

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC
SITINGS AND DISPOSITIONS

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May 6, 2021
Start: 2:08 p.m.
Recess: 2:45 p.m.

HELD AT: Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 1)

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Inez D. Barron
Peter A. Koo
Daneek Miller
Mark Treyger
Laurie Cumbo
Vanessa Gibson

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DISPOSITIONS

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: P C recording is underway.

3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Cloud has started.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Back up is rolling.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Sergeant
6 Leonardo, you may begin to open.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good afternoon and welcome to
8 Remote New York City Council hearing for the
9 Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings and
10 Dispositions. At this time, we ask that all
11 council members and council staff turn on their
12 video for verification purposes. To minimize
13 disruptions, please place cell phones and
14 electronic devices to silent or vibrate. Thank
15 you. Chair Riley, we're ready to begin.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Good afternoon. I'm Council
17 Member Kevin Riley, Chair of the Subcommittee on
18 Landmarks, Public Sitings and Dispositions. I am
19 join... I am joined remotely today by Council Member
20 Cumbo, Council Member Miller, Council Member Koo,
21 Council Member Barron, and Council Member Miller.
22 Gibson. Excuse me.

23 Today, prior to our votes, we will be hearing
24 amendments for previously approved article 11 tax
25 exemption for the South Portland Project related to

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2 property in Brooklyn and LU 759 for property in the
3 Bronx. I recognize the council, once again, to
4 explain to these hearing procedures.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RUGOO: Thank you, Chair Riley.

6 I am Angelina Martinez Rugoo, council to the
7 subcommittee for today. Members of the public who
8 wish to testify were asked to register for today's
9 hearing.

10 If you're registered to testify and are not yet
11 signed into zoom, please sign in now and remain
12 sign in until after you have testified. If you wish
13 to testify and have not registered, please go to
14 www.council.nyc.gov to sign up now. If you are not
15 planning to testify on today's items, please watch
16 the hearing on the New York city council website.

17 All people testifying before the Subcommittee will
18 be on mute until they are recognized to testify.

19 Please confirm that your mic is unmuted before you
20 begin speaking. Public testimony will be limited
21 to two minutes per witness. If you have written
22 testimony you will like the Subcommittee to
23 consider in addition to or in lieu of appearing
24 before the Subcommittee or if you require an
25 accessible version of today's presentation, um

2 please e-mail land use testimony at
3 council.nyc.gov. Please indicate the LU number or
4 project name in the subject line of an e-mail.
5 During the hearing, council members who will like
6 to ask questions should use the zoom raise hand
7 function. The raise hand button should appear at
8 the bottom of the participant panel. I will
9 announce council members who have questions and uh
10 that they raised their hand. Witnesses are
11 reminded to remain in the meeting until they are
12 excused by the chair. Lastly, there may be
13 extended pauses that we encounter technical
14 problems. We ask that you please be patient as we
15 work through these issues. Chair Riley will now
16 continue with today's agenda.

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Angelina. I now
18 open today's public hearing on pre-considered
19 application number 2025... 15023 HAK submitted by
20 the department of housing preservation and the
21 development related to the previously approved
22 South Portland Project.

23 This application request approval of an amendment
24 to resolution 425 for the year 2018 to amend a
25 previously approved article 11 tax exemption to

2 exempt community facility space located on block
3 2003 lot 37 in the Brooklyn Council District
4 represented by Majority Leader Cumbo.

5 And before you begin, I just wanna allow Majority
6 Leader Cumbo to give any words if she would like.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you, Chair Riley.
8 Can you call hear me?

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes. We can hear you,
10 Majority Leader.

11 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Wonderful. Thank you so
12 much for hosting this important hearing. This is a
13 critically important project to me as we are.. uh
14 many of the members are beginning to wind down our
15 term. I certainly wanted to see this particular
16 project um over the finish line because of just how
17 important it is to my community.

