

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS AND CONCESSIONS

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May 24, 2011
Start: 1:00 pm
Recess: N/A

HELD AT: Committee Room
250 Broadway - 14th Fl.

B E F O R E: STEPHEN T. LEVIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Charles Barron
Inez E. Dickens
Sara M. Gonzalez
Peter A. Koo

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

Carol Clark
Assistant Commissioner of Land Use and Local
Legislative Affairs
Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Wendell Walters
Assistant Commissioner for New Construction
Department of Housing Preservation and Development

Jack Hammer
Director of Brooklyn Planning
Department of Housing Preservation and Development

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: If we could
have quiet in the room..

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Good afternoon.
Welcome to the Subcommittee on Planning,
Dispositions and Concessions. I'm Council Member
Stephen Levin, chair of the Subcommittee. I am
joined today by my colleagues on the Subcommittee.
Starting from the right, we have Council Member
Inez Dickens of Manhattan, Council Member Sara
Gonzalez of Brooklyn, Council Member Charles
Barron of Brooklyn and Council Member Peter Koo of
Queens. We have a short agenda for today, and I
apologize for my lack of formal attire. We have
two items; one is in the district of Council
Member Dickens and the other is in the district of
Council Member Barron. We are going to start with
Land Use Nos. 314 and 315 Harlem Park Houses,
Block 1736, Lot 1 in Community Board District 10
of Manhattan, Council District No. 9 and that is
the Council District represented by Inez Dickens.
Testifying on this item, we have Assistant
Commissioner, Carol Clark and Wendell Walters from
HPD. Commissioner Clark?

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2 CAROL CLARK: Mr. Chairman and
3 members of the Committee, I'm Carol Clark,
4 Assistant Commissioner of Land Use and Local
5 Legislative Affairs at HPD and I'm joined by
6 Wendell Walters, who is the Assistant Commissioner
7 for New Construction. He'll give the testimony
8 this afternoon. Wendell?

9 WENDELL WALTERS: Good afternoon
10 [off mic] Committee. Land Use No. 315 consists of
11 the proposed conveyance of undeveloped vacant land
12 at 60 West 139th Street in Harlem, Manhattan to a
13 new owner, who will construct in the existing
14 courtyard behind the buildings a multiple dwelling
15 that will provide 51 home ownership units, plus
16 one super's unit, where 20% of units will have
17 sales price and income restrictions for families
18 at 80-90% of AMI. The new building will be eight
19 stories tall, fitting appropriately into the
20 surrounding neighborhood context. The current
21 owner is an Article 5 redevelopment company, whose
22 project was approved by the Board of Estimate in
23 August 2000—Sorry, 1980—long time ago. It is
24 known as Harlem Houses and contains two multiple
25 dwellings, which provides 214 low-income rental

1 housing units, plus two super's units. Today HPD
2 seeks the approval of the conveyance of the
3 property from the current owner to a new owner and
4 Land Use 314 seeks the modification of the
5 previously approved Harlem Park Houses planning
6 project by deleting the proposed conveyance area
7 to facilitate the new project. Councilperson
8 Dickens has been briefed and indicated her
9 support.
10

11 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, thank you
12 very much, Commissioner Walters. Council Member
13 Dickens, do you have anything to add?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you,
15 Chair Levin. Good afternoon. I am happy to
16 announce that I have made progress with Harlem
17 Park Houses project and it is ready to move
18 forward. I want to thank the development company
19 Park - - and Wendell Walters and Carol Clark of
20 HPD for our continuing correspondence on this
21 matter. It was more foremost priority to create
22 affordable housing for my constituents. The site
23 for this new development sits in between two
24 already existing Section 8 buildings. The site
25 for the new development as a blighted courtyard,

1
2 it was not an easy negotiation. Where you going?
3 This is a woman speaking. It was not an easy
4 negotiation because I would not accept anything
5 less than decent affordability for any development
6 going up in my district. The land is as of right,
7 which meant the developers already own the land.
8 That presented difficulty in negotiating, but they
9 understood my passion for providing affordable
10 housing to my families. We went through numerous
11 rounds of negotiations to garner larger units for
12 families that would be affordable. There are now
13 52 units down from 72 units with 20% at 80 to 90%
14 AMI. I reluctantly accepted this final
15 negotiation because most of the affordable units
16 are two and three bedrooms, allowing for Harlem's
17 families to take occupancy and yet be able to
18 afford them. I ask my colleagues for their yes
19 vote. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
21 much, Council Member Dickens. Mr. Walters, can
22 you just give us a brief breakdown of the unit
23 sizes?

24 WENDELL WALTERS: Yes. So in the
25 total project, there are 7 1-bedrooms, 26 2-

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2 bedrooms and 18 3-bedrooms. In the 80-90% of AMI
3 category, there are 2 1-bedrooms, 5 2-bedrooms and
4 3 3-bedrooms. Quite a number of 3-bedroom
5 apartments that are in that restricted income
6 sales prices category.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: And the
8 marketing will be done by the Harlem Park
9 Development?

