

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION

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JANUARY 31, 2023
Start: 1:16 p.m.
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HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: SHEKAR KRISHNAN, CHAIR

COUNCIL MEMBERS: DAVID M. CARR
ERIC DINOWITZ
ROBERT F. HOLDEN
LINDA LEE
CHRISTOPHER MARTE
JULIE MENIN
FRANCISCO P. MOYA
MERCEDES NARCISSE
LINCOLN RESTLER
SANDRA UNG
MARJORIE VELAZQUEZ
CHARLES BARRON
SHAWN ABREU

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

CONNIE PELLEGRE, Speaker

1 COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION

3

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Start the recording.

3 Did you do everything? You good? Yeah.

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good afternoon.

5 Welcome to New York City Cultured Hybrid Hearing on
6 the Committee on Parks and Recreation. At this time
7 please set all electronic devices to vibrate or
8 silent mode. Chair, we are ready to begin.

9 CHAIRPERSON SHEKAR KRISHNAN: Thank you
10 so much Sergeant. Good afternoon. I am Co-. Oh,
11 let's gavel in. (gavel pounding). Good afternoon.
12 I am Council Member Shekar Krishnan and pleased to
13 Chair the Committee on Parks and Recreation. Today,
14 the Committee will consider a Bill that was
15 ceremonially co-named 128 thoroughfares and public
16 places throughout the City. Co-naming Bills are the
17 result of the Council's periodic process where we
18 seek to honor individuals and organizations that have
19 made lasting contributions to our City. Some of
20 these include co-names for active Community Members,
21 heroic New Yorkers who sacrificed their lives for
22 others, people who committed their lives to public
23 service or those who greatly enriched the City's
24 cultural landscape. Of the many honorees proposed by
25 this piece of Legislation I'd like to call a couple -

2 - attention to a couple of co-namings that I am proud
3 to have sponsored. One would be Bangladesh Street on
4 73rd Street in Jackson Heights. The heart and soul
5 of our Bangladesh Community are not just in Jackson
6 Heights but would all through New York City.

7 Bangladesh Street would honor the Bangladesh
8 Committee of our City and recognize the immense
9 contributions that has made and continues to make to
10 our Community of Jackson Heights and to New York City
11 overall. I am proud and excited to push forward to
12 co-name 73rd Street which has our Bangladeshi small
13 businesses, celebrates so much of Bangladeshi culture
14 throughout the year and is a place where so many from
15 the Bangladeshi community congregate. I am proud to
16 co-name it Bangladesh Street. Another co-naming of
17 mine would recognize, I'm sorry out of mine would
18 recognize John Browne Way which would honor John
19 Browne an Irish immigrant who served in the U.S. Army
20 and later became a local business and civic leader
21 who engaged in providing needed need to other
22 immigrants and countless child activities. Finally,
23 another co-name that I'm particularly proud to
24 sponsor is Asif Rahman Way which would honor Asif
25 Rahman who tragically died at the young age of 22

2 when he was struck by a freight truck on Queens
3 Boulevard. Asif was a Bangladeshi immigrant who
4 excelled in school and was a graduate of Queens
5 College. His tragic death spurred his mother Lizi
6 Rahman to create a campaign to make Queens Boulevard
7 safer and as a result of her efforts and her
8 leadership we have made great strides over the years
9 to make Queens Boulevard known as the Boulevard of
10 Death in Queens far safer today than it has ever
11 been. As a result over 10,000 people, hundreds of
12 businesses and dozens of organizations have supported
13 the campaign to make Queens Boulevard safer by
14 signing petitions, participating in Community
15 designed workshops and local rally. All of which had
16 helped to make changes to Queens Boulevard resulting
17 in a safer street for pedestrians. We will always
18 remember the life of Asif. We will always carry his
19 memory forward in the work that we do to make our
20 streets of Queens and our City safer and I couldn't
21 be touched and honored to work with Lizi Rahman and
22 so many others to make sure that we can co-name that
23 street in partic- -- that part of the Boulevard in
24 particular where Asif was tragically killed after
25 him. Because it is his legacy and working alongside

