

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 5, 2013
Start: 1:09 p.m.
Recess: 1:33 p.m.

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

B E F O R E:
MELISSA MARK-VIVERITO
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Daniel Dromm
James Vacca
Vincent J. Gentile
Jimmy Van Bramer
Elizabeth Crowley

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

Robert Sancho
Producer
NYC

Eddie Palmieri
Bandleader/ Musician
NYC

Shirley Zafirau
Host
NYC Jazz Tours

Dmitri Daniel Glinski
President
Russian-Speaking Community Council
of Manhattan and the Bronx, Inc.

Lori Gold

Norman Weiss
Adjunct Associate Professor of
Architecture
Columbia University

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COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION

CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Alright.

[gavel] We're going to get started. This should be a quick hearing. Good afternoon, everybody. I'm Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito, chair of the Parks... of the Committee on Parks and Recreation and today's hearing, this is a hearing that we have about twice a year, which is we are going to be considering a bill to co-name 56 thoroughfares and public places throughout the city of New York. It's proposed Intro Number 1188-A. And so I know that we have a whole bunch of people that have signed up to speak. I also just want to recognize that we have been joined here by members of the committee, Council Member Danny Dromm, Council Member James Vacca and I want to thank all the committee staff that has helped put this hearing together and I know that I'd that I'd like to make the... just call on... we have maybe two or three panels that we're going to call. And we'd like to invite members of the public who will... maybe have not signed and want to speak to please sign one of these with the Sergeant-at-Arms and I'll call up the first panel, okay? So I want to thank everyone that's here. Oh, I did not notice. Mr. Palmieri,

2 you want to come up to the panel, please? Thank
3 you. It's a great pleasure to have you here.

4 [applause] Yes, come on up if you want to... sure,
5 yes.

6 EDDIE PALMIERI: Thank you very much.

7 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Also Shirley
8 Zafree? I hope I... Zafirau; Robert Sancho, 'kay.
9 I'll start with those three.

10 [Pause]

11 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Okay, so then if
12 anybody would like to... [background voices] to
13 start off. Yep. Oh, you're all three with the
14 same...

15 ROBERT SANCHO: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Right? Okay.

17 ROBERT SANCHO: Yes, we are, we're...

18 [crosstalk]

19 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Okay.

20 ROBERT SANCHO: We're obviously wanting
21 to thank you...

22 [crosstalk]

23 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Yes.

24 ROBERT SANCHO: Melissa, for sponsoring
25 this bill and the members of your committee. As

1 you know, Charlie was Eddie's older brother. He
2 was a world-class band leader, composer, arranger
3 and a tremendous teacher. He recorded several,
4 several albums and he was actually Eddie's mentor,
5 so I know Eddie knows a lot more about Charlie than
6 I do, so I just wanted to introduce Eddie Palmieri.
7

8 EDDIE PALMIERI: Thank you. Thank you.

9 [applause]

10 [Pause]

11 EDDIE PALMIERI: Councilwoman Melissa,
12 thank you very much for allowing me to speak on
13 behalf of my wonderful brother; like Mr. Sancho
14 said my mentor. At 14, my brother, Charlie
15 Palmieri, was already working professionally. The
16 only problem that he had was when he finished, they
17 would tell him, "Charlie, your mother's outside
18 waiting for you," 'cause he was 14 years old and my
19 mother is the one that wanted us to play piano.
20 And we were nine years difference. My brother was
21 born in '27; I was born in 1930... my brother was
22 born in 1927 and I was born in 1936 and no other
23 brothers and no other sisters, nothing, so I was
24 blessed that I was born and I couldn't have been
25 born to a greater family; mother and father and my

1 brother took care of me and recommended me to
2 teachers. I had great teachers. One of them was
3 an Afro-American, Miss Margaret Bonds, who's in the
4 Negro history books, a concert pianist, and we took
5 lessons at Carnegie Hall and she had a studio up in
6 Carnegie Hall that she rented and we took lessons
7 there. He recommended me to another Spaniard
8 teacher called Claude Saavedra. He recommended me
9 to all the different bands so that I was able to
10 make a career and I loved him just so much and he
11 died too young; 60 years young, but I think about
12 him just now. His birthday was November 21st and
13 we lit a candle in his name, again, and I just want
14 to thank everyone to make a crossroad for him for
15 him to have his own street. That was 112th Street,
16 where I was born, between Madison and Park and then
17 I was raised in the Bronx. So again, he was a
18 great pianist. He was a great arranger and
19 teacher, but he also taught and he was a great
20 teacher and he worked with the youth constantly, so
21 in the community he was like so well-loved by all
22 the students and whoever he taught. So this is an
23 honor that is being bestowed on Charlie and I just
24 want to thank each and every one of you for making
25

2 this possible, and I'll certainly be there when
3 that happens, and then we're going to do a benefit
4 in the name of my brother, Charlie Palmieri.

