

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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November 18, 2021
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HELD AT: Remote Hearing (virtual room 4)

B E F O R E: Francisco Moya
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Carlina Rivera
Diana Ayala
Barry Grodenchik
Stephen T. Levin
Antonio Reynoso
Joseph C. Borelli

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

Richard Lobel, Counsel for Applicant
Sheldon Lobel PC

Fayanne Betan
Sheldon Lobel PC

Edward Perez, Senior Monitoring Director
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Dylan Sandler, Senior Planner
Department of City Planning

Nicholas Moore
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Kristina Hinckson
New York State Society of Medical Massage
Therapists

Louis Mazzella
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Katie Muehlenkamp, Owner
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Keith Berger, New York City Resident

Cory Kantin, New York City Resident

Lucy Walton, New York City Resident

Ward Dennis, New York City Resident

Richard Mazar, New York City Resident

Katie Denny Horowitz, Executive Director
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Joe Chan, Senior Vice President for Real
Estate and Property Management
YMCA of Greater New York

Matt Emmi, New York City Resident

Tami Stronach, New York City Resident

Adam Ganser, Executive Director
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Lori Raphael, Senior Vice President

Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

Kendall Charter, Executive Director
Greenpoint YMCA

Renzo Ramirez, member
32 BJ

Jose Leon
St. Nick's Alliance

Rashid Littlejohn, New York City Resident

Ruben Colon
Carpenter's Union

Scott Baker
Urban Cyclists

Paul Samulski, President
North Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

Daniella Castillo
El Puente

Marcel Negret, Senior Planner
Regional Plan Association

Michael Kawochka
Land Use Committee
Community Board One

Millie Khemiri, Licensed Social Worker
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Luke Loreti, New York City Resident

Ramon Peguero, President and CEO
Committee for Hispanic Children and
Families

Susan Albrecht, New York City Resident

Neil Sheehan, Chairperson and Cofounder
North Brooklyn Angels

Ray Acosta, New York City Resident

William Thomas, Executive Director
Open New York

Eliza Grace Madrone, Communication
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Juana Rodriguez, New York City Resident

Peter Malinowski
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Luke Gronchowski, New York City Resident

Paul Pullo, Chair
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Allyson Stone, New York City Resident

Zane Shelby, New York City Resident

Arelis Pujols, New York City Resident

Marnie Marjorelle, New York City Resident

Rose Angel Perez, New York City Resident

Harrison Grinnan, New York City Resident

Melissa Cosme, New York City Resident

Sunny Ng, New York City Resident

Catherina Gioino, Community Partnership
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Shaurav Datta, New York City Resident

Sasha Aiken, New York City Resident

Alex Vallejo, New York City Resident

Cristiano Rossi, New York City Resident

Julia Foster, New York City Resident

Maria Khimulya, New York City Resident

Spencer Heckwolf, New York City Resident

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: We're just waiting on
3 the live. It's taking a little bit.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Oh. Okay. Sorry about
5 that.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Okay. Good morning and
7 at this time, will sergeants please start their
8 recordings?

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: PC started.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Recording to the cloud
11 all set. And good morning and welcome to today's
12 remote New York City Council hearing of the
13 Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. At this
14 time, would all Council members and Council staff
15 please turn on their video? To minimize disruption,
16 please place electronic devices on vibrate or silent
17 mode. If you wish to submit testimony, you may do so
18 at landusetestimony@Council.NYC.gov. Once again,
19 that is landusetestimony@Council.NYC.gov. Thank you,
20 Chair Moya. We are ready to begin.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank
22 you so much. Good morning. I am Council member
23 Francisco Moya, the Chair of the Subcommittee on
24 Zoning and Franchises. I am joined today remotely by
25 Council member Barry G. We're going to continue to

2 wait until our members come back from Democratic
3 Conference, but today we will hold public hearings on
4 the rezoning proposal for the 103-16 Van Wyck
5 Expressway in Queens, two citywide zoning text
6 amendments by the Department of City Planning,
7 including one for the expansion of the FRESH program
8 and one relating to health and fitness uses and River
9 Ring project in Brooklyn. And so, before-- we will
10 skip votes right now until we get a quorum and
11 annoying well now go to our hearing. So, before I
12 turn to our hearings, I first want to recognize the
13 subcommittee counsel to review the remote meeting
14 procedures.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair
16 Moya. I am Arthur Huh, counsel to this subcommittee.
17 Members of the public wishing to testify were asked
18 to register for today's hearings. If you wish to
19 testify and have not already registered, we ask that
20 you please do so now by visiting the New York City
21 Council website at www.Council.NYC.gov. Members of
22 the public may also view a live stream broadcast of
23 this meeting at the Council's website. As a
24 technical note, for the benefit of the viewing
25 public, if you need an accessible version of any of

1 the presentations shown today, please send an email
2 request to landusetestimony@Council.NYC.gov. When
3 called to testify, individuals will remain muted
4 until recognized by the Chair to speak. Applicant
5 teams will be recognized as a group and called first,
6 followed by members of the public. Public testimony
7 will be limited to two minutes per witness. If you
8 have additional testimony you would like the
9 subcommittee to consider or if you have written
10 testimony you would like to submit instead of
11 appearing here before the subcommittee, you may email
12 it to landusetestimony@Council.NYC.gov. Please
13 indicate the LU number and/or project name in the
14 subject line of your email. During the hearing,
15 Council members with questions should use the zoom
16 raise hand function. Council members with questions
17 will be announced in order as they raised their hands
18 and Chair Moya will recognize members to speak.
19 Witnesses are requested to remain in the meeting
20 until excused by the Chair as members may have
21 questions. Finally, there may be pauses over the
22 course of this meeting for various technical reasons
23 and we ask that you please be patient as we work
24
25

2 through these issues. Chair Moya will now continue
3 with today's agenda items.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, Arthur. I
5 now open the public hearing on LU numbers 925 and 926
6 for the 103-16 Van Wyck Expressway rezoning
7 requesting a zoning map and zoning text amendment
8 relating to property in Council member Adams'
9 district in Queens. For anyone wishing to testify on
10 this item, if you have not already done so, you must
11 register online and you made to that now by visiting
12 the Council's away site, once again, at
13 Council.NYC.gov/land use. Counsel, if you can,
14 please call the first panel for this item.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The applicant panel
16 for this item will include Richard Lobel. Also
17 available for question and answer will be Fyanne
18 Betan.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great. And if you could
20 please administer the affirmation.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would
22 you please raise your right hands? Do you swear or
23 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
24 nothing but the truth in your testimony before this
25

2 subcommittee and in answer to all Council member
3 questions?

4 RICHARD LOBEL: I do.

5 FAYANNE BETAN: Yes. I do.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. You may
8 begin, Richard.

9 RICHARD LOBEL: Thank you, Chair Moya.
10 Good morning, Chair, Council members. Again, Richard
11 Lobel from Sheldon Lobel PC. I am joined by Fayanne
12 and we are here to present 103 16 Van Wyck Expressway
13 rezoning. If the presentation could be loaded? So,
14 this rezoning is for 10,000 square-foot lot and the
15 second page, if you can forward, it is a project
16 summary. This is a very straightforward rezoning.

17 ? Thank you. So, the project summary
18 contains the two actions sought. The first is, of
19 course, a zoning map amendment to rezone 103-16 Van
20 Wick Expressway. This rezoning would result in a
21 proposed four story plus cellar mixed use building
22 with ground floor commercial use and roughly 18
23 dwelling units on three floors above. There would,
24 additionally, be five lots around the corner on
25 Liberty Avenue included in the rezoning, however,

2 this is merely to correct the rezoning of the rear
3 portions of those lots and there is no intended
4 redevelopment based upon that. Second, of course, is
5 the zoning text amendment which, as is the case with
6 such rezonings would result in mapping of mandatory
7 inclusionary housing currently designated as either
8 option one or option two resulting in 5 to 6
9 affordable units of the 18 units proposed. Next
10 slide. So, you can see from the zoning map on the
11 next slide that we currently are in an R3A district.
12 It's notable that this is around the corner from and
13 R6B C2-3 district which would be wrapped around in
14 order to cover the property. This is one of the
15 reasons it is deemed to be a very appropriate
16 rezoning. In addition, we are on the Van Wyck
17 Expressway service road which operates as an extra
18 wide street in front of us. So, we really are quite
19 appropriate for this density. The next slide, if you
20 can forward it, demonstrates with a little bit more
21 specificity the exact area of the rezoning as
22 designated. So, you can see the 10,000 square-foot
23 lot with frontage on the side street. This would
24 take a relatively underutilized property and allow
25 for the provision of not only affordable units, but

1 also for ground floor commercial to enliven this
2 area. Next slide. So, this is a land use map. The
3 land use map demonstrates, as you would expect along
4 Liberty Avenue, a commercial corridor that there is,
5 you know, many uses that are consistent with the C2-3
6 rezoning which is also proposed for the site. Again,
7 you can see that this would allow for the R6B to bend
8 around from Liberty Avenue. This would be considered
9 a very contextual rezoning, not only by the choice of
10 district which would limit the height of this
11 building to four stories, but also by allowing for
12 the zoning should really be extended beyond the
13 existing boundaries. Next slide. So, the next few
14 slides-- and you can feel free to page through them
15 quickly, are photographs which demonstrate the area,
16 demonstrates the building typology and, again, in
17 front of us is a zoning change map which, as you can
18 see, merely tanks the existing R6B district and Ben's
19 and around Van Wyck Expressway service road to cover
20 the property. The resulting development-- next
21 slide-- would include the building that you see on
22 the plans in front of you with the site plan here.
23 It would include ground floor commercial use with
24 residential use above. Next slide. The ground floor

2 commercial use would consist of roughly 6500 square
3 feet of a retail store and include a ramp down to
4 cellar parking of, I think, 12 parking spaces.

5 Sorry. 13. Next slide. So, you can see the cellar
6 floor plan along with the typical second, third,
7 fourth story plan. The next slide is merely a photo
8 rendering of the area and then the last slide
9 contains eight apology of the buildings in the
10 immediate area so that you can see generally the 2 to
11 4 story buildings within the R6B. We are hopeful
12 that the Council will join in the near unanimous vote
13 of Queens Community Board 10, the Queens Borough
14 Pres., and the City Planning Commission in approving
15 what we think is a productive rezoning to a love for
16 some additional residential and, importantly,
17 affordable units in an area which is sorely in need
18 of such units. And, with that, the applicant team is
19 happy to answer questions.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry. Council
21 member Grodenchik, I'm about to resend a message to
22 you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Good morning.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member
25 Grodenchik.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: You're going
3 to have to give me a second because I am transferring
4 from zoom to zoom. I am sorry about that.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You could, Mr.
6 Chair--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Can we go
8 right now to Council member Adams for questions,
9 please?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
11 Council member Grodenchik. I didn't really have any
12 questions. I am kind of doing the same thing that
13 you're doing right now between the two meetings. I
14 did want to just publicly state my support for the
15 project. We will be reviewing MIH provisions for
16 this project, but it is needed in my district.
17 Affordable housing is needed in my district in this
18 project is well. So, with that, I will just say that
19 I am supportive and looking forward to continuing
20 this discussion around the affordability issues with
21 regard to MIH. Thank you very much.

22 RICHARD LOBEL: Thank you, Council
23 member.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: So, Chair
25 Grodenchik, I resent some notes. We will just wait

2 until you get that and you're ready to go.

3 Sergeants, Chair Grodenchik.

4 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: I'm sorry for
5 that delay. Give me one more moment. I apologize
6 for that delay. I want to thank Council member
7 Adams. Does the Council have any questions for the
8 applicant?

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member did
10 not have any questions after her statement.

11 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. I do
12 have one question and that is the regarding the Van
13 Wyck Expressway corridor in general and I know it
14 well having traveled it many, many times over my 61
15 years-- often very slowly. There are various
16 feelings is staying commercial uses along the
17 Expressway, especially in this part of Richmond Hill.
18 What are some of the issues you've considered
19 deciding to include the commercial overlay district
20 in this proposal and are there any specific plans or
21 specific tenants known or being considered for the
22 commercial space at this time?

23 RICHARD LOBEL: Sure. Thank you,
24 Council member Grodenchik. So, I think, first of
25 all, the fact that we are adjacent to parcels

1 fronting on Liberty Avenue was a factor in the
2 determination to go forward with city planning on
3 allowing for the commercial overlay. So, I think
4 that the-- this is kind of a challenging block,
5 which is somewhat underdeveloped and also blighted.
6 To the extent that there is this kind of connection
7 to Liberty Avenue to allow for some commercial use to
8 enter the Expressway service road, it seems to be a
9 desirable thing. You know, the Expressway here and
10 development along the Expressway is somewhat limited
11 given the fact that you are facing what amounts to be
12 this extra wide and very active roadway. So, the
13 applicant has no definitive tenants yet. They have
14 had some discussions. The intention would be for
15 local retail and professional offices and, while it
16 is not a tremendous amount of lot area square footage
17 devoted to that use, it would be seen as something
18 that is complementary for those existing uses on
19 Liberty. So, you know, we went forward with City
20 Planning on that portion of the application. We are
21 happy to do it. We think it could kind of create a
22 little bit of interest and some needed development in
23 that immediate area.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Chair, you are
3 on mute.

4 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: All right.
5 Thank you for that. And I apologize again. I've
6 been juggling, but you've got my full attention now.
7 So, I don't have any other questions for the
8 applicant and I thank you for your patience this
9 morning. So, counsel, I think we can move on.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: All right. Yes,
11 Mr. Chair. You may dismiss the applicant panel and
12 then we can turn to public testimony.

13 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. This
14 applicant panel is dismissed and I thank you for your
15 time this morning.

16 RICHARD LOBEL: Thank you, Chair
17 Grodenchik.

18 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: I understand
19 that Councilman Levin would like to speak.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Chair, I--

21 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: I don't know
22 if he is here--

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, I think
24 the--

2 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Oh. Just that
3 he's here. Okay. I appreciate that. Yes. I'm
4 sorry about that.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: All right. With
6 that, we do have one member of the public who is
7 signed up to speak and we will now hear from that
8 first panel for this item. The first speaker--
9 first and only speaker on this panel will be Edward
10 Perez.

11 EDWARD PEREZ: Good morning, Chairman
12 and committee members and those tuning in. Thank you
13 for the opportunity to speak this morning. My name
14 is Edward Perez. I am the senior monitoring director
15 at the Big Apple Group. We specialize in civil
16 engineering solutions, one of them being construction
17 monitoring and protecting adjacent structures during
18 construction. I do want to come in favor of this
19 project, but with special considerations for the
20 protection of the adjacent structures around that
21 site. For example, those along 135th Street, Liberty
22 Avenue, and 103 18 Van Wick right next-door. This
23 project does involve the excavation of roughly 75,000
24 feet of cubic material. Cubic feet of material. The
25 proposed construction will result in inground

2 disturbances throughout the excavation phase that
3 could trigger excessive vibrations, horizontal and
4 vertical displacement of the neighboring buildings.
5 One of the things that we would propose is a full
6 scope monitoring program involving, A, a
7 preconstruction survey to determine the existing
8 conditions of the adjacent buildings. B, installing
9 what we call seismographs. This is a small little
10 device. It goes inside of a case. Outside of the
11 job site and then this is a sensor that will grow
12 attached to the foundation wall of the adjacent
13 structures. So, what this device does is it records
14 vibrations on a constant basis and once they trigger
15 a predetermined threshold, and alert is immediately
16 sent out to the project site, the managers involved,
17 the engineers to stop construction and check out the
18 adjacent structures to make sure that there wasn't
19 any damage. It's kind of like a quality assurance
20 type of method. It also prevents, you know,
21 excessive 311 calls and complaints for the neighbors.
22 The other thing we do to protect adjacent structures
23 is we install these small little targets. There
24 little reflective sheets that read of building
25 movement and displacement. The manager right behind

2 me is actually one of our project sites that we just
3 wrapped up. It's 77 Commercial Street in Greenpoint.
4 The device over my--

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

6 EDWARD PEREZ: shoulder is the total
7 station that shoots the readings. The building to
8 the left is all the buildings that we're protecting
9 about that site and throughout the project life of
10 excavation. You know, it's not to scare the
11 neighbors. It's more so people know that there are
12 solutions out there to protect adjacent structures.
13 Anybody afraid of vibrations or damage to their
14 property, the contractors are able to go ahead and
15 hire people like us. Anyone interested in having the
16 Big Up GROUP conducting monitoring for the protection
17 of adjacent structures or other civil engineering
18 solutions such as geotechnical investigations or
19 special inspections, I can be reached at 718-767-2900
20 extension 421. You can also read more about our
21 services at vibrationmonitoring.com. Thank you for
22 your time. That is it.

23 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you for
24 your testimony and thank you for the information you
25 presented this morning. If any other Council members

2 have questions for this gentleman, please indicate by
3 using the raise hand button. Counsel, do we have
4 any?

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Chair, I do not
6 see any members with questions for this panel, so you
7 could dismiss this panel.

8 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. This
9 panel is hereby dismissed. Counsel, are there any
10 other panels on this issue?

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please standby. If
12 there are any members of the public who wish to
13 testify on the 103-16 Van Wick Expressway rezoning
14 proposal, please press the raise hand button now.
15 The meeting will briefly stand at ease while we check
16 for any newly registered members of the public.
17 Chair Grodenchik, I see no other members of the
18 public who wish to testify on this item.

19 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
20 counsel. There being no members of the public who
21 wish to testify on Land Use numbers 925 and 926-- no
22 further members, I'm sorry, for the 103-16 Van Wyck
23 Expressway rezoning proposal, the public hearing is
24 now closed and the items are laid over. I am now
25 going to open the public hearing on land use number

2 923 for the citywide health and fitness zoning text
3 amendment by the Department of City Planning. Once
4 again, if you wish to testify on this item, please
5 visit the Council website to register. That link is
6 at [www.Council.NYC.gov/land use](http://www.Council.NYC.gov/land%20use). You may also submit
7 written testimony by emailing it to land use
8 testimony@Council.NYC.gov. Counsel, please call the
9 first panel for this item.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The applicant panel
11 for this item will include Dylan Sandler and Nicholas
12 Moore from the Department of City Planning.

13 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Counsel, if
14 you would please administer the affirmation?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: panelists, would
16 you please raise your right hands. Do you affirm to
17 tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
18 truth in your testimony before this subcommittee and
19 in answer to all Council member questions?

20 DYLAN SANDLER: Yes.

21 NICHOLAS MOORE: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you.

23 Thank you, counsel. When you're ready to present the
24 slideshow, please say so and it will be displayed on
25 the screen by our staff and the slides will be

2 advanced for you. As a reminder, for anyone who
3 requires an accessible version of this presentation,
4 please send an email request to land use
5 testimony@Council.NYC.gov. For the record, as you
6 begin your testimony, I will just ask you to please
7 raise state your names. And, with that, Mr. Sandler
8 and Mr. Moore, you may begin.

9 DYLAN SANDLER: Thank you. Good
10 morning, Council members. Can you please load the
11 slide presentation? My name is Dylan Sandler. I am
12 a senior planner at the Department of City Planning.
13 And I will give a brief overview of the health and
14 fitness text amendment and then we would be happy to
15 answer any questions. Next slide, please? This
16 proposal is intended to cut red tape for health-
17 related businesses. So, this includes large gyms,
18 smaller exercise studios, spas, and massage therapy.
19 Next slide, please? Currently, there is a special
20 permit from the Board of Standards and Appeals that
21 is required to open these businesses almost
22 everywhere in New York City. There has been a lot of
23 growth and change in the industry since this special
24 permit was created in the 1970s and the department
25 believes that the permit is no longer serving its

2 intended purpose, but it is creating significant
3 regulatory barriers for a wide range of very
4 legitimate small businesses that are trying to
5 operate a New York City. Next slide, please. On
6 average, the special permit takes about six months to
7 be granted and it costs businesses in the range of
8 \$30-\$50,000 to go through this process. In addition,
9 this permit is not applicable in most C1 districts
10 meaning that gyms, spas, and massage therapy are not
11 allowed in locations where we allow other retail and
12 commercial uses. And, finally, at a time when
13 vacancy rates are quite high along some retail
14 streets, we want to ensure that our zoning
15 regulations are sufficiently flexible to allow
16 businesses to occupy the space. Next slide. Moving
17 into the details of the proposal, the Department of
18 City Planning is proposing to remove the BSA special
19 permit for all gyms, spas, and licensed massage
20 therapy. These are currently referred to in the
21 zoning resolution as physical culture or health
22 establishments and we would also be removing that
23 term from the zoning. Gyms and spas would be
24 considered commercial uses that would be allowed as
25 of right. Smaller gyms and spas, so those that are

smaller than 10,000 square feet in floor area, it would be allowed in all commercial and manufacturing districts, including C1 districts where they are not currently allowed. Gyms and spas that are unlimited in size, so those that are larger than 10,000 ft.²

would be allowed into slightly more limited real graffiti. So, these would be permitted in our highest density C1 districts which are primarily in Manhattan, as well as C2 districts and higher commercial districts and manufacturing districts.

