

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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February 11, 2009  
Start: 11:28 am  
Recess: 12:10 pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E:  
DAVID I. WEPRIN  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Joel Rivera  
Diana Reyna  
Maria Baez  
Gale A. Brewer  
Leroy G. Comrie, JR.  
Bill de Blasio  
Lewis A. Fidler  
James F. Gennaro  
Alan J. Gerson  
Eric N. Gioia  
Robert Jackson  
G. Oliver Koppell  
Helen Sears

## A P P E A R A N C E S

## COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Peter F. Vallone, Jr.

Albert Vann

David Yassky

Vincent J. Gentile

Vincent Ignizio

James S. Oddo

Inez E. Dickens

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

Jeremy Waldrup  
Assistant Commissioner  
Department of Small Business Services

Joel Dabu  
Director of Commercial Revitalization  
Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation

Hardy Joe Long  
President  
Fulton-Nostrand Merchants Association

James E. Robinson  
Co-convener  
Coalition for the Improvement of Bedford Stuyvesant

Edmon Braithwaite  
Co-chair Bed-Stuy Business Improvement District  
Steering Committee

Noah Katz  
Owner  
Super Food Town

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2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: ...and welcome  
3 to today's Finance Committee hearing, I'm David  
4 Weprin, I'm Chair of the Committee.

5 We have a number of our colleagues  
6 here today, we have Council Member Helen Sears  
7 from Queens, Council Member Maria Baez from the  
8 Bronx, Council Member Inez Dickens from Manhattan,  
9 Council Member Joel Rivera from the Bronx, Council  
10 Member Gale Brewer from Manhattan, Council Member  
11 Eric Gioia from Queens, Councilman Jim Oddo from  
12 Staten Island, and Brooklyn, Council Member  
13 Vincent Ignizio from Staten Island, Council Member  
14 Albert Vann from Brooklyn.

15 Today, the Finance Committee has  
16 two items on its agenda, a Local Law to establish  
17 a Business Improvement District in Brooklyn and a  
18 resolution relating to the adopted fiscal 2009  
19 expense budget.

20 Let's begin with the Business  
21 Improvement District, Intro 906, establishes the  
22 Bed-Stuy Gateway BID located in Council Member  
23 Albert Vann's district. Proposed resolution 1739-  
24 A, approved and adopted by this Committee on  
25 January 27th, set today as the first hearing date

1  
2 so that we may hear from all those who may be  
3 affected by the establishment of the BID who wish  
4 to speak.

5                   After we hear from our witnesses,  
6 we will adjourn the hearing for at least 30 days,  
7 which is statutorily mandated time during which  
8 property owners objecting to the establishment of  
9 a BID may file objections. In the absence of  
10 significant objections, if the Committee and the  
11 Council can answer the following four questions  
12 affirmatively, it may adopt a Local Law  
13 establishing the BID. The four questions are that  
14 we're prepared to ask: were all notices of  
15 hearings for all hearings required to be held  
16 published and mailed as required by law and  
17 otherwise sufficient; two, does all the real  
18 property within the district's boundaries benefit  
19 from the establishment of the district except as  
20 otherwise provided by the law; three, is all real  
21 property benefited by the district included within  
22 the district; and four, is the establishment of  
23 the district in the best interest of the public.

24                   If the Committee finds in the  
25 affirmative on these four questions and the number

1  
2 of objections required to prevent the creation of  
3 the bid are not filed, then the legislation can be  
4 adopted.

5 Our next piece of legislation  
6 relates to the adopted fiscal 2009 expense budget.  
7 In an effort to make the budget process more  
8 transparent, this Committee will vote on a  
9 Preconsidered resolution approving certain changes  
10 in the designation of organizations receiving  
11 funding in the fiscal 2009 expense budget.  
12 Specifically, the resolution before us today sets  
13 forth new designations and or changes in the  
14 designation of certain organizations receiving  
15 local aging and youth discretionary funding, as  
16 well as new designations and or changes in the  
17 designation of certain organization to receive  
18 funding pursuant to certain initiatives in the  
19 fiscal 2009 expense budget.

20 Council Members should have the  
21 list of these new designations and changes which  
22 is attached to the resolution. For clarification  
23 purposes, it is to be noted that organizations  
24 appearing in the resolution that have not yet  
25 completed the prequalification process conducted

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by the Mayor's office of contract services or by the Council are identified in the attached charts with an asterisk. Additionally, as with all transparency resolutions, Council Members will have to sign a disclosure form indicating whether or not a conflict exists with any of the groups on the attached list. If any Council Member has a potential conflict of interest with any of the organizations listed, he or she might want to disclose the conflict at the time of their vote.