5 [applause]

6 SHIRLEY ZAFIRAU: This was unexpected.
7 I am here for Miles Davis, but I knew Charlie and
8 Eddie a long time ago and Charlie was a beautiful,
9 beautiful human being. He made great music and we
10 were always there for their performances, but I
11 didn't know that this was going to be on the
12 agenda, so I can only say I am misspeaking and I
13 need to speak to it.

14 [crosstalk]

15 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: And on another
16 one. Thank you. And you already... you're fine?

17 SHIRLEY ZAFIRAU: I'm here for Miles
18 Davis.

19 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Right. No, I
20 know, but I'm saying Mr. Sancho, you're okay?

21 ROBERT SANCHO: Yeah, that's fine.

22 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Okay, and if
23 you... could you identify yourself a second?

24 SHIRLEY ZAFIRAU: Yes, my name is
25 Shirley Zafirau.

2 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Okay, Zafirau
3 and I know she's going to be testifying about a
4 different street naming, so I want to thank Mr.
5 Sancho and obviously Mr. Palmieri, it's a pleasure
6 to have you here.

7 EDDIE PALMIERI: Thank you so much.

8 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Obviously, I'm
9 proud to represent this district and East Harlem,
10 which has such a prolific history with regards to
11 contributions; musical contributions. So your
12 brother is in good company along with many others
13 that we've named; had done street namings in East
14 Harlem, so thank you for being here today and for
15 testifying and I look forward to the unveiling once
16 we pass this and the celebration that we'll do to
17 celebrate his memory.

18 EDDIE PALMIERI: [off mic] Thank you
19 very much for giving me the opportunity to speak at
20 the meeting. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Okay, thank you,
22 alright? [applause] And you'll stay. You'll stay,
23 right, 'cause you want to testify about another.
24 Gracias, muchas gracias. [background voices]

2 Alright, so do you want to... I know you're here to
3 testify on another street name.

4 [crosstalk]

5 SHIRLEY ZAFIRAU: Yes, my name is
6 Shirley Zafirau, and there was a 50th anniversary
7 cover of Jazz Magazine, which really prodded me to
8 do something I've been saying for years on the
9 street. I live on West 77th Street, just doors
10 down from where Miles lived. He owned... he was
11 one of the first African Americans to own;
12 literally own a townhouse on the Upper West Side
13 and he was a very low-key neighbor. He used to sit
14 out on the retaining wall in front of his house and
15 say hi to the neighbors when we would walk by,
16 running counter to you know, the press that he got.
17 That building where he lived, his family grew up
18 there and his best selling multi-Grammy winning
19 album, Kind of Blue, was actually conceived and
20 created there with Bill Evans, and I just think
21 that that block... he used to park his sports cars
22 on that street. He would park them down right
23 around the corner on Riverside Drive and there was
24 a lot of creative energy emanating from that
25 building and from his presence on the street, and

2 he's considered an icon in the jazz world. He
3 basically changed jazz. I might be stretching this
4 a bit, but he is to modern jazz what Ellington was
5 to the Big Band Era jazz, so I just think it would
6 be fitting to have him recognized with that one
7 block being named for him, Miles Davis Way, and
8 I've been on a quest for three years and I hope it
9 can happen. [background voice]

10 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: It sounds like
11 you're well on your way. The fact that we are here
12 today means that this has been approved at the
13 community level and there's been a vetting.
14 Obviously, we all know Miles Davis's contributions
15 and we know the great musician that he was, so I
16 think this is a great way of honoring his memory.

17 SHIRLEY ZAFIRAU: Okay.

18 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: So thank you for
19 the endeavor.

20 SHIRLEY ZAFIRAU: Okay, thank you.

21 [crosstalk]

22 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: And thank you
23 for doing this.

24 SHIRLEY ZAFIRAU: Thank you for giving
25 me the time.

2 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: You're welcome.

3 [applause] Alright, we're going to have one more
4 panel. We've got Dmitri Daniel Glinski; Lori Gold;
5 Norman Weiss.

