

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

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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June 5, 2025
Start: 11:04 a.m.
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HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Kevin C. Riley, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Shaun Abreu
David M. Carr
Francisco P. Moya
Lynn C. Schulman

A P P E A R A N C E S

Jesse Batus, Senior Vice President of Real Estate Development at The Community Builders, Inc

Eric Palatnik, attorney representing CB-Emmanuel

Chris Bramwell, CB-Emmanuel

Julius Tajiddin, self

Richard Lobel, Sheldon Lobel PC

Victor Efremenkov, Victor Efremenkov Management Company

Alexander Zhitnik, Z Architecture PLLC

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Mic check, mic check,
3 this is a mic check on the Subcommittee on Zoning and
4 Franchises. Today's date is June 5, 2025, recorded by
5 Walter Louis in the Chambers.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning, and
7 welcome to today's New York City hearing for the
8 Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises.

9 At this time, we ask you to silence all
10 electronic devices, and at no time is anyone to
11 approach the dais.

12 If you would like to sign up for in-
13 person testimony or have other questions throughout
14 the hearing, please see the Sergeant-at-Arms.

15 Chair, we are ready to begin.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [GAVEL] Good morning,
17 everyone, and welcome to a meeting of the
18 Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. I'm Council
19 Member Kevin Riley, Chair of this Subcommittee. This
20 morning, I'm joined by Council Member Schulman and
21 remotely by Council Member Moya.

22 Today, we will hold four public hearings.
23 Two will cover projects in Brooklyn, including the
24 Marcus Garvey Boulevard Large-Scale General
25 Development or LSGD proposal in Bedford-Stuyvesant,

2 as well as the North 7th Street Rezoning Proposal in
3 Williamsburg. In Queens, we will have a hearing on
4 Article XI tax exemption request for the previously
5 approved Ocean Crest project, and for the One45
6 Project in Manhattan, we are holding a hearing on the
7 zoning special permit, which is a part of the package
8 of land use actions relating to the project for which
9 we held a comprehensive public hearing last month.

10 On a procedural note, please note that LU
11 items 287 and 288 on today's agenda are laid over,
12 and I will now review the hearing procedures.

13 This meeting is being held in hybrid
14 format. Members of the public who wish to testify may
15 testify in person or through Zoom. Members of the
16 public wishing to testify remotely may register by
17 visiting the New York City Council's website at
18 www.council.nyc.gov/landuse to sign up. For those of
19 you in here in person, please see one of the
20 Sergeant-at-Arms to prepare and submit a speaker's
21 card. Members of the public may also view a live
22 stream broadcast of this meeting on the Council's
23 website.

24 When you are called to testify before the
25 Subcommittee, if you join us remotely, you will

2 remain muted until recognized by myself to speak.
3 When you are recognized, your microphone will be
4 unmuted.

5 We will limit public testimony to two
6 minutes per witness. If you have additional testimony
7 you would like the Subcommittee to consider, or if
8 you have written testimony you would like to submit
9 instead of appearing in person, please email it to
10 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Written testimony
11 may be submitted up to three days after the hearing
12 is closed. Please indicate the LU number and/or
13 project name in the subject line of your email.

14 We request that the witnesses joining us
15 remotely remain in the meeting until excused by
16 myself as Council Members may have questions.

17 Lastly, for everyone attending today's
18 meeting, this is a government proceeding and decorum
19 must be observed at all times. Members of the public
20 are asked not to speak during the meeting unless you
21 are testifying.

22 The witness table is reserved for people
23 called to testify, and no video recording or
24 photography is allowed from the witness table.
25 Further, members of the public may not present audio

2 or video recordings as testimony, but may submit
3 transcripts of such recordings to Sergeant-at-Arms
4 for inclusion in the hearing record.

