

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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December 9, 2008

Start: 11:00am

Recess: N/A

HELD AT: Committee Room  
City Hall

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Joel Rivera  
Maria Baez  
Diana Reyna  
Michael E. McMahon  
Annabel Palma  
Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.  
Eric N. Gioia  
Lewis A. Fidler  
Robert Jackson  
Helen Sears  
Vincent J. Gentile  
Vincent Ignizio  
James S. Oddo

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

## COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Rosie Mendez  
Albert Vann  
G. Oliver Koppell  
Bill de Blasio  
Peter F. Vallone, Jr.

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

Jeremy Waldrup  
Assistant Commissioner  
Department of Small Business Services

Carl Weisbrod  
Trinity Real Estate

Jonathan Dean  
Jack Resnick and Sons

Elizabeth Lusskin  
Hudson Square BID Steering Committee

Laura Walker  
Chair  
Hudson Square BID Steering Committee

George Glatte  
Hudson Square BID Steering Committee

Philip Mouquinho  
P.J. Charlton

Earle W. Kazis  
Earle Kazis Associates

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2                   CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Good morning.  
3 And welcome to today's Finance Committee hearing.  
4 My name is David Weprin. I chair the Finance  
5 Committee. This morning we have three items on  
6 our agenda: A local law to establish a business  
7 improvement district in Manhattan, and two land  
8 use items to provide a property tax exemption for  
9 low income families in Manhattan, and elderly  
10 persons of low income also in Manhattan. We'll  
11 first start with the BID item. Intro 870  
12 establishes the Hudson Square BID located in  
13 Speaker Christine Quinn's district. Resolution  
14 1680, adopted by this Committee in November 19th,  
15 set today as the first hearing day so that we may  
16 hear all those who may be affected by the  
17 establishment of the BID who wish to speak. After  
18 we hear from all witnesses, we will adjourn the  
19 hearing for at least 30 days, which is the  
20 statutorily mandated time during which property  
21 owners objecting to the establishment of a BID may  
22 file objections. In the absence of significant  
23 objections, if the Committee and the Council can  
24 answer the following four questions affirmatively,  
25 it may adopt the Local Law establishing the BID.

1  
2 The four questions we must be prepared to answer  
3 are: One, were all notices of hearing for all  
4 hearings required to be held published and mailed  
5 as required by law and otherwise sufficient? Two,  
6 does all the real property within the district's  
7 boundaries benefit from the establishment of the  
8 district, except as otherwise provided by the law?  
9 Three, is all real property benefited by the  
10 district included within the district? And four  
11 is the establishment of the district within the  
12 best interest of the public? If the committee  
13 finds in the affirmative on these four questions  
14 and the number of objections required to prevent  
15 the creation of the BID are not filed, then the  
16 legislation can be adopted. The Speaker will not  
17 take a position on the formation of the BID until  
18 after the 30 day objection period has passed.  
19 Next, we have a Land Use item. This item is a  
20 pre-considered resolution providing a property tax  
21 exemption for the new construction of senior  
22 housing located in Council Member Rosie Mendez's  
23 district. The Dona Petra Housing will provide 56  
24 units of rental housing in an eight-story building  
25 for elderly persons of low income. This property

1  
2 tax exemption is needed for the project's  
3 viability. Also in Council Member Mendez's  
4 district is the Haven Plaza Project. Haven Plaza  
5 contains four buildings that currently provide 371  
6 units of rental housing for low-income families.  
7 The sponsor, Haven Plaza Housing Development Fund  
8 Company, had its original mortgage mature in  
9 August 31st, 2008 and has a Section 8 contract for  
10 138 units that will run until January 31st, 2009  
11 with an anticipated renewal of at least another  
12 five years. The owner plans to finance  
13 significant rehabilitation work with a combination  
14 of an Article 8 mortgage loan from HPD and a  
15 private bank loan. The owner plans to request a  
16 new Article 11 tax exemption, to be co-terminus  
17 with the term of the new mortgage. The original  
18 Article 11 exemption expired on July 1st, 1992.  
19 And the original project is now experiencing  
20 operating deficits in real property tax arrears.  
21 In order to make the project economically viable  
22 until the financing of the new mortgage is  
23 secured, the owner is requesting a new tax  
24 exemption pursuant to Private Housing Finance Law  
25 577. Council Member Rosie Mendez supports both of

