

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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October 31, 2017
Start: 10:46 a.m.
Recess: 11:22 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: JAMES G. VAN BRAMER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ROBERT E. CORNEGY, JR.
MARK LEVINE
HELEN K. ROSENTHAL
VANESSA L. GIBSON
LAURIE A. CUMBO
YDANIS A. RODRIGUEZ
COREY D. JOHN BONIZIOSON
I. DANEEK MILLER
STEVEN MATTEO

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

Kris Goddard
Assistant Commissioner of Neighborhood
Development at the Department of Small Business
Services

William Pedone
Current Morris Park Business Improvement District
Steering Committee Chairman

John Bonizio
Member of Morris Park Business Improvement
District and Bid Committee

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[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Alright, good, good morning everyone and welcome to today's Finance Committee meeting. My name is Jimmy Van Bramer and I'm chairing the committee today at the request of Council Member Julissa Ferreras-Copeland. Today we will... but before I, I say what we're going to be voting on I want to introduce the colleagues who are with us; Minority Leader Matteo is with us, Council Member Levine, Council Member Kallos, Council Member Vacca, Council Member Rodriguez, Council Member Gibson, and Council Member Rosenthal, I believe that's all of the members who are here today. We will be voting on three items this morning, a transparency resolution, a bid item and proposed Intro 1176-A to require OMB to provide budget documents in a machine-readable format. In addition, we'll be holding a public hearing on Intro 1737 to establish the Morris Park bid. Let's start with the transparency resolution that sets forth the new designation and changes in the designation, I know, of certain organizations receive... I got... receiving local aging and youth discretionary funding and funding pursuant to certain initiatives in the budget. Organizations

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2 appearing in the resolution that have not yet
3 completed the pre-qualification process conducted by
4 the Mayor's Office of Contract Services, the Council
5 or another entity are identified in the attached
6 charts with an asterisk. As with all transparency
7 resolutions Council Members will have to sign a
8 disclosure form indicating whether or not a conflict
9 exists with any of the groups on the attached list.
10 If any Council Member has a potential conflict of
11 interest with any of the organizations listed, he or
12 she has the opportunity to disclose the conflict at
13 the time of their vote. As a reminder please disclose
14 any conflicts you may have with the proposed
15 subcontractors used by organizations sponsored by
16 discretionary funding. These disclosures must be made
17 before the subcontractor can be approved. Rowen Grant
18 from the General Counsel's Office is here and can
19 assist you with any questions or concerns regarding
20 disclosures. Next, we have Intro 1698, which would
21 authorize 11 existing bids throughout the city to
22 increase the amounts they expend annually. The budget
23 increases have been requested by the property owners
24 within the boundaries of each bid and would be used
25 to enhance the services provided. The details about

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2 which bids would see increases and the amounts sought
3 are set forth in the briefing documents prepared by
4 the Finance staff. The last item we will be voting on
5 is proposed Intro 1176-A sponsored by Council Member
6 Kallos. This legislation would, would require OMB to
7 submit the preliminary and executive budgets to the
8 council in machine readable formats such as Excel. In
9 addition, it would, would require that within ten
10 days of posting a budget document on its website OMB
11 must post the data in the document on its website and
12 on the open data portal in a machine-readable format.
13 In 2017 having budget documents publicly available in
14 sortable and searchable formats should be a no-
15 brainer. I applaud Council Member Kallos on his
16 leadership and persistence on this issue. A
17 transparent government is a better government and
18 this bill ensures that the budget process will be
19 more open and accessible to all. And I'd like to ask
20 Council Member Kallos to say a few words on this
21 bill.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you
23 Majority Leader and today's Finance Chair Van Bramer.
24 New York City has an 85-billion-dollar budget. The
25 council and the public deserve to know how every