5 I just want to state for the record we
6 have been joined by Council Member Carr.

7 I will now open the public hearing on LU
8 296 relating to the application for a zoning special
9 permit, which is related to the two other
10 applications for a zoning map amendment and a zoning
11 text amendment, and all of which together are being
12 reviewed concurrently by the Council, and all of
13 which together will facilitate the development known
14 as One45 for Harlem in Council Member Salaam's
15 District. I will remind everyone that this
16 Subcommittee held a public hearing on the other two
17 applications on May 20th last month, where we heard
18 comprehensive testimony from the applicants and the
19 public regarding all aspects of the proposal. Today's
20 hearing is on the zoning special permit, which is a
21 part of that package of applications covered on May
22 20th.

23 For anyone wishing to testify on this
24 item remotely, if you have not already done so, you
25 must register online by visiting the Council's

2 website at council.nyc.gov/landuse. For anyone with
3 us in person, please see one of the Sergeant-at-Arms
4 to submit a speaker's card, and if you prefer to
5 submit written testimony, you may always do so by
6 emailing it to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

7 Counsel, can you please administer the
8 affirmation?

9 Counsel, are there any members of the
10 public who wish to testify remotely or in person
11 regarding the rezoning proposal?

12 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Chair, I
13 understand that we do have remote witnesses.

14 Okay, it appears that we did have some
15 registrations, but they are currently not in the
16 room. They are not logged on. We'll just give them a
17 few more seconds.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: We'll stand at ease
19 for 60 seconds.

20 Okay, thank you. Is there anyone in
21 person here to testify on LU Number 296?

22 There being no members of the public who
23 wish to testify on LU Number 296 relating to the
24 One45 zoning special permit application, the public
25 hearing is now closed and the item is laid over.

2 I will now open the public hearing on
3 pre-considered LU items associated with the
4 application number G 250076 SCQ relating to an
5 Article XI tax exemption request for the Ocean Crest
6 project in Majority Whip Brooks-Powers' District in
7 Queens. The proposal seeks to facilitate an
8 affordable homeownership development with
9 approximately 89 units in Queens. The project site
10 was the subject of a rezoning proposal that was
11 approved by the Council in 2023.

12 For anyone wishing to testify on this
13 item remotely, if you have not already done so, you
14 must register online by visiting the Council's
15 website at council.nyc.gov/landuse. For anyone with
16 us in person, please see one of the Sergeant-at-Arms
17 to submit a speaker's card. If you prefer to submit
18 written testimony, you can always do so by emailing
19 it to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

20 I will now call the applicant for this
21 proposal, which is Jesse Batus, and I understand we
22 also have some project team members from HPD on hand
23 for Q and A, if necessary, including Ryan Moroz,
24 Emily Adler, and Justin Donlon.

2 Counsel, can you please administer the
3 affirmation?

4 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Mr. Batus,
5 would you please raise your right hand and state your
6 name for the record?

7 JESSE BATUS: Jesse Batus.

8 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: The red light
9 indicates that it's on.

10 JESSE BATUS: Jesse Batus.

11 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Thank you, and
12 do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
13 nothing but the truth in your testimony before the
14 Subcommittee and in answer to all Councilmember
15 questions?

16 JESSE BATUS: I do.

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. I know that
18 the Majority Whip Brooks-Powers is excited to be in a
19 position to continue moving this development forward,
20 particularly an affordable home ownership project in
21 her District. So thank you, and I have no questions.
22 I now invite my Colleagues, if they have any
23 questions.

24 Okay. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

2 JESSE BATUS: Pursuant to Section 577 of
3 the Private Housing Finance Law, Restored Homes
4 Housing Development Fund Corporation, who will
5 acquire the exemption area and TCB Beach Channel
6 Drive Limited Partnership and will collectively be
7 known as Owner, is seeking approval of an Article XI
8 tax exemption for a project known as Ocean Crest.
9 Ocean Crest is an 89-unit, 100-percent affordable
10 homeownership development previously approved by the
11 City Council on August 8th of 2023. The proposal is
12 to be financed under HPD's Open Door Program, wherein
13 eligible sponsors purchase City-owned or privately-
14 owned land and construct cooperative and condominium
15 buildings affordable to moderate and middle-income
16 households.

