CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS

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December 9, 2021 Start: 11:11 a.m. Recess: 11:42 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Karen Koslowitz

CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Adrienne Adams
Margaret Chin
Corey Johnson
Steve Matteo
Keith Powers
Deborah Rose
Mark Treyger
Paul Vallone

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

Leah Goodridge, Nominee for City Planning Commission

Joseph Douek, Nominee for City Planning Commission

1 COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS 2 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Rules, Privileges, 3 and Elections called to order. Good morning and 4 welcome to the Commit-- I don't have my glasses. 5 Committee on Rules, Privileges, and Elections. My 6 name is Karen Koslowitz and I am Chair of this Committee. Before we begin, I would like to 8 introduce the members of the Roles Committee who have 9 joined us today. Council member -- Is Adrienne here? 10 Not in the room, though? 11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Not in the room. 12 No. 13 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: All right. She is 14 next door. Council member Margaret Chin, Council 15 member Keith Powers. Is Keith here? Okay. And 16 Council member Deborah Rose. I don't see Mark 17 Treyger. And Council member Paul Vallone. I would 18 also like to acknowledge Rule Committee counsel, 19 Lance Polizzi -- Did I do it good? 20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You did great. 21 CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Okay. And the 2.2 staff members of the Council's investigative unit: 23 Chuck Davis, chief compliance officer, and 24 investigators Alicia Versel, Desiree Robinson, and

Ramses Booten. We will consider the nomination of

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    COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS
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    Leah Goodridge and Joseph Douek for the City Planning
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     Commission. Should Ms. Goodridge be appointed by the
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     Council, she will be eligible to serve the remainder
     of a five-year term that expires on June 30, 2025.
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    Ms. Goodridge has been nominated by the Public
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    Advocate. Should Mr. Douek be appointed by the
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     Council, he would be appointed to a five year term
    that expires on June 30, 2023. Mr. Douek currently
     serves on the CPC by appointment of the borough
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    president of Brooklyn. Today, we are considering his
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     nomination for appointment by the Mayor.
     Davis, our chief compliance officer, has briefed all
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    members of the committee regarding the contents of
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     each candidate background and investigation.
                COMMITTEE COUNSEL:
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                                       Do you want me to
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     read the boiler plate?
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                CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Yeah. You want to?
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                COMMITTEE COUNSEL:
                                       Pursuant to the New
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    York City Charter, the City Planning Commission must
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     consist of 13 members with seven appointments which
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     includes the appointment of the Chair by the Mayor,
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    one appointment each made by the Public Advocate and
     each borough president. All members except the Chair
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are subject to the advice and consent of the Council.

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS According to the Charter, the members should be chosen for their independence, integrity, and civic commitment. City Planning Commission members other than the Chair are not considered regular city employees and there is no limitation on the number of terms a CPC member may serve. However, CPC members are prohibited from holding any other city office while serving on the CPC. CPC has several responsibilities. Some of the these include engaging in planning focused on the city's orderly growth, improvement in future development which should involve considerations concerning appropriate resources for housing, business, industry, recreation, and culture. Overseeing and coordinating environmental review mandated by the state's environmental conservation law in preparing required reports. The CPC also establishes various rules. Some of these rules consist of establishing minimum standards for certifying ULURP applications, establishing criteria associated with the selection of sites for capital projects. The member of the CPC who is designated as the vice chair receives an annual salary of 73,855. The other members receive an annual salary of \$64,224. We would like to

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COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS welcome Ms. Goodridge and Mr. Douek. Would you both please raise your right hands to be sworn in? Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: All right.

[background comments]

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Yeah. COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yeah. Do you wish to make an opening statement?

CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Ms. Goodridge, do you wish to make an opening statement?