18 I'm happy to be here this afternoon, once again,
19 to express my strong support for the Hanson Place
20 Community Plaza development on South Portland
21 Avenue. I wanna add that this is one of the um
22 oldest churches in my district. It was also a stop
23 on the Underground Railroad. It was a place for
24 abolitionist activity and it is one of the oldest
25 uh African-American and Caribbean uh Seventh Day

2 Adventist churches in Brooklyn, New York uh serving
3 a community uh that is very much in need. They are
4 known for their food pantries, their clothing
5 banks, their clothing drives. They are also known
6 in terms of disasters that happen um being the
7 recovery agent within New York City um when
8 disasters hit Caribbean uh countries which happen
9 far too often.

10 And so, this is a critically important uh
11 opportunity for the Hanson Place Seventh Day
12 Adventist Church in order to be able to continue
13 the dynamic work that they are doing in a highly
14 gentrifying community.

15 Nearly three years after the city council
16 originally approved the project with this minor
17 ammendment. It will finally be ready to complete
18 financing with HPD and break ground. This
19 partnership between the Hanson Place Seventh Day
20 Adventist Church and MDG Development Group will
21 produce over 60 low-income affordable housing units
22 for formerly homeless, 40 moderate-income
23 affordable housing units, and over 18,000 square
24 foot of community facility space for social
25 services, health services, and general community

2 programming by the church which i previously
3 mentioned. In this part of my district just
4 outside downtown Brooklyn, so much luxury
5 development has happened in recent years with few
6 connections to the longstanding local community. I
7 only wish there were more projects like this one in
8 my district because affordable housing is so scarce
9 within my community. We need to help preserve and
10 enhance longstanding community institutions like
11 the Hanson Place Church.

12 I'd like to thank HPD for putting the finishing
13 touches on this project and i urge my fellow
14 council members to support this project.

15 Thank you so much and it is an honor to be here
16 today. And I thank you so much, Chair Riley, uh
17 for hosting this important committee hearing.
18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you for your remarks,
20 Majority Leader.

21 Council, please call the applicant panel.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: The applicant panel for
23 South Portland is Libia Rothing, Nina Ritchie,
24 Steven Williams, and Phillip Petri from HPD.

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2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Council, please (inaudible) to
3 affirmation, please.

4 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Uh can the applicants
5 please raise their right hands and state their name
6 for the record? (inaudible).

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RITCHIE: Nina Ritchie.

8 PHILLIP PETRI: Phillip Petri.

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Before you begin,
10 please state...

11 STEVEN WILLIAMS: Steven Williams.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: (INAUDIBLE).

13 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Alright, Chair. I'm gonna
14 administer the affirmation now. We were waiting to
15 unmute one of the applicants. Um so now, um do you
16 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
17 nothing but the truth in your testimony before the
18 subcommittee and answer to all council member
19 questions?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RITCHIE: Yeah.

21 STEVEN WILLIAMS: I Do.

22 PHILLIP PETRI: Yeah. i do.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Before you begin,
24 please state your name and affiliation again for
25 the record. And then, you may begin.

2 CHIEF OF STAFF ROTHING: Great. Thank you, Chair
3 Riley. My name is Elizabeth Rothing. I'm the
4 Chief of Staff for the New York City Department of
5 Housing Preservation and Development. Um this land
6 use item consists of an amended tax exemption for
7 South Portland, a proposed affordable housing
8 development at 14250 South Portland Avenue, block
9 2003, lot 37 which we define as the exemption area
10 in the fort green neighborhood of Brooklyn in
11 Council District 35.

12 On June 28TH, 2018, the council approved
13 resolution number 425 which authorized a tax
14 exemption for the exemption area that is applicable
15 to all of the land and buildings. It's excludes
16 portions, if any, devoted to business, community,
17 or community facility use.

18 We are now seeking to ammend the prior resolution
19 to also... also exempt a portion of the community
20 facil... facility space in the exemption area. The
21 community facility space will be a medical facility
22 operated by a third-party healthcare provider.

23 Also, since the approval, the project has changed
24 from fee simple ownership to lease hold and uh
25 through a long-term ground lease.

