

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 6, 2017  
Start: 10:34 a.m.  
Recess: 11:12 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Daniel R. Garodnick  
Ydanis A. Rodriguez  
Margaret S. Chin  
Deborah L. Rose  
Helen K. Rosenthal  
Jumaane D. Williams  
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.  
Mark Levine  
The Speaker (Council  
Member Mark-Viverito)  
Steven Matteo

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

Alameda Sky Chapman  
Candidate for the Youth Board

Anne Holford-Smith  
Appointee to the  
Landmarks Preservation Commission

2 [sound check]

3 [pause]

4 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: We're ready? Good?

5 Alright.

6 [gavel]

7 Good morning and welcome to the New York  
8 City Council's Committee on Rules, Privileges and  
9 Elections. I am Brad Lander, the chair of the  
10 Committee, and I think some other members will be  
11 joining us a little later this morning, but at the  
12 end of term and two Stateds left, it's a very busy  
13 time here at the Council, so please don't take it as  
14 an insult that they're not here; they are missing  
15 out, I suspect, so I think they will conclude when  
16 they watch the video that they -- whatever they were  
17 doing is not as good as having had the opportunity to  
18 meet our two nominees this morning, but I will  
19 introduce the other members as they come.

20 I want to thank and acknowledge our  
21 counsel, Elizabeth Guzman and the staff of the  
22 Council's Investigative Unit -- Chuck Davis, the  
23 Director, as well as Andre Johnson-Brown. The  
24 Council Committee -- and we are joined now as well by  
25 our Minority Leader Steve Matteo from Staten Island.

2 We're considering two nominations this  
3 morning. First we are going to hear from Alameda Sky  
4 Chapman for recommendation by appointment to the  
5 Mayor to the New York City Youth Board, and then  
6 after that, Anne Holford-Smith for the Council's  
7 advice and consent concerning her nomination to the  
8 New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission.

9 The Youth Board serves as an advisory  
10 body to the Commissioner of the Department of Youth  
11 and Community Development with respect to the  
12 development of programs and policies related to the  
13 youth of New York City. The Board consists of 28  
14 members appointed by the Mayor, 14 of whom are  
15 appointed upon recommendation by the Council and the  
16 Board seeks to be representative of the community and  
17 include people who represent social services, health  
18 care, education, business industry, and labor; it  
19 meets quarterly and members serve without  
20 compensation, and we are pleased it would of course  
21 be a big mistake if the Youth Board did not include  
22 some young people, so we're really pleased that it  
23 does and we're thrilled to have Alameda Sky Chapman  
24 here this morning as a nominee for service to the  
25 Youth Board.

2 So first of all, thank you for coming  
3 down this morning; it's great to have you here. We  
4 do swear people in when we're asking them questions  
5 about their nomination to a public commission or  
6 board, so if you would please raise your right hand  
7 to be sworn or affirmed in by our counsel.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hello.

9 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Hello, ma'am [sic]

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you swear or  
11 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing  
12 but the truth?

13 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: I do. [background  
14 comment]

15 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Excellent. Thank  
16 you. So Miss Chapman, we don't bite, [laughter] you  
17 know, and I don't mean to be patronizing; we think  
18 young people have a whole lot to offer, but we also...  
19 and we really value your experience and your  
20 expertise as a young person, and we're thrilled that  
21 you're here, so just feel at ease; I know you have an  
22 opening statement; go ahead and make it and then  
23 Council Member Matteo and I, and Council Member Rose,  
24 who's coming in, will ask you a few questions.

2 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Okay. Hi, I'm  
3 Alameda Sky Chapman; I'm a senior at Uncommon Charter  
4 High School. Last year I ran a healthy living club  
5 in my school because I feel like, for minorities  
6 especially, kind of like healthy living and..  
7 [interpose]

8 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: I'm sorry; can you  
9 talk... [crosstalk]

10 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Oh...

11 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: pull the microphone  
12 a little closer to you, just so everyone can hear  
13 you...? [crosstalk]

14 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Sorry; should I  
15 start over? [laugh]

16 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Very good.

17 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Okay. Last year in  
18 my school I ran a healthy living club where we talked  
19 about how like class and race like affects healthy  
20 living in like different communities as well as how  
21 we can live healthier lifestyles, things of that  
22 nature.

