

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL
AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP
RELATIONS

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February 25, 2019
Start: 10:05 a.m.
Recess: 12:43 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: BARRY GRODENCHIK
Chairperson

HELEN ROSENTHAL
Chairperson

JAMES G. VAN BRAMER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Joseph C. Borelli
Justin L. Brannan
Andrew Cohen
Costa G. Constantinides
Mark Gjonaj
Andy L. King
Peter A. Koo
Francisco P. Moya
Eric A. Ulrich
James G. Van Bramer
Diana Ayala
Laurie A. Cumbo

Ben Kallos
Brad S. Lander
Karen Koslowitz
Francisco Moya

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

Tom Finkelppearl, Commissioner Department of
Cultural Affairs

Kendal Henry, Direct of Percent for Art Program
Department of Cultural Affairs

Justin Moore, Director, Public Design Commission

Matt Drury, Director of Government Relations
New York City Parks and Recreation

Keri Butler, Deputy Director, Public Design
Commission

Tara Kelly, Vice President of Pilots and Programs,
Municipal Arts Society

Lynn Kelly, New Yorkers for Parks

Meredith Maskara, CEO, Girl Scouts of Greater New
York

Professor Harriet Senie, Art Historian
Director of Masters Program in Art History and
Art Museum Studies

Pam Elam, President of the Stanton and Anthony
Statue Fund and our Monumental Women Campaign

Brenda Berkman, Board Member,
Statue Fund and our Monumental Women Campaign

Judaline Cassidy, Board Member
Statue Fund and our Monumental Women Campaign

Amina Ali, Naturopathic Doctor, Representing U.N.
Women for the Gambia

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[sound check] [pause] [gavel]

CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: good morning,
everybody and welcome to this hearing of the Parks
and Recreation Committee, the Women's Committee and
your title is very long, Mr. Van Bramer, Cultural
Affairs and something else. My name is Barry
Grodenschik. I have the honor of chairing the Parks
and Recreation Committee for this term of the New
York City Council. I and Council Member Van Bramer
are going to waive our opening statements for the
time being in terms of just to save some time right
now, and we are going to hear first from the
Commissioner of Cultural Affairs, a good friend to
many of us and former Director of the Queens Museum,
and he's eager to go. I see that. So, I know that
you have to be somewhere. So--

I do.

CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: --we will speak
a little later. If the clerk can swear him in and
his--

CLERK: Do you affirm to tell the truth,
the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your
testimony before these committees today?

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COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes, I do.

[coughs] I'd like to—to just start by thanking you
all for the [coughs] the brevity or quickness of
getting to my testimony. So, I will read my
testimony. Good morning Chairs Van Bramer,
Grodenschik, Rosenthal and members of the respective
committees. I'm here to testify on behalf of the
Department of Cultural Affairs with regards to
today's topic: Improving gender and cultural
diversity of monuments located in city parks. I'm
joined by a number of colleagues from my agency and
from other agencies here. I want to start by saying
that the subject of today's hearing is something that
that the Department of Cultural Affairs along with
colleagues throughout the city government and
community partners have dedicated an enormous amount
of time and energy to in the recent months. It's a
major priority for us and we thank you for the
opportunity to highlight some of the ongoing efforts
to address the historic lack of diverse
representation in our city's collection of monuments,
statues and public art. Since the Percent for Art
program was created under Mayor Koch in 1982,
Department of Cultural Affairs has completed more

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2 than 300 permanent public artworks for our open
3 spaces and civic buildings. Thanks to legislation
4 sponsored by Chair Van Bramer and others and signed
5 into law by Mayor de Blasio in 2017, Percent for Art
6 has recently been updated. For the first time since
7 the program created, we have updated the budget
8 formula expand the funding for art commissions. We
9 have also worked with you on legislation to advance
10 community's role in the process. Several monumental
11 works have been commissioned through the Percent for
12 Art from Allison Saar's remarkable sculpture of
13 Harriet Tubman in Harlem to artist Gabriel Coran's
14 depictions of Frederick Douglass and Malcolm that's
15 also in Harlem to a monument commemorating Dr. Ronald
16 McNair in Brooklyn, and an installation at New Yorker
17 Public Library Schomburg Center honoring Langston
18 Hughes. These are examples of incremental progress
19 we have seen in years towards a more diverse public
20 art collection, but since 2017, we've been committed
21 to addressing the historic lack of representation for
22 women and people of color in more urgent and
23 deliberative—deliberate way. Following national
24 protests related to the Confederate Monuments and
25 other representations of bigotry and bias in the

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2 public realm, Mayor de Blasio established the Mayoral
3 Advisor Commission on City Art Monuments and Markers.
4 Its charge was to renew—to review controversial items
5 on city-owned property. As DCLA's Commissioner I
6 served as Co-Chair of the Monuments Commission
7 alongside Barron Walker of the Ford Foundation. We
8 host the public hearings in all five boroughs to
9 listen to what New Yorkers had to say about
10 representation in our city's public art collection.
11 More 500 individuals attended these public hearings
12 with nearly 200 offering verbal testimony and an
13 online survey received more than 3,000 responses.
14 The Commission considered several pieces of art on
15 city property that we—they were the subject of
16 sustained controversy, and worked to formulate
17 recommendations for addressing these in a considered
18 inclusive way. Following the Commission's report
19 issued in 2018, January 2018 we embarked on a number
20 of new efforts to make New York City's public spaces
21 more inclusive welcoming and representative of our
22 shared values. For one, Mayor de Blasio ordered the
23 removal of the statue honoring J. Marion Sims,
24 located at the edge of Central Park across from the
25 New York Academy of Medicine. [coughs] Sims

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2 performed medical experiments on the site of black
3 women and this statue is the focus of sustained
4 community opposition in East Harlem for many years.
5 The statue's removal in April of 2018 marked the
6 beginning of our efforts called Beyond Sims to work
7 with the local community to commission new artwork
8 for the site. MACCAM (sic) has done several
9 community discussions to keep the local residents
10 engaged in the art commissioning process, and to
11 articulate what community wants, what the community
12 wants to achieve through this new commission. This
13 past Saturday we hosted the first of two artist
14 selection panels at the Schomburg Center, and artists
15 will be selected at the next panel, which will take
16 place in the weeks ahead. They will be expected to
17 work closely with the community as they design this
18 new monument. [coughs] Also in response to the
19 mayor, the Mayoral Monuments Commission's report, the
20 city's Public Design Commission hired two archivists
21 to undertake a one-year extensive review of the
22 city's park collection. If we want to address the
23 issues of representation of public land, we first
24 need to have a clear sense of who is currently
25 represented. The first phase of this project will

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2 result in a public online data base of outdoor
3 monuments and memorials and is planned for completion
4 in August 2019. Removing ahead with several fronts
5 while that other appeal (sic) is underway. The
6 Mayor's Monuments Commission emphasized that we
7 should focus on an additive approach finding ways to
8 honor people, histories and voices that are currently
9 underrepresented or not represented at all in our
10 city's public spaces. One of the most exciting and
11 concrete outgrowths of this effort is She Built NYC,
12 an initiative spearheaded by First Lady Chirlane
13 McCray and Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen to commission
14 permanent artwork honoring women. This is an area
15 particularly stark and troubling statistics of 118
16 unique individuals represented in commemorative
17 sculptures in city parkland most of which date from
18 the 19th and Early 20th Century just for our women.
19 An open call for nominations of women or groups of
20 women that the public wanted to see honored yielded
21 thousands of responses and an enormous amount of
22 enthusiasm for the project overall. Building on this
23 public engagement and momentum, in November we were
24 thrilled to be part of the announcement that Shirley
25 Chisholm would be the first woman to be honored as

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2 part of She Built NYC. The trailblazing public
3 servant from Brooklyn would have a monument installed
4 at the park side entrance of Prospect Park by the end
5 of 2020. This is just the beginning of our efforts
6 to cultivate a more diverse collection of city
7 monuments, and we plan to announce more in the near
8 future. Following the Monuments Commission Report,
9 the Mayor also committed to honoring the indigenous
10 people of New York. We are in active conversations
11 with members of the community on ways to accomplish
12 this important gesture honor the people who lived
13 here for Europeans arrived. As you can see from all
14 this activity, this is an exciting time to be
15 involved in the work of bringing new ideas, energy
16 and voices into the process of commission public
17 monuments. We look forward to sharing updates about
18 our new commissions with you and general public in
19 the near future. Your support is an essential
20 complement or component of these efforts. As we hope
21 today's testimony makes clear, the city has
22 demonstrated its strong commitment to the values and
23 objectives that are reflected in the proposed
24 legislation, and we believe that there are ways we
25 can work together to achieve them. I thank you for

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2 giving me the opportunity to testify before today's
3 hearing.

4 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
5 Commissioner. To open up questions, I'm going to call
6 on Chair Van Bramer. We've been joined by Joe
7 Borelli of Staten Island and also Peter Koo from the
8 Borough of Queens. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Commissioner, I
10 thought you were staying until 10:30. No?

11 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [off mic]

12 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: [off mic] I
13 guess not.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay.
15 [background comments/pause] Well, let me just say I
16 think that's highly unusual and I'm—we understood
17 that the Commissioner had a hard stop at 10:30, but I
18 did not realize that meant that he would refuse to
19 take any questions. I realize that Kendall and
20 others are here, but I think that abrupt turn of
21 events is surprising and highly unusual and
22 unfortunate. But, nevertheless, we will persist.
23 So, with that why don't my co-chair speak and have
24 some other folks testify.

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2 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you chair
3 Van Bramer. We've also been joined by Councilman
4 Rafael Salamanca from the great Borough of the Bronx.
5 At this time, Matt, do you have testimony?

6 MATT DRURY: No.

7 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. So, we
8 don't have any testimony. So, I'm going to let now
9 my—my Co-Chair Van Bramer open up the line of
10 questions this morning. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
12 much. I—I just confirmed that our Counsel that we
13 had in fact been told that the Commissioner had a
14 hard stop at 10:30, and did not know that he would
15 refuse to take any questions here at this hearing,
16 which is galling to me, but I believe we have to
17 swear in the others who are going to testify today.
18 So, I'll hand it over to our Counsel to do that.

19 LEGAL COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell the
20 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in
21 your testimony today?

22 PANEL MEMBER: I do.

23 PANEL MEMBER: I do.

24 PANEL MEMBER: I do.

25 PANEL MEMBER: I do.

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LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: For anybody that would like to testify I have a bunch, but if you'd like to testify this morning please if you haven't done so already, please see the sergeant-at-arms. Thank you. Councilman or Chair Van Bramer.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very much, Chair. So, you know, I want to thank my Co-chairs. Obviously, Chair Grodenchik and Chair Rosenthal who will be joining us--and there she is, Chair Rosenthal--for this very important hearing that unfortunately the Commissioner of Cultural Affairs could only stay for 13 minutes at. So, I want to say that the remembrances that we have in our city are incredibly important, and it's also incredibly important that they accurately reflect our society clearly we have not done so, and the efforts to correct that are worthy and important, and that's why we're having this hearing in part with our parks and our city's civic structures deserve to have monuments that speak to who we are, and obviously with a city that is over 50% comprised of women with less than 2% of the monuments reflecting that important part of our population. So some efforts are underway, but

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2 more are needed and we have some pieces of
3 legislation that have been introduced, and were the
4 Commissioner here I would continue to ask him as we
5 did in private, but it's important that these
6 conversations be transparent and public as well.
7 Where we're at and I think Kendal that—that
8 responsibility—responsibility for the Department of
9 Cultural Affairs falls to you, but I see Parks and
10 the Public Design Commission and others are
11 represented here as well. So, we'll get to those
12 folks, but

13 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: [off mic] Are
14 you making up your statement? (sic)

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I sort of am.
16 [laughs] So, I guess I would say, Kendal, maybe it's
17 helpful to introduce yourself, but where is the
18 Administration and why is the Administration so
19 tentative about this issue? Why? There seems to be
20 a lot of trepidation on the part of the Commissioner
21 to talk openly about this issues, which is one that I
22 am sure in his heart—I know, Tom Finkelparl that he
23 is a good and decent and progressive person, and
24 wants, you know, only the best things to happen here,
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2 but there seems to be a lot trepidation on the part
3 of the department to talk about this--

4 KENDAL HENRY: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --both in what
6 you've done and what you're doing. Maybe you can
7 clear that up right here since the Commissioner had
8 to run out of the early but early after he gave his
9 testimony.

10 KENDAL HENRY: And yes. So, I'm Kendal
11 the Director of the Percent for Art Program, and we
12 are tasked with commissioning any other works that
13 move forward as Permanent Art or Magnet, and I don't
14 know that there's trepidation. I mean we support the
15 spirit of the legislation and I think like when we
16 worked with the Percent for Art we knew that
17 legislation for Percent for Art there's a lot of
18 conversation and we welcome that so--

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: But where--where--
20 where are you at in terms of meaningfully addressing
21 the inequity that exists?

22 KENDAL HENRY: Uh-hm.

23 Uh-hm. CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Where is--
24 where is the department? Where is the Commissioner
25 in that debate and in that discussion? Is it--is it a

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2 funding issue? Is it a process issue? Where are you
3 and—and do you think that it is a worthy goal for 50%
4 of our monuments to be those of—of women? Is that
5 something the department believes or does not
6 believe?

7 KENDAL HENRY: Yeah. We support—we
8 support, you know, the legislation. We support the
9 idea of it, of course, and we are starting with the—
10 with, for example with the She Built Initiative and—
11 and right now we are working on the shore leeches
12 (sic) and like the Commissioner mentioned in his
13 testimony and we're approaching that in—in—in many
14 different ways in terms of having equity within the
15 artists that we look at in terms of the artists—the
16 panelists that we—we convene to select those artists,
17 and—and so we're going to continue that.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Are any of these
19 projects funded, and if so, where is the funded?
20 Which agency might it be located?

21 KENDAL HENRY: So, as part of the Mayor's
22 initiative, he had funded the—the—the initiation of
23 new monuments, and we're using that funding. So, it
24 does exist. So, for example the Shirley Chisholm
25 Monument we're doing it and we do have funding for

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2 that. We've just been working on the Beyond Sins,
3 which is the project we're using to replace the Jim
4 Caron (sic) that was removed. We have funding for
5 that as well, and so we—so we do having funding for
6 those projects. Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And how much
8 funding was that?

9 KENDAL HENRY: The Mayor has allocated
10 \$10 million in the next four years.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Over how many
12 years?

13 KENDAL HENRY: Four years.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Over four years.

15 KENDAL HENRY: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And do you have
17 a sense of how many statues you can erect with that
18 \$10 million?

19 KENDAL HENRY: It's hard to say. A lot
20 of things go into play in terms of what the cost of
21 the monument might be. From the location and having
22 the site preparation. Then it shows that's used, the
23 scale, the site, you know, all these things go into
24 play in terms of how much it costs for a monument.
25 So, it's hard to say, but a lot of general—a general

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2 scale would be at least half a million and above for
3 any given monument. So, it's hard to tell how many
4 we could do with the \$10 million that we do have.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And of the \$10
6 million is some of that part of the Percent for Art
7 Program or is all of that new money?

8 KENDAL HENRY: That's all new money.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: All new money
10 then for them okay. So, with the--the Shirley
11 Chisholm statute in particular obviously you must
12 have a cost estimate because that's fairly far along,
13 right--

14 KENDAL HENRY: Uh-hm.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: -- and that's
16 obviously a beautiful thing, but how much? Do you
17 have any sense of what that would cost?

18 KENDAL HENRY: So for that monument we've
19 allocated up to \$1 million for the project, and--and
20 so right now the artists are working on their
21 proposals, and they--they're going to come in with
22 their proposals on--on April 1st, and we'll get a
23 better idea of--of how much they'll cover for that
24 amount.

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2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And—and what's
3 the coordination between all of you with respect to
4 anyone of these right? I mean if it's on Parks
5 property I see you've got Parks, and then PDC you
6 have to weigh in here right and —and essentially
7 approve any of these right? So, maybe each of you
8 or—or one of you can talk to the—the coordination,
9 but PDC at a certain point you have to vote, your—
10 your board has to vote to approve anything or you
11 could vote to disprove I suppose.