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2 single penny of that 85 billion dollars is being
3 spent. While most budget documents are posted online
4 by the Office of Management and Budget, they are
5 really hard to read. Most of these documents are
6 submitted in portable document format, PDF which make
7 it difficult for anyone even our own finance team to
8 sort through because PDF's cannot be analyzed in a
9 spread sheet or even searched. Introduction 1176-A
10 requires that when the Mayor submits a budget
11 document to the council and the public that we get
12 them in human or something that anyone can read and
13 machine-readable formats and that when the Office of
14 Manager and Budget post a budget document to it's
15 website within ten days they also post it to the open
16 data portal in the usable format and either repost it
17 on their website or simply link to it on the open
18 data portal. Additionally, this legislation,
19 legislation cleans up some outmoded language in the
20 law. When is the last time any of you saw a floppy
21 disc, currently and, and the, the quick answer to
22 that is it was created in 1982, the three-and-a-half-
23 inch floppy disc stopped being sold in 2007 and Sony
24 stopped making them in 2010. This floppy disc is
25 curtesy of the city council's IT division and it was

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2 created in 2002 and so under the current law the
3 Office of Management and Budget is required to give
4 us the budget documents on these and I can tell you
5 for a fact that in the three and half years that I've
6 been a Council Member the Office of Management and
7 Budget has not delivered the budget on these floppy
8 discs or on a CD Rom as required. So, this would
9 actually just say we're going to join the 21st
10 Century, we're going to put these documents online
11 and we're going to put them in formats that people
12 can use. I want to just take a moment to thank our
13 Speaker, Melissa Mark-Viverito and our Finance Chair,
14 Julissa Ferreras, we've worked together with the
15 Finance team and Dean Fuleihan at the Office of
16 Management of Budget as well as CGI and the folks...
17 who are the folks behind the city's Financial
18 Management System to ensure that this was
19 technologically possible to get it online and in fact
20 you can actually see most parts of the budget online
21 on the city's open data portal but not everything and
22 we still need every single penny. And I want to thank
23 Latonia McKinney, Rebecca Chase, and Eric Bernstein,
24 John Russell, John Selzer and my Legislative Director
25 Paul Westrick, it took a lot of hard work on

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2 everyone's part to make this happen and hopefully
3 we'll get more online soon. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Congratulations
5 Council Member Kallos. Lastly, we are holding a
6 public hearing on Intro 1737, which would establish
7 the Morris Park Business Improvement District in
8 Council Member Vacca's district in the Bronx. On
9 October 17th this committee voted on Resolution 1679
10 to set today as the hearing date to hear from
11 individuals who may be affected by the proposed
12 establishment of the Morris Park bid. The bid would
13 be located along Morris Park Avenue in the Morris
14 Parke neighborhood of the Bronx and consist of 188
15 properties. The area is a low density, pedestrian
16 friendly commercial corridor which provides
17 neighborhood scale retail services and entertainment.
18 The annual 390,000-dollar budget of the bid would
19 provide services related to maintenance and
20 sanitation, marketing and special events,
21 administration and advocacy, beautification and
22 public safety. First, we will hear from any witnesses
23 who wish to testify, once we have heard any testimony
24 we will then adjourn the hearing for at least 30 days
25 to allow any property owner within the proposed area

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2 of the bid to file an objection to the establishment
3 of the bid with the City Clerk. In the absence of
4 objections filed either by a majority of all impacted
5 property owners or by property owners owning a
6 majority of the assessed value of the property within
7 the proposed bid the committee and the full council
8 may adopt the legislation establishing the Morris
9 Park bid. In order to do so the committee and the
10 full council must be prepared to answer the following
11 four questions in the affirmative. We're all notices
12 of the hearing for all hearings required to be held
13 published and mailed as required by law and otherwise
14 sufficient. Two, does all the real property within
15 the proposed district boundaries benefit from the
16 establishment of the district except as otherwise
17 provided by law. Three, is all real property
18 benefited by the establishment of the district
19 included within the proposed district and four, is
20 the establishment of the district in the best
21 interest of the public. If the committee and full
22 council finds in the affirmative on these four
23 questions and the number of objections required to
24 prevent the establishment of the bid are not filed,
25 then the legislation can be adopted. Now I'd like to

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2 call on Council Member Vacca to speak on this very
3 important matter.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VACOMMITTEE CLERK MARTINA:

5 Thank you very much and I want to urge the council to
6 pass the Morris Park bid. The merchants here have
7 worked very hard to get the word out about how bids
8 can really improve a community and I know that this
9 is the 75th bid in New York City and I want to thank
10 the Mayor's Office and I want to thank SBS for their
11 hard work because I wanted this very much to be done
12 during my term in office. Anyone who knows Morris
13 Park knows that it's one of our most vital shopping
14 centers in the borough. We have mom and pop stores
15 that predominate the entire stretch and these
16 merchants are concerned about attracting, attracting
17 pedestrians to the restaurants and to the other
18 stores and they're concerned about the overall of
19 quality.. overall quality of life in that community
20 which is one of the finest communities in the
21 borough. So, again with thanks to all especially to
22 the merchants, to the Westchester Square bid that
23 gave technical assistance to the merchants here. I
24 want to thank my office for the work that they did to
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2 assist and again to the Mayor's Office and SBS, but I
3 would certainly urge the committee to vote yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
5 much Council Member Vacca. Now representatives from
6 the Department of Small Business Services are here to
7 provide testimony on the Morris Park bid and we also
8 have some folks from the Morris Park Business
9 Improvement District itself. I'm going to call all
10 three of you up together on the same panel. Kris
11 Goddard, the Assistant Commissioner of SBS; William
12 Pedone and John Bonizio both of the Morris Park
13 Improvement District and bid committee. And you will
14 be sworn in at this moment.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Do you affirm to
16 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
17 truth in your testimony before the committee today
18 and to respond honestly to Council Member questions?

19 KRIS GODDARD: I do.

20 WILLIAM PEDONE: I do.

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Great, Kris do
22 want to start?

23 KRIS GODDARD: Thank you. Good morning
24 Majority Leader Van Bramer and members of the Finance
25 Committee. I'm Kris Goddard, Assistant Commissioner

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2 of Neighborhood Development at the Department of
3 Small Business Services. I'm joined here by our
4 Senior Program Manager for Bid Development, LeMel
5 Lindsey. We are here to testify in support of the
6 proposed Morris Park Business Improvement District.
7 At SBS we are focused... we are working hard to open
8 doors for New Yorkers across the five boroughs
9 focusing on creating stronger businesses, connecting
10 New Yorkers to good jobs and fostering thriving
11 neighborhoods. We believe that the vitality of the
12 city's commercial corridors is a key part of
13 achieving this goal and bids have been valuable and
14 proven partners in revitalization and economic
15 development across all five boroughs. In addition to
16 our roll overseeing and supporting the city's
17 existing network of 74 bids SBS also supervises bid
18 formation and expansion process serving as an advisor
19 and resource for communities interested in developing
20 or expanding bids. We are careful to ensure that each
21 steering committee we work with adheres to our
22 planning process and policies, solicits robust
23 community improvement... or input and performs
24 extensive outreach to collect and demonstrate broad
25 based support across all stakeholder groups.

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2 Moreover, we are cognizant that the unique nature of
3 each community that we assist and aim to empower
4 local stakeholders to make determinations on proposed
5 services, boundaries and budget size that best suits
6 their community's needs, appetite and ability to pay
7 assessments, but we always impart strong planning
8 principles and share our data and best practices from
9 across the bid network when working with any bid
10 formation effort. We recognize that the power and
11 effectiveness of bids rests in their unmatched
12 understanding of local needs and issues. Like other
13 recent bid formations that SBS has overseen the
14 Morris Park formation effort involved numerous
15 meetings and consultations with local stakeholders
16 throughout the planning and outreach phases. After
17 extensive outreach effort in close coordination with
18 all key parties SBS determined that the document and
19 support among all stakeholder groups including over
20 50 percent of the areas total assessed value
21 providing written support in favor was in fact
22 sufficient to submit the application. As required by
23 law the Morris Park bid.. Steering Committee mailed a
24 summary of the City Council Resolution no later than
25 ten days and no more than 30 days before today's

