

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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April 18, 2016

Start Time: 10:45 a.m.

End Time: 10:58 a.m.

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

B E F O R E:

Donovan Richards
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Zamani Williams
Antonio Reynoso
Vincent Gentile
Daniel Garodnick
David. M. Greenfield
Andrew Cohen

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

Michael Parkinson
Department City Planning

John Wadey
Department City Planning

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[gavel]

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CHAIRPERSON DICKENS: Good morning. I am Donovan Richards chairman of the subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises and today we are joined by council member Antonio Reynoso, who gets a gold star, Council member Ritchie Torres, Council member Daniel Garodnick and council member Vincent Gentile. And we also special guests, the Land Use Chair David Greenfield and we are also joined by Council member Andrew Cohen, who actually has a rezoning of today. Today, we will be holding a public hearing and voting on two items today, Land Use Items No. 354 and application for a sidewalk café and Land Use Item No. 355 rezoning in the Woodlawn neighborhood of the Bronx. I would now open the public hearing for Land Use No. 354 and application for a sidewalk café with two tables and six chairs located in the community board two of Manhattan and council member Corey Johnson, and I just want to note that council member Johnson supports the application.

So, first we will hear from, Andrew Cohen. Oh, I got it right SWA Architecture, (INAUDIBLE) this actually to state your name for the record and the organization you representing and then

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2 you may begin sir and hit the button. You are going
3 to hit the button on the mic at the light of red.

4 Andrew Cohen: It's alright Red. My name
5 Andrew Cohen. I represents SWA Architecture and we
6 are here in favor of the sidewalk cafe at 289
7 Bleecker. It is a simple sidewalk café, its 3
8 tables, 6 chairs on the corner of 7th Avenue South in
9 Bleecker Street. I don't know if there are any
10 questions.

11 Chairperson Donovan Richards: Sure,
12 community board supports that there was any issues
13 surrounding everybody support of the community board
14 or the president.

15 Andrew Cohen: Ah, Yes. I believe that
16 they are.

17 Chairperson Donovan Richards: And you
18 just go through your hours of operation.

19 Andrew Cohen: I do not have that issue
20 available.

21 Chairperson Donovan Richards: Okay, no
22 problem, so here was some issue obviously with this
23 at the beginning in which the community board voted
24 it down and then you came back and made some changes.

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2 So, can you just read some of those changes on the
3 record.

4 Andrew Cohen: I believe that originally,
5 it was requested 5 tables with 12 seats and it was
6 reduced to 3 tables and 6 seats.

7 Chairperson Donovan Richards: Then on
8 noise, can you comment on that on the record.

9 Andrew Cohen: Yes. They have agreed to
10 keep down the noise as much as possible by closing
11 some, keeping one of the doors closed at all times
12 from one of the two. It's a double door, they are
13 going to keep one door closed and the other door will
14 be a swing door, closing at behind them, not to
15 remain open.

16 Chairperson Donovan Richards: Thank you.
17 Anybody else have questions for this gentlemen.
18 Alright. Thank you for testimony. Anybody from the
19 public here to testify in this issue. Okay. If not,
20 we will close Land Use Items No. 354, which was
21 sidewalk café and once again council member Johnson
22 supports this application.

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24 [Pause]

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2 Chairperson Donovan Richards: Okay. We
3 are back. Now, we will open the public hearing for
4 Land Use Item No. 355 and application of rezoning
5 area and Woodlawn in the Bronx. This rezoning would
6 change the area from the existing R7A zoning to an
7 R4A district. This change would help to support the
8 character of the areas one and two family homes. This
9 rezoning is in community board 12 and Council member
10 Cohen's District. Both the community board and the
11 council members support this application and with
12 that being set, I will now turn this portion of the
13 hearing over to council members Cohen for some
14 remarks.

15 Andrew Cohen: Thank you very much. I
16 will be ready. I really just want to express my
17 gratitude to City Planning for having this be a
18 collaborative effort for really hearing the community
19 and addressing you know problem and I think that we
20 got in time, we are where there is one building under
21 construction that is sort of out of character but I
22 think, we are going be able to prevent others. So, I
23 really again; you know the community board was in;
24 the City Planning was in, my office was in and we all
25 worked together and I am really glad, we got this

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2 done today. And I really encourage my colleagues to
3 vote, Aye. Thank you very much.

4 Chairperson Donovan Richards: Thank you.
5 That's very good comments. Alright, we will now hear
6 for Michael Parkinson from Department of City
7 Planning and Shawn Brede, did I say it right? Close
8 enough. Okay. So, I will ask you to hit your mics,
9 say your name on the record and who you representing
10 and then you may continue with some statements, if
11 you have any statement? You have anything, you want
12 to read in?. Okay, sure. So, you may began.

13 Shawn Brede: Good morning. I am Shawn
14 Brede, I am deputy director for the Bronx office of
15 the Department of City Planning, welcome, thank you
16 for having us. I apologize again for being a little
17 late this morning. We are going to be talking very
18 briefly about a zoning map amendment in the Woodlawn
19 neighborhood of community district 12 in the Bronx.
20 I am just going turn it to Michael Parkinson, who is
21 going to walk through some of those details. Thank
22 you.

