

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

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December 15, 2015

Start: 1:24 p.m.

Recess: 1:57 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: BRAD S. LANDER  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Inez E. Dickens  
Donald R. Garodnick  
Ydanis A. Rodriguez  
Margaret S. Chin  
Deborah L. Rose  
Jumaane D. Williams  
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.  
Mark Levine  
Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito  
Steven Matteo

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



2 [sound check, pause]

3 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: We're good? Thank  
4 you. [gavel] Good afternoon and welcome to the New  
5 York City Council's Committee on Rules, Privileges  
6 and Elections. My name is Brad Lander. I chair the  
7 committee. We're joined this morning by Council  
8 Member Debbie Rose from Staten Island, Council Member  
9 Mark Levine from Manhattan and Minority Leader Steve  
10 Matteo from Staten Island and the guest Council  
11 Member Daneek Miller from Queens. And I also wanted  
12 to acknowledge our attorney Hamid Hussein, and as  
13 always thank our--the staff of our Investigative Unit  
14 Chuck Davis, Deandra Johnson and Alysia Rachel.  
15 There's actually--and we're now joined by Council  
16 Member Margaret Chin as well. There are two items on  
17 the calendar for this meeting, and let me be clear  
18 we're going to do part one of the hearing today where  
19 we have a--have a hearing with Hope Knight, who I'll  
20 discuss in just a minute. And then, we will vote on  
21 both items tomorrow. We're not going to vote today.  
22 Today, we'll have our hearing and an opportunity to  
23 ask questions, and--and meet the nominee. And then  
24 as is typical in this committee we wait at least one  
25 day to think about and we have a vote.

2 The two items on this calendar first  
3 members you have before you a resolution authorizing  
4 the Speaker to file or join a amicus brief on behalf  
5 of the Council in support of the Council's previous  
6 approvals related to the development of Willets  
7 Point. The brief will be filed in connection with  
8 the case currently pending in the New York State  
9 Court of Appeals captioned *Avella et al. v. City of*  
10 *New York*. And if members have questions about that  
11 we can talk about them at the end after we--after we  
12 interview Ms. Knight or we can talk about the  
13 tomorrow at the hearing before we vote. But I'll  
14 just clarify a couple of things first. The  
15 resolution is to join or file an amicus brief of the  
16 Council in which--in a suit in which we are already  
17 named. As you know, last term the Council voted  
18 overwhelmingly to adopt the Willets Point rezoning.  
19 That has become the subject of litigation. That case  
20 is now on appeal, and the Council having been named  
21 in that suit intends to file an amicus brief  
22 depending on our actions in approving that--in  
23 approving that rezoning in the prior term. So I will  
24 also find there was one news article about it  
25 yesterday, which got one item wrong, actually two

2 items wrong. They said we were going to vote today.  
3 We're not voting until tomorrow. Where substantively  
4 it implied that there's a time limit on the filing of  
5 the amicus, which is not the case. There has been--  
6 the appeal has been granted, but no dates have been  
7 set for the filing of papers or motions. So we don't  
8 know what the time line is for the filing of the  
9 amicus. That's all I'm going to say about that for  
10 now. If people have questions about it, we can talk  
11 about after we get the opportunity to meet and talk  
12 to Ms. Knight and we can as well talk about it  
13 tomorrow at the meeting before we vote.

14 So, moving to today's hearing, we have  
15 the pleasure of meeting Hope Knight. In a letter  
16 dated December 20--2nd, 2015, Mayor de Blasio  
17 formally submitted her name to the Council for it's  
18 advice and consent regarding her appointment to the  
19 New York City Planning Commission, and today the  
20 Council will consider whether to give its advice and  
21 consent. If appointed to the City Planning  
22 Commission, Ms. Knight will succeed Boni Jong (sp?)  
23 and serve the remainder of her five-year term  
24 expiring June 30, 2018. Pursuant to the New York  
25 City Charter, the Planning Commission must consist of