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2 these projects. Representatives from Council  
3 Finance are available to answer any questions you  
4 may have regarding the Land Use item. And we will  
5 hear from the Assistant Commissioner of the  
6 Department of Small Business Services, Jeremy  
7 Waldrup on the BID. Let me introduce my  
8 colleagues that are here. We have our majority  
9 leader, Joel Rivera, from the Bronx; we have  
10 Council Member Maria Baez, from the Bronx; Council  
11 Member Diana Reyna, from Brooklyn and Queens; we  
12 have Council Member, Congressman-elect, Michael  
13 McMahon, from Staten Island, who we're relying on  
14 to aid the City shortly when we're going to be up  
15 there pleading for aid in Washington. And I know  
16 he will be a strong voice in that new legislative  
17 body. We have Council Member Annabel Palma, from  
18 the Bronx; we have our deputy majority leader  
19 Leroy Comrie, from Queens. Mr. Waldrup. And our  
20 Committee Counsel, Tanisha Turnbull, and Bill.

21 TANISHA EDWARDS: Edwards.

22 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Tanisha  
23 Turnbull Edwards, Tanisha Edwards, and Bill  
24 Martin.

25 JEREMY WALDRUP: Good morning, Mr.

1 Chairman and members of the Finance Committee.

2 I'm Jeremy Waldrup, an Assistant Commissioner at

3 the Department of Small Business Services. SBS

4 supports the establishment of the Hudson Square

5 Business Improvement District in the borough of

6 Manhattan. Geographically the proposed BID

7 district is generally bounded by West Houston

8 Street to the north, Avenue of the Americas to the

9 east, Canal Street to the south and Greenwich

10 Street to the west. Services to be provided in

11 the Hudson Square BID include traffic management

12 and safety, retail attraction and marketing,

13 streetscape improvements, sanitation and

14 maintenance and other services as may be required

15 for the promotion and enhancement for the

16 district. The budget for the first year of

17 operation is \$2.5 million. As required by law,

18 the Hudson Square Bid Steering Committee mailed

19 the summary of the City Council resolution to each

20 owner of real property within the proposed

21 district at the address shown on the latest City

22 Assessment Roll, to such other persons as are

23 registered with the city to receive tax bills

24 concerning real property within the district and

25



1  
2 to tenants of each building within the proposed  
3 district. In addition, SBS arranged for the  
4 publication of a copy of the summary of the  
5 Resolution at least once in the City record.

6 Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.

8 Any questions for Mr. Waldrup? Going once? Going  
9 twice? Yes. Oh, and I left out Council Member  
10 Eric Gioia from Queens.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GIOIA: I just want  
12 to-- I heard going once, going twice. I felt like  
13 I was at an auction there. Just very quickly,  
14 Commissioner, I've just been waiting on some  
15 information from your office on the BIDs and I  
16 just want to remind you of that, that we haven't  
17 gotten it yet and would like to have that. We  
18 continue to vote on BIDs, and I'm happy to do so,  
19 but I am requesting information from you and would  
20 like your office to follow up with my Chief of  
21 Staff, Zoey Epstein, on that.

22 JEREMY WALDRUP: Sure.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GIOIA: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you,  
25 Council Member. We're now going to hear from a

1  
2 panel. We may have to put some more chairs up  
3 because we'll take you all up at once. We have  
4 Laura Walker, Elizabeth Lusskin, George Glatter,  
5 Carl Weisbrod, Philip Mouquinho and Jonathan Dean.

6 [Pause]

7 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: And it's  
8 particularly nice to see Mr. Glatter in his new  
9 capacity. We're used to seeing you in a different  
10 capacity, and it's always a pleasure to have you  
11 back here. We miss your regular attendance at our  
12 Finance Committee hearings.

