

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

-----X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON LAND USE

-----X

August 22, 2012
Start: 10:36 a.m.
Recess: 10:52 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E: LEROY G. COMRIE, JR.
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Maria del Carmen Arroyo
Charles Barron
Inez E. Dickens
Daniel R. Garodnick
Sara M. Gonzalez
Robert Jackson
Jessica S. Lappin
Rosie Mendez
Annabel Palma
Diana Reyna
Joel Rivera
James Sanders, Jr.
Larry B. Seabrook

A P P E A R A N C E S

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

James Vacca
Albert Vann
Brad S. Lander
Stephen T. Levin
Mark S. Weprin
Jumaane D. Williams
Daniel J. Halloran III
Vincent M. Ignizio
Peter A. Koo

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: We're reconvening the Land Use Committee meeting for Wednesday, August—Oh, it's a new meeting? We're convening Land Use Committee meeting for Wednesday, August 22nd. Present Council Members Al Vann, Jimmy Vacca, Peter Koo, Daniel Garodnick, Charles Barron, Mark Weprin, Maria del Carmen Arroyo, Joel Rivera, Annabel Palma, Diana Reyna, Sara Gonzalez, Vinny Ignizio, James Sanders, Robert Jackson, Jumaane Williams, and Rosie Mendez, who's right at the door. We are just doing the one item that was worked on and finalized this morning, which is Land use number 648, item number 20125797 HHM. The application by the Health and Hospitals Corporation to request the approval to lease a parcel of land consisting of approximately 20,000 square feet on the Metropolitan Hospital Center campus for use by Metro Health Homes [phonetic] Housing Development Fund Corporation to be known as Metro East 99th Street for the development of housing for low income elderly and/or disable individuals. Anyone who would like to speak to the application? Council Member Barron?

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you
3 very much. You know, I'm a thousand percent for
4 the elderly and the disabled receiving affordable,
5 reasonable housing in our neighborhoods, and I
6 have supported a lot of special needs housing
7 projects in my neighborhood, but not exclusively,
8 and this is my problem with this project. The
9 Mayor is getting around the procedures that would
10 have required the community to get at least 50% of
11 any housing, affordable housing, coming in through
12 the Community Board, but by going this route 100%
13 of the residents of this housing will come from
14 Roosevelt Island from the Coler Goldwater Nursing
15 Homes, and I think it should be 70%, 60% so that
16 we address both issues. We have problems with
17 housing in our communities, special needs housing,
18 but a lot of our communities are losing residents
19 'cause they can no longer afford to live in our
20 neighborhoods, and we're losing residents, so for
21 this project to get around the 50% requirement
22 even if it's special needs housing is troubling to
23 me. The other troubling part, the support of
24 needs housing program by the city the funding of
25 this project is going to go through that, and some

1
2 of the money even is going to be used for
3 supportive housing services. Some of the money is
4 going to be used and that's for the homeless. So
5 they get around having any of the community or the
6 homeless or anybody being a part of this
7 affordable housing formula and they—we're making a
8 big mistake here if we let this kind of process go
9 forward and then there's an environmental impact
10 concern that Community Board 11 and the
11 Metropolitan Hospital Committee both of those
12 bodies voted against this project. Community
13 Board 11 and the Metropolitan Hospital Committee
14 voted against it for environmental reasons and for
15 being locked out of the affordable housing
16 formula, so I don't want us to get thinking that
17 we're not supporting special needs housing or
18 seniors or the disabled coming from Roosevelt
19 Island into East Harlem, but it should be 70% and
20 at least 30% of affordable housing for the
21 community or usually the 50% formula would be even
22 better, but 100% and using homeless money to do
23 it, but yet nobody homeless can get in there is
24 wrong. And I think we should reject this project.
25 We should vote no and make them do right by the

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

community.

CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Council Member Arroyo has a comment.

COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Thank you, Mr. Chair. In the Subcommittee we heard from Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito, whose district the project is—will take place in, and in her statement she raised concerns and articulated the issues that she and her community have been dealing with and discussing with HHC and the administration. All in all, despite the issues and the concerns, she is recommending we support this project because it does have a component of absolute necessary development that has to happen in order to enable HHC to reduce its capacity of individuals who need a different level of care, and that is what this housing will enable HHC to do. I suspect that if you take a real quick review of the individuals who could end up living in this facility that you would find that many are community residents. Individuals do not end up in Goldwater or Coler because they come from somewhere else in the city. Families choose those facilities to keep their relatives and loved ones

1
2 close to home or as close to home as possible. So
3 I am confident that while there is a concern that
4 it might not serve directly the residents of
5 Community Board 11 that when we look at the 400
6 plus patients that are waiting for discharge from
7 these two facilities that we will find that many
8 do indeed come from either Community Board 11 or
9 the surrounding communities so I urge colleagues
10 to vote in favor and echoing Council Member
11 Viverito's request for us to support the project.