LEAH GOODRIDGE: Yes, please. Good I monitored to be here and to be the morning. nominee of Public Advocate Jumaane Williams to join the City Planning Commission. If my nomination is confirmed, I would be an excellent addition to the CPC. First, I have dedicated my career to fighting for housing rights, racial justice, and community I am currently the managing attorney empowerment. for Housing Policy at Mobilization for Justice, one of New York's largest and oldest civil legal service organizations. This January will mark-- January-sorry-- marks six years at MFJ, but I have a decade of experience in this field. Through the Right to Counsel Law, many tenants come to my office seeking

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS help in fighting an eviction case. Over the years, I have argued at the New York State Court of Appeals on behalf of a NYCHA resident seeking to become remaining family member, launched a housing rights clinic at Brooklyn Law School, and led presentations at universities in the U.S. and abroad on housing rights and gentrification. For my work, I've been awarded the 2019 Public Service Award by the New York County Lawyers Association and the 2018 Rising Star award by New York nonprofit medium. As a housing rights attorney, I have developed an expertise in a key angle of the urban planning story which would greatly contribute to the work of the Commission. Second, I have experience serving on boards and have gained skills that will be transferable to the CPC. In 2018, Mayor Bill de Blasio appointed me as a tenant member on the Rent Guidelines Board. Similar to the CPC, there are meetings which last hours, link the reports, housing activists and property owners chanting outside and inside of the meetings, and fellow board members with various perspectives and personalities. While navigating the RGB, I have learned to conduct my own research, get my point across effectively, and ask pertinent questions. Ι

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    COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS
    believe that the CPC is a much more intense
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    environment than the RGB, but my background will
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    guide me to be an effective Commissioner. Third, I
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    am deeply passionate about New York City. I was born
    in Flatbush and raised in a Mitchell Lama housing in
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    Brownsville, Brooklyn by my mother who emigrated here
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    from Barbados. I was threatened with not getting
    oxtails for Christmas if I didn't say that last
    sentence. So I attended public schools. I've lived
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    in three of the five boroughs, and I am an avid
    researcher up New York history. It would be an honor
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    to be part of conversations and decisions on
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    bettering New York City. I welcome any questions you
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    may have.
                CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Thank you.
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    Douek?
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                JOSEPH DOUEK:
                                  Thank you, Chair
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    Koslowitz and honorable Council and committee
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    members. For context and background, I am a born and
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    raised Brooklyn I and has for over 20 years in New
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    York City government. From 2001 to 2012, by the
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    appointment of then city Council speaker, the
    Honorable Peter Vallone, Sr., I represented the
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Council on the Board of Directors of the New York

City Economic Development Corporation, EDC, for several terms. Having been continuously reappointed by successful councils and speaker. Concurrent with my service under EDC Board of Directors and its Executive Committee, from 2002 through 2012, I also had the privilege of representing the Brooklyn Borough President on the Board of Directors of the New York City Industrial Development Agency, IDA. Ι served on both the board and its Audit Committee. Ιn 2012, I was appointed by the Brooklyn Borough President to serve as a member of the City Planning Commission and, in 2017, I was reappointed by current Brooklyn Borough President and Mayor-elect, the Honorable Eric Adams. The tenure seen a change in administrations from Mayor Bloomberg to Mayor de Blasio and leadership change as at the Department of City Planning from Amanda Burden, Carl Weisbord, to Marisa Lago, and now Chair Anita Laremont. Mayor de Blasio, working in tandem with the City Council, has made affordable housing a linchpin and priority of his administration. Our city's pro-growth policies based on the reality of an increasing population, as well as a successful economy. However, the growth is also contributed to exacerbated housing affordability

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COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS 10 challenges and highlighted capacity limitations on our infrastructure. To that end, and to ensure more economic diversity in our city as it grows and becomes denser, the Department of City Planning introduced mandatory inclusionary housing, MIH and the City Planning Commission has subsequently [inaudible 00:10:54] the New York City Council passed The first mandatory program of its kind in this To quote then Deputy Mayor Alicia Glenn country. referring to MIH, those were foundational policies to help us confront the biggest crisis facing New Yorkers-the cost of housing. With MIH firmly in place, the city has a platform from which to launch its goal of attaining and retaining affordable units by leveraging private development that benefits all. As MIH is dependent on my uniform land use and review process, otherwise known as ULURP, which is a multi your process, we can only expect that, as more of rezonings take effect, MIH will be another strong tool in the toolbox to create affordable housing needed to maintain the diversity devoid of any pockets of poverty. There is no doubt that the pandemic has impeded the continuing rollout of MIH, as the administration and its agencies were put into