12 KENDAL HENRY: Right, that's correct.
13 So, as a matter of process we want it to be clear
14 that the—sorry. Justin Moore.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Introduce
16 yourself

17 JUSTIN MOORE: I serve as the Director of
18 the Public Design Commission. We want it to be clear
19 that—that PDC does not initiate the—the proposals,
20 the projects. That happens through the various city
21 agencies based on—on their jurisdiction so Parks—with
22 Parks Department, Transportation for our streets and
23 plazas, et cetera. So that the initiating, the
24 commissioning of the artwork happens through that
25 process, and through the agencies. Once an artist is

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2 selected and -and a design has-has been developed, it
3 moves forward to the Public Design Commission for an
4 early conceptual review. There is often kind of an
5 iterative design process with feedback on proposals.
6 You know, we see nearly a 1,000 projects a year
7 citywide, but typically only one maybe two that are
8 artworks of this nature.

9 MATT DRURY: Yeah, and I'm Matt Drury,
10 Director of Government Relations and New York City
11 Parks. Specific to our role as sort of, you know, in
12 this case, you know, property owner with jurisdiction
13 over the actual site, you know, we work very, very
14 closely obviously with-with the Department of
15 Cultural Affairs as they are going to administer and,
16 you know, in the future moving forward as other
17 projects that come out of the Monuments Commission or
18 She Built NYC specially. You know, if those are, you
19 know, determined to be cited or if it's to be
20 explored that dirt to be sited on parkland, we'd
21 obviously very, very closely with both DCLA and then
22 as the project moves through the approval process at
23 PDC as well.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And so, let me
25 just be sure that, Kendal I got you right because you

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2 said you support the legislation. So, does the
3 Department of Cultural Affairs—are you—are you
4 prepared to say and are you saying that on behalf of
5 the commissioner and the administration that you
6 support the legislation that—this before us?

7 KENDAL HENRY: We support the spirit of
8 the legislation and—and this is something that we've
9 been—we've been doing already. So, yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay. So
11 supporting the spirit, and then yes or--

12 KENDAL HENRY: [interposing] Supporting
13 the spirit.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --two different
15 things. The yes at the end of it would—which to
16 indicate that you do, but the spirit is a little bit
17 less concrete I suppose.

18 KENDAL HENRY: Not necessarily. It's
19 about the spirit, but again looks at—more
20 conversation and—and back and forth and speaking and—
21 and discussing is important.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Got it. Okay.
23 It gets a little unfair that you're as—as Camming was
24 approaching you from behind I think it's a little
25 unfortunate that you are put in the position in this

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2 very strange circumstance where the Commissioner
3 literally ran out of the room. So, I'm—I'm not going
4 to belabor the point just to say that it's very, very
5 disappointing and I'm not directing that to you, but
6 to the—the Commissioner really and the Administration
7 who told us a certain set of circumstances that
8 exists here today. And when we—we bypassed our
9 opening statements intentionally so that we could
10 actually hear from the Commissioner and address some
11 of the questions because we knew we only had until
12 10:30, but after he read his opening statement he
13 literally ran out of the room, and that's completely
14 unacceptable. And as in my 10th year as a Council
15 Member and I've never seen that happen in 10 years,
16 and we count the number of committee meetings that I
17 have attended over the 10 years and it's well over a
18 thousand, I've never seen a commissioner run out of
19 the room like that. So, just shocked that that would
20 occur. So, I have more questions, but I—I know that
21 we have other chairs to hear from and other folks who
22 may want to ask questions while we have the team
23 assembled here.

24 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you, Chair
25 Van Bramer. I am going to deliver my opening remarks

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2 now and we had put them off, and I am disappointed as
3 well that my friend Tom Finkelppearl could not stick
4 around to answer at least a few questions. I want to
5 put that on the record. I want to thank Councilwoman
6 Rosenthal for being the inspiration for this hearing.
7 I want to thank Chair Van Bramer as well for agreeing
8 to hold this hearing. Our city prides itself on many
9 things including its rich history and cultural
10 diversery—diversity, both of which have helped to
11 cement our status as the capital of the world. One of
12 the many ways we commemorate that history and
13 diversity is through the dedication of various
14 monuments, statues and memorials. Sadly, if you were
15 to take a look at the statues that honor historical
16 figures, you would not come away with a feeling that
17 they reflect the city's diversity. In fact, there
18 are over 250 sculptures on city property, 125 of
19 which are based on historical figures, and of that
20 total only five, yes five of those statues depict
21 women not counting Alice in Wonderland statue in
22 Central Park. Since that number is so small, it is
23 easy for me to name them all. There's Joan of Ark in
24 Riverside Park; Golda Mayer is Broadway and 39th
25 Street; Gertrude Stein is located in Brian Park.

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2 Eleanor Roosevelt is also in Riverside Park and
3 Harriet Tubman is on St. Nicholas Avenue and West
4 120nd Street. I want to note that we as city are
5 doing all we can to welcome our diverse population. I
6 represent one of the most diverse districts in
7 Queens, which is the most diverse county in the
8 United States of America, but it is sad to say that
9 when it comes to monuments we would be hard pressed
10 to be less diverse even if we were trying to be. The
11 process to approve any work of art on city property
12 can be involved and arduous. Basically, if a
13 proposed monument would on Parks property involves
14 Parks Department reviewing the proposal for any art
15 installation that will permanently be installed on
16 public property. DPR works with sponsors to refine
17 the—refine the proposed design and determine the
18 location, and if it is approved, determine whether
19 the proposal complies with other city rules such as
20 those issued by Landmarks Preservation. After that,
21 they make a formal submission to the Public Design
22 Commission. PDC will then hold what is referred to
23 as a committee meeting with stakeholders of the
24 proposed installation. At the committee meeting
25 agencies can receive feedback on design proposals

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2 before the proposals are submitted to the full
3 commission although the PDC does not vote on projects
4 and does not accept public testimony at that time.
5 Ultimately, if the committee meeting results in a
6 positive outcome for the proposal, a public meeting
7 will occur in which public testimony is presented and
8 the full commission vote. I am not making this up.
9 I assure you. Under PDC's guidelines, PDC
10 discourages monuments of memorials for people, places
11 and events that have been recognize as significant
12 for less than 20 years unless they are of exceptional
13 importance and will not consider monuments to living
14 persons. Perhaps it is time we consider changing
15 some of the guidelines to allow for far more
16 diversity. The two bills that we are hearing today
17 attempt to address the process with the goal of
18 greater inclusivity in our monuments and Councilman
19 Van Bramer has talked about that, and we'll hear from
20 Chair Rosenthal in a second, and then we will hear
21 from Councilman Salamanca as well on his bill. It is
22 long past due that the city engage in a holistic
23 approach to addressing our diversity deficiency when
24 it comes to our monuments. I am pleased that we have
25 initiatives like She Built New York and Create New

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2 York City to lead us in the direction. However,
3 there are some issues and questions regarding these
4 Initiatives that we need to address today and again,
5 I am disappointed that Commissioner Finkelppearl left
6 because he is the Commissioner of Cultural Affairs,
7 and would have loved to hear his insight. He's been
8 on the cultural scene in this city for decades. I
9 look forward to examining all of these issues today,
10 and I welcome all of those who have come to testify.
11 At this time I would like to call upon Chair
12 Rosenthal for her opening statement, and then we will
13 hear from Councilman Salamanca.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so
15 much, Chair Grodenchik. I share your concerns about
16 the Commissioner making a statement and leaving. I'm
17 sure his staff is incredibly able, and we're all, you
18 know, of course, happy you're here, but [coughs] it
19 makes a statement I think that the Commissioner chose
20 not to be here when he had ample time to change his
21 schedule. It's our understanding that he was going
22 to be here at least for half an hour. He delivered
23 his speech for 15 minutes and then left. It-it
24 reflects to me a lack of engagement with the public.
25 This is the opportunity here in an oversight hearing,

1
2 this an opportunity for the city to say, you know,
3 enough is enough. Going forward all statues, and
4 we're going to lean in and make a lot more. We'll be
5 people of color and of, you know, white men and I'm—
6 I'm really disappointed that he would get up and
7 leave. I'm going to read my statement, but I'm sorry
8 it will fall not on the Commissioner's ears, and I'm
9 sorry that [coughs]—I would like to think this issues
10 is being taken seriously. I would like to think that
11 it's not because of this hearing that you have a
12 meeting to discuss possible artists on the Sims
13 Statue on Saturday. So, here we go. I'm Council
14 Member Helen Rosenthal, Chair of the Committee on
15 Women and I'm pleased to be here with my co-chairs
16 Barry Grodenchik and Jimmy Van Bramer. Public
17 statues and monuments are selective windows into our
18 past. The decisions of what to do to commemorate are
19 reflective of our society's values, and aspirations.
20 As my colleagues have mentioned in their statement
21 and comments, New York—in New York City women, trans
22 and gender non-conforming individuals are under-
23 represented if at all among public statues and
24 monuments and, in fact, there are presently only five
25 monuments that that honors historic women in our

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2 public spaces. In Central Park in my district there
3 are over 20 statues of white men, but not one statue
4 of female historical figure, although there is a
5 historically accurate of a dog. People of color and
6 those with disabilities fare no better, and it's time
7 to right that wrong, and it shouldn't be so hard, but
8 for nearly a decade including the last five years
9 community members, I should say not the last year,
10 but four years prior to that community members in
11 East Harlem fought to have the statue of Dr. J.
12 Marion Sims known as the father of gynecology removed
13 from Central Park for over a decade. This should not
14 be so hard. Dr. Sims earned this moniker while
15 brutally experimenting on black women and white women
16 although they may have been given anesthesia. All of
17 them were poor, and that's why they could be
18 experimented on and, of course, it was without their
19 full consent or even for the most part anesthesia.
20 In my mind, the Sims statue unjustly honored the
21 racism, misogyny and oppression, but tragically is a
22 part of our history. Now, I am grateful to the
23 Harlem community for initiating this fight, and I was
24 proud to stand with them last April as we pushed for
25 and eventually witnessed the statue's removal.

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2 However, let be clear, the podium on which stood
3 still stands, and when I get to my question part I'd
4 like to hear from you what the plaque on that podium
5 says because it certainly doesn't make reference to
6 any of the crimes that are our dear doctor committed,
7 and does not speak to these like next steps of what's
8 happening. So, it's been almost a full year, and
9 from the perspective of the public all we see is the—
10 a pedestal. It's very disappointing. Monuments
11 matter and they are prompts for discussion about
12 history—history and justice. They are opportunities
13 for one generation to transmit a sense of cultural
14 history, meaning, purpose and values to the next. As
15 a city, we must aim for thoughtfulness and inclusion.
16 We cannot stand for the erasure of the contributions
17 of so many dynamic and monumental individuals. Just
18 as importantly, we cannot hide or cover up. It's
19 difficult and at times shameful truths about those
20 that we've memorialized, and I just want to give a
21 shoutout to the artist who posted a—a picture of her
22 art of three women in hospital gowns on a shade with
23 blood all over their hospital gowns, and put that as
24 if that were above the pedestal. I thought that was
25 brilliant, and reflected history accurately. That's

1
2 my two cents. So, much work remains to address the
3 challenge to bring greater honesty and equity to our
4 public monuments. Evolving cultural monuments
5 challenge us to reconsider what was previously deemed
6 accessible, acceptable and virtuous. We saw this
7 most recently when the spray painting of #Me Too on
8 the unconditional surrender statue in Florida
9 memorializing a fourth kiss at the Victory Parade at
10 the end of World War II. This public dialogue and
11 questioning is overdue, must be welcome. We must
12 continue to shine a spotline-spotlight on this, and
13 today's hearing an opportunity to learn from the
14 public about how we can bring greater diversity to
15 our public monuments. We refuse to continue ignoring
16 history and herstory, and I'm grateful to all who
17 wish to change and enter this dialogue. I want to
18 thank Ned Terrace my Legislative Director as well as
19 the Committee on Women's staff for their work in
20 preparing for this hearing: Brenda McKinney, our
21 General Counsel; Chloe Rivera, Legislative Policy
22 Analyst; and Monica Pepple our Finance Analyst.
23 Again, it just—I was hoping for a lot more. I was
24 hoping we could have a declarative statement from the
25 Commissioner making it clear that—that he is full

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2 willing to no longer put up statues of white men
3 until we are in an equal position of people of color,
4 and women and that we would lean in to make that
5 happen, and a million dollars and a million dollars
6 there just doesn't cut it for me. Thank you Chair
7 Grodenchik for the time to speak.

8 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you, Chair
9 Rosenthal. I'm going to call on Chair Van Bramer now
10 to read the pieces of legislation, and then we will
11 hear from Councilman Salamanca. We have been joined
12 by our Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo who recently
13 celebrated a birthday, and I want to wish her a happy
14 birthday because I didn't see her that day, and I am
15 not going to ask her how old she is.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
17 much, Chair. First, let me just say thank you to
18 Chair Rosenthal for that incredibly passionate and
19 important statement and, of course, for her ongoing
20 work on behalf of all women and people in the city of
21 New York. So, just so that we are clear and it's on
22 the record, Intro 1114 is a Local Law related to
23 creating task force to examine the monuments,
24 statues, public art, and historical markers on city-
25 owned property sponsored by Council Member Inez

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Barron. I'm happy to be a second on that piece of legislation with her. I know Council Member Barron feels very passionately about this, and helping us to understand the current landscape and artwork that might be inconsistent with the values of diversity, equity and inclusion that we hold dear in this city. Introduction 1439 and you'll hear from the prime sponsor Council Member Salamanca and, of course, Chair Rosenthal. That is a local law that would require the Public Design Commission to ensure that women are depicted in at least 50% of approved works, and I believe that Council Member Salamanca is here and will speak to this important piece of legislation now. [background comments]

COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you all, Chair Van Bramer and Chair Grodenchik and Chair Rosenthal. I am today—I'm excited that you will be hearing my bill 1439, which will require the New York City Public Design Commission to ensure that 50% of all work—works of art installed and built in city-owned land depict non-fictional woman, and just to point out some details here, of the 150 monuments or statues city-owned property there's only five that are—of—of women. In Central Park there are 12 dozen

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statues, and none of them were of living women, but you have Alice in Wonderland, Balto the dog, Mother Goose and Romeo and Juliet, which I find it unacceptable. And so, my bill 1439 will require that moving forward any statues, arts, any sculptures are being approved by the department, the Public Design Commission will require that 50% of these monumental statues are of women. So, with that, I want to thank this committee for allowing me to—to this bill heard.

CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you

Councilman Salamanca. We have been joined by also by Councilwoman Diana Ayala from the Borough of Manhattan and also the borough of Bronx. She crosses the river so to speak. At this time I would like to call upon my colleague and co-chair of this hearing, Helen Rosenthal to ask some questions.

CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you so much

Chair Grodenchik, and thank you so much Council Member Salamanca for your legislation, and Council Member Barron as well. I just want to, of course, thank you for being here, and I want to start with what is—what is the plaque that's on the podium that was left behind? [background comments/pause]

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2 MATT DRURY: I'm going to refer to my
3 colleague here Kenal from the DCLA to talk a little
4 bit about the efforts that underway that what we call
5 the Bionson's (sic) Project.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: So, I'm aware of
7 the efforts that are underway. I'm just asking a
8 simple question. What are the words on the plaque or
9 on the podium?

10 MATT DRURY: [interposing] Yeah, I don't
11 have that text. I apologize. I don't have that text
12 with me, and we can—we can get back to you.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: It's okay.

14 [background comments/pause]

15 MATT DRURY: I don't have that text with
16 me. I'd be happy to get that to you. I don't have
17 that with me.

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay. We're going
19 to be here for like at least another hour. Do you
20 think that there's someone back at the office who
21 might have it who could text you the words, and you
22 could report on that at this hearing? [background
23 comments/pause] Surely there is someone who made it
24 who is back at the office who can just sort of
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2 forward over what the plaque says. [background
3 comments/pause]

4 MATT DRURY: I'm reading off a photo
5 here. So, it's a little fuzzy so, as I believe it
6 reads: "By order of Mayor Bill de Blasio, NYC Parks
7 has relocated the statue of Dr. James Marion Sims to
8 Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn where Sims is buried.
9 Plans are being developed to commission a new
10 monument on this site. I believe that's what it
11 reads. I not quite clear.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I would ask that
13 you update that plaque as the community asked on that
14 April day in 2018 to be a little more informational
15 about why the statue is no longer there, and I think
16 that in and of itself is an important message to the
17 people who walk by, right? Because right now it's
18 just a pretty boring description. Technically it's
19 true, but this is a community that fought for 10
20 years to get it down. Really? You couldn't come up
21 with one or two empathetic words or-or is Parks just
22 refusing to play a role?