6 [Pause] [background voices]

7 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: I understand,
8 but those... that's the panel and Mr. Palmieri, I
9 really want to take a moment. You are an
10 incredible inspiration. You are a world-renowned
11 musician and Grammy Award winning and in many, many
12 other ways. I, as a Latina, thank you very much
13 for your contributions. You've made great
14 contributions to the Latin jazz and to many other
15 genres. [background voice] Igualmente. Thank you
16 very much. Yes, but these people are hearing this
17 today. [background voice] Right, I'll look them
18 over. Alright, so I want to recognize that we've
19 been joined by Council Members Gentile and Van
20 Bramer. Anyone else? Okay and I think that we
21 have... now, right, we've got Lori Gold, Dmitri
22 Daniel Glinski and Norman Weiss, so whoever would
23 like to begin, feel free.

24 Okay, thank you for the honor of being
25 able to speak here. I'm Dmitri Daniel Glinski,

1
2 President of Russian-speaking Community Council of
3 Manhattan and the Bronx and we had absolutely no
4 intention or expectations of speaking here because
5 until a few days ago, we were 100 percent confident
6 from our council member that the co-naming, which
7 we believe would be the first co-naming for a hero
8 of Russian-American community in New York, was
9 going through. This is a place on the corner of
10 West 181st Street and Bennett Avenue. There were
11 over 300 signatures of Americans and Russian-
12 Americans collected in the winter of 2012-2013.
13 There was a Community Board Resolution passed
14 unanimously in March and then we were told that
15 unfortunately they were unable to squeeze it into
16 June's bill, but it will be in December. We kind
17 of would be very grateful for correcting this
18 mistake. We had a string of emails from Council
19 Member Jackson's office and Council Member
20 Rodriguez, who will be taking over and who also
21 said that he'll support that, and given that many
22 of the people who knew that person are very old,
23 those who took part in the human rights struggle
24 that allowed Russian-Americans to come to this
25 country. Some of them are in their eighties and

1 their nineties, those who signed who stood behind
2 this petition. For them, half a year is a big
3 deal. There are also a number of rabbis, pastors
4 in our area who signed this and there is a lot of
5 other support for this. We would be very, very
6 grateful for considering this in our exceptional
7 situation. We understand it's the last moment, but
8 we very much ask you to consider whether this can
9 be included in this bill. Just briefly Alexzim
10 Muzramka [pneonic] spent 22 years in jails and
11 concentration camps in the Soviet Union between
12 1962 and 1987 struggling for the freedom of
13 immigration and was one of the people whose fight
14 allowed many Russians who wanted to leave the
15 country to be able to leave it and he lived on
16 Bennett Avenue and we believe that's the only...
17 the first time that a place will be named for
18 actually a deceased Russian-American immigrant who
19 was a hero and a leader of his community. Thank
20 you very much for your attention and considering
21 our request.

23 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Are either of
24 you two here to speak about this separate? Okay,
25 so Mr. Glinski, I want to thank you for being here.

DMITRI DANIEL GLINSKI: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: It's the first that I'm hearing as of this morning about the concern that this street naming is not on the agenda. There is a process by which street naming happen you are well aware. Obviously, you did get the support of the local Community Board; then it is to be forwarded to us, usually from the council member's office so that it can be vetted for consideration. To my understanding, and I will definitely look at this after we hear this today, that we have not received official word from the council member's office for this name to be considered. We will try to figure out what happened. This is not to say that it will not get approved at some point. Right now, we just have not received the official request for it to be considered for a hearing and I am sorry, since you say you were also expecting this on the agenda in June. Our next you know, street naming won't happen until the next session and so what I would like to do is just because you took the time to be here, after this hearing I will follow up with the council member's office. I will follow up with our

2 staff, but I'm not sure that we could include it
3 this in this round. I will get back to you on that
4 though, if you would allow us and I apologize for
5 all the confusion, but I thank you for taking the
6 time to be here. I know that this is frustrating.
7 I can imagine, but I want to at least thank you for
8 bringing it to my attention and I will handle this
9 after the hearing today, okay?

10 DMITRI DANIEL GLINSKI: Thank you very
11 much.

12 [crosstalk]

13 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: And we'll follow
14 up. Alright.

15 DMITRI DANIEL GLINSKI: Give me just a
16 quick short comment. The widow of Alexzim Muzramka
17 [pneonic] She lives on 3rd Avenue. She is on her
18 way here. I think she was trying to get...

19 [crosstalk]

20 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Alright, so when
21 she gets here we can see.

22 [crosstalk]

23 DMITRI DANIEL GLINSKI: Yesterday when
24 I was calling your office as well about this...

25 [crosstalk]

2 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Okay.