Next slide, please. Licensed massage therapy would be treated in the same way as other outpatient medical uses in zoning. They is would be categorized as either ambulatory healthcare or healthcare offices and this would allow licensed massage therapy studios as community facilities in commercial and manufacturing districts as well as residential districts other than R1 and R2 districts. And it's important to note that massage is illegal to practice without a license in New York State and the proposal will maintain the existing elements of zoning that prohibit unlicensed massage been practiced within a business anywhere in New York City. Next slide.

Finally, the proposal also includes additional

2 performance standards for noise and vibration that
3 can occur within gyms. A subset of gyms, those that
4 include significant weight or exercise machinery will
5 need to have an acoustical engineer certify with the
6 Department of Buildings that the facility is designed
7 to meet these performance standards before they
8 receive a certificate of occupancy. These provisions
9 would apply mixed use buildings and commercial and MX
10 districts. Lower intensity facilities such as yoga,
11 you might live, and spas will not need to demonstrate
12 compliance with these additional noise and vibration
13 performance standards, but will still be subject to
14 the New York City noise code. Next slide, please.
15 Thank you very much for your time. I would be very
16 happy to respond to any questions.

17 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. I think
18 you very, very much for that presentation. For the
19 record, this is something in my opinion that is long
20 overdue, but, of course, we do have a few questions.
21 Citywide, there are many areas with the illegal
22 massage establishments and how will we make sure that
23 this text amendment doesn't exacerbate this problem?

24 DYLAN SANDLER: Thank you for that
25 question. So, under the current framework, the way

2 this typically works is that legitimate businesses go
3 through the special permit process, so they go
4 through a criminal background check from the
5 Department of Investigations, they go to community
6 boards and present the project, and they go to the
7 BSA and they have a public hearing and then they have
8 a permit to operate. The businesses that are
9 offering massage and are, you know-- offering
10 massage by people who are not licensed and a subset
11 of those that are engaged in commercial sex work are
12 not going through the special permit process today.
13 And so, what happens is the zoning does provide a
14 civil enforcement tool so that the city can issue
15 violations and shutdown these businesses that are
16 engaging in unlicensed massage. Currently, and
17 zoning, they are referred to as adult physical
18 culture establishments and these are not allowed
19 anywhere in New York City. So, with this proposal,
20 we have maintained the provision in the zoning. We
21 have updated that definition of adult physical
22 culture establishments. It is now referred to as
23 unlicensed physical treatment establishments and,
24 basically, what this says is that unlicensed massage
25 continues to be prohibited as a primary or accessory

2 use in a business anywhere in New York City and so we
3 have worked very closely with the Mayors Office of
4 Special Enforcement in the Office to End Gender Based
5 Violence to make sure that these rules still provide
6 every pathway for enforcement against today's kinds
7 of businesses, but what it does to ways make sure
8 that the legitimate massage therapists and other
9 health and fitness facilities are not overly burdened
10 by special permit that is no longer serving its
11 intended purpose.

12 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: All right.
13 Thank you for that answer. The text amendment
14 describes high intensity uses. How exactly are they
15 defined?

16 DYLAN SANDLER: Sure. They are defined
17 as facilities that include significant weights or
18 exercise machinery. So, this would include things
19 like, you know, traditional large gyms like Blink and
20 Planet Fitness and Equinox. It would also include
21 things like CrossFit that involves heavyweights. And
22 also things that involve a lot of aerobic equipment
23 that are operating in unison. So, things like indoor
24 cycling or indoor facilities with a lot of indoor
25 treadmills where there is the potential for

2 significant vibration. There is some discretion from
3 the Department of Buildings to determine what falls
4 into the category of high intensity. And this is
5 really acknowledging that the industry changes over
6 time and if we were to, say, you know, bar classes
7 are low intensity or cross fit is high intensity, in
8 two years, there would be a new kind of exercise
9 that we wouldn't have conceived of today. So we
10 tried to sort of basic on the equipment used, the
11 also, you know, given the Department of Buildings
12 some discretion to determine what falls into that
13 category.

14 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: I'm old enough
15 to remember when Jacqueline was the only game in town
16 and he would into stuff on TV with chairs and tables
17 and all that kind of stuff. And so, we certainly
18 have over my and all lifetime and even before we have
19 involved tremendously in this city. We now have so
20 many also martial arts facilities in addition to the
21 gyms and I am hopeful that this text amendment will
22 solve a lot of the issues that communities have been
23 grappling with. And speaking of communities,
24 community boards have raised-- several of them, of
25 course, have raised issues regarding this text

2 amendment and I was just wondering how we managed to
3 deal with those issues specifically noise and I think
4 you mentioned vibration already, but just is that
5 within the purview of this text amendment to deal
6 with? Especially noise?

7 DYLAN SANDLER: Yeah. So, we think the
8 proposal has a very thoughtful way of dealing with
9 noise and vibration. You are correct that this was
10 an issue raised by several community boards. So, all
11 of these businesses, regardless of the size and the
12 activity would be subject to the New York City noise
13 code which can address both concerns about noise use
14 within a building but also for adjacent buildings.
15 And then we go beyond that by, you know, we worked
16 with both the Board of Standards and Appeals and we
17 also put together a committee of acoustical engineers
18 who have a lot of experience working with gyms in New
19 York City and in the region to come up with a
20 standard that links to national codes and standards
21 to deal with noise and vibration. So, for those high
22 intensity uses, they would, basically, have to hire
23 an acoustical engineer to make sure that the spaces
24 designed adequately based on the activity and based
25 on the building that they are in and the adjacent

2 uses to design their space upfront so that they are
3 unlikely to trigger noise code complaints after-the-
4 fact. And, you know, we think this is both helpful
5 for businesses so that they are not opening and then
6 dealing with complaints and having to sort of change
7 their flooring or walls, but also very protective of
8 neighbors and adjacent uses. So, I think that we
9 have struck a good balance of trying to be responsive
10 to those concerns of communities by having additional
11 standards for noise and vibration.

12 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Yeah. Thank
13 you. No. It is especially important in many parts
14 of this anywhere of these operations go on 24 seven,
15 so that is critical. Counsel, I don't have any more
16 questions. Any members of the panel? Any of my
17 colleagues have questions?

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Going to check to
19 see if there are any members with questions, Mr.
20 Chair. I see no members with questions for this
21 panel.

22 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. There
23 being no further questions, the applicant panel is
24 excused. I want to thank them for their succinct and
25 excellent testimony today. Counsel, any members--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Mr. Chair, may I
3 just quickly-- this is Council member Levin.

4 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Yes. Of
5 course. Council member Levin is recognized. And
6 his kids.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I just want to
8 express my support for this text change and look
9 forward to be able to vote on this before the end-of-
10 the-year.

11 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: I agree with
12 you, Council member Levin and I am looking forward to
13 voting on it, as well. It will cut out a lot of
14 paperwork in the future.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I have heard from
16 businesses in my district that this is a major
17 impediment. So, looking forward to it.

18 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: And I was just
19 reminiscing off-line with a member of the staff about
20 the rezoning in my district that was, basically,
21 based on this issue and hopefully it will save a lot
22 of time and money for people looking to do business
23 in this area of New York. With that, there being no
24 further questions, again, the panel is excused.

25 Counsel, are there any members of the public who wish

2 to testify on the citywide health and fitness zoning
3 text amendment proposal?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We are going to
5 check on that right now, Mr. Chair. Thank you. You
6 could dismiss-- I'm sorry if I missed it, but you
7 could dismiss the applicant panel.

8 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: They are
9 dismissed.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Please
11 standby.

12 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, Mr. Chair. We
14 do have a number of public witnesses who have signed
15 up to speak. For members of the public here to
16 testify, please note, again, that you may be called
17 in panels of more than one person. If you are a
18 member of the public signed up to testify on the
19 health and fitness zoning text amendment proposal,
20 please stand by when you hear your name being called
21 and prepare to speak when the Chair says that you may
22 begin. Please also note that once all panelists in
23 your group have completed their testimony, you will
24 be removed from the meeting as a group and the next
25 group of speakers will be introduced. Once removed,

2 participants may continue to view the live stream
3 broadcast of this hearing on the Council website. We
4 will now hear from the first panel which will include
5 Kristina Hinckson. Kristina Hinckson.

6 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
7 counsel. Members of the public will be given two
8 minutes to speak and please do not begin until the
9 sergeant-at-arms has started the clock. You may
10 begin.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

12 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Is the witness
13 on, counsel? I don't see-- oh. There she is.
14 Okay.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Kristina Hinckson.
16 There she is.

17 KRISTINA HINCKSON: I apologize. Due
18 to the time constraint, if you can defer to my
19 colleague, Lou Mazzella, you will speak on behalf of
20 our organization, the New York State Society of
21 Medical Massage Therapist. If you can elevate Lou
22 Mazzella to speak on behalf of our organization, the
23 New York State Society of Medical Massage Therapists.
24 Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: I see Mr.
3 Mazzella is here. Can we bring him forward to
4 testify?

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We will be bringing
6 up Mr. Louis Mazzella will be testifying on this next
7 panel. Louis Mazzella.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Louis Mazzella, if
10 you can hear us, we need you to unmute or accept the
11 unmute request. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Mr. Mazzella,
13 if you could please begin. I don't know if a-- this
14 person is having difficulty. Perhaps we can come
15 back to them. Is there any-- oh.

16 LOUIS MAZZELLA: Hi. Can you hear me?

17 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Yes. We can
18 hear you, Mr. Mazzella. Please begin.

19 LOUIS MAZZELLA: Okay. I will speaker
20 quickly. Thank you, members, for having me. Good
21 morning. We are the New York State Society of
22 Medical Massage Therapists or NYSSMMT for short. We
23 support the health and fitness amendment. Fully
24 written testimony will be submitted. Thanks to
25 former Governor Rockefeller, NYSSMMT is responsible

1 for massage therapy being regulated as a licensed
2 healthcare profession under title eight with other
3 healthcare professionals. Other NYSSMMT accomplishes
4 having the name changed from lettuces to massage
5 therapist with title protection and, in the year
6 2022, the derogatory phrase massage parlor is now
7 abolished from the White House nix code system as it
8 lands-- excuse me. As a lens to misrepresent the
9 market confusion that we are having this moment
10 today. In New York State, one must attain an
11 Associates degree, pass the state board exam to be
12 licensed and then registered. Registration must be
13 renewed every three years upon the proof of
14 completion of 36 continuing education credits. The
15 public can verify massage therapist license and the
16 registration at NYSED, N Y S E D website. As
17 healthcare licensees, massage therapists volunteered
18 at September 11 Ground Zero as second responders to
19 the first responders rescue and recovery efforts.
20 There are over 3700 licensees and five massage
21 therapy schools in the five boroughs. We are the
22 first line of enforcement to protect our profession.
23 If there is any stakeholder that has the most concern
24 about enforcement, it is us. The massage therapy
25

2 community, however, the special permit is a burden to
3 our profession nor has--

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

5 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: If you can
6 wrap up, Mr. Mazzella, you can continue just a little
7 while.

8 LOUIS MAZZELLA: I would appreciate that.
9 Rejecting the proposal would continue system that is
10 not working and seeing the opportunity to address the
11 guidance from our association. Rejecting this
12 proposal is saying no to massage therapy for
13 pregnancy, cancer patients, veterans with PTSD,
14 cardiac patient, burn victims, and mental health.
15 During the pandemic, rejecting this proposal is
16 saying no to medical massage and manual lymphatic
17 drainage therapists who are struggling to meet the
18 high demand against COVID 19. With this passage--
19 But the passage of the proposal, massage therapist
20 will be able to contribute to the city's economic
21 recovery while providing our best care for each New
22 Yorker in mind, body, and spirit. You so much for
23 the extension of time.

24 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: I thank you
25 for your testimony this morning. We are still in

2 morning. Are there any other members of this panel,
3 Counsel?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Checking on that.
5 Please standby, Mr. Chair. All right. We do not
6 have any other speakers on this panel.

7 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Any of my
8 colleagues have any questions for Mr. Mazzella?

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I see council
10 members with questions for Mr. Mazzella.

11 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. With
12 that, I am going to dismiss Mr. Mazzella and I ask
13 that you call up the next panel.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If there are other
15 members of the public who wish to testify on the
16 health and fitness zoning text amendment proposal,
17 please press the raise hand button now and, Mr.
18 chair, the meeting will briefly stand at ease while
19 we check for any members of the public who wish to
20 testify.

21 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
22 counsel.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Chair, it
24 appears that we need to have another member of the
25 public wishing to testify. We are now going to call

2 on Katie Muhlenkamp. Katie Willingham to testify on
3 the health and fitness zoning text amendment.

4 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
5 counsel.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

7 KATIE MUEHLENKAMP: Hi. Can you hear
8 me?

9 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Yes. Yes. We
10 can.

11 KATIE MUEHLENKAMP: Okay. Hi. Thank
12 you very much for taking the time to listen. My name
13 is Katie Muehlenkamp and I am the owner of two
14 franchises in Brooklyn called the Bar Method-- when
15 in Williamsburg, Brooklyn and one in Cobble Hill,
16 Brooklyn and I've been in operation for about seven
17 years. For fitness classes to thousands of women
18 mostly who live in Brooklyn and I went through the
19 process and I am in support of this amendment. I
20 went through the process of putting two or three
21 showers in each of my locations and as a fitness
22 center and, in order to do that, which is standard
23 for a business like mine in helps attract clients
24 because they want to be able to work out after
25 working out, I went to through the Board of Standard

2 and Appeals process and I am so glad to hear that
3 some of the Council members are supportive of this
4 because I this whole time have thought that I was
5 crazy thinking that this process was real. I spent
6 \$18,000 each time on an attorney who took me through
7 this process and I spent about five to \$7000 in
8 permanent on top of that age time and for me the
9 process took 9 to 12 months to get approved for the
10 showers. It was an excessive amount of work for
11 myself, my architect, and my expediter. It made
12 things extraordinarily confusing, even for the
13 expediters. I remember years ago having lengthy
14 conversations where no one really understood this
15 process, the people who are professionals and it. I
16 just want to also let you know that before the
17 pandemic I was considering opening up 1/3 location
18 and one of the biggest deterrents of been doing that
19 was having to go through the PCE process again and
20 that is the complete truth. I do not plan to open up
21 1/3 location mostly because of what the pandemic has
22 done to my industry, but I would have and was very
23 nervous about the PCE process. Having showers is
24 totally normal service to offer clients-

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

2 KATIE MUHLENKAMP: Can I just do like 10
3 more seconds?

4 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Yes. Please
5 continue. Please continue.

6 KATIE MUHLENKAMP: Yeah. I just have a
7 couple more sentences. I just want to say that I
8 think it is very strange and unfair to make
9 businesses like mine go through this process. It
10 seems very outdated, as mentioned, and expensive and
11 I also find that it is discriminatory towards us as
12 businesses and also compared to other places outside
13 of New York City. I am part of a franchise network
14 and nobody that I know out of the other hundred studio
15 owners has heard of anything even remotely similar to
16 this process. So, it seems discriminatory to me.
17 So, I would just say, in closing, especially at a
18 time like this, as mentioned, when businesses like
19 mine are very reluctant to open in this market and
20 even if we didn't experience the pandemic, I think
21 that this amendment is very much needed to encourage
22 the success of small and larger fitness studios.
23 Thank you very much for your time.

24 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: I think you
25 for your testimony and for providing a compelling

2 example of what business owners or would be business
3 owners have gone through. To be quite honest, this
4 is something that I've thought necessary, I think,
5 pretty much since I've been in government and I'm
6 joined government in late 87. So, we have finally,
7 hopefully we will move forward with this amendment
8 and we will make it much easier and much more
9 sensible to do business, the sort of business, in the
10 city of New York. I thank you. Any of my colleagues
11 have any questions for Ms. Muhlenkamp?

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Mr. Chair. I
13 see no members with questions.

14 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. Being
15 that there are no questions, ideas Ms. this panel and
16 I asked the Council if there are any other persons
17 wishing to testify at this time.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Once
19 again, we will check to see if there are any members
20 of the public and, if there are members of the public
21 speaking to testify on the health and fitness zoning
22 text amendment, we ask that you please use the raise
23 hand button now. And, Mr. Chair, the meeting will
24 once again briefly stand at ease while we check.

2 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
3 counsel.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Grodenchik, I
5 see no other members of the public who wish to
6 testify on this item.

7 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
8 counsel. There being no other members of the public
9 who wish to testify on land use number 923 for the
10 health and fitness zoning text amendment, I am now
11 closing the public hearing and the item is laid over.
12 I am now opening the public hearing on land use
13 number 924 for the citywide FRESH expansion text
14 amendment proposal also by the Department of City
15 Planning. I will remind the viewing public that for
16 any one wishing to testify on this item, if you have
17 not already done so, you must register online and you
18 may do that now by visiting the Council's website
19 Council.NYC.gov/land use. Counsel, if you would
20 please call the first panel for this item.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The applicant panel
22 for this item will include Jesse Hirakawa and Barry
23 Dinerstein, both from the Department of City
24 Planning.

2 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. And
3 counsel, if you could please administer the
4 affirmation.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, if you
6 would please raise your right hands. Do you affirm
7 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
8 the truth in your testimony before this subcommittee
9 and in answer to all Council member questions?

10 BARRY DINERSTEIN: I do.

11 JESSE HIRAKAWA: I do.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
14 counsel and when you are ready to present your
15 slideshow, please say so and it will be displayed on
16 screen by our staff slides will be advanced when you
17 say next. Once again, anyone who requires-- excuse
18 me-- an accessible version of this presentation may
19 send an email request to land use
20 testimony@Council.NYC.gov. Now, Mr. Hirakawa and Dr.
21 Dinerstein, you may begin and I will remind you, just
22 as you begin speaking, to please state your name for
23 the record.

24 JESSE HIRAKAWA: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Gentleman, you
3 may proceed.

4 JESSE HIRAKAWA: Oh. Are we waiting for
5 the tech to--

6 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. There
7 it is.

8 JESSE HIRAKAWA: Yes. Good morning,
9 Council members. My name is Jesse Hirakawa. I'm an
10 urban designer and city planner at the Department of
11 City Planning and I am joined by Barry Dinerstein who
12 is the deputy director of our housing and economic
13 development division. Next slide. FRESH is an
14 existing program in the zoning resolution since 2009
15 mainly to encourage more supermarkets in underserved
16 areas of the city and to increase accessibility to
17 fresh foods. FRESH has two components: discretionary
18 tax incentive program managed by EDC which is in the
19 dark green and gray areas he can see on the map which
20 provides tax breaks for supermarket operators and
21 developers seeking to build or renovate new retail
22 spaces such as building taxes, land taxes, sales
23 taxes, mortgage record taxes, etc. Zoning incentives
24 under the Department of City Planning is a
25 certification process by the Chair of City Planning

Commission which is available in all the green areas.

This is where our applicants can gain additional residential FAR for every square foot of fresh food stores-- up to 20,000 square feet. In light manufacturing districts and

[inaudible 00:54:47] our FRESH stores cannot take

[inaudible 00:54:52] residential FAR, but it can

build and as of right grocery store up to 30,000

square feet. Currently, as of right footage of food

store in and M1 is at 10,000 square feet. Also, if

needed to increase the maximum building height up to

15 feet, but this changes the process from a

certification to an authorization process.