23 Outside of school, I'm the captain of a  
24 row team; I'm a part of the nonprofit organization  
25 Row New York; I've been a part of the team since

1 middle school, so this will be my fifth year rowing  
2 with them. Yeah.

3 I'm also a part of a community garden  
4 with my mother, where we spend a lot of time kind of  
5 like gardening and things like that. Yeah.

6 I think I'm a good fit for the New York  
7 City Youth Board because I think it's extremely  
8 important... [background comment] oh, a little closer;  
9 oh I'm so sorry... 'cause I think it's important to  
10 have these voices heard, especially as kind of like a  
11 minority woman to have a voice in government is  
12 important. That's all. Okay, I'm done.

13 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Super. Thanks for  
14 that opening statement. We've been joined by Council  
15 Member Debi Rose from Staten Island and Council  
16 Member Margaret Chin from Manhattan. We are first  
17 doing the hearing on Alameda Sky Chapman for the New  
18 York City Youth Board.

19 Just give us the background a little, you  
20 know, what neighborhood do you live in; where'd you  
21 grow up; what... you know where's the school that you  
22 go to?  
23

2 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: I've grown up in  
3 Williamsburg, Brooklyn; my school's in Crown Heights.  
4 Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: And talk to me just  
6 a little about what you think the major issues are  
7 facing young people in New York City; you're gonna be  
8 appointed to this board whose mission is to try to  
9 develop programs and policies that support young  
10 people; that address the key issues they're having,  
11 so if you could just tell me a little bit about what  
12 you think those issues are and you know, how you'd  
13 hope to push, you know, push us forward in doing  
14 better on it?

15 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Okay. I feel like  
16 education is a really important issue. Yeah, I'm  
17 sorry; I'm a little nervous. [laughter]

18 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: And that is totally  
19 fine, you know, we're a nice bunch, but yeah, so  
20 just...

21 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Yeah, I think my..  
22 [laugh] my priorities will be kind of education and  
23 expanding the scope of after school programs  
24 regarding kind of like accessibility and  
25



1 individuality, kind of like [inaudible] program. I  
2 don't know, yeah. Okay.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: And I was interested  
5 to see that you're, you know, both the captain of the  
6 row team and active with Row New York, which as you  
7 point out is not something that is, you know normally  
8 associated with young women of color, so it's great  
9 that you're doing that.

10 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Tell me a little how  
12 you got involved and what that brings to you; why you  
13 like it; how you think it helps.

14 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: As you said, rowing  
15 is usually a sport that's kind of like inaccessible  
16 in cities and to like people of color. I kind of  
17 found the organization kind of as an accident sort  
18 of. My mom really wanted me to be a part of like a  
19 sport, so I kind of just like randomly signed up and  
20 it overall is a really amazing community. Row New  
21 York fosters the development of kind of like youth  
22 all across New York City, so I meet kids who go to  
23 private schools and public schools and of all races  
24 and I think it's really amazing; they offer you  
25 academics, help, and we travel and they take us to

1 COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS 10  
2 like college campuses; it's a really amazing kind of  
3 program **[inaudible]**.

4 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Great. Well I'm  
5 glad your mom had that instinct. I have a high  
6 school daughter who I also felt was not, you know,  
7 engaged enough in athletic activity and I pushed her  
8 to get involved; now she signed up at her high school  
9 for the Ultimate Frisbee team, which may be the only..  
10 [laughter] which may be the only sport less  
11 representative than rowing. So I'm glad that you  
12 found Row New York and that that has been such a  
13 successful thing for you.

14 Let me see whether any of our other  
15 colleagues have questions. It's great to get to hear  
16 from you and it's wonderful to meet you and know that  
17 young people like you are taking leadership in their  
18 own lives, in their schools, and then we're also  
19 providing some opportunities to help that have impact  
20 citywide. Any questions from... [background comment].  
21 Yeah. Council Member Chin.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Hi, good morning,  
23 welcome. I see here that you ran a healthy living  
24 club...

25 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Yes.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: so my question is  
3 that, do you think that should be part of the school  
4 curriculum, you know from elementary school, middle  
5 school, and high school?

6 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Most definitely. I  
7 feel like no one really knows anything about like how  
8 to eat or how to take care of yourself. In my  
9 school, kids drink like a bottle of soda and a bag of  
10 Doritos and call that breakfast, and I just.. I don't  
11 think that's any way to live and I don't think.. I  
12 don't know how they survive, honestly just like  
13 eating chips every single day. Yes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: So maybe you could  
15 advocate for that in the Youth Board and work with  
16 us.

