

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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November 13, 2008
Start: 11:44am
Recess: 12:34pm

HELD AT: Committee Room
City Hall

B E F O R E:
DAVID I. WEPRIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Diana Reyna
Gale A. Brewer
Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
Bill de Blasio
Lewis A. Fidler
Eric N. Gioia
Robert Jackson
G. Oliver Koppell
Michael E. McMahon
Helen Sears
Peter F. Vallone, Jr.
Albert Vann
David Yassky

A P P E A R A N C E S

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Vincent J. Gentile

Vincent Ignizio

James S. Oddo

Mathieu Eugene

Letitia James

Miguel Martinez

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

Jeremy Waldrup
Assistant Commissioner
Department of Small Business Services

Deborah Howard
Executive Director
Pratt Area Community Council
Central Fulton Street BID

Dale Charles
Economic Development Director
Pratt Area Community Council
Central Fulton Street BID

Wellington Sharpe
Head of BID Steering Committee
Central Fulton Street BID

Michael Wimberly
Member, BID Steering Committee
Central Fulton Street BID

Richard Gottfried
Assembly Member
Chair, New York State Assembly Health Committee

Mark Lipton
Concerned Resident

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Ready? Good morning. We made it under the wire. Welcome to this morning's Committee on Finance hearing. My name is David Weprin. I chair the Committee. Let me introduce my colleagues that are here now. We have Council Member Oliver Koppell, from the Bronx; Council Member Gale Brewer, from Manhattan; Council Member Mathieu Eugene, from Brooklyn; Council Member Lou Fidler, from Brooklyn; and Council Member Peter Vallone, Jr., from Queens. Now just a quick housekeeping item. As many of you know, today the Finance Committee was tentatively scheduled to consider a transparency resolution and two budget modifications. However because there is another Stated meeting just six days from now on November 19th, we have decided to postpone the transparency resolution to allow additional preparation time. Today the Finance Committee will consider three pieces of BID related legislation, but only vote on two. The first BID legislation is Intro 841. Last month on October 23rd, the Council passed a resolution that set today as the public hearing date to authorize budget increases for 13 BIDs. In accordance with

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2 the BID law, Intro 841 can be adopted if the
3 Council makes the following findings: One, that it
4 is in the public interest to authorize the
5 increase; two, that the tax and debt limits set
6 out in the BID laws will not be exceeded; three,
7 that notice requirements of the proposed budget
8 increases are complied with. In addition,
9 although the BID law only requires notice of this
10 action by publication in a newspaper, we informed
11 Small Business Services at last month's hearing
12 that we would like notices mailed to all property
13 owners in all 13 BIDs of the proposed budget
14 increases. It is my understanding that such
15 notice was mailed to such property owners. The 13
16 BIDs that are seeking an increase in expenditures
17 are the following: the Brighton Beach BID in
18 Council Member Michael Nelson's district; the
19 Church Avenue BID in Council Member Mathieu
20 Eugene's district; the Columbus Avenue BID in
21 Council Member Brewer's district; the 82nd Street
22 BID in Council Member Sears's district; the Kings
23 Bridge BID in Council Member Koppell's district;
24 the Lincoln Square BID in Council Member Brewer's
25 district-- all the people that are here; the Lower

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2 East Side BID in Council Member Gerson's district;
3 the Myrtle Avenue BID in Council Member Reyna's
4 district; the Steinway Street BID in Council
5 Member Vallone's district; the Sunset Park BID in
6 Council Member Sara Gonzalez's district; and the
7 34th Street BID in Speaker Christine Quinn's
8 district; the Village Avenue BID and the 47th
9 Street BID, all in Speaker Christine Quinn's
10 district. All affected Council Members have
11 expressed their written support for the assessment
12 increases. Our next BID item is Intro 842, which
13 establishes the Fulton Street BID in Council
14 Member James's district. On October 23rd, the
15 Council passed a resolution to set today as the
16 public hearing date so that we may hear all those
17 affected by the establishment of the BID who wish
18 to speak. After we hear from all witnesses we
19 will adjourn the hearing for at least 30 days,
20 which is the statutorily mandated time during
21 which property owners objecting to the
22 establishment of a BID may file objections. In
23 the absence of significant objections of the
24 Committee and the Council, can answer the
25 following four questions affirmatively, it may

