

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING, AND
MARITIME USES

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

B E F O R E:

PETER A. KOO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ANNABEL PALMA
BEN KALLOS
INEZ D. BARRON
MARIA DEL CARMEN ARROYO
ROSIE MENDEZ
STEPHEN T. LEVIN

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

Eric Landau
Associate Commissioner of Public Affairs
NYC Department of Environmental Protection

Vincent Sapienza
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[gavel]

CHAIR KOO: Good morning. This is

Council Member Peter Koo. I'm the council member
from Queens. And today... And I'm also the chair for
the Subcommittee of Landmarks, Public Siting, and
Maritime Use. And today we have Council Member
Kallos, Council Member Barron, and Council Member
Levin on our committee. And we also have a guest
Council Member Crowley here. And before we start
she wants to open the statement... opening statement.
Okay. One second. Yeah I forgot a procedure myself.
And today we are going over Land Use number 243.
Application number C150218 PSQ Newtown Creek East
Branch Aeration Facility in Council Member
Crowley's district. And this is a proposed
application from the New York City Department of
Environmental Protection and Department of Citywide
Administration Services for the site section or
property located at 58-26 47th Street in the...
neighborhood of Queens to facilitate the
construction of an aeration facility. So Council
Member Crowley.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you

Chairman Koo and... and colleagues. Good morning. I

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2 want to thank the Department of Environmental
3 Protection for working with my office on this site
4 plan that is proposed today for a vote and I want
5 to thank them for a number of meetings coming out
6 to my office in Glendale, meeting with my community
7 board and working for... together over the weekend
8 even to get to a point where we had a plan that I
9 could support. And I now do believe that we have a
10 plan that I can support because there's been some
11 modifications. The plan here today that you will
12 vote on s a much needed aeration facility that will
13 bring healthy levels of oxygen into the Newtown
14 Creek. But as you can see from the rendering there
15 is a significant amount of green space next to the
16 proposed aeration plant. Maspeth is a area that has
17 a very high level of asthma and very little amount
18 of green space. And so when we have an opportunity
19 to get additional green space for our community use
20 we want to make sure that it is taken advantage of
21 in a way where no time is wasted. This area is
22 changing quickly in more and more New Yorkers and
23 moving into Maspeth. And although it is a
24 residential area mixed with an industrial area it
25 is certainly an area in need of more green space.

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2 So I do appreciate Department of Environmental
3 Protection agreeing to go into a plan where they
4 would have a memorandum of understanding with a
5 community group that would provide athletic
6 services on the facility that is unused by the
7 aeration plant. Something similar to what the DEP
8 has done in the Harlem area of the city where they
9 took Manhattan's North River Wastewater Treatment
10 Plant and they were able to build public space
11 above it and around it and they worked with this FC
12 Harlem soccer club to make sure that they were
13 responsible for maintaining the site. And we will
14 look to do the same here in Maspeth with the
15 community organization to maintain that the site is
16 safe and that any cost associated with making the
17 site ready for athletic use is assumed by that
18 organization but that there would be a strong
19 working relationship with the Department of
20 Environmental Protection to make sure that this is
21 happening and that no time is wasted. So as we
22 start to develop and implement the construction of
23 the Aeration plant we're also working for the
24 construction of a athletic field. Thank you.

25

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2 CHAIR KOO: Thank you Council Member
3 Crowley. And we have today Eric Landau Associate
4 Commissioner of DEP and also Vincent Sapienza
5 Deputy Commissioner here to give testimony. Thank
6 you. We are also joined by Council Member Mealy.

