

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND
FRANCHISES

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June 12, 2025
Start: 11:06 a.m.
Recess: 3:00 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Room, 16th
Floor

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Shaun Abreu
Justin Brannan
David M. Carr
Kamillah Hanks
Francisco P. Moya
Yusef Salaam
Lynn C. Schulman
Inna Vernikov

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

Jodi Stein
The Coney

Sara Davis
Self

Peter McEnaney
Self

Robert Corneige
Self

Charlene Davis
Local 6, HTC

Yelena Makhuu
Self

Lucy Mujica Diaz
CB13 Member

Melissa Gliatta
Thor Equities

Randy Levine
Legends Hospitality LLC

Julia Daniely
Self

Deborah Carter
Self

James Kinard
Self

Erika Ulcenat
Self

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

Ronald Stewart
Coney Island Resident Against the Casino

Jeanny Hernandez
Self

Marissa Soloman
Self

Donna McMammon
Self

Joseph Packer
Self

Camille Hastick
Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

Marie Mirville- Shahzada
Self

Daisy O'Mallie
Self

Edward Munie
Self

Kovich Chirayangi (SP?)
Coney Islander Against the Casino

Aidan Halootian (SP?)
Against the Casino

Charles Safo
Self

Angel Alvarado
Self

Marion Kennedy
PPEE

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

Domenic Recchia
Self

Sara Ferraro
Self

Andrea Biro
Self

Georgianna Aldaco
Self

Steve Rolston
Self

Harry Owens
Self

DeeAnne Gorman
Self

Stephen Dima
Self

Angela Ranieri
Self

Kyndra Gilverry
Self

Matt McGlade
Coney Island

Sherry Durden
Self

Shella Britton
Self

Linda Harrison
Self

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

Perla Silva
Make the Road New York

Maria Laura Hernandez
Make the Road

Ron Schweiger
Brooklyn Borough Historian

Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon
Self

Jeff Mortun
The Coney

Towanug Coe
Self

Martin Allan
Self

Ron Greenburg
Self

Jess Zari
Self

Jessie Newman
Self

Rachel Shapero
Self

AM Goodrise
Self

Eric Thortmosque
Self

JoHanna Greece
Self

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

Obsidian
Self

Eddie Mark
Self

Christian Molarry
Self

Charles Denson
Self

Laurie Gold
Self

Victoria Heins
Self

Amanda Deutch
Self

Rein Riley
Self

Ida Sanoff
Self

Renee Gary
Self

Shanna Blankenship
Self

Faristra Safi
Self

Jennifer Ponsner
Self

John Quijije
Self

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

Bruce Silverglade
Self

Keith Suber
Self

SERGEANT AT ARMS: This is a microphone check for the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises located on the 16th Floor on June 12, 2025. I'm Pat Kurzyna (SP?).

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning. Welcome to today's New York City Hearing on the Committee of Zoning and Franchises. At any point, no one may approach the dais at any time during today's hearing. If you'd like to testify today, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms in the back to fill out a testimony slip. Please silence all electronic devices. Chair, you may begin.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Zoom webinar host, has the webinar started?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Webinar has just started. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [GAVEL] Good morning everyone and welcome to the meeting of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. I am Council Member Kevin Riley, Chair of this Subcommittee. I am joined today remotely by Council Member Moya and in the room, we're joined by Council Member Brannan.

Today, we are scheduled to hold a public hearing on the applications related to a proposal to develop

a casino complex in the city under the states initiative to issue up to three gaming facility licenses in the downstate area, which includes New York City.

This is the third such proposal to have come to the Council for review this year. Following one in Queens, one in Manhattan.

Before opening the hearing, I will go over the hearing procedures. This meeting is being held at hybrid format. Members of the public who wish to testify may testify in person or through Zoom. Members of the public wishing to testify remotely may register by visiting the New York City Council's website at www.council.nyc.gov/landuse to sign up. For those of you here in person, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms to prepare for - excuse me, to prepare and submit a speakers card. Members of the public may also view a livestream broadcast of this meeting at the Council's website.

When you are called to testify before the Subcommittee, if joining us remotely, you will remain muted until recognized by myself to speak. When you are recognized, your microphone will be unmuted. We will limit public testimony to two minutes per

witness. If you have additional testimony you would like the Subcommittee to consider or if you have written testimony you would like the Subcommittee to consider, please submit it instead of appearing in person.

You can email it to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Written testimony may be submitted up to three days after the hearing is closed. Please indicate the LU number and/or project name in the subject line of your email. We request that witnesses joining us remotely remain in the meeting until you are excused by myself as Council Members may have questions.

Lastly, for everyone attending today's meeting, this is a government proceeding and decorum must be observed at all times. Members of the public are asked not to speak during the meeting unless you are testifying. The witness table is reserved for people called to testify and no video recording or photography is allowed from the witness table. Further, members of the public may not present audio or video recordings as testimony but may submit a transcript of such recording to the Sergeant at Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

I will now open the public hearing on LU 297 relating to the Coney Development Proposal in Council Member Brannan's district in Brooklyn. I want to note upfront as I've stated before, it is important to clarify that the proposal to license up to three downstate gaming facility is a state initiative and that the state is leading the process to decide which proposals are awarded a license.

This state led process will consist of three steps to begin later this year. First, is a review by the Community Advisory Committee or CAC followed by a review of the Gaming Facility Location Board and a final decision is issued by the State Gaming Commission. It is important to note that the CAC process will provide another opportunity for public input about the merits of each casino proposal.

A decision by the state is expected at the end of the year. The Coney Development proposal is here today under the Council review because gaming license applicants are required to have receive the necessary local land use approval in order to compete for a state license in the first place. So, to be very clear, we are not here today to decide whether there should be a casino in Coney Island. We are here

today to determine whether the requested land use approval, which is a request to amend the city map, is appropriate.

The applicant seeking approval to amend the city map in four ways to demap a portion of Bowery demap and purchase two volumes of air. One over a portion of West 12th Street, one over a portion of Stillwell Avenue and change the grade of a portion of Stillwell Avenue.

The action being discussed today does not authorize the applicant to actually build a casino. Whether the applicant may ultimately build a casino is a question that the state will ultimately decide later this year.

Having made these clarifying remarks, for anyone wishing to testify on this item remotely, if you have not already done so, you must register online by visiting the Council's website at council.nyc.gov/landuse. For anyone with us in person, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms to submit a speakers card and if you are filling out a speakers card, please make sure to indicate whether you are testifying in favor or in opposition.

As always, if you prefer to submit written testimony, you may do so by emailing it to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. I will now like to recognize Council Member Brannan for his remarks.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you Chair Riley. Good morning everyone. I'm Council Member Justin Brannan and I proudly represent Coney Island in the New York City Council. Coney Island has always stood as a beacon of excitement, imagination, and possibility. A symbol of egalitarianism and grit. A place of resilience and reinvention. It is the original peoples playground. It's a very special place rooted in entertainment, equity, big dreams and endless opportunity.

Three months a year when the weather is nice, the entire world descends upon Coney Island. People across the world dream of one day traveling to New York just to ride the cyclone and the wonder wheel. They dream of traveling just to touch the sand, go for a stroll on the world famous boardwalk and smell the salty sea breeze. But it's my job to represent Coney Island for the other nine months a year too. Don't get me wrong, we love the tourists and their tax dollars but it's my responsibility and my honor

to do what's best for the hardworking people who call Coney Island their home 12 months a year and not just when the weather is nice.

While we anticipate the proposal to bring a casino to the area, it will represent a significant private investment that could create quality permanent jobs, generate year around economic activity, and bring much needed investments in revenue to our community. I must at the same time acknowledge the valid concerns that have been raised by so many of my constituents including issues related to traffic, public safety and the broader social impacts that casinos come along with.

I think everyone needs to fully understand the overall consequences of opening a casino in a community, so the real life, real world risk benefit analysis here is everything. A development of this scale must first and foremost benefit the people who live here and not burden them.

Lastly, casinos are not a magic fix that will solve all local and statewide fiscal challenges. So, all of these concerns deserve serious attention and I look forward to addressing them in greater detail today.

To be clear, as Chair Riley said, the application we are considering today is not to approve or deny a casino in Coney Island. That decision ultimately lies with the New York State Gaming Commission and the state authority can only make that decision after the conclusion of the work of the Community Advisory Committee that will be convened if this development teams application for a casino license is filed with the state later this month.

If this application moves forward, the Community Advisory Committee will present an opportunity for a robust community engagement and feedback about the merits of having this casino in Coney Island or not. I am sure all local stakeholders will rigorously engage in this New York State process and I look forward to that continued engagement. While this action before us today is an important one, it is not the end of the process or the end of the public engagement regarding the casino proposal or the future of Coney Island.

What is before the City Council today are street mapping actions that would allow the casino application to be considered by these state authorities for one of the three gaming facility

licenses that are available. And let us be clear, every land use action this Council has taken regarding any of the casinos throughout the five boroughs is contingent on actually getting a gaming license from the state.

Simply put, if a casino applicant is denied a casino license or does not file for a license, the land use action disappears and the zoning remains exactly what it is today. I appreciate the opportunity to continue this dialogue today and to hear from all the stakeholders. I want to thank my constituents who have stayed engaged throughout this process thus far and to everyone joining us today for their thoughtful contributions to this very important conversation around the future of Coney Island. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Council Member Brannan. I just want to state for the record we're joined remotely by Council Member Abreu and in the room with Council Member Carr and Salaam. I will now call the applicant panel for this proposal, which consists of Jodi Stein, Sara Davis, Carvis Sasknon, Peter McKinney, Paul Pipen, Sam Garidy, Robert Cornegy and Eva Schneider.

Counsel, can you please administer the affirmation?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Applicants I'll ask you all to raise your right hands. State your name for the record when I ask you in order the affirmation.

Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this Subcommittee and in answer to all Council Member questions? Jodi Stein? Sara Davis? Covis Secsena(SP?)? Peter Macaneny? Paul Pippen? Sam Garidy? Sorry, did I hear Paul Pippen is here or? Okay. Uh Mr. Cornegy? Eva Schnider?

CHAIRPERSON RESTLER: Thank you. For the viewing public if you need an accessible version of this presentation, please send an email request to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

And now the applicant team may begin. Please state your name and organization for the record before you begin. You could turn the mic on please. Thank you.

JODI STEIN: That would be helpful. Thank you so much Chair Riley, Council Member Brannan, the rest of the Committee. My name is Jodi Stein, I'm with Sheppard Mullin, I'm here with my colleagues at the

table. Sara Davis from FX and Robert Cornegy, we're here to present the Coney. Next slide please.

I just want to take a moment if I could to tell you about our team, which is a partnership with Global Gaming for Equity, Saratoga, and Legends and then we have an amazing team of great consultants. Next slide please.

I'm going to turn it over now to FX, which is the amazing architect on this project and Sara Davis.

SARA DAVIS: Thanks Jodi. Hi, I'm Sara Davis with FX Collaborative. You could go to the next slide. On the screen you can see the proposed site here outlined in red. There's four blocks that make up the project site and you can see it's very centrally located among a lot of the parks and existing amusements of Coney Island.

That arch that you see in the middle of the screen is Surf Avenue, just to give you some orientation and then of course the boardwalk and the beach to the south. Next slide please. We wanted to show you our process and really that starts looking back at the history of Coney Island and these images on the screen really represent what was described about how we - the character of Coney Island and its

history. The architecture has a monumental skill right? It's activated year around. It has a presence in the events going on. There's also historically a casino that was in Coney Island so as noted, it was, it is, was peoples playground and that's where we're drawing some inspiration.

On the next slide, you'll see unfortunately the dark moment that the community has a lot of destruction and deterioration and where it was really blighted and this was a moment where a lot of that monumental character is no longer existing.

On the next slide, you can see today that this is rebounding. It is a community of resiliency. So, you can see the activation that is going on today with the amusements, with the character and the threat of the community with the representation of various establishments and things like the aquarium and the theater and the stadium that are really drawing folks from all around the world. So, on the next slide, I know our task is to really continue in that hard work into continue that vibrancy and to restore the historic Coney Island waterfront today.

On the next slide, we really are drawing upon the inspiration of the current vibrancy that we see

throughout those three months of the year where Coney Island is very active and then also the monumental character and giving this an ongoing presence with some architecture as well. So, these are some of the images that we were drawing upon. Taking a look at the next slide, we want to highlight the key drivers that we have been focusing on for the project. It is to create a year around destination to really as part of that destination and allowing for that vibrancy year around to generate careers that support that growth.

We understand the importance of doing this responsibly and focusing on resiliency efforts and sustainability in the project development and all of this to culminate serving as a gateway for the entire district and understand that the central location and the key place that this is anchoring.

On the next slide, you'll see the image of the existing entertainment district and you can see some of the color and the vibrancy of the rides and the street scape. On the next slide, what we're trying to do is enhance that right and you can see what we're proposing as the project program. Listed on this screen are all of the different program aspects.

We can go into a lot more detail if there are questions about all of the programs here but they're a great synergy that help support one another and aim to reach those project goals.

Just going to the next slide, we want to take a look at why we're here, which is the mapping application. So if we can go to the next slide. We just want to take you through what has already been done in the area. So, if you take a look at the red and the pink, which is on the left hand side West 15th Street, the red street and then in the middle Stillwell Avenue and then on the right West 12th Street. And then in the pink, which goes across from left to right is Wonder Wheel Way. That has already been demapped and you can see within that area are the existing amusements that will remain.

In the yellow, which you will see is kind of in the air, those are the volumes of air above both Stillwell Avenue to the left and then on the right West 12th Street that we're seeking to demap and then in the middle on Bowery between Stillwell Avenue and West 12th Street is that area of Bowery that we're seeking to demap, which the applicant actually owns.

On the next slide, you can actually see it in plan. So, it's laid out quite clearly and then in the next slide, you can see it actually in rendering. So, you can see on the left hand side with an A above it, that's the Stillwell Bridge where the volume of air above Stillwell would be and then where it says B is the wealth West 12th Street volume of air where the West 12th Street Bridge is located.

On the next slide, we can see it in sections. So, this is the volume of air that in the box outlined in red, that is on Stillwell Avenue and you can see the bridge is quite smaller than the volume of air but the volume of air is outlined in red and then going to the next slide, you can actually see the volume of air outlined both in red and in blue. So, while we were at the City Planning Commission, they asked us to make the volume of air smaller on West 12th Street, so we raised the lower limiting plane by 20 feet. And so, the lower limiting plane and the actual volume of air is now the one that we're seeking is outlined in blue.

So, moving to the next slide, we're also seeking to raise the elevation of Stillwell Avenue between Surf Avenue and Wonder Wheel Way. We're only seeking

to raise it about a quarter of an inch to two feet and that's just for some flood mitigation in the area because we're building our building above the flood elevation. So, it will allow the street to actually meet the building needs.

And then just moving forward on the next slide, we wanted to talk a bit about the public experience and what they see and the community benefits that this project will bring, so I'm going to turn it back over to Sara.

SARA DAVIS: Thanks Jodi. So, on the next slide, we just want to give you some images about what the public experience might be. Of course landing at the subway stop at the Stillwell Surf intersection, this is at the platform where you can see this gateway that's really drawing folks towards the amusements and towards the boardwalk. On the next slide, this is to just understand that gesture that we're really seeking to make a monumental entrance and a gateway into this community. So, you can see the historic reference and then our proposed new project to the left.

Next you'll see kind of an overall rendering again and this is looking from the boardwalk or the

south towards the project. Through the center there, you can see where we're proposing the improvements to Stillwell and making that a pedestrianized area.

Really to allow for more space that are free of any vehicular access to pedestrians that get from surf all the way to the areas that are currently demapped and into the boardwalk. Further enhancing that is an access up to open roof space you can see here in the green line that takes you up from the street level, completely all outside of the casino up to an open roof space that's available for the public to use.

On the next slide, you'll have a closer look of what that's proposed. It's an area that's open to the public full of landscape, vibrancy and a space for the community to really have access for a public art and so forth.

So, to kind of continue on the benefits for the community, the next slide starts to outline some of those.

ROBERT CORNEGY: Thank you. Thank you, I'd also like to reiterate my thank you to both Chairs Brannan and Riley and the Council Members that are in attendance, Salaam, Carr and Abreau. This point, you know just a direct benefit - some of the direct

benefits to the community are a \$200 million community trust fund, which has a board of directors, which will have a board of directors comprised of community leaders, stakeholders to guide the funding decisions for the local benefits.

We've also partnered with Brooklyn Org, which is a nonprofit that does these disbursements and has a long history throughout the city but certainly with Brooklyn Chamber and uhm the Brooklyn Borough President. It has a really rich history of making sure that these allocations meet the needs of the community.

Community grants, boardwalk improvements, neighborhood safety and security, creation of new open spaces or improve the existing spaces, workforce development, resiliency and environmental protection and public art. We've also had the pleasure of over two years uhm getting the buy in and partnership with colleges in the immediate area and in the borough and with schools to provide training programs, high schools as well, the jobs. We've gone over this several times but I think it's important to note that there are 4,500 union construction jobs and 4,000

permanent gaming and hospitality union jobs with a local hiring preference.

We've already scheduled and have had meetings with local NYCHA residents to talk about job fares in those areas to make sure - to ensure that people in the immediate area have access to those jobs. Other improvements that haven't much been talked about but are long term components to the resiliency of the area are flood resiliency at Still Avenue, one acre of rooftop open space for public use accessible from street level. So, you don't have to go through the casino to use that public space.

Increased lighting and surveillance for safety and convention space for community events.

JODI STEIN: On the next slide, I just wanted to walk you through the vehicular circulation slide a little bit. So, as we've talked about, Stillwell Avenue is going to be completely pedestrianized and that process has actually been completed already with our environmental application.

So, because Stillwell Avenue, which is 100 foot wide street has been pedestrianized through this process, cars are going to be coming in along Surf Avenue either way and they're going to come down on

this orange, if you can tell the orange and pink lines, which are on West 12th Street towards the right of the screen.

They'll come in and they'll go through the corda co share or the circle. They'll either drop off in a valet or they'll self-park themselves and they'll go into the parking lot, which is located within the project itself. When people go to pick up their cars, they'll go within the parking garage, within the project and they'll pick up their cars. They'll actually drive through the Stillwell Avenue bridge and they'll come out on West 15th Street, which is on the left hand side of the screen, never crossing on the ground floor of Stillwell Avenue. So, the pedestrians and the vehicles never have a conflict. So, they'll go up in the air and over and out on 15th Street back onto Surf Avenue.

Buses will also be coming in through West 15th Street, there's a bus lobby. People who exit and enter in the bus lobby, they can go right into the project or they can go right into towards the boardwalk. Tenants who have uhm, you know either rides or need access to their booths within the entertainment district, they can go through as they

always have on West 12th or West 15th Street through the lighter blue line. And then emergency access can be provided along Stillwell Avenue, which is pedestrian but obviously emergency vehicles can access it as well as on Jones Walk, West 12th Street, West 15th Street and so there's really access for everyone in this vehicular access plan. Next slide please.

ROBERT CORNEGY: Wait, before you go forward Jodi, think it's important to note as a community benefit also, those people who are from Coney Island, who travel to Coney Island know that the parking is absolutely horrible. We've had preliminary conversations with local small businesses for them to be able to use the public parking space in a way almost as a uhm, not as a valet but as a how do we describe that?

JODI STEIN: Well, they can get uhm validated.

ROBERT CORNEGY: Yes, they can actually, if you're dining in I Hop or using any of the local public restaurants, which suffer tremendously as we've been told from the ability to access their customers because of parking, they would be able to do that in the facility.

JODI STEIN: So, and there's 1,500 parking spaces. So there will be plenty of parking provided within the project but some of proposed transit improvements, we are as Council Member Brannan certainly knows, we are seeking and we are continuing to advocate for a ferry service with our local elected officials. We are also advocating for express subway service, which used to exist in the area. We're providing, we're going to be providing shuttle service from major downtown hubs such as the Brooklyn - downtown Brooklyn, downtown Manhattan, Flushing Queens and airports. We'll be providing employee incentives so that they do not - employees do not take their own vehicles but use public transportation to get to work.