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2 adopt a Local Law establishing the BID. The four
3 questions we must be prepared to answer are: One,
4 were all notices of hearing for all hearings
5 required to be held published and mailed as
6 required by law and otherwise sufficient; two,
7 does all the real property within the district
8 boundaries benefit from the establishment of the
9 district, except as otherwise provided by the Law;
10 three, is all real property benefited by the
11 district included within the district; and four,
12 is the establishment of the district in the best
13 interest of the public? If the Committee finds in
14 the affirmative on these four questions and the
15 number of objections required to prevent the
16 creation of the BID are not filed, then the
17 legislation can be adopted. The last piece of
18 legislation we will consider is Intro 808, a Local
19 Law establishing the Belmont BID in the Bronx, in
20 Council Member Joel Rivera's district. On October
21 7th, 2008, this Committee had its first public
22 hearing on Intro 808, and such notice closed
23 without a vote. As such mentioned, the Committee
24 had to wait at least 30 days after its first
25 public hearing on the BID before it could again

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2 consider and vote to approve legislation to
3 establish the BID. The 30-day objection period
4 ended on November 5th at 5:00 p.m. We will hear
5 from the Department of Small Business Services on
6 whether the requisite number of objections
7 pursuant to the BID law have been reached to
8 prevent the establishment of the Belmont BID. Is
9 Commissioner Jeremy Waldrup here? We'll hear from
10 Commissioner Waldrup; but before we hear from the
11 Commissioner, we've been joined by Council Member
12 Vincent Gentile. And I want to welcome our new
13 Counsel. She was Deputy Counsel to the Finance
14 Committee, but she now has assumed the full title
15 of Counsel to the Finance Committee, and that's
16 Tanisha Turnbull, on my right.

17 TANISHA EDWARDS: Edwards.

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Edwards,
19 Tanisha Edwards. Tanisha Turnbull Edwards. Thank
20 you for that modification. I believe Council
21 Member Mathieu Eugene wanted to make a statement
22 on one of the proposed BIDs. Council Member
23 Eugene.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you
25 very much, Mr. Chair, thank you. I'm going to be

1 very brief, but very, very strong on my support.
2 I'm here to support the request made by the BID
3 for the increase in the annual expenditure. We
4 know that the BIDs are very important for our
5 communities, for our City and for our businesses.
6 They're an asset, a very important asset, you know
7 in terms of improvement of our district, and
8 improvement, you know, empowerment of our
9 businesses, and also in terms of service delivery.
10 And I can speak especially about Church Avenue
11 BID; that is in my district. I know that the
12 wonderful job that they're doing, and I know the
13 wonderful job that all the BIDs are doing for our
14 community, for our district, for our businesses.
15 I'm here to strongly support the request. And I'm
16 asking all my colleagues to stand together with me
17 to support the increase, the request for the
18 increase in the budget. And in terms of the
19 Church Avenue BID, they are asking only for 30%,
20 and they didn't have an increase for about five
21 years. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

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23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,
24 Council Member. Council Member Gale Brewer?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you

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2 very much. I want to talk particularly about the
3 Columbus Avenue BID, and I see Barbara Adler here,
4 and certainly the Lincoln Square BID, and I see
5 Monica Blum and her wonderful staff here. These
6 two bids are particularly relevant to our
7 community, not only serving the businesses,
8 keeping the institutions and the streets clean,
9 thinking about security, but also working with
10 some of our schools both in terms of structure and
11 in terms of students. So I want to thank them for
12 making sure that their information is transparent,
13 that the meetings are held on a regular basis and
14 that all the information that they gather and that
15 they then share with everyone in the community--
16 so people feel very positive about these two
17 institutions, and I look forward to supporting
18 their increase, because the information has been
19 shared with their members and with the community,
20 and people feel strongly about their future.