7 ERIC LANDAU: Thank you. First of all
8 I'd like to... to thank Council Member Crowley for...
9 for working with us over the weekend as well to
10 reach what we believe is a... a good next step
11 forward. Chairman Koo, members of the committee
12 again my name is Eric Landau Associate Commissioner
13 of the Bureau of Public Affairs for the New York
14 City Department of Environmental Protection. I'm
15 joined today by Vincent Sapienza. Thank you for the
16 opportunity to appear before you this morning
17 regarding our ULERP application for a site
18 selection for the Newtown Creek East Branch
19 Aeration Facility in Queens. In 1992 New York City
20 entered into a consent order with the New York
21 State Department of Environmental Conservation
22 calling for construction of retention facilities
23 for combined sewer overflows in certain waterways.
24 In 2004 DEC renegotiated with DEP and established
25 the 2004 administrative CSO consent order requiring

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2 the city to adopt a more comprehensive water shed
3 water based approach and to incorporate existing
4 facility plans and other system improvements into
5 the water body washer shed based long term CSO
6 control plan. The consent order requires the
7 planning, design, and construction of 30 projects
8 citywide including improved water quality through
9 CSO and non-CSO abatement strategies. Part of the
10 consent order mandated that Newtown Creek and its...
11 achieve a water quality suitable for fish,
12 shellfish, and wildlife survival. In response DEP
13 has proposed to build an aeration facility which
14 will raise dissolved... dissolve oxygen levels by
15 compressing air and blowing it down air header
16 pipes laid along the bottom of parts of each branch
17 and upper Newtown Creek. DEP anticipates completion
18 of the full project in December 2018. The specific
19 site, 58-26 47th Street in Maspeth Queens was
20 selected because it was already city owned
21 property. And management has recently been
22 transferred from the Department of Citywide
23 Administrative Services to DEP. And it's on the
24 edge of Newtown Creek. The specific zoning M3-1
25 allows DEP to build the facility. However the

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2 specific use classification does require public
3 waterfront access. Based on a variety of factors
4 though DEP does have concerns about providing water
5 for an access immediately. The proposed facility
6 would be located on 47th Street and now a side
7 street that draws little pedestrian traffic. Our
8 facility would not have a regular staff presence
9 but would rather be visited only on an as needed
10 basis. Additionally the facility would be
11 surrounded by industrial uses which do not
12 currently provide connection to any waterfront
13 public access. Due to these unique conditions DEP
14 believes that providing public waterfront access at
15 this location now would create a significant safety
16 and security concern and that it would become
17 what's known as an attractive nuisance. Due to
18 these concerns DEP applied for and received a
19 mayoral override for the waterfront access
20 requirement. However DEP does fully understand and
21 appreciate the need for open space in all
22 communities, especially in Maspeth. We also
23 understand the sites selected for our facility is
24 desired by members of the community to help fill
25 this void. That's why as a first step we've been

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2 working with local community to develop a two-step
3 public access plan which we remain fully committed
4 to. First, as indicated on the rendering here,
5 during the initial construction of the project DEP
6 will create a public seating area for the community
7 consisting of benches and trees between the fence
8 line and the sidewalk which is indicated here in
9 Brown with benches and trees. Second DEP will
10 further enhance the site with waterfront access in
11 the future as nearby properties also develop access
12 including the Kosciuszko bridge and prominent
13 project. Our future enhancement will consist of a
14 walkway to the water and a walkway adjacent to it
15 again as indicated in the...in the rendering, the
16 walkway and the walkway. In order to show our full
17 commitment to the community DEP will lay the cement
18 for the waterfront access pathway and water
19 adjacent pathway during the initial construction of
20 the project. We'll complete these walkways with...
21 when additional access points to the water are
22 developed ensuring increased safety and increased
23 eyes and ears on the waterfront. Following earlier
24 presentations to the community board and the
25 borough president it has been suggested that we

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2 develop the unused space for a athletic field for
3 local soccer teams as Council Member Crowley
4 indicated. We do have some concerns about this in
5 addition to the safety and security concerns
6 already described which should be noted. First
7 under normal circumstances athletic fields require
8 a significant capital investment up front as well
9 as substantial annual maintenance budget. Turning
10 this space into an athletic field would create a
11 further challenge as the space is smaller than a
12 typical soccer field and is not currently level.
13 For our original plan we specifically selected
14 what's known as a meadow mix planting treatment
15 which is the green that you see which was approved
16 by the public design commission. And it was
17 selected because it has a low maintenance need and
18 is... and at the same time being visibly attractive.
19 Second, this project is among the first in meeting
20 water quality standards for our long term control
21 plan or LTCP as described by the Department of
22 Environmental Conservation. As we continue to
23 develop the LTCP as well as requirements under
24 Newtown Creek superfund designation DEP does need
25 to remain flexible with the space as we may be

