

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON LAND USE

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SEPTEMBER 26, 2018
Start: 11:29 A.M.
Recess: 11:48 A.M.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: RAFAEL SALAMANCA, CHAIR

COUNCIL MEMBERS: VANESSA L. BARRON
INEZ BARRON
COSTA CONSTANTINIDES
STEPHEN T. LEVIN
I. DANEEK MILLER
ANTONIO REYNOSO
DONOVAN J. RICHARDS
MARK TREYGER
BARRY GRODENCHIK
ADRIENNE E. ADAMS, CHAIR
RUBEN DIAZ, SR.
FRANCISCO MOYA, CHAIR
CARLINA RIVERA
BEN KALLOS, CHAIR
BILL PERKINS, CHAIR
PETER KOO
RITCHIE J. TORRES
CHAIM M. DEUTSCH

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3 MOHAMMAD ARSHAD (SP?): Test, test, test,
4 this is a Committee Hearing on Land Use. Today's
5 date is September 26, 2018. Being recorded by
6 Mohammad Arshad (SP?). (gavel pounding).

7 CHAIR RAFAEL SALAMANCA: Alright good
8 morning everyone. Welcome to the Committee on Land
9 Use. I am Council Member Rafael Salamanca. I am the
10 Chair of this Committee. I would like to welcome my
11 colleagues to today's hearing. Today we have present
12 Council Members, Gibson, Barron, Constantinides,
13 Levin, Miller, Reynoso, Richards, Treyger,
14 Grodenchik, Chair Adams, Diaz, Chair Moya, and
15 Rivera. I would like to thank Chair Moya, Chair
16 Adams and Chair Kallos for their work on our Land Use
17 Subcommittees. Today we will be voting on an
18 application referred out of our Landmarks
19 Subcommittee. We will be voting to approve LU 151,
20 the Landmark Preservation Commissions Designation of
21 the Central Harlem West 130th to 132nd Street Historic
22 District. The Historic District consists of
23 approximately 164 properties. Primarily row houses
24 located on West 130th, West 131st and West 132nd Street
25 between Lennox and 7th Avenues. As a microcosm of

2 the African-American (INAUDIBLE) in greater Harlem,
3 the District is not only significant for its
4 contributions to the social and political history of
5 the immediate area but to the nation as a whole. It
6 has been home to an impressive (INAUDIBLE) of
7 cultural, religious, civic and political
8 organizations including the New Amsterdam Musical
9 Association which is the oldest African-American
10 Musical Association in the United States. The Alpha
11 Physical Culture Club, the first all-black athletic
12 club in the country and the planning headquarters for
13 the march on Washington for jobs and freedom in 1963.
14 This Historic District is in Council Member Perkin's
15 District. On September 17th, the Landmark
16 Subcommittee voted to modify the designation to
17 exclude a parking garage located on the 161st to 165th
18 West 132nd street; however, since the Landmarks are a
19 Committee vote we have had a number of discussions
20 where members of the community and the Council
21 Member. I would like to turn it over to the Chair of
22 the Landmark Subcommittee to speak on the discussions
23 that have taken place since that vote. I would like
24 to recognize Chair Adams.

2 CHAIR ADRIENNE E. ADAMS: Thank you Chair
3 Salamanca. On August 17th, the Landmark Subcommittee
4 held a public hearing on LU151, the designation of
5 the Central Harlem Historic District. At that
6 hearing, we received a lot of testimony in support of
7 the Historic District broadly and also testimony that
8 161 through 165 West 132nd Street should be carved
9 out from the Historic District. The building in
10 question is a 4-story parking garage in a District
11 that is principally row houses and apartment
12 buildings. We heard concerns that rather include a
13 parking garage in the Historic District this property
14 would serve a better use if re-developed which we
15 understood would likely require Council review
16 because the site is very close to its maximum
17 allowable floor area ratio or FAR. The Committee
18 also heard testimony from community members and
19 Historic Preservation Groups urging us to affirm LPCs
20 Designation without modification. After the hearing,
21 the Committee received many calls from constituents
22 on both sides of the issue. Ultimately the Landmark
23 Subcommittee looks to the Council Member representing
24 the affected district for guidance in such matters.
25 At the time of the Landmark Subcommittee vote on