2 In addition, the New York City Housing
3 Development Corporation or HDC will not be a party
4 to the regulatory treatment. Therefore, HPD is
5 before the subcommittee seeking an amendment to the
6 prior resolution to exempt from... from tax...
7 taxation, a portion of the community facility space
8 in the exemption area to add HDC as a party to the
9 regulatory agreement and to reflect the lease hold
10 interest of the ownership structure in order to
11 facilitate the creation of this affordable housing
12 development.

13 And with that, I would love to turn it over to
14 the development team for their presentation. So...

15 STEVEN WILLIAMS: Thank you. Uh my name is Steven
16 Williams, a project manager for MDG uh working on a
17 South Portland uh Community Plaza Development. Um
18 did... uh can i bring up the uh... the... the uh...

19 CHIEF OF STAFF ROTHING: The power point?

20 STEVEN WILLIAMS: Thank you.

21 CHIEF OF STAFF ROTHING: Thank you.

22 STEVEN WILLIAMS: Uh, um this is a quick
23 rendering of the project. Um the... the building
24 will be a 13-story uh building consisting of 104
25 units of affordable housing. As the council... as

2 the majority leader uh mentioned, there will be uh
3 over 61 units that will be affordable. Um and
4 those affordability will... will have uh 16 units
5 that's affordable to families earning up to 40
6 percent of the AMI, 26 units uh for families
7 earning up to 50 percent of the AMI, and 19 units
8 for uh families earning up to 60 percent of the
9 AMI. Um the... the remaining 42 units will be
10 affordable to families uh between 120 and 140 AMI.

11 The uh... the uh breakdown of the units, uh of the
12 106 units, we will have 16 studio units, uh 56 one-
13 bedroom, 20 two-bedroom units, 11 three bedrooms
14 for a total of 103 units. Uh we will have one
15 super unit uh which will be a two-bedroom to round
16 out the uh... the site. Um...

17 CHIEF OF STAFF ROTHING: Did you wanna advance the
18 slides? I... Sorry.

19 STEVEN WILLIAMS: I can... I can...

20 CHIEF OF STAFF ROTHING: Okay, There we are.
21 Okay.

22 STEVEN WILLIAMS: Yeah.

23 CHIEF OF STAFF ROTHING: You... You can let them
24 know when you wanna advance the slides and I'll...
25 and I'll...

2 STEVEN WILLIAMS: Okay, you can... you can advance.

3 CHIEF OF STAFF ROTHING: Sorry.

4 STEVEN WILLIAMS: One more. Yeah. And this... I
5 was... just went through the uh unit breakdown. Um
6 and again, to reiterate, that there will be uh
7 unit... 16 units that will be affordable for the
8 households earning up to 40 percent of the AMI, um
9 26 uh for households earning up to 50 percent of
10 the AMI, and 60... uh 19 units uh for families
11 earning up to uh 60 percent of AMI.

12 Since this project was first presented, we have
13 gone back and made the affordability deeper. Um
14 and it also comes along with 26 uh permanently
15 affordable housing through the mandatory
16 inclusionary housing uh, uh, uh zoning um approval
17 that... that was uh given through... through the
18 (inaudible). So, we have uh deep affordability uh
19 within the project.

20 Um you can advance the uh...

21 And uh for local hiring and... and minority uh
22 business uh participation, we will be working with
23 the uh... the uh buildup program and higher in NYC.

24 Our general contractor will be Latier (SIC) uh
25 Contracting and they have a lot of experience in

2 meeting and exceeding this... these uh... these uh
3 target um hiring... uh target hiring.

4 Um so, we... we're... we're very positive that
5 we'll be able to exceed that um and uh our track
6 record and working and providing uh opportunities
7 for minority businesses and local hires. Um we've
8 been able to exceed and... and this... this will be a
9 part of this project going forward. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Steven. Are... Is
11 that the end of the presentation?

12 STEVEN WILLIAMS: Yeah. It was only four slides.
13 I wanted to really hone in on affordability and uhm
14 the... the... the overview of the project and... and
15 just to ensure that we are meeting those... those
16 guidelines for the uh minority participation and
17 that... that's a big part o' this... this uh overall
18 project.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Uh before I go
20 into my questions, Majority, do we have any
21 questions for this applicant panel?

