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COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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04/28/2022

Start: 10:02 a.m.

Recess: 10:23 a.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING - VIRTUAL ROOM 1

B E F O R E: Justin L. Brannan,
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Diana Ayala,
Charles Barron,
Gale A. Brewer,
Selvena N. Brooks-Powers,
David M. Carr,
Amanda Farías,
Kamillah Hanks,
Crystal Hudson,
Ari Kagan,
Farah N. Louis,
Francisco P. Moya,
Chi A. Ossé,
Keith Powers,
Pierina Ana Sanchez,
Marjorie Velázquez,
Julie Won

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2 SERGEANT BRADLEY: PC recording is up.

3 SERGEANT LEONARDO: Good morning, and welcome to
4 today's remote New York City Council hearing for the
5 Committee on Finance. At this time, we recommend
6 that council members and staff turn off their video
7 for verification purposes. To minimize disruptions
8 throughout the hearing, please place your cell phones
9 and electronic devices to vibrate or silent. Thank
10 you for your cooperation. Chair, we are ready to
11 begin.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Good morning.
13 Welcome to today's Finance Committee meeting. My
14 name is Councilmember Justin Brannan. I am the chair
15 of the Finance Committee. I want to first
16 acknowledge my colleagues who have joined us this
17 morning, Councilmembers Louis, Barron, Carr,
18 Velázquez, Brooks-Powers, Moya, Ossé, Farías, Kagan,
19 Hanks, Won, Ayala, and Brewer, and if more join us, I
20 will acknowledge them.

21 Today, we have 3 items on the agenda, an Article
22 XI property tax exemption and 2 bid items. So let's
23 start with the Land Use item, which his 1312 Beach
24 Channel Drive, located in Far Rockaway, in Minority
25 Whip Brooks-Powers's district. The proposed

2 development, which would consist of a single 8-story
3 building that would include both a 100-bed shelter
4 and 147 units of supportive housing, which would be
5 supported by a 40-year full Article XI tax exemption.
6 Minority Whip Brooks-Powers is supportive of the
7 project, and I want to give the Minority Whip an
8 opportunity to make her remarks now.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Good morning
10 everyone, and thank you Chair Brannan and The
11 Committee for convening today's hearing. Before we
12 begin with the vote agenda, I wanted to speak briefly
13 about the item in my district, approving an Article
14 XI property tax exemption at 1312 Beach Channel Drive
15 in downtown Far Rockaway.

16 The tax exemption will facilitate the development
17 of a facility that will contain a supportive housing
18 facility and a women's shelter. Shelters and
19 supportive housing facilities provide critical
20 services, and they are key to addressing the multiple
21 crises of housing, employment, mental health that
22 unhoused New Yorkers often face. However, these
23 investments must be made with equity in mind. We
24 must ensure that our resources and support are
25 distributed equitably across our city's districts.

2 My council district overlaps with _____ (2:45) wards
3 12, 13, and 14. These 3 community districts contain
4 over half of the shelter beds sited in the entire
5 borough of Queens. An additional shelter of the
6 originally proposed size would bring a serious drain
7 on our local infrastructure in an area that has
8 already seen our development skyrocket. In light of
9 this reality, I would like to acknowledge the staff
10 at DHS and HPD as well as the team at BRC for their
11 partnership in coming to the table to ensure that the
12 needs of the community are prioritized on this
13 project. The city has agreed to substantially reduce
14 the size of the shelter component of this project by
15 100 beds and has also agreed to a reduction of
16 shelter beds across my district by the end of the
17 year, and an indefinite moratorium on new sitings
18 while the city announces and analyzes its shelter
19 placement plan.

20 Thanks also to the Committee's Assistant Counsel,
21 Noah Brick, for his assistance on this item, and I
22 encourage my colleagues to vote in support of this
23 project. And thank you Chair Brannan for this time.

24 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Majority Whip
25 Brooks-Powers. I also want to acknowledge that we

2 have been joined by Councilmembers Powers, Sanchez,
3 and Hudson.

