

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING
AND DISPOSITIONS

----- X

October 16, 2019
Start: 11:34 A.M.
Recess: 12:15 P.M.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Adrienne E. Adams
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Inez D. Barron
Peter A. Koo
I. Daneek Miller
Mark Treyger

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

[sound check] [pause] [gavel]

CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Good morning. I think it's still morning, [background comments] and thank you for patience. I'm Council Member Adrienne Adams. Welcome to this meeting of the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions. I'm joined today by Council Members Treyger, Koo, Barron, Miller, Ayala, Levin and Koslowitz. There will be no public hearings today. Today, we will only be voting on items heard at previous meetings. As all public hearings are now closed. Audience members, we welcome you as always to this meeting, but if you've come to disrupt, you will be removed immediately. We will vote to approve LU 545, an application submitted by HPD for amendment to the Blake Hendrix Affordable Home Ownership, NYHOP, Urban Development Area Project previously approved by Council with Resolution 1263 of 2017. The amendment would allow HPD to forgive all or a portion of the land debt to reduce the taxable consideration of the home. The application relates to a cluster of properties in Council Member Barron's district in Brooklyn. We will also vote to approve LUs 546, 547, and the Preconsidered LU for HPD Application Number 2020-202511 HAM all related to

the NME West 140th and West 150th Street UDAAP approving HPD's acquisition of property located at 207 through 209 West 140th Street, and 304 through 308 West 150th Street, the designation of an Urban Development Action Area Project for such properties and an exemption from real property taxes for the project's area. These actions will facilitate a mixed use development containing approximately 52 Affordable housing units in Council Member Perkins' district in Manhattan. The Council Member is in support of these actions. We will also vote on the Proposed Borough-Base Jail system. We have arrived here this morning as a result of years and years of hard work and advocacy. What we are voting on this morning is so meaningful to so many people because it is based on the hope that if we treat people fairly, respect their humanity through public policy changes, many of the lives that would have otherwise been lost to hopelessness, and harm may now have brand new opportunities to succeed. Those fortunate enough to have never experienced our Criminal Justice System or lived in a community without the basic resources that many of us take for granted, may have a harder time understanding why closing Rikers Island and investing

2 in eliminating the root causes of incarceration are
3 so very important. Many of us think it could never
4 happen to us, that we could never find ourselves in
5 situation where we're accused of a crime, that those
6 who are accused of crimes aren't us, they're
7 different from us. So, we can't relate and don't
8 understand what all the fuss is about, but there is
9 both an arrogance to this kind of thinking and
10 certainly a lack of compassion. We must all
11 understand that if our circumstances were just a
12 little different we, too, could be in the shoes of
13 the New Yorkers sitting in Rikers right now scared,
14 hopeless, searching for security, and being forever
15 changed as a result. We need to find the compassion
16 to invest in programs that will prevent incarceration
17 in the first place. Helping people with mental
18 illness, interrupting anger, and subsequent violence,
19 giving people a home and stable life from which to
20 build resiliency and better cope with trauma. And if
21 they do, in fact, slip onto the other side of our
22 laws, we are there, too, to catch them and get them
23 back on their feet the way that some of us have, the
24 way that we would with our very own children. We
25 vote today on a plan to close Rikers Island, and the

2 existing detention centers in Manhattan, Brooklyn and
3 the Bronx because history has shown us that these are
4 places our sons and daughters have experienced
5 despair and hopelessness, violence and suffering.
6 Through an agreement reached with the Administration
7 we are not only building more humane jail facilities,
8 but we are also going to invest in programs and
9 policies that prevent incarceration, provide
10 alternatives to detention and help people who are
11 detained find their footing again. Responding to the
12 advocacy of dedicated criminal justice stakeholders,
13 many of whom themselves experienced the harsh
14 conditions of Rikers Island, the Council has secured
15 a total for \$469,895 in commitments for criminal
16 justice related programming, and community-based
17 investments.

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: [interposing] Keep it
19 down, please.