We will also be providing offsite improvements such as providing signage from the Bell Parkway and other local intersections to disburse traffic throughout the neighborhood. We'll be providing signal timing changes and actuation and creating new turning lanes. We'll be providing pedestrian safety improvements. We will also be adding a traffic lane with the applicants own property on West 12th Street. So, instead of having the three lanes that exist

today, it will become a four lane street by using some of the applicants property to create a fourth lane on West 12th Street to allow more traffic to come into that street. We'll be providing traffic attendance to assist with the traffic flow to make sure that it flows smoothly on and off of Surf Avenue.

We're also providing 100 foot pedestrian through way on Surf Avenue which is right across from Stillwell Subway Station, which is a very heavily utilized subway station, especially during the summer months, so that will be a huge benefit to the area and a gateway into the Coney Island entertainment district, especially to the boardwalk and to the beach and we are providing as well as the one acre open rooftop space, which will be a benefit to all pedestrians that enter into the area.

And then next slide. And then that is the end of our presentation and we are happy to take any questions that you might have.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Alright, thank you so much. I'm going to ask a few questions then I'm going to turn it over to Council Member Brannan to ask his questions. What will happen at the development site

if the Coney Development project does not receive one of the three downstate gaming license?

JODI STEIN: There is no plan at this time for anything to happen at the site, meaning that this - the actions before you will not take place.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: If this land use action is approved, what is the immediate next step for this proposal and your team?

JODI STEIN: If this land use action is approved, we'll go through the CAC process and we'll continue to submit our supplemental application because the land use action is required for the supplemental application with the state and we hope to be chosen for a casino license.

ROBERT CORNEGY: And we'll continue to outreach to the community to get their input.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Given Coney Islands vulnerability to flooding and climate events, how is this proposal being designed to improve local infrastructure and increase neighborhood resiliency?

SARA DAVIS: So, we are taking measures to offer this facility as a resilience hub. There are a lot of venues that offer that type of flexibility such as the multiuse venue at the top that could be used for

community outreach as a safe place for meeting in the event of an incident, the climate. There's a number of different actions that we're looking at that would offer for that resiliency hub within the facility.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: So, I know a lot of community concern tends to raise concerns about casinos in general when it comes to crime, addiction and other negative secondary effects, especially within the area that you guys are planning to build this casino. A lot of families in the area, so there's a lot of concern from the community. What specific initiatives or investments are proposed here in regards to those concerns by the community for prevention and public safety?

ROBERT CORNEGY: Well, clearly lighting. Any crime prevention professional will tell you that where there's more lighting and more activity, it actually decreases crime not increases crime.

So, we've actually consulted with some other top law enforcement professionals in the city and have gotten and doubled down on the fact that actually what happens in a situation like this as crime actually decreases, like I said because of lighting,

because of activity, it is less likely to have more crime. That's documented.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Is there anything else that you guys are projecting?

JODI STEIN: We will have uhm space for NYPD, FDNY and EMS onsite and then we will be having all the programs that any of our - of the partners have for their continuous supports for all health that's needed for any assistance for any addictions that would be provided and that's a big part of their programs in all their facilities and we have one of the biggest casino operators in the country. So, this is a big part of their program and safety of the customers.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I do believe that these are great additions to address public safety but I do believe that there is so much more that you guys could do, specifically in this area if you are going to be the ones obtaining this license, so I would insist and I know the former Council Member mentioned that you're going to be connecting with the community a little bit more but I'm pretty sure light and NYPD presence are really good but there are so much other

things that could be added to this to address those concerns for the community.

JODI STEIN: We're really open to having those discussions.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

JODI STEIN: Continuing that.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: What are the anticipated impacts of the proposal and existing small businesses in the surrounding area?

JODI STEIN: I'm sorry, can you repeat that?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: What are the anticipated impacts of the proposal on existing small businesses in the surrounding area?

JODI STEIN: Robert, do you want to -

ROBERT CORNEGY: So, we anticipate that those impacts will be improved. One, because we've already stated how to provide parking for customers and local businesses but also, we're prepared to drive customers out into the community with incentives as well. So, we know that characteristically its been stated that people insulate themselves in these kind of developments. We're prepared and ready and coming up with a streets strategic and plans to drive

customers of the Coney back into the community with incentives.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. I'm going to yield to Council Member Brannan to ask his lines of questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you Chair. I had one first question. The onsite improvements with adding the traffic lane on West 12th. Do you have renderings of that?

JODI STEIN: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Do you have it with you?

JODI STEIN: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Is it in the package?

JODI STEIN: Yeah, I think probably the best or maybe the vehicular circulations. It's a little hard to see but on the vehicular circulation page 26.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Yeah.

JODI STEIN: You can see a 4th lane. There's three lanes at the on the right side of the pink arrow is a fourth lane.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay. I'd like if you could do an actual rendering of that, I'd like to see it. It's hard to visualize.

JODI STEIN: No problem. Can you tell us to date how much money have you invested in the community in terms of talk a little bit about how the team is engaged with local residents and community stakeholders and thus far, have any changes been made to the proposal in response to feedback that you've heard?

ROBERT CORNEGY: Changes but - so I don't have a number, a monetary number but I can tell you that we have been for the last two years instituting the programs that the community has demanded and those have primarily been for young people and for seniors. So, when I asked over these two years, how they'd like to see - what improvements they'd like to see prior to the RFA, it has been programs for young people and we've spent summer after summer and some winters instituting programs primarily around sports right because anybody who knows Coney Island knows that it's a sports hub and has been especially for basketball and volleyball and baseball. We've actually listened to the community and only did and instituted programs that the community demanded over this two year, three year period.

If you'd like me to get back to you Council Member on an actual number, I can get you the actual number.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Yeah, that would be helpful, yeah.

ROBERT CORNEGY: But I can tell you that it's significant.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Can you talk to some of the changes that have been made based on the feedback you heard over the past two years?

JODI STEIN: Yeah, so with regard to some of the changes, we have been working with I would say - we've been listening to the community as well as to the agencies for two years. We have had many, many, many - I know Sara has worked on all of the iterations of this plan. I believe you've seen some of them where you know we've had two hotel towers. We've had one hotel tower; we've had hotel towers on one side and other side. We've had many iterations and we've had parking, we've had less parking, we've had more parking, we've had bridges that had no vehicles going over them. We've had vehicles going throughout the site, so there have been many iterations but it's been quite a lot. We've spent a

lot of time with many different versions of this project to get to where we are, especially as you - I'm sure you know working with DOT to get to a place where you know everything works between the pedestrians and vehicles and for the community and the views in particular.

ROBERT CORNEGY: I think it's also important to note that we listen to the community and the small businesses who operate those three months out of the year and have provided based on the campus the ability for them to be incorporated going forward to operate 12 months out of the year. So, if you look at you know the design, the casino is not on the first floor for two reasons primarily. One is, we don't want young people to be able to walk in off the street, so as a security measure but also we'd like that first floor to be able to incorporate those businesses who only find themselves able to operate. If they would like to be incorporated in the project and I think we arrived at that after constant conversations with those attractions operators and with the community wanting to make sure that there was some authenticity in the project by allowing them to be incorporated if they saw fit.

JODI STEIN: The very outward leavy thing project with retail surrounding pretty much every side of the project to try and bring people through the project, to the entertainment district and to the beach and boardwalk.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: So, with your immediate neighbors there, the Cyclone, the Wonder Wheel and Coney Island USA, the side show, are they all supportive of the casino?

ROBERT CORNEGY: No, everybody hasn't been supportive of the project but when you think about the holistic way that casinos operate these days and you have to your left the aquarium and to your right the stadium, it's actually becoming incredibly more family friendly as a venue right? And so, we're talking primarily about the casino but there's also a 500 key hotel. There's also a world class entertainment venue that's incorporated in the project, so the casino is a portion of it and you can't get around to speaking about it but incorporating into the fabric of Coney Island, where you have the ballpark and the aquarium, that's much more family friendly all of these other rides and attractions, makes it actually -

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Do the Aquarium and Cyclone folks support it?

JODI STEIN: Peter McEnaney would like to -

PETER MCENANEY: Yeah, I think the Aquarium is supportive. Many times with our neighbors just as you know and we are working hard to -

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Sorry, real quick everyone, we're going to get your time to give your testimony. We just want to have them testify. If you want to do a rebuttal, do it during your testimony please. Okay. Thank you so much Council Member Brannan.

PETER MCENANEY: I would just say as direct neighbors, we've spent a lot of time over the last few years as Jodi and Sara mentioned, trying to iterate the plan to accommodate them and make them happy and create a year around destination so and our commitment is to continue that conversation through the CAC process and try and make changes and things that would bring them in support of the project.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: So, you're actively still trying?

PETER MCENANEY: Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay and let's talk about your specific commitments regarding local

1 hiring, both for the construction phase and for
2 permanent jobs. Coney Island is seeing a lot of
3 development right now housing, which we're happy
4 about but a lot of those jobs do not go to local
5 folks. So, what is your commitment to ensuring that
6 if this were to pass and go through that the
7 opportunities would actually reach Coney Island
8 residents first?

9
10 PETER MCENANEY: Yeah, no -

11 ROBERT CORNEGY: Well, our partnership with
12 organizations like the Regional Alliance for Small
13 Contractors who has done tremendous work around the
14 airports and incorporating resident - local residents
15 from the airport. So, we're not doing this on our
16 own. We've gone and gotten partnered with the best
17 and the brightest around hires and workforce
18 development to ensure that the local residents
19 specifically NYCHA are included in the project job
20 wise.

21 PETER MCENANEY: I would say in addition, we've
22 partnered with local community colleges and really
23 the goal is here both on the construction union jobs
24 right getting tradesmen's the training they need and
25 having small subcontractors that are able to be

bonded so they can do large scale projects. We partners with the K Mike group to create a framework and a plan for how you kind of get small subcontractors capacity and bonding capacity so that they can do larger scale projects and our goal is to meet and exceed the state mandated goals for MWBE participation on the construction. And then what's more important is the career opportunities right in the facility, both hotel, security, gaming related, F&B related opportunities and a big focus for us is like the biggest need in Coney Island today is the NYCHA housing that's there.

How do you penetrate that? And that's not something that anybody's been able to solve over however many years but creating programs and partnering with local stakeholders to create those programs is something that we're ambitiously trying to accomplish.

ROBERT CORNEGY: You know it's very difficult to go into detail here because this is a very competitive project, a process and so while we're submitting what our plans are, there are people watching who are also submitting plans. So, I would and the team would love to go as deeply as possible

on what we've done but this is a very competitive process.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: So, when would we see - I mean just being honest \$200 million is peanuts to how much money you guys would stand to make. When will we see the full community benefit plan?

PETER MCENANEY: That will all be part of the state application absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay, because I don't see any I mean I would at least need to see actual dollar signs put next to investments in NYCHA repairs, actual dollar signs next to money for gambling addiction, like this is not going to cut it.

PETER MCENANEY: No we appreciate the feedback and we look forward to working with you guys through this CAC process in meeting those needs.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Uhm, and can you I guess is the biggest, I mean the biggest changes I've seen aside from the towers you know and moving them or whatever it may be but the biggest change I have seen in response to feedback has been the - you know how the proposal will handle an increase in traffic. Because right now, basically West 16th Street is basically how you get into Coney Island and it's a

private street right. Has that been the biggest area where you've made changes to the proposal?

JODI STEIN: We have our environmental engineer, traffic engineer from [INAUDIBLE 00:43:03].

UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah, changes to access have been substantial especially around Stillwell Avenue so that I think that was an update initial [INAUDIBLE 00:43:25] in the changes to the site plan to avoid the pedestrian conflict as vehicles entering and exiting to site.

Besides that, working with the New York City DOT through the process, there were geometric improvements to Surf Avenue, 17th Street and this was all within the constraints of the - of what's doable right now. There were - there are transit improvements that Jodi presented and that will have the maximum benefit in actually reducing the number of vehicles on the street but within the existing constraints, the fact is a lot of the vehicles coming down through Coney Island is to [INAUDIBLE 00:44:14] and therefore onto 17th Street and there were geometric improvement done to improve safety and vehicle circulation at 17th and Surf, Surf Avenue in

front of the site and then signal changes throughout the area to improve traffic circulation.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Uhm, I guess my last question would be, if you're not granted one of the licenses, how do you see the future of this site and the parcels that are currently owned?

Actually, two questions Peter. Number one would be if the demapping is denied, is there an alternative proposal where you would still go forward with the casino and then if you don't win the license, if everything goes through but you don't win the license, what is the plan B?

PETER MCENANEY: Yeah, I would say the answer to the first question is no from a synergy perspective in the campus. All four blocks need to be connected to create a viable development. And in terms of long term planes, we'd have to reevaluate and reassess the situation of the economic viability of development. You know however, you know the challenges there. I mean the seasonal nature of Coney Island makes it very hard to do anything other than temporary uses in terms of short term leases on the site and that's been the challenges over the years and I don't see

any economic driver that would change that any time in the near future candidly.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay, I want to move on because we've got a lot of testimony today.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, so I just want to recognize Council Member Vernikov. Council Member Vernikov.

COUNCIL MEMBER VERNIKOV: Thank you very much Chair Riley, Chair Brannan and it's very nice to see a lot of familiar faces here, so. Good morning. Although this casino is proposed to be constructed outside the boundaries of my district, I must make something abundantly clear. My constituents will absolutely be effected by its construction and they have been extremely vocal about their opposition to this project. Our residents are rightfully concerned about increased crime, traffic congestion, lack of parking, plummeting property values and other obvious quality of life issues that come with placing a 24/7 gambling hub blocks away from working class families. For those reasons, I vehemently oppose the Coney Island Casino and I will continue to do everything in my power to ensure this plan does not move forward. As elected officials our most basic duty is to

represent our constituents. My interests do not align with the developers who hope to profit off the back of this neighborhood. We would be derelict in our duty as representatives if we let a flashy proposal move forward without answering the communities most basic concerns. Coney Island would certainly benefit from development but the community deserves responsible development. Not a casino that will change the communities character forever. I have made a commitment two months ago to vote yes on every casino outside my district and I did just that yesterday when I voted in favor of a homeroom message that would open a door to a casino in the Bronx.

I also voted yes on a casino that will be built in Queens. His is not about ideology. This is about representing the will of my constituents. They have clearly stated that they don't want the Coney and I will always stand with them. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No clapping please, thank you. You guys are excused. Thank you so much. Counsel, are there any members of the public who wish to testify remotely or in person regarding this proposal?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes Chair. We have approximately 40 in person witnesses registered to testify with us and approximately 15 registered standing by online.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. For members of the public here to testify, please note that witnesses will generally be called up in panels of four. If you are a member of the public signed up to testify on this proposal, please stand by when you hear your name being called and prepare to speak when I indicate that you may begin.

Please also note that once all panelists in your group have completed their testimony, you will be excused as a group, and the next group of speakers will be introduced. Once removed, participants may continue to view the livestream broadcast of his hearing on the Council's website.

Members of the public will be given two minutes to speak. Please do not begin until the Sergeant at Arms has started the clock, once you hear the clock has went off, please complete your remarks within 10 seconds, okay. Thank you. You will be given two minutes to speak, you hear the clock go off, 10 seconds to wrap it up. Got it? Alright.

The following individuals who signed up to testify will come up soon. I will also like to make an announcement regarding the public testimony portion of this meeting. For the benefit of the viewing public and those who may be watching and waiting for a turn to testify remotely, we are going to first hear the testimony here in the room and then we will start to take online testimony.

At the point and time we don't estimate getting to online testimony until approximately 2 p.m.. As always we will make every effort to hear testimony from everyone who has signed up and we thank you for your patience and participation.

And first, we are going to start with Randy Levine. If Mr. Levine is here, can you please approach the witness table? You may begin.

RANDY LEVINE: Good morning everybody. Good morning Mr. Chairman, good morning Councilman. It's great to be here with you. My name is Randy Levine. I'm the President of the New York Yankees and I'm also a board member of Legends Hospitality, which is a partner in this venture.

Let me tell you a little bit about Legends Hospitality. Legends Hospitality was started by the

New York Yankees and the Dallas Cowboys about 15 years ago and today, it's one of the leading venue operators if not the leading venue operator and hospitality company in the world.

Why is that important? Because whenever we put the Yankee name to something, we insist that's complete excellence and we back up what we do. We got into this project. We don't know how to run casinos and we have nothing to do with running the casinos. The partner who will run the casino is one of the experts in doing so but we know how to manage hospitality. We know how to make big venues come alive and we know how to do things right. And you know I used to be in government for a lot of years and sit in these rooms and hear, including here today, what everybody is going to do. What are we going to do? Well, the way you got to look at it is what have you done in New York City? Have you measured up and when you take a look at legends record, the answer is 100 percent in everything that we do and I'm going to go through a little of it because it's going to lend in my opinion credibility to this. Now, I'm not here -

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Randy. Thank you.
Is there any questions for this panel?

RANDY LEVINE: It's only two minutes?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, it's only two minutes
Randy. Thank you so much. We're going to move on to
the next panel, which consists of Charlene Davis,
Angela Kravichenko, Yelena Makhuu, and Lucy Mujica
Diaz. If you hear your name, please come up to the
podium. Also, I will ask members of the public here
in person that after you present your testimony and
you are excused from your panel, if you are not
leaving the hearing, please move the overflow room
next door where this hearing is streaming. This will
allow people to come into the room that have to
testify still and I will remind members of the public
that they can always submit their testimony online at
landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov for up to 72 hours
after this public hearing.

We'll begin first with Charlene Davis. Ms.
Davis, can you just turn on that mic for me please
and just put the mic down a little lower? Thank you.
The Sergeant is going to help you out.

CHARLENE DAVIS: Okay, hello everyone. Can you
hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, we can hear you Ms. Davis go ahead.

CHARLENE DAVIS: My name is Charlene Davis as you have been told. I live in Coney Island and I'm very concerned about what's going on with the casino. I am not for the casino and my reasoning being not for the casino, is because I'm someone that's in a wheelchair that uses oxygen. I know what it's like when we have the 4th of July in Coney Island. I've had several people in that area have to have an emergency situation where the ambulance and the police department cannot get through. Coney Island does have three months in a year where it's very crowded and they're stating that this casino is supposed to be something that's all year round. I'm afraid for myself to be able to travel in the area and stuff because anyone can rob me, take money from me, even if I was to go to the casino and win some money. Someone can follow me. It's not conducive. The transportation issue is also a problem. Also, with them talking about the money that they're supposed to be giving to the community, like Justin Brannan said, it's peanuts. When they're talking about speaking with the community in reference to

getting jobs and stuff, they need to realize Coney Island is more than just the projects.

I don't live in the projects; I live in a townhouse. I have a son who has been looking for a job and a lot of times when you go online, they say that you must be a resident of Coney Island on NYCHA. We don't live in NYCHA. They need to speak with everyone. Even when I go to meetings and stuff and I go to panels and stuff, I don't see anybody on that panel or on their panel that look like me, that's in a wheelchair. That has to depend on oxygen. That has different things.

When you're talking about putting people on a committee and stuff, you must represent everybody in that Committee. Every time I go somewhere, it's like I said, I want to see someone on these Committees that look like myself.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Ms. Davis. Next, we're going to hear from Angela Kravchenko. I'm sorry if I mispronounced your name.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Kravchenko.

ANGELA KRAVCHENKO: Hello?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, we can hear you. Go ahead.

ANGELA KRAVCHENKO: Good afternoon and thank you for welcoming us today and listening. So, I would like to talk about the mapping aspect of this proposal. So, we've been shown that the developers is asking for two small parts of the street but in reality, they're taking more than that.

If you wouldn't have the map, the renderance anymore but you will see that they essentially taken West 12th Street as the access to the parking garage. So, there will be no way to park the car so it goes away from the community. They also turn on Stillwell Avenue to the pedestrian Street, which is good except that's the pedestrian street that serves as an access to the beach. Now, they have to go through the casino tunnel, so that's the access to the casino and everybody who gets on the train, which is most of the people coming to Coney Island, they're going through the casino to get to the public beach.

Okay, the third one, buses. West 15 is taken for the buses, so again, community loses there as well. What else about this casino proposal? So, Coney Island is a special district. It's a historical district. Historically nothing is built higher than [INAUDIBLE 00:57:53]. So, when you see in the

pictures, so the towers stick out as high as two pressure gems stuck on top of each other, that's 42 story tall hotel. Nothing as tall as this hotel exist right now in Coney Island. It's a send; we're a flood zone. There is a reason for it.