17 Thank you, Chair Riley and Subcommittee
18 Members, for your time and consideration of this
19 proposal.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. The
21 applicant panel is now excused.

22 Counsel, are there any members of the
23 public who wish to testify remotely or in person
24 regarding this rezoning proposal?

2 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Anyone with us
3 in the Chamber wishing to testify on the Ocean Crest
4 Article XI, please step forward, identify yourself,
5 and submit a speaker card to the Sergeants.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. There being
7 no members of the public who wish to testify on the
8 pre-considered LU for Ocean Crest Article XI tax
9 exemption request, the public hearing is now closed
10 and the item is laid over. Thank you.

11 I will now open the public hearing on LUs
12 numbers 300, 301, and 302 relating to the Marcus
13 Garvey Boulevard LSGD proposal in Council Member
14 Ossé's District in Brooklyn. The proposal seeks a
15 zoning map amendment, a zoning text amendment, and a
16 zoning special permit to develop a 14-story
17 affordable senior housing building in the Bedford-
18 Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn.

19 For anyone wishing to testify on these
20 items remotely, if you have not already done so, you
21 must register online by visiting the Council's
22 website at council.nyc.gov/landuse. For anyone with
23 us in person, please see one of the Sergeant-at-Arms
24 to submit a speaker's card. If you prefer to submit a

2 written testimony, you can always do so by emailing
3 it to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

4 I will now call the applicant panel for
5 this proposal, which includes Eric Palatnik and Chris
6 Bramwell.

7 Counsel, can you please administer the
8 affirmation?

9 And I also want to acknowledge that we've
10 been joined remotely by Council Member Abreu.

11 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Applicant
12 panelists, please raise your right hand and state
13 your name for the record.

14 CHRIS BRAMWELL: Chris Bramwell.

15 ERIC PALATNIK: Eric Palatnik.

16 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Thank you. I'll
17 ask you each in turn, do you affirm to tell the
18 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in
19 your testimony before this Subcommittee and in answer
20 to all Council Member questions? Mr. Bramwell.

21 CHRIS BRAMWELL: Yes, I do.

22 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Mr. Palatnik.

23 ERIC PALATNIK: I do.

24 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. And now the
3 applicant team may begin.

4 I'd just ask that you please restate your
5 name and organization for the record. You may begin.

6 ERIC PALATNIK: Sure. My name is Eric
7 Palatnik. I'm an attorney, and I'm representing CB-
8 Emmanuel in this rezoning special permit application
9 that, if approved, will create fully affordable
10 senior housing, the opposite of the Joni Mitchell
11 song, what is now a parking lot so we are going to
12 actually remove the parking lot and build a building.
13 The building is shown right here. If you can go to
14 the next slide, please. I don't know who's
15 controlling the screen. Do I control it?

16 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: No, you just
17 say next slide when you're ready.

18 ERIC PALATNIK: All right. Next slide,
19 please.

20 There you go. I thought so. So you can't
21 see it from here, you can't read the words, so I'll
22 read it to you. But what you can see in the lower
23 right-hand corner is a brand-new proposed 14-story
24 building. The reason we're here today is because the
25 top portion of it that's shaded in a little bit of a

mauve color or burgundy color is not allowed to be there as-of-right so we're requesting here a height increase to allow the increase in height to a 14-story building from what is a permitted building height of 90 feet to a total proposed height of 155 feet. And I'm not going to go through the entire presentation, but suffice it to say, there are multiple buildings within the blocks all surrounding it of similar height. Also, as point of reference, we met with the Community Planning Board multiple times, and we've met with the Council Member related to this, and we've met with the Borough President. We received support at the Community Planning Board. We have not heard back from the Council Member yet, but I have no reason to believe that he's objecting to it. Mr. Bramwell here met with him, and we received a support letter from the Borough President's office. If the application is approved, it will allow for the creation of 292 additional units in addition to the 269 that are there now, resulting in 560 units, all of which will be affordable housing, the existing housing on the proposed, to people at 60 percent or lower AMI, and it will be using federal tax credit

2 subsidies, as well as a host of other funding sources
3 to achieve that.