20 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: These commitments
21 consist of \$158 million that is already budgeted,
22 \$189 million in new expense funding, and a \$122.4
23 million for new capital projects ranging from
24 affordable housing for the justice involved to mental
25 health programs and new community centers for our

1 young people. We believe that in securing this broad
2 set of commitments, the Council sends a strong
3 message that we understand our new approach must go
4 beyond new jail buildings. We have also heard local
5 communities' feedback loud and clear, concerns about
6 the scale of these new buildings and their impact on
7 the surrounding communities. The Council has
8 aggressively advocated for design changes, and as a
9 result of the Council's modifications, the heights
10 and densities of the four buildings are being reduced
11 significantly. So, these new buildings will better
12 integrate into their communities. We had—have a lot
13 of people to thank for getting us to this point.
14 First, I'd like to thank Council Members Diana Ayala,
15 Margaret Chin, Karen Koslowitz, and Steven Levin.
16 They have fought hard for the needs of their
17 communities, and balanced them with the Criminal
18 Justice goals of this plan, which was not an easy
19 thing to do. This was probably the hardest fight of
20 their careers at City Council. I know this project
21 has generated a lot of emotional feedback from
22 constituents, but these four member have been steady
23 and strong for their review of this project and
24 advocacy for what they believed was important. I's
25

2 also like to thank City Council Speake Corey Johnson
3 for his staunch, careful leadership throughout this
4 entire project. There are many voices that needs to
5 consider in a project of this scale and importance,
6 but being bold in a moment like this takes strength
7 and courage, and our Speaker was determined not to
8 settle for anything less than what this moment
9 demanded, but our most sincere thanks and gratitude
10 is reserved for all of the formally incarcerated
11 individuals. [applause]

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Quiet, please.

13 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: These individuals
14 have pushed us to not only invest in new buildings,
15 but invest in new opportunities because they knew,
16 you knew first hand how powerful redemption can be,
17 and they want a clearer path to redemption for their
18 brothers and sisters in the future. It is our hope
19 that now that communities can begin to heal because
20 we've invested in the right places, because we're—we
21 are treating people with the dignity the deserve. I
22 now recognize Council Member Levin for remarks.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you chair.

24 I would just like to associate myself with—with your
25 remarks, and for your leadership on this

2 Subcommittee, which has been absolutely steadfast. I
3 want to thank all of you for your forbearance this
4 morning, and working with us to get to this point
5 this morning. I want to—I want to acknowledge all of
6 the justice impacted people and communities that
7 we've been working with for many months now to arrive
8 at this point. The Close Rikers Campaign, which, um,
9 called our city to its—to its conscience, and made
10 us recognize as a society that we have the ability to
11 choose our own future, and, um, if it seems
12 impossible, persevere and have faith in—in ourselves,
13 in our ability to change the world as we would like
14 to see it, and the Close Rikers Campaign was told
15 that it was too ambitious or it would never happen,
16 and that was only a few short years ago, and—and here
17 we are at the precipice of—of really changing, um,
18 changing how we want to approach community justice,
19 community justice, not criminal justice, community
20 justice. And—and so I want to thank—I want to thank
21 the Close Rikers Campaign and Beyond Rosie's, um,
22 for—for sticking with this vision, for sticking with
23 this vision. I want to thank the members of the
24 Downtown Brooklyn Boerum Hill community that they
25 came together in good faith, part of the Neighborhood

2 Advisory Committee and put a priority on seeing what
3 we could do as a city to do reforms, bail reform and
4 speedy trial reform and discovery reform, but also
5 how we could invest in communities, as the Chair
6 said, to make-to make sure that people never come in
7 contact with incarceration, with-with police and-and
8 we've-we've taken that charge very seriously and-and
9 made that a priority. And so, I want to thank-I want
10 to thank this community. I see Justin is here and
11 Sandy is here who have-have been really committed to
12 making sure that that happens, and-and-and also
13 making sure that any jail building in Downtown
14 Brooklyn is-is within context with the rest of the
15 neighborhood, and is seen as not something that is
16 just an outlier or an institution, but is-is going to
17 be part of-of the neighborhood, and that's important
18 moving forward. I want to thank obviously the Speaker
19 Corey Johnson and-and his Chief of Staff Jason
20 Goldman; our Land Use Director Raju Mann, the staff
21 that worked on this, Brian Crow, Alana Sivin, George
22 and I'm sorry, George. I'm going to mispronounce,
23 and I don't know how to pronounce his last name,
24 Sarkissian, and um, um, and, um and-and-and William
25 Pasone as well for all of their-their work n this,