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COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS 11 crisis mode dealing with this emergency. For a time, all ULURP actions came to a halt. While I wouldn't say that the pandemic is behind us and you can see me struggling with my map, I do believe that, change in policies and protocols, we are learning to cope with it and resuming a normal pace of land use actions. Additionally, the many lessons we learn throughout this global health crisis need to be internalized as we plan the future of this great city. Building Mayor were covering for all of us, as Mayor de Blasio has said, means cutting red tape in supporting the efforts to make our communities healthier and more accessible. One example of a recovery oriented policy change is the newly adopted Elevate Transit. Zoning for accessibility or CFA. Through CFA, developers work with the MTA to set aside space where needed for station elevators, it expands the sentence for developers to build elevators and related station upgrades and new high density buildings. CFA is a collaboration between the Department of City Planning, Metropolitan transit Authority, MTA, Mayors Office for People with Disabilities, and the City Council. Building on recommendations from the 2019 city Council [inaudible 00:12:45]. In general, the

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COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS 12 land use and review process provides for robust public input from all stakeholders, including local residents, community board members, Borough Presidents, and, finally, the City Council would serve as the check and balance. The public has multiple opportunities throughout the process to come and help shape the final product. I can definitely say that the past three years have seen a more collaborative approach by the agency whether it be interagency or with the Council. Ultimately, on one level or another, old policymakers are accountable to the true stakeholders which are the residents of this great city. They should know that, while we are doing, we can do more and will do more and I look forward to continue to serve and being part of the process. Thank you. And I am now available to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: I have a question for Ms. Goodridge. Can you please confirm on the record that you will comply with the guidance you have received from the New York City Conflicts of Interest Board?

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CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: And this is for both candidates. Can you please describe how you would balance the critical need for more affordable housing in New York City with community concerns?

JOSEPH DOUEK: I'll begin the answer.

So, I think that, you know, as the city grows

denser— if you look at the population, we're

growing— we're going to need to create more housing

and more affordable housing and, basically, the ULURP

process, like I said earlier, provides a robust

public input from community members and stakeholders.

And the original application, as you know, don't come

out at the way they were originally presented to us

and that is through the input that we get from the

community members, the Borough Presidents, and the

community boards. And, finally, at the end of the

day, the City Council has the ability to modify any

application as they see fit and within scope.

CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Ms. Goodridge?

LEAH GOODRIDGE: I am a believe in

community economic development which really puts

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    community centered approach in any urban planning and
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    development. I'm also a housing rights attorney and
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    believe that there should be more housing and,
    specifically, more affordable housing. I currently
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    live in Brooklyn and sometimes I look up, you know,
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    the affordable housing units and I have seen studios
    for 2004 in combat is middle or low income. And so,
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    you know, affordable housing actually needs to be
    affordable, as well. So, the answer is, one, to
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    center the community, as was mentored in the ULURP
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    process, but also being transparent about what
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    affordable actually means because it means different
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    things to different people, apparently.
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                CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Okay.
                                             Thank you.
    Do any of my colleagues have any questions?
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    Margaret?
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                COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN:
                                      Thank you.
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    morning. Mr. Douek? Yes. You are already
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    on the City Planning and I'm sure you are familiar
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    with my district.
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                JOSEPH DOUEK:
                                  Yes.
                                        I am.
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                COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN:
                                      We come before you
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quite often. And in your testimony, you focus a lot

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on MIH.