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2 hearing to the following parties; to each owner of
3 real... of real property within the proposed district
4 at the address shown on the latest city assessment
5 roll, to such other persons as are registered with
6 the city to receive tax bills concerning real
7 property within the district, and to tenants of each
8 building within the proposed district. Furthermore,
9 SBS arranged for the publication of a copy of the
10 summary of the resolution at least once in the city
11 record. I'd like to acknowledge and thank Council
12 Member Vacca for his ongoing support of this effort,
13 I'd also like to thank Council Member Torres for his
14 support. Lastly, I'd like to acknowledge the
15 representatives of the bid formation effort and
16 Steering Committee who are here and present today to
17 testify and address any specific questions that I'm
18 unable to answer. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
20 much and who would like to go first?

21 WILLIAM PEDONE: Thank you. Good morning
22 members of the council. I appreciate you having us
23 here today. I'm here to discuss the Morris Park
24 Business Improvement District, its history, it's
25 desires and prospects moving forward. My name is

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2 William Pedone and I'm the current Morris Park
3 Business Improvement District Steering Committee
4 Chairman. I've been the Chairman for a little over
5 two years. I would like to give you a little history,
6 in late 2007, early 2008 we began discussing the
7 potential for a business improvement district in the
8 Morris Park corridor of the Bronx. That discussion
9 was taken up by Councilman James Vacca and the now
10 debunked Morris Park Alliance. The momentum went
11 nowhere but in about 2011 momentum picked up again
12 for the rebuilding of the Morris Park corridor. The
13 Steering Committee reached out to all the property
14 owners, commercial tenants and residents to discuss
15 the potential for a bid. In 2015 we were provided
16 with additional staffing and funding from Councilman
17 Vacca's Office. A strong outreach was done, and
18 surveys were taken. The stakeholder decided on five
19 key services; sanitation, branding, marketing, retail
20 attraction, and beautification and then a budget was
21 established. See our area is a middle-class area, my
22 family has been there since the late 1800's, three
23 potentially four generations. We've seen the good,
24 the bad and the not so good or the ugly. Our
25 collective goal is to improve safety, improve

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2 appearance, develop better infrastructure and home
3 ownership. Right now, we're not on the city's radar
4 but the city has a lot on their hands and we're here
5 to work with the city to join forces to help Morris
6 Park keep its charm while keeping up with the times.
7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you, John?

9 JOHN BONIZIO: Thank you. Good morning
10 members of the committee. The Morris Park bid
11 Steering Committee was formed in 2013 on the
12 coattails of the successful bid development effort
13 undertaken in Westchester Square. The sponsoring
14 organization at the time was the Morris Park
15 Alliance, a volunteer merchant association that
16 gathered a group of approximately 31 commercial
17 property owners, commercial tenants, area residents
18 and community leaders to begin the development
19 process. Supported by a grant from Council Member
20 James Vacca the Bronx Chamber of Commerce was
21 enlisted to assist in organization and outreach
22 efforts. The passage of time witnessed a disbanding
23 of the alliance when it's leaders retired, moved away
24 or fell victim to the demands of business. In a turn
25 of events that speaks loudly of the dedication of the

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2 area's stakeholders the Morris Park Community
3 Association, a 40-year-old resident organization
4 assumed the role of sponsor. The chamber was
5 succeeded by a neighborhood initiatives development
6 corporation and then eventually by the Westchester
7 Square bid to restart outreach efforts and wrap up
8 the loose ends of the project. During the chambers
9 tenure a survey was undertaken of property owners,
10 merchants, residents and consumers and the results of
11 the survey uncovered a strong lead for a business
12 plan for the business district, the engagement of a
13 paid woodsman to guide area advocacy, the
14 establishment and promotion of a strong district
15 image, an increase in consumer foot traffic, graffiti
16 cleanup and the maintenance of a safe community
17 environment. Based on the survey a plan was
18 established as Will provided that includes a full
19 time Executive Director to oversee program services
20 that include sanitation, a comprehensive marketing
21 plan, a street scape program, a branding initiative
22 and collaboration with and support of the existing
23 civilian safety patrol run by the community
24 association. A budget of 390,000 dollars was adopted,
25 approximately 75 percent of which is dedicated to