Certification is a nondiscretionary action, but in

authorization becomes discretionary and is referred

out to the affected community boards. Lastly, there

are parking reductions that are available within the

FRESH program. Next slide. In 2018, the

department reviewed the supermarket landscape across

New York City and updated our supermarket needs index

and it showed that many neighborhoods remain

underserved by fresh stores. As a refresher from the

previous study, the supermarket needs index was

determined by looking at walking distances to grocery

1 stores, household car ownership, families with
2 children living in poverty, and also the trade area
3 of grocery stores. Putting those together created
4 areas of high need which you can see in the darker
5 gray areas to the lower need which is the lighter
6 areas for access to fresh grocery stores. All New
7 Yorkers deserve to live within a comfortable walking
8 distance from a grocery store and have choices about
9 where they shop. Next slide. The proposed expansion
10 and need of the FRESH program dictate encourages
11 development and retention of accessible stores,
12 provide more affordable options that can be available
13 due to increased competition, and lastly, power
14 consumers with more options, convenience, and access.
15 Next slide. The proposed text amendment would update
16 the existing program under the zoning resolution,
17 section 63 - 00, and includes some of the following.
18 An expansion of the FRESH hundred days, a mechanism
19 to stall saturation supermarkets in the areas,
20 modifications to glazing requirements, windows, and
21 also modify the parking relief. Lastly, there are
22 some minor zoning text cleanups. Next slide. Based
23 on our updated analysis of the supermarket needs
24 index and land use policy goals, the department if
25

2 proposing an expansion of the program in the Bronx,
3 Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island. Expansion
4 boundaries are all vetted by Borough staff and city
5 Council land use staff and influenced by areas of
6 high need in the supermarket needs index. The
7 expansions are showed in the hatch - areas. 19
8 community districts already exist in FRESH and 11
9 more will be added. Although the use boundaries are
10 drawn widely around community District boundaries,
11 FRESH is applicable where there is commercial zoning,
12 as well as M1 districts-- typically were grocery
13 stores are already allowed as of right for zoning.
14 So, where FRESH applies is actually little bit
15 smaller than overall. Next slide. This concludes my
16 presentation. Barry Dinerstein and myself are
17 available for any questions. Sorry. I think you're
18 muted, Chair.

19 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: I certainly
20 was. That was a sticky button there. I am going to
21 ask-- we are going to have a quick procedural
22 announcement right now. Counsel?

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry. I just want
24 to confirm with you that it was okay that the Special
25

2 Brooklyn Navy Yard item on today's agenda is to be
3 laid over. If you could just--

4 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Yes. We are
5 laying over that item, counsel. Yes. We are.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you for that.

7 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. I
8 thank you for setting that straight. Just give me
9 one second. Okay. I thank you, Mr. Hirakawa and Mr.
10 Dinerstein grade testimony. Any colleagues have any
11 questions for this panel at this time? I will have
12 questions in the second, but I was just wondering if
13 any of my colleagues had any.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Mr. Chair. I
15 see no members with questions for the panel at this
16 time.

17 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. I've
18 two questions for the panel, then. If the underlying
19 zoning needs to be a place for a FRESH grocery store,
20 why not just make the FRESH geographic boundary
21 citywide?

22 BARRY DINERSTEIN: Thank you for that
23 question, Council member. This is Barry Dinerstein
24 from the Department of City Planning. The purpose of
25 the program is really to serve areas that are low

2 income where there have been incidents of diet
3 related diseases and ways a shortage of supermarkets.
4 There are, obviously, some very affluent parts of the
5 city which we think are not really appropriate for
6 the FRESH program. And, you know, we have had
7 extensive discussions with the various Council
8 members and Council members to have and I think they
9 would agree that targeting the program was more
10 appropriate than a citywide program.

11 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. Just to
12 clarify, while we see saturation provision only
13 having applicable in Brooklyn community districts
14 three right now, this provision will apply in the
15 entire FRESH geography. Is that correct?

16 BARRY DINERSTEIN: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: All right. I
18 have no further questions and, counsel, I don't see
19 any members of the committee with their hands up. Is
20 there any members of the public that wish-- I'm
21 going to just double check with you, counsel, that
22 there no members of the committee that have hands
23 raised?

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sure. We're just
25 going to take a second, quick moment to just confirm.

2 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. Thank
3 you.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You can dismiss
5 this panel we are checking.

6 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Your checking
7 for the public, then, for your dismissing?

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Correct.

9 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: This panel is
10 dismissed. Okay. I'm going to dismiss this panel
11 because none of my colleagues have questions. And,
12 counsel, are there any members of the public?

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Now, Mr. Chair. I
14 see no members of the public who wish to testify on
15 this item.

16 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. That
17 being the case, we're going to take a positive this
18 hearing for the time being.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Chair, if you
20 would refer to page 25.

21 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You could close
23 this hearing before we pause. Excuse me. Close on
24 layover.

2 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Okay. Being
3 that there are no more witnesses, this hearing is now
4 closed and it is laid over.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And,
6 Mr. Chair, with that, we are going to briefly stand
7 the subcommittee at ease for a moment while we
8 organize for the next hearing.

9 CHAIRPERSON GRODENCHIK: Thank you,
10 counsel.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning, everybody
12 viewing the livestream. We are currently on a brief
13 pause while we figure out some back end issues. We
14 appreciate your patience. Thank you.

15 [background comments]

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. We're going to
17 get started in a few. We're going to start with our
18 vote first and then we will go into the next hearing.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Mr.
20 Chair, sergeants, we are officially now going to come
21 back and Chair Moya will continue with today's
22 agenda.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yeah. I'm just waiting
24 for-- There we go. Are we ready to go, Arthur?

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sergeants, we're
3 now going to continue with the agenda. Chair Moya
4 will be taking it up now with the votes.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great. Thank you so
6 much. Thank you, everyone, for your patience. We
7 will vote today to approve with modifications
8 reconsidered LU number 911 for the Citywide Hotel
9 Special Permit text amendment. The proposal seeks a
10 zoning text amendment to establish a citywide special
11 permit relating to the transient hotel use. Our
12 modification will be to add flexibility to certain
13 vesting provisions as they relate to the site in the
14 theater subdistrict of the special Midtown district.
15 We will also vote to approve reconsidered LU number
16 916, 917 for the 506 Third Avenue rezoning relating
17 to property in Council member Lander's district in
18 Brooklyn. The proposal seeks a zoning map amendment
19 to read zoning existing M2-1 district to a C4-4A
20 district and a related zoning text amendment to
21 establish an MIH program area utilizing options one
22 and two. Our modifications will be to strike the MIH
23 option two while retaining option one. Council
24 member Lander is in support of the proposal as
25 modified and we will also vote to approve with

1 modifications reconsidered LU numbers 920 and 921 for
2 the Start Lehigh Terminal warehouse building rezoning
3 relating to property in Speaker Johnson's district in
4 Manhattan. The proposal seeks a zoning map amendment
5 to read zoning existing M2-3 district to an M2-4
6 district and a related zoning text amendment to
7 extend the special West Chelsea district over the
8 rezoning area, created a new subarea within the
9 special district, and modify various use, signage,
10 and loading regulations. Our modifications will be
11 to reduce the floor area limitation for large retail
12 use from 15percent to 10percent and, as part of this
13 approval, the applicant has committed to monitoring
14 pedestrian safety conditions on West 26th Street and
15 working with DOT to implement any necessary safety
16 improvements in the future. Speaker Johnson is in
17 support of this proposal as modified and now I call
18 for a vote to approve with the modifications I have
19 described LU number 911, 916, 917, 920, and 921.

20 Counsel, can you please call the roll?

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Moya?

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I vote aye.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member

24 Levin?
25

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 57

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Aye.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member

4 Reynoso?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Aye.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member

7 Ayala?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I vote aye.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member

10 Rivera?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I vote aye.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member

13 Borelli?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BORELLI: I vote aye.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member

16 Grodenchik?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. Mr. Chair,

19 the items are adopted by a vote of seven in the
20 affirmative, zero in the negative, and no abstentions
21 and are referred to the full land use committee.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great. Thank you very
23 much. I just wanted to thank the opportunity to
24 thank Barry G for stepping in and taking care of
25 business while I was gone. Thank you again, Barry,

2 for that. I now open the public hearing on to
3 reconsidered LU items for the River Ring proposal
4 which seeks a zoning map and zoning text amendment
5 under ULURP numbers C220062ZMK and N220063ZRK and
6 relating to property in Council member Levin's
7 district in Brooklyn. I will remind the viewing
8 public for anyone wishing to testify on this item, if
9 you have not already done so, you must register
10 online and you may do that now by visiting the
11 Council's website and Council.NYC.gov/land use. And,
12 now, counsel, if you can, please call up the first
13 panel.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The applicant panel
15 for this item will include Jed Walentas, Bonnie
16 Campbell, and David Lumbee now, all of Two Trees
17 Management company and David Karnofsky, land use
18 counsel for the applicant. Panelists, would you
19 please raise your right hands. Do you affirm to tell
20 the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth
21 in your testimony before this subcommittee and in
22 answer to all Council member questions?

23 UNIDENTIFIED: I do.

24 BONNIE CAMPBELL: I do.

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you very much.
3 You may begin whenever you're ready.

4 JED WALENTAS: Bonnie, do you want me
5 to start?

6 BONNIE CAMPBELL: Yeah. Go ahead, Jed.

7 JED WALENTAS: Good evening or, I
8 guess, good morning, everyone. I'm actually calling
9 in from Uganda. I'm doing some work with David
10 [inaudible 01:32:50] at a refugee camp here. It's a
11 pleasure to be here with everyone, so I can't joined
12 by video. I just want to thank the Council for this
13 opportunity and Steve Levin, in particular. We have
14 had a great experience working with him in Brooklyn
15 and around the Domino project in particular and look
16 forward to concluding this process. We bought this
17 site three or four years ago really within I towards
18 building another amazing park. We assembled what I
19 think is a world-class team to do that, not just the
20 park, but the buildings. But the focus is to make a
21 park that will change the model for resiliency and
22 how New Yorkers interact with the water and the river
23 forever, or at least for the next several decades.
24 I'm building Domino Park and then having run it for
25 the last three years has been probably the greatest

2 professional experience of my life and I think I
3 speak for everyone in our office and our professional
4 teams, as well. So, these super long. I'm sure my
5 connection is weird, but I wanted to thank everyone
6 for this opportunity. We take this project and all
7 of our work extremely seriously. We're very proud of
8 what you're about to see and what we're about to
9 present. We recognize that with any process like
10 this, there's an expectation that there's tremendous
11 public good involved and we think we've met and
12 exceeded those expectations and we look forward to
13 working with Councilman Levin and his staff and the
14 rest of the Council and Council leadership over the
15 next couple weeks to get this over the finish line.
16 So, thank you very much. I'm extremely grateful for
17 this opportunity and, with that, I'll turn it over to
18 Bonnie and the rest of the team. Thank you.

19 BONNIE CAMPBELL: Thanks, Jed. If you
20 could screenshare the deck, that would be great,
21 please. Great. Thank you. And thank you, Council
22 members, for giving us this opportunity. As Jed
23 mentioned, when we bought this site a few years ago,
24 we were very much motivated by a real personal and
25 professional ambition to build on the success we have

1 had in redeveloping the Domino sugar site and I know
2 I speak for our entire team when I say, as Jed said,
3 when opening Domino park has been, bar none, the most
4 inspiring and humbling milestone in our collective
5 careers. The sense of community, diversity, and
6 energy there that's evolved over the past three years
7 has been extremely moving for all of us and equally
8 rewarding has been to see families in the
9 neighborhood who have been there-- some of which
10 have been there over a generation and some of which
11 have relatives that actually worked at the Domino
12 sugar factory and move into Domino's first low income
13 units as we bring the buildings to market. So, next
14 slide, please. So, we really pursued Forever Burying
15 with the objective of building on the success in
16 creating a unique pilot project for New York City,
17 one that takes cues and best practices from other
18 global cities around the world and from resiliency
19 experts. And, as Jed said, the project seeks to
20 fundamentally change the way we approach development
21 along the rivers and and in our city and a way that
22 the community can actually engage New York's
23 ecosystem and sustainability and environmental
24 justice are really the underpinnings of every aspect
25

2 of this project. Next slide, please. We have
3 inherited from Con Edison some existing piers and in
4 water infrastructure that we can actually leverage
5 and reconstruct into a shoreline that can respond to
6 the realities of climate change, not just for the
7 next 30 years, but really for the next 100 years. By
8 creating this or resilient coastline, we can also
9 change the experience of residents of this
10 neighborhood and New Yorkers more broadly and how
11 they think about and interact with the water. People
12 from all backgrounds will really have meaningful
13 access to the river ecosystem which I personally
14 believe is fundamentally moving our collective
15 community mindset towards a more sustainable future.
16 Next slide, please. Before I take you for the kind
17 of master planning thinking in detail, just wanted to
18 highlight some of the major community benefits we
19 have been able to integrate into the project. As Jed
20 mentioned, many of which really, frankly, came from
21 months of work-- years of work, really-- and
22 collaboration with community stakeholders and the
23 Department of City Planning. I want to give the
24 Brooklyn office a shout out for really pushing us
25 here in no way that made this project, and

2 particularly the public space just better. In
3 addition to the unique 3 acre park which I will talk
4 about next, the project includes over 250 units of
5 MIH low income housing. As this committee knows
6 well, affordable housing in a high fraternity
7 neighborhood like North Williamsburg is really gentle
8 to curbing gentrification and providing New Yorkers
9 from all socioeconomic backgrounds, you know, access
10 to open space, quality jobs, close jobs, functional
11 transit. This is really where affordable housing
12 should be. The project also includes 50,000 square
13 feet of a YMCA facility with a large pool that will
14 support their free second grade Learn To Swim program
15 which I think will be great in this neighborhood. We
16 have also integrated some kind of cutting-edge green
17 building technologies with the aim in reducing and
18 potentially even eliminating the developments
19 dependent on city infrastructure and energy and time
20 when that is fundamental. And, finally, the
21 developments is going to build on our existing
22 success at Domino in training and hiring local
23 community members for good paying jobs. We will
24 continue our partnership with groups like St. Nick's
25 Alliance which has resulted in newly 100 new local

2 jobs at Domino. So we are excited to build on that
3 success. Next slide. So, now I will just quickly
4 take you through the master plan and kind of how we
5 arrived at this development. As you can see, this
6 site is really a missing link in what is evolving
7 into a wonderful waterfront open space, so we are
8 excited to kind of be able to bring the north and
9 south waterfront open space together. Next slide,
10 please. And as I mentioned, what really gave us an
11 opportunity that is different from something like
12 Domino to the south are the existing piers and
13 caissons that are in the canopies River have allowed
14 us to work with the Army Corps and with DAC to hang
15 what are called breakwaters off into the river in a
16 way that will actually slow the wave energy and storm
17 surge energy to create a softer, more resilient edge
18 that can withstand future storms and also created an
19 opportunity for water recreation. Next slide,
20 please. So, again, the kind of four goals here that
21 we wanted to create this continuous waterfront by
22 connecting to the north and south to burying the city
23 into the water and give New Yorkers a really unique
24 experience. Create this more resilient soften
25 shoreline and, you know, and aggregate, have a

2 spectacular new waterfront Park. Next slide, please.

3 So, here you can see, you know, what were amazingly

4 escape architect-- this is James Horner field

5 operations has been able to fit into this 3 acre

6 park. There is a tremendous amount of kind of

7 egocentric recreation and passive and active

8 recreation and a waterfront be and a tidal wetlands

9 and we have been able to reuse those caissons that

10 are out in the water for very unique system of

11 pathways that you can really get out and experience

12 at the river. Next slide, please. This cross-

13 section kind of shows you how it works from an

14 engineering and performance standpoint. You can see

15 the cross-section of the breakwater which, again, we

16 have done all that is wave modeling to understand,

17 you know, how it can create a calm area adjacent to

18 the park and it reduces the wave energy by upwards of

19 70percent. And this is something that can adapt with

20 sea level rise. It can actually move up over time.

21 It's a pretty cool design. And then, it also allows

22 us to put all of these ecological installations in

23 the river in the way that they will stay and not get

24 washed out were scoured. So, there is an opportunity

25 for a real tidal wetland and oyster reefs and all of

2 that kind of stuff. Next slide, please. And now, he
3 is just a series of renderings that kind of give you
4 a sense of what that space looks and feels like once
5 it is constructed. You can see the beach here, the
6 rain walkway which is a perforated metal walkway
7 which, you know, is quite wide and expansive. Nature
8 play area and outdoor title classroom. We have been
9 partnering with the Billion Oyster Project and
10 Brooklyn Boatworks to do number of youth programming
11 that focus on river ecology. Next slide, please.

12 So, now turning to the building that things. So we
13 thought through the typical building massing approach
14 for the site, we weren't satisfied with the outcome.
15 It is kind of what you see to the north and south of
16 here. A 40 story tower on a base. I shoreline
17 connection, but no real impactful public space and
18 the hardened edge actually exacerbates the wave
19 energy and upland flooding. Next slide, please. So,
20 we said, what if we actually had same density, but we
21 compressed the density into a much smaller footprint
22 trading off height for open space and facilitating a
23 design that would allow and enable the resiliency
24 measures that I just described. And it turns out
25 this trade-off between, you know, right and open

2 space is something that has been generally embraced
3 by government and community stakeholders. Next
4 slide, please. So, with this configuration, we were
5 able to concentrate the community oriented
6 programming, the parks supporting neighborhood
7 retail, the YMCA on the ground floor, and still have
8 kind of a rational residential floorplate and that
9 the design team I never find this further to create a
10 blending between the podium and the base that it
11 lands more softly on the park and is a bit more
12 deferential and its shape. Next slide, please. And
13 while these buildings are tall, we feel that the
14 project very much fits within the context of the
15 overall Brooklyn skyline and contributes to it quite
16 nicely. Next slide, please. And the massing
17 approach here also gave the landscape architect and
18 the building architect an opportunity to really
19 collaborate on what we are calling a park facing
20 waterfront public arcade. It's like and inters to
21 show zone between the public realm and the private
22 round where, you know, the park and the neighborhood
23 facing retail really blend together in a very public
24 space and public way. Next slide, please. So, here
25 you can see this is looking down North Third Street

2 next to the Boston Nichols building where the YMCA
3 will be on the second and third floor. Next slide,
4 please. And this is the gateway to the park. We are
5 metropolitan wages a major artery that runs all the
6 way from Jamaica Queens to the East River and really
7 opened up. And it's been closed off for decades,
8 nearly 100 years and here we have this great, you
9 know, 80 foot wide entrance to this open space and
10 now you can really see that arcade and where that
11 kind of building comes together with the park and a
12 very open way. Next slide, please. And this is a
13 list of the proposed ULURP actions that we are
14 seeking and while the project seems, you know,
15 somewhat unconventional, the tools to make it happen
16 already exist in the zoning resolutions, so we are
17 excited to be able to put this all together. We have
18 David Karnofsky here on the panel to answer any
19 specific questions committee members have about these
20 proposed actions. Next slide. And, with that, I
21 will leave it on this slide. This is, again, just
22 kind of a recap of what the project includes an terms
23 of community benefits. As Jed said, we are just
24 super excited to make this reality and work with the
25 local Council member and making sure that it meets

2 the community needs. And, with that, I will turn it
3 over to questions.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you so much.

5 Just a few questions before I turn it over to Council
6 member Levin. The current rezoning here is an M3-1
7 which hasn't been changed since 1961. Why are these
8 sites left out of the 2005 Greenpoint Williamsburg
9 Waterfront Rezoning and would the M3-1 rezoning allow
10 on these sites to be an as of right?

