

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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November 13, 2014  
Start: 10:40 a.m.  
Recess: 10:58 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E:  
JULISSA FERRERAS  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
COREY D. JOHNSON  
HELEN K. ROSENTHAL  
I. DANEEK MILLER  
JAMES G. VAN BRAMER  
LAURIE A. CUMBO  
MARK LEVINE  
ROBERT E. CORNEGY, JR.  
VANESSA L. GIBSON  
VINCENT IGNIZIO  
YDANIS A. RODRIGUEZ

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

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Good, good

morning and welcome to today's Finance Committee hearing. I'm Council Member Julissa Ferreras and I chair the committee. We've been joined by Council Members Gibson, Van Bramer, Johnson, Mendez, Cumbo, and Rosenthal. Congratulations to Council Member Cumbo for winning her Brooklyn dance off. Yes. We're going to have to start one in Queens cultural chair, I'm just saying. I'd also like... yes. I'd also like to introduce Gia Fang [sp?] who has recently joined the legal unit of the Finance Division as the legislative assistant. Gia will be working closely with my Chief Council Tanisha Edward and Assistant Council Rebecca Chassen [sp?] on the work of the Finance Committee. Welcome Gia, not to be confused with Commissioner Gia. So we're going to try to make that work. Today we have three items on the agenda, two Land Use items and a BID item. The first Land Use item is... plaza south sponsored by KB25 HDFC in Council Member Mendez's district in Manhattan. This property which is a new construction will provide 55 units of affordable rental housing for middle income families, the

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2 property's tax exemption will be a full property  
3 tax exemption it will receive for 40 years. Next we  
4 have ACRMD Lubin Center for independent living in  
5 Council Member Lander's district in Brooklyn. The  
6 property which is sponsored by the Association of  
7 Children with Retard, Retarded Mental Development  
8 Residential Facilities HDFC provides 25 units of  
9 affordable housing for low income senior citizens.  
10 It is refinancing its mortgage and will need a new  
11 regulatory agreement with HBT that is with HUD's  
12 mortgage. The property's new property tax exemption  
13 will be partial exemption which will receive, which  
14 it will receive for 40 years. Both council members  
15 support these projects and representatives from HPD  
16 are here to answer any questions you may have on  
17 the Land Use items. The third item on the agenda is  
18 a BID item, Intro 480 which relates to the Fordham  
19 Road business improvement district in Council  
20 Member Torres' district in the Bronx. The Fordham  
21 Road BID was established in 2005 and it general  
22 covers, covers the regional commercial center of  
23 the west Bronx. The BID includes the third busiest  
24 retail corridor in New York City and serves over  
25 80,000 visitors a day. It includes over 300

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2 businesses which have a total annual sale revenue  
3 of over 500 million dollars. The retailers in the  
4 BID are both small independent merchants as well as  
5 large national and regional chains. At this time  
6 the BID is seeking the council's approval to do  
7 three things; one, expand the boundaries to include  
8 two additional tax lot that include one Fordham  
9 Plaza 14 story office building with numerous retail  
10 establishments on the floor, on the ground floor.  
11 And Fordham Plaza, a plaza that also serves as a  
12 major transportation HUB, two, to increase its  
13 annual budget from 625 thousand dollars to 670  
14 thousand dollars, and three, to amend the district  
15 plan to include a cap on all assessments so that  
16 the maximum annual assessment to be paid by any  
17 individual property not exceed 45 thousand dollars.  
18 On October 7, 2014 this committee held a hearing to  
19 consider Intro 480 and all the testimony we heard  
20 was in support of the legislation as required by  
21 law the hearing was closed without a vote and a 30  
22 day objection period began to allow property owners  
23 affected by the proposed extension of the BID to  
24 formally object to the extension. According to the  
25 city clerk with whom these objections would be

1  
2 filed no property owner filed an objection to the  
3 extension of the Fordham Road BID during the 30 day  
4 period. According to the committee, accordingly the  
5 committee may now vote in favor of Intro 480 if we  
6 can answer the following four questions in the  
7 affirmative; were all notices of the hearing for  
8 all hearings required to be held published and  
9 mailed as required by law and otherwise sufficient?  
10 Does all the real property within district  
11 boundaries benefit from the establishment of the  
12 district except as otherwise provided by law? Is  
13 all real property benefitted by the district  
14 included in, within the district? And is the  
15 establishment of this district in the best interest  
16 of the public? In addition the committee and the  
17 full council must determine that it is in the  
18 public's interest to authorize an increase in the  
19 maximum annual expenditure amount that the relevant  
20 tax and debt limits will not be extended. At this  
21 notice of, at, at that, and that notice of the  
22 increased proposed expenditure amount was properly  
23 published. The Department of Small Business  
24 Services is here to testify to help us answer those  
25 questions. Council Member Torres supports the

