

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS,
PUBLIC SITING AND MARITIME USES

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DECEMBER 13, 2018
Start: 12:07 P.M.
Recess: 12:43 P.M.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - COMMITTEE RM. 16TH FL

B E F O R E: ADRIENNE E. ADAMS, CHAIR

COUNCIL MEMBERS: INEZ D. BARRON
PETER A. KOO
I. DANEEK MILLER
MARK TREYGER
STEVEN MATTEO, MINORITY
LEADER
CARLOS MENCHACA

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

TAMI RACHELSON, Senior Manager for
Project Operations in Real Estate for
School Construction Authority (SCA)

BEN GOODMAN, Community Relations Manager
for School Construction Authority (SCA)

GAYLE MANDARO, Senior Director and Senior
Attorney for Real Estate Services for
School Construction Authority (SCA)

TAMAR SMITH, School Construction
Authority

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SARGEANT AT ARMS: Microphone check.

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Today's date December 13, 2018. Committee on

4

Landmarks being recorded by John Biando (SP?) 16th

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Floor Committee Room.

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CHAIR ADRIENNE ADAMS: Good afternoon,

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welcome to this meeting of the Subcommittee on

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Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses. I am

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Council Member Adrienne Adams, the Chair of this

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Subcommittee. We are joined today by Council Member

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Koo and Matteo. Today we will be holding hearings

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and voting on two school site selections, submitted

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by the New York City School Construction Authority

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pursuant to section 1732 of the Public Authorities

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Law. The first hearing is on LU287 for the Site

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Selection of a 432-seat primary school and a 231-seat

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3KU/PKU facility at the former St. John Villa

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Educational Campus in Community School District 31 in

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Minority Leader Steve Matteo's District in Staten

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Island. Our second hearing will be on LU288 for the

21

Site Selection of a new approximately 380-seat

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Primary School Facility on the site of the Former St.

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Rosalea Church located at block 5741 lot 5, Community

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School District 20 in Council Member Menchaca's

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District in Brooklyn. I know open the Public Hearing

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2 on LU287 and recognize Minority Leader Matteo to
3 speak on this application.

4 MINORITY LEADER STEVEN MATTEO: Thank you
5 Chair Adams. I am here today to speak in support of
6 the proposed acquisition of the former St. John's
7 Villa Campus. For decades the Sisters of St. John
8 the Baptist ably performed a mission of education for
9 Staten Island's Youth. Generations of students and
10 teachers walked the halls of this venerable
11 institution and many Staten Islanders received an
12 excellent education which enabled them to go on to
13 high school, college and fulfilling careers. It is
14 for the reason as well as our desire to prevent
15 further overdevelopment of Staten Island that the
16 borough President I called to the City to acquire
17 this property as an educational campus. Continuing
18 to use the site for education not only provides much
19 needed new classroom seats in the East Shore of
20 Staten Island but it also allows for the site to be
21 used in a way with minimal impacts to their
22 surrounding neighborhood. Ultimately, that is what
23 is so important to get right about this eventual
24 project. The City is doing a great thing by
25 maintaining the Villa Campus as a school site but we

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2 must make sure that we get all the details right, the
3 kind of schools to be situated there, student
4 transportation, to a relationship with residential
5 neighbors and existing institution like the Galla
6 House and all of the Land Use questions that arise
7 with any project like this, such as building
8 utilizing and parking. Today's hearing only presents
9 us with a question of whether we approve the
10 acquisition of the site for schools. I have been
11 assured that all of the details are yet to be
12 finalized and that the New York City School
13 Construction Authority is committed to working with
14 me and other stakeholders to ensure that a balanced
15 final project is made a reality for this campus.
16 That is why I am here today in supporting the
17 purchase of this very important site and I will send
18 it back to you Chair Adams. Thank you.

19 CHAIR ADRIENNE ADAMS: Thank you very
20 much uhm Minority Leader. We have been joined by
21 Council Member Menchaca. I now call upon the panel,
22 Tami Rachelson, Ben Goodman, Gayle Mandaro, please
23 step up. You are representing SCA of the School
24 Construction Authority, before you begin, Counsel,
25 will you please swear in the panel.

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COUNSEL: Please state your names.

BEN GOODMAN: Ben Goodman.

TAMI RACHELSON: Tami Rachelson.

GAYLE MANDARO: Gayle Mandaro.

COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before the subcommittee in response to Council Member questions.

BEN GOODMAN: Yes.

TAMI RACHELSON: Yes.

GAYLE MANDARO: Yes.

