

Hope Knight
City Council Hearing
Opening Statement

December 15, 2015

Good Morning, Chairman Lander, and Members of the Rules, Privileges, and Elections Committee, my name is Hope Knight and I am honored to have the opportunity to appear before you as I am considered for an appointment to the New York City Planning Commission.

I am a very proud New Yorker who was born in New York City, raised in East Harlem and continue to be a resident of Manhattan. I have lived in the City for my entire life with the exception of a brief 3 year period, when I lived and worked in Asia.

While my mother was born in New York City, my father came to New York seeking opportunity to pursue graduate studies. He was able to pursue and complete a PhD and was employed as a Professor at the City University of New York, where he spent most of his career.

Like my father, so many people come here seeking access to better opportunities and the challenge for this City is ensuring that it is able to manage growth in the population while balancing the needs of a unique and diverse set of communities.

The mission of the City Planning Commission is to make comprehensive and thoughtful land use decisions that seek to improve the communities of this City while accommodating future growth.

I have spent a significant portion of my career and professional affiliations focused on creating equal access to opportunities for underserved communities. Currently, I serve as President and CEO of the Greater Jamaica Development Corporation. In this role, I manage an organization that plans, coordinates, and advances responsible development with a transit-oriented focus. For more than a dozen years, I was Chief Operating Officer of the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone (UMEZ). The work at UMEZ was centered on using public funding and tax incentives to stimulate private investment. The goals for this investment were to develop mixed-use and retail facilities to create access to goods and services for local residents, stabilize and strengthen the cultural infrastructure, provide access to capital for small businesses, and fund demand driven

sector-based workforce development initiatives that were responsive to the needs of both employers and local residents.

I believe that the strength of my background in economic development and the breadth of my experience in community building positions me to be able to become an informed, thoughtful, and diligent member of the City Planning Commission.

I thank you for the opportunity to discuss my desire to serve on the City Planning Commission and, if provided advice and consent, look forward to working with City Council. I am happy to answer any questions that you might have.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Hope Knight

Address: _____

I represent: City Planning Commission Nominee

Address: _____

◆ Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms ◆