3 DMITRI DANIEL GLINSKI: That I was
4 coming.

5 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Right, we
6 were... my staff just told me today, so we'll
7 follow up, okay? I apologize. If she wants to
8 speak when she gets here, then we will allow her
9 to, okay?

10 DMITRI DANIEL GLINSKI: Okay, okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Alright, thank
12 you very much.

13 DMITRI DANIEL GLINSKI: Excellent.

14 LORI GOLD: The issue that I'm speaking
15 about are the street co-naming proposed is Grace
16 Gold Way, Broadway between 115th and 116th Street.
17 And good afternoon. I'm Lori Gold, Grace's older
18 sister and I'm primarily here to say thank you to
19 the many, many people who have been so helpful
20 throughout this last year. Thank you, council
21 members, beginning with the honorable Council
22 Member Inez Dickens, who sponsored this and the
23 honorable council members who served as co-
24 sponsors, Domenic Recchia, Melissa Mark-Viverito,
25 Rosie Mendez, Margaret Chin, Elizabeth Crowley,

1 Gale Brewer. New York City Parks and Recreation
2 members, thank you so much for your consideration.
3 Chair Mark-Viverito and members Crowley, Ferreras,
4 Gentile, Vacca, Dromm and Van Bramer and all
5 members of the New York City Council for their
6 generosity and consideration of the proposed Grace
7 Gold Way street co-naming. I also want to extend
8 thanks to Community Board 9, Chair Reverend Morgan
9 Thomas, and Miss Prince Ray [phonetic] and the
10 amazing Lizzie Bevita [phonetic] and special thanks
11 to the resident brains and heart and soul behind a
12 lot of everything that came out of my sometimes
13 ham-handed way of handling things. That would be
14 Lermant Mays [phonetic], Joe Toronto, Ashley Owens
15 and Umay Katasai [phonetic]. I'm probably
16 butchering her name; I apologize. On behalf of the
17 Gold family, the 700 petition signers and letter
18 writers, thousands more who haven't yet gotten
19 around to it, the Barnard and Morningside Heights
20 communities, the Citizens Residence Visitors to New
21 York City, whose lives were made safer thanks to
22 the protections afforded by what's now known as
23 Local Law 11, which is Grace's legacy. I'm here to
24 say thank you to each one of you on behalf of each
25

2 one of us for your time and consideration. Thank
3 you.

4 NORMAN WEISS: [off mic] I'd like to...
5 is this on? Okay, we're live now. I'd like to add
6 some things to this. I am Norman Weiss. I teach
7 at Columbia University and I have taught there
8 since 1977, since before Lori sister's death and
9 you're dealing with street co-namings is an act
10 related to places of significance, so I want to say
11 just one or two things about why that place is
12 significant and to whom, because the significance
13 of it is much bigger than the significance to the
14 family; than the significance to friends from
15 Barnard and so on. It's a much, much larger
16 community. But now, it's very tempting to look at
17 the history of New York City and say that it's the
18 history of great buildings and at times we talk
19 about the race to be tall, as we did a week or two
20 ago in our competition with the city of Chicago,
21 but if we look at that; if we look at tall
22 buildings; we look at Woolworth just on the next
23 block and Chrysler and the Empire State and the
24 World Trade Center and so on, it's a very
25 impersonal history. And this history that will be

1 commemorated through the street co-naming is very
2 personal. It also is very... is really something
3 that is independent of the size, the scope, the
4 quality of the building at 115th and Broadway, but
5 it's about another kind of history, which is the
6 history of turning points in the city. From my
7 standpoint and how I teach it and we teach it every
8 year, we teach the law; we teach the significance
9 of... to buildings in New York. From my
10 standpoint, there are a few turning point moments
11 that are very great. One of them, the installation
12 of Elisha Otis's first elevator in the Howard
13 building, which is just up here at Broadway and
14 Broome; turning point moment for the way in which
15 New Yorkers relate to their buildings. Triangle
16 Shirtwaist fire in 1911; another turning point
17 moment that gave us better fire escapes and
18 sprinklers and egress and so on and so forth, and I
19 think a third moment is the death of Grace Gold in
20 the spring of 1979. It certainly was for us on the
21 campus and I think it is for the city at large
22 because the examination that was done by the
23 Buildings Department in December of that year led
24 to Local Law 10 the following year and then as Lori
25

