

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS AND  
CONCESSIONS

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March 9, 2015  
Start: 1:17 p.m.  
Recess: 1:42 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm,  
16th Fl.

B E F O R E:  
INEZ E. DICKENS  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Darlene Mealy  
Ydanis A. Rodriguez  
Andrew Cohen  
Mark Treyger

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

Artie Pearson  
Director of Land Use  
Office of Governmental Relations and  
Regulatory Compliance  
NYC Housing Preservation & Development

Ted Weinstein  
Director of Bronx Planning  
Division of Planning and Sustainability  
NYC Housing Preservation & Development

Michael Wadman  
Phipps Houses

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2 [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Good afternoon. I  
4 am Council Member Inez E. Dickens, Chair of the  
5 Subcommittee on Planning, Dispositions and  
6 Concessions. I would like to welcome everyone to  
7 today's hearing.

8 I want to thank and acknowledge my  
9 Sergeant at Arms, Heriberto Collazo and my Land Use  
10 Director, Raju Mann, Deputy Director Amy Levitan and  
11 my Attorney, Ann McCoy and of course my new Attorney  
12 is Dylan Casey. Welcome him -- come on y'all,  
13 welcome.

14 [applause]

15 I want to acknowledge my esteemed  
16 colleagues who are members of the Planning  
17 Subcommittee -- Council Member Andrew Cohen, Council  
18 Member Mark Treyger; Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez,  
19 who today gets the gold star. [background comments,  
20 laughter]

21 We have two items on our calendar that we  
22 will be hearing and voting on. I'm now opening up  
23 the public hearing for Land Use Item Nos. 0180, 1081,  
24 0182; 0183, also known as Melrose Commons North.  
25 These properties are related and are located in

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS AND CONCESSIONS 4  
2 Council Member Arroyo's district in the Bronx; this  
3 application is submitted by HPD for an approval of a  
4 ULURP, UDAAP and zoning change; they are also seeking  
5 a proposed third amendment to the Melrose Commons  
6 Urban Renewal Area, as well as an amendment to the  
7 City Map.

8 I believe we have some members from HPD;  
9 we have the Director of Land Use, Artie Pearson and  
10 the Director of Bronx Planning, Ted Weinstein, both  
11 from HPD here to testify. Please turn on your mics  
12 and identify yourselves.

13 ARTIE PEARSON: Good afternoon, Chair  
14 Dickens and members of the Subcommittee. I'm Artie  
15 Pearson, Director of Land Use from HPD's Office of  
16 Governmental Relations and Regulatory Compliance and  
17 I'm joined by Ted Weinstein, Director of Bronx  
18 Planning within HPD's Division of Planning and  
19 Sustainability.

20 Land Use Nos. 0180, 0181, 0182 and 0183  
21 are proposed actions relating to the Melrose Commons  
22 North RFP Site C, which would be developed on City-  
23 owned parcels located at Block 2383, Lots 19, 25, 27,  
24 29, 30, 31, 33, 35, 39 and an unbuilt map street to  
25 be demapped between East 161st and 163rd Streets.

2 Land Use No. 0180 is the third amendment  
3 to the Melrose Commons Urban Renewal Plan; the  
4 current proposed changes include the elimination of  
5 the Melrose Crescent and the remapping of East 162nd  
6 Street. Additionally, several sites are being  
7 reconfigured and/or consolidated. Furthermore, use  
8 designations are changing from residential to public  
9 open space and the reverse and the removal of height  
10 restrictions and modification of curb cut regulations  
11 affecting the urban renewal area site is also being  
12 proposed.

13 Land Use No. 0181 consists of the  
14 proposed amendment of the Zoning Map, changing an  
15 existing R7-2 District to an R8 and establishing a  
16 C1-4 District within the proposed R8 District.