4 So next the bid up. There are 2 bid items:
5 Intro 47, which would establish the Castle Hill
6 Business Improvement District in Councilmember
7 Farias' Council District. The proposed bid is
8 generally bound from the Cross Bronx Expressway to
9 Manning Street along the east and west side of Castle
10 Hill Avenue, from Olmstead Avenue to just east of
11 Glebe Avenue, along the south side of Westchester
12 Avenue, and from Union Point Road to just east of
13 Glebe Avenue, along the north side of Westchester
14 Avenue. The bid area is a neighborhood commercial
15 corridor comprised primarily of smaller one- and two-
16 story buildings with residential uses on the upper
17 floors. Of the district's 97 properties, 94 are
18 partially or wholly commercial with ground-floor
19 retail use and some second-floor residential space.
20 The bid projects a first-year budget of \$300,000, in
21 which it proposes to offer such things as marketing,
22 holiday lighting, street cleaning, graffiti removal,
23 administration services, and advocacy services.
24 Intro 73 would establish the West Village bid in
25 Councilmember Bottcher's district. The proposed bid

generally includes blocks on 5 major commercial strips, Seventh Avenue south, the west side of Avenue of the Americas, Bleeker Street, Christopher Street, and West 4th. It also includes smaller commercial and mixed-use streets that intersect the above-mentioned streets that are heavily trafficked by neighborhood visitors and residents. The proposed district contains approximately 872 properties, 60 percent of which are commercial or mixed use after adjusting for residential condos. The bid projects a first-year budget of approximately \$600,000 in which it proposes to offer marketing, holiday lighting, street cleaning, graffiti removal, administration and advocacy services. \$600,000 is also the maximum budget permitted under the current local law.

On March 24, 2022, this Committee held a public hearing to consider both Intros 47 and 73. We heard testimony in support of both of the bids respective establishments as required by law. That hearing closed without a vote and the 30-day period began, to allow property owners affected by the establishment of the relevant bids to formally object to the proposed action.

2 According to the city clerk with whom these
3 objection would be filed, one property owner filed a
4 valid objection to the creation of the West Village
5 bid during the 30-day period. For the Castle Hill
6 bid, however, no property owners filed a valid
7 objection to the creation of the bid during that 30
8 days.

9 Accordingly, this Committee may now vote in favor
10 of Intro 47 and 73 if we can answer the following 4
11 questions in the affirmative:

12 Question 1: Were all notices of hearing for all
13 hearings required to be held published and mailed as
14 so required by law and otherwise sufficient?

15 Question 2: Does all the real property within
16 the districts boundaries benefit from the
17 establishment or the expansion of the district,
18 except as otherwise provided by law?

19 Question 3: Is all real property benefitted by
20 the districted included within the district?

21 Question 4: Is the establishment or expansion of
22 the district in the best interest of the public.

23 Representatives from SBS, the Department of Small
24 Business Services are here to testify to help us
25 answer shows 4 questions on the 2 bid items. Before

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2 we turn to SBS, I want to invite Councilmember Farias
3 to speak in support of the establishment of the
4 Castle Hill bid.

5 Is Councilmember Farias here?

6 COUNCILMEMBER FARIAS: I'm here. Sorry. I am
7 just getting off... just getting off the ferry today.

8 CHAIRPERSON BARRAN: It's okay. Right on.

9 COUNCILMEMBER FARIAS: So, thank you again for
10 asking me to come say a couple of words. I will say
11 that I am in full support of the bid development and
12 the Intros today, and I urge all of my colleagues to
13 support it. It is a long time coming, as I have
14 stated before, for this bid to be created and the
15 formation from before my 2 predecessors, beginning
16 through the pandemic, these businesses have pulled
17 through, and stayed organized and committed to this
18 effort, and so I urge my colleagues to vote yes
19 today. Thank you for giving me a moment to
20 acknowledge its creation and all of the hard work
21 that has been put into that.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you Councilmember.

23 Okay. Now, I am going to ask my counsel to swear
24 in the representative from the department of Small
25 Business Services before they give their testimony.

2 COUNSEL BRICK: Mr. Brannan, do you affirm that
3 the testimony that you will give today before this
4 Committee will be truthful to the best of your
5 knowledge, information, and belief?

6 CALVIN BROWN: I do.

7 COUNSEL BRICK: I'm sorry. You may begin.

8 CALVIN BROWN: Okay. Thank you. Good morning
9 Chair Brannan and the members of the Finance
10 Committee. I'm Calvin Brown. I'm the Assistant
11 Commissioner for Neighborhood Development at the
12 Department of Small Business Services. Today, we
13 would like to report on the results of the objections
14 filed with the City Clerk against the establishment
15 of the proposed Castle Hill business improvement
16 district. As required by law, the Castle Hill
17 Steering Committee mailed the summary of City Council
18 Resolution to the following parties: To each owner
19 of real property within the proposed district at the
20 address shown at the latest city assessment role, to
21 such other persons as registered with the city to
22 receive tax bills, concerning real property within
23 the district, and to tenants of each building within
24 the proposed district. Furthermore, SBS arranged a
25 publication of a copy of the summary of the

2 resolution at least once in the city records. At the
3 conclusion of the objection period at 5 p.m. on April
4 22, 2022, and taking into consideration any
5 objections postmarked by that date, no objections
6 were filed with the City Clerk for the properties
7 within the district. The Department of Small
8 Business Services supports the establishment of the
9 proposed Castle Hill bid. In our judgment, the
10 proposed bid will improve the quality of life and
11 business conditions in the Castle Hill district.