10 WENDELL WALTERS: They will lead
11 the marketing effort supervised by HPD.

12 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. If no
13 further questions—do any of my colleagues have any
14 questions on the item?

15 Seeing none, I thank you very much
16 Commissioner Walters, and we'll move on to the
17 next item, which is—by the way, the previous item
18 was Land Use Nos. 314 and 315; it's 20115418 HAM.
19 The next item is Land Use No. 392; that's 20115751
20 HAK, 660 Jerome Street, 741 Barbey Street and that
21 is in Community District 5, Council District 42—
22 that's represented by Council Member Charles
23 Barron. Testifying on this item is Assistant
24 Commissioner Carol Clark and Jack Hammer from HPD.

25 CAROL CLARK: Thank you, Mr.

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2 Chairman and members of the Committee. I'm Carol
3 Clark, assistant commissioner at HPD. Jack Hammer
4 the director of Brooklyn planning is with me.

5 L.U. 392 is known as the Coretta Scott King
6 apartments and is a Section 202 supportive housing
7 project located as you noted at 660 Jerome Street
8 and other addresses in Brooklyn. The action
9 before the Council today is an amendment of a
10 prior approval. The original project was approved
11 in October of 2009. The proposed amendment seeks
12 a reduction of the number of units from 52 to 51
13 units and a reduction in the annual minimum real
14 estate tax payments. Under the amended project,
15 Coretta Scott King Housing Development Fund
16 Corporation, the sponsor, will purchase the
17 disposition area and undertake the new
18 construction of one four-story elevator building
19 to provide 50 units of rental housing for elderly
20 persons of low-income, plus one unit for a
21 superintendent. Council Member Barron has been
22 briefed and has indicated his support. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Thank you very
24 much, Ms. Clark. Mr. Hammer, do you have
25 anything to add?

JACK HAMMER: Nothing to add.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Council Member Barron?

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, I would just like to say this is an extremely affordable unit and I'm not going to mention any names 'cause I wouldn't want to put anybody out there like that, but the prior item that was just discussed doesn't come near the affordability of this item here. The prior items' supporter and we won't mention any names--

[laughter]

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: --doesn't come near the affordability of this item here. In addition to have Coretta Scott King as the name, you know, not in Harlem, but in Brooklyn, I think this is a project that we should all approve once again with its modifications. Thank you very much.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Mr. Chair, I have a question.

CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I think Council Member Dickens has something to say.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Yes, I

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2 have a question and a statement. Number one, I do
3 commend my unnamed colleague that the development
4 is named Coretta Scott King; however, having said
5 that, I do believe if my memory serves me, that
6 this is something that was really passed on
7 before, so this doesn't count as far as numbers is
8 concerned, so I want to nix that and say that
9 we're just making some small minute changes and
10 not increasing the numbers that my colleague
11 thinks that he is going pull the wool over our
12 eyes. Having said that, I will support it.

13 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I will say that
14 I agree with Council Member Dickens that he can't
15 count it twice. You can only count it one time.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Mr. Chair,
17 in all due respect, it is important to stay
18 neutral no matter what you hear from your
19 colleagues—

20 [laughter]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: --'cause you
22 never want to be considered favoring one side over
23 the other, so I just wanted to say that this was
24 not—when I passed this, I wasn't even discussing
25 who's better at affordability and since that

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2 discussion, I have to include this because this
3 comes when we started the competition.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: However,
5 we are all aware that it's - - the queen is the
6 one who carries the power.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: But there's
8 a man that created the game of chess.

9 [laughter]

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: I will say that
11 it's a great benefit to the city of New York and
12 to Brooklyn and to the district that Council
13 Member Barron represents to have 202 housing.
14 This is a big challenge that we face in the city
15 of New York that we don't have enough affordable
16 housing for senior citizens, so I think that it's
17 a benefit wherever it is. Congratulations,
18 Council Member Barron. Congratulations,
19 Councilmember Dickens, as well. So I am going to
20 urge a yes vote on both items, and I'm going to
21 ask counsel to the committee, Christian Hilton, to
22 call the roll.

23 COUNSEL: Chair Levin?

24 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Aye on all.

25 COUNSEL: Council Member Barron?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Aye on all.

3 COUNSEL: Council Member Gonzalez?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GONZALEZ: Aye on

5 all.

6 COUNSEL: Council Member Dickens?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Aye.

8 COUNSEL: Council Member Koo?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Aye.

10 COUNSEL: By a vote of five in the
11 affirmative, none in the negative and no
12 abstentions, L.U. 314, 315 and 392 are approved
13 and referred to the Land Use Committee.

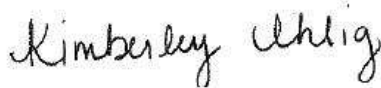
14 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: This hearing is
15 adjourned.

16 [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

Date May 31, 2011