2 his mother that together we will create safer
3 streets, a safer Queens and a safer City for
4 pedestrians. I'd like to welcome all who have come
5 to participate in this hearing and speak on behalf of
6 the various nominees. Thank you again. I'd like to
7 first recognize my colleagues of the Parks Committee
8 who have joined us today. We have Council Member
9 Moya, Council Member Lee, Council Member Marte,
10 Council Member Menin, Council Member Narcisse,
11 Council Member Ung, Council Member Velazquez and
12 Council Member Carr. Thank you all so much for
13 joining today. Now before we take testimony from the
14 public, I would like to open up for our colleagues on
15 the Committee to say a few words. And I would like
16 to first ask Council Member Velazquez to say a few
17 words.

18 MARJORIE VELAZQUEZ: Good afternoon and
19 thank you Chair Krishnan, colleagues and members of
20 the Community. Today is the day for us to recognize
21 and honor the people who have done great things for
22 our respective Communities. For my District it means
23 recognizing businesses like Side Street. The home of
24 the Salsa which was notorious for hosting well-known
25 artists from all over the world who would perform for

2 crowds of thousands. The location was infamous for
3 their special events from concerts to radio shows to
4 parties for families, dance classes. Yes, even I
5 learned how to dance Salsa there. And even as a
6 filming location. So I am excited to sponsor Side
7 Street Way in recognition of the diversity and
8 culture this business has brought to the Bronx and
9 certainly New York City and now more than ever in the
10 City's history it's important to recognize arsenal
11 businesses and the locations that brought the City to
12 life in the past and honoring their history together
13 in our Community. This afternoon I'm joined by
14 Connie and her husband Vinny whose father Salvatore
15 Triscari we hope to also co-name a street after.
16 Connie has been an advocate on behalf of her father
17 Salvatore's legacy and her level of commitment to
18 getting this done exemplifies what a loving father
19 and cherished community member he was. Richard
20 DePierro was a sweet gentleman and welcoming man who
21 brought so much life to City Island. As a neighbor
22 he was always there to lend a helping hand. As a
23 business owner his name became synonymous to some of
24 the most well-known establishments that still remain
25 on City Island. Mr. DePierro was a proud man who

2 never took differences as a disadvantage but embraced
3 his differences and made his community better. He
4 did so much for so many throughout his life and it
5 seems fitting that he would be recognized following
6 his passing. I would like support along with many
7 members on City Island we hope to co-name Hawkins
8 Street after this great man so his legacy remains not
9 just for those who knew but for all. Also we'd like
10 to recognize Jim McQuade. For him and for us in my
11 personal family to know him was to love him. Mr.
12 McQuade spent so much of his life comforting others
13 through their darkest moments, certainly in my family
14 as well as many in the district and just handling
15 people with so much grace and compassion just spoke
16 of his heart which was a heart of gold. Mr. McQuade
17 was a New York State Funeral Director and owner of
18 Schuyler Hill Funeral Home in Throggs Neck. He spent
19 most of his life as one of the founding fathers of
20 the Throggs Neck Ambulance Corps. He is also the
21 prime organizer of the annual 9/11 memorial in
22 Throggs Neck. He gave so much of his time, energy
23 and certainly love to so many organizations
24 throughout the community that almost everyone has
25 been touched by his good deeds. His wife Kathleen,

2 daughter Jackie and Kathy Nan, late son James got to
3 see not just his compassionate side but the loving
4 and generous side of a man who just cared so much for
5 everyone and it is an honor to co-name a street after
6 him. And finally, and I speak on the tragic passing
7 of Alissa Kolenovic. A bright young girl who's life
8 was cut far too short. And her passing illustrates a
9 citywide problem with safety on streets and
10 dedicating this intersection will honor her legacy
11 and offer a unique opportunity to remember her and
12 recognize the added need for more traffic safety
13 measures. Following Alissa's passing there vigils on
14 the site of the crash, community event held in
15 multiple boroughs to honor her and the beautiful
16 sentiments provided by Speaker Adams at that time
17 stated showed how much her life not only means today
18 but tomorrow and for the future. Being able to
19 provide the family an opportunity to view this foyer
20 of Paulding and Neill Avenues as a tribute to honor
21 Alissa's memory is a fane one and I know that
22 Alissa's sister, Usada is looking at us now virtually
23 so we want to say thank you and in her honor we are
24 honored to sponsor this co-name. I just want to add
25 with my District represents a diverse culture of

2 people and businesses and the street honorees I've
3 just submitted reflect that and I look forward to
4 having my colleagues and I being able to celebrate
5 and honor so many of those who accomplish much and I
6 thank you Chair for this time.