4 And I'll skip right to the chase, and
5 then I'll stop talking. If you can go to page six,
6 please. Page six shows you what we are doing so you
7 can understand it. Again, we're asking for a rezoning
8 from an R6A to an R7A, and we're asking for a special
9 permit for the height increase. We're not asking for
10 the rezoning for floor area. We're very well
11 underbuilt. We're asking for the rezoning to
12 facilitate the height and to enable the height
13 special permit. It will be 14 stories, and the
14 building will be built on the parking lot. It's part
15 of a larger complex known as Willoughby Court
16 Apartments, which Mr. Bramwell and his organization
17 took control of about a decade ago and have spent the
18 last decade making substantial improvements in
19 safety, security, and apartments and site conditions.
20 We heard multiple testimony from multiple people at
21 the Community Planning Board, most of whom supported
22 Mr. Bramwell and the work that he's been doing there
23 for the past 10 years. If this is approved as a part
24 of a larger site improvement, there will be a new
25 plaza area built in the area that's the parking lot

2 between the new building and the existing buildings.

3 All of the landscaping inside the interior courtyard,

4 which is Everdeen's open area, will be replaced and

5 replanted with new landscaping. There will be new

6 fencing, new lighting, new security systems. There

7 will be new sidewalks installed as necessary around

8 the property, as well as street trees installed, as

9 well as more lighting and security on the perimeter.

10 Security is a number one concern for Mr. Bramwell. It

11 was raised at the Community Board, and he's intent on

12 making this as safe and as nice as he could do so.

13 And that is, in essence, our application. We'd be

14 happy to answer any specific questions the Committee

15 may have.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Your

17 proposal to build on an existing parking lot that I

18 understand is utilized by residents of the Willoughby

19 Court Apartments. The application proposed to

20 relocate the existing space to a cellar of the new

21 building. Will this be a one-for-one replacement, or

22 will there be a reduction in the number of spaces?

23 ERIC PALATNIK: It'll be a one-for-one

24 replacement. That was discussed at length. People

25 value their cars. The other thing to take note of, so

2 the Committee has assurance, is also, is the parking
3 lot is substantially underutilized. We have documents
4 in our application that say so, but also you can see
5 from the photo, it's just a random Google aerial that
6 the parking lot is at about 50 percent capacity.
7 That's pretty much its average capacity. But there
8 will be a one-for-one replacement at the cellar
9 level.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Can you clarify how
11 the proposed affordable senior housing will be
12 funded? Do you intend to use the HPD SARA term sheet?

13 ERIC PALATNIK: Yes, we do.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Can you clarify the
15 affordability tenants will receive vouchers and be
16 required to pay 30 percent of income as rent? Is that
17 correct?

18 CHRIS BRAMWELL: Not all tenants are going
19 to receive vouchers, but it will be at the 60 percent
20 AMI, the rents.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I will now ask
22 questions on behalf of Council Member Ossé. The
23 tenants of Willoughby Court Apartments have expressed
24 concerns about existing amenities requiring upgrades,
25

2 sanitation in and around property, and personal on-
3 site. How do you plan to address these concerns?

4 CHRIS BRAMWELL: We've met with the
5 tenants a number of times, and we are doing some
6 upgrades that will go along with this project. We'll
7 be redoing the courtyard. There's a massive courtyard
8 that is in the center of the project. We're doing
9 some security upgrades and a lot of beautification.
10 Also, with the plaza that will be between the two
11 buildings, that will also be a great amenity for the
12 residents to have.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I did not know this,
14 so I'm asking this question, and Eric knows how I
15 feel about studios. You're proposing 222 studios and
16 69 one-bedrooms. How did you decide on the number of
17 studios in relation to the number of one-bedroom
18 units, and what were the considerations that
19 determined this?