21 Thank you very much.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,
23 Council Member. Council Member Oliver Koppell.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Thank you
25 very much, Mr. Chairman. I bring some

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2 institutional memory to this, because I was
3 present in Albany when the authorization was given
4 to the City to create these BIDs, under the
5 leadership then of then Assemblyman John Dearie,
6 who you may remember, Mr. Chairman.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Sure.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: And I
9 think the BIDs in general all over the City have
10 played a very positive role. And the BIDs in my
11 district have done so. And we have
12 representatives of the Kingsbridge BID here today,
13 and I think all of us should remember that
14 property owners and business people in the BIDs
15 are paying the costs of these services and making
16 an extra contribution beyond the contribution they
17 make in the real estate taxes and other taxes they
18 pay to the City. And we are I think very
19 fortunate to have these property owners and
20 business owners participate. I think they do get
21 value for the money, but it is something that's
22 not immediately, perhaps, visible, and nobody
23 likes to pay more money in taxes. So the fact
24 that these BIDs have asked and I have assured
25 myself that the vast majority of property owners

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and business owners favor this step, and the BID favors this step, and I've been assured that they do favor it-- I certainly believe, because I was a supporter of the creation of the BID in the utility of having this additional arm, if you will, of the community, working to improve the community. So I'm pleased to support their request to increase their funding, which will cost them money and not cost the City money. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you Council Member. I will now hear from Assistant Commissioner Jeremy Waldrup.

JEREMY WALDRUP: Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members of the Finance Committee. I'm Jeremy Waldrup, an assistant commissioner at the Department of Small Business Services. SBS supports the law providing an increase in the amount to be expended in 13 Business Improvement Districts. As required by law, the 13 BIDs published a notice of the public hearing at least once in a local newspaper having general circulation in the district, specifying the date, time and place of the hearing, and stating the

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2 proposed amount to be expended annually. In
3 addition, the BIDs certified that they have mailed
4 a letter to property owners informing them about
5 the proposed assessment increase and the date,
6 time and place of the hearing. The 13 BIDs
7 requesting increases of annual assessments desire
8 to further expand, reinforce and strengthen
9 existing core services currently provided in the
10 Business Districts. The BIDs wish to increase the
11 amount to be expended annually beginning on July
12 1st, 2008 as follows. Steinway Street from
13 250,000 to 325,000; 34th Street from 9,216,000 to
14 9,291,500; Myrtle Avenue from 300,845 to 406,141;
15 82nd Street from 194,900 to 224,450; Lower East
16 Side from 245,200 to 290,400; 47th Street from
17 331,367 to 500,000; Church Avenue from 145,000 to
18 188,500; Brighton Beach from 160,000 to 190,000;
19 Lincoln Square from 1,665,000 to 2,000,000;
20 Columbus Avenue from 208,800 to 308,800;
21 Kingsbridge from 235,000 to 329,000; Sunset Park
22 from 200,000 to 300,000; and Village Alliance from
23 735,000 to 984,900. The City's BID supplements
24 City sanitation and public safety services,
25 promote businesses through marketing initiatives

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2 and public events, enhance the City's physical
3 environment through streetscape improvement
4 projects and engage local community through a
5 variety of public programs and initiatives. In
6 addition BIDs, in partnership with City
7 government, help improve the quality of life of
8 New Yorkers and visitors, enhance the City's tax
9 base and strengthen the local economy in tough
10 economic times. SBS also supports the creation of
11 the Fulton Street Business Improvement District.
12 Geographically the proposed Fulton Street BID
13 includes properties along Fulton Street on the
14 north side of Rockwell Place to Classon Avenue and
15 on the south side from Ashland Place to Classon
16 Avenue. Services to be provided in the Fulton
17 Street BID include sidewalk sweeping and
18 maintenance, graffiti removal, public safety,
19 marketing promotion of the local area, holiday
20 decorations, beautification initiatives,
21 administration and other services to be required
22 for the promotion and enhancement of the district.
23 The Fulton Street BID District Management
24 Association will manage the district. The budget
25 for the first year of operation is \$300,000. As

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2 required by law, the Fulton Street BID Steering
3 Committee mailed the summary of the City Council
4 resolution to each owner of real property within
5 the proposed district at the address shown on the
6 latest City Assessment Roll. To such other
7 persons as registered with the City to receive tax
8 bills concerning real property within the district
9 and to tenants of each building within the
10 proposed district. In addition, SBS arranged for
11 the publication of a copy of the summary of the
12 resolution at least once in the City Record.

13 Lastly, as required by BID law, the Belmont BID
14 Steering Committee mailed the summary of the City
15 Council Resolution to each owner of real property
16 within the proposed district at the address shown
17 on the latest City Assessment Roll, or to such
18 other persons as registered with the City to
19 receive tax bills concerning real property within
20 the district, and to tenants of each building
21 within the proposed district. In addition, SBS
22 arranged for the required publication of a copy of
23 the summary of the resolution in the City Record.

