

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

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February 26, 2018
Start: 9:54 a.m.
Recess: 10:22 a.m.

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

B E F O R E: FRANCISCO P. MOYA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Costa G. Constantinides
Barry S. Grodenchik
Rory I. Lancman
Stephen T. Levin
Antonio Reynoso
Donovan J. Richards
Carlina Rivera
Ritchie J. Torres

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

2 [sound check, pause] [background
3 comments]

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Good morning. Thank
5 you and my apologies for the late start, but I'd like
6 to welcome you to the meeting of the Subcommittee on
7 Zoning and Franchising. I'm Francisco Moya. I am
8 the Chair of the subcommittee, and today we are
9 joined by Council Members Costa Constantinides, Rory
10 Lancman, Barry Grodenchik. Did I miss anyone else?
11 [background comments] And today, we will be holding a
12 hearing on one item, LU 28 and 29, and 35-10, Astoria
13 Boulevard Rezoning. We also have LU 15 and 16 of the
14 Sea Park North Rezoning on our calendar. We closed
15 the public hearing on that application at our last
16 meeting, and we will be laying it over for
17 consideration at our next meeting on March 6th. The
18 35-10 Astoria Boulevard application consists of a
19 zoning map amendment to establish a C4-3 district in
20 place of existing R6B zoning, and a zoning text
21 amendment to establish the Mandatory Inclusionary
22 Housing program over the rezoning area. The zoning
23 area covers property located on the Astoria Boulevard
24 South between 35th Street and 36th Street in Council
25 Member Constantinides' district in Queens. The

2 rezoning would facilitate the development of seven-
3 story mixed-use building with commercial and
4 residential use. The building would include 35
5 dwelling units with approximately 11 being affordable
6 through the MIH program, and we will now open the
7 public hearing on LU 28 and 29, and if the speakers
8 would introduce themselves and identify themselves.

9 JOSH RINESMITH: Good morning, Council
10 Member Moya, Council Member Constantinides and
11 Council Members of the Subcommittee. My name is Josh
12 Rinesmith of Akerman LLP, Land Use Counsel for the
13 applicant. I'm also joined here this morning by
14 Robert Bianchini, who is the project architect, who
15 is available to answer any questions that you may
16 have. Thank you for taking the time to-to have this
17 hearing this morning about this project that--that
18 we're excited about. The project site is located on
19 the south side of Astoria Boulevard South between
20 35th Street and 36th Street in Astoria. It is located
21 approximately four blocks to the east of the 31st
22 Street and Astoria Boulevard Subway Station. It is
23 located exactly one block to the east of an existing
24 C4-3 zoning district, and there are commercial uses
25 both on our block front—I'm sorry—as well as the

1 block fronts to the-the east, and the existing site
2 is built with a 2-story non-conforming building with
3 commercial uses. Currently it's occupied by Callina
4 School of Dance, which is a neighborhood institution,
5 as well as a-a small martial arts studio. As I
6 mentioned, there are commercial uses on the blocks to
7 both east and west, which are currently-and the site
8 is located in R6B, which does not allow commercial
9 uses at all. So, I mentioned it is on Astoria
10 Boulevard South, which is a wide street, but it also
11 fronts on the Grand Central Parkway, and so there is
12 ample light and air, and the site can support
13 additional density. In addition, immediately
14 adjacent to the development site is six-story non-
15 complying residential building with ground floor
16 community facility use. As Council Member Moy had
17 mentioned, the application that we're considering
18 today involves a zoning map amendment to extend the
19 C4-3 zoning district to cover the block front of
20 Astoria Boulevard South between 35th Street and 36th
21 Street, and to map an MIH designated area under MIH
22 Option 2. The proposed project would include a new
23 7-story building with ground floor commercial use,
24 on-grade and subsurface parking as well as 35

1 residential units on floors 2 through 7. The
2 building will have approximately 31,500 square feet
3 of zoning floor area, and be 75 feet in height. As I
4 believe the rendering on the first page indicates or
5 shows, the project architect has done a nice job of
6 maintaining the street context with the existing 6-
7 story building on Astoria Boulevard South. Under MI
8 op-MIH Option 2, 11 units will be permanently
9 affordable at an average of 80% AMI. We're currently
10 envisioning a breakdown of three units at 60% AMI,
11 three units at 80% AMI and three units at 100% AMI.
12 The breakdown will include two 2-bedroom affordable
13 unit and—and nine 1-bedroom. The overall unit count
14 is 35 units, 29 of which are 1-bedrooms and six of
15 which are—are 2-bedrooms, and there will be 13
16 accessory parking spaces behind the commercial use on
17 the ground floor, and in the project cellar. Here is
18 just a—a copy of the proposed site plan. And one
19 thing that I want to make sure is understood is that
20 the—the applicant is committed to returning Callina
21 School of Dance to the space—to the commercial space
22 once the building is completed. It is a neighborhood
23 institution, and the—the applicant is going to work
24 with them to relocate to space—temporary space in
25

