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COMMITTEE ON LAND USE

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE LAND USE

June 14, 2019  
Start: 11:06 a.m.  
Recess: 12:28 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: RAFAEL SALAMANCA, JR.  
Chairperson

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTINS:  
ADRIENNNE E. ADAMS  
INEZ D. BARRON  
COSTA G. CONSTANTINIDES  
CHAIM M. DEUTSCH  
RUBEN DIAZ, SR.  
VANESSA L. GIBSON  
BARRY S. GRODENCHIK  
ANDY L. KING  
PETER A. KOO  
RORY I. LANCMAN  
STEPHEN T. LEVIN  
I. DANEEK MILLER  
FRANCISCO P. MOYA  
ANTONIO REYNOSO  
DONOVAN J. RICHARDS  
CARLINA RIVERA  
RITCHIE J. TORRES  
MARK TREYGER

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

Alex Sommer  
Deputy Director of the Brooklyn Borough Office of  
The New York City Department of City Planning,  
DCP

Alison McCabe  
Deputy Counsel at the New York City Department of  
City Planning, DCP

Aziz Dehkan  
Executive Director of the New York City Community  
Garden Coalition

Samira Behrooz  
Program Manager at Design Trust for Public Space

Ricky Stephens  
Co-Founder of AgTech X, Director of Digital  
Strategy at Agritecture Consulting Services

Kathleen Daniel  
Representing Brooklyn Borough President Eric L.  
Adams

Qiana Mickie  
Executive Director of Just Food

Keith Carr  
Program Manager for Food Access at City Harvest

Gemma Garcia  
East New York Farms

Onika Abraham  
Director of Farm School NYC

Alexandro Ziari  
CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute

Wylie Goodman  
Urban Planner from Ridgewood, Queens

Kristin Reynolds  
Lecturer, Food Systems Researcher and Educator

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

Jordan Rogers  
F-16 Pilot of New Jersey Air National Guard

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright, good morning everyone and welcome to the Committee on Land Use. I am Council Member Rafael Salamanca; I am the Chair of this Committee. I would like to welcome my esteemed colleagues who are members of this Committee who are present here today; we have Council Members Treyger, Miller, Diaz, Cabrera, Koo, Chin, Chair Adams, Richards, Lancman, Barry Grodenchik, Deutsch, Espinal and Antonio Reynoso. I want to thank Chair Moya and Chair Adams for their work on our Land Use Committees. Today we will be voting on a number of projects deferred out of our Subcommittees and after that we will hold the public hearing on Intro 1058. If you are here to testify on Intro 1058 please fill out a speaker slip with the Sergeant at Arms. Today we will vote to approve some modifications of pre-considered numbers 436 and 437 for the 2 Howard Avenue rezoning in Council Member Ampry-Samuel's district in Brooklyn. The project area will be rezoned from an R6B/C2-4 district to a C4-4L district, a related zoning text amendment to map the site as a mandatory inclusionary housing area will modified to remove option two requiring the use of

1  
2 MIH option one or, or the added deep affordability  
3 option. We will also be voting to approve some  
4 modifications of pre-considered LU's 420 through 423,  
5 the special Bay Street corridor district zoning in  
6 Council Member Rose's district in Staten Island. The  
7 special Bay Street corridor rezoning proposal would  
8 rezone approximately 20 blocks in the area of  
9 downtown Staten Island near the Saint George  
10 Stapleton and Tompkinsville neighborhoods to require  
11 contextual buildings and new affordable housing and  
12 to promote economic development. The actions are a  
13 zoning map change, a zoning text amendment, a UD AAP  
14 designation and dispositions. The Council will be  
15 modifying the zoning text application LU 421 in  
16 response to concerns voiced by community members  
17 regarding the urban design of anticipated new  
18 development by requiring building heights in certain  
19 areas to be more consistent with the existing  
20 character of the area and to accommodate public  
21 schools. The Council will also remove mandatory  
22 inclusionary... mandatory inclusionary housing option  
23 two and the workforce option. MIH option one and a  
24 deep affordability option which together require the  
25 deepest affordability possible will apply. With

1  
2 regards to LU 423, the proposed UDAAP disposition,  
3 the Council knows that HPD has submitted a revised  
4 project summary for the future development of the  
5 disposition site at 539 Jersey Street. This ensures  
6 that the site will be developed with a residential  
7 component of approximately 223 units that would be  
8 100 percent affordable and include an option for the  
9 set aside for affordable senior housing. I would like  
10 to congratulate Council Member Rose who has dedicated  
11 countless hours with the administration and  
12 stakeholders to achieve the best possible outcome for  
13 her community. We will vote to approve some  
14 modification of LU's 424 through 427, the Brook 156<sup>th</sup>  
15 Street rezoning in my district in the Bronx. The  
16 proposal includes a zoning map change to rezone an  
17 existing R7-2 to a C6-2 district. A zoning text  
18 amendment to map the site as a mandatory inclusionary  
19 housing area with MIH option one and MIH option two  
20 approved for disposition of city owned property and a  
21 special permit to allow the development on or over a  
22 rear yard right away. These actions will facilitate  
23 the development of a new nine story mixed use  
24 building with approximately 54 affordable housing  
25 apartments, community facility space and open space.

1  
2 We will be striking MIH option two and requiring  
3 compliance with MIH option one. From our Landmarks  
4 Subcommittee we will voting to approve four site  
5 selections for new schools, application 20185131 SCK  
6 is for an approximately 650 seat intermediate school  
7 to be located in Council Member Menchaca's district  
8 in Brooklyn. Application 20185333 SCX is for an  
9 approximately 458 seat primary school to be located  
10 in my district in the Bronx. Application 20195177 SCX  
11 is an application for approximately 458 seat primary  
12 school in Council Member Gibson's district also in  
13 the Bronx. Application 20195464 SCK is for an  
14 approximately 592 seat intermediate school in Council  
15 Member Brannan's district in Brooklyn. We will also  
16 vote to approve five application; LU's 398 through  
17 402 submitted by HPD pursuant to Article XVI of the  
18 general municipal law for approval of an urban  
19 development area project and waivers of the area  
20 designation requirements and of, of charter section  
21 197-C and 197-D and pursuant to Article XI of the  
22 private housing finance laws for exemptions for... from  
23 real property taxes. LU's 398, the East Harlem/El  
24 Barrio community land trust will facilitate the  
25 rehabilitation of affordable housing in four city

1  
2 owned buildings in Council Member Ayala and Council  
3 Member Perkin's district in Manhattan. LU 399, the  
4 Lenox Avenue cluster will facilitate the  
5 rehabilitation and conversions to cooperative  
6 ownerships of seven partially occupied city owned  
7 buildings in Central Harlem. The properties are  
8 located in Council Member Perkin's district in  
9 Manhattan. LU 400, 401 and 402 are applications to  
10 facilitate rehabilitation and preservation of four  
11 mixed use residential buildings in Manhattan in the  
12 districts of Council Member Rodriguez, Perkins and  
13 Levin. We will also vote to approve LU's 416 and 417,  
14 two HPD applications related to Manhattanville  
15 Walkway at 437 West 126<sup>th</sup> Street in Council Member  
16 Levin's district in Manhattan. LU 416, an application  
17 for the acquisition of property located at 437 West  
18 126<sup>th</sup> Street. LU 417 is an application pursuant to  
19 Article XVI of the general municipal law for the  
20 designation of such properties as an urban  
21 development action area and approval of an urban  
22 development action area project and a disposition of  
23 such properties to a developer to be selected by the  
24 HPD. The proposed action would facilitate the  
25 construction of a landscape walkway that will serve



1  
2 as a public open space and potentially be used as an  
3 outdoor seating area for local restaurants or food  
4 stores or other community services. We will vote to  
5 approve LU 418, the Brownsville North Ocean Hill  
6 neighborhood construction program project in Council  
7 Member Ampry-Samuel's district in Brooklyn.  
8 designation of property located at 37, 379-384 Howard  
9 Avenue and 1297 East New York Avenue as an urban  
10 development action area UDAAP project approval along  
11 with dispositions of the properties will facilitate  
12 the construction of two buildings containing a total  
13 of approximately 32 units of, of affordable housing.  
14 We will vote to approve LU 415, the JFL north site,  
15 an application for a city map amendment and the  
16 authority for related acquisition or disposition for  
17 a site in Council Member Richard's district in  
18 Queens. The elimination of a map portion of Nassau  
19 Expressway will create two new tax lots which will be  
20 disposed by the economic development corporation to  
21 facilitate the development of a distribution and  
22 vehicle repair facility for Bartlett Dairy and family  
23 owned businesses. Finally, we will also.. we will also  
24 vote to approve some modifications of LU 410, the  
25 Haven Green Senior Housing application for property

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2 in Council Member Chin's district in Manhattan  
3 pursuant to sections 576-a(2) of the private housing  
4 finance law and section 197-c of the city charter.  
5 HPD requests approval for the disposition of city  
6 owned property located at 199-207 Elizabeth Street to  
7 the project sponsor. This will facilitate the  
8 development of a new seven story building with 123  
9 LGBTQ friendly, affordable units for seniors with on-  
10 site supportive services, nonprofit space, a  
11 community room and storefront commercial space. This  
12 was a much-debated application, but the dialogue led  
13 to a balanced project and a better outcome overall.  
14 We have strengthened the integrity of this project by  
15 modifying it to ensure that the open space will be  
16 preserved in perpetuity and open to the public for  
17 approximately 12 hours per day depending on the  
18 season. Are there any questions or remarks from  
19 members of the Committee? Alright, seeing none..  
20 seeing none I will now call on a vote in accordance  
21 with the recommendations of the local members and of  
22 the Subcommittees to approve 20185131 SCK, 20185333  
23 SCX, 20195177 SCX and 20195464 SCX, LU's 398, 399,  
24 400, 401, 402, 415, 416, 417 and 418 and to approve  
25 the modifications I have described, pre-considers

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2 LU's 410, pre-considers LU's 420 through 423, LU's  
3 424 through 427, and pre-considers LU's 436 and 437,  
4 will the Clerk please call the roll.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: William Martin,  
6 Committee Clerk, roll call vote, Committee on Land  
7 Use, all items are coupled, Chair Salamanca?

