

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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May 11, 2021  
Start: 10:08 a.m.  
Recess: 10:19 a.m.

HELD AT: Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 1)

B E F O R E: Francisco Moya  
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Diana Ayala  
Stephen Levin  
Joseph Borelli  
Barry Grodenchik  
Antonio Reynoso

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

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Recordings.

3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Recording to the  
4 computer started.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Okay. Cloud has started  
6 and--

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Backup is rolling.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Please start  
9 your opening statement.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Yes. Thank you. Good  
11 morning and welcome to the remote hearing on  
12 Subcommittee Zoning and Franchises. Will Council  
13 members and staff please turn on your video at this  
14 time? Once again, will Council members and staff  
15 please turn on their video at this time? Thank you.  
16 To minimize disruptions, please place all cell phones  
17 and electronics to vibrate. You may send your  
18 testimony to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Once again,  
19 that is [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Chair, we are  
20 ready to begin.

21 [gavel]

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you and good  
23 morning. I am Council member Francisco Moya, Chair  
24 of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. I am  
25 joined remotely today by Council members Ayala,

1 Borelli, Barry G., and Council member Chin. Today,  
2 we will vote on items heard by the subcommittee at  
3 our April 5th meeting. We will vote to approve with  
4 modifications LUs 753 and 754 and previously considered LU  
5 763 from the Suydam Street rezoning proposal relating  
6 to property in Council member Reynoso's district in  
7 Brooklyn. The proposal seeks a zoning map and zoning  
8 text amendment and a zoning special permit to  
9 facilitate the development of a new 100 percent  
10 affordable housing residential building with  
11 approximately 95 dwelling units at 1250 Willoughby  
12 Avenue along with the enlargement of an existing  
13 industrial building at 349 Suydam Street. A  
14 modification will be to strike the MIH Option two and  
15 add deep affordability option while retaining MIH  
16 Option one. Council member Reynoso is in support of  
17 the proposal, as modified. And we will also vote to  
18 approve, with modifications, LUs 770 and 771 for the  
19 Governor's Island rezoning proposal relating to  
20 property in Council member Chin's district. The  
21 proposal seeks a zoning map amendment to change an  
22 existing R32 district to a C41 district and related  
23 zoning text amendment to modify the existing special  
24 Governor's Island district by establishing a new  
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1 subdistricts for the north and south portions of the  
2 island and new provisions applicable within the  
3 proposed South Island subdistrict. Our modifications  
4 would reduce the proposed overall density by capping  
5 the aggregated floor area at 3000-- at 3,000,777  
6 square feet, allowing a full build out of the floor  
7 area in the southern subdistrict only in the  
8 provision of use group three and four: community  
9 facility use exclusively of ambulatory, diagnostic or  
10 treatment health facilities, cap the hotel and office  
11 space use in the southern subdistrict, limit to  
12 permitted obstructions in the open space subarea to  
13 no more than 20%-- and such obstructions will be  
14 included in the aggregated floor area calculations--  
15 prohibit CPC authorizations to increase allowed use  
16 in the open space subarea as, significantly reduce  
17 building height to 200 feet or below except for one  
18 parcel at 225 feet, change bulk rates to match  
19 reduced base heights and reduce bicycle-- and  
20 require bicycle parking in accordance with applicable  
21 zoning and for uses not specified in zoning at a rate  
22 of one per 10,000 square feet of floor area. Council  
23 member Chin is in support of the proposed-- of the  
24 proposal as modified and I want to congratulate  
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2 Council member Chin on achieving these modifications  
3 and I invite her to provide some remarks related to  
4 additional comments for the Governors Island trust.  
5 Council member Chin?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Good morning.  
7 Thank you, Chair Moya, for allowing me to speak on  
8 this rezoning item and also to the members of the  
9 subcommittee. Good morning. Governors Island is the  
10 New York City treasure and it is home to unique  
11 facility use and buildings that define the island's  
12 district and throughout the many months of discussion  
13 and negotiation with the Trust for Governors Island,  
14 it has been my top priority that the island retained  
15 its open and organic atmosphere and that it continues  
16 to provide families with an affordable and accessible  
17 place to picnic and to relax. I hope every New  
18 Yorker has the opportunity to ride the fairy and  
19 visit Governors Island. Some of the aspects of this  
20 proposal that I am most excited about the amenities  
21 that I believe define Governors Island. New  
22 commitments of security a permanent location for  
23 compost processing, expanding ferry services, and  
24 ensuring uses in the open space sub area are aligned  
25 with those in the public parkland and are so