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2 required to build additional facilities or
3 infrastructure to meet those state and federal
4 mandates. We believe that's important to not build
5 an open space amenity now only to be ripped up
6 later for essential infrastructure. Having said all
7 of that however DEP is willing to further entertain
8 the idea of entering into a memorandum of
9 understanding with a community organization which
10 we would be responsible for building and
11 maintaining the space for athletic purposes. As
12 Council Member Crowley indicated we have a similar
13 relationship with a soccer league in Manhattan at
14 our North River waste water treatment plant. The
15 organization, FC Harlem Soccer Club was responsible
16 for the capital cost of the field and is
17 responsible annually for its maintenance and
18 appropriate use. While the specifics are somewhat
19 different we would be willing to consider a similar
20 agreement with a community organization here. Again
21 our main concern is the potentially negative impact
22 on both the community and athletic organization if
23 we're required to build additional infrastructure
24 at the... at the location resulting in the fuel being
25 removed therefore the MOU would need to make clear

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2 that if the area is developed for athletic purposes
3 and DEP requires the use of the area for waste
4 water utility functions upon reasonable notice the
5 organization would need to vacate the field and
6 remove any of its equipment or other improvements.

7 As an immediate next step we welcome the
8 opportunity to take members of the community on
9 tour of the athletic field by the North River
10 Wastewater Treatment Plant as well as begin
11 discussions with local athletic groups identified
12 by both the borough president and the council
13 member. We also pledged to meet with the local
14 community annually to provide an update on the LTCP
15 and the superfund processes to ensure full
16 transparency about the site's future use. Before I
17 conclude my testimony it's also worth noting that
18 the city planning commission recommended that we
19 develop signage describing the facility and its
20 purpose for Newtown Creek as part of our
21 application to them. Of course we're working with
22 our project designers to develop that signage. I
23 thank you again for the opportunity to testify and
24 Vincent and I would be happy to address any
25 questions that you may have.

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2 CHAIR KOO: Crowley... question?

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Deputy

4 Commissioner you mentioned in your testimony the
5 future of a possible wastewater utility functions?

6 ERIC LANDAU: Mm-hmm.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Wouldn't that
8 have to be cited?

9 ERIC LANDAU: So as we've been
10 discussing all along as this project is the first
11 in many to meet requirements under both the LTCP
12 and the superfund the... the things that... that could
13 come out of that for example in Gowanus right now
14 we're under federal order to build two combined
15 sewer overflow tanks below ground. And so this is
16 the first project to meet water quality goals. We
17 know that there are going to be future projects.
18 And because this is already city land and DEP land
19 our thought was in staying flexible with the space
20 if we did need to put infrastructure which we don't
21 yet know what those requirements will be we thought
22 this could be an appropriate space.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Now you could
24 also build that... those under the structure you're
25 planning to build correct?

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ERIC LANDAU: Under the building?

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Yeah.

ERIC LANDAU: Yeah it would be very
difficult because that building will have a pile
foundation. So to put anything underneath it while
doable would be very expensive and... and... [cross-
talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: You already
have a wastewater treatment plant on the Newtown
Creek.

ERIC LANDAU: Right. Right we're not
talking about a wastewater treatment plant. We're
talking about other infrastructure required to
reduce CSOs or capture CSOs from go... going into the
waterway. So not... not a treatment plan
specifically.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Okay. The
wastewater utility... [cross-talk]

ERIC LANDAU: Right. So that could be
like a combined sewer overflow storage tank which
we have in Flushing which we are doing in Gowanus
...that is a... has become a more common method
especially under EPA, that superfund designation.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Right. So I
3 need to know that your commitment is real. Because
4 from your testimony and from our conversations it
5 seems slightly different. I want to make sure that
6 my community can enter into an agreement with DEP
7 to use that site and not waste any time. And you
8 spoke about later on building a path along the...