11 BONNIE CAMPBELL: I can start and then,
12 David Karnofsky, if you want to jump in if I'm is
13 state something. But I believe that was left out of
14 the rezoning because Con Edison was still operating
15 as a utility on that site and I don't think they, at
16 the time, foresaw terminating that operation and then
17 they have since done so. And, yes, there is an as of
18 right scenario that was, in fact, studied in the EIS
19 under the existing zoning. There is a number of
20 manufacturing and commercial uses that can be
21 developed as of right.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you. So,
23 and you were talking about this before. The proposed
24 waterfront park design with its emphasis on the
25 access to the water and a soft shoreline which is a

2 very different design from the Domino Park and from
3 most waterfront public access areas. Can you just
4 talk about, again, what were the factors that did
5 influence the open space design here again?

6 BONNIE CAMPBELL: Sure. So, because have
7 this in water infrastructure that allowed us-- the
8 East River is very tidal and has very fast moving
9 currents, so it's not really feasible to have kind of
10 softened shorelines. That combined with the fact
11 that, you know, storm surge events bring water,
12 usually, that can breach, you know, bulkheads and
13 that hardened design, because we have the
14 infrastructure out in the water, we are able to
15 hang-- it's almost like aprons. Like flowerpots in
16 the water that dissipate the wave energy. So, you
17 are almost creating like a little commonly and that
18 enables us to have things like a beach that won't
19 scour away with the times. It enables us to have
20 things like kayaking that are safe without tremendous
21 wave energies from the ferries, for example, and what
22 it does is it slows the storm energy so, once it
23 breaches, you don't have the storm retreat which
24 caused during Sandy most of the damage. It was
25 actually the retreat of the storm energy that causes

2 most of the Upland damage, so we are able to mitigate
3 all of those factors to create this softened
4 shoreline.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: has Two Trees examined
6 the potential impacts of the sea level rise on the
7 proposed development?

8 BONNIE CAMPBELL: Yeah. I mean, we're
9 operating under the existing FEMA guidance and it is
10 designing our buildings and the park in accordance
11 with those. What is interesting about this park is
12 that it can, the way that it is constructed is over
13 time you can actually build it up as a level rises.
14 And then, in terms of the building, you know, one
15 pushing them to the highest part of the site and then
16 also taking the love the life safety systems and
17 putting them all above the second floor.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great. And just my
19 last question before I turn it over to Council member
20 Levin, so, evaluating the proposal from the fair
21 housing perspective, Two Trees has developed similar
22 low income affordable housing units and parts of the
23 Domino project. Can you talk to us about how those
24 units have been successful and a they have been
25 successful in creating opportunities for sort of the

2 greater diversity of households to live in this
3 neighborhood?

4 BONNIE CAMPBELL: Yeah. And, Dave, you
5 might want to jump in on it because I know you have
6 more staff. I think it has been really amazing at
7 Domino to see the amount of we have a heat map that
8 we looked at to see kind of where the interest in
9 those affordable housing-- and they are 40, 50, and
10 60percent of AMI, I believe-- you know, they were
11 filled up extremely quickly. It has created much
12 more diversity in the immediate neighborhood and
13 enabled families, again, who either have lived in the
14 community board or are currently living in the
15 community board to stay there. Dave, I don't know if
16 you want to give any more specific metrics.

17 DAVID LOMBINO: You know, we have
18 developed more than 200 [inaudible 01:50:38] units at
19 Domino. You know, there will be several hundred more
20 that are developed there together with the affordable
21 housing that we're doing here. There will be more
22 than 1000 units of affordable housing along this
23 stretch of waterfront from the Williamsport Bridge to
24 North First Street. You know, we have been
25 successful at achieving the community preference.

2 That is not hard. There's a lot of families within
3 the community board that are seeking, you know, more
4 affordable housing options. You know, we are proud
5 of the job we have done so far in terms of marketing
6 the units to the local community and were going to
7 continue that aggressively with the rest of our
8 units.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you. That
10 is it for me. I want to turn it over to Council
11 member Levin for some questions.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very
14 much, Chair. Nice to see you, Bonnie and David.
15 Nice to have you on the call, Jed, from Uganda. So,
16 I wanted to ask a series of questions. First
17 question has to do with just broader proposed density
18 of the project. How did Two Trees arrive at the--
19 excuse me-- the proposed density wage I believe is
20 6.1 in lieu of the context surrounding the site of--
21 I believe Domino is 5.6 and then the 2005 rezoning
22 sides are 4.7.

23 BONNIE CAMPBELL: So, the north and south
24 Domino-- the density is the same act Domino as the
25 north side that is built, the Cook Fox building and--

2 Sorry. The south side and the north side. They are
3 both-- those are both six with a 6.5 with community
4 facility and this is the same zoning designation.
5 What is interesting is the effective density here is
6 actually a little less than most projects when you
7 account for the street bed, the roadbed, as part of
8 the lot area which is how you are arriving at that
9 6.1. Domino is really 6.5 and the north Williamsburg
10 sites are, as well.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. So, then
12 this is entirely-- This is the same density that you
13 are proposing is the Domino site?

14 BONNIE CAMPBELL: Yes.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Across all of the
16 sites, right? Because Domino is--

17 BONNIE CAMPBELL: Correct. Correct.
18 Domino has an Upland site that is different and the
19 refinery is also different. Okay. The
20 Community board and the borough president and other
21 community stakeholders have been very clear demanding
22 greater and deeper affordability than the baseline
23 that is provided by MIH option one. How does Two
24 Trees anticipate answering these demands? You know, I
25 think working with your office and figuring out a way

2 to deepen the affordability more than what the what
3 is required by MIH in terms of the AMIs that are
4 proposed, in addition to thinking about how to get
5 more units in this vicinity, whether it is, you know,
6 senior housing that is within, you know, some radius
7 of the project or more housing on site, like we are
8 open to a lot of options and we want to continue to
9 work with your office to figure out, you know, how to
10 best serve that need.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay. And have
12 you identified any sites nearby that could
13 potentially be, you know, additional sites for
14 affordable housing?

15 BONNIE CAMPBELL: We are certainly working
16 at it hard and we expect to give your office and
17 updates over the next couple waiting on kind of what
18 we are thinking could potentially work for you for
19 work for your constituents.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Both the community
21 board and the borough president also raised concerns
22 about providing a baseline of two and three-bedroom
23 units, especially with regard to the affordable
24 housing component. Do you have proposed unit size
25 makes in the proposal as set forth?

2 BONNIE CAMPBELL: We do not. Premature
3 based on kind of a couple things. One, what the
4 market is. I mean, we know that, at Domino, the
5 demand has been trending larger from when we first
6 started, so, you know, it does seem like the
7 neighborhood as a whole is trending in that
8 direction. More family sized units, I would say, but
9 we will have to determine, you know, with the unit
10 mix is when we get much closer to actually doing the
11 construction drawings for these buildings and then
12 also see what the programmatic requirements are for
13 the affordable housing at that time and whether they
14 have to, you know, match the market rate mix or we
15 can deviate and potentially have some larger
16 affordable units. We are definitely open to doing so
17 so long as the programs will allow us to do that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: In the Domino
19 development-- and the only reason I ask about this
20 is because it is close by and Two Trees is the
21 developer, but in the Domino Development, has there
22 been a change between unit size mixes from one
23 development site to another?

24 BONNIE CAMPBELL: So, I think that between
25 the first two buildings, the units got-- the makes

2 didn't really change, but the units did get a little
3 bigger and then now we are in a design process for
4 our third building and--

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

6 BONNIE CAMPBELL: as we have done market
7 research, you know, we are understanding and whether
8 it is kind of a COVID trend, but also I think the
9 neighborhood, as I said, maturing and has more kind
10 of families living there, we are seeing a demand for
11 more bedrooms and we are exploring that now and I
12 believe we intend to include that in our next
13 building at Domino.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Chair, mask a
15 couple more questions?

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yeah. We will just keep
17 it brief, if we could. We have a lot of people--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Yes, sir.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Have you
21 considered a fully electric development site, you
22 know, for both buildings-- both here and the
23 remaining Domino sites? I can tell you that we just
24 had a full day hearing yesterday on legislation
25 sponsored by Council member Alicka Ampry-Samuel that

1 would make, you know, all future developments and Alt
2 one's in the city fully electric as opposed to
3 natural gas. You know, I don't think I need to tell
4 you guys, you know, the rationale for that and the
5 roll of natural gas in our carbon footprint and
6 asthma rates and, you know, that we are moving
7 towards a renewable grid and, you know, any new
8 development that is using gas is a step in the wrong
9 direction. One of your peers in the development
10 industry, Alloy, testified at the hearing that Addy
11 Flatbush that we rezoned a few years back is actually
12 doing a full electric building with water heat pumps,
13 etc. So, is that something that you are exploring
14 here or willing to commit to at this point?

16 BONNIE CAMPBELL: That is very much front
17 of mind for us. It's something that we discuss all
18 the time and not just about River Street, but, as you
19 say, our next Domino building. We know and embrace
20 that as the way of the future. We also want River
21 Ring to be a real kind of model for resiliency and
22 that includes, you know, electrification. So, you
23 know, while we can't commit to it today because we
24 are very much still learning exactly what it means to
25 be a fully electric building, it's quite possible

2 that our future Domino buildings will be and
3 certainly by the time we get to River Ring building,
4 I imagine that's where New York City will be and I
5 think it's where our organization will be, as well.
6 We have made steps-- we did a microgrid in Gowanus
7 and we're exploring a microgrid here, as well, which,
8 again, takes energy off the grid during the nonpeak
9 time, stores it, and then actually puts it back on
10 the grid during peak times. That would also enable
11 us to power the River Ring buildings through that
12 microgrid battery system which would further enable
13 us to be completely electric, but also to supplement
14 and fortify the neighborhood Con Ed grid.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Yeah. I would
16 maybe recommend reaching out to the people at Alloy
17 to see kind of what their experience has been because
18 they are in the early stages of constructing the
19 building right now.

20 BONNIE CAMPBELL: Absolutely.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: [inaudible
22 02:00:16]

23 BONNIE CAMPBELL: Yeah.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: In terms of
25 resiliency, the wave attenuation construction program

2 that you have identified, are there-- that reduces
3 the overall energy of the waves, it does not displace
4 that energy elsewhere along the shorelines. Is that
5 right?

6 BONNIE CAMPBELL: No. It absorbs that,
7 right, so it gives you like a broader landscape to
8 absorb it for a softer head. So by the time that it
9 reaches-- It's not like pushing it up or pushing it
10 down. In fact, not only does it, you know, really
11 protect this public open space and our buildings, but
12 it protects kind of a larger section of the
13 neighborhood in reducing that wave energy. So it's
14 not just displacing it and putting it elsewhere to
15 exacerbate--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Right.

17 BONNIE CAMPBELL: what is there, which I
18 think is what you are asking. Yeah.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: That's what I was
20 asking. Yes. Around the community facilities space,
21 are there opportunities for additional community
22 facilities space? You know, there is-- within the
23 application, there is no guarantee that the YMCA will
24 indeed build up in that space. Is there-- Are you

2 proposing and measures to ensure that there is
3 affordable community access to the YMCA?

4 BONNIE CAMPBELL: Yeah. I mean, we were
5 pretty far along with the Y. We have an executed LOI
6 that agrees upon kind of terms of delivery and the
7 general space requirements and everything for the Y,
8 so we feel very confident and we are happy to help
9 you feel assured that it is going to happen in any
10 way that makes sense. And they have articulated
11 [inaudible 02:02:21] to kind of serve the needs of
12 this community from kind, you know, income
13 perspective and {swimming lessons for second graders.
14 But, again, we are happy to kind of connect you and
15 us to the Y to make sure that they are really meeting
16 the member needs of this specific neighborhood.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: And then just on
18 the--

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I'm going to step in
20 here, Steve. I gave you an additional five minutes
21 and we are already over that five minute time limit.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We already have a large
24 number of people who are looking to testify, so we
25 are going to move on from your questions now. Okay?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Sound good. Thank
3 you, Chair.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, Steve.
5 Counsel, do we have any other Council members with
6 questions?

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Chair. I see
8 no other members with questions.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There being no
10 further questions, the applicant panel is excused.
11 Counsel, are there any other members-- any members
12 of the public who wish to testify on the River Ring
13 proposal?

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, there are.
15 And for those members of the public here to testify,
16 the please note, once again, that witnesses will
17 generally be called in panels of up to four names at
18 a time. If you are a member of the public who has
19 signed up to testify on the River Ring proposal,
20 please stand by when you hear your name being called
21 and prepare to speak when the Chair says that you may
22 begin. We will now hear from the first panel which
23 will include Keith Berger, Cory Kantin, Lucy Walton,
24 and Tami Stronach. Keith Berger to go first followed
25 by Cory Kantin.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

3 KEITH BERGER: Hi. Can you hear me
4 okay?

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

6 KEITH BERGER: I apologize. I am
7 actually going to be less time because I'm on a work
8 call. Unfortunately, this is my work today. , So I
9 would implore that the Council members read my
10 written comments and I would just like to add a
11 couple of points. I am a long term resident and
12 current renter in the neighborhood. I have seen the
13 impact of the development along the waterfront,
14 having lived in a waterfront building now for 13
15 years and, you know, look, I think Two Trees has done
16 certain things really well and Domino is a great
17 Park, although I would like to note that Domino
18 itself is still three buildings away from being
19 complete, so the impact of that building on this
20 community along with a number of other buildings
21 across this waterfront corridor are still not really
22 felt and so to add now another 3000 potential
23 residents on top of this area without any
24 infrastructure development or thought or planning is
25 one issue. I am a very big fan of affordable

2 housing. I am on a Homeless Services board and have
3 been dealing with affordable housing issues for
4 years, but, you know, I've also seen affordable
5 housing built in other units along this waterfront
6 that has still resulted in significant displacement
7 of people in this community, so I am a fan of
8 retaining some housing, but I think 3000 additional
9 units is too much. It's clear that this developer is
10 willing to make some changes to this. They have
11 claimed they can't go down on density. I would like
12 to urge the Council and members to really question
13 that and really get actual details and numbers and
14 talk to others. I think that they could easily
15 retain 263 affordable units in this development while
16 reducing the size of the development by 25 or
17 30percent or more easily. I am a member of the Land
18 Use Committee and we spend a lot of time on the
19 conditions that were presented to CB one and approved
20 by all CB one members and I would strongly urge the
21 committee to take those conditions very seriously.
22 Thank you very much for your time.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your
24 testimony. Next speaker, please?

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Cory Kantin to be
3 followed by Lucy Walton.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

5 CORY KANTIN: Good morning, Council
6 members. Thank you for your service to our city.
7 So, I don't envy you. I realize that it is not an
8 easy task to be a decision-maker on a controversial
9 development. But you don't have to actually be the
10 decision-maker if you follow the voice of the people.
11 In fact, as a public servant, it is-year-old to
12 follow the voice of the community and the community
13 has spoken. As Keith just said, CB one sent a whole
14 lot of detailed conditions for that is that everyone
15 voted and agreed on and, to clarify those, it was
16 essentially affordability and density. Community
17 Board one asked for 50percent of affordable units and
18 one third reduction of density and, you know, the
19 developer claims they can't do both and that is
20 probably true, but it's also not our problem. We
21 don't need this rezoning, but they do. And, yes, I
22 agree that we need affordable housing and they are
23 offering that, but the luxury housing this
24 development includes is the exact thing that actually
25 makes our city less affordable. So, unless the ratio

2 of affordable units is around 50percent, we just
3 think we are making the city more affordable when, in
4 fact, we know all of our neighborhoods are going to
5 be more in more expensive with the luxury units. The
6 question I keep on hearing is that elected officials
7 want to know how much can the developers to. What do
8 their books look like so the city can push them to
9 the max? But I think that is the wrong question.
10 Based on an assumption of how big a rezoning they can
11 get with what tax subsidies. If the developer
12 thought from the beginning that they needed to do
13 50percent affordability in a lower density, then they
14 would have spent less on the Con Ed site. Rezonings
15 offer leverage to our city. This is a moment where
16 you guys, where our city, Kim set a precedent of what
17 it is that we are looking for. This is a legacy
18 project for the developer and Excel legacy project
19 for the city. You can choose to reduce the density
20 and the height and choose to bring affordability to
21 our community and you can choose what is right for
22 you. If you believe in community-based planning,
23 please--

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

25 CORY KANTIN: listen to the community.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you
3 for your testimony.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker
5 will be Lucy Walton followed by Tami Stronach.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

7 LUCY WALTON: Thank you very much and
8 appreciate the due process today. Like many of our
9 neighbors, I'm actually pro development of this site,
10 however, I am not pro development to the level of
11 3000 units which I think will simply overwhelm our
12 infrastructure. And I would support the conditions
13 that the community have put together a with a one
14 third reduction of density and also an increase in
15 affordable units. Our task is that the investment in
16 the land, as Cory pointed out, is not the starting
17 position for the negotiation. In fact, this
18 developer is extracting a tremendous amount of value
19 from our neighborhood and we ask that we do not
20 accept their first offer of their plan. Instead, we
21 uphold the CB one conditions which were put together
22 by the community. We ask that we are not railroaded
23 into a snap decision on what will be Brooklyn's
24 second-largest tower and a tremendous legacy of Steve
25 Levin and of this Council. Just because it suits the

2 developer to do this quickly, this should have much,
3 much more detailed public consultation that has been
4 possible during the pandemic and zoom meetings with
5 limited access and then another hearings where, you
6 know, extreme weather events have been taking place
7 at the exact same time. So, question just why we are
8 doing this so quickly because it suits the developer.
9 I would also like to question the misrepresentation
10 of the acreage of parkland. 3 acres of which are
11 underwater and the need for increased access to the
12 waterfront which I have heard numerous times when a
13 36-year-old man died at Domino Park recently. I
14 don't think it is the responsible thing to do to
15 allow children and dog walkers and even adults
16 anymore access to the waterfront given the dangers of
17 that particular current. I think there have been
18 some really gross misrepresentations of the people
19 who are against this as NIMBY or just against all
20 development. I, myself, could be characterized as
21 one of those gentrified errors in the neighborhood.
22 I would say that I'm very pro development as are many
23 of the people who live here, but in a sensible and
24 thoughtful manner and, by the way, this development
25 is going to increase the value of many of our units,

2 so it's not that we will lose out from this. What is
3 most offensive is the minimum level of affordability
4 in the mega towers. At seven to \$10,000 per month of
5 rent per unit, build will actually push out diverse
6 communities even farther from our neighborhood. We
7 demand that we just to get more out of this a
8 rezoning that is currently on the table. And we
9 would also just question that the developers failed
10 to really use any of the affordable units in their
11 One South First Street--

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your
14 testimony. Next speaker, please.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Tami Stronach will
16 be the next and last speaker on this panel.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Tami Stronach, we
19 need to accept the unmute request in order to begin
20 your testimony which you can do on the telephone by
21 pressing the star sign. Star six buttons. Star six
22 to unmute.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We seem to be
25 having some technical difficulties. I was the last

2 speaker on this panel, Mr. Chair. And I will-- I
3 don't see any members with questions, so with your
4 permission, I will call the next panel which will
5 include Ward Dennis, Richard Mazar, Katie Denny
6 Horwitz, and Joe Chan. Tami Stronach, we will try to
7 get back to you in a future panel. The first speaker
8 on this panel will be Ward Dennis followed by Richard
9 Mazar.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

11 WARD DENNIS: Good afternoon, everyone. My
12 name is Ward Dennis. I live on Grand Street less
13 than a block away from the proposed River Ring site
14 and also from the developers Domino site. I was a
15 member of Community Board One during the 2005
16 Greenpoint Williamsburg waterfront rezoning and the
17 first domino rezoning and Chair of the land use
18 Committee during much of that time. Testifying on my
19 own behalf today in general support of the rezoning
20 of the River Street site to the residential use with
21 some conditions and comments on this application
22 specifically. First, I really strongly support the
23 proposed open space which I think is nothing short of
24 this and area. It is a resilient and it is
25 equitable. I have been advocating for waterfront

