

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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November 14, 2017
Start: 12:18 p.m.
Recess: 12:44 p.m.

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

B E F O R E:

PETER A. KOO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Annabel Palma
Deborah L. Rose
Rosie Mendez
Stephen T. Levin
Inez D. Barron
Ben Kallos

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

Kate Lemos McHale
Director of Research
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission

Ali Rasoulinejad
Director of Community Intergovernmental
Affairs
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND
MARITIME USES

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2 [sound check]

3 [pause]

4 [gavel]

5 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Good morning, I am
6 Council Member Koo, chair of the Subcommittee on
7 Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses. We are
8 joined by Council Members Palma, Mendez and Rose.
9 Today we will be hearing the designations by LPC
10 pursuant to Section 3020 of the New York City Charter
11 on the Old Saint James Episcopal Church (now the Old
12 Saint James Parish Hall), located at 86-02 Broadway,
13 aka 85-08 51st Avenue, Block 1549 p/o, Lot 1 as an
14 exterior landmark.

15 Built in 1735-36, Old Saint James
16 Episcopal Church is significant for its association
17 with the early colonial settlement of Queens, and
18 with the mission activity of the Church of England in
19 the American colonies. A remarkable colonial era
20 mission, church, it retains its early 18th century
21 rectangular box-like form, wood shingle siding, round
22 arch windows, and heavy timber framing. It is New
23 York City's oldest Church of England building and the
24 City's second-oldest religious building that is still
25 standing.

2 The church is in Council Member Dromm's
3 district; he has submitted a letter in support of the
4 designation for the record. We are hearing the
5 proposed designation to be considered. We have Kate
6 Lemos McHale from LPC and Ali Rasoulinejad from LPC
7 to testify. Please identify yourself and you can
8 start.

9 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Okay. Thank you.
10 I'm Kate Lemos McHale, Director of Research at the
11 Landmarks Preservation Commission and with me is Ali
12 Rasoulinejad, our Director of Community and
13 Intergovernmental Affairs.

14 Good afternoon Chair Koo and Committee
15 members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on
16 the Commission's individual landmark designation of
17 the Old Saint James Episcopal Church located at 86-02
18 Broadway in Queens, Block 1549/Lot 1 in part.

19 On September 19, 2017, the New York City
20 Landmarks Preservation Commission unanimously voted
21 to designate the Old Saint James Episcopal Church as
22 a New York City individual landmark. During a public
23 hearing on August 8, 2017, the Commission heard
24 testimony from two representatives of the owner, the
25 Episcopal Diocese of Long Island and their architect,

2 CWB Architects, in addition to the New York Landmarks
3 Conservancy, Historic Districts Council, and the
4 Society for the Architecture of the City, all in
5 support of designation. In addition, we received
6 letters of support from several local organizations
7 and from the local Council Member, Daniel Dromm.

8 Old Saint James Episcopal Church is
9 located on the corner of Broadway and 51st Avenue in
10 Elmhurst, Queens. Built in 1735-36, the building is
11 historically significant for its association with the
12 colonial settlement of Queens and with the beginnings
13 of the Protestant Episcopal Church in New York. It
14 is architecturally significant as an early 18th
15 century timber framed meeting house that was updated
16 in 1883 with stick style and Gothic revival features.

17 Founded in 1652, Newtown (shown in the
18 map on the left) was one of the first towns in Queens
19 County. Early settlers of different denominations in
20 Newtown Village shared community buildings and
21 ministers for religious services. That changed in
22 1735, when the Church of England built a mission
23 church specifically for the Anglican community,
24 today's Old Saint James Church. The building sits on
25 its original site in the heart of Newtown Village,

2 which is now Elmhurst. The drawing on the right
3 shows this church in 1773 as viewed from Broadway.
4 At that time, it had classic meeting house form with
5 a tower and steeple at its rear, which was the west
6 end. Following the revolutionary war, the parish
7 became one of the earliest members of the New York
8 Protestant Episcopal Diocese.

9 In 1848, the parish constructed a new
10 Saint James Church (shown at the upper left of this
11 1850 image) with two towers. Old Saint James Church
12 (shown near the center of the drawing) became a
13 chapel and parish hall at this time.