9 ERIC LANDAU: Yep.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: ...green space.
11 Well if there is a agreement in place which DEP is
12 saying that you're ready to take on an agreement
13 with the community then why is there a delay for
14 the path? You said in your testimony...

15 ERIC LANDAU: I did say that in my
16 testimony, yes. The concern that we've... we've had
17 about the path itself and... and the field... and the
18 soccer field is a little different. So the... the
19 soccer field if... and again we're fully committed to
20 entering into an agreement if there is an
21 organization that is able to enter into the
22 agreement with us, they're able to pay for it, the
23 construction, the maintenance etcetera. We're 100
24 percent committed to doing that is there's an
25 appropriate organization. The... the field itself

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2 then would be fenced because you wouldn't want
3 people... balls going into the water or it's a two
4 tiered bulk head. You wouldn't want anyone trying
5 to get down to the water from the field. And the...
6 the point of the... the path itself was that there
7 was no other waterfront access in this... in this
8 neighborhood currently and a concern about having
9 few people on the waterfront. And that's why the
10 thought was that when the other projects were
11 developed and there are more people on the water...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Right.

13 ERIC LANDAU: ...we too would do that.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: But let's say
15 this group is agreeing to secure the site when
16 they're not using it. Then there'd be less of a
17 security risk and therefore it seems to make sense
18 to just put the path there when you're doing your
19 initial construction.

20 ERIC LANDAU: I see. I think we were
21 looking at them as separate, as a totally en-fenced
22 [phonetic] enclosed field and then the walkway
23 separate from that to be honest but...

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: It would be
25 nice to have it around the... the soccer field I

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2 would think. [cross-talk] makes sense because then
3 it could give you as much room that you would need
4 for the field. And then you know the current
5 existing conditions of the land... are you required
6 environmentally to clean it to a certain extent
7 before such organization was to take it on making
8 an athletic field... Like I understand it used to be
9 used as an area for waste transfer, construction
10 debris and that there... there's likely asbestos and
11 stuff in that pile, the height of the... the green
12 space.

13 VINCENT SAPIENZA: For the... the meadow
14 mix concept there would just be a small layer of
15 clean fill and for you know essentially not
16 disturbing much of the site other than adding the
17 meadow mix there wouldn't need, there would not
18 need to be a significant remediation.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: But for
20 athletic use there would be?

21 VINCENT SAPIENZA: There may need to be,
22 yeah.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And how... what
24 is the... the height of that building to the height
25 of the current ground level?

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2 VINCENT SAPIENZA: I'm going to ask...
3 Okay, okay. 33 feet is the height of the building.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: So off... because
5 it looks like there's a hill on the green space,
6 off the height of the green space or off the
7 regular ground level?

8 VINCENT SAPIENZA: Off the regular
9 ground level it's 33 feet.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And you know
11 how high the green space is right now to that?

12 VINCENT SAPIENZA: It... it is hilly. In
13 fact there's... there's a mound of... of soil that's
14 there as well.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Potentially one
16 could... because you're still in your early stage of
17 design bring that green space up even higher and
18 possibly work with DEP to... to make it a larger
19 field on top of your building. So you... sort of like
20 you sort of have a green room that extends to the
21 old green.

22 VINCENT SAPIENZA: Yeah the... the... the
23 height of the building is... is much taller than
24 could be leveled with... with the field. I'm fairly
25 sure the...

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: But where are
3 you with your design phase? With the architectural
4 renderings?

5 VINCENT SAPIENZA: Yeah so... so that's
6 essentially the... the... done now. All the design is
7 completed and we're... we're be looking to issue
8 contracts for...

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Why does it
10 take so long to... why are you estimating that 27
11 hundred square foot building would take three
12 years, three and a half years to build.

