 done, but I am troubled by the fact that we are

1 approving the 74-711 after the work has already been
2 conducted. I don't believe developers should
3 continue to presume that they will get permission to
4 change the use of their building from the Council
5 just because they have gotten landmark approval. I
6 also understand that there are issues with the joint
7 live-work quarters for artist system, but I don't
8 think the solution is to erase these units completely
9 from our historic neighborhoods. I believe it is
10 imperative that we continue to preserve the vibrant
11 mixed-use nature of SoHo, including joint live-work
12 quarters for artist units; indeed, this building, 498
13 Broome Street was once home to an artist for decades.
14 I am seeking the Subcommittee to approve a modified
15 74-711 special permit for this building, which
16 retains the as-of-right zoning use for the second
17 floor, including joint live-work quarter for artists,
18 which granting this applicant approval for Use Group
19 2, residential uses for floors 3-6. It is my hope
20 that this compromise will help preserve the mixed-use
21 artist character of SoHo neighborhood and I hope that
22 my colleagues will join me in approving this
23 modification.
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2 And I also wanna express my thanks to the
3 applicant for working with us, to Community Board 2,
4 Tobi Bergman, the Chair, who is also here today, to
5 the Manhattan Borough President and her staff, and of
6 course, our Land Use staff, Ann McCoy, Amy Levitan,
7 Dylan Casey and Raju Mann for their support on this.
8 Thank you, Chair.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you, Miss
10 Chin. Do any other members of the Committee want to
11 comment on this; I have a draft of the modification
12 in front of me? Anybody? We're joined by David
13 Greenfield, by the way, Chair of the Land Use
14 Committee.

15 So what we're gonna do now is, we're
16 gonna move to a vote on this special permit for 498
17 Broome Street, with the following modifications, as
18 described by Ms. Chin, that the special permit be
19 limited to allow Use Group 2, residential uses only
20 on the 3rd to 6th floor of the building and that the
21 uses of the cellar 1st and 2nd floor be limited to
22 the underlying uses permitted in the Zoning
23 Resolution. I am now gonna call on Ann McCoy to
24 please call the roll.

25 ANN MCCOY: Chair Weprin.

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CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I vote aye.

ANN MCCOY: Council Member Gentile.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I vote aye.

ANN MCCOY: Council Member Garodnick.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Aye.

ANN MCCOY: Council Member Richards.

COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Aye.

ANN MCCOY: Council Member Reynoso.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Aye.

ANN MCCOY: By a vote of 5 in the affirmative, 0 abstentions and 0 negatives, Land Use Item 0174 is approved with modifications and referred to the full Land Use Committee.

[pause]

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, we are gonna keep the rolls open for 20 minutes, for 20 minutes, for a couple of members who are caught in the BQE traffic. So with that in mind, with the rolls being open, 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 March 23, 2015