Members of Council Finance are available to answer any questions you may have regarding the transparency resolution and Noran Camp is available to answer any questions you may have regarding the conflict of interest disclosure form.

We will hear from the Department of Small Business Services, Assistant Commissioner Jeremy Waldrup, who is here to testify about the Bed-Stuy Gateway BID.

I'd also like to introduce a new finance intern who's on my left and that's Wilson Ramirez.

And I'd like to call upon Council

1  
2 Member Albert Vann, who is a supporter of the  
3 establishment of the BID in his district for any  
4 remarks, he might have about the BID.

5 We've also been joined by a few  
6 more colleagues, we have Council Member Lou Fidler  
7 from Brooklyn, Council Member Robert Jackson from  
8 Manhattan, Council Member Leroy Comrie from  
9 Queens, and Council Member Peter Vallone, Jr.,  
10 from Queens.

11 Eric, did I get you? And Council  
12 Member Eric Gioia from Queens.

13 Council Member Vann.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Yeah, thank  
15 you, Mr. Chairman.

16 Good morning to my colleagues and  
17 to my friends and neighbors and business persons  
18 from Bedford-Stuy. I'm very enthusiastic in my  
19 support for the Bed-Stuy Gateway Business  
20 Improvement District, which will be located in the  
21 heart of the commercial area of my district.

22 This Gateway, the Bed-Stuy Gateway  
23 Business Improvement District is a mixed-use  
24 district consisting of properties lining two major  
25 thoroughfares and Bedford Stuyvesant. Properties



1  
2 on eight blocks on the north and south sides of  
3 Fulton Street, which extends from Carson Avenue on  
4 the west to Troy Avenue on the East. Then there  
5 are properties on four blocks on the East and West  
6 sides of Nostrand Avenue, which extends from  
7 Halsey Street on and the north through Atlantic  
8 Avenue on the south. The buildings within the  
9 proposed boundaries of the district are  
10 predominantly mixed-use in classification and  
11 range from one to six floors. The ground floors  
12 of most buildings are occupied by retail or  
13 professional uses with upper floors for  
14 residential use.

15                   Located in the district is  
16 Restoration Plaza, a mixed-use complex owned by  
17 Bed-Stuy Restoration Corporation. This is, you  
18 may recall, the nation's, not only the oldest, but  
19 its first comprehensive community development  
20 corporation. Restoration Plaza occupies the  
21 entire block bounded by Brooklyn Avenue, Herkimer  
22 Street, New York Avenue, and, of course, Fulton  
23 Street. It was formerly a milk bottling plant--I  
24 remember passing by there as a young kid and being  
25 amazed by how the bottles were being filled with

1  
2 making this whole machinery that was going on, not  
3 too many people in this room can say that, but I  
4 can, thank God I'm still here. For the formerly  
5 milk bottling plant, it was developed in 1972 as a  
6 commercial and civic center for Bedford Stuyvesant  
7 and contains a diverse mix of retail office and  
8 cultural uses. It includes a Super Food Town, a  
9 suburban style shopping center; Applebee's, a  
10 neighborhood grill and bar and restaurant; Duane  
11 Reade Pharmacy; Washington Mutual Bank; Chase  
12 Bank; Citibank; Billie Holiday Theater; College of  
13 New Rochelle; School of New Resources; the offices  
14 of Bed-Stuy Restoration and some very outstanding  
15 clients as well.

16           The Gateway is one of the busiest  
17 hubs of commercial activity outside of downtown  
18 Brooklyn, with the intersection of Fulton and  
19 Nostrand Avenue receiving the second highest  
20 levels of pedestrian activity outside of downtown  
21 Brooklyn.

22           The BID's formation is really quite  
23 timely, it comes at this economically hard time in  
24 our city when businesses are relying on government  
25 to toe the line to help them to continue to

1  
2 survive, indeed to thrive. This has been in the  
3 making for quite some time, I know Joe Long has to  
4 be happy. In fact, there have been efforts in the  
5 past to create a BID in Bedford Stuyvesant as  
6 early as in 1989 there were concerted efforts to  
7 get this BID, but a lack of timing and local  
8 consensus thwarted that effort, but, Joe Long, I  
9 think we're on target now.