12 Regarding the West...

13 Should I move on to the next one?

14 COUNSEL BRICK: Yes. That's fine.

15 CALVIN BROWN: Alright. Thank you.

16 Regarding the West Village Business Improvement
17 District, also as required by law, the West Village
18 Steering Committee Resolution to the following
19 parties: To each owner of real property within the
20 proposed district at the address shown on the latest
21 city assessment role, to such other persons as
22 registered with the city to receive tax bills,
23 concerning real property within the district, and to
24 tenants of each building within the proposed
25 district. Furthermore, SBS also arranged a

2 publication of a copy of the summary of the
3 resolution at least once in the city records. At the
4 conclusion of the objection period which was also on
5 April 22, 2022, and taking into consideration any
6 objections postmarked by that date, one valid
7 objection representing less than 1% of the total
8 assessed value was filed with the City Clerk for the
9 properties within the district. This level of
10 objection is within our acceptable threshold needed
11 to advance the bill for a favorable consideration by
12 the full City Council. The Department of Small
13 Business Services also supports the establishment of
14 this proposed bid in the West Village. In our
15 judgment, the proposed bid will improve the quality
16 of life and business conditions in the West Village
17 district. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN BRANNAN: Thank you Calvin. Okay, are
19 there any other questions on today's items? I do not
20 think I see any. Counsel, do you see any?

21 COUNSEL BRICK: I see no hands.

22 CHAIRMAN BRANNAN: Okay. Uh, before I turn to
23 the mighty Bill Martin to call the roll, I would like
24 to extend thanks to Committee Counsel Noah Brick. He
25 has been an invaluable member of the Finance Division

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2 and this Committee. I want to thank him for all the
3 work he has done for this legislative body. Noah, I
4 am really going to miss you. I appreciate how you
5 have guided me in the past almost-5 months in my role
6 as Chair, and we are going to miss you, bud.

7 So I will now ask Billy Martin, Committee Clerk,
8 to call the roll.

9 CLERK MARTIN: Good morning. William Martin, the
10 mighty Committee Clerk roll call vote Committee on
11 Finance, all items are coupled. Chair Brannan?

12 CHAIRMAN BRANNAN: I vote aye.

13 CLERK MARTIN: Ayala?

14 COUNCILPERSON AYALA: I vote aye. Sorry about
15 that.

16 CLERK MARTIN: No problem. Thank you. Moya?

17 COUNCILPERSON MOYA: I vote aye.

18 CLERK MARTIN: Powers?

19 COUNCILPERSON POWERS: Aye.

20 CLERK MARTIN: Louis?

21 COUNCILPERSON LOUIS: I vote Aye.

22 CLERK MARTIN: Brooks-Powers?

23 COUNCILPERSON BROOKS-POWERS: I vote Aye on all.

24 CLERK MARTIN: Barron?

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2 COUNCILPERSON BARRON: May I explain my vote.

3 (pause) I guess that means yes, I can explain my
4 vote.

5 CHAIRMAN BRANNAN: Yeah, of course.

6 COUNCILPERSON BARRON: I want to commend Brooks-
7 Powers, the Council Member on doing the best that she
8 could on this project. You know, it started off
9 worse than what it was before, but honesty compels me
10 to be consistent and not vote in favor of it, even
11 though I am glad that you did get it down to 100 and
12 a commitment to reduce more in other areas of your
13 community, but this is in violation of the Fair Share
14 ACT, where communities that are oversaturated with
15 homeless shelters should not be building more
16 homeless shelters, and the city should be supporting
17 putting those 100 units into permanent housing, which
18 has happened in other areas. It should be permanent
19 housing. We will never get rid of homelessness
20 building more shelters, but to you, you are open to
21 try to fight it to the best of your ability, so I do
22 want to commend you for that, but I have to be
23 consistent and say I vote no for that item, and Aye
24 on all the rest.