20 ERIC PALATNIK: Sure. This is proposed to
21 be fully affordable senior housing. We're taking off
22 of much data that's been accumulated on senior
23 housing through the decades. Obviously, family sizes
24 are tremendously smaller in a senior household. So,
25 we're trying to accommodate, and it's been targeted

2 towards couples and maybe couples that have a child,
3 but it's really targeted towards seniors. I'm 56, so
4 I guess I'll be a senior in a few years. I got a 13-
5 year-old.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: You got a long time,
7 Eric.

8 ERIC PALATNIK: Right, I got a little
9 time, but people my age are not necessarily the
10 target here. The target demographic are people that
11 are in their late 60s, 70s, that are in need of some
12 social services in addition to some income relief in
13 their rent, and that's who we're trying to attract to
14 the property.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Are there any existing
16 studios in the development?

17 CHRIS BRAMWELL: Currently, no.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No?

19 CHRIS BRAMWELL: No, we don't have any
20 currently.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I am not a big fan of
22 studios. I don't think they're conducive to someone
23 who's trying to live in a nice space where they want
24 to invite their loved ones over and not have them in
25 their private space as soon as they enter their

2 household. I do understand why studios are needed,
3 because we do have to address the units that we are
4 able to produce so I understand, but I would just ask
5 if there is any space to produce any more one-
6 bedrooms, you would try your best to do so. I can
7 only ask that request.

8 CHRIS BRAMWELL: I will discuss it with
9 the architect and the team to see if there's any
10 adjustments that can be made.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much. I
12 appreciate it.

13 Council Member Schulman, you have any
14 questions?

15 Okay. There being no other Council
16 Members with questions, thank you so much for
17 testifying here today.

18 ERIC PALATNIK: Thank you for your time,
19 everybody.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Counsel, are there any
21 members of the public who wish to testify on this
22 application?

23 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Yes, Chair. We
24 have currently one registration for public testimony,

2 and we currently have no one signed up online, but we
3 do have the one in-person witness.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. I will now call
5 up Julius Tajiddin. I'm sorry if I mispronounced your
6 name. I always mispronounce your name, Julius. I'm
7 sorry.

8 JULIUS TAJIDDIN: Is this the One45 going
9 up?

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No, it's not. That was
11 done already.

12 JULIUS TAJIDDIN: Okay.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, that was done
14 already, Julius. You can submit written testimony on
15 that one, though, which I believe you did already.

16 JULIUS TAJIDDIN: I can do it again.

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, you can do it
18 again. Okay? All right. Thank you, Julius.

19 If there are any other members who wish
20 to testify on this application relating to LUs
21 numbers 300, 301, or 302, relating to the Marcus
22 Garvey Boulevard LSGD proposal, you can raise your
23 hand online, or if you're in person, you can see the
24 Sergeant-at-Arms. We will stand at ease for ten
25 seconds.

There being no members of the public who wish to testify on LUs number 300, 301, and 302 for the Marcus Garvey Boulevard LSGD proposal, the public hearing is now closed and the item is laid over.

Thank you so much.

Okay. Our last hearing we will have today, I will now open the public hearing on LUs numbers 298 and 299 relating to the North 7th Street rezoning proposal in Council Member Gutiérrez's District in Brooklyn. The proposal includes a zoning map amendment and a related zoning text amendment to facilitate the development of a new six-story residential building with approximately 28 apartments in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn.

For anyone wishing to testify on these items today, if you have not already done so, you must register online by visiting the Council's website at council.nyc.gov/landuse. For anyone with us in person, please see one of the Sergeant-at-Arms to submit a speaker's card.

If you prefer to submit written testimony, you can always do so by emailing it to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

2 I will now call for the applicant panel
3 for this proposal. This consists of Richard Lobel. Is
4 Amanda here?

5 RICHARD LOBEL: Amanda's in the audience.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: She's not?

7 RICHARD LOBEL: She's not testifying.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Victor?

9 VICTOR EFREMENKOV: Yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Victor, how do you
11 pronounce your last name?