2 13 members with seven appointments including the  
3 Chair and made by the Mayor, and one appointment each  
4 by the Public Advocate and each of the borough  
5 presidents. All members except for the Chair--I  
6 always wondered why this is--are subject to the  
7 advice and consent of the Council. According to the  
8 Charter, the members should be chosen for their  
9 independence, integrity and civic commitment. They  
10 serve staggered five-year terms except for the Chair  
11 who serves at the pleasure of the Mayor who also is  
12 the Director of the Department of City Planning.  
13 Other than the Chair, they're not considered regular  
14 city employees, and there's no limitation on the  
15 number of terms they may serve, but they can't hold  
16 any other city office while on the City Planning  
17 Commission. The Chair receives a salary of \$214,413.  
18 The Vice Chair and annual salary of \$65,121 and the  
19 other members an annual salary of \$54,150. I am not  
20 going to go through all of the responsibilities of  
21 the City Planning Commission. I think fellow Council  
22 members and members of the public are aware  
23 especially this week when they're set tomorrow to  
24 have a varied hearing with many eyes on them, on  
25 mayor mandatory inclusionary housing and zoning for

2 quality and affordability. But obviously through the  
3 ULURP process and Charter they have an array of  
4 Charter provided duties and very important duties.  
5 So--so we're lucky to have the opportunity to--to  
6 meet Ms. Knight, who all of the information, her  
7 resume or opening statement, some articles about her.  
8 A long and impressive career in the fields of  
9 planning and land use are in the red binder. And  
10 Lyle, let me ask Ms. Knight if you'll raise your hand  
11 to be sworn in by Committee Counsel.

12 LEGAL COUNSEL: Welcome, Ms. Knight.  
13 Would you please--Do you swear or affirm that you  
14 will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but  
15 the truth in the testimony that you are about to  
16 provide?

17 HOPE KNIGHT: I do.

18 LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: And so, if you can  
20 proceed to give your opening statement, and then  
21 we'll have questions afterwards, and I'll again just  
22 point out for members the answers to the pre-hearing  
23 questions are in your--in your book.

24 HOPE KNIGHT: Good afternoon Chairman  
25 Lander and members of the Rules, Privileges and

2 Elections Committee. My name is Hope Knight, and I'm  
3 honored to have the opportunity to appear before you  
4 as I am considered for an appointment to the New York  
5 City Planning Commission. I am a very proud New  
6 Yorker who was born in New York City, raised in East  
7 Harlem, and continue to be a resident of Manhattan.  
8 I have lived in the city for my entire life with the  
9 exception of a three--a brief three-year period when  
10 I lived in Northern New Jersey. (sic) While my  
11 mother was born in New York City, my father came to  
12 New York seeing the opportunity to pursue graduate  
13 studies. He was able to pursue and complete a PhD  
14 and was employed as a professor the City University  
15 of New York where he spent most of his career. Like  
16 my father, so many people come here seeking access to  
17 better opportunities and the challenge for the city  
18 is ensuring that it is able to manage growth in the  
19 population while balancing the needs of a unique and  
20 diverse set of communities.

21 The mission of the City Planning  
22 Commission is to make comprehensive and thoughtful  
23 land use decisions that seek to improve the  
24 communities of this city while accommodating for  
25 future growth. I have spent a significant portion of

2 my career in professional affiliations focused on  
3 creating equal access to opportunities for  
4 underserved communities. Currently, I serve as  
5 President and CEO of the Greater Jamaica Development  
6 Corporation. In this role I manage an organization  
7 that plans, coordinates, and advances responsible  
8 development with a transit focus. For more than a  
9 dozen years, I was Chief Operating Officer at the  
10 Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone, also known as UMEZ.  
11 The work at UMEZ with Senator Brand (sic) using  
12 public funding and tax incentives to stimulate  
13 private investment. The goals for this investment  
14 were to develop mixed use in retail facilities to  
15 create access to goods and services for local  
16 residents, stabilize and strengthen the cultural  
17 infrastructure, provide access to capital to small  
18 businesses, and fund demand-driven, sector-based  
19 workforce development initiatives that were  
20 responsive to the needs of both employers and local  
21 residents.

22 I believe that the strength of my  
23 background in economic development and the breadth of  
24 my experience in community building positions me to  
25 be able to become an informed, thoughtful and

2 diligent member of the City Planning Commission. I  
3 thank you for the opportunity to discuss my design to  
4 serve in the City Planning Commission, and if  
5 provided advice and consent, look forward to working  
6 with the City Council. I'm happy to answer any  
7 questions that you have.