17 Land Use No. 0182 consists of the UDAAP  
18 designation, project approval and disposition of  
19 Block 2383, Lots 19, 25, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35, 39  
20 and a portion of the area to be demapped for the  
21 development of a mixed-use project known as Melrose  
22 Commons North, RFP Site C. The disposition area will  
23 contain two buildings; the first building on  
24 Disposition Area A will be developed under HPD's  
25 Extremely Low and Low-Income Affordability Program;

2 the sponsor will take the new construction of one  
3 building that will provide 198 rental units,  
4 including plus one for the superintendent; they will  
5 be a mix of studio, one, two and three-bedroom units  
6 and the rents will be affordable to low-income  
7 households between 30 and 80 percent; the rents will  
8 average between \$367 for a studio and \$1740 for a  
9 three-bedroom unit. The project will also include  
10 8,233 square feet for commercial space.

11 The second building on Disposition Site B  
12 will consist of new construction of a building under  
13 the Supportive Housing Loan Program; the sponsor for  
14 this building will provide 68 studios for veterans,  
15 plus a two-bedroom unit for a superintendent. The  
16 building will also include a multi-purpose room for  
17 dining and activities, administrative offices, social  
18 service offices, job training office and security  
19 desk; referrals for these units will come from the  
20 Department of Homeless Services.

21 Together the two buildings will provide a  
22 total of 257 units of affordable housing for low-  
23 income households, plus two superintendent units.

24 And Land Use 0183 consists of a proposed  
25 amendment to the City Map involving the elimination,

1       SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS AND CONCESSIONS 7  
2 continuation and closing of certain streets,  
3 establishment and prolongation of certain streets and  
4 extinguishment of portions of sewer easements and  
5 adjustment of grades of property in order to  
6 facilitate future development within the Melrose  
7 Commons area. And Council Member Arroyo has been  
8 briefed and supports this project.

9                   CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Do you have  
10 anything to add, Mr. Weinstein?

11                   TED WEINSTEIN: No, but I'm happy to  
12 answer the questions.

13                   CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Alright. I first  
14 wanna comment Council Member Arroyo for working hard  
15 with you and for HPD willing to do this because of  
16 the supportive housing for the formerly homeless  
17 veterans, which has been a component of society that  
18 has been neglected, so I'm very pleased to see about  
19 that and I'm also very pleased to see that this is  
20 gonna be a totally, really affordable, in the true  
21 sense of the word affordability, housing.

22                   Before I pass it on to my colleagues to  
23 see if they have any questions, I have a couple --  
24 community space and retail space, square footage for  
25 each and what is the approximate per square footage

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2 cost; will it be a build-out or is that expected from  
3 the tenant?

4 TED WEINSTEIN: 'Kay. The commercial  
5 space will be approximately 8,200 square feet and the  
6 interior build-out would be the responsibility of the  
7 commercial tenant that they rent to. I actually am  
8 not sure about community facility space.. I'm sorry; I  
9 don't... [crosstalk]

10 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: What are you  
11 anticipating advertising the retail space for?

12 TED WEINSTEIN: Yes, well it's -- we've  
13 spoken to the Community Board as well about the need  
14 for retail space; it would be on 161st Street, which  
15 is a major street that cuts across the South Bronx  
16 and it would be very helpful to reactivate that  
17 street, create pedestrian traffic by putting in some  
18 type of an active retail use; I mean it could be a  
19 restaurant, it could be a number of things that the  
20 community would be interested in having there.

21 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: What I was really  
22 asking about was the per square footage that you're  
23 advertising for rental.

24 TED WEINSTEIN: Well the commercial space  
25 -- it's approximately 8,200 square feet.

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2 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Yes, I understand..

3 TED WEINSTEIN: Yeah.

4 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: how much per square  
5 foot...

6 TED WEINSTEIN: Oh you mean for the  
7 rental amount...? [crosstalk]

8 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: are you renting it  
9 for? Let me be a little bit more specific..  
10 [crosstalk]

11 TED WEINSTEIN: Oh okay. I'm sorry; I  
12 didn't... [crosstalk]

13 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: That's alright.