2 September 17th, we voted to remove the garage for the
3 reasons I described above. Since that vote, Council
4 Member Perkins has strongly expressed his opposition
5 to modifying the designation and asked that we
6 maintain the boundaries as the Landmarks Commission
7 recommended. The designation of this District is
8 something that the community, Council Member Perkins
9 and the LPC staff have been working on for a number
10 of years. I want to personally acknowledge and
11 credit the hard work of numerous stakeholders in
12 Harlem for making their voices heard over many, many
13 years. To the residing community of the 9th
14 District, I say thank you for your passionate
15 perseverance in this matter. My colleagues and I
16 welcome the opportunity to get it right and with that
17 I will proudly vote to support your efforts to
18 maintain the boundaries of the entire Central Harlem
19 Historic District. (clapping).

20 UNKNOWN: Quiet please.

21 CHAIR RAFAEL SALAMANCA: Thank you uhm
22 Chair Adams. I would like to recognize Chair
23 Perkins.

24 CHAIR BILL PERKINS: Thank you very much
25 I uhm want to enthusiastic support the Central Harlem

2 Historic District located in the mid-blocks of West
3 130th, West 131st, West 132nd Streets between Malcolm-X
4 Boulevard, Lennox Avenue and 7th Avenue in Manhattan.

5 I also believe emphatically; however, that the
6 commercial garage at 161 West 132nd Street built in
7 1910 should be included in this Landmark District
8 designation. The proposed District also exhibits
9 high architectural merit. The proposed District's
10 largely intact group of late 19th Century buildings
11 tells the story of Harlem's speculative building boom
12 with row houses built primarily in the neo-Grec style
13 including work from architects such as Kleberdon
14 (SP?) and Putzel (SP?), Charles Baxter and William J.
15 Merit. This primarily row house district has a
16 culture significance that for me and many of my
17 constituents is deeply felt. It is a remarkable
18 reminder of the powerful role that the African-
19 American Community of Harlem played in creating
20 political and social change in New York City and the
21 nation. Figures such as Jacob Lawrence, Famarick
22 Bearden (SP?) and Bayard Rustin (SP?) lived and
23 worked in the area. The New York, the National
24 Headquarters of the 1963 march on Washington for jobs
25 and freedom was located here. I respect and work

2 with the Preservation community in many areas
3 including the city, More Beautiful in keeping his
4 character and enthusiastically support the
5 Designation of the Historic District as submitted by
6 Historic Preservation Advocates and the majority of
7 the residents and homeowners in the area as
8 referenced by the petition submitted. Sincerely,
9 Council Member Bill Perkins.

10 CHAIR RAFAEL SALAMANCA: Thank you
11 Council Member Perkins. So uhm therefore consistent
12 with the request of Council Member representing the
13 affected District. We will vote on the Resolution to
14 Approve the Designation of the Historic District
15 without Modification. A vote to approve is a vote to
16 approve the LPC Designation including the parking
17 garages. Are there any questions or remarks from
18 members of the Committee?

19 CHAIR BILL PERKINS: I just want to point
20 out to uhm to the, to the Committee and to uhm
21 Members on the Council. You know this Committee on
22 Land Use wants to work with every individual members
23 and we want to be supportive of your projects, but we
24 need to know you know what are we going to be
25 supportive of. Uhm you know the work that is being

2 done in the Subcommittees is important and it is
3 important that projects in Member's Districts, that
4 members are there and they inform the Committee
5 chairs and the members of the Committee. What
6 exactly is their status on this projects so that we
7 can be supportive and move forward you know as, as
8 you know as one body. So with that I would like to
9 call for a vote to approve LU151 will the clerk
10 please call the roll.

