

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND
MARITIME USES

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October 24, 2017
Start: 11:39 a.m.
Recess: 12:10 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.
14th Fl

B E F O R E: PETER A. KOO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Anna Palma
Deborah L. Rose
Rosie Mendez
Stephen T. Levin
Inez D. Barron
Ben Kallos

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

Henry Jackson, Deputy Commission
New York City Emergency Management

Craig Bonney, Director of Support Services
New York State Emergency Management

Dale Lasserson
Real Estate Services, DCAS

John Connell
New York City Emergency Management

Kate Lemos McHale, Director Research
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Ali Rasoulinejad, Director
Community and Intergovernmental Affairs
Landmarks Preservation Commission

Risa Honig, Vice President
Capital Planning and Construction
New York Public Library

[sound check, pause] [Gavel]

CHAIRPERSON KOO: Good morning. I'm
Council Member Koo, Chair of the Subcommittee on
Landmarks, Public Siting and Maritime Uses. We are
joined by Council Member Kallos and Council Member
Reynoso. Today, we will be hearing an application
for a site selection and acquisition of property and
the designation of a landmark, but first item is LU
791, and application submitted by New York City
Emergency Management and the Department of Citywide
Administrative Service pursuant to Section 197-c of
New York City Charter for the acquisition of property
located at 930 Flushing Avenue, Bock 3140, Lot 1 to
facilitate the expansion of Emergency Management's
96,000 square feet equipment storage facility to the
full 304,000 square foot available at their site. The
Facility is used for storage of emergency vehicles
and supplies ranging from mobile light towers to
generators to pallets of bottled water. This also
maintains as back-up emergency operation center in
case the facility at 165 Cameron Park (sic) East
becomes unavailable. Eighty-seven parking spots
intended for the back-up of EOC will also be provided
inside their facility. The site is located in

1 Council Member Reynoso's district in Brooklyn. I
2 will now open the public hearing on LU 791. We have
3 Henry Jackson, New York City and Emergency Management
4 and Dale (sic) [background comment] Dale Lasserson,
5 DCAS Real Estate Office and Craig Bonney from
6 Emergency—Emergency Management and James Macano (sic)
7 from Emergency Management. [background comment]
8 Please identify yourselves and start, yeah.

9
10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JACKSON: Is this
11 microphone on. Hi. My name is Henry Jackson. I'm
12 Deputy Commission of New York City Emergency
13 Management.

14 CRAIG BONNEY: I'm Craig Bonney Director
15 of Support Services, at New York State Emergency
16 Management

17 DALE LASSERSON: Good morning. I'm Dale
18 Lasserson with DCAS Real Estate Services

19 JOHN O'CONNELL: [off mic] John Connell
20 also from New York City Emergency Management. (sic)

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JACKSON: You ready.

22 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [off mic] Yes, go right
23 ahead.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JACKSON: Yeah.
25 Okay. So, good morning Chairperson Koo and the

1 members of the Committee on Landmarks, Public Siting
2 and Maritime Uses. My name is Henry Jackson. I'm
3 the Deputy Commissioner at the Office of Emergency
4 Management, and I'm here to present, as you
5 mentioned, a lease for expansion at 930 Flushing
6 Avenue, which is our warehouse or as well call it the
7 Emergency Support Center. As you know, New York City
8 Emergency Management has four primary missions
9 preparing the city for emergencies, educating and
10 informing the public, coordinating emergency response
11 and recovery and collecting and disseminating
12 information. The Emergency Support Center plays a
13 role in all four of these missions. We got into the
14 warehousing business after 9/11 when we had to take
15 over a pier n the Lower East Side to stage many of
16 the logistical supplies that were needed to respond
17 to that day's tragic events. We operated at that
18 location until 2006 when—when we relocated off the
19 water's edge to the current location at 930 Flushing.
20 Our goal at the Emergency Support Center is to have
21 supply of anything that might be needed to get
22 through the first few hours of an emergency, and then
23 we need the vehicles and equipment to move those
24 supplies. So, we keep a variety of vehicles as well
25