So the third thing; so when the study was done, saying that there will be gridlock because 30,000 people every day, it's a lot of people. Thank you so much

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Angela. Next, Yelena.

YELENA MAKHUU: Good afternoon. Thank you for hearing us. I was about to speak about the devastating effect of this proposal but I believe you all Committee Members, to the Council Members, so the proposal is not only flash a picture. I believe all of you read more than 100 pages in environmental impact statement proposed by the same developer, not for the public. Where each and every page, where each and every word and each and every comma screams disaster.

Because talking about 1,500 cars parking garage, not even talking about what they all themselves involves more than 1,000 cars that should look for

parking. It's kind of - but I'm very happy to see former councilman Danny Dromm because I remember very well 2009, when he was part of Coney Island rezoning and I stood next to him advocating for rezoning and I remember the same [INAUDIBLE 00:59:56] promising a rose garden for community if this rezoning approved. Nothing was done. They don't hear Plan D as of now. So, you represent people and you all were elected by people to represent our interests. Please read Environmental Impact Study and you would really understand what kind of disaster they want to bring to Coney Island.

Second, even though it's not the licensing process but by approving demapping you are giving the more chance to get a license. Don't let us down. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Lucy?

LUCY MUJICA DIAZ: Lucy Mujica Diaz. Thank you for the opportunity for allowing me to submit my testimony. I like to speak from my heart about the demapping of building a casino in our district which would effect our residents. I trust that the rest of my team will give you the facts about demapping. So, I will focus on emotion and community impact. First

let me say it's disgusting that they don't have a Plan B. [INAUDIBLE 01:01:16] has been here in this community for over 20 years. I will walk with you to show you every vacant lot that he has abandoned and has not built anything. They have given to the community free turkeys. Our Council Members give free turkey. Thank you very much. They have given Christmas gifts. I thank you very much but they started that two years ago. Two years ago when they wanted to start this project. So, again it is disgusting that you do not have a Plan B and I have brought that to their attention over and over again, so they will leave that vacant lot abandoned and you can't tell me you care for the community if that's what you're telling me in the same sentence. That's impossible. 30,000 people will enter our community every day, that's insane. Let's talk about housing. New York City housing people are not the only residents there. I live there. I'm a homeowner. My taxes will be increased not tomorrow, not the next day but they will be increased. We have seniors that will not be able to pay those increases. We have people that they told us to get the American dream. We're not able to get the American dream. As Council

Member Justin Brannan said the other day, people are moving out of New York. They're struggling in New York. You're going to abandon us and make us move out. Schools a failure in our district. 18 year olds can enter the casino and gamble and what they're going to do tomorrow, if you're failing a school, they're going to mug that person that's walking down the street and we're going to have more violence in our community. \$200 million, that's a drop in the bucket. I'd pee that out if I had it okay. Union jobs, union jobs are going to be given everywhere. Whatever casino is built. Let's be blunt, low income communities and let's be honest, let me finish this sentence please. Uh, we will not -I'll end it there and I submitted my testimony online as well.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Lucy. Just Council Member Brannan, hold on one second. Council Member Brannan?

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Any of you guys on the panel could take it. I guess is there something that if you saw it in their proposal or something that you feel is missing from their proposal, that if you saw it, whether it was more money or specific investments in something, is there something that - let me just

finish. Is there something that if you saw it, you would feel differently or you'd be more open to it? Whoever wants to answer. Just speak on the mic please.

LUCY MUJICA DIAZ: Absolutely not because it's really inappropriate to bring casino to an already crowded residential area you know, I's already crowded, number one. And I commend you for speaking about opportunities and economic development in Coney Island but it breaks my heart to hear this casino is the only opportunity for economic growth. Not incubated for businesses, not more schools, not trade school, not some job incubator, casino. I'm really sorry, nothing can change this community mind because casino and gambling facilities do not belong to residential area, especially middle and low income. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Anyone else want to answer they can.

YELENA MAKHUU: I would like to say that Coney Island community has 50 percent of population, leaving under \$35,000 per year. It's like very low. I think it's like maybe one of the lowest, so but that's category of people most susceptible to the

gambling addiction. It's a big issue in our area, so I wouldn't support casino because of the gambling component to begin with. I don't think it's right for our community. We're residential and we want to keep our family places. We want to keep our beach, our open streets for the communities and we welcome any other economic opportunities, trade schools, environmental study groups, anything that could go there. Thank you.

ANGELA KRAVCHENKO: May I respond?

CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Sure.

ANGELA KRAVCHENKO: Thank you Council Member for allowing us to respond to your questions. I don't care if they give me a billion dollars, not me personally but they give the community. Let's be realistic, they've already made it perfectly clear to you today, that if they don't get this casino, they don't care about what Plan B is. \$1 billion is not - it's never going to be guaranteed money. Anyone that owns a business don't know if any of you on the panel have owned businesses or if anyone here has owned businesses, you can never guarantee anyone that that same income will be reversed over and over again. So to tell us you're giving me a one shot deal like it

clearly shows that you can no - as I said, no one can guarantee that you will continue to give us resources in finance - in a financial way, sorry. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you.

CHARLENE DAVIS: I would like one thing that could have been in there when they were speaking is that they could have spoke about other things that could help the community. I feel that they're being greedy because the community needs so many other things that these developers could help with getting us because they have the money to do so with. With leaving property rotting and go back, that's showing the community right that you don't care about us. You don't care about the community. They could reach out to you Justin Brannan and sit down with you because I'm quite sure a lot of your constituents has voiced their opinions about things that we need in the community that we really could use, that everyone could use. Not just adults but kids as well and young adults as well.

I would like to see them be willing to develop things in the community that would help the community as a whole and for everyone.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you. Thank you all very much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. The next panel I'm going to call up consists of Melissa Gliatta, Julia Daniely, Deborah Carter and James Kinard. If you hear your name, please come up to the podium. Thank you.

Okay, first, we're going to hear from James Kinard.

JAMES KINARD: Good morning. I see nothing but a plus here for the community. The outreach of some - somebody's trying to help the community. To build things and to make more jobs is nothing but a good thing for us. I don't see where we should not grant the application. It's nothing but - it's something that we need. There's a lot of grounds over there that need development and this neighborhood can use it. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Whoever wants to go next.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Next, uh Deborah. Next, we're going to have Deborah Carter.

DEBORAH CARTER: Hello, I'm Deborah Carter. I'm a resident leader, Gravesend Houses New York City

Housing Authority, NYCHA and I want to say we are the least in the community to get anything that comes into our community. We are the least on the totem pole. We are not called projects. We are called developments. It's a big change in our community and I would like to say that yes, I am for the casino. I think that we have sat down with the Coney and we have talked about bringing in apprenticeship programs and talking with our community. They have been very nice to our communities. We had the opportunity to sit with them and talk with them. Now, the other ones that the other panels that was here, I didn't see them come to the board, come with us to sit down and speak. Collectively we could have sat down and we could have talked and we could have all talked to the community, to the Coney and come up with great ideas but unfortunately, we have been threatened, we have been talked about. I mean there were so many things that have come against us because we say yes to the casino and I will continue on saying yes to the casino. It's going to bring jobs for us. It's going to bring jobs and to sit here and say that robbery and things like that. People can go to the casino, do whatever they want to do. They have

options to go in. You have an option whether you want to go gamble or you don't gamble but it's up to you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Ms. Carter. Next, we're going to hear from Ronald Stewart. Oh, Ms. Carter, you could sit right there. Sorry Ms. Carter. I'm sorry, not Ronald Julia Daniely, sorry.

JULIA DANIELY: Good afternoon everyone. My name is Julia Daniely, I'm a lifelong resident of Carey Gardens, a former resident leader. I'm an Executive Director to my own nonprofit organization called [INAUDIBLE 01:11:42] and I'm here to say yes to the Coney.

If we look around, a lot of young people need jobs and if you're going to be a gambler, if you're going to be an alcoholic, if you're going to do, you're going to do it whether you're in Coney Island or in Beverly Hills. Let's stop that. It's a choice, that's one. Number two, let's talk about the overhead. We've had that walkway on West 8th Street that was taken down that was so nice to walk through. They could have made it over. We're going to have the opportunity to get a walk through back again. That's going to be great like off the train, right

1 into the boardwalk. You know all of that is nice.
2 The lights are beautiful but the jobs, the convention
3 center, we have amphitheater that gives us no ample
4 time okay. The convention center is going to be
5 there. The hotel, people come. Coney Island had a
6 casino already like I don't understand. That was
7 there before. If this is the peoples playground,
8 then let's make it a real peoples playground. It can
9 never be Atlantic City; it's only one casino. We're
10 not going to be thrown out of NYCHA development
11 because we have a casino a few blocks away. They are
12 not putting us out. I don't know who ever came up
13 with that idea. I live in NYCHA, I don't want to get
14 put out. You think I'm going to like a casino if
15 they're going to put me out? Like, are you serious?
16 So, I've lived on both ends of the spectrum with a
17 wheelchair because I was walking until a year and a
18 half ago and now I'm in a wheelchair, so I've
19 experienced both.

21 And if they're going to rob me, they're going to
22 rob me anyway whether I mean, people do what people
23 want to do but the jobs are great. I talk to a lot
24 of young people. I have a lot of young men. People
25 don't come to these hearings because they don't want

to go through the nonsense. That's what we go through and jobs are going to be made available and that's a good thing. That's a good thing.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Julia. Next, we're going to hear from go ahead.

MELISSA GLIATTA: Melissa.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead, yeah go ahead Melissa.

MELISSA GLIATTA: Thanks. Hi, I'm Melissa Gliatta and I'm here today because I believe deeply in the future of Brooklyn and I believe our project has the power to truly transform the Coney Island community in a way that's long overdue and profoundly deserved. For 30 years, I've proudly been a part of the Thor Equities Family. A long term stakeholder in Coney Island. Thor has believed in this community for decades, investing here when others looked away and holding on to a vision for what this neighborhood could become.

In that time, I've seen the resilience, pride and potential of Coney Island's residents but I've also seen the challenges. The chronic underinvestment and limited economic opportunities. What South Brooklyn needs now is a bold, lasting investment. It needs

opportunity that is built to stay, to grow and to uplift. Our development does just that. We're proposing a creation of nearly 4,500 union construction jobs and 4,000 permanent family sustaining careers in hospitality and gaming. These aren't just jobs. They are real career pathways with strong wages benefits protection and room to grow. We're prioritizing local hiring especially for the Coney Island residents and hosting job fairs directly in the communities that have been overlooked. We are committed to giving people a fair shot close to home and we're equally committed to supporting small, minority, and women owned businesses by giving them the resources that they need to thrive.

In summary, with this project, we have the opportunity to revitalize Coney Island and bring year around economic activity to a place full of history, heart and potential. We have a once and a generation chance to deliver meaningful, lasting change and now is the time to invest where it will matter most. Thank you so much for your time.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. There being no questions, this panel is excused. Next, we're going

to hear from Erika Ulcenat, Ronald Stewart, Feanny Hernandez and Marissa Soloman.

And please remember if you testify, can you please go over to the flow room, because we have other people that need to testify and have to come sit in this room. We'll begin first with Erika followed by Ronald followed by Feanny followed by Marissa. Jennie? I didn't call Jennie. I have a Feanny Hernandez.

UNIDENTIFIED: It's Jeanny.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: It's Jeanny, oh it's probably the way it was written. Okay, sorry Ms. Hernandez. So, we're going to have Erika followed by Ronald followed by Jeanny followed by Marissa. Erika?

ERIKA ULCENAT: Right here.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes.

ERIKA ULCENAT: Hello?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, go ahead.

ERIKA ULCENAT: Hi, good afternoon. MY name is Erika Ulcenat. I am a TA President of Carey Gardens. I also sit on the Board of Carey Gardens Community Center and the Board for FCC Center. I'm Coney Island born and raised. I'm definitely opposed to the casino. I believe it will be a burden traffic

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 69
2 wise; it's already congested in Coney Island from the
3 Stadium, from the amphitheater. They also moved the
4 uh welfare building onto Mermaid Avenue which even
5 made it more congested and when there's a game in
6 Coney Island, it will take you 30 minutes to get
7 through 37th Street to West 8th Street. It's
8 congested and it's not a good idea.

9 Also, I believe that the crime rate will go up.
10 We already deal with a lot of drug issues in Coney
11 Island. I don't believe it will be a good idea and I
12 definitely oppose.

13 RONALD STEWART: Yeah, thank you for taking our
14 messages here today. My name is Ronald Stewart; I'm
15 a lifelong member of Coney Island. My mother and a
16 group of other mothers fought for all the housing
17 that you see on the west end so we can have a descent
18 and a safe place to live. This plan, this demapping
19 plan, it's going to be a disaster. We already as
20 Erika has said, we deal with congestion all the time.
21 Not just when this thing is going to be built but
22 every day. In fact yesterday, I was uh, I couldn't
23 get home because there was so many cars on Neptune
24 Avenue. So, this is - it's a safety issue and that's
25 number one for me. I don't care if they offer us one

1 billion dollars. Safety is number one and we have to
2 maintain that.

3
4 People call Coney Island the playground of the
5 world. The people in my end of Coney Island, we're
6 not playing. This is not a play thing for us. We're
7 very serious and they are offering our young people;
8 you know I talked to our young people and I watch
9 some of our adults. You don't talk to them. You
10 walk by them. You're afraid of them. They look
11 scary to you but I talk to them. When they see me
12 they say there's brother Ron, put your guns away.
13 Put your dope away. They respect me and they want
14 jobs of course but you know what the more that they
15 want, they want hope. They want a sense of a future
16 for themselves because the job is limited, and this
17 is why we look for the City Council for economic
18 development. We look to the City Council for
19 revitalization. That's what we support the City
20 Council and vote for them. That's what we're looking
21 for. I just - my great grandson just graduated from
22 PS 90 yesterday. He said, grandpa, he called me
23 papa. He said, "what am I going to be doing soon?"
24 And I said, "we're going to take care of you because
25 we love you."

So, this is the thing that we're concerned about.

JEANNY HERNANDEZ: Hello. So, good afternoon, my name is Jeanny Hernandez. I am a long time resident of Coney Island. Basically grew up here. I grew up in Coney Island. It is my home as to many others. Today, I'm here to ask the Subcommittee of Zoning and Franchises to reject the demapping of our streets. Those streets belong to the people, not for predatory developers looking to line their pockets. Traffic is a major issue in Coney Island. How will emergency vehicles be able to enter or exit the area with the anticipated influx of over 23,000 visitors that it will bring each day, right?

What is now a seasonal threat will become a year round threat. I suffer from several health conditions and I am extremely concerned for my safety and that of my neighbors that live just as one - you know one block away from where this casino will be.

This situation is the lasting we need. Our wellbeing should be top priority. Coney Island is not just a tourist site. It is a home to many families. We must prioritize the residents of Coney Island. Families first, children first, seniors first, and individuals with disability first. This

demapping along with the associated casino project will only create chaos in our community. Really quick in Spanish, [01:21:01]- [01:21:05].

Thank you and I hope my testimony will be taken seriously and considered.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Before you go, the next panel I'm going to call up consists of Donna McMammon, Joseph Packer, Camille Hastick and Marie Mirville-Shahzada. Go ahead. That's the next panel.

MARISSA SOLOMAN: Marissa Soloman, Coney Island born and raised. We've been told that approving the demapping for the casino would just be letting the process play out for the casino license but let's be clear, letting the process play out would mean that the developer Joe Sitt applies for the casino license for the property he currently owns.

What you are being asked to do here today, however, is to give away, hand over for free the public streets in Coney Island to Joe Sitt. To hand over the property that is owned by all New Yorkers, so that he can replace half the current amusement area with his 40 story casino towers. Taking away the streets and even the skies and sunshine from millions of every day New Yorkers. What you are

being asked to do is expropriate and steal the value created by other existing long term business owners and residents and put that value into the pocket of this one billionaire developer. Voting to approve the demapping would amount to a multimillion dollar welfare payment to this multibillionaire. Today, we are submitting over 10,000 signatures on our petition against the demapping and the casino. These are people from all across Coney Island, across Brooklyn and from every city council district in New York. Coney Island, the peoples playground belongs to all the people of New York. It is not for the City Council to just give away the public streets in Coney Island to this billionaire developer.

We have been emailing and informing these thousands of New Yorkers who have signed a petition about this process and who have been voting to save Coney Island and who is voting to give it away. The members of the City Council should not give member deference on this issue. People are not going to except the excuse of hiding behind member deference. They won't care about that. They will care and will want to know which City Council members voted to save Coney Island and who voted to give the peoples

1 playground away. Make no mistake, Coney Island
2 belongs to all New Yorkers. Don't erase the Coney
3 Island that has been loved by New Yorkers for over
4 150 years. And in my remaining time, I live right
5 across the street from where they want to put this.
6 The casino developers have never once done any
7 outreach to anywhere, anybody where I live. So, when
8 they tell you that, that's a lie. They're going to
9 people that live a mile, two miles away and the
10 people that live right across the street, they're
11 trying to ignore us but they're not going to be able
12 to because we're too loud. We're from Coney Island.
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Council Member
15 Brannan.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Just a question and you
17 can answer and then if anyone else wants to answer.
18 It's the same question I asked the other panel. Are
19 there things that you believe are missing from their
20 proposal or things that would make you consider the
21 proposal if you saw it? Whether it was a further
22 commitment to jobs or more money? Is there anything
23 like that that you would say, I'm willing to listen
24 more?
25

RONALD STEWART: The proposal that has been presented to the community, to Coney Island, it does not efficiently and cover everything that is needed, for Coney Island. You mentioned Councilman that \$200 million is peanuts. You cannot have that. We need revitalization as I was growing up in Coney Island up and down Mermaid Avenue and some of you that are sitting here, you remember when Mermaid Avenue there were stores and mom and pop businesses. These are the things that we need. We don't need a big corporation to come in that has no plan for us if they don't get it. Those are dreams. You know I grew up and I watched all kind of developers come here and make grand promises unfulfilled dreams for us and have given us nothing. That's why we're here today. So, there's nothing in their councilman that would change anything. I think it has to come from the people. The people of Coney Island need to sit down. I think Deborah said, we need to sit down not with casino people, not with corporation, we need to sit down and deal without representatives and put together something like they did up in northern New York and White Planes and Yonkers. They put together an enterprise zone. They didn't wait for a casino.

This is what we need to do but there's nothing in there right now that can give us that kind of hope and future.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Got it. Anyone else?

JEANNY HERNANDEZ: Yeah, the way I would answer that question is how much would you pay to build over central park and put a casino or build over Prospect Park and put a casino. This area in Coney Island where the amusement area is, that's our central park. That's our open area. That's where the working people of this city go to and when they say, oh we need to make this a year around destination, a year around economy, well I live there year around. The stores I shop in are year around. It's not like we disappear in the winter time but with this casino, we might disappear because nobody is going to want to live next to this 24 hour a day casino and if you put it there, the people who can afford to move will move away. The money they spend in local stores will move with them. Those stores will lay off people and they will close and this is exactly what happened in Atlantic City. Atlantic City does not even have their own supermarket today and we don't want that to happen in Coney Island. This is a residential area.

There are businesses that have been there for decades. This has been an amusement area for 150 years. It's Coney Island. It is not Casino Island and that is what it will become if you give away the public street of our neighborhood.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Anyone else? Yeah.

ERIKA ULCENAT: Yes, I'd like to speak as a mother as well, I do not want a casino at close proximity of our children, my daughter. There's a school a block away from the potential casino site, so as a mother, I don't want this at all. I don't want this for my daughter. I don't want this for the children of Coney Island. I think the youth of Coney Island deserve more and they deserve better. Better than this casinos proposing.

MARISSA SOLOMAN: For me, it's the congestion as I spoke about before.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: The traffic?

MARISSA SOLOMAN: The traffic. It's too crowded. There's no where for them to go. When there's an event at that ballpark or the amphitheater -

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

MARISSA SOLOMAN: The traffic is from 37th all the way to - it's too much.

