

## OPENING STATEMENT

SUBMITTED TO THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL

BY ORLANDO MARÍN,

NOMINEE FOR THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

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Good Morning Chairman Rivera and members of the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections, my name is Orlando Marin. Thank you for the opportunity to address the committee regarding my nomination by the Bronx Borough President to become a member of the City Planning Commission.

In the summer of 1977 I, along with 7 million other New Yorkers, experienced the largest blackout in the history of the City of New York, an event that later resulted in the destruction of various City neighborhoods, including Morrisania where I lived. Night after night I would look north from the 12<sup>th</sup> floor of the Gouverneur Morris Houses, the New York City Housing Authority projects where I lived, at the tenements that were between my building and the Cross Bronx Expressway and wondered which would be next to go up in flames. Eventually my neighborhood and the community would be destroyed by the fires, by the looting of the “mom and pop” commercial establishments that were at the base of many tenements and the very heart of the community, and subsequently by the abandonment by the lending institutions that resulted from this catastrophic event. The final result was that buildings began to be razed and block by block, neighborhoods were picked apart and decimated.

As a result of these events, I knew at a very young age that I had to find some way to effectuate change. I was 13 years old and just entering High School. I had the honor to attend the High School of Music & Art, a specialized public school. At eleventh grade we were required to choose an elective. Knowing beforehand the choice of electives made the decision very easy for me; I chose architecture.

My desire to craft a career as an architect continued through college and eventually became my profession of choice. I worked for the prestigious firm of Perkins & Will, where I developed and executed the design for a prototypical school that could be built on any urban parcel. This was the beginning of what would become for me a life in the public sector. I began to develop a deep and abiding commitment to serving the City and its’ development efforts. As a result I applied for and was appointed to Bronx Community Board #3. I was subsequently appointed to serve as Chairman of the Housing and Land-Use Committee. It was 1986 and by this point, City leaders had found a way and the process of rebuilding had just begun.

The development of my career continued and in 1990 I became a fellow in the National Urban Fellows program where I eventually obtained a Master’s Degree in Public Administration. My concentration was affordable housing development and planning. My fellowship took me to the City of Phoenix, where I worked as an Architect and Planner for the City Engineer.

In 1992, I began working as the Director of Design and Construction for the New York City Housing Partnership where I developed Design Guidelines and Construction Standards that every developer in the program was required to follow. My dual role as vice President for Residential Integrated Solutions Corporation or RISCO as it was more commonly known, assured homeowners that warranty items would be addressed. Today, as a Senior Project Manager with one of the most prestigious affordable housing developers, I secure the funding for and develop affordable housing.

I am currently the Chairman of Bronx Community Board #2 ("CB#2"). My involvement with CB#2 began upon my arrival back to New York in 1992, after obtaining my M.P.A. I've chaired both the Housing and Land-Use and Economic Development committees. My participation on the Board has afforded me further the opportunity to interact directly with a cadre of professionals that have allowed for the continued planning and development of the Hunt's Point and Longwood neighborhoods.

It is for these reasons that I wish to become a member of the Commission. The experiences that I have gained and the professional acumen that I have developed combined with the skill sets and development expertise that I have honed throughout the years have grounded me and are the basis for my continued desire to serve the City and which I believe will compliment that of those currently serving on the Commission. I am proud to have been nominated to serve on the City Planning Commission and look forward to working with the currently appointed members.