7 CHAIRPERSON SHEKAR KRISHNAN: Thank you
8 so much Council Member Velazquez. Now I would like
9 to recognize Council Member Marte.

10 CHRISTOPHER MARTE: Thank you Chair
11 Krishnan for hosting this meeting. I'm really
12 excited for the street announcement. Is to honor
13 Morris "Moishe" Cohen who also is or was the former
14 owner of Economy Candy which I argue is probably the
15 best candy store in New York City. We can debate
16 that on another day but he was a World War II
17 veteran. In the 1930s he took over his family's
18 candy shop which is called Economy Candy and he kept
19 it thriving and as the neighborhood changed around
20 him and the Lower East Side became more hip, grungy,
21 cooler, Economy Candy remained a staple for kids like
22 me who would stop by after school. And one thing
23 that was constant was the love that he had for the
24 Community and the love the Community had for him.
25 And so this is a longtime coming and I really want to

2 thank his daughter-in-law Sky and his son Mitchell
3 who have continued to own and work in this
4 generational business and I look forward to reading
5 an issue with this summer in honoring his legacy and
6 more to come. Thank you all.

7 CHAIRPERSON SHEKAR KRISHNAN: Thank you
8 so much, Council Member Marte. Council Member
9 Narcisse.

10 MERCEDES NARCISSE: It's tough for me
11 when it comes to street co-naming because I don't
12 take -- I don't take the co-naming streets after a
13 resident lightly and for me to introduce the decision
14 with you and thank you Chair for giving me the
15 possibility, the opportunity to do that today. The
16 individual must truly be deserving and gone above and
17 beyond. Our entire City was shocked and saddened
18 when Ethan Holder, a young assistant teacher at T771K
19 in my District was gunned down right outside of the
20 school shortly after making sure the Special Needs
21 students in his care were safely on their bus home.
22 So that's the reason I'm here to name East 52nd
23 Street and Avenue M in honor of Ethan Zachary Holder
24 Way. Second one is Mr. Chuck Rogers. That what we
25 call him. Charles Rogers. A Canarsie Courier,

2 Canarsie was his home and I recall vividly we would
3 spend time talking about the importance of fighting
4 for the community. So I am proud to name the street
5 after him East 92nd where he spent a lot of time
6 riding the street on Flatlands and the intersection
7 of Flatlands. He is very important to us. The other
8 one is 15-year-old Kaitlyn Bernhardt was known as a
9 Saint on Earth to all her friends. At her young age
10 she would be making sure others are good with food,
11 collecting clothes and I'm proud to name the street
12 of East 69th Street and Veteran's Avenue in her
13 honor. She passed with cancer. Another one is our
14 City bravest firefighters, Steven Pollard. Is a hero
15 who died in the line of duty and he is certainly
16 deserving of having East 35th Street and Avenue S
17 named after him. So I'm looking forward to name
18 those streets for those that fought hard for our
19 community and thank you Chair for giving me the
20 opportunity. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON SHEKAR KRISHNAN: Thank you
22 so much Council Member Narcisse. Now we will go to
23 Council Member Carr.