1 connection between the south side and the north side
2 for years and this three blocks site has always stood
3 in the way. Two Trees has shown at its Domino
4 project that it can deliver on its promises and
5 design, build, and manage world-class open space and
6 I urge you to support and codify what is proposed for
7 this site wholly and unconditionally. As for the
8 zoning itself, I would like to see the density be in
9 an with the tower density of other waterfront
10 developments, including that thousand five rezoning
11 of Rose Plaza and the like. I don't have issue with
12 the building height, especially if the height allows
13 for smaller footprints and more usable open space.
14 The Domino development, specifically One South First
15 Street, have proven that tall or towers and smaller
16 floor plates create a superior neighborhood urban
17 experience, so let's continue that. I think everyone
18 agrees that this project needs to have more
19 affordable housing and add T-bar levels of
20 affordability and while I would like to see the
21 density adjusted to the extent that this site is
22 going to be rezoned to answer than the neighboring
23 towers, it should be providing more affordable
24 housing and more affordability than those sites.
25

2 And, last, while this site does-- While this
3 proposal does some amazing things in the name of
4 sustainability and resiliency, that should be taken
5 much further. There have been excellent suggestions
6 for modifications such as electrification--

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

8 WARD DENNIS: onsite geothermal and others
9 and I strongly urge you to pursue those. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you
11 for your testimony.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker
13 will be Richard Mazar to be followed by Katie Denny
14 Horowitz.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

16 RICHARD MAZAR: Okay. Can you hear me?

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

18 RICHARD MAZAR: All right. This is rich
19 Mazar, a lifelong resident of Greenpoint. I've only
20 been here since 1950 which was 71 years and I just
21 want to put everything into context. I get bored
22 repeating the same testimony, but, as I said, we are
23 dealing with what we are left with and, basically, we
24 were sold out in a rezoning of 2005 because
25 100percent of the community was against what

2 ultimately happened on the waterfront. So, given
3 that and that we were dealt, when we got here in
4 1950, virtually 100percent of the community was
5 affordable because who else would want to live in the
6 middle of a industrial wasteland surrounded by
7 polluted water with zero access to the waterfront?
8 Think about it. People actually lived in these
9 communities of Greenpoint Williamsburg all of their
10 lives without ever having access to the waterfront.
11 So, moving fast forward, we have fought all the good
12 fights. Councilman Levin and I were arm in arm. I
13 remember when hundreds of people pretty close to the
14 site fighting for 40percent of affordability and
15 trying to get larger units because, remember, Weill
16 came here with families of three, four, five, six,
17 whatever, so we need larger apartments. Having said
18 all of this, I look at the project and say wow. We
19 can actually get to the waterfront without sneaking
20 on like I used to as a kid. We can take care of some
21 of the children because we run 350-- we run programs
22 for 350 children after school and the YMCA and Sarco
23 partners in taking care of our you and the YMCA is
24 also the people's gym. So, you know, locals can

2 afford to go into it. And as I said in my last
3 testimony, get to---

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

5 RICHARD MAZAR: and swim. A lot of the
6 things I like, so for the project and I hope you
7 understand the Brooklyn part of the matrix. Thank
8 you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you
10 for your testimony. Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Katie Denny Horwitz
12 will be the next speaker to be followed by Joe Chan.
13 Katie Denny Horwitz.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

15 KATIE DENNY HOROWITZ: Hi, there. Can you
16 hear me?

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

18 KATIE DENNY HOROWITZ: Good afternoon. My
19 name is Katie Denny Horowitz . , Although not as
20 long as Richard. I've been here for about 20 years.
21 I'm a member of community Board one and I am the
22 executive director of the North Brooklyn Parks
23 Alliance whose mission it is to create an equitable,
24 accessible, and vibrant park and open space system
25 here in North Brooklyn and it is with that mission in

mind that I am sharing my experience with Two Trees as a well demonstrated park creator and manager, most notably in its success of Domino Park, a beloved waterfront park that offers the highest quality and maintenance, operations, and community engagement, especially in Williamsburg's Southside which is woefully underserved with its lack of open space.

I'm speaking this morning on behalf of the creation of additional green space in our neighborhood and the innovative park design being proposed as part of River Ring. The Two Trees is going beyond just the creation of new parkland and has proposed a first of its kind public waterfront park that can serve as a model for responsible development in the face of climate change and continued environmental challenges, especially along our city's shorelines.

Rather than building a hardened bulkhead Ed which only accelerate storm surge and pushes flooding two adjacent areas, the project will feature berms, breakwaters, marshes, wetlands, all designed to mitigate storm surges, reduce flooding and erosion, and better protect our North Brooklyn waterfront.

River Ring park includes 6 acres of much-needed public open space, including both waterfront and in

2 water areas designed to engage, educate, and inspire
3 New Yorkers to embrace the East River and support
4 essential habitats, restoration, and environmental
5 stewardship. This project will restores salt
6 marshes, wetlands, oyster beds, and tidal flats,
7 enriching wildlife and habitat while creating new
8 protected areas for recreation and environmental
9 education. Our neighborhood, if you know it, as our
10 Council member Steve Levin does very well, we
11 suffered from a very long history of heavy industry
12 that has resulted in strong-

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

14 KATIE DENNY HOROWITZ: activism. It has
15 been heightened to new levels in the face of climate
16 change and devastating impacts of storms like Sandy
17 and Ida.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you
19 for your testimony today.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Jo Chan will be the
21 next and last speaker on this panel.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

23 JOE CHAN: Thank you. Thank you for
24 this opportunity to speak. I am Joe Chan. I am
25 Senior VP for real estate and property management at

2 the YMCA of Greater New York or as Richard well
3 titled US, the People's gym just wanted to give you a
4 little bit of context as to what this project means
5 to the YMCA citywide and within the Greenpoint and
6 Williamsburg neighborhoods. You will also be hearing
7 from Kendall Charter who runs our Greenpoint branch
8 and he will obtain again a little bit more into the
9 local services and programs that will be offered.
10 River Ring will afford us a unique opportunity to
11 build a state-of-the-art YMCA that will be well
12 positioned to secure Greenpoint and Williamsburg--
13 to serve Greenpoint and Williamsburg communities at a
14 fraction of what it would normally cost us. Just a
15 little bit of context on our existing Greenpoint
16 branch that is in operation now. It is 115 years
17 old, it is one of our smallest. We've got 23
18 branches now citywide and I believe it is the second
19 smallest. It is a labyrinthine and not at all laid
20 out to serve families and 2021 and, for those
21 reasons, a few decades ago, . That search
22 intensified about five years ago when I joined and we
23 did inexpensive search of public and private sites in
24 CB one that might work for us. There were no sites
25 that we could find that met our locational price

2 criteria and we concluded that the sites that were
3 available would cost us about 3 to 4 times what we
4 could afford to build a new YMCA on. At that time,
5 Two Trees approached us with the opportunity to be
6 included within River Ring.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

8 JO CHAN: The location was ideal. The
9 terms were reasonable. Just to wrap, what we will
10 get out of this is a pool that is multiple times
11 bigger than what we have now, a gym that is multiple
12 times bigger--

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you
14 again for your testimony. I see that we have-- that
15 was the last speaker?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Say that we have
18 Council member. His hand up, so I am going to turn
19 it over to Council member Levin.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Chair, I just want
21 to thank this panel and the previous panel will
22 friend the neighbors of mine and I just wanted to
23 acknowledge their testimony and thank them for doing
24 this today and taking time out of their busy days.

2 In particular, I haven't seen Richmond time, so, hey,
3 rich. It's been a while. Okay. That's all.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No other members
5 with questions for the panel, Chair, I call the next
6 panel which will include Matt Emmi and Tami Stronach.
7 Matt Emmi to testify first.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

9 MATT EMMI: Good afternoon, Council.
10 Thank you for taking the time to hear your comments.
11 I am a business owner who has been in the Greenpoint
12 and Williamsburg area and operated for 12 years and I
13 would like to speak out against the proposed
14 development as it sits. While there are many
15 thoughtful items about the River Praying rezoning
16 proposal that I can appreciate, I can't fathom any
17 reason why the city should grant the opening offer.
18 This is a negotiation and this is a negotiation that
19 should exist between the city residents and the
20 developer and the community board. The current
21 proposal is no different from a pre-COVID opening
22 offer we saw three years ago and incorporated snow
23 community feedback, only input taken from a park
24 meeting that had no bearing on the design and the
25 layout of the building itself. Sustainable

2 Williamsburg has received over 8000 signatures from
3 the neighborhood voicing their dissatisfaction with
4 the plan as it exists. It is unfathomable to me
5 that, as neighbors, we wouldn't have the opportunity
6 to see that developers rework the proposal based upon
7 conditions applied in the city Council meeting.
8 Three years of neighborhood feedback and multiple
9 meetings, and from the impact of an ongoing pandemic.
10 ANS to this zoning breaks a fair process, robs the
11 community have the ability to negotiate, and puts the
12 developer in the most favorable financial condition
13 at the expense of a vibrant and beautiful
14 neighborhood that I call home to my family and
15 daughters. We deserve the discussion and a
16 negotiation around what is arguably the most
17 important decision our neighborhood will face in the
18 next 30 years. Thank you. I surrender the remainder
19 of the time.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your
21 testimony.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Tami Stronach will
23 be the next speaker. Tami Stronach.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Tami Stronach, we
3 need you to accept the unmute request in order to
4 begin.

5 TAMI STRONACH: Am I unmuted finally?

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. Yes.

7 TAMI STRONACH: Hello? Oh, I'm so sorry
8 having technical difficulties. Thank you so much for
9 allowing me to speak today. I am a long-term
10 resident of Williamsburg. I have been here for 30
11 years. I came in with a plethora of artists. I
12 opened a modern dance theater here that was
13 subsequently lost to development. All of my friends
14 have moved. I, personally, would benefit financially
15 from this transaction because it will increase the
16 value of my apartment, but the soul of the
17 neighborhood is not something you can put a price on
18 and I feel like Williamsburg is just being gutted at
19 the benefit of massive developers. In the bottom
20 line here is profit for them. It isn't
21 sustainability and resiliency and affordable housing.
22 But the bigger issue for me is I actually like the
23 conversation I heard today. I liked a lot of the
24 proposals on the table. I just don't think that this
25 is a good partner. From what I've heard, they have

2 absolutely not made good on their promises with
3 affordable housing, they have lied to tenants about
4 their affordable housing being affordable housing.
5 That went to court and an appellate court found them
6 guilty of fraud. And I just don't understand how are
7 Council members can't sleep past negligent behavior
8 like that under the table. If you are going to
9 partner with somebody, you need to actually know that
10 they actually are going to meet their requirements.
11 So, what I am saying is I'm sure that this will be
12 rammed down our throats. I'm sure there is nothing
13 much we can do about it, but what we can do about it
14 with this zoning opportunity for you guys to speak
15 for us is make sure there is oversight. Make sure
16 there isn't these beautiful bullet points and these
17 lovely speaking points that public speaking coaches
18 gave them, but that actually these things materialize
19 and that is going to mean oversight for the
20 conditions that the whole community agreed on
21 wanting. Please look at those conditions and fight
22 for them. Fight for us. This is our neighborhood.
23 This giant Tokyo style tower is going to look down on
24 this and this little peons are going to look up at it
25 and feel completely helpless in the face of

2 development in pushing our city goes and not our
3 Council members standing up for us. That's what I
4 have to say.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Chair, that was
6 the last speaker on this panel. I don't see any
7 members with questions for this panel, so we can move
8 on to the next which will include Adam Ganser, Lori
9 Raphael, Kendall Charter, and Renzo Ramirez. Adam
10 Ganser to testify first followed by Lori Raphael.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Adam Ganser, if you
13 can hear me, we need you to accept the unmute request
14 in order to begin your testimony.

15 ADAM GANSER: Can you hear me?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

17 ADAM GANSER: Great. My name is Adam
18 Ganser. I am the executive director of New Yorkers
19 for Parks. I would like to thank you for the
20 opportunity to speak today in favor of the River Ring
21 project proposed by Two Trees. This project speaks
22 to three priority policy issues facing the city: a
23 dearth of public green space, a general lack of
24 preparedness for climate change, and a shortage of
25 affordable housing. This project, a private

development, ambitiously seeks to do its part to address these three important challenges. On affordable housing, all too often, the priorities of open space and affordability are pitted against each other. In private developments, Two Trees has demonstrated a commitment to both with this project, prioritizing affordability of those New Yorkers most in need of affordable housing. The development proposal currently dedicates 25percent of the total units to affordability with 40percent of those units targeted the very low income New Yorkers making 40percent of the area median income. While New Yorkers for Parks focuses on opens space, open space must have equitable access and Two Trees initial proposal is a start in that direction. With parks space, according to our own research, going is one of the lowest rates of open space per capita in the city, making this development of parks a critical priority. Even though there is no requirement for the developer to do so, Two Trees is committed to building ambitious Park open spaces from Brooklyn Navy Yard to Newtown Creek, unthinkable just 10 years ago, what's more is it will be fully public and paid for and maintained by private dollars, costing the

2 city nothing. Last, on climate resiliency, the
3 proposed park is not just a park. It is a forward
4 thinking climate resiliency model with breakwaters to
5 slow down wave action, reducing the impact of storm
6 surges and protecting the neighborhood. The project
7 sets an important precedent for future waterfront
8 development in New York City. What is more, the park
9 resiliency features will allow a natural habitat--

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

11 ADAM GANSER: of the East River at this
12 site should be restored.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lori Raphael will
14 be the next speaker to be followed by Kendall
15 Charter.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

17 LORI RAPHAEL: Good morning. My name
18 is Lori Raphael. I'm the senior vice president of
19 the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce and I am speaking in
20 support of the River Ring project. The River Ring
21 project addresses the boroughs need for additional
22 housing of all types with 313 affordable units
23 comprising at least 25percent of the total, 30,000
24 square feet of the neighborhood retail, over 6 acres
25 of waterfront Park, and resiliency infrastructure.

1 We see this as a textual and welcome addition to the
2 Williamsburg waterfront. Two Trees has consistently
3 offered well-designed projects that meet a wide range
4 of the needs in the communities in which they build.
5 In addition to affordable housing, the project will
6 create 506 permanent jobs and over 2000 construction
7 jobs. This is a significant amount of job creation
8 in our post pandemic economy. The site is designed
9 for storm resiliency which is increasingly necessary
10 measure to protect against flooding as we address the
11 effects of climate change. This flood mitigation
12 would extend beyond the site itself and into
13 potentially 500 surrounding inland sites.
14 Sustainable features including infrastructure that
15 will not rely on or in any way burden the city's
16 sewer, stormwater, or electrical grid. We are in
17 full support of the sale of-- I'm sorry. That's a
18 different second page and I apologize for that. We
19 would like to see this project built in its current
20 format. It is sustainable, and addresses the need
21 for housing in every sector of the borough, and we
22 urge you to approve it. Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Kendall Charter

25 will be the next speaker followed by Renzo Ramirez.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

3 KENDALL CHARTER: Good morning. Thank
4 you, Council members. My name is Kendall Charter. I
5 am the executive director of the Greenpoint YMCA. We
6 really strongly support this project. The YMCA is
7 thrilled to be part of the River Ring project which
8 will include a new YMCA that will serve thousands of
9 families and young people in Greenpoint and
10 Williamsburg. We welcome the opportunity to provide
11 additional services and resources to our community
12 where we have been for more than 100 years since
13 1906. Our goal is to serve more in our community,
14 supporting working families and young people.
15 Offering programs like second grade swim, families
16 swim, lifeguard training, afterschool training
17 programs, early childhood development, sports
18 programs, wellness programs for seniors and adults,
19 and a place where our community can come together to
20 make new friends. Again, we support the River Ring
21 project and a new YMCA, serving thousands more
22 families and young people in Greenpoint and
23 Williamsburg. Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Renzo Ramirez will
25 be the next speaker.

2 RENZO RAMIREZ: Hello. Can you guys
3 hear me?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

5 RENZO RAMIREZ: All right. Awesome.
6 Sorry if you can hear me. Good evening. My name is
7 Renzo Ramirez and I am a member of 32 BJ. I work as
8 a doorman and, as you know, 32 BJ is the largest
9 properties service Union and representing 85,000
10 service workers across the city. We maintain, clean,
11 and provide security services and buildings like the
12 one being discussed at River Ring. We estimate that
13 this rezoning, which will allow the construction of
14 two residential towers with nearly 300 affordable
15 apartments, community, retail, and parking space,
16 River Ring will provide 500 permanent jobs and more
17 than 2000 construction jobs on a site that currently
18 supports zero employment. The permanent jobs include
19 YMCA employees, building service workers, park
20 maintenance, retail, and nonprofit employees. This
21 commitment to good, permanent jobs in this project is
22 clear. The best way to make sure that developments
23 like the one proposed have a positive impact on
24 building service workers is for developers to make a
25 formal commitment to paying the prevailing wage and

2 create good jobs with families sustaining wages and
3 benefits. We are pleased to let you know that the
4 developer affiliated with this project, River Street
5 Partners LLC, has a track record of creating good
6 jobs throughout their portfolio. River Street
7 Partners LLC has made an early commitment to creating
8 prevailing wage building service jobs at this site.
9 We are in full support of this project. These jobs
10 are typically filled by local members of the
11 community and, because of this commitment, will pay
12 families sustaining wages which help bring working
13 families into the middle class. The percentage of
14 affordable apartments are needed for working people
15 in Brooklyn. This affordable housing and commitment
16 to good prevailing wage jobs will give opportunity
17 for upward mobility, security, and dignity to working
18 class families. 32 BJ supports the responsible
19 developers who invest in the communities where they
20 build. We know that this development will continue
21 to uphold the industry standard and provide
22 opportunities--

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

24 RENZO RAMIREZ: Okay. Thank you for
25 your time, guys.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the
3 last speaker on this panel and I don't see any
4 members for questions for this panel, so, with your
5 permission, we will call the next panel which will
6 include José Leon, Rashid Littlejohn, Ruben Colón,
7 and Sinade Wadsworth. The first speaker will be José
8 Leon followed by Rashid Littlejohn.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

10 JOSÉ LEON: Good afternoon, Council
11 members. Good afternoon, Council members. Thank you
12 for the opportunity to testify on the River Ring
13 project. I am with St. Nick's Alliance and St.
14 Nick's Alliance and El Puente make up the community
15 coalition. Organizations engaged in an affordable
16 housing, environmental justice, and creating access
17 for low income people seeking a foothold in the
18 economic growth in New York City. My testimony on
19 recommendations from the coalition has been presented
20 to the community board, community Board one, the
21 Brooklyn Borough President's office, and to Council
22 member Steve Levin and Antonio Reynoso. I will speak
23 about the coalition's recommendations on affordable
24 housing and jobs and a colleague from El Puente who
25 will be joining a little bit later. Collectively,

1 the coalition has engaged Two Trees and other
2 developers during the rezoning of industrial land to
3 residential for community benefits. In my Domino
4 Park rezoning, that advocacy led to environmental
5 justice games as exemplified in the award-winning
6 Domino Park, nearly 1000 construction jobs, and
7 housing set-asides. Two Trains has been a leader
8 amongst developers in proactive community engagement
9 and these efforts with great success. Now, there is
10 a starting wage of \$20 per hour for construction
11 placements and contributions to costs of local
12 training. We ask that they continue this commitment
13 to the community. While we understand concerns about
14 height and density, creating deeply affordable
15 housing and underwriting improvements to the
16 environment and creating jobs is a greater priority
17 concern for the community and the coalition. We
18 support the River Ring project with the following
19 recommendations: number one, the Community Board has
20 set a condition of 50percent affordable of the units
21 to be developed. We demand that a minimum of
22 40percent of these units be available to residents
23 with incomes of 40percent of the area median income.
24 Most of the current inclusionary units are at the
25

2 80percent to 120percent AMI and too often those are
3 filled by rising young professionals who have far
4 more housing options.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

6 JOSE LEON: Number three, local hiring
7 for 100 construction jobs, 50 per building and
8 underwriting training costs. Number four, provide
9 access to 10 union scale buildings services jobs.
10 Number five, commitment to career path approach on
11 wages of scale growth, leading to annual salaries of
12 50,004 high performing workers after 12 months of
13 employment. To Cherries has been exemplary in
14 working with the committee groups and residents to
15 create a new plan to have access to construction jobs
16 and maintaining commitments in the last Domino Site
17 rezoning goals. We hope they will continue and
18 accommodate the Coalitions request on River Ring.
19 Thank you so much for your time and I hope you can
20 support these recommendations. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Rashid Littlejohn
22 will be the next speaker followed by Ruben Colón.
23 Rashid Littlejohn.