23 MATT DRURY: I think we're being
24 differential to the process that's in place now to
25 replace the work. I think the history of what

1
2 happened, I think—I don't want to speak for what, you
3 know, the artist that gets selected of the process
4 that will play itself out, but I think we—we—we
5 presume that that will obviously an important context
6 that's provided when the work is replaced.

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I think that's
8 waiting too long. That's my opinion. It's been a
9 year. It could be five more years before a statue is
10 put up. You haven't told me a deadline. Unless you
11 have a deadline of when it's actually going to be
12 done, but that still again doesn't get to the point
13 of leaning in. I mean if the Mayor was willing to
14 have a commission to study whether or not these
15 statues were going to stay up, he can't take the
16 extra mile of making a statement on the podium of a
17 statue that that was taken down clearly because it
18 was—represented the racism and misogyny of that time.
19 You made the decision to take it down.

20 MATT DRURY: [interposing] Uh-hm.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: No?

22 MATT DRURY: Yeah, no I think we can take
23 this back to our—to our respective agencies and
24 discuss--

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: [interposing] No,
3 no, be clear.

4 MATT DRURY: --it and some signage.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: If I'm not gay
6 this is what the community asked. So I mean taking
7 it back now, you know, it's a little cute by half,
8 right, and you knew--I--I want to hear--this is what I
9 want to hear. I want to hear that you'll work with
10 the community this month, come up with the wording
11 and have it installed by the end of next month. Why--
12 why is that so hard? You were able to have a plaque
13 installed on that day. So, could you do that and
14 could you get back to this committee on when you
15 expect an appropriate statue to be placed there?

16 MATT DRURY: Can I--Yeah, I'm sorry.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: It's insulting to
18 the community. You need to be aware. I mean it
19 troubles me that you weren't aware, but it is
20 insulting to the East Harlem community the plaque
21 that's up there now.

22 JUSTIN MOORE: Yeah, so since the statue
23 has been moved we have been working with the East
24 Harlem community boards and a couple of the
25 organizations that fought for many years to remove it

1
2 to come up with a process that would guide how we
3 look at what replaces the Sims Statue. We started
4 with a—what we call a hearing process to sort—

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: [interposing] So,
6 I'm just asking two things and really this is not a
7 time to filibuster, and we have so many more people
8 who want to ask questions. So I don't want to eat up
9 all their time. I'm asking two things: Would you be
10 willing to go back to the community board this month,
11 and ask them what language they think would be
12 appropriate on the statue for right now. My guess is
13 they're writing it as we speak, and would you commit
14 to installing that plaque on the podium in the next
15 two months? May I ask you—I think it's appropriate
16 and good that you have a process for the replacement
17 and you should continue that process, but did not
18 talk to the community about what the replacement
19 plaque should be in the time being, and I'm asking
20 that you make a commitment to talk to the community
21 board that's very well versed in this issue, and
22 agree to put what they want on the plaque, on the
23 plaque.

24 MATT DRURY: I mean I think. I'm
25 prepared. I don't want to speak for my colleagues

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2 here, but I think we're prepared absolutely to hear
3 more from the community to make sure that we can get,
4 you know, we can explore interim signage. I'm not
5 prepared to, and I can't, you know, in terms of the
6 conditions and the timeline. I think it's hard to do
7 that, but I think it's absolutely important to
8 engage. They've been engaged up to this point and--

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: [interposing] And
10 then can you--can you--

11 MATT DRURY: --and actually willing to
12 work on that.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: [interposing]--can
14 you make a commitment to have the actual replacement
15 statue up in a year?

16 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: We can't build a
17 bathroom in a year.

18 KENDAL HENRY: So the process takes a
19 little bit of time and just going through--

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: [interposing] And
21 keep in mind you've been going at it for a year. So,
22 yes it takes time. Although the community I think
23 knows what they want now. That's a whole other
24 story.

25 KENDAL HENRY: So, again--

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Do you want to
3 say two years, five years? Just tell me what it is.
4 What year did you put the money in budget for?

5 KENDAL HENRY: The budget is not in a
6 specific year. It's--

7 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I mean that's how
8 the budget works.

9 KENDAL HENRY: But anyway, so the process
10 is that we speak to the community first, and then we
11 discuss what--a healing process and then what--what
12 they think--what's--what's some of the issues that they
13 want the--the replacement to--to address. The we had
14 an artist selection process on Saturday where we
15 narrowed down a list of about 54 artists to allow
16 five and these artists are now going to meet with the
17 community again to sort of hear a different--from
18 individuals within their committee that we formed.
19 Then those artists are going to go back and have
20 about eight weeks to come up with a proposal. Then
21 we're going to do an exhibition of those proposals to
22 the community and then the art. So, there's a--it's
23 a--it's a very long process. Just the fabrication of
24 any kind of work takes a number of--of--of many months.

25

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2 Just the review process that the has to go through at
3 PDC takes at least—at least two or three months.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: [interposing]

5 Okay so, I really--

6 KENDAL HENRY: So it's just—it's just,
7 you know longer.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: --I mean I—I
9 apologize for interrupting and I know you you're
10 doing your job and really this is just an
11 institutional dialogue. I don't—I'm really kind of a
12 nice person, and I'm sure you are, too most of the
13 time, but—and I just want to say I'm really
14 disappointed that you can't answer my question, and I
15 think the community—I would just want to reflect that
16 I think the community is sick of, you know, there
17 being one reason or another for not just moving on
18 this. I'm glad you have a process. I would ask that
19 you speed your process up, and that you know the end
20 date of your process, and I would, you know, at least
21 ask for a commitment to that. Maybe getting back to
22 us with an end date.

23 KENDAL HENRY: We'll get back to you.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Uh-hm. I just
25 want to compare that process actually to what's going

1
2 on with the selection of the Shirley Chisholm statue
3 that She Built NYC says that it's first project. So,
4 in that situation, you put out an RFP and there are
5 going to be panels reviewing it, but in the RFP it
6 doesn't even mention Shirley Chisholm, and I'm
7 wondering why and how you expect there to be
8 responsive that will answer the call for Shirley
9 Chisholm at that site. Unless I'm wrong. You tell
10 me.

11 KENDAL HENRY: Yes. So, we did an RFQ, a
12 Request for Qualifications for any artist who would
13 be interested in doing monuments in New York City,
14 and so that's how we began with the Shirley Chisholm
15 project, and then we issued the RFQ to request for
16 specific artists who specifically wanted to work in
17 Shirley Chisholm's project.

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: That's gone out
19 or not yet?

20 KENDAL HENRY: That has been out before.
21 It has been out for a couple of months, and so we've
22 passed that process. We passed that component at the
23 first step.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: [interposing] So
25 you—you first did Who Wants to do Monuments, and did—

1
2 is that part of also what we're talking about for the
3 replacement of the misogynous racist Sims Statue?

4 KENDAL HENRY: Yeah, so--

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: [interposing] Or
6 is that part of just who wants to do monuments and
7 you've got 54 back?

8 KENDAL HENRY: So, when we first started
9 the She Built Initiatives-Initiative, we didn't have
10 specific women identified yet, but we just wanted to
11 make sure that the word out that we need-we're
12 looking for artists. Then when it was announced that
13 it would be Shirley Chisholm monument, we issued the
14 RFQ identifying that this particular woman would be
15 memorialized, and-and so it-we extended that-that-the
16 RFQ. So, there is two-two phases of the RFQ, one for
17 a general and then one for a specific to Shirley
18 Chisholm.

19 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: When that's due
20 back?

21 KENDAL HENRY: So that was done already.
22 So, with the Shirley Chisholm--

23 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: [interposing] How
24 many responses did you get for the Shirley Chisholm
25 statue?

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2 KENDAL HENRY: So, we—we—we got about
3 134.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: For Shirley
5 Chisholm in particular?

6 KENDAL HENRY: For the whole—we just
7 opened it up again. So we started with a general and
8 then we said Shirley Chisholm will be the first one.
9 So, if you wanted to add your name to the general
10 list, then please submit your—your information
11 [coughs] and so that was done—it was closed I think
12 on the late—the 21st of December, and we got our
13 first panel looking at a lot of these artists on
14 early January and we selected five artists who are
15 now working on the proposal for Shirley Chisholm to—
16 to the monument.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Over a hundred
18 applied to that, and now you have five who are
19 working on the Shirley Chisholm and over 54 applied
20 for the Sims Statue, and now you have how many
21 working on it? Five as well?

22 KENDAL HENRY: We literally just selected
23 them on Saturday--

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah.
25

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2 KENDAL HENRY: --and they have not even
3 been identified or contacted yet, but yes we-we're
4 looking for five proposals for-for that one.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: [interposing]
6 Okay. I got it. Okay, well, I'm glad you're looking
7 at Shirley Chisholm as well. Could you explain to me
8 the-I mean I'm just going to have two more-two more
9 questions and turn it over to my colleagues, and this
10 about the relationship between She Built NYC and
11 women.nyc and DCLA. Is women.nyc a government
12 entity?

13 KENDAL HENRY: I don't have any
14 information women.nyc.

15 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Who does She
16 Built--She Built NYC is an arm of what government
17 entity?

18 KENDAL HENRY: She Built NYC is an
19 initiative.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Is what?

21 KENDAL HENRY: It's an initiative.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Under the
23 jurisdiction of which agency?

24 KENDAL HENRY: So, as Cultural as the
25 Department of Cultural Affairs for some part-program,

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2 we're tasked with commissioning the work, and so the
3 She Built Initiatives was I think, and correct me if
4 I'm wrong, was initiated by the First Lady and Deputy
5 Mayor as a-a means to really focus on the women's
6 monuments, and so—and so we are tasked with—with that
7 initiative to commission the works.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: So, the money
9 comes out of what budget?

10 KENDAL HENRY: The money comes out of
11 the—the budget that the Mayor has identified, the \$10
12 million.

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Where is it
14 stored right now?

15 KENDAL HENRY: The money is—each year we
16 get about a 2.5—2 and--\$2.5 million within our budget
17 to realize those—those monuments.

18 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I'm sorry. Just—
19 I just to articulate it. Ours is the Department of
20 Parks or Department of Cultural Affairs Department of
21 Cultural Affairs.

22 KENDAL HENRY: Department of Cultural
23 Affairs. Yes, councilwoman.

24 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay, so Cultural
25 Affairs every year if I were to open up the budget

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2 last year, the year before there's always 2.5% of
3 some number that's in your budget that's for art?

4 KENDAL HENRY: So, \$2.5 million for the
5 next two years.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Oh, \$2.5 million.
7 My bad. Oh, is this additional funds that have been
8 put in your budget? You said yes.

9 KENDAL HENRY: That's correct.

10 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: What's the usual
11 amount that's in there?

12 KENDAL HENRY: At Culture—in Cultural
13 Affairs' Budge?

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yes.

15 KENDAL HENRY: I'm not—I don't know our
16 budget like that. I'm sorry.

17 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: So, right now or
18 five years ago, five years ago if I were to say do
19 you have any money in your budget for monuments,
20 historic plaques, what would you have said?

21 KENDAL HENRY: I would say no.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: You would have
23 said zero? So this is brand new money?

24 KENDAL HENRY: That's correct.
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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: That's been put
3 in and the first fiscal year is what year of the \$2.5
4 million?

5 KENDAL HENRY: [background
6 comments/pause] I'll have to double check but I
7 think, but I think it's 2018? [background comments]
8 Yeah, this--this current fiscal year 2018-19.

9 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: So, you'll have
10 to get back to me as to which fiscal year?

11 KENDAL HENRY: And I just got the
12 information. It's 2019?

13 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: 2019? Fiscal
14 Year 19--

15 KENDAL HENRY: Uh-hm.

16 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: --have \$2.5
17 million. Fascinating and how are you spending that
18 \$2.5 million?

19 KENDAL HENRY: We started with She Built
20 NYC Shirley Chisholm and the Tom Sims.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: MY guess is I
22 think the answer to the question is you're going to
23 roll over what you don't use into the next year, or
24 does it go away? Because you're not spending \$2.5 on
25 She Built this year.

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KENDAL HENRY: It does roll over, yes.

CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay. Then
you've spend maybe a couple of hundred thousand on
putting out RFQs?

KENDAL HENRY: No, that--that--

CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: [interposing] Is
that soft money or is that part of the capital?

KENDAL HENRY: That's not--that's not part
of it. That's soft money. That's not part of it.

CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: So, you're not
spending any of the \$2.5 this year, and we have a
guarantee from the Administration that's rolling
over. Will that roll over as the full \$2.5 in Fiscal
year 20 or roll over evenly?

KENDAL HENRY: As far as I know, it's
going to be rolling over.

CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Evenly or into
simply 2020, Fiscal Year 20?

KENDAL HENRY: I'll have to get back to
you on those details.

CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay. It's
important and just given that, you know, you have one
more slice of this apple. By June if you could
forecast how you're going to spend the money instead

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2 of putting it in evenly over four years? I think
3 it's part of the statement that you're making to the
4 public, and the idea. That's my two cents. And so
5 just to confirm, there's no relationship between DCLA
6 and women.nyc or is there one with the Commissioner
7 and Gender Equity? I'm just trying to see how—who's
8 going to drive the bus for She Built NYC after this
9 administration leave in—in 2021 when, by the way,
10 two-thirds of the money will still be left unspent in
11 the budget.

12 KENDAL HENRY: I will get back to you on
13 that information.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: It's pretty
15 important. I mean is it going to stay in DCLA?
16 Could the next mayor take it out? How quickly are
17 you moving to get this work done to guarantee it will
18 happen under the de Blasio Administration? [pause]
19 I'll take that as we haven't thought about it.

20 KENDAL HENRY: Oh, yeah.

21 MALE SPEAKER: [off mic] Yes we have.

22 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I apologize

23 KENDAL HENRY: No, I just—I just thought
24 you were just keep talking about that. We haven't a
25 tentative schedule, and the year we are trying to

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2 complete those—at least the She Built NYC Shirley
3 Chisholm and the Marion Sims by the end of 2020.

4 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: So, again, here's
5 why it's so important because I don't know what
6 website you're talking as having put out the RFQs or
7 whatever. Right now on women.nyc it talks about if
8 you're interested in creating a public monument that
9 honors women's history, please apply. Deadline to
10 submit is December 21, 2018, and there's link to
11 apply. There's no update for that whatsoever. I'm
12 looking through it. So, that's why it's so important
13 what the coordination is. I'm not just asking to
14 bust your chops. I'm asking to understand how the
15 public could know that you're serious, and it turns
16 into a mess. It's not coordinated with the group
17 that's putting out the call.

18 KENDAL HENRY: So, that RFP or RFQ was
19 put out to select for the—the artwork that we already
20 selected.

21 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yeah, I—look, if
22 you could put out some sort of diagram explaining how
23 all this is connected and you're going to guarantee
24 that this money is going to be spent on statues for
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2 women, that would be really helpful. Thank you very
3 much. Thank you, Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you. I
5 think Councilman/Chairman Van Bramer wants to make a
6 quick statement and then we're going to get to
7 Council Member Borelli.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I just want to
9 say because Chair Rosenthal is rightfully asking a
10 lot of really important questions, but I know you,
11 Kendal to be a very thoughtful and intelligent
12 Administrator of the Percent for Art Program, but
13 this is the problem with this administration is—is
14 you're here for us to take the hot seat and to
15 receive a lot of questions, some of which you don't
16 actually know the answers to, and you aren't expected
17 because you're the Director of the Percent for Art
18 Program of the Department of Cultural Affairs. But
19 we had the Commissioner of the Department of Cultural
20 Affairs and he literally ran out of the room at
21 10:13, literally ran out of the room not to take
22 questions. This is not—

23 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: [interposing]
24 Good point Jimmy.

COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS,
LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --supposed to be
3 a really difficult and intense hearing. It's about
4 an issue that virtually all of us agree on, right,
5 that virtually everybody in the Administration could
6 agree on. But this hearing from your perspective is
7 bungled because the Commissioner runs out and leaves
8 really good folks like you, Kendal and others to get
9 grilled on questions many of which you don't know the
10 answer to, and it's unfair to you and it's unfair to
11 us and I don't know why this Administration whoever
12 in this Administration told Commissioner Finkelpearl
13 you are not to answer any questions about this topic.
14 It's outrageous, and I'm not directing this to anyone
15 of you. You all are doing you jobs, representing your
16 agencies. In the case of Justin, runs a department
17 here in this Administration, but it's completely
18 unnecessary for us to be in this position, for the
19 Chair Rosenthal not to be able to get answers and for
20 you Kendal to be put in the position, quite frankly.
21 Tom Finkelpearl is the Commissioner of the Department
22 of Cultural Affairs, should be here to answer these
23 damn questions, and I just have to say that on the
24 record before- I know other council members have
25 questions.

