

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION

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December 17, 2020  
Start: 10:03 AM  
Recess: 10:26 AM

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 1)

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Carlina Rivera  
Mark Levine  
Mark Gjonaj  
Francisco Moya  
Jimmy Van Bramer  
Robert F. Holden  
Eric A. Ulrich  
Darma V. Diaz  
Justin Brannan  
Joseph C. Borelli

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

Ashook Ramsaran, Indian Diasporan Council

Kevin Lowenston

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: PC recording done. Sergeant  
3 Bradley can you do the Cloud recording?

4 SERGEANT BRADLEY: Cloud recording is up.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Back-up is rolling.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. Sergeant Polite.  
7 You can take it away.

8 SERGEANT POLITE: Thank you. Good morning and  
9 welcome to the remote hearing on Parks and  
10 Recreation. Will Council Members and staff please  
11 turn on their video at this time. To minimize  
12 disruption please place all cell phones and  
13 electronics to vibrate. Chair Koo, we are ready to  
14 begin.

15 CHAIR KOO: (gavel) Thank you for joining our  
16 virtual hearing today before the Council's  
17 Committee on Parks and Recreation. I would like to  
18 acknowledge my fellow Council Members who are  
19 present today, Council Members Diaz, Adams, Council  
20 Member Cohen, Council Member Levine, Brannan,  
21 Council Member Holden, Council Member Van Bramer,  
22 and Council Member... I have the list here. Sorry  
23 and Council Member Van Bramer, Council Member  
24 Gjonaj, Council Member Moya Council Member Borelli  
25 Council Member Gibson. We are here today to vote

2 for legislation to rename the Council Member Peter  
3 Koo. I am pleased to chair the Committee on Parks  
4 and Recreation. Today the Committee will be voting  
5 on a preconsidered bill that will ceremonially co-  
6 name 92 thoroughfares and public spaces. Would the  
7 Counsel make the call to vote?

8 CLERK: William Martin Committee Clerk, roll  
9 call vote Committee on Parks and Recreation. Chair  
10 Koo.

11 CHAIR KOO: I Vote aye.

12 CLERK: Cohen.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Can I have permission  
14 to just briefly explain my vote?

15 Chair Koo: (pause) Peter

16 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Peter I'm going to  
17 take that, you silence as a yes. (laughs) I really  
18 just want...

19 CHAIR KOO: Yes, yes. I'm sorry. Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: (laughs) It's just like  
21 you Peter.

22 CHAIR KOO: Yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you. I am going to  
24 vote yes. I just wanted to take a second. I think  
25 this is my last vote at the Parks Committee, and I

1  
2 just wanted to say that what a pleasure it's been to  
3 serve on the Parks Committee. I've served on the  
4 Parks Committee for the entire time in the Council  
5 currently under Chair Koo, and Chairs Levine and  
6 Chairs Grodenchik and it's really just...it's...I am  
7 most proud of the work that we've done in Parks. I  
8 feel like we've made the Parks Department better.  
9 We've made our city parks better, and I just found  
10 the work very gratifying, and working with all of  
11 you. My colleagues Chris and Patrick thank you also  
12 for all that you did to make the committee run  
13 smoothly, and with that I vote aye. Thank you.

14 CHAIR KOO: Thank you Chair. I mean Cohen,  
15 yeah on the Council Affairs. Thank you for your  
16 dedication and your service on the Parks Committee  
17 you know. Thank you.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: Thank you.

19 CLERK: Levine.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Permission to briefly  
21 explain that we will miss Council Member Cohen  
22 terribly.

23 CHAIR KOO: Please go ahead. Yeah.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: (laughs) Well, you,  
25 you've been a stalwart member of this committee

1  
2 Council Member. Unfortunately, now there will be no  
3 one to complain when we hold our hearings on  
4 Fridays, but, but, but alas, we will soldier on.  
5 Thank you for everything you've done to fight for  
6 parks in your district and citywide, and there will  
7 be many more chances to say this, but we're just  
8 wishing you all the best in your roles as a jurist in  
9 the great Borough of the Bronx. Thank you and I'll  
10 be voting aye.