8 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very much  
9 for that opening statement, and--and I'll just say  
10 having had the chance to review your resume and to  
11 talk to you a little in advance and to review your  
12 answers, you know, it's--you've got a--a deep history  
13 in the city with these issues of planning and land  
14 use, and I give the Mayor credit in nominating you  
15 for the Commission. Before we get to substantive  
16 questions, I just want to dispatch with the conflicts  
17 issue. You are the President and CEO of Greater  
18 Jamaica Development Corporation, which does a variety  
19 of business with the City. So you sought and  
20 received COIB guidance. That's not atypical.  
21 Several other members of the Planning Commission have  
22 comparable relationships. You sought and received  
23 guidance from the New York City Conflicts of Interest  
24 Board. Can you just characterize broadly that--what

2 they said, and tell us the steps you are going to  
3 follow?

4 HOPE KNIGHT: Absolutely. So, you know,  
5 so besides the sort of basic conflict issue with  
6 respect to my role as President of the Greater  
7 Jamaica Development Corporation, I have provided for  
8 this notion of empowering my senior staff who have  
9 gleaned expertise and significant experience and are  
10 able to make decisions based on the project nature of  
11 the work that gets done. And we will create a  
12 firewall so that I do not have any action with the  
13 people that I am per--you know, that I am not  
14 permitted to appear before.

15 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Great, and do you  
16 mind just characterizing. So does that mean anything  
17 that-- You know, how do you understand that--the COIB  
18 guidance in terms of what you're not supposed to--

19 HOPE KNIGHT: Sure. So there are a  
20 number of entities that I cannot appear before, the  
21 community board, City Council people, the offices of  
22 the borough president, anything related land use or  
23 planning, City Hall. So I am not to appear before  
24 any of those bodies.

2 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Great, and I'll just  
3 refer members to the full letter from COIB, which is  
4 in your packet, but you--you're committed to  
5 following COIB's advice?

6 HOPE KNIGHT: I--I have read the COIB  
7 letter, and I intend to abide by that.

8 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: So--so I'm just  
9 going to ask one opening question because now we've  
10 been joined by Council Members Garodnick and Mealy.  
11 I think members may have questions as well, but  
12 having worked in--in two neighborhoods pretty in-  
13 depth--

14 HOPE KNIGHT: [interposing] Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: --you have a real  
16 on-the-ground perspective on the challenges--  
17 strengths and challenges presented by planning and  
18 growth and development. And it's no secret that in  
19 the city at this moment those issues are very much on  
20 many people's minds. And you I'm sure have been  
21 reading the news reports specifically around the  
22 mandatory inclusionary housing and zoning for  
23 equality and affordability in East New York  
24 proposals. But really more broadly we're at a moment  
25 when the issues of density and affordability and

2 development and neighborhood and infrastructure are  
3 much on people's minds in--in ways that some people  
4 are very anxious about and concerned about the  
5 different things, the erosion of the neighborhood  
6 quality of life, or displacement. And I guess, you  
7 know, just broadly what do you feel like you've  
8 learned from working on the ground in neighborhoods  
9 trying to balance growth and investment with making  
10 neighborhoods work for the people who love there and  
11 work there, and how will you bring that experience to  
12 your tenure on the Planning Commission?

13 HOPE KNIGHT: So, you know, as you know,  
14 I have worked in two very distinct communities, Upper  
15 Manhattan and now in Jamaica and they're--they're  
16 very different places. You know, the challenge is  
17 that, you know, you try to manage growth, create  
18 opportunities for residents that are there while  
19 understanding the unique context and character of a  
20 community. And so, it's very important to have  
21 community input with respect to, you know, land use  
22 decisions that have to be made for these communities.  
23 You know, I in the past have sat at the table, you  
24 know, as community providing input to concerns  
25 related to, you know, looking at managing growth.

2 And so, you know, it's just very important that  
3 communities are able to provide their input not only,  
4 you know, considered during the ULURP process, but in  
5 Planning. So very early in the process so that plans  
6 can be made to accommodate all of the sort of city  
7 services that, you know, you want to have--be put  
8 online, infrastructure, open space, parks, schools.  
9 Those things we thought about very early on in the  
10 planning process for communities.

11 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Right, I'm tempted  
12 to ask follow-up questions, but I'm going to wait  
13 actually, and let other Council members ask theirs,  
14 and if I have others, I may come back at the end.  
15 Minority Leader Matteo to kick us off.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Thank you, Chair  
17 Lander. Thank you for reaching out last week. I was  
18 very appreciative that you called and, you know, to  
19 have discussions with us prior. I--I just want to  
20 start with--with--I'm just curious on your first  
21 question on who recommended you. I'd just like to  
22 know. I know you said you don't know who recommended  
23 you, but when someone comes to, you know, look to be  
24 appointed, I just want to know, you know, how it  
25 began. So did you use your name someone on a list?