CHAIR ADRIENNE ADAMS: You may begin.

Thank you.

BEN GOODMAN: Thank you, good morning Chair Person Adams and Council Members. My name is Ben Goodman and I am a Community Relations Manager for the School Construction Authority. Also, with me in Gayle Mandaro, Senior Director and Senior Attorney for Real Estate Services and Tami Rachelson, Senior Manager for Project Operations in Real Estate. The SCA has undertaken the site selection process for a new 432-seat primary seat and 231-seat 3KU/PK facility on block 3087 lot 1 and 3089 lot 59 in the borough of Staten Island. The site contains a total

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2 of approximately 313,632 square feet of lot area on
3 the former St. John's Villa Academy Campus. The site
4 is privately owned, is located within the Staten
5 Island Community School District #2 and Community
6 School District #31. It is located within the
7 Arrochar neighborhood. Under the proposed project,
8 the SCA plans to acquire the privately-owned property
9 and to renovate some of the existing buildings a 432-
10 seat primary school and a 231-seat 3K/PKU facility.
11 The Notice of Filing for the Site Plan was published
12 in the New York Post, Staten Island Advance and the
13 City Record on September 17, 2018. Staten Island
14 Community Board 2, Community Education Council 31 and
15 the City Planning Commission were all notified of the
16 Site Plan. CAC 31 held a hearing on September 17,
17 2018. Community Board 2 held a hearing on October
18 16th, 2018. The SCA has considered all comments
19 received on the proposed site plan and a affirms the
20 site plan pursuant to section 1731 of the Public
21 Authorities Law. In accordance with section 1732 of
22 the PAL, the SCA submitted the proposed site plan to
23 the Mayor and City Council by letter, dated December
24 7, 2018. We look forward to your subcommittee's
25 favorable consideration of the proposed site plan and

1
2 are prepared to answer questions from the Committee.
3 Thank you.

4 CHAIR ADRIENNE ADAMS: Thank you very
5 much for your testimony this morning. We want to
6 note that uhm both of you spoke, at both applications
7 and that we will take care of LU287 first before
8 moving to LU288. Are there any more members or any
9 members of the public that wish to testify on... Oh,
10 sorry, Council Member Matteo question.

11 STEVEN MATTEO: Thank you, thank you
12 Chair Adams, thank you all for being here today and
13 for your constant cooperation with myself and my
14 office on all things SCA appreciated. I just had a
15 few questions, uhm just to go over. What kind of
16 capital work will be done in the outside... to what
17 buildings? I believe you uhm..

18 TAMI RACHELSON: Currently planning to
19 uhm rehabilitate. Oh, we are currently planning to
20 rehabilitate the high school and the former
21 elementary school uhm facilities for PS and the UPK
22 program at this time.

23 GAYLE MANDARO: And to use the gym
24 building on the campus as well.

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STEVEN MATTEO: And the gym building.

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And you are going to do exactly what with the

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capital? You are tearing the whole things down?

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You, you are existing, you are retro...

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TAMI RACHELSON: I believe the original

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plan, though not designed yet in any kind of formal

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way is to try to rehab what we can at this time.

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STEVEN MATTEO: Okay and the, what is the

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plans for parking? Do we think we have sufficient?

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TAMI RACHELSON: Being that it is a 7 and

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approximately 7.2-acre campus we do believe there

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will be adequate parking.

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STEVEN MATTEO: For the both, both

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schools that we have.

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TAMI RACHELSON: Correct.

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STEVEN MATTEO: That we are talking

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about. Okay, great. Uhm, listen, we have spoken a

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lot and you have spoken to my staff. You know where

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I am, obviously I am supportive of us starting this

21

process. We want the borough President and I want

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SCA to take over this site as a school site. Uhm I

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have spoken with the Department of Education as well,

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uh they have committed to working with us on a final

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plan and hear our priorities and I just ask SCA do

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2 the same thing and work with the borough President
3 and I as we move forward.

4 TAMI RACHELSON: We intent to work with
5 all affected stakeholders as we move forward in the
6 design process.

7 STEVEN MATTEO: So, with that, uhm I send
8 it back to you uhm Chair Adams.

9 CHAIR ADRIENNE ADAMS: Thank you very
10 much Council Member Matteo and now are there any
11 members of the public who wish to further comment on
12 this item? Seeing none. LU287 is now closed and I
13 now open the public hearing on LU288 and recognize
14 Council Member Menchaca to speak on this application?