11 WILLIAM MARTIN: William Martin,
12 Committee Clerk, roll call vote Committee on Land
13 Use. Chair Salamanca?

14 CHAIR RAFAEL SALAMANCA: Aye on all.

15 WILLIAM MARTIN: Gibson?

16 VANESSA GIBSON: Congratulations Council
17 Member Perkins and congratulations Harlem I vote aye.

18 WILLIAM MARTIN: Barron?

19 INEZ BARRON: Permission to explain my
20 vote.

21 CHAIR RAFAEL SALAMANCA: Council Member
22 Barron.

23 INEZ BARRON: Uhm thank you Mr. Chair,
24 uhm I just wanted to say that this is an example of
25 the will of the people being expressed even though a

2 vote had been taken in Subcommittee and as the Chair
3 of the Subcommittee indicated this is an important
4 issue and we are pleased that we are able to be
5 supportive of all of those persons who came and
6 expressed their concern as well as the wishes of the
7 Council Member of that District and I proudly vote
8 aye.

9 WILLIAM MARTIN: Constantinides?

10 COSTA CONSTANTINIDES: Aye.

11 WILLIAM MARTIN: Koo?

12 PETER KOO: I vote aye and I want to
13 congratulate Council Member Perkins and our Chair
14 Salamanca, (SPEAKING SPANISH). Thank you.

15 WILLIAM MARTIN: Miller?

16 I. DANEEK MILLER: Uhm permission to
17 explain my vote please?

18 CHAIR RAFAEL SALAMANCA: Council Member
19 Miller to explain his vote.

20 I. DANEEK MILLER: Thank you uhm Chair
21 Salamanca. Uhm as Chair Salamanca indicated in his
22 testimony that the testimony of the public testimony
23 of our colleagues are very important and we have
24 access to all relevant information when we are voting
25 on, on such projects that are so vital to our

2 communities. While certainly the preservation of
3 Harlem and many other communities throughout our city
4 is intricate as we attempt to maintain the value of
5 communities as they transition throughout the city.
6 In this particular case here, however, the
7 information that was delivered during our
8 Subcommittee vote obviously differs from what we are
9 seeing here now and I have not had the opportunity to
10 digest that as of yet so I would be upstanding on the
11 vote.

12 WILLIAM MARTIN: Reynoso?

13 ANTONIO REYNOSO: Aye.

14 WILLIAM MARTIN: Richards?

15 DONOVAN J. RICHARDS: I'm going to
16 abstain for the same reasons Council Member Miller
17 cited.

18 WILLIAM MARTIN: Torres?

19 RITCHIE J. TORRES: I vote aye.

20 WILLIAM MARTIN: Treyger?

21 MARK TREYGER: Aye.

22 WILLIAM MARTIN: Grodenchik?

23 BARRY GRODENCHIK: Aye.

24 WILLIAM MARTIN: Adams?

25 ADRIENNE E. ADAMS: I vote aye.

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2 WILLIAM MARTIN: Diaz?

3 RUBEN DIAZ, SR.: Aye.

4 WILLIAM MARTIN: Moya?

5 FRANCISCO MOYA: Aye.

6 WILLIAM MARTIN: Rivera?

7 CARLINA RIVERA: Aye.

8 WILLIAM MARTIN: By a vote of 13 in the
9 affirmative and 0 in the negative and 2 abstentions
10 Land Use item has been approved by the Committee
11 (applause).

12 CHAIR RAFAEL SALAMANCA: I would like to
13 thank members of the public, my colleagues, Council
14 and Land Use Staff for attending today's hearing. We
15 will leave the roll open for 10 minutes, thank you.

16 WILLIAM MARTIN: Continuation roll call,
17 Committee on Land Use. Council Member Deutsch?

18 CHAIM M. DEUTSCH: Aye.

19 UNIDENTIFIED: Quiet down please, quiet
20 down.

21 WILLIAM MARTIN: Council Member Levin?

22 STEPHEN T. LEVIN: Aye on all.

23 WILLIAM MARTIN: Council Member Kallos?

24 BEN KALLOS: I vote aye on all.

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2 CHAIR RAFAEL SALAMANCA: Final vote,
3 Committee on Land Use, LU151 has been adopted by the
4 committee 16 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative
5 and 2 extensions. This meeting is hereby adjourned.

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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 OCTOBER 15, 2018