ERIKA ULCENAT: You got three streets.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you everybody.
Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we're going to hear from Donna McMammon, Joseph Packer, Camille Hastick and Marie Mirville-Shahzada. The following panel after that will consist of Daisy O'Mallie, Shhhh, please. Edward Munie, Kovichi Chirayangi, and Aidan Halootian. That will be the following panel.

We'll begin first with Donna followed by Joseph followed by Camille followed by Marie.

DONNA MCMAMMON: Good afternoon Council Members.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Just make sure your mics on.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Good afternoon. Press the -
thank you.

DONNA MCMAMMON: Good afternoon everyone.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Good afternoon.

DONNA MCMAMMON: It's a pleasure being here today. Just to voice my opinion. My name is Donna McMammon and I'm a proud hospitality worker and a member of the hotel and gaming trade council.

I am here on behalf of my union to testify in support of Coney. This project will transform and

already an area into a world class casino, create opportunities for economic development, affordable housing, and high quality hospitality jobs like mine. No more now ever our city and Brooklyn especially needs an economic boost. The Coney has the potential to improve the quality of life for thousands of people who live and work in South Brooklyn.

I urge you to vote yes on this application.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you.

DONNA MCMAMMON: You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Joseph?

JOSEPH PACKER: First of all, let me just say that I appreciate the Coney because Coney has been honest brokers in this process, so and productive listeners, so I just want to get that out of the way. I'm going to read my statement real quick. As a lifelong resident of Coney Island and an active community advocate for over five decades. I'm compelled to express my enthusiastic support for the Coney Project. This transformative initiative holds immense promise for our community offering a myriad of benefits that are urgently needed. Coney Island faces significant challenges from traffic congestion during the summer months to an aging infrastructure

that requires immediate attention. These issues have long hindered our communities potential for growth and prosperity. The Coney project presents a crucial opportunity to address these challenges head on with substantial private investment. The project projected billions of dollars in private funding would not only revitalize our infrastructure and to roads, our boardwalk, the bridges, subways and ferries but also create a wealth of job opportunities and job training programs for local residents. This infusion of resources will breath new life into our economy providing much needed support for our community based organizations and enhance in social service that are vital to our residents.

Furthermore, the investment in public education, which I am a teacher, after school programs and scholarships for college would empower our youth and prepare them for successful futures. As someone who has witnessed the struggles and aspirations about community first hand, I firmly believe that these investments are essential for our long term growth and prosperity.

In conclusion, the Coney Island project is not just an opportunity but a lifeline for Coney Island.

It represents a collaborative effort between project investors in our community to create substantial growth, improve quality of life, enforce a brighter future for generations to come. I urge all stakeholders to support this transformative initiative for the betterment of Coney Island, its residents, Brooklyn, New York City and the state at large.

CAMILLE HASTICK: Good afternoon Chair Riley and Council Member Brannan, corporate counsel and all the other members. My name is Camille Hastick, Vice President of External Affairs and Government Relations at the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. I am here on behalf of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce to provide testimony in support of the proposed project. The project will revitalize the economic engine in Brooklyn Coney Island. It will be a 1.4 square foot entertainment complex, thoughtfully designed to echo Coney Island's historic charm with 500 hotel rooms, 20 restaurants, a spa, fitness center, retail, recreation, and entertainment spaces, located at the corner of Surf and Stillwell Avenues directly across the street from the Coney Island Stillwell Avenue Subway Station.

The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce supports the proposed casino and entertainment complex in Coney Island. This project would guarantee significant investment in Coney Island and address things the community has been waiting for, including a year around economy that creates not just jobs but careers. Residents would have access to job training and access to union jobs with a living wage and benefits. This mixed use project will not only provide for employment and gaming industry, but with the inclusion of a world class hotel and indoor entertainment venue and additional retail, there will be multiple career opportunities for residents to access.

The project itself will serve as a compliment to already successful seasonal entertainment district and provide significant multiplier impact year round. The Coney has also promised to establish a \$200 million community trust that will be locally led to fund projects important to Coney Island. This project is a major game changer for Brooklyn. When we talk to our members, we hear repeatedly how important big anchor projects are to the entire local business community, injecting thousands upon

thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of investment into a community like Coney Island is exactly what we need now when the economy feels stagnant. Thank you.

MARIE MIRVILLE-SHAHZADA: Thank you. Good afternoon. Coney Island is a neighborhood that has been overlooked and under resourced for far too long. Our community desperately needs job training opportunities, youth and senior programs and economic initiatives that will sustain local businesses especially along Mermaid Avenue where shops struggle to keep their doors open from September to May during the low peak season.

Chairman you had asked, recently asked about improving conditions for local businesses. As a business owner and as a person who has a family business on Mermaid Avenue, I can tell you when the boardwalk or Surf Avenue has events, we do well. So, this project is - a project of this scale, would only multiply those opportunities for local entrepreneurs and storefronts.

As an executive Director of Alfadila Community Services, I have personally witnessed the Coney's commitment to Coney Island. Their team has supported

our organization and families we serve in countless ways, partnering with us with the Blue Bucket Trick or Treat event for children with autism, donating tablets to Carey Gardens Cornerstone, thanks to the advocacy of their former TA President Julia Danaly supporting volleyball programs for teenage girls and older women at 288 Heartshare, backing our women empowering initiatives, working directly with small, women business owners, leaders and advocates to help them grow and build capacity.

My biggest issue with this community that the naysayers - Coney Island is changing. There are developments building up all over Coney Island. Nobody says anything about them and those developments have nothing to offer Coney Island. One bedroom apartment is \$3,100. Do you think anyone in Coney Island can afford that? But yet, none of these people are complaining about that. So, thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you all very much. Thank you. I want to know where you got that zip up.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Next, we're going to hear from Daisy O'Mallie, Edward Munie, Kovichi - I'm sorry, I can't pronounce your last name, Chirayangi

and Aidan Halootian. We'll start with you Mr. Chirayangi.

KOVICHI CHIRAYANGI: Sure. Am I on?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, you're on.

KOVICHI CHIRAYANGI: Alright-

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Shhh.

KOVICHI CHIRAYANGI: First of all, for the Council Member who is on the Zoom, Francisco Moya, I am an alum of working for Congressman Brad Sherman and Francisco Moya is as well and so, you know it's good to be addressing a body that includes an alum from Shermania. I am a dad and I live on West 15th and Mermaid right a block away from the proposed site of the casino and I want to say that what you did not hear from the casino developers presentation, is what happens to the traffic overflow? When you approve this street demapping, what happens to the traffic overflow? Where do all the cars go? Because they say in their documents that they have 1,000, they're building 1,500 parking spaces and they're going to give - they're going to - in times when their parking lot isn't full, they're going to give businesses an ability to use their parking lot as some kind of community benefit.

What they don't say is in their presentation, is that in their document, they say that they're going to bring at least at the peak time, they're going to bring 2,500 vehicles to the neighborhood. So, where do the other thousand vehicles go? They're going to be driving around the neighborhood looking for parking because there's no parking as it is in our neighborhood. And I'm a father, I have a seven year old son and every morning at 8:00 in the morning, my son has to get to school. My son - I trust a contractor with the DOE to drive my son to school and I trust my contractor of the DOE to drive my son home. And when you have a development like this, that's going to bring 1,000 cars overflowing onto my - in front of my building. How is my son going to be able to get to school safely? That's what my question is.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear from Edward. Edward Munie? Do we have an Edward Munie? Okay next we'll hear from Daisy.

DAISY O'MALLIE: Hello?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, go ahead.

DAISY O'MALLIE: Yeah hi. I'm Daisy O'Mallie. I've been living here since 1977 and yeah, I know

what most of you think, I don't look my age. How many of you have actually physically been to resort out in Queens?

Now, you know for a fact that you have to walk in either direction away from the casino to get to either the Burger King or the Dunkin' Donuts. As for that Skywalk that's there, oh yeah, if you're coming from the train in the right direction, you get the sky walk. If you're coming from the train in the other direction, you're walking across that parking lot in all kinds of weather.

So, been there, done that, which is why resorts ended up losing a comic book convention because it was too hard to get to and there was no food. And even though it was a minor convention, we still got people. They said enough is enough, we're going back to Manhattan where there's more room and about 15 trains. Speaking of trains, DNFQ are always rerouted no matter what time of year. It's going to be a miracle that we're going to have an express, "express" into Coney Island on Mermaid Parade Day. Who got the idea that we're only three months a year? No, we go 24/7 365 especially during the polar bear plunge, especially on New Years Eve if we have

fireworks, especially if the hot dog contest, the Mermaid Parade, you name it, we have it. Fireworks every week, every Saturday starting like in a week and a half, we don't stop and as far as Mermaid Avenue, walk down there now. So many places have gone out of business including Major Meats. They were forced to give us their lease. There's nothing there.

So, what are we actually bringing because resorts is automated; you don't get Black Jack dealers, you don't get -

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

DAISY O'MALLIE: And you don't get cocktail waitresses. What's left?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Next, we'll hear from Aidan.

AIDAN HALOOTIAN: Hi Council. Good afternoon. My name is Aidan Halootian. I'm 19 years old and I am a resident of both Brooklyn and New York City. I'd like to state very plainly, this plan is not out of the prosperity or culture for Coney Island. This is a betrayal of the community and it's born of greed. I don't think anything else will show how vital this plan is then through equity standing outside this very building this morning, to show

support for the developed plan by paying people but I'll try anyway.

Everyone here knows that Coney Island is the beating heart of leisure and love in New York. It is a place that is woven into the city's identity since the 1900's. We are told today that this heritage will be bulldozed to the predatory silence of casinos. The developers through equities and its constituents promise prosperity but their vision will erase Coney Island's legacy. The Coney, which no one has been courageous enough to mention exactly by name today is a trojan horse. The research shows that urban casinos economic benefits are short lived and that social costs far outweigh tax contributions.

I have to skip through a whole bunch of stuff here. I'd like to call you out specifically Mr. Brannan. You once stood firmly against the casino. Your constituents on Community Board 13 have already rejected it and you are now saying you want to let this process play out. You are signaling that lobbyist whispers are more important than the communities voices. To use the peoples playground moniker when referring to our beautiful Coney Island, while these developers clearly state both your and

Council Member Riley's names in thanks at this meeting, suggest that you believe we are stupid. We are not. We will not be gaslit by the corporate entities who intend to buy you. For the Brooklyn Boroughs Presidents Office, you cannot demand a bigger investment from a project that will be a fundamental cancer on this communities wellbeing. To Thor equities and its correspondence, I'd like to firmly state that coming to this meeting without any actual data to support the monetary and social value you've brought to my community is insulting. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Do we have an Edward Munie here or Edward? Edward? Okay, thank you so much for your testimony and I just want to state for the record, nobody on this panel is bought. This is a process and we have to hear everybody in the community out. There are people here on both sides supporting the project and opposing the project and we want to make sure that everyone's voices is heard.

AIDAN HALOOTIAN: And you can gladly roll the tape back and see that I said it was suggested and I never said anyone actually did anything. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Alright, thank you Aidan.
Next, we're going to call for Charles Safo, Angel
Alvarado, Domenic and Marion Kennedy.

Oh excuse me Former Council Member Domenic
Recchia. Nice to meet you sir.

We'll begin with Former Council Member Domenic
Recchia, Recchia excuse me. Okay, you may begin.

DOMENIC RECCHIA: Thank you Council Member Riley
and Council Member Brannan for the opportunity to
speak today. I'm a Former Councilman for Coney
Island speaking to you today about the request for a
map change and the opportunity we have to build an
entertainment complex in the district in Coney
Island.

Coney Island emerged as the world renown one of
the kind of amusement destination back in the mid-
19th Century. At a time when it was the world's
greatest playground with the amusement, which
included Lunar Park, Dreamland, Steeple Chase Park,
and casinos, the race track, six bath house,
carousels, business and many rides. In 2009, myself
and City Council member Mayor Michael Bloomberg and
the Economic Development Corporation, and Borough
President Marty Markowitz, decided to revitalize

Coney Island the process voted on and was completed in 2009. The process ended with the rezoning of Coney Island; however, our goal was to see hotels, entertainment for one of a kind, an entertainment complex to be built someday with a year around destination. Now, our dream could come true with your support for this rezoning and an opportunity to alter in dramatic positive ways, the lives of Coney Island residents. Over 50,000 and millions of visitors to flock to this area to the worlds greatest playground.

Coney Island, we must make it a year around urban amusement and entertainment destination while building upon the prime beach fund. The development of the entertainment district will enhance retail opportunities and the needs for 10,000 businesses to grow.

I just want to address some of the things that were said here today. First of all, people said they were talking about people only make low wages. We're going to give jobs the opportunity to local residents first to apply for those jobs. So, we are addressing the opportunity to increase their pay, increase to make more money with good paying jobs with benefits.

In addition, you hear them say our property values are going down, right? But then you had Lucy saying her taxes are going up. Taxes on property only go up one way, when the property values go up. So, you can't have it both ways. One minute the property value is going down, the next minute you testify that her taxes are going up, the property taxes. Yes, because you're property value is going up. That's what this is all about.

Everyone, the majority of people today who testify against this, in 2009 testified, picketed in front of my house against the Coney Island Rezoning but I stood up to the plate because I knew what was for the best interest of the community and look at it today. It's growing, prospering, millions of people are coming. There are job opportunities and it's growing and look at all the affordable housing.

The latest affordable housing is going up -

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Shhhhh, please.

DOMENIC RECCHIA: Over 40 percent affordable.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. You can wrap it up Council Member.

DOMENIC RECCHIA: I just had to address some of this and when they talked about other properties that -

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Council Member, you have to wrap it up please.

DOMENIC RECCHIA: We had an opportunity to bring in movie theaters and other complexes.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

DOMENIC RECCHIA: And the community said no and we listened to the community.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Mr. Kennedy.

MARION KENNEDY: Mr. Councilman. Marion Kennedy my name. I've been a resident of Coney Island for 80 years. I have been on a local planning board; 63 Precinct Council and a number of other organizations I have attended meetings. I am well known in the community because of one thing. When I was out there, I treated people of all races fairly and honestly.

I think it's a cheap insult to our intelligence by not thinking that Coney Island residents know what they want. We need employment. We need safe streets. We need programs for our youth. We need programs for our seniors. We need descent housing

but we all need this by going and working ourselves at One Union. It is imperative that we support this project of casinos and I don't like to just say casino gambling. There are hotel technology contracted coming in. There is employment - employment for young people to get a job and hopeful for a better future and if you don't have anything else in mind, you have nothing else to go off your community.

It is imperative that you vote yes for this particular project and it's not just for casinos. It's for affordable housing. It's for [INAUDIBLE 01:49:45]. It's for safer streets and you have a personality of doing a hell of a job then when I grew up. Thank you for the time and pleasure of me speaking with you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Angel.

ANGEL ALVARADO: Hello, can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah.

ANGEL ALVARADO: Council Member Brannan, how are you sir? I'm sorry -

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Riley.

ANGEL ALVARADO: Riley. Chairman Riley, how are you? Uhm, I've been raised and I was born in raised

1 in Harlem. When I was five years old, the first
2 place that my parents brought me to was Coney Island,
3 all six of us. The first place that I visited was
4 the Free Kill House where they have all these crazy
5 people faces and all that and I have pictures to
6 prove it. Five years old, I was underneath one of
7 those pictures, all my family and I never stopped
8 coming here.

10 I like it for a reason that a lot of people say
11 and say the negatives, but what about the positives
12 about Coney Island? Why do you keep coming here?
13 And when they put that casino up, which we will, it's
14 going to be a lot more better. A lot more youth will
15 come and say I want to get a job and the only place
16 that you can get a career is in a casino. You'll be
17 there forever working and yes, try it, you'll see.

18 I'm retired. I retired 14 years ago and I wish I
19 would have kept on working but I retired and the
20 thing about it is that when the casino is built, more
21 stores, more properties will flourish. More revenue
22 will come into the community, into Coney Island.
23 Thank you so much.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Charles.
25

CHARLES SAFO: Good afternoon Council Members.

My name is Charles Safo. I'm a proud member of the hotel and gaming trade Council and a resident of Brooklyn. I'm here with other members on behalf of our union to testify in support of the Coney project. The Coney is committed to giving back to the community and this project will be a win not just for residents but for all New Yorkers. The hotel and casino will create thousands of much needed good paying jobs. With benefits while creating new homes. This is once in a lifetime opportunity to help New Yorkers who need jobs and housing and I urge you to vote yes.

Our elders always tell us that in life there's - any advantage have a disadvantage, any disadvantage have an advantage. So, we should look at the advantage in need and through the good services, the Council Member should vote yes on this project.

Of course, many will dispute about it. Some will like it; some will not like it but we have to foreclose the benefit and let it begin so that people could get job to do. Thank you. God bless you all.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. You guys are excused. Next we'll hear from Praela Silva, Maria

Laura Hernandez, Ron Schweiger, Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon. Perla Silva, Maria Laura Hernandez, Ron Schweiger, Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon.

The following panel will consist of Jeff Mortlund, Towanug Coe, Martin Allan, Ron Greenburg. We'll begin first with Perla followed by Maria followed by Ron followed by Jennifer. You may begin.

PERLA SILVA: Thank you. Good afternoon.

SPEAKING IN SPANISH [01:54:05] everyone. My name is Perla Silva. I work for one of the largest nonprofit organizations of the State of New York, Make The Road. We have over 28,000 members in the State of New York. The majority of our membership is in Brooklyn, over 10,000 and that is my, one of my jobs and then I work for another large nonprofit organization. I am the senior political coordinator for Make the Road Action. So, I do a lot of the ground work. I work very closely with the community but I'm here today as Perla Silva living 30 years in Brooklyn and 15 years neighbor of Coney Island. So, I'm here to speak on behalf of my community, myself and my family. Coney Island is more than just - what was that? Adult playground, some BS. And it's very - I would like to make it clear that as my job, I

like to state that we should have access to the public. That data or some sort of survey that the first panel was discussing about that they've been doing for two years. How do you do the work for two years but you don't have that access, that data available? You came unprepared? I know I would have been fired. Like yesterday boo.

So, please if they are able to give us access to that, right? Put it on your website. Please let us know where we can look those numbers up and just the surveys because that's very interesting to me. I'm going to wrap it up. I have 25 seconds. Just quickly in Espanol because I know Coney Island right. SPEAKING IN SPANISH [01:55:50]-[01:56:09].

And then for my friend over here, she will say some words in Spanish for the one minute and then I can just translate the other minute in English, Gracias.

MARIA LAURA HERNANDEZ: SPEAKING IN SPANISH [01:56:21]- [01:57:21].

PERLA SILVA: My name is Laura, Maria Laura. I have been a neighbor of Coney Island for 15 years and I'm here just to show support for our neighbors in Coney Island. She has a large family that has been

1 living here for a long time and she's very vocal,
2 she's an active member in the community and she knows
3 how hard it is to keep the community safe and she
4 said that if we don't keep our own community safe,
5 who is going to come into Coney Island and keep us
6 safe? Who is going to keep us safe? Who is going to
7 clean it up? Who is going to do all of that work?
8 We've been doing that. The family and the community
9 members that live there have been building Coney
10 Island and they've been doing the work. They don't
11 need outsiders to come in and do that work. And then
12 just quickly from my point of view, the 4,500 jobs
13 that will be here, we've seen it in other casinos.
14 We already have a casino. Like I said, I speak to
15 over 30,000 people in months. Not a year, in months.
16 We already have a casino in Queens and they're not
17 hiring local folks. They're bringing in their own
18 employers. Gracias.

19
20 RON SCHWEIGER: Hi, my name is Ron Schweiger. I
21 am the officially appointed historian for the Borough
22 of Brooklyn. I've been in that position since 2002,
23 23 years. I'm a lifelong Brooklyn resident and as a
24 kid back in the 1950's, my friends and I used to ride
25

our bicycles down the Ocean Parkway Bicycle Path to Coney Island and it was great.

I have been doing walking tours of Brooklyn's historic neighborhoods for over 35 years and one of the most popular requests I get is a walking tour of Coney Island. And I bring with me vintage photographs, my personal collection of post cards and I blow those pictures up this big to show people what it was 125 years ago and what it is today.