8 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Aye on all.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Gibson?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Permission to  
11 explain?

12 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Council Member  
13 Gibson to explain her.. [cross-talk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you so much  
15 Chair Salamanca and good morning colleagues. I am  
16 extremely excited that today the Land Use Committee  
17 will vote on a brand new 458 seat school in my  
18 district in school district nine in the borough of  
19 the Bronx and it is a long time coming in recognizing  
20 that our population continues to grow in the Bronx  
21 after the Jerome Avenue rezoning that was passed by  
22 this Council last year. It is more than fitting that  
23 we continue to invest in our neighborhoods and  
24 recognize that this is not just about building more  
25 affordable housing but looking at all of the

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2 amenities that we are afforded in our districts  
3 including new school seats. This Land Use application  
4 has been a long journey and I certainly want to  
5 recognize the Land Use staff particularly want to  
6 thank Raju, Amy and especially Jeff who has been with  
7 me during this process and my school district, my CEC  
8 district nine and really everyone in Bronx community  
9 board four in my district, I am so proud we are  
10 getting a brand new school that is long awaited, Pre-  
11 K through fifth grade with all of the amenities that  
12 our children should be afforded. This is my first  
13 school project in my tenure here in the Council but  
14 prior to that serving in the assembly I had the honor  
15 of opening new schools in district nine. So, this is  
16 a long journey and I'm so proud, I'm excited and I  
17 ask all of you to please vote for this along with all  
18 the other items but this is a great day for the West  
19 Bronx and we're going to see this new school open in  
20 a few years and I could not be more proud of the work  
21 of this Council and certainly on behalf of my  
22 district. So, with that I vote aye on all and thank  
23 you so much to the Land Use Division.

24 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Deutsch?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: [off mic] Aye.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Koo?

3 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Aye.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Lancman?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCOUNCIL MEMBERAN: [off  
6 mic] Aye.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Miller?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Aye.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Reynoso?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Just want to...  
11 permission to explain my vote?

12 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Council Member  
13 Reynoso to explain his vote.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I, I will be  
15 voting aye on all I just want to acknowledge the fact  
16 that we will be getting 100... over 120 senior housing  
17 units in Council Member Rivera's district and we...  
18 Chin's district, oh I'm sorry, look at that, it's all  
19 the... but I, I just want to... I'm grateful for the fact  
20 that we're being thoughtful about building in areas  
21 that don't look like what the city of New York has  
22 traditionally been building around and that we're,  
23 we're taking bold steps to build again in areas that  
24 I think are considered like high opportunities that I  
25 want to use, HPD's new term but I really want to

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2 thank you for that and I'm excited to see that senior  
3 housing go up. So, I want to vote aye on all with  
4 congratulations to Council Member Chin.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Richards?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Permission to  
7 explain my vote?

8 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Council Member  
9 Richards to explain his vote.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you Chair  
11 Salamanca, it's an honor to be here today to usher in  
12 nearly 200 jobs back into Southeast Queens with the  
13 passage this proposal that welcomes Bartlett Dairy  
14 back to its homeland. Hundreds of Queens residents  
15 can work back in the community that they call home  
16 with additional opportunities for more jobs and  
17 apprenticeships for high school students looking for...  
18 toward their first career or homeless families  
19 looking for the right job to find their path to  
20 stability. Bartlett Dairy has committed to working  
21 with local partners such as Spring Jam and Spring  
22 Garden Civics, Saratoga Family and Shelter, Community  
23 Boards 12 and 13 and Springfield High School and my  
24 colleagues of course I want to thank Daneek Miller  
25 and Adrienne Adams who've been good... great partners

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2 on this as well. Bartlett has also committed to a 50  
3 percent local hiring goal with 25 percent goal of  
4 MWBEs for construction design and service costs of  
5 the project. Bartlett will be working with the  
6 Gateway JFK, JFK IBID and will provide annual hiring  
7 updates for the first five years of the project, they  
8 will also be installing 35 trees on site to help with  
9 stormwater management with an outdoor picnic area for  
10 employees at lunch. The Department of Transportation  
11 will also resurface Rockaway Boulevard between  
12 Farmers and Brookville Boulevard in fiscal year 2020  
13 and the strip between South Conduit and Farmers will  
14 be resurfaced following the completion of a sewer  
15 project currently in the design phase, construction  
16 begins in 2021 and we... and will be completed in 2024.  
17 DOT has also filled all potholes and will continue to  
18 monitor and maintain a roadway. We've also received a  
19 commitment from the Parks Department to expedite  
20 construction on the replacement track and field turf  
21 and adult fitness equipment at Baisley Pond Park with  
22 my colleague Adrienne Adams and much more which will  
23 help improve public green space in the area. I'd like  
24 to thank Bartlett Dairy for their commitment to  
25 delivering jobs back to Queens, EDC for their

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2 diligence in securing economic development  
3 opportunities for the residents of Southeast Queens  
4 and the surrounding JFK area, the De Blasio  
5 Administration including DOT and Parks for helping to  
6 bring this project across the finish line and of  
7 course our Land Use staff Raju Mann, John Douglas and  
8 everyone who's worked to get us to the finish line on  
9 this, it's a great day for Queens, a great day to  
10 bring jobs, jobs back and let me be quite before this  
11 Novocain wears off, but with that being said I vote  
12 aye on all.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Treyger?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I vote aye.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Grodenchik?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: [off mic]

17 Aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Adams?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ADAMS: With

20 congratulations to my colleagues, Council Members  
21 Gibson, Council Member Chin, Council Member Rose and  
22 special mention to Southeast Queens and our Bartlett  
23 Dairy project. Just to echo a little bit of Council  
24 Member Richard's sentiment we are very excited about  
25 the Bartlett project coming near and dear to our JFK



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2 project as well, so I enthusiastically vote aye on  
3 all.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Diaz?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DIAZ: Yes, on all.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Rivera?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Aye.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Barron?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I vote aye on  
10 all.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: By a vote of 14  
12 in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no  
13 abstentions all items have been adopted by the  
14 Committee.

15 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you all and  
16 we will keep the roll open. Now we will hear Intro  
17 1058 by Council Member Espinal by request of Brooklyn  
18 Borough President. A Local Law in relation to  
19 developing a comprehensive urban agricultural plan.  
20 The bill will provide that the Department of City  
21 Planning prepare a comprehensive urban agricultural  
22 plan and cooperation with relevant agencies and  
23 stakeholders. The bill would require that such plan  
24 address among other things, cataloging existing and  
25 potential urban agricultural spaces..

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2 [off mic dialogue]

3 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright, so let  
4 me start this again. So, the bill will provide that  
5 the Department of City Planning prepare a  
6 comprehensive agricultural planning cooperation with  
7 relevant agencies and stakeholders. The bill would  
8 require that such plan address among other things  
9 cataloging existing and potential urban agricultural  
10 space. The integration of urban agricultural into the  
11 city's conservation and resiliency plan expanding the  
12 availability of healthy foods in low income  
13 neighborhoods, direct and indirect job creation that  
14 may result from urban agriculture and portions of the  
15 zoning resolution, building code and fire code that  
16 permit amendment in order to promote urban  
17 agriculture. I now recognize Council Member Espinal  
18 to offer a statement in support... in support of the  
19 legislation.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Thank you Mr.  
21 Chair. Good morning, my name is Rafael Espinal and  
22 I'm the prime sponsor of Intro 1058 which aims to  
23 create an urban ag plan for the city of New York. I  
24 would like to thank the Chair, Council Member  
25 Salamanca and the 46 colleagues who are signed onto

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2 this important bill. For too long, urban farmers have  
3 had their growth stymied by unclear regulations and  
4 zoning. This legislation asks the, the Department of  
5 City Planning to create a comprehensive urban ag plan  
6 in order to better serve existing farms and promote  
7 this vital industry. When we support urban farms and  
8 community gardens, we are creating more equitable  
9 access to affordable and healthy food and we're  
10 creating a new green job in local communities. We  
11 have to strive past making sure no New Yorker is  
12 going hungry and go a step further to ensure that no  
13 New Yorker is starved of fresh food. In low income  
14 neighborhoods like the ones I represent our community  
15 gardens that grow food are an essential tool in  
16 closing the freshness gap. Gardeners have worked hard  
17 to transform vacant and neglected lots into  
18 environmental havens that provide their neighborhoods  
19 with communal green space filled with native plants  
20 and fresh food. The majority of local produce  
21 harvested in New York City is grown in the soil of a  
22 community garden. Studies have shown that urban ag is  
23 estimated to be a nine-billion-dollar industry in the  
24 U.S. and has the potential to feed 20 million people  
25 in New York City. Technology surrounding urban ag is

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2 increasing the capacity of these farms to produce  
3 more food and finding unique spaces to grow fresh  
4 produce. The industry and its revenue can go directly  
5 into our communities into training and employing  
6 people with sustainable jobs and reducing the carbon  
7 footprints of our city. Not to mention the vital role  
8 that community gardens also play in fighting climate  
9 change and also building communities. I'm proud the  
10 city has able to set up... I'm proud that the city was  
11 able to set up an urban ag website which was a  
12 significant step forward that wouldn't have been  
13 possible without the voices of many of those who are  
14 in the room with us today. However, the site is a  
15 means to achieve our urban ag vision and today we are  
16 asking the city to take the next step in making that  
17 vision a reality. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you Council  
19 Member and now I, I call on the first panel, we have  
20 Mr. Alex Sommer from City Planning, did I get that  
21 right. I'm sorry, you're alright and Alison McCabe,  
22 did I get that right? Alright, the, the Counsel will  
23 swear you in.