17 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Yes, I think so.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Great. Thank you.

19 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Okay.

20 [background comments] [laughter]

21 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Well I'll take this  
22 one question further. So you know, what DYCD does is  
23 funds programs for young people, and I wonder what  
24 you think would, you know, makes a good.. so let's

1 say.. alright, we all agree, all of us, students and  
2 Council Members have a lot of unhealthy habits...

4 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: the whole city would  
6 be better off if we had more healthy ones, you know  
7 what's the kind of program that you, you know, DYCD  
8 should fund and what would make it more likely to be  
9 successful in getting young people on a healthier  
10 path?

11 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Okay. Uhm... sorry.

12 I think that there's like a lot of kind of like  
13 stigma about vegetables and things like that,  
14 [laughter] so when I like introduced the club in high  
15 school, like no one really wanted to join, so a lot  
16 of kids were kind of like forced into it, and  
17 everyone was kind of like, I never.. this is  
18 disgusting; I never wanna eat like this in my entire  
19 life, I don't know what it's... like salads are gross.  
20 So I think you can like still eat well and like... I  
21 don't know; I think we just kind of have to change  
22 the idea of what like healthy eating is; it's like  
23 it's not, I don't know, just like eating a tomato and  
24 calling it like dinner, like my peers think it is;  
25 it's more holistic than that. So if you come at it

2 with like a more holistic approach than kind of just  
3 these are the food groups you need to be eating; more  
4 of like, this is what the food can look like and  
5 things like that.

6 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Yeah. Well we'd  
7 love to continue that conversation with you as you  
8 join the Youth Board. You may know; this Council  
9 pushed very hard to get universal free lunch to  
10 remove the stigma of kids eating free school lunch in  
11 the first place, and some people, like Council Member  
12 Vacca, who was just cracking us up downstairs in  
13 leadership, I know he invested a lot of money in the  
14 renovation of the cafeteria in one of his big high  
15 school, with the goal of just making it a place  
16 where, you know, like the difference between sort of  
17 the food court model where you might wanna eat in an  
18 old cafeteria or you might not, so I think we'd love  
19 to continue the dialogue with you about what we could  
20 all do in this regard.

21 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Okay.

22 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Anybody else have  
23 further questions? No. Alright. Miss Chapman,  
24 thank you very much for taking the time to come this  
25 morning; we really appreciate you and... [crosstalk]

2 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Thank you for  
3 having me.

4 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: We don't... the way  
5 these hearings work; we do the hearing now; we talk  
6 to each other; we wanna make sure our colleagues on  
7 the Committee who didn't get to meet you know what a  
8 mistake they made, and we'll vote in the Committee  
9 next week before the full Council meeting, but I feel  
10 very optimistic that your nomination will be  
11 approved...

12 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: overwhelmingly by  
14 the Committee. So thank you.

15 ALAMEDA SKY CHAPMAN: Okay. Thank you  
16 for having me.

17 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Alright, so we'll  
18 close the public hearing on Miss Chapman's nomination  
19 and turn now to our second nomination for the  
20 morning.

21 In a letter dated December 6, Mayor de  
22 Blasio formally submitted the name of Anne Holford-  
23 Smith for the Council's advice and consent concerning  
24 her nomination for appointment to the New York City  
25 Landmarks Preservation Commission. If we give our

2 advice and consent, Miss Holford-Smith, a Manhattan  
3 resident, will fill a vacancy and be appointed to the  
4 LPC and be eligible to complete the remainder of a  
5 three-year term that expires on June 28, 2019.

6 We've done a fair number of LPC  
7 appointments in this committee before, so I won't go  
8 into detail about its responsibilities, but the  
9 Charter has a good deal on it and its responsibility  
10 for establishing and regulating landmarks and  
11 historic districts. The LPC consists of 11 members  
12 and that must include at least three architects, one  
13 historian, one City planner or landscape architect,  
14 and one realtor, and it also must include amongst  
15 those people one resident from each of the five  
16 boroughs. The Mayor appoints the members of the LPC  
17 with the advice and consent of the Council, and when  
18 appointing a member for the architect, historian,  
19 City planner, or landscape architect position, the  
20 Mayor may consult with the Fine Art Federation of New  
21 York or a similar organization, and we have staggered  
22 three-year terms. One of the members of the LPC  
23 serves as chair and another as vice-chair. The  
24 members, not including the chair, but the others  
25 serve without compensation but are reimbursed for

2 necessary expenses incurred in the course of  
3 performing their duties.