1 and—and I want to thank the Administration. I see
2 Dana Kaplan here, the entire MOCJ team and
3 Intergovernmental Affairs team who—to hear more who
4 talked with countless late hours on this. So, I
5 reserve further comments for the—for the full Council
6 vote, but I just want to thank all of you for your
7 commitment here and for daring to—to dream big and—
8 and take—and take charge of our future and say, um,
9 that we're not going to allow history to judge us
10 passively by allowing a place like Riker Island—
11 Rikers Island to jut perpetuate on into the future,
12 and really, really to close it and maybe go to close
13 it now. And lastly, I do want to thank everyone
14 that's part of the No New Jails Movement because
15 they, um, they really made us do better, and—and made
16 us think about what it means to—to decarcerate and
17 what it means to really think about jail and prison
18 abolition in the long term, and I think this is a
19 plan a meaningful step on the way towards dismantling
20 what is an unjust system for far too long for far too
21 many people and, um, and with that I'll turn it back
22 to the Chair. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you, Council
25 Member Levin. I'd like to acknowledge we've been

2 joined by Council Member Rory Lancman. I recognize
3 Council Member Koslowitz.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Thank you,
5 Madam Chair and thank you for your remarks. [coughs]
6 I'm not going to make a big speech tomorrow. I will
7 talk, but today starts a happy day in my life. I've
8 been a Council Member for over 20 years, 10 years
9 from the '90s and then now 10 years again. This has
10 been the hardest issue I have ever worked on, the
11 hardest. From day one I could tell you now I will be
12 voting yes no this tomorrow with—with stars and
13 stripes and everything. That's how important this is
14 to me, and I just want to thank all the people that
15 have been helping us on this issue because it was not
16 an easy issue. There were people in my community
17 that I've worked very hard for for many years, that
18 are angry with me because I am voting yes on this,
19 but I feel that I'm doing the right thing, the most
20 humane thing that I can possibly do. I visited
21 Rikers Island in the '90s. I've also visited the
22 jail in Kew Gardens. They're not cells, they're—
23 they're cages and people don't belong in cages. They
24 belong in a society that wants to help them, and in
25 this situation they are going to be helped. I want

2 to thank [coughs] the Land Use Committee for all
3 their help and questions that I had to ask you. I
4 want to thank my colleagues who have been in this
5 situation through the whole time talking and assuring
6 each other because some days were very, very hard
7 when people were your friends and now they're not
8 your friends. But, I feel very strongly about this,
9 and I just want to thank the Speaker for being there
10 for us and Jason Goldman for being there for the
11 hours that we would talk on the phone and it wasn't
12 just during the day. It was at night. It was a very
13 hard process. I'll make my big speech tomorrow, but
14 I just want to let you know this [coughs] a start of
15 a happy time for me. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you, Council
17 Member. [applause] Council Member Chin has a prior
18 engagement, and is not able to be here this morning
19 but she did ask me to read her remarks on her behalf.
20 And it says, Thank you, Chair Adams for taking a
21 moment to read my comments to the Subcommittee on
22 Landmarks, Public Siting and Dispositions about the
23 application to create four borough-based jails.
24 Rikers Island is representative of a Criminal Justice
25 System that has trapped marginalized communities

1 including low-income New Yorkers of color in decades
2 long cycle of incarceration. From the beginning I
3 have been clear that Rikers must go if we are going
4 to truly reform and re-imagine how New York City's
5 Criminal Justice System operates. That fundamental
6 commitment that so many of us here share has prompted
7 a tough but critical dialogue about the proposed
8 borough-based jail plan. Part of that dialogue has
9 included addressing legitimate concerns raised by
10 myself and my constituents about the proposed jail at
11 124-125 White Street as well as security community
12 investments for Chinatown. From the beginning I made
13 clear my intention to secure a serious reduction in
14 the bulk and height of the proposed jail. Working
15 with residents, I secured a significant height
16 reduction from 450 feet to 295 feet. This 155-foot
17 drop ensures that the proposed jail will not be out
18 of scale with the neighborhood. As Chair of the
19 Committee on Aging, I am deeply committed to our city's
20 seniors and as a result, I demanded construction
21 mitigation and the preservation plan of the senior
22 residents at the Chung Pak Building located next to
23 the Manhattan Detention Center. Upgrading community
24 spaces was another priority. We secured close to \$10
25

2 million in capital investments to upgrade Columbus
3 Park including the comfort station upgrade and
4 pavilion renovation. Finally, we ensured the
5 creation of a brand new cultural performing arts
6 center at 215 Center Street, which will serve as a
7 vital resource center for the entire Chinatown
8 community. I want to thank Chair Adams and members
9 of the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and
10 Dispositions for their consideration of this item. I
11 also want to thank the Subcommittee Staff Raju Mann,
12 Jeff Ewen, the Mayor's Office and HPD. I recognize
13 Council Member Ayala for remarks.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Thank you. I'm
15 wearing my glasses that I can see? Good morning
16 everyone. I'm Council Member Diana Ayala
17 representative of East Harlem and the South Bronx and
18 the Chair of the Council's Committee on Mental
19 Health, Disabilities and Addiction. Before I begin,
20 I want to thank Council Member Adrienne Adams and my
21 colleagues in the Subcommittee of Landmarks, Public
22 Siting and Dispositions for proceeding over this
23 critical vote. The borough-based jail plan affords
24 our city a historic opportunity to re-imagine our
25 Criminal Justice System. Rikers Island is

1 antiquated, unsafe and inhumane and redefining our
2 Criminal Justice System demands its closure. The new
3 facilities proposed by this plan will be equipped
4 with adequate space for educational programming,
5 therapeutic services and other elements to help
6 justice involved people successfully re-enter their
7 communities. Additionally, because the facilities
8 will be community-based, incarcerated individuals
9 will have greater access to their family, friends,
10 attorneys and overall support system. With reduced
11 heights and projected jail populations of 3,330 by
12 2026, the borough-based jail plan will shrink the
13 city's incarceration (sic) rules different, and put
14 us on a path to decarceration. We have also
15 identified a mechanism to ensure that the closure of
16 Rikers-Rikers Island by 2026 demonstrating that we
17 have never been interested in expanding our jail
18 system, ever, ever. Since day one, our goal has been
19 to minimize it, and that is exactly what this plan
20 will do. Since the initial announcement in February
21 2018, I have stressed the importance of holistic
22 community investments for the South Bronx, a
23 neighborhood historically neglected by all levels of
24 government. My staff and I have met with local youth
25

2 groups, seniors, public housing residents, community
3 board member. Clergy leaders, social service
4 providers, and just involved people by-to cultivate a
5 community investment plan reflective of their needs.

6 I am proud to stand here today and share that their
7 vision will be brought to fruition with millions of
8 dollars earmarked by this Administration for various
9 investments. Those include a new youth hub for Mott

10 Haven, renovations four NYCHA community centers, a
11 new community center in Highbridge, and expansion of
12 Cure Violence program, capital improvements for our
13 schools and public housing developments, new

14 Cornerstone programs, a senior center for Millbrook
15 residents, plus the development of deeply affordable
16 housing on two public sites. The South Bronx has
17 been detrimentally impacted by decades of

18 disinvestment, and that is why since the beginning, I
19 have fought alongside my community for those
20 investments that will help dismantle drivers of mass
21 incarceration such as the School to Prison Pipeline.

22 At the New Youth Hub for example Bronx youth will
23 have access to primary care, mental health services,
24 vocational training, academic enrichment and more.