10 I have to credit the leadership and  
11 focus efforts of the Bedford Stuyvesant  
12 Restoration Corporation and their work towards  
13 supporting and structuring a bridge with the  
14 Nostrand Avenue Merchants Association. Over the  
15 past four years, Restoration has worked to build  
16 relationships and to gain a solid understanding of  
17 the needs of the merchants in the area. Their  
18 efforts have led to a successful strategic  
19 partnership between the city, Restoration, and the  
20 Fulton-Nostrand merchants. In the past two years,  
21 Merchant Association Steering Committee Chairs,  
22 Mr. Braithwaite and Mr. Noah Katz, have really  
23 lead this effort, in many instances have gone door  
24 to door amongst their neighbors to gain support  
25 for the BID and I thank them for that. I also

1  
2 know that their hard work is paying off and, of  
3 course, we undoubtedly expect a resultant economic  
4 boom for the area, if not right away, in the near  
5 future. We understand what's happening globally,  
6 nationally, and, indeed, in our city, we are very  
7 cognizant of that, but we continue to move on.

8           Where things are under way in the  
9 district the BID's creation dovetails with the  
10 economic development occurring in Bed-Stuy. The  
11 reconstruction of Nostrand Avenue is promised by  
12 the Administration right away, the recent rezoning  
13 in the district, and also a recent EPA Smart  
14 Growth Planning Grant for urban sustainability  
15 that we recently have been awarded.

16           So we welcome the BID, invite  
17 people from all over the city to come to the area,  
18 come to Bed-Stuy to shop and learn more about this  
19 very thriving community. We've been discovered,  
20 people from all over the world seem like they're  
21 trying to move in and we're trying to accept some  
22 of them graciously.

23           I would like to thank Commissioner  
24 Rob Walsh and his staff for all of their hard work  
25 and time [phonetic] management in helping to get

1  
2 the BID started. I also want to congratulate and  
3 thank the staff of Bedford Stuyvesant, Joe Dabu,  
4 I'm well aware of your efforts, Restoration  
5 Corporation for their leadership, and, of course,  
6 last, but definitely not least, the Fulton-  
7 Nostrand Merchants Association for your leadership  
8 and hard work. Today is a significant day for  
9 Bed-Stuy.

10 Thank you, Mr. chair.

11 [Off mic]

12 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,  
13 Council Member Vann.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Mr. Chair, I  
15 forgot to--there was significant omission in terms  
16 of my name being omitted from the introduction of  
17 this Intro--significant omission, I understand the  
18 error has occurred and will be taken care of by  
19 the time we [crosstalk]--

20 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]  
21 Yeah, why don't we consider it orally added and  
22 we'll make sure that before the final copy is  
23 printed that your name is prominently displayed.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: My community,  
25 and I thank you very much for that.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Let the record  
3 reflect that.

4 We have a number of people here to  
5 testify on the BID. I believe they're all  
6 testifying in favor of the BID.

7 [Off mic]

8 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: But we'll first  
9 hear from Assistant Commissioner Jeremy Waldrup  
10 and then we'll hear from the following  
11 individuals, well I'm going to ask to come up as a  
12 panel: James E. Robinson, Noah Katz, Edmon  
13 Braithwaite, Joel Dabu, and it looks like Harley  
14 Joe Long. I'm sure I'm messing this up, but it's  
15 the handwriting.

16 But first Commissioner Walter.

17 COMMISSIONER WALDRUP: Good morning,  
18 Mr. Chairman and Members of the Finance Committee.  
19 I am Jeremy Waldrup, an Assistant Commissioner at  
20 the Department of Small Business Services.

21 SBS supports the establishment of  
22 the Bed-Stuy Gateway Business Improvement District  
23 in the borough of Brooklyn. Geographically, the  
24 proposed BID includes properties along both sides  
25 of Fulton Street from Classon Avenue to Albany

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2 Avenue, north side of Fulton Avenue from Albany  
3 Avenue to Marcus Garvey Boulevard, the south side  
4 of Fulton street from Albany Avenue to Troy  
5 Avenue, and Nostrand Avenue from Halsey Street to  
6 Atlantic Avenue. Services to be provided in the  
7 Bed-Stuy Gateway BID include sidewalk sweeping and  
8 maintenance, graffiti removal, security, marketing  
9 and promotion to the local area, sidewalk and  
10 streetscape improvements, administration, other  
11 services as to be required for the promotion and  
12 enhancement of the district.

13 The Bed-Stuy Gateway District  
14 Management Association will manage the district  
15 and the budget for the first year of operations is  
16 expected to be 675,000.