24 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Please raise  
25 your right hands and say your name?

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2 ALISON MCCABE: Alison McCabe.

3 ALEX SOMMER: Alex Sommer.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Do you swear or  
5 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing  
6 but the truth in your testimony before this committee  
7 and in response to all Council Member questions?

8 ALEX SOMMER: I do.

9 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you, you  
10 may begin your presentation.

11 ALEX SOMMER: Good afternoon Chair  
12 Salamanca and Council Member Espinal and  
13 distinguished members of the Land Use Committee. My  
14 name is Alex Sommer and I'm the Deputy Director of  
15 the Brooklyn Borough Office of the New York City  
16 Department of City Planning. Thank you for the  
17 opportunity to be here today to discuss Intro 1058  
18 regarding urban agriculture in our city. I'm joined  
19 here by my colleague Allison McCabe, she's the Deputy  
20 Counsel at City Planning to testify and answer  
21 questions on this proposal. I'd like to also note my  
22 personal interest in urban agriculture, I  
23 participated in a chicken apprenticeship program and  
24 egg cooperative in a community garden in Crown  
25 Heights and that gave me the confidence to raise

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2 three chickens with my roommates and share free fresh  
3 eggs with my neighbors, so my heart is in this. Intro  
4 1058 proposes a local law in relation to developing  
5 an urban agricultural plan in New York City. You may  
6 recall that former DCP General Counsel Anita Laremont  
7 testified on this topic in 2017 and we'd like to  
8 reiterate that DCP and the administration support  
9 urban agriculture and recognize the many benefits  
10 that agriculture provides to New Yorkers offering  
11 educational opportunities, strengthening community  
12 networks and helping to improve environmental  
13 conditions in our neighborhoods. We continue to be  
14 very supportive of urban agriculture and eager to  
15 work with the City Council to advance urban  
16 agriculture in, in New York City. As New Yorkers, we  
17 are all probably familiar with community run gardens  
18 which provide opportunities for residents to connect  
19 with nature, improve the environment, beautify public  
20 open space, learn about growing and preparing  
21 nutritious foods and form social bonds with  
22 communities but schools and housing developments  
23 throughout the city are also building and maintaining  
24 their own onsite farms and larger for profit  
25 businesses are now starting to partake in indoor

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2 farming, hydroponics and aquaponics and developing  
3 new technologies to grow high quality food in dense  
4 urban environments. Because of the long history of  
5 urban agriculture in New York City and the  
6 significant value that it brings to our communities,  
7 the city has many initiatives and resources for  
8 community gardeners and urban farmers. Green Thumb,  
9 the New York City Parks Department community  
10 gardening program provides technical assistance  
11 workshops, programming and material support to over  
12 550 community gardens and 20,000 volunteer gardeners.  
13 The Grow to Learn NYC initiative which, which is part  
14 of Grow NYC supports more than 780 school gardens and  
15 over half of the city's schools. Children are  
16 connected to the science of growing food and  
17 essential, nutritional education. Many of our city's  
18 community programs such as the Department of youth  
19 and Community Development funded after school sites  
20 or Department for the Aging funded senior centers  
21 have gardens and offer educational programs about  
22 farming, the environment and healthy foods. The Farms  
23 at NYCHA initiative maintains six food producing  
24 farms at NYCHA developments which are constructed and  
25 operated by 18 to 24 year old NYCHA residents and

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2 expand healthy food access to their communities and  
3 the small but growing number of commercial for profit  
4 farms in New York City help increase the supply of  
5 locally sourced food and offer a unique economic  
6 development opportunity for residents and businesses.  
7 Regarding DCPs role in these efforts we are extremely  
8 proud to note that our city's zoning is flexible for  
9 urban agriculture, its allowed in every residential,  
10 commercial and manufacturing zoning district in New  
11 York City with a minor exception for areas zoned for  
12 amusement parks. The definition of agricultural uses  
13 within the zoning resolution includes farming,  
14 hydroponics and aquaponics and can be conducted  
15 outside or in unenclosed spaces, in yards, inside of  
16 buildings or on rooftops of buildings and the  
17 definition is broad enough to also allow for the sale  
18 of products that are grown on site. This includes the  
19 sale of produce from commercial agricultural  
20 operations either on site or distributed for sale in  
21 another location. As noted, earlier this Can occur in  
22 all zoning districts across the city including in our  
23 residential districts. In addition, as part of the  
24 zone green initiative approved in 2012, a new City  
25 Planning Commission certification was created to



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2 allow rooftop greenhouses as a permitted obstruction,  
3 which should note greenhouses are also still allowed  
4 as of right. This Provision creates additional  
5 flexibility in allowing greenhouses to be exempt from  
6 floor area and offering relief from the maximum  
7 building height limits set by zoning. DCP meets  
8 regularly with residents and businesses across the  
9 five boroughs and fields zoning questions and  
10 comments at our zoning help desk. We have not been  
11 made aware of any barrier in the zoning resolution to  
12 any urban agricultural project or of any land use  
13 regulation that would otherwise hamper a proposed  
14 agricultural project, farm, business or development  
15 from moving forward. Of course, if there is a concern  
16 that the zoning resolution is creating specific  
17 barriers, we encourage operators and elected  
18 officials to discuss zoning challenges with us. In  
19 response to Local Law 46 of 2018, which resulted from  
20 the bill mentioned earlier, DCP worked with New York  
21 City Parks Department, the Department of Small  
22 Business Services and DoITT to create a one stop shop  
23 with resources, programs and regulations related to  
24 agriculture in New York City. The New York City urban  
25 agricultural website was released in June 2018 and

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2 can be found at NYC dot gov slash agriculture. The  
3 website includes a resources page that links to a  
4 range of agricultural related city programs and an  
5 extensive FAQ section that describes the process for  
6 starting and operating community gardens and  
7 commercial agricultural businesses. The website  
8 includes descriptions of relevant zone... sections of  
9 the zoning resolution and several diagrams to  
10 illustrate how locally produced food can be  
11 distributed, sold or donated in the city. The website  
12 has been positively received by many organizations  
13 involved in urban agriculture in New York City and  
14 has been viewed more than 7,000 times since its  
15 release less than a year ago. Local Law 46 also  
16 required the city to document city owned spaces that  
17 are available and potentially suitable for community  
18 urban agricultural uses and the status that was  
19 created by the Department of Parks and Recreation and  
20 is now available on NYC open data. During 2018 the  
21 Department of Small Business Services also created an  
22 urban agricultural quick, quick guide that describes  
23 the typical permitting requirements, licenses and  
24 regulations that may apply to commercial agricultural  
25 businesses in New York City. DCP is also committed to

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2 expanding the availability of, of fresh healthy food  
3 in low income neighborhoods, one of the elements of  
4 the... listed in the proposed bill. The Fresh program,  
5 adopted in 2009 by the City Council facilitates the  
6 development of grocery stores selling a full range of  
7 food products in underserved neighborhoods with an  
8 emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables, meats and  
9 other perishable goods. The department is actively  
10 working with the City Council's Land Use Division and  
11 individual Council Members to develop a proposal to  
12 update and expand the applicability of the Fresh  
13 program in appropriate areas identified by the  
14 supermarket needs index. We welcome the conversations  
15 with Council Members who may be interested in  
16 expanding the program within their districts. In  
17 conclusion, DCP and the administration are encouraged  
18 by the work that is already underway across many  
19 agencies, nonprofits, community groups and businesses  
20 as a whole to support and expand urban agriculture in  
21 New York City. We are certainly open to ideas about  
22 programmatic improvements or regulatory changes to  
23 further facilitate agriculture in New York City,  
24 however before embarking on any comprehensive  
25 planning effort we would first open to learn about

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2 the issues facing urban agricultural community in the  
3 city and afford the new website and resources offered  
4 by agencies time to do their intended job so that we  
5 can expend city resources efficiently and effectively  
6 focusing on any identified barriers or needs that  
7 warrant further study. We very much appreciate the  
8 opportunity to testify and welcome further  
9 discussions with you on this matter. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you for  
11 your testimony, I'm going hand it off to Council  
12 Member Espinal.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Thank you. So,  
14 sorry, can, can you repeat does the administration  
15 support the bill?