1 as our own command vehicles that we use when we set
2 up in the field. We have generators and light towers
3 and tractors and trailers, and 4-posts and other
4 special vehicles, and for supplies we keep the cots
5 and blankets, food and water, and other supplies to
6 set up sheltering operations. We keep dust masks,
7 tarps, cones, tools, shovels, sand bags and supplies
8 to set up staging areas in the field, and we have a
9 small staff at the warehouse to maintain the
10 corridor's resources. In addition, we have a mandate
11 to establish possible alternates seats to government,
12 for the Mayor's Office and other agencies, and we're
13 also going to be setting up a backup to the City's
14 Emergency Response—Emergency Operation Center to use
15 in case of a manmade or natural disaster. The
16 Emergency Support Center also houses the Urban Search
17 and Rescue Team, which is comprised of New York City
18 Police Department and Fire Department members, which
19 has been deployed this year for Hurricanes Harvey,
20 Irma and Maria. As you likely know, we have used
21 this warehouse for a large donation process right now
22 for Hurricane Maria, and as of today we sent out 130
23 pallets to Puerto Rico with a lot more coming. We
24 could not have supported such a donation drive
25

1 without this warehouse. We are looking to expand our
2 footprint at the current warehouse in order to
3 address recommends from Hurricane Sandy to have
4 additional warehouse space to surge during
5 emergencies such as the one we are currently engaged
6 in, and to provide an alternate location for a backup
7 emergency operation center. In order to do this, we
8 work with DCAS and its partners to review several
9 sites around the city to see if we could move our
10 warehouse to these spots. Unfortunately, none of the
11 proposed spots were viable mainly either because they
12 weren't available for the city to buy or lease or
13 because they were located in one of the city's six
14 hurricane evacuation zones, which is a place we
15 cannot be. The Flushing Avenue location is central
16 located allowing us to get supplies quickly to the
17 five boroughs for catastrophic events such as
18 Hurricane Sandy, smaller localized events such as the
19 East Harlem or East Village Building collapses, or
20 localized power outages. So, we are here today
21 seeking approval for a long-term lease for this
22 critical facility at 930 Flushing Avenue that will
23 allow us to continue to stand ready to respond for
24 the next couple of decades. Thank you for the
25

1 opportunity to testify, and I'm happy to answer any
2 questions you might have.
3

4 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. We are also
5 joined by Council Member Greenfield and Council
6 Member Rose. No and Council Member Mendez. I'm
7 sorry, and Council Member Levin and Council Member
8 Reynoso, would you like to ask questions or make a
9 statement?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Yes. So, thank
11 you, Chair Koo. Thank you to OEM and DCAS for being
12 here. I'm extremely excited about this site being in
13 my district especially after the recent—the recent
14 tragedy that happened in Puerto Rico and in Houston
15 and in Florida and Mexico, knowing that this facility
16 can be in my district and help supply relief to—to
17 many of these either states or countries is extremely
18 important to us. I think it's a perfect site. It's
19 our of a flood zone. It—it speaks to the purpose the
20 building and manufacturing in my district. It's
21 300,000 square feet. It's of value. I want to make
22 sure that we work to make this a permanent site for
23 OEM. So, that's my end goal here knowing that this—
24 this piece that we're pursuing today speaks to that
25 possibility in the future. It's extremely important

1 to me. What I do want to make sure that I get on
2 record is should there be a need for an expansion of
3 parking on-in-on site in that facility, I would just
4 like to know whether or not that is something that
5 can be accommodated by this building and by DCAS and
6 OEM.
7

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JACKSON: Sure. So,
9 I understand there are ongoing discussions about
10 parking. We—we did a design for the building with
11 this 300,000 square feet. We just have to, you know,
12 modify that to accommodate again whatever number is
13 determined.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: So, you do feel
15 comfortable about if needed a design modification can
16 happen where we could expand for parking?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JACKSON: There's
18 certainly enough space in there to a whole bunch of
19 things—and—and parking is certainly one of the.
20 We've already put some parking in there as we
21 testified for the Emergency Operation Center so it's
22 hot.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: How many—how
24 many vehicles are parked there now or would be parked
25

1 in let's say a full built-out design, how many
2 parking spots would be available in the center.

