

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING, AND
MARITIME USES

----- X

August 12, 2015
Start: 11:19 a.m.
Recess: 11:52 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E:

PETER A. KOO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ANNABEL PALMA
BEN KALLOS
INEZ D. BARRON
MARIA DEL CARMEN ARROYO
ROSIE MENDEZ
STEPHEN T. LEVIN

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING, AND
MARITIME USES

1

2

2

[gavel]

3

CHAIRPERSON KOO: Good morning. My name

4

is Peter Koo. I'm the council member for... I'm... I'm

5

the Chair and Council Member for Landmark

6

Subcommittee. We are convene... convening the

7

Landmark Subcommittee to proceed with application

8

30155367SCR, a site plan submitted by SCA for

9

approval of a new 345-seat annex to Curtis High

10

School. This is... the school is in Council Member

11

Rose... Council Member... Rose yeah yeah yeah. Council

12

Member Rose district. Since she's not here today

13

and Chair Greenfield is saying some comments on her

14

behalf.

15

COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank you.

16

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you

17

especially for your thorough treatment of this

18

siting application and for giving the opportunity

19

for all sides to air their concerns. The Council

20

Member wants to be clear that her top priority of

21

course is relieving the overcrowding at Curtis High

22

School. The school is currently at 147 percent

23

capacity. She still would like to of course see a

24

brand new high school in the north shore of Staten

25

Island. Unfortunately the School Constructions

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING, AND
MARITIME USES

3

1
2 Authority is not at this point ready to do that but
3 they're certainly willing to move forward with this
4 project. She remains concerned about the
5 preservation of the historic stone wall but
6 believes that the priority needs to be moving this
7 project forward and so she therefore supports the
8 project. And based on my conversations with
9 representatives from the city who've pledged to us
10 that after this is done they will sit down with the
11 council member to see if there is a way to
12 incorporate the wall as well. And so we will take
13 them at their word and strongly encourage them to
14 try to preserve this historic wall that is a very
15 important part of the historic heritage of this
16 particular site. So based on the council member's
17 feedback I myself and the local council member are
18 encouraging members to vote aye on this proposal.

19 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you Mr. Chair.
20 Joining us on our subcommittee are member Kallos
21 and Council Member Levin and Council Member Mendez.
22 And yesterday we heard the concerns of local
23 residents for the preservation of a historic stone
24 wall that will be partially removed as part of the
25 site plan. We have received a letter from Landmarks

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING, AND
MARITIME USES

4

1
2 Preservation Commission explaining that a wall... in
3 the historic district lower part of the landmark
4 site for the existing school. While we understand
5 the concerns of local residents we must balance
6 those concerns against the urgent need for a school
7 in this community. We are now moving forward with
8 this item. Like Council Member Greenfield already
9 said Council Member Rose has indicated her support
10 for the school. I ask you all to vote in favor as
11 well. I now call for a vote on this preconsider LU
12 item, application number 20155364SCR. Counsel can
13 you call the roll?

14 COUNSEL: Chair Koo.

15 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Aye.

16 COUNSEL: Council Member Mendez.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Permission to
18 explain my vote?

19 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I cannot vote in
21 favor of this siting. As much as we need schools
22 and we need to move forward with the overcrowded
23 situation at this particular high school... however
24 we have a historic wall that was built in 1898 and
25 it is most troubling to me that the School

1
2 Construction Authority has not tried to figure out
3 a way of incorporating that wall into the design.
4 And so we are left with voting for this today or
5 not. And then getting back to the School
6 Construction Authority for them to determine if and
7 how they can incorporate the school wall... this
8 historic wall into the school project. You know it...
9 it just seems backwards to me. This is not the
10 first time the School Construction Authority has I
11 feel not done their due diligence. In... in my
12 district they went forward with a school siting
13 that I approved only to find out after the fact
14 that the school building was contrary to zoning. So
15 we needed to shorten the height of the building
16 after the fact because this is something they did
17 not flag nor bring to the attention of this
18 committee nor to my attention. So for this reasons
19 I cannot vote in favor. However out of difference
20 to my colleague who I have not been able to reach
21 I'll be abstaining instead of voting no on this
22 matter. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you.

24 COUNSEL: Council Member Levin.

25

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING, AND
MARITIME USES

6

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Permission to
3 explain my vote?

4 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [off mic] Yes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you Mr.
6 Chairman. I'm going to be voting aye on this item.
7 I... I want to express some reservation in the
8 proposed demolition of this historic wall. We had
9 an extensive hearing yesterday and thank you for
10 conducting that in a... in a very thorough fashion.
11 Thank... thank you to Chair Greenfield as well. And
12 we requested that there be a follow-up with the
13 Landmarks Preservation Commission. That has been
14 done. They have produced the designation report of
15 the school itself from 1982. I haven't had a chance
16 to go through the entire designation report but
17 they did do what we asked them to do. I would
18 encourage strongly the School Construction
19 Authority to explore ways to... to... to yield the
20 necessary square footage for this expansion while
21 not taking down a historic wall. Whether it's in
22 the designation report or not it's still historic
23 in many ways. And every effort... every reasonable
24 effort should be made to preserve it. And... and so
25 I... I encourage SCA to work with Council Member Rose

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING, AND
MARITIME USES

7

1
2 and her staff to make sure that... that that takes
3 place. But in the interest of alleviating the
4 overcrowding that is at this school and the
5 challenges that are faced within that school
6 community I will be voting aye on this item. Thank
7 you.

8 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you.

9 COUNSEL: Council Member Kallos.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I vote aye.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Mr. Chair? I've
12 just gotten word from Council Member Rose. So now
13 that I've been able to let her know I'll like to
14 change my abstention to a no vote. Thank you very
15 much.

16 CHAIRPERSON KOO: We'll keep the vote
17 open until some other members come in. You want to
18 call?

19 COUNSEL: [off mic] Just go ahead.

20 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah. Right. Council
21 Member Arroyo. Council Member...

22 COUNSEL: Council Member Arroyo.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Aye.

24 COUNSEL: Council Member Arroyo.
25

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING, AND
MARITIME USES

8

1

2

COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Am I saying aye?

3

What am I doing? Mr. Chairman. Aye.

4

CHAIRPERSON KOO: Oh please, yeah. Go

5

ahead yeah. You want to explain your vote?

6

COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Do I have to?

7

Mr. Chairman I just want to... What am I doing here?

8

Am I saying yes? I vote aye.

9

CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Thank you.

10

[laughter]

11

CHAIRPERSON KOO: I'm sorry. So yeah an

12

officer told her yeah...

13

[background conversations]

14

CHAIRPERSON KOO: [off mic] Quiet

15

please.

16

COUNSEL: Preconsidered land use item

17

application number 20155364SCR is approved with

18

four votes in the affirmative and one in the

19

negative. Preconsidered land use items 201555589SCQ

20

20155388SCK and 20155170SCQ are approved with four

21

votes in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and

22

zero abstentions. All items are referred to the

23

full Land Use Committee.

24

CHAIRPERSON KOO: Meeting adjourned.

25

[gavel]

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING, AND
MARITIME USES

- 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

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 August 14, 2015