11 CLERK: Van Bramer?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: I vote aye.

13 CLERK: Thank you. Brannan.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Aye.

15 CLERK: Gjonaj.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: I vote aye.

17 CLERK: Holden.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Permission to  
19 briefly explain my vote?

20 CHAIR KOO: Council Member please go ahead,  
21 yeah.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Okay. Thank you so  
23 much, Chair Koo. I just want to really honor with  
24 this street co-naming my good friend and former  
25 Council Member and Minority Leader Tom Agnibene

1  
2 who served ten years in the Council with  
3 distinction and was really a role model for me as  
4 a Council Member in delivering constituent  
5 services and redoing parks by the way. He  
6 constructed so many parks in the district that  
7 that was a kind of a... and I worked with him on  
8 that for almost ten years in coordinating that.  
9 So, I just want to recognize Tom Agnibene for his  
10 work. Unfortunately, we lost him at the age of 71  
11 and this is, this is my way and the community's  
12 way of honoring Tom Agnibene. Thank you so much  
13 Chair and I vote aye.

14 CHAIR KOO: Thank you.

15 CLERK: MOYA.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MOYA: I vote aye.

17 CLERK: Thank you. Diaz. The vote is our  
18 Diaz.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: I vote aye. Aye

20 CLERK: Thank you.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: You're welcome.

22 CLERK: Ulrich.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: (Inaudible)

24 CLERK: Are you muted, Council Member Ulrich?  
25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Yeah, hi and good  
3 morning everybody. I just want to second what  
4 Council Member Holden said about Agnibene, a real  
5 giant, and an important part of the institution of  
6 the City Council played a very close role and  
7 friendship with former Speaker Vallone, and putting  
8 New York City back on track and saving New York  
9 City. So, I'm so proud to cast vote in favor of the  
10 street renamings and to honor Tom Agnibene and all  
11 the other wonderful people that will be honored  
12 today. I vote aye.

13 CLERK: Thank you. Council Member Borelli.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: (Bell)

15 CLERK: He was on there. He is not now.

16 Okay, by a vote of 10 in the affirmative, zero in  
17 the negative and no abstentions, Preconsidered  
18 Introduction in relation to the 92 thoroughfares,  
19 and both places has been adopted by the committee.  
20 (bell) (pause)

21 CHAIR KOO: Thank you, Council Members who  
22 are here today to vote for this very important  
23 bill. We are here to honor all these hills for the  
24 contributions to the New York City. So, this  
25 meeting is being adjourned. (gavel)



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the city. This co-naming bills are the result of the Council's periodic process where we seek to honor individuals and organizations that have made lasting contributions to the people of our city. Some of this includes co-names for active community members, heroic New Yorkers who sacrificed their lives for others, people who committed their lives to public services or those who greatly enriched the city's cultural landscape. Of the many people honored by this piece of legislation, I would like to call attention to three New Yorkers who dedicated their lives to public services, former Council Members Thomas

1  
2 Ognibene Lewis Fidler and Randall Foster. Tom  
3 Ognibene served in the Council from 1991 to 2001,  
4 and Lew Fidler served from 2002 to 2013. Randall  
5 Foster was the first African American from Bronx  
6 for holding elected office and served with great  
7 distinction for 24 years in the Council. These  
8 individuals were power champions for their  
9 communities and constituents, and have left our  
10 city, left our officials with a great legacy to  
11 live up to. I am happy to support this this bill,  
12 and I urge all my colleagues on the committee to  
13 vote in favor of this legislation. Before we  
14 conduct the bill...before we conduct the vote, we  
15 will hear testimony from a few individuals who will  
16 speak on behalf of some of the New Yorkers we are  
17 honoring today. Once their testimony is concluded,  
18 we will hold a vote on this bill. Thank you. I  
19 would like...I would now like to turn it over to  
20 our moderator Committee Counsel Kris Sartori to go  
21 over some of the procedural items.

22 COUNSEL SARTORI: Thank you, Chair Koo. Just  
23 to note, we've also been joined by Council Members,  
24 Council Members, Council Member Gibson and Council  
25 Member Borelli. Good morning. I'm Kris Sartori. I'm

1  
2 the Senior Counsel to the Parks committee, and I will  
3 be moderating the hearing. Before we begin, I'd like  
4 to remind everyone that you will be on mute until you  
5 are called on to testify at which point you will be  
6 unmuted by the host. During the hearing I'll be  
7 calling on the various panels to testify so please  
8 listen for your name to be called (bell) as I'll  
9 periodically be announcing who the next panelists  
10 will be. For this hearing we will be hearing  
11 testimony only from members of the public. During the  
12 hearing if Council Members would like to ask a  
13 question of a specific panelist, please use the Zoom  
14 Hand Raise function, and I will call on you in order.  
15 For members of the public who will testify please  
16 state your name and the organization you represent,  
17 if any once it's your time to speak. Once public  
18 testimony has concluded we will conduct a vote on the  
19 preconsidered co-naming legislation once we have a  
20 quorum of Parks Committee members. At this time, I  
21 will invite the first panelist to speak. So far, we  
22 have two panelists that have registered to speak. I  
23 will call on Ashook Ramsaran (sp?) to testify and he  
24 will be followed by Kevin Loweninston (sp?) Mr.  
25 Ramsaran, you may begin your testimony. Thank you.