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2 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
3 Chairs. We have been joined by several council
4 member, Councilman Mark Levine from Manhattan. I've
5 got to take my glasses off. My leader Karen
6 Koslowitz from queens, Andrew Cohen from the Bronx,
7 and [coughing] Francisco from the Borough of Queens.
8 At this time from the far reaches of the New York
9 City Councilman Joe Borelli.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Thank you,
11 Chairman Grodenchik. My question is for the Public
12 Design Commission, and it's a little bit off topic.
13 You know, we—we know the other agencies always blame
14 you guys for everything. So, what would—what would
15 say you guys do?

16 JUSTIN MOORE: So the—Justin Moore,
17 Public Design Commission, Executive Director. So,
18 Public Design Commission is essentially the designer
19 of View Agency for the city. We look at capital
20 projects from a number of different city agencies.
21 So, an agency could the Parks Department. It could
22 be transportation. We'll develop a design proposal.
23 That's done by architects, designers and goes through
24 that agency review process. You know, in terms of
25 agency, once that agency is—is confident that that's

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2 a project that they can advance and—and really build,
3 they send it to us at the Design Commission. We
4 review projects at different stages. So, it can be a
5 very early review what we call a conceptual level of
6 review, and give feedback. So, at the agency as
7 they're developing the design and construction
8 project can incorporate the commission's---

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: [interposing]

10 How much time does your review process during the
11 design—say a park, how much time does your review
12 process normally take?

13 JUSTIN MOORE: So, we have a calendar
14 where we review projects once a month. So, the
15 agencies have a whole pipeline of multiple projects
16 and they submit monthly, and several project
17 typically to the Design Commission for review in that
18 cycle. The commission meets, gives feedback and then
19 that information goes back to the agency. In some
20 cases that-

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: [interposing]

22 What is the criteria for—for—for requiring PDC
23 approval?

24 JUSTIN MOORE: The City Charter.
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: No, no. I'm
3 sorry. You know, if-if I was building a tot lot in a
4 playground, does that require PDC approval?

5 JUSTIN MOORE: Anything that is a
6 permanent installation or permanent change to the
7 design of the city's property that is visible is
8 admitted to the PDC review on city-owned property.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Do you think at
10 any point that-that sometimes becomes unnecessary?
11 If I'm building a tot lot and the tot lot is almost
12 identical to every other tot lot in the city of New
13 York, is it--

14 JUSTIN MOORE: [interposing] Yes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: --is it
16 sometimes redundant? I mean it--

17 JUSTIN MOORE: So-so we review several
18 tot lots, playgrounds, multiple projects and those
19 are reviewed. The large number of them are reviewed
20 and approved on-on meetings cycle. There are cases
21 where design review and design oversight is important
22 that there can be specific site conditions, a number
23 of different--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: [interposing]
25 Explain what a-what an improvement would be then. If

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2 you review it and improve it, what's an improvement?

3 Like how do we—so DEP lays a sewer pipe, right.

4 That's how we measure some success. We—we built a
5 sewer. PDC makes an improvement to a tot lot. What
6 would that look like?

7 JUSTIN MOORE: An improvement?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: That was your—
9 you—you said improvement.

10 JUSTIN MOORE: Yeah, a change—a change to
11 a park or playground is—it's not an improvement.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: [interposing]
13 So, in the—I think she's still here, Councilwoman
14 Rose. I can't see her. She has a park in her
15 district Faber Park, and the park designers and the
16 Parks Department, and I believe Councilwoman Rose all
17 happen to like a basketball court that's on the
18 waterfront, and like I—I can close my eyes and I can
19 imagine, you know, kids imagining themselves like
20 LeBron just in this awesome basketball court, but now
21 I'm told that PDC wants Parks to move the basketball
22 court away for the water. Is that—is that like an
23 improvement?

24 JUSTIN MOORE: I'm sorry. That's related
25 to monuments?

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: No, but I, you
3 know, like Lord of the Flies, I have the conch, you
4 know. I'm asking the questions. [laughter] It's a
5 good book, but I'm just—I'm just trying to get to the
6 bottom of it because PDC doesn't testify at a lot of
7 hearings. So, I'm just trying to see. In other
8 words, why does PDC as an agency care if the
9 community is happy with a basketball court on the
10 water? Why is there an added step, an unnecessary
11 step? I think sometimes we—we, you know, Parks has a
12 whole bunch of problems, but sometimes they hire
13 great landscape architects to design parks, and yet
14 we—we add this extra step where now another group of
15 of—of architects, designers, folks on the Commission
16 will say well we don't want the park on the water.
17 We want—I'm sorry the basketball court on the water.
18 We want, you know, 50 feet inland, and now that
19 starts a whole other level of designs. You know,
20 how—is that improving?

21 JUSTIN MOORE: So, the—it was mentioned
22 kind of about our process earlier we obviously look
23 at public input as a part of our review process, and
24 projects do have public hearings as a part of the PDC

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2 review. So, all of that is factored into the
3 Commission's review and design recommendations.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: So, I-I read
5 your Annual Review and I noticed one of the projects
6 that were-were highlighted on Staten Island was
7 Historic Richmond Town. Have you ever been to
8 Historic Richmond Town?

9 JUSTIN MOORE: I personally have not been
10 in Historic Richmond Town.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: So, I'll
12 describe if for you in my amateur architectural
13 knowledge. It's a collection of houses that were
14 built roughly from 1670 to the early 20th Century
15 mostly Dutch Colonial houses through say Italianate
16 villas. Yet, when it came to the PDC to design a sort
17 of a storage area for carriage horses, somehow we
18 were left with a design that resembled quonset huts
19 like-like Vietnam era huts that were multi-colored.
20 Every other-there every other building on the
21 property is an historic home. Is that improving it?
22 I mean this-this is in the annual review as sort of a
23 win like it's one of the projects you guys
24 highlighted. How is that a better design than an
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2 adjacent storage facility, which is functional but-
3 but for example has sort of a faux historic look?

4 JUSTIN MOORE: Sorry. The Commission has
5 a-sort of a diverse group of people that review
6 design. They have different backgrounds and
7 different sort of understandings of what makes a
8 project or a design appropriate to its context.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: No, I-I-I and I
10 get that, but-but again, we have these storage
11 facilities that are now leaking. It's a whole
12 separate issue with DCA, and I just want to figure
13 out how someone and why it's an improvement to build
14 something that is-doesn't resemble in the slightest
15 bit a historic village, and put that right in the
16 middle of a place where people come to see a historic
17 village. It just doesn't make sense to me, but I'll-
18 I'll stop there. I see Barry-

19 KERI BUTLER: Can I help.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Barry, give me
21 the stink eye so-

22 KERI BUTLER: Could I say something?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Yes, please.
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2 KERI BUTLER: I'm sorry. I'm Keri
3 Butler, Deputy Director of the Public Design
4 Commission--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: [interposing]
6 Thank you.

7 KERI BUTLER: --and I've been there for
8 about 13 years, and we don't design projects--the
9 projects. We--we do make recommendations. I mean I
10 don't personally, but the Commissioners who are
11 professionals do make recommendations, and there are
12 agencies where you can have a contemporary design fit
13 into a historical context quite successfully I think
14 that, you know, I think Faber Park was resolved, if
15 I'm not correct, but I'm happy to look into that for
16 you. You know, there are cases where commissioners
17 who have expertise in architecture and landscape
18 architecture and civic design and transportation,
19 they question the layout of parks, and when we get
20 feedback from them, you know, there may be that we
21 just need some more explanation and then it's
22 resolved. So, you know, I do think that things like
23 tot lots are very quickly reviewed, and we don't
24 spend a lot of time trying to, you know, make people
25 do revisions on projects.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Then-then do you
3 think there's a little bit of mission creep for the
4 agency where you've expanded beyond, you know, sort
5 of the-the-and I don't mean to-I don't mean to sort
6 of bring up an iconic argument of aesthetics, but of
7 what is art, but is there a mission creep where--
8 where there is an added step to almost every single
9 project?

10 KERI BUTLER: And I don't believe so, but
11 I'm happy to work with all the city agencies to try
12 to expedite the review process as we have worked with
13 people on, you know, using prefab, using part
14 atypical designs like reviewing things in an
15 expedited manner. We-we are willing to do that.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: Thank you both.
17 Okay, thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you
19 Councilman Borelli. We'll now here from Peter Koo.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: [coughs] Thank you,
21 Chair Grodenchik and Jimmy Van Bramer and Rosenthal.
22 Thank you for coming to testify. I support the two
23 new bills. They will improve gender and cultural
24 diversity of-of monuments put into the New York City
25 parks and other areas. So, I-I will give you a

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2 simple question. Yeah. In my area since it has
3 changed a lot, right. Now we have more Asian-
4 Americans than other groups. So many groups in my
5 community they come to me and they say hey, Council
6 Member, I want to—we want to put a statue of
7 Confucius in the area, and Confucius as all of you
8 know is the most famous educator, teacher,
9 philosopher, you know. So, it's a—they're very proud
10 of Confucius, you know, because of their philosophy,
11 and also Confucius' idea is to everyone no matter how
12 poor or how rich or hope everybody have. You have to
13 receive a basic education. So, how do I go about it?
14 Can you show me a roadmap in like couple of minutes,
15 you know, how to do it? The first step I s go to
16 Public Design Commission or what?

17 MATT DRURY: If I may, with the Parks
18 Department and generally speaking, the process of
19 putting Percent-Percent for Art aside, what you're
20 talking more about is sort a publicly initiated
21 commission, if you will, and often funded effort to
22 install permanent artwork on city property, and—and
23 generally how that's handled is by the individual
24 agency that owns that property. So if it's a—you
25 know if it's a DOT island the conversation would be

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2 DOT. If it's parkland, it would be with parks. So,
3 just speaking specifically for parkland, we have our-
4 our-our division Arts and Antiquities, which engages
5 with local community members constantly. They're
6 always available. Anyone interested in the sort of
7 process to explore whether, you know, such a donation
8 of a permanent art piece is-it makes sense for a
9 given location. That's something we're always open
10 to having conversations with the community.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So, how long will
12 you take to accomplish the whole process? Three
13 years or--?

14 MATT DRURY: Well, it depends on a lot of
15 factors. There's a lot of variables. It depends on
16 what's proposed. It depends on what site is being,
17 you know, identified as whether it's feasible.
18 Sometimes, you know, a proposal might be duplicative
19 of another, you know, effort that's made elsewhere
20 and then specific parklands these are private
21 donations of artwork. So, there's a series of
22 conversations and those, you know, that public
23 citizenry, you know, has to often sort of gather sort
24 of funds and others so to make sure there's consensus
25 among, you know, what they believe and so that

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2 process that, you know, that conversation, if you
3 will, can take considerable time because sometimes a
4 community, you know, disagrees within itself about
5 what they want to see represented and where and
6 various detail. So that can take significant time.
7 Once it coalesces into a formal proposal, you know,
8 that process I think, you know, can between, you
9 know, the funds that need to be raised and the
10 process to go through, you know, identifying a
11 designer and all the various steps that come into
12 place can—can take a couple of years absolutely.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So, if the statue is
14 not in city parks suppose they want to do it a
15 pedestrian plaza? So then they have to go to DOT or
16 what?

17 MATT DRURY: Yeah. The individual agency
18 that has jurisdiction over that given location will—
19 will be the—that sort of lead agency in conducting
20 that conversation.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Okay, thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
23 Councilman Koo. We will now hear from Majority
24 Leader Laurie Cumbo, and I want to welcome
25 Councilwoman Inez Barron of Brooklyn and the she will

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2 make a statement about her bill after the Majority
3 Leader is done. Thank you.

4 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you and
5 thank you all for being here today. Just wanted to
6 talk about the--the statement that was read. It spoke
7 about, and I'm very pleased and very proud of the
8 sculptures that you marked of Alison Saar's sculpture
9 of Harriet Tubman, which I love, Gabriel Carron's
10 just depictions of Frederick Douglas and Malcolm X.
11 I also love the Duke Ellington sculpture. The New
12 York Public Library's sculpture honoring Langston
13 Hughes. In an instance like that, love these
14 sculpture and love going to Harlem to see them. What
15 is Brooklyn doing wrong that we don't have that same
16 level of representation in our borough where we want
17 to have rep--representations of our own culture in our
18 borough? What did we do wrong?

19 KENDAL HENRY: I don't know that
20 anything---

21 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: And what did they
22 do right?

23 KENDAL HENRY: [laughs] So, a lot of
24 these artworks came in because they are part of our
25 capital project, and--and so that's, you know, and--

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2 and—and most of those capital projects were named or
3 there is some significant event that happened that
4 was—was very easy to make it into a monument. For
5 example the Audubon Ballroom and Malcolm X, but the
6 Douglas Circle was name for Frederick Douglas so
7 before repaired. (sic) So—so—so that made sense.
8 You're getting the Shirley Chisholm that—that we're
9 working on in Brooklyn so—

10 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Okay, the
11 challenge that I have with that is like the Percent
12 for Art Program is designed around a capital project.
13 So, if you look at the Betty Saar sculpture that
14 seems to be in like a public plaza--

15 KENDAL HENRY: Uh-hm.

16 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: --of sorts. So,
17 was a precedent set because that was done in a public
18 plaza that now we can utilize public plazas as
19 opportunities to do public art? I'll give you an
20 example. What's currently known as Bam Park we're
21 looking to rename into Betty Carter Park. So, when I
22 say I would love to have a sculpture of Betty Park—I
23 mean of Betty Carter in the—the—what's now known as
24 the Bam Park, I get kind of that situation where we
25 want to go is like you got to go to that person. So,

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2 it seems like there's this thing where you can't
3 quite nail down how you go about the process of
4 having what happened with Allison Saar's beautiful
5 work, I want that to happen in Bam Park as well.

6 KENDAL HENRY: Well, actually, Allison
7 Saar was part of our capital project as well. It was
8 a DOT project that—a streetscape project that—that
9 we—and so was Douglas Circle as well. So, they are
10 both capital projects.

11 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Because we've had
12 a lot of plaza projects happen in Brooklyn, but no
13 sculptures.

14 KENDAL HENRY: Uh-hm.

15 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Again, what did we
16 do wrong and what did Harlem do right?

17 KENDAL HENRY: Yes. So, most of the
18 plaza projects the Percent for Art doesn't really
19 kick in unless it's a certain threshold in terms of
20 the budget, the consumption budget, and so a project
21 that is above—that's \$5 million and above, is
22 automatically eligible because, you know, the one
23 percent is \$50,000 and anything less than that it
24 doesn't—when you take out the artist's fee, you're
25 not left with much to--

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MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Uh-hm.

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KENDAL HENRY: --make an impact in terms
of an artwork. So, and from my understanding there's
a lot of the plaza projects are very small kind of
capital projects, and-but--

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MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: But that Betty
Saar project looks pretty small, too.

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KENDAL HENRY: But again, that-that
section there was just part of a bigger component, I-
I believe. Yes.

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MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Let me just say
this: I believe that it's important for us to create
as it pertains to plazas and many of you may know
that I've been fighting for this and working towards
this. We need to create a formalized process in
terms of how we review our plazas because it can't be
this-I don't know. A few-a couple of people get in a
room and decide, you know what, we should probably
put some resources behind this particular project
versus that particular project. I'd like to see a
formalized process for the opportunity for plazas to
have two things, (1) a name and (2) how that
community wants to realize artwork there because
that's a wonderful opportunity at plazas to be able

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2 to do that and I'm going to stay on that one because
3 that one is important to me in terms of my final term
4 in office. So the Percent for Art Program Council
5 Member Jimmy Van Bramer and I worked very hard to
6 increase the Percent for Art program. I believe, and
7 my numbers are off, we increased the budget and the
8 ability to be able to spend from I believe \$1.3
9 million to I believe about \$4.6 million. Since that
10 was changed, what percentage of that are we actually
11 realizing?