24 At the conclusion of the objection period at 5:00
25 p.m. on November 5th, 2008, and taking into

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2 consideration any objections postmarked by that
3 date, 17 valid objections and one invalid
4 objection were filed with the City Clerk. The 17
5 objecting properties are owned by 15 property
6 owners, representing 5.6 of the owners of the
7 benefited real property, and 5.9% of assessed
8 valuations of all benefited real property. In
9 addition, one invalid objection was filed for a
10 property located outside the BID boundaries, and
11 was not included in the above objection
12 tabulations. The total assessed valuation of real
13 property within the district is \$60,193,706 and
14 the total number of properties is 270, which are
15 held by 267 property owners. Our review concludes
16 that the level of objection filed in terms of
17 either the number of property owners or percentage
18 of assessed valuation is within the acceptable
19 threshold needed to advance the bill for favorable
20 consideration by the full City Council. In our
21 judgment, the BID will improve conditions and
22 quality of life in the Belmont area, making it a
23 good place to live, work and visit, and lay the
24 groundwork for further neighborhood development
25 activities in the Bronx. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

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Any questions for Commissioner Waldrup? Seeing

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none, thank you. Okay. I'm now going to call up

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a panel. When I call your name, if you could come

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up and sit in those five seats in the front.

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Michael Wimberly, Dale Charles, Wellington Sharpe,

8

and Deborah Howard. And I believe they're all

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testifying on the Fulton Street BID. If there's

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anybody else that would like to testify, please

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fill out a slip; see the Sergeant-At-Arms and fill

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out a slip.

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[Pause]

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CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Proceed.

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DEBORAH HOWARD: Good morning. My

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name is Deborah Howard. I'm the Executive

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Director of Pratt Area Community Council; we were

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the designated community based organization to

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work with the BID Steering Committee for the

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Central Fulton Street BID in bringing this process

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to bear. I would like to thank the City Council

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Finance Committee Meeting for holding this hearing

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and I would like to introduce the people that will

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be testifying in regards to the BID. We have

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Wellington Sharpe, who is the Head of the BID

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2 Steering Committee, and he's a property owner and
3 merchant owner on the strip. We have Dale
4 Charles, who is our Economic Development Director
5 at Pratt Area Community Council, and we have
6 Michael Wimberly, who is a merchant on the Strip
7 at Fish and Crustaceans, who is an active BID
8 Steering Committee Member. The Fulton Street BID
9 covers the area of Fort Green and Clinton Hill in
10 sections of Brooklyn. It goes from Rockwell Place
11 to Classon Avenue in the area that is at this time
12 a fairly depressed section of Fulton Street.

13 Pratt Area Community Council has been working with
14 the Fulton Area Business Association there since
15 1997, and in 2005, we determined that it was time
16 to really work towards a Business Improvement
17 District on the strip. After doing a survey we
18 found that the needs of the community were
19 marketing for the businesses, it was also for
20 security on the strip. The strip is on Fulton
21 Street, which has the A and C trains stops on it
22 within the district, and the G train stops within
23 the district, as well as street maintenance and
24 clean up for the businesses on the strip. The
25 initial budget is \$300,000. And we held a number-

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2 - ten informational sessions as well as two public
3 hearings on the strip to make sure that property
4 owners and merchants could have input into the
5 business plan that was developed, and the Steering
6 Committee made active outreach to each of the
7 members of the Merchants Association to make sure
8 that we had input on this BID process. The area
9 of Clinton Hill, which is between-- actually from
10 Bedford to Vanderbilt Avenue in the last year has,
11 two years actually, has gone through major
12 construction from the Department of Transportation
13 on the strip, which has caused a great deal of
14 hardship for the businesses on the strip. The
15 timing of the BID now is crucial to bringing back
16 those businesses. So the construction is supposed
17 to end in December. If we can get the BID up and
18 running in March, we can then bring the marketing
19 to bear and the security and the cleaning to bear,
20 which would just add to the physical investment of
21 capital dollars that the City has already put on
22 to the strip. We are very excited about being
23 able to launch this opportunity for Fulton and the
24 neighborhoods of Clinton Hill and Fort Greene, and
25 hope that you will support our effort in bringing

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2 about a Business Improvement District on Fulton
3 Street. Thank you very much.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