12 VICTOR EFREMENKOV: Efremenko.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Victor Efremenko. And
14 Alexander?

15 ALEXANDER ZHITNIK: Zhitnik.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Zhitnik. And I
17 understand we also have remote participants for
18 Christina Szczepanski (phonetic) and Kevin Williams.

19 Counsel, please administer the
20 affirmation.

21 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Applicant
22 panelists, would you please raise your right hands
23 and state your name for the record?

24 RICHARD LOBEL: Richard Lobel of Sheldon
25 Lobel.

2 VICTOR EFREMENKOV: Victor Efremenko.

3 ALEXANDER ZHITNIK: Alexander Zhitnik.

4 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: And I will ask
5 you each in turn to answer the following. Do you
6 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
7 nothing but the truth in your testimony before the
8 Subcommittee and in answer to all Council Member
9 questions? Mr. Lobel.

10 RICHARD LOBEL: I do.

11 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Mr. Efremenko.

12 VICTOR EFREMENKOV: I do.

13 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Mr. Zhitnik?

14 ALEXANDER ZHITNIK: I do.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. And now the
16 applicant panel may begin.

17 As you start, please reinstate your name
18 and organization for the record. You may begin.

19 RICHARD LOBEL: Thank you, Chair Riley,
20 Council Member Schulman, other Council Members
21 joining remotely. My name is Richard Lobel from the
22 law firm of Sheldon Lobel, and I'm here with Victor
23 and Alex to present the North 7th Street rezoning. We
24 are hopeful that the Zoning Subcommittee will be
25 supportive of a rezoning which has enjoyed the

2 unanimous vote of Community Board 1 in Brooklyn, as
3 well as the unconditional approval of the Brooklyn
4 Borough President. Next slide, please.

5 So, this is a very local rezoning. Victor
6 and several of his neighbors, specifically three
7 other applicants, are proposing a rezoning to eight
8 lots on the south side of North 7th Street between
9 Bedford and Berry Streets. This rezoning would allow
10 for the reinstatement of R6 zoning, so there would be
11 an existing R6B and R6B/C2-4 that would be rezoned to
12 R6A/C2-4. We are also, of course, seeking an MIH text
13 amendment to allow for mapping Options 1 and 2. The
14 resulting development would be a new six-story,
15 26,000-plus square foot mixed residential and
16 commercial building, which would consist of ground
17 floor commercial use and roughly 28 units, of which
18 roughly seven would be permanently income-restricted.
19 I will present with regards to land use, briefly
20 discuss architectural aspects, and then both Alex, in
21 terms of architecture, and Victor, in terms of
22 program, are happy to answer any questions. Next
23 slide, please.

24 As you can see from the circled area,
25 tough to see, but we'll see it in the coming maps,

1 this property is currently located on a block on
2 which the southern portion of the property is already
3 zoned R6A. That's an existing MX8, M12, R6A mixed-use
4 district that was zoned as part of the 2005
5 Greenpoint Williamsburg rezoning. This property was
6 previously R6(M1-2) and was rezoned to R6B over 20
7 years ago. The rezoning would, in essence, restore
8 that R6 noncontextual zoning, which here would permit
9 FAR up to 3.9 and allow for development of
10 residential and, importantly, required affordability,
11 which is not currently a part of the existing zoning
12 district.

14 If you can skip two slides to the tax
15 map, you can see the extent of the zoning district
16 boundaries. So, the R6A would be mapped from 100 feet
17 from Bedford through to Berry Streets, and a
18 commercial overlay would be on the middle portion of
19 the block to meet up with the existing commercial
20 overlay existing along Berry and North 7th. In
21 addition, you can see the red highlighted area, that
22 is the area that is the development site currently
23 owned by Victor and his co-applicants.