Some of the tours that I give are not only for people from the New York City area, Brooklyn and other boroughs but from New Jersey, Pennsylvania and also from Europe. I have done tours for people from the Netherlands, England, France and Italy and others and when I mention to them in my tours the last couple of years, when the thought of a casino coming into Coney Island, they said, we don't come to New York City to go to a casino. We come to New York City to see New York City and to come to Coney Island which is world renown and to get a hot dog at Nathans and go on the cyclone.

They do not come to spend their money at a casino when they're coming from Europe and casinos rely on people like in Atlantic City and Atlantic City and

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 102
2 Los Vegas on people coming from Europe as well. I
3 don't think you're going to have people visiting New
4 York City from Europe that are going to go to the
5 casinos in Coney Island. They will come to Coney
6 Island for the rides, for the food, maybe a baseball
7 game; I'll be there tonight with my wife for the
8 baseball game and congestion. This past Saturday, it
9 was raining and it was so congested on Surf Avenue to
10 find a place to park. It was so congested. We need
11 the parking. Thank you.

12 JENNIFER THORPE-MOSCON: Thank you. I agree with
13 what my colleagues who are against the casino have
14 said, so I won't repeat it. I'm going to speak
15 directly to the land use proposal that we're talking
16 about today. Many of you on City Council including
17 Justin Brannan talked about how important it was for
18 you to protect the environment and make sure that our
19 ocean front neighborhoods are more resilient,
20 especially given that Sandy and something like that
21 will probably happen again. This land use proposal
22 would allow a 40 story building, which in addition to
23 being out of scale with the neighborhood would add to
24 our flooding risk.

In 2023, environmental experts conducted research showing that adding tall, heavy structures to the waterfront accelerates the sinking of the land and thus the rate of flooding. We cannot allow that in our already vulnerable neighborhood.

Another campaign commitment that many of you have made is to help small businesses. The Coney reps claimed that their casino would help small businesses. Yet this is a casino which with the land use change would have skybridges, keeping people inside the casino and off the streets away from the stores. So that will absolutely not help small businesses and right now, there are small businesses on Bowery, the street they want to erase. What is going to happen to those businesses and the people who run them and the people who love going there?

If all of your promises, all of the campaign promises that all of you have made now and over the years were true, you must vote no on this land use proposal. We want development but not this. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. This panel is excused. Thank you so much for your testimony. Next, we'll hear from Jeff Mortund, Towanug Coe,

Martin Allan and Ron Greenburg. The following panel consists of Sara Ferraro, Andrea Biro, Georgianna Aldaco, and Steve Rolston. We'll begin first with Jeff Mortan.

JEFF MORTAN: Hello, good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Good afternoon. I'll say the panelists again, Jeff Mortan, Towanug Coe, Martin Allan, and Ron Greenburg. Go ahead Jeff.

JEFF MORTAN: My name is Jeffrey Mortan. I am a proud President of Coney Island and I lived in Coney Island for over 45 years. I'm also a film director and I have had - I won over three awards with my film titled, 'Our Mothers Voices,' which is currently available on Tubi. This film addresses the heartbreaking issues of mothers who have lost their children to violence. And I'm also actively working on a sequel in addition to my work on a film an event called, 'Brothers Reaching Out,' commonly known as BRO, which is dedicated to stopping the violence in our community. I have been hosting this event for over 25 years. I am here today expressing my strong support for the casino project in Coney Island. I believe it will not only enhance the image of our community but also create viable jobs, opportunities

for our teens and residents. This initiative has the potential to play a significant role in reducing violence in Coney Island by showing our young men and women that we care and invested in their futures.

I wholeheartedly believe that this project and its potential to uplift our community. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Can you please reinstate your name for the record?

MARTIN ALLAN: My name is Martin Allan; I represent People for Political and Economic Empowerment. I've been a resident of Coney Island for 60 years.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Martin Allan sir?

MARTIN ALLAN: Martin Allan.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, thank you.

MARTIN ALLAN: Uh, my thing is that I'm so sick and tired of people talking about traffic and cars and not concerned about peoples lives. I grew up in Coney Island my whole life. I went in and out of jail because there was no opportunity for people like me in Coney Island. When you lived in the Bungalows in Coney Island on Surf Avenue and 29th Street and 30th Street, it went to complete hell. It turned me

1 into a bank robber. I had to survive and a lot of
2 the kids out there are doing the same thing. They're
3 either joining gangs, which I was also a gang member
4 you understand? You went through so many trials and
5 tribulations that you got to eat and if you can't eat
6 from your mother and father, you understand? Then
7 you're going to go out and try to get something to
8 eat. It cost me half of my life in prison.

10 Last week, I mean two weeks ago, I was in your
11 office in Coney Island and you Chief of Staff told me
12 oh, I understand man. I know Coney Island is not
13 getting their fair share of jobs, you understand?
14 But after doing all my time in prison, I came back to
15 Coney Island, you understand? I put hundreds of
16 people from Coney Island to work downtown Brooklyn,
17 City Point, Brooklyn Navy Yard where they were making
18 descent salaries. I have people working in the
19 Brooklyn Navy Yard making \$87 an hour. You
20 understand? They didn't have the training that they
21 needed from the time that they - what we need to do
22 is hold the casino accountable. I'm for the casino
23 because it brings a lot of opportunity if we keep
24 them in check and not give the money to the wrong
25 people. When you give \$200 million, who are you

going to give it to? Are you going to give it to the community or are you going to give it to some private person that want to call the shots and we don't need people like that to call the shots.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Martin.

MARTIN ALLAN: We need the community to get the money you understand so that we can have - that's it?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, thank you Martin.

MARTIN ALLAN: Man that was quick.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Do we have Towanug Coe or Ron Greenburg? Towanug Coe or Ron Greenburg? Okay, you guys are excused. Next, we're going to hear from Sara Ferraro, Andrea Biro, Georgianna Aldaco, and Steve Rolston. Excuse me if I mispronounced your name.

The following panel will consist of DeeAnne Gorman, Stephen Dima(SP?), Angela Ranicri(SP?), and Kyndra Gilvery(SP?). Sara? Do you have a Sara on this panel? What's your name? No, you're in the following panel Kyndra. Sara Ferraro? Andrea? Andrea, you may begin.

ANDREA BIRO: Good afternoon Councilman, Chair and representative from Corporation Council. After listening to both sides of the arguments and

pleadings to the panel, I'm actually slightly distressed regarding what's going on, what's happening.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Can you talk into the mic please? Thank you.

ANDREA BIRO: I'm sorry. Uhm, I'm going to go under the assumption and presumption that pretty much everybody has in oath of office and understands what that is and if filed with the city clerk with their \$9 fee.

However, after listening to everything else, I've come to the conclusion that it doesn't matter whether you have an oath or not because at this point, we're not a municipality anymore. We're a subsidiary and our representatives are shareholders and we're pretty much watching Dodge versus Ford in action and that's disturbing. Because if our panel and our representatives and our public officials actually adhere to the oath of office, we would not be needing to see how many people on each side had a comment as long as one person was being harmed or one person did not consent. That would be enough for the panel to say nope, not going forward. We need to revisit this.

We shouldn't have hours on testimony and making it seem like we're battling in a democracy. When your oath of office adheres to a separate form of government.

So, once again, we don't have a municipality. We have a subsidiary ever since the state incorporated us and the more and more the state tells New York City how they're supposed to run, the less and less we are actually a true municipality which is a self-governing body. We cave every time the state says jump. That's not a municipality, it's a subsidiary. They're the parent company. So what's the point of you even listening to the public besides checking off the boxes that we have open meetings and corporation counsel then can adhere to their duty to make sure everything is in check?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Andrea. Next, we'll hear Steve.

STEVE ROLSTON: Thank you. I'm Steve Rolston from Baldwin New York. That's in Long Island where we've been fighting the Sands Casino trying the same thing on Long Island that you're facing in Coney Island and I felt it was important to be here. Casinos were prohibited in New York State until 2013

when Governor Andrew Cuomo allowed them into struggling upstate counties to find revenue. Those casinos have not fared well.

On October 24, 2013, a New York Times editorial warned of the long term negative effects of casinos that what they have on the surrounding area and the local economy. Ten years later, studies by the Illinois Laurel Review and other interest groups; there it is indicate, no better prognosis regarding the presence of a casino especially in a residential community.

Economists note the lowering paying jobs actually hurt local economies. The national group Stop Predatory Gambling reminds us that a casino is the only business enterprise to have an adversarial relationship with their customers. Every other business we know offers goods or services in return for payment. Casinos and gambling in general is so seductive, they know addiction occurs. So much so that they are required to add warnings and help line phone numbers at the end of each ad.

I didn't realize I was against casinos until March 2023 when I read the words of Pastor Arthur Mackey and Roosevelt. He wrote of the damage done to

people of color in his community, in our communities when a casino is so readily accessible. A study by the institute of American Values notes, communities within ten miles of a casino exhibit double the rate of problem gambling. Unsurprisingly, such communities also suffer high rates of home foreclosure and other forms of economic distress and domestic violence. So, I ask all of you democrats and republicans, please come together today and say no to the short sided and destructive idea that casinos fix anything. They never do.

GEORGIANNA ALDACO: Hi, I'm Georgiana Aldaco. I live in Brooklyn but I grew up in Texas and I've seen firsthand how a casino moving in can just wreck a community. In the mid-90's, a casino moved into my neighborhood in Texas where I lived with my parents. They promised a lot of things. They promised jobs. They promised money for the community, programs for the community. What actually happened was the traffic got bad. Any piece of land in the vicinity got eaten up first, stuff for the casino, either parking or stuff for them. The schools closed down. My elementary school closed down, the preschool closed down, the middle school closed down because

nobody wanted to live in the casino. We're in the area where the casino was. Young families didn't move in. The only people that stayed were people that could not leave and they couldn't you know their lives got worse. There's always traffic. There's always crime. It destroyed the fabric of the community and this was in an area that was a historic community. We had uh it was uh - it's an area where it was known for the mission trail. There was a mission there that was built in the 1600's. We used to go to it in elementary school walking to it when I was in second grade. Once the casino came in, it got walled up by the casino and good luck getting in there to see it. That's the kind of thing that's going to happen to anything that's at Coney Island, just the casino built around it and block off anybody from getting to the stuff that they wanted to see at Coney Island in the first place.

I think the casino builders are going to promise a lot to you. They're going to deliver on some of it. Possibly while they need you, but they're also going to create several other problems that they'll never fix and they're just going to you know just come in and do what they want to the community and

destroy essentially everything that's already there.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Uhm, any questions Council Member? This panel is excused. Thank you so much. Uhm, I'm sorry I missed, I was supposed to call Harry Owens. Is there a Harry Owens here? Oh okay, we'll have Harry Owens then following Harry Owens, then we'll have DeeAnne Gorman, Stephen Dima, Angela Ranieri, and Kyndra Gilvary. Sorry Kyndra.

Harry, you may begin as soon as the Sergeant at Arms starts the clock. You may begin. Harry, if you could just press the button. Thank you.

HARRY OWENS: Good afternoon. My name is Harry Owens. I am a lifelong resident of Coney Island. I am 41 years old. I have been living at 2949 West 23rd Street for 40 years. Personally, I think that the casino will be a good thing and the reason why I think that the casino will be a good thing because like I said, I've been living in Coney Island for 40 years. I know the people of Coney Island. I know what people in Coney Island need. We need jobs. We need opportunities. This casino will - the building of the casino itself will open up so many

1 construction jobs for all of the young men in Coney
2 Island that are currently getting their OSHA
3 certifications, the SST certifications, the flagging
4 certifications. Like, this is something that the
5 community needs, whether they realize it or not.
6 Like, I understand why people are opposed to the
7 casino. They feel like the casino could bring an
8 element of crime and things of that nature but I got
9 news for you, that element already exists inside of
10 Coney Island. You understand? People, like people
11 are getting killed every day in Coney Island because
12 they have nothing better to do. We need to give
13 these people opportunities. If the casino is going
14 to come and give people opportunities, give people
15 jobs, give people a better way of living, I'm not
16 opposed to that.

17 We talk about the traffic, it's horrible getting
18 out of Coney Island on the weekend. Like it takes
19 three hours to get from 30th Street to Crapsey Avenue
20 because it's baseball games. It's stuff going on at
21 the Art Wall. It's stuff going on at the amusement
22 parks. The traffic is going to be there regardless
23 and yes; the amusement park is a wonderful place.
24 They provide opportunities and jobs for people but
25

let's be honest, those jobs last four months. It's 12 months in a year. What happens with the other 8 months? Like, how are these people supposed to feed themselves? How are they supposed to take care of their families? How are they supposed to take care of their children?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Harry.

HARRY OWENS: You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Next, we have an update. We'll beginning online testimony roughly around 1:45. We're going to go next to DeeAnne, Stephen, Angela and Kyndra.

Following them, we have Matt McGlade, Sherry Durden(SP?), Shella Britton(SP?) and Linda Harrison. And also - oh she's here? Do we have Sara Ferraro? Sara, are you here Ferraro? It's alright, uhm, you can come up. You can just sit in the seat right there. You'll go in this panel as well. Yes. Okay, first, we'll begin with DeeAnne.

DEEANNE GORMAN: Hi, I left my glasses a long way away so.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: You want to borrow mine?

DEEANNE GORMAN: No, they're prescription so I'm going to do my best here.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: How do you know mine is not prescription?

DEEANNE GORMAN: So, DeeAnne Gorman, New York City License Sight Seeing Guide and I'm a member of community organizations in all five boroughs of New York City and for years, I've attended or walked in the Mermaid Parade, ridden the rides, seen the shows, taken walking tours, shopped the small stores, enjoyed the beach at and been enchanted by Coney Island. I also saw Super Storm Sandy devastate the area. Without power and hot water for almost two weeks, my boyfriends buildings lobby flooded to the ceiling as the sea rushed up Ocean Parkway, which was left smelly and strummed with ruined cars in the aftermath. So, I also echo the environmental concerns of this project.

As developers take advantage of this special place, I'm appalled at claims that a proposed casino would be beneficial when these plans are actually short sided and put private profits ahead of the public good.

Despite what developers say, economic research counters that casinos aren't the jobs drivers they claim to be. Thousands of construction jobs and once

the casino is built and permanent jobs are often low paying and can be unfulfilling to some, as they are based on collecting losses from customers. Las Vegas being an exception, research also indicates casinos don't add to the economy of the city. In fact, in recessionary times, they subtract from it.

Revenue going into casinos by and large comes locally so it doesn't benefit local businesses, it takes away from them and the money casinos depend on comes primarily from people who are addicted.

Casino bidders say they will drive tourism and spending in communities but casinos are designed to keep customers spending money for as long as possible inside. This waiting guests from leaving and spending money at nearby entertainment and businesses.

As legalized gambling explodes across the globe, leaving behind ruined lives, broken families, financial hardships, reports state it should be declared a national health emergency.

Residents and the integrity of this iconic neighborhood -

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you DeeAnne. Start wrapping up. Thank you.

DEEANNE GORMAN: Should be protected.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

DEEANNE GORMAN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Next, we'll hear from
Stephen.

STEPHEN DIMA: Thank you. Hi, my name is Stephen
Dima. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.
I come before you as a long born and bred Brooklynite
and New Yorker who deeply values the layered complex
and vibrant life of this city. And as someone who
believes that our shared public spaces must serve
people, not just profit.

City's thrive when streets are alive with
diversity, creativity and human energy and when they
reflect the labor, culture and care of the
communities that inhabit them. This is especially
true of Coney Island, one of New Yorks most iconic
democratic public spaces. That's why I and so many
others stand in strong opposition to the proposed
casino project in Coney Island.

We all know Coney Island is no stranger to
spectacle or reinvention but its enduring magic has
never relied on exclusionary luxury or industries
that extract from the community instead of giving

back. It has been and must remain a place of accessible joy where working class families, immigrants and every day New Yorkers can experience wonder, leisure and belonging.

Introducing a casino into this delicate civic ecosystem is not revitalization, it's an eraser. It threatens to displace local businesses, raise rents and creates crime and drain economic life from the neighborhood. We've seen this pattern repeat in other cities where casino developments make big promises and leave behind deep inequality and disconnection.

In Coney Island, a neighborhood with a long tradition of artistic expression, immigrant resilience, and grassroots culture. This would be nothing short of cultural vandalism. The Arc doesn't need another speculative real estate scheme dressed up as an economic development. What we need are investments that truly serve the public, affordable housing, cultural recreational spaces, youth programs and infrastructure that uplifts the people who already live there and work there. And beyond the physical consequences, we must continue to be honest about the social impact. The casino industry profits

by targeting the most vulnerable among us, those struggling financially, those seeking help in the face of hardship. That is not an economic opportunity. That is exploitation.

I'd like to say to everyone on both side, for and against to remember we now live in - thank you very much. I appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: You can finish your thought.

STEPHEN DIMA: That there's a lot of anger on both sides and I just want to say that when we divide that those empower concur and never in the best interest of anyone but themselves. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Best message today. Thank you so much for that. Go ahead Kyndra.

KYNDRA GILVARY: Hello, thank you Council for letting me speak. I have lived in Brooklyn for almost a decade now and have worked in Coney Island for over half that time. I grew up in the western part of America where casinos are more plentiful. My mother worked on a casino for the Swinomish reservation outside of Anacortes, Washington and her family lived in Montana where gambling is pretty much everywhere. You walk into a gas station, there's going to be slot machine.

I grew up in casinos. I sat in lobbies with other children waiting for adults to stop gambling. I sat in restaurants picking at cold fries waiting for my grandmother to give up on the slot machine and I understood even at 8 years old that she was doing it because casinos and gambling offer hope. They offer hope to impoverished communities that they often do not deliver on.

I have seen countless relatives and members of other communities destroy their lives through gambling. Not because of the choice that they made to begin gambling, but because they thought perhaps I can do something better for my family. I can provide for them. I can give my children Christmas.

Sometimes that gambling paid off. Other times it did not. I recently got back from a tour for working in Vegas. I got to speak at a convention to people from all over the country. Every single one of them asked, "what's the deal with that casino going on in Coney? They're not really getting rid of Coney Island, are they?"

A casino is not the thing that will bring people to the peoples playground. People want the history. They want to ride the Wonder Wheel. They want to sit

on the beaches. They want to eat a Nathan's hotdog and I understand that Coney Island does need jobs. It needs more grocery stores. It needs better housing. It needs better infrastructure but a casino is not designed for communities. They even said, the board that came to speak for the casino and to describe everything said, "we are putting all security in place for our customers." Not for the community.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear from Sara.

SARA FERRARO: Hi, I'm Sara Ferraro. I'm a senior in high school going into college and some of my best memories come from the days that I spend at Coney Island with my friends and family. I'm worried that if we turn it into just another casino, future generations won't have those kinds of memories and they'll just have another building that looks like it can be anywhere.

I work a lot with children and it stings me that Coney Island could turn into a place that can give them this - that won't give them the same joy that I was able to experience as a child. There's also something about the feel of Coney Island, like the

space that I'm worrying, the steeple chase face. It stuck with me for so long, ever since I was a kid and it's so impactful and a casino is not this. This is never going to like be replaced by a casino and let's just be for real, casinos are dead. Online gambling has taken over. Casinos will never do well. Atlantic City is not doing well at all and I'm sorry, I'm getting emotional. This means a lot to me. I don't really testify for a lot of these things but this is really important to me and it's not just a place for entertainment; it's a place of history. It holds so many memories. You can see in the buildings; it's like starting to decay and that's just the beauty in it. Casinos will be fresh, new modern. That's not what we need in New York City. That's not what New York City is. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Angela? Thank you Sara.

ANGELA RANIERI: Hi, my name is Angela Ranieri and I am a small business owner and I live in Flatbush so I know personally how terrible Thor Equity really is. They have claimed that they're trying to invest in the community. They have not. They have literally boughten all the property and drove all the small businesses out. You keep saying

you want small businesses and opportunities, it's Thor Equity that has created this problem and now they're trying to come in in the last minute and be your savor and they want you to thank them and I'm going off script. But just they want you to thank them for saving the problem that they created.

I agree, we need more businesses and everything in Coney Island. I love Coney Island. It is a magical wonderful land and this casino will destroy it. If they want to bring small businesses back, then stop letting their properties go into decay and stop upping your rent. Put a cap on what they're allowed to charge small businesses so small businesses can thrive in Coney Island. Thor Equity will never be the answer for anything. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you for your testimony. You're excused. Next, we're going to call up Matt Ugly McGlade, Sherry Durden, Shella Britton, and Linda Harrison.