14 TED WEINSTEIN: The development team is  
15 present here and if... [crosstalk]

16 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Well can someone  
17 come up and give me an answer; is it gonna be  
18 affordable? Is any part of that 8,200 square feet  
19 gonna be affordable for indigenous businesses that  
20 are in that area or is it gonna be at market rate,  
21 and if so, what does the market rate bare there?

22 TED WEINSTEIN: Okay.

23 [background comment]

24

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: No, please come up.  
3 Give your name, please; your affiliation. Please  
4 give him a seat. [background comments] Thank you.

5 MICHAEL WADMAN: Hi. So to answer your  
6 question, the projected underwritten rent is \$12 a  
7 square foot, which is measurably lower than the best  
8 rents in that neighborhood, but we think is a prudent  
9 level to try to get the type of tenant that Mr.  
10 Weinstein referred to; it has been hard for us to  
11 find real active, you know nighttime use type of  
12 retail tenants that we know the community wants, so  
13 hopefully having this lower rent as being all we need  
14 to charge will help with that effort.

15 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: So you're looking  
16 mainly for a restaurant; is that my understanding?

17 MICHAEL WADMAN: That's one of the uses,  
18 but what I mean is a more -- and I think what  
19 Mr. Weinstein meant was, a real genuine retail use  
20 rather than a community facility or a use that's not  
21 open at night, so could be stores that have you know  
22 evening hours as well where you have people coming in  
23 and out on a regular basis, that kind of things.

24 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Alright. And you  
25 said \$12 per square foot... [crosstalk]

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2 MICHAEL WADMAN: Yeah.

3 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: what is the market  
4 baring in that area?

5 MICHAEL WADMAN: I would say the higher  
6 end of the market is more like \$20-25... [crosstalk]

7 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: But that wouldn't  
8 be around 161st Street.

9 MICHAEL WADMAN: Well in and around; we  
10 have other properties in the neighborhood where we  
11 actually have community facility tenants, because  
12 those were the only people we could find at the time,  
13 and they do pay something like \$20-25 a foot, but we  
14 were unable to find real retail at that number, which  
15 is one of the reasons we wanna use this lower number  
16 for this project.

17 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Now you're the  
18 developer?

19 MICHAEL WADMAN: Correct. Yeah, I'm from  
20 Phipps Houses, which is one of the co-developers.

21 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: I'm very familiar  
22 with Phipps. Alright. And give me your name again,  
23 please.

24 MICHAEL WADMAN: Michael Wadman.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Alright. And what  
3 about the community facility space?

4 MICHAEL WADMAN: So I think the language  
5 in the materials refers to the 8,200 square feet as  
6 being retail or community facility, because we have  
7 sometimes rented to community facility tenants; there  
8 isn't any other space being rented to outside  
9 parties. The veterans building has program space  
10 that Ted described, but there isn't any other space  
11 being leased to outside... [crosstalk]

12 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: So the retail space  
13 is really located in building one, the first  
14 building?

15 MICHAEL WADMAN: Correct.

16 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Okay. Alright,  
17 thank you so much. I'm asking my colleagues; do they  
18 have any questions on this? Since I'm the only one  
19 that's asking a lot of questions, then I will... I am  
20 very happy about this, the \$12 per square foot sounds  
21 reasonable; I'm not quite familiar with that area and  
22 the retail space, but basing it just upon numbers,  
23 that sounds reasonable because I'm very concerned  
24 about indigenous businesses being able to stay in  
25 their communities that they service, because they're

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2 the ones that hire from the community. But I wanna  
3 thank you and the Phipps Housing, who's renowned for  
4 maintaining affordable housing in New York City. So  
5 thank you so much and if there's nothing else...