2 another one of its buildings in the neighborhood, and
3 the return them to the brand new commercial space in
4 the building, and that's essentially the--the--a sense
5 of the application. Here is a copy of the--or the
6 rendering. I'm happy to answer any questions that
7 you might have.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Alright, so--
9 [background comments] are there any members of the
10 [background comments] Alright. So, I'm going to turn
11 it over to Council Member Constantinides. [background
12 comments, pause]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Alright,
14 so I'm going to be--I'm going to be very brief to make
15 sure we can keep quorum. So, as Callina's Dance
16 School, as you said it's a neighborhood institution.
17 Where are you relocating the dance school
18 temporarily?

19 JOSH RINESMITH: The applicant owns
20 another building in Astoria. I don't have the
21 specific address, but I can provide that to you in
22 writing after.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: And we
24 already have a letter of commitment--

25 JOSH RINESMITH: That is correct.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: --to make
3 sure that Callina's School is back, right?

4 JOSH RINESMITH: That is correct.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Because I
6 think generations of Astorians have learned to dance
7 there, and it's something that we want to make sure
8 we can continue.

9 JOSH RINESMITH: Absolutely.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: On the
11 affordability piece, can you put--so three at 63 and
12 83 at 100?

13 JOSH RINESMITH: Correct.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: And then
15 the other two 2-bedrooms are at what AMI?

16 JOSH RINESMITH: So the 2-bedrooms would
17 be one at 60% AMI, and one at 100% AMI. So the
18 breakdown would be three at 60%, two 1-bedrooms, one
19 2-bedroom at 60, then three 1-bedrooms at 80, and two
20 1-bedrooms and one 2-bedroom at 100%.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: So, it
22 breaks out to about 31.5% affordability.

23 JOSH RINESMITH: Correct.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Alright,
25 thank you very much.

2 JOSH RINESMITH: You're welcome. Thank
3 you for your time and consideration of this matter.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Thank
5 you.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, thank you
7 Council Member. Are there any members of the public
8 who wish to testify on this item? Seeing none, I
9 will now close the public hearing on this item. I
10 will now move onto a vote on LU 28 and 29, the 35-10
11 Astoria Boulevard rezoning application. At the
12 recommendation at Council Member Constantinides we
13 will be voting to modify the application to remove
14 the MIH Option 1 in order to maximize the number of
15 affordable units in the development. I believe
16 Council Member Constantinides-- [background
17 comments]. No statement. Okay. Alright, well, thank
18 you Council Member. Are there any questions, remarks
19 or anything from other members of the Subcommittee?
20 Seeing none, I will now call a vote to modify LU 28
21 and 29 to move the MIH Option 1 from the application.
22 Counsel, please call the roll.

23 LEGAL COUNSEL: Chair Moya.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Aye.

2 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member
3 Constantinides

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Aye.

5 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Richards.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Just having
7 flashbacks with David Greenfield here. I was like
8 wait a minute, he's over my shoulder, but ware
9 reliving the past. Good to see you my friend.
10 Congratulations, Costa. I vote aye, and Council
11 Member Moya, thank you.

12 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Rivera.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: [off mic] Aye.

14 LEGAL COUNSEL: And Council Member
15 Grodenchik.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye.

17 LEGAL COUNSEL: By a vote of 5 in the
18 affirmative, 0 in the negative and 0 abstentions, LU
19 28 and 29 are approved with modifications and
20 referred to the full Land Use Committee. [background
21 comments, pause]

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: So, we're going to
23 leave the rolls open for 15 minutes, but thank you
24 all for attending, and this meeting is—

25 LEGAL COUNSEL: Is not adjourned.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: --not--not adjourned.

3 Not adjourned. [laughter] Alright, not adjourned.

4 Alright and we'll leave it open. Thank you. Thank
5 you. [pause]

6 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Levin.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: With a-a-a happy
8 hello to our former Chairman David Greenfield, I vote
9 aye.

10 LEGAL COUNSEL: The vote stands a 6 in
11 the affirmative, 0 in the negative and 0 abstentions.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And
13 congratulations to Council Member Constantinides.

14 [pause] [background comments]

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: That's off the record,
16 by the way. Okay.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER: We're all set with that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Okay. Are we
19 voting on Self-Storage? Is that--? [background
20 comments] I vote aye. Costa, I actually don't, you
21 know. [background comments]

22 LEGAL COUNSEL: Sorry, continued roll
23 call on LU 28 and 29, vote to modify. Council Member
24 Torres.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I vote aye.

2 LEGAL COUNSEL: The final vote stands at
3 7 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative and 0
4 abstentions. [pause] [background comments]

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Meeting adjourned.
6 Thank you. [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 March 11, 2018