12 KENDAL HENRY: So, the annual amount that
13 we could spend per year is-is \$4 million. That's-
14 that was the change, and the calculation was from-
15 from calculating the percentage was 1% of-it used to
16 be 1% of the first \$20 million and with your help we
17 got up 1% of the first \$50 million, which increased
18 or allocation for-for some projects for artwork.

19 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Right.

20 KENDAL HENRY: Right. So in terms of-so
21 that kicked in earlier last year in 2018. It-it-but
22 those projects were eligible to-to-to-to meet those
23 calculations, and we have began commissioning some
24 works with the new-with the new math, and it does
25 take-because our projects are tied to the-the Capital

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2 Project schedule, it will take a number of years to
3 actually see the results in an actual artwork.

4 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: But did DCLA in
5 any way because if—if we increase the amount of
6 public art resources that are able to be spent, but
7 we didn't provide any infrastructure for it, then
8 it's the same staff, same review panel, same process,
9 same people, same execution then you'll never really
10 be able to realize the amount of money. And I'd like
11 to know where are we in that process because I
12 believe we passed this legislation very early in my
13 tenure. So, I'm—I'm surprised that it hasn't ramped
14 up to be able to provide more public art.

15 KENDAL HENRY: Yeah, again it—it sort of
16 comes in with the types of projects that we have that
17 are being initiated for capital projects. So, if
18 it's not a gigantic project where it's, you know,
19 the—the calculations, you know, showing a big
20 increase, then it's just a normal kind of amount. We
21 are doing quite a bit more, and the increase in art
22 allocation allows us to be—to do bigger projects or
23 have more artists per project let's say and that is
24 happening, but again, it does take a little bit of
25 time.

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2 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I have two final
3 questions. So, I just feel like I-I-I want to see a
4 lot more art before we leave and I-I don't know how
5 to jump start this process in order to make it
6 happen. I thought that changing the budget and the
7 amounts of money would spearhead that process moving
8 forward. So, it-and this might have been discussed
9 and I'm sure it was with Council Member Grodenchik
10 because this is his hearing, but if we have park in
11 our area there's so many wonderful parks in our area
12 like Jackie Robinson Park, like what's going to be
13 Betty Carter Park. All of these different parks that
14 are just so phenomenal in our district that have no
15 artistic markers. What's going to be the process
16 moving forward so that these particular spaces can
17 have permanent works of art that many of our other
18 parks already have?

19 KENDAL HENRY: If it's a capital project
20 then the Percent for Art kicks in and we could
21 commission a work of art.

22 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: It kicks in.
23 Okay. Here's the--here's the magic nugget in all of
24 this: There are thousands of capital projects that
25 are happening all across the city, thousands. How do

1
2 you all pick? What is the process for which projects
3 get pulled out, and say this project will get public
4 art funding through the Percent for Art program?

5 Like our libraries. We love Grand Army Plaza
6 Library, that beautiful gold sculpture outside that
7 embellishes the doors, it's iconic, but there have
8 also been many libraries that have received capital
9 dollars that don't have any public art. How do you
10 select because that process has to be un-mystified

11 KENDAL HENRY: Uh-hm. So, we work with
12 our design agency Department of Design and
13 Construction, EDC and SCA to when they do have
14 capital projects, the first thing that we do is see
15 what is the amount of the construction budget, and
16 see again like I mentioned before if it's below \$5
17 million, then the percentage is very low to make an
18 impact of an artwork. Second, we have a discussion
19 as to what-if it's a-what is the most public facing
20 component of that capital project? Where is it in-
21 and-and then we-we go through the process of-of
22 commissioning an artwork. We can't-for certain
23 projects we always do-we always try to do Percent for
24 Art with the school, a library, the police station,
25 that sort of things that is very community-oriented

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2 or it can--projects that are community hubs we-we
3 always try to do Percent for Art in them and we've
4 done quite a few libraries in Brooklyn and in-in
5 Queens and throughout. We--

6 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: [interposing] I
7 feel like I'm missing out.

8 KENDAL HENRY: I could-I could give you a
9 list of the ones that we have, but again, if-if the
10 agency does not put that project forward, sometimes,
11 you know, we're not able to see them, but we always
12 as much as possible.

13 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I feel like we
14 have to demystify that because we have everything
15 from waste transfer stations to libraries to parks to
16 major construction that's happen all throughout the
17 city, and for us to only-to be celebrating at this
18 point one Shirley Chisholm sculpture in the whole
19 borough of Brooklyn means that some thing is way off
20 in terms of what's actually happening with those
21 dollars to do those forms of public art. The last
22 one that I will say because I'm sure this is not
23 happening, but this is a concept that I want to put
24 out. I believe that the MIH program that we have as
25 far as housing should also kick in with some form of

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2 Percent for Art because what's happening is that
3 there is so much construction and architecture that's
4 being built in Brooklyn, New York that is un-iconic,
5 unimaginative, boring, just nothing happening about
6 it. These buildings that are being built in Brooklyn
7 will never be in any kind of architectural design
8 book of the 100 greatest anything. Right? So, we
9 need to create a way for—for the arts community to
10 work with these architects in order to create a
11 design and a building, and art that is reflective of
12 the borough that people are going to be proud of,
13 that's going to incorporate our history and our
14 culture, that people are going to want to come to see
15 like how everybody goes to Spain to see Gowdy. They
16 want to see the beautiful architecture and the
17 design, something different and imaginative. Nobody
18 is going to be coming to Brooklyn to see anything
19 that we've built as far as our design and
20 architecture. So, I just want to put that concept out
21 there. If—if a project qualifies for MIH we should
22 have an ability to kick in a Percent for Art in order
23 to create some level of interest in the design that's
24 happening and that—those are my final comments. Thank
25 you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
3 Majority Leader Cumbo. I want to welcome our guests.
4 I don't know where you're from, but welcome to the
5 New York City Council. At this time we will hear
6 from Councilwoman Inez Barron, and a statement on her
7 legislation.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you to the
9 Chairs for holding this hearing and thank you to the
10 panel for coming. I hear I missed the Commissioner,
11 but I heard—but this is an important topic, and it
12 deserves out time and attention, and all of those who
13 have some impact on the decisions that are to be made
14 should be involved in the hearing. So, I'm
15 disappointed that the Commissioner could not remain.
16 I want to talk briefly about my bill and then I do
17 have some questions for the panel. The bill that's
18 proposed is one that would establish a task force.
19 Now, we know because of the pressure that had been
20 put on the mayor for the community particularly in
21 East Harlem and led by protests by persons, activists
22 such as Viola Plummer for over 10 years, the Sims
23 statue was removed. We know that horrific
24 experiments he conducted without using anesthesia on
25 black women that he purchased particularly for that

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2 reason, and we know that when he perfected his
3 experiments and used those techniques on white women
4 he did use anesthesia. So the blatant racism that we
5 see in his life and in his work under the guise of a
6 doctor was certainly more than cause to have the
7 statue removed, and the pedestal should have gone
8 with man. So, that did not happen then. It's still
9 a battle that we're waging, and we do want to see
10 that pedestal removed as well. We can't do half of
11 the job. We've got to do all of it. We've got—he's
12 got to be obliterated in terms of getting recognition
13 for work that he has experimented, he had conducted
14 on women that were enslaved. So, following the
15 mayor's commission there was still much work to be
16 done. So, what the bill proposes is that we
17 establish a task force, and that this task force be
18 charged with examining that other historical
19 monuments and markers need to be confronted and
20 addressed and how we can make sure that we have a
21 reflection of monuments highlighting people and
22 events that talk about the humanity and talk about
23 the goals that we say we as a nation hold great, and
24 hold in high esteem. I won't ask you to look behind
25 you at that statue behind you. In my opinion, it

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2 needs to go, and I'm working on that as well. It's
3 not something that I understand your—your commission
4 has authority over, but I don't think we need to
5 elevate and bring any kind of accolades to people who
6 enslaved Africans, who raped teenage children and who
7 did not have any worthwhile contribution to ending
8 the horrific conditions of slavery in America. So,
9 that's what the task force seeks to do and I do have
10 some questions. The task force wants to, as we say
11 talk about broader issues and highlight great people
12 that recommend—that represent the great goals that
13 are has set before us. Here in this building we are
14 benefiting from the work of enslaved Africans
15 particularly here and particularly on Wall Street.
16 It was a big battle to get a marker on Wall Street
17 talking about the fact that the market that was
18 engaged in was the exchange of Africans that had been
19 kidnapped that had been humanly trafficked, and
20 brought here. It was a big battle to get that. My
21 question is how are we going to ensure that as
22 markers are added to locations that we feel are
23 significant to our history they acknowledge and
24 include the work that was done by the Africans that
25 were enslaved and brought here? There should be a

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2 marker on the gates of City Hall talking about the
3 work that had been done to build this establishment
4 that is done by uncompensated labor of Africans.
5 Everything that helped to build this country should
6 include that proviso that acknowledgement that this
7 was the work that was done by uncompensated labor
8 from Africans who never received reparations and
9 people get nervous and talk about it being divisive
10 to talk about the fact that we are entitled to have
11 some kind of compensation. But how are we going to
12 look at making sure that that happens, the
13 contributions of enslaved Africans that built
14 particularly this city. A lot of people did not even
15 know that New York City had enslaved Africans, but it
16 did, but how are we going to make sure that as we put
17 in historical markers and monuments the whole area of
18 Red Hook and Fort Greene were-were populated and-and
19 embellished and improved because of the work of
20 Africans that were slaves. So, how are going to make
21 sure that when these markers go up, there's some
22 significance to that? There was a marker at the New
23 York-at the Brooklyn New Lots Public Library that
24 talked about the fact that the library itself was
25 built on what had ben an African Burial ground. The

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2 marker is gone. Nobody can chase it and nobody can
3 tell me yet where it is, or how we are going to make
4 sure that those kinds of acknowledgements are
5 included and preserve them, and if you can find that
6 marker, which was in the lobby of the library until
7 about maybe 15 years ago the would be great. That
8 was a long introduction to your short question.

9 MATT DRURY: Well, I can speak
10 specifically--Matt--Matt Drury from parks. I could
11 speak specifically to historical signage that exists,
12 you know, on parkland we are--we are very mindful and
13 we're very happy to work with, you know, historical
14 advocates and things of that nature when we are
15 providing historical signage and, you know, for
16 example the slave market marker downtown, you know,
17 not too far from here was a really important, you
18 know--you know, obviously overly overdue clearly and
19 we--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]
21 Overdue and a fight to get it.

22 MATT DRURY: Yeah, I can't--I won't--I
23 wouldn't claim credit or I was not part of that
24 process. I came in--frankly, it happened shortly
25 after I arrived at the agency so I can't--

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

3 MATT DRURY: --but I-I-I fully believe
4 that I'm sure, and we thank the advocates and the
5 elected officials who joined in that advocacy.
6 Similarly, I think there are other properties that
7 are parkland that have these sort of historic natures
8 and we do everything in our power to sort of reflect
9 that history whenever possible. Obviously, there are
10 other locations, historic buildings. You know, it
11 kind of depend what entity has oversight, you know,
12 in terms of how that site--but generally speaking I
13 know this Administration is committed to making sure
14 that our--that our history is properly reflected.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So, is there a
16 person who has that task to make sure that you do
17 that research in--in the historical documents to be
18 able to include that?

19 MATT DRURY: Yes, we have--we have a--a
20 team of historians and--and experts who work closely
21 with Arts and Antiquities Division. Each of our
22 historical signs that are posted are actually also
23 available online as well not just in person, but we
24 also wanted it to be a resource that's available to
25 the--to the broader public just interested in the

1
2 history of New York City so that the language can be
3 mirrored, you know, available to other people as
4 well, and so yes, that's--it's something that's very
5 much on our minds.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Anybody else?

7 MATT DRURY: I think we're--I'm the only
8 representative of a jurisdictional agency here so--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Now, in
10 terms of the One Percent for Art, I'm very pleased to
11 say that there's a new high school being built in our
12 community. The school is being valued at \$111
13 million. How are we going to involve the students
14 that will be in that school? It's a high school--to
15 have--and the principal and the staff and the
16 community to have a decision making voice in the art
17 that goes into that school? It's just now, the
18 ground is just being built, and so we are at the
19 beginning stages of that. How are we going to make
20 sure that what they want in the building where they
21 will be students attending daily is what they want?

22 KENDAL HENRY: Uh-hm. So, the good thing
23 about when we commission artwork for existing schools
24 where there is an addition or-or some major
25 renovation--

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] You
3 said existing schools?

4 KENDAL HENRY: Is it not an existing
5 school?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Not yet.

7 KENDAL HENRY: Okay.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: It's-it's-it was-
9 it was demolished and is now a new school that's
10 being built a brand new school is being built.

11 KENDAL HENRY: But it had-it has existing
12 student body and principal?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes.

14 KENDAL HENRY: Alright, so, yeah.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay.

16 KENDAL HENRY: So-so the good thing about
17 that is that throughout our process these are the
18 people we engage through-even before we start having
19 a conversation about art, and so when we do to
20 through our process of selecting an artist, they are
21 actually sitting on the panel, and part of selecting
22 artists to do the work. When the artist is selected,
23 part of the artist's task is to have conversations
24 wit that student body and the principal to determine
25

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2 how much—to determine what the art actually is. So,
3 it's—it's a—it's a very engaging process.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: In the length of
5 time that it's going to take to build a school, which
6 is projected to be three years, where in that
7 timeline does this process start?

8 KENDAL HENRY: It happens in the
9 beginning during the design.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I don't think
11 it's happened. I think—well, we may not be at that
12 phase of the design, but I'll be in touch with you
13 because I've asked about it, and I've been told well,
14 when we get to that stage, we'll make sure that that
15 happens, but I'm very concerned about that, and as
16 well as talking about the fact that the monument
17 going back to Sims the pedestal was a part of the
18 monument. It wasn't always there. It had been
19 located some place else previously. So the fact that
20 that pedestal remains is still a—an insult and it's
21 only half of the job, and I think we need to look at
22 making sure that it's done. Not to say, well, we'll
23 put something else there to give the other
24 perspective or the other side, but to make sure that
25 that happens. So, that basically was most of the

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2 questions that I had, and I thank your listening and
3 for your responses. I did have another question.
4 Where do we have the exact count of the number of
5 statues that represent blacks and the number of
6 monuments that represent blacks, and the number of
7 historical markers that have reference to blacks of
8 African-Americans? Do you have that exact number?

9 KENDAL HENRY: So the Parks Department
10 does have a complete inventory, but that's not the
11 city's complete inventory obviously. So, one of the
12 outcomes of the Mayor's commission was providing some
13 funding that has come through Cultural Affairs to the
14 PDC to do a complete inventory of the monuments. So,
15 that work is—is underway. We've—we've got a good
16 start, but we expect to have that some time in the
17 summer of a complete inventory of the monuments. The
18 markers is a much larger project that—that, you know,
19 we honestly don't have the resources to—do the full
20 inventory of every marker.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Do you know how
22 many markers there are?

23 KENDAL HENRY: I don't—[laughs] So, I—I--
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing] So,
3 if-if you know how many there are, can't we find out
4 what they say?

5 KENDAL HENRY: So-so that's what-it-it
6 takes a lot of time and research. So, we can, but
7 that's not something that we anticipate that we'll be
8 able to do in our first round of research, but we're
9 absolutely committed to doing that even more.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: [interposing]
11 That might be a nice project for Summer Youth to work
12 on. We talk about how we can use our youth and get
13 them engaged and involved. That might be a way to
14 engage them for the Summer Youth. Yes?

15 KENDAL HENRY: Sure

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And lastly--Mr.
17 Chair, thank you--the--the Grand Entrance to the
18 Brooklyn Public Library, that my colleague referred
19 to, has many indications and inclusions of African
20 history in it and African markers, but I don't know
21 that they are in any way acknowledged. So, perhaps we
22 can look at that, and make sure that include
23 information that highlight what are the African icons
24 and markers that are part of that beautiful doorway.
25 Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
Councilwoman Barron. I just want to ask and I think
somebody covered it. Now is there a police at Parks
and Recreation for siting statues? I mean we have
30,000 acres of parkland, and statues generally take
up, you know, a few dozen square feet, but I—I, you
know, I know some places are more desirable
obviously, but I just wondered is there something on
paper that—that talks about how you actually look at
a site?