13 [Pause]

14 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Go head.

15 [Off Mic]

16 LAURA WALKER: --and members of the  
17 Council. I'm Laura Walker. I'm the Chair of the  
18 Steering Committee for the Hudson Square Bid and  
19 also the president and CEO of WNYC Radio. WNYC  
20 has recently, as many of you know, with your  
21 support and others, moved from the Municipal  
22 Building to 160 Varick Street, right smack in the  
23 middle of the Hudson Square neighborhood, and we  
24 are delighted to be there. We're broadcasting  
25 from there with our staff of over 200 people to

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2 more than one million people every week, and  
3 enjoying the great neighborhood of Hudson Square.  
4 And we are particularly excited about the ways in  
5 which this proposed BID can make the neighborhood  
6 even better in terms of streetscape, traffic,  
7 retail. The BID's plan has been greeted with  
8 great support throughout the neighborhood over the  
9 one and a half years of work that we've done in  
10 planning this. And we wanted to take a few  
11 minutes to go through some of the specifics.  
12 George Glatter will talk about the outreach we've  
13 done, then Liz Lusskin will provide some of the  
14 specifics on the district plan. Carl Weisbrod, of  
15 Trinity and Phil Mouquinho, who will represent  
16 large and small owners in the area, and Jonathan  
17 Dean, I guess, will also make statements in  
18 support of the BID. Additionally, I'd like to  
19 acknowledge several other owners and tenants who  
20 are here to show their support for the Hudson  
21 Square BID. David Vermillion from Edelman, Donna  
22 Vogel from Newmark Frank, Erin Reiter [phonetic]  
23 from Trinity Real Estate and Liz Neumark from  
24 Great Performances are all here to show their  
25 support. I also have two letters, one from Jerry

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2 Gottesman from Edison Properties and Jill Fink is  
3 the representative of Edison on the Steering  
4 Committee, which I will submit to you, as well as  
5 a letter from Tony Mannarino, from Tishman Speyer,  
6 also in the neighborhood. So we have a tremendous  
7 amount of support and I will now turn it over to  
8 George Glatter.

9           GEORGE GLATTER: Thank you, Laura,  
10 and it is indeed a pleasure to be back before the  
11 Committee. As Laura Walker mentioned, we've been  
12 doing outreach for the past year and a half to  
13 make sure that it is well known that a BID is  
14 being formed or contemplated in the area. It  
15 started out with an introductory letter to all the  
16 stakeholders in the area outlining some of the  
17 goals in the BID. Along with that there was a  
18 survey sent out, a stakeholder survey, to find out  
19 just what it is that people in the neighborhood,  
20 businesses, tenants, owners, feel is really good  
21 about the neighborhood and how the neighborhood  
22 can be improved. Along with that there was a  
23 stamped self-addressed envelope that can be sent  
24 back to us. We established a website, the  
25 Steering Committee established a website. The

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2 survey could be filled out online. A dedicated  
3 phone line was established for anyone who had any  
4 questions about the BID. And to make sure that  
5 the retailers and the ground floor tenants knew  
6 what was happening, door-to-door handout was done  
7 to all the retail, all ground floor tenants in the  
8 area. Once we received the responses, a draft of  
9 the District plan was put together, outlining  
10 services, budgets-- those are things that Liz  
11 Lusskin will go over. This was based on the  
12 responses to the survey. Following that we had  
13 notices sent out that there would be public  
14 meetings. There were in fact three public  
15 meetings were held. The public meetings were well  
16 advertised. They were held in the morning, they  
17 were held in the evening to give everyone a chance  
18 to attend those public meetings. In addition to  
19 that there were many newspaper articles, stories  
20 in the local press, about the formation of the  
21 BID. And at this point it was then taken to the  
22 Community Board. The Community Board then voted  
23 unanimously to support the formation of the BID.  
24 As you know, City Planning also voted unanimously  
25 to support the formation of the bid. Three-