16 ALEX SOMMER: We support the growth of  
17 urban agriculture broadly and we want to work with  
18 you on identifying specific issues but in terms of  
19 the comprehensive plan we want to make sure that  
20 we're identifying specific issues first before moving  
21 ahead with that.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Okay, so I would  
23 encourage the administration to stay here and listen  
24 to testimony from everyone who's going to speak up  
25 today, they're the real experts here, I'm just the

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2 messenger trying to get this done only because I also  
3 acknowledge that there are issues, you know across  
4 the board whether you're a community gardener or  
5 you're part of the industry, they still feel that  
6 there, there are barriers, they are under threats  
7 every single day. For example, just a few minutes ago  
8 there was a vote to build on Elizabeth Street Garden  
9 and I, I believe that if, if the city was to take a  
10 real comprehensive approach that they would have  
11 realized the important role that gardens like  
12 Elizabeth would, would play in the overall ecosystem  
13 of these communities. For example, a few months ago,  
14 Mandela Garden being bulldozed by HPD to prioritize  
15 building affordable housing which we all acknowledge  
16 is very important but, you know advocates have  
17 identified other plots of land that were not being  
18 used as gardens that could have been built on. So, I  
19 think that there is a serious, you know gap or a  
20 blind spot from, from City Hall and we need to pay  
21 more attention to what's actually happening on the  
22 ground in order to really play a leading role in this  
23 conversation. As of now we have cities across the  
24 country that have created a plan, that have created a  
25 roadmap, that have created some sort of codified

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2 document in that they're protecting their, their  
3 green spaces and, and the... creating the opportunity  
4 for industries to grow as well so I think more has to  
5 be done, this bill I do believe will get us there, I  
6 don't see this as being something difficult to pass  
7 or get done, you know it's, it's simply asks this  
8 administration to create a plan working with  
9 advocates, working with a task force to get it done  
10 and I think it'll be a great addition to the overall  
11 plan of how we move our city forward. So, I, I guess  
12 my, my question is do you... I guess is there any, any  
13 insight that, that the... that DCP can give as to why  
14 community gardens are not being prioritized when we  
15 talk about overall development in our city?

16 ALEX SOMMER: So, we, we recognize that  
17 there's a whole host of different priorities across  
18 the city, open space, affordable housing among some  
19 of the top priorities. We rely on the ongoing public  
20 review process to help weigh those priorities as  
21 projects move forward and, and that's why we always  
22 want to work with the City Council and the public at  
23 large so that that... those discussions can be had, we  
24 know it's very difficult and there's a lot of things  
25 that we have... we have to pick between and, and that's

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2 why we think the public review process is the ideal  
3 discussion forum for that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: And, and now  
5 that we're on the topic of, of urban gardens and  
6 community gardens, I was made aware recently of  
7 license renewals that were handed out to, to gardens  
8 across the city and some of the stipulations that,  
9 that gardeners have to follow or community gardens  
10 have to follow actually puts them at risk of having  
11 their garden taken away from them. For example, I  
12 think that one of the stipulations asks that, that  
13 the garden has to remain open seven days a week, we  
14 do know that these gardens are volunteer base led,  
15 they're not getting paid to run these gardens and  
16 there's fear amongst the community that if for  
17 example they're not able to keep the garden open  
18 seven days a week because of other priorities in  
19 their personal lives that that will be an excuse for  
20 the city to come in and be able to take over the  
21 garden and use it for, for example, housing. And  
22 again, I, I, I urge you to stay here and just listen  
23 to everyone's testimony I think we'll have better  
24 insight hearing from them but I'm very committed to  
25 passing this bill this time around and, and hopefully

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2 the city can be a partner in making... in making that  
3 happen.

4 ALISON MCCABE: I just wanted to add to  
5 that that there are ongoing discussions that the, the  
6 administration is having with gardeners on that  
7 issue. They're... the administration is having ongoing  
8 discussions with gardeners on that issue.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Okay, great, I'm  
10 glad to hear and then when, when it comes to the  
11 industry their concerns is more around the city not  
12 really... not really codifying or creating regulations  
13 around what is allowed, permissible by them which  
14 makes it difficult for them to be able to get seed  
15 funding to grow their businesses within our city as  
16 well and I think that's something the city has to  
17 continue thinking about and again hope to hear from  
18 the testimony later. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Do you currently  
20 have a list of all, all community gardens in the city  
21 of New York and under whose jurisdiction they fall  
22 under?

23 ALEX SOMMER: Sure, so that, that list  
24 exists and a map exists with the Department of Parks  
25 and Recreation and I don't know if we can access it



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2 online here, let me see if there's a... an image of it  
3 but it's about 550 community gardens, 100 acres or so  
4 and we, we do have a map of that and there's a link  
5 on, on this website as well.

6 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: I have quite a  
7 few of them in my council district, they're very  
8 popular with the budget season I ensure that I, I  
9 allocate funding to keep these gardens moving but  
10 there has been concerns. Now these gardens are under  
11 the jurisdiction of the Parks Department not HPD?

12 ALEX SOMMER: In most cases, there are  
13 some exceptions where there's other city agencies  
14 that control the site or a nonprofit entity that  
15 controls the site.

16 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: And what are the  
17 terms of agreements should there be a garden there  
18 for about ten years, the site belongs to another city  
19 agency and the city agency decides that they want to  
20 take over that, that location?

21 ALEX SOMMER: It really depends on the  
22 ownership of the site on what the... on what the zoning  
23 is, what the process is for going through a public  
24 review process for that and so each case is pretty  
25 unique in how... in how that would happen.

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2 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Has there ever  
3 been a conversation about changing the zoning of  
4 these gardens to just that use which is a garden use?  
5 There are communities where there's a block, there's  
6 a garden but it's zoned as an R7, you know is there...  
7 is there... has there ever been any conversations from  
8 your agency to, to change the zoning on all 500  
9 gardens in the city of New York?

10 ALEX SOMMER: There have been instances  
11 where the zoning has been changed to be actually  
12 mapped as parkland and, and that means DPR controls  
13 it and it actually means that there is no zoning  
14 there but there hasn't been a citywide approach to  
15 doing that because again each case is really unique  
16 about who owns the site, how it's operated and  
17 whether it's city or nonprofit or private entity.

18 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: But the city...  
19 these, these community gardens that are listed in,  
20 in, in your website they, they are city owned land,  
21 right, they're not non... they're not... it's not non for  
22 profit land or privately-owned land?

23 ALEX SOMMER: I'll, I'll have to get back  
24 to you, I'm actually not sure if all 550 are city  
25 owned or if some of them actually include private or

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2 nonprofit entities, I'll have to get back to you on  
3 that.

4 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Alright, thank  
5 you. Do you have any further questions Council  
6 Member?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: So, you  
8 mentioned there are about 500 gardens on, on the  
9 website, I've heard numbers of there being over 1,000  
10 gardens that exist citywide and those are.. those are  
11 gardens that are on HPD sites that are actually being  
12 run by, by community groups and nonprofits, is that  
13 correct?

14 ALEX SOMMER: We... there's 550 on the  
15 website itself and I... like I said I'll have to get  
16 back to you as on, on whether they're all city owned  
17 or under DPR ownership or nonprofit.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Okay, yeah so  
19 just, just for clarification I think part of the bill  
20 does, does call for, for there being a catalogue of  
21 existing or potential urban ag spaces as well which  
22 is why I think it's also an important bill to pass  
23 and get done.

24 ALEX SOMMER: And, and just to add on  
25 that the Department of Parks and Recreation has

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2 another map layer that is on NYC open data which  
3 includes not only the existing but other potential  
4 sites for community gardens.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Alright, thank  
6 you.

7 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you very  
8 much, thank you for you, your presentation. Alright,  
9 so up next, we're going to bring up... we have a  
10 representative from the Brooklyn Borough President  
11 Eric Adams office, if I mispronounce your name my  
12 apologies, Aziz Dehkan; Ricky Stephens and Samira  
13 Behrooz, did I... did I get that? My apologies and then  
14 I just want to remind everyone that's here that's  
15 going to testify that we have a hard stop here today  
16 at one p.m. so we're going... we're going to set the  
17 clock, every, everyone's going... all the public  
18 speakers are going to get two minutes but if you want  
19 to give up some of your time and you have testimony  
20 that you want to submit we will, we'll also be taking  
21 that as well but before we move forward we have to... I  
22 want to recognize Chair Moya and they'll call...

23 [cross-talk]

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COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Continuation of roll call, Committee on Land Use, Council Member Moya?

COUNCIL MEMBER MOYA: Aye on all.

COMMITTEE CLERK MARTIN: Final vote on all items on today's land use agenda are adopted by a vote of 15 in the affirmative, affirmative, zero in the negative and no abstentions.

CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: So, I want to thank all my colleagues and council staff for today's votes and for the record the, the roll is closed. Alright, so we'll start with... I guess we'll, we'll start with you and, and I'm going to ask the Sergeant at Arms if they can set the clock at two minutes for each speaker. Please introduce yourself before you begin.

AZIZ DEHKAN: My name is Aziz Dehkan, I'm the Executive Director of the New York City Community Garden Coalition. Councilman you did a really good name on my job... on my name... a job on my name, I can't even speak. I want to thank Councilman Espinal, Borough President Adams and the 40 Council Members who are signed onto this bill, I think it's a good start but there's a lot of work to be done. A couple...

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2 a few... within the last few years the words community  
3 gardens have finally entered the lexicon of New York  
4 City and we're, we're encouraged by that, but we  
5 still have a long way to go. As you heard from the,  
6 the City Planners we still need a lot of protection,  
7 we need permanence of community gardens, we need more  
8 community gardens. We can't let the wedge of  
9 affordable housing and community gardens continue in  
10 this city. They are compatible and if you really  
11 wanted to... if the city really wanted to do something  
12 about affordable housing they would have made Hudson  
13 Yards affordable housing so, you know that's a false  
14 argument that dates back to Rudy Giuliani and we need  
15 to change that language but back to community  
16 gardens. I think the, the key that we want to talk  
17 about is making these gardens permanent, give them  
18 protection. Councilman Espinal talked about the  
19 license issues, there are a number of issues that,  
20 that stop community gardens from doing certain  
21 things; growing food is, is a really important piece  
22 of being able to give communities fresh produce that  
23 they do not have in their neighborhoods. We talk  
24 about ways to protect gardens, community gardens in  
25 this city and we can do that through community land

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2 trusts, we can do that through garden districts,  
3 there's multiple ways to make community gardens  
4 permanent and to keep them safe and to make not just  
5 to protect them but to find other places to make  
6 gardens permanent and to create gardens. I think one  
7 of the problems that I have with City Planning is  
8 that all too many gardens are listed as vacant land  
9 and it's not vacant land folks, it's real land, it's  
10 worked by the neighbors and we have to change that  
11 language too. Language has meaning and I know my time  
12 is up, give me ten more seconds. Language has meaning  
13 and if you really want this task force to move  
14 forward, we need to make sure that the language in  
15 that task force and that task force has people who  
16 understand what these issues are all about. Thank  
17 you.