24 DAVID CARR: Thank you Chair Krishnan. I
25 have four street co-namings in this package that's

2 being heard today and normally I would spend me time
3 talking about those three Staten Islanders who I
4 think are very deserving and a fourth who is a
5 National Hero to many who call my District in Staten
6 Island their home today but I'm going to focus my
7 remarks at this hearing one that is not in my
8 District and that's unfortunately for the so-called
9 Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad. Elijah Muhammad was
10 the leader of an organization that at its root has
11 anti-Semitism pervasive throughout that organization
12 and at a time when I'm working with so many in our
13 City in order to combat anti-Semitism across the five
14 boroughs I think this is a particularly ill-timed
15 street co-naming. The very fact that this individual
16 in his lifetime was a partner -- documented partner
17 of white power groups and other anti-Semitic groups,
18 spoke openly about his anti-Semitism and is
19 documented as such by power the Southern Poverty Law
20 Center and the Anti-Defamation League I think alone
21 calls into question his inclusion in this list of
22 honorees many of which are so deserving. I think in
23 light of all of that and in light of his connection
24 to violence over the period of his life this is not a
25 street co-naming that we should be supporting at this

2 time or frankly at any time. And so with that, I
3 thank the Chair for allowing me my remarks.

4 CHAIRPERSON SHEKAR KRISHNAN: Thank you
5 Council Member Carr. Now we will go to Council
6 Member Abreu.

7 SHAWN ABREU: Good afternoon and thank
8 you Chair Krishnan for allowing me to speak on this
9 co-naming resolution. I want to take a moment to
10 highlight the importance of the three individuals we
11 have chosen to honor for inclusion in the Street Co-
12 Naming Legislation, Rafael "Monkey" Delgado, Tom
13 DeMott and Agripina Nunez. Rafael Delgado grew up on
14 West 108th Street in the Manhattan
15 Valley/Bloomingdale neighborhood with his parents and
16 three siblings. At the age of 17, he served in
17 Vietnam as a "tunnel rat." A soldier that went to
18 and explored burrows and tunnels. He came back
19 afflicted as many were by post-traumatic stress
20 disorder. Despite his trauma followed by the
21 addition of more personal losses of his siblings he
22 maintained a golden heart and was a good neighbor,
23 friend and support for so many in his neighborhood.
24 He is missed and remembered by many. Tom DeMott.
25 Tom DeMott was a activism leader in New York City's

2 tenant's movement. Assisting many tenants hold on to
3 their homes. He demonstrated against various
4 Columbia University issues such as Columbia's
5 involvement in the Vietnam War and its plan to build
6 a gym in Morningside Park with a separate entrance
7 and lower quality facilities for local community
8 members. He was banned from campus because of his
9 involvement in local protests which prompted him to
10 eventually drop out of Columbia University. He found
11 a job at the U.S. Postal Service where he worked for
12 the next 30 years. Tom founded the Tiemann Tenants
13 Alliance in 1981. The Alliance began a legal rent
14 strike. Housing inspectors went into the three
15 buildings and recorded over 1500 violations which the
16 Alliance then moved to be repaired. In the late
17 1986, all the court cases up to that date were settle
18 together. The Alliance was awarded 50% of five years
19 rent totaling \$270,000. His courage and endurance
20 led him to be a central player and efforts to rally
21 neighborhoods threatened by gentrification throughout
22 the City. His funeral at St. Mary's Church became an
23 occasion for representatives for community groups
24 from East Harlem to the Upper Westside, the Movement
25 for Justice in El Barrio and Mirabal Sister Cultural

2 and Community Center to show their love for him. His
3 impact on the community is profoundly felt to this
4 day and it is only fitting that his legacy is
5 enshrined in the neighborhood that he loved so much.

6 Agripina Nunez immigrated to the United States in
7 1975. She was a parishioner of the Our Lady of
8 Esperanza Church in Manhattan for 44 years and was
9 very involved in causes for the poor and underserved
10 communities. She served as President of the 894
11 Riverside Drive Tenant's Association for many years
12 advocating for tenant rights. She received a
13 Community Leadership Award from the Northern
14 Manhattan Improvement Corporation where she served in
15 the Community Organizing Department and she served as
16 a block leader on the Unidad Comunal to improve the
17 quality of life for tenants in her building and
18 community. She led successful campaigns against
19 abusive property owners and was successful in
20 fighting and defeating Pinnacle Management's plan to
21 convert to 894 Riverside Drive to a condominium. She
22 was also a unifying force in organizing a rent strike
23 at 894 Riverside Drive which led to tenants demanding
24 compensation for lack of cooking gas and the
25 existence of numerous violations of the building

2 code. Her immense contributions as a fighter, a
3 leader had profound impact on many lives and we're
4 honored to include for recognition. We look forward
5 to the passage of the Legislation subsequent co-
6 naming ceremonies. Thank you again Chair Krishan.