13 VINCENT SAPIENZA: Yeah it's not... it's
14 not just a building Council Member. There's a
15 diffuser system, a grid that has to go into the
16 Newtown Creek water body. There's a lot of
17 mechanical and electrical upgrades that need to be
18 done in that area.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And when do you
20 think could be the earliest point for let's say the
21 athletic league has the capital put aside that's
22 needed to make that field to play sports on... when
23 do you think is the earliest time that their
24 construction crews could have access to the green
25 space to make it... to work on that.

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2 VINCENT SAPIENZA: So... so we should have
3 the... the super structure up sometime towards the
4 end of 2017. And much of the work after that would
5 then be either inside the building or inside the
6 water body. So it's... it's probably an early to mid-
7 2018 that the community could have that space.

8 ERIC LANDAU: But we'd be looking to
9 begin the discussions with athletic organizations
10 right away.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Right away?

12 ERIC LANDAU: Right away.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Like tomorrow?

14 ERIC LANDAU: If you have one identified
15 absolutely.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And how does
17 that work? Do you have to do some types of public
18 process or you just go into agreement with the
19 local...

20 VINCENT SAPIENZA: Yeah the... the... the
21 way we did it at North River we were approached by
22 a... a community group. It was FC Harlem Soccer who
23 asked if... if we had any sites available for their
24 youth league to use and we did. We had a... an empty
25 lot that was not being used. We worked out a

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2 memorandum of understanding with them to use lot as
3 long as we didn't need it. And... and they have made...
4 made some improvements and they have been
5 maintaining and securing it for about five years
6 now.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: And their field
8 is above your facility.

9 VINCENT SAPIENZA: No actually our
10 facility is essentially enclosed but we do have
11 space just to the east of the facility and... and
12 they're using some of that.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Okay good. I
14 have no further questions. Thank you.

15 ERIC LANDAU: Thank you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you Mr.
17 Chairman.

18 CHAIR KOO: Okay. So I have some
19 questions for the Deputy Commissioner or the
20 Associate Commissioner. How do you get all these
21 air into the water? You have a big fan or...

22 ERIC LANDAU: Yeah so there's... there's...
23 there's three large compressors... this building and
24 they just kind of take outside atmospheric air,
25 compress it, and then pump it into the, the river.

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2 CHAIR KOO: So you have a big fan
3 forcing all this air into the water would you bring
4 up all the bacteria in the water to the... to the
5 air?

6 ERIC LANDAU: So... so we've looked at
7 that. We've studied that extensively. It's... it's a
8 really good question. And the... the grid will be
9 just high enough that the bubbles of air will move
10 upward a certain percentage of that air gets
11 absorbed into the waterway and the rest is just
12 released back into the atmosphere. And there's
13 essentially you know o disturbance of... of sediment
14 or... or anything else. We've done a lot of testing
15 and a lot of evaluation of that.

16 CHAIR KOO: So you won't... you won't
17 affect the air quality in the surrounding area. And
18 then supposing now you have a soccer field or
19 something the people are breathing all this
20 bacteria.

21 ERIC LANDAU: We... we can provide you...
22 We... we... we did a report. We actually wrote a letter
23 to a... a community group called Swim because this
24 isn't the first aeration facility that we have on
25 Newtown Creek. We actually have a... another one

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2 closer to the East River and we provide that report
3 to you.

4 CHAIR KOO: Okay. Thank you. Yeah... Any
5 other questions? Nope? Okay. So thank you very
6 much. No I asked him already. Any member... members
7 have any comments or suggestions? No? Thank you. So
8 we will close the public hearing on this item. So
9 we are moving to the next item, LU number 241,
10 application number 215... no, two... I'm sorry yeah...
11 2015587 HKK, the Brooklyn Public Library/Stone
12 Avenue Branch under Council Member Mealy's
13 district. And we have Gina [phonetic] Jenna Adams
14 from the LPC here to testify. You want to... Thank
15 you. Please identify yourself and... and begin. Yeah.