4 And we are glad to have Anne Holford-  
5 Smith, who is an architect and will be introducing  
6 herself and then we'll ask questions as well.

7 Committee members, you can find a written copy of her  
8 opening statement, her resume, etc. in the red  
9 booklets, as usual. Miss Holford-Smith, if you would  
10 raise your right hand to be sworn or affirmed in by  
11 our counsel.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hello. Do you swear  
13 or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and  
14 nothing but the truth?

15 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: I do.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very much  
18 and please now proceed with your opening statement.

19 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Great, thank you.

20 Good morning, Chair Lander and members of  
21 the Committee for Rules, Privileges and Elections.  
22 Thank you for the opportunity to stand before you and  
23 answer your questions. I'm extremely excited and  
24 honored to have been nominated by the Mayor for a  
25 seat at the Landmarks Preservation Commission.



2 I am a born and bred New Yorker, born in  
3 Brooklyn and raised in Queens, and for the past 30  
4 years have lived in the nexus of Chelsea, the West  
5 Village and the Meatpacking District. I spent much  
6 of my childhood in Forest Hills [sic] Gardens, a  
7 bucolic and charming environment that introduced me  
8 to urban planning and design at an early age. I was  
9 enamored of the Tudor style buildings and brick  
10 roadways that made the gardens such a special place.

11 My parents also instilled in me a deep  
12 caring for meeting and place. Our summer vacations  
13 always included pilgrimages to historic places, from  
14 the battlefields of Gettysburg to Monticello and  
15 Mount Vernon. Our own Tudor style townhouse was a  
16 constantly evolving project, led by my father, who  
17 was an interior designer who was always bringing home  
18 treasures to be somehow incorporated into our home.

19 I later attended Pratt Institute in  
20 Brooklyn to study architecture, which introduced me  
21 to a larger world of the built environment and  
22 further solidified my love of old buildings.

23 I have been practicing architecture for  
24 30 years and have spent a considerable amount of that  
25 time dedicated to preserving historic buildings in

2 New York City. Most of that time has been with Platt  
3 Byard Dovell White Architects, of which I am now  
4 proud to be partner. My late mentor, Paul Byard, was  
5 a renowned preservationist in New York and served for  
6 many years as the dean of Columbia's Graduate School  
7 of Architecture, Preservation and Planning. Together  
8 we worked on the restoration of several important New  
9 York City landmarks, including the Cooper Union  
10 Foundation Building, the Appellate Division  
11 Courthouse, Gould Memorial Library Auditorium, and  
12 Flushing Town Hall.

13 For the Cooper Union Foundation Building  
14 and the Appellate Division Courthouse, we were able  
15 to return those amazing masonry buildings, after 100  
16 years and more of very hard wear, to a close  
17 semblance of their original appearance and restore  
18 the meaning that their original design intended to  
19 convey.

20 For the Cooper Union, that was the  
21 forward-thinking freshness and opportunity that a  
22 free education could provide; symbolized by its many  
23 large windows and the use of the most up-to-date  
24 materials for 1859.

2 For the Appellate Division, it was the  
3 bright white symbol of truth in law as embodied in  
4 the classical idiom.

5 Both of these projects benefited from my  
6 technical expertise and building envelope, including  
7 stone restoration, wood window restoration, and  
8 ornamental metalwork.

9 While these were pure restoration  
10 projects, the opportunity to transform old buildings  
11 back to community use has been even more rewarding.  
12 Flushing Town Hall was restored from an empty shell  
13 to a vibrant center for the arts. Our other work  
14 with institutions, like the Lower East Side's  
15 Educational Alliance, will provide new generations  
16 the chance to grow and learn in the same building in  
17 which their parents did. And the restoration of the  
18 auditorium of the Gould Memorial Library, in the  
19 campus that was once the home of NYU in the Bronx,  
20 returned light and original details back to a space  
21 darkened to discourage bombing in World War II and  
22 vandalized by student radicals in the 1960s.