15 CARLOS MENCHACA: Thank you Chair and I
16 want to welcome the SCA back uhm I am not a member of
17 this Committee Chair uhm but it seems like I'm here
18 often and for really great reasons. I want to say
19 thank you so much for the work that you have done on
20 the team, on the SCA team, uhm in partnership with
21 all of the members of our, of our committee, uhm
22 Community and make space for quality schools, for
23 example, kind of brings to mind when I think about
24 the energy that is going on on the ground. Uhm this
25 is an exciting moment for us in District 38 that

1 encompasses a couple of highly overcrowded school
2 Districts 20 and 15. Uhm currently we have about 30
3 public schools but students are yet still feeling
4 overcrowded and not getting the attention and the
5 support, uhm and support uhm but that is changing
6 with SCAs help, vision, focus, seven more schools are
7 planned for the District and even more are in the
8 pipeline uhm including this one. Uhm these 7 planned
9 schools are bringing 3,000 more seats to the Council
10 District and I want to acknowledge that there has
11 been so much expertise and support and commitment of
12 parents and you all working together, fighting with
13 our kids and our kids have been so vocal on the
14 ground too and I see them when they have taken over
15 SCA and taken over the City Council uhm already
16 prepared to take on these challenges uhm I also want
17 to make sure that I say uhm that well, while things
18 are complicated on the ground, uhm what's never
19 complicated is our commitment to education so thank
20 you so much uhm and I look forward to hearing your
21 testimony today. I have one question after your
22 testimony but thank you so much for being here and I
23 really urge the committee to support.
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2 CHAIR ADRIENNE ADAMS: Thank you very
3 much Council Member Menchaca. Council will swear in
4 Tamar Smith SCA.

5 COUNSEL: Please state your name?

6 TAMAR SMITH: Tamar Smith. Thank you so
7 much Tamar Smith, School Construction Authority.

8 COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell the
9 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in
10 your testimony before this Committee and in response
11 to Council Member questions?

12 TAMAR SMITH: Yes, I do.

13 CHAIR ADRIENNE ADAMS: Thank you very
14 much panel, you may begin.

15 TAMI RACHELSON: Good morning, Chair
16 Person Adams and Council Members, my name is Tami
17 Rachelson and I am Senior Manager for Project
18 Operations in the New York City School Construction
19 Authority Real Estate Department. Also, with me is
20 Gayle Mandaro, Senior Director and Senior Attorney
21 for Real Estate Services and Tamar Smith Community
22 Relations Manager. The SCA has undertaken the site
23 selection process for a new approximately 380-seat
24 primary school facility on block 5741 lot 5 in the
25 Borough of Brooklyn. Site contains a total of

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2 approximately 920,000 square feet of lot area on the
3 former St. Rosalea Church Property. The site is
4 privately owned but improved and is located within
5 Brooklyn Community District #11 and Community School
6 District #20. It is located in the neighborhood of
7 Bensonhurst and under the proposed project the SCA
8 would acquire the property and construct a new
9 approximately 300-seat primary facility. The Notice
10 of Site Planning was published in the New York Post
11 and City Record on October 10, 2018 at which time
12 Community Education Counsel #20, Brooklyn Community
13 Board #11 and the City Planning Commission were also
14 notified of the Site Plan. On October 10th, the CEC
15 and Community Board were asked to hold public
16 hearings on the proposed site plan, Community Board
17 #11 held a public hearing on November 7th and
18 submitted comments, CEC 20 held a public hearing on
19 November 8th. Written comments were not received
20 from the CEC nor from the City Planning Commission.
21 The SCA has considered all comments received on the
22 proposed site plan and affirms the site plan pursuant
23 through Section 1731 of the Public Authorities Law in
24 accordance with section 1732 of the PAL. The SCA
25 submitted the proposed site plan to the Mayor and

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2 City Council by letter dated December 7, 2018. We
3 look forward to your Subcommittee's favorable
4 consideration of the proposed site plan and are
5 prepared to answer questions from the Committee.
6 Thank you.

7 CHAIR ADRIENNE ADAMS: Thank you very
8 much for your testimony. Council Member Menchaca
9 questions?

10 CARLOS MENCHACA: Yes, thank you chair.
11 Uhm the Diosis has been a really great partner uhm on
12 many sites. Can you tell us a little bit about how
13 this Site became uhm a possible Site? Was a
14 communication from Diosis? Did you, kind of
15 affirmatively ask the Diosis for the Site? How did
16 that, how did that start?