17 As required by law, the Bed-Stuy  
18 Gateway BID Steering Committee mailed the summary  
19 of the City Council resolution to each owner of  
20 real property within the proposed district at the  
21 address shown on the latest city assessment roll,  
22 to such other persons as are registered with the  
23 city to receive tax bills concerning real property  
24 within the district, and to tenants of each  
25 building within the proposed district. In

1  
2 addition, SBS arranged for the publication of a  
3 copy of the summary of the resolution at least  
4 once in the city record. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Any questions  
6 for Commissioner Waldrup? Thank you.

7 I'm going to ask those individuals  
8 to come up again as a panel.

9 [Pause]

10 Unless you're going to--if you  
11 agree among yourselves, you can go in any order  
12 you want.

13 MR. JOEL DABU: Okay.

14 [Pause]

15 MR. DABU: Good morning again,  
16 Chairman Weprin, Councilman Vann and Members of  
17 the Finance Committee.

18 My name is Joel Dabu, I'm the  
19 Director of Commercial Revitalization for Bedford  
20 Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation and I'm the  
21 manager of this initiative to form the Bed-Stuy  
22 Gateway Business Improvement District.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: As he finishes.

24 MR. DABU: Councilman Weprin, I'd  
25 like to thank you for allowing this proposal to



1  
2 establish the Bed-Stuy Gateway BID to be heard  
3 before your committee.

4           And to you, Councilman Vann, I  
5 extend the warmest and most sincere thanks from  
6 Colvin Grannum, our President and CEO of  
7 Restoration, and also the staff for your  
8 unwavering vision of the holistic improvement of  
9 Bedford Stuyvesant and its residents, and your  
10 consistent and steadfast commitment over many  
11 years towards initiatives that help the community  
12 achieve that result. Please also accept my  
13 sincerest personal gratitude for your leadership  
14 in assisting our effort. It's been very important  
15 and I know my colleagues here will also echo those  
16 sentiments.

17           I speak to you today simply to ask  
18 you respectfully to vote yes on this proposal to  
19 establish the Bed-Stuy Gateway BID. On behalf of  
20 our Steering Committee--

21           CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]  
22 You know we're not voting today, we're just--

23           MR. DABU: [Interposing] Yes, in 30  
24 days, yes.

25           CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yes.

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2 MR. DABU: And on behalf of  
3 Restoration, which is the technical assistance  
4 partner today, but will also be a property owning  
5 and dues assessment paying member of the BID.

6 Restoration has been a steward of  
7 Central Brooklyn for the last 41 years. We have a  
8 comprehensive slate of programming that spans  
9 housing preservation and development, arts and  
10 culture, youth education, workforce development,  
11 personal asset building, and local economic  
12 development. Restoration has sought to ensure  
13 that Central Brooklyn is a community built on a  
14 wide and solid foundation.

15 For over two decades, there has  
16 been a desire from many segments of the community  
17 for physical and economic improvement in this  
18 business district. Merchants get ticketed  
19 constantly for the litter strewn on the sidewalks  
20 and facade graffiti that goes unpainted.  
21 Neighborhood residents who live only two blocks  
22 away bypass the shopping district for farther,  
23 more visually appealing destinations, such as Park  
24 Slope's 7th Avenue or Myrtle Avenue and Fort  
25 Greene, Clinton Hill. Our potential business

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2 owners and residents and retailers are scared away  
3 by signs of physical disinvestment and open their  
4 new businesses elsewhere, despite the 100,000  
5 customers that live only a 10 minute walk away  
6 from Fulton Street.

7           This proposed BID will strengthen  
8 Central Brooklyn's local economy by encouraging  
9 residents to shop locally and our entrepreneurs to  
10 invest locally. The 2008 Bed-Stuy Gateway LISC  
11 MetroEdge Retail Scan that we commissioned in  
12 consult with the Business Vitality Network of the  
13 Coalition for the Improvement of Bedford  
14 Stuyvesant found that Bed-Stuy had nearly \$600  
15 million of concentrated buying power per square  
16 mile--this is 30% greater than Brooklyn at large  
17 and roughly 50% greater than Queens at large, but  
18 we cannot get our local residents to shop on  
19 Fulton Street because they leak their dollars away  
20 elsewhere for various reasons.

21           In mid-2006, the Fulton-Nostrand  
22 United Merchants Association--the president is  
23 Hardy Joe Long here in the middle of the table--  
24 decided to enter into a working partnership with  
25 Restoration to begin the Bed-Stuy Gateway BID

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initiative.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Excuse me, can I just interrupt for one minute?

We have a quorum, I know some members have to leave, we're not voting on this item, we want to hear your testimony, but I'd like to call for a vote on the Preconsidered Transparency Resolution while we have a quorum and that's the only item we're going to be voting on today.