22 MAJORITY LEADER: I do not. I stand in full
23 support of this particular project. We've been
24 meeting now. Um while you're talking about three
25 years, I've actually been working on this project

2 for 10 years if you can believe it. I've only been
3 in office eight. So, um this is a project that I'm
4 in uh full support with. Um it began with uh
5 Pastor... Pastor Melan Mounter who was the pastor at
6 the time of the church and we began talking about
7 this project as a concept and as uh an idea um
8 almost 10 years ago now. So, it's a... it's a very
9 important project.

10 And another reason why I'm particularly proud of
11 this project is because it is the only project that
12 i have approved that is uh majority ownership stake
13 and beneficiaries uh of the African-American
14 community and Caribbean community. Uh this will be
15 the first time in this particular district where a
16 project like this um in the driver seat is an
17 African-American own uh Seventh Day Adventist
18 Church. And so, I'm quite proud of it and i know
19 that this will certainly be an anchor um for many
20 communities of color who are feeling the rapidness
21 of displacement throughout the city.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Majority Leader.

23 And I just have two quick questions for the... the
24 panel. And then, I'll see if my colleagues have
25 any questions. Uh the first one is uh this is not

2 the first time council has had to approve
3 ammendments to article 11, tax exemptions, in order
4 to extend the exemptions to the community facility
5 portion of a development.

6 Is the HPD making efforts to try to make sure
7 this specific issue is included in the original
8 approvements... uh approvals where applicable?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RITCHIE: Uhm Libby, would you
10 like me to respond to that one?

11 LIBIA ROTHING: That will be great. Thank you.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RITCHIE: Yeah. Um I... I think
13 generally that the answer is yes. We try to make
14 sure that the package is reflect of the project.
15 Um and when this originally went, um the community
16 facility space was not anticipated to be part of
17 the exemption area.

18 Um we now are (inaudible) to include it um but we
19 do wanna make sure, you know, generally speaking
20 that our packages um are accurate.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Nina. And my
22 last... uh can you explain the change in ownership
23 structure that took place as the original approval?

24 STEVEN WILLIAMS: Yes. It was a fee simple uh,
25 uh set of ownership and it has been changed to a...

2 a ground lease ownership which uh was changed the
3 nature of... of how the develop... how the uh... the...
4 the financing um of the project would... would work.
5 And um that was the major change. It went from a
6 fee simple to a ground lease.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Steve. Uh just
8 wanting... as we have been joined by Council Member
9 Treyger. I now invite my colleagues to ask
10 questions. Council, are there any council members
11 with any questions?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RITCHIE: Council Member Barron has
13 a question.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Council Member Barron?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair
16 and thank you to the panel for coming and having
17 your presentation. In terms of the units, that 41
18 percent of the units I understand are ranging from
19 120 to 140 percent of the AMI. Is that correct?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yes. That's correct.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And what is the unit
22 distribution across each of the AMI's groups that
23 we're talking about?

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Um if there's uh... only
3 12 uh... there's uh... 16 percent of the units are of
4 the... up to 40 percent AMI.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes. Uh...

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAM: Um yeah.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I have that. My question...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: is more towards the unit
10 size distribution across the AMI groups.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Oh. It's... It's
12 spread. Let me pull it up. I um... Okay, uh we
13 have uh the... the breakdown... uh, uh if you look at
14 the... the uh 40 percent AMI, it's spread... uh you
15 have two two-bed... two studios, uh nine one-
16 bedrooms, three two-bedrooms, and two three-
17 bedrooms across the uh 40 percent uh AMI.

18 If you're looking at the 50 percent AMI, we have
19 uh three studios, 11 uh... I'm sorry. Five studios,
20 13 one-bedrooms, six two-bedrooms, and then two
21 three-bedrooms.

22 For the 60 percent AMI, we have three studios, 11
23 one-bedrooms, three two-bedrooms, uh two three-
24 bedrooms.

2 And for the zero... uh 120 to uh 140 percent
3 AMI's, we have six studios, 23 one-bedrooms, eight
4 two-bedrooms, five three-bedrooms.