3
4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JACKSON: [background
5 comment] Eighty-seven.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay, so--

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JACKSON:
8 [interposing] It's what we did--what we have currently
9 designed. We would have to take whatever the--the new
10 need and incorporate that into the design.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: So, so there can
12 be an expansion of that without threatening the --the
13 use of the building?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JACKSON: Yeah, we
15 just have to move things around and figure out how
16 the workflow goes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay. Thank you
18 very much. That's all--that's all the questioning I
19 have. Again, very supportive of this site. OEM and
20 DCAS has been over-communicative regarding what we
21 need to get done here. Ultimately, I would like to
22 see this permanently a site for OEM, and lend you
23 full support.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JACKSON: Thank you.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Are there any members
3 of our committee who wanted to ask questions? No.
4 Seeing none. Oh, thank you.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER JACKSON: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Are there members of
7 the public who wish to testify on LU 791? No. Okay.
8 Seeing none, I will now close the public hearing on
9 LU 791.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you,
11 Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: And the next item is--
13 the next item is the Proposed designation by the
14 Landmark Preservation Commission. Pursuant to
15 Section 3020 of the New York City Charter of the New
16 York Public Library, Stephen A. Schwartzman Building
17 Interiors located at 476 Fifth Avenue Block 1257, Lot
18 1 in Manhattan as an interior landmark. The
19 designated--the designated interiors include the main
20 reading room, a/k/a Rose-Rose Main Reading Room, and
21 Catalog Room, a/k/a Bill Glass Public Catalog Room
22 third floor and the fixtures of the interior
23 components of these spaces are among the finest
24 public interiors in New York City. The Main Reading
25 Room and the Catalog Room are library's principal

1 public spaces, and primary destination for most
2 visitors. They are both masterpieces of design with
3 52 feet tall ceilings and one arch windows. The
4 library is in Council Member Garodnick's district.
5 He has submitted a letter in support of the
6 designation for the record. We are hearing the
7 proposed designation preconsidered, and we are have
8 Lisa Honig, from the Public Library, Kate Lemos
9 McHale form the Landmark Commission and Ali
10 Rasoulinejad from the Landmarks Commission. So, sorry
11 if I pronounced your names wrong. Yeah, yeah.
12 [background comment, pause] Yeah, please identify
13 yourself and—and start, yeah. [pause] Alright, ma'am,
14 when you're ready, yeah.

16 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Good morning—good
17 morning, Chairs Koo, Greenfield and Committee
18 members. My name Kate Lemos McHale, Director of
19 Research at the Landmarks Preservation Commission.
20 I'm joined today by Ali Rasoulinejad, our Director of
21 Community and Intergovernmental Affairs. Thank you
22 for the opportunity to testify on the Commission's
23 designation of the Main Reading Room and Catalog Room
24 in the New York Public Library Stephen A. Schwartzman
25 Building at 476 Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. A public

1 hearing for the proposed designation of the Main
2 Reading Room and Catalog Room was held on July 18,
3 2017. Seven people testified in support including
4 representatives of the New York Public Library and
5 several preservation advocates. The Commission
6 received a petition supporting designation of the
7 Main Reading Room, and several other spaces with
8 approximately 1,950 signatures as well as letters of
9 support from the Preservation League of New York and
10 State Senators Brad Hoylman and Liz Krueger.
11 Following the public hearing, the Commission voted on
12 August 8, 2017 to designate these spaces as the
13 city's 120th Interior Landmark. The Reading Room and
14 Catalog Room in the New York Public Library Stephen
15 A. Schwartzman Building opened in May 2011–1911.
16 They are the buildings principal public research and
17 work spaces central to the public and civic role of
18 the institution. Designed by the prominent
19 architectural firm Carrere and Hastings, the
20 Landmarks Preservation Commission has long recognized
21 the significance of this remarkable Beaux-Arts
22 structure designating it an individual landmark in
23 1967, and its primary circulation spaces including
24 Astor Hall, the Central Stairs and McGraw Rotunda as
25