2 It says you don't know who recommended you, but did  
3 you like apply? Did you show an interest?

4 HOPE KNIGHT: [interposing] I--I--I  
5 didn't--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Or just--I'm just  
7 surprised on your first answer that you don't know--  
8 you don't know who recommended you. So I'm just  
9 interested in--

10 HOPE KNIGHT: [interposing] Right.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: --how it all came  
12 about.

13 HOPE KNIGHT: So I did not, you know,  
14 seek this position. I didn't apply but the Mayor's  
15 Office of Appointments did reach out to me to ask me  
16 if I would be interested in--in looking at this, you  
17 know, as a role. So that's how the conversation got  
18 started.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: So it seriously  
20 didn't come from you at all--

21 HOPE KNIGHT: [interposing] No.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: --like you were--  
23 you were called.

24 HOPE KNIGHT: No.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Just interested.  
3 I don't think I've seen that answer before. Thank  
4 you. You know Staten Island, you know, the--the  
5 borough that I represent, you know, we have unique  
6 challenges and, you know, part of when my  
7 constituents or even elected officials come to the  
8 commission, they feel like decisions are already made  
9 and their voices aren't heard especially my  
10 constituents. So, you know, I guess I'm kind of  
11 asking what kind of weight would you consider from--  
12 from local constituents who are going to be impacted  
13 greatly by decisions that come before the commission,  
14 you know, and, you know, local community opinion  
15 whether it's for or against, and what kind of weight  
16 do you--will you--will you take when someone comes up  
17 and takes time out of their day and takes off from  
18 work and checks into the city and, you know, wants to  
19 voice their support or opposition to a project?

20 HOPE KNIGHT: So, you know, tremendously.  
21 You know residents, constituents and stakeholders,  
22 you know, understand what's going on in their  
23 community and have strong opinions about what should  
24 happen there. And so, you know, I think that the  
25 process accommodates, you know, the ability to hear

2 these opinions, and the community board is able to  
3 make recommendations during the ULURP process, and  
4 all of that would get--work through in the ULURP  
5 process when City Planning would have hearings to  
6 hear this. And so I would put tremendous weight on  
7 what the community has to say because I sat at the  
8 table one time to do that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: I appreciate  
10 that. You know, part of the--part of the frustration  
11 on Staten Island, and I'm sure my other colleagues  
12 can attest to, is the lack of resources in City  
13 Planning and with community groups that are trying  
14 for--whether it's re-zonings or other applications  
15 that can't get through because City Planning, you  
16 know, tells us they don't have the staff and-- You  
17 know, so things are always in a holding pattern. It  
18 just seems that whatever is going before the  
19 commission is being dictated by others not from the  
20 local grassroots and, you know, that's an--that's an  
21 issue we certainly face. And the frustration I  
22 personally have with [coughs] City Planning in just  
23 trying to get, you know, some amendments, you know,  
24 moved forward, and then we have a commit--a  
25 commission hearing that has nothing to do with what

2 we're trying to do on the ground.(sic) I'm just  
3 wondering if you--if you have any opinion on that,  
4 and your thoughts on City Planning as a whole.

5 HOPE KNIGHT: So I can't speak to the  
6 resources that City Planning has specifically, but I  
7 will say that, you know, it's important that  
8 communities do have the resources to support efforts  
9 in planning. And, you know, that's something that if  
10 I were confirmed would take under serious  
11 consideration.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: I appreciate that  
13 and one final question. You know, we have a number  
14 of challenges that we face with respect to land use,  
15 affordability issues and our growing aging  
16 population, you know. So, what--to what extent do  
17 these challenges weigh on your mind in--in making  
18 land use decisions, and are you aware of, you know,  
19 the unique challenges we all face each of us in our  
20 borough. And then the general--the ones I just, you  
21 know, the aging issue of affordability. You know, if  
22 you could just speak to that a little bit, I'd  
23 appreciate it.