14 In 1883, the parish remodeled their
15 church hall, updating it with stick style and Gothic
16 details. They added the gable end truss, pointed-
17 arch windows within the original round-arch openings
18 along the side, brackets along the eaves, and drip
19 molding. They also added a shed-roof porch at the
20 entry and a small rear addition that replaced the
21 tower, which had been damaged. These changes
22 reflected the popularity of 19th century medieval
23 revival details; in this instance to update the
24 appearance of the small wood building.

2 These are two images showing the church
3 before and after a restoration that it underwent in
4 2004. The building continued to serve the parish and
5 the community as a meeting hall in the 20th century.
6 As seen in the view on the left, by the 1970s
7 asbestos shingles covered the historic wood shingles
8 and some decorative trim had been removed. In 2004,
9 the exterior was restored to an 1883 appearance with
10 the help of grants from the Landmarks Conservancy and
11 other funding sources.

12 This 280-year-old former church, which
13 retains both 18th and 19th century character and
14 historic fabric, is New York City's second-oldest
15 religious building. Pre-dating Saint Paul's Chapel
16 in Manhattan, it is also the oldest Church of England
17 Building still standing in the City.

18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. So this is
20 the second-oldest church, huh?

21 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON KOO: So I was just curious
23 myself, so which church is the oldest one? If I'm...
24 [crosstalk]

2 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: The oldest is
3 actually the Friends Meeting House... [crosstalk]

4 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah, in Flushing.
5 Yeah...

6 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Yeah. Yeah.

7 CHAIRPERSON KOO: which is the district I
8 represent, yeah.

9 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Yes. Yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON KOO: The Quaker House was
11 building 1694...

12 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: That's right.

13 CHAIRPERSON KOO: right. Yeah. Forty-
14 one years before this... [interpose]

15 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Yeah.

16 CHAIRPERSON KOO: second-oldest church.

17 So do we have any questions for LPC, Katie,
18 Miss McHale? No? Any questions, no? Okay, thank
19 you.

20 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Are there members of
22 the public who wish to testify on the Old Saint James
23 landmark designation? Seeing none, I will close the
24 public hearing on this item. [background comments]

2 Today we will be voting on the Old Saint
3 James landmark and we will also be voting on LU 791,
4 the New York City Emergency Management Warehouse
5 acquisition at 930 Flushing Avenue which we
6 previously held a meeting on.

7 New York City Emergency Management
8 already leases space at this location for storage or
9 specialized emergency vehicles and supplies and
10 maintains an office area as a backup emergency
11 operations center in case the main facility at 165
12 Cadman Plaza East becomes unavailable.

13 The additional space that this
14 application will allow the City to lease, as needed,
15 for storage of additional emergency equipment and
16 supplies and to fully build out to back up EOC [sic].
17 Council Member Reynoso is in support of this
18 acquisition. [background comment]

19 Counsel, please call the roll on the vote
20 to approve Preconsidered LU landmark designation of
21 the Old Saint James Episcopal Church exterior and
22 LU 791 for Emergency Management Warehouse.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Koo.

24 CHAIRPERSON KOO: I vote aye.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Palma.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: I vote aye.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mendez.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Aye.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Levin.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I vote aye.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Rose.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Aye.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: By a vote of 5 in the
10 affirmative, 0 in the negative, with 0 abstentions,
11 the items are recommended for approval and referred
12 to the full Land Use Committee.

13 CHAIRPERSON KOO: I will leave the roll
14 open for... [background comment] for another...
15 [background comment] We expect Council Member
16 Kallos will be here to vote and I wanna ask Council
17 Member Levin to hold this committee, and here he
18 comes.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Sure thing.

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah.

21 [pause]

22 [background comments]

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Kallos.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I vote aye.

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1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME
USES 11

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: By a vote of 6 in the
3 affirmative, 0 in the negative and 0 abstentions, the
4 items are recommended for approval and referred to
5 the full Land Use Committee.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And this hearing
7 on Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses is
8 hereby closed.

9 [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 November 20, 2017