5 So, it's pretty spread across the uh... the... the
6 full thing. There's not... there's no real
7 concentration of uh one type of unit in one uh AMI
8 level.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Uh that's good to know.
10 I uh... I thank you for that. Uh but I do notice
11 that it's uh in terms of those who are going to be
12 making 120... a requirement for \$120,000.00 to
13 \$140,000.00 represents 40 percent of the... of the
14 population.

15 Thank you very much for answering the questions.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Council Member
17 Barron.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Uh, uh madam. Um I'm
19 sorry. Mr. Chair, can I ask another question?

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Sure. Go ahead.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So, in terms of the
22 exemption for taxation, it's for a portion of uh...
23 it's been presented as representing a portion of
24 the community space, so does not apply to the other
25 space within this development?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RITCHIE: That's correct. Um we
3 anticipate that the community facility space to be
4 used by the church will receive a separate tax
5 payment.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay, great. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member
8 Barron. Are there anymore questions for any
9 council members?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Uh so, I don't see any uh
11 hands raised.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RITCHIE: I'm sorry. I didn't
13 raise my hand but can you hear me?

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Oh, go...

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RITCHIE: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: ahead.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RITCHIE: We can hear you.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah.

19 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Um just wanted to say that
20 in this particular project which is quite unusual
21 for our district that 60 percent... uh in my
22 particular district being considered in this way,
23 60 percent are going to be units for low-income
24 housing. Uh this isn't a typical um 30 percent or
25 25 percent. This is going to produce 60 percent of

2 the units are going to be for low-income. Um 16 of
3 those units are gonna be for formerly homeless
4 families. Um for example, individuals uh receiving
5 section eight. And then, 26 of the units are gonna
6 be at 50 AMI, 19 of the units are gonna be at 60
7 AMI, and 42 of the units are gonna be at 120/140
8 AMI.

9 So, over a long period of negotiation, we were
10 able to get that number to 60 percent of
11 affordability. But the remaining 40 percent, um
12 the church investing in this project and wanting to
13 utilize their property in a highly gentrifying
14 community which is very... we are ground zero for
15 gentrification. Um they need this particular
16 income from the 40 percent to offset the cost of
17 the church at this time. So, they have uh an
18 educational program. They have a school. they
19 also have a food pantry. They also do distribution
20 of clothing drives. They do a lot of community
21 programming um within the district where their
22 costs and the... and the costs of operating the
23 church in this district with a population that's
24 being gentrified, they certainly need the ability
25 to offset some of the costs in this particular

2 district um which is very different from many other
3 districts who are not facing a lot of the
4 challenges.

5 So, that is the reason for the 40 percent AMI um
6 being at the higher end of the affordable spectrum.
7 um but again, this is an opportunity for this
8 church um to sustain themselves um and to be viable
9 and this is one of the main strategies that they've
10 chosen to do this um with a lot of uh push and pull
11 uh through uh community negotiations and dynamics.

12 So, thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Majority Leader.
14 There being no more questions for this panel, this
15 panel is excused.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAM: Thank you.

17 MAJORITY LEADER CUMBO: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Council, are there any members
19 of the public who wish to testify?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RUGOO: Chair, the meeting will
21 briefly stand at ease while we check for members.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Chair, it appears that
24 there are no members of the public who wish to
25 testify on the plan.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council. There
3 being no other members of the public who wish to
4 testify on this item, the public uh hearing on
5 application number 20215023 HAK, the South Portland
6 article 11 amendment is now closed.

7 I now open the public hearing on LU759, the 97
8 West 169th Street proposal which is also heard on
9 April 21st. If you are here to testify on LU759,
10 please raise your hand now.