First, we're going to begin with uh Matt.

MATT MCGLADE: Yeah hi, I'd like to thank Council for time. As a young person, the mystery of Coney Island inspired positive thoughts of thrilling delights. Coney called me from afar but not just me

and not only now. Hundreds of historic years of games, not gambling, fantastic rides, not financial ruin. The diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders DSM 5 classifies gambling as an addictive disorder. I couldn't find a negative section involving boardwalks and roller coasters. Quite the opposite, they build positive pathways to our autonomic responses. Notwithstanding the loss of magical parks like Astro land, Steeple Chase Park, Dreamland. Something keeps New Yorkers and tourists interested in visiting year after year. Surprisingly without the draw of gambling. We want to be there because of outdoor entertainment near the ocean. People are still drawn to the sites and sounds by the boardwalk.

The neighborhoods nearby of families and friends, generations of families and friends, coming when they are able but staring at a giant vampiric wall of glass isn't attractive and it won't become an attraction. It will monitor the landscape, destroy the view and bring pollution and devastation.

In addition, there has been some poi of this parking notion which is they won't even have enough parking for their own casino patrons, and then

they're going to choke out whatever emergency vehicles that are trying to get to the emergency, which already can't get there in the first place.

This whole idea of the jobs, these 4,000 jobs in a city of 8 million people and they're probably going to outsource. That doesn't make any sense. Just the numbers don't add up. Casinos are not revitalization. Yeah, I mean I just consider - I consider that to a casino, we vote no. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear from Sherry. Sherry? Ms. Sherry, can you press the button please? Yes, there you go.

SHERRY DURDEN: Hello everyone. I'm a physician and a lifelong resident of Coney Island, a small business owner in a community of the hardest workers, the disenfranchised. I was here when the bungalow's were here. I stayed. I'm telling you, poor people in a gambling district are the most susceptible to gambling addiction. It attracts crime and prostitution, drug dealing as a result. This is good for parents and children? The surrounding community of Atlantic City bears witness to empty promises and promised loved people have believed in. Casinos do

not belong in residential districts. Jobs? What jobs? To whom? What will those requirements be? Where have you been before giving jobs to those communities? Tell us of the other communities you've uplifted. I want proof. They haven't even talked to the community. People who like you want to talk to you. Not through June 12th cash carrots to appear with promises of bigger carrots to come.

Unions already have members; those members get those promised jobs. They are not in your community and I'm sure that the casino entity hasn't reached out to unions to make sure that the community becomes members of those unions displacing the jobs that are promised to them.

Someone mentioned, not complaining about the high cost of housing but complaining about the buying of Coney Island for \$24 that the Native Americans believed in. I think someone hasn't been listening. If anything, this casino would displace possibilities for affordable housing. The promises are wampum.

Gridlock -

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: You can wrap it up Ms. Sherry.

SHERRY DURDEN: Increasing to 30,000 more a day, I can't get home when baseball season is in and I'm 30 minutes away from - I'm two miles away from my home. There is no plan b. If we don't act, we ask. That's a threat and you should take it seriously because friends don't threaten you and your way of life.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Ms. Sherry.

SHERRY DURDEN: If they aren't good.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear from Shella followed by Linda.

SHELLA BRITTON: Okay, alright well good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Good afternoon.

SHELLA BRITTON: I've lived in Coney Island for about 40 years and uhm, we live on a peninsula and it's very difficult during holidays, weekends and special events and it's almost impossible to travel through the area. Demaping would definitely be critical, cause a critical problem if we have the casinos in place, we would have an additional 34,000 people coming in to the area and this would cause major gridlock.

Right now, NYPD and FDNY are often unable to respond to emergencies in a timely fashion. The DEIS traffic study has basically identified significant adverse uhm issues regarding the plan. Also, as far as flooding goes, having such as large complex in the area would cause storm surges to be redirected to residential areas. I say, say no to this casino.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you.

LINDA HARRISON: Good afternoon. My name is Linda Harrison, good to see you Council Member Brannan. It's been awhile. I know you all are tired and you heard a lot of statistics over and over again but I just want to point out something I think is very, very important. We're here to discuss the land use or whether or not to give a permit to Thor Equities. Let me say the last part first because I have a tendency to talk long but I want to get this last point in. I want to challenge Thor Equities first of all to look at a different venture. I'm for a win-win situation. This proposition for a casino is a - win loss proposition. Win for the casino and a loss for the community. I want something that's more family friendly that's going to bring people out. I've stood at the subways when I come home from

1 church or from the doctors office or from wherever
2 and I watched the families get off the subways and
3 enter into Coney Island and it brings me to tears.
4 Because I see moms and dads with their kids and
5 they're happy. Who knows what happened at home that
6 day or that week? They're out there for fun. I see
7 the young adults coming out to have fun and enjoy
8 themselves. I see tourists coming out to enjoy
9 themselves bringing their families. I see young
10 groups of people from schools, in colleges and
11 outside of the community come to our neighborhood to
12 see Coney Island but to put a casino here would be
13 detrimental.

14 The economic impact would be - uh, we would lose
15 that. Whatever you thought you'd gain in the
16 beginning, you're going to lose that. The novelty
17 would wear off and then after a while, the community
18 will lose because a casino is meant to be
19 incapsulated. It is meant to keep people inside.
20 You're not going to go out and shop in the local
21 businesses. The local businesses will dry up. The
22 community will have no place to shop or buy for food,
23 which is scarce right now and so, you are about to
24 where you started again.
25

As far as traffic, I'm really the human component is really, really important for me. I wake up at 6:00 in the morning every morning and my time is - every morning to sirens and emergency vehicles. I know what time it is without looking at the clock. It's 6:00, the emergency vehicles are going off. Imagine a year around, year around emergency vehicles trying to get in. The impact on lives would be horrendous. Really, really, really consider the impact of lives. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you all very much. Okay, the next panel we have Jess Zari(SP?), Jessie Newman, Rachel Shapero, AM Goodrise(SP?), and Eric Thorpe-Moscon.

JESSIE NEWMAN: Good afternoon. A lot of statistics have been said today. There has been many think tanks that have done studies that casinos near communities suck out revenue from the communities. I see this proposal as a deal with the devil. It's selling out the future for a short term fix today. I can hear a lot of the points that members of the Coney Island community have made about needing jobs. I see this as a failure of uhm, of politicians to provide community centers, movie theaters, water

1 parks, other large scale leisure opportunities. I'm
2 not a [INAUDIBLE 02:39:16]. I'm not against any kind
3 of future development but this is a short term fix
4 that will sell things out for the future. We all
5 understand how these real estate developments pay
6 themselves through shell corporations to build a
7 casino. They have no real concern for the long term
8 success of the venture. Thor Equities has a track
9 record of bankruptcies and defaulting on their
10 properties in East Harlem and many other locations.
11 I see this being completely predatory and the
12 arguments that the lobbyists have devised, the PR
13 teams that Thor Equities have hired have devised are
14 exploiting the existing fault lines within Coney
15 Island.

17 What really would be a better solution that
18 people I hope maybe this will lead to people
19 advocating for is tax incentives for local
20 businesses, so that people could actually create
21 generational wealth in an organic way that will
22 sustain. Maybe it will be construction jobs for a
23 few months, all the local businesses in the area will
24 shut down from the giant pits in the ground. This
25 won't help create generational wealth long term.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 133
2 It's going to put money in peoples pockets. They're
3 going to flee to their next venture. I don't know if
4 any of you guys or any of you have spent time in
5 Atlantic City, so maybe some state politicians made
6 some money in the 70's in Atlantic City but it really
7 is a very, very hard place to walk around and see the
8 devastation. Thank you yeah.

9 RACHEL SHAPERO: Hello, my name is Rachel. I was
10 waiting outside for one and a half hours before I
11 came in to speak so sorry, I missed so much of this.
12 I was with somebody out there who is from Coney
13 Island and she couldn't stay in the sun that long, so
14 I just wanted to say, she's concerned about the
15 traffic. She has teenagers working at Starbucks in
16 Coney Island and she understands the neighborhood
17 needs jobs but she doesn't trust the casino because
18 you can't. I wanted to say about jobs just one thing
19 you know that IKEA, the IKEA that went up and Red
20 Hook promised jobs and there were jobs there for a
21 little while and there still are some but all of the
22 checkouts there, a lot of checkouts that there were,
23 they are all replaced with automation and the whole
24 restaurant there that was staffed by people, all were
25 placed with automation and I know that's going to be

harder to do at a casino and I know that it's going to be harder to do in a hotel but they're going to do it as soon as they can.

I also wanted to say that I've lived in Brooklyn for 16 years through Sandy, which hit Coney Island hard, through COVID. I got my first COVID shot in the shadow of the Wonder Wheel. I first went to Coney Island when I was 16. Since then, I took the F-Train many times with my father before Parkinsons made it too difficult for him to travel. We had hot dogs. We were at the Cyclone. He told me about when he was a kid and the parachute jump was still running. I take my sister there. We walk by people dancing on the boardwalk, babies and teens and people in wheelchairs. I go there with my friends and ride the Spook Arama every summer and eat bortitatianas down the boardwalk every season.

I've seen teenagers run up the beach to help their grandmother down on the sand. I've heard an old woman eating ice cream call her friend from the boardwalk and say, "guess where I am? Our special place."

The Coney Island Boardwalk is the nearest placeable third space. It's reachable by train. The

surrounding streets are walkable. Teens can hang out there all day in summer and I teach teens so I know how important that is.

Coney Island is free. It's accessible. It's free. It's free.

Good afternoon Mr. Brannan. So, I'm going- thank you. I see you smiling. So, I'm a 38 year resident, born and raised in Central Brooklyn and now I live in South Central Brooklyn for three years and of course ten months if you're picking online.

So, I'm from Coney Island but I was in Easeman Park when I was doing a track trip during throughout the month of June. My mother used to use Easeman Park throughout the summer. One time we received the ride, the boardwalk and all that because it also being Friday they have a mixed committee. So, and fast forward the CE Bike gamification and the displacement, there are all the shops and the residents fear like the - if you go like 4th Avenue, Downtown Brooklyn and even when you at Greenpoint, you see the [INAUDIBLE 02:44:00] for over 20 years. Fast forward, you see a lot of them like pushing people out.

So, why you want to push people out for a casino that doesn't benefit the residents or the small shoppers being concerned with? But the need for also jobs, housing, education, healthcare. People die sometimes but so, it's not nothing new. It's not because of accident. It's nothing but speculation. It will cause high end small shops. Talking about the gap. Even like Whole Foods and Trader Joe, like who is going benefit from what? Affordable for who? They are not for the residents who currently live in the borough or in any community or any New York City resident as well, so for Christ sake.

So, this is nothing new. It's nothing but [02:45:02]- [02:45:05] homeowners out. That is seriously unacceptable. So, we need to put how [02:45:12]. That's it.

JESS ZARI: Hey, I'm Jess, born in Coney Island, taught there, went to school there, worked there, lived there 30 years. Spent every summer there. You know I'm kind of freaking out right now because I didn't come prepared and as much as I should be for something this important but I have shown up to all the community board meetings and will continue to show up. The people that are still in this room are

all seemed to be against this, which means that we really, you know we're here for a reason but the problems about a casino are well documented. Like the community detracts the psychological impacts. We don't need to talk about that, it's obvious we know that. The jobs we said they're probably going to be replaced AI, people from outside the community, whatever it may be. This is not actually; we know that it's not for us. We know that this is going to destroy the landmark. It's sort of the environment fabric that we have going on in Coney Island, the demapping of the Bowery is the destruction of history. The demapping of those streets is the destruction of the character of Coney Island. Yeah it's like - it's a little sketchy back there but it's also very punk rock.

I feel like honestly, we know what this is about but when we think about the real consequences of this, we have to think about climate change. We have to think about putting that 40 story building right on the shoreline and how that will increase the sinking of the already sinking land. How this threatens our climate resiliency and flood resiliency. How demapping the streets and increasing

the traffic is increasing public safety concerns. We all have them. It's not just about oh I'm frustrated I can't find a parking spot. It's like how is my grandma going to get into an ambulance and how are they going to get out of the peninsula.

But yeah, I'm going to be a Social Worker one day. I don't want to have to treat my community for any additional addictions then whatever is already going on, so.

ERIC THORPE-MOSCON: Hi, my name is Eric Thorpe-Moscon. You heard my wife speak earlier. She spoke about the environmental concerns and the flooding, which I agree with and I second. I just want to say that uh we live 20 minutes away from Coney Island, so we basically walk there almost every weekend. We spend a lot of time there. We love it there and I'm against this casino for the reason - many of the reasons that you've heard already, which were you know the problems that it brings, the gambling problems, the addictions, as well as it will decimate the community like other casinos have done in other areas. And it will have a rippling affect to the neighboring communities as well and like I said, we're 20 minutes away. I don't want to see it affect

my neighborhood either. Additionally, I think I want to just address like what the pro-side says about like how you know oh like it's going to bring in all these jobs and we're going to hold them accountable and make sure they keep their promises. You're not going to hold them accountable. There's no way. Once they get what they want, once they tell you what they hear, that's it. They're going to do - what they care about is their stock holders, their bottom line and their profits and they're going to do anything to make sure that that's what happens. All those promises they're telling you are going to go right out the window. I don't trust them and that's it.

I would vote no on this casino. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you all very much.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Is Johanna Greece(SP?).

Greece. We'll hear from Ms. Greece and then we will switch over to online testimony. If there is anyone left in the room with us today who has not already testified but wishes to do so, please fill out a speaker card with the Sergeants and we will take your testimony.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Go ahead.

JOHANNA GREECE: Hey there, I'm Johanna I was running around the city and I had to get back here in person because this is important to me.

First I'd like to address you directly Mr. Brannan. I'm really disappointed to hear that you're probably for this casino because you actually, you and your team helped me save an injured bird at the beach and I thought you cared about the environment.

So, this is going to kill our environment. Every day I have to check the AQI. I have asthma and we have a lot of pollution problems in our country and in this city especially and this casino and the construction will make it ten times worse. And it's very interesting to me, I could be wrong but I was told that you switched to being for the casino after you got a huge donation -

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Just to correct the record. I have taken no stance.

JOHANNA GREECE: Okay great, well I would like if you take a stance against it.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay but just so we're clear, I haven't taken a stance.

JOHANNA GREECE: Okay, I hope your stance will be no though and I don't mean to attack you but I just -

1 I thought - okay, fine that's fine but I hope you'll
2 be against it then because this is really important
3 and these people are lying and saying they are going
4 to give jobs. I understand as an actor and a
5 freelancer how hard it is to get work but this is not
6 going to help us. I don't know if you guys remember
7 that woman who was set on fire in the subway system.
8 Things like that are going to happen way more if you
9 allow this casino to go forward because when people
10 get drunk, when they do things like gambling, it
11 becomes more dangerous. We've got schools and for
12 goodness sakes, I was at Coney all day yesterday. It
13 was a beautiful day. I loved it but there's already,
14 we have a problem with like broken bottles on the
15 beach. That's going to get ten times worse if we
16 have this casino.

18 I can't believe this is even something that's
19 being considered. This should be a landmark place.
20 I've been going - I'm 41, I've been going since when
21 I was a kid my parents took me to Coney. An Oscar
22 winning movie was made here, Nora was made here.
23 It's not going to happen next time. Wildlife is
24 going to be hurt. Atlantic City, I was just reading
25 on line before this has been losing money. Like I

1 said, a lot of poor people really quickly, the last
2 point I'll make is the last zoning meeting I came to
3 for this, Thor Equities bus people over from an
4 adjacent community and the woman I asked, I said to
5 her, she was this poor woman who was missing teeth
6 with her walker and I said, "well, why do you want
7 the casino?" "I just want to gamble."

9 These are the people that they're going after.
10 People who can really be hurt and are really
11 susceptible. So, please vote no. We need this
12 sanctuary in the city especially with everything
13 going on. Thank you.

14 UNIDENTIFIED: Could you please add that
15 construction jobs are not community jobs.

16 JOHANNA GREECE: That's true. They are and they
17 will not hire them. I know people who have worked in
18 casinos. They're not going to hire you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay, we have one more
20 in person. The name is Obsidian.

21 OBSIDIAN: Hi, my name is Obsidian. I am the
22 current raining Ms. Coney Island and I wasn't
23 planning on speaking today but I feel that it's
24 really important to just highlight everything that
25 community is saying against a casino because as

1 someone who has been very involved in this community,
2 I have been speaking with a lot of the local
3 residents including the people who run the Wonder
4 Wheel. The people who run Lunar Park and none of
5 them are in favor of it. Coney Island USA, which is
6 a huge nonprofit arts organization that I work for is
7 very much against a casino. I also have had people
8 come up to me and ask me to do what I can to help not
9 let what happened to Atlantic City happen to the
10 people here on Coney Island. So I want to do
11 whatever I can to help prevent that and I hope that
12 you all do as well.

14 Also, one thing I wanted to comment on from
15 earlier was when asked about the safety plan for
16 public safety, they mentioned lighting. If lighting
17 improved the safety then Vegas would be considered
18 safe, you know? And I'm sorry, it's not. The same
19 with the historically Time Square. So many lights,
20 so much crime.

21 So, I'm not really sure what the logic is there
22 but I also just I am seeing the community being
23 divided over this and that's really painful to watch
24 and I just hope that at the end of all of this, we
25 can listen to the facts, we can look at the

statistics and we can think about historically the damage that casinos have done to communities. So, thank you so much for the time, appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Ron Greenburg. Ron Greenburg, are you here? Alright, so Ron Greenburg is not - Ron Greenburg; you say he's here. He's here, okay. Ron Greenburg? No, Ron we can't -

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: We called you three - we called you three times Ron.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, we're going to transition to Eddie Mark.

UNIDENTIFIED: Thanks for showing me who you really are, really appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: We're going to shhhh, please. Thank you. We're going to transition online. Mr. Greenburg if you want, you could still submit written testimony to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

We're going to transition to online. We're going to first start with Eddie Mark, Christian Molarry(SP?), Charles Denson, and Laurie Gold. We'll begin first with Eddie Mark.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

EDDIE MARK: Hi, my name is Eddie Mark and I'm the District Manager here in Community Board 13 and what

you guys have been hearing people have been saying yes and no to this casino. Right now, we are, the Community Board had a public hearing, a community meeting and we also had a general board meeting and in that meeting, we basically voted uh 11 voted for the demapping, 24 had voted against the demapping, to abstain and 3 relinquished their vote.

Overall, the board has voted against the demapping of this project. As also uh we heard and understand that this doesn't just effect our community but the surrounding community and we understand that there are problems with the traffic, problems with gambling, additional gambling, with crime, and things like this that we haven't even addressed when bringing a casino into the area.

So, we voted against this project for the demapping and you know that's what the Community Board has spoken. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Eddie. Next, we'll hear from Christian Molarry.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin. You may begin.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Christian Molarry?

CHRISTIAN MOLARRY: Thank you, sorry. Good afternoon. My name is Christian Molarry and I speak

only for myself. I'm a Coney Island Polar Bear, a member of Coney Island USA. My household supports the ocean, the arts, our local bars and small businesses. The New York State Plunge and the Mermaid Parade. I live here, serve here, and show up for this place year around.

Coney Island is not for sale. This project threatens to alter the character and fabric of our community, what they call development is just displacement with glossier branding. Developers want to demap public streets, including parts of Bowery and West 12th to build a 1.3 million square foot casino resort with a hotel, convention center and skybridges. Demapping would disrupt our historic street grid and cut essential links between neighborhoods and the boardwalk. It prioritizes luxury over public access and undermines the inclusive spirit that defines Coney Island.