1  
2 ASHOOK RAMSARAN: Good morning. Thank you for  
3 the opportunity to make my testimony public. My name  
4 is Ashook Ramsaran. I represent the Indian Diaspora  
5 Council as well as the Committee to co-name one block  
6 in honor of Pundik Rumlow to be called Pundik Rulow's  
7 Way one block of 133rd Street between Liberty Avenue  
8 and 101st Street and Fifth Avenue in Queens. I want  
9 to thank Council Member Adrienne Adams for her help  
10 in reaching this bill, getting this far and with her  
11 guidance, and her encouragement it has reached this  
12 stage. We are seeing you approval for coding this  
13 one block in honor of the late Damachario Pundik  
14 Rumlow (sp?) a selfless and avid community advocate  
15 who passed away on January 26, 2019 at the age of 91.  
16 There is overwhelming community board, community  
17 residents, religious, business and organizational  
18 support for this application. Over 5,000 signatures,  
19 dozens of letters of support and petitions submitted.  
20 In fact, we have a 90-page volume that was presented  
21 to the Council Member Adams in support of this  
22 request. This gentleman founded the area  
23 legislation. This gentleman founded the area's  
24 Fraser Center of New York, and the same center is  
25 used for various community events including events

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2 including the annual Gandhi Peace March, the Diwali  
3 Parade, the Mine (sic) in the Park, etcetera. As can  
4 be seen from this extensive bio, the late Damachario  
5 and the Pundit Rumlow was a very respected iconic  
6 spiritual leader and scholar, a pandering community  
7 advocate who would be recognized locally and  
8 internationally for his lifelong community service.  
9 He founded the Annual holiday, holy parade in New  
10 York and Queens Borough President declared March 23,  
11 2003 as Spanish (sic) Rumlow week. (sic) He was  
12 indeed a tremendous asset to the community with a  
13 lifetime of service to spirituality, justice and  
14 freedom. We followed all the protocols and  
15 procedures in filing this application, and we are  
16 supporters who are diligently in favor of this.  
17 Queens is the most diverse community and the rate of  
18 Pundik Rumlow represented the best and by the  
19 Somoans. (sic) Our community even looks forward to  
20 this New York City Council approval. Thank you for  
21 your consideration. Any questions, I'm...

22 COUNSEL SARTORI: Thank you, sir. Do any  
23 members questions or wish to speak? Thank you.  
24 Council Member, I see Council Member Adams does have  
25 a question.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: I do. I was looking for  
3 my Raise Hand. I couldn't find it all of a sudden. I  
4 just want to congratulate Mr. Ramsaran. It has been  
5 an absolute pleasure and honor to knowing you over  
6 the years, and then it's more of an honor for me to  
7 help make this happen. It is more than a pleasure for  
8 me. I don't think I've ever seen a package put  
9 together like yours. Five signatures more for this  
10 amazing individual who more than deserves this street  
11 co-naming. So, congratulations to you, and I salute  
12 you and, of course, I will always salute Pundik  
13 Rumlow. Thank you.

14 ASHOOK RAMSARAN: In fact, this volume may be  
15 presented a new, live new library in Queens in the  
16 local community there for others to read as well.  
17 They started handing them.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Amazing. Thank you.

19 COUNSEL SARTORI: Thank you very much.

20 We will now hearing testimony from Mr. Kevin  
21 Livingston. You may begin. Thank you.

22 KEVIN LIVINGSTON: Good morning. I would be  
23 delighted. Thank you so much for having me. First,  
24 happy holidays to all you and Family and Creole  
25 (sic) as well as well. This is a very a... This is