7 CHAIRPERSON SHEKAR KRISHNAN: Thank you
8 Council Member Abreu and we will now go back to
9 Council Member Narcisse.

10 MERCEDES NARCISSE: One more important
11 person that we need to name in my district. It's
12 Sergeant Mario Nelson. He died in Iraq serving his
13 Country. And I would like very much to see his name
14 on Avenue N and East 83rd Street co-named Sergeant
15 Mario Nelson Haitian Warrior. So thank you Chair for
16 giving me the opportunity. I just had the
17 confirmation I want to go through it and not seeing
18 it on paper. So, thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON SHEKAR KRISHNAN: Any time.
20 Thank you Council Member Narcisse. With that, thanks
21 to our colleagues and now we will open up for public
22 testimony. We have one witness signed up to testify,
23 Connie Pellegré (phonetic). Please come on up. You
24 can begin.

2 CONNIE PELLEGRE: Okay. Thank you
3 everybody to give me the opportunity for this little
4 speech that I have for my beloved Anna Andoyle
5 (phonetic) Salvatore Triscari. Very happy to and a
6 little nervous but it should be okay. I love my
7 father, we miss him so much but he did lot of things
8 for the area and I'm happy that his name is going to
9 be a street name for himself with my grandchildren
10 and for the family of Triscari. Thank you very muc
11 for this opportunity.

12 CHAIRPERSON SHEKAR KRISHNAN: Thank you
13 so much Ms. Pellegré. Great job. Good job. Okay.
14 I think at this point unless we have no other public
15 testimony. We've been joined by Council Member
16 Barron. Council Member did you want to say a few
17 words before we close.

18 CHARLES BARRON: Okay.

19 CHAIRPERSON SHEKAR KRISHNAN: Yep.
20 You're up. Council Member Barron.

21 FEMALE: You're on.

22 CHARLES BARRON: All right. Just give me
23 a second. Okay. Thank you very much Mr. Chair for
24 allowing me these minutes to discuss three in
25 particular, Juanita Caballero, Myrtle McKinney,

2 Jacolia James. We want to honor them, the three
3 elderly. They were killed in a development and the
4 families have suffered so we are looking forward to
5 honoring them through the street co-naming. I also
6 understand that Al Vann is a part of the package I
7 believe and he was a longtime friend of ours and an
8 icon in the black community. So we want to honor Al
9 Vann. And I don't want to disappoint you without
10 having some controversy so we definitely support the
11 Honorable Elijah Muhammad and his street co-naming
12 and we denounce all of the accusations of anti-
13 Semitism particularly by the anti-defamation league,
14 a league who supported the racist of Harti Brezem
15 (phonetic) under Ronald Reagan in South Africa and
16 there's nothing more racist than that. I don't think
17 they have the morale authority to be criticizing the
18 Honorable Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X and Minister
19 Lewis Faracon (phonetic) who really have saved so
20 many people in our community. We advised our
21 communities and particularly those of us who were
22 incarcerated turned their lives around and living
23 better lives now and building institutions in our
24 community and anybody that can get over a 1.6 million
25 people to come to Washington D.C. particularly the

2 march black man in honor of Elijah Muhammad, the
3 Honorable Minister Lewis Faracon calls him to do that
4 so I just we detest and denounce the anti-Semitism.
5 Any constructive criticism of the State of Israel is
6 always turned into anti-Semitism so we support that
7 street naming as well. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON SHEKAR KRISHNAN: Thank you
9 so much Council Member Barron. All right, well I
10 want to thank you all so much for participating and
11 attending today's Parks Committee Hearing and for all
12 the public testimony as well. And at this moment
13 we'll close out the hearing. Thank you all. (gavel
14 pounding). Thank you Sergeant we will be re-opening
15 today's Parks Hearing of January 31st and we would
16 like to recognize we have two other Council Members
17 with us as, Council Member Restler is here and also
18 Council Member Holden, virtual.

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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 FEBRUARY 7, 2023