18 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Thank you.

19 SAMIRA BEHROOZ: Thank you for the  
20 opportunity to speak about the comprehensive urban  
21 agriculture plan. My name is Samira Behrooz, I am the  
22 Program Manager at Design Trust for Public Space, a  
23 nonprofit dedicated to the future of public space in  
24 New York City. Our projects bring together city  
25 agencies and community groups to make a lasting

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2 impact through design on how New Yorkers live, work  
3 and play. Design Trust's five borough farm project in  
4 partnership with Added Value, New York City Parks and  
5 Farming Concrete offered a roadmap to understand the  
6 cross-sector benefits of urban agriculture to our  
7 health, social capital, environment and economy and  
8 to provide resources to grow urban farming and  
9 gardening throughout New York City. The five borough  
10 farm policy recommendations included the creation of  
11 an urban agriculture plan that established goal  
12 objectives and a citywide land use scheme for garden  
13 and farm development, integrates urban agriculture  
14 into existing city plans, programs and policy making  
15 processes and addresses disparities in access for  
16 gardeners and farmers to funding information and  
17 other resources by creating more transparent and  
18 participatory processes. The proposed legislation  
19 aligns with these recommendations; however, systems  
20 of accountability are essential, the plan must apply  
21 to all forms of urban agriculture not just commercial  
22 winters including community gardens, school gardens,  
23 permaculture gardens and vertical farms. We urge the  
24 City Council to incorporate these following three  
25 ways to ensure accountability in creating and



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2 executing the plan and to engage an expert in food  
3 systems to lead an open and transparent planning  
4 process. One, a citywide task force similar to the  
5 roundtable convened by Brooklyn Borough President  
6 Adams in 2016 with city agencies, supporters and  
7 gardeners and farmers. Two, open forums. At many  
8 points in the plan development process including  
9 spring gardening and farming events such as grow  
10 together and making group and bloom. Three,  
11 communication within the city and gardening and  
12 farming and farming supporters and advocacy networks  
13 including green thumb, NYCHA's garden and Greening  
14 program and New York City Community Garden Coalition.  
15 We've waited a long time for a plan, let's ensure all  
16 New Yorkers can benefit, thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON SALAMANCA: Okay, thank you.

18 before moving, move... we move on I have to go  
19 downstairs to the budget negotiating team meeting so  
20 I'm going to hand over the Committee to you, Council  
21 Member Espinal, alright, thank you all. Alright.

22 RICKY STEPHENS: Thanks everyone for  
23 allowing me to be here, a thank you especially to  
24 Council Member Espinal for your leadership on this  
25 matter. My name is Ricky Stephens, I'm a Co-Founder

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2 of AgTech X and recently now Director of Digital  
3 Strategy at Agritecture Consulting. For the sake of  
4 time and given my area of focus I'm going to speak  
5 purely from the commercial urban agriculture  
6 standpoint, however I would like to highlight my  
7 support for all forms of urban farming and my hope is  
8 that a comprehensive plan addresses the needs of the  
9 many stakeholders who benefit from the range of  
10 positive environmental and socioeconomic services  
11 that urban ag provides so I recognize my colleagues,  
12 folks like Aziz and many others who hopefully will  
13 speak after me for the work that they've done on that  
14 front. In two years of running the city's only shared  
15 workspace focused exclusively on urban agriculture  
16 and local food system innovation, AgTech X was  
17 uniquely situated to observe and analyze the  
18 explosive popularity for these topics. We hosted 35  
19 coworking members, put on over 100 events including a  
20 major conference that attracted more than 650  
21 registrants to New York City and have had more than  
22 2,500 total guests visit our small office in  
23 Brooklyn. Using our space as a hub to gain knowledge  
24 and connections in this industry, our visitors have  
25 primarily been New York City residents, but others

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2 have hailed from places like Brazil, France,  
3 Tanzania, Japan, Australia to name a few.

4 Overwhelmingly these visitors are well educated,  
5 young professionals who are seeking jobs in a more  
6 impact driven field, looking to create jobs here  
7 through entrepreneurship or are looking to size up  
8 the opportunity for bringing their existing

9 businesses to New York City. All these, these  
10 visitors consider New York to be at the forefront of  
11 innovation when it comes to food, technology, urban  
12 design and cultural diversity foundations to

13 encourage positive business growth in the urban  
14 agriculture field. However, my worry is that at... as  
15 these invaders uncover the more hidden barrier to  
16 entry and their associated risks and costs they will

17 flee for greener pastures. Some of those greener  
18 pastures include Chicago, Boston, and Los Angeles are  
19 there.. just a few places of the many other U.S.

20 cities that have already adopted comprehensive urban  
21 agriculture plans or made supportive amendments to  
22 zoning policies to spur the growth of this industry.

23 New York City has been behind the curve, let's use  
24 this bill to change this please. Thank you.

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2 KATHLEEN DANIEL: Good afternoon... thank  
3 you. Kathleen Daniel reading the testimony of the  
4 Brooklyn Borough President, Eric L. Adams. I want to  
5 thank Chairs Rafael Salamanca Junior and the  
6 Committee on Land Use for giving me the opportunity  
7 to provide comments at this public hearing.  
8 Additionally, I would like to thank Council Member  
9 Espinal for introducing this legislation on my behalf  
10 as well as his council colleagues for cosponsoring  
11 this important legislation. The impetus of this  
12 legislation stems not only from the historic  
13 challenges of unsecured land tenure for community  
14 gardens throughout neighborhoods across New York City  
15 but also for meeting time and again with urban  
16 agriculture companies during my visits to  
17 neighborhoods throughout Brooklyn. I was and continue  
18 to be inspired by the entrepreneurial spirit that  
19 produces fruits and vegetables in Brooklyn using new  
20 forms of tech focused agriculture such as aeroponics  
21 and closed loop aquaponics. Unfortunately, I hear  
22 over and over again about the difficulty of receiving  
23 city agency's approval for these companies which were  
24 often being set upon up on rooftops and in  
25 warehouses. This frustration prompted the most

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2 logical next step which was to bring city agencies to  
3 the table to speak with advocates and industry  
4 leaders on the issue of permits and regulations. Two  
5 years ago, I hosted a roundtable in partnership with  
6 Council Member Espinal at Brooklyn Borough Hall with  
7 ten city agencies and more than 20 urban agricultural  
8 companies and nonprofit organizations. The takeaway  
9 was clear, agriculture is only mentioned in a handful  
10 of items in the zoning resolution and city agencies  
11 replacing responsibility on one another to regulate  
12 this emerging industry but no one was taking any  
13 clear regulatory responsibility this resulted in more  
14 questions and answers for urban agriculture companies  
15 and no clear path for fresh food and job creation.

16 While we've seen successful companies like Brooklyn  
17 Grange and Gotham Greens take root, many more  
18 companies have labored trying to get their businesses  
19 off the ground. Meanwhile cities such as Atlanta,  
20 Boston, Chicago and Newark are plowing forward with  
21 an urban agriculture revolution. Intro 1058 asks the  
22 New York City Department of City Planning to take the  
23 first step in playing catch up with so many other  
24 cities by developing a comprehensive urban  
25 agriculture plan that addresses land use and other

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2 regulatory issues. The website created in response to  
3 our last attempt at getting a comprehensive plan  
4 passed is a nice resource, but it does not fully  
5 address the challenges facing this growing industry.  
6 We need a real plan and I support the creation of a  
7 task force to create and implement this plan. Since  
8 being on my own journey with type II diabetes, I've  
9 noticed how deadly our food system has become. Fast,  
10 processed foods dominate our lives from our school  
11 lunches to our grocery stores to restaurants  
12 throughout the borough we're killing ourselves with  
13 the food we eat. The data amplifies the problem.  
14 According to 2007 to 2010 center for disease control  
15 and prevention survey, 87 percent of adults fail to  
16 meet their daily recommended vegetable intake, that's  
17 no surprise to me considering bodegas represent 80  
18 percent of the food source in neighborhoods in  
19 central and northern Brooklyn according to the New  
20 York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's  
21 analysis of their healthy bodegas initiative from  
22 2008. On average only ten percent of bodegas carry  
23 leafy green vegetables according to a 2006 DOHMH  
24 study. These are food deserts filled with processed  
25 foods, plain and simple. We must have equity of

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2 access for fresh healthy food and stop flooding our  
3 neighborhoods that have the greatest need with the  
4 least healthy alternatives. As Brooklyn Borough...  
5 Brooklyn Borough president it is my job to advocate  
6 for the health and wellbeing of my constituents that  
7 is why I'm calling for the passage of this  
8 legislation, we can clear the way for urban and  
9 vertical agriculture then we can begin to sow the  
10 seeds for a food revolution that produces healthy  
11 food and access to communities from Benson Hurst to  
12 Brownsville. Through the support and expansion of  
13 community gardens and urban farming we can reduce  
14 transportation costs, negative environmental effects  
15 and other externalities associated with shipping  
16 logistics while opening up job opportunities to the  
17 next generation of entrepreneurs that's why I  
18 contributed one million dollars in capital funding to  
19 the Brooklyn Navy Yard... Navy Yard for the  
20 establishment of an urban agriculture tech incubator  
21 so we can foster startups to crack the high energy  
22 costs and real estate code. Looking to the future I  
23 initiated growing Brooklyn's future, committing more  
24 than seven million dollars in capital funding for  
25 projects across Brooklyn. These include hydroponics

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2 classrooms in schools across the borough in  
3 partnership with New York Sun Works, a greenhouse at  
4 the urban assembly unison school in partnership with  
5 Council Member Laurie Cumbo and Teens for Food  
6 Justice as well as green roofs and rooftop gardens at  
7 other schools. This investment recognizes the need to  
8 prepare for the workforce of the future that is  
9 coming, an urban fresh food revolution. As our young  
10 people are preparing for this future the question  
11 remains, will the city be prepared for them? This  
12 legislation and the capital contribution are a win,  
13 win for Brooklyn and the city of New York. I hope  
14 this Committee and the City Council pass the  
15 legislation and send it to the Mayor for his  
16 signature so we can begin the fresh and healthy food  
17 revolution. Thank you.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL (: Before I go to  
19 the next panel just one quick question, can, can Aziz  
20 and Ricky identify and Public Space one issue you  
21 think that the, the city can tackle with a  
22 comprehensive plan?