MATT DRURY: So, we have a set of
guidelines for—for donate—donating permanent artwork
to—on parklands, which kind of spells out a pretty
robust process to engage, and obviously Parks as—as
Primary stakeholder, you know, jurisdiction. You
know, we obviously have a lot to say about endorsing
ideas and—and shaping them along, but that also
involves, you know, working closely with those
interested parties. I will say, you know, it can—
generally speaking we've also tried to be very
aggressive about pursuing opportunities for temporary
art. Sometimes upwards of a year and, you know,
obviously, you know, permanence has its place and
that's—we entertain proposals of that sort all the

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2 time, but also I—I didn't want to—I think it's very
3 important to highlight there—there's a variety of
4 efforts underway in the Parks Program is—is robust,
5 and it's very much a focus just making sure the, you
6 know, Parks can stay in, you know, engaging and—and
7 dynamic. And so, I don't—I wanted to give that. I
8 understand it's not the topic of today's hearing, but
9 it's a really important part of our portfolio in
10 terms of making sure that people visiting our art in
11 our public space, you know, kind of get an engaging
12 and dynamic experience.

13 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Alright. Can
14 you—I know we have the Antiquities Division. Do you
15 have an idea what the budget is a year and what they,
16 you know, I know some of it is done by conservancies
17 now. So, just the statues in Central Park and other
18 parks where there are conservancies. But I know that
19 it's a far—I mean it's—I've seen statues all over the
20 city now. I'm must wondering what the budget is for
21 that.

22 MATT DRURY: So, I don't have those
23 budgetary information on hand. I will say that it's
24 a—a moderately small team that—that works extremely
25 hard taking care of existing works and also, you

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know, run—also running the Temporary Art—Temporary Art Program and they work tirelessly. I have to give credit to Director Jonathan Kuhn, and his team that we do have some conservators and other things of that nature on staff, but it's one of the reasons why most of the statuary that has been commissioned over the years was essentially sort of crowd funded, if you will, and a lot of that often includes a maintenance endowment that's been, you, that's—that's been raised that helps provide for that care, but also the agency has been quite creative about getting out there and finding grants identifying additional opportunities, you know, that the, you know, this Administration, you know, gives the agency the resources it needs, but we don't stop there. We obviously, you know, look for every opportunity to make sure that we're taking care of—of this portfolio.

CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: And you

mentioned temporary art and I love the Gates. I mean I'm dating myself a little, but it was spectacular, beyond spectacular. Can you talk about if I had a work of art that I wanted to—you probably wouldn't allow it, but my spin on it was quite wonderful. I have to—Can you talk about that process a little?

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2 MATT DRURY: Yeah, absolutely. We have a
3 very robust—and it's all publicly available on our
4 website. You know, our Art in the Parks Program we
5 take submissions from artists all the time. In fact,
6 we're—we've really put a lot of work into
7 diversifying the sites and locations at which this
8 art is being displayed. We're quite proud of that.
9 Quite recently our—I think we—we've worked I close
10 partnership with UNIQLO. They funded a grant program
11 and we funded I think through that ten locations
12 throughout the city. Very exciting. You know, fresh
13 artistically interesting, you know, from different
14 voices and—and so we've, you know, we appreciate, you
15 know, opportunities like that and we look for every-
16 ever chance. So, if you're an artist and you're
17 interested, by all means please visit, you know, our
18 Parks Department website and—and seek more
19 information.

20 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Alright. I
21 think Chair Van Bramer has a question.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: One—one last
23 thing. First of all, I just want to say because
24 Council Member Borelli rightly asked some questions
25 of Justin. I—I do want to say, Justin, since you've

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2 joined in your position as Director of the Public
3 Sign Commission, we have had a hearing and you have
4 been the most accessible director that I know of in-
5 in the Commission. So, I just wan to say that.

6 JUSTIN MOORE: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And I want to
8 say to Matt so, you know, I think Council Member
9 Barron raises a lot of really, really important
10 points, and I think we're never really going to get
11 to where we need to be unless we actually proactively
12 look for opportunities to change names or-or gain
13 opportunities to rename things to actually bring the
14 equity that we're looking for. Right, it's not just
15 about creating new statues or new plaques or new
16 things, but for example, I have an opportunity in my
17 district, right. We've also got a lot of parks that
18 that have these really goofy names, right. That
19 maybe Henry Stein named like 35 years ago, right, and
20 one of mine is Bridge and Tunnel Park, right. As a
21 kid who grew up in Queens, I've always resented the
22 Bridge and Tunnel crowd thing, you know what I mean,
23 and-and that's the name of a park as you enter
24 Queens, Bridge and Tunnel Park. So, as you may or
25 may not know, Matt, I've actually raised the idea of

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2 like why don't we rename that in honor of a woman who
3 has great distinction in Queens or the city of New
4 York? Right. That's the kind of thing that we need
5 to be doing more. So, not just waiting right like
6 waiting, waiting, waiting. Like why don't we actually
7 go out there and look, survey, you know, and say well
8 this is a dopey name of the park that someone thought
9 was cute 35 years ago, 50 years, 100 years ago, and
10 it like now it has no more relevance, right. We want
11 to actually take this as an opportunity. We have a
12 list. There's so many women. There's so many people
13 of color. There's so many African-Americans. Like
14 let's do that right and let's do that quickly. So, I
15 don't know what the process is, but I have already
16 raised Bridge and Tunnel Park in Long Island City,
17 and like let's do it.

18 MATT DRURY: So, a couple things, (1) I
19 am—I—I hail originally from New Jersey so I'm equally
20 offended by the name I suppose. There are two sides
21 of that coin I guess, but I can—I am happy to say
22 that (a) we—we do—we agree with you Bridge and Tunnel
23 as a really exciting opportunity. It's a rather
24 generic name if not insulting. So, so, I think we—
25 we'd really, I think we'd like to active work with—

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2 with your office, and other stakeholders, you know,
3 to kind of figure out, you know, what name makes more
4 sense, and I'll go further and say that that, you
5 know, Commissioner Silver has thought a lot about
6 identifying potential opportunities like this. I
7 will note however in doing that because there are
8 some times names—there are duplicates for example.
9 You know, there's more than one, you know blank park.
10 You know, it does sometimes happen. However, local
11 constituencies may have attachments to that name even
12 some that sound, you know, Playground 134. It
13 doesn't sound like it, but, you know, to folks that
14 grew up in that neighborhood. So, I just would only
15 add that as a caveat that I think we are actively
16 looking for opportunities of that nature because, you
17 know, obviously monuments are not far from the only
18 way to capture New York's history and—and the amount
19 of people that should, you know, but I'll just caveat
20 that (a) you can, you know, obviously people have
21 differing opinions and that can be a very, you know,
22 challenging conversation, and—and more to the point
23 there will always be more people who deserve renaming
24 than there are opportunities, you know, in terms of,
25 you know, whether that's, you know, people of

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2 service, you know, to the city or people gave their
3 lives in service for the city. Like there will
4 always be more of the, you know, those. Doesn't mean
5 we, you know, we shouldn't be practical about funding
6 that. So, we're happy to work with you about
7 continuing that, those efforts.

8 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Great. Okay. I
9 don't have a Bridge and Tunnel park, but I do have a
10 Holy Cow Playground [laughter] named after the great
11 Yankee shortstop Bill Rizzuto, although he now has a
12 park named after him in Richmond Hill where he grew
13 up. My counsel the great Yankee fan, Steve Behar
14 might object that as Met fan, I [laughter] find it a
15 bit much. At this time, I'm going to dismiss this
16 panel. I want to thank you for being here today and
17 for being with us for nearly two hours, and I am
18 going to call—we have two panels, and the first panel
19 from the Municipal Arts Society, Tara Kelly; from New
20 Yorkers for Parks, Lynn Kelly, from the Girl Scouts
21 of Greater New York; Meredith Maskara (sp?) and
22 representing herself Professor Harriet Senie. I hope
23 I got that right? Did I get that right? Senie?
24 [background comments] Right or is it Penny? Okay.
25 Thank you. The next panel after this will be Amina

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2 Ali; Judaline Cassidy. I hope I pronounced that
3 right, Elam or Elam and Brenda Berkman. So, I will--
4 we'll set the clock for three minutes, if you would
5 and Ms. Kelly whoever Ms., whichever Ms. Kelly wants
6 to start first. [background comments]

7 LYNN KELLY: No, relation, but we work
8 together quite a bit.

9 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: No relation? I'm
10 shocked.

11 LYNN KELLY: Yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay.

13 LYNN KELLY: Yes. Thank you to the
14 Council for inviting us to speak. My staff has
15 prepared wonderful testimony but as usually I'm going
16 to go off the record but on the record--

17 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: [interposing]
18 I'm shocked, Lynn.

19 LYNN KELLY: --and speak from my heart.
20 Imagine that. If you would let me for a minute I
21 just want to read you a list, and I'm going to ask
22 you at the end of this list what do all these
23 organizations have in common? Okay. Prospect Park,
24 Central Park, Hudson River Park, Randall's Island
25 Park, Snug Harbor Cultural Center, Madison Square

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2 Park, Battery Park, Flushing Meadows Park, Van
3 Courtlandt Park, Forest Park, Union Square Park, Fort
4 Trion Park, Historic Harlem Parks, Bronx River Parks
5 Alliance; Gowanus Canal Conservancy, Alley Pond Park,
6 Downtown Alliance, Brooklyn Greenway Initiative, New
7 Yorkers for Parks, New York Restoration Project,
8 Designs for Us for Public Space, Municipal Arts
9 Society, Horticultural Society, the Nature
10 conservancy, Audubon NYC, City Parks Foundation, the
11 Landmarks Conservancy, the Natural Areas Conservancy
12 and the League of Conservation Voters.

13 FEMALE SPEAKER: [off mic] Is that all
14 there is?

15 LYNN KELLY: Exact—no wait. One better.
16 On thing that ties the thread in 30 of the largest
17 organizations that care for parks and the public
18 realm in New York they are all run by women, every
19 single one. Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: I have—

21 LYNN KELLY: That's—that's a hands up.

22 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: I just for the
23 record want to state that I may be the only man in
24 America who has worked for four women elected
25 officials, for different ones. So,

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2 LYNN KELLY: Amen. Can I say that in the
3 City Council? Yes.

4 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: You can say that
5 in the City Council.

6 LYNN KELLY: And I say this to say that
7 as a city that aims to be equitable to all its
8 residents in a city where all of the largest
9 organizations that care for the public realm, care
10 for parks, care for quality of life for all New
11 Yorkers we can do better when it comes to
12 representation in our parks for statutes and for
13 monuments. We have to do better when more than 50%
14 of the users arguably are women. So, I'm here today
15 to both thank the Council for bringing this to the
16 attention of the Administration. We commend the
17 Administration's work so far on what they're trying
18 to do, but more has to be done, and I stand united
19 with my fellow female leaders of all these
20 organizations to say that we have to do better in
21 getting representation in our parks, and I want to
22 thank you for time this morning.

23 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you, Lynn
24 and I want to thank for working with me. To indulge
25 myself here the-on-on-on Thursday we will be kicking

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2 off the Play Fair Campaign for Parks, which seeks to
3 raise an additional \$100 million in expense funding
4 for parks. So, I hope that some of you who are
5 listening can be with us Thursday at high noon. This
6 is just the beginning of a—what will be a multi-year
7 campaign to raise additional funding for parks and I
8 thank you for working with me on that, and thank you
9 for your comments today.

10 LYNN KELLY: Thank you Councilman.

11 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Ms. Kelly.

12 TARA KELLY: Hi, thank you. Good—good
13 morning almost afternoon. I'm Tara Kelly
14 representing the Municipal Art Society of New York.
15 We have been one of the watchful guardians over New
16 York City's architecture and public arts since 1893.
17 Following its founding premise of commissioning and
18 endorsing public art, MAS in 1987 in partnership with
19 the Public Design Commission and the Parks Department
20 launched the Adopt a Monument Program to restore 20
21 of the most threatened statues in the five boroughs
22 damaged by pollution, neglect and vandalism. The MAS
23 sought corporations, foundations and private funders
24 to underwrite the cost of each conversation. Success
25 led to the second partnership with the city the Adopt

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2 a Mural Program initiated in 1991. To date, 52 works
3 of public art have been rescued, restored and
4 importantly maintained. The artworks are far ranging
5 in location, style and material representing an
6 investment of \$4 million to the city. Included among
7 these is the magnificent Beaux Art ceiling mural in
8 this very chamber room, New York receiving the
9 tributes of the nations, as well as iconic sculptures
10 in your neighborhoods. Some of these are Lincoln and
11 Lafayette Monuments in Prospect Park; Rocket Thrower
12 in Flushing Meadows; Heinrich Heine in Joyce Kilmer
13 Park in the Bronx; and the Neptune Fountain in South
14 Harbor, Staten Island. Thus, MAS greatly appreciates
15 the attention of City Council to this very important
16 matter of today's hearing especially relevant in
17 recent years. The city's track record for
18 commemorating people of color and women has improved
19 greatly since 1945 when only two non-white male
20 representations existed in figurative statuary.
21 Today, of the 118 sculptures of individuals, 23
22 represent people of color or women. While progress
23 has been made, indeed the city has not gone far
24 enough, and so we are here to support you in that
25 effort. We ask the new task force to take note that

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2 figurative public art has been on the wane in the
3 21st Century and, therefore, urge the task force to
4 think beyond bronze and stone and telling our city's
5 untold stories. We also believe that the charge of
6 this task force should be as broad as possible in
7 order to seize the incredible momentum towards
8 equity. Every art form should be plumbed for its
9 inherent ability to reflect the city and its rich
10 narratives. Beyond formal art, park names, street
11 signs, temporary installations and celebrations are
12 all ways of amplifying this history. On a more
13 specific note, we respectfully ask that the Chair of
14 the Landmarks Preservation Commission rather than the
15 Executive Director and the Chair of the Public Design
16 Commission both be appointed to the proposed task
17 force. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: [off mic] Thank
19 you. [on mic] Thank you for your testimony. Ms.
20 Maskara.

21 MEREDITH MASKARA: Thank you. Good
22 morning, good afternoon and thank you to the
23 committee for letting me be here. I'm Meredith
24 Maskara the CEO of the Girl Scouts of Greater New.
25 I'm not only here testify on behalf of myself, my

1
2 five daughters, but most importantly on behalf of the
3 31,000 Girl Scouts here in New York City. I was
4 actually a little disappointed that I couldn't bring
5 a girl with me today to testify, but it is the first
6 day back from public—for public schools from
7 vacation, until I started hearing the PDC talking
8 earlier and I would not want my girls to hear that
9 this has been deprioritized and put off and put off
10 for way too long, and we just need—we need to stop.
11 We need to—to do something about it now and
12 reproritize the work of the—of the Commission, and
13 after listening to them the need for oversight of
14 these laws and transparency is so clear and if the
15 PDC is not willing to prioritize this, the City
16 Council needs to. It's insulting. It's insulting to
17 all of us. I have girls who have been organizing
18 since 2016 working with the statues funds who have
19 made more progress than—the Commission has. They
20 raised money through their cookie sales. They have
21 advocated and rallied, and worked to get a statue of
22 the Suffragettes put up in Central Park, and it is
23 put on pause.

24 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay.

25

1
2 MEREDITH MASKARA: And I have to answer
3 to those girls, and I have to tell them that all of
4 the work that they have done is put on pause and may
5 not happen until after they graduate, and I'm telling
6 you right now these girls need answers now, and you
7 need to—you need to make sure that the Commission is
8 and this Administration is accountable to making sure
9 this work is done, and that there is fair and
10 equitable representation of women and tell the right
11 history and story of New York City. Even walking
12 into this building when I bring Girl Scouts here, I
13 have to explain to them that this is not actually
14 what represents New York City. This is not what
15 represents what women have contributed to the
16 greatness of New York City. I have to tell them that
17 they do have a place here, and it's wonderful for
18 them to be able to see the women who actually are
19 working here now even though we need more of you, but
20 they need to see it in every shape and form across
21 this city. So, please, please be accountable for
22 that. Let our girls have representation and just
23 make sure that this happens sooner than keep getting
24 put off. We're tired of waiting. Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: We share your
3 frustration on many level, and I thank you for being
4 here today. It's always good to see a resident--

5 MEREDITH MASKARA: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: --of Queens
7 testify. [laughter] I mean I got winners (sic) from
8 Queens. That's okay it's a big city. We've been
9 joined at this time also--

10 MEREDITH MASKARA: [interposing] And I
11 own a house. (sic)

12 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: --by Councilman
13 Ben Kallos of Manhattan, and we will now hear
14 testimony from Professor Senie.