16 JENNA ADAMS: Good morning Chair Koo and
17 committee members. I'm Jenna Adams, the Director of
18 Intergovernmental Affairs for the Landmarks
19 Preservation Commission. And I'm here today to
20 testify on the commission's designation of the
21 Brooklyn Public Library/Stone Avenue Branch located
22 at 581 Stone Avenue in Brooklyn. Landmarks
23 Preservation Commission had our hearing on this
24 building April 7th of this year. There were five
25 people there speaking in favor of the designation

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2 including a letter from Council Member Mealy whose
3 district represents the site of the library, also a
4 representative from the Brooklyn Public Library
5 Historic Districts Council, Society for the
6 Architecture of the City, Citizens Defending
7 Libraries, and no one in opposition. The Stone
8 Avenue Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library opened
9 in September 1914 funded by a gift from Andrew
10 Cornegy and it was designed by a very notable
11 Brooklyn architect William Tubby and it was
12 originally known as a Brownsville Children's
13 Library and was the only public library of the time
14 to serve only children. And the building itself is
15 notable for many reasons, not sure if you have a
16 photo but it is a two story structure clad with red
17 tapestry brick and trimmed with Indiana buff
18 limestone designed in the Jacobean revival style
19 the library's distinctive projecting corner tower
20 features stone steps and dual entrances with
21 decorative stone plaques of the coat of arms of the
22 Brooklyn Public Library. A stone bandine [phonetic]
23 marks the first and second floor and wraps the
24 building. Decorative stone molding at the tower
25 features carvings referencing characters from

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2 children's books. It's had several rehabilitations
3 and most recently a 1.7 million renovation in 2013
4 which they did quite a bit of work. And this
5 architect William Tubby designed not only this
6 library branch but three other in Brooklyn funded
7 by Carnegie several which have been designated as
8 New York City landmarks. So accordingly the
9 Landmark preservation commission urges you to
10 affirm this designation and let me know if you have
11 any questions, thank you.

12 CHAIR KOO: Thank you. We are also
13 joined by Council Member Mendez. And Council...
14 Council Member Mealy wants to make a statement.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Thank you. I just
16 want to say I am proud to say that it's overdue,
17 this hundred years old I was there when we did the
18 hundred years. And I just put in a lot of new
19 technology in there, the 600 word games, words
20 where children should know by now. And I just want
21 to thank the Mother Gaston family. They were a part
22 of this just as well. And this is the first
23 children library in the world to me period. That's
24 how I say it is. It's the first children library in
25 the world. And one thing I... I... I just feel

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2 disappointed that the Brooklyn library should have
3 taken those vacant lot next door then more people
4 could come to the library. Because right now we
5 will have homeless and mentally right next door to
6 this lot, this historic library. So I am full
7 support of it. And I did meet with the library
8 preservation and everyone trying to make sure that
9 we have people coming from all over the world...
10 could come and maybe park there at this historic
11 library. So I am for it and I thank this... the
12 committee, the HPD, and Land Use Committee, and you
13 Peter Koo for having this... this meeting. And I say
14 aye on this period. Thank you.

15 CHAIR KOO: Thank you. Council Member
16 Barron you have questions?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Just a comment.
18 Thank you Chairman Koo. I do support this
19 landmarking status. And as we all know libraries
20 are so critical at this time in our society where
21 there are so many people who are looking to
22 reinvent themselves and take on second careers. And
23 this particular library is also very important to
24 me because when I was a teacher in Brownsville I
25 used this library to have my students go and do

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2 work. And additionally my predecessor Charles
3 Barron at the time that he was elected had this
4 library in the district before the rezoning. And he
5 did commit 400,000 dollars to major renovations in
6 the library which was able to install a library and
7 do a major renovation of the Heritage House which
8 is located on the second floor of the library. So
9 this is an opportunity for the community to
10 actually be involved in the services that the
11 library provides. The Heritage House is an
12 outgrowth of the Carter G. Woodson Society for the
13 Study of African American Life and Culture. And
14 then as was said by my colleague the Rosetta Gaston
15 Society. The Rosetta Gaston as a community member
16 was a strong advocate for education and for
17 children. So we're very pleased that this is come
18 for Landmark Status and we do support it as well.
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIR KOO: Thank you Council Member
21 Barron. Questions from our members? What about from
22 the public? No? This application is...