5 DEBORAH HOWARD: You have to press
6 the button.

7 WELLINGTON SHARPE: Good morning.

8 My name is Wellington Sharpe and let me thank the
9 City Council for giving us this opportunity this
10 morning to make this presentation. After three
11 years of what I would call full participation with
12 the businesses in the area, we are pleased to be
13 here this morning. As a property owner, as a
14 business owner and as the head of the Steering
15 Committee, I believe strongly in the creation of
16 the Central Fulton Street BID. When I look at
17 some of the services or the benefits that we will
18 be receiving from the BID, namely security,
19 sanitation, promotion and marketing, I believe
20 that this BID will serve its purpose and prove to
21 be one of the greatest benefits for the Fulton
22 Street. Take a look at the economy today, we
23 realize that most of the small businesses on
24 Fulton Street will not be able to obtain loans.
25 Therefore the promotion and marketing will go a

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2 long way to benefit these businesses and to bring
3 business on to the strip. We just want to point
4 out this morning that some of the new initiatives
5 that will be coming from this bid will be very
6 important and will go a long way, as I said, to
7 benefit these businesses in the area. The holiday
8 season is coming up and during the Christmas
9 season, we intend to do a lot of lighting in the
10 area. And what this will do, it will encourage
11 individuals to come into the area to shop. And
12 that's what we're hoping to do. We want to take a
13 look at Fulton Street, and this BID will allow us
14 to see Fulton Street as the way it should be.
15 Over the years, there might have been negative
16 belief as to the Fulton Street strip, but as to
17 the heightened security this BID will bring, I'm
18 sure that the residents in the area will see this
19 as a very attractive place to come and shop.
20 Therefore I'm asking that the City Council approve
21 this bid, and we want to thank you very much for
22 your participation and support in this BID. Thank
23 you.

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

25 Proceed.

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2 MICHAEL WIMBERLY: My name is
3 Michael Wimberly, and I'm a co-owner of a merchant
4 business, Fish and Crustaceans on Fulton Street,
5 and thank you very much, City Council, for having
6 us this morning. I'd just like to kind of add to
7 that, as a business owner for the past three years
8 and especially within the past two years, it's
9 been very arduous to have customers come through
10 because of the construction, but I know that the
11 bigger picture is that will improve the overall
12 flow and the face of Fulton Business area. At the
13 same time, I'm supportive of the BID because it
14 allows me to have a lower fee in order to continue
15 marketing and perhaps putting out marketing in a
16 much wider area so I can generate more business.
17 And it's been tough because of the construction
18 for our businesses, just not mine, but for other
19 people's businesses because of the flow of the
20 area. Once that is in place, with improved
21 lighting, that's just going to bring a better feel
22 to the neighborhood. We unfortunately had a
23 murder, actually, earlier this year right in front
24 of our store which, even though it was daylight,
25 there was no security there; and perhaps greater

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2 security could improve the overall feel. I have
3 people from, really literally from Europe and
4 Africa who want to come over to the area, but they
5 don't feel that security because it's perhaps not
6 lit the way it should be. So we're hoping for
7 better improvement in lighting, overall marketing,
8 website and management that can come from this,
9 will encourage more merchants and visitation,
10 tourism to the area. So, I am definitely in
11 support of the BID, and as a Committee Member, I
12 want to thank you for this opportunity.

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CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

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Council Member James, did you want to make a
statement?

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COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Sure. On
behalf of Pratt Area Community Council under the
leadership of Deb Howard and Dale Charles and to
all the businesses on Fulton Street, over the last
three years Fulton Street has suffered a
significant amount of challenges. A number of
businesses have closed down as a result of the
construction. Fulton Street, unfortunately,
aesthetically leaves a lot to be desired. We
continue to face major challenges on Fulton

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2 Street. Fulton Street is a major corridor in the
3 district that I represent, and it is with
4 enthusiasm that I support this BID, as we go
5 forward, as the construction concludes, as we
6 establish a retail survey on Fulton Street, and in
7 an attempt to attract anchor businesses, we are
8 working together. This is a step in that
9 direction. And Fulton Street in the Clinton Hill
10 and Fort Greene and Bedford-Stuyvesant community
11 will one day rival that of Myrtle Avenue and any
12 other commercial corridor in the City of New York.
13 And so I'm proud to support this proposal and
14 would urge the support of my colleagues. And I
15 thank, again, Pratt Area Community Council for
16 their vision and their leadership. Thank you, Mr.
17 Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