23 These projects included both restoration  
24 and architectural intervention, merging my technical  
25 preservation expertise with my architectural

2 practice. I have honed these skills on projects  
3 throughout the five boroughs, ranging from  
4 preservation master plans to full building  
5 restorations and adaptive reuse. It has been my  
6 privilege to work at one of the most preeminent  
7 preservation firms in New York, working alongside not  
8 only Paul Byard, but Charles Platt, who himself  
9 served as commissioner in the 1970s.

10 I have spent the past 30 years committed  
11 to the restoration of New York City landmarks,  
12 sensitive additions to old buildings and new  
13 buildings set in historic context and am now  
14 committed to the public service of helping to oversee  
15 the stewardship of this incredible city that I call  
16 home. That stewardship includes not only the  
17 preservation of individual landmarks, but the  
18 creation of clear guidelines to inform the  
19 development of new construction in the context of  
20 historic districts.

21 New York, which embodying a unique  
22 amalgam of its history from Dutch New Amsterdam to  
23 the brown decades of brownstone construction, is  
24 still a growing and changing metropolis that needs to  
25 be allowed to evolve. The combination of the new and

2 old is what makes New York such an exciting  
3 environment in which to live, work and visit.

4 Allowing sensitive and invigorating new buildings and  
5 additions to coexist with the fabric of our older  
6 buildings is crucial for the future of this city.

7 Again, thank you for the opportunity, and  
8 I welcome your questions.

9 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very much  
10 for that opening statement, which is a very good  
11 demonstration I think of your extensive  
12 qualifications for the position.

13 The LPC and Council Members' experiences  
14 sort of tend to be two different kinds of debates  
15 about it; on the one hand, there is the preservation  
16 versus development debates; people, whether they got  
17 to grow up in Forest Hills Gardens or not, loving  
18 this city and it's kind of historic nature and small  
19 scale and trying to grapple with the challenges that  
20 a growing city and its development demands and how to  
21 balance those things, and so that tends to be.. you  
22 know our constituents want in that side more  
23 preservation faster to preserve things; they're  
24 afraid of being eroded and then on the other hand,  
25 our homeowner constituents come and say it's a big

2 headache to have to get an application through the  
3 LPC, you know, and we want that to go smoother when  
4 we're doing some simple work on our home. I just  
5 wonder if you could say a little about your  
6 perspective on both of those issues.

7 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Sure. I think that  
8 the process has gotten a lot more streamlined and a  
9 lot more efficient and is currently working better  
10 than it had been. I know historically there was  
11 always this sort of feeling that, you know if you  
12 have a landmarks building that, you know, it takes  
13 forever to get things done and it's more expensive  
14 and I understand that the process has gotten a lot  
15 better with homeowners and Landmarks... under this  
16 administration it's gotten... it's been more sensitive  
17 to that. There could always be more improvement and  
18 you know, maybe in terms of public outreach to people  
19 so that the process is more transparent; people  
20 understand it better.

21 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: I'll just interrupt  
22 you there before you go on to the first one. I think  
23 that's... I mean in my experience that is right, it  
24 certainly has... there are more things that can be  
25 approved at the staff level than were previously --

2 technology is used more effectively; it's more often  
3 you get a quick turnaround -- so all of that progress  
4 is real and good and I'm grateful for it, and I also  
5 think it's good for commissioners to find ways to  
6 stay attuned with, you know your sort of average  
7 homeowner who's not a person who's really in the big  
8 preservation development debate; is not someone who  
9 generally otherwise will kind of appear before you,  
10 and just make sure that we're operating the system in  
11 a way that makes sense to them **[inaudible]**...

12 [crosstalk]

13 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Sure; it needs to be  
14 equal across the board..

15 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Yeah.

16 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: and **[inaudible]** lot  
17 more you know, individual homeowners than there are  
18 major developments and so **[inaudible]**... [crosstalk]

19 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: And rightly, most of  
20 those things don't come to the commissioners, you  
21 know staff level approvals... [interpose]

22 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Right.

23 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: for things which are  
24 minor work are wonderful, so... but staying attuned to

25

2 that is a valuable thing I think for Council Members  
3 to make sure that commissioners are doing so.