24 The next slide is the area map, which I
25 think tells the story well in terms of why this is

2 such a supported rezoning. You can see from the area
3 map the Bedford Avenue L stop exists roughly 150 feet
4 from the site. There are multiple subway lines within
5 half a mile of the site, multiple bus lines as well,
6 at least four bus lines, and you've got existing
7 thoroughfares along Bedford and Berry Streets.

8 Clearly, the area can handle this modest additional
9 density, in addition to which, pursuant to City of
10 Yes, the current building is R6A, which would allow
11 for the proposed building, would allow for six
12 stories here as proposed. The existing R6B, because
13 of City of Yes, would also allow for six stories. So
14 essentially, we're allowing for a more full floor
15 plate, which will allow for the increase in
16 residential units as well as affordability in this
17 area. I would add that the area is in dire need of
18 residential use as well as affordable units, given
19 the tremendous upswing in population since 2010. In
20 the most recent census since 2010, there was roughly
21 a 40 percent increase in the number of residents in
22 the area, clearly placing much pressure on the
23 housing market.

24 The next several slides we can just page
25 through, show pictures of the area, including the

2 next slide, which shows the site itself, existing
3 one- to three-story buildings with ground floor
4 commercial. I would also note that the commercial
5 overlay here would serve to create conforming
6 conditions on many of the commercial uses already
7 existing on this block, an additional bonus of the
8 rezoning.

9 As we page through the next several
10 slides, I guess if we go to the next slide, you can
11 see the proposed building in rendering. There is a
12 building across the street, which totals 12 stories
13 in height, so the six-story building here, clearly
14 within the context of this block.

15 And with the remaining slides and plans,
16 you can see the sensitive design in terms of the
17 area. If you want to keep moving forward, you can see
18 the floor plans, which allow for cellar storage. You
19 can keep going. The next slide.

20 Ground floor commercial and residential
21 use, as well as three parking spaces. And then as you
22 go, you can keep paging through the upper stories.
23 These provide a mix of studios, ones, and twos. I
24 would add that the building is very heavily favored
25 towards one- and two-bedroom units, a total of four

2 studios, 14 one bedrooms, and 10 two bedrooms,
3 resulting in 85 percent of the units at one bedroom
4 or above.

5 So, in essence, that's the application.
6 Again, we've received tremendous support to date.
7 Community Board 1 was very gracious in their
8 approval, approving this application by a vote of 40
9 to nothing. And with that, the applicant's happy to
10 answer any questions.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Richard.
12 The building you proposed is just shy of utilizing
13 the full FAR. Please explain why you aren't able to
14 use the full FAR.

15 RICHARD LOBEL: Alex, do you want to talk
16 a little bit about the current utilization of the
17 square footage?

18 ALEXANDER ZHITNIK: I think one aspect of
19 the project that Richard didn't mention, the project
20 also includes an affordable component. So, this is
21 not purely market rate building. In terms of FAR,
22 this particular proposal was designed prior to the
23 latest rezoning. So, the building was designed based
24 on 3.0 FAR right now, although the latest rezoning
25 would allow 3.9 FAR, which could increase the bulk,

2 but we decided not to modify the project because it's
3 already enough and it's in advanced stages already.
4 So, we are actually under-building in comparison to
5 what could have been done based on the most recent
6 zoning. So it's not a maximization.

7 RICHARD LOBEL: And just to add to that,
8 the FAR total is 3.54, so close to 3.6. And the
9 additional FAR is minimal, it would be about an
10 additional .3 so it's close to maximum.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. What
12 potential impact will this rezoning have on non-
13 control applicant sites? Are any of those sites
14 considered soft sites?