23 RICKY STEPHENS: Yeah, sure I can maybe..  
24 two examples, one is if you look at Boston's plan and  
25 it passed in 2013 Article 89, part of what they did



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2 was expediting land use changes to quicken the launch  
3 time for new urban farms and then another thing that  
4 I think we need to look at here with DCP is there's a  
5 lot of talk about the review process. My  
6 understanding is that the review process does not  
7 have any sort of assessment for fresh food access,  
8 why not? And that should include not just grocery  
9 stores but also gardens, urban farms, etcetera.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Alright, thank  
11 you.

12 AZIZ DEHKAN: Well I think earlier I said  
13 permanence is, is really important and mapping is  
14 also really important, I don't think we know enough  
15 about how many vacant lots are out there, how many  
16 vacant lots the city would, would intend to turn into  
17 community gardens, it's, it's a little... on the other  
18 side of this is how many... how many parcels does HPD  
19 actually have when they claim that they don't have a  
20 lot of land to... and they want to take community  
21 gardens away and open space away, I think those are  
22 some of the takeaways plus as we talked about before  
23 in, in one of our meetings Councilman I think it's  
24 important to, to recognize how to save them through  
25 community land trusts as one and districts as

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2 another. We do it all the time with... in the theater  
3 district, we did with the highline I think we can do  
4 it with community gardens but we have to find a way  
5 to make them permanent and find another way to make...  
6 to turn, you know real vacant lots not vacant lots  
7 that are actually community gardens but real vacant  
8 lots turn them into community gardens.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Got it...

10 AZIZ DEHKAN: And give money to, to, to  
11 Green Thumb to be able to let them support that also,  
12 I mean we need resources and the resources come from  
13 the city.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Thank you. Okay,  
15 great. Thank you all, appreciate it. Up next, we have  
16 Qiana Mickie; Keith Carr; Alexandro Ziari [sp?];  
17 Gemma Garcia and Onika Abraham Lee. You may begin.

18 QIANA MICKIE: Hi, my name is... well thank  
19 you for having me. My name is Qiana Mickie, I am the  
20 Executive Director of Just Food. Just Food is a grass  
21 roots nonprofit based in New York City with an aim to  
22 shift the power of health and wealth of historically  
23 and economically marginalized communities in  
24 particular black and Latinx, communities of color,  
25 other communities of color, LGBTQ, mixed income and

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2 small-scale farmers and producers. We connect New  
3 York City institutions, businesses and individuals  
4 with sustainable, small and mid-scale regional  
5 growers and trained community leaders as they work  
6 collectively towards a more economically viable  
7 democratic food system grounded in the principles of  
8 cooperation, solidarity and equity. Thanks again for  
9 having me here to submit testimony. I submitted  
10 testimony in 2017 at the last hearing on initiative  
11 1661 that... where I expressed concerns in  
12 consideration of a comprehensive urban ag plan. With  
13 initiative 1015... 1058 being identical in all respects  
14 with the exception of the urban agriculture plan  
15 being posted on the DCP website by July 20, 2019. I'm  
16 in support of a comprehensive urban ag policy but I  
17 must lift up remaining concerns that this initiative  
18 as it stands now because it misses critical key  
19 findings and evidence that grassroots groups like  
20 Just Food as well as city agencies such as DCP  
21 explored and lifted up within the past two years  
22 between these two resolutions. I think these are  
23 critical elements that should not go unanswered and  
24 an introduction of a new bill should reflect the  
25 lessons learned to support the breadth of New York

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2 City urban ag in particular in communities that have  
3 been the most impacted. To ensure a comprehensive  
4 urban ag plan for New York City there must be a  
5 tenant of racial, economic, and environmental equity  
6 within the legislation. As I mentioned in 2017 it  
7 must include and benefit those who have worked in the  
8 soil, grown food, developed community at great  
9 expense and livelihood. In my testimony today and you  
10 have the, the details I want to lift up areas around  
11 zoning, land and enterprise that increase equity  
12 within New York urban ag and recommendations. In this  
13 initiative or the last initiatives three city  
14 agencies were, were to develop an urban ag grub site  
15 that, that happened. DCP and Just Food last fall  
16 along with Yemi Amu of Oko Farms, an aquaponics  
17 farmer in Brooklyn collaborated together and shared  
18 information around innovations around urban ag that  
19 currently are supported within our current zoning  
20 ordinances so we feel that the website is there, the  
21 information is there, the current zoning is already  
22 there that supports the breadth of urban ag and we  
23 feel that it still affirms the analysis that was done  
24 by DCP in order to support any urban agriculture that  
25 is here. I do believe that this initiative right now

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2 holds older language that was left from 1661 and that  
3 should be taken out and after much research and  
4 shared learning with DCP it, it would be harmful to  
5 continue to venture into considering changing the  
6 zonings because that's how neighborhoods flip and  
7 make it vulnerable to development gentrification and  
8 community displacement. I started.. [cross-talk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Thank you, we,  
10 we have your.. [cross-talk]

11 QIANA MICKIE: ...later.. [cross-talk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: ...testimony..

13 QIANA MICKIE: Okay.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: So, yeah, we're  
15 going to hold it, the attorneys will look at it and  
16 we'll then take everything into account..

17 QIANA MICKIE: Thank you.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Yeah,  
19 definitely, thank you.

20 KEITH CARR: Good afternoon, my name is  
21 Keith Carr, I'm the Program Manager for Food Access  
22 at City Harvest. Everyone knows what City Harvest is  
23 so I don't have to go into that but this year we plan  
24 to collect about 64 million pounds of excess produce  
25 to feed 1.3 million New Yorkers and we really can't

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2 do it without you but for City Harvest to be  
3 successful it takes that partnership between both  
4 public and private partners. The same way we partner  
5 with upstate and local agriculture to provide food  
6 for hungry New Yorkers a significant collaboration  
7 with urban agriculture would do the same thing on a  
8 hyper local area... on hypo local... hypo local farming  
9 and urban farming will provide even more support to  
10 the emergency feeding programs that we serve. Just to  
11 give some scale, New York City has 1,500 acres of  
12 unused rooftops and just the neighborhood of East New  
13 York alone has more than 45,000 square feet of  
14 publicly owned unused land so an organized and  
15 determined approach to a comprehensive land...  
16 comprehensive and exclusive plan to urban agriculture  
17 could greatly increase the amount of healthy foods  
18 available in the communities that we serve. If you  
19 look to Cuba even though we... it's going to get harder  
20 and harder to go there but if you look to Cuba they...  
21 with their urban agriculture program they have more  
22 than 300,000 urban farms and they feed about 50  
23 percent of their population on the island so they...  
24 along with like 30,000 tons of meat and two, two...  
25 more than two million pounds of eggs Cuban urban

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2 farmers yield about 44 pounds of... per square foot per  
3 year so... to bring it to New York terms 120... 100...  
4 1,200 acres of land would produce about 88 million  
5 pounds of vegetables enough to provide 220 pounds of...  
6 per year, per person to almost 400,000 residents so  
7 that's everybody in Brownsville could eat. So, this  
8 is why we think it's important but gentrification is  
9 happening and it really concentrates the effect of  
10 poverty and hunger even though in a lot of the  
11 communities that we serve the retail landscape has  
12 improved, there are more stores but those stores  
13 aren't necessarily selling the things that are  
14 familiar to the community and it's become more  
15 expensive so using urban agriculture as a way to  
16 serve those communities and it's direct access to the  
17 residents of the community. So, we just want more  
18 development, development, more farm stands and more  
19 food bus... food bus distributions, more farmer  
20 markets, I really want to highlight the campaign  
21 against hunger in Bed Stuy as well as like all other  
22 programming, hiring youth to have summer jobs and  
23 jobs throughout the year as well as feeding people,  
24 Teens for Food Justice has become a City Harvest  
25 donor so it shows that by scalable urban farming it

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2 can really make a difference in serving the  
3 underserved as well as the Phoenix community garden  
4 in Brownsville... I'm sorry in Ocean Hill, they'll kill  
5 me if I say Brownsville, in Ocean Hill, they have a  
6 robust mini food hub where they're doing a food  
7 voucher distribution as well as their own farmers  
8 market on, on Saturdays so... and we're also really  
9 encouraged by... we know that urban farming and urban  
10 ag tech is... it's lucrative and there's lots of money  
11 that can be thrown at it but we also want you to take  
12 into account that the community needs to be involved  
13 in that so if I'm a traditional growing farmer if I'd  
14 like to do hydroponics or aquaponics there should be  
15 funding and training and technical assistance  
16 afforded for that. So, as our ads say we really need  
17 their help on helping us to feed New York or we're  
18 really encouraged by the recent... when thinking about  
19 rezoning when it comes to... and it's effect on food  
20 security we're really encouraged by the recent deep  
21 dive with the Department of Health and Department of  
22 City Planning and then looking at the, the effects of  
23 zoning on food security so we just... [cross-talk]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Alright... [cross-  
25 talk]



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2 KEITH CARR: ...sorry he's not here to...