4           Alright, and then just give us your broad  
5 perspective -- we don't need to drill down too much,  
6 I think -- and you and I had a conversation yesterday  
7 that makes me clear you're just a thoughtful person  
8 about how to balance the needs of a growing city and  
9 the requirements of meeting the housing demands, the  
10 growth demands that we have with the love we have for  
11 our... you know the built environment and our  
12 neighborhoods and wanting to strike that balance just  
13 as well as we possibly can, so talk about the  
14 perspective you bring and maybe you know share one or  
15 two examples of how you've tried to balance that in  
16 your career.

17           ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Sure. I think... you  
18 know we have a great building stock in New York City  
19 and some of it is very historic and worthy of  
20 individual designation and preservation and some of  
21 it is simply just nice old buildings that we want to  
22 maintain and keep, and I think that certainly in  
23 establishing a district it's important to -- and you  
24 know, not having done this personally, and I hope to  
25 learn this as I go, if I'm appointed -- you have to



2 sort of you know balance -- looking at an area, those  
3 buildings that are truly stand-out buildings that  
4 should be designated as individual landmarks or sited  
5 as being contributing to the district, while there  
6 are probably a vast number of buildings within a  
7 district that are not necessarily contributing but  
8 are sort of handsome buildings and I think we need to  
9 maintain that kind of a balance in order for building  
10 owners to develop those properties to their fullest  
11 potential, while also respecting the district.

12 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Just maybe give us  
13 an example or two from the work you've done -- I mean  
14 I know your work has been more on the restoration of  
15 historic buildings...

16 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Right.

17 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: oh and I should say  
18 I also... I hadn't noticed till I was just peaking at  
19 it, the work at Greenwood Cemetery, which is just  
20 some wonderful, wonderful work, so thank you for  
21 that. But I mean just give us an example of sort of  
22 a place where you know in your professional world you  
23 were balancing between these pushes and pulls of  
24 development and you know, the desire of owners to  
25 build a building that they believe made the most

2 sense for them under the zoning and the rules and the  
3 pull of neighbors and a community seeking to preserve  
4 context as much as possible.

5 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: So we had a building  
6 that was a bit controversial several years ago that  
7 was in the Carnegie Hill district and 91st Street and  
8 Madison Avenue that was originally a one-story bank  
9 building, and the property developer wanted to put an  
10 as-of-right residential development, which we  
11 designed and presented a zoning envelope with the  
12 proper street wall and setbacks and a tower above  
13 that wasn't that tall a tower, 'cause it couldn't be  
14 for that district, for that neighborhood, but we did  
15 come up against extreme opposition by the community,  
16 and it was a process of back and forth with community  
17 boards and working with the preservation staff at the  
18 Commission to come to a building that ended up being  
19 a shorter building, which was the predominant comment  
20 that we received, but also because we made it shorter  
21 and in order for the developer to be able to have a  
22 usable building, it had to fill out to the entire  
23 building envelope, so instead of being a slender  
24 tower on a base, it became a real squat building,  
25 which unfortunately we felt was not as good a

2 building, but it met... you know, we were able to work  
3 with the community and Commission and the building  
4 owner to come to this resolution that met everyone's  
5 expectations and needs.

6 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Hm. And yeah, I  
7 mean that in some ways... you know there are... I mean  
8 the LPC, relative to let's say the Board of Standards  
9 and Appeals, which is you know supposed to have a  
10 tight set of technical findings; the LPC, we want  
11 people with expertise to have thoughts about  
12 aesthetics and design and we have members of the  
13 public testify and sometimes what that results in is  
14 a balance in which, you know, that's something kind  
15 of in the middle, which...

16 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Right.

17 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: on the one hand the  
18 design professionals don't think is the best designed  
19 building and the neighbors don't think is exactly  
20 what they wanted either; you feel comfortable, you  
21 know, you feel like you can add value in those  
22 conversations and decisions in the LPC... [crosstalk]

23 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Oh absolutely, yeah.  
24 You know seeing it from the other side, you know as a  
25 commissioner obviously I would be looking at it

2 differently, but having the experience of presenting  
3 before the Commission and working through those  
4 design processes would definitely inform my work if I  
5 am chosen to become a commissioner.