So if you could call the roll on the Preconsidered Transparency Resolution.

I apologize.

MR. WILLIAM MARTIN: William Martin, Committee Clerk, Committee on Finance roll call.

Council Member Weprin.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Aye.

MR. MARTIN: Rivera.

COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I vote aye.

MR. MARTIN: Reyna.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: I vote aye.

MR. MARTIN: Baez.

COUNCIL MEMBER BAEZ: Aye.

MR. MARTIN: Brewer.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Aye.  
3 MR. MARTIN: Comrie.  
4 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Aye.  
5 MR. MARTIN: Fidler.  
6 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Aye.  
7 MR. MARTIN: Gioia.  
8 COUNCIL MEMBER GIOIA: Yes.  
9 MR. MARTIN: Jackson.  
10 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Aye on all.  
11 MR. MARTIN: Koppell.  
12 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Aye.  
13 MR. MARTIN: Sears.  
14 COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: Aye.  
15 MR. MARTIN: Vallone.  
16 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Aye.  
17 MR. MARTIN: Vann.  
18 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Aye.  
19 MR. MARTIN: Ignizio.  
20 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Aye.  
21 [Off mic]  
22 MR. MARTIN: Oddo.  
23 [No Response]  
24 FEMALE VOICE: ...so you call the  
25 office [crosstalk]--

1  
2 MR. MARTIN: By a vote of 14 in the  
3 affirmative, zero in the negative, and no  
4 abstentions, Preconsidered Resolution is adopted.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Please sign the  
6 committee report.

7 I apologize, continue.

8 MR. DABU: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

9 So to repeat, in 2006, the Merchant  
10 Association decided themselves to enter into a  
11 partnership with Restoration to begin this  
12 process. And from there, in 2007, they formed the  
13 Steering Committee, the Bed-Stuy Gateway BID  
14 Steering Committee, of whom Noah Katz and Edmon  
15 Braithwaite are the co-chairs and we have several  
16 members of the Steering Committee here in the room  
17 as well. They decided to create the BID and  
18 Restoration is providing the technical assistance.

19 The first think that the Steering  
20 Committee did, the very first task was to set out  
21 a vision that unambiguously terms the purpose of  
22 their work and for the BID to be created and I'm  
23 just going to briefly read that vision.

24 We declare that the Bed-Stuy  
25 Gateway Business District is the business and

1  
2 cultural destination of choice for all residents  
3 of Bedford Stuyvesant, Clinton Hill, Northern  
4 Crown Heights, Ocean Hill and Brownsville.

5 Through the services of the BID, we  
6 are committed to a safe, clean, and aesthetically  
7 attractive commercial and cultural destination;  
8 fostering thriving and profitable businesses;  
9 providing a variety of retail goods and services  
10 from a mixture of national brand and locally-based  
11 companies, including minority and women-owned  
12 small businesses; and, finally, valuing the  
13 diverse history, culture, and styles of the  
14 residents of the Bedford Stuyvesant and wider  
15 Central Brooklyn communities by offering goods and  
16 services that respond to the community's wants and  
17 desires.

18 There's no mistake that this  
19 Steering Committee had on its mind neighborhood  
20 change and they wanted to transform the look and  
21 feel of the business district while also making it  
22 sure that it's responsive to the neighborhood that  
23 it's in. This is the vision of the bid.

24 So in the two years that have  
25 elapsed we have done significant outreach. We

1  
2 have had three informational mailings, we've had  
3 three public scoping meetings, two public  
4 hearings, we have a host of outreach portions  
5 where we've had numerous opportunities to solicit  
6 that input. We welcome that input. Our Steering  
7 Committee co-chairs have stressed that they want  
8 all input, whether it's negative or positive, and  
9 that we invite them to join in the BID Steering  
10 Committee, which will be the board, to make this a  
11 success. The BID's budget and the vision is truly  
12 ambitious, but it's affordable, yet large enough  
13 to make an impact--it's \$675,000 annually, it's  
14 big enough to effect change from day one without  
15 really bankrupting our businesses from day one.

16           The last thing the Steering  
17 Committee wanted to see was within one or five  
18 months of the BIDs being formed, that our members  
19 can come back and say I don't see a difference--  
20 that would be a tragedy, that'll be a waste of  
21 money, that's not what this BID Steering Committee  
22 wanted.

23           And the BID is to be called Bed-  
24 Stuy Gateway to differentiate the BID from other  
25 Fulton Street entities throughout the city, to



1  
2 reflect on the role of the streets in this BID  
3 that they play in bringing people to the  
4 neighborhood and also to connect the BID to its  
5 Bedford Stuyvesant location.