19 Council Member Fidler, did you have a question or
20 a statement?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: No, I need
22 to make a comment for the record. I am going to
23 have to recuse myself from this discussion and I
24 will be abstaining when this does come back to us
25 for a vote. I have been and I think I still am

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2 the attorney for Mr. Sharpe's business on Fulton
3 Street and as a result, I wanted to lay that on
4 the record, disclose it.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Is it a good
6 business?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: It's was
8 the last time I checked in. It's a very wonderful
9 daycare program, facility. Nilrack [phonetic] and
10 I just wanted to make that disclosure and indicate
11 the reason for my recusal.

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: No problem.
13 Did you want to?

14 DALE CHARLES: Yes. Hi, good
15 morning. My name is Dale Charles. I'm the
16 Director of Economic Development at Pratt Area
17 Community Council, and I'm also the person who
18 started out as the Merchant Organizer for the
19 merchants on Fulton Street, and hear and still
20 hear all the concerns of after the construction
21 has ended and where do we go. And this BID is
22 going to be an asset to what we need to do moving
23 forward. We've tried ad hoc ways of doing
24 marketing and new signage and new holiday events
25 and things, and there's not funding for that, and

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2 this will put in place a marketing and holiday
3 lighting funding to make sure that every year can
4 be a year where we have decorations and lighting
5 and different things for the different holidays of
6 the year that we didn't have in the past, and I
7 had to go door-to-door to try and collect
8 membership, which was hard to do. And this is
9 just an added-- it makes the work a little easier
10 and makes the process a lot better, and I thank
11 you for the opportunity for speaking this morning.
12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.
14 Any further questions for these panelists? Thank
15 you all for coming. We'll next hear from
16 Assemblyman Richard Gottfried, who is chair of the
17 New York State Assembly Health Committee, as well
18 as being the Senior Member of the New York State
19 Legislature. It's a great honor to have you here,
20 Assemblyman, as you have testified on a number of
21 other occasions before this body. The floor is
22 yours.

23 RICHARD GOTTFRIED: Well thank you
24 very much. I am Assembly Member Richard N.
25 Gottfried, and I represent the Chelsea, Hell's

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2 Kitchen, Midtown and Murray Hill neighborhoods and
3 part of the Upper West Side, and I very much
4 appreciate the opportunity to testify in support
5 of the proposal for the authorization to increase
6 the amounts to be expended by Business Improvement
7 Districts. My district includes or adjoins
8 several Business Improvement Districts, including
9 and I hope I'm not leavening anyone out, 14th
10 Street/Union Square, the Flat Iron 23rd Street
11 Partnership, the 34th Street Partnership, the
12 Times Square Alliance, Bryant Park, 47th Street,
13 Fashion Center, The Grand Central Partnership,
14 Fifth Avenue, Lincoln Square and Columbus Avenue.
15 Perhaps, not coincidentally, my district also
16 includes more subway entrances than any assembly
17 district, I think, in the country. We have two
18 Whole Foods, three Brooks Brothers, and as of a
19 couple of days ago, we have our aircraft carrier
20 back. Business Improvement Districts have proven
21 themselves to be valuable additions to the City,
22 improving the quality of life in the communities
23 in which they operate. They improve the security
24 and sanitation of their areas; they enhance their
25 neighborhoods with beautification programs. They

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2 carry out merchant promotions and social events
3 that increase visibility for businesses that might
4 otherwise not have the means to do it themselves.
5 Some BIDs also provide technical and business
6 development services. It is appropriate that the
7 BIDs would want to continue and expand their work
8 and need to get assessment increases to do so.
9 Many BIDs have been unable to serve their
10 districts as well as they could because of a lack
11 of funding. Increases in assessments should be
12 allowed for the BIDs to accomplish their goals.
13 These are difficult times for businesses, for the
14 workers they employ and for the City budget. BIDs
15 help support the economy and relieve some of the
16 burden on the City budget. BIDs have been good
17 for New York City and they deserve our support and
18 I thank you for, again, for holding this hearing
19 and for giving me this opportunity to testify.

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,
21 Assemblyman. I'd like to welcome a special guest
22 to the Chamber, and that's Amelia Gioia, who is
23 being accompanied by her father, Council Member
24 Eric Gioia. Welcome, Ms. Gioia. Any questions
25 for Assemblyman Gottfried? Thank you for coming.