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2 quarters of the assessed value of properties  
3 within the district and two-thirds of the property  
4 within the district have shown their support for  
5 the BID. So at this point we really feel that  
6 we've done an outstanding job of outreach and we  
7 have the support and we look forward to your  
8 positive vote. Let me turn to--

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: [Interposing]  
10 Before we hear the rest of the testimony, since we  
11 now have a quorum and we will not be taking a vote  
12 on the BID today, but we will be taking a vote on  
13 the two coupled Land Use items, I'd like to take a  
14 vote on the Land Use items. But before we take a  
15 vote, does anybody have any questions on either of  
16 the two Land Use items I referred to? Seeing  
17 none, let's call for a vote on the Land Use items  
18 and then we'll continue testimony.

19 WILLIAM MARTIN: William Martin,  
20 Committee Clerk. Council Member Weprin?

21 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Aye on all.

22 WILLIAM MARTIN: Rivera?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I vote aye.

24 WILLIAM MARTIN: Reyna?

25 [Pause]

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WILLIAM MARTIN: Baez?

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COUNCIL MEMBER BAEZ: Aye.

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WILLIAM MARTIN: Comrie?

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COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Aye.

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WILLIAM MARTIN: Fidler?

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COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Aye.

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WILLIAM MARTIN: Gioia?

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COUNCIL MEMBER GIOIA: Thank you.

10

I'd like to vote yes.

11

WILLIAM MARTIN: Jackson?

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COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Aye.

13

WILLIAM MARTIN: McMahon?

14

COUNCIL MEMBER MCMAHON: Yes.

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WILLIAM MARTIN: Sears?

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COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: Yes.

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WILLIAM MARTIN: Vallone?

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[Pause]

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WILLIAM MARTIN: Gentile?

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COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Aye on

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all.

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WILLIAM MARTIN: Ignizio?

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COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Aye on

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all.

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WILLIAM MARTIN: Oddo?

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COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Yes.

WILLIAM MARTIN: By a vote of 12 in the affirmative, none in the negative and no abstentions, both pre-considered Land Use items are adopted. Members, please sign the Committee Report.

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: I think Council Member Mendez wanted to make a statement. The Land Use items are in her district. Council Member Mendez?

COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you, Chair Weprin. I'm sorry. I stepped out for a second. I just wanted to now thank the Committee for voting in favor of these two Land Use items and state that Dona Petra and Santiago Senior Housing Program has been in the works for ten years, way before I ever got into office. It's going to create 65 units of special needs and senior housing, which is desperately needed, and I'm very excited that we're moving forward with that; and Haven Plaza, over 200 units in my district and we're getting them tax abatements for a year and we need to extend this while we're working on an 8-A loan. They were listed as one



1  
2 of the buildings that had the top ten elevator  
3 problems in the City. So this tax abatement comes  
4 at a good time so that we can put some of that  
5 money into repairs. And I am committed to working  
6 with the City Council and with the Arch Diocese  
7 and with the residents of these buildings to  
8 ensure these tax abatements come through after the  
9 year so that we can do all the necessary repairs  
10 there. And thank you, Mr. Chair.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Proceed with  
12 your testimony. I apologize for the interruption.  
13 Council Members, please sing the Committee Report.

14 WILLIAM MARTIN: Council Member  
15 Vann?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Aye on all.

17 [Pause]

18 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Go ahead.  
19 Proceed.

20 ELIZABETH LUSSKIN: Okay, I'm  
21 sorry. Good morning, Chairman Weprin. My name is  
22 Elizabeth Lusskin. I'm a consultant working with  
23 the Hudson Square Steering Committee on  
24 establishing the BID. I'm going to walk through  
25 briefly the District plan, which was put together