15 PROFESSOR HARRIET SENIE: [off mic]

16 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Can you turn
17 that--

18 PROFESSOR HARRIET SENIE: How does that
19 go?

20 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK:

21 PROFESSOR HARRIET SENIE: Does that do
22 it?

23 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: That does it.

24 PROFESSOR HARRIET SENIE: I don't usually
25 need it in the classroom. I'm an Art Historian by

1
2 training. I work with City College. I direct a
3 Masters Program in Art History and Art Museum
4 Studies. I've written extensively on public art
5 especially on memorials, but also on controversy. I
6 was a member of the Mayor's Advisory Commission on
7 City Art Monuments and Markers. I can address our
8 thinking about the Sims base later if you'd like. I
9 was also member of the She Built New York Advisory
10 Commission. We did suggest alternative forms, but
11 some of these memorials might take, that is the idea
12 that we could honor groups of women. For example,
13 women in politics or withstand history as well as
14 significant individuals. I was happily a member of
15 the Selection Committee for the Susan B. Anthony and
16 Elizabeth Cady Stanton Memorial scheduled to be in
17 Central Park, which will put two actual women there.
18 Also, on the Selection Committee for Flight 587 in
19 Rockaway Park. Remember that one? And a little
20 further afield to the memorial to the 1968 Student
21 Uprisings in Mexico City. My comments today are
22 based on caveats of process, and they're based on my
23 experience of serving on these various public bodies.
24 I'm leery of a quota system in any area, although I'm
25 an ardent, ardent fan, supporter, feminist, et cetera

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2 of more representation of women. My concern is how
3 this quota would be implemented. Would commissions
4 have to alternate by gender or would there a catch up
5 period at the end of the year to balance the numbers?
6 Either way, communities might be denied the ability
7 to celebrate worth individuals even dare I say it
8 right now, and might it also lead to a selection to
9 women who are perhaps somewhat questionable choices
10 in order to fill the quota. I'm sure there are other
11 problematic issues, but these are the ones that
12 immediately jump to mind. My concern with the task
13 force, again, something I heartily, heartily support
14 is that it might not adequately consider either the
15 past or the future. Based on spending more time with
16 controversies and probably any healthy person should,
17 my conclusion is that they are large, and I think the
18 words were sustained by negative attention that these
19 would get the most attention, controversies like
20 major political, it's not always easy to ascertain
21 what the actual agenda is and how much local support
22 for a protestor actually is. So, it's been my
23 experience that sustained negative attention may not
24 indeed be representative of overall community
25 response, and I think any investigation and analysis

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2 that of such a protest would be critical. Sometimes
3 it's spearheaded by somebody [bell] with that
4 passion.

5 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: [off mic]

6 PROFESSOR HARRIET SENIE: There was more
7 but that's it.

8 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: That's alright.
9 That's okay. I think Chair Rosenthal has a question
10 for the panel.

11 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: And—and perhaps
12 it will be answered more quickly than I expected, but
13 except for being on the committee, do you have
14 recommendations for or did all of you hear about the
15 call for statues to depicting women? The
16 Administration said they got the word out to everyone
17 and everyone submitted them. I'm just wondering if
18 your organization knew about it.

19 MEREDITH MASKARA: I can speak for—for
20 the Girl Scouts. We first heard about it honestly
21 from our girls who joined Working with the Statue
22 Fund over three years ago and, you know, that—that
23 was a choice that they—that they did as—as community
24 project to make sure that there was fair
25 representation.

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2 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: [interposing] But
3 that's for a particular statue fund?

4 MEREDITH MASKARA: Correct.

5 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I mean the
6 Administration.

7 MEREDITH MASKARA: And then we were
8 invited in to—because of the shared sentiment for She
9 Built NYC. With much enthusiasm only to not hear
10 anything after the Initial announcement about our
11 further participation in that.

12 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay, anyone
13 else?

14 LYNN KELLY: I want to take step back,
15 Councilwoman. So, I actually started my career at
16 what was called the Art Commission at the time, which
17 is now the Public Design Commission. I was in this
18 Deputy Director spot many moons ago, and so what I
19 can speak from personal experience and it kind of
20 translates to that question to day. I think several
21 members of the Council particularly Council Member
22 Cumbo brought us this issue of process, right? Like
23 how to get back, let's put aside the question of the—
24 the task force right now, but look at more of the
25 overall process. It's almost unfair to pin down on

1
2 Cultural Affairs and to Design Commission about where
3 things may or may not have been bungled in the
4 current process. What it really takes is a decision
5 from the top about how expense dollars on
6 construction projects will be allocated and spent.
7 And so those organizations are, you know, doing their
8 jobs and carrying out direction, and when I was in
9 that role, it was only how projects were delineated.
10 You know, whether they were prioritized or not to
11 have public art in them. That's why it's not always.
12 That's why there's not necessarily—just because the
13 number is X amount that it's going to get this
14 amount. Y amount public art as One Perce for Art, and
15 the other piece of it is to really have a robust
16 public art program like other cities do
17 internationally and even, you know, East Coast
18 cities. You have to be willing as a city to invest
19 the expense dollars in the agencies that carry out
20 those public projects. When you have one or two
21 people running Percent for Art, and you have hundreds
22 and hundreds of major capital construction projects
23 citywide, there's an inequity there from the
24 beginning. So, you know, I commend my colleagues for
25 the work that they do. I mean I can—I want to say

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2 Jonathan Crowchek (sp?) is here. He spent his
3 career as long as I've known him caring for our
4 sculptures in New York City would voluntarily send
5 his crews to Snug Harbor when I was running it to
6 clean our Neptune Found that was mentioned. This is
7 like, you know, yeoman's work, but in order, and, and
8 this gets back to our-our campaign, Council Member.
9 In order to really care for our city's parks and
10 monuments and do right by parks we have to play fair
11 with the budget for Parks and we have to place there
12 with the process, and we're not right now and we can
13 do better.

14 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you. Thank
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you.
17 Thank you all. Chair Van Bramer.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, I-I thank
19 you and Lynn, you know we're big fans from your
20 various positions, and I appreciate what you said,
21 which is also further from our perspective why we're
22 disappointed what happened earlier because the-we
23 could have asked about the budget for the Department
24 of Cultural Affairs and the budget for the Percent
25 for Art program, not the budget that Laurie and I

1
2 fought to increase but the expense in Administration
3 budget actually make it go faster and make it be
4 better, which, you know, is-is tough and as I said,
5 publicly Kendal is incredibly smart, and-and good
6 person who does great work. And Meredith, I-I-as you
7 were talking I had an idea about something you might
8 be able to do jointly with the girls to publicly make
9 this process go faster, and as you have some-done so
10 amazingly both vocally and the citywide and then
11 citywide with-with empowering girls and-and making
12 activists and agitators and-and future leaders there
13 may be things that we can together that-that publicly
14 make this go faster, and if-if not, and it's not the
15 job necessarily of 8-year-old girls to make the city
16 of New York do what it should, but few things can
17 motivate the city of New York better than some really
18 empowered 8-9 and 10-year-old girls to do the right
19 thing. So, look forward to talking with you more
20 about that.

21 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you. I
22 want to thank the panel. I also would like to ask
23 Professor Senie if you could send us a copy if you
24 have of your testimony--

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2 PROFESSOR HARRIET SENIE: I'll be happy
3 to do that.

4 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: --so we could
5 have that for the record, and at this time I'm going
6 to dismiss this panel and thank you for your insight.
7 It was—I'm sorry, Majority Leader.

8 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you. Just
9 wanted to add as well my support for the Girl Scouts.
10 It's just an incredible organization and to see our
11 young girls fighting so hard for their future to see
12 representations is certainly admirable. I just
13 wanted to touch on the—the—both the concepts that you
14 brought up in terms of when you're having an
15 opportunity to travel nationally as well as
16 internationally, you really see ironically how far
17 behind New York City is within the public art realm.

18 MEREDITH MASKARA: Uh-hm.

19 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: And when we have
20 opportunities to see projects like the Gates or the
21 Cow Parade or all of these different elements that
22 really create fanfare in New York City, it's still
23 amazing that we don't invest the way that we should
24 in public art because of what it does for cities. But
25 I did want to address the—the—the comment around the

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2 quota particularly because you're on the Commission.
3 I totally don't see this quota as a quota. I really
4 see it as an opportunity to level the playing field
5 and really an opportunity for us to put a particular
6 focus on righting an historic wrong, and I think that
7 the challenge of—and I'm just going to speak
8 stereotypically. Everyone forgive me. The challenge
9 of being a woman is that we have the opportunity to
10 see full circle and we have this deep desire often to
11 be inclusive and to think about how can we all play
12 fair in the sandbox. How can we make sure that
13 everybody has an opportunity? And I think that there
14 are many great white men, but I believe that it's
15 important for us now in order to create a level
16 playing field and then to have an opportunity at a
17 later time to reintroduce great white men into the
18 dialogue and the conversation, but I think—I think
19 it's fair and equitable to say they've had their
20 time. They've had a great run, and when we look a
21 dynamic like night at the Oscars what an incredible
22 historic--herstoric evening where we really saw that
23 talent and creativity is the gift that God give all
24 races and all cultures, and to able to see that last
25 nigh where you would—you would go to watch the

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2 Oscars. I had stopped watching the Oscars because I
3 had just well, we're not going to win, and we're just
4 going to go back home and be disappointed. So, I
5 think it was—that—those types of changes in our
6 dynamic are so important for people to see. It's
7 important for people to see representations of
8 themselves, and it really just makes our culture and
9 our society a much better, richer, fairer, more
10 equitable less violent place when everybody sees
11 themselves there.

12 PROFESSOR HARRIET SENIE: I couldn't
13 agree with you more and I appreciate your comments.
14 The point I was—that I was trying to make was really
15 one related to process to make sure that this is done
16 in a way that doesn't end up with results that don't
17 address those issues, and my comment about white men
18 had more do to with let's stay inclusive. Let's not
19 by definition exclude anybody even if they've had the
20 entire pie almost up 'til now because we've got a
21 historical vacuum for the period of time in which
22 we're leveling the playing field, and I'm on that
23 team 100%.

24 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: We can agree to
25 disagree on that one.

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PROFESSOR HARRIET SENIE: Totally.

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MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: I just feel that
in your particular role it's-it's—and here's the
other thing about it, this process that DCLA is
talking about is like a faucet that's dripping so
slowly.

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PROFESSOR HARRIET SENIE: I think it's
that staffing issue that we—

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MEREDITH MASKARA: A real one.

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MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: So, I mean if
it's—if it's a matter of like a few drips or a drip
or every two or three years, which is unfathomable.
I mean when we look at the amount of public art
that's in the city of New York, at one time I don't
know dozens, hundreds of sculptures had to built or
created and in one or two years.

18

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PROFESSOR HARRIET SENIE: It would be a
beautiful move.

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MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Right. So, this
is really an opportunity for us to fast forward this
process, and to really hone on some great and dynamic
people, and it's okay to agree to disagree.

24

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PROFESSOR HARRIET SENIE: I—absolutely.
I'm so thrilled with the support for Public Art. I

1
2 just want to say when I first started researching
3 this area and I looked it up in the card catalog, I
4 got the Art of Public Speaking. No joke.

5 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: [off mic] Thank
6 you. [on mic] Thank you all for your testimony
7 today. It was most insightful. I do want to say one
8 of the most teachable moments in my life I was with
9 my mother-in-law who is a young woman from Brooklyn
10 although she now lives in Queens, and I was with her
11 the day that Ruth Bader Ginsburg was nominated for
12 the Supreme Court, and she pretty much did what
13 Professor Senie did, she cried. She literally cried
14 and I understood it because it was her going to the
15 Supreme Court, and I know for the first time now an
16 Attorney-General who's a woman of color, and she has
17 taken the hopes and dreams of millions of women of
18 color in this state and around the nation. I look
19 forward to the day when—when something like that is
20 not news. We've got work to do obviously, and I want
21 to thank you all for being here today, and I'm going
22 to dismiss you now with a wave of my hand, and
23 welcome the next pane. Ms. Cassidy, Ms. Elam, Ms.
24 Berkman and Ms. Ali. [background comments/pause] Ms.
25 Cassidy, if you'd like to begin.

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PAM ELAM: No.

CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. You're going to tell me what you're going to do. Okay,

PAM ELAM: [laughter] Sorry.

CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: I take instructions. My wife won't believe this, but I do take instruction well at times.

PAM ELAM: Well, actually the three of us are from the same organization.

CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay.

PAM ELAM: We're going to divide our testimony in thirds to meet your time schedule.

CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: You can have—

PAM ELAM: Well, we literally will go in this direction.

CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay, take your time.

PAM ELAM: Thank you very much. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on proposals to make the city's process for creating monuments more transparent and fair. We approach those issues from a unique vantage point. I'm Pam Elam, President of the Stanton and Anthony Statue Fund and our Monumental Women Campaign. Board Members Brenda Berkman and

1
2 Judaline Cassidy and I are here today to offer a
3 brief overview of our five-year experience as an all
4 volunteer tax-exempt charity dealing with the city to
5 bronze sealing in Central Park, to create the first
6 statue real women in the park's 165-year history.
7 Monumental Women, our campaign is a three-part
8 project to increase the awareness and appreciation of
9 the vast and varied contributions women have made to
10 history, as well to challenge municipalities across
11 the country to re-imagine their public spaces, to
12 honor more women and people of color. Little did we
13 know that we would have to challenge our own
14 municipality to make that happen. Part 1 of our
15 project, as I've said is to create the first statue
16 of real women in Central Park, New Yorkers Stanton
17 and Anthony, but that statue is only the first of
18 many that we'll proposed throughout New York City.
19 Part 2 includes a woman's history education campaign
20 to tell the stories of all women all the incredible
21 women that our history books and history classes
22 omitted, and we're in partnership with the New York
23 Historical Society to create new curriculum and
24 online resources for students and teachers as well as
25 programs, conferences and exhibitions for the public.

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2 Part 3 is the challenge to municipalities that I
3 reference, and the timing is right as we get ready to
4 celebrate the National Woman's Suffrage Centennial,
5 and the 200th anniversary of the birth of Susan B.
6 Anthony both in 2020. New York City could be at the
7 center of the nation's celebration of those two
8 monumental events in 2020, and we would be pleased to
9 work with the City Council to make that happen.
10 We're also please to announce today that the Statue
11 Fund has successfully reached our \$1.5 million budget
12 goal for the first phase of our efforts. We thank
13 the over 1,000 individual donors who have supported
14 us, as well as foundations and companies like the
15 Ford Foundation, the American Express Foundation, the
16 Jane Walker Campaign and Old Navy who see the vital
17 importance of our work. We especially want to extend
18 our thanks to New York Life for both the
19 extraordinary \$500,000 challenge grant and for
20 believing in us. The only city money we have
21 received came from a \$100,000 capital fund grant from
22 Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer who has been
23 our steadfast supporter and from a member item from
24 Council Member Helen Rosenthal for which we're very
25 grateful. We also thank the members of the Council's

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2 Women's Caucus for two wonderful letters of support
3 we've received over the last several years.