1  
2 really, really gratifying to me. I want to thank  
3 Council Member Adams for your leadership in allowing  
4 my hero community hero Henry Clayton to be brought  
5 to this level. A little bit about Henry Clayton.  
6 He was an entrepreneur from Southeast Queens back in  
7 the '90s. He had one of the largest black and brown  
8 owned travel agency in the South, in Queens that  
9 employed over 40 to 50 people from our area. In  
10 Rockville Village in particular, Mr. Clayton had  
11 employed 25 young people to learn the travel  
12 industry. He would pull them off the street. Often  
13 I would go down the block and walk with my bag.  
14 Henry Clayton is my father, and he would go down  
15 South Road, areas of the great 28 Council Districts,  
16 and, and, and buy clothes for homeless men and  
17 women. He often would ride down...he also owned a  
18 Frito Lay van (sic) that would go down Sutton  
19 Boulevard in the great 28 and pick up young men on  
20 the street and give them an opportunity to work.  
21 He's done this for 25 years until he went into his  
22 travel agency. Henry Clayton is my hero. Henry  
23 Clayton is the reason why 100 Suits does what it  
24 does in the community. I've learned the things that  
25 I've do with senior citizens through Henry Clayton.

1  
2 He used to take the community Roman side of Allen  
3 Cathedral... I'm sorry, Allen Senior Center and buy  
4 lunches for the seniors every month. I've learned  
5 my community activism through him. The corner of  
6 137th and 169th is where he had his hub of Hinden  
7 Travel that allowed young men and women to learn the  
8 industry. He's worked with everybody from the  
9 President of Archfield Village to Assembly woman  
10 Cook, and he has ringing support all around  
11 Southeast Queens. Some of the notables just call  
12 him Captain who has reached out and given me his  
13 support on this legislation allowing the street co-  
14 naming of Henry Clayton. I just want you all to  
15 understand the enormity of what he's had in  
16 Southeast Queens, and to what he's meant to our  
17 young people, and when he's put the battery in my  
18 back to continue every day the things that I do with  
19 a hundred suits. I thank you for getting me to this  
20 moment, and I thank you for allowing or considering  
21 to continue my dad's legacy, and allowing young  
22 black boys and girls to look at that street corner,  
23 brown boys and girls, white boys and girls, Asians.  
24 No matter your ethnicity, race, creed or color to  
25 look at that and see a real community hero, a real



1  
2 community champion that cared about people and did  
3 something that's real New York to me is put people  
4 first. That's what Henry Clayton is, and that's why  
5 I'm testifying on his behalf.

6 COUNSEL SARTORI: Thank you Mr. Williamson.  
7 If, if there are any members who have a question  
8 (bell) or would also like to speak, please  
9 physically raise your hand if you can turn on your  
10 video because we are having a few issues with the  
11 Zoom Hand Raise function, and I will call on you. I  
12 see Council Member Adams followed by Council Member  
13 Diaz has a question and would like to speak. So,  
14 Council Member Adams.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: Thank you. Just very  
16 quickly. I just wanted to congratulate Mr.  
17 Livingston on this day, on this submission. It is  
18 not often that we are able to celebrate heroes in  
19 the Black communities such as your dad was, and I'm  
20 so very happy to be able to have co-sponsored this  
21 legislation in his memory. So, thank you very much  
22 and congratulations. (bell)

23 COUNSEL SARTORI: Thank you. Council Member Diaz  
24 I believe wished to speak next.  
25

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Yes, just want to say  
3 thank you to both the presenters for following in  
4 the foot steps of the community advocates presented  
5 here today. As a community advocate, you allow me  
6 to reflect the many members of my community who  
7 have taken part in such behavior as yours. Thank  
8 you for pursuing the legacy. People need to know in  
9 our communities who did what. Often when leadership  
10 moves on to a different state of life our heroes  
11 are dying. So, again thank you both for presenting  
12 and moving forward, and allowing me to be a part  
13 today of our process, and honoring your heroes.  
14 We're are better for it. Thank you.

15 COUNSEL SARTORI: Thank you Council Member. I  
16 just want to note we've been joined by Council  
17 Members Koslowitz and Council Member, Council  
18 Member Rose as well. I believe that was the last  
19 person who has signed up to testify. If there are  
20 any others please use the Zoom Raise Hand function  
21 or physically raise your hand because we're having  
22 an issue with that. If any other members would like  
23 to speak also please physically raise your hand and  
24 we'll call on you to testify. Okay, seeing none, I  
25 will now turn it back over to Chair Koo who will

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adjourn this part of the hearing, and once that is...once we are adjourned we will readjourn or reopen the next hearing for the Committee vote. Thank you.

CHAIR KOO: Thank you. Thank you, Chris. The meeting is being adjourned. (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 January 8, 2020