1 important to the characters of Governors Island. I  
2 am pleased that the modification includes large  
3 reductions in density and, in some cases, building  
4 height is scaled down by 100 feet. From the  
5 beginning of this rezoning process, it was important  
6 to me that this process not only have developments  
7 for the Eastern and Western section of the island,  
8 but also for the long term stability of the future of  
9 the island that will include expansions of our  
10 educational facility at the harbor school. I thank  
11 every New Yorker who has been following this process  
12 and I want to speak to some of the concerns that we  
13 have heard from local residents, community boards,  
14 and our Manhattan borough president. During this  
15 negotiation process, we were able to secure, as Chair  
16 Moya talked about, a reduction in density with the  
17 FAR, reducing the square footage by 500,000 square  
18 feet and a cap of 3,775,000 square feet. And the  
19 open subarea will be aligned with the public  
20 parkland. Permitted obstruction will occupy no more  
21 than 20% of the open space [inaudible 00:06:39].  
22 Height and buildings throughout the southern area  
23 will be significantly lower than the original  
24 proposed ranges from 125 feet to 225 feet compared to  
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1 the original of 250 to 300. And then, we will have  
2 bicycle parking required for the site and even  
3 working with city bike to increase the number of docs  
4 and bikes for the island. Expansion of the harbor  
5 school that will include 18 classrooms and  
6 approximately 400 seats, including a gym and a pool  
7 that the students so wanted to have an allowing Birth  
8 Matter New York, and urban farm grow NYC to continue  
9 operation on Governors Island in the long term. The  
10 trust has extended the Earth Matters license for a  
11 five-year term on the existing site through 2026 and  
12 there will be an expanded ferry service to Governors  
13 Island. I want to stress that the modified proposal  
14 in front of the committee today is the product of  
15 hours and hours of discussion with the trust and I  
16 want to especially thank our Councils land use team,  
17 [inaudible 00:07:57] Mann, Chelsea Kelley, and  
18 Angelina Martinez Rubio for their hard work and their  
19 expertise and their support. I also appreciate the  
20 time that they have dedicated to this and I'm go  
21 happy that we can see it move forward. I also want  
22 to thank Shawn Fitzpatrick from the Mayor's Office,  
23 as well as members of the Trust of Governor's Island,  
24 Claire Newman, Sarah [inaudible 00:08:29], Chris



2 Temper, Wesley O'Brien, and Melanie Meyers, and also  
3 my land use director, Anthony Drummond, for those  
4 hours and hours of meetings. Chief of staff, Gigi  
5 Lee, and my deputy chief of staff, Connor Irvin.  
6 This has been a long process and I really appreciate  
7 all the support that I got from the Council and from  
8 my colleagues and I just want to say, again, from the  
9 Council's land use team, they have just been so  
10 fantastic. And I really urge my colleagues on this  
11 subcommittee to support this rezoning plan and I hope  
12 that all of you will have some time during the summer  
13 or to go out and really visit for yourself to see  
14 what truly a treasure Governor's Island is to our  
15 city. Thank you very much, Chair Moya.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you and, again,  
17 congratulations to Council member Chin. I know how  
18 hard you worked on this. So, congratulations to you.  
19 Let me just turn it over to our counsel to see if  
20 there's any members who wish to speak on any of these  
21 LUs?

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, I see no  
23 members with hands raised at the moment.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Seeing none, I  
25 now call for a vote to approve with modifications I

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2 have described LUs 770 and 771 and 753 and 754 and  
3 preconsidered LU 763. Counsel, can you please call  
4 the roll?

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Moya?

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I vote aye.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member  
8 Levin?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I vote aye.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member  
11 Reynoso?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I vote aye.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member  
14 Grodenchik?

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Barry G., you're up.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member  
17 Grodenchik, your vote on the land use items?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye. Sorry  
19 about that.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member  
21 Ayala? Thank you. Council member Ayala?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I vote aye.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member  
24 Borelli?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: I vote aye.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, by a vote of  
3 six in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and no  
4 abstentions, the items are approved and recommended  
5 to the full Land Use Committee.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, Arthur. And  
7 that concludes today's business. I would like to  
8 thank the members of the public, my colleagues, the  
9 subcommittee counsel, land use and other Council  
10 staff, and the sergeant-at-arms for participating in  
11 today's meeting. This meeting is hereby adjourned.

12 [gavel]

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

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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 \_\_\_\_\_ June 13, 2021 \_\_\_\_\_