25 This coupled with our enhance community centers and

2 investment in the Cure Violence program will help
3 drive down arrest numbers and divert youth away from
4 justice involvement. Our community investment package
5 is closely aligned with the leadership build
6 communities—with just leadership build communities
7 platform, which recognizes that a well resourced
8 environment is key to maximizing safety and ensuring
9 high health, educational and employment outcomes. I
10 thank all of the advocates and directly impacted
11 leaders who have fiercely fought for this plan. If
12 not for you, we would not be here today. Thank you
13 for pushing us to embark on this moral imperative and
14 refine the system that has harmed black and brown
15 communities for far too long. As some may know, my
16 younger brother was in and out of prison for almost
17 two decades. His repeated encounters with the
18 current Criminal Justice System has contributed to a
19 decline in his social, emotional and mental
20 wellbeing. His story is a story of countless of
21 other formerly incarcerated people and it drives my
22 commitment to this plan. Because of him, I dare to
23 replace to our current system with one that is
24 holistic, responsive and most importantly, humane.
25 Thank you. [applause]

2 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you Council
3 Member Ayala. We recognize Council Member Barron.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Madam
5 Chair. Thank you to all of my colleagues and to all
6 of those who are here on this particularly complex
7 issue. First, I want to say that a part of the vote
8 that will be taken today is a bill about my district,
9 LU 545, and it's an in-fill project for
10 homeownership, and it's nine two-family homes and
11 four three-family homes, and it's geared for people
12 whose AMI is from 80 to 100% of the AMI. So, I want
13 to put that on the record, and I want to say we can
14 build affordable housing so that people can be
15 involved in those kinds of conditions. Historically,
16 the penitentiary system was instituted at the end of
17 chattel slavery in America, and it was a system that
18 was devised to continue a source of free labor, which
19 is how we got the convict leasing system. So, the
20 penitentiary system as it exists is, in fact,
21 designed to do just that, continue free or cheap
22 labor for the capitalistic interests of the United
23 States. Someone last week referred to the justice
24 system and said, it's not broken because it's doing
25 what it was intended to do, provide cheap labor. I

2 think that the problems are many, but it's
3 inappropriate detention, and the poor who are mainly
4 Black and Latino are the ones who are detained.
5 Those who have money can, in fact, post bail, and we
6 know that we have many reforms that are being
7 instituted and that's a good thing, there is still
8 the subjectivity of judicial discretion, and we still
9 have judges who have the ability to determine whether
10 someone who is black or brown will be able to—will be
11 detained as opposed to someone who is white who will
12 not be detained, and the statistics bear that out.
13 That still exists. So, we have insufficient and
14 inadequate interventions, and I think that all of
15 those things that we're talking about that are needed
16 to be a part of what needs to be included in making
17 this a more humane system, should already have been
18 in place, and should already be implemented in a way
19 that we could know that it's not just lip service
20 that we're saying that this is what we're going to
21 do. That same dollar amount that we're talking about
22 to go to crisis intervention and to go to community-
23 based organizations can, in fact, be designed to be
24 the form in which those persons who will no longer be
25 detained will be able to have those services. So that

1 those groups that exist presently, and are proven to
2 be effective can, in fact, be the place where people
3 who are subject to going back to court, can complete
4 their time, can get training and can get those
5 services that we need. Why don't we invest in
6 beautiful accommodations affordable to everyone not
7 just when they're going to jail to make it beautiful,
8 make it pleasant, make it inviting. We can do those
9 same things on an intervention basis not confined to
10 a jail, but included in a larger society. So, I
11 think that the challenge and the change of the racial
12 discrimination is the basis for what will make the
13 difference in these systems, and for that reason, I
14 will be voting no on siting new borough-based jails.
15 Thank you, Madam Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you, Council
18 Member Barron. The borough-base jail system is
19 comprised of 13 related items, Preconsidered LUs 513
20 through 516, and LUs 518 through 526. They include a
21 zoning text amendment creating a citywide special
22 permit for borough-based jail facilities, a site
23 selection application for borough-based jail
24 facilities in Manhattan, the Bronx, Queens and
25 Brooklyn. Four special permits, one for each

2 borough-based jail facility, three city map change
3 applications affecting certain streets and public
4 spaces in Brooklyn, Queens, and Manhattan, and
5 acquisition of property for the Manhattan borough-
6 based--borough-based jail facilities and three
7 actions related to the provision of affordable
8 housing near the Bronx borough-based jail facility, a
9 zoning text amendment, a zoning map change, and UDAAP
10 area an project designation and disposition. In
11 addition to modifying the four special permits, we
12 will also be modifying Preconsidered LU 515 to strike
13 MIH Option 2 and will add the deep affordability
14 option to MIH Option 1. I now call for a vote to
15 approve LU Nos. 545 through 547, the Preconsidered LU
16 for HPD Application No. 20205116 HAM and to approve
17 with the modifications I have described Preconsidered
18 LUs 513 through 516 and LUs 518 through 526.
19 Counsel, please call the roll.