12 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Council Member
13 Jackson has a comment.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Thank you.
15 Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm speaking in favor of
16 this particular motion in order to move this
17 particular item. As someone that my brother who
18 is now deceased was a resident at Coler for about
19 a year and a half or almost two years and I
20 traveled over there to visit him often, and I say
21 to all of you that I asked a question whether or
22 not the Council Member whose district it's in is
23 in favor of this, and I understand that she is in
24 favor of it, and as per what the Chair of the
25 Subcommittee had indicated. But the people—as the

1
2 Chair of the Subcommittee indicated—the people
3 over there at Coler are basically poor and working
4 people, and they all look like us, and they come
5 from the inner city. They don't come from Long
6 Island. They're not the wealthy residents on
7 Roosevelt Island. They're poor people. And they
8 all look like us. I think there is a need for
9 that as what was indicated, and I say to you from
10 my personal experience I have been there. I know
11 what it looks like. I have walked the wards for
12 almost two years with my brother, and he came out
13 of there after two years and survived for another
14 four or five years after that, and he passed away
15 about a year ago, so I say to all of you that that
16 movement towards secured facilities—not secure,
17 housing for those individuals that are in need is
18 clearly needed, and I just wanted to let you know
19 my personal situation about that and for my actual
20 experience in knowing the patients that are over
21 there and so forth and so on. So I urge my
22 colleagues to vote yes. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Any other
24 comments on the issue? Seeing none, I would
25 recommend an aye vote on this item. We could have

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

the clerk call the roll.

COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
Committee Clerk. Roll call vote Committee on Land
Use. Council Member Comrie?

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Rivera?

COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Reyna?

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Barron?

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Once again
we're not against Coler residents or the Goldwater
residents moving into East Harlem. 70% of them
can. 80% of them can, but when you do 100% and
many of neighborhoods when we do special needs
housing, there is a portion for the special needs
housing for people who are homeless and people who
need housing in our neighborhoods, so it's good
for everybody, and I'm not saying vote against
this project 'cause they come from Roosevelt
Island. Those are our people. I understand that,
but we're talking about 100% and that's not fair
and Community Board 11 said no. That's 50 people.
The Metropolitan Housing Advisory Board said no.

1
2 That represents community members as well. So I
3 don't want you think that if you did vote against
4 this, you're voting against people who are in need
5 coming into a neighborhood. That's just not true,
6 and I'm sure people can give stories of their
7 personal needs and experiences with homeless
8 people, with people in our communities that need
9 housing. The thing I'm urging you to do is not
10 let the Bloomberg Administration go through a
11 process that puts it in support of needs housing
12 program to avoid the community getting any
13 consideration for housing and using some of the
14 money that wasn't slated for this. It was slated
15 for the homeless, and don't let him get away with
16 that and have you-hit you emotionally because of
17 the need of the people in Coler and the people in
18 Goldwater. Those needs will be met, but it
19 shouldn't be exclusively 'cause we have multiple
20 of needs in our community and it shouldn't be
21 100%. They could get 30% for the neighborhood as
22 well. So I don't want you to think that we're
23 saying we're not concerned about our people and
24 poor people and people in need. It's just like we
25 have many needs and let's be equitable and fair in

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

meeting those needs. And I vote no.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Jackson?

COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Aye.

Thank you.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Sanders?

COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Vann?

COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Gonzalez?

COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Palma?

COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Permission

to explain my vote? I just want to echo the sentiments of my colleagues and to my colleague, Charles Barron, I don't think that your message is that we're voting against homeless people or that we don't want the folks from Goldwater to come into our neighborhoods, but I think that fact that the statement that we're taking money away from homeless people to put it into the project that is going to be built is inaccurate. I think that the people in—if this project doesn't get, those folks that are housed right now in Goldwater are—if they are discharged, most of them won't have anywhere

1
2 to go and they will become homeless and will be in
3 our shelter system, so I believe that the dollars
4 that will follow them in terms of supportive
5 housing is just to address that need—the need that
6 they are experiencing now, which is a lesser level
7 of clinical [phonetic] need in our hospital
8 setting versus one that will be in their own
9 community and their own homes still with a level
10 of supportive medical need, so I believe that none
11 of the dollars that are being used in terms of the
12 supportive housing portion is for the build out of
13 this project, but actually for the services that
14 they will receive once they're released back into
15 the community. I vote aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Arroyo?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ARROYO: Aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Garodnick?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Aye.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Mendez?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Aye.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Vacca?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: [no audible
24 response]

25 COMMITTEE CLERK: Koo?

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Weprin?

COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: - - .

COMMITTEE CLERK: Williams?

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: May I be excused to explain my vote? Mr. Chair, may I be excused to explain my vote? Thank you. I was listening to colleague, Council Member Barron, who as usual brought up some points that I thought needed to be explained, and so I went ahead and tried to get some information. As was just explained, it was told to me that the money was not coming from the homeless services. In addition from the information I have and from what I've seen for HHC projects, they generally do - - set aside for the communities that live in the area. This particular one they asked for an exception with explanation and also said as people moved out or were deceased, those new units opening up will then have the priority for the areas in the community. The one that disturbed me the most is the vote against it from the Community Board and the Metropolitan CAB [phonetic], which was explained to me that they actually were not

1
2 opposed to the Coler Goldwater people coming in.
3 They were opposed to the project being built next
4 to a sanitation - - in which the Council Member
5 who was there is working on or has lowered some of
6 the garbage trucks that are going by. So for that
7 reason and in addition to whose district it is in,
8 and I know the work that she does, the fact that
9 those community members weren't particularly
10 opposed to what was being built as opposed to the
11 sanitation department—I guess they're still
12 working on. I'm going to vote aye. Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Ignizio?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Aye.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 16
16 in the affirmative, one in the negative and no
17 abstentions, item has been adopted. Members,
18 please sign the Committee Report.

19 CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Again, please
20 have your staffs check with the Land Use Committee
21 as to the next Subcommittee meetings because the
22 date is not—the date hasn't been locked in yet
23 because of people's schedules during the first
24 week of September. If you know what those are,
25 please let the Committee know so we can add the

1

2

proper dates when everyone can be here for quorum.

3

With that, the Committee is adjourned.

4

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberley Uhlig certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature Kimberley Uhlig

Date 8/30/12