24 HOPE KNIGHT: Absolutely. So as you  
25 mentioned, there are many challenges. You know, how

2 do you house, you know, an increasingly aging  
3 population? You know, we have this affordability  
4 crisis, and I think that, you know, it's important  
5 that we just consider the fact that this is real and  
6 we have to really put forth the effort to understand  
7 and work with the community to deal with some of  
8 these issues.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Um, and--and, you  
10 know, finally to just make a statement. You know, if  
11 you're--you know, if you're put through and  
12 appointed, I would like you to, you know, meet with--  
13 with me and my colleagues to discuss, you know,  
14 Staten Island's unique challenges that we have. I  
15 think it's--it--it would be beneficial for you to  
16 hear it directly from us, and I look forward to that,  
17 and I'll send it back to the chair. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you, Minority  
19 Leader. You know, it--some of his questions raised  
20 for me an issue that I think you have a good  
21 perspective on that members and other communities are  
22 really feeling at the moment. As a result of UMEZ  
23 and Greater Jamaica, those two communities have a--  
24 sort of a neighborhood--rooted in the neighborhood,  
25 and yet fairly well resourced planning and

2 development arm. So when it's time to consider land  
3 use actions, it's not only whatever City Hall or City  
4 Planning says, and it's not only kind of Zoning will  
5 work out the infrastructure issues later. There's a  
6 rooted ability to do proactive continuous somewhat  
7 more neighborhood scale comprehensive planning to get  
8 infrastructure in place, and to be thinking about  
9 what's necessary to make neighborhoods work amidst  
10 growth. And I think it--it can certainly--most  
11 neighborhoods don't have that in place, and it's much  
12 harder, therefore, for those issues to get addressed  
13 and residents to feel, businesses to feel like those  
14 issues stay front and center. So, I hope you can  
15 help think about how to bring that. You know, see  
16 the gaps caused where those neighborhoods where  
17 neighborhoods don't have it and bring that  
18 perspective to helping make sure that whatever the  
19 community is, those issues are getting addressed and  
20 not just--

21 HOPE KNIGHT: [interposing] Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Okay, so--and I'll  
23 just put a red flag I guess on the--on the--who  
24 recommended you issue. It's certainly plausible to  
25 me that if someone were assigned go find people who

2 would be good members [laughs] of the Planning  
3 Commission that they put you on the--on the list, and  
4 you have a lo of connections with the Planning  
5 Commission, the de Blasio Administration. There are  
6 plenty of people you work closely with who might have  
7 internally suggested you.

8 HOPE KNIGHT: That--that is correct.

9 Yes, so, yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: And this happened  
11 and I'll just flag it, and talk e to the  
12 Administration about it. They clearly have a  
13 process. Obviously, some people apply, and then  
14 there's a process that Rachael Louder (sp?) and her  
15 team lead where they develop a list of candidates for  
16 the positions they're seeking. We always lead with  
17 that question, and where it was developed internally.  
18 It's a little bit of a black box to us. Okay.  
19 Council Member Levine and then Council Member  
20 Garodnick.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you, Mr.  
22 Chair. I mostly just wanted to vouch for a nearly  
23 20-year relationship with Ms. Knight. She is  
24 universally well respected in her years and your  
25 years at UMEZ, and I was thrilled to see your name

2 come up for nomination. You are clearly highly  
3 qualified by any standard, and I'm grateful that  
4 you've accepted this challenge. One of your goals  
5 and maybe your first official action depending on the  
6 timing of all this will be on the QA and MIH,  
7 definitely a trial by fire. I know that you haven't  
8 had the benefit of all of the briefings and the  
9 internal discussions. But you're probably aware that  
10 one of the arguments driving the rejection by so many  
11 community boards and borough boards of these  
12 proposals was the sense of existing residents that  
13 new development of any sort, especially development  
14 with luxury housing, drives up land values so much in  
15 the surrounding neighborhood that it could displace  
16 everybody intentionally or not. Do you accept that  
17 or how do you respond to that fear?

18 HOPE KNIGHT: You know, it is, you know,  
19 a tough challenge because clearly, you know, with the  
20 addition of market rate housing that gets developed,  
21 that's going to put pressure on other sources of  
22 housing. I think it's--it's a legitimate fear, but  
23 on the other hand, we have to balance that with the  
24 fact that, you know, there is an affordability  
25 crisis. And, in order to create more affordable

2 units, you know, we have to look at various land use  
3 tools to implement, you know, the possibility of  
4 creating these units. And so, I think that MIH and  
5 the QA they're all components of the Mayor's New York  
6 Housing Plan, and will have to be, you know, greatly  
7 considered to support the growth of new housing.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: And the last  
9 question. To what extent do you include open space  
10 as one of the components of infrastructure that we  
11 have to account for when we grow a population of a  
12 neighborhood?