24 RASHID LITTLEJOHN: How are you doing?

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

2 RASHID LITTLEJOHN: My name is Rashid
3 Littlejohn, a member of the Bushwick community, also
4 a nonprofit leader and I am much in support of this
5 project and I see the innovation and the ingenuity
6 that is in the design and the impact that it can have
7 on the community. My concern is more so with the
8 quality-of-life of what the affordable housing
9 opportunities will be for those recipients who gain
10 access to having more family units, you know, for
11 individuals that have, you know, the desire to grow,
12 you know, their family size. I also think that there
13 should be a lot more units allocated in this project
14 for affordable housing as this is an opportunity to
15 turn the tides of what it means to intermix luxury
16 apartments and developing communities as well as how
17 we are going to have the necessary support of those
18 who are in affordable housing and really just
19 creating a culture of inclusion and not, you know,
20 what can also feel like segregation at many points if
21 it's only allocated for certain recipients in one
22 corner more so than just allowing people to have a
23 full existence throughout these different
24 developments. And I just pray that our Council
25 members work with leaders in the community that look

2 like the residents of the affordable housing units to
3 make sure that there is leadership when it comes to
4 making sure the voices of those who gain access to
5 this space are heard and concerns about being
6 included in the community are always met when it
7 comes to really having opportunities and access to
8 positions of leadership and power, whether it is
9 working with Two Trees or within a lot of the
10 businesses that will come. I am Rashid and I lay my
11 claim.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ruben Colón will be
13 the next speaker followed by Sinade Wadsworth. Ruben
14 Colón.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

16 RUBEN COLÓN: Yes. Good afternoon. Thank
17 you for giving me an opportunity to speak. I am a
18 Brooklyn resident, lifelong resident and a member of
19 my community board. I am here speaking on behalf of
20 the Carpenters Union and thousands of members with
21 ties to Brooklyn. Thus far, Two Trees management has
22 complied with the suggestions and wishes of the
23 community board with reference to engaging in
24 dialogue with a Carpenters Union on labor standards.
25 We are scheduled to meet again in early December.

2 Therefore, that Carpenters Union, on behalf of over
3 300 Carpenter families which would be affected
4 directly by your decision, would like to express our
5 continued support for the River Ring project at this
6 time. Sinade Wadsworth will not be speaking today.
7 She had another engagement, so I want to thank you
8 again, Councilman Moya, Councilman Levin for the
9 opportunity to speak. Thank you, sir.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. We just
11 heard that Sinade Wadsworth would not be speaking on
12 this panel, so this panel has concluded. Chair, I
13 see no members of questions, so we will call the next
14 panel which will include Scott Baker, Paul Samulski,
15 Daniella Castillo, Marcel Negret. First speaker will
16 be Scott Baker followed by Paul Samulski.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

18 SCOTT BAKER: Hello. I am Scott Baker. I
19 am the leader of the biking group, the Urban Cyclists
20 with 2500 members and what you go all over the city,
21 including the new waterfront in Brooklyn Queens. I
22 am also the leader of the River Arch consortium and I
23 am strongly in favor of this project. I think Two
24 Trees has gone above and beyond what is required,
25 especially in the park land. They are going into the

2 river with a very exciting and very sustainable set
3 of park structures which will break the waters even
4 100 years from now when they are higher than they are
5 now if they are providing what they say, 40 to
6 60percent AMI, that is going above and beyond what
7 most developers do, as well, even if it is 25percent
8 of the project. That is a deeper level of
9 affordability and most developments do when they so,
10 propose affordable housing. So, I am strongly in
11 favor of this. I think it is, obviously, welcome
12 waterfront extension. Right now,., I'm about to go
13 out after this meeting to bike that area and I know
14 that that area is now basically a derelict so which
15 was a con Ed site previously and you can even ride
16 through it. So, it would be welcome to have this
17 whole waterfront extended and to continue all the way
18 down to the Williamsburg-- Well, to the Manhattan
19 Bridge and beyond. So, I hope this will be approved
20 and I look forward to it being built. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Paul Samulski will
22 be the next speaker. Paul Samulski.

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Samulski, if
25 you can hear me, we need you to accept the--

2 PAUL SAMULSKI: Hello?

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hello.

4 PAUL SAMULSKI: Hi. Two good afternoon
5 because we have been here a while. Thanks for the
6 opportunity to be heard. My name is Paul Samulski
7 and I am the president of the North Brooklyn Chamber.
8 We are a hyper local business organization that
9 represents Bushwick, Greenpoint, and Williamsburg and
10 I'd like to inform the Council at this time that we
11 are in favor of the River Ring proposal and actually
12 have been since it was first presented to us back in
13 2019. The idea of taking a potentially dangerous
14 eyesores such as the old Con Ed fuel oil storage site
15 on the North Brooklyn waterfront and turning it into
16 a thoughtfully designed new addition to our urban
17 waterfront was always of interest to us. The fact
18 that, throughout the entire series of public and
19 community board meetings, Two Trees has been open to
20 reacting to the conditions that have been put before
21 them, makes us even more, chair ball and supportive
22 of this project. Productively dealing with the
23 issues of climate resiliency and carbon footprint,
24 the need for affordable housing units, the ability to
25 offer a significant number of local jobs, union to

1 the opportunity to present the local YMCA with a
2 potential new facility which would serve the
3 community, and positively satisfying those issues
4 shows the character of Two Trees, which I'm happy to
5 say has been a good neighbor to North Brooklyn for
6 many decades. The addition of the River Breathing
7 will completely continue as public waterfront that
8 stretches from Domino Park up to Bushwick in the park
9 and will address the major missing piece in the
10 connection between Williamsburg and Greenpoint, to
11 communities where we are obviously very passionate
12 about. Also, expressing concerns pertaining to the
13 impact that the River Ring would have on our North
14 Brooklyn infrastructure, we hosted a meeting with the
15 MTA to directly discuss the local subway situation,
16 specifically the L train which was thought to receive
17 the lion share of additional ridership in the MTA
18 assured us the detailed presentation that, with the
19 recent improvements--

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

22 PAUL SAMULSKI: in the local stations
23 that will prevent any public transit nightmare due to
24 the addition of River Ring.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you
3 for your testimony today. Thank you so much.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Daniella Castillo
5 will be the next speaker followed by Marcel Negret.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

7 DANIELLA CASTILLO: Hi, everyone. Can
8 you hear me?

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

10 DANIELLA CASTILLO: Okay. Thank you
11 for the opportunity to speak. I will try to be
12 brief. I plan on submitting more thorough and team
13 town written testimony. My name is Danny Castillo.
14 I am here from El Puente, a human rights institution
15 that engages community members in the arts,
16 education, scientific research, and environmental
17 action in South Williamsburg and Bushwick to low
18 income communities of color that have been
19 historically vulnerable to environmental injustices.
20 We have always advocated for grader and equitable
21 access to the waterfront and for the creation of
22 public space. Looking back at the history and legacy
23 advocacy and activism in our neighborhoods, we always
24 envisioned a promenade or park that would allow
25 residents access to spend time along this amenity,

1 but, unfortunately, we have received multiple up
2 zoning projects against the affordability goals
3 expressed in the 197A Plan and historical piece of
4 the open green space promised in the 2005 rezoning
5 plan. We feel the massive and nor Medio this project
6 and the speed at which it has moved through ULURP has
7 not properly allowed for genuine community input, but
8 we hope these concerns are taken seriously into
9 account. We understand the concerns regarding the
10 dire lack of affordable housing and are in agreement
11 with the demands put forth by Los Sures as well as
12 the focus on workforce development posed by St.
13 Nick's. We appreciate the conditions made by CB Juan
14 and offer suggestions to push forward on these items,
15 especially in regards to affordability and density.
16 Knowing the immensity of this proposal will
17 inevitably bring massive changes and increased
18 displacement, we need to offer demands to mitigate
19 these long-term and equitable environmental impacts
20 of the project and those being knowing that the open
21 space will not adequately respond to the increased
22 residents that will come through Domino and River
23 During, we propose funding and support for new parks
24 and improvements to open spaces, specifically to
25

2 underserved and under maintained in the south side
3 and, while we support the use of renewable energy, we
4 would like to punish for investments in the south
5 side to support direct assistance to local building
6 owners, homeowners, and places of worship to install
7 and benefit from any and all innovative technologies
8 that will strengthen preparedness. We also would
9 like to push that--

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you
12 for your testimony.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Marcel Negret will
14 be the next and last speaker on the panel.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

16 MARCEL NEGRET: Hello. My name is
17 Marcel Negret. I am a senior planner with the
18 Regional Plan Association. The RPA fully supports
19 the proposed development and their requested land use
20 actions. We are particularly enthusiastic about the
21 associated resiliency measures and innovative water
22 management initiatives that are part of this project.
23 As a highly developed intends waterfront city with
24 520 miles of shoreline, New York City center is
25 directly in the crosshairs of the climate crisis. In

1 addition to other climate impacts of heat and
2 increased precipitation, the slow, steady and
3 accelerating rise of sea levels threatens to
4 permanently inundate neighborhoods and
5 infrastructure. We also have a deficit of open
6 space. Only 66percent of New Yorkers are within a
7 five minute walk to a park and Community District
8 One, in particular, has one of the lowest amounts of
9 park land per capita within the city. In RPA's own
10 forth regional plan, we called for a combination of
11 resiliency strategies, including zoning changes and
12 investments in engineered and nature-based solutions
13 to adequately adapt to our changing coastline and
14 provide access to new open space. In this regard,
15 River Ring could serve as a regional model. This
16 project will help set new resiliency standards for
17 development projects in the city and beyond. There
18 are some reasonable considerations and ideas that
19 have been proposed throughout the public review
20 process. There are particularly two that were
21 included in the resolution of the borough president's
22 office that we think are worth highlighting. I don't
23 have time to elaborate on love, but we will submit a
24 written testimony that touches on those, but that has
25

2 to do with the completion of Bushwick Inlet Park and
3 improving the housing lottery process. But just to
4 reiterate, we believe that the city Council can play
5 an important role in facilitating discussions to
6 figure out the details across the various city
7 agencies and the applicant, but we largely encourage
8 the city Council to support and approve the requested
9 action that would facilitate this development. Thank
10 you for your time and consideration of this proposal.
11 We are always happy to serve as a resource to help
12 provide ideas and find the right mix of solutions to
13 address our planning challenges. Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That was the last
15 speaker on this panel, Mr. Chair, and I see no
16 members with questions for this panel, so we will
17 call the next panel. That will include Michael
18 Kawochka, Ramon Peguero, Millie Khemiri, and Luke
19 Loreti. Michael Kawochka will testify first followed
20 by Ramon Peguero.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

22 MICHAEL KAWOCHKA: Good morning, Council
23 member. My name is Michael and I am a fourth
24 generation Greenpointer. Board, PS 110 PTA and the
25 CBA one land use committee that deliberated this

1 project. Through various public hearings, it is
2 increasingly clear that there is strong, diverse
3 community support for the affordable housing included
4 in this project, as well as the park, the new Why, a
5 job creation that will be generated. Project
6 supporters outnumber opponents at each of our public
7 hearings. I have found that the vast majority of
8 opposition to River Ring is coming from immediate
9 neighbors to the site where residents may experience
10 negative impacts on their waterfront views.

11
12 Currently, neighbors enjoy uninterrupted views over
13 the site which is vacant except for a few interim
14 uses. The folks that insist the site remained zoned
15 for manufacturing are being disingenuous. They would
16 really just prefer that nothing gets developed there.
17 The truth is, this site on Williamsburg Gold Coast
18 will never remain vacant. It is too valuable as a
19 potential residential site that includes hundreds of
20 affordable units or even with its existing zoning
21 which can be used for big-box retail distribution and
22 last mile delivery. We all know that the Two Trays
23 proposal can be improved upon. That is what this
24 process is for. [Inaudible 02:54:00] and
25 recommendations to maximize the community benefits

2 for any development on the site. Affordable housing,
3 park space, and community facilities like the YMCA in
4 the Two Trees proposal does just that. I urge you to
5 approve the proposal with workable conditions that
6 ensure that the site can actually be developed to the
7 community benefits that are being proposed. Thank
8 you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ramon Peguero will
10 be the next speaker followed by Millie Khemiri.
11 Ramon Peguero.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ramon, if you can
14 hear me, we need you to accept the unmute request and
15 turn on your video. We will try to come back to
16 Ramon Peguero and go next to Millie Khemiri. Millie
17 Khemiri, if you can hear me, we need you to accept
18 the unmute. Thank you.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

20 MILLIE KHEMIRI: Hi. Good afternoon. My
21 name is Millie Khemiri and I'm a licensed social
22 worker with the Administration for Children Services,
23 ACS, and a longtime resident in Williamsburg for the
24 last 36 years. I fully support the River Ring
25 project. I love what Two Trees has done in the

1 community. I have seen the positive impact and it
2 has been instrumental to transform the waterfront in
3 the south side of Williamsburg. This is a critical
4 housing site in a city that has a growing housing
5 crisis. New York City is in dire need of affordable
6 housing and this housing crisis will only escalate
7 with the immediate and direct action. The most
8 effective way to combat this crisis is to build more
9 housing, especially affordable housing for low income
10 families and this is an obvious and critical site for
11 housing. This community has long fought the replace
12 sites like this with housing and open space. This
13 site is one of our last chances to access significant
14 open space on the waterfront which is exactly what
15 this is and I have seen how this neighborhood has
16 gentrified and I don't think it's fair to leave this
17 land vacant or turned into another factory.

18 Additionally, my nieces then I have truly enjoyed
19 Domino Park and I am excited to see what River Ring
20 will offer to the community and I am super excited to
21 see finally a YMCA in my neighborhood for the
22 children and the community to enjoy. It will also
23 create an opportunity for New Yorkers of all ages to
24 interact with the East River and touch and feel the
25

2 water to help change how we think of our future in
3 light of climate change. The new approach to the
4 water will also provide a six acre model for
5 resiliency, ecology, education, recreation, and
6 community building. I'm looking forward to see what
7 this new development brings to my community. Thank
8 you so much for allowing me to speak on behalf of--

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Luke Loreti will be
10 the next speaker on the panel. Luke Loreti.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

12 LUKE LORETI: Hi. My name is Luke. I'm a
13 North Brooklyn resident living about a 10 minute
14 block away from the River Ring site. I think this
15 proposal is a home run. Building this gives us over
16 1000 much needed homes. The construction of market
17 rate housing will prevent high income earners from
18 outbidding current residents of our neighborhood for
19 our existing housing stock. That is to say, not
20 building this will result in increased displacement
21 pressure along the L train deeper into Brooklyn.
22 Even better, 260 of the proposed units are
23 permanently affordable. If we don't build housing
24 here, those 260 families will almost certainly not
25 have a place to live in an increasingly expensive

2 Williamsburg. Brooklyn CB One approved this proposal
3 with the requested that the project cut 300 homes. I
4 asked that the Council rejected this request as it
5 greatly diminishes the benefits I just mentioned and
6 shouldn't be considered in the context of an ongoing
7 housing crisis. Thank you for giving me opportunity
8 to speak today and I hope to enjoy this new stretch
9 of the waterfront soon.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We will try once
11 again to hear testimony from Ramon Peguero. Ramon,
12 if you can hear me, we would ask that you accept the
13 unmute request in order to begin your testimony.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

15 RAMON PEGUERO: Thank you. My name is
16 Ramon Peguero. I am the of the Committee for
17 Hispanic Children and Families. I am also the board
18 chair for Los Tres Ninos Child Development
19 Corporation and also a board member of the Brooklyn
20 Navy Yard Corp. I've been a resident of Williamsburg
21 since the age of six. I raised my family here.
22 Worked here for the past 25 years, I've been working
23 nonprofits that support and enhance the service
24 delivery models for those that are the most in need
25 in Williamsburg. I was happy to hear that Two Trees

1 was once again the developing property in our
2 neighborhood because they have been a true partner in
3 this community. They are not developers and
4 Williamsburg, they are partners in Williamsburg.
5 They have worked with El Puente, Los Sures, St.
6 Nick's, People's Firehouse, and every other
7 organization that cares about affordable housing. In
8 fact, Two Trees call me, Joe Blow on the street to
9 present the project to me and to ask me to bring
10 other people to the table so that they could also
11 present because they wanted to hear from the
12 community. The anything that I wanted to bring is
13 that, in every level of hearing, I have been there
14 and there been overwhelming majorities of community
15 residents that support this project. In the largest
16 storm of the year, fully packed house in the school
17 auditorium said yes. 90percent of the people said
18 yes to this development. I look forward not only to
19 the affordable housing, I look forward not only to
20 the water systems that they are creating, but also
21 the employment opportunities, the social services
22 support, and the entirety of what is a partnership
23 that Two Trees has brought to Williamsburg. I thank
24

2 you and I ask for your vote of support for this
3 project.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That was the last
5 panelist on this panel, Mr. Chair. With your
6 permission, I see no members with questions, so we
7 will call the next panel which will include Susan
8 Albrecht. Susan Albrecht will be the next speaker.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

10 SUSAN ALBRECHT: Hi. You can hear me,
11 right?

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Right.

13 SUSAN ALBRECHT: Okay. Good. All right.
14 Thank you. My name is Susan Albrecht. I am 30 year
15 resident of North Brooklyn and a former member of
16 community Board one. I am speaking in opposition to
17 the proposed rezoning. Before I begin my testimony,
18 I ask the city Council legal staff and Department of
19 City Planning to review the viability or validity of
20 the initial public hearing on this matter which was
21 held in person on September 1, 2021. There was no
22 opportunity for members of the community to join the
23 meeting remotely and no video was made of this
24 hearing to inform the public of the details of this
25 very, very significant project. On that evening, New

1 York City experienced an unprecedented rainstorm.

2 The Mayor of New York City urged residents not to

3 travel and issued a state of emergency, but this

4 initial an important rezoning hearing was held. I

5 attended it in many, many people who preregister did

6 not appear. I believe that this initial September 1

7 public hearing should be deemed invalid because of

8 the state of emergency. But here we are today in the

9 ULURP process for River Ring application has

10 continued at an unprecedented speed the railroad this

11 rezoning through all channels before the end of this

12 administration. The River Ring project is too large

13 for our already congested neighborhood. At a height

14 of 60 stories, it's more than 50percent higher than

15 what was planned in the 2005 waterfront rezoning.