1
2 New York City's first interior landmark in 1974. The
3 existing interior landmark is shown in blue on these
4 plans. It includes the main ceremonial route from
5 Fifth Avenue up through the center of the building to
6 the third floor. The Catalog Room and Main Reading
7 Room shown in orange complete the ceremonial route to
8 the primary public spaces within the library. The
9 plan for the building originated with a simple sketch
10 by the library's first director John Shaw Billing in
11 1897. He envisioned a grand building with reading
12 rooms for various collections arranged around its
13 perimeter and the main reading room located on the
14 third floor above the book stacks, elevated above the
15 city streets. Carrere and Hastings won the
16 architectural competition in the same year realizing
17 Billing's vision for the library with their elegant
18 and rational Beaux-Arts plan. On the third
19 floor, the McGraw Rotunda, which is show in blue on
20 the map, which-and was designated in 1974, and the
21 Catalog Room and Main Reading Room are all arranged
22 together within a single T-shaped volume at the
23 center of the building between two right courts.
24 This elevated position provides maximum natural light
25 and ease of book circulation. These three grand

1 volumes are enclosed within their own roofline, which
2 rises prominently above the lower street facing
3 roofline to highlight the functional and formal
4 importance of the spaces within. On the Bryant Park
5 façade, the Main Reading Room's large arched windows
6 differentiate its important public function above the
7 narrow windows that illuminate the stacks.
8

9 Designating the Main Reading Room and Catalog Room
10 adjacent to the already designated McGraw Rotunda
11 recognizes the importance of these three volumes.

12 The Catalog Room shown here and Main Reading Room are
13 functionally connected in the process of searching
14 for, retrieving and studying books and other
15 materials in the library's collections. The rooms
16 share similar proportions, ornamental features, and
17 materials including red quarry tile floors, oak
18 Norwork (sic) tiered circular chandeliers, monumental
19 arched windows and molded plaster ceiling. The Main
20 Reading Room is one of the grandest interiors in New
21 York City rivaling the interiors of Grand Central
22 Terminal, a master piece of Beaux-Arts design. It is
23 the destination for most visitors especially for
24 students and scholars. Nearly two blocks in length,
25 it measures 297 feet long by 78 feet wide. At the

1 center of the Main Reading Room is the delivery desk
2 where readers receive books and other materials. A
3 low structure with arched openings flanked by fluted
4 door columns, it creates a screen diving the Reading
5 Room in two sections without obscuring views of the
6 remarkable plaster ceiling. Fifty-two feet high, the
7 sensuously painted ceiling frames sky murals
8 originally painted by the artist James Walfin (sp?).
9 Both rooms recently underwent a major ceiling
10 restoration project reopening to the public with
11 great fanfare in the fall of 1916. The woodwork
12 throughout both rooms is also particularly fine
13 especially the desk pedestal, delivery desk and
14 entrance portals. Significant features within the
15 two spaces include the molded plaster ceiling, arched
16 windows, imitation constone walls, quarry tile and
17 model floors and the wood and bronze finishes and
18 fixed furnishings especially the doors and surrounds,
19 delivery desk, Renaissance style tables and desk,
20 bronze chandeliers and the bookcase and Bronze rail
21 balconies line the-aligning the walls. Over the past
22 century, the relatively few changes within these
23 magnificent public spaces have been sensitive to the
24 spirit of their original design. These chair spaces
25

1 dedicated to learning and discovery are notable for
2 their architectural, civic and cultural significance
3 and accordingly the Landmarks Preservation Commission
4 urges the Council to affirm their designation. Thank
5 you.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you, Mr. McHale
8 and the library is indeed a magnificent and beautiful
9 building. Yeah. Any questions from our members?
10 No. Seeing none. Oh.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I would like to
12 just make a statement--

13 CHAIRPERSON KOO: [interposing] Sure.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: --Chair. I just--I
15 want to voice my support for this application. This--
16 we see the Schwartzman interior Main Reading Room and
17 Catalog Room are some of the finest interior spaces
18 in our entire city and provides a timeless space for
19 visitors and both New Yorkers and those coming from
20 far and wide, and it's a certainly a piece of our
21 architectural heritage that should be maintained
22 permanently. So, I'm in steadfast support of this
23 application. Thank you.

24 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Thank you.

25 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you.

1
2 KATE LEMOS MCHALE: Do you want to—Risa
3 has a statement as well.

4 CHAIRPERSON KOO: You want to read it?
5 Yeah. [laughs] Please do. [laughs] Will you please
6 identify yourself and speak—start.