2 JOSEPH DOUEK: Correct.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: How do you see really improving it that we can, you know, get more percentage of affordable housing? Because right now it's still very minimal. Like 30%, 20%, 25%. that is a significant tool. And that is one question. And, maybe, also Ms. Goodrich could address that, too, because we want to utilize every tool to fight for more affordable housing. other question that I have is that, in the rezoning, there's always concerned about displacement, gentrification, right? So, I am just, you know, grappling with this issue of like how do we prevent that or how do we strengthen, you know, residents to make sure that they know how to fight back? And is there any way in the zoning text that would say something like, if you have to demolish a building, let's say, that you have to relocate the tenants and then have them to have the right to return so that you are doing MIH or could that be included in MIH for those units? Like if you have to displace five tenants, could you include that in MIH, right, so that we-- sort of like some assurance to, you know, long-term residents -- and a lot of them are seniors. COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS 16

They are afraid that, oh, with this rezoning, they're going to tear down my building to build a bigger building because now they are allowed to. So, how do we make sure that we could protect especially long-term, you know, residents? And most of them, you know, I seniors and is there a way to kind of use the zoning disorder provide that protection?

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JOSEPH DOUEK: Would you like me to So, MIH, as you know, is a program that start? creates affordable housing without any public investment. The private sector has to fund these affordable units for the city of New York. You know, we implemented it, I think, in 2017. 2016 or 2017 and, obviously, projects need to go through a longer rezoning process and it takes time to actually bear fruit from the tree that was planted. So, I think, over time, you are going to see a lot more affordable units coming through MIH. But to get deeper and more affordability the city through HPD is going to have to step in and provide subsidies to complement the private -- to leverage more of the private investment that is being done. And the same thing with displacement. I think that the best way to combat displacement is through homeownership. You can't

throw you out of a home that you own or making it more affordable. And I think that, with HPD as the lead— because that is what they would do, City Planning can begin effective role in helping shape policy that would in send more homeownership, which would be beneficial for all the residents, especially the seniors. So, that is my answer to that question. I will let nominee Goodrich pick up the rest.

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LEAH GOODRIDGE: One point that was raised was how to help residents fight back against gentrification and displacement. And from just an everyday New Yorkers perspective myself, one of the challenges is that a lot of New Yorkers are not even aware of any development, redevelopment, or rezoning until it is a very late stage. And so, I think that part of helping residents fight back against it is to-- you know, the accessibility component. Involving them a lot more and, you know, not just with the city Council member, but like how do we get out more information that this is happening? Because sometimes when the information is out, it's at the very late stage and then it is a blurb of like you're going to get kicked out. And that might not be representative of every single proposal or project.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah. I think right now it is really up to the Council member, you know, when we negotiate with the administration that we have to deal with this issue and we have

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    COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS
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    experienced in terms of, you know, giving, you know,
    tenants the right to return. I mean, that really
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    depends on negotiation. But, definitely in terms of
    the process to really strengthen, as you say. A lot
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    of people don't really know what their rights are.
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    We really need to get the administration to commit to
    doing more, you know, education and outreach and
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    making sure people know what their rights are and
    they can organize and fight back. And then, I think,
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    with Mr. Douek, your suggestion, I mean, we should
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    look at MIH and see if also it could relate to
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    affordable homeownership. Because right now you
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    people building condos, but there is no affordable
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    homeownership. I mean, we get some rental units are
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    some ways people will build a full building, build a
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    full rental and then their building is condo.
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    that is something that maybe in the future MIH will
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    look at.
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                JOSEPH DOUEK:
                                  I would love to see
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    that.
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JOSEPH DOUEK: That is something--

planning, that you can--

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN:

Yeah.