1  
2 as George reported, after extensive outreach to  
3 the District and discussion amongst the Steering  
4 Committee Members. Hudson Square and the area of  
5 this bid is an area that the character of it has  
6 been shaped by transportation, first by boat, then  
7 train, then truck. The Holland Tunnel still  
8 dominates the area. A key moment in the history  
9 of the development of the district was in the  
10 early 20th Century when it became home to the  
11 Printing District and the buildings that were  
12 created for that use still dominate the area  
13 today. The shift over time from the manufacturing  
14 to the commercial of the printing industry has  
15 lead to further commercial use, but more in the  
16 services areas and creative industries. We-- the  
17 bid is-- the commercial core, as I said. There's  
18 very limited residential in there and has this  
19 consistent building stock. As we surveyed, we  
20 found that the top issues were transportation and  
21 traffic enforcement. The Holland Tunnel traffic  
22 causes both problems with circulations of cars and  
23 pedestrians within the district and also people  
24 getting in to the district. It also creates  
25 really the only safety issues in the District,

1 which is otherwise extremely safe. And we plan to  
2 first and foremost have a comprehensive strategy  
3 including physical changes, enforcement and  
4 cooperative action with the various government  
5 agencies to try and address the traffic and  
6 transit issues. The next largest problem is  
7 retail. The area enjoys, I shouldn't say enjoys,  
8 but suffers from a consistent 30% or more vacancy  
9 rate in the retail, which is quite high. And it's  
10 a problem both of the amount of retail but also  
11 the quality and the variety of retail. So we're  
12 going to have a strategy to both give the area a  
13 branded identity, but also to attract more and  
14 varied uses of, for example, grocery stores,  
15 drugstores, bookstores, more and different kinds  
16 of restaurants and so on. The next big issue is  
17 streetscape, which really plays into both retail  
18 and transportation as well as making the area  
19 greener, both physically green and also  
20 environmentally sound. So there's a program both  
21 to enhance and expand the amount of green space,  
22 street trees and so on, but also a variety of  
23 efforts to make the area a sustainable district,  
24 with pollution control measures and greener  
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buildings and so on. We do plan to have a small maintenance and sanitation program with some solar powered trash compactors, probably to replace the few trashcans that overload. It is just as it's a safe district; it also is a fairly clean district. So the maintenance program will really be to maintain streetscape improvements as those are done. We'll spend some money on administrative expenses and appropriate contingency and reserve. Thank you.

[Pause]

CARL WEISBROD: Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Carl Weisbrod. I am the president of Trinity Real Estate, which is the real estate arm of Trinity Church. We have been landowners in this district for more than 300 years. We represent and own approximately one third of all the commercial square footage in the proposed district. And over those 300 years, we've seen this area transform from what was originally farmland to industrial use, as Liz Lusskin said, to over the past three decades or so to commercial use. And now it has become a magnet for creative companies. And in

1  
2 addition to the companies that Laura Walker  
3 mentioned, we're proud that among the tenants in  
4 this district are Viacom, CBS Radio, the  
5 Guggenheim Foundation, the Jackie Robinson  
6 Foundation, Penguin Putnam and many, many others.  
7 We and our tenants, especially in these times, do  
8 face challenges. And we hear from our tenants all  
9 the time about first the traffic conditions in the  
10 area, and second, the absence of retail to service  
11 the employees of our tenants and the broader  
12 community. And so we have been enthusiastic  
13 supporters of the creation of this BID, because it  
14 is intended to address the issues of traffic  
15 congestion and the horrible conditions created by  
16 the Holland Tunnel, and also address through  
17 streetscape improvements, marketing and the  
18 creation of a lively pedestrian traffic, an  
19 opportunity to bring retail into the district and  
20 to enhance the retail that's already in the  
21 district. So we have been strong supporters of  
22 this proposed district.

23 JONATHAN DEAN: Jonathan Dean with  
24 Jack Resnick and Sons. Resnicks are the second  
25 largest owners in the Hudson Square District.

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2 We're in the final stages of a \$35 million  
3 renovation of 250 Hudson Street, where we're  
4 converting the building from what was a printing  
5 building into a first class office building,  
6 including a green roof going along with the whole  
7 future where we're looking to bring the whole  
8 neighborhood. But Resnicks, we have properties  
9 elsewhere and are firm believers in the benefits  
10 of BIDs. In our marketing efforts we've actually,  
11 you know, used that as a ploy, not a ploy but as a  
12 selling point, I should say, of the benefits for  
13 the neighborhood and for the tenants in terms of  
14 attracting the retail and helping support the  
15 businesses in the area.