6           Lastly, one of the primary goals of  
7 the creation of this BID is, in addition to  
8 increasing local consumer spending, is to create  
9 the conditions in the district to attract further  
10 public and private investment. In this regard,  
11 the vision for the BID is already successful from  
12 day one.

13           With funding from the Office of  
14 Management and Budget, Borough President Marty  
15 Markowitz, New York City's Comprehensive  
16 Neighborhood Economic Development Initiative, and,  
17 of course, our Councilman Vann, we have been able  
18 to attract more than \$9 million for a streetscape  
19 beautification project that you see right here  
20 that EDC is project managing for us. The  
21 condition for granting this money and that  
22 Councilman Vann has been able to get it for us is  
23 that we have an entity to maintain the new and  
24 beautiful streetscape after it's put in and it's  
25 been emphasized to me in the meetings that you

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have to have the BID, DOT will not sign off unless they know there's a maintenance agreement in place.

So we have emphasized to our community members that you cannot let almost \$10 million walk away because you're not able to pony up to give your neighborhood a contribution.

So in sum, this streetscape will begin by the end of this year if the BID is in place.

So I stand here on the shoulders of many people who have worked tirelessly before me in Bedford Stuyvesant over the last 25 years and more to bring the benefits of BID management to Central Brooklyn's main street. In addition to the people that I mentioned at the beginning of my remarks, we have Angel Melendez from Flowerworks Florists and landscape contractors Edna Johnson, Wes Gibson, a local resident, Hardy Joe Long, Stephanie Faulkner, Noah Katz, Jim Robinson, Jeremy Waldrup, and, SBS, thank you for your help. I also want to thank Bernice McRae, my colleague, for her knowledge and guidance in the previous efforts, the members of Community Board 3 and its

1  
2 chair, Henry Butler, the Brownstoners of Bedford  
3 Stuyvesant Civic Association, and, of course, the  
4 late Tohma Faulkner, who among other roles, was a  
5 member of our Steering Committee and was one of  
6 our tireless advocates and she's recently passed  
7 away, but I know her spirit's with us today. And  
8 all of their support and all of their work has  
9 brought us here today and I urge you to vote in  
10 over 30 days to approve this BID.

11 So respectfully yours, I thank you  
12 for this opportunity to speak. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

14 [Pause]

15 MR. HARDY JOE LONG: Good morning to  
16 our chairperson. It's good to be here this  
17 morning and to our Councilman Al Vann. It's  
18 indeed a pleasure to sit here in this seat--

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]  
20 Just identify your name and title for the record.

21 MR. LONG: Hardy Joe Long, President  
22 of the Fulton-Nostrand Merchants Association.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: All right.  
24 Thank you.

25 MR. LONG: I've been a resident of

1  
2 Bedford Stuyvesant since 1957, I've been in  
3 business since 1961, I've been working with the  
4 Merchants since 1965. And as of the years that  
5 has been gone, bypassed, we have always been  
6 trying to do what we're about to achieve now, is  
7 to bring a better Business Improvement District to  
8 Bedford Stuyvesant.

9 Over the years, I could sit here--I  
10 guess Vann, I'm the only one can say that I  
11 remember the building when it was a mill company  
12 there before Restoration took over and over the  
13 years that I've seen that how Restoration has been  
14 very instrumental in our community and making sure  
15 that the stores that are there will maintain their  
16 businesses and some that has gone on beyond that,  
17 they have been able to survive. Right as of now I  
18 sit here to say that I know and hope and pray that  
19 the Council will look into what we're trying to do  
20 to pass in 30 days that we will be able to bring a  
21 better Business Improvement District to Bedford  
22 Stuyvesant.

23 This is my vision over the years  
24 that I've been there and I don't know with the  
25 economy the way it is today and with my individual

1  
2 business, I don't know whether I will be able to  
3 be successful for the rest of the 2009, but if I  
4 don't be there, I know my spirits will be there  
5 and my hard work that I've done over the 50 years  
6 of being in Bedford Stuyvesant in the business  
7 that I've been able to say that I have been able  
8 to see what has been accomplished over the years.

9           And I just want to thank you, Al,  
10 personal for putting your input in where we are at  
11 this time. Before you became Council, you worked  
12 with us from Assemblyman district and we know that  
13 this is going to be a successful BID because of  
14 all the hard work and especially from the Steering  
15 Committee that has put in, that it will be  
16 successful.