6 [crosstalk]

7 MICHAEL WADMAN: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: that anyone has to  
9 say, I'm gonna close the public hearing on Land Use  
10 Item Nos. 0180, 0181, 0182 and 0183, also known as  
11 Melrose Commons North, and I'm not gonna open the  
12 public hearing on Land Use Nos. 0184 and 0185, the  
13 Corona Senior Residence, which are also related.

14 This application is submitted by HPD for  
15 approval of a UDAAP and zoning change for property  
16 located in Council Member Julissa Ferreras' district  
17 in Queens.

18 And let's see, we have again to testify  
19 Artie Pearson, Director of Land Use at HPD -- just  
20 keep the seat; you're in the hot seat today?

21 ARTIE PEARSON: I'm in the hot seat  
22 today.

23 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Okay. [laughter]  
24 And Chanda Shampa [sic], Director of Queens Planning.  
25 Please identify yourselves first.

2 ARTIE PEARSON: Again, I am Artie

3 Pearson, Director of Land Use from HPD's Office of  
4 Governmental relations on Regulatory Compliance and  
5 I'm joined by Shampa Chanda, Director of the Queens  
6 Planning Unit within HPD's Division of Planning and  
7 Sustainability.

8 Land Use No. 0184 consists of the ULURP  
9 action for the designation, project approval and  
10 disposition of City-owned property located at 54-25  
11 101st Street, also known as Corona Senior Residence.  
12 Under HPD's Senior Affordable Rental Apartments  
13 Program, the sponsor proposes to construct an 8-story  
14 building, creating 68 units for low-income senior;  
15 they will be a mixture of studios and one-bedrooms,  
16 plus a two-bedroom apartment for a superintendent;  
17 the tenants will pay no more than 30 percent of their  
18 household income in rent and the expected rent for a  
19 studio apartment is approximately \$440 and a one-  
20 bedroom unit will be approximately \$471. The project  
21 will include 5,150 square feet of community facility  
22 space on the ground floor for residents and for a  
23 pre-K program; additionally, 4,924 square feet of  
24 open space on the ground floor containing an open  
25

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2 passive area with seating, community garden space and  
3 a children's play area for the pre-K program.

4 Land Use No. 0185 consists of the  
5 proposed action to approve an amendment of the Zoning  
6 Map, Section No. 10b, by changing from an R6B  
7 District to an R6 District, property bounded by Lewis  
8 Avenue, which is aligned between 101st Street and  
9 102nd Street, aligned 270 feet northwesterly of  
10 Martense Avenue and 101st Street in order to  
11 facilitate the development of the Corona Senior  
12 Service Center, and Council Member Ferreras is  
13 supportive of this project.

14 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Miss Chanda, do you  
15 have anything you would like to add?

16 SHAMPA CHANDA: I will be more than happy  
17 to answer any questions you may have.

18 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Alright. And now  
19 this is -- please forgive me; what is the zoning  
20 change, going from what to what?

21 SHAMPA CHANDA: The current zoning is R6B  
22 District and the proposed zoning is an R6 District,  
23 so the reason for this change is the R6B allows an  
24 FAR of 2 for any kind of housing, even for nonprofit  
25 senior housing, whereas an R6 allows for a higher

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2 density for nonprofit senior housing and this will  
3 enable us to provide more senior units on this site.

4 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: What's the FAR for  
5 an R6?

6 SHAMPA CHANDA: R6 for senior, it is 3.9  
7 FAR.

8 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: And that's only for  
9 senior housing?

10 SHAMPA CHANDA: It's only for senior  
11 housing.

12 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Otherwise, what  
13 would R6 FAR... [crosstalk]

14 SHAMPA CHANDA: R6... R6 allows --  
15 depending upon the housing type, so if it is a  
16 contextual built form in this neighborhood it would  
17 mostly be an R6B equivalent; it would be a 2 FAR  
18 building type, but if someone wants to do a height-  
19 factor building, then it depends on the range; it  
20 would go 2.43 FAR onwards; sorry, up to 2.43 FAR.

21 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Well FAR 2 to 3.9  
22 to me seems to still be contextual.

