

Good morning, Chairman Koo and Members of the Committee. My name is Lewis Finkelman and I am the General Counsel and Senior Vice President of the Queens Borough Public Library. I am here to testify in connection with the applications to sell the properties that are currently owned by the Library and are being used for the Mitchell-Linden and Rosedale Community Libraries to the City of New York.

The Mitchell-Linden branch is located at the northeast corner of Union Street and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in a 5-story mixed residential and community facility condominium building known as the Sunrise Terrace Condominium. The Library owns and occupies 7 ground floor condominium units totaling 8,800 square feet for use as the Mitchell-Linden Community Library. The library has been operating at this site since 2012.

This community library had previously operated from a rented space two blocks away, but due to the extremely poor physical condition of the premises and the landlord's desire to redevelop the site, the Library decided to acquire the condominium units and relocate the Mitchell-Linden branch to the present site. The Library's purchase of the condominium units for \$3.5 million was approved by the Library's Board of Trustees with the stated goal that the property would thereafter be sold to the City. The Library's Board consists of 19 voting trustees appointed alternately by the Mayor and the Queens Borough President and the Mayor, Speaker, Comptroller, Public Advocate and Queens Borough President are non-voting ex-officio members of the Board as well.

The Mitchell-Linden branch is located in a densely populated Flushing neighborhood and is the eighth largest branch in the Queens library system. It serves approximately 150,000 visitors a year and more than 12,000 people attend free library programs at this location annually.

The Rosedale branch is located at the northeast corner of 243<sup>rd</sup> Street and 145<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The 7,000 square foot lot includes a 4,469 square foot one-story building and the Rosedale branch has been operating at this site since 1962. The Rosedale branch hosts approximately 80,000 visitors a year and more than 5,400 people attend free library programs at that location annually.

Queens Library purchased the property in 2012 as the result of provisions in the lease in effect at that time which gave the Library a right of first refusal in the event the property owner decided to sell the property. The owner put the property up for sale sometime around the beginning of 2012 and received an offer of \$800,000 for the property. In accordance with the aforementioned lease provisions, the Library was given 14 days to exercise its option to purchase the property at that price. Given the monetary benefits of exercising the option and to ensure the continued provision of critical library services in that community, the Library's Board of Trustees approved the exercise of the option with the expectation that the property would thereafter be sold to the City.

The City's acquisition of these properties will facilitate the continued operation of these branches and enhance the efficacy of procuring City capital funding for needed renovations, maintenance and/or improvements. Currently, there are 57 library branches that are City-owned. City ownership of the library branches is consistent with the 1907 agreement between Queens Library and the City, which explicitly provides that title to library properties that are part of the free library system shall be held by the City with Queens Library agreeing to administer the libraries in Queens and the City agreeing to pay for the maintenance and support of the libraries.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 467/468 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Chris Grove DCAS (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 1 Centre Street

I represent: DCAS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. 467/468 Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: MATT BERK (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 1 Centre Street

I represent: DCAS

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE COUNCIL  
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

in favor  in opposition

Date: 9/20/16

Name: Lewis Finkelman, General Counsel (PLEASE PRINT)

Address: 89-11 Merrick Boulevard

I represent: Queens Borough Public Library

Address: 89-11 Merrick Boulevard

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms