

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

----- X

February 11, 2020
Start: 10:39 a.m.
Recess: 11:15 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Daniel Dromm
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Daniel Dromm
Adrienne Adams
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.
Laurie A. Cumbo
Vanessa L. Gibson
Mark Gjonaj
Barry S. Grodenchik
Rory I. Lancman
Farah N. Louis
Steven Matteo
Francis P. Moya
Keith Powers
Helen K. Rosenthal
Jimmy Van Bramer
Karen Koslowitz

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

Michael Blaise Backer
Deputy Commissioner of Neighborhood
Development
Department of Small Business Services

Tina Lee
Cochair, Flushing Business Improvement
District

Chair, Expansion Steering Committee

Dian Yu
Executive Director
Downtown Flushing Business

Bruce Jacobs

1

2

SARKEEM BRADLEY: Test, test, test.

3

Today is the Committee on Finance, today's date is

4

February 11, 2020.

5

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: [gavel] Good morning

6

and welcome to today's Finance Committee meeting.

7

I'm Council Member Daniel Dromm and I'm the chair of

8

the committee. We have been joined by Council Member

9

Brad Lander, Council Member Francisco Moya, Council

10

Member Keith Powers, Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer,

11

Council Member Robert Cornegy, Council Member Farah

12

Louis, Minority Leader Steve Matteo, Council Member

13

Adrienne Adams, Council Member Barry Grodenchik, and

14

Council Member Mark Gjonaj. Today the committee will

15

be voting on three times - proposed Intro 113-A and

16

two Article 11 property tax exemptions. In addition,

17

we will be holding a public hearing on Intro 1854 to

18

authorize the Downtown Flushing Transit Hub Business

19

Improvement District to amend its district plan.

20

Proposed Intro 113-A, sponsored by Council Member

21

Lander, would require the establishment of an

22

interagency task force consisting of representatives

23

of at least seven mayoral agencies and offices to

24

create and implement a public online capital projects

25

database. The database would consist of an

1
2 interactive and searchable public database updated on
3 a triannual basis, containing information about
4 capital projects citywide. The bill would also
5 require an advisory board, consisting of
6 representatives from the mayor's office, the council,
7 and the comptroller to advise the task force on the
8 development of the public online capital projects
9 database. We first heard an earlier version of this
10 bill almost exactly one year ago and I'm going to
11 invite Council Member Lander to speak in favor of his
12 bill.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you very
14 much, Chair Dromm, and I also want to thank Chair
15 Gibson for her work leading the capital, the Finance
16 Capital Subcommittee, which has been really important
17 in helping pushing this issue forward. Every member
18 of this council and many members of the public and
19 press have had their challenges moving a capital
20 project forward. You're not sure how long it's
21 taking, how much it's costing. Um, as I was actually
22 talking to Minority Leader Matteo this morning, some
23 good steps have been taken in this administration to
24 drive some improvements at DDC and the Mayor's Office
25 of Operations. But we still have a long way to go in

1 a city that's facing the challenges of climate
2 resiliency, of transit, of schools, of a whole range
3 of capital projects, and it remains true that about
4 half of our capital projects are reported to be
5 either behind time or over budget, and there is no
6 place right now that you can go to get public visible
7 transparent comprehensive information about all the
8 city's capital projects. The Mayor's Office of
9 Operations maintains a capital projects dashboard
10 that covers projects over 25 million dollars, but
11 that's only about 3% of the city's projects and not
12 most of the ones that council members are the most
13 focused on and the communities are often focused on.
14 Parks has their own system. SCA has their own
15 system. But for many agencies there is no such
16 system and you can't compare across those systems to
17 figure out what kinds of projects are costing too
18 much, which agencies are doing well. So for purposes
19 of transparency, for purposes of accountability, for
20 purposes of cost saving, and for purposes of
21 improving projects management, the creation of this
22 online capital projects tracking system will make a
23 big difference in fiscal accountability and
24 transparency and improve capital projects management,
25

1 something that we really sorely need. There will be
2 this interagency task force to get it done. What
3 they have to do is really spelled out very clearly in
4 the bill. There's an advisory board that council
5 members and others will be on to make sure it moves
6 forward. Um, I want to thank the administration for
7 their partnership in making it happen. Office of
8 Management and Budget has actually agreed until the
9 tracker is done to start putting some additional
10 details and make them available, downloadable, via
11 the city's financial management system through the
12 Capital Projects Detail Report, and that has actually
13 already started, so a really good show of good faith,
14 um, as well as a real commitment to move forward to
15 get this done in a way that I think will have real
16 good long-term benefits to the city. So, now that
17 she's here, I want to thank again Chair Gibson
18 because of the council's creation of our Capital
19 Finance Subcommittee has been a valuable way of
20 moving this issue forward. I also want to thank from
21 our team Rebecca Chasen, Nathan Toth, and Stephanie
22 Ruiz. From the administration side Kenny Grace, Dan
23 Steinberg, Josh Sitas, and Jimmy Torres Spring, and
24 from team Steph Zokowski and my former policy
25

1
2 director Annie Levers. Like for many of you when
3 you're watching a capital project drag on and on,
4 this one has been something we've been working for
5 years and years. But I'm excited today that we're
6 moving it forward and, and I hope that you will vote
7 aye on Intro 113. Thank you very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,
9 Council Member Lander. We have been joined by our
10 chair on the capital subcommittee for finance,
11 Vanessa Gibson, and by Council Member Robert Cornegy.
12 Next, we have two Article 11 property tax exemptions.
13 528 East 11th Street in Council Member Rivera's
14 district would receive a full 40-year Article 11
15 exemption to preserve 33 units of affordable home
16 ownership. The Carroll Gardens portfolio in Council
17 Member Lander's district would receive a full 40-year
18 Article 11 exemption to preserve 31 units of
19 affordable rental housing. Both the council members
20 are supportive of the projects in their respective
21 districts. I want to say that Council Member Rivera
22 has submitted written testimony and it will be put
23 into the record. Did you want to speak anything on
24 that? OK. Thank you.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I'm in favor but
3 do not need to speak on it.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you, Council
5 Member. Lastly, the committee will be hearing a
6 public hearing on Introduction number 1854, which
7 would authorize the Downtown Flushing Transit Hub BID
8 in Council Member Koo's district to amend its
9 district plan, including authorizing a budget
10 increase, extending the district's boundaries,
11 providing additional services, and modifying
12 additional existing services, changing the method of
13 district charge assessment and increasing the maximum
14 to be expended for improvements. More information
15 regarding the requested changes can be found in the
16 committee report prepared by the City Planning
17 Commission. Council Member Koo supports the
18 requested changes. We will hear from any witnesses
19 to wish to testify. Once we have heard any testimony
20 we will then adjourn the hearing for at least 30 days
21 to allow any property owner within the proposed area
22 of the BID to file an objection to the extension of
23 the BID with the city clerk. In the absence of
24 objections filed, either by a majority of all the
25 impacted property owners or by the property owners

1 owning a majority of the assessed value of the
2 property within the proposed BID the committee and
3 the full council may adopt legislation expanding the
4 BID. In order to do so the committee and the full
5 council must be prepared to answer the following four
6 questions in the affirmative. Were all notices of
7 hearings for all hearings required to be held
8 published and mailed as so required? Does all the
9 real property within the district's boundaries
10 benefit from the establishment or expansion of the
11 district except as otherwise provided by law? In all
12 real property benefitted by the, is all real property
13 benefitted by the district included within the
14 district? And, four, is the establishment or
15 expansion of the district in the best interest of the
16 public? If the committee and full council find in
17 the affirmative on these four questions and the
18 number of objections required to prevent the
19 expansion of the BIDs are not filed then the
20 legislation can be adopted. Additionally, the
21 committee and the full council must determine that it
22 is in the public interest to authorize an increase in
23 the maximum annual expenditure amount, that the
24 relevant tax and debt limits will not be exceeded,

1
2 and that notice of the increased proposed expenditure
3 amount was properly published. For further details
4 on the BID please refer to the committee report, the
5 City Planning Commission report, and the BID's
6 proposed district plan. Representatives from the
7 Department of Small Business Services are here to
8 testify and to answer any questions we may have, and
9 I believe that they're going to come up to give
10 testimony. So we have Michael Blaise Backer from New
11 York City Small Business Services. We have Dian Sung
12 Yu, Downtown Flushing Transit Hub. And we have Tina
13 Lee, Downtown Flushing Transit Hub as well. And
14 we've also been joined by Council Member Karen
15 Koslowitz and Council Member Helen Rosenthal. Thank
16 you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm that
18 your testimony will be truthful to the best of your
19 knowledge, information, and belief?

20 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: I do.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. You may
22 proceed.

23 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: Thank you. Good
24 morning, Chair Dromm and members of the Finance
25 Committee. I am Michael Blaise Backer, deputy

1 commissioner of neighborhood development at the
2 Department of Small Business Services. I am joined
3 by Lamel Lindsay, senior program manager for BID
4 development. We are here to testify and support the
5 extension of the Downtown Flushing Business
6 Improvement District in Queens. At SBS we are
7 working hard to open doors for New Yorkers across the
8 five boroughs, focusing on creating stronger
9 businesses, connecting New Yorkers to good jobs, and
10 fostering thriving neighborhoods. We believe that
11 the vitality of the city's commercial corridors is a
12 key of achieving this goal and BIDs have been
13 valuable and proven partners in small business
14 support, neighborhood revitalization, and economic
15 development across the five boroughs. In addition to
16 our role overseeing and supporting the city's
17 existing network of 76 BIDs, SBS also supervises the
18 BID formation and expansion process, serving as an
19 advisor and resource for communities interested in
20 planning or expanding BIDs. We are careful to ensure
21 that each steering committee we work with adheres to
22 our planning process and policies, solicits robust
23 community input, and performs extensive outreach to
24 demonstrate broad-based support across all
25

1 stakeholder groups. Moreover, we are cognizant of
2 the importance and unique nature of each community we
3 assist and aim to create greater capacity and
4 sustainability for the organizations that we support.

5 In 2016, two years after the BID Expansion Steering
6 Committee was initially formed the Downtown Flushing
7 BID was selected by SBS as a partner organization in
8 SBS's inaugural year of its Neighborhood 360.

9 Through this program the Downtown Flushing BID and
10 the Greater Flushing Chamber of Commerce worked
11 closely with SBS to conduct a commercial district
12 needs assessment, which identified challenges and
13 opportunities in the downtown Flushing area.

14 Equipped with findings from the CDNA and a subsequent
15 Neighborhood 360 grant the downtown Flushing BID was
16 able to strategically address challenges in the
17 growing commercial areas of the neighborhood and
18 provide services to nearly one thousand businesses
19 outside of its boundaries, strengthening the
20 relationship between the BID and the wider Flushing
21 community. Furthermore, the grant allowed the BID to
22 hire additional staff to kick start extensive
23 stakeholder engagement and outreach to successfully
24 document expansion and support. Similar to other
25

1 recent BID expansions, the downtown Flushing
2 expansion effort involved numerous meetings with
3 local stakeholders. After extensive outreach and
4 close coordination with these stakeholders, SBS
5 determined that the documented support among all
6 stakeholder groups, including over 50% of the area's
7 total assessed value signing in favor, was sufficient
8 to submit the application to City Planning. As
9 required by law, the Downtown Flushing Expansion
10 Steering Committee mailed the summary of the City
11 Council resolution no less than 10 days and no more
12 than 30 days before today's hearing to the following
13 parties: To each owner of real property within the
14 proposed district at the address shown on the latest
15 city assessment roll; to such persons as are
16 registered with the city to receive tax bills
17 concerning real property within the district; and to
18 tenants of each building within the proposed
19 district. Furthermore, SBS arranged for the
20 publication of a copy of the summary of the
21 resolution at least once in the city record.
22 Additionally, I would like to acknowledge and thank
23 Council Member Peter Koo for his ongoing support of
24 the downtown Flushing BID expansion effort. I would
25

1
2 like to acknowledge the BID expansion effort is also
3 represented here today by the executive director of
4 the downtown Flushing BID and members of the
5 expansion steering committee, who will also be
6 providing testimony and answering questions. At this
7 time I'm happy to take any questions you have.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Thank you very
9 much. Any questions? Council Member Grodenchik?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I am, I'm
11 fully in support of this. I worked on the original
12 BID when I served in the New York State Assembly a
13 long, long time ago. Um, my question for you today
14 is the assessment for residency, and this is just a
15 general question, it really has nothing to do with
16 this specifically. Residents of the district are
17 assessed at a dollar annually. How is that put in?
18 Do they get it on their tax bill? Is it a separate
19 bill? Because I would hate to see somebody, just
20 curious how it works.

21 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: Sure, yes. No,
22 all assessments, whether it's the residential or
23 commercial assessment, show up on, ah, a property tax
24 bill.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: OK.

2 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: So by resident,
3 when you're talking about a resident like a dollar
4 assessment that's often the case, that is per fully
5 residential tax lot in this case. So it's not that,
6 ah, residential tenants see that anywhere. It's
7 residential property owners and the [inaudible].

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: So it's not a
9 separate bill?

10 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: Ah, it will show
11 up, ah, twice, essentially usually twice a year or
12 four times a year depending on the property and the
13 property tax.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: OK, thank you
15 very much, Mr. Chair.

16 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Any other
17 questions? OK, seeing none, I'm gonna call up the
18 other two folks who, um...

19 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: ...I mistakenly
21 called earlier. Thank you very much to SBS, Michael
22 Blaise Backer. Thank you. Ah, I'm gonna call now
23 Tina Lee from the Downtown Flushing Transit Hub and
24 Dian Sung Yu from the Downtown Flushing Transit Hub

1
2 BID. You may begin. Just make sure the red light is
3 on on your microphone. Nope, not yet.

4 TINA LEE: Hello, good morning. I'm Tina
5 Lee, cochair of the Flushing Business Improvement
6 District and also chair of the Expansion Steering
7 Committee. I'm also a property owner and business
8 owner within the BID. With the seven-train Long
9 Island Railroad and over 20 bus lines, downtown
10 Flushing has the enviable position of never being
11 short of foot traffic. However, with the explosive
12 growth since our founding of the BID in 2003 we've
13 seen increased density in pedestrians, vehicles, as
14 well as businesses within our district and as a
15 result a need for expanded services. Our steering
16 committee, consisting of both members within the
17 existing BID and the expansion area, recognize the
18 positive impact that the BID's work has had on the
19 quality of life within the downtown district and
20 would like to expand that to our neighboring streets.
21 The proposed expansion allows us to include more
22 businesses within our district to make it more
23 complete and also allows us to provide more
24 comprehensive services. For over 16 years the BID
25 has worked to support the development of Flushing

1
2 into a bustling commercial district and dining
3 destination with diverse businesses, including
4 comprehensive medical services, hotels, educational
5 services, as well as financial banks and various
6 retailers. Through supplemental sanitation,
7 beautification projects, and marketing initiatives
8 the BID has promoted our community, connected
9 consumers with our local businesses through area
10 guides, and also hosted resource workshops and fairs
11 to bring new city resources to our local businesses.
12 We look forward to the expansion to allow us to keep
13 pace with the rapid growth of our community and
14 support our business during competitive and challenge
15 environment. Thank you for the opportunity to appear
16 before you in support of the Flushing BID expansion.
17 And I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank
18 you for your service to the communities you represent
19 and the City of New York. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: OK, good, we're going
21 to have questions, but I'm going to go to the next
22 witness. So if you want to start that would be good.

23 DIAN YU: All right, good morning
24 Chairman Dromm and the members of the Finance
25 Committee. My name is Dian Yu. I'm the executive

1 director of Downtown Flushing Business. As you know,
2 downtown Flushing is the food capitol of Queens. We
3 have over 1000 business in downtown Flushing, with
4 200 of them being restaurant. And we are one of the
5 busiest [inaudible] in New York City. Because every
6 day we have over 100,000 people walking on our
7 sidewalks, there's very busy street and although our
8 job is very challenging, but we consistently, ah,
9 face challenges by we're providing a [inaudible]
10 service, ah 'cause every year we provide over 15,000
11 hours in supplemented, ah, supplemental sanitation
12 service. And we also will put up holiday lighting
13 from November to January. And also we distribute a
14 Flushing guide, which consists of a restaurant guide
15 and a transit guide to our neighborhoods and to our
16 visits. And we also have newly added a power wash
17 and graffiti remove functions. So our BID has been
18 very successful to do those jobs in our district. We
19 have also received complaints or requests from our
20 neighborhoods to extend our service to their
21 neighborhoods, such as Union Street, [Prays] Street,
22 and based on those feedbacks we formed a committee.
23 A steering committee was formed and we work with SBS
24 and with support of Councilman Koo and everyone else.
25

1 So, I mean, that's what we, here's what we did. So
2 we proposed the boundaries for the BID expansion
3 areas that includes College Point, Main Street, and
4 Union Street, and the BID expansion would consist of
5 over two dozen business and with 500 of them being
6 commercial properties. And we also, ah, want to
7 extend our service, such as marketings,
8 beautification, advocacy to, ah, a pedestrian
9 measurement program. So to cover all those
10 additional service the steering committee has
11 proposed a budget of one million dollars. As I
12 mentioned before, with support of Councilman Koo and
13 SBS we received a grant to provide a taste of those
14 service to the BID expansion areas and we have
15 received great feedbacks and everyone is really happy
16 about. So, ah, but we need to expand our area to
17 consistently, to consistently provide this service to
18 the area for years to come, and that is why we're
19 here, to expand the, ah, the BID expansion, and wish
20 the BID expansion would allow us to consistent, I
21 know I'm repeating myself, to provide those service
22 to our neighbors. So I thank you for your support
23 and we're looking forward to support our community
24
25

2 and our local elected officials. All right, thank
3 you.

4 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. I noticed
5 that you put it from College Point Boulevard, Main
6 Street, and Union Street. Is it from Northern
7 Boulevard? What's the north-south boundaries?

8 DIAN YU: That's a great question. So it
9 would be from Northern Boulevard all the way down to
10 Franklin Avenue.

11 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: To Franklin, OK.

12 DIAN YU: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Was the BID involved
14 in the expansion of the sidewalks on Main Street?

15 DIAN YU: Ah, yes we did, because as a
16 matter of fact we worked closely with SBS and joined
17 Main Street [inaudible] program. We support our
18 small business by doing all different kind of
19 marketing program and promotion to make sure that our
20 small, ah, small business are not impacted by this,
21 ah, sidewalk widening.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Overcrowded? Do you
23 know how many people pass through the Main Street
24 subway station every year?

2 DIAN YU: Quite a few numbers. I don't,
3 but I can get back to you on that. But then again I
4 do know, based on the New York City DOT, the last
5 study was done in 2005, that every day with over
6 100,000 pedestrians but then again we are one of
7 those, we're busiest transit hub in New York City.

8 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I heard it was like
9 23 million a year or something like that, incredible
10 number.

11 DIAN YU: I wouldn't doubt that. Because
12 as a transit hub we have over 23 bus lines, Long
13 Island Railroad and seven trains. So that number
14 sounds right to me.

15 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yep, OK. Council
16 Member Gjonaj has questions.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Thank you so much
18 for being here, Mr. Yu and Ms. Lee. Your testimony
19 is important to us. I just have a couple of
20 questions for you. The \$380,000 current budget
21 covers how many stores? I believe the expansion now
22 is gonna be 509? Is that the addition?

23 DIAN YU: That will be the addition,
24 that's correct.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: And how many do
3 you currently represent in your BID?

4 DIAN YU: We, we currently represent
5 around a total of 1000 properties, with 500 of them
6 being commercial properties.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: So roughly you
8 cover 500 now and you're gonna expand another 500 and
9 the budget's gonna be...

10 DIAN YU: One thousand.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: ...twice what is
12 currently.

13 DIAN YU: That's correct.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Can you tell me
15 how you plan on spending that million dollars when it
16 comes? I'm a true believer in BIDs. I know how
17 important they are, especially when, um, they are
18 promoting the commercial corridors. What dollar
19 amount are you going to be spending on marketing and
20 bringing business into the district?

21 DIAN YU: Ah, that's a very good
22 question, I mean especially right now. So we, ah,
23 right now we probably will spend around 20%.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: What percentage?
25

1
2 DIAN YU: Twenty to 30% of money in
3 marketing, because the nature of downtown Flushing is
4 that really requires us to spend a lot of money on
5 sanitation. I keep the mentioning the phrase that we
6 have 100,000 people walking on the street alone and
7 with 23 bus lines that really brings a tremendous
8 amount of, ah, garbage, I mean, to our sidewalks. So
9 we really need to spend tremendous amount of
10 sanitation cost just to cover that, ah, the basic.
11 But, then again, the marketing is also a crucial, ah,
12 project that we're working on. Because we're so
13 close to JFK and Laguardia Airport we really want to
14 make downtown Flushing as the first stop when people
15 visit New York City. That's our goal and we really
16 care about to market our local community. So one of
17 the things that we did is, I mean, for this year, as
18 I said before, is that we have distributed over
19 10,000 plus copies of Flushing guide. That is a
20 guide that with a restaurant guide, you know, with
21 the restaurant over there. We have a list of over
22 200-plus restaurants in the guide. And also in that
23 guide is a transit guide. So, ah, all those projects
24 are crucial to us and are dear to our heart.

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE 25
2 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Thank you for the
3 explanation. My concern is exactly that, that we
4 don't spend enough promoting our commercial corridors
5 and instead we subsidize city services, um, that we
6 already pay tax dollars into. I would encourage that
7 we continue to promote our small businesses,
8 including the restaurant businesses, which are
9 currently under siege and under threat through the
10 third-party food apps, the ghost kitchens, virtual
11 kitchens. That industry is going to be in jeopardy
12 in the near future unless we become very proactive to
13 preserve their identical and the brick-and-mortar
14 establishments before they become off the beaten path
15 through these ghost kitchens. What dollar amount do
16 you spend on security, if any?

17 DIAN YU: Ah, well, going forward I think
18 we have allocated around like 5% to 10% of the money
19 into a security that's part of our pedestrian
20 management. So it's really a mobile pedestrian
21 management program. So we don't really have a lot of
22 money for security.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: So you're
24 currently spending any money for security?

25 DIAN YU: No, we're not.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

TINA LEE: Can I just comment on that?

Um, in terms of the safety of the community we primarily work with the 109th Precinct to share information to help keep the community safe, and run programs with them.

COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: I would encourage you to continue to work on marketing and bringing business to the area. We understand that a clean commercial corridor is inviting. It's the first interaction they have with the community and it could make a decision whether or not they return. But spending that money on city services, whether it be security, sanitation, snow removal, ah, of the sort, takes away from the intent of what a BID, a business improvement district should be. The focus is on how do we market, how do we bring new foot traffic, how do we bring repeat customers to our commercial corridors. The internet has changed the world. Retail is not what it once was. We know changes are coming and bigger changes are coming that are gonna undermine this very important tax base that [offers] services and makes our communities [inaudible]. Push back. I am the chair of Small Business. Every BID is important to me. Chairman, we need to be more

1
2 attentive to our BIDs and their needs and how they
3 spend their money, and every dollar that they invest
4 back into these BIDs, ah, for improving the amount of
5 shoppers that come to these corridors is a dollar
6 wisely spent. But subsidizing city services from
7 graffiti removal, sanitation, policing or security,
8 is not in the best interest of those small mom and
9 pop shops that you have. So my door is always going
10 to be open to you and helping work with you and SBS,
11 as we determine how to improve the shopping
12 experience. And my last question to you, anyone in
13 your commercial corridor received a violation for
14 illegal signs? Have you been a subject to that
15 bombardment?

16 TINA LEE: Signage?

17 DIAN YU: Yes, signage, yes. Ah, I mean,
18 yes, we are, because as a matter of fact, I mean, for
19 the past two years we have held business fairs and in
20 that fair we invite all city agencies to help out and
21 we invite, we also invite local business and property
22 owners to attend and to resolve their fines. And so
23 far that...

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: You do know that
3 there is a, we were able to get in this year a
4 moratorium on the books...

5 DIAN YU: Moratorium, exactly.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: ...and a refund
7 for those businesses that received violations that
8 paid the violations. I am not sure if you've, ah,
9 informed your commercial corridor that they, that
10 we're relooking at the law now and assessing the
11 changes that have to be made. If they paid a fine or
12 were given a violation they may be entitled to a
13 refund, and also to be aware of the fact that there
14 are new legislations that's gonna be coming down on
15 store compliance. Those fines, Chairman, were
16 between \$5000 and \$20,000 per store. There is no mom
17 and pop shop that can prepare for such a violation,
18 um, and my, I will continue to offer my services to
19 you as you help fight for those small businesses and
20 get them the refunds that they need. Thank you.

21 DIAN YU: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you very much,
23 and for the record, according to the budget, I think
24 they're going to spend \$566,000 on supplemental
25 sanitation services, um, and, um, \$60,000 on

2 marketing, if I'm not mistaken. And I think that the
3 supplemental sanitation is basically for sweeping and
4 bagging and emptying trash cans, am I right?

5 DIAN YU: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It's not for the
7 pickup and take away of garbage?

8 DIAN YU: Yes, because, ah, we do the
9 sidewalks and just like what you said, so, ah, it's
10 to help the local business to keep the sidewalk clean
11 so the pedestrian can have a clear pathway to walk
12 and to improve our, our business district.

13 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: It has really
14 improved the district a lot. You know, I go there
15 quite often and it's, it's needed. So thank you.
16 OK, any other questions? All right, seeing none, I
17 thank you for coming in. And we do have another
18 witness who wants to speak. So thank you very much.

19 DIAN YU: All right, thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: OK, we have Bruce
21 Jacobs.

22 BRUCE JACOBS: Good morning.

23 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Good morning.

24 BRUCE JACOBS: Bruce Jacobs, Coalition of
25 the Rockaways and southeast Queens, fighter for the

1
2 Rockaways, fighter for southeast Queens, and fighter
3 for medical and religious freedom. I have, I have a
4 problem with this. First of all, it says something
5 about to notify them in the newspaper. How could
6 every real person of property be notified? That's
7 impossible just by putting a little article. Another
8 problem here is that from \$380,000 to one million
9 dollars, that's a lot of money, when people in other
10 neighborhoods can't get nothing. So that's a little
11 bit off. Now why is this people running this
12 district? In my opinion that's like kind of
13 extorting the people. Because you have to be in
14 cahoots with these guys to get anything done. If
15 you're gonna put that they're gonna run the
16 businesses where not everybody is under the order,
17 what about the mom and pop stores? What about, you
18 know, the regular people from that neighborhood? How
19 do they really feel? Now another thing, like, ah,
20 Mark was saying, the police, the sanitation, the
21 pickup of garbage, that's gonna come back to the
22 city. Why ain't these guys putting some of this
23 million dollars into these services, 'cause these
24 services will cost a lot of money? Police claim that
25 they can't even do their jobs now. So who's gonna be

1
2 the security in that neighborhood when people are
3 walking by and stuff? My thing is that I don't like
4 any kind of corporation running the business
5 district. It just doesn't work. I like to see the
6 responses of these privilege business people? How do
7 they really feel about this? Are these guys getting
8 some kind of fee from these business to get things
9 approved? I understand the neighborhood, you know,
10 political neighborhood. It, the, it can't be just
11 given to them because of to expand the district.
12 They're not happy with, with the \$380,000. They
13 don't want to take any responsibility for police,
14 sanitation, or that, and why are they the
15 representatives of this neighborhood? It just
16 doesn't make sense because they say, they don't even
17 have an exact amount of businesses that they're
18 really running. Maybe there's somebody else that's
19 stronger or the same as them and people that live
20 there for 50, 60 years, or whatever they lived, they,
21 they have rights also. I just don't believe in
22 passing it on to go automatic to these guys 'cause
23 how are they really representing the neighborhood?
24 Thank you very much.

2 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Thank you. Any
3 questions? OK. Thank you very much. I'm gonna ask
4 the clerk, ah Billy, to call the vote, Billy Martin.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: William Martin,
6 Committee Clerk, roll call vote, Committee on
7 Finance. Introduction 113-A and Land Use items 611
8 and 612.

9 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: By the way, I meant
10 to acknowledge and introduce our Majority Leader,
11 Laurie Cumbo, has joined us.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: All items are
13 coupled. Chair Dromm.

14 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: I vote aye.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Gibson.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Permission to
17 briefly explain? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

18 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes, I'm sorry.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you. Um,
20 good morning, colleagues. I just wanted to just
21 speak in favor of Council Member Brad Lander's bill
22 that relates to the capital tracker system. It has
23 been a long journey and the last time the
24 subcommittee held a hearing we learned that the
25 Mayor's Office of Operations really maintains the

1
2 existing database, which unfortunately has a minimum
3 threshold of 25 million dollars. So many of our
4 capital projects do not apply and are not therefore
5 on this database. And this bill is really an
6 opportunity to enhance the responsibilities of the
7 Mayor's Office of Operations, provide them with the
8 sufficient staff they need, and really for all of us,
9 those of us that are in PV and our capital
10 allocations that are under 25 million, which most
11 are, to make sure that there is a mechanism by which
12 residents can follow capital projects through the
13 process. So I'm grateful this bill is coming to the
14 floor. We will continue to work with the Mayor's
15 Office of Operations on its implementation and I vote
16 aye on all of today's agenda items. Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Cornegy.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Aye.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Cumbo.

20 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Aye.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Koslowitz.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Aye.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Rosenthal.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Aye.

25 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Van Bramer.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Aye.

3 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Grodenchik.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Permission
5 just to briefly explain my vote, Mr. Chair?

6 CHAIRPERSON DROMM: Yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I want to
8 congratulate Mr. Yu and Ms. Lee. I know, um, how
9 hard we fought originally to establish the Flushing
10 BID. There were not, everybody wasn't convinced.
11 But it has made a sea change in Flushing. Um, I call
12 it the snow cone effect when, you know, the garbage
13 cans overflow. Flushing is a very windy place
14 because it's right near the water and, um, it has a
15 made a tremendous difference, um, in, in the
16 perception in how Flushing looks and I congratulate
17 you on that. I also want to congratulate Brad Lander
18 on the capital tracker. I don't know who said it, it
19 may have been Churchill, sunlight is the best of
20 disinfectants, and even the little information that
21 we get now is a lot. It helps me a lot in my work.
22 And I'm sure this bill will go a long way to help us
23 all and the citizens of our city, um, to see what's
24 going on in their community. So with that I vote aye
25 on all.

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Adams.

COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Gjonaj.

COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Moya.

COUNCIL MEMBER MOYA: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Powers.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Louis.

COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Matteo.

MINORITY LEADER MATTEO: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: We have a vote
of 14 in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and
no abstentions. The items on today's agenda have
been adopted.

CHAIRPERSON DROMM: All right. OK, thank
you very much, and with that this meeting is
adjourned at 11:16 in the morning. [gavel]

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 February 22, 2020