23 SHAMPA CHANDA: Yes. Yes.  
24  
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2 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Alright. And this  
3 is new construction with an AMI up to 30 percent; is  
4 that what I understood?

5 SHAMPA CHANDA: So the program that Artie  
6 just mentioned, this is the -- we call it,  
7 affectionately, SARA, Senior Affordable Rental  
8 Apartment Program; it allows affordability; it is for  
9 a senior program for households with income up to 60  
10 percent of area median income; however, we anticipate  
11 in this particular project it would be limited up to  
12 50 percent of area median income.

13 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Very good. Thank  
14 you so much for coming in to testify. Are there any  
15 questions from my colleagues? Council Member  
16 Treyger, please.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you,  
18 Chair. Just a point for clarification; who is the  
19 applicant in this; who is seeking to do this  
20 building?

21 ARTIE PEARSON: The sponsor for this is  
22 the Hannick [sp?] Corona HDFC...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay.

24 ARTIE PEARSON: it's a nonprofit.

25

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right. And how  
3 long was this project in the works?

4 SHAMPA CHANDA: This site was identified  
5 as a senior housing site as part of a point of  
6 agreement with Willets Point, developments of [sic[  
7 Council Member Ferreras, Council Member Koo; they  
8 were very involved.. [crosstalk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right.

10 SHAMPA CHANDA: in that point of  
11 agreement, so it really started I would say last  
12 year; we aggressively started working on the project  
13 with the Department of City Planning and the sponsor  
14 last year.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Reason why I  
16 asked is because I'd love to work with you on the  
17 same program in my district, because.. [crosstalk]

18 SHAMPA CHANDA: We...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: there is a great  
20 need for this as well in Southern Brooklyn as well.

21 SHAMPA CHANDA: We would like to too.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you.

23 Thanks, Chair.. [crosstalk]

24

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2 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Now you said this  
3 was done as a result of the Willets Point  
4 negotiations... [crosstalk]

5 SHAMPA CHANDA: The site was identified  
6 as a housing site, [background comment] as part of  
7 the negotiation with the Willets Point and the  
8 agreement was that we would [background comment]  
9 develop senior housing on this site... [crosstalk]

10 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Council Member  
11 Treyger, frequently when we do a rezoning, a large  
12 rezoning, we're able to better negotiate effectively  
13 for our community to get additional sites identified  
14 for affordable housing or senior housing, so I just  
15 wanted to put that in your ear.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Well I hear you,  
17 Chair and I will say that Coney Island and other  
18 parts of my district sill has a lot of City-owned  
19 land and even without a big rezoning right now, I  
20 will aggressively be working on making sure we have  
21 senior housing as well in my district. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Alright, I wanna  
23 thank all of you for coming in to testify; I'm  
24 closing the public hearing on Land Use Item Nos. 0184  
25 and 0185. I note for the record that the

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2 applications that we are voting on today have my full  
3 support and that of the local Council Members in  
4 whose districts both of these actions are being  
5 taken.

6 I will now call on counsel to call the  
7 roll on a vote to approve.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Dickens.

9 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Aye.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Cohen.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Aye.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member  
13 Treyger.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Aye.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Land Use Nos. 0180,  
16 0181, 0182, 0183, 0184 and 0185 are approved, with 3  
17 votes in the affirmative, 0 in the negative and 0  
18 abstentions.

19 CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: I would like to  
20 thank the members of the public, my colleagues;  
21 Council and Land Use staff for attending today's  
22 hearing. Please mark your calendar and be sure to  
23 attend our next hearing which will be held on March  
24 24th. I'm going to leave this hearing open for 15  
25

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2 minutes to allow other members to come in to vote.

3 Thank you for coming and [gavel] have a great day.

4 [background comments]

5 [pause]

6 [background comments]

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member

8 Rodriguez.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Aye. And with  
10 this, this meeting is adjourned.

11 [background comments]

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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 March 23, 2015