20 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Adams.

21 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Aye.

22 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Barron.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I vote aye on all
24 with the exception of Land Use 513 through 516 and
25 518 through 526.

2 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Koo.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: May explain my vote?

4 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Yes,

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Today's vote is one
6 of the most important votes I make in the City
7 Council. I think closing Rikers Island is the right
8 thing to do. Rikers Island is too old, and it
9 cannot—it's beyond repair. So, um, it's the humane
10 thing we do to close Rikers Island, and then moving
11 the jail system near the court is the right thing to
12 do. It save a lot of time and energy for the prison
13 and personal health to try to place those inmates.
14 So, we also have to be more compassionate to the
15 inmates, to their families. Imagine you are a
16 grandparent or a parent and your son or your grandson
17 in trouble, you would—you--you would have to visit
18 them on Rikers Island. It would take you a long time,
19 and you have to get up early in the morning, spend a
20 lot of time just to visit them. So, with the change
21 of the new-new jail it's easier for families to visit
22 their relatives or their children and this gives them
23 a better chance rehabit-rehabiting, and we want to--
24 everyone wants to—we want to help inmates because so
25 that they become productive citizens again. So, with

2 all that said, I vote yes on all the bills mentioned.

3 Thank you.

4 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Miller.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Permission to
6 explain my vote.

7 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Yes

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank you, Madam
9 Chair. So, it is abundantly clear here today that
10 many had suffered the inhumanities of what is known
11 as Rikers Island over decades. This includes
12 everyone including the workforce. It is also clear
13 from the dialogue that has occurred over the past
14 three years that—that this is a necessary first step,
15 and while it is a necessary first step, let's
16 recognize that closing Rikers Island is the lowest of
17 the bar when it comes to community justice reform,
18 which absolutely has to happen. Brick and mortars
19 does not circumvent the draconian and racist policies
20 that have disproportionately incarcerated black and
21 brown people. I am glad to see that the prevailing
22 wisdom of—of true community justice reform has come
23 to the forefront and that by virtue of negotiations,
24 I want to thank the leadership here, the Speaker and
25 others that—that the prevailing wisdom of a more just

2 Criminal Justice System has prevailed, and—and that
3 we have chosen policies and serves and—and
4 programming over incarceration, but again, and that
5 is—let me just say that is by virtue of—of the voices
6 and everybody that is in this room. It has been said
7 time and time again that folks thought that this was
8 an impossibility. While I am not convinced that this
9 is the end all, I know that this is s a necessary
10 first step and I am also—I also know that if not for
11 the advocacy, we wouldn't be here right. This is a
12 voice that nobody wanted to hear, that people wanted
13 this voice to just go away, but the fact of the
14 matter is that there are many of us that are impacted
15 everyday not just constituency, family members, sons
16 and daughters, and neighbors and selves that have
17 been impacted by this unjust Criminal Justice System
18 and we have an opportunity to really do something
19 about it, and because of everybody that is out here
20 and these advocates and the courage of my colleagues,
21 that we are doing something about it even beyond
22 closing Rikers Island. This is not the end of this
23 conversation. We don't go away when Rikers Island is
24 closed because there is much more work to be done. I
25 vote aye on all.

2 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Treyger.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Permission to
4 explain my vote.