23 Michael Parkinson: Sure. Thanks Shawn.
24 Just to reiterate Shawn's comments again our deepest
25 apologies for sort of crossing some wires and being

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2 late this morning. My name is Michael Parkinson, I
3 am a borough planner for Department of City Planning
4 in the Bronx for the record. The proposed action
5 before you today is a zoning map amendment from R7A
6 to R4A affecting 19 lots on portions of three blocks
7 in the Woodlawn neighborhood in Bronx community board
8 12. The action was undertaken in response to and
9 with great support by local community groups,
10 community board 12 and elected officials. Community
11 board 12 held a public hearing in December 3, 2015
12 and voted by a count of 23 to 0, to recommend
13 approval of the application and the borough's
14 president's office held a public hearing in December
15 22, 2015, subsequently issued a recommendation to
16 approve the application. So, the proposal to rezone
17 the area from R7A to R4A is intended to preserve the
18 historical character of the affected area. It is not
19 expected to induce or preclude new development but
20 would rather ensure that any construction or
21 development that does occur would do so in a manner
22 that reflects the existing low scale character of the
23 affected area. I am happy to sort of elaborate on
24 the proposal as much as you all would like but for my
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2 comment, I want my comments and are open for the
3 questions if there are any?

4 Chairperson Donovan Richards: Right, I
5 want to thank you for statement and comments and
6 thanks the Department of City Planning. It is not
7 every day that we are down zoning nowadays, right. I
8 want to congratulate council member Cohen on a great
9 job and preserving the character of his neighborhood
10 in particular. I guess this is a historic in this
11 day and age, when we are looking to do somewhat more
12 density but congratulation on this on and I will go
13 anyone have question?.

14 Chairperson Greenfield: I have questions
15 on this. So, thank very much for finally showing up
16 to our hearing, we appreciate it. That's a joke, I
17 know there is miscommunication, is a very serious
18 today. We just happy to hear. I am teasing, I am
19 teasing. We are happy to have you. Just where is
20 May, when you need her, okay, I would like bust your
21 jobs. I have question for you, how long does this
22 process takes? when do you begin the process and how
23 long does it take you to get this done?.

24 Michael Parkinson: Well the project is
25 actually certified in November, but the request has

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2 been around for a little bit of time and we really
3 wanted to take a look in the area and do a due
4 diligence but once it's went through, it did move
5 relatively quickly.

6 Chairperson Greenfield: Okay. I am going
7 repeat my questioning, and may be this time I might
8 get an answer? How long does the project actually
9 take from the time it was proposed by the community;
10 not from the certification point, but long it is
11 going to take from time that the community has come
12 forth and say we want to do this, until the time that
13 actually it got certified, roughly.

14 Michael Parkinson: I would say about a
15 year. We were out in April talking about the
16 project, when it became a real project.

17 Chairperson Greenfield: That's it, one
18 year.

19 Michael Parkinson: Yes.

20 Chairperson Greenfield: Okay, kind of a
21 hard to believe but sure, I will take it. I want to
22 thank you for the work that you have done here today
23 and I want to thank the council member for his
24 advocacy and I joined the Chair and noting that this
25 is rear down zoning action that we don't generally do

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2 but this speaks to the fact that the administration
3 and City Planning is very responsible to the needs of
4 the local communities and when appropriate the City
5 Planning and administration will support down zoning
6 in the neighborhood to preserve the character of that
7 neighborhood, so we are certainly grateful for that.
8 Thank you very much.

9 Chairperson Donovan Richards: Alright;
10 thank you for your testimony and question.

11 : I just want to say? Just want to
12 congratulate council member Andrew Cohen, who's
13 district is going to stay exactly the same and I know
14 lot of extreme value to him, so I think this is
15 great. I am excited to see a down zoning and I am
16 excited to vote, Aye on this.

17 Chairperson Donovan Richards: We did not
18 call a vote yet by the way.

19 : A silent vote.

20 Chairperson Donovan Richards: Thank you
21 for your testimony. Thank you, you are free to go.
22 Anyone else here from the public here to testify and
23 take you on this item. Right, if not, we will close
24 Land Use Item No. 355 and I will ask the clerk to
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2 call the roll, on both Land Use Items No. 354
3 sidewalk café and Land Use Item No. 355 rezoning.

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5 Chair Richards: I happily vote, Aye.

6 Council member Gentile: I love down
7 zoning, so I vote, Aye.

8 Council member Garodnick: Aye.

9 Council member Reynoso: Congratulations,
10 council member Andrew Cohen for keeping things the
11 same. I vote, Aye.

12 Council member Torres: So, I don't like
13 down zonings but I like Andrew, so I vote, Aye.

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15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Land Use Item No. 354
16 and 355 are approved and referred to the full Land
17 Use committee by a vote of 5 votes in the
18 affirmative, 0 in the negative and 0 abstentions.

19 Chairperson Donovan Richards: Alright.
20 Thank you so much. This hearing is officially
21 closed.

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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 April 18, 2016