17           So I want to thank each and every  
18 one that gives us this opportunity to come here to  
19 speak on behalf of the Nostrand Fulton Merchants  
20 Association, along with Restoration Gateway  
21 project that this will be successful for Bedford  
22 Stuyvesant residents and also to bring in more  
23 residents, more commercial strips that people can  
24 be able to do shopping there. Thank you very  
25 much.

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CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

We do have some our members have joined us and I'd just like to call on them to vote on the Preconsidered Resolution. Ms. Edwards Mrs. Edwards, can you call the roll please?

MS. EDWARDS: Gennaro.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENNARO: Yes.

MS. EDWARDS: Gentile.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I vote yes.

MS. EDWARDS: The vote now stands at six--

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Yassky.

MS. EDWARDS: Yassky.

COUNCIL MEMBER YASSKY: Aye.

MS. EDWARDS: The vote now stands at 17 in the affirmative and zero in the negative.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you

I'm sorry, I apologize.

Please sign the committee report.

[Off mic]

[Pause]

MR. JAMES E. ROBINSON: Good morning. My name is James E. Robinson, I am the co-convener of the Coalition for the Improvement

1  
2 of Bedford Stuyvesant, which is a approximately 25  
3 member association of organizations that either  
4 perform within Bedford Stuyvesant or reside within  
5 the boundaries.

6 Each and every one of these 25  
7 organizations are in full support of the formation  
8 of this BID, we certainly hope that you ladies and  
9 gentlemen on the Council are also. Thank you.

10 [Pause]

11 MR. EDMON BRAITHWAITE: Good  
12 morning--

13 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Good morning.

14 MR. BRAITHWAITE: --Mr. Chairman.  
15 Good morning--

16 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]  
17 You just made it under the wire.

18 MR. BRAITHWAITE: --great friend of  
19 ours, Councilman Al Vann, and other Members of  
20 [off mic] My name is Edmon Braithwaite, I am the  
21 co-chair of the Bed-Stuy Business Improvement  
22 District Steering Committee, the vice president of  
23 the Fulton United Merchants Association, I am also  
24 the owner of a couple of businesses in the Bed-  
25 Stuy area.

1  
2 My presence here this morning is  
3 more than just being a representative of the  
4 organizations I just mentioned. My presence here  
5 is as a business person to indicate to folks here  
6 that over the past six or seven years, we have  
7 made a tremendous amount of progress in improving  
8 the business district in which we function and in  
9 which we make our living.

10 And before I even go any further, I  
11 wanted to tell a little story of something that  
12 happened as recent as Monday morning and to me  
13 this illustrates why it is that we as a community  
14 need to take control of what we do and how we do  
15 business. I opened one of my businesses on Monday  
16 morning at 10 o'clock and the first two customers  
17 that walked in about five minutes later, one was a  
18 gentleman of about 60 something years old I would  
19 imagine and the other one was a young man of no  
20 more than 22 or 23 years old and they both walked  
21 in pretending as if they were going to buy lottery  
22 tickets and as they're standing there together  
23 side-by-side, I noticed something strange. Upon  
24 investigating, they're actually selling drugs, the  
25 younger man was selling drugs to the older man and



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2 I stood and I watched them and I turned and I said  
3 to them not in my business, I said not here, go do  
4 it someplace else, and the older gentleman looked  
5 at me in an aggressive manner as if he was ready  
6 to argue, but the younger man looked at me and  
7 said, I'm sorry, we're not going to do it here  
8 again, right? And that is what I was greeted with  
9 first thing Monday morning as I opened my business  
10 and that is the type of event that illustrates why  
11 it is that we need to take control of our business  
12 district. That is an indication as to why it is  
13 that we as business folks need to understand that  
14 we have over the last couple of years, is it Joel,  
15 that have worked diligently to begin the process  
16 to where we are now.

17

18 I do believe that we've come to the  
19 point where we need to work with our government,  
20 we're not looking for handouts from the City  
21 Council or from our Mayor. We have made a  
22 decision that we will take responsibility of our  
23 district and ensure that the 60% of residents who  
24 live in Bedford Stuyvesant, who shop elsewhere, we  
25 will reduce that number, we want 100% of the  
residents in Bedford Stuyvesant to shop in Bedford

1  
2 Stuyvesant. Right now, we don't have that. With  
3 the implementation of this Business Improvement  
4 District, we are going to make progress in that  
5 and we urge your support and we urge that in 30  
6 days you pass the bill that will allow us to  
7 control our own destiny.

8 Chairperson WEPRIN: Thank you.

9 Before we hear from the next  
10 speaker, I'd like to call upon Council Member de  
11 Blasio to vote on the Preconsidered resolution on  
12 the additional budget items.