23 [background comments]

24 CHAIR KOO: Oh, okay. Thank you. So this
25 application is closed. This public hearing is

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2 closed yeah, sorry. So now we go to land use item
3 number 242, application number 20155741 TAX, tax.

4 Hmm. It's Paratransit facility in Council Member
5 Vacca's district. And we have Joseph Colletti,
6 senior VP from the NYEDC and Charlie Samboy
7 Assistant Vice President. They're going to testify
8 for us. Please identify yourself and start now.

9 JOSEPH COLLETTI: Sure. Good afternoon I
10 think now Chairman Koo, members of the subcommittee
11 on Landmarks, Public Siting, and Maritime Uses. I'm
12 Joe Colletti, Senior Vice President of the New York
13 City Economic Development Corporation. I'm here to
14 speak about the application for relocation of MTA
15 Peratransit facility from its current site at 65
16 Commercial Street in Greenpoint, Brooklyn to 1120
17 Commerce Avenue located in the Zerega Avenue
18 section of the Bronx. Pursuant to Section 1266-C5
19 of the New York State Public Authorities Law we're
20 required to submit this application for review and
21 approval to New York City Council. Just a little
22 background to begin. The 2005 Greenpoint
23 Williamsburg rezoning outlined plans for the
24 construction of a waterfront esplanade and related
25 open spaces along two miles of Brooklyn's East

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2 River waterfront including the creation of the
3 future Box Street Park at 65 Commercial Street. The
4 site is currently occupied by two MTA operations; a
5 Paratransit facility and emergency response unit
6 along with some additional uses. In order for the
7 city to proceed with the design and construction of
8 Box Street park the MTA must fully vacate 65
9 Commercial Street and relocate to a suitable
10 location. As defined in the points of agreement
11 established with the city council during the 2005
12 rezoning the city agreed to identify an alternative
13 location for the MTA Paratransit facility and
14 provide capital funding for the relocation and
15 creation of new open space. The city completed a
16 search of appropriate city owned sites across
17 various agencies. And the parcel zone N1 at 1120
18 Commerce... in the Bronx is identified as the most
19 suitable relocation for the MTA Paratransit
20 facility. Approximately 14 million dollars was also
21 previously allocated by the city for the creation
22 of the open space and to cover the cost of the
23 relocation of the current MTA facilities. EDC's
24 role will be to manage the design, remediation, and
25 construction on behalf of the city and the Parks

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2 Department for a one story.. or for the MTA on a one
3 story building on the 1120 Commerce Ave site in the
4 Bronx that will house MTA offices and training
5 facilities for Paratransit operators. The site has
6 existing contamination that will be addressed and
7 cleaned up prior to construction of the new MTA
8 facility. As part of the project a public sidewalk
9 will also be enhanced with new trees and plantings.
10 Only a portion of the parcel closest to Commerce
11 Ave will be developed to house the relocated
12 Paratransit facility. Environmental investigation
13 is already underway at the site and pending city
14 council approval EDC anticipates remediation and
15 construction to begin as early as the end of this
16 year. On the facility itself according to the MTA
17 activity on the premises will include asset
18 recovery of select vehicle equipment as well as
19 training of drivers and maintenance staff on the
20 operation and maintenance of vehicle systems. The
21 facility will also serve as a center for the
22 receiving of new vehicles until commissioned and
23 dispersed to operators based at various other
24 locations. Old.. old vehicles will be held on site
25 until decommissioned and either sold, released, or

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2 disposed of. A maximum of approximately 150
3 vehicles can be on site at one time and vehicles
4 will not be transiting continuously to and from the
5 facility on a regular basis as is common with
6 access-a-ride operations. The MTA expects operating
7 hours to be from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with
8 approximately three permitted staff on site daily.
9 We respectfully request the approval of this
10 application by the subcommittee which will allow
11 the city to move closer to fulfilling its
12 commitment to build Box Street Park. Now I'm happy
13 to answer any of your questions. Thank you.