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2 CLERK MARTIN: Thank you, Council Member. Just
3 to clarify, that was Beach Channel?

4 COUNCILPERSON BARRON: Mm-hmm.

5 CLERK MARTIN: Thank you. Council Member Brewer?

6 COUNCILPERSON BREWER: I vote Aye, but I do agree
7 with Council Member Charles Barron that we need to
8 have permanent housing, it's a fight every single
9 time, and I think if we do more permanent housing,
10 then we will not have as many people applying to be
11 the next transitional building, so we have got to
12 work on it because there are so many aspects of it,
13 but I vote Aye and I know the fight continues. Thank
14 you very much.

15 CLERK MARTIN: Thank you. Farías?

16 COUNCILPERSON FARÍAS: I vote Aye.

17 CLERK MARTIN: Hanks?

18 COUNCILPERSON HANKS: I vote Aye.

19 CLERK MARTIN: Hudson?

20 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Uh, Billy she will be
21 coming back in a few moments. So we will keep the
22 vote open for a few moments.

23 CLERK MARTIN: No problem. Thank you. Council
24 Member Kagan?

25 COUNCILPERSON KAGAN: I vote Aye.

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2 CLERK MARTIN: Ossé?

3 COUNCILPERSON OSSÉ: I vote Aye.

4 CLERK MARTIN: Sanchez?

5 COUNCILPERSON SANCHEZ: I vote Aye, but want to
6 second Council Member Brewer's and Council Member
7 Barron's concerns. Thank you.

8 CLERK MARTIN: Velázquez?

9 COUNCILPERSON VELÁZQUEZ: I vote Aye, and I agree
10 with my colleagues, Sanchez, Brewer, and Barron: We
11 need to do more with permanent housing.

12 CLERK MARTIN: Thank you. Won?

13 COUNCILPERSON WON: I vote Aye and my colleagues
14 _____ because my district is already saturated with
15 temporary shelters right now. Thank you.

16 CLERK MARTIN: Thank you. Carr?

17 COUNCILPERSON CARR: Aye on all

18 CLERK MARTIN: Thank you. One moment.

19 Okay, by a vote of 16 in the affirmative, 0 in
20 the negative, and no abstentions, we have
21 Introductions 47 and 73 adopted by The Committee, and
22 by a vote of 15 in the affirmative, 1 in the
23 negative, and no abstentions, the pre-considered Land
24 Use item is also adopted by The Committee. Chair
25 Brannan, we have 1 member outstanding.

2 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. What do you guys
3 want to do? Are we going to leave it open for a
4 minute.

5 CLERK MARTIN: Yes, Chair Brannan. I just texted
6 her staff, and we are going to keep it open just for
7 a few minutes. She is going to jump on.

8 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. (15 seconds silence)

9 COUNSEL BRICK: Those of you who have already
10 rendered your vote, may of course stay on or drop off
11 if you have other business to attend to.

12 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: You guys can all go home
13 early on good behavior.

14 COUNCILPERSON BREWER: Does that mean you're
15 staying on bad behavior, Chair Brannan?

16 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: That's the only behavior
17 I've got.

18 CLERK MARTIN: As a reminder, we are live and
19 recording. Thank you.

20 COUNCILPERSON BREWER: I don't mind. Everybody
21 knows.

22 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: You're reminding the wrong
23 people, Billy.

24 COUNCILPERSON BREWER: He'll say anything.

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2 CLERK MARTIN: Mr. Chairman, I'm just trying to
3 use my mighty powers.

4 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Heheh. That's duly noted.

5 MR. BUTEHORN: Okay Chair Brannan. Council
6 Member Hudson just jumped on, and we are just waiting
7 for her to connect to audio. Okay, Billy. It looks
8 like she is connected to Audio.

9 CLERK MARTIN: Great. Thank you. Council Member
10 Hudson?

11 COUNCILPERSON HUDSON: Aye on all.

12 CLERK MARTIN: Thank you. Final vote of the
13 Committee on finance, Introductions 47 and 73 are
14 adopted by The with 17 in the affirmative 0 in the
15 negative, and no abstentions. The pre-considered
16 Land Use item is adopted by The Committee is adopted
17 by The Committee with a vote of 16 in the
18 affirmative, 1 in the negative, and no abstentions.
19 That is a full Committee, Mr. Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Alright, with
21 that, this meeting is adjourned. Thank you so much.

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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 May 20, 2022