7 RISA HONIG: [off mic] I'm Risa Honig,
8 Vice President for Capital Planning and Construction
9 [on mic] at the New York Public Library. I guess
10 good afternoon. I would like to thank the Land Use
11 Chair David Greenfield, Subcommittee Chair Peter Koo,
12 and members of the Committee for inviting the Library
13 to testify today. The New York Public Library
14 supports the New York City Landmarks Preservation
15 Commission's proposal to landmark the iconic Rose
16 Main Reading Room and adjacent Bill Blass Public
17 Catalog Room. For over a century the library and its
18 staff have—have acted as proud, caring and dedicated
19 stewards of these two architectural treasures, and we
20 are now pleased to endorse their designation as New
21 York City interior landmarks. The two rooms
22 masterpieces of Beaux-Arts design located on the
23 third floor of the historic Stephen H. Schwarzman
24 Building opened in 1911 as its principal public
25 spaces. These rooms are distinguished by the

1 grandeur of their scale and design, which includes
2 monumental chandeliers and arch windows, richly
3 molded plasterwork, carved wood reliefs and vast
4 ceiling murals. The building itself was designated an
5 individual landmark in 1968. Several interior spaces
6 were also landmarked later: Astor Hall, the Central
7 Stairs and the third floor McGraw Rotunda.

8 Designating the Reading Room and public Catalog Room
9 will rightly complete a sequence of landmarked
10 spaces, which were conceived as part of a single
11 experience. The first part, the library has always
12 treated these rooms with respect and reverence that
13 they deserve. In 1997, with a generous gift from the
14 Library Trustee Sandra Priest Rose, the library
15 completely renovated the Reading Room, cleaning the
16 ceilings, refinishing the wood—the wood removing
17 various partitions and restoring three ceiling
18 murals. In 2014, after a decorative rosette fell from
19 the over 100-year-old Rose Main Reading Room ceiling,
20 the library did not simply repair—repair that one
21 element, but proactively inspected the ceilings of
22 both the Reading Room and the Public Catalog Room.
23 While the ceilings were deemed to be in good
24 condition, the library decided to launch a full
25

1 restoration of the ceilings and the room reinforcing
2 all of the ceiling's plaster elements with steel
3 cables to ensure their integrity for many years to
4 come, refurbishing the chandeliers and restoring a
5 mural in the public Catalog Room. The library is
6 proud of its work to preserve and protect these two
7 rooms and welcomes landmark designation. Thank you
8 very much.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Thank you. Any
11 questions from our members. No. Thank you.

12 RISA HONIG: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Are there members of
14 the public who wish to testify on the landmark
15 designation of the New York Public Library? Seeing
16 none, I will now close the public hearing on this
17 item. LU 791 is being laid over. Counsel, please
18 call the roll on the vote to approve the landmark
19 designation of the New York Public Library interiors.

20 LEGAL COUNSEL: Koo.

21 CHAIRPERSON KOO: I vote aye.

22 LEGAL COUNSEL: Mendez.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Aye.

24 LEGAL COUNSEL: Levin.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Aye

2 LEGAL COUNSEL: Kallos.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: With pride, I
4 vote aye.

5 LEGAL COUNSEL: By a vote of 4 in the
6 affirmative, 0 in the negative and 0 abstentions, the
7 item is recommended for approval and referred to the
8 Full Land Use Committee. [background comment, pause]

9 CHAIRPERSON KOO: We will hold the vote
10 open for-- How many minutes?

11 LEGAL COUNSEL: Ten minutes.

12 CHAIRPERSON KOO: Yeah, for another ten
13 minutes and I would like to thank the members of the
14 public, my colleagues, counsel and Land Use staff for
15 attending today's meeting. Thank you. [background
16 comment, pause]

17 LEGAL COUNSEL: Council Member Rose.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Oh, yes.

19 [background comment]

20 LEGAL COUNSEL: By a vote of 5 in the
21 affirmative, 0 in the negative, 0 abstentions, the
22 item is approved and referred to the Full Land Use
23 Committee. [background comment]

24 CHAIRPERSON KOO: The meeting is
25 adjourned. [gavel]

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITING AND
MARITIME USES

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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 October 27, 2017