14 CHAIR KOO: Council Member Levin.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very
16 much Mr. Chairman. Wow. I'm very excited. This was
17 a day that I was... I was unsure would ever come. So
18 I'm very happy to have EDC testifying in front of
19 us today. I want to thank Council Member Vacca for
20 his... for his welcoming of the facility to his
21 district. And you know this is a big deal for the
22 Williamsburg-Greenpoint Community. This is at this
23 point about 10 years and one month after the
24 commitment was... was... was first made to make this
25 happen. I'm sure that you guys were not at EDC at

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2 the time. But it took a lot of work to make... to
3 make this a reality. The mayor's office Carol E.
4 Fink [phonetic] worked really hard on making this
5 happen. We worked very closely with the MTA on
6 identifying replacement sites, Lois Tandler and...
7 and everyone that works with her at MTA and... and my
8 staff. So Rommie Medal [sp?] who's my Chief of
9 Staff. He started working on this issue, I think he
10 was an intern for my predecessor. And... and... and
11 then Ashley Thompson who was my Chief of Staff
12 worked on this issue for... for like four years while
13 she was my chief of staff. And... and so this is
14 really... this is really great. This is going to mean
15 a brand new park that is going to have one of the
16 most exquisite views of Manhattan of any park in
17 New York City. It's going to be a... it's going to
18 get a lot of use. Likely will have active and
19 passive recreational uses. And... and so we're just
20 very excited. Thank you very much for... for your
21 diligence on this and for working through what is...
22 you know what was really a... a seemingly unworkable
23 situation and... and working together with other
24 agencies; the MTA and... and every other agency you
25 had to work with to... to make this a reality. So

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2 thank you. I vote aye... I... I encourage my colleagues
3 to... to vote aye on this one please.

4 CHAIR KOO: Thank you Council Member
5 Levin. Any members have any questions? Nope? So
6 thank you very much. Any members from... any comments
7 from the public? No? Seeing none this public
8 hearing is closed.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I'm posting this
10 on the North Brooklyn Facebook page as we speak so
11 that... so that everybody in North Brooklyn knows
12 this is happening. So we going to take a vote and...
13 on... on those three items we just heard. And we will
14 vote as... as one right? Coupled together. So the
15 Chair recommend a yes vote, yeah.

16 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Chair Koo.

17 CHAIR KOO: Aye.

18 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Council Member
19 Mendez.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I vote aye on
21 all. And I'd like to congratulate Council Member
22 Mealy and the Barrons for their work in... in
23 preserving this library and our history for our
24 communities.

25

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2 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Council Member
3 Levin.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I vote aye on all
5 and congratulations to Council Members Mealy and
6 Barron as well.

7 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Council Member
8 Barron.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I vote aye on
10 all.

11 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Council Member
12 Kallos.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I vote aye on
14 all and congratulations to Council Members Barron,
15 Mealy, and Council Member Levin and his extended
16 staff including Rommie and Ashley. Great work.

17 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Land Use Items 241,
18 242, and 243 are approved with five votes in the
19 affirmative, zero in the negative, and zero
20 abstentions. They're referred to the full Land Use
21 Committee.

22 CHAIR KOO: We going to leave the vote
23 open for 15 minutes. So meeting's adjourned? Yeah.
24 Meeting's adjourned.

25 [gavel]

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UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Council Member

Arroyo.

COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Aye.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Land Use numbers

241, 242, and 243 are approved by a vote of six in

the affirmative, zero in the negative, and zero

abstentions and they're referred to the full Land

Use Committee.

COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Okay that

concludes the Landmark Committee for June 22nd.

[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 June 26, 2015