So, the city

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1 COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS 20 2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: initiate that and 3 see how we can help more affordable homeownership. 4 JOSEPH DOUEK: I concur 100%. 5 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you. Thank you, Chair. 6 Thank you. 7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you. Ι 8 would just like to sort of piggyback on Council member Chin's remarks. Because we both have very hard and tough projects to get through and one of the 10 11 things that I hear consistently, especially with my 12 last project, was that people didn't feel like they had enough notice. They didn't have enough 13 14 information that they weren't informed until too late 15 in the process. Of course, I know that that is not the case, however, I was wondering if you both could 16 comment on whether you think the public review 17 18 process is significant enough and the notice that, 19 you know, is given and, if, in fact, we should 20 increase the number of sort of entry points that the public has to the process before the final 21 determination is made? 2.2 2.3 LEAH GOODRIDGE: I think in terms of, you know, accessibility, one of the main challenges is, 24

you know, a lot of the notices may be given digitally

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS 21 and, for a lot of seniors, we are seeing right now--I'm seeing as a housing rights attorney, everything right now is virtual and a lot of my senior clients are not really able to access housing court and they don't have a laptop and they are not aware of how to use, you know, the device on their phone. And so, it is exceedingly difficult even if there is notice. There is a question of how exactly is that notice being given and is that excluding are shutting out-not intentionally, but having the impact of not having as wide ever reaches possible. And, especially, with the main target audience that is going to be impacted the most, which are seniors who have been living most of the time in these projects in these spaces for 20 or 30 years and then there is a question of, well, where do we go? We are going to be displaced. So, I don't have all the answers, but I know where to start in the starting point would be looking at the accessibility and how the communications are put out and who the target audience is and who it is reaching.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Yeah. No. Did you have another comment?

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JOSEPH DOUEK: I think anything that could be done to provide more notice. But as you stated earlier, I mean, the community and residents have multiple opportunities. They can comment present at the borough board, community Board, City Planning Commission, City Council-- and even prior. Many of the agencies do scoping meetings or meetings within the community on projects. But any opportunity to get more public input as well, at any point in the process.

really task both of you, if you are confirmed, that you look at the notification process and that you look at how to allow the residents to have more input, you know, at that public stage. At the public stages. You are absolutely right. There are three processes, but we continually hear that people who are directly impacted art finding out and tell the news media starts screaming like you are going to have this terrible affordable housing project in your neighborhood. So, I really would like to see examine. Because we know that a lot of people in the communities that are impacted by these projects don't have access to digital media and are not, you know,

1	COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS 23
2	technologically savvy. They are not the people who
3	go to the community board meetings on the regular.
4	You know, they certainly don't interact with the
5	borough president's office. So, I just want City
6	Planning to look at that process of how we notify
7	people in the review period and access to the
8	hearings. And that we have taken into consideration
9	the people who have physical disabilities also.
10	Thank you.
11	CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Any public
12	comments? I don't see anybody. So, with that, I
13	would like to now call the role.
14	COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
15	committee clerk. Committee on Rules, Privileges, and
16	Elections. The two M's which are coupled. Chair
17	Koslowitz?
18	CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: I vote aye.
19	COMMITTEE CLERK: Chin?
20	COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I vote aye and
21	congratulations. Look forward to working with you.
22	Thank you.
23	JOSEPH DOUEK: Thank you. Thank you.
24	COMMITTEE CLERK: Rose?

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS 1 24 2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Congratulations. I 3 vote aye and I don't look forward to working with you in the future. I'm out. 4 COMMITTEE CLERK: Vallone? COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: 6 7 Congratulations to both of you. May you have 8 blessed and happy new year. And I vote aye on both 9 of you. COMMITTEE CLERK: Adams? 10 11 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: I echo the 12 congratulations to both of you. Thank you in advance 13 for your hard work. I vote aye. 14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you. Powers? 15 COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: I do look forward 16 to working with both of you and you're already on it, 17 but congratulations and congratulations and good luck 18 and, of course, we're here to be partners with you, 19 as well. I vote aye. 20 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of six in the 21 affirmative, zero in the negative, and no 2.2 abstentions, both items have been adopted by the 2.3 committee. CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Thank you very 24

much. I will not be working with you, but

1	COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES, AND ELECTIONS 25
2	congratulations. I'm sure you're going to do a grea
3	job.
4	JOSEPH DOUEK: Thank you, Chair. Thank
5	you, Committee member.
6	CHAIRPERSON KOSLOWITZ: Okay. With that,
7	this meeting is adjourned.
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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 January 27, 2022