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2 these program efforts. The committee also plans to
3 undertake additional commercial development efforts
4 once the bid is established with funding and
5 resources from local anchors just outside the bid
6 district and by taking advantage of grant programs
7 available in the community. Outreach for the effort
8 was extensive and included the execution of multiple
9 mailings to all the stakeholders, presentations at
10 community board meetings, community association
11 meetings and merchant gatherings and hundreds of one
12 on one conversations with home, business and
13 commercial property owners. In addition, two public
14 hearings were held in the district, so stakeholders
15 could question board members and employees of other
16 establishments, employees of the Department of Small
17 Business Services and local elected officials.
18 Statement of support... statements of support were
19 collected by the outreach team for document support.
20 The committee considered several formulas for the
21 equitable establishment of assessment fees to pay for
22 the plan. These include a formula based on assessed
23 property values, square footage, front footage,
24 building structure, etcetera and combinations of
25 these factors. Based on the low-density environment

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2 of the district a front footage formula was adopted
3 for commercial and mixed-use properties with an
4 additional 300 dollars per year for corner properties
5 and commercial use above the first floor. Vacant lots
6 are assessed at 300 dollars per year, vacant lots on
7 corners are assessed an additional 300 dollars for
8 the corner. Residential properties occupied for
9 residential use are assessed at one dollar per year
10 and government and not-for-profit owned and operated
11 properties are exempt from assessment. I, I'd be
12 happy to answer any questions you might have
13 regarding... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you...
15 [cross-talk]

16 JOHN BONIZIO: ...the numbers... [cross-talk]

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...very much and
18 congratulations to you all and to Council Member
19 Vacca. Are there any questions for this panel from
20 any of the members of the committee, seeing none and
21 if we have quorum I believe we do... I want to
22 recognize first of all we've been joined by Council
23 Member Daneek Miller from Queens and then I would ask
24 Billy Martin, Committee Clerk to call the roll.
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2 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: William Martin,
3 Committee Clerk roll call vote Committee on Finance,
4 the items are coupled, Council Member Van Bramer?

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Aye.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Rodriguez?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Aye and
8 congratulations to my colleague Council Member Vacca
9 and, and to the leaders of this new bid, someone that
10 also have a bid at 181st in my district and now
11 working to create two new business improvement
12 districts, one in the South of 178 and another one in
13 the Inwood area, area that we are looking to rezoning
14 we know how important it is... the bid for an
15 especially a small business, congratulations.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VACOMMITTEE CLERK MARTINA:
17 Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Gibson?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: With my warmest
20 congratulations to Council Member Vacca and the
21 Morris Park Community from your colleague on the West
22 side of the Bronx I want to congratulate you, this is
23 certainly a great opportunity to improve economic
24 development and create jobs and create an incredible
25 business sector in Morris Park that I'm already

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2 familiar with, but I know will continue to get better
3 and better so congratulations colleague and I vote
4 aye on all, thank you.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Levine?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Adding my
7 congratulations to our colleague Council Member
8 Vacca, I vote aye.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Miller?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I vote aye.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Rosenthal?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: With
13 congratulations to my colleague Council Member Vacca
14 I vote aye on all, thank you.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Matteo?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Aye.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: By a vote of
18 seven in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no
19 abstentions all items have been adopted on today's
20 finance agenda.

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Great, we will
22 be keeping the vote open for 15 minutes for other
23 colleagues who may be joining us. Congratulations to
24 all of you...

25 WILLIAM PEDONE: Thank you...

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JOHN BONIZIO: Thank you..

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
much.

JOHN BONIZIO: Thank you Council Member.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Continuation...
continuation of roll call, Committee on Finance,
Council Member Cornegy?

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: The final vote,
Committee on Finance all items on today's agenda have
been adopted by a vote of eight in the affirmative,
zero in the negative and no abstentions, thank you.

[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 15, 2017