13 HOPE KNIGHT: I think that opens space is  
14 very important to community, and it needs to be  
15 considered, you know, in the context of all the other  
16 kind of infrastructure that gets considered when  
17 planning. And, I think that open space should be a  
18 part of, you know, any planning process in the  
19 community.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Thank you very  
21 much.

22 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you. Council  
23 Member Garodnick.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: You know, I'm  
25 --I'm not going to pretend that all of my questions

2 that I had weren't just asked and answered. So, I'm  
3 going to leave you be except to say that obviously  
4 you have a very, very impressive background here, and  
5 I think that you would be very well suited for--for  
6 this role. And also, Ms. Knight is a constituent of  
7 mine, and so she gets extra bonus points for that as  
8 far as I'm concerned, and so with that I will defer.

9 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: [laughs] Very good.  
10 Council Member Chin.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay, that is a big  
12 plus, a constituents of yours. We'll take that as a  
13 serous consideration. [laughs] Good afternoon and  
14 thank you for reaching out last week, and we had a  
15 chance to chat. And, I mean looking at some of the  
16 questions that you responded like my district. I  
17 represent Lower Manhattan, and we have tremendous  
18 density in a certain part of my district down here.  
19 And--and the whole issue of air rights and people  
20 being able to build bigger and taller, and also as-  
21 of-right. So the city, you know, we're--we're not  
22 able to capture the benefits back to the community  
23 whether it's building a school, or other  
24 infrastructure, open space or improving trans--  
25 transportation system. So I'm really interested in--

2 in the way--talking to you about really having City  
3 Planning looking at issues of as-of-right  
4 developments and these transfer of air rights that's  
5 happening in the city. And at the same time, we're  
6 not reaping the benefits, and we're not getting  
7 contributions, you know, to help support our  
8 infrastructure. So going forward, how can--how can  
9 you help with that issue?

10 HOPE KNIGHT: So it's my understanding  
11 that there is a study happening in your district a  
12 land use study. And I think that, you know, there's a  
13 unique opportunity to think about, you know, what's  
14 happening in the community, and how can zoning  
15 changes be made to help capture some of what needs to  
16 happen with respect to infrastructure. You know,  
17 changes are happening in your community, and they  
18 probably were unanticipated. And so, being able to  
19 go back and look at these things that are happening  
20 through this study, getting community and stakeholder  
21 input maybe--you may be able to lead a process sort of  
22 to make some zoning changes that help support  
23 infrastructure maintenance. And creating more of it  
24 for this growth that's happening all in your  
25 community.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah, I think  
3 that's--that's--that's the way to do it because only-  
4 -often times we only look at big rezoning.

5 HOPE KNIGHT: Right.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: You know, we're not  
7 going back and really looking at things that were  
8 rezoned in the past. I mean one of the other parts  
9 of my district is the--the SoHo area where a lot of  
10 the manufacturing, you know, space is being lost, and  
11 it's being converted into luxury condos. And the  
12 developers are coming in all, you know, all the time  
13 counseling for special permits. And so now, you  
14 know, now we are really trying to revisit and see  
15 how, you know, to do some changes. You know, it  
16 doesn't have to be a big rezoning to really try to  
17 address those issues that's coming up.

18 HOPE KNIGHT: Right.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So I look forward  
20 to working with you on that.

21 HOPE KNIGHT: Thank you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you. Council  
24 Member Mealy.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Thank you. I'm  
3 just--she's definitely qualified. I want to--I'm  
4 glad it's in your district, but one thing I wanted to  
5 think about just talking and hearing my colleagues  
6 talk about the air rights are being transferred. And  
7 you saying that you understand that the Mayor's  
8 position is that we need more affordability of  
9 housing, but what is your stand on the poor door  
10 housing? Being on the Planning Committee, that is  
11 the first stop right there in regards to knowing that  
12 no one should feel that just because they're getting  
13 affordable housing they should have to walk around  
14 the corner when everyone else is walking in through  
15 the front door? So that's my main question. How  
16 would be on this committee really think about that  
17 and change that?

18 HOPE KNIGHT: So--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: [interposing] I  
20 think even though we do need affordable housing--

21 HOPE KNIGHT: [interposing] Right.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: --but air rights  
23 and how they're changing is not good for the city.