3 [cross-talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: ...thank you...

5 [cross-talk]

6 KEITH CARR: ...hear that but... [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Yeah. Alright,  
8 thank you, great. I'm going to have to ask everyone  
9 to stay, stay to the clock only because of the time  
10 limit we have with, with the room, I appreciate the  
11 testimony.

12 GEMMA GARCIA: Can you turn it on for me?  
13 Thank you. My name is Gemma Garcia and I'm on... I'm  
14 here on behalf of East New York Farms. I am  
15 testifying in support of bill 1058 by Council  
16 Espinal. East New York Farms has been working for  
17 over 20 years to improve food access and build  
18 community through local food production. More than a  
19 single urban farm, we are communicated.. we are a  
20 community of 100, 100's of gardeners, vendors,  
21 educators, youth, NYCHA residents and neighbors who  
22 have transformed our neighborhood. We applaud the  
23 effort to bring a more comprehensive approach to  
24 securing and advancing urban agriculture in New York  
25 City. To do our work effectively we need to partner

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2 with a variety of city agencies which underscores the  
3 need for more coordination on a government level. In  
4 this year alone we have forged partnerships and  
5 signed agreements with Green Thumb, NYCHA, Department  
6 of Sanitation, Department of Transportation,  
7 Department of Health, CUNY, and the Office of  
8 Environmental Remediation. The breadth of this.. these  
9 partnerships alone should be enough to convey the  
10 degree to which our work intersects with city policy  
11 initiatives on many different fronts. We have.. we are  
12 excited to see urban agriculture expand to all  
13 sectors of the city and to serve a wider community be  
14 that through gardens, urban farms, hydroponics, or  
15 roof farms. At the same time, we insist that any  
16 urban agriculture plan must take into account the  
17 critical role that community gardeners play in this  
18 city of which I'm one. The majority of food  
19 production in this city happens in over 500 community  
20 gardens, many them in low income communities of color  
21 in the Bronx, Upper Manhattan and Brooklyn. In  
22 addition to providing fresh produce for families many  
23 supply farmers markets. In fact, gardeners in East  
24 New York were the first urban growers in New York  
25 State who were certified to accept the farmers market

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2 nutrition program coupons which serves seniors and  
3 mothers who received WIC. Any planning process for  
4 the Department of City Planning must incorporate the  
5 voice of low-income communities of color and must  
6 keep equity as the central focus in the process. As  
7 East New York residents we have been disappointed in  
8 the past for the approach of DCP when it came to  
9 rezone our community. We hope that they can do better  
10 in this process by engaging community stakeholders  
11 from the beginning. Beyond a comprehensive urban  
12 agriculture plan, we would like to see this bill  
13 create an interagency task force whose mission is to  
14 protect, foster and expand urban agriculture in New  
15 York City. The needs of the urban agriculture  
16 community are as diverse as the practitioners and the  
17 issues... and the issues have shifted over time and  
18 will continue to evolve. We want to see a coordinate,  
19 coordinated effort by city agencies including Parks,  
20 HPD, DEP, Sanitation and others to support the urban  
21 agriculture community and leverage of city resources  
22 for community benefits...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Thank, thank  
24 you, I'm going to have to move on to the next  
25 panelist but I... [cross-talk]

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2 GEMMA GARCIA: Yeah, sure... [cross-talk]

3 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: ...appreciate if  
4 you have a testimony you can give, give it into us  
5 and, and we'll finish reading it.

6 GEMMA GARCIA: Yes, okay... [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Alright, thank  
8 you... [cross-talk]

9 GEMMA GARCIA: Thank you.

10 ONIKA ABRAHAM: Hello, good afternoon,  
11 thank you for holding this hearing. My name is Onika  
12 Abraham, I am a lot of things; a wife, a mother, a  
13 native, Lower East sider who was deeply impressed,  
14 impression by community gardens throughout my youth,  
15 I'm also the Director of Farm School NYC and in that  
16 role we wanted to say that we are excited about the  
17 energy behind this comprehensive plan. Urban  
18 agriculture is something that's been the bedrock of  
19 food justice and food sovereignty for generations of  
20 urban poor because we can do it. We have a few seeds,  
21 the sun, the rain, the soil and that's all we really  
22 need. We have the control of what we eat by what we  
23 grow, and we also have the means of the production  
24 and distribution which is critical. This is something  
25 that the founders of Farm School NYC understood

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2 deeply. Farm School NYC's origin story provides a  
3 really important example of the importance of  
4 building community voice into this proposed urban  
5 agriculture plan. Farm School was created by a  
6 collective of farmers, educators, social justice  
7 advocates working and living and low-income  
8 communities in New York City. Our communities are so  
9 often defined by what we lack, lack of access to  
10 fresh food and health care, economic and educational  
11 opportunity but our founders were really focused on  
12 the abundant resources that they shared. Over 600,  
13 900, 1,000 community gardens in the city depending on  
14 how you count, experienced growers with expertise to  
15 share like the sister sitting right next to me,  
16 community gardeners throughout the city. Our founders  
17 recognized the need for a comprehensive professional  
18 level of farmer training program for adults, so they  
19 started one. Together they centered the school on  
20 social justice believing that farming in community  
21 could be a tool for liberation and self-determination  
22 for the marginalized and, and the oppressed and it  
23 really developed all of our teaching methodology on  
24 labor movements really welcoming in communities that  
25 have been underserved by traditional hierarchical

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2 educational institutions. So, when we welcomed our  
3 first class in 2010 since then we've trained more  
4 than 400 people who are now leading farms and gardens  
5 in the city. I think what's really important to lift  
6 up in this conversation are the people who are going  
7 to be leading these farms of the futures, the adults  
8 who are doing all of this work in the city mostly  
9 unpaid, often underpaid, how are we supporting  
10 working wages for farmed labor in the city and in our  
11 food region in general and how are we creating  
12 opportunities for people to have that self  
13 determination to really invest in their  
14 entrepreneurial spirit and not keep depending on low  
15 wage and free wage work in the city to run all of the  
16 gardens that we're really working on right now. Thank  
17 you. You have the full testimony that has a lot more  
18 points in it, I appreciate it.

19 ALEXANDRO ZIARI: Thank you very much  
20 Councilman for all of your environmental  
21 progressiveness. My name is Alexandro Ziari, I come  
22 from the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute and my  
23 points are, urban agriculture is beginning to  
24 contribute to environmental goals by sequestering  
25 storm water to resilience by stemming flooding and

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2 to, to economic growth through job training and  
3 entrepreneurship. An urban agriculture plan would  
4 identify ways to increase the co-benefits that farms,  
5 and gardens produce. Conflicts between urban  
6 agriculture and competing land uses continue  
7 highlighting the value of a... of a public planning  
8 process to decide how much urban agriculture is  
9 appropriate for New York City where new urban farms  
10 and gardens should be located, methods to protect  
11 existing gardens and farms and a process for  
12 supporting the current and new farming and gardening  
13 activities. New forms of commercial urban agriculture  
14 practiced indoors in shipping containers on rooftops  
15 require reassessing zoning and related codes and  
16 regulations to ensure that these innovations are  
17 supported while also protecting community health,  
18 safety and quality of life with fair wages and  
19 working conditions for farm workers. Efforts to  
20 sustain regional agriculture particularly in the  
21 Hudson Valley have created opportunities for  
22 innovative links between Perry urban and urban farms.  
23 Incorporating regional agriculture in the urban  
24 agriculture plan would identify common needs and  
25 opportunities for shared infrastructure and

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2 supportive policy. Officials for the Parks Department  
3 and Recreation... and Recreation have said... and, and  
4 of... and the Department of City Planning have said  
5 that a plan is unnecessary because the city's zoning  
6 allows urban agriculture throughout the five boroughs  
7 in some cases and there are no significant zoning or  
8 regulatory obstacles to growing food in the city but  
9 there are many questions about expanding urban  
10 agriculture that a plan could answer. Number one, how  
11 much land should be allocated for this activity?  
12 Number two, to what extent are existing resources  
13 searching as Green Thumb is... as Green Thumb adequate  
14 for and expanding urban agriculture sector? Number  
15 three, how can urban farms use resources like water  
16 and soil sustainably and economically and number  
17 four, how can urban farms and gardens be designed to  
18 address large issues like climate resilience and  
19 social equity. Plans are meant for... to envision and  
20 guide a future, a plan would help to make urban  
21 agriculture bigger, stronger, more sustainable, and  
22 more democratic. Thank you very much.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Thank you so  
24 much, I appreciate it, appreciate all your testimony,  
25 I look forward to reading the rest of it, but it was



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2 all insightful and I... I'm hoping that we... we're going  
3 to get this done but I want to follow up our  
4 conversation making sure that all our points are  
5 addressed in this bill to move forward. Alright,  
6 thank you.

7 QIANA MICKIE: Thank you.

8 KEITH CARR: Thank you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Alright, we'll  
10 call up the last panel; Wylie Goodman; Kristin  
11 Reynolds and Jordan Rogers.