4 BRENDA BERKMAN: So, I'm Brenda Berkman
5 and I'm a retired New York City Fire Captain and I'm
6 a member of the Board of Directors of the Statue Fund
7 and Monumental Women, and as Pam said, we are a non-
8 profit charity completely privately funded and I'm
9 going to—there's been a lot of questions today about
10 what is the process for getting a work of art into a
11 public park, and I want to give a few details about
12 our process so you understand the great difficulty
13 that we have—we have had in terms of over five years
14 trying to make this happen. So, first we had to, you
15 know, challenge the New York City governmental
16 bureaucracy and it's often unwritten rules, and I was
17 very pleased to hear the questioning from the city
18 Council about making the process way more
19 transparent. It's not easy to donate a work of art
20 to the City of New York especially when that work of
21 art is of real women. We want to give you several
22 quick examples of many challenges. First, the Parks
23 Department and the New York City Park Conservancy
24 said absolutely not to adding a statue of real women
25 to Central Park arguing that the statues in Central

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2 Park represent historical collection. There will be
3 no-no new ones. We persisted. Then they said why
4 don't you pick another park? Are you sure you want a
5 statue? Why not a garden? We persisted. Then they
6 said something that the advocates who passed Central
7 Park Statues never were told we should find evidence
8 of Anthony and Stanton actually be in Central Park.
9 We found that evidence. Then thanks to Parks
10 Commissioner Mitchell Silver, the statue was
11 approved. It was given a location on the outskirts
12 of the park. We persisted and a beautiful site on a
13 mall was dedicated on November 6, 2017. In addition,
14 we've had to adhere to rules requiring our statue to
15 match the 19th Century aesthetic of the other
16 statues. On the mall. Finally, the many very strict
17 requirements for placement of a statue on the mall
18 were ironed out. Then came an interaction with the
19 Public Design Commission, which started last October.
20 From the very beginning our intent with the Statue
21 Design Competition was to find a compelling of
22 including many contributing voices from the Suffrage
23 Movement in addition to those of Stanton and Anthony.
24 Our jury was selected to bring a diverse set of
25 viewpoints to the process and those jury members

COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON WOMEN AND COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS,
LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS

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2 unanimously selected the design of nationally known
3 artist Meredith Bergman. Parks, Central Park
4 Conservancy and the Public Design Commission
5 representatives were involved the entire time. Only
6 late last year did we hear nay reservations about the
7 current design [bell] and it appears that we want—if
8 we want to have PDC approval, we need to remove some
9 of the aspects of the design we believe to be the
10 most inclusive especially the 22 additional quotes on
11 the scroll and the ballot box. We, of course, want
12 PDC approval.

13 JUDALINE CASSIDY: Alright, thank you.
14 My name is Judaline Cassidy. I'm a plumber from the
15 Plumber's Union number one and I'm the founder of a
16 non-profit called Tools and Tiaras, and recently we—
17 we were please that the PDC Commission stated most
18 emphatically that they believe that Anthony and
19 Stanton were certainly deserving of being honored in
20 their own right with a statute in Central Park as
21 abolitionists, suffrage and women's rights pioneers.
22 The PDC Commissioners said that no number of
23 individual no matter how worthy could truly represent
24 a whole movement. Thus in effort—in an effort to
25 complete our original goal of honoring all women, we—

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2 we now offer another idea to the City Council. We
3 propose that New York City create rights trails. In
4 comparison in all the five boroughs this trail will
5 consist of statues, garden, plaques, street signs and
6 historic home, museums, exhibitions and other
7 tributes to honor the diversity of women especially
8 those who fought for suffrage and for women's rights.
9 We look forward to working with many partners
10 including the City Council and the newly created She
11 Built NYC Woman's Rights Trails a reality and thank
12 you so much for your time, and looking forward to
13 working with you.

14 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you so
15 much for being here today. We may have some question
16 for you. So, but first we're going to hear from Ms.
17 Ali.

18 MS. ALI: Yes. Thank you so much for
19 having me. Give a man a fish and he eats for a day.
20 Give a woman a fish and she'll probably ask you where
21 she's got—where you got it from so she can feed her
22 tribe. I am Amina Ali. I'm a naturopathic doctor
23 and I represent U.N. Women for the Gambia. I am Gulf
24 War Veteran and I am a Muslim African-American woman
25 living here New York. I come representing sovereign

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2 tribes International cultures and the voice of
3 indigenous people of New York, and I speak to the
4 point that women are the first teachers in all
5 religions as nurturing is the first lesson learned.
6 Independent moms, and we're getting away from the
7 single moms because her marital status has nothing to
8 do with her parenting, but independent moms raise the
9 children regardless of accompaniment because she
10 realizes that that is her sworn duty to that child.
11 Even sports greats often seem to shout out hi mom
12 when in camera view. So, consciously or
13 unconsciously women are wanting to be inclusive not
14 be a part of anything because we are the first
15 teachers of this language in any religion, any
16 culture or any tribe. The value and the importance of
17 women are seen. It is only when come into a
18 political or a transgressed governmental entity that
19 it just seems that that lesson or that view is askew.
20 It is important that we remember this in our
21 communities as we are the ones that are favored to
22 the respective times that we have in our community.
23 For example, most women go to grocery stores. They
24 go to parks. They are outside in the communal life
25 more often than men are as they are the breadwinners

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2 and subsequent-subsequently traditionally was at work
3 most of the time. So, it only makes sense that if
4 we're in the community as women as representatives
5 that we see things that represent us. Since we are
6 the ones that are given the opportunity to be in that
7 space and occupy that at most, why is it that we have
8 to be reminded of those that may not be there all the
9 time. I think most of us would agree that when we
10 come in front or come in view of things we do
11 culturally and tribally, women are the number one
12 peace that we see. But more importantly and more to
13 the point approving of this will open the doors for
14 representations of those in the military that I have
15 yet to hear mentioned in this panel. Those that are
16 of indigenous cultures and are indigenous traditions
17 as well as sovereign traditions. These are things
18 that will hopefully open the door and open a way to
19 us having those representations as well. Than you so
20 much.

21 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you very
22 much Ali, and I want to thank you all. It's quite
23 shocking to me. Central Park is one of the world's
24 great public spaces that, and there are many, many
25 statues there and I've had this conversation with

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2 both of my co-chairs. They're shocking to me that
3 there is not a single statue of a woman who actually
4 existed who didn't have to be created as fictional
5 work of art. So, I don't know if Councilman Van
6 Bramer or Council Member Rosenthal have questions at
7 this time? No. Okay.

8 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Actually I have a
9 quick question. First of all I do have a quick
10 question. Just for the Monument Committee. Are you
11 guys clear about what your next steps are?

12 PAM ELAM: Well, the three-part program
13 that I initiated in terms of a discussion is the
14 whole continuation. You know, this statue is only
15 the first one. We are going to have many others.
16 The Women's History Education Campaign has already
17 started, and you'll see the rollout of it as we get
18 closer and closer to the unveiling of our statue on
19 the mall on August 26, 2020. The challenge to
20 municipalities all across the country will happen
21 that very day when we have the unveiling ceremony and
22 it will continue as long as we can privately
23 fundraise to keep ourselves going. As I've said,
24 we're all volunteers. By the time of the unveiling
25 we will have spent seven years of our lives trying to

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2 make this happen, but we're committed to spend a
3 lifetime to increase the awareness and the
4 appreciation of women's history and the history of
5 all women.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: I should have
7 started by saying thank you. [laughter]

8 PAM ELAM: Well, I-I would like to finish
9 by saying thank you, and we want to work with the
10 Council because there's so much together we could do
11 to make this celebration in 2020 quite remarkable,
12 and the Council could help take the lead on that, and we
13 would join you in full partnership.

14 BRENDA BERKMAN: Well, Pam is too modest
15 to say this but many years ago she not only
16 spearheaded the street naming out here for Stanton
17 and Anthony, but also put together for Manhattan this
18 list of 120 women's history sites, and that's because
19 she was working Manhattan right for Manhattan
20 politicians, but we anticipate that we would like to
21 do similar kinds of things for the other boroughs
22 recognizing unfortunately--Council Member Cumbo left,
23 but recognizing that Queens, Brooklyn, Staten Island
24 the Bronx have been left out of the equation in many
25 cases and at least being able to push and work with

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2 those communities to recognize women and people of
3 color in their public spaces. So, this is, you know,
4 this is sort of old school now, not that it's not
5 needed, but—but I've been working with projects like
6 talking statues and digital work and then, of course
7 with the New York Historical Society and with
8 Wikipedia. So, I would urge the Council not only to
9 look at how do we physically memorialize women and
10 people of color in public spaces, but then how do we
11 provide the full accounting of history about why
12 those things are there? How many monuments have you
13 walked by, and you have no idea who these people are,
14 right. And so, can we educate the public in maybe
15 different perspectives not—from many different
16 perspectives not just putting a piece of rock or
17 bronze there but also doing the hard work to bring
18 for the actual history of these people.

19 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Yes, I was
21 asking—I agree with you and thank you. I was asking
22 a sort of simplistic question of are—the monument
23 fund yourselves are you on a track to move forward
24 that is clear, a path forward--

25 BRENDA BERKMAN: Clear?

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CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: --that's clear

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now.

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BRENDA BERKMAN: Well, we're very clear

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on it

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PAM ELAM: Well, the--the short answer to

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a long process--we enter our sixth year--is that you

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heard testimony earlier today saying that the public

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design, the Public Design Commission only takes two

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or three months. We're in month number 5 and

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counting. You know, what we've described to you in a

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very brief way has demonstrated obstacles at every

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possible step and at this point who wouldn't agree

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that we need more statues of women. We're supplying

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the money. We're supplying the work. Everybody is

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working with us pro bono, why can't we get some

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cooperation?

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CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: And so does PD

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have an end date? Have they told you this will come

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out of the commission in the next two months or--?

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PAM ELAM: Well, we know their next

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hearing, which we have applied to be on the agenda is

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March 18th.

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CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Okay.

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2 PAM ELAM: We're hopeful that they can
3 combine both the conceptual and preliminary approval
4 at that hearing, but we have not heard a response to
5 our request for that yet.

6 CHAIRPERSON ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you. To
8 answer your question, there are plenty of statues
9 that I have to back when I'm touring. I'm the Parks
10 Chair so I-I get to a lot of parks, and there are
11 people I have literally done a-forget it. I've never
12 heard of them let alone know what they did or what
13 they've stood, and-and that may be because, you know
14 of these statues have been in place for of a 100
15 years, and they did not hold up to the scrutiny of
16 history or they just-- You know, they may still be
17 important to people, but they're just not as well
18 know, as they might have been [coughing] a long, long
19 time ago. We have been joined by two of our
20 colleagues, Council Member Andy King from the great
21 Borough of my birth the Bronx, and Councilman Eric
22 Ulrich from my home borough of Queens and Councilman
23 King wanted to make a statement.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Yes. Thank you, Mr.
25 Chair, and I appreciate you because of the way you

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2 treat parks is like you treat your own, and you take
3 care of it very well. So, I say thank you for that.
4 Also, I want to just put on the record I'd like to
5 get an idea from you all as you've advocated for
6 statues, and this is something I would like to see
7 the Council get more engaged in. How are we able to
8 be a prat of funding statues ourselves? If we're not
9 at that level like I said--no one has ever said to me
10 hey, listen, can you help us fund a statue of so and
11 so or such of this person. We're trying, you know,
12 to get a statue buildup. The City of New York is
13 very diverse, as we always say it is, and all our
14 statues wherever they are should reflect that in
15 everyway, and not being afraid to tell the story of
16 New York or the world. As bad as some of it is,
17 there's a lot of greatness in it as well, and I would
18 definitely like to see, you know, my 9-year-old
19 granddaughter walk down the streets and see a statue
20 of someone she can appreciate because it's a
21 reflection of her story as well. We know what it is.
22 America one day did not look at everyone the same.
23 So, we're not reflected, and some of the statues, you
24 know, kind of put us all on blast where you start
25 telling the story of who that person actually is and

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2 we find we find out the name of that school, the name
3 of that person, how they actually lived. You know,
4 to search it (sic) is demoralizing and unacceptable
5 today. So, we need to make sure that we have artwork
6 that's reflective and tells our story, but us not
7 being afraid to say this is—this is—these are the
8 great things in the city of New York, and the are
9 some of the things that now proud of, but everyone
10 needs to know—know about it so we can move forward.
11 When we try to throw stuff underneath the rug, it's
12 that's underlying energy—negative energy that always
13 surfaces when we don't talk about something. So
14 having these monuments or statues being built to tell
15 our story I think it's a great way to reflect and
16 educate ourselves. Would you be able to tell me in
17 all the advocacy work, and the money that you use,
18 how long—I know the system takes a minute to get
19 stuff done sometimes, but if you were to say I want
20 to erect a statue, how long do you think it would
21 take for you to get a statue built at the final
22 location and get it erected?

23 PAM ELAM: Well, the plan that we have
24 and we're very fortunate to have project managers of
25 the highly respected firm of Byer Blinder Belle.

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2 Right now because there's been such a delay with the
3 Public Design Commission, we're behind schedule. We
4 need to have approval and move forward to the
5 development of the full statue. We've had the
6 Marquette (sic). We're working on the one-third size
7 figure and moving to the large figure and then go to
8 the foundry and all the other steps. The short
9 answer is if we get that design approval immediately
10 we can make our deadline of August 26. So, we issued
11 our RFQ, RFP on November 6, 2017. We selected the
12 winner in July of 2018. We are moving forward with
13 the approvals and it takes two more years from that
14 time. So, I would say realistically four years/

15 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Four years.

16 BRENDA BERKMAN: And Council Member King,
17 keep in mind, too that, you know, our—our project is
18 privately funded for the most part.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay.

20 BRENDA BERKMAN: And for a lot of
21 communities it's going to take them a long time to
22 raise that money. We were very fortunate to be able
23 to raise \$1.5 million that was needed in order to
24 both construct and then maintain the statue in
25 Central Park plus do our education campaign. So, the

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2 money raising part of private groups can be quite
3 daunting, Go Fund me or whatever. It's a good
4 thought.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: [laughs]

6 BRENDA BERKMAN: But if—but if you add
7 this—the help of the City Council and the active
8 participation and advocacy of New York City
9 government, you can cut the four years to two.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Right and that's why
11 I said to Mr. Chair let's figure out, Mr. Chair, how
12 do we come together as a council to offer funds—
13 support and maybe we can look to erect five new
14 statues in each in borough, you know, doing-doing
15 attending here that said we're doing our part and
16 streamline, fast track this stuff. There's no reason
17 stuff needs to—well, we know it's the right thing to
18 do. We should like bureaucracy get in the way of us
19 doing the right thing. So, I want to thank you, Mr.
20 Chair for leading today's conversation. I think you
21 ladies for all your advocacy and what you're doing
22 and speaking truth to power. Thank you.

23 PAM ELAM: Thank you. Thank you Council
24 Member.

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CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you
Councilman King. I want to thank this panel for
their insight and for your work especially Captain
Berkman for your service to the city of New York as a
fire captain. I know that is a very, very difficult
job and one of great distinction. I want to thank
you all for being here today. I want to thank my co-
chairs Helen Rosenthal of the Women's Committee and
Jimmy Van Bramer of the committee with a very long
name. [laughter] And I also wanted you to know that
we are going to enter into the record testimony of
Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, which she
gave before the Public Design Commission on October
15, 2018, and two letters from the Women's Caucus of
the City Council from the last term in the City
Council, one on June 20, 2017 and- [background
comments/pause] Ms. Ali, did you want to add
something?

AMINA ALI: Actually, it's kind of out of
place now, but more to the Council Member-Council
Member's point. It's-you talked about community and
that we are community, but I remember Ellis Island
was mentioned as a reminder, which is another statue
of a woman [laughs] that is a reminder of the

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2 communities that came aboard these shores, and
3 because of that, we were more inclusive as a people
4 in those communities. I remember a time when we used
5 to represent Ms. Johnson's baby girl or Ms. Jackson's
6 young one and now were representing communities. I'm
7 from Brooklyn, I'm from the Bronx. So, we kind of
8 lost that efficacy of—of representing family and what
9 we were, and I think that holds a great tangent to
10 the communities and the cultures that I represent to
11 be able to bring that back together and to be a
12 cohesive need, and have a statue in your community
13 that represents your community, and I don't see how
14 hard that is if the people are duly noted be able to
15 be represented. And I think that's the bigger piece
16 that we're not really represented as a truth. We're
17 represented as a demographic effect. So, it's not
18 really tangible to see how people have the power that
19 we're asking for if we're not seen as the people that
20 we—you mentioned in history that weren't represented
21 initially when the rules of engagement were written.
22 So, I think sometimes we have to see that and
23 understand that in partnership with what it is that
24 we're designing that if we don't see people as human,

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2 there isn't a humanistic factor. [background
3 comments/pause] I relent.

4 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: I thank you for
5 that. I just want to add that in addition to Borough
6 President Brewer's testimony, we're going to enter
7 into the record two letters from the Women's Caucus
8 of the previous term of the Council dated June 20th.
9 It was addressed to Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner
10 and another letter of October 6, 2014 also addressed
11 to the Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Silver about
12 this topic. At this time seeing no other questions
13 from this panel, I want to thank everybody who was
14 here today and for advancing this conversation along.
15 You can be sure that we will be following this most
16 intensely, and we look forward to working with
17 everybody who participated today to diversifying our
18 monuments and our statues to be more reflective of
19 this great city of New York, and with that at 12:43,
20 I am going to close this hearing. Thank you all.

21 [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 29, 2019