24 HOPE KNIGHT: Right. I think that the  
25 concept of having income diversity in one location is

2 a significant one, and that should be, you know, a  
3 part of kind of any planning--affordable housing  
4 plan. I know that the Mayor has incorporated some of  
5 those elements into the housing plan. And so I think  
6 that--it's one of those things that has to be  
7 considered. I think that, you know, the focus should  
8 be on creating income diversity within, you know, one  
9 structure.

10 [pause]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Even though he has  
12 it, some--is there anyway you would be thinking of  
13 anyway we could change that being on that board?  
14 Because it's--it's--to me it's not good for the city,  
15 but knowing that the Mayor has already started it, I  
16 just hope that you can sit on that board and kind of  
17 deviate the conversation from--from doing that  
18 because it is to me discrimination. So I thank you,  
19 and I'm glad that you're going to be on this  
20 committee. I know you're going to do a great job.

21 HOPE KNIGHT: Thank you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: I--I can't resist  
24 asking your--resist asking--I'm not going to ask, you  
25 know, your opinion on the three big rezoning actions

2 coming before the City Planning Commission, but it's  
3 a--it is an exciting time to be joining the City  
4 Planning Commission.

5 HOPE KNIGHT: [interposing] Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: This as I understand  
7 it, you know, so we'll--we'll vote tomorrow, and then  
8 as soon as we vote because Boni Jong (sp?) already  
9 left. The Mayor could appoint you right away. So  
10 you won't be--you wouldn't be on the Commission for  
11 tomorrow's hearing. But assuming that they don't  
12 vote tomorrow, you know, they vote in another couple  
13 of weeks, you would--you would quite likely--would be  
14 on the Commission in time for the vote. So I--I just  
15 wonder, you know, what your thoughts--do you have any  
16 thoughts about joining the Commission at a time when  
17 such a--you know, when the public spotlight is on it  
18 in ways that are, you know, out of the ordinary. And  
19 it usually has quite so many articles focused on the  
20 Planning Commission. And so many New Yorkers engaged  
21 through the dialogue, which has--says the papers have  
22 reported has not been--has not been the smoothest of  
23 conversations in the borough boards and the community  
24 boards?

2 HOPE KNIGHT: So, you know, it is a tough  
3 time to--to join up the City Planning Commission. I  
4 understand that if I were to be appointed, but what I  
5 would say is that they issue is so important to the  
6 City. You know, it's critical to the growth in the  
7 future. You know, there is this affordability  
8 crisis. We've got to figure out what the land use  
9 tools are available to us to help us address this.  
10 And so, you know, I hope that I am able to bring this  
11 community planning and economic development back and-  
12 -and perspective to this decision making process.  
13 And, you know, be able to consider these issues in a  
14 very thoughtful way.

15 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Well, I just want to  
16 say I feel encouraged by that. You know, peaking as  
17 someone who on the one hand is broadly supportive of  
18 the goals of the Administration and--and these  
19 applications as--as well. But who is concerned that  
20 the focus on infrastructure, the focus on community  
21 needs and priorities in investments, and indeed the  
22 focus on economic development are not at the level  
23 that we need them to be in the planning dialogue.  
24 That you're--you're coming on at a very good time,  
25 and I hope you'll bring your voice to those issues as

2 they come before the Planning Commission right away,  
3 and we'll look to--to that as well as we pick those  
4 issues up here, and try to figure out how to move  
5 them forward. Any other questions from any of my  
6 colleagues? All right, if not, we'll close [pause]  
7 Thank you for--for your time with us. As I said, we  
8 are going to recess this hearing and reopen it  
9 tomorrow to vote in the morning. 10:30? At 10:30 I  
10 will reopen this hearing and vote in advance of the  
11 Stated Meeting, and for those members who were not  
12 here at the beginning of this meeting, I will just  
13 call your attention to the fact that we have a second  
14 item on the calendar that we'll be voting n tomorrow,  
15 which is the Resolution authorizing the Speaker to  
16 file or join an amicus brief on behalf of the Council  
17 in the case *Avella v. City of New York* currently on  
18 appeal at the New York Court of Appeals regarding the  
19 Council's previous approval of the development plan  
20 for Willets Point, and we will consider that and vote  
21 on it as well as on Ms. Knight's nomination tomorrow.  
22 With that, this committee stands in recess. [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date December 18, 2015