12 WYLIE GOODMAN: Should I wait till folks  
13 that are... can I start?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Yeah, you can  
15 begin...

16 WYLIE GOODMAN: Yeah, great. Good  
17 afternoon, my name is Wylie Goodman, I'm an Urban  
18 Planner from Ridgewood, Queens and the lead author of  
19 a recently published article in the Journal Land Use  
20 Policy, will the urban agriculture revolution be  
21 vertical and soilless, a case study of controlled  
22 environment agriculture in New York City. I'm here  
23 today to urge support for Council Member Espinal's  
24 proposed legislation to create a comprehensive urban  
25 agriculture plan for New York City. If passed the

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2 plan would put New York on par with U.S. municipality  
3 such as Los Angeles, Chicago and Boston among others  
4 in prioritizing agriculture as a land use not merely  
5 compatible with urban life but enhancing of it.

6 agriculture may seem antithetical to New York's  
7 densely built environment but as anyone who has  
8 visited our 550 community gardens, 30 plus

9 educational farms, ten and growing for profit rooftop  
10 and indoor establishments and six NYCHA farms knows  
11 determination to plant and harvest and distribute has  
12 grown steadily in the last decade and appears poised  
13 for continued expansion. Why then is a comprehensive

14 UA plan needed because even as interest in  
15 agriculture has risen, community-based farmers

16 particularly farmers of color are still constricted  
17 in their ability to engage in safe and sustainable  
18 production due to lack of resources and information.

19 In parallel, over one million food challenged New

20 Yorkers most in need of agricultural sociocultural  
21 health, environmental and economic benefits remain

22 far from fully accessing these eco services and while

23 commercial agriculture is encouraged in nearly every  
24 zoning district, financial, legal and land use

25 obstacles reduce the degree to which entrepreneurs

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2 can comfortably consider New York as a viable  
3 location to build their businesses. In sum, a  
4 comprehensive UA plan could address these barriers  
5 ensuring that more of those who want to farm can do  
6 so successfully. How would the plan accomplish this,  
7 by bringing together diverse stakeholders and city  
8 agencies to formulate shared goals, determine  
9 targeted strategies and unlike many cities, measure  
10 whether objectives are achieved. In this New York can  
11 benefit from both studying the city's experiences and  
12 bringing to the process the innovative spirits  
13 synonymous with New York which is why I want to leave  
14 you this morning with this recommendation not if and  
15 not when, not if the bill passes, we use our  
16 imaginations to envision a biophilic future for New  
17 York in which nature is interwoven into the landscape  
18 of our infrastructure etcetera, the 21<sup>st</sup> century New  
19 York can include everything from kelp harvesting in  
20 the East River to cricket production in once  
21 abandoned factories and beyond. If we plan for that  
22 eventuality New York can reassert its position as an  
23 urban agriculture leader and more importantly prepare  
24 the city's 1.1 million students for careers in a  
25 regional economy where the broad range of food

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2 agriculture, natural resource and human science  
3 professions stand to play a critical role in our  
4 green new future.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Thank you.

6 KRISTIN REYNOLDS: Okay, thank you. Thank  
7 you Council Member Espinal and for the rest of the  
8 Committee for allowing me to submit testimony today.  
9 my name is Kristin Reynolds, I'm here... a resident of  
10 Forest Hills and the Co-author of two recent studies  
11 on urban agriculture in New York City, one of which  
12 has been referenced today, five borough farm which  
13 documented urban agriculture throughout the city,  
14 recommended policy changes and suggestions to  
15 strengthen the practice throughout the five boroughs  
16 and the second beyond the kill which documents the  
17 work of people of color and women in particular in  
18 low income communities using urban agriculture to  
19 advance social equity. I'm currently conducting  
20 research on commercial urban agriculture in Paris and  
21 New York and attendant policy changes. I want to  
22 speak briefly about this today and you'll have my  
23 full testimony which I've submitted. Commercial and  
24 high tech urban agriculture are an evolution in both  
25 cities New York and Paris and policies are responding

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2 these changes, this is logical particularly in the  
3 United States given the agriculture defined at the  
4 federal level by the USDA is a commercial activity  
5 but this has potential around vacations on the  
6 diversity of urban agriculture and it's potential to  
7 provide social, ecological economic and community  
8 benefits for all city residents. Today I'd like to  
9 share a few brief points about these revolutions, but  
10 I'll skip through them quickly because of time.. lack  
11 of time. A recent assessment estimated that the  
12 potential economic value of ecosystem services  
13 including food production from urban agriculture  
14 globally between 88 and 164 billion dollars and if  
15 investment in high tech urban agriculture suggests  
16 profitability there's at least an expectation that  
17 commercial urban agriculture will produce a strong  
18 economic return. I will defer to the rest of my  
19 written testimony and close by offering a... two points  
20 that I think are interesting... important if and when  
21 the plan... planning process goes forward. Two things  
22 that would strengthen the integrity of a  
23 comprehensive urban agriculture plan for New York  
24 City, City in the context of the recent evolutions  
25 and commercial urban agriculture are that it enables...

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2 that the plan supports a diverse system that enables...  
3 to support the needs of all... and need... and  
4 preferences of all New Yorkers and all community  
5 gardeners and second due to the diversity of interest  
6 represented in New York City urban agriculture which  
7 I and others have documented in detail and many  
8 others know from experience the... should... the city  
9 should formerly engage informed and experienced  
10 individuals and community members of the community...  
11 in developing the comprehensive urban agriculture  
12 plan. New York has a rich and diverse history of  
13 urban agriculture, one that's regarded around the  
14 world as a model for innovative farming and  
15 gardening. A comprehensive urban agriculture plan  
16 should live up to this reputation making New York  
17 city a model for just and sustainable urban  
18 agriculture policy making in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Thank  
19 you.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Thank you.

21 JORDAN ROGERS: Hi, I'm Jordan, I am the  
22 F-16 pilot at the New Jersey Air National Guard, I do  
23 that guys job, so I guess I'm the governor then or  
24 how does this work? I mean I'm the one that protects  
25 the sovereignty, right? I mean whenever you're doing

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2 that job usually that's the guy who's in charge,  
3 right? Not necessarily, okay, I just wanted to make  
4 sure we're clear on this because it just... this, this  
5 doesn't look right. Just a couple of weeks ago I  
6 submitted a bill and it was approved called the Green  
7 New Deal...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Identify  
9 yourself for the record.

10 JORDAN ROGERS: Yeah, Jordan Rogers.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Jordan Rogers.

12 JORDAN ROGERS: Yes. Yeah, I'm the... I'm  
13 the F-16 pilots. So, my question to you is, I  
14 submitted the... have you heard of the Green New Deal,  
15 you know the... yeah, I wrote that and I was... it was  
16 supposed to be on my contract but one of the state  
17 senators here that, that received it, I think it was  
18 Bernie Sanders wrote his name on it and submitted it  
19 and so they... [cross-talk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Do you have any...  
21 [cross-talk]

22 JORDAN ROGERS: The president told me...  
23 [cross-talk]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Do you have  
25 anything regard... [cross-talk]

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2 JORDAN ROGERS: ...resubmit it... [cross-  
3 talk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Do you have  
5 anything to say regarding the hearing today,  
6 regarding the urban, urban farm... [cross-talk]

7 JORDAN ROGERS: Yes, and it is regarding  
8 this specifically because a part of that Green New  
9 Deal was not properly placed and so the president  
10 told me to come down here and resubmit a new version  
11 that actually was a lot better and it, it also  
12 entailed distributing the rights on taxes on  
13 farmlands to the soldiers who actually fought for it  
14 and since we're the ones that uphold it I think that  
15 it should go to them and you know if they do grant  
16 for, you know no money down payments on homeowners I  
17 don't see why they can't just give them the rights of  
18 tax on farmland, you know we got the national guard  
19 down there and they're not being used so might as  
20 well give... you know some rights to tax to them, I  
21 mean it... that is technically what we fought for,  
22 right and what we defend, your rights to tax so I  
23 mean it should go to them too.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Okay, so you're  
25 saying farmland for, for veterans?



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2 JORDAN ROGERS: Right, yeah, I mean we  
3 provide a protective service to the community that  
4 they're taxing, and I mean without the, the landlord  
5 the farm operates just fine so you know might as well  
6 get some protective services... [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Got it... [cross-  
8 talk]

9 JORDAN ROGERS: ...to the community that  
10 we're taxing.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Alright, thank  
12 you sir, thanks for your testimony.

13 JORDAN ROGERS: Yeah, sure thing.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Okay... [cross-  
15 talk]

16 JORDAN ROGERS: One more quick question,  
17 if I wanted to submit a new bill would this be the  
18 right place to do this for... as well because they told  
19 me to come to a committee but I'm not sure if I'm in  
20 the right place?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Well, the... this  
22 is more of a, a city issue, it's not... sounds like  
23 you're alluding to a federal bill you were working  
24 on...

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COMMITTEE ON LAND USE

JORDAN ROGERS: Right but they... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: So... [cross-talk]

JORDAN ROGERS: ...told me that I had to speak to some Committee... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Go... after, after, after the hearing just leave us your information and we'll reach out to you let you know... [cross-talk]

JORDAN ROGERS: That'd be great... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Thank you.

JORDAN ROGERS: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: With, with that said this, this hearing is, is adjourned, we are going to take all of the testimony into account to see what... how we, we rework this bill but as I mentioned earlier we have over 40 co-sponsors helped to get this thing passed this time around and the sooner the better so thank you. With that the meetings adjourned.

[gavel]

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

June 15, 2019