11 Council, is there anyone registered to speak on
12 this item?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RUGOO: Uh chair, uh once again,
14 the meeting will briefly stand at ease while we
15 check for members of the public.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RUGOO: Chair, there are no
18 witnesses here to testify on this item.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, council. There
20 being no witnesses to testify on this item, the
21 public hearing on LU759 is not closed. We will now
22 move onto our votes. We will vote to approve
23 application number 20215023 HAK, the South Portland
24 Article 11 Amendment, to exempt community facility
25 space located on block 2003, lot 37 in the Brooklyn

2 Council District represented by Majority Leader
3 Cumbo.

4 We will also vote to approve LU759, the 97 West
5 169th Street Project. This application was
6 submitted by the department of housing preservation
7 and development requiring the designation of
8 property located at 97 West 169th Street in the
9 Bronx as an urban development action area as well
10 as an approval or an urban development action area
11 project for such area in this position of such
12 property to a developer to be selected by HPD.

13 These actions will facilitate the development of
14 a nine-story building containing approximately 104
15 affordable housing units in community facility
16 space. This project is located in the council
17 district representative by Council Member Vanessa
18 Gibson.

19 We will vote to approve LU760, the Landmark
20 Preservation Commission Designation of the Harriet
21 and Thomas Truesdale house located at 227 Duffield
22 Street in Brooklyn as an historic landmark. The
23 site is significant as the home of a prominent
24 abolitionist and is believed by some to have been a
25

2 stop of the Underground Railroad is located in
3 Council Member Levine's district.

4 We will also vote to approve two... two items to
5 facilitate phase two of the Sendero Verde Project
6 approved by the council in 2017. We will vote to
7 approve LU761 for the amendment of a previously
8 approved of an urban development action area
9 project.

10 We will also approve LU762 to amend a previously
11 approved article 11 tax exemption. The previously
12 approved project will uh include approximately 652
13 dwelling units, approximately 36,218 square feet of
14 commercial space, and approximately 161,440... 40
15 square feet of community facility space.

16 The mint project will include approximately 707
17 dwelling units, approximately 6,213 square feet of
18 commercial space, and approximately 87,278 square
19 feet of community facility. The affected property
20 is located at 1617, lot 20, 120, 125, and 140 in
21 the Manhattan Council District represented by
22 Council Member Ayala.

23 And before we call the roll, i just would like to
24 acknowledge Council Member Gibson to give any
25 remarks regarding her project issue.

2 Council Member Gibson.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Um thank you. Thank you
4 so much, Chair Riley. And good afternoon everyone,
5 to all my colleagues on the subcommittee. I thank
6 you so much for the opportunity. I wanna speak in
7 support of land use application 759 before the
8 subcommittee today known as the Corporal Fischer
9 Park Affordable Senior Housing Project to be
10 located at my council district at 97 west 169
11 street.

12 Um as you have heard during the public hearing,
13 this proposal by HPD uh will be built by the West
14 Side Federation For Senior and Supportive Housing
15 and will be developing about 15,000 square feet of
16 mixed and extremely affordable housing for seniors
17 in my council district located in the high bridge
18 community.

19 I'm grateful that this building will offer both a
20 combination of studio and one-bedroom units. 30
21 percent of these units will be set aside for
22 formerly homeless seniors uh while all the units
23 will receive project-based section eight. All
24 tenants will only pay 30 percent of their income
25 towards rent. Um together, our efforts in the city

2 council, we just continue to keep New York City
3 truly affordable for our older New Yorkers. And
4 certainly, as the Bronx becomes an attractive
5 destination for new investment, it is our
6 responsible to ensure a quality of life for all of
7 our older residents.

8 Um with today's vote, you are ensuring that our
9 older residents in the Bronx and beyond can afford
10 to remain in this city. I'm especially proud of
11 this project known as Corporal Fischer Senior
12 Apartments that will provide an FU8C that will be
13 operated by Damian Family Health Center, on-site
14 social services which means our residents will
15 receive holistic wrap around social services mental
16 health primary care uh and holistic services for
17 their needs. There will be on-site management, 24-
18 hour security, laundry services, recreation space,
19 outdoor terrace, and a myriad of services for our
20 seniors. This project was a part of the Jerome
21 Neighborhood Plan that the council passed by in
22 2017 and I'm really grateful for my colleagues in
23 this state legislator, State Senator Jose Marcos
24 Serrano, and Assembly Woman Latoya Joyner for also
25 supporting this project. The Bronx Ball President

2 Ruben Diaz, Jr. And his team as well as Bronx
3 Community Board Four.

4 I am grateful that this project will bring over
5 100 units of affordable senior housing for
6 residents in our district as well as the larger
7 community because that's exactly what we should be
8 doing as legislators.