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RICHARD GOTTFRIED: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Amelia, do you have any questions? Do you want to say hi?

ERIC N. GIOIA: Say hi, Mom. No, no questions.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, would anybody else like to-- oh wait, we have another person signed up to testify, and that's Mark Lipton.

MARK LIPTON: Good afternoon. Thank you for the--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing] I think you have to press the button.

MARK LIPTON: Hello?

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes.

MARK LIPTON: Okay. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Mark Lipton. I am a property owner as well as a business owner in the Kingsbridge BID, and I'm here just very briefly to say that I am opposed to passing this legislation, at least regarding the Kingsbridge BID. I'm not sure how it works as far as separating them out versus the other ones, and I understand that may be complicated. At this

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2 time this BID is looking for a 40% approximate
3 increase, and in this economy I just think that
4 that's irresponsible to even consider,
5 particularly since I'm of the opinion, and I think
6 I speak for many of the business owners near me as
7 well as many of the property owners, that this is
8 not a BID of impressive accomplishment. I've
9 owned those buildings in that area for many years.
10 They were in my family for, you know, probably 20
11 years even maybe more before I took them over.
12 And the neighborhood has not seen the benefits
13 that many other neighborhoods have seen from
14 Business Improvement Districts, so I would
15 encourage you to in some way separate them out or
16 vote down that increase, and thank you very much
17 for your time. I appreciate it.

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

19 Any questions for Mr. Lipton?

20 MARK LIPTON: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

22 Okay, we don't have a quorum yet. If someone
23 could, yeah, we're going to get some more members
24 in here and then we'll call for a vote.

25 [Pause]

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Aye on
3 all. Aye on all.

4 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: We're not up
5 to that yet.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: And more.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, we're
8 going to couple the two items before us. The
9 first one is 808, the second one is 841. The
10 first one is the establishment of the Belmont
11 Business Improvement District. The second one is
12 the Local Law to the Administrative Code to
13 authorize all the increases to the 13 Business
14 Improvement Districts. Call the Roll.

15 TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member
16 Weprin.

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Aye on all.

18 TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member
19 Reyna.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Aye on all,
21 and congratulations to my Myrtle Avenue BID.

22 TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member
23 Brewer.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Aye on all.
25 Congratulations again to Columbus BID and to

1

2

Lincoln Square BID, Columbus Avenue BID.

3

TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member

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Comrie.

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COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Permission

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to explain my vote?

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CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes, you may.

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COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Aye on all,

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thank you.

10

TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member de

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Blasio.

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COUNCIL MEMBER DE BLASIO: Aye on

13

all.

14

TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member

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Fidler.

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COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Aye on all,

17

and congratulations to everyone who's

18

congratulating people.

19

TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member

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Gioia.

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COUNCIL MEMBER GIOIA: Thank you.

22

I vote yes on all.

23

TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member

24

Jackson.

25

COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: I thought

1

2 I voted already. No?

3 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Vote again.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Oh. Aye

5 on all and congratulations to the three BIDs, and

6 I vote Aye, Aye, Aye.

7 TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member

8 McMahon.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MCMAHON: Aye.

10 TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member

11 Sears.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: Aye.

13 TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member

14 Vallone.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE:

16 Congratulations to Lou Fidler and to my Steinway

17 Street BID. I vote Aye.

18 TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member

19 Yassky.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER YASSKY: Aye.

21 TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member

22 Gentile.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Aye on

24 all.

25 TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member

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2 Oddo.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Yes.

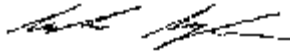
4 TANISHA EDWARDS: In a vote of 16
5 in the affirmative, zero in the negative, this
6 vote stands adjourned.7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. I'm
8 going to keep the roll open for a half hour.9 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Wait, you
10 didn't call my name.11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Council Member
12 Albert Vann.13 TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member
14 Vann. Sorry.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Aye on all.

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Council Member
17 Vann votes Aye. Council Member Koppell.18 TANISHA EDWARDS: Council Member
19 Koppell.20 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Aye on
21 all.22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, the roll
23 is going to be open for a half hour. Other than
24 that, we're adjourned. Members, please sign the
25 Committee Reports.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Erika Swyler certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.



Signature_____

Date February 8, 2009