6 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you. I don't  
7 think there's any question, looking at your resume  
8 and my own hearing you today that you've got all the  
9 qualifications and experience that we would want; one  
10 challenge in finding people for the positions on the  
11 LPC is that the people who have the qualifications  
12 and experience we want quite often got it by being in  
13 places where they appear regularly before the LPC,  
14 which you have done and your firm has a lot of  
15 business, and that presents a set of conflicts that  
16 it's our job, along with the Conflicts of Interest  
17 Board and our Director of Investigation, just to make  
18 sure we have fully disclosed and know exactly how  
19 they're going to be handled, so I know you received a  
20 waiver from the Conflicts of Interest Board  
21 concerning your partnership and your role at your  
22 firm; that your firm you know has projects, some of  
23 which you have worked on and some of which you have  
24 not, and will continue to have projects before the  
25 LPC; it's my understanding, but I guess I just want

2 to ask you to kind of clarify and affirm the ways  
3 you're going to follow it that you will cease to work  
4 on and have no personal involvement in the projects  
5 involving landmark-designated properties that would  
6 go before the LPC, and that includes not  
7 participating in discussions, emails, conversations,  
8 conference calls, or receiving documents, and also,  
9 in one further step, not being compensated for the  
10 firm's work before the LPC, so sort of both a  
11 firewall on the firm side and also non-participation  
12 in those matters on the LPC side. So let me just  
13 first, like 'cause, you know... is my understanding  
14 correct or can you just explain to me how you'll  
15 proceed to do... [crosstalk]

16 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Yes; that's correct.  
17 We provided a very detailed letter that explained the  
18 projects that we're working on, I worked on in the  
19 past and am currently working on that have come  
20 before Landmarks; right now it's about a third of our  
21 projects that come before Landmarks. So we will set  
22 up a policy in the firm and obviously tell the staff  
23 that I'm no longer able to work on any projects that  
24 come before Landmarks and so any conversations or  
25 emails will have to cease and we have several other

2 preservation professionals in our office who are more  
3 than capable of handling the projects that we have,  
4 and I'm currently working on other projects that are  
5 not before Landmarks. And in terms of compensation,  
6 again, we track every project so it's clear you know  
7 what project is; this profit or loss and which  
8 project is a landmark project, and very clear and  
9 very easy to separate that and so I will not be  
10 compensated for any work that comes before Landmarks.

11 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: And there are a  
12 couple of projects that you've worked on already that  
13 will come before Landmarks; I guess how will you  
14 handle those...? [crosstalk]

15 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Right. So I'm  
16 working on one project right now, 462 Broadway, which  
17 is actually winding down and one of the associates of  
18 the firm is working on it as well as staff and  
19 partner Sam White, and so they will continue working  
20 on the project and I will step down if I'm appointed.  
21 And then we have another small project, which is a  
22 storefront restoration which is just getting started,  
23 which another associate will take over and I will  
24 cease working on.

2 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: And I mean, it's my  
3 understanding you became a partner last year on which  
4 congratulations..

5 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: though that makes  
7 this a little more complicated because obviously it's  
8 easy enough to pay you salary for work that you did  
9 before a certain date on projects and not pay you a  
10 salary on projects you won't be working on after you  
11 would join the LPC, but just talk a little more in a  
12 partner role about how you plan to not benefit from  
13 the profits associated with these particular.. the  
14 projects that come before the LPC, you know in  
15 addition to the more clean hours, you know billing..

16 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Right. Right.

17 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: hours of billing.

18 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: So we have a basic  
19 payment for partners, basically like a salary and  
20 that's just sort of across the board, and then beyond  
21 that, there are -- depending on, you know profits and  
22 losses on projects, distribution of those to  
23 partners. But again, since we can track each project  
24 -- every project has a project number and at the end  
25 of the year we know exactly what each project has

2 done; those projects would just be excluded from any  
3 further bonus or, you know, compensation that I would  
4 get.

5 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: You do distribution  
6 of profit and losses by project in a way that makes  
7 it possible... [crosstalk]

8 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Right.

9 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: to draw a line and  
10 not have you... and they won't go in some -- and it's  
11 not to say you would do this, but we've seen these  
12 things in the past -- they won't go into a sort of,  
13 you know fund in abeyance that you... [crosstalk]

14 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Oh no.

15 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: can pick up later or  
16 they get paid out; they would be...

17 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: No.