5 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I like many of
7 my colleagues feel keenly the historical weight of
8 the actions, which are before us today. Over two
9 years ago, many of us committed to the urgency of
10 closing Rikers, which is plagued by violence and
11 isolation, limits the ability of incarcerated people
12 to maintain contact with their families and
13 communities, and keeps the conditions and impacts of
14 incarceration outside of the public eye. I will be
15 voting yes today because simply put, I feel that this
16 vote is necessary to close Rikers. Make no mistake,
17 this plan is not sufficient to fully achieve justice
18 for communities impacted by mass incarceration, but
19 for me, to vote no would give credence to the
20 prevailing sentiment from just a few years ago that
21 closing Rikers was overly idealistic and impossible.
22 There will not be another opportunity to vote to
23 close Rikers in the near future. I do not have
24 confidence that there is the political and
25 bureaucratic will to close Rikers outside of this

2 vote. This is the day of decision. We have the
3 opportunity to reaffirm the commitment to the moral
4 exigency—exigency of closing Rikers, and continue the
5 historic arc of the criminal justice reform work on
6 the city and state level such as investing in public
7 health approaches to public safety, criminalizing
8 quality of life offenses, bail reform, investing in
9 alternatives to incarceration, and diversion
10 programs, disrupting and ending, dismantling School
11 to Prison Pipeline by putting an end to the Giuliani
12 era memorandum of understanding between DOE and NYPD,
13 all of which continue to reduce the number of lives,
14 families and communities disrupted by incarceration.
15 But there is much more work for us to do. I respect
16 the voices of my colleagues like Council Member
17 Barron who has always talked the talk and walked the
18 walk when it comes to criminal justice reform and
19 reinvesting in communities who do not support the
20 creation of borough-based jails. Regardless of the
21 outcome of this vote, I will continue to stand with
22 my colleagues to fight for the resources, which we
23 know sustain and uplift our communities. Access to
24 bridge employment programs and adult education,
25 affordable and supportive housing, culturally

2 competent community-based mental health support, high
3 quality schools, reentry programming and community-
4 based approaches to public safety. I believe that
5 this plan is a necessary framework for closing
6 Rikers, but it is incumbent on us all to commit to
7 holding this administration, future administrations
8 and the Department of Corrections accountable for
9 their policies and for us to ensure that our
10 priorities as a Council are aligned towards justice,
11 and with that, I vote aye. [applause]

12 LEGAL COUNSEL: By a vote of 5 in the
13 affirmative 0 in the negative with zero abstentions,
14 LU Nos. 545 through 547 the Preconsidered LU for HPD
15 Application No. 2025116 HAM and by a vote of 4 in the
16 affirmative, 1 in the negative and 0 abstentions,
17 Preconsidered LUs 513 through 516 and LUs 518 through
18 526, I recommend it for referral to the full Land Use
19 Committee.

20 CHAIRPERSON ADAMS: Thank you. I thank
21 all of my colleagues for being here today. I thank
22 members of the audience for being here today. Just
23 one final note for myself, you know, we've taken a
24 lot of votes in-in Council as of late that have been
25 extremely personal for me, and this one in particular

2 was perhaps the most personal having a child that has
3 gone through the system, it could have been a lot
4 worse, but also on the other side of the coin being
5 raised by a correction officer so having lived the
6 life of a child whose mother very proudly I might
7 add, retired as a—as a captain from the Department of
8 Corrections and worked in Rikers Island for many,
9 many years. I was a latch key kid under her
10 leadership and guidance. So, you're looking at a
11 product of a CO, a proud product of a CO who when I
12 told her mom, we're going to be talking about Rikers
13 and closing Rikers, she said, "Baby, they should have
14 closed it a long time ago." [applause] And so I
15 shared just to put a period on the end of this
16 sentence. If we scored this subcommittee today as we
17 conclude and just letting you know that it is—it is a
18 two-way street at Rikers Island. It is a one-way
19 street for detainees and it is another street for the
20 COs who suffer as well because of the culture that
21 has engrained in Rikers Island and the spirit and the
22 walls of Rikers Island, and so I sit here before you
23 to champion the closure immediately, the reform
24 immediately, the mindset change immediately and the
25 movement to do something radically different in the

2 ways of criminal reform. I'd like to thank all of
3 you for being here today especially Land Use staff
4 members Raju Mann, George Sarkissian, Counsel Amy
5 Levitan, Jeff Campagna all of my colleagues for being
6 here, Council Members Ayala, Koslowitz, Chin, Levin,
7 all of the members of the Subcommittee that sit here
8 today. Thank you all for your resilience. This
9 meeting is hereby adjourned. [gavel]

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date October 19, 2019