17 TAMI RACHELSON: Well, we have very close
18 relationship with the Diosis. We have about 60
19 leases with them, they are our largest landlord and
20 we are their largest tenant and we work very closely.
21 We are in daily contact with them and uh they sort of
22 have their finger on the pulse of our needs and sort
23 of have a finger on the pulse of unfortunately their
24 schools are and properties that they may no longer.
25 So, uhm they know that District 20 has always been an

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2 area of high need and they came to us and said that
3 this property had been basically vacant for years
4 because of the two pari... the two nearby parishes had
5 merged and they said would be interested and we took
6 it from there.

7 CARLOS MENCHACA: Thank you for that and
8 uhm you know I was talking off-line with Council
9 Member Matteo about his Site and we were both, uhm
10 comparing notes in some ways and these, these
11 projects, kind of conversations from the Diosis to
12 public schools often have some challenges. Do you,
13 did you see any challenges has you approach the
14 building? The is...

15 TAMI RACHELSON: Okay this is, I, I just
16 want, sorry I was not clear. This is vacant land.
17 It had not been on.

18 CARLOS MENCHACA: No and I, I understand
19 that but just more on the site itself, where it is
20 located. Any challenges that you can kind of foresee
21 uhm in just kind of transparency and there might be
22 any but I think this is where I want to be, to be
23 clear.

24 TAMI RACHELSON: We had done a test fit
25 uhm to see and we could fit 380-seat school uhm

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2 primary school on the property. We, full disclosure,
3 we will need to do a zoning override.

4 CARLOS MENCHACA: Uh-huh, uh-huh.

5 TAMI RACHELSON: Because it's in an M1
6 and we are also exceeding certain you know on both.

7 CARLOS MENCHACA: Right.

8 TAMI RACHELSON: But other than that, we
9 don't foresee any problems.

10 CARLOS MENCHACA: Good and like I said
11 you have my full support and we will be back for all
12 of those approvals in and it is just like good to
13 make sure that every site is very different. The
14 communities are different uhm and we don't want to
15 feel like there is one solution and that in fact what
16 we saw here was a real opportunity and uhm to address
17 the overcrowded issue with community in-hand and
18 support with kind of full, full throttle support,
19 especially from me. Okay I think that is it for me
20 on questions. Thank you so much.

21 CHAIR ADRIENNE ADAMS: Thank you very
22 much Council Member. Thank you, panel, I just want
23 to say, from, from, just a personal note here it is
24 always heartwarming for me to see schools go up, go
25 up in our City. It is tremendous to see these

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2 schools go up throughout the City. Our children are
3 in need. We've got so many locations that are
4 overcrowded. We still have trailers on some
5 locations, in our District and I just you know
6 commend you for your thoughtfulness and placement uhm
7 for these facilities and uhm we, we need to see more
8 as you know. So, thank you very much for your
9 testimony this afternoon.

10 TAMI RACHELSON: Thank you.

11 TAMAR SMITH: Thank you.

12 CHAIR ADRIENNE ADAMS: Are there any more
13 members of the public who wish to testify on these
14 items? Okay, seeing none. The public hearing on
15 LU288 is now closed. Uhm we will go into recess
16 briefly, we need a quorum to vote. (silence). Okay
17 in accordance with the affected members
18 recommendations, we will now vote on both items. We
19 will vote to approve LU287 for a Site Selection of a
20 432-seat primary school and a 231-seat K3/UPK
21 Facility at the former St. John Villa Educational
22 Campus in Staten Island. We will also vote to
23 approve LU288 the Site Selection for a new
24 approximately 380-seat primary school facility on the
25

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2 site of the former St. Rosalea Church in Brooklyn. I
3 now call for a vote. Counsel.

4 COUNSEL: Adams?

5 CHAIR ADRIENNE ADAMS: I vote aye.

6 COUNSEL: Koo?

7 PETER KOO: Aye.

8 COUNSEL: Treyger?

9 MARK TREYGER: Uhm with congratulations
10 with my colleague Council Member Menchaca who is
11 helping address a crisis and in terms for the need
12 for additional seats in District 20 which is one of
13 the most overcrowded Districts in the New York City
14 School System. I vote aye.

15 COUNSEL: With a vote of three in the
16 affirmative, zero in the negative and zero
17 abstentions. The items are recommended for approval
18 by the full Land Use Committee and the vote is held
19 open.

20 CHAIR ADRIENNE ADAMS: Thank you very
21 much, we will hold the vote open for 10 minutes.
22 This concludes today's business. I would like to
23 thank the members of the public, my colleagues,
24 Council and the great Land Use Staff for attending
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today's hearing. This meeting is hereby adjourned.
(gavel pounding).

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 JANUARY 12, 2019