16 The proposed development is irresponsible and would

17 add more than 1000 units to one-way streets bordered

18 by water a neighborhood with a troubled subway line

19 in an area that is suffering more condo construction

20 than any other in New York City. The proposed park

21 is flawed and misleading. All the they promise that

22 2.9 aboveground acres is-- fails to meet the 2.5

23 acres of open space per 1000 people given that the

24 towers will add over 2000 residents. So, exactly

2 what are the benefits to the community of this out of
3 scale proposal and project that will ultimately
4 enrich the developer? The key one is that everyone
5 talks about the commitment to 25percent affordable
6 housing. Well that might be considered admirable,
7 the developer could do much more and I asked the New
8 York City Council to look closely at the thoughtful
9 conditions developed by community Board one and their
10 recommendation. Most specifically, increase the
11 number of affordable units and decrease the size of
12 this ridiculously large and out of scale project.
13 Thank you very much.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That was the last
15 speaker on this panel, Mr. Chair. I see no members
16 with questions for this panel, so we will move to the
17 next panel which will include Neil Sheehan, Ray
18 Acosta, Edward Perez, and William Thomas. The first
19 speaker will be Neil Sheehan followed by Ray Acosta.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Neil Sheehan, we
22 need you to accept--

23 NEIL SHEEHAN: Yes. Yes. Can you hear
24 me?

25 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

2 NEIL SHEEHAN: Thank you. I'm Neil
3 Sheehan. Currently, I'm the Chairperson and
4 cofounder of the North Brooklyn Angles which is a
5 group dedicated to neighbors helping neighbors. We
6 have about 300 weekly volunteers involved and we
7 provide food to 1500 meals and about five or 10,000
8 pounds of food in our community. We see old, we see,
9 we see in between. There is a huge need for
10 affordable housing in our community if the
11 international people aren't going to hold on. I do
12 want to clear up something because it's kind of like
13 my commitment to Fox News [inaudible 03:04:44]. Two
14 Trees is a development with a grade reputation in our
15 community and this nonsense about criminal cases and
16 whatever is nothing other than nonsense or somebody
17 not knowing what they are talking about. Having said
18 that, I was involved in the rezoning in 2005. I
19 headed the clergy group with the Bishop of Brooklyn
20 and worked on the rezoning issue should try to bring
21 affordability to our community. This community needs
22 affordability. Two Trees can do that. Steve is a
23 great guy. I worked with him before he was a
24 Councilman. Steve, I trust you to push those issues
25 that you brought up and to push the affordability to

2 its top line with the AMI and I like the idea of an
3 all site option. That would be great. We did that a
4 long time ago. I do think it's important that we
5 develop this site. It's ridiculous, as Ward
6 mentioned earlier. It should be developed. I don't
7 think we should sit on this thing. This is an equity
8 issue. Progressive communities, upper-middle-class
9 progressive communities, need to understand that
10 housing is where equity needs values. If we are
11 worried about congestion over housing, shame on us.
12 Let's not call that. I've been in this community my
13 whole life fighting for working class--

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

15 NEIL SHEEHAN: and equity means get the
16 people housing and live with the crowded L train.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ray Acosta will be
18 the next speaker. Ray Acosta.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

20 RAY ACOSTA: Yes. How do you do? Do you
21 hear me?

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

23 RAY ACOSTA: Okay. I am talking seven
24 generations date since the first world war. We are
25 Puerto Rican descendants in Williamsburg for over 100

2 years and I am very anxious to see this construction
3 initiative take flight. It's about time that we see
4 something that only the upper West Siders or the
5 upper East Siders enjoy and it breaks my heart to
6 jealousy and I think that Williamsburg deserves that.
7 While I want to say this done by Two Trees, which I
8 applied, I am an advocate of not just affordable
9 housing, but no income housing which is something
10 that I'm not hearing from so many politicians and
11 elected officials are representatives. No one is
12 saying anything about low income housing which is
13 something that should be emphasized, not just
14 affordable housing. And, yes, there is a difference.
15 Again, I take my hat off to Two Trees. My seven
16 generations that have-- unfortunately, there is only
17 four of us left, but we advocated for this beautiful
18 project and I can't wait for everyone to enjoy as far
19 away as from Coney Island and all the way to
20 Williamsburg.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Edward Perez will
22 be the next speaker followed by William Thomas.
23 Edward Perez.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Edward Perez, if
3 you can hear us, we need you to accept the unmute.

4 EDWARD PEREZ: Hello? Okay. Good
5 afternoon, Council, and thank you for the opportunity
6 to speak today. My name is Edward Perez. I am the
7 senior monitoring director at the Big Apple Group.
8 We are also a member of the New York state
9 Association for affordable housing in the supportive
10 housing network of New York. I would like to comment
11 in favor of this project with considerations for the
12 protection of adjacent structures. Demolition of the
13 C word structures and excavation states for both
14 towers would have the potential to create excessive
15 vibrations as well as resolve: vertical displacement
16 that could affect the adjacent structures and their
17 tenants. The Big Apple Group, we would recommend a
18 monitoring protocol that includes a pre-existing
19 conditions survey of the adjacent structures as well
20 as optical and vibration monitoring. Behind me, the
21 image behind me, that is the Hereford Inlaid Seawall
22 in North Wildwood New Jersey which is also an Army
23 Corps of Engineers project. The contractor is
24 roadbuilding that seawall using 31,000 tons, just a
25 little over 31,000 tons of stone fill and capstone.

2 Protecting the homeless adjacent to the construction.
3 And to comment on MTA infrastructure, you know, I can
4 tell you from experience that it's not as bad as
5 people think in Brooklyn. We are monitoring a few
6 projects overseeing construction that is adjacent to
7 a variety of tunnels. A development of this size, it
8 wouldn't be the first project that we are working on
9 them Brooklyn. For that very same reason, you know,
10 we recommend that monitoring protocols. Something as
11 simple as reflective targets that are mounted on the
12 adjacent buildings and seismographs with sensors that
13 are mounted on the adjacent buildings and structures,
14 this would protect from any excessive vibrations. To
15 monitor continuously and remotely and, in the case of
16 any exceedances, we do notify the contractors
17 immediately so they can stop work. Anybody
18 interested in having the Big Apple Group conduct
19 monitoring in the protection of adjacent structures
20 or other so engineering solutions like geotechnical
21 investigations or special inspections can reach me at
22 718-767-2900--

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

24

25

2 EDWARD PEREZ: or you can read more
3 about it at vibrationmonitoring.com. Thank you for
4 your time.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: William Thomas will
6 be the next and last speaker on this panel.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

8 WILLIAM THOMAS: Hi, everyone. My name
9 is Will Thomas. I am here to support the proposal
10 for River Ring is the executive director of Open New
11 York. We are an independent grassroots Pro housing
12 organization. We believe that this project will help
13 to alleviate New York's dire housing shortage and
14 actively helped to cut displacement and surrounding
15 areas and I hope the Council can also find a way to
16 support the project. On some level, I believe
17 everyone realizes that New York is in a dire housing
18 shortage, but let me toss out a few numbers so
19 everyone can remember how bad it is. There are
20 thousands of children that sleep in shelters every
21 single night. 14,000 children. Homelessness is at a
22 highest rate since the Great Depression. The
23 affordable homes in this proposal are badly, badly
24 needed. In addition, the market rate homes this
25 rezoning will allow will also help by proactively

2 preventing displacement elsewhere. The median
3 household income of this census tract is well over
4 six figures. More broadly, the Williamsburg
5 waterfront is an extremely desirable area and
6 although it would be many families first choice, if
7 the wealthy can't find new places to live here, they
8 will simply bid up the price of existing housing and
9 if families who would otherwise have lived in that
10 housing will instead move to more affordable
11 neighborhoods. As displaced demand increases, up
12 goes the rent which forces current tenants to
13 allocate ever larger shares of their income to stay
14 in their homes. If we don't let young professionals
15 live here, they're not going to disappear. They are
16 going to further displacement pressures and East
17 Williamsburg, Bushwick, and more of Brooklyn. The
18 Council should spare families this pressure by
19 supporting the project. Last but not least, I think
20 the Council should consider making one ask of the
21 developer. They are seeking a waiver to lower their
22 parking. I think the city should go one step further
23 and mandate the developer include no parking
24 whatsoever completely as parking has proven to add
25 substantially to housing prices. They can replace

2 the parking with anything else. Housing, retail,
3 office space. I just think it is a mistake to have
4 any parking whatsoever in such a walkable
5 neighborhood. Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the
7 last speaker on this panel and I see no members with
8 questions, so we will call the next panel which will
9 include Eliza Grace Madrone, Juana Rodriguez, Peter
10 Malinowski, and Luke Grochowski. Eliza Grace
11 Madrone will speak first followed by Juana Rodriguez.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

13 ELIZA GRACE MADRONE: Good afternoon. My
14 name is Eliza Grace ledger. I am the communications
15 manager for the Brooklyn Greenway Initiative and I
16 want to thank you for the opportunity to testify in
17 support of the River Ring proposal on behalf of the
18 Brooklyn Greenway Initiative. We are a nonprofit
19 organization that has been focused on the Brooklyn
20 waterfront Greenway for two decades. As a 22 mile
21 green ribbon of active transportation and open space
22 from Greenpoint to East New York and we are in
23 support of Two Trees River Ring proposal and would
24 like to ask you to consider approving it as
25 presented. The city's open space has never been more

critical to the mental and physical health of New Yorkers and there is also very clearly and urgent need to address climate change and increased resilience along the coastline by creating this kind of soft edge and living shoreline by increasing public access to the waterfront, balancing growth and risk through land use policy, and by capturing the value of parks through the kind of creative partnership and funding models that are carefully responding to local needs and context. And that kind of opportunity for creating new Parks and waterfront access, they are few and far between. Public funding for construction and for ongoing maintenance is severely lacking and public-private partnerships are a proven solution with Two Trees as a proven, responsible partner. This proposed waterfront Park and the protected and water access would introduce an entirely new waterfront experience which is rarely seen in Brooklyn and not River Ring would be one of the last remaining stitches in Green Ribbon around the waterfront. We would also like to underscore the ability and commitment of Two Trees to the ongoing maintenance and operation of the waterfront Park which would be a significant ongoing investment in

2 the community and the public realm at large without
3 adding to the city budget. We need to protect our
4 shoreline from sea level rise and super storms and
5 foster the--

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

7 ELIZA GRACE MADRONE: connection. Thank
8 you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Juana Rodriguez
10 will be the next speaker.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

12 JUANA RODRIGUEZ: [speaking foreign
13 language]

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: [speaking foreign
15 language]

16 JUANA RODRIGUEZ: [speaking foreign
17 language]

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: [speaking foreign
19 language]

20 JUANA RODRIGUEZ: [speaking foreign
21 language]

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker
23 will be Peter Malinowski to be followed by Luke
24 Grochowski.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

PETER MALINOWSKI: Hi. Good afternoon. .

I am here to testify in support of the River Ring proposal. I am representing Billion Oyster Project. We already ecosystem restoration and public education initiative nonprofit that works citywide, so we work throughout all five boroughs throughout all 500 miles of coastline trying to make New York Harbor more accessible and abundant plays by restoring oyster reefs to the harbor with communities around New York City-- particularly public school students. The waterfront design proposed by River Ring is innovative and is one of very few examples where a developer or city agency or anything like that works to make the harbor more accessible to New Yorkers and welcome the East River into the city in a way that is safe and responsible. We have been working with Two Trees for the last few years engaging the public and public school students in the water and monitoring water quality at the site. I have to say that I find the earlier comments that New Yorkers should not have access to the water because that might be dangerous to be deeply offensive and that the fact that we should only have-- that only people that can afford houses and shoreline communities should have access

2 to the water is offensive to me personally and I just
3 have been thrilled to work with Two Trees and we
4 believe that New York Harbor is New York City's
5 biggest and best looking open space and should be
6 accessible to all New Yorkers. And so we are
7 thrilled with the innovative designs at the site and
8 we couldn't be happier with our partnership therefore
9 with the landowners critical and enthusiastic
10 interest in water quality and shoreline that actually
11 takes into consideration rising water levels and we
12 believe this project is not only good for improving
13 access to the harbor, but is also a key part of
14 proactive planning for global climate change and
15 rising water levels. Thank you so much tonight is it
16 for me.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Luke Grochowski
18 will be the next and last speaker on this panel.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

20 LUKE GROCHOWSKI: Hi. Can hear me?

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yes.

22 LUKE GROCHOWSKI: Great. Give me one
23 second. So, my name is Luke Grochowski. I was born
24 in Brooklyn and I am a longtime resident here. When
25 I came back from college, you know, this was the only

2 neighborhood I wanted to move back to, you know, it
3 is sort of become the center of town now. Its that
4 Greenpoint Williamsburg is the place to be, but, you
5 know, I remember as a kid when it was not. When it
6 was a toxic wasteland and was dangerous and filled
7 with abandoned properties on the waterfront. Me and
8 my friends would jump over the fence and, you know,
9 we would try to access the water. You know, that is
10 a big selling point for me. You know, this
11 accessibility to the waterfront is, obviously-- I
12 mean, I think a lot of the proposals of the
13 waterfront that have come out and I think To capture
14 youth has really made the best one that I've seen.
15 You know, the best proposal read out the bat that
16 I've seen. So, wanted to speak out in support of
17 that. I also just wanted to say that [inaudible
18 03:19:54] the project. You know, saying that we're
19 going to lose the soul of the community and that
20 there's too much density and not enough housing. You
21 know, you can't have more affordable housing without
22 the density. I mean, it is an incredibly
23 disingenuous argument to make and I can't believe
24 people are doing that with a straight face. You
25 know, I think the value that the community will

2 extract from this property is greater than what even
3 the property developers will extract. I mean, I
4 heard somebody really concerned about that being an
5 issue and I think, you know, community pool,
6 community YMCA access, I mean, these are things that
7 we need and I'd like to see more affordable housing,
8 too, but the fact that they came out with this much
9 units as they did is already impressive. So,
10 hopefully there can be some better work going on with
11 that. The fact that, you know, there people calling
12 for less density, I mean, that just doesn't make
13 sense to me. You know, nobody was making those
14 arguments when the Edge was built. That's all I've
15 got to say.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That was the last
18 speaker on this panel, Mr. Chair, and I see no
19 members with questions, so we will move to the next
20 panel. That will include Paul Pullo, Allyson Stone,
21 Zane Shelby--

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Do we have the next
24 speaker?

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Paul Pullo, if you
3 can hear me, we need you to accept the unmute request
4 in order to begin your testimony. Paul Pullo, if you
5 can hear me, we need you to accept the unmute
6 request.

7 PAUL PULLO: Hi. Yes. I'm here.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, Paul.

9 PAUL PULLO: Hi. Okay. Sorry. So, okay.
10 My name is Paul Pullo. I'm the board Chair of the
11 Greenpoint Y and I'm also the president of North
12 Brooklyn Development. I am wholeheartedly in favor
13 of this project. It is going to bring affordable
14 housing. It's going to bring permanent jobs and
15 union construction jobs, but more important to me, it
16 is going to have a brand-new beautiful Y with a
17 state-of-the-art aquatic center. It's going to be
18 able to bring the Y to the southside and the
19 northside of Brooklyn, communities who have not had
20 the benefit of a YMCA. This design is magnificent.
21 It's futuristic and it's bold and I think that,
22 wholeheartedly, the community is going to have
23 something that generations are going to look forward
24 to. So, thank you for your time and please approve
25 the project.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker
3 will be Allyson Stone.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

5 ALLYSON STONE: Hello. Good afternoon.
6 My name is Allyson Stone and I am a neighbor on the
7 south side of Williamsburg. I live just a few blocks
8 south of Domino Park. I'm also a member of the Land
9 Use Committee. I was very much part of the decision
10 making process that other CB One members have
11 mentioned at today's meeting. Two Trees does a lot
12 for the neighborhood. I'm a mom raising a family
13 here and it's really nice to have some extra green
14 space and some new development in the area. I know
15 we have some concerns about the expansion and growth
16 here in the neighborhood from other neighbors and Two
17 Trees really have proven themselves to be the leaders
18 in keeping out neighborhood clean. I have taken
19 matters into my own hands. I've lead community clean
20 ups here on the southside. It's no secret that the
21 streets are pretty busy at night and sometimes during
22 the day with some four legged friends and it's, I
23 think, at an all time high. So we're hoping to clean
24 up the neighborhood and I really do believe that Two
25 Trees and the River Ring project will benefit the

2 neighborhood far and wide and make our neighborhood,
3 which all of us care about so deeply, an even better
4 environment and even safer place for families and
5 children and working with great developers who are
6 presenting this wonderful project. So, I am in
7 support of it. Thank you for your time today. And
8 thanks again.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Zane Shelby will be
10 the next speaker.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

12 ZANE SHELBY: Good afternoon. My name is
13 Zane Shelby. Thank you for this opportunity to
14 speak. I want to express my support for the River
15 Ring proposal. I have lived in North Brooklyn for
16 eight years. I am a former resident of Williamsburg,
17 but like many others, I had to move away as rents in
18 the area rose. This project, if approved, will be a
19 powerful weapon against displacement. It will
20 provide new arrivals with an alternative to competing
21 with current residence for the severely limited in
22 existing housing stock. What's more is it is
23 currently zoned for industrial use, so there are no
24 residents on site who will be affected. When you
25 consider the needs of the community, I would ask that

2 you consider the concerns of families who have either
3 already been displaced or would like to live in the
4 area but cannot because of how unaffordable it is.
5 Thank you and I will yield the rest of my time.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Catherina Gioino
7 will be the next speaker on this panel.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We seem to be
10 having an issue with Catherina. We will try to come
11 back to her in a future panel. Chair, that was the
12 last speaker and I see no members with questions for
13 that panel. With your permission, we will move to
14 the next panel which will include Arelis Pujols,
15 Maria Lager, Marnie Majorelle, and Rose Angel Perez.
16 Arelis Pujols will be the first speaker followed by
17 Maria Lager.

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Arelis Pujols, if
20 you can hear me, we need you to accept the unmute
21 request in order to begin your testimony which you
22 can do by pressing star six on your keypad. Star six
23 to unmute. We will try to come back to Arelis
24 Pujols. Is Maria Lager available? Maria Lager, if
25 you can hear me, we need you to accept the unmute

2 request which you can do by phone by pressing star
3 six on your keypad. Star six to unmute.

4 ARELIS PUJOLS: [speaking foreign
5 language]

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Arelis Pujols.
7 Thank you.

8 ARELIS PUJOLS: [speaking foreign
9 language.]

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: [speaking foreign
11 language]

12 ARELIS PUJOLS: [speaking foreign
13 language.]

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do we have Maria
15 Lager available? Maria Lager, if you can hear me, we
16 need you to accept the unmute request in order to
17 begin your testimony which you can do by phone by
18 pressing star six on your keypad. Maria Lager, we
19 will try to come back to you. Marnie Majorelle will
20 be the next speaker. Marnie Majorelle. Thank you.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

22 MARNIE MAJORELLE: Hi. Thank you for
23 allowing me to speak today. I just wanted to thank
24 everyone who testified before me [inaudible 03:29:57]
25 will be taken into account. I am in favor of the

2 River Run project, very involved in environmental
3 work. I care deeply about green infrastructure,
4 natural habitat, water quality, and people's access
5 to nature and to parks and I think this project is
6 invaluable in those respects. The landscape design
7 is stunning in terms of its aesthetic value, as well
8 as its ecological value. And I think a lot of
9 thought has been put into it and I think the
10 neighborhoods will benefit from it and also so will
11 our water quality into much for my testimony.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Rose Angel Perez
13 will be the next speaker.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

15 ROSE ANGEL PEREZ: Hello. I'm not sure if
16 you can see me. Can you hear me?

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can't see you, but we
18 can hear you.

19 ROSE ANGEL PEREZ: Oh. That's wonderful.
20 Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this
21 amazing panel. My name is Rose Angel Perez. I am
22 one of the Perez sisters. I was born and raised in
23 Williamsburg Brooklyn. I am affordable housing
24 advocate. I am also a small business owner. My
25 sister and I have a small business right in front of

2 where this Two Trees property will be built and I am
3 offering my testimony in support of this project. I
4 look forward to more green spaces. I am sympathetic
5 to the people and their testimony year in
6 relationship to traffic concerns. We have been
7 dealing with traffic concerns since we started
8 building nonstop as I have been waiting to even
9 speak. There's been nonstop construction. This is
10 just what it also means to live in Williamsburg
11 Brooklyn and so, yeah. It's a little bit
12 disheartening and disingenuous when people are like
13 concerns about views. We have already lost them.
14 This is already a very congested neighborhood. One
15 thing we don't speak about is the impact of small
16 businesses and how we also need foot traffic and one
17 of the reasons that we are still here is because we
18 benefit from the foot traffic when Domino Park
19 opened. So, yeah. I am definitely in full support
20 of this project and I look forward to being in
21 discussion where we do discuss traffic flow, parking.
22 I do think parking is an issue. I do think we also
23 need more parking and I am in support of
24 affordability, however that can be fulfilled. Thank
25 you for your time and that is it.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the
4 last speaker on this panel. I don't see any members
5 with questions for the panel, so we will get to the
6 next panel which, I believe, will include Harrison
7 Grinnan, Julia Amanda Foster, Melissa Cosme, and
8 Sunny Ng. Harrison Grinnan to speak first followed
9 by Julia Amanda Foster.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

11 HARRISON GRINNAN: Hello. My name is
12 Harrison Grinnan. I am a resident of Greenpoint. I
13 live about a 10 minute walk from the location that is
14 under the consideration. I would like to talk about
15 the community board meeting that I attended on this
16 topic. This was the night of the superstar. After
17 the meeting, which was primarily a majority support
18 for the project in question, on the walk home, and it
19 up encountering floodwater that was about 18 inches
20 deep. It went above my kneecaps. For me, that was a
21 very disgusting inconvenience, but that night was
22 deadly for many in Queens. The reason for that is
23 because we don't have enough housing. More than
24 100,000 people live in basement units in New York
25 City and even if we gave them money to buy or rent a

1 non-basement unit-- these are the illegal units that
2 are under discussion-- even if we gave them money,
3 they wouldn't be able to find one because there
4 aren't 100,000 empty units available in New York at
5 any given time. The only way that we are going to
6 give people safe from these things is retrofitting
7 units of which we should do, as well as creating more
8 housing. This is a great place to do this, as well
9 as directly impacting the risk of flooding, this will
10 create 1000 new homes in the affordable homes will
11 directly move people out of situations that they
12 don't want to be in. But the market rate homes are
13 important, too. Each market rate home means that
14 that person will not be bidding against someone else
15 for their housing. Rich people don't just, you know,
16 pop into existence when we build new housing. If you
17 don't build new housing, they buy brownstones. I'm
18 sure you are aware of this. 150-year-old housing in
19 New York can be extremely expensive, but it's not
20 just new housing that is expensive. So, we need to
21 build way more housing so that the rich people can
22 compete with existing people in New York. The
23 community board here asked to reduce 300 of those
24 homes. That means 300 people would not have a house
25

2 in New York indirectly or directly. That is
3 offensive to me.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your
5 testimony today. Next speaker?

