

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING
AND FRANCHISES

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January 14, 2020
Start: 10:24 a.m.
Recess: 11:20 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Francis P. Moya
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Francis P. Moya
Barry Grodenchik
Rory I. Lancman
Steve Levin
Antonio Reynoso
Donovan J. Richards
Carlina Rivera

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

Jay Goldstein

Jacqueline Skarinchy

Emmanuel Kokanakis

Paola Duran

Constantinos Yanudis

Panos Adamopoulos

Frank Scivetta

Brandon Levy

Mark Espinoza

Richard Kuzami

Afrocini Sukas

Krina Dermanis

Effie Antonio

Peter (speaking for Eddie Masterson)

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING
AND FRANCHISES

4

2 SAKEEM BRADLEY: Test, test, test. Today
3 is the Committee on Zoning and Franchises. Today's
4 date is January 14, 2020. This is being recorded by
5 Sakeem Bradley.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Good morning. Good
7 morning, and welcome to the meeting of the
8 Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. I'm Council
9 Member Francisco Moya, the chairperson of the
10 subcommittee, and today we are joined by Council
11 Members Grodenchik, Richards, and Rivera. If you are
12 here to testify, please fill out a speaker's slip
13 with the Sergeant at Arms, indicating your full name,
14 the application name or LU number, and whether you
15 are in favor or against the proposal. We will begin
16 this meeting with our hearing, starting with a
17 preconsidered LU item C-19 0029 ZMQ for the 14740
18 15th Avenue rezoning proposal relating to property in
19 Council Member Vallone's district in Queens. The
20 applicant seeks approval for a zoning map amendment
21 to map a C12 commercial overlay district within an
22 existing R3-A district along the south side of 15th
23 Avenue between 147th Street and 149th Street in
24 Whitestone, Queens, in which would bring an existing
25 building, which would bring an existing building to

2 two stories of commercial office into conformance
3 with zoning. I now open the public hearing on this
4 application. And we have Jay Goldstein and Bill
5 Mulnarik. Thank you. Counsel, if you could please
6 swear in the panel.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please raise your
8 right hand and state your name for the record.

9 YAKOV GOLDSTEIN: Yakov Goldstein, for
10 the applicant, for Jay Goldstein.

11 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible]

12 UNIDENTIFIED: Speak into the mic.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Just speak into the
14 microphone. Make sure that the button is pressed,
15 yep.

16 UNIDENTIFIED: Anthony Romano is the
17 applicant. William L. Marik, applicant.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you swear or
19 affirm that the testimony you are about to give will
20 be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
21 truth, and you will answer all questions truthfully?

22 UNIDENTIFIED: Yup.

23 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

24 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: You may begin.

3 JAY GOLDSTEIN: Good morning. Happy New
4 Year, everybody, and thank you for having us today.
5 My name is Jay Goldstein. I'm here on behalf of 8850
6 Management, LLC, ah, Anthony and Bill, who are the
7 owners of 147-40 15th Avenue in Queens. We're here
8 before you today to ask for a zoning map amendment to
9 create a C12 commercial overlay in an R3-A zoning
10 district. As you can see from the map, the proposed
11 district will be 100 feet from 149th Street along
12 15th Road, and 150 feet from 149th along 15th Avenue.
13 The proposal before you is necessitated by the fact
14 that my clients unfortunately in 2015 bought a
15 property under the information that it was a
16 commercial property. Subsequent to that they found
17 out that they could not in fact use it for their
18 desired use. They are the end users. It's not a
19 development. It's not a rental property. In seeking
20 ways to handle this issue, we spoke to the city and
21 they have advised us that we should pursue this
22 rezoning, which would serve to legalize our building,
23 as well as the properties along 149th. So the
24 proposal before you includes four tax lots. The tax
25 lots include our property, a Mobile station, a two-

2 story residential, as well as a eating and drinking
3 establishment. The Mobile station would not be
4 legalized. They're existing under a BSA application.
5 However, our use as well as the eating and drinking
6 establishment would be legalizing the use and
7 bringing it into more in line with what the current
8 land use is for this area. The area surrounding us
9 has commercial use and mixed use along the
10 thoroughfare and as well as along the Cross Island
11 Parkway. The remainder of the area is community
12 facilities as well as residential buildings. As
13 mentioned before, we have our property which is the
14 development site. There is the Mobile station, which
15 would not be impacted, the two-family residential,
16 which is a new building, so we don't anticipate any
17 change to that occupancy or use, and Jager House
18 Restaurant, which has existed in this location for
19 many, many years. So the application before you
20 seeks to legalize that. We don't anticipate
21 development under this application. Rather, it's
22 just a method of which to help these individuals
23 maintain their office in that building and put the
24 property to productive use. If there are any
25 questions I'm happy to answer them.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Just two
3 quick questions, and just once again, can you provide
4 an overview of the previous use on the site and how
5 they relate to the proposed commercial overlay?

6 JAY GOLDSTEIN: OK, so historically the
7 building was built as a daycare, which is a community
8 facility use. When the C of O was issued, it
9 indicated that there were offices there. When this
10 was, you know, since that time it's been used as a
11 paint storage and paint facility. It was used as a
12 kitchen design firm, and there were other commercial
13 uses. My clients operate a building services
14 company, which sends out service workers to buildings
15 all over the country, and they operate the call
16 center, if you will, or the main office, from this
17 building. So they've been operating there since
18 about 2015. It's a very small operation within the
19 building. The majority of their people don't
20 actually work from the building, but they've been
21 using this as their home base, or their headquarters,
22 for their use. And we seek to retain that use at
23 this location.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: OK[clears throat],
3 excuse me. And the community board had a split
4 vote...

5 JAY GOLDSTEIN: Right.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: ...on this application.
7 Can you identify what were their concerns and how
8 you've been addressing them?

9 JAY GOLDSTEIN: So the initial, we
10 actually presented to the community board a number of
11 times. The only time that they had the split vote
12 was at the very end, the last vote. Um, in the first
13 two hearings there were no issues. At the last vote
14 one of the neighbors from a surrounding house, which
15 is not a part of the rezoning application, came and
16 addressed, and raised concerns about over-development
17 and overuse of the street. Um, as a matter of fact,
18 we, from the initial iteration of this rezoning we
19 reduced the, the, ah, scale of the rezoning to
20 address community board concerns, and that's why the
21 community board was supportive. Subsequent to the
22 hearing, while we were standing in the room, we spoke
23 to that neighbor. We addressed his concerns,
24 explained the actually project. That neighbor had no
25 more comments, no more complaints, and actually left

2 supportive. When we got to the borough president and
3 City Planning Commission the neighbor did not come.
4 There was no opposition. So we believe that these
5 split vote was because we didn't have a chance to
6 respond on the record at the community board to that
7 neighbor's concerns.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Got it. Thank you.
9 Thank you for your testimony today.

10 JAY GOLDSTEIN: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Are there any other
12 members of the public who wish to testify? Seeing
13 none, I now close the public hearing on this
14 application. Thank you.

15 JAY GOLDSTEIN: Thank you very much.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We will now hear
17 preconsidered LU item C-19 0267 ZMQ and M1-9 0266 ZRQ
18 for the 22-60th 46th Street rezoning related to the
19 property in Council Member Constantinides' district
20 in Queens. The applicant seeks approval for a zoning
21 map amendment to rezone the block bounded by 23rd
22 Avenue and Ditmars Boulevard and 45th Street and 46th
23 Street by changing the existing R4 and M1 district to
24 R4, R6-A district with a C2-3 commercial overlay
25 along 45th Street in the southern, ah, in the

2 southwest western portion of the block, as well as a
3 related zoning text amendment to establish a
4 mandatory inclusionary housing area utilizing option
5 2 and the workforce option. Together these actions
6 would facilitate the construction of a new mixed use
7 building with eight-story portions along both street
8 frontages of the, of the through block site, and as
9 well as an approximately 250-seat theater space and
10 below-grade parking with approximately 105 spaces. I
11 now open the public hearing on this application, and
12 I will now call the first panel. Jocelyn Skarinsky,
13 did I say it right? Sorry. And Emmanuel
14 [inaudible], ah, thank you. And Paula Verdun.
15 Sorry, you didn't get that one? Counsel, if you
16 could please swear in them.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please raise your
18 right hand. State your name for the record.

19 JACQUELINE SKARINCHY: Jacqueline
20 Skarinchy.

21 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: Emmanuel Kokanakis.

22 PAOLA DURAN: Paola Duran.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you swear or
24 affirm that the testimony you are about to give will
25 be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the

2 truth, and that you will answer all questions
3 truthfully.

4 UNIDENTIFIED: I do.

5 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

6 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

8 JACQUELINE SKARINCHY: Good morning Chair
9 Moya and council members. My name is Jacqueline
10 Skarinchy of Egerman LLP, on behalf of the co-
11 applicants for this land use application, Mega Realty
12 Holding LLC, and the Pancyprian Association of
13 America. I'm joined here today by Emmanuel Kokanakis
14 of Mega Realty and also Hercules Agrio, as well as
15 Paola Duran from HANAC, the project's affordable
16 housing administering agent. We are here today to
17 present the proposed rezoning of Block 769, which
18 will make the existing residential uses on the block
19 confirming and/or complying and will facilitate the
20 redevelopment of two manufacturing sites that are not
21 currently consistent with the existing the
22 development on the block, with a new mixed use
23 development that includes affordable housing and a
24 new home and theater for a nonprofit community group
25 that has been in the community for decades. To

2 orient you to the site, the project area is comprised
3 of Block 769, which is bounded by Ditmars Boulevard
4 to the north, 23rd Avenue to the south, 45th Street
5 to the west, and 46th Street to the east. The
6 existing uses, which you can see in this proposed
7 area, in this actual aerial photograph, shows the
8 Pistilli Building, which is a six-story residential
9 condominium building with 201 units, that was
10 converted from the former Steinway Piano factory in
11 2008. The building is over-built within this
12 existing R4 zoning district. Further south there are
13 also nonconforming uses. There is Lot 39, which is
14 improved with the one-story eating and drinking
15 establishment for Joe's Garage, and the remainder of
16 the block are residential buildings that are located
17 within an M1 zoning district. To provide you with
18 broader neighborhood contacts, west of the site is a
19 retail shopping mall. East of the site you can see
20 is a 45-foot tall that rises about a set-back storage
21 facility, Cube Smart. It was recently developed
22 within the M1 zoning district. And then the, just
23 moving to our development site, which is just
24 immediately adjacent to the Pistilli Manor Building,
25 it's two manufacturing buildings, one of which has

2 been occupied by our client for over 20 years, Mega,
3 it's their contracting business, which they will be
4 relocating that business elsewhere, and then on the
5 45th Street side is a plumbing supply business, which
6 has been vacant. So there are no existing
7 manufacturing uses that are being used here today.

8 Just to show you what the existing experience is, you
9 see this residential development is adjacent to this
10 blank wall, a desolate environment for, for anyone,
11 any pedestrians walking by. To give you the area
12 context, this M1 zoning district is literally an
13 isolated M1 zoning district with very little, it's
14 surrounded by mostly residential uses within the
15 surrounding area. Here's the zoning change map. The
16 map to the left shows the existing zoning today,
17 which is an R4 with an M1-1 on the southern portion
18 of the block. And then we are proposing to rezone
19 the M1-1 and R4 districts to an R4, R4 C2-3 on the
20 southern portion of the block that will bring in the,
21 the commercial, existing commercial use into
22 conformance, and also bring in the lower density
23 residential buildings into conformance, and then over
24 our proposed site we would be mapping an R6A which
25 would also bring the Pistilli Building, which is

2 currently out of compliance, into compliance. In
3 addition to the rezoning actions, we are seeking a
4 mandatory inclusionary housing text amendment. We
5 are proposing both options 2 and the workforce
6 option. The applicant here is proposing the MIH
7 workforce housing option. Workforce option requires
8 30% of the residential floor area to be provided an
9 average of 115% AMI with 5% of the residential floor
10 area at 70% AMI, and no unit exceeding 135% of AMI.
11 No subsidy is permitted for income-restricted housing
12 under this workforce housing option. Although the
13 median household income in Astoria is approximately
14 \$60,000, the median for the wider Astoria area
15 includes five of the city's largest NYCHA
16 developments. The AMI for Steinway's neighborhood
17 tabulation area from 2013 to 2017 has a median
18 household income of approximately 70% AMI. However,
19 this census tract directly affecting the project area
20 is much higher at \$79,700, approximately 80% of AMI.
21 Additionally, 57.5% of the population within this
22 neighborhood make between \$47,000 and \$163,000, which
23 is the broad range of incomes that the project's
24 affordable housing units will serve. The project
25 will have income bands at 70%, 90%, and 135% AMI.

2 According to the US Census Bureau, 40.5% of
3 households in Queens Community District 1 are rent
4 burdened, spending 35% or more of their income on
5 rent. The affordable housing crisis in New York
6 doesn't just reach the lowest-income residents, which
7 have received the bulk of the mayor's housing budget,
8 but also to the middle class. The mayor's housing
9 plan defines work force housing as housing for those
10 who provide essential services for the local economy,
11 such as firefighters, teachers, nurses, or police
12 officers, who might otherwise be priced out of the
13 housing market in proximity to their place of
14 employment. Middle income housing is essential to
15 support our economy and the middle class, which
16 increasingly cannot afford to live in our city.
17 Additionally, the applicant has selected the
18 workforce housing option here because market rents in
19 this area reflect a moderate market condition. The
20 workforce option was established to address policy
21 concerns about the potential effects of mandatory
22 affordability requirements in areas such as Steinway,
23 where prevailing rents are sufficient to support
24 construction at moderate rents needed by the middle
25 class, but not the internal cross-subsidy of low, low

2 income affordable rents. Now I'll turn it over to
3 Emmanuel Kokanakis, who will discuss the proposed
4 development and proposed workforce housing in more
5 detail, as well as changes to the project since it
6 was certified into public review.

7 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: Good morning. As
8 Jacqueline briefly described, the projects consists
9 of a through lot, so it's two building segments over
10 a common base. The base of the building includes a
11 commercial space that will front on 45th Street,
12 which is complementary to the existing shopping
13 center across the street and the eating and drinking
14 establishment next door. The total unit count will
15 be 88 units. This was after much feedback from the
16 local community board. We initially went in with a
17 proposal of a much more dense building with a heavier
18 studio mix. The community voiced a concern for
19 wanting more family-size units and no studios. So we
20 went back with a mix of 88 units that are all ones,
21 twos, and threes, with the majority, over 60%, being
22 two-and three-bedroom units. Of the 88 units, 28
23 will be permanently affordable to middle-income
24 households. The building amenities will include a
25 fitness center, residents' lounge, play room, party

2 room, office center, and a large landscaped terrace
3 in between the two frontages of the building. We've
4 also signed an agreement with 32BJ to provide the
5 building service employees for the property, ah, 6000
6 of commercial on 45th Street, as previously
7 mentioned, and typically in our projects we put, um,
8 complimentary residential uses, daycares, doctors'
9 offices, fitness concepts, something that would fit
10 well into the context of the neighborhood. We're
11 currently contemplating a 70-space garage that was
12 also another major community concern, given the
13 density for the neighborhood of providing ample
14 parking, so this far exceeds the minimum required
15 parking under zoning, and the cultural component to
16 the project is a 250-seat theater that will house the
17 Pancyprian Association of America. It's an
18 organization that's been in Astoria for over 40
19 years. They currently have their club on 31st Street
20 in Astoria and have since outgrown that
21 substantially. This is a rendering from 46th Street.
22 You'll see the building rises six stories and
23 setbacks for an additional two stories. You have the
24 parking garage entrance and the community facility,
25 theater entrance on 46th. This is the view from

2 45th, which has the main residential entrance and
3 also the commercial retail on the base there. This
4 is a view of the terrace in between the two building
5 segments. And this is an aerial view showing the two
6 segments of the building. To go into a little bit
7 more detail about the theater, it will be an 11,000
8 square feet total facility that has a 250-seat
9 theater component to it, as well as can be used for
10 many other uses. There's a large lobby foyer area
11 that could be used for art exhibitions and other
12 cultural events. The Pancyprian Association is a
13 not-for-profit association. The theater would be
14 used exclusively for not-for-profit uses and would be
15 open to other local not-for-profit groups to use on a
16 short-term rental basis. There are a few cultural
17 divisions to the Pancyprian Association. They have a
18 theater division, dance division, choir division.
19 They currently don't have a space to house these
20 groups to practice. Most of the participants are
21 children that live in the neighborhood and most of
22 their constituents do live in the immediate area
23 here, so they would be having practices during the
24 week where the children would come after school hours
25 and leave, and would have roughly six major

2 performances a year that meet the capacity of the
3 theater. This is an outline of the affordability
4 levels that we're targeting for the project. As
5 you'll see, we have bands at 70%, 90%, and 135% AMI.
6 The majority of those units are two- and three-
7 bedroom units. I think part of the argument for
8 using the workforce option here is that we do have
9 the ability to target dual-income households, having
10 mostly two- and three-bedroom units. Dual-income
11 households will be able to qualify for these AMI
12 levels. We also have a very wide range of
13 affordability, from \$47,000 a year to \$163,000 a
14 year. So it will be open to a wide range of
15 residents that will be able to qualify. And the
16 affordable units would be administered by HANAC, who
17 has been established in Astoria for a very long time,
18 since 1972, and Paola can talk a little bit about the
19 marketing and ongoing maintenance of the affordable
20 units.

21 PAOLA DURAN: Thank you. So, hi, my name
22 is Paola Duran. I'm the director of housing for
23 HANAC, and we will be working with the developer in
24 order to act as the marketing agent the approximately
25 28 affordable units that are going to be, that are

2 being proposed under this development. I just want
3 to say that on behalf of the team and some of the
4 seniors that are present here today we are really
5 happy to be able to collaborate with this project and
6 we want to hear our voice to support the rezoning
7 application for this project. We think that the
8 middle-income housing is really needed in Astoria and
9 that's why we are, we really are eager to see this
10 project moving forward. HANAC will be working in two
11 different areas, towards the marketing and then the
12 management of the affordable units. Towards the
13 marketing of the process, towards the marketing of
14 the MIH units, we've been doing this for a couple of
15 years now. We're working with other developers, ah,
16 by administering the MIH units and we usually do it
17 doing like a large community outreach strategy.
18 We've been in Astoria since 7/19/72, so we have a
19 good range of organizations that we will be reaching
20 out to, just to make sure that everyone is informed
21 about this opportunity for the MIH units, and we will
22 be also working with the applicants to put the
23 applications through Housing Connect and through the
24 entire lottery process. HANAC is part of the HPD's
25 Housing Ambassador program since 2017, so we have a

2 well-established office in Astoria, where we receive
3 the applications and we guide them through the
4 process. So if they want to do either the paper
5 application or the website application, we work with
6 them, and we've been doing that since 2017, so we are
7 100% sure that we should be able to secure all the
8 MIH units for these project as well. We have been
9 working in Queens for decades and we are aware of the
10 housing need on this area. So I think our role is
11 going to complement the entire project and the other
12 sections of the project, so if you have any questions
13 just let me know.

14 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: Thank you, Paola.

15 This slide here references the change in the unit
16 distribution. On the right-hand side you'll see our
17 initial proposal to the community board with 135
18 units, the bulk of them being studios and one-bedroom
19 units, and the revised to the left of 88 units, with
20 the bulk being two- and three-bedroom units. Some
21 additional street views here. We'll have, the
22 buildings will be set back significantly off of the
23 streetscape, roughly 10 feet, allowing for a
24 landscape front yard experience for the local
25 community members so the buildings won't be

2 overbearing on the street. We've done a great deal
3 of community outreach. In addition to several
4 meetings with the community board, we received over
5 1000 petition, ah, petition signatures in support of
6 the project. 152 of them are within a three- to
7 four-block radius of the project. We've received
8 over 10 letters of support from local businesses as
9 well, who are all in favor of the project. We've had
10 many local cultural groups express their support of
11 the project as well. And we also have some immediate
12 neighbors that are in favor of the project and are
13 here to testify. We've also done some outreach to
14 the local schools, who've expressed some theater
15 programming that they currently don't have a space
16 for, so some collaboration there and making the
17 theater space available to the local schools as well.

18 JACQUELINE SKARINCHY: That's it, thank
19 you.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Just a
21 couple of questions, and if we can just, ah, go back
22 again to, just walk me through again the
23 justification for the MIH workforce option and why it
24 was appropriate for this neighborhood.

2 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: Sure. So the, the
3 marketing MI for Astoria roughly run 150% AMI. So
4 compared to other neighborhoods where there would be
5 stark difference between, you know, the workforce
6 option to be cross-subsidized with the market rate
7 units. There isn't a great disparity here that the
8 market units are that much more higher than the
9 affordable units, so there's not that much cross-
10 subsidization from the market-rate units here. Also
11 with the income bands that we're targeting and our
12 unit mix being mostly two- and three-bedrooms it
13 gives the ability for dual-income households, middle-
14 income households to apply for the units with family
15 units. Are there any other points?

16 JACQUELINE SKARINCHY: Sure. I mean,
17 just to give you some examples of the starting
18 salaries, so you could see what the dual-incomes that
19 Manny is referencing, like for a starting MTA
20 employee makes \$43,500 and a starting salary for a
21 schoolteacher is \$56,000. Together they make
22 \$100,000. They would qualify for the units at 90%
23 AMI. Then just even further, a public schoolteacher
24 is making approximately \$56,000, a starting nurse
25 salary is \$75,000. Together they make close to

2 \$135,000. They would be qualifying for the 115% AMI
3 units. So I think, you know, there is a strong need
4 for workforce housing in general that, that supports
5 the middle class. This project is not requesting
6 public subsidy. It's, it's a privately financed
7 project. And in addition to that we're also
8 constructing a community theater that's part of the
9 overall project program and it's a huge benefit to
10 the overall community.

11 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: And also I want to
12 point out, it's not that large of a building, being
13 88 units. We're not looking for a very high density
14 here. We're only going for an R6A, given the
15 relatively low density in the immediate area, so it's
16 not, we don't have that many units to bolster cross-
17 subsidization.

18 PAOLA DURAN: I just want to say
19 something. Because we receive people from, not only
20 from CB1, but for the entire borough, and they're
21 looking for larger units, sometimes when we are
22 renting our projects we have to reject some
23 applicants because they are exceeding the income
24 band, not because they're looking for larger units.
25 So I think this will be a good complement for that.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. The
3 community board had a number of concerns. Can you
4 tell us how you've addressed these concerns through
5 changes to the proposed development? Before that, I
6 just want to acknowledge that we've been joined by
7 Council Member Lancman.

8 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: So I think that the
9 first major concern that was raised in our initial
10 meetings was the unit count and the density. So we
11 went from 135 units with a heavy studio and one-
12 bedroom concentration to 88 units with a heavy two-
13 and three-bedroom family concentration of units.
14 There are other concerns related to the bulk of the
15 building and the height of the building. We set back
16 the building 10 feet on both street frontages to not
17 have this, the bulk overbearing. We do have a
18 contextual building immediately next door, the
19 Pistilli Building, which is roughly within the same
20 height range of our building. So we feel that our
21 building is contextual and given the setbacks will
22 not be an overburden on the street experience there.
23 We're also going to landscape the front, both
24 frontages of the building to allow for an additional
25 public amenity in that setback area. Other concerns

2 were related to the parking, given the theater
3 component. So we sought to seek, ah, outside parking
4 availability on nights that we do have, ah, theater
5 performances where it will be at the maximum
6 capacity, so we don't overburden the street parking
7 in the area. We also looked at increasing our
8 parking size from 70 units to 80 parking spaces to
9 better accommodate everything within the proposed
10 building.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: OK. And why is the
12 Pistilli Building being rezoned here, and is the
13 building fully occupied by residential use?

14 JACQUELINE SKARINCHY: So the Pistilli
15 Building is part of the rezoning because it's
16 currently a noncomplying building. It's in an R4
17 district. It was converted from manufacturing to
18 residential by a variance.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Was the, I'm sorry, go
20 ahead.

21 JACQUELINE SKARINCHY: It was through a
22 BSA variance.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Got it. So did the
24 rezoning to the R4 not allow enough residential
25 density to fully occupy the building?

2 JACQUELINE SKARINCHY: No, it's an
3 existing non-complying, but this will bring it into
4 compliance, DR6.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: OK.

6 JACQUELINE SKARINCHY: Yeah.

7 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: And there are
8 commercial uses on the ground floor. I think,
9 actually the community board's local offices are at
10 the base of that building.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Right. Thank you.
12 Council Member Reynoso?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you,
14 Chair. Who is the nonprofit that you guys would be
15 partnering with in this project?

16 PAOLA DURAN: HANAC.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: HANAC.

18 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: Yes.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: HANAC. What is
20 the population or the demographics of the people the
21 you serve?

22 PAOLA DURAN: We serve seniors, youth,
23 and children.

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Seniors, youth,
3 and children. Demographics as in race makeup? Do we
4 know their ethnic backgrounds?

5 PAOLA DURAN: I think we really cover a
6 little bit of everyone, so.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Oh, OK.

8 PAOLA DURAN: To give you a very
9 specific, are you looking for something specific so I
10 can give you the answer?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: No, no. I just
12 want to know income, like the income of the people
13 that you service mostly. Are they, I guess if you're
14 a not-for-profit are you serving like low-income?

15 PAOLA DURAN: Yes, mostly low income and
16 some middle-income families as well, for a variety of
17 different social services mainly.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: All right. So
19 75% of the affordable housing units under the option
20 3 would be for people making \$163,000 a year.
21 There's a lot of people are wearing green shirts here
22 and I would love to know how many of them you think
23 make \$163,000 a year, that wouldn't even be able to
24 live in this apartment building. 75% of the units
25 are one-bedroom, going for \$2570. Comparing prices

2 for a one-bedroom that are comparable to Williamsburg
3 and Bushwick housing, as opposed to this being, um,
4 in a different part of the City of New York that has
5 a housing market that doesn't seem to be as, as
6 lucrative, let's say, as the waterfront properties in
7 Long Island City or Williamsburg. Can I ask the
8 developer, though, what are the prices of the regular
9 market rate units gonna be in this property?

10 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: Right, so they'll be
11 roughly around 150% AMI. So it's about a 15%, 15% to
12 20% discount to the rent levels that you see there.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: So a one-bedroom
14 would probably go for \$2700, \$2800?

15 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: Roughly, yes.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: So \$2800, OK.
17 Are you guys aware about the fact that the City of
18 New York is one of the most segregated cities in all
19 of America?

20 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: Yes.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Do you, do you
22 know, um, one of the reasons that is, or do you think
23 housing has anything to do with the segregation?

24 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: Absolutely. We
25 build a lot of affordable housing throughout the

2 city. We would like to do more affordable here. If
3 we had more density to do it we would absolutely do
4 it. We've done other affordable projects in Queens
5 throughout the boroughs. That's, that's the bulk of
6 our work and we're very familiar. It comes down to
7 the density and also the land acquisition prices
8 associated with these properties that are
9 [inaudible].

10 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Yeah, but the
11 land acquisition prices is a bet you made and that's,
12 that's, that's a personal problem. So I don't want
13 to talk about land acquisition. Just 'cause you paid
14 too much for it doesn't mean that we gotta suffer and
15 have people pay, ah, \$3093 for a two-bedroom
16 apartment. Um, so, I do want to ask, though, ah,
17 subsidies from the City of New York, you've rejected
18 subsidies from the City of New York?

19 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: I'm sorry?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Subsidies?

21 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: Yes.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: From the City of
23 New York?

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Sorry, if, if folks
3 can silence their mobile phones I'd greatly
4 appreciate it. Thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Subsidies, are
6 you taking any subsidies from the City of New York?

7 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: No. Not for this
8 project.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Why not? Why
10 not?

11 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: The scale of the, of
12 the project would not fall within any HPD programs.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: So, so you
14 believe that HPD wouldn't have funded any affordable
15 housing, any deeper affordable housing in this
16 project? I mean, did you ask HPD I guess is the
17 question I'm asking.

18 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: We, we're familiar
19 with the HPD term sheets. It would not fall under
20 any of the categorized HPD term sheets. We have not
21 specifically spoken about this project, no. But for
22 28 units, um, we're not aware of an HPD program that
23 would work for this type of project.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Right, 28 units,
25 but maybe you could add more units than 28 out of the

2 88 to be affordable, I guess is what I'm saying. And
3 I just want to be very clear. I think that this is a
4 project that is not gonna serve a, a crisis that we
5 have in our city. We have over 70,000 people living
6 in homeless shelters, um, that you, the workforce
7 option should have never been an option that should
8 have been included in MIH, um, I believe, from the
9 get. Ah, there's, just as a member of this
10 subcommittee, as a member of the committee on Land
11 Use and as a member of the City Council I will not be
12 voting on any project that uses the work force
13 option. It just doesn't speak to, um, you being a
14 partner in addressing the housing crisis that we have
15 in the City of New York. And the crisis, um, does
16 not fall on people making \$112,000 to \$163,000 a
17 year. The people that are suffering make less than
18 \$58,000 a year, which you would only have five units
19 being constructed for them. So I just don't think
20 that this project is in line with our goals that
21 we're trying to reach when we talk about
22 affordability and affordable housing, um, and the
23 fact that you guys would even, um, have a whole
24 lineup, a whole rationale as to why the workforce
25 option makes sense is very, is concerning, especially

2 for a developer like Mega who has done affordable
3 housing work in the past and understands these
4 dynamics much more intently than other people. Um,
5 so, again, I would advise that you move away from the
6 workforce option. Um, the community board
7 specifically said that they would prefer option 1.
8 So the community board is also telling you that your
9 analysis as to how much affordability that you're
10 putting forth in this project doesn't fall in line
11 with even their wants. So the community is asking
12 for more affordability. So that's just a
13 recommendation that I would give to you, um, and
14 would recommend that you never come in here with a
15 workforce option as one of the options for affordable
16 housing because it just doesn't make any sense.
17 Thank you for my time, Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Just for the record,
19 before I turn it over to Council Member Grodenchik,
20 HANAC does wonderful work with communities of all
21 colors. They're actually in Corona, Queens, where I
22 represent. Ah, I actually worked there when I was a
23 kid, over in Astoria. They do wonderful work and
24 they have been good partners, ah, with us. So I just
25

2 wanted to put that on the record. I just want to
3 turn it over now to Council Member Grodenchik.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
5 Mr. Chair. And I do want to second, having worked in
6 the borough, ah, for over 30 years in and around
7 government, I do know the great work that HANAC does,
8 um, and continues to do on a daily basis, helping
9 people from all walks of life. So I want to thank
10 you for that work. And, um, I notice you have a
11 theater in this building. Can you tell me how much
12 the cost of the theater is, how much it's pushing up,
13 not that I'm objecting to this, my brother is a
14 working actor, but I'm just curious as to how much
15 that pushed the price up here.

16 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: The, the theater,
17 the total cost of the theater will be roughly 4.5 to
18 5 million dollars.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: That's a
20 pretty expensive build-out. I have to disagree with
21 my esteemed colleague from Brooklyn and Queens, Mr.
22 Reynoso. I do believe that there is a need for work
23 force housing in the city. Ah, we have a lot of
24 people in my district that leave and go to Nassau and
25 Suffolk County simply because they can't find housing

2 and while I certainly agree with him that we need to
3 be doing more, ah, for people who cannot find homes,
4 and that's generally poorer people, we also need to
5 remember that there is a crisis for people such as
6 firefighters and police officers and nurses. So I,
7 you know, I just want to put that on the record, Mr.
8 Chairman. Um, you're, as you, you are not getting
9 any subsidies from the city, or other than the
10 rezoning, which is not technically a subsidy, but it
11 is.

12 EMMANUEL KOKANAKIS: Correct.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: All right.

14 All right, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you
16 very much for your testimony today. I'd like to call
17 up the next panel. Constantine Yanudin. Panos
18 Adamopoulos. Frank Scivetta. Brandon Levy. I just
19 want to remind the panel, you have two minutes for
20 your testimony.

21 UNIDENTIFIED: OK. Is this on? Do you
22 want me to push anything, or?

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yeah, yeah, just
24 announce, you're going to announce your name and then
25 you...

2 CONSTANTINOS YANUDIS: Yeah. I'm
3 Constantinos Yanudis. Ah, I'm the general director
4 of an opera company in, ah, in Astoria, for the past
5 eight years. And I've been a member of the
6 Pancyprian Association for 30 years, since I came to
7 America. As a producer, as a conductor, I want to
8 reiterate how, ah, unbelievably important it will be
9 to have a real professional theater in Astoria. Ah,
10 if you look at the theaters in Astoria, and I'm
11 working every, I dare say, even in event little halls
12 that I've been producing different events in galas
13 and opera companies. I will tell you the only
14 theater that exists in Astoria is a [inaudible]
15 theater. But the [inaudible] theater is a high
16 school and it serves the community, and this is not a
17 criticism, it serves the children, ah, and the
18 students of the high school. And I am forced as a
19 producer and as a general director of a professional
20 opera company to go to Manhattan. Same, ah, with the
21 same way, I would like to tell you that most people
22 that I know that they want to, ah, go and experience
23 a professional production, ah, theater, dance, a
24 concert, pop music, where do they go? They go to
25 Manhattan, ah, most of them, because there's not a

2 real, ah, theater that can actually provide, you
3 know, this, this professional productions for the
4 community and Astoria I think needs it very, very
5 much. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

7 PANOS ADAMOPOULOS: Hi, my name is Panos
8 Adamopoulos.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: If you can just can
10 speak into the microphone. Yep.

11 PANOS ADAMOPOULOS: Oh, thank you, OK.
12 Well, I'm the baritone of the choir, so I might need
13 it.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: [inaudible]

15 PANOS ADAMOPOULOS: My name is Panos
16 Adamopoulos and, ah, I am a business owner in Astoria
17 and long-time supporter of cultural events. For the
18 last six years I've been the president of the
19 Athenian Society of New York, a 501(c)(3)
20 organization that produces a lot of educational and
21 cultural programs. For the last 10 years I have been
22 the vice president and the artistic director of the
23 Athens Square Committee on 30th Avenue and 30th
24 Street, where every summer we produce programs,
25 concerts, theatrical plays for, ah, Italian, Greek,

2 and Spanish community. Next year we'll have also for
3 Arabic community as well. But the thing that is
4 lacking, besides the three months of the summer and
5 that's also due to the weather, if we can have all 12
6 concerts, we need a place where we can house
7 ourselves during the winter times. Um, as a business
8 owner I'm here to support this project because I also
9 represent other business owners in Astoria who cannot
10 be here today, cannot take the day off, and I
11 believe, as the panel said before, that we need
12 affordable housing in Astoria. We need to people to
13 come, live, flourish, raise their families, and I
14 think that they will be a major economic contributing
15 factor. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA:

17 FRANK SCIVETTA: Hi. Thank you for
18 allowing me to speak. My name is Frank Scivetta. I
19 was born in Astoria 62 years ago and I live right up
20 the block from the project. I got married 40 years
21 ago and I bought that house when the block was empty
22 factories, abandoned cars, and over the years I've
23 seen a supermarket and a mall be built, and there was
24 a lot of resistance. The neighborhood got better. I
25 saw the Pistilli Building go up. The neighborhood

2 got better. And now I want to see this project go
3 up. I have, through all my windows I look at this
4 project, whatever window you look at in my house. I
5 have four homes within this project that they're
6 building. Two of them butt right up against the
7 property. One which my 86-year-old mother lives in
8 and two doors away my daughter, her husband, and my
9 two beautiful grandchildren. I don't want nothing
10 bad to happen to Astoria, and I feel it would be a
11 great thing to bring the neighborhood alive.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

13 FRANK SCIVETTA: Thank you.

14 BRANDON LEVY: Hi, my name is Brandon
15 Levy. I work with the Queens Chamber of Commerce.
16 I'm going to read a letter written by Thomas Grech,
17 the president and CEO of the Queens Chamber into the
18 record. Ah, good morning, Thomas Grech, CEO of the
19 Queens Chamber, ah, the Queen Chambers fully supports
20 this proposed rezoning in Astoria. More than a dozen
21 local businesses, they're in the direct vicinity of
22 the proposed development, have expressed support of
23 the project, from the bar that's located right next
24 door, to the restaurants, bakery, dry cleaners, and
25 others. Since many of them cannot be here today as

2 small business owners, they cannot take a day off to
3 be here. However, I know they have deep roots in
4 Astoria. They care deeply about the community that
5 they live in and that they've invested in. Ah, and
6 of course they want the best possible outcome. New
7 housing for working families will revitalize this
8 section of Astoria, which is desolate at night and
9 prone to vandalism. Each day middle-class families
10 are pushed out of the city, adversely impacting small
11 businesses as well, which of course the small
12 businesses, of course, who we represent at the
13 Chamber, they help contribute to make Astoria, you
14 know, such a desirable neighborhood that it is. Now
15 that we have the opportunity to offer permanently
16 affordable housing, specifically creating, ah,
17 created for dual-income families, where an MTA
18 employee and a nurse may share a home that's well
19 built, near affordable, ah, near transportation, and
20 great schools. So we hope to welcome this proposed
21 development and rezoning there will not only offer
22 housing for working families, but it in turn will
23 help support the small business community in Astoria
24 as well.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great. Thank you all
3 for your testimony here today. I appreciate your
4 time. I'm going to call up the next panel. Mark
5 Espinoza. Richard Kuzam. Oh boy, Afrocini Sukas.

6 AFROCINI SUKAS: Yes. Very good.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

8 AFROCINI SUKAS: Perfect.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: And Karina Duramanas.
10 We're going to begin with you.

11 MARK ESPINOZA: Hello, good morning. My
12 name is Mark Espinoza. I'm a, I'm a cleaner and I
13 have been a member of 32BJ for about 12 years. I'm
14 here today on behalf of my union to share our support
15 of this project. New York's economy is hard on, hard
16 on working families, and we believe that in order to
17 create a more balanced New York new developments
18 should come with commitments to create prevailing
19 wage building service jobs. We are pleased to tell
20 you that Mega Reality Holding LLC has made a credible
21 commitment to providing prevailing wage jobs to the
22 future property service workers at this site.

23 Additionally, we know this development to be a
24 special development because it has a significant
25 amount of multiple bedroom units. It is often, it is

2 not often that a project like this goes through
3 ULURP. Having access to bigger and more spacious
4 units means more space for growing families. 32BJ
5 represents 4500 workers who live and work in the
6 community district. We believe that new development
7 needs to cater to families at a range of
8 affordability levels, including not only the lowest-
9 income families, but also moderate-income people,
10 like many in our membership. We are supportive of a
11 vision for this project that integrates work force
12 housing so that working people like cleaners and
13 porters can continue to have a place in this
14 community and to live near where they work. We
15 believe that this development team has a vision to
16 invest in this community and we are happy to support
17 this plan. We respectfully request you approve this
18 project. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

20 RICHARD KUZAMI: Hello, I'm Richard
21 Kuzami. I'm the president of the Old Astoria
22 Neighborhood Association, and I'm also a member of
23 CB1, and I want to begin by clarifying my no vote on
24 the community board. I also am on the land use
25 committee, um, and I want, because of the way the

2 vote was structured, some of the no votes were people
3 that were completely against the project and some of
4 the no votes were people that were in favor of the
5 project. So I want people to understand that the
6 negative vote had, was not clarified correctly. And
7 I did vote in favor of it. So I'd like you to know
8 that first of all. OK, and in terms of some of their
9 findings, the reasons I did this was, number one, um,
10 the stipulation that the Pistilli Building not be
11 considered when assessing context. I think that
12 flies in the face of logic. When combined with the
13 recently completed public storage facility across the
14 street from it, I feel that the proposed building is
15 completely within context. You can't ignore the
16 elephant in the room. It makes no sense. Ah, the
17 parking, I think that the parking actually, they're
18 actually providing parking above what's required in
19 the zoning. So, and also I know that they're going
20 out and trying to, ah, find additional parking on
21 performance nights. So I think this is a big
22 positive. Um, the M1 use, this is something that
23 really needs to be considered, I think. If for some
24 reason, ah, Mega was to sell the property, there's so
25 much that could be built there as-of-right. It would

2 be much more onerous to the neighborhood. I mean,
3 they could have hotels, homeless shelters, public
4 storage, warehouses, manufacturing, offices, and it
5 would not be within, go within the ULURP process.
6 The community would have no say. So I think it's
7 important that that be kept in mind. Um, also, the
8 arts. There is a movement out there of something
9 they call Artwashing when...

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: You can [inaudible]

11 RICHARD KUZAMI: OK, a movement called
12 Artwashing, um, and this is somehow saying that
13 developers are using the arts in order to get their
14 evil, ah, desires. OK, this is, I'm finding this
15 quite a bit out there. And I just think that private
16 investment in the arts is what fueled the
17 Renaissance. It kept, it keeps government from
18 controlling what's accessible, OK. So, that, and
19 also I just think that the workforce option needs to
20 be readdressed in order to [inaudible] fully be
21 compliant with the neighborhood needs.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

23 RICHARD KUZAMI: OK.

24 AFROCINI SUKAS: My name is Afrocini
25 Sukas, and I am here representing the Greek Cultural

2 Center. I am a resident of Astoria since '68 and the
3 center is active in Astoria since 1974. So we have
4 seen the changes that have come in Astoria and, um,
5 one change we have witnessed ourselves is where we
6 begun by being a completely Greek cultural center and
7 our resident theater groups were all Greek. Right
8 now we have a resident theater group that consists of
9 people from 17 different countries, and that's a
10 reflection of what is going on in Astoria. Astoria
11 has, I'm here to speak mainly for the need for the
12 theater. Astoria has two factors that add to the
13 need for the theater. One is that, ah, there are a
14 lot of Greeks in Astoria and to Greeks theater is as
15 opera is to Italians, and we have at least 10 groups,
16 theater groups, in Astoria active at this time and
17 dozens of performances every year, and, um, and no
18 theaters. And the second group is after the Kaufman
19 Studios were built the influx we have of artists in
20 Astoria. And now that the [inaudible] bought the,
21 the, the Steinway building also here, from what I
22 hear he's going to build studios there. I can
23 imagine that more and more artists will be coming to
24 Astoria because of the proximity perhaps to
25 Manhattan. We see that in our theater, too. We have

2 a small, um, black box theater of 60 seats and, ah,
3 we have people coming, we are renting it out now to
4 groups, off of Broadway groups, and people are coming
5 from Manhattan to, to see these shows. And the, um,
6 and the, um, the other, um, important thing for the
7 theater is that it is the, right now we have a
8 theater production that we have, in order to get a
9 room for it, our own theater was too small, we either
10 had to go to Manhattan, which is too expensive,
11 because we want to provide affordable theater in
12 Astoria, and we have to go to Corona Park Theater,
13 that's the only other option we had, which has no
14 public transportation going to it. It's a, there is
15 no other theater in Astoria.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

17 KRINA DERMANIS: Hi, my name is Krina
18 Dermanis. I am a lifelong resident of Astoria, born
19 and raised, in fact. Um, I also have grown my
20 insurance business there. My family had their
21 business there for 30 years, um, still do. And, um,
22 I'm a new mom and my husband and I are temporarily
23 living in Jamaica and looking to relocate back to
24 Astoria and surprisingly our apartment searches have
25 yielded few results that meet our criteria. Um, and

2 I think that this new development at 46 and Ditmars
3 would be amazing for us, to be near transportation,
4 near daycare, near shops, everything I need. Um,
5 parking, which is a great plus, the theater, which is
6 a great plus, um, and I know that a lot of people,
7 you know, will say buy a two-family house in Astoria,
8 because that's what is there currently, and that is
9 just not the case anymore. Um, it's there out of
10 reach, they're not affordable, um, and we're a dual,
11 you know, income family, middle-class family, and
12 we're looking for a great place to live, and I think
13 that this would be a great place to raise my
14 daughter. I want to come back and bring her back and
15 continue my business there.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great. Thank you.
17 Thank you all for your testimony today. I want to
18 bring up the last panel. Effie Antonia and Peter
19 Vatsinas.

20 EFFIE ANTONIO: Good morning. My name is
21 Effie Antonio and I'm the president of the theatrical
22 division and [inaudible] association. I'm going to
23 read this letter on behalf of my daughter, who she is
24 a vice principal in the neighborhood, but she
25 couldn't attend because she has to be in school. As

2 a lifelong resident of Astoria Ditmas and also a
3 teacher serving the same community, I believe that
4 the residential development and Hellenic Culture
5 Center will be a long-term investment for our
6 community. A household moving into a new community
7 generally spends about three-fifths of its income on
8 goods and services sold in the local stores, causing
9 an economic [inaudible] that permanently increases
10 the level of economic activity for local business
11 owners. The list of goods and services affected
12 include groceries, home improvement, beauty salons,
13 clothing, fitness centers, school supplies, and so
14 on. Area business benefits from increased
15 [inaudible], allowing them to increase income, job
16 availability, and most purchase made from local
17 vendors. As an educator that works and lives in the
18 same community the zone schools where this
19 development is being built is under-utilized and has
20 had a decrease in student population. Declines like
21 this cannot [inaudible] lead to school closure and
22 influx of students attending other schools in the
23 area. More families moving into the residential
24 development will increase enrollment, save teaching
25 jobs, and will ultimate benefit an already struggling

2 school. Lastly, the Hellenic Culture Center that
3 will be developed on the ground floor will promote
4 culture and adds to the whole community. Activities
5 of a culture center are necessary for growth and
6 provide unique experience to the community. The
7 Hellenic community needs a facility in which to sing,
8 perform, play games, make music and art, develop
9 talent, teach techniques, share ideas, and learn from
10 other [inaudible] and performers way to express life
11 richness. Culture centers allow much of the
12 community that provide a place for education, holiday
13 gatherings, lectures, activities, philanthropic and
14 everyday fun. I hope you consider all these positive
15 factors and reasons why I feel that [inaudible]
16 Hellenic Culture Center will be beneficially for the
17 Astoria community. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

19 PETER: Hi, my name is Peter. I'll be
20 speaking for Eddie Masterson, who is a neighbor of
21 the project. My name is Eddie Masterson. I live at
22 2266 46th Street, right next door to the proposed
23 development. I am in full support of the proposal.
24 I have lived on 46th Street for more than 20 years.
25 During this time I witnessed storage facilities,

2 warehouses, trucks, and graffiti overwhelm our block.
3 These buildings do not add to our quality of life.
4 They only take away from it. A new residential
5 building and theater would bring new life, culture,
6 and opportunity for us to live on an actually
7 residential street, one where families can get to
8 know each other and neighbors could make friends,
9 instead of an industrial zone. My son is a New York
10 City firefighter who is searching for an apartment.
11 This building would be a perfect place for a young
12 man at his income level. Please support the
13 rezoning.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

15 PETER: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you both for
17 your testimony today. Are there any other members of
18 the public who wish to testify? Seeing none, I now
19 close the public hearing on this application. Both
20 applications that we heard today will be laid over.
21 This concludes today's meeting, and I would like to
22 thank the members of the public, my colleagues, and
23 of course the council and land use staff for their
24 hard work in attending here today. This meeting is
25 hereby adjourned.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING
AND FRANCHISES

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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 January 20, 2020