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2 proposed expansion and other changes to the BID.  
3 For further details on the management and district  
4 profile of the Fordham Road BID a description of  
5 the services that are, are and will be provided and  
6 information regarding the property's located within  
7 the BID and the proposed extension. Please refer to  
8 the committee report and the attached city planning  
9 commission report and the BID's proposed extended  
10 district plan. Those are the items for today. I  
11 will first open up the floor to Council Member  
12 Mendez to discuss her matter and then we will open  
13 up the floor to other members of the Land Use  
14 questions. Council Member Mendez.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you Madam  
16 Chair. Several years ago we had a Mitchell-Lama  
17 that was coming out of the program. And.. houses  
18 extended rent stabilization to those residents in  
19 that building. But in addition on a part of their  
20 land we agreed that they would build affordable  
21 housing. 55 units will be built of which 20  
22 percent, 20 percent will be.. no. 22 out of the 55  
23 units, whatever percentage that is, will be for  
24 incomes under 78 percent of the AMI. This is in  
25 Kips Bay which is a higher income part of my

1  
2 community. And the other 33 units will range 11  
3 units at 120 percent, 11 units at 145 percent, and  
4 11 units at 165 percent of AMI which would allow  
5 many of the neighborhood residents who are being  
6 priced out of their rent stabilized housing or  
7 other form of Mitchell-Lamas to apply for this  
8 housing. I'm very proud of this project. I'm  
9 finally am proud that it's finally coming to the  
10 floor of the city council and I would ask all my  
11 colleagues to vote aye. Thank you very much Madam  
12 Chair.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council  
14 Member Mendez. Do we have any other questions, Land  
15 Use related questions? HPD's representative. If you  
16 could just state your name for the record. Council  
17 Member Cumbo.

18 ARTEMISIA PIERCE: Sure I'm Artemisia  
19 Pierce [sic] [cross-talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Oh I'm so sorry  
21 we have to swear you in as..

22 ARTEMISIA PIERCE: Oh.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: ...part of the new  
24 rules.

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2 UNKNOWN FEMALE: Do you affirm that your  
3 testimony will be truthful to the best of your  
4 knowledge, information, and belief?

5 ARTEMISIA PIERCE: I do.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you. And  
7 we've also been joined by Council Member Rodriguez.  
8 Council Member Cumbo with your question.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Just one simple  
10 question in terms of understanding. This sounds  
11 like a great project. Are there any other community  
12 benefits to this particular project or is it  
13 primarily focused on the, the, the level of  
14 affordability that's going to be included in the  
15 project?

16 ARTEMISIA PIERCE: Yes I'm Artemisia  
17 Pierce from HPD and the, this is focused on the  
18 residential housing.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay. And..  
20 [cross-talk]

21 UNKNOWN FEMALE: Excuse me, can I just  
22 add 50 percent preference is given to Community  
23 Board 6 residents of which this is located in.

24 ARTEMISIA PIERCE: Yes.  
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Oh so there will  
3 be a preference for the Community Board members  
4 also.

5 UNKNOWN FEMALE: For any... within the  
6 community board district.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Oh, okay. That's  
8 fantastic.

9 ARTEMISIA PIERCE: Yes that, that's  
10 generally the standard for HPD's housing programs  
11 is the 50 percent community board preference.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay and that's,  
13 and when will the project be completed?

14 ARTEMISIA PIERCE: Generally we have a  
15 range of between 18 months to 24 months. That's  
16 generally the new construction time line for our  
17 projects.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Well that's  
19 fantastic. Congratulations.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council  
21 Member Cumbo. Also to let members know we've asked  
22 HPD, we tentatively have a date for November 22<sup>nd</sup>?  
23 21<sup>st</sup>. So if you can mark your calendars we'll get  
24 you more detail where HPD is going to come and do a  
25 briefing very similar to what SBS did last week or

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2 two weeks ago for BID specific. But this is going  
3 to be on a lot of the programs that we vote on in  
4 this committee. So they're going to be here to give  
5 us a briefing. Okay, thank you very much for your  
6 testimony. We're going to now call up the  
7 Department of Small Business Services to read their  
8 testimony but also if we have any questions in  
9 reference to the Fordham Road BID.