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Julia Amanda
7 Foster.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Julia Foster, if
10 you can hear me, we need you to accept the unmute
11 request to begin your testimony. We will come back
12 to--

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We will go to the next
14 speaker and come back.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We will try Melissa
16 Cosme.

17 MELISSA COSME: Hello?

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Hi, Melissa. We can
19 hear you.

20 MELISSA COSME: Okay. So, I have lived
21 in Williamsburg my entire life. 44 years old. I am
22 a single mother. I currently live in Edge. I am one
23 of the tenants that was promised amenities and was
24 approved by CB One and, when I got here, we have no
25 access to the amenities. We are considered the

2 [inaudible 03:36:46] of Williamsburg and Edge
3 community. We were promised dishwashers. We don't
4 have dishwashers. We don't have access to the pool.
5 We had on the second for community room that has been
6 locked which we have no access to. Everyone that
7 lives on the waterfront property has all the
8 amenities and places to get together with their
9 families and socialize. We do not. We have to come
10 into the building and come out and we are completely
11 separated from everyone else. I am completely in
12 support of Two Trees. We do need more affordable
13 income in this neighborhood and I'm very excited for
14 the new YMCA project that is coming, too. I have a
15 14-year-old son and I think that it's amazing for him
16 to be a part of this new community that is beginning
17 to grow in this neighborhood. I am also an ACS
18 worker. I am a Mile Caramel member and I've seen a
19 lot of people leave the neighborhood because they
20 can't afford to live here anymore. The 130percent
21 AMI is way too high for people like me--

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

23 MELISSA COSME: for working class to
24 afford and I just look forward to Two Trees to help
25 the working class family.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, Melissa.
3 Thank you for your testimony today. Next speaker.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: [inaudible
5 03:38:40] will testify next followed by Julia Amanda
6 Foster if she is available.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

8 SUNNY NG: Hello, good afternoon,
9 Council members. My name is Sunny Ng and I am a
10 resident of a use in Southside Williamsburg by
11 Broadway and Havemeyer. I would like to express my
12 support for the River Ring project as originally
13 proposed and reject the community boards
14 recommendation to reduce the number of units. This
15 project would not only add more affordable and market
16 rate housing units, it will also provide much-needed
17 publicly accessible parking space and a YMCA. The
18 park will provide a continuous waterfront to the
19 public, filling out the current blight between Domino
20 Park and the Northside peers. At the hearing with
21 the community Board one's recommendation of
22 arbitrarily cutting 33percent of the units, there is
23 dubious claims about the lack of capacity with local
24 infrastructure. Especially given the work the MTA is
25 done in the last couple years to increase L train

1 capacity. The inclusion of new residents from River
2 Ring will not have a significant impact on the
3 trains. CB one has demonstrated that community
4 boards should be abolished for making wild
5 recommendations that are not only in bad faith, but
6 also not grounded in reality. Those who are against
7 the project are mostly against it because of
8 aesthetics and perhaps may be the tower will block
9 their views and those are, frankly, not good enough
10 reasons to cut down the number of units. It's also
11 shameful that the opponents of the project have
12 admitted that they are gentrified or that are
13 continuing to make it harder for others who live
14 here. The one recommendation I would like to CB
15 considered is to minimize the number of parking spots
16 included in the development. With so many nearby
17 transportation options available, including the L, J,
18 M, and the V trains, as well as the ferry, these new
19 residents should be discouraged to travel by car.
20 Also, as Council member and future Borough Pres.
21 Reynoso had said during a previous meeting, the money
22 saved from building parking spaces can be used to
23 build more affordable units. So, thank you thank you

2 for your time to let me speak and I hope you support
3 this project.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Julia Amanda Foster
6 will be the next speaker. Julia, we need you to
7 accept the unmute request. Okay.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Julia, we need you
10 to accept the unmute request. We are having trouble
11 hearing you.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: How about trying it one
13 more time, Julia. You were unmuted it for like two
14 seconds. There you go. Oh. We can't hear you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We are not getting
16 any audio from you.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yeah. Was that the--

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can try to--
19 Perhaps you can try logging in on a different device
20 and maybe we can try to accommodate you on the next
21 panel. For now, I see that Catherina Gioino is
22 available. Catherina, if you can hear me, I need you
23 to accept the unmute request.

24 CATHERINA GIOINO: Yes. Hi, there. I'm
25 Catherina Gioino. I'm the head of community

1 partnerships and advocacy of Ooni. It's a black and
2 brown owned company operated in Brooklyn that
3 provides free, secure bike parking and repair
4 services to anyone who needs them. It cannot be
5 overstated how highly needed bicycle parking in
6 general, let alone secure is needed and absolutely
7 really lacking the infrastructure is in meeting that
8 demand. Ooni recognizes the need for all people,
9 regardless of income, profession, or demographic to
10 protect their bikes from both weather extremities and
11 from the theft which affects one in four households in
12 New York. River Ring is leading the way in building
13 secure, resilient infrastructure that we have seen
14 time and time again, most recently with Ida, to his
15 far back as Sandy and even earlier, fail the city and
16 its residents. In similar vein, Ooni is striving to
17 provide secure bike parking to anyone, regardless of
18 income or profession. As a viable and sustainable
19 transportation alternatives. And we know that this
20 particular area of Williamsburg is in desperate need
21 of not only secured bike parking, but bike parking in
22 general. This area has well-connected bike lanes and
23 high usage and it's a common occurrence to see three,
24 four, five bikes chained up to one fence or link and
25

2 it's increasingly more common to see those same bikes
3 missing tires, saddles, or altogether a week later.
4 Our team is excited to partner with Two Trees and
5 bring 538 secure bike parking facilities to this area
6 and we are proud that our partner recognizes here it
7 will be a benefit [inaudible 03:43:04]. That is why
8 I and the Ooni team are in full support of River Ring
9 and our partners, Two Trees. I cannot explain enough
10 and I really do look forward to Two Trees moving
11 forward with this project. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That was the last
13 speaker on the panel, Mr. Chair, and I don't see any
14 members with questions, so we can-- I will call the
15 next panel which will include Shaurav Datta,
16 Alexander Aiken, Alex Vallejo, and Cristiano Rossi.
17 First speak will be Shaurav Datta to be followed by
18 Alexander Aiken.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

20 SHAURAV DATTA: Good afternoon. This is
21 Shaurav Datta. I hope you can hear me.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

23 SHAURAV DATTA: Thank you, Chair Moya,
24 Council member Levine, and other Council members.
25 Good afternoon. I'm testifying in support of River

1 Ring as a constituent in Council member Levine's
2 district 33. I am a public servant and first
3 generation Asian immigrant whose personally benefited
4 from living in build mixed income housing in downtown
5 Brooklyn for the last decade. You all already
6 understand the middle and low income affordability
7 crisis facing Brooklyn and indeed the rest of New
8 York City and, yet, and many rezoning applications
9 located particularly in richer Brooklyn
10 neighborhoods, they have hindered our ability to take
11 even small steps toward solving the affordability
12 crisis in the way we choose to top the scale with
13 new, modern housing. Comfortably housed incumbent
14 homeowners often in the same, quote, unquote, luxury
15 towers there now opposed to admirably ask for more
16 affordability, but only in exchange for lower density
17 and at the cost of more units and, thus, also the
18 ability to house more families. These cuts are
19 consequential. There are cuts to the housing
20 stability for so many rent burden to New Yorkers,
21 many living in substandard housing poorly suited to
22 survive climate change. We have all seen the impact
23 of Hurricane Ida: so many of our fellow New Yorkers.
24 This is much more than a negotiation with a
25

convenient evil developer bogeyman. There are literally lives at stake. I'm glad the CPC acknowledge that it would be a missed opportunity to cut down the number of homes utilized by this project, based largely on subjective aesthetic concerns. Missed opportunity for bringing 1000 modern, energy-efficient climate resilient mixed income and affordable units in the Brooklyn neighborhood that is already priced out of reach for so many. Furthermore, the benefits of the new only connected public waterfront park space that River Ring offers are obvious and it would be a sad outcome if any of these unique benefits were watered down as a result of the change in density to ostensibly protect incumbent homeowner water views were to further individual notions of contextual appropriateness. Two Trees are the track record of success that Domino Park, despite the local--

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

SHAURAV DATTA: I encourage you to support this application and strongly force maximizing the number of new homes that will create. Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Alexander Aiken
3 will testify next followed by Alex Viejo.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

5 SASHA AIKEN: Hello, there. My name is
6 Sasha Aiken and I am a homeowner in Williamsburg. I
7 disagree with my community board and I am strongly in
8 favor of this project with as many units as possible.
9 I believe this because I lived in San Francisco for
10 many years and I witnessed over the course of two
11 decades the slow death of almost everything that made
12 that city great. I saw what happens to neighborhoods
13 when you say no to housing over and over again and
14 what happens is that rich people don't just
15 disappear. They buy the homes where low income folks
16 are living, they kick those folks out of their homes,
17 and they renovate the home to live in themselves.
18 Neighborhoods can and do gentrified with no new
19 buildings whatsoever. I've seen it happen. And it's
20 already happening here in parts of Williamsburg.
21 And, you know, many economists have been studying
22 this phenomenon for the last few years and they find
23 over and over again that new housing relieves
24 gentrification and displacement pressures on the
25 nearby neighborhoods and eight is important to note

1 that this benefit is present for both affordable
2 housing and market rate housing. What is more is
3 this particular project is in a unique opportunity.

4 It's not going to displace people because no one is
5 living on this site right now. The disused
6 industrial site on a prime spot on the water.

7 Williamsburg is also a very high opportunity
8 neighborhood, exactly where we should be advocating
9 for more housing at all income levels. On top of

10 that, developers have partnered with community
11 organizations and provides the waterfront space and
12 it includes a significant amount of affordable

13 housing. The only thing I do not support in the
14 project is the inclusion of a parking garage. We
15 cannot continue to build structures for cars,

16 especially in transcendent cities like New York and
17 expect to deal with climate change in any real way.

18 The parking garage should be replaced with more

19 housing for more neighbors with as much of it

20 affordable as possible. With that said, as a

21 homeowner, as a Community Board One resident, and as

22 a neighbor, I am very much in favor of welcoming more

23 residents into Williamsburg and sharing this

24 wonderful neighborhood. I look at this project and I
25

2 think, yeah, that is why I want Williamsburg to go.

3 Please approve this project as proposed with as many

4 units as possible. Thank you for your time.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Alex Viejo will be
7 the next speaker to be followed by Cristiano Rossi.
8 Alex Vallejo.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

10 ALEX VALLEJO: Hello? Can you hear me?

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yeah.

12 ALEX VALLEJO: Hi. I'm Alex Vallejo.
13 I'm actually one of the owners of the barbershop that
14 is right next to the site, so I'm strongly for this
15 project. I have seen this neighborhood development
16 I've seen a lot of people moving in all the time--
17 literally every week. In this project will just help
18 everything all around. It will help the
19 neighborhood. As far as Two Trees, they have, from
20 what I've seen, gone above and beyond with Domino
21 Park and keeping everything clean and putting the
22 minigolf that they put in to Domino Park. Everything
23 that they do is just very good. It's very
24 exceptional and just this project to which would help
25 all the businesses, all my neighbors. It would just

2 help everybody. The affordable housing, that would
3 be able to help people, you know, live in a nice
4 neighborhood and everybody be able to enjoy every
5 thing that Williamsburg has and that it is just going
6 to become better with the waterfront and with the
7 River Ring and everything else, but I'm strongly for
8 this project. Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Cristiano Rossi
10 will be the next speaker on the panel. Cristiano
11 Rossi.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

13 CRISTIANO ROSSI: Hi. Good morning. I am
14 Cristiano Rossi. I run a hospitality company in New
15 York city with locations all around the city. When I
16 decided to rent the Williamsburg location, I rented
17 the location because I thought that would be a
18 developed area and I fully love this project because
19 this project redesigns the waterfront of New York and
20 Brooklyn and becomes more like a European-style. All
21 my residence in New York try to find a location like
22 that and when they saw that place and saw that
23 project, I do my best to find a location close to
24 this project. I thought it would be a part of this
25 project and I would do all I can for that to become

2 true. I really want you to approve and go to this
3 amazing project. Thank you very much.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I see we appear to
5 have been rejoined by Julia Foster. Julia Foster, if
6 you can hear me--

7 JULIA FOSTER: Can you hear me now?

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

9 JULIA FOSTER: Hi. Thank you so very
10 much. Wow. I've heard a lot of people for. I am
11 for and I've heard a lot of people say they have been
12 here a long time. I've also been used since the 50s-
13 -- 1959 and I sent on community Board one. I am a
14 member of St. John's Lutheran Church of Williamsburg
15 for 50 years and I just want to say, yes. Bring this
16 project forward. We are already becoming a
17 neighborhood of homeless shelters, something we don't
18 need. That does not need to be Williamsburg's
19 legacy. We don't need to be a legacy of homeless
20 shelters. We need homes for children, parents,
21 working hard people, young people. And, yes, we need
22 to need low income. You know, I live in a low income
23 development and it is kind of hard to live here, so
24 if we can incorporate that into having it be low
25 income and not just affordable-- because sometimes

2 we can't afford it. I know Two Trees is working with
3 the shelter industry. I'm grateful to hear that and
4 I hope it goes forward and, once again, about those
5 signatures, I have yet to see them. I don't know who
6 lives here with those signatures. Anybody can sign
7 anything online. Katie, thank you for your wonderful
8 work. Council members, thank you for hearing the
9 community out. Bring this project forward. If it is
10 anything like Domino, I have two children on the
11 spectrum, grandchildren and they loved Domino Park.
12 They love to go see the water. So, come on, Two
13 Trees. Let's do this. Thank you. And,
14 Williamsburg, we don't want to be a legacy of
15 homeless shelters. Thank you for hearing me.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your
17 testimony today.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the
19 last speaker on this panel. I don't see any members
20 with questions for this panel. We have another panel
21 coming up which I will call now with your permission.
22 That will include Maria Khimulya and Spencer
23 Heckwolf. Maria Khimulya to testify first to be
24 followed by Spencer Heckwolf.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Maria, can hear us?

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We need you to
4 accept the unmute request to begin your testimony.

5 MARIA KHIMULYA: Hello. Can you hear me?

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you. We're
7 ready, Maria.

8 MARIA KHIMULYA: Hello, Council members
9 and the members of the community. Thank you so much
10 for giving me the opportunity to testify. I fully
11 support the proposal for the development and I only
12 want to make two points. Waterfronts are the most
13 desirable places to live and to spend time on and, as
14 the city, we want to be able to give an opportunity
15 to as many people to live there and to access those
16 places and this project allows us to do exactly that.
17 Those arguing for reducing the number of units or
18 prioritizing minor conveniences against high-quality
19 living conditions for thousands of people who would
20 live in the proposed development. I do echo the
21 concerns that the percentage of affordable units is
22 relatively low-end should be increased if at all
23 possible. That said, we do want to make sure that
24 this proposal is economically viable and allows for
25 as many units overall as possible. A lot has been

2 said in this hearing about surrounding
3 infrastructure, especially for transportation. I
4 would think that the more residents are to move into
5 this space, the more emphasis there would be a
6 building more infrastructure, including
7 transportation I said as and it just cannot work the
8 other way around. [Inaudible 03:55:01] until we have
9 people living in the community. Support for building
10 as many units as possible on the waterfront and I am
11 particularly supportive of the extremely ambitious of
12 the proposed solutions of the flood protection which
13 is a continued worry for most people that I know when
14 we think about the long-term viability of New York
15 City. This project seems to be a much-needed step
16 forward to addressing this worry and I do hope that
17 it goes forward. Thank you so much for this
18 opportunity to speak.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, Maria. Thank
20 you for your testimony.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Spencer Heckwolf
22 will be the next speaker. Spencer Heckwolf.

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

24

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Spencer, if you can
3 hear me, we need you to accept the unmute request.
4 Thank you.

5 SPENCER HECKWOLF: Yep. Just got it. So,
6 I want to express my support for this project. I
7 think that there is obviously a lot of great things
8 about this project: open space, a lot of housing, and
9 obviously the YMCA facility, but I think we need to
10 look at the broader point of New York City and to the
11 New York region that has a massive housing deficit.
12 I don't know if anyone saw the recent New York Times
13 article entitled: Blue States, you are the problem.
14 Well, one of the biggest reasons we are the problem
15 is because we failed to build enough housing and we
16 cannot be cutting housing or rejecting housing
17 because we don't like that it blocks our views, we
18 don't like that we have to share the subway, we don't
19 like that the sidewalks are occupied by more people.
20 If we are really going to be, you know, live up to
21 our values, we basically just need to allow for the
22 construction of a lot of housing. I hear people
23 complain that a developer is going to make money from
24 building housing. Well, yeah. Chefs make money by
25 cooking food for people. Farmers make money by

2 growing food for people. Do we say they are evil for
3 doing that? And developers make money by building
4 shelter for people. Obviously, there needs to be
5 rules in place so that things are fair, but I think
6 it is fine that people make money providing goods and
7 services to people. That is just the general
8 economy. You know, housing is obviously one of the
9 lifelines we need in this world and we need to be
10 inviting more housing, not rejecting it. One quick
11 thing about the parking, I would hope that the
12 developer would not include any parking. It just
13 drives up the cost of housing. I hope they are not
14 including parking so that they can convert it to
15 another use later which, in case, would just allow
16 the ground floor or underground to just be used for
17 any other development.

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

19 SPENCER HECKWOLF: thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you
21 for your testimony.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Moya, that
23 was the last speaker on this panel. I see no members
24 with questions for this panel.

25 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Oh, sorry.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Please.

3 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: There being no members
4 of the public who wish to testify on the pre-
5 considered LU items for the River Ring proposal--

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry, Chair. I'll
7 just make a final announcement just to make sure. If
8 there are any members of the public who wish to
9 testify on the River Ring proposal, please now is the
10 time to press the raise hand button. And, Chair, we
11 will just briefly stand at ease for a bit while we
12 confirm. Chair Moya, I see no other members of the
13 public who wish to testify on this item.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you,
15 Arthur. There being no members of the public who
16 wish to testify on the pre-considered LU items for
17 the River Ring proposal under ULURP number C220062AMK
18 and N220063ZRK, the public hearing is now closed and
19 the items are laid over. That concludes today's
20 business and I want to remind the viewing public
21 that, for anyone wishing to submit the written
22 testimony for items that were heard today, please
23 send it by emailing us at
24 landusetestimony@Council.NYC.gov. That is
25 landusetestimony@Council.NYC.gov. And I would like

2 to thank the members of the public, my colleagues,
3 the Subcommittee Counsel, land-use and other Council
4 staff, and the sergeant-at-arms for participating in
5 today's meeting. This meeting is hereby adjourned.
6 Thank you.

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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 December 29, 2021