One overlooked fact, West 12th Street is a designated fire lane and vital emergency route. The plan would erase it, turning it into a private driveway for a 1,500 car garage. That's not just rezoning, it's a public safety risk in a dense, climate vulnerable neighborhood every second matters

and those skybridges designed to trap casino patrons inside, bypassing the shops, restaurants and street life that give this place soul that's not revitalization. That's economic extraction from small business and cultural institutions that have weathered every storm, literal and political. Coney Island is a resilient living community but our infrastructure is already stretched thin. We are climate vulnerable, transit congested and deeply interconnected. This isn't just a bad fit, it's a corporate takeover. One that endangers the safety, culture and future of our neighborhood. I urge you to vote no on the land use application and no on demapping our public streets. Protect the culture, protect the ocean, protect the community, vote no. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Charles Denson.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

CHARLES DENSON: Hello, I'm Charles Denson, Director of the Coney Island History Project located on West 12th Street. The casino developers earlier showed a photo and said casinos are a Coney Island tradition. Coney Island has never had a gambling casino. Restaurants and dance halls used to call

themselves casinos, which just means house or little house. It has nothing to do with gambling, so get your facts straight and learn some history and stop showing that photo.

Casino developers are asking for demapping so that they can buy air rights to build skybridges connecting Thor Equities properties. The purpose of this skybridge is to make sure that no one leaves the casino once they enter it. They seek to cut people off from all surrounding streets and attractions and keep them inside gambling until their money runs out. The casino has a business plan based on addiction and greed. The developers are asking to transform Stillwell Avenue and the Bowery into a pedestrian mall that will funnel people into the casino.

Transforming Stillwell Avenue will limit emergency access to the beach, boardwalk and amusements for nearly a quarter mile stretch of the world's most crowded beachfront.

The streets of the developers want to take for the casino service fire lanes used by emergency vehicles and closing the streets would also limit disability parking and wheelchair accessibilities to the beach and boardwalk, a clear violation of federal

ADA accessibility standards. The developers also want to transform West 12th Street into a four lane driveway for the casino. The project's environmental impact statement confirms that this will create a chokepoint and traffic nightmare at this intersection and all along Surf Avenue and through Coney Island. Existing businesses will have their deliveries blocked, repair vehicles and utility trucks, can no longer be able to serve any businesses south of Surf Avenue.

PS 90 is located on West 12th Street, a block north of the proposed casino. When casino gridlock backs up on West 12th Street, it will have a negative

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SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

CHARLES DENSON: The city should reject the demapping of these public streets.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time is expired.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear from Laurie Gold.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Laurie Gold, if you can hear me, please unmute and you may begin. Oh Laurie if

you're on the phone, is it star 9? You could press star 9 to unmute.

LAURIE GOLD: Hello?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you.

LAURIE GOLD: Can you hear Laurie Gold?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you.

LAURIE GOLD: Okay I'm at JFK and I'm going through security; can you call me on the next group?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I got you Ms. Gold. Yes, yes I can. Yes I can.

LAURIE GOLD: Alright, thank you. Thank you. Can I put this with my item?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Shh, please. The next group we're going to call consists of Victory Heins, Amanda Doosh, Rein Riley and Ida Sanoff. We'll begin first with Victory Heins.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Victoria Heins, Victoria Heins.

VICTORIA HEINS: Hello, my name is Victoria Heins and I am here to testify against the development in Coney Island. My main concerns with the building of the new development in this area are the loss of many

businesses on and in Coney Island and the loss of rides of Luna Park, Amusement Park.

From my research, it seems that the Coney development will displace many of Coney Islands structures and this pains me. They say that this development will bring change to the area but I'm here to tell you that change is only good if it's done for good. This project seems to be for the sole purpose of money. I appreciate progress and I think we all could use a boost in economy and jobs but what it does not need is a new casino or even hotel. Instead you can invest money in renovating the already existing neighborhood and repair housing or businesses so that the residents of Coney Island can thrive. This can add businesses and give jobs without compromising the existing structure of the city.

As a New Yorker, I had concerns that gentrification might happen if the casino is built. This will appeal not to the residents already living in Coney Island but to the hip, young, hip new generations will be looking for somewhere to live, work or eat after college and want to shop, either live in Coney Island after the development is done.

Prices of homes and apartments will start to become higher. People who were born and raised on the island will be persuaded to sell their places to a younger generation and they will be forced to sell for the right price. This is what will start to happen to Coney Island if we are not careful to protect it.

As a Brooklynite, I go against the Coney development and still propose investments in refreshing already existing buildings. This way, you do not have to lose any historic integrity of one of the most iconic places in NYC. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear from Amanda Doosh(SP?). Amanda, you may begin.

AMANDA DEUTCH: Hi, my name is Amanda Deutch and I'm going to speak really fast to get it in in two minutes. I've worked in Coney Island for the last 20 years. I also run a nonprofit there and I am a teacher, which is why I cannot be there in person today.

I come from several generations of Coney Islanders and I'm a resident of Southern Brooklyn. This is not just an amusement area, people live here. Look at Joseph Lott. As other members of our

community have said, he has owned property for well over 15 years. If they cared about the community, if they cared about New York, if they cared about the amusement area, those would not be empty lots with rats and no running water. I urge anybody on this committee to come walk through Coney Island and see Thor Equities year around properties.

Next up, if you want to talk about small businesses and history, they tore down the Hinderson building on Surf Avenue and Stillwell and kicked out small family businesses. That was a viable landmarkable building. This demapping is solely to line the pockets of those who are proposing it. They are taking away our public streets to line their pockets. These are everyone's streets, not a billionaire slumlords. For those on the Committee, I urge you to look at New York history and which side of it you want to be on. Is the demolition of Penn Station remembered favorably? Do the right thing here.

Lastly, in today's proposal, they mentioned that tenant and booth workers may use their entrance to get to their businesses. They said they will give an acre of land to the public. I think this says it

all. They've used stakeholders and residents as tenants and booth workers and offer New York City an acre. Think about that.

If they want to apply for the casino license, they can but the demapping should not go through. If you approve the demapping, you are essentially helping to greenlight their casino. They should propose to build on the land they already have. Oh shit I lost my -

In addition please note that they do not have a Plan B. They were not able to answer how much money they have already invested in the community. How could you not know that figure? They do not have a rendering ready for West 12th Street. I also want to mention that there is not one but three, there are three schools within a block of this proposed demapping. They have not mentioned anything about how this will impact the schools.

I also work on West 12th Street.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time is expired.

AMANDA DEUTCH: Thank you. I urge you to look at the environmental impact statement. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear from Rein Riley.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

REIN RILEY: Hi, my name is Rein Riley and I fiercely reject stupidly names Coney projects. I live in Flushing right by City Field where another developer, Steven Collen, is harassing us with the same kind of racially targeted proposal and Coney Island is very special to me. I grew up performing full time since I was five and in circus acrobatics, so I when I moved to NYC, Coney was the first big place I went.

All of the special days were spent by the boardwalk, always at the freak show. I brought my dad there. We celebrated weddings there, right? I recovered from a tonsillectomy and then rode a cyclone out of pride. I performed at Coney in the theaters on the boardwalk throughout the park, peed my pants right? None of the casino developers even live in Coney much less have any precious memories.

I'm lucky to have done a lot of high profile gigs all over the tristate area including performances at casinos nearby and also in Atlantic City and Atlantic City if you didn't know is rated among the poorest cities in the state and the median income is per person \$24,000. Last year, the residents still

1 didn't even have their own supermarket and it's home
2 to gruesome crime. Like when a serial killer
3 targeted sex workers and arranged their bodies in a
4 drainage with their arms stretched towards the light
5 like that. And since 2019, I have proudly been a sex
6 worker. I have seen some things behind the scenes
7 and I'm active in sex working united in activism.
8 So, I've worked in all kinds of venues, through all
9 kinds of jobs. Las Vegas succeeds because it's Las
10 Vegas. Coney Island is Coney Island, so if you
11 really want that huge crowd and that volume and
12 customer base that Vegas attracts, the first step is
13 to at least leave the lights raveled.

14
15 So, why is it okay for casinos to steal from us
16 and then it's not okay for us to serve each other
17 legally?

18 So, like the previous testifier and many people,
19 I'm also a wheelchair user and when I lost my ability
20 to walk safely in the last couple years, I was
21 devastated by the restrictions and Coney Island is
22 the one reliable place I can always go to and still
23 have independent access.

24

25

Transforming Stillwell Avenue will severely limit emergency access to the beach, boardwalk and amusements for nearly a quarter mile.

In conclusion, demapping the streets will disrupt stores, family businesses -

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time is expired.

AMANDA DEUTCH: Thank you very much and we can have public services that are flashy and attractive year round free and that don't involve harming people. I vote for park. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Ida.

JEFF SANOFF: Hello this is Jeff Sanoff, for some reason my wife's name was on there but I'd like to use my testimony. Is that okay Chair?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No, it's not okay Jeff okay. We're now going to Ida Sanoff.

IDA SANOFF: Coming.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Jeff, can you please mute?

IDA SANOFF: Ida Sanoff is here. Ida Sanoff is here, do you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, I hear you Ida, go ahead.

IDA SANOFF: Okay, good morning Chair Riley and other members of the Subcommittee on Zoning and

Franchises and Council Member Justin Brannan. I am reading testimony of Jeffrey Sanoff, who is Chairperson of CB13. At the low interest Committee on the demapping ULURP on January 15, 2025, the vote was 2 in favor, 7 opposed and one abstention. The ULURP for this application was voted down.

At the general board meeting on January 21, 2025, the Board voted 11 in favor, 24 opposed, 2 abstentions, 3 relinquished. The ULURP was voted down. The Community Board has spoken loudly rejecting the demapping ULURP. The proposed ULURP will have detrimental impacts on our community as follows: 30 followers and additional visitors every single day. It will be July 4th every day in Coney Island. Far Away Street will be given to the casino developers, parts of West 12th and Stillwell Avenue. Our space will be sold. Casino parking will basically take over all of West 12th Street, which is also an entrance to Dino's Wonder Wheel.

West 15th Street will be taken over by tour bus staging. The traffic will be forced on to Surf Avenue which is already crowded year round. Emergency vehicle access will be compromised. We have already had people die here in the summer

because ambulances could not get through the traffic. There is limited options for traffic. There is limited options for traffic during the season and this will make the traffic; this will make every day the summer season. It will provide permanent changes to the neighborhoods ability to get around. It will have a year around impact on residents and Lunar Park Amusements is not in favor of this and they submitted a letter. Dino's Wonder Wheel Park is not in favor of this.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time is expired.

IDA SANOFF: And they submitted a letter. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Ida. Ida, did you read Jeff's testimony?

IDA SANOFF: Yes, I did.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay.

IDA SANOFF: And I stated that at the beginning.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. So, Jeff doesn't have to testify no more; I just wanted to make that clear, correct?

IDA SANOFF: Okay, correct.

JEFF SANOFF: Correct. Thank you very much Chair.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: So, we're going to take you off the list Jeff. Just wanted to make that clear.

IDA SANOFF: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Alright, thank you. Okay, the next group I'm going to call up consists of Sheila Smalls, Bruce Silverglade, Reverend Kevin McCall, and Christopher Leon Johnson. We will begin first with Christopher Leon Johnson.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah, hello. Hello Chair Riley, Justin Brannan. My name is Christopher Leon Johnson and I am showing my support to the Brooklyn Casino. On the record, 32BJ store for the enter ease of access. So, but at the same time, I'm not representing 32BJ. I am showing my support to the Coney Island BID. I support this casino because Brooklyn is left out in a lot of things. Shout out to the Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, Queens VP while at the same time that RBP Reynoso needs to start doing the right thing for his borough and bring it home for the people. I understand he's trying to fight upstairs for uhm downstairs on the 42 floor for the BMT but at the same time, if you care about Brooklyn, the economic crisis in Brooklyn Reynoso, you need to say yes to this project.

At the same time Mr. Justin Brannan, you run for Comptroller and I understand that you don't want to lose schedule to Coney Island but at the same time you need to put your foot down as a man. Not as a politician, put your foot down as a man and say look, I care about the economic development of Brooklyn. I care about the money that's being flowed into the district and you need to vote; you need to support this project.

At the same time, I'm calling out Mr. George Staratopalus who is running for City Council. He needs to vote yes. He needs to show support for this project too. I'm calling on the whole City Council to vote yes on this project. I'm calling on Justin Brannan to support this project because we need the jobs. We need the jobs. All the unions - we need the work. This is going to benefit the communities. I believe that this is going to help out the Black, young Black male generations. The Black population and give them jobs in which will lower the crime rate in the City of New York. It will lower the crime rate and the prison population of young Black men in Coney Island and the neighboring of Bay Ridge and Seagate.

So, like I said, I'm calling on the City Council to vote yes for this project. Vote in favor for this. Brooklyn needs the money. We need this in Brooklyn. I don't live in the district but like I said, we need this in Brooklyn.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you for your testimony Christopher. Next, we're going to hear from Reverend Kevin McCall.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Thank you.

REVEREND KEVIN MCCALL: Good afternoon everyone and thank you for the opportunity to speak today to Chair Riley, to Council Member Brannan. I want to start by saying something that might surprise a lot of folks. I spent my whole life opposing no major development projects like this one, especially in Brooklyn for years. I stood at committee meetings and fighting and making sure that neighborhoods didn't get sold off to the highest bidder and I fought against overdevelopment and displacement against promises that were never kept. So, if you would have asked me a couple years ago where I stand about the idea of a Coney Island project, I would have told you no way. But sometimes in some things as we devolve, we have to be honest with ourselves to

see what makes sense. Not our values, not our principles but our perspectives because I've come to the realization about spending time in Coney Island after listening and being in that area for a long time, it's not - it isn't about just a flashy casino or a tourist destination. It's about a neighborhood that had been forgotten for the city for too long. This is about jobs, investment, opportunity and for once, it feels like the community has a real seat at the table.

Coney Island has been treated like an afterthought. It's only remembering in the summer time when the beaches and people come to bring their children but after Labor Day hits, tourists go home so does the job, so does dollars and the people are still trying to raise their families, still trying to pay rent, still trying to find full time work in this part time economy.

So, I'm grateful that this isn't just a casino. It's a chance to create a full economic ecosystem. It's a chance to turn Coney Island into a destination for that works for everyone, not just visitors but the residents. And I look forward-

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time is expired.

REVEREND KEVIN MCCALL: I just want to add one thing. Can I add one more thing?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead.

REVEREND KEVIN MCCALL: Coney Island deserves more, not just in the summer, all year around but in the project. This isn't about gambling. It's about hope and finally betting on the people of Coney Island. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Reverend. Next, we'll hear from Sheila Smalls.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

SHEILA SMALLS: Yes, good afternoon. Good afternoon I'm in favor of the street demapping action. I'd like to talk about Surf Avenue and 12th Street. At one time, we did have a foot bridge leading from the train station to the boardwalk, which it made it very safe for the people who were going back and forth. And it also alleviated all of the people that were turning right on right into the traffic on Surf Avenue from West 12th Street. So, the Committee Board voted to take that down. They were saying it costs too much to put it back up. The Community Board also took streets that were going all the traffic going into Coney Island that was going

1 out of Coney Island. They diverted and changed the
2 block, so instead of a block going up and one going
3 down, they made all the blocks going into Coney
4 Island and only making a few coming back out of Coney
5 Island. 60 Precinct is another deterrent with the
6 traffic. What they do is hold the people hostage
7 that are in the area that comes for the concerts. So
8 that the people from the baseball field can go out
9 and mind you, they're directing drunk people out of
10 the baseball field okay and holding the rest of the
11 community hostage in the meantime.

12 Okay, so we have the Community Board and DOT to
13 thank for all the traffic jams. How could you sit
14 there and put the blocks going up and nothing coming
15 out? Okay, so they need to put that back the way it
16 was. And because they want to do the demapping and
17 make the foot bridges, I think that would alleviate
18 some of the traffic. I think that Community Board 13
19 is very not in favor of anything good for the people
20 in the -

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time is expired.

22 SHEILA SMALLS: Okay, I'm going to say -

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Ms. Smalls.
24
25

SHEILA SMALLS: For the rest of Coney Island, because they don't want us to have anything.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Ms. Smalls.

SHEILA SMALLS: Okay and I'm saying to uhm my Councilman, why can't they bring in -

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Ms. Smalls. We have to end your testimony. Thank you so much.

SHEILA SMALLS: Why can't they bring in the ferry?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

SHEILA SMALLS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Next. I'm just going to ask, when the time is expired and you got to continue, you could submit your testimony online. We have over 100 people online wanting to testify. So, we try to give everyone two minutes, okay. So, if everyone online could hear the voice, please wrap it up after you hear the bell.

SHEILA SMALLS: I didn't hear a bell, sorry.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Next, we're going to call on Paula Jenkins, Audrey Garrett, Bailey Kalese and Charles Arnstein. We're going to hear first from Paula Jenkins.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

PAULA JENKINS: Hello, you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes.

PAULA JENKINS: Okay, good afternoon. My name is Paula Jenkins. I'm the Tenant Association President at the Marble Houses in Brooklyn. I've lived there most of my life and I've witnessed both attention and neglect that come with public housing.

Community kids and seniors have no place to go. The kids need jobs, seniors need activities, I believe a casino in Coney Island is a solution. Kids could be trained and land good jobs. They could get certified for union jobs. Perhaps be part of the construction crew. They could hire a whole staff.

Kids need opportunities to gain skills and get employment. Our seniors look forward to our organized ships in Atlantic City with Coney right here, quick trip you don't have to leave the city. Safety, train stations are right across the street, come out of the casino, get back on the train, go home safely.

With the casino cops next to Coney Island, they could keep their entertainment activities local without having to travel out of New York. NYCHA residents deserve more opportunities to improve our

quality of life year around. I fully support the Coney Casino project and I hope you will support it to. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Audrey Garrett. Audrey Garrett if you can hear me, please begin.

AUDREY GARRETT: Audrey Garrett, can she come in?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, we hear you Audrey, go ahead. Okay, Audrey Garrett are you there?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, we don't have Audrey. Can I have Bailey Kalese?

BAILEY KALESE: Hi, can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes we can hear you. Go ahead.

BAILEY KALESE: Okay. My name is Bailey Kalese; I am a Brooklyn resident and performer. One thing I've noticed with all these proceedings regarding the demapping, I need to point out the lack of specifics not only from Thor Equities but those speaking in support of the demapping and casino construction. You speak repeatedly with the same vague talking points might I mention, you speak of job opportunities but do not talk pay rates. Give actual numbers. Also note, these are jobs not careers. You

1 speak of economic growth but ignore that casino
2 patrons coming to gamble will not want to come to
3 your tiny businesses. You speak of a walkway into
4 Coney Island but this is a walkway into the casino
5 and aimed to keep people inside, not going to the
6 small businesses.
7

8 The performers that others have mentioned that
9 they love will be priced out of venues to perform in
10 in exchange for high priced censored safe and generic
11 entertainment within the casino, not the freak shows
12 that we know and love. People have mentioned crime
13 and struggle to get around and park already so why
14 add to that? As Councilman Brannan has said, \$2
15 million is a drop in the bucket compared to the
16 billions that Joe said in Thor would read. That is
17 if they don't abandon this project and leave it empty
18 again. A casino is not the only growth opportunity.
19 It is not a once in a lifetime opportunity. We need
20 to pursue ventures that will harmonize with Coney
21 Island to its stark identity, not erase it.

22 Mr. Brannan, you have said you love Coney Island,
23 Luna Park, the Cyclone, the Polar Bear Plunge, the
24 Mermaid Parade. Please do not be known as somebody
25 who contributed to destroying that. A good way to

get votes for Comptroller is to show that you are for the people, not the billionaires. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Next, we'll hear from Charles Arnstein. Charles if you can hear me, please unmute and you may begin.

CHARLES ARNSTEIN: Charles Arnstein the Faith Team leader for the National Stop Predatory Gambling Foundation. All religions agree that gambling is a menace to society to the best interest of moral, social, economic and spiritual life and destructive of good government. Why? In gambling only one percent come out ahead, the other 99 percent lose. Casino gambling throughout the US, only the casino wins sucking money out of and causing harm to the community within a 30 mile radius despite of all the positive people try to say. But why? How do casinos cause harm? Just as the tobacco industry intentionally increases nicotine, sugars, flavors and menthol in tobacco to intentionally create addictions, the gambling industry casinos intentionally create addictions to exploit their patrons. How? They make it hard for people to leave the building. They rig the games per near misses encouraging maybe next time. They disguise losses

with wins. They provide a false sense of control, such as in Black Jack games. They have no windows or clocks causing the gamblers to lose track of time. They use lights, sounds and music given the sense that everybody is winning. They provide free food and drinks. They place ATM's at restrooms, near the action where people get their money. A quick restroom relief so they can get back to gambling quicker. They use chips that reduces a gamblers sense of what they've waged. They have increased the speeder games, such as slots. Increase the speed gives a false sense of hope. Maybe the winning will come sooner. They create a false sense of gamblers mind that after a horrible losing streak, they just might win the next.