16 [Pause]

17 PHILIP MOUQUINHO: Good morning,  
18 Chair Weprin and honorable members of the  
19 Committee. My name is Phil Mouquinho. I was born  
20 and raised in the community. I own a restaurant  
21 for 30 years in the community. And I've served on  
22 Community Board 2 for up till this year five  
23 years. And I can honestly tell you that this  
24 proposal in front of you for a BID is a good idea.  
25 To just sum it up, I think it promotes the health,

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2 the safety and the welfare of the people in the  
3 community, and it will increase the quality of  
4 life. I've seen this community start from back in  
5 the '60s and the '70s as a very dark, dismal and  
6 dank place. And very slowly and very carefully  
7 it's developed a nice tone, a lot of nice  
8 companies. My restaurant, having been there for  
9 30 years, is a place where many of the large  
10 companies come and eat, such as Saatchi and  
11 Saatchi, Turner Worldwide Construction Thompson  
12 Reuters, and a host of others as well as small  
13 businesses. And I can tell you that they're all  
14 in favor of this plan. I believe that traffic  
15 mitigation has been a big problem in the area,  
16 ever since I was old enough to cross the street.  
17 And as well streetscape improvement needs to be  
18 worked on. I believe that this BID will address  
19 both of those issues. Furthermore, I just want to  
20 comment that we not only support this, we actually  
21 need this BID. And we need it because of the  
22 incredible congestion brought upon us by the UPS  
23 facility, the Federal Express, the Holland Tunnel,  
24 and what is soon to be one of the biggest  
25 sanitation garages in the City of New York, which

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2 will be the home of three districts, district 1, 2  
3 and 5. It will also accommodate 32,000 gallons  
4 of ethanol, diesel and gasoline. It will also  
5 accommodate large portions of the salt spreading  
6 equipment as well as five tons of salt. So we do  
7 need a BID that will help us mitigate some of the  
8 impacts of this facility. Thank you very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Thank you.  
10 Any questions for any of the panelists? Okay.  
11 Thank you. In addition to these witnesses in  
12 favor of the BID, we have one person that signed  
13 up in opposition to the BID, and that's Earle  
14 Kazis from Earle Kazis Associates. Before we hear  
15 from Mr. Kazis, is there anyone else who'd like to  
16 testify either for or against the BID that has not  
17 filled out a slip?

18 [Pause]

19 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, and on  
20 the vote on the two Land Use items, Council Member  
21 Koppell?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Aye.

23 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Mr. Kazis?

24 EARLE W. KAZIS: Thank you,  
25 Chairman Weprin.



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2 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: You've got to  
3 have the light off.

4 EARLE W. KAZIS: Yes, it's off.

5 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Now we  
6 can hear you.

7 EARLE W. KAZIS: Thank you,  
8 Chairman Weprin. I am not in general opposed to  
9 BIDs. I think they are a good idea. I am,  
10 however, oppose to a formal creation of a Hudson  
11 Square District, which has never existed before.  
12 It is a district which is the creation of the  
13 Trinity Church Real Estate. And it is for their  
14 benefit as well as the community's benefit. I am  
15 the owner of two connecting buildings, they're  
16 large buildings, at 161 Avenue of the Americas and  
17 233 Spring Street. These buildings are located in  
18 the Historic Richmond Hill area. And I'd like to  
19 read the plaque at the corner of the building at  
20 161 Avenue of the Americas, if I may. Richmond  
21 Hill. Prior to the American Revolution, this site  
22 was the entrance to Richmond Hill, the bucolic  
23 country estate of the British Major Abraham  
24 Mortier. In 1776, soon after the commencement of  
25 the War of Independence, this estate became the