15 RICHARD LOBEL: So roughly 30,000 square
16 feet plus is the total rezoning area. Victor and his
17 co-applicants control roughly 8,000 square feet. With
18 regards to most of the other area, there's really two
19 properties. The first is the corner of Berry Street,
20 an existing commercial establishment, a restaurant,
21 which could build roughly to the size and bulk of
22 this property. And then the additional site, which
23 would not be considered soft, is the site immediately
24 to the south of us. That's already built to an FAR of
25 well over 3, and so that would not be considered a

2 soft site. So almost all of the buildable square
3 footage within the rezoning area is owned or
4 controlled by Victor and his partners.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: There are currently
6 eight occupied residential units. What are the lease
7 terms of the existing tenants, and what are the rents
8 of the existing tenants?

9 RICHARD LOBEL: Sure. So I'll start. And
10 Victor can add as necessary. Most of those tenants
11 have either vacated or their leases that are going to
12 be up during the summer. Victor, again, one of the
13 attractive parts of this rezoning is that we have
14 local owners and neighbors who are conducting the
15 rezoning application, and so they will all receive
16 ample notice. Indeed, the opportunity here, we're not
17 even rezoned yet, but the opportunity here to develop
18 plans for the building at Department of Buildings, as
19 well as obtain financing, would result in a fairly
20 long lead time for those residents of the building.
21 Those who have not vacated or are terming out over
22 the summer, Victor said that he's able to work with
23 them, both having property and knowing landowners
24 within the area and property owners, in order to make
25 sure that they are sufficiently housed after a

2 proposed rezoning. So, he knows most of these
3 tenants, with several of them being in his building,
4 but he and his co-applicants have committed to being
5 as helpful as possible. But clearly those people
6 would not be affected for a minimum of a year.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: How many of those
8 tenants moved out, you said, Richard?

9 RICHARD LOBEL: I think of the eight
10 units, do you know how many are vacant?

11 VICTOR EFREMENKOV: No vacancy right now,
12 but there is no senior citizen in the existing
13 premises or tenants with children. All young
14 professionals, and we also promised them to help with
15 moving expenses. And if they want to come back in the
16 future after the project will be finished, they will
17 get an apartment with some discount.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: All right, thank you.
19 My last question is, what is the timeline for tenant
20 move out, demolition, and construction?

21 RICHARD LOBEL: Yes, so I'll start. I
22 think the applicant here, to the extent that the
23 rezoning was approved, the rezoning would be approved
24 within the next several months. Alex is the project
25 architect, has not yet begun Department of Buildings

2 applications, given that there would be then
3 technical drawings needed. So as mentioned, I think
4 that any type of construction or work to be done on a
5 going forward basis would not be begun for a minimum
6 of a year. And then potentially in terms of the
7 construction timeline, construction I imagine would
8 take somewhere between a year and a half to two
9 years.

10 ALEXANDER ZHITNIK: Yeah, at least.

11 RICHARD LOBEL: So that's the rough
12 schedule.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Thank you. And I
14 just want to shout that we've been joined by the
15 Elliott School of International Affairs in the
16 balcony. Thank you so much for joining us at City
17 Hall.

18 Thank you. Council Member Schulman, you
19 have any questions?

20 Okay. There being no questions, this
21 applicant panel is excused.

22 Counsel, are there any members of the
23 public who wish to testify on this application?

24 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL HUH: Chair, we have
25 no one registered online at the moment, and it

2 appears there's no one signed up to testify in
3 person. If there is, please come forward and fill out
4 a speaker's card. Okay.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. There being no
6 members of the public who wish to testify on LUs
7 numbers 298 and 299 for the North 7th Street rezoning
8 proposal, the public hearing is now closed and items
9 are laid over. Thank you.

10 Okay. That concludes today's business. As
11 a reminder, all public hearings held today have been
12 closed and the items are laid over, but for any
13 members of the viewing public still wishing to submit
14 testimony, you may do so through email by sending it
15 to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

16 I would like to thank the members of the
17 public, my Colleagues, Subcommittee Counsel, and the
18 Sergeant-at-Arms for participating in today's
19 meeting.

20 This meeting is hereby adjourned. Thank
21 you. [GAVEL]

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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 July 14, 2025