18 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Okay. Okay, and I  
19 will just flag for members of the Committee -- ones  
20 who are here and not -- that all of that is detailed  
21 in the letter and the COIB guidance -- it is,  
22 [background comment] yes. Yes. And we may have  
23 further -- you know and because it is our, you know,  
24 and it's often the case that members don't  
25 necessarily dig in on those things till we do this,



2 and that's partly why we don't in any cases vote on  
3 the day of the hearing -- we do the hearing and we  
4 give members a little time to sit with the  
5 information -- if there are any additional questions  
6 that we have about this, we can call you back before  
7 we vote next week or be in touch about it. Council  
8 Member Rose; any questions? [background comment]  
9 Yeah, of course.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you, Chair  
11 Lander. I appreciate that you were able to get into  
12 some of the nuts and bolts about your partnership and  
13 how we're going to keep you safe in terms of being  
14 able to recuse yourself from projects that are going  
15 to come before the Landmarks Commission. And I want  
16 to congratulate you; I'm sure as a woman you worked  
17 really hard to get there and so I was just concerned  
18 about the distribution of the work and maintaining  
19 the firewall, so I think the Chair delved into that  
20 quite effectively.

21 What I'd like to know; as a person who is  
22 used to being on the other side speaking to the  
23 Commission, are there any parts of the process that  
24 you think should be streamlined or worked on and you  
25 might focus on once you become a commissioner?

2 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Well I think one  
3 possibility is to possibly increase the amount of  
4 work that can be approved at the staff level; that  
5 could be something that could streamline the process  
6 and make things go more smoothly and would then take  
7 less time in public hearings.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: At one point we had  
9 a really large calendar backup and this Council I'm  
10 really proud of you know worked hard to eliminate  
11 that calendar so we could move forward. Are you  
12 seeing that projects are being expedited as quickly  
13 as possible; are we on track; are we building up any  
14 kind of backlog?

15 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Well again, not  
16 having the firsthand experience, I'm looking at it  
17 from the other.. as the outsider.. [crosstalk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: From the other  
19 side. True.

20 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: view, but it seems  
21 to me that when I hear about a project that's sort of  
22 being considered and it seems to be going at a very  
23 good pace and things are moving quickly.. [crosstalk]

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Well as a person  
3 who has presented before the Commission, do you find  
4 that the process is expedited?

5 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: I do. So when we  
6 typically present something for a hearing there could  
7 be comments that come from the Commission and we're  
8 usually able to work with staff to do those changes  
9 if needed and to work through any revisions, and so  
10 the process can take place without having to go back  
11 usually for a second hearing. You know for a larger  
12 project, more complex, sometimes you have to go back  
13 for a second hearing, but I think that staff has been  
14 really good... [crosstalk]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: For the most part?

16 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Yeah.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you, Council  
19 Member Rose. No, definitely and you know, this goes  
20 back to my first question; I think there is... you  
21 know, on big projects where the owner/developer hires  
22 someone like you, then, you know I think they're in  
23 good shape; you know, the challenges we hear tend to  
24 be on homeowners who -- and look, I want more  
25 landmarked districts in my district, so I say this as

2 someone who believes in them a great deal and wants  
3 to see them expanded, you know you don't want a  
4 homeowner who's redoing their stoop to have to hire a  
5 premier architectural firm and how it can work that  
6 both things can be true; that protections against the  
7 kinds of encroachments that we don't want can be  
8 protected against while also making it just as easy  
9 as possible for people to do non-encroaching and not  
10 particularly consequential small work is... that's...

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Absolutely.

12 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: I know Council  
13 Member Rose and I both represent... [crosstalk]

14 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: I agree.

15 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: are enthusiastic  
16 about our landmark districts and represent a lot of  
17 homeowners who can run into those challenges, so.  
18 Good; any other questions?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Just a comment. I  
20 love Tudor style also.

21 [laughter]

22 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Alright, that's  
24 [background comment] an excellent place to leave this  
25 hearing. As I said before, we'll... you know the

2 Committee will go into recess; we and other members  
3 will take a deeper look at the materials -- I think  
4 you've done a very thorough job; again, your  
5 qualifications for this are unarguable and your  
6 approach to the complex questions are thoughtful and  
7 detailed, so other members will take a look; if we  
8 have any additional questions, we will be in touch  
9 and reserve the right to call you back, but  
10 otherwise, the Committee will meet next week.

11 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Okay. Thank you  
12 very much.

13 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you very much  
14 for your time and your interest in serving, which we  
15 really appreciate.

16 ANNE HOLFORD-SMITH: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: Thank you.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank...

19 CHAIRPERSON LANDER: ...is now in recess.

20 [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 7, 2017