All religions view casinos as wolves in sheep's clothing, ready to attack and exploit manipulating local governments for approval and blessing so they can legally steal from the community. Receiving \$1 billion or more for a casino is not worth the pay politicians will inflict on the community through a casino. Please reject this casino. Any questions?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No questions Charles. Thank you so much for testifying though. One more time for

Audrey Garrett. Audrey Garrett, are you there?

Okay, the next panel we're going to here and we're going to transition to in person real quick. We're going to hear from Ron Greenburg. Is there anyone else in person that wants to testify, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms. Thank you.

After Ron Greenburg, we're going to hear from Laurie Gold, Maribelle Rodriguez, Emily Ganedov, Christina Nelson and Shannon Williams. Ron, you may begin. Ron if you could press the mic. Thank you.

RON GREENBURG: Good afternoon. My name is Ron Greenburg; I'm a Board Member at Brooklyn Community Board 13 and a board member of the Neighborhood Advisory Board for Brooklyn 13 speaking on behalf of myself.

I strongly support to approve the Coney development application presented today for the purposes of an amendment to New York City map for the demapping action as it is reasonable and appropriate and beneficial to and not egregiously harmful to the environment of the community.

The Coney Casino is a once in a generation opportunity to return to the peoples playground amusement district to its former glory as a year

around destination while simultaneously rejuvenating nearby disadvantaged communities.

The benefits of the project far outweigh the risks and those who oppose the proposal suffer from closed mindedness, myopic vision and are unable or unwilling to fathom the totality of the projects conceptual design.

The Coney casinos investment includes the Coney trust that will adhere to public as far as accountability to ensure transparency and accountability and community oversight. Arguments against the Coney casinos development are not in the best interest of the local community and are actually nimbyism and holds back progress. Security in local community will be greatly enhanced from the large influx of additional police officers and other first responders necessitated by the Coney Casino and crime will not increase. For example, resorts world New York City Casino, located by Ozone Park in Queens did not cause an adverse impact on crime and similar social economic distressed communities located relatively nearby in the East New York and Jamaica.

Major traffic increases caused by the Coney Casino will not ruin residential and commercial

quality of life or endanger lives as even the most highly congested streets of midtown Manhattan function adequately and provide timely emergency vehicles responses in spite of car density. Damage your mental health from having more opportunities to gamble as justification of being against is specious reasoning as online gambling on smart phones are now ubiquitous and only a few clicks away for all.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, thank you Ron.

RON GREENBURG: Thank you very much. I support the project.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. There being no questions, you're now excused Ron. We're going to transition to back online - to online testimony. We're going to begin first with Laurie Gold. Ms. Gold, are you there? Laurie Gold?

LAURIE GOLD: Can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes.

LAURIE GOLD: Can you hear me now?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you Ms. Gold.

LAURIE GOLD: Okay, thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead.

LAURIE GOLD: And there about to push off, so I'm going to try to speak very quickly. I'm Laurie E. Gold. My family has lived in Coney Island for 60 years. We were the initial tenants of Bright Water Towers. My family has been very involved with the city for the better. In fact, my younger sister Grace Gold, her death in 1979 was what was the impetus for New York City's façade laws which most recently were updated this year. I helped the city commission. So, my heart is in the right place.

Addressing Council Member Brannan's question about is this a good project. It's sufficive to say it could be a great project. Good projects roll in place. This is having an elephant fall on an outline of a flea and unfortunately the flea is the iconic Coney Island.

This resilience plan that they speak about, elevating themselves where there is storm surge, we're thinking is going to - okay sorry. It's going to hurt the historic Coney Island museum, which is landmarked. My final point is that this is a defacto eminent domain and has no bonified economic impact, which is what eminent domain is supposed to do. Thank you very much. Bye.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Laurie. Have a safe trip.

LAURIE GOLD: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Uhm, Maribelle Rodriguez, are you there?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Maribelle Rodriguez? Maribelle Rodriguez?

MARIBELLE RODRIGUEZ: Yes, I'm here.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: You may begin Ms. Rodriguez.

MARIBELLE RODRIGUEZ: Yes, I'm against this. I don't feel this project will benefit our community. I am totally against it as a grandmother and a great grandmother. This will not benefit our children. This is going to bring down my community. So, I don't agree with this casino being built, I'm sorry. On no for the casino.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Ms. Rodriguez. Next, we're going to hear from Emily Ganedov.

EMILY GANEDOV: Hi, yeah, my name is Emily Genedov.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Ms. Rodriguez, can you please mute? Emily, you may begin.

EMILY GANEDOV: Thank you. I'm Emily, I've been a resident of New York City for nearly 20 years now. I live in South Brooklyn and I'm a social worker. Until very recently I was actually employed in the area of workforce development, so I am certainly not opposed to bringing more jobs to our area. However, we need more than just jobs. We deserve public space, public parks, places where we can go to relax and have fun. I personally go to Coney Island at least once a week, year around to walk on the boardwalk. I'm trying to start a family and I want to be able to take my kids to the boardwalk to walk in the sun. A very basic simple quality of life aspect that we all deserve.

I do not want to be taking a young child to have to walk under a giant looming building that is destroying the existing arts and culture of our area. I know I am certainly not the only one who loves going to the Freak Bar, the Coney Island Circus Side Show. We have these incredible cultural institutions that are going to be utterly swallowed by this giant building and what we're being presented with here is a false choice. We don't have to choose between having jobs and having a beloved amusement area and

beach access to relax in after we finish our jobs.
We deserve both. We can have both. People who live
in richer areas of the city are never asked to give
up say access to Central Park or Prospect Park in
order to have jobs. So, we don't deserve to have to
give up our incredible beach community to create
those jobs. Please reject this proposal and demand
that our of our Brooklyn. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear
from Christiana Nelson.

CHRISTIANA NELSON: Hi, yes I'm Christiana
Nelson. I'm a longtime resident of Brooklyn and I
love Coney Island so much that I showed up to speak
in person and stood in the hot sun for 45 minutes
until I had to leave and I wanted to join by Zoom to
voice my strong opposition to the casino.

I've been listening to the testimony today and
what I'm hearing across the board is that people
don't want a casino. They want good jobs. They want
investment in the community and safety and
infrastructure and I want that too but I refuse to
accept this false and dangerous narrative that the
only way to bring jobs to Coney Island is by
destroying the things that make it great in the first

place. This casino will destroy this community and this beautiful family friendly tourist destination.

Let's be clear, this is about a billionaire real estate investor asking you to give away some of our precious public land for free so that he can line his pockets. I live near Barclay Center and those well developers made the neighborhood a lot of promises back then too and they have not delivered. In fact a few weeks ago, the deadline for affordable housing that they promised passed and not only are we not getting the affordable housing, they're not even paying the fines that they agreed to pay. We get nothing. Promises made are not promises kept. Coney Island is my favorite place in the city. My husband proposed to me on the Wonder Wheel. After my two kids were born, Coney Island was one of the first places we took them as babies. When my kids were toddlers, I'd take them on weekdays to the little rides and I'd enjoy seeing the groups of school kids running around having a great time. We visit multiple times in the summer and in the winter and I bring my kids to walk on the boardwalk and visit the aquarium.

People come to Coney Island to spend time with their families to go on dates, to spend time in a beautiful place outside. It's a place for joy and it's open to everyone. Please, I am personally appealing to the politicians who have the power to vote on this today. Don't let billionaire greed destroy my favorite place in New York City.

I heard you talking on New York One about how you support the people and -

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time is expired.

CHRISTIANA NELSON: Actions speak louder than words. Actions speak louder than words. Vote no. Take action today and vote no on this disastrous proposal. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we're going to hear from Shannon Williams.

SHANNON WILLIAMS: Good afternoon everyone. My name is Shannon, born and raised Native of the sweet Republic of Brooklyn. Unfortunately I was displaced from Brooklyn maybe three or four - well three years ago due to gentrification and increased rent and I had to relocate but when I heard about the news about this project, it broke my heart and I had to say something or do something. I feel like Coney Island

is not just an amusement park, it is a landmark. People in Europe, people in Africa, all want to come to Coney Island to experience the Ferris Wheel, to get a Nathan's hotdog, to be on the boardwalk and to experience the culture of Brooklyn. If we get rid of Coney Island and bring a casino, Brooklyn is dead. There is no more Brooklyn. Brooklyn has a pulse that is barely held onto and if we get rid of Coney Island, we'll no longer have that.

I feel like once we bring in this casino, we'll have nothing but an increase in the drugs that's already there. An increase in prostitution. There will be an increase in a huge amount of traffic you can barely get through on a regular weekend. Imagine if there's a casino there. You know and what - just piggybacking off what Christiana said, people in in the neighborhood don't want a casino. A casino is not going to bring anything positive. We need more jobs. Why don't we increase the protection when it come to police? Why don't we increase when it comes to schooling? Why don't we think about other ways that we can help the community that I don't think a casino will help us at all. I think that you know why don't we put in Howard Beach or we put it in Riis

1 Beach. We already have a staple in Coney Island and
2 if we get rid of that, I don't think that the
3 neighborhood will prosper from this. I don't - I
4 feel like I've listened to the testimony of the
5 people that are from Coney Island and again, they
6 don't want anything more than jobs and they want
7 safety in their neighborhoods and if we put focus on
8 that, I think that we'd benefit better than just
9 putting something as vial as a casino where people
10 come to spend the money that they don't already have
11 and to waste it. It's just not going to be
12 beneficial and that's my thoughts.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. The next panel
15 I'm going to call on consist of Renee Gary, Shanna
16 Blankenship(SP?), Faristra Safi(SP?), and Jennifer
17 Ponsner(SP?). We'll begin first with Renee Gary. Do
18 we have a Renee Gary?

19 RENEE GARY: Yes, can you hear me now?

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, go ahead.

21 RENEE GARY: Yes, my name is Renee Gary. I am
22 from Coney Island and I feel that Coney Island don't
23 have nothing at all, nothing at all. So, with the
24 casino being up there, it will really be beautiful.
25 It will help the seniors, because the seniors don't

have nothing to do and that's why it's the buildings. They're building bigger buildings in Coney Island so it ain't sink them, it ain't going to sink now.

So, therefore yes, we do need a casino out there. It will bring something beautiful to our neighborhood and to our community and it will bring jobs for our children and we will have something to do.

Yes, I do say have the casino out there please. We need it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Next, I'm going to call on Shanna Blankenship.

SHANNA BLANKENSHIP: Hi, can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes.

SHANNA BLANKENSHIP: Hi, uhm, I'm from Coney Island, been living there all my life. I have my children there, my family from there. One of the first people who lived in Coney Island. I'm totally against the casino because it's not going to benefit the community. We do want jobs and I am for change. I've been wanting change at Coney Island for years now and all I've seen was Thor, Thor buying up property, buying up property and just leaving it there. If they really cared about our community, they would have been giving us something for jobs.

People talk about it will bring in jobs for our young men, yes construction for a short period of time. Once that's done, it's over and then the casino jobs are not going to give you enough to live. We already can't afford the cost of living now and then they want to bring this in to make it harder. No one is going to leave a casino to go support our small businesses. We already have to outsource to go to get things because we are constantly losing our small businesses in our community. I just strongly oppose it. I don't think it's right. We already deal with extreme congestion and this would just make it ten times worse. I have to leave and go to work every single morning and every day and it's not safe. I don't understand how anyone thought a casino at a place that there's one way in and one way out made any sense. I don't hear anyone talk about how it would benefit, truly benefit the community. They talk about jobs and yes, we need jobs and I want change but not to take away the culture and the history of what Coney Island represents. So, I strongly oppose it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear from Faristra Safi. Excuse me if I mispronounced your name.

FARISTRA SAFI: Good afternoon. Can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you.

FARISTRA SAFI: Okay, hi my name is Faristra Safi, I'm a third year medical student born and raised in Coney Island and I am against this casino. Sure, my home value might increase with a casino but I care more about the health, safety and future of my community more than money. As a future doctor and somebody who worked at a health center in Coney Island, I am deeply aware of the serious health challenges that Coney Island faces from high rates of comorbidity illnesses to lack of access to quality medical care. Adding a casino will only worsen these issues, gambling addiction, financial instability, and increased crime have been well documented in neighborhoods surrounding casinos such as Atlantic City.

When surveys were done for this casino proposal, were residents really asked what we need? Was anyone really asking people in Coney Island why are they unemployed? Because I'll tell you, it's not from a

1 lack of access to work. There's a lack of access to
2 education, job training and health care, especially
3 mental health care and a casino doesn't solve any of
4 that. I've been to Atlantic City many times. You
5 think casinos make jobs? I've seen employees still
6 in their uniforms, feed their paychecks into the slot
7 machines before they even leave the building and one
8 speaker before had said that casinos build careers
9 but shouldn't we be telling the kids the only way to
10 build a future is through gambling? No, we shouldn't
11 be doing that. We should try to invest their talents
12 in colleges, trade schools, internships, and small
13 businesses.
14

15 One speaker earlier was right, it's not even safe
16 to walk alone at night in Coney Island. Now imagine
17 what happens when people are walking around with cash
18 in their pockets. That's not safety, that's a set
19 up. And if there had been a casino when I was
20 younger, I might have fallen into that easy money
21 trap. Instead, I'm becoming a doctor and I have a
22 dream to come back to Coney Island and serve the
23 community as a physician. So, Coney Island deserves
24 better. We deserve hope, not another reason for
25 addiction and currently we are in a recession, so I

don't know of anybody who is gambling their money right now. So, say no to the casino. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next panel we're going to hear from consists of oh no, we didn't finish this panel. Sorry, Jennifer Ponsner, are you there?

JENNIFER PONSNER: Yes, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead Jennifer. Sorry about that.

JENNIFER PONSNER: No problem. I am a lifelong Brooklynite. I grew up just down the block from Lunar Park. The last building on Ocean Parkway. I saw Lunar Park from my bedroom window and I went to Junior High School at Mark Twain in Coney Island and just two years ago, I took my engagement pictures at Coney Island.

I want to echo what everybody from the neighborhood has said as well as everybody who especially the historian who spoke about the history. When I was at Mark Twain Junior High School, the first paper; I'm a journalist. The first paper I ever wrote at 13 maybe was the history of Coney Island and how this was a center of tourism for the entire world in the 1900's, early 1900's. You can

only destroy Coney Island once. Those short term jobs will go away. The economic disaster that casinos bring. The health, the financial instability, the economic and social instability that casinos bring, that lasts forever but destroying the beating heart of Brooklyn. Destroying the beating heart of one of the tourism centers, that one of the last remaining affordable and accessible places for families to spend their time. That lasts forever. Do the right thing, preserve the beating heart of Brooklyn. Do not destroy it for short term gains for billionaires. We the people of Brooklyn and the people of New York, will remember the politicians who either do the right thing or who do the wrong thing and sell us out to extract well from our communities via false promises of financial investment that we know will never come. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. The next panel we are going to hear from consists of John Quijije(SP?). Excuse me if I mispronounced your name and Bruce Silverglade. Also Keith Suber. We'll begin first with Keith Suber. Keith? Keith Suber? Okay, we'll move onto John, John, your last name is spelled Q-u-i-j-i-j-e.

KEITH SUBER: Can you guys hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, go ahead Keith.

KEITH SUBER: Good afternoon. Good afternoon.

My name is Keith Suber. I'm a long time community resident. I'm very involved with getting jobs for the people from the neighborhood. I hear a lot of the people talk about how Thor Equity has left their properties undeveloped for years. You have to understand as a business owner; this is an intensive plan. So, they've been planning and waiting for this opportunity to come. You don't want to put up something and then have to tear it down.

It's not that they have been neglecting the neighborhood. Thor Equities has done a lot and I'm quite sure they will continue to do a lot and one of the main focuses I know is traffic, congestion issues, but I'm quite sure they will fix the problem. The city planning commission, the - you guys, the City Council. I'm quite sure you could put a plan together and make it accessible for people to get in and out of emergency vehicles and I'm just like; you look at the history of life. One of my favorite cartoons was the Flintstones. So, when they introduced the Jetsons, I didn't know what was going

on but now look, we have a microwave, we have flying cars, we have TV's, remote control. So we have to prepare our children for the future, which is this is what it is. It has to become modernized. Coney Island is a great place. It's a place of amusement. It's what - the name itself is what it was built on.

So, we would love to see the growth and development of new things coming to the neighborhood by the casino, so I say yes to the Coney.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Keith. Next we'll hear from John Quijije.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: John? John you could press star 9 to unmute.

JOHN QUIJIJE: Hello, can you hear me now?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can.

JOHN QUIJIJE: Hi, hello. My name is John Quijije; I am a 22 year old resident in Brooklyn and I oppose this casino being on Coney Island as it stands as more of a means to gain large access money for billionaires and the upper middle class. This casino is not going to help anyone in Coney Island. It's going to cause more harm than good. A lot of people in Brooklyn are already struggling with their

rents and job prices or jobs are hard to find and jobs with good pay are even harder to find. So, no one is going to go out to a casino when there's a recession with Trump in office actively targeting our communities here. Yeah, I'm sorry, I'm new to this. This is my first time trying to participate in something like this but having a casino built in Coney Island really isn't going to help anyone, especially the future generation that most of the people my age are scared due to financial reasons. Uhm, and I know a lot of like my parents, my cousins, my aunts, they're all struggling too financially. This building project is not going to help anyone. I do not think it should be out in Coney Island. Coney Island is known for being a place of community and gathering. I love going to Coney Island and a casino is just going to destroy that for everyone. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No, thank you for your time and testifying John. Hopefully we will hear from you again to testify on another project.

JOHN QUIJIJE: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Next we'll hear from Bruce Silverglade. Do we have a Bruce Silverglade?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin Bruce.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Bruce Silverglade? Okay, there's no Bruce Silverglade. Okay, alright, so we're going to stand at ease. If there is anyone else in here who hasn't testified who wants to testify, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms. If there is anyone online that we did not call, please use the raise hand function and we will call you to testify. We will stand at ease for 30 seconds.

[03:50:36]- [03:51:04]. If there is anyone online who did not testify yet, if you testified online, then we cannot take another testimony from you. If there is someone online who did not testify already, please use your raise hand function.

Okay, alright, Audrey Garrett?

AUDREY GARRETT: Yes, can you hear me now?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes we can hear you. Go ahead.

AUDREY GARRETT: Okay great, thank you. I am 25. I am a New York resident. Coney Island is a sanctuary for young people, families and New Yorkers. I have found Coney Island to be a safe haven for me. I had my birthday there. Uhm, I fell in love there. All my friends go there and the Coney would be a

1 distraction of the 442 acres and it would be
2 emotional and permanent devastation. I really want
3 to be clear that I think if we add this, this would
4 be permanent and so, we can't reverse. If we let
5 this happen, we can't get Coney, the Coney Island we
6 know and love today, we can't get it back.

7
8 The Coney talked about having an acre of
9 community space. I don't think that would be
10 sufficient. Everyone I know, all my friends, it's a
11 beautiful third space for us and having just that one
12 acre would be pretty tough. It's the best place on
13 earth. It's the best place in New York, so uhm, I'm
14 strongly against and thank you for hearing me.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Ms. Garrett. If
16 there anyone else online who wishes to testify and
17 who did not testify yet, please use the raise hand
18 function. We'll stand at ease for ten seconds.

19 [03:53:13] - [03:53:28].

20 Okay, there being no other members of the public
21 who wish to testify on LU 297 relating to the Coney
22 development proposal, the public hearing is now
23 closed and the item is laid over.

24 That concludes today's business. I would like to
25 thank the members of the public, my colleagues,

2 Subcommittee Council, Land Use and other Counsel
3 staff and the Sergeant at Arms for participating in
4 today's meeting. This meeting is hereby adjourned.
5 Thank you everyone. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date August 25, 2025