1 has mentioned, Local Law 11, the kind of updated
2 modified version of it since 1998. Now, that has
3 done two things. It obviously has made the city a
4 safer place for New Yorkers walking in the streets,
5 but the thing that is really important and what she
6 did not actually understand until we began to talk
7 a few months ago is the significance to this much,
8 much larger community. I can't... it's impossible
9 to overestimate how important this is to
10 architects; to engineers; to building inspectors;
11 to DOB people; Landmarks Commission and so on and
12 so forth; the people who deal on a professional
13 level with the care and the quality of New York
14 City buildings. It's also significant to
15 bricklayers; to stone setters; to mason
16 contractors; to scaffold directors; to people who
17 do the physical hands-on work on the building and
18 so this is a much bigger community. It's really
19 thousands and thousands of New Yorkers who are
20 involved because of Local Law 10 and Local Law 11
21 and now would have a place that commemorates that;
22 a place of significance that's associated with an
23 event that changed all of our lives in the
24

2 architecture and engineering world, and I do hope
3 that you'll give it great consideration. Thanks.

4 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Well, thank you
5 for that, Mr. Weiss and Miss Gold, thank you for
6 being here. Obviously, an unfortunate tragedy, but
7 as you're saying, in terms of what the significance
8 of that moving forward has been, I appreciate the
9 context. Just curious as to when you said that
10 this occurred in 1979, her death, how... what led
11 to the moment now where you want... I mean it's
12 been some time in terms of...

13 [crosstalk]

14 LORI GOLD: Yeah.

15 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Naming the
16 street. No, just curious. I'm just wondering.

17 LORI GOLD: Sleeping giant. Not to
18 bore you with too much you know, nonsense, but
19 there was a room left in her name by the class of
20 '79 at Barnard because the actual death occurred on
21 Columbia's graduation day. She stayed... she was a
22 freshman and she stayed to watch her friends and
23 because they ultimately wound up watching her get
24 struck, they left a gift, which was a dark room in
25 a building that, at some point, I learned was going

2 to be taken down to make way for what is now the
3 Diana Center, so I launched a project to find a new
4 home for it, which was rededicated in Brooks Hall
5 two years ago, but in the course of doing that, I
6 set out... I just you know, things kind of snowball
7 and in trying to leave her a legacy and do good for
8 others who are living basically. So it just
9 snowballed from that effort in 2007 give or take.

10 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Well, thank you,
11 just want to...

12 LORI GOLD: Yeah, thank you. Thank you
13 for asking.

14 [crosstalk]

15 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Thank you for
16 your effort, and I know that Council Member Crowley
17 has joined us. So I think that that's it. Thank
18 you very much for your testimony.

19 LORI GOLD: Thank you, thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: I don't know if
21 anybody else has anything. If not, and my
22 colleagues, then... yes, go ahead, Council Member
23 Dromm.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Sure. Thank
25 you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to make a comment

1 about the Jeanne, Jules, Morty Manford PFLAG Way,
2 which I put in as well. The aforementioned people
3 were very close friends of mine, particularly
4 Jeanne Manford. Jeanne Manford was the founder of
5 PFLAG, which stands for Parents, Families and
6 Friends of Lesbians and Gays and she was the first
7 mother to ever openly support her gay son, and she
8 did so by marching in the 1972 Pride Parade. They
9 were Flushing residents. They lived in Queens.
10 Her husband, Jules, became an activist after that
11 as well. He was a dentist and would oftentimes
12 offer dental services to activists who did not have
13 enough money to be able to pay to take care of
14 their own teeth at the time and of course, her son,
15 Morty was the son for whom Jeanne had become active
16 and Morty passed away in 1992 of complications
17 related to AIDS and each of them have left an
18 indelible mark upon the LGBT rights movement and
19 one of the things that I have been interested in
20 doing is to acknowledge that history of the LGBT
21 community and by placing this sign on the corner of
22 171st Street and 35th Avenue in Flushing near their
23 home, which is actually what we call the cradle of
24 the gay rights movement, because many people went
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to Jeanne's home when they were thrown out of their own home, including State Senator Tom Duane when he was rejected by his family and so Jeanne Manford, Morty Manford, Jule Manford's contributions to the movement and into American history are very significant and in fact, President Obama awarded her the Presidential Citizens Medal just last March, so I feel this is a fitting way to recognize what happened at that home on that corner in Flushing. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Thank you so much, Council Member Dromm and thank you for sharing that with us and your efforts, as always, to recognize and commemorate the history of the LGBT communities, always very much appreciated. So with that, thank you, everybody that's here. Thank you for the... to the staff that helped put this hearing together and the vetting and with that, this hearing is adjourned.

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON VIVERITO: Oh, Mary Alice? Who's Mary Alice Lee? Okay.

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. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.



Date: 12/13/2013