10 UNKNOWN FEMALE: Do you affirm that your  
11 testimony will be truthful to the best of your  
12 knowledge, information, and belief?

13 BLAISE BACKER: I do. Good morning Chair  
14 Ferreras and members of the Finance Committee. I am  
15 Blaise Backer, Deputy Commissioner of Neighborhood  
16 Development at The Department of Small Business  
17 Services. I am joined by Executive Director of the  
18 BID program, Chris Goddard and Director of the BID  
19 Development Patrick Cammack. As required by law the  
20 Fordham Road Business Improvement District mailed  
21 the summary of the City Council resolution to the  
22 following parties; each owner of real property  
23 within the proposed district to the address shown  
24 on the latest city assessment roll, such other  
25 persons as are registered with the city to receive

1 tax bills concerning real property within the  
2 district, and tenants of each building within the  
3 proposed district. The BID also published in the  
4 newspaper having general circulation in the  
5 district a notice stating the time and place of the  
6 public hearing and stating the increase in the  
7 amount to be expended annually in the district. In  
8 addition SBS arranged for the publication of the  
9 summary of their resolution and the city record.  
10 The total amount to be assessed on the proposed  
11 expanded district is 670 thousand dollars. This is  
12 less than the 3,465,581 dollars which is the 20  
13 percent threshold of the total amount of municipal  
14 real property taxes levied against the proposed  
15 expanded district in this fiscal year which is  
16 17,327,905 dollars. We would like to report on the  
17 result of the objections filed with the city clerk  
18 against the proposed expansion and amendments to  
19 the district plan of the Fordham Road BID. At the  
20 conclusion of the objection period at 5:00 p.m. on  
21 November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014 and taking into consideration  
22 any objections post marked by that date no  
23 objections were filed with the city clerk. Due to  
24 zero objections being filed this is within our  
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2 acceptable threshold needed to advance the bill for  
3 a favorable consideration by the city council. We  
4 at SBS support the proposed expansion and district  
5 plan amendments of the Fordham Road BID. In our  
6 judgment the proposed changes will improve business  
7 conditions and quality of life in the surrounding  
8 area laying the ground work for further  
9 neighborhood development activities in the Fordham  
10 Road section of the Bronx. I would like to  
11 acknowledge that the BID staff is here today in  
12 case there are any specific questions about the  
13 proposed expansion and district plan amendments. At  
14 this time we are happy to take any questions. Thank  
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you. Does  
17 any council member have questions in reference to  
18 the Fordham Road BID? No? Excellent.

19 BLAISE BACKER: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you SBS and  
21 Council Member Lander wants to say a few words on  
22 his HPD... so you guys don't have to answer that  
23 question. They're real happy to run off.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you Madam  
25 Chair. I really appreciate your and members of the

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2 committee's hearing and reviewing favorably item  
3 number... no item number excuse me I screw up even  
4 while she's walking over. Oh okay. Well, so I'm a  
5 big supporter of the supportive housing development  
6 that's in my district that's having its tax  
7 exemption extended today so they can get HUD  
8 refinancing I'm not going to go through all the  
9 AMIs because without Council Member Barron here  
10 it's not that much fun to list just how good the  
11 depth of affordability is but it is a wonderful,  
12 very deeply affordable, very supportive project is  
13 anyone wants to come visit it with me some time I  
14 would love it and I appreciate your support in  
15 extending their tax exemption. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council  
17 Member. Now we will have Billy Martin, the  
18 Committee Clerk, call the roll.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: William Martin,  
20 Committee Clerk. Roll call vote Committee on  
21 Finance. Items are coupled. Chair Ferreras.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: I vote aye and  
23 congratulations again to Council Member Mendez,  
24 Lander, and Torres. And I urge my colleagues to  
25 vote aye also.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Rodriguez.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Van Bramer.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Gibson.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I want to congratulate all my colleagues for passing very important legislation. But as a Bronx member I also want to give credit to Council Member Ritchie Torres and the Fordham Road BID. Huge supporters and fans have been working with them for many years and I want to thank all of you for your work and everything that you do to make Fordham Road thriving in the borough of the Bronx. I proudly vote yes on all.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Cumbo.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I vote aye on all.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Johnson.

COUNCIL MEMBER JOHNSON: Aye on all.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Rosenthal.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Aye on all.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: By a vote of seven in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and

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COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

no abstentions items have been adopted. Members  
please sign the committee reports. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you and we  
will adjourn this meeting.

[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 November 14, 2014