13 MS. EDWARDS: De Blasio.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DE BLASIO: I vote  
15 aye. Thank you.

16 MS. EDWARDS: The vote--

17 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Please sign the  
18 committee report.

19 MS. EDWARDS: The vote now stands at  
20 18 in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and  
21 no abstentions.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I'm sorry,  
23 continue.

24 MR. NOAH KATZ: Edmon, are you  
25 finished? Thank you Edmon.

1  
2 Chairman Weprin, Councilman Vann,  
3 ladies and gentlemen, thank you for having us  
4 today.

5 My name is Noah Katz and, along  
6 with my brother and my father, I am the owner of  
7 the Super Food Town in Restoration Plaza in  
8 Brooklyn. We're a family run business, we operate  
9 supermarkets in the city of New York and compared  
10 to the people that are here before me, I'm the new  
11 kid on the block in Bed-Stuy, but we've been there  
12 for five years and we are thrilled to be there and  
13 serve the residents with our supermarket.

14 Please let me just begin by saying  
15 that there are countless people that worked on  
16 this well before I even got here or, in fact,  
17 before I was born and saw the milk plant, but this  
18 is a long time in the making and we're thrilled to  
19 be part of it.

20 And just to echo some of Edmon's  
21 comments as a business owner, please let me  
22 communicate to you that we have done our due  
23 diligence through this process, we have  
24 communicated to the residents of Bedford  
25 Stuyvesant, we have reached out, we have had

1  
2 meetings, and, of the vast majority of people that  
3 have responded, there is literally no public  
4 objection to this process. We're thrilled to  
5 finally have in our sights the Business  
6 Improvement District, the Gateway, the Bed-Stuy  
7 Gateway become a reality.

8           And please let me add my own two  
9 cents to this process, we look at this as a little  
10 bit of a microcosm of how it's supposed to work  
11 across the country, this is how businesses are  
12 supposed to be working together with government.  
13 We will improve the district; we will have a  
14 clean, beautiful environment for customers to  
15 shop; we will create opportunities in Bedford  
16 Stuyvesant and it will translate into jobs and  
17 that is how we kind of see this thing working and  
18 we're thrilled to be part of it and please, I  
19 humbly request that you vote in favor of it next  
20 month.

21           And thank you so much for having  
22 us, and it's a thrill to be part of it. And thank  
23 you very much.

24           CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

25           COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Is that the

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2 last--

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CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Council Member

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Vann.

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COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Yeah, I would

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just ask if they would remain seated. For

7

history, we're going to record this moment, the

8

photographer is here, unless there's further

9

business, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to--

10

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: No, that's

11

fine.

12

COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Very good. So

13

all those who's come from Bed-Stuy, part [off mic]

14

if you would stand behind those who are seated,

15

we'll take a group photograph, again to record

16

this moment.

17

[Pause]

18

[Off mic]

19

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Historic photo.

20

[Pause]

21

[Off mic]

22

MALE VOICE: Are we close to doing

23

some thing--

24

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Robinson,

25

did you want to testify?

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MR. ROBINSON: I did, sir.

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CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You did. Okay.

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Any questions for any of the panel? Seeing none,

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thank you all for coming and we'll wait 30 days,

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it'll be another hearing, we will have a vote.

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MR. BRAITHWAITE: Thank you. A

8

positive vote.

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CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Is there

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anybody else who would like to testify either for

11

or against the proposed BID?

12

[Pause]

13

Seeing none, we're going to

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adjourn. I'm going to keep the roll open for a

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half hour for those that have not voted, other

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than that, we're adjourned.

17

[Pause]

18

MR. MARTIN: Council Member Oddo.

19

COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Yes, thank

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you.

21

MR. MARTIN: Vote on the Committee

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on Finance now stands at 19 in the affirmative,

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zero in the negative, and no abstentions.

24

[Pause]

25

MR. MARTIN: Council Member Gerson.

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[Off mic]

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COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: I vote aye  
on all or aye on the transparency resolution.

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MR. MARTIN: Final vote on the  
Committee on Finance is now 20 in the affirmative,  
zero in the negative, and no abstentions.

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COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: And this  
meeting of the Finance Committee is now adjourned.

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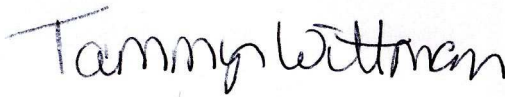
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Tammy Wittman, 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tammy Wittman". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed "Signature" label.

Signature\_\_

Date February 23, 2009