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2 headquarters of General George Washington. From  
3 1789 to 1790, when New York City was our nation's  
4 first capitol, the estate was the residence of  
5 Vice President John Adams and his wife, Abigail.  
6 Vice President Aaron Burr lived here beginning in  
7 1794, and sold the property in haste in 1884 after  
8 the fateful duel at Weehawken, in which he  
9 mortally wounded his rival, Alexander Hamilton.  
10 Here were entertained Thomas Jefferson, the  
11 Marquis de Lafayette and other leaders of America  
12 and Europe. The Butterick Publishing Company  
13 erected this building as its headquarters in 1903.  
14 The architects were Morgan and Slattery and the  
15 interior designer was Louis Tiffany. This plaque  
16 has been placed on this building for many, many  
17 years. And I personally feel that there is an  
18 importance to history. There is importance to the  
19 maintenance of an historic area such as Richmond  
20 Hill. While we are on the edge of SoHo, we have  
21 identified ourselves with SoHo, and one of the  
22 sponsors of the SoHo partnership, and contribute  
23 to it annually. And they do a good job. During  
24 the past few years there have been-- I thought  
25 there were two meetings, but I hear today there

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2 were three meetings, there were two hearings held  
3 by Trinity Church Properties, which we attended,  
4 and we have indicated to them that we did not want  
5 to be included, and principally because there was  
6 no such thing as a Hudson Square District. This  
7 is a figment of the Trinity Church creation. Now  
8 the idea of creating a BID is a wonderful idea,  
9 but the idea of downgrading Richmond Hill is not a  
10 good idea. Richmond Hill played an important part  
11 in the history of the United States. I think that  
12 it would be an appropriate thing if the BID were  
13 called the Richmond Hill BID. There would be no  
14 question in my mind, and I'd be pleased to  
15 participate. The reason I did not want to  
16 participate in this-- and it's a very expensive  
17 thing to participate; initially it was to cost  
18 four or four and a half cents a square foot. Now  
19 it's going to cost 19 cents a square foot, which  
20 means \$100,000. I frankly think that's a lot of  
21 money. And if they wanted to call it Richmond  
22 Hill, I would have no objection. But I do believe  
23 in History, and I believe in the importance of  
24 history, and I would like to suggest that the  
25 Trinity people be asked to reconsider the name of

1

2 their BID and I would withdraw my objection.

3 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Have you  
4 reached out to them?

5 EARLE W. KAZIS: Yes, we have. We  
6 told them at each of the two meetings we attended  
7 that we did not want to be included in a Hudson  
8 Square BID. We have talked recently to them and  
9 they have obviously not been agreeable to our  
10 thinking.

11 CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Well if  
12 you want to work on them after this meeting, you  
13 know, feel free.

14 EARLE W. KAZIS: But I do want to  
15 make it perfectly clear that the issues that were  
16 raised here are real issues. The traffic  
17 congestion is horrendous. When the SoHo Hotel  
18 Condominium opens, it will become even worse. And  
19 I think these things should be corrected, and I  
20 don't mind participating, except that I mind  
21 participating in the creation of an area which did  
22 not exist in history, which is now being created  
23 by Trinity. And Richmond Hill is the area it  
24 should be referred to. If you have any questions,  
25 I'd be delighted to answer them.

1

2

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay, no.

3

We're fine. We're not going to take a vote today.

4

We're going to wait at least 30 days, and if I had

5

to guess, we'll probably take a vote to the latter

6

part of January or middle part of January.

7

Council Member de Blasio, would you like to vote

8

on the two Land Use items?

9

COUNCIL MEMBER DE BLASIO: Yes,

10

sir.

11

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: How do you

12

vote?

13

COUNCIL MEMBER DE BLASIO: I vote

14

Aye. Thank you.

15

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: de Blasio,

16

Aye. Council Member Peter Vallone, Jr., how do

17

you vote on the Land Use items?

18

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I vote

19

Aye.

20

CHAIRPERSON WEPRIN: Okay. Other

21

than that, this hearing is adjourned. I'm going

22

to keep the roll open for a half hour for those

23

members that would like to vote and are around the

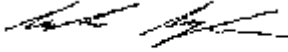
24

building. Other than that, we're adjourned.

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Erika Swyler, 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 December 30, 2008 \_\_\_\_\_