9 So, I thank you, Chair Riley, for your leadership
10 in holding today's hearing and I thank all the
11 members of the subcommittee and ask you to vote in
12 the affirmative for this project/commitment to
13 providing real affordable housing for our older New
14 Yorkers in the Bronx and beyond. Thank you so much
15 for...

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Your time today.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Council Member Gib... Gibson.
19 Council, please call the roll.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Chair Riley?

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Council Member Koo? Can
23 we unmute Council Member Koo? Uhm I'll move on and
24 I'll...

25 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Alright.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RUGOO: call on Council Member
3 Barron.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Huh.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RUGOO: Oh. Sorry, Council Member
6 Koo. We hear you.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Can you hear me?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RUGOO: I got you. Yes. I got
9 you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Yeah. I got a problem. Uh
11 okay. I vote aye. Thank you.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RUGOO: Thank you. Council Member
13 Barron?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. Uh permission
15 to explain my vote.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Permission granted.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. I wanna talk
18 briefly on the 227 Duffield Street Project. I
19 believe that's on the council's calendar today for
20 a note. Uh...

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Uh it was in 2007 that the
23 city announced that they were going to do an Urban
24 Development Plan for downtown Brooklyn which as we
25 see today is manifested by all skyscrapers and

2 buildings that are there that are not affordable at
3 all to the people who previously lived in that
4 community.

5 So, that downtown Brooklyn supposedly urban
6 development project went way off the tracks and
7 resulted in what we see now. But as a part of that
8 plan in 2004, there was a proposal to demolish 227
9 Duffield Street and there were three council
10 members at that time, Council Member Barron,
11 Council Member uh Vann, and Council Member James
12 who said no, we need to make sure that a study is
13 done so that we can make sure we're not destroying
14 history because it was believed that 227 was a part
15 of that underground railroad that helped to uh have
16 so many of those who were enslaved escape slavery.

17 So, the Economic Development Corporation did a
18 study and their study concluded that perhaps it
19 might have been but it did not warrant maintaining
20 that property. There was a vigorous... vigorous
21 fight to maintain that property uh because Mama
22 Joy, Joyce Hotel was the owner of that property and
23 she had many people who came and mobilized with her
24 to fight to preserve that property. Through many
25 efforts and through many years of fighting, the

2 property went back and forth in terms of would it
3 be demolished, would it be landmark, would it be
4 torn down. And I just wanna say that through the
5 valiant efforts of so many people who worked to
6 preserve that property, the landmarks commission
7 did landmark it. And now, we're moving forward to
8 make this a historic landmark. And uh it's
9 particularly important to me because I had an aunt
10 that I used to visit who lived one block over from
11 Duffield Street uh within those same two blocks.
12 So, the area is quite familiar to me.

13 And I wish I had known then that it was suspected
14 to be a area of what was a hotbed of... of people
15 who were abolitionists 'cause i would'a asked my
16 auntie, can i go downstairs in the basement and see
17 what's down there. But we're certainly glad that
18 this is coming forward. And with that, I vote aye
19 on all.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RUGOO: Thank You, Council Barron.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RUGOO: Uh Council Member Miller?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Council Member Miller
24 votes aye.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER RUGOO: And Council Member Treyger?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Aye.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER RUGOO: I uh vote uh five in the
4 affirmative, zero in the negative and no
5 abstentions. All items are approved and
6 recommended for approval to the full (INAUDIBLE)
7 committee.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council. That
9 concludes today's business. I'll remind you that
10 if you have a written testimony on today's items,
11 you may submit it to
12 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Please indicate
13 the LU number or the project name in the subject
14 heading. I will like to thank the applicants,
15 members of the public, my colleagues,
16 subcommittee council, land use staff, and the
17 sergeant-at-arms for participating in today's
18 meeting is hereby adjourned. Have a good one
19 everyone.

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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 June 16, 2021